

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS

John Gill, D.D.

Volume 4 of 9

Psalms 73 through
Solomon's Song



**EXPOSITION OF
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

By John Gill, D.D.

Complete & Unabridged

VOL. 4 of 9



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JOHN GILL, D. D.

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OF THE
Old Testament
BY
John Gill D. D.
IN SIX VOLUMES
Vol. IV.

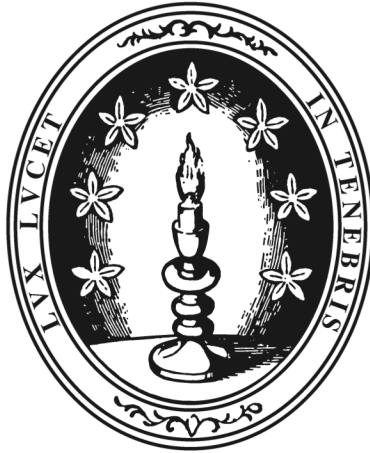
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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
The Old Testament;

IN WHICH ARE RECORDED

THE ORIGIN OF MANKIND, OF THE SEVERAL NATIONS OF THE WORLD,

AND OF

THE JEWISH NATION IN PARTICULAR:

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS OF ISRAEL;

THE JOURNEY OF THAT PEOPLE FROM EGYPT THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO THE LAND OF CANAAN,
AND THEIR SETTLEMENT IN THAT LAND;

THEIR LAWS,

MORAL, CEREMONIAL, AND JUDICIAL;

THEIR GOVERNMENT AND STATE UNDER JUDGES AND KINGS;

THEIR SEVERAL CAPTIVITIES;

AND THEIR SACRED BOOKS OF DEVOTION:

IN THE EXPOSITION OF WHICH

IT IS ATTEMPTED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL BOOKS, AND THE WRITERS OF THEM; A SUMMARY OF EACH CHAPTER, AND THE GENUINE SENSE OF EVERY VERSE; AND, THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE, THE ORIGINAL TEXT, AND THE VERSIONS OF IT, ARE INSPECTED AND COMPARED; INTERPRETERS OF THE BEST NOTE, BOTH JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN, CONSULTED; DIFFICULT PLACES AT LARGE EXPLAINED; SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED, AND VARIOUS PASSAGES ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED BY TESTIMONIES OF WRITERS, AS WELL GENTILE AS JEWISH.

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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AN EXPOSITION
OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LATTER PART
OF
The Psalms of David.

P S A L M LXXIII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

IT seems by the title that Asaph was the penman of this psalm, as it is certain that he was a composer of psalms and hymns; see 2 Chron. xxix. 30. though it may be rendered, *a psalm for Asaph, or unto Asaph*^a; and might have David for its author, as some think, who, having penned it, sent it to Asaph, to be made use of by him in public service; see 1 Chron. xvi. 7. and so the Targum paraphrases it, “a song by the hands of Asaph;” the occasion of it was a temptation the psalmist fell into, through the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, to think there was nothing in religion, that it was a vain and useless thing; under which he continued until he went into the house of God, and was taught better; when he acknowledged his stupidity and folly, and penned this psalm, to prevent others falling into the same snare, and to set forth the goodness of God to his people, with which it begins.

Ver. 1. *Truly God is good to Israel, &c.*] To Israel, literally understood; in choosing them to be his people above all people on earth; in bringing them into a good land; in favouring them with many external privileges, civil and religious; in giving them his word, statutes, and ordinances, as he did not to other nations: or, spiritually understood, the Israel whom God has chosen, redeemed, and called by his special grace; verily of a

truth, God is good to these; there is abundant proof and evidence of it; see the note on Psal. xxxiv. 8. or *only* God is good to such; though he is good to all in a providential way, yet only to his chosen and redeemed ones in a way of special favour; the goodness others share is but a shadow of goodness, in comparison of what they do and shall partake of; they are blessed with blessings indeed, and are only blessed; so this particle is rendered in Psal. lxii. 2, 4, 5. *or but, or notwithstanding*^b, God is good, &c. that is, though he suffers the wicked to prosper, and his own people are much afflicted, yet he is good to them; he supports them under their afflictions, and makes all to work for their good; gives them grace here, and glory hereafter; even *to such as are of a clean heart*; this character excludes the carnal Israelites, who were pure in their own eyes, but not cleansed from their filthiness, and describes the true Israel of God, and explains who are meant by them, such as are pure in heart, inwardly Jews, Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; this is not natural to men, their hearts are by nature unclean, nor is it in their power to make them clean: this is God's work, he only can create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit; which is done by the sanctifying influences of his grace, and by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and thus purifying their hearts by

^a אֲשָׁפָה לַיהוָה אֲשָׁפָה. Sept. Asaph ipsi, Pagninus, Montanus; Asapho, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

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^b אֲבָרְכָה אֲתָמֶן, Tigurine version, Piscator, Gussetius, Michaelis.

faith; yet so as not to be free from all impurity of spirit, but as to have a conscience purged from the guilt of sin, and to have the heart sincere and upright towards God.

Ver. 2. *But as for me, &c.*] Who am one of the Israel of God, whose heart has been renewed and purified by the grace of God, and to whom he has been kind and good in a thousand instances; yet, ungrateful creature that I am, *my feet were almost gone*; out of the good ways of God, the ways of truth and holiness; just upon the turn, ready to forsake them, and give up all religion as a vain thing: *my steps had well nigh slipped, or poured out*: like water; the allusion is to standing on wet and slippery ground, where a man can scarcely keep upon his feet. It may be observed, that good men are liable to slips and falls, to fall into sin, snares, and temptations, and from their steadfastness in the faith, but not totally and finally; their feet may be *almost*, but not *altogether*, gone: their steps may *well nigh* slip, but not *quite*; they may fall, but not be utterly cast down; at least they rise again, and are made to stand; for God is able to keep them, and does keep them, from a total and final falling away.

Ver. 3. *For I was envious at the foolish, &c.*] The atheists, as in Psal. xiv. 1. who deny the creation, as Arama; the wicked, as after explained, as all wicked men are, how wise soever they may be in things natural and civil, yet in religious things, in things of a spiritual nature, they have no understanding; they are proud boasters, glory in themselves, and in their outward attainments, as the word ^d here used signifies; the external happiness of these, their riches, health, and ease, were envied by the psalmist; see Psal. xxxvii. 1. when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, or the peace of the wicked ^e; with an evil eye. This was the occasion of his slip and fall, this was the temptation he was left unto for a while.

Ver. 4. *For there are no bands in their death, &c.*] Nothing that binds and straitens them, afflicts and distresses them; they have no pain of mind nor of body, but die at once, suddenly, in a moment, wholly at ease and quiet, without any bitterness of soul; see Job xxi. 13, 23, 25. or *there are no bands until their death*^f; they have no straits nor difficulties all their life long, no distempers nor diseases which may be called *bonds*, Luke xiii. ^g 12, 13, 16. till they come to die: the Vulgate Latin version is, *there is no respect to their death*; they take no notice of it, they have no care or concern about it; or, as the Targum, "they are not terrified" nor troubled because of the day of their death;" they put it away far from them, and think nothing about it: *but their strength is firm*; they are hale and robust, healthy and sound, to the day of their death; their strength is not weakened in the way by diseases and distempers. Some take the word rendered *strength* to signify a porch or palace, and translate it, they are strong as a palace, or in a palace, or their palace is

strong^h; their houses are well built, and continue long.

Ver. 5. *They are not in trouble, as other men, &c.*] Either of body or of mind, as the saints are, who through many tribulations enter the kingdom; or are not in *labour*ⁱ, don't labour for food and raiment, or get their bread by the sweat of their brow, as poor men do; nor are weary, so Arama: *neither are they plagued like other men*; smitten of God, corrected, and chastised by him, as his children are; the rod of God is not upon them, Job xxi. 9.

Ver. 6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain, &c.*] Which was the sin of the devils, and of our first parents, and of Sodom, and is the sin of anti-christ; and which, of all sins, is most hateful to God; this arises from, at least is increased by, outward prosperity. Jesuburun waxed fat and kicked; pride and fulness of bread went together in Sodom; and, where it is predominant, it binds as a chain; such who are under the power of it are slaves unto it, they are chained and fettered by it, and it possesses them wholly; it shews itself in the several members of their bodies, in their eyes and feet, their walk and gait, and in their conduct and behaviour, and in the several actions of their lives, and is rightly called *the pride of life*; or rather they bind it about themselves as a chain, fancying it to be an ornament to them, what sets them off, and makes them look great in the eyes of others; whereas the reverse is what is of great price, and in high esteem with God and good men; namely, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit: *violence covereth them as a garment*; wicked men that are prosperous and proud are generally oppressive to others; and are very often open in their acts of violence, which are as openly done and to be seen of all men, as the clothes upon their backs; and frequently the clothes they wear are got by rapine and oppression, so that they may properly be called garments of violence; see Isa. lix. 6.

Ver. 7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness, &c.*] Or their face, the eyes being put for the whole face; so the Targum, "their face is changed, because of fatness;" see Job xv. 27. otherwise through fatness the eyes are almost enclosed: or *it goes forth out of the fatness of their eyes*^j; that is, either *pride*, which shews itself in haughty looks and scornful airs, through the abundance possessed; or *violence*, seen in the fierceness of the eyes, and fury of the countenance; or *their eyes go out through fatness*^k: that is, through the plenty they enjoy, their eyes go out in lust after unlawful objects: *they have more than heart could wish*; that they themselves could have wished for heretofore, though not now; for what is it that a worldly covetous heart cannot and does not wish for? if it had all the world, it would not satisfy it: or *the imaginations of the heart go on*^l; that is, after more, not being content with such things as they have; or *they*, i. e. their pride and violence, *exceed the imaginations of the*

^c שפכה effusi sunt, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; effusi faissent, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^d בְּחֹלִים in arrogantes, Gejerus; stolidè gloriosos, Michaelis; at vains-glorious fools, Ainsworth.

^e שְׁלוֹמִים pacem, Pagninus, Musculus, Piscator.

^f למות usque ad mortem eorum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^g אֶלֶל palatium vel sicut palatium; so some in Piscator; porticus, Schmidt; so R. Jomah, Arama, and Jerom.

^h בעמל in labore, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus.

ⁱ יצא מחלב עינים prodit vel exit e pinguedine oculorum eorum, Michaelis.

^j Exivit præ adipe oculus eorum, Montanus; egreditur præ pinguedine, Gejerus.

^k עברו משכיות לבב pergunt cogitationes cordis eorum, Piscator.

heart"; they are more than can be conceived of, they overpass the deeds of the wicked, Jer. v. 28. or they transgress by the imaginations of the heart"; which are evil, and that continually.

Ver. 8. *They are corrupt, &c.*] In themselves, in their principles, and in their practices, being shapen and conceived in sin, and born of the flesh; and are corrupters, or corrupt themselves, and their ways, and also others by their corrupt speech, evil communications, and bad examples: or they consume away: like smoke, or into it, as Psal. xxxvii. 20. or as wax melteth at the fire, Psal. lxxviii. 2. see Zech. xiv. 12. where the same word is used as here: or they cause to consume away"; they melt or dissolve others; they consume them, and waste their estates by their oppression and violence; they make their hearts to melt with their threatening and terrifying words; or they make them dissolve in their lives by keeping them company: and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak oppression and revolt, threaten with it, Isa. lix. 13. and speak in vindication of it, and in a boasting glorying manner; so Arana; which is speaking wickedly concerning it: they speak loftily: proudly, arrogantly, in a haughty and imperious manner: or from on high"; as if they were in heaven, and above all creatures, and even God himself; and as if what they said were oracles, and to be received as such, without any scruple and hesitation. Thus Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar spake, Exod. v. 2. Isa. xxxvi. 20. Dan. iii. 15. and the little horn, or antichrist, Dan. vii. 20. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 6.

Ver. 9. *They set their mouth against the heavens, &c.*] Against God in heaven, see Dan. iv. 26. Matt. xxi. 25. Luke xv. 18. against his being, saying, there is no God; against his perfections, thinking him to be such an one as themselves; against his purposes and decrees, replying against him, and charging him with insincerity, cruelty, and unrighteousness; and against his providence, either denying it, or affirming it to be unequal; and against his doctrines, ordinances, and ministers. Aben Ezra interprets it also of the angels of heaven, who are spoken against, when it is denied that there are any such beings, as were by the Sadducees; and blasphemed, when the worshipping of them is introduced. The Targum understands it of the saints of heaven, with which compare Rev. xiii. 6. it may be applied to civil magistrates, the higher powers, who represent on earth God in heaven; and there are some that despise dominion, and speak evil of such dignities: and their tongue walketh through the earth; sparing none, high nor low, but injures all sorts of persons with their lies and calumnies. This denotes the unbridled liberty which wicked men take with their tongues; there is no restraint upon them, no stopping of them; see Psal. xii. 5. the universal mischief they are continually doing, and the diabolical influence of their detraction and falsehood; like Satan, their tongues walk to and fro in the earth, doing all the injury to the credit and characters of men they possibly can.

Ver. 10. *Therefore his people return hither, &c.*] Either the true people of God, and so the Targum, the

people of the Lord, and whom the psalmist owned for his people; for the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read *my people*; who seeing the prosperity of the wicked, and feeling their own afflictions, return to the same way of thinking, and fall by the same snare and temptation as the psalmist did; or such who were only the people of God by profession, but hypocrites, who observing the trouble that attends a religious life, and the prosperity of wicked men, return from the good ways of God they have outwardly walked in for some time, to the conversation of these men, and join themselves to them: or else, *his* being put for *their*, the sense is, the people of these wicked men, of every one of them, return unto them, and flock about them, and caress and flatter them, because of their prosperous circumstances, and join with them in their evil practices of oppression and slander; which sense seems best to agree with what goes before and follows after: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them; meaning either to the people of God, and to be understood either of the abundance of their tears, on account of their afflictions inward and outward; see Psal. vi. 6. and xlii. 3. and cxix. 136. so the Targum, "and many tears flow unto them;" or of their afflictions themselves, which are oftentimes compared to waters in Scripture; see Psal. xlii. 7. and lxxvi. 12. Isa. xliii. 2. which are given them in measure: it is a cup of them that is put into their hands, and in full measure; they have a full cup of them; many are their tribulations, through which they enter the kingdom, and they are all of God; it is he that wrings them out to them with his fatherly hand: or else, taking the people to mean the followers and companions of the wicked, the words are to be understood of the plenty of good things which such men enjoy in this life, their cup runs over; and indeed these seem to be the persons who are introduced speaking the following words.

Ver. 11. *And they say, how doth God know? &c.*] Owning there is a God, but questioning his knowledge; for the words are not an inquiry about the way and manner of his knowing things; which is not by the senses, as hearing and seeing; eyes and ears are improperly ascribed to him; nor in a discursive way, by reasoning, and inferring one thing from another; for he knows things intuitively, beholding all things in his own eternal mind and will: but they are a question about his knowledge itself, as follows: and is their knowledge in the most High? they acknowledge God to be the most High, and yet doubt whether there is knowledge in him; and indeed the higher with respect to place, and at the greater distance he was from them, the less they imagined he knew of affairs below; see Job xxii. 13, 14. for the knowledge called in question is to be understood of his providential notice of human affairs, which they thought he did not concern himself with, as being below his regard; see Ezek. ix. 9. Zeph. i. 12. and therefore concluded that their acts of oppression and violence, and their insolent words against God and men, would pass unobserved, and with impunity. If these are the words of good men, of the people of God under affliction, they are to be considered as under

^m Excesserunt imaginations cordis, Cocceius; excedunt, Michaelis.

ⁿ Transgrediuntur cogitationibus cordis, Gejerus.

^o מִיָּקוּן dissolutos reddunt, Vatablus; reddunt se dissolutos, Montanus; faciunt tabescere, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^p מִיָּקוּן a sublimi, Musculus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ex alto, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

a temptation from their affliction, and the prosperity of the wicked, to call in question the providence of God in the government of the world, and his love to them, which is sometimes expressed by his knowledge of them, Psal. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Ver. 12. *Behold, these are the ungodly, &c.*] Who say and do as before declared; such as these must be without the knowledge of God, the fear, love, and worship of him: *who prosper in the world*; in worldly and temporal things, in their bodies and outward estates, but not in their souls and spiritual things: *in this world*, as the Targum is; all their prosperity is here; their good things are in this life, their evil things will be in that to come; though ungodly, they prosper in the world, and as long as they are in it; or they are at peace and in ease, and are quiet; they have nothing to disturb them, they are not in outward trouble, and their sins don't distress them, and they have no concern about another world: *they increase in riches*; which they are in the pursuit of, and overtake and enjoy in great abundance; whereby they become mighty and powerful, as the word^o for *riches* signifies: these words are the observation of the psalmist, and which was the occasion of the following temptation he was led into.

Ver. 13. *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, &c.*] Which supposes that his heart had been unclean, as every man's is, and which appears by what is in it, and by what comes out of it; that it was now cleansed, not in an absolute and legal sense, as if it was wholly free from sin, for this no man can say; but in an evangelical sense, being purified by faith in the blood of Christ; that he had himself some concern in the cleansing of his heart, which seems to be contrary to Prov. xx. 9. and besides, this is the Lord's own work, Psal. li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. wherefore this may be considered as a wrong and rash expression of his; for as he was wrong in one part of it, its being cleansed in vain, so he might be in the other, in ascribing it to himself; though it may be allowed, consistent with what is before observed, that a believer has a concern in the cleansing of his heart; for, being convinced of the impurity of it, he owns and laments it before the Lord; and, seeing the fountain of the Redeemer's blood opened, he applies to it, and to him for cleansing; and expresses a love unto, a great and studious concern for purity of heart as well as life; and, under the influence of divine grace, is enabled to keep a watch over it, whereby, through the same grace, it is preserved from much pollution; and, by fresh application to the blood of Christ, is cleansed from what it daily contracts: *and washed my hands in innocency*: that is, *in vain*, as before; which denotes the performance of good works, a course of holy life and conversation, which when right springs from purity of heart; see the note on Psal. xxvi. 6. now the psalmist under temptation concluded that all his religion and devotion were in vain, all his hearing, and reading, and attending on ordinances, all his concern for purity of heart and life; since those who shewed no regard to these things prospered in the world, and increased in riches, abounded in ease and plenty, and seemed to be rather the favourites of heaven than religious men;

and this temptation was strengthened by the following observation.

Ver. 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, &c.*] *Smitten or scourged*¹, as in ver. 5. that is, afflicted of God; which is no ways inconsistent with his love, nor with his covenant, nor with an interest in him, as a covenant God and Father; see Psal. lxxxix. 29—34. Heb. xii. 5—8. *and chastened every morning*; not in wrath, but in love, and for good; not with the chastisement of a cruel one, but of a loving and tender father; and therefore not to be improved in such a manner, as if on this account there was nothing in religion; whereas the daily notices the Lord takes of his people this way shew his regard unto them, and care of them.

Ver. 15. *If I say, I will speak thus, &c.*] Either as the wicked do, ver. 8, 9, 11. or rather as he had thought in his own mind, ver. 13, 14. wherefore he kept it all to himself, and did not make known to others the reasonings of his mind, and the temptations he laboured under: *behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children*; of whom care should be taken, above all things, that they be not offended, Matt. xviii. 6. *or should condemn*; as the Targum; or as Jarchi, "I should make them transgressors, and wicked persons;" I should represent them as if they were men hated and rejected of God, because of their afflictions: the words may be rendered, *behold the generation of thy children, I have transgressed*¹; by giving way to the above temptation, which might have been prevented by considering the church, children, and people of God, and the care he has taken of them, the regard he has shewn to them, and the preservation of them in all ages. The words are an apostrophe to God, who has children by adopting grace, and which appear so by their regeneration; and there is a generation of them in all ages; when one goes, another comes; there is always a seed, a spiritual offspring, to serve him, which is counted for a generation.

Ver. 16. *When I thought to know this, &c.*] How to reconcile the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, to the perfections of God, and his wise providence in the government of the world, by the mere dint of reason, without consulting the sacred oracles, or his own and others' experience: *it was too painful for me*; too laborious and toilsome, a work he was not equal to; *hic labor, hoc opus*; see Eccl. viii. 17.

Ver. 17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God, &c.*] The tabernacle or house of God, where the word of God was read and explained, prayer was made, and sacrifices offered up, and where fellowship was had with the saints, and communion with God himself; which for one hour or moment is preferable to all the prosperity of the wicked, during their whole life. This shews that though the psalmist was beset with the temptation, yet not overcome; it did not so far prevail as to cause him to neglect public worship, and relinquish the house of God, and the ordinances of it; and it is right, under temptations, doubts, and difficulties, to attend the public ministrations, which is the way and means to have relief under temptations, to have

^o חיל vires, Junius & Tremellius; potentiam, Piscator.
¹ פגוע flagellatus, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; percussus, Gejerus.

¹ וְעַד שֶׁאֶתְּוַעֲבֵר עַד הַבַּיִת עַד הַקֹּדֶשׁ ecce generatio filiorum tuorum, prævaricatus sum, Pagninus, Montanus.

doubts resolved, and difficulties removed: some by the *sanctuary of God* understand the Scriptures, which are holy and of God, and are profitable for instruction, and are to be consulted and entered into by a serious reading of and deep meditation on them; whereby may be known the happiness that is prepared for the saints in the other world, and the misery of the wicked, and hereby judgment may be made of the present case and condition of each: others interpret it of the world of spirits, which may be entered into by contemplation; when it may be observed that the spirits of just men upon their dissolution possess unspeakable joys and glories, and the souls of the wicked are in inconceivable torments: then *understood I their end*; both of the godly and of the wicked; that the end of the righteous is peace, rest, salvation, and eternal life, and the end of the wicked is ruin, destruction, and death; see Psal. xxxvii. 35—38.

Ver. 18. *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, &c.*] In which a man can't stand long, and without danger; and the higher they are the more dangerous, being slippery, and such are places of honour and riches. The phrase denotes the uncertainty and instability of these things, and the danger men are in who are possessed of them of falling into destruction and misery. The Targum is, "thou didst set them in "darkness;" to be in slippery places, and in the dark, is very uncomfortable, unsafe, and dangerous indeed; see Psal. xxxv. 6. Jer. xxiii. 12. and it may be observed, that all this honour, promotion, and riches, are of God; it is he that sets them in these places of honour and profit; and he that sets them up can pull them down, as he does; so it follows, *thou castest them down into destruction*; into temporal destruction, by removing them from their high stations into a very low, mean, and contemptible state, as were Shebna and Nebuchadnezzar, Isa. xxii. 15, 19. Dan. iv. 24, 25. and into everlasting destruction, from whence there is no recovery; see Psal. lv. 23.

Ver. 19. *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment? &c.*] Very suddenly, which is often the case of wicked men, who cry Peace and safety, and sudden destruction comes upon them, 1 Thess. v. 3. so as in a moment were the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Pharaoh and his host, and of Korah and his company, Lam. iv. 6. Exod. xiv. 28. Numb. xvi. 21, 45. the words are expressed with admiration, as wondering at the sudden and amazing turn of things: *they are utterly consumed with terrors*; their destruction is not only sudden, but entire; it is like the breaking in pieces of a potter's vessel; a sheard of which cannot be gathered up and used, or like the casting of a mill-stone into the sea, which will never rise more; such will be the destruction of antichrist; see Rev. ii. 27. and xviii. 21. and this is done *with terrors*; either by terrible judgments inflicted on them from without; or with terrors inwardly seizing upon their minds and consciences; as at the time of temporal calamities, or at death, however at judgment, when the awful

sentence will be pronounced upon them; see Job xxvii. 20.

Ver. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh, &c.*] So will be all the temporal felicity of wicked men, all an illusion, all a dream; when they lift up their eyes in hell, and awake in the resurrection, they'll find themselves destitute of all their riches and honours, and it will be as if they had only dreamed of them, and never enjoyed them; see Job xx. 6, 7, 8. Isa. xxix. 8. so, *O Lord, when thou awakest*; to judgment, to take vengeance on wicked men, and vindicate his own people; and who seems sometimes to be as it were asleep, and to take no notice of things, when the judgment of the ungodly, and their damnation, seem to slumber, though it does not; see Psal. vii. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 3. or when he awakes the dead at the time of the resurrection. Death is often compared to sleep in Scripture, and the resurrection to an awaking out of it, which is the Lord's work, Isa. xxvi. 19. Dan. xii. 2. and so the Targum, "O Lord, when thou shalt raise "them from their graves:" *thou shalt despise their image*; the image of the earthly man, of sin and of Satan, which is upon both their souls and bodies; which will both be destroyed in hell: or their riches and honour, the vain shew in which they have walked, their outward pomp and splendour; which was only a shew, an outward appearance, and no solidity and substance; and which will not be esteemed in the great day of account, but despised; see Job xxxvi. 18, 19. the wicked will awake, and arise to everlasting shame and contempt, Dan. xii. 2.

Ver. 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, &c.*] Not with his own sins, nor with the sins of the wicked, but at their prosperity; for this is an account of himself, whilst under the temptation, and before he went into the sanctuary of the Lord; or when he was *leavened*, with the old leaven of wickedness, and envy, and indignation; he was in a ferment, so Plautus uses the phrase for being in anger and wrath; he swelled, as what is leavened does, against God and his providence: or was *soured*; he was out of humour and angry with God, or was exasperated and provoked at the favours bestowed upon the wicked. Some render it *inflamed*, made hot; not with the love of God, and meditation upon it, but with wrath and indignation: *and I was pricked in my reins*; disturbed and distracted in his thoughts, felt a great deal of pain in his mind, whilst he was considering the prosperity of the wicked; which was as a sword in his bones, and as an arrow shot into his reins; see Lam. iii. 13.

Ver. 22. *So foolish was I, &c.*] To envy the prosperity of the wicked, which is of so short a continuance; to arraign the providence and perfections of God, and to conclude so hastily that there was nothing in religion: *and ignorant*; or, *I knew not*; what he attempted to know, ver. 16. nor the end of the wicked, till he went into the sanctuary of the Lord; nor the counsel and design of God, in his methods of providence towards wicked men: *I was as a beast before thee,*

^r effervescent fermenti instar, Tigurine version; in fermento asset, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

^s Casin, Act. 2. Sc. 5. v. 17.

^t Acecet Montanus; quasi aceto acri perfundeatur, Vatablus.

^u Inflammatum est, V. L.

^v כעסתי לית נסעתי, V. L. non cognoscebam, Pagninus, Montanus; nec sciebam, Piscator; non noveram, Cocceius.

or with thee²; in the knowledge of the ways and works of God, even those of providence; see Psal. xcii. 5, 6, 7. unteachable, untractable, kicking against God and his providential dispensations; not behaving like a man, much less like a saint; but even as the worst of brutes, as the behemoth in Job xl. 15. for the same word is here used; he concluded that God, who saw all the wickedness of his heart, the workings and reasonings of his mind, which were so vain and foolish, could esteem him no other than as a beast; so the Targum, "as a beast I am accounted with thee:" the words may be rendered, *I was the veriest beast before thee*; there being no note of similitude in the text; the word for *beast* being in the plural number, may be used for a superlative; Plautus⁷ uses the word *bellua*, beast, for a stupid man.

Ver. 23. *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, &c.*] Upon the heart of God, in his hands, under his eye, under his wings of protection and care, and not suffered to depart from him finally and totally; he could not be disunited and removed from him by the above temptation; nor was he left to cast off the fear of the Lord, and to forsake his worship and service; nor altogether to lose his love and affection for him, which still continued; see ver. 25. or *I shall be always with thee*²; not now, for though the saints are always in union with the Lord, yet they have not always communion with him; but hereafter, in heaven, to all eternity: *thou hast holden me by my right hand*; as an instance of condescension, respect, and familiarity; see Acts xxiii. 19. as a parent takes his child by the hand, and learns it to go, so the Lord takes his children by the hand, and teaches them to walk by faith in him, Hos. xi. 3. or in order to keep them from falling, and bear them up under temptations and exercises; as well as to lead them into more intimate communion with himself in his sanctuary, and to raise them up out of their low estate to an exalted one; see Isa. xiv. 1. and likewise to put something into their hands, to supply their wants, and fill them with his good things; see Ezek. xvi. 49.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, &c.*] Which is wise and prudent, wholesome, suitable, and reasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful, and which is freely given, and when taken, infallibly succeeds: or *according to thy counsel*⁴; the determinate counsels, purposes, and will of God, which were of old faithfulness and truth; who does all things after the counsel of his own will in providence and grace: or *by thy counsel*^b; by the Scriptures of truth, the revealed word, which contains the will of God, and directions for a holy walk and conversation; by the Gospel and truths of it, called the whole counsel of God, Acts xx. 27, and by his Holy Spirit, which is a spirit of counsel as well as of might; and by which the Lord guides his people in the ways of peace, truth, righteousness, and holiness, through this world, to the heavenly glory, as follows: *and afterward receive me to*

glory; into a glorious place, an house not made with hands, a city whose builder and maker is God, into a kingdom and glory, or a glorious kingdom; and into glorious company, the company of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints, where glorious things will be seen, and a glory enjoyed both in soul and body to all eternity; for this glory is eternal glory, a glory that passes not away: or *in glory*^c; in a glorious manner: some render it, *after glory thou wilt receive me*^d; that is, after all the glory and honour thou hast bestowed upon me here, thou wilt take me to thyself in heaven; so the Targum, "after the glory is completed, which thou saidst thou wouldst bring upon me, thou wilt receive me:" but rather the sense is, *after thou hast led and guided me by thy counsel through the wilderness of this world; after all the afflictions and temptations of this present life are over; after I have passed through the valley of the shadow of death, or after death itself, thou wilt receive me into everlasting joy and happiness*; see 1 Pet. v. 10.

Ver. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, &c.*] Which includes God the Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father, as his only covenant God and Father; Christ as his only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer, Head, Husband, Advocate, and Intercessor; the Spirit as his only sanctifier, Comforter, earnest, and sealer; and is expressive of their being the one and only Lord God, the sole object of worship, trust, and confidence; his only helper and guide; and in whom his supreme happiness and glory lay; and it excludes the sun, moon, and stars, in the lower heavens, from being the object of worship and trust; and angels and glorified saints in the highest heavens: the words may be rendered, *who is for me in heaven*^e? on my side, my protector and defender; see Rom. viii. 31. *and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; or with thee*^f; there are many things on earth desirable, as riches, health, friends, food, raiment, &c. but not to be compared with God and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; with the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; there are none to be loved and delighted in as they, nor any thing so desirable as fellowship with them: or *with thee I desire not the earth*^g; the whole world, and all things in it, are nothing in comparison of God; if a man was possessed of the whole of it, and had not interest in the Lord, he would be miserable; and if he has an interest in him, he has enough without it; for all things are his, God is all in all; therefore he is willing to leave all, and be with him for ever: the Targum is, "who is like unto thee, that is, mine in heaven but thee? and with thee I do not desire a companion on earth." See Psal. lxxxix. 6.

Ver. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth, &c.*] Either through vehement desires of communion with God deferred, see Psal. lxxxiv. 2. or through afflictive dispensations of Providence, being smitten and chastened continually, ver. 14. or through inward trials and exercises, by reason of in-dwelling sin, temptations, and

^x אפוד te, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^y Trinum. Act. 4. Sc. 3. v. 110.

^z אמני תמיד ego jugiter futurus sum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator;

^{aa}que ego in posterum semper tecum ero, Michaelis.

^{aa} בפתוך pro consilio tuo, Michaelis.

^{ab} Consilio tuo, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Çocceius.

^c כבוד in gloria, Gejerus.

^d אחר כבוד post gloriam, Hammond.

^e מי כמוני pro me? Gejerus.

^f אפוד tecum, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus.

^g לא אפודתי בארץ nec terram totam diligo tecum, Gejerus.

desertions; or rather the words are expressive of the body being emaciated by sickness and diseases; and the heart fainting through fear of death, or rather failing at it, being at the point of death; the heart being, as philosophers say, the first that lives, and the last that dies: but *God is the strength of my heart, or the rock of my heart*^a; when overwhelmed with distress through outward trouble, or in the lowest condition with respect to spiritual things; when grace is weak, corruptions strong, temptations prevail, and afflictions are many; then does the Lord support and sustain his people, and strengthens them with strength in their souls; and in the moment of death, by shewing them that its sting is taken away, and its curse removed; that their souls are going to their Lord, and about to enter into his joy; and that their bodies will rise again glorious and incorruptible: *and my portion for ever*; both in life and at death, and to all eternity; this is a very large portion indeed; such who have it inherit all things; yea, it is immense and inconvertible; it is a soul-satisfying one, and is safe and secure; it can never be taken away, nor can it be spent; it will last always; see *Psal. cxlii. 5. Lam. iii. 24.*

Ver. 27. For, lo, they that are far from thee, &c.] Who are alienated from the life of God, far from the law of God, and subjection and obedience to it; and from righteousness either moral or evangelical, and from the love and fear of God, and worship of him: *shall perish*; not merely at death, as even righteous men do, but be lost eternally: *thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee*; that follow after

other gods, and worship them; which is spiritual adultery and fornication, the Scriptures often speak of, and intend by it idolatry; see *Deut. xxxi. 16.* or who set their hearts and affections upon the creature, and have them alienated from God; and love the creature more and besides the Creator: the past tense seems to be put for the future, and so some render it, *thou shalt destroy, or cut off*¹; destroy them soul and body, and punish them with an everlasting destruction in hell; the Targum is, "that wandering from thy fear;" that is, from the worship of God.

Ver. 28. But it is good for me to draw near to God, &c.] In prayer, and other acts of religious worship; to attend the word and ordinances in the sanctuary, where the psalmist had lately been delivered out of a sore temptation, and so had a recent experience, which was fresh in his mind, of the advantages of such exercises; for it is both an honourable good, what is becoming and commendable, and a pleasant good, what yields delight and satisfaction, and a profitable good, to draw nigh to God by Christ, the new and living way, assisted by the Holy Spirit; which, when done aright, is with faith, sincerity, reverence, and a holy boldness: *I have put my trust in the Lord God*; as the rock of his refuge and salvation, as his portion and inheritance: *that I may declare all thy works*; of providence and grace, by proclaiming the wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness of God in them; by giving him the glory of them, and by expressing thankfulness for them, both by words and deeds.

P S A L M LXXIV.

Maschil of Asaph.

SOME think that Asaph, the penman of this psalm, was not the same that lived in the times of David, but some other of the same name, a descendant of his^k, that lived after the Babylonish captivity, since the psalm treats of things that were done at the time the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, or after; but this hinders not that it might be the same man; for why might he not, under a spirit of prophecy, speak of the sufferings of the church in after-ages, as well as David and others testify before-hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow? The psalm is called *Maschil*, because it gives knowledge of, and causes to understand what afflictions should befall the church and people of God in after-times. The Targum is, "a good understanding by the hands of Asaph." Some think the occasion of the psalm was the Babylonish captivity, as before observed, when indeed the city and temple were burnt; but then there were prophets, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and after them Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; which is here denied, *ver. 9.* others think it refers to the times of

Antiochus Epiphanes; but though prophecy indeed had then ceased, and the temple was prophaned, yet not burnt. The Jews apply it to their present captivity, and to the profanation of the temple, by Titus¹, and to the destruction both of the city and temple by him; so Theodoret: the title of it in the Syriac version is, "when David saw the angel slaying the people, and he wept and said, on me and my seed, and not on these innocent sheep; and again a prediction of the siege of the city of the Jews, forty years after the ascension, by Vespasian the old man, and Titus his son, who killed multitudes of the Jews, and destroyed Jerusalem; and hence the Jews have been wandering to this day." But then it is not easy to account for it why a psalm of lamentation should be composed for the destruction of that people, which so righteously came upon them for their sins, and particularly for their contempt and rejection of the Messiah. It therefore seems better, with Calvin and Cocceius, to suppose that this psalm refers to the various afflictions, which at different times should

^a רובי לבי *rupes cordis mei*, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius; *petra cordis mei*, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

¹ תיטוס *perdes*, Tigurine version, Musculus, so some in Vatablus; *excusides*, Michaelis.

^k Bochart. *Hierozoi. par. 1. l. 3. c. 29. col. 984.*

¹ Vid. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 2.

come upon the church and people of God; and perhaps the superstition, wickedness; and cruelty of the Romish antichrist, may be hinted at.

Ver. 1. *O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?* &c.] This the church supposed because of the prevalence, oppression, and triumph of the enemy, because of the hardships and afflictions she laboured under, and because of the hidings of the face of God from her, which unbelief interpreted of a casting off; see Psal. lxxvii. 7. when in reality it was not so, only in appearance, and according to a wrong judgment made of things; for God never did nor never will cast off, nor cast away, his people whom he foreknew, Rom. xi. 1, 2. *why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?* the people of God are called *sheep*, because subject to go astray, not only before conversion, but after; and because harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and because, though exposed to the insults and persecutions of men, and their butcheries and barbarities, and therefore called *the flock of slaughter*, Zech. xi. 4, 7. yet bear all patiently, as the sheep before her shearers is dumb; and because like sheep they are weak and timorous, unable to defend themselves; are clean, and so distinguished from dogs and swine; and are profitable, though not to God, yet to men, and one another; and like sheep are sociable, and love to be together: and they are called *the sheep of the Lord's pasture*; because he provides good pasture for them, leads them into it, and feeds them himself with Christ, the bread of life, the tree of life, and hidden manna; with covenant-grace and promises, even the sure mercies of David; with discoveries of his love and grace, and with his word and ordinances; and yet these, when under afflictions and desertions, are ready to conclude that God is angry with them, yea, is very angry; that his anger burns against them, and his fierce wrath goes over them, signified by smoking; see Deut. xxix. 20. alluding to men, who, when they are angry, become hot, as Kimchi observes, and their breath like smoke comes out of their nostrils.

Ver. 2. *Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old, &c.*] Alluding to the redemption of the congregation of Israel out of Egypt, when they were said to be *purchased*, Exod. xv. 16. and as that people were typical of the people of God, they may be said to be *purchased* then, even of old; though the purchase in reality was not made till the blood of Christ was shed, with which he purchased his church, Acts xx. 28. indeed he was the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, in the purpose and promise of God, and in the typical sacrifices so early offered up, Rev. xiii. 8. and besides, the words may be considered as the words of the church of God groaning under antichristian oppression and cruelty, hundreds of years since the death of Christ, and so may be said to be of old purchased; and which is called a *congregation*, because a select number, chosen of God, and called out of the world, and brought into one body, and into fellowship with Christ and one another; and though they may not meet together in one place, they are all of one body, and will one day make one general assembly and church of the first-born, called *the congregation of the righteous*, Psal. i. 5. now it is desired of

the Lord for these, that they might be *remembered* with his loving-kindness and tender mercies, with his covenant and promises, and be delivered and saved out of the hands of their enemies: *the rod of thine inheritance*, which *thou hast redeemed*; the Targum adds, out of Egypt; but this is to be understood not of the redemption of the people of Israel, but of the redemption of the church of God from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death; who are chosen by the Lord for his inheritance, his peculiar treasure and portion; and which he highly values and esteems, and is dear unto him as such, as the redemption of them by the blood of Christ shews: *this Mount Sion wherein thou hast dwelt*; meaning the church of God, which often goes by this name, both in the Old and in the New Testament, comparable to the mount of Zion for its height, holiness, and immoveableness; where the Lord has promised to dwell, and where he does dwell, and will for evermore. As the reference to Sion literally understood, it is called *this Sion*, because well known, and because the psalm might be composed or said in it, as Kimchi observes; and which shews that it was written before the destruction of the city and temple, and whilst Zion was the seat of religious worship, and therefore a prophecy of future times.

Ver. 3. *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations, &c.*] That is, arise, hasten, move swiftly, and in the greatness of strength, and come and see the desolations made by the enemy, which look as if they would remain for ever; meaning either the desolations made in the city and temple of Jerusalem, either by Nebuchadnezzar, or by Titus; or the havocs and devastations made in the church of God by the tyranny and persecutions of antichrist; which have continued so long, that an end of them has been almost despaired of. So Jacob is said to *lift up his feet*: which we render *went on his way*, Gen. xxix. 1. Some take these words in a different sense, as a prayer for the destruction of the church's enemies; so the Targum, "lift up thy feet or goings, to make desolate the nations for ever;" and Kimchi makes but one sentence of this and the following clause, and reads it thus, "lift up thy feet, to make desolate for ever every enemy that does wickedly in the sanctuary;" but the accent *athnach*, which divides propositions, and is upon the word נִצַּח, forbids such a reading. The former sense is best, and most agreeable to the context; even *all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary*; by profaning and destroying the temple, as did Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and Titus; or by antichrist sitting in the temple and church of God, setting up idolatrous worship in it, and blaspheming the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell therein, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 6.

Ver. 4. *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations, &c.*] Particular churches, gathered out of the world in Gospel order, and which meet together at particular times and places; in the midst of these, and against them their enemies, and who are the Lord's enemies, roar like lions, as Satan, and bloody persecutors, and particularly antichrist, whose mouth is as the mouth of a lion, which is opened in blasphemy against God and his people, Rev. xiii. 2, 5, 6. *they set up their ensigns for signs*; or *signs, signs*, false ones

for true ones; meaning either military signs, as the Roman eagle, set as signs and trophies of victory; or idolatrous statues and images, such an one as Antiochus brought into the temple; or false miracles and antichristian marks, in the room of true miracles, and the true mark of Christ's followers; see 2 Thess. 2, 9. Rev. xiii. 14, 16. and xiv. 1. The Jewish writers generally interpret it of the divinations and superstitious rites used by the king of Babylon, when he was coming up against Jerusalem, Ezek. xxi. 21.

Ver. 5. *A man was famous, &c.*] Or, *it was, or is known*^m; the desolations the enemy made, the wickedness they committed, the terror they spread, and the signs they set in the sanctuary of the Lord: *according as he had lifted up, or as one that lifts up axes upon the thick trees*ⁿ; that is, the above things were as visible, and as well known, being as easy to be seen as such an action is, a man being obliged to lift his axe above his head, to cut down a thick tree: or rather the sense is, formerly a man was famous for, and it gave him some credit and esteem, to be an hewer of wood in the forest of Lebanon, where he lifted up his axe, and cut down the thick trees for the building of the temple, as the servants of Hiram king of Tyre did; and such an action was esteemed as if a man brought an offering to God; agreeably to which is Kimchi's note, "when the temple was built, he who lifted up his axe upon a thick tree, to cut it down for the building, was known, as if he lifted it up above in heaven before the throne of glory; all so rejoiced and gloried in the building:" and Aben Ezra interprets it of acclamations made above on that account. The words, according to the accents, should be rendered thus, *he or it was known, as he that lifteth up on high: even as he that lifteth up on high, axes upon the thick tree.*

Ver. 6. *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*] Formerly it was an honour to be employed in cutting down a tree for the building of the temple; but now so little regard was paid to it, that all its fine carved work, which Solomon made, 1 Kings vi. 18, 29, 32. was demolished at once in a rude and furious manner with axes and hammers; which was done either by the Chaldeans in Nebuchadnezzar's time, or by the Syrians in the times of Antiochus, or by the Romans in the times of Vespasian; the first seems intended; see Jer. xlvi. 22, 23.

Ver. 7. *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, &c.*] Or, *thy sanctuary into the fire*^p; which denotes the utter destruction of it by fire, which was done both by the Chaldean and Roman armies; see 2 Kings xxv. 9. Matt. xxii. 7. *they have defiled, by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground, or to the earth they have defiled the habitation of thy name*^q; that is, to the last and lowest degree; this Antiochus did when he set up an idol in the temple, and Titus when he laid it level with the ground, not leaving one stone upon another, as our Lord predicted, Matt. xxiv. 1, 2. the aggravation of which was, that it was the

place where the Lord had put his name, where his name was called upon, and where was the symbol of his presence.

Ver. 8. *They said in their hearts, let us destroy them together, &c.*] The Targum is, "their children, are together;" or *their kindred*, as the Septuagint Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, taking the word to be of נין, which signifies a son; and the sense to be, that seeing they were all together, as the Jews were at the taking of Jerusalem, they might be cut off at once. Jarchi explains it of their rulers; Marinus, as Aben Ezra observes, derives it from a word which signifies to afflict and oppress, to which he agrees; see Psal. lxxxiii. 3, 4, 5. *they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land*; not only in Jerusalem, where there were, the Jewish writers say, 460, and others 480 of them, but also in all the land of Judea; of these synagogues there is much mention made in the New Testament; they were places for public worship, in which prayer was made, and the Scriptures were read and explained; see Matt. vi. 5. Luke iv. 16. Acts xv. 21. but it may be doubted whether they are meant here, since it does not appear that there were any until after the return of the Jews from Babylon^r; the temple, and the parts of it, may be meant, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; or the schools of the prophets; though the psalm may refer to times after the Babylonish captivity, and so may design Jewish synagogues, and even take in places of worship among Christians.

Ver. 9. *We see not our signs, &c.*] Either such miracles as were formerly wrought to support the faith of God's people in distress, and for their deliverance out of it, as when they were in Egypt, and brought forth from thence; see Psal. lxxviii. 43. and cv. 27. or rather their sabbaths and sacrifices, the passover and circumcision, and other ordinances and institutions of divine worship; which were signs of the presence of God with them, and of Christ, and blessings of grace, and good things to come by him; which ceased, or were interrupted in their captivity, and which the godly lament: or the signs of redemption, as Kimchi; and may be interpreted of the blindness and stupidity of the greater part of them, who could not discern the signs of the times, as before the destruction of the city and temple, Matt. xvi. 3. so after it, when these being destroyed, and they in the hands of the Romans, might easily have perceived that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore Shiloh must be come, or the Messiah; who also must have been in his temple, and Daniel's weeks be up; but these signs they saw not, nor do they yet: and so though the signs of the latter day are upon us, we see them not, or at least very few take notice of them, and lament them; such as a very great departure from the faith of the Gospel, a neglect of Gospel worship and ordinances, coldness and lukewarmness in matters of religion, want of love to Christ and his people, a general sleepiness and security, a form of religion without the power of it, a name to

^m כְּנִידָא cognitus erat, Munster; noscitur, Cocceius; cognoscitur, inanescit, Gejerus.

ⁿ כְּנִידָא velut adducens, Montanus, Gejerus; tanquam sursum tollens & desuper inducens, Michaelis.

^p כְּנִידָא in ignem sanctuarium tua, Pagninus, Vatablus; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^q אֶרֶץ חֲלוּ מִשְׁכַּן מִשְׁכַּן ad terram usque prophanarunt tabernaculum, vel habitationem nominis tui, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius.

^r T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 35. 3. & Megillah, fol. 73. 4.
^s Vid. Vitringam de Synagog. Vet. l. i. par. 4. c. 9. Reland. Antiqu. Heb. par. 1. c. 16. sect. 3. Burmannus de Synagogia disp. 1. sect. 9.

live and be dead, and iniquity abounding even among professors of religion; besides the frequent signs in heaven and in earth; see Matt. xxiv. 12, 23, 29. Luke xxi. 9, 10, 11, 25, 26, 28. 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. there is *no more any prophet*; there were but few in the Babylonish captivity, and after Malachi there were none; there were none in the times of Antiochus; there were none till John the forerunner of Christ came; and in the latter day the two prophets that prophesy in sackcloth will be slain, and there will be no prophesying for a while, Rev. xi. 7, 8, 9. Kimchi explains it, there is no prophet yet, and interprets it thus, Elijah the prophet is not yet come: *neither is there among us any that knoweth how long*; the calamity will endure, and ere deliverance will come; how long the Babylonish captivity would continue was known, that it would be seventy years, and no longer; the prophets that searched after the time of salvation and redemption by Christ knew how long it would be to it; Daniel fixed the exact time of it; but how long the present times will last we know not, or how long it is to the end of wonders; or when will end the 1260 days of the reign of antichrist, of the church's being in the wilderness, of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth.

Ver. 10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? &c.*] The name of God, as in the next clause, the divine Persons and perfections, the purposes and providence of God, his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances: *shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?* The *adversary and enemy* being in the singular number, may intend some particular one, as antichrist; who is emphatically and eminently *the enemy* of God, he opposing himself to, and exalting himself above, all that is called God; and the adversary of Christ, as his name shews; not only setting himself in his room and stead, but undermining him in all his offices; changing his laws as a King, dishonouring his sacrifice and intercession as a Priest, and doing injury to his word and ordinances as a Prophet; and who has a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, and tabernacle, heaven, and they that dwell therein, angels and saints, Rev. xiii. 5. He reproaches and blasphemes God himself, by shewing himself to be God, by suffering himself to be so called, and to be worshipped as if he was God; by taking infallibility to himself, and setting up image-worship, and obliging persons to it: he reproaches and blasphemes the son of God, in whom the name of God is, by pretending to be his vicar on earth, and head of the church; to transubstantiate the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; and to offer him up again in the blasphemous service of the mass: he reproaches and blasphemes his Gospel, which is his name, Acts ix. 15. by introducing doctrines contrary to it, as the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and justification by works; and the Scriptures, which bear the name and authority of God, by making them a nose of wax, taking upon himself to be the infallible interpreter of Scripture, and sole judge of controversies; by setting

up his own unwritten traditions upon an equality with them, and forbidding the use of them to the people in their mother-tongue: and he reproaches and blasphemes his name and authority by assuming it to himself in civil things, deposing and setting up kings at his pleasure; in religious affairs, dispensing with the laws of God, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; yea, in matters of salvation, giving out pardons and indulgences, pretending to open and shut heaven at pleasure. Moreover, these terms may be understood of many enemies and adversaries, even of all the enemies of the grace of God, and person of Christ; such reproach and blaspheme the name of God the Father; by denying some of his perfections, as his sovereignty, omniscience, and punitive justice, and by charging his decrees with injustice, insincerity, and cruelty; they reproach and blaspheme the name of Christ, by denying his deity, eternal sonship, and distinct personality, and by speaking contemptuously of his righteousness, blood, and sacrifice; and they do despite unto the spirit of grace, and speak evil of his person, and the operations of his grace on the souls of men; and such a day of rebuke and blasphemy is the present one: and these things give good men that observe them a great concern for the name of God, who are ready to fear there will be no end to these reproaches and blasphemies; but there will, the time is coming when the name of the Lord will be excellent in all the earth, and the Lord alone shall be exalted; but it is not known how long it will be to it.

Ver. 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? &c.*] By which is meant the power of God; by which he made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, and supports them in their beings; by which the work of his grace is wrought in the hearts of his people, and they are upheld; and by which he conquers their enemies, and saves them: this may be said to be withdrawn when he denies his people the help and succour they have had from him; when he seems to have forsaken the work of his hands; when there is not that success in the ministry of the word there formerly was, his arm being not revealed and made bare; and when the enemies of religion prosper and get ground; and when the Lord seems to be altogether inactive and unconcerned, like a man that folds up his arms under his arm-holes, or hides his hands in his bosom, see Psal. xlv. 23—26. Prov. xix. 24. Lam. ii. 3—8. wherefore it follows: *pluck it out of thy bosom*; as he will one day, and strike with a home-blow antichrist and his followers, and destroy them with his rod of iron, with which he will break them in shivers as a potter's vessel; and all his enemies shall feel the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger; and then this request will be fulfilled: the word used signifies to *consume*^a; and Kimchi interprets it, consume the enemy out of thy bosom, which is the house of the sanctuary; his secret place, as the bosom is to man; but both senses of the word may be retained, and the meaning be, pluck it out of thy bosom to consume them^b: also it signifies to restrain^c; and the sense may be, as the above writer ob-

^a כלה consume, Montanus, Gejerus.

^b So some in Vatablia.

^c Cohibe, Junius & Tremellius.

erves, restrain it, that it may not return to thy bosom, till thou hast executed judgment on the wicked.

Ver. 12. *For God is my King of old, &c.*] Or but God, or verily God, &c.⁴; for these words contain the church's consolation under all the above melancholy circumstances, taken from what God was, and had been to her, even Christ, who is God over all; he was her King by the constitution and designation of his father, and so he had been of old, even from everlasting; for so early was he set up as King; and he had in all ages been exercising his kingly office for the good of his church, and continued to do so; and this was her comfort, and is the comfort of saints in the worst of times, that Zion's King reigneth, see Psal. xlv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7. and xcvi. 1. Isa. lii. 7. *working salvation in the midst of the earth*; it is *salvations*⁵ in the plural number, and means both spiritual and eternal salvation, which the Lord has wrought out; and is continually applying to his people; and temporal salvation, which the Lord has been and is daily working out; he continually protecting his people, and saving them from their enemies, and delivering them out of their afflictions and temptations; and which the church considers and improves into an argument to encourage her faith, and expect the time when her walls would be salvation, and her gates praise; and she should have reason to say, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ; and give him all the glory of it; see Isa. lx. 18. Rev. xii. 10. and xix. 1. which salvation, as it has been, so will be wrought in the midst of the earth; meaning not in the midst of the land of Judea, or in Judea, the middle of the world, but openly and publicly in all the earth; though Cyril of Jerusalem says⁶ Golgotha is the midst of the earth, where Christ suffered and wrought out salvation; and that it is here referred to.

Ver. 13. *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength, &c.*] This and the following instances from hence to ver. 18 are proofs of God's working salvation in the midst of the earth; some of them seem peculiar to the people of Israel, and others are benefits common to mankind in general; which the church makes use of to encourage her faith and hope, in expectation of salvation, and deliverance out of her present distressed and melancholy circumstances. This seems to refer to the Lord's dividing of the Red sea into parts by a strong east wind, whilst Moses lifted up his rod and stretched out his hand as he was ordered, as a token of the divine power, and so the children of Israel passed through it as on dry land, Exod. xiv. 21. and he that did this can make way for his redeemed ones to return to Zion with everlasting joy, Isa. li. 10. Some render the words, *thou hast broken the sea by thy strength*; subdued and conquered it, and so hast the dominion over it, rulest the raging of it, settest bounds to it, and hast ordered its proud waves to go so far and no farther; and thus the Arabic version, *thou hast made it to stand*; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, *thou hast confirmed it*; but our version is best, which refers it to the work of God at the Red sea, and

with which the Targum agrees; and Aben Ezra observes, that some refer it to the dividing of the Red sea: *thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters*; or great whales, as the word is rendered in Gen. i. 21. by which are meant Pharaoh and his generals, his captains and chief men, who were destroyed in the waters of the Red sea; comparable to dragons for their strength, for their cruelty to the children of Israel, and for their wrath and malice against them; and so, for the same reason, another Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in after-times, is called the great dragon, that lies in the midst of his rivers, Ezek. xxix. 3. and xxxii. 2. and the king of Babylon or of Egypt, Isa. xxvii. 1. So the Targum paraphrases it: "thou hast broken the heads of dragons, and hast suffocated the Egyptians in the sea." Rome Pagan is compared to a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, which have been broken and destroyed, Rev. xii. 3, 7, 8, 9. and Rome Papal has the power, seat, and great authority of the dragon; and though the Romish antichrist has two horns like a lamb, he speaks as a dragon, who also has seven heads and ten horns, and which ere long will be broke in pieces, see Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 11. and xix. 15. and ii. 27. in the faith of which the church might be strengthened, by considering what God had done to the heads of the dragon in the Red sea; to which may be added that Satan is called a dragon, Psal. xc. 13. Rev. xii. 9. and xx. 2. whose head was bruised, and his principalities and powers spoiled, by Christ at his death, and will be utterly destroyed at his second coming.

Ver. 14. *Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, &c.*] A large fish, generally thought to be the whale, by some the crocodile, described in Job xli. to which the king of Egypt or Babylon is compared, Isa. xxvii. 1. and so the Romish antichrist in one of his characters is represented as a sea-beast with many heads, which will all be broken in pieces in due time, Rev. xiii. 1. as here is one *leviathan* with heads in the plural number. Aben Ezra thinks the word *ל* is wanting, and may be supplied thus, *thou hast broken the heads of every leviathan*; it may be interpreted as before of Pharaoh and his chief men; so the Targum, "thou hast broken the heads of the mighty men of Pharaoh;" and *gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*; either to the wild beasts, called *tzium*, the word here used, Isa. xlii. 21. and may be called a *people*, as the ants and coney are, Prov. xxx. 25, 26. to whom the dead bodies of Pharaoh and his host, drowned in the Red sea, were given for food, when they were cast upon the shore, where the Israelites saw them dead, Exod. xiv. 28. or to the *Ichthyophagi*, a sort of people that dwelt by the Red sea, and lived on fishes; and so the Egyptians became their food, they living upon the fish which devoured their bodies, at least some of them: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *to the people*, the Ethiopians; who, it seems, living upon the borders of Egypt, took this opportunity, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned, and seized upon their country; but others refer it to the people of Israel themselves, as the Tar-

⁴ וְאֵלֹהִים atqui Deus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; at Deus Vatablus, Cocceius; equidem, Tigurine version; certe, Schmidt.

⁵ וְשִׁלְוֹת salutes, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Gejerus.

⁶ Cateches. 13. sect. 13. p. 180. Vid. Amamæ Antibar. Bibl. l. 3. p. 798. &c.

⁷ וְשִׁלְוֹת contrivisti, Pagninus, Montanus; disruptisti, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; rupisti, Cocceius.

gum, "thou hast given them for destruction to the people of the house of Israel, and their bodies to the dragons;" and so Jarchi, "thou hast given his man or riches to the people of Israel, to feed their companies and armies;" and Kimchi interprets it of the spoil of the sea which the Israelites took from them; and they may be truly called the people inhabiting the wilderness, since they were in one forty years; so the Romish *leviathan*, or antichristian whore, will be given to the Christian kings, who will hate her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; and to the Christian church, which now is in the wilderness, where it is nourished for a time and times, and half a time.

Ver. 15. *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood, &c.*] That is, the rocks at Horeb and at Kadesh, from whence water flowed as out of a fountain, and became a flood, whereby the people of Israel were supplied with water in the wilderness, and also their beasts; and from this instance it may be concluded that God will not leave his people, nor suffer them to want, but will supply all their need while they are in the wilderness, and will open fountains and rivers for them, Isa. xli. 17, 18. he himself is a fountain of living water; Christ is the fountain of gardens, and the Spirit and his grace a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life: *thou driedst up mighty rivers*; the river of Jordan, called *mighty*, as Kimchi says, because by its strength it overflowed all its banks and rivers, and because other rivers flowed into it; this was dried up, or way was made through it, as on dry land, for the people of Israel to pass into Canaan, Josh. iii. 14, 15. the Targum is, "thou hast dried up the fords and brooks of Hermon, and the fords of Jabbok and Jordan;" see Numb. xxi. 14, 21. and the Lord, that did this, is able to dry up, and will dry up, the river Euphrates, as is foretold, Rev. xvi. 12. that is, destroy the Turkish empire, and make way for the spread of the Gospel in the eastern parts of the world; to which reference is had in Isa. xi. 15, 16.

Ver. 16. *The day is thine, and the night also is thine, &c.*] He made the one and the other, and divided the one from the other; and can make them longer or shorter, clear or cloudy, as he pleases: and the day of prosperity and night of adversity are at his disposal; all the times of his people and of his church are in his hands; sometimes it is a night of darkness, deadness, sleepiness, and security, as it now is; ere long there will be no more night, but bright day; the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven-fold as the light of seven days; and this is to be expected from him whose is the day and the night also, Rev. xxi. 25. Isa. lx. 1. and xxx. 26. Jarchi interprets the day, of the redemption of Israel; and the night, of distresses and afflictions: *thou hast prepared the light and the sun*; first the light, and then the sun; for the light was before the sun; or the luminary, even the sun. Aben Ezra interprets the *light* of the moon, and so the Targum; and Kimchi, both of the moon and of the stars; Jarchi takes the light figuratively to be meant of the light of the law; but it is much better to understand it of the light of the Gospel, which God has prepared, and will send forth more largely in the latter day, whereby the whole earth shall be lightened; and when Christ the *sun* of righteousness

will arise with healing in his wings, and who gives both the light of grace and glory to his people.

Ver. 17. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth, &c.*] Of the whole world, and of the several nations, as of the land of Canaan, so of others, Deut. xxxii. 8. and even has fixed and settled the bounds of every man's habitation, Acts xvii. 26. *thou hast made summer and winter*; see Gen. viii. 22. which, taken literally, are great benefits to the world; and, figuratively understood, may represent the two dispensations of the law and Gospel; see Cant. ii. 11, 12. and the different frames of God's people when under temptations, and clouds, and darkness, and when they enjoy peace and comfort; and the different state of the church, when affected with affliction, persecution, false doctrine, deadness, and formality, which is now greatly the case; but there is a summer coming, when it will be otherwise; see Luke xxi. 30, 31.

Ver. 18. *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, &c.*] Or *hath reproached the Lord*, as the Septuagint version and others render it, and very rightly; though not so well the former part of the clause, which it renders, or rather paraphrases, thus: *remember this thy creation, or creature*; as if it referred to what goes before, as day and night, light and sun, the borders of the earth, summer and winter; whereas it is to be connected with what follows, the reproach of the Lord by the enemy; and it is a prayer of the church, that God would remember the enemy and his reproaches, which seemed to be forgotten, and inflict deserved punishments on him, which will be done in due time, Rev. xvi. 19. and xviii. 5, 6. and that *the foolish people have blasphemed thy name*; the foolish people are not such as want common sense, or are idiots; the blasphemers of God and Christ, and the blessed Spirit, are generally the wise and prudent of this world, from whom the things of the Gospel are hidden; but wicked and profane men: scoffers at religion, and blasphemers of Christ, his truths and ordinances, are commonly such who walk after their own ungodly lusts, who, though wise to do evil, are foolish in matters of religion: perhaps the Gentiles, which know not God, are here meant, and are so called, Deut. xxxii. 21. and it is observable, that the Papists bear the name of Gentiles in Rev. xi. 2, 18. and may be the foolish people here chiefly designed, who worship images of gold, silver, brass, and wood, and are notorious for their blasphemies; see the note on ver. 10.

Ver. 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove, &c.*] By which is meant the church, see Cant. ii. 14. and v. 2. and vi. 9. which is comparable to this creature for its cleanness and purity, for its amiableness and beauty, for its harmlessness and innocence, for its modesty and meekness, for its affection and chastity to its mate, for its mournful and bemoaning voice for the loss of it, for its being a timorous and fearful creature, a weak one, and exposed to the prey of others; all which is true of the church, and may be applied to it: the Targum is, "do not deliver the souls of them that teach thy law;" the word having some affinity with *torah*, the law; but Jarchi says, that Jonathan, in his Targum (which is not now extant) interprets it a turtle; the Syriac version, by the change of a letter, renders it,

the soul that confesseth thee; and the Arabic version, by a like change, and the addition of a letter, *the soul that knows thee*; all which, indeed, is applicable to the church of God; but our version expresses the true sense of the word, with which agree Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Melech, and others: and it is a prayer of the church for herself; that the life of her members, their corporeal life (for not the soul, the better part, and its eternal concerns, are meant, which are safe in Christ's hands), might not be delivered *unto the multitude of the wicked*, or to *the beast*; to persecutors, comparable to lions and bears, and particularly the Romish antichrist, often called the beast in Rev. xi. 8. and xiii. 1, 11. and xvii. 3. and so the Targum, "don't deliver to the people, who are like to the beasts of the field, 'the souls of, &c.:' forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever; the church of God is a congregation of men gathered out of the world by effectual grace, and consists chiefly of such who are literally poor, and all of them are spiritually so, and are sensible of it; for the most part they are a poor and afflicted^b people, as the word may be also rendered, which the church is made up of; and may seem by themselves and others to be forgotten of God, when under divine desertsions, or under afflictions, and immediate help is not given; but they are not forgotten, and still less for ever; see Isa. xlix. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 20. *Have respect unto the covenant, &c.*] The Targum adds, "which thou hast made with our fathers;" meaning not the covenant of works, which being broken, no good thing was to be expected from it, not liberty, life, nor eternal salvation, but all the reverse; but the covenant of grace, made with Christ before the world was, and made manifest to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to David, and others: this God has a respect unto, and does look unto it; he looks to the surety and Mediator of it, which is Christ, for the fulfilment of all conditions in it; to the promises of it, that they may be made good; to the blessings of it, that they be bestowed upon the persons to whom they belong; to the blood of it, for the delivering of the church's prisoners, and the salvation of them from wrath to come; and to the persons interested in it, that they be all called and brought safe to glory; and particularly to the things in it, respecting the glory of the church in the latter day, and increase of its members, and of its light, which seem chiefly designed here; and therefore it follows: *for the*

dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty; many places of the earth are in gross darkness as to the knowledge of spiritual and divine things; even all those places which are inhabited by Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists, which make a great part of the globe; and in these dark places cruelty reigns, and especially in the antichristian states; wherefore the church pleads the covenant of God and his promises, that he would send forth his light and his truth, and cover the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, which is now covered with gross darkness, and under the tyranny and oppression of the man of sin.

Ver. 21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed, &c.*] From the throne of grace, not having an answer of their prayer, but still continuing under the oppressions of their enemies: *let the poor and needy praise thy name*; let them have occasion for it, by the destruction of their enemies, and their deliverance from them, as they will have ere long; see Rev. xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause, &c.*] The church's cause being the cause of God; and therefore she desires that he would arise and exert himself, and take vengeance on his and her enemies: this is an interesting argument, and a forcible one: *remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily*; this being so frequently repeated, as in ver. 10, 18. shews how much the name and glory of God lay near her heart; the Targum is, "remember the reproach of thy people 'by a foolish king all the day';" perhaps the man of sin is meant, the king of the locusts, and angel of the bottomless pit.

Ver. 23. *Forget not the voice of thine enemies, &c.*] Their roaring in the midst of the sanctuary and the congregation, ver. 4. their reproaching and blaspheming voice, ver. 10, 18, 22. *the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually, or ascendeth*¹; goes up to God, and is taken notice of by him; the cry of their sins, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the city of Nineveh, Gen. xviii. 20, 21. Jon. i. 2. was continually going up to God; wherefore it might be hoped and expected that vengeance in a little time would come down; see Rev. xviii. 5, 6, 7. the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, render it, *the pride of those, &c.* all these petitions are prayers of faith, and are, or will be, heard and answered; upon which will follow thanksgivings, with which the next psalm begins.

P S A L M LXXV.

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

OF the word *al-taschith*, see on Psal. lviii. it signifies *do not destroy, or do not corrupt*; the Targum renders it, "do not destroy thy people;" so Jarchi, "do not 'destroy Israel;' perhaps it may be considered as a petition, that God would not suffer the man of sin to go

on to destroy the earth, and corrupt the inhabitants of it with his false doctrine, idolatry, and superstition, Rev. xi. 18. and xix. 2. for the psalm respects the times of the Gospel dispensation, and includes both the first coming of Christ in the flesh, and his second

ט ליתר *scilicet*. Montanus, Piscator; bestie, Musculus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; bestia, V. L.
 א afflictionum tuorum, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

¹ עולה תמיד *ascendens semper*, Montanus; *ascendit semper*, V. L. Musculus, Gejerus.

coming to judgment; the argument of it with the Syriac version is, "the divinity of Christ, and a remembrance of the judgment;" it is said to be a psalm or song of Asaph, but is thought to be written by David, and delivered to Asaph; for it may be rendered for Asaph^k; and so the Targum, "by the hands of Asaph;" though some think it was written after the Babylonish captivity; perhaps by some person whose name was Asaph, or was of the family of him that lived in David's time. Theodoret supposes it was written in the person of the captives in Babylon.

Ver. 1. *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, &c.*] Either David and his men, when he was delivered from Saul, and raised to the kingdom, or the Jews upon their return from the Babylonish captivity; or rather the churches of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, for the coming of Christ and the blessings of grace through him, and in the view of the sure and certain destruction of antichrist and all the wicked of the earth; yea, Christ himself may be considered as at the head of his people, joining with them in thanksgiving, to whom this action is sometimes ascribed, Matt. xi. 25, 26, and xxvi. 27. and the rather since he is continued all along speaking to the end of the psalm: unto thee do we give thanks; which is repeated to shew the constancy, fervency, and sincerity with which this was performed: it may be rendered, *unto thee do we confess*^l; sins committed against God, unworthiness to receive favours from him, and his grace and goodness in bestowing them: *for that thy name is near*; or rather, *for thy name is near*^m; and so the words are a reason of the above thanksgiving; for they belong not so much to what follows after as to what goes before, since the accent *athnach* is upon שׁמֵךְ, *thy name*; and are to be understood of God himself, for his name is himself; who is near to his people, both in relation, being their father, and as to presence, communion, and fellowship, which are matter of praise and thanksgiving; or his works and word, by which he is known and made manifest; his works which are throughout the earth, and so near at hand, and his word which is nigh, being in the mouths and in the hearts of his people; or rather his son, in whom his name is, his nature and divine perfections: he was at a distance in promise and prophecy, and only seen afar off; after the Babylonish captivity, at which time some think this psalm was written, he was near; the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, speak of him as just coming; and when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men, he was near indeed, so as to be found of them, seen, heard, and handled by them; on which account there was and is reason to give thanks to God: *thy wondrous works declare*; meaning either the miracles of Christ, which were proofs and evidences of his being come, and of his being the true Messiah; see Matt. xi. 3, 4, 5, or the wonderful works done by him, which to do were the principal end of his coming; as the work of righteousness, the business of reconciliation, and in general the affair of redemption and sal-

vation; all which were amazing instances of his power, grace, and goodness, and which are declared in the everlasting Gospel by the ministers of it; for the words, I think, may be better rendered, *they declare thy wondrous works*ⁿ, or impersonally, *thy wondrous works are declared*.

Ver. 2. *When I shall receive the congregation, &c.*] Some render it, from the Arabic signification of the word, *the promise*^o; the spirit promised, the gifts of the spirit, which Christ received for men, and gave to men, whereby he executes the judgment or government of the church committed to him; others *the time*, so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, to which agrees the Targum, the word signifying a set appointed time, Psal. cii. 14. and so may respect the time appointed for the judgment of the world, which when come, Christ will execute in a most righteous manner, as follows; see Acts xvii. 31. but whereas the people of Israel met at the door of the tabernacle, which from thence was called *Ohel Moed*, the tabernacle of the congregation,^h hence the word is used for a congregation, and here designs the general assembly and church of the first-born written in heaven, even all the elect of God; these were received by Christ of his father in eternity, when he espoused them to himself, and undertook the care of them; and they are received by him, one by one, in effectual vocation; and in like manner are they received by him into glory at death; but when they are all gathered in, and are prepared for him as a bride for her husband, then will he receive them all in a body, and present them to himself a glorious church during the thousand-years' reign; upon which will proceed the judgment of the wicked; see Rev. xx. 5, 12. *I will judge uprightly*; in equity, in strict justice, in the most righteous manner, rendering to every man according to his works; hence the future judgment is called a righteous one, and so is the Judge; no injustice will be done to men, but the strictest integrity, uprightness, and impartiality, will be observed in pronouncing the several sentences on the righteous and on the wicked, and in adjudging them to their several places and states.

Ver. 3. *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, &c.*] Or *melted*^p; the inhabitants, through fear and dread of the righteous Judge, appearing in the clouds of heaven, and of the wrath that is coming on them are deserving of; and the earth, through fire, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burnt up, 2. Pet. iii. 10, 11, 12. *I bear up the pillars of it. Selah*; so that it shall not utterly perish; for though by the fire, at the general conflagration, the heavens and the earth will be so melted and dissolved as to lose their present form, and shall be purged and purified from all noxious qualities, the effects of sin; yet the substance will remain, out of which will be formed new heavens and a new earth, and this through the power of Christ sustaining it, and

^k אֲסָפָה ipsi Asaph, Pagninus, Montanus; Asapho, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^l אֲסָפָה confessi sumus, Montanus; confitemur, Cocceus, Michaelis.

^m אֲסָפָה nam propinquum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^h אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד narrat mirabilia tua, Montanus; enarrant, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^o אֲסָפָה promissa, Schulteus animadv. p. 174. festi dona, Gusset. p. 334.

^p אֲסָפָה liquefacti, Montanus; liquefiat, Musculus.

preserving it from entire destruction or annihilation. R. Obadiah by *pillars* understands in a figurative sense the righteous, for whose sake the world is continued in its being; these at the general conflagration will be bore up and preserved by Christ, whom they shall meet in the air, even the church, who is the pillar and ground of truth; and not only the ministers of the Gospel, who are pillars in Christ's house, but also every believer, which is a pillar there, that shall never go out, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Gal. ii. 9. Rev. iii. 12. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret the pillars of the mountains.

Ver. 4. *I said unto the fools, &c.*] To the vain glorious, proud boasters, mockers, and scoffers at the day of judgment, and burning of the world: *deal not foolishly*; by glorying in themselves, boasting of their riches, and trusting in them; singing a requiem to themselves on account of their abundance, and by putting away the evil day far from them: *and to the wicked, lift not up the horn*; of power, grandeur, and wealth, and use it to the injury of others; or be so elated with it, as to look with disdain on others; or imagine they shall always continue in this exalted state, as antichrist the horned beast does, Rev. xviii. 7. the allusion is to horned beasts, particularly harts, which lift up their heads and horns in great pride^p: the phrase signifies to behave proudly and haughtily.

Ver. 5. *Lift not up your horn on high, &c.*] Or against the most High^q; as the little horn, or the beast with ten horns, antichrist, does, whose look is more stout than his fellows, and opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, Dan. vii. 8, 20. Rev. xviii. 1, 6. *Speak not with a stiff neck*; arrogantly, proudly, and haughtily: or *hard things with a neck*^r; hard speeches against Christ and his people with a stretched-out neck, in an imperious and insolent manner; for the righteous Judge will convince such of their hard speeches, and condemn them for them; Jude 14, 15.

Ver. 6. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*] It is not from men, from themselves, or others, or from any quarter under the heavens, but from God; it is he that raises men to high places, and sets them there, which are often slippery ones: by him kings reign; they have their crowns and sceptres, thrones and kingdoms from him; there is no power but what is of God; riches and honour come of him, and he can take them away when he pleases; and therefore men should not be proud, haughty, and arrogant: some take these words to be the words of the fools and wicked, when they speak with a stiff neck, either as triumphing over the Messiah, his ministers, cause, and interest, reading the words thus, *neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south*, shall there be a *lifting up*^s, or an exaltation; that is, of Christ and his people, they are low, and shall never rise more; but in this they are mistaken; though now the son of God is trampled under foot in his person and offices, there is a day coming when the Lord, and he alone, shall be exalted; though his ministers and witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and

shall be slain and lie unburied, yet they'll arise again and ascend to heaven, to the great terror and astonishment of those their enemies; though Jacob is small, and it is said, by whom shall he arise? yet he shall become great and numerous; the mountain of the Lord's house, the church, shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and this enlargement of Christ's kingdom and interest shall be east, west, north, and south; or else as flattering themselves that no evil shall come to them from any quarter: *neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert of the mountains*^t, cometh evil; meaning to themselves, looking upon themselves as secure, and putting the evil day far from them: but there will be an awful and righteous judgment; there is a Judge ordained, a day appointed, in which the world will be judged in righteousness, and destruction and ruin will come upon the ungodly, and at a time when they are crying Peace, peace; nor shall they escape; and so the Syriac version renders the words, *for there is no escape from the west, nor from the desert of the mountains*; taking the word הריים, not to signify promotion, elevation, or a lifting up, as Kimchi and others, whom we follow: but Montanus and R. Aba observe that the word always signifies mountains but in this place: the Targum is, "for there is none besides me from the east" to the west, nor from the north of the wildernesses, "and from the south, the place of the mountains;" no Messiah to be expected from any quarter; see Matt. xxiv. 23, 26. no God besides him, nor any other Saviour, Isa. xlv. 6, 8. and xlv. 21, 22. nor any other Judge, as follows.

Ver. 7. *But God is the Judge, &c.*] Or because God is the Judge^u; and so this is another reason why fools should not deal foolishly, nor wicked men lift up the horn, and speak with a stiff neck, because there is a Judge to whom they are accountable for their words and actions; and this Judge is God omniscient, knows all persons and things, searches the heart and tries the reins, will bring every secret thing into judgment, bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; omnipotent, able to do all things, raise the dead, call to judgment, bring all before him, pass the sentences, and execute them; omnipresent, there is no fleeing from him, nor escaping his righteous judgment; holy, just, and true, who will render to every man according to his works: *he putteth down one, and setteth up another*; he humbles or brings one low, such as are proud, haughty, and arrogant; and he exalts another, such as are lowly and humble: this he does in providence, he removes kings, and sets up kings; puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of low degree, Dan. ii. 21. Luke i. 52. and xiv. 11. he has many ways to mortify the proud, by inflicting diseases on their bodies, by stripping them of their honour and wealth, and by bringing them into disgrace among men: and this he does in grace; such as are stout-hearted and far from righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ, he brings them to it; and those whom he makes hum-

^p Vid Suidam in voce *Exuperans*.

^q לְמִיכָאֵל *contra* excelsum, Junius & Tremellius.

^r דַּבַּר עֲתָק *cello durum*, Michaelis.

^s הַרְיָם *exaltatio*, Figuræ version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^t Neque a desertis montibus, V. L. neque a deserto montium, Cocceius; neque a deserto Australi montium, Michaelis.

^u כִּי *quoniam*, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; *siquidem*, Figuræ version; quia, Gejerus; so some in Michaelis.

ble by his grace, he raises to a high estate, to be kings and priests, and to sit among princes, and to inherit a throne of glory. This might be exemplified in Jews and Gentiles; he has stripped the one of their privileges, and put them down from their civil and church state, and raised up the other to be his church and people; and also in antichrist and the true church of Christ; he'll ere long put down the one, that sits as a queen, and exalt the other, when she shall be as a bride adorned for her husband, having the glory of God upon her.

Ver. 8. *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, &c.*] Another reason why men should not act haughtily and arrogantly; for by the *cup* are meant afflictions, calamities, and judgments, which are measured out in proportion to men's sins, and are of God's appointing, and in his hands, and at his disposal *and the wine is red*; an emblem of the wrath of God this cup is full of, as it is explained, Rev. xiv. 10. where there is a reference to this passage; for it is a cup of fury, of trembling, and of indignation: Isa. li. 17. Jer. xxv. 15. *it is full of mixture*; has many ingredients in it, dreadful and shocking ones, though it is sometimes said to be without mixture, Rev. xiv. 10, without any allay, alluding to the mixing of wine with water in the eastern countries; see Prov. ix. 2. *and he poureth out of the same*; his judgments upon men in this world, in all ages; on some more, others less, as their sins call for, or his infinite wisdom judges meet and proper: *but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them*; the whole cup that God has measured out and filled up shall be poured out at last, and all be drank up; the very dregs of it by the wicked of the world, when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: this will be the portion of their cup, Psal. xi. 6.

Ver. 9. *But I will declare for ever, &c.*] These are not the words of the psalmist, but of Christ, who is all along speaking in the psalm; what he would declare is

not expressed, and is to be supplied in sense thus; either that he would declare the wonderful works of God, ver. 1. so the Targum, his thoughts, mercies, and kindnesses to his people, as in Psal. lx. 5. or his judgments on his enemies, whom he shall pass sentence on, which will be for ever; or the name of the Lord, his purposes and decrees, his counsel and covenant, his mind and will, his Gospel and the truth of it: see Psal. xxii. 22. *I will sing praises to the God of Jacob*; the covenant-God of his people, Christ's God, and their God; of his singing praise to him, see Psal. xxii. 22.

Ver. 10. *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, &c.*] Therefore let them not lift up the horn on high: *horns* denote the power and authority of wicked men, their kingdoms and states; both Rome Pagan and Rome Papal are said to have ten horns, which are interpreted of ten kings or kingdoms; and which will be cut off when the vials of God's wrath are poured out on the antichristian states; which vials will be filled from the cup which is in the hand of the Lord, Rev. xii. 1. and xiii. 1. and xvii. 12. and xvi. 1. the Jews^b interpret this of the ten horns of the nations of the world, that shall be cut off in future time; and Jarchi particularly of the horns of Esau, by whom he means Rome, or the Roman empire: *but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted*; either of the righteous one Christ, for the word is in the singular number; he who is the Lord our righteousness, whose power and authority, kingdom and government, shall be enlarged and increased, signified by the budding of the horn of David, and the exaltation of the horn of his Messiah, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psal. cxxxii. 17. or of every one of the righteous, which will be when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, Dan. vii. 27. Rev. v. 10. and xx. 5. Kimchi says this will be in the war of Gog and Magog, which is expected by the Jews.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

THE Targum is, "by the hand of Asaph:" concerning *neginoth*, see the title of Psal. iv. this psalm is generally thought to be written on account of some great appearance of God for the Jews, or victory obtained by them over their enemies, either the Ammonites in the times of David; so the first part of the Syriac inscription is, "when Rabbah of the children of Ammon was destroyed;" see 2 Sam. xii. 26—31. or in the time of Jehoshaphat, when they came up against him, and were in a wonderful manner defeated, which occasioned great joy and thankfulness, 2 Chron. xx. 1—29. The Septuagint version entitles the psalm *an ode against the Assyrian*, in which it is followed by the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions: and it is the opinion of

Sennacherib, and his army, which came up against Jerusalem in the times of Hezekiah, and was destroyed by an angel in one night, and so slept their sleep, and a dead one, with which agree ver. 5, 6. see 2 Kings xix. 35. so Arama and Theodoret; Jarchi gives this reason for such an interpretation, because we don't find that any enemy fell at or near Jerusalem but he, as is said ver. 3. *there brake he the arrows of the bow, &c.* nor was one arrow suffered to be thrown into the city, 2 Kings xix. 32. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of the war of Gog and Magog, yet to come; and the latter part of the Syriac inscription is, "moreover it shews the vengeance of the judgment of Christ against the ungodly;" and indeed it seems to point out the latter day, when Christ shall destroy the antichristian kings

^b Vid. Yalkut in loc.

and states, and save his own people, and shall be feared and praised; as the former part of it may respect his incarnation, appearance, and dwelling in the land of Judea, and so the whole is of the same argument with the preceding psalm.

Ver. 1. *In Judah is God known, &c.*] God is to be known, and is made known, by his works of creation, and by his providences, and particularly by his judgments in the whole world, even among the Gentiles; and he was made known by his word and ordinances, his statutes and his judgments, among the Jews, to whom these were specially given; and he is made known by his Spirit, and in his Son in a spiritual and saving manner to such who are Jews inwardly, or the true circumcision: moreover this may be understood of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and regard his appearance in human nature in the land of Judea; he was, according to prophecy, of the tribe of Judah as man, and was born in Beth-lehem, a city in that tribe, where David was, and of the family of David, that formerly lived there: and he was made known by John the Baptist, who came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and by his being baptized of him in Jordan; by his own ministry and miracles in that land, and by the preaching of his apostles in the several cities of it, he was known in person to many; and by the fame of his doctrine and miracles to more, though seemingly but to few: *his name is great in Israel*; he himself is great, for his name is himself, being the great God, and possessed of all divine perfections; his offices and titles are great, he is a great Saviour, a great High-priest, a great Prophet risen up in Israel, a great King, and the great Shepherd of the sheep; his works which make him known are great, his works of creation and providence, in which he is jointly concerned with his Father; the mighty works he did on earth, and especially the great work of our redemption; and his Gospel, which is called his name, Acts ix. 15, brings glad tidings of great and good things; by means of which, and the wonderful things he did in the land of Israel, his fame was spread about in it, for he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; here his marvellous works were done, and his Gospel first preached, which afterwards went into all the earth.

Ver. 2. *In Salem also is his tabernacle, &c.*] That is, in Jerusalem, as the Targum expresses it, where the tabernacle of Moses and the ark of the covenant were, and afterwards the temple of Solomon, which the Targum here calls the house of the sanctuary; and may be interpreted of the human nature of Christ, the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, in which the divine word when he was made flesh dwelt or tabernacled among the Jews at Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea, Heb. viii. 2. John i. 14. Salem or Jerusalem often signifies the church of God in Gospel times, in the midst of which Christ resides, and where he grants his gracious presence, Heb. xii. 22—24, and in the New Jerusalem the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell among them, Rev. xxi. 2, 3. The Septuagint translate the word, and render it, *in peace*, as in Heb. vii. 2. the God of peace dwells among those that live in peace, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *and his dwell-*

ing-place in Zion; where the ark was brought by David, and the temple was built by Solomon, into which, as rebuilt by Zerubbabel, Christ came, and here he preached; a figure of the church, which is his habitation.

Ver. 3. *There brake he the arrows of the bow, &c.*] The Targum is, “there brake he the arrows and the bows “of the people that inake war;” the word *שפי*, translated *arrows*, signifies *sparks or coals of fire*; see Job v. 7. Cant. viii. 6. and is used of arrows, because they fly swiftly, as sparks do, or because of their brightness, or because fiery; so we read of the *fiery darts of Satan*, Ephes. vi. 16. and perhaps they may be meant here: when Christ our Lord suffered near Jerusalem, he spoiled principalities and powers, and broke their strength and might, and made peace by the blood of his cross, in which he triumphed over them; for the destroying of these instruments of war with what follow: *the shield, and the sword, and the battle*, is expressive of making wars to cease, and causing peace; and may include the peace which was all the world over at the birth of Christ, and was foretold and expressed in much such language as here, Zech. ix. 9, 10. and also that which was made by his sufferings and death, and which was published in his Gospel by his apostles, whom he sent forth unarmed, whose weapons were not carnal, but spiritual; and likewise the spiritual peace he gives to his people, quenching the fiery darts of Satan, and delivering them from the archers that shoot at them, and sorely grieve them; as well as that peace which shall be in the world and churches in the latter day; see Psal. xvi. 11. of the word *Selah*, see the note on Psal. iii. 2.

Ver. 4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*] Which is to be understood not of Zion, as some interpret it; though it is true that the mountain of Zion, or the church of Christ, his kingdom and interest, shall in the latter day be more glorious and excellent than all other mountains, kingdoms, and interests; see Isa. ii. 2. but of God or Christ before spoken of; and so the Targum, “bright, to be feared, “art thou, O God, to be praised from the house of thy “sanctuary.” Christ, who is God over all, is *bright*, splendid, and glorious, in his divine nature, being the brightness of his father’s glory, and the express image of his person: and *excellent* in his office as Mediator, and in all his works as such; and in human nature, as he is exalted at his father’s right hand, far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, signified here by *mountains of prey*: the kingdoms of this world, because of their eminence and strength, are compared to *mountains*; see Isa. xli. 15. Jer. l. 25. Zech. iv. 7. and may be called *mountains of prey*, in allusion to mountains inhabited by beasts of prey, as lions and leopards; see Cant. iv. 8. because obtained and possessed by tyranny and oppression. Christ is more glorious and excellent than the kings of the earth; he is higher than they, and is King of kings; he is richer than they, the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein; he is wiser than they, by him kings reign, and princes decree justice; he is more powerful than they, and all must submit to him, and all

* אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל illustris, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremel-

lius, Piscator; illustrior, Tigurine version; splendidus, Valabius, Gegerus, Michaelis; bright, Ainsworth.

will serve him hereafter; and his kingdom will be greater than theirs, more large and more lasting; it will be an everlasting one, and reach from sea to sea, and even to the ends of the earth.

Ver. 5. *The stout-hearted are spoiled, &c.*] The Assyrian army, its officers and generals, that came up against Jerusalem, with great resolution and courage, and with daring impiety and blasphemy against the God of heaven, as Rabshakeh and others; these were spoiled, and their armour and riches became a prey to those they thought to have made a prey of. So principalities and powers were spoiled by Christ upon the cross, and Satan, the strong man armed, has in the conversion of a sinner his armour taken from him, and his spoils divided by him that is stronger than he; and such as are stout-hearted, and far from true righteousness, are stripped of their own, and made willing, in the day of Christ's power upon them, to submit to his; and as for antichrist, whose look is more stout than his fellows, that exalts himself above all that is called God, and opens his mouth in blasphemy against him and his followers, he shall be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming: or the stout-hearted have spoiled themselves^a; as the Midianites did, or gave themselves for a prey; so the Targum, "the stout-hearted have cast off from them the weapons of war;" threw away their armour, and ran away, such of them as were not destroyed by the angel. It is observable, that the Hebrew word, translated *spoiled*, is in the Syriac form: *they have slept their sleep*: the sleep of death, as did the Assyrians when smitten by the angel, which was done in the night, when probably they were fast asleep, and so never awoke more, as the Babylonians, Jer. li. 57. So Jezebel, or the Romish antichrist, shall be cast into a bed, and her children killed with death, Rev. ii. 22, 23. Death is often in Scripture signified by a sleep, both the death of the righteous and of the wicked; but there is a difference between the one and the other; wherefore the death of the wicked here is called *their sleep*; the one sleep in Jesus, in his arms, and under his guardianship, the other not; to the one death is a true and proper rest from toil and labour, to the other only a cessation from doing mischief, Job iii. 17. the one rests in hopes of a glorious resurrection, the other not; the one will awake in Christ's likeness, and to everlasting life; the other in the image of Satan, and to everlasting shame and contempt: *and none of the men of might have found their hands*; none of the valiant soldiers in the Assyrian army could find their hands to fight their enemies, or defend themselves; as men in a deep sleep can't find their hands to do any thing, and are as if they had none, and still less in a dead sleep. The Targum is, "they were not able to lay hold on their armour with their hands." This was the case of them that were killed; and as for those that remained alive, they were struck with such a panic, that their hearts could not endure, nor their hands be strong when God thus dealt with them; and so it will be with the antichristian army at the battle of Armaged-

don; and so it is with the wicked at death, they can't find their hands so as to prevent it; and when it has seized upon them, they can't find their hands to do any more mischief.

Ver. 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, &c.*] The God of Jacob personally, and of his posterity, the children of Israel, and of the church, often so called; who rebukes his people in love, but his enemies with furious rebukes, with rebukes in flames of fire; with such he rebukes the Heathen, destroys the wicked, and puts out their name for ever: *both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep*; that is, the riders in chariots and on horses; such there were doubtless in the Assyrian army, it being usual to have such in great armies. Kimchi observes, that the word נרדם, translated *cast into a dead sleep*, is in the singular number, and interprets it of the king, the head of the men of might: but Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was not slain, he departed to his own country; wherefore he applies it to Gog and Magog, the chief prince of Meshec and Tubal, Ezek. xxxix. 1. and may very well be understood of the head of the apostacy, the king of the bottomless pit, the beast or false prophet, who being destroyed, the flesh of his captains and horsemen shall be the food of the fowls of the air, at the supper of the great God, Rev. xix. 17, 18, 19, 20.

Ver. 7. *Thou, even thou, art to be feared, &c.*] By his own people with reverence and godly fear, because of his greatness and goodness; and to be dreaded by his enemies; which seems to be the sense here, as appears by what follows: *and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* or *from the moment thou art angry*^b; so the Targum, from the time, and Jarchi, from the hour; that is, as soon as ever his anger begins, when it is kindled but a little, and how much less when it burns in its full strength? there is no standing before his justice, and at his judgment-seat, with boldness and confidence, and so as to succeed, or come off acquitted, without having on his righteousness; and much less is there any standing before his wrath and fury, when his hand takes hold on judgment to execute it; see Nah. i. 6. Rev. vi. 16, 17.

Ver. 8. *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven, &c.*] When an angel was sent down from heaven, and destroyed the Assyrian army, a judgment of God upon them; at which time some think there was a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God: and it may refer to the judgments which God has decreed to execute on the antichristian states, the seven vials of his wrath he'll pour upon them; for all decrees, as Aben Ezra on the place observes, come from heaven; or to the last judgment, when Christ the Judge shall descend from heaven, the voice of the archangel shall be heard, the last trumpet shall sound, the dead in their graves shall hear it, and rise and stand before the judgment-seat, and hear the sentence pronounced: *the earth feared, and was still*: or *trembled, and was quiet*^c; that is, again: some think there was an earthquake when the angel smote the Assyrian camp,

^a אשתוללנן præda se exposuerant, Tigurine version, Gejerus; de-
siderant se in prædam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^b אפך ex quo irasceris, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; a mo-
mento, vel tempore iræ tuæ, Michaelis.

^c ירדה ושקטה terra tremuit, & quævit, V. L.

but was quickly over. It may regard the panic the other nations were in when they heard of it, and therefore were still and quiet, and never offered to give the Israelites any disturbance. Some understand this of the remainder of the army that escaped with Sennacherib; these were seized with fear, and quickly withdrew, and silently departed into their own land. Aben Ezra observes it as the sense of some, *the earth feared*, these are the wicked; *and was still*, they are the righteous; so the Targum, "the land of the people *feared*, the land of Israel was still;" reference may be had to the consternation, fear, and dread, that will fall on them that escape the judgments inflicted on the antichristian party, Rev. xi. 13. and the fear and silence that will attend the last and awful judgment; see Zech. ii. 13.

Ver. 9. *When God arose to judgment, &c.*] He may sometimes seem to be asleep, and to defer judgment, but he will arise and hasten it in his own time, and will take vengeance on all his and his people's enemies, as he did upon the army of the Assyrians, and will upon the antichristian powers, and upon all the wicked, and at the same time will save his own people, as follows: *to save all the neck of the earth. Selah*; the quiet in the land, who are afflicted in this world, despised by the men of it, are lowly and humble, and mean in their own eyes; these the Lord takes notice of and cares for them, he'll beautify them with salvation; these, all of them, even every one of them, shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; this verse is by some connected with the preceding; so Kimchi, *the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, &c.* and by others, as R. Moses and Aben Ezra, with the following.

Ver. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, &c.*] Either the wrath which comes from God, and has man for its object; and that either as it regards the people of God; so the Targum, "when thou art *angry with thy people*, thou hast mercy on them, "and they shall confess unto thy name;" or praise thee; see Isa. xii. 1. they are deserving of the wrath of God, but are not appointed to it, and are delivered from it by Christ, who bore it for them as their representative; by which as the justice of God is glorified, it is matter of praise to them; when the law enters into their consciences, it works wrath there, which being removed by the application of pardoning grace, is an occasion of praise to God; and whereas, under afflictive dispensations, they apprehend and deprecate the wrath of God, when they are delivered from them their mouths are filled with songs of praise: or, as it regards wicked men, so it came forth upon the old world, and drowned it; upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and reduced them to ashes; upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, in the plagues inflicted on them; all which turned to the praise and glory of God; of the last instance, see Rom. ix. 17. and Exod. xv. 1. it came upon the wicked Jews to the uttermost in the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and upon Rome Pagan, in the entire demolition of it as such; and so it will come upon Rome Papal, which will be attended with

great joy, praise, and thanksgiving in the saints; see Rev. xi. 17, 18. and xv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. or else this is to be understood of the wrath which is in man, and comes forth from him, and has him for its subject; which though it don't work the righteousness of God, yet the righteousness of God is glorified both in checking and punishing it; and the more it rages and burns against the people of God, the greater reason have they to praise the Lord when delivered from it; see Psal. cxxiv. 1, 2, 3. so the wrath of the Assyrian monarch, and of railing and blaspheming Rabshakeh, gave the people of the Jews a greater occasion to praise the Lord for their wonderful deliverance; so the wrath of men against Christ, his church and people, his ministers, Gospel, and ordinances, will all turn to the glory of his name, when in the issue it will be seen that these are established, *maugre all the rage and malice of men: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*; that which remains in a man's breast, he has not yet vented, God can and does keep in, that it may not break forth; this very likely was verified in Sennacherib, who might breathe revenge, and threaten the Jews with a second visit; but was prevented by a sudden and violent death. Some read the words, *the remainder of wraths thou wilt gird*^d; that is, those that remain, and are not destroyed through the rage and fury of men, God will gird with strength to defend themselves, and resist their enemies that may rise up against them, or with gladness, because of deliverance from them; see Psal. xviii. 32. and xxx. 11, 12. Some understand this of the wrath of God, which he has in reserve and store for wicked men, and render the words thus, with *the remainder of wrath wilt thou gird thyself*^e; and so come forth like an armed man, clad with zeal, and arrayed with the garments of wrath and vengeance; see Isa. lix. 17, 18.

Ver. 11. *Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God, &c.*] Not monastic vows, which the Papists would infer from these and such-like words; nor ceremonial ones, but spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, such as men sometimes make in times of distress, or when delivered, Psal. lxxvi. 13, 14. Jon. i. 16. and which when vowed ought to be paid, Eccl. v. 4, 5. not to creatures, angels, or saints, but to God, from whom the mercy desired must be expected, and from whence it comes, Psal. l. 14. these words are an address to such who were delivered from wrath, either of God or man: *let all that be round about him*; who surround the throne of his grace, gather together in his house to attend his word and ordinances, who are his servants, and constantly and faithfully adhere to him; among whom he grants his presence, they are near to him, and he to them. It is a periphrasis of the assembly of the saints; see Psal. lxxxix. 7. The Targum is, "all ye *that dwell round about his sanctuary*;" the allusion is to the situation of the camp of Israel, and the tabernacle in the wilderness, Numb. ii. compare with this Rev. iv. 4. *bring presents unto him that ought to be feared, or to the fear*^f, which is one of the names of God; see Gen. xxxi. 42. and who is and ought to be the object of the fear and reverence of men; the pre-

^d רַחֲמֵי הַיְהוָה רַחֲמֵי הַיְהוָה res. duam irarum accinges, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus.

^e Reliquo indignationum accinges te, so some in Vatablus; residuo irarum accinges te, Michaelis.

^f לְיִרְאָה ad verb. terrori, timori, Vatablus; numini, Deo Dea, venando & timendo hu. c. numini, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

sents to be brought to him are the sacrifices of prayer and praise, yea, the whole persons, the souls and bodies, of men; see Psal. lxxii. 10. compare with this 2 Chron. xxxii. 22, 23. The Targum is, "let them bring offerings into the house of the sanctuary of the terrible One;" of him that is to be feared, with a godly fear by good men, and to be dreaded by evil men, as follows.

Ver. 12. *He shall cut off the spirit of princes, &c.* The pride of their spirits, as the Targum, humble their proud spirits, and bring them down; or dispirit them, take away their courage from them, upon which they flee apace to rocks and mountains to cover them; or confound them, blast their schemes, and carry their counsel headlong, and even take away their breath, or

life; which he can as easily do as a man can cut off a bunch of grapes from the vine, as the word ^h here used signifies; the destruction of the wicked is expressed by cutting down the vine of the earth, and casting it into the wine-press of God's wrath, Rev. xiv. 17, 18, 19. *he is terrible to the kings of the earth*; as he was to the king of Assyria, when he sent his angel, and destroyed his army; and as he has been to others in all ages; so he will be to the kings of the earth that have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, who will be in the utmost panic at the time of her destruction, Rev. xviii. 9, 10. and who will themselves be overcome by the Lamb, Rev. xvi. 14, 16. and xvii. 12, 14. and xix. 19, 20, 21. The Targum is, he is to be feared above all the kings of the earth.

P S A L M LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

JEDUTHUN was the name of the chief musician, to whom this psalm was inscribed and sent; see 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 3, 6. though Aben Ezra takes it to be the first word of some song, to the tune of which this was sung; and the Midrash interprets it of the subject of the psalm, which is followed by Jarchi, who explains it thus, "concerning the decrees and judgments which passed upon Israel;" that is, in the time of their present captivity, to which, as he, Kimchi, and Arama think, the whole psalm belongs. Some interpreters refer it to the affliction of the Jews in Babylon, so Theodoret; or under Ahasuerus, or Antiochus; and others to the great and last distress of the church under antichrist; though it seems to express the particular case of the psalmist, and which is common to other saints.

Ver. 1. *I cried unto God with my voice, &c.* Which is to be understood of prayer, and that vocal, and which is importunate and fervent, being made in distress; see Psal. iii. 4. or *my voice was unto God^h, and I cried*; it was directed to him, and expressed in a very loud and clamorous way: even *unto God with my voice*; or *my voice was unto God*; which is repeated to shew that he prayed again and again, with great eagerness and earnestness, his case being a very afflicted one: *and he gave ear unto me*; his prayer was not without success; God is a God hearing and answering prayer, according to his promise, Psal. l. 15.

Ver. 2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, &c.* Not the creature, for help, and creature-amusements to drive away trouble, but the Lord, in private, by prayer and supplication; a time of trouble is a time for prayer, Jam. v. 13. all men have their trouble, but the people of God more especially; and there are some particular times in which they have more than usual, and then it may be said to be a *day of trouble* with them; which sometimes arises from themselves, the

strength of their corruptions, the weakness of their graces, their backwardness to duties, or poor performance of them; sometimes from others, from the profaneness or persecutions of the men of the world, from the heretical notions or wicked lives of professors; sometimes from the temptations of Satan, and at other times from the Lord himself more immediately, by his withdrawing his presence from them, or by laying his afflicting hand upon them; but, let the trouble come from what quarter it may, it is always right to seek the Lord. Some think reference is had to the time of trouble mentioned in Dan. xii. 1. *my sore ran in the night; my stroke, or wound¹*; so Kimchi interprets it; the wound that was made in his soul, and the pain and anguish, grief and trouble, which flowed from it; see Jer. vi. 7. though the word may be literally rendered *my hand^h*; and the sense is, either that his hand flowed or was wet with wiping his eyes, or with the tears that flowed from his eyes, which ran down to his fingers' ends; so the Targum, "in the night my eye dropped with tears;" or rather that his hand was stretched out, as waters, that are poured out and run, are spread, that is, in prayer; the stretching out of the hand being a prayer-gesture: *and ceased not*; was not remiss and feeble, or was not let down, as Moses's, Exod. xvii. 11, 12. it denotes the constancy of prayer, and his continuance in it; he prayed without ceasing: *my soul refused to be comforted*; such was the greatness of his distress, like that of Jacob's and Rachel's, Gen. xxxvii. 35. Jer. xxxi. 15. it is right to refuse comfort and peace, which men speak to themselves upon the false foundation of their own merit and works; or any but what comes from the God of all comfort, and through Christ, in whom is all solid consolation, and by his Spirit, who is the Comforter; but it is wrong to refuse any that comes from hence, and by means of the promises, the word and ordinances,

^h בָּעֵר qui vindemiat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; succidet nempe, ut vindemiator racemos, Vatablus, so Ainsworth.

^h אֶל אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֱלֹהִים ad Deum, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Jerur, Janius & Tremellius; erat, Cocceius.

¹ פְּלַגַּא מֵעָא, Pagninus, Muis.

^h Manus mea, Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus, &c.

and ministers of the Gospel, or Christian friends; this shews the strength of unbelief.

Ver. 3. *I remembered God, and was troubled, &c.*] Either the mercy, grace, and goodness of God, as Jarchi; how ungrateful he had been to him, how sadly he had requited him, how unthankful and unholy he was, notwithstanding so much kindness; and when he called this to mind it troubled him; or when he remembered the grace and goodness of God to him in time past, and how it was with him now, that it was not with him as then; this gave him uneasiness, and set him a praying and crying, that it might be with him as heretofore, Job xxix. 2, 3, 4. or rather he remembered the greatness and majesty of God, his power and his justice, his purity and holiness, and himself as a worm, a poor weak creature, sinful dust and ashes, not able to stand before him; he considered him not as his father and friend, but as an angry Judge, incensed against him, and demanding satisfaction of him: *I complained*; of sin and sorrow, of affliction and distress: or *I prayed*, or *meditated*¹; he thought on his case, and prayed over it, and poured out his complaint unto God, yet found no relief: *and my spirit was overwhelmed*; covered with grief and sorrow, pressed down with affliction, ready to sink and faint under it: *Selah*; see Psal. iii. 2.

Ver. 4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking, &c.*] Or, *the watches*, or rather *keepers of the eyes*^m; the eyebrows, which protect the eyes; these were held, so that he could not shut them, and get any sleep; so R. Moses Hacohen interprets the words, as Jarchi observes; and so the Targum, “thou holdest the “brows of my eyes;” a person in trouble, when he can get some sleep, it interrupts his sorrow, weakens it at least, if it does not put a stop to it; wherefore it is a great mercy to have sleep, and that refreshing, Psal. cxvii. 1. but to have this denied, and to have wearisome nights, and be in continual tossing to and fro, is very distressing: *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*; his spirits were so sunk with weariness, and want of sleep in the night, that he could not speak in the morning; or his heart was so full with sorrow, that he could not utter himself; or it was so great that he could not express it; or his thoughts were such that he durst not declare them; or he was so straitened and shut up in himself that he could not go on speaking unto God in prayer.

Ver. 5. *I have considered the days of old, &c.*] Either the former part of his life, the various occurrences of it, how it had been with him in time past, what experience he had had of the divine goodness; so the Syriac version renders it, *I have considered my days of old*; or the preceding age, and what has happened in that, which his ancestors had acquainted him with; or rather many ages past, from the days of Adam to the then present time; at least it may include the Israelites coming out of Egypt, their passage through the Red sea and wilderness, the times of the judges, and

what befell them in their days, and how they were delivered out of their troubles; as appears from the latter part of the psalm, and with which agrees the following clause: *the years of ancient times; or, of ages*ⁿ; of times long ago past; it is very useful to read the history of the Bible, with respect to ancient times, and so the ecclesiastical history of ages past, and observe the faith and dependence of the Lord's people upon him, and their deliverance out of trouble by him; which may be a means of strengthening faith in him, and of relief under present trials; but frequently the goodness of former times is only observed as an aggravation of the badness of the present ones, and of trouble in them; see Eccl. vii. 10. the Targum interprets the whole of happy days and times, paraphrasing it thus, “I have “mentioned the good days which were of old, the “good years which were of ages past.”

Ver. 6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night, &c.*] What had been an occasion of praising the Lord with a song, and which he had sung in the night-seasons, when he was at leisure, his thoughts free, and he retired from company; or it now being night with him, he endeavoured to recollect what had been matter of praise and thankfulness to him, and tried to sing one of those songs now, in order to remove his melancholy thoughts and fears, but all to no purpose: *I commune with mine own heart*; or *meditate*^o with it; looked into his own heart, put questions to it, and conversed with himself, in order to find out the reason of the present dispensation: *and my spirit made diligent search*; into the causes of his troubles, and ways and means of deliverance out of them, and what would be the issue and consequence of them; the result of all which was as follows.

Ver. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? &c.*] The Syriac version of this, and the two following verses, is not by way of interrogation, but affirmation: *the Lord hath forgotten me for ever, nor will he, &c.* and so expresses the language of unbelief; but the Arabic version, in connexion with the last words, with which it begins this verse, is, *and I weighed in my spirit whether the Lord, &c.* and so makes it a subject of inquiry, and at most of questioning or doubting. The Targum, different from either, begins this and each of the verses thus, *is it possible that the Lord, &c.* suggesting that it was not possible that he should do this and the other, and so speaks the language of faith. Unbelief in the psalmist said, the Lord will cast me, or his people, off, for either or both may be understood; which so appears when God hides his face, or does not immediately arise to help; or suffers the enemy to prevail, and difficulties and discouragements to obtain and continue; but Faith says, he will not cast off his people, whom he foreknew, from having a share in his affections, from being interested in his covenant, from his sight, and being the objects of his care, from enjoying the privileges of his house and family, or so as to perish eternally: *and will he be favourable no more?* or bear good will, shew

¹ מְדַבֵּר meditator, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; meditator, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius.
^m שְׂמֵרֹת vigiliis, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; palpebras oculorum meorum, Musculus, Cocceius; palpebras quasi custodias oculorum, Michaelis.

ⁿ שְׁנֵי עֶלְמִים annos seculorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.

^o מְדַבֵּר meditator, Montanus; meditatus sum, V. L. meditor, Junius & Tremellius; meditar, Piscator, Cocceius.

kindness, be propitious, graciously accept, as the word ^p signifies; this question supposes that he had been favourable, and bore a good will, as the gracious purposes and kind intentions of his heart, the well-stored covenant of his grace, and the mission of his son to be a Saviour, shew; that he has been propitious through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and has accepted of the persons and services of his people, and indulged them with near communion with himself; but that now he is not, he having withdrawn the sense of his love, and the communications of his divine favours; and Unbelief says he'll be so no more, and adds, I am cut off from before his eyes, and am as the slain, that are remembered no more; and shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul; but Faith says, he'll be favourable again; that joy will come in the morning; that the Lord will hear, and be a light unto the souls of his people, though in darkness; and will bring to the light, and cause to behold his righteousness.

Ver. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? &c.*] Or *his grace*? and mercy is no other than grace to objects in misery; Unbelief says it is gone, that no more will be shewn, and that the treasures of it are exhausted; but Faith says it is not gone, and observes that God is the God of all grace, is rich in mercy, and abundant in goodness; that his son is full of grace and truth, and so is the covenant; and that though there is an abundance of it given in conversion, and there are continual supplies of it afterwards; yet this grace is still sufficient, and this mercy abundant; salvation is by it, as for millions past, so for millions present and to come; the mercy of God is new every morning, it endures for ever, it is from everlasting to everlasting: *doth his promise fail for evermore?* or word ^r; his words of consolation, as Kimchi interprets it; the sense may be, will he speak never a word of comfort more? Unbelief says he will not, but Faith says he will; and that though he brings into the wilderness, yet he'll speak comfortably there; and as he answered the Angel of the covenant with good and comfortable words, so he orders his ministers to speak, and by them he does speak comfortably to his people; or, in general, the word of the Gospel is meant; which though it may be sometimes scarce and rare, and there may be few preachers of it; yet it lives and abides for ever, it is the everlasting Gospel; or, in particular, the promise or promises of the Gospel: Faith says not one of these shall fail, grounding it upon the ability of God, and his power to perform; and upon his faithfulness, which he will never suffer to fail; and the promises of God are so far from failing for evermore, that they never fail at all; there never was any instance of any; not one of the good things which God has spoken of, from the creation of the world to this present time, have ever failed; the promises are yea and amen in Christ; see Josh. xxiii. 14. 2 Cor. i. 20. The Targum interprets it differently of his evil word being fulfilled on every generation.

^p לְרַחוּם acceptos habere, Cocceius, so Ainsworth; propitius et gratiosus esse, Michaelis.

^r וְדָבָר gratia ipsius, Cocceius, Gejerus.

^r אָמַר eloquium, Pagninus, Montanus; sermo, Junius & Tremellius,

Ver. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, &c.*] He has not, is it possible that he should? as the Targum; it is not; he cannot forget the purposes of his grace and mercy, nor the covenant and promises of it, nor his people the objects of it; and much less can he forget his grace and mercy itself, so agreeable to his nature, what he delights in, and which he has proclaimed in Christ: *hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* *Selah*; as an avaricious man shuts up his hand, and will not communicate liberally; or as the sea is shut up with doors, that its waters may not overflow; so, the mercies of God are not restrained, though Unbelief says they are, at least queries if they are not, Isa. lxiii. 15. but Faith says they flow freely through Christ, and the people of God are crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercies; God gives liberally, and upbraieth not; and though he may hide his face in a little seeming wrath for a moment, yet with great mercies will he gather, and with everlasting kindness will he have mercy.

Ver. 10. *And I said, this is my infirmity, &c.*] Referring either to what he had said in the preceding verses; and which is to be considered either as checking and correcting himself for what he had said, and acknowledging his evil in it; and it is as if he had said, this is a sin against God, that I am guilty of in questioning his love, and disbelieving his promises; it is an iniquity I am prone unto, a sin that easily besets me; it flows from the corruption of my nature, and the plague of my heart, and shews a distempered mind; it is owing to the weakness of my faith and judgment; I have said this rashly, and in haste, without well weighing and considering things, and I am sorry for it, I'll stop and proceed no further: or else as comforting and encouraging himself in his melancholy circumstances; and the sense is, this is an *infirmity*, an affliction and trouble that I am at present exercised with; but it is but a temporal one, it will not always last; I shall get over it, and out of it; it is a sickness, but not to death; and it is *mine*, what is allotted to me; every man has his affliction and cross, and this is mine, and I must bear it patiently; see Jer. x. 19. or else this refers to what follows, which some render, *the changes of the right hand of the most High*; and the meaning may be, this is my affliction and trouble, that there are changes in the right hand of the most High; that is, that that hand which used to be exerted in his favour, and against his enemies, was now withdrawn, and hid in his bosom; see Psal. lxxiv. 11. and that which liberally distributed favours to him was now laid upon him in an afflictive way; and to this sense is the Targum, "this is my infirmity, the change of the power of the right hand (or the powerful right hand) of the most High;" though another Targum is, "this is my prayer; &c. the years of the end from the right hand;" and Aben Ezra makes mention of some as so interpreting the first clause, to which De Dieu agrees, who renders the whole, and *I said, this is my prayer, that the right hand of the most High might be*

Piscator; verbum, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; oraculum, Tiguriensis, Musculus.

^r וְדָבָר mutaciones sunt dexteræ excelsi, Musculus, Muis; so Ainsworth.

changed; that is, that his dispensations of providence might be changed; that he would bring him out of these afflicted, sorrowful, and melancholy circumstances, into a more comfortable one: as these words may be understood as what the psalmist comforted himself with, that there are *changes of the right hand of the most High*; I have been greatly troubled and distressed, and I have been so weak as to call in question the mercy and favour of God, and his promises to me, which I own is my sin; but I have reason to believe it will not be always thus with me, God will take off his hand, it shall not always lie thus heavy upon me; though he cause grief, he will have compassion, and turn again to me; there will be a change, and I'll wait till that comes: but Kimchi thinks the word *אֲזַכֵּר*, *I will remember*, which stands at the beginning of the next verse, belongs to that and this; and is to be supplied here, as it is in our translation, and interprets the whole to the like sense; but I will remember *the years of the right hand of the most High*: which the psalmist proposed to do as a means to remove his doubts, despondency, and unbelief, and to relieve and strengthen his faith; as that God was the most High in all the earth, and above his enemies; that he had a right hand of power, which in years past had been exerted on the behalf of his people, and on his behalf; which was not impaired and shortened, but the same as ever, and sooner or later would be again used in his favour.

Ver. 11. *I will remember the works of the Lord, &c.*] His works of creation and providence, his government of the world, and particularly his regard for his own people, and his preservation of them, especially the people of Israel, whom he had not cast off, nor would; and so might serve to strengthen his faith, that he would not cast him off for ever: and in like manner, what God has done for his people in a way of grace, in their redemption by Christ, and in a work of grace upon their souls, may be improved to the removing of doubts and fears, and unbelief, and for the strengthening of faith: there is a double reading of this clause, that in the margin is followed by us; but in the text it is written, *I will cause to remember*: that is, I will declare and shew forth to others the works of the Lord: *surely I will remember thy wonders of old*; such as were done in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; which exceeded the power and reason of man, and which shewed ancient love and old friendship subsisting between God and his people; so the remembrance of God's everlasting love, his ancient covenant, and the grace and blessings given in Christ before the world was, may be of use against despondency, and for the support and encouragement of faith.

Ver. 12. *I will meditate also of all thy work, &c.*] Or *works*¹, which were many; he desired not to forget any of them, but remember the multitude of his tender mercies, and not only call them to mind, but dwell upon them in his meditations and contemplations, in order to gain some relief by them under his present circumstances: *and talk of thy doings*: for the good of others, and so for the glory of God, as well as to im-

print them on his own mind, that they might not be forgotten by him; for all things that are talked of, and especially frequently, are better remembered, see Psal. cxlv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12. the Targum is, "I will meditate on all thy good works, and speak of the causes of thy wonders."

Ver. 13. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, &c.*] Or *in holiness*²; that is, is holy, so the Syriac version, and to which the Targum agrees. "O God, how holy are thy ways," see Psal. cxlv. 17. or *in the sanctuary*, the temple, the church of God, where he takes his walks, and manifests himself, and where the reasons of his providence, and dealing with his people, are opened and made known unto them, see Psal. lxxviii. 24. and lxxiii. 17. *who is so great a God as our God?* the Targum is, as the God of Israel; he is great in his persons, perfections, and works, and is greatly to be loved, feared, and praised.

Ver. 14. *Thou art the God that doest wonders, &c.*] In nature, providence, and grace; it seems chiefly to regard what was done for the Israelites in Egypt, and in the wilderness, see Psal. lxxviii. 12, 43. *thou hast declared thy strength among the people*: the nations of the world, who heard what the Lord did for Israel by his mighty power, and with a stretched-out arm, as follows.

Ver. 15. *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, &c.*] The people of Israel out of Egypt, which was typical of the redemption of the Lord's people by Christ, the arm and power of God: *the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.* Joseph is particularly mentioned for honour's sake, and because he was the means of supporting Jacob and his family in Egypt; and had special faith in their deliverance from thence; the Targum is, "the sons whom Jacob begot, and Joseph nourished."

Ver. 16. *The waters saw thee, O God, &c.*] The waters not of Jordan, but of the Red sea; these felt and perceived the power of God, in causing a strong east wind, which dried it up, and made way for the children of Israel to pass through it as on dry land: compare with this Psal. cxiv. 3. Hab. iii. 10. *the waters saw thee*; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to excite attention to it, as well as to express the psalmist's admiration at it; the Targum is, "they saw thy majesty in the midst of the sea, O God; they saw thy power upon the sea;" not the Egyptians, but the sons of Jacob and Joseph; the old Syriac church understood these waters of the waters of Jordan, at the baptism of Christ, when in their way they saw the incarnate God, and felt his sacred body laid in them, by which he was made manifest to Israel; but Jerom better interprets them, by the help of Rev. xvii. 15. of people, nations, and tongues; some of which saw Christ corporeally, others spiritually, and by faith, as preached in the Gospel to the Gentile world: *they were afraid*; of the majesty of God, obeyed their Sovereign, of whom they stood in awe, gave way unto him, and fled at his rebuke, see Psal. cxiv. 5. or *were in pain*³, as a woman in travail, as were

¹ פֶּלַח de unoquoque opere tuo, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. בְּקִרְבֵּי in sanctitate, Paginius, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

² אֲזַכֵּר parturierunt, Montanus, Vatablus; dolore corruptæ sunt, videl. dolore parturientium, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

the Gentile world at the preaching of the Gospel of redemption and salvation by Christ, Rom. viii. 29. *the depths also were troubled*; not only the superficies, or top of the waters, were moved by the strong east wind, through the power of God, but the bottom of the sea was reached by it; the depths were congealed in the midst of it, the channels of water were seen, and the foundation of the world discovered, and the children of Israel went through the deep as on dry land, see Exod. xv. 8. Psal. xviii. 15.

Ver. 17. *The clouds poured out water, &c.*] This, with some other circumstances which follow, are not related by Moses in the history of this affair; but as they are here recorded by an inspired penman, there is no doubt to be made of the truth of them; besides Josephus^a relates the same things; he says, that at the time when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red sea, rains descended from heaven, and there were terrible thunders, lightnings, and thunderbolts; this was when the Lord looked through the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, Exod. xiv. 24. *the skies sent out a sound*; or the airy clouds, the lighter ones, and which were higher in the heavens, as the others before mentioned were thick clouds, full of water, and hung lower; these were thunder-clouds, and thunder is the sound which they sent forth, as in the following verse: *thine arrows also went abroad*; that is, lightnings, as in Psal. xviii. 14. so Aben Ezra; but Kimchi interprets them of hailstones.

Ver. 18. *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven, &c.*] Thunder is the voice of God, Job xxxvii. 5. and xl. 9. this is heard in *the orb*^b, or the air, so called, because spherical; the Targum is "the voice of thy "thunder was heard in the wheel;" so the word here used sometimes signifies; so Ezek. x. 13. and is so rendered here by some^c; some think this refers to the wheels of the chariots of the Egyptians, which were taken off; it may be by the force of thunder and lightning, so that they drove on heavily, Exod. xiv. 25. *the lightnings lightened the world*; not only that part of the world where the Israelites and Egyptians were, but the whole world; for lightning comes out of the east, and shines to the west, Matt. xxiv. 27. this was in the night, and a very dark night it was, as Josephus^d affirms; see Psal. xcvi. 4. *the earth trembled and shook*; there

was an earthquake at the same time; unless this is to be understood of the panic which the inhabitants of the earth were put into on hearing of this wonderful event, Josh. ii. 9, 10.

Ver. 19. *Thy way is in the sea, &c.*] In the sea of Suph, as the Targum, the Red sea; it was the Lord that made the way in the sea for the Israelites, and went before them, and led them through it: *and thy path in the great waters*; because the word rendered *path* is written with *yod*, and is in the plural number, though the Masorites observe, that that letter is redundant, and so the word is singular; hence the Jews imagine there were more paths than one, even twelve, according to the number of the tribes, and which they think is intimated in Psal. cxxxvi. 13. *and thy footsteps are not known*; not by the Egyptians, who assayed to follow after the people of Israel with the Lord at the head of them, nor by any since; for the waters returned and covered the place on which the Israelites went as on dry ground; so that no footsteps or traces were to be seen at all ever since; and such are the ways God, many of them in providence as well as in grace, Rom. xi. 33. it may be rendered *thy heels*, which made the footsteps or impressions; which latter being the works of God, may be seen and known, but not the former, he being invisible; so Gussetius^e observes.

Ver. 20. *Thou leddest thy people like a flock, &c.*] Either through the Red sea, according to R. Moses Hacohen, as Aben Ezra observes; see Isa. lxiii. 11—13. or rather, as he and Kimchi, through the wilderness, after they were led through the sea; the people of Israel are compared to a flock of sheep; the Lord is represented as the Shepherd of them, who took care of them, protected and preserved them from their enemies: *by the hand of Moses and Aaron*; the one was their civil and the other their ecclesiastical governor, and both under the Lord, and instruments of his, in guiding and conducting the people in all things needful for them. The Arabic version adds, *Allelujah*; from all this the psalmist concluded, though it is not mentioned, that as God had delivered his people of old out of their straits and difficulties, so he hoped and believed, that as he could, he would deliver him in his own time and way; and by this means his faith was relieved and strengthened.

P S A L M LXXVIII.

Maschil of Asaph.

OR for *Asaph*^f; a doctrinal and instructive psalm, as the word *Maschil* signifies; see Psal. xxxii. 1. which was delivered to Asaph to be sung; the Targum is, "the understanding of the Holy Spirit by the hands "of Asaph." Some think David was the penman of it; but from the latter part of it, in which mention is made of him, and of his government of the people of

Israel, it looks as if it was wrote by another, and after his death, though not long after, since the account is carried on no further than his times; and therefore it is probable enough it was written by Asaph, the chief singer, that lived in that age: whoever was the penman of it, it is certain he was a prophet, and so was Asaph, who is called a seer, the same with a prophet, and who

^a Antiqu. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 3.

^b מַשְׁכֵּל in rotunditate, Montanus, Vatablus; in isto orbe, Junius & Tremellius; in orbe, Cocceius; in sphaera, Arab.

^c In rota, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; in rotis, Muis, Syr. vid. Suidam in voce Πηχες.

^d Ut supra.

^e Comment. Ebr. p. 633.

^f מַשְׁכֵּל לוֹ אֶסָפָה, Sept. ipsi Asaph, Pagninus, Montanus; tradita Asapho, Piscator.

is said to prophesy, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. and 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2. and also that he personated Christ; for that the Messiah is the person that is introduced speaking in this psalm is clear from Matt. xiii. 34, 35. and the whole may be considered as a discourse of his to the Jews of his time: giving them an history of the Israelites from their first coming out of Egypt to the times of David, and in it an account of the various benefits bestowed upon them, of their great ingratitude, and of the divine resentment; the design of which is to admonish and caution them against committing the like sins, lest they should be rejected of God, as their fathers were, and perish: some Jewish writers, as Arama observes, interpret this psalm of the children of Ephraim going out of Egypt before the time appointed.

Ver. 1. *Give ear, O my people, &c.*] The Jews were Christ's people, he descending from their fathers according to the flesh; they were his own, to whom he came, though rejected by them; they were his nation and people that delivered him up into the hands of the Romans; see Rom. ix. 4, 5. John i. 11. and xviii. 35. thus it is usual with persons to call those, who are of the same nation with them, their people, Esth. vii. 3, 4. Jer. ix. 1, 2. and especially for kings to call their subjects so; see 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, and xxix. 14. and such was Christ; he was King of the Jews, though they would not have him reign over them; and therefore he here speaks as one having royal authority, and requires attention to him, and obedience to his word, which he calls his law: *to my law*; meaning neither the moral nor the ceremonial law, but the doctrine of the Gospel, or law of faith, called the Messiah's law, Isa. ii. 3. and xlii. 4. Rom. iii. 27. This is the doctrine which he as man received of his father, and which he taught and delivered to his disciples, and which concerns himself, his person, office, and grace, and is sometimes called the doctrine of Christ, 2 John, ver. 9. *incline your ears to the words of my mouth*; the several doctrines of the everlasting Gospel preached by him, which were words of wisdom and of grace, of righteousness and eternal life, of peace, pardon, and everlasting salvation: these ought to be heard and diligently attended to; the matter contained in them requires attention; the office Christ bears demands it of men; all that have ears to hear should hear; all Christ's sheep do hear his voice, understand it, and act according to it: *hear ye him* was the instruction of Moses, and the direction of Christ's heavenly Father, Deut. xviii. 15. Mat. xvii. 5. and great is the danger such incur who hear him not, but neglect and despise his word, Heb. ii. 2, 3. and xii. 25.

Ver. 2. *I will open my mouth, &c.*] Speak freely, boldly, and without reserve, Ephes. vi. 19. so Christ opened his mouth, Matt. v. 2. *in a parable*; not that what follows in this psalm was such, but what were delivered by our Lord in the days of his flesh, who spake many parables; as of the sower, and of tares, and of the grain of mustard-seed, and many others, and without a parable he spake not, and so fulfilled what he here said he would do, Matt. xiii. 34, 35. Mark iv. 33, 34. *I will utter dark sayings of old*; sayings that relate to things of old; meaning not to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and what follows in the psalm, interpreted, as Aben Ezra

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and Kimchi observe, in figurative and tropical terms, as in ver. 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 61. but to the things which were from the foundation of the world, as the phrase is rendered in Matt. xiii. 35. spoken of Christ in his ministry, such as the fall of the angels, the ruin of man by Satan, the murder of Abel, Abraham's sight of his day with joy, and many things that were said by them of old, Luke x. 18. John viii. 44, 56. Mat. xxiii. 35. and v. 21, &c. or rather this refers to the Gospel, and the sayings and doctrines of it, which were kept secret since the world began, Matt. xiii. 35. Rom. xvi. 25. yea, which were ordained before the world was, and therefore called the everlasting Gospel, 1 Cor. ii. 7. Rev. xiv. 6. and here in the Arabic version, *eternal mysteries*; such as concerning the everlasting love of God to his people, his everlasting choice of them, and everlasting covenant with them: and the sayings or doctrines of the Gospel may be called *dark*, because secret, hidden, and mysterious; and were so under the legal dispensation, in comparison of the more clear light under the Gospel dispensation; they having been wrapped up in types and shadows, and in the rites and ceremonies of the law, but now held forth clearly and plainly in the ministry of Christ and his apostles, as in a glass: these Christ says he would *utter* or deliver out as water from a fountain, in great plenty, as he did; he came in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel; and being full of grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth, these came by him, and were delivered from him in all their fullness and glory.

Ver. 3. *Which we have heard and known, &c.*] The change of number from *I* to *we* have made some think that the disciples of Christ are here introduced speaking; but there is no need to suppose that, since our Lord uses the same form of speech, John iii. 11. and *our fathers have told us*; this may not only regard the Jewish ancestors, from whom our Lord descended according to the flesh, and so refer to the following account of the wonderful things done for the people of Israel; but also the divine Father of Christ, from whom, as his only-begotten Son that lay in his bosom, and as Mediator, and the Angel of the great council, he heard and became acquainted with the secrets and mysteries of grace, and with his Father's mind and will; all which he declared and made known to his apostles, and in so doing used them as his friends, John i. 18. and xv. 15. and so the apostles of Christ, what they had from him their everlasting Father, and who had used to call them his children, even what they had seen, and heard, and learned, they made known to others, Acts iv. 20.

Ver. 4. *We will not hide them from their children, &c.*] The children of the Jewish fathers, but faithfully publish and declare them, as Christ and his apostles did; or the children of God and Christ, their spiritual seed and offspring: *shewing to the generation to come*; and so in all successive ages, by the ministration of the word, and the spirit attending it; see Psal. xxii. 30, 31. and xlvi. 13. *the praises of the Lord*: what he has done in predestination, redemption, and effectual vocation, which is to the praise of the glory of his grace, Ephes. i. 6. and so all other truths of the Gospel, which are to the praise of Father, Son, and Spirit, and en-

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gage men to shew it forth: *and his strength displayed*: in Christ, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself, and in the redemption wrought out by him, as well as in the conversion of sinners by his mighty grace, and in the preservation of them by his power: *and his wonderful works that he hath done*: in providence and grace; the miracles wrought by Christ, which were the wonderful works given him to finish, as proofs of his deity and Messiahship, and are testified in the Gospel for the confirmation of it; and especially the wonders of redeeming love, and calling grace, which are peculiarly to be ascribed unto him as the works his hands have wrought, and the wonderful decrees of God he made in eternity concerning these things.

Ver. 5. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, &c.*] So the law is called, being a testification of the divine will, Exod. xxv. 16, 22, and the Scriptures, the writings of the Old Testament, which testify of Christ, his person, office, sufferings, and death, Isa. viii. 20. John v. 39. and particularly the Gospel, which is the testimony of God, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his apostles, 2 Tim. i. 8. which bears witness to the love and grace of God in the salvation of men by Christ; to the dignity of Christ's person, to the fulness of his grace, to the several offices and relations he bears and stands in to his people; to the virtue of his obedience, sufferings, and death; to redemption, righteousness, peace and pardon by him: this is established in the house of Jacob, as the Targum; in the church, which is the pillar and ground of truth, among the saints and people of God, to whom it is delivered, and by whom it will be kept, and with whom it will remain throughout all ages; for it is the everlasting Gospel: *and appointed a law in Israel*; the law given on Mount Sinai was peculiar to them, and so were the word and oracles, they were committed to them; and not only the writings of Moses, but the prophets, are called the law, John x. 34. see Deut. iv. 8. Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Rom. iii. 1, 2. and ix. 4. but the Gospel seems to be here meant, as in ver. 1. see the note there: this was ordained before the world for our glory, and is put and placed in the hands and hearts of the faithful ministers of it, and is published among, and received by, the true Israel of God: *which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children*; that is, the testimony and the law, and the things contained in them; the Jewish fathers were frequently commanded to teach their children the law of Moses, Deut. iv. 9, 10. and vi. 6, 7. and xi. 19. and it was their practice to instruct them in the knowledge of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15. and it becomes Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, by making known to them the principles of the Christian religion, and the truths of the Gospel, Ephes. vi. 4.

Ver. 6. *That the generation to come might know them, &c.*] Not only notionally, but spiritually and experimentally; which is the case, when human teachings are attended with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine truths; for the truths of the Gospel are unknown to men; the Gospel is hidden wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery; the Bible is a sealed book, the doctrines of it are riddles

and dark sayings; the ministry of the word is the means of knowledge, which become effectual when attended with the spirit and power of God: even the *children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children*; and so be transmitted from age to age: it is the will of God, that, besides private instructions, there should be a standing ministry kept up in all ages, to the end of the world; and he will have some that shall receive the Gospel, and profess his name; there has been and will be a succession of regenerate persons; instead of the fathers come up the children, a seed to serve the Lord, accounted to him for a generation; the seed and the seed's seed of the church, from whose mouth the word of God shall never depart; but they shall declare it one to another, by which means it shall be continued to the latest posterity, Psal. xxii. 30, 31. Isa. lix. 21.

Ver. 7. *That they might set their hope in God, &c.*] And not in the creature, nor in any creature-enjoyment; see Job xxxi. 24. the Lord is the only proper object of hope and confidence; Christ, who is truly God, is the hope of his people, and in him they place it, as they have great reason to do; since with him there is mercy, the mercy of God is proclaimed in him; and with him there is redemption, which includes the blessings of peace, pardon, and righteousness; and a plenteous one, a redemption from all sin; and it is the Gospel which points out these things in Christ, and encourages a firm and settled hope and trust in him: and this shews that that is meant by the law and testimony; since the law of Moses gives no encouragement to hope in God; it convinces of sin, but does not direct to a Saviour, and so leaves without hope; it works wrath, terror, and despair; 'tis in the Gospel only Christ is set before men, as the object of hope to lay hold on, and which is as an anchor sure and steadfast, where they may securely place it: *and not forget the works of God*; which the Gospel declares; not only the miracles of Christ recorded by the evangelists, but the works of grace, redemption, and salvation; the remembrance of which is kept up by the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances: *but keep his commandments*; the commandments of Christ, and which are peculiar to the Gospel dispensation; and are to be kept in faith, from a principle of love, through the grace and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God by him; see John xiv. 15, 21, 23.

Ver. 8. *And might not be as their fathers, &c.*] This chiefly respects the Jews in Christ's time: though it also is an admonition to them in succeeding ages, and especially in the latter day, when they shall be instructed, called, and converted; and even to us, to whom the Gospel is preached, on whom the ends of the world are come, not to be disobedient, as the Jewish fathers were, and to take care we do not fall after the same example of unbelief; this opens the whole scope and general design of the psalm; see 1 Cor. x. 6—11. Heb. iii. 7—14. and iv. 1—11. *a stubborn and rebellious generation*; as the generation in the wilderness was, Deut. ix. 6, 7, 24. and so were their posterity in Christ's time, Matt. xii. 34, 39. Acts vii. 51. *a generation that set not their heart aright*; to seek the Lord, serve and obey him; their hearts were removed far

from him, and they were hypocritical in their prayers to him, and service of him: *and whose spirit was not steadfast with God*; did not continue in the faith of God, in the true religion, but departed and apostatized from him; see ver. 37, 57. Apostacy is generally the fruit and effect of hypocrisy; all the following facts support the character which is here given of them.

Ver. 9. *The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, &c.*] Or casting arrows out of the bow^a; they went out well armed to meet the enemy, and they trusted in their armour, and not in the Lord; and being skilful in throwing darts, or shooting arrows, promised themselves victory: but *turned back in the day of battle*; fled from the enemy, could not stand their ground when the onset was made: what this refers to is not easy to determine; some think this with what follows respects the defection of the ten tribes in Rehoboam's time, which frequently go under the name of Ephraim; but we have no account of any battle then fought, and lost by them; and besides the history of this psalm reaches no further than the times of David; others are of opinion that it regards the time of Eli, when the Israelites were beaten by the Philistines, the ark of God was taken, Eli's two sons slain, and thirty thousand more, 1 Sam. iv. 1—11. Ephraim being put for the rest of the tribes, the ark being in that tribe; others suppose that the affair between the Gileadites and Ephraimites, in the times of Jephthah, is referred to, when there fell of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand, Judg. xii. 1—6. many of the Jewish^b writers take it to be the history of a fact that was done in Egypt before the children of Israel came out from thence; see 1 Chron. vii. 20, 21, 22. so the Targum, "when they dwelt in Egypt, the children of Ephraim grew proud, they appointed the end (or term of going out of Egypt), and they erred, and went out thirty years before the end, with warlike arms, and mighty men carrying bows, turned back, and were slain in the day of battle;" though it seems most likely to have respect to what was done in the wilderness, as Kimchi observes, after they were come out of Egypt, and had seen the wonders of God there, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and perhaps reference is had to the discomfiture of the Israelites by the Amalekites, when they went up the hill they were forbid to do, and in which, it may be, the Ephraimites were most forward, and suffered most; see Numb. xiv. 40—45.

Ver. 10. *They kept not the covenant of God, &c.*] Either the covenant of circumcision, which was neglected during their travels through the wilderness, Josh. v. 5. or the covenant made with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, Exod. xxiv. 7. and this is to be understood not of the children of Ephraim only, but of the Israelites in general, who in many instances broke the covenant, and were not steadfast in it, ver. 37. see Jer. xxxi. 32. *and refused to walk in his law*; the law of God, which was given forth by him, by the disposition of angels, through the hands of a mediator, Moses, as a rule of their walk and conversation; but they refused to order their conversation according to

it, being unwilling to be subject to it, but despised and cast it away; a sad instance of the corruption of human nature, and the depravity of man's will, boasted of for its freedom, yet what is common, and to be observed in all mankind.

Ver. 11. *And forgot his works, and his wonders, &c.*] That is, his wonderful works, the miracles he wrought in their favour, and for their deliverance, afterwards particularly mentioned; these were not only forgotten in the next generation, Judg. ii. 10. but in a few years, yea, in a few months, nay, in a few days, when they had been but three days' journey in the wilderness, after their passage through the Red sea, see Exod. xv. 1, 22, 24. which occasioned the observation of the psalmist, Psal. cvi. 12, 13. *that he had shewed them*; being done in their sight, and in the sight of their fathers, as follows.

Ver. 12. *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, &c.*] The Targum is, "before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes of their fathers, he did marvellous things;" but these were dead before this time; the Jews have a fancy, that these were brought to the sea, and placed upon it; and the Lord shewed them what he would do for their children, and how he would redeem them; but this is to be understood of the plagues which were brought upon the Egyptians, and which are called wonders, Exod. xi. 10. and were so to the Egyptians themselves; and these were done by the hands of Moses and Aaron, and in their sight: *in the land of Egypt*; where the Israelites were in bondage, and whilst they were there, and on their account were these things done: *in the field of Zoan*; that is, in the territory of Zoan, which was an ancient city of Egypt, Numb. xiii. 22. the metropolis of the land where Pharaoh kept his court; hence we read of the princes of Zoan, Isa. xix. 11, 13. it is the same with Tanis, and so it is called here in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and also in the Targum; it is said to have been two miles from Heliopolis, and one from Memphis; and at this day these three cities are become one, which is fifteen miles in compass, and goes by the name of Alcair. In this great city, the metropolis of the nation, before Pharaoh and all his court, were the above wonders done.

Ver. 13. *He divided the sea, &c.*] The Targum adds, "by the rod of Moses their master;" which he was ordered to lift up, and to stretch out his hand over the sea; which he did, and at the same time a strong east wind was raised, which caused the sea to go back, and divided the waters of it; see Exod. xiv. 16, 21. *and caused them to pass through*; that is, he caused the Israelites to pass through the sea; this they did in faith, Heb. xi. 29. in the faith of the power and promise of God, and of future grace and blessings, which this was an emblem of; for it was a representation of baptism, and is so called, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. and of the sea of Christ's blood, or of his sufferings and death; whereby all enemies are overcome and destroyed, as sin and Satan, signified by the Egyptians, and salvation is wrought, and every blessing of grace pro-

^a יָצְאוּ רַמְיָם jacientes arcu, Pagninus, Montanus; jaculantes arcu, Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^b See Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

cured; and of the passage of God's people through the sea of this world, and afflictions in it, safe to glory: *and he made the waters to stand as a heap*; and were as a wall on the right hand and on the left, and so they continued until the Israelites had passed through; and then they returned, and covered the Egyptians, and drowned them, Exod. xiv. 22, 23.

Ver. 14. *In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, &c.*] Which was in the form of a pillar, and went before them, and the Lord in it, and directed their way, and protected them from heat; see Exod. xiii. 21, 22. Neh. ix. 12, 19. this was typical of Christ, who is a shadow and security from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, which is poured forth like fire, the fiery darts of Satan, and from hurt by any enemy whatever; see Isa. iv. 5, 6, and xxv. 4. and who leads his people through the wilderness of this world by his spirit, by his word, and by his own example; and who is the best and safest guide to follow: *and all the night with a light of fire*; which also was in the form of a pillar, and went before them, and gave light in the night, and the Lord was in it; and this also was typical of Christ, who is the light of his people amidst all their darkness in this world.

Ver. 15. *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, &c.*] The one at Rephidim, Exod. xvii. 1—6. and the other at Kadesh, Numb. xx. 1—11. both to be seen at this day; see the notes on the above places; though of the latter no modern traveller makes mention but one, yet Jerom^b from Eusebius affirms that it was shewn in his day: they were typical of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4. who is frequently compared to one for height, strength, and duration, shade, shelter, and protection; and is called the Rock of Israel, the Rock of offence to both houses of Israel, the Rock of salvation, the Rock of refuge, the Rock of strength, the Rock that is higher than the saints, and on which the church is built, and who is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The cleaving of the rocks is ascribed to God, which was done by the hands of Moses; and so the Targum adds, "by the rod of Moses their master;" but Moses was only the instrument, it was the Lord that did it; Moses with his rod could never have done it, had not the power of God went along with it. This smiting and cleaving the rocks were an emblem of the sufferings of Christ, who was smitten of God with the rod of justice, according to the law of Moses, in a judicial way, for the sins of his people, and in order to obtain salvation for them: *and gave them drink as out of the great depths*; such a large quantity of water flowed out of the rocks when smitten, as if it came out of the great sea, which furnished them with drink sufficient, and more than enough for them and their cattle; this was typical of the large abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, which flow freely and plentifully from Christ and his fulness, and through his sufferings and death.

Ver. 16. *He brought streams also out of the rock, &c.*] Which is expressed in the singular number, as also in ver. 20. because the children of Israel were

not come to Kadesh, and the second rock was not smitten when they lusted after flesh, and murmured against God, and tempted him, as is after related: *and caused waters to run down like rivers*; from the descent of the rock, which followed them all the way in the wilderness; this was a most marvellous thing, that water should flow from a flinty rock upon striking it, from whence fire rather than water might have been expected; and that it should flow in such great abundance, and that from a rock in a wilderness.

Ver. 17. *And they sinned yet more against him, &c.*] Or, *and they added yet to sin against him*^c; which was great ingratitude; they had sinned before, and it might have been hoped that the goodness of God to them would have engaged them to have sinned no more, at least at such a rate, and in such a manner, as they had done; but instead of sinning less, they sinned more and more, they added sin to sin; such is the corrupt heart of man, notwithstanding the grace of God, and the blessings of it vouchsafed unto him: *by provoking the most High in the wilderness*; every thing is aggravating; the object against whom they sinned was the most High, which betrays their impiety, folly, and vanity; and they did not slightly sin against him, but did those things which were highly provoking and exasperating; and that in the wilderness, where they received so many favours, and where they must have been starved and perish, and could not have lived, without immediate provision, support, and protection, from the hand of the Lord.

Ver. 18. *And they tempted God in their heart, &c.*] Which is desperately wicked, and from whence all impiety flows; they entertained hard thoughts of God; they inwardly fretted at their present circumstances, and secretly repined and murmured against God, and wished for things they should not; not being contented with what they had, and thankful for them, as they ought to have been: *by asking meat for their lust*; or, *for their soul*; such as their souls lusted after, and their sensitive appetites craved; for they were not satisfied with the bread they had, which was sufficient for their sustenance and support; they wanted food for pleasure and wantonness; to ask for daily bread is right, but to ask for more to consume on our lusts is wrong, James iv. 3.

Ver. 19. *Yea, they spake against God, &c.*] Not only thought ill of him, and tempted him in their hearts, but they expressed with their mouths what was in their hearts, and spoke against him, his power, and his providence, in plain words, though he had been so good and gracious to them, and had done such wonderful things for them: *they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* these are the words which they spoke against him, and by which they tempted him, questioning his power and his goodness, and expressing their dissatisfaction with their present and daily allowance; they were not content with the manna they had every day, but they wanted to have a table ordered and spread with all kind of dainties. The sense of the question is, can the Lord do this for us? give us a plentiful table in the wilderness, as well as

^b De loc. Heb. fol. 93. L.

^c ויִסְתְּמוּ עַד לְחַטְאוֹתָם לֵי & addiderunt adhuc ad peccandum ei, Montanus, vel peccare, Musculus, Gejerus, Michælis.

drop the manna about our tents? if he can, why don't he? if he does not, it must be either for want of power in himself, or want of good will to us; and thus they tried and tempted the Lord.

Ver. 20. *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed, &c.*] This they allow was done by him, for these are their words continued; suggesting, that though the waters did gush out upon smiting the rock, yet they might have been in the caverns of it before, and had remained there a long time, and might have come out of themselves; and therefore this was no such great matter, and might easily be accounted for: but *can he give bread also?* solid, substantial bread, and not like this light bread, the manna, as they called it, Numb. xxi. 5. can he give us bread of corn, in a wilderness which is not a place of seed, where no corn grows? can he do this? this would shew his power indeed: *can he provide flesh for his people?* for so great a multitude, and in a place where no cattle are? let him do this, and we'll believe his power; or else the words intimate that the smiting of the rock, and the waters flowing in such large streams, were an instance of his power, and therefore he that could do the one could do the other; he that could bring such large quantities of water out of a rock could give them solid bread and suitable flesh, and fulness of both; and should he not do so, they must conclude that he bore no good will to them, and had no love and kindness for them.

Ver. 21. *Therefore the Lord heard this, &c.*] What they said in their hearts, and what they expressed with their mouths, all their murmurings against him, their distrust of his power and providence, and disbelief of his promises; see Numb. xi. 1. *and was wroth*; exceeding wroth; he was highly displeased; there was an overflow of his indignation, as the word ^d signifies; it was running upon him, upon the thick bosses of his buckler, to arraign his perfections, call in question any of his attributes, and disbelieve his word; this must greatly exasperate him, and provoke the eyes of his glory: *so a fire was kindled against Jacob*; the posterity of Jacob; or in Jacob^b, in the camp of Israel; which was literally true, because of the murmurings of the people against the Lord fire came down from heaven, and burnt among them, and consumed the uttermost parts of the camp; wherefore the name of the place was called Taberah, which signifies a burning, Numb. xi. 1, 2, 3. or it may be taken figuratively for the wrath of God, which is oftentimes compared to fire; see Nah. i. 6. hence it follows, *and anger also came up against Israel*; the people of Israel, the same with Jacob before; the allusion is to men when angry, in whose breasts anger burns, and from thence it rises up, and shews itself in their countenance, in their eyes, and by the words of their mouth.

Ver. 22. *Because they believed not in God, &c.*] That he was able to give them bread, and provide flesh for them, or bring them through the wilderness to Canaan's land, as he had promised. God, and he only, is

the object of faith, and he is to be believed in at all times, and for all things temporal and spiritual; and nothing is more displeasing to him than unbelief; for as faith gives glory to him, unbelief reflects dishonour upon him; faith sets its seal to him as true, but unbelief makes him a liar; and what is more provoking to man than to have his veracity called in question, and to be counted a liar? in short, as faith has salvation annexed to it, unbelief has damnation, and to whom did the Lord swear that they should not enter into his rest but to them that believed not? so great an evil is unbelief, and is the sin which *easily beset*^c the Israelites, as appears from the context; see Heb. iii. 12—18. *and trusted not in his salvation*; which he promised them, and bid them stand still and see, Exod. xiv. 13. and of which they had had some proofs and instances in leading them through the Red sea, and thus far guiding them through the wilderness, and providing for them; and therefore had reason and encouragement to trust in the Lord, that he would yet be with them, and save them, and complete the mercy promised unto them.

Ver. 23. *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, &c.*] Which were round about him, his chariots, and the dust of his feet; and which were at his command to go here and there, and carry and let down provisions for his people, as they did: *and opened the doors of heaven*; as a large granary, from whence the manna, afterwards called the corn of heaven, was given out in great abundance, which is signified by opening the doors; see Mal. iii. 10.

Ver. 24. *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, &c.*] So called, either from מָנָה, *manah*, which signifies to prepare, appoint, and distribute, because this was food prepared of God for the Israelites without them, and was their demensum, their appointed portion, and which was daily distributed to them in measure; or from the words מָן הוּ, *man hu*, what is it? which they used at first sight of the manna, they not knowing what it was, and hence called it *man*, or *manna*; this the Lord rained down from heaven, as he promised he would, that they might have food to eat; see Exod. xvi. 4, 15. *and had given them of the corn of heaven*; bread-corn springs out of the earth, but this was corn from heaven, very unusual and wonderful; this greatly aggravated the unbelief of the Israelites, and shews their great ingratitude, that after all this they should disbelieve the Lord, and not trust in his salvation; the manna was a type of Christ, who is called the hidden manna, 1 Cor. x. 3. Rev. ii. 17. see the note on John vi. 32.

Ver. 25. *Man did eat angels' food, &c.*] Or, *the bread of the mighty*^d; such as Moses and Elijah ate of; so Arama; but Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the clouds, or skies, said to be strong, Job xxxvii. 18. in which the manna was prepared, and let down; but rather the words may be read, *every man did eat the bread of the mighty ones*; of princes and nobles, and the great men of the earth; it was royal food, it was

^a מַעֲבֵרִי transit—*in hitpaal de transitu vel exundatione bilis solet usurpari, Gejerus.*

^b מָנָה in Jahacob, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus.

^c Εὐσεβίου, which Suidas, in voce Ευσεβια, interprets a foolish thing; and it is thought by his learned editor Kusterus, in *ibid.* to allude to

foolish persons, who stand round about a mountebank or juggler, gazing at his tricks with pleasure and admiration, being insnared by them.

^d מַנְיִים fortium, Pagninus, Montanus, &c. *magificorum, potentium, vastabulis.*

princely fare; and, indeed, the common people of Israel ate the same as their princes and nobles did; they all fared alike; but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render the word *angels*, and so Jarchi interprets it, and who are called mighty angels, and are creatures that excel in strength, 2 Thess. i. 7. Psal. ciii. 20. now the manna may be said to be their food, as it is in Wisdom, ch. xvi. 20. because it might be prepared in the air by the ministry of angels, and given by their disposition, as the law was, Acts vii. 53. or because it came down from heaven, where they dwell, and so the Targum, "the children of men did eat food, which came down from the habitation of angels;" or because it was most excellent food, as the tongue of angels is the most excellent and eloquent, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. or because it was such food, that, if angels ate any, it was fit for them, and not at all unworthy of them. Cocceius thinks, and so Gussetius^c, that by the mighty ones are meant the mighty God, Father, Son, and Spirit, by whom this food was prepared and given; so the word is used in the singular number, of Jehovah, who is called the mighty One of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 24. and of the Redeemer, Isa. xlix. 26. *he sent them meat to the full*; which may be understood either of the manna, of which they had great plenty, so that there was no lack for any man, and this continued with them till they came to the land of Canaan; or of the quails, of which in the following verses.

Ver. 26. *He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens, &c.*] In the airy heaven: or *he caused it to go*^f; to go forth out of its place, out of the repositories and treasures of it, from whence he brings the wind, Psal. cxxxv. 7. the winds are under the power and government of God, they are his servants that obey him; he says to one, Go, and it goes; and to another, Come, and it comes; stormy wind fulfils his word of command, and obeys its Creator: *and by his power he brought in the south wind*; into the heavens, into the air, as before, and with it he brought the quails; and which made his power to appear the greater, since they do not fly with the south wind, which is too moist and heavy for them, as naturalists observe^g; it looks as if first one wind blew, and then another was used for the bringing of them from the place where they were; perhaps about the Red sea, where they are said to have been in great numbers; and that the east wind brought them to a certain point, and then the south wind blew to bring them into the camp of Israel, where, by the moistness of it, they fell; hence fowlers, as the above naturalists relate, observe the south wind, in order to take them; though it may be that only one wind is intended, namely, the south-east wind; and so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand it.

Ver. 27. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, &c.*] By *flesh* is meant fowl, as the following clause shews; for there is flesh of birds, as well as of other creatures, see 1 Cor. xv. 39. and the quails which are here meant may be very fitly called *flesh*, since they are, for their bigness, a very plump, fat, and fleshy bird: *and fea-*

thered fowls like as the sand of the sea; or *fowl of wing*^b: winged fowls, so the Targum; *fowl that flies*; and therefore it was the more remarkable that these should be rained and fall, and be taken by the Israelites; and which fell in great numbers, as is signified by these phrases, the dust and the sand of the sea; for there fell enough to feed six hundred thousand men, beside women and children, for a month together; they lay in heaps, two cubits high, on one another, and every one that gathered them brought in ten homers; see Numb. xi. 19, 20, 21, 31, 32. which is the history referred to; and quails are used to fly together in large bodies; and sometimes, as Pliny¹ relates, will light on ships at sea, and sink them with their numbers. Some think one sort of locusts is meant, which were used for food, and was very delicious food; and the circumstances of bringing them with an east or south-east wind, their falling in heaps, and being gathered in bushels, and spread about to be dried in the sun, seem to favour such a sense; see the notes on the place above mentioned. The ancients interpret this mystically of the flesh of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, delicious food for faith, as the quails were a rich food; and as they were rained down from heaven, so Christ is the bread of life which came down from heaven, and the bread he gave for the life of the world was his flesh: and as these came up, however the first quails, in the evening, Exod. xvi. 13. so Christ came in the flesh, in the evening or end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to which may be added, that these creatures sit upon their young, and cherish and protect them, as a hen her chickens^k; with which compare Matt. xxiii. 37. but seeing the quails are never called spiritual meat, as the manna is, 1 Cor. x. 3. but were given in wrath and judgment, they are rather an emblem of riches, or worldly goods, things given to carnal men; these are of God, as the quails were, and are by some persons enjoyed without care or trouble, as these were; their meat, as it is sometimes said, falls into their mouth, as these quails did into the mouths of the Israelites, as it were; and are in wrath, their blessings are cursed to them, and, whilst they have a great affluence of worldly things, have leanness in their souls, as the Israelites now had, Psal. cvi. 15. moreover, as these were feathered or winged fowl, so riches have wings, and sometimes flee away, and are very uncertain things to trust to, Prov. xxiii. 5.

Ver. 28. *And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, &c.*] Or, *his camps*^l; the four camps of Israel; for so many there were, Numb. ii. or the camp of God, where he dwelt, and before which he went as the General, Leader, and Commander of them; in the midst of this, or by it, by the side of it, Numb. xi. 31. the flesh or feathered fowl fell, so that they had no trouble to fetch it in; and here it fell by the order and direction of the Lord himself; he caused it to fall, without whose knowledge and will a sparrow does not fall to the ground, Matt. x. 29. These creatures fell either, as

^c Comment. Ebr. p. 14. Vid. Witsium de Econom. Fæder. l. 4. c. 10. sect. 29.

^f פֶּשֶׁתִּים fecit proficisci, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus.

^g Aristot. de Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 12. Plin. Hist. l. 10. c. 23.

^b חֲסִידֵי עוֹף volucres alatas, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

¹ Hist. l. 10. c. 23.

^k Arist. de Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 8.

^l מַחֲנֵי צְבָאוֹת castrorum ejus, Pagninus, Vatablus, Gejerus.

some think, being wearied with their flight over the Red sea; or through their wings being broken by the vehemency of the wind that brought them, as others; or by the moistness of the south wind, which wetted their wings, and made them flag and fall; but, by whatever means this was done, it was so ordered by the Lord that they should fall, and fall just in the place where they did: *round about their habitations*; for the space of a day's journey on every side, where they lay in heaps, here and there, two cubits high, Numb. xi. 31. so that they could gather them with great ease, and had no need of arrows to shoot at them, nor nets to spread for them; they were ready at hand, and in great plenty.

Ver. 29. *So they did eat, and were well filled, &c.*] Or *exceedingly filled*^m, or too much, as some versions render it; they eat to excess, not merely to satisfy nature, but to gratify their sensual appetite: gluttony is a sin; it is an abuse of the creatures; it hurts the body by filling it with gross humours, and bringing diseases on it; it is injurious to the mind; the heart may be overcharged by it; it disposes it to sin; it leads to impiety, to atheism, and disbelief of a future state, which often go along with it, and ends in destruction, which is the case of those whose god is their belly: *for he gave them their own desire, or their lust*ⁿ, what they lusted after, flesh; and they had as much of it as they would, though this was given in judgment; and a sad thing it is when God gives men a fulness of this world's things, and leaves them to the abuse of them, or sends leanness into their souls, and gives them up to their own hearts' lusts.

Ver. 30. *They were not estranged from their lust, &c.*] By the goodness and liberality of God unto them, they were not brought to repentance for their sin of lusting; nor did they abstain from their fleshly lusts, or deny themselves of them, which the grace of God teaches to do; or else the sense is, what they lusted after, flesh, was not withheld from them, or they restrained from eating it; they were indulged with it for a whole month together; to which agrees what follows: *but while their meat was yet in their mouths*; the meat of the quails, while it was between their teeth, ere it was chewed, and before it was swallowed down, while they were rolling this sweet morsel under their tongues, and were gorging themselves with it, destruction came upon them, as follows; just as Belshazzar, while he was feasting with his nobles, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was slain by the Persians, Dan. v. 1. 30.

Ver. 31. *The wrath of God came upon them, &c.*] Either by causing fire to come down from heaven, or by suffering them to be surfeited by excessive eating, or by sending a plague among them; see Numb. xi. 33. *and slew the fattest of them*; such perhaps who had been most guilty of the sin of gluttony, and had fed the most inordinately upon the flesh that was sent them; or this designs the chief among their princes and nobles, though not only them, but them as well as the common people; so the Targum, "and slew

"their mighty ones." or the words may be rendered, *and slew them among their fatness, or fat things*^o; whilst they were feeding on their feast of fat things, the fat quails, which were brought among them in such plenty; for the quail is a very fat bird, as Kimchi observes^p: *and smote down the chosen men of Israel*; or the young men, as the Targum, who were within the 20th and 50th year of their age; who were chosen and fit for war within that time, as well as were the choicest for comeliness, strength, and service; or *made them to bow*^q to death and the grave; whose power they could not withstand, though in the prime and vigour of youth, and while they were freely and heartily feeding upon the food they lusted after.

Ver. 32. *For all this they sinned still, &c.*] Those that survived, not being brought to repentance by mercies, nor by judgments; not by mercies, such as before mentioned, though they were great and many, and some of them continued, and of which they were very unworthy; the goodness of God should, but it does not always, lead persons to repentance; mercies, unless they are sanctified, often prove snares and temptations to sin yet more and more; nothing short of the grace of God will bring persons to repentance for sin, or keep them from it: nor by judgments, which were last mentioned, and seem chiefly designed; these have no more effect than the other, unless the power of divine grace goes along with them; see Amos iv. 6. 11. it could not be thought, nor was it expected, that they should, after all these mercies and judgments, have lived without sin, which no man does, or can do; but then they went on in a course of sin, and were continually repeating their transgressions, and were guilty of sins of a very heinous nature, many of which are on record; as Aaron and Miriam, by speaking against Moses, the faithful servant of the Lord, which brought upon the latter the plague of leprosy; the spies which were sent to search the land, and brought an evil report of it, which set the people murmuring, and put them on thoughts of returning to Egypt; those that were concerned in the business of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up in the earth, or burnt with fire from heaven; the whole congregation which murmured at Kadesh, whom Moses called rebels, and who afterwards expressed their loathing of the manna, for which fiery serpents were sent among them, Numb. xii. 1, 10. and xiii. 32. and xiv. 2, 3, 4. and xvi. 1, 2, 3, 31, 35. and xx. 2, 3, 4, 5. and xxi. 5, 6. but their prevailing sin was unbelief, as follows: *and believed not for his wondrous works*; not in them, though the words will bear to be so rendered; for they did believe in them when they were wrought, and that they were wrought by the Lord; though they soon forgot them, and fell into distrust and unbelief; but *by them*^r, or by means of them; though such wonderful things were done for them in providence, as before related, which should have engaged their faith and trust in the Lord; yet, notwithstanding these, they called in question his providence, power, and goodness.

^m וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ מְאֹד & saturati sunt valde, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

ⁿ וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ מְאֹד in concupiscentiam ipsorum, Cocceus.

^o וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ מְאֹד in opimis ipsorum, Cocceus; inter pinguedines eorum, Michaelis.

^p In Sepher Shorashim, rad. שָׁלוּ.

^q In Sepher incurravit, Pagninus, Montanus.

^r וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ מְאֹד per miracula ejus, Schmidt; so some in Gejerus.

Ver. 33. *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, &c.*] They were not immediately cut off by the hand of God, though some were; but the greatest part spent their time, for about eight and thirty years together, in fruitless marches to and fro in the wilderness, and never entered into the land of Canaan, where they were gradually wasted and consumed, till at length all their carcasses fell in the wilderness; see Numb. xiv. 32, 35. time spent in sin is all waste time, and is spent in vanity; let a man enjoy ever so much of worldly things, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit; if he does not get to heaven at last, his life here is lived in vain; it had been better if he had never been born: *and their years in trouble; or in terror*^a and consternation; through their enemies, who smote and discomfited them, Numb. xiv. 45. through the earth's opening and swallowing many of them up; through fire coming from heaven on some of them, and fiery serpents being sent among them all, Numb. xvi. 31, 35. and xxi. 6, 7. It is an awful consideration, and yet it is true, of some wicked men, though not all, that they have nothing but trouble here, by what their sins bring upon them, and hell at last. Kimchi renders the word here used *suddenly*, and interprets it of the sudden death of the spies; so the Syriac and Arabic versions *swiftly*, following the Vulgate Latin, which renders it *with haste*.

Ver. 34. *When he slew them, &c.*] Some of them, the spies particularly; or when he threatened to slay them, or was about to do it: *then they sought him*; that is, those who either survived the slain, or were threatened with destruction; these sought the Lord by prayer and supplication, that he would not destroy them; the Targum is, "they repented and sought him;" see Numb. xiv. 37, 39, 40. *and they returned*; from their evil ways, and by repentance, at least in shew and appearance: *and inquired early after God*; but not earnestly, and with their whole hearts and spirits; the Targum is, "they prayed before God;" which is often done, by carnal professors, in trouble; see Isa. xxvi. 16. Hos. v. 15.

Ver. 35. *And they remembered that God was their Rock, &c.*] Who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, had strengthened them against them, and supported and protected them, as well as supplied them with all good things, of whom they had been greatly unmindful; but affliction was a means of refreshing their memory; see Deut. xxxii. 15, 18. *and the high God their Redeemer*; who had redeemed them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, with a high hand and a mighty arm, and thereby shewed himself to be the most high God: between this and the following verse the Masorah puts this note, "half of the book," i. e. half of the book of Psalms ends here.

Ver. 36. *Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, &c.*] In prayer to him, they only drew nigh to him with their mouths, and honoured him with their lips; they shewed much love to him and his ways and ordinances hereby; but their hearts were not with him, but after their lusts; they made fine speeches

and fair promises, but their hearts and mouths did not agree; they spoke with a double heart, thinking and endeavouring to *deceive* the Lord, as the word^b here used signifies; but he is not to be deceived, nor will he be mocked; the Targum is, "they allured (or persuaded) him with their mouth;" they attempted to do so; the Syriac and Arabic versions are, *they loved him with their mouth*; professed great love and sincere affection to him, when they had none: *and they lied unto him with their tongues*; to lie unto men is bad, but to God is worse; and it is a most vain and foolish thing, since there is not a word in the tongue of any but is known to him.

Ver. 37. *For their heart was not right with him, &c.*] Neither prepared and ready to any good work, but reprobate thereunto; nor steady, fixed, and established, as a good man's heart is, trusting in the Lord; but wavering, fickle, and inconstant; nor true, faithful, and upright; but turning aside like a deceitful bow, as is afterwards said, ver. 57. *neither were they steadfast in his covenant*; which was made with them at Sinai, though they promised to be obedient, and to do all the Lord said unto them; but this covenant they broke, though he were an husband to them; see Exod. xxiv. 7. Jer. xxxi. 32.

Ver. 38. *But he, being full of compassion, &c.*] Or merciful; having bowels of mercy, as a tender mother to the son of her womb; a word from the same root as this signifies the womb: the mercies of God are tender and abundant; there is a multitude of them; he is rich and plenteous in mercy, and so ready to forgive; hence it follows, *forgave their iniquity*; forgiveness of sin flows from the tender mercy of God; it is according to the multitude of his mercies, and the riches of his grace; yet is through the blood and atoning sacrifice of his son; and the word^c that is here used signifies to expiate or atone; God never intended to pardon sinners, but through the propitiation of his son, whom he set forth in his purpose, and sent forth in the fulness of time to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; he forgave the sins of Old-Testament saints with a view to that; and it is for Christ's sake he forgives any; for without shedding of blood there is no remission; though perhaps, since these persons were impenitent, unbelievers and hypocrites, no more may be meant here by the forgiveness of their sins than averting a threatened judgment, or a removing of one, and putting a stop to the further execution of it, which is sometimes meant by forgiving sin; see Numb. xiv. 19, 20. 1 Kings viii. 30, 34, 36, 39, 50. which sense the following words incline to: *and destroyed them not*; though they deserved it, and he was able to do it, he did not destroy them immediately and at once, nor all of them, at least not their seed and posterity, who were preserved and brought into the land of Canaan: *yea, many a time turned he his anger away*; he does not retain it for ever, or always carry on a resentment, or the appearance of it; though he causes grief, he has and shews compassion; he is said to turn away his anger from his own people when he forgives their sins,

^a בבהלה in terrore, Montanus; per consternationem aut terrorem, Gejerus; in terrore & consternatione, Michaelis.
^b יפתחורו quamvis consenserat eum decipere, Junius & Tremellius; astutem decipiebant eum, Cocceius.

^c יכפר propitiabit, Montanus; propitiatus est, Pagninus, Musculus; propitius fuit, Tigurine version; expiabat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

and comforts their souls, Psal. lxxxv. 2, 3. Isa. xii. 1. so when he causes the effects of his displeasure to cease, or stays a plague, or stops a judgment, by means of any of his servants; see Numb. xxv. 8, 10. *and did not stir up all his wrath*; which their sins deserved, and was laid up among his treasures: the wrath of a temporal king is as the roaring of a lion, Prov. xix. 12. much more that of the King of kings; and the allusion here seems to be to the arousing of some fierce creature; the wrath of God is intolerable, and even when it is kindled but a little, it can't be endured; and much less should it be all stirred up; but here in wrath he remembered mercy.

Ver. 39. *For he remembered that they were but flesh, &c.*] Or *children of flesh*, as the Targum; poor, frail, weak, mortal creatures, unable to bear the weight of his displeasure, the stroke of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his wrath; that they must be crushed before him, and would sink, and fail, and die; see Psal. ciii. 14. Isa. lvii. 16. or that they were naturally sinful and corrupt, prone to evil, easily drawn into sin; it was what their depraved natures inclined unto; they were impotent to that which is good, and unable to withstand temptations to evil; all which was taken notice of and considered by the Lord in his condescending goodness, and therefore he dealt gently with them; see Gen. vi. 3. and viii. 21. *a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*; such is the life of man; it may be fitly compared to the wind, which moves swiftly, and, passing on, loses its strength and subsides; so the life of man is quickly gone, his days move swiftly on, he dies, and returns not again to his former state, to a mortal life; and though the spirit returns to the body again, yet not till the resurrection; and then not of itself, but by the power of God; see Job vii. 7.

Ver. 40. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, &c.*] Where they were not only at his mercy, having nothing to help themselves with, but had many singular mercies bestowed upon them; and yet were continually committing such sins against God as provoked the eyes of his glory; ten times they tempted him, the Lord says, Numb. xiv. 22. therefore that dispensation is called the provocation and day of temptation; for it was a series of rebellion and sin, Psal. xc. 8. and *grieve him in the desert*; which signifies the same as before, and is spoken after the manner of men, Gen. vi. 6. and like a tender parent grieved at the disobedience of his child, and that he is obliged to take the rod and chastise it. The prophet Isaiah says, they *veered or grieved his Holy Spirit*, Isa. lxiii. 10. the same word is there used as here; compare with it Ephes. iv. 30.

Ver. 41. *Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, &c.*] They talked of going back to Egypt, and of choosing a captain to lead them back thither, Numb. xiv. 3, 4. and they turned back from the Lord, and from his good ways, and chose their own ways, and followed after idols; or the sense is, they again tempted God, not only at Meribah, but elsewhere; they tempted him again and again, even ten times, as before observed: *and li-*

mitted the holy One of Israel; or *signed*⁴ him; signed him with a sign, so the Targum; they tempted him by asking a sign of him, as Jarchi interprets it; insisting that a miracle be wrought, by which it might be known whether the Lord was among them or not, Exod. xvii. 7. with which compare Matt. xvi. 1. or they set bounds, so Kimchi; to his power and goodness, saying, this he could do, and the other he could not; see ver. 19, 20. and so men limit the Lord when they fix on a blessing they would have, even that, and not another; and the measure of it, to what degree it should be bestowed on them, as well as set the time when they would have it; whereas the blessing itself, and the degree of it, and the time of giving it, should be all left with the Lord; who knows which and what of it is most convenient for us, and when is the best time to bestow it on us.

Ver. 42. *They remembered not his hand, &c.*] Which brought them out of Egypt, and dashed their enemies in pieces, and which had been so often opened to supply their wants in the wilderness; the Targum renders it, the miracles of his hand: nor *the day when he delivered them from the enemy*; Pharaoh king of Egypt; that very memorable day in which they were delivered out of his hands, that self-same day which had been fixed by promise and prophecy many hundreds of years before, in which the hosts of the Lord went out of Egypt, Exod. xii. 41. Gen. xv. 13, 14. times when as well as places where deliverances and salvation have been wrought should not be forgotten; and forgetfulness of the goodness of God in times past is often the cause and occasion of sinning against him, which, by a remembrance of his kind appearances, might be prevented.

Ver. 43. *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, &c.*] The plagues which he brought upon the Egyptians, for refusing to let Israel go: *and his wonders in the field of Zoan*, or in the country of Zoan, that is, Tanis, as the Targum renders it; so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; see ver. 12. an enumeration of these signs and wonders follows; but not of all, nor in the order in which they were: only seven are mentioned, with which compare the seven vials or last plagues, Rev. vi. 1.

Ver. 44. *And had turned their rivers into blood, &c.*] The river Nile and its seven streams; this was the first of the plagues of Egypt, Exod. vii. 20, 21. and was a just retaliation for drowning the infants of the Israelites in their river, Exod. i. 22. a like plague will be inflicted on spiritual Egypt, and with equal justice; see Rev. xi. 8. and xvi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *and their floods, that they could not drink*; the rivulets that flowed from the Nile, and every spring or confluence of water; or rather by these rivers and floods are meant the canals and ditches, which, as Jarchi⁵ observes, were made by the hands of men, from the banks of the river Nile, to water their fields with.

Ver. 45. *He sent divers sorts of flies among them, &c.*] This was the fourth plague; see Exod. viii. 24, 25. the word signifies a *mixture*⁶, and the Targum renders it "a mixture of wild beasts;" so Josephus⁶ understood

⁴ הִתְּוּ signaverunt, Pagninus.

⁵ Comment. on Exod. vii. 29. so Kimchi in Sopher Shorash. מִן הַיָּם.

⁶ מִיִּצְוֵי מִיִּצְוֵי מִיִּצְוֵי mixturem, Montanus; miscellam, Vatablus; a mixed swarm, Ainsworth.

⁶ Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 3.

this plague of various sorts of beasts of different forms, and such as had never been seen before. Aben Ezra, on Exod. viii. 24. interprets it of evil beasts mixed together, as lions, wolves, bears, and leopards; and Jarchi, on the same place, of serpents and scorpions: the Syriac and Arabic versions here, following the Septuagint, render the word *dog-flies*; so called because they were, as Pliny^b says, very troublesome to dogs, and so might give the Egyptians greater uneasiness, because they worshipped dogs. God can make use of very mean and contemptible instruments, the least of insects, to plague and distress the most powerful enemies of his people; *which devoured them*: corrupted their land, Exod. viii. 24. perhaps produced a pestilence, which destroyed many of the inhabitants, or consumed the vegetables of the land; as but a few years ago, in New England, a sort of insects came out of little holes in the ground, in the form of maggots, and turned to flies, which for the space of 200 miles poisoned and destroyed all the trees in the country^c: *and frogs, which destroyed them*; with their stench; see Exod. viii. 5, 6. with this plague compare Rev. xvi. 13. this was the second plague.

Ver. 46. *He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, &c.*] A kind of locust, and the same with the locust in the next clause; for we read but of the locust only in Exod. x. 13. *and their labour unto the locust*; which devoured the increase of the field, all green grass and trees, all sorts of corn, wheat, barley and rye, and the increase of vineyards, and all fruit-trees, on which much labour had been used to manure and cultivate; see Rev. ix. 3, 4. this was the eighth plague.

Ver. 47. *He destroyed their vines with hail, &c.*] Or *killed*^d them; for there is a vegetative life in plants: this was the seventh plague of Egypt, attended with thunder and lightning, and was very terrible to Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 23, 28. with this compare Rev. xvi. 21. *and their sycamore-trees with frost*: sycamore-trees, according to Kimchi, were a sort of wild figs, and these with the vines are only mentioned; though the plague of hail destroyed all sorts of trees; because there were many of these in Egypt, and are put for all others; and who also observes, that the word חֶגְלֵי, rendered *frost*, which is only used in this place, signifies a kind of hail; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of great hailstones which beat off the fruit of the sycamore-trees: but R. Saadiah Gaon explains it by the Arabic word *Al-sakia*, which signifies a strong frost which breaks the buds of trees, and dries up their moisture. Jarchi will have it to be, according to the Midrash, a kind of locust, which comes and sits and cuts off the green of the trees and grass, and eats it. Aben Ezra makes mention of this sense, but rejects it.

Ver. 48. *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, &c.*] For the hail fell upon man and beast, as well as upon herbs and trees, Exod. ix. 22, 25. *and their flocks to hot thunderbolts*: which were killed by them: this is to be understood of the fire that was mingled with the hail, and ran upon the ground, and destroyed their flocks, Exod.

ix. 23, 24. Jarchi, out of the Midrash, interprets the words of fowls which devoured the sheep killed by the hail.

Ver. 49. *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, &c.*] This with the following words, *wrath, and indignation, and trouble*, are thought by some to intend the other plagues, which are not particularly mentioned; or rather they express the manner in which they were all inflicted, in great wrath and hot displeasure for their sins and iniquities, and which particularly were shewn by *sending evil angels* among them; not evil in themselves, but because they were the instruments God made use of to bring evil things upon the Egyptians, as good angels often are; though some think that demons, devils, or wicked spirits, were sent among them at that time; the darkness was over all the land, and frightened them; see Wisdom xvii. 3, 4. According to Arama, the three last plagues are meant: the words may be rendered *messengers of evil things*^e, as they are by some, and be understood of Moses and Aaron, who were sent time after time with messages of evil things to Pharaoh, in which were expressed his wrath and fury against them.

Ver. 50. *He made a way to his anger, &c.*] Or, for it, so that nothing could obstruct it, or hinder the execution of it; or *he weighed a path for his anger*^m; he weighed it in the balance of justice, and proportioned his anger to their crimes, and punished them according to their just deserts: *he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence*; which some understand of their cattle, and of the murrain that came upon them, by which they were destroyed, and which was the fifth plague of Egypt, Exod. ix. 3. so the Targum, "their beasts he delivered unto death;" but Aben Ezra interprets it of the slaughter of the first-born, expressed in the following verse; and so others.

Ver. 51. *And smote all the first-born in Egypt, &c.*] From the prince to the peasant; and not only the first-born of men, but of beasts also, Exod. xii. 29. *the chief of their strength*; or first of it, as the first-born is called, Gen. xlix. 3. *in the tabernacles of Ham*: in the several cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Egyptians, the descendants of cursed Ham; for Mizraim, from whom the Egyptians have their name, and from whence they sprung, was a son of Ham's, Gen. x. 6. Perhaps No Ammon may be particularly meant, Nah. iii. 8. the same with Memphis, and which signifies the mansion or palace of Ammon, that is, Ham; and so Chemmis, another city in Egypt, signifies the same"; of which see Psal. cv. 23. this was the tenth and last plague: according to Suidasⁿ, the plagues of Egypt continued forty days.

Ver. 52. *But made his own people to go forth like sheep, &c.*] The people of Israel, whom the Lord chose to be his peculiar people above all others; these he caused to go forth out of Egypt, with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; like sheep, weak, timorous, unarmed, harmless, and inoffensive, not a dog daring to move his tongue at them: the power of God was wonderfully displayed in

^b Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 34.

^c See Philosoph. Transact. vol. 2. p. 766. See also p. 781.

^d יָהָרַג יָהָרַג, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; interfect, Gejerus.

^e נְשִׁיכֵי מַלְאָכֵי רָעִים nuncios malorum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^m וַיִּשְׁקֹל פִּיכֵי נַחֲשֵׁי מַרְוֵי רָעִים ponderavit semitam furori suo, Pagninus, Vatablus; libravit semitam iræ suæ, Tigurine version; iter ad iram suam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ⁿ Dickinson Delph. Phœniciz. cap. 4.

^o In voce אַרְבָּעִים.

the delivery of his poor, helpless, and oppressed people, well may it be ascribed to him; for it was not their arm, but his, that brought them out: *and guided them in the wilderness like a flock*; by the hands of Moses and Aaron, Psal. lxxvii. 20. he also going before them as the Shepherd of the flock, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; he kept them together as a flock from scattering, straying, and being lost; and directed their way in the untrodden wilderness, through all the windings and turnings of it, and protected them from all dangers and enemies.

Ver. 53. *And he led them on safely, &c.*] Through the sea, where the waters were on each side; and through the wilderness, in which were serpents and scorpions, and where they were attacked by many powerful enemies: *so that they feared not*; for though they feared for a while at the Red sea, yet their fears were soon silenced, and they by faith passed through the Red sea as on dry land; and especially their fears were gone, when they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore; wherefore it follows: *but the sea overwhelmed their enemies*; or *covered them*? the waters returned, and overflowed and drowned the Egyptians, who were their implacable enemies, and vowed their destruction, and were sure of it; but now the Israelites had nothing to fear from them.

Ver. 54. *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, &c.*] Of the land of Canaan, which the Lord had sanctified, and set apart for them; and of Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of the great God, and of the temple where his residence was to be; so the Targum, "to the border of the place of the house of his sanctuary:" *even to this mountain, which his right hand purchased*; the mount Moriah, on which the temple was built; this psalm being composed, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, after it was made known to David, by the prophet Gad, the place where the temple should be built; namely, on the very mountain, on part of which David had his palace; and this was obtained and possessed, not by the power nor through the merits of the Israelites, but through the power and goodness of God; see Psal. xlv. 3.

Ver. 55. *He cast out the Heathen also before them, &c.*] The seven nations, the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, Deut. vii. 1. *and divided them an inheritance by line*; the land of Canaan was divided among the nine tribes and a half by Joshua, the other two and a half having had their portion assigned them on the other side; this distribution was made very exactly by lot, by line, and measure, so that every tribe had their proper portion and inheritance; see Josh. xiii. 6, 7, 8, 32, and xiv. 1—5. *and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents*; in the cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Heathen cast out before them.

Ver. 56. *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, &c.*] After the death of Joshua, and in the times of the judges, by worshipping and serving the gods of the nations, and forsaking the Lord their God, who had done such great things for them, Judg. ii. 11—14. *and kept not his testimonies*; the laws of God, which testified and declared his mind and will; nor observed his

word and ordinances, which testified of his grace, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

Ver. 57. *But turned back, &c.*] From God and his worship, apostatized from the true religion, and turned to idols: *and dealt unfaithfully, like their fathers*; in the wilderness; see ver. 8, 36, 37. *they were turned aside like a deceitful bow*; that promises well to carry the arrow right, but drops it at the feet of the archer; or carries it another way, so that it misses the mark. The Targum is, "as a bow casting arrows;" to the ground, and not to the mark; see Hos. vii. 16. or being too much stretched is suddenly broken, and kills the archer; or returns to its own nature; so Arama.

Ver. 58. *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, &c.*] Which they built to Baal, and other Heathen deities: *and moved him to jealousy with their graven images*; which they worshipped, see Judg. x. 6. which idolatry was spiritual adultery, and so made the Lord jealous of them, who stood in the relation of a husband to them, as a man becomes jealous by the unchaste and lascivious conduct of his wife; and such a course of life the Israelites lived, throughout the reigns of the judges, at certain seasons, until the times of Eli and Samuel, when the ark was carried captive, of which mention is made in the following verses.

Ver. 59. *When God heard this, &c.*] Their building high places, and sacrificing on them, their making and worshipping graven images, and the language which such actions spoke; who also heard what they said to their idols, when they paid their devotion to them, acknowledging them to be their gods; he took notice of and observed all this, for nothing could pass his all-seeing eye and hearing ear; and who acted as a righteous Judge, first heard, and then proceeded to give and execute the sentence; by which he let them know that he did hear and observe what they said and did: *he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel*; not his remnant among them, according to the election of grace, which he in all ages had; for this would be contrary to his everlasting love, which always continues; to the immutability of his nature, who changes not; to his Word, who says, fury is not in me; and to his oath, who hath sworn that he will not be wroth with his people: he may indeed, and does, abhor their sins, but not their persons; he may seem to them and others, in the dispensations of his providence, to be wroth with them and abhor them; but does not in reality. This is to be understood of the bulk of the people in general, and is to be explained and illustrated by those several instances of his displeasure with them in the times of the judges; when his anger waxed hot against them for their idolatries and other sins, and he delivered them up into the hands of their enemies, Judg. iii. 7, 8, 12, 13, 14. and iv. 1, 2. and x. 6, 7, 8. and xiii. 1.

Ver. 60. *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, &c.*] The tabernacle which Moses built in the wilderness by the command of the Lord, and according to the pattern shewed him; and which, when the Israelites were settled in the land of Canaan, was set up in Shiloh; see Josh. xviii. 1. and here it was in the times of Eli and Samuel, which are here referred to: *the tent which he placed among men*; it was as a tent moveable from

place to place, and was to continue at longest but for a while, as the whole tabernacle-worship and service was to do; here the divine Majesty dwelt, and among men, vile, sinful, wicked, and ungrateful men; which was a wonderful instance of his condescension and goodness, 1 Kings viii. 27. but when their iniquities grew to such a degree as were intolerable, he forsook it and removed it elsewhere; see Jer. vii. 12, 14. rather the words may be rendered, *the tent, or tabernacle, which he had fixed in Adam*; as they are by Doctor Lightfoot⁴; that is, in the city Adam, which was in the centre of the parting of the waters of Jordan, and where was the station of the tabernacle and ark of the covenant, when Israel entered into them, and passed through them; which is mentioned as a wonderful circumstance, both with respect to the tabernacle and to the people of Israel.

Ver. 61. *And delivered his strength into captivity, &c.* That is, the ark, called his strength, and the ark of his strength, Psal. cv. 4. and cxxxii. 8. because it was a token of his strength, and by means of which he displayed it, as when the Israelites passed through Jordan into Canaan's land, and encompassed the city of Jericho; and besides, it was typical of Christ, the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself, and in whom is strength as well as righteousness for his people; now this was delivered up into the hands of the Philistines, and carried captive, 1 Sam. iv. 11. The Targum renders it, *his law*, because the two tables of the law were in the ark; so Jarchi interprets it, the ark and the tables: *and his glory into the enemy's hand*; which designs the same thing, the ark being the glory of God, over which upon the mercy-seat the glorious majesty of the Lord was; hence Phinehas's wife, when she heard the ark was taken, fell into labour, her time being near, and brought forth a son, and called him Ichabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken, 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22.

Ver. 62. *He gave his people over also to the sword, &c.* To those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; that is, to the Philistines, when there fell of them thirty thousand men at once, 1 Sam. iv. 10. *and was wroth with his inheritance*; and the above shewed that he was, though they were his inheritance, his portion and possession, and he had chosen them for it, Psal. xxxiii. 12.

Ver. 63. *The fire consumed their young men, &c.* Not Nadab and Abihu, as some of the Jewish Rabbins interpret it, of which Jarchi makes mention; but the young men, the choice, the flower, of the Israelitish army, which engaged with the Philistines in the times of Eli; and the fire that consumed them is not to be understood of material fire, or of extraordinary fire from heaven, but either of the wrath of God, as Jarchi, or of the flaming glittering sword of the enemy, which consumed them like fire; see Numb. xxi. 28. Isa. xxvi. 11. *and their maidens were not given to marriage; the young men to whom they should have been married, and to whom they might have been espoused, being slain in battle: or, were not honoured*; that is,

with marriage, which is honourable to all, Heb. xiii. 4. or *were not praised*⁵; were not attended with epithalamies and nuptial songs, such as used to be sung at the time of marriage; hence, as Kimchi observes, the nuptial chamber is called *בית הוללה*, *the house of praise*; and so frequently, when a great calamity is threatened or described, it is said, the voice of the bride and bridegroom is not heard; see Jer. xvi. 9. and xxv. 10. Rev. xviii. 23.

Ver. 64. *Their priests fell by the sword, &c.* Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, and other priests; which shews the cruelty of the enemy, not to spare men unarmed, as the priests were; and the justice of God, which pursued these men, who were very wicked, and whose character and office could not secure them from divine wrath: *and their widows made no lamentation*; for their husbands the priests, who fell by the sword; particularly the widow of Phinehas, who upon the news fell into labour, and as soon as she brought forth her child died, and while she lived took no notice of the death of her husband, nor lamented that, only that the ark of the Lord was taken, 1 Sam. iv. 19—22. and which might be the case of others; nor could they attend their funerals, or follow them to the grave with lamentations, they falling in battle; and such was their concern for the public loss, that their private sorrow was swallowed up in it. Some understand it of the disrespect and neglect of others, who came not to lament with them, and comfort them, as was usual: one of the Targums paraphrases the whole thus, “at the time that the Philistines carried captive the ark of the Lord, the priests of Shiloh, Hophni, and Phinehas, fell by the sword; and at the time they brought their wives the news of it, they wept not, for they died even the same day.”

Ver. 65. *The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, &c.* He seemed to be asleep, while he suffered the ark to be taken, and the Israelites to be slain; and he may be said to awake when he exerted his power in smiting the Philistines, and causing their idol to fall before his ark; see Psal. vii. 6. and xlv. 23. *and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine*; who having taken a free draught of generous wine, not to excess, goes forth with great courage and cheerfulness to meet his adversary, shouting as he goes, being sure of victory; which must be applied to God with decency, consistent with the glory of his majesty, and the perfections of his nature; and seems designed to express his power and readiness to help his people, and avenge himself on his enemies; see Isa. xlii. 13. Zech. ix. 15.

Ver. 66. *And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts, &c.* Not the Israelites, as Kimchi interprets it, but the Philistines, who in another battle were put to flight; and turned their backs, and so were smitten in their hinder parts; or rather this has reference to the Philistines being smitten with hæmorrhoids, or piles in their posteriors, whilst the ark was retained a captive by them, 1 Sam. v. 6, 12. and so the Targum paraphrases it, “and he smote them that troubled them with hæmorrhoids in their posteriors;” the Greek

⁴ See his Works, vol. 2. p. 82.

⁵ *הוללה* honorat, Munster; so some in Vatablus.

⁶ Celebrata epithalamio, Montanus; laudate, Tigurine version,

Amama, so Ainsworth; laudarentur, Junius & Tremellins, Michaelis; laudabantur, Picator; commendabantur, Gejerus.

version, as quoted by Suidas*, is, *he smote his enemies on the back parts of the seat*: signifying, he says, a disease, modestly expressed: *he put them to a perpetual reproach*: either by causing their idol Dagon to fall before his ark, and be broken upon the threshold of the house of the idol; in memory of which the priests ever after, nor any that came in thither, trod upon the threshold, 1 Sam. v. 3, 4, 5. or rather through their sending golden images of their hæmorrhoids, and golden mice along with the ark, which were reserved to their perpetual reproach: other instances of the Lord's regard to Israel follow, in providing a proper place for the ark, and appointing a suitable governor over the people.

Ver. 67. *Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, &c.*] That is, the tabernacle of Moses, which had been for a long time at Shiloh, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph; when the ark was brought back by the Philistines, it was not returned to Shiloh, but carried to Kirjath-jearim, where it remained twenty years, and after that was had to Zion, the city of David, 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2. 2 Sam. vi. 3, 4, 12. so the Targum, "and he rejected the tabernacle which he had stretched out in the border of Joseph;" he did not refuse the tabernacle, or remove his presence from it; but he refused the place it had been in, or refused that it should be any more there: *and chose not the tribe of Ephraim*: the same thing is designed as before; the meaning is, not that he rejected the tribe of Ephraim from being one of the tribes of Israel; nor does it refer to the revolt of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, from the pure worship of God to idolatry, and their separation from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; or to their being carried captive into Assyria; since this historical narration reaches no further than the reign of David, or the time of Solomon at furthest; whereas the facts mentioned were a long time afterwards; nor does it regard the removal of government from the tribe of Ephraim, which was the seat of it in the times of Joshua, of which tribe he was, Numb. xiii. 8. though this tribe was overlooked in the choice of a king, one of the tribe of Benjamin being first chosen; and when he was rejected, then one of the tribe of Judah; but this purely, at least principally, intends that it was the will of God that the seat of worship should not be in this tribe any longer; that the ark and tabernacle should be no more there: perhaps the Ephraimites were more culpable, and more provoked the Lord with their idolatry, than the other tribes, since they are first and last taken notice of as the objects of the divine resentment in this account; see ver. 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 68. *But chose the tribe of Judah, &c.*] Both to be the seat of kingly power and government, and of religious worship; the latter is chiefly designed. Jerusalem was, at least part of it, in the tribe of Judah: here David, who was of that tribe, dwelt, and Solomon his son, and all the kings of Judah afterwards; here the temple was built, into which the ark of the covenant was put, and whither the tribes went up to worship: *the mount Zion, which he loved*; where was the city of David; into which the ark was brought when removed from Gibeah, and on part of which the temple was

built: the choice of this place, for such a purpose, was from love, Psalm lxxxvii. 2. it was typical of the church, the choice of which also arises from the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to it.

Ver. 69. *And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, &c.*] The temple at Jerusalem, called a sanctuary, or holy place, because separated and dedicated to holy use and service; where the holy God had his residence, and was worshipped, and was a figure of the holy place not made with hands: this is said to be built by the Lord, because the materials provided for it, and which David and his people so willingly offered, were his own; of his own they gave him; as well as the pattern after which it was made was had from the spirit of God; and it was the Lord that put it into the heart of David to set such a work afoot, and encouraged Solomon to begin and finish it, and gave wisdom, health, and strength, to the workmen to accomplish it; and in reference to this are the words in Psal. cxxvii. 1. *except the Lord build the house, &c.* and this he built not like the high places, where idolatry was committed; the temple was not built in imitation of them; but like what high and eminent men, like such buildings as they erect; like stately palaces, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi, built for kings and great personages; and such a building was the temple, the most magnificent in all the world, as built by Solomon, and even as rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired by Herod; see Mark xiii. 1. or it was built on high, as the Syriac version, on a high hill, Mount Moriah: the Targum is, "as the horn of the unicorn;" and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. Jarchi interprets it as the high heavens, of which it was a figure; it was like them for magnificence and glory, and like the earth for stability, as follows: *like the earth, which he hath established for ever*; as to the substance of it; though as to the qualities of it, it will be done away, and a new one arise; otherwise it will abide for ever, Eccl. i. 4. this respects the continuance of the temple during the Jewish dispensation, when the Gospel temple, or Gospel church, should take place, which will continue to the end of the world: this is opposed to the frequent removes of the tabernacle and ark before the temple was built, when there was no abiding habitation provided for it.

Ver. 70. *He chose David also his servant, &c.*] To be king of Israel, the youngest of his father's family, when he rejected all the rest; see 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 11. an eminent type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called by his name, Psal. lxxxix. 3, 19. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5. and the signification of his name *Beloved* agrees with him, who is beloved of God, as his son, and as man and Mediator; and beloved of men, of all the saints: and so likewise his character as a servant suits with him; who not only frequently has the name of a servant, Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20. Isa. xlii. 1. Zech. iii. 8. but appeared in the form of one, Phil. ii. 7. had the work of a servant to do, which he has accomplished, even the great work of our salvation, John xvii. 4. in doing which, and all things leading on and appertaining to it, he took the utmost delight and pleasure, and used the greatest diligence and assiduity,

* In voce Edm.

John iv. 34. and ix. 4. and justly acquired the character of a faithful and righteous servant, Isa. liii. 11. and to this work and office he was chosen and called by his father, Isa. xlii. 1. and xlix. 3. and took him from the sheep-folds; from whence he was fetched when Samuel was sent by the Lord to anoint him, 1 Sam. xvi. 11. so Moses, whilst he was feeding his father's sheep, was called to be the saviour and deliverer of Israel, Exod. iii. 1—10. and Amos was taken from following the flock to be a prophet of the Lord, Amos vii. 13, 14. and as David was a type of Christ, this may express the mean condition of our Lord, in his state of humiliation, previous to his exaltation, and the more open exercise of his kingly office.

Ver. 71. *From following the ewes great with young, &c.*] Or, *from after them*; it was usual with the shepherd to put them before him, and to follow them, and gently drive them, which is expressive of his care and tenderness of them; see Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14. the same is observed of David's antitype, the great and good Shepherd of the sheep, Isa. xl. 11. David was a type of Christ as a shepherd; as he kept his father's sheep, so Christ keeps those that the Father has given him, John x. 29. as David kept his flock with great care and courage, and in safety, 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35, 36. so does the Lord Jesus Christ keep his flock in safety, and preserves it from Satan, the roaring lion, and from grievous wolves that enter into it, and every beast of prey that would devour it; and particularly as David took special care of those that were with young, so does the Lord take special care of such that are new-born babes, that have Christ formed in them, and are big with desires after him, carry a burden, and are weary, and heavy laden: the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word ^b of such that give suck, and so it most properly signifies: *he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance*; that is, to rule over them: this is said in allusion to his having been a shepherd; and nothing is more common than for kings to be represented as shepherds, and their acts of government by leading and feeding; and one and

the same word in the Greek language signifies to feed and rule: and so the Targum, "he brought him to rule over Jacob his people:" this was a great honour indeed, to be the governor of the Lord's people, a special people above all people on the face of the earth, and whom he had chosen to be his inheritance; and in this also he was a type of Christ, who has the throne of his father David given him, and who reigns over the house of Jacob, one of whose titles is King of saints; for as the government of the world in general, so of the church in particular, is on his shoulders, Luke i. 32, 33. Rev. xv. 4. Isa. ix. 6, 7.

Ver. 72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, &c.*] Or, *reigned over them*, as the Targum; that is, over the people of Israel, and which he did in such manner as shewed uprightness of heart, and that he was, as his character is, a man after God's own heart: it appeared, by his administration of government, that he sought not his own honour and interest, and the aggrandizing of his family, but the good of his people, and the glory of God; and this character, in the fullest extent, and highest sense of it, best agrees with Christ, the righteous branch raised unto David, Jer. xxiii. 5. Rev. xv. 3, 4. John vii. 18. and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands; or by the prudence of his hands, as the Targum; or, by the prudencies ^c, as in the original text; with the most consummate wisdom and skill: hands are made mention of, partly in allusion to the shepherd, as David had been, who carries a staff in his hand, and guides his flock with it; and partly with respect to the acts and administration of government, which were wisely performed by him: he made wise laws for his people and soldiers, and put them in execution; he behaved wisely in the court and in the camp; but was greatly and infinitely exceeded by his antitype, the servant of the Lord, that should deal prudently, Isa. lii. 19. and who is abundantly qualified for it, as being not only the Wisdom of God, and the all-wise God, but even, as Mediator, has the spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom in him.

P S A L M LXXIX.

A Psalm of Asaph.

THIS psalm was not written by one Asaph, who is supposed to live after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, or, according to some, even after the times of Antiochus, of whom there is no account, nor any certainty that there ever was such a man in those times; but by Asaph, the seer and prophet, that lived in the time of David, who, under a prophetic spirit, foresaw and foretold things that should come to pass, spoken of in this psalm: nor is it any objection that what is here said is delivered as an history of facts, since many prophecies are delivered in this way, especially those of the prophet Isaiah. The Targum is, "a song by the hands of Asaph, concerning the de-

struction of the house of the sanctuary (or temple), "which he said by a spirit of prophecy." The title of the Syriac versions, "said by Asaph concerning the destruction of Jerusalem." The argument of the psalm is of the same kind with the 74th. Some refer it to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes; so Theodoret; but though the temple was then defiled, Jerusalem was not utterly destroyed; and others to the destruction of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar; and why may it not refer to both, and even to the after-destruction of both by Titus Vespasian? and may include the affliction and troubles of the Christians under Rome Pagan and Papal, and especially the latter; for

^a כְּאֶחָד de post, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; a post, Michaelis.
^b לְיָמָיו lactantes, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^c בְּתוֹכָם prudentiis, Vatablus; intelligentiis, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; discretions, Ainsworth.

Jerusalem and the temple may be understood in a mystical and spiritual sense; at least the troubles of the Jews, in the times referred to, were typical of what should befall the people of God under the New Testament, and in antichristian times.

Ver. 1. *O God, the Heathen are come into thine inheritance, &c.*] The land of Canaan, divided among the children of Israel by lot and line for an inheritance, out of which the Heathen were cast, to make room for them; but now would come into it again; see Psal. lxxix. ver. 55. and this is called the Lord's inheritance, because he gave it as such to the people of Israel, and dwelt in it himself; and the rather this is observed as something marvellous, that he should suffer Heathens to possess his own inheritance; or the city of Jerusalem, which was the place the Lord chose to put his name in; or the temple, where he had his residence, called the mountain of his inheritance, Exod. xv. 17. and into which it was always accounted a profanation for Heathens to enter; see Acts xxi. 28, 29. into each of these places the Heathen came; the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar; the Syrians under Antiochus, 1 Maccab. i. 38. and iii. 45. the Romans under Pompey, Vespasian, and Titus; and the Papists have since entered among the people of God, who are his heritage or inheritance, and have lorded it over them, and made havoc of them, and who are called Heathens and Gentiles, Psal. x. 16. Rev. xi. 2. 18. *thy holy temple have they defiled*: this was done in the times of Antiochus, by entering into it, taking away the holy vessels out of it, shedding innocent blood in it, and setting up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and sacrificing to it, 1 Maccab. i. 21, 37, 46, 54. and iii. 51. 2 Maccab. viii. 2. and by burning it in the times of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus; see Psal. lxxiv. 7. and the church, which is the holy temple of God, has been defiled by antichrist sitting in it, and shewing himself there as if he was God, by his dreadful blasphemies, idolatrous worship, and false doctrines, 2 Thess. ii. 4. *they have laid Jerusalem on heaps*; the walls and buildings being pulled down, and made a heap of stones and rubbish: in the times of Antiochus and of the Maccabees, it was set on fire, and the houses and the walls pulled down on every side, and was greatly defaced, and threatened to be laid level with the ground, 1 Maccab. i. 31. 2 Maccab. viii. 3. and ix. 14. and this was thoroughly done in the times of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, when the city was broke up and burnt with fire, and laid utterly desolate; so the Targum renders the word for *desolation*; it sometimes signifies a grave; see Job xxx. 24. and the sense may be here, that the city of Jerusalem was made graves to many; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of it. Aben Ezra interprets it, low places which were dug to find hidden things; the Septuagint translate it *a watch, or cottage for apple-orchards*, and so the versions that follow it; signifying to what a low condition the city was reduced. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word as we do, *heaps*: this, as it is true of Jerusalem, which has been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and remains so to this day, Luke xxi. 24. so likewise of mystical Jerusalem, the holy city, given to the Gentiles or Papists, to be trodden down for the space of forty and

two months, the exact time of the reign of antichrist, Rev. xi. 2.

Ver. 2. *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, &c.*] For such there were, both at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and in the times of Antiochus, who were good men, and served the Lord, and yet suffered in the common calamity. Nicanor, a general of Demetrius, in the time of the Maccabees, seems to have been guilty of such a fact as this, since, when he was slain, his tongue was given in pieces to the fowls, and the reward of his madness was hung up before the temple, 2 Maccab. xv. 33. *the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth*; this clause and the following verse are applied to a case in the times of the Maccabees, when three score men of the Assideans were slain, religious, devout, and holy men, so called from the very word here translated *saints*; 1 Maccab. vii. 13, 17.

Ver. 3. *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, &c.*] Without any concern of mind, or remorse of conscience; without any fear of God or man; as if it had been so much water only; and this they shed in great abundance: see 1 Maccab. i. 24, 30, 37. and ii. 38. in like manner the blood of the saints has been shed by the antichristian beast of Rome, for which he and his followers will be righteously retaliated, Rev. xvii. 6. and xviii. 24. and xvi. 6. *and there was none to bury them*: either the number of the slain was so great, that there were not left enow to bury the dead, or they that did remain were not suffered to do it; this will be the case of the two witnesses, when slain, Rev. xi. 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 4. *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, &c.*] That is, those that remained; so the Jews were to the Edomites, especially at the time of the Babylonish captivity, Psal. cxxxvii. 7. *a scorn and derision to them that are round about us*; as the Christians in all ages have been to the men of the world, and especially will be insulted and triumphed over when the witnesses are slain, Rev. xi. 10.

Ver. 5. *How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? &c.*] That is, how long wilt thou be angry? shall it be for ever? see Psal. lxxxv. 4, 5. for though what was done, or to be done, as before related, was or will be done by the enemies of the Lord's people, yet by his permission, and as a token of his anger and displeasure against them: at least it might be so understood, both by them and by their enemies; and hence this expostulation, *shall thy jealousy burn like fire?* so jealousy does; its coals are coals of fire, Cant. viii. 6. there were, at the times referred to, such among the people, who did evil things, and provoked the Lord to jealousy and wrath: see 1 Maccab. i. 64. 2 Maccab. viii. 29.

Ver. 6. *Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen that have not known thee, &c.*] Who had poured out the blood of the saints like water, and therefore it was a righteous thing with God to pour out the cup of wrath in his hands, and cause them to drink the dregs of it: these words, though they are in the form of an imprecation, yet regard not private revenge, but public justice, and the honour of God; and, besides, may be considered as a prophecy of what would be, and particularly of God's pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian

states; who, though they profess Christianity, are no other than Heathens, and have no spiritual and serious knowledge of Christ: *and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name*; but upon their idols of gold, silver, brass, and stone, on the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints departed; for these, besides the kingdoms of Babylon, Syria, and Rome Pagan, are the kingdoms of the ten kings, that gave their kingdoms to the beast, and committed fornication, *i. e.* idolatry, with the whore of Rome; see Rev. xvii. 2, 12, 13, 14. these words are referred to in Jer. x. 25. and also the following.

Ver. 7. *For they have devoured Jacob, &c.*] The posterity of Jacob, the people of the Jews, typical of the church of God, made havoc of by the Romish antichrist: *and laid waste his dwelling-place*; both Jerusalem and the temple, which was done both by the Chaldeans and the Romans, and also in the times of Antiochus; see 1 Maccab. i. 38, 39. and iii. 4, 5. which were types of the Gospel church made desolate by the Papists: the word ^d used signifies a sheepcot, the dwelling-place of those sheep that are worried by the beast of Rome.

Ver. 8. *O remember not against us former iniquities, &c.*] Or, *our ancient iniquities*, as the Septuagint; the most ancient sin of all is that of our first parents, in which we are involved, and by which we are made sinners; and for which judgment comes upon all men; and from thence flows the corruption of nature, or that original sin of our nature in which we are all conceived and born, and so are transgressors from the womb; or iniquities of former times, of our youth, as Kimchi, sins done of old, committed long ago, in the youthful age, see Psal. xxv. 7. or the sins of former persons, of our fathers, as Aben Ezra, which the Lord visits sometimes upon the children: some think reference is had to the sin of their forefathers in making and worshipping the golden calf; the Jews^e have a saying, that there is no punishment happens to Israel, but there is an ounce in it for the sin of the calf; their meaning is, that this is always remembered and visited, according to Exod. xxxii. 34. the phrase may take in all the sins of former persons, their ancestors, and of former times, from age to age, they had continued in, which had brought ruin upon them; and all their own sins, of nature and of youth, all past ones, to the present time: and it is desired that God would not remember these *against them*; that is, that he would not chastise or punish them for them, but that he would pardon them; for forgiveness of sin is sometimes expressed by a non-remembrance of it, Isa. xliiii. 25. Jer. xxxi. 34. or that he would not remember unto^f them; that is, put them in mind of them, lay them home and heavy upon their consciences, charge them with the guilt of them, and demand satisfaction for them; which is causing them to possess the sins of their youth, or former ones, Job xiii. 26. *let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us*; the mercy of God is rich, plen-

teous, and abundant; many are the acts, and manifold the instances of it; and there are bowels of compassion, and a tenderness expressed in it; and which is free, and prevents the merits of men, goes before them, and is not caused by them; and the phrase denotes the early and timely application of it, the case being desperate, and requiring haste, and the danger such that nothing but mercy could prevent; and indeed it is mercy that prevents both our temporal and eternal ruin. The reason given for this request is, *for we are brought very low*; sin brings men into a low estate, and only the grace and mercy of God can raise them up, and that exalts to an high estate; or are become very weak^g and helpless; sin strips men of their strength, leaves them without any, and incapable of helping themselves out of that estate into which it has brought them: or are quite exhausted^h and dried up, no good thing in them, no comfort left them; but are poor, and wretched, and miserable.

Ver. 9. *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, &c.*] Help us out of the troubles in which we are; enable us to bear them with patience, and without murmuring, whilst it is thy pleasure to continue them; assist us against our powerful enemies, and strengthen us to do our duty; afford us more grace, and fresh supplies of it in our time of need: the arguments enforcing these petitions are, because God is the God of salvation, to whom it belongs, of whom it is, and of him only to be expected; he is the sole author and giver of it; and because to help and save is for the glory of his name, which is great in the salvation of his people: *and deliver us*; out of the hands of all our enemies, and out of all our afflictions, and out of this low estate in which we are: *and purge away our sins for thy name's sake*; which were the cause of all calamities and distress, and which can only be purged away by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, Heb. i. 3. and ix. 14. the word signifies to expiateⁱ sin, or atone for it; which was the work and business of Christ our High-priest, who has made reconciliation for sin, finished, made an end of it, and put it away by the oblation of himself, for the sake of which God is propitious; and so the words may be rendered, *be propitious to our sins*^k; or merciful to our unrighteousnesses, for the sake of Christ the great propitiation; or through the propitiatory sacrifice to be offered up by him; or, in other words, *cover our sins*^l; which is also the sense of the phrase, that they may be seen no more; pardon and forgive them for Christ's sake; see Psal. xxxii. 1.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore should the Heathen say, where is their God? &c.*] They boast of, and put their confidence in, and expect salvation from? he does not appear for them, he's not with them; he has forsaken them, and will not help them; than which nothing can be more afflicting and distressing to the Lord's people; see Psal. xlii. 3. *let him be known among the Heathen in our sight*; in his holiness and justice, as a

^d *caulam ejus, Michaelis.*

^e *T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 3.*

^f *אֵל תִּזְכֹּר לָנוּ ne memineras nobis, Montanus, Michaelis; so Cocceius.*

^g *attenuati, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.*

^h *Exhausti, Gejerus, Michaelis.*

ⁱ *expiationem fac, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.*

^k *Propitiare, Pagninus, Montanus; propitius esto, V. L. Musculus; so Tigurine version.*

^l *metaph. text, Amama.*

God of power, and to whom vengeance belongs; let him be known by his judgments executed upon the Heathen, openly and publicly in our sight, and in the view of the whole world; see Psal. ix. 16. so it follows, *by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed*; as in ver. 3. which blood God will revenge according to the request of his people, and give them blood to drink by way of retaliation; by which means his vindictive justice will be known, and it will be seen where the God of his people is, that he is with them, and maintains their cause; see Rev. vi. 9. and xvi. 6, 7. and xix. 2. The words may be rendered in connexion with the preceding clause thus; *let it be known among the Heathen in our sight, even the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed*, though Kimchi supplies the words as we do, *by a revenging*, &c.

Ver. 11. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee*, &c.] Such as were so in a literal or spiritual sense; and the sighs and groans of such are not hid from the Lord; they come up into his ears as did the sighing and groaning of the children of Israel when in Egypt, Exod. ii. 23, 24. according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die: not by the Lord, as all men are, but by men; who are under a sentence of condemnation, who are ready to die, being appointed to destruction, Prov. xxxi. 6, 8. or are in danger of death, as Jarchi observes; the phrase is used in Talmudic writings; whose lives are exposed to danger, who are killed all the day long, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, Psal. xlv. 22. these it is desired the Lord would keep from dying, or cause them to remain in life; or not suffer their lives to be taken away from them, which he was able to do through the greatness of his power; though these words according to the accents belong to the preceding clause. The Targum, and so Jarchi, and other Jewish writers, render the words, *loose thou*

those, &c. mention being made before of prisoners, or of persons bound.

Ver. 12. *And render unto our neighbours seven-fold into their bosom*, &c.] Not seven-fold for one, as the Targum paraphrases it, or a seven-fold punishment for one sin; but that he would recompense their sins, or punish for them, and take vengeance on them, largely, abundantly, though not beyond measure, or exceeding the rules of justice; see Gen. iv. 15. Luke vi. 38. *the reproach with which they have reproached thee, O Lord*; by denying his being, or calling in question his perfections of power, truth, and goodness, to help his people; speaking ill of his providence, despising his word and ordinances, and even reproaching his people in reproaching him, Psal. lxxxix. 50, 51. and this is what a righteous recompense is desired for; see Lam. iii. 64.

Ver. 13. *So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture*, &c.] Who were the people of God, not by creation and providence only, as all men are, being his creatures, and provided for by him; but by special choice, and by covenant-grace: and *the sheep of his pasture*; whom he feeds as a shepherd does his flock, provides good pasture for them, and leads them into it: *will give thee thanks for ever, we will shew forth thy praise to all generations*; the above petitions being answered and fulfilled; the work of praise is acceptable unto God, what he is well-pleased with, being glorified thereby; and is what becomes his people to do, and which they are formed for, and that for evermore, as long as they live in this world, and to all eternity in another; and who will and do take care that the wonders of divine grace and providence be transmitted and told to their posterity in succeeding ages, that so thanks may be given him, and his praise shewn forth in one generation after another.

P S A L M LXXX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, Eduth, A Psalm of Asaph.

OF the word *shoshannim*, see the title of Psal. xlv. and of *shushan-eduth*, the title of Psal. lx. which seems to be the same with this here, and is thought by some to be the name of a musical instrument now unknown, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; though these two words are not to be read together as one, for there is a dividing accent on *shoshannim*, and which may be rendered *concerning the lilies*^a; and so may denote the subject-matter of the psalm, or respect the people of God, comparable to lilies for their beauty, purity, and holiness in Christ, Cant. vi. 2, 3. and to lilies among thorns, Cant. ii. 2. being in great afflictions and persecutions, as appears from ver. 5, 6, 12, 13. the word *eduth* is to be read not along with *shoshannim*, but with what follows, thus, *Eduth unto Asaph a psalm*; some render the word *eduth* an ornament or glory, as R. Marinus in Aben Ezra; and take the sense to be, that the psalm was a glorious one, and desirable to

Asaph; but it rather signifies a testimony, and is by the Targum interpreted of the testimony of the law; but it is rather to be understood of the testimony of the Gospel, which is the testimony of Christ, and bears witness of him; and there is a testimony of him in this psalm, ver. 17. and there seem to be in it many breathings after his coming and appearance in the flesh. Some take this psalm to be of the same argument with the foregoing, and think it refers to the destruction of the Jews, the two tribes, by the Chaldeans; so Theodoret; but there is no mention made of the temple, nor of Jerusalem, as in the preceding psalm; and besides, why should Manasseh and Ephraim be mentioned? wherefore others are of opinion that it has regard to the captivity of the ten tribes by Salmanser; but then it may be asked, why is Benjamin taken notice of, which had no concern in the affliction? this has led others to conclude that it respects some

^a אֶלְשָׁנִים super liliis, Tigurine version, Cocceius; pro liliis, Musculus.

time of affliction before either of these captivities, or between them both; and it may be applied to any affliction of the people of God in any age or period of time; and no doubt was written by Asaph, or by David, and put into his hands before the distress was, under a spirit of prophecy. Kimchi interprets it of the present captivity of the Jews, and Jarchi of their three captivities.

Ver. 1. *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, &c.*] The title of a shepherd for the most part belongs to the Messiah, and who is expressly called the Shepherd and stone of Israel, as distinct from the God of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 24. and may be so called because he was to be, and was of Israel, according to the flesh, and sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and appointed by his Father as a Shepherd over them; and it is on the mountains of Israel he provides a good fold, and pasture for his sheep, Rom. ix. 4, 5. Matt. xv. 24. Ezek. xxxiv. 24, 23. and it is for the spiritual Israel, his sheep, his elect, both among Jews and Gentiles, for whom he laid down his life; by which it appears that he is the good Shepherd, as he also is the great, the chief, the only one; though this character also may be given, and agrees unto God the Father, who rules, and governs, and feeds his people, his spiritual Israel, as a shepherd his flock; and who is addressed by his people, and is desired to *give ear* to their cries and prayers in their affliction and distress: God has an ear to hear his people's prayers, though sometimes they think he does not hear them; but he not only hears, but answers sooner or later, and in his own way; and the consideration of his character as a shepherd may be an encouragement to their faith, that he will hear, and will not withhold any good thing from them, Psal. xxxiii. 1, 2, 3. and xcv. 6, 7. *thou that leadest Joseph like a flock*: the posterity of Joseph, the same with Israel, the spiritual Israel, who are like a flock of sheep, a separate people, distinguished by the grace of God, and purchased by the blood of Christ; and as there is but one Shepherd, so one fold, and one flock, and that but a little one neither; and which is sometimes called a flock of slaughter, because exposed to the rage and fury of men; yet a beautiful one in the eye of Christ, which he undertook to feed: and this he leads on gently and softly, gradually, and proportionate to their strength, or as they are able to bear; he leads in and out, and they find pasture; he leads them out of their former state and condition, in which he finds them, out of the pastures of sin and self-righteousness into the green pastures of his love, grace, word, and ordinances: *thou that dwellest between the cherubim*; which were over the mercy-seat, and were either emblems of angels, among whom Jehovah dwells, and is surrounded by them; by whom Christ was ministered to on earth, and now in heaven, and among whom he was when he ascended thither, and where they are subject to him: or of the two Testaments, which look to Christ, the mercy-seat, and agree with each other in their testimony of him, and in other things; and where these are truly opened and explained, there the Lord dwells: or rather of the saints of both dispensations, who look to Christ alone for salvation, and expect to be saved by his grace; are both partakers of it, as they will be of the same glory; and among these the Lord dwells

as in his temple; though it seems best of all to consider them as emblems of Gospel ministers, since Ezekiel's four living creatures are the *cherubim*, Ezek. x. 20. and these the same with John's four beasts, or living creatures, who were certainly men, being redeemed by the blood of Christ; and were ministers, being distinguished from the four and twenty elders, Rev. iv. 6—11. and v. 8—14. and among these the Lord dwells, and with them he has promised his presence shall be unto the end of the world: *shine forth*; either God the Father, who dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat, who sits upon a throne of grace, from whence he communes with his people: and communicates to them; and then the request is, that he would shine forth in the perfections of his nature, as he has done in his Son, the brightness of his glory, and in redemption and salvation by him, where they are all illustriously displayed; and particularly in his loving-kindness through him, which has appeared and shone forth in the mission of Christ, and in giving him up for us all; and by granting his gracious presence unto his people in Zion, in his house and ordinances; see Psal. l. 2. or the Messiah, the Shepherd of Israel, and the Leader of his flock, and under whom the living creatures and cherubim are, Ezek. i. 26—28. that he would shine forth in human nature; that this bright morning-star would appear; that the day-spring from on high would visit men, and that the sun of righteousness would arise with healing in his wings; and that the glorious light of his Gospel would break forth, and the grace of God, the doctrine of it, appear and shine out unto all men, Jews and Gentiles.

Ver. 2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, &c.*] Which Christ did in the public ministry of the word, speaking as one having authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees; and in the performance of miracles, openly, and in the sight of all; and in his sufferings and death for the salvation of his people; in which he appeared to be the mighty God, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and mighty to save. These tribes design all Israel, before whom the above things were done; and the allusion is to these three tribes marching immediately after the Kohathites, who carried the ark on their shoulders in journeying, Numb. ii. 17—24. and x. 21, 22, 23, 24. which is called the Lord's strength, and the ark of his strength, Psal. lxxviii. 61. and cxxxii. 8. The Targum in the king's Bible reads, to the children of Ephraim, &c. reading לפני instead of לפני; see the Masorah, and Prov. iv. 3. *and come and save us*; come from heaven to earth, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature; this was promised and expected, and is here prayed for; Christ is now come in the flesh, which to deny is antichristian; and his end in coming was to save his people from their sins, from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come; and as he came on this errand, he is become the author of eternal salvation, in working out which he has shewn his great strength.

Ver. 3. *Turn us again, O God, &c.*] From our captivity, as the Targum, into our own land; or return us backsliding sinners to thyself by repentance; turn us, and we shall be turned; for the prayer shews it was not in their power, but must be effected by the

grace of God; or restore our souls, which have been wandering, and them to their former flourishing and comfortable condition: *and cause thy face to shine*; grant thy gracious presence, lift up the light of thy countenance; favour with the manifestations of thyself, the enjoyment of thee, and communion with thee through Christ; indulge us with the discoveries of thy love, the joys of salvation, the comforts of the spirit, and larger measures of grace: *and we shall be saved*: be in a very happy and comfortable condition; see Psal. iv. 6, 7.

Ver. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, &c.*] Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, that the word *Elohe* is here understood, and the words to be read, *O Lord God, the God of hosts*; of the armies above and below, against whom there is no standing, nor any before him when he is angry: *how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?* which must be put up in a wrong manner, in a very cold and lukewarm way, without faith and love, and with wrath and doubting; or otherwise God is not angry with, nor sets himself against the prayer of his people; nor does he despise, but is highly delighted with it: or how long wilt thou be angry with thy people, and continue the tokens of thy displeasure, though they pray, and keep praying, unto thee? it is in the Hebrew text, *how long wilt thou smoke^m at the prayer of thy people?* that is, cause thine anger to smoke at it; in which 'tis thought there is an allusion to the smoke of the incense, to which prayer is compared; see Psal. cxli. 2. Rev. viii. 3, 4, and denotes the acceptance of it with God through the mediation of Christ; but here his displicency at it, not being offered up through him, and by faith in him; such were the prayers of the Pharisees, Matt. vi. 5, 7. and xxiii. 14.

Ver. 5. *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, &c.*] With tears instead of bread, having none to eat; or their bread is mingled with their tears, *dipped* therein, as the Targum; such was their constant grief, and the occasion of it, that they could not cease from tears whilst they were eating their meals, and so ate them with themⁿ: *and givest them tears to drink in great measure*: or the wine of tears *three-fold*, as the Targum. Jarchi interprets it of the captivity of Babylon, which was the third part of the two hundred and ten years of Israel's being in Egypt; which exposition, he says, he learned from R. Moses Hadarsan; but he observes, that some interpret it of the kingdom of Grecia, which was the third distress: and so Kimchi and Arama explain it of the third captivity; but Menachem, as Jarchi says, takes *shalish* to be the name of a drinking-vessel, and so does Aben Ezra; the same it may be which the Latins call a *triental*, the third part of a pint; unless the Hebrew measure, the *seah*, which was the third part of an *ephah*, is meant; it is translated a *measure* in Isa. xl. 12. and seems to design a large one, and so our version interprets it; compare with this Isa. xxx. 20.

Ver. 6. *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, &c.*] Either obliged us to contend with them for our

defence and safety; or having given us into their hands, they strive and contend one with another about dividing the spoil: *and our enemies laugh among themselves*; at us, and because there is no help for us in God, as they imagine; or at God himself, as Kimchi, saying he cannot save us.

Ver. 7. *Turn us again, O God of hosts, &c.*] The same with ver. 3. only instead of *God* there, here it is *the God of hosts*; the repetition of these words shews what was uppermost on the minds of God's people; what they were longing for, and most desirous of, namely, the light of God's countenance.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, &c.*] The house of Israel, who are like unto a vine, as the Targum paraphrases it; and to a vine or vineyard are they often compared; see Isa. v. 1, 7. and xxvii. 2, 3. Jer. ii. 21. Hos. x. 1. These were in Egypt awhile, where they were grievously oppressed and trampled upon; and yet the more they were afflicted, the more they grew and multiplied; and from hence the Lord brought them in due time, with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; he *caused them to go out*; the word^o used fitly expresses their journeyings from thence, and through the wilderness; they were a type of the church of Christ, and special people of God, who also are frequently compared to vines and vineyards; see Cant. ii. 13, 15. and vi. 11. and vii. 12. and viii. 11, 12. the vine-tree is fruitful, and bears fruit in clusters; but its wood is very useless and unprofitable, Ezek. xv. 2, 3. and it is a tree very weak, and can't rise and support itself, it must be propped up; so believers in Christ, though fruitful through the grace of God, yet are unprofitable to him, and very weak in themselves, and are upheld by the right hand of his righteousness, on whom they lean and stay themselves; and these, in their nature-state, are in worse than Egyptian bondage, darkness, and idolatry, out of which they are brought, in effectual vocation, into Gospel liberty, marvellous light, and the true worship and service of God; and out of the antichristian Egypt will all the Lord's people be brought one day; see Rev. xi. 8. and xviii. 4. *thou hast cast out the Heathen*; the Targum adds, out of the land of Israel, that is, Canaan; it designs the expulsion of the seven nations from thence, to make way for the Israelites, Deut. vii. 1. and was an emblem of the ejection of Satan out of the Gentile world, and out of the souls of men, through the ministry of the word; and of sin, and the lusts of it, when the King of glory enters in, so as that they shall not any more have dominion; though as the Canaanites were left in the land to be pricks and thorns in the eyes and sides of the Israelites, so in-dwelling sin remains in God's people to the distress of their souls, and the trial of their graces. The Papists are sometimes called the Heathens and Gentiles; and there will be a time when they shall be cast out, and be no more in the land, Psal. x. 16. Zech. xiv. 21. *and planted it*; the vine, the Israelites, in the land of Canaan; see Exod. xv. 17. So saints are planted not only in Christ, the true vine, of which they are branches; but in a

^m עשנות fumabis, Pagninus, Vatablus; fumaturus es, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; fumasti, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaëlis, & Ainsworth.

^o ——— lachrymisque suis jejunia pavit, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 6.

^p * עתים fecisti proficisci, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Gospel church-state, where they flourish and become fruitful and pleasant plants, plants of renown; and being of the Lord's planting, he is glorified by them, and they shall never be rooted up, nor wither, but prosper and thrive; see Psal. i. 5. and xcii. 14. Isa. lxi. 3. Matt. xv. 13.

Ver. 9. *Thou preparedst room before it, &c.*] By sending the hornet before the Israelites, and driving the Canaanites out of the land, Exod. xxiii. 28. and so the Targum, "thou didst remove from before thee the Canaanites;" which made way and room for them: and thus the Lord prepared room for his messiah, church, and people, in the Gentile world, in the first times of Christianity, by sending the Gospel into all parts of it, and making it successful, and still there is room, Luke xiv. 22. *and didst cause it to take deep root;* which denotes the settlement of the people of Israel in Canaan, in church and state, as a body ecclesiastic and politic; so believers, being rooted in Christ, are grounded, settled, and established in him, and in a Gospel church-state, and so become fruitful; see Col. ii. 7. Isa. xxvii. 6. *and it filled the land;* with people, who, in the days of Solomon, were as the sand of the sea, 1 Kings iv. 20. and so the Gentile world was filled with Christian converts in the first times of the Gospel; and the interest and church of Christ will fill the whole world another day, Isa. xi. 9. Dan. ii. 35.

Ver. 10. *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, &c.*] Alluding to the land of Canaan, which was a mountainous and hilly country, at least some part of it; hence we read of the hill-country of Judea, Luke i. 39. and to the nature of vines, which delight to grow on hills and mountains²: in a figurative sense this may denote the subjection of kings and kingdoms, comparable to hills, to the Israelites in the times of David and Solomon, 2 Sam. viii. 1. &c. 1 Kings iv. 21, 24. and the exaltation of the church of Christ, in the latter day, over the hills and mountains, Isa. ii. 2. The Targum is, "the mountains of Jerusalem were covered with the shadow of the house of the sanctuary, and of the houses of the schools:" *and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars;* to these the righteous are compared, Psal. xcii. 13. the Targum is, "the doctors, the mighty preachers, who are like to the strong cedars:" the words may be rendered, *the boughs thereof cover the goodly cedars, or cedars of God*³; that is, overrun and overtop the goodly cedars; alluding to vines running and growing upon high and goodly trees; and so may denote, as before, the power of Israel over the princes and potentates of the earth, comparable to cedars, the most excellent; as things most excellent have often the name of God added to them; see Psal. civ. 16.

Ver. 11. *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, &c.*] The Mediterranean, or midland sea, which was the border of the land of Canaan to the west: *and her branches unto the river;* the river Euphrates, which was its border to the east; see Deut. xi. 24. This, in the spiritual sense of it, will have its accomplishment in the church of Christ, when he shall have dominion

from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Psal. lxxii. 8. The Targum is, "she sent out her disciples to the great sea, and to the river Euphrates her babes;" or sucklings.

Ver. 12. *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, &c.*] After having done all this for her; which signifies the Lord's removing his presence, power, and protection, from Israel; which were the hedge he set about them, and by which they were secured and defended from their enemies; but these being gone, they became an easy prey to them; see Job i. 10. Isa. v. 2, 5. the hedge about the church and people of God are the angels that encamp about them; salvation, which is as walls and bulwarks to them; and the Lord himself, who is a wall of fire around them; which may be said to be broken down when he withdraws his presence, and does not exert his power in the protection of them; but suffers them to be exposed to the persecutions of men: *so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?* the hedge being broken down, all passengers and travellers plucked the fruit of the vine as they passed along, there being nothing to keep them off from it: this may denote the plunder of the Israelites by their enemies, when left of God, they fell into their hands; and the havoc persecutors make of the church of Christ, and their spoiling them of their goods and substance, when they are permitted to do it.

Ver. 13. *The bear out of the wood doth waste it, &c.*] As Salmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried the ten tribes captive; the title of this psalm in the Septuagint version is, a psalm for the Assyrian. Vitringa, on Isa. xxiv. 2. interprets this of Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose times he thinks the psalm refers; but the Jews⁴ of the fourth beast in Dan. vii. 7. which designs the Roman empire: the wild bear is alluded to, which lives in woods and forests⁵, and wastes, fields, and vineyards: *and the wild beast of the field doth devour it;* as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who carried the two tribes captive, and who for a while lived among and lived as the beasts of the field; both these, in their turns, wasted and devoured the people of Israel; see Jer. l. 17. Jarchi interprets this of Esau or Edom, that is, Rome; and says the whole of the paragraph respects the Roman captivity; that is, their present one; but rather the words describe the persecutors of the Christian church in general, comparable to wild bears and wild beasts for their fierceness and cruelty; and perhaps, in particular, Rome Pagan may be pointed at by the one, and Rome Papal by the other; though the latter is signified by two beasts, one that rose out of the sea, and the other out of the earth; which have made dreadful havoc of the church of Christ, his vine, and have shed the blood of the saints in great abundance; see Rev. xii. 3, 4. and xiii. 1, 2, 7, 11, 12. unless we should rather by the one understand the pope, and by the other the Turk, as the Jews interpret them of Esau and of Ishmael.

Ver. 14. *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, &c.*] The Lord had been with his vine, the people of Israel,

² Bacchus amat colles—Virgil Geog. l. 2. v. 113.

³ רַמֵי עֵצֵי הַצֵּדִים rami ejus cedros Dei, Tigurine version; so Sept. אר אמני עֵצֵי הַצֵּדִים ramus ejus cedri Dei, Musculus, Coecceus; palmitibus ejus cedri al-

tissimæ operiebantur, Piscator, De Dieu; ramis ejus operatæ sunt cedri Dei, Michaelis.

⁴ Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2.

⁵ Homer. Olyss. xix. v. 439.

when he brought them out of Egypt, and planted and settled them in the land of Canaan, and made them a flourishing people; but had departed from them when he suffered the hedges about them to be broken down, and the boar and wild beast to enter and devour them; and here he is entreated to return and restore them to their former prosperity. So the Lord sometimes departs from his church and people, and hides his face from them; and may be said to return, when he manifests himself, shews his face and his favour again, and grants his gracious presence, than which nothing is more desirable; and if he, the Lord of hosts and armies, above and below, is with his people, none can be against them to their hurt; they have nothing to fear from any enemy: *look down from heaven*: the habitation of his holiness, the high and holy place where he dwells, and his throne is, from whence he takes a survey of men and things; where he now was at a distance from his people, being returned to his place in resentment, and covered himself with a cloud from their sight; and from whence it would be a condescension in him to look on them on earth, so very undeserving of a look of love and mercy from him: *and behold*; the affliction and distress his people were in, as he formerly beheld the affliction of Israel in Egypt, and sympathized with them, and brought them out of it: *and visit this vine*; before described, for whom he had done such great things, and now was in such a ruinous condition; the visit desired is in a way of mercy and kind providence; so the Targum, "and remember in mercies this vine;" so the Lord visits his chosen people by the mission and incarnation of his Son, and by the redemption of them by him, and by the effectual vocation of them by his Spirit and grace through the ministration of the Gospel; and which perhaps may, in the mystical sense, be respected here; see Luke i. 68, 78. Acts xv. 14.

Ver. 15. *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, &c.*] The word *Cannah* is only used in this place, and the first letter of it is larger than usual, to keep in perpetual remembrance, as is thought by some¹, the bringing of this vine out of Egypt, and the great things done for it in the land of Israel; and the letter, being crooked, may denote the oppression of this vine by various calamities. The Targum renders the word, a branch or shoot; and Kimchi, according to the scope of the place, a plant; and observes, that others interpret it an habitation or dwelling-place; and so may be understood of Jerusalem, or the temple. Aben Ezra takes it to be an adjective, and to signify *prepared or established*, which is said of this vine, ver. 9. It is an Egyptian word used by the psalmist, treating of the vine brought out of Egypt, and signifies a plant; hence the ivy is by the Greeks called *κισσοφυτε*, *the plant of Osiris*²; the clause carries in it a reason or argument, enforcing the above petition, taken from this vine being of the Lord's planting, as in ver. 8. and therefore his own honour and glory were concerned in it: *and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself*: meaning the same thing, and the same people whom

he confirmed in the land of Canaan, and made strong for his service and glory. The word *vine* translated *branch* signifies a *son*, as Israel was, to the Lord, his son and first-born. The Targum understands it of Christ, and paraphrases it thus, "and for the King Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself;" that is, for the sake of Christ, whom thou hast appointed to work out the salvation of thy people by his great strength, and who was to come from this vine, or descend from Israel; for the sake of him destroy it not, nor suffer it to be destroyed; and is the same with the Son of man, ver. 17. and so it is read in a manuscript.

Ver. 16. *It is burnt with fire, it is cut down, &c.*] That is, the vine of Israel, and the branch before spoken of, alluding to a vine, and its branches; which, when become unprofitable, are cut down or cut off, and cast into the fire; see John xv. 6. so Jerusalem and the temple were burnt with fire by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Vespasian: *they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance*; that is, the Israelites, signified by the vine, whose destruction was owing to the wrath of God upon them for their sins; he frowned upon them, and rebuked them in his hot displeasure, and to that their ruin was owing; others were only instruments in his hands. Some understand this as a wish or imprecation, let them that cut down the vine, and burn it with fire, perish at the rebuke of thy countenance; see Psal. lxxviii. 1, 2. so the Targum.

Ver. 17. *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, &c.*] Which some understand of the people of Israel in general, beloved, supported, and strengthened, by the Lord; and others of the then king of Israel, or Judah, the vine-dresser, or keeper of the vineyard under God; praying that he might be directed, supported, and protected, by the Lord; but it seems better to understand it with R. Obadiah on the place, and Abarbanel³, of the Messiah; and so Aben Ezra interprets it either of Israel, or of Messiah the son of Ephraim. Christ is called *the man*, though as yet he was not really man, because it was purposed and promised that he should; and he had agreed to become man, and had appeared often in an human form; and it was certain that he would be incarnate: and also the man of God's *right hand*, which is expressive of the power of God, because by him, who, in time, became man, even the son of God, the world, and all things in it, were made; and by him all things are upheld in their being; by him his people were to be redeemed, and have been redeemed from all their enemies; and by him they are upheld, kept, and preserved from a final and total falling away, and will be raised at the last day: and the phrase may design the support and strength the human nature of Christ, which was weak in itself, was to have, and had, not only from its union in the Son of God, but from God the Father; who promised and gave support and strength to it, under all the sufferings endured in it: to which may be added, that this phrase is expressive of love and affection; so Benjamin had his name, which sig-

¹ Vid. Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 14.

² Plutarch de Isid. & Osir.

³ מן על super filium, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; propter filium, Janius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

⁴ Mashiah Jesuah, fol. 81. 2.

nifies the son of the right hand, from the great affection of his father; so Christ is the son of God's love, his dear and well-beloved son; as appears by hiding nothing from him, by putting all things into his hands, and appointing him the Head and Saviour of his people, and the Judge of the world; and his love to him is a love of complacency and delight, is everlasting and unchangeable: moreover, he may be so called, because he was to be, and now is, exalted at the right hand of God, in human nature, as a Prince and Saviour, above angels, authorities, and powers, and above every name whatever: and the prayer is either that the hand of vindictive justice might not be upon the vine, or the church of God, but upon Christ their surety, who was able to bear it, and had engaged to do it; or the hand of divine power and support might be upon him, to strengthen him for the work of redemption and salvation, that so that might prosper in his hand; and the hand of love, grace, and mercy, might be turned upon his people: 'tis added, *upon the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself*; for the accomplishment of his purposes, promises, and covenant, for the bringing about the salvation of his own people, and for ends of his own glory: the same person is here meant as before; and his being called *the son of man*, which is a very usual phrase for Christ in the New Testament, and which seems to be taken from hence, and from Dan. vii. 13, shews that he could not be really from eternity, since he was to be the son of man, as he was, of Abraham, David, &c.

Ver. 18. *So will not we go back from thee, &c.* From thy fear, as the Targum; or from thy service,

as Kimchi; doing as above would encourage them to stand before the Lord, and worship him; which they could not do, if he marked their sins, and demanded satisfaction from them for them; but if he looked to his son and their surety, and took it from him, this would encourage their faith and hope, and give them boldness in his presence, and attach them to his service: *quicken us, and we will call upon thy name*; the people of God are sometimes dead and lifeless in their frames, and in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, and have need of the quickening influences of the spirit and grace of God; and which are necessary to a fervent calling upon the name of the Lord in prayer, and without which none will stir up themselves so to do. Kimchi interprets this of quickening, or of raising to life, from the death of the captivity; and so Abarbanel, who thinks also that it respects the resurrection of the dead in the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 19. *Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, &c.* This is a repetition of ver. 3, 7. in which may be observed an increase of the names or titles of the Divine Being: in ver. 3, it is only *O God*; in ver. 7. *O God of hosts*; and here, *Lord God of hosts*; some have thought that the doctrine of the Trinity is here suggested; which is a better thought than that of Jarchi's, who supposes that three captivities of Israel are pointed at: but as it follows, *cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*; it appears that this was the burden of their song, being in darkness and distress, that they might have the light of God's countenance, and therefore repeat it again and again.

P S A L M LXXXI.

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

OF *gittith*, see the note on the title of Psal. viii. The Targum renders it, "upon the harp which came from Gath;" and so Jarchi says it was a musical instrument that came from Gath. The Septuagint, and the versions which follow that, render it, *for the wine-presses*. This psalm, according to Kimchi, is said concerning the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt; and was composed in order to be sung at their new moons and solemn feasts, which were typical of Gospel things in Gospel times; see Col. ii. 16, 17. and so the Syriac version, "a psalm of Asaph, when David by him prepared himself for the solemnities."

Ver. 1. *Sing aloud unto God our strength, &c.* The strength of Israel, who, by strength of hand, and a mighty arm, brought Israel out of Egypt, protected and upheld them in the wilderness, and brought them to, and settled and established them in the land of Canaan; and who is the strength of every true Israelite, from whom they have both their natural and spiritual strength; so that they can exercise grace, perform duty, bear afflictions, withstand temptations, fight with and conquer enemies, and hold on and out to the end; and therefore have reason to sing the

praises of God with great fervour, zeal, and affection: *make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob*; or Israel, being the God that had made a covenant with them, had chosen them for his peculiar people, and had redeemed them out of the house of bondage, and bestowed peculiar favours upon them; and therefore were under obligation to shew forth his praise vocally and audibly, and with strong expressions of joy; and the spiritual Israel of God much more so, who have an interest in the covenant of grace, and share in electing, redeeming, and calling grace, by all which he appears to be their God and Father, in a special sense.

Ver. 2. *Take a psalm, &c.* Or *lift one up*¹; hold up the book, and read and sing it; or rather, lift up the voice in singing a psalm: *and bring hither the timbrel*; or *give one*², put the hand to one: *the pleasant harp with the psaltery*; make use of all these musical instruments in singing, and so make an agreeable melody: these were used in the times of the Old Testament, and were typical of the spiritual joy and melody in the heart, expressed by vocal singing, under the New Testament; see Rev. v. 8. and xiv. 2, 3. and xv. 2.

¹ שָׁמַר attollite, Piscator; tollite, Cocceius, Ananias, Gejerus.

² שָׁמַר date, Paganius, Montanus, &c.

Ver. 3. *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, &c.*] Either in every new moon, or first day of the month, which was religiously observed by the Jews, 2 Kings iv. 23. or rather the new moon, or first day of the seventh month, the month Tisri, which day was a memorial of blowing of trumpets, Lev. xxiii. 34. and so the Targum, "blow the trumpet in the month of "Tisri," when their new year began, and was typical of the year of the redeemed of the Lord, of the acceptable year of our God, of the famous new year, the Gospel dispensation, when old things passed away, and all things became new. The Jews say this blowing of trumpets was in commemoration of Isaac's deliverance, a ram being sacrificed for him, and therefore they sounded with trumpets made of rams' horns; or in remembrance of the trumpet blown at the giving of the law; though it rather was an emblem of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, by which sinners are aroused, awakened and quickened, and souls are charmed and allured, and filled with spiritual joy and gladness: *in the time appointed*; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word of a set fixed time; see Prov. vii. 20. the word * used has the signification of covering; and the former of these understand it of the time just before the change of the moon, when it is covered, which falls in with the former phrase; and so the Targum, "in the moon that is covered;" though the Latin interpreter renders it, "in the month which "is covered with the days of our solemnities," there being many festivals in the month of Tisri; the blowing of trumpets on the first day of it, the atonement on the tenth, and the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth. But De Dieu has made it appear, from the use of the word in the Syriac language, that it should be rendered *in the full moon*, and so directs to the right understanding of the feast next mentioned; *on our solemn feast-day*, which must design a feast which was at the full of the moon; and so must be either the feast of the passover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and was a type of Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us, on which account we should keep the feast, Exod. xii. 6. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. or else the feast of tabernacles, which was on the fifteenth of the month Tisri, kept in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths, Lev. xxiii. 34, 42, 43. and which is called the feast, and the solemn feast, emphatically; see 1 Kings viii. 2. Hos. xii. 9. and was typical of the state of God's people in this world, who dwell in the earthly houses of their tabernacles, and have no continuing city; and of the churches of Christ, which are the tabernacles in which God and his people dwell, and will abide in this form but for a time, and are moveable; and also of Christ's tabernacling in human nature, John i. 14. Heb. viii. 2. and ix. 11.

Ver. 4. *For this was a statute for Israel, &c.*] It was not a piece of will-worship, or device of the children of Israel, but was of divine institution; that the passover should be kept at the time it was; and that the trumpets should be blown on the new moon, or first of Tisri; and that the feast of tabernacles should

be kept on the fifteenth of the same month: and a law of the God of Jacob; and therefore to be observed by Jacob's posterity: the law for the one is in Exod. xii. 18, 19. and for the other is in Lev. xxiii. 24, 34. and so all the ordinances of Christ, and of the Gospel dispensation, are to be regarded on the same account, because they are the statutes and appointments of God; and the feast of tabernacles is particularly put for them all, Zech. xiv. 16.

Ver. 5. *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, &c.*] That is, this law concerning the blowing of trumpets on the new moon, and the keeping the solemn feast at the full of the moon, was made to be observed by all Israel, who are meant by Joseph, for a testimony of God's good will to them, and of their duty and obedience to him: *when he went out through the land of Egypt, or over it*^b; which some understand of Joseph, who is said to go over all the land of Egypt, to gather in provision against the seven years of famine, Gen. xli. 45, 46. and Jarchi says that his deliverance from prison was at the beginning of the year, and was advanced in Pharaoh's court: and the meaning is, either *when he*, the Lord, *went out against the land of Egypt*, so Arama, in order to slay their first-born; and when he passed over Israel, and saved them; marched through the land in his indignation, and went forth for the salvation of his people, Exod. xi. 4. Hab. iii. 12, 13. then was the ordinance of the passover appointed: or when Israel went out of Egypt, designed by Joseph, some little time after, whilst in the wilderness, and dwelling in tents, the feast of tabernacles was instituted; but rather this shews that the feast of passover is before meant, which was instituted at the time of Israel's going out of Egypt, and was the solemn feast-day ordained for a statute-law and testimony in Israel; and that the new moon, or month rather, on which the trumpet was to be blown, was the month Abib, the beginning of months, by an ordinance of God, Exod. xii. 2. and xiii. 3, 4. where *I heard a language that I understood not*; here the prophet personates the people of Israel in Egypt; though the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *he heard, and he understood not*; and the language is either the voice of God out of the fire, which before was never heard in this unusual manner, nor understood, Deut. v. 24, 26. or the speech of Moses, who had Aaron for his mouth and spokesman; or rather the Egyptian language, which was not understood by the Israelites without an interpreter, Gen. xlii. 23. which sense is confirmed by Psal. cxiv. 1. and this is mentioned as an aggravation of their affliction in Egypt; see Jer. v. 15.

Ver. 6. *I removed his shoulder from the burden, &c.*] These are the words of God, declaring how he had delivered the Israelites from the oppression and cruelty of the Egyptians; who made their lives bitter in hard bondage, and obliged them to carry heavy loads of bricks upon their shoulders: *his hands were delivered from the pots, or baskets*^c; into which the bricks were put when made, and carried on their shoulders; or

* בַּכֶּסֶם quom tegitur luna, Piscator; ad verbum in obtectione, i. e. sum obtegatur luna a sole, Amama.

^b בְּצֵאתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ in ipsum exeundo, Montanus; cum exiret ipse super terram, Paguinus.

^c מְרִירָה a sporta, a cophino, Gejerus, Amama, Michaelis.

from making of pots, as Kimchi, who thinks the Israelites were employed in making pots of clay as well as bricks; see Psal. lxxviii. 13. the Targum is, "his hands withdrew themselves from casting clay into "the pots;" the whole is typical of the saints' deliverance by Christ from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law.

Ver. 7. *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee, &c.*] That is, when Israel were in trouble in Egypt, as the Targum adds, and they cried unto the Lord in their distress, he heard them, and answered them, and sent them a deliverer, and brought them out of all their troubles, Exod. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *I answered thee in the secret place of thunder*: by bringing the plague of thunder and lightnings upon the Egyptians, when the Israelites were hidden from them; a sense given by some, as Kimchi observes: or rather this was done when the Lord looked out of the pillar of cloud at the Red sea upon the Egyptian host, and troubled them; at which time the voice of his thunder was heard in heaven, Psal. lxxvii. 16, 17, 18. Some think this has reference to the thunder at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; but the sense before given is best: *I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah*; by withholding water from them to try them, and see whether they would behave patiently, and put their trust and confidence in the Lord, or not; see Exod. xvii. 4—7.

Ver. 8. *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee, &c.*] Of himself, his being, and perfections; what he was unto them, had done for them, and would do for them, as in the following verses: or *testify in thee*^d, bear witness to their spirits, that they were his people, and he was their God; this is a witness which the people of God have in themselves; it is the inward testimony of the spirit; besides which, there is the outward testimony of the word, and which also may be here meant; for it may be rendered, *I will give a testimony to thee*: the law is a testimony of the will of God to his people, what he would have done, or not done; and the Gospel is a testimony of his grace, and the whole word testifies of Christ, his person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death: some render it, *testify against thee*^e, for their murmurings, rebellion, and idolatry, as in Psal. l. 7. and they are called upon to hear the voice of God in his word, and in his providences, being his people; and as such he addresses them, which bespeaks interest in them, affection to them, and an acknowledgment of them, and carries in it a reason why they should hear him: *O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me*; this explains who are meant by the Lord's people, Israel, the posterity of Jacob, a chosen and special people, who are exhorted not only to hear, but to hearken and obey; suggesting, it would be well with them, if they did as in ver. 13, 14. and some^f take these words to be a wish, as there; *Israel, O that thou wouldst hearken unto me*: see Isa. xlvi. 18.

Ver. 9. *There shall no strange god be in thee, &c.*] Or in the midst of thee, owned and worshipped as God; or in thine heart, for whatever engrosses the affection, or a man puts his trust and confidence in, that he makes his god, and is a strange one: thus, if any friend or relation, father or mother, wife or children, are loved

more than God, they are set up as such in his room; thus the epicure, that seeks the gratification of his carnal lusts, makes his belly his god; and the covetous man his money, in which he trusts, and therefore is called an idolater; and the self-righteous man his righteousness, on which he depends for salvation: hence we read of idols set up in the heart, from which they are disengaged in conversion, and kept from, Ezek. xiv. 7. and xxxvi. 25. Hos. xiv. 8. 1 John v. 21. *neither shalt thou worship any strange god*; only the Lord God is to be worshipped, Matt. iv. 10. and there is but one God; though this is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are with the Father the one God, and to be worshipped equally with him, and are; see Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Rev. i. 4, 5.

Ver. 10. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*] The true Jehovah, the Being of beings, in whom all live and move and have their beings, the covenant-God of his people; and is a reason why they should hear him, and worship him, and no other: *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*; this, with what goes before, is the preface to the ten commands, the first and principal of which is urged in the preceding verse; and this is another reason why the Lord God should be had and worshipped, and not a strange god; and redemption from worse than Egyptian bondage, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and a deliverance from worse than Egyptian darkness, and from a state of wickedness and impiety, should lay under greater obligations still to serve the Lord, and worship him only; who adds, as a further reason for it, *open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*: which may be understood of opening the mouth either in prayer or in praise: to open the mouth wide in prayer is to pray with great freedom, to pour out the soul to God, lay open its whole case, and tell him all its mind and wants; to pray with great boldness, and with much importunity and fervency, and in full assurance of faith, pleading with great strength the promises of God, and asking in faith for much, according to them; and God may be said to fill this wide mouth of faith in prayer, when he grants the desires of the heart, gives his people what they will, even very largely and abundantly, yea, more than they can ask or think: to open the mouth wide in praise is to be abundantly thankful for mercies received; and when persons are so, the Lord fills them with more abundant matter for praise and thanksgiving; see Psal. lxxi. 8. or this may be interpreted of opening the mouth wide in expressions of desire after spiritual food, hungering and thirsting after spiritual things, when the Lord fills or satisfies the mouths of his people with good things, Psal. ciii. 5. Matt. v. 6. with the sincere milk of the word which they desire, and with the ordinances, the breasts of consolation they long for, and so satisfies them with the goodness and fatness of his house, Psal. lxxv. 4. the metaphor seems to be taken from the young of birds, which open their mouths, and are filled by the old ones: the Targum is, "open thy mouth to the words of the law, and I will fill it with "every good thing."

Ver. 11. *But my people would not hearken to my voice, &c.*] Neither as exhorting them to the above duties, nor

^d בן תעידה לך testificabor in te, Gejerus.

^e Et testificor contra te, Schmidt.

^f So Michaelis, and Gussetius, and Genevenses, in ib. Comment. Ebr. p. 431.

as promising the above favours; would neither hearken to the voice of the law, nor to the voice of the Gospel; but were like the deaf adder, which stops its ear to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely: *and Israel would none of me*; would not attend to his word, acquiesce in his will, nor delight themselves in him, and in his worship and service; would have none of his salutary doctrines, or wholesome reproofs, nor of his laws and government; would not have him to reign over them, nor to be their Saviour, though the only one, and there is none beside him; though the chiefest good, and from whom all good things come, and is the portion and exceeding great reward of his people: see Prov. i. 25, 30.

Ver. 12. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, &c.*] Sometimes God gave them up, when they sinned, into the hands of the Moabites, or Ammonites, or Philistines, or other neighbouring nations, for their chastisement; but to be delivered up unto their own hearts' lust is worse than that; nay, than to be delivered to Satan: salvation may be the consequence of that, but damnation of this; and yet it is a righteous judgment; for as men like not to retain God in their knowledge, it is but just with him to give them up to vile affections, to a reprobate mind, to do things not convenient, Rom. i. 24, 26, 28. there is nothing men are more desirous of than to have their hearts' lusts; and there is no greater judgment can befall them than to be left to the power of them, which must unavoidably issue in their ruin here and hereafter: and *they walked in their own counsels*; which were bad; after the imagination of their own evil hearts, and not after the counsels and directions of God in his word, and by his servants.

Ver. 13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me, &c.*] This might have been expected from them, as they were his professing people; and it would have been to their advantage if they had hearkened to him, as well as it would have been well-pleasing to him; for that is what is designed by this wish, which does not express the purposing will of God; for who hath resisted that? if he had so willed, he could have given them ears to hear; but his commanding will, and what is his approving one: to hearken to him is not only to hearken to what he commands, but to what he approves of; it is the good and acceptable will of God that men should hearken to the declarations of his will in the law, and to the declarations of his grace in the Gospel; and indeed it is the voice of Christ, the Angel of God's presence, who went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, which they were to hearken to and obey, that is here meant; see Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 22. and Heb. iii. 6, 7, 8. and *Israel had walked in my ways*; which he marked out and directed them unto, meaning his ordinances and commandments; which to walk in, as it denotes progress and continuance, and supposes and requires life and strength, so it is both pleasant and profitable.

Ver. 14. *I should soon have subdued their enemies, &c.*] The Canaanites, and others: this he would have done in a very little time, or at once, and that easily, and without any trouble; he would quickly have humbled them,

^a מַנְתִּיעֵרִים *flecterem, Cocceius.*

^b מִנְתִּיעֵרִים *mentientur, Montanus; mentiti fuissent, Vatablus; mendicantur, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus; mendaciter se dedissent, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.*

and brought them on their knees, as the word ^c signifies, to terms of peace; for when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes his enemies to be at peace with him, Prov. xvi. 7. so those that hearken to the voice of Christ, and walk in his ways, he subdues their iniquities, and will bruise Satan under their feet shortly, and make them more than conquerors, through himself, over the world; the men and things of it he has overcome: *and turned my hand against their adversaries*; that troubled, distressed, and oppressed them; and it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble his people; he turns his chastising hand off of them, which sometimes is heavy upon them, and presses them sore, and turns it in a way of wrath and vindictive justice against their adversaries; and so the Targum, "and turned the stroke of my power against their adversaries;" this is the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger, which is intolerable, Isa. xxx. 30.

Ver. 15. *The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him, &c.*] Or, *lied unto him*^d; feignedly submitted to him, flattered him, pretended friendship to him, and entered into a league with him; either Israel, mentioned ver. 13. our God, whom and whose worship and people they hated; as every natural man is an hater of God, and all that is good, and enmity itself unto him; but these shall all submit to Christ, sooner or later, in one way or another, and acknowledge him Lord, and that he is superior to them, and themselves not a match for him; as Julian the emperor, when wounded, said, Thou hast overcome me, O Galilean: *but their time should have endured for ever*; which Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret of the calamities and vengeance that should come upon the haters of God, who will be punished with everlasting destruction; their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched; it is everlasting, and the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever and ever; in which sense the word is used, Isa. xiii. 22. or rather this is to be understood of the time, or happy state and condition, of the Israelites, which would have been of long continuance, had they hearkened to the Lord, and walked in his ways; particularly, they would have long enjoyed the land of Canaan, which was given to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, Gen. xvii. 8. Isa. i. 19. and so all truly gracious souls, that hearken to the voice of Christ, and walk in his ways, are in a happy state, which will endure for ever; they are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and those are for ever; the heavenly land of Canaan they shall dwell in for ever; their mansions or habitations in Christ's father's house are everlasting; their house, not made with hands, is eternal in the heavens; their estate, possession, and inheritance, is an eternal one; it is incorruptible, and fades not away; their being with Christ is for ever; and their happiness is often expressed by eternal life and eternal glory.

Ver. 16. *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, &c.*] Or the *'fat of the wheat'*; see Deut. xxxii. 14. with the finest flour of it: the Targum is,

^d מַלְכָּה עַד אֲדִיפֵי פְרֻמֵּנִי, V. L. *Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; adipe tritici, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.*

“with the best bread of wheat;” with the best of wheat, and the best bread that can be made of it: Aben Ezra interprets it of the manna, which was better than the fat, or finest, of the wheat, being the corn of heaven, and angels’ food, Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25. but it rather respects what the Israelites would have been continued to be fed with in the land of Canaan, which was a land of wheat, Deut. viii. 8. and such who hearken to the Lord, and walk in his ways, are fed by him with the Gospel, which is comparable to wheat, and the finest of it, for its choiceness and excellency, for its solidity and substantiality, for its purity and cleanness, and for its being of a nourishing and strengthening nature, see Jer. xxxviii. 28. and especially Christ, the sum and substance of the Gospel, may be figuratively meant, with whom the saints are fed, and who is compared to a corn of wheat, John xii. 24. for his preciousness and excellency, for his purity and fruitfulness, and for being the food of his people, the bread of life, for which he was prepared by his sufferings and death; which may be fitly expressed by the threshing, winnowing, and grinding of wheat, and then of kneading the flour, and baking the

bread: *and with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee*; the land of Canaan abounded with hills and rocks, in which bees had their hives, and from whence honey dropped to lower places; and hence the land is said to flow with milk and honey, Exod. iii. 8. Deut. xxxii. 13. 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26. nor is it unusual in other places to find honey in rocks; at Guadaloupe, in the West Indies, we are told², honey was found in trees and caves of rocks. Aben Ezra interprets this of the water which flowed out of the rock at Horeb, which was sweeter than honey; but the former sense is best: the rock spiritually and mystically designs Christ, the Rock of salvation, 1 Cor. x. 4. the *honey* out of the rock, the fulness of grace in him, and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David, and the precious promises of the everlasting covenant; and the Gospel, which is sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb; and with these such are filled and satisfied, who hearken to Christ, and walk in his ways; for, as the whole of what is here said shews what Israel lost by disobedience, it clearly suggests what such enjoy who hear and obey.

P S A L M LXXXII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

THIS psalm was written for the use of persons in power, for the instruction of kings and princes, judges and civil magistrates; according to Kimchi, it was written about the times of Jehoshaphat, who appointed new judges throughout the land; those that were before having been very corrupt, to whom he gave a charge agreeably to the purport of this psalm, 2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7. but it seems rather to be written by Asaph, in the times of David, under a spirit of prophecy, and has respect to the times of Christ, when there was a great corruption among the judges and rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastic. The Syriac version calls it, *a reproof of the ungodly Jews*; our Lord cites a passage out of it in vindication of himself from their charge of blasphemy, John x. 34, 35, 36.

Ver. 1. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, &c.*] The Syriac version renders it, *in the congregation of angels*: they are mighty, and excel in strength, and there is a large company of them, even an innumerable one, and who surround the throne of the Majesty on high. Christ, who is God over all, was among those on Mount Sinai, and when he ascended to heaven; and with these he’ll descend when he comes a second time, Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. The Targum interprets it of the righteous thus, “God, whose majesty (or Shechinah) dwells in the congregation of the righteous that are strong in the law.” It may be better understood of such as are strong in the Lord, in the grace that is in Christ, and in the exercise of grace upon him; who are gathered out of the world unto him, and unto distinct societies and congregations; in the midst of which God is, where he grants his presence,

bestows the blessings of his grace, and affords his divine aid and protection; and where Christ the Son of God is, and will be to the end of the world. The words may be rendered, *God standeth in the congregation of God*²: that is, in his own congregation, his church and people; but it seems best of all to understand the words of rulers and civil magistrates, of the cabinet councils of princes, of benches of judges, and courts of judicature; in all which God is present, and observes what is said and done; perhaps reference may be had to the Jewish sanhedrim, the chief court of judicature with the Jews, consisting of seventy-one persons; in the midst of which Christ, God manifest in the flesh, God in our nature, stood, and was ill used, and most unjustly judged by them, of whose unjust judgment complaint is made in the next verse: *he judgeth among the gods*: which the Syriac version renders *angels* again; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of them, who are so called, Psal. viii. 5. and xcvi. 7. but rather civil magistrates are meant, the rulers and judges of the people, who go by this name of *elohim*, or gods, in Exod. xxi. 6. and xxii. 18. and are so called because they are the powers ordained of God, are representatives of him, are his vicegerents and deputies under him; should act in his name, according to his law, and for his glory, and are clothed with great power and authority from and under him; and therefore are before styled the *mighty*. Among these Christ, the son of God, judges, to whom all judgment is committed; he qualifies these for the discharge of their office, he directs them how to judge, and all the right judgment they make and do is from him, *by whom kings*

² P. Martyr. Decad. 3. lib. 9.

² אֱלֹהִים in congregatione Dei, Pagninus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth.

reign, and princes decree justice; by whom princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth; and to whom they are all accountable, and will be themselves judged by him another day, Prov. viii. 15, 16. so the Targum, "in the midst of the judges of truth "he judges."

Ver. 2. *How long will ye judge unjustly, &c.*] These are the words not of the psalmist, but of the divine Person that stands in the congregation of the mighty, and judges among the gods; calling the unjust judges to an account, and reproving them for their unrighteous proceedings and perversion of justice, in which they had long continued, and which was an aggravation of their sin; this is very applicable to the rulers and judges of the Jewish nation in the times of Christ, who had long dealt very unjustly, and continued to do so; they judged wrong judgment, or judgment of iniquity, as Aben Ezra renders it, both in civil and ecclesiastical things; their judgment was depraved concerning the law, which they transgressed and made void by adhering to the traditions of the elders; they passed an unrighteous judgment on John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, rejecting his baptism, and calling him a devil; and upon Christ himself, adjudging him to death for crimes he was not guilty of; and upon his followers, whom they cast out of the synagogue; the character of an unjust judge see in Luke xviii. 2. and accept the persons of the wicked? *Selah*; gave the cause in favour of them, and against the righteous, because they were rich, or related to them, or had bribes from them, contrary to the law in Deut. xvi. 19. so the judges among the Jews, in Christ's time, judged according to appearance, the outward circumstances of men, and not righteous judgment, as our Lord suggests, John vii. 24.

Ver. 3. *Defend the poor and fatherless, &c.*] Or, *judge*^d them; such as have no money to enter and carry on a suit, and have no friends to assist and advise them, and abide by them; these should be taken under the care and wing of judges; their cause should be attended to, and justice done them; their persons should be protected, and their property defended and secured; for, since they are called gods, they ought to imitate him whose name they bear, who is the Father of the fatherless, the Judge of the widows, and the helper of the poor that commit themselves to him, Psal. x. 14. and lxviii. 5. such a righteous judge and good magistrate was Job; see ch. xxix. 12. *do justice to the afflicted and needy*; or *justify*^e them, pronounce them righteous, give the cause for them, not right or wrong, nor because they are poor and needy, but because they are in the right; for, if wicked, they are not to be justified, this is an abomination to the Lord; see Lev. xix. 15. Deut. xxv. 1. Prov. xvii. 15.

Ver. 4. *Deliver the poor and needy, &c.*] From his adversary and oppressor, who is mightier than he, and draws him to the judgment-seat; when it is not in his power to defend himself against him, and get out of his hands, unless a righteous judge will shew a regard to

him and his cause; and sometimes even an unjust judge, through impotency, will do this, as every one ought, and every righteous one will: *rid them out of the hand of the wicked*; this was what the poor widow importuned the unjust judge for, and obtained, Luke xviii. 3, 4, 5.

Ver. 5. *They knew not, &c.*] The Targum adds, to do well. This is to be understood of unjust judges and wicked magistrates, who know not God, and have not the fear of him before their eyes, though he stands in the midst of them, and judges among them; which is the source of their unjust judging and unrighteous proceedings: for because they know not God, nor fear him, therefore they regard not men: nor do such know themselves; they are called gods, and they think they are so, and don't consider they are but men; they are the ministers of God, deputies under him, and are accountable to him: nor do they know their duty before pointed out; it is for them to know judgment, what is right, and what is wrong, that they may pronounce righteous judgment, Mic. iii. 2. but they do not know it, at least so as to practise it: nor did the Jewish rulers know Christ, which was the reason of their unrighteous dealing with him and with his followers; they put him to death, and so they did them, because they knew him not, 1 Cor. ii. 8. John xvi. 2, 3. *neither will they understand*: the Targum adds, by way of explanation, *the law*, the rule of judgment, which judges ought to understand; so the Jewish rulers, Pharisees and Sadducees, were upbraided by Christ with ignorance of the Scriptures, and the law of God, their false glosses of which he refutes, Matt. ch. v. see ch. xxii. 29. and their ignorance was wilful and affected, they shut their eyes against light and evidence, especially with respect to Christ; they could discern the face of the sky, but not the signs of the times, Matt. xvi. 3. who so blind as they that will not see? and such were the Jewish rulers; see Isa. xlii. 19. *they walk on in darkness*; they chose darkness rather than light, and so were blind leaders of the blind, and were wilfully so, having their eyes blinded with gifts, Deut. xvi. 19. *all the foundations of the earth are out of course*; or *shaken or moved*^f: by the perversion of justice, towns, cities, commonwealths, kingdoms, and states, are thrown into the utmost disorder and confusion: as the *king by judgment stablisheth the land*; Prov. xxix. 4. so when judgment is not executed, it is unsettled, and thrown into confusion; or though ^g *the foundation, &c.* though this is the case, yet unjust judges will go on, perverting judgment, even though, as at the deluge, the foundations of the earth were shaken and moved, for the violence, rapine, and oppression, the earth was then filled with, which Kimchi thinks is here referred to; and though a dissolution of the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, was threatened, because of such injustice; that God would once more shake the heavens and the earth, remove their church and civil state, when they should cease to be a nation, their city be destroyed, and their temple, not one stone left upon another; and yet such was the obsti-

^d שפשו judicate, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^e הוציא justificate, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, &c.

^f יסודו moventur, Vatablus; dimoventur, Junius & Tremellius, Piccator; commoventur, Gejerus; nutant, Tigurine version.

^g So Ainsworth.

nacy of their wicked judges, that they would persist in their wicked ways.

Ver. 6. *I have said, ye are gods, &c.*] In the law, Exod. xxi. 6. and xxii. 28. or they were so by his appointment and commission; he constituted them judges and magistrates, invested them with such an office, by which they came to have this title; see Rom. xiii. 1. and so our Lord interprets these words, that they were gods to whom the word of God came, which gave them a commission and authority to exercise their office, John x. 35. or rather *against whom* it came, pronouncing the sentence of death on them, as in ver. 7. to which the reference is; declaring, that though they were gods by office, yet were mortal men, and should die. The Targum is, *I said, as angels are ye accounted*; and so judges and civil magistrates had need to be as angels, and to have the wisdom of them; see 2 Sam. xiv. 20. Jarchi interprets it of angels, but magistrates are undoubtedly meant: *and all of you are children of the most High*; the Targum here again renders it, "the angels of the most High:" and so Aben Ezra explains it of them who are called the sons of God, Job xxxviii. 7. but men in power are meant, who, because of their eminency and dignity, their high office, post, and place, are so called; see Gen. vi. 2. Psal. lxxxix. 6.

Ver. 7. *But ye shall die like men, &c.*] As men in common do, to whom it is appointed to die, Heb. ix. 27. or as common men, as men in the lowest class of life: the wise man dies as the fool, the king as the peasant, high as the low, rich as the poor; death levels and makes all alike: or as Adam, as the first man, so Jarchi, who was lord of the whole universe; but being in honour, abode not, but became like the beasts that perish; sinning he died, and so all his posterity, even those who have the greatest power and authority on earth; see Psal. xlix. 2, 10, 12. and not only die a corporeal death, but an eternal one, dying in their sins;

as Christ threatened the Jewish rulers, Scribes, and Pharisees, if they believed not in him, John viii. 21, 24. *and fall like one of the princes*; or the chief of them, Satan, who fell like lightning from heaven, Luke x. 18. or rather as one of the giants that lived in the old world, famous for their injustice and oppression, that fell in the deluge, Gen. vi. 4. or any of the Heathen princes, tyrants and oppressors, such as are mentioned in the following psalm, Psal. lxxxiii. 9, 10. This may have respect to the destruction of the Jewish nation, which is called the *falling* of them, Rom. xi. 11, 12. and the words may be rendered, *and ye shall fall together, equally and alike, O ye princes*; when the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, fell, they fell with it, and together; the princes of this world then came to nought, or were abolished, they and their authority, as the Apostle Paul says they should, 1 Cor. ii. 6. the sceptre then departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet; all rule and authority ceased among them, as Jacob foretold it would, Gen. xlix. 10.

Ver. 8. *Arise, O God, &c.*] These are the words of the prophet, or of the church, whom he personates, addressing Christ, who is God over all; that seeing there was such a corruption and degeneracy in the world, and such wretched perversion of justice, that he would *arise* and exert himself, and shew himself strong on the behalf of his people: *judge the earth*; who is the Judge of the whole earth, to whom all judgment is committed, and who will judge the world in righteousness: *for thou shalt inherit all nations*; which he will do in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and the Heathen shall be given him for his inheritance, he being heir of all things; and universal justice will not take place in the world till that time comes; and therefore it is to be wished and prayed for, as by the prophet and church here.

P S A L M LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

THIS is the last of the psalms that bear the name of Asaph, and some think it was written by him on occasion of David's smiting the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and others, 2 Sam. viii. 1—14. but these did not conjunctly, but separately, fight with David, and were overcome by him; whereas those this psalm makes mention of were in a confederacy together; and besides, the Tyrians in David's time were in friendship with him; but are here mentioned as joining with others against Israel, ver. 7. others are of opinion that this was prophetically delivered out with respect to future times, either to the conspiracy of the enemies of the Jews against them in the times of the Maccabees, see 1 Maccab. v. 1. &c. or rather to the confederacy of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others, in

the times of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 1. so Kimchi, Arama, and the generality of interpreters: perhaps reference is had to the enemies of God's people, from age to age, both in the Old and in the New Testament; R. Obadiah understands it of the war of Gog and Magog.

Ver. 1. *Keep not thou silence, O God, &c.*] Which he is thought and said to do, when he does not answer the prayers of his people, nor plead their cause, nor rebuke their enemies; when he does not speak a good word to them, or one for them, or one against those that hate and persecute them; *hold not thy peace*; or *be not deaf*^b to the cries and tears of his people, and to the reproaches, menaces, and blasphemies of wicked men: *and be not still, O God*; or *quiet*^c, at rest and

^a פאריר pariter; sive ex æquo, Maius apud Gataker. Cin. c. 10. p. 209.

^b אל-תחורש ne obsurdescas, Vatablus; ne surdum agas, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ne quasi surdus & mutus sis, Michaelis.

^c אל תשקט ne quiescas, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; neque quietus sis, Michaelis.

ease, inactive and unconcerned, as if he cared not how things went; and the reason follows.

Ver. 2. *For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult, &c.*] Or a noise^d: wicked men are commonly noisy, roaring out their blasphemies against God, belching out oaths and curses, and breathing threatenings and slaughter against the saints; especially a numerous army of them, consisting of many people and nations, as this did; who are called the Lord's enemies, being the enemies of his people, and their cause and his are one and the same; and besides, all wicked men are enemies to God, and all that is good, in their minds, and which appears by their actions; yea, they are enmity itself unto him: *and they that hate thee have lift up the head*; are haughty, proud, and arrogant; speak loftily, and with a stiff neck; set their mouth against heaven, and God in it; and their tongue walks through the earth, and spares none; they exult and rejoice, as sure of victory, before the battle is fought; such then were, and such there are, who are haters of God, hate his being, perfections, purposes, and providences; hate his Son without a cause, and even do despite unto the Spirit of grace; hate the law and its precepts, the Gospel and its doctrines and ordinances, and the ways, worship, and people of God, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 3. *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, &c.*] The people of Israel, hereafter named, whom God had chosen and avouched to be his people; these they dealt subtly with, as the king of Egypt had done with their forefathers; and this, agreeably to their character, being the seed of the old serpent, more subtle than any of the beasts of the field; these devised cunning devices, formed crafty schemes for the destruction of the Lord's people; but often so it is, that the wise are taken in their own craftiness, and their counsel is carried headlong: *and consulted against thy hidden ones*; not hidden from the Lord, and unknown unto him, though from their enemies, and unknown by them, and so the object of their hatred and persecution; but hidden by him as his jewels and peculiar treasure, which he takes care of; hidden under the shadow of his wings, in the secret of his presence and tabernacle, as in a pavilion; and therefore it was a daring piece of insolence in their enemies to attack them: so the life of saints is said to be hid with Christ in God, which denotes both its secrecy and safety; see Col. iii. 3. the Targum is, "against the things hidden in thy treasures;" meaning the riches of the temple.

Ver. 4. *They have said, &c.*] Secretly in their hearts, or openly to one another, and gave it out in the most public manner, as what they had consulted and determined upon; see Psal. lxxiv. 8. *come, and let us cut them off from being a nation*; they were not content to invade their country, take their cities, plunder them of their substance, and carry them captives, but utterly to destroy them, root and branch; so that they might be no more a body politic, under rule and government, in their own land, nor have so much as a name

and place in others; this was Haman's scheme, Esth. iii. 8, 9. *that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance*; but this desperate and dreadful scheme, and wretched design of theirs, took not effect; but, on the contrary, the several nations hereafter mentioned, who were in this conspiracy, are no more, and have not had a name in the world for many hundreds of years; whilst the Jews are still a people, and are preserved, in order to be called and saved, as all Israel will be in the latter day, Rom. xi. 25. So Dioclesian thought to have rooted the Christian name out of the world; but in vain: the name of Christ, the name of Christianity, the name of a Christian church, will endure to the end of the world; see Psal. lxxii. 17. Prov. x. 7. Compare with this Jer. xi. 19.

Ver. 5. *For they have consulted together with one consent, &c.*] Or heart^e: wicked men are cordial to one another, and united in their counsels against the people of God, and his interest: whatever things they may disagree in, they agree in this, to oppose the cause and interest of true religion, or to persecute the church and people of God: Herod and Pontius Pilate are instances of this: *they are confederate against thee*; or have made a covenant against thee^f; the covenant they had entered into among themselves, being against the Lord's people, was against him; and such a covenant and agreement can never stand; for there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord, Prov. xxi. 30. This the psalmist mentions to engage the Lord in the quarrel of his people, and not be still, and act a neutral part; since those were his enemies, and confederates against him, and they are next particularly named.

Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of Edom, &c.*] Or the Idumeans, as the Targum; the posterity of Esau, who, with the rest that joined with them, hereafter mentioned, and made the confederate army, brought their tents with them, pitched them, and encamped in them against Israel: *and the Ishmaelites*; or Arabians, as the Targum, who descended from Ishmael, the son of Abraham: *of Moab, and the Hagarenes*; the Moabites, who sprung from Lot by one of his daughters, in an incestuous way; and the Hagarenes are the same with the Hagarites, 1 Chron. v. 10, 19, 20. who dwelt to the east of the land of Israel, so called from Hagar, the handmaid of Abraham, but not by him, but by another husband, after sent away from him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, or by him, supposing Hagar to be the same with Keturah, as some do: the Targum calls them Hungarians, the Syriac version renders it Gadareans, or Gadarenes; of which see Mark v. 1.

Ver. 7. *Gebal, &c.*] Gubeans, or Gebalites, as the Targum; the same with Giblites, Josh. xxiii. 5. 1 Kings v. 18. or men of Gebal, Ezek. xxvii. 9. the same with Byblus: these dwelt in Phœnicia, near Tyre, where Pliny^g makes mention of a place called Gabale: the Syriac version joins it with Ammon, and renders it the border of Ammon: *and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre*;

^d חמיון sonuerunt, V. L. perstrepuunt, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Coccejus; strepuunt, Gejerus.
^e לב corde, Pagninus, Fontanus; ex corde, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; cordicitus, Coccejus.

^f עליון בריית יכרותו contra te fœdus pepigerunt, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Musculus, Coccejus, Michaelis.

^g Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.

these are well known in Scripture, and as the enemies of Israel.

Ver. 8. *Assur also is joined with them, &c.*] Before mentioned, or Assyria, though at so great a distance from Israel, and unprovoked by them: according to R. Joseph Kimchi, the sense is, that the Assyrians joined them, continuing in their wickedness, though their army had been destroyed by an angel in Hezekiah's time, of which they were unmindful; but this, as his son observes, makes this confederacy and war to be after the times of Hezekiah; whereas it was long before it: the Targum is, "Sennacherib, king of Assyria, is joined with them;" and so some refer this to his invasion of Judea, and besieging Jerusalem, with an army consisting of many nations, in Hezekiah's time; but he was the principal there, and not an auxiliary, as here: *they have holpen the childrea of Lot. Selah*; or were an arm^b unto them, assisted and strengthened them: these were the Moabites and Ammonites, who were the principals in the war, and the rest auxiliaries, as it appears they were in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 1, 10, 22, 23, here were ten different nations, which joined in confederacy against the people of Israel; to which answer the ten horns of the beast, or ten antichristian kings, who agreed to give their kingdom to the beast, and to make war with the Lamb and his followers, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 14, and it may be observed, that these were on all sides of the land of Israel; the Edomites, Ishmaelites, and Amalekites, were on the south; the Moabites, Ammonites, and Hagarenes, were on the east; the Assyrians on the north; and the Philistines, Gebalites, and Tyrians, on the west: so that Israel was surrounded on all sides with enemies, as the Lord's people are troubled on every side, 2 Cor. iv. 8. and so the Gog and Magog army, of which some understand this, will encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, Rev. xx. 9.

Ver. 9. *Do unto them as unto the Midianites, &c.*] In the times of Gideon, who destroyed one another, and in whose destruction the hand of the Lord was very visible, Judg. vii. 20, 21, 22, and much in the same manner was the confederate army of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others, destroyed in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 22, 23, 24. *as to Sisera, as to Jabin*: Jabin was a king of Canaan, who oppressed Israel, and Sisera was his general; the latter was slain by a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber; and the former the hand of Israel prevailed against, until they destroyed him, Judg. iv. 2, 21, 22, 24. the great victory which they obtained over them was *at the brook of Kison, or Kishon*, Judg. iv. 7. and v. 21. with this compare 2 Chron. xx. 16.

Ver. 10. *Which perished at En-dor, &c.*] Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand this of the Midianites; but rather it is to be understood of Jabin and Sisera, and the army under them, who perished at this place, which is mentioned along with Taanach and Megiddo, Josh. xvii. 11. which are the very places where the

battle was fought between Jabin and Israel, Judg. v. 19. according to Jerom¹, it was four miles from Mount Tabor to the south, and was a large village in his days, and was near to Naim, the place where Christ raised the widow's son from the dead, Luke vii. 11. see 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. *they became as dung for the earth*: being unburied, they lay and rotted on the earth, and became dung for it; see Jer. viii. 2. or were trodden under foot, as dung upon the earth; so the Targum, "they became as dung trodden to the earth."

Ver. 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb, &c.*] Two princes of Midian, who were slain, the one at the rock Oreb, and the other at the wine-press of Zeeb, so called after their names, Judg. vii. 25. *yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna*: kings of Midian, slain by Gideon, Judg. viii. 21.

Ver. 12. *Who said, &c.*] Not the kings and princes of Midian just mentioned, but the confederate enemies of Israel, named ver. 6, 7, 8. to whom the like things are wished as to the Midianites and others, because they said what follows: *let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession*; not only the temple, which was eminently the house of God, but all the habitations of the Israelites in Jerusalem, and other places, where the Lord vouchsafed to dwell; unless this should be ironically spoken by their enemies calling them so, because they pretended, as they reckoned it, to have and to hold them by the gift of God; whereas, of right, they belonged to them, at least some of them: such a claim was made by the Ammonites in the times of Jephtha, Judg. xi. 13. and to dispossess the Israelites was the intention of the Ammonites and Moabites in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 10, 11.

Ver. 13. *O my God, make them like a wheel, &c.*] Which, as the Targum adds, is rolled, and goes on, and rests not in a declivity; let them be as fickle and inconstant as a wheel; being in high, let them be in slippery places, and brought down to desolation in a moment; like a wheel set a-running down hill, so let them swiftly and suddenly come to ruin; or be in all kind of calamities, and continual troubles^k, as the wheel is always turning: some think there is an allusion to the wheel by which bread-corn was bruised; see Isa. xxviii. 28. Prov. xx. 26. but the word^l signifies a rolling thing before the wind, as a whisp of straw or stubble, which is easily carried away with it: Jarchi interprets it of the tops or down of thistles, which fly off from them, and roll up, and are scattered by the wind; see Isa. xvii. 13. and which agrees with what follows: *as the stubble before the wind*: which cannot stand before it, but is driven about by it here and there; and so wicked men are, as chaff and stubble, driven away in their wickedness, with the stormy wind of divine wrath and vengeance, and chased out of the world, which is here imprecated.

Ver. 14. *As the fire burneth the wood, &c.*] Or *forest*^m; which is sometimes done purposely, and sometimes through carelessness, as Virgilⁿ observes;

^b חרוב וקצו fuerunt brachium, Pagninus, Montanus; sunt brachium, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

¹ De locis Hebraicis, fol. 88. L. and 91. E.

^k Vide Suidam in voce Τροχός.

^l רמל rem in leuem quæ turbæ circumagitur, some in Amama;

pappos, i. e. lanuginem carduorum, so some in Grotius; as a rolling thing, Ainsworth.

^m ארץ sylvam, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

ⁿ Georgic. l. 2. v. 310.

and which is done very easily and swiftly, when fire is set to it; even all the trees of it, great and small, to which an army is sometimes compared, Isa. x. 18, 19. and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; either the mountains themselves, as *Ætna*, *Vesuvius*, and others; or rather the grass and trees that grow upon them, smitten by lightning from heaven, which may be meant by the flame: in like manner 'tis wished that the fire and flame of divine wrath would consume the confederate enemies of Israel, above mentioned; as wicked men are but as trees of the forest, and the grass of the mountains, or as thorns and briars, to the wrath of God, which is poured out as fire, and is signified by everlasting burnings.

Ver. 15. *So persecute them with thy tempest, &c.*] Pursue them with thy fury, follow them with thy vengeance; cause it to fall upon them like a mighty tempest: and make them afraid with thy storm; God has his storms and tempests of wrath and vengeance, which he sometimes causes to fall upon wicked men in this life, to their inexpressible terror, and with which he takes them out of this world; and he has still more horrible ones to rain upon them hereafter: see Job xxvii. 20, 21. Psal. xi. 6.

Ver. 16. *Fill their faces with shame, &c.*] For their sins, or rather through disappointment, not being able to put their desperate and deep-laid schemes into execution: or with lightness^o; instead of a weight of honour and glory upon them, let them be despised. R. Joseph Kimchi renders it, *fill their faces with fire*; let their faces be as if they were on fire, as men's faces are, who are put to an exceeding great blush, or are most sadly confounded and ashamed: *that they may seek thy name, O Lord*; not they themselves, who are filled with shame; for it is imprecated, that they be ashamed, and troubled for ever, and so as to perish, ver. 17. but others; for the words may be supplied, as

in ver. 18. *that men may seek thy name, or that thy name may be sought*: the judgments of God upon wicked men are sometimes the means of arousing others, and putting them upon seeking the Lord, his face, and his favour; that God would be merciful to them, pardon their iniquities, avert judgments from them, and preserve them from threatened calamities; and this is a good end, when answered; see Isa. xxvi. 9. 16.

Ver. 17. *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever, &c.*] As long as they are in this world, and to all eternity in another; a dreadful portion this: *yea, let them be put to shame, and perish*; wholly and eternally, in soul and body, for evermore.

Ver. 18. *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, &c.*] Or, *that thou, thy name alone is Jehovah* ^p, a self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the everlasting I AM, the immutable God; for this name is expressive of the being, eternity, and unchangeableness of God, who is, and was, and is to come, invariably the same, Rev. i. 4. which is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit, who are with the Father the one Jehovah, Deut. vi. 4. and to whom this name is given; see Exod. xvii. 6. compared with 1 Cor. x. 9. Isa. xl. 3. Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. vi. 8, 9. compared with Acts xxviii. 25, 26. but to the exclusion of all nominal and fictitious deities, the gods of the Heathens; and the being and perfections of God are known by the judgments he executes, Psal. ix. 16. art *the most High over all the earth*; or, *and that thou art, &c.* ^q, being the Maker and the Possessor of it, and the sovereign Lord of its inhabitants, doing in it what seems good in his sight; see Gen. xiv. 22. Dan. iv. 35. for the accents require two propositions in the text: the Heathens' give the title of most high to their supreme deity: the Targum is, "over all the inhabitants of the earth."

P S A L M LXXXIV.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

OF *gittith*, see the title of Psal. viii. The Targum renders it here, as there, "to praise upon the harp that was brought from Gath;" and of the sons of Korah, see the title of Psal. xliii. and the argument of this psalm is thought to be much the same with that and the lxiid. It was, very probably, written by David; to whom the Targum, on ver. 8, ascribes it; though it does not bear his name, the spirit it breathes, and the language in which it is written, shew it to be his; though not when he was an exile among the Philistines, in the times of Saul, as some in Kimchi think; for then the ark was not in Zion, as is suggested ver. 7. but elsewhere; for it was brought thither by David, after he was king of Israel, 2 Sam. vii. 2, 16. but rather when he fled from his son Absalom; though there is nothing in it that necessarily supposes him to be banished, or at a distance from the house of God; only

he expresses his great affection for it, and his earnest desires for returning seasons and opportunities of worshipping God in it; and the general view of it is to set forth the blessedness of such who frequently attend divine service: the inscription of it, in the Syriac version, is, "for the sons of Korah, when David meditated to go out of Zion, to worship in the house of God: and it is called a prophecy concerning Christ, and concerning his church," as it undoubtedly is. Bishop Patrick thinks it was composed by some pious Levite in the country, when Sennacherib's army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered them from waiting upon the service of God at the temple; and others refer it to the times of the Babylonish captivity; and both Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the captivity, when the temple and altars of God were in ruins; but this does not agree with the loveliness of

^o קלון Heb. levitate, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

^p מן שמך כי אתה תומו quod nomen tuum, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus.

^q Quod tu, inquam, sis altissimus, Michaelis.

^r Pausan. Bœotica sive, l. 9. p. 555.

them, in which they were at the time of writing this psalm.

Ver. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts* [Which were erected in the wilderness by Moses at the command of God, and brought into the land of Canaan, where the Lord took up his dwelling: here he was worshipped, and sacrifices offered to him; here he granted his presence, and commanded his blessing; here it was in David's time; for as yet the temple was not built: it is called *tabernacles*, in the plural number, because of its several parts: hence we read of a first and second tabernacle, Heb. ix. 2, 3. there was the holy place, and the holy of holies, besides the court of the people; unless it can be thought to refer to the tabernacle David had built for the ark in Zion, and to the old tabernacle which was at Gibeon, 2 Sam. vi. 17. 1 Chron. xxi. 19. the whole was a representation of the church of God, and the ordinances of it; which is the dwelling-place of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, where he is worshipped, his presence enjoyed, his word is preached, ordinances administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise offered up; on account of all which it is very *amiable*: what made the tabernacle of Moses lovely was not the outside, which was very mean, as the church of God outwardly is, through persecution, affliction, and poverty; but what was within, having many golden vessels in it, and those typical of things much more precious: moreover, here the priests were to be seen in their robes, doing their duty and service, and, at certain times, the high-priest in his rich apparel; here were seen the sacrifices slain and offered, by which the people were taught the nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and the necessity and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ; here the Levites were heard singing their songs, and blowing their trumpets: but much more amiable are the church of God and its ordinances in Gospel times, where Christ, the great High-priest, is seen in the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; where Zion's priests, or the ministers of the Gospel, stand clothed, being full fraught with salvation, and the tidings of it; where Christ is evidently set forth, as crucified and slain, in the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances; here the Gospel trumpet is blown, and its joyful sound echoed forth, and songs of love and grace are sung by all believers: besides, what makes these tabernacles still more lovely are, the presence of God here, so that they are no other than the house of God, and gate of heaven; the provisions that are here made, and the company that are here enjoyed; to which may be added, the properties of those dwellings; they are light-some, like the habitations of Israel in Goshen; they are healthful, no plague comes nigh them; the inhabitants of them are not sick; their sins are forgiven them; they are safe, sure, and quiet dwelling-places; see Isa. xxxii. 18. and xxxiii. 20, 24. and they are lovely to such, and to such only, who have seen the unamiableness of sin, and are sick of its tents, and of enjoying its fading pleasures, and to whom Christ is precious, and altogether lovely: these have an intense affection for him, and for his house, word,

worship, and ordinances, and with admiration say, *how amiable, &c.*

Ver. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, &c.* The courts of the tabernacle now at Gibeon, though the ark was in Zion, 2 Chron. i. 3—6. as the court of the priests, and the court of the Israelites, in which latter the people in common stood: after these David longed; he longed to enter into them, and stand in them, and worship God there; which soul-longings and hearty desires were the fruits and evidences of true grace, of being born again; so new-born souls desire the sincere milk of the word, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances, as a new-born babe desires its mother's milk and breast; and he even *fainted*, through disappointment, or length of time, being impatient of the returning season and opportunity of treading in them; see Psal. xlii. 1. and lxiii. 1. *my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God*; he not only inwardly desired, and secretly *fainted*, but audibly cried out in his distress, and verbally expressed, with great vehemence, his desire to enjoy the living God: it was not merely the courts, but God in them, that he wanted; even that God which has life in himself, with whom is the fountain of life; who gives life to others, natural, spiritual, and eternal, and in whose favour is life; yea, whose loving-kindness is better than life, and which was the thing longed and thirsted after: and these desires were the desires of the whole man, soul and body; not only he cried with his mouth and lips, signified by his *flesh*, but with his heart also, sincerely and heartily; his heart went along with his mouth.

Ver. 3. *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, &c.* One or other of the houses of men, where to build its nest; or its nest itself is called an house, as it seems to be explained in the next clause: the word here used signifies any bird; we translate it a *sparrow*, and so Kimchi; the Targum renders it the *dove*; but the Midrash is, "it is not said as a dove, but as a sparrow: the dove takes its young, and returns to its place; not so the sparrow:" and the *swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young*; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have it the *turtle*, the stock, or ring-dove: and so the Targum, which paraphrases this clause, in connexion with the following, thus: "and the turtle a nest for herself, whose young are fit to be offered up upon thine altars:" it is translated a swallow in Prov. xxvi. 2. and has its name in Hebrew from liberty, it not loving confinement, or because it freely visits the houses of men without fear: even *thine altars, O Lord of hosts*; that is, as some understand it, there the swallow builds a nest, and lays her young; but it can hardly be thought that this could be done in them, since the priests were so often officiating at them, and there were so much noise, fire, and smoke there; it must be at the sides of them, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, or near unto them; or rather in the rafters of the house where they were; and the rafters and beams of the temple were of cedar, and in such turtles have their nests; or in the houses adjoining to the tabernacle; or in the trees that might be near it; see

* Vide Theocrit. Idyl. 5.

Josh. xxiv. 26. and so the psalmist seems to envy and grudge the place these birds had, and wishes he had the same nearness as they. Kimchi observes, that if this is to be understood of David, when in the land of the Philistines, at that time high places and altars were lawful everywhere, and there birds might build their nests; but if of the captivity, the birds found a place and built their nests in the ruins of the temple and altars; and so Jarchi; for as for the temple, it was not built in the times of David; besides, when built, had a scare-crow on it: though the words may be considered as in connexion with ver. 3. and what goes before be read in a parenthesis, as they are by R. Judah Ben Balaam, cited by R. Aben Ezra; *my soul longeth for the courts of the Lord—crieth out for the living God: even thine altars, O Lord of hosts; that is, for them; or may be supplied thus, I desire thine altars, O Lord of hosts*: as the birds above mentioned seek for a nest, and desire to find one, and have what they want, and nature prompts them to; so I desire a place in thine house and courts, and near thine altars; see Matt. viii. 20. or thus; as these birds rejoice, when they have found an house or nest for themselves and young; so should I rejoice, might I be favoured once more with attendance on thine altars, O Lord of hosts: mention is made of altars, referring both to the altar of burnt-sacrifice, and the altar of incense, both typical of Christ, Heb. xiii. 10. and of his sacrifice and intercession; both which believers have to do with: 'tis added, *my King, and my God*; when, by attending at his tabernacle, courts, and altars, he would testify his subjection to him as his King, and his faith in him, and thankfulness to him, as his God; see John xx. 28.

Ver. 4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, &c.*] The house of God, in his tabernacles and courts; referring to the priests and Levites, who were frequently officiating there, in their turns, night and day; and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Gibeon, where the ark and tabernacle were, who had frequent opportunities of attendance on divine worship: and happy are those who have a name and place in the church of God, who abide there, and never go out; see Psal. lxxv. 4. the Targum is, "blessed are the righteous, &c." and the Arabic version, *blessed are all they that dwell, &c.* they are happy on account of their settlement, and also on account of their work, as follows: *they will be still praising thee. Selah*; which is delightful employment; for praise is pleasant and comely; and in which they are continually and constantly engaged, as their mercies return upon them, as they do every day; and especially on Lord's days, or at the stated times of public worship; such will bless and praise the Lord, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, as long as they live; see Heb. xiii. 15.

Ver. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, &c.*] Or, *for thee*, as some choose to render the words; who have bodily strength from the Lord, for his worship and service, to go up to his house, and serve him: this, with what follows in the two next verses, seem

to refer to the males in Israel going up from different parts of the land to Jerusalem to worship, who had strength so to do; when the women and children, for want thereof, stayed at home, which was their infelicity, as it was the happiness of the males that they had ability for such a journey and service: the Targum is, "whose strength is in thy Word;" the essential Word, the Messiah, who have spiritual strength in and from him; see Isa. xlv. 24. without this there is no heart to go up to the house of God; and this will carry through a great deal of bodily weakness; and by it saints overcome the temptations of Satan to the contrary, and perform the several duties of religion: *in whose heart are the ways of them; or thy ways*; the ways of God, the ways of Zion, the ways to the house of God; who have these ways at heart, who ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards; who have not only ability, but inclination and readiness of mind, to walk in them; whose hearts are bent upon them, regarding no objection, difficulty, and discouragement; who stir up themselves and others to go up to the house of God, and are heartily desirous of being taught his ways, and walking in them, and take great pleasure and delight therein; they are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace to them; the word properly signifies *highways*, ways cast up. Some render it *ascensions in his heart*; the affections of whose heart go up to God, like pillars of smoke perfumed with frankincense, are after God, his ways and worship, and are set on things above.

Ver. 6. *Who passing through the valley of Baca, &c.*] Kimchi interprets it a valley of springs, or fountains, taking the word to be of the same signification as in Job xxxviii. 16. and mention being made of a well and pools in it, or of mulberry-trees, which grow, as he says, in a place where there is no water, and such a place was this; and therefore pools or ditches were dug in it, and built of stone, to catch rain-water for the supply of travellers; and so Aben Ezra says, it is the name of a place or valley where were trees, called mulberries; and is by some thought to be the same with the valley of Rephaim, where we read of mulberry-trees, 2 Sam. v. 22, 23. the Septuagint render it *the valley of weeping*, and the Vulgate Latin version *the valley of tears*; which have led some interpreters to think of Bochim, a place so called from the children of Israel weeping there, Judg. ii. 1, 5. it does not seem to design any particular place, through which all the males could not pass from the different parts of the land of Israel, as they came to Zion at the three grand festivals; but any difficult and troublesome place, any rough valley, or dry and thirsty land, where there was no water: so saints are passengers, travellers, or pilgrims, in this world, and often pass through a valley; are in a low valley, through the weakness of grace; a rough one, through affliction; and a dark one, through desertion and temptation; and a valley of weeping and tears, on account both of outward and inward trials. The way to Zion, or to the house and ordinances of God below, lies through the valley of weeping; none come rightly thither but who come weeping over their

¹ To drive away birds, or to destroy them, Misn. Middot, c. 4. v. 6. Maimon. & Bartenora, in ib.

² So Noldius, p. 23.

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³ Semite tua, Tigurine version; so Kimchi.

⁴ מַסְלֵלוֹת *via stratae*, Montanus, Cocceus.

⁵ Ascensiones in corde suo, V. L. so Sept.

sins and unworthiness; or by repentance towards God, and by looking by faith to Christ whom they have pierced, and mourning for it; see Jer. 1. 4, 5. and the way to Zion above lies through a vale of tears, shed in plenty by reason of sin, a man's own, original and actual, the sins of professors and profane, by reason of Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the distresses, divisions, and declensions of Zion; yet relief is afforded, succour is given, refreshment is had, in this valley, for such passengers: *they make it a well*; either the valley a well with their tears, an hyperbolic expression, like that in Lam. ii. 18. or they account it as such, a dry valley, as if it was a well-watered place; look upon all their toil and labour in going to the house of God as a pleasure; and esteem all reproach, afflictions, and persecutions, they meet with from the world, or relations, for the sake of religion, as riches and honours; or they find a supply, which is kindly and graciously given, even rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys, streams of divine love, and precious promises in a wilderness, Isa. xli. 18. and xxxv. 6. or *make him a well*^a: that is, God himself; they account of him as such; they find him to be so, and make use of him as one, who is a well of living waters; such are his love, his covenant, and his grace; such are his Son and his fulness, his Spirit, the gifts and graces of it; all which yield a rich supply: *the rain also filleth the pools*: of the word and ordinances: or *the rain covereth with blessings*^b; the rain of divine love covers the passengers with spiritual blessings, which flow from it; Christ, whose coming is compared to the rain, brings a train of blessings with him to his people; and the Gospel, which drops as the rain, and distils as the dew, is full of the blessings of Christ; is a glorious revelation of them, and is the means of conveying them to the saints; or *the teacher covereth*, or is *covered with blessings*^c; the great Teacher of all, God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father teaches all his children to great profit and advantage, and covers or blesses them with all spiritual blessings; the Son is a teacher come from God, and is covered or prevented with the blessings of goodness, and communicates them to his disciples and followers; and the Spirit teacheth all things, and takes of the things of Christ, the blessings of his grace, and covers his people with them; and all under-teachers, ministers of the Gospel, are clothed with salvation, and come forth in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 7. *They go from strength to strength, &c.*] Whose strength is in the Lord, and in whose heart are his ways, and who pass through the valley of Baca, and find a well of supply, and pools of blessings there; they renew their spiritual strength; they grow stronger and stronger every step they take; the way of the Lord is strength unto them: or *from army to army*, or *from company to company*^d, as Kimchi, alluding to the com-

panies in which they went up to the feasts; see Luke ii. 44. when those who were more zealous, or more able to undergo journeys, would outgo the rest, and first overtake one company, and then another, and get to Zion first: or *from victory to victory*: first overcoming one enemy, and then another, as sin, Satan, and the world, being more than conquerors through him that has loved them: or *from doctrine to doctrine*^e; being led first into one truth, and then into another, as they were able to bear them; and so following on to know the Lord, and increasing in the knowledge of him: or *from class to class*^f; from the lower to an higher form in the school of Christ; so Jarchi interprets it, from school to school; and the Targum, from the sanctuary to the school; compare with this Rom. i. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 18. every one of them *in Zion appeareth before God*; three times in the year, but not empty, Exod. xxxiv. 20, 23, 24. so the saints appear before God in his church below, presenting their persons, souls and bodies, prayers and praises, as holy and spiritual sacrifices unto him; than which nothing is more desirable to them. This is the wished-for happiness, and the issue of their travel, toil, and labour; see Psal. xlii. 2. and they shall appear before him, and in his presence, in the church above; when Christ shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory, and be like him, and see him as he is; even every one of them, not one shall be wanting; because he is great in power, not one of them shall fail; and he'll present them to his father, saying, *lo, I and the children thou hast given me*: some render the words, *the God of gods will appear, or be seen in Zion*^g; there Jehovah manifests himself, and grants his gracious presence; this is the mount of the Lord, in which he is and shall be seen, Gen. xxii. 14.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer, &c.*] For the redemption of the captives, says Kimchi; for the building of the house, the temple, according to Jarchi; but rather for the courts of God, an opportunity of attending them, and for the presence of God in them; see ver. 2. in which he might hope to succeed, from the consideration of the Lord's being the God of hosts, or armies, in heaven and in earth; and so was able to do every thing for him, and more for him than he could ask or think; his arm was not shortened, nor his ear heavy, Isa. lix. 1. and as this character is expressive of his power, the following is of his grace: *give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah*; he being the covenant-God of the people of Israel in general, and of David in particular; from whence he might comfortably conclude he would give ear to him, and it carries in it an argument why he should.

Ver. 9. *Behold, O God our shield, &c.*] Which may be considered either as the character of God, who is addressed, who was David's shield, and the shield of his people, to protect and defend them from

^a מַעֲיֵן יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה פִּתְּמֵי מַעֲיֵן יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה eum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth; Deum ipsum, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^b מַעֲיֵן יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה quæ in benedictionibus operit pluvia, Cocceius.

^c Benedictionibus operietur docens, Montanus; benedictiones induit doctor, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Gussetius, p. 725.

^d מַעֲיֵן יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה de exercitu in exercitum, Pagninus; so Piscator, Junius & Tremellius; de turma ad turmam, Vatablus, Cocceius.

^e De doctrina ad doctrinam, so some in Vatablus.

^f Ex cohorte, vel classe rudiorem & infirmiorum, ad classem adiutorium, Gussetius, p. 725.

^g בְּעֵינַי רִאָּה אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵינַי videbitur Deus deorum in Sijon, Pagninus Montanus; videtur Deus deorum in Sion, Musculus; so Sept. and Eth.

their enemies, and is the shield of all the saints; this favour encompasses them as a shield, and his truth is their shield and buckler; his veracity and faithfulness, in keeping covenant and promises; and so is his power, by which they are kept unto salvation; see Psal. iii. 3. and v. 12. and xci. 4. or else it belongs to other persons and things the psalmist desires God would behold, in agreement with the following clause. Jarchi interprets it of the house of the sanctuary, as a shield unto them; much better Aben Ezra of the king their protector; and makes the sense of the petition to be, that God would save our king; it is best to apply it to Christ, afterwards called a sun and shield; see on ver. 11. and to whom the following clause belongs: *and look upon the face of thine anointed*; meaning either himself, David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, who was anointed with oil, in a literal sense, king of Israel, by the appointment and order of the Lord himself; and his request is, that God would look upon his outward state and condition, which was a distressed and an afflicted one, with an eye of pity and compassion, he being deprived of sanctuary-worship and service, and of the presence of God there; see Psal. cxxxii. 1. or rather he has a view to the Messiah, the Lord's Christ, or Anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, anointed with the oil of gladness, the grace of the Spirit, without measure; and so the sense is, that though he and his petitions were unworthy of notice, yet he entreats that God would look upon his Son the Messiah, and for his sake hear and answer him; look upon his person, and accept him in him, the Beloved; upon his future obedience and righteousness, and impute it to him; upon his sufferings, and death he was to endure, to save him from his sins; upon his blood to be shed for the remission of them, as he had looked upon the blood of the passover, upon the door-posts of the Israelites, and saved them when he destroyed the first-born of Egypt; and upon his sacrifice, which is of a sweet-smelling savour; and upon his fulness, for the supply of his wants. Kimchi takes it to be a prayer for the speedy coming of the Messiah.

Ver. 10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand, &c.*] *One-day*; so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it; one day in the house of God, in the world to come, so Arama; though rather reference is had to the seventh-day sabbath, then in being; and which with the psalmist was a delight, holy and honourable; and though now abolished, as to the time of it, with the rest of the ceremonial law, there is yet a day of public worship, called the Lord's day, and the day of the Son of man; and one of these days spent in the courts of the Lord, in an attendance on the word and ordinances, in worshipping in the fear of God, in spirit and in truth; in divine service, assisted by the spirit of God, doing every thing in faith, from love, and with a view to the glory of God; a day thus spent in religious exercises is *better than a thousand*; that is, than a thou-

sand days; not than a thousand days spent in like manner, but than a thousand other days, common days of the week; or than a thousand in other places, especially in places of sin, and in the company of wicked men; one day in God's house employed in spiritual exercises, and enjoying communion with him, is better than a thousand days in any of the houses of Satan, of sinful pleasure, or in the houses of sinful men; better as to peace of mind, solid pleasure, real profit, and true honour: *I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God*; in the meanest post and place there; alluding to the Levites, who were some of them porters, and kept the doors of the Lord's house, 1 Chron. xxvi. 1. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. or to the beggars that lay at the gates of the temple for alms; see Acts iii. 1, 2. or to be fixed to the door-post of it, alluding to the servant that was desirous of continuing in his master's house, and serving him for ever; who was brought to the door-post, and had his ears bored through with an awl, Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Such a willing servant was the psalmist; and this sense the Targum seems to incline to, which renders it, "I have chose to cleave to the house of the sanctuary of God;" or to be a waiter there, to watch daily at Wisdom's gates, and to wait at the posts of her doors; such lie in the way of conversion, and of finding Christ; in the way of spiritual healing, as the man at the pool; and of spiritual instruction, and of spiritual strength, and an increase of it: or to be, or sit, upon the threshold; or to be *thresholding*^l of it; that is, to frequent the house of God, to be often going over the threshold of it; this the psalmist took delight to do, even to be the threshold^k itself, for men to tread upon as they go into the house of God: *than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*; meaning not houses built by wicked men, or with money ill got; but where wicked men dwell, and who were so bad as to be called wickedness itself; perhaps the psalmist might have in his mind the tents of Kedar, where he had sometimes been; see Psal. cxx. 5. now to live in the meanest place in the house of God, to wait at the door as a porter, to lie there as a beggar, to sit upon the threshold, and much more to go often over it, or be that itself, was abundantly preferable than to dwell *an age*^l in the house of princes and great men, being wicked; than to live in the most pompous manner, at ease and in plenty, enjoying all the good things of life that heart can wish for; one hour's communion with God in his house is better than all this, and that for the reason following.

Ver. 11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield, &c.*] Christ is the *sun of righteousness*, and it is in the house of God that he arises upon his people with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2. he's like the sun, the great light, the fountain of light, the light of the world, that dispels darkness, makes day, and gives light to all the celestial bodies, moon and stars, church and ministers; he is a *sun* to enlighten his people with the light of grace, to warm them with the beams of his love, to cheer and refresh their souls with the light of his countenance, and to make them fruitful and flourish-

ⁱ חסותו esse in limine, Pagninus, Montanus; ad limen esse, Musculus; desidere ad limen, Tigurine version, Vatablus, so Ainsworth; frequentare limen, Junius & Tremellius; commorari limen, Piscator; ad limen stare, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^k Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 565.

^l דרך quam aetatem agere, Piscator; vel aetatem omnem agere, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ing: and he is a *shield* to protect them from all their enemies; he is the shield of faith, or which faith makes use of, against the temptations of Satan; he is the shield of salvation, and his salvation is a shield which shelters from divine justice, and secures from wrath to come: *the Lord will give grace and glory*: he gives converting grace, the first grace, and all after-supplies of it; he gives sanctifying grace, all sorts of it, faith, hope, love, and every other; he gives justifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace, and all freely; he gives honour and glory among men, fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians; and he gives eternal glory, the glory his Father gave him, the crown of glory, life, and righteousness: this is the gift of God through Christ; Christ gives a right unto it, meetness for it, and the thing itself; and in his house and ordinances, as he gives more grace to the humble waiters upon him, so he encourages and increases their hope of glory; and he that gives the one will certainly give the other; for these two are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall enjoy the other: *no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*; that walk by faith, and on in Christ, as they have received him; who have their conversation according to the Gospel of Christ, and walk in the

uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; from such the Lord will not withhold any good thing he has purposed for them, promised to them, or laid up for them in covenant; no spiritual good thing appertaining to life and godliness, and no temporal blessing that is good for them; he'll deny them no good thing they ask of him, not any thing that is good for them; and he'll not draw back any good things he has bestowed on them, his gifts are without repentance.

Ver. 12. *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee, &c.*] For grace and glory, and every good thing; that trusts in the Lord at all times, and not in the creature, or in an arm of flesh; but in the Lord of hosts and armies, in whom is everlasting strength, and is the sun and shield of his people: happy are such that trust in him, whether they have ability or opportunity of going up to the house of the Lord, or not; they are happy that have and make use thereof, and so are they that trust in the Lord, whether they have or no; they are safe, being as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; and do and shall enjoy perfect peace and solid comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter; see Jer. xvii. 5, 7. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. The Targum is, "blessed is the man that trusteth in thy Word;" in Christ, the essential Word.

P S A L M LXXXV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

THIS psalm is generally thought to have been composed after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon; and yet when they were in some distress from their neighbours, either in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, or in the times of Antiochus; but then this deliverance from captivity must be considered as typical of redemption by Christ; for as the title of the Syriac version is, "it is a prophecy concerning Christ;" it speaks of his dwelling in the land, of his salvation being near, and of the glory of the divine perfections as displayed in it; and perhaps some parts of it may respect the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; and Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, it is concerning the captivity of Babylon, yet also of their present captivity.

Ver. 1. *Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land, &c.*] The land of Canaan, which the Lord chose for the people of Israel, and put them into the possession of it; and where he himself chose to dwell, and had a sanctuary built for him; and therefore though the whole earth is his, yet this was his land and inheritance in a peculiar manner, as it is called, Jer. xvi. 18. the inhabitants of it are meant, to whom the Lord was favourable, or whom he graciously accepted, and was well-pleased with and delighted in, as appears by his choosing them above all people to be his people; by bringing them out of Egyptian bondage, by leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, by feeding and protecting them there; and by bringing them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, and settling them in it; and by many

temporal blessings, and also spiritual ones, as his word and ordinances; but especially by sending his own Son, the Messiah and Saviour, unto them; and which perhaps is what is here principally intended: *thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob*; or, *the captives* of Jacob; in a temporal sense, both out of Egypt, and out of Babylon; and in a spiritual sense from sin, Satan, and the law; the special people of God often go by the name of Jacob, and these are captives to the above mentioned; and redemption by Christ is a deliverance of them from their captivity, or a bringing of it back, for he has led captivity captive; and in consequence of this they are put into a state of freedom, liberty is proclaimed to these captives, and they are delivered, and all as the fruit and effect of divine favour.

Ver. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, &c.*] Took it from them, and laid it on Christ, who has bore it, and took it away, so as it shall never return more to their destruction; and by the application of his blood it is taken away from their own consciences; for this denotes the manifestation and discovery of forgiveness to themselves; it is a branch of redemption, and is in consequence of it; and is a fruit of the free favour and good will of God through Christ; and it only belongs to the Lord's special people, the people he has taken into covenant with him, and for whose iniquity Christ was stricken: *thou hast covered all their sin. Selah*; this is but another phrase for forgiveness, see Psal. xxxii. 1. and this is done by the blood and righteousness, and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, the

מִבְּרִיתָא captivam turbam, Junius & Tremellius; i. e. captivos, Gejerus, Michaelis.

antitypical mercy-seat, the covering of the law and its transgressions, and the people of God from its curse and condemnation; whose sins are so covered by Christ, as not to be seen by the eye of avenging justice, even all of them, not one remains uncovered.

Ver. 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, &c.]* Or gathered ^a it; sin occasions wrath, and the people of God are as deserving of it as others; but the Lord has gathered it up, and poured it forth upon his son, and their surety; hence nothing of this kind shall ever fall upon them, either here or hereafter; and it is taken away from them, so as to have no sense, apprehension, or conscience of it, which before the law had wrought in them, when pardon is applied unto them, which is what is here meant; see Isa. xii. 1. *thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger*: the anger of God is very fierce against sin and sinners; it is poured forth like fire, and there's no abiding it; but, with respect to the Lord's people, it is pacified by the death of his son; or he is pacified towards them for all that they have done, for the sake of his righteousness and sacrifice; and which appears to them when he manifests his love and pardoning grace to their souls; see Ezek. xvi. 63.

Ver. 4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation, &c.]* Who appointed it in his purposes, contrived it in council, secured it in covenant, and sent his son to effect it; the prayer to him is for converting grace, either at first, for first conversion is his work, and his only; or after backslidings, for he it is that restores the souls of his people; and perhaps it is a prayer of the Jews, for their conversion in the latter day; when sensible of sin, and seeking after the Messiah they have rejected, when the Lord will turn them to himself, and turn away iniquity from them, and they shall be saved, Hos. iii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 16. Rom. xi. 26. *and cause thine anger towards us to cease*: the manifest tokens of which are now upon them, being scattered up and down in the world, and made a proverb, a taunt, and a jeer; but will be removed, and cease, when they shall be converted.

Ver. 5. *Will thou be angry with us for ever? &c.]* God is angry with the wicked every day, their life being a continued series of sin, without repentance for it, or confession of it; and he will be so for ever, of which they will have a constant sense and feeling; and is the worm that never dies, and the fire that is inextinguishable; but he does not retain his anger for ever with his own people; though he is displeased with them, and chastises them for their sins, his anger endures but for a moment; he is pacified towards them, and turns away his anger from them, by discovering his pardoning love, and withdrawing his afflicting hand: *will thou draw out thine anger to all generations?* out of his heart, where it is supposed to be conceived; and out of his treasury, where it is thought to be laid up: this has been drawn out to a great length of time upon the Jewish nation; it has been upon them for almost seventeen centuries, or ages, and still remains, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; but it will not be drawn out to *all* ages or generations;

for they shall return to the Lord, and seek him; and he will come to them, and turn away iniquity from them, and so all Israel shall be saved.

Ver. 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, &c.]* Their return from the Babylonish captivity was a reviving of them in their bondage, Ezra ix. 8, 9. and the conversion of them in the latter day will be a reviving them again, be as life from the dead; they are like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, or like the dead in the graves; and their being turned to the Lord will be a resurrection, or quickening of them, as every instance of conversion is; see Rom. xi. 15. Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10. men are dead in trespasses and sins, and they are quickened by the spirit and grace of God, so that they revive, and live a life of sanctification; they are dead in law, and find themselves to be so, when spiritually enlightened; when the spirit of God works faith in them, to look to and live upon the righteousness of Christ for justification; and who, after spiritual decays, declensions, and deadness, are revived again, and are made cheerful and comfortable by the same spirit; all which may be here intended: *that thy people may rejoice in thee*; it was a time of rejoicing in the Lord, when the Jews were returned from their captivity in Babylon; but their future conversion will be matter of greater joy, both to themselves and to the Gentiles; everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and in their hearts, when they shall return to Zion, Psal. xiv. 7. Isa. xxxv. 10. and so is the conversion of every sinner joyful to himself and to others; such rejoice in Christ, in his person, blood, and righteousness; and every view of him afterwards, as it is a reviving time, it fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: the Targum is, "and thy people shall rejoice in thy Word;" Christ, the essential Word.

Ver. 7. *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, &c.]* Or *thy grace* ^o and goodness, the riches of which are shewn forth in Christ; the mercy promised to Abraham and others, long expected, wished, and prayed for; his pardoning mercy, justification, salvation, and eternal life, by his free grace: *and grant us thy salvation*; Jesus, the Saviour, and salvation by him, an interest in it, and the joys of it; which is all a free gift, a grant of divine favour, and not according to the merits and works of men.

Ver. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, &c.]* This the psalmist says in the name of the people of the Jews, whom he represents, in all the foregoing expostulations and petitions, refusing to be still and quiet, and wait and listen for an answer to the above request from the Lord, who speaks by his providences, word, and spirit; see Hab. ii. 1. *for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints*; as he does in his word, which is the Gospel of peace; and by his ministers, who bring the good tidings of it, and publish it; and by the blood and righteousness of his son, which both procure, call for, and produce it; and by his spirit, the fruit of which is peace: it is an answer of peace, or of good and comfortable words, that the Lord returns to his people sooner or later; and it is only to his own people he speaks peace, to his cove-

^a מַדְבַּח collegisti, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^o מַדְבַּח bonitatem tuam, Tigurine version, Musculus; benignitatem tuam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; gratiam tuam, Cocceius, Gejerus.

nant-ones, with whom the covenant of peace is made; and to his saints, his holy ones, whom he has set apart for himself, and sanctified by his spirit: as for the wicked, there is no peace unto them, nor any spoken to them by him: Kimchi understands by the *saints* the godly among the Gentiles, as distinct from the Lord's people, the Jews: *but let them not turn again to folly*; to doubt of and question the providence of God; so *Árama*; or to idolatry, which there was danger of, upon the Jews' return from Babylon; and it is observable, that they afterwards never did return to it, to which they were so much addicted before; or to a vicious course of life, to sin and iniquity, which is the greatest folly, after mercy has been shewn; or to self-righteousness, and a dependence on it, to the neglect of Christ and his righteousness, which is the great folly of the Jews to this day; and when the Lord shall quicken them, and convert them, slew them his mercy and salvation, speak peace and pardon to them, it would be very ungrateful in them to turn again to this folly.

Ver. 9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, &c.*] That have a true sense of sin and folly, are humbled for it, hate it, and depart from it, and don't return unto it; have a reverential affection for God, a sense of his goodness, particularly his pardoning grace and mercy, and fear him on account of it, and to offend him; and that serve him with reverence and godly fear: to these his salvation is nigh; temporal salvation, for that is his, it is of him, and from him; and he is a present help in time of trouble: spiritual and eternal salvation is his; it is of his contriving, settling, appointing, and giving; and was now near being accomplished by Christ; who also may be meant by God's salvation, being the Saviour of his providing, choosing, and sending, who, in a short time, would appear, and suddenly come to his temple, as Haggai and Malachi foretold, and as was fixed by Daniel's weeks, Hagg. ii. 6, 7. Mal. iii. 1. Dan. ix. 24. and therefore the psalmist speaks of it with the utmost certainty; *surely*; verily of a truth it is so; there can be no dispute about it; for this psalm, as is generally thought, was written after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; so that the coming of the Saviour was at hand, and the impetration of salvation not afar off; and the revelation of it in the Gospel was just ready to be made, or in a little time; see Isa. lvi. 1. and this may be said to be nigh to sensible sinners, when it is brought unto them by the Gospel, and applied to their hearts by the spirit of God, and they see their interest in it, the full possession of which in heaven is still nearer than when they believed; but then it is only so to them that fear the Lord; not to the wicked, from whom it is afar off, Psal. cxix. 155. this character seems to design converted persons among the Gentiles, as well as among the Jews; see Acts xiii. 26. and x. 35. *that glory may dwell in our land*; Christ, who is the brightness of his father's glory, having the same nature, names, worship, and honour; whose glory is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and who also is the glory of his people Israel; who, when he was incarnate, dwelt among

men, particularly in the land of Judea, where the writer of this psalm dwelt, and therefore calls it *our land*; and though his appearance was then but mean, in the form of a servant, yet he had a glory, which was manifest in his doctrine and miracles; and he was the Lord of glory, even when he was crucified; see Heb. i. 3. John i. 14. Luke ii. 32. Phil. ii. 6, 7. 1 Cor. ii. 8. or else the Gospel may be meant, which has a glory in it excelling that of the law; it containing glorious truths, and glorious promises; and which is the glory of a land where it is, and, when it departs, an *Ichabod* may be written on it: this came in consequence of Christ, the Saviour, and salvation by him, which it is a revelation of; and dwelt and abode in the land of Judea, till it was utterly despised and rejected: the whole of Gospel worship and ordinances may be intended also, together with a holy life and conversation becoming it.

Ver. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together, &c.*] Or *grace and truth*^p, which are in Christ, and come by him; and so may be said to meet in him, the glorious Person, the Author of salvation, before mentioned, John i. 14, 17. these may be considered as perfections in God, displayed in salvation by Christ: *mercy* is the original of it; it is owing to that that the day-spring from on high visited us, or glory dwelt in our land, or Christ was sent and came to work salvation for us; 'twas pity to the lost human race which moved God to send him, and him to come, who is the merciful as well as faithful High-priest, and who in his love and pity redeemed us; and though there was no mercy shewn to him, he not being spared in the least, yet there was to us; and which appears in the whole of our salvation, and in every part of it, in our regeneration, pardon, and eternal life; see Luke i. 72, 78. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 3. Psal. li. 1. Jude, ver. 21. or *grace*, the exceeding riches of which are shewn forth in the kindness of God to us, through Christ; and to which our salvation, in whole and in part, is to be attributed, Ephes. ii. 7, 8. *truth* may signify the veracity and faithfulness of God, in his promises and threatenings: his promises have their true and full accomplishment in Christ, Luke i. 72. Rom. xv. 8. 2 Cor. i. 20. so have his threatenings of death to sinful men, he being the surety for them, Gen. ii. 17. Phil. ii. 8. and so mercy is shewn to man, and God is true to his word: *righteousness and peace have kissed each other*; as friends at meeting used to do: *righteousness* may intend the essential justice of God, which will not admit of the pardon and justification of a sinner, without a satisfaction; wherefore Christ was set forth to be the propitiation for sin, to declare and manifest the righteousness of God, his strict justice; that he might be just, and appear to be so, when he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; and Christ's blood being shed, and his sacrifice offered up, he is just and faithful to forgive sin, and cleanse from all unrighteousness, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Rom. iii. 25, 26. 1 John i. 9. and thus the law being magnified, and made honourable by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, an everlasting righteousness being brought in, and justice entirely satisfied, there is *peace* on earth, and good will to men: peace

with God is made by Christ the peacemaker, and so the glory of divine justice is secured and peace with God for men obtained, in a way consistent with it, Luke ii. 14. and Christ's righteousness being imputed and applied to men, and received by faith, produces a conscience-peace, an inward peace of mind, which passeth all understanding, Rom. v. i. and xiv. 17. Phil. iv. 7.

Ver. 11. *Truth shall spring out of the earth, &c.*] Either the Gospel, the word of truth, which sprung up at once in the land of Judea, as if it came out of the earth; and from Zion and Jerusalem it came forth into the Gentile world: or else the truth of grace God desires in the inward parts, and which springs up in such who are like cultivated earth, or good ground, being made so by the spirit and grace of God, particularly the grace of *faith*; by which some render the word⁴ here, which springs up in the heart, and, with it, man believes to righteousness: or rather Christ himself, who is *the way, the truth, and the life*; who, though he is the Lord from heaven, yet may be said, with respect to his incarnation, to spring out of the earth, he taking flesh of the virgin: hence his human nature is said to be *curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth*; and that *new thing created in the earth*, Psal. cxxxix. 15. Jer. xxxi. 22. and *righteousness shall look down from heaven*; the justice of God, or the righteous God, shall look down from heaven on Christ, the truth, in our nature on earth, with pleasure beholding his obedience, sufferings and death, sacrifice and righteousness; being well-pleased with him, and with all he did and suffered, and with all his people, considered in him: these upright and righteous ones his countenance beholds with delight, as they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, washed in his

blood, and their sins expiated by his sacrifice, and as they are hoping in his mercy, and trusting in his son.

Ver. 12. *Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, &c.*] Meaning not merely temporal good, as rain in particular, as some think, because of the following clause; but that which is spiritually good, his good spirit and his grace, grace and glory: nor will he withhold any good thing from his people; every good and perfect gift comes from him: *and our land shall yield her increase*; such who are like to the earth, which receives blessing of God, and oft drinks in the rain that comes upon it, and brings forth herbs to the dresser of it, Heb. vi. 2. these increase with the increase of God, bring forth fruits of righteousness, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; though the whole may be interpreted of the incarnation of Christ, which agrees with what goes before and follows after; see Psal. lxxvii. 6, 7.

Ver. 13. *Righteousness shall go before him, &c.*] The incarnate Saviour, the increase of our land, and fruit of the virgin's womb; and righteousness may be put for a righteous person, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and may design John the Baptist, a holy and just man, Mark vi. 20. who was the forerunner and harbinger of Christ, went before him, and prepared the way for him, Luke i. 76. Isa. xl. 3. and *shall set us in the way of his steps*; the business of John the Baptist being not only to prepare the way of Christ by his doctrine and baptism, but to guide the feet of his people into the way of peace; or to direct them to believe in Christ, and to be followers of him, the Lamb of God, whithersoever he went; who has left an example of grace and duty, that we should tread in his steps, Luke i. 79. the Targum renders it, *in the good way*; and such a way John taught men to walk in.

P S A L M LXXXVI.

A Prayer of David.

THE title is the same with the 17th Psalm, and the subject of it is much alike: it was written by David, when in distress, and his life was sought after; very likely when he was persecuted by Saul, and fled from him; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi: and as he was a type of Christ in his afflictions, as well as in his exalted state, it may not be unfitly applied to him, as it is by some interpreters. The Syriac inscription of it is, "for David, when he built an house for the Lord; and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles; and "moreover, a prayer of a peculiar righteous man." Theodoret thinks it predicts the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, and Hezekiah's hope in God.

Ver. 1. *Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me, &c.*] This is spoken of God after the manner of men, who, when they listen and attentively hearken to what is said to them, stoop and bow the head, and incline the ear; and it denotes condescension in the Lord, who humbles himself as to look upon men, so to bow down the ear and hearken to them: this favour is granted to

the saints, to whom he is a God hearing and answering prayer, and which Christ, as man and Mediator, enjoyed; see Heb. v. 7. John xi. 41, 42. *for I am poor and needy*; weak and feeble, destitute and distressed, and so wanted help and assistance; and which carries in it an argument or reason enforcing the above petition; for the Lord has a regard to the poor and needy; see Psal. vi. 2. and xii. 5. and xxxv. 10. This may be understood literally, it being the common case of the people of God, who are generally the poor and needy of this world, whom God chooses, calls, and makes his own; and so was David when he fled from Saul, being often in want of temporal mercies, as appears by his application to Ahimelech and Nabal for food; and having nothing, as Kimchi observes, to support him, but what his friends, and the men of Judah, privately helped him to; and the character well agrees with Christ, whose case this was; see 2 Cor. viii. 9. Matt. viii. 20. Luke viii. 2, 3. Moreover, it may be taken in a spiritual sense; all men are poor and needy, though

⁴ פָּדָה אֵדָה. Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius.

not sensible of it; good men are poor in spirit, are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to the Lord, and to the throne of his grace, for the supply of their need; and such an one was David, even when he was king of Israel, as well as at this time, Psal. xl. 17. and may be applied to Christ, especially when destitute of his Father's gracious presence, and was forsaken by him and all his friends, Matt. xxvii. 46. and xxvi. 56.

Ver. 2. *Preserve my soul, &c.*] Or *life*, which Saul sought after; and this prayer was heard: David was often remarkably preserved by the Lord from his attempts upon him; and so was the soul or life of Christ preserved in his infancy from Herod's malice; in the wilderness from wild beasts, and from perishing with hunger; and often from the designs of the Jews, to take away his life before his time; and he was supported in death, preserved from corruption in the grave, and raised from thence: instances there are of his praying for the preservation of his life, with submission to the will of God, in which he was heard, Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. John xii. 27. Heb. v. 7. The Lord is not only the preserver of the lives of men in a temporal sense, but he is the preserver of the souls of his people, their more noble part, whose redemption is precious; he keeps them from the evil of sin, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory; yea, their whole soul, body, and spirit, are preserved by him blameless, unto the coming of Christ: *for I am holy*; quite innocent, as to the crime that was laid to his charge by Saul and his courtiers; or was kind, beneficent, and merciful, to others, and to such God shews himself merciful, they obtain mercy: or was favoured of God, to whom he had been bountiful, on whom he had bestowed many mercies and blessings; and therefore desires and hopes that, to the rest of favours, this of preservation might be added; or, as he was a sanctified person, and God had begun his work of grace in him, he therefore entreats the Lord would preserve him, and perfect his own work in him: some, as Aben Ezra observes, would have the sense to be, "keep my soul until I am holy:" so Arama interprets it, "keep me unto the world to come, where all are holy:" the character of an *holy one* eminently and perfectly agrees with Christ, as well as the petition; see Psal. xvi. 1, 10. *O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee*; both temporally and spiritually: the arguments are taken from covenant-interest in God, which is a strong one; from relation to him as a servant, not by nature only, but by grace; and from his trust and confidence in him; all which, as well as the petition, agree with Christ; see Psal. xxii. 1, 8, 10, 20, 21. Isa. xlii. 1.

Ver. 3. *Be merciful unto me, O Lord, &c.*] In my distressed and miserable condition, being an object of mercy, pity, and compassion; this petition is used by Christ in Psal. xli. 10. *for I cry unto thee daily; or all the day*; every day, and several times in a day, Psal. lv. 17. constant and importunate prayer is the duty of saints, and available with God, 1 Thess. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1—7. Christ was much in the exercise of it, Luke vi. 12.

Ver. 4. *Rejoice the soul of thy servant, &c.*] With the discoveries of love, of pardoning grace, and mercy, before made sad with sin or sufferings; and with the

light of God's countenance, before troubled with the hidings of his face: this may be applied to Christ, in sorrowful circumstances, who was made full of joy with his Father's countenance, Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. Acts ii. 28. *for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul*; in prayer, as the Targum adds; and it denotes the devotion, fervency, heartiness, and sincerity, of his prayer; the doing of it with a true heart, the lifting up of the heart with the hands unto God, Lam. iii. 41. or by way of offering unto the Lord, not the body only, but the soul or heart also; or as a depositum committed into his hands; so Christ lifted up his eyes, and his heart and soul, to his divine Father; and also made his soul an offering for sin, and at death commended his spirit into his hands, John xvii. 1. Isa. liiii. 10. Luke xxiii. 46. see the note on Psal. xxv. 1.

Ver. 5. *For thou, Lord, art good, &c.*] Essentially and independently good, from whom every good and perfect gift comes; good in himself, and good to others; good to all, in a providential way; and good to his own special people in a way of grace: this is asserted by Christ, Matt. xix. 17. *and ready to forgive*; there is forgiveness with him, and it is to be had without difficulty; he has largely provided for it; he is forward unto it, he freely giving it; it is according to the riches of his grace; he does abundantly pardon; no sooner is it asked but it is had; this David knew by experience, Psal. xxxii. 5. *and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee*; in truth, in sincerity, in a right way, through Christ, and faith in him; to such not only the Lord shews himself merciful, but is rich and abundant in mercy; he has a multitude of tender mercies, and abounds in his grace and goodness, and in the donation of it to his people; all which encourage their faith and hope in their petitions to him.

Ver. 6. *Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer, &c.*] As this psalm is called, in the title of it; his own prayer, and not another's, not one composed for him, but what was composed by him; this petition is repeated, as to the sense of it, from ver. 1. to shew his importunity to be heard: *and attend to the voice of my supplications*; which proceeded from the spirit of grace and supplication, put up in an humble manner, in a dependence on the mercy of God, which the word used has the signification of, and were attended with thanksgiving, ver. 12, 13. according to the apostle's rule, Phil. iv. 6. these were vocal prayers, and not mere mental ones; see Heb. v. 7.

Ver. 7. *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee, &c.*] David had his troubles, both inward and outward, before and after he came to the throne, in private and public life; and every good man has his troubles; and there are some particular times or days of trouble; which trouble arises from different causes; sometimes from themselves, their corruptions, the weakness of their grace, and the poor performance of their duties; sometimes from others; from the persecutions of the men of the world; from the wicked lives of profane sinners, and especially professors of religion, and from the spread of false doctrine; sometimes from Satan and his temptations; and sometimes from the more immediate hand of God in afflictions, and from the hidings of his face: these troubles don't last always;

they are but for a day, for a particular time; and such a season is a fit one for prayer, and the Lord invites and encourages his people to call upon him in prayer when this is the case, Psal. l. 15. Christ had his times of trouble, in which he called upon his divine Father, John xi. 33, 41. and xii. 27. *for thou wilt answer me*; which the idols of the Gentiles could not do; Baal could not answer his priests, 1 Kings xviii. 26. this the psalmist concluded, both from the promise of God, Psal. l. 15. and from his frequent experience, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. a very encouraging reason or argument this to call on the Lord: Christ was always heard and answered, John xi. 41, 42.

Ver. 8. *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, &c.*] Among the angels of heaven, as the Targum, in the king's Bible; see Matt. xxiv. 36. and who are sometimes called gods, and among whom there is none like to the Lord; see Psal. xcvi. 7. Heb. i. 6. Psal. lxxxix. 6. or among civil magistrates, he being King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only Potentate; among whom he judges, over whom he presides, and whom he sets up and puts down at pleasure, Psal. lxxxii. 1—6. or among all those that are named gods in heaven, or on earth, the nominal and fictitious gods of the Gentiles, who are vanity, and the work of error: the portion of Jacob is not like them, Jer. x. 15, 16. there is none like him, for the perfections of his nature, his power, wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, justice, mercy, grace, and goodness; see Exod. xv. 11. Psal. lxxxix. 8. and cxlii. 5, 6. Micah vii. 18. *neither are there any works like unto thy works*; as the works of creation and providence, and those of redemption and grace, in which there is such a manifest display of the perfections of his nature, Deut. iii. 24.

Ver. 9. *All nations whom thou hast made, &c.*] All nations, or the inhabitants of all nations, are made by the Lord, and of the blood of one man, Acts xvii. 26. and which as it shews the obligation of all men to come and worship, as is said should be; so likewise that the Lord, who has made them, is able to make them come to do homage to him, as follows: *shall come and worship before thee, O Lord: come*, spiritually, by faith and repentance, to the Lord himself, being drawn by the power of his efficacious grace through the ministry of the word; and, locally, to the house and ordinances of God, to attend upon them, and wait on him in them; and *worship* both externally, according to his revealed will; and internally in the exercise of grace, in spirit and in truth: this is prophetically said of the conversion of the Gentiles in Gospel times, especially in the latter day; see Rev. xv. 4. Kimchi and Arama say this will be in the time of the Messiah: *and shall glorify thy name*; the Lord himself, with their bodies and spirits, which are his; and ascribe the glory of their salvation to him, and glorify him for his mercy towards them in their redemption and conversion; glorify that and every perfection of his, displayed in their salvation; and also his Gospel, which brings them the news of it; see Rom. xv. 9. Acts xiii. 48.

Ver. 10. *For thou art great, &c.*] In his nature, and the perfections of it; in his power, wisdom, truth, faithfulness, love, grace, and mercy; and in all his persons; the Father is great, greater than all; the Son

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is the great God, and our Saviour; and the Spirit, which is in his people, is greater than he that is in the world: *and doest wondrous things*; in nature and providence; such as the forming of all things out of nothing; upholding all things by the word of his power; the formation of man, soul and body, and the union of both; and the constant government of the world; and more especially in grace, as the provision in the covenant in eternity, the mission of Christ in time, the conversion of a sinner, and bringing him to eternal glory: *thou art God alone*; to the exclusion of all such who are not gods by nature; but not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are, with the Father, the one God, 1 John v. 7.

Ver. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, &c.*] The methods of thy grace, which thou hast taken, and dost take, in the salvation of men, in the contrivance, impetration, and application of it; or the way which thou hast marked out for thy people to walk in, the way of thy commandments; each of these the psalmist had knowledge of before; but he desires to be more and more instructed therein, as every good man does; see Psal. xxv. 4, 5. Isa. ii. 3. *I will walk in thy truth*; in Christ, the truth of types, and by whom grace and truth came, and who is truth itself, and the true way to eternal life; and to walk in him is to walk by faith in him, in hope of eternal happiness through him, John i. 17. and xiv. 6. Col. ii. 6. or in the truth of the Gospel, of Gospel doctrine, Gospel worship, and Gospel conversation; to walk in it is to walk becoming it, and abide by it, its truths and ordinances; see 2 John, ver. 4. 3 John, ver. 3, 4. *unite my heart to fear thy name*; there must be an heart given to man to fear the Lord; for the fear of the Lord is not naturally in their hearts, or before their eyes; and they should have, not a divided and distracted heart, an heart divided between God and the world, between the fear of God and the fear of man; but a heart united to the Lord, that cleaves to him, and him only; a single and a sincere heart; a heart that has a single view to his glory, and a sincere affection for him; and such a heart the Lord has promised to give to his people, in order to fear him, Jer. xxxii. 39.

Ver. 12. *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, &c.*] And under that consideration, that he was his God, and which itself is sufficient matter of praise; this makes him amiable, and such he is, love itself: this is a blessing of pure grace, and is the foundation of all other blessings, and continues for ever: this work of praise, which is no other than ascribing glory to God, and giving thanks unto him for mercies received, the psalmist determines to do with his whole heart, which is to be engaged in every spiritual service; even all of it, all that is within it, every power and faculty of the soul, Psal. ciii. 1. which is expressive not of perfection, but sincerity: *and I will glorify thy name for evermore*; by celebrating the perfections of his nature, by giving him the glory of the works of his hands, by praising him for all favours, by devoting himself unto him, and by doing all things for his glory, and that for ever, in time as long as he lived, and to all eternity.

Ver. 13. *For great is thy mercy toward me, &c.*] Both in things temporal and spiritual; an instance of

which follows: *and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell*; from a very distressed and disconsolate condition, being almost in despair, under a deep sense of sin, and a fearful apprehension of the wrath of God, as, particularly, when he was charged by Nathan; or from hell itself, and the severest punishment in it; from the second and eternal death, which every man is deserving of, and are only delivered from by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: this shews the sense the psalmist had of the just demerit of sin, and his thankfulness for deliverance from it; see Psal. lvi. 13. Kimchi interprets it of the grave; but says, there are some that interpret it of the judgment, or condemnation of hell: such who have escaped great dangers in long and perilous journeys, or have been delivered from threatening diseases, are said to be saved from hell¹.

Ver. 14. *O God, the proud are risen against me, &c.*] As all men naturally are, and as all are without the grace of God; and because they are, they deal in proud wrath: as, through the pride of their heart, they seek not after God; so, through the same, they persecute his people, treating them with the utmost contempt, and as the off-scouring of all things. Jarchi interprets this particularly of Doeg and Ahithophel: *and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul*; or terrible² ones, who breathed out nothing but cruelty, threatenings, and slaughter; and who were many, and got together in bodies, and entered into combinations and conspiracies; and whom nothing would satisfy but the taking away of his life, which they sought after; see Psal. xxii. 12—16. *and have not set thee before them*; they did not consider the omniscience of God, that he knew and took notice of all they did; nor his omnipresence, that he was everywhere, and there was no fleeing from him; nor his omnipotence, who was able to crush them to pieces; nor his justice, which will render tribulation to them that trouble his; nor his goodness, which should lead to repentance; nor had they any fear of him, nor respect to his glory: in short, they were like the unjust judge, who neither feared God nor regarded men, Luke xviii. 4.

Ver. 15. *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, &c.*] Or *merciful*³, in the most affectionate and tender manner, as a parent to its child, or particularly as a mother to the son of her womb; and is rich and plenteous in his mercy, and freely bestows it; and this was the support of the psalmist under his troubles from his enemies, that though they were cruel the Lord was merciful: *and gracious*; so he has been in eternity, as appears by his election of grace, by the covenant of his

grace, and the provisions of it in his son; and so he is in time, as is manifest from his kindness in Christ Jesus, from his justification, pardon, adoption, effectual calling and salvation of his people, which are all of grace: *long-suffering*; not only to wicked men, but to his chosen ones; which long-suffering of his is salvation to them; he bears with them, and waits to be gracious to them, to bring them to repentance, and save them, 2Pet. iii. 9, 15. *plenteous in mercy*; or goodness; see in ver. 5. *and truth*: in fulfilling promises; see Exod. xxxiv. 6. to which these words refer.

Ver. 16. *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me, &c.*] For it seems the Lord had turned away from him, and had hid his face, and withheld the manifestation of his grace and mercy from him, and had not yielded him the help and assistance he expected; and therefore entreats that he would turn again to him, and shew him his face and favour, and be merciful to him: *give thy strength unto thy servant*; spiritual strength, strength in his soul, to exercise grace, perform duty, bear the cross, and stand up against all enemies, and hold out to the end: this is God's gift; and the psalmist pleads his relation to him as his servant, not merely by creation, but by grace; this is interpreted by the Jews of the King Messiah: *and save the son of thine handmaid*; out of the hands of those that were risen up against him; see Psal. cxix. 94. Some think this has a special reference to Christ, who was made of a woman, called a handmaid, Luke i. 48. born of a virgin, the son of Mary: Arama says David uses the word *handmaid*, because he sprung from Ruth the Moabitess.

Ver. 17. *Shew me a token for good, &c.*] Not only one by which he might know that his sins were pardoned, and his person accepted with God, and that he should be saved; but one visible to others, even to his enemies, by which they might know that God was on his side, and would verily do him good: Kimchi interprets it of the kingdom; and his being raised to the throne of Israel was a token of the Lord's goodness to him, and shewed that he had a delight in him, and meant to do him good: *that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed*; of their envy of him, their combinations and conspiracies against him, and of all their efforts to distress him, to hinder him of the kingdom, or deprive him of it, or make him uncomfortable in it: *because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me*; he comforted him by helping him against his enemies, and out of his troubles; and, by doing both, shewed him a token for good, and filled his enemies with shame and confusion.

P S A L M LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

WHETHER this psalm was composed by David, in a view of the temple to be built by his son Solomon; or whether by one that returned from the Babylonish

captivity, who wrote it for the comfort of those that wept at the laying of the foundation of the second temple; it seems evident that the subject-matter of it

¹ Vide Heraclit. de Incredib. c. 21. p. 86.

² ערִיבִיִּם *terribilium*, Montanus; so some in Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

³ רַחֲמִים *misericos*, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

⁴ Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. & 59. 1.

is the church of God in Gospel times, and especially in the latter-day glory: the title in the Syriac version is, "concerning the redemption of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*] The Jewish writers connect these words with the title of the psalm, and make the sense to be this; *the foundation* or argument of it, the psalm, is *concerning the holy mountains* of Zion and Jerusalem; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; and the Targum joins them together thus, "by the hands of the sons of Korah is said a song, which is founded by the mouth of the fathers "that were of old:" but the words are a part of the song or psalm, which begins in an abrupt manner, just as Cant. i. 2. and may be rendered either *its foundation*, or *his foundation*, and refer either to the church, or to the Lord, and the sense is the same either way; for the church's foundation is also the Lord's foundation, a foundation of his laying; see Isa. xiv. 32. and xxviii. 16. and is laid *in the holy mountains*: alluding to the mountains of Zion and Moriah, where the temple stood, a type of the church; or to the mountains about Jerusalem, by which also the church is frequently signified; and by those, in a mystical and spiritual sense, may be meant the purposes and decrees of God, which are as mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1. they are like the ancient mountains for the antiquity of them, and are high, and not to be reached and searched into, and are firm, solid, and immovable; and are also holy, particularly the decree of election, that source of all true holiness, which has sanctification for its end and means; and is the foundation of the church, which supports and secures it, and stands sure, 2 Tim. ii. 19. also the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable, and in which are provisions for holiness, internal and external; and is the foundation and security of the church, and all believers; but especially Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages, is meant, the holy One of Israel, the sure foundation laid in Zion: some interpret these holy mountains of the holy apostles, who were in an high and eminent station in the church, and were doctrinally foundations, as they ministerially laid Christ, as the only foundation; see Ephes. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14. it may be rendered, *among the holy mountains*^w; and so may regard, as Cocceius explains it, the several kingdoms and provinces of the world in which the Gospel shall be preached; and the church shall be established and settled in the latter day even upon the tops of mountains, which shall become holy to the Lord, Isa. ii. 2.

Ver. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, &c.*] Which the Targum interprets of the schools, as preferable to the synagogues: the Lord loves Zion herself; that is, the church, and therefore has chosen it for his habitation, took up his rest and residence in it, has founded it, and set Christ as King over it, and by whom he has redeemed it; and he loves her *gates*, the public ordinances; he loves them that come to Zion's gates, and wait and worship there, and who enter in and become members thereof; and he loves what is done there, he being there publicly prayed unto, and publicly praised by a large number of his

people; where his word is faithfully preached, and reverently attended to, and his ordinances truly administered, and the graces of his saints exercised on him: wherefore, because all this is done socially, and in a public manner, and so much for his own manifestative glory, he esteems these *more than all the dwellings of Jacob*; the private habitations of his people; yet he has a regard to these, the bounds of which he fixed from eternity, and where he was delighting himself before they were in being; and he loves the persons that dwell in them, and what is done there in a right manner, as closet and family worship; but when these are put in competition with public worship, the latter is preferred unto them, because done by more, and more publicly; Zion and its gates, the church and its ordinances, are preferable to all the dwellings of Jacob put together.

Ver. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.*] Which is to be understood not of the city of Jerusalem literally, which was a magnificent city, compact together, full of inhabitants, and spacious houses, the metropolis of Judea, and seat of the kings of Judah; and what was most glorious of all that could be said of it, it was the city of God; and so Jarchi interprets it, the glory spoken of it is, that it is the city of God; here the temple was built, and many glorious things were in it; here God granted his presence, and his worship was kept up: and besides, there were other and more glorious things spoken of it, by way of prophecy; as, that the Messiah should come in person into it, as the owner of it, and give it a greater glory than the first temple had; here he was to preach his doctrines, and do his miracles, which he accordingly did; near this city he suffered, died, and was buried; rose again, ascended to heaven; and here he poured forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary manner: but rather this is to be interpreted of the church of God, comparable to a city, and which is of God's building, and where he dwells; see the note on Psal. xviii. 1. of which glorious things are spoken for the present; as, that it is the city of the King of kings, the name of which is *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there; its foundation is Christ; its walls and bulwarks are salvation; its gates are praise; glorious ordinances are administered in it, and glorious truths are preached here; and so the words may be rendered, *glorious things are spoken in thee*^x: and of it also glorious things are spoken, by way of prophecy, as, what shall be in the latter day; a great effusion of the spirit upon it; the gracious presence of Christ in it in a more visible manner; a great increase of converts both among Jews and Gentiles, which shall flock into it; and the great spread of the Gospel, which shall be the means of it; the unity, harmony, and concord of professors of religion; the holiness of their lives and conversation; and the very great peace and prosperity which will everywhere abound; and especially glorious things are spoken of the New Jerusalem, the city of our God; of which see Rev. xxi.

Ver. 4. *I will make mention of Rahab, &c.*] Not of Rahab the harlot, as Jerom and others of the ancients^y

^w בְּהַרְרֵי קִרְשׁ inter montes sanctitatis, Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth.

^x בְּרֵיב in te, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schmidt, Syr. ver.

^y Aug. Euthymius, Theodoret, & alii, in Amans, Antibarbar. Bibl. l. 3. p. 890.

interpret it; for the letters of both words are not the same in Hebrew; though mention is made of her in the Gospel, and Gospel times, in the genealogy of Christ, and by two of the apostles, Matt. i. 5. Heb. xi. 31. James ii. 25. but of Egypt; and so the Targum interprets it, which is so called, as it is in Psal. lxxxix. 19. Isa. li. 9. either from the pride of its inhabitants, the word having in it the sense of pride and haughtiness, and these being naturally proud and haughty, as Philo^a the Jew observes; or from some city of this name in it; or rather this respects that part of Egypt called Delta, which was in the form of a pear; which *raab*, or *rib*, in the Egyptian language, signifies; in the midst of which was the city of Athribis of Ptolemy^a, which has its name from hence, and signifies the heart of a pear; and still this part of the country is called Errifia, as Leo Africanus^b relates, and is here put for the whole country: the passage respects the conversion of it, and are the words of God foretelling it, and of which mention is made in Isa. xix. 18, 19, 25. and had its accomplishment, at least in part, on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 10. and will be further accomplished in the latter day, when the people that now inhabit that country shall be converted, which will be when the kingdoms of this world become Christ's: *and Babylon*: the country of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, of which Babylon was the metropolis: mention is made of the conversion of these in Isa. xix. 24, 25. and which also was fulfilled, in part, on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 9. and in Babylon there was a church, in the times of the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. v. 13. these the Lord promises that he would make mention of: *to them that know me*; says he, that so they might expect their conversion, and take notice of them, and receive them, when converted; or *among them that know me*^c; that is, I will make mention of them, as such that know me, and belong to that number; even such that love the Lord, believe in him, own and confess him, and yield obedience to him, and whom he takes into communion and fellowship with himself, and makes his friends, familiars, and acquaintance: *behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia*; where also will be many converts, regenerate persons, and such as know the Lord; of which there has been a partial accomplishment already; of Philistia, see Acts viii. 40. for Azotus, or Ashdod, was a city of the Philistines; and of Tyre, see Psal. xlv. 12. Acts xxi. 3, and 4. and of Ethiopia, and its conversion, mention is made in Psal. lxxviii. 31. and the Ethiopian eunuch is one instance of it, Acts viii. 27. of all which there will be abundance of instances in the latter day; and thus, as the church is commended from her foundation, from the superlative love the Lord bears to her, and the glorious things spoken of her; so from the number of her converts in different nations, in which her glory in Gospel times would greatly lie; see Isa. xlix. 18—21. and liv. 1—3. and lx. 4—8. *this man was born there*; not any particular man; any single individual, famous for piety, wisdom, wealth, or power; as if it suggested that

now and then such a person might be born in the above countries; whereas in Zion there were frequently many such persons born: nor is it to be understood of the Messiah, that should come out of Zion, as if that was the reason why multitudes from the above places should flock thither, because of the birth of this illustrious Person: the Targum understands it of a great personage, a king; and paraphrases it, "a king is educated there;" but it designs many persons in those several countries that should be born again, of water, and of the spirit, of the incorruptible seed of grace, by the ministry of the word; who, because they should be regenerated by means of the Gospel preached in Zion, therefore are said to be born there; and besides, being born again, they are admitted members of Zion, and to all the privileges of Zion, as true-born Israelites; and are brought up there, are nourished with the sincere milk of the word, and nursed with the breasts of Gospel ordinances there administered; and so Zion, or Jerusalem, the Gospel church, is truly the mother of them all, Gal. iv. 26.

Ver. 5. *And of Zion it shall be said, &c.*] The same with the city of God, the church before commended: *this and that man was born in her*; this and that great man, in opposition to a mean person, in the preceding verse: or a man and man^d; men of all sorts, and of different nations, Jews and Gentiles, and great numbers of them: *and the Highest himself shall establish her*; the church of God, though founded by him, and laid on a sure foundation, on the Rock of ages, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, yet is sometimes fluctuating and unsettled; it is *tossed with tempests*, the persecutions of men, the errors and heresies of false teachers, and the contentions and divisions of its own members; and is not always in one place, but is removed from one place to another, and is obliged to flee into the wilderness; but in the latter day it will be established and settled; it will be a tabernacle that shall not be taken down nor removed; but shall be established for ever, Psal. lxxxix. 37. and this is the work of God, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, whatever instruments he may make use of, as ministers of the word, and kings of the earth; as it is his work, and his only, to establish particular believers, 2 Cor. i. 21. so it is his to establish the church in general: or it may be rendered, *he shall establish her on high*^e, which will be the case when she is *established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills*, Isa. ii. 2.

Ver. 6. *The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, &c.*] Not in the Lamb's book of life; for that was written from eternity, Rev. xiii. 8. but in the writing of the house of Israel, among the living in Jerusalem, and with his righteous ones; which is done at effectual calling, and when admitted members of Gospel churches, whereby they openly appear to be the children of God, and are taken into the list and catalogue of saints; see Ezek. xiii. 9. Isa. iv. 3. Psal. lxxix. 29. or in the last day, when the Lord will take the number of his people, and cause them again to *pass under*

^a De Agricultura, p. 196.

^b Geograph. l. 4. c. 5.

^c Descriptio Africae, l. 8. c. 2.

^d לריקו inter scientes me, Vatablus, Gejerus, Schmidt; apud no-

scientes me, Junius & Tremellius; apud familiares meos, Piscator; apud notos meos, Amama.

^e ויר, ויר ויר ויר ויר, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^f So the Targum, and Ainsworth.

the rod of him that telleth them; and will make up his jewels, complete the number of them in conversion, and collect them all together; and his counting and writing them may denote his exact knowledge of them, and his care that he lose none; but this will only concern regenerate persons; the Lord will not count nor make any account of any others, as follows: that *this man was born there*. *Selah*; and the man that is born in Zion, even every regenerate man, will be counted and numbered by him, and declared to be his, when he makes a general survey and muster of his saints another day.

Ver. 7. *As well the singers as the players on the instruments shall be there, &c.*] In Zion, in the church; signifying that there should be great spiritual joy there when the above things should be accomplished; great joy in the churches, because of the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; and great joy in the persons themselves, born again, and brought to Zion; in allusion to the vocal and instrumental music used in the temple service; see Isa. xxxv. 10. Rev. xiv. 1—7. and xix. 6, 7, 8. *all my springs are in thee*; which are either the words of the psalmist, or rather of the souls born in Zion; who, in their spiritual songs, will thus express themselves concerning the church, in which are the word and ordinances, compared to fountains of living water, and are springs of spiritual peace and refreshment to converted persons; see Joel iii. 18. Zech. xiv. 8.

Isa. lv. 1. where also the Spirit and his graces are communicated by the ministry of the word and ordinances in the church, which are signified by wells and rivers of living water, John iv. 14. and vii. 37, 38. and particularly here stands Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters, for the supply and comfort of saints, and his blood a fountain opened for cleansing and purification, Cant. iv. 15. Zech. xiii. 1. yea, here flows the river of God's love, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and which, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, come from under the threshold of the sanctuary, Psal. xlvi. 4. Ezek. xlvi. 1—5. or the words may be considered as an address of the psalmist, or of the church, or of regenerate persons, unto Christ: *all my springs or fountains are in thee*; the fulness of grace dwells in him, the springs of all joy, and peace, and comfort, are with him; the wells of salvation are in him, and both grace and glory are from him; he is the spring of all grace now, and the fountain of all happiness hereafter. Gussetius^a has a very peculiar version of the whole text, which he renders thus, "all my fountains will be singing in thee, or of thee, as those that dance at the sound of the pipe;" taking the allusion to be to the playing of fountains in gardens, and to the delightful sound the waters make; but the accents will not admit of such a sense.

P S A L M LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannothe, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

OF the word *maalath*, see the note on the title of psalm 53d. *Leannothe* signifies to answer. Perhaps this song was to be sung alternately, or by responses. Both words are thought by some, as Aben Ezra, to be the beginning of a song, to the tune of which this was set; and by others a musical instrument, on which it was sung; a hollow one, as the word *maalath* seems to signify, a wind-instrument: others are of opinion that they intend the subject-matter of the psalm, and render them, concerning the disease to afflict, or the afflicting disease^a; either a bodily one, which threatened with death, under which the psalmist now was; or a soul-disorder, being under desertions, and a sense of divine wrath, which were very afflicting. The psalm is called *Maschil*, which may be translated causing to understand: it being instructive to persons in a like case to apply to God, as he did; and if it respects Christ, it teaches many things concerning him, his sorrows and his sufferings: the author of it is said to be Heman the Ezrahite; the Targum calls him Heman the native, and the Septuagint render it Heman the Israelite, and Arama says this is Abraham. There were two of this name, one the son of Zerah, the son of Judah, and so might be called the Zerahite, and with the addition of a letter the Ezrahite; he is mentioned along with

others as famous for wisdom, 1 Chron. ii. 6. 1 Kings iv. 31. but this man seems to be too early to be the penman of this psalm: though Dr. Lightfoot^b is of opinion that this psalm was penned by this Heman many years before the birth of Moses; which and the following psalm are the oldest pieces of writing the world has to shew, being wrote by two men who felt and groaned under the bondage and affliction of Egypt, which Heman here deplores, and therefore entitles his elegy *Maalath Leannothe, concerning sickness by affliction*; and accordingly he and his brethren are called the sons of Mahal, 1 Kings iv. 31. There was another Heman, who was both a singer in David's time, and the king's seer, who seems most likely to be the person, 1 Chron. vi. 33. and xv. 17, 19. and xxv. 1, 5. he was when he wrote this psalm under sore temptations, desertions, and dejections, though not in downright despair; there is but one comfortable clause in it, and that is the first of it; many interpreters, both ancient and modern, think he is to be considered throughout as a type of Christ, with whom every thing in it more exactly agrees than with any one man else. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the people of Israel in captivity; and so the Syriac version entitles it, "concerning the people that were in Babylon;"

^a Comment. Ebr. p. 845.

^b ענות לטנות על פחלת לענות pro infirmitate ad affigendum, so some in Mun-

ster; de miseria ad affigendum, Tigurine version; de infirmitate affigente, Piscator; so Gussetius, p. 622.

^c Works, vol. 1. p. 699.

but a single person only is designed throughout. Spinoza ^c affirms, from the testimony of Philo the Jew, that this psalm was published when King Jehoiachin was a prisoner in Babylon, and the following psalm when he was released: but this is not to be found in the true Philo, but in Pseudo-Philo ^d.

Ver. 1. *O Lord God of my salvation, &c.*] The author both of temporal and spiritual salvation; see Psal. xviii. 46. and xxiv. 5. from the experience the psalmist had had of the Lord's working salvation for him in times past, he is encouraged to hope that he would appear for him, and help him out of his present distress; his faith was not so low, but that amidst all his darkness and dejection he could look upon the Lord as his God, and the God of salvation to him; so our Lord Jesus Christ, when deserted by his Father, still called him his God, and believed that he would help him, Psal. xxii. 1. Isa. l. 7, 8, 9. *I have cried day and night before thee, or in the day I have cried, and in the night before thee*; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it, "in the night my prayer was before thee;" prayer being expressed by crying shews the person to be in distress, denotes the earnestness of it, and shews it to be vocal; and it being both in the day and in the night, that it was without ceasing. The same is said by Christ, Psal. xxii. 2. and is true of him, who in the days of his flesh was frequent in prayer, and especially in the night-season, Luke vi. 12. and xxi. 37. and particularly his praying in the garden the night he was betrayed may be here referred to, Matt. xxvi. 38, 39.

Ver. 2. *Let my prayer come before thee, &c.*] Not before men, as hypocrites desire, but before the Lord; let it not be shut out, but be admitted; and let it come with acceptance, as it does when it ascends before God, out of the hands of the angel before the throne, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation, Rev. viii. 3, 4. *incline thine ear unto my cry*; hearken to it, receive it, and give an answer to it; Christ's prayers were attended with strong crying, and were always received and heard, Heb. v. 7. John xi. 41, 42.

Ver. 3. *For my soul is full of troubles, &c.*] Or *satiated or glutted* ^e with them, as a stomach full of meat that can receive no more, to which the allusion is; having been fed with the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, so that he had his fill of trouble: every man is full of trouble, of one kind or another, Job xiv. 1. especially the saint, who besides his outward troubles has inward ones, arising from in-dwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, which was now the case of the psalmist: this may be truly applied to Christ, who himself said, when in the garden, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, Matt. xxvi. 38. he was a man of sorrows all his days, but especially at that time, and when upon the cross, forsaken by his Father, and sustaining his wrath: his soul was then *filled with evil things* ^f, as the words may be rendered: *innumerable evils compassed him about*, Psal. xl. 12. the sins of his people, those evil things, were imputed to him; the iniquity of them all was

laid upon him, as was also the evil of punishment for them; and then he found trouble and sorrow enough: *and my life draweth nigh unto the grave*; a phrase expressive of a person's being just ready to die, Job xxxiii. 22. as the psalmist now thought he was, ver. 5, 15. 'tis in the plural number *my lives* ^g; and so may not only denote the danger he was in of his natural life, but of his spiritual and eternal life, which he might fear, being in darkness and desertion, would be lost, though they could not; yea, that he was near to *hell* itself, for so the word ^h may be rendered; for when the presence of God is withdrawn, and wrath let into the conscience, a person in his own apprehension seems to be in hell as it were, or near it; see Jon. ii. 2. This was true of Christ, when he was sorrowful unto death, and was brought to the dust of it, and under divine dereliction, and a sense of the wrath of God, as the surety of his people.

Ver. 4. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit, &c.*] With the dead, with them that are worthy of death, with malefactors that are judicially put to death, and are not laid in a common grave, but put into a pit together: thus Christ was reckoned and accounted of by the Jews; the sanhedrim counted him worthy of death; and the common people cried out Crucify him; and they did crucify him between two malefactors; and so he was numbered or counted with transgressors, and as one of them, Isa. liii. 3, 4, 12. *I am as a man that hath no strength*; for his strength was *dried up like a potsherd*, Psal. xxii. 15. though he was the mighty God, and, as man, was made strong by the Lord for himself.

Ver. 5. *Free among the dead, &c.*] If he was a free-man, it was only among the dead, not among the living; if he was free of any city, it was of the city of the dead; he looked upon himself as a dead man, as one belonging to the state of the dead, who are free from all relations, and from all business and labour, and removed from all company and society; he thought himself quite neglected, of whom there was no more care and notice taken than of a dead man: *like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more*; in a providential way, as in life, to clothe them, and feed them, and protect and preserve them; in which sense God is said to be mindful of men, Psal. viii. 4. who when dead have no need to be minded, and remembered in such a manner; otherwise God does remember the dead, and takes care of their dust, and will raise them again; and especially he remembers his own people, those that sleep in Jesus, who will be thought of in the resurrection-morn, and will be raised first, and brought with Christ; see Job xiv. 13, 14. *and they are cut off from thy hand*; that is, the slain that lie in the grave, the dead that are buried there; these are cut off from the hand of Providence, they needing no supplies from thence as in the time of life. The Targum is, "and they are separated from the face of thy majesty;" or *they are cut off by thine hand* ⁱ; by the immediate hand of God, in a judicial way; so Christ

^c Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 10. p. 184.

^d Apud Meur Emymim, c. 32. p. 106.

^e saturata, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; satiata, Tigurine version.

^f בְּרֵעֵי מַלְאָכָה in malis, Pagninus, Montanus; malis, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

^g וְיָמַי כִּי־מֵתָא, Montanus, Michaelis.

^h לְשֵׁן אֵלֶּיךָ ad oreum, Cocceius; inferno, Gejerus; ad infernum, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

ⁱ מִיַּד מְנוּחָא manu tua, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama.

in his death was like one of these, he was cut off in a judicial way, not for his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people, Isa. liii. 8. Dan. ix. 26.

Ver. 6. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, &c.*] The Targum interprets it of "captivity which was like unto the lowest pit;" and so Jarchi and Kimchi. Some understand it of a prison or dungeon, into which the psalmist was put; it may be interpreted of the pit of the grave, into which Christ was laid; though he continued in it not so long as to see corruption; from that prison and judgment he was quickly taken, Psal. xvi. 10. Isa. liii. 8. *in darkness*; both corporeal and spiritual, Matt. xxvii. 45, 46. and it is in the Hebrew text *in darknesses*^k, denoting both: *in the deeps*; in the deep waters of affliction, sorrows, and sufferings; see Psal. lxix. 1, 2. The allusion is to a dark and deep pit, under ground, such as in the eastern countries they used to put their captives and prisoners into in the night, and take them out in the morning; and which custom continues still among the Turks. Leo Africanus^l says he has seen three thousand Christian captives together, clothed in a woollen sack, and chained to one another; and in the night put into pits or ditches under ground; see Zech. ix. 11.

Ver. 7. *The wrath lieth hard upon me, &c.*] So some good men apprehend, when they are under afflictive dispensations of Providence, and are left of God, and have not his immediate presence, and the discoveries of his love; though fury is not in him, nor does any wrath in reality fall upon them, only it seems so to them; see Psal. xxxviii. 1, 2. Lam. iii. 1. but the wrath of God did really lie with all the effects of it upon Christ, as the surety of his people, when he was made sin, and a curse for them; see Psal. lxxxix. 38. *and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah*; the afflictions of God's people are compared to waves and billows of the sea, which are many, and come one upon the back of another, and threaten to overwhelm and sink; see Psal. xlii. 7. and so the sufferings of Christ are signified by waters coming into him, and floods overflowing him; and hence they are called a baptism, Psal. lxix. 1, 2. Luke xii. 50. and these were brought upon him by the Lord; he spared him not; he laid the whole chastisement, all the punishment due to the sins of his people, on him; he caused every wave to come upon him, and him to endure all sorrows and sufferings the law and justice of God could require.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me, &c.*] His familiar friends, who were well known to him, and he to them: it is a mercy and privilege to have good acquaintance, and hearty faithful friends, to converse and advise with, whether about things civil or religious; and it is an affliction to be deprived of them; and oftentimes in distress and adversity they drop and fall, which is an additional trouble: this was the case of Job and of David, Job xix. 13, 14. Psal. xxxi. 11. and here of Heman, who attributes it to God, as done by him; as also Job does, in the place referred to; for as it is the Lord that gives favour in the sight of men, he can take it away when he pleases: this is true

of Christ, and the like is said of him, Psal. lxix. 8. and by his *acquaintance*, familiars, and friends, may be meant his apostles, who, upon his being apprehended, forsook him, and fled; who, though they were not all alienated in their affections, yet stood at a distance from him; Peter, though he followed him, it was afar off, and at last he denied him; and others of his acquaintance and intimates stood afar off, beholding what was done to him on the cross; and his familiar friend, Judas, lifted up his heel against him, and basely betrayed him, Matt. xxvi. 50, 56, 58. Luke xxiii. 49. Psal. xli. 9. *thou hast made me an abomination unto them*; to some of them, as to Judas, and to many that hosanna'd him into Jerusalem, and within a few days cried Crucify him, crucify him, Matt. xxi. 9. and xxvii. 22, 23. compare with this Isa. liii. 3. *I am shut up, and I cannot come forth*; the Targum renders it, "shut up in the house of prison," in a prison; and so some literally understand it of the author of the psalm being in a prison, or dungeon, in the time of the captivity: but it is rather to be understood of some bodily disease, by which he was detained a prisoner at home, and of his being bound in fetters, and held in the cords of affliction; which was as a prison to him, and in which when the Lord *shuts up a man, there can be no opening*, Job xxxvi. 8. and xii. 14. or else of soul-troubles, being in great darkness and desertion; so that his soul was as in a prison, and could not come forth in the free exercise of grace, and needed the *free spirit* of God to set him at liberty; see Psal. cxlii. 7. and li. 12. this may be applied to Christ, when in the hands of Judas, and the band of soldiers with him, who took him, and bound him, and led him to the high-priest; and when he was encompassed with bulls of Bashan, and enclosed by the assembly of the wicked, as he hung on the cross, Psal. xxii. 12, 16.

Ver. 9. *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction, &c.*] Or dropped tears, as the Targum, by which grief was vented; see Psal. vi. 7. *Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee*; in prayer, as the Targum adds, this being a prayer-gesture: notwithstanding his troubles continued and increased, he did not leave off praying, though he was not immediately heard and answered, which is what is tacitly complained of, as in Psal. xxii. 2. Christ, in his troubles in the garden, and on the cross, prayed for himself, for divine support and assistance, as man; for his friends, disciples, and apostles, and for all that should believe in him through them; and even for his enemies.

Ver. 10. *Will thou shew wonders to the dead? &c.*] The Lord does shew wonders to some that are spiritually dead, dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins, by quickening them; whereby the wonders of his grace and love, and of his power, and the exceeding greatness of it, are displayed; for the conversion and quickening of a dead sinner is a marvellous event, like that of raising Lazarus from the dead, and causing Ezekiel's dry bones to live: likewise the Lord will shew wonders to those that are corporeally dead, by raising them from the dead; which work,

^k במשכנים in loca tenebrosa, Tigurine version, Musculus; in tenebrosissimis, Junius & Tremellius; in densis tenebris, Piscator; in caliginis, vel obscuritate, Gejerus.

^l Descriptio Africae, l. 3. p. 413.

though not incredible, yet is very wonderful, and can only be accounted for by the attributes of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence: yea, he would, and he has shewn wonders to Christ, when dead, by raising him up again, and giving him glory, and that before he saw corruption, and as the head and representative of his people; and by raising many of the saints also, after his resurrection: *shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah*; the spiritually dead, when they are made alive, and rise out of their graves of sin, praise the Lord for the exertion of his grace and power upon them; which is one end of their being formed anew, quickened, and converted; and those that are corporeally dead, such of them as shall rise again to everlasting life, their mouths will be filled with everlasting praise: but here the author of the psalm suggests, that in a little time he should be among the dead, unless he had speedy help and deliverance from his troubles; to whom wonders are not shewn, but to the living; and who ordinarily do not rise again to this mortal state, to praise the Lord in it: or, considering them as the words of Christ, he suggests, that none of the above things would be done, unless he was a conqueror over death and the grave, and was raised from thence himself; and so these expostulations carry in them the nature of a prayer, even of the prayer of Christ, as man, to be assisted in overcoming all his enemies, and to be raised from the dead, as Cocecius and others think: the Greek and Vulgate Latin versions are, "shall physicalians rise again?" of whom the Jews had a bad opinion; see the note on 2 Chron. xvi. 12.

Ver. 11. *Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? &c.*] Where he saw himself now going, and where should he be detained, and not raised out of it, the loving-kindness of God to him, as his son, and as man and Mediator, and to his people in the gift and mission of him to be their Saviour and Redeemer, how would that be declared and made known? now it is, Christ being raised, and his ministers having a commission from him to preach the Gospel, in which the loving-kindness of God is abundantly manifested: *or thy faithfulness in destruction?* the grave, so called from dead bodies being cast into it, and wasted, consumed, and destroyed in it: the meaning may be, that should he be laid in the grave, and there putrefy and rot, and not be raised again, where would be the faithfulness of God to his purposes, to his covenant and promises, to him his son, and to his people?

Ver. 12. *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? &c.*] A description of the grave again; see Job x. 21, 22. The sense may be, should he continue in the dark and silent grave, how would the wonders of the grace of God, of electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, be made known; the wonders of Christ's person and offices, and the wondrous things, and doctrines of the Gospel, relating thereunto? as the glory of these would be eclipsed, there would be none to publish them: *and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?* the grave, where the dead lie, who, having lost all sense of things, forget what were done in this world, and they themselves are quickly forgotten by the living; and had Christ continued in this state, and had not risen again to our justification,

how would his justifying righteousness have been revealed, as it is from faith to faith in the Gospel, which is therefore called the word and ministration of righteousness?

Ver. 13. *But unto thee have I cried, O Lord, &c.*] Formerly, and had been heard, answered, and relieved, and which was an encouragement to cry again to him in his distress; Christ was always heard, John xi. 42. or, now, in his present case, yet was not heard, at least not immediately answered: which was the case of the Messiah, when forsaken by his God and Father, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. yet still determines to continue praying, as follows: *and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee*; not before the Lord is awake, and can hear; for he neither slumbers nor sleeps, and he always hears: but the meaning is, that he would pray before he entered upon another business; this should be the first thing in the morning he would do, and this he would do before others did, or he himself used to do; before the usual time of morning prayer; signifying, he would pray to him very early, which is expressive of his vehemency, fervency, and importunity and earnestness, and what a sense he had of his case, and of his need of divine help: so Christ rose early in the morning, a great while before day, to pray, Mark i. 35. See the note on Psal. v. 4.

Ver. 14. *Lord, why castest thou off my soul? &c.*] Here begins his prayer, which he determined to present early in the morning, and consists of expostulations, and a representation of his distressed case: this shews that he was under soul-desertion, and which was what so greatly afflicted him; imagining that his soul was cast off by the Lord, and had no more share in his affection, and was no more under his care, and in his sight: such expostulations of the saints, the church, and people of God, in a like case, are elsewhere met with, Psal. xliii. 3. and lxxiv. 1. and may be applied to Christ, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death, and was made an offering for sin; and particularly when he was forsaken by his father: the Targum is, "why hast thou forsaken my soul?" and uses the word *sabachtha*, which Christ did when on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 46. the Septuagint version is, "wherefore, O Lord, dost thou reject my prayers?" *why hidest thou thy face from me?* which is a denial of sensible communion, a withdrawing the influences and communications of divine grace for a time; and which sometimes is the case of the best of men, as Job, David, and others; and is very grieving and distressing to them; and, for the most part, is on account of sin; it is sin which separates between God and his people, and causes him to hide his face from them, or not grant them his gracious presence: this was the case of Christ, who knew no sin, whilst he was suffering for the sins of his people; see Psal. lxxix. 17. compared with Matt. xxvii. 46.

Ver. 15. *I am afflicted, &c.*] In body and mind, from within and from without, by Satan, by the men of the world, and by the Lord himself; which is the common lot of God's people, Psal. xxxiv. 19. Zeph. iii. 12. and was the case of the Messiah, who was afflicted both with the tongues and hands of men, by words, by blows, and by the temptations of Satan;

and was smitten and afflicted of God, by divine justice, as the sinner's surety: see Paal. xxii. 24. Isa. liii. 4. or *I am poor*^a; which as it is a character, which, for the most part, agrees with the saints, who are the poor of this world God has chosen, to whom the Gospel is sent, and by whom it is received, and who are effectually called by it, so likewise belongs to Christ, Zech. ix. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 9. and ready to die, from my youth up; a sickly unhealthful person from his infancy, and often in danger of death; which last was certainly the case of Christ in his infancy, through the malice of Herod; and many times afterwards, when grown up, through the attempts of the Jews to take away his life: some render it, *I am ready to die through concussion, or shaking*^b; meaning some very rough and severe dispensation of Providence, such an one as Job expresses by shaking him to pieces, Job xvi. 12. and was literally true of Christ, when his body was so shaken by the jog of the cross, that all his bones were put out of joint, Psal. xxii. 14. while *I suffer thy terrors*; or bear^c them, or carry, even terrible afflictions, in which he had terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God in them, of death they would issue in, and of an awful judgment that should follow that; all which are called the terrors of the Lord, Job vi. 4. Psal. lv. 4. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. and which the saints, when left to God, have some dreadful apprehensions of: such were the terrors of the Lord the Messiah endured, when in a view of the sins of his people being laid upon him, and of the wrath of God coming on him for them, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, Luke xxii. 44. Compare with this Psal. xviii. 4, 5. *I am distracted*: not out of his mind, deprived of his senses, and without the use of reason; but his thoughts were distracted and confused, and his mind discomposed with the terrors of God upon him: the Hebrew word *aplunah* is only used in this place, and is difficult of interpretation, and is variously derived and rendered: some take it to be of the same root with *pen*, which signifies *lest, perhaps*^d; seeing persons in a panic are apt to use such expressions; perhaps, or it may be, such and such things will befall me; forming and framing in their minds ten thousand dreadful things, which they fear are coming upon them; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and is applied by Cocceius^e to the solicitous care and fear of Christ concerning his body, the church, Heb. v. 7. others derive it from *ophen*, which signifies a wheel, and so may be rendered, *I am wheeled about*^f; always in motion, and have no rest day nor night; as Christ was after his apprehension, being carried from place to place, and from bar to bar: others derive it from the Arabic word *aphan*^g, which signifies to be in want of counsel and advice: Christ though, as God, needed no counsel, nor did he take counsel with any; and, as Mediator, is the wonderful Counsellor; yet, as man, he needed it, and had it from

his father, for which he blesses him, Psal. xvi. 7. others from the Hebrew root *phanah*, which signifies to look unto, as persons in a panic look here and there; and as Christ did when suffering, who looked, and there was none to help, Isa. lxiii. 5. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it *amazed, or astonished*, which is said of Christ, Mark xiv. 33. the Vulgate Latin version is *troubled*, which also agrees with Christ, John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 38. as he must needs be, when his enemies surrounded him, the sins of his people were upon him, the sword of justice awaked against him, and the wrath of God on him, as follows.

Ver. 16. *They fierce wrath goeth over me, &c.*] Or *wraths*^h, burning wrath; the whole of divine wrath, in all its fierceness, due to the sins of his people: these, like the mighty waves of the sea, passed over him, threatening to overwhelm him, Psal. lxxxix. 38. *thy terrors have cut me off*; from the presence of God, and out of his sight; as sometimes the Lord's people are ready to imagine, when forsaken by him, Psal. xxxi. 22. or from the land of the living, as the Messiah was, and in a judicial way, though not for any sin of his own, Isa. liii. 8. Dan. ix. 26.

Ver. 17. *They came round about me daily like water, &c.*] That is, the terrors of the Lord, the sorrows of death and hell, Psal. xviii. 4, 5. this was the Messiah's case, when it was with him as is expressed Psal. lxxix. 1, 2. *they compassed me about together*; as waters coming from many places, from all quarters, meet together, and together surround a person or place; in such circumstances was Christ, when the bulls of Bashan beset him around, and the assembly of the wicked enclosed him, and innumerable evils encompassed him about, Psal. xxii. 12, 16. and xl. 12.

Ver. 18. *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, &c.*] This is mentioned in ver. 8. and is here repeated; and the account is closed with it, to shew that this was a most aggravating circumstance of his affliction, and which bore exceeding hard upon him; and this must be a very uncomfortable case, to be in distress, whether of body or mind, and to have no kind friend near to yield the least help, relief, and comfort; so Christ's lovers and friends, his disciples, who loved him and he loved them, and reckoned them as his friends, and was a friend to them, when he was taken by his enemies, they all forsook him, and fled, Matt. xxvi. 56. and *mine acquaintance into darkness*: either by death into the dark grave, which Job calls the land of darkness and shadow of death, ch. x. 21, 22. or being removed from him, so that he could not see them, it was all one to him as if they had been put into darkness, into some dark dungeon, or into the grave itself: or the words may be rendered, *mine acquaintance are darkness*ⁱ: this was the case of Christ, when on the cross; he had none near him, no acquaintance about him, but darkness; and darkness was over all the land for the space

^a Lex. Heb. p. 663. ^b Heb. rotor, seu instar rotæ circumagor, Piscator.

^c Heb. rotor, seu instar rotæ circumagor, Piscator.

^d Heb. consilii inops fuit, Castel. Lex. col. 199.

^e Heb. חרונך ירא תוא, Pagninus, Montanus; furores tui, Musculus, Tigurine version.

^f Heb. חרונך ירא תוא, Pagninus, Montanus; furores tui, Musculus, Tigurine version.

^g Heb. חרונך ירא תוא, Pagninus, Montanus; furores tui, Musculus, Tigurine version.

^h Heb. חרונך ירא תוא, Pagninus, Montanus; furores tui, Musculus, Tigurine version.

ⁱ Heb. חרונך ירא תוא, Pagninus, Montanus; furores tui, Musculus, Tigurine version.

of three hours; and a darkness was on his soul, being forsaken by his Father; and the prince of darkness, with all the fiends of hell, were throwing their fiery darts at

him, Matt. xxvii. 45, 46. Thus ends this sorrowful and mournful song; a joyful one follows.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

WHO this Ethan was is not certain. Kimchi takes him to be the same with Ethan the wise man, a grandson of Judah, 1 Kings iv. 31. 1 Chron. ii. 6. But seeing he lived some hundreds of years before the times of David, it is not likely that he should be the writer of this psalm; for David is made mention of in it, which could not be, unless it can be thought to be by a spirit of prophecy; which indeed is the opinion of Doctor Lightfoot^k, who takes this Ethan to be the penman of this psalm; and who "from the promise, Gen. xv. "sings joyfully the deliverance (of Israel); that the "raging of the Red sea should be ruled, ver. 9. and "Rahab, or Egypt, should be broken in pieces, ver. 10. "and that the people should hear the joyful sound of "the law, ver. 15. and as for the name of David in it, "this, he says, might be done prophetically; as Samuel "is thought to be named by Moses, Psal. xcix. 6. which "psalm is held to be made by him; or else might be put "into it, in after-times, by some divine penman, endued "with the same gift of prophecy, who might improve "the ground-work of this psalm laid by Ethan, and set "it to an higher key; namely, that whereas he treated "only of bodily deliverance from Egypt, it is wound up "so high as to reach the spiritual delivery by Christ; "and therefore David is often named, from whence he "should come." There was another Ethan, a singer, in David's time; and it is more probable that he is the person, who might live to the times of Rehoboam, and see the decline of David's family, and the revolt of the ten tribes from it; or perhaps it was one of this name who lived in the times of the Babylonish captivity, and saw the low estate that David's family were come into; to which agrees the latter part of this psalm; and, in order to comfort the people of God, he wrote this psalm, shewing that the covenant and promises of God, made with David, nevertheless stood firm, and would be accomplished: the title of the Septuagint version calls him Ethan the Israelite; and the Arabic version Nathan the Israelite: the Targum makes him to be Abraham, paraphrasing it "a good "understanding, which was said by the hand of Abraham, that came from the east." But whoever was the penman of this psalm, it is *maschil*, an instructive psalm, a psalm causing to understand; it treats concerning the covenant of grace, and the promises of it; and concerning the mercy and faithfulness of God, in making and keeping the same; and concerning the Messiah and his seed, his church and people; and the stability and duration of all these: many passages in it are applied to the Messiah by Jewish writers,

ancient and modern; and ver. 20 is manifestly referred to in Acts xiii. 22.

Ver. 1. *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever, &c.*] Both temporal and spiritual, especially the latter, in which there is a large display of the rich and abundant mercy of God, from whence they are so called; as in the choice of men to everlasting life, who are said to be vessels of mercy; in the covenant of grace made with them, the blessings of which are the sure mercies of David; in the mission of Christ, whose coming, as the day-spring from on high, is owing to the tender mercy of our God; in redemption by him, in which mercy and truth have met together; in regeneration, which is according to abundant mercy; in the forgiveness of sins, which is according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and in the whole of salvation, which is not by works of righteousness, but by the mercy of God through Christ: the word may be rendered *graces, kindnesses, goodnesses*^l, and designs the abundance of grace; as in the heart of God, in the covenant, in the hands of Christ, as displayed through him, and in the several parts of salvation, and the whole of it: and these are a proper subject for a song; and a truly gracious soul, sensible of these things, thankful for them, cheerful on account of them, and seeing his interest in them, cannot but *sing* of them; and will determine to do it *for ever*, every day, and all the day long, as long as he lives, and while he has any being, and which he will do to all eternity: *with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations*: God is faithful to himself, to all the perfections of his nature, to his truth, holiness, and justice, he cannot deny himself; he is so to his Son, and to all engagements with him, and promises to him; to all his counsels, purposes, and decrees; all which are faithfulness and truth, or faithfully and truly performed; and to his covenant and promises made to his people in Christ, in whom they are all yea and amen: and that this glorious perfection of God might be made known to the saints in all successive generations, and be taken notice of by them, the psalmist spoke and sung this psalm with his mouth, and penned it with his hand; in which there is more mention made of the faithfulness of God than perhaps in any other passage of Scripture besides; see ver. 2, 5, 8, 24, 33.

Ver. 2. *For I have said, &c.*] That is, in his heart he had said, he had thought of it, was assured of it, strongly concluded it, from the spirit and word of God; he believed it, and therefore he spoke it; having it from the Lord, it was all one as if He had spoke it:

^k Works, vol. i. p. 699, 700.

^l חסדו bonitates, Tigurine version; benignitates, Junius & Tremellius; beneficia, Piscator; gratias, Cocceius.

some versions therefore render it, *for thou hast said*, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions: *mercy shall be built up for ever*; signifying that there should be new and frequent displays of it, fresh favour should be given, and a daily increase of them; and so, like a building, should rise, and be a firm and stable one; for the phrase denotes the perpetuity of the mercy of God; it endures for ever; it is from everlasting to everlasting: moreover, this may be said to be done, when saints are rooted and grounded in the love, grace, and mercy of God, and are built up in Christ, and established in him, in whom this mercy is displayed; and when the church of God in general, which is a monument of mercy, and which, though it may decay and fall into ruins, shall be raised up again, and rebuilt, and the head-stone brought in with acclamations of God's grace unto it: now, because mercy would be such a noble and lasting structure, therefore the psalmist determines to sing of the mercies of God for ever: *thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens*; make it appear to be as firm and stable as the heavens, and more so; for these may pass away; but the words of the Lord, his promises, to which he is always faithful, shall never pass away; his word of promise, being made in the heavens, is settled there; and when he brings his people to heaven, which he has prepared for them, and has promised to them, then will his faithfulness appear to be fully established there; and because of this, of the faith of this, the psalmist resolved to make it known to all generations: and as this refers to a covenant made, that is mentioned in the following words, in which the Lord is introduced speaking.

Ver. 3. *I have made a covenant with my chosen*, &c.] Not with Abraham, as the Targum expresses it: but with David, as in the following clause; not David, literally understood, though he was chosen of the Lord to be his servant, and a covenant was made with him, and a promise made to him of the perpetuity of his throne and kingdom in his family, Psal. lxxviii. 70. 2 Sam. vii. 16. but mystical David, the Messiah, David's son and antitype; after, on this account, called David in Scripture, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. Hos. iii. 5. and who is the Lord's *chosen One*, fore-ordained to be the Redeemer of lost sinners, chosen to be the Mediator between God and them, to be the head of the church, and Saviour of the body; and his human nature was chosen to the grace of union to the Son of God, ver. 19. hence he is called God's elect, Isa. xlii. 1. and with him the covenant of grace was made from all eternity, and all the blessings and promises of it were put it into his hands; he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and by his blood it is ratified and confirmed: the Septuagint render it, in the plural number, *with mine elect ones*; and it is a truth, that the covenant of grace is made with all the elect, considered in Christ, and is made with them as such, and not as believers, converted persons, &c. election is the foundation of the covenant, and the source of all covenant-blessings: *I have sworn unto David my servant*: to the Messiah, called David, as before observed, and

who is the Lord's servant, as man and Mediator, of his choosing, calling, sending, and supporting, Isa. xlii. 1. and xlix. 3. and liii. 11. to whom he swore, and he will not repent; and which oath of his, joined to his covenant and promise, makes for the strong consolation of the heirs of promise; see ver. 35. Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vi. 18. the sum and substance of which covenant and oath follow.

Ver. 4. *Thy seed will I establish for ever*, &c.] Meaning not the natural seed of David, at least not only them; whose family was indeed preserved, though in very low circumstances, until the Messiah came, who sprung from thence, Luke i. 27. and ii. 4. Acts xiii. 23. but the spiritual seed of Christ, to whom it was promised that he should have a seed, and should see and enjoy it, and which should endure for ever; see ver. 29, 36. Isa. lvii. 11. and so he always has had a seed to serve him in all generations, in the worst of times, and will; and who are established in him, and will be kept and preserved by him, and whom he will present to his Father, saying, *Lo, I and the children whom thou hast given me*, Heb. ii. 13. *and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah*; and this shews that the passage is not to be understood literally of David, and of his temporal throne and kingdom, which did not last many generations; but of the spiritual throne and kingdom of the Messiah, who sprung from him, called the throne of his father David, whose throne is for ever and ever, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, Luke i. 32, 33. Psal. xlv. 6. Dan. ii. 44. his throne is in the heavens, where he will reign until all enemies are put under his feet; and it is also in the midst of his church, and in the hearts of his people, where he reigns as King of saints; and he is on the same throne with his Father; it is the same with his, as to glory, power, and authority; on this he will sit, and judge the world at the last day; and on it he will reign with his people a thousand years, in the New-Jerusalem state, and after that to all eternity, Rev. iii. 21. and xx. 4, 5, 11. and xxii. 3, 4.

Ver. 5. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord*, &c.] Which, by a prosopopœia, may be understood of the heavens literally, in the same sense as other inanimate creatures praise the Lord, Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4. or mystically of the church, consisting of heaven-born souls, and whose doctrines and ordinances are from heaven; or of the apostles, as Jerom, who had their ministry, mission, commission, and gifts, from thence; or rather of the angels, the inhabitants of heaven, who praise the Lord for his wonderful works of nature, providence, and grace, Psal. cxlviii. 2. particularly they admire and praise the wonderful work of redemption *that wonderful thing of thine*, as the word may be rendered, being in the singular number: the person of the Redeemer is wonderful, and that is his name; his incarnation is a most amazing thing, it is the great mystery of godliness; and the redemption wrought out by him is the wonder of men and angels: when he appeared in the world, the angels of God worshipped him; at his birth, they sung glory to God in the highest; and the mysteries of his grace are what

^m מִרְאֵי מִלְאֵי mirabile tuum, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus;

mirabile opus tuum, Junius & Tremellius; illud miraculum tuum, Michaelis.

they look into with wonder and praise, Heb. i. 6. Luke ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 12. *thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints*; i. e. is praised there; which Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret of the angels also, who are called saints, Deut. xxxiii. 2. of which there is a congregation, even an innumerable company, Rev. xii. 22. these not only admire and praise the wonderful works of the Lord, but his perfections also; and particularly his faithfulness in the execution of promises and threatenings, Rev. vii. 11, 12. and xvi. 5. but rather holy men are meant, such as are called to be saints, and are gathered together in a Gospel church-state, designed by a congregation of them, among and by whom the truth and faithfulness of God, as well as his loving-kindness and mercy, are spoken of with the highest commendation, Psal. xl. 9, 10.

Ver. 6. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? &c.*] Or *ranked**, or put upon a par, with him; none of the angels in heaven; for though they are holy, wise, knowing, powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful creatures, yet not to be compared with the Lord for holiness, wisdom, knowledge, strength, faithfulness, and mercy; see Exod. xv. 11. Isa. xlvii. 9, 10. Psal. lxxxix. 8. 1 Kings viii. 23. Mic. vii. 18. *who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* the Syriac version very wrongly renders it *the sons of angels*, seeing angels do not propagate their species, Luke xx. 36. to which Kimchi agrees, who makes the *mighty* to be angels, and their sons to be the host of heaven, which are moved and guided by them: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it *the sons of God*; and this phrase, indeed, is applicable to the angels, Job xxxviii. 7. and so the Targum interprets it of the multitude of the angels; but rather the mighty men of the earth, and their children, are meant; princes, nobles, judges, and civil magistrates of all sorts, men of power and authority in the world; there are none of them to be likened to the Lord, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords; see Psal. lxxxii. 1, 2.

Ver. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, &c.*] Which Jarchi and Kimchi understand of angels again, and render it *God is to be feared in the great assembly* of them; for they are a very large number, even an innumerable company, in and by whom the Lord is feared and worshipped, Heb. xii. 21. Rev. v. 11. and vii. 11, 12. but rather an assembly or congregation of holy men are designed: it is the duty of such to assemble together publicly for religious worship; they ought to do it on account of the Lord, who requires it, and encourages it by his presence, he has promised; on the account of themselves, it being for their profit and pleasure; and on the account of others, for their conversion and comfort; and in imitation of the people of God, in all ages; nor should they forsake the assembling of themselves: the word סדר, rendered *assembly*, signifies *counsel* or *secret*; see Gen. xlix. 6. and so the Targum, "God is mighty in the "secrets of the saints, sitting on a throne of glory;" in the assembly of the saints, the secrets of God's love are disclosed unto them; the doctrines and mysteries of his grace, called the whole counsel of God,

Acts xx. 27. are there made known; and the ordinances of the Gospel, which also are styled the counsel of God, Luke vii. 30. are there administered: now, where all this is done, *God is greatly feared* herein; not with a slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation, such as may be in devils; nor with an hypocritical fear, such as is taught by the precepts of men; but with a filial, godly fear, such as is peculiar to the children of God; with an holy and humble fear, with a fiducial and fearless one; with a reverential affection for the Divine Being, and such as includes all worship of him, internal and external: *and to be had in reverence of all them that arc about him*; which the Targum paraphrases "and is to be feared above all "the angels that stand round about him;" and so Kimchi interprets it; see Rev. v. 11. and vii. 11. but the same thing, in different words, is meant, as in the preceding clause.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, &c.*] Of all the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and of all the heavenly hosts of angels, of all the armies in heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth: *who is a strong Lord like unto thee?* he is Jah, or Jehovah, and he alone is so, and is the most High in all the earth, Psal. lxxxiii. 18. and there is none like him for his great power and strength, by which he has made the heavens and the earth, and upholds them in their being; and by which he has redeemed his people, plucked them out of the hands of sin and Satan, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory: see Job xl. 9. Isa. xl. 15, 17, 18. *or to thy faithfulness round about thee*; none so faithful as the Lord, none to be trusted as he, either angels or men; some understand it of the faithful ones that are about him, his trusty servants the angels, who stand round about him ready to do his will; or the glorified saints that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful; see Psal. ciii. 19, 20. Rev. xvii. 14. or rather the words are to be read, *and thy faithfulness is round about thee*; and so the Targum, "and thy truth (or faithfulness) surroundeth thee:" look all around him, and his faithfulness is everywhere to be seen; to himself, and the perfections of his nature; to his son, and agreements with him; and to his counsels of old, his purposes and decrees, and to his covenant and promises: he is as it were clothed with faithfulness, and it appears in all the dispensations of his providence and grace.

Ver. 9. *Thou rulest the raging of the sea, &c.*] The power, pride, and elation of it, when it swells, and foams, and rages, and becomes boisterous, and threatens vessels upon it with utter ruin and destruction; but the Lord, who has it under his dominion and government, restrains it; he has made and can manage it, and he only: his power over it is seen in assigning it its place, and ordering the waters of it to it when first made: in placing the sand for its boundary by a perpetual decree, which it cannot pass; by commanding the stormy wind to lift up its waves, and by making the storm a calm, and the waves thereof still; see Psal. cvii. 25, 29. instances of this were at the universal deluge, and at the Red sea: *when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them*; when the sea lifts up its waves, and

* יערך par aestimetur, Junius & Tremellius; par aestimabitur, Picator.

both lift up their voice, and make a noise, and roar, the Lord hushes them, and makes them still and quiet, as a parent its child when it cries, or a master his scholars, when they are noisy and tumultuous; so Christ rebuked the wind, and checked the raging sea, and made it a calm, when the ship in which he was with his disciples was covered with its waves; and as this is mentioned here as an instance of the great power and strength of the Lord of hosts, so that was a proof and evidence of the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. viii. 24—27. all this may be understood, in a mystical sense, of the sea of this world, and the wicked inhabitants of it, who are as the troubled sea, and cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt, reproaching and blaspheming God and man; and particularly of tyrannical princes and potentates, who are like the proud waters and raging waves of the sea; but the Lord on high is mightier than they, and can and does restrain their wrath and rage, so that his people have nothing to fear from them; see Psal. cxxiv. 3, 4, 5. and xlvi. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 10. *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain, &c.*] Or Egypt, as in Psal. lxxxvii. 4. Isa. li. 9. or the Egyptians, and particularly Pharaoh their king; so the Targum explains it, “Rahab or “the proud one, this is Pharaoh the wicked;” who and his people were broken to pieces by the plagues that were brought upon them, especially when all their first-born were slain; and he and his host were broke in pieces at the Red sea, and were seen by the Israelites on the shore, all dead men; and this was done as easily by the Lord, as one slain with the sword, as a dead carcass which has no life, power, and strength to defend itself, may be trampled upon, crushed, bruised, and broken to pieces, by a living man. All this may be an emblem of the Lord’s breaking in pieces the proud and insolent one Satan, as Rahab signifies; of his breaking his head, destroying his works, and spoiling his principalities and powers; and indeed of his destruction of every proud and haughty sinner, that says, Pharaoh-like, who is the Lord, that I should obey him? and of every vain boaster, and self-righteous person, that trusts in his own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ; and particularly of mystical Egypt, the proud beast of Rome, antichrist, who sits in the temple of God as if he was God, shewing himself to be so, blaspheming God, his name, his tabernacle, and his saints; who will be broken to shivers as a potter’s vessel, when the vials of God’s wrath are poured out, and at and by the coming of Christ: *thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm*; as the Egyptians were in the Red sea, by the waves of it, and cast upon the shore by them; and as the Amorites were by Moses, and the Canaanites by Joshua; which instances may be here referred unto; see Numb. x. 35. these are further proofs of the power and strength of the Lord, Job xl. 9—14.

Ver. 11. *The heavens are thine, &c.*] They are made and inhabited by him, they are the work of his hands, and the seat of his majesty, and the throne of his glory; the angels of heaven are his, his creatures and

servants; the several heavens are his, the airy, starry, and third heavens; the place and state of the blessed and glorified saints is of his preparing and giving: *the earth also is thine*; the whole terraqueous globe, and all that is in it, being made, preserved, and continued by him, and by him given to the sons of men, Psal. cxvi. 15. *as for the world, and the fulness thereof*; the habitable world, and all that dwell therein, all the children of men, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills, and the provisions for them all; which is the goodness of the Lord, the earth is full of; these are all the Lord’s; see Psal. xxiv. 1. and xxxiii. 5. and l. 10, 11, 12. *thou hast founded them*; the world, and the inhabitants of it; the earth is founded upon the seas, and the world upon nothing; and the inhabitants are wonderfully preserved and continued by the power and providence of God; see Psal. xxiv. 2.

Ver. 12. *The north and the south, thou hast created them, &c.*] The two extreme parts of the world, the northern and southern poles, whether inhabited or uninhabited, are created by the Lord, to answer some purpose or another; see Job xxvi. 7. *Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name*; Tabor was a mountain in the western part of Galilee, in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 12. This mountain, according to Mr. Maundrell^a, stands by itself in the plain of Esdraelon, about two or three furlongs within the plain; it has a plain area at top, most fertile and delicious, of an oval figure, extended about one furlong in breadth, and two in length; this area is enclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, in which there are in several places cisterns of good water. It is generally thought to be the mountain Christ was transfigured upon before his disciples; and if so, it might then be said to rejoice in his name, when he appeared in so glorious a form upon it; Moses and Elias talking with him, and a voice from the excellent Glory declaring him his beloved Son; and especially the disciples rejoiced in his name there and then, who could say, It is good for us to be here, Matt. xvii. 1—5. Hermon was a mountain called by the Sidonians Sirion, and by the Amorites Shenir, Deut. iii. 8, 9. and was in the east; and so Mr. Maundrell^b, speaking of Tabor, says, not many leagues eastward you see Mount Hermon, at the foot of which is seated Nain, famous for our Lord’s raising the widow’s son there, Luke vii. 11. there was an Hermon near Mount Tabor, thought likely to be here meant; but, be these mountains where and what they may, they were no doubt very high and fruitful ones, clothed with fruitful trees and grass, and covered with flocks; which made the proprietors and all the beholders rejoice in the goodness, wisdom, and power of God: the Targum in the king’s Bible gives the four quarters very truly, “the desert of the north, “and the inhabitants of the south, thou hast created; “Tabor on the west, and Hermon on the east, praised; “in thy name.”

Ver. 13. *Thou hast a mighty arm, &c.*] Christ is the arm of the Lord, and a mighty one he is, and so is the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation; here it seems to design the almighty power

^a Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 113, 114, Ed. 7.

^b Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 115, Ed. 7.

of God, displayed in the works of creation and providence; see Isa. li. 59. and liii. 1. *strong is thy hand thy left hand*, as some, it being distinguished from his right hand, mentioned in the next clause; the Targum adds, "to redeem thy people:" the work of redemption was put into the hand of Christ, and it prospered in his hand, and his own arm brought salvation to him; and his hand is strong to keep and preserve his people, where they are put, and where they are safe; and the hand of the Lord is strong to correct and chastise them, and sometimes his hand lies heavy upon them, and presses them sore, when it becomes them to humble themselves under his *mighty hand*; and it is also strong to punish his and their enemies: *and high is thy right hand*; when it is lifted up in a way of judgment against wicked men, and for the defence of his people, then may it be said to be exalted; and it is high enough to reach the highest and most powerful of his adversaries; see Psal. cxviii. 16. Isa. xxvi. 11. Mic. v. 9. The Targum adds, "to build the house of thy sanctuary." Some render these two last clauses as a wish or prayer; *let thy hand be strong, and let thy right hand be lifted up*.

Ver. 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne, &c.*] The seat and throne on which he sits; all the administrations of his kingly power in the government of the world, in the salvation of his people, and in the punishment of his enemies, being according to the strict rules of justice and judgment: or the preparation of thy throne^d; all that the Lord does according to the counsel of his will; and these counsels were of old, and were formed in strict justice and judgment, and were a preparation for his future government in providence and grace: or the establishment of thy throne^e; the throne of an earthly king is established by righteousness; and so the throne of God, and of Christ, is ordered and established with justice and judgment in the exercise of righteousness for evermore, Prov. xvi. 12. Isa. ix. 7. *mercy and truth shall go before thy face*; be and appear wherever he is; all his ways are mercy and truth, Psal. xxv. 10. *mercy* in pardoning and saving sinners that come unto him by Christ; and *truth* in performing all his purposes and promises; and these make the joyful sound next mentioned.

Ver. 15. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, &c.*] Of the love, grace, and mercy of God displayed in Christ, of peace and pardon by his blood, of justification by his righteousness, of atonement by his sacrifice, and of complete salvation by his obedience, sufferings, and death; this is the sound of the Gospel, and a joyful one it is to sensible sinners; and is so called in allusion either to a shout made upon a victory gained, and such a sound is the Gospel; it declares victory by Christ over sin, Satan, the world, and death, and every enemy; and that he has made his people more than conquerors over them; or to the jubilee-trumpet, which proclaimed liberty and a restoration of inheritances, Lev. xxv. 9, 10. and so the Gospel proclaims liberty to the captives, freedom from the dominion of sin, and condemnation by it, from the tyranny of

Satan, and the bondage of the law; and gives an account of the inheritance the saints have in Christ, and through his death, to which they are regenerated, and for which they are made meet by the spirit of God, and of which he is the seal and earnest: or to the silver trumpets, for the use of the congregation of Israel, and blown at their solemn feasts, and other times, and were all of a piece, Numb. x. 1, 2. the trumpet of the Gospel gives a certain sound, an even one, a very musical one; there's no jar nor discord in it; is a soul-charming all-ringing sound, and very loud; it has reached, and will reach again, to the ends of the earth, Rom. x. 18. it is a blessing to hear it, but it is a greater to know it, not merely notionally, but spiritually and experimentally; so as not only to approve of it, and be delighted with it, but so as to distinguish it from all other sounds; and by faith to receive it, and appropriate the things it publishes to a man's own soul; and such must be *blessed*, or happy persons, for the reasons following in this verse, and in the 16th, 17th, and 18th: *they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance*; enjoy the gracious presence of God, have the manifestation of himself, the discoveries of his love, communion with him through Christ, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and these continued; so that they shall walk in the sunshine of these things, though not always; for sometimes they walk in darkness, and see no light; but it is an unspeakable mercy and blessing to walk herein at any time, for ever so short a season, see Psal. iv. 6, 7.

Ver. 16. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, &c.*] That know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of God's countenance, as they have reason to do; these will rejoice in the Lord himself, for his name is himself; in the perfections of his nature, as displayed in redemption and salvation by Christ; in him as the God of all grace, as their covenant God and Father in Christ, and the God of their salvation; and they will rejoice in Christ, in his name, in which is salvation, and therefore precious; in his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness; and that *all the day long*, continually; there is always reason, ground, and matter for rejoicing in Christ, though it is sometimes interrupted by sin, temptation, and desertion; see Phil. iv. 4. *and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted*; from a low estate of sin and misery to an high estate of grace and glory; from a state of condemnation and death to a state of justification of life; from being beggars on the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; such as are clothed with the righteousness of the Son of God are exalted to great honour, as to be admitted into the presence of the King of kings in raiment of needle-work, to stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir, and to live and reign with him for evermore in his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 17. *For thou art the glory of their strength, &c.*] By which they walk, and do all they do, exercise every grace, and discharge their duty; they have their strength from Christ, as well as their righteousness, without whom they can do nothing, but all things through him strengthening them; and as

^a So Pagninus, Montanus, and V. L.

^d כְּמִןּוּן מִכּוֹן כְּסִיךְ preparatio sedis tue. V. L. so the Sept.

^e Basis, fulcrum & stabilimentum, Michaelis.

his righteousness exalts them, his strength adorns and glorifies them; how glorious and beautiful does a believer look, that is strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, in the grace that is in Christ, and in the exercise of faith on him, giving glory to God; on whom the power of Christ rests, and it overshadows, and in whose weakness his strength is made perfect! *and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted*; either Christ, the Horn of their salvation, who in an acceptable time, in the time of God's favour, or good will, was heard and helped by him as man, carried through his sufferings and death, was raised from the dead, and exalted at his right hand; see ver. 24. and Isa. xlix. 8. or the saints themselves, their power and strength, kingdom and glory; by the special favour of God in Christ, their mountain is made so strong, and they so highly exalted, as that they think they shall never be moved; and in the latter day the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the hills, Psal. xxx. 6, 7. Isa. ii. 2.

Ver. 18. *For the Lord is our defence, &c.*] From all their enemies, being all around them, as a wall of fire to protect them, and as the mountains were round about Jerusalem, and being kept by his power as in a fortress, strong hold, or garrison, unto salvation; or *our shield*^f; see Psal. lxxxiv. 9, 11, as are his favour, righteousness, and salvation, Psal. v. 12. and xviii. 35. or to the Lord belongs *our defence or shield*^g; our protection and salvation is from him: *and the holy One of Israel is our King*: he who was to be, and is of Israel according to the flesh, and is holy in his nature, life, and office; he is King of saints, that rules over them, protects and defends them, and therefore they must be happy: or to or with the *holy One of Israel is our king*^h; Christ is King of Zion by designation, appointment, and constitution, of God the holy One of Israel, the holy God that has chosen Israel for his peculiar people; though it rather seems that Christ is the holy One by what follows.

Ver. 19. *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, &c.*] Samuel the prophet, that holy man of God, to whom the Lord spoke in vision, or by a spirit of prophecy, concerning David, the choice and exaltation of him to the kingdom, and his unction for it, 1 Sam. xvi. 1. The Vulgate Latin version reads it to *thy holy ones*; and so the Targum, with which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions, which render it *thy sons*; and the Syriac version *his righteous ones*, and so takes in Nathan also, to whom the Lord spake in a vision, by night, concerning the settlement and perpetuity of the kingdom in David's family, 2 Sam. vii. 4, &c. Aben Ezra interprets it of the singers, Heman, Ethan, and others; and Jarchi of Gad and Nathan: but the whole is rather to be understood of David's son, the Messiah; and it may be rendered *concerning thy holy One*ⁱ, as he is called, Psal. xvi. 10. concerning whom in vision, that is, in prophecy, see Isa. i. 1. The Lord said, by the mouth of his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world, the following things: *and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty*; this

mighty One is the Messiah, the mighty God, the mighty Man, the mighty Mediator and Redeemer; who was mighty to save to the uttermost, and was every way fit for and equal to the work of a Redeemer; for which reason the Lord *laid help* upon him, not for himself; for this is not to be understood of help promised or given him as man and Mediator: this is after spoken of, ver. 21. but for others; and so the Targum adds, *for my people*: laying it on him is no other than ordering or enjoining him, to which he agreed, to help his people out of that miserable condition they were fallen into, through Adam's transgression, and their own sins, out of which they could not help themselves: the work assigned to Christ, and devolved on him in council and covenant, was to help them out of this estate by price and power; and to help them on in their way to heaven, through all difficulties, trials, and temptations; and to help them to heaven itself, and introduce them there: and being thus laid upon him, according to his father's will and purpose, and with his own consent, it was found in him, and exercised by him, Hos. xiii. 9. *I have exalted one chosen out of the people*; the same as before, the Messiah, God's elect, his chosen One, Isa. xlii. 1. Luke xxii. 35. *chosen* to be the head of the church, to be the Mediator between God and man, and to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; to be the foundation and corner-stone in the spiritual building, and to be the Judge of quick and dead: and he was *chosen out of the people*: out of the vast number of the individuals of human nature God determined to create, there was a certain number which he selected for himself, for his own glory, and to be eternally happy with him; and out of these he singled one *individuum* of human nature, to be united to the eternal Word, the second Person in the Trinity; and which may be truly said to be the *chiefest among*, or, as the Septuagint version has it, *chosen out of ten thousand*, Cant. v. 10. this the Lord *exalted* to the grace of union to the Son of God, whereby it became higher than angels and men, and to have a more excellent name than either of them, it bearing the name of him to whom it is united, Heb. i. 4, 5. Luke i. 35. and he has exalted him to the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, for which he is *anointed above his fellows*; and he has also, having done his work, highly exalted him at his right hand; angels, principalities, and powers, being subject to him.

Ver. 20. *I have found David my servant, &c.*] Not David literally; but his son and antitype, the Messiah, who is sometimes called by his name; see the note on ver. 3. and his *finding* him does not suppose any ignorance of him, nor anxious solicitude in seeking him, nor any fortuitous event; but is attributed to God by an anthropopathy, or speaking after the manner of men; for it is an act of the highest wisdom, and richest grace, to find out, that is, to pitch upon and appoint, in council and covenant, his own son to be his servant, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of sinners, and to be a ransom for them, Job xxxiii. 24. The Apostle Paul seems to refer to this passage in Acts xiii. 22. *with my*

^f מוֹנֵנוּ clypens noster, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; scutum nostrum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
^g לַיהוָה Domino, Pagninus, Montanus.

^h וְאֶתֵּן אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶתֵּן אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל, Pagninus, Montanus.
ⁱ לַיהוָה de pio tuo, Cocceius; de sancto tuo, Gejerus.

holy oil have I anointed him; not with material oil, as David, his type, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. 2 Sam. ii. 4. and v. 3. but with the Holy Ghost, which may well be called holy oil, in allusion to the holy anointing oil under the law; the oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed above his fellows, and without measure, at the time of his conception and birth, at his baptism and ascension to heaven, and even, in some sense, from all eternity; for so early is he said to be anointed, and to be possessed with all fulness of grace, being invested with and installed into his office as Mediator; and from this anointing he has the name of Messiah and Christ, both which signify *anointed*, Acts x. 38. Psal. xlv. 7. Prov. viii. 22, 23.

Ver. 21. *With whom my hand shall be established, &c.*] A promise of God's gracious presence with Christ, as man and Mediator, which is his work; of a communication of grace and strength from him, to carry him through it; and of his supporting and upholding him under it; which hand of his power and grace would be always prepared and ready for him, as the word ^a signifies, and stable and firm with him, so that he should have success in it; the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand; so the Targum, "for my hands are prepared for his help;" the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the eastern versions, *mine hand shall help him*; and which is confirmed in the next words: *mine arm also shall strengthen him*; in the human nature, subject to and encompassed with infirmities: this shews the greatness of the work of man's redemption, which no creature could effect; it required the arm and power of the Lord to be exerted, and by which Christ was made strong by the Lord, both for himself, and for the working out of salvation for us; which he did when he travelled in the greatness of his strength, standing up under the mighty weight of our sins, and the wrath of God; and yet failed not, nor was he discouraged, till his own arm brought salvation to him; see Psal. lxxx. 17. Isa. xlii. 1, 4. and lxiii. 1, 5.

Ver. 22. *The enemy shall not exact upon him, &c.*] The enemy is the devil, as in the interpretation of the parable of the tares, Matt. xiii. 39. the implacable enemy of Christ and his church; and yet, notwithstanding all his enmity and malice, he could not *exact*, or get more inflicted on him, than the law and justice of God required of him, as the sinner's surety; or could not *exact* a tribute of him, or make him tributary to him; or, in other words, conquer him, and subject him to him: so far from it, that he was conquered by Christ, and all his principalities and powers spoiled; or could not *deceive* him, in which sense the word ^b is sometimes used; and so the Targum here: though he deceived Eve, he could not deceive the Messiah, the seed of the woman; he tried it, in person, by his temptations in the wilderness, and by his agents and instruments, the Scribes and Pharisees; but in vain, and to no purpose; he could not succeed: *nor the son of wickedness afflict him*: at least not always: he was indeed afflicted, as by wicked men, and by

Satan the wicked one, yet not so as to be overcome by any; and as Christ personal, so Christ mystical, or his church and people, are afflicted by the sons of wickedness; yet, sooner or later, they are delivered out of all their afflictions. Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that wicked one, that is eminently so, and may be well called *the son of wickedness*, has long and greatly oppressed the people of Christ, and his interest; but he shall not always; he shall be destroyed with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8. This passage is applied to the Messiah by the Jews ^c.

Ver. 23. *And I will beat down his foes before his face, &c.*] In Judea, and in the Gentile world; more especially in Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal; in the most public manner, before his Gospel, and the ministry of it by his servants; and they shall either submit unto it, or be broken to pieces as a potter's vessel; for he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. *and plague them that hate him*; that would not have him to reign over them, the unbelieving Jews, and all the followers of antichrist; who are either plagued with the judgments of God here, or with everlasting punishment hereafter, with which they will be tormented for ever and ever, Luke xix. 14, 27. Rev. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. and xiv. 10, 11. or *strike* ^d them with a rod of iron, with his wrath and vengeance; strike them down to the ground, and to the lowest hell.

Ver. 24. *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him, &c.*] The *faithfulness* of God was and is with Christ, in performing promises made to him respecting his work, and strength to do it, as man, and the glory that should follow; and also those made to his people in him, relating to grace here, and happiness hereafter: and though there was no *mercy* shewn to Christ, as the surety of his people, but he was dealt with in strict justice; yet, as Mediator of the covenant, the special mercy of God is with him, even every blessing of it, called *the sure mercies of David*; and is only communicated through him; he is the mercy-seat, from whence mercy is dispensed, and the propitiation through whom God is merciful to men; the words may be rendered, *my truth and my grace* ^e, as they are by the Targum; and both are with Christ, the truth of doctrine, and all the fulness of grace, justifying, sanctifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace, John i. 14, 17. *and in my name shall his horn be exalted, or his glory*, as the Targum; his power and dominion, of which the horn is an emblem; and his glory is displayed in having the same name his father has: his name is expressive of his nature, being, and perfections, the name Jehovah; and his name of title and office *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; or his name the Word of God, as the Targum; who, as such, is the brightness of his father's glory; or the sense is, that, by the power of God, he should be raised from the dead, and have glory given him, and be exalted at his right hand, and made Lord and Christ; or by means of the Gospel, which is the name

^a פָּרַטָּה parata erit, Musculus, Muis; so the Targum.

^b מִשְׁתָּהֵם non imponet ei, Targumic version; non seductum eum, so some in Vatablus; non decipiet eum, Gejerus, Schmidt.

^c Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

^d מַחֲרִיקִים percutiam, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Michaelis.

^e וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ & veritas mea, & gratia mea, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

of the Lord, John xvii. 6, 8. his kingdom and dominion should be spread in the world; see 1 Sam. ii. 10.

Ver. 25. *I will set his hand also in the sea, &c.*] Which is expressive not of his dominion over the sea, and of his power and authority over all things in it, which he has by right of creation, and as Mediator, Psal. viii. 5, 6, 7. of which there were instances in the days of his flesh, Matt. viii. 26, 27. and xvii. 27. but of his kingdom taking place in, and of his government over the inhabitants of the isles of the sea; and so the Targum, "I will set or place his government in the provinces of the sea;" and which has been remarkably accomplished in our isles, where his Gospel has been preached, his kingdom set up, and he has had a race of subjects, and a seed, to serve him for many years: *and his right hand in the rivers:* or, as the Targum, "the power of his right hand in those that dwell by rivers;" meaning such that dwell upon the continent, afar off from the sea, and whose countries are watered by rivers: so that both phrases denote the extent of Christ's kingdom in the continent, and in the islands of the sea; signifying, that it should reach everywhere, and be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Psal. lxxii. 8. Compare with this Rev. x. 1, 2. Aben Ezra interprets it of David's prevailing over those that go in ships in the sea, and in rivers.

Ver. 26. *He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, &c.*] Not by creation, as he is the Father of angels and men; nor by adoption, as he is the Father of saints; but by generation, being the begetter of him, Psal. ii. 7. so that he is Christ's own and proper Father, and Christ is his own and proper Son, John. v. 18. Rom. viii. 3, 32. and he is frequently called him his Father, and asserted him to be in this relation to him, John v. 17. and x. 30. and xx. 17. and addressed him, called upon him, and prayed unto him as such, Matt. xi. 25. John xi. 41. and xvii. 1, 5, 11, 24, 25. Luke xxiii. 34. 46. *my God;* that chose him to be the Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour; who made a covenant with him, his chosen; who prepared and provided the human nature of Christ; anointed him with the gifts and graces of his spirit, and supported him in his sufferings, and crowned him with glory and honour; whom Christ loved as his God, trusted in him as such, obeyed him, and prayed unto him: he called him his God, owned him to be so, and called upon him, and cried unto him, as such, John xx. 17. Matt. xxvii. 46. God is the Father of Christ, as Christ is a divine Person; and he is the God of Christ, as Christ is man: these two relations frequently go together in the New Testament, John xx. 17. 2 Cor. i. 3. Ephes. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3. It is added, *and the Rock of my salvation;* that bore him up, and where he stood firm, whilst he was working out the salvation of his people; and though he was not saved from sufferings and death, yet he was quickly delivered from the grave, and raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet.

Ver. 27. *Also I will make him my first-born, &c.*] Or, *make him the first-born;* make him great, as Jar-

chi interprets it; give him the blessing, the double portion of inheritance: so Christ is made most blessed for ever, and has all spiritual blessings in his hands; and is heir of all things, and his people joint-heirs with him. Christ is God's *first-born*, or *first-begotten*, Heb. i. 6. being begotten by him, and of him; and his first-begotten, though none begotten after him; as the first that opened the womb, under the law, was called the first-born, though none were ever born after; and in such sense his first-begotten, as that he is his only begotten: and he is the first-born, with respect to creatures; he is the *first-born of every creature*; Col. i. 15. being begotten and brought forth before any creature was in being, Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24, 25. and, with respect to the saints, he is the *first-born among many brethren*, Rom. viii. 29. they are of the same nature, and in the same family, and in which Christ is a son, and the first-born; and in all things he has the pre-eminence; and he is also the *first-born from the dead*, or the *first-begotten of the dead*, Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. being raised first from thence by his own power, and to an immortal life; and is the first-fruits of them that sleep, and the efficient and meritorious cause of the resurrection of life, and the pattern and exemplar of it: even him the Father promises to make *higher than the kings of the earth*; having a kingdom of a superior nature to theirs, and a more extensive and durable one; and even they themselves shall be subject to him; hence he is called *King of kings*, Rev. xix. 16. This will be when their kingdoms become his; when they shall fall down before him, and worship him, and bring their riches and glory into his kingdom, or the New-Jerusalem church-state, Psal. lxxii. 10, 11. Rev. xi. 15. and xxi. 24. This passage is interpreted of the Messiah by the Jews.

Ver. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, &c.*] That is, for his mystical body, his church and people; for whom stores of mercy are kept with him, to be laid out in their regeneration, pardon, salvation, and eternal life; for to them the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, Psal. ciii. 17. unless this is to be understood of the *grace and kindness* of God, as the word may be rendered; his free favour and love to Christ, which always continues; for as he was always his dearly-beloved son, that lay in his bosom from eternity, so he continued, throughout his state of humiliation, his well-beloved, in whom he was well-pleased, and still is, and ever will: *and my covenant shall stand fast with him;* being made with him, as the head and representative of his people, it remains, and will remain, sure, firm, and immovable; its blessings are *sure mercies*, and its promises are all *yea and amen in Christ*: the stability of it, and of all that is in it, is owing to its being made with him, and being in his hands, who is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it.

Ver. 29. *His seed also will I make to endure for ever, &c.*] Not a race of kings from David, which ended at the Babylonish captivity; not the natural seed of David, not the Messiah himself, who sprung from him, but the Messiah's spiritual seed, which were given him

[†] In Shemot Rabba, s. 19. fol. 104. 4.

^{*} חסדו bonitatem meam, Musculus, Tigurine version; benignitas.

tem meam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; gratiam meam, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

by the Father, adopted through him, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, begotten through his Gospel, and the ministry of it, and born again in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6. and liii. 10. The *enduring* of these *for ever* may denote the final perseverance of particular believers; which may be concluded from the relation of Christ, as an everlasting Father to them, who therefore must continue as his children; from his affection to them, from which there can be no separation; from their security in and by him, being in his hand, and in his heart; from their adoption, which is never revoked, being sons they are no more servants; from their regeneration of incorruptible seed; and from the nature of faith, which can never be lost: they that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which endures for ever, Psal. cxxv. 1. or it may be expressive of the duration of the church of Christ in general, throughout all periods of time, notwithstanding the malice and opposition of men and devils against it; see Matt. xvi. 18. *and his throne as the days of heaven*; a phrase signifying a great length of time, Deut. xi. 21. yea, invariable constancy and duration, Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. Matt. v. 18. and indeed the throne of Christ is for ever and ever, and will be when the present earth and heavens are fled away, Psal. xlv. 6. Rev. xx. 11. Christ is upon a throne now in heaven, the same with his divine Father's; and here he must sit and reign, till all enemies are put under him; and he will be on a throne of glory when he judges the world, and in the New-Jerusalem state for the space of a thousand years; and, after that, he'll reign with his saints, and they with him, for evermore; his throne and kingdom are everlasting, Isa. ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44.

Ver. 30. *If his children forsake my law, &c.*] The same with the *seed* before mentioned, the children of the Messiah: it is not said *if he forsakes*, which cannot be supposed of Christ, because he knew no sin, nor did any; which yet might be supposed of David, had he been literally meant; but not he, nor his natural children, but the spiritual seed of mystical David, are here designed, who may sin, and do sin, of which there is too much proof and evidence; and who sin not only through infirmity, but sometimes very grossly, and which sins are here expressed by various phrases: they sometimes *forsake the law of God*; do not attend to it, as they should, as the rule of their walk and conversation; are remiss in their observance of it, and obedience to it, and transgress its precepts; or his *doctrine*^h, even the doctrine of the Gospel; which may be said to be forsaken when men grow indifferent to it; go off from it in any measure, drop their profession of it, or hold it remissly, or become careless in their attendance on it: forsaking the assembling together to hear it, in some sense, is a forsaking of it; and this the Lord takes notice of, and resents, in his people: *and walk not in my judgments*; those laws of his house by which he judges, regulates, and governs his people; by which they are directed by him, as their Judge and Lawgiver, how to behave themselves in the church of God; and

in which they are to walk, and continue in the observance of; and so to do is to walk as becomes the Gospel, and worthy of their vocation; but to do otherwise is to walk disorderly; and such are cognizable by the Lord, and by his people.

Ver. 31. *If they break my statutes, &c.*] Fixed, settled, appointed ordinances; such as are baptism and the Lord's supper, under the New-Testament dispensation; which are the things that are unshaken, and will remain until the second coming of Christ: these are to be kept as they were first delivered; no change and alteration ought to be made in them; so to do is to break and violate them, or *profane* them, as the wordⁱ here used signifies; and which may be done by an unbecoming, irreverent, and indecent attendance on them; as was by some in the Corinthian church, of which the apostle complains, and who for it were taken notice of, and chastened by the Lord, 1 Cor. xii. 2, 20, 21, 22, 30, 32. *and keep not my commandments*; which should be kept impartially, with great affection to them, from a principle of love to the Lord, with a view to his glory, and without trusting to and depending upon an obedience to them; for they are not grievous; and, besides, *in*, though *not for*, keeping them, there is great reward; and a contrary behaviour is displeasing to God: now this particular enumeration of offences, that may be committed by the children of God to Christ, shew that all sorts of sins may be committed by them; sins of omission and commission; sins against the law, and against the Gospel; all but the unpardonable one; and that these, though they are observed in a way hereafter mentioned, yet are all forgiven.

Ver. 32. *Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, &c.*] That is, of men; as in 2 Sam. vii. 14. the Lord making use of men to chastise his people by, as he did of the neighbouring nations of the Jews, when they sinned against him; and so the Targum interprets it here, "I will visit their transgressions by the hands of the tribes of the ungodly;" or with such afflictions as are common to men, 1 Cor. x. 13. in a kind, humane, moderate way, in measure, in judgment, and not in wrath and hot displeasure; or in such-like manner as a man chastises his children, which is in love, Deut. viii. 5. *and their iniquity with stripes*; such as diseases of body, loss of relations, crosses and disappointments in the world; not with the stripes of divine vengeance, of vindictive justice, such as Christ, the surety of his people, endured for them; but with the scourges of a father, Isa. liii. 8. Heb. xii. 6.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, &c.*] Or *make it void*^k, not from Christ, who always was, and ever will be, the dear Son of his love, even whilst he was obeying, suffering, and dying; nor from all those that are in him, loved and chosen in him, from every one of his spiritual seed, who are all dear sons, and pleasant children; and the love of God to his people is in Christ; and therefore there can be no separation from it; nor will it ever depart from them, or be utterly or at all taken from

^h תורתו verbum meum revelatum, Gejerus; legem & doctrinam meam, Michaelis.

ⁱ ויחלני prophanaerint, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^k לא אפסתיך not irritam faciam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

them, as to that itself, though sometimes the manifestations of it are withdrawn from them; but the love of God itself is invariable and unchangeable; see Rom. viii. 38, 39. nor is it removed when God afflicts and chastens his people; for his chastenings are from love, and in love; the reason why he chastens them is because he loves them, and he loves them whilst he is chastening them; he visits and comforts them, sympathizes with them, supports them, and supplies them, and makes all things work together for their good, Rev. iii. 19. *nor suffer my faithfulness to fail*; in making good his engagements to Christ, in keeping the covenant made with him, and in fulfilling his promises to his people; and even when he afflicts them, it is in faithfulness to them; nor will he suffer them to be afflicted above what they are able to bear, and will support them under it, and deliver out of it, Psal. cxix. 75. 1 Cor. x. 13. or *I will not falsify in my truth*¹; or falsify his word; he is faithful that has promised, who will do it, yea, notwithstanding the unbelief of his people, Heb. x. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 13.

Ver. 34. *My covenant will I not break, &c.*] Not the covenant at Sinai, as Aben Ezra, but the covenant of grace made with Christ, and which stands fast with him, ver. 3, 28. which is firm, sure, and stable, and as immovable as mountains and hills, and more so, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Isa. liv. 10. or *profane*^m it; though his people profane his statutes, ver. 31. he won't profane his covenant; though they violate his laws, he's a God keeping covenant with them, and will not break his word with them: *nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips*; any promise of his, respecting either the temporal, spiritual, or eternal welfare of his people: or *not change*ⁿ; as he changes not in his nature and perfections, nor in his love and affections, nor in his counsels and purposes; so neither in his covenant and promises, they are always the same, and have a certain and unchangeable accomplishment; there is a performance of whatsoever is spoken by the Lord, Luke i. 45.

Ver. 35. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, &c.*] Swearing is ascribed to God after the manner of men, and is done in condescension to the weakness of his people, and to remove doubts and hesitations from them, relating to things spiritual and eternal; as to his everlasting love to them, his covenant with them in Christ, and their perseverance in his grace; and it is made by himself, or one or other of his perfections, as here by his *holiness*; see Amos iv. 2. and indeed his holiness being his nature, is no other than he himself, the holy God; and because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, that as sure as he was, and was holy, just, and true, he would make good what he promises, Heb. vi. 13. and this is done but *once*, once for all, that being sufficient; it need not be repeated, nor is it ever revoked; when he swears, he never repents of it, nor changes his mind; and it is to shew the immutability of his counsel that he swears at all, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vi. 17. *that I will not lie unto David*; he will not lie to any, he cannot, it is impossible he should; it would be to deny himself, it is con-

trary to his being as God, he is not a man that he should lie; it is contrary to his character as the God of truth; he will not lie, neither in his counsel nor covenant, in his purposes nor promises; these are the two immutable things, in which it is impossible he should lie: and he has sworn to it that he will not lie to David, to David's son the Messiah, with whom the covenant is made, and stands fast; all the prophecies concerning him he has fulfilled; and all the promises made to him of help and assistance, as man and Mediator, in his work, and of the reward of it, a glory with him, he has made good.

Ver. 36. *His seed shall endure for ever, &c.*] This is a confirmation by his oath of what he had before said, ver. 29. which may be understood either of the perseverance of particular believers, of every one of the spiritual seed of Christ; or of the duration of the church in general, throughout all ages, as before observed; and these being matters of moment and importance, and of which there are sometimes doubts in the minds of the Lord's people about them, and that they may be firmly believed by them, he confirms them with an oath; for God never swears to trivial things; and when he does swear, it is to remove the doubts of his people, and make their minds easy: *and his throne as the sun before me*; that is, shall continue as long as it does; see ver. 29. and Psal. lxxii. 17. or shall be bright, splendid, and glorious as the sun, so the Targum, "and his throne light as the sun before me;" meaning his church and kingdom, of which the throne is an emblem, and which became so in Gospel times, clear and lucid as the sun, Cant. vi. 10. when day was made by the rising of the sun of righteousness, and by the bright shining of the Gospel ministry; and at particular periods since, as in the times of Constantine, when the church was clothed with the sun, and at the Reformation, when Christ appeared with a rainbow on his head, and his face was as the sun, Rev. xii. 1. and x. 1. and especially this will be the case of the church in the latter day, when the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold, as the light of seven days; and when the city, the church, will stand in no need of the sun, nor of the moon; and also in the ultimate glory, when the saints will shine as the sun in the kingdom of God; see Isa. xxx. 26. Rev. xxi. 23. Matt. xiii. 43. This passage is applied to the Messiah by the Jews^a.

Ver. 37. *It shall be established for ever as the moon, &c.*] Either Christ's seed, or throne, which comes to much the same sense; for by both are meant his church and people, his kingdom and interest in the world; the moon is as perpetual as the sun, and is used as elsewhere to signify the continuance of the people, church, and interest of Christ, Psal. lxxii. 5, 7. for though the moon has its spots, and is changeable, sometimes in the full, and sometimes in the decline, yet always is, and always continues, and ever will; and so though the people of God have their spots and imperfections, and are sometimes on the decline in the frames and dispositions of their minds, in the exercise

¹ וְלֹא אֲשַׁקֵּר בְּאִמְרוֹתַי neque faciam mendacium (neque fallam, Montanus) in veritate mea, Pagninus; neque mentiar aut fallam in veritate mea, Michaelis.

^m אֲחַלֵּל לֹא non profanabo, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

^a אֲשַׁקֵּר לֹא non mutabo, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

^b Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 1.

of grace, in their spirituality, liveliness, and zeal, and in their walk and conversation in the church and world; yet they shall abide and persevere to the end; and though the church may be like the moon in the wane, be declining as to numbers, gifts, and graces, yet it shall continue and be established; it is sometimes indeed in a fluctuating state, and is not always in the same place, but is removed from one country to another; yet it always is somewhere, even though in the wilderness, and ere long will be established on the top of the mountains, and be no more a tabernacle that shall be taken down; see Psal. xlvi. 8. and lxxxvii. 5. and as a faithful witness in heaven. *Selah*; or in the sky or cloud^b; some understand this of the moon, others of both sun and moon; but it seems best to interpret it of something distinct from either, even of the rainbow, which though it does not always appear in the clouds, yet it has appeared at times, and does and will unto the end of the world; and be a faithful and an everlasting token and witness of the covenant of God made with all creatures, that he will no more destroy the world by a flood, Gen. ix. 12, 13, 16, 17. and is an emblem of the covenant of grace, and of the continuance, perpetuity, and immutability of it; see Isa. liv. 9, 10.

Ver. 38. *But thou hast cast off, &c.*] Here begin objections to what is before said, and swore to; even to the everlasting love of God, to Christ, and to his seed, to the unchangeableness and unalterableness of the covenant, and to the continuance and perpetuity of the kingdom and church of Christ, taken from the dealings of the Lord with the Messiah and his people; which were made either by the psalmist, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing what would come to pass; or by the apostles and church of Christ, about the time of his sufferings and death, and after; when he seemed to be cast off, and rejected by the Lord, particularly when he forsook him, and hid his face from him, Matt. xxvii. 46. as when he hides his face from his people, it is interpreted by them a casting them off; see Psal. xlv. 22, 23, 24. and viii. 14. and abhorred; not that he abhorred the person of Christ, who was his own Son, his beloved Son; nor his afflictions and sufferings, which were a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to him; see Psal. xxii. 24. though these might be interpreted by others as if the Lord abhorred or rejected him; because he suffered him to be used in the manner he was, and particularly to be abhorred by the Jews, even by the nation in general, Isa. xlix. 7. Zech. xi. 8. though the sins of his people, which he had upon him, and for which he suffered, were an abhorring to the Lord; and when he was made sin, he was made a curse: *thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed*; with thy Messiah; not Rehoboam, from whom the ten tribes were rent; nor Josiah, who was killed by Pharaoh-necho; nor Zedekiah, carried captive into Babylon; but the true Messiah, the son of David, before said to be found by the Lord, and anointed with his holy oil, ver. 20. which is to be understood of him, not as his own son, who was always the object of his love, but as the sinner's surety, bearing the sins of his people, and all

the wrath and punishment due unto them; and so is reconcilable to the promise, that loving-kindness should not be taken from him, ver. 33. and is no objection to it, though made void.

Ver. 39. *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant, &c.*] His servant David the Messiah, ver. 3, 20. meaning not the covenant of circumcision, nor the covenant at Sinai, which were really made void at the death of Christ; but the covenant of grace and redemption made with Christ, which it was promised should stand fast, and never be broken, ver. 3, 28, 34. but was thought to be null and void when the Redeemer was in the grave, and all hopes of redemption by him were gone, Luke xxiv. 21. but so far was it from being so, that it was confirmed by the sufferings and death of Christ; and every blessing and promise of it were ratified by his blood, hence called the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20. *thou hast profaned his crown* by casting it to the ground; by suffering it to be cast to the ground, and used contemptibly; as when Jesus was crowned with thorns, and saluted in a mock-manner; when an *if* was put upon his being the King of Israel, Matt. xxvii. 29, 42. and which seemed very inconsistent with the promise, ver. 27. that he should be made higher than the kings of the earth; and yet so it was, and is; he is highly exalted, made Lord and Christ, crowned with glory and honour, and is set far above all principality and power, and every name that is named in this world or that to come, notwithstanding all the above usage of him.

Ver. 40. *Thou hast broken down all his hedges, &c.*] Round about his vine, the church; see Psal. lxxx. 12. A famous church was raised at Jerusalem, quickly after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, which seemed to be well filled, fenced, and protected; but on a sudden a violent persecution arose, and the members of it were made havoc of, and the ministers of the word were scattered abroad, and which was the breaking down of the hedges; and what was done to the church was taken by Christ as done to himself, as it is here spoken of him; see Acts viii. 1—4. and ix. 5. and this might seem contrary to the word and oath of God, that his seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, ver. 29, 36. when the first Christian church was used in this manner; but that providence was overruled, for the spread of the Gospel, and the interest of Christ, in other parts; see Acts viii. 4. and xi. 19, 20, 21. and so no objection to what is before said: *thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin*; the same as before, the church of Christ, which seemed to be so well built and fortified; see Isa. xxvi. 1.

Ver. 41. *All that pass by the way spoil him, &c.*] His church, his members, which are himself, when made havoc of by their persecutors, and they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb. x. 34. see Psal. lxxx. 12. so the church of Christ may be spoiled, however, attempted to be spoiled, by false teachers, who are the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; crafty seducers, who spoil Christians of their peace and comfort, through philosophy and vain deceit, Cant. ii. 15.

^b בשוק in æthere, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus; in superiore nube, Junius & Tremellius; in nubibus, Gejerus.

Col. ii. 8. Christ himself may be said to be spoiled, when he was stripped of his clothes by the Roman soldiers, who also parted his garments, casting lots on his vesture; when they that passed by his cross, as he hung upon it, reviled him, and robbed him of his good name, and of his kingly and priestly offices; and he is also spoiled by false teachers, who rob him of his deity, his divine and eternal sonship, and of his satisfaction and righteousness, by whom he is trodden under foot, and his blood counted as an unholy thing; and so the Targum, "all that pass by the way tread upon him;" see Heb. x. 29. these are they that walk not in the right way; but go out of it, and choose their own way; they are such as pass over the right way, or cross it; they are they that transgress, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, that so use him, 2 John, 9. *he is a reproach to his neighbours*; his name and character were reproached by the Jews, his countrymen, who called him a glutton and a wine-bibber; and represented him as a notorious sinner; his miracles as done by the help of Satan; his doctrine as hard sayings, novel opinions, contrary to common sense and reason, and tending to licentiousness; and his followers and members as the off-scouring of all things: but all this has been or will be rolled off, and is no objection to the glory promised him.

Ver. 42. *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries, &c.*] Suffered them to become powerful, and to prevail against him; as the wicked Jews, and Satan, and his principalities and powers, at the time of Christ's apprehension, crucifixion, and death; for then were their hour, and the power of darkness, Luke xxij. 53. death also had dominion over him, and held him under the power of it for awhile: the enemies of his interest, Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, have, in their turns, had their right hands set up, and have had power, and prevailed over it; and the latter will again, at the slaying of the witnesses: all which, though it seems contrary to ver. 21, 22, 23, 25, 27. yet is not; for Satan, though he bruised Christ's heel, yet Christ bruised his head, destroyed his works, and him himself, and that by dying; and spoiled his principalities and powers; and death could not hold him long, nor has it now any dominion over him, and is abolished by him; and antichrist, and all the antichristian powers, will be destroyed by him ere long: *thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice*; as they did when they had got him on the cross; and especially when he was laid in the grave, Psal. xxij. 7, 8. and xli. 8. and as the antichristian party will when his witnesses are slain, Rev. xi. 10. but as the joy of the former was shortlived, and was soon turned into sorrow, so will be that of the latter.

Ver. 43. *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, &c.*] Or the sharpness of it; blunted it, so that it could do no execution: the disciples of Christ were not allowed the use of the temporal sword to defend their master; and his house, his kingdom, not being of this world, Matt. xxvi. 51, 52. John xviii. 36. other weapons were put into their hands; the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and the edge of this was blunted, with respect to the Jews, being of little or no efficacy among them; it was turned off by them,

and put away from them; but then it was turned towards the Gentiles, and was powerful and effectual among them; Christ girt it on his thigh, and rode forth in his glory and majesty, conquering, and to conquer, and by it subdued many, who fell under him, and gave up themselves unto him; see Ephes. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5. and ere long, with the two-edged sword, which proceeds out of his mouth, will he smite the antichristian nations; and the remnant of those that escape at the battle of Armageddon shall be slain with it, Rev. xix. 15, 21. *and hast not made him to stand in the battle*; but to fall in it, being delivered up into the hands of wicked men, of justice, and death; and yet, by dying, he put away sin, finished it, made an end of it, and destroyed it; he conquered Satan, and led him captive; overcame the world, the spite and malice of it, and its prince; and abolished death itself.

Ver. 44. *Thou hast made his glory to cease, &c.*] The glory of his deity, though it did not properly cease, yet it seemed to do so, being covered, and out of sight, and seen but by a very few, whilst he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; and the glory of his humanity was made to cease, in which he was fairer than the children of men, and his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men; and the glory of his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly, which were reproached and vilified, and disputed and contradicted by the Jews, Matt. xxvi. 68. and xxvii. 42. it may be rendered, *his purity*^b, which seemed to cease when he was clothed with our filthy garments; or had all our sins laid upon him, and imputed to him, by his father; and he was made sin for us, who knew none: the Targum is, "thou hast made the priests to cease who sprinkle upon the altar, and purify his people;" *and cast his throne down to the ground*; this seems contrary, and is an objection, to ver. 29, 36. but is not; for notwithstanding the usage of Christ by the Jews, who rejected him as the King Messiah, see the note on ver. 39. yet he is now upon the same throne with his father, and will sit upon a throne of glory when he comes to judge the world, and so in the New-Jerusalem church-state, and to all eternity.

Ver. 45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened, &c.*] His days of joy and pleasure; such as days of youth are, in opposition to the days of old age, which are evil, Eccl. xi. 9. and xii. 1. these were shortened when his sorrows and sufferings came on, and God hid his face from him; and indeed he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief all his days: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the days of his time*; and the Arabic version *the days of his years*; for he did not live out half the time of man's age, which is threescore years and ten, Psal. xc. 10. he dying at the age of three or four and thirty; but, notwithstanding this, he lives again, and lives for evermore; he has length of days for ever and ever, Psal. xxi. 4. Rev. i. 18. though his days were in some sense shortened, yet in another sense they are and will be prolonged, even his own, and those of his spiritual seed, according to the promise of God, Isa. liii. 10. *thou hast covered him with shame. Selah*; see Psal. lxi. 7. when

^a * 111 acumen, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^b * 111 puritatem ejus, Montanus, Michaelis.

his face was covered with shame and spitting, from which he hid it not, Isa. l. 6. but now he is crowned with glory and honour; wherefore all these complaints, though true, are no objections to what is before said and swore to.

Ver. 46. *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself? for ever? &c.*] When God hides his face from his people, though it is but for a little while, it seems long, and a kind of an eternity to them; and so it seemed to the man Christ Jesus; and indeed what he endured, when his father hid his face from him, was of the same kind with an eternal absence; see Psal. xliii. 1. and xxii. 1. *shall thy wrath burn like fire?* it did so when Christ bore the sins of his people, and all the punishment due unto them; when his strength was dried up like a potsherd; when he, the antitype of the passover-lamb roasted with fire, was sacrificed for us; all which is entirely consistent with God's everlasting and invariable love to him, as his own son. See the note on ver. 38.

Ver. 47. *Remember how short my time is, &c.*] In this world: man's time here is fixed, and it is but a short time; his life is but a vapour, which appeareth for a little while; his days are as an hand's breadth; they pass away like a tale that is told; the common term of life is but threescore years and ten, and few arrive to that: to know and observe this is proper and useful; it may awaken a concern for a future state, excite to a vigorous discharge of duty, and animate to patience under afflictions: the clause in connexion with the preceding verse seems to be a plea for mercy; that, since time was short, it might not be consumed in bearing the wrath of God; but be spent in peace and comfort, like that of Job, ch. x. 20. Compare with this Psal. ciii. 13, 14, 15. the Targum is, "remember that I am created out of the dust:" but these words, with what follow, are the words of the psalmist, personating the apostles of Christ, and other saints, at the time of his sufferings and death, and when under the power of the grave, and when they were almost out of hope of his resurrection: see Luke xxiv. 21. expostulating with the Lord on that account; and here entreat him to remember the shortness of their time, if there was no resurrection from the dead, as there would be none if Christ rose not; and therefore, as their life was a short one, it would be of all men's the most miserable: *wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* none of the sons of men are made in vain; for they are all made for the glory of God, which end is answered, some way or another, in every one of them; either in the salvation of them by Christ, or in the just destruction of them through their own sin; and though the time of life is short, and afflictions many, yet men are not made in vain, and especially those of them who believe in Christ; for, for them to live is Christ, they live to his glory: whether they live a longer or shorter time, they live to the Lord; and when they die, they die to him; and their afflictions are always for good, temporal, or spiritual, and eternal: indeed, if there was no future state after this, men might seem to be made in vain, and there might be some reason for such a question or complaint; but so it is not; there is an immortal life and state after this, either of bliss or woe: also, if there was no such

thing as the redemption, justification, and salvation of any of the sons of men, through the sufferings and death of Christ, and which could not be without his resurrection from the dead, with a view to which the question is put, then there would seem some room for it; but there is a redemption of them, and therefore are not made in vain; and Christ, who was delivered for their offences, is risen for their justification.

Ver. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? &c.*] Every living man must die; as sure as a man lives, so sure he shall die: be he strong and mighty, as the word signifies, or weak and sickly; be he high or low, rich or poor, prince or peasant, righteous or wicked; persons of all ranks, states, and conditions, age or sex, must die; for all have sinned; and it is the appointment of God that they should die, and very few are the exceptions; as Enoch and Elijah, and those that will be found alive at Christ's coming: *shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah;* either from going down into it, or coming under the power of it; so the Targum, "what man is he that shall live, and shall not see the angel of death?" (see Heb. ii. 14.) shall he deliver his soul from his "hand, that he should not go down to the house of his grave?" or deliver himself from the power of it, when in it; that is, raise himself from the dead: none ever did this, or ever can: Christ indeed undertook, and has promised, to redeem his people from the power of the grave, upon which they have believed they should be delivered; see Hos. xiii. 14. Psal. xlix. 15. but if Christ rose not himself, which was the thing now in question, how could it be? the case stands thus; every man must die; no man can raise himself from the dead; if Christ rise not, every one must continue under the power of the grave; for then there could be no resurrection.

Ver. 49. *Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, &c.*] The spiritual blessings said to be in Christ; the grace said to be given to us in him; the sure mercies of David, such as redemption, justification, remission of sins, and eternal life; so called because they flow from the free favour and love of God, and, being many, are expressed in the plural number; and which were former or ancient ones, even promised and secured in Christ before the world began; springing from the love of God, which, both to Christ and his people, was from everlasting, and provided for in a covenant, which was as early: which *thou swarest unto David in thy truth?* which were promised to Christ, the antitype of David, and that with an oath, by the truth or faithfulness of God, for the certainty thereof: but now where are all these? or how will they take place, if Christ rise not from the dead? where will be the redemption of his people, the justification of their persons, the remission of their sins, and their everlasting salvation? and what will become then of the covenant, oath, and faithfulness of God?

Ver. 50. *Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants, &c.*] The apostles of Christ, his servants, and the servants of the living God, that shewed unto men the way of salvation, and other saints with them that believed in Christ, and were made willing to serve and follow him; these were now reproached by the Scribes and Pharisees for believing in him, and professing

him; and were scoffed and laughed at, when they had crucified him, and laid him in the grave, triumphing over him and them, believing he would never rise again, as he had given out he should, and for which his followers were reproached; and therefore desire the Lord would remember the reproach cast upon Christ, and them, for his sake, and roll it away: how *I do bear in my bosom* the reproach of *all the mighty people*: the ecclesiastical and civil rulers of the Jews, their chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who poured out their reproaches very plentifully on the followers of Christ, whom the psalmist here personates; which fell very heavily upon them, as a very great weight and burden, and pressed them sore, and went to their very hearts, and therefore said to be *in their bosom*; and which is mentioned to excite the divine compassion, that he would appear for them, and raise his son from the dead, as was promised and expected; that their enemies might have no more occasion to reproach him and them: it is in the original, *I bear in my bosom all the many people*^c; which some understand of the people of God, and of Christ's sustaining their persons, and making satisfaction for their sins; but the other sense is preferable: Kimchi supplies the words as we do; and so the Targum, which renders them thus, "I bear in my bosom all the reproaches of many people."

Ver. 51. *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, &c.*] Which carries in it another argument why the Lord should take notice of these reproaches; because they come not only from their enemies, but from his also, and the enemies of his son, who would not have him, the King Messiah, to reign over them, and are said to reproach him in the next clause: *wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine Anointed*; or thy Messiah; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the Messiah: Jarchi renders it *the ends of the Messiah*; and all of them understand it of the coming of the Messiah, as in the Talmud^d; which, because delayed, or was not so soon as expected, was scoffed at and reproached by wicked men; see Mal. ii. 17. and iii. 1. but it rather designs the ways and works, actions, and especially the miracles of Christ, which

were reproached, either as done on the sabbath-day, or by the help of Satan; and he was traduced in his kindest actions to the bodies and souls of men, as a friend of publicans and sinners, and himself as a sinner: and it may have a particular view to the latter end of the Messiah, the last part of his life, his sufferings and death, and when he hung on the cross; at which time he was, in the most insolent manner, reviled and reproached by his enemies: the words may be rendered *the heels of the Messiah*^e, and are thought by some to have reference to the promise in Gen. iii. 15. and may regard either the human nature of Christ, which was both reproached and bruised; or his members suffering disgrace and persecution for his sake, and which he takes as done to himself. Suidas^f interprets it of the ancestors of Christ, according to the flesh; and Theodoret of the kings of that time.

Ver. 52. *Blessed be the Lord for evermore, &c.*] In this world, and in the world to come, as the Targum; for reproaches and afflictions for Christ's sake, since they work together for good; as Job blessed the Lord in the midst of his troubles, Job i. 21. or rather the psalmist, viewing, by a spirit of prophecy, Christ rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and interceding for the application of all the blessings of the covenant; and now, seeing all before objected and complained of was reconcilable to the love, covenant, and oath of God, breaks out into this benediction, and with it closes the psalm; which agrees with Christ, not only as God over all, blessed for ever, but as Mediator, who, as such, is made most blessed for evermore; see Psal. xxi. 6. These are not the words of the copier of the Psalms, blessing God for assistance in prosecuting the work thus far, which is the sense of some Jewish writers mentioned by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, but of the psalmist himself: *Amen, and Amen*; which words are added to express the wish and faith of the psalmist; and the word is repeated to denote the vehemence and strength of the same. Here ends the third part of the book of Psalms, and so the Syriac version closes it. See the close of Psal. xli. and lxxii.

P S A L M X C.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

HERE begins the fourth part of the book of Psalms, and with the most ancient psalm throughout the whole book, it being written by Moses; not by one of that name that lived in after-times; nor by one of his posterity; nor by some one who composed it, agreeably to his words and doctrines, and called it by his name; but by that Moses by whom the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness to the borders of Canaan's land, and by whom he delivered to them the lively oracles; and who

is described as *the man of God*, a title given to Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 1. so called, not as a creature of his make, so all men are; nor as a man of grace, born of God, so is every saint; but a man of more than ordinary gifts received from the Lord, a prophet of the Lord, and the chief of the prophets, and a type of the great Prophet; so inspired men and prophets under the Old Testament bear this name, and ministers of the Gospel under the New, 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24. 2 Pet. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 17. It is a conceit of Bohlius, that

^c כָּל רִבּוּיִם עִמּוֹם omnes multos populos, Montanus; omnes, quam multi sunt, populos, Cocceius.
^d Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

^e עַקְבוֹת calcibus, Vatablus; ealcancos, Gussetius, Michaelis.
^f In voce Ἀνταλλαχμα.

this prayer of his (so it is called, as several other psalms are, see Psal. xvii. 86, 102, 142) was made by him when he was about seventy years of age, ten years before he was sent to Pharaoh, while he was in Midian, which he gathers from ver. 10; others think it was written towards the end of his life, and when weary of it, and his travels in the wilderness; but it is more generally thought that it was penned about the time when the spies brought a bad report of the land, and the people fell a murmuring; which provoked the Lord, that he threatened them that they should spend their lives in misery in the wilderness, and their carcases should fall there; and their lives were cut short, and reduced to threescore years and ten, or thereabout; only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, lived to a greater age; and on occasion of this Moses wrote this psalm, setting forth the brevity and misery of human life; so the Targum, “a prayer which Moses the prophet of the Lord prayed, when the people of the house of Israel sinned in the wilderness.” Jarehi and some other Jewish writers * not only ascribe this psalm to Moses, but the ten following, being without a name; but it is certain that Psal. xc. was written by David, as appears from Heb. iv. 7. and Psal. xcvi. is his, compared with 1 Chron. xvi. 23. and in Psal. xcix. mention is made of Samuel, who lived long after the times of Moses.

Ver. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations, &c.*] Even when they had no certain dwelling-place in the world; so their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt in tabernacles in the land of promise, as in a strange land; and their posterity for many years served under great affliction and oppression in a land that was not theirs; and now they were dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and removing from place to place; but as the Lord had been in every age, so he now was the dwelling-place of those that trusted in him; being that to them as an habitation is to man, in whom they had provision, protection, rest, and safety; see Psal. xxxi. 2. and lxxi. 3. so all that believe in Christ dwell in him, and he in them, John vi. 56. they dwelt secretly in him before they believed; so they dwelt in his heart's love, in his arms, in him as their head in election, and as their representative in the covenant of grace from eternity; and, when they fell in Adam, they were preserved in Christ, dwelling in him; and so they were in him when on the cross, in the grave, and now in heaven; for they are said to be crucified, buried, and risen with him, and set down in heavenly places in him, Gal. ii. 20. Col. ii. 12. and iii. 1. Ephes. ii. 6. and, being converted, they have an open dwelling in him by faith, to whom they have fled for refuge, and in whom they dwell safely, quietly, comfortably, pleasantly, and shall never be turned out: here they have room, plenty of provisions, rest, and peace, and security from all evils; he is an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm. Some render the word *refuge* †; such is Christ to his people, being the antitype of the

cities of refuge; and others *helper*, as the Targum; which also well agrees with him, on whom their help is laid, and is found.

Ver. 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, &c.*] Or *were born* ‡, and came forth out of the womb and bowels of the earth, and were made to rise and stand up at the command of God, as they did when he first created the earth; and are mentioned not only because of their firmness and stability, but their antiquity: hence we read of the ancient mountains and everlasting hills, Gen. xlix. 26. Deut. xxxiii. 15. for they were before the flood, and as soon as the earth was; or otherwise the eternity of God would not be so fitly expressed by this phrase as it is here, and elsewhere the eternity of Christ, Prov. viii. 25. or *ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world*; the whole teraqueous globe, and all the inhabitants of it; so the Targum; or *before the earth brought forth*; or *thou causedst it to bring forth* § its herbs, plants, and trees, as on the third day: *even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God*; and so are his love, grace, and mercy towards his people, and his covenant with them; and this is as true of Jehovah the Son as of the Father, whose eternity is described in the same manner as his; see Prov. viii. 22—30. Rev. i. 4, 8. and may be concluded from his name, the everlasting Father; from his having the same nature and perfections with his Father; from his concern in eternal election, in the everlasting covenant of grace, and in the creation of all things; and his being the eternal and unchangeable I AM, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is matter of comfort to his people.

Ver. 3. *Thou turnest man to destruction, &c.*] Or to death, as the Targum, which is the destruction of man; not an annihilation of body or soul, but a dissolution of the union between them: the words may be rendered, *thou turnest man until he is broken* ¶, and crumbled into dust; thou turnest him about in the world, and through a course of afflictions and diseases, and at last by old age, and however by death, returns him to his original, from whence he came, the dust of the earth, which he becomes again, Gen. iii. 19. Eccl. xii. 7. the grave may be meant by destruction: *and sayest, return, ye children of men, or Adam*; from whom they all sprung, and in whom they all sinned, and so became subject to death; to these he says, when by diseases he threatens them with a dissolution, return by repentance, and live; and sometimes, when they are brought to the brink of the grave, he returns them from sickness to health, delivers them from the pit, and enlightens them with the light of the living, as he did Hezekiah: or this may refer to the resurrection of the dead, which will be by Christ, and by his voice calling the dead to return to life, to rise and come to judgment; though some understand this as descriptive of death, when by the divine order and command man returns to his original dust; thus the frailty of man is opposed to the eternity of God. Gusetius understands all this of God's bringing men to repent-

* Huius Patriarch. in Origen. apud Hieron. adv. Rufin. l. 1. fol. 67. L.

† 1125 refugium, V. L. Vatablus; asylum, Gejerus.

‡ 175 nasceretur, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mihaelis; so Ainsworth; geniti essent, Piscator, Gejerus.

§ 1125 antequam parturiret terra, Syr. aut peperisses terram, Piscator, Amama.

¶ 1125 converses hominem usque ad contritionem, Montanus; donec conteratur, Musculus, Tigurine version; donec sit contritus, Vatablus; ut sit contritus, Junius & Tremellius.

ance, contrition, and conversion; and takes the sense to be, "thou turnest till he becomes contrite, and sayest, be ye converted, ye sons of Adam;" which he thinks best agrees with the mind of the Apostle Peter, who quotes the following passage, 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9. Some, as Arama observes, connect this with the following verse; though men live 1,000 years, yet they are but as yesterday in the sight of God.

Ver. 4. *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, &c.*] Which may be said to obviate the difficulty in man's return, or resurrection, from the dead, taken from the length of time in which some have continued in the grave; which vanishes, when it is observed, that in the sight, esteem, and account of God, a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore, should a man lie in the grave six or seven thousand years, it would be but as so many days with God; wherefore, if the resurrection is not incredible, as it is not, length of time can be no objection to it. JUST in the same manner is this phrase used by the Apostle Peter, and who is thought to refer to this passage, to remove an objection against the second coming of Christ, taken from the continuance of things as they had been from the beginning, and from the time of the promise of it: see 2 Pet. iii. 4—8. though the words aptly express the disproportion there is between the eternal God and mortal man; for, was he to live a thousand years, which no man ever did, yet this would be as yesterday with God, with whom eternity itself is but a day, Isa. xliii. 13. man is but of yesterday, that has lived the longest; and were he to live a thousand years, and that twice told, it would be but as yesterday when it is past; though it may seem a long time to come, yet when it is gone it is as nothing, and can never be fetched back again: and as a watch in the night; which was divided sometimes into three, and sometimes into four parts, and so consisted but of three or four hours; and which, being in the night, is spent in sleep; so that, when a man wakes, it is but as a moment with him; so short is human life, even the longest, in the account of God; see Matt. xiv. 25. and the note there.

Ver. 5. *Thou carriest them away as with a flood, &c.*] As the whole world of the ungodly were with the deluge, to which perhaps the allusion is; the phrase is expressive of death; so the Targum, "if they are not converted, thou wilt bring death upon them;" the swiftness of time is aptly signified by the flowing gliding stream of a flood, by the rolling billows and waves of it; so one hour, one day, one month, one year, roll on after another: moreover, the suddenness of death may be here intended, which comes in an hour unlooked for, and unaware of, as a flood comes suddenly, occasioned by hasty showers of rain; as also the irresistible force and power of it, which none can withstand; of which the rapidity of a flood is a lively emblem, and which carries all before it, and sweeps away every thing that stands in its course; as death, by an epidemical and infectious disease, or in a battle, carries off thousands and ten thousands in a very little time;

nor does it spare any, as a flood does not, of any age or sex, of any rank or condition of life; and, like a flood, makes sad destruction and devastation where it comes, and especially where it takes off great numbers; it not only turns beauty to ashes, and strength into weakness and corruption, but depopulates towns, and cities, and kingdoms; and as the flowing flood and gliding stream can never be fetched back again, so neither can life when past, not one moment of time when gone; see 2 Sam. xiv. 14. besides this phrase may denote the turbulent and tempestuous manner in which, sometimes, wicked men go out of the world, a storm being within and without, as in Job xxvii. 20, 21. *they are as a sleep*; or dream, which soon passeth away; in a sound sleep, time is insensibly gone; and a dream, before it can be well known what it is, is over and lost in oblivion; and so short is human life, Job xx. 8. there may be, sometimes, a seeming pleasure enjoyed, as in dreams, but no satisfaction; as a man in sleep may dream that he is eating and drinking, and please himself with it; but, when he awakes, he's hungry and empty, and unsatisfied; and so is man with every thing in this life, Isa. xxix. 8. and Eccl. i. 8. and v. 10. and all things in life are a mere dream, as the honours, riches, and pleasures of it; a man rather dreams of honour, substance, and pleasure, than really enjoys them. Wicked men, whilst they live, are "as those that sleep;" as the Targum renders it; they have no spiritual senses, cannot see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel; they are strengthless to every thing that is spiritually good; inactive, and do none; are subject to illusions and mistakes; are in imminent danger, and unconcerned about it; and don't care to be joggled or awaked, and sleep on till they sleep the sleep of death, unless awaked by powerful and efficacious grace; and men when dead are asleep, not in their souls, but in their bodies; death is often in Scripture signified by a sleep, under which men continue until the resurrection, which is an awaking out of it: *in the morning they are like grass, which groweth up or passeth away, or changeth*; or is changed; some understand this of the morning of the resurrection, when there will be a change for the better, a renovation, as Kimchi interprets the word; and which, from the use of it in the Arabic language, as Schultens observes, signifies to be green and flourishing, as grass in the morning is; and so intends a recovery of vigour and strength, as a man after sleep, and as the saints will have when raised from the dead. The Targum refers it to the world to come, "and in the world to come, as grass is cut down, they shall be changed or renewed;" but it is rather to be understood of the flourishing of men in the morning of youth, as the next verse shews, where it is repeated, and where the change of grass is beautifully illustrated and explained.

Ver. 6. *In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, &c.*] That is, the grass, through the dew that lay all night on it, and by the clear shining of the sun after rain, when it appears in great beauty and verdure; so man in the morning of his youth looks gay and beau-

^c Ebr. Comment. p. 158.

^d חַלְלִי קִוָּה מְטַבֵּר, Pagninus; mutabitur, Montanus; immu-

tatur, Tigurine version; transiens, Junius & Tremellius; quæ transit, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^e Animadv. in Job, p. 34.

tiful, grows in the stature and strength of his body, and in the endowments of his mind; and it may be also in riches and wealth; it is well if he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ: *in the evening it is cut down, and withereth*; the Targum adds, *through heat*; but it can't be by the heat of the sun, when it is cut down at evening; but it withers in course, being cut down. This respects the latter part of life, the evening of old age; and the whole expresses the shortness of life, which is compared to grass, that now is in all its beauty and glory, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, Matt. vi. 30. This metaphor of grass, to set forth the frailty of man, and his short continuance, is frequently used; see Psal. xxxvii. 2. and cii. 11. Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8. 1 Pet. i. 24. It may be observed, that man's life is represented but as one day, consisting of a morning and an evening, which signifies the bloom and decline of life.

Ver. 7. *For we are consumed by thine anger, &c.*] Kimchi applies this to the Jews in captivity; but it is to be understood of the Israelites in the wilderness, who are here introduced by Moses as owning and acknowledging that they were wasting and consuming there, as it was threatened they should; and that as an effect of the divine anger and displeasure occasioned by their sins; see Numb. xiv. 33, 35. Death is a consumption of the body; in the grave worms destroy the flesh and skin, and the reins of a man are consumed within him; hell is a consumption or destruction of the soul and body, though both always continue: saints, though consumed in body by death, yet not in anger; for when *flesh and heart fail*, or is *consumed*, God is the strength of their hearts, and their portion for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 26. their souls are saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, and their bodies will rise glorious and incorruptible; but the wicked are consumed at death, and in hell, in anger and hot displeasure: *and by thy wrath are we troubled*; the wrath of God produces trouble of mind, whenever it is apprehended, and especially in the views of death and eternity; and it is this which makes death the king of terrors, and men subject to bondage in life through fear of it, even the wrath to come, which follows upon it; nothing indeed, either in life or at death, or death itself, comes in wrath to the saints; nor is there any after it to them, though they have sometimes fearful apprehensions of it, and are troubled at it.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast set our sins before thee, &c.*] The cause of all trouble, consumption, and death; these are before the Lord, as the evidence, according to which he as a righteous Judge proceeds; this is opposed to the pardon of sin, which is expressed by a casting it behind his back, Isa. xxxviii. 17. *our secret sins in the light of thy countenance*; the Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the sins of youth; the word is in the singular number, and may be rendered, *our secret sin*^f; which has led some to think of original sin, which is hidden from, and not taken notice of by, the greatest part of the world, though it is the source and spring of all sin. It is not unusual for the singu-

lar to be put for the plural, and may intend all such sins as are secretly committed, and not known by other men, and such as are unobserved by men themselves; as the evil thoughts of their hearts, the foolish words of their mouths, and many infirmities of life, that are not taken notice of as sins: these are all known to God, and will be brought to light and into judgment by him, and will be set in the *light of his countenance*; which denotes not a gracious forgiveness of them, but his clear and distinct knowledge of them, and what a full evidence they give against men, to their condemnation and death; and intends not only a future, but the present view the Lord has of them, and his dealings with men in life, and at death, according to them.

Ver. 9. *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath, &c.*] The life of man is rather measured by days than by months or years; and these are but few, which pass away or *decline*^g as the day does towards the evening; see Jer. vi. 4. or *turn away their face*, as the word^h may be rendered: they turn their backs upon us, and not the face to us; so that it is a hard thing to get time by the forelock; and these, which is worst of all, pass away in the *wrath of God*. This has a particular reference to the people of Israel in the wilderness, when God had sworn in his wrath they should not enter into the land of Canaan, but wander about all their days in the wilderness, and be consumed there; so that their days manifestly passed away under visible marks of the divine displeasure; and this is true of all wicked men, who are by nature children of wrath, and go through the world, and out of it, as such: and even it may be said of man in general; the ailments, diseases, and calamities, that attend the state of infancy and youth; the losses, crosses, and disappointments, vexations and afflictions, which wait upon man in riper years; and the evils and infirmities of old age, do abundantly confirm this truth: none but God's people can, in any sense, be excepted from it, on whom no wrath comes, being loved with an everlasting love; and yet these, in their own apprehensions, have frequently the wrath of God upon them, and pass many days under a dreadful sense of it: *we spend our years as a tale* that is told; or as a *meditation*ⁱ, a thought of the heart, which quickly passes away; or as a *word*^k, as others, which is soon pronounced and gone; or as an assemblage of words, a tale or story told, a short and pleasant one; for long tales are not listened to; and the pleasanter they are, the shorter the time seems to be in which they are told: the design of the metaphor is to set forth the brevity, and also the vanity, of human life; for in tales there are often many trifling and vain things, as well as untruths told; men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie, in every state; and, in their best state, they are altogether vanity: a tale is a mere amusement; affects for a while, if attended to, and then is lost in oblivion; and such is human life: in a tale there is oftentimes a mixture, something pleasant, and something tragical; such changes are there in life, which is filled up with

^f עֲלֵמֵינוּ nostrum absconditum, Montanus; sive occultam, Vatablus, Muis, Michaelis.

^g נִבְדָּה declinaverunt, Pagninus, Montanus; declinant, Munster, Muis.

^h Deflectunt faciem, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

ⁱ כִּמְדוּתָא sicut cogitationem, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

^k Sicut sermonem, Pagninus, Montanus; instar locutionis, Musculus, Vatablus; dicto citius, Tigurine version.

different scenes of prosperity and adversity: and perhaps this phrase may point at the idle and unprofitable way and manner in which the years of life are spent, like that of consuming time by telling idle stories; some of them spent in youthful lusts and pleasures; others in an immoderate pursuit of the world, and the things of it; very few in a religious way, and these with great imperfection, and to very little purpose and profit; and particularly point to the children of Israel in the wilderness, who how they spent their time for thirty-eight years there, we have no tale nor story of it. The Targum is, "we have consumed the days of our life as the breath or vapour of the mouth in winter," which is very visible, and soon passes away; see Jam. iv. 14.

Ver. 10. *The days of our years are threescore years and ten, &c.*] In the Hebrew text it is, *the days of our years in them are, &c.*; which refers either to the days in which we live, or to the persons of the Israelites in the wilderness, who were instances of this term of life, in whom perhaps it first took place in a general way: before the flood, men lived to a great age; some nine hundred years and upwards; after the flood, men lived not so long; the term fixed then, as some think, was an hundred and twenty years, grounding it on the passage in Gen. vi. 3. but now, in the time of Moses, it was brought to threescore years and ten, or eighty at most: of those that were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai, from twenty years and upwards, there were none left, save Joshua and Caleb, when the account was taken in the plains of Moab; see Numb. xiv. 29. and xxvi. 63, 64, 65. so that some must die before they were sixty; others before seventy; and perhaps all, or however the generality of them, before eighty: and, from that time, this was the common age of men, some few excepted; to the age of seventy David lived, 2 Sam. v. 4. and so it has been ever since; many never come up to it, and few go beyond it: this is not only pointed at in revelation, but is what the Heathens have observed. Solon used to say, the term of human life was seventy years^b; so others; and a people called Berbicæ, as Ælianus relates^c, used to kill those of them that lived above seventy years of age, having exceeded the term of life. The Syriac version is, *in our days our years are seventy years*; with which the Targum agrees, "the days of our years in this world are seventy years of the stronger;" for it is in them that such a number of years is arrived unto; or *in them*, that is, in some of them; in some of mankind, their years amount hereunto, but not in all: *and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years*; through a good temperament of body, a healthful and strong constitution, under a divine blessing, some may arrive to the age of eighty; there have been some instances of a strong constitution at this age and upwards, but not very common; see Josh. xiv. 11. Deut. xxxiv. 7. for, generally speaking, such who through strength of body live to such an age, yet is *their strength labour and sorrow*; they labour under great infirmities, feel much

pain, and little pleasure, as Barzillai at this age intimates, 2 Sam. xix. 35. these are the evil days^d, in which is no pleasure, Eccl. xii. 1. or *their largeness or breadth is labour and sin*^e; the whole extent of their days, from first to last, is spent in toil and labour to live in the world; and is attended with much sin, and so with much sorrow: *for it is soon cut off*; either the strength of man, or his age, by one disease or incident or another, like grass that is cut down with the scythe, or a flower that is cropped by the hand; see Job xiv. 2. *and we fly away*: as a shadow does, or as a bird with wings; out of time into eternity; from the place of our habitation to the grave; from a land of light to the regions of darkness: it is well if we fly away to heaven and happiness.

Ver. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* &c.] Expressed in his judgments on men: as the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the consumption of the Israelites in the wilderness; or in shortening the days of men, and bringing them to the dust of death; or by inflicting punishment on men after death; they are few that take notice of this, and consider it well, or look into the causes of it, the sins of men: such as are in hell experimentally know it; but men on earth, very few closely attend to it, or rarely think of it: *even according to thy fear*, so is *thy wrath*; or who knows thy wrath, so as to fear thee? who considers it so, as that it has such an influence upon him to fear the Lord, and stand in awe of him, and fear to offend him, and seek to please him? or rather the wrath of God is answerable to men's fear of him; and that, in some things and cases, men's fears exceed the things feared; as afflictions viewed beforehand, and death itself: the fears of them are oftentimes greater, and more distressing, than they themselves, when they come; but so it is not with the wrath of God; the greatest fears, and the most dreadful apprehensions of it, do not come up to it; it is full as great as they fear it is, and more so.

Ver. 12. *So teach us to number our days, &c.*] Not merely to count them, how many they are, in an arithmetical way; there is no need of diving teachings for that; some few instructions from an arithmetician, and a moderate skill in arithmetic, will enable persons not only to count the years of their lives, but even how many days they have lived: nor is this to be understood of calculating or reckoning of time to come; no man can count the number of days he has to live; the number of his days, months, and years, is with the Lord; but is hid from him: the living know they shall die; but know not how long they shall live, and when they shall die: this the Lord teaches not, nor should we be solicitous to know: but rather the meaning of the petition is, that God would teach us to number our days, as if the present one was the last; for we can't boast of to-morrow; we know not but this day, or night, our souls may be required of us: but the sense is, that God would teach us seriously to nie-

^a כִּבְהָ in ipsis, Paginus, Montanus; in quibus vivimus, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

^b Laertius in Vita Solon. p. 36. Herodotus, l. 1. sive Clío, c. 32. Macrob. in Somno Scipionis, l. 1. c. 6. p. 58. & Plin. Epist. l. 1. Ep. 12. & Solon. Eleg. apud Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 6. p. 685, 686.

^c Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.

^d ——— tristisque senectus

Et labor. ——— Virgil. Georg. l. 3. v. 67.

^e כִּבְהָ amplitudo eorum, Montanus.

ditate on, and consider of, the shortness of our days; that they are but as a shadow, and there is no abiding; and the vanity and sinfulness of them, that so we may not desire to live here always; and the troubles and sorrows of them, which may serve to wean us from the world, and to observe how unprofitably we have spent them; which may put us upon redeeming time, and also to take notice of the goodness of God, that has followed us all our days, which may lead us to repentance, and engage us in the fear of God: *that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*; to consider our latter end, and what will become of us hereafter; which is a branch of wisdom so to do; to seek the way of salvation by Christ; to seek to Christ, the wisdom of God, for it; to fear the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom; and to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; to all which an application of the heart is necessary; for wisdom is to be sought for heartily, and with the whole heart: and to this divine teachings are requisite, as well as to number our days; for unless a man is taught of God, and by his Spirit convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, he will never be concerned, in good earnest, about a future state; nor inquire the way of salvation, nor heartily apply to Christ for it: he may number his days, and consider the shortness of them, and apply his heart to folly, and not wisdom; see Isa. xxii. 21.

Ver. 13. *Return, O Lord, &c.*] Either from the fierceness of thine anger, according to Aben Ezra and Jarchi; of which complaint is made, ver. 7, 9. or unto us, from whom he had departed; for though God is everywhere, as to his being and immensity, yet, as to his gracious presence, he is not; and where that is, he sometimes withdraws it; and when he visits again with it, he may be said to return; and when he returns, he visits with it, and which is here prayed for; and designs a manifestation of himself, of his love and grace, and particularly his pardoning mercy; see Paal. lxxx. 14. and lxxxv. 2, 3. *how long?* this is a short abrupt way of speaking, in which something is understood, which the affection of the speaker would not admit him to deliver; and may be supplied, either thus, *how long wilt thou be angry?* God is sometimes angry with his people, which, when they are sensible of, gives them a pain and uneasiness they are not able to bear; and though it endures but for a moment, yet they think it a long time; see Psal. xxx. 5. and lxxxv. 5. Arama interprets it, “how long ere the time of “the Messiah shall come?” or *how long wilt thou hide thyself?* when he does this, they are troubled; and though it is but for a small moment he forsakes them, yet they count it long, and as if it was for ever; see Psal. xlii. 1. and lxxxix. 46. or *how long wilt thou afflict us?* as the Targum; afflictions come from the Lord, and sometimes continue long; at least they are thought so by the afflicted, who are ready to fear God has forgotten them and their afflictions. Psal. xli. 23, 24. or *how long wilt thou defer help?* the Lord helps, and that right early, at the most seasonable time, and when difficulties are the greatest; but it sometimes seems long first; see Psal. vi. 3, 4. *and let it repent thee concerning*

thy servants; men are all so, of right, by creation, and through the benefits of Providence; and many, in fact, being made willing servants by the grace of God; and this carries in it an argument for the petition: repentance does not properly belong to God; it is denied of him, Numb. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29. yet it is sometimes ascribed to him, both with respect to the good he has done, or promised, and with respect to the evil he has brought on men, or threatened to bring; see Gen. vi. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 11. Jer. xviii. 8, 10. and in the latter sense it is to be understood here; and intends not any change of mind or will in God, which cannot be; but a change of his dispensations, with respect to desertion, affliction, and the like; which the Targum expresses thus, “and turn from the evil thou hast said “thou wilt do to thy servants:” if this respects the Israelites in the wilderness, and their exclusion from Canaan, God never repented of what he threatened; he swore they should not enter it, and they did not, only their children, excepting two persons: some render the words, *comfort thy servants*!; with thy presence, the discoveries of thy love, especially pardoning grace, and by removing afflictions, or supporting under them.

Ver. 14. *O satisfy us early with thy mercy, &c.*] Or *grace*; the means of grace, the God of all grace, and communion with him, Christ and his grace; things without which, souls hungry and thirsty, in a spiritual sense, cannot be satisfied; these will satisfy them, and nothing else; namely, the discoveries of the love of God, his pardoning grace and mercy, Christ and his righteousness, and the fulness of grace in him; see Psal. lxiii. 3, 4, 5. and ciii. 2, 3, 4, 5. this grace and mercy they desire to be satisfied and filled with betimes, early, seasonably, as soon as could be, or it was fitting it should: it may be rendered *in the morning*^a, which some understand literally of the beginning of the day, and so lay a foundation for joy the whole day following: some interpret it of the morning of the resurrection; with which compare Psal. xlix. 14. and xvii. 15. others of the day of redemption and salvation, as Kimchi and Jarchi: it may well enough be applied to the morning of the Gospel dispensation; and Christ himself, who is *the mercy promised* unto the fathers, may be meant; whose coming was prepared as *the morning*; and satisfied such as were hungry and thirsty, weary and faint, with looking for it, Hos. vi. 3. Jer. xxxi. 14. The Targum is, “satisfy us with thy goodness in the world, which is like to the morning;” and Arama interprets it of the time of the resurrection of the dead. *that we may rejoice and be glad all our days*; the love, grace, and mercy of God, his presence, and communion with him, the coming of Christ, and the blessings of grace by him, lay a solid foundation for lasting joy in the Lord’s people, who have reason always to rejoice in him; and their joy is such that no man can take from them, Phil. iv. 4. John xvi. 22.

Ver. 15. *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, &c.*] The days of affliction are times of sorrow; and days of prosperity make glad and joyful; and the psalmist here seems to desire an equal

^f חסד consolare, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
^g חסד gratia tua, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^a בבקר matutino, Montanus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

number of the one as of the other; not that an exact precise number of the one with the other is intended; but that there might be a proper proportion of the one to the other; and commonly God does *set the one over-against the other*: there is a mixture of both in the believer's life, which is like unto a chequer of black and white, in which there is a proper proportion of both colours; and so prosperity and adversity are had in turns, and *work together for good* to them that love the Lord: and when it is said *make us glad*, that is, with thy favour and presence, it suggests, that these are a sufficient recompense for all affliction and trouble; and if so here, what must the enjoyment of these be in heaven! Between this and present afflictions there is no proportion, neither with respect to the things themselves, nor the duration of them; see Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17. and *the years wherein we have seen evil*; afflictions are evils; they flow from the evil of sin, and to some are the evil of punishment; and even chastisements are not joyous, but grievous: this may have respect to the forty-years' travel in the wilderness, in which the Israelites saw or had an experience of much affliction and trouble; and even to the four hundred years in which the seed of Abraham were afflicted in a land not their's; see Numb. xiv. 33, 34. Gen. xv. 13. Hence the Jews¹ make the times of the Messiah to last four hundred years, answerable to those years of evil, and which they take to be the sense of the text; and so Jarchi's note on it is, "*make us glad* in the days of the Messiah, according to the number of the days in which thou hast afflicted us in the captivities, and according to the number of the years in which we have seen evil."

Ver. 16. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, &c.*] Either the work of Providence, in conducting the people of Israel through the wilderness, and bringing them into the land of Canaan; which God had promised to do for them, especially for their posterity, and therefore their *children* are particularly mentioned in the next clause; or the work of salvation, as Kimchi; even the great work of redemption by the Messiah, which is the work of God, which he determined should be done, appointed his son to do, and gave it him for that purpose: now this was spoken of, and promised, as what should be done; but as yet it did not appear; wherefore it is prayed for, that it might; that the Redeemer might be sent, and the work be done: or else the work of grace upon the heart, which is God's work, and an internal one, and not so obvious to view; and hence it is entreated, that, being wrought by him, he would shine upon it, bear witness to it, and make it manifest that it was really wrought, and

a genuine and true work; and moreover this may reach to and include the great work of God, to be brought about in the latter day, respecting the conversion of the Jews, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the establishment and glory of the kingdom of Christ: *and thy glory unto their children*; the glory of God, displayed in the above works of providence and grace, particularly in the work of redemption, in which all the divine perfections are glorified; or Christ himself, who is the brightness of his father's glory, that he would appear to them in human nature, and dwell among them; and they behold his glory, as they afterwards did, John i. 14. or else the sense is, that the glorious grace of God might appear unto them, and upon them, by which they would be made all-glorious within, and be changed into the image of Christ, from glory to glory; or that the Shechinah, the glorious majesty and presence of God, might be among them, and be seen by them in his sanctuary, Psal. lxxiii. 2.

Ver. 17. *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, &c.*] Either the grace and favour of God, his gracious presence vouchsafed in his ordinances, which makes his tabernacles amiable and lovely, and his ways ways of pleasantness; or the righteousness of Christ, which is that comeliness he puts upon his people, whereby they become a perfection of beauty; or the beauty of holiness, which appears on them, when renewed and sanctified by the Spirit; every grace is beautiful and ornamental: or Christ himself may be meant; for the words may be rendered, *let the beauty of the Lord be with us*²; he who is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, altogether lovely, fairer than the children of men, let him appear as the Immanuel, God with us: *and establish thou the work of our hands upon us*; yea, *the work of our hands establish thou it*; or *direct it*¹; though God works all works of grace for us, and in us, yet there is a work of duty and obedience to him for us to do; nor should we be slothful and inactive, but be the rather animated to it by what he has done for us: our hands should be continually employed in service for his honour and glory; and, whatever we find to do, do it with all the might of grace we have; and in which we need divine direction and strength, and also establishment, that we may be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: and this petition is repeated, to shew the sense he had of the necessity of it, and of the vehemence and strength of desire after it. Jarchi interprets this of the work of the tabernacle, in which the hands of the Israelites were employed in the wilderness; so Arama of the tabernacle of Bezaleel.

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

² כִּי יִשָּׁבֵט אֲדִיט נֹבִיחַ, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius; Heb. sit apud nos, Piscator; super nobis & apud nos, Michaelis.

¹ כִּי יִשָּׁבֵט אֲדִיט נֹבִיחַ, Sept. dirige, V. L. Musculus; dirige & confirma, Michaelis.

P S A L M XCI.

JARCHI and others think this psalm was written by Moses^m, as was the preceding; but the Targum ascribes it to David; as do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and very probably, as is generally thought, was penned by him on occasion of the pestilence which came upon the people, through his numbering of them, 2 Sam. xxiv. The person all along spoken of, and to, according to the Targum, is Solomon his son; and, according to the title in the Syriac version, King Hezekiah, so Theodoret, who is called the son of David; neither of which are probable. Some think the Messiah is meant; and that the psalm contains promises of protection and safety to him, as man, from diseases, beasts of prey, evil spirits, and wicked men, under the care of angels; and this not because that Satan has applied one of these promises to him, Matt. iv. 6. but because they seem better to agree with him than with any other: and one part of the title of the psalm, in the Syriac version, runs thus, “and spiritually it is called the ‘victory of the Messiah, and of every one that is ‘perfected by him.’” It seems best to understand it of every godly man, who is always safe under the divine protection. The Talmudistsⁿ call it *שיר פנעים*, a song of the occurrences, or meetings with evil spirits.

Ver. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, &c.*] Or the Supreme; a title of God, who is superior to all beings, the Creator and Preserver of them, God over all, higher than the highest of angels or men; see Gen. xiv. 22. his *secret place* is his heart, his bosom, where his only-begotten Son lies; and into which he takes his people, where they are set as a seal, and who enjoy intimate communion with him; which is no other than his gracious presence, called the *secret of his presence*, Psal. xxxi. 20. which none but saints are admitted to, when his everlasting love, which was a secret in his heart, is made known unto them, and in which they also dwell, 1 John iv. 16. as they likewise do in the eternal decree of election; which perhaps is meant by the *clefts of the rock*, and *secret places of the stairs*, where the church is said to dwell, Cant. ii. 14. unless rather Christ the Rock, and who may be signified by the cleft of that Moses was put into, when the goodness of the Lord passed before him, is intended; and who is the hiding-place from the wind: mention is made of the *secret of God's tabernacle*, Psal. xxvii. 5. in which he hides his people; alluding to the tabernacle, or temple, and the most holy place in it, called his *secret place*, Ezek. vii. 22. and may refer to the ministry of the word and ordinances, where saints dwell, and enjoy much communion with God; and who are particularly under his special providence, protection, and power; which may here be designed: *shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*; who is able to do all things for his people, and is *Shaddai*, all-sufficient, as this word is thought to signify; has

a sufficiency of happiness in and for himself, and of provisions for all his creatures, and of power and grace for his own children: his *shadow* may be the same with his *secret place*, his power and protection, often in this book of Psalms called the *shadow of his wings*, Psal. xvii. 8. and xxxvi. 7. and lvii. 1. in allusion to birds that overshadow and protect their young with their wings; though perhaps the allusion here may be to the shadow of a tree, and design the word and ordinances of the Lord's house, which are a delightful, refreshing, reviving, and fruitful shadow, Cant. ii. 3. Hos. xiv. 7. where gracious souls dwell, and abide with great delight and pleasure. Christ, the Son of God, is sometimes compared to the shadow of a rock, or tree, which screens and shelters from heat; as he preserves his people from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, the fiery darts of Satan, and the fury of persecutors: under this shadow do they abide or lodge all night, safe and secure, as the word^o signifies: the Targum calls this shadow the shadow of the clouds of glory; the Arabic version, *the shadow of the God of heaven*.

Ver. 2. *I will say of the Lord, &c.*] Or to the Lord? these are the words of the psalmist, expressing his faith in the Lord in the following words, taking encouragement from the safety of the godly man above described: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *he shall say to the Lord*; that is, the man that dwells in the secret place, and under the shadow of the Lord: the Targum is, “David said, ‘I will say to the Lord,’” as follows: he is *my refuge*; a refuge in every time of trouble, outward or inward; a refuge when all others fail; and is himself a never-failing one, a strong refuge, which none can break through and into, and in which all that have fled thither and dwell are safe: *and my fortress*; what fortifications, natural or artificial, are to a city and its inhabitants, that is God to his people, and much more; he is round about them, as the mountains were about Jerusalem; his salvation are walls and bulwarks to them; yea, he is a wall of fire about them, Psal. cxxv. 2. Isa. xxvi. 1. Zech. ii. 5. they are kept by his power, as in a garrison, 1 Pet. i. 5. *my God, in him will I trust*; his covenant-God, his God in Christ, and who would ever continue so; and was a proper object of his trust and confidence, both as the God of nature, and the God of grace; who is to be trusted in, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, and at all times; to which his loving-kindness, power, and faithfulness, greatly encourage and engage: the Targum is, “in ‘his Word will I trust.’”

Ver. 3. *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, &c.*] These are the words of the psalmist, either speaking to himself, for the encouragement of his own faith and trust in the Lord; or to the man that dwells in the secret place, and under the shadow of

^m So in Tikkune Zohar, correct. 20. fol. 50. 1.

ⁿ T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 8. 2.

^o תלונן indiesinenter pernoctans, Junius & Tremellius; pernoctat, Piscator, Gejerus; pernoctabit, Michaelis.

^p ליהרהר Domino, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus; ad Jehovam, de Dieu.

the most High; which latter seems most agreeable; though Coceius thinks they are the words of God in one of his Persons, speaking of another divine Person that should deliver such that trust in him: the Targum makes them to be the words of David to Solomon his son. By the *fowler* and his *snares* may be meant either Saul, who laid wait for David, spread snares for him, and hunted him as a partridge on the mountains, from whom he was delivered; or rather any tyrannical enemy and persecutor of the saints, who lay snares for them; and these are broken by the Lord, and so they escape, as a bird out of the hands of the fowler, Psal. cxxiv. 6, 7. or it may, best of all, be understood of Satan and his temptations, which are as snares that he lays to catch the people of God in, and from which they are delivered by the power and grace of God; see 1 Tim. iii. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 26. and from the *noisome pestilence*; the most pernicious and destructive one; which may be literally understood of any pestilential distemper; from which the Lord, by his powerful providence, sometimes protects his people, when in danger of it: or, spiritually, of the pestilential disease of sin, that noisome and deadly one, the plague of the heart, which is the worst of all plagues; and from the ruinous and destructive effects and consequences of which the Lord saves his saints.

Ver. 4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, &c.*] As birds do their young, who cannot cover themselves: this they do from a tender regard to them, whereby they both keep them warm, and protect them from those that would hurt them: this represents the helpless state of the children of God, who are, like to young birds, weak and unable to defend themselves; the tender regard of God unto them, as the eagle and other birds have to their young; see Deut. xxxii. 11. Isa. xxxi. 5. Matt. xxiii. 37. and the warmth and comforts souls have, as well as protection, under his powerful and gracious presence; he comforts them under their tribulations, as well as defends them from their enemies: *and under his wings shalt thou trust*; see the note on ver. 1. and the passages there referred to; the same metaphor is continued: *his truth* shall be thy *shield and buckler*; his faithfulness, which is engaged to keep and preserve his saints safe to his kingdom and glory, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. his son, who is *truth* itself, John. xiv. 6. and whose person, blood, righteousness, and salvation, are as a shield and buckler all around the saints, to secure them from ruin and destruction; and are the shield which faith lays hold on, and makes use of, against the temptations of Satan; see Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Ephes. vi. 16. the word of God also, which is *truth*, John xvii. 19. every promise in it, and doctrine of it, is as a shield and buckler to strengthen, support, and secure the faith of his people, Prov. xxx. 5.

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, &c.*] The terrible things that happen in the night; as fire, storms and tempests, invasion of enemies, murders, thefts, and robberies: a good man, when he has committed himself and his family to the care and protection of God by prayer, has no reason to be anxiously

careful of these things, or to indulge a slavish fear about them; see Psal. iii. 5. and iv. 8. Prov. iii. 24, 25. the Targum is, "thou shalt not be afraid for the fear of devils that walk in the night:" so Jarchi interprets this, and the next verse, of such; as do others of the Jewish writers: a man that trusts in the Lord need not be afraid of men or devils: a fear of evil spirits is natural to men, and very early appeared; perhaps it took its rise from the fatal affair of the fall of our first parents, through an intercourse with an evil spirit; and ever since has been imprinted on human nature an aversion to evil spirits, and a dread of them, and even of all spirits in general; see Job iv. 13—16. Matt. xiv. 25, 26. Luke xxiv. 37, 38. nor *for the arrow that flieth by day*; the judgments of God, such as the sword, famine, and pestilence; these are called the arrows of God, Deut. xxxiii. 23, 24, 42. Ezek. v. 16³, because they move swiftly, come suddenly, and strike surely, and are open and visible; they are sent by the Lord, and are ordered and directed by him, and hit and hurt whom he pleases, and none else; and therefore such who dwell in the secret of the Lord, and under his shadow, need not be distressed about them: the Targum interprets it of the arrow of the angel of death, which he sends out in the day; see Heb. ii. 14. so Jarchi understands it of a demon that flies like an arrow.

Ver. 6. *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, &c.*] Some think, and not without cause, that what is figuratively expressed in the preceding verse is here explained; and, indeed, the *pestilence* may well be called the *terror by night*: the name of the plague, at a distance, is terrible; the near approach of it is more so; when it enters a country, city, or town, what fleeing is there from it? and in the night-season it is more dreadful than in the day; not only to think of it in the gloomy watches of the night, but to see the vast numbers carried out to be interred, and to hear the dismal cry, Bring out your dead: and so it is here said to *walk in darkness*: in the darkness of the night, or to arise from dark and unknown causes; when it moves and walks through cities, towns, and villages, and there's no stopping it: and this also may be the *arrow that flieth by day*; which flies as swift as an arrow, and that flies as swift as a bird⁴; this is taken out of the Lord's quiver, has its commission and direction from him, and does execution by night and by day: the plague that smote the first-born in Egypt was in the night; and that which was in David's time, and might be the occasion of penning this psalm, began in the day, Exod. xii. 29, 30. 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. nor *for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day*; as the pestilence, which may be increased, and rage the more, through the heat of the day; and which destroys great numbers wherever it comes: seventy thousand were taken off in three days by the plague occasioned by David's numbering of the people: the Targum is, "of a company of devils that destroy at noon-day;" that is, thou shalt not be afraid: some think respect is had to a pestilential hot wind, common in the eastern countries, which begins to blow about eight o'clock in

⁴ Ἐχθρῶν καὶ Σάτου—Homer. Iliad. i. v. 51, 52.

³ Voluces sagittæ, Virgil. Æneid. 12. volante sagitta, Ovid. Trist. eleg. 10.

a morning, and is hottest at noon; which instantly suffocates persons, burns them, and reduces them to ashes presently, which the Arabs call *sammiel*, or a poison-wind*.

Ver. 7. *A thousand shall fall at thy side, &c.*] The left side, as the Targum; so the Arabic version, and Jarchi and Kimchi; which sense the opposition and distinction in the next clause direct unto: this is not to be understood of falling in battle, as some interpret it, but by the pestilence before spoken of: *and ten thousand at thy right hand*; which shews both the great devastation made by the plague where it comes, and the special care and providence of God in preserving his people from it; of which David had an experience, when vast numbers of his people were destroyed by it on the right and left: but *it shall not come nigh thee*; it may come nigh the place where good men are, or else it could not be said that a thousand should fall on their side, and ten thousand at their right hand: the plague that killed the first-born in Egypt was nigh the dwellings of the Israelites, though it entered not into them; and that in David's time was nigh him, though he was not infected with it: but the meaning is, that it should not come so nigh such as to seize their persons, and they fall by the distemper; there being a particular providence oftentimes concerned for their safety, which guards them from it; see Ezek. ix. 4. not but that good men may fall in a common calamity, and by an epidemical distemper; but then it is for their good, and not their hurt; they are taken away from the evil to come, and are delivered from a worse plague than that by which they fall, the plague of their own hearts, the evil of sin; and so the Targum adds, "shall not come nigh to hurt," though it understands it of devils.

Ver. 8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, &c.*] The flying arrow, the walking pestilence, and wasting destruction, and the great devastations made by it: *and see the reward of the wicked*: the vengeance of God upon them, and this as a just punishment for their sins; not looking upon it with delight and pleasure, rejoicing in the misery of their fellow-creatures, any otherwise than as the glory of divine justice is displayed in it; see Psal. lii. 6. and lviii. 10. the pestilence is always threatened, and it always comes, as a judgment upon a wicked generation of men; and so it is ever to be considered, and is considered by good men, Lev. xxvi. 25. Deut. xxviii. 20, 21.

Ver. 9. *Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, &c.*] So the words, according to Kimchi, also are directed to the good man; giving the reason of his safety, because he trusts in the Lord, and puts himself under his protection: but they should rather be rendered, and the accents require such a reading, *because thou, Lord, art my refuge*†; and so are either the words of the good man that trusts in the Lord; or rather of the psalmist himself, seeing his safety in the midst of danger, and ascribing it to the Lord; whose providence was in a peculiar manner over him, whose power protected him, and he was as an asylum or city

of refuge to him; so that nothing could hurt him: even *the most High, thy habitation*; it should be rendered, *thou hast made the most High thy habitation*‡; being an apostrophe of the psalmist to his own soul, observing the ground of his security; the most high God being made and used by him as his habitation, or dwelling-place, where he dwelt, as every good man does, safely, quietly, comfortably, pleasantly, and continually: the Targum makes them to be the words of Solomon, paraphrasing them thus, "Solomon answered, and thus he said, thou thyself, O Lord, art my confidence; in an high habitation thou hast put the house of thy majesty."

Ver. 10. *There shall no evil befall thee, &c.*] The evil of sin cleaves to the best of saints, the evil of temptations besets them, and the evil of afflictions comes upon them, as chastisements from the Lord; for they must expect to receive evil, in this sense, as well as good, from his hands; but the evil of punishment never touches them; and therefore, when any public calamity befalls them in common with others, yet not as an evil of punishment; it is not an evil to them, it is for their good: *neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling*; how should it, when they dwell in God, and have made him, the most High, their habitation? ver. 1. 9. otherwise it may come nigh their temporal dwellings; see the note on ver. 7. though it may not enter into them; and, should it, yet not as an evil, or by way of punishment; see Prov. iii. 33.

Ver. 11. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, &c.*] Created spirits, so called, made by the Lord, and are at his command; who are ministering spirits to his people, who encamp about them, and are concerned in the preservation of them; they being committed to their care and charge by him who is Lord of heaven and earth: Satan applied this passage to Christ, Matt. iv. 6. nor did our Lord object to the application of it; and it can hardly be thought that he would have ventured to have done it, had he been aware that a misapplication might be objected; or that it was not the received sense of the place: what he is to be blamed for, in quoting it, was the wrong purpose for which he produced it, and for leaving out the next clause, which he saw was against his design; *to keep thee in all thy ways*; in walking and travelling from place to place, as Providence calls and directs; and in all civil ways, in all lawful business and employment of life; in all spiritual ones, as the ways of God and religion: what Satan tempted Christ to was neither of these ways; it was not a natural way of going, nor the duty of his office, nor any of the ways of God.

Ver. 12. *They shall bear thee up in their hands, &c.*] Which denotes the strength and power of angels to carry the saints in their hands; their tender care of them, such as a parent or nurse have of children; the helpless condition of the people of God, who are like infants, and need to be dealt with after this manner; the condescension of angels to take such an office on them, in submission to the will of God; the constant view they have of the saints, being always in their

* Vide Thevenot's Travels, par. 2. sect. 1. c. 12. p. 54. & l. 3. c. 8. p. 135.

† *quoniam tu Domine spes mea*, Pagninus,

Montanus, Musculus; *nam tu O Jehova es receptus meus, Cocceius; so Piscator*; *quia tu Domine, es perfrugium meum, De Dieu, Gejerus.*
‡ *עליון שמת מעונך* *excelsum posuisti habitaculum tuum*, Pagninus, Montanus, De Dieu, Gejerus.

hands, and so in sight: thus they bear them up in life, and at death carry their souls to Abraham's bosom: *lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*; lest they fall into sin, or into any calamity and distress; the least hurt or mischief befall them, or the least injury be done them; see Prov. iii. 23. The Targum interprets it of the evil concupiscence, or corruption of nature, which is like a stone; see Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, &c.*] Or be unhurt by such savage and poisonous creatures; as the Israelites, when they travelled through the wilderness, in which were serpents and scorpions; and many of the servants of God have been delivered from them, or have slain them, as Samson, David, and Daniel; and so Christ was among the wild beasts in the wilderness, and yet not touched or hurt by them; and his disciples had power given them by him to tread on serpents and scorpions, and to take up serpents, without receiving any damage from them; and when a viper fastened on the hand of the Apostle Paul, he shook it off, without being hurt by it; see Mark i. 13. and xvi. 18. Luke x. 19. Acts xxviii. 5. it may be understood figuratively of Satan, who, for his voraciousness and cruelty, is compared to a lion; and, for his craft and subtlety, to a serpent, 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. xii. 9. *the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot*: which also may be understood of the great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan; whom Christ trampled under his feet when he hung on the cross, and spoiled him and his principalities and powers; and who, in a short time, will be bruised under the feet of his people, as he has been already by the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15. Rom. xvi. 20.

Ver. 14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, &c.*] These are the words of God himself; and, according to Aben Ezra, are directed to the angels, describing the good man, and making promises to him; and in this clause he is represented as one that had *set his love upon the Lord*, being first loved by the Lord, and having the grace of love wrought in his heart by him: the phrase denotes the strength of his affection to God, and the sincerity of it; its singularity, being placed alone on him, and the settlement and fixedness of it, so as nothing could separate from it: this the Lord takes great notice of, and is highly well-pleased with: hence it follows, *therefore will I deliver him*: from noisome diseases before mentioned, from all afflictions into which he comes, and from all the temptations of the evil one, so as that he shall not be hurt or destroyed by them: *I will set him on high*: on the Rock Christ Jesus, that is higher than he, higher than the angels, higher than the heavens, and where he is now out of the reach of all his enemies, and will be set

hereafter on high in heaven, among princes, inheriting the throne of glory; yea, even set upon the same throne with Christ himself: *because he hath known my name*; himself, his being, and perfections; his Son, the Angel of his presence, in whom his name, nature, and perfections are; and his name as proclaimed in him, a God gracious and merciful; and this not merely notionally, but experimentally, and affectionately and fiducially; for such, that truly know him, love him, and trust in him; and these exalt him, and so are exalted and set on high by him.

Ver. 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, &c.*] God is to be invoked by prayer, and to be called upon in every time of trouble, in faith and with fervency, in truth and uprightness, and sincerity of soul; and he himself directs and encourages to it, and promises an answer, which he always sooner or later gives; for he is a God hearing and answering prayer; see Psal. l. 15. *I will be with him in trouble*: the Lord knows his people in adversity; he visits them in their affliction, grants his gracious presence with them, supports them under it, that they are not overwhelmed by it; he bears them up and through it, and makes all things work together for their good: *I will deliver him, and honour him*; deliverance is again promised, to denote the certainty of it; and with this addition, that the Lord will *honour* such that know him, and love him: all his saints are honoured by him, by taking them into his family, and giving them a name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate; by clothing them with the righteousness of his Son; by adorning them with the graces of his Spirit; by granting them communion and fellowship with himself, and by bringing them to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 16. *With long life will I satisfy him, &c.*] In this world: the saints live in it as long as they choose to live; and when they come to die, be it when it will, they are, like Abraham, full of years, or satisfied with them; they have had enough of them, and would not live always here; but, with good old Simeon, desire to depart in peace; and in the other world they shall be satisfied with length of days, for ever and ever, even with eternal life; and nothing short of this will satisfy a good man: *and shew him my salvation*; Jesus Christ, the author of salvation, whom God appointed to do it, and who has finished it; salvation itself, wrought out by him; its fulness and suitableness, and interest in it; and also eternal glory and happiness, the completion and consummation of salvation: the former is shewn unto and seen by faith here; the latter will be seen and enjoyed in heaven to all eternity. Aben Ezra and Kimchi refer this salvation to the days of the Messiah.

P S A L M XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

MANY of the Jewish writers* think that this psalm was written by the first man Adam, and so the Targum, "a hymn or song which the first man said for the sabbath-day." But had it been a composure of his, one would think it should have been placed at the head of this collection of psalms, and before that of Moses, Psal. xc. besides there were no musical instruments then for this psalm to be sung on, as in ver. 3. for they say it was made by him quickly after his creation, and his ejection from paradise; for Jubal was the father of them that handle the harp and organ; nor were there any number of enemies and wicked men to rise up against him, as in ver. 7, 9, 11. Nor was it written by Moses, as others have thought; but rather by David, to whom the Arabic version ascribes it; the musical instruments, the number of enemies, and the mention of the house and courts of the Lord, best agree with his times. It was made for the sabbath-day, and to be used upon it; and directs to the work and worship of it; praising of God and celebrating his works, attending his house and ordinances; even for the seventh-day sabbath, which God instituted and appointed the Jews to observe; and which in David's time was religiously kept; though some understand this of the time of rest which David had from his enemies round about him, and apply it to all such times of rest from tyranny and persecution, which the church of God in any period enjoys; and which is a proper season for praise and thanksgiving. Some Jewish writers refer it to the world to come, which will be all sabbath, even to the days of the Messiah, as Jarchi and others; so Theodorēt; see Heb. iv. 9.

Ver. 1. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, &c.*] For all mercies, temporal and spiritual; for Christ, and salvation by him; for the Gospel, and for Gospel opportunities and ordinances; for, such days and seasons this psalm was composed for. It is good so to do, for it is the will of God that we should in and for every thing give thanks; it is due unto him, and is our reasonable service; it is well-pleasing unto God through Christ; it is pleasant work for the saints themselves, and is profitable unto them; to be thankful for what they have is the way to have more. Kimchi connects this with the title; the sabbath-day is good to give thanks unto the Lord; it is a very fit opportunity for such service; when a man is at leisure from worldly business, and his heart is engaged in spiritual exercises, and especially when it is warmed with the love of God: *and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High*; a name and epithet of God, suitable to his majesty and glory, to his supereminence over all his creatures, and the place where he dwells, and to whom the highest praises are due; these two phrases, giving

thanks, and singing praise, are much the same; only with this difference, the former may be done in prayer, and without the modulation of the voice, as well as with it; the latter only with it; hence these two are mentioned as distinct things in Ephes. v. 19, 20.

Ver. 2. *To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, &c.*] God has shewn forth his loving-kindness in Christ, and Christ has shewn it in a ministerial way; and saints should shew it forth also with their lips, to warm the hearts of one another, and encourage distressed minds; this should be a part, and a considerable one, of their thanksgiving and praise; as it will appear to be, when the objects of it are considered, not angels, but men, and these the worst and vilest; the instances of it in election, redemption, vocation, adoption, and eternal life; and the freeness, earliness, and immovableness of it; and this is to be done in the morning, not of the sabbath-day only, but every other day, giving praise and thanks for the mercies of the night. Jarchi interprets it of the time of salvation: *and thy faithfulness every night*; or *in the nights*^b; not the night and goes out of the sabbath only, so Arama; but every other night, observing and declaring the faithfulness and truth of God in his counsels and covenant, in his word and promises, and in the preservation of his people, and the continuance of favours to them; particularly praising his name, and giving thanks unto him openly for the mercies of the day past: morning and night being mentioned may have some respect to the morning and evening sacrifices; and may signify that our sacrifices of praise should be offered up to God continually, Heb. xiii. 15.

Ver. 3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings, &c.*] An harp of ten strings, as the Targum. The harp invented by Terpander had only seven strings^c; according to Pliny^d; Simonides added the 8th, and Timotheus the 9th; but this of David was of ten strings: *and upon the psaltery*; of which see the note on Psal. xxxiii. 2. *upon the harp with a solemn sound*; or *upon higgaon with the harp*; which *higgaon*, Aben Ezra says, was either the tune of a song, or an instrument of music; all these instruments of music were typical of the spiritual joy and melody which the saints have in their hearts when they praise the Lord; hence mention is made of harps in particular in this spiritual sense, under the Gospel dispensation, Rev. v. 8. and xiv. 2, 3. and xv. 2, 3.

Ver. 4. *For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work, &c.*] Either of creation, which work is mentioned in the precept of the sabbath, as an argument for it; and therefore a very proper work to be remembered and observed on that day; or of providence, which in general extends to all men, but especially to them

* Zohar in Gen fel. 43. 2. Vajikra Rabba, s. 10. fol. 153. 4. See the Targum in Cant. i. 1.

^b בלילות in noctibus, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

^c Suidas in voce Τετραπδος. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

^d Ibid.

that believe; or of the work of redemption wrought out by Christ, which is cause of great joy and gladness; or of the work of grace upon the soul, which when a man is satisfied of, gives him infinite pleasure, as knowing it will be performed until the day of Christ; and when a man is in such a joyful frame of spirit, he is in a very suitable one to sing the praises of God, Jam. v. 13. *I will triumph in the works of thine hands*; those before mentioned; or shout aloud for joy, on account of them; and also triumph over all enemies, as being out of the reach of them, so as to be hurt and ruined by them.

Ver. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy works! &c.*] Of nature, providence, and grace, both for quantity and for quality, for number, excellency, and glory, as they are a display of God's wisdom, power, and goodness; see Psal. civ. 24. *and thy thoughts are very deep*; his counsels, purposes, and designs, they are unfathomable and unsearchable; see 1 Cor. ii. 10.

Ver. 6. *A brutish man knoweth not, &c.*] The loving-kindness of the Lord, and his faithfulness, nor how to shew them forth, nor his great works and deep thoughts; man was made originally far above the brute creatures, and had them all under his dominion; but, sinning, became like the beasts that perish; and is in Scripture often compared to one or other of them, as the horse, ass, &c. a brutish man is one that only knows things naturally, as brute beasts do, and in which also he corrupts himself; he is governed by sense, and not by reason, and much less by faith, which he has not; one that indulges his sensual appetite, whose god is his belly, and minds nothing but earth and earthly things; and, though he has an immortal soul, has no more care of it, and concern about it, than a beast that has none; he lives like one, without fear or shame; and in some things acts below them, and at last dies, as they do, without any thought of, or regard unto, a future state: *neither doth a fool understand this*; what is before said, or else what follows in the next verse, as Jarchi and others interpret it, concerning the end and event of the prosperity of the wicked; Arama interprets it of the Gentiles not knowing this law of the land, the sabbath, and so rejected it: a *fool* is the same with the *brutish* man, one that is so, not in things natural and civil, but in things moral, spiritual, and religious.

Ver. 7. *When the wicked spring as the grass, &c.*] Out of the earth, as they do, and are of the earth earthly, and become numerous as spires of grass, and look gay and beautiful for a while, as that does; but, like it, weak and unstable, and of a short continuance: *and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish*; in the health of their bodies; not being afflicted as other men, and their eyes standing out with fatness; whilst a Job, an upright man, is smitten with boils from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot: in wealth and riches, in which they increase often to such a degree, as to think of pulling down their barns, and building greater, to put their substance in; in their progeny and offspring, having a numerous issue; as well as in their cattle, and the standing of them, and in other stores; likewise in their power and authority, grandeur and glory, being set in high places of honour and profit, though slippery ones: these are the un-

godly, who are *wicked* at heart, and shew it by their wicked works; who are continually committing sin, it is the course of their conversation, and yet prosper in the world; which is sometimes a stumbling-block to God's people, and a hardening of sinners, who consider not that *it is that they shall be destroyed for ever*; they are like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, and as lambs and other creatures are nourished and fattened for the day of slaughter, 2 Pet. ii. 12. James v. 5. and as land is manured and cultivated, and grass springs up and flourishes, that it may be, when grown, cut down, and become the fodder of beasts, or the fuel of fire; so the prosperity of the wicked issues in their ruin, and is an aggravation of their damnation; their destruction is of soul and body in hell, and is an everlasting one; the Targum is, "and it shall be that God shall destroy them for ever."

Ver. 8. *But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore, &c.*] God is the *most High*; that is one of his names; he is above all, is higher than the highest; and he dwells on high, and looks down upon the inhabitants of the earth, and sees what is doing among them; and to him they will be accountable another day for what they do; and when wicked men perish, being destroyed, he will continue for ever in all his greatness, glory, and majesty; for there seems to be an antithesis in this verse to the former, or between wicked men and the Lord; and besides he endures for ever to inflict punishment upon them; and therefore it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

Ver. 9. *For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, &c.*] The particle *lo*, or *behold*, is not used for the sake of God, but for the sake of men; to excite their attention, and to observe unto them that those who are everlastingly destroyed are the enemies of the Lord; who are enemies in their minds by wicked works, yea, enmity itself against God; and therefore their perdition is just as well as certain; sooner or later these shall be brought forth and slain before him; and for the certainty of it it is repeated, *for, lo, thine enemies shall perish*; the Targum adds, in the world to come: *all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered*; one from another, and not be able to unite and combine together against the saints, as they have done; or they shall be separated from them at the last day, being placed at Christ's left hand; and shall not stand in judgment, nor in the congregation of the righteous; and so the Targum, "and all the workers of iniquity shall be separated from the congregation of the righteous;" see Psal. i. 5.

Ver. 10. *But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn, &c.*] Which is said to be very high and strong, see Deut. xxxiii. 17. this may be understood of the establishment of David's kingdom, of his royal authority, power, and the glory of it, signified by his *horn*: which was fulfilled when he had subdued the neighbouring nations, and the kings of them, and was exalted above them, and had rest from all his enemies; and may be applied unto the Messiah, the horn of David, the horn of salvation raised up in his house, Psal. cxxxii. 17. Luke i. 69. and so may refer to his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the strength and glory of his kingdom; see 1 Sam. ii. 10. and also may be interpreted of every good man, in opposition

to the wicked; who, though low and abased, God will exalt and set them among princes, and cause them to inherit the throne of glory, and even to sit down on the same throne with Christ; see 1 Sam. ii. 8. Rev. iii. 21. *I shall be anointed with fresh oil*; oil of olive, as the Targum; oil of myrrh, as Aben Ezra; it may respect David's unction to office, as king of Israel; for not only after he had been anointed by Samuel, but even after he was anointed by the men of Judah as king over them, he was afresh anointed by all the tribes of Israel as their king, 2 Sam. ii. 4. and v. 3. *oil* often signifies the spirit of God, his gifts and graces; and *fresh oil* may intend new supplies of his grace out of the fulness of it, which is in Christ; and also the renewed joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit, who is the oil of gladness Christ was anointed with above his fellows, and is given to his people in measure.

Ver. 11. *Mine eyes also shall see my desire on mine enemies, &c.*] The Targum supplies thus, "shall see "destruction;" Aben Ezra, shall see *the vengeance of God*, as in Psal. lviii. 10. and Kimchi, as we do, shall see *what I will, or my desire*: which arose not from a revengeful spirit, or from a spirit of private revenge, but from a regard to the glory of God, and the honour of his name; and in no other view could the destruction of fellow-creatures, though his enemies, be grateful to him: *and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me*; he should see the ruin of some, and hear of the destruction of others; that which his eyes saw not, his ears should hear; the report would be brought to him; as in the latter day the voice of the angel will be heard, *Babylon is fallen*; and other voices heard in heaven, giving glory to God; an account of which will be acceptable to the saints, because of the justice of God, and the honour of it, as well as because it will make for their future peace and comfort, Rev. xviii. 2. and xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 12. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, &c.*] Not like grass, as the wicked, ver. 7. which is weak and tender, and soon cut down; but like trees, and like palm-trees, that are firm and strong, and of a long continuance: the word for *righteous* being of the singular number, has led some to think that Christ is meant; but though he is eminently the righteous One, being so in himself, and the author of righteousness to others, yet not he, but his church and people, are compared to a palm-tree, Cant. vii. 7, 8. the reason why the singular number is made use of is, as Aben Ezra thinks, because the righteous are very few, in comparison of the wicked: the sense is, that every one of the righteous, or every one that is righteous, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and are created anew in righteousness and true holiness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, are like the flourishing palm-trees; which grow upright, and under the greatest pressures, and rise upwards against the greatest weight upon them*; whose force and vigour is on the top of them, which being cut off, they die; which delight in hot climates and sunny places, bear a delicious fruit, are ever green, are very durable,

and their branches used in token of joy and victory; it is said to be a perfect image of a man, and in many things to resemble him†: so truly righteous persons are upright ones in heart and life, grow up into their head, Christ, and rise up heavenwards in their desires and affections; and, like the Israelites, the more they are pressed with the weight of afflictions, the more they grow; their grace and strength, their life and vigour, lie in their head, Christ; from whom was it possible they could be separated, as it is not, they would instantly die; they flourish under him, the sun of righteousness, and his warming beams of love, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness by him, to the glory of God; their leaf of profession does not wither, but is always green; the grace of God, which is in them, being an incorruptible and never-dying seed: hence, in the issue, they make that palm-bearing company in Rev. vii. 9. who are more than conquerors through Christ, that has loved them: the Greek version is, *as the phenix*, which some of the ancients understood of a bird so called, supposed to rise out of its ashes, and use it to prove the resurrection of the dead‡: *he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon*; where the best, tallest, largest, and strongest cedars grow; see the note on Isa. xxxvii. 24. to which the righteous are compared, who grow up by degrees higher and higher, even to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and, stronger and stronger in him, go from strength to strength, having their spiritual strength renewed by him; and cast forth their roots in him, like Lebanon, and the cedars there; and spread their boughs and branches, like them, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and grow in every grace, of faith, hope, love, humility, self-denial, and submission to the will of God, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and are durable as the cedar, never die, their life being hid with Christ in God. Kimchi refers this to the days of the Messiah.

Ver. 13. *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, &c.*] Or *being planted*§, that is, every one of the righteous before mentioned; such are they that are transplanted out of the wilderness of the world, and are grafted into Christ, and are rooted in him, and are planted together in the likeness of his death and resurrection; have the graces of the spirit of God implanted in them, have received the ingrafted word; and, in consequence of all this, are grafted into the olive-tree, the church; or have a place and name there, better than that of sons and daughters, where they are as plants grown up in their youth; and which is here meant by *the house of the Lord*, in allusion to the tabernacle, or temple, which had the figure of palm-trees on the walls of it: so the Targum interprets it the temple, rendering it, "his children shall be "planted in the sanctuary of the Lord:" and though it may seem strange that trees should be planted in an house, it should be remembered that the house of the Lord, or the church, is a garden, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, Cant. iv. 12, 13. and such are not mere education-plants, or such as are merely by outward profession, or only ministerially, planted,

* Plotarch. apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 6.
† See Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 80.

‡ Texellii Phenix, l. 1. c. 4. p. 14.

§ See שחוריים plantati, Paganus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

but are planted by the Lord himself; and so are choice and pleasant ones, by which God is glorified, and which shall never be plucked up: and these shall flourish in the courts of our God; like trees in court-yards before houses; alluding to the courts in the tabernacle or temple, where the people worshipped: here the righteous flourish like palm-trees, as in the preceding verse, being rooted in Christ, who is the righteous man's root, that yieldeth fruit, and from whom all his fruit is found; but this flourishing is not merely in the leaves of profession, but in the fruits of grace and righteousness, being watered with the dews of divine grace, and having the benefit of the word and ordinances; which are the waters of the sanctuary, that refresh and quicken the trees of righteousness that grow by it; see Ezek. xlvii. 1, 7, 12. This is referred to the times of the Messiah, and the resurrection, by the ancient Jews^f.

Ver. 14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, &c.*] Being thus planted and watered, they shall not only bring forth the fruits of righteousness, but shall continue, and go on to do so, and even when they are grown old; contrary to all other trees, which, when old, cease bearing fruit; but so do not the righteous; grace is often in the greatest vigour when nature is decayed; witness Abraham, Job, David, Zachariah, and Elisabeth, and good old Simeon, who went to the grave like shocks of corn, fully ripe: *they shall be fat and flourishing; or green*, full of sap and moisture, abound with green leaves and precious fruit; or, in other words, abound in grace, and be fruitful in every good work: being ingrafted into the true olive, the church of God, they partake of the root and fatness of it; having a place in the house of the Lord, they

are satisfied with the goodness and fatness thereof, and are made to drink of the river of divine pleasure; and being in the courts of the Lord, where a feast of fat things is provided for them, they eat and feed, and so thrive and flourish; the allusion is to fat and flourishing palm-trees^g.

Ver. 15. *To shew that the Lord is upright, &c.*] Or righteous, that is, faithful; as he is in his counsels, covenant, and promises, which he makes good by causing his people to grow and flourish, and become fruitful; by carrying on the work of grace upon their souls, and by preserving them to the end safe to his kingdom and glory; by all which it appears that he does not, and will not, suffer his faithfulness to fail: the Targum is, "that the inhabitants of the earth may shew, &c." *he is my Rock*; the psalmist sets his seal to the truth of God's faithfulness, firmness, and constancy, calling him a *Rock* for his strength and stability, and claiming his interest in him; declaring he found him to be so by experience, even the *Rock* whose work is perfect; who always completes what he undertakes, and finishes what he begins, and will not forsake the work of his own hands: *just and right is he*; the *Rock* of ages, that remains firm, steadfast, and unalterable in all generations: *and there is no unrighteousness in him*; as not in his sovereign acts of grace, so neither in his providential dispensations, either towards good men or bad men; not in suffering the wicked to prosper, as in ver. 7, and the righteous to be afflicted; nor in punishing bad men here, or hereafter; nor in justifying sinners by the righteousness of his son, and giving them the crown of righteousness at the last day: all his proceedings are in the most just and equitable manner; see Rom. ix. 14.

P S A L M XCIII.

THIS psalm is by some ascribed to Moses, by others to David, which latter is more probable; with which agree the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; all which, excepting the Syriac and Arabic versions, say it is a psalm that was made to be sung the day before the sabbath; and it was a custom with the Jews^h to sing it on the sixth day of the week; which it is likely the authors of the Septuagint version were acquainted with, and therefore inserted it in the title of the psalm, though it is not in the Hebrew text. The subject of the psalm is the kingdom of God; not of nature and providence, but of grace; the kingdom of the Messiah; of the certainty, firmness, and eternity of it, notwithstanding the opposition of mighty enemies; being established by the sure promises of God, which his faithfulness and holiness were engaged to make good. Kimchi says, that all these psalms, this and the following unto the 101st, are concerning the Messiah; and so say Kabvenaki and Ben Melech.

Ver. 1. *The Lord reigneth, &c.*] The King Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Jehovah, God over all, the Lord God omnipotent: he has reigned, he

was set up as King from everlasting; he reigned throughout the whole Old-Testament dispensation; he was promised, and prophesied of, as a King; he came as such, in human nature, into the world, though his kingdom was not with observation; when he ascended to heaven, he was made or declared Lord and Christ, and was crowned with glory and honour; he now reigns in the hearts of his people, by his spirit and grace; and, ere long, he will take to himself his great power, and reign more manifestly; when the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and he shall be King over all the earth; and this his government will be still more apparent when he shall come in person, and reign with his saints on earth a thousand years; and, after that, for ever and ever, in heaven: *he is clothed with majesty*; with all the regalia and ensigns of royalty; seated on a throne of glory, with a crown of pure gold on his head, a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and arrayed with robes of honour and majesty; so that his appearance at his kingdom will be very splendid, Psal. civ. 1, 2. *the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself*; as he was, when he came here on earth, tra-

^f Zohar in Lev. 7. 1.

^g Præferat Herodis palmētis pinguibus. — Horat. Ep. 1. 2. Ep. 2. v. 148.

^h T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 21. 1. & Tamid, fol. 23. 2.

velling in the greatness of his strength, and mighty to save; bearing the sins of his people, conflicting with and spoiling principalities and powers, and obtaining eternal redemption; and which also appeared in carrying the Gospel into the Gentile world, and succeeding it, against all the opposition made unto it; and in making his way into the hearts of sinners at conversion, binding the strong man armed, and dispossessing him, and taking his place; in strengthening them with strength in the inward man, against him and all enemies; and keeping them by his power, through faith, unto salvation: and which will be further manifest in the destruction of antichrist, and in the ruin of all the antichristian states, which will make way for his spiritual reign; and especially this will be seen, at his personal coming, by raising the dead in Christ, causing the heavens and earth to pass away, and making new ones; and binding Satan for a thousand years, that he may give no disturbance to his subjects during that time: *the world also is established, that it cannot be moved*; the world to come, of which Christ is the father; that which is not put into subjection to angels, Isa. ix. 6. Heb. ii. 5. the Gospel dispensation, the church-state in it; which, though it has been unsettled, the church has been tossed about with tempests, and has been removed from place to place, and obliged to fly into the wilderness; yet, in the latter day, it will be established on the top of the mountains: this is one of the glorious things that are spoken of it, and for the accomplishment of which we should earnestly pray, and give the Lord no rest until it is; after which it shall never be moved again; it shall be a tabernacle that shall never be taken down; there will be no enemies to attempt it; all will be vanquished and destroyed; the beast, the false prophet, and the old serpent the devil, Psal. lxxxvii. 3, 5. Isa. ii. 2. and lxii. 7. and xxxiii. 20.

Ver. 2. *Thy throne is established of old, &c.*] Or prepared from eternity^b; Christ was set up and anointed as King from everlasting; he had a kingdom appointed and prepared for him so early; and his throne, which is prepared in the heavens, is an established one; it is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; of his government, and the increase of it, there is no end: *thou art from everlasting*; as a divine Person, as God, and the Son of God; or he could not have been anointed unto or invested with the kingly office so early; nor have had a glory with his Father before the world began: his eternal existence, as God, accounts for the establishment of his throne of old, without which it could not be.

Ver. 3. *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, &c.*] The Targum adds, "in a song," taking the words in a good sense; and so some of the ancients, as Jerome particularly, understood them of the apostles and their ministrations; who lifted up their voice like a trumpet, which went into all the world, and unto the ends of the earth; and who came with the fulness of the gifts and graces of the spirit, and were attended with a force and power which bore

down all before them: but rather by the floods are meant the enemies of Christ, his kingdom, and interest; and by their lifting up their voice, the opposition made by them thereunto; see Isa. viii. 7, 8. and xvii. 12, 13. Psal. cxxiv. 4, 5. and xviii. 4. this was fulfilled in the Jews and Gentiles, who raged, like foaming waves of the sea, against Christ, and lifted up their voices to have him crucified; in the Roman emperors, and in the ten persecutions under them; in those floods of errors and heresies, which the dragon has cast out of his mouth to devour the church of Christ, against which the spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard in all ages; in the antichristian kingdoms, compared to many waters, on which the whore of Rome is said to sit, Rev. xvii. 1, 15. and especially in antichrist himself, who has opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, his tabernacle, and they that dwell therein; and will be further fulfilled in the last persecution and slaying of the witnesses, and in the Gog and Magog army, which shall encompass the beloved city and camp of the saints. Kimchi interprets it of Gog and Magog, and of the kings that shall be gathered together to fight against Jerusalem: *the floods lift up their waves*; with great strength, making a great noise, and threatening with ruin and destruction, as before.

Ver. 4. *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, &c.*] Christ is the most High; he is God over all, higher than the highest; he is, as King, higher than the kings of the earth; he is in the highest heavens, and higher than they; he is highly exalted, as Mediator, at the right hand of God: he is the mighty God, and mighty Saviour; yea, he is Almighty, and therefore mightier than all his enemies, and the noise they make, and the force they use; he is stronger than the strong man armed; than Satan, and all his principalities and powers; than all the persecuting princes and potentates of this world; than antichrist, and all the antichristian states: yea, than the mighty waves of the sea; the same are intended as before^c.

Ver. 5. *Thy testimonies are very sure, &c.*] Meaning not the works of God, of nature, and providence, which testify of his power and Godhead, and other perfections of it; rather the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, the law and Gospel; the one being a testimony of his will to be done by men, the other a testimony of his good will to men; which are sure and true, and to be believed; though it seems best of all to understand them of the promises of God, which testify what he will do, or shall be done hereafter, and which are all yea and amen in Christ; and especially those that respect his kingdom and interest, the glory, stability, and eternity of it, things which are the principal subjects of this psalm; all which promises are sure and certain, true and faithful, firm, and to be believed; see Rev. xix. 9. and xxi. 5. and xxii. 6. *holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever*; or *unto length of days*^d: holiness is a dress or clothing; though it is not the robe of a justifying righteousness, yet it is an inner garment, which makes the saints all-glorious within; it is a very beautiful and becoming dress; it is called the beauty of

^b פָּנִינִים paratum, Pagninus, Montanus; a principio, Targum; ab antiquo, Syr. ab eterno, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

^c Vide Homer. Iliad. 21. v. 190, 191. where the same is said of Jove, almost in the same words, and repeated as here.

^d אֵלֶּיךָ יָמִים in longitudinem dicunt, Pagninus, Moutanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

holiness, and it is always becoming; it becomes the church and people of God, all that are of the household of God, both now and for evermore; it will never be out of use; it will be more and more in use, both in

the spiritual reign of Christ, and in the New-Jerusalem church-state, and in heaven to all eternity; see Zech. xiv. 20. Rev. xxi. 27. Heb. xii. 14.

P S A L M XCIV.

SOME, as Jarchi and others, think this psalm was written by Moses; others, with greater probability, assign it to David; as do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which all but the Syriac version say it was composed to be sung on the fourth day of the week, on which day the Talmudists say it was sung; see the argument of the preceding psalm. This psalm and others, that go before and follow, are without any title in the Hebrew Bible: the title of it in the Syriac version is, “*a Psalm of David, concerning the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; but spiritually, concerning the persecution against the church;*” not of the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, as some; nor of the Jews in their present exile, as Kimchi; but rather of the people of God under the tyranny of antichrist; who are represented as complaining of his insults and cruelty, and as comforting themselves in the hopes of deliverance, and in the view of his destruction.

Ver. 1. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, &c.*] As it does to God, and to him only; not to Heathen deities, one of which has the name of Vengeance given it, Acts xxviii. 4. nor to Satan, the enemy and avenger, and his spiteful principalities and powers; nor to men, who are not to exercise private revenge on their fellow-creatures; only to civil magistrates, to whom public revenge belongs, they being God’s vicegerents, and representing him; otherwise to God only it belongs, against whom sin is committed; and he will, in his own time and way, execute it; he is the *God of revenges*⁶, as the words may be rendered; and this is applicable to Christ, who is the true Jehovah, and God over all: it was he that took vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, and rained from the Lord fire and brimstone on them; and who took vengeance on the inventions of the Israelites in the wilderness; and when he came in the flesh, he came with vengeance to destroy Satan and his works, as it was promised and prophesied he should, Isa. xxxv. 4. and lxi. 2. and lxiii. 4. forty years after his death, resurrection, and ascension, he came in his power and kingdom, and took vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their unbelief and rejection of him, Luke xxi. 22. and at the opening of the sixth seal his wrath came upon Rome Pagan in a manner intolerable to them, for their cruel persecutions of his church and people; and the cry of the souls under the altar was much like what is uttered in this psalm; see Rev. vi. 9—17. and at the time of his spiritual coming and reign he will avenge the blood of his saints on Rome Papal, or antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the saints will be called upon to rejoice, and will rejoice, when

they see the vengeance, Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. and his personal coming will be in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, and when all the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, 2 Thess. i. 8. Jude, ver. 7. *O God, to whom vengeance belongeth;* which is repeated to observe the certainty of it, and to express the vehement and importunate desire of the psalmist, and those he represents, that he would shew himself to be so, as follows: *shew thyself; or shine forth*⁷, as in Psal. lxxx. 1. either at his incarnation, when he appeared as the day-spring from on high; yea, as the sun of righteousness; or, in the ministry of the Gospel, the great light which shone first on the inhabitants of Judea and Galilee, and then on the Gentile world; or in his gracious presence with his people, which is expressed by causing his face to shine upon them, Psal. lxxx. 7. or in the protection of them, and destruction of their enemies; which is a shewing himself strong on their behalf, an appearing to the joy of the one, and the confusion of the other; and in this manner will Christ shew himself in the latter day.

Ver. 2. *Lift up thyself, thou, O Judge of the earth, &c.*] A title very proper to Christ, and which is given him by Abraham, Gen. xviii. 25. who then appeared to him in an human form, and with whom he was conversing; he judges his own people on earth, all judgment being committed to him by the Father; he judges and chastises them, that they may not be condemned with the world; he judges and distinguishes between them and the world; he protects and defends them, he pleads their cause, and avenges them on their enemies: and for this purpose he is requested to *lift up himself*; being in the apprehension of his people as one laid down and asleep, quite negligent and careless of them; and therefore they desire that he would awake and arise, and exert his power, and shew himself higher than their enemies; that he would mount his throne, and execute justice and judgment on the wicked, agreeably to his character and office: *render a reward to the proud*: an evil reward, as the Targum; to proud persecutors of the church, who through their pride persecute the poor saints; and to render tribulation to them is but just with the Lord; to antichrist, that exalts himself above all that is called God, and to all his haughty and ambitious dependents and followers, cardinals, bishops, priests, &c.

Ver. 3. *Lord, how long shall the wicked, &c.*] The reign of antichrist is thought long by the saints, being the space of forty-two months, or 1,260 days or years; and this tries the faith and patience of the church of Christ, Rev. xiii. 5, 10. *how long shall the wicked tri-*

⁶ דַּם הַמָּוֹתִים Dens ultionum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

⁷ הִרְאֵה אֶת־פָּנֶיךָ irradiat, Montanus; illuesce, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; effulsit, Cocceius; adfulge, Michaelis.

umph? in their prosperity, and in the ruins of the interest of Christ; the Targum is, "how long shall they sit in tranquillity, or prosperity?" the triumphing of the wicked may seem long, but it is but short, Job xx. 5. the inhabitants of the Romish jurisdiction will triumph when the witnesses are slain, and send gifts to one another, as a token of their joy; but this won't last long, no more than three days, or three years and a half; and while antichrist is saying, I sit a queen, and shall know no sorrow, her plagues shall come upon her in one day, Rev. xi. 10, 11. and xviii. 7, 8.

Ver. 4. How long shall they utter and speak hard things? &c.] Against Christ, his person and offices, his ministers, his people, his truths and ordinances; this is very applicable to antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and which he opens, and with it blasphemes God, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it, Rev. xiii. 5, 6. The Targum is, "will they utter and speak reproachful words?" contumelies or calumnies; and such are uttered by the antichristian party against the true professors of religion in great abundance, as water out of a fountain, as the first word used signifies; see Jude, ver. 15. and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves; the just character of the followers of antichrist, who work an abomination, and make a lie, and whose whole course of life, and even of religion, is a series of sin and iniquity, Rev. xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. these lift up themselves against the Lord, like the high branches of a tree, as Aben Ezra; or praise themselves, as Jarchi; being proud, they are boasters; boast of their antiquity and precedence, of their wealth and riches, of their power and authority, of infallibility, and works of supererogation, and the like.

Ver. 5. They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, &c.] Not the Israelites, as Kimchi; but the church of Christ, by their anathemas, cruel edicts, and persecutions; by confiscating their goods, imprisoning their persons, putting them to cruel deaths; and by such means think to wear out the saints of the most High, the Lord's covenant and peculiar people; which is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, and as an argument with the Lord to arise on their behalf: and afflict thine heritage; the church, styled God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 3. whom the Lord has chosen for his inheritance; and are dear to him, as his portion, his jewels, and even as the apple of his eye; and yet these are afflicted all manner of ways by their persecuting enemies, as Israel was of old in Egypt.

Ver. 6. They slay the widow and the stranger, &c.] Who are so both in a literal and figurative sense, such who are weak and feeble, helpless and friendless; or who are deprived of their faithful pastors, who were as husbands and fathers to them, and who profess themselves pilgrims and strangers here; these the followers of the man of sin have inhumanly put to death, supposing they did God good service: and murder the fatherless; having slain the parents in a cruel and barbarous manner, murder their infants; or figuratively such who are as orphans, destitute of their spiritual fathers, who were the instruments of begetting them in Christ, and of nourishing them with the words of

faith and good doctrine; with the blood of these the whore of Rome has often made herself drunk, and therefore blood shall be given her to drink, Rev. xvii. 5, 6. and xvi. 6, 7.

Ver. 7. Yet they say, the Lord shall not see, &c.] The blood they shed, the murders they commit, the mischief they do, the wickedness they are guilty of, so flattering themselves with impunity; such atheism reigns at Rome, but God sees all their abominations, and he'll let them know one day that he does behold them; see Psal. x. 10, 14. neither shall the God of Jacob regard it; the same as before; this title of the God of Jacob may be considered either as put in by the psalmist, as an argument strengthening the faith of the church of God; that being their covenant-God, he would take notice and care of them, and resent the injuries done them, and avenge them: or else as mentioned by their enemies, sneering at their confidence in God, whom they called their covenant-God; that notwithstanding he would not regard or take any notice of what was done unto them, so as to appear in their behalf; all this has been said, if not openly with the mouth, yet secretly in the heart; the language of their actions has abundantly declared this gross atheism of antichrist, and his abettors, who are addressed as follows.

Ver. 8. Understand, ye brutish among the people, &c.] Or the most brutish and stupid of all people; especially that profess themselves to be the people of God, or Christians, as the Papists do; and who seem to be the persons here addressed: brutish; to murder the servants of the Lord, and drink their blood, till inebriated with it; stupid to the last degree to think that hereby they did God good service: hence the pope, the head of them, is represented both in his secular and ecclesiastical power by two beasts; the one rising out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, a monster in nature, most like a leopard, his feet as a bear's, and his mouth as a lion's, having the fierceness and cruelty of them all; and the other coming out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, but spake like a dragon, Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 11. the exhortation to these brutish creatures supposes them to be without understanding, like the beasts by whom they are represented; or, however, that they did not make use of those intellectual powers which God had given them; had they, they would have learned more humanity to their fellow-creatures, and more religion towards God; they would have known more of him than to have said and done what is before declared; wherefore they are called upon to consider (so the word^b is sometimes rendered, Psal. l. 22) the reasonings about it to be laid before them: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? fools they are to worship stocks and stones, the images of the Virgin Mary, and other saints; to give into the gross atheism they do; to disbelieve the omniscience of God and his providence, at least to behave as though they did; and think to do the vilest actions with impunity; wherefore it would be their wisdom to relinquish such stupid notions, and do no more such foolish and wicked actions.

^a עִיִּיִם effatiant, Montanna, Tigurine version, Vatablus; effatiant, Musculus; scaturiant, Cocceius.

^b בִּינְוֹן auimadvertite, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ver. 9. *He that planted the ear, &c.*] In the human body, with so much art and skill, in so convenient a place, so capacious of receiving sounds, and fitted it with organs suited for such a purpose: *shall he not hear?* the atheism spoke in the heart, in the actions and by the mouths of such blasphemers of him; the hard speeches spoken against his Son, his person and offices; and against his Spirit, his being, and operations; and against his people, the saints of the most High; in short, all those blasphemies and evil speakings of God, of his tabernacle, and those that dwell therein: it would be monstrous stupidity to imagine, that that God, that communicates a faculty of hearing to his creatures, should not hear himself; for none can give that which they have not: *he that formed the eye:* in so curious a manner, with such exquisite parts; with such fine humours, nerves, and tunics; so adapted to receive all objects, and take the impress of them in so wonderful a manner: *shall he not see?* all persons and things, all the ways and actions of men; certainly he must: clouds, rocks, and hills, are no obstruction to him; the darkness and the light are both alike to him; his eyes are everywhere, and all things are naked and open before him: it is the height of madness and folly to think that that God cannot see what men are doing here below, who has given to men eyes to see the heavens above, and all their host; and in this so small a compass to take in the sight of the largest mountains, as well as the most minute things: since the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, are both from the Lord, it may be most strongly concluded that he hears all that is said, and sees all that is done, against him and his people; see Prov. xx. 12. Exod. iv. 11. A Heathen^c could say, “truly there is a God, who hears and sees all that we do.”

Ver. 10. *He that chastiseth the Heathen, &c.*] As he did the old world, by bringing a flood upon it, and sweeping away its inhabitants at once; and Sodom and Gomorrah, by raining fire and brimstone upon them, and consuming them from off the earth; and the old inhabitants of Canaan, by ejecting them out of their land for their abominations, with other similar instances: *shall he not correct?* such audacious wretches, guilty of such atrocious crimes, such horrid murders, and gross atheism? certainly he will, as he has both a right and power to do it. The Targum is, “is it possible that he should give the law to his people, and, when they have sinned, should they not be corrected?” and if these are corrected and chastised, then surely such daring and insolent wretches shall not go unpunished: or, *he that instructeth the Heathen*^d; by the light of nature in things civil and moral, and therefore has a right to punish such who act contrary to it; see Rom. ii. 12. *he that teacheth man knowledge;* that has given him the light of nature; inspired him with reason and understanding; taught him more than the beasts of the field, and made him wiser than the fowls of the heaven; from whom he has the knowledge of all arts and sciences, liberal and mechanic, those of the lower as well as of the higher class; see John i. 9. Job xxxii. 8. and xxxv.

11. Isa. xxviii. 26, 29. The Targum is, “has not the Lord taught the first man knowledge?” that more perfect knowledge of things, which Adam had in innocence, was from the Lord; and therefore, *shall not he know?* all persons and things? verily he does; he is a God of knowledge, of all knowledge; his knowledge and understanding is infinite; it reaches to all persons, and to all their thoughts, words, and actions: this clause is not in the Hebrew text; but is understood, and rightly supplied; see 2 Sam. v. 8. compared with 1 Chron. xi. 6.

Ver. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, &c.*] He not only hears their words, and sees their actions; but he knows their thoughts, the secret thoughts of their hearts, though he is afar off from them, and they from him; he is the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men; see Psal. cxxxix. 2, 23, 24. Jer. xvii. 9, 10. and so is Christ, who is the omniscient God, and is the Jehovah all along spoken to and of in this psalm; he knows the thoughts of men, and is a critical discernor of them, Matt. ix. 3, 4. Heb. iv. 12. *that they are vanity:* either that their thoughts are vanity; the object of them is vanity, the riches and honours of this world, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and sinful lusts and pleasures, which are vain and useless, yea, pernicious and hurtful: and so they are in their issue and event; they come to nothing, they are without effect; the Lord disappoints men's devices, and frustrates their designs; they think of this and the other, form schemes, but cannot execute them: or else the sense is, that they themselves are vanity, as man in his best estate is; even every man, whether of high or low degree; see Psal. cxxxix. 5, 6. and lxii. 9. The Syriac version is, *for they are a vapour;* with which compare James iv. 14. Thales, an Heathen philosopher^e, being asked whether men's deeds could be hid from God, answered, no, nor their thoughts.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, &c.*] Much more happy now, and hereafter, than the proud insulting persecutor of him; he is chastened of the Lord, that he might not be condemned with the world; he is chastened not in wrath, but in love; not with the chastisement of a cruel one, nor indeed of a magistrate nor a master; but of a tender-hearted father, who always does it for his profit and advantage, and therefore is he *blessed*, or happy; for these chastenings are tokens of God's love, evidences of sonship, or of a man's being an adopted child of God; are for, and do work for good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and even in every sense; and, besides, the Lord grants his presence in them, supports under them, and teaches by them, as follows: *and teacheth him out of thy law; or doctrine*^f; and may be understood of the doctrine of the Gospel, as well as of the law; the Lord teaches by his spirit, his word, and providences; and, even by afflictive ones, he teaches men their sins and transgressions, and shews them wherein they have exceeded; brings them to a sense and confession of them, repentance and reformation; he teaches them hereby

^c Plauti Capteivi, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 63.

^d מוסר an erudiens gentes, Coecius.

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^e Apud Laert. Vit. ejus, Valer. Maxim. l. 7. c. 2. extern. 8.

^f מורה מתורתך ex lege, sc. doctrina veri tui, Michaelis.

their duty, both to himself and all men, which they have neglected, and departed from; he teaches many lessons of faith, patience, humility, self-denial, and submission to his will in the school of affliction; here they learn much of God, of his power and faithfulness, truth, goodness, grace, and love, and of evangelical doctrines; of his everlasting love, of eternal election, the covenant of grace, the righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him; which the Lord makes known unto them at such seasons, and on which account they are pronounced blessed, or happy persons.

Ver. 13. *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, &c.*] Or *evil*; or *in the evil days*, as the Arabic version; for through teaching men under afflictions, they become tranquil and quiet in them; they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them; such men patiently bear them; and quietly submit to the will of God in them, and are still, and know that he is God, that does all things well and wisely: moreover, the Lord does not always chasten his people; when he has taught them by his rod, and the affliction has answered its end, he gives them rest or intermission from those days of affliction: God does not always suffer the rod of the wicked, or persecution, to be upon the lot of the righteous; he gives his churches rest at times: in all ages there have been some intervals of respite; and after the slaying of the witnesses, and their rising, there will be no more of those days of adversity; but the *times of refreshing*, or rest, will come, which will make up the spiritual reign of Christ; and there remains a *rest*, or *sabbatism*, for the people of God, which will last a thousand years; and, after that, an eternal rest in heaven, which the light afflictions of the saints here are working, and are the means of making them meet for it: *until the pit be digged for the wicked*: hell, the pit of destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: this pit and lake is dug and prepared by the sovereign will and unchangeable purpose and decree of God, for all wicked and Christless sinners; particularly for the beast and false prophet, and his followers, who shall be cast into it, and be tormented in it day and night, and have no rest; whilst the saints they here persecuted will be in the greatest repose, and utmost felicity; and when it will appear who are the blessed and happy persons, and who not.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord will not cast off his people, &c.*] The people whom he has foreknown, his chosen people, whether among Jews or Gentiles, Rom. xi. 1, 2. his covenant-people, whom he has given to Christ, and who are redeemed by his blood, and called by his spirit and grace: these, though he may not arise immediately for their help; though he may withdraw his presence from them for a time, may afflict them, and suffer them to be afflicted by others, ver. 5. he will not cast them off, at least for ever, so as to be removed out of his sight, or off of his heart, or from his covenant, or out of the hands of his son, or from being a part of his family, or so as to perish eternally; they are a people near and dear unto him; he takes pleasure in them, and will not eternally reject them;

whoever casts them off, he will not: *neither will he forsake his inheritance*; which he has chosen, and values and esteems as a goodly one; he will not give up his title to it, nor drop his claim upon it, nor relinquish his hold and use of it; he will not forsake his people for this reason, because they are his inheritance, as well as because he has promised that he will not: he may seem to forsake them, and they may think they are forsaken by him; but he will not forsake neither their persons in youth nor in old age, nor his work upon their hearts: the church, in the wilderness, and under the persecution of antichrist, might seem to be cast off and forsaken; yet is not, being nourished there for a time and times, and half a time, Rev. xii. 14. the note of Arama is, "at the coming of the Messiah all this good shall be."

Ver. 15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness, &c.*] Which may be understood either of the judgment and righteousness of God, which seemed to be parted, and stand at a distance from each other; his conduct and government of the world from his justice; the righteous being persecuted and afflicted, and wicked men suffered to prosper; which sometimes makes it difficult to reconcile the judgment of God, or his government of the world, to his justice; see Jer. xii. 1. but as this has been made manifest in the destruction of the Jews, and in the downfall of Rome Pagan, the first persecutors of the Christians; so it will be seen in Rome Papal, when the judgments of God will be manifest, and appear to be just and true; and these two, judgment and justice, will openly come together, in the sight of all; as they also will at the last judgment; see Rev. xv. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7. or else of the righteousness of men, which, in times of general corruption, seems to be fled from them, and to stand at a distance, from their conduct and behaviour; as in the old world before the flood, and in the times Isaiah beautifully describes, Isa. lix. 14, 15. and in the times of Christ and his apostles; and in the persecuting times of Rome Pagan and Papal; and as it will be at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but upon the rising of them, which will not be long after, there will be a great pouring down of the spirit, and a general reformation will follow throughout the world; all the Lord's people will be righteous, not only nominally, but really; every pot in Jerusalem shall be holy; and holiness shall be so common as that it is said it shall be upon the bells of the horses; and in the new heavens and new earth will dwell none but righteous persons; and then judgment and righteousness will come together indeed: *and all the upright in heart shall follow it*: either judgment, as Jarchi; or righteousness, as Kimchi; not the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of faith; or rather practical righteousness, works of righteousness, which both the grace wrought in them, and the doctrine of grace received by them, will teach, influence, and engage to pursue after with eagerness: or else the meaning is, that such who are *upright in heart*; who have new hearts and right spirits formed in them; who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter, in them; whose hearts, words, and actions, agree; who are sincere

souls, Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile; these will approve and applaud the righteous judgments of God upon antichrist; they shall follow the justice of God with their commendations and praises; see Rev. xv. 3, 4. and xvi. 6, 7. and xix. 1, 2. The words may be rendered, *and all the upright in heart shall be after him**, the Lord; they shall follow him whithersoever he goes, as sheep follow the shepherd, servants their masters, and soldiers their general; they shall follow him in his own ways, observe his commands, and obey his orders; see the description of such that will be with Christ, and follow him, before and at the time of antichrist's ruin, Rev. xiv. 4. and xvii. 14. and xix. 14. The Targum is, "after him shall be redeemed "all the upright in heart."

Ver. 16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? &c.*] These are the words of the psalmist, personating the church of God, under several persecutions from the antichristian party; called *evil-doers*, because of their thefts, murders, idolatries, sorceries, and all manner of wickedness committed by them, Rev. ix. 21. intimating, that she had looked all around her, and could not observe any that she could hope for assistance from, to fight her battles for her with the enemy, and deliver her out of his hands: the Targum is, "who will rise up for me, to make war with the evil-doers?" what the church here seems to say in a despairing way, the followers of antichrist say in a triumphant and insulting manner; *who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* Rev. xiii. 4. or *who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* to contend or strive with them, as the Targum; suggesting, that she had no friends to appear for her, that had either courage or strength to engage in such a warfare; her case was like that of the oppressed, Solomon speaks of, Eccl. iv. 1. or the Apostle Paul's, when none stood with him; but all forsook him, excepting the Lord, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. and so here the church had none to rise up, and stand by her, but the Lord; Michael, the great Prince that stands for the children and people of God, and who is a match for all the enemies of his church; and he will rise and stand up for them, and fight their battles, and overcome the beast and false prophet, with the kings of the earth, Dan. xii. 1. Rev. xvii. 14. and xix. 11—20.

Ver. 17. *Unless the Lord had been my help, &c.*] Against her enemies, which were so many and mighty, and her friends so few and feeble, and having no heart to defend her cause; especially this will be the case at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but the Lord will appear, and help her; the spirit of life, from him, shall enter into them, and cause them to live again, and to ascend up to heaven; and shall destroy great numbers of their enemies, and the rest shall be affrighted, and give glory to God, Rev. xi. 11, 12, 13. *my soul had almost dwelt in silence; or within a little, or must quickly**; not only have been, but must have dwelt, continued in silence, in the grave; see Psal. cxv. 17. his case being desperate, like that of the apostles, when they had the sentence of death within themselves, 2 Cor. i. 10. this is to be understood not

of the soul precisely, and abstractly considered, which dies not, nor is it silent after death; but of the whole person, being a part for the whole; and of the person, with respect to the mortal part, the body, which only dies, and whilst in a state of separation, or in the grave, is silent, and ceases from all operations of life: perhaps this may have some respect to the silencing of the witnesses, which is a principal thing meant by the slaying of them; a stop put to their ministrations, partly by the edicts of their enemies, and partly by the discouragement of their friends, their shiness, and negligence of them; and which silence will be almost total, if not altogether; though it will last but for a short time; they shall not dwell or continue in silence, but will open their mouths again; signified by the angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, Rev. xiv. 6.

Ver. 18. *When I said, my foot slippeth, &c.*] There is no ground for me to stand upon; all is over with me; there's no hope nor help for me; I am just falling into ruin and destruction: such will be the desperate case of the church, at the time before referred to: *thy mercy, O Lord, held me up*; the extremity of his people is the Lord's opportunity; then is his set time to arise, and have mercy on them; then mercy steps in, lays a solid ground and foundation for hope, and holds up in its arms a sinking people, and revives a dying cause.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, &c.*] The word for *thoughts* is used of branches of trees, thick and entwined, and so denotes perplexed and distressing thoughts; such as good men sometimes have concerning God; his awful and tremendous majesty; the perfections of his nature, particularly his power, purity, and holiness; concerning their relation to him, his presence with them, and good will towards them, which, because of their sins, they are ready to doubt of: thoughts concerning sin; that there are no sins like theirs, attended with such aggravated circumstances; that they are such as will not be forgiven; or they fear their corruptions will be too many for them, and they shall perish by them; or that they shall so fall as to bring dishonour on the ways of God; and sometimes that they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost: thoughts concerning the law of God, their sins are a violation of, of the holiness and spirituality of it; by comparing themselves with which, they find they are very deficient, and very carnal; and ready to fear that all the curses of it belong to them, and the condemnation of it will light upon them: thoughts concerning Christ, the Saviour; that he is the Saviour of others, but not of them; that he is able to save, but they cannot think he is willing to save such vile sinners as they are: thoughts concerning the work of the spirit of God upon them; calling it in question, fearing it was never begun, because of the power and prevalence of sin and corruption in them: thoughts concerning their present and future state; how it is with them now, and how it will be with them hereafter; how they shall pass through the troubles and difficulties of this world, and pass over Jordan's river, or get through

* מורתי post ipsum, Musculus, Gejerus.

* מורתי quasi parum, Montanus, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

the valley of the shadow of death; and how they shall appear before the judgment-seat of God; and how things will be with them to all eternity: these are some of the perplexing and distressing thoughts, a multitude of which rise up at times in the minds of God's people, who yet are favoured with the same gracious experience the psalmist was, expressed as follows: *thy comforts delight my soul*; such as flow from the love of God, shed abroad in the heart; from the presence of God enjoyed; from the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel; from Christ, and the things of Christ, shewn, brought home, and applied by the Spirit; his person, offices, fulness, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice; all which are a fund of divine consolation to a distressed mind: these are the consolations of God, of which he is the provider, author, and giver, and therefore called *the God of all comfort*; they come from Christ, the *consolation of Israel*, and by the Spirit the Comforter, who sheds abroad the love of God in the heart; reveals Christ, and the things of Christ; opens and applies the promises; wherefore these comforts are called the *comforts of the Holy Ghost*; and they are usually enjoyed by means of the word and ordinances, which are *breasts of consolation*; and these are not small, but strong, and even everlasting, and which *delight the soul*; worldly comforts may delight the animal part, and please the senses, but not delight the soul, especially a wounded spirit, a distressed mind; but these will satiate the weary soul, and replenish the sorrowful soul with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory: the psalmist may here personate the church in the latter day, when in the midst of her troubles, and having many distressing thoughts concerning the issue of things; the comforts of God, from his promises, will delight her; ver. 14, 15. that he will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance; but judgment shall return to righteousness; that he will keep her in the hour of temptation, and avenge the blood of her slain.

Ver. 20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, &c.*] Or *be joined with thee*, be partner with thee^f, as antichrist affects to be; who may well be called *the throne of iniquity*, since the dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, gave him his power, seat, or throne, and great authority: his coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; he sits and enacts, practises and countenances, all manner of iniquity; he sits in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he was God; he claims all power in heaven and in earth; takes upon him to dispense with the laws of God and men, and makes new laws, and binds the consciences of men with them; presumes to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and to open the gates of heaven to whom he pleases; see Rev. xiii. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 4, 9, 10. but can these things

be allowed of? shall not such pride and arrogance, and horrible iniquity, be punished with the utmost severity? doubtless it will: *which frameth mischief by a law*^g does all manner of mischief to men, without control, as if he had a law for doing it; or makes a law that all men shall worship him, or receive his mark in their right hand, or forehead; or else shall not buy or sell, yea, be killed; see Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17. or *against law*^h; against the laws of God and man; for antichrist is ο ανωμοσ, *the lawless one*, spoken of in 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Ver. 21. *They gather themselves together, &c.*] As *in troops*^b, as the word signifies; in great armies; so the antichristian kings and states will, at the instigation of Popish emissaries; see Rev. xvi. 17. and xix. 19. *against the soul of the righteous; or the life of them*; in order to take away their lives; to cut them off, root and branch, and destroy at once the whole interest of Christ; for it will be to make war with him, and them his followers, who are the righteous here meant, made so by his righteousness, that they will be gathered together in such great numbers: *and condemn the innocent blood*; condemn innocent persons to death, shed their blood, and drink it, and to such a degree as to be drunk with it; for in them will be found the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that are slain on earth, Rev. xvii. 6. and xviii. 24.

Ver. 22. *But the Lord is my defence, &c.*] The defence of his church and people, of all the righteous, against those great armies of their enemies that gather together against them: the Targum, in the king's Bible, is, "the Word of the Lord shall be my weapon:" *and my God is the rock of my refuge*; to whom recourse is had for shelter from the enemy, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: both characters, rock and refuge, agree with Christ, the essential Word of the Lord.

Ver. 23. *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, &c.*] The just punishment of it; or cause the mischief they designed to others to fall upon themselves; or make retaliation to them; that whereas they had drank the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, blood should be given them to drink; or their own blood should be shed, Rev. xvi. 6. the Jewsⁱ say, that the Levites stood on their desks, and recited this passage, both at the precise time of the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and of the second by the Romans: *and shall cut them off in their own wickedness*; in the midst of it, whilst slaying the witnesses, and triumphing over them, Rev. xviii. 7, 8. yea, *the Lord our God shall cut them off*: the God of Jacob, who, they said, did not see nor regard what they did, ver. 7. see Rev. xix. 15—21. and so this latter part of the psalm fulfils the former, and proves that God is a God of vengeance, to whom it belongs; and he will exercise it in due time.

^f הַיְסוּבִירִי אֵין סוֹצִיבִירִי תִיב? Cocceius, Gejerus; num consociabitur? Michaelis.

^g פְּרַטֵּר סְטָטוּטוּם, Piscator, Cocceius; contra statutum, Gejerus; contra legem tuam, Arab.

^b יְנַדְרִי turmatim conveniunt, Vatablus, Piscator.

ⁱ Seder Olam Rabba, c. 30. p. 92.

P S A L M X C V.

THIS psalm, though without a title, was written by David, as appears from Heb. iv. 7. and to him the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions ascribe it. It belongs to the times of the Messiah, as Kimchi observes; the apostle applies it to the Jews of his time, and bespeaks them in the language of it, Heb. iii. 7—11. and in which time Israelites, believers in Christ, are called upon to serve and worship him, in consideration of his greatness in himself, and his goodness to them. Theodoret thinks that David spoke prophetically of King Josiah and his times; and wrote it in the person of him, and the priests of God.

Ver. 1. *O come, let us sing unto the Lord, &c.*] To Jehovah the Messiah, the Lord our righteousness; setting forth, in songs of praise, the glory of his person, the riches of his grace, and our thankfulness to him for spiritual mercies by him: Christ is to be the subject of our spiritual songs, and is the person to whose honour and glory they should be directed: in the New Testament we are instructed to sing unto the Lord, the Lord Christ, Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. and this is what Pliny* tells Trajan, the Roman emperor, the Christians in his time did; they sung an hymn to Christ, as to a God: *let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation*; to Christ, the Rock, 1 Cor. x. 4. a Rock, for height, being higher than the saints, than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves; for strength, being the mighty God, and mighty Saviour; for shelter, being the saints' security from avenging justice and wrath to come: a Rock, on which the church and all believers are built, and which endures for ever; *the Rock of salvation*, being the author of spiritual and eternal salvation, and the strength and security of it; not only is he strong to do it, but, being done by him, it is safe in him; wherefore shouts of joy and songs of praise are due unto him. This shews that vocal singing is meant, singing with an harmonious and musical voice; and that social singing, or singing in concert together, is intended. The Septuagint renders it, *to God our Saviour*, Luke i. 47. Jud. 25.

Ver. 2. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, &c.*] Come with the sacrifice of praise, there being no other in the days of the Messiah, all ceremonial sacrifices being put an end to when his sacrifice was offered up; so Arama observes, that the offering of thanksgiving shall remain, or be left in the days of the Messiah; come with this to Christ as a priest, to offer it by him to God his Father, to whom it is acceptable through him, and with this to himself for the great salvation he has wrought out: *to come before his presence, or face*^b, supposes his being come in the flesh, his being God manifest in it, and also as clear and free from the veil of types and shadows; these all

being gone now he is come, and to be beheld with open face; and likewise his having done his work as a Saviour, and now upon his throne as a King; into whose presence-chamber saints are admitted to make their acknowledgments to him, and profess their allegiance and subjection to him, and their gratitude for favours received. It signifies an attendance on him in his house and ordinances, where he shews his face, and grants his presence; and intends not merely bodily exercise, or a presentation of our bodies only to him, but a drawing nigh to him with true hearts, and serving him in a spiritual manner: *and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms*; with a melodious voice, and grace in the heart, with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; this belonging to Gospel times shews that singing of psalms vocally in a musical way is an ordinance of Christ, to be performed to him under the Gospel dispensation, Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

Ver. 3. *For the Lord is a great God, &c.*] Christ is truly and properly God, wherefore divine service is to be performed unto him; particularly singing psalms, setting forth therein his greatness and glory: and he is a great one; great in power, wisdom, justice, truth, mercy, and grace; greatness is to be ascribed unto him, and worship given him, because of his greatness, Tit. ii. 13. *and a great King over all gods*; he is King of the whole world; his kingdom ruleth over all; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; he is King of saints, the government of the whole church is upon his shoulders, which he exercises in the most wise, powerful, and righteous manner imaginable; he is above all that are called gods, all the nominal and fictitious deities of the Heathens; above all civil magistrates, who are gods by office; and above the angels, who have this name, 1 Pet. iii. 22. Aben Ezra interprets it of angels.

Ver. 4. *In his hand are the deep places of the earth, &c.*] The *penetrals*^c of it; not only what are penetrated by men, the minerals that are in it; but what are of such deep recess as to be penetrated only by the Lord himself; these are in the hands and power of Christ, which he can search into, discover, and dispose of; these are the foundations of the earth, which cannot be searched out beneath by men, Jer. xxxi. 37. *the strength of the hills is his also*; or, *the wearinesses*^d of them, the tops^e of them, which make a man weary to go up unto, they are so high; the Targum is, "the strengths of the height of the hills;" which takes in both ideas, both the height and strength of them. The hills, that are both high and strong, are set fast by his power, and are at his command; and bow and tremble before him, whom men ought to worship.

Ver. 5. *The sea is his, and he made it, &c.*] He made it, and therefore it is, and all creatures in it; he sets bounds to it, and its waves, and restrains the

* Ep. l. 10. ep. 97.

^b פניו faciem ejus, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; Tigurine version, &c.

^c מחקרי penetrals terre, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^d חוסות lassitudines, Gejerus.

^e Cœcimina, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus.

raging of it at his pleasure, Matt. viii. 26, 27. and his hands formed the dry land; the whole world, all besides the sea, the vast continent; he is the Maker of it, and all creatures in it; without him was nothing made that is made; and, being the Creator of all things, is the proper object of worship, John i. 2, 3. Rom. i. 25. as follows.

Ver. 6. *O come, let us worship and bow down, &c.*] Before him who is the Rock of our salvation, the great God and great King, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the proper object of all religious worship and adoration: Christ is to be worshipped with every part of external worship under the New-Testament dispensation; psalms and songs of praise are to be sung unto him; prayer is to be made unto him; the Gospel is to be preached, and ordinances to be administered, in his name; and likewise with all internal worship, in the exercise of every grace on him, as faith, hope, and love: see Psal. xiv. 11. *let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*; both in a natural and spiritual sense: Christ is the Maker of us as creatures, of our souls and bodies; we have our natural being from him, and are supported in it by him; and he is the Maker of us as new creatures; we are his workmanship, created in him, and by him; and therefore he should be worshipped by us, Ephes. ii. 10. Psal. c. 3, 4. Kimchi distinguishes these several gestures, expressed by the different words here used; the first, we render *worship*, signifies, according to him, the prostration of the whole body on the ground, with the hands and legs stretched out; the second, a bowing of the head, with part of the body; and the third, a bending of the knees on the ground; but though each of these postures and gestures have been, and may be, used in religious worship, yet they seem not so much to design them themselves, and the particular use of them, as worship itself, which is in general intended by them.

Ver. 7. *For he is our God, &c.*] God over all, blessed for ever, truly and properly God, and therefore to be worshipped: *our God*; in whom we have interest, who became our head and surety in covenant; took upon him our nature, is our *Immanuel*, God with us, which increases the obligation to worship him; these are the words of New-Testament saints: *and we are the people of his pasture*; for whom he has provided a good pasture; whom he leads into it, and feeds in it, even by the ministry of the word and ordinances: *and the sheep of his hand*; made and fashioned by his hand, both in a natural and spiritual sense; led and guided by his hand, as a flock by the hand of the shepherd; are in his hand, being put there for safety by his father; and upheld by it, and preserved in it, and from whence none can pluck them; see Deut. xxxiii. 3. John x. 28, 29. receiving such favours from him, he ought to be worshipped by them. The Heathens had a deity they called Pan, whom they make to be a keeper of sheep^e; and some Christian writers have thought that Christ the chief Shepherd is meant; since, when the Heathen oracles ceased, after the coming and death of Christ, a voice is^f said to be heard at a certain place, *the great Pan is dead: to-day, if ye will*

hear his voice; the voice of the Shepherd, the voice of God, says Aben Ezra, his Word, as the Targum; the voice of the Messiah, both his preceptive voice, his commands and ordinances, which ought to be hearkened to and obeyed; and the voice of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which is to be heard not only externally, but internally: when it is heard as to be understood, to be approved of and believed, and to be distinguished; so as to have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it; to feel the power and efficacy of it, and practically attend to it; it is an evidence of being the sheep of Christ; see John x. 4, 5, 27. where the sheep are said to know the voice of the shepherd, and not that of a stranger; of which Polybius^g gives a remarkable instance in the goats of the island of Cyron, who will fly from strangers, but, as soon as the keeper sounds his trumpet, they will run to him: though the words may be connected with what follows, as they are in Heb. iii. 7, 8. where they are said to be the words of the Holy Ghost, and are applied to Gospel times, and are interpreted of the voice of the Son of God in his house; for though it may refer to some certain day in David's time, as the seventh-day sabbath, in which the voice of God might be heard, the word of God read and explained; and in Gospel times, as the Lord's day, in which Christ speaks by his ministers; and to the whole time of a man's life, which is called *while it is to-day*, Heb. iii. 13. yet it chiefly respects the whole day of the Gospel, the whole Gospel dispensation, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Ver. 8. *Harden not your hearts, &c.*] Against Christ, against his Gospel, against all the light and evidence of it. There is a natural hardness of the heart, owing to the corruption of nature; and an habitual hardness, acquired by a constant continuance and long custom in sinning; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives men up unto. There is a hardness of heart, which sometimes attends God's own people, through the deceitfulness of sin gaining upon them; of which, when sensible, they complain, and do well to guard against. Respect seems to be had here to the hardness of heart in the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, which the Holy Ghost foresaw, and here exhorts from; who, notwithstanding the clear evidence of Jesus being the Messiah, from prophecy, from miracles, from doctrines, from the gifts of the Spirit, &c. yet hardened their hearts against him, rebelled against light, and would not receive, but reject him: *as in the provocation*; or *as at Meribah*^h; a place so called from the contention and striving of the people of Israel with the Lord and his servants; and when they provoked not only the meek man Moses to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but also the Lord himself by their murmurings, Exod. xvii. 7. Numb. xx. 13. though this may respect their provocations in general in the wilderness; for they often provoked him by their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry; see Deut. ix. 8, 22, 23. *and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness*; or *as in the day of Massah*ⁱ; the time when they tempted him at Massah, so called from their tempting him by

^e Pan orium custos—Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 17. Pana deum pecoris veteres coluisse feruntur, Ovid. Fasti, l. 2.

^f Plutarch. de orac. defect. p. 419.

^g Hist. l. 12. in principio.

^h כְּמֵרִיבָה sicut Meribah, Montanus; sicut in Meriba, Musculus, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Ainsworth.

ⁱ מַסָּה sicut die Massah, Montanus, Musculus, Tigurine version; secundum diem Massah, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Ainsworth.

distrusting his power and presence among them, by disobeying his commands, and limiting the holy One of Israel to time and means of deliverance; see Exod. xvii. 7. and this being in the wilderness was an aggravation of their sin; they being just brought out of Egypt, and having had such a wonderful appearance of God for them, there and at the Red sea; and besides being in a place where their whole dependence must be upon God, where they could have nothing but what they had from him immediately, it was egregious folly as well as wickedness to provoke and tempt him.

Ver. 9. *When your fathers tempted me, &c.*] Or, *where*¹; that is, in the wilderness, particularly at Meribah and Massah; it was Christ they tempted, as appears from 1 Cor. x. 9. *proved me*; had proof of his power, goodness, and mercy, in providing for them, and in the preservation of them: or *tried*^k him, his patience, long-suffering, and forbearance, by their repeated provocations of him: *and saw my work*; his work of judgment upon their enemies the Egyptians, by inflicting plagues upon them, and by the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea; and his work of goodness to them, in bringing them out of bondage, leading them through the Red sea safely, raining manna about their tents, and giving them water out of the rock; or particularly his work in consuming them in the wilderness, as he swore he would, and which they saw with their eyes, and was near forty years a doing. The Syriac version joins the *forty years* at the beginning of the next verse to this; the phrase standing in such a situation as to be connected with both, and is true of each; so the apostle uses it both ways, Heb. iii. 9, 17.

Ver. 10. *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, &c.*] The generation of the wilderness, as the Jews commonly call them; and which was a stubborn and a rebellious one, whose heart and spirit were not right with God, Psal. lxxviii. 8. wherefore, speaking after the manner of mer, God was grieved with them, as he was with the old world, Gen. vi. 6. or he was *weary* of them, and *loathed* them, as the word^l sometimes signifies; wherefore, after the affair of the spies, to which Aben Ezra thinks this had reference, they did not hear from the mouth of the Lord, there was no prophecy sent them by the hand of Moses, as the same writer observes; nor any history or account

of them, from that time till they came to the borders of Canaan; so greatly was their conduct and behaviour resented: and it was much such a term of time that was between the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist and of Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem; during which time the Jews tempted Christ, tried his patience, saw his works, and grieved his spirit, which brought at last ruin upon them: *and said, it is a people that do err in their heart*; he was not only inwardly grieved with them, but, speaking after the same human manner, he gave his grief vent, he spoke and gave this just character of them. The apostle adds *always*, Heb. iii. 10. and so does the Arabic version here, and which is implied in the words *do err*; they not only had erred, but they continued to do so; and their errors were not merely through weakness, ignorance, and mistake, but were voluntary, and with their whole hearts; they sprung from their hearts, which were desperately wicked; they erred willingly and wilfully; and this the Lord, the searcher of hearts, knew and took notice of: *and they have not known my ways*; they had his law, his statutes, and his judgments, and so must know the ways he prescribed them to walk in; but they did not practically observe them: or his ways of providence; which they did not take that notice of as they ought to have done; they did not consider them as they should, nor improve them in the manner as became them; they were not thankful for their mercies as they ought; nor did the goodness of God lead them to repentance.

Ver. 11. *Unto whom I swear in my wrath, &c.*] Being angry with them, he swore for the confirmation of what he said; the form of the oath was, *as truly as I live*; he swore by himself, for he could swear by no greater; see Numb. xiv. 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 35. *that they should not enter into my rest*; the land of Canaan, or Israel, as Kimchi; which the Lord provided, promised, and gave to the Israelites, as their rest; the land of Israel and Jerusalem, as Jarchi; or the house of the sanctuary, the temple, as the Targum; which Jehovah chose for his rest, and took it up in it, and where he promised the Messiah, the Prince of peace, who gives to his people spiritual and eternal rest. Canaan was typical of the rest which remains for the people of God; the use that believing Jews, and all Christians under the Gospel dispensation, are to make of this, see in Heb. iii. 18, 19. and iv. 1, 9, 10, 11.

P S A L M XCVI.

THIS psalm was written by David, as appears from 1 Chron. xvi. 7, 23. to whom it is ascribed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This and part of Psal. cv. were first composed and sung at the bringing of the ark from the house of Obededom to the city of David; and here it is detached from that with a new introduction to it, and applied to the times and kingdom of the Messiah, and with great

propriety, since the ark was an eminent type of him. The inscription in the Syriac version is, "a Psalm of David, a Prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, "and of the calling of the Gentiles that believe in "him;" and very rightly, since express mention is made of them in it, and of the publication of the Gospel among them; and clear reference is had to Christ, who is the Jehovah all along spoken of. Jarchi well

¹ אֲשֶׁר quo, Pagninus, Montanus; ubi, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

^k אֲנִי explorarunt me, Tigurine version, Piscator, Gejerus.

^l אֲנִי fastidio habui, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, so Cocceius, Michaelis.

observes, that wherever a *new song* is mentioned, it is to be understood of future time, or the times of the Messiah; and the end of the psalm shews it, *he cometh to judge, &c.*

Ver. 1. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, &c.*] A famous excellent one, suited to Gospel times, on account of the new benefit and blessing of redemption and salvation lately obtained by the Messiah; which should be sung to him, who is the Lord or Jehovah here designed, by all the redeemed ones, Rev. v. 9. see the note in Psal. xxxiii. 3. the Targum adds, "sing, ye angels on high:" *sing unto the Lord all the earth*; not the whole land of Israel only, as Aben Ezra interprets it; though here the Saviour first appeared, taught his doctrines, wrought his miracles, suffered, and died for the salvation of his people; here the angels first begun the new song; and here those that believed in him first expressed that spiritual joy which afterwards spread through the whole world, and who are here called upon to sing; namely, all those that are redeemed from among men, throughout all the earth: believing Gentiles are here intended: the Targum is, "sing before the Lord, all ye righteous of the earth."

Ver. 2. *Sing unto the Lord, &c.*] Which is repeated to shew the vehemency of the speaker, and the importance of the work exhorted to: this being the third time that the word Lord or Jehovah is mentioned, have led some to think of the trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, the one only Jehovah, to whom the new song of salvation is to be sung, because of their joyful concern in it; the Father has contrived it, the Son has effected it, and the Spirit applies it: *bless his name*; speak well of him, whose name is excellent and glorious, sweet and precious; even every name of his, Jesus, Immanuel, &c. proclaim him the ever-blessed God, as he is, as prevented with the blessings of goodness, and made most blessed for ever; as Mediator, ascribe all spiritual blessings to him, and bless him for them, and give him the glory and honour of them: *shew forth his salvation from day to day*; the salvation of his people he undertook, and has completed; publish that as a piece of good news, as glad tidings; so the word ^a used signifies; even evangelizing, or preaching the Gospel; for this is the Gospel, the sum and substance of it, salvation by Jesus Christ: this may be considered as directed to ministers of the Gospel, whose work it is, more peculiarly, to shew forth the salvation of Christ; to point him out as a Saviour to sensible sinners; to declare that this salvation is done, is wrought out for sinners, is full and complete; is to be had freely, and to be had now; and this is to be done *from day to day*, one Lord's day after another, frequently and constantly, when opportunity serves.

Ver. 3. *Declare his glory among the Heathen, &c.*] What a glorious Person the Messiah is; the brightness of his father's glory; having all the perfections of deity in him; how the glory of God appears in him, and in all that he has done; and especially in the work of redemption, in which the glory of divine wisdom, power, justice, truth, and faithfulness, love, grace, and

mercy, is richly displayed; say what glory he is advanced unto, having done his work, being highly exalted, set at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour; and what a fulness of grace there is in him, for the supply of his people; and what a glory is on him, which they shall behold to all eternity: *his wonders among all people*; what a wonderful person he is, God manifest in the flesh; what wonderful love he has shewn in his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; what amazing miracles he wrought, and what a wonderful work he performed; the work of our redemption, the wonder of men and angels; declare his wonderful resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people; the wonderful effusion of his spirit, and the conquests of his grace, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as also what wonders will be wrought by him when he appears a second time; how the dead will be raised, and all will be judged.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord is great, &c.*] In the perfections of his nature; in the works of his hands, of creation, providence, and redemption; and in the several offices he bears and executes: *and greatly to be praised*; because of his greatness and glory; see the note on Psal. xlviii. 1. *he is to be feared above all gods*; the angels by whom he is worshipped; civil magistrates, among whom he presides, and judges; and all the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, who are not to be named with him, and to whom no fear, reverence, and worship, are due.

Ver. 5. *For all the gods of the nations are idols, &c.*] Or are *nothings*^o, nonentities; such as have not, and never had, any being, at least many of them, but in the fancies of men; and all of them such as have no divinity in them; *an idol is nothing in the world*, 1 Cor. viii. 4. *but the Lord made the heavens*; and all the hosts of them, the sun, moon, and stars; these are the curious workmanship of his fingers, and which declare his glory, and shew him to be truly and properly God, who is to be feared and worshipped; see Heb. i. 10. Jer. x. 11, 12.

Ver. 6. *Honour and majesty are before him, &c.*] He being set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and having honour and majesty laid upon him; being arrayed in robes of majesty, crowned with glory and honour, sitting on the same throne of glory with his father, and having a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and all the forms and ensigns of royalty and majesty about him; rays of light and glory darting from him; as well as those glorious and bright forms before him, the holy angels continually praising him; which is a much more noble sense than that of Kimchi's, who interprets them of the stars: *strength and beauty are in his sanctuary*; the Targum is, "the house of his sanctuary," the temple; the Gospel church, of which the temple or sanctuary was a figure: the *strength* of Christ is seen here, in the conversion of sinners by his Gospel, which is the rod of his strength, the power of God unto salvation, when it comes not in word only; and by which

^a *בשרו* evangelizate, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^o *אליהם* nihil, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis.

he also strengthens his people to the more vigorous exercise of grace and discharge of duty; here they go from strength to strength: the *beauty* of Christ is seen here; the King is held in the galleries of Gospel ordinances, and is beheld in his beauty; his people appear here in the beauties of holiness, and as a perfection of beauty, through the righteousness of Christ upon them; and as they observe the order of the Gospel, and do all things decently, and with a good decorum: or else, as Kimchi interprets it, heaven may be meant by the sanctuary, of which the holy place, made with hands, was a figure; here Christ reigns, girded with strength; here he rules as the Lord God omnipotent, having all power in heaven, and in earth, and doing according to his will in both; and from hence he shews himself strong on the behalf of his people; here he, who is beauty itself, fairer than the children of men, dwells; here those beauteous forms of light and glory, the holy angels, are; and here the spirits of just men made perfect, who are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, have their abode: in 1 Chron. xvi. 27. it is, *strength and gladness are in his place*: among his people and worshippers there.

Ver. 7. *Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, &c.*] Or *families*^p: the Targum is, "give unto the Lord a song, ye families of the people;" by whom are meant not the tribes and families of the people of Israel, but the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who were to be blessed in the seed of Abraham, the family of Egypt, and others; see Amos iii. 2. Zech. xiv. 17, 18. even such as were chosen of them, taken out from among them for a people to his name; who were redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and were taken, one of a city, and two of a family, and brought to Zion: *give unto the Lord glory and strength*; see the note on Psal. xxix. 1.

Ver. 8. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, &c.*] Or *the glory of his name*^q; whose name is glorious and excellent, because of his nature and perfections, because of the works done by him, and because of his benefits and blessings bestowed on his creatures; wherefore it is his due, and their duty, to give him glory; see the notes on Psal. xxix. 2. and lxvi. 2. the word *Jehovah*, or *Lord*, being thrice mentioned in this and the preceding verse, in the ascription of glory, may lead our thoughts to the trinity of Persons, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom glory is to be equally given: *bring an offering, and come into his courts*; not ceremonial sacrifices, which are abolished under the Gospel dispensation, to which times this psalm belongs; but either the saints themselves, their bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, and especially the sacrifices of a broken heart, with as much of their substance as is necessary for the relief of the poor, the support of the ministry, and the carrying on of the cause and interest of the Redeemer: the allusion is to the law that enjoined the Israelites not to appear empty before the Lord; but every one to bring his gift according to his ability, Deut. xvi. 16, 17. or else their sacrifices of prayer and praise, which

are the spiritual sacrifices of the Gospel dispensation, and are to be offered by the saints, as priests, to God through Christ; or rather the sacrifice of Christ himself, which is of a sweet-smelling savour to God, makes way for access unto him, and acceptance with him; and which should be brought in the arms of faith, when they enter into the house of the Lord, and attend his word and ordinances; for, through this, their persons and services become acceptable to God, and the sins of their holy things are taken away.

Ver. 9. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, &c.*] See the note on Psal. xxix. 2. in this and the three preceding verses there is a manifest allusion to the form of addresses made to kings in the eastern nations; who being arrayed, and seated in a majestic manner, with all the marks of royal honour and dignity about them, whom their subjects approach with ascriptions of glory to them; bringing presents in their hands, and bowing down to the ground before them, as the word *r* for *worship* signifies; expressing the utmost awe and reverence of them, as in the next clause: *fear before him, all the earth*; or, as the Targum, "all the inhabitants of the earth;" it is the duty of all men to fear the Lord; but none can fear him aright without his grace, or an heart given them to fear him: this respects the latter day, when the Jews shall seek the Lord, and fear him and his goodness; when all nations shall fear and worship him; when, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great and tremendous among the Gentiles; see Hos. ii. 5. Rev. xv. 3, 4. Mal. i. 11.

Ver. 10. *Say among the Heathen, &c.*] This is a direction to such as were converted to Christ among the Jews, or were first called out from among the Gentiles; or to the ministers of the word, the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel more especially, who were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, that a people from among them might be taken for the Lord: that *the Lord reigneth*; whose Gospel should be received and obeyed, and his ordinances submitted to; who now reigns in heaven, at his father's right hand, and must reign till all enemies are put under his feet; he reigns in the hearts of his people by his spirit and grace; will reign more gloriously in his churches in the latter day, and with his saints for a thousand years in the New-Jerusalem church-state; and, after that, to all eternity in heaven: this is one part of the Gospel, or good tidings to be published among the Gentiles, Isa. lii. 7. *the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved*; not the natural material world; for that shall flee, and pass away, and be no more; it shall be burnt up, and all things in it; though that, and mankind on it, will be continued till all the elect of God are gathered in; Christ will uphold it, it being by his power that it shall not be moved till the work is effected: moreover, the church, in however fluctuating and unsettled a condition it may be now, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, yet ere long will be established on the top of the mountains, so that it shall not be moved;

^p משפחות *familie*, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^q כבוד שמו *gloriam nominis ejus*, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^r השתחוו *incurvate vos*, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; *prosternite vos*, Tigurine version.

and the Gospel dispensation is what will remain unto the end of time, and the Gospel is an everlasting one; the ordinances of it will continue to the second coming of Christ; and he will be with his churches to the end of the world; he is reigning King of Zion; has set up a government, of which, and the peace of it, there shall be no end: during the spiritual reign of Christ, the world will be in such stable tranquillity as to have no commotions in it, nor to be moved with wars, and rumours of wars; and when the Millennium shall take place, the new heavens and new earth shall never pass away: *he shall judge the people righteously*; he reigns over his people in a righteous manner, with a sceptre of righteousness, according to the rules of righteousness, by righteous laws and ordinances; he justifies his people with his own righteousness; he forms the new man in them, which is created in righteousness, and sets up a kingdom within them, which consists of righteousness; and he protects and defends them, and keeps them in safety from all their enemies.

Ver. 11. *Let the heavens rejoice, &c.*] At the coming and kingdom of Christ; at what is said and done in the Gentile world; even the hosts of heaven, as the Targum, the angels that dwell there, and never left their habitation and first estate: these rejoiced at the incarnation of Christ, at the first setting up and appearance of his kingdom in the world; and as they rejoice at the conversion of a single sinner, much more must they be supposed to do at the conversion of multitudes in the Gentile world, and at the increase of the Redeemer's interest there: or heavenly men, such as are born from above, partakers of the heavenly calling; these rejoice when the kingdom of Christ is enlarged, and his cause flourishes: or the holy apostles and prophets of Christ, and ministers of the word, full of heavenly gifts and grace, are meant; who express their joy when sinners are converted, and made subject to Christ, at any time; and will be called upon to do it, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and Babylon is fallen, Rev. xviii. 20. *and let the earth be glad*: the righteous of the earth, as the Targum; the excellent of the earth, who are glad, and exult at the coming and kingdom of Christ, in every sense; in the salvation which he has wrought out; in the righteousness which he has brought in; at the sight of him, the glory of his person, and riches of his grace; in the enjoyment of his presence; at hearing his Gospel, and the comfortable truths of it; and when it is made useful to the souls of others; and in a view and hope of the glory of God, and of being partakers of it to all eternity: *let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof*: the roaring of the waves is the voice of the sea, which sometimes speaks terror, and here expresses joy: its fulness is not literally the abundance of its waves, or the multitude of its fishes, as Kimchi; but the islands in it, the inhabitants of them; see Psal. xcvi. 1. and such as ours of Great Britain and Ireland, who have reason to rejoice and be

glad at the bringing of the Gospel among us, the continuance of it with us, and the kingdom and interest of Christ in the midst of us.

Ver. 12. *Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein, &c.*] Not the field of the world, but of the church, separated from others by distinguishing grace; the peculiar property of Christ, cultivated and manured by his spirit and grace, and abounding with the fruits and flowers thereof; of a wilderness becoming a fruitful field, and for that reason should rejoice, even with joy and singing, Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. *then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice*; the sons of God, so called, Cant. ii. 3. who, though like such, in their nature-state, barren and unfruitful, yet, being ingrafted into Christ, become trees of righteousness; and so have reason to rejoice at their root in Christ, their stability by him, and fruitfulness through him: Jarchi interprets this of all the governors of the people; see Ezek. xvii. 24. all this, indeed, by a prosopopœia, may be understood of inanimate creatures; the heavens, earth, and sea, fields, woods, and trees, rejoicing, if they could, and in their way, at such great and wonderful appearances in the Gentile world; see Isa. xlv. 23. and xlix. 13. and lv. 12. Aben Ezra interprets all this of the heavens giving dew, the earth its increase, and the field its fruit; all which is rejoicing.

Ver. 13. *Before the Lord, &c.*] At the face of him, in his presence; meeting him as he comes, and rejoicing at his coming: this clause is to be joined to every one in the two preceding verses: *for he cometh, for he cometh*; which is repeated to shew the certainty of Christ's coming, and the importance of it, and the just reason there was for the above joy and gladness on account of it; and it may be also, as Jerom and others have observed, to point out both the first and second coming of Christ, which are both matter of joy to the saints: his first coming, which was from heaven into this world, in a very mean and abject manner, to save the chief of sinners, to procure peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life for them, and therefore must be matter of joy: his second coming, which will be also from heaven, but in an extremely glorious manner, without sin, or the likeness of it, unto the salvation of his people: it will be as follows, *to judge the earth*; the inhabitants of it, small and great, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, quick and dead, righteous and wicked; when all works, words, and thoughts, good and bad, will be brought to account; and every man will be judged, as those shall be, with or without the grace of God: *he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth*; according to the rules of justice and equity; he will truly discern and rightly judge; his judgment will be according to his truth; he will approve himself to be the righteous Judge, and his judgment will appear to be a righteous judgment; for which he is abundantly qualified, as being the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, holy, just, and true; see Acts xvii. 31.

P S A L M XCVII.

THIS psalm is ascribed to David by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. It is of the same argument, and upon the same subject, as the preceding, the coming and kingdom of Christ; and that it respects his first coming into the world, when angels were called upon to worship him, appears from ver. 7. compared with Heb. i. 6. though it is expressed in such language as seems to agree with his second coming; and, perhaps, both are included, with various things between the one and the other; or it respects the kingdom of Christ, from his first to his second coming; to which agrees the inscription of the Syriac version, which is “a Psalm of David, in which he prophesies concerning the coming of the Messiah, and again he intimates in it his last appearance.”

Ver. 1. *The Lord reigneth, &c.*] He has reigned, now reigns, will and must reign till all enemies are made his footstool; see the notes on Psal. xciii. 1. and xcvi. 10. *let the earth rejoice*; not the land of Judea only, and the inhabitants of it, to whom the King Messiah came; for there were but few among them that received him, and rejoiced at his coming; but the whole earth, the vast continent, as distinguished from the isles after mentioned, and they that dwell upon it; the Gentiles, who had a concern in his coming, in whom they were to be blessed, to whom they were to be gathered, and in whom they should find a glorious rest; and therefore he is called *the desire of all nations*: the first preaching of the Gospel was occasion and matter of great joy to them; not only the blessings contained in it of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; but the effects of it, delivering them from the dominion of Satan, the god of this world; and from superstition, and idolatry, with which they were enslaved; and the bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God: *let the multitude of isles be glad* thereof; the isles of the sea are many, even many thousands: Columbus, when he first discovered America, sailing by Cuba westward, gave names, as he passed along, to seven hundred islands, leaving three thousand more without names: Gejerus reports, from some writers, that an Indian king, in 1553, was converted to the Christian faith, that ruled over eleven thousand islands; and that in Maldivar there are reckoned to be sixteen thousand: well may the text speak of a multitude of them: or, *let the great islands, &c.* such as ours of Great Britain and Ireland; these isles are said to wait for Christ and his doctrine, Isa. xlii. 4. and li. 5. and lx. 9. and therefore must be glad to hear of his coming and kingdom: the Gospel was very early sent to the isles, as to Cyprus, Crete, &c. see Acts xiii. 4, 5, 6. Tit. i. 5. and to our northern isles likewise, who have great reason to be glad at its coming among us, con-

tinuance with us, and the success it has had; and that it is yet in the midst of us for further usefulness; and that Christ reigns, and will reign evermore.

Ver. 2. *Clouds and darkness are round about him, &c.*] Either as a garment; so Apollinarius paraphrases it, “near is the King clothed with a cloud and tempest;” and it is usual with the Heathens to represent their deities as surrounded or clothed with a cloud: here the allusion is to the tabernacle and temple, when reared up and dedicated, Exod. xl. 34. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, 12. and to other appearances of God, or Christ, in a cloud, Exod. xix. 9, 16. Matt. xvii. 5. it may denote the obscurity of his divine nature at his first coming; he appearing in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that few discerned his glory as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father; as also the darkness and blindness of the Jews concerning him, who could not perceive him to be the Messiah; notwithstanding all the characters of him; clouds and darkness were about him to them; as they were, in a literal sense, when he hung on the cross; the sun withdrew and hid itself, and darkness was upon the face of the earth for three hours; Christ was enveloped in it; and a greater darkness surrounded his soul when his divine Father hid his face from him: dark providences attended the first setting up of his kingdom, and the ministration of his Gospel in the world; the apostles, the first preachers of it, were persecuted by their own countrymen the Jews; the whole Gentile world was against them; the Roman empire, emperors, and governors of provinces, opposed them; wherever there was an open door, there were many adversaries, so that things looked very unpromising: nevertheless these clouds were dissipated, and the difficulties got over; though this has sometimes been the case since, and will be again, ere the kingdom of Christ is in all its glory; he now sits enthroned in heaven, surrounded with clouds and darkness, and unseen to us; whose being and perfections are inscrutable to us, his providences unsearchable, and his ways past finding out; and when he comes a second time, it will be at midnight, and in the clouds of heaven: *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*; the seat, basis, and support of it; he sits on a throne doing right, and by it his throne is established; see the note on Psal. lxxxix. 14.

Ver. 3. *A fire goeth before him, &c.*] Not the fiery law, which went forth from his right hand on Mount Sinai; but rather his Gospel, which, as it enlightens, warms, comforts, and refreshes his people, searches, torments, and destroys his enemies, and is the savour of death unto death to them; see Jer. xxiii. 29. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Rev. xi. 5. Some apply this to the gifts of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, signified by cloven tongues of fire; but then no such effect followed as

^r P. Martyr. Decad. 1. l. 3.

^s Et Venus æthereis inter dea candida nimbo, Virgil. Æneid. 8. Venus circumdata nimbo, ib. Æneid. 12. Nube candentes humeros

amictus augur Apollo, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 2. so Homer. II. 5. v. 186.

mentioned in the next clause: it seems best to interpret it of his wrath, which, like fire, was poured out to the uttermost on the Jews, for their disbelief and rejection of him; they would not have him to reign over them; they despised his Gospel, and slew his servants; wherefore he sent the Roman armies to them, who destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city, Matt. xxii. 7. this will be also verified in the second coming of Christ, who will descend in flaming fire, and the earth will be burnt up, and all that is therein, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. some Jewish writers interpret this of the war of Gog and Magog, in Ezekiel, which they suppose still future; as, when it is, fire will be sent and rained upon them, Ezek. xxxviii. 22. and xxxix. 6. but may be better applied to the Gog and Magog in Rev. xx. 8, 9. and *burneth up his enemies round about*; so that none can escape: this was true of the Jewish nation, who were burnt up; so that there was not left root nor branch in it, Mal. iv. 1. and will be true of the wicked, at the general conflagration of the world, upon Christ's second coming; and of the Gog and Magog army, after the resurrection.

Ver. 4. *His lightnings enlightened the world, &c.*] Either the doctrines of the Gospel, compared thereto, because of the swift progress they made, and the large extent of them in the world, in a very little time; by the apostles they were published in all nations, and were the means of enlightening them in the true knowledge of themselves, and of the way of salvation by Christ: hence they are called the *lights of the world*, Matt. v. 14. as the coming of Christ, in his kingdom and power, by them, is compared to lightning, and so are the arrows of his word, Matt. xxiv. 27. Zech. ix. 14. or else his judgments on the Jewish nation are meant, which were manifest and clear, and obvious to all the world; see Psal. xviii. 14. *the earth saw, and trembled*; the inhabitants of the earth, of the Gentile world, saw the judgments of God upon the Jews, and were astonished at them; see Deut. xxix. 24. it is usual for lightnings and earthquakes to go together; see Rev. xi. 19. and xvi. 15.

Ver. 5. *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, &c.*] Kimchi interprets the *hills* of the kings of the wicked; and it was verified in Herod and his nobles, and the citizens of Jerusalem, who, when they heard of the coming of the Messiah, of the birth of the King of the Jews, were exceedingly moved and troubled; their hearts melted like wax within them, Matt. ii. 1, 2, 3. so when he appeared, in the power of his Gospel, in the Gentile world, and went forth in the ministration of it, conquering, and to conquer, all fled before him; every mountain and island were moved out of their places; and the kings of the earth, and great men, ran to the rocks to hide them from his face, which they could not bear, Rev. vi. 14—17. and the like events, and more terrible, will they be, when he comes to destroy antichrist, and especially to judge the world, Rev. xvi. 19, 20. and xx. 11, 12. *at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth*; as Christ is; he is Lord of all, the Prince of the kings of the earth, Acts

x. 36. Rev. i. 5. and xi. 4. and as he will shew himself to be at the great day; and that is the reason why the proud and lofty, comparable to hills and mountains, shall melt at his presence.

Ver. 6. *The heavens declare his righteousness, &c.*] His justice in punishing his enemies; the lightning and the thunder in the heavens, the tokens of his wrath, and instruments of it; his wrath itself, which is revealed from heaven, Rom. i. 18. or the inhabitants of heaven, as Aben Ezra; the angels of heaven; so the Targum, "the angels on high (or of heaven, as in the "king's Bible) declare his righteousness;" see Rev. xvi. 5, 6, 7. it is true of the ministers of the Gospel, who are Christ's angels or messengers, men of heavenly gifts and grace, whose work it is to declare the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith, and which is therefore called the word of righteousness, and the ministration of it, Rom. i. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. v. 13. *and all the people see his glory*; the glory of his justice in the destruction of his enemies; the glory of his power and grace in the salvation of his chosen; the glory of God in the face of Christ; the glory of Christ himself, as the only-begotten of the Father; the glory of his person, office, grace, and righteousness, in the glass of the Gospel; the glory and honour he is now crowned with in heaven; and all the people, even all the chosen, redeemed, and called people, shall behold his glory to all eternity: it seems chiefly to respect the revelation of his glory, and his people's view of it at his first coming; see Isa. lx. 5, 6.

Ver. 7. *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, &c.*] Images of gold, silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device; to serve and worship which must be the grossest ignorance and stupidity, which, when convinced of, must fill with shame and confusion: this may be considered either as a prayer, that the idolatrous Gentiles might be enlightened to see the vanity of their idols, and their worship of them, and turn to the living God; or as a prophecy that it should be; for it may be rendered, *they are or shall be confounded, or ashamed*, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; which had its accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel; when, being preached in the Gentile world, multitudes forsook their idols, and served the true God; and especially at the opening of the sixth seal, when Pagan worship was abolished throughout the Roman empire; and when the kings and great men in it, through shame, confusion, and dread, fled to the rocks and mountains, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 12—17. and will have a further accomplishment, when the Papists, the worshippers of the beast, shall be ashamed of their graven images, of the Virgin Mary, and other saints; which will be when the Gospel shall be published throughout the world, Rev. xiv. 6—11. *that boast themselves of idols*; as their saviours and deliverers, which yet are nothing, as the word ^u signifies; that praise and extol them, as the givers of good things to them, or the procurers of them for them; that glory in them, and in their worship of them, than which nothing can be a greater instance of folly and mad-

^l פדפדוּן pedefunt, Cocceus; erubescens, Gejerus.

^u באיליִם in diis nihil, Tigurine version; so some in Vatablus, Cocceus.

ness: *worship him, all ye gods*; those that are so called, the graven images and idols before mentioned; let them bow down, and be prostrate before the Lord, as Dagon before the ark; or they that serve other gods, as Kimchi; so the Targum, "and all the nations that serve idols shall worship before him;" rather kings and princes, civil magistrates, who are sometimes called gods, are meant, Psal. xc. 3. and lxxii. 1, 6. and who, in the latter day especially, shall serve and worship the Messiah, Psal. lxxii. 10. though it is best of all to interpret it of angels, as this word Elohim is rendered in Psal. viii. 5. and Aben Ezra says there are some of their interpreters that understand it of angels: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, and so Apollinarius, render it, *worship him, all his angels*: Gussetius * interprets it, *all that is God's*: all that belong to him, angels and men, and all creatures; particularly angels, the most noble of all: and this sense is confirmed by an inspired writer, who manifestly refers to and quotes this passage, and applies it to the angels worshipping of Christ, the first-begotten Son of God, when he came into the world, Heb. i. 6. with which compare Luke ii. 13, 14. from whence it appears not only that Christ is superior to angels, for the proof of which it is produced by the apostle; but that he is truly God, since God only is the object of religious worship; and that, if he is worshipped by angels, he ought to be worshipped by men; and that angels are not the proper objects of worship, since they are worshippers.

Ver. 8. *Zion heard, and was glad, &c.*] Or, the congregation of Zion, as the Targum; the church of Christ, and the members of it, called Zion, in allusion to the mountain of that name, in which the temple stood; a type of the church, Heb. xii. 22. these heard the Gospel, the good news and glad tidings of good things; they heard that Zion's King reigned, and that his kingdom was enlarged, and interest increased; they heard the heavenly men declare his righteousness, by which they are justified from all things; they heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the confusion of idolaters; of the incarnation of Christ, and of his being worshipped by angels; all which filled them with joy and gladness: *and the daughters of Judah rejoiced*; particular congregated churches, particular believers and professors of Christ and his Gospel; these rejoiced at the above things, as well as because of what follows: *because of thy judgments, O Lord*; either the doctrines of the Gospel, which come from the God of judgment, and are according to his justice and holiness; and are matter of joy and gladness when they are spread in the world, and succeed to the conversion of sinners, the comfort of saints, and the glory of Christ; see Psal. xix. 9, 10. or his judgments upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people; which also are an occasion of rejoicing to them, because Christ is thereby glorified in his power, justice, truth, and faithfulness, Rev. xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 9. *For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth, &c.*] Above all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum; he is highly exalted above every name, men of the greatest name that is named in the world; he is

made higher than the heavens, and the inhabitants of it; and has all power in heaven and earth, as Mediator; and, as a divine Person, he is the most high God, as the word *Eliou*, here used, signifies; and all this lays a foundation for joy and gladness in the saints; even the dignity of Christ's person, and the exaltation of him in the human nature: *thou art exalted far above all gods*: not only the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, or the greatest potentates upon earth, being made higher than the kings of the earth, who are called gods; but also than the angels in heaven; he is set down at the right hand of God, where they are not, and never were, nor shall be; angels, authorities, and powers, being subject to him, Heb. i. 13. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Ver. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, &c.*] The evil of sin, which is to be hated, because of the evil nature of it, it being exceeding sinful; and because of its evil consequences, bringing death, ruin, and destruction with it to the souls of men, unless grace prevents; and disquietude, distress, and trouble to the saints themselves; and because it is hateful to God, being contrary to his nature, will, and law, and is hated by Christ; and therefore those that love him should hate that, shun it, avoid it, depart from it, and abstain from all appearance of it; as all such will that love him in sincerity above all persons and things; and all of him, and that belong to him, his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances: and such are they that have seen the loveliness of him, and know his love, and have had it shed abroad in their hearts; and these will not only hate the evil of sin, but evil men; not their persons, but their actions and conversations; and will avoid them, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: *he preserveth the souls of his saints*; that are set apart by him, and chosen in him to be holy; that are sanctified by his blood, and by his spirit and grace, and to whom he is made sanctification: the *souls* of these, their better and more noble part, which are dear to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and whose salvation he has obtained, and they still receive, he *preserves* from the evil of sin, from its governing and damning power, from a final and total apostacy by it, from ruin and destruction through it, from being hurt by the second death; and he preserves them from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, from being destroyed by them, safe to his kingdom and glory; therefore he is to be loved, and sin to be hated, by them: *he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked*; of wicked and unreasonable men, into whose hands they sometimes fall, cruel and bloodthirsty persecutors; as he is able to deliver them, so oftentimes he does; and will, ere long, put them entirely out of their reach. Kimchi interprets this of the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, Media, and Persia.

Ver. 11. *Light is sown for the righteous, &c.*] Who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and live soberly and righteously; the *light* of joy and gladness, as it is explained in the next clause: see Esth. viii. 16. so, *φως*, *light*, is frequently used by Homer * for joy and gladness: these sometimes are without it,

* Ebr. Comment. p. 386.

* Iliad 6. v. 6. & s. v. 292. & 16. v. 39.

through the hidings of God's face, the prevalence of corruptions, the force of Satan's temptations, and the many afflictions they meet with; but joy and gladness, peace and comfort, are sown for them in the counsels and purposes of God, in his covenant, in the Scriptures, in the Gospel, and in the promises of it; and, though at present hidden, will spring up in God's due time, Psal. cxii. 4. and which also may be interpreted of the light of glory, which at present does not appear; but it is prepared in the purpose of God, and in his promise, and shall be enjoyed by the heirs of it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, *light is risen for the righteous*; and so the Targum, "light is risen and prepared for the righteous;" Christ, the light of the world, the sun of righteousness, is risen for them, and upon them, with healing in his wings, which bring joy and comfort to them: *and gladness for the upright in heart*; such as have new hearts and right spirits formed in them, and are Israelites indeed, that have the truth of grace and the root of the matter in them: gladness is prepared, provided, and promised to them, and sooner or later they shall have it; the seed of it is sown, and

it will spring up, and a large crop shall be enjoyed. Kimchi's note is, "light is sown for the righteous in this world, and they shall reap light and joy in time to come, in the days of the Messiah."

Ver. 12. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, &c.*] In the word of the Lord, as the Targum; in Christ, the essential Word, in his person, the greatness, glory, and fulness of it; in his righteousness, and in salvation by him, and that always; see Phil. iv. 4. *and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness*; of his essential holiness, as a divine Person, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all that he has done; and of the holiness of his nature and life, as man and Mediator, which are imputed to his people for their justification; and at the remembrance of that holiness which they have from him, and are made partakers of in sanctification; and at the remembrance of that perfect holiness which they shall have with him in heaven to all eternity. Holiness may also signify his faithfulness in the discharge of his work and office as Mediator, and in the fulfilment of his promises to his people; see the note on Psal. xxx. 4.

P S A L M XCVIII.

A Psalm.

THIS is the only psalm throughout the whole book which is so called, without any other additional word, epithet, or inscription. The Targum calls it a psalm of prophecy, or a prophetic psalm, as indeed it is; for it respects time to come, as Jarchi observes, even the Gospel dispensation. Aben Ezra says, perhaps this psalm is concerning the coming of the Redeemer; a doubt need not be made of it, it certainly is. Abendana, a later writer among the Jews, says of the latter part of the psalm, that it figuratively expresses the greatness of the joy that shall be in the days of the Messiah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, ascribe it unto David; but it was not penned by him on account of any victory obtained by him, but as a prophecy of the victories and salvation of the Messiah; nor is it of the same argument with, or a compendium of, the song of Moses at the Red sea, as Grotius thinks; though the inscription of the Syriac version begins thus, "a Psalm of David, concerning the redemption of the people out of Egypt, when they conquered and triumphed;" yet it more rightly adds, "but spiritually a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles unto the faith."

Ver. 1. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, &c.*] An excellent one unto the Lord Christ, on account of the great work of redemption and salvation wrought out by him; and because of the new and living way opened by him, and because of the new dispensation of the Gospel, which takes place through him, and for the reasons next mentioned; see the note on Psal. xcvi. 1. *for he hath done marvellous things*; by assuming human nature, in that he, being God, became man,

took flesh of a virgin, even pure and uncorrupt, a clean thing out of an unclean; which he took into personal union with himself, and that for the sake of sinful creatures: a most marvellous affair this! which calls for a new song from men, as it had from the angels. In this nature he taught wonderful doctrines, at which his hearers were astonished, wondering from whence he had his wisdom; and in it he did many marvellous works, which filled them with amazement above measure; and especially in it he performed the amazing and surprising work of man's redemption, an instance of the marvellous loving-kindness and astonishing wisdom of God; performed in a manner quite stupendous, through Christ's being made under the law both the precept and penalty of it; through his being made sin and a curse for men, even for the ungodly, sinners and enemies; a redemption which is of the souls of men from sin, Satan, and the law; a complete and plentuous one, which includes and secures all the blessings of grace and glory, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. To which may be added the resurrection of himself from the dead, his ascension to heaven, the effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the spirit on the apostles, the wonderful success of the Gospel in the Gentile world, the support of his interest against all the powers on earth, the destruction of the man of sin, the calling of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; all which marvellous events require a new song of praise: another reason of which follows: *his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory*: over sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell, in which he has made his people sharers, yea, more than conquerors; and therefore may well sing the new tri-

umphant song to him: the words may be rendered, *hath brought salvation to him*^b; as in Isa. lix. 16. and lxiii. 5. to him personally, he raising himself from the dead, as a triumphant Conqueror; to him mystically, his body the church, to whom he is the author of salvation; or to him, that is, to his father, in obedience to whose will he wrought out salvation for his people, and for the honour of his name, and for the glorifying of his perfections. This was done by him alone, by his right hand of power, by the mighty arm of his strength, and which no mere creature could ever have performed: and this he did in a way of holiness; his holy arm did it in a way that maintains and secures the glory of divine holiness and justice.

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath made known his salvation, &c.*] Which was appointed him, he undertook, came to perform, and has effected; this, though wrought out, is unknown to men, especially to the Gentile world, who had no prophecy, promise, or revelation of the Messiah, and salvation by him; but now this is made known in the everlasting Gospel, called therefore the Gospel of salvation, and by the ministers of it; and, besides this, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and his salvation, is given to some; whereby they come to know their need of it, the suitableness of it to their case, the necessity of going to Christ for it, and their special and particular interest in it; and such have a new song put into their mouths, and are under great obligation to sing it: *his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the Heathen*; either the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises, particularly in raising up the Saviour Jesus; or the goodness of God to his people, and the strictness of his justice on their surety; goodness towards them, and severity on him, when he spared them and not him, turned his hand of grace and mercy on them, when he awoke the sword of justice against him; or rather his own righteousness, by which he fulfilled the law in the room and stead of his people; and which being brought in is revealed in the Gospel, from faith to faith; and that *openly*, not in dark shadows, types, and figures; but it is to be seen with open face in the clear glass of the Gospel; and is held up and forth in the ministration of it unto the Gentiles, whom God justifies through faith in it, as well as the believing Jews; see Rom. iii. 30. Gal. iii. 8.

Ver. 3. *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel, &c.*] His mercy promised them, in raising up a Saviour to them, one that should be the glory of them; and his truth, in fulfilling that and every other promise concerning him; see Luke i. 72, 73, 74. and ii. 32. Rom. xv. 8. *all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*; either Christ himself, who is the salvation or Saviour of God's appointing, providing, and sending; or the salvation which he has wrought out, the Gospel declaring it; which has been sent throughout the world; and many in all parts of it, even in the most distant parts of it, in the very ends of it, have been made to see the nature, want, worth, and value of it; not every indivi-

dual person in the world, but some in the several parts, and in the remote corners of it, whither the Gospel has been or will be sent; see Isa. lii. 10.

Ver. 4. *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, &c.*] That is, all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum, to whom the joyful sound of the Gospel comes; see the note on Psal. xcvi. 1. *make a loud noise, rejoice, and sing praise*; exalt and extend the voice to the highest pitch, in the most musical and melodious strains; this heap of words is used to express the intenseness of mind, vehemency of affection, and strength of spirit and exceeding greatness of joy, with which the Lord should be praised for his great and marvellous works.

Ver. 5. *Sing unto the Lord with the harp, &c.*] Playing upon that at the same time: here and in the following verse is an allusion to Old-Testament worship, and the manner of performing that; not that this should be done in New-Testament times, only New-Testament worship is expressed in Old-Testament language, which is no unusual thing; hence in Gospel times, and Gospel churches, the saints, especially when singing the new song of redeeming grace, are said to have harps in their hands, expressive only of their spiritual melody in their hearts, Rev. v. 8, 9. and xiv. 2, 3. and xv. 2, 3. *with the harp, and the voice of the psalm*; with the harp alone first, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, and then with the harp, and together with the words of a psalm, sung in a psalmtune. Gospel churches are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

Ver. 6. *With trumpet and sound of cornet, &c.*] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, render it *with ductile trumpets*, such as were made of silver, as the two trumpets for the calling of the assembly, Numb. x. 2. to which the allusion seems to be here, called *asotra* by Josephus^c, according to the Hebrew language דַּוְצְצֹרִית which he says were in length a little less than a cubit, but the pipe narrow, somewhat thicker than a flute, having a sufficient breadth at the mouth to blow with, ending after the manner of a bell. The cornet was a trumpet or pipe, made of horn, from whence it has its name; such were those, made of rams' horns, the priests blew with when they encompassed Jericho, Josh. vi. 4. *make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King*; or rather *before the King, the Lord*^d; before the King, who is Jehovah, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; let this shout be made before him, in his presence, and on account of his kingly office, and because of some eminent appearance of his kingdom and glory; see Rev. xix. 6, 16.

Ver. 7. *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof, &c.*] See the note on Psal. xcvi. 11. *the world, and they that dwell therein*; men, the inhabitants of the world; that is, let them rejoice because this glorious King has taken to himself his great power, and reigns, Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 8. *Let the floods clap their hands, &c.*] Or *rivers*^e, dashing against their banks, as they pass along; a prosopopœia, as the preceding and following,

^b דְּהוֹשִׁיעָה לִּי salutem attulit ei, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ^c Tigurine version, Munster, Cocceus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^e Antiqu. Jud. 1. 3. c. 12. sect. 6.

^d לפני המלך יהוה coram rege Domino, Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

^e נהרות fluvii, Cocceius, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

expressing great joy on account of the Messiah, the reigning King. Aben Ezra interprets this of men that are in rivers, as the sea in the preceding verse of such that are in ships at sea; and the hills in the next clause of such that dwell on them; *let the hills be joyful together*: see Isa. lv. 12.

Ver. 9. *Before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth, &c.*] See the note on Psal. xcvi. 13. *with righte-*

ousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity; both at his first and second coming, and during the intermediate time; see the note as before. The only difference is, that in Psal. xcvi. 13. it is said that he shall judge the people *with his truth*, here *with equity*, or *uprightnesses*^f; in the most upright manner, according to the strictest rules of justice and judgment; see Isa. xi. 3, 4, 5.

P S A L M XCIX.

THIS psalm, with the foregoing from Psalm xcth. is ascribed to Moses by Jarchi and others; but cannot be his, since mention is made of Samuel in it, who lived many years after him. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, more rightly attribute it to David; the inscription of the Syriac version, after saying it is David's, subjoins, "concerning the destruction of the Midianites, whom Moses and the people of Israel led captive;" of which there is not the least mention in it; but it more truly adds, "and a prophecy concerning the glory of the kingdom of the Messiah;" as it undoubtedly is.

Ver. 1. *The Lord reigneth, &c.*] The King Messiah, he is made and declared Lord and Christ; he has reigned, does reign, and ever will; see Psal. xciii. 1. and xcvi. 10. and xcvi. 1. *let the people tremble*; with awe of his majesty, and reverence of his word and ordinances; rejoicing before him with trembling, as his own people and subjects do, Psal. ii. 11. and so it agrees with Psal. xcvi. 1. or it may be understood of the people that are enemies to Christ, who would not have him to reign, though he shall whether they will or no; and who will sooner or later tremble for fear of him, and his righteous judgment. Jarchi refers this to the war of Gog and Magog. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, *let the people be angry*; or it may be rendered, *they are angry*; or therefore *they are angry*; because he reigns; so the people, both Jews and Gentiles, were angry and raged, when his kingdom was first visibly set up among them, Psal. ii. 1, 2. and so the nations will when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, Rev. xi. 18. *he sitteth between the cherubim*; upon or above, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; alluding to the seat of the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, in the holy of holies; and respects either the exalted glory of Christ among the angels, and above them at the right hand of God, where they are subject to him, stand about him, ready to do his will; or rather his presence with his ministers of the word, who are the instruments of spreading his Gospel, and enlarging his kingdom and interest in the world; see the note on Psal. lxxx. 1. *let the earth be moved*; not that itself out of its place, but the inhabitants of it; and these either with a sense of sin and duty, and become subject to Christ their King; or with wrath and indignation at him, or through fear of him, as before; Kimchi says, at the fall of Gog and Magog; it may be particularly understood of the land of Judea, and of

the commotion in it, especially in Jerusalem, when the tidings were brought of the birth of the King Messiah, Matt. ii. 1, 2. or of the shaking and moving both of the civil and ecclesiastical state of the nation, and of the ruin of it; see Heb. xii. 26, 27. 1 Thess. ii. 16.

Ver. 2. *The Lord is great in Zion, &c.*] Where the temple stood, and into which Christ came as the proprietor of it, and gave it a greater glory by his presence than the first temple had; here he preached his doctrines, wrought many of his miracles; here he poured forth the spirit on his apostles; and from hence went forth his Gospel into all the world: or in Zion, that is, in his church, and among his people; here he grants his gracious presence, and bestows the blessings of his goodness; and shews himself to be great and glorious in his person, offices, and operations; see Psal. lxviii. 1. *and he is high above all people*; as God, he is the Creator of them all; in whom they live, move, and have their being, and so must be above them all; as Mediator, he is the Saviour of his own people, and exalted to be so unto them; as King, he is higher than the kings of the earth, and therefore must be above all the rest of the inhabitants of it; he is higher than the heavens, and the angels there, and therefore he must be higher than the earth, and they that dwell in it; he is highly exalted above every name that is named in this world, or in that to come.

Ver. 3. *Let them praise thy great and terrible name, &c.*] All people, especially the Lord's people; those that dwell in Zion, where his name is great, in high esteem, venerable, and valued; as his name Jesus, or Saviour, is amiable and lovely to his saints; and his name, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is terrible to his enemies: for *it is holy*; his name is holy, as well as reverend and great; his nature is holy, both divine and human; holy in all his ways and works; and is holiness to his people, and therefore worthy of praise; holiness is the ground and foundation of his praise from the seraphim, Isa. vi. 3.

Ver. 4. *The King's strength also loveth judgment, &c.*] Or he who is a strong and mighty King, as Christ is; which appears by saving his people, and preserving them to his kingdom and glory, and by destroying all his and their enemies; but, though he is so potent and victorious a Prince, yet no tyrannical one, he loves and does what is just and righteous; he loved the righteous law of God, and obeyed it in the whole course of his life; he wrought out a perfect righteousness for his people, and encourages and loves righteousness in

^f במשׁרׁים in *rectitudinibus*, Montanus, Michaelis.

them; he will judge the world in righteousness hereafter; and is now on his throne, and in his kingdom, ordering it with judgment and justice; all the administrations of his kingly office are just and true, and herein he delights: *thou dost establish equity, or equities*^a; uprightneses, righteousnesses; a perfect and a complete righteousness: this he has prepared^b, as the word signifies, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and has established as an everlasting one; moreover, equity, righteousness, and justice, are the settled rules and laws of his government; see Isa. ix. 7. and xi. 4, 5. *thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob*: among the true Israel and people of God, as David his type did, 2 Sam. viii. 15. thereby keeping them in due order, in the observance of his righteous judgments and statutes, and defending them from their enemies.

Ver. 5. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, &c.*] Christ, who is Lord of all, and Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, our Lord and our God; exalt him in his person, as God over all, blessed for ever; in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, by hearkening to his word, by trusting in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and by submitting to his ordinances, and obeying his commands; exalt him in heart, thought, and affection, thinking highly of him, and affectionately loving him; exalt and extol him in words, speak of his love and loveliness, and of the great things he has done; exalt him in private and in public, in the family and in the house of God; make mention of him everywhere, that his name be exalted: *and worship at his footstool*; worship him who is the object of the adoration of angels, and ought to be of men; worship him privately and publicly, internally and externally, in spirit and in truth; *at his footstool*, on earth, he being on his throne in heaven; see Isa. lxvi. 1. or else the ark is meant, which is so called, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. and this being a type of the human nature of Christ, that may be meant here; and which, though not the object of worship, nor is it said, worship his footstool, but *at it*; yet, in worshipping Christ, respect is to be had unto him, as in our nature, in which he has done such great things for us: the Targum is, “worship in or at the house of his sanctuary;” so Kimchi interprets it of the sanctuary, which agrees with ver. 9. for *he is holy*: essentially holy, glorious in holiness as a divine Person, and therefore to be worshipped: *or it is holy*; the footstool, the ark, the human nature of Christ, in which the Godhead dwells bodily.

Ver. 6. *Moses and Aaron among his priests, &c.*] The priests of the Lord, called and appointed by him, that ministered to him in that office, were the priests of Christ, types of him, and ceased when he came: these were the chief among them, or of them, as Kimchi observes: Moses officiated as a priest before Aaron was called and separated to that service; yea, it was he that consecrated and installed him in it, and that by offering sacrifice among other things, Exod. xxix. 1. see also Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. Numb. vii. 1, &c. and that Aaron was the chief of them there can be no question, seeing he was the first from whom a race of priests sprung, and who gave name to that order of

priesthood which continued until the Messiah's coming: *and Samuel among them that call upon his name*; these, according to Kimchi, describe the prophets, among whom Samuel was the chief; see Acts iii. 24. calling on the name of the Lord includes the whole worship of God, and is often used particularly of prayer; the object of which is God, and him only; and who is to be called upon at all times, and especially in a time of trouble, and always in faith, and with sincerity and truth; and an honour it is to be among such persons: now these three men, who were eminent for religion and piety, and particularly prayer, see Jer. xv. 1. are mentioned to animate and encourage the saints, by their example, to the worship and service of the Lord, before exhorted to: *they called upon the Lord*; the Lord Christ, who is the object of invocation, was so in the Old-Testament dispensation, and should be so in the New; see Acts vii. 59. and xxii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 2. Moses called upon him, Exod. xxxii. 11, 32. so did Aaron, Numb. xvi. 22. and also Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9. and xii. 18, 19. *and he answered them*; as he does all his people, sooner or later, in one way or another; which is no small encouragement to pray unto him.

Ver. 7. *He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar, &c.*] In the pillar of the clouds of glory, as the Targum; in which the Lord went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, to lead them, and protect them from heat in the day, Exod. xiii. 21, 22. that is, he spake in this to Moses and Aaron; for it ceased when they came to the land of Canaan; instances of which see in Exod. xix. 9. Numb. xii. 5. some have thought that the Lord might speak to Samuel also out of a cloud, when he called upon him, and it thundered, since clouds and thunder go together, 1 Sam. xii. 18. the cloudy pillar was a type of Christ; and it is by him the Lord has spoken all his mind and will, when he was clothed with a cloud, or became obscure in the form of a servant; and it is through him, the Mediator, that men have access to God, and answers of prayer from him: *they kept his testimonies*; the law, and the precepts of it, which were testifications of the mind and will of God; these Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, kept, though not perfectly, yet sincerely, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God: *and the ordinance that he gave them*; the ordinance of the passover, with the several rituals of the ceremonial law, which was an ordinance of God until the Messiah came; and we, under the Gospel dispensation, ought to keep the ordinances of Christ in faith and love, as they have been delivered to us; and such only can expect to be heard and answered by the Lord; and this is the reason of the mention of these things; see Psal. lxvi. 18. Prov. xxviii. 9.

Ver. 8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God, &c.*] This is repeated to shew the certainty of it, and to encourage the people of God, in all ages, to pray unto him: *thou wast a God that forgavest them*; even Moses, Aaron, and Samuel; for, though they were great and good men, they did not live without sin, and stood in need of pardoning grace and mercy, which they had;

^a מישלים rectitudines, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; equitates, Vatablus; recta, Musculus.

^b פארסתי parasti, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; parasti, Targumic version.

or rather the people for whom they prayed: so the Targum, "O God, thou wast forgiving thy people for "them;" that is, through their prayers; see Numb. xiv. 19, 20. Psal. lxxviii. 38. *though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions*; their sins, which are the inventions of men, Eccl. vii. 29. Kimchi and others interpret this of the inventions, designs, and practices of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, against Moses and Aaron, Numb. xvi. 32, 35. but though God took vengeance on them, it does not appear that he forgave their iniquities; wherefore it is best to understand this either of the sins of Moses and Aaron themselves, which, though pardoned, God took vengeance of, and shewed his displeasure at, by not suffering them to go into the land of Canaan, Numb. xx. 10, 11, 12. and xxvii. 12, 13, 14. or else of the sins of the Israelites, who murmured upon the report of the spies; and though they were pardoned at the intercession of Moses, yet so far vengeance was taken upon them, that none of them were suffered to enter the land of Canaan; but their carcasses fell in the wilderness, Numb. xiv. 19—23. and thus, though God forgives the iniquities of his people, for

the sake of his son, yet he takes vengeance of them on him, their surety; on whom they have been laid and borne, and who has not been spared in the least; but has bore the whole wrath and vengeance of God due to sin; and besides, though he pardons his people, yet he chastises them for their sins, and shews his fatherly displeasure at them.

Ver. 9. *Exalt the Lord our God, &c.*] Having given the above instances of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, serving and worshipping the Lord, the psalmist repeats the exhortation in ver. 5. which he enforces by their example; see the note there: *and worship at his holy hill*; the holy hill of Zion, the church; attend the public worship and service of it: the Targum is, "worship at the mountain of the house of his sanctuary;" the temple, a type of the church of Christ: *for the Lord our God is holy*; his nature is holy, and he is glorious in the perfection of his holiness, and therefore to be praised and exalted; and his name is holy, and so reverend, and therefore to be worshipped; see in ver. 3, 5.

P S A L M C.

A Psalm of praise.

THE Arabic version ascribes this psalm to David, and very likely it is one of his: the Targum calls it "a hymn for the sacrifice of thanksgiving;" and so Jarchi. It is supposed to have been used when peace-offerings for thanksgivings were offered up, Lev. vii. 11, 12. The Syriac inscription is very odd; "concerning Joshua the son of Nun, when he made the war of "the Ammonites to cease;" though it more rightly adds, "but in the New Testament, when the Gentiles "are converted to the faith;" and indeed the scope of the psalm is to exhort the Gentiles to praise the Messiah, to serve and worship him, from the consideration of his goodness and mercy, truth and faithfulness.

Ver. 1. *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.*] Or, *all the earth*; that is, as the Targum, all the inhabitants of the earth, who are called upon to shout unto him as their King; as the angels did at his birth, the disciples when he made his public entrance into Jerusalem, the apostles at his ascension to heaven, the saints when the marriage of him, the Lamb, will be come, and both men and angels when he shall descend from heaven to judge the world; and such a joyful noise or shout should be made unto him as to a triumphant conqueror, who has got the victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave, and every enemy of his and his people, and made them more than conquerors through himself; see Psal. xcv. 1.

Ver. 2. *Serve the Lord with gladness, &c.*] Not with a slavish fear, under a spirit of bondage, as the Jews under the legal dispensation; not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit: with spiritual joy and freedom of soul, as under the spirit of adoption;

readily, willingly, cheerfully; without sinister and selfish ends and views; as their Lord and Master; taking delight in his person, and pleasure in his service; rejoicing in him, without having any confidence in the flesh: *come before his presence with singing*; to the throne of his grace with thankfulness for mercies received, as well as to implore others; and into his house, and at his ordinances, beginning public worship with singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; see Psal. xcv. 2.

Ver. 3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, &c.*] Own and acknowledge him to be God, as well as man; and though a man, yet not a mere man, but the great God and our Saviour, the true God and eternal Life; so a man, as that he is Jehovah's Fellow; or *our God*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh: it is *he that hath made us*; as men, without whom nothing is made that was made; in him we live, move, and have our being; and, as new creatures, we are his workmanship, created in him, and by him; regenerated by his spirit and grace, and formed for himself, his service and glory; and made great and honourable by him, raised from a low to an high estate; from being beggars on the dunghill, to sit among princes; yea, made kings and priests unto God by him; so Kimchi, "he hath brought us up, and exalted us:" *and not we ourselves*; that is, did not make ourselves, neither as creatures, nor as new creatures; as we have no hand in making either our souls or bodies, so neither in our regeneration, or in the work of God upon our hearts; that is solely the Lord's work: there is a double

reading of this clause; the marginal reading is, *and we are his*; which is followed by the Targum and Aben Ezra: both are approved of by Kimchi, and the sense of both is included; for if the Lord has made us, and not we ourselves, then we are not our own, but his, and ought to serve and glorify him: we are his by creation; *we are also his offspring*, as said Aratus^d, an Heathen poet, cited by the Apostle Paul, Acts xvii. 28. we are *his people*; by choice and covenant; by his father's gift, and his own purchase; and by the power of his grace, bringing to a voluntary surrender and subjection to him; even the Gentiles particularly, who were not his people, but now his people, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. *and the sheep of his pasture*; his sheep also by gift and purchase, called by him, made to know his voice, and follow him; for whom he provides pasture, leads to it, and feeds them with it himself; see Psal. lxxiv. 1. and xcv. 7.

Ver. 4. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, &c.*] The same with the gates of Zion, loved by the Lord more than all the dwellings of Jacob; the gates of Jerusalem, within which the feet of the saints stand with pleasure; the gates of Wisdom, or Christ, where his followers watch and wait; the gates into his house, the church, and the public ordinances of it, to be entered into *with thankfulness* for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; for the Gospel, and Gospel opportunities and ordinances: and *into his courts with praise*: with the sacrifice of praise, as in Psal. xcvi. 8. of these

courts, see Psal. lxxv. 4. and lxxxiv. 2. *be thankful unto him*; for all blessings of grace in him and by him; for all things, and at all times: and *bless his name*; by ascribing honour, blessing, and glory to him, saying, *blessed be his glorious name for ever*, Psal. lxxii. 19. see Psal. ciii. 1.

Ver. 5. *For the Lord is good, &c.*] Both in a providential way, and in a way of grace, and does good; he is the good Shepherd, that has laid down his life for the sheep; and the good Samaritan, that pours in the wine and oil of his love and grace, and his precious blood, to the healing of the wounds made by sin: whilst he was on earth, he went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men; and he continues to do good unto them, and therefore should be praised, served, and worshipped: *his mercy is everlasting*; or *his grace*^e; there's always a sufficiency of it for his people; and his loving-kindness, which may be also here meant, is always the same; having loved his own which were in the world, he loves them to the end, John xiii. 1. *and his truth endureth to all generations*; or his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, and performing his engagements; he was faithful to his father that appointed him, and to the covenant he made with him; and he is faithful to his people, to keep what they commit to his care and charge now, and to give them the crown of righteousness at the last day, which is laid up for them; and upon all these considerations, and for these reasons, ought to be praised and adored.

P S A L M C I.

A Psalm of David.

THE title of this psalm, in the Syriac version, is, "for Asaph, an exhortation of David, concerning those things which are required in the ministry of the house of the Lord; and a prophecy of the praise of the conqueror, and of the perfect man in God." Theodoret thinks it was written by David concerning good Josiah, whom he foresaw, by a spirit of prophecy, would rise up a great reformer of the people, and whom he proposes as a pattern of perfection to others; but it was, no doubt, written by him of himself; very likely, after he was delivered out of his troubles by the death of Saul, and was come to the kingdom, since he resolves to *sing of mercy and judgment*: though by the interrogation, *when wilt thou come unto me?* it looks as if he had not arrived to the height of his honour: wherefore, perhaps, this psalm was penned between his being made king over Judah, and his being made king over all the tribes; but, be it as it may, the design of it is to shew his resolutions, how he would behave as a king in his court, and as a master in his family; so that it is very instructive to kings and civil magistrates, and to parents and masters of families: and as David was a type of Christ, he seems, throughout the whole, to personate him; and, indeed, there are some things in

it which agree with none so well as with him; such as behaving wisely, in a perfect way, and walking in his house with a perfect heart; not suffering any evil thing to cleave unto him, and knowing none, and the like.

Ver. 1. *I will sing of mercy and judgment, &c.*] Either of mercy and justice, exercised by him towards his people, which he resolved to do, and did, 2 Sam. viii. 15. which are two very principal points in government, are the glory of a reign, the support of the throne, and the happiness of a people, Prov. xx. 28. or rather of the mercy of God to himself, in delivering him from his enemies, and raising him to the throne; and of the judgment of God in maintaining his cause, and avenging him on those that hated him: every good man has reason to sing of the *mercy of God*; not only of his providential mercy, but of his special mercy, prepared in council and covenant for him, displayed in regeneration, in the pardon of sin, and in his everlasting salvation: or of *grace and goodness*, as the word^f signifies; of the grace and goodness of God laid up in Christ, shewn forth through him, and to which the whole of salvation is owing; singing of this shews a sense of it, thankfulness for it, and a cheerful disposition of soul,

^d Ἡ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ἀστρονομῶν. Arati Phenomena, v. 5.
^e חַסְדִּים gratia ejus, Cocceius, Gejerus; gratia & misericordia ejus, Michaelis.

^f חַסְדִּים gratiam, Gejerus, Michaelis.

in a view of interest in it: and he may also sing of judgment: of righteous punishment inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of God, and Christ, and true religion; not as taking delight in the misery of fellow-creatures, but as rejoicing in the glory of divine justice displayed therein, and in a deliverance from them; as Israel did at the Red sea; and as the church will, when Babylon is destroyed: moreover, a good man may sing of mercy and judgment together, with respect to himself; there being, in the course of his life, a mixture of prosperity and adversity, of merciful and afflictive dispensations, which work together for his good; and he has reason to be thankful for the one as for the other, as Job was, Job i. 21. so the Targum, "if thou re-derest mercy to me; if thou exercisest judgment on me; for all I will praise thee:" judgment sometimes signifies chastisement, Jer. x. 24. 1 Cor. xi. 32. it may be understood of Christ, who sung of the mercy of God, as shewn in the mission of him into the world to save men, and which was glorified in their redemption by him; and of the justice of God exercised on him, as their surety, on whom judgment came unto condemnation for their sins; and when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of mercy was turned on the little ones, Zech. xiii. 7. *unto thee, O Lord, will I sing*; on the above subjects.

Ver. 2. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, &c.*] So David did before he came to the throne, which made Saul fear him, and the people love him, 1 Sam. xviii. 14, 15, 16. and so he resolved to do, and did afterwards; and thus it becomes all good men, in every station of life, to do: and then do they behave wisely, when they walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time; when they make the perfect law of liberty, the word of God, the rule of their faith; take Christ for their pattern and example, and the Spirit for their guide; when they walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; seek the glory of God, and the good of others; behave inoffensively to all, and live as pilgrims and strangers here; attending closely to their duty, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless: and yet it is certain that no man lives without sin, or does or can behave himself wisely in so perfect a way and manner as to have no fault in him; wherefore this seems most applicable to Christ, who, as it was prophesied he should, so he did deal prudently, or behave wisely, Isa. lii. 13. where the same word is used as here; and this is true of Christ throughout the whole of his life; in his infancy, when but twelve years of age; in his public ministry, in his conduct towards all men; in his answers to the insinuating questions of his enemies; in his behaviour at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation and crucifixion; and this to perfection, so as that the least fault could not be found in him: *O when wilt thou come unto me?* and perform thy promise in bringing me to rule over all the tribes of Israel: or it may be read without an interrogation, *when thou wilt come unto me*; that is, when thou wilt grant me thy gracious presence, and divine assistance, then I will behave myself wisely, in

a perfect way; or *in the way of perfect*^h and upright men, and will walk with them, and do as they do; without the grace of God, and strength of Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, nothing is to be done that is wise and good: if it is applied to Christ, it respects the time of his sufferings and death, when he was without the divine Presence and help: *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart*; or *in the integrity of my heart*ⁱ; in a sincere and upright manner, ruling my own house well, and setting a good example to all in the family; and so should all good men do, performing all duties of religion in the family; be a pattern of good works, bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and neglect nothing that may contribute to their real good and the glory of God: the house of Christ is his church and people; here he walks and manifests himself, giving proofs of his sincere love and affection to them: the Targum paraphrases it, "the house of my doctrine;" such is the church of Christ, Isa. ii. 3.

Ver. 3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes, &c.*] Either the eyes of the body, which are the inlets of lust, and are easily caught with objects that inflame the heart, and should be turned aside from beholding vanity; or the eyes of the mind; so the Targum, "I will not propose to my heart;" or, as Kimchi, "in my thought;" that is, I will not set up an evil thing in my imagination, to dwell upon in my thoughts, and take delight and pleasure in meditating upon it; or set it before me, to imitate as a pattern, to work by, and copy after: Christ did not so; he set the Lord always before him, Psal. xvi. 8. not any thing of Belial^k, or Satan, as the phrase here may be rendered; no, he always bid Satan, or any thing of his, be gone, and get behind him, Matt. iv. 10. and xvi. 23. *I hate the work of them that turn aside*; from God, and from his law; from the paths of religion, truth, and virtue; and from the Gospel, and a profession of it; such are not fit for the kingdom of God, and in these God and Christ have no pleasure, Heb. x. 38. *it shall not cleave to me*; neither the wicked thing, or thing of Belial, nor the work of apostacy; that is, he would have no familiarity nor fellowship with it; not come near it, nor connive at it, but hate and abhor it: the Jews said, *an evil disease*, or a thing of Belial, *cleaveth fast unto him*, Psal. xli. 8. but they were mistaken.

Ver. 4. *A froward heart shall depart from me, &c.*] A man of a froward heart, that devises frowardness in his heart, and speaks it out with his mouth; that which is perverse, and contrary to the law of God and Gospel of Christ, to the light of nature and the word of God; contrary to the sentiments of all good men, and repugnant to truth and good manners: such sort of persons are disagreeable companions, and good men would not choose to have any thing to do with them; they are hateful to Christ, and shall be bid to depart from him; see Prov. viii. 13. and vi. 14. *I will not know a wicked person*: so as to be familiar with him, or shew him any respect; have any affection for him, or take any notice of him; such Christ will not know at the great

^h So V. L. Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version.

ⁱ בדרך תמים in via integri; so some in Michaelis.

^k לבוי בתם in integritate cordis mei, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.

^k בליעל רבו verbum Belijshah, Montanus; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Ainsworth.

day, Matt. vii. 23. or *I will not know wickedness*; or any wicked work and action, approve of it, love it, delight in it, and do it: the Targum interprets it of the evil concupiscence, corruption of nature, or indwelling sin, which is hated by the believer, Rom. vii. 15. and is utterly unknown to Christ; he was not conscious of it; *he knew no sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21. original or actual; he had no sin in him, nor was any done by him.

Ver. 5. *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off, &c.*] That raises and spreads a false report of him; that insinuates evil things of him; that brings false charges and accusations against him, in a private manner, when he has no opportunity to defend himself: such an one David threatens to cut off from his presence, as Kimchi interprets it; from all communion and conversation with him; and yet he listened to the slanders of Ziba against Mephibosheth: but Christ, who knows the hearts and the secret actions of men, will reject and cut off all persons of such a character: the Targum is, "he that speaketh with a triple tongue against his neighbour, him will I destroy, and he shall be smitten with the leprosy:" a slandering tongue is called a triple tongue with the Jews^a, because, as they say, it kills three persons; him that carries the slander, him that receives it, and him of whom it is related; see Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 16. *him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer*; or, *I cannot*^b; that is, cannot bear him in my presence and company; cannot look upon him with any pleasure and delight: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions, render it, *with him I will not eat*: have no familiarity or acquaintance with him; see 1 Cor. v. 11. such who looked above others, and with contempt upon them, whose hearts were large, as the word^c signifies, were ambitious and insatiable, and never had enough of riches and honour; such were very contrary to David's character, and could never be agreeable to him, Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2. as the proud and haughty Pharisees were not to Christ, Luke xviii. 9—14. and the man of sin that exalts himself above all that is called God, that little horn, whose look is more stout than his fellows, 2 Thess. ii. 4, 8. Dan. vii. 20.

Ver. 6. *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, &c.*] To look them out, bring them to court, and promote them to places of honour and trust; such an one was David himself, and such there were in the land of Israel, though but few, and of which he complains, Psal. xii. 1. Christ's eyes are upon faithful persons, on faithful ministers of the word, who preach the Gospel faithfully, administer the ordinances truly, are faithful to the souls of men in watching over them, reproving and exhorting them; his eyes are upon them to keep and preserve them, and to honour and reward them with a crown of life that fadeth not away; and his eyes are also on faithful members of churches, such who truly believe in him, who hold fast the

faithful word, and keep close to his worship and ordinances; his eyes are upon them, to shew favour to them, to bestow blessings upon them, and to protect and defend them, and preserve them from perishing: *that they may dwell with me*; or, *sit with me*^d; at his table, or at the council-board, or in judgment, and assist him in the affairs of government: so such as are faithful shall dwell with Christ both here and hereafter; they dwell in him and with him by faith, and have communion with him; they dwell in his house below, and shall dwell with him above for evermore: *he that walketh in a perfect way*; in God's way, in the way he has prescribed and directed, to what is perfect; in a way agreeable to his word, in all his commandments and ordinances, in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life: *and in the way of perfect men*^e, as it may be rendered; in the way that such walk; and though he does not walk perfectly, or without sin, yet sincerely and uprightly: *he shall serve me*; be taken into my service, be employed by me, as a prime minister, a counsellor, a secretary of state, or in other lesser places under David. But, as it refers to Christ, it signifies that such an one shall be a servant of his, which is no small honour; for, where he is, there shall his servant be, John xii. 26. The Targum is, "he shall stand with my servants;" in his house here, and at his right hand hereafter.

Ver. 7. *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house, &c.*] Flatterers, sycophants, tricking and fraudulent persons, who seek to supplant others, and get into their places; these should lose the favour they had, when detected. So hypocritical persons, that have only a form of godliness, a mask of religion, and false teachers that lie in wait to deceive; and antichrist, whose coming was with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; who has seduced men by his miracles, doctrines, and sorceries; these shall have no place, neither in Christ's house below nor above. The Targum is, "he that works deceit shall not dwell in the midst of the house of my sanctuary:" *he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight*; or, *he shall not be established before mine eyes*^f; he shall not continue in his post and place, in his office and station; he shall soon be dismissed from it; lying is very abominable to God, very prejudicial to men, and hated by Christ, who is truth itself. All sorts of lies and liars are so, religious and doctrinal ones; such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the emissaries of Rome; all that make an abomination, or a lie, will have no place with Christ in the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 27.

Ver. 8. *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, &c.*] Of the land of Israel, signifying that he would make a general reformation throughout the kingdom; that as soon as wicked men were discovered in any part of the land, he would cut them off, would take the first opportunity of punishing them as the law directs: or he would do it *in mornings*^g, as in the Hebrew text; that is, every morning, constantly and conti-

¹ רע malam hominem sive opus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

² T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Vide Targum Jon. in Deut. 27. 4.

³ אונל לא אונל non potero, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; ferre, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

⁴ לבב vatum corde, Montanus; latum corde, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

⁵ לשבת ad sedendum, Montanus; ut sedeant, V. L. Gejerus.

⁶ חמיו in via integra vel integri, Michaelis.

⁷ לא nequiquam firmabitur, Pagninus, Montanus; non stabilietur, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

⁸ לקריים in matutinis, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

nually; or, it may be, mention is made of the morning, because that was the usual time of hearing and judging causes, Jer. xxi. 12. or this may have respect to the spiritual reign of Christ, whose coming will be as the morning; when the Heathens shall perish out of his land, when sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more, and he will destroy them that destroy the earth, Psal. x. 16. and civ. 35. Rev. xi. 18. The Targum agrees with this, "in the world to come, which is like to the light of the morning, I will destroy all the wicked of the earth:"

that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord; from the city of Jerusalem, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it; and it may be understood of the church of God, in the spiritual reign of Christ, into which shall enter no more the uncircumcised and the unclean; and all that offend and do iniquity shall be gathered out of it, Isa. lii. 1. Matt. xiii. 41. or of the New-Jerusalem church-state, in the personal reign of Christ, into which no wicked doers will be admitted, but will remain for ever without, Rev. xxi. 27. and xxii. 15.

P S A L M CII.

A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.

WHETHER this psalm was written by David, under a prophetic spirit, concerning future times; or whether by one of the Babylonish captivity, as Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, or any other; either just at the close of it, or upon their return from it; since it is said *the set time to favour Zion was come*, is not certain: however, since Zion was a type of the Gospel church, it may be very well applied to Gospel times; and the rather, since some passages in it are cited by the apostle in Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. as to be understood of Christ; see ver. 25, 26, 27. The Syriac version calls it, "a prophecy concerning the new people, namely, the Gentiles in the faith;" it is entitled, *a prayer of the afflicted, or poor*; which Austin understood of Christ, who became poor for our sakes, and was afflicted of God and men. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the Jews suffering affliction in the Babylonish captivity; the former observes, that it was the opinion of some of their interpreters that this prayer was composed by some wise and understanding man that fell into the hand of his enemies. It may very well be applied to any afflicted person; all the people of God are more or less a *poor* and *afflicted* people; outwardly afflicted in body, in estate, and in their good name and character; inwardly with the corruptions of their own hearts; the temptations of Satan, and divine deserts; when it is a very proper time for *prayer*, Jam. v. 13. and it is their privilege that they have a God of grace and mercy to pray unto, a throne of grace to come at all times, a spirit of grace and supplication to assist them, and Christ their Advocate and High-priest, to present their petitions for them: and this every one may do, *when he is overwhelmed*; pressed with the burden of sin, without a view of pardon, covered, as the word^f signifies, with shame and sorrow for it; almost overset with, and ready to faint and sink under, afflictions, which like waves and billows roll over him; and at the same time is attended with much darkness and unbelieving frames of soul: *and poureth out his complaint before the Lord*; concerning his trials and afflictions, especially concerning the badness and naughtiness of his heart, the hardness

of it, being so unaffected with providences, and under the word, and at the ordinances; concerning his leanness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness under the means of grace; his lukewarmness and indifference, his deadness and dullness in duty; his unbelief, distrust, and dejection of mind; as well as of the low estate of Zion, the little success of the Gospel, the few instances of conversion, and the unbecoming walk of many professors. Such a *complaint* as this, or *meditation*^g, which he has thought of and digested in his mind; or all that is in his heart, as Aben Ezra observes, he *pours out*; which denotes enlargement in prayer, the abundance of his heart, out of which his mouth speaketh; the fulness of his petition, as also freedom of expression; it signifies a *σπασμα*, a telling all one's mind, speaking out with great liberty; laying it in an humble manner before the Lord, before whom all things are naked and open, and leaving it with him, in entire submission and resignation to his will, to do as seems good in his sight.

Ver. 1. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, &c.*] The prayer of a poor, destitute, and afflicted one; his own, and not another's; not what was composed for him, but composed by him; which came out of his own heart, and out of unfeigned lips, and expressed under a feeling sense of his own wants and troubles; and though dictated and inwrought in his heart by the spirit of God, yet, being put up by him in faith and fervency, it is called his own, and which he desires might be heard: *and let my cry come unto thee*: he calls his prayer *a cry*, because it was uttered in distress, and with great vehemency and importunity; and he prays that it might come unto God, even into his ears, and be regarded by him, and not shut out: prayer comes aright to God, when it comes through Christ, and out of his hands, perfumed with the incense of his mediation.

Ver. 2. *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble, &c.*] Thy Shechinah, as the Targum: when God hides his face at any time from his people, it is a trouble to them, and very grievous; but especially when they are in any other trouble besides; it is very affliction, indeed, when to their outward trou-

^e לעני pauperis, V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus, Amama; inopis, Cocceius.
^f עָשָׂה convolveretur, Munster; obtegitur, Gejerus, so Michaelis

^g טְהוֹמָה meditationem suam, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

ble this is added, which was Job's case, Job xxiii. 1, 2, 3. *incline thine ear unto me*; condescend, in great grace and goodness, to stoop and bow thine ear, and listen to the voice of my supplication: *in the day when I call, answer me speedily*; good men are always for speedy answers of prayer; they would have them the day, the hour, the moment they are calling upon God: sometimes answers are returned as soon, Isa. lxxv. 24. the case of the psalmist was very distressing, and, as he thought at least, required haste, and therefore requests a speedy answer.

Ver. 3. *For my days are consumed like smoke, &c.*] Which suddenly rises up, is easily dissipated, and quickly disappears; so sudden, short, and transient, are the days of man's life; see James iv. 14. or *in smoke*^c, as the Syriac version; his days were spent in great obscurity, in the darkness of affliction, temptation, and desertion; and in so much vexation, trouble, and uneasiness, as if he had lived in smoke all his time: *and my bones are burnt as an hearth*; on which fire is continually made for the preparation of food, and other uses: or as a *trivet*, or *gridiron*: so the Targum: or as a frying-pan; so the Arabic version: the meaning is, that, through trouble and grief, his bones, the strongest parts of his body, the props and supports of it, were so weakened and enfeebled, the strength of them so exhausted, that they were as if they had been parched and burnt up, as the hearth by fire; see Prov. xvii. 22. Psal. xxii. 15.

Ver. 4. *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass, &c.*] Like grass in the summer solstice^d, which being smitten with the heat of the sun, or by some blast of thunder and lightning, is dried up, and withers away; so his heart was smitten with a sense of sin, and of God's wrath and displeasure at him, and with the heat of affliction and trouble, that it failed him, and he could not look up with joy and comfort: *so that I forget to eat my bread*; sometimes, through grief and trouble, persons refuse to eat bread, as Jonathan and Ahab, which is a voluntary act, and purposely done; but here, in the psalmist, there was such a loss of appetite, through sorrow, that he forgot his stated meals, having no manner of inclination to food: some understand this of spiritual food, the bread of life, refusing to be comforted with it; so the Targum, "for I forgot the law of my doctrine."

Ver. 5. *By reason of the voice of my groaning, &c.*] Under the burden of sin, and pressure of afflictions: *my bones cleave to my skin*; was quite emaciated, reduced to a skeleton, became nothing but skin and bone^e; which sometimes is occasioned, as by outward afflictions, so by soul-troubles: or *to my flesh*^f; flesh is put for skin; see Job xix. 20. Lam. iv. 8.

Ver. 6. *I am like a pelican of the wilderness, &c.*] It may be so called, to distinguish it from another of the

same name that lives upon the waters; which has the name of *pelican* in the Greek tongue, as is said, from its smiting and piercing its breast, and letting out blood for the reviving of its young; and in the Hebrew language, from its vomiting shell-fish it has swallowed down; see the note on Lev. xi. 18. where the word is rendered a *pelican* as here, and in Deut. xiv. 17. the same we call the *shovelard*; but a *cormorant* in Isa. xxxiv. 11. Zeph. ii. 14. however, it seems to be a bird of solitude, and therefore the psalmist compares himself to it. According to Isidore^g, it is an Egyptian bird, that inhabits the desert of the river Nile, from whence it has the name of *Canopus Ægyptus*: *I am like an owl of the desert*: or of desert places; so the Turgine version; it is translated *the little owl* in Lev. xi. 17. Deut. xiv. 16. It delights to be on old walls, and in ruined houses, and cares not to consort with other birds, and it makes a hideous sorrowful noise^h. Jarchi renders it the hawk, but that, as Kimchiⁱ observes, is found in habitable places. Bochart^k thinks the *onocrotalos* is meant, a bird so much of the same kind with the pelican, that they are promiscuously used by learned men; and which is a creature, as Jerom^l says, that is used to dwell in desert places; and Isidore^m observes, that there are two sorts of them, one that lives in the water, and another in the desert; it has its name from its braying like an ass; and *Ælianus*ⁿ speaks of a bird of this sort in India, which has a large crop like a sack; and the Hebrew word *cos* here used signifies a cup or vessel, from whence it may have its name; and which he says makes a very disagreeable noise, to which the psalmist may compare the voice of his groaning, ver. 5.

Ver. 7. *I watch, &c.*] Night after night, and take no sleep; can't get any by reason of thoughtfulness, care, and trouble: *and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop*; or, *as a bird*^o; for there is no necessity of limiting it to a sparrow, to which the account does not seem so well to agree; for sparrows will not only perch on housetops and solitary places, but will make their nests in dwelling-houses, and in places of public resort, as temples; hence David speaks of the sparrow finding an house near the altars of God, Psal. lxxxiv. 3. and Herodotus^p makes mention of sparrows and other birds making their nests in the temple at Branchides; which may serve to illustrate the text last mentioned: wherefore this may be understood of any solitary bird, and especially of the owl^q; the Jews had flat roofs upon their houses, and here birds of solitude would come and sit alone in the night-season, to which the psalmist likens himself; being either forsaken by his friends and acquaintance; or, being in melancholy circumstances, he chose to be alone, mourning over his sorrowful state and condition.

Ver. 8. *Mine enemies reproach me all the day, &c.*]

^c בַּעֲשָׁן in fumo, Montanus.

^d Quasi solstitialis herba paulisper fuit, Plauti Pseudulus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 36.

^e Ossa atque pellis sum, Plauti Captivei, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 26. Asinaria 3. 6. v. 28.

^f לְבָשָׁרִי carni mea, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^g Origin. l. 12. c. 7.

^h Solaque culminibus ferali carmine

Bubo, sæpe queri— Virgil. Æneid. 4.

ⁱ Sepher Shorash. rad. סוף.

^k Hierozic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 20. col. 275, 276.

^l Comment. in Esaiam, c. 34. fol. 64. A.

^m Ut supra.

ⁿ De Animal. l. 16. c. 4.

^o כַּסְפָּרִי sicut avis, Gejerus, Schmidt.

^p Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 159.

^q ——— tectoque prophanus

Incubuit bubo.

E tectis strix, &c.

Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. Fab. 8.

Tibullus, l. 1. Eleg. 5. v. 52.

For his principles and practices, being different from theirs; for his religion, and preciseness in it; for his faith and profession of it, and for his holy walk and conversation. Good men have their enemies, and always had; but then they are such who are also enemies to God and Christ, and true religion; and these, not content to reproach now and then, continually throw out their scoffs and jeers; which is not grateful, and is here mentioned as an article of complaint; though the saints should reckon reproach for the sake of Christ and religion greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt: and *they that are mad against me*; as the Jews were against Christ, because of his miracles, doctrine, and success, and therefore sought to take away his life; and as the Apostle Paul before conversion was, even exceeding mad against the saints, and persecuted them to strange cities, Luke vi. 11. Acts xxvi. 11. so were the psalmist's enemies quite outrageous and implacable, being his sworn enemies, as follows: *are sworn against me*; laid themselves under a curse, to do him all the mischief they could, and it may be to take away his life; as those who swear they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, Acts xxiii. 12. or they swear to lies, false charges and accusations brought against him, like those that Jezebel suborned against Naboth: or *they swear by me*; as the words may be rendered; they swear by his calamities and distresses, and wished they might be as he was, if they did not do so and so; and took his name for a curse.

Ver. 9. *For I have eaten ashes like bread, &c.*] He sitting in ashes, as Job did, and rolling himself in them in the manner of mourners; and, having no other table than the ground to eat his food upon, he might eat ashes along with it; and by an hypallage of the words, the sense may be, that he ate bread like ashes, no more savoured and relished it, or was nourished by it, than if he had eaten ashes; the meaning is, that he was fed with the bread of adversity, and water of affliction: *and mingled my drink with weeping*; that is, with tears; as he drank, the tears ran down his cheeks, and mixed with the liquor in his cup; he was fed with the bread of tears, and had them to drink in great measure; these were his meat and his drink, day and night, whilst enemies reproached him, swore at him, against him, and by him; see Psal. lxxx. 5. and xliii. 3.

Ver. 10. *Because of thine indignation and thy wrath, &c.*] This was the burden of his complaint, what gave him the greatest uneasiness; not so much the reproach of his enemies, and his other outward afflictions, as the sense he had of God's wrath and indignation. The people of God are as deserving of his wrath as others; and when they are awakened to a sense of sin and danger, or the law enters into their consciences, it works wrath there, and leaves nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, till comfort is given; and under afflictive providences they are very ready to conclude, that the wrath of God is upon them; but this is only their ap-

prehension of things; it is not in reality: for God has not appointed them to wrath, and has sworn he will not be wroth with them; Christ has bore it for them, in their room and stead; and being justified by his blood and righteousness, they are saved from it; but then the sense they have of it is very terrible, and there is no rest, peace, and comfort in their souls, whilst under the apprehensions of it: *for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down*; as a man that, in wrestling, has the advantage of his antagonist, lifts him up as high as he can, that he may throw him with the greater force upon the ground; in like manner the psalmist thought the Lord was dealing with him: or this may express his changeable state and condition, sometimes lifted up, and sometimes cast down, and which is the case of every believer, more or less; all have their liftings up, and their castings down: when God first calls them by his grace, he raises them from a low estate, lifts them up out of an horrible pit, takes them from the dunghill, sets them among princes to inherit the throne of glory: when he comforts them with the consolations of his spirit, he is the lifter up of their heads; when he grants his presence, and lifts up the light of his countenance; when he discovers his love, and makes their mountain to stand strong; when he shews them their interest in himself, as their covenant-God, in Christ, as their Redeemer and Saviour, and grants them the communion of the Holy Ghost; and when their graces are in lively exercise, then is it a time of lifting up: and they are cast down when corruptions prevail, when grace is weak, when God hides his face, and when afflictions lie heavy on them: this was now the case of the psalmist, and perhaps the remembrance of his liftings up in former times was an aggravation of it.

Ver. 11. *My days are like a shadow that declineth, &c.*] Or, *that is stretched out**, which, though it may appear long, is soon at an end; as it does appear longer when the sun sets[†], and departs from the earth: he reckons his life not by months and years, but by days; and these he compares to a *shadow*, which has no substance in it; his age being as nothing before the Lord, and has much darkness and obscurity in it; his days being days of darkness, affliction, and trouble, and quickly gone, as man's life is; there is no abiding; see 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Job xiv. 2. Pindar[‡] calls man the dream of a shadow: *and I am withered like grass*; which in the morning is flourishing, is cut down at noon, and withered at evening: this is the case of all flesh, however beautiful and goodly it may look; it is weak, frail, and mortal; cannot stand before the force of afflictions, which quickly consume strength and beauty, and much less before the scythe of death; see Psal. xc. 5, 6. Isa. iv. 6, 7, 8.

Ver. 12. *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, &c.*] This address is made to Christ, as is clear from ver. 25, 26, 27. compared with Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. who is a divine Person, endures for ever, is from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeably the same in his love, power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c. and though he died

[†] בִּי נִשְׁבַּעַת per me jurant, Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

[‡] ἰνκλινάτα, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Musculus, Cocceius; extensa, Michaelis.

[†] Et sol crescentes decedens duplicat umbras, Virgil. Bocol. Elog. 2.

[‡] Pyth. Ode 8.

as man, he will die no more; he is alive, and lives for evermore; and because he lives, his people shall live also; and he will come again to take them to himself; and, as Mediator, he is King for ever; always continues, as such, to rule over, protect, and defend his people; and is a Priest for ever, and ever lives to make intercession for them; and his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, have a constant virtue in them, to take away sin, and secure from it: the consideration of the perpetuity of Christ, in his person and offices, was a comfort to the psalmist under his troubles, and in a view of his own declining state: the Targum is, "but thou, O Lord, thy habitation continues for ever in heaven:" and thy remembrance to all generations; the remembrance of his name Jehovah, or Jesus, or Immanuel, or any other, is sweet and precious to his saints in all ages; and so the remembrance of his works, of what he has done and suffered, especially the great work of redemption; for the remembrance of which the ordinance of the Lord's supper is appointed to be continued till his second coming; and his Gospel is an everlasting one, which will transmit the memory of him to men in every age, to the end of the world; and though all flesh is as grass, and every man dies, even the ministers of the word, yet that itself lives for ever. Aben Ezra reads *thy throne*, as agreeing with Lam. v. 19. but Kimchi observes that this reading is owing to a bad copy.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion, &c.*] Exert his power, and display the riches of his grace and mercy; not by delivering the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, to which some restrain it; but by redeeming his church and people by power and price; or rather by raising up and restoring them to great glory and prosperity in the latter day: *for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come*; not the seventy years of the captivity made known to the prophet Jeremiah; rather the seventy weeks of Daniel fixed for the Messiah's coming; or the fullness of time agreed upon, between Christ and his father, for him to come and redeem his people; but it may best of all design the end of the forty-two months, or the 1260 days, or years, fixed for the treading under foot the holy city, for the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and for the reign of antichrist; which when come will usher in glorious times in favour of Zion, the church of God, Rev. xii. 2, 3. and xiii. 5.

Ver. 14. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, &c.*] Meaning not Cyrus and Darius, who gave leave and orders for the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem, as some; nor Nehemiah, and Ezra, and others, who took more pleasure in the stones and rubbish of the temple, as it lay in ruins, than in all the stately palaces in Babylon; and who were very desirous of, and took delight in, gathering these stones, and putting them together again, as others; but the ministers of the Gospel, and other Christians, in the latter day, who will take pleasure in the great number of converts that there will then be, who, as lively stones, will be built up a spiritual house; and especially when those stones shall be laid with fair colours, and the head-stone shall be brought in with acclamations,

crying, Grace, grace unto it; see 1 Pet. ii. 5. Isa. liv. 11⁷ 12. Zech. iv. 7. and *favour the dust thereof*; which sometimes designs multitudes, Numb. xxiii. 10. perhaps here it may denote the meanest of the Lord's people, who will be regarded, and not despised by his servants; but they will shew favour to them, do them all the good they can, and wish well to them, and pray for their prosperity, and for the peace of Zion; that God would make it the joy of the whole earth; and when there shall be such a delight in the stones and dust of Zion, and a spirit of grace and supplication poured forth upon the servants of the Lord, to pray for the promised glory and happiness of it, it will be a token for good, and an intimation that the set time to favour her is at hand; which seems to be the sense of the psalmist: such great reverence and respect have the greatest of the wise men among the Jews for the land of Israel, literally understood, that they kiss the borders, the stones of it, and roll themselves in its dust^a, having perhaps in mind this passage of Scripture.

Ver. 15. *So the Heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, &c.*] Whose name is reverend, and to be feared; especially the glorious and fearful name *Jehovah*, expressive of the divine existence, of his eternity and immutability; though the name of the Lord frequently signifies himself, and here particularly the Messiah, the Son of God, in whom the name of the Lord is; the King of saints, whom all men will fear in the latter day, when the set time to favour Zion is come; will stand in awe of him, be careful of offending him, and will serve and worship him; even the very Heathen, who knew not God, and had no fear of him before their eyes, or in their hearts; the Pagan nations, whose kingdoms will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; see Rev. xi. 15. and xv. 3, 4. and *all the kings of the earth thy glory*; which may be supplied thus, either *all the kings of the earth shall see thy glory*, or shall fear thee because of *thy glory*; the glory of Christ's person, as the Son of God; the glory of his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; especially the glory of his kingly office, to which that of the kings of the earth is not to be compared; the glory of his works of creation, providence, and redemption; and as it will be held forth in the Gospel, with which the earth will now be full, and so be filled with the glory of the Lord, Psal. lxxii. 19. and will be so remarkable and conspicuous as to be taken notice of by the kings of the earth, even by all of them, who, when the glory of the Lord shall be risen in Zion, will come to the brightness of it, and look upon it, and admire it, and fear because of it, Isa. lx. 1. 3.

Ver. 16. *When the Lord shall build up Zion, &c.*] The church of God, fallen down, and in a ruinous condition, as it may be said to be when the doctrines of the Gospel are departed from; and the ordinances of it are corrupted and altered, or not attended to; the worship and discipline of the Lord's house are neglected; great declensions in faith, love, and zeal, among the professors of religion, and but few instances of conversion; and it may be said to be built up again, as it will be in the latter day, when the doctrines of grace will be re-

^a Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 5. s. 10.

vived; the ordinances will be administered in their primitive purity; great spirituality, holiness, and brotherly love, among the saints, and large numbers converted and brought into it: and this will be the work of Christ, the great master-builder; the materials of this building are the saints; those lively stones which will now be laid with fair colours; the ministers of the word will be the instruments that Christ will make use of in rebuilding his church; it is his spirit, power, and grace, which will make all effectual; and he will have the glory, as follows: the Targum is, "for the city of Zion is built by the Word of the Lord:" *he shall appear in his glory; or shall be seen in his glory*^b, which will be upon his church and people, and on which there will be a defence, so that it shall continue; and this will lie chiefly in the purity of Gospel truths, ordinances, and worship; in the number of converts; in the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God upon them; in their peace, prosperity, unity, and spirituality; and in the presence of Christ with them, who will be seen in all the glory and majesty of his kingly office; he will now reign before his ancients gloriously.

Ver. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, &c.*] Of the destitute of human help and support, protection and defence; as the church in the wilderness; of the poor, as the Syriac and Arabic versions, both in spirit and in purse; of the *humble*, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin: the word *c* signifies a low shrub or plant; it is rendered, the heath in the wilderness, Jer. xvii. 6. and designs the saints in their low and afflicted state, during the reign of antichrist, and whilst the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; these are the elect that pray day and night, and give the Lord no rest till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth; and the prayers of these are regarded and looked to by the Lord; his eyes are upon and his ears are open to these praying ones; and all the glorious things which shall be done for the church of God will be in consequence of their prayers: *and not despise their prayer*; not reject it with contempt and abhorrence; more is intended than is expressed: the meaning is, that he will receive it with pleasure, and return an answer to it; the prayer of these poor destitute ones is delightful to him, Prov. xv. 8.

Ver. 18. *This shall be written for the generation to come, &c.*] This prayer, as the Targum paraphrases it, is a directory to saints in distressed circumstances; or that which was just now said, that the Lord will regard, and not despise the prayer of the destitute; this shall stand on record, for the encouragement of praying souls in all generations; or this whole prophecy, concerning the glory of the church in the latter day; this shall be written for the next generation, and so on, until it is accomplished, to keep up the faith and expectation of the fulfilment of it: *and the people which shall be created*; born at the time when all this shall be done; or who shall become new creatures; be created in Christ Jesus, and made new men; these *shall praise the Lord*, when he shall arise and have mercy on Zion;

when he shall favour and rebuild her, in answer to the prayers of his people; then their prayers will be turned into praise; then will those voices be heard among them, hallelujah, salvation, glory, honour, and power unto the Lord our God, Rev. xix. 1.

Ver. 19. *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary, &c.*] From heaven, as it is explained in the next clause, which is the Lord's sanctuary, or holy place, where he dwells, even in the height of it; it is both high and holy, as he himself is; yet he condescends to look down from thence on sinful mortals: *from heaven did the Lord behold the earth*; the inhabitants of it, good and bad: it designs the general notice he takes of men and things in a providential way; he beholds the world, that lies in wickedness, and all the wickedness committed in it; and will one day call to account, and punish for it; he beholds good men, not only with an eye of providence, to take care of them, protect and defend, but with an eye of love, grace, and mercy; he has a special and distinct knowledge of them, and it may here particularly regard the notice he takes of his people, under antichristian tyranny; he sees all the barbarity and cruelty exercised upon them, and will requite it, ere long, to their adversaries, and free them from it, as follows.

Ver. 20. *To hear the groanings of the prisoner, &c.*] Not of a single person only, but of many, who lie in prisons in Popish countries, especially in the Inquisition; where they lie and groan, in darkness and misery, under dreadful tortures; their cries and groans the Lord hears; his heart yearns towards them; he looks with pity on them; and, because of the sighing of these poor and needy ones, he will arise in due time, and set them in safety from him that puffs at them: it is true also of such who are prisoners of sin, Satan, and the law; and, when sensible of it, groan under their bondage, and cry to the Lord for help, who hears them, and directs them, as prisoners of hope, to turn to Christ, their strong hold, Zech. ix. 11, 12. *to loose those that are appointed to death*: delivered to death, as the Targum; delivered over to the secular power, in order to be put to death; who are arraigned and condemned as malefactors, and put into the condemned hole, in order for execution; these the Lord will loose, and save them from the death they are appointed to by men; for this is not to be understood of persons appointed by the Lord to death, either corporeal or eternal, from which none can be loosed, so appointed: in the original text the phrase is *children of death*^d; the same as *children of wrath*, Ephes. ii. 3. that is, deserving of death, and under the sentence of it; as all men are in Adam, even the Lord's own people; and who are, in their own apprehension, as dead men, when awakened and convinced of their state by the spirit of God; these Christ looses from the shackles and fetters of sin, from the bondage of the law, from the tyranny of Satan, and from fears of death, and puts them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 21. *To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, &c.*] That is, that the prisoners and persons appointed

^b וְיִרְאוּהוּ *videbitur*, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

^c וְיִרְאוּהוּ *eorum, qui sunt veluti myricæ*, Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius.

^d בְּנֵי תִמְוֹתָהּ *filios mortis*, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Gericus, Michaelis.

to death, being loosed, might declare, in the church, what great things the Lord has done for them; and so speak well of his wisdom, power, grace, and goodness, in their deliverance; profess his name, and confess him before men, and express a value for his name, and shew forth the honour of it, and seek his glory: *and his praise in Jerusalem*; the Gospel church-state, the same with Zion; when it shall be the praise of the whole earth; then and there will those, that are delivered from the antichristian yoke, praise the Lord, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and glorify God for all that he has done for them.

Ver. 22. *When the people are gathered together, &c.*] When the people of the Jews shall be gathered together, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, the Messiah, and appoint them one head, even Christ; and when the Gentiles shall gather together, in great numbers, to the church of God, Hos. i. 11. and iii. 5. Isa. lx. 4—8. *and the kingdoms to serve the Lord*; even the kingdoms of this world, which will become his, and will serve him in righteousness and holiness, freely and cheerfully, with one shoulder and one consent; their kings will fall down before the Lord, and all nations shall serve him, Psal. lxxxii. 11. and then will be the time when the prisoners shall be loosed, and the Lord shall be praised in Zion.

Ver. 23. *He weakened my strength in the way, &c.*] The psalmist here returns to his complaint of his afflictions, weakness, and frailty, which ended ver. 11. after which some hints are given of the latter-day glory, which though he despaired of seeing, by reason of his frailty and mortality, yet comforts himself with the eternity and immutability of Christ, and that there would be a succession of the church, a seed of true believers, who would see and enjoy it: as for himself, he says that God (for he is that *He*, and not the enemy, as some) had *weakened his strength in the way*, by afflictions, as the word ^c signifies; which weakens the strength and vigour of the mind, and discourages and dispirits it, and enfeebles the body: many are the afflictions which the people of God meet with in the course of their life, in their way to heaven, which have such an effect upon them; through many tribulations they pass to enter the kingdom, as the Israelites in their way to Canaan, and Christ to glory: some think the psalmist personates the Jews in their return from the Babylonish captivity, meeting with difficulties and discouragements in the way; rather the church of God, in the expectation of the Messiah, who, because his coming was delayed, grew feeble in their faith and hope, had weak hands and feeble knees, which needed strengthening by fresh promises: though it may be, best of all, the people of God, waiting for latter-day glory, enfeebled by the persecutions of antichrist, or grown weak in the exercises of their grace, faith, hope, and love: which will be their case before these glorious times, and now is, see Rev. iii. 2. 8. *he shortened my days*; which he thought he should live, and expected he would; and which, according to the course of nature, and the common term of man's life, he might, in all human appearance, have lived; otherwise, with re-

spect to the decree of God, which has fixed the bounds of man's days, they cannot be shorter or longer than they are, Job xiv. 5.

Ver. 24. *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days, &c.*] Which was always reckoned as a judgment, as a token of God's sore displeasure, and as what only befell wicked men, Psal. lv. 23. in the Hebrew it is, *cause me not to ascend*^f; either as smoke, which ascends, and vanishes away; or rather it designs the separation of the soul from the body at death, when it ascends upwards to God that gave it; so Aben Ezra compares it with Eccl. xii. 7. the Targum is, "do not take me out of the world in the "midst of my days, bring me to the world to come:" some, who think that Daniel was the penman of this psalm, or some other, about the time of the Babylonish captivity, curiously observe, that that period was much about the middle between the building of Solomon's temple and the coming of Christ, the antitype of it; which was about a thousand years, of which four hundred and ninety were to come, according to Daniel's weeks; so, personating the church, prays they might not be destroyed, as such; but be continued till the Messiah came: *thy years are throughout all generations*; which are not as men's years, of the same measure or number; but are boundless and infinite: the phrase is expressive of the eternity of God, or Christ; which the psalmist opposes to his own frailty, and which he illustrates in the following verses, by setting it in contrast with the discontinuance and changeableness of the heavens and the earth; see Job x. 5. and xxxvi. 26.

Ver. 25. *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, &c.*] The lower part of the creation, the Lord's footstool, called the earth beneath: this has its foundation; though what it is cannot be well said, it cannot be searched out; it is sometimes said to be founded upon the waters, and yet so as not to be removed for ever, Jer. xxxi. 37. Psal. xxiv. 2. and civ. 5. this shews the wisdom of God, as a wise master-builder, and the stability of the earth; and is a proof of the deity of Christ, to whom these words belong: this is said to be done *of old*, or *at or in the beginning*, as Jarchi and the Targum; and so in Heb. i. 10. where they are applied to the Messiah, the Son of God; and this, as it proves the eternity of Christ, who must be in the beginning, and before all things, so it confutes the notion of the eternity of the earth, received by some philosophers: besides, the words may be rendered, *before^g thou foundedst the earth*; and so refers to the preceding, *thy years, &c.* were before the earth was; that is, from eternity, and so fully express the eternal existence of Christ: *and the heavens are the work of thy hands*; these are the airy and starry heavens, and the heaven of heavens; which are creatures, and not to be worshipped, made by Christ himself, and are expressive of his power, wisdom, and glory.

Ver. 26. *They shall perish, &c.*] Both the heavens and the earth, though so well founded, and so firmly made; they shall be dissolved, melt, and pass away; not as to the substance, but as to the quality of them:

^c אָוֵן affixit, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schmidt; so Ainsworth.

^f אֶל תַּעֲלֶינִי אֵל me ascendere facias me, Montanus, Gejerus.
^g לְמִנִּים antea, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus.

or, as R. Judah Ben David says, whom Aben Ezra on the place cites, and calls the first grammarian in the west, not as to generals, but as to particulars: *but thou shalt endure*; as the eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting; and, even as man, he'll die no more; and, as Mediator, will ever remain; he will be King for ever; his throne is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting one; he is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; his sacrifice is of an eternal efficacy, and he ever lives to make intercession for his people; he will always continue, as the Prophet, in his church, to teach by his spirit, word, and ordinances, in the present state; and hereafter will be the light of the New Jerusalem, and of his saints, for ever: *yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment*; not only the heavens, which are as a curtain and garment about the earth, but the earth itself, Isa. li. 6. will lose their beauty and glory, and become useless, as to the present form of them: *as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed*; as to their form, as a garment that is turned or folded up, and laid aside, as to present use: this seems to favour the above sense given, that the earth and heavens will not perish, as to the substance of them; but as to their form, figure, fashion, and scheme; and as to the qualities of them, all noxious ones being purged away by fire, the curse removed, and new heavens and new earth arise out of them.

Ver. 27. *But thou art the same, &c.*] That hast created them, as the Targum adds; or *thou art he*^b, the everlasting I AM, the unchangeable Jehovah; immutable in his nature and perfections; in his love and affections to his people; in his power to protect and keep them; in his wisdom to guide and direct them; in his righteousness to clothe them, and render them acceptable to God; in his blood to cleanse them, and speak peace and pardon to them; in his fulness to

supply them, and in his intercession for them: *and thy years shall have no end*; see the note on ver. 24. now he, that made the heavens and the earth, and will be when they will not be, especially in the present form they are, must be able to rebuild his Zion, and bring on the glory he has promised; and from his eternity and immutability may be concluded the continuance of his church and interest in the world, until all the glorious things spoken of it shall be fulfilled, as follows.

Ver. 28. *The children of thy servants shall continue, &c.*] The *servants* of the Lord are the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, in all successive generations, with whom Christ will be to the end of the world: their *children* are such whom they have begotten again, through the Gospel, to whom they are spiritual fathers; regenerated souls are meant; of these there will be a succession in all ages, until latter-day glory takes place; these are the church's seed, and her seed's seed, from whom the word of the Lord, the Gospel, will never depart, Isa. lix. 21. or these *shall inhabit*¹, as the word may be rendered, the earth, as the Targum adds; that is, the new heavens, and the new earth, when the old ones are passed away; here they shall dwell with the Lord, who is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever: *and their seed shall be established before thee*; the same with the children, the spiritual seed of the church and of faithful ministers; these, with the church, in which they are born and brought up, shall be established in Christ; the church will be no more in an unstable and fluctuating state, but will be as a tabernacle, that shall not be taken down; yea, shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; see Isa. ii. 2. and xxxiii. 20.

PSALM CIII.

A Psalm of David.

THE Targum adds, "spoken in prophecy," as doubtless it was, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some think it was written by David, after a fit of illness, and his recovery from it, since he speaks of his diseases being healed, and his youth renewed; for which reason the Syriac interpreter suggests it was written in his old age; for he makes the subject of the psalm to be, "concerning coldness which prevailed upon him in old age;" but rather he wrote it when his heart was warm with a sense of the love of God, and spiritual blessings of grace flowing from thence; and in it celebrates and sings the benefits of New-Testament times; and it is a psalm suitable to be sung by every believer, under a quick sense of divine favours: wherefore the above interpreter better adds, "also an instruction and thanksgiving by men of God;" whom the psalmist may very well be thought

to personate, even in Gospel times; and much rather than the Jews in captivity, as Kimchi thinks.

Ver. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c.*] His better part, his soul, which comes immediately from God, and returns to him, which is immaterial and immortal, and of more worth than the world: God is to be served with the best we have; as with the best of our substance, so with the best of our persons; and it is the heart, or soul, which he requires to be given him; and such service as is performed with the soul or spirit is most agreeable to him; he being a spirit, and therefore must be worshipped in spirit and in truth: unless the spirit or soul of a man is engaged in the service of God, it is of little avail; for bodily exercise profiteth not; preaching, hearing, praying, and praising, should be both with the spirit, and with the understanding: here the psalmist calls upon his soul to *bless* the Lord;

^b הוּא הוּא tu ipse, Pagninus, Montanus.

¹ יִשְׁכְּנוּ habitabunt, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Sept.

not by invoking or conferring a blessing on him, which as it is impossible to be done, so he stands in no need of it, being God all-sufficient, and blessed for evermore; but by proclaiming and congratulating his blessedness, and by giving him thanks for all mercies, spiritual and temporal: *and all that is within me, bless his holy name*; meaning not only all within his body, his heart, reins, lungs, &c. but all within his soul, all the powers and faculties of it; his understanding, will, affections, and judgment; and all the grace that was wrought in him, faith, hope, love, joy, and the like; these he would have all concerned and employed in praising the *name* of the Lord; which is exalted above all blessing and praise; is great and glorious in all the earth, by reason of his works wrought, and blessings of goodness bestowed; and which appears to be *holy* in them all, as it does in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; at the remembrance of which holiness thanks should be given; for he that is glorious in holiness is fearful in praises, Psal. xcvi. 12. Exod. xv. 11.

Ver. 2. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c.*] Which is repeated to shew the importance of the service, and the vehement desire of the psalmist, that his soul should be engaged in it: *and forget not all his benefits*: not any of them; the least of them are not to be forgotten, being such as men are altogether unworthy of; they flow not from the merit of men, but from the mercy of God; and they are many, even innumerable; they are new every morning, and continue all the day; and how great must the sum of them be, and not one should be forgotten; and yet even good men are very apt to forget them; as the Israelites of old, who sung the praises of the Lord, and soon forgot his works: the Lord, knowing the weakness of his people's memories, has not only, under the Gospel dispensation, appointed an ordinance, to be continued to the end of the world, to commemorate a principal blessing and benefit of his, redemption by his Son; but has also promised his Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance; and this they should be concerned for, that they do remember what God has done for them, in order both to shew gratitude and thankfulness to him, and for the encouragement of their faith and hope in him.

Ver. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, &c.*] The psalmist explains here what he means by *benefits*, and gives a particular enumeration of them; and begins with the blessing of pardon, which is a special and peculiar benefit; it is according to the riches of divine grace, and the multitude of tender mercies; without which all outward blessings signify nothing; and, without a sense of this, a man is not in a suitable and proper frame to bless the Lord; and this being the first benefit a soul sensible of sin, its guilt and demerit, is concerned for, and seeks after; so enjoying it, it is the first he is thankful for: this is rightly ascribed to God; for none can forgive sins but he; and what he forgives are not mere infirmities, peccadillos, the lesser sins of life; but *iniquities*, grosser sins, unrighteousnesses, impieties, the most enormous crimes, sins of a crimson and scarlet die; yea, *all* of them, though they are many, more than the hairs of a man's head; he abundantly pardons, multiplies pardons, as sins are

multiplied, and leaves none unforgiven; original sin, actual sins, sins of heart, lip, and life, of omission and commission, all are forgiven for Christ's sake: and the special mercy is when a man has an application of this to himself, and can say to his soul, as David to his, God has forgiven *thine* iniquities; for though it may be observed with pleasure, and it is an encouragement to hope in the Lord, that he is a forgiving God, and has forgiven others, yet what would this avail a man, if his sins should not be forgiven? the sweetness of the blessing lies in its being brought home to a man's own soul; and it may be further observed, that this is a continued act; it is not said who has forgiven, and will forgive, though both are true; but *forgiveth*, continues to forgive; for as there is a continual virtue in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, and in his blood to cleanse from all sin, so there is a continual flow of pardoning grace in the heart of God, which is afresh applied to the consciences of his people by his spirit; and this is a blessing to be thankful for: *who healeth all thy diseases*; not bodily ones, though the Lord is the physician of the bodies as well as of the souls of men, and sometimes heals the diseases of soul and body at once, as in the case of the paralytic man in the Gospel; but spiritual diseases, or soul-maladies, are here meant; the same with *iniquities* in the preceding clause: sin is a natural, hereditary, epidemical, nauseous, and mortal disease; and there are many of them, a complication of them, in men, which God only can cure; and he heals them by his word, by means of his Gospel, preaching peace, pardon, and righteousness by Christ; by the blood, wounds, and stripes of his son; by the application of pardoning grace and mercy; for healing diseases, and forgiving iniquities, are one and the same thing; see Isa. xxxiii. 24. and this the Lord does freely, fully, and infallibly, and for which thanks are due unto him; and it would be very ungrateful, and justly resented, should they not be returned to him; see Luke xvii. 15-18.

Ver. 4. *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, &c.*] Not from temporal destruction, to which the natural life is subject, through diseases, dangerous occurrences, and the malice of enemies; to be delivered from which is a blessing, and for which God is to be praised; but from eternal destruction, the destruction of the body and soul in hell; and so the Targum, "who redeemest thy life from hell;" to which destruction all men are liable through sin; their ways lead unto it, and grace only prevents it: the people of God are redeemed from sin, the cause of it; and from the curse of the law, in the execution of which it lies; and from Satan, the executor of it; and all this by Christ, who is the Redeemer appointed and sent, and who being mighty, and so equal to the work, has obtained eternal redemption; through which the saints are secure from going down to the pit of destruction, or from wrath to come; and this is a blessing they can never be enough thankful for; see Luke i. 68. Rev. v. 9. *who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies*; with all other blessings which flow from the loving-kindness and tender mercy of God, even all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David; all the spiritual blessings with which the saints

are blessed in Christ, the grace given them in him, and the mercy kept with him for evermore; all things pertaining to life and godliness given in regeneration; the fruits of great love and abundant mercy, with all the other supplies of grace between that and eternal glory: *crowning* with these denotes an application and enjoyment of them, the great plenty and abundance of them, a being surrounded and loaded with them; as also the honour that goes along with them, which makes those that have them great and glorious, rich and honourable; as well as preservation and protection by them; these encompassing about as a crown the head, and as a shield the body; see Psal. v. 12. where the same word is used as here.

Ver. 5. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, &c.*] With the good things in the heart of God, with his favour and loving-kindness, as with marrow and fatness; with the good things in the hands of Christ, with the fulness of grace in him, with pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; with the good things of the Spirit of God, his gifts and graces; and with the provisions of the Lord's house, the goodness and fatness of it; these he shews unto his people, creates hungerings and thirstings in them after them, sets their hearts a longing after them, and then fills and satisfies them with them: hence the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, *who filleth thy desire with good things*: the word used has sometimes the signification of an ornament; wherefore Aben Ezra interprets it of the soul, which is the glory and ornament of the body, and renders it, *who satisfieth thy soul with good things*; which is not amiss: so that *thy youth is renewed like the eagle's*; not the youth of the body, or the juvenile vigour of it; nor the outward prosperity of it; but the youth of grace, or a renewal of spiritual love and affection to divine and heavenly persons and things; of holy zeal for God, his ways and worship; for Christ, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances; of spiritual joy and comfort, strength, liveliness, and activity, as formerly were in the days of espousals, in the youth of first conversion, or when first made acquainted with the best things; so that though the outward man may decay, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: and this is said to be *like the eagle's*, whose youth and strength are renewed, as some observe^a, by dropping their feathers, and having new ones, by feeding upon the blood of slain creatures; and whereas, when they are grown old, the upper part of their bill grows over the lower part^b, so that they are not able to eat, but must die through want; Austin^c says, that by rubbing it against a rock, it comes to its use of eating, and so recovers its strength: but there is no need to have recourse to any of these things; for as the old age of an eagle is lively and vigorous, like the youth of another creature; so it is here signified, that saints through the grace of God, even in old age, become fat and flourishing, and fruitful, and are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, run and are not weary, walk and faint not, Isa. xl. 31. all which are inestimable mercies, and the Lord is to be praised for them.

Ver. 6. *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*] Not only for the Israelites oppressed by the Egyptians, though the psalmist might have them in his view, by what follows; for whom the Lord did justice, by delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors, and by punishing Pharaoh and his people, and bringing down judgments upon them, both in Egypt and at the Red sea; but for all other oppressed ones in common, the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, who are often oppressed by the rich and mighty; the Lord judges their cause, and does them right, and frees them from their oppression; and so all good men who are oppressed by tyrannical princes and cruel persecutors, and all such whom the man of the earth, the man of sin, antichrist, oppresses, Psal. x. 18. and all those who are oppressed by the devil, buffeted by Satan, and bore down with his temptations; the Lord rebukes him in his own time, and delivers his people out of his hands; which is matter of praise and thankfulness: the psalmist, in this verse and the following, passes to the consideration of the good things God did for others, in order to keep up a warm sense of divine goodness upon his heart.

Ver. 7. *He made known his ways unto Moses, &c.*] The ways in which he himself walks, the steps and methods which he has taken to shew forth his glory; his way in creation, and the order of it, as in Gen. i. 1—30. for though, by the light of nature, it might be known that God created all things; yet, without a revelation from him, it could never have been known in what manner he made them, and the peculiar work of each of the six days, in which they were made; this was made known to Moses; as also his way in providence, which sometimes is in the deep, and past finding out: Moses was made acquainted with the methods of divine Providence, with many special instances of it, relating both to himself in his infancy and in riper years, and to the people of Israel in their march from Egypt to Canaan's land; and the Lord likewise made known unto him his way of grace and mercy, life and salvation, by Christ, which he desired to shew him, and he did, Exod. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19, and xxxiv. 6, 7. Christ was made known to him, as the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head, as God's salvation old Jacob waited for: he was shewn him in the types of the passover-lamb, the brasen serpent, and the rock in the wilderness, and in other things; the way of atonement, by the sacrifice of Christ, was made known to him through the sacrifices which he from God enjoined the people of Israel: hence he wrote of Christ, and of what he should do and suffer; and so fully, that the Apostle Paul said no other things than what he did, John v. 46. Acts xxvii. 22, 23. moreover, the Lord made known to him the ways in which he would have him and the people of Israel to walk; the way of his commandments, his statutes and ordinances; which were made known to him, to deliver to them, and was a peculiar favour, Psal. cxviii. 19, 20. *his acts unto the children of Israel*; his works, his wonderful works; his plagues on their enemies the Egyptians; his redemption of them out of

^a Ambrosii Opera, tom. 5. p. 78.

^b Aristot. de Animal. l. 9. c. 32. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 2.

^c Opera, tom. 8. in Psal. 102. fol. 474. c.

the house of bondage; his leading them through the Red sea as on dry land; his feeding them with manna in the wilderness, protecting them from their enemies, bringing them into the land of Canaan, and settling them there; see Psal. lxxviii. 11, 12. Deut. xxix. 2, 3.

Ver. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, &c.*] So he made himself known to Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 6. and so David found him to be, and therefore calls upon his soul to bless his name. God is *merciful* in the most tender and affectionate manner; he has bowels of mercy, which yearn towards his people, as those of a tender parent to its child, as the word signifies; his mercy is free, without any motive or merit in men to engage it; he delights in shewing it; he constantly bestows it; it is the source of all good things; it is communicated through Christ; all mercies temporal and spiritual come by him; and this lays a foundation for faith and hope: and he is *gracious*, as appears in the eternal choice of his people to salvation; in providing a Saviour and a ransom for them; in giving all grace and the blessings of it to them in his son; in giving him for them, and all things to them with him; in justifying them by his righteousness; in pardoning their sins for his sake; in taking them into his family; in regenerating, calling, preserving, and saving them: *slow to anger*, or *long-suffering*^d; even to wicked men, to the vessels of wrath, to the old world, yea, to Jezebel, to whom he gave space to repent; which long-suffering being abused and despised, is an aggravation of condemnation: but rather here it intends God's long-suffering to his people, as before conversion, waiting till the time comes that he is gracious to them; and after conversion, notwithstanding their backslidings and revoltings; and this long-suffering is their salvation: *and plenteous in mercy*; large and abundant in it, as appears by the various instances of it, and ways and methods in which he shews it; in election, in the covenant, in redemption, in regeneration, in pardon and eternal life; and by the abundance of it which he bestows on every one of his people; and by the vast numbers which do partake of it.

Ver. 9. *He will not always chide, &c.*] He sometimes does chide his children, though never but when they have done a fault; always for their sins, in order to bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to depart from them; not for chiding-sake, as some parents, to gratify their passion and ill humour, who correct for their own pleasure; but the Lord chides and corrects for the profit of his children, that they may be partakers of his holiness; he ever does it for their good, but he will not always chide, or continue it ever: or *he will not always contend*^e, strive with them, litigate a point with them, hold out a controversy, not being able to stand before him; he knows their frame, their weakness, and frailty; see Isa. lviii. 16. *neither will he keep his anger for ever*; though he does with the wicked, yet not with his own people; that endures but for a moment, and is rather seeming than real; and what does appear is soon turned away; he does not retain it long, he is quickly pacified towards them for

all they have done, and smiles again upon them, Mic. vii. 18.

Ver. 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, &c.*] God deals with his people, and deals with them roundly, for their sins, reproving them by his spirit, and by his ministers, and by his chastising rod; but not after or according to them, or as they deserve; in this David acknowledges himself and other saints, with whom he joins, to be sinners, to have been guilty of sins, as none live without them; and that God had taken notice of them, and chastised them for them; but in great moderation, and not according to the due demerit of them: *nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; had he, if every transgression had received its just recompense of reward, they must have been sent to hell; the lake burning with fire and brimstone must have been their portion; the wages of sin is eternal death: the reason why God deals not with nor rewards his people according to the due desert of their sins is because Christ has bore them, and the chastisement of them, and made satisfaction to divine justice for them; see Ezra ix. 13.

Ver. 11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, &c.*] Which is the greatest distance known, or can be conceived of; the space between the heaven and the earth is seemingly almost infinite; and nothing can more illustrate the mercy of God, which reaches to the heavens, and is in heaven; though this is but a faint representation of the largeness and abundance of it, and which indeed is boundless and infinite: so *great is his mercy towards them that fear him*, or, *his mercy hath prevailed over them that fear him*^a; as the waters of the flood prevailed upon the earth, and reached and overflowed the highest hills, Gen. vii. 18. so abundant and superabundant is the grace of God over them that fear him. Which character is given, not as being the cause of their obtaining mercy, but as descriptive of the persons that partake of it; on whom it has such an effect, as to cause them to fear the Lord, and his goodness; and is mentioned to prevent obstinate and presumptuous sinners expecting it, or trusting to it.

Ver. 12. *As far as the east is from the west, &c.*] Which Kimchi thinks is mentioned because it contains the length of the habitable world; and therefore it is not said as far as the north is from the south; since a man can go from east to west, but not from north to south, because of the extreme heat and cold. But this distance is not given with respect to those opposite parts of the earth, which scarcely exceed 2,700 miles; but with respect to those opposite points in the heavens: and the meaning is, that as far as the eastern point of the heavens is from the western point of them; which more illustrates the matter in hand, or the blessing after-mentioned, than the other. *So far hath he removed our transgressions from us*; which removed men and angels from God, and set them at a distance from him: and which, if not removed, are such burdens as must sink men down into the lowest hell; and yet cannot be removed by any thing that they can do; not by any sacrifices, services, or duties of any kind;

^d אָפִים לִּנְיָ longanimis, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

^e כִּנְיָ contendit, Pagninus, Montanus; litigat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; litigabit, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
^a כִּי עַל-עַל prevailed super, Musculus; so Cocceius, Michaelis.

nor in any other way, nor by any other person, than the Lord himself: and this is to be understood not of a removal of the being of sin out of his people, for that is not done in this life; rather of the removal of the guilt of sin, by a special application of pardoning grace and mercy; see 2 Sam. xii. 13. Zech. iii. 4. but, best of all, of a removal of sins to Christ, and of them by his sacrifice and satisfaction: Christ engaged as a surety for his people; Jehovah the Father considered him as such; and therefore did not impute their sins to them, but to him; and when he sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh, he removed them from them, and laid them upon him; who voluntarily took them on himself, cheerfully bore them, and, by bearing them, removed the iniquity of the land in one day; and carried them away to the greatest distance, and even put them away for ever by the sacrifice of himself; and upon the satisfaction he gave to divine justice, the Lord removed them both from him and them; justified and acquitted him, and his people in him: and by this means so effectually, and so far, are their transgressions removed, that they shall never be seen any more, nor ever be imputed to them, nor be brought against them to their condemnation; in consequence of which, pardon is applied to them, and so sin is removed from their consciences, as before observed; see Lev. xvi. 21, 22. Zech. iii. 9.

Ver. 13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, &c.*] When in any affliction, disorder, or distress: the Lord stands in the relation of a father to his people; they are his children by adopting grace, through the covenant of grace with them; by a sovereign act of his own will he puts them among the children, predestinates them to the adoption of children; and sends his Son to redeem them, that they might receive it, and his Spirit to bear witness to their spirits, that they are his children; and towards these he has all the affections of a tender parent. So the Lord pitieth them that fear him: not with a servile fear, which is unsuitable to the relation of children; but with reverence and godly fear, with a fear of him and his goodness, and on account of that; a filial fear, such a reverence as children should have of a father: and this character belongs to all the saints of all nations, Jews or Gentiles; and seems to be here given on purpose to include all; and that the divine pity and compassion might not be thought to be restrained to any particular nation. And, as the fruit of his tender mercy, he looks upon his children in their lost estate, and brings them out of it; he succours them under all their temptations; he sympathizes with them under all their afflictions: being full of compassion, he forgives their iniquities; and in the most tender manner receives them when they have backslidden, and heals their backslidings. The Targum in the king of Spain's Bible is, "so the Word of the Lord 'pities,' &c. See Heb. iv. 15.

Ver. 14. *For he knoweth our frame, &c.*] The outward frame of their bodies, what brittle ware, what earthen vessels, they be; he being the potter, they the clay, he knows what they are able to bear, and what not; that if he lays his hand too heavy, or strikes too hard, or repeats his strokes too often, they will fall in

pieces: he knows the inward frame of their minds, the corruption of their nature, how prone they are to sin; and therefore does not expect perfect services from them: how impotent they are to that which is good; that they can do nothing of themselves; nor think a good thought, nor do a good action; and that their best frames are very uncertain ones; and that, though the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. The word used is the same that is rendered *imagination*, Gen. vi. 5. and viii. 21. and by which the Jews generally express the depravity and corruption of nature; and so the Targum here paraphrases it, "for he knows 'our evil concupiscence, which causes us to sin,'" and to this sense Kimchi. *He remembereth that we are dust*^b: are of the dust originally, and return to it again at death; and into which men soon crumble when he lays his hand upon them; this he considers, see Psal. lxxviii. 38, 39. The Targum is, "it is remembered 'before him, that we are of the dust?'" the Septuagint version makes a petition of it, *remember that we are dust*; and so the Arabic version. And we should remember it ourselves, and be humble before God; and wonder at his grace and goodness to us, Gen. xviii. 27.

Ver. 15. *As for man, his days are as grass, &c.*] He himself is like the grass which springs out of the earth, continues on it for a time, and then drops into it; the continuance of the grass is very short, it flourishes in the morning, is cut down at evening, and withers; see Psal. xc. 5, 6. *As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth*; which denotes the goodness of man, and describes him in his best estate, as possessed of health, riches, honour, and all the gifts and endowments of nature; and yet, with all these, is only like a field-flower, exposed to every wind, liable to be cropped by every hand, and to be trampled upon by the beasts of the field; and therefore flourishes not long: so very precarious and uncertain is man in his most flourishing circumstances; see Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8.

Ver. 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, &c.*] A stormy wind, as the Targum, which tears it up by its roots, or blows off the flower, and it is seen no more; or a blighting easterly wind, which, blowing on it, shrivels it up, and it dies at once; such an one as blasted the seven ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xli. 23. or any impetuous, drying, and noxious wind: and so when the east wind of adversity passes over a man, his riches, and honour, and estate, are presently gone; or some bodily distemper, which takes away health, strength, and beauty, and impairs the mind; and especially death, which removes at once into another world. *And the place thereof shall know it no more*; the place where the flower grew shall know it no more; or it shall be seen no more in it: so man, when he dies, though he is not annihilated, he is somewhere; he is in another world, either of happiness or woe; yet he is not in this world, in the house and family, in the station and business he was; he is no longer known nor seen among men on earth; see Job vii. 10.

Ver. 17. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, &c.*] In opposition to the frailty of man, the stability and duration of the mercy of God is observed. This reaches from one

eternity to another; it is from everlasting in the heart of God: it appeared in the choice of the vessels of mercy; in the covenant of grace, which is founded upon it, and filled with it; every blessing of which flows from it, and therefore are called the *sure mercies of David*. And it appears in time in the regeneration of God's elect, which is according to his abundant mercy; in the forgiveness of their sins, which is according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and in their whole salvation, which is by that, and not by works of righteousness; and will endure for ever, for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is unto eternal life. It reaches from the world past to the world to come, as the Targum; and it is so upon them that fear the Lord; not with a servile, but a filial fear; a fear of the Lord and his goodness; which only is consistent with the grace and mercy of God, and a sense of it: not that the fear of God is the cause of mercy or grace; but, on the contrary, grace and mercy are the cause of the fear of God; which is a blessing of the covenant of grace, and one of the first things which appear in conversion; but this properly describes the persons who openly and manifestly share in the grace or mercy of God, and to whom he manifests it yet more and more; nor have any reason to believe they are the objects of it, until the true fear of God is wrought in their hearts; and, besides, this character may be given to shew that the mercy and grace of God are not limited to the Israelites only, but belong to such of all nations that fear the Lord. *And his righteousness unto children's children*; not the essential righteousness of God, but rather his faithfulness in the performance of his promises, which he will not suffer to fail: the justifying righteousness of Christ is here meant; which is an everlasting one, and is unto and upon all them that believe, in all successive generations; which is meant by the phrase of *children's children*, even the spiritual seed of Christ, the seed of the church, the seed of Israel; to all and each of which, in every age, the word of God comes, and his promises are fulfilled; and who are justified by and glory in Christ, their righteousness; and who are further described in the next verse, which shews that not the carnal seed of them that fear the Lord are meant.

Ver. 18. *To such as keep his covenant, &c.*] The covenant of grace, which is peculiarly the Lord's covenant, as distinct from man's; and which he keeps himself, and is ever mindful of it. This he makes known to his people at conversion; his secret is with them, and he shews them his covenant; the blessings and promises of it; their interest in them, and in himself, as their covenant-God: which they *observe* ^ε; as the word here used signifies; and observing it, they lay hold upon it by faith, as belonging to them; and laying hold upon it, they *keep* it as their own, and keep it fast, and will not part with their interest in it for all the world. *And to those that remember his commandments to do them*; some read them and hear them, but forget them, at least to do them: these are like a man that beholds his face in a glass, and forgets what man-

ner of man he is; so James compares one that is a forgetful hearer, and not a doer of the word, Jam. i. 23, 24. The commandments of God are best remembered, so as to be done, when he puts his laws into the minds of men, and writes them in their hearts, and puts his spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes, and do them, Jer. xxxi. 34. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Ver. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, &c.*] The heaven is his throne; here he sits enthroned in all the glory of his majesty, with all his attendants upon him, and courtiers about him. The Lord Christ is now in heaven; and where he will continue to the restitution of all things, and from whence his people expect him at the last day. Here he is on the same throne with his divine Father; which throne he has *prepared or established* ^ε, so as it cannot be moved: when others are cast down, this shall stand; his throne is for ever and ever. The Targum in the king's Bible is, "the Word of the Lord hath prepared," &c. *And his kingdom rulcth over all*; over all created beings; over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked; over the greatest of men, the kings and princes of the earth. Good angels are subject to him; devils tremble at him; saints acknowledge him as their King; the wicked he rules with a rod of iron; and kings reign by him, and are accountable to him; see Psal. xxii. 28.

Ver. 20. *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, &c.*] For their creation, being made by him; for their preservation, living, moving, and having their being in him; and for their happiness, in which they are continued, owing to their being chosen of God in Christ, and to their confirmation by Christ. These are always employed in the work of blessing and praising the Lord; nor are they in the least backward to it, nor remiss in it; nor does this address unto them suppose any thing of this kind. The design of the psalmist is only to shew how great and good the Lord is; that angels, the more excellent order of creatures, are under obligation to him, and are bound to praise him: and his further view is, to stir up himself and others to this work, from such a consideration, that such noble creatures are employed in the same, and who are further described: *that excel in strength*; or, *are mighty in strength* ^ε; they are called mighty angels, 2 Thess. i. 7. an instance of the might and power of an angel see in 2 Kings xix. 35. These, not having sinned, have lost nothing of their original strength and power, and therefore must greatly excel fallen man; who is become a very weak creature, and unable to do the will and work of God, which angels are, as follows: *that do his commandments*; or *his word* ^δ; what he orders to be done: this they do readily and willingly, constantly, perfectly, and completely; see Matt. vi. 10. *Hearkening to the voice of his word*; they stand before the Lord, waiting his orders; listening with great attention to what he says, and then readily execute it. Or, *at hearing the voice of his word*; that is, as soon as they hear the voice of his word, or hear him speaking ^ε, immediately they apply themselves to the performance of it.

^ε לְשׁוֹרֵי observantes, Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator, Gejerus.
^δ תְּקִינֵי stabilivit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^ε וְהֵי אֲנִי fortis robore, Pagninus, Montanus; valentissimi robore, Junius & Tremellius.

^ε וְהֵי אֲנִי verbum ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^ε So Maüs.

Ver. 21. *Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, &c.*] Which some understand of the sun, moon, and stars, sometimes called the hosts of heaven; and who in their way bless and praise the Lord; see Psal. cxlviii. 2, 3. Others, of the angels, as before; who are sometimes styled the heavenly host, Luke ii. 13. and may be so called from their numbers, there being legions of them; and for their military employment, in guarding and protecting the saints, in encamping about them, and fighting for them. Or rather, since these seem to be distinguished from the angels before addressed, by them may be meant the church militant and her members; who are like an army with banners, consisting of volunteer soldiers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation; whose battles they fight against sin, Satan, and the world; and have a great deal of reason to bless and praise the Lord, for all the great and good things he has done to them, and for them. *Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure*; so the angels are called, and they do the will of God; what is acceptable to him, and well-pleasing in his sight, Heb. i. 7, 14. But rather, as distinct from them, the ministers of the Gospel are intended; a name which the preachers of it bear, both in the Old and in the New Testament, Isa. lxi. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 1. They are ministers of Christ's appointing, calling, qualifying, and sending; and who are employed in his service, in preaching him, his Gospel, and the truths of it; and who do his pleasure,

that which is grateful to him, when they speak his word faithfully, declare his whole counsel, and keep back nothing that is profitable: and these have reason to bless the Lord for the gifts bestowed upon them, and for their success and usefulness; and indeed they bear a leading part in giving praise and glory to God, Rev. iv. 9, 10.

Ver. 22. *Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion, &c.*] Which some interpret of all his creatures, animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, throughout the whole world, which is all under his government; and who all of them, objectively, bless and praise the Lord, Psal. cxlviii. 7—13. Or rather regenerate persons, his sons and daughters, the work of his hand, in the several parts of the world where they live, are here called upon to bless the Lord; who, of his abundant mercy, hath begotten them again to a glorious inheritance: these are his workmanship in Christ; formed for himself, his service, and glory; and are under the highest obligations to shew forth his praise. *Bless the Lord, O my soul*: thus the psalmist ends the psalm as he begun it; not excusing himself by what he had done, nor by calling upon others to this service; knowing that this is constant employment for time and eternity; a work in which he delighted, and was desirous of being concerned in, now and for ever.

P S A L M CIV.

THIS psalm, though without a title, was probably wrote by David, since it begins and ends as the former does, as Aben Ezra observes; and to him the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, ascribe it. The inscription of the Syriac version is, "a psalm of David, when he went to worship before the ark of the Lord with the priests; and as to us, it teaches us confession and prayer; and intimates to us the constitution of the beginning of the creatures; and declares some things concerning the angels." Some copies of the Septuagint version have it, "a psalm of David concerning the constitution of the world;" which indeed is the subject-matter of it; for it treats of the creation of all things, of the heavens and the earth, and of all creatures in them; and of the providence of God in taking care of them. Christ is the divine Person addressed and described throughout the whole, as appears from the quotation of ver. 5. and the application of it to him in Heb. i. 7.

Ver. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c.*] As for the blessings of grace and mercy expressed in the preceding psalm, so on account of the works of creation and providence, enumerated in this; in which Christ has an equal concern, as in the former. *O Lord my God, thou art very great*; the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness, Lord of all, truly God, and the God of his people; see John xx. 28. and who is great, and very great, in his divine Person, being the great God, and our Saviour; great in all his works of crea-

tion, providence, and redemption; great in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; a Saviour, and a great one; the great Shepherd of the sheep; the Man, Jehovah's Fellow. *Thou art clothed with honour and majesty*; being the brightness of his Father's glory, and having on him the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and a natural majesty in him as the Son of God and King of the whole universe; and, as Mediator, he has honour and majesty laid upon him by his Father, Psal. xxi. 5. he has all the regalia and ensigns of royal majesty; he is on a throne, high and lifted up, even the same with his divine Father; he has a crown of glory on his head, he is crowned with glory and honour; he has a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and is arrayed in robes of majesty; and, as thus situated, is to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone; or as if he was covered with sparkling gems and precious stones, Rev. iv. 2, 3. and, having all power in heaven and earth, over angels and men, honour and glory are given him by both.

Ver. 2. *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, &c.*] Referring, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, to the light, which was first created; and indeed this was commanded out of darkness by God the Word, or by the essential Word of God. Light is expressive of the nature of God himself, who is light, and in him is no darkness at all, and who dwells in light^b inaccessible, and so may be said to be clothed with it; which is applicable to Christ as a divine Person, 1 John i. 5.

^b Pura in luce refulsit alma parens, Virgil. *Æneid.* 9. Et paulo post, pallas incedit, nimbo effulgens.

1 Tim. vi. 16. and to whom this term *light* well agrees; Light being one of the names of the Messiah in the Old Testament, Psal. xliii. 3. Dan. ii. 22. and is often given him in the New Testament, as the author of the light of nature, grace, and glory, John i. 9. and viii. 12. Rev. xxi. 23. He is now possessed of the light and glory of the heavenly state, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem, when his face shone like the sun, and his raiment was as the light, Matt. xvii. 2. *Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain*; alluding to the firmament or expanse, which, being spread out like a curtain, divided between the waters and the waters, Gen. i. 6, 7. Heaven is represented as a tent stretched out, with curtains drawn around it, to hide the dazzling and unapproachable light in which the Lord dwells, Isa. xl. 22. and it is as a curtain or canopy stretched out and encompassing this earth; the stretching of it out belongs to God alone, and is a proof of the deity of Christ, to whom it is here and elsewhere ascribed, Job ix. 8. Zech. xii. 1. Isa. xlv. 24. Here Christ dwells invisible to us at present; he is received up into heaven, retained there, and from thence will descend at the last day; and in the mean while is within the curtains of heaven, unseen by us.

Ver. 3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, &c.*] Or his upper rooms¹; one story over another being built by him in the heavens, Amos ix. 6. the chambers where he resides; his courts, as the Targum; his palace and apartments, his presence-chamber particularly, the floor and beams of them are the waters bound up in the thick clouds; or the region of the air, from whence the rain descends to water the hills, as in ver. 13. *Who maketh the clouds his chariot*; to ride in; in these sometimes Jehovah rides to execute judgment on his enemies, Isa. xiv. 1. and in these sometimes he appears in a way of grace and mercy to his people, Exod. xiii. 21. and xix. 9. 1 Kings viii. 11. Matt. xvii. 5. in these, as in chariots, Christ went up to heaven; and in these will he come a second time; and into these will the saints be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at his coming, Acts i. 9. Rev. i. 7. 1 Thess. iv. 17. *Who walketh upon the wings of the wind*; see Psal. xviii. 10. which is expressive of his swiftness in coming to help and assist his people in time of need; who helps, and that right early; and may very well be applied both to the first and second coming of Christ, who came leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills, when he first came; and, when he comes a second time, will be as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 8. and viii. 14. The Targum is, "upon the swift clouds, like the wings of an eagle;" hence, perhaps, it is, the Heathens have a notion of Jupiter's being carried in a chariot through the air, when it thunders and lightens².

Ver. 4. *Who maketh his angels spirits, &c.*] The angels are spirits, or spiritual substances, yet created ones; and so differ from God, who is a spirit, and from the Holy Spirit of God, who are Creators and not creatures; angels are spirits without bodies, and so

differ from the souls or spirits of men, and are immaterial, and so die not; these are made by Christ, by whom all things are made, Col. i. 16. and so he must be greater and more excellent than they; for which purpose the passage is quoted in Heb. i. 7. Some render it, *who maketh his angels as the winds*; to which they may be compared for their invisibility, they being not to be seen, no more than the wind, unless when they assume an external form; and for their penetration through bodies in a very surprising manner; see Acts xii. 6—10. and for their great force and power, being mighty angels, and said to excel in strength, Psal. ciii. 20. and for their swiftness in obeying the divine commands; so the Targum, "he maketh his messengers, or angels, swift as the wind." *His ministers a flaming fire*; angels are ministers to God, stand before him, behold his face, wait for and listen to his orders, and execute them; they are ministers to Christ, they were so at his incarnation, in his infancy, when in the wilderness and in the garden, at his resurrection and ascension, and will attend him at his second coming; and these are ministers to his people, take the care of them, encamp about them, do many good offices to them in life, and at death carry their souls to Abraham's bosom: these are made a flaming fire, or as flaming fire, for their force and power; so the Targum, "his ministers strong as flaming fire;" and for their swiftness as before; and because of their burning love to God, Christ, and his people, and their flaming zeal for his cause and interest; hence thought by some to be called *seraphim*; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath; and have sometimes appeared in fiery forms, as in forms of horses of fire and chariots of fire, and will descend with Christ in flaming fire at the last day; see 2 Kings ii. 11. and vi. 17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Some invert the words, both reading and sense, thus, *who maketh the winds his angels, or messengers, and flaming fire his ministers*; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; we read of stormy wind fulfilling his word, Psal. cxlviii. 8. he sends out his winds at his pleasure to do his errands; as to dry up the waters of the flood, to drive back the waters of the Red sea, and make dry land, to bring quails from thence, and scatter them about the camp of Israel, and in many other instances. So flaming fire was used as his ministers in burning Sodom and Gomorrah; and multitudes of the murmuring Israelites, and the captains with their fifties; but this sense is contrary to the order of the words, and the design of them, and to the apostle's sense of them, Heb. i. 7. which is confirmed by the Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions.

Ver. 5. *Who laid the foundations of the earth, &c.*] Or founded the earth upon its bases¹; which some take to be the waters, according to Psal. xxiv. 2. others the centre of gravity in it; others the mountains; others the circumambient air, by which it is poised; rather the almighty power of God, by which it subsists; this is the work of Christ the Almighty; see Heb. i. 3, 10. That it should not be removed for ever: for though

¹ עליונותו, שמים, Sept. canacula sua superiore, Gejerus; so Michaelis.

² Vid. Horat. Carmiu. l. 1. Ode 34. v. 5. Namque diespiter, &c. Et Ode 12. v. 58. Tu gravi curru quatias Olympum.

¹ על סמכותו super bases ejus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis.

it may be shaken by earthquakes, yet not removed; nor will it be until the dissolution of all things, when it shall flee away before the face of the Judge, and a new earth shall succeed, Rev. xx. 11. and xxi. 1.

Ver. 6. *Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment, &c.*] This refers not to the waters of the flood, when the earth was covered with them, even the tops of the highest mountains; but to the huge mass of waters, the abyss and depth of them, which lay upon the earth and covered it as a garment, at its first creation, as the context and the scope of it shew; and which deep was covered with darkness, at which time the earth was without form, and void, Gen. i. 2. an emblem of the corrupt state of man by nature, destitute of the image of God, void and empty of all that is good, having an huge mass of sin and corruption on him, and being darkness itself; though this depth does not separate the elect of God, in this state, from his love; nor these aboundings of sin hinder the superaboundings of the grace of God; nor the operations of his spirit; nor the communication of light unto them; nor the forming and renewing them, so as to become a curious piece of workmanship; even as the state of the original earth did not hinder the moving of the spirit upon the waters that covered it, to the bringing of it into a beautiful form and order. *The waters stood above the mountains*; from whence we learn the mountains were from the beginning of the creation; since they were when the depths of water covered the unformed chaos; and which depths were so very great as to reach above the highest mountains; an emblem of the universal corruption of human nature; the highest, the greatest men that ever were, comparable to mountains, have been involved in it, as David, Paul, and others.

Ver. 7. *At thy rebuke they fled, &c.*] The depths of water that covered the earth fled, went off apace, when Christ, the essential Word, gave the word of command that they should; saying, *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so*, Gen. i. 9. and this being called a *rebuke*, suggests as if there was something amiss, irregular and disorderly, and to be amended; as if these waters were not in their proper place. *At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away*; ran off with great precipitance; just as a servant, when his master puts on a stern countenance, and speaks to him in a thundering, menacing manner, hastes away from him to do his will and work. This is an instance of the mighty power of Christ; and by the same power he removed the waters of the deluge, when they covered the earth, and the tops of the highest hills; and rebuked the Red sea, and it became dry land; and drove back the waters of Jordan for the Israelites to pass through; and who also rebuked the sea of Galilee when his disciples were in distress: and with equal ease can he and does he remove the depth of sin and darkness from his people at conversion; rebukes Satan, and delivers out of his temptations, when he comes in like a flood; and commands off the waters of affliction when they threaten to overwhelm; who are his servants, and come when he bids them come, and go when he bids them go.

Ver. 8. *They go up by the mountains, they go down by the valleys, &c.*] The Targum is, "they ascend out of the deep to the mountains;" that is, the waters, when they went off the earth at the divine orders, steered their course up the mountains, and then went down by the valleys to the place appointed for them; they went over hills and dales, nothing could stop them or retard their course till they came to their proper place; which is another instance of the almighty power of the Son of God. Some render the words, *the mountains ascended, the valleys descended*"; and then the meaning is, when the depth of waters were called off the earth, the mountains and valleys appeared, the one seemed to rise up and the other to go down; but the former reading seems best, and emblematically describes the state of God's people in this world, in their passage to their appointed place; who have sometimes mountains of difficulties to go over, and which seem insuperable, and yet they surmount them; sometimes they are upon the mount of heaven by contemplation, and have their hearts and affections above; they mount up with wings as eagles; sometimes they are upon the mount of communion with God, and by his favour their mount stands strong, and they think they shall never be moved; at other times they are down in the valleys, in a low estate and condition; in low frames of soul, in a low exercise of grace, and in the valley of the shadow of death, of afflictive providences in soul or body: and as the waters, thus steering their course under a divine direction, and by an almighty power, at length came unto the place which, the psalmist says, *thou hast founded for them*, meaning *the seas*; which the Lord founded and prepared for the reception of them; and which collection of waters in one place he called by that name, Gen. i. 10. So the Lord's people, through a variety of circumstances, trials, and exercises, will be all brought safe to the place appointed for them, and prepared by Christ in his Father's house; where they will be swallowed up in the boundless ocean of everlasting love.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast set a bound, that they may not pass over, &c.*] The Targum adds, "to the rolling waves of the sea." Set doors with bolts and bars, cliffs, rocks, and shores: and, what is more surprising, sand, which is penetrable, flexible, and moveable, is set as a perpetual bound to the raging ocean and its waves, which they cannot pass over: see Job xxxviii. 8—11. Jer. v. 22. So the Lord has set a bound to the proud waters of afflictions, and says, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther; and to the life of man, which he cannot exceed, Job xiv. 5. But he has given man a law, as a rule to walk by, as the boundary of his conversation, and this he transgresses; in which he is less tractable than the raging sea and its waves. *That they turn not again to cover the earth*: as they did when it was first made, ver. 6. that is, not without the divine leave and power; for they did turn again and cover the earth, at the time of the flood; but never shall more. Some think there is no need to make this exception; since this was written after the flood, and when God had sworn that the waters should no more go over the earth, Isa. liv. 9.

Ver. 10. *He sendeth the springs into the valleys, &c.*] The Targum is, "who sendeth fountains into the "rivers." Either from the waters of the sea, which being drained through the sand, become sweet and drinkable; or from the hills and mountains. This is an instance of divine goodness, that having removed the waters from the earth, and shut them up in the sea, and which, through the saltness of them, not being proper drink for men and beasts, he has been pleased to form and open springs, fountains, wells, and rivers of fresh water in the valleys, for the supply of both. Though this is not to be compared with the wells of salvation, and springs and fountains of grace, which he has opened for his chosen people. God himself is a spring or fountain of living water; his love is a river, whose streams delight the city of God; his covenant a source and spring of all blessings and promises. Christ is the fountain of gardens; his fulness is a supply for all his people: the Spirit of God and his grace are a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life. The word and ordinances are the springs in Zion, which *run among the hills*, the several congregated churches, to the watering and refreshing of them; just as springs and rivers of water run in the dales and valleys among the hills, by which they are bounded.

Ver. 11. *They give drink to every beast of the field, &c.*] These fountains, springs, and rivers, afford water for all the beasts of the field; who are therefore said to honour and praise the Lord on account of it, Isa. xlii. 19, 20. *The wild asses quench their thirst; or break* it.* Those creatures that live in dry and desert places, and are themselves dry and thirsty; and though so stupid as they be, yet provision of water is made for them, and they are directed where to seek for it, and find it; see Job xxxix. 5, 6. And if God takes care of the beasts of the field, even the most wild and stupid, will he not take care of his own people? He will, and does. He opens rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; he gives waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to his people, his chosen, Isa. xli. 18, 19. and xliii. 19, 20.

Ver. 12. *By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, &c.*] Another use of the springs, fountains, and rivers of water; by the sides and on the shores of these, some birds delight to be, and on trees that grow here do they build their nests; and here, having wetted their throats, they sit, and chirp, and sing; to doves, by rivers of water, is the allusion in Cant. v. 12. Which *sing among the branches*; of trees that grow by the sides of fountains and rivers; see Ezek. xvii. 23. Matt. xiii. 32. To such birds may saints be compared; being, like them, weak, defenceless, and timorous; liable to be taken in snares, and sometimes wonderfully delivered; as well as given to wanderings and strayings: and to fowls of the heaven, being heaven-born souls, and partakers of the heavenly calling. These have their habitation by the fountain of Jacob, by the river of divine love, beside the still

waters of the sanctuary; where they sing the songs of Zion, the songs of electing, redeeming, and calling grace.

Ver. 13. *He watereth the hills from his chambers, &c.*] The house of his superior treasures, as the Targum. The airy regions, ver. 3. with the clouds of heaven, by the rain which they drop down upon them; the usefulness of which blessings of nature is largely described in this and some following verscs. The *hills*, which are naturally dry and barren, and receive but little advantage from the springs, fountains, and rivers below, are supplied with water from above; and become fruitful, bear herbage, and are clothed with flocks. This seems to refer to the first rain that was upon the earth, Gen. ii. 5, 6. and which favour is continued to all lands, excepting some part of the land of Egypt, and in all ages since; see Psal. lxxv. 9—13. So ministers of the word, who are set in the first place, and are eminent in the church of God, and who water others, are watered themselves with the gifts and graces of the Spirit descending from above, as the apostles were, in an extraordinary manner, at the day of Pentecost; and as others in a more ordinary manner daily are. So likewise the churches of Christ, comparable to hills and mountains for firmness and visibility, and the several members thereof, are watered with the dews of divine favour, with the rain of the divine word; which comes down from heaven as the rain does, and drops and distils like that; and with the grace of the divine Spirit, whereby their souls become as a watered garden, whose springs fail not. *The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works*; with the fruits which grow out of it by means of rain, as are after mentioned; herbs, grass, and trees, so Aben Ezra: or with the influences of the heavens, which are the work of God's hands, and by which the earth is made fruitful; or more particularly with the virtue and efficacy of the rain, so Kimchi; which is the Lord's peculiar work, Jer. xiv. 22. This the earth drinking in, is as satisfied with as a thirsty man is with drinking a draught of water; see Deut. xi. 11. Heb. vi. 7. So the people of God, comparable to the good earth that drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, are satisfied with the love of God, with the blessings of his grace, with the doctrines of his Gospel, and with the ordinances of his house.

Ver. 14. *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, &c.*] By means of rain falling upon the tender herb, and upon the mown grass, whereby provision of food is made for those creatures that live upon grass. *And herb for the service of man*: some herbs being for physic for him, and others for food, and all more or less for his use. Herbs were the original food of man, Gen. i. 29. and still a dinner of herbs, where love is, is better than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith, Prov. xv. 17. Some render it, *and herb at the tillage of man*: grass grows of itself for the use of the cattle; but the herb, as wheat and the like, which is for the use of man, is caused to grow when man has taken some pains with the earth, and has tilled and manured

* יִשְׁבְּרוּ frangent, Pagninus, Montanus; frangunt, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

° לֵעֲדוּרָא ad culturam, Cocceius, some in Vatablus, and Michaelis; so Gussetius, p. 572.

it; but the former sense seems best. *That he may bring forth food out of the earth*; either that man may do it by his tillage; or rather that the Lord may do it, by sending rain, and causing the grass and herbs to grow. However, man's food, as well as the food of beasts, comes out of the earth, as he himself does, and to which he must return.

Ver. 15. *And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, &c.*] That is, by means of rain watering the earth, vines are caused to grow out of it; which produce wine, that has such a virtue in it, as to cheer the heart of man, even of a miserable, distressed, and afflicted man, as the word^p is supposed to signify, Judg. ix. 13. Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. Of this nature are (and therefore are compared to wine, or expressed by it) the love of God and Christ; the blessings of grace, the doctrines of the Gospel, the ordinances of it; particularly that of the Lord's supper, and even the joys of heaven. *And oil to make his face to shine*; or, *to make his face shine more than oil*^q; and so it continues the account of the virtue of wine, which not only cheers the heart, but makes the countenance brisk and lively, and even shine again: but, according to our version, and others, this is a distinct effect of the rain, causing olive-trees to grow out of the earth, productive of oil; which being eaten, fattens, and so makes the face to shine; as it also does by anointing with it, which was much in use for that purpose in the eastern countries, as well as for cheering and refreshing; see Ruth iii. 3. Psal. xxiii. 5. Matt. vi. 17. Pliny^r says, oil purifies or clears; and particularly of oil of almonds, he says, that it makes clean, makes bodies soft, smooths the skin, procures gracefulness; and, with honey, takes spots or specks out of the face. Kimchi makes mention of another use of oil, in lighting lamps; by which the face of man is enlightened, or light is given him. So the Targum, "to enlighten the face with oil." To this the grace of the Spirit is often compared in Scripture, with which both Christ and his members are said to be anointed, Acts x. 38. 2 Cor. i. 21. 1 John ii. 20, 27. This not only cheers and refreshes them, and is therefore called the oil of joy and gladness, Psal. xlv. 7. Isa. lxi. 3. but beautifies and adorns them, and even makes them fat and flourishing, and so their faces to shine; as well as causes their lamps of profession to burn clearly, and the light of their good works to shine before men to the glory of God. *And bread which strengthens man's heart*: the earth being watered with rain, causes the wheat sown in it to grow up; of which bread is made for the support of man's life, and is the chief sustenance of it; and is therefore commonly called *the staff of life*, and, by the prophet, *the whole stay of bread*, Isa. iii. 1. by which human nature is invigorated, and the strength of man is kept up and increased; for the phrase, see Gen. xviii. 5. Judg. xix. 5. Of this nature are the provisions of God's house, which go by the same name, the word and ordinances; and especially Christ Jesus himself, the true and living bread; by

which the Christian's spiritual life is supported and maintained, and he is comforted and refreshed, and strengthened for every good work.

Ver. 16. *The trees of the Lord are full of sap, &c.*] Or *satiated*^s; that is, with rain; and through it are filled with fruits. This is to be understood not only of the tallest and largest trees; which are therefore called the trees of the Lord, as high mountains are called the mountains of the Lord, Psal. xxxvi. 6. and so other things excellent in their kind: but of trees of the field and forest; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; which are not planted and cultivated by man, as trees in gardens and orchards are; but are more especially under the care and cultivation of the Lord himself, and may design such as were produced by him at the creation. *The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted*; a mountain on the borders of Judea, so called from its whiteness, through the snow on it, as the Alps are; and where grew great quantities of large and spreading cedars, which were not of man's, but of the Lord's planting; these were watered and made to grow with the rain of heaven. Rauwolf^t, who was upon this mountain in 1574, says, "though this hill in former ages has been quite covered over with cedars, yet they are so decreased, that I could tell, says he, no more but twenty-four, that stood round about in a circle; and two others, the branches whereof are quite decayed with age." But Thevenot^u, who has been there since, affirms there are no more nor less than twenty-three, great and small; of the largeness, thickness, and height of these trees, see the note on Isa. xxxvii. 24. Saints are often compared to trees, which are planted by the Lord in Christ, and in his churches; and particularly to cedars, for their height, strength, and durability; see Psal. xcii. 13, 14. and these, through the grace of God, are full of sap and spiritual life, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, and are often represented as planted and growing by rivers of water; see Numb. xxiv. 6. Psal. i. 3. Jer. xvii. 8.

Ver. 17. *Where the birds make their nests, &c.*] As they do in large, tall, spreading trees: not any particular birds, as the sparrow, to which the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and Apollinarius, restrain it: but birds in general are intended; and especially such as build in large trees, as before and after mentioned. Jarchi applies it to the Israelites dwelling among the trees in the garden of Eden: and it may be much better applied to the saints dwelling in the churches, among the trees of righteousness, under the shadow of Gospel ordinances; see Ezek. xvii. 23. Matt. xiii. 31, 32. As for *the stork, the fir-trees are her house*; where she makes her nest, and brings up her young. Kimchi says it is a large bird, and builds its nest in high trees, as in cedars; but the bird which goes by the name of *pelargus* with the Greeks, and of *ciconia* with the Latins, and of *stork* with us, for the most part builds its nest on the tops of towers and temples^v, and

^p מִיָּמִין mortalis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; sorry man, Ainsworth.

^q יָדֵי שָׁמַיִם præ oleo, Vatablus, Gejerus; magis quam oleum, Piscator.

^r Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 4.

^s מִשְׂבֵּעַ satiantur, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cœcius; so Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^t Travels, par. 2. ch. 13. p. 191.

^u Travels, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 60. p. 224.

^v Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 8. c. 18. & Prætorii Disp. Histor. Physic. de Crotalistris, c. 6. Heldelin. in ibid. c. 11.

the roofs of high houses, and seldom in trees; and when it does, it is in such that are not far from the habitations of men, which it loves to be near: perhaps the reason of its not building on houses in Palestine might be because their roofs were flat and frequented, and therefore built on high trees there, as fir-trees and cedars. And Olympiodorus * says it does not lay its eggs on the ground, but on high trees; and Michaelis on the text attests, that he himself had seen, in many places in Germany, storks' nests on very high and dry oaks. It has its name in Hebrew from a word † which signifies *holy, merciful, and beneficent*; because of the great care which it takes of its dam when grown old ‡: and a like behaviour among men is called *piety* by the apostle, 1 Tim. v. 4. But in the Chaldee tongue, and so in the Targum, it has its name from its whiteness; for though its wings are black, the feathers of its body are white: and so Virgil * describes it as a white bird, and as an enemy to serpents; for which reason the Thessalians forbade the killing them, on pain of banishment †. It was an unclean bird, according to the ceremonial law, Lev. xi. 19. Good men are called by the same name, holy and beneficent; and though they are unclean by nature, yet Christ, the green fir-tree, Hos. xiv. 8. is the house of their habitation; in him they dwell by faith, who receives sinners, and eats with them, Luke xv. 2. It is usual with the Latin poets to call the nests of birds their houses †.

Ver. 18. *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, &c.* Who have their name in Hebrew † from their climbing and ascending them. What we commonly call a *wild goose chase* should be expressed a *wild goat's chase*; for not geese, but goats, are chased; and when they are, they flee to the hills for refuge. Hence they are sometimes called the wild goats of the rocks, Job xxxix. 1. and sometimes the rocks are called from them the rocks of wild goats, 1 Sam. xxiv. 2. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it *for the harts*, or deer; and so Apollinarius: but the word is not used of them. And the *rocks for the conies*; who being a feeble folk, make their houses in them, to protect them from creatures of superior power and strength, Prov. xxx. 26. Some interpret it of the *hedgehog*, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions: others of *hares*, as the Syriac and Arabic, and so Apollinarius; and others of *mountain-mice*. Now what the hills and rocks are to the above creatures, a refuge and a habitation for them, that Christ is to those that fly to him for refuge; though weak and feeble, sinful and unworthy, he is their rock, the rock of their refuge, their strong tower, and place of defence.

Ver. 19. *He appointeth the moon for seasons, &c.* Or, *he made* †; for the moon is the work of his hands, Psal. viii. 3. as is likewise the sun. From the rain the psalmist passes to the luminaries; for this reason, as Aben Ezra thinks, because they are the cause of rain: the moon is taken notice of in the first place, because, as Kimchi observes, the night was before the day; and

in the night of the fourth day were the sun, moon, and stars; but the sun rose in the morning. The moon was made for seasons as well as the sun, Gen. i. 16. or that times might be numbered by it, as the Targum, both months and years; one of its courses and revolutions making a month, and twelve of these a year; which lunar years were in use among some nations: as also it is supposed to have an influence on the ebbing and flowing of the tides; and served to regulate the festivals of the Jews, their set appointed times, as the word signifies, and is used of them, and which were governed by it. And this Jarchi takes to be the sense of the passage; though Aben Ezra more truly remarks, that it purely belongs to the work of creation, and the original design and use of this luminary. It was an emblem of the ceremonial law; which consisted, among other things, in the observation of new moons; which gave some light in the time of Jewish darkness, though but a dim one, in comparison of the Gospel; had its imperfections, was changeable, waxed old, and vanished away; and which the church is said to have under her feet, being abolished, Rev. xii. 1. Though some think the world is meant, which is changeable and fading. It was also an emblem of the church, Cant. vi. 10. which receives her light from Christ, the sun of righteousness; has its different phases and appearances; sometimes being in prosperity, and sometimes in adversity; has its spots and imperfections, and yet beautiful, through the grace of God and righteousness of Christ. *The sun knoweth his going down*; not the going down of the moon, which is the sense of some, according to Kimchi; but his own going down; and so he knows his rising, to which this is opposed, Psal. l. 1. and every revolution, diurnal or annual, he makes; and which he constantly and punctually observes, as if he was a creature endued with reason and understanding; see Psal. xix. 5, 6. Job xxxviii. 12. He knows the time of his setting, as the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and also the place where he is to set, at the different seasons of the year, and indeed every day. This luminary is an emblem of Christ, the sun of righteousness, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Mal. iv. 2. the fountain of all light; the light of nature, grace, and glory; and of all spiritual life and heat, as well as fruitfulness. He arose at his incarnation, and set at his death, the time of both which he full well knew; and he has his risings and settings, with respect to the manifestation of himself to his people, or hiding himself from them, which depend on his pleasure.

Ver. 20. *Thou makest darkness, and it is night, &c.* The darkness was before the light, and the night before the day, Gen. i. 2, 4, 5. and now the darkness and night are made by the setting of the sun before mentioned; see Isa. xlv. 7. *Wherein all the beasts of the field do creep forth*; out of their dens, and range about for their prey, as the evening-wolves and others: and these are not the only creatures that choose the night and darkness; all wicked men do the same; whose

* Apud Bochart. Hierozoiic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 29. col. 330.

† מְרִיבָה אֶת־הַסֵּלֶם Buxtorf. Lexic. fol. 247.

‡ Solinus, c. 53. Elian. de Animal. l. 2. c. 43.

§ Candida venit avis longis invisâ celubris, Georgic. l. 2.

¶ Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. prope finem.

† Frondiferasque domos avium, Lucret. l. 1. v. 19. Antiquasque

domos avium, Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. v. 209.

‡ מְרִיבָה אֶת־הַסֵּלֶם Buxtorf. Lexic. fol. 322.

§ עָשָׂה פְּעִי, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Picator, &c.

deeds are evil, and do not care to come to the light, lest they should be reprov'd; particularly drunkards, adulterers, thieves, and murderers, John iii. 20, 21. 1 Thesa. v. 7. Job xxiv. 13—17. So the Scribes and Pharisees, when they consulted to take away the life of Christ, and agreed with Judas to betray him, did it in the night: so false teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing, when it is a night of darkness with the church, take the advantage of it, to creep about and spread their pernicious doctrines; see 2 Tim. iii. 6. Jude 4.

Ver. 21. *The young lions roar after their prey, &c.* Or, *at the prey*^f; for, according to the Scriptures, it seems as if their time of roaring was when they have got their prey, and are tearing it and feeding on it, and not till then, Amos iii. 4. Isa. xxxi. 4. though naturalists tell us, that, when they are pinched with hunger, they make such a hideous roaring, as quite stupifies, as well as terrifies, other creatures; that they have no power to stir, till they come up to them, and become their prey, who otherwise could outrun them; for the lion is neither a swift creature, nor of good scent: wherefore, according to credible accounts, a creature called a *jackal*, little bigger than a fox, hunts its prey for it, and secures it till it comes up to it. Young lions are rather mentioned, because their appetite is keenest, and their voice loudest and strongest. This creature is an emblem of Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. *And seek their meat from God*; as all creatures in their way do; as the ravens by crying, so the young lions by roaring; neither one nor other can provide for themselves, but God, in his providence, supplies them all with food; see ver. 27, 28. and Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. And should not we seek and ask our meat of God too, even both temporal and spiritual? And may we not expect it from him? Does he feed the ravens, and also the young lions, and will he not take care of his own people, and feed them with food convenient for them, and especially when they ask it of him? Psal. xxxiv. 10. Luke xii. 24. and xi. 13.

Ver. 22. *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, &c.* Having gone some one way, some another, seeking their prey; but upon the sun's rising gather together in order to return from whence they came, abhorring the light of the sun, as some creatures do, and fearing being hunted and taken by men, the fear of whom is still in some measure upon the beasts of the field, Gen. ix. 2. So wicked men do not care for the light of the day, nor do false teachers choose to come to the light of the word; these owls and bats, these *lucifuge*, as Tertullian calls them; and Satan himself chooses to set upon persons when they are in darkness, and in melancholy and disconsolate frames; and is afraid of believers, when they put on the armour of light, especially the shield of faith, and resist him with it, then he flees from them. *And lay them down in their dens*; for rest and safety, and to feed themselves and young ones with the ravin they bring with them; see Cant. iv. 8. Nah. ii. 12.

Ver. 23. *Man goeth forth to his work, &c.* Having taken sleep in the night, being comfortably refreshed, and his strength recruited; he rises with the rising sun, and goes forth cheerfully and with intrepidity to his work in the field, or elsewhere, the beasts being fled and gone. *And to his labour until the evening*; to till the ground, and do other services and labour, either of the head or hand; for man is born and designed for labour, and not for sloth and idleness: in his innocent state he was set to dress the garden and keep it; and, after the fall, his doom was to get his bread by the sweat of his brow; and he is to work while the day lasts, till the evening and night come on, when he betakes himself to sleep and rest again. So the believer, though the work of redemption and salvation is wrought for him, and the work of grace is wrought in him, each by another hand; yet he has work enough to do, which he is created for, and under obligation to perform; and in which he is to continue steadfast and immovable, while the day of life lasts, till the night of death comes, and no man can work; and then he rests from his labours, and his works follow him.

Ver. 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! &c.* The psalmist having taken notice of many of the works of creation, stops and wonders at the number of them; though he had not gone through them all, and there were even things innumerable behind; see ver. 25. he admires the sum of them, how great it was; and not only the quantity but the quality of them; for so the words may be rendered, *how great are thy works*^g, as for number, so for nature; in which there is such an amazing display of the greatness and power of God, and particularly of his wisdom, as is observed in the next clause. *In wisdom hast thou made them all*; not only one thing, as the heavens, Psal. cxxxvi. 5. but every thing is wisely contrived and made; there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God in the most minute thing his hands have made; he has made every thing beautiful in its season: a skilful artificer, when he has finished his work and looks it over again, often finds some fault or another in it: but when the Lord had finished his works of creation, and looked over them, he saw that all was good; infinite wisdom itself could find no blemish in them: what weak, foolish, stupid creatures must they be that pretend to charge any of the works of God with folly, or want of wisdom? Some by *wisdom* here understand Christ himself, the wisdom of God; and not amiss, since without him was not any thing made; see Prov. iii. 19. *The earth is full of thy riches: or possessions*^h; for as the Lord is the maker, he is the proprietor and the possessor of heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and can and does dispose thereof as seems good in his sight; and whatever of the riches and good things of the earth men may have, they are only stewards, the Lord is the rightful owner and possessor of them; see Gen. xiv. 19. Psal. xxiv. 1. with which compare Psal. xxxiii. 5. and the note there.

Ver. 25. So is *this great and wide sea, &c.* One of

^f אֲרִיָּהּ ad prædam, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^g כַּמֵּה מְרִבָּה quam multa ac magna, Gejerus.

^h אֶרֶץ כְּפִיֶּיךָ possessione tua, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; tuis possessionibus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis.

the great and manifold works of God, made in his wisdom, and full of his riches and possessions, as the earth is; this is that collection of waters which God called seas, Gen. i. 10. and is, as Kimchi observes, great in length, and wide and spacious in breadth; or *broad of hands*¹, as in the original; or spacious in borders, as the Targum; it washing the several parts of the continent, and encompassing and embracing the whole earth with both arms as it were. Nor is it unusual with other writers to call the sea the great sea², and to speak of an arm or arms of the sea³, as we do. Isidore says⁴, the great sea is that which flows out of the ocean from the west, and goes to the south, and then to the north, called so in comparison of other seas that are less, and is the Mediterranean sea. This is an emblem of the world, which may be compared to the sea for the multitude of nations and people in it, as numerous as the waves of the sea; for the temper of the inhabitants of it, being like the troubled sea, restless and uneasy, casting up the mire of dirt and sin; and for the instability of it, and the fluctuating state and condition of all things in it. *Wherein are things creeping innumerable*; so that it seems there are reptiles in the water as well as on land; and indeed every creature without feet, and that goes upon its belly, in the element where it is, whether earth or water, is a creeping thing; of these swimming or creeping things the number is exceeding great, especially of the latter sort; fishes increasing much more than the beasts of the earth. Their species are innumerable; so their kinds or sorts are reckoned up by some 144⁵, by others 153⁶, and by others 176⁷; the Malabarians reckon up 900,000 fishes, and 1,100,000 creeping things⁸. These are an emblem of the common people of the world, which are innumerable; see Hab. i. 14. *Both small and great beasts*; for there are creatures in the seas which answer to those on the dry land, both of the lesser and greater sort, as sea-lions, sea-horses, sea-cows, sea-hogs, &c. these may represent the rulers and governors of the world, supreme and subordinate; it is no unusual thing for great monarchies, and persons of great power and authority, to be signified by beasts rising out of the sea, Dan. vii. 3. Rev. xiii. 1.

Ver. 26. *There go the ships, &c.*] From place to place, from one end of the world to the other, for the sake of merchandise⁹; this is one of the four things that were too wonderful for Solomon, *the way of a ship in the midst of the sea*, Prov. xxx. 19. though navigation was improved in his time, indeed not so much as it is now. The original of ships was doubtless Noah's ark, so that they owe their first draught to God himself. They seem to be an emblem of the church and people of God passing through the sea of this world to the haven of eternal rest. The ship is but a small vessel, and takes up but a small room in comparison of the vast ocean on which it is; and so the church of

Christ is but small, a little city, and few men in it, a little flock, a small remnant: a ship is unfixed and unsettled, sometimes here and sometimes there; so the church of Christ is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; nor is this world the rest of God's people, nor have they any continuing city here; for, as a ship is tossed with tempests, so are they with the waves of afflictions, the temptations of Satan, and the persecutions of men; and sometimes, like Paul, and the mariners with him, have no sight of sun and stars for many days, of the sun of righteousness, or of the stars, the ministers of the word; when sailing is dangerous it bodes perilous times, through the impure lives of professors, and impious doctrines of false teachers, whereby many suffer shipwreck; yet all the Lord's people get safe ashore, having a good pilot, Christ, to conduct them; and the good anchor of hope, sure and steadfast. There is *that leviathan*, whom *thou hast made to play therein*; the Targum adds, "for the righteous at the feast of the house of his habitation." Of this creature there is an account in Job xli. Some take it to be the crocodile, which is both a sea and river fish; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, and so Apollinarius, call it the dragon; it is more generally thought to be the whale; Aben Ezra says it is the name of every great fish; it is a sportive creature, tumbles about in the great sea, and plays with the waters of it, which it tosses up in great quantities; and with the fishes of the sea, which it devours at pleasure; and laughs at the shaking of the spear; and to which mariners throw out their empty casks to play with, when near them, and they in danger by it; see Job. xli. 5, 29. This creature is generally reckoned by the ancients a figure of Satan, it being king over all the children of pride, Job xli. 34. as he is the prince of the power of the air, and god of this world; who has been playing his tricks in it from the beginning of it, not only deceiving our first parents, but all the nations of the world; nor are saints ignorant of his devices. It sometimes describes a tyrannical prince, as the kings of Babylon and of Egypt, Isa. xxvii. 1. Ezek. xxxii. 2. and is a true picture of antichrist, the beast which rose out of the sea; nor is there any like him on earth; see Rev. xiii. 1, 4. Job xli. 33.

Ver. 27. *These wait all upon thee, &c.*] Or *hope in thee*¹⁰; not only the fishes of the sea, but the beasts of the field; for to them the psalmist returns, as Aben Ezra observes; to whom hope and expectation of their food, and waiting for it at the hands of God, are ascribed; the allusion seems to be to tame creatures, who come at their certain times and wait on them that have been used to give them their food; and it may instruct us to wait on the Lord, as for our daily bread, so for our spiritual food, in prayer, and in public ordinances, where and from whom we may hope and expect to have it. *That thou mayest give them their meat in*

¹ יָמִים רַחֲבֵי יָדַי latum manibus, Montanus; spatiosum manibus, V. L. amplum manibus, Vatablus.

² Virgil. Æneid. 5. Lucretius, l. 6.

³ Veluti par divexum in mare brachium transitum tentaturus, Liv. Hist. l. 44. c. 35. Nec brachia longo, &c. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1. v. 13, 14.

⁴ Origin. l. 13. c. 16.

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⁵ Origin. l. 12. c. 6.

⁶ Oppianus in Halienticis. Vid. Hieron. in Ezek. 47. 60. 266.

⁷ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 11.

⁸ Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 963.

⁹ So Homer calls ships *ματ' αμαρτυροισι*, Iliad. 3. v. 46.

¹⁰ יִשְׁפְּרוּן sperant, Pagninus, Cocceius, Michaelis; sperabunt, Montanus.

*due season; or in his time*¹; every one in its own time, which is natural to them, and they have been used to; at which time the Lord gives it to them and they take it; it would be well if men would do so likewise, eat and drink in proper and due time, Eccles. x. 17. Christ speaks a word in season to weary souls; his ministers give to every one their portion of meat in due season; and a word spoken in due season, how good and sweet is it? Isa. l. 4. Luke xii. 19. Prov. xv. 23.

Ver. 28. *That thou givest them they gather, &c.*] What God bestows upon them as a bounty of Providence they take and make use of, and in their way thankfully, and without repining; some gather it up for immediate use and service, and not into barns; others gather it up for time to come, as the ant, Matt. vi. 26. Prov. vi. 8. Kimchi understands this of a time of scarcity, when they gather here a little and there a little; as he does the following clause of a time of plenty. *Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good*; God, in whose hand all things are, and from whence all things come, opens his hand of providence, and liberally and bountifully gives, as this phrase signifies, Deut. xv. 11. and all his creatures are filled with his good things to their satisfaction: and thus the spiritual food which he gives his people, they gather it by the hand of faith, as the Israelites gathered the manna in the wilderness every morning, and according to their eating, what was sufficient for them; and to whom he gives liberally, even all things richly to enjoy; all things pertaining to life and godliness; Christ, and all things along with him; abundance of grace here, and glory hereafter; and they are satisfied with his good things as with marrow and fatness.

Ver. 29. *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled, &c.*] God may be said to hide his face from the creatures when he withholds their food from them, when there is a scarcity of provisions, a famine in the land; when there is no pasture for them to feed on, nor brooks of water to drink of; then are they troubled or perplexed, as in Joel i. 18, 20. and know not what to do, nor where to go for help, but faint, and sink, and die. So in a spiritual sense when God hides his face from his people, removes his Shechinah, or divine Majesty and Presence, as the Targum here; and withdraws the influences of his grace and spirit; or when they have no food for their souls, or what they have is not blessed, then are they troubled, Psal. xxx. 7. *Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust*; their original dust, from whence they sprung, as man himself does; the breath of all is from the Lord; he gives it to his creatures, and when he pleases he takes it away; and when he does, they die and become dust again.

Ver. 30. *Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, &c.*] Thy Holy Spirit, as the Targum, who was at first concerned in the creation of all things, the heavens and the earth, and man upon it, Gen. i. 2. Psal. xxxiii. 6. Job. xxvi. 13. and xxxiii. 4. which may be alluded to here; though it seems chiefly to intend the generation and production of creatures in the room of

those that die off; that so their species may be preserved, and there may be a constant succession of them, as there is in all ages, Eccl. i. 4. *And thou renewest the face of the earth*; by a new set of creatures of all kinds being brought upon it to fill it. As there is also a daily renewing it every morning by the rising sun, giving fresh life and vigour to all created beings; and a yearly one every spring, when the face of all nature is renewed and revived. Jarchi and Arama understand it of the resurrection of the dead; this sense Kimchi mentions as an article of their faith, but not as the sense of the text. It may be applied to the renewing work of the spirit of God in the souls of men, by whom they are made new, and by whom they are daily renewed in the spirit of their minds. And there are particular seasons in which God sends forth his spirit and renews the face of things in the world, and in his churches; upon the effusion of his spirit in the first times of the Gospel, there was a new face of things, not only in the land of Judea, but throughout the whole Gentile world, where old things passed away, and all things became new; as in the latter day, when the spirit shall be poured forth from on high, there will be a renewing of the face of the earth again; it will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; the kingdoms of it will become Christ's; new heavens and a new earth will be created, and Jerusalem will be made a rejoicing, and her people a joy, Isa. lxxv. 17, 18.

Ver. 31. *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, &c.*] The glory which arises from the works of his hands, which is due unto him, and shall be given him; this is opposed to the perishing and fading glory of all created beings: and as Christ is the person spoken of throughout the whole psalm, this may be understood of his glory as the only-begotten of the Father; and which is equal to his Father's glory, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and of the glory of his office as Mediator: and of all his works of nature and grace, of creation and redemption: nor will there be creatures wanting, angels and men, to glorify his name, to all eternity. The Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it as a prayer, *let the glory of the Lord be for ever*; or, let him be for ever glorified, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; as he will and ought to be. *The Lord shall rejoice in his works*; being well pleased with them, as he was with the works of creation; they appearing, on a survey of them, to be all very good, Gen. i. 31. so he rejoices in the sustentation and preservation of them; and the rather, when he is glorified in them. And this should be a reason why glory should be given him, that he may rejoice in his works, and not be grieved, as he is sometimes said to be, and to repent of his making them, Gen. vi. 6. Christ rejoices in the work of redemption, which he undertook and performed with pleasure; he rejoiced at the finishing it, and he rejoices in the application of it to his people; and will rejoice in their complete enjoyment of it; they being the objects of his love, in whom he has an interest; whom he engaged for, are the purchase of

¹ בְּתוֹרָה in tempore suo, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

his blood, and for whom he prays and intercedes; he rejoices in them as the work of his hands now; in their persons, who are his *hephzi-bah*, in whom he delights; his *beulah*, to whom he is married: he rejoices in his own grace wrought in them, and in the exercise of it on him; he rejoices over them to do them good, and never ceases doing good to them and for them.

Ver. 32. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth, &c.*] As Sinai did when he descended on it, Psal. lxxviii. 8. and lxxvii. 19. to which the allusion seems to be; and a look from him, a severe one, a frowning one, will make the inhabitants of the earth to tremble; a providential look, sending famine, pestilence or the sword among them. A displeased look will make the hearts of his own children tremble, as no doubt Peter's did, when the Lord looked upon him, and he remembered his word; and if a look, much more a word, an awful word, as his voice in the law, pronouncing such cursed as keep it not; and especially the tremendous sentence he will pronounce on the wicked at the last day, *go, ye cursed, &c.* and if a look and a word are so terrible, what will be the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger upon those who have refused to give him glory? For the words seem to carry in them a reason why he should be glorified, taken from the consequence of not glorifying him, who has such a majesty in his looks, such a terror in his countenance, and such power in his hands. *He toucheth the hills, and they smoke:* as Sinai likewise did, when he was upon it, Exod. xix. 18. and as other hills do, when touched with lightning; the tops of mountains, the higher they are, the sooner and the more they smoke. God, with a touch of his hand, can set mountains on fire, open *volcanos*, and cause them to burn for years together; as *Ætna*, *Vesuvius*, *Hecla*, and others: and how easily can he set on fire the course of nature, burn the world, and all that is in it! It is but touching it, and it takes fire immediately: this he can as easily do as a man can light a torch or a candle; and as easily can he destroy sinners with the fire of his wrath, or cast them into everlasting fire, with the devil and his angels, which will burn to the lowest hell; and what are hills and mountains, or the greatest personages on earth, if he does but touch them, or lay his hand upon them in wrath? They are crushed as the moth; they are nothing before our great *Zerubbabel*.

Ver. 33. *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, &c.*] Or, *in my life or lives*, throughout the whole of it. This was what the psalmist determined to do, let others do what they would; even sing songs of praise to the Lord; since he was the God of his life, who had fed him all his life long; from whom he had all the mercies of life, and by whom he had been followed with goodness and mercy all his days, and on whom his life and the comforts of it depended. *I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being:* because he lived, and moved, and had his being in him; and it was continued to him, and he was upheld in it; and not only for his being, but for his well-being; as

for his temporal, so for his spiritual mercies, which he had from him as his God, as his covenant-God; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life: a view of God as our own God, such a view as Thomas had of Christ, when he said, *my Lord, and my God,* is enough to make a man sing; and when the psalmist says he would do this as long as he lived and had a being, this is not to be understood as if this work would end with his life, or that he had no thought of praising him hereafter; but it signifies his constancy in this employment, whilst in the land of the living; knowing that in the grave he could not praise the Lord with his bodily organs as now; though he knew that this would be his eternal employ in the world of spirits, in his soul, during its separate state, and in soul and body after the resurrection.

Ver. 34. *My meditation of him shall be sweet, &c.*] Of the glories, excellencies, and perfections of his person; of his offices, as Mediator, King, Priest, and Prophet, the Saviour and Redeemer; of his works of creation, providence, and redemption; of his word, the blessed truths and comfortable doctrines of it; of his providential dispensations, and gracious dealings with his people in the present state; which to meditate upon, when grace is in exercise, is very sweet, delightful, and comfortable. The Targum renders it as a petition, "let my meditation be sweet before him;" that is, grateful and acceptable to him: or, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, *let my speech*, discourse, colloquy, address in prayer; see Psal. cxli. 2. or, *let my praise*, so the Arabic and Syriac versions: the spiritual sacrifices both of prayer and praise are acceptable to God through Christ; and the speech of the church, and every believer, whether in the one way or the other, is sweet to Christ, very pleasant and delightful to him, Cant. ii. 14. *I will be glad in the Lord:* the Targum is, "in the Word of the Lord;" in the essential word, the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person, the greatness, glory, beauty, and fulness of it; in his righteousness, its purity, perfection, and perpetuity; in his salvation, being so suitable, complete, and glorious.

Ver. 35. *Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, &c.*] Not in common, for all men are sinners, even good men are not without sin; but notorious sinners, whose lives are one continued series and course of sinning; such as will not have Christ to reign over them, and do not give him the glory due unto him; particularly antichrist, the man of sin, and his followers; they that worship the beast and his image: these will be consumed with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, and will perish out of his land, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8. Psal. x. 16. *And let the wicked be no more:* as the wicked one, antichrist, will be no more when consumed; there will never rise another, when the beast and false prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire; there will no more of the antichristian party remain, the remnant of them will be slain with the sword; after the battle of Armageddon, there will be none left of the followers of antichrist, nor any ever rise up any

^u *Montis vicina cacumina celo — Tanto magis edita fumant, Laeret. de Rerum Natura, l. 6. v. 458, 459.*

^w *יְהִי בַּחַיָּתָא מִיָּיִן, V. L. Pagninus; in vitis meis, Montanus.*

more. *Bless thou the Lord, O my soul*; as for his mercies, spiritual and temporal, so for the destruction of all his enemies. The psalm begins and ends alike as the preceding. *Praise ye the Lord, or hallelujah*: this is the first time this word is used in this book of Psalms, though frequently afterwards: and it is observable that it is only used, in the New Testament,

at the prophecy of the destruction of antichrist, Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6. which may serve to confirm the sense before given; and is to be considered as a call upon the saints to praise the Lord, on account of his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; so Aben Ezra.

P S A L M CV.

THIS psalm was penned by David, and sung at the time when the ark was brought from the house of Obededom to the place which David had prepared for it; at least the first fifteen verses of it, the other part being probably added afterwards by the same inspired penman, as appears from 1 Chron. xvi. 1—7. The subject-matter of the psalm is the special and distinguishing goodness of God to the children of Israel, and to his church and people, of which they were typical: the history of God's regard to and care of their principal ancestors, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, &c. and of the whole body of the people, in bringing them out of Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, and settling them in the land of Canaan, is here recited, as an argument for praise and thankfulness.

Ver. 1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, &c.*] These are the words of David, either to the singers, or rather to the whole congregation of Israel, the seed of Abraham, and children of Jacob, ver. 6. stirring them up to praise and thankfulness for their mercies, temporal and spiritual; for the Messiah they had hope and expectation of, typified by the ark now brought home; for the word and ordinances, and opportunities of waiting upon God in them; for heaven and happiness, figured by Canaan's land given them to enjoy. Or, *confess or celebrate the Lord* ²; his greatness and goodness: his being and perfections; his sovereignty over all creatures: confess him as your Creator, Benefactor, covenant God and Father; or, *confess to the Lord* ³ your sins and transgressions committed against him, his great grace and kindness to you, and your unworthiness to receive any favour from him. *Call upon his name*; as such may to advantage, who are thankful for what they have received from him; these may and ought to call upon him, or pray to him, in faith and fervency, with frequency and importunity, in the truth and sincerity of their souls; and at all times, especially in times of trouble. Some, as Aben Ezra, interpret it, proclaim his name, make it known to others; call upon them to serve and worship him. This sense is mentioned by Kimchi, and agrees with what follows: *make known his deeds among the people*; which are the effects of his counsel, wisdom, power, and goodness; such as the works of creation and providence, and especially of grace and salvation; and which were to be published among the Heathen, for the glory of his name: and indeed the Gospel, which is ordered to be preached to all nations, is nothing

else than a declaration of what Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have done and do.

Ver. 2. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, &c.*] Both vocally and instrumentally, with the voice and upon instruments of music, as were used in David's time. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, are to be sung now, even the song of Moses, and of the Lamb. The wondrous things God had done for his people were sufficient matter for a song; and these were to be put into one, to be transmitted to posterity: it was usual in ancient times to hand down the history of memorable events by a song. *Talk ye of all his wondrous works*: all the works of the Lord are wonderful; what David elsewhere says of himself may be said of them, that they are wonderfully made, even the least and most inconsiderable of them; and especially his works of grace, when it is observed for whom they are performed, or on whom they are wrought; sinful creatures, enemies to God, and deserving of his wrath. These are to be talked of freely and frequently, in friendly conversation, in order to gain a further knowledge of them, and warm each other's hearts with them, and to lead into adoring and admiring views of the love and grace of God in them; and all of them deserve notice, none should be omitted, all are worthy of consideration and contemplation; for so the words may be rendered, *meditate* ² on all his wondrous works. Here is a large field for meditation; and when the heart is in a proper frame for it, meditation on the works of God is sweet, pleasant, and profitable.

Ver. 3. *Glory ye in his holy name, &c.*] In the knowledge of it, as proclaimed in Christ; in being called by his name, and in having the honour to call upon his name; in the holiness of it; and in Christ being made sanctification as well as righteousness, in whom all the seed of Israel are justified and glory; as they may also of interest in him, and communion with him. *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord*; while he may be found, and where he may be found; who seek him in Christ, and under the guidance and direction of his spirit; who seek him with their whole hearts, diligently and constantly. The Targum is, "who seek doctrine from the Lord." Such may and should rejoice in him, and in him only; and that always, as they have reason to do, even in their hearts, since they that seek him find him; and whether it be at first conversion, or afterwards, or when he has for a time

² ליהוה *celebrate Jehovah, Junius & Tremellius.*

³ Confitemini Domino, V. L. Paginus, Montanus, &c.

² שירון *meditamina, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.*

hid his face; it must be matter of joy to them, even to their very hearts, to find him whom they seek.

Ver. 4. *Seek the Lord and his strength, &c.*] The ark, which is called his strength, and the ark of his strength, Psal. lxxviii. 61. and cxxxii. 8. because he had shewn his great strength by it, in dividing the waters at Jordan, throwing down the walls of Jericho, and plaguing the Philistines because of it, when among them. This was a symbol of God's presence, before which he was sought by his people; and was a type of our Lord Jesus, the man of God's right hand, whom he has made strong for himself, and who is called his strength, Psal. lxxx. 18. Isa. xxvii. 5. Some render it, and which Aben Ezra makes mention of, though he rejects it, *seek the Lord in his strength; or by it: God is to be sought in Christ; he is the way of access to him. Or the meaning is, seek strength from the Lord; spiritual strength; strength to assist in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; seek it from him, in whom are both righteousness and strength. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, render it, seek the Lord, and be ye strengthened. The way to gain an increase of spiritual strength is to seek the Lord by prayer, or in his ordinances; see Psal. cxxxviii. 3. The Targum is, "seek the doctrine of the Lord, and his law."* It follows: *seek his face evermore: his favour and loving-kindness; his smiling countenance, which beholds the upright; his gracious presence, and communion with him; which is always desirable, ever to be sought after, and will be eternally and without interruption enjoyed in another world.*

Ver. 5. *Remember his marvellous works which he hath done, &c.*] Which Aben Ezra interprets of the works of creation; rather they seem to design the works of Providence in favour of the children of Israel: best of all, works of grace done for his saints, none of which are to be forgotten; especially the great work of redemption and salvation, for the remembrance of which, under the New Testament, an ordinance is particularly appointed. *His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth:* the above Jewish writer, by *wonders*, understands the miracles in Egypt, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians; and by *the judgments of his mouth*, the laws and statutes given at Sinai: each of which were indeed to be remembered: but *his wonders* may take in all the wonderful things done in Egypt and in the wilderness, and in settling the Israelites in the land of Canaan; and *his judgments* may also intend the judgments which he threatened to bring upon the enemies of Israel, and which he did bring upon them as he said. The wonders of his grace, of his law and Gospel, his judgments and his testimonies, are not to be forgotten.

Ver. 6. *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, &c.*] These are the persons all along before addressed; the Israelites, who descended from Abraham, were his natural seed and offspring, and who had reason to give thanks unto the Lord and praise his name, since so many and such wonderful things had been done for them; though all that were his natural seed were not the children of God; and such who have the same faith he had, and tread in the steps he did, are Christ's, and partakers of his grace; these are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; and are under the

greatest obligations to praise the Lord. Abraham is here called his servant, as also in ver. 42. being a true worshipper of God; though sometimes his friend, which is not inconsistent; though this character, according to the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, belongs to his seed, they rendering it in the plural, *his servants*. It follows, *ye children of Jacob his chosen*; this is added to distinguish the persons intended from the other seed of Abraham in the line of Ishmael; for in Isaac his seed was called, which were the children of the promise, and that in the line of Jacob, and not in the line of Esau; from whom they were called Israel or Israelites, a people whom the Lord chose above all people on the face of the earth; for the word *chosen* may be connected with the *children* as well as with Jacob. The whole spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, all such who are Israelites indeed, as they appear to be the chosen of God, so they are bound to praise his name.

Ver. 7. *He is the Lord our God, &c.*] Here begin the arguments to excite to praise and thankfulness; and the first is taken from what God is, and is to us; he is Jehovah, the Being of beings, a self-existent Being, the author of all beings, but receives his own from none; being undivided, independent, and self-sufficient, invariably and unchangeably the same, which is, and was, and is to come; and who has a sovereign power and authority over all creatures, whose name alone is Jehovah; nor is that name applicable or communicable to any created being; and yet this Jehovah is our God, our God in covenant, our God in Christ; our God that has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ; our God that has regenerated, adopted, and justified us; that supplies all our wants, and will be our God and our portion for ever; and therefore worthy of all praise, honour, and glory. *His judgments are in all the earth;* not his laws and statutes, his word and ordinances, or the revelation of his mind and will as to faith and worship, which are sometimes meant by his judgments; for these were not in all the earth, were only known to the people of the Jews at this time, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. rather his judgments on the Egyptians, or his plagues upon them for refusing to let Israel go, the fame of which was spread throughout the world: and may take in all the judgments of God in other parts of the world, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, and especially the universal deluge, which destroyed the world of the ungodly; and by such judgments the Lord is known, Psal. ix. 16. and for these he is to be praised; as they are expressive of his holiness and justice; as he will be for his judgments on antichrist, when they are made manifest, Rev. xv. 4. and xix. 1, 2. This may also respect in general God's government of the world, and his righteous judging in it; who is a God that judgeth in the earth, and governs it by his power and wisdom, and in righteousness; and this righteous Judge is our God.

Ver. 8. *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, &c.*] Another argument of praise taken from the covenant of grace, in which he is our God, and of which he is ever mindful; he remembers his covenant-ones, whom he perfectly knows, and never forgets them; he remembers his covenant-promises to them, and allows them to put him in remembrance of them; he has re-

spect unto his covenant, and the blessings of it, and bestows them on his people; gives them the sure mercies of David; and he remembers his love, which is the source and spring of all. *The word which he commanded to a thousand generations*; that which is properly a covenant with Christ our head on our account, is a word of promise to us; a promise of grace and glory; a free promise, absolute and unconditional: and this he has *commanded*, or ordered, decreed, and determined that it shall stand good, and be punctually performed, *to a thousand generations*; that is, for ever; for all his promises are yea and amen in Christ.

Ver. 9. *Which covenant he made with Abraham, &c.*] Or made it known unto him, and shewed him his particular interest in it; promised that he would be his God, that he would bless him; and that in his seed, the Messiah, that should spring from him, all nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xii. 2, 3. and xvii. 2—8. and xxii. 16—18. compare with this Luke i. 72, 73. *And his oath unto Isaac*: he made known to Isaac the oath which he swore to Abraham, and promised to perform it, Gen. xxvi. 3. or *concerning Isaac*^a; in whom his seed was to be called, and in whose line from him the Messiah was to come, the grand article of this covenant.

Ver. 10. *And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, &c.*] The son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham, to whom it was renewed and confirmed, Gen. xxviii. 13, 14. It is true of his posterity that go by his name, and even of all the spiritual Israel of God, to whom this covenant is confirmed and made sure: or *caused to stand*^b, as the word is; by the faithfulness of God, by his oath annexed to his word, and by the death of his son: when this is said to be *for a law*, the meaning is, not as if this covenant had the nature of a law, as the covenant of works had; indeed one of the articles of it is, that the law of God should be put into the inward part, and written on the heart; but this refers here not to men, but to God; and the sense is, that this covenant has the force of a law with respect to God, who of his condescending grace and goodness has hereby laid himself under obligation to do such and such things; which is marvellous grace indeed. *And to Israel for an everlasting covenant*: for being remembered, commanded, repeated, and confirmed by the Lord, it can never be broken; and being well ordered, remains sure, and is as immovable as rocks and mountains, and more so: as it was made with Christ from everlasting, it will continue to be made good to his people to everlasting; and is a just reason for praise; it being the basis of faith and hope; the ground of joy, peace, and comfort here, and of eternal happiness hereafter.

Ver. 11. *Saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, &c.*] To each of the above persons, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their posterity, the children of Israel. Not that the word *saying*, as Gussenius^c well observes, signifies that the words following it are expressive of the covenant, for that is expressed ver. 7. the main article, sum, and substance of it, being this,

that the Lord was their God; but it only signifies that this earthly promise was pronounced when that everlasting covenant was given, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. Besides, this must be considered as typical of the heavenly inheritance; as that was a land of promise, so is this; it is the promise, the grand promise, which God has promised; as that was a land prepared and ready furnished with houses, fields, and vineyards, so is heaven a kingdom prepared by God the Father, and by the presence and mediation of his Son; as the Israelites passing through the wilderness met with many difficulties, and fought many battles, before possessed of it, so the people of God pass through the wilderness of this world, go through many tribulations, and fight the good fight of faith before they lay hold on eternal life; and as not Moses, but Joshua, led the people into the land, so not the law, but Jesus the Saviour, the great Captain of salvation, brings the many sons to glory; and as that was a land of rest after fatiguing travels, so is heaven the sabbatism or rest for the people of God, a rest from all their toil and labour; and as the one was the pure gift of God, so is the other: *to thee will I give, &c.* And as the land of Canaan is here called *the lot of your inheritance*, it being divided and distributed by lot to the children of Israel, who had each their proper share and portion, Josh. xiv. 1, 2. so heaven is an inheritance, not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed by the will of God; comes through the death of the testator Christ, belongs only to children, and is, as inheritances are, for ever; this is also by lot, as the word is in Ephes. i. 11. not that it is a casual thing, for it is appointed by the Lord for his people, and they for that; it is what they are predestinated to, as in the forementioned text; but it denotes that every one shall have their part and portion in it.

Ver. 12. *When they were but a few men in number, &c.*] Or *men of number*^d, that might easily be numbered; see Gen. xxxiv. 30. when this covenant, promise, and oath, were first made to Abraham, he was alone, and had no child; and when his posterity were increased in Jacob's time, and sojourned in Egypt, they were but few, though greatly enlarged when they came out of it: in comparison of other nations, they were the fewest of all people, and therefore had this grant of Canaan, not for their numbers any more than their goodness. And this circumstance is mentioned to shew the unmerited goodness of God unto them; see Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8. and xxvi. 5. And so the Lord's people, to whom he gives the kingdom of heaven, are a little flock; they are only a few that find the way to eternal life, Luke xii. 32. Matt. vii. 14. *Yea, very few; or as a little thing*^e: so were the people of Israel a little contemptible body of men in the eyes of others, and in comparison of them. And such are the saints in this world; the *filth* of it, and the *off-scouring of all things*: yea, *things that are not*; that scarce deserve, in the opinion of men, to be reckoned entities or beings. *And strangers in it*: as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were, Heb. xi. 9, 13. and so are the people of God, who are the heirs of the heavenly Canaan. These

^a לישוק די Isahac, Vatablus.
^b יעמירה stare fecit, Vatablus.
^c Ebr. Comment. p. 822.

^d ויחסי מתי viros numeri, Montanus; so Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^e כמעט sicut parum, Montanus; so Vatablus; aut exile aliquid, Gejerus; so Gussenius, p. 477.

are strangers to the men of the world, who know them not; and the men of the world to them; with whom they have no conversation and fellowship in things sinful and criminal; for which they are despised by the world: yet these are the fellow-citizens of heaven, and of the household of God, which shews his discriminating grace.

Ver. 13. *When they went from one nation to another, &c.*] From Chaldea to Mesopotamia; from thence to Canaan, and then into Egypt; and after that to Canaan again: which was the tour that Abraham took; and when in Canaan, and travelling from place to place there, might be said to go from nation to nation, since there were seven nations in that country. *From one kingdom to another people;* from the kingdom of Palestine or Canaan to Egypt, which was a strange people; and of another language, as appears by the use of an interpreter between them, Gen. xlii. 23. So Isaac, Jacob, and his posterity, journeyed from one of these kingdoms to the other. Thus the children of God are pilgrims and strangers in this world; they are unsettled in it; they are travelling through it, and a troublesome journey they have of it; they are bound to another country, to which they belong; and their hearts are there before-hand; and they look upon this world as a strange place, and at best but as an inn; where they tarry but for a time, till they get to their own country, the better and heavenly one.

Ver. 14. *He suffered no man to do them wrong, &c.*] Though strangers and unsettled, and moving from place to place; and few in number, and weak and defenceless. Thus the herdsmen of Gerar were not suffered to do any hurt to Isaac and his herdsmen; but, on the contrary, the king of the place, with some of his chief men, sought an alliance, and entered into one with Isaac. Thus Laban was not suffered to hurt Jacob, nor the Sichemites to hurt him and his sons; the terror of God falling on all the cities round about, Gen. xxvi. 20, 26—31. and xxxi. 29. and xxxv. 5. The people of God are in this world exposed to the injuries of the men of it, being as sheep among wolves; and it is often in the power of their hands to hurt them, as it was in the power of Laban to hurt Jacob; nor do they want an inclination, there being a rooted enmity in the seed of the serpent to the seed of the woman: but God will not suffer them; though they would willingly, like Balaam, curse them, yet they cannot curse whom God has blessed; he will not suffer them to injure them. *Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes:* as Pharaoh king of Egypt, and Abimelech king of Gerar; whom he reprov'd, both verbally and really, with words and stripes, Gen. xii. 17. and xx. 3, 18. Kings are to be reprov'd by men, when they do amiss, as Herod was by John Baptist; and may expect to be reprov'd by the King of kings, when they do wrong, especially to his people; who are themselves kings and priests unto God, and are esteemed by him above the kings of the earth, and made higher than they.

Ver. 15. *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, &c.*] Or, *mine anointed ones;* my Christs, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were; who, though not anointed with material oil, yet were all that, that such were, who in after-times were anointed with it. They were prophets,

priests, and kings; and which all met in one person, particularly in Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. and xxii. 13. and xxiii. 6. besides, they were anointed with the oil of grace, with an unction from the holy One, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces, as all true believers are: they are the Lord's Christs, or his anointed ones; which stand before him, and have the name of Christians from hence. These the Lord will not have touched, so as to be hurt; they are sacred persons: they are near unto God, in union with him; and *he that toucheth him toucheth the apple of his eye;* so dear are they to him. *And do my prophets no harm;* so Abraham is expressly called a prophet, Gen. xx. 7. and so were Isaac and Jacob; men to whom the Lord spoke familiarly in dreams and visions, as he used to do with prophets; and who taught and made known the mind and will of God to others, as well as foretold things to come; they being the Lord's servants, his prophets, they were revealed unto them, Numb. xii. 7. Amos iii. 7. see Gen. xii. 7. and xviii. 17, 19. and xxvii. 27. and xlix. 1. These the Lord will have no harm done to them; he guards them by his power; he holds them in his right hand; and covers them under the shadow of his wing.

Ver. 16. *Moreover, he called for a famine upon the land, &c.*] On the land of Egypt; or rather on the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons sojourn'd; and which reached to all lands, Gen. xli. 56, 57. and xlii. 5. and calling for it, it came, being a servant at the command of the Lord; see 2 Kings viii. 1. Hag. i. 11. *He brake the whole staff of bread;* so called, because it is the support of man's life, the principal of his sustenance: as a staff is a support to a feeble person, and which, when broke, ceases to be so. The staff of bread is broken, when either the virtue and efficacy of it for nourishment is taken away or denied; or when there is a scarcity of bread-corn; which latter seems to be intended here; see Isa. iii. 1. Lev. xxvi. 26.

Ver. 17. *He sent a man before them, even Joseph, &c.*] Who, though but a lad of seventeen years of age when he was sold into Egypt, yet was a grown man when he stood before Pharaoh, and interpreted his dreams of plenty and famine to come; and advised him to lay up store in the years of plenty, against the years of famine; by which he appeared to be a wise man, as the Targum here calls him; see Gen. xxxvii. 3. and xli. 46. Him God sent before into Egypt; before Jacob and his sons went down thither, to make provision for them, to support them in the time of famine, and preserve their lives. God is said to send him, though his brethren sold him out of envy; there being such a plain hand of Providence in this matter; and which is observed by Joseph himself over and over again, Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8. in which he was a type of Christ, in whom all provisions are made, and by whom they are communicated unto his people; who all receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace. *Who was sold for a servant:* either to a servant: as to Potiphar, as Aben Ezra, who was a servant of Pharaoh's; or rather to be a servant, as Joseph was in his house: he was sold for twenty pieces of silver, as Christ, his antitype, for thirty; the price of a servant, Gen. xxxvii. 28. Zech. xi. 13. Exod. xxi. 32. and who not only

appeared in the form of a servant, but did the work of one; and a faithful and righteous servant he was to his father, and on the behalf of his people.

Ver. 18. *Whose feet they hurt with fetters, &c.*] For it seems Joseph was not only cast into prison, upon the calumny of his mistress; but had fetters put upon him, and his feet were made fast with them; and these were so close and heavy, as to pinch and gall and hurt him; which, though not mentioned in his history, was undoubtedly true; see Gen. xxxix. 20. *He was laid in iron; or the iron* (or, as the Targum, *the iron chain*) *went into his soul*^f; his body; it ate into him, and gave him great pain; or rather, as it is in the king's Bible, *his soul went into the iron chain*; there being, as Aben Ezra observes, an ellipsis of the particle \aleph , and which is supplied by Symmachus, and so in the Targum; that is, his body was enclosed in iron bands, so Buxtorf^g. In all this he was a type of Christ, whose soul was made exceeding sorrowful unto death: he was seized by the Jews, led bound to the high-priest, fastened to the cursed tree, pierced with nails, and more so with the sins of his people he bore; and was laid in the prison of the grave; from whence and from judgment he was brought, Isa. liii. 8.

Ver. 19. *Until the time that his word came, &c.*] Either the word of Joseph, interpreting the dreams of the butler and baker, till that came to be fulfilled; so the Syriac version, *till his word was proved by the event*; or rather till the fame and report of that came to Pharaoh's ears, Gen. xli. 13, 14. or else the word of the Lord, concerning his advancement and exaltation, signified in dreams to him, Gen. xxxvii. 7—10. as it follows: *the word of the Lord tried him*: it tried his faith and patience before it was accomplished; and when it was, it purged him and purified him, as silver in a furnace, and cleared him of the imputation and calumny of his mistress; for, even in the view of Pharaoh, he appeared to be a man in whom the spirit of God was, Gen. xli. 38. Some think that Christ, the essential Word, is intended, who came and visited him, tried and cleared him.

Ver. 20. *The king sent and loosed him, &c.*] That is, Pharaoh king of Egypt sent messengers to the prison, and ordered Joseph to be loosed, as soon as ever he heard the account which the chief butler gave of him, and of his skill in interpreting dreams. *Even the ruler of the people; or peoples*: the subjects of Pharaoh's kingdom being very numerous. *And let him go free*. ordered his fetters to be taken off, and him to be set at liberty, to go where he pleased; or, however, that he might come to court, whither he was brought, and which was the end of his releasement; see Gen. xli. 14. in this he was a type of Christ in his resurrection from the dead; who for a while was under the dominion of death, was held with the pains and cords of it, and was under the power and in the prison of the grave; but it was not possible, considering the dignity of his person, and the performance of his work as a surety, that he should be held here. Wherefore the cords and pains of death were loosed, and he was brought out of prison; God his Father, the King of kings, sent an

angel from heaven, to roll away the stone of the sepulchre, and let the prisoner free; so that he was legally and judicially discharged and acquitted; as it was proper he should, having satisfied both law and justice; he was justified in the spirit when he rose from the dead, and all his people were justified in him, for he rose again for their justification.

Ver. 21. *He made him lord of his house, &c.*] That is, Pharaoh made Joseph lord-chamberlain of his household; after he had him to court, and he had interpreted his dreams to him to his great satisfaction, and had given him such prudent advice to provide against the years of famine; see Gen. xli. 4. So Christ, after his resurrection, was received up into heaven, and was made and declared Lord and Christ, Lord of all, having all power in heaven and earth given to him; particularly had the care of the church committed to him, which is the house of God, of his building, and where he dwells; where his children are born, brought up, and provided for. Here Christ is as a Son over his own house, as the owner and proprietor of it; here he is King, Priest, and Prophet; and is the provider for all in it, both of food and clothing: *of him the whole family in heaven and in earth is named*, Ephes. iii. 15. though he makes use of under-stewards, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season. *And ruler of all his substance . or possession*^h; lord-treasurer of all his revenues, Gen. xli. 40, 41, 43. Herein also he was a type of Christ, who, as God, is possessor of heaven and earth, being the Creator of them; but, as Mediator, he has all things delivered into his hands; all are at his dispose, to subserve the ends of his mediatorial office; he has all temporal things, gold and silver, riches and honour, to bestow upon men at pleasure; more especially all spiritual things are with him; the gifts of the Spirit, which he has without measure; and the fulness of all grace, which it has pleased the Father should dwell in him; the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and the promises of it; all the riches of grace, pardoning, justifying, and adopting grace, and all the riches of glory.

Ver. 22. *To bind his princes at his pleasure, &c.*] Not to lay them in prison, and bind them with fetters, as he had been bound; but to give laws unto them as he pleased, and bind and oblige them to observe them: for, according to his word, all the people of Egypt, high and low, rich and poor, were to be ruled; and, without his leave, no man was to lift up his hand or foot in all the land, Gen. xli. 40, 44. All Christ's people are princes, to whom he gives laws at his pleasure, as one having authority, though they are not grievous; and these he binds, obliges, and constrains his people by love to observe, and which they do. Jarchi's note is, "this is an expression of love like that; and the *soul of Jonathan was bowed unto the soul of David*: "when he (Joseph) interpreted the dream, they all *loved him*." The Targum is, "to bind his nobles *as to his soul*." *And teach his senators wisdom*: his elders, his privy counsellors: he made him president of his council; where he was a curb upon them, and restrained them from taking wrong or bad measures; so

^f So Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

^g Lexic. in voce בְּרִיל.

^h כְּנִינָה possessione sua, Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Schultens¹, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, *to bride, or restrain his senators*; which conveys an idea agreeable to the preceding clause. Nor were these the only persons he taught; he not only instructed the nobles and courtiers in politics, but the priests and men of learning in the arts and sciences; and all, no doubt, in the mysteries of the true religion, as he had an opportunity. And this is the source of the wisdom of the Egyptians, which Moses was afterwards brought up in; and for which that people were so famous, that many of the ancient philosophers, as Pythagoras, Plato, and others, travelled thither to acquire it. This they had from Joseph, and his people that dwelt in their land. Christ's senators are his apostles and ministers, the elders that rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine: these are taught wisdom by him; the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; the words and doctrines of the wise are all from him, that one Shepherd; that they, as undershepherds and pastors, may feed others with knowledge and understanding.

Ver. 23. *Israel also came into Egypt, &c.*] That is, Jacob, as afterwards expressed, who had the name of Israel, from his wrestling with God and prevailing. He came into Egypt, being invited by Pharaoh, and having heard of his son Joseph being alive, and of his exaltation. *And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham: the same with Egypt; Mizraim, from whence Egypt has its name, being the son of Ham, Gen. x. 6.* Hence Egypt is called by Plutarch^k Chemia; and Diodorus Siculus^l speaks of a city in Thebes, or Upper Egypt, which was called by the inhabitants Chemmis, interpreted by them the city of Pan; and Plutarch^m mentions a place called Chennis, inhabited by Pans and Satyrs. The same is mentioned by Herodotusⁿ, which he calls a large city of the Thebaic nome; a city of the same name is observed by Heliodorus^o; and both Herodotus^p and Mela^q speak of an island called Chemmis, which the Egyptians represent as floating. In all which there are plain traces of the name of Ham, the same with Jupiter Ammon; or Amun, as Plutarch; worshipped in Egypt; and from whom all Africa was sometimes called Ammonia^r, the country of Ammon or Ham. And Herodotus^s speaks of a people called Ammonii, about ten days' journey from Thebes in Upper Egypt; who, according to him^t, had their name from Jupiter Ammon, or Ham. And Pliny^u makes mention of the oracle of Hammon, as twelve days' journey from Memphis, and of the Hammoniac nome; and the Egyptian priests are called Ammonean^v. Here Jacob was a sojourner, as all the Lord's people are in this world; they are sojourners, as all their fathers were; and their time here is a time of sojourning, 1 Chron. xxix. 15. 1 Pet. i. 17. They are not natives of the place where they are; they are indeed so by their first birth, but not by their new birth; being born from above, they belong to another place,

are citizens of another city; their house, estate, and inheritance, are in heaven: neither their settlement nor satisfaction are here; they do not reckon themselves at home whilst they are in this world; they are indeed in an enemy's country, in a cursed land; or that is nigh unto cursing, and its end to be burned. Such the land of Ham was, where Jacob sojourned.

Ver. 24. *And he increased his people greatly, &c.*] God increased the people of Israel greatly in the land of Egypt; they went down few, and became a populous nation; only sixty-six persons, besides Jacob's sons' wives; and when they came out from thence were six hundred thousand footmen; yea, they increased the more they were afflicted, Exod. i. 12. So the people of God in this world sometimes increase in number, and that even amidst the persecutions of their enemies; as the Christians did in the first times of the Gospel under the Roman emperors; and they increase in grace, in every grace, and oftentimes the more they are tried and exercised by afflictions. *And made them stronger than their enemies*; in their bodies, being more healthy, strong, and robust; and which was seen, observed, and owned by their enemies, Exod. i. 9. So saints, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, are a match for their enemies; are stronger than they, and are even more than conquerors through Christ, that has loved them.

Ver. 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people, &c.*] Whom before they loved and esteemed: when Pharaoh and his servants heard of Joseph's father and brethren, they were greatly pleased, and invited them into Egypt; and, when come, placed them in the land of Goshen; but when a new king arose, and a new generation, which knew not Joseph, the hearts of these were turned to hate them. This is said to be of the Lord: not that he put any hatred into them, there was no need of that; there is enough of that naturally in every man's heart against good men, and all that is good: but he did not restrain that hatred, as he could have done, but suffered them to let it have vent; and moreover, he did those things which were an occasion of it, and which served to stir up their hatred; as increasing their numbers, and making them stronger and mightier than they, Exod. i. 9, 10. *To deal subtilly with his servants*; by putting them to hard labour, and using them with great rigour, in order to weaken their strength; by commanding the midwives to kill every son that was born; and by publishing an edict, to cast every male child into the river and drown it, and so hinder the increase of them. Thus the people of God have their enemies that hate them; that are subtle and cunning, wise to do evil, full of all subtilty and wicked craft; Satan, at the head of them, has his artful methods, wiles, stratagems, and devices: but the Lord is wiser than all, and knows how to deliver his people out of the hands of all their enemies, as he did the

¹ De Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 215.

^k De Iside.

^l Biblioth. l. 1. p. 16.

^m Ut supra.

ⁿ Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 91.

^o Ethiopic. l. 5. c. 9 & l. 6. c. 4.

^p Ut supra, c. 156.

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^q De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9.

^r Stephanus de Urb.

^s Melpomene sive, l. 4. c. 181.

^t Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 32, 42.

^u Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9.

^v Sachouatho apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35.

children of Israel; of which there is an account in the following verses.

Ver. 26. *He sent Moses his servant, &c.*] Into Egypt, to deliver his people Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians; in which, as in other things, he approved himself to be a faithful servant to the Lord; of this mission of his, see Exod. iii. 10—14. In this he was a type of Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, and really was one; God's righteous servant as Mediator, though his Son as a divine Person; sent by him to redeem his people out of worse than Egyptian bondage, from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation. And Aaron whom he had chosen; to go along with Moses, to be a mouth for him, and a prophet to him, Exod. iv. 16. and vii. 1. who also was a type of Christ, being a priest and good spokesman, chosen and called of God, a holy and an anointed one. The Targum is, "in whom he was well-pleased."

Ver. 27. *They shewed his signs among them, &c.*] The Egyptians to whom they were sent; that is, Moses and Aaron did. In the original it is, *the words of his signs*². They declared the words of God to them, that he would do such signs and wonders among them; or inflict such plagues upon them, in case they did not let Israel go: or they performed them according to the word of the Lord, as he commanded them, as well as taught the doctrines and instructions to be learned from them. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it in the singular number, though contrary to the Hebrew text, and understand it of God, *he put the words of his signs in them*; in Moses and Aaron; or gave them orders and power to perform them: he put them in both, as the Arabic version has it; or, *he did his signs by them*, as the Syriac version. And *wonders in the land of Ham*; or Egypt, as in ver. 23. meaning the miracles of the plagues, which are next particularly mentioned, though not all of them: the plagues of the murrain, and of the boils and blains, are omitted; the reason of which, according to Aben Ezra, is, because Pharaoh did not seek to Moses to remove them; and the other eight that are mentioned are not placed in the order in which they were done, the last but one being observed first.

Ver. 28. *He sent darkness, and made it dark, &c.*] The land of Egypt; either he, God, or it, darkness, made it dark, or it was made dark; the Targum is, "made them dark;" that is, the Egyptians; darkness was a messenger of the Lord's, who forms the light and creates darkness; it came at his word and covered all the land, excepting the dwellings of Israel; even a thick darkness that might be felt, so that the Egyptians could not see one another, nor rise from their place for three days together; such as sometimes rises at sea, and is said to be so dark, that for five days together day and night are the same; this was the ninth of the ten plagues, Exod. x. 21—23. and was an emblem of the darkness which is on the minds of men in an unregenerate state; who are covered with gross darkness, and are even darkness itself; which is universal as to persons, and the powers and faculties of their souls concerning divine things: and it also

bears some resemblance to the darkness which will be in the kingdom of the beast upon the pouring out of the fifth vial, or plague, on spiritual Egypt, Rev. xvi. 10. *And they rebelled not against his word*; the plague of darkness, and the rest of the plagues which God commanded; these, as they were his servants, were not disobedient to him, they came at his word; see ver. 31, 34. so Jarchi interprets it; or else Moses and Aaron, who were sent of God to inflict those plagues, did not refuse to obey the divine orders; though Pharaoh threatened them hard, yet they feared not the wrath and menaces of the king, but did as the Lord commanded them. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, mention both these senses, but the latter seems most agreeable. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, leave out the word *not*; and so some copies of the Vulgate Latin version, and Apollinarius in his metaphrase, *and they rebelled against his word*; that is, the Egyptians did not hearken to the word of the Lord, nor to the signs and wonders he wrought, but their hearts were hardened, and they would not let Israel go. But this is contrary to the original text; though Arama interprets it of them, that they did not rebel, but confessed this miracle, which being the greatest of all, as he observes, is first mentioned. Dr. Lightfoot⁷ thinks it is to be understood of Israel, and of some special part of obedience performed by them; which he takes to be circumcision, which they had omitted in Egypt, at least many of them, and was necessary to their eating of the passover, which was to be done in a few days, Exod. xii. 48. and it was a fit time to perform this service while darkness for three days was upon the Egyptians; in which they were shut up by the Lord, that they might not take the opportunity against his people, now sore through circumcision.

Ver. 29. *He turned their waters into blood, &c.*] With which Egypt abounded; their streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, so that they had no water to drink; a just judgment upon them for shedding the innocent blood of infants, by drowning them in their rivers; this was the first of the ten plagues, Exod. vii. 19—21. with this compare the second and third vials poured out on spiritual Egypt, whereby blood will be given to antichrist, and to the antichristian states, for they are worthy, having shed so much of the blood of the saints, Rev. xvi. 3—6. *And slew their fish*; which shewed that the miracle was real, that the waters were really turned into blood, since the fish could not live in them, as they might if it had been only in appearance; the rivers of Egypt abounded with fish, this was a principal part of their food, and therefore must greatly distress them; see Numb. xi. 5. Isa. xix. 8.

Ver. 30. *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, &c.*] The land of Egypt, the moist, marshy, and watery places of it, the banks of the river Nile, out of the slime and mud of which these sprung; or, as Kimchi observes, wherever there were waters in the land there were frogs, for these came out of the streams, rivers, and ponds; this is the second plague, Exod. viii. 3—6.

² אֲתוֹתַי וּמִוִּפְתֵּי דְבַרְיָא verba signorum suorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

⁷ Works, vol. 1. p. 707.

In the chambers of their kings; that is, they came into the chambers of their kings; not that they were produced there; they entered not only into the kneading-troughs, and ovens, and bedchambers of the common people, but into the chambers of the king, and his sons, and his nobles, and princes of the land, who may be called in the plural number kings; see Isa. x. 8. with these compare the three unclean spirits, like frogs, under the pouring out of the sixth vial, that will go forth to the kings of the earth, and gather them to the battle of the Lord God Almighty; by whom are meant the emissaries of Rome, priests and jesuits; so called for their impurity and impudence, for their noise and loquaciousness, and for the ways and means they use to get into the cabinet councils of princes, and prevail upon them to do things which will issue in their ruin; see Rev. xvi. 13, 14, 16. and xix. 20.

Ver. 31. *He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, &c.*] Or a *mixture*² of various insects, and, as some interpret it, of wild beasts; and so Kimchi says evil beasts are meant, which were raised up to go into all their borders; the Arabic version renders it *dog-flies*, after the Septuagint; see the note on Psal. lxxviii. 45. this was the fourth plague, Exod. viii. 24. And *lice in all their coasts*; this is the third plague, and what the magicians could not imitate, but were obliged to own the finger of God was in it, Exod. viii. 16—19. God can make use of mean and despicable instruments to do his work; the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Ver. 32. *He gave them hail for rain, &c.*] Egypt, at least part of it, was not used to rain, but was watered by the overflowings of the Nile; but now it had hail for rain, and a grievous hail-storm it was, such as was never seen in the land of Egypt before; hail being rare, if ever there, and so frost and snow³; this was the seventh plague, Exod. ix. 18—26. compare with this the terrible storm of hail which will fall on men at the pouring out of the seventh vial on spiritual Egypt, Rev. xvi. 21. And *flaming fire in their land*; for a storm of thunder and lightning went along with the hail; fire was mingled with it, and ran upon the ground, Exod. ix. 23, 24.

Ver. 33. *He smote their vines also, and their fig-trees, &c.*] So that they died; for in Psal. lxxviii. 47. it is said, he *killed* them; and it is not only used in common speech with us, but with classical writers^b to speak of killing inanimate things, as trees, herbs, &c. That is, the hail smote them, or God by the hail; these are particularly mentioned because most useful, producing grapes and figs. And *brake the trees of their coasts*: all the trees within the borders of their land, Exod. ix. 25.

Ver. 34. *He spake, and the locusts came, &c.*] A great army of them, and covered the land, that it was even darkened by them; and were such as had never been seen before, or ever were since; this is the eighth plague, Exod. x. 12—15. with these compare the locusts in Rev. ix. 3, 4. *And caterpillars, and that with-*

out number; of these no mention is made in Exodus; they seem to be one of the kinds of locusts, or a different word is here used for the same, and so Kimchi interprets it; some render it the white locust; it has its name from licking up the herbs and grass of the field; as the other name for the locust seems to be taken from its great abundance and increase.

Ver. 35. *And did eat up all the herbs in their land, &c.*] As these creatures usually do, unless restrained, Exod. x. 15. see Rev. ix. 4. *And devoured the fruit of their ground*; which the hail left, Exod. x. 15.

Ver. 36. *He smote also all the first-born in their land, &c.*] Both of men and beasts; the first-born of the king on the throne, and of the maid-servant behind the mill, and of the captive in the dungeon; this was the last plague, and which prevailed upon the Egyptians to let Israel go, Exod. xi. 5. and xii. 29—33. *The chief of all their strength*: or the first of their strength; the same in different words as before, their first-born; see Gen. xlix. 3.

Ver. 37. *He brought them forth also with silver and gold, &c.*] That is, God brought forth the Israelites out of Egypt by means of the above plagues, laden with great riches, with jewels of gold and of silver, which they borrowed of the Egyptians at the command of the Lord; and so to be justified in what they did; and besides it was but just and equitable that they should be paid for their service and hard labour in Egypt for a long course of time; and this was the method in Providence they were directed to take to do themselves justice; and hereby was accomplished an ancient prophecy concerning them, that they should come out with much substance, Gen. xv. 14. see Exod. xi. 2. and xii. 35, 36. Besides, in the passages quoted, the words should be rendered of the Israelites that they *asked*, and of the Egyptians that they *gave*: the Jews, some of them, say^c that these were given not with the will of the Egyptians, and others say not with the will of the Israelites, but neither of them true. And so in like manner will the people of God, when rescued from the tyranny of the antichristian states, enjoy great riches and honour; see Rev. xvii. 16. Isa. lx. 3, 9, 11, 16. *And there was not one feeble person among their tribes*: though there were six hundred thousand footmen, Numb. xi. 21. and though they had been used to hard and rigorous service in order to weaken their strength; and though they came from among a people plagued with diseases and deaths. This confronts a lying story told by some Heathen writers^d, that the Israelites were driven out of Egypt because they had the itch, leprosy, and other diseases upon them. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, there was not a poor or necessitous man among them, for they abounded with gold and silver; compare with this the case of God's people in the latter day, Zech. xii. 8. Isa. lx. 22.

Ver. 38. *Egypt was glad when they departed, &c.*] The Egyptians, as the Targum; they were glad when the Israelites were gone, for whose sake they had been so much and so long plagued. So wicked men are glad

^a מִצְרַיִם mixture insectarum, Pagninus, Montanus; colluvies insectarum, Piscator, Gejezur, Michaelis; mista bestiarum, Vatablus; colluvies animalium, Junius & Tremellius.

^b Horat. Carmi. l. 3. Ode 26.

^c ——— interface messes, Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. Neque herbas crescere & interfici, Ciceron. Econom. ex Xenophon, l. 3.

^d T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

^e Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. Tacitus, l. 5. 3. Lysimachus apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 34.

to be rid of the company of good men, which is very disagreeable to them; so the Gergesenes were glad when Christ departed out of their coasts, which they requested he would. So the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice, be merry, and send gifts one to another, when the witnesses are slain, the two prophets that tormented them with their doctrines and religious lives. *For the fear of them fell upon them*; their first-born being slain, they looked upon themselves as dead men; and feared that, if the Israelites stayed, their lives must go next; and therefore being seized with a panic they were urgent upon them to depart; not out of any good will to them, but through fear of them, Exod. xii. 33.

Ver. 39. *He spread a cloud for a covering, &c.*] That is, the Lord spread one over their heads as an *umbrella*, to protect them from the heat of the sun; this refers to the pillar of cloud, Exod. xiii. 20, 21. though that seems to have been in an erect posture, and to go before the children of Israel to direct them in their journey, and not a covering to them. Kimchi says it was a covering to them when they rested, but not when they journeyed: but when they rested it only covered the tabernacle, not the people, for any thing we read of it, Numb. ix. 21, 22. it looks as if there were more clouds than one, and indeed the Jews speak of many, and particularly make mention of one that was over the heads of the Israelites, that the heat of the sun, and the hail and rain, might not have power over them; and of such use this cloud was, at least at certain times, if not always; a type of Christ, who is the covering and shelter of his people from the heat of the fiery law, of the flaming sword of justice, of the wrath of God, of the fiery darts of Satan, and of the fury of wicked men. *And fire, to give light in the night*: this respects the pillar of fire which gave them light by night; an emblem of Christ, who is the light of his people, when it is a night-season with them, as it sometimes is; a night of affliction and distress, of darkness and desertion, of temptation, of carnal security and sleepiness; when Christ arises as a light in darkness, and enlightens by his presence, by his spirit, and by his word; as well as is as fire to warm, refresh, quicken, and comfort them when chill and cold, in such seasons.

Ver. 40. *The people asked, and he brought quails, &c.*] The Targum is, "they asked flesh, and he brought quails," or pheasants; some render it partridges, others locusts: that is, the people of Israel asked flesh of the Lord, and he gave them quails; which he did twice, first at the same time the manna was first given, Exod. xvi. 13. and some years after that a second time, when the wrath of God came upon them and slew them whilst their meat was in their mouths, Numb. xi. 31, 33. it is the first time that is here referred to, since it is mentioned among the benefits and blessings bestowed upon them; this was typical of the spiritual meat believers eat of, even the flesh of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed. The quail was a fat and fleshy bird, delicious food, sent from heaven in the evening; so Christ came from heaven in the evening of the world, and gave his flesh for the life of his people, and on which they live by faith.

And satisfied them with the bread of heaven: the manna, called the corn of heaven; a type of Christ the hidden manna, who is soul-satisfying food to believers; see the notes on Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25.

Ver. 41. *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out, &c.*] That is, God opened the rock, who before is said to spread the cloud, and bring the quails, for it was a miraculous affair; or Moses, by divine orders, which was done by smiting it, when waters flowed out in great abundance, sufficient to give drink to men and beasts, and which continued, Exod. xvii. 6. Numb. xx. 11. This was typical of Christ the Rock, 1 Cor. x. 4. and of the opening of his side, from whence flowed blood and water, John xix. 34. and of his being smitten with the rod of justice, and by the law of Moses, from whom flow abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, freely to all his people; see the notes on Psal. lxxviii. 15, 16. *They ran in the dry places like a river*; and did not sink and soak into them. but continued their flow, and followed the Israelites, wherever they went; see 1 Cor. x. 4.

Ver. 42. *For he remembered his holy promise, &c.*] It was not owing to the goodness of this people, to their obedience to the divine will, to any worthiness or merit of theirs, that such signs and wonders were wrought for them in Egypt; and that they were brought out from thence in such a manner as they were; and were protected and so plentifully provided for in the wilderness; but it was owing to the grace and goodness of God, to his covenant and promise, which he sacredly and inviolably observed; the grace and covenant of God are the source and spring of all blessings of goodness; he is ever mindful of his covenant, and therefore sends meat to them that fear him, as he did to the Israelites, Psal. cxi. 5. *And Abraham his servant*; or the promise he made to Abraham his servant; so the Targum, "which was with Abraham his servant;" that is, which holy word or promise was with Abraham, was spoken to him; and was with him, that he would give him and his seed the land of Canaan; and that though they should be afflicted long in Egypt, yet should come out from thence with great substance, Gen. xv. 13, 14, 18. this he remembered, as he never forgets any promise of his, nor ever suffers his faithfulness to fail, nor his covenant to be broken. Hence it follows,

Ver. 43. *And he brought forth his people with joy, &c.*] Or *therefore*, in consequence of his promise, and the remembrance of it, he brought Israel out of Egypt with great joy to them, they coming out with so much health and wealth; having their liberty, and in hope of shortly being settled in a land flowing with milk and honey. *And his chosen with gladness*; or *singing*; especially when they had got through the Red sea, their enemies drowned, and they quite clear of them, Exod. xv. 1. And when they are called *his chosen*, this opens another source of those blessings to them, not only the promise and covenant of God, but their election of God, which was free and sovereign, to choose them above all people; not because they were better or more than others, but because he

* Vid. Targum in Cant. ii. 6.

† מִצִּיָּוִי ideo adduxit, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

* בְּרִנָּה in ovatione, Montanus; cum júbilo, Tigurine version, Michaelis; cum cantu, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

loved them; and hence he did all the above things for them. In like manner when God's elect are in effectual vocation, brought out of bondage to liberty, out of darkness to light, out of an horrible pit, and have their feet set on a rock; are brought to Christ and into his church, and have a place and a name there; it is with exceeding great joy and gladness to them; and to the church above shall they at last be brought with everlasting joy on their heads, Isa. xxxv. 10.

Ver. 44. *And gave them the lands of the Heathen, &c.*] The countries of the seven nations that dwelt in Canaan; the Lord did it, who had a right to do it, being the possessor of heaven and earth; and who was provoked unto it by the sins of these Heathens, as well as promised it to his people the Israelites. *And they inherited the labour of the people;* dwelled in the houses they had built, which they found full of all good things; enjoyed the vineyards and olive-trees they had planted, and possessed the wells which they had dug, Deut. vi. 10, 11. In like manner the heavenly Canaan is enjoyed by the saints without any labour of theirs; this inheritance is not of the law, nor of the works of it, it is the gift of God, Rom. iv. 14. and vi. 23.

Ver. 45. *That they might observe his statutes, and*

keep his laws, &c.] All this the Lord did for them, to engage them by his goodness to them to observe the statutes he appointed them, and the laws he gave them; the contrary to which the Canaanites had done, which caused him to cast them out of the land; but on these his people he heaped benefits, thereby to influence them to a cheerful obedience to his will; and this was all he required of them, and the least that they could do, being so highly favoured by him. And this is the end of our spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, and of our effectual vocation by his grace and spirit, that we be zealous of good works; live unto righteousness, live to him that died for us; glorify him with our bodies and spirits, which are his; and be holy in all manner of conversation. *Praise ye the Lord,* all the Israelites ought to have done so, upon the remembrance of the manifold instances of the divine goodness to them, recorded in this psalm; and so the spiritual Israel of God ought to praise him for their redemption by Christ, out of a worse than Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; and for their vocation into liberty, and to marvellous light; for their meetness for heaven, and right unto it; they should praise him now with joyful lips, as they will in the other world to all eternity.

P S A L M CVI.

THIS psalm is without the name of its author, as the Syriac interpreter observes. Aben Ezra, on ver. 47, says, that one of the wise men of Egypt (perhaps Maimonides) was of opinion that it was wrote in the time of the judges, when there was no king in Israel; and another, he says, thought it was written in Babylon: but he was of opinion it was wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or by a prophetic spirit, concerning their present captivity; and so Kimchi. The petition in ver. 47, *gather us from among the Heathen*, has led most interpreters to conclude that it was written either in the Babylonish captivity, or, as some, in the times of Antiochus: but by comparing it with 1 Chron. xvi. 7, it appears that it was written by David, at the time of the bringing up of the ark to Zion; since the first and two last verses of it are there expressly mentioned, in the psalm he gave Asaph to sing on that occasion, ver. 34, 35, 36. who therein might have respect to the Israelites that had been taken captive by some of their neighbours, as the Philistines, and still retained; though there is no difficulty in supposing that David, under a prophetic spirit, foresaw future captivities, and personates those that were in them. As the preceding psalm treats of the mercies and favours God bestowed upon Israel, this of their sins and provocations amidst those blessings, and of the goodness of God unto them; that notwithstanding he did not destroy them from being a people; for which they had reason to be thankful.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or *hallelujah*;

which, according to the Arabic version, is the title of the psalm; and so it stands in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions. Several psalms following begin in like manner; it begins as the former ended, and ends as it begins; praise being due to God at all times, and on all occasions. *O give thanks unto the Lord*: always, for all things, temporal and spiritual, since not worthy of any: or, *confess unto the Lord*^h; his great goodness, and your unworthiness; and all your sins and transgressions committed against him, who only can pardon. *For he is good*; essentially, solely and originally; is communicative and diffusive of his goodness; is the author of all good, and of no evil; and is gracious and merciful, and ready to forgive. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; notwithstanding the sins of his people; though he may sometimes hide his face from them, and rebuke them in his providence; and though he causes grief by so doing, he still has compassion upon them, his mercy continues towards them; yea, his mercies are new every morning, as to temporal things; and spiritual mercies, the sure mercies of David, redemption, remission of sins, and sanctification, issue in eternal life; the mercy of God is from eternity to eternity: these are reasons why he should be praised, and thanks be given to him.

Ver. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? &c.*] Or *powers*ⁱ; to which answers the Greek word for the miracles of Christ, Matt. xi. 20, 21. and Kimchi here restrains them to the wonders wrought in Egypt,

^h בְּהַלְלוֹתָי ליהוה confitemini Domino, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

ⁱ גְּבוּרוֹת potentias, V. L. Michaelis; virtutes, Cocceius.

and at the Red sea: but they may as well be extended to the mighty acts of God, and the effects of his power, in the creation of all things out of nothing; in the sustentation and government of the world; in the redemption of his people by Christ; in the conversion of sinners, and in the final perseverance of the saints; in all which there are such displays of the power of God as cannot be uttered and declared by mortal tongues. *Who can shew forth all his praise?* all those things done by him, worthy of praise, they are so many and so great? see Psal. xl. 5.

Ver. 3. *Blessed are they that keep judgment, &c.]* Or *observe* * it; the righteous judgment of God on wicked men; by which he is known in his justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness; and by which the inhabitants of the earth observing it, learn to do righteousness, as follows: or else it may intend the word of God, his laws, statutes, and ordinances, after called his judgments, Psal. xix. 9. and cxlvii. 19, 20. which should be observed and kept, as the rule of our actions, walk, and conversation. *And he that doeth righteousness at all times;* continually believes in Christ for righteousness, and puts on that as his justifying righteousness; whereby he becomes righteous as he is, 1 John iii. 7. and performs acts of righteousness from a principle of grace, as a fruit of regeneration, and an evidence of it, 1 John ii. 29. that does it with right views, aims, and ends; not to be justified and saved by it, but because God requires it; and it is for his glory, and to testify subjection to him, and thankfulness for favours received from him. And this is to be done at all times; we should never be weary of well-doing, but be always abounding in good works; and happy are those that will be found so doing, such are *blessed* persons: not that their blessedness lies in or arises from righteousness done by them; but this is descriptive of such that are blessed in Christ with the remission of sins, and his justifying righteousness. And these are the proper persons to shew forth the mighty acts and praise of the Lord; they are most capable of it, and more likely to perform it with acceptance than any other; see Psal. l. 14, 16, 23.

Ver. 4. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, &c.]* The Lord has a special and peculiar people, whom he has chosen, taken into covenant, given to his son, redeemed by him, who are called by grace, and brought to glory: to these he bears a peculiar favour, loves with an everlasting love; which he has shewn in the choice of them; in the gift of his son to them; in their regeneration, and eternal salvation. Now nothing can be more desirable than an interest in this favour, in which is life, spiritual and eternal; is the strength and security of believers, the source of their comfort, and the foundation of their happiness: to be remembered with this is to have a view of interest in it, a comfortable sensation of it, and an application of benefits by it. *O visit me with thy salvation;* a prayer, either for the coming of Christ, as God's salvation, promised, expected, and wished for; or, however, for an application of spiritual salvation to be wrought out by him; for a view of interest in it; to have the joys and com-

forts of it now, and the full possession of it hereafter. A gracious and desirable visit this! The ends of such requests, or of such a visit, follow:

Ver. 5. *That I may see the good of thy chosen, &c.]* The elect, according to the foreknowledge of God; who are chosen in Christ to holiness and happiness, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth unto salvation by him; the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory, both of Jews and Gentiles. The *good* of those is not any goodness of their own, for there is none in them naturally; they are by nature no better than others, none are good, nor do good, no, not one: but the goodness of God laid up for them, and bestowed on them; the blessings of goodness with which Christ is prevented for them; all the good things secured for them in a well-ordered covenant; which they partake of in time, and to eternity. To see these is not to have a superficial, notional, knowledge of them, as hypocrites may have; or a distant view of them, as Balaam, and the rich man in hell; but to have an experience of them, possess them, and enjoy them. *That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation;* all the nations of the world are the Lord's; but there is a chosen generation, an holy nation, that is peculiarly his; a nation taken out of a nation, nay, taken out of all the nations that are upon earth: and these have a joy peculiar to them, which foreigners know nothing of, and strangers intermeddle not with; a spiritual joy in the Holy Ghost; a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and in hope of the glory of God; and such joy is desirable, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory. *That I may glory with thine inheritance;* the same with his chosen people and nation: for the Lord's people is his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; they are chosen for an inheritance, given to Christ as such, with which he is well-pleased, esteeming them a goodly heritage; they are his purchased possession, his jewels and peculiar treasure. These *glory* not in themselves, in their strength and wisdom, their riches and righteousness; but in Christ and in his righteousness, and in what he is made unto them. And the psalmist desires to join with them, and glory in what they did, and in no other; and unite with them in giving glory to God and Christ, now and hereafter, for his salvation, and all good things from him.

Ver. 6. *We have sinned with our fathers, &c.]* Sinned in their first father Adam; derived a corrupt nature from their immediate ancestors; sinned after the similitude of their transgressions; sinned after their example, in like manner as they did; guilty of the same gross enormities as they were: though sufficiently warned by the words of the prophets, and by punishments inflicted, they continued their sins, a constant series and course of them, and filled up the measure of their iniquities; they rose up in their stead an increase of sinful men, to augment the fierce anger of God, Numb. xxxii. 14. And this the psalmist, in the name of the people of Israel, confesses, as it was his and their duty and interest so to do, Lev. xxvi. 40. and as we find it was usual with Old-Testament saints, Jer. iii. 25. and xiv. 20. Dan. ix. 8. *We have*

* אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ observarent, Junius & Tremellius; observantium, Gejerus.

committed iniquity, we have done wickedly; this heap of words is used to denote not only the multitude of their sins, but the aggravated circumstances of them; that they had committed all manner of sins, not sins of ignorance, frailty, and infirmity only; but presumptuous sins, sins against light and knowledge, grace and mercy; sins against both tables of the law, against God and their neighbour; and these attended with many aggravations: all which a sensible sinner is ready to make a frank and ingenuous confession of, and forsake; and such an one finds mercy with a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: this form of confession is followed by Solomon and Daniel, 1 Kings viii. 47. Dan. ix. 5.

Ver. 7. *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, &c.* Or, *our fathers in Egypt*¹; whilst they were there, they did not understand, or wisely consider and attend unto, the miracles there wrought, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. These were done in their sight, they saw them with their eyes; yet had not hearts to perceive them, and understand the true use and design of them: not only that these were for the destruction of their enemies, and for their deliverance from them; but that they were proofs of the power of God, and of his being the one only and true God, in opposition to the idols of the Egyptians; and that he only ought to be adhered unto, worshipped, and trusted in. Had they adverted to these things, they would not so easily have given in to a murmuring and repining spirit, to a distrust of the power and providence of God, and to idolatry, as they did; see Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. something of this kind may be observed in the disciples of Christ, Mark vi. 52. *They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies*; the mercies of God bestowed on his people are many, both temporal and spiritual; there is a multitude of them; the sum of them is great, it cannot well be said how great it is: but though they are so many as not to be reckoned up in order, yet a grateful remembrance of them should be kept up; it is sinful to forget them, and argues great ingratitude. Past mercies should be remembered, both for the glory of God, and to encourage faith and hope in him, with respect to future ones, as well as to preserve from sinning against him. The stupidity and ingratitude of this people, here confessed, were the source of their rebellion against God, as follows: *but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea*; or, *sea of Suph*^m; so called, either from a city of this name, which it washed, as Hillerusⁿ thinks; see Numb. xxi. 14. Deut. i. 1. or from the sedge and weeds in it, or reeds and rushes that grew upon the banks of it. When they were come hither, though just brought out of Egyptian bondage, and had seen the wonders the Lord had done; and though now in the utmost distress, the Egyptian army behind them, and the sea before them; yet neither past mercies nor present danger could keep them from rebelling against the Lord. They provoked him by their language to Moses; *because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?* Exod. xiv. 11, 12.

The Targum is, "but they rebelled against thy word."

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake, &c.* Not for any worth or worthiness in them; not for their righteousness-sake, for they were a rebellious and disobedient people; but for his name's sake, because his name was called upon them, and he was called the God of the Hebrews, as Aben Ezra observes; and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their ancestors; to whom he had promised the land of Canaan, and was their covenant-God; and because of his covenant, and of his divine perfections, and the glory of them, which were engaged to make it good; therefore he saved them, see Ezek. xx. 9, 14. And so the spiritual Israel of God are saved, not for any superior excellencies in them, for they are in no wise better than others; nor for their righteousness-sake; but to display the wisdom and faithfulness of God, his grace and mercy, his justice and holiness, power, goodness, and truth. And so here it follows; *that he might make his mighty power to be known*; not only among the Israelites, but among the nations of the world; who, had he not saved them, might have thought, and said, that it was for want of power, and that he could not do it; see Deut. ix. 28.

Ver. 9. *He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up, &c.* By sending a strong east wind, which drove the waters back, and made the sea a dry land, Exod. xiv. 21. *So he led them through the depths*; that is, the deep waters of the sea, which were cast up as an heap, and stood as a wall on each side, through which they passed. *As through the wilderness*; or rather, *as on a plain*; for a passage through a wilderness where no roads are, and many obstructions be, is not easy; and so it is manifestly to be understood in Isa. lxiii. 13. where Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it a plain and smooth ground, a champaign country; and so the word is used for a plain, in opposition to mountains, in Jer. ix. 10. and then the sense is, that God led them through the sea, being dried up, as if they were led through a plain and open country, where was nothing to obstruct their march; an emblem of baptism, 1 Cor. x. i, 2. and of the passage of the people of God through this world; see the note on Psal. lxxviii. 13.

Ver. 10. *And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, &c.* As Pharaoh and his people did, because of their numerous increase, which they endeavoured to prevent; and still more because of the plagues inflicted on them; and now because they were got away from them, and therefore pursued them in great wrath and indignation, Exod. xv. 9. *And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy*; the same thing in different words; so the Lord Christ has saved and redeemed his people out of the hand of all their spiritual enemies; and those that hate them and war against them, as sin, Satan, and the world, Luke i. 71, 74.

Ver. 11. *And the waters covered their enemies, &c.* They pursuing the Israelites into the sea, the waters returned, and covered Pharaoh and all his host, and

¹ אבותינו במצרים patres nostri in Ægypto, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^m סוף in mari Suph, Pagninus, Vatablus, Schmidt; in mare

carecti, Montanus; mare algosum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceus.

ⁿ Onomastic. Sac. p. 128, 940.

drowned them, so that they sunk as a stone, and as lead into the bottom of the sea, Exod. xiv. 28. and xv. 4, 5, 10. *There was not one of them left*; to return back to Egypt, and give an account of what became of the army, Exod. xiv. 28. an emblem this of the utter destruction of all our spiritual enemies by Christ; who has not only saved us from them, but has entirely destroyed them; he has made an end of sin, even of all the sins of his people; he has spoiled Satan and his principalities and powers; he has abolished death, the last enemy, and made his saints more than conquerors over all. Likewise it may be a representation of the destruction of the wicked at the last day, who will be all burnt up at the general conflagration, root and branch, not one will be left; see Mal. iv. 1.

Ver. 12. *Then believed they his words, &c.*] And not till then; for this is observed, not to their commendation, but to shew the slowness of their hearts to believe; they believed on sight, but not before, as Thomas did; whereas, *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*, John xx. 29. When they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore, then they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses; what he said by his servant Moses, that he would save them from the Egyptians, whom they should see no more, that is, alive, Exod. xiv. 13, 14, 31. The Targum is, "and they believed in the name of his Word." *They sang his praise*; Moses with the men, and Miriam with the women; the song is recorded Exod. xv. and thus when the people of God have got the victory over the antichristian beast, they will stand on a sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, Rev. xv. 2, 3.

Ver. 13. *They soon forgat his works, &c.*] The miracles he wrought in Egypt, the deliverance of them from thence with a mighty hand and out-stretched arm, and the leading them through the Red sea as on dry land, and destroying all their enemies; all these they soon forgat, for they had gone but three days' journey into the wilderness after this, ere they began to murmur and shew distrust of the power and providence of God, Exod. xv. 22, 24. it is in the Hebrew text, *they made haste, they forgat his works*; as soon as they were out of Egypt, they were for entering into the land of Canaan at once, and were much displeas'd that they were not immediately led into it. *They waited not for his counsel*; they did not ask counsel of God, though it belongs to him, and he is wonderful in it, and does all things after the counsel of his own will; nor would they take it when given by Moses and Joshua; they did not choose to wait his time and way of working; they were for limiting the holy One of Israel to their time and way; they were for being in the land of Canaan before his time; and were for eating flesh, when it was his counsel to feed on manna he provided for them every day.

Ver. 14. *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, &c.*] Or, *lusted a lust*, as in Numb. xi. 4. to which story there related this refers; they were not content with the manna they had every day, though very nourishing and of a sweet taste; they lusted after the fish

and flesh of Egypt, and other things they ate there; so that this was not a natural lust, or craving after food and drink, to satisfy nature, which would not have been criminal; but a voluptuous lust to gratify their appetite: it was lusting after evil things, as the apostle interprets it, 1 Cor. x. 6. lust after sinful things, or any unlawful object, or after any thing in an unlawful way, is sin. *And tempted God in the desert*; which is expressly forbidden by a law which our Lord referred to when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness: a very ungrateful action this, since God tempts no man to sin; a very daring impiety, a sin of the first magnitude, and which lay in making experiments, in trying whether the presence of God was among them or no; and putting God as it were on proving that he had power sufficient to provide for them in the wilderness; see Exod. xvii. 7. Psal. lxxviii. 18, 19, 20. It seems it was Jesus Christ whom they tempted, from whence it appears that he is truly God, 1 Cor. x. 9. Both in this and the preceding clause an emphasis lies on the place where all this was done, the wilderness or desert, where God had done such great things for them, and where they could not help themselves, but were wholly and immediately dependent on him.

Ver. 15. *And he gave them their request, &c.*] Flesh and feathered fowl in great abundance; see Psal. lxxviii. 27—29. So God sometimes gives to wicked men what they ask for, as much as they can desire, yea, more than heart could wish. *But sent leanness into their soul or body*; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *he sent fulness into their souls*; he gave them flesh to the full, even to a nausea; they fed too heartily on it, and were surfeited with it; which not being digested brought a repletion, and issued in a consumption; or rather death, immediate death, is meant, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; for whilst the flesh was in their mouths, and they were chewing it between their teeth, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them, Numb. 11. 33. Psal. lxxviii. 29, 30. It is true in a spiritual sense, that while the bodies of wicked men are fed and pampered, their souls are starved, and at last eternally lost; as the rich man's in the Gospel, who fared sumptuously every day: and worldly professors are very lean ones; such who mind earth and earthly things never thrive in spirituals; and either they soon drop their profession, err from the faith, and turn apostates; or, if they continue, the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word; so that it is unprofitable to them, not being mixed with faith by them; and hence leanness under the best of means: yea, there is sometimes a leanness in the souls of the people of God, when corruptions prevail, the graces of the spirit are low in exercise; when there is a want of a spiritual appetite to the word; and when they fall into bad company, or do not improve conversation with one another in a spiritual way; or are too much taken up, inasrned, and entangled with the things of the world; see Isa. xxiv. 16.

Ver. 16. *They envied Moses also in the camp, &c.*] That he should be generalissimo there, have the sole

° סָחָרוּ כִּהְיוּ festinaverunt, oblitii sunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c.

° סָחָרוּ כִּהְיוּ concupierunt concupiscentiam, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

command of the people, and be their leader and chief magistrate. Gifts qualifying men for civil government are from the Lord, and these commonly draw the envy of others upon them; who, though they pretend patriotism and the good of their country, yet seek themselves; and would be in the places of those they envy and speak against; which was the case of Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Reuben, who thought themselves as fit, and had a better right, as being the sons of Jacob's first-born, to command, than Moses. And Aaron the saint of the Lord; who was not only a holy good man, but was separated from his brethren, and sanctified, and put into the priest's office, and this drew upon him the envy of many of the Levites, at the head of whom was Korah, a Levite; these envied that he should be the high-priest, and that this office should be restrained to his family; now the envy to each of these is ascribed to the whole body of the people, though discovered only in some, because it was not opposed by them; see Numb. xvi. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 17. *The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, &c.*] One of the heads of the conspirators against Moses and Aaron; the earth clave asunder under him and his company; opened itself, or its mouth, and devoured them at once. This was a new, marvellous, and unheard-of thing, and which manifestly shewed the divine displeasure and resentment at their proceedings; and served greatly to confirm the authority and office of Moses and Aaron; see Numb. xvi. 30—33. *And covered the company of Abiram*; another of the heads of the confederacy. Korah is not mentioned, though the earth swallowed up him and all that belonged to him, their houses and their goods; some think the reason is because it was well known that this was his case, when Dathan and Abiram are not so expressly mentioned in the history by Moses; as also because the sons of Korah were now in esteem as singers; nor is On the son of Peleth mentioned, because, as Kimchi says, he repented, and desisted from the conspiracy.

Ver. 18. *And a fire was kindled in their company, &c.*] This seems to be the company of Korah, or however a part of it, the two hundred and fifty men that had censers, and so were of the Levitical race, as Korah was; this fire came from the Lord out of heaven. *The flame burned up the wicked*; the two hundred and fifty men with censers, Numb. xvi. 35. this was an emblem of that fire which shall consume those that hurt the witnesses; or of that vengeance of eternal fire which wicked men will suffer for ever.

Ver. 19. *They made a calf in Horeb, &c.*] A golden one, of the ear-rings of gold which were in the ears of their wives, sons, and daughters; these they took and melted down, and cast into the figure of a calf, or an ox, as it is afterwards said, in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped the ox; a people that had used them ill, from whose bondage they were just delivered; on whom they had seen the judgments of God inflicted, and who were notoriously wicked and an idolatrous people, and yet these they imitated; and, which was still a greater aggravation, this they did in Horeb, the mountain in

which God appeared in so terrible a manner, with thunder and lightnings, and in fire, out of which he spoke to them; and when he gave them a body of laws, among which were one that forbid the worshipping of graven images; and yet they made and worshipped one in this very place, from whence they received this law; as follows. *And worshipped the molten image*; when fashioned with a graving-tool, and made a molten calf, they said, these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt; and they brought their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and ate and drank before it, and danced about it; all which were acts of idolatrous worship, Exod. xxxii. 1—6. 1 Cor. x. 7. This was so heinous a sin, that the Jews say it is not expiated to this day, and that there is no punishment comes upon them but there is an ounce of the golden calf in it⁴.

Ver. 20. *Thus they changed their glory, &c.*] God, who is glorious in all the perfections of his nature, and is glory itself, and was the glory of these people; it was their greatest honour that they had knowledge of him, nearness to him, the true worship of him among them, and that they were worshippers of him; and who, though he is unchangeable in himself, may be said to be changed when another is substituted and worshipped in his room, or worshipped besides him; which was what the Heathen did, and in which the Israelites exceeded them, Rom. i. 23, 25. Jer. ii. 11. the Targum is, "they changed the glory of their Lord." *Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass*; which was monstrous stupidity, to leave the worship of the true God, *El-shaddai*, God all-sufficient, all-powerful, that stands in need of nothing, but upholds and supports all creatures in being, and provides them with necessaries; and worship an ox, yea, the figure of one that eats grass, that lives on hay, and is supported by that which is so weak and withering; the Targum adds, "and makes dung;" or defiles itself with it, as the ox does while it is eating grass; Jarchi observes, there is nothing more abominable and filthy than an ox when it is eating grass, which then makes much dung, and defiles itself; this the Targumist adds, to make the worship of such a creature the more contemptible.

Ver. 21. *They forgot God their Saviour, &c.*] Not only forgot the works of God, ver. 13. but forgot God that did those mighty works; forgot that there was a God; or however forgot him that is the only true and living God, when they said of the molten image, *these are thy gods, O Israel*; and what aggravated their crime was, they forgot that God that had saved them in so wonderful a manner out of the hand of their enemies, for his own name's sake; and had led them safely through the Red sea as on dry land, and destroyed those that hated them. *Which had done great things in Egypt*; meaning the ten plagues on the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the Israelites from them.

Ver. 22. *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, &c.*] The same with Egypt; Mizraim, from whence Egypt had its name, being the son of Ham; see the note on Psal. lxxviii. 51. and cv. 23. and these wondrous things are the same plagues as before, so called be-

cause they exceeded the power of nature; the magicians themselves confessed the finger of God in one of them; and they were all of them such as might be truly said to be miracles. And *terrible things by the Red sea; or in it*, as the Syriac and other versions; as the utter destruction of Pharaoh and his army, not one being left, which was doing terrible things in righteousness; and by which it appeared that with God is terrible majesty; and who shews himself to be terrible in his works, and even to the kings and princes of the earth; but all these things were soon forgot, which it might have been thought, being so amazing and terrible, would have made a lasting impression on them.

Ver. 23. *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, &c.*] He said in his word, the Targum adds; he thought within himself he would; he seemed determined in his own mind to destroy them, being provoked at their wretched forgetfulness of him, and their idolatry; he said to Moses, *let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, Exod. xxxii. 10. The decree indeed was not gone forth, but there was such an appearance of displeasure as if ruin was determined; and a great number was destroyed, and the whole body was threatened. *Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach*; made between God and the Israelites by their sin; the allusion is either to an hedge broken down, at which a spoiler enters, unless made up, Ezek. xxii. 30. or to a breach made in the wall of a besieged city, at which the besieger enters, unless stopped by the besieged, Isa. xxx. 13. or to the bank or dam of a river broken down, which lets in a flood of waters, 2 Sam. v. 20. So Moses made up the hedge, and stood in the gap; he presented himself to God, rushing in like a man of war, and pouring out his wrath like an inundation of waters: this is to be understood of his fervent and importunate prayer to God on the behalf of this people, and which succeeded. *To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them*; Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 30, 31, 32. so the Targum, "unless Moses his chosen had rose up and strengthened, or prevailed in his prayer before him to turn away his wrath from destroying." This shews the power and efficacy of prayer, and of what avail it is with God, especially the prayer of his elect; it was Moses, his chosen, that prayed, a choice servant of his; and whom he had chosen to everlasting life, as well as to be the deliverer, guide, and governor of Israel; see Luke xviii. 7. Herein he was an eminent type of Christ, as in other things; as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, so is Christ between God and his people. Sin is a transgression of God's law, a breaking of his statutes, which he has set as an hedge, fence, or wall, about man; and this has made a breach between God and man; which lets in the wrath of God as a flood, and justice as an armed man: and terrible it is to consider there is no standing before him, and making up the breach; but Christ has interposed as a surety, made satisfaction to law and justice, and procured peace and reconciliation; and so, by his atonement and intercession, has made up the breach, appeased the wrath of

God, and turned it away, and prevented the ruin and destruction of his people.

Ver. 24. *Yea, they despised the pleasant land, &c.*] Or *land of desire*; the land of Canaan; a very delightful and desirable country, the glory of all lands, a land that abounded with every thing for necessity and pleasure. The spies themselves, that brought an ill report of it, owned it was a land flowing with milk and honey; but that there were such difficulties to possess it which they thought insuperable: and hence the people despised it, inasmuch as, when they were bid to go and possess it, they refused, and did not choose to be at any difficulty in subduing the inhabitants of it, or run any risk or hazard of their lives in taking it, though the Lord had promised to give it them, and settle them in it; but they seemed rather inclined to make themselves a captain, and return to Egypt, when they were just on the borders of Canaan; which was interpreted a despising the land, Numb. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 31. This was a type of heaven, the good land afar off; the better country, the land of promise and rest; in which is fulness of provisions, and where there will be no hunger and thirst; where flows the river of the water of life, and stands the tree of life, bearing all manner of fruits; where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore: the most delightful company of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints; and nothing to disturb their peace and pleasure, neither from within nor from without. And yet this pleasant land may be said to be despised by such who do not care to go through any difficulty to it; to perform the duties of religion; to bear reproach for Christ's sake; to go through tribulation; to walk in the narrow and afflicted way, which leads unto it: and by all such who do not care to part with their sinful lusts and pleasure; but prefer them and the things of this world to the heavenly state. *They believed not his word*; his word of promise, that he would be with them, and lead them into the pleasant land, and put them into the possession of it: which disbelief of his word was highly provoking to him; and therefore he swore they should not enter into his rest; and because of their unbelief they did not, Numb. xiv. 11. Heb. iii. 18, 19. This is a very heinous sin, to disbelieve God that is true, and cannot lie; it is to make him a liar; nothing can more dishonour him; it is a departure from him, very provoking to him, and of very dangerous consequence; unbelievers shall have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8.

Ver. 25. *But murmured in their tents, &c.*] Throughout their tents; the murmuring was general; they murmured often; but what is here referred to seems to be their murmuring upon the report of the spies, Numb. xiv. 2, 27, 29. To murmur against God and his providence is a very great evil; and which generally proceeds on one or other of these two things; either because men have not so much of the good things of this world as others have; or because they endure more afflictions, and so are ready to charge the ways of God with inequality; not considering that God is a Sovereign, and may do with his own what he pleases; and that they are deserving of nothing at his hands; and

⁷ בארץ חמדה in terra desiderii, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

that their punishment or chastisement is less than their sins deserve. *And hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord*; to go up and possess the land; they disbelieved his word, and were disobedient to his command. The use the apostle makes of this, see Heb. iii. 7, 8. and of their other provocations, of their lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting of God, and murmuring against him, see 1 Cor. x. 6—11.

Ver. 26. *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, &c.*] A gesture used in swearing, Gen. xiv. 22, 23. Rev. x. 5, 6. So the Targum understands it here, "and he lifted up his hand with an oath, because of 'them:'" and so it is interpreted by Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; and agrees with Numb. xiv. 28, 29, 30. The same gesture was used by the Heathens in swearing, as by Latinus*. Or he lifted up his hand, in a way of judgment, to strike the blow; and which, when it lights on man with the indignation of his anger, falls heavy; see Isa. xxvi. 11. and xxx. 30. *To overthrow them in the wilderness*; as he did all the murmuring generation that came out of Egypt, all but Caleb and Joshua; all from twenty years and upwards, their carcasses fell in the wilderness; there they were wasted, consumed, and died, Numb. xiv. 32, 33, 35. 1 Cor. x. 5. Heb. iii. 17.

Ver. 27. *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, &c.*] Their posterity was not overthrown in the wilderness; they were spared to possess the land their fathers despised. This respects after-times, as does what follows: *and to scatter them in the lands*; which Kimchi explains by the discomfiture of them by the Amalekites and Canaanites, when they presumed, contrary to the will of God, to go up to the top of the hill; and by Arad's taking some of them prisoners afterwards, Numb. xiv. 45. and xxi. 1. But this was not done, nor to be done, in the wilderness: but the meaning is, that God lifted up his hand in the wilderness, and swore there, as Ezekiel says, ch. xx. 23. that he would scatter them and disperse them among the Heathen; that is, at one time or another; which he did in part at the Babylonish captivity, and completely by the Romans which is now their case, and is a standing proof of this prophecy, and an accomplishment of the oath of God.

Ver. 28. *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, &c.*] Or to the idol Peor, as the Targum. Baal, which signifies Lord or master, was a common name for an idol in many countries; wherefore, to distinguish one from another, an additional name was used. Baal-zephon was the god of the Egyptians; Baal-zebul the god of the Ekronites; and here Baal-peor the god of the Moabites: for the fact referred to was committed when the children of Israel were on the borders of Moab, and when Balak sent for Balaam to curse them; who at last advised him to draw them to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab; who might then prevail upon them to commit idolatry, which would bring the wrath of God upon them. And in this he succeeded. The above idol had its name of Peor either from the obscene actions done in the worship of

it, too filthy to be related, and which, it is thought, are referred to in Hos. ix. 10. It seems to be the Priapus of the Heathens. Or, as others, from a mountain of this name, where was the house or temple in which it was worshipped: hence we read of Mount Peor, and of Beth-peor, Numb. xxiii. 28. Deut. iii. 29. So Suidas† says, Baal is Saturn, and Peor the place where he was worshipped. Or else from some great man of this name, Lord Peor; who being of great fame and note among the Moabites, for some extraordinary things done by him, was deified and worshipped after his death; as was common among the Heathens. To this idol the Israelites joined or yoked themselves, as the word "signifies: they withdrew themselves from the yoke of the true God, whose yoke is easy, and put their necks under the yoke of an idol; which was to be unequally yoked: or they were tempted unto it; they committed spiritual whoredom with it, which is idolatry; they left their first and lawful husband, to whom they were married, and joined themselves to an idol, and cleaved to it. The phrase is expressive of their fellowship with it, and with the idolatrous worshippers of it; they devoted and gave up themselves to the worship of it; just as the true worshippers of God are said to join themselves to him, Jer. l. 6. they were, as the Septuagint renders it, initiated into the rites and mysteries of this idol. *And ate the sacrifices of the dead*; which were offered up to this lifeless statue. So idols are called the dead, in opposition to and distinction from the living God, Isa. viii. 20. Or they partook of the feasts which were kept in honour of their dead deified hero, Lord Peor; see the history in Numb. xxv. 1, 2. These were sacrifices offered to the Stygian Jupiter, or Pluto, called by the Phœnicians Mot", the same with Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and who also was Baal-peor, according to Jerom‡.

Ver. 29. *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions, &c.*] Sin is an invention of man's: when our first parents sinned, they found out many inventions; and their posterity ever since have been inventors of evil things; and man's invention is very quick at that work. All false doctrine and false worship are of men's finding out; all idolatrous practices are their inventions, and which are here intended; see ver. 39. And these are very provoking to God, who is jealous of his glory, and which is taken from him hereby; and even when he forgives such sins of men, he takes vengeance on their inventions, as in this case, Psal. xcix. 8. For it follows: *and the plague brake in upon them*; like an inundation of water, and carried off four-and-twenty thousand persons, Numb. xxv. 9.

Ver. 30. *Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment, &c.*] When none else would, he rose up in great zeal for the Lord of hosts; and took on him the work of a civil magistrate, and slew two persons of noble birth in the very act of fornication. The Targum is, "he prayed;" and so the Syriac version, "he interceded with the Lord, that the plague might stop." This he might do, as well as the other, though

* Tenditque ad sidera dextram—Terram, mare, sidera juro, Virg. Æneid. 12.

† In voce Βελουγερ.

‡ 1725' conjugati sunt, Vatablus; subdidierunt sese jugo, Gejerus.

§ Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38. Vid. Castell. Annot. Samar. p. 13. in vol. 6. Læm. Polyglott.

* Comment. in Esaiam, fol. 96. H.

it is not elsewhere recorded, and in which he succeeded: but in the Talmud ⁷ it is observed that it is not said ירפלל (that is, *he prayed*), but פלל, from whence may be learned, if it is proper to say so, that he executed judgments with his Maker. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, *he appeased*; made atonement or propitiation; and this is said of him, Numb. xxv. 13. *And so the plague was stayed*; it was restrained from proceeding further; no more execution was done by it. In this he was a type of Christ, who, by doing righteousness, by the atoning sacrifice of himself, and by his intercession, has appeased the wrath of God, and satisfied divine justice; so that there is no condemnation to them that are interested in him; no evil of punishment shall befall them, nor plague come nigh them.

Ver. 31. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness, &c.*] Not for his justifying righteousness before God; for all the works of righteousness done by the best of men cannot justify them before him, much less a single action: but his executing judgment in the manner he did, or slaying the above two persons, was esteemed a righteous action by the Lord himself; who upon it caused the plague to cease, and likewise gave to Phinehas the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, and to his posterity; whereby the action had eternal honour put upon it, and was sufficiently secured from the calumny of men; who might condemn it as a rash action done by a private person, assuming the office of a public magistrate; and as being a cruel one, not giving the criminals time for repentance. But all this is wiped off by the testimony of God himself, approving of it; and so it continues to be esteemed; as it is said it should, *unto all generations for evermore*: whenever it is spoken of, it is spoken of with commendation, as a righteous action, as expressive of true zeal for the Lord of hosts. Moreover, the covenant made with him upon it, which confirmed the justness of it, that taking place in Zadok, a priest of his line, continued in it till the Messiah came, who is a Priest for ever: see Ezek. xlv. 15. Jer. xxxiii. 17—22.

Ver. 32. *They angered him also at the waters of strife, &c.*] Or, *at the waters of Meribah*²; that is, Meribah-kadesh, as it is called in Deut. xxxii. 51: to distinguish it from Meribah-rephidim, where also were waters of strife or contradiction; at which the people murmured and strove with the Lord, and greatly displeased him, Exod. xvii. 7. *So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes*; he was not suffered to go with them into the good land; though he most earnestly desired it, it could not be granted: but when he was just upon the borders of it, he is bid to go up to the mount, and take a view of it, and die; and all because of what was done at this place; see Numb. xx. 12. Deut. iii. 26. and xxxii. 50, 51.

Ver. 33. *Because they provoked his spirit, &c.*] Though he was a very meek man, meeker than any upon the face of the earth, Numb. xii. 2. yet, being greatly provoked, let fall some passionate and undue expressions; and this was not only his sin, but the fault of those also that provoked him, and with this

view it is mentioned. The Targum is, “for they rebelled against his Holy Spirit;” the Holy Spirit of God, as in Isa. lxiii. 10. Jarchi interprets it of Moses and Aaron provoking the Spirit of God; which sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra and Kimchi; though they seem to prefer the former, and which seems best. Some interpret it of the Israelites, that they caused Moses and Aaron to provoke his Spirit. *So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips*; that is, Moses spake, saying, *Hear now, ye rebels, must we, or can we, fetch you water out of this rock?* Which words were spoken in an angry passionate way, calling them rebels, and expressing diffidence about getting water out of the rock; which was the thing that was so displeasing to God, because they did not believe him to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel, Numb. xxv. 10, 12. Jarchi, as before, understands this of God, of his speaking, pronouncing, and declaring, that Moses and Aaron should not bring the congregation into the land of Canaan, Numb. xxv. 13. and so the word *unadvisedly* may be left out, and only read, *he spake with his lips*; but the other sense is to be preferred.

Ver. 34. *They did not destroy the nations, &c.*] Here begins an account of their sins and provocations, after they were settled in the land of Canaan. They did not destroy the inhabitants of the land, of the seven nations; whose land was given to them as an inheritance, and of which the Canaanites were dispossessed for their sins, and to be destroyed. *Concerning whom the Lord commanded them*; that they should destroy them; the command is in Deut. vii. 1, 2. God’s commands are to be obeyed; they are neither to be added to, nor diminished from; his commands are transgressed and violated by sins of omission or commission; the Israelites might plead mercy, but this was no excuse to an express command: the same sin Saul was afterwards guilty of, with respect to one of these nations, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 8, 9. Those spiritual Canaanites, the sinful deeds of the body, are to be mortified, and not indulged and spared, Col. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 13.

Ver. 35. *But were mingled among the Heathen, &c.*] Not only dwelt among them, but made covenants and contracts, carried on trade and commerce, and intermarried with them, contrary to the express law of God, Deut. vii. 2, 3, 4. Nor should saints have communion with wicked men, especially in things sinful and superstitious, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16. Ephes. v. 11. *And learned their works*; not their civil works and actions, their trades and business, but their idolatrous works; of which a detail is given in the following verses: *evil communications corrupt good manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33.

Ver. 36. *And they served their idols, &c.*] Of gold and silver, wood and stone; the works of men’s hands, senseless creatures; which are nothing in the world, and bring grief and sorrow to the worshippers of them, from whence they have their name here given them; see Psal. xvi. 4. They served their idols, the idols of the Canaanites, who were dispossessed of their land for their idolatries and other sins; and these Israelites were put in their place. They served those which

⁷ T Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 82. 2.

² על מי מריבה super aquas Meribah, Montanus; apud Memeribus, Tigurine version; juxta aquas Meriba, Gejerus; so Answorth.

they were ordered to destroy; they who knew the true God, whose servants they were, or ought to have been, and professed to be, and were so called; and yet served the idols of the nations driven out before them. *Which were a snare unto them*; either the Canaanites were, who were left in the land, with whom they mixed, and whose works they learned; these insnared them, and drew them into idolatry, Josh. xxiii. 13. or the idols they worshipped, which were the cause of many evils and calamities, Judg. ii. 3. or the act of serving and worshipping them, Exod. xxiii. 33. Deut. vii. 16. They were by these means like a bird or beast in a snare, and brought into trouble and distress, out of which they could not extricate themselves.

Ver. 37. *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.*] Who have their name here given them from a word that signifies to waste and destroy, they being the destroyers of mankind. So the Targum renders it by מוֹקִיף, which signifies spirits noxious and hurtful; but R. Elias Levita, in his Tishbi, p. 233, says it is a mistake to derive it from the root which signifies to waste and destroy; for then he says the *daleth* should have a *dagesh*; but does not tell us from whence it is derived. De Dieu, on Matt. ix. 32, derives it from the Arabic word *سار*, to rule, for these demons were heroes, princes who ruled over others, and so were reckoned among the gods. As Satan, the head of them, was a murderer from the beginning, the cause of the ruin of our first parents, and of all their posterity; and may be truly called, as the king of the locusts is, *Apollyon* or *Abaddon*, John viii. 44. Rev. ix. 11. these the Israelites sacrificed unto, as the Gentiles did, Lev. xvii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 17. 1 Cor. x. 20. and not lambs and rams, sheep, goats, and bullocks, but their sons and daughters; which they not only caused to pass through the fire to Moloch, which was a lustration of them by the flame, or causing them to pass between two fires; but they sacrificed them to be devoured, and actually burned them; see Jer. vii. 31. Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. From whence we may see of what a hardening nature sin is, and how by degrees persons may be brought to commit things the most shocking to nature, and which they some time before shuddered at. First, these Israelites mix themselves with the Heathens they spared, whom they should have destroyed; then they learn, by being among them, to do as they did, to walk in the vanity of their minds like them; and then they are enticed to serve their idols, and at last to sacrifice their sons and daughters to devils; which was no other than murder, and that of the most heinous nature: as follows.

Ver. 38. *And shed innocent blood, &c.*] The blood of innocent persons; not that any of Adam's posterity, descending from him by ordinary generation, are strictly and properly innocent, or free from sin; self-righteous persons have thought themselves, touching the righteousness of the law, blameless; and some perfectionists have pretended to be free from sin, but are not such; they who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and washed in his blood, are, so considered, all fair and without spot; are without fault before the throne, and unreprouvable in the sight of God: but,

considered in themselves, are not without sin; only the man Christ Jesus is perfectly holy and free from sin, being born of a virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; otherwise all descending from Adam sinned in him, are conceived in sin, and polluted with it; nor can a clean thing be brought out of an unclean, no, not one: though infants may be said to be innocent in comparison of adult persons, guilty of actual transgressions, who have lived in sin, and committed many gross iniquities; as also they may be so called as being undeserving of such barbarous and inhuman usage here mentioned. Even *the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan*; this was a further aggravation of their wickedness, that it was not only innocent blood, but the blood of their own children, they shed; their own flesh and blood, pieces of themselves; and their near alliance to them gave them no power over their lives; but, on the contrary, the nearer they were in blood to them, the greater and more horrid was their sin; and what still added to it was, that they were the idols of Canaan, of that people whom the Lord abhorred, and had drove out before them, and had given their land; to them they sacrificed them; so that here was a complication of wickedness in this affair. *And the land was polluted with blood*; with innocent blood, the blood of their own children; with the sins of murder, as the Targum; which only can be cleansed with the blood of the murderers, Numb. xxxv. 33. even the land which the Lord separated from all others for his people; in which his tabernacle was placed, and his worship set up, and therefore called the holy land, Zech. ii. 12.

Ver. 39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, &c.*] Not the land only, but they themselves also; or *with their works**, with the works of the Heathen they learned, ver. 35. or rather with their own works, the works of the flesh, especially their shocking idolatries: sin is of a defiling nature; it has defiled all men, it defiles all of men, all the faculties of their souls, and all the members of their bodies; nor can any thing truly and thoroughly cleanse from it but the blood of Christ: even men's works of righteousness are as filthy rags and defiling, and much more their evil works. *And went a whoring with their own inventions*; after other gods; idolatry is often in Scripture signified by whoredom; the idolatry of Israel and Judah is represented by two harlots and their lewd practices, in Ezek. xxiii. and hence the apostate church of Rome is compared to a whore, because of her idolatry, Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 5.

Ver. 40. *Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, &c.*] Sin is the cause of wrath, which is compared to fire kindled by the breath of the Almighty, and is intolerable; this shews that the offence must be very great, as to incense the Lord against a people he had chosen above all others to be his peculiar people; as well as it was an aggravation of their sin, so highly to provoke the Lord, whom they had vowed to be their God. There may be appearances of wrath for sin against those who are the Lord's people in the highest and best sense. *Inasmuch that he abhorred his own inheritance*; the people of

* במצותיהם operibus earum, Mais; so Ainsworth.

Israel, whom he had chosen for his inheritance, and were his portion, and the lot of his inheritance. This must be understood of the body of the people, not of every individual; not of the remnant according to the election of grace among them, of which there were some in all ages; for this would be contrary to his love, and the unchangeableness of it; and however not of the persons of his people, but of their sins; and of the appearances of his providence towards them, which look like wrath, indignation, and abhorrence; for God will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance, Psal. xciv. 14. the following verses explain this wrath and abhorrence. The Targum in the king's Bible is, "The Word of the Lord abhorred," &c. see Zech. xi. 8.

Ver. 41. *And he gave them into the hand of the Heathen, &c.*] In the times of the judges; as into the hands of the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, and Philistines, to whom they became tributaries; see the book of Judges. *And they that hated them ruled over them*; as it was threatened and foretold they should, in case they did not observe the law of God, Lev. xxvi. 17.

Ver. 42. *Their enemies also oppressed them, &c.*] By taxes, and taking the increase of their fields and sustenance, which often obliged them to cry for a deliverer, who upon this was sent to them; see Judg. ii. 9, 15. and vi. 1—7. *And they were brought into subjection under their hand*; or were humbled under their hand, as the Targum; they were not only made to submit to their enemies, but they were humbled before the Lord; brought to a sense of their sins, and acknowledgment of them, when the Lord appeared for their deliverance, as follows.

Ver. 43. *Many times did he deliver them, &c.*] By means of the judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephtha, Samson, and others. *But they provoked him with their counsel*: in asking a king, whom he gave in his anger, and took away in his wrath, Hos. xiii. 11. and with their idolatries which they devised, setting up the calves at Dan and Beth-el; and by taking counsel of others, and not of the Lord; seeking for help from the Assyrians and Egyptians, and trusting in them, Isa. xxx. 1, 2. all which was very provoking, and shewed great ingratitude, after so many deliverances: or, *though they provoked him with their counsel*^b; with their inventions, as in ver. 29. yet such were his grace and goodness, that he frequently wrought salvation for them. *And were brought low for their iniquity*; or *when they were weakened, or impoverished by their iniquity*^c, so that they could not help themselves; as they were particularly by the Midianites, Judg. vi. 1—6. Unless this should rather refer to some after-times, as the times of Ahaz, when Judah was brought low for their transgressions, 2 Chron. xxviii. 19. as also the time of the Babylonish captivity. Sin is of a weakening and impoverishing nature; it has weakened all mankind, and took from them their moral strength to do good; and has brought them to poverty and want; to be beggars on the dunghill; to a pit wherein is no water;

and left them in a hopeless and helpless condition: yea, it brings the people of God oftentimes after conversion into a low estate, when God hides his face because of it; temptations are strong, grace is weak, and they become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual things.

Ver. 44. *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, &c.*] Or *looked on them in distress*^d; he saw their affliction, and had compassion on them; he was so far from abhorring and despising the affliction of the afflicted, that he pitied them and sympathized with them; in all their afflictions he was afflicted; he looked upon them with an eye of pity and concern, and helped them out of their troubles. *When he heard their cry*; or *their prayer*, as the Targum, and so other versions; crying is prayer; and it denotes vocal and vehement prayer, such as is put up to God in distress; and which he hears and answers; his ears are open to the cries of his people.

Ver. 45. *And he remembered for them his covenant, &c.*] At Sinai, according to Aben Ezra; rather that made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see Psal. cv. 8, 9, 10. not their covenant who promised to hear and do all that the Lord commanded, and did it not; but his covenant, his promise of giving them the good land, and settling them in it: the Lord is ever mindful of the covenant of his grace for his people, for their good; he remembers the promises he has made, where they are in Christ; and so as to fulfil and apply them; he remembers the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David, and gives them; he remembers for whom it is made, and never forgets them; he remembers with whom it is made, with his Son, the surety, messenger, and Mediator of it; he remembers that he is their covenant God and Father, and will be so for evermore; he remembers his loving-kindness, which has been ever of old, which is the source and foundation of it. *And repented according to the multitude of his mercies*: his mercies temporal and spiritual are many; and there is an abundance of mercy displayed especially in spiritual ones, in redemption, in regeneration, and in the forgiveness of sin. Or *according to the abundance of his grace, or gracious benefits*^e; there is an abundance of grace in his heart, in his son, in his covenant, in salvation by Christ, and in every part of it; and which appears at conversion, as superabundant; and by this multitude of mercy, and abundance of grace, he is moved to repent. This is sometimes denied of him; and indeed he never repents so as to change his mind, to alter his purposes, to revoke his promises or his gifts, these are all without repentance; but he sometimes changes his ways and his works, his conduct in Providence, and the course of it; and then he may be said to repent of the evil he threatened to do, or was doing, when he puts a stop to it; and instead of that bestows favours and blessings.

Ver. 46. *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*] He not only pitied them himself, but caused them to be pitied by others, even by their enemies; he has the hearts of all men in his

^b חוסה quamvis ipsi, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^c וימנו & attenuati essent, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius, Michaëlis, Gejerus; & in paupertatem devenerunt per suam iniquitatem, Tigurine version.

^d וירא ביער להם & vidit in angustia eis, Montanus, Gejerus; & Musculus, Tigurine version.

^e כרב חסדיו secundum amplitudinem, seu multitudinem gratiarum suarum, Cocceius, Gejerus.

hands, and can turn them as he pleases; as he sometimes turned their hearts to hate his people, Psal. cv. 25. so he turned them to pity them, as he promised he would when they turned to him, 2 Chron. xxx. 9. so he did, by stirring up Cyrus to proclaim liberty to them, and his successors to encourage and assist in rebuilding their city and temple.

Ver. 47. *Save us, O Lord our God, &c.*] Here the psalmist personates the people in captivity, and represents them as praying for deliverance; as well knowing that none but God could save them: and a prayer of this nature, with respect to spiritual salvation, supposes danger, and a sense of it; that they are not able to save themselves, nor any creature able to save them; only the Lord, who is both willing and able; and of this kind is the prayer of faith. *And gather us from among the Heathen*: in Babylon, and other countries; see the note on the title. *To give thanks unto thy holy name*: bring us out of captivity to our own land, to Jerusalem, to the temple there, to give thanks to thy holy name for the merciful deliverance of us; see Psal. cxvii. 4. *And to triumph in thy praise*: in thy salvation, in thy wondrous works, worthy of praise; or whilst praising thee: the word signifies to glory therein; and such who are sensible of the mercies they receive from the Lord

will make their boast of him and them, and glory; see Psal. xxxiv. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 48. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, &c.*] God is to be blessed as the Father of mercies; as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the covenant God and Father of his people in him, of the true Israel of God: which is done by celebrating his blessedness in himself; by ascribing to him all blessedness enjoyed, as the author of it; and by giving him honour, glory, and blessing for it. *From everlasting to everlasting*; here and hereafter, in time and to all eternity; from this world to that which is to come, as the Targum; and which Arama observes are the days of the Messiah. *And let all the people say, Amen*; so be it; to giving thanks to God, to praising his name, and ascribing blessing to him. *Praise ye the Lord*; or *hallelujah*: so these two words, *Amen, hallelujah*, are joined together in Rev. xix. 4. The psalm ends as it began; for though the greatest part of it is taken up in relating the sins of the people of Israel; yet as the Lord was merciful to them and forgave them, and notwithstanding bestowed great mercies on them, there was reason for praise and thanksgiving. Here ends the fourth part of the book of Psalms; the fifth part begins with the following psalm.

P S A L M CVII.

THIS psalm, from its style, and from its connexion with the preceding psalms, seems to have been written by David. The two foregoing psalms respect the children of Israel; this is generally thought to concern all mankind, and its view to assert a general providence which attends all, in whatsoever condition and circumstance; and to encourage men in their distresses to cry unto the Lord. According to Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and others, four sorts of persons are mentioned, travellers through a wilderness, prisoners, sick persons, and such who use the seas; to which some add a fifth, husbandmen; these are instanced in, not to the exclusion of others, but from them it may be concluded that whatsoever state or condition persons may be in, they are known and taken notice of by the Lord, and are relieved by him when they call upon him. Some restrain the whole to the Israelites, as the Targum, R. Obadiah, Arama, and others, where they make any application; and others apply the psalm to New-Testament times; and indeed, though the literal sense should be attended unto and preserved, yet it seems to be applicable to spiritual persons and things. The title of it in the Syriac version is pretty remarkable, "it is said concerning Joab and Abiah the sons of Samuel, who recited the commandments of the Lord. God gathered the Jews out of captivity, and brought them out from Babylon. Also the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, gathered the Gentiles from the four corners of the world, by preaching to baptism."

Ver. 1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, &c.*] As all men should do, at all times and for all things; the psalm begins as the former does, and gives the same reasons for thanksgiving. *For he is good*; and does

good, and is the author of all good. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; and men in every age are partakers of it.

Ver. 2. *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, &c.*] That the Lord is good, and his mercy everlasting; since their redemption is a proof of his goodness, and an instance of his mercy; this is not to be understood of the Israelites redeemed from Egyptian bondage, or from the Babylonish captivity, though they had abundant reason to say as above; but rather of all such who are delivered from any sort of slavery, bondage, and confinement; whether from the power of a disease, or from a prison, or from wicked and unreasonable men; and from captivity in an enemy's country, where they have been used very severely; and as the providence of God is concerned in all such deliverances, thanks should be given him: it seems best of all to understand it of those who are spiritually redeemed by Christ, this phrase being frequently used of such, Isa. xxxv. 10. and li. 11. and lxii. 12. who may be said to be so, since Christ is the author of their redemption; they are redeemed, not by themselves, nor by any creature, but by the Lord; who being their God, and near kinsman, had a right to redeem them, and, being God, was able to do it, and who has effected it by his precious blood; so that he has a right unto them and a property in them, which this phrase also suggests; and for all which they have great reason to praise the Lord and his goodness, and sing the new song of redeeming love. *Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy* from all their sins which war against their souls; from Satan their implacable adversary, who is stronger than they; from the law, which curses and threatens them with damnation and death; from death itself, the last

enemy, and indeed from the hand of all their enemies, be they who they may.

Ver. 3. *And gathered them out of the lands, &c.*] This cannot have respect to the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt; for they were not then brought out of several countries, but from one land only: nor to the Babylonish captivity; for, though some might be gathered out of different provinces, yet not from east, west, north, and south, as here expressed. It best suits with the gathering of the redeemed in effectual vocation, and particularly the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times; to which the title of the Syriac version before mentioned has respect. The elect of God are gathered in consequence of being redeemed, Zech. x. 8. they are gathered out of the world, and from among the men of it; they are gathered to Christ, and by him; they are gathered into his churches, and to communion with them, and to a participation of all privileges and ordinances: and this is usually done by the ministration of the Gospel, which is sent into all the world for this purpose; and a distinguishing blessing of grace it is to be gathered out from the rest of the world, and favoured with such rich mercies. Such have reason to adore the grace of God, and to shew forth his praise, who has called them by his grace, and separated them from others for himself. *From the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south; or, from the sea*¹; the southern sea, as the Targum; or the Red sea, the Arabian or Persian sea. The elect of God, and redeemed of the Lord, lie in all parts of the world; and from thence they are gathered by the ministry of the word unto Christ: this was fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, and will be more so in the latter day; see Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

Ver. 4. *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, &c.*] Not the people of Israel, as the Targum. These seem not to be particularly intended, whatever allusion there may be to their passage through the wilderness to Canaan's land; but rather, in general, travellers through waste places, especially the wild deserts of Arabia; where the wind blowing the sand, covers the roads with it, so that frequently travellers lose their way, and wander about, till directed to it by one providence or another. Some compare this with the case of the Old-Testament-saints, mentioned in Heb. xi. 37, 38. others with the church in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 2. and xii. 14. But it is certain that the redeemed and gathered are here meant; and this fitly describes their case, before and at effectual vocation: they are in the wilderness of the people, Ezek. xx. 35. from whence they are gathered; are in a state of error and ignorance; are like straying sheep, gone out of the right way; and are as lost sheep, they have lost their way; and though there may be many ways that present unto them, and which they think bid fair to be the right way; yet the true way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, they know not, whilst in a state of nature and unregeneracy; and when they come to be effectually called, they see themselves to be in a bewildered state and condition. They found no city to dwell in; nor even to call at or lodge in, for miles together; which

is the case of travellers in some parts, particularly in the deserts of Arabia. Spiritual travellers find no settlement, rest, peace, joy, and comfort, but in Christ; nor any indeed in this world, and the things of it; here they have no continuing city, Heb. xiii. 14.

Ver. 5. *Hungry and thirsty, &c.*] As travellers in deserts sometimes are; their provisions being spent they bring with them, and none to be had on the road; there being no inns to stop at, nor any sort of food to eat, nor springs of water to drink of. In such a condition are souls, when, like the prodigal, they come to themselves, and are thoroughly convinced of their state and condition by nature; they find themselves starving and famishing, and no provision to be had from themselves or the creature: they hunger after Christ, the bread of life, and thirst after his grace, the water of life, and the blessings of it; they hunger and thirst after his righteousness, and justification by it; after the pardon of their sins through his blood, and after salvation by him, and an interest in it; after more knowledge of him, and communion with him. *Their soul fainted in them; for want of food and drink; as men do, in a spiritual sense, for want of Christ, the blessings of his grace, particularly salvation; for want of views of interest in it, of the joys and comforts of it; see Psal. cxix. 81. Some refer all this to the apostles and apostolic men, wandering in the Gentile world, hungry, thirsty, and without any certain dwelling-place; see 1 Cor. iv. 11.*

Ver. 6. *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, &c.*] To be directed in their way, and for food and drink, as travellers do when in such distress. Natural men, even the very Heathens, when in distress, will cry unto God for relief, as Jonah's mariners did, Jon. i. 5. It is a time of trouble with awakened sinners, when they are convinced of sin by the spirit of God; when they are pricked to the heart with a sense of it; when the terrors of death and hell get hold of them; when they see themselves lost and undone, and in a wrong way, and know not what to do; when they find themselves starving and ready to perish; and then they cry, that is, pray, unto the Lord, the God of their lives, whose ears are open to their cries. *And he delivered them out of their distresses; by leading them in a right way, and by satisfying and filling their hungry souls with good things, as it is explained, ver. 7, 9.*

Ver. 7. *And he led them forth by the right way, &c.*] Thus God by his providence directs travellers that have lost their way, and puts them into the right way. There is no doubt a very great concern of Providence in such a case, and which ought to be acknowledged with thankfulness. And thus the Lord leads awakened and inquiring souls to the right way of salvation; to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and directs and enables them to believe in him, to walk by faith, and to continue to walk in him, as they have received him; and which is a plain and straight way, in which they shall not stumble; yea, in which men, though fools, shall not err, wander, or lose themselves: and though this way is attended with many afflictions and tribulations, and so may be said to be a narrow and a rough way; yet it is a right

¹ מִן הַיָּם & a mari, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

one, and a safe one, it brings at last to eternal life: the Syriac version renders it, *by the way of truth*. That they might go to a city of habitation; a city to dwell in; the Targum is, "to Jerusalem, a city to dwell in:" but any city nearest for travellers is here meant; and in a spiritual sense may be intended, either Christ, the city of refuge, where awakened sinners are directed to flee to, and where they find safety and plenty of provisions; or the church of God, the strong city, about which salvation is as walls and bulwarks; and to which they come when effectually called, and become citizens of it; or the New Jerusalem church-state, in which the tabernacle of God will be, and he will dwell with men, and they with him; or the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, that city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; in which are everlasting habitations, and mansions of peace and rest for the people of God to dwell in, after they have gone through their troublesome passage in this wilderness.

Ver. 8. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, &c.*] For his providential goodness, in providing food and drink for them, when fainting; in directing them to their right way, when they had lost it; and in bringing them safe to the place they were bound for: and particularly for his special grace and goodness, in redemption and effectual vocation; for bringing out of a wilderness state and condition, and supplying them with all spiritual provisions, and putting them in the right way to eternal glory and happiness. *And for his wonderful works to the children of men!* as all the above things are wonderful ones, both in providence and grace. This verse is repeated at the close of each of the instances produced; in which the goodness of God appears to persons in distress, and who being delivered, ought to acknowledge it, and be thankful for it: or *confess*: that is, declare to God his goodness, and to the children of men his wonderful works; so the Targum.

Ver. 9. *For he satisfieth the longing soul, &c.*] The soul that is hungry and thirsty, and longs for food and drink, which nature in such circumstances craves. And so such who long for Christ and his grace, for an interest in him, and fellowship with him, the Lord satisfies with these things, as with marrow and fatness. *And filleth the hungry soul with goodness;* with the goodness and fatness of his house; with good things; with the good things laid up in Christ and in the covenant; with the good things of the Gospel; with the grace and goodness of God in Christ; see *Psal. lxxv. 4. and ciii. 5.*

Ver. 10. *Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, &c.*] This is the second instance of persons in distress calling on the name of the Lord; and who, being delivered, are under obligation to praise him, such as are captives and prisoners. The Targum applies it to the Israelites in the Babylonish captivity; but it is much better to interpret it of prisoners in common; whose prisons are generally dark cells or dungeons, and where they are alone, and deprived of the company of the living; and so are not only in darkness, but seem as if they were in the state of the dead; their condition is the shadow of it, and bears some resemblance to it. And it may be applied, in a

spiritual sense, to the case and condition of the people of God in a state of ungeneracy, which is described in the same language, *Isa. ix. 2. and xlii. 7. and xlix. 9. Luke i. 79.* and which is a state of darkness and ignorance; they are darkness itself, and are ignorant of themselves and their case; of the nature of sin, and the evil of it; of the spirituality of the law; of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work; of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel contained in them; and, like persons in a dark prison, cannot behold the sun, nor see to read nor work; and are like those that are in the state of the dead; and indeed are dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins; having no spiritual life, sense, nor motion. And here they sit, continue and remain, during the time of their ignorance, till it pleases the Lord to enlighten, quicken, and convert them. These phrases are used of the people of God after conversion, when in darkness and desertion, and under afflictive providences, *Psal. xxiii. 4. and xlv. 19. and lxxxviii. 5, 6. Mic. vii. 9.* Being bound in affliction and iron; that is, with fetters of iron, which is very afflictive; see *Psal. cv. 18.* and fitly describes the people of God in a state of nature, who are led captive by Satan, at his will; are held with the cords and fetters of their own sins, and are shut up under the law, as a ministration of condemnation and death: or, bound with affliction, as with iron; hence we read of fetters and cords of affliction, *Job xxxvi. 8.* with which good men may be held for their iniquities; or, however, are chastened with them for their good. Some refer all this to the state of the Christian church under the ten persecutions, *Rev. ii. 10.*

Ver. 11. *Because they rebelled against the words of God, &c.*] All afflictions, as captivity and imprisonment, are generally for sin; which is a rebellion against God, and a transgression of his laws. Adam rebelled against the words of God, not giving credit to them, but believing the words of the devil; and so brought himself and all his posterity into that state of darkness, captivity, and death, before described. Some understand this only of the light of nature, and the dictates of it, against which men rebel; but rather it designs any and every revelation of the will of God, either in the law or in the Gospel; disobedience to which is rebellion against the words of God, and is highly resented by him. *And contemned the counsel of the most High;* the advice he gives in his law, and by his prophets, what to do, and what to avoid: and which he gives by the ministers of the word, in his Gospel and in his ordinances; which are both called his counsel, *Luke vii. 30. Acts xx. 27.* the contempt of which is very displeasing to him, *Prov. i. 25.*

Ver. 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour, &c.*] Humbled them under his mighty hand; brought down their haughty spirits and proud stomachs by one afflictive providence or another; by which the Lord humbles men, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness, and hides pride from them: or with trouble of mind, under a conviction of sin; when pride, which is the cause of rebellion against God, and of contempt of his counsel, is brought down, and the haughtiness of man laid low; and when men, humbled under a sense of sin, are made willing to submit to Christ and

his righteousness, to God's way of saving sinners by him, to the law of God, and to the Gospel of Christ. *They fell down*; they threw themselves prostrate at his feet for mercy; their heart and strength failed them, as the word signifies, and is used in Psal. xxxi. 10. terrified with a sense of divine wrath, they could not stand before the Lord, nor brave it out against him. *And there was none to help*; they could not help themselves, nor was there any creature that could. There is salvation in no other than in Christ; when he saw there was none to help him in that work, his own arm brought salvation to him; and when sinners see there is help in no other, they apply to him, as follows.

Ver. 13. *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, &c.*] Their affliction, their hearts being brought down with labour, and they being and finding themselves in a state of darkness, in the shadow of death, in affliction and iron; or in soul-troubles, under a sense of sin, and in a view of wrath and displeasure; under apprehensions of imminent danger, as the disciples in the storm; and therefore cry to the Lord, as they did, *Lord, save us, we perish*, Matt. viii. 25. *And he saved them out of their distresses*; from all their sins; from the curse of the law; from wrath to come; from hell and death; being both able and willing. The following verse further explains this.

Ver. 14. *He brought them out of darkness, &c.*] In which they were by nature, into marvellous light; to see their interest in Christ, and his salvation; and to have the light of joy and comfort in him. *And the shadow of death*; quickening them by his spirit and grace; causing them to live by faith upon him; entitling them to eternal life, and securing them from eternal death. *And brake their bands in sunder*; their cords and fetters of affliction; or their bands of sin, and the power of it; and loosed them whom Satan had bound and kept so for many years, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 15. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, &c.*] Or, *confess to the Lord his goodness or grace, or mercy*; own and acknowledge it, in delivering them from such a state of darkness and death, of thralldom and captivity; see Rom. vi. 17. *And for his wonderful works to the children of men*; or, *confess them before them*; relate and declare them to them, what wonderful things he has done for them; that they may be affected with them, and that they may praise his name together; see the note on ver. 9.

Ver. 16. *For he hath broken the gates of brass, &c.*] The prison-doors made of brass, as sometimes of iron, for the security of the prisoners; see Acts xii. 10. *And cut the bars of iron in sunder*; with which they were barred and secured. Hyperbolic phrases these, as Kimchi, expressing how exceeding strong the prison-doors were, and the impossibility of an escape out of them, unless the Lord had delivered them; but when he works, none can let; all obstructions are easily removed by him; which is the sense of the words, see Isa. xlv. 2. Vitringa, on Rev. xii. 2. inter-

prets this of the subjection of the Roman emperors to the faith and obedience of Christ.

Ver. 17. *Fools, because of their transgression, &c.*] Or, *because of the way^h of it*; their sinful course of life; for it is not for a single transgression they are afflicted, but for a continued series of sinning, which is a transgression of the law of God. *By fools* are meant not idiots, men devoid of common sense and natural understanding, but immoral persons; such who have no understanding of divine and spiritual things; are destitute of the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom; without the true knowledge of God himself; place their happiness in sensual enjoyments; seek only the gratification of their lust; scoff at religion, make a mock at sin, and have no concern about a future state, and the welfare of their immortal souls. *And because of their iniquities, are afflicted*; or *afflict themselves, or find themselves afflictedⁱ*; rather *bring affliction on themselves^k*. Not that these are the only persons that are afflicted; for many truly wise, good, and gracious persons, have a large share of afflictions; though not in a way of punishment for sin, or in wrath and hot displeasure, but in a way of fatherly chastisement, and in love: nor are fools for the most part afflicted, nor so much as others; they are not in trouble and plagued as other men; which has been a stumbling to good men: however, sometimes they are afflicted in this life, and in a way of punishment for sin; and very often are but the more hardened by it; though to some it is an ordinance for good; they are awakened by it to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it, and to seek for pardoning grace and mercy. This is the *third* instance of persons in distress calling on the Lord, and finding relief^l, and being under obligation to praise him.

Ver. 18. *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, &c.*] Not only bread and common food, but dainty meat, the most delicious fare, Job xxxiii. 20. in which they most delighted in time of health, and too much indulged themselves in; and by that means brought diseases upon them, which caused this loathing in them, as is common. Thus to those who are distempered with sin, whose taste is not changed, nor can it discern perverse things, the word of God, the Gospel of Christ, which is delicious food, is disrelished by them; the doctrines of it are insipid things, they loath them as light bread, as the Israelites did the manna. *And they draw near unto the gates of death*; that is, the grave; the house appointed for all living; the dwelling-place of men till the resurrection; and so is said to have gates and doors; see Job xxxiii. 22. and xxx. 23. and men sometimes are brought so low by affliction as that they seem to be near to death, just upon the brink of eternity, ready to enter into the grave, and lie down among the dead.

Ver. 19. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, &c.*] A time of affliction is a time of trouble, and a proper season for prayer; and by it persons are brought to the throne of grace, when humbled under the mighty hand of God, to seek for relief. Hezekiah in his

^h So Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

ⁱ מִדְּרַךְ propter viam, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

^k יִתְעַבְּרוּ sese addictos sentiebant, Michaelis.

^l So Figurine version.

^l Flectitur iratus voce rogante Deus, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

affliction prayed to the Lord, though Asa sought to the physicians only, and not to the Lord; this is to be understood of such who are convicted of their folly, brought to a sense of sin and danger, and therefore cry to the Lord for his sparing mercy, and pardoning grace. And he saveth them out of their distresses; their afflictions, which were distressing to them, by removing their disorders and restoring them to health again; as follows.

Ver. 20. *He sent his word, and healed them, &c.*] It was his will and pleasure they should be healed, and accordingly they were; he issued his orders for the removal of the affliction, and it was done; diseases are his servants, which come and go at his command; so Christ, in the days of his flesh, healed by a word speaking, Matt. viii. 3, 8. This is true of Christ the essential Word, who was sent in the fulness of time, and was made flesh and dwelt among men, and went about healing all manner of diseases among the people; and who is also the physician of souls who came with healing in his wings; that is, with pardon of sin, for which his blood was shed: he is the only physician, the skilful, universal, and infallible one, and does all freely, and in a most marvellous manner, by his stripes, blood and wounds, and by an application of these to diseased persons sensible of their case. It may also be applied to the word of the Gospel; the law is the means of wounding, it is the killing letter; the Gospel is the means of healing, the doctrines of it are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations; it is the doctrine of remission of sins by the blood of Christ, and by it Christ speaks peace and pardon to wounded consciences. And delivered them from their destructions; from the destruction of the body, of the beauty and strength of it by diseases; restoring to health is a redeeming of the life from destruction; from the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction, so called because in it bodies corrupt, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms; and such who are savingly convinced of sin, and blessed with pardoning grace and mercy, are delivered from the everlasting destruction of body and soul in hell.

Ver. 21. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, &c.*] Both in restoring to bodily health, which is an instance of divine goodness; and in healing the diseases of the soul, or in the pardon of sin, which is according to the multitude of his mercies, and the riches of his grace. And for his wonderful works to the children of men; bodily health is sometimes restored in a wonderful manner, when all means used are without success, and the prescriptions of physic fail; and pardon of sin is a wonder of grace now, and will be to all eternity; and for these things praise ought to be given to the Lord, and they should be declared to men for his glory.

Ver. 22. *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, &c.*] Not legal sacrifices, but spiritual and evangelical ones, the sacrifices of praise and thankfulness which God has enjoined are well-pleasing to him through Christ, glorify him, and are but our reasonable service; see Heb. xiii. 15. And declare his works with rejoicing: tell them to the children of men, what he has done for them, for soul and body; let them come to Zion with joy and everlasting joy on their

heads; to the gates thereof, or to the public assemblies of the saints, and there declare what great things the Lord has done for them; and has had compassion upon them in healing their bodily diseases, and curing them of their soul-maladies.

Ver. 23. *They that go down to the sea in ships, &c.*] This is the fourth instance of persons in distress crying to the Lord for help, and, having it, are laid under obligation to praise him; the case of seafaring men: so the Targum introduces it, “mariners that go down to “the sea in ships;” the same form of expression as here is used in Isa. xlii. 10. Some affirm the sea to be higher than the earth, but by this it should be lower; besides the earth is said to be founded on the seas, which suggests superiority; and all the rivers run into the sea, which supposes a declivity; but, be it so that it is higher than the earth, yet this phrase is to be justified by the shores being higher than the sea, from whence men go down to take shipping, as Kimchi observes; though Kimchi’s father is of opinion that it respects persons going down into the ship, which is deep, as Jonah is said to do, Jon. i. 3. *That do business in great waters*; which refers either to the steering and working of the ship, and every thing relating to the management of the ropes and sails, and other affairs; and in a storm much business is done, all hands are employed: or else to the business they go to sea about, as catching fish, curing them, and carrying them to market; or else to traffic and merchandise of goods, they convey from place to place. The phrase is much like that, *as many as trade by sea*, Rev. xviii. 17.

Ver. 24. *These see the works of the Lord, &c.*] In creation, the sea itself, its flux and reflux; the creatures in it, fishes of various forms and sizes: and in providence, in preserving ships and men in the most imminent danger, and even to a miracle; sometimes causing the wind to change or to subside in a moment, whereby deliverance is wrought. And his wonders in the deep; the strange and wonderful creatures that are in the deep waters of the sea, and to be seen nowhere else; and the amazing appearances of divine providence, in delivering when in the greatest distress, and none at hand to help, and all hope of salvation gone.

Ver. 25. *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, &c.*] Winds are not raised by men, nor by devils, nor by angels, but by the Lord himself; who has created them, holds them in his fist, brings them out of his treasures, and sends them forth to do his will; if he speaks the word, gives but the order, a storm arises at once, and executes what he pleases, Psal. cxlviii. 8. *Which lifteth up the waves thereof*; that is, the waves of the sea: it comes down into it, and causes surges; which rise above the ship, and sometimes cover it, and ready to sink it; yea, even they are lifted up to the heavens, as it follows.

Ver. 26. *They mount up to the heaven, &c.*] The waves which are lifted up by the stormy wind, and the ships which are upon them, and the men in them. *They go down again to the depths*: one while they seem to reach the skies, and presently they are down, as it were, in the bottom of the sea, and are threatened to be buried in the midst of it; distress at sea is described in much

the same language by Virgil and Ovid^m. *Their soul is melted because of trouble*; because of the danger of being cast away; so it was with Jonah's mariners, and with the disciples in the storm; sea roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, are joined together in Luke xxi. 25, 26.

Ver. 27. *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, &c.*] Through the agitation of the water, and motion of the ship, not being able to stand upon deck. *And are at their wit's end*; or, *all their wisdom is swallowed up*ⁿ; their wisdom in naval affairs, their art of navigation, their skill in managing ships, all non-plussed and baffled; they know not what method to take to save the vessel and themselves; their knowledge fails them, they are quite confounded and almost distracted. So Apollinarius paraphrases it, "they forget navigation, and their wise art does not appear," so Ovid, describing a storm, uses the same phrase, *deficit ars*, "art fails."

Ver. 28. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, &c.*] As in a storm seafaring persons are used to do; so did Jonah's mariners, though Heathens, every one cried to his god. With the Romans^o tempests were reckoned deities, and had temples erected, and sacrifices offered to them; but these persons were such as knew and owned the true Jehovah, and called upon him in their distress: so did the apostles of Christ. *And he bringeth them out of their distresses*; by stilling the winds and the waves, causing them to proceed on their voyage with pleasure, and landing them safe on shore, as follows.

Ver. 29. *He maketh the storm a calm, &c.*] As Christ did by a word speaking, Mark iv. 39. *So that the waves thereof are still*; and roar and toss no more, but subside; and the sea becomes smooth and quiet, its raging ceases: the agry sea, as Horace^p calls it, becomes calm and peaceable; see Psal. lxxxix. 9.

Ver. 30. *Then are they glad because they be quiet, &c.*] The mariners are glad that the waves are quiet, and they free from danger, and at ease and in repose themselves. *So he bringeth them unto their desired haven*; the port, city, border or tract of land^q, they are bound to; which they desire to be at, and eagerly look out for, and rejoice when arrived at it. This is all the Lord's work in providence: mariners too often take it to themselves, as if it was owing to their own skill and management that they have brought home the ship safe to the appointed port; but it is owing to the secret guidance and protection of divine Providence, which should be acknowledged. The late Mr. Hussey^r thinks, that all this is not to be understood of seamen and naval affairs in common, but is a prophecy of what should befall the disciples of Christ, when on shipboard with him; who are the persons that went down to the sea of Galilee in a ship; whose business in the great waters was fishing; when, by the will of God, there came down a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea, so that the ship in which they were was filled with them, and in danger of being sunk; when they

went up and down, as here described, and reeled as they went along on the deck, to awake their Master; their hearts melting, and they at their wit's end through fear, when they saw such wonders, what no common mariner ever did; the Godman and Mediator rising up, and in a majestic manner rebuked the winds and waves, and caused a calm, and so brought them to the country of the Gadarenes, whither they were bound; see Luke viii. 23—26. But it may be applied, in a more spiritual manner, to the people of God in common; who are embarked in the cause of Christ, and in a church-state, comparable to a ship, of which Christ is the master, governor, and pilot; and who are sailing through the tempestuous sea of this world, and are tossed with tempests in it; and have business to do here, not only of a civil, but of a spiritual nature; and who not only see the wondrous works of creation and providence, but of grace and redemption; the deep things of God, the mysteries of his grace and love: and who sometimes are covered with the billows and waves of affliction, and in the utmost distress; which are all under the direction and at the command of God, to whom they apply for relief; and he commands a calm in their breasts, and causes their afflictions to cease, which produce joy and gladness in them; and at last they are brought safe to heaven, their desired haven, which they are bound unto, are seeking after, and desirous of; and where they are at entire rest, brought hither by the Lord himself.

Ver. 31. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, &c.*] Seafaring men particularly, before mentioned, as Jonah's mariners did, Jon. i. 16. or all the four sorts of persons instanced in, as Kimchi thinks: and even all men whatsoever should do this, high and low, rich and poor, of every age, sex, and condition; since they all receive favours from the Lord, and should return thanks to him; and especially good men, who are blessed with spiritual blessings by him: these should all *confess to the Lord his goodness*; as it may be rendered, see the note on ver. 15. they should own the mercy received as the Lord's doing, and acknowledge their unworthiness of it, and give him the glory of it. *And for his wonderful works to the children of men! or, confess and declare his wonderful works to the children of men*: the wonderful works of creation and providence, which those that go to sea see in the deeps, and every thing of the same kind which others observe; and especially the wonderful works of grace, or what God has done in a wonderful manner for the souls of his people; see Psal. lxxvi. 16. Mark v. 19. and ver. 8, 15, 21.

Ver. 32. *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, &c.*] Of the people of God, who are gathered out of the world into a church-state; and who gather themselves together to attend the worship and service of God in some one place; and here the Lord should be praised, and his name exalted, by those who have received favours from him; see Psal. cxi. 1. the Targum explains it, "in the congregation

^m Tollitur in celum, Virgil. *Æneid* 3. prope finem. Cælumque æquare videtur pontus. Ovid. *Metamorph.* l. 12. Fab. 10.

ⁿ כל חכמתם תבלע כל omnis sapientia eorum absorpta est, Paganus, Mutanus, Vatablus; so Janus & Tremellius, Piscator.

^o Cero de Nat. Deor. l. 3. c. 90. Virgil. *Æneid*. l. 5. v. 772. Horat. *Epod.* Ode 10. v. 23, 24. Ovid. *Fast.* 6. v. 193.

^p Nec horret iratum mare, Horat. *Epod.* Ode 2. v. 6. Nec maris ira manet, Ovid. *Metamorph.* l. 12. Fab. 7.

^q Vid Kimchii Sopher Shorash. rad. 117.

^r Warning from the Winds, p. 21—26.

“ of the people of the house of Israel.” *And praise him in the assembly of the elders; or, in the seat, or chair of the elders*: not of the Scribes and Pharisees, and elders of the people, that sat in Moses’s chair; but rather of the four-and-twenty elders, who are said to have four-and-twenty seats round the throne, where they worship and praise God; and which are emblems of Gospel churches; the members of which, for their grace, gravity, and prudence, are called elders; and over which elders in office preside, and who rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine; see Rev. iv. 4. 1 Tim. v. 17. The Targum renders it, “ the sauhedrim of the wise men.”

Ver. 33. *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, &c.*] A country abounding with rivers, as the country round about Sodom and the land of Canaan were, Gen. xiii. 10. Deut. viii. 7. Such an one is sometimes, by the just judgment of God, turned into a desert. *And the water-springs into dry ground*: what was like a well-watered garden becomes like dry and barren earth, on which nothing grows.

Ver. 34. *A fruitful land into barrenness, &c.*] Or, *into saltness*: as Sodom and the land adjacent became a salt sea; and the land of Canaan was threatened to become brimstone, salt and burning, like Sodom; in which nothing was sown, and which bore no grass; see Gen. xiv. 3. Deut. xxix. 23. and so the Targum, “ the land of Israel, which brought forth fruit, he hath destroyed, as Sodom was overthrow.” *For the wickedness of them that dwell therein*; this was the cause of the overthrow of Sodom, and of the destruction of that fine country, as also of Canaan afterwards; see Gen. xiii. 13. Deut. xxix. 22, 23. The very Heathens had a notion that barrenness and unfruitfulness in countries were owing to the sins of men; hence the sterility and famine at Mycenæ were attributed to the wickedness of Atreus. This may figuratively be understood of the present state and condition of the Jews; who were once a people well watered with the word and ordinances, and had the first preaching of the Gospel among them; but, rejecting and despising it, are now become like a desert, barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of divine things: and it might be illustrated by the case of several Christian churches; the seven churches of Asia, and others, once as well-watered gardens, but now are no more; and the places where they stood are destitute of spiritual knowledge, and the means of it.

Ver. 35. *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, &c.*] On the other hand, when it is the pleasure of God, a country uncultivated and like a desert, he makes it fruitful as one that is well-watered and tilled; as this country of ours, and the colonies in America, once waste places, now fruitful ones. *And dry ground into water-springs*: which is expressive of the same thing, and may be figuratively understood of the Gentile world; which, before the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel, and the pouring down of the Spirit, was like a wilderness and dry ground; but now watered with the word and ordi-

nances, and the grace of God, and in many places has become fruitful in grace and good works. The Targum prefaces this verse thus, “ when they return unto the law, he turneth,” &c.

Ver. 36. *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, &c.*] In those fruitful places which they find agreeable to them, and so fix upon them as the places of their abode, and build houses, and dwell there; having all the conveniences of life, which they wanted elsewhere: so such as hunger and thirst after righteousness make to such places where the waters are, the word is preached, and ordinances administered; and here they take up their dwelling, their bread being given them, and their waters sure unto them. *That they may prepare a city for habitation*: those poor necessitous persons, as they were when they first came; building houses, and others continually coming to them, by degrees form a well-regulated city, in which are a large number of inhabitants: which may be considered as an emblem of the church of God, often compared to a city; and is an habitation for God, and where saints desire and delight to dwell.

Ver. 37. *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, &c.*] And so raise a sufficient supply of corn and wine for the support of themselves and families. In a spiritual sense the *fields* are the world, and the seed which is sown is the word; the persons that sow it are the ministers of the Gospel, which, by a divine blessing, brings forth fruit, in some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold: the *vineyards* are the churches, planted by Christ and by his ministers, as his instruments; believers are the pleasant plants in them, and young converts are the tender grapes. *Which may yield fruits of increase; or fruit and increase*: the fields yield all sorts of grain for food, and the vineyards wine for drink. So the seed of the word being sown, and churches planted, they increase with the increase of God, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to the glory of his name.

Ver. 38. *He bleaseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, &c.*] Not only their fields and vineyards are blessed with an increase, but these husbandmen themselves; as man at his first creation was bid to do, being blessed of God; and as the Israelites were in Egypt, Gen. i. 28. Exod. i. 7. and which may spiritually denote the great number of converts to Christian churches, especially in the latter day, Jer. xxx. 19. *And suffereth not their cattle to decrease*; their sheep and oxen, which is reckoned a great temporal happiness, Psal. cxliv. 13, 14. and may signify that God does and will give a sufficient number of Gospel ministers, comparable to oxen for their labouriousness, that shall in all ages minister to his churches; see 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17.

Ver. 39. *Again they are minished, &c.*] Or *lessened*, in their families, cattle, and substance; either the same persons as before, or others. The Targum paraphrases it, “ but when they sin, they are lessened;” for sin is the cause of it, as follows: *and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow*; either be-

* במושב in cathedra, Pagninus, Montanus.

† למלחה in saluginea, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus,

† piscator, Gjerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius; in saluam, Cocceius.

‡ Hygin. Fab. 88.

cause of their oppression of the poor, the evil they do to them, and the sorrow they bring upon them; or they are brought into a low estate through the tyranny and oppression of others, and by the afflictions and sorrows they are brought into by them. This may be applied to the Jews, at their destruction by the Romans, when they were greatly lessened and brought low by their oppression of them: or rather to the Christians; not under the Heathen persecutions, for then they increased more and more; but under antichristian tyranny, when the beast had power over them, and overcame and slew them; and their numbers were so reduced, that the whole world is said to wonder after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3, 7, 8. and which will be the case again, when the witnesses will be slain: the number of Christians is greatly lessening now; there are but a few names in Sardis; Jacob is small, but will be smaller and fewer still.

Ver. 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes, &c.*] That is, the Lord does, who is above them; he laughs at them, and has them in derision, when they are raging against his people, cause, and interest; he sets them up and pulls them down at his pleasure; he hurls them from their seats and thrones, and makes them contemptible to their subjects; he sometimes brings them to a shameful end, as Herod, who was eaten with worms; and wicked princes, if they are not brought to disgrace in this world, they will rise to shame and everlasting contempt in the other; and will stand with the meanest and lowest before the Judge of the whole earth; and seek to the rocks and mountains to cover them from his wrath. This particularly will be true of the antichristian princes, when the vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon them, Rev. xvi. 1. *And causeth them to wander in the wilderness;* where there is no way; no beaten track or path; whither being driven out of their kingdoms, they flee for shelter, and wander about in untrodden paths; as Nebuchadnezzar, when he was driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts of the field: or this may be interpreted, as it is by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, of the infatuation of their wisdom, and of their being left without counsel, and erring through it; being at their wits' end, not knowing what step to take, or measures to concert; being in a maze, in a wilderness, at an entire loss what they should do; see Job xii. 17—21.

Ver. 41. *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, &c.*] On the other hand, the Lord sometimes exalteth men of low degree, raiseth men of mean extract and parentage, who have made a poor figure in life, to high places of honour, free from adversity and distress; as David from the sheepfold, and from following the ewes great with young, to be king of Israel. This may be applied to the saints and people of God, who for the most part are poor in purse, the poor of this world, whom he chooses, calls, and saves; poor in knowledge, capacity, and gifts; poor as to their spiritual circumstances, having neither food nor clothing, nor money to buy either; poor in spirit, and sensible of it; and poor by reason of afflictions: these the Lord sets on high, sets them among the princes of his people, makes them kings and priests; sets them on Christ the Rock, who is higher than they, higher than

the angels and than the heavens; sets them above the angels, their nature being advanced above theirs in Christ, and they being represented by him in heavenly places; and standing in the relation of sons to God, and of spouse and bride to Christ, and angels being their ministering servants; and ere long they will be set on thrones, and have a crown of glory, life, and righteousness, put upon them, and be possessed of an everlasting kingdom, and be out of the reach of affliction. They are not clear of it in this world; it is needful for them, they are appointed to it, and through it they must enter the kingdom; but then they will come out of all tribulation, and there will be no more pain, sorrow, and death: it may be rendered, *after affliction*, after their time of affliction is over, then God will exalt and glorify them; see 1 Pet. v. 10. this may respect the prosperity of the church in the latter day; see Dan. vii. 27. *And maketh him families like a flock;* that is, the Lord makes the poor families like a flock of sheep, so greatly does he increase them; this is a very apt figure that is here used, since the people of God are often compared to sheep, and to a flock of them; and these are creatures that greatly increase; and here it denotes the large number of the saints, as in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea and in the Gentile world; and as it will be in the latter day, when they shall be multiplied and not be few, glorified and not be small; and that they should be branched out into families, or particular churches, which, like families, consist of children, young men, and fathers, of which Christ is master, and ministers stewards; so it has been from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, and will be much more so in the latter day, when the earth will be full of these families every where. The Targum introduces this verse thus, "when they turn to the law he setteth," &c.

Ver. 42. *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice, &c.*] Shall see the increase and prosperity of the saints, the glory of the church in the latter day, and rejoice at it; the judgments of God upon the wicked, upon antichristian princes and states, and rejoice on that account; see Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. and the several deliverances of persons in distress before mentioned, and rejoice with them that rejoice; which is what good men ought to do, Rom. xii. 15. *And all iniquity shall stop her mouth;* men of iniquity, very bad men, the man of sin and his followers, and all profane and atheistical persons, who will be silenced and have nothing to say against the providence of God; will be confounded, and through shame lay their hand on their mouths and be struck with admiration at the wonderful things done by the Lord for his people; nor will they have any thing to say against their own condemnation.

Ver. 43. *Whoso is wise, &c.*] Or as it may be read interrogatively, *who is wise?* as in Jer. ix. 12. Hos. xiv. 9. that is, spiritually wise, wise unto salvation; who is made to know wisdom in the hidden part; for not such as are possessed of natural wisdom, or worldly-wise men, much less who are wise to do evil, are here meant. *And will observe these things;* the remarkable appearances of divine Providence to persons in distress; the various changes and vicissitudes in the world; the several afflictions of God's people, and their deliverances

out of them; the wonderful works of God in nature, providence, and grace; these will be observed, taken notice of, laid up in the mind, and kept by such who are truly wise, who know how to make a right use and proper improvement of them. *Even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*: every one of the wise men; they will perceive the kindness of God unto all men, in the several dispensations of his providence towards them, and his special love and kindness

towards his own people, even in all their afflictions; they will perceive this to be at the bottom of every mercy and blessing; they will understand more of the nature and excellency of it, and know more of the love of God and Christ, which passeth knowledge. *Or the kindnesses of the Lord shall be understood*: that is, by wise men; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra renders the words.

P S A L M CVIII.

THIS psalm consists of several passages out of the fifty-seventh and sixtieth psalms, with very little variation. Jarchi and Kimchi refer it to the times of the Messiah. The title in the Syriac version is, “cerning the calling of the Gentiles,” to which, no doubt, it has respect.

Ver. 1. *O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, &c.*] From hence to ver. 6 the words are taken out of Psal. lvii. 7—11. which see. *Even with my glory; my tongue; in Psal. lvii. 8. it is read, awake up my glory.*

Ver. 4. *For thy mercy is great above the heavens, &c.*] It is in Psal. lvii. 10. *thy mercy is great unto the heavens.*

Ver. 6. *That thy beloved may be delivered, &c.*] From hence to the end of the psalm the words are taken out of Psal. lx. 5—12.

Ver. 9. *Over Philistia will I triumph, &c.*] In Psal. lx. 8. it is, *Philistia, triumph thou because of me; see the note there.*

Ver. 11. *And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? &c.*] In Psal. lx. 10. it is, *and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies.*

P S A L M CIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was wrote by David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concerning Judas the betrayer of Christ, as is certain from Acts i. 16, 20. hence it is used to be called by the ancients the Iscariotic psalm. Whether the occasion of it was the rebellion of Absalom, as some, or the persecution of Saul, as Kimchi; and whoever David might have in view particularly, whether Ahithophel, or Doeg the Edomite, as is most likely; yet it is evident that the Holy Ghost foresaw the sin of Judas, and prophecies of that, and of the ruin and misery that should come upon him; for the imprecations in this psalm are no other than predictions of future events, and so are not to be drawn into an example by men; nor do they breathe out any thing contrary to the spirit of Christianity, but are proofs of it, since what is here predicted has been exactly accomplished. The title in the Syriac version is, “a psalm of David when they created Absalom king “without his knowledge, and for this cause he was “slain; but to us it expounds the sufferings of the “Christ of God;” and indeed he is the person that is all along speaking in this psalm.

Ver. 1. *Hold not thy peace, &c.*] Or be not as a deaf or dumb man, or like one that turns a deaf ear and will give no answer; so the Lord seems to his people when he does not give an immediate answer to their prayers, and does not arise to help them; he seems to have forsaken them, and to stand at a distance from them; nor does he avenge them of their enemies; it

is the Messiah, as man, that puts up this petition, and it agrees with Psal. xxii. 2. *O God of my praise; worthy of all praise, because of the perfections of his nature, and for the mercies he bestows; and is and ought to be the constant object of the praise of his people, and was the object of the praise of Christ; see Psal. xxii. 22, 55. who praised him for his wonderful formation as man, having such a holy human nature, so suitable to his divine Person, and so fit for the service of his people; for his preservation from his enemies, and the deliverance of him from death and the grave, by his resurrection; for hearing his petitions, and for the special grace bestowed on his people; see Psal. cxxxix. 14. and cxviii. 21, 22. John xi. 41, 42. Matt. xi. 25, 26. Or, O God of my glorying;” in whom he gloried, of whom he boasted; as he often with exultation spoke of him as his God and Father: or, the God that praises me; for his praise was not of men, but of God, who by a voice from heaven declared him his beloved Son, in whom he was well-pleased, Matt. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.*

Ver. 2. *For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me, &c.*] Or of deceit^x itself; most wicked and very deceitful men, who sometimes flattered and pretended friendship, as the Jews did to Christ, when they designed ill against him; though at other times their mouths were opened, and they poured out their calumnies and reproaches very freely and largely; traducing his person, and

^x גְּלוֹרְיָתוֹ gloriationis meæ, Cocceius; de quo glorior, so some in Vatablus.

^x פִּי מְרִמָּה os doli, Vatablus, Cocceius; os fraudis, Gejerus, Michaelis; os Ainsworth.

aspersing his character as a wicked man; blaspheming his miracles, as if done by the help of the devil; charging his doctrine with novelty, falsehood, and blasphemy; loading him with invidious names, as Samaritan, madman, &c. representing him as an enemy to the state, as a seditious person, and a disturber of the nation's peace; particularly their mouths were opened against him when they called for his crucifixion, and would have no denial; and especially when he was on the cross, where they gaped upon him with their mouths, and poured out their scoffs and jeers at him; see Psal. xxii. 14. *They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.* false witnesses rose up against him, and laid things to his charge he knew nothing of, and which they could not prove, Matt. xxvi. 59, 60, 61.

Ver. 3. *They compassed me about also with words of hatred, &c.* They surrounded him as he hung on the cross, and expressed their malice and hatred against him; then was he enclosed with these spiteful snarling dogs, and encompassed by them as with so many bees, who every one left their sting in him, Psal. xxii. 16. and cxviii. 12. *And fought against me without a cause;* they were of an hostile spirit, enemies and enmity itself against him; fought against him both with words and blows, with their tongues and with their fists; sought his life, and at length took it away; he was attacked by the body of the Jewish nation, and by the whole posse of devils; and all this without any cause or just reason: he gave them no occasion for this enmity and malice, and opposition to him; and it was in the issue without effect, it was in vain and to no purpose; for though they gained their point in putting him to death, yet he rose again a triumphant Conqueror over them all.

Ver. 4. *For my love they are my adversaries, &c.* For the love that Christ shewed to the Jews; to their bodies, in going about and healing all manner of diseases among them; to their souls, in preaching the Gospel to them in their several cities; and for the love he shewed to mankind in coming into the world to save them, which should have commanded love again; but instead of this they became his implacable adversaries: they acted the part of Satan; they were as so many Satans to him, as the word signifies. *But I give myself unto prayer; or I am a man of prayer;* as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply it; so he was in the days of his flesh, Heb. v. 7. he was constant at it, and fervent in it; sometimes a whole night together at it: his usual method was, when at Jerusalem, to teach in the temple in the day-time, and at night to go to the mount of Olives, and there abide and pray, Luke vi. 12. and xxi. 37. and xxii. 44. This was the armour he alone made use of against his enemies, when they fought against him, and acted the part of an adversary to him; he betook himself to nothing else but prayer; he did not return railing for railing, but committed himself in prayer to God, who judgeth righteously, 1 Pet. ii. 23. yea, he prayed for those his adversaries: and so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, that he was a man of prayer for them, and prayed for them; as it is certain Christ did, when he was encompassed by his enemies,

and they were venting all their spite and malice against him, Luke xxiii. 34.

Ver. 5. *And they have rewarded me evil for good, &c.* For the good words and sound doctrine he delivered to them; for the good works and miracles he wrought among them, to the healing of them; see John x. 32. *And hatred for my love;* he came to seek and save that which was lost, and yet they hated him, and would not have him to rule over them, Luke xix. 10, 14.

Ver. 6. *Set thou a wicked man over him, &c.* Or them, as the Syriac version; over every one of his adversaries, and all of them; and which may be interpreted, as it is by Cocceius, of tyrannical princes and governors, set over the Jews, as Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, Nero, &c. and their deputies, Pilate, Felix, Festus, Florus; all wicked men, and which were a judgment on them for their usage of Christ. Though here some single person is designed, even Judas, notorious for his enmity and ingratitude to Christ; and by the *wicked* one set over him may be meant Satan, as in the next clause, as he is sometimes called, Matt. xiii. 38. 1 John v. 18. into whose hands and power Judas was put, under whose influence he was; who entered into him, took possession of him, and put it into his heart to betray his Master, John xiii. 2, 27. *And let Satan stand at his right hand;* to direct and influence him, to solicit and tempt him to do the evil he did, and to accuse him for it when done; see Zech. iii. 1.

Ver. 7. *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, &c.* When he shall be arraigned at the bar of his own conscience, and be charged with the sin of which he is guilty, let conscience, which is as a thousand witnesses, rise up against him, and condemn him; so it did Judas, Matt. xxvii. 3, 4. or when he shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ at the last day, *let him go out a wicked, or a guilty or condemned man;* let him hear the awful sentence, *go, thou cursed, into everlasting fire;* and let him go out immediately from the presence of the Judge into eternal punishment, the continuation of the devil: so Judas is said to go to his own place, Acts i. 25. *And let his prayer become sin.* let it be fruitless and in vain; and so far from being heard, let it be treated as an abomination; let it be considered as an aggravation of his crime, as Haman's was, Esth. vii. 7, 8 let his prayer, being without faith in the blood of Christ, be reckoned sinful, as it was; let his cries, and tears, and repentance, issue in desperation, and that in sin, as it did in destroying himself, Matt. xxvii. 5.

Ver. 8. *Let his days be few, &c.* The days of men in common are but few at most: length of days, either beyond or according to the usual term of life, is reckoned a blessing; and to be cut off in the midst of a man's days a curse; when this is by the immediate hand of God, as a visible token of his displeasure; or by the hand of the civil magistrate, for some capital offence; or by a man's own hands, which was the case of Judas; whose days were but few, in comparison of the other apostles, who outlived him

7 וְאֵנִי תַפְלֵה & ego vir orationis, Pagninus, Gejerus.

7 וְאֵנִי תַפְלֵה exeat impius, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, De Dieu, Gejerus; damnatus, Junius & Tremellius; condemnatus, Cocceius.

many years; especially the Apostle John, who lived sixty years after, at least. The Syriac version renders it, *let their days be few*; and so it reads the whole context in the plural number, both in the verses preceding and following; and the whole may be interpreted of the Jews, as it is by Theodoret, as well as of Judas; since they were concerned in the same sin, and are equally charged as the betrayers and murderers of Christ, Acts vii. 52. and their days as a nation and church after the death of Christ were very few; within forty years, or thereabout, their city and temple were destroyed. *And let another take his office; or bishopric*, as the Septuagint version and the Apostle Peter call it; who cites this passage, and applies it to Judas, in Acts i. 20. His office was the office of an apostle, an high and honourable one, the chief office in the church: it was a charge, as the word signifies; a charge of souls, an oversight of the flock; which is to be taken not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind. Judas took it for filthy lucre's sake, and it was taken away from him, and given to another; to Matthias, on whom the lot fell, and who was numbered with the apostles in his room, Acts i. 21—26. This is true also of the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who were divested of their offices in a very little time; three shepherds were cut off in one month, Zech. xi. 8. There being a change of the priesthood, law, and ordinances, there was a change of offices and officers; new ordinances were appointed by Christ, and new officers created, on whom gifts were bestowed suitable to their work.

Ver. 9. *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*] This sometimes is the case of good men, who leave widows and fatherless children, whom the Lord shews mercy to; being the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widow, Psal. lxxviii. 5. but sometimes it is threatened and comes as a judgment, when the Lord shews no mercy and favour to them, Exod. xxii. 24. Isa. ix. 17. And this is the case here, which very probably was literally fulfilled in Judas, who might have a wife and children; since it looks as if the other apostles had, and certain it is that one of them had a wife, even Peter, in the times of Christ; see 1 Cor. ix. 5. Matt. viii. 14. And this was verified in the people of the Jews; whom the Lord divorced from himself, and wrote a *lo-ammî* upon them, and left them as orphans and fatherless, Hos. i. 9. This will never be the case of Christ's people, or the Christian church, John xiv. 18. though it will be of the antichristian one, Rev. xviii. 7, 8.

Ver. 10. *Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg, &c.*] Wander from place to place, begging their bread: this is denied of the children of good men in David's time, Psal. xxxvii. 25. yet was threatened to the children of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 36. and was very likely literally true of the children of Judas; and was certainly the case of multitudes of the children of the Jews, the posterity of them that crucified Christ, at the time of their destruction by the Romans; when great numbers were dispersed, and wandered about in various countries, as vagabonds, begging their bread

from door to door; which is reckoned^a by them a great affliction, and very distressing. *Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places*; either describing, as Kimchi thinks, the miserable cottages, forlorn and desolate houses, in which they lived, and from whence they went out to every one that passed by, to ask relief of them; or it may be rendered, *because of their desolate places*; or, *after them*; so the Targum, "after their desolation was made;" when their grand house was left desolate, their temple, as our Lord said it should, and was, Matt. xxiii. 38. and all their other houses in Jerusalem and in Judea; then were they obliged to seek their bread of others elsewhere, and by begging. The Syriac version wants this verse.

Ver. 11. *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, &c.*] Or, *lay a snare for all*; as the Romans did, by bringing in their army, invading the land of Judea, and besieging the city of Jerusalem; who are the *extortioner* or *exacter* that demanded tribute of them; which they refused to pay, and therefore they seized on all they had for it. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *the creditor*; who sometimes for a debt would take wife and children, and all that a man had; see 2 Kings iv. 1, 2. Matt. xviii. 25. It might be literally true of Judas; who dying in debt, his wife and children, and all he had, might be laid hold on for payment. *And let the stranger spoil his labour*; plunder his house of all his goods and substance he had been labouring for: which was true of the Romans, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; who came into the land, and spoiled their houses, fields, and vineyards, they had been labouring in; they took away their place and nation, and all they had, John xi. 48.

Ver. 12. *Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, &c.*] No pity is ever expressed at hearing or reading the sad case of Judas; and though the Jews were pitied of those that carried them captive to Babylon, Psal. cvi. 46. yet, in their last destruction by the Romans, no mercy was shewn them; the wrath of God and man came upon them to the uttermost, 1 Thess. ii. 16. *Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children*; to bestow any benefit upon them; to relieve their wants, nor to protect their persons; no more respect shewn them than to their father, being shunned and hated for their father's sake.

Ver. 13. *Let his posterity be cut off, &c.*] As the seed of the wicked are said to be, Psal. xxxvii. 28. or cut down, as a tree to the very root; as the Jewish nation was by the axe of God's judgment, which, John says, was laid to the root of the tree, and the blow just going to be given, as it was in a few years after, Matt. iii. 10. or, as the Targum, "let his end be for destruction;" and so the Syriac version, *let their end be for destruction*; their last-end, which it is said shall be cut off, and issue in death, eternal death; when the end of a good man is peace and eternal life, see Psal. xxxvii. 37, 38. Rom. vi. 21. *And in the generation following let their name be blotted out*; or, *in another age*^d; the next age, the third generation; meaning the name of the posterity of Judas, and the name of the

^a Michar Hapeninim spud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 262, 263.

^b So De Dieu, Gejerus, and some in Michaelis.

^c וְיִשְׁקַח יִלְלָקֶט, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus; inetiati, Vatablus, Michaelis.

^d וְאֵלֶּיךָ אֲמַר בִּלְיָדִי in generatione altera, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

people of the Jews, so as to be spoken of with honour and reputation; but, instead of that, they are for a taunt, a proverb, and a curse, in all places.

Ver. 14. *Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, &c.*] Not of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who, though they had their failings, they were not remembered, and much less punished in their posterity, but were forgiven: rather of the Amorites and Hittites; the one being said to be the father, and the other the mother, of the Jews, Ezek. xvi. 3. they succeeding them in their land, and imitating their example, and committing the same sins they did: or rather of their wicked ancestors, who killed the prophets; and the measure of whose sins Judas and the Jews filled up in crucifying Christ, see Matt. xxiii. 31, 32. The iniquity of these may be said to be remembered, it not being forgiven, when it was brought to account, and punished in their posterity, doing the same wicked actions; compare with this Rev. xvi. 19. and xviii. 5. *And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out:* or forgiven; but stand as a debt to be accounted for: meaning not the sin of his mother Eve, nor of his immediate parent; but either of the Hittite as before, or of the synagogue of the Jews, or Jerusalem, which killed the prophets of the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Let them be before the Lord continually, &c.*] And not cast behind his back, or into the depths of the sea, never to be seen more, as sins are when forgiven; but be always in sight, as loathsome and abominable, and causing those that committed them to be abhorred for them; and be before him, as a Judge, to examine them, the nature and desert of them, and to condemn and punish for them; see Exod. xx. 5. The Targum is, "let them be before the Word of the Lord always;" see Heb. iv. 13. *That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth;* so that they may not be remembered with any applause, or their names spoken of with any commendation; see Job xviii. 17.

Ver. 16. *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, &c.*] As Judas did not; neither to the poor, whom he cared not for, John xii. 6. nor to Christ, whom he betrayed with a kiss to his enemies: nor had these words of Christ any effect upon him, to move his pity and compassion, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* Matt. xxvi. 49, 50. nor did the Jews shew mercy to him: they were a merciless and hardhearted people; though mercy was one of the weightier matters of the law, this they omitted, Matt. xxiii. 23. their want of compassion may be observed in the priest and Levite passing by the man wounded by thieves, Luke x. 30, 31, 32. Nor did they shew any mercy to Christ, when they smote and buffeted him; nor did it move their pity when Pilate brought him forth with a crown of thorns on his head, and in a miserable condition, saying, *Behold the man;* but they cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him;* and gave him gall for his meat, and vinegar to drink; and mocked him when in all his miseries and agonies. *But persecuted the poor and needy man;* Christ, who became poor for our sakes, and stood in need of the ministrations of others to him, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Luke viii. 3. and was poor in spirit, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs;

him Judas and the Jews persecuted to death, as follows: *that he might even slay the broken in heart;* Christ, whose heart was broken with the reproach and cruel usage of men, Psal. lxxix. 20. whose life the Jews sought to take away, and by means of Judas did.

Ver. 17. *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him, &c.*] Judas loved that which brought a curse upon him, sin; and so he may be said to love the curse; just as sinners are said to love death, Prov. viii. 36. He was desirous of and sought after it, to bring Christ to an accursed death; and which he accomplished and pleased himself with; and therefore it was a just retaliation upon him that the curse should light on him, and he himself come to a shameful and ignominious death. The Jews loved the cursing law, the flying roll, called the curse in Zech. v. 2, 3. which curses every transgressor of it: they boasted of it, rested in it, and sought for righteousness by it; and submitted not unto, but despised, the righteousness of Christ; and therefore it was but just they should come under the curse of the law: they imprecated the curse on them and their children, saying, *His blood be upon us and them,* Matt. xxvii. 25. and which accordingly came upon them, and remains to this day. *As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him:* Judas delighted not in the good will and good wishes of any to Christ, as appears from his dislike of the ointment being poured on his head by the poor woman, in John xii. 4, 5. and so the Jews were displeased at the children, and at the disciples in the temple, blessing Christ, pronouncing him blessed, and wishing blessings to him, Matt. xxi. 15, 16. Luke xix. 38, 39. yea, they delighted not in their own blessedness, or in that which only could give it to them; they delighted not in Christ, who was sent to bless them, but despised and rejected him; nor in the Gospel, which is full of blessings; and particularly not in the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness, which commonly makes a man blessed: yea, in a sense, they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life; and therefore it was but a righteous thing that blessing should be far from Judas and the Jews, as it was; even temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings: yet there have been a sort of heretics*, that have highly praised and commended Judas, as doing a brave and noble action in betraying Christ, whereby the work of salvation was hastened.

Ver. 18. *As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, &c.*] He was full of it; his mouth was full of cursing and bitterness; it was visible in him, easy to be discerned; he took pride as well as pleasure in it, it was in his esteem an ornament to him, as his clothes were. The Syriac version renders it, *as armour;* as if it was a protection to him, or he thought it to be so. *So let it come into his bowels like water;* the meaning is, let the wrath of God and the curse of the law come into his conscience, and make sad work there, and fill him with dread and terror, and that in great abundance, and with great force; like a flood of waters that carry all before it; or like the waters of jealousy which made the belly to swell and the thigh to rot; or the flying roll of the curse, which

* Epiphanius contra Hæreses. l. 1. c. 28.

entering into the house of the sinner destroyed it, and all in it, Numb. v. 22. Zech. v. 4. *And like oil into his bones*; which is more piercing and penetrating than water; and signifies the inward and quick sense he should have of his sins, and of the wrath of God for them; see Job xx. 11.

Ver. 19. *Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, &c.*] Let him be surrounded on all sides with the wrath of God; and let it be visible to all, as a man's garment on him is: see Isa. lxvii. 24. *And for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually*; let him be in the utmost straits and distress, being encompassed about with the curse and wrath of God; and let that stick close unto him as a man's girdle does; and let him not be able to get clear of it, or extricate himself out of it, as no man can on whom it is.

Ver. 20. *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, &c.*] Who were so many Satans, as the word used signifies; and Judas particularly is called a devil; and of the same malevolent and diabolical disposition were the Jews in general, John vi. 70. and viii. 44. and what is before imprecated upon them is the just recompense of reward for their hatred to Christ and ill usage of him. *And of them that speak evil against my soul; or life*^f; in order to take it away, as did the false witnesses that rose up against him, and the Jews who charged him with sedition and blasphemy.

Ver. 21. *But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake, &c.*] The sense of the petition is, and which is a prayer of Christ as man, that the Lord God would take his part, be on his side, be present with him, work with him, help and assist him, and that for his own honour and glory, for his truth and faithfulness sake, who had promised him help and assistance, Psal. lxxxix. 21, 22, 33, 34. *Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me; or thy kindness*^g; meaning the loving-kindness of God to Christ, which he always bore to him, and was eminently and superlatively good; which he makes use of as an argument for his deliverance out of all his troubles, and from death itself; see Psal. lxix. 14, 16.

Ver. 22. *For I am poor and needy, &c.*] As he was in human nature, being born of poor parents, brought up in a mean manner, had not where to lay his head, and was ministered to by others; though he was Lord of all, and immensely rich in the perfections of his nature, and in his vast empire and dominion, and the revenues arising from thence; see 2 Cor. viii. 9. It may here chiefly respect his helpless and forlorn estate as man, at the time of his sufferings and death; see Psal. xl. 17. *And my heart is wounded within me*; with the sins of his people on him, with a sense of divine wrath, and when under divine desertions, especially when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, Matt. xxvi. 38. see Psal. xl. 12.

Ver. 23. *I am gone like the shadow when it declineth, &c.*] When the sun is setting, and the shadow is going off; man's life is often compared to a shadow, because fleeting, momentary, and soon gone, 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

^f עַל נַפְשִׁי *contra vitam meam*, Gejerus.

^g חַסְדְּךָ *benignitas tua*, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^h אֲבִירֵי נַפְשִׁי *cogor abire*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; *abire factus sum*, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Job xiv. 2. Psal. cii. 11. and death is expressed by going the way of all flesh; and by going to the grave, the house for all living, a man's long home, Josh. xxiii. 14. Job xxx. 23. and so is the death of Christ, Luke xxii. 22. it may be rendered, *I am made to go*^h, denoting the violent death of Christ, who was cut off out of the land of the living, and whose life was taken away from the earth, Isa. liii. 8. *I am tossed up and down as the locust*; or *shaken out*ⁱ by the wind, as the locust is by the east wind, and carried from place to place, Exod. x. 13. or when a swarm of them by a strong wind are crowded together and thrown upon one another; or like the grasshopper, which leaps from hedge to hedge, and has no certain abode: and such was the case of Christ here on earth; and especially it may have respect not only to his being sometimes in Judea and sometimes in Galilee, sometimes in the temple and sometimes in the mount of Olives; but to his being tossed about after his apprehension, when he was led to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then delivered to the soldiers, and by them led to Calvary, and crucified.

Ver. 24. *My knees are weak through fasting, &c.*] Either voluntary or forced, through want of food or refreshment; this was verified in Christ, when he kneeled and prayed, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; see Psal. lxix. 10. *And my flesh faileth of fatness*; or *for want of oil*^k; the radical moisture of his flesh being dried up like a potsherd, Psal. xxii. 15.

Ver. 25. *I became also a reproach unto them, &c.*] Or they reproached him; not only in life, traducing his conversation, blaspheming his miracles, calling him a Samaritan, saying he had a devil, and charging him with sedition; but at the time of his death they reviled him, and treated him in the most opprobrious manner. *When they looked upon me, they shook their heads*; which was verified in the Jews as they passed by the cross of Christ, whither they came to stare upon him and scoff at him, Matt. xxvii. 39.

Ver. 26. *Help me, O Lord my God, &c.*] Jehovah the Father is here addressed, who is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who formed him, supported him, and glorified him; and whom Christ loved, believed in, obeyed and prayed unto; nor did he pray to a God that could not hear, but to one that was able to save him from death: as a divine Person he needed no help, being the mighty God, the most Mighty, the Almighty: but as man he did, being encompassed about with infirmities; and as Mediator help was promised him, he expected it, and he had it, Psal. lxxxix. 21. Isa. l. 7, 8. and xlix. 8. *O save me according to thy mercy; or kindness*; as before in ver. 21. from sufferings, and out of them; from death and the grave, as he was; or his people by him, who are saved not by works of righteousness, but according to the mercy of God, Tit. iii. 5.

Ver. 27. *That they may know that this is thy hand, &c.*] Which inflicted vengeance, and executed judgments on Judas and the Jews, as before imprecated;

ⁱ עָרַחְתִּי *excussus sum*, Montanus, Vatablus Gejerus, Michaelis; *excutus*, Tigurine version, Musculus, Cocceius.

^k חֲסֵן שֶׁן *ὁ ἄλατος*, Sept. *propter oleum*, V. L. *propter defectum olei*, Eth. Arab.

so the Targum, "that they may know that this is thy stroke;" or which was concerned in all the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, which could never have come upon him had it not been the will of God; it was his hand and council that determined it, or men could never have effected it; see Acts iv. 28. John xix. 11. or which wrought deliverance and salvation as before prayed for; see Psal. cxviii. 21—23. That *thou, Lord, hast done it*: one or other, or all the above things; the finger of God was to be seen in them; particularly in the sufferings of Christ, and in his exaltation; see Acts ii. 23. and v. 31.

Ver. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou, &c.*] Let them curse me, as Shimei did David, the type of Christ; let them curse themselves, as they did; or my people: or *let them be cursed*, as the Syriac version; cursed in life and at death, and to all eternity: but *bless thou me*, the Messiah; as he did, when he raised him from the dead, set him at his right hand, and gave him a name above every one, and made him most blessed for evermore; and bless my people with all spiritual blessings of grace, and with eternal glory and happiness. Or *be thou blessed*; let honour, blessing, and praise, be continually ascribed to thee; if God does but bless, it is no matter if wicked men curse, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it; see 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12. *When they arise, let them be ashamed*; be suffered to do those things which may bring shame and disgrace upon them; or let them be disappointed and so confounded, as the Jews were; who though they so far gained their point as to bring Christ to the dust of death and the grave, yet to their great confusion he arose again from the dead; or let them be ashamed at the last day, as they will be when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven and be their Judge, who will then be glad to shelter themselves in rocks and caves. This is imprecated to be done *when they shall arise*: rise up against Christ to take away his life; rise up against his disciples to persecute them, against his Gospel to contradict and blaspheme it, and against his cause and interest to crush it; or against the Romans, to shake off their yoke, when they were brought to great shame and confusion; or when they shall arise at the resurrection of the dead, which will be to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. xii. 2. *But let thy servant rejoice*; the Messiah, who appeared in the form of a servant; came not as a temporal lord and prince, to be ministered unto, but as a servant, to minister to others;

and who is a servant of God's choosing, calling, and sending, and whom he faithfully served; and who, as prayed for, did rejoice in the strength of the Lord, given him as man; and in the salvation wrought for and by him, Psal. xxi. 1. in the work of the Lord prospering in his hand; in his victory over sin, Satan, the world, and death; in the presence of God he was made glad with, and in the glory promised him, which he had with his Father before the world was, Psal. xvi. 11. and xxi. 6.

Ver. 29. *Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, &c.*] This is only explanative of what is said before. *And let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle*: the Arabic version is, *as with a breast-plate*. Some understand it as a petition of Christ, that they might be brought to repentance for their sins, and so to shame for them; which is an instance of his wondrous grace and goodness; and it is certain he prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies when on the cross, Luke xxiii. 34.

Ver. 30. *I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth, &c.*] Vocally, and in the highest strains. *Yea, I will praise him among the multitude*; of converted persons, both Jews and Gentiles, and by them: or, *among the mighty*¹; or great ones; the great congregation, as in Psal. xxii. 25. among the innumerable and mighty angels in heaven; or, as the Targum, "among the wise men;" his own disciples, made wise unto salvation, and to win souls; being filled with the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; among and with whom Christ sung an hymn of praise after the celebration of the supper, Matt. xxvi. 30.

Ver. 31. *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, &c.*] Of the Messiah, as in ver. 22. at whose right hand the Lord was, to guide and direct, help and assist, protect and defend, Psal. xvi. 8. or of his poor people, who are poor in every sense; but the Lord is on their side, and is a present help in time of trouble, Psal. xlvi. 1, 5. *To save him from those that condemn his soul*: the Messiah: from his judges, the high-priest and Jewish sanhedrim, and Pilate the Roman governor, who condemned him to death; but he committed his spirit, or soul, to God, who received it, and raised his body from the dead; and would not suffer it to see corruption, as a testimony of his innocence: or the soul of the poor saints, which the Lord saves from the condemnation of sin, Satan, the law, and their own consciences, Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34.

P S A L M C X.

A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was written by David, as the title shews, and which is confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. xxii. 43. and by the Apostle Peter, Acts ii. 34. and was not written by any one of the singers concerning him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; nor by Melchizedek, nor by Eliezer the servant of Abraham, concerning him, as Jarchi and others: for the former could not call Abraham his lord, since he was greater than he, Heb.

vii. 7. and though the latter might, yet he could not assign his master a place at the right hand of God; nor say he was a priest after the order of Melchizedek: and as it was written by David, it could not be concerning himself, as the Targum, but some other; not of Hezekiah, to whom some of the Jews applied it, as Tertullian^m affirms; but of the Messiah, as is clear from the quotation by Christ, Matt. xxii. 43, 44. and

¹ רבנים in magna cætu, Tigurine version.

^m Adv. Marcion. l. 5. c. 9.

of it is daily the power and wisdom of God to them that are saved. Or rather this signifies the set time of love and life to every particular soul at conversion; which is a day for light, and a day of power; when the exceeding greatness of the power of God is put forth in the regeneration of them: and the people that were given to Christ by his Father, in the covenant of grace, and who, whilst in a state of nature, are rebellious and unwilling, are made willing to be saved by Christ, and him only; to serve him in every religious duty and ordinance; to part with their sins and sinful companions, and with their own righteousness; to suffer the loss of all things for him; to deny themselves, and take up the cross and follow him: and when they become free-will offerings to him, as the word ¹ signifies; not only willingly offer up their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, but themselves, souls and bodies, to him; as well as enter *volunteers* ² into his service, and cheerfully fight his battles, under him, the Captain of their salvation; being assured of victory, and certain of the crown of life and glory, when they have fought the good fight, and finished their course. The allusion seems to be to an army of volunteers, such as described by Cicero ³, who willingly offered themselves through their ardour for liberty. *In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning*: this does not design the place where these willing subjects of Christ should appear; either in Zion, beautiful for situation; or in Jerusalem, the holy city, compact together; or in the temple, the sanctuary, in which strength and beauty are said to be; or in the church, the perfection of beauty: but the habit or dress in which they should appear, even in the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness and holiness; the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; the best robe, the wedding-garment; gold of Ophir, raiment of needle-work; and which is upon all them that believe: as also the several beautiful graces of the spirit; the beauty of internal holiness, by which saints are all-glorious within; and holiness is the beauty and glory of God himself, of angels and glorified saints. This, though imperfect now, is the new man put on as a garment; and is true holiness, and very ornamental. The phrase, *from the womb of the morning*, either stands in connexion with *the beauties of holiness*; and the sense is, that as soon as the morning of the Gospel dispensation dawns, these people should be born again, be illuminated, and appear holy and righteous; or, *from the womb, from the morning* ⁴, shall they be *in the beauties of holiness*; that is, as soon as they are born again, and as soon as the morning of spiritual light and grace breaks in upon them, and they are made light in the Lord, they shall be clad with these beautiful garments of holiness and righteousness; so, *from the womb*, signifies literally as soon as men are born; see Psal. lviii. 3. Isa. xlvi. 8. Hos. ix. 11. or else with the latter clause, *thou hast the dew of thy youth*; and so are rendered, *more than the womb of the morning*, i. e. than the dew that is from the womb of the morning, is to thee the dew of thy youth; that is, more than the

dew of the morning are thy converts; the morning is the parent of the dew, Job xxxviii. 28. but the former sense is best; for this last clause is a member or proposition of itself, *thou hast the dew of thy youth*; which expresses the open property Christ has in his people, when made willing; and when they appear in the beauty of holiness, as soon as they are born of the spirit, and the true light of grace shines in them; then those who were secretly his, even whilst unwilling, manifestly appear to belong unto him: so young lambs, just yeaned, are in Homer ⁵ called *εργασίαι, deus*; and it is remarkable that the Hebrew words for *dew* and a *lamb* are near in sound. Young converts are Christ's lambs; they are Christ's youth, and the dew of it; they are regenerated by the grace of God, comparable to dew, of which they are begotten to a lively hope of heaven; and which, distilling upon them, makes them fruitful in good works; and who for their numbers, and which I take to be the thing chiefly designed by this figure, are like to the drops of the dew; which in great profusion is spread over trees, herbs, and plants, where it hangs in drops innumerable: and such a multitude of converts is here promised to Christ, and which he had in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea, when three thousand persons were converted under one sermon; and especially in the Gentile world, where the savour of his knowledge was diffused in every place; and as will be in the latter day, when a nation shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. The sense given of these words, as formed upon the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, respecting the generation of Christ's human or divine nature, is without any foundation in the original text.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, &c.*] What he swore about, and did not repent of, was the priesthood of Christ, as follows; and which shews the importance of it, since when Jehovah swears, as it is by himself, because he can swear by no greater; so it is about matters of great moment only that are sworn to by the Lord, as this of the priesthood of Christ was: which was concerned in things pertaining to God and his glory, as well as in making reconciliation for the sins of his people: and it shews the truth, and was for the confirmation of it; since doubts might arise whether the Aaronical priesthood was changed, seeing it was given to Phinehas for an everlasting priesthood; and since so great a person as the Son of God is said to be a priest; and since, in the human nature, he was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe nothing was said concerning the priesthood: and this oath was not so much for Christ's sake, to establish the priesthood with him, and assure him of it, as for the sake of his people; who, by two immutable things, the word and oath of God, might have strong consolation from it; and it clearly shews the validity of his priesthood; that he was called of God to this office, and invested with it, and consecrated in it with an oath; and which is expressive of the singularity of it, and of the dignity and preference of the priesthood of

¹ עֲבֹדוֹת oblationes voluntariæ, Junius & Tremellius; spontanea oblatio, Coccejus, Gejerus.

² מיליתות voluntarii, Bootius.

³ Epist. l. 11. Ep. 8.

⁴ מִשְׁחַר מִשְׁחַר a vulya, ab aurora, Montanus.

⁵ Odys. ix. v. 232.

Christ to that of Aaron's, Heb. vii. 20, 21, 28. What follows was said, and this oath was made, in the council of peace, when Christ was called to this office, and he accepted of it, Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. and of this the Lord never repented; as he never does of any of his acts of grace, Numb. xxiii. 19. Rom. xi. 29. *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*; or, according to the word of Melchizedek²; that is, according to what is said of him; there being an agreement between the things said of one and of the other; so the Syriac version, according to the likeness of Melchizedek, see Heb. vii. 15. of him no mention is made elsewhere, but in Gen. xiv. 18. and in the epistle to the Hebrews. Various are the opinions of men concerning him: some think he was not a man, but an angel that appeared to Abraham: others, a divine power, superior to Christ, who were called *Melchizedecians*: and others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, the Son of God himself, in an human form. On the other hand, some take him to be a mere man. The general notion of the Jews is, that he was Shem, the son of Noah; others, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham: but others do not think it proper or lawful to inquire who he was, or from whom he descended; this being purposely hidden from men, that he might be more clearly a type of Christ. That there is a likeness between them is certain; the signification of his name, a title of office, King of righteousness, and King of peace, agrees with Christ the Lord, our righteousness and our peace: his being without father, mother, descent, beginning of days, and end of life, agree with the divinity, humanity, and eternity of Christ; and who is likewise King and Priest, as he was; and who blesses his people, as he did Abraham; and refreshes them with bread and wine, as he did Abraham's soldiers; see the note on Heb. vii. 2, 3. Now Christ is a Priest like him; whose office is to offer sacrifice, which he has done, even himself, for the atonement of the sins of his people; to make intercession for them, which he ever lives to do; to introduce their persons to his father, and present their petitions to him; and to call for every blessing for them, and answer all charges against them: in which office he continues for ever; there never will be any change in his priesthood, as there has been in Aaron's; nor will he ever have any successor: his priesthood is unchangeable, or does not pass from one to another, Heb. vii. 24. the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice always continues, and intercession is ever made by him, and the glory of his mediation is ever given him. The apostle produces this passage in proof of the change of the Aaronical priesthood, and so of the law, Heb. vii. 11—19. and about the time Christ appeared as the high-priest, the legal priesthood sensibly declined, and which the Jews themselves own; for they say, "after the death of Ishmael Ben Phabi, the splendour of the priesthood ceased³;" which man was made priest by Valerius Gratus, governor of Judea, under Tiberius Cæsar⁴.

Ver. 5. *The Lord at thy right hand, &c.*] These

words are either directed to Christ, at whose right hand the Lord was to help and assist him, Psal. xvi. 8. or to the church, consisting of the Lord's willing people, at whose right hand he is to save them; is ready to help them, and is a present help to them in time of need, Psal. cix. 31. or rather to Jehovah the Father, at whose right hand the *Adonai*, or Lord, even David's Lord, and every believer's Lord, is, as in ver. 1. and who is spoken of in all the following clauses; and to whom the things mentioned are ascribed, and so what immediately follows: *shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath*; not only strike at them, and strike them; but strike them through, utterly destroy them. This is to be understood of the kings and princes that stood up and set themselves against him, Psal. ii. 2. which is interpreted of Herod and Pontius Pilate, Acts iv. 26, 27. who both died shameful deaths; as did another Herod, that set himself against the apostles and church of Christ, Acts xii. 1, 2, 23. and also of Heathens, kings and emperors, who persecuted the Christians; as Diocletian, Maximilian, and others; who are represented as fleeing to rocks and mountains, to hide them from the Lamb, the great day of his wrath being come, Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. and also of the antichristian kings, that shall be gathered together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, and shall be overcome and slain by Christ, Rev. xvi. 14, 16. and xvii. 14. and xix. 20, 21. which will be a time of wrath, when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon the antichristian kings and states; see Rev. xvi. 1, 19. and xi. 18. And may also reach the last and general judgment; when kings, as well as others, shall stand before him, and receive their awful doom from him; and shall perish when his wrath is kindled against them, Psal. ii. 11, 12.

Ver. 6. *He shall judge among the Heathen, &c.*] Either rule among the Gentiles, making them through his Gospel obedient by word and deed, and so reigning in their hearts by his spirit and grace; and, by making many converts among them, enlarge his dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth: or inflict judgments on the Heathen; that is, the Papists, as they are called. These are the Gentiles to whom the outward court is given; the nations that will be angry when the time of his wrath, and to judge the dead, is come; and whom Christ will break in pieces with his iron rod; and are the Heathen that shall perish out of his land, when he is King over all the earth, Rev. xi. 2, 18. and xix. 15. Psal. x. 16. *He shall fill the places with the dead bodies*: the Targum adds, "of the ungodly that are slain;" namely, at the battle of Armageddon; when the fowls of the air shall be called to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men; of horses and their riders; of all men, bond and free, great and small, Rev. xix. 17, 18. *He shall wound the heads over many countries*: that is, kings over many countries, as the Targum explains it: it is to be read in the singular number, *he shall wound the head over a large country*⁵; him who is the head over a large country; meaning either Satan, the god of this world, the wicked one,

² על דברתי super mecum verbum, Montanus; juxta verbum, Vatablus.

³ Misa. Sotah, c. g. s. 15.

⁴ Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. s. 2. Vid. ib. l. 20. c. 7. s. 8.

⁵ ראש על ארץ רבה caput super terram multam, Pagninus, Montanus; vel amplam, Piscator, Cocceius; so Gejerus & Michaelis.

under whom the world lies; and who has deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and rules them at his pleasure; him Christ has wounded and bruised, even his head; destroyed him and all his power, policy, schemes, and works, agreeably to the first hint concerning him, Gen. iii. 15. see Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. or else antichrist, who is head over a large country, or many countries; the whore that sits on many waters, which are people, nations, and tongues, and reigns over the kings of the earth; who has seven heads and ten horns; one of whose heads has been wounded already, of which it has been curing again; but ere long this beast will receive such a wound from Christ, as that he will never recover of it; when he shall consume him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; see Rev. xvii. 2, 15, 18. and xiii. 1, 3, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Musculus renders it, *the head of the country of Rabbah*; and refers it to David's conquest of the king of the Ammonites, whose head city was Rabbah, 1 Chron. xx. 1, 2.

Ver. 7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way, &c.*] This some understand of the sufferings of Christ, compared to a brook, a flow of waters, because of the abundance of them, as in Psal. lxxix. 1, 2. his partaking of which is sometimes expressed by drinking, Matt. xx. 21. John xviii. 11. and this was in the way of working out the salvation of his people, and in his own way to glory, Luke xxiv. 26. If this is the sense, there may be some allusion to the black brook Kidron; over which David, the type of Christ, passed when in distress; and over which Christ himself went into the garden, where his sorrows began, 2 Sam. xv. 23. John xviii. 1. but seeing this clause stands surrounded with others, which only speak of his victories, triumph, and exaltation, it seems to require a sense agreeable to them; wherefore those interpreters seem nearer to the truth of the text, who explain it of Christ's victory over all enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; and illustrate it by the passage in Numb. xxiii. 24. *he shall*

drink of the blood of the slain; with which compare Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Others think the allusion is to the eagerness of a general pursuing a routed army, and pushing on his conquest; who, though almost choked with thirst, yet will not stop to refresh himself; but meeting with a brook or rivulet of water by the way, takes a draught of it, and hastens his pursuit of the enemy: and so this is expressive of the eagerness of Christ to finish the great work of man's salvation, and the conquest of all his and their enemies; see Luke ii. 49. and xii. 50. John xviii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. But I think the clause is rather expressive of the solace, joy, and comfort, which Christ, as man, has in the presence of God, and at his right hand, having finished the work of our salvation; then he drank to his refreshment of the river of divine pleasure, when God shewed him the path of life, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, and introduced him into his presence; where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. *Therefore shall he lift up the head*; as he did at his resurrection; he bowed it when he died, he lifted it up when he rose again, and so when he ascended on high to his God and Father; when he took his place at his right hand; where his head is lifted up above his enemies, and where he is exalted above angels, principalities, and powers, and where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. Or, *so shall he lift up his head*, as Noldius⁴ renders it; not that his sufferings, which he understands by *drinking out of the brook*, were the cause of his exaltation, but the consequent of it: these two, Christ's humiliation and exaltation, though they are sometimes joined together, yet not as cause and effect, but as the antecedent and consequent; Christ having finished what, according to the divine order was to be finished, glory followed by the same order: and so the words thus taken respect not the cause, but the consecution of things, according to that writer.

P S A L M CXI.

THIS psalm, though without a name, is thought to be penned by David; it is composed in an artificial manner, in an alphabetical order, each clause or sentence beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in course, till the whole is finished; this perhaps was done to recommend the psalm, to make it more observed, and to help the memory; the general design of it is to excite to praise the Lord, from the consideration of his great and wonderful works.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or *hallelujah*; this is the title of the psalm, and is expressive of the subject-matter of it; and so it stands in the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as it should, as appears from the psalm being alphabetical; for the first letter of this word is the fifth and not the first of the alphabet; it is wanting in the Syriac version, which gives the title in this manner, "without a name, concerning the glorious virtues of the works of God; but it exhorts us to give thanks

to Christ; and it is said in the person of the "apostles." *I will praise the Lord with my whole heart*; the psalmist excites to praise God by his own example; the object of his praise is Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the author of his Being, and in whom all men live and move, and have their being; the God of their mercies, temporal and spiritual, and therefore should praise him, even Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; especially Jehovah the Messiah may be here intended, whose work of redemption is particularly attended to: the manner in which he determines to perform this service is, *with his whole heart*; which ought to be engaged in every religious exercise, even the whole of it, all the powers and faculties of the soul, without being divided between other objects, and distracted or drawn off from the Lord by them; the phrase is not expressive of perfection, which is not to be expected in any duty, but of sincerity and cordial affection. The place where follows, *in the as-*

*sembly of the upright, and in the congregation; which may signify one and the same; even the place where upright persons assemble and gather together for divine worship, the tabernacle in David's time, and the temple afterwards; and may point at any place of worship in Gospel times, and the people that meet there; who being for the most part upright persons, or in a judgment of charity so accounted, though every individual among them may not be such, are thus called; and that because they have the uprightness, righteousness, and holiness of Christ imputed to them; and have right spirits renewed in them, and so are upright in heart; and, in consequence of this, walk uprightly according to the rules of the Gospel. It may be rendered, as it is by the Targum, "in the secret" of the upright, "and the congregation;" because here the secret of the Lord is made known to his people; the mysteries of his grace are revealed; and his ordinances, which are his counsel, are administered: or it may design some particular friends and acquaintance of the psalmist's, who privately met and took sweet counsel together, and communicated their secrets to one another, as the other word *congregation* may intend the public assembly of the people; and then the sense is, that he would sincerely praise the Lord both in private and public, and that because of his works; as follows.*

Ver. 2. *The works of the Lord are great, &c.]* His works of creation are great, being made out of nothing, are the effects of great power, and the produce of great wisdom, and which greatly display the glory of their Maker; the works of providence are great, which are daily wrought, especially such as concern the church and people of God, for whom he does great things, whereof they have reason to be glad and praise his name; the miracles of Christ he wrought here on earth were surprisingly great, some of them such as had not been known from the creation of the world; and yet greater things were shewn him, and done by him, particularly the work of redemption, a work which angels and men were unequal to, a work which none but the great God and our Saviour could effect, and is truly called the great salvation; the work of grace upon the heart is a great work, and requires the exceeding greatness of the divine power, and which is exerted in the beginning, carrying on, and finishing that work; and for all which the Lord is to be praised: and the rather since they are such as are *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; or sought out because of all the pleasures of them, or that are in them*^f, which comes to much the same sense: there is a pleasure in the contemplation of the works of nature and providence; to behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in them, and his care over all his creatures; and particularly how he makes all things to work together for the good of his people; and especially it is delightful to observe the works of grace, how the glory of all the divine perfections is displayed in them; angels themselves take pleasure in looking into them: now these are sought and found out by those who delight in them;

the works of creation are to be sought and found in the book of nature, the works of providence in the book of experience, and the works of grace in the book of God; and indeed all of them are recorded there, which are searched with pleasure by those that are inquisitive after them.

Ver. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious, &c.]* Or *honour and glory*^g itself; there is nothing mean and trifling done by him; nothing unworthy of him in nature, providence, and grace; every work of his serves to display his glory, and set off the greatness of his majesty; the heavens and the earth are full of his glory; and he does all things well and wisely in the government of the world; and whatever he does in a way of grace is for the glory of it, and tends to make his people honourable and glorious, as well as manifests his own glory, and makes for the honour of his own name. *And his righteousness endureth for ever;* his justice and holiness, which appear in all his ways and works; for there is no unrighteousness in any thing done by him, just and true are all his ways; there is a constant tenour of righteousness in them all; his faithfulness in fulfilling every word of promise, in making his words good by his works, is to be seen in all generations; and true evangelical righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, which is so considerable a branch of the work of redemption and salvation, is an everlasting one; it can never be abolished, it will answer for the saints in a time to come.

Ver. 4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered, &c.]* All his works are marvellous ones; his works of creation, that they should rise out of nothing at a word of command; his works of providence, which have such a depth of wisdom and knowledge in them, are unsearchable and past finding out; and his works of redemption and grace; and these are so wrought by him, and such methods taken to continue the memory of them, that they cannot well be forgotten: all things in nature are as they were from the beginning; the sun, moon, and stars, keep their course and station; cold and heat, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, are as they always were; remarkable providences have been carefully recorded, and memorials of them handed down to posterity. The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was annually remembered in the passover; the feeding of them with manna in the wilderness was caused to be remembered by a pot of manna preserved in the tabernacle and temple; and the great work of our redemption by Christ is brought to remembrance in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, appointed for that purpose. *The Lord is gracious and full of compassion;* so he was in eternity, and is in time; this appears in all his works, and especially in our salvation by Jesus Christ; see Psal. lxxxvi. 5, 15.

Ver. 5. *He hath given meat to them that fear him, &c.]* Or a *prey*^h, alluding to the spoil of the Egyptians; or to the manna; corporeal food, daily bread, which they that fear him shall not want, Psal. xxxiv.

^g בסוד in secreto, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

^f חפציהם לכל ob omnes amabilitates eorum, Coccejus; secundum omnia desideria eorum, Gejerus.

^h הורר gloria & decor, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Mi-

chaelis; gloria & splendor, Musculus; majestas & magnificentia, Piscator.

^h przdam, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus; so Ainsworth.

9. spiritual meat, such that endures for ever; the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men; savoury meat does God give his people, such as their souls love, and the world knows nothing of; all is given, and freely given, and in plenty. *He will ever be mindful of his covenant*; made with Abraham, and that at Sinai; and especially which he made with his people in Christ before the world was; and which is the ground and foundation of all his works of grace and redemption, and the reason why he gives food unto them; he never forgets that, his promises in it, nor the blessings of it, nor the people for whom they are made and provided, nor his love unto them; he is a covenant-keeping God.

Ver. 6. *He hath shewed his people the power of his works, &c.*] Or his works of power, his mighty works, in which his great power was shewn; as to the people of Israel in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in bringing them to and settling them in the land of Canaan; these he shewed to them in fact, they saw them with their eyes; and he shewed or declared them to them in prophecy, before they came to pass, as Kimchi observes, that it might not be said they came by chance. So he hath shewed his works of power to his people in Gospel times, as the miracles of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, redemption by him, and the work of grace on the hearts of men in all ages. *That he may give them the heritage of the Heathen*; the Lord did the above works of his power for the people of Israel, that he might put them into the possession of the land of Canaan, inherited by Heathens; that it might become their inheritance, and they might enjoy their houses, vineyards, and fields; and he wrought powerfully through the ministration of the Gospel, by his spirit and grace, upon the hearts of men in the Gentile world; that the Christian church might possess the dominions of it, as it did in the times of Constantine and others, and as it will more largely in the latter day; see Psal. ii. 8. Rev. ii. 26.

Ver. 7. *The works of his hands are verity and judgment, &c.*] His works of providence are just and true, particularly those which respected the driving the Canaanites out of their land, and settling the Israelites in it; these were done according to the truth of the divine promises and prophecies, and so were *verity* or *truth*; and for the sins of the Heathen, and by him who has a right to dispose of the earth and the fulness of it to whom he pleases, and so are *judgment* or *righteous*; and this holds good of his work of grace upon the heart, which is the work of his hands, and is *truth* in the inward parts; and is created in righteousness and true holiness; and of all his acts of grace in election, redemption, &c. which are according to the truth of the divine nature and its perfections, and in which there is no unrighteousness. Some interpret this of the two tables of stone, which were the work, writing, and engraving of God, and on which were inscribed the judgments of the Lord; and are *true* and *righteous* altogether. Aben Ezra understands it of the law implanted in the hearts of men. *All his commandments are sure*; firm, and to be believed and complied with, either to destroy the nations, or to possess their

land; or rather the commands of the moral law, which are firm and sure, one jot or tittle of which shall never pass away; all have been fulfilled by Christ, and remain with him a rule of walk and conversation; or the word which the Lord has commanded to a thousand generations, Psal. cv. 8. the covenant which is ordered in all things and sure; the promises of which are yea and amen in Christ; and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David; and even the doctrines of the Gospel are the commandments and testimony of the Lord, which are sure, Psal. xix. 8. and to be believed, being the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation, and coming from God, who cannot lie.

Ver. 8. *They stand fast for ever and ever, &c.*] Not only the covenant and its promises do, but both law and Gospel, the commandments of the one and the doctrines of the other; the law is an eternal law, as to the matter of it, and is not made void by faith, but established; and the Gospel is an everlasting Gospel, which lives and abides for ever, being established upon the word of God, which cannot be broken; and is continued in the church, the pillar and ground of truth, from whence it can never be removed. And are *done in truth and uprightness*; either made by the Lord according to the truth of things, the moral perfections of his nature and will, and the rectitude of it; or observed by men that truly fear the Lord with great truth and sincerity.

Ver. 9. *He sent redemption unto his people, &c.*] Or one to redeem them, who effected it; Moses to redeem Israel out of Egypt, and Christ to redeem his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and who has done it; and having obtained eternal redemption, he sent his ministers to publish it in the world, and his Spirit to apply it, and to shew his people their interest in it; and make it over to them, and the blessings of it, that they may enjoy it, and all the comforts and advantages arising from it; temporal redemption, as typical of the spiritual and eternal one, is here meant. *He hath commanded his covenant for ever*; which cannot be the covenant of circumcision, or that at Sinai, neither of which were for ever; but the covenant of grace made with Christ, and which stands fast with him for ever; it is everlasting, sure, and can never be removed; its blessings and promises are for ever; and it is so made and framed, and so kept and observed, as that it shall always continue, which is meant by its being *commanded*: as well as it may denote the decree and resolution of God never to break and alter it; see Psal. lxxxix. 3, 28, 34. *Holy and reverend is his name*: the name of God is *holy*; it is his nature, and appears in all his works; and in which he is glorious, and so is reverend; he is to be feared and revered by all his creatures, and among his saints, as he is by the angels in heaven.

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, &c.*] The fear of the Lord, whose name is reverend, is not a fear of his judgments here or hereafter, but of his goodness and grace; it is a reverential affection for him, a fiducial fear of him, a fear of offending so good a Being as he is; and it includes all religious worship of him, inward and outward, private and public; and at this true wisdom begins; a man begins to be wise when he fears the Lord, and not till then; this

is his highest wisdom, and this is, as it may be rendered, *the chief of wisdom*¹, the principal part of it; see Prov. ix. 10. *A good understanding have all they that do his commandments; or that do them*²; the fear of the Lord and wisdom; that exercise them, that do as they oblige and direct to; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra connects the words; such have a good understanding of the Lord, know him as the object of their fear and reverence, and of their duty to him, and of their own interest, it being their wisdom to fear him; since by attending to their duty, to the word and ordinances of God, such arrive to a greater degree of knowledge and understanding of divine things. Some render it *good success*³ or *prosperity*, as Kimchi; such usually have

prosperity in soul and body, in things temporal and spiritual; see Josh. i. 8. *His praise endureth for ever; or its praise*⁴; the praise of the fear of the Lord, of divine wisdom, and of a good understanding; just as of circumcision in the heart, Rom. ii. 29. or the praise of him that does the above things, that does the commandments of God, or acts under the fear of God, and as a wise man, 1 Cor. iv. 5. or rather the praise of God, which shall be given him by angels and men now and for evermore, as it ought to be; and to stir up to which is the design of the psalm throughout; and which men are encouraged to from the works and word of God, from his name, nature, and covenant, and from his blessings and acts of grace and goodness.

P S A L M CXII.

THIS psalm, also, very probably, was written by David, and is composed as the former, in an alphabetical order. The inscription of it in the Syriac version is, "When David in it commanded Solomon his son, saying, Keep the commandments of the Lord, and worship him: likewise the calling of the Gentiles and the righteousness of Christ." The subject-matter of the psalm are the character, conduct, usefulness, and happiness of a good man.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or, *hallelujah*. This is properly the title of the psalm: Aben Ezra says it is a word of the psalmist; it shews that all that a good man is, has, or does, is from the Lord; and therefore his name is to be praised: and he is not only to be praised for his perfections and works, but for this among others, that there are any good men on earth that fear and serve him, and are useful in their day and generation. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord*; not men, but the Lord; not his wrath, nor his judgments here or hereafter, but his goodness; not with a servile, but with a godly fear. This every man does not; there are but few that truly fear the Lord, only such who have the grace of God; and these are happy men: they have an interest in the heart of God, in his pity, love, and delight; great discoveries are made unto them; the secret of the Lord is with them; he shews them his covenant; and the sun of righteousness arises upon them: they are guarded and protected by the Lord; his eye of providence, as well as love, is upon them, and his angels encamp about them: they are supplied with all needful good things, temporal and spiritual; and have much goodness laid up for them hereafter. This psalm begins with what the preceding ends, the fear of the Lord; and is a further illustration and enlargement of it; see there. That *delighteth greatly in his commandments*: in the righteousness, purity, and holiness of them; in keeping and doing them: they are not grievous, but pleasant; a good man delights in them, after the inward man; he observes them from a principle of love, and finds peace and pleasure in them; he loves them above gold, yea,

above fine gold; and esteems them concerning all things to be right, Psal. cxix. 97, 127, 128, 165.

Ver. 2. *His seed shall be mighty upon earth, &c.*] The Targum is, "mighty in the law;" as Apollos is said to be *mighty in the Scriptures*, Acts xviii. 24. This must be understood of such of them as fear the Lord also, and love him, and delight in his commandments, according to Exod. xx. 6. and not in a literal sense, for not many mighty are called; but in a spiritual sense, of their being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Some understand this of the spiritual seed of Christ; and make him to be the man that feared the Lord, and greatly delighted in his commandments, as it is certain he did; he was heard in that he feared; and it was his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him. He has a spiritual seed; and these are mighty in the sense before given; and as they will be in the latter day, when the feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the Angel of the Lord; when the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints, and, being kings and priests, they shall reign with Christ on earth. Aben Ezra thinks the note of similitude as is wanting, and supplies it thus, *his seed shall be as a mighty man on earth*: be known, as he is in his generation. *The generation of the upright shall be blessed*; the seed of them, as before, who are the upright in heart and conversation: or the age in which upright men live is happy on their account; or a succession of upright persons: or rather a company of them dwelling together, at the same time, and in the same place; the same with the generation of them that seek the Lord, Psal. xxiv. 6. these are blessed with spiritual and eternal blessings.

Ver. 3. *Wealth and riches shall be in his house, &c.*] In his family; if not possessed by him, yet by his posterity: though rather this signifies spiritual riches, the riches of grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ, durable riches and righteousness; seeing it is connected with an everlasting righteousness, as in the next clause.

¹ חכמה ראשית חכמה caput sapientie, Junius & Tremellius; vel precipuum, Cocceius; summa, Michaelis.
² עשיהם facientibus ea, Paganius, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

³ טוב שכל successus optimus, Junius & Tremellius; so Ain-worth.
⁴ אורחם quorum laus, Tigurine version; i. e. uniuscujusque facientium, Gejerus, Michaelis.

And his righteousness endureth for ever; he is not hurt by his temporal riches, as others are, the prodigal, the covetous, and formal professor; he continues the good and righteous man he was, notwithstanding his riches. Some understand this of his liberality with his riches, as alms-deeds are sometimes called righteousness; see ver. 9. Matt. vi. 1. though it rather intends either inherent righteousness, the new man which is created in righteousness, the inward principle of grace which always continues; or the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, which is an everlasting one.

Ver. 4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness, &c.*] Upright ones are sometimes in the darkness of affliction, under divine desertions, without spiritual joy, and in an uncomfortable condition; when on a sudden light arises to them, like break of day, or the morning-light: they have deliverance from affliction, and enjoy prosperity; the light of God's countenance is lifted up on them; the sun of righteousness arises upon them with healing in his wings; and spiritual joy and comfort are communicated unto them. It may denote the comforts the people of God have amidst their afflictions and troubles, even whilst they are in them; and the light they enjoy, whilst darkness is round about others, like the children of Israel in Egypt: or the suddenness of deliverance from adversity, temporal or spiritual; weeping endures for a night, joy comes in the morning, and at evening-time it is light, Psal. xxx. 5. Zech. xiv. 7. He is *gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*; that is, the Lord is so. Thus the Arabic version, "the Lord God is merciful and bountiful;" and the Ethiopic version, "merciful and compassionate is the Lord, and righteous is our King." And because God is the God of all grace, and is able to make it abound to his people, and is compassionate to them in distress, and is just and faithful to his promises; therefore he causes light to arise to them in darkness; and which, on such account, they may believe and expect; see Mic. vii. 8, 9. Some understand this of the upright man and of his character; that he is *gracious*, kind, and bountiful; that he is *full of compassion*, tender-hearted, and shews mercy to distressed objects; and is *righteous*, through Christ, and lives soberly and righteously. This sense agrees both with what goes before, and follows after.

Ver. 5. *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth, &c.*] Without usury, hoping for nothing again: he pities those that labour under difficulties, for want of a little money; and he generously lends it till they are able to pay him again; which oftentimes is of as much service as if it was given; see Psal. xxxvii. 21, 26. Luke vi. 34, 35. A good man is not only a man that has the good work of grace in him, and is ready to every good work; but one that is munificent, bountiful, and liberal; in which sense the word is used in Rom. v. 7. and so in Latin writers^a. *He will guide his affairs with discretion*; his civil and domestic affairs: he will act the part of a good economist; so that he may be able to support his family with credit and reputation, and

have something to give to the relief of those in want. Some restrain this to his acts of charity. He lends to some, and gives to others: he takes care that they to whom he gives are proper objects of charity; he gives to persons seasonably, and in proportion to his own ability and their wants. It may be rendered, *he shall guide his words with judgment*^b; take care of what he says, and before whom; and that it be at a proper time and place; and especially when speaking of spiritual and religious things.

Ver. 6. *Surely he shall not be moved for ever, &c.*] Out of the heart of God, and from his love and affections; out of the covenant of grace, and from an interest in it; out of the hands of Christ, or off of him the foundation; out of the house and family of God; out of a state of grace and righteousness, into condemnation: and though he may be distressed by afflictions, yet not destroyed; and though he may be so shaken, as to fall from some degree of steadfastness in the faith, and into sin, yet not so as to perish everlastingly: the saint's perseverance is a sure and certain truth, and to be depended upon. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance*; with good men, and especially such whose names are recorded in Scripture: and even others are remembered after death; and for a long time after, their pious characters, sayings, actions, sufferings, works, and writings; and with God, who remembers his love to them, his covenant with them, his promises to them; has a book of remembrance for their thoughts, words, and actions; which will be remembered and spoken of at the last day, when forgotten by them; see Prov. x. 9. Mal. iii. 16. Heb. vi. 10. Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

Ver. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, &c.*] Either respecting things temporal; the death of friends, loss of substance, public calamities, wars and rumours of wars, commotions, confusions, convulsions, and revolutions in states, kingdoms, and nations, Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3, 4. or things spiritual; such as are brought to him by Satan; that he is an hypocrite, and the root of the matter is not in him; for he knows him to be a liar, and the father of lies; or by his own unbelieving heart: or what will befall the churches of Christ, and the interest of religion, in the latter day; as that the outward court shall be given to the Gentiles; that the witnesses shall be slain, and an hour of temptation shall come upon all the earth; and such a time of tribulation as has not yet been; for he knows that the saints will be kept in it, and carried through it, and glorious times will follow. Or, *he shall not be afraid of an evil hearing*^c; of an ill report raised of himself; for he knows he must go through good report and bad report; and especially when it is a false one, and for the sake of truth and righteousness, it gives him no uneasiness: nor is he afraid of hearing the report of the law, which in some sense may be called an evil hearing or report, in opposition to the hearing of faith, or the good report of the Gospel; he is not afraid of it, when it curses those that are under it, seeing he is redeemed by Christ from the curse of it; and therefore is not afraid

^a Bonus est hic homo, Plauti Pœnulus, Act. 5. Sc. 4. v. 42. Vellet bonus atque benignus, Horat. Satyr. l. 1. Sat. 2. v. 51. Piso bonus, Jurnal. Sat. 5. v. 109.

^b במשפט דבריו verba sua in, vel cum, judicio, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

^c בשמועה רעה ab audiente mala, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

of its menaces and threatenings, its curse and condemnation: nor is a good man afraid of or terrified at the tidings of death; nor will he be dismayed when the last trumpet sounds, and the dead are raised; when the heavens shall melt away with a great noise; when all shall be summoned to the judgment-seat, and the wicked will hear, *Go ye cursed*, he will be under no fears of hearing such a sentence. *His heart is fixed*; on the love of God, and is rooted and grounded in it; and is firmly persuaded of his interest in it, and that nothing can separate him from it: it is fixed on Christ the foundation; his faith is fixed and settled in him, and so are his affections; and nothing can separate from his love to him, Rom. viii. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. Or *his heart is prepared*²; to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments: he expects tidings of evil things, and that he shall receive evil things, as well as good, at the hands of the Lord; and therefore is not afraid of them, or surprised at them when they come; as well as his heart is prepared by the Lord to serve him, and is ready to every good work. *Trusting in the Lord*; in his covenant God and Father, who will never leave him nor forsake him; in his grace, which is sufficient for him in the worst of times; and who will supply all his wants: in his strength, to enable him to do his duty; to bear up under trials and exercises, and to do and suffer his will and pleasure; and in his power, to protect and preserve him, and keep him unto salvation; and in his faithfulness, to perform his promises, trusting in him for things temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Targum is, "trusting in the Word of the "Lord;" in Christ, the essential Word; looking to him as the author and finisher of faith; leaning upon him, laying the whole stress of his salvation on him; trusting in his person for acceptance, in his righteousness for justification, in his blood for pardon and cleansing, in his sacrifice for atonement, in his fulness for supply, and in his strength and power for assistance and protection; all which give him peace, and secure him from fear of evil tidings; see Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.

Ver. 8. *His heart is established, &c.*] With the doctrine of grace; which is food unto it, and by which it is strengthened and nourished; it is established in the faith of Christ, both in the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, even in all the doctrines of the Gospel; so that he is not as a child, tossed to and fro with every wind; his heart is established in the exercise of grace, and he is steadfast and immovable in the discharge of duty. This being the case, *he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies*; until he

looks them in the face boldly and confidently; or until he sees them all slain and destroyed, as the Israelites saw the Egyptians on the sea-shore. We supply *his desire*; it might be put *vengeance*, as in Psal. lviii. 10. the punishment of God on wicked men, who are the enemies of the upright; and which they shall see with pleasure, because of the glory of divine justice conspicuous therein; see Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. and even before this is brought about, whilst their enemies are oppressing them, insulting them, and triumphing over them, they shall not be afraid, as knowing the time is coming when the scene will be changed, and they shall triumph in their turn.

Ver. 9. *He hath dispersed, &c.*] His money, as the Targum; scattered it here and there, as the sower scatters his seed; does not throw it all in one place, but some here and some there, and all with profusion and plenty. This denotes the bounty and liberality of the upright; and his wisdom and discretion in distributing his charity, and the numerous objects of it; see Prov. xi. 14. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 9, 10. *He hath given to the poor*; that stand in need of his charity, freely, cheerfully, and bountifully. *His righteousness endureth for ever*; his liberality continues, he is not weary of well-doing; he gives a portion to seven and to eight, and to as many and as often as there is a call and need for it; see the note on ver. 3. *His horn shall be exalted with honour*; the reproach cast upon him shall be wiped off; he shall grow more prosperous, and become more honourable among men here on earth; and in the resurrection-morning shall have the dominion over the wicked, and shall appear with Christ in glory, and be with him to all eternity.

Ver. 10. *The wicked shall see it, &c.*] The glory and happiness of the upright man: so when the witnesses shall ascend to heaven, a phrase expressive of a more glorious state of the church, their enemies shall behold them, Rev. xi. 12. *And be grieved*; at their happiness, and grudge it: the Targum is, "and shall "be angry at him;" the upright man. *He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away*; like snow-water¹; or as a snail melteth, or as wax before the fire, Psal. lviii. 7, 8. and lxviii. 2. or shall pine away with grief and envy at the happiness and prosperity of the righteous; the wicked will weep and gnash their teeth, when they shall see them in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shut out, Luke xiii. 28. *The desire of the wicked shall perish*; they shall not have their desire, neither of good things for themselves here and hereafter, nor of evil things for the righteous.

P S A L M CXIII.

WITH this psalm begins the great *Hallel*, which ends with the 118th; and was used to be sung at the Jewish festivals, particularly at the feast of tabernacles and of the passover; and is thought by some to be the hymn sung by Christ and his apostles, after the celebration of the Lord's supper; in which

there are many things pertinent to that occasion as well as to the above feasts. This psalm is a song of praise for redemption by Christ, to be sung in Gospel times, when the name of the Lord should be known among all nations, from the rising to the setting sun. It is thought by some to be an abridgment

¹ מֵי לֶבַי paratum cor ejus, V. L. Gejers.

² Mens mea tabida liquescit, &c. Liquescent pectora, &c. Ovid. de Ponto, l. 1. Eleg. 1. v. 68. & Eleg. 2. v. 57.

of the song of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. there is an agreement.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or, *hallelujah*. This is the title of the psalm, as in the two preceding, and directs to the principal matter of it. *Praise, O ye servants of the Lord*; meaning not the angels, nor all men, nor the priests and Levites only; but all the saints, who are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God; who are servants, not of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of God and Christ; and who serve the Lord willingly and cheerfully, with much pleasure and delight, in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear, and without trusting to and depending on their service for salvation: and one principal branch of their service is praise, especially under the Gospel dispensation; in which all legal sacrifices are abolished, and the sacrifice of praise is continued; and which is pleasant and delightful work, and yet there is a backwardness to it; and therefore there is need of such an exhortation to excite unto it, and to repeat it, as follows: *praise the name of the Lord*; not any particular name, as Jehovah; but him himself, and the perfections of his nature; his holiness, justice, truth, faithfulness, power, goodness, grace and mercy. The repetition of the exhortation denotes either the abundance of praise to be given to the Lord, or the constancy and continuance of it; which ought to be done at all times, every day, since his mercies are new every morning. Some have thought the threefold repetition respects the trinity of Persons, who are each to be praised, as in Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. Psal. xcvi. 1. but this is doubtful, and perhaps not sufficient to build such a doctrine on; and especially since the first of these exhortations is the title of the psalm: however, this is a certain truth, that Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, are to be praised.

Ver. 2. *Blessed be the name of the Lord, &c.*] Some prefix the word *saying*, as directing to the matter and manner of praising the Lord, and to express themselves thus; *let the name of the Lord be blessed*; honoured, glorified, spoken well of. *From this time forth and for evermore*; from the beginning of time, or as soon as time began, the Lord's name was to be praised, and was praised by the holy angels, who were present at laying the foundation of the earth, Job xxxviii. 4—7. and all the works of the Lord, in their way, have praised him ever since. Here it may respect the time of penning this psalm, or the time when the persons called upon commenced the servants of the Lord, the time of their conversion; a time of love, life, light, and deliverance, and therefore a time to begin to praise the Lord: or the whole time of the Gospel dispensation, to which this psalm refers; the accepted time and day of salvation, and of the Gentiles glorifying God for his mercy; in which the Lord is to be and is praised, as he will be to all eternity, by angels and glorified saints.

Ver. 3. *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, &c.*] Meaning not from morning to night; for it designs not time, but place, even all the space from east to west, or that lies between the rising and setting sun; even all nations, and the inhabitants of them; and who ought to praise the Lord for the rising

sun, and the benefit and advantages of it; and yet many of them have worshipped the sun, and served the creature more than and besides the Creator. All within this compass are the creatures of God, and the care of his providence, and therefore are bound to praise him; and yet he has had this tribute due unto him but from a few. Here it respects Gospel times, when the Gospel should be sent into all the world; and many should be called from the east and west, from the north and south, and fear the Lord and worship him, and offer a pure offering of praise unto him; and his name be great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, Mal. i. 11. For within this wide space *the Lord's name is to be praised*; it ought to be, though it is not; and ere long it will be, when all nations shall come and worship before him, Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Ver. 4. *The Lord is high above all nations, &c.*] He is the most High in all the earth; he is higher than the highest; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords: all nations are made by him, and are under his government and dominion; he is the Governor among the nations; they are in comparison of him as the drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance; as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity. Here it seems to respect the time when the Lord shall be more visibly King over all the earth, and the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, Zech. xiv. 9. Rev. xi. 15. And *his glory above the heavens*; it is above what the heavens do or can declare; they declare something of it, but not all. Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is made higher than the heavens, and has ascended far above them; and is above the angels in them, both as to nature, name, office, and place, Heb. i. 4—14. and vii. 26.

Ver. 5. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, &c.*] Among the gods of the nations, as Kimchi; or among the angels of heaven, or among any of the mighty monarchs on earth; there is none like him for the perfections of his nature, for his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness; for his holiness, justice, goodness, grace, and mercy; who is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; nor for the works of his hands, his works of creation, providence, and grace; none ever did the like: and what makes this reflection the more delightful to truly good men is, that this God is their God; and all this is true of our Immanuel, God with us; who is God over all, and the only Saviour and Redeemer; and there is none in heaven and earth like him, or to be desired besides him. *Who dwelleth on high?* in the high and holy place, in the highest heaven, which is his throne; or *who exalteth himself to dwell?*; so the Targum, "he exalteth his habitation to dwell," suitable to the dignity and the greatness of his majesty; as he is high and above all, so he has fixed his habitation in the highest heavens; as he is self-existent, he is self-exalted, and none can exalt him as himself; he is exalted above all blessing and praise; and if it is an exaltation of him to dwell in the highest heavens, what an exaltation will it be of the saints to dwell with him there, in those mansions in

לשבת ^א sustollens se ad habitandum, Montanus; qui se elevat, Pagninus.

his house which Christ is gone to prepare for them! This clause may be applied to Christ, who, both previous to his humiliation, and after it, dwelt in the highest heavens with his Father, in his bosom, from whence he came down on earth, and whither he is gone again, and is highly exalted there.

Ver. 6. *Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth.*] The persons in the highest heavens, the angels whom he upholds in their beings, and admits into his presence; who always behold his face, and he beholds them, delights in their persons, and accepts their services; which, though pure and perfect, it is a condescension in him to do, since they are but creature-services, and chargeable with folly and weakness; and who themselves are as nothing in comparison of him, and veil their faces before him, Job. iv. 18. also glorified saints are continually in his view, and favoured with intimate communion with him: and he humbles himself to look lower than this, and behold the things in the starry heavens, the sun, and moon, and stars; whom he preserves in their being, directs their courses, and continues their influence; brings out their host by number, calls them by their names, and because of his power not one fails: he looks lower still, and beholds the things in the airy heavens; there is not a meteor or cloud that flies, or a wind that blows, but he observes, guides, and directs it; nor a bird in the air but his eye is on it; he feels the fowls of the air, and not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge and will: and he also humbles himself to behold persons and things on earth, even every beast of the forest, the cattle on a thousand hills, all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field; and their eyes are on him, and he gives them their food in due season; he looks down from heaven and beholds all the children of men, and is the Saviour of them in a providential way; in an especial manner his eye, both of providence and grace, is on his own people, whom he beholds in Christ as fair and comely, and rejoices over them to do them good; and he has respect to their services for his sake, and condescends to dwell on earth with them. This may also be applied to Christ, who humbled himself to look upon the angels in heaven, and take them under his care and protection, be the head of them, and confirm them in that estate in which they were created: and who from all eternity vouchsafed to look with delight upon the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, where he knew they would dwell; and in the fulness of time he humbled himself to come down on earth in human nature and dwell among men, and become very man in that nature; made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself so as to become obedient to death, the death of the cross, and be made sin and a curse for his people. This was an humiliation indeed!

Ver. 7. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, &c.*] Persons of mean extraction and in low life are sometimes raised by him to great honour and dignity, as Saul, David, and others; and is true of many who are spiritually poor and needy, as all men are, but all are not sensible of it; some are, and these are called poor

in spirit, and are pronounced *blessed*, for *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; they are raised out of a low and mean estate, out of the dust of sin, and self-abhorrence for it, in which they lie when convinced of it. And *lifteth the needy out of the dunghill*; which denotes a mean condition; so one born in a mean place, and brought up in a mean manner, is sometimes represented as taken out of a dunghill: and also it is expressive of a filthy one; men by sin are not only brought into a low estate, but into a loathsome one, and are justly abominable in the sight of God, and yet he lifts them out of it: the phrases of *raising up* and *lifting out* suppose them to be fallen, as men are in Adam, fallen from a state of honour and glory, in which he was created, into a state of sin and misery, and out of which they cannot deliver themselves; it is Christ's work, and his only, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to help or lift up his servant Israel, Isa. xlix. 6. Luke i. 54. see 1 Sam. ii. 8.

Ver. 8. *That he may set him with princes, &c.*] As all the saints are by birth, being the sons of God, the King of kings; born of him, and not of the will of man; and are of a princely spirit, have a free spirit, and offer themselves and services willingly to the Lord; have the spirit of adoption, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; and, as princes, have power with God and prevail; and are also heirs of God, heirs of salvation, heirs of a kingdom, as princes be; now such as are raised by Christ and his grace from a low estate and condition are set among those princes here; they are brought to Zion, and have a place and a name in the house of God, better than that of sons and daughters; and become fellow-citizens with the saints; and they are set among princes hereafter in the kingdom of heaven. Even *with the princes of his people*; the more eminent among the people of God, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom they shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven; and with the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New; and even with all the saints, who are made kings and priests unto God; see Psal. xlv. 16.

Ver. 9. *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, &c.*] Or: *to dwell in the house*, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions; or rather *to cause the house to be inhabited*; to fill the house with inhabitants, to build up the house, as the barren woman, when made fruitful, does, as Rachel and Leah built up the house of Israel, Ruth iv. 11. This may be applied to the church of God, as it is to the congregation of Israel by the Targum, "who makes the congregation of Israel, which is like to a barren woman, that sitteth sorrowful, to dwell with the men of her house, full of multitudes." Jarchi interprets it of Zion, who was as a barren woman; see Isa. liv. 1. Gal. iv. 27. It may be illustrated by the case of the primitive and apostolic church, which at first had but very few converts, but afterwards, both in Judea and in the Gentile world, had large numbers; as the church in the latter day will also have, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and the nation of the Jews born at once. And to be a *joyful mother of children*; as the barren woman is when she becomes the mother of children; and indeed every wo-

* Ex sterquilinio effosse, Plauti Casina, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 26.

man rejoices when a man is born into the world, John xvi. 21. and so does the church of Christ and people of God, when souls are born again among them; this causes great joy among the saints; see Psal. lxxxvii.

4—7. Acts xv. 3. Isa. xlix. 18—21. and lx. 4, 5. *Praise ye the Lord; not only for the church's fruitfulness, but for all the great and good things the Lord has vouchsafed to do for his people, mentioned in this psalm.*

P S A L M CXIV.

THE title of this psalm in the Arabic version is *hal-lelujah*, as in some preceding ones; it is part of the great *Hallel* sung at the passover, and with great propriety; since the subject-matter of it is the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, typical of our spiritual redemption by Christ; and of the effectual vocation of God's elect out of a state of nature into a state of grace; and particularly of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them from Paganism to Christianity: the inscription of the Syriac version is, "a psalm without a name, out of the ancient writing, concerning Moses, who sung praise at the sea; but unto us the calling of the Gospel, by which we become a new people; spiritual to God, who is incarnate; to Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by his blood from the curse of the Scripture (the law), and hath cleansed us from sin by his Spirit."

Ver. 1. *When Israel went out of Egypt, &c.*] The people of Israel in a body, publicly, openly, and not by stealth; freely and willingly, not forced and drove out; though urged by the Egyptians to go, through the hand of God upon them; and so went out with the mighty hand and stretched-out arm of the Lord, and with great riches, and in health, not one feeble or sick among them. *The house of Jacob from a people of strange language; or barbarous; as every language was reckoned by the Jews but their own; the Egyptian language they did not understand; see Psal. lxxxi. 5. Gen. xlii. 23.* no doubt many of them learned it during their long stay there, but in general they retained their own language. This was an emblem of the Lord's people in effectual vocation, coming out of bondage into liberty, out of darkness into light, out of superstition, and idolatry and profaneness, to the service of the true God in righteousness and true holiness; and from a people of a strange language to those that speak the language of Canaan, a pure language, in which they can understand one another when they converse together, either about experience or doctrine; and the manner of their coming out is much the same, by strength of hand, by the power of divine grace, yet willingly and cheerfully, with great riches, the riches of grace, and a title to the riches of glory, and with much spiritual strength; for, though weak in themselves, yet are strong in Christ.

Ver. 2. *Judah was his sanctuary, &c.*] Meaning not the tribe of Judah only, though that in many things had the pre-eminence; the kingdom belonging to it, the chief ruler being out of it, especially the Messiah; its standard was pitched and moved first; it offered first to the service of the Lord; and the Jews have a tradition, mentioned by Jarchi and Kimchi, that this tribe, with its prince at the head of it, went into the

Red sea first; the others fearing, but afterwards followed, encouraged by their example: but rather all the tribes are meant, the whole body of the people; for this is not to be understood of the tabernacle or temple in the tribe of Judah, sometimes called a sanctuary; for neither of these were in being when Israel came out of Egypt; but it may be rendered, *Judah was his holiness*, or was holiness to the Lord, the Lord's holy people; see Jer. ii. 2, 3. not all internally holy; for there were many that came out of Egypt that were unholy, rebellious, and disobedient, and whose carcasses fell in the wilderness; but externally, when brought out of Egypt they were separated from all other people, and in this sense sanctified, and became a holy and special people, chosen by the Lord to be so; with whom he made a covenant, and to whom he gave holy laws and righteous statutes: and in this they were typical of those who are effectually called by grace with an holy calling, and unto holiness; have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and have Holiness to the Lord written upon them; they have the sanctification of the Spirit, and Christ is made sanctification to them; and they are the Lord's sanctuary, in which he dwells. And *Israel his dominion*; for, though all the world is his kingdom and his government, yet the people of Israel were in a very particular and remarkable manner his dominion; from the time of their coming out of Egypt to their having a king, their government was properly a theocracy; God was their King, and by him they were immediately ruled and governed, and had a body of laws given them from him, and were under his immediate care and protection, Exod. xix. 5. 1 Sam. viii. 7. and xii. 12. In this they were typical of the saints called by grace, who are then translated from the power of Satan into the kingdom of Christ; whom they acknowledge to be their Lord and King, and whose laws, commands, and ordinances, they willingly observe; the people of God are often represented as a kingdom, and Christ as King of saints; the Targum is, "the congregation of the house of Judah was united to his holiness, and Israel to his power."

Ver. 3. *The sea saw it, and fled, &c.*] When the Word of the Lord appeared at it, as the Targum in the king's Bible; the Red sea, to which the Israelites came when they went out of Egypt; this saw that Judah was the Lord's holy and peculiar people, and that Israel were the subjects of his kingdom; it saw the presence of the Lord among them; it saw him in the glory of his perfections, and felt his power; see Psal. lxxvii. 16. at which its waters fled and parted, and stood up as a wall to make way for Israel to pass through as on dry land, Exod. xiv. 21, 29. This was

• קרישׁו sanctificatio ejus, Pagninus, Vatablus; sanctitas ejus, Gejerus, Mielcaelis.

typical of the nations of the Gentile world, comparable to the sea, Dan. vii. 2, 3. who saw the work of God going on among them under the ministry of the Gospel in the first times of it, whereby multitudes were turned from idols to serve the living God; this they saw and trembled at, and they and their kings fled for fear; see Isa. xli. 5. Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. and of the stop put to the ocean of sin in a man's heart, and to the torrent of wickedness that breaks out from thence, by powerful and efficacious grace, much more abounding where sin has abounded. *Jordan was driven back*; this was done not at the time of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, but just before their entrance into the land of Canaan, and in order to it; and being an event similar to the former is here mentioned, and done by the power and presence of God; for as soon as the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence, were dipped in the brim of the waters, the waters below were cut off from those above, and stood up on an heap, and all the Israelites passed through on dry ground, Josh. iii. 13—17. this was an emblem of death, through which the saints pass to glory, which is abolished by Christ, its sting and curse taken away; which when the saints come to, they find it like Jordan driven back, and have an easy and abundant passage through it; and when on the brink of it, and even in the midst of it, sing, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Ver. 4. *The mountains skipped like rams, &c.]* The mountains of Sinai and Horeb quaked and moved at the presence of the Lord, when he descended thereon to give the law; these saw his glory and trembled, Exod. xix. 18. Psal. lxxviii. 8. Hab. iii. 6, 10. And *the little hills like lambs*; very beautiful are the larger mountains of Sinai and Horeb compared to rams, and the motion of them to their skipping; and the little hills adjacent to them to lambs: these may represent the greater and lesser governors in the Roman empire at the time when such large conversions were made in it as before observed; and which skipped, and trembled, and fled, and were moved out of their places at the downfall of Paganism and progress of Christianity, Rev. vi. 14. and also may be an emblem of the difficulties which lie like mountains and hills in the way of a sinner's conversion and effectual calling, which yet give way to and are surmounted by the efficacious grace of God; all mountains become a plain before him, and when he works none can let.

Ver. 5. *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? &c.]* What was the matter with thee? what appeared to thee? what didst thou see? what didst thou feel, which caused thee to flee in such haste? *Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?* what is the meaning that thou didst not continue to flow as usual? what was it that stopped thy flowing tide? that cut

off thy waters? that drove them back as fast or faster than they came?

Ver. 6. *Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, &c.]* Not for joy, but fear; what caused these trembling motions, these violent agitations, and quakings, and movings to and fro like the skipping of rams? And *ye little hills, like lambs?* what was it that disturbed you, and put you into a panic, that you skipped like frightened lambs? These questions are put, by a beautiful and poetical figure, to inanimate creatures; the Red sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains of Sinai and Horeb, and the hills about them; to which an answer is returned in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, &c.]* Or, *the earth has trembled at the presence of the Lord*; so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; the imperative is sometimes put for the preterit or past tense, see Psal. xxii. 9. likewise the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions thus render it, *the earth is moved at the presence of the Lord*; and then the sense is by a prosopopœia. Is it to be wondered at, that we, the sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains and hills, have fled, or have been driven back, or have skipped like rams and lambs, when the whole earth, of which we are a part, has trembled at the presence of God? who, when he does but look, the earth trembles; and when he touches the hills, they smoke, Psal. civ. 32. and lxxviii. 8. It is at the same presence of God we have been thus moved, the power of which we have felt, even at the presence of the God of Jacob; who brought Jacob out of Egypt, led him through the sea, and gave him the law on Sinai. This is not to be understood of the general and common presence of God, which is everywhere, and with all his creatures; for this is not attended with such wonderful phenomena as here mentioned, either in the literal or mystic sense; but of the majestic, powerful, and gracious presence of God; such as he sometimes causes to attend his ministers, his word, his churches, his martyrs and confessors; and so as to strike an awe upon, and terror into, their greatest enemies, as well as to convert his own people.

Ver. 8. *Which turned the rock into a standing water, &c.]* Both at Rephidim and at Kadesh; which being smitten, streams of water flowed out like rivers, as if the rock itself was changed into water; and which became a constant and continual supply for the Israelites, for it is said to follow them; see Exod. xvii. 6. Numb. xx. 11. Psal. lxxviii. 15, 16. and cv. 41. 1 Cor. x. 4. *The flint into a fountain of waters*; referring to the same thing, the rocks were flinty ones. This was a type of Christ the Rock; who has an abiding fulness of grace in him; is the fountain of it, from whence it flows in great abundance for the supply of his people's wants, while passing through this wilderness to Canaan's land.

P S A L M CXV.

THIS psalm is by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the former, and makes one psalm with it: and Kimchi

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says, that in some books the psalm does not begin here; but in the best and correct copies of the Hebrew, and in the Targum, it stands a distinct psalm; and

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the different subject-matter or argument shews it to be so. It is ascribed to various persons; by some to Moses and the Israelites, when pursued by Pharaoh: by others to the three companions of Daniel, cast into the fiery furnace: by others to Mordecai and Esther, when Haman distressed the Jews: by others to the heroes at the times of Antiochus and the Maccabees; so Theodoret: by some to Jehoshaphat, when a numerous army came against him; and by others to David, which is more probable; though on what occasion is not easy to say: some have thought it was written by him, when insulted by the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6. The occasion of it seems to be some distress the church of God was in from the Heathens; and the design of it is to encourage trust and confidence in the Lord; and to excite the saints to give him the glory of all their mercies, and to expose the vanity of idols.

Ver. 1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, &c.*] There is no glory due to men; no, not to the best of men, not to be given them on any account whatever; neither on account of things natural, civil, and temporal, nor on account of things spiritual and eternal; but all to be given to the Lord: for, as for their beings and the preservation of them, with all the mercies of life, food, raiment, &c. they are not of themselves, but of the Lord; and so are the salvation of their souls, their election and redemption, their regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, their justification and pardon; whatsoever good thing is in them, or done by them: nor have they any thing for the sake of righteousness done by them; nor do they desire to take the glory of past favours to themselves; nor request deliverance from present evils for their own merits, which they disclaim; nor for their own sakes, or that they may be great and glorious; but for the Lord's sake, for his name's sake, that he may be glorified; which is the principal sense of the passage. So the Targum, "not for our sakes, O Lord, not for our merit, but to thy name give glory." Good men desire to glorify God themselves, by ascribing to him the perfect-ions of his nature, and celebrating them; by giving thanks to him for mercies, spiritual and temporal; by exercising faith upon him, as a promising God; and by living to his glory: and they are very desirous that all others would give him the glory due unto his name; and that he would glorify himself, and get himself a glorious and an everlasting name. And indeed the words are addressed to him, and not to others; and particularly that he would glorify, or take the glory of the following perfections: *for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake*; so very manifest in the salvation of his people, and in all their deliverances, and therefore ought to have the glory of them. His *mercy*, or his *grace*, as it may be rendered, is displayed in the salvation of his people by Christ, in their regeneration, justification, pardon, and eternal life: and so is his *truth*, or faithfulness in all his promises; and particularly in the mission of his Son as a Saviour, so long promised and expected; and who is *truth* himself, the truth of all promises and prophecies; and by whom the truth of the Gospel came, the Word, which God has magnified above every name.

וְעַל חַסְדְּךָ *propter gratiam tuam, Cocceius, Michaelis.*

Ver. 2. *Wherefore should the Heathen say, &c.*] The nations about Israel, the nations of the world; the Gentiles in any age; the Papists in ours, sometimes called the Heathen, Psal. x. 16. Rev. xi. 2, 18. The church expostulates with the Lord why those should be suffered to say, in a reproachful, insulting, manner, and by way of triumph, *where is now their God?* that they have boasted of would help them; in whom they have put their trust and confidence; why does not he help them, as he has promised, and they expect? Thus the church suggests, that if the Lord did not appear for them, his own glory lay at stake. Such language is generally used by their enemies, when the people of God were in any distress; see Psal. xlii. 10. and lxxix. 10. Joel ii. 17. Mic. vii. 9, 10.

Ver. 3. *But our God is in the heavens, &c.*] His habitation is in the heavens, as the Targum; the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, *and in earth*: he is in both, and fills both with his presence; and cannot be contained in either. He is the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth; the one is his throne, and the other is his footstool: he dwells in the highest heaven, and overlooks all persons and things on earth, and overrules all; he is higher than the highest, and his kingdom ruleth over all. *He hath done whatsoever he pleased*: in creation, in providence, and in grace: he hath made what creatures he pleased, and for his pleasure; and he does according to his will, and after the counsel of it, in heaven and in earth; and is gracious to whom he will be gracious; saves and calls men, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and will; whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; he is the most high God, and a sovereign Being; all that he wills are possible to him, and easily done by him, and which Heathens themselves own*.

Ver. 4. *Their idols are silver and gold, &c.*] The idols of the Gentiles; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. The gods they serve and worship are not in the heavens; but the matter of which they are made is dug out of the earth: and this is the greatest excellency and value that there is in them; and such as are made of these are of the greatest worth, and yet only for the matter of them, otherwise useless and inanimate statues; such are the idols of the Papists, Rev. ix. 20. *The work of men's hands*; the matter of them is gold and silver, which they owe to the earth as their original; the form of them they owe to men, and therefore cannot be God, Hos. viii. 6. If it is idolatry to worship what God has made, the sun, moon, and stars, it must be gross idolatry, and great stupidity, to worship what man has made: if it is sinful to worship the creature besides the Creator, or more than him, it must be still more so to worship the creature of a creature.

Ver. 5. *They have mouths, but they speak not, &c.*] These idols are carved with mouths, but they can make no use of them; if any cry to them for help, they cannot answer them, nor save them from their troubles. Baal's priests cried to their idol, but there was no voice heard, nor answer returned; they are rightly called dumb idols, Hab. ii. 18. see Isa. xlvi. 7. Jer. x. 5. 1 Kings xviii. 26, 29. but our God in the

* ὅσα θεοῖς τε σκῆπτρα δυνάμει, HOMER. Odyss. 10. v. 306. Facile est omnia posse Deo, OVID. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

heavens, when his people cry to him, he answers them, and sends them relief; and tells them his grace is sufficient for them, and so they find it to be. *Eyes have they, but they see not*; they are made with eyes in their heads, but cannot see with them; they cannot see their worshippers, nor what they bring to them; neither their persons nor their wants, Dan. v. 23. but our God and Father in heaven, he sees in secret the persons and hearts of his people; their desires are before him, and their groanings are not hid from him; his eyes are on the righteous, and are never withdrawn from them.

Ver. 6. *They have ears, but they hear not, &c.*] The makers of them have taken care to place a pair of ears to their heads, but could not convey the faculty of hearing to them; so that though their votaries may cry from morning to noon, as Baal's worshippers did, saying, O Baal, hear us; and even to night, and one day and night after another, nothing is heard, 1 Kings xviii. 26, 27. Indeed the image of Jupiter at Crete was made without ears; because it was thought unbecoming that he, who was prince and lord of all, should give ear to any: but the God of heaven and earth is a God hearing prayer; his ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear; his ears are always open to the cries of his people. *Noses have they, but they smell not*; the incense that is set before them, nor the sacrifices offered to them, Deut. iv. 28. but our God smelled a sweet savour in legal sacrifices, offered up in the faith of the Messiah; and especially he smells a sweet savour in the sacrifice of his son, and in the prayers of his saints, which are sweet odours; and particularly as they come to him perfumed with the incense of Christ's mediation, Gen. viii. 21. Ephes. v. 2. Rev. v. 8. and viii. 3, 4.

Ver. 7. *They have hands, but they handle not, &c.*] So as to feel any thing that is put into their hands; they cannot make use of their hands to stretch them out, and receive any thing from their worshippers; nor can they give any thing to them: but our God receives and accepts the sacrifices of his people, their prayers and their praises; and opens his hand, and liberally supplies their wants, both in providence and grace. *Feet have they, but they walk not*; cannot stir from the place where they are, to the assistance of those that call unto them, Isa. xlii. 7. but our God walks upon the wings of the wind, and is a present help in times of trouble; a God at hand and afar off, and makes haste to the relief of his people in distress. *Neither speak they through their throat*; or make a mournful voice as a dove, as the word is used in Isa. xxxviii. 14. or chirp as a bird, or chatter as a crane; or warble out any note through the throat, as birds do; and much less form any articulate sound, or utter any proper word, that may be understood.

Ver. 8. *They that make them are like unto them, &c.*] As stupid as the matter of which they are made; as sottish and as senseless as the idols themselves, see Isa. xlv. 9—20. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it as a petition, *let them that make them be like unto them*; and so the Targum, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: they liked not

to retain God in their knowledge, let them be given up to a reprobate mind, to a mind void of all sense and judgment; and which indeed is their case, Rom. i. 28. So is *every one that trusteth in them*; more especially they that worship them: for an artificer may make them for gain, and have no faith in them; but a worshipper places confidence in them. Or this clause may be explanative of the former, and be rendered, *even every one, &c. for to make* sometimes signifies to serve and worship, Exod. xxxii. 35.

Ver. 9. *O Israel, trust thou in the Lord, &c.*] Or, *the house of Israel hath trusted in the Lord*: so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: the Targum is, "Israel trusteth in the Word of the Lord;" in distinction from the Heathens, that trust in their idols. But it is better rendered as an imperative, *trust thou*: it being an exhortation to Israel to trust in the Lord, in opposition to idols; and may be understood of Israel, literally taken, who were God's chosen covenant-people, to whom he had made a revelation of himself, and of his will; and therefore should trust in him, and in no other; and of spiritual Israel, or all the elect of God, and redeemed of the Lamb; every Israelite indeed; every wrestling Jacob, and prevailing Israel; every praying soul; every sensible sinner, Jew or Gentile. It becomes them to trust in the Lord, not in the creature; not in their own strength, wisdom, riches, righteousness, or fleshly privileges; but in the Lord, as the God of nature, providence, and grace; as a promising and covenant-keeping God, who is to be trusted with all, and for every thing temporal and spiritual, and at all times. *He is their help and their shield*; the help and shield of every true Israelite; of every one that trusts in the Lord; or, "your help and your shield, O ye Israelites;" so Ben Balaam in Aben Ezra reads the words: which are a reason or argument encouraging trust in the Lord, since he is the help of his people; they are helpless in themselves, and vain is the help of man, for there is none in him; there is no help but in the Lord, and he is a present, seasonable, and sufficient help; Jehovah the Father has promised them help, and he is both able and faithful to make it good; he has laid help upon his Son for them; and has set up a throne of grace, where they may come for grace to help them in time of need: Christ has helped them out of the miserable estate they were fallen into by sin; he helps them on in their way to heaven, by his power and grace, and at last brings them thither: the Spirit of God helps them to the things of Christ; to many exceeding great and precious promises; and out of many difficulties, snares, and temptations; and he helps them in prayer under all their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God; and therefore they should trust in the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit: and who is also *their shield*, to protect and defend them from all dangers, evils, and enemies; what a shield is to the body, to secure it from hurt, that to the people of God are the love and favour of God, his power and might, his truth and faithfulness; as likewise Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sal-

vation; and the Spirit, and his grace; see Psal. v. 12. and xviii. 35. and xci. 4. Ephes. vi. 16. Isa. lix. 19.

Ver. 10. *O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord, &c.*] The family of the tribe of Levi, that was separated from the rest, to minister in the priest's office, to offer gifts and sacrifices for the people, and to bless them; and therefore ought to trust in the Lord, and set a good example to others: as ministers of the word should, who are intrusted with much by the Lord, and should trust in him for much; for every supply of gifts and grace; and the rather, as they are to be examples of faith to the people: and as all the saints under the Gospel dispensation are priests unto God, they should put their trust and confidence in the Lord; since their sacrifices cannot be acceptable and well-pleasing to God, without faith in him. *He is their help and their shield*; the Lord is the help and shield of every one of Aaron's family; of the priests under the law, and of ministers under the Gospel; and of all those who are kings and priests unto God; and therefore they should trust in him. This is repeated for the certainty of it, and for the particular application of it to Aaron's house.

Ver. 11. *Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord, &c.*] Which is said not to distinguish true saints from hypocrites, in Israel or in Aaron's house; rather to describe such who belonged to neither: but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, who feared the Lord, of every people and nation; or proselytes, as Jarchi explains it: the distinction between the people of the Jews, and the proselytes among them, under the character of those that feared the Lord, may be observed in Acts xiii. 26. It takes in all true worshippers of the Lord; and who are exhorted to trust in him, for faith and fear are consistent; and where there is the one, there is the other; where there is the true fear of God, not a slavish nor an hypocritical fear, but a holy reverence and a godly fear, there will be faith and confidence in him. Job was a man that feared the Lord, and yet trusted in him; these characters meet in the same persons, see Psal. xxxi. 19. *He is their help and their shield*; the help and shield of all those that fear the Lord, their protector and defender, and therefore should trust in him. The word *ezer*, translated *help*, in this and the two preceding verses, is applied to God, and often in this book of Psalms, as a title and epithet belonging to him; and it may be observed that *Æsar*, in the Etruscan language, signifies God².

Ver. 12. *The Lord hath been mindful of us, &c.*] The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord hath remembered us for good." And is another reason why his people should trust in him: he has been mindful of his covenant with them and promises to them, and has kept them; he remembered them in their low estate, and sent redemption to them; goodness and mercy have followed them all their days. Past experiences of divine favour should encourage trust in the Lord, as well as promises of future blessings, as follow: *he will bless us*; with all kind of blessings, temporal and spiritual; with blessings indeed, solid and substantial: it is certain and may be depended upon; he has promised it, and swore to it, that in blessing he will

bless. Kimchi interprets it as a wish, *let him bless*: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it in the past tense, *he hath blessed*; but the Targum as we: and as it follows, *he will bless the house of Israel*; with whom he has made his new covenant; the household of faith, the family named of Christ, the whole Israel of God. *He will bless the house of Aaron*; his priests, his ministers, all that offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; he will bless them with an increase of gifts and grace, and with his presence and spirit, and therefore they should trust in him.

Ver. 13. *He will bless them that fear the Lord, &c.*] They shall want no good thing now, and have much goodness laid up for them to be enjoyed hereafter; the sun of righteousness rises upon them, and a book of remembrance is written on their account; the Lord delights in them, his eye is upon them; and they are blessed with more grace now, and will be blessed with glory hereafter. Both *small and great*; young and old, rich and poor, high and low, lesser or greater believers; be they children, young men, or fathers; see Rev. xi. 18.

Ver. 14. *The Lord shall increase you more and more, &c.*] The Word of the Lord, as the Targum, shall do it; in a temporal sense, with a numerous posterity, with riches, wealth, and honour; and in a spiritual sense, with an addition of spiritual blessings; with renewed instances of divine favour: with an increase of the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, as faith, hope, love, joy, patience, humility, and other graces; and with more knowledge of God and Christ, and of divine and spiritual things. *You and your children*; not only they that feared the Lord of the present generation, but those that should succeed them, and be as they were, a seed to serve the Lord, and who should be accounted to him for a generation.

Ver. 15. *You are blessed of the Lord, &c.*] The Arabic version reads it, *we are blessed*; with temporal and with spiritual blessings; being the beloved of the Lord, chosen of him; whose sins are pardoned, whose persons are justified by the righteousness of Christ; who are put among the children of God, and are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; regenerated by his Spirit, favoured with communion with God, and wrought up to some degree of conformity to Christ, and shall ever be with him. *Which made heaven and earth*; and so able to bless with all kind of blessings, both heavenly and earthly; and from whom all help and assistance may be hoped for, and who may be trusted and confided in: and this, it may be, is observed to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, who made not the heavens and the earth; and who are not able to bless, nor give the least relief to any of their votaries.

Ver. 16. *The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, &c.*] Not only the visible heavens, the airy and stary regions, which are within our sight; but the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, into which the Apostle Paul was caught, and heard and saw things not to be uttered; and which is, as the Targum expresses it, "for the majesty of the glory of the Lord:" he is the maker, owner, proprietor, and possessor of them all: but the third heaven is more especially the seat of his majesty; where he has prepared the throne of his glory, where

² Sueton. in August. c. 97.

he keeps court; where his ministers, his angels, wait upon him, observe his orders, and execute his will; and which he has prepared for his saints to dwell with him in to all eternity. *But the earth hath he given to the children of men*; to Adam and his posterity, to dwell in it, to till it, and enjoy the fruits of it; yet so as not to leave it entirely to the care of men, and have no concern in it, and the affairs of it, as some licentious persons would from hence conclude; as if God had took the heavens to himself, and only minded the persons and things in that, and never concerned himself about the earth, and persons and things there; having disposed of it to the children of men, and left it to their conduct: for though he has given it to them for their use, yet he has still a claim upon it, and can and does dispose of it, and order all things in it, according to his pleasure; and men, from the highest to the lowest, are accountable to him, being but stewards, and at most but deputies and viceroys, under him: besides the words may be rendered, *and the earth which he hath given to the children of men*^a; that is his also, as well as the heavens. This the Lord gives to the children of men as their portion; and sad is the case of such, when this is their all; but to his own children he gives heaven, the kingdom of heaven, eternal glory and happiness. Maimonides^b gives the sense of the whole passage thus: "God only perfectly knows the truth, nature, substance, form, motion, and causes of the heavens: and to man he has given, that he may understand what are under the heavens; because they are the world, and as it were his house, in which he dwells, and of which he is a part."

Ver. 17. *The dead praise not the Lord, &c.*] Not the dead in sin; such as the makers of idols, and those that trust in them, who are like unto them; men must be made spiritually alive, ere they can shew forth the praises of God: nor the dead corporeally. The souls of departed saints can and do praise the Lord: these die not with their bodies, nor sleep in the grave; they

go immediately to God and Christ, and are employed in the service of God continually; particularly in praising him, as do the angels with whom they join; they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, of providence and grace; especially the song of redeeming love, with which they always praise the Lord: but they cannot praise him with their bodily organs until the resurrection, which by death are rendered useless; they can praise him no more among men on earth, as they have before done; and there is no work of this kind in the grave. *Neither any that go down in silence*; the grave, so called, because every thing is mute and silent there^c; the instruments of speech are no more used on any account; no noise and clamour there from wicked men; *there the wicked cease from troubling*; and no songs of praise from good men, all still and quiet there. So the Targum, "not any that go down to the house of the grave of the earth;" or the earthly grave. And therefore save us, O Lord, suffer not the enemy to destroy us; for, should he, we shall no more be capable of praising thee, as we have done and desire to do; for no such service is to be done in the grave, see Psal. vi. 4, 5. and xxx. 9. and lxxxviii. 10—12.

Ver. 18. *But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore, &c.*] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *we who are alive*; both in a corporeal and in a spiritual sense; who, as long as we live, and while we have a being, will bless the Lord; being made spiritually alive, quickened by the spirit and grace of God, and so capable of ascribing blessing, praise, and glory to him, for all the great and good things he has done; and especially when in lively frames, or in the lively exercise of grace: and that *from this time*; under a sense of present favours, and outward mercies being renewed every day; yea, throughout the whole of life, and so to all eternity in the world above; see Isa. xxxviii. 19. *Praise the Lord*; let others do the same as we; let us join together in this work, now and hereafter.

PSALM CXVI.

THEODORET applies this psalm to the distresses of the Jews in the times of the Maccabees under Antiochus Epiphanes; and R. Obadiah interprets some passages in it of the Grecians of those times; but it rather seems to have been written by David on account of some troubles of his, out of which he was delivered; and refers either to the times of Saul, and the persecutions he endured from him, particularly when he was beset round about by him and his men in the wilderness of Maon, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26. to which he may have respect ver. 3. The inscription of the psalm in the Syriac version is, "the progress of the new people returning to the Christian worship, as a child to understanding: and as to the letter, it was said when Saul "stayed at the door of the cave where David lay hid "with his men;" see 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. But since mention is made of Jerusalem, ver. 19. where the psalmist

would praise the Lord for his deliverance, which as yet was not in his hands nor in the hands of the Israelites, but of the Jebusites; some have thought it was written on account of the conspiracy of Absalom against him, and who, hearing that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, said the words related in ver. 11. it is very probable it was composed after the death of Saul, and when he was settled in the kingdom, as Jarchi observes, and was delivered out of the hands of all his enemies; and very likely much about the same time as the eighteenth psalm was, which begins in the same manner, and has some expressions in it like to what are in this. David was a type of Christ, and some apply this psalm to him.

Ver. 1. *I love the Lord, &c.*] As the Messiah, David's antitype, did; of which he gave the fullest proof by his obedience to his will; and as David, the man

^a So Junius & Tremellius.

^b Moreh Nevochin, par. 2. c. 24. p. 256.

^c Silet rex ipsa silentium, Virgil. Migrantesque domos animarum intrasse silentium. Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 12. v. 33.

after God's own heart, did, and as every good man does; and the Lord is to be loved for the perfections of his nature, and especially as they are displayed in Christ, and salvation by him; and for his works of creation, providence, and grace, and particularly for his great love shewn in redemption, regeneration, and other blessings of grace, as well as for what follows. *Because he hath heard my voice and my supplication;* in the original text the words lie thus, *I love, because the Lord hath heard, or will hear;* and so read the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so the Targum; and may be rendered, *I love that the Lord should hear me,* so the Syriac and Arabic versions; nothing is more desirable and grateful to good men than that the Lord should hear them; but Kimchi and others transpose the words as we do, which gives a reason why he loved the Lord; because he heard his prayers, which were vocal, put up in a time of distress, in an humble and submissive manner, under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplication, in the name of Christ, for his righteousness-sake, and through his mediation; and such supplications are heard and answered by the Lord, sooner or later; and which engages the love of his people to him; see Psal. xxxiv. 1—6. It may be applied to Christ, who offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and was always heard; and for which he thanked his father and loved him, Heb. v. 7. John xi. 41, 42.

Ver. 2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, &c.*] Not as hard of hearing, for his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear; he is quick of hearing, and his ears are always open to the righteous; it rather denotes his readiness to hear; he hearkens and hears, he listens to what his people say, and hears them at once, and understands them, though ever so broken and confused; when their prayers are but like the chatterings of a crane or swallow, or only expressed in sighs and groans, and even without a voice; when nothing is articulately pronounced: moreover, this shews condescension in him; he bows his ear as a father to a child, he stoops as being above them, and inclines his ear to them. *Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live;* or *in my days*^d; in days of adversity and affliction, for help and relief; in days of prosperity, with thankfulness for favours received; every day I live, and several times a day: prayer should be constantly used; men should pray without ceasing always, and not faint; prayer is the first and last action of a spiritual life; it is the first thing a regenerate man does, *behold, he prays;* as soon as he is born again he prays, and continues praying all his days; and generally goes out of the world praying, as Stephen did, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;* and it is the Lord's hearing prayer that encourages his people to keep on praying, and which makes the work delightful to them. Christ was often at this work in life, and died praying, Luke vi. 12. and xxiii. 46.

Ver. 3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, &c.*] Christ, of whom David was a type, was a man of sorrows all his days; and in the garden he was

surrounded with sorrow; exceeding sorrowful even unto death, in a view of the sins of his people imputed to him, and under a sense of wrath for them, he was about to bear; and his agonies in the article of death were very grievous, he died the painful and accursed death of the cross. This was true of David, when Saul and his men compassed him on every side, threatening to cut him off in a moment; when he despaired of life, and had the sentence of death in himself, and saw no way to escape; and such a case is that of the people of God, or they may be said to be compassed about with the sorrows of death, when through a slavish fear of it they are all their life-time subject to bondage; and especially when under dreadful apprehensions of eternal death. *And the pains of hell gat hold upon me;* or *found me*^e; overtook him, and seized upon him; meaning either the horrors of a guilty conscience under a sense of sin, without a view of pardon; which is as it were a hell in the conscience, and like the pains and torments of it: or *the pains of the grave*^f; not that there are any pains felt there, the body being destitute of life, and senseless; but such sorrows or troubles are meant which threaten to bring down to the grave, which was the case of Jacob on the loss of his children, Gen. xxxvii. 35. and xlii. 38. This applied to Christ may design the wrath of God and curse of the law, which he endured in the room and stead of his people, as their surety; and which were equivalent to the pains of the damned in hell; or it may refer to his being laid in the grave, in a strait and narrow place, as the word^g signifies; where he lay bound in grave-clothes, till he was loosed from the pains and cords of death, it being not possible he should be held by them, Acts ii. 24. see the notes on Psal. xviii. 4, 5. *I found trouble and sorrow;* without seeking for them; they seized and took hold of him, on David, and his antitype, when in the above circumstances; and often do the saints find trouble and sorrow from a body of sin and death, from the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and afflictive providences. Aben Ezra refers the one to the body, the other to the soul.

Ver. 4. *Then called I upon the name of the Lord, &c.*] Upon the Lord himself in prayer for speedy deliverance; or *in the name of the Lord*^h, in the name of the Messiah, the only Mediator between God and man; saying, as follows, and which word may be supplied, *O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul;* from these sorrows and pains, from these afflictions and distresses, from death and the grave, and from wrath, and a sense of it, and fears about it.

Ver. 5. *Gracious is the Lord, &c.*] So the psalmist found him, calling upon him; so he is in Christ, the author and giver of all grace, to help in time of need. *And righteous;* faithful to his promises, just in every dispensation of his providence, even in afflictive ones; righteous in punishing the enemies of his people, and in saving, justifying, and pardoning them for Christ's sake. *Yea, our God is merciful;* compassionate, tender-hearted, full of bowels of pity, as a father to his

^d בְּיָמַי in diebus meis, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^e מְצָרָתִי invencaut me, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^f אֶפְרָסִי sepulchri, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^g מְצָרָתִי angustie, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^h יְהוָה in nomine Domini, Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus.

child; and sympathizes with his people under all their afflictions, and saves them out of them; see *Psal. lxxxvi. 5, 15.*

Ver. 6. The Lord preserveth the simple, &c.] Such as have but a small degree of understanding, either in things natural or spiritual, in comparison of others; babes, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, so in the Talmud¹; see *Matt. xi. 25.* Such who are sensible of their lack of wisdom, and what they have they do not lean unto or trust in, but being sensible of their weakness commit themselves to the Lord; they are sincere and upright, harmless and inoffensive, artless and incautious, and so easily imposed upon by designing men; but the Lord preserves them, as from sin, from a total and final falling away by it, so from gross errors and heresies; he preserves them from the snares and pollutions of the world, and from the temptations of Satan, so as not to be overcome with them; he preserves them by his spirit, power, and grace, safe to his kingdom and glory. *I was brought low, and he helped me;* the psalmist returns to his own case, and gives an instance of the divine goodness in himself; he had been brought low by affliction of body, by distress of enemies, through want of the necessities and conveniences of life; he had been brought low as to spiritual things, through the weakness of grace, the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; but the Lord helped him to bear up under all this; he put underneath his everlasting arms, and upheld him with the right hand of his righteousness; he helped him out of his low estate, and delivered him out of all his troubles, when none else could; when things were at the greatest extremity, and he in the utmost distress, just ready to go down into silence and dwell there, *Psal. xciv. 17.* The Targum is, "he looked upon me to re-deem me."

Ver. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, &c.] To a quiet and tranquil state after much distress²; a soliloquy, an address to his own soul to return to God his resting-place, as Kimchi; or to Christ, whose rest is glorious, and which lies in a cessation from a man's own works; not from doing them, but from depending on them, or from labouring for life by them; in a deliverance from the bondage of the law, its curse and condemnation, and from the dominion and tyranny of sin, and from the distressing guilt of it on the conscience; in spiritual peace and joy, arising from the application of the blood of Christ, and from a view of his righteousness and justification by it, and of his sacrifice, and of the expiation of sin by that; which is enjoyed in the ways and ordinances of Christ, and oftentimes amidst afflictions and tribulations: this is sometimes broke in upon and interrupted, through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; but may be returned to again, as Noah's dove returned to the ark when it could find rest nowhere else; as the believer can find none but in Christ, and therefore after he has wandered from him he re-

turns to him again, encouraged by the following reason. *For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;* in times past, even in an eternity past, having loved him with an everlasting love, chosen him in Christ, made a covenant with him in him, blessed him with all spiritual blessings in him, and made unto him exceeding great and precious promises; provided a Redeemer and Saviour for him, whom he had made known unto him, having enlightened, quickened, and converted him; and had laid up good things for him to come, and had done many great things for him already; all which might serve to encourage his faith and hope in him. The Targum is, "because the Word of the Lord hath rendered good unto me."

Ver. 8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, &c.] From a corporeal death, when his life was in danger, surrounded by Saul's army, in the hand of the Philistines at Gath, and when his son rebelled against him; and from a spiritual death in regeneration, which is a passing from death to life; and from an eternal death, the just wages of sin: and not only so, but even *mine eyes from tears;* they were sometimes full of, and sued in great plenty; he watered his couch with them; and especially when absent from the worship of the Lord, and without his presence, which his enemies sometimes reproached him with; and particularly when he fled before his rebellious son, and at the death of him; but God dried up all his tears; see *Psal. vi. 6.* and *xlii. 3.* *2 Sam. xv. 30.* and *xviii. 33.* Many are the occasions of the saints weeping as they pass through the valley of *Baca*, but God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. *And my feet from falling through a push¹,* by an enemy, so as to fall; the people of God are liable to falling, both into sin and into calamity; it is the Lord only that keeps them; and which they may expect from their interest in his love, covenant, and promises, and from their being in the hands of Christ; see *Psal. lvi. 13.*

Ver. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.] As in the sight of the omniscient God, according to his word and will, and in such manner as to please him. So Enoch's walking with God is by the apostle explained of pleasing him; compare *Gen. v. 22.* with *Heb. xi. 5.* and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, *I will please the Lord;* or, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, *that I may please the Lord;* be grateful to him; or walk gratefully and acceptably before him, sensible of the obligations I am under to him: and this, in the strength of grace, he determined to do *in the land of the living;* in this world, where men live, and as long as he lived in it; or in the church of God, among the living in Jerusalem, with whom he resolved to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. The land of Canaan is thought by Jarchi and Kimchi to be meant; and this being a type of heaven, the meaning may be, that he should walk and dwell where living and glorified saints are to all eternity; and so it is an expression of his faith of future glory and happiness, agreeably to what follows.

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2.

² Remigat animus nunc denuo mihi, Plauti Epidicus, Act. 4. Sc. 1. v. 42.

¹ מְרִי ab impulsu, Muntanus; ab impulsione, Cocceius, Gejcrus, Michaelis.

Ver. 10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken, &c.*] Here the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, begin a new psalm, but without any foundation in the original; nor is it countenanced by the Targum; and is manifestly against the connexion with the preceding verses. David expresses his faith in relation to what goes before, though the particulars of it are not mentioned, but are left to be supplied from thence: he not only believed there was a God, but that this God was gracious and merciful, and that he was his God; who had made a covenant with him, ordered in all things, and sure: he believed the promises of it; and particularly the grand promise of it respecting Christ, and salvation by him: he believed the Lord would deliver him out of all his troubles; that he should walk before him, and see his goodness in the land of the living; he believed a future state of happiness he should hereafter enjoy. The Apostle Paul quotes this passage, and applies it to himself and other Gospel ministers; declaring their faith in the resurrection of the dead, and an eternal weight of glory they were looking for, 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14. and therefore spake so freely about these things. Faith gives boldness and freedom of speech to men; which believers use with God in prayer, in the believing views of him, as their God in Christ; and of Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: it gives ministers boldness and freedom to speak out plainly, constantly, and boldly, the Gospel of Christ; it gives the same to private Christians, to speak freely one to another of their gracious experiences, and to declare publicly to the churches of Christ what God has done for their souls. *I was greatly afflicted*; when he believed and spake, and yet nevertheless did; he might be afflicted, reproached, and persecuted for his faith, and his speaking of it; particularly as it respected his coming to the crown and kingdom of Israel. And it is no unusual thing for saints to be persecuted for their faith, and profession of it; and yet none of these things move them from it; their faith remains, and is much more precious than gold that perisheth; and they hold fast the profession of it. Many and great afflictions are the common lot of believers.

Ver. 11. *I said in my haste, all men are liars.*] The sin of lying is common to man; there is a natural proneness and propensity to it: men go astray from the womb, speaking lies; yet such who have received the grace of God put it off with the rest of the deeds of the old man, and are children that will not lie. Wherefore, though the greater part of mankind might deserve this character, yet all and every individual of them did not. However degenerate the age was in which David lived, and the faithful among men were few; yet there were some to whom this imputation did not belong; and therefore, on cool reflection, he owned it was said *in haste*; not with thought and deliberation, but rashly and precipitately, unadvisedly, in a passion, and under a temptation, and when off of his guard; and which he acknowledged and repented of. The Targum is, "I said in my flight;" when he made haste and fled from Saul, whom he

might call a liar and dissembler, pretending respect to him when he had none; and also his courtiers; nay, even Samuel himself, who had anointed him, and assured him he should be king; and yet now he thought he had deceived him, and he should perish by the hand of Saul, and never come to the kingdom, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1. or when he fled from his son Absalom, whom he might call a liar, who had deceived him with the pretence of a vow; and also Ahithophel and others, who proved treacherous and unfaithful to him. Some take the words in a quite different sense, as an instance of his great faith; that when he was so greatly afflicted, and obliged to fly, yet declared that every man that should say he should not come to the kingdom was a liar; so Kimchi: and others think his meaning is, that every man is a liar in comparison of God, who is true and faithful to his promises, and not a man, that he should lie. Men of both high and low degree are a lie and vanity, and not to be trusted and depended upon; but a man may safely put confidence in the Lord; to this agrees Rom. iii. 4. where the apostle seems to have some respect to this passage.

Ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord? &c.*] He considers the Lord only as the author and giver of his mercies, and has nothing to say of his own merits, nor of other persons, who might be instruments of good to him; but is for giving all the glory to God: not as though he could render any thing proportionable or equivalent to what he had received, but as having a grateful sense of mercies, and willing to express it; though at a loss, in a great measure, in what manner to do it, and therefore puts this question to himself and others: for *all his benefits towards me*; or, *all his benefits are upon me*^a. This being a clause of itself; and shews what moved him to put the question he did; a sense of divine favours was impressed upon him, a load of benefits lay on him, and he wanted to ease himself in expressions of gratitude. These benefits were the blessings of nature and providence; his being, and the preservation of it, food, raiment, &c. and the blessings of grace; spiritual blessings, all things pertaining to life and godliness, sanctification, adoption, pardon, justification, and eternal life. These may well be called *benefits*, since they spring entirely from the free grace of God; and they were many, more than could be counted and reckoned up, and set in order before the Lord; and yet he was desirous that none of them might be forgotten, but that praise might be rendered to the Lord for them all.

Ver. 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, &c.*] Or *salvations*^a; not the eucharistic cup, or the cup in the Lord's supper, which the apostle calls *the cup of blessing*, 1 Cor. x. 16. though some so think, and that the psalmist personates the saints under the Gospel dispensation; nor the cup of afflictions or martyrdom for the sake of Christ; being willing, under a sense of mercies received, to bear or suffer any thing for his sake he should call him to; as knowing it would be a token to him of salvation, and work for his good: but rather an offering of praise for temporal salvation, and for spiritual and eternal salvation; in allusion to a master of a

^a So Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^a יְשׁוּעוֹת salutum, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; salvationum, Musculus.

family, who, at the close of a feast or meal, used to take up a cup in his hands, and give thanks; see Matt. xxvi. 27. *And call upon the name of the Lord*; invocation of the name of the Lord takes in all worship and service of him, public and private, external and internal; and particularly prayer, which is calling upon the Lord in the name of Christ, with faith and fervency, in sincerity and truth: and the sense of the psalmist is, that he would not only give thanks for the mercies he had received, but continue to pray to God for more; and this was all the return he was capable of making.

Ver. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people.*] Make good the resolutions and determinations he made in the strength of divine grace, in the time of his troubles; that should the Lord deliver him out of them, he would give him all the glory, and offer thanksgiving and praise to him; and now being delivered, this he declares he would do, in a public way, before all the people of God, assembled in the house of the Lord, as witnesses of it; see Psal. lxxvi. 13, 14.

Ver. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*] The Lord has his saints or sanctified ones, who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father from all eternity; who are sanctified in Christ, their head and representative; who are sanctified by his blood, shed for the expiation of their sins; who are sanctified by his spirit and grace, are called with an holy calling, and have principles of holiness wrought in them, and live holy lives and conversations. The word * used also signifies one that has received kindness and favour, and shews it: saints are such, who have received spiritual blessings from the Lord, to whom he has been kind and bountiful; and these are merciful and beneficent to others. Now these die as well as others, though holy and righteous, and though Christ has died for them; he has indeed delivered them from death as a punishment, he has abolished it in this sense; and has freed them from the curse and sting of it, but not from that itself; because it is for their good, and it is precious in the sight of the Lord. Saints are precious to him, living and dying; there is something in their death, or that attends it, that is delightful to him, and of high esteem with him; as when they are in the full exercise of grace at such a season; when they die in faith, and have hope in their death; and their love is drawn out unto him, and they long to be with him: besides, they die in the Lord, and sleep in Jesus, in union with him; with whom he is well-pleased, and all in him; and they die unto him, according to his will, and are resigned unto it; and so glorify him in death, as well as in life. It is the time of their ingathering to him; at death he comes into his garden, and gathers his flowers, and smells a sweet savour in them; their very dust is precious to him, which he takes care of and raises up at the last day. The commonly received sense of the words is, that the saints are so dear to the Lord, their lives are so much set by with him, and their blood so precious to him, that he will not easily suffer their lives to be taken away, or their blood to be spilled; and whenever it is,

he will, sooner or later, severely revenge it; see Sam. xxvi. 21, 24. Psal. lxxii. 14. And to this sense is the Targum, "precious before the Lord is death sent to" (or inflicted on) his saints;" that is, by men. The words will bear to be rendered, *precious in the sight of the Lord is that death, or death itself, for his saints*; that very remarkable and observable death, even the death of his son, which was not only for the good of his saints, for their redemption, salvation, justification, pardon, and eternal life; but in their room and stead; and which was very acceptable unto God, of high esteem with him, of a sweet-smelling savour to him: not that he took pleasure in it, simply considered; for he that hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, even of a sinner, could have none in the death of his son; but as hereby his justice was satisfied, his law fulfilled, the salvation of his people procured, and his covenant, counsels, purposes, and decrees, accomplished. הַמָּוֹת has a double ה in it; one at the beginning, and the other at the end of the word; which is very emphatical, and so may point at something very remarkable; and what more so than the death of Christ? and ל is sometimes used for substitution, and signifies *for, instead, or in the room of*, another; see Exod. iv. 16. and v. 12. Numb. x. 31. and xiv. 34. Prov. xxi. 18.

Ver. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, &c.*] Not merely by creation, and as obliged by providential favours; but by the grace of God, which made him a willing one: and he was so, not nominally only, but in reality; not as those who say Lord, Lord, but do not the will of God; whereas he served the Lord cheerfully and willingly, in righteousness and true holiness: and this he repeats for the confirmation of it, and to shew his heartiness in the Lord's service, and his zealous attachment to him; and which he mentions, not as though he thought his service meritorious of any thing at the hand of God; but that his being in this character was an obligation upon him to serve the Lord, and him only, and might expect his protection in it. *And the son of thy handmaid*: his mother was also a servant of the Lord; and had trained him up in his infancy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; so that he was inured to it betimes, and could not easily depart from it. *Thou hast loosed my bonds*; the bonds of affliction and death in which he was held; these were loosed, being delivered from them, ver. 3, 8. and the bonds of sin, and Satan, and the law, in whose service he had been, which was no other than a bondage; but now was freed from the servitude and dominion of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and the bondage of the law; and therefore, though a servant, yet the Lord's free man.

Ver. 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, &c.*] For deliverance from afflictions and death; for loosing his bonds, in every sense; for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; see Rom. vi. 17. Such sacrifices are according to the will of God; are well-pleasing to him, when offered up through Christ, and in faith, and are a glorifying of him. These are more acceptable than all ceremonial sacrifices; and therefore the psalmist determined to offer this, and not them. *And*

* חסרין quos ipse benignitate prosequitur, Junius & Tremellius; so Musculus.

will call upon the name of the Lord; see the note on ver. 13.

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord, &c.*] See the note on ver. 14. And the Targum here, as there, paraphrases the latter clause, *now in the presence of all his people*, thus; "I will then declare his signs (or "wonders" to all his people;" the marvellous things he had done for him.

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, &c.*] This is added by way of explanation of the former verse, what he meant by *the presence of all his people*; the assembly of the saints met together in the house of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle, in the courts of it,

where the people got together to worship God. *In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem*; the Lord's house or tabernacle; for as yet the temple was not built, and the courts of it were in the midst of the city of Jerusalem. And this shews, as some interpreters have observed, that this psalm must have been written after David came to the kingdom, and had got this city into his hands, whither he brought the ark of the Lord. The whole signifies that he would praise the Lord publicly, as well as privately; and he concludes the psalm thus, *praise ye the Lord*: calling upon the Lord's people, in his house and courts, to join with him in this work of praise.

P S A L M CXVII.

THE inscription of this psalm in the Syriac version is, "it is said concerning those of the house (or the "companions) of Ananias, when they came out of the "furnace; likewise it foretels the calling of the Gentiles by the declaration of the Gospel." Which last is right; for the apostle has quoted it, to prove the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy, Rom. xv. 9, 11. Aben Ezra thinks it concerns only the nations subdued by David; but he quotes R. Moseh, as of opinion that all nations are comprehended: and Kimchi affirms that the psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah; and supposes there is a mystery in its consisting of two verses only; and that it intimates that in those times there will be two people that will serve the Lord; Israel, with the law; and the Gentiles, with the seven precepts of Noah. It certainly refers to Gospel times, and to the conversion of the Gentiles; and when Jews and Gentiles should make one people, and be partakers of the same privileges and blessings; receive the same doctrines, submit to the same ordinances, and be under the same law, to Christ their King.

Ver. 1. *O praise the Lord, all ye nations, &c.*] The Lord having chosen, and Christ having redeemed, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and the Gospel being sent and preached to all nations, and some of each being called and converted by the Spirit of God; they are excited to praise the Lord, Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit, for their several acts of divine grace and kindness towards them, in choosing, redeeming, and sanctifying them; and in favouring them with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and with his gracious presence in them; and in supplying them with his grace, and giving them a right unto and meetness for eternal glory; for all which praise should be given to the Lord. *Praise him, all ye people; ye people of God in the several nations of the world; not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also: the same thing is repeated in different words, for the greater certainty and confirmation of it; that this should be the work and exercise of the Gentiles in Gospel times, and ex-*

presses eagerness and vehemence to stir them up to it. A different word is here used for *praise* than in the former clause; and which is more frequently used in the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic languages; and signifies the celebration of the praises of God with a high voice.

Ver. 2. *For his merciful kindness is great towards us, &c.*] Not us Israelites only, of whom David was, but Gentiles also; or otherwise there would be no force in the reason why all people and nations should praise the Lord: but it respects the time when these should become one people, partaking of the same grace, blessings, promises, and privileges; in which the grace, mercy, and loving-kindness of God, greatly appeared; *it prevailed over us*[†], as it may be rendered: the word is used of the prevailing of the waters of the flood over the earth, Gen. vii. 18. and so may denote the exuberancy of the grace of God, of the abounding and superabounding of it. There is an abundance of it in the heart of God, in his covenant, and in his son; and which is displayed in redemption by him; in the forgiveness of sin; and in the conversion of sinners, and their everlasting salvation: particularly there has been an inundation or deluge of it in the Gentile world, where it has flowed and overflowed; where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; and therefore the Lord is to be praised. And another reason follows, *and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever*; the faithfulness of God to his promises, not only made to the Jewish fathers concerning the Messiah, and redemption by him; but to the Gentiles, and concerning the blessing of all nations in the promised seed: and the faithfulness and truth of God, with respect to any of his promises, never fails; nor will his word of truth, the Gospel; nor Jesus Christ, who is the truth, and the truth of God, the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; see Psal. xliii. 3. for he is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. *Praise ye the Lord*; for his superabounding grace, and eternal truth; even all the people of God, of all nations, Jews and Gentiles.

[†] רבנן exsuperavit, Vatablus; invaluit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; exuberavit, Cocceius.

P S A L M CXVIII.

KIMCHI says their Rabbins are divided about this psalm. Some understand it of David; others of the Messiah: but, with us Christians, there ought to be no doubt of its belonging to the Messiah; since our Lord has quoted a passage out of it, and applied it to himself, ver. 22, 23. see Matt. xxi. 42. and so has the Apostle Peter, Acts iv. 11. Nor did the Jews of those times object thereunto, which doubtless they would have done, had the psalm respected any other but the Messiah; yea, the common people that attended Christ when he entered into Jerusalem, and the children in the temple, took their *hosannah* from hence, ver. 25, 26. see Matt. xxi. 9, 15. It is generally thought to be written by David, after he was established in the kingdom, and had brought the ark of the Lord into the city. It concludes the great *Hallel*, or hymn sung at the Jewish festivals; particularly at the feasts of tabernacle and the passover.

Ver. 1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, &c.*] For all his mercies, temporal and spiritual; as all should, who are partakers of them: this should be done always, and for all things, in the name of Christ; it is but reasonable service. For he is good; in himself, and to others; is essentially and diffusively good; the fountain of all goodness, and the author of all good things. *Because his mercy endureth for ever*; in his own heart, and in his covenant; his grace and loving-kindness displayed in Christ; the blessings and promises of it, which are the sure mercies of David: these always remain, notwithstanding the unworthiness of his people; and though he hides his face sometimes from them, and chastises them; see Psal. cvii. 1. and cviii. 1. the goodness and mercy of God were seen in setting David on the throne; and abundantly more in giving Christ to be the Saviour of his people; for both which thanks should be given, and the kindness acknowledged, by the persons mentioned in the following verses.

Ver. 2. *Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let such who have had an experience of it acknowledge and declare it to others; not only believe in it with their hearts, and privately give thanks for it, but with the mouth make confession of it to the glory of divine grace; not only literal Israel, whom the Lord brought out of Egypt, led and fed in the wilderness, and settled in the land of Canaan; and to whom the law and the services of God, the covenants and promises, word and ordinances, belonged; and who now were so happy under the government of such a king as David; but also the spiritual Israel of God, the whole Israel of God, Jews and Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation; the Israel whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit effectually calls and sanctifies; such who are Israelites indeed, who have been encouraged to hope in the Lord, and in his mercy, and are made partakers of it; these should speak of the grace and mercy of God, and the continuance of it, for the encouragement of others.

Ver. 3. *Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] The priests and Levites that blessed the people, and taught them the knowledge of divine things; but not these literally, at least not only these, since the priesthood of Aaron is changed, and the law of it abrogated, and all believers are now priests unto God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; and particularly the sacrifice of praise for his grace and mercy, the perpetuity of which they should publish and proclaim all abroad.

Ver. 4. *Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*] Not the proselytes to the Jewish religion only, but all that feared the Lord among all people, as Aben Ezra observes; such as fear the Lord and his goodness, and have had an experience of his grace and mercy, which has caused them to fear him; and to whom the mercy of God is great, and on whom it is from everlasting to everlasting; and therefore should speak well of it, and set their seal to it, that it abides for ever; see Psal. ciii. 11, 17.

Ver. 5. *I called upon the Lord in distress, &c.*] Or out of that strait^a; when David was encompassed by Saul and his men, or when at the court of Achish, or when his own people talked of stoning him. As this may respect the Messiah, it may design his distresses in the garden, when surrounded with sorrow, and being in an agony prayed the more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood; and may be applied to his members, as it often is their case to be in distress, straits and difficulties, through outward afflictions and pressures, inward corruptions, temptations, and desertions, and through the low exercise of grace; when they are as it were imprisoned, and so straitened they cannot come forth in the free exercise of it; at all which seasons prayer is necessary; and nothing is more proper than to call upon the Lord, which is both duty and privilege, and often attended with success, as follows. *The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place*; as he did David, when he delivered him from all his troubles, placed him on the throne of Israel, and gave him rest from all his enemies round about; see Psal. xxxi. 8. And so he did the Messiah, when he raised him from the dead, received him to heaven, where he sits at the right of God in human nature: this is a large place indeed, large enough for the innumerable company of angels, and for all the saints, for whom everlasting habitations and mansions of bliss are preparing by him; and which is the glorious liberty of the children of God; see Psal. xviii. 19. and these also, upon calling on the Lord in distress, are heard and answered, and brought into large places, where they walk at liberty; so at first conversion, when distressed about their souls, and cry for help, they are answered and brought out of the pit, and have their feet set upon a rock and their goings established; and when at other times their grace is drawn forth into exercise, their souls are enlarged in duty, are favoured with large

^a מַצְרָה אֶת מִן הַמַּצְרָה, Junius & Tremellius; ex illa angustia, Michaelis.

views of the love of God, with an increase of spiritual fight, knowledge, peace, and joy; and are delivered from their troubles, and out of the hands of their enemies. Or it may be rendered, *the Lord answered me largely*; as he did Solomon, when he gave him more than he asked for; and as he does his people, when he gives them a sufficiency, and an abundance of his grace, and even not only above their deserts, but above their thoughts and expectations; see Ephes. iii. 20.

Ver. 6. *The Lord is on my side, &c.*] Or *for me*; he was on the side of David, hence all his prosperity and victories, the wonderful things done by him, his exaltation to the throne, and the establishment of it; and so he was on the side of Christ, he was near unto him, at his right hand, to guide, direct, and assist him as man; and he is likewise on the side of his people, to fight their battles for them, to support them under all their afflictions, to supply all their wants, to deliver them from all evil, to carry on the work of grace in their souls, and to bring them to glory. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord is for my help." *I will not fear: what can man do unto me?* David did not; he was not afraid of ten thousands of men, nor, of a whole army that encamped against him, God being for him, the strength of his life, and his salvation, Psal. iii. 6. and xxvii. 1, 3. nor did the Messiah; he was not afraid of Herod when he was told he would kill him; nor of the high-priests, Scribes and Pharisees, though he knew he should fall into their hands, and they would deliver him to the Gentiles, to be scourged and crucified; nor of Judas and his band of men, who came to take him; nor of Pilate his judge, who had no power against him but what was given him. Nor have the saints any reason to fear what man can do unto them, when grace is in exercise; for what is man to God, who is but flesh, and that flesh grass? Nor can he do any thing without a divine permission; is often frustrated in his attempt; and what he is suffered to do is overruled for good; and the utmost he can do is to kill the body; he cannot destroy the soul, or hinder the happiness of it; see Psal. lvi. 4, 9, 11.

Ver. 7. *The Lord taketh my part with them that help me, &c.*] With the four hundred men that were with David, and stood by him in his troubles, 1 Sam. xxii. 2. see Psal. liv. 4. and with those who ministered unto Christ as man, Luke viii. 3. Or, *the Lord is for me, with or among my helpers*; he is the principal helper, he is one for all; he is in the room and stead of other helpers; having him, there is no need of any other: the Lord is the only helper of his people, vain is the help of man; he helps them out of all their troubles and difficulties, in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty; he helps them to all their mercies temporal and spiritual, to grace here, and glory hereafter. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord is to help me." *Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me; see vengeance on them, as the Targum; which was desired by David, by the Messiah, and by the saints; not for the sake of that itself, but for the glory of divine justice. David saw this, Psal.*

liv. 7. so will the Messiah, when all his enemies, that will not have him to reign over them, will be slain before him; and so will the people of God, when antichrist is destroyed.

Ver. 8. *It is better to trust in the Lord, &c.*] This, with what follows in the next verse, is the conclusion from the above premises and experience; it is good to trust in the Lord; such enjoy peace, are in safety, shall not want any good thing, nor ever be ashamed and confounded: the Targum is, "it is better to trust in the Word of the Lord." *Thantoput confidence in man*; it is not good to put confidence in man at all; it is trusting to a broken staff, to a mere shadow, which can yield no support or relief: it is best to trust in the Lord; he is able to help, as well as willing; he is faithful to his word, and unchangeable in his promises; whereas man, though he may have a will to help, oftentimes has it not in his power; and when it is in his power, and has promised it, he disappoints, being changeable or unfaithful. Wherefore trust not in man, but in the Lord; yea, cursed is the man that trusts in man; see Jer. xvii. 5.

Ver. 9. *It is better to trust in the Lord, &c.*] The Targum is, "in the Word of the Lord." This is repeated for the sake of what follows: *than to put confidence in princes*; who have greater ability to help, and whose honour should engage them to keep their word; and yet it is better to trust in the Lord than in them; see Psal. cxlvi. 3. Two different words being used in this and the preceding verse for trust and confidence, Jarchi has observed, that the one signifies a lesser, the other a stronger confidence; as if the sense was this, It is better lightly to trust in the Lord than to put the strongest confidence in men and princes. But the observation is scarcely solid enough.

Ver. 10. *All nations compassed me about, &c.*] Not all the nations of the world, but all the neighbouring nations about Judea; as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, and Syrians; and these not all at one time, but sometimes one, and sometimes another, whom David fought with and subdued: and these, applied to Christ, design Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel; who were gathered together against him, to do what God had determined should be done, Acts vi. 27, 28. see Psal. xxii. 12, 16. And this is sometimes the case of the church and people of God: at the first setting up of the interest of Christ, the whole world was against it; and in such circumstances was the church of Christ, when the whole world wondered after the beast, the Romish antichrist; as it will be when the kings of the earth and of the whole world will be gathered to the battle at Armageddon; and also when the Gog and Magog army shall compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city; see Rev. xiii. 3. and xvi. 14. and xx. 8, 9. and so Jarchi interprets this of Gog and Magog. Yea, it is applicable to particular believers, who are attacked by Satan, the god of this world; and who are hated and persecuted by the men of it in general; and who are beset on all hands, at times, with the tempta-

* במרחב in latitudine, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

* לי pro me, Musculus, Michaelis.

* לי בעורי לי pro me est cum iis qui auxiliantur mihi, Vatablus; so Cocceius, Gejerus.

tions of the devil, and the corruptions of their own hearts, and the snares of the world; that it is as if all nations compassed them about. *But in the name of the Lord will I destroy them*; that is, calling upon the name of the Lord; as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and others did besides David: or trusting in the name of the Lord; and so the Targum, “in the name of the Word of “the Lord I trusted, therefore will I cut them off.” Or, going forth in the name and strength of the Lord, as David did against Goliath; and so against all nations that gathered together against him, whose armies he vanquished and destroyed, and made the nations tributary to him. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, his antitype, as Mediator stood in the strength and in the majesty of the name of the Lord, calling upon him to glorify him; and, trusting in his help and power, he attacked all his and our enemies, and obtained an entire victory over them, to the utter demolition of them; sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell. The word^u used has the signification of concision or circumcision; and may have a peculiar regard to the Jews, who boasted of their circumcision, and were the implacable enemies of Christ; and who were destroyed by him, when wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

Ver. 11. *They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about, &c.*] Which is repeated not only for the confirmation of it, but to denote the frequency and fury of their attacks, and their obstinate persisting therein. *But in the name of the Lord I will destroy them*; which also is repeated to shew the strength of his faith, and the continuance of it, notwithstanding his numerous enemies, and their violent efforts against him.

Ver. 12. *They compassed me about like bees, &c.*] In great numbers^v; as a swarm of bees, which, being irritated and provoked, will fly upon persons in a body, and with great fury; to which the Amorites and the Assyrian army were compared, Deut. i. 44. Isa. vii. 18. They will attack horses and kill them, as Aristotle^w says; and places besieged have been delivered by throwing out hives of bees among the besiegers^x; and yet as they are feeble creatures, so by striking they lose their sting; and either die very quickly, or however become useless. All which denotes the numbers of the enemies of David and of Christ, and of his church and people, and the wrath and fury of them against them, as well as their fruitless and unsuccessful attempts upon them; for though they rage, what they contrive and endeavour to put in execution are vain things, and in the issue end in their own ruin and destruction. *They are quenched as the fire of thorns*; which make a blaze, a noise, for a while; but are soon consumed, and leave only a few ashes behind. Wicked men are often compared to thorns, they being like them, unfruitful in themselves, unprofitable to others, hurtful to the saints, and whose end is to be burnt; and whose destruction is certain and sudden, and easily effected as the burning of thorns; see Psal. lvi. 9. Eccl. vii. 6. The Targum renders it, “they burned as fire among thorns;”

which is easily kindled and soon quenched: and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as if it was expressive of their wrath and fury, which was soon over; which agrees with what follows: *for; or but, or verily^z, in the name of the Lord I will destroy them*: see the notes on ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 13. *Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall, &c.*] Or *pushing, thou hast pushed me^a, that I might fall*: an apostrophe to some particular enemy, as Saul was to David; who thrust sore at him to take away his life, by casting a javelin at him; speaking to his servants to kill him; sending messengers to watch his house and slay him, and by pursuing him from place to place. And such an one was Judas to Christ, who lifted up his heel against him, and betrayed him into the hands of his enemies; or the devil in him, and by him; and who thrust sore at Christ by others; by Herod in his infancy, who sought to take away his life; and by the Scribes and Pharisees, who attempted it in different ways, and at last got him nailed to the cross; as well as Satan thrust sore at him, by his temptations in the wilderness, and when in his agonies in the garden, and when on the cross: and so the same enemy thrusts sore at the members of Christ, to cause them to fall from him, and the steadfastness of their faith in him to fail; that they may fall into temptation, and by it into sin, and that finally and totally, and into hell itself, could he obtain it. *But the Lord helped me*; helped David, so that he perished not by the hand of Saul, he sometimes feared he should; helped Christ, as man and Mediator, in the day of salvation, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; and he helps his people against all their enemies; holds them with his right hand; helps them to fight against them; maintains his own work of grace in them, and keeps them from a total and final falling away, by his power unto salvation. The Targum is, “the Word of the Lord helped me.”

Ver. 14. *The Lord is my strength and song, &c.*] It being in the name of the Lord the enemies of the psalmist were destroyed; and having obtained help of him when sore thrust at, he gives him all the glory, and ascribes nothing to himself. It was the Lord that strengthened him, helped him, and gave him the victory. The Lord is the author and giver of strength, natural and spiritual; he is the *strength* of the hearts and lives of his people, and of their salvation; and therefore is their *song*, the matter of it: they sing of his nature and perfections, of his works of providence and grace, of his righteousness and salvation, as follows: *and is become my salvation*; the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; which the psalmist saw his interest in, and was assured of, and therefore sung praise on that account; see Exod. xv. 2. Isa. xii. 2.

Ver. 15. *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous, &c.*] In all the dwellings of good men, throughout the land of Israel, was heard nothing but the voice of joy, on account of David's accession to the throne; the deliverance of him from a

^u מְחַלְחֵל concidebam eas, Piscator; concidam eos, Schmidt.

^v ἡνὶκα ἴσθια μιλίσσας αἶψα, Homer. Iliad. 2. v. 87. Vid. Virgil. Æneid. 12. v. 587.

^w Hist. Animal. l. g. c. 40.

^x Vid. Dieteric. Antiqu. Biblic. p. 478.

^z כִּי sed, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; certe utique, Polus;

quod certissime, Michaelis.

^a רָחַק רַחֵק רָחַק impellendo impulisti me, Paganius, Montanus,

Musculus, Michaelis; trudeudo trusisti me, Cocceius.

persecuting Saul, and of them from his mal-administration; and the victories David obtained over all his enemies: for, *when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice*, Prov. xxix. 2. And still much more occasion is there of joy, in the dwelling-places of the saints, though but cottages, and in the churches of God, the tabernacles of the most High, on account of the spiritual and eternal salvation Christ is the author of; which joy is inwardly felt in the heart, and outwardly expressed by one saint to another; and in vocal prayer to God, and in singing his praises; which may be done in the houses of the saints, as well as in the house of God. What this voice, or the righteous with their voice, expressed in their several dwelling-houses, is as follows; for the word *saying* may be supplied, and the words connected thus: *saying, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly*; or *acts powerfully*^b; in helping and assisting David, in protecting and defending him, in raising him to the throne, and in giving him rest from all his enemies; and so in supporting the Messiah, his antitype, as man and Mediator, in his work and under his sufferings; in raising him from the dead, and exalting him at his right hand; and which was done with his right hand, Acts ii. 33. and v. 31. Jarchi refers this joy here expressed to future times, the times of the Messiah: and in an ancient^c writing of the Jews the right hand of the Lord, three times mentioned in this and the following verse, is interpreted of the Messiah, the son of David.

Ver. 16. *The right hand of the Lord is exalted, &c.*] Lifted up, very eminent and conspicuous, easily to be observed in the instances before given, and become great and glorious in power; see Exod. xv. 6. The power of God is superior to all enemies; and is beyond conception and expression; and is able to do for his people above all they are able to ask or think. *The right hand of the Lord doth valiantly*; or *acts powerfully*. This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to shew how much the righteous were affected with it, and how desirous they were of glorifying of it; *the right hand of the Lord*, being three times mentioned, may have respect to the three divine Persons in the Godhead, whose right hand or power is the same: and as the right hand of the Father has done powerfully in the instances given, so the right hand of the Son has worked mightily in vanquishing all enemies, sin, Satan, death, and the world; in obtaining the salvation of his people, and in raising himself from the dead: and so the right hand of the Holy Spirit has wrought powerfully on Christ, on whom he rested as the Spirit of might, and through whom Christ offered himself to God, and by whom he was raised from the dead; and also in the conversion of sinners, and in helping, assisting, strengthening, and protecting the saints.

Ver. 17. *I shall not die, but live, &c.*] Not that he should never die, David knew he should; but that his present afflictions would not issue in death; or he should not die by the hands of his enemies, he sometimes feared he should; but now believed he should live, as he did, to a good old age: he knew he should live spiritually and eter-

nally, and not die a second death; and so may all true believers and members of Christ say. Yea, these words may be considered as the words of Christ; who, though he came into the world to die, and did die for the sins of his people; yet he knew he should not die before his time, nor should he continue long under the power of death; but should live again, and live for evermore, and not die; death should have no more dominion over him; see Psal. xvi. 10. Rom. vi. 9. *And declare the works of the Lord*; the wonderful appearances of God in a providential way, and all his marvellous works of grace; as David did, and as all the people of God more or less do; and which is the end of their living; not to eat and drink, and gratify their carnal senses, but to glorify God, by declaring what he has done for themselves and others. So the Messiah declared the name of God, his nature, perfections, mind and will, word and works, among his brethren in the great congregation, Psal. xxii. 22.

Ver. 18. *The Lord hath chastened me sore, &c.*] Or, *in chastening hath chastened me*^d. David was exercised with many afflictions; and though these were sore ones to the flesh, yet they were only the chastenings of a father, and were all in love and for his good; as are all the afflictions of God's people; for whom he loves he chastens. Indeed the chastisement of the Messiah was a proper punishment for sin, and so a sore one indeed; he being the surety of his people, on whom *the chastisement of their peace was laid*; that is, the punishment of their sin, Isa. liii. 5. *But he hath not given me over unto death*; as yet, or to the power of it, so as to continue under it. This is to be understood in the sense as before; see the note on ver. 17.

Ver. 19. *Open to me the gates of righteousness, &c.*] The doors of the sanctuary or tabernacle, so called, because none but righteous persons might enter in at them, or who were clean in a ceremonial sense; and because sacrifices of righteousness were here offered. The words are addressed to the porters, or Levites, that kept the doors of the tabernacle, to open them. The Targum is, "open to me the gates of the city of 'righteousness';" Jerusalem, so called Isa. i. 26. the gates of which were opened to David, when he took it from the Jebusites. An emblem of the church or city of God, the gates of which are opened to the righteous to enter into now; and of the New Jerusalem, and of the heavenly glory, into which the saints will have an abundant entrance hereafter; see Isa. xxvi. 1. 2. Rev. xxii. 14. Moreover, these may be the words of the Messiah, requiring the gates of heaven to be opened to him by his blood, he having obtained redemption for his people; see Psal. xxiv. 7, 8, 9, 10. *I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord*: at the gates of the tabernacle David entered, and praised the Lord for his deliverance and salvation, and for the many favours and honours bestowed on him; and in the church of God do the saints praise him, as they will do in heaven to all eternity; and where Christ, as man, is praising his divine Father, Psal. xx. 22, 25.

Ver. 20. *This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous*

^b חיל עשה agit strenue, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius.

^c Ray's Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 64. 1.

^d יקר יקרני corripiendo corripuit me, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; castigando castigavit me, Musculus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

shall enter.] This seems to be spoken by some other person or persons, distinct from David and the Messiah, pointing at some particular and principal gate, upon hearing the above word: by which is meant, not the gate of the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, as the Targum; but the Messiah himself, afterwards spoken of as the stone rejected by the builders, and made the head of the corner; who is the way of access to God; the door into the church or sheepfold; the strait gate that leads to eternal life; by which none but righteous persons enter into heaven; even such who are made righteous, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; see John x. 1, 9. and xiv. 4. Matt. vii. 14.

Ver. 21. *I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, &c.*] Here the psalmist reassumes his part in this song, and determines to praise the Lord for hearing him when in distress, and when he was encompassed with his enemies, and for delivering him out of their hands. *And art become my salvation;* the author of it, and therefore deserving of praise; and who is no other than the Messiah Jesus, who is described in the next verse.

Ver. 22. *The stone which the builders refused, &c.*] This is not Zorobabel, according to the sense of some Jews, as Theodoret suggests; nor the people of Israel, as Jarchi and Kimchi; nor David, as the Targum, which paraphrases the words, "the child the builders despised was among the sons of Jesse, and deserved to be appointed a king and a governor." He doubtless was a type of Christ, and there was some shadow of what is here said in him: he was refused by all the tribes but Judah; Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, was set upon the throne, though afterwards all Israel and Judah united in making David king, 2 Sam. ii. 8, 9, 10, and v. 3. But the Messiah is intended, as some ancient Jewish writers* own, and Jarchi himself elsewhere† confesses; and which is certain from the quotation and application of this passage to Christ, in Matt. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11, 12. who is compared to a stone for his strength and duration; and because of his usefulness in the spiritual building of the church, as a foundation and corner-stone; see the note on Matt. xxi. 42. Him the Jewish builders refused; their political ones, their rulers, that believed not on him; the princes of this world, that rose up against him and crucified him; even those who were the support of their civil state, and the maintainers of it: but more especially their ecclesiastical builders, the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who built the people, or directed them to build on their carnal privileges, the traditions of the elders, and their own legal righteousness. These refused to receive Jesus as the Messiah, and to believe in him; they refused to own and honour him as King of Zion; they refused his doctrines and ordinances; they refused to hear him preach, or suffer others to hear him; they refused to make use of him in the spiritual building, either to preach him themselves, or allow others to do it; they rejected him with contempt; they set him at nought, and preferred a thief and a robber to him. *Is become the head-stone of the corner;* Christ is the corner-stone, that unites elect angels and elect

men together, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above and below, saints in all ages and places; and he is the head-stone, or chief corner-stone, for strength and beauty, and the head of the corner; or of persons most eminent, who are sometimes called the corner, Judg. xx. 2. Zech. x. 4. Christ is exalted above all; he is the head of principalities and powers, the angels; he is made higher than the kings of the earth; and is the head of the body, the church, an head both of eminence and influence.

Ver. 23. *This is the Lord's doing, &c.*] This stone is from the Lord, Gen. xlix. 24. it is of his choosing, appointing, and laying: the rejection of it by the builders is through his permission and will; they did no other things than what his hand and counsel determined should be done, Acts ii. 23. and iv. 27, 28. and the exaltation of it, or the making it the head of the corner, was of him; he highly exalted him at his right hand, above every name, creature, and thing. *It is marvellous in our eyes;* the stone itself is wonderful to look at, for its beauty, strength, and usefulness; the wisdom, love, care, and power of God, in laying it, are astonishing; the distinguishing grace of God in selecting some stones out of the common quarry, making them lively stones, and building them on this foundation-stone, is exceeding marvellous: and so are both the rejection and exaltation of it; that so precious a stone should be refused, and, when treated with so much neglect and contempt, should be exalted. The Targum is, "from the Lord was this, said the builders; this is marvellous in our sight, said the sons of Jesse."

Ver. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, &c.*] Famous and remarkable for the above events. Meaning either the day of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, in order to be delivered up to the Jews, and suffer and die in the room of his people; to which the following words agree: or the day of his resurrection* from the dead; when God gave him glory, and was matter of joy to those for whose justification he rose; or the Lord's day, kept in commemoration of it: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation, made a bright day by the sun of righteousness; and which is the now present day of salvation. *We will rejoice and be glad in it;* because of the blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, which came through the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and are published in the everlasting Gospel. The Targum is, "this day the Lord hath made, said the builders; let us rejoice and be glad in it, said the sons of Jesse."

Ver. 25. *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, &c.*] Or, *we beseech thee;* for they are the words of the people, wishing all health and happiness to their king; and it is as if they had said, *vivat rex*, let the king live, or, God save the King: and no doubt these words were used by the people, when all the tribes united and made David king over all Israel, and when he became the head of the corner; which was attended with the shouts and acclamations of the people, expressing themselves after this manner. And certain it is that these words were used by the followers of Christ, and

* Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 2. Vid. Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 5. fol. 15. 2.

† Comment. in Mic. v. 2.

* So Suidas in voce ΑΓΩΓΗ; which he observes fell on March 25

applied to him, when he made his public entry into Jerusalem, crying, *hosanna* to the son of David. The word *hosanna* is the same with *save now*; and is compounded of the two words in the text thus translated, Matt. xxi. 9. *O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity*; to our King; give him success in all his undertakings, and victory over all his enemies; may the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands; may his Gospel run and be glorified, and be spread all over the world, and multitudes bow to the sceptre of his kingdom; may his kingdom be enlarged, and his dominion be from sea to sea; and may this spiritual building rise, and be brought to perfection, of which he is the foundation and chief corner-stone. The allusion may be to the shouts usually made at the laying of the foundation or corner-stone of any considerable edifice, and at the bringing in the head-stone of it; see Ezra iii. 11. Zech. iv. 7.

Ver. 26. *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, &c.*] These words were used by the multitude that followed Christ, as he went into Jerusalem, in order to eat his last passover, and suffer and die for his people, and are applied to him; as also by his disciples, who expressed them thus, *Blessed be the King that cometh, &c.* Luke xix. 38. the King Messiah, who came from heaven to earth, from his father into this world, to save the chief of sinners; who now came to Jerusalem on that errand, and into the temple, as the proprietor of it; where he shewed his power, and exercised his authority: he came not in his own name, but in his father's name; and not to do his own will, but his; nor did he seek his own glory, but his father's: he came as his servant to do his work; he came with a commission from him, by his order, and to obey his commands, which he did; he came with his full consent and will, and, as man and Mediator, was helped and assisted by him; and as such he is pronounced blessed: all blessing, happiness, and honour, are wished for him, and ascribed unto him, as his just due; being Lord and King, Saviour and Redeemer, of his people. *We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord*; these are the words of the priests, one part of whose office it was to bless the people, Numb. vi. 23—27. but these were not the chief priests of the Jews in Christ's time; for they were displeased with the multitude, and with the children in the temple, for crying *hosanna* to the son of David, and wishing well to him, Matt. xxi. 15, 16. But the disciples of Christ, or ministers of the Gospel, who blessed the people that blessed their Lord and Master; or wished well to them, and prayed for them that wished well to him. The sense is, either we who are of the house of the Lord bless you; we who stand there, and serve him, are rulers of the household of God, and stewards of the mysteries of grace: or we bless you, and pray for your welfare, who are of the household of faith; who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: or we bless you with provisions out of the house of God; with the goodness and fatness of his house, the word and ordinances, by administering them to you: or we pray

that the Lord would bless you out of Zion, or out of the highest heavens, where he is; even with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; see Psal. cxxxiv. 1, 2, 3. The Targum of this and the preceding verse is, "We beseech thee, O Lord, *save now*, said the builders; We beseech thee, O Lord, *send now prosperity*, said Jesse and his wife. Blessed *be he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, said the builders; Let us bless you out of the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, said David."

Ver. 27. *God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light, &c.*] These are the words of the people, acknowledging divine favours; particularly that the Lord had caused his face to shine upon them, as the priest wished for, Numb. vi. 25. The Lord might be said to shew them light, by sending the Messiah to them, who came a light into the world; by making a Gospel day, for which they expressed their gladness, ver. 24. by causing the light of his glorious Gospel to shine into their hearts; by making them who were darkness light, the darkness of ignorance and unbelief to pass away, and the true light to shine; by lifting up the light of his countenance upon them, and giving them hopes of the light of glory and happiness, and making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light; for all which they are thankful, and call for sacrifices. *Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar*; that is, the lamb, as the Targum and Aben Ezra. Take a lamb for sacrifice, and bind it with cords; and being bound, lead it to the altar; there slay it, and then pour the blood upon the horns of it; which were the usual rites in sacrifice. Or bring a large number of sacrifices, and, as many as will fill the court, even up to the horns of the altar, upon this joyful occasion: for the sacrifice was not bound to the horns of the altar; but it denotes here such a number of sacrifices as would fill the court, and reach thither; so Gussetius^b interprets it very rightly. But we are not to think of slain beasts, but of holy and living sacrifices, even the persons of God's people; their bodies and souls, and their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; since this refers to Gospel times; whose hearts in such service are to be united to fear the Lord, and fixed trusting in him; and are to be drawn to it with the cords of love, which are more than all whole burnt-offerings; and which sacrifices are to be brought to the altar, Christ; which is most holy, and sanctifies gifts and persons, and renders them acceptable to God; and which is to be compassed about with songs of deliverance and salvation, by persons from every quarter, the four corners of the earth. Luther renders it, "adorn the feast with leaves;" and others, "bind on the feast-day branches," of trees, as was usual on the feast of tabernacles; see Lev. xxiii. 40. and it was usual with the Heathens to strew their altars with green herbs and flowers^c, particularly vervain, put for all other sweet herbs^d: hence Ovid^e calls them *herbosas aras*; which the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions seem to countenance.

Ver. 28. *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee,*

^b Comment. Ebr. p. 27.

^c Martial. l. 3. Ep. 24. *virides aras*. Vid. Ovid. de Trist. l. 3. Eleg. 13. *Ramis tegetem ut frondentibus aras*, Virgil. Æneid. 3. v. 25.

^d Terent. Andria, 4. 2.

^e Metamorph. l. 15. Fab. 49.

&c.] These are the words of David, asserting his interest in God as his covenant-God; and which is the great blessing of the covenant, and the greatest happiness of men, and will always continue; and for which there is abundant reason for praise: it is an instance of distinguishing grace, an evidence of everlasting love, and the foundation of all comfort and happiness here and hereafter. Thou art *my God, I will exalt thee*; in my heart, and with my lips; and call upon others to join with me in it, as in the following verse. The Targum is, "thou art my God, and I will confess before thee; thou art my God, and I will praise thee, said David: Samuel replied, and said, Praise, O ye con-

"gregation of Israel;" who are addressed in the next words.

Ver. 29. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, &c.*] And thus the psalm ends as it began; there having been given many instances of the divine goodness, in hearing and delivering the psalmist when in distress; saving him from his enemies, when compassed about with them; sparing his life, when in great danger; and especially in making the stone rejected by the builders the head of the corner. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; the above instances are proofs of it; and still it continues, and will for evermore. Here ends the great *Hallel*, or hymn, sung at the passover and other festivals.

P S A L M CXIX.

THIS psalm is generally thought to be written by David, but when uncertain; very probably towards the decline of life; and, as some think, for the sake of his son Solomon. It seems to be a collection of observations on the word of God and its precepts, the usefulness and excellency of it, he had made in the course of his life; interspersed with various petitions for the grace of God, to enable him to observe it. The psalm is a very extraordinary one; partly on account of the unusual length of it, it being more than double the length of the longest psalm in the whole book; and partly on account of its curious composition. It consists of twenty-two parts, according to the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet; the names of which letters stand between each part; and every part consists of eight verses, all of which begin with the same letter: thus, for instance, the first eight verses begin with the letter **N**, *aleph*, and the second eight verses begin with the letter **B**, *beth*, and so on throughout; hence the Masorah calls this psalm the Great Alphabet. This the psalmist did, perhaps to excite attention to what he said, and also to help the memory. And it is observable that there are very few verses in the whole, not more than one or two, but what has something in it concerning the word of God, and its precepts and ordinances; there are nine or ten different words used relative to it, which signify much one and the same thing; as laws, statutes, judgments, testimonies, &c. Luther^m observes, that neither Cicero, nor Virgil, nor Demosthenes, are to be compared with David for eloquence, as we see in the 119th Psalm, where he divideth one sense and meaning into twenty-two sorts. And it may also be remarked, that there is nothing in it concerning the tabernacle-worship, or the rites and ceremonies of the legal dispensation; so that it seems to be calculated for, and is suited to, the word of God, and the ordinances of it, as we now have them in their full perfection: and the design of the whole is to shew the fervent affection the psalmist had for the word of God, and to stir up the same in others.

N, ALEPH.—*The First Part.*

Ver. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, &c.*]

Who are in the right way to heaven and happiness, which is Jesus Christ; the strait gate, and narrow way to eternal life; the only true way of life and salvation, in which way believers walk by faith. All out of this way are altogether become filthy; but all in this way are clean, even every whit: they are without spot and blemish, blameless and unprovable, and without fault, before the throne of God and in his sight; being washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, and clothed with his righteousness; and even *perfect* and complete in him, as the Targum renders the word. These are also found in the way of their duty, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless before men, and are sincere and upright in the sight of God; and are upon all accounts happy persons: *who walk in the law of the Lord*: within the boundaries and limits of it, according to its direction, as it is a rule of walk and conversation in the hands of Christ the Lawgiver; and who continue to walk in it, as in a pleasant path, with great delight; and cheerfully obey its precepts, as influenced by the love of God, and assisted by the spirit and grace of Christ. The word *law*, or *doctrine*, as it signifies, may design every revelation of the divine will; and even the doctrine of Christ, which believers should abide in, and not transgress; and should walk uprightly according to the truth of it, and as becomes it, and as they are enabled to do.

Ver. 2. *Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, &c.*] The whole word of God, the Scriptures of truth, are his testimonies: they testify of the mind of God, and of his love and grace in the method of salvation by Christ; they testify of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; and of all the happiness that comes to the people of God thereby. The law is called a testimony, which being put into the ark, that had the name of the ark of the testimony. This is a testimony of the perfections of God, his holiness, justice, and goodness displayed in it; and of his good and perfect will, what should or should not be done. The Gospel is the testimony of Christ, of what he is, has done and suffered for his people, and of the blessings of

grace by him; the ordinances of it, baptism and the Lord's supper, testify of the love of God, and grace of Christ; and all these good men keep: they keep the Scriptures as a sacred depositum; they hold fast the faithful word of the Gospel, that no man take it from them; and are desirous of observing both the law of God, as in the hands of Christ; and the ordinances of the Gospel, as delivered by him, from a principle of love to him; and such are happy persons in life, at death, and to all eternity. And that *seek him with the whole heart*; that is, that seek the Lord by prayer and supplication, with a true heart, and in sincerity; that seek to know more of him, and that in good earnest; that seek for communion and fellowship with him, with the spirit within them, with all their heart and soul; that seek Christ, and God in Christ, his kingdom, and his righteousness, and that in the first place, early, earnestly, and diligently. The Targum is, "they seek his doctrine with the whole heart."

Ver. 3. *They also do no iniquity, &c.*] Not that they are free from in-dwelling sin, nor from the acts of sin, nor that what they do are not sins; but they do not make a trade of sinning, it is not the course of their lives; nor do they do iniquity with that ease and pleasure, without reluctance and remorse, as others do: or rather as new creatures, as born again, they do not and cannot commit sin; for the new man is pure, spiritual, and holy; and nothing can come out of that, or be done by it, which is the contrary. This is a distinct *I* from the old man, or corrupt nature, to which all the actions of sin are to be ascribed; see 1 John iii. 9. Rom. vii. 17, 20. *They walk in his ways*; in the ways of God and Christ, into which they are guided and directed, and where they are kept, and in which they find both pleasure and profit. Here end the descriptive characters of good and happy men.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.*] Here, and in the following verses, the psalmist expresses his great regard to the precepts, commandments, statutes, and judgments of God; and that as such, because they were commanded by him; were not the precepts of men, but the commands of God; who had a right to command, as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and King; and whose commands are not to be reckoned as indifferent things, that are at the option and choice of a creature, to be done or let alone at his pleasure; but are what God has enjoined, and are binding upon men; and which love should and does constrain the saints to have a regard unto, and to keep them diligently or vehemently; with all a man's might and strength, as the word is used in Deut. vi. 5. These are not at any time to be dispensed with, but to be kept always constantly and steadily.

Ver. 5. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.*] The psalmist, sensible of his own inability, as every good man is, to keep the commands of God, prays for grace, direction, and assistance in it; that the ways of his mind, his thoughts, affections, and inclinations, might be directed to an observance of the divine precepts; knowing he could not command his

thoughts, raise his affections, dispose his mind, and incline his heart thereunto; and finding a backwardness to religious exercises and spiritual duties, and that the ways and actions of his life might be guided to the same; being sensible he could not take one step aright without God and Christ; that the way of man is not in himself, and that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; that a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, and he directs his paths: besides the direction of the word, there is need of the spirit and grace of God, to cause a person to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them; see Jer. x. 23. Psal. xxxvii. 23. Prov. iii. 6. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Ver. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, &c.*] Of hope in God, of a profession of faith in him, and of a conversation agreeable to it before men; nor of appearing before God in his house, worshipping him there; nor at the throne of his grace, nor at the day of judgment, and before Christ at his coming. *When I have respect unto all thy commandments; or look** at them constantly, as the rule of walk and conversation; and to copy after, as a scholar looks at his copy to write after; and affectionately esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right, and none of his commandments grievous; and practically, not in the theory only; but observing them in order to practise them, and diligently attending to them, and steadfastly continuing in them; impartially regarding them, one as another; and especially as beholding them fulfilled perfectly in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.

Ver. 7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, &c.*] In the most sincere manner, in the most affectionate way, with the whole heart; sensible of great favours received, and great obligations laid under; see Psal. ix. 1. *When I shall have learned thy righteous judgments; or, the judgments of thy righteousness**: of the righteousness of God, declared in his righteous law; which is founded upon, and is according to, the strictest rules of justice and equity; and so are all the precepts of it: and of the righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel; by which God appears to be just, whilst he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Now the precepts of the one, and the doctrines of the other, are to be learned, and learned of God, in his word and by his spirit. The psalmist had been learning them, but was desirous of learning more of them, not being a complete proficient in them; and of learning them, not merely in the theory, but in the practice and experience of them; which, when he had attained unto, as he hoped he should, it would be matter of the most sincere praise and thankfulness.

Ver. 8. *I will keep thy statutes, &c.*] This is a resolution taken up in the strength of divine grace, to answer the end of learning the judgments of God; which he did, not merely to have a notional knowledge of them, but to put them in practice; and not that he thought he could perfectly keep them, but was desirous of observing them in the best manner he could, as assisted by the grace of God; from love to God, in

* קוּמִי מִיָּדָיִךָ quom intuebor, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

* מִיָּדָיִךָ מִשְׁפָּטֵי דִינִי judicis justitiae tue, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

the faith and name of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; without dependence upon them for life and salvation. *O forsake me not utterly*; totally and finally, or not at all; otherwise as if he should say, I shall never be able to keep thy statutes; so sensible was he of the necessity of the divine Presence and grace, to assist him in the observance of them: or, *for ever*, as Ben Balaam interprets it, and so the Ethiopic version; R. Moses reads the words, *O forsake me not*, in a parenthesis, and joins the rest thus, *I will keep thy statutes vehemently*; or with all my strength and might; and so Kimchi reads them: but such a trajection is very forced, and contrary to the accents.

ב, BETH.—The Second Part.

Ver. 9. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?* &c.] Some think David means himself, and that he was a young man when he wrote this psalm; and which they think is confirmed by ver. 100. but neither of them seem conclusive; rather any young man is meant, and who is particularly mentioned, because young men are liable to sins and snares, to carnal lusts and sensual pleasures, which are of a defiling nature. Some are of opinion that a young man, or babe in Christ, is intended, that needs direction in his way, and instruction about the manner of cleansing it. But the former sense seems best, and expresses the concern of the psalmist for the education and right information of youth; which is a matter of great moment and advantage to families, neighbourhoods, and commonwealths. The question supposes the young man to be impure, as every man is by birth, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; is a transgressor from the womb, and his heart, ways, and actions, evil from his youth: and the difficulty is, how he shall be cleansed; how one so impure in his nature, heart, and ways, can be just with God, or become undefiled in the way, as in ver. 1. to which some reference may be had: or how he can have his heart made pure, or a clean one be created in him; or how his way, life, and conversation, may be corrected, reformed, and amended. The answer is, *by taking heed thereto according to thy word*; that is, to his way and course of life, and steering it according to the direction of the word of God. But I think the words may be better rendered and supplied thus, *by observing what is according to thy word*? which shews how a sinner is to be cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, and be clean through his word; and also how and by whom the work of sanctification is wrought in the heart, even by the spirit of God, by means of the word; and what is the rule of a man's walk and conversation: he will find the word of God to be profitable, to inform in the doctrines of justification and pardon, to acquaint him with the nature of regeneration and sanctification; and for the correction and amendment of his life and manners, and for his instruction in every branch of righteousness, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Ver. 10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee,* &c.] Not himself, his own honour and applause, as formal worshippers and self-righteous persons do; but

the Lord and his glory, his face, his presence, and communion with him, his grace, and fresh supplies of it, to help in time of need; his doctrine, as the Targum; and to know more of it, and of him, and of his mind and will; and this he did in the most sincere manner, with all his heart and soul. The character of the good man, in ver. 2. the psalmist applies to himself; see Isa. xxvi. 9. and uses it as an argument to obtain the following request: *O let me not wander from thy commandments*; the way of them. Good men are apt to go astray, as David, ver. 176. their hearts, their affections, and their feet, wander from the way of their duty: there are many things which lead them aside, and cause them to turn to the right hand or the left, at least solicit them to do so; as a corrupt nature, an evil heart, a body of sin and death, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan; and, what is worst of all, when God leaves them to themselves, withdraws the influences of his grace, and brings them into such circumstances as expose them to going astray, which the psalmist here deprecates; *suffer me not to wander*, but uphold my goings in thy ways; preserve me by thy grace, and keep me by thy power; hold me by thy right hand, and guide and direct me. Or, *cause me not to wander*, &c. a like petition to those in Psal. cxli. 3. Matt. vi. 13. Isa. lxiii. 17. with which last Kimchi compares these words.

Ver. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart,* &c.] Not only heard and read it, but received it into his affections; mixed it with faith, laid it up in his mind and memory for future use; preserved it in his heart as a choice treasure, where it might dwell richly, and be of service to him on many occasions; and particularly be of the following use: *that I might not sin against thee*; the word of God is a most powerful antidote against sin, when it has a place in the heart; not only the precepts of it forbid sin, but the promises of it influence and engage to purity of heart and life, and to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord; and all the doctrines of grace in it effectually teach the saints to deny all sin and worldly lusts, and to live a holy life and conversation; see 2 Cor. vii. 1. Titus ii. 11, 12.

Ver. 12. *Blessed art thou, O Lord,* &c.] In himself, in his nature, persons, and perfections; the fountain of all happiness to angels and men, in time and to eternity; to whom all blessing, honour, and glory, are to be given. The psalmist takes this method of praising and ascribing blessing to God, for what he had received from him; particularly for teaching him what he had learned, ver. 7. in hopes of succeeding in his following request: *teach me thy statutes*; the knowledge of the best is imperfect. Good men desire to know more of God, of his mind and will, even of his revealed will; and that they may have grace and strength to act in conformity to it; for it is not the bare theory of things they desire to be taught, but the practice of them; and though ministers, and the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, may be and are means of teaching; yet there is none teaches like the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit. The

פ לשמר כדברך observando secundum verbum tuum, Cocceius.

א לא תשבני ne errare facias me, Pagninus, Montanus.

Targum and Syriac versions render it, *teach me thy decrees.*

Ver. 13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*] Not the judgments of his hand, what he executes on an ungodly world; nor the intricate dispensations of his providence; those judgments of his now unsearchable, though ere long will be manifest; these the psalmist could not declare: but the revelation of the will of God, what his mouth has uttered, doctrines and precepts of righteousness and truth; these, though David had them in his heart, he did not conceal them from men; but out of the abundant experience he had of them in his heart, his lips spake of them, of their nature and excellency, and usefulness unto others: and whereas he desired to be instructed more and more in them, it was in order to teach them, and declare them to others; even *all* of them, in the most sincere and impartial manner; see Acts xx. 27.

Ver. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, &c.*] The way which the Scriptures, that testify of God and Christ, direct unto; and the principal way is Christ himself, the only way of life and salvation; in which believers walk and go on rejoicing; rejoicing in his person, offices, grace, righteousness, and salvation: the lesser ways the Scriptures point unto are the ways of duty and paths of ordinances; in which truly gracious souls find a great deal of peace, pleasure, and delight. *As much as in all riches; or, as above all riches:* the joy that believers have in the ways of God is superior to that which any natural or worldly man has in his substance of every sort, or be it ever so great; yea, they find such riches in the ways of God, as are vastly preferable to the riches of this world; they find Christ, the pearl of great price, and his unsearchable riches, the riches of grace, and the riches of glory; and even the word of God itself, those testimonies of his, are more desirable than thousands of gold and silver, and give a greater pleasure than the increase of corn and wine.

Ver. 15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, &c.*] In his own mind; revolve them in his thoughts; consider well the nature, excellency, usefulness, and importance of them, and the obligations he lay under to observe them. The Targum is, "I will speak of thy 'precepts;' in conversation to others, and recommend them to them; so the Arabic version: *and have respect unto thy ways; or look*^a *unto them; take heed unto them, and walk in them, and not wander from them; make them the rule of walk and conversation; as travellers look well to their ways, that they do not miss them, and go into wrong ways; they observe the directions that have been given them, and keep unto them; and so good men advert to the ways of the Lord, which the Scriptures point out unto them; see Jer. vi. 16.*

Ver. 16. *I will delight myself in thy statutes, &c.*] In looking over them; in meditating on them; in obeying them, and walking according to them; as every good man does delight in the law of the Lord, after the

inward man, Rom. vii. 22. see ver. 24, 29, 97. *I will not forget thy word:* he took all proper methods to fix it in his memory; he laid it up in his mind; he meditated upon it in his heart, and he talked of it with his lips, ver. 11, 13, 15.

3, GIMEL.—The Third Part.

Ver. 17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant, &c.*] Which character is mentioned, not by way of plea or argument for favour, but as expressive of modesty, sense of duty, and obligation to it. He pleads not his services by way of merit; but prays that God would deal bountifully with him, in a way of grace and mercy: or *render good* unto him, as the Targum; bestow it on him as a free gift. The Lord deals bountifully with men, when he gives himself unto them as their portion and inheritance; his Son, and all things along with him; his Spirit, and the graces of it; and every daily needful supply of grace. That *I may live, and keep thy word;* life natural is the bounty of God; he grants life and favour, he grants life as a favour, and all the mercies and blessings of it; and through the gracious dealings of God with his people, they live spiritually and live comfortably; in his favour is life; the life of faith is encouraged and invigorated in them by it; and eternal life is the free gift and bounty of God through Christ, by whom they have both a right unto it and meetness for it: and the desire of good men to live in this world is not to indulge themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures; not to live to themselves, nor to the lusts of the flesh, nor to the will of men; but to live soberly, righteously, and godly; to live by faith in Christ, and in hope of eternal life through him; and whilst they live to keep the word of God, and not forget it, as Aben Ezra interprets it, to lay it up for their own use, and preserve it for others, and observe its instructions, cautions, and directions.

Ver. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, &c.*] The eyes of my heart or understanding, as Kimchi; or, *reveal mine eyes*^b; take off the veil from them: there is a veil of darkness and ignorance on the hearts of all men, with respect to divine and spiritual things; their understandings are darkened, yea, darkness itself. This veil must be removed; the scales must drop from their eyes; their eyes must be opened and enlightened, ere they can discern spiritual things contained in the word of God; and even good men need to have the eyes of their understandings more and more enlightened into these things, as the psalmist here petitions, and the apostle prays for his Ephesians, Ephes. i. 17, 18. *That I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;* the law strictly taken, which had great and excellent things in it; and was wonderful for the compendiousness of it; for the justice, holiness, and equity of its precepts; especially for its spirituality, and above all for Christ, being the end of it; the two last more particularly could only be discerned by a spiritual man: or rather the five books of Moses, the almost only Scriptures extant in David's time,

^a כָּל הַדָּבָר כַּל הַדָּבָר sicut super omnibus divitiis, Pagninus; so Janius & Tremellius, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

^b וְאֶבְיִן & aspiciam, Pagninus, Moutanus; & intecor, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^c וְאֶבְיִן revela oculos meos, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Coceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; velamen detrahe oculis meis, Tigurine version.

in which there were many wonderful things concerning Christ; some delivered by way of promise and prophecy of him, under the characters of the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, and the great Prophet; and many others in dark figures, types, and shadows, which required a spiritual sight to look into; of which the rock and manna, the brasen serpent, passover, &c. are instances: but rather, as the word *law* signifies *doctrine*, the doctrine of the Gospel may be meant; which contains mysteries in it, respecting the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the person of Christ, his incarnation, sufferings and death; the blessings of grace through him; the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, eternal life, and the resurrection of the dead; with many others.

Ver. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth, &c.*] As all his fathers were, and all the saints are; not to divine and spiritual things; to God, and communion with him; to Christ, and the knowledge of him; to the Spirit, and his operations in their hearts; to their own hearts, and the plague of them; to the Gospel, and its truths; nor to the people of God, and fellowship with them: but to the world, among whom they are, not being known, valued, and respected by them; and they also behaving as strangers to the world, having no fellowship with them in their sinful works; as also not being natives here, but belonging to another city and country, an heavenly one; see 1 Chron. xxix. 15. *Hide not thy commandments from me*; the doctrines of the Gospel, the word which God has commanded to a thousand generations; which is pure, and enlightens the eyes, and so needful to strangers in their pilgrimage, Psal. xix. 8. and cv. 8. which God sometimes hides from the wise and prudent, and which the psalmist here deprecates with respect to himself, Matt. xi. 25, 26. Or the precepts of the world may be meant, which are a light to the feet, and a lamp to the paths, a good direction to travellers and strangers in the way: David, being such an one, prayed that these might not be hid from him, but be shewed unto him; that he might know his way, and not go out of it; but walk as a child of light, wisely and circumspectly.

Ver. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing, &c.*] His heart was just ready to break, and his soul fainted; he was ready to die, through a vehement desire of enjoying the object longed for, after mentioned; *hope deferred makes the heart sick*, Prov. xiii. 12. the phrase is expressive of the greatness, vehemence, and eagerness of his mind after the thing he desired, which follows: that it hath *unto thy judgments at all times*; not the judgments of God on wicked men, though these are desirable for the glorifying of his justice; nor his dark dispensations of providence, though good men cannot but desire and long for the time when these judgments shall be made manifest: but rather the righteous laws and precepts of God are designed, which he desired to have a more perfect knowledge of, and yield a more constant obedience unto; or, best of all, the doctrines of grace and righteousness, that should be more clearly revealed in the times of the Messiah;

who was to set judgment in the earth, his Gospel; and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and glorify the justice of God; than which nothing was more earnestly and importunately wished and longed for by Old-Testament saints; see ver. 81. and Psal. xiv. 7.

Ver. 21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud, &c.*] Which some understand of the fallen angels, who, in proud wrath, left their habitations, because they would not be subject to the Son of God in human nature; wherefore he scattered them in the imaginations of their hearts, and cast down these mighty ones into hell, where they are reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. Others of the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, this psalm being suited, as is thought, to Gospel times; who were proud of their own righteousness, and despised others less holy than themselves; and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ, whom he often rebuked, and at last punished. Rather all proud atheistical persons, profane and wicked men, are meant; who, Pharaoh-like, say, who is the Lord that we should obey him? who reckon their tongues to be their own, and employ them both against God and men, and regard neither: these God resists, sets himself against, and sooner or later severely punishes; for in the things they deal proudly he is above them, Exod. xviii. 11. that are *cursed*; according to the law of God, being transgressors of it, and will hear the awful sentence, *go, ye cursed*. The Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, join this with the next clause: *cursed are they which do err from thy commandments*; from the way of them, not observing them; from the end of them, Christ, not looking to him for righteousness.

Ver. 22. *Remove from me reproach and contempt, &c.*] Or, *roll it from me* *. It lay as a load, as a heavy burden upon him, which pressed him sore; and he therefore desired ease from it, being probably in a low frame of soul; otherwise saints do and should rejoice when reproached for Christ's sake; and esteem it, with Moses, more than all the treasures in Egypt, being what is common to them with their Lord. *For I have kept thy testimonies*: which was the reason why he was reproached and despised; for having a regard to the word of God, and embracing and professing the doctrines of it. Thus the word of the Lord was made a reproach to Jeremiah, or he was reproached for delivering it; as many good men have been vilified, and have suffered for the testimony of Jesus, Jer. xx. 8. Rev. i. 9. and for walking according to the directions of it; wicked men thinking it strange they do not run into the same excess of riot with them, and therefore speak evil of them, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4.

Ver. 23. *Princes also did sit and speak against me, &c.*] The princes in the court of Saul, who suggested to him that David sought his hurt; the princes of his own court, Absalom, his own son, a prince of the blood, and Ahithophel, a counsellor of state: or the princes of the Gentiles, as Jarchi; so the princes of the Philistines spake against him in a very disdainful manner, *make this fellow return to his place again*, 1 Sam. xxix. 4. Such as these might speak against

* גל מעלי devolve a me, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

him, as they sat and rode in their chariots; when at their tables, conversing together; or at their councils, forming schemes against him: the phrase denotes their constant practice, as Kimchi observes; see Psal. l. 20. herein David was a type of Christ, whom the princes of this world conspired against, and whose life they took away, Psal. ii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 8. But *thy servant did meditate in thy statutes*; what the princes did or said against him did not divert his mind, or take off his thoughts from the word of God, and the ordinances of it; he thought of them, he spoke and discoursed of them; he declared them, as the word * sometimes signifies, and so the Targum takes it here; he was not afraid nor ashamed to profess his regard unto them: as Daniel, when he knew that the presidents and princes had obtained a royal decree, and the writing was signed; yet went into his chamber, as at other times, and kneeled down and prayed to God, Dan. vi. 10.

Ver. 24. *Thy testimonies also are my delight, &c.] Or delights* *; exceeding delightful to me. The whole of Scripture is so to a good man; he delights in the law of God, after the inward man; the Gospel is a joyful sound to him; the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, are very pleasant; the promises of it give more joy than the finding of a great spoil; and the precepts and ordinances of it are not grievous, but ways of pleasantness and peace. *And my counsellors*: or, *the men of my counsel* †; though David took counsel with men about affairs of state; yet concerning spiritual ones, or what related to his soul, and the concerns of that, not they, but the Scriptures, were the men of his counsel. The Gospel is the whole counsel of God relating to salvation; in it Christ, the wonderful Counsellor, gives advice to saints and sinners: the whole word of God may be profitably consulted on every occasion, and in every circumstance in which a child of God may be; all Scripture, being divinely inspired, is profitable for doctrine, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

7. DALETH.—The Fourth Part.

Ver. 25. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust, &c.]* Either to the dust of death, having the sentence of it; being almost in despair of life, upon the brink of the grave seemingly, and free among the dead: or in a very low estate of mind, in great dejection and humiliation, rolling himself in the dust, and putting his mouth in it; if there might be any hope of deliverance; but despairing of it, unless the Lord appeared; or finding a proneness in him to the corruption of nature, the body of sin and death, which was very powerful and prevalent, insinuating and captivating; and particularly to worldly things, comparable to dust, for their lightness, emptiness, and unprofitableness; which often have an undue influence on good men, and to which their affections are too much glued; and which greatly affect the exercise of grace and religious duties,

and bring a deadness upon the soul, and make the following petition necessary: *quicken thou me according to thy word*; such who are quickened together with Christ, and who are quickened by his spirit and grace, when they were dead in trespasses and sins, have often need to be quickened again, and to have the work of grace revived in them; which is done when grace is drawn forth into lively exercise, and which is necessary to the performance of duty; and this is done both by means of the word of God, which, as it is used for the quickening dead sinners, so for the reviving of drooping saints; see ver. 50. And according to his word of promise, who has promised never to leave his people, nor forsake the work of his hand, but perform it until the day of Christ; Jarchi and Kimchi think reference is had to the promise in 2 Sam. xii. 13. and Aben Ezra to Deut. xxxii. 39.

Ver. 26. *I have declared my ways, &c.]* That is, to the Lord; either the ways he had chose and desired to walk in, and not wander from, and therefore entreated help and assistance, guidance and direction, in them; or his sinful ways and actions, which he acknowledged and confessed, lamented and bewailed, and entreated the forgiveness of; or all his counsels and cares, his affairs and business, in which he was concerned, and which he declared and committed to the Lord, to be directed and assisted in; or all his wants and necessities, which he spread before him at the throne of grace; which he did not as though the Lord was ignorant of these things, but partly as knowing it was the will of God that he should be inquired of by his people, to do the things for them they want; and partly to ease his own mind, and encourage his faith and hope in the Lord. *And thou heardest me*: and directed him in the way he should go, and what he should do; forgave him his sins, and supplied his wants. *Teach me thy statutes*; which he desired to learn and obey, in gratitude for being heard and answered by him; see the note on ver. 12.

Ver. 27. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, &c.]* The meaning of them, to have a more comprehensive, clear, and distinct knowledge of them; and to be led into the way they direct unto, and walk therein. *So shall I talk of thy wondrous works*: the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; with more knowledge and understanding, with more spirit and cheerfulness, with more readiness and liberty, more to his own satisfaction, and for the good of others: or, *meditate on thy wondrous works* †; being in the ways of God, and freed from the distractions of the world and business of it.

Ver. 28. *My soul melteth for heaviness, &c.]* Like wax before the sun or fire; or flows like water; *drops* ‡, as the word signifies, and dissolves into tears, through grief and sorrow for sins committed; or by reason of Satan's temptations, or divine desertions, or grievous troubles and afflictions; which cause heaviness, lie heavy, and press hard. *Strengthen thou me according unto thy word*; to oppose corruptions, withstand temp-

* דִּשְׁתִּי *diserit*, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus; loquitor, Piscator, Gejerus.
 † עֲדָתִי *delicias meæ*, Montanus, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis; *delectationes meæ*, Pagninus; *oblectationes meæ*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

‡ וְיִשְׁתִּי *viri consilii mei*, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus.
 * מְדַבֵּר *meditator*, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; *ut mediter*, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.
 † שְׁתִּי *stillavit*; Pagninus, Montanus; *distillet*, Vatablus; *stillat*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

tations, bear up under trials and afflictions, and do the will of God. And the word of God is a means of strengthening his people to do these things; it is the spiritual bread which strengthens man's heart, and in the strength of which, like Elijah, he walks many days, and goes from strength to strength: and there are many gracious words of promise, which may be pleaded with God to this purpose; that he will help, strengthen, and uphold his people; that he will renew their strength, and that as their day is their strength shall be.

Ver. 29. *Remove from me the way of lying, &c.*] Not the sin of lying to men, and a course of it, which David was not addicted to; but a *false way*, or *way of falsehood*; as it may be rendered, and so the Targum; and is the same with what he expresses his abhorrence of, ver. 128. and is opposed to the way of truth in the next verse; and designs all false doctrine and false worship, all errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry; which he desired to be at the utmost distance from, and those from him, as having a dislike and abhorrence of them; and as knowing how prejudicial they would be to him, and how contrary to the glory of God. *And grant me thy law graciously*; not the fiery law, which works wrath, curses and condemns; the voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; and which to have is no act of grace and favour, unless as fulfilled in Christ, and as it is a rule of walk and conversation in his hands: but rather *doctrine*, as the word signifies; the doctrine of the Gospel, the law or doctrine of faith; which to have and understand is a gift of grace; it is the Gospel of the grace of God, the grace of God itself; and instructs in it, and shews that salvation is purely by it.

Ver. 30. *I have chosen the way of truth, &c.*] Christ, who is the way and the truth, the true way to God and to eternal happiness; and to choose him is to choose the good part, which shall never be taken away; and which choice is made, not by the free will of man, as left to itself, but under the influence and by the direction of the spirit and grace of God; whereby a soul sees a preferableness in Christ to every thing else, and which determines the choice of him: or, *the way of faith*, as the Targum; the doctrine of faith, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; also the several truths of the Gospel, a way in which believers walk with pleasure and by choice; as being preferable to, and more desirable by them, than thousands of gold and silver. *Thy judgments have I laid before me*; to be looked at continually, as being exceeding amiable and lovely, and having a strong affection for them; and as a copy to write after, and a rule to walk by.

Ver. 31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies, &c.*] The word of God, the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines contained in them. These he closely adhered to, was glued unto them as it were; having firmly believed them, he steadfastly professed them; nor could he be moved from them by any temptations whatever, notwithstanding the reproach cast upon them and him for their sake, or the opposition made unto them. O

Lord, put me not to shame: or let me not be ashamed of the choice I have made, of the testimonies I adhere unto, of my hope and confidence in the Lord and his word; or suffer me not to do any thing, any sinful action, that may expose me to shame and contempt.

Ver. 32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, &c.*] Not only walk but run in it; which is expressive of great affection to the commands of God, of great readiness and cheerfulness, of great haste and swiftness in the way of them, and of great delight and pleasure therein. *When thou shalt enlarge my heart*; with the knowledge of God, his word, ways, worship, and ordinances; with his love more fully made known, and with an increase of love to him; with the fear of him, and a flow of spiritual joy and peace; and when delivered from straits and difficulties, from weights and pressures, and every thing that may hinder walking or running; and being in circumstances which may lead and encourage to the one as to the other; see 1 Kings iv. 29. 2 Cor. vi. 11. and v. 14. Isa. lx. 5. Psal. iv. 1. and xviii. 36. Heb. xii. 1, 2.

71. HE.—The Fifth Part.

Ver. 33. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, &c.*] Which they point unto, and direct to walk in; not only the statutes and ordinances themselves, the theory of them, but the practice of them. This is taught in the word, and by the ministers of it; but none so effectually teach as the Lord himself, Isa. ii. 3. Matt. xxii. 16. and xxviii. 20. *And I shall keep it unto the end*; keep the way unto the end of it: or rather to the end of life, all my days, and never depart out of it, or turn to the right hand or the left; but walk on in it as long as I live: or, *I shall observe it, even the end*; the end of the way of thy statutes or commandments. Now the end of the commandment is charity or love, which is the fulfilling of it: though that is perfectly fulfilled by none but by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, 1 Tim. i. 5. Rom. x. 4. The word for *end* signifies a *reward*; so Aben Ezra interprets it, and refers to Psal. xix. 11. but Kimchi denies the law is to be kept for the sake of reward; which is right: rather the sense is, I will keep it by way of retribution, or in gratitude for teaching the way. The Targum is, "and I will keep unto perfection;" which cannot be done by sinful man.

Ver. 34. *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, &c.*] A spiritual understanding; an understanding of the law, the perfection, purity, holiness, and spirituality of it; an understanding of the Gospel, and of Christ and the things of Christ; from whom grace and strength are to be had for the due observance of the law, as in his hands; which understanding must be given, and is a gift of pure, free, rich grace, to such who have it; though they cannot keep the law perfectly, as no mere man can, yet will keep it spiritually, from a principle of love and gratitude, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ, 1 John v. 20. *Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart*; not only externally, and to be seen of men, and get applause from them; but doing the will of God from the heart, and

אשר שקר ופסולת, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

אשר שקר ופסולת & custodian finem; so some in Gejerus.

with a good will and heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; with a sincere affection for him, and with a single eye to his glory, Ephes. vi. 6, 7. 1 Tim. i. 5.

Ver. 35. *Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, &c.*] Lead, guide, direct me in the path, and use me to it; work in me both to will and to do; give both ability and a willing mind to walk therein; by granting fresh supplies of grace, and more spiritual strength; by drawing with the cords of love, and by putting in him the good spirit of grace, to cause to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and keep his judgments and do them, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *for therein do I delight*; in the law of God, after the inward man; in the commandments of Christ, which are not grievous; in wisdom's ways and paths, which are pleasantness and peace.

Ver. 36. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, &c.*] To read the word of God, to hear it opened and explained, to observe and keep the things contained in it; to which there is a disinclination in men naturally: but the Lord, who fashions the hearts of men, and has them in his hands, can bend and incline them by his efficacious grace to regard these his testimonies; which, as Aben Ezra observes, are more precious than all substance, and so are opposed to what follows: *and not to covetousness*: not to mammon or money, as the Targum; the love of it, which is the root of all evil, and very pernicious and hurtful; in hearing the word it chokes it, and makes it unfruitful, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Matt. xiii. 22. Not that God inclines the heart to evil, as he does to good; but he may suffer the heart to be inclined, and may leave a man to the natural inclinations of his heart, and to the temptations of Satan, and the snares of the world, which may have great influence upon him; and this is what is here deprecated; see Psal. cxli. 4. Matt. vi. 13.

Ver. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, &c.*] As the things of this world, the riches, honours, and pleasures of it, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and yet these catch the eye, and allure the heart: and all false doctrines, gilded over with the specious pretence of truth; and all false worship and superstition, set off with pomp and pageantry, with which the eyes of the body or the eyes of the mind are taken, and by which the heart is ensnared; and therefore it is desirable to have the eyes turned away from such objects unto better. And *quicken thou me in thy way*: so as to walk and even run in the path of truth, in the way of true religion and godliness; and, instead of looking upon vanity, press towards the mark for the prize; keep Christ in view, whilst running the race; and look to things unseen, and not things that are seen; and set the affections on things above, and serve the Lord fervently; all which is done when God quickens the hearts of his people, and the graces of his spirit in them.

Ver. 38. *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, &c.*] Either God's word of promise, which never fails, is firm and stable in Christ; and the sense is, that God would assure him of the fulfilment of it, and give him a strong faith and firm belief of it; for otherwise the

word of the Lord cannot be surer or more stable than it is: or else the word of his grace; and then the sense is, that he might be established in it, and the truths of it, and be established by it; for the word is a means of establishment, and a good thing it is to have the heart established with grace, with the doctrine of grace, Heb. xiii. 9. *who is devoted to thy fear*; who served the Lord with reverence and godly fear; who feared the Lord and his goodness; that grace being a reigning one in his heart, and ever before his eyes. Or, *which is unto thy fear*^d; that is, which word is unto thy fear; which leads unto it, and has a tendency to promote and increase it; and so is a commendation of the word of God from this effect of it.

Ver. 39. *Turn away my reproach which I fear, &c.*] Either for the sake of religion, which was disagreeable to him; and he might be afraid it would be too heavy for him to bear, and be a temptation to him to forsake the good ways of God: or rather by reason of sin, which brings a reproach on good men; and causes the enemy to speak reproachfully, and is therefore dreaded by them who desire to be kept from sin, for that reason as well as others; see Psal. xxxix. 8. Jarchi and Kimchi think that David has some reference to his sins, in the case of Uriah and Bath-sheba; lest they should be a perpetual reproach on his name and family, which he greatly feared. *For thy judgments are good*: the laws of God, and punishment of sin according to them; the Scriptures, and the doctrines contained in them; the ways of God, and true religion; which are evil-spoken of, through the sins of the professors of them.

Ver. 40. *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts, &c.*] After a greater degree of knowledge of them, and an opportunity of hearing them explained and enforced, and of yielding obedience to them; see ver. 7, 20, 27, 30. *Quicken me in thy righteousness*: in the way of righteousness, according to the word of righteousness, the Gospel, and with the righteousness of Christ revealed in it; and which is unto life, and quickens and comforts the heart, and from whence abundance of peace and joy flows.

1, VAU.—The Sixth Part.

Ver. 41. *Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, &c.*] Meaning not his providential mercies, but his special mercies and favours; his mercies of old, which were upon his heart and thoughts from everlasting; the sure mercies of David, or the blessings of the everlasting covenant; the spiritual blessings, wherewith the saints are blessed in Christ; the grace that was given to them in him, before the world was: these are desired by the psalmist to be remembered, shewn, communicated, and applied unto him, and, as it were, that they might come into his heart and soul; which is done when the love of God is shed abroad there, when full flows of it come in, and all grace is made to abound, and every want is supplied. *Even thy salvation, according to thy word*; not temporal, but spiritual and eternal salvation; which God has appointed his people to, secured for them in covenant, promised them

^d ליראתך quod ad timorem tuum, Paguius, Montanus;

quod ad timorem tui facit, Musculus; & ducit, Schmidt; quod datum est ad timorem tui, Michaelis.

in Christ, whom he sent to work it out, and which is in him; and which in effectual vocation comes to the soul, being brought near and applied to a sensible sinner by the spirit of God. Here a fresh view of interest in it, a fresh visit with it, and a restoration of the joys of it, are desired; and which salvation flows from the abundant mercy and free favour of God in Christ; and is, according to his word of promise, spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world; and may here respect the particular word of promise made to David, that God would put away his sin, and save him, and that he should not die, 2 Sam. xii. 13. or his word of promise in general, to all that seek and call upon the Lord, that they shall find grace and mercy, and be saved everlastingly.

Ver. 42. *So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me, &c.*] Saying there is no help and salvation for him in God; asking where is his God, in whom he trusted? and where is the promise of salvation, on which he depended? To which an easy and ready answer might be given, when the mercies and salvation of God came unto him, and he clearly appeared to be interested in them; see Psal. iii. 2. and xlii. 10. *for I trust in thy word*: in Christ the essential Word, the object of trust and confidence; or in the written word, it being divinely inspired and dictated by the spirit of God, and so to be depended on as true and faithful; or rather God's word of promise concerning mercy, grace, and salvation, which God that has made is faithful and able to perform, as may be believed.

Ver. 43. *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, &c.*] The Scriptures, which are by divine inspiration, come from the God of truth, contain nothing but truth in them, and are called *the Scriptures of truth*, Dan. x. 21. Or the Gospel, which is often so called, Ephes. i. 13. Jam. i. 18. This comes from God, who cannot lie, and is a declaration of his mind and will concerning the salvation of men; in which Christ, who is the truth, is concerned, being the author, preacher, and substance of it; into which the spirit of truth leads men, and makes it useful and effectual; which has many eminent and important truths in it, and nothing but truth, and stands opposed to the law, which is typical and shadowy, and to every thing that is a falsehood and a lie. This the psalmist desires might not be taken out of his mouth, but kept in it as a sweet morsel there, rolled under his tongue; be eaten and fed upon by him, and be the rejoicing of his heart. Or his sense is, that he might not be left under a temptation to conceal, drop, or deny the word of truth, or be ashamed to own and confess it before men; but at all times, and upon all occasions, publicly declare it, and his faith in it: at least he desires that it might not *utterly* cease from him, or be wholly neglected by him, and he entirely apostatize. Some join the word rendered *utterly*, and which signifies *exceedingly*, with the word of truth, thus; *take not out of my mouth the word of truth, which is exceedingly so*; that is, exceedingly true, to the highest degree. For

I have hoped in thy judgments; or, *have waited for thy judgments*^f: either the judgments of God upon sinners, especially on apostates, which he knew would be very sore and severe, their last estate being worse than the first; or rather the last judgment, when those that confess Christ and his truths shall be confessed by him; and those that deny him and his Gospel will be denied by him: though it may be best of all to understand it of the word of God, and the doctrines of it, which the psalmist had an exceeding great regard unto, hoped, waited, and even longed for; see ver. 20.

Ver. 44. *So shall I keep thy law continually, &c.*] Which denotes not the perfection of keeping the law, but the constancy of it: the psalmist was persuaded, that so long as he had the word of truth in his mouth, and the judgments of God in his view, he should be diligent and constant in the discharge of his duty, which these directed and encouraged him unto. *For ever and ever*; in this life and that to come; when the law of God will be kept, and his will done perfectly by the saints, as it now is by the angels in heaven; or this may be connected with the law of God; which law is for ever and ever, being of eternal duration and obligation. The whole may be understood of the law of faith, or doctrine of the Gospel, and be rendered, *so shall I observe thy doctrine continually*; contained in the word of truth; which doctrine is for ever and ever, it is the everlasting Gospel.

Ver. 45. *And I will walk at liberty, &c.*] Not in a licentious way, but in Gospel liberty, under the influence of the free spirit; where is liberty, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty. Or, *I will walk at large*^g; or, *in a broad way*, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply it: not in the broad road that leads to destruction, but in the law of God, which is exceeding broad, ver. 96. as the Targum, "in the breadth of the law." So a man walks when he walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord: and who also may be said to walk at large when delivered out of straits and difficulties; when he is brought into a large place, and his steps are enlarged under him; and having his heart enlarged with the love of God, and fear of him, and with spiritual joy, and having every grace in exercise, he not only walks in, but runs the way of God's commandments; see ver. 32. and the note on Psal. cxviii. 5. *for I seek thy precepts*; out of love and affection to them, to know more of them, the mind and will of God in them, and to practise them.

Ver. 46. *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, &c.*] As very likely he did before Saul and his courtiers, before the king of Achish and the princes of the Philistines, when as yet he was not a king himself; and when he was come to the throne, such kings as came to visit him, instead of talking with them about affairs of state, he spoke of the Scriptures, and of the excellent things they bear witness of; and such a practice he determined to pursue and continue in. *And will not be ashamed*: of the testimonies of God, and of the truths contained in them; and of speaking of them and for them; or of being reproached and vili-

^o So Gussetius Ebr. Comment. p. 458. דבר אמת על אמת verbum veritatis usque valde, Pagninus, Montanus; so Musculus, Junius & Tremellius.

^f משפטיו ad judicia tua expectavi, Pagninus, Montanus;

judicia tua expecto, Tigurine version, Musculus, Vatablus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^g ברחבת in latitudine, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

fied on that account. So the Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before kings; nor was he ashamed to speak of him and of his Gospel before Nero the Roman emperor, Agrippa king of the Jews, and before Felix and Festus, Roman governors; nor ashamed of the reproaches and afflictions he endured on that account.

Ver. 47. *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, &c.*] In perusing and practising them. *Which I have loved*; a good man loves the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and delights in them after the inward man.

Ver. 48. *My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, &c.*] Shewing by such a gesture his great esteem of them, and affection for them; stretching out his hands, and embracing them with both arms, as it were: and this being a praying gesture, 2 Tim. ii. 8, may signify his earnest desire and request that he might have grace and spiritual strength to enable him to observe them; and it being used in swearing, Gen. xiv. 22, may express his firm resolution in the strength of divine grace to keep them; and the phrase signifying a doing or an attempt to do any thing, Gen. xli. 44, may denote his practical observance of the commands, his putting his hand to do them with all his might. *And I will meditate in thy statutes*; and thereby get a better understanding of them, and be in a better disposition and capacity to keep them.

†, ZAIN.—*The Seventh Part.*

Ver. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, &c.*] The word of promise made unto him, concerning establishing his house and kingdom for ever; which he desires God would shew himself mindful of in fulfilling it, and renew and confirm his faith in it, and give him some fresh assurance of the performance of it, 2 Sam. vii. 16—29. Not that God ever forgets his promise, or is unmindful of his word; but so it seems when he delays the accomplishment of it; and when unbelief prevails and doubts arise, and faith is not in lively exercise; and he has not so clear a view of the promise, and comfortable assurance of its being performed. *Upon which thou hast caused me to hope*; which, when first made, he received in faith, and hoped and waited for the accomplishment of. A word of promise is a good ground of hope, let it be on what account it will; whether it relates to interest in God, as a covenant God and Father; or to pardon of sin; or to salvation by Christ; or to fresh supplies of grace and strength from him; or to eternal life through him: and the hope which is exercised on the promise is not of a man's self; it is the gift of God, a good hope through grace; which the Lord, by his spirit and power, produces, and causes to abound in, or to exercise in a comfortable manner.

Ver. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, &c.*] David had his afflictions, and so has every good man; none are without; it is the will and pleasure of God that so it should be; and many are their afflictions, inward and outward: the word of God is often their comfort under them, the written word, heard or read; and especially a word of promise, powerfully applied:

this is putting underneath everlasting arms, and making their bed in sickness. This either respects what goes before, concerning the word of promise hoped in, or what follows: *for thy word hath quickened me*; not only had been the means of quickening him when dead in sin, as it often is the means of quickening dead sinners, being the savour of life unto life; but of reviving his drooping spirits, when in affliction and distress; and of quickening the graces of the spirit of God in him, and him to the exercise of them, when they seemed ready to die; and to the fervent and diligent discharge of duty, when listless and backward to it.

Ver. 51. *The proud have had me greatly in derision, &c.*] Profane sinners, proud and haughty scorers, that make a jest of religion, and scoff at every thing serious and good: these derided the psalmist for his piety and religion, his principles and practices; in which he was a type of Christ, who was both the song of the drunkards, and was derided by the proud and haughty Scribes and Pharisees; as all self-righteous persons are, they who trust in themselves, and despise others, Psal. lxxix. 11, 12. Luke xvi. 14. and xviii. 9. Yet *have I not declined from thy law*; from walking according to it, as a rule of life and conversation; from professing and maintaining the doctrine of the word, the truths of the Gospel, he had knowledge and experience of; and from going on in the ways of God and true religion he was directed in; and this testimony the Lord himself gave of him, 1 Kings xiv. 8. and xv. 5. see Psal. xli. 19.

Ver. 52. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, &c.*] Either the judgments of God executed on wicked men; as the bringing a flood on the world of the ungodly; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; the cutting off of the Canaanites, and dispossessing them of their land: or the providential dispensations of God towards his own people; who sometimes chastises and corrects them, and brings them very low, and then raises them up again, as in the case of Job. These things the psalmist called to remembrance, and revolved them in his mind, which gave him pleasure and comfort: *and have comforted myself*; with such thoughts as these, that that God, who had cast down the mighty from their seats, and had scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts, and destroyed them, could easily rebuke the proud that had him in derision; and he that had shewn himself so good and gracious to his people, when brought low, could raise him out of his afflictions and distresses.

Ver. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, &c.*] Trembling, sorrow, and distress, to a great degree, like a storm, or a blustering, scorching, burning wind, as the word ^h signifies, which is very terrible. *Because of the wicked that forsake thy law*; not only transgress the law of the Lord, as every man does, more or less; but wilfully and obstinately despise it, and cast it behind their backs, and live in a continued course of disobedience to it; or who apostatize from the doctrine of the word of God; wilfully deny the truth, after they have had a speculative knowledge of it, whose punish-

ment is very grievous, Heb. x. 26—29. and now partly on account of the daring impiety of wicked men, who stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and run upon him, even on the thick bosses of his bucklers; because of the shocking nature of their sins, the sad examples thereby set to others, the detriment they are of to themselves, and dishonour they bring to God; and partly because of the dreadful punishment that shall be inflicted on them here, and especially hereafter, when a horrible tempest of wrath will come upon them. Hence such trembling seized the psalmist; and often so it is, that good men tremble more for the wicked than they do for themselves; see ver. 120.

Ver. 54. *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*] Meaning either his unsettled state, fleeing from place to place before Saul; or, literally, his house of cedar, his court and palace, which he considered no other than as an inn he had put into upon his travels homeward; or rather the earthly house of his tabernacle, in which, as long as he continued, he was but a pilgrim and stranger; or, best of all, the whole course of his life; which Jacob calls the days of the years of his pilgrimage, Gen. xlvii. 9. so Hipparchus the Pythagorean¹ calls this life a sort of a pilgrimage; and Plato also. This world is not the saints' house and home; this is not their rest and residence; they confess themselves pilgrims and strangers here; and that they belong to another city, and a better country, an heavenly one, which they are seeking and travelling to, Heb. xi. 13—16. And as travellers sing songs to themselves as they pass on, which makes the way the more easy and pleasant to them, so the psalmist had his songs which he sung in his pilgrimage-state; and these were the statutes, or word of the Lord, and the things in it, which were as delightful to him as the songs of travellers to them. Or the songs he made and sung were composed out of the word of God; and which may serve to recommend the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, made by him, the sweet psalmist of Israel, to the Gospel churches, to be sung by them, Ephes. v. 19.

Ver. 55. *I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, &c.*] In the night of distress and affliction, as Jarchi; or rather literally, in the night-season, when on his bed and awake: whilst others were asleep, he revolved in his mind the greatness of the divine Being; the perfections of his nature; his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; his word and ordinances, by which he was made known unto the sons of men; and these he called to mind and meditated upon in the night-watches, to encourage his faith and hope in the Lord, and draw out his love and affection to him. *And have kept thy law;* though imperfectly, yet spiritually, sincerely, heartily, and from a principle of love and gratitude, and with a view to the glory of God, and without mercenary and sinister ends.

Ver. 56. *This I had, because I kept thy precepts.*] Either the comfort he had from the word, the pleasure and delight he had in it, being his songs in his pil-

grimage, ver. 50, 54. see ver. 165. or this knowledge of the name of God, and the remembrance of it, and his carefulness and diligence in it in the night-season, were of the Lord, and gifts of his: or rather this he had from the Lord, that he kept the precepts and commands of God in the manner that he did; it was all owing to grace and strength received from him; for so the words may be rendered, *this was given unto me, that I have kept thy precepts*².

¶ CHETH.—*The Eighth Part.*

Ver. 57. *Thou art my portion, O Lord, &c.*] Which he chose and preferred to all others: to the riches, honours, and profits of this world; the grant of which was made to him in the covenant of grace; the first discovery of it was from the Lord himself; and the choice and claim were made under the influence of his grace; and a great act of faith it is to assert this, and a wonderful blessing to enjoy it. This is a large portion indeed, immense and inconceivable, soul-satisfying, safe, and for ever! see Psal. lxxiii. 26. *I have said that I would keep thy words;* keep his commandments, lay up his promises, observe his doctrines, profess and retain them; this he determined within himself to do, under a sense of the love of God to him, in being his portion and inheritance. Some render the words, in connexion with the former, thus, *my portion, O Lord, I said, is, or shall be, to keep thy words*¹; it is the part and portion of some to preach the word, and of others to hear it; and of all to keep or observe it, its precepts, promises, and truths. Aben Ezra gives the sense of them thus, "This I said to many, perhaps 'they will keep thy words;' namely, that the Lord was his portion, which he thought might induce them to an observance of them, as he had done.

Ver. 58. *I entreated thy favour with my whole heart, &c.*] Or, *thy face*³; to see it; or thy presence, to enjoy it; to have communion with God, and the light of his countenance; than which nothing is more desirable and delightful to a gracious man: as also to be remembered with the special favour of God, in which is life; to have his love shed abroad in the heart; to have large views of interest in it, and to be rooted and grounded therein; and this the psalmist entreated, not in an hypocritical manner, but with all sincerity, heartiness, and affection, having tasted that the Lord was gracious. Or, *made thy face sick*⁴; wearied him with supplications, gave him no rest until he obtained his request. *Be merciful unto me, according to thy word;* have compassion on me; sympathize with me in all my troubles; grant me fresh supplies of grace; and particularly shew and apply thy pardoning grace and mercy to me, according to thy word of promise in the covenant of grace, in which provision is made for forgiveness of sins; see Psal. li. 1. Aben Ezra and Kimchi think reference is had to Exod. xxxiii. 19. but rather it is to 2 Sam. xii. 13.

Ver. 59. *I thought on my ways, &c.*] What they were, whether right or wrong; whither they led, what would be the consequences of walking in them: the

¹ De Anim. Tranquill. inter Fragm. Pythagor. p. 11. Ed. Gale.

² כִּי quod, Pagninus, Montanus.

³ So Montanus, Piscator.

⁴ פָּנֶיךָ tuam faciem, Pagninus; tuas facies, Montanus.

⁵ כִּי לִי כִּי לִי tuum velut fatigavi vultum, Gejerus. So Horace, Carmin. l. 1. Ode 2. v. 26. prece qua fatigat virginis.

Septuagint and Arabic versions read, *thy ways*; no doubt the psalmist thought of both; of his own ways, in which he had walked; and of God's ways, which he directed him to walk in: and, considering the superior pleasure and profit of the latter, he preferred them to the former. The Targum is, *I thought to mend my ways, or make them good.* Hence he took the following step: *and turned my feet unto thy testimonies*; betook himself to the word of God, which testifies of his will, and directs to those ways he would have his people to walk in; and he steered his course of life and actions thereby; he turned from his own ways into the ways of God; under the influence of divine grace, he turned, being turned.

Ver. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*] As soon as he was sensible of his duty, he immediately complied with it; he consulted not with flesh and blood, but at once yielded a cheerful obedience to the commands of God. Instances of evangelical obedience of this kind we have in the three thousand converts, in Saul, and in the jailer and his house, Acts ii. 41. and ix. 18. and xvi. 33.

Ver. 61. *The bands of the wicked have robbed me, &c.*] Very probably Saul and his ministers seized on his effects, when he fled from him; and the Amalekites plundered him of all his substance, when they took Ziklag; and Absalom and the conspirators with him robbed him, when he was obliged, because of them, to retire from his palace and court, which they entered and took possession of. But Aben Ezra rejects this sense of the word, which Jarchi and Kimchi espouse, and we follow, and renders it, *took hold of me*; and so the Targum, "the company of the wicked" were gathered together against me: they surrounded him and put him into fear, great numbers of them encompassing him about; see Psal. xviii. 4. But *I have not forgotten thy law*; this was written in his heart; he kept it in his memory, and retained an affection for it; and could not be deterred from obedience to it by the numbers and violence of wicked men, who hated and persecuted him for his attachment to it.

Ver. 62. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, &c.*] Not only send up an ejaculatory thanksgiving upon his bed, but rise up from it and shake off his sleep, and in a set, serious, solemn manner, praise the Lord. This shews a great regard to him, and affection to this work, since it is with difficulty men prevail upon themselves to rise at midnight upon any occasion; at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises to God, Acts xvi. 25. *Because of thy righteous judgments*; upon the wicked, as Aben Ezra; the bands and troops of them that encompassed him about, and robbed him; but God avenged him of them, and for this he gave thanks, or for such-like things. Sometimes the judgments of God have been executed at midnight; as the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, and of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, when Israel sang his praise, Exod. xii. 29. and xiv. 20, 21. and xv. 1. and for the judgments of God upon antichrist the church will rejoice and give thanks, Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. Or rather by these may be meant the word of God, the precepts and ordinances of it, which are

all just and good; such is the law of God, and such are the ordinances of Christ, Psal. xix. 9. Prov. viii. 20.

Ver. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, &c.*] Not of the rich and mighty, much less of the wicked and ungodly; but of such who had the true fear of God upon their hearts, and before their eyes; who feared the Lord and his goodness, and truly served and worshipped him; even all of these, whether poor or rich, of whatsoever condition, or of whatsoever nation, being no respecter of persons. With these he was a partner in the blessings of the covenant, in the promises of it, in the graces of the spirit, and in a right and meetness for the same eternal glory and happiness: he went in company with them to the house of God, and joined with them in all acts of religious worship; he conversed privately with them about what God had done for the souls of him and them; he delighted in their company; he sympathized with them in their troubles; and was a companion with them in their tribulation, sorrows, and sufferings, as well as in their joys and comforts. *And of them that keep thy precepts*; as all such do who truly fear the Lord; for by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil, and cannot do those things that others do; cannot allow themselves in a wilful transgression of the divine precepts; but, influenced by the fear of God, observe and keep them.

Ver. 64. *The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy, &c.*] *Goodness or grace*; both of the providential mercy and goodness of God, which extends to all his creatures; and of his special grace and goodness to his own people, held forth in his word and ordinances; see Psal. xxxiii. 5. *Teach me thy statutes*; as an instance of mercy, grace, and goodness; see ver. 12, 26.

2, TETH.—The Ninth Part.

Ver. 65. *'Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, &c.*] In a providential way, ever since he had a being; by the protection and preservation of him, by following and loading him with benefits, by raising him from a low estate to the throne of Israel, by delivering him from many dangers and enemies, and by giving him rest from them all; and in a way of special grace and mercy, by making an everlasting covenant with him, by blessing him with all spiritual blessings, by giving him an interest in salvation by Christ, and hope of eternal glory. And thus he deals with all his servants; he does all things well by them; he deals well with them even when he afflicts them; he treats them as his Davids, his beloved and chosen ones, and his children. The Syriac version renders it as a petition, *do good with thy servant*; bestow benefits on him, or deal bountifully with him, as in ver. 17. *O Lord, according unto thy word*; thy word of promise: providential mercies are according to promise, for godliness or godly persons have the promise of the things of this life; and so are spiritual blessings, they are laid up in exceeding great and precious promises, which are yea and amen in Christ; and so is eternal glory and happiness; it is a promise which God, that cannot lie, made before the world began; so that there is a solid foundation laid for faith and hope as to these things; and

this confirms and commends the faithfulness of God to his people.

Ver. 66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge, &c.*] Or, a good taste^p: of the Lord himself, how good and gracious he is; of his grace and love, which is better than wine; of his word and the truths of it, which are sweeter to a spiritual taste than honey or the-honey-comb; and of the things of the spirit of God, which are savoury to a spiritual man, a distinguishing taste of things; for as the taste discerns perverse things in food, so a man of a spiritual taste distinguishes good from evil, truth from error; discerns things that differ, and approves of those that are most excellent, and abides by them. Or, a good sense^q, as it may be rendered; a good sense of the Scriptures, the true and right sense of them; and to have the mind of God and of Christ, and of the spirit of Christ, in the word; and to have distinguishing light in it, and a well-established judgment in the truths of it, is very desirable: as is also a spiritual and experimental knowledge of them, a growing and increasing one; a knowledge of God in Christ, and of his will; a knowledge of Christ, his person and offices, and the mysteries of his grace; which a truly gracious and humble soul desires to be taught, and is taught of God more or less. For I have believed thy commandments; the whole word of God, and all that is said in it; that it is of God, is the word of God and not the word of man; and therefore he was desirous of being taught the true meaning of it, and to be experimentally acquainted with it; the word of God is called his commandment, Psal. xix. 7. Or the precepts of the word; he believed these were the commandments of God, and not of men; delivered out by him, and enforced by his authority; and therefore he gave credit to them, and loved them, and desired better to understand and do them: or the promises and threatenings annexed to them, which he believed would be punctually fulfilled upon the doers or transgressors of them; and as for himself, he cheerfully yielded the obedience of faith unto them.

Ver. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, &c.*] From God; from his word, his ways and worship; like a lost sheep from the shepherd, the fold, the flock, and the footsteps of it; see ver. 176. Not that he wilfully, wickedly, maliciously, and through contempt, departed from his God; this he denies, Psal. xviii. 21. but through the weakness of the flesh, the prevalence of corruption, and force of temptation, and very much through a careless, heedless, and negligent frame of spirit, he got out of the right way, and wandered from it before he was well aware. The word is used of erring through ignorance, Lev. v. 18. this was in a time of prosperity, when, though he might not, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick, and forsake and lightly esteem the Rock of his salvation; or fall into temptations and hurtful lusts, and err from the faith, and be pierced with many sorrows, as an overlove of the world brings men into; yet he might become inattentive to the duties of religion, and be negligent of them, which is a common case. But now have I kept thy word: having been afflicted with outward and inward afflictions,

afflictions of body and mind; afflictions in person, in family and estate; afflictions in soul, through in-dwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face: all this brought him back again to God, to his word, ways, and worship; he betook himself to reading and hearing the word, if he might find any thing to relieve and comfort him under his trials; he observed the doctrines of grace in it, and kept the precepts of it, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of it, being restored by afflictions.

Ver. 68. *Thou art good, and doest good, &c.*] Essentially, originally, and only good, and the fountain of all goodness to his creatures; who does good to all men in a providential way, and especially to his own people; to whom he is good in a way of special grace and mercy, in and through his son Jesus Christ; and even he is good to them, and does good to them, when he afflicts them; he makes their afflictions work for their good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal. *Teach me thy statutes*; as a fresh instance of goodness; this had been often desired, being what lay much on his mind, and was of moment and importance; see ver. 12, 26, 33, 64.

Ver. 69. *The proud have forged a lie against me, &c.*] Or, sewed a lie to him^r; fastened a lie upon him, or sewed and added one lie to another. Either with respect to politics, as the proud and haughty courtiers of Saul, who represented David to him as a traitor, that had treasonable designs against him to take away his life, and seize his crown and kingdom, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9. or with respect to religion; so some proud scornful men, that derided him for his piety, and scoffed at his seriousness, gave out that it was all grimace and hypocrisy; raised calumnies upon him, and laid things to his charge he knew nothing of; and which were all lies, forged out of their own brains, and artfully and purposely put together to blacken his character, and lessen his esteem among men: and it is no unusual thing for wicked men to speak all manner of evil falsely against the people of God. But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart; observe the commands of God sincerely, heartily, and affectionately, and not in show and appearance only; and so make it evident that it was a lie that was forged against him; and this is the best way of answering such liars and defamers; see 1 Pet. iii. 16.

Ver. 70. *Their heart is as fat as grease, &c.*] Or tallow, a lump of it, fat or grease congealed. That is, the heart of the above proud persons, who abounded in riches, were glutted with the things of this world; had more than heart could wish, and so became proud and haughty; or their hearts were gross, sottish, senseless, and stupid, as persons fat at heart are; or as creatures over fat, which have little or no feeling: so these had no knowledge of the law of God, no sense of their duty, no remorse of conscience for sin; their hearts were hardened, and they past feeling, and given up to a reprobate mind; see Isa. vi. 9, 10. The Targum is, "the imagination of their heart is become gross as fat:" the Septuagint is, *curdled like milk*; that is, hardened, as Suidas^s interprets it. But I delight in thy law; after the inward man; as the apostle did, Rom. vii. 22. as

^p טעם bonitatem gustus, Piscator, Michaelis.

^q Bonitatem sensus, Montanus; i. e. sensum bonum, Gejerus.

^r חסד consuerunt, Tigurine version; assuerunt, Muis.

^s In voce *Ερωπεδο*.

fulfilled in Christ; as in his hands, as King and Lawgiver; as written upon his own heart; and so yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to it; he delighted in reading the law, in meditating on it, and in observing it.

Ver. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, &c.*] The good and profit of which he had observed before, ver. 67. see the note there. The following end being also answered thereby, *that I might learn thy statutes*; to understand them, and to keep them. Afflictions are sometimes as a school to the people of God, in which they learn much both of their duty and of their privileges; and when they are teaching and instructive, they are for good; see Psal. xciv. 12.

Ver. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*] The word of God, the doctrines contained in it; which, coming out of the mouth of God, and spoken by him, carries in it weight and authority, commands reverence and respect; and ought to be considered as indeed the word of God and not of man; and so of more value than thousands of pieces of gold and silver; or, as the Targum, than a thousand talents of gold and silver. The truths and doctrines of the word of God are not only comparable to gold and silver for their intrinsic worth and value; but are preferable to them, and to be received before them: David had his thousands of gold and silver, but he esteemed the word of God above them all; and willingly suffered afflictions, that he might understand it better; see ver. 127. Psal. xix. 10. Prov. viii. 10, 11.

JOB.—*The Tenth Part.*

Ver. 73. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, &c.*] Not the psalmist himself, nor his parents, but the Lord alone: for though parents are fathers of our flesh, they are but instruments in the hand of the Lord; though man is produced by natural generation, yet the formation and fashioning of men are as much owing to the power and wisdom of God, which are his hands, as the formation of Adam was. Job owns this in much the same words as the psalmist does, Job x. 8. see Psal. cxxxix. 13—15. God not only gives conception, and forms the embryo in the womb, but fashions and gives it its comely and proportionate parts. Or, *covered me*; the first word may respect conception, and this the covering of the fœtus with the secundine; see Psal. cxxxix. 13. *Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments*; since he had a proper comely body, and a reasonable soul; though debased by sin, and brought into a state of ignorance, especially as to spiritual things, he desires he might have a spiritual understanding given him; of the word of God in general, the truths and doctrines of it, which are not understood by the natural man; and of the precepts of it in particular, that he might so learn them as to know the sense and meaning of them, their purity and spirituality; and so as to do them from a principle of love, in faith, and to the glory of God: for it is not a bare learning them by heart, or committing them to memory, nor a mere theory of them, but the practice of them in faith and love, which is here meant.

Ver. 74. *They that fear thee will be glad when they*

see me, &c.] In outward prosperity, delivered from all troubles, set on the throne of Israel, and at rest from all enemies round about: and in spiritual prosperity, being illuminated by the spirit of God, having a spiritual understanding of divine things, an obedience of faith to the commands of God, in the lively exercise of grace upon him, in comfortable frames of soul, and flourishing circumstances. Now they that fear the Lord, that have the grace of fear in their hearts, and are true worshippers of God, as they delight to meet together, and are glad to see one another, so they rejoice in each other's prosperity, especially spiritual; see Psal. xxxiv. 1—3. *Because I have hoped in thy Word*; in Christ the essential Word, the hope of Israel; in the written word, which gives encouragement to hope; in the word of promise, on which he was caused to hope; and in which hope he was confirmed, and not disappointed, and so it made him not ashamed: and others rejoiced at it, because it was an encouragement to their faith and hope likewise.

Ver. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, &c.*] His word, the doctrines and precepts of it, they are all consistent with the holiness and righteousness of God; and so are his judgments on wicked men, they are righteous, just, and true: God is righteous in all his ways, there is no unrighteousness in any dispensation of his; and such are his corrections of his own people, and which seem to be chiefly intended here; and are so called, because they are done in judgment, with moderation and gentleness, in wisdom, and to answer the best purposes; and they are all right, for the good and profit of the people of God, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and not be condemned with the world: this the psalmist knew by experience, and owned and acknowledged. *And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*; in faithfulness to himself, his covenant, and promise; that upon forsaking his law, and not walking in his statutes, he would visit sin with a rod, and transgressions with stripes, though he would not take away his loving-kindness; and in faithfulness to David, for his spiritual and eternal good, in great sincerity, heartily, cordially, with real affection and love: his rebukes were faithful; the chastisement was not above measure or desert, nor above strength to bear it; see Psal. lxxxix. 30—33. Prov. xxvii. 6. Ezra ix. 13. 1 Cor. x. 13.

Ver. 76. *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, &c.*] Shewn in the provision and promise of a Saviour; in the forgiveness of sins through him; a discovery and application of which yields comfort under afflictions. *According to thy word unto thy servant*; a word of promise, in which he had assured him of his love, grace, mercy, and kindness; and that he would continue it to him, and comfort him with it: to make such a promise, and shew such favour, was an instance of condescending grace to him, who was but his servant, and unworthy of his regard.

Ver. 77. *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, &c.*] See the note on ver. 41. *That I may live*; not merely corporeally; though corporeal life is a grant and favour, and the continuance of it; it is owing to the tender mercies of God that men are not consumed:

but spiritually; the first principle of spiritual life is from the rich mercy and great love of God; his time of love is a time of life. Here it seems to design the lively exercise of grace, which is influenced, animated, and quickened by the love of God, as faith, hope, and love; or a living comfortably: without the love of God, and a view of it, saints look upon themselves as dead men, forgotten as they are, free among the dead, that are remembered no more; but in the favour of God is life; let but that be shewn, let the tender mercies of God come in full flow into the soul, and it will be revived, and live comfortably; and such also shall live eternally, as the fruit and effect of the same love and favour. *For thy law is my delight; or delights*; what he exceedingly delighted in, after the inward man, and yet could not live by it, without the mercy, love, and grace of God; see ver. 24, 47, 70.

Ver. 78. *Let the proud be ashamed, &c.*] The same persons he before speaks of as accursed, who had him in derision, and forged a lie against him. Here he prays that they might be ashamed of their scoffs and jeers, of their lies and calumnies, the evils and injuries they had done him; that they might be brought to a sense of them, and repentance for them; when they would be ashamed of them in the best manner: or that they might be disappointed of their ends, in what they had done, and so be confounded and ashamed, as men are when they cannot gain their point; or be brought to shame and confusion eternally. *For they dealt perversely with me without a cause; or, they perverted me with falsehood*; that is, they endeavoured to pervert him with lies and falsehood, and lead him out of the right way; or they attempted, by their lies and calumnies, to make him out to be a perverse and wicked man, and pronounced and condemned him as such, without any foundation or just cause for it. *But I will meditate in thy precepts*; he was determined, in the strength of grace, that those ill usages should not take off his thoughts from religious things, or divert him from his duty to his God: none of these things moved him; he still went on in the ways of God, in his worship and service, as Daniel did, when in like circumstances.

Ver. 79. *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, &c.*] Whose companion he was fond of being, ver. 63. There were some good men, it seems, that turned from him, took the part of his enemies, and sided with them against him, which was matter of grief to him. Some think this refers to the affair of Bath-sheba; when some that feared the Lord, that had been familiar with him, did not choose to keep company with him, but abstained from his conversation, having so foully sinned, and brought forth dishonour to God and on his ways. Jarchi and Kimchi both make mention of this. Now this grieved David; and he desires of all things that they would turn to him again, and favour him with their company; who were the excellent in the earth, in whom was all his delight. The Targum is, "turn to my doctrine;" to hear it, receive it, profess it, and abide by it. *And those that have known thy testimonies*; as such as fear the Lord do: they know them, and

have a spiritual understanding of what they testify of; they know them, and love them, and delight in them; they know them, and own, acknowledge, and profess them; they know them, and keep, and observe them; and an excellent character this is.

Ver. 80. *Let my heart be found in thy statutes, &c.*] Or *perfect*, and sincere: he desires that he might have a sincere regard to the ways and worship, ordinances and commands, of God; that he might have a cordial affection for them, and observe them, not in shew and appearance only, but heartily as to the Lord, and in reality and truth, like an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. *That I be not ashamed*; before men, conscious of guilt; or before God, at the throne of grace; where a believer sometimes is ashamed to come, not having had that regard to the statutes of the Lord he should have had, and that he might not be ashamed before him at the last day; but have confidence, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and the true grace of God implanted in him; which engaged him to a regard to all his commandments.

ג, CAPH.—The Eleventh Part.

Ver. 81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation, &c.*] Either for temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies; which, being promised, was expected by him from the Lord; but not coming so soon as looked for, his spirits began to sink and faint: or for spiritual and eternal salvation, for a view of interest in it, for the joys and comforts of it, and for the full possession of it in heaven; and, particularly, for the promised Messiah, the author of it, often called the Salvation of God, because prepared and appointed by him to be the author of it: of him there was a promise, which gave the Old-Testament saints reason to expect him, and for him they waited; his coming they earnestly wished for, but being long deferred, were sometimes out of heart, and ready to faint, which was here David's case. *But I hope in thy word*; the word of promise concerning deliverance and salvation, especially by the Messiah, which supported him, and kept him from fainting; that being firm and sure, for ever settled in heaven, and has the oath of God annexed to it, for the confirmation of it; and God is faithful that has promised, and is also able to perform; so that his word lays a solid foundation for faith and hope.

Ver. 82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word, &c.*] Either with looking for the Messiah, the essential Word, that was to be, and afterwards was made flesh, and dwelt among men; or for the fulfilment of the word of promise, on which he was made to hope; but that being deferred; and he believing in hope against hope, and looking out continually till it was accomplished, his eyes grew weary, and failed him, and he was just ready to give up all expectation of it; see Psal. lxxvii. 8. *Saying, when wilt thou comfort me?* The people of God are sometimes very disconsolate, and need comforting, through the prevalence of sin, the power of Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions; when they apply to God for comfort, who only can comfort them, and who has his set

* טעניו deliciae meae, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius; oblectationes meae, Gejerus; so Michaelis.

* ערונני mendacio me opprimere querunt, Tigurine version; mendacium, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

times to do it; but they are apt to think it long, and inquire, as David here, when it will be.

Ver. 83. *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke, &c.*] Like a bottle made of the skins of beasts, as was usual in those times and countries: hence we read of old and new bottles, and of their rending, Judg. ix. 13. Matt. ix. 17. Now such a bottle being hung up in a smoky chimney, would be dried and shrivelled up, and be good for nothing; so Jarchi's note is, "like a bottle made of skiu, which is dried in smoke;" and the Targum is, "like a bottle that hangs in smoke." It denotes the uncomfortable condition the psalmist was in, or at least thought himself to be in; as to be in the midst of smoke is very uncomfortable, so was he, being in darkness, and under the hidings of God's face; black and sooty, like a bottle in smoke, with sin and afflictions; like an empty bottle, had nothing in him, as he was ready to fear; or was useless as such an one, and a vessel in which there was no pleasure; like a broken one, as he elsewhere says, despised and rejected of men. It may also have respect unto the form of his body, as well as the frame of his mind; he who before was ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance, now was worn out with cares and old age, was become pale and wrinkled, and like a skin-bottle shrivelled in smoke. *Yet do I not forget thy statutes;* he still attended to the word, worship, ways and ordinances of the Lord; hoping in due time to meet with comfort there, in which he was greatly in the right.

Ver. 84. *How many are the days of thy servant? &c.*] If this is to be understood of the days of his life, they were very few, as the days of every man be; and if of his days of joy and comfort, peace and prosperity, they were fewer still; but if of days of adversity and affliction, which seems to be the sense, they were many indeed. *When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?* good men have their persecutors; there is a judgment that will be executed on them, if not here, yet hereafter; it is a righteous thing with God to do it; it is often deferred when the saints, through zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his justice, as well as for their own deliverance and comfort, are at times somewhat impatient for it, and earnestly solicit it, as the psalmist here; see Rev. vi. 9.

Ver. 85. *The proud have digged pits for me, &c.*] Laid snares and temptations in his way, to draw him into sin, and so into mischief; they sought indeed to take away his life, and formed schemes for it. The allusion is to the digging of pits for the taking of wild beasts; which shews the ill opinion they had of David, and their ill usage of him; see Psal. vii. 15. and ix. 15. *Which are not after thy law;* no, contrary to it; which forbids the digging of a pit, and leaving it uncovered, so that a neighbour's beast might fall into it, Exod. xxi. 33, 34. and if those might not be dug to the injury of beasts, then much less to the injury of men, to the hurt of the servants of the Lord, or to the shedding of innocent blood, which the law forbids.

Ver. 86. *All thy commandments are faithful, &c.*] Or, *faithfulness*: they are made by a faithful God, who is holy, just, and true; they command faithfulness, sincerity, and uprightness; and require men to love their

neighbours as themselves, and to do all they do faithfully, cordially, and affectionately; they are to be done in truth and faithfulness, in charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; and therefore to dig pits for men must not be after, but contrary, to the law of God. *They persecute me wrongfully;* without a cause, purely out of ill will and for religion's sake; which, as it is an argument with the saints to bear persecution patiently, it is used as an argument with the Lord, to arise and appear on the behalf of his persecuted ones, as follows: *help thou me;* against my persecutors, and out of their hands: God is able to help his people; he has promised to do it; it may be expected from him; and he is a present help in time of trouble. This is a suitable petition in the mouths of God's people, and should be a prayer of faith.

Ver. 87. *They had almost consumed me upon earth, &c.*] Almost destroyed his good name, wasted his substance, took away his crown and kingdom, and even his life; it was within a little of it, his soul had almost dwelt in silence; they had almost cast him down to the ground, and left him there. But all this was only on earth; they could not reach any thing that belonged to him in heaven; not his name, which was written there in the Lamb's book of life; nor his riches and inheritance there, the never-fading crown of glory laid up for him there; or that eternal life, which is hid with Christ in God for him. *But I forsook not thy precepts;* did not decline the service and worship of God, nor neglect his word and ordinances, though thus persecuted, and all these things came upon him for the sake of religion; see Psal. xiv. 17.

Ver. 88. *Quicken me after thy loving-kindness, &c.*] According to it, and with it; let me have some discoveries of it, and of interest in it; and that will quicken me, revive and comfort me, under all the reproaches, ill usage, and persecutions of men. The love of God shed abroad in the heart comforts and supports under all sorts of afflictions; it quickens the graces of the spirit, and brings them forth into lively exercise, as faith, hope, and love; and to a diligent and fervent discharge of every duty: it constrains to love the Lord, and live to him, to his glory, in obedience to his will. *So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth;* the word of God, which comes out of his mouth, testifies of him, and of his mind and will; and which is to be received and observed, as being greater than the testimony of men, 1 John v. 9.

5, LAMED.—The Twelfth Part.

Ver. 89. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.*] The Syriac version makes two propositions of these words, rendering them thus, *for ever thou art, O Lord; and thy word stands, or is firm in heaven;* and which agrees with the accents: the first of which is expressive of the eternity and immutability of God; and the other of the stability of his word: it is true of the essential Word of God, who was with God from all eternity; in time came down from heaven indeed to earth, and did his work, and then went to heaven again; where he is and will remain, until the times of the restitution of all things. The decrees and pur-

poses of God, what he has said in his heart that he will do, these are firm and sure; these counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; they are mountains of brass settled for ever, and more unalterable than the decrees of the Medes and Persians. The revealed will of God, his word of command, made known to angels in heaven, is regarded, hearkened to, and done by them: the word of the Gospel, published in the church, which is sometimes called heaven, is the everlasting Gospel, the word of God, which lives and abides for ever; what remains and will remain, maugre all the opposition of men and devils. The word of promise in the covenant made in heaven is sure to all the seed; every one of the promises is yea and amen in Christ, and as stable as the heavens, and more so; *heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*, Matt. xxiv. 35. The firmness of God's word is seen in the upholding and continuing the heavens by the word of his power, by which they were first made; and the certainty of the divine promises is illustrated by the perpetuity of the ordinances of heaven; see Jer. xxxi. 35. and xxxiii. 25, 26.

Ver. 90. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations, &c.*] Or to generation and generation⁷; to his people in every age, fulfilling his word, supplying their wants, giving them new mercies every morning and every day; never leaving and forsaking them, according to his promise: his faithfulness never fails, it endures for ever, and is exceeding great and large indeed; see Lam. iii. 23. Psal. lxxxix. 33. and c. 5. *Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth*; laid the foundation of it so firm and sure, that it cannot be removed: and though one generation has passed after another, the earth abides where it was, and will do for ever; and as firm and stable, and never-failing, is the faithfulness of God, which this is designed to illustrate. So some supply it, *as thou hast established the earth, &c.*²; see Psal. xxiv. 2. and civ. 5. Eccl. i. 4.

Ver. 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances, &c.*] That is, the heavens and the earth do, before mentioned, just as they were from the beginning of the creation. The heavenly bodies have the same motion, magnitude, distance, and influence; the sun rises and sets as it did; the moon keeps her appointed seasons of full and change, of increase and decrease; the fixed stars retain their place, and the planets have their exact revolutions: and on earth things are as they were; seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night; thus they are at this day, and will continue, according to the wise order and appointment of God. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, "they stand or continue" unto this day to do the will of God; to execute "his judgments and decrees, or observe his order and ordinances." For all are *thy servants*; or *they, or these all*²; the heavens and earth, and all that is in them, all the works of God; he called them into being, and they rose up at his command; he calls them to service, and they stand up as obedient ones to do his will; he *commandeth the sun, and it riseth not before its time*; and *he sealeth up the stars*, that they

shine not when he pleases; once he commanded the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and they obeyed him; see Isa. xlviii. 13. Job ix. 7. Josh. x. 12, 13. Hence it appears that the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, ought not to be served and worshipped; but the Lord, the Maker of them, only, since they are his servants; and that men ought surely to serve the Lord, if these do, and especially such who are his chosen, redeemed, and called ones.

Ver. 92. *Unless thy law had been my delights, &c.*] Not the law of works, the voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; which is terrible, and works wrath in the conscience; is a cursing and damning law to the transgressors of it; and so not delightful, unless as considered in the hands of Christ, the fulfilling end of it: but the law of faith, the doctrine of faith, or of justification by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, which yields peace, joy, and comfort, even in tribulation: or the whole doctrine of the Gospel, the law of the Messiah, the isles waited for; the doctrine of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ, which is exceeding delightful to sensible sinners. *I should then have perished in mine affliction*; referring to some particular time of affliction he was pressed with, either through the persecution of Saul, or the conspiracy of Absalom; which was very great and heavy upon him, so that he almost despaired of deliverance from it; and must have perished, not eternally, but as to his comforts: his heart would have fainted in him, and he would have sunk under the weight of the affliction, had it not been for the relief he had from the word of God, the doctrines and promises of it; he was like one in a storm, tossed with tempests, one wave after another beat upon him, and rolled over him, when he thought himself just perishing; and must have given all over for lost, had it not been for the delight and pleasure he found in reading and meditating on the sacred writings.

Ver. 93. *I will never forget thy precepts, &c.*] Not the precepts of the moral law, though he carefully observed and attended to them, laid them up in his mind, and did not forget to keep them; but the doctrines of the word, of the word which the Lord commanded to a thousand generations; these he endeavoured to remember, and not let them slip from him, since it follows: *for with them thou hast quickened me*: not with the precepts of the moral law, which cannot give life, quicken a dead sinner, nor comfort a distressed saint; it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death: but the doctrines of the word, of the Gospel, which are spirit and life; the savour of life unto life, the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; of refreshing their spirits, and cheering their souls, when in distress: and when they are made thus useful, they are not easily forgotten, they leave impressions which do not soon wear off; and besides, saints are careful to remember such words and truths, which have been of use unto them, since they may have occasion for them again.

⁷ גרר לך in generationem & generationem, Gejerus; in statem & statem, Cocceius.

² Quemadmodum vel sicut fundasti, Gejerus.

² ככל illa omnia, Junius & Tremellius; universa hæc, Gejerus.

Ver. 94. *I am thine, save me, &c.*] From all troubles and afflictions; from all enemies, temporal and spiritual; from Satan, and his principalities and powers, from sin, and all the wretched consequences of it; from hell, wrath, and damnation: salvation from all which is by Christ. And this is a prayer of faith with respect to him, founded upon his interest and property in him; whose he was by choice, by covenant, by gift, by purchase, and by grace: and this is a plea for salvation; thou hast an interest in me, I am one of thine, therefore let me not be lost or perish. *For I have sought thy precepts*; to understand them better, and observe them more constantly; and which sense of interest and relation, and of salvation, will influence unto.

Ver. 95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me, &c.*] This is another reason why he desires the Lord would save him; because wicked men, such who feared not God, nor regarded men, sons of Belial; such as Saul's courtiers and the conspirators with Absalom were, had laid wait and were waiting an opportunity, and were hoping and expecting to have one, that they might take away his life; destroy him out of the world, as Kimchi; or eternally, as Aben Ezra thinks; by endeavouring to draw him out of the right ways of religion and godliness, into the ways of sin and wickedness, and so ruin him for ever. But *I will consider thy testimonies*; the word of God, which testified of his power and providence, employed in the protection of his people, and so an encouragement to put trust and confidence in him; and of his mind and will, with respect to the way in which he should walk; and so making these his counsellors, as he did, ver. 24. and well weighing and considering in his mind what they dictated to him, he was preserved from the attempts of his enemies to destroy him, either temporally or spiritually.

Ver. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfection, &c.*] An end, limit, or border, to every country, as the Syriac version; as there is to every kingdom and state, and to the whole world; but none to the commandment of God: or an end of all created beings, the finished works of God, the most perfect in their kind. Many things had already fallen under the observation of the psalmist: he had seen men of the greatest strength, and of the most consummate wisdom, and that had attained to the highest degree of power and authority, of wealth and riches, and yet were all come to nothing; he had seen some of the most flourishing states and kingdoms brought to desolation; he had seen an entire end of them: he saw by the spirit of God, and by the word of God, and faith in it, that all things would have an end, the heavens and earth, and all that is therein; for so it may be rendered, *I see an end of all perfection*^b; or that the most perfect things will have an end, and that the end of them is at hand; see 1 Pet. iv. 7. Moreover, he had looked over the wisdom of this world, and the princes of it, which comes to nought; he had considered the several political schemes of government, the wisest digest and system of laws, made by the wisest lawgivers among men,

and found them all to be limited, short and shallow, in comparison of the word of God, as follows: the Targum is, "I have seen an end of all that I have studied in and looked into." But *thy commandment is exceeding broad*: the word of God is a large field to walk and meditate in; it is sufficient to instruct all men in all ages, both with respect to doctrine and duty, and to make every man of God perfect; it has such a height and depth of doctrine and mysteries in it as can never be fully reached and fathomed, and such a breadth as is not to be measured: the fulness of the Scripture can never be exhausted; the promises of it reach to this life, and that which is to come; and the precepts of it are so large, that no works of righteousness done by men are adequate and proportionate to them; no righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ, is as large and as broad as those commandments; wherefore no perfection of righteousness is to be found in men, only in Christ; who is the perfect fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, Rom. x. 4.

♫, MEM.—*The Thirteenth Part.*

Ver. 97. *O how love I thy law! &c.*] The whole word of God, the preceptive part of it; the commands of the moral law, which are holy, just, and good, and to be loved: but they are not loved by carnal men, whose minds are enmity to them, and therefore are not and cannot be subject to them, but despise and reject them; but to a good man, on whose heart they are written, they are delightful, and loved to admiration: though this is wholly owing to the grace of God; and marvellous it is that men so sadly depraved by sin should love the holy law of God; yet so it is, and David could appeal to God for the truth of it. So the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of Jesus Christ, are not grievous to saints, but loved, valued, and esteemed by them; likewise the doctrinal part of the word, the truths of the Gospel, which may be more especially meant by the *thorah*, or doctrine, here; which those who have had an experience of greatly love and justly value, because of the intrinsic worth of them, being comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; and for the profit and benefit of them to their souls, they being wholesome words, soul-nourishing doctrines, and so more to them than their necessary food; and for the pleasure they have in them, these being sweeter to them than the honey or honeycomb: particularly the exceeding great and precious promises of the word, which are more to be rejoiced at than a great spoil; and even the whole Gospel part of the word, that containing the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life through Christ; yea, the whole Scripture, which is both profitable and pleasant to read in, and hear explained. *It is my meditation all the day*; not only in the night, when at leisure, and free from the incumbrance of business; but in the day, and whilst engaged in the affairs of life, yea, all the day long; see Psal. i. 2. Or, *it is my discourse*^c; what he talked of, as well as what he thought on. Good men cannot forbear speaking of this or the other passage of

^b ראייתו video, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius.

^c שיוחתי de qua meus sermo est, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator; vel colloquium meum, Cocceius; so Michaelis.

Scripture, which has been of use unto them : and this is a proof of affection for the word ; for what men love, persons or things, they often think of, and frequently talk of ; see Deut. vi. 6, 7.

Ver. 98. *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, &c.*] David had his enemies, as every good man has : and these are often cunning and crafty ones, at least in wickedness ; many of them are wise and prudent as to natural things, wiser in worldly things and political matters than the children of light, and often lay deep schemes and take crafty counsel against the saints ; and yet they, by attending to the word and commands of God, and being under his direction and counsel, counterwork the designs of their enemies, and overturn their schemes and measures, which are brought to confusion ; honesty being in the issue the best policy. However, the people of God are wiser than they in the best things ; in the affair of salvation ; in things relating to a future state, and their happiness there ; which wisdom they attain unto through the word of God, which is written for their learning ; through the Scriptures, which are able to make men wise to salvation : these are the means, and no more ; for it is God that is the efficient cause, or makes the means effectual, to make them wise, and wiser than others ; it is owing to his divine teachings, to his spirit and grace. The words may be rendered, *it hath made me wiser in thy commandments than mine enemies* ^d ; that is, the law ; and so is another reason why it was so greatly loved by him : or, *thy commandments*, that is, every one of thy commandments, *have made me wiser, &c.* ^e. Joseph Kimchi gives this as the sense, “ by mine enemies thou hast made me wise ^f ; thou hast learned me thy “ commandments, so that I see they cannot remove “ thy law from my mouth.” *For they are ever with me ;* that is, the commandments of God, or his law, and the precepts of it ; they were his privy-counsellors, with whom on all occasions he consulted, and so became wiser than his enemies, and outwitted them : these were always near him, in his heart and in his mouth ; he was ever thinking and speaking of them, and so did not forget the instructions they gave him ; they were ever before his eyes, as the rule of his conduct.

Ver. 99. *I have more understanding than all my teachers, &c.*] Such as had been or would have been his teachers, who were bad ones in religious matters ; especially such might be the religious teachers in Saul's time, when David was a young man : as the priests, whose lips should keep knowledge, and deliver it to the people, were in the times of Malachi ; and as the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses's chair, were in Christ's time ; and as those legal teachers were in the apostles' times, who would be teachers of the law, not knowing what they said, nor whereof they affirmed ; such as these David exceeded in spiritual understanding. Or his good teachers are meant ; and though in common it is true that a *disciple is not above his master*, yet there are sometimes instances in which scholars exceed their teachers in knowledge and learning ; and this is no reproach to a master to have such

scholars : no doubt A pollos so improved in knowledge as to excel Aquila and Priscilla, of whom he learned much ; as the Apostle Paul excelled Ananias ; and so David excelled his teachers : and which is said by him, not in an ostentatious way of himself, nor in contempt of his teachers ; but to commend the word of God, the source of his knowledge ; and to magnify the grace of God, to whom he attributes all his wisdom, as in the preceding verse. Kimchi interprets it, “ of them all “ I have learned and received instruction ; and from “ them I have understood the good way, and they “ have taught me.” *For thy testimonies are my meditation ;* what he learned of his teachers he compared with the word, the Scriptures, which testify of the mind and will of God ; he searched into them, he meditated upon them, and considered whether what his instructors taught him were agreeable to them or no ; and by this means he got more understanding than they had.

Ver. 100. *I understand more than the ancients, &c.*] Than those that had lived in ages before him ; having clearer light given him, and larger discoveries made unto him, concerning the Messiah, his person and offices particularly, as it was usual for the Lord to do ; or than aged men in his own time : for though wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, may be reasonably supposed to be with ancient men ; who have had a long experience of things, and have had time and opportunity of making their observations, and of laying up a stock of knowledge ; and this may be expected from them, and they may be applied to for it ; yet this is not always the case ; a younger man, as David was, may be endued with more knowledge and understanding than such ; so Elihu ; see Job viii. 8—10. and xii. 12. and xxxii. 6, 7, 9. Or, *I have got understanding by the ancients ;* so Kimchi ; though the other sense seems preferable. *Because I keep thy precepts ;* keep close to the word ; attend to the reading of it, and meditation on it ; keep it in mind and memory, and observe to do the commands of it ; and by that means obtained a good understanding, even a better one than the ancients ; especially than they that were without it, or did not carefully attend unto it ; see Psal. cxi. 10.

Ver. 101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, &c.*] Of error or immorality, forbidden and condemned by the word of God ; every way that is evil in itself, or leads to evil, and in which evil men walk ; and though there may be many snares and temptations to walk in such a way, yet a good man cannot allow himself to walk therein, as others do ; he has not so learned the word of God ; he is under the influence of divine grace, and withholds himself from it ; he abstains from all appearance of evil, and lays a restraint, as upon his mouth and lips, so upon his feet, or guards his walk and conversation. This shews, that as David had an affection for the word of God, and made great proficiency in knowledge by it ; so it had an influence on his life and conversation, and his knowledge appeared to be not merely speculative, but practical : his end, in laying such a restraint upon his feet, was not out of vain glory, and to gain popular applause ;

^d So Junius & Tremellius.

^e So Cocceius, Muis, Gejerus, and the Targum.

^f Fas est & ab hoste doceri, Ovid.

nor through fear of losing his credit among men, nor of the wrath of God; but out of love to God, and to his word, as follows: *that I might keep thy word*; such was his love to it, and his regard to the honour of it; considering whose word it was, and with whose authority it was clothed, and whose glory was concerned therein; that he was careful to walk according to it, and in the way that directed to, and shun every other way.

Ver. 102. *I have not departed from thy judgments, &c.*] From the precepts of the word, from the ways and worship and ordinances of God; he had not wickedly and on purpose departed from them; whenever he did, it was through inadvertency, the weakness of the flesh, and strength of temptation; nor from the doctrines of the word, which he held fast, knowing of whom he had learned them, as follows: *for thou hast taught me*; the nature, excellency, and use of these judgments; he had taught him, by his spirit, experimentally to understand the doctrines of the word, and practically to observe the precepts of it; and this preserved him from an apostasy from either of them.

Ver. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste!* &c.] Who had a spiritual one; and could discern perverse things, and could taste how good and gracious the Lord is: and so his words were sweet unto him; the doctrines of grace, the truths of the Gospel, were delightful and pleasant to him; like unadulterated milk, desirable by him; like good wine, that goes down sweetly; like good food, that is exceeding palatable; or like honey, and even sweeter than that, as follows. And that words *may be tasted and eaten*, is not only agreeable to Scripture language, Jer. xv. 16. but to classical writers*. *Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth*; not only had they the nourishing nature and the refreshing virtue of honey, but the sweetness of it; yea, exceeded it in sweetness; see Paal. xix. 10.

Ver. 104. *Through thy precepts I get understanding, &c.*] Of the will of God; of his worship, the nature and manner of it; of his ordinances, their use and importance; and of his doctrines, and the excellency of them. *Therefore I hate every false way*; of worship; all superstition and will-worship, the commandments and inventions of men, and every false doctrine; all lies in hypocrisy, for no lie is of the truth; every thing that is contrary to the word of God, and is not according to truth and godliness. The Targum is, "I hate every lying man."

3. NUN.—The Fourteenth Part.

Ver. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, &c.*] The same Solomon says of the law and commandment, the preceptive part of the word, Prov. vi. 23. and the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it *law* here. This shews a man what is his duty, both towards God and man; by it is the knowledge of sin: this informs what righteousness that is God requires of men; by the light of it a man sees his own deformity and infirmities, the imperfection of his obedience, and that he needs a

better righteousness than his own to justify him in the sight of God; it is a rule of walk and conversation; it directs what to do, and how to walk. The Gospel part of the word is a great and glorious light; by which men come to have some knowledge of God in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful; of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life by him; and it teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly. The whole Scripture is a light shining in a dark place; a lamp or torch to be carried in the hand of a believer, whilst he passes through this dark world; and is in the present state of imperfection, in which he sees things but darkly. This is the standard of faith and practice; by the light of this lamp the difference between true and false doctrine may be discerned; error and immorality may be reprov'd, and made manifest; the way of truth and godliness, in which a man should walk, is pointed out; and by means of it he may see and shun the stumbling-blocks in his way, and escape falling into pits and ditches; it is a good light to walk and work by. The Targum is, "thy word is as a light that shines to my feet." It follows, *and a light unto my path*; the same thing in other words. Now it should be observed, that the word of God is only so to a man whose eyes are opened and enlightened by the spirit of God, which is usually done by means of the word; for a lamp, torch, candle, or any other light, are of no use to a blind man.

Ver. 106. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, &c.*] Or, *I have performed it*^b. The psalmist had not only taken up a resolution in his mind, but he had openly declared with his mouth, and professed in a solemn manner, that he would serve the Lord; he had sworn allegiance to him as his King, and, through divine grace, had hitherto kept it; and hoped he ever should, and determined through grace he ever would; see ver. 48. Isa. xlv. 25. *That I will keep thy righteous judgments*; the precepts of the word, the ordinances of the Lord, the doctrines of grace; all which are righteous, and to be kept, observed, and held to; though they cannot be perfectly kept unless in Christ the surety.

Ver. 107. *I am afflicted very much, &c.*] In a temporal sense, in his body, in his family, and by his enemies; in a spiritual sense, with the corruptions of his heart, with the temptations of Satan, and with the hidings of God's face; and what with one thing or another, he was pressed above measure, and his spirits sunk under the weight of the affliction, so that he was as a dead man; and therefore prays, *quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word*; see the note on ver. 25.

Ver. 108. *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord, &c.*] Not sacrifices out of his flocks and herds, such as were the voluntary and free-will offerings brought to the priests under the law, though there may be an allusion to them; nor out of his substance, such as David and his people willingly offered towards the building of the temple; but these are not the free-will offerings of his hands, but of his mouth; the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and

* *Mea dicta devorato*, Plauti *Asinaria*, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 59. *Edi sermonem tuum*, ib. *Aulularia*, Act. 3. Sc. 6. v. 1. *Gustare ego ejus sermonem volo*, ib. *Mostellaria*, Act. 5. Sc. 1. v. 15.

^b מִקִּימָה & statui, *Musculus*, *Muis*; idque ratum feci & implevi, *Michaelis*.

praise: prayer is an offering; see Psal. cxli. 2. and it is a free-will offering, when a man is assisted by the free spirit of God, and can pour out his soul freely to the Lord, in the exercise of faith and love. Praise is an offering more pleasing to God than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs, because it glorifies him; and it is a free-will offering when it is of a man's own accord, comes from his heart; when he calls upon his soul, and all within him, to bless the Lord: and as every good man is desirous of having his sacrifices accepted with the Lord, so they are accepted by him when offered up through Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15. Rev. viii. 3, 4. *And teach me thy judgments*; for though he was wiser than his enemies, and had more understanding than his teachers, or than the ancients; yet needed to be instructed more and more, and was desirous of being taught of God. This petition, or what is similar to it, is often put up.

Ver. 109. *My soul is continually in my hand, &c.*] In the utmost jeopardy, always exposed to danger, ever delivered unto death; killed all the day long, or liable to be so: this is the sense of the phrase; see Judg. xii. 3. 1 Sam. xix. 5. for what is in a man's hands may easily fall, or be taken out of them: so the Targum, "my soul is in danger upon the back of my hands continually;" the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *in thy hands*; but wrongly. *Yet do I not forget thy law*; it was written on his heart, and fixed in his mind; he had a true affection for it, and a hearty desire to keep it; and no danger could divert him from his duty; as Daniel, though he carried his life in his hand, yet continued to pray to his God as usual; nor could any thing move the Apostle Paul from the doctrine of the Gospel, and preaching it.

Ver. 110. *The wicked have laid a snare for me, &c.*] To draw him into sin, and so into mischief; and even to take away his life, as they are said to dig pits for him, ver. 85. *Yet I erred not from thy precepts*: not wilfully and wickedly, though through inadvertence and infirmity, as he often did, and every good man does; and indeed his errors are so many, that they cannot be understood and numbered. The sense is, he kept on in the way of his duty; did not desist from that, or wickedly depart from his God and his worship, to escape the snares of bad men.

Ver. 111. *Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, &c.*] The Scriptures, which testify of Christ and of his grace, and of the mind and will of God, are a portion of themselves; and a goodly heritage they are, better than thousands of gold and silver, preferable to all worldly inheritances; as they have been to many, who have forsaken all for Christ and his Gospel. These, like an inheritance, have been transmitted from father to son, from one age of the church to another, in successive generations; nor shall they depart from her, nor from her seed and seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever; they are an inheritance which will continue for ever, Deut. xxxiii. 4. Isa. lix. 21. These David chose and took, as for his counsellors, so for his portion and inheritance; and a wise and good choice he made; he chose the good part that should never be

taken away; his reason for it follows: *for they are the rejoicing of my heart*; the doctrines in them, the promises of them, when read or heard explained, gave him a sensible pleasure; revived his heart, and cheered his spirits, supported him under all his troubles, and caused him to go on his way rejoicing; see Jer. xv. 16.

Ver. 112. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, &c.*] He had prayed to God to incline his heart to them, ver. 36. and by the grace of God his heart was inclined to obedience to them; and nothing but that can incline the heart, which is naturally averse unto them: the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be, until it is made so by the grace of God, Rom. viii. 7. and by this the psalmist had prevailed upon his heart to keep the statutes of the Lord, and do them, and that continually; for a good man is desirous of being steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Even unto the end; the end of life, as long as he lived. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin version render it, *for a recompense*; and the Arabic version, *for an eternal recompense*; but the Ethiopic version the reverse, *not for a recompense*, or benefit: which latter is the truth, though neither of them a right version; for the statutes are to be kept, not for the sake of a recompense of reward, but from love to God, and in duty to him, without any mercenary views; though the word does sometimes signify a reward, and may be rendered here, *for ever there is a reward*; as there is in, though not for, keeping the commands; see Psal. xix. 11.

D, SAMECH.—The Fifteenth Part.

Ver. 113. *I hate vain thoughts, &c.*] Or *thoughts*: evil thoughts are undoubtedly meant, no other can be the object of hatred to a good man; they are such as are contrary to the law of God, and forbidden by it, mentioned in the next clause as the object of love, in opposition to these; and which are abominable to God, and defiling to men; should be forsaken, need pardon; and, if not pardoned, will be brought into judgment, and there exposed, and men punished for them. There are multitudes of these rise up in the minds of men, not only bad men, but good men; even sometimes atheistical blasphemous thoughts, as well as proud, haughty, revengeful, lustful, impure, and worldly ones; which, when observed by a good man, give him great concern and uneasiness, and raise a holy indignation in him against them. The word is used for the *opinions* of men; the ambiguous, doubtful, wavering, and inconstant sentiments of the mind, 1 Kings xviii. 21. and is used of branches, or the tops of trees, waved with the wind to and fro: and may be applied to all heterodox opinions, human doctrines, damnable heresies; such as are inconsistent with the perfections of God, derogate from his grace, and from the person and offices of Christ; and are contrary to the word, and which are therefore rejected and abhorred by good men. The Targum is, "I hate those who think vain thoughts;" and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of persons, thinkers, or devisers of evil things; and to this sense are the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which is approved of by

¹ לעולם עקב in aeternum est retributio, Clarius.

Gussetius^k; even free-thinkers, such as devise things out of their own brains, and regard not the law, doctrine, or word of God. *But thy law do I love*; which forbids and condemns such vain and wicked thoughts, and requires pure and holy ones. Or, *thy doctrine*; which comes from God, is concerning him, and reveals his mind and will, his grace and love, to men; the doctrine of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work; the doctrine of the Scriptures, which contain the whole Gospel of Christ, as well as the law of God; the doctrine according to godliness, and which is good, sound, and wholesome, and to be received in the love of it.

Ver. 114. *Thou art my hiding-place, &c.*] From temporal calamities. The perfections of God are chambers of retreat and safety to his people, where they may hide themselves and be safe, till such calamities are over, Isa. xxvi. 20. Psal. lvii. 1. And from spiritual evils; from avenging justice, from divine wrath, from the rage of Satan, and the fury of men, Isa. xxxii. 2. and xxv. 4. and from eternal death, and being hurt by it; the spiritual and eternal life of saints being hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. see Psal. xxxii. 7. *And my shield*; to protect from all dangers, and preserve from every enemy: such are the love and grace, the power and strength, the truth and faithfulness of God; which are the saints' shield and buckler, Psal. v. 12. and xci. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 5. such also the person, blood, righteousness, and salvation of Christ, who is a sun and shield; the shield of faith, or which faith holds up and defends the soul against the attacks of a powerful enemy, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Ephes. vi. 16. *I hope in thy Word*; in Christ the Word, for acceptance and justification, for peace, pardon, and eternal salvation; all which are in him: in the word of promise, for all supplies of grace, strength, light, life, and comfort here, and for glory hereafter, contained therein: see ver. 74, 81.

Ver. 115. *Depart from me, ye evil-doers, &c.*] The same with the evil-thinkers, ver. 113. According to Aben Ezra, they that think evil commonly do it; as they devise it, they commit it. This describes such persons whose course of life is, and who make it their constant business to do, iniquity; such the psalmist desires to depart his presence, to keep at a distance from him, as being very disagreeable to him; and who would be a great hindrance to him in keeping the commandments of God, as follows: these same words will be spoken by David's son and antitype, at the great day of account, Matt. vii. 23. *For I will keep the commandments of my God*; of God who has a right to command, and not of men, especially when opposed to the commands of God; of God, who is the covenant God and Father of his people; and whose covenant, grace, and favour, in choosing, redeeming, regenerating, and adopting them, lay them under greater obligations still to keep his commandments; and whose commandments are not grievous: and though they cannot be perfectly kept by good men, yet they are desirous of keeping them as well as they can, and determine in the strength of divine grace so to do; and which they

do out of love to God, and with a view to his glory, without any selfish or mercenary ends. The Syriac version renders it, *that I may keep, &c.* to which end he desires to be rid of the company of wicked men; who are both a nuisance to good men, and a hindrance in religious duties.

Ver. 116. *Uphold me according unto thy word, &c.*] In thy ways, that my footsteps slip not; in thine arms, and with the right hand of thy righteousness, from fainting and sinking under difficulties and discouragements, in trying circumstances; and from slipping and sliding out of the way of God; and from a total and final falling away, according to thy word of promise, that, as are the days of thy people, their strength shall be; and that thou wilt never leave them nor forsake them. The Targum is, "uphold me in thy word;" or by thy word, either essential or written. *That I may live*; meaning not corporeally, though none so live but whom the Lord upholds in life; but, spiritually, live by faith on Christ the Saviour, live comfortably on the word of promise, and live honourably, agreeably to the word of God, in all holy conversation and godliness. *And let me not be ashamed of my hope*: as men are, when they are disappointed of having and enjoying what they have been hoping and waiting for; but the grace of hope makes not ashamed, nor shall those who have it ever have any reason to be ashamed of it; since it is a good hope through grace; is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast; is upon a good foundation, Christ, and by which men are saved; and so may rejoice, in full hope of the glory of God they shall certainly enjoy.

Ver. 117. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe, &c.*] As all are, and none but such, who are in the hands of Christ; enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, upheld with the right hand of Jehovah, supported by his promises and grace, surrounded by his power, sustained by his love, and preserved in Christ Jesus. *And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually*; for nothing can more strongly engage a constant regard unto them than a sense of divine love, and a view of safety and security in the arms of it; or better enable to keep them than fresh communications of grace and strength: being upheld, saints hold on and out to the end; they go from strength to strength, run and are not weary, walk and faint not; and, having a supply of the spirit, walk on in the judgments of the Lord, and keep his statutes, and do them. Or, *and I will rejoice*^l in them, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or, *employ myself* in them, as Jarchi.

Ver. 118. *Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes, &c.*] That wander from the way of the Lord's commandments; that deviate from his precepts, go astray constantly and wilfully; a people that err in their hearts, and with all their hearts. These the Lord treads down, as mire in the streets, as grapes in a wine-press; which shews his abhorrence of them, his indignation at them, and how easily they are subdued under him. *For their deceit is falsehood*; or, *their hypocrisy is a lie*^m: the appearance they make is a false one; they appear outwardly righteous, but

^k Ebr. Comment. p. 564.

^l מְשַׁחֵם solatiabor, Montanus; delectabor, Pagninus, Musculus; so Ainsworth; voluptatem capiam, Tigurine version.

^m So Michaelis.

are inwardly wicked; have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it: or all their deceitful doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, though dressed up with all the art and cunning they are masters of; or all their subtle schemes to corrupt and subvert the true doctrines of the word are in vain and to no purpose.

Ver. 119. *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross, &c.*] Which is of no worth and value, useless and unprofitable; which is cast into the fire, and separated from the choice metal. This expresses the character and state of wicked men; who are of no account with God, are of no profit and advantage to him; nor to men, but hurtful and pernicious; are cast into the fire of God's judgments here, and into everlasting burnings hereafter; and will be separated from the righteous, and have no part and lot with them: these seem to be hypocrites also, who have made a shew of being gold and silver, when they were nothing but dross; and being reprobate silver, were rejected of God as such. *Therefore I love thy testimonies*; which discover such persons when brought to be tried by them; and which require purity of heart and life, and caution against evil ways and evil men, and are a means of preserving from them.

Ver. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, &c.*] Not for fear of the wrath of God coming down upon himself, nor for fear of eternal damnation; but for fear of what was coming upon the wicked, for their sins and transgressions. The word ^a used signifies such a dread and horror, which seizes a man to such a degree, that it makes the hair of his flesh to stand up; as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; see ver. 53. Job iv. 14, 15. *And I am afraid of thy judgments*; not of their coming down upon him, but upon the wicked; the thought of which is more awful to good men than to the wicked themselves; and especially when under any darkness, doubts, and fears; lest, being conscious to themselves of their own weakness, they should be left to join with the wicked in their sins, and so be partakers of their plagues.

Y, AIN.—*The Sixteenth Part.*

Ver. 121. *I have done judgment and justice, &c.*] As king of Israel; which is the character given of him, 2 Sam. viii. 15. and in which he was a type of Christ, Jer. xxiii. 5. Isa. ix. 7. and as a private person; which is every one's duty, and every good man especially will be desirous of performing it: it is not indeed perfectly done by any, and therefore not to be trusted to; nor was it so done by David; nor did he place his confidence in it; nor did he say this in a boasting way, but in defence of himself and his innocence against those who oppressed him with their calumnies, as appears from the next clause. The Syriac version takes it to be an address to God, and as describing him, *O thou that doest judgment and justice!* to whom the following petition is directed: *leave me not to mine oppressors*; David had his oppressors, as all good men have, and power was on their side; but they could do no more, nor further exercise it, than as they were permitted by the Lord; for they had no power but what was given them from above; and he applies to God, and not men, for re-

lief; and deprecates being given up to them, and left in their hands.

Ver. 122. *Be surety for thy servant for good, &c.*] The psalmist was, in a like case with Hezekiah, oppressed; and therefore desires the Lord would undertake for him, appear on his side, and defend him, Isa. xxxviii. 14. and if God himself is the surety of his people, and engages in their behalf, they need fear no enemy. What David prays to God to be for him, that Christ is for all his people, Heb. vii. 22. He drew nigh to God, struck hands with him, gave his word and bond to pay the debts of his people; put himself in their law-place and stead, and became responsible to law and justice for them; engaged to make satisfaction for their sins, to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification, and to preserve and keep them, and bring them safe to eternal glory and happiness; and this was being a surety for them for good. The Syriac version is, *delight thy servant with good things*; and to the same sense the Targum and Kimchi interpret it; but Jarchi and Aben Ezra take the word to have the same meaning we do; and so Aquila and Theodotion translate it: the sense Arama gives is, "be surety " for thy servant, that I may be good." *Let not the proud oppress me*; the oppressors of God's people are generally proud; they are such who deal in proud wrath; it is in their pride, and owing to it, they persecute them, Psal. x. 2. This has been their character in all ages, and agrees with the man of sin and his followers, who is king over all the children of pride; but wherein such men deal proudly and oppress, God is higher than they, and therefore most proper to be applied unto.

Ver. 123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, &c.*] For temporal salvation or deliverance from oppressors; and for spiritual salvation, for views of an interest in it, the joys and comforts of it; and for the Messiah, the author of it; whom he was looking wistfully for, but, not coming so soon as expected, his eyes were tired and weary, and ready to fail, and his heart to faint; see the note on ver. 81. *And for the word of thy righteousness*; for the word of promise, which the righteousness or faithfulness of God was engaged to perform; or for the law of God, the rule of righteousness, and which shews what righteousness God requires; and for the bringing in of that righteousness of the Messiah, which could answer its demands; or for the Gospel, and more clear ministration of it, which is called the word of righteousness, Heb. v. 13. in which the righteousness of God is revealed; the righteousness which Christ, who is God as well as man, has wrought out; and which his father has approved of, accepted, and imputes to his people, and justifies them with; and which word also teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

Ver. 124. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, &c.*] Which is either general and providential, and reaches to all his creatures; and according to which David had been dealt with all his days, and which he desires a continuance of: or special; and which is in Christ, and communicated through him; and in whom he deals with his people, not according to their merits, but his own mercy; by receiving and

^a יסדף חסדו, Symmachus in Drusius; horripilavit, Cajetanus apud Gejerum.

accepting them, and admitting them into his presence, and to partake of his favours, and by pardoning their sins and saving their souls; which is not by works of righteousness they have done, but according to his abundant mercy; and by giving them eternal life and happiness at the great day. *And teach me thy statutes*; which is often requested; and which not only shews the need of divine teachings, and the psalmist's earnest and importunate desire to have them; but also that the mercy, grace, and kindness of God, have an influence on the holy life and conversation of the saints, and do not at all encourage licentiousness.

Ver. 125. *I am thy servant, &c.*] Not only by creation, but by grace; and as he had a work to do, he desires to know what it was; and as it was proper he should know his Master's will, he applies to him for it; using this as an argument, that he was his servant, devoted to his service, and willing to perform it to the best of his knowledge and ability; and therefore prays, *give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies*; the Scriptures, which testify of the will of God; which are only rightly understood by those who have their understandings opened and enlightened; or have an understanding given them, that they may understand them, so as to receive and embrace the doctrine, and do the precepts of them: and such an understanding is the gift of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace; see Luke xxiv. 45. 1 John v. 20.

Ver. 126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, &c.*] To send the Messiah, to work righteousness: to fulfil the law, and vindicate the honour of it, broken by men. It was always a notion of the Jews that the time of the Messiah's coming would be when it was a time of great wickedness in the earth; and which seems to agree with the word of God, and was true in fact; see Mal. ii. 17. and iii. 1, 2, 3, 15, 16. and iv. 2. Or to arise and have mercy on Zion, for which there is a fixed time: and it seems as if it would be when religion greatly declines, and profaneness abounds; when love is waxen cold, and there is no faith in the earth; and when the days are like those of Noah and Lot, Luke xvii. 26, 28. and xviii. 8. or to take vengeance on wicked men, by sending down his judgments on them now, as well as he will punish them hereafter; for which a time is appointed, though no man knows of it. The words may be rendered, *it is time to work for the Lord*; so the Septuagint version; to which agrees the Targum, "it is time to do the will of the Lord;" and the Syriac and Arabic versions, *it is time to worship the Lord*. It is proper, in declining times, for good men to beatir themselves and be in action, to attempt the revival of religion, to do all that in them lies to support the cause of God, and to vindicate his honour and glory. *For they have made void thy law*; the whole word of God, the Scriptures; as atheists and deists, who deny the authority of them; Pharisees, who preferred their oral law to the written word, and by the traditions of the elders made it of none effect; Papists, by their unwritten traditions, and denying the common people the reading of the Scriptures in their mother tongue; and all false teachers, who wrest the Scriptures, and put false glosses on them, and handle

the word of God deceitfully; and all profane sinners, who bid defiance to the law, and, as much as in them lies, abrogate it, and set up a law of their own, and frame mischief by it: or the law of faith may be meant; the Gospel of Christ, and the several truths of it, which are opposed, contradicted, and blasphemed by men of corrupt minds; and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; which are made void by the doctrine of works; and even the law itself is made void by the same: for not those that maintain the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, but those that establish their own, make void the law; presenting a righteousness to it, which is not answerable to its demands, Rom. iii. 31.

Ver. 127. *Therefore I love thy commandments, &c.*] Because he was the Lord's servant, as Aben Ezra; or rather because the wicked made void the law. His love was the more inflamed and increased towards it by the contempt it was had in by others; he preferred it *above gold, yea, above fine gold*; or gold of Phez, a place where the best gold was, as was thought: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it *the topaz*; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, *precious stones or gems*; see ver. 72. and Psal. xix. 10.

Ver. 128. *Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, &c.*] He had an impartial regard to all the commandments of God; and valued one as well as another, and walked according to all of them; making no difference either in his affection or practice between one and another, as being more or less necessary, just, and right: he had an equal respect to the lighter and weightier matters of the law; and, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; looking upon them all, with respect to every thing commanded or forbidden by them, to be just and equitable. *And I hate every false way*; every command, institution, and ordinance of men, which are opposed to the will of God; every false way of worship, all superstition and idolatry; every false doctrine whatsoever is contrary to the testimonies and word of God: and indeed where there is a true love of the word, worship, and ordinances of God, there must be an hatred of these.

B, PE.—The Seventeenth Part.

Ver. 129. *Thy testimonies are wonderful, &c.*] The Scriptures, which testify of God, his mind and will, are wonderful both with respect to the author of them, the things contained in them, and the use and advantage of them. They give an account of the wonderful works of creation; of their author and matter; of the manner, order, and time of their being wrought: they relate many wonderful events of Providence, both in a way of mercy and judgment; they declare several surprising miracles, wrought by Moses and others, and exhibit many marvellous things in types and figures: they are full of prophecies of extraordinary things, which have been exactly accomplished, and contain many exceeding great and precious promises; and abound with doctrines abstruse and recondite, hid from the carnal sense and reason of men; the mysteries of the Gospel, and of the grace of God, such as respect

* לעשות ליהוה *tempus est agendi pro Deo*, Gusssetius, p. 649. *Tempus faciendi Domino*, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus.

the divine Persons in the Trinity; the person and grace of Christ; the wonderful love of God and Christ towards men; the amazing blessings of grace through him, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life by him. *Therefore doth my soul keep them*; as a rich treasure, which he laid up in the cabinet of his heart, and preserved as what was most rare and valuable: and such are the wonderful things in the word of God; and such is the efficacy of its doctrines, and the influence the truths of it have upon the minds of gracious persons; that these engage them to keep and observe the precepts it enjoins, and that heartily and sincerely, with their whole spirit and soul.

Ver. 130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light, &c.*] The beginning of them; the first three chapters in Genesis, what light do they give into the origin of all things; the creation of man, his state of innocence; his fall through the temptations of Satan, and his recovery and salvation by Christ, the seed of the woman! the first principles of the oracles of God, the rudiments of religion, the elements of the world, the rites of the ceremonial law, gave great light into Gospel mysteries. As soon as a man enters upon reading the Scriptures, if he has any degree of understanding of the things in them, they immediately throw light into his mind; or, however, as soon as ever the word has an entrance into the heart, and through the spirit, power, and grace of God, makes its way and has a place there, that being opened by the Lord for that purpose, light arises in darkness. It may be rendered, *the opening of thy words giveth light*^p; and may signify either the interpretation and explanation of the word of God by the ministers of it, which is often of singular use for enlightening and warming the hearts of men, Luke xxiv. 32. Acts xvii. 3. and to this sense are the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions; the one rendering it *the declaration of thy words*, the other, *the manifestation of them*; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions; and to this sense is the Targum; “the impression of thy words will enlighten those that are dark.” Or it may intend the word that opens, as well as is opened, since it is the means of opening blind eyes; and so giving light to men to see their lost state by nature, and the suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, his fulness and grace, ability and willingness; to behold the wondrous things of the Gospel, the way they should walk in, and the duties of religion they should perform. *It giveth understanding unto the simple*: who want understanding in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, as all men do; and who are sensible of their want of it, ingenuously confess it, and are meek and humble; and so not above instruction, as proud and conceited persons are. Some render it *babes*^q; and it may design such who are but of weak parts, in comparison of others, to whom the things of the Gospel are revealed, when they are hid from the wise and prudent: Christ by his spirit opens their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures; and by means of them gives them an understanding of himself, and of those things which make them wise unto salvation,

and make for their spiritual peace and comfort, and their eternal welfare; see Psal. xix. 7. Matt. xi. 25.

Ver. 131. *I opened my mouth, and panted, &c.*] As a person out of breath does, through walking or running; he stops and pants, and opens his mouth, to draw in air to his relief: or as hungry and thirsty persons pant for food and drink, and open their mouths to receive it, before it can well be brought to them. So the psalmist panted after God, and communion with him; desired the sincere milk of the word; longed for the breasts of ordinances, and even fainted for the courts of the Lord, Psal. xlii. 1. and lxxxiv. 2. *For I longed for thy commandments*; for an opportunity of waiting upon God in the way of his duty; to hear his word, and attend his worship.

Ver. 132. *Look thou upon me, &c.*] Not as in himself; a sinful creature will not bear looking upon by the Lord, especially with the strict eye of justice; but as in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness; and so not merely in a providential way, though that is a favour, but in a way of special grace and mercy. It may be rendered, *turn unto me*^r; as it is in Psal. xxv. 16. and lxxxvi. 16. The Lord had turned from him, and had hid his face, which had given him trouble; and therefore he desires he would turn again to him, and shew him his face and favour. *And be merciful unto me*; in forgiving his sins, and admitting him to communion with him: he pleads mercy, and not merit; and this shews it was not any look but a look of grace and mercy he prays for. *As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name*; that is, himself: such as love the Lord have favours shewn them; he shews mercy to thousands of them that love him; he loves them that love him; he manifests his love to them, and admits them to great nearness to himself. David was one of these; he loved him in sincerity, and above all others; and could appeal to him for the truth of it, and desires no other nor better usage than such had; and indeed a man need not desire better, since all things work for their good now, and it is not to be conceived what God has prepared for them hereafter.

Ver. 133. *Order my steps in thy word, &c.*] Or, *by thy word*^s, or according to it. Which is the rule of practice and action, as well as of faith; and happy are they who walk according to the directions of it; but it is not in the power of man to order and direct his steps: this is done by the Lord; and such who acknowledge him in their ways, and apply to him for direction, are and shall be thus favoured by him; see Jer. x. 23. Psal. xxxvii. 23. Prov. iii. 6. *And let not any iniquity have dominion over me*; not only greater sins or presumptuous ones, very gross iniquities, as in Psal. xix. 13. but lesser ones, even the least of them. It is a sad thing to be enslaved to any lust or sin, be it what it will: sin reigns over wicked men even unto death; and it oftentimes has great power over good men, puts them upon doing that which is evil, and hinders them from doing that which is good; it carries them captive, and threatens to have the ascendant over them, and rule in them, which they deprecate; and such a prayer

^p פתח apertio, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus, Michaelis; apertura, Cocceus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.
^q בָּבִים, Sept. parvulis, V. L. so Arab. Ethiop. Musculus.

^r אָלַי convertere ad me, Michaelis; turn the face unto me, Ainsworth.

^s אֶלְוִיךָ eloquio tuo, Tigurine version; secundum eloquium tuum, Musculus.

may be the prayer of faith, since it is promised *sin shall not have the dominion over you*, Rom. vi. 14. Kimchi interprets this of the evil imagination or corruption of nature; R. Moses understands it of a wicked man; and so the Syriac version.

Ver. 134. *Deliver me from the oppression of man, &c.*] Of any man, of proud and haughty men, as in ver. 122. the psalmist always desired rather to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of wicked men, whose tender mercies are cruel. Some render it, *from the oppression of Adam*, as Jarchi observes; and Arama interprets it of the sin of Adam, and as a prayer to be delivered or redeemed from it; as the Lord's people are by the blood of Christ: Jarchi understands it of the evil imagination or corruption of nature, which oppresses men; which sense Arama also makes mention of. *So will I keep thy precepts*: being delivered out of the hands of wicked men, and free from their snares and temptations; see ver. 115. Luke i. 74, 75.

Ver. 135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant, &c.*] That is, lift up the light of thy countenance on me; favour me with thy gracious presence, and communion with thyself; manifest thyself unto me, and shed abroad thy love in my heart; cause the sun of righteousness to arise upon me, and commune with me, from above thy mercy-seat; restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and let me have the comforts of thy good spirit: this prayer is a part of the blessing of the high-priest, Numb. vi. 25. *And teach me thy statutes*: the more communion a man has with God, the more desirous he is of learning and doing his will. This is a frequent petition; see ver. 124.

Ver. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, &c.*] That is, out of them; as the Syriac version: or, *mine eyes let down rivers of waters*; see Lam. iii. 48. that is, an abundance of tears, which flowed like a river; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the excessiveness of grief. The reason follows, *because they keep not thy law*: the persons are not mentioned, but must be understood of wicked men; whose open and impudent transgression of the law in innumerable instances, and in the most flagrant manner, gave the psalmist great distress, as it does all good men; because the law of God is despised, his authority is trampled on, his name is dishonoured, and he has not the glory which is due unto him. The gloss of Arama is, "because Adam and Eve kept not thy law;" which transgression brought ruin on all mankind. The Septuagint and Arabic versions very wrongly read, *because I have not kept thy law*; as if his grief was on account of his own sins: and so Kimchi indeed interprets it; and both he and Ben Melech by *they* understand his eyes, from whence his tears flowed in such abundance; because they were the caterers for sin, and the cause and occasion of the transgressions of the law of God by him: and this sense is made mention of by Aben Ezra.

א, TZADE.—The Eighteenth Part.

Ver. 137. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, &c.*] Essentially, originally, and of himself; naturally, immutably,

and universally, in all his ways and works of nature and grace; in his thoughts, purposes, counsels, and decrees; in all the dispensations of his providence; in redemption, in the justification of a sinner, in the pardon of sin, and in the gift of eternal life through Christ. *And upright are thy judgments*; they are according to the rules of justice and equity; the precepts of the word, the doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the judgments of God inflicted on wicked men, and all the providential dealings of God with his people, and also the final judgment.

Ver. 138. *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous, &c.*] The Scriptures are holy, just, and good; and what is contained in them are according to godliness; are for instruction in righteousness, and teach men to live soberly, righteously, and godly. *And very faithful; or true*: all the sayings in them are true and faithful sayings; for they are the sayings of God that cannot lie; the promises in them are faithfully performed by him that made them; they are all yea and amen in Christ. The words may be rendered, *thou hast commanded righteousness in thy testimonies, and truth or faith exceedingly*; so the Arabic version. God in the law requires of men a perfect righteousness, every way agreeable to its demands; and in his Gospel he reveals the complete righteousness of his son, which he has commanded to be published in it, to be laid hold on and received by faith as a justifying righteousness, as it is to all that believe: this, with every other truth of the Gospel, is made manifest by the Scriptures according to the commandment of the everlasting God, Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

Ver. 139. *My zeal hath consumed me, &c.*] Zeal for God and his glory, for his word and ordinances and worship; which is a fervour of the mind, burning love, and flaming affections for God, shewn in a holy indignation against sin and sinners. This was a zeal according to knowledge, sincere and hearty, and what continued; and which was shewn in embracing and defending the truths of the word, and resenting every indignity cast upon them; to such a degree, that it ate up his spirit, wore away his flesh, and almost consumed him; see Psal. lxxix. 9. *Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words*; not merely through an indifference to them, and inattention in hearing them; nor through want of an earnest heed to keep and retain them; nor through negligence in laying them up, and a carelessness in making use of proper means to recollect them; but through an aversion to them, an hatred of them, and a spiteful malicious contempt of them, casting them away and despising them; which stirred up the spirit of the psalmist, and raised such an emotion in him as was almost too much for him.

Ver. 140. *Thy word is very pure, &c.*] Or, *exceedingly purified*: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times, Psal. xii. 6. free from all drossy matter; from any mixtures, or the corruptions and doctrines of men; and which tends and leads to purity of heart and life. *Therefore thy servant loveth it*; that which carnal men hate the word of God for, because it

[†] עיני ירו עיני oculi mei deduxerunt, V. L. rivos aquarum de.nittu nt oculi mei, Gejerus.

[‡] אמנות מאד & verissimæ, Vatablus, veritas valde, i. e. prorsus verissima, Gejerus.

^{*} מן טהור purificationem valde, Montanus; liquatum, vel expurgatum valde, Gejerus.

forbids and condemns all impurity of flesh and spirit, all impure thoughts, words, and actions; that a good man loves it for, and which is an evidence of a sanctified heart.

Ver. 141. *I am small and despised, &c.*] Or, *I have been*². Some versions render it *young*³; as if it had respect to the time of his anointing by Samuel, when he was overlooked and despised in his father's family, 1 Sam. xvi. 11. and xvii. 8. but the word here used is not expressive of age, but of state, condition, and circumstances; and the meaning is, that he was little in his own esteem, and in the esteem of men, and was despised; and that on account of religion, in which he was a type of Christ, Psal. xxii. 6. Isa. liii. 3. and which is the common lot of good men, who are treated by the world as the filth of it, and the offscouring of all things. *Yet do not I forget thy precepts*; to observe and keep them: the ill treatment of men on account of religion did not cause him to forsake it, or to leave the ways, word, and worship of God; see ver. 83, 109. and Psal. xlv. 17.

Ver. 142. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, &c.*] Or, *is for ever*². The rectitude of his nature, his faithfulness in his promises, and his kindness and beneficence to his people; and particularly the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel; the righteousness of his son, which he approves and accepts of, and imputes to him that believes. This is a righteousness that will last for ever, will never be abolished; it will answer for them that have it in a time to come; it is of use throughout the whole of life, at death, in the day of judgment, and to all eternity; see Dan. ix. 24. *And thy law is the truth; or thy doctrine; or thy word*, as the Arabic version. The Scriptures are called the Scriptures of truth, Dan. x. 21. they come from the God of truth, and all that is contained in them is truth; the legal part of them is truth, and so is the Gospel; that is called the word of truth, and truth itself: it is concerning Christ, who is the truth; and it is directed into and made effectual by the spirit of truth, and contains in it many excellent truths; and is therefore deservedly valued and esteemed by all good men; see John xvii. 17.

Ver. 143. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, &c.*] Or, *found me*². Outward troubles and inward distress; troubles arising from his enemies, the men of the world, that hated and persecuted him; and from a body of sin and death, from the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; some from without, and others from within; troubles both of body and mind, which is what all good men are liable to. *Yet thy commandments are my delights*; so far from being grievous, that they were a pleasure to him; yea, exceedingly delighted him, and cheered and refreshed his spirits amidst all his troubles.

Ver. 144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting, &c.*] Or, *for ever*². The righteousness which they require, or which they publish; the righteousness revealed in the Gospel, which is the righteousness of Christ; see the note on ver. 142. *Give me under-*

standing, and I shall live; an understanding of the testimonies of the Lord, of the word of God, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; an understanding of divine and spiritual things; a clearer and larger understanding of them, which is the gift of God; both that itself at first, and an increase of it here prayed for, the end, issue, and effect of which is life. Such live spiritually, and by faith; they live cheerfully and comfortably, and *for ever*, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi repeat from the former clause: *for this is life eternal to know the only true God and Jesus Christ*; or to have a spiritual understanding of them, and of those things which relate to spiritual peace and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, John. xvii. 3.

פ, קופח.—The Nineteenth Part.

Ver. 145. *I cried with my whole heart, &c.*] Prayer is often expressed by crying; which sometimes signifies mental, and sometimes vocal prayer; and generally supposes the person praying to be in distress, either outward or inward. This prayer of the psalmist's was hearty and cordial, not with his mouth and lips only, but with his heart also; it did not proceed from feigned lips, but was put up in sincerity and truth; yea, it was with his whole heart, with all the powers and faculties of his soul employed; his affections set on God, the desires of his soul after him, and his will submitted to his; it denotes the intenseness, earnestness, and fervency of prayer. *Hear me, O Lord*: the prayer he had put up, and answer it. Some persons pray, and that is enough; they do not concern themselves whether their prayers are heard or no: but David desired an answer, and looked after that. *I will keep thy statutes*; not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord; and it is to be understood not merely as a resolution what he would do; nor as a promise, which he uses as a plea, argument, or motive to be heard; but rather it expresses the end of his being heard, or the thing for which he desires to be heard: for so it may be rendered, *that I may keep thy statutes*; hear me, and give me grace and strength to enable me to observe them.

Ver. 146. *I cried unto thee; save me, &c.*] In his distress he cried and prayed to the Lord; and this was a principal and leading petition, that he would *save* him out of all his troubles and afflictions, and out of the hands of all his enemies; and with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation. which he knew he was able to do, and none else. *And I shall keep thy testimonies*; such salvation will affect my heart, and the sense of it influence and engage me to have the utmost regard to the word of God, its truths and doctrines, precepts and ordinances, so as carefully to observe them.

Ver. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried, &c.*] That is, he awoke and got up, and prayed, before the day broke, the morning looked forth, or the sun arose: he was early as well as earnest in his supplications to God; see Psal. v. 3. and lv. 17. as Christ, his antitype, rose early in the morning, a great while before day, and went out to a solitary

¹ אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.
² אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.
³ אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.

¹ אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.
² אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.
³ אֲנִי ego fui, & adhuc sum, Michaelis.

place, and prayed, Mark i. 35. *I hoped in thy word*; which is a great encouragement to prayer, the grace of hope itself is, though a man can only put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; and especially when it is grounded on the word of promise, that God will hear and answer his people, when they call upon him in a time of trouble: and particularly hope in Christ, the essential Word, is a great encouragement; many encouraging arguments to prayer are taken from the person, office, advocacy, and mediation of Jesus Christ, Heb. iv. 14, 16. and x. 19—23.

Ver. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, &c.*] The Targum is, “the morning and evening watches.” There were three of them; Kimchi interprets it of the second and third; the meaning is, that the psalmist was awake and employed in one religious exercise or another, praying, reading, or meditating; either before the watches were set, or however before the time that some of them took place, or at least before they were all over. *That I might meditate in thy word*; he rose so early, in order to give himself up to meditation on the word of God; that he might be better instructed in the knowledge of divine things; that he might have solace and comfort from thence under his afflictions; and that he might be better furnished for the work of prayer; for the more familiar the word of God is to us, the better able we are to speak to God in his own language.

Ver. 149. *Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness, &c.*] Not according to his own merits and deserts, or works of righteousness done by him, for the sake of which he did not present his supplications to God; nor according to his love to him, which often waxed cold, and he in a poor lukewarm frame of spirit; but according to the loving-kindness of God, which is always the same, and which is a great encouragement to faith and hope in prayer; that since God is gracious and merciful, kind and bountiful, plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive, on a throne of grace, and full of love, yea, love itself, invariably the same, he will hear, and saints shall find grace and mercy to help them in time of need. *O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment*; either according to his word of promise, or according to his manner and wonted method he used towards his people; see ver. 25, 132. This is a prayer, not for the first work of quickening grace, or the first implantation of a principle of spiritual life, which the psalmist had had an experience of; but for the reviving of the work and principle in him, that he might be refreshed and comforted, and be animated and stirred up to a lively exercise of grace and performance of duty: finding himself in dead and lifeless frames, and not able to quicken himself.

Ver. 150. *They draw nigh that follow after mischief, &c.*] Or *evil*; that which is sinful in itself, and injurious to others. Some cannot sleep unless they do mischief; they are bent upon it, and proceed from evil to evil: they are eager in their pursuit of it, as the huntsman after his sport, to which the allusion is; though it is to their ruin, even to their death,

Prov. xi. 19. These the psalmist says *draw nigh*; not unto God, unless feignedly and with their mouths only; but to him they drew nigh, to David, in an hostile way they pursued after him, in order to take away his life, and they had very near overtaken him, and were just ready to seize him; his life drew nigh to those destroyers, and those destroyers drew nigh to that, so that he was in great danger; and the more as these were abandoned creatures, that neither feared God nor regarded man, as follows: *they are far from thy law*; from the knowledge of it, of its equity and purity; and especially of its spirituality, and of its power and influence upon their minds; and so far from subjection and obedience to it; so far from it, that they treat it with the utmost contempt, cast it away from them and despise it, Rom. viii. 7. Isa. v. 24.

Ver. 151. *Thou art near, O Lord, &c.*] This was the comfort of the psalmist, that though his enemies drew nigh with a mischievous design upon him, yet his God was also near, and nearer than they; he was near as to relation to him, being his God and Father; near as to union, the bond of which is his everlasting love, which can never be dissolved; near as to communion, which he admits all his people to at one time or another; so that they are said to be *a people near unto the Lord*; Psal. cxlviii. 14. and near as to his gracious presence, and the divine assistance he affords; he is a present help in time of need; he is nigh to all that call on him in truth, and in all things in which they do call upon him for, Psal. cxlv. 18. Deut. iv. 7. *And all thy commandments are truth*; not only the precepts of the word of God, but his covenant, and the promises of it; the word which he has commanded to a thousand generations, Psal. cv. 8. and even the whole word of God, doctrines and duties; see John xvii. 17.

Ver. 152. *Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old, &c.*] Or, *from thy testimonies, I have known of old*⁴; by carefully reading the Scriptures, which testify of God, his mind and will, and frequently meditating on them, he had learned a long time ago, even from his youth, what follows, *that thou hast founded them for ever*: that the things contained in them are sure and certain, established and eternal truths; the moral law and the precepts of it are eternal, and of perpetual obligation; not one jot or tittle of them shall ever fail; the Gospel, and the truths of it, are everlasting, and shall ever remain; maugre all the opposition, craft and cunning, fury and force of men, to undermine and root them out; see ver. 89.

7, RESH.—The Twentieth Part.

Ver. 153. *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me, &c.*] Or, *look upon mine affliction*⁵; as in Psal. xxx. 18. The Lord seems as if he did not, when he does not grant his gracious presence to his people; or does not arise to the help and deliverance of them so soon as they desire and expect: but he always sees and beholds their afflictions; he cannot do otherwise, since he is the omniscient God; and not only so, but he is the author, appointer, and orderer of them; yea, he

⁴ וְכִי־יִשְׁׁמַר׃ V. L. scelus, Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michælis.

⁵ מִן־מַעֲרָתִי׃ ex obstationibus tuis, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Gejerus.

⁵ מִן־מַעֲרָתִי׃ vide, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius; intersere, Gejerus.

looks upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, which is what is here prayed for: he sympathizes with his people in all their afflictions, supports them under them, pays kind visits to them, sanctifies his hand, and in his own time delivers them out of all; which none else can but himself, and he has power to do it, and has promised it, and does perform: see Psal. l. 15. and xxxiv. 19. *For I do not forget thy law*: the precepts of it; to observe it as a rule of walk and conversation, as a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path, as a directory of the good and perfect will of God: or, *thy doctrine*; the doctrine of the word, the precious truths of it, which were his support under afflictions; and when either of them have a place in the heart, and are written there, they cannot easily be forgotten. This the psalmist mentions, not as if his not forgetting the law or doctrine of God was meritorious of deliverance from affliction, but as a descriptive character of such the Lord does deliver.

Ver. 154. *Plead my cause, and deliver me, &c.*] This shews that his affliction was chiefly from men, wicked, ungodly, and unreasonable men; such as were Saul and his courtiers, and a whole ungodly nation: his cause was a good one, and therefore he puts it into the hand of the Lord, and who otherwise would not have undertaken it; and this he did also because he could not plead it himself, nor any other for him but the Lord; his enemies that strove with him being so many, mighty, and crafty; see Psal. xxxv. 1, 23. and xliii. 1. Christ is the advocate of his people, their Redeemer, who is mighty, and thoroughly pleads their cause against the accusations of Satan, the charges of law and justice, and the condemnation of their own hearts; as well as defends their innocence from the calumnies of wicked men, and rights their wrongs, and redresses their grievances. *Quicken me according to thy word*; see the note on ver. 25.

Ver. 155. *Salvation is far from the wicked, &c.*] Christ, the author of salvation, is far from them: he was far from the unbelieving Jews, even though salvation was of them, and he, the Saviour, was among them; and he is far from all unconverted persons, as to knowledge of him, faith in him, or love to him; and from all those that seek for salvation elsewhere, let them make ever such pretences to religion: the word of salvation is far from them, as Kimchi; the Gospel of salvation, which they put away from them, as the Jews did in the times of Christ and the apostles; an experimental knowledge of salvation, a sense of need of it, and an application of it, are far from them; and the enjoyment of it in heaven, which, though nearer the saints than when they first believed, is far off from the wicked, and whose damnation is near: Aben Ezra interprets it, "the days of salvation." *For they seek not thy statutes*; either to know them, or keep them: they seek not after God, to know him, his mind and will; the language of their hearts and actions is, *depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*; no, not of life and salvation, and therefore it must be far from them, Job xxi. 14.

Ver. 156. *Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord,*

&c.] Not his providential mercies only, which are many and undeserved, and constantly repeated; but his special mercies in Christ, which flow from the tenderness of his heart; and his merciful loving-kindness to his people, and which are great or many^f, as to quantity; there being a multitude of them, not to be reckoned up: and for quality they are wonderful beyond expression and conception; proceed from unmerited love, rich, free, sovereign grace, and last for ever. *Quicken me according to thy judgments*; see the note on ver. 149.

Ver. 157. *Many are my persecutors and mine enemies, &c.*] Because they were his enemies, therefore they were his persecutors; and they became enemies to him, or hated him, because of his religion, and on that account persecuted him: and this has always been the lot and case of God's people in all ages; and whose persecutors are many, even the whole world, as well as fierce and furious. *Yet do I not decline from thy testimonies*; from reading and hearing the word of God; and from embracing and professing the doctrines contained in it; and from the worship of God according to it, for which he was hated and persecuted: yet none of these things moved him from them, which shewed that his heart was principled with the grace of God; for otherwise, when persecution arises because of the word, carnal professors are offended, and apostatize from it; see Matt. xiii. 22. Acts xxiv. 23, 24.

Ver. 158. *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, &c.*] Transgressors of the law of God, profane sinners; such as among whom he dwelt in Meshec and Kedar; it grieved him when he beheld their wicked life and conversation; as Lot in Sodom; and Isaiah and Jeremiah, among persons of unclean lips, and an assembly of treacherous men: and the word here used signifies *treacherous*^g persons; and may design not the profane only, but professors also; that dealt treacherously with God and men, made a profession of religion, but walked not agreeably to it, which is matter of grief to good men; see Phil. iii. 18, 19. as well as the conduct of abandoned sinners; with whom the psalmist was grieved, not so much on his own account, being hated and persecuted by them, as on their account, because of the ruin they brought upon themselves; but chiefly because of the dishonour of God, and their disregard to his righteous law. Joseph Kimchi paraphrases it, "I saw them prosper, and was weary of my life;" and refers for the sense of the word to Job x. 1. as does also Aben Ezra; but David Kimchi and the Targum interpret it *I strove, or contended* with them; that is, with the transgressors. *Because they kept not thy word*; did not regard the doctrines, nor observe the precepts of it; but despised, rejected, and cast them away from them.

Ver. 159. *Consider how I love thy precepts, &c.*] How ardently and affectionately, how cordially and sincerely, ver. 127, 128. and that was the reason why he was so grieved and distressed when wicked men transgressed and despised them. *Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness*; see the note on ver. 88.

Ver. 160. *Thy word is true from the beginning, &c.*] Every word of promise God made from the beginning

^f רבים multe, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Michaelis.

^g בוגדים perfidos, Vatnblus, Cocceius, Michaelis; perfide agentes, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

of the world, and in any period of time; as to Adam, to Abraham, to the Israelites, or to any other person or persons; was true in itself, and faithfully performed, not one ever failed; particularly the promise concerning the Messiah, made to Adam in Eden; and which has been spoken of by all the prophets which have been since the world began, Gen. iii. 15. Luke i. 70. Or it may be rendered, as the Targum, "the beginning of thy word is truth^k:" which a man finds to be so as soon as ever he enters upon the reading of it. Some refer this to the first chapter of Genesis; others to the first part of the decalogue, concerning the unity of God and his worship; so Aben Ezra, and R. Jeshua, as cited by him, and Jarchi; the same is mentioned by Kimchi as one of the senses, though the first he gives is agreeable to our version: but there is no need to restrain the sense to those particulars, or to the first part of the Scriptures, since the whole is truth; and the meaning may be, *the sum of thy word is truth^k*: so the word here used is sometimes taken for the sum of any thing, Numb. xxvi. 2. and xxxi. 26. all that is contained in the word of God is truth; its promises, precepts and doctrines, histories, prophecies and proverbs, all the sayings of it are faithful and true. *And every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever: every precept of the word, and doctrine of it; see ver. 152, and Psal. xix. 8, 9.*

ו, SCHIN.—The Twenty-first Part.

Ver. 161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause, &c.*] These were either the princes of the Philistines at the court of Achish; or the princes of Israel, who joined in the conspiracy with Absalom; or the princes in Saul's court, as Kimchi observes; who insinuated that David had evil designs against the king, drove him from abiding in the Lord's inheritance, and pursued him from place to place, as a partridge on the mountains, 1 Sam. xxix. 4. and xxiv. 9. and xxvi. 19, 20. and all which was without any cause or reason on his part; and which, as it was an aggravation of the sin of his persecutors, so it was an alleviation of his affliction: in this he was a type of Christ, against whom the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together; Herod, Pontius Pilate, and others, the princes of this world, who crucified the Lord of glory, and hated him without a cause; who was holy and harmless, and never did any injury to any man's person or property, Psal. ii. 2. and lxix. 4. *But my heart standeth in awe of thy word:* not in awe of the princes, but of the word of God; he had a greater regard to that than to them: when they in effect said, *go, serve other gods*; he remembered what the word of God says, *thou shalt have no other gods before me*; and this was a means of preserving him from sinning. Kimchi thinks some respect is had to the word of God by Nathan the prophet, *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine house, &c.* 2 Sam. xii. 11. and he was afraid, on account of this word, lest he should fall into the hands of the princes: but it seems not to be an excruciating tormenting fear that is here meant; but a high

regard for, and a holy reverence of the word of God, or a reverential affection for it; such as is consistent with the highest joy on account of it, as follows.

Ver. 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*] At having it, which is a distinguishing blessing; all are not favoured with it; and is an inestimable treasure, a field in which a treasure lies; which those that find rejoice at, and especially at the understanding of it, as Kimchi notes: for such only delight in it who spiritually understand it, or have an application of it to them; find it, and eat it, and then it is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts. The doctrines of it are matter of great joy, particularly which concern the grace of God, the person of Christ, and peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; and the several promises of it, which are exceeding great and precious; and, when opened and applied in a time of need, occasion great joy; such as is expressed at finding a great spoil, when much substance comes into the hands of the conqueror, as well as victory. The word is a part of the believer's spiritual armour, by which he overcomes his enemies; as well as it acquaints him with the conquest Christ has obtained over them, and made him a sharer in; and directs him to unsearchable riches, to things more valuable than thousands of gold and silver; so that he has great reason to rejoice at it in such a manner indeed! see Isa. ix. 2, 3, 6.

Ver. 163. *I hate and abhor lying, &c.*] The sin of lying in common conversation, which owes its rise to Satan, the father of lies; is common to human nature, though very dishonourable to it; exceeding unbecoming a professor of religion; and was greatly hated by David, as it ought to be by all good men, Psal. ci. 7. Or *falsehood^k*; false doctrine; every thing contrary to the truth of the word of God, with all false worship, superstition, and idolatry; and this may the rather be thought to be designed, since the law or doctrine of God is opposed to it in the next clause. But *thy law do I love*: because holy, just, and true; he being a regenerate man, and having it written on his heart, he loved both the precepts of the law and the doctrines of the Gospel: or, *thy doctrine*: the doctrine concerning God, his mind and will, his grace and love; see ver. 97, 115.

Ver. 164. *Seven times a day do I praise thee, &c.*] That is, very often in a day; not a day passed over his head but he praised the Lord, and often in the day; so the phrase *seven times* is used, Psal. xii. 6. Prov. xxiv. 16. Praise is comely for the saints, delightful and well-pleasing to God, being offered up in faith and through Christ; and should be frequent, since our mercies, temporal and spiritual, are daily renewed; and therefore we should always, in every thing, for every thing, and at all seasons, give thanks to God. Ephes. v. 20. 1 Thess. v. 18. *Because of thy righteous judgments*: either upon his enemies, the persecuting princes, as Aben Ezra; so saints may and should, and will praise the Lord, for his righteous judgments on the enemies of his church and people, because not only of their deliverance from them, but because of

^k אמת רבוי אמת principium verbi tui veritas, Pagninus, Musculus; vel verborum tuorum, V. L.

^l Summa verbi tui est veritas, Cocceius, Schmidt.

^k שקר falsitatem, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ledge; or else he means the promise of God, that he would give him more knowledge and understanding; that he might be taught of God, and follow on to know him, and increase in every branch of spiritual knowledge.

Ver. 170. *Let my supplication come before thee, &c.*] The same with his cry in the preceding verse; only expressed by another word, signifying a petition for grace and favour, in an humble and submissive manner; which it is entreated might be received and accepted, as before. *Deliver me according to thy word*; of promise, such as that in Psal. l. 15. meaning from all troubles and afflictions; out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the power of sin, Satan, and the world; and from all fears of wrath, ruin, and destruction. Kimchi observes, that this is not to be understood of a deliverance of the body from distress, but of the soul from the stumbling-block of sin.

Ver. 171. *My lips shall utter praise, &c.*] Like water flowing from a fountain, as the word ^m signifies. The heart of a good man is like a fountain of water, abounding with good things, and his mouth is a well of life; out of the abundance of grace and good things in his heart his mouth speaks, John iv. 14. Prov. x. 11. Matt. xii. 34, 35. and particularly his heart is filled with praise and thankfulness for the many blessings of providence and grace enjoyed; his lips shew it forth; it comes flowing from him freely and readily, without force and compulsion, largely and plentifully, constantly and continually, and with great vehemence and strength, as streams from a fountain. *When thou hast taught me thy statutes*; which is what the psalmist often prays for in this psalm; and signifies he should be very thankful to God for, and should sincerely praise him, could he obtain this favour; see ver. 7.

Ver. 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word, &c.*] Of the word of God in general; of the truth of it, which he knew by certain experience; of the purity of it, tending to promote holiness of heart and life; of the power and efficacy of it, enlightening his mind, and working effectually in him; of the profit of it, to his learning, to his instruction, comfort, and refreshment; of the preciousness of it, being of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and of the pleasantness of it, being sweeter than the honey or honeycomb, and more to be esteemed than one's necessary food; and of the promises of it in particular, of the worth and value of them, of their suitableness and use, and of the faithful fulfilment of them; and of the doctrines of the word, especially those which relate to the grace of God, and salvation by the Messiah; and also of the precepts of the word, as follows: *for all thy commandments are righteousness*; not only righteous, but righteousness itself, being strictly just and equitable in the highest sense; and not only some of them, but all of them; see ver. 128. Aben Ezra's paraphrase of the words is, "I will teach the children of men thy word, that they may know that thy commandments are righteousness;" which is not amiss: and to the same sense is Kimchi's note, who observes, that the

author of the Masorah interprets it of praise; as if he had said, My tongue shall praise thy word, because all of it is righteousness.

Ver. 173. *Let thine hand help me, &c.*] Let thine hand of power help me against mine enemies, and deliver me from them; and let thine hand of providence and grace communicate to me, and supply me with and help me to every thing needful for me, for body and soul; for time and eternity, all grace here, and glory hereafter; let thy right hand help me on in my way, hold and uphold me, keep and preserve me safe to heaven and happiness. *For I have chosen thy precepts*; not only the good part, which shall not be taken away, and the way of truth, ver. 30. but even the commandments of God, which he preferred to the commandments of men, and choose rather to obey the one than the other; having a most ardent affection for them, an high esteem of them, and a strong attachment to them; see ver. 127, 128.

Ver. 174. *I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, &c.*] For temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies; and for spiritual and eternal salvation by the Messiah; and for the Messiah himself, the author of it: Kimchi interprets it of the salvation of the soul in the world to come; see ver. 81. *And thy law is my delight; or delights*; his exceeding great delight, as being pure and perfect, holy, just, and good; a transcript of the divine nature, a revelation of the divine will; as in the hands of Christ, his surety and Saviour, who had engaged to fulfil it for him; and as written in his heart; and as delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, through the suretyship-engagements of Christ.

Ver. 175. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, &c.*] The psalmist desires the continuance of his natural life, not for his own personal advantage, nor for the sake of his family, nor with any worldly, sinister, and selfish views; but for the glory of God, and for the sake of praising him: or his desire is, that his soul might be lively and comfortable; or that he might be in a lively and cheerful frame of spirit, and so be in fit and proper circumstances to praise the Lord; for it is the living man in both senses, natural and spiritual, that is capable of praising the Lord, Isa. xxxviii. 19. *And let thy judgments help me*; that is, to praise him: meaning either judgments on his enemies, as Aben Ezra; which furnish out matter and occasion of praise and thanksgiving; see Rev. xv. 3, 4. and xix. 1, 2. or the word of God, the doctrines and precepts of it; see ver. 164.

Ver. 176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep, &c.*] In desert places, as it is the nature of sheep to do. A sheep he was, a sheep of Christ, given him by the Father; known by him, and that knew him; knew his voice, and followed him; a sheep of his hand, and of his pasture; one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who had been lost in Adam, though recovered by grace; and had gone astray before conversion, but now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and since conversion had gone astray from the Shepherd and fold, from the word and precepts of it, through in-

^m תְּבִינָה profundum, Vatablus, Musculus; ebullient, Piscator, Gejerus; scaturiant, Coccicus; scaturient, Michaelis, טִבְיָנָה delicie mex, Montanus, Tigurine version.

^o So Aristotle observes, Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 5. the same word that is used for feeding sheep is also translated wander, Numb. xiv. 33. so errant is used by Virgil for feeding with secntrity, Bucolic. Eclog. 2, Vid. Servium in ib.

advertence, the prevalence of corruption, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan; which he both deprecates and owns, ver. 10, 67. though it may be understood, as it is by many interpreters, of his being forced, by the persecutions of his enemies, to wander from the courts of God, and from place to place: *seek thy servant*; as a shepherd does his sheep when gone astray, which will not return of itself unless sought after: thou art my Shepherd, as if he should say, look me up, restore my soul; suffer me not to wander from thee, and go astray from thy word and

ordinances; and when he calls himself his servant, it carries in it an argument for being looked up and sought out; since he was his servant, not by nature, but by grace; not by force, but willingly; he was his, and devoted to his service. And another follows: *for I do not forget thy commandments*: he retained a knowledge of them, an affection for them, and a desire to observe them; though he had gone astray from them, either in a criminal way, through the power and prevalence of sin, or against his will, through the force of persecution.

P S A L M CXX.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm, and the fourteen following, are called *songs of degrees, or ascents*; for what reason it is not easy to say. Some think it refers to the music of them, and that this is the name of the tune to which they were set; or the first word of a song, according to which they were sung, as Aben Ezra; or that they were sung with an higher voice, or an ascending note, as Saadiah Gaon. Others are of opinion that the title of them respects the ascent of persons or places, at what time and where they were sung; either when the Israelites went up to Jerusalem, at the three solemn yearly feasts; or when the Jews came up from Babylon, mention being made in some of these psalms of their being in Babylon, and of their return from their captivity there; and so the inscription of the Syriac version is, “the first song of ascent; the people detained in Babylon pray to be delivered.” But the common opinion of the Jews, and which is embraced by many Christians, and is mentioned by Jarchi, Saadiah Gaon, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, is, that these are the songs sung by the Levites, on the fifteen steps, by which they went up from the court of the women to the court of the Israelites, or came down them; and on each step sung one of these psalms. Though it may be they are so called because of their excellency; a song of degrees being an *excellent* song, as an excellent man is called a man of high degree, 1 Chron. xvii. 17. these being excellent ones for the matter of them, their manner of composure, and the brevity of them. It is generally thought this psalm was composed by David, on account of Doeg the Edomite, because of its likeness in some things with the 52d Psalm: and certain it is that the psalmist had been in some great distress, and at a distance from his own country and the house of God, and dwelt among wicked men when he wrote it; so that it is very probable it was composed during his exile through the persecution of Saul.

Ver. 1. *In my distress I cried unto the Lord, &c.*] Being at a distance from his own country, or, however, from the house of God; persecuted by men, under the

lash of their tongues; reproached, abused, and belied by them: in this his case and circumstances, he betook himself by prayer to the Lord, and impounded help and deliverance of him, knowing that none could help him as he; see Psal. xviii. 6. *And he heard me*; answered him, and delivered him. The petition he put up follows, which shews his case, and his particular distress.

Ver. 2. *Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*] Not from such lips, and such a tongue of his own, which David abhorred; though every good man desires to be kept from speaking lies and deceit; nor from the company of those who have such lips and tongues, which he was determined should not dwell with him; but from the malignity of them, from being hurt in his character and reputation by them; God can restrain them, and prevent the ill influence of them when he pleases, Psal. xxxi. 20. Isa. liv. 17. Such were the lips and tongues of Doeg the Edomite, Psal. lii. 2—4. and of Saul's courtiers, who insinuated to him that David sought his hurt, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9. and of the Scribes and Pharisees, that flattered Christ to his face, and reproached him to the people; and of Judas, that betrayed him with *Hail, master*; and of the false witnesses suborned against him; and of false teachers, deceitful workers, that lie in wait to deceive, and, by their good words and fair speeches, do deceive the hearts of the simple; and of antichrist and his followers, who, as they are given up to believe a lie, speak lies in hypocrisy; and of Satan the father of lies, and who is the old serpent, the devil, that deceives the whole world: and to be delivered from the bad effects of such lips and tongues is very desirable.

Ver. 3. *What shall be given unto thee, &c.*] Or, *what shall it give unto thee*? That is, what shall the deceitful tongue give unto thee, O my soul? or to thee, to any one that hears and reads this psalm? It is capable of giving thee a deal of trouble, of doing thee a deal of mischief; and of injuring thy character, and hurting thy peace and comfort, if permitted. *Or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue*? or, *what shall*

* למעלות שיר canticum ascensionum, Munster, Vatablus.

† L'Empereur in Middot, c. 2. s. 5. Lightfoot's Temple-Service, c. 90. so Theodoret in loc.

‡ Vid. Misa. Middot, c. 2. s. 5. Succah, c. 5. s. 4.

† Canticum excellentissimum, Junius & Tremellius.

‡ מַה יִּתֵּן לְךָ quid dabit tibi, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

the false tongue add unto thee¹? it shall increase thy sorrows and distress: or rather, what gain, profit, and advantage, shall the deceitful tongue get to itself by its lies and deceit? none at all; it may do hurt to others, but gets no good to itself; see Isa. xxviii. 15, 17. Or, what shall he (God) give unto thee²? or, what shall he add unto thee, thou false tongue? so Jarchi. What punishment will not he inflict upon thee, who hates lying lips? what plagues will not he add unto thee, who knows all the deceit that is in thee, and spoken by thee? The answer is as follows:

Ver. 4. *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*] Some think these words describe lying lips, and a false tongue; which are like arrows, sharp ones, sent out from a bow drawn with a mighty hand, which come with great force, suddenly and swiftly, and do much mischief; see Psal. xi. 2. and lvii. 4. and lxiv. 4. and to coals of juniper, very distressing and tormenting; the tongue being a fire, set on fire of hell, and sets on fire the course of nature; and throws out devouring words, which consume like fire, James iii. 6. Psal. lii. 4. But rather the punishment of an evil tongue from the Lord is intended, whose sore judgments are often compared to arrows, Deut. xxxii. 23, 42. Ezek. v. 16. Psal. vii. 13. because they come from above, and bring swift and sudden destruction with them; and are very sharp in the hearts of his enemies; are very severe and cutting, and come with power irresistible, being the arrows of the Almighty, Job vi. 4. see Jer. i. 9. and these may be compared to coals of juniper, which are very vehement and strong, and very lasting and durable. Jerom³ and Isidore⁴ say they will last a whole year; and the Midrash on the place reports of two men, who had prepared food with them, and at the end of a year returned and found them unextinct, and warmed their feet at them. These fitly express the lake of fire and brimstone, the portion of liars; whose fire is very strong, and flames devouring, being kindled by the breath of the Lord of hosts, like a stream of brimstone: and the fire of hell is everlasting; its burnings are everlasting burnings; a worm that dieth not, a fire that is not quenched; the smoke of the torments of which ascend for ever and ever, Isa. xxx. 23. and xxxiii. 14. and lxvi. 24. Rev. xiv. 11. and xxi. 8. The Targum speaks of these arrows as lightnings from above, and of the coals of juniper as kindled in hell below; and they are interpreted of hell in the Talmud⁵.

Ver. 5. *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, &c.*] Meshech was a son of Japheth, Gen. x. 2. whose posterity are thought by some to be the Muscovites⁶ and Scythians, a barbarous sort of people: Mesech is frequently mentioned with Tubal and his brother, and with Gog and Magog, Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3. and xxxix. 1. the Targum here calls them Asiatics. Rather the Cappadocians, according to Josephus⁷; and Strabo⁸ makes mention of a city of theirs, called Mazaca: and

the rather, since they are mentioned with the Kedarenes, or Arabian Scenites, and were nearer to the land of Judea than the former. That *I dwell in the tents of Kedar*; Kedar was a son of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 13. whose posterity were Arabians, as the Targum here renders it; and Suidas⁹ says, they dwelt not far from Babylon, when he wrote; they lived a pastoral life, and dwelt in tents: Pliny¹⁰ makes mention of Arabs, called Cedrei; and also of Scenite Arabs, from the tents they dwelt in, which they could remove from place to place for the sake of pasturage. And among these David dwelt, when in the wilderness of Paran, 1 Sam. xxv. 1. though some think David never dwelt among any of those people, but among such who were like unto them for ignorance, idolatry, and barbarity. Some render the words, *woe is me, that I sojourn so long, dwelling as in the tents of Kedar*¹¹; as when he was among the Philistines and Moabites; nay, even he may compare his own people to those, many of whom it was as disagreeable dwelling with as with these: and we find Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, speaking of them in their times in like manner, and making the same complaints, Isa. vi. 5. Jer. ix. 2. Ezek. ii. 6. And very grieving and distressing it is to good men to have their abode among wicked men; as well as it is infectious and dangerous: to hear their profane and blasphemous talk, to see their wicked and filthy actions, and to observe their abominable conversation, is very vexatious, and gives great uneasiness, as it did to righteous Lot, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. The first clause is rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, *woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged*; to which the next words agree.

Ver. 6. *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*] The God of peace, against whom their carnal minds are enmity itself; Christ, the Prince of peace, the Man, the Peace, who has made peace by the blood of his cross, whom the world hates; the sons of peace, the quiet in the land, against whom the wicked devise evil things; the Gospel of peace, which the natural man abhors as foolishness; the way of peace, pardon, and salvation by Christ, which carnal men know not, and do not approve of; and the ordinances of the Gospel, which are paths of peace. In short, some are of such restless, quarrelsome, and contentious spirits, that they hate peace with any; are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest; and cannot sleep, unless they do mischief to their fellow-creatures: it is very uncomfortable living, especially living long with such. The Targum is, "my soul hath long dwelt with Edom, hating peace;" that is, with the Romans or Christians, who are intended; for the Jews understand this psalm of their present captivity.

Ver. 7. *I am for peace, &c.*] Am wholly peace; a man of peace, as Aben Ezra; of a peaceable disposition, devoted to peace; love it, seek and pursue it, as every good man does, who is called to it, and in whose

¹ וְאֵיךְ יִסְתִּי לְךָ & quid addet tibi, Montanus, Castalio; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

² Quid inferat tibi (Deus) aut quem rem adhibeat tibi, O lingua dolosa? Tigurine version.

³ Ad Fabiolam de 49 Mans. tom. 3. fol. 15. L.

⁴ Origin. l. 17. c. 7. Schnadler. col. 1776.

⁵ T. Bab. Eracin, c. 3. fol. 15. 2.

⁶ Davide de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 86. 1. 3.

⁷ Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6.

⁸ Geograph. l. 12. p. 370. Rufi Fest. Breviar. Vid Suidam in voce Targum.

⁹ In voce Kedar.

¹⁰ Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 11.

¹¹ Weemse's of the Ceremonial Law, c. 3. p. 6.

heart it rules: such follow peace with all men, and the things which make for it; and, as much as in them lies, endeavour to live peaceably with all. *But when I speak, they are for war*; make a motion for peace, and propose the terms of it, they declare against it, and for war: or when he spoke of the things of God, and of his experience of them, of the word of God, and of the truths of it, and of what he believed, Psal. cxvi. 10. and especially when he gave good counsel and advice

to them, and reproved them for their sins, they could not bear it; but hated him for it, and proclaimed war against him; and could not behave peaceably to him in any degree, but became his avowed, sworn, and implacable enemies. The Targum is, "when I prayed;" either prayed to God, that they did not like; or prayed for peace with them, that they would not grant; but became more embittered against him.

P S A L M CXXI.

A Song of degrees.

THE inscription of the Syriac version is, "one of the songs of ascent out of Babylon." Aben Ezra thinks it was composed on account of Israel, when in a siege and distress; or, adds he, on account of the children of our captivity; the present state of the Jews. Grotius is of opinion it was written by David, at the time of the battle with Absalom. Some take it to be a military psalm, proper for soldiers engaged with an enemy: others, that it is suitable for travellers when on a journey; and why not for persons also, when they commit themselves to God in the night-watches, and about to take rest? And indeed it is suitable at all times; when the good man may, with the psalmist, expect divine help, and be secure of protection and preservation.

Ver. 1. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, &c.*] Not to the hills and mountains in Judea, looking about to see if the inhabitants of them, or any bodies of men, appeared upon them to his help in distress; rather to the hills of Moriah and Zion, where the ark of God, the symbol of his presence, was, and to whom he looked for assistance and deliverance: or to heaven, the holy hill of the Lord, and to him that dwelleth there; see Psal. iii. 9. and cxviii. 1. The lifting up of the eyes is a prayer-gesture, John xi. 41. and xvii. 1. and is expressive of boldness and confidence in prayer, and of hope and expectation of help and salvation, Job xi. 15. Ezek. xviii. 6. when, on the contrary, persons abashed and ashamed, hopeless and helpless, cannot look up, or lift up their eyes or face to God, Ezra ix. 6. Psal. xl. 12. Luke xviii. 13. Some read the words, *I will lift up mine eyes upon the hills*^f; standing there and looking up to the heavens, and God in the heavens; who is the most High over all the earth, higher than the highest, and above all gods. Others render them interrogatively, *shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills*^g? to the idols worshipped on hills and mountains, and pray unto them, and expect help from them? No, I will not; salvation is not to be had from them, Jer. iii. 23. or to the kings of the nations, as R. Obadiah interprets it; and to powerful kingdoms and states he was in alliance with, comparable to mountains and hills, Psal. xlvii. 2. Zech. iv. 7? No, I will not; *it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes*, Psal.

cxviii. 9. And so the following clause may be read, *from whence shall my help come*^h? not from hills and mountains; not from men, for vain is the help of man; not from kings and princes, the great men of the earth, nor from the most powerful nations; but from the Lord, as in the next verse, which may be an answer to this.

Ver. 2. *My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*] Who helps his people out of the hands of all their enemies, and out of all their troubles and afflictions; he helps them in the performance of duty, in the exercise of grace, in bearing the cross, in fighting the Lord's battles, and on in their journey; he helps them to all blessings, temporal and spiritual; to all needful supplies of grace here, and glory hereafter; and this help he gives is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, is sufficient, and sometimes with, and sometimes without means; and they have great encouragement to expect it from him, since he is able to give it, being the Maker of heaven and earth; for what is it that he cannot do, who has made both them? And besides, he has promised to help them, and he is faithful that has promised; he has laid help on Christ for them, and set up a throne of grace, where they may hope to find grace and mercy, to help them in time of need; and they have had past experiences of his help and salvation. Arama connects this with the preceding psalm, and interprets this help of help from an evil tongue.

Ver. 3. *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, &c.*] This is either an address of the psalmist to his own soul; or to any other good man, his friend and acquaintance, assuring of stability, and of final perseverance in grace to glory. The Lord keeps the feet of his saints from falling: he will not suffer them to be moved out of the spiritual estate in which they stand; nor off of the Foundation and Rock of ages, on which their feet are set, and their goings established; nor out of the house of God, where they are as pillars; nor out of his ways, where he upholds their goings; moved in some sense they may be, yet not *greatly moved*; their feet may be *almost gone*, and their steps *well nigh slipped*, and yet shall not fall finally and totally, or so as to perish; see Psal. lxvii. 2. and lxxiii. 2. and xxxvii.

^f הרים אל הערים, Vatablus, Amama; so Kimchi. עניי עניי attollerem oculos meos ad illos montes? Junius & Tremellius; attollamne, &c. Piscator; so Gejerus and Ainswoth.

^h So Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. Michaelis.

24. *He that keepeth thee will not slumber*, neither angels nor men are the keepers of the saints, but the Lord himself; he is the keeper of every individual saint, of every regenerate person, of every one of his sheep, of every member of his church; he keeps them by his power, he preserves them by his grace, he holds them with his right hand, guides them by his counsel, keeps their feet from falling, and brings them safe to glory: and a watchful keeper he is, he does not so much as slumber; he keeps them night and day, lest any hurt them, Isa. xxvii. 3. Gussetius reads the whole as a prayer, *let him not suffer thy foot, &c. let not thy keeper slumber*; to which the answer follows.

Ver. 4. *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*] He that kept Israel or Jacob, when asleep, and appeared to him in a dream, and promised to keep him in all places, and did; who found his posterity in the wilderness, and kept them as the apple of his eye: he keeps his spiritual Israel, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and calls; and he that is in general their keeper, is the keeper of every particular believer, who may promise themselves the utmost safety under his care; since, though he may sometimes seem to sleep, when he withdraws his gracious presence, defers help, and does not arise so soon to the assistance of his people as they wish for and expect; yet does not in reality sleep, nor is any ways negligent of them; no, not so much as slumber, nor is in the least indifferent about them, and careless of them; see Gen. xxviii. 15. Deut. xxxii. 10. Psal. xlv. 23. So Homer¹ represents Jupiter as not held by sleep, whilst other gods and men slept all night; and hence Milton¹ has the phrase of *the unsleeping eyes of God*: but the Phrygians had a notion that their god slept in winter, and was awake in summer².

Ver. 5. *The Lord is thy keeper, &c.*] This explains more fully who it is that keeps Israel and particular believers, and confirms the same; not a creature, but the Lord; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in a following verse: Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God; who is the keeper of his people by the designation of his father, who has put them into his hands to be kept by him; and by their full will and consent, who commit the keeping of their souls to him; for which he is abundantly qualified, being able as the mighty God; faithful to him that has appointed him; tender and compassionate to those under his care, whom he keeps as the apple of his eye; and diligent and constant, for he keeps them night and day, lest any hurt them: he keeps them as they are his flock, made his care and charge; as they are the vineyard of the Lord of hosts; as they are a city, which, unless the Lord keeps, the watchmen watch in vain; as they are his body and members of it, and as they are his jewels and peculiar treasure: these he keeps in the love of God; in his own hands; in the covenant of grace; in an estate of grace; and in his own ways, safe to his kingdom and

glory. *The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand*; he is at the right hand of his people, to hold their right hand; to teach them to go, lead them into communion with himself, and hold them up safe; and to strengthen their right hand, assist them in working, without whom they can do nothing; and to counsel and direct them, and to protect and defend them against all their enemies. So a shadow signifies defence; see Numb. xiv. 9. Eccl. vii. 12. and such great personages are to others; in which sense Virgil³ uses the word *shadow*; and much more true is this of God himself. And he is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; or of a spreading tree, which is a protection from heat, and very reviving and refreshing; see Isa. xxxii. 2. Cant. ii. 3. The allusion may be to the pillar of cloud by day, which guided and guarded the Israelites in the wilderness, and was a shadow from the heat, Isa. iv. 5, 6. and xxv. 4, 5. as Christ is from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, and the fiery darts of Satan.

Ver. 6. *The sun shall not smite thee by day, &c.*] With its rays, which it shoots forth like darts, and which fly swiftly, and pierce and hurt: hence Apollo, the same with the sun, is represented with a bow and arrows⁴; so the rays of the sun seem to be called in Hab. ii. 11. *Nor the moon by night*; this clause should be supplied, as a learned man⁵ observes, thus, *neither shall the moon cool thee by night*: for that has no heating virtue in it, and cannot smite with heat, as the sun does: for even, as he observes, its rays concentr'd in a burning glass will not communicate the least degree of sensible heat to bodies objected thereunto; yet some say⁶ the moon is not only moist, but heats bodies as the sun. And Isaac Vossius⁷ observes, that there can be no light, which, separately considered, does not contain some heat at least: and Macrobius⁸ speaks of the lunar heat; and Plutarch⁹ ascribes heat and inflammation to it, and asserts it to be fire. It is said¹⁰ that some men of good credit, in a voyage to Guinea, strongly affirmed, that, in the night-season, they felt a sensible heat to come from the beams of the moon. The Septuagint version is, *the sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night*. And burning may be ascribed to the cold frosty air in a moon-light night, as to the north wind, Eccles. xliii. 20, 21. see Gen. xxxi. 40. and our English poet¹¹ expresses a sentiment to this effect; yet not what affects the bodies of men, but plants, trees, &c. and this not owing to the moon, but to the air. However, these clauses are not to be understood literally; for good men may be smitten and hurt by the heat of the one and the cold of the other, as Jacob and Jonah, Gen. xxxi. 40. Jon. iv. 8. but mystically, of persecuting antichristian tyrants, which are sometimes signified by the sun and moon, as both in Rome Pagan and Papal, Rev. vi. 12. and xvi. 8. and of persecution and tribulation itself, Matt. xiii. 6, 21. Cant. i. 6. and is sometimes applied to the perfect state of the saints,

¹ יְנוּם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ne permittat—ne dormitet, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

² Iliad. 9. v. 1, 2.

³ Paradise Lost, B. 5. v. 647.

⁴ Plutarch, de Iside & Osir. prope finem.

⁵ Et magnum regine nomen obumbrat, Æneid. l. i.

⁶ Marrob. Saturnal. l. i. c. 17.

⁷ Schencher. Physic. Sacr. p. 976, 977.

⁸ Suidas in voce ΣΑΡΡΑ; so Theodorot.

⁹ De Motu Marium & Vent. c. 6. Vid. Seneca Nat. Quæst. l. 5. c. 9.

¹⁰ Saturnal. l. 7. c. 16.

¹¹ De Facie Lunæ, in tom. 2. p. 933.

¹² The Second Voyage in Eden's Travels, p. 350. 2.

¹³ — the parching air — Burns froze (frosty) and cold performs the effect of fire. Milton's Paradise Lost, l. 2. v. 504.

either in the New Jerusalem, or ultimate glory, when there will be nothing more of this kind, Rev. vii. 15, 16. And there are some periods in the present state, when those entirely cease; nor are the saints ever really hurt by them, they being always for their good; or, however, not so as to affect their eternal happiness. The Targum is, "in the day, when the sun rules, the morning spirits shall not smite thee; nor the nocturnal ones in the night, when the moon rules."

Ver. 7. *The Lord shall preserve them from all evil.* &c.] The Word of the Lord, as the Targum. Not from the evil of affliction, though from that as a penal evil; or as a real one, it being made to work for good: but from the evil of sin; not from the being or commission of it; but from its dominion and damning power, or from a final and total falling away by it: and from the evil of the world; not from tribulation in it, nor from the reproach or persecution of it; but from the wickedness and lusts that are in it, and from the wicked men of it, their power, rage, and fury: and from the evil one, Satan; not from his temptations, but from sinking under them, and perishing by them; see John xvii. 12, 15. *He shall preserve thy soul:* he preserves the bodies of his people, oftentimes from diseases and disasters, and from death, till the appointed time comes; and then he preserves their dust in the grave, and raises it up at the last day; but more especially their souls, the redemption and salvation of which he undertook, and has effected; and which are preserved by him safe to his coming, kingdom, and glory.

Ver. 8. *The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, &c.]* In transacting all the business of life,

in going in and out about it; in all ways, works, and conversation; in journeying and travelling; in all affairs, civil and religious; and not only preserve, but prosper in all, Psal. i. 3. the Lord blessing him, coming in and going out, Deut. xxviii. 6. and such, with the poet², are said to go with a good or prosperous foot. And such persons, in the Punic language, are called Namphanians, as Austin observes³; who says the word signifies a man of a good foot: and the word seems to be the contraction of פְּעוּמֵי נֶגַע, which signifies his good or pleasant foot²; and so one that, wherever he comes and goes, things prosper with him, and with those that are in connexion with him: such an one was Jacob in the house of Laban, whom the Lord blessed, as he says, *since my coming*, or at *my foot*, Gen. xxx. 30. see the note there; and such a foot Joseph had wherever he went, Gen. xxxix. 5, 23. Arama interprets it of a man's going out into the air of this world, and of his entrance into the world to come. The Targum is, "the Lord will keep thy going out to business, and thy coming in to study in the law." *From this time forth, and even for evermore:* for the Lord not only preserves his people in life and at death, but in heaven, to all eternity; in the utmost safety and peace from all molestations by men or devils, and from their wrath and malice: not only his purpose and decree, but his power and providence, are the vast gulf between the one and the other; by means of which the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, Luke xvi. 26. Job iii. 17.

P S A L M CXXII.

A Song of degrees of David.

THIS is the first of the songs of degrees that bears the name of David: and Kimchi thinks they only were written by him which have his name to them; though he, Abendana, and others, are of opinion that this psalm was composed with a view to the captives in Babylon; who are here personated, and are represented as rejoicing at their going up to Jerusalem, to the solemn feasts there. The inscription in the Syriac version is, "a psalm of David, one of the psalms of ascent, when Cyrus commanded the captivity to go up; spiritually, a promise of good things." It seems to be designed for the use of the Israelites, and to be sung by them when they went up to the feasts, three times a year. Some say^a they sung this by the way, when they carried the first-fruits to Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me, &c.]* Or, *I rejoiced in, or because of, those that said unto me^b; or, in what was said unto me.* For it may regard not only the time when he had this pleasure of mind, but the persons who gave it, as well as the ground and reason

of the things said unto him, as follows: *let us go into the house of the Lord;* the house of the sanctuary, as the Targum; the tabernacle, the place of divine worship, typical of the church of God; which is an house of his building, beautifying, and repairing, and where he dwells: it has all the essentiality of a house; its materials are lively stones; its foundation Christ; its pillars ministers of the word; the beams of it stable believers; its windows the ordinances; and the door into it faith in Christ, and a profession of it. Now it is both the duty and privilege of believers to go into it; here they find spiritual pleasure, enjoy abundance of peace and comfort, and have their spiritual strength renewed, as well as it is to their honour and glory: and it becomes them to stir up one another to go thither; some are slothful and backward; some are lukewarm and indifferent; some are worldly and carnally minded; and others are conceited of their knowledge, and think themselves wiser than their teachers, and therefore need to be excited to their duty; and truly gracious souls are glad when they are stirred up to it, both on

^a Virgil. *Æneid*. l. 8. *Adi pede sacra secundo*; & l. 10. *adis pede diva secundo*.

^b *Epist.* 44.

^c Vid. *Sterringæ Philol. Sacr.* p. 169. *Reinesium de Lingua Punicæ*, c. 8. s. 10.

^a Weemæ's *Christ. Synagog.* l. 1. c. 6. s. 4. p. 144.

^b בְּמִשְׁכְּנֵי לִי in dicentibus mihi, Montanus; so Ainsworth, *Tabulas, Coccæus*; in his quæ dicta sunt mihi, V. L. so Junius & Tremellius.

their own account, and on the account of others, and because of the glory of God.

Ver. 2. *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*] Which is to be understood not merely literally of the city of Jerusalem, and of continuance in the possession of it, it being lately taken out of the hands of the Jebusites; but spiritually of the church of God, which is often called by this name; the gates of which are the same as the gates of Zion, and the gates of wisdom, the word and ordinances; attendance on which is signified by *standing*; and which also denotes continuance therein: and happy are those that are within these gates, and have a comfortable assurance of their abiding there; and still more happy will they be who will be admitted within the gates of the New Jerusalem, which are said to be twelve, and every one of them of one pearl; and through which none shall enter into the city but pure and holy persons, Rev. xxi. 2, 12, 21, 25, 27. and xxii. 14.

Ver. 3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*] In David's time the upper and lower city were joined together, the streets regularly built, the houses contiguous, not straggling about, here and there one. So the church of God, like that, is built in a good situation, on a rock and hill, where it is firm and visible; like a city full of inhabitants, governed by wholesome laws, under proper officers; a free city, which enjoys many privileges and immunities; a well-fortified one, having salvation for walls and bulwarks about it; a royal city, the city of the great King, the city of our God, the name of which is *Jehovah-shammah*, the Lord is there: and this is *compact together* when its citizens are united in affection to one another; agree in their religious sentiments; join in social worship, and live in subjection to one Head and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews often speak, and so some of their commentators on this passage, of a Jerusalem above and below, and of the one being made like unto the other: so the Targum, "Jerusalem is built in the firmament as a city, as Jerusalem on earth;" see Gal. iv. 26.

Ver. 4. *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, &c.*] The twelve tribes of Israel; the males of them went up three times a year to Jerusalem to worship, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and was typical of the church of Christ, where the worship of God is carried on, his word preached, and ordinances administered; and whither saints go and attend for their own profit and the glory of God; this is the city of our solemnities, Isa. xxxiii. 20. and lvi. 7. *Unto the testimony of Israel*; the ark of the testimony a symbol of the divine Presence. The law is called a testimony, because it testified the will of God to be done; this was put into an ark, which had its name from thence, and was typical of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and over the ark was the divine Presence: hither the tribes came to worship God, and to consult him; "who (the Targum here says) testifies to Israel, that his divine Majesty dwells among them, when they go to confess unto the name of the Lord." The Gospel is called the

testimony of Christ; and it is what testifies concerning his person, office, and grace, unto the Israel of God; and who go up to the house of God in order to hear it. *To give thanks unto the name of the Lord*; for all his mercies and blessings, both temporal and spiritual; and which should be acknowledged, not only in a private manner, but publicly in the house of God; see Psal. c. 4. and cxi. 1.

Ver. 5. *For there are set thrones of judgment, &c.*] In Jerusalem as the Targum; here were courts of judicature, and thrones for the judges to sit upon, to execute judgment and justice to the people. *The thrones of the house of David*; the Targum is, "thrones in the house of the sanctuary, for the kings of the house of David;" who might sit there, as the Jews say, when others might not. In the church of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, every saint is a king, as well as a priest, and all have thrones and seats there; have a power of judging, not only lesser matters pertaining to this life, but such as regard the spiritual peace and welfare of the church and interest of Christ; having laws and rules given them to go by, in the admission and exclusion of members, and respecting their conduct to each other, and to their Lord and head; and in the New Jerusalem there will be thrones set, not only for the twelve apostles of Christ, and for the martyrs of Jesus, but for all the saints; there will be the thrones of God and of the Lamb, and every overcomer shall sit down on the same; this honour will have all the saints, Matt. xix. 28. Rev. xx. 4. and xxii. 3. and iii. 21.

Ver. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, &c.*] This is said to the persons that solicited the psalmist to go into the house of the Lord; to the truly godly among the tribes that went thither to worship; to his brethren and companions, for whose sake he wished well to Zion; to praying souls, who should not be singular and selfish; not only pray for themselves, but for others; for all saints, and for the church of God in general; for Jerusalem, not merely literally considered; though as that was the metropolis of the nation, and many of them the psalmist addresses were inhabitants of it, it became them to seek and pray for the peace of it, their own peace being concerned in it; see Jer. xxix. 7. but for the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, the church of God, and for the peace of it; that Christ, the Man, the Peace, the Peacemaker, who then was not come, might come; that the members of it might enjoy spiritual peace in their souls, and might have peace one with another, and be at peace with their enemies; and enjoy the abundance of peace and prosperity, which will be in the latter day; and will lie in freedom from persecution, in a destruction of antichrist and all the enemies of the church; in the purity of Gospel truths and ordinances, and the spread of them; in numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles; in the unity of the Lord's people in sentiment, worship, and affection; and in a large increase of spiritual light and holiness: all which should be earnestly prayed for by the well-wishers of the cause of Christ; see Isa. lxii. 6, 7. There may be an allusion to the name of Jerusalem,

* Hecatasus, an Heathen writer, describes Jerusalem as a strong fortified city, fifty furlongs in circumference; and inhabited by twelve

myriads, or a hundred and twenty thousand men. Vid. Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4.

which signifies *they shall see peace*; and it should be prayed for that they might. The argument enforcing this duty exhorted to follows: *they shall prosper that love thee*; that love Jerusalem, the church of God; that love Christ, her King; the saints, her citizens; her laws and ordinances; and the word of the Lord that goes out of her, and is ministered in her: which is shewn by an attendance with her on them, and by their prayers for her prosperity and welfare: and such prosper in their outward affairs, as Obed-edom and his family were blessed for the sake of the ark he took in and took care of; and in their spiritual affairs their souls prosper, as Gaius's did, and as such do who are favoured with the discoveries of the love of God, with an application of pardoning grace and mercy; have a spiritual appetite for the word; when their graces are in lively exercise, their corruptions are subdued, spiritual light and zeal for truth are increased, inward strength is renewed, communion with God is enjoyed, and they are fruitful in every good work.

Ver. 7. *Peace be within thy walls, &c.*] The word *say* might be supplied; for this, with the following, seem to be petitions the psalmist puts into the mouths of those he desires to pray for Jerusalem's peace; and he directs them to pray in this manner, to take with them such words as these, and pray to the Lord. Jerusalem was a walled city, and so is the church of God; God himself is a wall of fire around her; salvation by Christ is as walls and bulwarks to her; the power and providence of God protect her: within these walls the people of God have a place and a name; all the inhabitants of Zion in common are included in this petition, and peace is wished for them all; let their condition and circumstances be what they may, be they high or low, rich or poor, stronger or weaker believers, children, young men, or fathers. Some render it, *in thine army*, as the Targum, and other Jewish writers; in the church's militia, all saints being soldiers and in a warfare state; and here success to their arms against sin, Satan, and the world, is wished for. *And prosperity within thy palaces*: as there were palaces in Jerusalem for the king, the nobles, and great men in the land; so there are in the church of God, where he

is known, for a refuge; even the meanest places in it are preferable to the palaces of the greatest monarchs; see Psal. xlvi. 3. and lxxxiv. 10. And here indeed all the saints are kings, and have their palaces; but particularly there are some who are set in the first place in the church, and over others in the Lord; who are their guides and governors, and are in office-relation to the church as pastors and deacons now, as there were priests and Levites before: and the prosperity of these is to be prayed for, the good of the whole church being involved therein.

Ver. 8. *For my brethren and companions' sakes, &c.*] Who were regenerated by the spirit of God; adopted into his family, and children of the same father; stood in the same relation to Christ the first-born, and members of the same church; and so brethren: partners in the same blessings and promises of the covenant; partakers of the same grace; joined together in religious worship; shared in the same joys and griefs; travellers together to the same heavenly country, and entitled to the same glory and happiness. So David, though a king, reckoned his meanest subjects as such, who were spiritual men; and for their sakes, through the good will, love, and affection he bore to them, he would set praying souls an example, and by it enforce his own exhortation, as follows: *I will now say, peace be within thee*; now and always put up this petition, and not put it off to longer time; that peace and prosperity may always attend the church of God, as well as the city of Jerusalem, literally considered, and the inhabitants of it.

Ver. 9. *Because of the house of the Lord our God, &c.*] Not because of his own palace, nor because of his own house and family; nor because of his own personal interest; though all were concerned in the peace of Jerusalem: but chiefly because of the sanctuary of the Lord, as the Targum; because of the worship and service of God in it; because of his great love and zeal for the house and church of the living God, which ate him up, Psal. lxxix. 9. *I will seek thy good*; the good of Jerusalem, the good of the church of God; do all the good he could to it both with his purse and prayers, and by stirring up others to do the same; see Psal. li. 18.

P S A L M CXXIII.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm is not thought to be written by David, but by some other person in after-times; and at a time, as is clear, when the people of God were much exposed to the scorn and contempt of men. Dr. Patrick thinks it was written by some pious person; perhaps by Isaiah, in Hezekiah's time, when Rabshakeh poured out his contempt on God, on the king and the people. Others are of opinion, it was wrote by one of the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews were jeered by the Babylonians, and they tauntingly asked them to sing one of the songs of Zion; and scornfully said of Jerusalem, Is this the city men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? So Aben Ezra says, the psalmist speaks of a great man of the generation, which

was in captivity or in a siege; and Kimchi says, that he speaks in the language of the children of the captivity; to which agrees the Syriac inscription, "it is said in the person of Zorobabel, the prince of the captives." Others think it was composed in the times of Antiochus, the little horn prophesied of by Daniel, whose look was more stout than his fellows; who magnified himself against God and his people, profaned the sanctuary, and took away the daily sacrifice: and others are of opinion it was wrote a little before the coming of Christ, in the person of those who were waiting for it, and spiritual redemption and salvation by it; and who were scorned and derided by the proud Scribes and Pharisees.

Ver. 1. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, &c.*] Not only the eyes of his body, this being a prayer-gesture; see *Matt. xiv. 19. John xi. 41. and xvii. 1.* but the eyes of his mind and understanding, opened by the spirit of God; particularly the eye of faith, by which he looked for and expected help and salvation from the Lord. The phrase is expressive of holy confidence in God, and a comfortable hope of receiving good things from him; as, on the contrary, when persons are ashamed and confounded with a sense of their sins, and the aggravations of them, and of their own unworthiness and vileness; and, on account of the same, almost out of all hope, cannot lift up their eyes to heaven, or their face before God, *Ezra ix. 6. Paal. xl. 12. Luke xviii. 13.* *O thou that dwellest in the heavens;* the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, the seat of angels and glorified saints; and though the Lord is everywhere, and fills heaven and earth with his presence, and cannot be contained any where; yet here is the more visible display of his glory; here he keeps his court; this is his palace, and here his throne is prepared, and on it he sits^d; so some render the word here; as the Judge of the whole earth, and takes a view of all men and their actions; and, as the God of nature and providence, governs and orders all things after his own will; and, as the God of grace, sits on a throne of grace, kindly inviting and encouraging his people to come unto him: and therefore the psalmist addresses him as such; see *Eccl. v. 2. Matt. vi. 9.* The Targum is, "O thou that sittest on a throne of glory in heaven!"

Ver. 2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters; and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, &c.*] To direct them in their work and business, to point out unto them what they shall do; which is often done by a motion of the hand of the master or mistress, or rap of their fingers without speaking^e, which the servant observes: or to help and assist them against their enemies, and protect them from them; servants unarmed, and molested in their masters' service, have no other to flee to for protection but them; so *Aben Ezra*: or to receive food and sustenance from them, as servants and maidens do, from their masters and mistresses, in whose service they are; see *Prov. xxxi. 15.* so *Kimchi* and *Arama*; the latter observes, that they have their food in a way of mercy, and not justice; contrary to what the apostle says, *Col. iv. 1.* or in order to receive their wages from them; see *Job vii. 2.* *So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God;* look unto him for direction in his service. Saints are servants, not of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of the Lord; and not on the foot of creation only, but of redemption, and are made so by the grace of God; and they are willing to work, and are desirous to know what they should do; they inquire of God; they wait upon him, in his word and ordinances, for direction; and, being informed, do it with all their might, and follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes or directs them: and they look unto him for strength to assist them therein, being conscious of their own weakness; they apply to

him, and wait upon him for strength, and do all they do in his name and strength; they look unto him for protection from all their enemies, which are many and mighty, and are stronger than they; and for food, both temporal and spiritual, and for all the necessities and comforts both of a corporeal and spiritual life; and likewise for the recompense of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is of grace, and not of debt. *Joseph Kimchi* thinks that the allusion is to servants, that look to the hand of their masters that correct and chastise them, and bear it patiently; and look to the hand that smites, till it shall have done, and mercy is shewn them. And thus the saints look to the chastising hand of God, and humble themselves under it, and patiently endure it, till the Lord shall please to remove it from them; and this agrees with what follows: *until that he have mercy upon us;* God is gracious and merciful; and he has his set time to have mercy on his people: and it becomes them to continue praying to him, and waiting on him, until he is pleased to shew it to them; men should pray always, and not faint; they will find mercy in due time, *Luke xviii. 1, 7.*

Ver. 3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.*] Merit is not pleaded; for, though servants, they knew they were unprofitable ones: but mercy is asked; whether by the awakened sinner, under first convictions, or by the backsliding professor, for forgiveness of sins, under a sense of them, or as under the correcting and chastising hand of God for them: and which is repeated, to shew the state of their case, which requires mercy, and in haste; and the eagerness of their spirit, and the earnestness of their suit, their prayer being the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. *For we are exceedingly filled with contempt;* by reason of meanness in outward circumstances, the common lot of God's people; and therefore are reckoned the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things: and on account of their religion, which wicked men make a jest of; reckon an engine of state, to keep people in awe of the civil magistrate; or a piece of priestcraft, to serve the lucrative views of a set of men; or as mere cant and enthusiasm, and a gloomy melancholy business, which none but fools will give into; and particularly on account of peculiar doctrines embraced, which are brauded as novel, irrational, and licentious; and ordinances, which entirely depend on the sovereign will of the institutor of them. For these things, and the like, contempt was plentifully poured upon them; they had enough of it, and too much, so much that they could not bear it; it was become intolerable and loathsome, and the more, as it had been a long time continued on them. So *Aben Ezra* and *Kimchi* interpret the word, rendered *exceedingly*, of a long time.

Ver. 4. *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, &c.*] That are in easy and affluent circumstances; abound in the things of this world, and have more than heart can wish; have no outward trouble, as other men, or as the saints have; nor any uneasiness of mind, on account of sin and their

^d *וְשֵׁבִי* sedens, Montanus, Gejerus; qui se'ies, Junius & Tremiluis, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

^e *Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 106. Digni preantipis signa novit euzuchus, Martial. l. 3. 82.*

eternal state: they have been at ease from their youth; Satan, that has the possession of them, keeps the goods in peace; and their consciences are seared as with a red-hot iron, and they are past feeling; though they are far from having any true solid peace of mind: and such persons are generally scorers of the saints, and load them with their gibes and jeers in a most insolent manner; which makes it very irksome and grievous to bear. And *with the contempt of the proud*: who are proud of their natural abilities; of their wealth and riches, and of their honours and high places: and such are generally scorers, and deal in proud wrath;

and, through their pride, persecute the poor saints with their reproaches, and by other ways; see Prov. xxi. 24. Psal. x. 2. Some understand by these characters, *that are at ease, or quiet*¹, and are *proud, or excellent*², as the phrases may be rendered, such described by them as are the objects, and not the authors, of scorn and contempt; even the saints, who are the quiet in the land, and the excellent in the earth; those precious sons of Zion, who are disesteemed by the men of the world, Psal. xxxv. 20. and xvi. 2. Lam. iv. 1, 2.

P S A L M CXXIV.

A Song of degrees of David.

SOME think this psalm was written by David, after the conquest of the Philistines and Ammonites, and other nations that rose up against him and Israel, like the proud waves of the sea, and spread themselves like a flood; and whose destruction was like the breach of many waters, 2 Sam. v. 18, 20. and x. 19. Others, after his deliverance from the persecution of Saul, or from the conspiracy of Absalom. Theodoret is of opinion that David wrote this by a prophetic spirit, concerning the enemies of the Jews, upon their return to their own land, from the Babylonish captivity; who envied them, and rose up against them, but the Lord delivered them. And others apply it to the times of Antiochus, when the Jewish church and state were threatened with ruin; but the Lord appeared for them, in raising up the Maccabees. Kimchi interprets it of the Jews in captivity; and Arama of the deliverance of the children of Israel at the Red sea. It may be applied to any time of distress the church and people of God have been in, and he has wrought salvation for them.

Ver. 1. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, &c.*] Or, *was for us*^b. The Syriac version is, *that rose up for us*; against their enemies, that rose up against them, as in the next verse: or, *was with us*, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; to help and assist, support and supply, strengthen and defend: or, *was among us*, as the Arabic version; as their King, Protector, and Saviour. This implies that he was on their side; was for them, with them, and among them, and took their part against their enemies; see Psal. cxviii. 6, 7. which if he had not done, their case would have been miserable and deplorable; or if any other had took their part, and not he, let them be who they would, angels or men. If God is on the side of us, it matters not who is against us; but if he is not on our side, or against us, it signifies nothing who is for us; see Rom. viii. 31. It suggests that the case of Israel now was so very forlorn and distressed, that none but the Lord himself could help them. Jehovah is on the side of his people in a spiritual sense, or otherwise it would be

bad for them: God the Father is on their side; his love and relation to them engage him to be so; hence all those good things that are provided for them, and bestowed on them; nor will he suffer any to do them hurt, they being as dear to him as the apple of his eye; hence he grants them his gracious presence, supports them under all their trials and exercises, supplies all their wants, and keeps them by his power, and preserves them from all their enemies; so that they have nothing to fear from any quarter: Christ is on their side; he is the surety for them, the Saviour of them; has took their part against all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; has engaged with them, and conquered them; he is the Captain of their salvation, their King at the head of them, that protects and defends them here, and is their friend in the court of heaven; their Advocate and interceding High-priest there, who pleads their cause against Satan, and obtains every blessing for them: the Spirit of Jehovah is on their side, to carry on his own work in them; to assist them in their prayers and supplications; to secure them from Satan's temptations; to set up a standard for them, when the enemy comes in like a flood upon them; and to comfort them under all their castings down; and to work them up for, and bring them safe to heaven: but were not this the case, what would become of them? *Now may Israel say*; this was a public case the psalmist here records, in which all Israel were concerned; and whom he calls upon to take notice of it, and directs them what to say on this occasion.

Ver. 2. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, &c.*] This he repeats both for the confirmation of it, and to excite the attention of the Israelites to it; as well as to observe that it was not once only, but again and again, many times the Lord appeared to be on their side. The Targum renders it, "the Word of the Lord;" the essential Word, the Son of God; and so in the preceding verse in the king's Bible. *When men rose up against us*; wicked men; though no hard

^f פַּעְוֹתָם peccatorum, Montanus; tranquillorum, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^g מְעֻלָּיִם excellentium, Hammond; a rad. עָמַל eminauit, Geol.

jerus; so an eminent Rabbi with the Jews is called Gaon, as R. Saadiah Gaon, &c.

^h לְנוֹן pro nobis, Vatablus.

epithet is given in the text, however just. The enemies of God's people are only called *men* by them, to shew their meekness and patience; it is in the singular number, *when man rose up*; hence Arama interprets it of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and R. Obadiah of Haman: but it might be better interpreted of the man of sin, the man of the earth; who, at the head of his anti-christian party, has rose up against the saints, oppressed them, and threatened them with utter ruin, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Psal. x. 18. Rev. xiii. 5, 6. Though it is best to understand it of a body of men; of men not mean, but mighty; not few, but numerous; and who united as one man against the people of God, and rose up against them in an hostile manner; being full of enmity to them, and bent upon their ruin.

Ver. 3. *Then they had swallowed us up quick, &c.] Or alive*: as the earth swallowed up Korah and his company; or as the fish swallowed up Jonah; or rather as ravenous beasts swallow their prey; to which the allusion is. The people of God are comparable to sheep and lambs, and such-like innocent creatures: and the wicked to lions, tigers, wolves, bears, and such-like beasts of prey that devour living creatures. *When their wrath was kindled against us*; which is cruel and outrageous; there is no standing against it, nor before it; it is like a fierce flame of fire that burns furiously, and there is no stopping it; none but God can restrain it.

Ver. 4. *Then the waters had overwhelmed us, &c.]* People, comparable to waters for their multitude, strength, force, and impetuosity; which bear down all before them, and against which there is no standing; which, like the waters of the flood, overflow and destroy all they pass over. These are the floods of ungodly men, which are very destructive and terrible; see Rev. xvii. 15. Isa. viii. 7, 8. Psal. xviii. 4. together with all those reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, which come along with them; which the presence of God only can bear up his people under, and carry them through, Cant. viii. 7. Psal. lxxix. 1, 2. Isa. xliii. 2. *The stream had gone over our soul*; and so deprived them of life; the whole force of the enemy; which, like a stream, flows in with great strength and rapidity, when a breach is made and spreads itself. Arama interprets it of the stream of the Egyptians, and restrains it to them, their armies and forces; but it rather designs others, and the enemies of God's people in general, which threaten their ruin, even their very souls and lives: it may be applied to the stream of corruptions, the flood of temptation and flow of persecutions, such as the flood the dragon cast out of his mouth after the woman; which, were it not for divine grace and assistance, would destroy the saints, who have no might against this great force, 2 Chron. xx. 12. Isa. lix. 19. Rev. xii. 16.

Ver. 5. *Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.]* The wicked, who, through their pride, persecute the poor saints: these proud tyrants and persecutors would prevail over them, to their ruin and destruction; who, for their number, force, and strength, and especially for their pride and haughtiness, are like to the strong,

boisterous, and swelling waves of the sea, were they not stopped and bounded by him who has said, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther, Job xxxviii. 11.

Ver. 6. *Blessed be the Lord, &c.]* Here begins the church's thanksgiving for deliverance from all their enemies, their proud persecutors; and from all afflictions and troubles by them; which they could never have been delivered from, had not the Lord appeared for them; and therefore it is but just that he should have all the glory of it, and be blessed and praised on account thereof. *Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth*; the teeth of wicked men are like spears and arrows, like swords and knives, to devour good men; their passions are strong, and their desires very vehement after their ruin; and, if suffered, the saints would fall an easy prey to them: but God will not give them up to them, either to Satan the devouring lion, or to any of his emissaries; nay, when they have seized them, and got them in their mouths, they shall be snatched from them, as the lamb out of the mouth of the lion and the bear by David; see Psal. lvii. 4. Prov. xxx. 14. 1 Pet. v. 8. 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35.

Ver. 7. *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers, &c.]* The people of God are like little birds, being harmless and innocent, singing forth the praises of God for his goodness to them; as also because weak and unable to resist their foes; and worthless in themselves, like sparrows, as the word¹ here used signifies; and are fearful and timorous, and flee at the least apprehension of danger, Psal. cii. 7. and xi. 1. Hos. xi. 11. Satan, and wicked men under his influence, are like fowlers who lay snares for them, to draw them into sin, into immorality and error, in order to bring them to ruin and destruction; hence we read of the snare of the devil and of wicked men, 1 Tim. iii. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Psal. cxix. 110. and who form plans and lay schemes to oppress and destroy them; but through the wisdom given them to discern these devices and stratagems, and through the power of divine grace accompanying them, they escape what was intended for their hurt, and particularly in the following manner: *the snare is broken, and we are escaped*; measures concerted by wicked men are broken, their schemes are confounded, their devices are disappointed, so that they cannot perform their enterprise; and by this means the saints escape the evils designed against them, the afflictions of the world, and the temptations of Satan.

Ver. 8. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, &c.]* This is the conclusion the church draws from the scene of Providence in her favour; this is the instruction she learns from hence, that her help is in the Lord only, and not in any creature; and that it is right to put her trust and confidence in the Lord for it, and only to expect it from him whose name is in himself; and is a strong tower to flee unto for safety, Prov. xviii. 10. The Targum is, "in the name of the Word of the Lord;" in the Messiah; in whom the name of the Lord is, his nature and perfections; and in whom help is found, being laid upon him, Exod. xxiii. 21. Hos. xiii. 9. Psal. lxxxix. 19. *who made heaven and*

¹ כַּעֲפֹרֶת אֶת כְּסֵפֶדֶת, Sept. sicut passer, V. L.

earth; and therefore must be able to help his people, and to do more for them than they are able to ask or think: for what is it he cannot do that made the

heavens and the earth, and all that is in them? see Psal. cxxi. 1, 2.

P S A L M CXXV.

A Song of degrees.

WHO was the penman of this psalm, and on what occasion written, is not certain. It describes the safety and security of the church and people of God; foretels the deliverance of them from the oppressions of their enemies; the blessings of goodness that should be bestowed upon them, and the vengeance that will be taken on the wicked. According to Aben Ezra, it belongs to the times of the Messiah, whom the Jews yet expect; when Israel, as they suppose, will be in safe and prosperous circumstances, and the wicked will be consumed; as Kimchi on it also observes: and, indeed, it may be very well thought to belong to the latter days of the kingdom of our Messiah; when the church will be in great safety and prosperity, and freed from the persecution and afflictions of wicked men.

Ver. 1. *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, &c.*] Who trust not in themselves, and in their own hearts; nor in any thing of theirs, their strength or wisdom, riches or righteousness; nor in any creature whatever, in the mightiest or best of men; but in the Lord; in God, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal mercies; and in him, as the God of grace, for all spiritual and eternal ones; who should be trusted in at all times, whether of affliction, temptation, or darkness; for which there is abundant reason. The Targum is, "the righteous that trust in the Word of the Lord;" in Christ the essential Word, who is trusted in by all that know him, and that know there is salvation in him, and in no other: these trust in him for acceptance with God, for a justifying righteousness, for remission of sin, for all supplies of grace, and for eternal life; and such are like Mount Zion for many things, being beloved and chosen of God, enjoying his presence, and the blessings of his grace; and being the joy of the whole earth, and a perfection of beauty; but here for their firmness and stability, as follows. Arama observes, that Mount Zion is made mention of, because here the prophecy was given; to which may be added, the psalmist was upon it, and had it in view, when he compared those that trust in the Lord unto it. Which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever; either, which Mount Zion is immovable, and continually abides, for which reason the church and people of God are compared unto it; or every one of those that trust in the Lord, like that, can never be removed, but always abide: they can never be removed from the Lord, though they may be removed from his house and ordinances, as sometimes David was; and from his gracious presence, and sensible communion with him, and out of the world by death; yet never from his heart's love, nor out of the covenant of his grace, which

is sure and everlasting; nor out of his family, into which they are taken; nor from the Lord Jesus Christ, nor out of his hands and arms, nor from off his heart; nor from off him, the foundation on which they are laid; nor out of a state of grace, either regeneration or justification; but such abide in the love of God, in the covenant of his grace, in the hands of his Son, in the grace wherein they stand, and in the house of God for evermore.

Ver. 2. *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, &c.*] There was Mount Zion on the side of the north, and the mount of Olives on the east, and other mountains on the other sides of it; so that it was encompassed with them, and was naturally as well as artificially fortified. Tacitus^k describes Jerusalem as inaccessible, walls and mountains, rocks and towers, surrounding it: and the poet Coerilus^l makes mention of a people that spoke the Phœnician language, by whom he plainly means the Jews, οὐκ ἔστι Σολυμοῖς ὄρει, that inhabited the mountains of Solyma; which are spoken of by Homer^m, from whence, according to Tacitusⁿ, Jerusalem had its name: yet, as Kimchi observes, this did not hinder the enemy from taking it; wherefore the Lord is a greater security to his people. So the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever; he encompasses them with his favour and loving-kindness as a shield; he encircles them in the arms of everlasting love; he guards them by his providence all around, and keeps a wakeful and watchful eye over them; that nothing hurts them: he keeps them, as in a garrison, by his almighty power: these are the walls that are round them, yea, he himself is a wall of fire about them, and the glory in the midst of them, Zech. ii. 5. and so he continues; he never leaves his people, nor forsakes them, but is their God and guide even unto death. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord is round about his people;" Christ, the essential Word of God.

Ver. 3. *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, &c.*] Which, according to Kimchi, is Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra interprets it of the Israelites that inherit the land. And the people of God are no doubt designed; the Lord's justified and chosen ones, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and all that belong unto them, their persons, families, estates, and good name: in all which they are sometimes oppressed and afflicted by wicked men; who are a rod of correction in the hand of the Lord, the rod of men with which he chastises them; but this shall not always continue: so the word is used for a rod of correction, Prov. xxii. 15. It sometimes signifies a

^k Hist. l. 5. c. 11.

^l Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 9.

^m Odys. 5. v. 283.

ⁿ Ut supra.

sceptre; an ensign of power and government, Gen. xlix. 10. and here may intend the nations of the world, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or the antichristian states, prevailing and ruling over the people of God in a tyrannical manner, which shall not always last; the reign of antichrist will come to an end, and the Lord will destroy him with the rod of his mouth. It sometimes signifies a tribe; and the Syriac version seems so to take it here, "the tribe of the wicked shall not rest" in the part of the righteous; they shall no more dwell among them, lest, being led by their example, they should learn their works, and do as they do; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi. But rather, with Gussetius*, this is to be understood of a measuring-rod; laid not on persons, but on lands and estates; and best agrees with the lot, inheritance, and estate of the righteous; and may signify, that though wicked men unjustly seize upon and retain the farms, possessions, and estates of good men, as if they were assigned to them by the measuring-line; yet should not hold them long, or always. *Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity*; for the righteous are not perfect in this life: they are not without sin, nor do they live without the commission of it; and may be under temptation, by long afflictions and oppressions, and seeing the wicked prosper, to desert their profession of religion, and forsake the ways of God, and join with the wicked, and commit iniquity as they do; and therefore, to prevent this, the Lord will not suffer them always to be under affliction and oppression; see Psal. xxxvii. 8. and lxxiii. 2, 3, 13, 14. Isa. lvii. 16. Hos. vii. 9. or them and theirs to be always in the hand of the enemy.

Ver. 4. *Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, &c.*] That are made so by the spirit and grace of God; for none are naturally good, but evil; only such who are regenerated and made new creatures, who have a good work of grace begun in them; who have the good spirit of God, and his good graces, and the good word of God in them, and are filled with all goodness; and which is known by the good fruits which they bear, or the good works done by them. For these the psalmist prays the Lord would do good to them, not only in a providential way, as he does to all; but in a way of special grace, bestowing the blessings of his goodness on them, and causing all things to work for their good: and as saints should pray for one an-

other, or supplication should be made for all saints, such a prayer as this may be the prayer of faith; for it is not to be doubted but God will do good to those he makes good. Aben Ezra says this may be considered either as a prayer or a prophecy; it may have respect unto the church in the latter day, and to the good things spoken of concerning it; which God will accomplish in due time, and should be prayed for; see Psal. li. 18. *And to them that are upright in their hearts*; which is a further description of good men, from the integrity and sincerity of their hearts; who do all they do before God and men, in the uprightness of their souls, cordially and sincerely, from right principles, and with right views.

Ver. 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, &c.*] The ways of sin, immorality, or error; which are crooked ways, not agreeing with the word of God, the rule of faith and practice. This seems to design not openly profane sinners, who have always lived in a course of sin and wickedness; but carnal professors, who, through affliction and persecution because of the word, are offended, and desert the good ways of God; and turn from the holy commandment, word, and ordinances, they have professionally embraced. *The Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*; the Targum adds, "to hell." These hypocrites shall be led forth by the Lord with abandoned sinners, like malefactors to the place of execution; when he shall bid them depart from him, and they shall go into everlasting fire; and if there is any place in hell hotter than another, those shall have it; see Matt. vii. 23. and xxv. 41. and xxiv. 51. *But peace shall be upon Israel*; upon every true Israelite, upon the whole Israel of God; the apostle seems to have respect to this passage in Gal. vi. 16. such shall have spiritual peace in their hearts now, and eternal peace hereafter. The words may be read either as a prayer that it might be, or as a prophecy that it should be; and may have regard unto the latter day, when all the enemies of Christ and his church shall be destroyed, and there shall be abundance of peace, so long as the moon endures, Psal. lxxii. 8. Aben Ezra observes, that the psalmist prays that God would remove the wicked far off, and then there would be peace in Israel; and to the same purpose Arama and Kimchi interpret it.

P S A L M CXXVI.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm is generally thought to have been written by Ezra, or some good man returned from the Babylonish captivity, and on account of it: the inscription in the Syriac version of it, besides observing it to be a song of degrees or ascents, and without a name, is, "it is said of Haggai and Zechariah, who came up out of Babylon with the captives; but spiritually; and it is an expectation of good things to come." It

may have respect to redemption by the Messiah; and the conversion of the Jews in the latter day.

Ver. 1. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, &c.*] Or returned the Jews from their captivity in Babylon; who are called Zion, from the city of David, built on Mount Zion, which was in Judea, and adjoined to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the kingdom; and because they were the godly who were concerned

for Zion in a spiritual sense, or the church of God, and the interest of religion, whose spirits the Lord stirred up to come out of Babylon, upon the proclamation by Cyrus, when those that were more worldly and carnal stayed behind; as also because the chief mercy in returning the captives was the rebuilding the temple on Mount Zion, and the restoration of religious worship; which gave the religious captives in Babylon great concern, Psal. cxxxvii. 1—3. This deliverance of the captives, though it was by Cyrus as an instrument, yet it was the Lord's work; which he employed him in, and stirred him up to do, and therefore is ascribed to him. And though this is expressed in the past tense, yet it may be put for the future; and be considered as a prophecy of it, and which the following word seems to confirm; and especially the prayer, ver. 4. for the return of the captivity seems to require it should: and may not only literally respect the return of the captives in Babylon, but the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, and their deliverance from their present captivity; which is expressed sometimes by the Lord's bringing again Zion, and returning the captivity of the Jews, and their being turned to the Lord; Isa. lii. 8. Jer. xxx. 3, 18. 2 Cor. iii. 16. and may be applied to spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, of which the deliverance from Babylon was a type; and is sometimes expressed in the same language, Psal. xiv. 7. Jer. xxxi. 22, 23. and the people redeemed are often signified by Zion, and are by nature captives to sin, Satan, and the law; from whence they are redeemed by Christ, whose work alone it is, Isa. i. 27. and lix. 20. *We were like them that dream; or shall be* ^p; that is, like persons that know not whether they are asleep or awake; and whether what they see and enjoy is in reality or only a vision, as Peter's deliverance from prison was to him, Acts xii. 9. When the proclamation by Cyrus was first heard of by the Jews, and they had their liberty upon it, they could hardly tell whether it was a real thing or a vision, and could scarcely believe it for joy; it seemed too good news to be true, as the news of Joseph's being alive was to Jacob, Gen. xlv. 26. and so the appearance of Christ, his resurrection, and redemption by him, were to the disciples, Luke xxiv. 11, 21, 41. The Targum is, "we were like the sick that are recovered;" which sense the word has in Job xxxix. 4. Isa. xxxviii. 16. and will be the case of the Jews, when they are converted; who will be recovered out of the sick state and condition in which they now are, and have all their diseases healed, and sins forgiven; yea, their conversion will be as life from the dead, a resurrection of them from their graves, Rom. xi. 15. Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, *as those that are comforted*; and the Syriac version, *as those that rejoice*; each of the seasons mentioned being times of comfort and joy: Joseph Kimchi interprets it of the passing away and forgetfulness of affliction and trouble at the time of redemption, like a dream that flies away upon awaking.

Ver. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, &c.]*

^p מְדַמִּים erimus, Musculus, Gejerus, Schmidt; so the Targum, Syr. Arab.

Who before mourned, and hung their harps on the willows, and could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land; but now, as their hearts were filled with joy, this was externally and visibly seen in their countenances, and expressed with their mouths and by outward gestures; it was so great, they could not contain it, to which respect is had, Isa. xxxv. 10. It may be rendered, *then shall our mouth be filled with laughter* ^q; that is, when we awake, says Arama; or rather when the captivity is returned, either in a literal or in a spiritual sense, both being matter of great joy: the Midrash says, this will be in the world to come, and not in this. *And our tongue with singing*; the praises of God, and the songs of Zion. *Then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*; it was taken notice of by the Chaldeans, among whom they had been captives, and by all the nations round about: and it was wonderful to them, that Cyrus, an Heathen prince, of his own motion and will, should at once, and without any price or reward, let them go, and send them into their own country to rebuild their temple; and with them the vessels of the Lord's house, that had been taken away by the king of Babylon; and order men to help them, with gold and silver, and goods and cattle, Ezra i. 1—11. Likewise the conversion of the Jews, and the restoration of them to their own land in the latter day, will be observed by the Gentiles with wonder, and as the work of God, Ezek. xxxvi. 35, 36. and xxxvii. 21, 28.

Ver. 3. *The Lord hath done great things for us, &c.]*

These words are generally supposed to be the words of the Jews, taking up those of the Gentiles, and confirming them; acknowledging that the Lord had done great things for them indeed; which, had they not owned, they would have been exceeding ungrateful; had they been silent concerning them, the stones would have cried out, and the very Heathens condemned them. But I see not why they may not be thought to be the words of those among the Heathens continued; declaring that the great things done were not for the Jews only, but for them also; as the great redemption by Christ is of persons out of every tongue, people, and nation; for he is the propitiation, not for the Jews only, but for the sins of the whole world; and having this in view, thus they express themselves. The work of redemption is a great thing of itself; the produce of great wisdom; the effect of great love; procured at a great price, for great sinners, by a great Saviour; and is not only a deliverance from sin, Satan, and the law; but contains many great and glorious blessings in it, as justification, remission of sins, adoption, and eternal life. Whereof *we are glad*; that those great things are done without us, finished by the Redeemer himself; that they are so great and glorious, so rich and plenteous, so full and free, and suitable to us; and done for us sinners of the Gentiles, so unworthy of them, who are by nature children of wrath as others.

Ver. 4. *Turn again our captivity, O Lord, &c.]* This prayer for the return of the captivity shews that

^q מְצַחֵם replebitur, Musculus, Gejerus; implebitur, Schmidt; so the Targum, Syr. Arab.

it was not as yet: though some think that this is a petition of those that were returned from captivity, for those of their brethren that stayed behind; who, enjoying the sweets of their liberty, pray for their brethren to come and share with them, that so the mercy and blessing might be completed. This may very well be considered as a petition; either for the coming of the Redeemer, and redemption by him from the captivity of sin and Satan, and the law; or for the conversion of the Jews in the latter day. Either of which would be as *the streams in the south*; as great and wonderful a work as causing rivers to be in dry places, and as grateful and acceptable as brooks and streams of water in southern countries: or like streams produced by the south wind, which brings rain, and melts the snow from the hills; which, running into the valleys, cause flows of water in great abundance: and so may denote the abundance of those that should share in the blessings of conversion, redemption, and salvation; as well as the wonderfulness and acceptableness of them; see Isa. xli. 18. and xliii. 19. and xxxii. 2. The Targum seems to understand it of the change made upon them, like that made on the earth by those; paraphrasing the words, "as the land is turned, when streams of water flow out in a time of drought." The allusion seems to be to Judea, lying south of Babylon; and to the southern parts of Judea, which were dry; see Josh. xv. 19.

Ver. 5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*] A proverbial expression, encouraging faith in prayer put up for the return of the captivity, whether in a literal or spiritual sense. Praying or seeking the Lord is sowing in righteousness, Hos. x. 12. which is often attended with tears and weeping; the issue of them is not always seen soon: these, like seed, lie buried under the clods, but take effect and will rise up in due time: saints should wait patiently for a return of them, as the husbandman for the fruits of the earth; in due time they will produce a large crop of blessings, a plentiful harvest, which the praying saint will reap with joy; as those that prayed and waited for the redemption in Jerusalem; and as those that pray for the latter-day glory, the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of anti-christ; the souls under the altar have been sowing in tears, but ere long they will reap in joy, Rev. vi. 9. and xix. 1, 2. It may be applied to the state and condition of saints in common in this life; now is their sowing-time, and careful they should be that they sow not to the flesh, but to the spirit: and a sorrowful time it is, on account of inward corruptions, Satan's

temptations, divine desertions, and the imperfection of their services; but ere long they will reap life everlasting, reap in joy, and be in the fulness of it; now they weep, then they shall rejoice; now they mourn, then they shall be comforted.

Ver. 6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, &c.*] Which he sows in tears. This is but a repetition and confirmation of what is before expressed in different words; and may be applied, as to a praying saint, so to a faithful preacher of the word. The word is the precious seed which he bears, which he takes out of the granaries of the Scriptures; and carries from place to place, and scatters and sows, Luke viii. 11. compared to seed, because of its meanness in the eyes of those that know it not; because of its generative virtue and increase, which it has from God, and which, unless sown in the earth, produces no fruit: and it is called *precious seed*, because either bought at a great price, when grain is dear; or because it usually is the choicest wheat that is the sowing-seed; and so may denote the preciousness and value of the Gospel, dispensed by Christ's faithful ministers, which is called a sowing of spiritual things, 1 Cor. ix. 11. which should be done plentifully and constantly, and with the same sort of seed or doctrine, and which requires art and skill; and is often performed weeping or with tears, because of their own insufficiency, through fear of success, and through want of it; and because of the badness of the ground, the hardness of men's hearts they have to do with. The allusion seems to be to a poor husbandman, that has got but little seed to s.w, and this bought at a dear rate; and which he buries under the clods, and fears it will rise no more; and weeps as he sows, because of the badness of the weather, or of the soil, doubting of success. Aben Ezra, by the words rendered *precious seed*, or, as they may be, *a draught of seed*^t, understands the vessel in which the sower carries his seed, the seed-basket, from whence he draws and takes out the seed, and scatters it; see Amos ix. 13. so the Targum, "bearing a tray of sowing corn." *Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him*; the seed he has been to and fro in sowing springs up under a divine blessing; and, beyond his expectation and fears, produces a large and plentiful crop; which he reaps, and returns home, not with his arms full of sheaves only, but with his cart laden with them: so a faithful minister, sooner or later, is blessed with converts, who will be his joy and crown of rejoicing another day: see John iv. 35, 38. 2 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

P S A L M CXXXVII.

A Song of degrees for Solomon.

THIS psalm was written for Solomon; that is, for the sake of Solomon, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or concerning Solomon, as Jarchi: and so the Syriac

title, "it was said by David concerning Solomon." Perhaps it was composed by David, after Nathan had informed him, that not he, but his son So-

^t מִשְׁךְ הַזֶּרֶק tractionem seminis, Moutanus, Piscator, Gejerus.

lomon, should build a temple for the Lord; and when he had made provision of gold and silver, and other things, for it, and had given the pattern of it to his son; and encouraged and animated him to it, assuring him that the Lord would be with him until he had finished it; and prayed that God would give him a perfect heart to do it; for he knew the whole success depended upon the Lord, notwithstanding all the preparations he had made: hence the psalm begins, *except the Lord build the house*; see 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. and xxix. 19. Theodoret is of opinion it was written for Zorobabel, and respects the building of the second temple by him; who is called Solomon, because he descended from him, and restored his work; but Zorobabel, though he was of the house of David, yet not in the line of Solomon, but of Nathan, Luke iii. 27, 31. The inscription of the Syriac version seems to agree with this conjecture; which adds, to what is before observed, "and it is also said concerning Haggai and Zechariah, who were solicitous for the building of the temple." And Arama the Jew says, that it is possible it may be said of the building of the second temple, and the walls of Jerusalem. But others think it is a composition of Solomon himself; who might set out upon the building of the temple with this song, as he made a prayer at the dedication of it when finished: and the Targum renders it, "a song by the hand of Solomon;" and our translators for the most part render the particle *of*, which they here translate *for*, as *of David*, in many places. And so accordingly it may be rendered here *of Solomon**, or Solomon's, and be one of the thousand and five songs he made; which, besides that called the Song of Solomon, is the only one extant: and the doctrine of it agrees with many things in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; that all things depend upon the providence and blessing of God, without which all the endeavours of men are in vain. Kimchi thinks the Messiah is meant, who is often called Solomon in the book of Canticles, Cant. iii. 7, 11. and viii. 11, 12. and to whom many passages in it may be applied.

Ver. 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, &c.*] Whether it be understood literally of an artificial house, as Solomon's own house; or the house of the Lord, or any other: let a man be ever so bent upon building one, or have ever so much skill in drawing the plan of it, or be ever so well provided to go through the expense of it, or have ever so many hands employed in it, yet, if the Lord does not give success, it will all be in vain; the building will fall down, or be consumed by fire before it is finished; or by one providence or another he will be obliged to desist from it, as in the case of the builders of the tower and city of Babel. Or whether it be understood of a family, which is built up by an increase and multiplication of children; so Leah and Rachel built up the house of Israel, Ruth iv. 11. this depends upon the providence of God; for, as it is after said, *children are an heritage of the Lord*. Or whether it be understood, figuratively and mystically, of the church of

God, the house of the living God; the house of Christ, a spiritual one; a Gospel church, whose materials are lively stones, or true believers. Now there are builders in this house, some indeed very bad ones; and it is no wonder that they labour in vain, who reject and lay aside the foundation and corner-stone, Christ; who deny his deity, despise his righteousness; or mix grace and works, law and Gospel, together, and pluck down with one hand what they build with another: and though there are others that are good ones, and lay the foundation, Christ; and build on this foundation precious truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; minister the word, and administer the ordinances, truly and faithfully; and in all direct to Christ for grace, strength, peace, comfort, and eternal life; speak to edification, and are the means of reviving the graces of God's people, and of establishing their souls; as well as of the conversion of sinners, whereby the house of God is built up; yet if the Lord does not succeed their ministrations, all is in vain. For the principal builder is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; this is mostly applied to the second Person, the Word and Wisdom of God, Prov. ix. 1. Zech. vi. 12, 13. Matt. xvi. 18. but not to the exclusion of the Father, who has laid in Zion a foundation, a precious corner-stone, and builds souls on it; nor of the Spirit, through whom saints are built up an habitation for God, Isa. xxviii. 16. Ephes. ii. 22. The Targum here is, "if the Word of the Lord does not build the city." It follows, *except the Lord keep the city*; the city Jerusalem, as the Targum; who also here makes mention of the Word of the Lord: or any other city: God, with the Heathens[†], was called *πολιεύς*, the keeper of cities; this title is given to Minerva by Pindar[‡], and is one of Jupiter's titles[§]. *The watchman waketh but in vain*; to preserve it from riots, robberies, fires, &c. This may be applied to the church of God, the city of the living God, of which saints are fellow-citizens: now in this city there are watchmen, some indeed that are blind and asleep, and so quite unfit for this office; but there are others who are awake and diligent, and watch in all things; and for the souls of men, and the good of the city, the church, to prevent heresies, errors, and immoralities; and yet all their watchfulness is in vain, unless the Lord keep it, who watches over his people for good, and that none hurt them; he is wakeful, never slumbers nor sleeps, and constant night and day; and keeps his people by his power, and as tenderly as the apple of his eye.

Ver. 2. It is *vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, &c.*] A description of an industrious and laborious person, who takes great pains to get a livelihood, or increase his substance; see Psal. civ. 23. Prov. xxxi. 15, 18. which yet, as in the former instances, depends upon the blessing of divine Providence, Prov. x. 4, 22. Eccl. ix. 11. For, after all, it may come to nothing more at last than to *eat the bread of sorrows*; that is, to eat bread gotten with much sorrow and labour; such get bread, and that is all, and not that without the providence of God. For *so he giveth his*

* *שִׁלְמוֹן* Salomonis, V. L. Tigurine version, Musculus, Muis, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth; ipsius Selomoh, Vatablus.

† Aristotel. de Mundo, c. 7. Apuleius de Mundo, prope finem. Phurnutus de Natura Deor. c. 9.

‡ Olympiad. Ode 5.

§ Pausanias Attica, sive l. 1. p. 43, 53. Vid Theoph. ad Autolyce. l. 1. p. 76.

beloved sleep; that is, the Lord: such who are partakers of his grace, that fear and love him; to them, thus diligent and industrious, he gives not only bread to eat, but sleep, which to a labouring man is sweet; and having food and raiment, he gives them contentment, quietness, and satisfaction of mind, which is the greatest blessing of all. Sleep, even bodily sleep, was reckoned with the very Heathens a divine gift*. Some think respect is had to Solomon, whose name was Jedidiah, and signifies the beloved of the Lord, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25, to whom God gave peace, rest, and safety all around; or, as others, the kingdom without labour, when Absalom and Adonijah toiled for it: Christ, who is the Beloved of the Lord, the Son of his love, his well-beloved Son, may be thought of, whose rest is glorious; his sleep in the grave, where his flesh rested from his labours and sufferings, in hope of the resurrection of it: and it may be applied to all the Lord's beloved ones; to whom he gives spiritual rest in this world, sleep in the arms of Jesus at death, and an everlasting rest in the world to come; all which depends not on their endeavours, but on his grace and goodness.

Ver. 3. *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, &c.*] As all success, safety, and the blessings of life, depend on the providence of God; so this very great blessing is a gift of his; having children, and those good ones, as the Targum interprets it; for of such only can it be understood; so, in a spiritual sense, the children of Christ, the antitypical Solomon, are the gifts of his heavenly Father to him; his portion and inheritance, and a goodly heritage he esteems them. *And the fruit of the womb is his reward; fruit*⁷ is the same with *children* in the preceding clause; see Luke i. 42, a reward he gives to good men, not of debt, but of grace; the Targum, "a reward of good works:" so regenerate persons are a reward to Christ, of his sufferings and death, Isa. liii. 10, 11.

Ver. 4. *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, &c.*] Are shot out with great strength; come with much force, and do execution, and do not return in vain; with which men defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; see Jer. l. 9. So are *children of the youth*: not young children, or children in their youth; but such who are born to their parents when they are

in their youth; and which are generally healthful and strong, and their parents live to see them grown up; and who are useful to protect them, and defend their persons and properties from enemies when grown old and feeble, and unable to defend themselves: whereas children born to them in old age are generally unhealthy and weak; and besides, their parents rarely live to see them brought up, or to be helpful to them. So Christ's spiritual seed and offspring, who are the dew of his youth, are strong, and overcome the evil one; and are serviceable in the defence of his cause and interest.

Ver. 5. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, &c.*] That is, his house full of them; called a quiver, referring to arrows before mentioned, this being the case in which they are put up: to have many children was always reckoned a great temporal blessing and happiness; see Job i. 2. Psal. cxxviii. 3, 4, 6. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *that fills his desire* has as many as he desires or wishes for: the Targum, "who fills his school of them:" so Jarchi interprets the children, of the disciples of the wise men. It may be applied to young converts, the children of Christ and of the church; which, when numerous, is a blessing to him and her; see Isa. xlix. 20, 21. and liii. 10, 11. *They shall not be ashamed*; the father and his children, as Aben Ezra; parents rather are meant, who are not ashamed when they have many children: with the Romans², those that had wives and children were preferred in honour to senior persons that had none; and they that had most to those that had fewest; and so with the Persians; see the note on Esth. v. 11. *But they shall speak with the enemies in the gate*; where courts of judicature were kept; and so the Targum, "in the gate of the house of judgment." The sense is, that their children should stand and plead the cause of their parents against their adversaries in courts of judicature; or publicly before the eyes of all, as Aben Ezra: and spiritually may design such of Christ's seed who are set for the defence of the Gospel, are valiant for the truth on earth, and earnestly contend for it; meet the enemy in the gate, publicly oppose him, and quit themselves like men, and are strong.

PSALM CXXVIII.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm very probably was written by the same hand as the former, and seems to have some connexion with it; as that shews that all things depend on the providence and goodness of God; and that all blessings, particularly children, are the gift of God; this points out the blessings, civil and religious, that belong to good men; and, among the rest, a numerous offspring. According to the Syriac version, "it is said concern-

ing Zorobabel, prince of Judah; and the care of the building; and it intimates in it the calling of the "Gentiles." Many things in it may be applied to Christ and his church.

Ver. 1. *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, &c.*] Be he who he will; of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; of whatsoever sex, age, or condition, high or low, rich or poor, Acts x. 35. such an one is blessed

* — prima quies—dono divum gratissima serpit, Virgil. *Æneid*. l. 2. v. 264, 265. *ὄνυξ δαΐμων*, Homer. *Iliad*. 7. v. 482. & 9. v. 709. & *Odysse*. 16. v. ult.

⁷ Nascitur ad fructum mulier, Claudian. in *Eutrop*. l. 1. v. 391.

² A. Gell. *Noct. Attic*. l. 2. c. 15.

now, and will be hereafter; see the note on Psal. cxii. 1. *That walketh in his ways*; which God has prescribed and directed his people to walk in, his ordinances and commands; which, to walk in, is both pleasant and profitable: it supposes life, requires strength and wisdom; and is expressive of progression, or going on and continuance in them: and where the true fear of God is, which includes every grace, and the whole of religious worship, there will be a conscientious regard to the ways of God: such avoid evil, and do good, because of the fear of God, Job i. 1. Neh. v. 15.

Ver. 2. *For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands, &c.*] That is, thou that fearest the Lord, and walkest in his ways. It is an apostrophe, or address to such, even to every one of them; instancing in one part of the blessedness that belongs to them, enjoyment of what their hands have laboured for; which may be understood both in a literal and spiritual sense: man must labour and get his bread with the sweat of his brow; he that will not work should not eat, he that does should; and a good man may have a comfortable enjoyment of the good of his labour; than which, as to temporal blessings, there is nothing better under the sun, Eccl. 5. 18. and, in a spiritual sense, good men labour in prayers at the throne of grace, there lifting up holy hands to God, wrestling with him for a blessing, which they enjoy; they labour in attendance on the word and ordinances, for the meat which endures to everlasting life; and they find the word and eat it, and Christ in it, whose flesh is meat indeed; and feed by faith on it, to the joy and comfort of their souls. *Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee*; or, *to thy soul*, as the Syriac version; happy as to temporal things, and well as to spiritual ones: such having an apparent special interest in the love, grace, mercy, and delight of God; in his providence, protection, and care; in the supplies of his grace, and in his provisions for his people, in time and eternity. It is well with such that fear God, in life and at death, at judgment and for ever: and the Targum is, "thou art blessed in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come;" and so Arama.

Ver. 3. *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, &c.*] The vine being a weak and tender tree, which needs propping and supporting; and often is fastened to the sides of a house, to which the allusion here is; whereunto it cleaves, and on which it runs up, and bears very agreeable fruit; it is properly used to express the weakness and tenderness of the female sex, their fruitfulness in bearing children, and their care of domestic affairs, being keepers at home; see 1 Pet. iii. 7. 1 Tim. v. 14. Tit. ii. 5. Kimchi observes, that the vine is the only tree men plant within doors; which, when it is grown up, they bring out at a hole or window of the house without, to have the sun and air; and so its root is within the house, and the branches without: and he observes, that a modest woman is within the house, and does not go without, and is only seen by her husband; but her children, like the branches of the vine, go out to work. This may be applied to Christ and his church; to him the other characters agree: he, as man, is one that feared the Lord; the grace of fear was in him; the spirit of fear rested on him; and he was in the exercise of it, and

walked in all the ways of the Lord, Isa. xi. 1—3. Heb. v. 7. he now sees and enjoys the travail or labour of his soul to satisfaction, and is made most blessed for evermore, Isa. liii. 11. Psal. xxi. 6. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, the spouse of Christ; and may be compared to a vine for her weakness in herself, her fruitfulness in grace and good works, and in bringing forth souls to Christ, through the ministry of the word; all which is pleasant and grateful to him; see Psal. lxxx. 14. Cant. ii. 15. and vii. 12. *Thy children like olive-plants round about thy table*; a numerous offspring was always accounted a very great blessing; and it must be very pleasant to a parent to see his children round about his table, placed in their proper order according to their age, partaking of what it is furnished with: Job, in his time of prosperity, had many children; and, next to the presence of the Almighty with him, he mentions this of his children being about him; see Job i. 2. and xxix. 6. This may be applied to the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ, which are like to olive-trees or olive-plants; to which David is compared, Psal. lii. 8. the two anointed ones in Zech. iv. 11, 14. the two witnesses in Rev. xi. 4. and all true believers in Christ may; because of their excellency, these being choice plants; because of their fruitfulness and beauty; because of their fatness, and having oil in them; and because of their perpetuity, being ever green; see Jer. xi. 16. Hos. xiv. 6. Now Christ has a table, which he has well furnished, at which he himself sits, and places these his children all around; and whom he welcomes to the entertainment he makes, and takes delight and pleasure in them, Cant. i. 12. and v. 1. Kimchi observes, the olive-trees do not admit of an ingrafture from other trees; see Rom. xi. 24. and so this denotes the legitimacy of those children, being free from all suspicion of being spurious, being born of such a wife as before described; and being green and moist all the year long, denotes their continuance in good works.

Ver. 4. *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.*] In the manner before described, and in the instances already given, as well as in the following; this is said to raise attention, and fix a sense of the blessedness of such persons; and who are further addressed, and pronounced happy, in the next verses.

Ver. 5. *The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, &c.*] The church of God, where he dwells, out of which he shines, even the Word of the Lord, as the Targum in the king's Bible; and where he commands his blessings of grace to descend on his people, even life for evermore, Psal. cxxxiii. 3. Here he blesses them with his word and ordinances, which are the goodness and fatness of his house, and with his presence in them; so that the man that fears God is blessed, not only in his person, and in his family, but in the house of God; see Psal. cviii. 27. *And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life*; the goodness of God in Jerusalem, which is another name for the church of God; the beauty of the Lord in his house and ordinances; his power and his glory in the sanctuary: or should see the church of God in prosperous circumstances all his days; true religion flourish, the power of godliness in the professors of it; the word and ordinances blessed to the edification of saints, and many

sinner converted and gathered in. This may be applied to Christ, Isa. liii. 11.

Ver. 6. *Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, &c.*] A numerous race of descendants from him, which are the crown and glory of old men, Prov. xvii. 6. this is also true of Christ's spiritual children by his church in successive ages, Isa. lix. 21. And *peace upon*

Israel: all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual; peace, and abundance of it; as will be in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, Psal. lxxii. 8. It may be considered as a wish or prayer, with which the psalm is concluded; let *peace be upon Israel**, as in Psal. cxxv. 5. see Gal. vi. 16.

P S A L M CXXIX.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm was written in later times, after many of the distresses of Israel; very probably upon the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, by Ezra, or some other godly person. Aben Ezra says the psalmist speaks in the language of Israel in captivity; and the same is the sense of Kimchi and Arama. The Syriac inscription is, "a psalm without a name, concerning the distress of the people; but as to us, it intimates to us the victory and triumph of the worshippers."

Ver. 1. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, &c.*] That is, the enemies of Israel, afterwards called *ploughers*. This may be understood of literal Israel, the posterity of Jacob; whose youth was the beginning of their constitution as a nation and church, or the first times of it; when they were greatly distressed by their enemies, and from thenceforward; as in Egypt, where, and in places near it, they were afflicted four hundred years, according to a prophecy given to Abraham their ancestor, and where their lives were made bitter with hard bondage; and in the times of the Judges, by several neighbouring nations, which was the time of their youth, or their settlement in Canaan; and afterwards in the times of their kings, particularly in the times of Ahaz king of Judah, by the Edomites and Philistines, and by Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria; and in the times of Hoshea, king of Israel, by Salmaneser, who carried away captive ten tribes; and in the times of Jeconiah and Zedekiah, kings of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried captive to Babylon the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. And the psalmist, by a spirit of prophecy, might have a further respect to the distresses of Israel in the times of Antiochus and the Maccabees, when the temple was profaned, the altar demolished, and the daily sacrifice made to cease, and many good men lost their lives; to which times the apostle may be thought to have regard, Heb. xi. 35—38. and also to their last affliction by the Romans, the greatest of all; and their present captivity, and deliverance from it. *May Israel now say*; this *now* refers to the time of redemption, as Arama observes, whether at their return from Babylon, or at their future conversion; then reviewing their former troubles ever since they were a people, may say as before. This may be applied to mystical Israel, or to the church of God in Gospel times, which, in its infancy, and from its youth upwards, has been afflicted many a time, and by many enemies; first, by the unbelieving Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus, and persecuted his

apostles and members; then by Rome Pagan, under the ten persecutions of so many emperors; and afterwards by Rome Papal, the whore of Babylon, who has many a time been drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. Yea, this may be applied to the Messiah, one of whose names is Israel, Isa. xlix. 3. who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs all his days, even from his youth; he was the *Aijeleth Shahar*, the hind of the morning, Psal. xxii. title; hunted by Herod in his infancy, Matt. ii. 13. and obliged to be carried into Egypt for safety when a child, from whence he was called, Hos. xi. 1. and ever after was more or less afflicted by his enemies, men or devils, in mind or body; and at last endured great sufferings, and death itself. It may moreover be applied to every Israelite indeed, to every true believer and member of Christ; conversion is their time of youth; they are first new-born babes, and then young men; as soon as regenerated, they are afflicted with the temptations of Satan, the reproaches and persecutions of men; which are many, though no more than necessary, and it is the will of God should be, and all for their good.

Ver. 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, &c.*] This is repeated for the confirmation of it, to excite attention to it, and to express the vehement affection of the speaker. *Yet they have not prevailed against me*; the Egyptians could not prevail against literal Israel; the more they were afflicted, the more they grew and multiplied; in the times of the Judges, one after another were raised up as deliverers of them; neither the Assyrians, Chaldeans, nor Romans, nor any other, have been able to cut them off from being a nation; they continue to this day: the enemies of the church of Christ, even the gates of hell, have not been able to prevail against it, being built upon a rock, so as to extirpate and destroy it, neither by open and cruel persecutors, nor by secret and fraudulent heretics; nor could the enemies of the Messiah prevail against him, for though they brought him to the dust of death, they could not hold him in it; and they themselves, through his death, were conquered by him, as sin, Satan, the world, and death itself; nor can the enemies of the saints prevail against them, God being on their side, Christ making them more than conquerors, the Spirit in them being greater than he that is in the world.

Ver. 3. *The ploughers ploughed upon my back, &c.*]

* על ישראל על שלום pax sit super Israele, Cocceius; so Gejerus.

Sinners, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it; such that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, Job iv. 8. Hos. x. 13. which may be understood of their carrying Israel captive, when they put yokes and bonds upon their necks, as upon oxen when they plough, as Arama interprets it; or it may design the destruction of their high places, signified by the *back*, such as the temple, the royal palace, and houses of their nobles, burnt with fire; yea, it was predicted that Zion should be ploughed as a field, Mic. iii. 12. and the Jews say that Turnus Rufus, the Roman general, as they call him, did plough up Jerusalem. The Syriac version is, *they whipped their whips or scourges*; with which many of the Israelites were scourged in the times of the Maccabees, Heb. xi. 36. And the Messiah himself, who gave his back to the smiters, and was buffeted and scourged by them, Isa. l. 6. Matt. xxvii. 26. and many of his apostles and followers, Matt. x. 17. 2 Cor. xi. 23—25. The Targum renders it “upon my body;” and Aben Ezra says the phrase is expressive of contempt and humiliation, and compares with it Isa. li. 23. *They made long their furrows*; which signify afflictions, and the pain their enemies put them to, and the distress they gave them; as no affliction is joyous, but grievous, but like the rending and tearing up the earth with the plough; and also the length and duration of afflictions; such were the afflictions of Israel in Egypt and in Babylon, and of the church of God under Rome Pagan and Papal; but, as the longest furrows have an end, so have the most lasting afflictions. The Syriac version is, *they prolonged their humiliation, or affliction*; Kimchi says the meaning is, “they would give us no rest from servitude and bondage.”

Ver. 4. *The Lord is righteous, &c.*] Or gracious and merciful; hence acts of mercy are called righteousness in the Hebrew language; the Lord has compassion on his people under their afflictions, and delivers them; or is faithful to his promises of salvation to them, and just and righteous to render tribulation to them that trouble them, and take vengeance upon them. *He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked*; alluding to the cords with which the plough is fastened to the oxen, which being cut, they cannot go on ploughing; or to the cords of whips, which when cut cannot be used to any purpose: it designs the breaking of the confederacies of wicked men against the people of God; the confounding their counsels and schemes, and disappointing their devices; so that they cannot perform their enterprises, or carry their designs into execution, or go on with and finish their intentions. The Targum renders it, “the chains of the wicked;” see Isa. v. 18.

Ver. 5. *Let them all be confounded, &c.*] Or *ashamed*: as all the enemies of God’s people will be sooner or later, either in this world, or however when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven; or let them be disappointed of their views, aims, and ends, when they will be confounded, as disappointed persons are. *And turned back*; from pursuing their designs and accomplishing them; as the Assyrian monarch was, who had a hook put into his nose, and a bridle in his lips, and

was turned back by the way he came, Isa. xxxvii. 29. *That hate Zion*; the inhabitants of Zion, who are called out of the world, and separated from the men of it, and therefore hated by them; the King of Zion, the Messiah, whom they will not have to reign over them; the doctrines of the Gospel, the word that comes out of Zion, to which they are utter enemies; and the laws and ordinances of Zion, the discipline of God’s house, which they cannot bear to be under and submit unto.

Ver. 6. *Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, &c.*] The tops of the houses in Judea were flat, and so grass grew upon them, being covered with plaster of terrace; though it was but small and weak, and being on high was exposed to the scorching sun, and soon withered^b; and Menochius says^c he saw such roofs in the island of Corsica, flat, and having earth upon them, smoothed and pressed, on which grass grew of its own accord; but being burnt up in summer-time by the sun, soon withered, as here said. But what Olaus Magnus^d relates is somewhat extraordinary; that, in the northern Gothic countries, they feed their cattle on the tops of houses, especially in a time of siege; he describes their houses as built of stone, high and large, and covered with rafters of fir and bark of birch; upon which is laid grass-earth, cut out of the fields four-square, and sowed with barley or oats, so that their roofs look like green meadows; and that what is sown, and the grass that grows thereon, might not wither before plucked up, they very constantly and diligently water it; but in the eastern countries, which are hot, and have but little rain, grass could not retain its verdure long, as follows. *Which withereth afore it groweth up*; to any height, the usual height of grass: or, *before it is plucked up*, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so Jarchi. And this was their usual way of gathering in their corn; and which continues to this day, as Mr. Maundrell^e affirms, who was an eye-witness to it in many places; where they plucked it up by handfuls from the roots, leaving the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had grown on them; and this they did for the sake of the straw, which was generally very short, and necessary for the sustenance of cattle; to which he thinks there is here a manifest allusion; but not corn, but grass, is here spoken of. The Targum is, “before it flourisheth, an east wind cometh, blows upon it, and it is withered;” and to the same purpose the Syriac version, “which when the wind comes upon it, it fades and withers.” This expresses the high and elevated state and condition of wicked men, the pride and haughtiness of their hearts; yet their weakness and frailty, and the danger they are exposed unto, through the wrath and vengeance of God upon them; when they consume and wither away like grass on the house-tops, and never come to the happiness they are hoping and wishing for: see Isa. xxxvii. 27.

Ver. 7. *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, &c.*] Such grass never rises high enough to be mowed, nor is of that account to have such pains taken with it; nor the quantity so large as to fill a mower’s hand, and carry it away in his arms. *Nor he that bindeth sheaves*

^a See Shaw’s Travels, p. 210, 211.
^b De Republica Heb. l. 7. c. 5. p. 666.

^c De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 9. c. 13.
^d Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 144. Ed. 7.

his bosom; when corn is mowed or reaped, the binders come and gather it up in their arms, and bind it in sheaves, and then bring it into the barn; but nothing of this kind is done with grass on the house-tops. This represents the insignificance and worthlessness of wicked men; who, when the harvest comes, the end of the world, will not be gathered in by the reapers, the angels, into Christ's garner, into heaven, as the wheat, the righteous, will; but, like the tares and chaff, will be cast into unquenchable fire.

Ver. 8. *Neither do they which go by say, the blessing of the Lord be upon you, &c.*] As was usual with passengers, when they went by where mowers, and reapers,

and binders, were at work in the field in harvest-time; who used to wish the presence and blessing of God with them, and upon their labours; and who returned the salutation, as may be seen in Boaz and his reapers, Ruth ii. 4. *We bless you in the name of the Lord;* which is either a continuation of the blessing of the passengers, or the answer of the reapers to them; so the Targum, "nor do they answer them, *we bless you,*" &c. The sense is, that those wicked men would have no blessing on them, from God nor men; that no God speed would be wished them; but that they were like the earth, that is covered with briars and thorns; which is nigh unto cursing, and its end to be burned.

P S A L M CXXX.

A Song of degrees.

THIS psalm is by some thought to have been written by David either when persecuted by Saul, and in great distress, and fearful he should perish by him; or else when in great distress of mind because of sin, after the affair of Bath-sheba; and it is reckoned therefore among the penitential psalms. Though others think it was written by Ezra, or some other godly person in the captivity; and Aben Ezra and R. Obadiah interpret it of Israel in captivity. The Syriac inscription is, "one of the psalms of ascension: it is said concerning Nehemiah the priest (or rather the prince or governor, since Nehemiah was no priest); and it intimates "in it the prayer of the martyrs." It may be applied to any person in distress, outward or inward; applying to God for help and deliverance, for pardoning grace and mercy; encouraging himself and others to hope for it.

Ver. 1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.*] Out of deep waters, out of the depths of the sea; not literally, as Jonah, who really was there, and from thence cried unto the Lord, Jon. ii. 2—6. but figuratively; meaning that he had been in the depths of sin, or brought into a low estate by it, as all men are: they are brought into debt by it, and so to a prison, the prison of the law, to be under its sentence of curse and condemnation; to a ditch, a horrible pit, a pit wherein is no water, and out of which men cannot extricate themselves; to a dunghill, to the extremest poverty and beggary; to a dungeon, a state of thralldom, bondage, and captivity; into an hopeless and helpless condition. The depths the psalmist was now in were a deep sense of sin, under which he lay, and which brought him low; as every man is low in his own eyes, when he has a thorough sense of sin; then he sees himself unworthy of any favour from God, deserving of his wrath and displeasure; as a polluted guilty creature, loathsome and abominable; as wretched and undone in himself; as the chief of sinners, more brutish than any man, and as a beast before the Lord: but then, though the psalmist was in the depths of distress for sin, yet

not in the depths of despair; he cried to God, he hoped in him, and believed there was pardon with him: or he might be in the depths of afflictions; which are sometimes, because of the greatness of them, compared to deep waters; to the deep waters of the sea, which threaten to overflow and overwhelm, but shall not; see Psal. xlii. 7. and lxix. 1, 2. and lxxxviii. 6. Isa. xliii. 2. and in such circumstances the psalmist cried to God for help and deliverance; not to man, whose help is vain; but to God, who is able to save, and is a present help in time of need. Theodoret understands this of the psalmist's crying to God from the bottom of his heart, in the sincerity of his soul; and so his cry is opposed to feigned and hypocritical prayers.

Ver. 2. *Lord, hear my voice, &c.*] His prayer, which was vocal: God is a God hearing prayer; sometimes his people think he does not hear them; but he always does, and in his own time answers; for to hear prayer with him is to answer it; which he does likewise in his own way as well as time; and not always in the way and at the time his people would have him. *Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications;* his prayers put up in an humble suppliant manner, for grace and mercy; not pleading merit and righteousness: these he desires God would hearken to and hear, listen unto, bow and incline his ears, as he is sometimes said to do; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension.

Ver. 3. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, &c.*] Or *observe* ^f them. Not but that God does observe the sins of men: he sees all the evil actions of bad men done in the dark, which cannot hide them from him; and all the iniquities of good men, so as to correct and chastise for them, but not with his eye of vindictive justice. Or *keep* ^g them; should he keep a watchful eye over them, make strict inspection into them, enter into a critical examination of them, and of all their aggravated circumstances; should he keep them in mind and memory, retain them in the book of his remembrance; should he lay them up, and keep them sealed among his stores, in order to be brought to light, and brought

^f תשמר observaveris, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

^g Servet, Cocceius; servaveris, Muis.

out as charges another day, and to the condemnation of men; should he set them before him in the light of his countenance, and not cast them behind his back and into the depths of the sea; should he visit for them in a way of wrath, or enter into judgment on account of them, with men in their own persons; demanding satisfaction for them at their own hands, without any regard to the sacrifice and satisfaction of his son; all a man's righteousness, repentance, humiliation and tears, would stand him in no stead, would not answer for him, or atone for his sins; still his iniquities would remain marked before God; the consequence of which would be eternal damnation, Jer. ii. 22. *O Lord, who shall stand?* Not one; since all are sinners. The Arabic version adds, *before thee*; in his presence; in the house and courts of God, there to minister before him; to pray and praise, to preach and hear: or at his bar hereafter, with any boldness and confidence; so as to litigate the point with him in his court of judicature, before angels and men, and so as to carry the cause; the wicked shall not stand in judgment, Psal. i. 5. Or who can stand before his vindictive justice, or bear his wrath and vengeance? No one can. See Nahum i. 6. Mal. iii. 2. Rev. vi. 17.

Ver. 4. *But there is forgiveness with thee, &c.* And with God only; not with angels, nor any of the sons of men; and which flows from his grace and mercy, through the blood of his son. It appears to be with him by his promise of it in covenant; by appointing his son to shed his blood for it, and exalting him as a Saviour to give it; by proclaiming it in the Gospel; and by the numerous instances of it, both under the Old and under the New Testament. Or, there is a propitiation with thee; as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it: God had found out Christ to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and the ransom of his people; and set him forth in his purposes and decrees for that end; and which was made known by the sacrifices of the law, typical of it; and in the fulness of time he sent him to be the propitiation for it, and he is become so; and has made reconciliation for sin, and reconciled his people to God by the sufferings of death; and reconciled all the divine perfections of justice and holiness, grace and mercy, together, in the salvation of men; and is now an advocate with the Father for them, pleading the propitiatory sacrifice of himself before him. *That thou mayest be feared*; were it not for pardon, and the hope of it, men would be desperate; and, having no hope, would resolve upon taking their swing of sin, and be entirely negligent of the worship and service of God: was there no forgiveness of sin, there would be no more fear of God among men than there is among devils, for whom there is no forgiveness; there might be dread and trembling, as among them, but no godly fear: yea, if God was strictly to mark iniquity, and not pardon it, there would be none to fear him, all must be condemned and cut off by him; but, in order to secure and preserve his fear among men, he has taken the step he has to pardon sin through the propitiatory sacrifice of his son; and a discovery, and an application of his grace, teaches men to fear to offend him; influences them to

serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, and engages them to fear him and his goodness, and him for his goodness-sake, Titus ii. 11, 12. Heb. xii. 8. Hos. iii. 5.

Ver. 5. *I wait for the Lord, &c.* For his gracious presence and the light of his countenance, being in darkness, as well as in the deeps; for his salvation and deliverance out of the depths of distress; for an answer of prayer, having cried unto him for application of pardoning grace he had some view and hopes of; and for the performance of promises the Lord had made to him; and for eternal glory and happiness: all which are to be patiently and quietly waited for, God having his set time to do them; and may be confidently expected, since he is gracious and merciful, wise and powerful, faithful and immutable. David might also be waiting for the coming of Christ, as all the Old-Testament saints did; through whom all the above things are enjoyed. *My soul doth wait*; which shews that this was not mere bodily service, or waiting upon God and for him in an external way; but expresses the intenseness of his mind, the earnest desires of his heart after God, his affection for him, and the exercise of all other graces on him; his whole soul, and all the powers of it, were engaged in this work. *And in his word do I hope*: both in his essential Word the Messiah, who was the Hope of Israel as well as the Saviour of them; the object, ground, and foundation of hope, of all blessings, of grace and of glory: and in his word of promise concerning the coming of Christ, and salvation by him; concerning the pardon of sin through him, and eternal life by him; as well as in many other special and particular promises made to David, concerning himself, his family, and his kingdom. Arama and Kimchi interpret it of the promise of deliverance from captivity made to the Jews.

Ver. 6. *My soul waiteth for the Lord, &c.* This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to shew the vehement and constant disposition of his mind towards the Lord; as well as for the sake of what follows: *more than they that watch for the morning*: I say, more than they that watch for the morning; or, more than the morning-watchers, that watch for or until the morning^h; than watchmen of cities, or the keepers of the walls, as Aben Ezra; those who are upon the last morning-watch, and are looking out for the morning-light; that they may go off from duty, and lie down and sleep: or than those that sit up with sick persons; who, being solitary and melancholy, as well as want sleep, long for the morning, that they may have some refreshment: or rather than the priests and Levites that watched in the temple, that waited for the morning, that they might be relieved by others; or else than those of that function, who were very diligent to observe the break of day, that they might enter upon their morning-sacrifices; of which are many instances in the Misnahⁱ. So the Targum, "more than they that observe the morning-watches, which they observe to offer up the morning-sacrifice:" and Kimchi's paraphrase is, "who rise in the morning-watches to pray." The coming of Christ is said to be as the morning; and the light of God's countenance is com-

^h So Janius & Tremellius, Musculus, Cocceius.

ⁱ See Misn. Yoma, c. 3. s. 1. & Tamid, c. 3. s. 2.

parable to the morning-light; the discoveries of pardoning grace are through the bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and is the healing that is in his wings; and salvation and deliverance from any distress is light that breaks forth as the morning: all and each of these are more desirable, and more to be waited for, than the natural light of the morning; see 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. Hos. vi. 3. Psal. xxx. 4. Mal. iv. 2. Isa. lviii. 8.

Ver. 7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord, &c.*] The psalmist having himself hope in the Lord and in his word, through a view of forgiveness with him, exhorts and encourages others to do so likewise, even every Israelite indeed; and such may comfortably hope in him for salvation, which was designed, contrived, promised, and now wrought out for sinners, the chief of sinners, and to be had freely; and the Gospel declaration is, that whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved; as well as for the remission of sin, which God has promised in covenant; proclaimed in Christ, whom he has sent to obtain it, and exalted to give it; and has declared in the Gospel that whoever believes in him shall have it; and also for eternal life and happiness, which is the gift of God through Christ; is in the hands of Christ, and of which the Spirit of God is the earnest and pledge. Arguments encouraging hope follow: *for with the Lord there is mercy*; which is natural and essential to him; as displayed, is either general, and over all his works, and towards all his creatures; or special, only shewn to whom he will: this flows through Christ, and is very large and abundant; and appears in various instances, in the covenant, in the mission of Christ, and redemption by him; in regeneration, the forgiveness of sins, and in salvation; as well as it is bestowed on innumerable objects: and this serves much to encourage hope, since there is plenty of it, and God is plenteous in it; and it is kept for many, for thousands, and even the vilest of sinners, share in

it; God has set up a throne of grace and mercy for men to apply to, and he delights in shewing mercy, and in those that hope in it: or, there is *grace* with him; an abundance of it in his heart; a fulness of it in his son; and large abounding of it through Christ, in conversion, pardon, and other things. *And with him is plenteous redemption*; the purpose of it was in him; the scheme of it was drawn by him; the covenant of it was made with Christ; the promise of it was published, and now the thing itself is done, and is with Christ the author of it: and this is *plenteous*, if we consider the number of persons redeemed from among men, being such as no man can number; what of them is redeemed, even all of them, their souls and bodies; what they are redeemed from, from all sin, the law, its curse and condemnation, from death and hell, from Satan and all enemies; the several blessings included in it, or connected with it, pardon of sin, justification of persons, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; the great price paid for it, the blood, the life of Christ, yea, himself: and the large display of love, grace, and mercy, wisdom, power, justice, and holiness, made in it. Kimchi interprets this of redemption from Egypt, Babylon, &c.

Ver. 8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*] The Lord shall do it; in whom Israel is encouraged to hope; with whom grace and redemption were; or who was appointed to be the Redeemer. Redemption was then future, when these words were said, but certain, by the promise of God and agreement of Christ; and would be of the whole Israel, or elect of God; and that from *all* their iniquities, original and actual; sins, secret and open, of heart, lip, and life: and which is no small encouragement for Israel to hope in the Lord, for the sake of which this is added; as well as for the further illustration of the nature of redemption by Christ; which is complete, and now obtained, and is an eternal one.

P S A L M CXXXI.

A Song of degrees of David.

THIS psalm was written by David in his younger days, before he came to the throne; while he was in Saul's court, or persecuted by him. The occasion of it, as is generally thought, was a calumny cast upon him, as if he had some ill designs against Saul; was ambitious of the crown, and aspiring to the throne, and was plotting and forming measures to get the government into his hand; see 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 14. and xxvi. 18, 20. with respect to all which he declares himself as innocent as a weaned child; and was as far from any such ambitious views as he was when in such a state; for the truth of which he appealed to God. Kimchi thinks that David, by his example, taught the Jews how to behave in captivity; that as he behaved, so should they, in great humility. The Syriac inscription is, "it is said concerning Jesus the son of Josedech the high-priest; and concerning

"humility." But the psalm no doubt was written by David of himself.

Ver. 1. *Lord, my heart is not haughty, &c.*] The heart of every man is naturally so, and every thing in civil life tends to make it more so; as riches and honour, birth and blood, wisdom, knowledge, and learning, strength and beauty, especially where there is a superiority of those to others; and in religious life, if persons have not the true grace of God, their hearts will be haughty; if they have a notion of the purity of human nature, and the goodness of their hearts, and are pure in their own eyes, and of the power of their free will to do this and the other, and of their perfection in good works, and are full of their own righteousness, and have some external gifts, and some degree of notional knowledge; but if the heart is made truly contrite under a sense of sin, and is melted

with discoveries of pardoning love, it will be humble and not haughty: and those have such hearts who have seen the naughtiness of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; their imperfection in all they do; the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, and that all their salvation is of grace, and that grace is entirely free; and the more spiritual knowledge and experience they have, the more humble they are: and this was David's case, and what he here said was no doubt true, since he hated lying; and besides he speaks this in the presence of and to God the searcher of hearts; though he had been anointed by Samuel, and knew that he was to be successor in the kingdom, yet his heart was not elated with it. *Nor mine eyes lofty; or lifted up*¹; they were lifted up to God in prayer often, but not above his fellow-creatures; he behaved himself humbly as well as wisely in Saul's court, where he was raised to great dignity, which gained him the affections of the court, and of all Israel; but there are too many whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up, who disdain to look upon those that are inferior to them, as the rich on the poor, the Pharisee on the publican; see Prov. xxx. 13. This is the character of antichrist, that his look is more stout than his fellows, and is abominable in the sight of God, even a proud look as well as a proud heart, Prov. vi. 17. and xvi. 5. But this was not David's case; as he could not bear this in others he would not suffer it in himself, Psal. ci. 5. *Neither do I exercise myself in great matters; or, walk*^m in them; these were not the subject of his employment and conversation; he did many great things, in killing the lion and the bear that came into his father's flock; in slaying Goliath with a sling and stone only; in leading out the armies of Israel, and slaying his ten thousands; and he exercised himself in the great things of the law, which he was careful to observe, and studied the great things of the Gospel, which he had the highest esteem of, and desired to understand; but he did not seek human greatness, or the great things of this world, for himself; he had no ambitious views, or was desirous of the kingdom he was anointed to, before the proper time; see 1 Sam. xviii. 18, 23. *Or in things too high for me; or too wonderful*ⁿ; see Job. xlii. 3. He contemplated the wonderful make and frame of his body, the texture, symmetry, and use of its several parts; he observed the wonderful providences of God towards him ever since he had a being; and particularly he took notice of the wonderful love of God to him, and remembered and talked of, and declared, the wonderful works of grace and redemption; but not things above his capacity, out of his reach, and which are secret, or not clearly revealed: and such things we should be content to be ignorant of, or not to have adequate ideas of, or be capable of accounting for; as the being and perfec-

tion of God, particularly his immensity and eternity; the mode of subsisting of the Persons in the Godhead; the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him; present providences, unsearchable and past finding out; and future things, especially the times and seasons of them; see Psal. cxxxix. 6.

Ver. 2. *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, &c.* Or, *my soul*^o; behaved quietly and peaceably towards all men, even his inferiors in Saul's court and elsewhere, and had given no tokens of a restless, turbulent, and ambitious spirit; as well as behaved patiently under all his troubles and afflictions, reproaches and calamities: or *if I have not*^p, being in the form of an oath or imprecation, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe; if I have not thus behaved, let it come to me so and so, or let me be as a weaned child. Noldius renders it by way of interrogation, *have I not composed and quieted myself?* &c. The Targum is, "if I have not put the hand to the mouth, and caused my soul to be silent, until it heard the words of the law." *As a child that is weaned of his mother*; and, for the further confirmation of it, it is added, *my soul is even as a weaned child*; innocent and harmless, had no more ill designs against Saul than a weaned child; humble, meek, and lowly, and had no more aspiring and ambitious views than such an one; like that, weaned from the world, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; as well as from nature, from self, from his own righteousness, and from all dependence on it; and as a child that is weaned from the breast wholly depends on its nurse for sustenance, so did he wholly depend upon God, his providence, grace, and strength; and as to the kingdom, he had no more covetous desires after it than a weaned child has to the breast, and was very willing to wait the due time for the enjoyment of it. The Targum, "as one weaned on the breasts of its mother, I am strengthened in the law." This is to be understood not of a child whilst weaning, when it is usually peevish, fretful, and froward; but when weaned, and is quiet and easy in its mother's arms without the breast.

Ver. 3. *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.* What he did himself, and found it good for him to do, that he knew was good for others, and therefore exhorts and encourages to it, to hope in the Lord and wait for his salvation; and which should be done constantly, and to the end of life, or till the thing hoped for is enjoyed; see Heb. iii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 13. Perhaps some respect is here had to the people of Israel, especially the friends of David, who were weary of Saul's government, and impatient to have David on the throne; whom he advises to wait patiently, and not take any indirect steps to bring it about, but leave it with God, and hope and trust in him; compare with this 1 Sam. xxiv. 7. and xxvi. 8, 9. see the note on Psal. cxxx. 7.

¹ רמו elati, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

^m מלכותי ambulavi, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceus, &c.

ⁿ מלאות סמני in mirabilibus præ me, Montanus, Cocceus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^o נשיתי animam meam, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^p לא לי non, Montanus; male sit mihi si non, Tigurine version.

P S A L M CXXXII.

A Song of degrees.

SOME think this psalm was written by Solomon, since ver. 8, 10, are much the same with which he concluded his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42, on account of which it is supposed to be written; though he might borrow these words from hence, as he sometimes did recite the words of his father, Prov. iv. 4, 5. Others are of opinion that it was written by David, either when he brought the ark from Baale or Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obed-edom, and from thence to Zion, 2 Sam. vi. or when he had that conversation with Nathan the prophet, in which he expressed such a strong desire to build a house for God, 2 Sam. vii. or, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, after he had numbered the people, which brought the pestilence on them; and when he and the elders of Israel were in distress on that account, and he was ordered to build an altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite; by which it appeared to him that this was the place for the house of the Lord God he had been so desirous of building, 1 Chron. xxii. 1. It seems by ver. 6, 7, that more persons than one were concerned in this psalm, at least the psalmist personates more; and Theodore takes it to be a prayer of the captives in Babylon, and a prophecy of the Saviour of the world; and this is favoured by the Syriac inscription, which is, "an anonymous psalm, when they would build the house of the Lord of hosts; and a prayer of David, and a revelation of Christ." And certain it is that Christ is spoken of in it, if not principally designed.

Ver. 1. *Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions.*] Which prayer might be put up by David on his own account, as Nehemiah does, ch. xiii. 22. and be considered as a petition to the Lord that he would remember his mercy and loving-kindness to him, and him with the favour he bears to his own people, as he elsewhere prays; that he would remember his covenant with him, and his promise to him, on which he had caused him to hope; and sympathize with him, and support him under all his trials and exercises, in his kingdom and family. Or, if it is considered as Solomon's, it may be a request that the Lord would remember the promise he had made to David, that his son should build a house for him, which he desired he might be enabled to do; that he would remember the covenant of royalty he had made with him, that he should not want a son to sit upon his throne; and particularly that he would remember the promise of the Messiah, that should be of his seed. Also *his afflictions*, his toil and labour of mind, his great anxiety about building a house for God; the pains he took in finding out a place for it, in drawing the pattern of it, in making preparations for it, and in the charges he gave his son concerning it: the Septuagint and other versions render it *his humility*; which agrees with the subject of the

preceding psalm, and may particularly respect what he expressed to Nathan when this affair of building the temple was much upon his mind, 2 Sam. vii. 2, 18. Moreover, respect in all this may be had by the authors of this psalm, or those herein personated, to the Messiah, who is the antitype of David; in his name, which signifies *beloved*; in his birth, parentage, and circumstances of it; in the comeliness of his person, and in his characters and offices, and who is often called David, Psal. lxxxix. 3, 20, 35. see Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxvii. 23, 24. Hos. iii. 5. and so is a petition that God would remember the covenant of grace made with him; the promise of his coming into the world; his offering and sacrifice, as typified by the legal ones; and also remember them and their offerings for his sake; see Psal. xx. 3. Likewise *all his afflictions* and sufferings he was to endure from men and devils, and from the Lord himself, both in soul and body; and so as to accept of them in the room and stead of his people, as a satisfaction to his justice. Or, *his humility* in the assumption of human nature, in his carriage and behaviour to all sorts of men, in his ministrations to his disciples, in seeking not his own glory, but his father's, and in his sufferings and death, which was foretold of him, Zech. ix. 9.

Ver. 2. *How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.*] Whom Jacob called so Gen. xlix. 24. and to whom he vowed a vow, and is the first we read of that did make one, and it was concerning the house of God, Gen. xxviii. 17, 20, 21. and who had an experience of the might and power of God in protecting and defending him from his brother Esau: of this oath and vow of David no mention is made elsewhere, but no doubt they were made; see Psal. cxix. 106. of the Messiah's swearing, though upon another account, to whom this may be applied, see Isa. xlv. 23. Rev. x. 1, 2, 5, 6.

Ver. 3. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, &c.*] The new house and palace David built for himself after he came to the throne, made of cedar, 2 Sam. v. 11. and vii. 2. not that he should never enter into it till he had found a dwelling for God, but that he should not go into it with pleasure till that was done; for this and what follows are hyperboles, as Kimchi observes, and signify that he should have no peace nor satisfaction of mind till this was accomplished. It may be applied to our Lord's ascension to heaven, which was not till after he had purchased the church with his blood, which is the temple and habitation of God. *Nor go up into my bed; or the bed that is made for me*; the royal bed, a bed of down, with soft pillows, fit for a person of such dignity to lie down on. Ainsworth renders it *the pallets of my bed*; the phrase of going up agrees with the custom of the eastern coun-

¶ עָנֹתָי שְׂמַחְתָּהּ אֵת, Sept. massuetudinibus ejus, V. L. so Syr. Arab. Ebiop.

¶ עָנֹתָי שְׂמַחְתָּהּ אֵת lectum strati mei, vel stratorum meorum, Gejerus, Michaelis.

tries, who have galleries in their chambers where they are set; at one end of each chamber in their houses there is a little gallery raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise leading up to it; here they place their beds¹; so that when they went to bed they might with great propriety be said to go up to it; but this David could not do with pleasure, so long as there was no place and habitation for God.

Ver. 4. *I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids.*] Not that he never would or did take any sleep till this thing was brought about he had so much at heart; but that he could not and would not suffer himself to sleep comfortably and quietly because of it. Aben Ezra interprets it of sleep at noon; the phrases express his great desire and solicitude to have this affair accomplished, and his eager and diligent pursuit of it; see Prov. vi. 4. of the eager desire of Christ to suffer and die for his people, that they might be brought near to God, and be his dwelling-place, see Luke xii. 50. and xxii. 15.

Ver. 5. *Until I find a place for the Lord, &c.*] To build a house on for the Lord; which it seems was unknown till the times of David; for though mention had been made of a place the Lord would choose to cause his name to dwell in, yet the particular place was not pointed out, Deut. xii. 11, 13, 21. David was very solicitous to find it out, and did, 1 Chron. xxii. 1. *An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob*; see the note on ver. 2. or *habitations, or tabernacles*²; the temple, which is meant, consisting of three parts, the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; this was typical of the human nature of Christ, the temple of his body, the tabernacle of God's pitching, John ii. 19. Heb. viii. 2. and ix. 11. in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, the glory of God is seen, and through whom he grants his presence to his people; and also* of the church of God, the temple of the living God, where he dwells and is worshipped: and that this might be a fit habitation for God was the great desire of the Messiah, and not only the end and issue of his sufferings and death, but also the design of his preparations and intercession in heaven, John xiv. 2, 3. and xvii. 23, 24. Rev. xxi. 3.

Ver. 6. *Lo, we heard of it at Ephrathah, &c.*] Either of the ark which David and others had heard of, that it formerly was at Shiloh, Josh. xviii. 1. here called Ephrathah, as some think; so the Ephraimites are called Ephrathites, Judg. xii. 5. and Elkanah of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim, is said to be an Ephrathite, 1 Sam. i. 1. but this tribe the Lord chose not, but the tribe of Judah, for his habitation; and rejected the tabernacle of Shiloh, and removed it from thence, Psal. lxxviii. 60, 67, 68. *We found it in the fields of the wood*; at Kirjath-jearim, which signifies the city of woods; being built among woods, and surrounded with them: here the ark was twenty years, and here David found it; and from hence he brought it to the house of Obed-edom, and from thence to Zion, 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2. 1 Chron. xiii. 5, 6, 13, 14. and xvi. 1. Or else the place where the temple was to be built; which was not known

till the times of David, who was of Ephrathah or Beth-lehem: here he was born and brought up; and here he was, as Arama supposes, when it was revealed to him where the temple should be built. According to R. Moses, the sense is, We have heard of it by the hand of David, who was of Ephrathah: but Aben Ezra thinks the meaning is, that in former times men used to say, We have heard from the mouths of the prophets that the chosen place was near to Beth-lehem-ephrathah; only the precise place was not known, whether to the east or west, or north or south, of Beth-lehem. Some think that not any particular city is intended, but a country, even all the neighbourhood of Beth-lehem-ephrathah; and took in Jerusalem, where the temple was built, it being but a few miles from the place; so Adrichomius³ says, the country round about Ephrathah had its name from thence; see 1 Kings xi. 26. Now the place found for the building of the temple was *the fields of the wood*, or the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and was on Mount Moriah; David found by the order he had to build an altar here, and by the acceptance of his sacrifices, that this was the place for the house of God, 1 Chron. xxii. 1. and here Solomon built the temple, 2 Chron. iii. 1. and which was formerly a woody place, as mountains generally are; and this seems to have been when Abraham offered his son on it, who then spied a ram caught in the thickets, Gen. xxii. 2, 13. The Targum is, "we found" it in the field of the forest of Lebanon, the place "where the ancient fathers prayed;" the temple being built of the wood of Lebanon. But all this is to be understood of the Lord, the mighty God of Jacob, who was heard of at Ephrathah; the Shechinah, or divine Majesty; so Kimchi, Arama, and Ben Melech. And indeed the Messiah is meant, the antitype of the ark and temple; of whom the saints or believers in him, a chorus of which is here introduced, had heard that he should be born at Ephrathah, which is Beth-lehem; see Gen. xxxv. 19. Ruth iv. 11. 1 Sam. xvii. 12. And if this psalm was written by the captives in Babylon, they might have heard of this from the prophecy of Micah, ch. v. 2. see Matt ii. 4, 5, 6, 8, 11. the shepherds heard from the mouths of the angels that Christ was born there; and we Christians have heard the same, and know and believe it, Luke ii. 4—18. And he has been found in *the fields of the wood*; in a low, mean, abject state, as this phrase signifies; Ezek. xvi. 5. The shepherds found him rejected from being in the inn, there being no room for him, and lying in a manger, Luke ii. 7, 16. the angels found him in the wilderness, among the wild beasts of the field, Mark i. 13. nor had he the convenience even of foxes, and birds of the air; had no habitation or place where to lay his head, Matt. viii. 20. And he is to be found in the field of the Scriptures, where this rich treasure and pearl of great price lies hid, Matt. xiii. 44. and being preached among the Gentiles, after his incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, who are compared to wildernesses, and desert places, was found by many of them, Isa. xxxv. 1. and lxxv. 1. and which serves to set off

* Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2.

¹ מְשֻׁבְּנוֹת *habitacula*, Pagninus, Montanus; *tabernacula*, Musculus, Vatablus, Cocceius.

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³ Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 41.

with a foil his glory; being like the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, Cant. ii. 3.

Ver. 7. *We will go into his tabernacles, &c.*] The tabernacles of him that was heard of at Ephrathah; born in Beth-lehem, and found in the ministry of the word among the Gentiles: enter into his churches, raised and formed there, which are the tabernacles or dwelling-places of Christ; where he has his residence, takes his walks, and dwells; and which are very lovely, amiable, and pleasant, and so desirable by believers to go into; because of the presence of God in them, the provisions there made for them, the company there enjoyed; the work there done, prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administration of all ordinances. Some render it as a mutual exhortation, *let us go into his tabernacles*; see Isa. ii. 2, 3. *We will worship at his footstool*; any place of worship on earth may be called the footstool of God, with respect to heaven his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. particularly the ark is so called, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. in which the law was; over which was the mercy-seat, and over that the cherubim of glory, and between them the Majesty of God dwelt; so that the ark was properly his footstool: and all this being typical of Christ may direct us to observe, that all religious, spiritual, and evangelic worship, is to be performed in his name, and in the faith of him, and by the assistance of his grace and spirit; see Psal. xcix. 5.

Ver. 8. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, &c.*] Which words, and what follow, were used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple; and with which he concluded his prayer, 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. and so may be a request to the Lord, that he would take up his residence in the temple built for him, where he would have a firm and stable place of rest; who, from the time of Israel's coming out of Egypt, had not dwelt in a house; but had walked in a tent or tabernacle from place to place, 2 Sam. vi. 6. and that he would take up his abode in his church, the antitype of the temple, and rest in his love there, and cause his people to rest also; see ver. 13, 14. *Thou, and the ark of thy strength*; the Targum is, "thou, and the ark in which is thy law." This is sometimes called the strength of the Lord; because by it he shewed his great strength in destroying the enemies of his people, the Philistines and others; see Psal. lxxviii. 61. and cv. 4. It was a type of Christ, who is the power of God, and the mighty God; and, as man, made strong by the Lord; and, as Mediator, has all strength in him for his people. And so the words may be considered as a request to him, either to arise and enter into his rest in heaven, having done his work of redemption and salvation here on earth, for which he became incarnate; or to grant his presence with his church, and take up his rest there, and give them spiritual peace and rest for their souls.

Ver. 9. *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, &c.*] In 2 Chron. vi. 41. it is, *with salvation*, as in ver. 16. Either the ministers of the word; who may be said to be clothed with righteousness when they

perform their work righteously, and faithfully dispense the word, keep back nothing that is profitable, and administer the ordinances according to the rules of Christ; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to the Gospel they preach; see Job xxix. 14. or else all true believers; who are priests as well as kings unto God; and who are clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness; and with the internal graces of the spirit, the new man created in righteousness and true holiness; and with conversation-garments, becoming the Gospel, and their profession of it. *And let thy saints shout for joy*: the Levites; thy holy ones, as the Targum; so Kimchi, Arama, and others; the singers in the temple: but rather the Lord's sanctified ones, true believers under the Gospel dispensation, are meant; who shout for joy, and have reason so to do, at the incarnation of Christ, at his ascension to heaven, at the Gospel preached by his ministers, and at the robe of righteousness with which they are clothed. In 2 Chron. vi. 41. it is, *rejoice in goodness*; in the goodness of the Lord; in the good things bestowed on them, or promised to them.

Ver. 10. *For thy servant David's sake, &c.*] Not for any virtues, or excellencies or merits, of David, literally understood; rather for the sake of the covenant and promises made with him: but for the sake of the antitypical David, the Messiah, the son of David according to the flesh, and the servant of the Lord as Mediator; for whose sake, and in whose name, prayers and supplications are made and presented. *Turn not away the face of thine anointed*; not David; rather Solomon, as the Targum expresses it; so Jarchi: but any of the Lord's anointed, every Christian, or believer in Christ, is an anointed one; and has received the unction from the holy One, the oil of true grace. And the request is, that God would not turn such away from him, and cause them to depart from his throne of grace, ashamed and disappointed; but hear and answer their petitions, for his son's sake. In 2 Chron. vi. 42. it is added, *remember the mercies of David thy servant*; the kind and good things promised to him, and perform them.

Ver. 11. *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, &c.*] By Nathan the prophet; when he assured him that his house, kingdom, and throne, should be established for ever, 2 Sam. vii. 5, 12, 16. and though there is no mention made of the oath of God, no doubt there was one; or however his word was his oath, as Kimchi observes: besides, the Apostle Peter is express for it that there was one, which was added to his word for the confirmation of it; who is said to swear by himself, because there is no greater; and sometimes by one or other of his perfections, as by his holiness elsewhere; so here in or by his truth, his faithfulness, being the God of truth that cannot lie. Or it may be rendered, *the Lord hath sworn truth unto David*; that which is truth: and we may be assured he could not possibly assert or swear any thing else; see Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35, 49. *He will not turn from*

* So Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus, Cocceus, Michaelis.

* אמת - נשבע juravit veritatem, V. L. Paginatus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

it; change his mind, repent of his oath; make it void, or not fulfil it; for he is unchangeable in his perfections, purposes, and promises; whatever he says and swears to he will certainly perform. *Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne; a king upon thy throne, as the Targum: meaning not Solomon; though it is true that the Lord chose him, above all the sons of David, to be his successor in the kingdom, and did place him upon his throne before his death; but a greater than Solomon is here, even the Messiah; as is clear from the testimony of the Apostle Peter, Acts ii. 30. by which it appears not only that this promise and oath relate to the Messiah; but that David knew they did, and so understood them; and which have been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth: who, as he was notoriously the fruit of David's body according to the flesh, or his human nature; or was of his seed, being born of the Virgin Mary, who lineally descended from him; so he was set upon the throne of David, as it was foretold both by the prophet Isaiah, and by the angel to the virgin, he should, Isa. ix. 6, 7. Luke i. 32, 33. not in a literal sense; for though he was no doubt right heir to the throne of David so understood, yet his kingdom was not of this world; but he was set as King over God's holy hill of Zion, the church; and reigned over the house of Jacob, the whole Israel of God; the mystical and spiritual Israel, consisting of Jews and Gentiles: his throne, or the seat of his kingdom, is the church; his sceptre the Gospel; his crown the glory true believers in him give him; his laws, by which he rules, are in his word, and written in the hearts of his subjects; and his kingdom shall continue for ever.*

Ver. 12. *If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, &c.]* The former part of the promise and oath is absolute, respecting the Messiah; but this is conditional, and relates to the seed of David, both immediate, and in succeeding generations; proposing their observance of the law of God, as the condition of their enjoying the kingdom after him. By the *covenant and testimony* are meant the same thing; the law, which was given to the people of Israel in the form of a covenant, and was a testimony of the will of God to them: in this the kings of Israel were to read continually, and conduct according to it in their personal walk and conversation, and by it to rule the people they were set over; and which the Lord promises to teach them by his prophets, whose business it was not to promulgate new laws, but to explain what were given. Now in case this was attended to, and the instructions of prophets observed, then thus it would be, *their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore*; but, the condition not being fulfilled, this did not take place: Solomon, his immediate successor, fell into idolatry in the latter part of his life; and Rehoboam, his son, slighted the advice of the old men, founded upon the laws of God, and ten tribes revolted from him: several succeeding kings of Judah, of the house of David, were very wicked princes; and the race of them ended in Zedekiah, who was carried captive into Babylon. Indeed all this is true of Christ

and his spiritual offspring; he kept the covenant of grace made with his divine Father; and the law or testimony; and fulfilled it in the room and stead of his people; and did the whole will and work of his father, and in all things pleased him: and his children also lay hold by faith on the covenant and the promises of it; and receive, observe, and retain the testimony of the Gospel; and shall reign with Christ, on the same throne with him, for ever and ever.

Ver. 13. *For the Lord hath chosen Zion, &c.]* Not only to build upon it the temple in a literal sense, and for the place of his worship; but also for the seat of his majesty, and over which he has set his son as King; and all this from the love he bears to Zion, which, in a figurative and spiritual sense, is his church; whom he has chosen to privileges, to grace and glory, and for his service and honour; see Psal. lxxviii. 67, 68. *He hath desired it for his habitation*; heaven is the habitation of his holiness and glory; Christ is his dwelling-place, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: yet his desire is to his church and people; his heart is set upon them, and upon their salvation; his delight is in them, and he takes pleasure in walking with them, and dwelling among them; they being built up an habitation for God through the spirit; see Psal. lxxviii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Ephes. ii. 22.

Ver. 14. *This is my rest for ever, &c.]* The rest of my majesty, as the Targum; the place of his rest: and this being for ever shews that not Mount Zion literally, nor the temple, are meant; but the church and people of God, in whom he rests in his love, and rejoices over with joy; who are the objects of his delight, and with whom he abides for ever; for this phrase is expressive of pleasure and delight, and of permanency and perpetuity. *Here will I dwell, for I have desired it*; not merely by his omnipresence, in which sense he dwells everywhere, both in heaven and in earth; nor only by his omnipotence, by which he upholds all creatures in their being, and so is present with them all; and they all live and move, and have their being, in him: but by his spirit and grace reviving and refreshing the hearts of his people with his gracious presence; which is enjoyed in his house and ordinances, and makes them lovely and delightful; and may be expected there, since he has promised it, and it is so desirable and agreeable to himself to dwell there.

Ver. 15. *I will abundantly bless her provision, &c.]* The provision of Zion, the church of God, the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance; the Gospel is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; the ordinances are a feast of fat things; Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; the whole provision is spiritual, savoury, salutary, strengthening, satisfying, and nourishing, when the Lord blesses it; as he does to those who hunger and thirst after it, and feed upon it by faith; so that their souls grow thereby, and they become fat and flourishing; grace increases in them, and they are fruitful in every good work: and this the Lord promises to do *abundantly*, in a very large way and manner; or *certainly*, for it is, in the original text, *in bless-*

7 אֲבָרַךְ בְּרַךְ benedicendo benedicam, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

ing *I will bless*, that is, will surely bless, as this phrase is sometimes rendered. Arama observes that the second blessing is because of the greatness of it; and says, that their Rabbins understand it of the fertility of the land of Israel in the time to come, when there will be no poor in it; but all is to be understood spiritually of the church in Gospel times. *I will satisfy her poor with bread*; Zion has her poor; persons may be poor and yet belong to Zion, belong to Zion and yet be poor; there are poor in all the churches of Christ: our Lord told his disciples that they had the poor, and might expect to have them always with them; and particular directions are given to take care of Zion's poor under the Gospel dispensation, that they may not want bread in a literal sense: though by the *poor* are chiefly designed the Lord's afflicted and distressed ones; or who in a spiritual sense are poor, and sensible of their spiritual poverty, and seek after the true riches; or are poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs: these the Lord promises to satisfy, to fill them to the full with the bread of the Gospel, made of the finest of the wheat, of which there is enough and to spare in his house; and with Christ the bread of life, of which those that eat shall never die, but live for ever.

Ver. 16. *I will also clothe her priests with salvation, &c.*] With the garments of salvation, as the Targum; in answer to the petition, ver. 9. but more is promised than prayed for, *salvation* including *righteousness* and all other blessings; and may be interpreted, as there, either of the ministers of the Gospel clothed with the doctrine of salvation by Christ, coming forth full fraught with it, openly publishing and proclaiming it; salvation being made public and manifest by them as a garment, as Aben Ezra observes: moreover Gospel ministers are instruments of saving others; the Gospel preached by them being the power of God unto salvation, as well as they themselves are saved in the same way, 1 Tim. iv. 16. besides, they are kept by the power of God, and in the hands of Christ, who protects them, and as it were covers them with the garment of salvation, whilst they are publishing it to the world, to whose reproaches and insults they are exposed: or else this may be interpreted of the people of God in common, who are all kings and priests to God, and are all clothed with the garments of salvation, Isa. lxi. 10. Salvation by Christ is brought near to them, is applied to them, and put upon them as a garment; it is from Christ, and without them, though upon them; it is their clothing and their ornament, as well as their security from sin, law, death, and hell; see Psal. cxlix. 4. *And her saints shall shout aloud for joy*; not only *shout*, as is entreated, ver. 9. but *shout aloud*; it shall be a jubilee-time with them on account of the Gospel of salvation, the joyful sound sounded in their ears by the ministers of it clothed with it; and on account of the salvation itself, so great, so suitable, so free, so complete and full, and in which the glory of God is so much displayed; and on account of the application of it to themselves, being clothed with it and possessed of the joys of it. These the Jewish writers generally understand of the Levites.

Ver. 17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud, &c.*] Which the Targum interprets a *glorious*

King; and both Kimchi and Ben Melech, and also Arama, understand it of the Messiah, and very rightly; called the horn of the Lord's Anointed, and the horn of salvation, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Luke i. 69. expressive of his power and strength, in allusion to the horns of cattle, with which they push their enemies and defend themselves; so horns are interpreted kings, Dan. vii. 24. and is fitly applied to Christ, raised up of the seed of David, the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself, who is a mighty King and an able Saviour; as appears by what he has done and suffered, by the deliverance and salvation of his people, and by the destruction of all their enemies: and it is here promised that God would make this horn to *bud* or branch out, in allusion to another name of the Messiah, the *branch*; and it is the same as raising up to David a righteous branch, or causing the Messiah to spring forth as a branch out of his roots, for which reason he is called the Lord's servant, the branch, and the man the branch; see Jer. xxiii. 5. Isa. xi. 1. Zech. iii. 8. and vi. 12. and it should be further observed that the Lord says, *there will I do it*; that is, either at Ephraim, which is Beth-lehem, the place where the Messiah was to be born, and was born; or else at Zion or Jerusalem, where he appeared and shewed himself, where he taught his doctrines and wrought many of his miracles, and near to which he suffered and died; and this shews that the Messiah must be come, that this horn of David must have budded, or the man the branch brought forth, since Beth-lehem and Jerusalem are long ago demolished. *I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed*; which Jerom understands of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was a burning and shining light, but was not *that light*, that famous light, that was to come, but was sent to bear witness of it; he being but as a candle, as the word here used signifies, in comparison of the sun of righteousness; but rather it means a son and successor of David, the Lord's anointed; in which sense the phrase is often used, 1 Kings xi. 36. and xv. 4. 2 Kings viii. 19. and here the famous and illustrious Son and successor of his, the Messiah, the light which lightens every man with the light of reason; and who is the light of the world of his people, enlightening them with the light of grace, and will be the light of the New-Jerusalem state, and of the ultimate glory; him God has *ordained* as such, even fore-ordained him before the foundation of the world; this lamp, or light, he prepared in eternity, and it dwelt with him, and therefore was desired to be sent out from him, Dan. ii. 22. Psal. xliiii. 3. which places are to be understood of the Messiah; see the notes there.

Ver. 18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame, &c.*] With the garments of shame, as the Targum; very different from the clothing of Zion's priests; all that are incensed against Christ as a King and Saviour shall sooner or later be ashamed; either here, when brought to a sense of their evil, to repentance for it, and faith in him; or hereafter, at the resurrection, when they will rise to shame and everlasting contempt, and when they shall see him come in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory, to judge the world in righteousness, Isa. xlv. 24. Dan. xii. 2. *But upon himself shall his crown flourish*; being crowned with glory

and honour, as he now is at the right hand of God, he reigns, and will reign, till all his enemies become his footstool; his throne is for ever and ever, and his kingdom an everlasting one; and will be very flourishing in the latter day, when his subjects shall be many, and when there shall be an abundance of peace and prosperity, and of that no end; the crown of the Messiah shall flourish on him as a king, shine out and be very conspicuous, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi inter-

pret the word used; and so his crown as a priest; the same word is used of the holy crown of the priests put upon the mitre, on which Holiness to the Lord was inscribed; and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, *my holiness*; and, as his own crown is a never-fading one, such an one he will give to his ministers, and all that love his appearing, i Pet. v. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

P S A L M CXXXIII.

A Song of degrees of David.

THIS psalm was penned by David, as some think when all the tribes of Israel united and chose and anointed him king over them, 2 Sam. v. 1—3. but, according to others, when the rebellion of his son Absalom was quelled, and all the tribes of Israel strove who should first bring back the king, and shew the greatest zeal and loyalty to him, 2 Sam. xix. 9, 10, 14. Theodoret supposes it to be prophetic, and to have respect to the union of the tribes after the Babylonish captivity, who had been disunited in the times of Rehoboam, but now were no more two nations and kingdoms, but one; see Ezek. xxxvii. 16—22. and others carry it further still, even to the first times of the Gospel, when the Christians were of one heart and of one soul, Acts iv. 32. it may indeed be applied to any community, civil or religious, that is in peace and unity: and no doubt the design of David was to promote peace and harmony among his subjects; and love and affection in his family, among his children, brethren one of another, and of Solomon; who was to be his heir and successor, and under whose government it would be well for them to live peaceably and quietly. Kimchi and Ben Melech refer the psalm to the times of the Messiah, and take it to be a prediction of the peace and concord between the King Messiah and the priest, of which Zorobabel and Joshua were types; see Zech. vi. 13. The inscription of the Syriac version is, “it is said of Moses and of Aaron, who dwelt in the tabernacle, in the house of the Lord; and there is an intimation in it of the perfect people,” the Christians in Gospel times.

Ver. 1. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, &c.* Aben Ezra thinks the word *thing* should be supplied; the thing is what follows. *For brethren to dwell together in unity*; which the Targum interprets of Zion and Jerusalem, as two brethren; Aben Ezra of the priests; Kimchi of the King Messiah and the priest; and Jarchi, and Kimchi's father, of the Israelites; which is best of all, especially of those who are Israelites indeed; for this is not to be understood of all mankind, who are in some sense brethren, being all of one blood, and among whom peace is to be cultivated; nor merely of those of the same nation, under one and the same government, who should endeavour to live peaceably and quietly; nor of brethren in a strict natural state, who belong to the same family,

and are of the same parents, and should be kindly affectioned one to another; but rather of such who are so in a spiritual sense, who have God for their father by adoption and regeneration, are related to Christ the first-born among many brethren, and are members one of another, in the same church-state; all which are a reason why they should love as brethren, and endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, Matt. xxiii. 8. Ephes. iv. 3, 6. 1 Pet. ii. 17. and iii. 8. Heb. xiii. 1. and *to dwell together in unity*; even as one man, as if one soul actuated them all; it is not only to dwell and abide in the house of God, where they have all a name and a place; but to associate together there, to go up to the house of God in company, and with delight to join together in acts of religious worship; to serve the Lord with one consent, with one mind and mouth to glorify God, and to be of one accord, having the same love; and to do all kind and good offices one to another in the most hearty and cordial manner; serving each other in love, bearing one another's burdens, sympathizing with each other in all circumstances, forgiving each other offences committed, praying with one another, and building up each other in their most holy faith, stirring up one another to love and to good works: now this is both *good and pleasant*; it is good, as being according to the will of God, the new command of Christ; what evidences the truth of regeneration, and of being the disciples of Christ; what makes the communion of saints comfortable and edifying, and without which a profession of religion is good for nothing: and it is *pleasant* to God and Christ, to angels and men, to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all about them and in a connexion with them; and it is this which makes any particular dispensation in time delightful and agreeable; as the first times of the Gospel, and the latter-day glory, the Philadelphian church-state, which has its name from brotherly love; yea, it will be the glory and delight of heaven. Now this is ushered in with a note of attention and admiration, *behold*, and with a note of exclamation, *how*; the psalmist pointing at some instance or instances of this kind, which were very amiable, and worthy of imitation; and suggesting that such a case is rare and wonderful, and inexpressibly good, profitable, and pleasant. Gussetius² renders it, *how good is the sabbatism of brethren, even*

² Ebr. Comment. p. 829.

gathered together; for the exercise of religion, prayer, praise, &c.

Ver. 2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, &c.] The composition which Moses was ordered to make of the principal spices, and therefore called *precious*; and which was poured on the heads of kings and priests, when they were anointed with it, Exod. xxx. 23—25. *That ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard*; this was put upon the head of Aaron when he was anointed, and so on any other high-priest, and trickled down to his beard; see Exod. xxix. 7. The reasons Kimchi and Ben Melech give, why the anointing of Aaron and other priests is mentioned, and not the anointing of a king, or of David himself, are, because the anointing of Aaron was first, and also more public and better known by the people. *That went down to the skirts of his garments*; or, *the mouth or opening of his garments*^a; not the extremity of them, as our version inclines to; for not so great a quantity of oil was poured upon him; nor would it have been decent to have his clothes thus greased from top to bottom: but the upper part of his garment, the top of the coat, on which the beard lay, as Jarchi; the neck or collar of it, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; the hole in which the head went through when it was put on, about which there was a band, that it might not be rent, Exod. xxviii. 32. and xxxix. 23. where the Septuagint use the same word as here. Suidas^b says, David means the superior aperture of the garment, that which we call the neck or collar-band; and so Theodoret: and the Arabic version renders it, the *aperture*, or opening of it; and hitherto the ointment came. This was typical of the grace of the spirit, the unction from the holy One; which has been poured on Christ, the head of the church, without measure; and with which he has been anointed above his fellows; and from him it is communicated to all his members; to every one of which is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; and who from his fulness receive, and grace for grace: and particularly brotherly love is compared to this ointment; because of the preciousness of it, which is true of every grace; and because of the extensiveness of it, reaching to head and members, to Christ and all his saints, the meanest and lowest of them; and because of its fragrant and sweet odour to all that are sensible of it; and because of its delightful, cheering, and refreshing nature; like ointment and perfume it rejoices the heart; yea, the worst things said, or reproofs given, in brotherly love, are like oil, pleasant and useful, Prov. xxvii. 9. Psal. cxli. 5. and is as necessary for the saints, who are all priests unto God, to offer up their spiritual sacrifices; particularly that of prayer, which should be *without wrath*, as well as without doubting; and to do all other duties of religion, which should spring from charity or love; as the anointing-oil was to Aaron and his sons, in order to their officiating in the priest's office.

^a עַל כִּי עָלָה עָלָיו מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, Sept super os, Montanus, Piscator; super os, vel aperturam, Michaelis; in capitulum, Tigurine version; upon the collar of his garments, Ainsworth.

Ver. 3. *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, &c.*] Hermon was a very high hill beyond Jordan; the Sidonians called it Sirion, and the Amorites Shenir, Deut. iii. 8. hence Shenir and Hermon are mentioned together, Cant. iv. 8. and sometimes Sion or Seon, Deut. iv. 48. and is the Zion here intended; for the dew of Hermon could never descend on the mountain of Zion near Jerusalem, which was a hundred miles distant; besides Zion was but one mountain, these many. Hermon was remarkable for its dew, which still continues: a traveller^c, one of our own country, and whose fidelity is to be depended on, lying in tents near this hill one night, says, "we were sufficiently instructed by experience what the holy psalmist means by the dew of Hermon; our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night." The mountains of Zion were those that were near to Zion, and not the mountain itself; those that were round about Jerusalem, on which the dew also fell in great plenty; and to which unity among brethren is here compared, because it comes from God in heaven, as the dew does. Saints are taught of God to love one another; contentions and quarrels come from lusts within, but this comes from above, from the Father of lights; and, because of its gentle nature, this makes men pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be entreated; as the dew falls gently in a temperate and moderate air, not in stormy and blustering weather: and because of its cooling nature; it allays the heats and animosities in the minds of men; and because it makes the saints fruitful, and to grow and increase in good works. *For there the Lord commanded the blessing*; either in the mountains of Zion; so Kimchi: and if Mount Zion is meant by it, the church, often signified thereby, is the dwelling-place of the Lord; here he records his name and blesses; here his word is preached, which is full of blessings; and here ordinances are administered, which are blessed of God to his people. Theodoret thinks some respect is had to the pouring down of the spirit on the apostles in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost: but rather the sense is, where brethren dwell together in unity, there the God of love and peace is; the Gospel of the grace of God is continued; and the ordinances of it made beneficial to the souls of men, they meeting together in peace and concord; see 2 Cor. xiii. 11. God is said to *command the blessing* when he promises it, and makes it known to his people, or bestows it on them, Psal. cv. 8. and xlv. 4. Even *life for evermore*: the great blessing of all, which includes all others, and in which they issue, the promise of the covenant, the blessing of the Gospel; which is in the hands of Christ, and comes through him to all his people; to the peacemakers particularly, that live in love and peace; these shall live for ever in a happy eternity, and never die, or be hurt of the second death.

^b In voce Ωα.

^c Maundrell's Travels, p. 57. Ed. 7.

P S A L M CXXXIV.

A Song of degrees.

THIS is the last of the psalms called *songs of degrees*; of which see Psal. cxx. It is thought to be written by David, either when he brought the ark to Zion, 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18. or rather when he numbered the Levites, and appointed them their service, 1 Chron. xxiii. 26, 30. So the Syriac inscription, “*a psalm of David, concerning the priests, whom he appointed to wait on the ministry of the Lord in the nights; but, spiritually, an instruction of life.*” Aben Ezra connects it with the preceding psalm, “*as the dew of Hermon ye shall be that bless; behold, therefore, ye are bound to bless the Lord.*”

Ver. 1. *Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, &c.*] All men are of right the servants of God, being his creatures; and are under obligation, through his providential goodness, to bless and praise him; though they are not all in fact so: but all good men are, being made so by the power of divine grace; which frees them from the servitude of sin, Satan, and the world, and makes them willing to serve the Lord; as they do in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear, heartily and willingly, and with great pleasure; and yet have no dependence on any service they perform: and as these are under the highest obligations to bless the Lord; that is, to ascribe greatness to him, to give him the glory of his works, and thanks for his mercies, temporal and spiritual; so they do in this way, and for those things, bless and praise him, to which they are here excited. *Which by night stand in the house of the Lord:* according to Kimchi, these were the wise and holy men, that rose from their beds in the night, and went to pray in the temple, and to praise the Lord; and such a holy person was Anna, Luke ii. 37. according to R. Obadiah and Arama, they were such who continued in the chambers of the temple in the night-season to study in the law and in the expositions of it: but it is generally interpreted of the priests and Levites, who watched in the temple by night, that it might not be profaned nor plundered; and they were obliged to stand, for none might sit in the temple but a king of the house of David⁴. The priests watched in three places, and the Levites in one-and-twenty, according to the Jewish Misnah⁵. The Targum is, “*who stand in the watch-house of the sanctuary of the Lord, and praise in the nights;*” which was one part of their

service, 1 Chron. ix. 33. and xxiii. 30. Under the Gospel dispensation all the saints are priests, and they have a place in the house of the Lord; where they wait upon him in his ordinances, and serve him, and which they do continually. Some understand, by *nights*, times of affliction, darkness, and desertion.

Ver. 2. *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, &c.*] Which Aben Ezra interprets of the priests lifting up their hands to bless the people; but Kimchi, better, of lifting up of the hands to God in prayer; see Psal. cxli. 2. which should be done *with holiness*, as the Targum renders it, in a holy manner; and is the same with lifting up holy hands, 1 Tim. ii. 8. or towards the holy place; the oracle in the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant, typical of Christ; see 1 Kings viii. 29, 30. Psal. xxviii. 2. so Kimchi; or rather, according to Arama, unto the holy name of God, to whom prayer is to be directed. *And bless the Lord;* which is repeated, to shew the importance of the work, that it might not be forgotten and neglected; this being a principal part of spiritual service, and greatly acceptable to God.

Ver. 3. *The Lord, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion.*] These are not the words of the priests blessing the people in this form, as some; but rather, as others, the wish of the servants of the Lord, that he would bless him that exhorted them to this service; whether one of the priests, or the captain of the temple, or the psalmist: though, according to Kimchi, and which seems agreeable, they are the words of the psalmist, promising a blessing from the Lord to those that blessed him; as an encouragement to them, to every one of them, to be constant and diligent in this service. For so it may be rendered, *the Lord shall bless thee*⁶; all blessings come from the Lord, whether spiritual or temporal; and are to be asked of him, and expected from him: and the blessings here promised or asked for are blessings out of Zion, the church, where God blesses his people with his word and ordinances, with his presence, and with communion with himself. Wherefore it is good to be there waiting on him and worshipping him, praying to him and praising of him; and he that made heaven and earth is able to bless both with heavenly and earthly things: and this description of the Lord is no doubt given to encourage faith in him; for, what is it he cannot do?

P S A L M CXXXV.

THIS psalm was written very probably by the same hand as the former. It begins in much the same manner; it has some likeness with Psal. cxiii. and cxv. It

begins and ends with *hallelujah*; and is throughout an exhortation of praise to God, on account of his name, nature, and perfections; and because of his works of

⁴ Maimon. Beth Habbekirab, c. 7. s. G.

⁵ Middot, c. 1. s. 1.

⁶ ברכתך benedict tibi, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Gejerus, Melancthi.

creation, providence, and grace, many of which are enumerated. The Syriac interpreter says, there is an intimation in it of the conversion of the people of the Messiah unto the faith.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or hallelujah; which may be considered as the title of the psalm; as in the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions: *praise ye the name of the Lord*; that is, the Lord himself, and the perfections of his nature; his greatness, goodness, grace, and mercy; his holiness, justice, power, truth, and faithfulness; and also his word, by which he makes known himself, and is a distinguishing blessing to his people, and to be praised for it; see Psal. xlviii. 1. and cxlvii. 19, 20. *praise him, O ye servants of the Lord*; priests and Levites, and ministers of the word, and all the people of God; who once were the servants of sin, Satan, and the world, but now by the grace of God become his servants; see Rom. vi. 17. Some observe that the word *praise* is here used three times, which is thought not to be without a mystery; and may have regard to the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are each to be praised; the Father for electing grace, the Son for redeeming grace, and the Spirit for regenerating and sanctifying grace.

Ver. 2. *Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, &c.*] That have a place and standing there, and go not out, being sons as well as servants; see the note on Psal. cxxxiv. 1. and lxxxiv. 4. *In the courts of the house of our God*; alluding to the courts in the temple, the court of the priests, where they stood and ministered, slaying and offering their sacrifices; and the great court, where all the Israelites stood and worshipped, 2 Chron. iv. 9. So this may describe the worshippers of God in common, who should praise him: and happy are they that have a place here; see Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10.

Ver. 3. *Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good, &c.*] Essentially and communicatively; he is good, and he does good, in a providential way, to all men; and in a way of special grace to his own people; for whom he has laid up and to whom he has promised good things, and on whom he bestows them; see pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; both grace and glory; and therefore they should praise him. *Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant*; either the work of singing praise is pleasant, being the employment of angels and glorified saints; the subject-matter of it delightful, the blessings of grace flowing from the everlasting love of God it leads unto, which is excellent and better than life; and it must be pleasant work to a saint, because it is pleasing to God; and especially when the presence of God is enjoyed in it, and melody is made in the heart as well as with the mouth. Or the sense is, *his name is pleasant*; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it: for though it is holy and reverend in itself, and fearful and terrible to sinners; yet as it is proclaimed in Christ, it is exceeding delightful, and in whom all the perfections of God are glorified; particularly the name of God, as a covenant God and Father in Christ, blessing, with all spiritual blessings in him, is exceeding pleasant; as are all the names of Christ, and therefore to be praised.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself,*

&c.] To be his own special people, and not another's; for his own service, and for his glory; and to be an habitation for himself, and to be for ever with him. This is not to be understood personally of Jacob, though a chosen vessel of mercy; nor of his natural posterity as such, though chosen as a nation to outward favours; for not all they, only some of them, were chosen to special grace and glory, a remnant according to the election of grace: but mystical and spiritual Jacob and Israel are meant, even the whole church and people of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; these God has chosen, of his own free grace and good will, to all the blessings of grace and glory, and that from all eternity; which choice will remain firm and immutable, in time and for ever; and therefore is worthy of praise and thanksgiving, now, and to all eternity. And *Israel for his peculiar treasure*; by whom they are accounted as such; even as the peculiar treasure of kings, as silver, gold, jewels, and precious stones; as his inheritance, his portion, and peculiar people; see Exod. xix. 5. Mal. iii. 17.

Ver. 5. *For I know that the Lord is great, &c.*] Jehovah the Father is great in his perfections; in his power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, and goodness; and in his works of creation, providence, and grace; and so is Jehovah the Son, who seems chiefly designed, who is called *our Lord* or *Adon* in the next clause; he is great, having the same perfections his Father has; and doing the same works, besides the miracles he wrought here on earth, and the great work of our redemption: he is the great God and our Saviour, and a great Saviour he is; and indeed he is great in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and so is the blessed Spirit, who is equal to the Father and Son, and greater than he that is in the world. Now all this the psalmist could say from his own knowledge; he knew the Lord was great, from the consideration and meditation of his wondrous works; he knew the greatness of Christ, from the revelation made to him of his person, offices, and grace; he knew the greatness of the divine Spirit, from the inward experience of his work upon his heart, as well as from his being divinely inspired by him; and because of this greatness of the Lord, as well as his goodness, he is to be praised; it is mentioned as a reason of it. *And that our Lord is above all gods*; the Lord our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us: our Lord, not only by right of creation, but of redemption; he is above all that the Heathens called gods, even the greatest of them; not the idols their hands made only, but the heavens and all the host of them, the sun, moon, and stars; his glory is above them, being the Maker of them, as God; and he is made higher than they, as man and Mediator: he is above civil magistrates, princes, and kings of the earth, called gods, Psal. lxxxii. 5. he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, he is higher than they; by him they reign, and to him they are accountable; and he is above the angels, sometimes called *Elohim*, or gods, Psal. viii. 5. he has a more excellent name and nature than they; he is the Creator of them, the object of their worship, to whom they minister, whose servants they are; and he is now exalted above them in the human nature, at the right hand of God; see Heb. i. 4—14.

Ver. 6. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, &c.*] In creation, producing into being what creatures he thought fit; in providence, doing according to his will in heaven and in earth; in grace, predestinating men to grace and glory, according to the good pleasure of his will, and calling by his grace whom he pleased: so Christ quickens whom he will; and the Spirit dispenses his gifts and grace severally to men as he pleases. Sovereignty, or acting according to will and pleasure, is peculiar to the Lord; the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars, are at his direction, and act by the laws of creation, which are at his control; angels do his will, and not their own: the most arbitrary and despotic princes cannot do every thing they please; but the Lord can and does, even every thing. *In heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places*; in the formation of them, and filling them with inhabitants, and fitting them to perform the several ends and uses for which they were designed; as well as performing many wonderful things in them out of the ordinary course of nature, as did our Lord, or as were done when he was here on earth: a wonderful star appeared in the heavens, which guided the wise men to the place of his birth; unusual voices were heard from heaven at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; the Spirit, with his extraordinary gifts, descended from hence after his ascension thither: surprising miracles were done by him on earth; the great work of redemption was finished here, where he glorified his divine Father; and throughout it he sent his apostles to publish his everlasting Gospel. He did wonders in the mighty waters; more than once he made the boisterous sea a calm, and walked upon the surface of it: and as of old he broke up the fountains of the great deep, and drowned the world; and at another time dried up the sea, and led his people through the depths, as through a wilderness; so he will hereafter bind the old serpent the devil, and cast him into the abyss, into the great deep, into the bottomless pit; where he will continue during the thousand-years' reign of Christ with his saints.

Ver. 7. *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, &c.*] Up to the heavens. Aben Ezra interprets this of the mist which went up out of the earth, and watered it, Gen. ii. 6. and still vapours are exhaled out of the earth by the force of the sun, and carried up into the air, and form various things, as wind, rain, &c. The Targum, Kimchi, and others, explain it of the clouds, so called from their elevation on high: these rise up out of the sea, the borders, and boundaries, and uttermost parts of the earth; see 1 Kings xviii. 44. Amos v. 8. Jerom interprets these clouds, spiritually and mystically, of the apostles and prophets, raised from a low and mean estate; and so may be applied to the ministers of the word, who are clouds full of water; of good doctrine, which they are sent to carry about the world, and publish in it; see Isa. v. 6. *He maketh lightnings for the rain*: for the descent of the rain, as the Targum; by lightning oftentimes the clouds are broke, and so pour down

rain; see Job xxviii. 26. or, *lightnings with the rain*^g; as Kimchi: these frequently come together, which is very surprising, that two such different elements should meet together as fire and water; and yet the fire not quenched by the water, nor the water heated by the fire: these the above ancient Christian writer interprets of the light of knowledge, and the rain of doctrine; see Zech. ix. 14. Deut. xxxii. 3. Isa. lv. 10, 11. *He bringeth the wind out of his treasures*; as he has his treasures for the snow and hail, Job xxxviii. 22. so for the winds: not the caverns of the earth, thought to be the repositories of the wind^h; nor are there proper repositories of it: but the air, as Suidasⁱ; which, when without wind, is easily moved by the wise hand of God; so Theodoret, from whom he seems to have taken this hint. In Scripture only mention is made of four winds, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Matt. xxiv. 31. Rev. vii. 1. and so the ancient Greeks only reckoned four cardinal winds, but at length they added four more; and at Athens was a marble temple, built by Andronicus Cyrrhestes, called the *temple of the eight winds*: this was an octagon, and on each side were engraven the images of every wind; and on the top of it was a Triton of brass, with a rod in his right hand, which being moved about by the wind, pointed to that which then blew^k: but now, through the great improvement of navigation, the winds are divided and subdivided in the points of the compass; and, besides the four cardinal ones, there are twenty-eight collateral ones, in all thirty-two; but be they reckoned as many as they may, they are all in the hands of God, and disposed of at his pleasure. Jerom here interprets them of the angels; perhaps it might be better to apply them to the gifts and graces of the Spirit, sometimes compared to wind, which are treasured up in Christ; see John iii. 8. Acts ii. 1—4.

Ver. 8. *Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.*] Which was the last of the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians; and is particularly mentioned, because, by means of it, they were made willing to let the children of Israel go out of their land: and so this includes the deliverance of the Israelites, God's first-born, when he slew the first-born of Egypt; and who were typical of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and the deliverance of them, through the blood of the passover, was an emblem of the deliverance of those by the blood of Christ; see Exod. xii. 22, 23, 27, 29, 30.

Ver. 9. *Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, &c.*] Or, *signs and wonders*. Meaning the other extraordinary plagues sent among the Egyptians, before that of slaying their first-born; and which have some likeness to the vials of God's wrath, which will be poured out on the city called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, Rev. xi. 8. and xvi. 1. *Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants*; his courtiers: some of them are particularly observed to affect him and his court; as the plagues of the frogs, and slaying the first-born: and he and his princes must be more

^g למטר ברקים fulgura cum pluvia, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cicerius; so Ainsworth.

^h Vasto rex Æolus antro—luctantais ventos frænat. Virgil. Æncid. l. i.

ⁱ In voce Θραυσιν.

^k Vid. Vitruvium de Architect. l. 1. c. 6.

or less affected with them all, as well as the common people; who were an emblem either of Satan and his principalities, as Jerom interprets it; or rather of antichrist and his followers; to whom the tokens of God's wrath and displeasure will be sent in a wonderful way and manner.

Ver. 10. *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.*] Or *many nations*¹. The seven nations of the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites; the kings of which were mighty and many, even one-and-thirty in number, Josh. xii. 1—24. This the Lord did by Joshua, a type of Christ; who has overcome the world by his sufferings and death, and delivered his people from it; who went forth conquering and to conquer, into the Roman Pagan empire, called the whole world, and subdued it by his spirit and word; and will shew his power in all the kingdoms of this world, either by converting or destroying them; and at last will judge all the nations and kings of the earth. Aben Ezra interprets this of the kings of Midian, or of those next mentioned, which is best.

Ver. 11. *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, &c.*] These are particularly named, because they were the first that were slain, and were the most mighty and powerful; see Deut. iii. 11. Amos ii. 9. These the Lord slew by the hand of Moses, a type of Christ; who has destroyed the god and prince of this world, that had the power of death, the devil; and has spoiled all his principalities and powers. *And all the kingdoms of Canaan*; one-and-thirty of them. These words explain the former; as the two kings mentioned point at the mighty kings slain, these kingdoms shew who the great nations were that were smitten.

Ver. 12. *And gave their land for an heritage, &c.*] The land of the two kings before mentioned, which was given to the Reubenites, and Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh, Deut. iii. 12—17. and the lands belonging to the several kingdoms of Canaan were given to the rest of the tribes. *An heritage unto Israel his people*; a type of the heavenly Canaan, the glorious, incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal inheritance; which is of God's free grace, chosen, prepared, and given; even a right unto it, and meetness for it, to the true and spiritual Israel of God, to his special people, his chosen, redeemed, and called ones.

Ver. 13. *Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever, &c.*] The Lord himself endures for ever, in his nature, being, and perfections; and the fame of him, the fame of those acts of power and goodness before mentioned: the name of Christ endures for ever; his person and offices, his Gospel, which is his name; his children and people, who are called by his name, and in whom his name is perpetuated; the fame of his wondrous works in nature, providence, and grace; and especially of his great work of redemption and salvation. *And thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations*; or *the remembrance of them to generation and generation*; to every age; the love of Christ is

remembered by his people in every age, the blessings of his grace in redemption, justification, pardon, &c. and cannot be forgotten as long as his Gospel is preached, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper administered, and he has a people in the world, all which will be as long as the sun and moon endure, there will be a memorial of him.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord will judge his people, &c.*] Rule and govern, protect and defend them; plead their cause, and avenge them of their enemies; judge between them, distinguish them by his care and providence, make them visible, so that others shall see the difference between them; especially at the last day, when he will judge them, and, as the righteous Judge, give them the crown of righteousness. *Or though the Lord judges his people*^m; chastises them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and *or yet*ⁿ *he will repent himself concerning his servants*; of the evil of affliction he has brought upon them; he will change the course of his providential dealings with them, according to his unchangeable will; and turn their adversity into prosperity, and their mourning into joy; some render it, *he will be entreated for his servants*^o; he will hear prayer on their account, and save them out of their afflictions; or, as others, *he will comfort himself concerning his servants*^p; take pleasure in them and their prosperity, comfort them, and take delight in so doing. The Targum of the whole is, "for the Lord will judge the judgment of his people by his word, and to his righteous servants will return in his mercies."

Ver. 15. *The idols of the Heathen are silver and gold, &c.*] This, with what follows, is observed, to shew that when God judges his people, and takes vengeance on their enemies, the idols they serve will not be able to protect them, and deliver them out of his hands; and also to prove what is before asserted, that our Jehovah is great above all gods, ver. 5. the matter of which they are made is at best gold and silver, which are the dust and metals of the earth, or what the prophet calls thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. and are the creatures of Jehovah, and at his dispose, who says, the silver and the gold are mine, Hagg. ii. 8, 9. and who is infinitely above them in value and worth; even the knowledge of him, and the words of his mouth, doctrines, and precepts, are better than gold and silver, Prov. iii. 14, 15. and viii. 10, 11. Psal. xix. 10. and cxix. 72, 127. *The work of men's hands*; which they form out of gold and silver into such shapes and figures, and therefore can never have deity in them; and a most stupid thing it is to imagine that the Godhead is like to gold and silver, graven by art and man's device, Acts xvii. 29. see the note on Psal. cxv. 4.

Ver. 16. *They have mouths, but they speak not, &c.*] Return no answer to the request and petition of their votaries; see the note on Psal. cxv. 5. *Eyes have they, but they see not*; the same is observed in the above place, which see.

Ver. 17. *They have ears, but they hear not, &c.*] See

¹ גוים רבים gentes multas, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; plurimas gentes, Tigurine version; so Ainsworth.

^m כ"י quod est, Junius & Tremellius; nam est, Piscator.

ⁿ Tamen, Piscator; mox, Junius & Tremellius.

^o יתוודע deprecabitur, V. L. sinet se deprecari, Tirinus.

^p Solatium reportabit, Tigurine version.

the note on Psal. cxv. 6. *Neither is there any breath in their mouths*; they are lifeless statues, they have not so much as what the brute creatures have, breath; our Jehovah, as the living God, is rightly opposed to them, who gives life, and breath, and all things, unto man; and yet what amazing stupidity is it, that any of them should worship such as gods, who have not what they themselves have.

Ver. 18. *They that make them are like unto them, &c.*] Are as blind, stupid, and senseless as they; or *let them that make them, &c.*⁴; so some versions and interpreters; see the note on Psal. cxv. 8. So is *every one that trusteth in them*; alike ignorant and sottish: and so are all such that set up idols and lusts in their own hearts, and serve them; or trust to their own righteousness; even all unregenerate and self-righteous persons: they cannot speak a word for God and his grace, for Christ and his righteousness, for the Spirit of God, and his work upon their hearts, of all which they are ignorant; they are blind and have no sight and sense of their sin and misery, and of their need of Christ and his righteousness; they are deaf to his Gospel, and the charming voice of it; they are lifeless and breathless, are dead in trespasses and sins, and have no pantings and desires after spiritual things.

Ver. 19. *Bless the Lord, O house of Israel, &c.*] Who are chosen by the Lord to be a special people to him above all others; redeemed from Egyptian bondage; through a variety of surprising providences brought into and settled in the land of Canaan; distinguished by various blessings, favoured with the word, worship, and ordinances of God, and not left to worship idols of gold and silver, as other nations; and therefore had great reason to bless the Lord: as also the spiritual Israel, or the household of God and of faith, the family of Christ; and that because they are of his family, because of the love of God to them, his choice of them, his covenant with them, their redemption by Christ, their effectual calling; or for being made Israelites indeed, and the provisions made for them in the house of God for their spiritual welfare. *Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron*: who were separated from their brethren to minister in the priest's office; to offer gifts and sacrifices for the people, and to bless them, Exod. xxviii. 1. Numb. vi. 23—27. which was a very sacred and honourable employment, and they were under obligation to bless the Lord, who had called them to it, and put this honour on them; as are the ministers of the Gospel, who have received gifts from Christ; whom he has counted faithful, and put into the ministry; made stewards of the mysteries of his grace, and ambassadors in his stead; and especially if made useful for edification and conversion: and indeed all the Lord's people, who are all made priests unto God, and have nearness unto him, liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all, as Aaron once a year into

the most holy place; and who have better sacrifices to offer than he, the living sacrifices of their own bodies and souls, and not slain beasts; spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and, above all, the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Christ they bring in the arms of faith, and so enter into the courts of God.

Ver. 20. *Bless the Lord, O house of Levi, &c.*] These were of the same tribe with the house of Aaron, but inferior ministers; they ministered to the priests, and had the charge of things in the tabernacle and temple; many of them were porters in the latter, and others were singers, and of these Kimchi interprets the words; whose work it was to give thanks morning and evening, and so are with great propriety called upon to bless the Lord, Numb. iii. 6—8. 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, 30. and may mystically design inferior officers in the church, who are helps and assistants to ministers in the government and discipline of it, and have the care of its secular affairs; and who, when they behave well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and boldness in the faith; and even doorkeepers in the house of the Lord have reason to bless his name for a place there; and all the saints are the sweet singers of Israel, have the new song of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, put into their mouths, and therefore should bless the Lord. *Ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord*; these are distinct from the Israelites, priests, and Levites, and design the proselytes among them of other nations that truly feared God, as Jarchi notes; and all such persons, whoever and wherever they are, have reason to bless the Lord for the fear of him they have, which is not from nature, but from grace; and for the favours shewn them, the blessings bestowed upon them, the good things laid up for them, and the guard that is about them, which the Scriptures abundantly declare, and experience confirms.

Ver. 21. *Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, &c.*] This, according to Aben Ezra, was the formula of blessing to be used by the houses of Israel, Aaron, and Levi, and all that feared God; or a direction to them in what manner they should bless him; and may both point out the persons that were to bless, and the place where; those that were inhabitants of Zion, where praise waited for the Lord, and was his due; and the blessings and benefits he was to be praised for, such as came out of Zion, strength from the Lord there, the rod of his strength, the word of the Gospel, and the Saviour himself. *Which dwelleth at Jerusalem*; in the temple there; and which distinguishes him from the idols of the Heathens before mentioned; and who dwells in the heavenly Jerusalem, in Gospel churches; and will dwell in the New Jerusalem, where his tabernacle will be with men, Rev. xxi. 3. *Praise ye the Lord*; or *hallelujah*; and so the psalm ends as it begun, being from first to last an exhortation to praise.

⁴ So V. I. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Sept. Syr. Arab. Ethiop.

P S A L M CXXXVI.

THIS psalm was very probably composed by David, and given to the Levites to sing every day, 1 Chron. xvi. 41. Solomon his son followed his example, and made use of them in singing at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 3, 6. as Jehoshaphat seems to have done when he went out to war against his enemies, 2 Chron. xx. 21. The subject of it is much the same with the preceding psalm; its composition is very singular; the half of every verse in it is, *for his mercy endureth for ever*; this is the burden of the song; and the design of it is to shew, that all blessings of every kind flow from the grace, goodness, and mercy of God, which is constant and perpetual; and to impress a sense of it upon the minds of men: the inscription of the Syriac version is, "it is said of Moses and Israel praising the Lord for those who were delivered; and concerning the deliverance of souls out of hell from Pharaoh, the devil, by Christ our Saviour, the Redeemer of them." R. Obadiah says it is an exhortation to the children of God in the days of the Messiah to praise the Lord.

Ver. 1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, &c.*] In himself, and to all his creatures; and especially to his chosen people, who therefore should give thanks to him daily in the name of Christ, for all blessings temporal and spiritual, in faith and fervency, and in the sincerity of their souls, with their whole heart. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; it is the same with his love, which is from everlasting to everlasting; and continues notwithstanding the sins of his people, the hidings of his face from them, and his chastisements of them; the covenant which is founded on mercy, and all the blessings of it, which are the sure mercies of David, last for ever; and hence the vessels of mercy shall certainly be saved, and not lost; see Psalm cvi. 1. and cvii. 1.

Ver. 2. *O give thanks unto the God of gods, &c.*] Not only of the gods of the Gentiles, who are by name and not by nature gods; or of civil magistrates, who are so called, and seem to be designed in the next verse; but the angels, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi. Christ, our Immanuel, is the God of them, the object of their worship and adoration, being their Creator and Preserver, Psal. xcvi. 7. Heb. i. 6, 7. So the Heathens say of the Maker of all things, him you may properly call the God of gods, the Supreme and Best; this title Janus has with them*. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; in the preservation of those excellent creatures from apostasy, when many of their species fell; and in the continuance and confirmation of them in the state in which they were created; and in making use of them as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and as a guard about them while they live, and at death to convey their souls to heaven.

Ver. 3. *O give thanks to the Lord of lords, &c.*] Which is not only the title of the God of Israel, as the

former, Deut. x. 17. but of the Messiah, Rev. xix. 16. who is the Prince of the kings of the earth; under whom they are, by whom they reign, and to whom they are accountable, being higher than they; as in nature, so by office, Rev. i. 5. Prov. viii. 15, 16. Psal. lxxxix. 27. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; in putting it into the hearts of kings and princes, which he has in his hands, to shew favour to his people, even to be their nursing fathers; and in curbing the power, restraining the wrath, of oppressors; and protecting his people from their rage and violence.

Ver. 4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders, &c.*] As in the works of creation at first, having no help from angels or men; so in the works of providence, many of which are unsearchable, and past finding out, and in which he has no assistance from creatures; and in the works of grace, redemption, and salvation, which his own arm has wrought out; as well as what he did when here on earth in our nature; the miracles then wrought by his omnipotent arm alone; and even all the wonders which Moses and Elijah did under the Old Testament, and the apostles of Christ under the New, were done, not by their power, but by his alone; who will do still greater wonders, when he shall create all things new, raise the dead, and summon all nations before him, and render to every one according to his works. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; towards his people, for whose sake all these wonders are wrought.

Ver. 5. *To him that by wisdom made the heavens, &c.*] In such a curious manner, in such a proper and delightful situation, with such furniture, and for such uses, Prov. iii. 19. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; which appears in the continued influences of the heaven; the dew, rain, and snow, that descend from it on the earth to water and make it fruitful, and to produce those rich and valuable blessings called the *precious things of heaven*, Deut. xxxiii. 13. and which are of the utmost importance for the service of man and beast: and, besides, God has of his infinite mercy, which continues, provided an inheritance in the heavens, a house eternal in the heavens, mansions of bliss and glory there, which Christ is now preparing for his saints, that they may dwell with him in them for evermore.

Ver. 6. *To him that stretcheth out the earth above the waters, &c.*] Or, *besides the waters*†, close by them, and yet secures the earth from being covered with them; see Psal. xxiv. 2. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; it was in mercy he caused the waters to go off the earth which first covered it; that trees, plants, and herbs, might spring up out of it, and that it might be a fit habitation for man; and though for the sins of the old world these waters were let in upon it, which drowned it, and destroyed man and beast upon it, except a few that were in mercy preserved; yet the Lord

* Hierocles in Carm. Pythagor. p. 10.

† Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 9.

† עַל הַמַּיִם juxta aquas, Tirusus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

has promised and sworn to it, that these waters shall no more go over the earth to destroy it; he has set a bound for the sea that it cannot pass, by a decree of his; even the sand on the shore, which, as weak as it may seem to be, is a bound unpassable; though they may toss and rage and roar, they shall not prevail, nor pass over it, which is a perpetual miracle of mercy, Jer. v. 22.

Ver. 7. *To him that made great lights, &c.*] For the inhabitants of the world to walk and work by, to do all the business of life in a comfortable manner; and which is an instance of mercy and goodness; see Gen. i. 14—16. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; these lights continuing for the benefit of mankind.

Ver. 8. *The sun to rule by day, &c.*] Which is the greater light, Gen. i. 16. *For his mercy endureth for ever*: this great light, so beneficial to the earth and the inhabitants of it, which was made near six thousand years ago, still continues, and will to the end of time; enlightening the world, warming the air and earth, imparting its light and heat to all creatures on it, and influencing the earth to bring forth a variety of things for the use and delight of mankind, called the *precious things brought forth by the sun*, Deut. xxxiii. 14. an emblem of a more beneficial light, in which the rich grace and mercy of God appear, and for which we have reason to give thanks; even the sun of righteousness, the Messiah, the light of the world, the author of the light of nature, grace, and glory; and who will continue as long as the sun, and when that shall be no more, Mal. iv. 2. Psal. lxxii. 17.

Ver. 9. *The moon and stars to rule by night, &c.*] The lesser lights, and which indeed receive all their light from the sun, Gen. i. 16. *For his mercy endureth for ever*: in continuing these lights, so useful to men, as well as in making of them: the moon and stars have their benign influences upon the earth, to produce things out of it useful to men; see Deut. xxxiii. 14. Job xxxvii. 31. and are of singular service to benighted travellers, and to those that go down to the sea in ships; see Acts xxvii. 20. The moon is an emblem of the church, that receives her light from Christ, the sun, and which will continue for ever; and stars are emblems of Gospel ministers, who are the means of enlightening dark souls, and of refreshing disconsolate saints; and are a continued mercy to an ignorant world, as well as to the church, and will be continued as long as it stands; see Cant. vi. 10. Rev. i. 20. and ii. 1. Matt. v. 14. and xxvii. 20.

Ver. 10. *To him that smote Egypt in their first-born, &c.*] In a tender part, in the dear part of themselves, in their sons and heirs, and who were to inherit their lands and estates, and perpetuate their names; this was an act of justice for using ill the Lord's first-born, the people of Israel, slaying their sons, and refusing to let them go, Exod. i. 13, 14, 16, 22. and iv. 22, 23. and yet there was mercy in it, for which thanks were to be given to God. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; the Israelites, in a very merciful manner, were distinguished by the blood sprinkled on their door-posts, when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt to destroy their first-born; and when they were destroyed, it was owing to the kind providence of God that the Egyptians did not rise as one man to cut off

the Israelites in vengeance; and yet not a dog was suffered to move his tongue against them when the dismal cry was made; yea, this was the means of their deliverance, which could not be obtained by all the other plagues; but now they not only bid them go, but were urgent upon them to be gone, Exod. xi. 5—7. and xii. 22, 23, 29—33.

Ver. 11. *And brought out Israel from among them, &c.*] A wicked and idolatrous people, among whom they suffered great hardships; and this was done by means of God's judgments on them, and especially that before related; and was an instance of the mercy of God, as follows, for which thanks should be given. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; and this is a proof of it, bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, the house of bondage; when they cried unto him by reason of it, and he sent them a Saviour to deliver them out of their distress, Exod. ii. 23. and xv. 13. and xx. 1. an emblem of the grace and mercy of God, in delivering his people from a worse than Egyptian bondage; from the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, and through fear of death, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 12. *With a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, &c.*] Exerting his power in a very open manner, and continuing it till he had effected the work; bringing his people out of Egypt, which is always ascribed to his great strength and mighty power, Exod. xiii. 3, 9. and xv. 6, 16. and xxxii. 11. The redemption of the mystical Israel of God is by a mighty Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; who has redeemed them out of the hands of their enemies, that were stronger than they, and too strong for them: the conversion of them is by the power of the grace of God, even by the exceeding greatness of his power, and yet both acts of grace and mercy. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; it was mercy put the Lord on stretching out his arm, and shewing the strength of his right hand, in delivering Israel out of Egypt; and in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, Isa. lxiii. 9. It is owing to the tender mercies of our God, and is a performing the mercy promised to the fathers, that Christ, the day-spring from on high, was sent to visit and redeem us, Luke i. 68, 72, 78. and the regeneration, quickening, and conversion of sinners, are acts of mercy as well as of power, Ephes. ii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. i. 3.

Ver. 13. *To him which divided the Red sea into parts, &c.*] Into two parts, so that the waters of it stood as a wall on the right and left hand of the Israelites, as they passed through; this was done by means of a strong east wind, Exod. xiv. 21, 22. The Jews have a tradition, which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Arama, make mention of, that the sea was divided into twelve parts, according to the twelve tribes of Israel, and every tribe had a path by itself to walk in; but for this there is no foundation: however, the dividing it into parts was a wonderful work, and a rich display of mercy to Israel. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; the children of Israel were encompassed about, and in the utmost distress; the rocks were on each side, Pharaoh and his host behind them, the Red sea before them; and so no visible way of escape; but the Lord cut a way for them through the sea, and saved them. The sea is an emblem of this world, which is like a tempestuous

troubled sea; where every thing is restless, fluctuating, and passing away; where the people of God are tossed with tempests; and where afflictions, like the waves and billows of the sea, come over them one after another; and through which they must pass and enter the kingdom: and God, that wills, orders, and appoints them, sets these proud waves of the sea their bounds, or makes them a calm: and, sooner or later, makes a way through them and out of them, which is owing to his enduring mercy, 1 Cor. x. 13.

Ver. 14. *And made Israel to pass through the midst of it, &c.*] Willingly, without reluctance; with great spirit and courage, fearless of danger, and with the utmost safety, so that not one was lost in the passage; see Psal. lxxviii. 53. and thus the Lord makes his people willing to pass through afflictions, he being with them; and able to bear them, he putting underneath the everlasting arms, even when in the valley of the shadow of death; and carries safely through them, so that they are not hurt by them; the waters do not overflow them, nor the fire kindle upon them; nor are any suffered to be lost, but all come safe to land. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* to which, and to his never-failing compassion, it is owing that they are not consumed, Lam. iii. 22, 23.

Ver. 15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, &c.*] In the same sea which was parted for the Israelites, and through which they passed safely as on dry land; into which Pharaoh and his army entering in pursuit of them in their chariots, the Lord shook^a him and them out of them, as the word signifies; and causing the waters to return and cover them, they were drowned in them, Exod. xiv. 28—31. This was an emblem of the destruction of Satan, and of his principalities and powers, by Christ, who thereby has saved his spiritual Israel out of their hands; and of the casting of the sins of God's people into the depths of the sea, never to be seen more, or to appear any more against them to their condemnation; and of the everlasting ruin and perdition of ungodly men. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* it was in mercy to Israel that Pharaoh and his host were destroyed, who threatened them with ruin; and therefore they sung of judgment and of mercy, and gave thanks to God for this instance of his vengeance on their enemies, and of goodness to them, Exod. xv. 1.

Ver. 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness, &c.*] Where there was no path. This the Lord did by going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, to shew them the way in which they should go, Exod. xiii. 21, 22. see Psal. lxxviii. 14. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* among the manifold mercies of God, shewn to Israel in the wilderness, this is one taken notice of by Nehemiah, ch. ix. 19. that the pillar of cloud and fire, to direct them, never departed from them while in it: and this act of leading them not only includes the guidance of them in the way, but the provision made for them; of water out of the rock, and of manna that fell about their tents every day; and of flesh and feathered fowl, like dust, so that they wanted nothing; and also the protection of them from their enemies: all which were

proofs of his constant care over them, and continual mercy to them; see Psal. lxxviii. 15, 16, 24, 25, 27.

Ver. 17. *To him which smote great kings, &c.*] Either the one-and-thirty kings in the land of Canaan; or those who are after particularly mentioned; which seems best, since the kings of Canaan were petty kings, when these were greater ones. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* the smiting of those kings were in mercy to Israel; both to preserve them from falling into their hands, and that they might possess their countries, as is after declared.

Ver. 18. *And slew famous kings, &c.*] Famous for their power and strength, their courage and valour; who were not only smitten and discomfited, but slain in battle. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* towards his own people, for whose sake these kings were slain.

Ver. 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites, &c.*] A strong and warlike people, and their king a great and mighty one; see Psal. cxxxv. 11. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* since this king would not suffer Israel to go through his borders, but came out and fought against them; and had not the Lord smote him, they must have fallen a prey into his hands, Numb. xxi. 23.

Ver. 20. *And Og the king of Bashan, &c.*] A country large and fruitful, and the king of it of a gigantic stature, see Psal. cxxxv. 11. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* for this mighty king came out against Israel, and threatened their destruction, and it was of the Lord's mercies they were not consumed by him. And it may be observed, whenever tyrannical princes and oppressors are cut off, it is in mercy to the inhabitants of the earth, and especially to the people of God.

Ver. 21. *And gave their land for an heritage, &c.*] This was taken away from them and their subjects by the Lord, who has the disposing of kingdoms, and given to another people, for an inheritance. *For his mercy endureth for ever;* whilst his justice is exercised on some, in a strict manner, with severity and rigour, his mercy is shewn to others.

Ver. 22. *Even an heritage unto Israel his servant, &c.*] The land of those that served idols, the Lord took and gave to Israel for an inheritance, who served him, the true God. Thus the Lord rewards his servants in a way of grace and mercy, though not as of debt; for it follows, *for his mercy endureth for ever;* Aben Ezra and Kimchi make the mercy to lie in this peculiarly, that the lands of these kings were not in the covenant with Abraham; only the seven nations or kingdoms of Canaan, which are not here mentioned, as in Psal. cxxxv. 11. but the Amorites were given in the covenant, Gen. xv. 21. and the one as the other were given as an inheritance to Israel, and equally owing to the mercy of God; see Psal. cxxxv. 11, 12. And thus the heavenly glory, of which Canaan was a type, is an inheritance owing to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 21.

Ver. 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate, &c.*] The Israelites; either in Egypt, as Jarchi, when in bondage and distress there, and sent them a deliverer; or in the times of the Judges, whom God raised up one after another, to save his people out of the hands of their enemies, by whom they were oppressed; or

^a 771 excussit, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

in the Babylonish captivity, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi: though the latter thinks their present captivity is rather intended; but as yet they are not remembered in a gracious way and manner. This may be applied to the people of God in a spiritual sense; who, before conversion, are in a low estate through sin, which has brought them into deep poverty, into debt they are not able to discharge, but are liable to a prison; it has stripped them of their original righteousness, instead of which at best they are clothed with filthy rags; it has left them, starving and famishing, to feed on ashes, sensual lusts and pleasures; it has brought them to a dung-hill, from whence they are taken as beggars; yea, to a ditch, a pit wherein is in no water; even an horrible pit, the mire and clay of corrupt nature. Man, that was lord of all, is by sin reduced to the utmost slavery to it, and to Satan; and is in the greatest distress and misery; filled with diseases, loathsome and incurable by him; quite lost and undone, helpless, and hopeless, and under the sentence of condemnation and death: but the Lord has remembered his chosen people, and provided a Saviour for them; who has paid all their debts; brought in an everlasting righteousness to clothe them; given his flesh for the life of them; healed all their diseases; delivered them from thralldom and bondage; saved them from condemnation and death, and raised them to sit in heavenly places with him: and not only so, but he sends down his Spirit to convince and convert them, renew and sanctify them; to bring them from death to life; out of darkness into marvellous light; from bondage to liberty; from fellowship with wicked men, into communion with Christ and his people; and to make them meet for heaven and happiness. These are sometimes in a low estate after conversion; when corruptions prevail, and the temptations of Satan are strong; when grace is weak; or God hides his face; or they are grown carnal and secure, lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual things; yet the Lord remembers them again, his loving-kindness, his covenant and promises; and with everlasting kindness has mercy on them, heals their backslidings, and loves them freely. The Targum is, "he

"hath remembered his covenant with us;" so Kimchi. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; which appears in the mission of his Son to save; in giving his Spirit to regenerate and quicken when dead in sin, and to revive and restore when backslidden.

Ver. 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies, &c.*] Temporal enemies, tyrants, and oppressors: and spiritual ones, sin, Satan, the world, the law, death, and hell. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; as is clearly seen in redemption by Jesus Christ, where mercy and truth have met together; and which is a distinguishing mercy to the sons of men, not granted to angels.

Ver. 25. *Who giveth food to all flesh, &c.*] To all creatures; the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, the young ravens that cry, Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. and cxlvii. 9. To all men their daily food; to Jews and Gentiles, good men and bad men, Matt. vi. 11. Acts xiv. 16, 17. and spiritual food to all that belong to Christ, who are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; even himself, the bread of life, the wholesome truths of the Gospel, and its refreshing ordinances. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; he continues to have compassion on his creatures, and opens his hand of providence, and supplies their wants; he is ever mindful of his covenant of grace and mercy, and therefore gives meat to them that fear him, Psal. cxi. 5.

Ver. 26. *O give thanks unto the God of heaven, &c.*] the Maker of it, in which the glory of his wisdom and power is displayed; the possessor of it, where he dwells, has his throne, and keeps his court; from whence all blessings, temporal and spiritual, come; and where he has prepared glory and happiness for his people hereafter, a house eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved there, a better and a more enduring substance. *For his mercy endureth for ever*; for though the above character is expressive of his sovereignty and dominion, yet he exercises it in a way of grace and mercy to the sons of men; and therefore they have reason to give thanks unto him, and praise him for his kindness and favours shewn to them on earth.

P S A L M CXXXVII.

THE occasion of this psalm was the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and the treatment they met with there; either as foreseen, or as now endured. Aben Ezra ascribes this psalm to David; and so the Syriac version, which calls it, "a psalm of David; the words of the saints, who were carried captive into Babylon." The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, make it to be David's, and yet add the name of Jeremiah; and the Arabic version calls it David's, concerning Jeremiah: but, as Theodoret observes, Jeremiah was not carried into Babylon, but, after some short stay in or near Jerusalem, was forced away into Egypt; and could neither be the writer nor subject of this psalm: and though it might be wrote by David under a spirit of prophecy; who thereby might foresee and foretel the Babylonish captivity, and what the Jews would suffer in it; as the prophets Isaiah and

Jeremiah did, many years before it came to pass; yet it seems rather to have been written by one of the captivity, either whilst in it, or immediately after it.

Ver. 1. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, &c.*] If by Babylon is meant the country, then the rivers of it are Chebar, Ulai, Tigris, Euphrates, and others; see Ezek. i. 1. Dan. viii. 2. but if the city itself, then only Euphrates, which ran through it; and is expressed by *rivers*, because of the largeness of it, and because of the several canals cut out of it, for the service of the city; hence Babylon is said to dwell upon many waters, Jer. li. 13. upon the banks whereof the captive Jews were; either through choice, where they could be alone, and mourn their fate, indulge their sorrows, and give vent to their grief; or by the order of these who carried them captive, there to be employed, either in taking goods from ships here unloaded,

and complaining of their cruelty and inhumanity, thus to insult them and jeer at them: or rather, because it was the Lord's song they required, and so sacred, and not to be sung in any place, or at any time, and in any company; which would be but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which was holy to dogs, Matt. vii. 6. or it may be they required this to be done in one of their temples, and to their idols, just as these songs were sung in the temple at Jerusalem, and to the honour of Jehovah; and therefore they refused to do it: for it may be rendered, or however interpreted, in the land of a strange god^c; as it is by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech: they required them to sing with mirth and joy, which they could not do in their present case; see ver. 2.

Ver. 5. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, &c.*] This was said by one or every one of the Levites; or singers, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or by the congregation of Israel, as Jarchi; by one of them, in the name of the rest; or by the composer of the psalm. The Targum is, "the voice of the Spirit of God answered "and said, if I forget, &c." that is, to weep over the calamities of Jerusalem; which might be thought, if the songs of Zion were sung; or to pray for the restoration of her prosperity and peace; as the church of Christ may be said to be forgotten, when men forget to mourn over its breaches, and shew no concern for the reparation of them; or at the death of principal persons, which they lay not to heart; or at the great decay of religion in those that survive; or at the sins of professors, and their disregard to the word and ordinances: also when they forget to pray for her happiness in general; for the good of her members in particular; and especially for her ministers, that they may have assistance and success; and for a blessing on the word and ordinances, and for the conversion of sinners; and when they forget the worship of the Lord in it, and forsake the assembling of themselves together. *Let my right hand forget her cunning; her skill in music, particularly in playing on the harp; see 1 Sam. xvi. 16, 18. the harp was held in the left hand, and struck with the right; and that more softly or hardly, as the note required, in which was the skill or cunning of using it. Or let this befall me, should I so far forget Jerusalem as to strike the harp to one of the songs of Zion in a strange land: or let it forget any of its works; let it be disabled from working at all; let it be dry and withered, which, Aben Ezra says, is the sense of the word according to some; and Schultens^d, from the use of it in Arabic, renders it, let it be disjointed, or the nerve loosened; see Job xxxi. 22. Or the sense is, let every thing that is as dear as my right hand be taken from me: or, as it may be rendered, my right hand is forgotten^e; that is, should I forget Jerusalem, it would; for that is as my right hand; so Arama. Some choose to translate the words thus, may thou (O God) forget my right hand^f; that is, to be at my right hand; to be a present help to me in time of need; to hold me by it, and to be the shade of it.*

Ver. 6. *If I do not remember thee, &c.*] In prayer, in discourse, in conversation; this is the same as before, to forget, repeated for the confirmation of it. *Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;* as is the case of a person in a fever, or in a violent thirst, which is to be in great distress, Psal. xvi. 22. Lam. iv. 4. the sense is, let me have no use of my tongue; let me be dumb and speechless, and never sing a song or speak a word more, should I be so forgetful of the deplorable state of Jerusalem as to sing songs at such a season, and in an enemy's country. *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy;* meaning not God his exceeding joy, Psal. xliii. 4. as his Creator, preserver, and benefactor, and much less as his covenant God and Father; as having loved him with an everlasting love; as the God of all grace unto him, and as his portion and exceeding great reward: nor Christ, the object of joy unspeakable and full of glory; joy in the greatness, glory, and fulness of his person; in the blessings and promises of his grace; in what he has done and suffered; as risen, ascended, exalted, and who will come a second time: nor the joy of the Holy Ghost in a way of believing, and in hope of the glory of God; but all worldly joy, or matter of it; and this not in things sinful, nor merely such as worldlings have in the increase of their substance; but a lawful joy, such as in the health, happiness, and prosperity of a man's family, wife, and children, and his own; which is the greatest outward joy a man can have; and yet the church of God and interest of Christ are preferred by a good man to these; see 1 Sam. iv. 19, 21, 22. which appears when all a man has that is matter of joy is sacrificed for the public good and interest of religion; when he can take no comfort in any outward enjoyment because of the sad case of Zion, Mal. ii. 3. when joy for its good is uppermost, and is first in his thoughts and words; when this is the head or beginning^g of his joy, as it may be rendered. - So Pindar^h calls the chief, principal, and greatest part of joy, ἀρχαίαις αρχαι, the beginning of joy, the top and perfection of it.

Ver. 7. *Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, &c.*] Of her visitation, calamity, and destruction, how they behaved then, and punish them for it; who, though the children of Esau and brethren of the Jews, as well as their neighbours, yet hated them; the old grudge of their father, because of the birth-right and blessing, as well as the old enmity of the serpent, continuing in them; and who rejoiced at their ruin, helped forward their affliction, and were assistants to the Babylonians in the plunder and destruction of them, Obad. 11—14. The Targum is, "Michael, the prince of Jerusalem, said, remember, O Lord, the people of Edom who destroyed Jerusalem." Many Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret this of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: *who said, raise it, raise it even to the foundation thereof; or make it naked or bareⁱ to the foundation; pull down its walls, lay them level with the ground; root up the very foundation of them,*

^c על ארמת נכר in terra peregrina, sc. Dei, Muis, Michaelis.

^d Animadv. Philol. p. 181.

^e ארמת ימיני oblita est nostra dextra, Castalio.

^f Obliviscor (O Domine) dexteræ meæ, Gejerus; so some in Michaelis.

^g ראש שמחתו caput letitiæ meæ, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

^h Pythia, Ode i. v. 4.

ⁱ ערו נודתו, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

and let nothing be left or seen but the bare naked ground; so spiteful and malicious were they.

Ver. 8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, &c.*] By the determinate counsel and decree of God, and according to divine predictions; see the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah; so mystical Babylon, antichrist, and the man of sin, who therefore is called the son of perdition, 2 Thess. ii. 4. because appointed to destruction, and shall certainly go into it, Rev. xvii. 8. or *O thou destroyer*, as the Targum, which paraphrases it thus, "Gabriel, the prince of Zion, said to the Babylonish nation that 'spoileth or destroyeth;' which is true of literal Babylon, called the destroying mountain, Jer. li. 25. and of mystical Babylon, the destroyer both of the bodies and souls of men, Rev. xi. 18. *Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us*; meaning Darius the Mede, as Kimchi; or rather, or however who must be added, Cyrus the Persian, as R. Obadiah; who were ordered by the Lord to retaliate her, and do as she had done to others, Jer. l. 15, 29.

and in so doing pronounced happy, being the Lord's shepherd, raised up in righteousness to perform his pleasure, Isa. xliv. 28. and xlv. 13. and here wished success by the godly Jews. In like manner the Christian princes will reward mystical Babylon, and be the happy instruments of her ruin, Rev. xviii. 6.

Ver. 9. *Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*] That takes the infants from their mothers' breasts, or out of their arms, and dashes out their brains against a rock, as the word ^k signifies; which, though it may seem a piece of cruelty, was but a just retaliation; the Babylonians having done the same to the Jewish children, and is foretold elsewhere should be done to theirs, Isa. xiii. 16. Nor is this desired from a spirit of revenge, but for the glory of divine justice, and that such a generation of cruel creatures might be rooted out of the earth; see Rev. ii. 23. Some allegorically understand this of crushing and mortifying the first motions of sin in the heart; but such a sense seems to have no place here.

P S A L M CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm is generally thought to have been written by David upon his being advanced to the throne; on account of which he praises the Lord, who had supported him under many exercises, and had made good his promise to him, at least in part; and he firmly believed the accomplishment of the rest, that he would perfect what concerned him, ver. 8. It seems as if this psalm was composed between his being king over Judah and over all Israel. Though Theodoret understands the psalm as a thanksgiving of the Jews upon their return from Babylon, which David prophesied of. The Syriac version calls it a thanksgiving with a prophecy; as indeed it is a prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom, and of the calling of the Gentiles in the latter day, as appears from ver. 4.

Ver. 1. *I will praise thee with my whole heart, &c.*] Cordially and sincerely, in the uprightness and integrity of his heart; which denotes not the perfection of his service, but the sincerity of it; his heart was in it, and his whole heart; all the powers and faculties of his soul were engaged in it, being deeply sensible of the great favours and high honours bestowed upon him; and though the object of praise, to whom he was obliged for them, is not so fully expressed; yet is easily understood to be Jehovah, the Being of beings, the Father of mercies, even Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, and especially the Messiah; see Psal. cxi. 1. *Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee*; before the princes, as Jarchi; before the kings, as the Syriac version; with which agrees Psal. cxix. 46. and who would join therein, ver. 4. or before the judges, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; or

civil magistrates, who are sometimes called gods, Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6. and they are the powers ordained of God, and represent him on earth; or the sanhedrim, as the Midrash; or before the gods of the Gentiles, those fictitious deities, above whom Jehovah is; and over whom the psalmist triumphs, having conquered the nations where they were worshipped; and therefore in their presence, and notwithstanding them, or in opposition to them, praised the Lord; see Psal. xviii. 49. or rather before the ark, the symbol of the presence of the true God; or, as Gussetius¹ interprets it, *before thee, O God, will I sing praise*; or I will sing praise to thee, the Son the Messiah, one divine Person before another; the Son before God the Father, and it may be added before God the Holy Spirit, the two other divine Persons; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *before the angels*, who are sometimes called gods, Psal. viii. 5. and xcvi. 7. and who attend the assemblies of the saints and churches of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 10. Ephes. iii. 10.

Ver. 2. *I will worship towards thy holy temple, &c.*] Not the temple at Jerusalem, which was not yet built, though, when it was, the Jews in their devotions at a distance looked towards it, 1 Kings viii. 38, 42. but rather the tabernacle of Moses, in which was the ark, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe; and over that the mercy-seat and cherubim, between which Jehovah dwelt; and this being a type of Christ's human nature, which was perfectly holy, and is called by himself a temple, and is the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man, John ii. 19. Heb. viii. 2. he may be designed,

^k סלע אבן ad petram, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. ad rupem, Coecelius.

¹ Comment. Ebr. p. 50.

and to him, as Mediator, should we look, and with him deal in all our devotions for acceptance with God; see Jon. ii. 4. unless heaven itself is meant, which is the palace of Jehovah, the habitation of his holiness, his temple where he dwells, Psal. xi. 4. Hab. ii. 20. *And praise thy name, for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth*; which may primarily regard the goodness and grace of God in promising David the kingdom, and his faithfulness in making good the promise, and for both which he was under obligation to praise the name of the Lord; and holds good with respect to all other promises: and it may also signify the free favour and love of God to his people, which is from everlasting, is the source of all blessings, and is better than life; and the faithfulness of God to himself, his perfections, purposes and promises, council and covenant: it may be rendered, *for thy grace, and for thy truth*^m, which both come by Christ, John i. 17. grace may intend both the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God preached by Christ, and the blessings of grace which come through him; as justification, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life, which are all of grace, and by Christ: and truth also may signify the word of truth, or solid substantial blessings, in distinction from typical ones; or the good things that come by Christ our High-priest, of which the law was only a shadow; and these are all of them things the name of the Lord is to be praised for. *For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name; or above every name of thine*ⁿ; which Aben Ezra interprets of the glorious name Jehovah; the word God spake to Moses, the name in which he made himself known to him, and to the Israelites, he had not to their fathers, Exod. iii. 14. and vi. 3. but rather it is to be understood of God's word of promise, and his faithfulness in fulfilling it; which, though not a greater attribute than any other, yet is made more known and more illustrious than the rest; and particularly may regard the promise of the coming of the Messiah, and of the blessings of grace by him; Jarchi interprets it particularly of the pardon of sin. It may with propriety be applied to Christ, the essential Word, that was made flesh, and dwelt among men; whom God has highly exalted, and not only given him a name above every name of men on earth, but also above any particular name or attribute of his: or however he has magnified him *according*^o to every name of his, it being his will that men should honour the Son as they honour the Father; or *with*^p every name, along with each of them; or *besides*^q every name; for all these senses the word will bear. Some render them, as Ben Melech, *thou hast magnified above all things thy name and thy word*; or, as others, *thy name by thy word*^r; see Psal. viii. 1. and lvii. 10, 11. The Targum is, "the words of thy praise above all thy name;" or *over all thy name*: every thing by which he has made himself known in creation and providence; *thou hast magnified thy word*, all being done according to the word said in himself, his decrees and purposes;

or declared in his word and promises, whereby he has glorified it.

Ver. 3. *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, &c.*] When in distress through Saul's persecution, he cried to the Lord, and he immediately answered him, and delivered him out of his troubles; and such immediate answers of prayer are to be remembered with thankfulness: see Psal. xviii. 6. Isa. lxxv. 24. And *strengthenedst me with strength in my soul*; put him in good heart and spirit, when before ready to faint; strengthened his heart and grace in it, particularly faith, and drew it forth into lively act and exercise; so that he sunk not under the weight of affliction and trouble, but was filled with courage to withstand his enemies, and with strength to do the will and work of God; this is to be understood of inward spiritual strength; see Ephes. iii. 16.

Ver. 4. *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, &c.*] Or *let them confess, or praise thee*^s; a wish or prayer. Not only the kings known to David, as Kimchi limits it; or that lived in his days, as Hiram and others; but in the latter day, when they shall come to Zion, the church, and be nursing fathers to it, and shall serve and worship the King Messiah, Isa. xlix. 23, and lx. 3, 11, 16. Psal. lxxii. 10, 11. *When they hear the words of thy mouth*; either the promises of it fulfilled not only with respect to David; but the Messiah, and his church and people, in the latter day, even the glorious things spoken thereof: or the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the words of his mouth, and more desirable than thousands of gold and silver; and which, when kings shall hear so as to understand, they will praise the Lord for them; see Isa. liii. 15. The Targum is, "the words of thy praise."

Ver. 5. *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord, &c.*] Which are all mercy and truth; ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace: so the eunuch went on his way, and in the ways of the Lord rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. Or, *they shall sing of the ways of the Lord*^t; of the excellency, pleasure, and usefulness of them. *For great is the glory of the Lord*; shewn in the works of creation; more especially in the person of Christ, and in the glorious work of redemption and salvation by him; and of which there will be a great display throughout the earth in the latter day, by means of the Gospel, the great spread of it, and the multitude of persons converted by it; which will make the ways of the Lord still more pleasant; see Isa. vi. 3.

Ver. 6. *Though the Lord be high, &c.*] Above all the earth, and all the nations of it, and the highest of men in it; above the heavens, and the angels there, who are his creatures and at his command; above all the blessings and praises of his saints: the perfect knowledge of him is so high as not to be attained; and his thoughts and ways are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth; he is indeed the most High, higher than the highest; see Psal. cxliii. 4, 5. According to Arama, here begins the song, "the kings of the earth shall sing in the ways of the Lord."

^m So Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ⁿ על כל ששך *super omne nomen tuum, Cocceius, Michaelis.*

^o Secundum omne nomen tuum, Gejerus.

^p Cum toto nomine tuo, Junius & Tremellius.

^q Vel præter omne nomen tuum, Piscator.

^s Nomen tuum sermone tuo; so some in Piscator.

^t יודוך confitentur tibi, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

^u יודוך de riis Jehovæ, Piscator, Schmidt; so some in Vatablus

Yet hath he respect unto the lowly; for good, as the Targum; that are low in their own eyes, humbled under a sense of sin, convinced of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them, and made to submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe the whole of their salvation to the free grace of God; patiently and quietly bear every afflictive providence; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and, being the followers of the lowly Jesus, learn of him, imitate him, and become like unto him: these the Lord has a gracious respect unto; he looks upon them with a look of love; he has respect to their persons in Christ, and to their sacrifices for his sake, which are those of a broken and contrite heart; he regards their prayers, though low and destitute, and gives more grace unto them; yea, he condescends to dwell with them, and in due time highly exalts them; see Isa. lvii. 15. and lxxvi. 2. Luke xiv. 11. David may have in view his own low state and condition as a shepherd, in which he was when the Lord took him, and raised him to the throne of Israel. *But the proud he knoweth afar off*: the Targum adds, "to destroy them:" such who are proud of themselves and what they have; of their wisdom and knowledge, of their strength or beauty, of their wealth and riches; or of their righteousness and holiness; of the purity and goodness of their hearts, and power of their free will, they vainly think themselves possessed of; and despise others below them in these things, or the practice of them: these the Lord takes notice of, and looks upon them at a distance with scorn and contempt; nor will he admit them to nearness to him, nay, opposes himself to them, and sooner or later abases them; see Prov. iii. 34. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, *high things he knoweth afar off*; things too high for creatures, that are out of their reach; he sees and knows all persons and things, whether in heaven or in earth. Others render them, *and the high One knoweth afar off*¹; knows the lowly, owns and acknowledges them for his own; takes care of them, provides for them, and protects them: and then the sense is the same with the preceding clause.

Ver. 7. *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, &c.*] Trouble attends the best of men; both outward and inward trouble, from sin, Satan, and the world; yea, they are in the midst of it, surrounded with it; and it is a way in which they walk through this world, and enter the kingdom of heaven; it is continued unto them; it is a long walk, and yet will have an end; see Psal. xxiii. 4. *Thou wilt revive me*; preserve his life amidst all his troubles, support him under them, make him cheerful and fearless; revive his work of grace in him, quicken him to the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty: this the Lord does by his gracious presence, by the discoveries of his love, and

by the application of precious promises. *Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies*; to stop and restrain it; which he can easily do, when most violent and outrageous, Psal. lxxvi. 10. Or, *against the nose of mine enemies*²; strike them on the nose, as men do unruly horses to stop them: or give a slap on their face with the left hand, as Arama observes, the right being after mentioned. *And thy right hand shall save me*: for that has saying strength in it, Psal. xx. 6. This may be understood of Christ, who is not only the man of his right hand, but is the right hand of his righteousness; by whom he saves his people with a spiritual and eternal salvation, as well as with a temporal one, Isa. xli. 10. Hos. i. 7.

Ver. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, &c.*] Or will, or may the Lord perform for me³: all things in providence; all that he had appointed for him, that would be for his good and his own glory, Psal. lvii. 2. and particularly what concerned him as a king. He had made him king over the house of Judah; he had begun to fulfil his promise concerning the kingdom; and he would perfect it, by setting him over all the tribes of Israel. Also he believed he would perfect what concerned him as a saint, even the good work of grace upon his heart; which is but a begun work, is imperfect, is gradually carried on, and will be completed: God is able to do it, and none can hinder him; he has promised to do it, and he is faithful who will do it; and his glory is concerned in it; and it may be depended on it will be finished; he is a rock, and his work is perfect; see Phil. i. 6. *Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever*; a phrase often used by the psalmist, with which his heart was affected; and here used, both as an argument by which he concluded God would perfect his begun work, and as an encouragement to make the following request: *forsake not the works of thine own hands*; as are all the works of providence and grace: the work of grace upon the heart may be expressed in the plural number, because of the several branches of it; which are all so many works, as the work of faith, labour, of love, &c. 1 Thess. i. 3. and which is the Lord's handywork; and a curious work it is, a new creation-work, a work of almighty power; and which he will never cease from, or be remiss in, as the word ⁴ signifies, until he has accomplished it, 2 Thess. i. 11. It is a prayer of faith, and may be most confidently believed: and some indeed render it as an expression of faith, *thou wilt not forsake the works of thine hands*⁵; David himself was the work of God's hands, as Kimchi observes, as a creature, as a king, and as a saint; and so are all the people of God, Isa. xlv. 11. and whom he will never leave nor forsake; for they are his church, his chosen, his children, his portion and inheritance, Psal. xciv. 14.

¹ So Pagninus; quamvis, Junius & Tremellius.

² על אף איבוי super nasum inimicorum meorum, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Gussenius; in faciem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

³ יבמר בערי perficiet pro me, Montanus, Musculus; perficiat pro me, Junius & Tremellius.

⁴ אל תרף ne dimittas, Pagninus, Montanus.

⁵ Non deeret, Musculus, Piscator.

P S A L M CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was written by David, when he lay under the reproach and calumnies of men, who laid false things to his charge; things he was not conscious of, either in the time of Saul's persecution of him, or when his son Absalom rebelled against him: and herein he appeals to the heart-searching and rein-trying God for his innocence; and, when settled on his throne, delivered it to the master of music, to make use of it on proper occasions. According to the Syriac title of the psalm, the occasion of it was Shimei, the son of Gera, reproaching and cursing him as a bloody man, 2 Sam. xvi. 5, 6, 7. Theodoret takes it to be a prophecy of Josiah, and supposes that he is represented as speaking throughout the psalm. Aben Ezra observes, that this is the most glorious and excellent psalm in all the book: a very excellent one it is: but whether the most excellent, it is hard to say. It treats of some of the most glorious of the divine perfections; omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Arama says, the argument of it is God's particular knowledge of men, and his providence over their affairs.

Ver. 1. *O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.*] The omniscience of God reaches to all persons and things; but the psalmist only takes notice of it as respecting himself. God knows all men in general, and whatever belongs to them; he knows his own people in an especial manner; and he knows their particular persons, as David and others: and this knowledge of God is considered after the manner of men, as if it was the fruit of search, to denote the exquisiteness of it; as a judge searches out a cause, a physician the nature of a disease, a philosopher the reason of things; who many times, after all their inquiries, fail in their knowledge; but the Lord never does: his elect lie in the ruins of the fall, and among the men of the world; he searches them out and finds them; for he knows where they are, and the time of finding them, and can distinguish them in a crowd of men from others, and notwithstanding the sad case they are in, and separates them from them; and he searches into them, into their most inward part, and knows them infinitely better than their nearest relations, friends and acquaintance do; he knows that of them and in them, which none but they themselves know; their thoughts, and the sin that dwells in them: yea, he knows more of them and in them than they themselves, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. And he knows them after another manner than he does other men: there are some whom in a sense he knows not; but these he knows, as he did David, so as to approve of, love and delight in, Matt. vii. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Ver. 2. *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, &c.*] Here the psalmist proceeds to observe the particular circumstances and actions of his life,

which were known to God; as his *downsitting*, either to take rest, as weary persons do. Schultens * explains it of the quiet rest in sleep; this the Lord knew when he betook himself to it, and to whose care he committed himself and family; under whose protection he laid himself down, and on whom he depended for safety, Psal. iv. 8. Or, since lying down to sleep is afterwards mentioned, this may respect sitting down at table to eat and drink; when the Lord knows whether men use the creatures aright, or abuse them; whether they receive their food with thankfulness, and eat and drink to the glory of God: or else this downsitting was to read the word of God, and meditate upon it; so the Targum paraphrases it, "my sitting down to study the law." When men do this, the Lord knows whether in reading they understand what they read, or read attentively and with affection; whether it is to their comfort and edification, and for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; whether their meditation on it is sweet, and is attended with profit and pleasure. *Uprising* may respect either rising from bed, when the Lord knows whether the heart is still with him, ver. 18. what sense is had of the divine protection and sustentation, and what thankfulness there is for the mercies of the night past; and whether the voice of prayer and praise is directed to him in the morning, as it should be, Psal. iii. 5. and v. 3. or else rising from the table, when the Lord knows whether a man's table has been his snare, and with what thankfulness he rises from it for the favours he has received. The Targum interprets this of rising up to go to war; which David did, in the name and strength, and by the direction, of the Lord. *Thou understandest my thought afar off*: God knows not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of men, which none but themselves know; by this Christ appears to be truly God, the omniscient God, being a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Matt. ix. 3, 4. Heb. iv. 12. God knows what thoughts his people have of him, and of his loving-kindness in Christ; what thoughts they have of Christ himself, his person, offices, and grace; what thoughts they have of themselves, their state, and condition: he knows all their vain thoughts, and complains of them, and which also they hate; and all their good thoughts, for they come from him. And he knows them *afar off*, or *of old*^b, even before they are; so Aben Ezra interprets it, a long time past, and compares it with Jer. xxxi. 3. where the same word is rendered *of old*: God knows the thoughts of his people, as well as his own, from all eternity; see Isa. xxv. 1. as he knew what they would say and do, so what they would think; he knows thoughts that are past long ago, and forgotten by men, or were unobserved when thought; how else should he bring them

* Animadv. Philol. p. 181.

^b מרוקוּ q. d. dum illa longe abest, Piscator; longe ante quam incidat in animum meum, Gejerus, & Campensis in Ibid.

into judgment? or though he is afar off in the highest heavens, yet he sees into the hearts of men, and is privy to all their thoughts.

Ver. 3. *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, &c.*] The Targum adds, "to study in the law." His walk in the day-time, and every step he took, and his lying down at night. It denotes his perfect knowledge of all his actions, day and night; he surrounds every path of man, that they cannot escape his knowledge. Or, *thou winnowest*, as some render the word^c; he distinguishes actions; he discerns and separates the good from the bad, or the godness of an action from the evil and imperfection of it, as in winnowing the wheat is separated from the chaff. Or, *thou measurest my squaring*^d; all his dimensions, his length and breadth, as he lay down in his bed. *And art acquainted with all my ways*; the whole of his life and conversation, all his works and doings: God knows all the evil ways and works of his people; he takes notice of them, and chastises for them; and all their good works, and approves and accepts of them; he knows from what principles of faith and love they spring, in what manner they are performed, and with what views, aims, and ends; see Rev. ii. 2, 19. Psal. i. 6.

Ver. 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, &c.*] Expressed by it or upon it, just ready to be spoken; or, as the Targum, "when there is no word in my tongue:" so Aben Ezra, "before it was perfect in my tongue:" before it is formed there; while it is in the mind, and not expressed, and even before that. But, *lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether*; the whole of it, from whence it springs; the reason of it, what is designed, or the ends to be answered by it. The Lord knows the good words of his people, which they speak to him in prayer, even before and while they are speaking them; and what they say to one another in private conversation, Isa. lxxv. 24. Mal. iii. 16. See an instance of words known by Christ before spoken, in Luke xix. 31, 33.

Ver. 5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, &c.*] Art on every side of me, all around me, like one besieged in a strait place; so that there is nothing I can think, say, or do, but what is known unto thee. The two Kimchis, father and son, render the word, *thou hast formed me*: and interpret it of the formation of his body, of which, in ver. 14—16. see Job x, 8, 10, 11. but it denotes how God compasses men with his presence and providence, so that nothing escapes his knowledge. *And laid thine hand upon me*; not his afflicting hand, which sometimes presses hard; though the Targum thus paraphrases it, "and stirred against me the stroke of thine hand:" but rather his hand of power and providence, to preserve, protect, and defend him. Or it signifies that he was so near to him that his hand was upon him, and he was perfectly known; as any thing is that is before a man, and he has his hand upon.

Ver. 6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, &c.*] Meaning either the knowledge of himself, such as God had of him, which was vastly superior to what he had

of himself; and especially the knowledge of other persons and things, whether visible or invisible, in heaven, earth, or hell; things past, present, and to come; or else the manner in which God knew all this was amazing to him, and quite impenetrable by him; that he did know him, his thoughts, his words and actions, and so those of all others, was easy of belief; but how he should know all this was past his conception, and struck him with the profoundest admiration. *It is high*; sublime, out of his reach, beyond his comprehension. *I cannot attain unto it*; neither to such knowledge, nor to comprehend what it is in God; and how he should have it, and in what manner he exercises it. Kimchi, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, connect the words with the following, as if the matter of his wonder and astonishment was the omnipresence of God, or where he should find a place to flee from him.

Ver. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? &c.*] Or, *from thy wind?* which some interpret literally, the wind being God's creature; which he brings out of his treasures, and holds in his fists, and disposes of as he pleases; this takes its circuit through all the points of the heavens, and blows everywhere, more or less. Rather God himself is meant, who is a spirit, John iv. 24. not a body, or consisting of corporeal parts, which are only ascribed to him in a figurative sense; and who has something analogous to spirit, being simple and uncompounded, invisible, incorruptible, immaterial, and immortal; but is different from all other spirits, being uncreated, eternal, infinite, and immense; so that there is no going from him, as to be out of his sight; nor to any place out of his reach, nor from his wrath and justice, nor so as to escape his righteous judgment. It may signify his all-conscious mind, his all-comprehending understanding and knowledge, which reaches to all persons, places, and things; compare Isa. xl. 13. with Rom. xi. 34. and 1 Cor. ii. 16. though it seems best of all to understand it of the third Person, the blessed Spirit, which proceeds from the Father and the Son; and who is possessed of the same perfections, of omniscience, omnipresence, and immensity, as they are; who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and pervades them all; and is the Maker of all men, and is present with them to uphold their souls in life, and there is no going from him; particularly he is in all believers, and dwells with them; nor do they desire to go from him, but deprecate his departure from them. Or *whither shall I flee from thy presence?* which is everywhere, for God's presence is omnipresence; his powerful presence and providence are with all his creatures, to support and uphold them in being; he is not far from, but near to them; in him they live, move, and have their being: and so there is no fleeing from him or that; and as to his gracious presence, which is with all his people, in all places at the same time; they do not desire to flee from it, but always to have it; and are concerned for it, if at any time it is removed from them, as to their apprehension of it. Or, *from thy face*^e; that is, from Christ, who is the face of Jehovah; the image of the invisible God,

^c וְיָדָע ventilasti, Pagninus, Montanus; so Tigariae version and Ainsworth.

^d רָבָע quadraturam meam spithama mensurasti, Gussetius, p. 775; spithama metiris, Coeccius.

^e מַפְנֵיךָ a facie tua, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

the express image of his person, in whom all the perfections of God are displayed; and such a likeness, that he that has seen the one has seen the other; he is the Angel of his face or presence, and who always appears before him, and in whom he is seen. Now there is no fleeing from him, for he is everywhere; where God is, his face is: and a sensible sinner desires to flee to him, and not from him; for there is no other refuge to flee unto for life and salvation but to him; and gracious souls desire to be always with him now, and hope to be for ever with him hereafter; they seek him, the face of God, now, and expect to see it more clearly in the world to come.

Ver. 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, &c.] No man hath ascended or can ascend to heaven of himself; it is an hyperbolical expression, as are those that follow; none but Christ has ascended to heaven by his own power, who descended from it; saints hope to go there at death, and, when they do, they find God there; that is his habitation, his throne is there, yea, that is his throne; here he keeps court and has his attendants, and here he will be seen and enjoyed by his people to all eternity. *If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there;* which, if understood of the place of the damned, is a place of torment, and a very unfit one to make a bed in, being a lake burning with fire and brimstone; and where the smoke of their torment ascends for ever, and they have no rest day nor night; their worm never dies, and their fire is not quenched; and even here God is: hell is not only naked before him, and all its inhabitants in his view; but he is here in his powerful presence, keeping the devils in chains of darkness; turning wicked men daily into it, pouring out his wrath upon them, placing and continuing an impassable gulf between them and happy souls: though rather this is to be understood of the grave, in which sense the word is often used; and so Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Arama, interpret it of the lowest parts of the earth, as opposed to heaven; the grave is a bed to the saints, where they lie down and rest, and sleep till the resurrection-morn, Job xiv. 12. and xvii. 13, 16. Isa. lvii. 2. and here the Lord is watching over and keeping their dust, and will raise it up again at the last day. The Targum is, "there is thy Word."

Ver. 9. If I take the wings of the morning, &c.] And fly as swift as the morning-light to the east, to the extremity of it, as Ben Melech; as far as he could go that way, as swiftly as the wings of the morning could carry him thither; so the morning is represented by the Heathens as having wings^f; or as the rays of the rising sun, called wings for the swiftness of them, Mal. iv. 2. *And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;* in the most distant isles of it, in the furthest parts of the world, the sea being supposed the boundary of it: or in the uttermost parts of the west^g, as opposed to the morning-light and rising sun, which appear in the east; and the sea is often in Scripture put for the west, the Mediterranean sea being to the west of the land of Palestine; and could he go from east to west

in a moment, as the above writer observes, there would God be. The Heathens represent Jupiter, their supreme god, as having three eyes, because he reigns in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth^h.

Ver. 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, &c.] For he could not get there with all the assistance of the wings of the morning, could they be had, without the leadings of divine Providence; and when there, being a good man, should experience the leadings of divine grace; let the people of God be where they will, he leads them as a parent his child, teaching him to go; and as a shepherd his flock, into green pastures, and to fountains of living water; he leads to himself, and to his Son by his Spirit; into communion and fellowship with them, and to a participation of all blessings of grace; guides them with his counsel, and directs all their ways and goings. *And thy right hand shall hold me;* the Lord lays hold on his people, and apprehends them for himself, and claims his interest in them; he holds them in his ways, that they slip and fall not; he upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness, and they are safe; and he holds them from going into or on in wrong ways to their hurt.

Ver. 11. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, &c.] The darkness of a cloud or of the night, so that my actions shall not be seen; that is, if I entertain such a thought in my mind, that what I do in the dark will escape the sight and knowledge of God, and so be emboldened to commit it. *Even the night shall be light about me;* and make all my works manifest, as light does.

Ver. 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, &c.] Any thing that is done by men in it; or *darkeneth not from thee*ⁱ, or causeth such darkness as to hinder the sight of any action committed. The Targum is, "from thy Word;" see Heb. iv. 12, 13. *But the night shineth as the day; or enlightens as the day*^k, gives as much light with respect to God as the day does. *The darkness and the light are both alike to thee;* as is the one, so is the other: the day gives him no more light than the night, and the night no more darkness than the day; he sees as well, as clearly and distinctly, in the one as in the other. The psalmist expresses the same thing in different words three or four times, as Kimchi observes, to shew that so the Lord is, that thus it is with him; he has as clear a discerning of all things done in the darkest night as at bright noon-day; see Job xxxiv. 21, 22.

Ver. 13. For thou hast possessed my reins, &c.] His thoughts and counsels, the reins being the seat of instruction and counsel; hence God is called the trier of the reins and searcher of the hearts of the children of men; he is the possessor or master of their most secret thoughts, and thoroughly knows them; see Psal. vii. 9. and xvi. 7. they are also the seat of the affections, which are naturally sinful and inordinate, and set upon carnal and earthly things; but the Lord possesses and engrosses the affections of his people in the best sense, Paal. lxxiii. 25. moreover the reins are the seat of lust, the bed in which it is conceived and

^f Vid. Cuperi Apothecos. Homerii, p. 177.

^g עֵינֵי הַיָּם in novissimo occidentis, Pagninus.

^h Pousan. Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 129.

ⁱ לֹא יוֹשֵׁךְ מִמֶּךָ non obscurabit a te, Montanus; non obtenebrant, Gejerus; so Michaelis.

^k יִשְׁרָאֵל יִלְלוּ illustrat, Janius & Tremellius; illuminabit, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

brought forth, and God knows the first motions of it there; and that the imagination of the thought of man's heart is evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. *Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb; with the secundine, or after-birth, in which he carefully wrapped him, a proof of his knowledge of him, and care for him in the womb; or with skin and flesh he covered his bones with as they grew there; see Job x. 11. or the sense is, he protected and defended him in his embryo state, and when ripe for birth took him out from thence, and held him up ever since, Psal. xxii. 9. and lxxi. 6. he had his eye on him when no other eye could see him, not even his mother that bare him, and before ever he himself saw light. The Targum is, "thou hast founded me in my mother's womb."*

Ver. 14. *I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, &c.*] The formation of man is not of himself, nor of his parents, but of God, and is very wonderful in all its parts; it has been matter of astonishment to many Heathens, as Galen and others, who have, with any carefulness, examined the structure and texture of the human body, the exact symmetry and just proportion of all its parts, their position and usefulness; how every bone, muscle, artery, nerve and fibre, are nicely framed and placed to answer their designed end; particularly the eye and ear, the exquisite make of them for sight and sound, have filled the most diligent inquirers into nature with amazement and wonder, and are a full proof of the wisdom and knowledge of God; see Psal. xciv. 9. no man has cause to reproach his parents, nor blame the Former of all things for making him thus, but on the contrary should praise the Lord, as David did, who has given him life and breath, and all things; or own and confess¹, as the word may be rendered, that he is in various surprising instances a wonder of nature; see Isa. xlv. 9, 10. Rom. ix. 20. Psal. c. 3. R. Moses in Aben Ezra thinks David is speaking of the first father, or the first Adam; who was wonderfully made of the dust of the earth, and had a living soul breathed into him; was made after the image of God, holy and upright: but rather he speaks of Christ, the second Adam, his antitype, who as man is a creature of God's make, and was wonderfully made, even of a virgin, without the use and knowledge of man; is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, the tabernacle which God pitched and not man; was produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, was born without sin, which no man is, and united personally to the son of God, and is the great mystery of godliness; and his name is justly called Wonderful. Cocceius interprets this passage of God's separating act of David, and so of others in election; which is a wonderful setting apart of man for himself, as the word is used Psal. iv. 3. it is the effect of amazing love, and to be ascribed to the sovereignty of God, and the unsearchable riches of his grace; but this seems not to be intended here, though it is a marvellous act, as all the works of God are, as follows; rather, since the word may be rendered, *I*

*am wonderfully separated*², it may be interpreted of his being separated in his mother's womb from the rest of the mass and matter of her blood, and formed from thence; which was done in a secret, unknown, and marvellous way and manner. *Marvellous are thy works; of creation, providence, sustentation of all creatures, the government of the world, the redemption of mankind, the work of grace and conversion, the perseverance of the saints, and their eternal salvation. And that my soul knoweth right well; having diligently sought them out, and having such a distinct knowledge of them as to be capable of talking of them, and of shewing them to others, and pointing out the wonders, beauties, and excellencies of them; see Psal. cxi. 2. and cxlv. 5. and ix. 1. however, he well and perfectly knew, or knew so much of them that they were very wonderful and amazing: some connect the word rendered right well, which signifies greatly, or exceedingly, not with his knowledge, but with the marvellous works known; and take the sense to be, that he knew them to be greatly or exceedingly wonderful; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.*

Ver. 15. *My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, &c.*] Or *my bone*³; every one of his bones, which are the substantial parts of the body, the strength of it; and so some render it *my strength*⁴; those, though covered with skin and flesh, yet, being done by the Lord himself, were not hid from him; nor the manner of their production and growth, which being done in secret is a secret to men; for they know not how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with-child, Eccl. xi. 5. but God does. And *curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; or formed in my mother's womb, as the Targum, and so Jarchi, like a curious piece of needle-work or embroidery, as the word⁵ signifies; and such is the con-texture of the human body, and so nicely and curiously are all its parts put together, bones, muscles, arteries, veins, nerves, and fibres, as exceed the most curious piece of needle-work, or the finest embroidery that ever was made by the hands of men; and all this done in the dark shop of nature, in the ovarium, where there is no more light to work by than in the lowest parts of the earth. The same phrase is used of Christ's descent into this world, into the womb of the virgin, where his human nature was curiously wrought by the finger of the blessed Spirit, Ephes. iv. 9.*

Ver. 16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, &c.*] The word⁶ for *substance* signifies a bottom of yarn wound up, or any rude or unformed lump; and designs that conglomerated mass of matter separated in the womb, containing all the essentials of the human frame, but not yet distinguished or reduced into any form or order; yet, even when in this state, the eyes of the Lord see it and all its parts distinctly. *And in thy book all my members were written; which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them; in the book of God's eternal mind, and*

¹ אָנֹכִי confitebor tibi, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; confiteor, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis.

² נִפְרָדִי velut opere phrygio effingerer, Tigurine version; velut accipietur sum, Grotius.

³ אֲנִי os meum, V. L. Vatinius, Gejerus; ossa mea, Piscator; apparatus ossium meorum, Cocceius.

⁴ רוּבַר meum, Tigurine version; vis mea, Junius & Tremellius.

⁵ נִפְרָדִי velut opere phrygio effingerer, Tigurine version; velut accipietur sum, Grotius.

⁶ אֲנִי informe meum, Montanus; glomus meum, Michaelis.

designs, the plan of the human body was drawn, all the parts of it described, and their form, places, and uses fixed, even when as yet not one of them was in actual being; but in due time they are all exactly formed and fashioned according to the model of them in the mind of God; who has as perfect knowledge of them before-hand as if they were written down in a book before him. Or in thy book are written all of them, what days they should be fashioned; not only the several members of the body were put down in this book, but the several days in which they should be formed and come into order: when as yet there was none of them; none of those days, before they took place, even before all time; the Targum is, "in the book of thy memory all my days are written, in the day the world was created, from the beginning that all creatures were created."

Ver. 17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!* &c.] The word signifies that which is scarce and rare, and not to be attained and enjoyed; see 1 Sam. iii. 1. Psal. xlix. 8. the thoughts and counsels of God are impenetrable and unsearchable; he knows our thoughts, as Aben Ezra observes, but we do not know his, ver. 2. as well as it likewise signifies the worth and value of them; God's thoughts are infinitely beyond ours, and infinitely more valuable and more important, and are concerning our welfare and happiness: it is marvellous that God should think of us at all; it is more so that his thoughts should not be thoughts of evil, to bring that evil upon us we deserve, but thoughts of peace and reconciliation in and by his son, in whom he was reconciling the world to himself; thoughts of salvation and eternal life, and of the way and means of bringing it about; thoughts to provide for our present supply in this world, and to lay up for us for the world to come; see Jer. xxix. 11. Psal. xl. 17. and xxxi. 19. It may be interpreted of the thoughts which David had of God in his meditations of him, which were sweet, precious, and comfortable to him; of his loving-kindness to him, covenant-grace, precious promises, and gracious dealings with him; but the former sense seems best. The Targum is, "to me how precious they that love thee, the righteous, O God!" and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, *thy friends*. *How great is the sum of them!* or *the heads of them*; that is, not the chief of thy friends, but the sum of thy thoughts, these in the bulk, in the general, are not to be counted; and much less the particulars of them, these are not to be entered into or described.

Ver. 18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand, &c.*] That is, if I should attempt to do it, it would be as vain and fruitless as to attempt to count the sands upon the sea-shore, which are innumerable; Psal. xl. 5. So Pindar says¹, that sand flies number, that is, is not to be numbered; though the Pythian oracle boastingly said², I know the number of the sand, and the measures of the sea; to which Lucan³

may have respect when he says, measure is not wanting to the ocean, nor number to the sand; hence geometricians affect to know them; so Archytas the mathematician, skilled in geometry and arithmetic, is described and derided by Horace⁴ as the measurer of the earth and sea, and of the sand without number; and Archimedes wrote a book called *ἑκαμύλιος*⁵, of the number of the sand, still extant⁶, in which he proves that it is not infinite, but that if even the whole world was sand it might be numbered; but the thoughts of God are infinite. *When I wake, I am still with thee*; after I have been reckoning them up all the day, and then fall asleep at night to refresh nature after such fatiguing researches; when I awake in the morning and go to it again, I am just where I was, and have got no further knowledge of God and his thoughts, and have as many to count as at first setting out, and far from coming to the end of them: or else the sense is, as I was under thine eye and care even in the womb, before I was born, so I have been ever since, and always am, whether sleeping or waking; I lay myself down and sleep in safety, and rise in the morning refreshed and healthful, and still continue the care of thy providence: it would be well if we always awaked with God in our thoughts, sensible of his favours, thankful for them, and enjoying his gracious presence; as it will be the happiness of the saints, that, when they shall awake in the resurrection-morn, they shall be with God, and for ever enjoy him.

Ver. 19. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God, &c.*] Since he is God omniscient, and knows where they are, what they have done, are doing, and design to do; and God omnipresent, at hand to lay hold upon them; and God omnipotent, to hold them and inflict due punishment on them; this is a consequence rightly drawn from the above perfections of God. Or *if thou wilt slay the wicked*⁷, then, when I awake, I shall be with thee, as Kimchi connects the words; that is, be at leisure to attend to thy works and wonders, and daily employ myself in the contemplation of them, having no wicked persons near me to molest and disturb me. The word is singular in the original text, *the wicked one*; meaning either Saul, who was David's enemy without a cause, and did very wickedly and injuriously by him, whom he might expect God in due time would take out of the world; though he did not choose to lay his hand on the Lord's anointed, when he was in his power. Jarchi interprets it of Esau, by whom he means Edom or Rome, in the Rabbinic language, that is, the Christians; if he meant no more than the Papal Christians, he may be much in the right; the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked one, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of his lips, may be intended, the common enemy of Christ and his cause, Isa. xi. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8. Though it may design a collective body of wicked men; all the followers of antichrist, all the antichristian states, on whom the vials of God's wrath will be poured; and even all the wicked of the earth, all Christ's enemies, that would not

¹ ἴσχυρ' difficultes, Coecceus; quam rare; so some in Vatablas.

² Olym. Ode 2. in fine.

³ Apud Herodot. Cliv. sive l. 1. c. 47.

⁴ Pharsal. l. 5. v. 182.

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⁵ Carmin. l. 1. Ode 28. v. 1, 2.

⁶ Vid. Turnebi Advers. l. 26. c. 1.

⁷ Fabric. Biblioth. Gr. l. 3. c. 22. s. 2.

⁸ חֲסִידֵי הַיָּם si occideris, V. L. Paganus, Montanus, Musculus, &c.

have him to reign over them, and none but they; the justice of God will not admit of it to slay the righteous with the wicked, and the omniscience of God will distinguish the one from the other, and separate the precious from the vile. *Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men*; men guilty of shedding innocent blood, and therefore by the law of God should have their blood shed; such particularly are antichrist and his followers, who deserve to have blood given them to drink, because they have shed the blood of the saints, Rev. xvi. 6, 7. and xvii. 6. and xviii. 24. these and such as these the psalmist would have no company or fellowship with, lest he should be corrupted by them, fall into sin, and partake of deserved plagues with them, Rev. xviii. 4. Some consider these as the words of God, and in connexion with the former, and by way of wish, thus, *O that thou wouldst slay the wicked, O God*^a; and wouldst say, *depart from me, ye bloody men*; which will be said to the wicked at the last day, and even to such who have made a profession of the name of Christ, Matt. vii. 23. and xxv. 34.

Ver. 20. *For they speak against thee wickedly, &c.*] Against his being, his perfections, his purposes, his providences, his doctrines, ordinances, ministers, and people; or *they speak of thee for wickedness*^b, they made mention of the name of God to cover their wickedness, pretending to fear God and love him, to have a reverence of him and serve him, putting on a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. And *thine enemies take thy name in vain*: either by profane swearing, or by false swearing. The Targum interprets both clauses of swearing deceitfully and vainly; or *he*, that is, every one that is *lifted up to vanity*, are *thine enemies*^c, whose hearts are lifted up to vanity, idols, riches, self-righteousness, sensual lusts and pleasures; these are the enemies of God, are estranged from him, hold friendship with the world, harbour his enemies, love what he hates, hate what he loves, and commit acts of hostility against him. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *they take thy cities in vain*.

Ver. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?* &c.] Wicked men are haters of God; of his word, both law and Gospel; of his ordinances, ways, and worship; of his people, cause, and interest; and therefore good men hate them: not as men, as the creatures of God, and as their fellow-creatures, whom they are taught by the Gospel to love, to do good unto, and pray for; but as haters of God, and because they are so; not their persons, but their works; and for the truth of this the omniscient God is appealed unto. *And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?* as wicked men do, in their hearts, in their words, and in their actions. They rebel against God, and contend with him, which is folly and madness; and this is grieving to good men, because of their insolence and impudence, the ruin and destruction they expose themselves to, and the dishonour done to God: and this arises from their great love and strong affection for him, not being able to bear such behaviour to him;

as a man is filled with grief and indignation when another rises up against his father or his friend; see Psal. cxix. 136, 138.

Ver. 22. *I hate them with perfect hatred, &c.*] Heartily and really; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; *odio vatniano*, with consummate hatred: this is an answer to his own question. *I count them mine enemies*; being the enemies of God: the friends of God were David's friends, as angels and good men, and God's enemies were his; their friends and enemies were common; so closely allied and attached were they to each other, as God and all good men are.

Ver. 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart, &c.*] He had searched him, and knew his heart thoroughly. *Try me, and know my thoughts*; he had tried him, and knew every thought in him, ver. 1, 2. This therefore is not said for the sake of God; who, though he is the trier of hearts, and the searcher of the reins, is indeed a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart at once, and knows immediately what is in man; and needs no testimony of him, nor to make use of any means in order to know him and what is within him: but David said this for his own sake, that God would search and make known to him what was in his heart, and try him by his word, as gold is tried in the fire; or by any thing difficult and self-denying, as he tried Abraham; or by any afflictive providence; or in any way he thought fit to make him acquainted thoroughly with himself. His sense is this, that if he knew his own heart and thoughts, and the inward frame and disposition of his soul, it was as he had expressed it; that he was grieved with sinners, and hated those that hated the Lord, even with a perfect hatred, and reckoned them as his enemies; but if it was otherwise, he desired to be searched and tried thoroughly, that it might be discovered: and he might say this also on account of others, who charged him falsely with things he was not conscious of; that never entered into his thoughts, and his heart knew nothing of, and could not accuse him with; and therefore he appeals to the heart-searching God, that he would so lay open things that his integrity and innocence might appear to all; see Gen. xxii. 1, 12. Deut. viii. 2. 2 Chron xxxii. 31.

Ver. 24. *And see if there be any wicked way in me, &c.*] Not that David thought himself free from wickedness, or that there was none to be found in his heart and life; and therefore said this in a boasting way, he knew otherwise; see Psal. xix. 12, 13. and cxix. 96. but he is desirous it might be thoroughly looked into and seen whether there was any such wicked way in him he was charged with; as that he had a design upon the life of Saul, and to seize his throne and kingdom, which never entered into his mind, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9. Or, *any way of grief*^d; what tended to wound and grieve his own soul, or to grieve the hearts of God's people; or to grieve the Holy Spirit of God; and which he ought to grieve for and repent of: suggesting, that upon the first conviction he was ready to relinquish any such wicked way, and express his

^a So some in Vatablus.

^b Or to a mischievous purpose; so Ainsworth.

^c וְשׂוֹא לִשְׂוֹא עֵרִיךְ qui elatus est ad vanitatem, hostes tui sunt, De Dien.

^d דָּוִד עֵרֵךְ via doloris, Montanus, Coccejus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

abhorrence of it, and testify true repentance for it. Some render it, *the way of an idol**; because a word from the same root signifies an idol: every carnal lust in a man's heart is an idol; and whatsoever engrosses the affections, or has more of them than God himself has, or is preferred to him, Ezek. xiv. 4. The Targum is, "and see if the way of those that err is in "me." *And lead me in the way everlasting*; or, *in the way of old*[†]: the good old way, the ancient path, in which the patriarchs before and after the flood walked. Or, *in the perpetual way*[‡]; the way that endures for ever; in opposition to the way of the wicked, that perishes, Psal. i. 6. or in the way that leads to everlasting life, to eternal peace and rest, and endless pleasures; as opposed to the way of grief and sorrow. It

designs Christ, the true and only way to eternal life, the path of faith, truth, and godliness, Matt. vii. 13, 14. John xiv. 6. in which the Lord leads his people, as a father does his child, and as the shepherd his flock. The Jewish commentators, Aben Ezra and Kimchi, interpret it the way of the world; and take it to be the same with the way of all flesh, death, or the grave; which is called man's world, or home, Josh. xxiii. 14. Eccl. xii. 5. and make the sense to be this: If thou seest any evil in me, take me out of the world; kill me at once, let me die. But this seems to be foreign from the text; for the word *lead* designs a blessing or benefit, as Calvin well observes. The Targum is, "lead me in the way of the upright of the world;" the way in which upright men walk.

P S A L M CXL.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm, Aben Ezra says, was composed by David before he was king; and Kimchi says, it is concerning Doeg and the Ziphites, who calumniated him to Saul; and, according to our English contents, it is a prayer of David to be delivered from Saul and Doeg. The Syriac inscription is, "said by David, when Saul "threw a javelin at him to kill him, but it struck the "wall; but, spiritually, the words of him that cleaves "to God, and contends with his enemies." R. Obadiah says, it was made at the persecution of David by Saul, which was before the kingdom of David; as the persecution (of Gog) is before the coming of the Messiah. It is indeed before his spiritual coming, but not before his coming in the flesh; and David may be very well considered in the psalm as a type of Christ, for he was particularly so in his sufferings, as well as in other things.

Ver. 1. *Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man, &c.*] Either Saul; so Theodoret; or rather Doeg, according to R. Obadiah: but Jarchi interprets it of Esau; by whom he means Edom, or Rome, or rather the Christians in general. Were his sense confined to the Papists, he might be thought to be much in the right; for this is applicable enough to the man of sin, and his followers: for it may be understood collectively of a body of evil men; all men are evil by nature, their hearts, thoughts, words, works, and ways. David's enemies were evil men; and so were Christ's; as Herod, Judas in particular, and the Jews in general: and such are the enemies of God's people; the world, profane sinners, persecutors, and false teachers; and to be delivered from such is desirable, and to be prayed for, and an happiness when enjoyed; see 2 Thess. iii. 2. *Preserve me from the violent man; or, the man of violence*^h; of a violent spirit, that breathes out slaughter and death; of a fierce countenance, of blustering words, and furious actions. Such a man was Doeg; who loved evil, and all devouring words, devised mis-

chief, and boasted in it, Psal. lii. 1—4. and Herod, who in his wrath, being disappointed, ordered all the infants in and about Beth-lehem to be slain; and the Jews, who were violently set on the death of Christ, and vehemently desired it: and such are all violent persecutors of the church of God, who clothe themselves with the garment of violence, and drink the wine of it; and to be preserved from such is a great mercy.

Ver. 2. *Which imagine mischiefs in their heart, &c.*] This shews that not a single person barely is meant, but more, as Saul's courtiers; who were secretly and continually meditating mischief against David, traducing him to Saul, and devising things to take away his life. Such were the Jews to Christ, who were always plotting to entangle him, or contriving to kill him; and so wicked men are ever devising mischief against the quiet in the land, which is very abominable to God; and rightly observed here, to prevail upon the Lord to preserve from them, Psal. ii. 1. Prov. vi. 18. *Continually are they gathered together for war*; so Saul gathered together three thousand men, and went in pursuit of David, as an enemy, to take him. So Herod and Pontius Pilate joined together, though before enemies, in the prosecution of Christ; and Jews and Gentiles gathered together against him: so the saints, being in a warfare-state, have their enemies, who often combine against them, and attack them, and will not suffer them to be at rest and peace; as sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; see Psal. cxx. 7.

Ver. 3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent, &c.*] Which Kimchi says it does before it bites. Aristotleⁱ observes, that the tip or extreme point of a serpent's tongue is as small as a hair, and so exceeding sharp and piercing. Arama interprets this of the sharpness and cunning of the serpent; and particularly the serpent that deceived Eve, and spake cunningly to her. *For God knoweth, &c.* and may design the calumnies and detractions, which were sharp as a

* Via idoli; so some in Vatablus.

† בדרך עולם per viam sempiternam, Paganus, Vatablus; per viam antiquam, Gussetius; so Ainsworth.

ⁱ In via perpetua, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^h מַאִישׁ חַמְסִים a viro violentiarum, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ⁱ Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 17.

razor; as swords, and spears, and arrows, and as the tongue of a serpent, Psal. lvii. 4. and lxiv. 3. and the subtlety of false teachers, and deceitful workers; and the sharp and cutting words of wicked men against Christ and his people, Jude 15. *Adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.* Which may signify the malignity of sin in wicked men, which comes from the old serpent the devil; is latent in men; very infectious, like poison, and deadly and incurable, but by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: and may describe particularly the mischief of the tongue, which is a little member, as the asp is a little creature; but very mischievous, full of deadly poison, which lurks in it, lies under it, and which spitting out, it stupifies and kills insensibly; as do the calumnies of wicked men, and the doctrines of false teachers; see Rom. iii. 13. The Targum is, "the poison of the spider;" though it is said¹ the spider is not venomous.

Ver. 4. *Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked, &c.*] From falling into their hands, and the weight of them; and from their laying hands on him, being men of power and authority. *Preserve me from the violent man:* or men, every one of them; see the note on ver. 1. *Who have purposed to overthrow my goings;* to supplant him; to cause him to stumble and fall, to his disgrace and reproach; and that they might take an advantage of him, and an occasion against him. Arama interprets it, to drive me out of the land of Israel; see 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. So Christ's enemies thought to have supplanted him, and have found something against him, to accuse him of to Cæsar, Matt. xxii. 15—22.

Ver. 5. *The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords, &c.*] These were the Ziphites, according to Arama; see Psal. cxix. 85. the character well agrees with the Scribes and Pharisees, who were proud boasters, and despised others, and often laid snares for Christ to take away his life; and with the enemies of the church and people of God; who, through their pride, persecute them, and are insidious, and use artful methods to insure them; as the fowler lays his snare for the bird, and has his cords to draw it to him when it is taken in the snare, to which the allusion is. *They have spread a net by the way-side;* they waylaid him; knowing the way he would go, they lay in wait for him, to seize him at once as he went along; see John xviii. 1, 2. the word *cords* in the preceding clause should be connected with this, and be read, *and with cords they have spread a net by the way-side;* it being usual, as Jarchi observes, to fasten a long cord at the top of the net; and when the fowler sees the birds under the net, he draws the cord, and the net falls upon the fowls. *They have set gins for me;* all these expressions design the insidiousness, and the private, secret, artful methods, the enemies of David, of Christ and his people, took and do take to insnare them. Arama interprets the *snare and cords* of the watching of David's house; the *net by the way-side* of posting themselves at the gates of the city, and surrounding it; and *gins* of spies; see 1 Sam. xix. 11—24. Of *Selah*, see the note on Psal. iii. 2.

Ver. 6. *I said unto the Lord, thou art my God, &c.*]

He said this to the Lord himself; claimed his covenant-interest in him, and expressed it in the strength of faith; and this he did when in the midst of trouble and distress; in danger of falling into the hands of evil and violent men; they imagined mischief against him; were bent on his ruin, and laid nets, snares, gins, and traps for him; when he applied to his God, who only could deliver him; and being his covenant-God, he had reason to believe he would; see Psal. xxxi. 14. *Hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord;* the requests he put up in an humble manner for deliverance and salvation; and which he expressed vocally, and entreated they might be heard and answered; and nothing could tend more to strengthen his faith in this than that it was his own God and Father he prayed unto; see Psal. xxviii. 2. Thus Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying; and in the midst of his troubles, and surrounded with enemies, declared his faith in God as his God, Heb. v. 7. Psal. xxii. 10, 11. Matt. xxvii. 46.

Ver. 7. *O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, &c.*] Temporal and spiritual, which he was able to effect; the mighty God and mighty Saviour: and this encouraged David to believe he should have deliverance; and this secured, confirmed, and established it to him; and to which he was the more induced by what experience he had had of the divine goodness to him, as follows: *thou hast covered my head in the day of battle;* with the helmet of salvation, as Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Arama observe; which, in a spiritual sense, is to a believer the hope of salvation, Ephes. vi. 17. 1 Thess. v. 8. a defensive weapon to him; and protects him whilst he is engaging with his spiritual enemies in this his state of warfare, sin, Satan, and the world. Perhaps David may have respect to the divine protection of him, when he fought with Goliath. Salvation was Christ's helmet, when he engaged with all his and our enemies; even with all the powers of darkness, and obtained deliverance for us, Isa. lix. 13, 17.

Ver. 8. *Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked, &c.*] Of Doeg, as the Targum, and of other wicked men, who were desirous both of taking him, and of taking away his life: but the desires of such men are under the restraints of the Lord; nor can they fulfil them unless they have leave from him, which is here deprecated. The psalmist entreats he might not be delivered up to their will, or they have their will of him; see Psal. xxvii. 12. Jarchi interprets it of Esau, as in ver. 1. and it is applicable enough to antichrist and his wicked followers; who, could they have their desires, would root the Gospel, and the interest of Christ and his people, out of the world. *Further not his wicked device:* or, *let not his wicked device come forth*¹, or proceed to execution, or be brought to perfection; let him be disappointed in it, that he may not be able to perform his enterprise, or execute his designs; which cannot be done without the divine permission. The Rabbins, as Jarchi and others, render it, *let not his bridle come out*^m; the bridle out of his jaws, with which he was held by the Lord, and restrained from doing his will; let him not be left to his liberty,

¹ Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 800. & vol. 5. par. 1. p. 24.

^m וְלֹא יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וְלֹא יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וְלֹא יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, Michaelis.

^m Vel frenum ejus ne sinas exire, Cocceius.

and freed from the restraints of divine Providence; see Isa. xxxvii. 29. *Lest they exalt themselves. Selah.* Grow proud, haughty, and insolent to God and man; see Deut. xxxii. 27. Or, *let them not be exalted*; upon the ruin of me and my friends.

Ver. 9. As for the head of those that compass me about, &c.] Meaning either their natural head, put for their whole persons; and the sense is, let the mischief they have contrived for others fall upon themselves; see Ezek. ix. 10. Psal. vii. 16. or some principal person, the head and leader of them, as the word is sometimes used, Isa. ix. 14, 15. and vii. 8. and designs either Saul, who at the head of three thousand men surrounded the hill where David and his men were; or Doeg the Edomite, who was over the servants of Saul, and accused David to him; so Kimchi: or Ahithophel, who was at the head of the conspirators against him; so the Targum paraphrases it, "Ahitophel, the 'head of the sanhedrim of the disciples of wickedness.'" If we understand this clause of Christ, the antitype of David, it may design Judas; who was the guide to them that sought Jesus, and, at the head of a band of men, enclosed and took him: or of the church and people of God, the man of sin may be intended, the pope of Rome; the head over many countries, the antichristian nations, Psal. cx. 6. The word is used of the gall and poison of asps, Job xx. 14. and if so taken here, as Arama interprets it, it will make the sense agree with ver. 3. and may be read in connexion with the following clause, thus: *let the poison of those that compass me about, even the mischief of their lips, cover them*; or the labour of them: let the lies and calumnies they have so industriously spread, and took so much pains to propagate to the hurt of others, like deadly poison, cover them with shame and confusion; and the mischief they have boasted of, and gave out that they would do, let it come upon them on all sides, and utterly ruin and destroy them.

Ver. 10. *Let burning coals fall upon them, &c.*] From heaven, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, by way of explanation; alluding to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from thence: and may design both the terrible judgments of God in this life, and everlasting burnings in hell; so Jarchi interprets it of the coals of hell; see Psal. xi. 6. and xviii. 8, 12, 13. and cxx. 3, 4. *Let them be cast into the fire*: into the fire of divine wrath, and have severe punishment inflicted on them in this world; and into the fire of hell hereafter, as the Targum, which is unquenchable and everlasting; and into which all wicked men, carnal professors, the followers of antichrist, the devil and his angels, will be cast: of the phrase of casting into hell, see Matt. v. 29, 30. Mark ix. 45, 47. *Into deep pits, that they rise not up again*: meaning either the grave, the pit of corruption; from whence the wicked will not rise to eternal life, as the Targum adds, for though they will rise again, it will be to everlasting shame and damnation, Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29. or else the pit of hell, the bottomless pit, from whence there will be no deliverance; where they must lie till the utmost

farthing is paid, and that will be for ever. Arama refers this to Korah, who was burnt and swallowed up, and rose not again in Israel.

Ver. 11. *Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth, &c.*] One that sets his mouth against the heavens, and speaks evil of God; of his being, perfections, purposes, and providences: whose tongue walks through the earth, and speaks evil of all men, even of dignities; and especially of the scions of the most High, and of the Gospel and ways of Christ. Or, *a man of tongue*; that uses his tongue in an ill way, in detractions and slanders; in blaspheming God, his name and tabernacle, and those that dwell therein, as antichrist, Rev. xiii. 5. a man that calumniates with a triple tongue, so the Targum; like a serpent, whose tongue seems to be so sometimes. Kimchi applies this to Doeg, and Jarchi to Esau. The request is, that such an one might not be established in the earth; in the land of the living, as the Targum; might not increase and flourish in worldly substance, or be continued in his posterity; but be rooted out of the earth, and he and his be no more; see Psal. lii. 4, 5. *Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him*; or to *impulsions*: to drive him from evil to evil, as Kimchi. The sense is, that the evil of punishment shall hunt him, as a beast of prey is hunted; it shall closely pursue him and overtake him, and seize on him, and thrust him down to utter ruin and destruction. The Targum is, "the injurious wicked man, let the angel of death hunt, and drive 'into hell.'" Of the violent man, see ver. 1, 4. he who purposed to overthrow David, he was persuaded would be overthrown himself. This clause teaches us how to understand the rest; for though they are delivered out as wishes and imprecations, yet are prophetic, and are strongly expressive of the certainty of the things imprecated.

Ver. 12. *I know, &c.*] Here is a double reading: the *Keri*, or marginal reading, is, *thou knowest*; an appeal of the psalmist to God, who knew the thoughts of the wicked concerning him, and their devices against him; as Kimchi: but the Scripture reading is, *I know*; expressing his full persuasion and assurance that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor; of his poor and afflicted people, that are afflicted within and without, by men and devils; and who are poor as to the things of this world, and poor in spirit, and sensible of their spiritual poverty, but rich in grace: the cause of these God will maintain against their oppressors, and right their wrongs, and avenge their injuries; this the psalmist knew, and was assured of from the word of God, from instances and examples in former times, and from his own experience, Psal. ix. 4.

Ver. 13. *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name, &c.*] The same with the poor and the afflicted; who, though traduced by men, and evil-spoken of and ill-used by them, are righteous in the sight of God; being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, and received by faith, in consequence of which they live soberly and

^a יָרִיבֵנוּ ne exaltentur, Vatablus, Gejerus.

^b So Junius: Tremellius, Piscator.

^c עֲשֵׂתֵינוּ labor laborum eorum, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^d אִישׁ לְשׁוֹן vir linguae, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^e So the word tongue is used in Cicero, Si lingua vitius facis possimus, epist. l. 9. 2.

^f למרוקת ad impulsiones, Montanus.

righteously: these the psalmist knew and was assured they would give thanks to the Lord, and praise his holy name, for the righteousness by which they are made righteous, and for every other blessing of grace and mercy of life; for maintaining their cause and their right, and for the ruin and destruction of their enemies; see Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. *The upright shall dwell in thy presence*; under his care and protection; in his gracious presence, enjoying the light of his countenance here; and in his glorious presence hereafter, where is fulness of joy: these upright ones are such who are upright in heart; whose hearts are right with God, sincere in his service and worship, and

walk uprightly according to the rule of his word. These, as some render it, *shall sit before him*; or in his presence; as children before a father, in whom he delights; or as disciples before a master, to be taught and instructed. The Targum is, "shall return to pray before thee;" and so *Aben Ezra* interprets it of their dwelling, or sitting before God, in the house of prayer; and *Kimchi* adds, by way of explanation, "to seek thee, and know thy ways." *Jerom* reads it, *shall dwell with thy countenance or face*"; and understands it of dwelling with Christ, the face of God, Heb. i. 3. with whom they shall dwell for evermore.

P S A L M CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was written about the same time, and upon the same occasion, as that going before and what follows after; even when David was persecuted by Saul, and when he was in great danger of his enemies, and snares were laid for his life.

Ver. 1. *Lord, I cry unto thee, &c.*] With great earnestness, importunity, and fervency, being in distress; and knowing vain was the help of man, and that none could deliver him but the Lord, and therefore continued crying unto him for help*. *Make haste unto me*; which shews he was in a desperate condition; that he could not help himself, nor could any creature, only the Lord; and he was at a distance from him, as it seemed to him, and he delayed assistance; and therefore desires he would immediately draw nigh and be a present help in his time of need, and work speedy deliverance for him, his case requiring haste. *Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee*; a request the psalmist frequently makes, not contenting himself with prayer, without desiring and looking for an answer to it.

Ver. 2. *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, &c.*] Which was offered every morning on the altar of incense, at which time the people were praying, Exod. xxx. 1, 7, 8. Luke i. 10. and was an emblem of it, even of pure, holy, and fervent prayer; which being offered on the altar Christ, which sanctifies every gift, and by him the High-priest; through whom every sacrifice is acceptable unto God; and through whose blood and righteousness, and the sweet incense of his mediation and intercession, it becomes fragrant and a sweet odour to the Lord; and being directed to him, it goes upwards, is regarded by him, and continues before him as sweet incense; which is what the psalmist prays for; see Mal. i. 11. Rev. viii. 3, 4. And the *lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*; the burnt-sacrifice of the evening, according to *Ben Melech*, the lamb slain every evening; or else the *minchah*, as the word is; the meat, or rather the bread-offering made of fine flour, with oil and frank-

incense on it, which went along with the former, Exod. xxix. 38—41. and so the Targum, "as the sweet gift offered in the evening." This only is mentioned, as being put for both the morning and the evening sacrifice; or because the incense was offered in the morning, from which it is distinguished; or it may be, as *Kimchi* thinks, this psalm was composed in the evening; and so the inscription in the Syriac version is, "a psalm of David, when he meditated the evening-service." Or because this was the last sacrifice of the day; there was no other after it, as *Aben Ezra* observes; and the most acceptable; to which may be added, that this was the hour for prayer, Acts iii. 1. and x. 3. Wherefore *lifting up of the hands* was a prayer-gesture, and a very ancient one both among Jews and Gentiles*; *Aristotle*† says, all men, when we pray, lift up our hands to heaven; and it is put for that itself, 1 Tim. ii. 8. and is desired to be, like that, acceptable unto God; as it is when the heart is lifted up with the hands, and prayer is made in the name and faith of Christ.

Ver. 3. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, &c.*] Whilst praying, as *Jarchi* and *Kimchi*; that he might not utter any rash, unguarded, and unbecoming word; but take and use the words which God gives, even the taught words of the Holy Ghost; or lest, being under affliction and oppression, he should speak unadvisedly with his lips, and utter any impatient murmuring and repining word against God; or express any fretfulness at the prosperity of the wicked, or speak evil of them; especially of Saul, the Lord's anointed, for the ill usage of him. *Keep the door of my lips*; which are as a door that opens and shuts: this he desires might be kept as with a bridle, especially while the wicked were before him; lest he should say any thing they would make a handle of against him, and to the reproach of religion; and that no corrupt communication, or any foolish and filthy talk, or idle and unprofitable words, might proceed from them. The phrase signifies the same as the other; he was sensible of his

* שָׁבוּ considerunt, Junius & Tremellius; sedebunt, Cocceius; so Ainsworth and Syriac version.

† So Sept. V. L. Arabic version, and Pagninus.

* Auxilium vocat, & duos conclamat agrestes, Virgil.

* Vid. Barthii Anim., v. in Claudian. ad Rufin. l. 3. v. 206.

† De Mundo, c. 6. Vid. Plutarch. in Vita Camillii. Sustulit ad sidera palmas, Virgil. Æneid. 2. so Ovid. Fasti, l. 3.

own inability to keep a proper watch and guard over his words, as was necessary, and therefore prays the Lord to do it; see Psal. xxxix. 1.

Ver. 4. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, &c.*] Or *evil word*^z, as the Targum; since out of the abundance of that the mouth speaketh, Matt. xii. 34, 35. or to any sinful thing, to the commission of any evil action: not that God ever inclines men's hearts to sin by any physical influence, it being what is repugnant to his nature and will, and what he hates and abhors; for though he hardens the hearts of wicked men, and gives them up to the lusts of them; yet he does not move, incline, or tempt any man to sin, Jam. i. 13, 14. but he may be said to do this when he suffers them to follow their own sinful inclinations, and leaves them to be inclined by the power and prevalence of their own corruptions, and by the temptations of Satan, which is here deprecated; see Psal. cxix. 36. Matt. vi. 13. So as to *practise wicked works with men that work iniquity*: to join with those that make a trade of sinning; the course of whose life is evil, in their unfruitful works of darkness; and do as they do, even commit crimes the most flagitious and enormous: he seems to have respect to great persons, whose examples are very forcible and insnaring; and therefore it requires an exertion of the powerful and efficacious grace of God, to preserve such from the influence of them, whose business is much with them. *And let me not eat of their dainties*: since their table was a snare to themselves, it might be so to him; and be a means of betraying him unawares into the commission of some sins, which would be dishonourable and grieving to him: the psalmist desires not to partake with them at their table; but chose rather a meaner table and coarser fare, where he might be more free from temptation; see Prov. xxiii. 1-5. Or this may be understood of the dainties and sweet morsels of sin; which are like stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, to a carnal heart: though the pleasures of it are but imaginary, and last but for a season, and therefore are avoided by a gracious man; by whom even afflictions with the people of God are preferred unto them, Heb. xi. 25. The Targum interprets it of the song of the house of their feasts; which is insnaring.

Ver. 5. *Let the righteous smite me*, it shall be a kindness, &c.] Or, *smite me in kindness*^a. In love; in a loving and friendly manner, which makes reproofs the more agreeable and effectual. Not the righteous God, as Arama; though he does sometimes smite his people for their sins, Isa. lvii. 17. that is, reproofs, corrects, and chastises them, and that in love and for their good; and therefore such smittings and corrections should be taken in good part by them, and received as fatherly chastisements, and as instances of his paternal care of them, and love to them; but rather righteous and good men; who, when there is occasion for it, should reprove and rebuke one another; but then it should

be in a kind and tender manner, and with the spirit of meekness; and such reproofs should be as kindly received: *for faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*, Prov. xxvii. 6. Or, *let the righteous beat me with kindness or goodness*^b; with precepts of goodness, by inculcating good things into him; which he should take, as if he overwhelmed and loaded him with benefits; even though it was like striking with a hammer, as the word signifies. *And let him reprove me*; which explains what is meant by smiting. It shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head; give no pain nor uneasiness to his head or his heart, but rather supple and heal the wounds sin reproved for has made. The Targum is, "the oil of the anointing of the sanctuary shall not cease from my head;" with which he was anointed king; and signifies that he should enjoy the dignity, and continue in it. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, *the oil of the ungodly, or sinners*; meaning their flattering words, which, though smooth as oil, were deceitful; and therefore lie deprecates them, *let not the oil of the wicked, &c.* as being hurtful and pernicious. *For yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities*; that is, when the righteous, that smote and reproved him for his good, should be in any distress; such a grateful sense should he retain of their favour in reproving him, that he would pray for them, that they might be delivered out of it; which would shew that he took it kindly at their hand. Or, *in their evils, or against them*^c; which some understand of the evil practices of wicked men; which the psalmist prayed against, and that he might be kept and delivered from.

Ver. 6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, &c.*] The judges of David's adversaries, the workers of iniquity; meaning Saul, Abner, &c. Arama refers this to Saul and his sons being slain on the mountains of Gilboa, 1 Sam. xxxi. 1, 8. which might be here prophetically spoken of. Or, as it is by some rendered, *when their judges are let down by the sides of the rock*^d; or let go free, as Saul was by David more than once; when it was in the power of his hands to have taken away his life, which his principal friends urged him to do, 1 Sam. xxiv. 2-7. and xxvi. 3-12. Some render the words as an imprecation or wish, *let their judges be cast down*^e; or as a prophecy, *they shall be cast down in stony places, or by the sides of a rock*: so the word is used of casting or throwing down, 2 Kings ix. 33. and may allude to the manner of punishment used in some places, by casting down from a precipice, from rocks and hills; see 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Luke iv. 29. Or, *when they slip by the sides of the rock*^f; endeavouring to get up it; as ambitious men are desirous of getting to the top of honour, power, and authority, but stand in slippery places, and often slip and fall. And when this should be the case of these judges, then should David be raised up on high;

^z לִבִּי רָע ad verbum malum, Montanus.

^a עַל מַחְסָן, Sept. in misericordia, V. L. benigne ac elemeter, Michaelis.

^b חֶסֶד benignitate, Tigurine version; bonitate, Gejerus; seu præcipit bonitatis, Gussetius, p. 212.

^c בְּרַעוּתָהֶם in malis eorum, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; adversus mala eorum, Musculus, Michaelis; so some in Vatablus.

^d דִּמְסוּיָם בְּרִדֵי סֵלַע demittentur per loca saxosa, Tigurine version; demissi sunt in manus petrae, Montanus; demittunt se in lateribus petrarum, Piscator.

^e Præcipitentur, Munster; dejiciantur, Gejerus; præcipites dentur, Musculus; so Kimchi.

^f Lubricati sunt per latere petrae, Cocceius.

the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel. And then *they shall hear my words, for they are sweet*: that is, the common people should hear them, and be pleased with them, who had been set against him by their judges; by which they would easily perceive that he had no enmity nor malice, nor ill design against Saul. This may respect either his very affectionate lamentation at the death of Saul and his sons, 2 Sam. i. 17—27. or what he delivered at the several times he spared the life of Saul, when he could have taken it away, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9—19. and xxvi. 17—25. and it is especially true of all the words which David spoke by inspiration, or the Spirit of God spake to him; particularly in his book of Psalms, concerning the Messiah, the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it; of the rich experiences of grace he had, and the several doctrines of the Gospel declared by him; which were sweet, delightful, and entertaining to those who have ears to hear such things; or whose ears are opened to hear them, so as to understand them and distinguish them; but to others not.

Ver. 7. *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, &c.*] Into which they were not suffered to be put, but lay unburied; or from whence they were dug up, and lay scattered about; which is to be understood of such of David's friends as fell into the hands of Saul and his men, and were slain: perhaps it may refer to the fourscore and five priests, and the inhabitants of Nob, slain by the order of Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19. Though the phrase may be only proverbial, and be expressive of the danger David and his men were in, and their sense of it, who looked upon themselves like dry bones, hopeless and helpless, and had the sentence of death in themselves, and were as it were at the mouth of the grave, on the brink of ruin. *As when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth*; and the chips fly here and there, and are disregarded; such was their case: or as men cut and cleave the earth with the plough, and it is tore up by it, and falls on each side of it, so are we persecuted, afflicted, and distressed by our enemies, and have no mercy shewn us; so the Targum, "as a man that cuts and cleaves with ploughshares in the earth, so our members are scattered at the grave's mouth." The Syriac and Arabic versions understand it of the ploughshare cutting the earth.

Ver. 8. *But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord, &c.*] Not only the eyes of his body, lifted up to God in prayer, this being a prayer-gesture, John xi. 41. and xvii. 1. but the eyes of his mind, or understanding,

especially the eyes of faith and love; for it is expressive of his affection to God, his holy confidence in him, and humble hope and expectation of good things from him, in this his time of distress: his eyes were to him and him only, both for temporal food for himself and his men; and for spiritual food, for all supplies of grace, for wisdom and direction, for strength and assistance, for protection and deliverance. *In thee is my trust*; not in himself, nor in his friends, nor in any creature, prince or potentate, but in the Lord, as the God of nature, providence, and grace; to which he was encouraged by his loving-kindness to him; by the everlasting strength in him; by what he had done for others and for him in times past; by the provisions he has made in his covenant and promises for those that trust in him, who are of all men most happy. *Leave not my soul destitute*; of daily food, of help and assistance, of the presence, spirit, and grace of God; or *naked*, and defenceless, but let it be surrounded or protected by almighty power and grace; or *pour not out my soul*, that is, unto death; suffer me not to be taken by enemies and slain; see Isa. liii. 12. The Targum is, "in the Word (of the Lord) I trust, do not empty my soul," or *evacuate*¹ it, as Aben Ezra; that is, out of his body; for he observes, that the soul fills the body.

Ver. 9. *Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, &c.*] Either Saul, who gave him a wife to be a snare to him, and set men to watch his house and take him; or the Ziphites, who proposed to Saul to deliver him into his hands; see 1 Sam. xviii. 21. and xix. 11. and xxiii. 19, 20. *And the gins of the workers of iniquity*: the transgressions of wicked men are snares to others, by way of example; and so are the doctrines of false teachers, and the temptations of Satan, from all which good men desire to be kept, Prov. xxix. 6. Hos. ix. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 26. and it is the Lord alone that keeps and preserves from them, or breaks the snare and delivers them, Psal. cxxiv. 7.

Ver. 10. *Let the wicked fall into their own nets, &c.*] Which they have laid for others, as they very often do; see Psal. vii. 15, 16. or *into his net*^k, either Saul into his own net, and others with him, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; or the wicked into the net which God has laid for them; see Ezek. xii. 13. *whilst that I withal escape*; or *whilst I together escape, or pass over*^l; that is, whilst he, together with his companions, passed over the net laid; or, "till I pass over safe and sound," will all mine, as Noldius^m; not only pass over and escape the snares of the wicked, but pass out of this world into a state of happiness and glory in another.

^k אֶל תָּרַק • • • nudes, Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator.

^l Ne effandas, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus.

^m Ne evacues, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ⁿ בַּמְבְּרֹוֹתֵי in reticulula ejus, Pagninus, Montanus; in retia ejus, Vatablus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

¹ יָרַד simul transeam, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus; una cum meis transiturus sum, Piscator.

^m Concord. Partic. Ebr. Chald. p. 363. No. 1979 so Michaelis.

P S A L M CXLII.

Maschil of David; a Prayer when he was in the cave.

OF the word *maschil* see the note on the title of Psalm xxxii. This psalm is called a *prayer*, as some others are, Psal. xc. and cii. and was composed by David when either in the cave of Adullam, 1 Sam. xxii. 1. or rather in the cave at En-gedi, where he cut off Saul's skirt, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. as Jarchi and Kimchi think. The psalm represents the troubles of David, and of the Messiah his antitype, and is applicable to the church of God, or to any particular soul when in distress.

Ver. 1. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, &c.*] With the voice of his soul, in the language of his mind, mentally, as Moses and Hannah cried unto the Lord when no voice was heard, or articulate sounds expressed, since this prayer was put up to the Lord in the cave where Saul was; though it might have been delivered before he came into it, whilst he and his men were at the mouth of it, which threw David into this distress; besides the cave was so large as to hold David and his six hundred men without being seen by Saul, and who could discourse together, as David and his men did, without being heard by Saul whilst he was in it; and so this psalm or prayer might be spoken vocally, though he was there. *With my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication:* the same thing in other words; *crying* is explained by making *supplication*, which is praying to the Lord in an humble manner for grace and mercy, and not pleading merit and worthiness.

Ver. 2. *I poured out my complaint before him, &c.*] Not a complaint of the Lord and of his providences, but of himself; of his sins, and particularly his unbelief; and also of them that persecuted and afflicted him; which he *poured out* from the abundance of his heart, and in the bitterness of his soul; denoting the fulness of his prayer, his freedom in it, the power and fervency of it, and which he left before the Lord, and submitted to his will; see Psal. cii. title. *I shewed before him my trouble;* the present trouble he was in, being pursued and surrounded by Saul and his army; not as if the Lord was ignorant of it, and did not see and observe it, but to affect his own soul with it, to exercise grace under it, and ease his burdened and distressed mind; the best of men have their troubles both within and without, and the way to be rid of them is to carry them to the Lord.

Ver. 3. *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, &c.*] Ready to sink and faint under the present affliction, being attended with the hidings of God's face, and with unbelieving frames; which is sometimes the case of God's people, and with which they are as it were covered and overwhelmed, as well as with a sense of sin, and with shame and sorrow for it; see Psal. lxi. 2. and lxxvii. 3. *Then thou knewest my path:* the

eyes of the Lord are upon all men, and he knows their goings, none of them are hid from him; and he sees and approves of the way, of the life and conversation of his people in general; and particularly observes what way they take under affliction, which is to apply to him for help and deliverance, Psal. i. 6. Job. xxxiii. 10. R. Moses in Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the path he walked in, which was right and not evil, for which he could appeal to God, that knows all things; it may literally intend the path David took to escape the fury of Saul, that pursued him from place to place. *In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me;* let him take which way he would, there were spies upon him, or men that were in ambuscade to take him; and snares were everywhere laid for him to entrap him; see Psal. cxl. 5. and cxli. 9.

Ver. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, &c.*] On the left, so Kimchi supplies it, and after him Piscator; he looked about him every way to the right and left, to see if he could get any help, or find out any way of deliverance. To this sense the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words; and so Kimchi and Aben Ezra understand them: but some render them in the imperative, *look on the right hand, and behold*; and consider them; either as spoken to his own soul, to stir up himself to look around him for succour and relief; or as an address to God, to look and behold, as in Psal. lxxx. 14. and R. Obadiah reads them, *look, O right hand;* O right hand of God, that does valiantly: but looking cannot properly be ascribed to the right hand; and besides it is not the Lord the psalmist is speaking to, or looking after, but men, as follows. *But there was no man that would know me;* take notice of him, and acknowledge and own him, or shew him any favour, or even own that they had any knowledge of him; which is often the case when men are in affliction and distress, their former friends, acquaintance, yea, relations, keep at a distance from them; so it was with Job, the Messiah, and others; see Job xix. 13. Psal. lxxix. 8. *Refuge failed me;* as he could get no help from men, so there was no way open for his escape, or by which he could flee and get out of the hands and reach of his enemies; in these circumstances he was when in the cave. *No man cared for my soul;* or *life*; to save it, protect and defend it, that is, very few; otherwise there were some that were concerned for him, as the men that were with him, and Jonathan, Saul's son; but none of Saul's courtiers, they were not solicitous for his welfare, but on the contrary sought his life, to take it away. This is an emblem of a soul under first awakenings and convictions, inquiring the way of salvation, and where to find help, but at a loss for it in the creature.

* וְיָדָעָה דְּמִינֵי יְמִינֵי וְיָדָעָה דְּמִינֵי וְיָדָעָה דְּמִינֵי respice dexteram & vide, Montanus; vel ad dexteram, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

* וְיָדָעָה דְּמִינֵי vitam meam, Junius & Tremellius.

Ver. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord, &c.*] Finding no succour from man, he turns to the Lord, and directs his prayer to him in his distress. *I said, thou art my refuge*; as he was, from all his enemies that were in pursuit of him, and from the storm of calamities he apprehended was coming upon him: and a refuge the Lord is to all his people in time of trouble; and where they always meet with sustenance, protection, and safety; he being a strong habitation, a strong hold, a strong refuge, to which they may resort at all times; and such is Christ to all sensible sinners that flee unto him, Heb. vi. 18. And *my portion in the land of the living*; and a most excellent one he is, a large, immense, and inconceivable portion; he and all his perfections, purposes, promises, and blessings, being included in it; a soul-satisfying one, and which will never be taken away nor consumed; it is a portion in the present life; it will last as long as life lasts, and continues unto death, and at death, and for evermore, Psal. lxxiii. 26.

Ver. 6. *Attend unto my cry, &c.*] His prayer and supplication for help in his distress, which he desires might be hearkened unto and answered. *For I am brought very low*; in his spirit, in the exercise of grace, being in great affliction, and reduced to the utmost extremity, weakened, impoverished, and exhausted; wanting both men and money to assist him, Psal. lxxix. 8. and cxvi. 6. *Deliver me from my persecutors*; Saul and his men, who were in pursuit of him with great warmth and eagerness. *For they are stronger than I*; more in number, and greater in strength; Saul had with him three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, able-bodied men, and expert in war; veteran troops, and in high spirits, with their king at the head of them; David had about six hundred men, and these poor mean creatures, such as were in distress, in debt, and

discontented, and in want of provisions, and despised; see 1 Sam. xxii. 2. and xxiii. 13. and xxiv. 2. Psal. xviii. 16. So the spiritual enemies of the Lord's people are stronger than they, Jer. xxxi. 11. Ephes. vi. 12.

Ver. 7. *Bring my soul out of prison, &c.*] Not out of purgatory, to which some Popish writers wrest these words very absurdly; nor out of the prison of his body, as Joseph Ben Gorion²; knowing that none but God had a power of removing it from thence; but out of the cave, where he was detained as in a prison, whilst Saul and his men were about the mouth of it; or rather out of all his straits, distresses, and difficulties, which surrounded and pressed him on all sides, as if he was in a prison. *That I may praise thy name*; this release he desired not so much for his own sake, that he might be at ease and liberty, but that he might have fresh occasion to praise the Lord, and an opportunity of doing it publicly, in the assembly and congregation of the people. *The righteous shall compass me about*; in a circle, like a crown, as the word² signifies; when delivered, they should flock to him and come about him, to see him and look at him, as a miracle of mercy, whose deliverance was marvellous; and to congratulate him upon it, and to join with him in praises unto God for it. The Targum is, "for my sake the righteous will make to thee a crown of praise." And to the same purpose Jarchi, "for my sake the righteous shall surround thee, and praise thy name." Aben Ezra interprets it, "they shall glory as if the royal crown was on their heads." *For thou shalt deal bountifully with me*; in delivering him from his enemies, settling him on the throne, and bestowing upon him all the blessings of Providence and grace; see Psal. cxvi. 7. and thus the psalm is concluded with a strong expression of faith in the Lord, though in such a low estate.

PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was composed by David when he fled from Absalom his son, according to the title of it in Apollinarius, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; so R. Obadiah Gaon: and of the same opinion is Theodoret and others. The sense he had of his sins, and his deprecating God's entering into judgment with him for them, seems to confirm it; affliction from his own family for them being threatened him, 2 Sam. xii. 9—11. though Kimchi thinks it was written on the same account as the former, and at the same time, namely, when he was persecuted by Saul; and what is said in ver. 3, 4, seems to agree with it. The Syriac inscription is, "when the Edomites came against him;" which is very foreign, since these were subdued by him.

Ver. 1. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications, &c.*] With these requests David begins the psalm; for it was to no purpose to pray and

supplicate for grace and mercy, unless his prayers were heard; and for which he always appears to be concerned, as every good man will, and not to be heard only, but to be answered, as follows. *In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness*; he does not plead his own faith, with which he believed in God, as Arama interprets it; though the prayer of faith is very effectual; but the faithfulness of God to his promises; he had promised to hear, answer, and deliver such as called on him in a time of trouble; and he is faithful that has promised, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; he cannot deny himself; and on this the psalmist relied for an answer, as well as desired and expected it; not on account of his own righteousness, but either on account of the goodness and grace of God, sometimes designed by righteousness, or because of the righteousness of Christ, or for the sake of Christ, the Lord our righteousness; on whose account God

² Hist. Heb. l. 6. c. 20. p. 610.

² יכתרו coronabunt, Pagninus, Montanus; vel in me tanquam coronati triumphabunt, Cocceius.

is just and faithful to forgive sin, the blessing the psalmist wanted, as appears from the following verse.

Ver. 2. *And enter not into judgment with thy servant, &c.*] The house of judgment, as the Targum, or court of judicature; God is a Judge, and there is and will be a judgment, universal, righteous, and eternal; and there is a day fixed for it, and a judgment-seat before which all must stand, and a law according to which all must be judged; but the psalmist knew he was but a man, and could not contend with God; and a sinful creature, and could not answer him for one of a thousand faults committed by him; and though his servant, yet an unprofitable one; his nature, his heart, his thoughts, words, and actions, would not bear examining, nor stand the test of the holy law of God; nor was he able to answer the demands of divine justice in his own person; and therefore pleads for pardon and acceptance through Christ and his righteousness, and entreats that God would not proceed against him in a judicial way, now nor hereafter. *For in thy sight shall no man living be justified; in a law-sense, so as to be acquitted in open court, and not condemned; that is, by the deeds of the law, as the apostle explains it, Rom. iii. 20. by obedience to it, by a man's own works of righteousness; because these are imperfect, are opposed to the grace of God, and would disannul the death of Christ, and encourage boasting; and much less in the sight of God; for, however men may be justified hereby in their own sight, and before men, in their esteem and account, yet not before God, the omniscient God; who sees not as man sees, and judges not according to the outward appearance, and is perfectly holy and strictly just; and none but the righteousness of Christ can make men righteous, or justify them before him; and this can and does, and presents men unblamable and irreprovable in his sight.*

Ver. 3. *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul, &c.*] Which is to be connected with ver. 1. and is a reason why he desires his prayer might be answered, seeing his enemy, either Saul, or Absalom his own son, persecuted him, or pursued him in order to take away his soul, or life; or Satan, the enemy and avenger, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; or persecuting men, who are his emissaries and instruments, whom he instigates to persecute the Lord's people, and employs them therein. *He hath smitten my life down to the ground:* brought him into a low, mean, and abject state, and near to death; had with a blow struck him to the ground, and left him wallowing in the mire and dirt, just ready to expire. The phrase is expressive of a very distressing state and condition. Some render it *my company*; meaning the men that were with him, his soldiers, who were reduced to a low condition with him, and greatly enfeebled and dispirited. *He hath made me to dwell in darkness;* in the sides of the cave, as Kimchi; see 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. or in great affliction of body and mind, frequently signified by darkness, as prosperity is by light; he was not only obliged by his enemy to hide

himself in woods and wildernesses, and in caves and dens, but was filled with gloomy apprehensions of things, Psal. lxxxviii. 6. *As those that have been long dead; or of old*, an age or two ago, who are out of mind and forgotten, and of whom there is no hope of their coming to life again until the resurrection; or who are *dead for ever*; will remain so till that time comes; signifying hereby his hopeless, helpless, and forlorn state and condition; see Psal. xxxi. 12. and lxxxviii. 4, 5.

Ver. 4. *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me, &c.*] Covered over with grief, borne down with sorrow, ready to sink and fail; see the note on Psal. cxlii. 3. *My heart within me is desolate:* destitute of the spirit and presence of God, and with respect to the exercise of grace, and filled with fears and misgivings; or *astounded*, at the providence he was under, like one stunned and filled with sore amazement, not knowing what to make of things, or what the issue of them would be; so David's antitype was *sore amazed* in the garden, when his troubles and agonies came upon him, Mark xiv. 33.

Ver. 5. *I remember the days of old, &c.*] Former times he had read and heard of, in which the Lord appeared for his people that trusted in him; or the former part of his own life, his younger days, when the Lord delivered him from the lion and bear, and from the uncircumcised Philistine, whom he slew; and made him victorious in battles, and preserved him from the rage and malice of Saul. If this was written on account of Absalom, those times of deliverance he called to mind, in order to encourage his faith and hope, and cheer his drooping spirits. *I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands;* the works of creation and providence, in order to observe the instances of divine power, wisdom, and goodness in them; and from thence fetch arguments, to engage his trust and confidence in the Lord: he both thought of these things within himself, and he *talked* of them to his friends that were with him, as the last of these words used may signify; and all this he did to cheer his own spirit, and the spirits of the men that were with him, in the time of distress and danger.

Ver. 6. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee, &c.*] In prayer, as the Targum adds; for this is a prayer-gesture, 1 Kings viii. 38. Isa. i. 15. both hands were stretched forth, earnestly imploring help, and ready to receive and embrace every blessing bestowed with thankfulness. *My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land. Selah.* As a dry land, which wants water, gapes, and as it were thirsts for rain, which is very refreshing to it; so his soul thirsted after God, after his word and ordinances, after communion with him in them, after his grace and fresh supplies of it; particularly after pardoning grace and mercy, after the coming of Christ, and the blessings of grace by him; as reconciliation, atonement, righteousness, and salvation; after more knowledge of God and Christ, and divine truths; and after the enjoyment of them in heaven to all eternity.

¹ חַיִּיתִי catervam meam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

² אֲנִי עֹלָם olim, Figurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

So Syriac and Arabic versions.

³ אֲנִי עֹלָם attonitum est, Vatablus; stupuit, Tigurine version; stupet, Cocceius, Michaelis; obstupuit, Gejerus.

⁴ אֲנִי עֹלָם loquor, Piscator; sermocinatus sum, Cocceius; aut colloquor, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Some copies read, *in a thirsty land*², and so some versions; see Psal. xlii. 1, 2. and lxiii. 1. and lxxxiv. 2. Of the word *Selah*, see the note on Psal. iii. 2.

Ver. 7. *Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth, &c.*] Ready to sink, swoon, and faint away, through the weight of the affliction on him, by reason of the persecution of his enemy, and for want of the divine Presence; hence the Targum renders it, "my spirit desireth thee;" see Cant. v. 6. Isa. lvii. 16. and therefore entreats that God would hear and answer him quickly; or, *make haste to answer him*, and not delay, lest he should be quite gone. Wherefore it follows, *hide not thy face from me*: nothing is more desirable to a good man than the *face* or presence of God, the light of his countenance, and sensible communion with him; which may be said to be *hid* when he withdraws his gracious presence, and withholds the discoveries of his love, and the manifestations of his free grace and favour; which he sometimes does on account of sin, and is the case at times of the best of saints; and is consistent with the love of God, though very grieving to them, and therefore here deprecated: the Targum is, "cause not thy Shechinah to remove from me." *Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit*; either the house of the grave, as the Targum; look wan and pale, become lifeless and spiritless, or like a dead man; for as in the favour of God is life, his absence is as death: or the pit of hell, the pit of destruction; that is, be in such horror and despair, and under such apprehensions of divine wrath, as the damned feel.

Ver. 8. *Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning, &c.*] Not only externally in the ministry of the word; but internally by the spirit, so as to feel and perceive, and have some sensible experience of it; which he desired he might have in the morning, early, speedily, by the next morning; it being now night perhaps when he was in this distress, and put up this prayer; see 2 Sam. xviii. 1. Jarchi interprets it, when the redemption arises or springs out; meaning the deliverance of the Jews from their present captivity: and so Kimchi, of the time of salvation; as a time of distress is called the evening. *For in thee do I trust*: alone for salvation; being encouraged by his loving-kindness, and the goodness of God being for such that trust in him, Psal. xxxvi. 7. and xxxi. 19. the Targum is, "in thy Word do I hope." *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk*: either literally, which way he should take to escape his enemies, and get out of danger; or the way and course of his life and conversation, according to the will of God; the way of truth, and path of faith; the way of righteousness and holiness, the way of God's commandments and ordinances; which he desired to have a more distinct knowledge of, and grace to enable him to walk therein. *For I lift up my soul unto thee; in prayer*, as the Targum adds, which this phrase is expressive of; and unless the heart is lifted up to God, and the affections of the soul, and the desires of it, are drawn out unto him, and grace is in exercise on him in prayer, the lifting up of

the hands will be of no avail; see Psal. xxv. 1, 4. Lam. iii. 41.

Ver. 9. *Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies, &c.*] Either Saul and his courtiers, or Absalom and the conspirators along with him; who were many, and lively and strong, stronger than he; and therefore God only could deliver him, and to him he sought for it, and not to men; and so deliverance from spiritual enemies is only from the Lord. *I flee unto thee to hide me*; from their rage and fury; who was the only *asylum* or place of refuge for him, where he could be safe. It may be rendered, *with thee have I hid*³; that is, myself: so Arama gives the sense, "I have hid myself with thee." Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret it to this purpose, "I have hid my affairs, my straits and troubles, my difficulties and necessities, from men; and have revealed them unto thee, who alone can save." The Targum is, "I have appointed thy Word to be (my) Redeemer."

Ver. 10. *Teach me to do thy will, &c.*] Revealed in the word; which saints desire a greater knowledge of in order to do it, and in which they delight; and also are desirous of being taught, and to practise submission to the will of God under afflictions; which was now the case of the psalmist. *For thou art my God*; his covenant-God; and from whom all his afflictions came in a covenant-way, and therefore desires to be instructed by him in them; see Jer. xxxi. 18. *Thy Spirit is good*; thy holy good Spirit, as the Targum; the Spirit of thy holiness, as the Arabic version: the Holy Spirit of God is meant, the third Person in the Trinity; who is good essentially, being of the same nature and essence with the Father and Son, with God, who is only good; and effectually is the author of the good work of grace upon the heart, and of the several particular graces there implanted, and who performs many good offices to the saints. *Lead me into the land of uprightness*; or, *let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of uprightness*: either into a right land, as the Targum, where honesty prevails, and honest and upright men live; or, *through a plain way*⁴, easy to be found, in which he should not err, and where would be no occasion of stumbling; or, *through the way of life*, as the Syriac version; the way to eternal life, to heaven and happiness; the land where only truly righteous and upright persons dwell: such will be the new heavens and the new earth, as well as the ultimate state of glory, 2 Pet. iii. 13. and to this the Spirit of God is the leader and guide of his people, Psal. xlvi. 14.

Ver. 11. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, &c.*] Being like one dead, ver. 3. that is, revive and cheer his drooping spirit, ready to fail, being overwhelmed within him. ver. 4, 7. as well as revive the work of grace in him; and quicken his soul to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; and this he desires not only for his own soul's good, but for the glory of God, that his name might be honoured, and not blasphemed. *For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble*; for as he had his bodily troubles and other

² בארץ Cod. Heb. Bomberg. Venet. in terra siticulosa, Musculus, Tarnovius.

³ אלך כסודי ad te abscondi me, Montanus; apud te, Tigurine version; ad te texi, Cocceius, Michaelis.

⁴ So the Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

⁵ בארץ מישור per terram planam, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

outward afflictions, he had soul-troubles, through the corruptions of his nature, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; which beset him around, and greatly straitened and afflicted him, and filled him with doubts and fears; from all which he desires deliverance, for the sake of the righteousness of God, or his faithfulness to his promise, that he would deliver his people in distress when they called upon him; see the note on ver. 1. This interprets the meaning of the petition in Psal. cxlii. 7.

Ver. 12. *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, &c.*] Which, though an act of vindictive justice, and terrible righteousness to them, would be an act of grace and mercy to him, who thereby would be delivered from them: or, *for thy grace*^b; for the sake of it, for the honour of it, do this; those being, as Cocceius

thinks, despisers of the grace of God. *And destroy all them that afflict my soul*; by their persecutions, reproaches, and blasphemies. These clauses, with those in the preceding verse, are read in the future tense, *thou shalt quicken—bring out—cut off—destroy*, in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so may be considered as a prophecy of what would be the case of David and his enemies, or of the Messiah and his, here typified; as well as a prayer for those things. *For I am thy servant*: by creation, by redemption and grace; and by office, being set upon the throne for the service of God and his people, and therefore pleads for his protection and succour; and the rather, as he was the servant of God; and not they, his enemies, as Kimchi observes.

P S A L M CXLIV.

A Psalm of David.

THIS psalm was written by David; not on account of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, by a spirit of prophecy, as Theodoret; but on his own account, after he was come to the throne, and was king over all Israel; and was delivered from the war between him and Israel, and from the war of the Philistines, as Kimchi observes, having gained two victories over them: or it was written between the two victories, and before he had conquered all his enemies; since he prays to be delivered from the hand of strange children, ver. 7, 11. R. Obadiah thinks it was written on the account of his deliverance from Absalom and Sheba; but the former is best. Some copies of the Septuagint, and also the Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, have in their titles these words, "against Goliath;" and so Apollinarius; as if it was written on account of his combat with him, and victory over him; but this clause is not in the Hebrew Bibles; nor could Theodoret find it in the Septuagint in the Hexapla in his time. The Syriac inscription is still more foreign to the purpose, "a psalm of David, when he slew Asaph the brother of Goliath." R. Saadiah Gaon interprets this psalm of the times of the Messiah; and there are several things in it which are applicable to him.

Ver. 1. *Blessed be the Lord my strength, &c.*] The author and giver of his natural strength of body, and of the fortitude of his mind, and of all the spiritual strength he had, to exercise grace, to bear up under afflictions and trials, to perform duty, and withstand enemies. It may be applied to Christ, the antitype of David, the man of God's right hand, he has made strong for himself. It may be rendered, *my rock*^c; to whom the psalmist fled for shelter, when in distress and overwhelmed; and on whom he built his faith, and hope of eternal salvation, as well as depended on him for all

supplies of grace and strength, and for help and succour in all times of need. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *my God*: and so the word *rock* is used for God, Deut. xxxii. 30, 31. *Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight*; he took him from being a shepherd, and made him a soldier; and from being the leader of a flock of sheep, to be a general of armies; and all his military skill in marshalling of troops, in leading them on to battle, and bringing them off, as well as all his courage and success, were from the Lord: he whose hands and fingers had been used to the shepherd's crook, and to the handling of the harp and lyre, were taught how to handle the sword, the bow, the shield, and spear. God is a *man of war* himself; and he teaches the art of war, as he does husbandry and other things; see Exod. xv. 3. Psal. xviii. 34. and so the Lord furnishes his people, who are here in a militant state, with spiritual armour, to fight against their spiritual enemies; he teaches them how to put it on, and directs them how to make use of every piece of it; as well as gives them boldness to face their enemies, and victory over them.

Ver. 2. *My goodness, &c.*] Not only good, but goodness itself; the donor of all the blessings of goodness to him; the author of all goodness in him; the provider of all goodness for him, laid up to be used hereafter. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it *my mercy*, properly enough; that is, the God of my mercy, as in Psal. lix. 10, 17. who is all mercy, full of mercy, rich and plenteous in it; which is abundant, and from everlasting to everlasting. Or, *my grace*^d; the God of all grace, the giver of every grace, and who is able to make all grace to abound; and from whom every blessing of grace, and every particular grace, as faith, hope, and love, and all the supplies of

^b נחמתיך propter misericordiam tuam, Pagninus; propter benig-nitatem tuam, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; per gratiam tuam, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^c רוקי super mea, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. so Ainsworth.

^d חסדי gratia mea, Cocceius, Gejerus.

grace, as well as every good and perfect gift, come: Christ is prevented with all the blessings of goodness; in him all fulness of grace dwells, and with him God keeps his mercy for evermore. *And my fortress*; garrison or strong hold: what fortresses or fortifications are to cities, whether natural or artificial, that is God to his people; all his perfections are on their side; and particularly they are kept by his power, as in a garrison, through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. *My high tower*; the name of the Lord, which is himself, is a strong tower, where his righteous ones that flee to him are safe; and is an *high* one, where they are out of the reach of all their enemies, Prov. xviii. 10. *And my deliverer*: that delivered him from his temporal enemies; and from his spiritual ones, from sin, Satan, and the world; from all afflictions and temptations, from wrath and ruin, death and hell. *My shield*; that protected him from all evil and danger; whose favour encompassed him as a shield; whose salvation was a shield to him; and more particularly the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his Son, called the shield of faith, Ephes. vi. 16. *And he in whom I trust*; not in men, no, not in princes; but in the Lord only; in his Word, as the Targum; for things temporal and spiritual; for the blessings of grace here, and glory hereafter; of these several titles, see more on Psal. xviii. 2. *Who subdueth my people under me*; the people of Israel, all the tribes; whose hearts the Lord inclined to make him king over them all, 2 Sam. v. 1—3. Or, *the people*^f; so the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the Heathen people, the Philistines, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, and Syrians; see 2 Sam. viii. Psal. xvii. 47. The former reading seems best, and is followed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions: and this may be typical of the subduing of Christ's people under him; who are made willing, in the day of his power, to receive and own him as their King; profess subjection to his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances.

Ver. 3. *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? &c.*] Man, that is at most and best but a creature, made of the dust of the earth, is but dust and ashes; yea, a sinful creature, that drinks up iniquity like water: and yet the Lord not only knows him, as he is the omniscient God, but takes notice of him in a way of providence, and in a way of grace. His chosen people are no other nor better than others, of the same original, and of the same character; and yet he owns and acknowledges them as his peculiar people, and makes himself known unto them: and so it is rendered by the Septuagint version, *that thou shouldest be known unto him? or, appear to him?* as the Arabic; reveal thyself to him, not only by the light of nature and works of creation, but in Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Or *the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* as the Lord does, especially of some of the sons of men; whom he reckons as his portion and inheritance, his jewels and peculiar treasure, and who are as dear to him as the apple of his eye; whom he *magnifies*, as in Job vii. 17. makes them kings and priests; raises

them from the dunghill, and sets them among princes, to inherit the throne of glory; on whom he sets his heart, and loves them with an everlasting love: or, *that thou shouldest think of him?*^g thoughts of peace, and not of evil; so as to provide a Saviour for men, and send down the spirit of his son into their hearts to quicken them; so as to bless them with all spiritual blessings, and at last to glorify them. David no doubt had a special respect to himself; and wondered at the goodness of God to him, in taking him from a family of little or no account, from a mean employ, from a shepherd's cottage, and raising him to the throne of Israel; and especially in making him a partaker of grace, and an heir of glory; see Psal. viii. 4. which is applied to Christ, Heb. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 4. *Man is like to vanity, &c.*] Is vanity itself, in every age, state, and condition; yea, in his best estate, Psal. xxxix. 5. or, *to the breath*^h of the mouth, as Kimchi; which is gone as soon as seen almost: or, *to a vapour*ⁱ; to which the life of man is compared, Jam. iv. 14. *His days are as a shadow that passeth away*; as the former denotes the frailty and mortality of man, this the shortness of his duration; his days fleeing away, and of no more continuance than the shadow cast by the sun, which presently declines and is gone.

Ver. 5. *Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down, &c.*] The heavens, which the Lord has made, and where he dwells; and which are under his influence, and he can cause to incline or bow at his pleasure: and which literally may be said to bow, particularly the airy heavens, when these are filled with clouds heavy with rain, and hang low, ready to fall upon the earth, and being rent, let down showers on it: and mystically may design storms of wrath gathering over the heads of ungodly men, and revealed from heaven against them. Or rather, as connected with the phrase, *and come down*, denotes some appearance or manifestation of God; either for the help and assistance of his people; or in a way of vengeance against their enemies; or both: and which descent must be understood in consistence with the omnipresence of God; and supposes his habitation to be on high, and is expressive of regard to the persons and affairs of men on earth; and is by some considered as a prayer for the incarnation of Christ, which is sometimes signified by coming down from heaven; not by change of place, nor by bringing an human nature, soul or body, down with him from heaven; but by the assumption of our nature; and which was greatly wished, prayed, and longed for, by the Old-Testament saints. The Targum is, "O Lord, bow the heavens, and manifest thyself;" see Psal. xviii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 1. *Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke*; as Mount Sinai did when the Lord descended on it, Exod. xix. 18. see Psal. cii. 32. These, according to Kimchi, signify mighty kings, strong as mountains: so kingdoms are sometimes called; as the Babylonian empire is called a mountain, a destroying and burnt mountain, Zech. iv. 7. Jer. li. 25. Such kings and kingdoms rose up like mountains against Christ, when here incarnate; and against his Gospel, and the ministry of it by his

^f עמי pro populus, Piscator.

^g וחושבהו quod cogites de eo, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

^h להבלי halitui, Muie; so Kimchi.

ⁱ Vapori, Cocceius; so the Syriac and Arabic versions.

apostles; as the kingdom and nation of the Jews, and the whole Pagan empire: but these, by a touch of his almighty power, have vanished into smoke, Psal. ii. 1, 2. Rev. viii. 8.

Ver. 6. *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them, &c.*] The mountains, the kings and kingdoms of the earth; the enemies of David, and of Christ, and of his people; particularly the Jews, who have been scattered all over the earth by the judgments of God upon them; cast forth like lightning, which is swift, piercing, penetrating, and destructive. *Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them; or, trouble them*^k; as the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, nearer to the Hebrew: these also design the sore judgments of God, the arrows of famine, pestilence, and sword; which fly swiftly, pierce deeply, cut sharply, and, like fiery darts, give great pain and trouble. So Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret them of the decrees which come down from heaven, as Ben Ezra does the preceding verse: by *lightning* Arama understands the flame of fire which comes out with thunder; and by *arrows* the thunder-bolt, which he calls a stone hardened in the air like iron.

Ver. 7. *Send thine hand from above, &c.*] From the high heavens, as the Targum; that is, exert and display thy power in my deliverance, and in the destruction of my enemies; as follows: *rid me, and deliver me out of great waters*; out of great afflictions, which, for quantity and quality, are like many waters, overflowing and overwhelming; see Isa. xliii. 2. or out of the hands of enemies, many, mighty, and strong, whom he compares to waters; as Ben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe: and so the Targum, “deliver me from “the multitudes or armies, that are like to many “waters;” see Rev. xvii. 1, 15. Isa. viii. 7, 8. Jer. li. 42. It may be applied to the sorrows and sufferings of Christ, the antitype of David, with which he was overwhelmed; to the billows of divine wrath which went over him; to the floods of ungodly men that encompassed him; and to the whole posse of devils, Satan, and his principalities and powers, that attacked him; see Psal. xviii. 4. and lxi. 1, 2. *From the hand of strange children*; which explains what is meant by *great waters*: wicked men chiefly; either Gentiles, the children of a people of a strange nation, and of a strange language, and of strange sentiments of religion, and that worship a strange god: such as the Edomites, Moabites, Philistines, &c. who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise: or else the Israelites, who were degenerated from their ancestors, such of David’s subjects that rebelled against him; so the Ziphim are called strangers that rose up against him, Psal. liv. 3. and such were the enemies of Christ, both the Romans, who were Heathens and aliens; and the people of the Jews, his own countrymen, who were a generation of vipers; see Acts iv. 27, 28. Matt. xxiii. 33. such as Juvenal calls *filiū morum*, who inherited the vices of their fathers.

Ver. 8. *Whose mouth speaketh vanity, &c.*] Vain

words, lies, flatteries, and deceit, Psal. xii. 2. when they speak loftily of themselves, and contemptuously of others; when they deliver out threatenings against some, and make fair promises to others; it is all vanity, and comes to nothing. *And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood*; their strength and power to perform what they boast of, threaten, or promise, is fallacious, is mere weakness, and cannot effect any thing; or their treaties, contracts, and covenants, they enter into and sign with their right hand, are not kept by them; they act the treacherous and deceitful part. The Latin interpreter of the Arabic version renders it, *their oath is an oath of iniquity*; and Ben Balaam in Ben Ezra, and R. Adnim in Ben Melech, say the word so signifies in the Arabic language; and Schultens^m has observed the same: but the word in that language signifies the right hand as well as an oath, and need not be restrained to that; it is better to take it in the large sense, as Cocceiusⁿ does; whether they lifted up the hand to pray, or to swear; or gave it to covenant with, to make contracts and agreements; or stretched it out to work with; it was a right hand of falsehood.

Ver. 9. *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God, &c.*] The author of his being, the father of mercies, temporal and spiritual, and therefore to him praise is always due; a new song of praise is to be sung for new mercies; and as these are new every morning, and are renewed day by day, new songs should be sung continually: or this is a song suited to New-Testament times, in which all things are become new; there is a new covenant of grace; and a new and living way to the throne of grace; a new-slain sacrifice; redemption newly wrought out, and therefore the new song of redeeming grace must be sung. Arama suggests that this refers to the days of the Messiah. *Upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee*; such instruments of music were used in the Old-Testament dispensation, and were typical of the hearts of God’s people; which are the harps they now strike upon, and where they make melody to the Lord; see Psal. xxxiii. 2. and xcii. 3.

Ver. 10. *It is he that giveth salvation to kings, &c.*] Which is the reason of singing the new song to the Lord, or this is the matter of it. The Lord is the Preserver of men and beasts, the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that believe; who are in a spiritual sense kings and priests unto God; and in a temporal sense he saves high and low, rich and poor: but there is a particular providence respecting kings; who, as they are the powers ordained of God, and are his vicegerents on earth, and represent him, so they are preserved by him; were they not, there would soon be an end to all public order and government: they cannot save themselves; nor are they saved by their life-guards about them; nor is any king saved by the multitude of his host, but by the Lord, Psal. xxxiii. 16. Or, *he that giveth victory to kings*; over their enemies; which is not obtained by the strength and force of their armies, and by their military skill and valour; but by the right hand and arm of the Lord:

^k כַּמְטַח אֶת תּוֹרְבָא עוֹס, Tigrine version; & conturbā eos, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^l Satyr. 14. v. 52.

^m Observat. Philolog. p. 195.

ⁿ Lexicon, col. 312.

and therefore, whenever this is the case, a new song should be sung to him; see Psal. xcvi. 1, 2. David no doubt has regard to himself, and to the many salvations God had wrought for him, and the victories he had given him; as also to the King Messiah, whom God heard and helped, as man and Mediator, in the day of salvation, and gave it to him, and in which he rejoiced, Isa. xlix. 8. Psal. xxi. 1. *Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword; David literally, the servant of the Lord by creation, redemption, and grace, as well as by his office, as king of Israel; him the Lord delivered from the sword of Goliath, as the Targum; from the sword of Saul, as Jarchi and Kimchi; and from the sword of strange children, as Arama; of all his enemies he had been or was engaged with in war: and David mystically, Christ the son of David, God's righteous servant, he chose, called, upheld; and in whom he was glorified, by doing his work diligently, faithfully, and completely; him he delivered from the sword of justice, when he had satisfied it; and from wicked men, like a sword; and from all his enemies, and death itself, when he raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; see Psal. xxii. 20. and xvii. 13. Zech. xiii. 7. Isa. liii. 8.* Aben Ezra thinks there is a defect of the copulative *and*: and that it should be read, *from the sword and evil*: every evil person or thing; and observes, that some take it for an adjective, and understand it of an evil camp or company.

Ver. 11. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, &c.*] This is repeated from ver. 7, 8, and is done to shew the vehemency and importunity of the request, and the danger David was in, and his sense of it.

Ver. 12. *That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, &c.*] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *whose sons are as plants, &c.* as if this and what follows were a description of the families, estates, substance, and outward happiness of wicked men, the enemies of David, the strange children he desired to be delivered from, agreeably to Job xxi. 7—13. Psal. lxxxiii. 4, 5, 7, 12, and if the word *saying*, or *who say*, be supplied, as by some^o, and connected with *that our sons are, &c.* they may express the vain boasts of these men, and explain what is meant by the vanity their mouth spake; as well as furnish out another reason for the repetition of the above requests, namely, for the sake of introducing those vain boasts to which the happiness of good men is opposed, who have an interest in God as their God, ver. 15. but we with other versions take them to be a petition of the psalmist; that as he would deliver him personally out of the hands of his enemies, so he would bless his subjects with all prosperity and happiness in their families and estates; like a good prince concerned for the real welfare of his people, and wishes that their sons might be as plants, young, tender, well nursed, and taken care of, that were healthful, thriving, flourishing, and promising much fruit; so they might be of healthful constitutions, well educated in all useful knowledge, natural and religious,

and grow both in wisdom and stature, and appear to be of promising parts for usefulness in the church and state; and especially that they might be the plants of the Lord, pleasant ones to him, and profitable to others; be planted in Christ, and in his house, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of him, and grow up to him their head in all things. The Targum is, “that our sons may be as plants of the dactyles (or palm-trees, Psal. xcii. 12), nourished up in the doctrine of the law from their youth;” see Psal. cxxviii. 3. *That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace; or temple;* tall, beautiful, and in good proportion; children have their name in Hebrew from a word which signifies *to build*^p, because by them families are built up, Ruth iv. 11. and by marriage divers families are connected together, so that they are as corner-stones to them; thus Plautus^q speaks of children as a building, and parents as the fabricators of them; laying the foundation of them, raising them up and polishing them, and sparing no cost to make them useful to the commonwealth: or as *corner pillars*^r, which support the house and continue in it; so they guide the house, take care of the affairs of it, and be keepers at home, 1 Tim. v. 14. Tit. ii. 5. and like such as are in temples or in kings' palaces, finely graven and beautifully polished, be adorned with grace and good works, particularly with modesty, meekness, and humility, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. and grow up into an holy temple in the Lord, being parts of the spiritual building, and being laid on the foundation, of which Jesus Christ is the corner-stone. The Targum is, “our daughters splendid and fit for the priests that minister in the midst of the temple.” The Syriac version, “their daughters as spouses adorned like temples.”

Ver. 13. *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store, &c.*] Or *our corners*^s, the corners of their houses, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; the nooks that were in them might be full of provisions for the supply of the family; or that their barns and granaries might be full of all kind of corn, as wheat, rye, barley, &c. which might be sufficient from year to year, as the Targum; plenty of all food is intended, in opposition to a scarcity, dearth, and famine, Prov. iii. 9, 10. Joel i. 17. that so there might be enough for increasing families. Spiritually it may design that large provision of grace in the churches of Christ, and the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel the ministers of it come forth with, bringing out of their treasure things new and old, in the ministration of the word and administration of ordinances. *That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets; or millions;* in which lay the riches of men formerly, and indeed in our nation now, where wool is the staple commodity of it; and these are creatures that breed and increase much; when they stand well, a few soon become a thousand, and these thousands produce ten thousands or millions, more. The Hebrew word צֹאן, *sheep*, seems to be derived from the Arabic word *tzana*, which signifies to be fruitful, whether in men or beasts: *tzana: fecunda fruit, & multos liberos habuit mulier—idem significat, &*

^o So Schmidt.

^p Educato edificavit, unde בניתי & בניתו filii & filiae.

^q Mostellarius, Act. 1. Sc. 2.

^r כביות sicut angulares lapides, aut columnae, Michaelis.

^s כוונינו angulii nostri, Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

multa habuit pecora, Golius, col. 1428. and though for the most part they bring but one at a time, yet Aristotle¹ says, sometimes two, three, and four; and in India, *Ælianus*² says, they bring four, and never less than three. It is a beautiful sight to see them driven in such numbers through the streets of cities to markets, or to pasture. Or rather this may design the country-towns and villages, where large flocks of them are kept. The people of God resemble these in their meekness, harmlessness, innocence, and other things; and who not only increase in grace and gifts, and spiritual knowledge, and in all goodness, which is desirable, but also in numbers, as they did in the first times of the Gospel, and will in the last, when they shall be increased as a flock; the fulness of the Gentiles, the other sheep, shall be brought in, and the nation of the Jews called at once.

Ver. 14. That *our oxen* may be strong to labour, &c.] To draw carriages, to plough with, and to tread out the corn: or may be burdened³; fit to carry burdens; or burdened with flesh, be plump and fat, and in good condition to work; or burdened with young, as some⁴ understand it, and then it must be meant of cows, as the word is used, Deut. vii. 13. and so here an increase of kine is wished for, as of sheep before. Ministers of the word are compared to oxen for their patience in suffering, and their laboriousness in working, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17. and happy is it for the churches of Christ when their ministers are laborious ones; are strong to labour, and do labour, in the word and doctrine; stand fast in the faith, and quit themselves like men, and are strong. That there be no *breaking-in*; of the enemy into the land to invade it, into cities and houses to plunder and spoil them. *Nor going out*; of the city to meet the enemy and fight with him, peace and not war is desirable; or *going out* of one's nation into captivity into a foreign country, as *Kimchi*; or *not breaking in* to folds and herds, and leading out and driving away cattle, to the loss of the owners thereof. Some⁵ understand both these of abortion, of any violent rupture of

the womb, and an immature birth. That there be no *complaining in our streets*; on account of famine, pestilence, the sword, violence, and oppression; or no *crying*⁶, no mournful cry or howling and shrieking on account of the enemy being at hand, and just ready to enter in, or being there, killing, plundering, and spoiling.

Ver. 15. *Happy* is that *people that is in such a case*, &c.] Whose families are in good order and behave well; who enjoy plenty of all good things; whose flocks and herds increase, and who live in peace and prosperity; these are temporal blessings highly valuable, and for which those who have them should be thankful, as being happy in comparison of others that are destitute of them, Deut. xxviii. 3—6. and especially who besides these are blessed with spiritual blessings, signified by them, and of which these were typical. *Yea, happy* is that *people, whose God is the Lord*; whose God the Lord is, not only by creation, and as he is a common benefactor and preserver, but as their God in covenant, their covenant God and Father in Christ; whom he has loved, chosen, redeemed, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and sanctified; all which appears to them in effectual vocation, is manifested by the application of covenant grace to them, and is witnessed to their spirits by the spirit of God, and which their faith claims an interest in: and these are happy, thrice happy persons; for all that God has are theirs; all his perfections are on their side and for their good; he is their portion, shield, reward, and their all in all; his covenant, its blessings and promises, are all theirs; they have enough, having all things, and can want no good thing; nor need they fear any enemy; the Lord takes care of them, sets a guard about them, resents all injuries done them, prevents the designs of their enemies, makes all things work together for their good, provides all things necessary for them for time and eternity, and will be their God and guide even unto death; covenant-interest always continues, and therefore such must be ever happy.

P S A L M CXLV.

David's Psalm of praise.

THIS psalm is rendered by Ainsworth a *hymn of David*; and the whole book of Psalms is from hence called the *Book of Hymns*; see Ephes. v. 19. It seems to have been a psalm David took great delight in, and it may be that he often repeated and sung it, as it was made by him with great care and contrivance, in a very curious manner, as well as he was assisted in it by divine inspiration; for it is wrote in an alphabetical order, each verse beginning with the letter of the alphabet in course, and goes through the whole, excepting one letter; and very probably it was composed in this form that it might be the more easily committed to memory, and retained in it. The Jews

have a very high opinion of it; their Rabbins say, that whoever says this psalm thrice every day may be sure of being a child of the world to come. This is mentioned by Arama and Kimchi; and which the latter explains thus, not he that says it any way, but with his mouth, and with his heart, and with his tongue. It seems to have been written by David after the Lord had granted him all his requests put up in the preceding psalms, and had given him rest from all his enemies; and when he turned his prayers into praises; for this psalm is wholly praise from one end to the other; and so are all the five following ones; they begin and end with *hallelujah*; nor is there a single

¹ Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 19.
² De Animal. l. 4. c. 32.
³ מְבִיטִים *onusi*, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; *onerarii*, so some in Vatablus; *onerati*, Schmidt; *laden*, Ainsworth.

⁴ So Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 295.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ מְרִיבֵי *clamor*, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, *Musculus*, Coccinus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

petition in them, as I remember; so that it may in some sense be said, *here the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended*. It no doubt, as Cocceus observes, belongs to the Messiah and his kingdom, which is everlasting, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *I will extol thee, my God, O King, &c.*] Or the King^a, the King Messiah, who is by way of eminency called the King, as in Psal. xxi. 1. and xlv. 1. This is the foundation of this whole psalm, as Aben Ezra observes; and shews who is intended and who is the subject of it that is spoken of throughout, even the Messiah, who is the King of the world, the King of the kings of it, the King of Zion, of his church and people, the King of saints, of all believers in him, by the appointment of God, by the conquest of his grace, over whom he reigns by his spirit and grace; for this his kingdom is spiritual, is in righteousness, and everlasting: and this great King is not a creature, but God, the mighty God, David's Lord and God, and the Lord and God of every saint; whom David loved as such, believed in, looked unto for salvation; from whom he received grace and expected glory, and knew and claimed his interest in him, which is the great privilege of believers in him; see John xx. 28. and therefore they, as David, will extol him above all created beings, he being God over all; extol him above all men, even the best and greatest, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Abraham, or any other, who are his creatures, his children, and his subjects; and even as man he is to be extolled above all men; being chosen out from among the people, fairer than the children of men, and the chiefest among ten thousand; and above the angels, having a more excellent name and nature than they; they being his creatures and servants, and he their Creator and the object of their worship: Christ is extolled by his people when they ascribe deity to him, magnify him in his offices, and make use of him in them all; attribute their whole salvation to him, think and speak highly of him, and declare him extolled and exalted at the right hand of God, as he now is, and as the Old Testament-saints, as David and others, had a foresight of and rejoiced in, Psal. cx. 1. Isa. lii. 13. the Septuagint, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, have it, *my King*; see Zech. ix. 9. *And I will bless thy name for ever and ever*; by pronouncing him the Son of the Blessed, God over all blessed for ever; and by ascribing blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto him; by adoring and celebrating the perfections of his nature, which are his name, by which he is known; by expressing a high value and esteem for every precious name of his, as Immanuel, God with us; Jesus, a Saviour, &c. and a regard to his everlasting Gospel, which is his name, bore by his ministering servants throughout the world; see Psal. viii. 1. Acts ix. 15.

Ver. 2. *Every day will I bless thee, &c.*] For new mercies had every morning; for fresh supplies of grace every day, which all come from the fulness of Christ, to whom all grace is given, and from whence it is received, and in whom all spiritual blessings are, and by whom they are bestowed. *And I will praise thy*

name for ever and ever; as long as he lived in this world, and to all eternity in the world to come. David understood the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, and knew he should not be an apostate and blasphemous of the name of Christ, but a praiser of it as long as he had a being; and that his principal service, and that of all the saints in the other world, will be praise; not praying, nor preaching, nor hearing the word, and attendance on other ordinances, which will be no more, but adoring and magnifying the riches of divine grace, Psal. civ. 34. and cxlvi. 2.

Ver. 3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, &c.*] Christ is the great God as well as our Saviour; great in all the perfections of his nature, of great wisdom, power, faithfulness, holiness, grace, and goodness; great in his person as God-man, God manifest in the flesh; great in all his offices and relations he bears and stands in to his people; and great in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption, in which he is concerned; and upon all which accounts he is to be praised, and greatly to be praised, by his people, even to the utmost of their capacities, here and hereafter; see Psal. xlviii. 1. *And his greatness is unsearchable*; the greatness of his nature, and the perfections of it, these are past finding out; and so are his ways and works, and the riches of his grace, John xi. 7. and v. 9. Ephes. iii. 8. The Targum is, "and of his greatness there is no end." So the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 4. *One generation shall praise thy works to another, &c.*] The works of providence done in one age shall be told by the father to the son with praise to the great Performer of them, and so be transmitted to the latest posterity; for in every age there are new and strange things done in Providence, the memory of which is not lost, but they are recorded for the glory of God and the use of men; and the works of grace and salvation wrought by Christ should be, have been, and will be told from age to age; and published in every age by his faithful ministering servants, to the glory of his grace, and the praise of his great name; see Psal. xxii. 30, 31. and cii. 12, 18. *And shall declare thy mighty acts*; his mighty acts of nature, in creating all things out of nothing, and upholding all things by the word of his power; his mighty acts of grace, in redeeming his people out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and from all their sins, and from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come; and the victories which he has obtained over sin, Satan, the world, and death: or *thy powers*^b; the powers of the world to come, Heb. vi. 5. the miracles wrought by Christ on earth, and by his disciples in Gospel times, sometimes called mighty works; as the raising of the dead, &c. Matt. xi. 5, 20, 21.

Ver. 5. *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, &c.*] Of the majesty of the divine Person of Christ; of the honour due unto him; of the glory of him as of the only-begotten of the Father, as he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; of his glory as Mediator, and the honour that

^a המלך rex, Tigurine version, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^b גבורותך potentias tuas, Vatablus; potentia facta tua, Piscator; prae-potentias tuas, Cocceus.

belongs to him as such, with which he is now crowned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels, authorities, and powers, being subject unto him as the Lord and King of glory. *And of thy wondrous works*; in becoming incarnate, in dying for the sins of his people, in rising from the dead the third day, in ascending to heaven and receiving gifts for men; in pouring down the spirit on them, in governing his church throughout all ages of the world, and judging the world at last.

Ver. 6. *And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, &c.*] The terrible things of Christ, which his right hand has taught him, and his mighty power has performed; such as the destruction of a disobedient and ungodly world by a flood, to whom he preached by his spirit in the days of Noah; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by raining on them fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven; and the dreadful things he did in Egypt and at the Red sea by the hands of Moses; these, men or saints of the former dispensation, in, before, and after the times of David, could speak of: there are others done by him on the cross, as the bruising the serpent's head, destroying his works, and him himself with his principalities and powers; and at the time of his sufferings, when the sun was darkened at noon-day, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the veil of the temple rent in twain, and graves opened, which threw the centurion and his soldiers into a panic that watched Jesus on the cross; and at his resurrection, when was a great earthquake also, and angels appeared, which made the keepers shake and tremble; and in a few years followed the terrible destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple, for the rejection of the Messiah; as also of Rome Pagan in a few ages after that; which are things besides the others that men under the Gospel dispensation can speak of: and there are others yet to be done, terrible to the kings of the earth, as the destruction of antichrist and all the antichristian states, the burning of Rome, the fall of the tenth part of the great city, or Romish jurisdiction, and also of the cities of the nations by an earthquake, and the downfall of all kingdoms and states, to make way for the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Now the power of Christ, as the mighty God, is seen in all these things, which shew his eternal power and Godhead, and that with him is terrible majesty; and these are to be spoken of by good men to the terror of the wicked, and to command a proper awe and reverence of Christ in the minds of others. *And I will declare thy greatness*; the greatness of his person, offices, and grace, as well as he could, being unsearchable, ver. 3. see the note there.

Ver. 7. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, &c.*] Not only his essential goodness, or the perfections of his nature; nor his providential goodness only; but his special grace and goodness to his own people in becoming their surety, in assuming their nature, in laying down his life for them, in working out their salvation, in paying their debts, and providing for them food and raiment, and all

things pertaining to life and godliness: which goodness is great, inexpressibly great, and passing knowledge; if we consider the spring of it, his good will and free favour, and not the works and merits of men; the multitude of persons it reaches to, all the elect of God, a number which no man can number, out of every people and nation; and the many benefits bestowed on them through it, all the blessings of goodness he himself is prevented with, even all spiritual blessings that are in him. Now this will be remembered by the saints, and not forgotten; in the memory of which they are assisted by the spirit of God, who brings this goodness to their remembrance; and under the Gospel dispensation an ordinance is appointed to refresh the memory of the saints with it; and with such helps they are enabled at times abundantly to utter it, or to speak of it in a very free and flowing manner; it comes from them like water from a flowing fountain, as the word ^c signifies; out of the abundance of their hearts, and the great sense they have of his goodness, their mouth speaketh. *And shall sing of thy righteousness*; his essential righteousness as God, the same with his divine Father's; his righteousness as Mediator, or his righteous and faithful performance of his office, as such; and his justifying righteousness, which he undertook to work out and bring in: and those that know it, and have an interest in it, have great reason to sing, because it is commensurate to the demands of law and justice; and so large a robe of righteousness as to enwrap and cover all their persons, and justify them from all things; and because it is so beautiful, rich, and glorious, and makes them appear so; and because it is so well-pleasing to God, and so comfortable and beneficial to them; securing them from wrath, and entitling them to eternal life. Aben Ezra adds the word *saying*, as if what follows was the subject-matter of the song.

Ver. 8. *The Lord is gracious, &c.*] These are the epithets of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may be truly and with great propriety said of him; he is *gracious*, kind, and good, in the instances before mentioned; he is full of grace, and readily distributes it; his words are words of grace; his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are doctrines of grace; his works are works of grace, all flowing from his wondrous grace and mercy: *and full of compassion*; or *merciful*^d, in the most tender manner; hence he came into the world to save sinners, and in his pity redeemed them; and when on earth shewed his compassion both to the bodies and souls of men, by healing the one and instructing the other; and particularly had compassion on the ignorant, and them that were out of the way; pitying those that were as sheep without a shepherd, as the blind Jews under their blind guides were; and is very compassionate to his people under all their temptations, afflictions, trials, and exercises; see Heb. ii. 17, 18, and iv. 15. and v. 2. Matt. v. 36, 37. Mark v. 19. Isa. lxiii. 9. *Slow to anger*; to the wicked Jews, though often provoked by their calumnies and reproaches, and by their ill behaviour to him in various instances; yet we never read but once of his being angry, and that was through

^c ערעטאבאנט, Montanus, Piscator; scaturient, Cocceius.

^d מרעווערן misericors, V. L. Tigurine version, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

grief at the hardness of their hearts, Mark iii. 5. and likewise to his own disciples, who were often froward and perverse, and of bad spirits, very troublesome and afflictive to him, yet he patiently bore with them: *and of great mercy*: a merciful High-priest, typified by the mercy-seat, where we may find grace and mercy at all times; through whom God is merciful to sinners, and to whose mercy we are to look for eternal life.

Ver. 9. *The Lord is good to all, &c.*] Which is to be understood not of the general and providential goodness of God to all men, to all his creatures, and the works of his hands; but of the special goodness of Christ before mentioned, ver. 7. which extends to all the chosen people of God; who are all loved by Christ, redeemed by him, justified and glorified by him; and to Gentiles as well as Jews; for whom he tasted death, laid down his life a ransom for them, and became the propitiation for their sins. Hence his Gospel has been sent to both; and some of each have been effectually called by his grace, and more will. This shews this psalm belongs to Gospel times, in which the grace of Christ appears more large and extensive: *and his tender mercies are over all his works*; meaning not all the creatures his hands have made; though he has a tender regard to them, and is kind and merciful to them all; but such as are made new creatures in him and by him, who are eminently called his workmanship, the work of his hands; these, all of them, share in his special mercy and goodness; see Ephes. ii. 10. Isa. xxix. 23. and xlv. 11.

Ver. 10. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, &c.*] Not all his works or creatures in general; though these do objectively praise him, or are the cause rather of others praising him on their account: but those who are in a special manner the works of his hands, of his powerful and efficacious grace; whom he has formed for himself, that they may shew forth his praise; such as are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: these in an eminent sense, in the best way and manner, praise their blessed Saviour and Redeemer; see Isa. xliiii. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 9. *And thy saints shall bless thee*: which are mentioned last, not as distinct from the former; but as explanatory of them, as well as of their work: these are they that are set apart by the Lord, on whom his favours are bestowed; to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are sanctified by his blood, and also by his spirit: and, being sensible of the blessings of grace they receive from him, rise up and call him blessed, and ascribe blessing, honour, glory, and praise to him, for ever and ever.

Ver. 11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, &c.*] That is, the saints who are his special workmanship, in the celebration of his praise; and, while they are blessing him, will take particular notice, and make particular mention of his kingdom, and the glory of it; not only his kingdom of nature and providence, which ruleth over all, angels and men, good and bad; which deserves the notice of the saints, and is matter of great joy unto them, that their King reigns in the world, but also, and rather, his kingdom of grace, in which he rules by his spirit and grace in the hearts of his people; which is not worldly, but spiritual; is not with outward observation, but lies within

the heart, and makes the Lord's people all-glorious within; consisting of peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and is what can never be removed. The church is Christ's kingdom, in which he reigns; and all the subjects of it are kings and priests unto God: here proper laws are made and observed, and officers appointed to explain them, and see them put in execution; glorious ordinances are administered, in which Christ the King is seen in his beauty; and the glorious Gospel, which is his sceptre, is held forth, and by which he rules in the midst of his enemies. More especially this may regard the glorious kingdom of Christ in the latter day; both in his spiritual reign, in which there will be a great display of glory; as a large effusion of the spirit; much spiritual light and knowledge; great holiness of heart and life; an abundance of peace, temporal and spiritual; great purity of Gospel doctrine, worship, and ordinances: and also in his personal reign; when he will appear glorious, and reign before his ancients gloriously, and his saints will appear with him in glory; the New Jerusalem will have the glory of God upon her; a glory there will be then both upon the bodies and souls of the saints Christ will have with him in that state: *and talk of thy power*: not only as exerted in creation and providence; but of his power in working out the salvation of men; and in conquering and subduing all the spiritual enemies of his people, sin, Satan, the world, and death; in raising himself from the dead, as he will all his saints by the same power at the last day; in going forth into the Gentile world in the ministry of the word, conquering and to conquer, making it powerful and effectual to the conversion of thousands: and also of his power in heaven and in earth, given him as Mediator; and which he has exercised and does exercise on the behalf of his church, and for its protection and welfare: and especially of the more open display of it in the latter day, when he shall take to himself his great power and reign; then will his saints talk of it with great pleasure and thankfulness; see Rev. xi. 15—17.

Ver. 12. *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, &c.*] As in ver. 4. the acts of his power in providence and grace; in the salvation of his people, and the destruction of their enemies; which, with others, are made known in the ministry of the word, to those who were strangers to them, to those without the church, who wait at Wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her door; Aben Ezra interprets it of little ones, or children that knew them not, whose parents would make them known to them: rather it designs the common people, instructed by the word and the ministers of it: *and the glorious majesty of his kingdom*; the majesty of him as King, and the glory of his kingdom, ver. 5, 11. and the perpetuity of it, as follows.

Ver. 13. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, &c.*] So it is opposed to all other kingdoms and monarchies, which have had or will have an end; as the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; with all other states which will be on the spot when this kingdom is set up in its glory, and will continue for ever, Dan. ii. 44. and the King of it is opposed to all other kings, who die, and their kingdoms are no more to them; but he never dies, he lives for evermore; he is the living

God, and so an everlasting King; nor will his kingdom cease at the end of the thousand years, nor when delivered to the Father; only it shall be in a different place and form, and shall remain for ever; for his saints will reign for ever and ever, and he with them. Or it may be rendered, *a kingdom of all worlds^a, or ages*; Christ's kingdom reaching to all worlds; heaven, earth, and hell: or which, according to Arama, takes in the world above, below, and middle; and regards all times past, present, and to come: *and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations*: in this world, and that to come; there is no end of it, Isa. ix. 7. Luke i. 32, 33.

This psalm is written alphabetically, as is observed on the title of it; but the letter *nun* is here wanting, the reason of which Kimchi professes his ignorance of: but Jarchi gives a reason for it, such an one as it is, which he has from the Talmud^b; because David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw the grievous fall of the people of Israel, the prophecy of which begins with this letter, Amos v. 2. Nor is the order always strictly observed in alphabetical psalms; in Psal. xxxvii. the letter *ain* is wanting, and three in Psal. xxv. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, supply this defect here, by inserting these words, *the Lord is faithful in all his words, and holy in all his works*, as if they were begun with the word נאמן, but they seem to be taken from ver. 17, with a little alteration.

Ver. 14. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, &c.*] Not all that fell in Adam, as all mankind did; nor all that fall into sin, as every man does; and therefore not those that fall into hell: but this is to be understood of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, of which the psalmist is speaking; who does that which no mortal king can do, as Aben Ezra observes: another king raises up one, and depresses another; supports one, and lets another fall: but the Lord upholds all his people and subjects with the right hand of his righteousness; though they are liable to fall into sin, and in many instances do fall, and into various temptations and afflictions; yet he sustains and upholds them, that they shall not fall finally and totally by sin, nor be overwhelmed and crushed by their heavy afflictions. Or, *all that are falling^c*; he either upholds and keeps them that they shall not fall, at least so as to perish; or he holds them by his right hand when they are fallen, and raises them up again; and bears them up under all their exercises, so that they are not utterly cast down and destroyed, Psal. xxxvii. 24. *And raiseth up all those that be bowed down*; with a body of sin, under which they groan, being burdened, and which presses them sore; with Satan's temptations, like the woman in the Gospel, bound together by him; and with various troubles and afflictions; but the Lord raises and bears them up under all, and comforts and refreshes them.

Ver. 15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee, &c.*] Not of all creatures, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the

sea, and fowls of the air, as in Psal. civ. 27, 28. but of all the Lord's people, who are subject to fall and be depressed: these, as they look unto him for deliverance and salvation, and wait upon him for it, and expect it from him; so their eyes are directed to him for their spiritual food, as well as for their temporal bread, and ask it of him, and wait to have it from him: *and thou givest them their meat in due season*: the meat which endures to everlasting life; the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; the doctrines of the Gospel, which, as some of them are milk for babes, others are meat for strong men, or strong meat for experienced believers: and these are given forth under Christ's direction, by his ministering servants, who are his wise and faithful stewards, that give to every one of the family their portion of meat in due season, which is the word fitly spoken; and, when it is so, *how good it is!* Luke xii. 42. Prov. xv. 23. This is food convenient for them, given out *in his time^d*, as in the original; either in the Lord's time, which he sees best; or in their time, as the Syriac version, when they most need it, and it will do them most good.

Ver. 16. *Thou openest thine hand, &c.*] Not of providence, but of grace, in which all things are, and from whence they come; and which the Lord opens liberally and bountifully, and gives out all things richly to enjoy; all things pertaining to life and godliness; grace here, with all the supplies of it, and glory hereafter: *and satisfiest the desire of every living thing*; not of every savage creature; every lion, bear, wolf, &c. for then there would be no living in some parts of the world: nor of every carnal, lustful, worldly, and covetous man; who never say they have enough, or are ever satisfied: but of every one that is made spiritually alive, quickened by the spirit and grace of God; these desire spiritual things, spiritual food, more grace and more communion with God, and conformity to Christ; and these desires are before the Lord; and sooner or later they are satisfied, they have what they desire; especially this will be their case, when they awake in the divine likeness. The words may be rendered, *and satisfiest every living one with that which is acceptable with favour^e*; with good will; with loving-kindness; which is better than life: so Naphtali is said to be *satisfied with favour*, Deut. xxxiii. 23. as all living saints are or will be.

Ver. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, &c.*] Christ is righteous in all the ways of providence, in which he is jointly concerned with his father: there are some of the ways of providence, which are now intricate and perplexed, are unsearchable and past finding out, and cannot be easily reconciled to the justice and faithfulness of God, respecting the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous; but these will ere long be made manifest, and they will appear to be just and true. And so in all his ways of grace, in all his decrees; in the choice of some to everlasting life, and the leaving of others; with respect to either of these, there is no unrighteousness in him: nor in

^a מלכות כל עולמים regnum omnium seculorum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

^b T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

^c וְעַיְנֵי כָל הַנְּשָׁמָה מְנַחֵם כְּדָרְשֵׁי תְּרַם פְּנֵי הַנְּשָׁמָה cadentes, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^d בְּתֵרֵוֹ suo tempore, Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^e רַצוֹן re acceptabili, Gassetius, p. 803. benedictione, V. L. benepacito, Piscator, Gejerus; benevolentia, Cocceius.

the redemption of men, for which an adequate price is given; and in which mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, meet together; nor in the justification of a sinner, which is not done without a righteousness, but in such manner that God is just whilst he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; nor in the pardon of sin, which is upon the foot of a satisfaction made to the justice of God, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; nor in eternal life, the gift of God through Christ, which none inherit but righteous ones. Christ is righteous in all his suretyship-engagements, which he has punctually performed, and in the execution of all his offices; in doing which, righteousness and faithfulness are the girdle of his loins and reins: and so likewise he is and will appear righteous in his judgments on his and his people's enemies, in the destruction of antichrist and his followers. And, moreover, he is righteous in all the ways he prescribes for his people to walk in, in all his commandments and ordinances; which are all holy, just, and good. *And holy in all his works*; in all his works of providence; doing no evil, though he suffers it for wise ends, and overrules it for good: and in all his works of grace; in election, which is through holiness and to it; in the redemption of his people, which is from a vain conversation, and that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; in the vocation of them with an holy calling, and to holiness; in bringing them to glory, which is through regeneration and sanctification. It may be rendered, *is merciful or bountiful in all his works**; all he does flowing from his grace, mercy, and goodness.

Ver. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, &c.*] He is not only nigh unto them in relation, being their near kinsman, brother, father, husband, and head, but with respect to place and presence; not in a general way, as he is the omnipresent God, and so nigh to all, and from whose presence there is no fleeing; but in a special way, he is so nigh to them as he is not unto others, Deut. iv. 7. He is in their hearts, and dwells there by faith, and they dwell in him; his blood is sprinkled in their consciences, and his righteousness is unto them and upon them; his salvation is brought near to them, to their very hearts, and they are nearer than when they first believed; he is nigh to them that call upon him, for Christ is equally called upon as the Father; see 1 Cor. i. 2. Acts vii. 57. and xxii. 16. so as to give them what they ask of him, and to help them in all their times of need. *To all that call upon him in truth*; in faith and with fervency, constantly and importunately, and in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts; with true hearts, cordially and affectionately; their hearts and mouths agreeing together, as Kimchi observes.

Ver. 19. *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, &c.*] That have the true fear of God put into their hearts; that fear him not with a servile, but godly fear; that fear the Lord and his goodness, and are true worshippers of him in a spiritual and evangelic manner; for the fear of God includes the whole worship of him, private and public: and the Lord grants to such whatever they desire of him, in his fear, under the direction of his spirit, according to his will, and in sub-

mission to it. Do they desire good things of him, temporal or spiritual? there is no want of any good thing to them that fear him; how should there, when such great goodness is laid up for them? Do they desire his presence, and the discoveries of his love? the sun of righteousness arises on them that fear his name, and his secrets are with them, and his mercy is upon them from everlasting to everlasting. Do they desire his protection from enemies? the Angel of the Lord encamps round about them, and the Lord himself is their help and their shield. *He also will hear their cry, and will save them*; that is, he will hear and answer their prayer, which they put up to him in their distress: they cry to him either mentally or vocally, in their troubles, and his ears are open to their cries, and they enter into them; and he regards them, and saves them out of them; out of their temporal and out of their spiritual troubles; he saves them with a temporal and with an eternal salvation.

Ver. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him, &c.*] All do not love Christ, none but those that are born again, and believe in him: love to Christ is a fruit of the spirit, and accompanies faith in him; it flows from the love of Christ shed into the heart, and from a view of his loveliness, and a sense of his benefits; and, where it is true and genuine, it is superlative and sincere, and shews itself by a regard to its truths and ordinances, to his people, ways, and worship: and such the Lord preserves often in times of public calamity; and from the evil of sin, the dominion of it; from Satan's temptations, from being devoured and destroyed by him; and from a final and total falling away; he preserves them to his kingdom and glory, which is promised to them that love him. *But all the wicked will he destroy*; he will consume them from off the earth, so that the wicked shall be no more; he will destroy the man of sin, and all his adherents: all the enemies of Christ, those that do not love him, but oppose him, his Gospel, kingdom, and interest; the beast and false prophet, with all that attend them, shall be cut off; the day of the Lord, like an oven, shall burn up all that do wickedly, and shall leave them neither root nor branch: this will especially be true at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall be ordered to everlasting fire; and they shall go into eternal punishment, when they shall be turned into hell; and all the nations that forget God. Kimchi interprets this of future time, when there shall not be a wicked man left in the world, and compares it with Mal. iv. 1.

Ver. 21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, &c.*] Always, at all times, as long as he lived; and particularly when all the Lord's people shall be brought safe to glory, and the wicked destroyed; when, as Kimchi observes, he should live again with the dead that shall be raised. *And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever*; not every animal, or irrational creature; not carnal men, but spiritual men; such as are praying ones, that come to a God hearing prayer: these should be praising ones; such who have hearts of flesh given them, and are sensible of divine favours, as well as of their sinfulness and unworthiness; Jews and Gentiles, all sorts of men called by grace, all flesh

* מִסִּדִּיק misericors, Paginaius, Montanus, so Ainsworth; benignus Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

on whom the spirit of God is poured; these are all excited to praise and bless the holy name of the Redeemer, with the words and by the example of the

psalmist. And thus the psalm ends as it begun, with praise and blessing.

P S A L M CXLVI.

THIS psalm is entitled by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, *hallelujah*, of Haggai and Zechariah; and by Apollinarius, the common hymn of them: and the Syriac inscription is still more express, "it was said by Haggai and Zechariah, prophets, who came up with the captivity out of Babylon." Theodoret says this title was in some Greek copies in his time; but was not in the Septuagint, in the Hexapla: nor is it in any other Greek interpreters, nor in the Hebrew text, nor in the Targum; though some Jewish commentators, as R. Obadiah, take it to be an exhortation to the captives in Babylon to praise the Lord: and Kimchi interprets it of their present captivity and deliverance from it; and observes, that the psalmist seeing, by the Holy Spirit, the gathering of the captives, said this with respect to Israel; and so refers it to the times of the Messiah, as does also Jarchi, especially the last verse; and which, though they make it to serve an hypothesis of their own, concerning their vainly-expected Messiah; yet it is most true, that the psalm is concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, to whom all the characters and descriptions given agree.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or, *hallelujah*; which, in the Greek and Vulgate Latin versions, is the title of the psalm; but is rather the beginning of it; and is an exhortation to men, especially to the saints, to praise the Lord, the Lord Christ, the Lord of the world, who has created it and upholds it; the Lord of lords, David's Lord; and the Lord of all his people, by creation, redemption, and grace; and from whom they receive all blessings and mercies, temporal and spiritual, and are therefore under the highest obligations to praise him. *Praise the Lord, O my soul*: the psalmist does not put others upon that he does not choose to do himself; but, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, and prophet of the church, leads the way and sets an example; and not only strikes his harp and psaltery, and with his tongue, mouth, and lips, shews forth the praise of the Lord; but engages his heart, his soul, in this work; which, as it was capable of it, so most agreeable to the Lord, who requires the heart in his service, and to be worshipped in spirit and in truth: and this being the better and more noble part of man, making melody in it to the Lord, and engaging all the powers and faculties of it in such an employment, must be acceptable to him.

Ver. 2. *While I live will I praise the Lord, &c.*] As he had good reason to do, since he had his life from him, and was upheld in it by him; who also favoured him with the mercies and comforts of life; and that every day, being renewed to him every morning, and

continued all the days of his life; which determined him throughout the whole of it to praise the Lord: nay, he had his spiritual life from him, with all the blessings of it; which are lasting, everlasting ones, and had hope of eternal life with him. *I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being; or while I am*¹; not only in this world, but in the world to come; for men have a being or existence after death, and the saints have a most comfortable and happy one then; and will be more capable of singing praises to their incarnate God, and which will be their work to all eternity; see Psal. civ. 33.

Ver. 3. *Put not your trust in princes, &c.*] Not in foreign princes, in alliances and confederacies with them; nor in any at home. David did not desire his people to put their trust in him, nor in his nobles and courtiers; but in the Lord Christ, who, as he is the object of praise, is also the proper object of trust. Princes, though ever so liberal and bountiful, as their name signifies, and therefore called benefactors, Luke xxii. 25. or ever so mighty and powerful, wise and prudent, yet are not to be depended upon; they are changeable, fickle, and inconstant; and oftentimes not faithful to their word, but fallacious and deceitful; *men of high degree are a lie*, Psal. lxii. 9. wherefore it is better to trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength; who gives all things richly to enjoy; who is unchangeable, and ever abides faithful; see Psal. cxviii. 8, 9. Nor *in the son of man, in whom there is no help; or salvation*^m: not in any mere man born of a woman; not in Abraham, the father of the faithful, of whom the Jews boasted, as the Midrash; nor in Moses, as Arama; nor in Cyrus, as R. Obadiah; no, nor in David himself, nor in any of the princes; for how great soever they look, or in whatsoever honour and esteem they may be, they are but sons of men; are frail mortal men, and die like men, though they may be called gods, as they are by office: but no man or son of man, let him be what he will, is to be trusted in; there is a curse on him that does it, Jer. xvii. 5. There is indeed a Son of man that is to be trusted in, the Lord Jesus Christ: but then he is God as well as man, the true God, the great God, God over all, blessed for ever; were he not, he would not be the proper object of trust, for there is *no help or salvation* in a mere creature; even kings and princes cannot help and save themselves oftentimes, and much less their people; their salvation is of God, and not from themselves, or from their armies, Psal. xxxiii. 16. and cxlv. 10. Prov. xxi. 31. There is help in Christ, on whom it is laid, and where it is found; there is salvation in him, but in no other; he is the author and giver of

¹ בעירי dum fuero, Pagninus; in adhuc me, Montanus; quamdiu ero, Cocceius; *אני אהיה*, Sept. quamdiu sum, Schmidt, Ethiopic version; so Ainsworth.

^m חסרון salus, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

it, and therefore he, and not another, is to be trusted in.

Ver. 4. *His breath goeth forth, &c.*] That is, the breath of a son of man, of any and every one of the princes; it goes forth continually, and is drawn in again as long as a man lives; but at death it goes forth, and returns no more till the resurrection: the breath which the Lord breathed into man, and which is in his nostrils while he lives, and is very precarious. And when it is taken away, he dies, and *he returneth to his earth*; from whence he was taken, and of which he was made; upon which he lived, where he dwelt, and in which he took delight and pleasure, minding earth and earthly things, and which is now all he has; who, though he may have had many large estates and possessions, nay, have ruled over many kingdoms and countries, yet his property of earth is now no more than the length and breadth of a grave; he returns to earth as soon as he dies, becoming a lump of clay; and particularly when he is interred in it, and when by corruption and worms he is turned into it. *In that very day his thoughts perish*: in the day, hour, and moment he dies: not that the soul ceases, or ceases to think at death; it is immortal, and dies not; and, as it exists in a separate state after death, it retains all its powers and faculties, and, among the rest, its power of thinking; which it is capable of exercising, and does, as appears from the case of the souls under the altar, Rev. vi. 9. But the meaning is, that at death all the purposes and designs of men are at an end; all their projects and schemes, which they had formed, and were pursuing, now come to nothing; whether to do good to others, or to aggrandize themselves and families; and therefore such mortal creatures are not to be depended upon, since all their promises may fail; nay, even their good designs may be frustrated; see Job xvii. 12.

Ver. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, &c.*] The God of the patriarch Jacob, the Messiah, who is that God that fed him all his life, the Angel that redeemed him from all evil, with whom in the form of a man he wrestled, when he had power over God, and saw him face to face; the God of the posterity of Jacob, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, who went before them by day and night in the wilderness, and saved and carried them all the days of old; the God of spiritual Jacob, or Israel, the church of the chosen, redeemed, and called ones; the God of every Israelite indeed, of every true believer, as he was Thomas's Lord and God: now happy is that man that has him for his help, who helps his servant Israel, all his people out of the sad estate of sin and misery into which they are brought; helps them to all the blessings of grace, and to all the supplies of it in their time of need; helps them under all their infirmities, temptations, and afflictions; helps them in all their way to heaven, and against every enemy of their souls; and at last helps them to everlasting glory and happiness. *Whose hope is in the Lord his God*: in Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh; Christ the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof; who is our hope, and in all his people the hope of glory; not only the author and giver of the grace of hope, but the object, ground, and foundation of it: now happy is that man whose

hope alone is in him; who hopes for salvation, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him, and him only; such are safe and secure, who, as prisoners of hope, turn to him their strong hold; those shall want no good thing that hope and trust in him; they have peace now through his blood and righteousness, and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; see Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

Ver. 6. *Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is, &c.*] This and the following verses are a description of that divine Person, even Christ, who is the help and hope of his people; and every character of him is a reason for faith and hope in him; all things are made by him, which are in the whole compass of creation, the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them; the fowls of the airy heaven; the sun, moon, and stars, the hosts of the starry heavens; and the angels, the inhabitants of the third heaven; the beasts of the field, and cattle of a thousand hills; and man, the chief of God's works on earth; and the innumerable fishes of the sea, great and small; and he that made all these, what is it he cannot do? he must be the mighty God, and a mighty Saviour, and the proper object of trust and hope; see John i. 1-3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 10. *Which keepeth truth for ever*; the truth of doctrine, who as Mediator is full of it, and by whom it came; and, as the Prophet of the church, concealed it not, from the great congregation, the law of truth being in his lips, as the antitype of Levi; the truth of the promises, which are all yea and amen in him; every promise being made to him, and being in him, as the promise of eternal life, with all others, which are safely kept by him, and he will see them performed; the truth of all his engagements with his father, as the surety of his people; to take their nature, obey, suffer, and die for them, which he has truly and punctually made good, being faithful to him that appointed him; and the truth of all his sayings, concerning his presence with his church and ministers unto the end of the world, and of whatsoever should befall them, from his resurrection and ascension to his second coming.

Ver. 7. *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed, &c.*] All judgment being committed to Christ as Mediator, he executes it on the behalf of his oppressed ones, and breaks in pieces their oppressors; being oppressed with sin, and lying under the power of it, he condemned it in his flesh, wrought out a righteousness to justify from it, and redeemed them from all their iniquities; being oppressed by Satan, and led captive by him, he took them as a prey from the mighty, and led captivity captive; and, when oppressed by the world, he is on their side and takes their part, and thoroughly pleads their cause, and suffers no weapon formed against them to prosper; and will ere long destroy antichrist and his followers, and bring down his judgments on them, so that men of the earth shall no more oppress; and especially at the last judgment, he, the righteous Judge, will render tribulation to them that have troubled his people, and set the crown of righteousness on their heads; see Psal. x. 18. and lxxii. 4. *Which giveth food to the hungry*: in a literal sense he gave manna and quails to the hungry Israelites in the wilderness, fed five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes, and four thousand with seven

loaves and a few fishes, when here on earth; and in a spiritual sense, to such as are in a starving and famishing condition, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, he gives himself, the bread of life, and his grace, the water of life; he gives them to eat of the hidden manna, and of the tree of life; he gives them his word, his Gospel, which is milk for babes and meat for strong men; he gives them his ordinances, which are a feast of fat things, and so he fills and satisfies their hungry souls. *The Lord looseth the prisoners*: such as were bound by diseases and infirmities of body, he loosed in the days of his flesh here; and some that were held with the cords of death he raised from the dead, Luke xiii. 11, 12. Matt. xi. 5. and his people, who are in a spiritual sense prisoners of sin, Satan, and the law, being shut up and held under by them, he proclaims liberty to them, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; he opens the prison-doors, and says to the prisoners, Go forth; he delivers them from the power of sin, the slavery of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and brings them into a state of liberty, Isa. lxi. 1. and xlix. 9. yea, all the prisoners in the grave he will loose at the last day; he has the key of hell and death, and will open those prisons and set them free; they shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of damnation.

Ver. 8. *The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, &c.*] Who are corporeally blind; the eyes of many such were opened by Christ when here on earth, and one who was born blind; and such who are spiritually blind as to any knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, of the way of life and salvation by Christ, of the Spirit and his operations, of their state and condition by nature, or of the things of the Gospel; the eyes of many such he opens so as to see their sin and danger, their want of righteousness, and need of Christ, and salvation by him; this is usually done-by means of the ministry of the word, which is as an eye-salve; but the work is Christ's, and a work of almighty power it is; see Isa. xxxv. 4, 5. *The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down*; as he did in a literal sense the poor woman that was bowed together, Luke xiii. 11, 12, 16. and as he does in a spiritual sense such as are heavy laden with sin, and pressed with the burden of it; that are depressed with Satan's temptations, and labour under sore afflictions and exercises; all which he supports his people under, and delivers them out of; and cheers and refreshes their souls with discoveries of his love and grace unto them; see Psal. cxlv. 14. *The Lord loveth the righteous*; not self-righteous persons; these are not loved by God the Father, who preferred a publican to one of them; nor by Christ, who came not to call them to repentance; nor by the Spirit, who reproveth and convinces men of self-righteousness; nor by angels, who rejoice at one sinner that repents more than over ninety and nine just persons who in their own opinion need no repentance: but such who are righteous through Christ's righteousness imputed to them, and there are none righteous in any other way; and these Christ loves, not for any righteousness in them, or done by them; nor does his love flow from his own righteousness upon them, for he loved them from all eternity; and his engaging and

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undertaking to work out a righteousness for them, and the bringing in of that righteousness, were the fruits and effects of his love to them, and evidences of it; he suffered for them when they were in themselves unjust; he died for them when sinners, ungodly, and enemies; nevertheless, as they are clothed with his perfect righteousness, and are introduced unto him and presented before him in this raiment of needle-work, this clothing of wrought gold, this fine linen clean and white; he takes delight and pleasure in them, and they appear a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Ver. 9. *The Lord preserveth the strangers, &c.*] The life of them, as he did the daughter of the Greek, a Syrophenician woman, and a Samaritan, by healing them of their diseases, Mark vii. 26—29. Luke xvii. 16—18. and in a spiritual sense he preserves the lives and saves the souls of his people among the Gentiles, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise; for these he laid down his life a ransom, and became the propitiation for their sins; to these he sends his Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation unto them. *He relieveth the fatherless and widow*; in their distresses and troubles, who have no helper; a wonderful instance of his relieving a widow, in the most disconsolate circumstances, we have in raising the widow of Naim's son to life, and restoring him to his mother, Luke vii. 12—15. in him the *fatherless*, and all that in a spiritual sense are destitute of help in the creatures, and see they are so, *find mercy*; nor will he leave his people comfortless, or as orphans and fatherless ones, but will and does come and visit them, relieve and supply them with every thing convenient for them; though his church here on earth may seem to be as a widow, he being in heaven at the right hand of God, yet he cares for her in the wilderness, and provides for her support, where she is nourished with the word and ordinances, and will be until he comes again; see Hos. xiv. 3. John xiv. 18. Rev. xii. 14. *But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down*; so that they cannot find it; nor their hands perform their enterprise; their schemes and counsels are all confounded and blasted by him, and all their policy and power are not able to prevail against his church and people; see Psal. i. 6.

Ver. 10. *The Lord shall reign for ever, &c.*] The Messiah, who is King of kings and Lord of lords; and in this he is superior to them, they reign but for a while, but he for evermore; the throne of majesty and glory on which he sits is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; of his government, and the peace of it, there will be no end; he is King of saints now, and reigns in their hearts, and in his churches, and in the world; and he will reign with his people, and they with him, a thousand years on earth; and then they will reign together to all eternity; see Psal. xlv. 6. Isa. ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44. Both Jarchi and Kimchi refer this to the Messiah and his kingdom; the note of the former is, "he shall confirm his kingdom in the redemption or salvation of his children;" and of the latter, "it shall be said he is King over all, after he has executed judgment on the wicked in the valley of Jehoshaphat." *Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations*; he who is Zion's God is Zion's

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King, head over all things to the church; and this is her joy and comfort in every age, that her God and her King reigns, and will reign for evermore; and especially in a glorious manner in the latter day; see Isa. lii. 7. and as all this is a solid ground and foundation of truth in the Lord, and serves to encourage

saints to make him their help and hope; and shews how happy they are that have him as such; so it is matter of praise and thanksgiving: hence it follows, *praise ye the Lord; or hallelujah; and so the psalm ends as it began.*

P S A L M CXLVII.

THIS psalm is thought to be written by David, and according to Theodoret predicts the return of the Jews from Babylon, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Zorobabel, which seems to be grounded on ver. 2. though the words there agree well enough with the times of David; hence the title in the Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac versions, and Apollinaris, is as the preceding; the Syriac adds, "concerning Zorobabel and Joshua the priest, and Ezra, who were solicitous and diligent in building Jerusalem." Aben Ezra and other Jewish writers think it foretels the future rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews from their present captivity, and refer it to the times of the Messiah; and so far it may be right, that it respects Christ and the praise of him, on account of his nature and works; and may take in the conversion of the Jews. It seems to be written by the same person, and on the same account, as the preceding psalm.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] When he shall reign, as Kimchi connects this psalm with the preceding; the arguments used to engage men to this work are taken partly from the nature of it, as in the next clauses; and partly from what the Lord is and does, as in the following verses. *For it is good to sing praises unto our God; it being agreeably to his revealed will, what he enjoins, approves of, and accepts, and is profitable to his people, as well as makes for his glory; see Psal. xcii. 1. Some render it, because he is good, as in Psal. cvi. 1. and cvii. 1. but the accents, and what follows, will not admit of this sense. For it is pleasant; to our God; with which the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, join this clause; the sacrifice of praise is more pleasing to the Lord than any ceremonial sacrifice, especially when offered from a grateful heart in the name of Christ, and with a view to his glory; and it is pleasant to saints themselves, when grace is in exercise, and they make melody in their hearts to the Lord. And praise is comely: is due to the Lord, and becomes his people to give it to him; it is but their reasonable service, and a beautiful and lovely sight it is to see the chosen, redeemed, and called of the Lamb, harping with their harps, and singing the song of redeeming love.*

Ver. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, &c.*] Literally, after the Babylonish captivity, according to some; or rather when taken from the Jebusites by David; or spiritually the church, which is often called Jerusalem, even the Gospel church, of which Christ is the builder, his ministers are instruments, his people are the materials, and which, though now greatly

fallen to decay, will be rebuilt by him in the latter day; when his work will be revived among his saints, his Gospel more powerfully preached, his ordinances more purely administered, and multitudes of souls converted; and which will be matter of praise and thanksgiving, as it is now matter of prayer; see Psal. li. 18, and cii. 13, 16. Jer. xxx. 18, 19. *He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel; the exiles from Babylon, as some; or rather such who in the times of the judges had been carried captive by their neighbours, or fled from their cities, in the times of Saul for fear of the Philistines, and who were gathered to their own country, cities, and houses, when David began to reign. Spiritually this regards the whole Israel of God, the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, and the outcasts of them; so called, not because ever cast out or cast off by the Lord, being received into his favour, covenant, and church; but either because cast out of the company of profane men, as evil and unworthy; or cast out of Israel, the church of God, very justly, for offences given; but, being brought to repentance, are restored and gathered in again: or rather this may represent the Lord's people as in a state of nature, like the wretched infant cast out into the open field, scattered up and down in the world, in a state of distance from God, Christ, and his people; these are gathered by Christ in redemption, who came to seek and collect them together; and by his spirit in conversion, when he gathers them to himself, and into his fold; and this, as it is an occasion of joy to angels and saints, is matter of praise and thanksgiving to the outcasts themselves, thus gathered in. The Septuagint render it, to the dispersion or dispersed of Israel; see John vii. 35.*

Ver. 3. *He healeth the broken in heart, &c.*] Christ is a physician; many are the diseases of his people; he heals them all by his blood, stripes, wounds; and among the rest their broken hearts, which none can cure but himself; hearts broken by the word, as a hammer, accompanied with a divine power; which have a true sense of sin, and godly sorrow for it; are truly contrite, such as the Lord has a respect unto, dwells with, and accepts of; and these he heals, and only he, by pouring in oil and wine, as the good Samaritan; or by applying pardoning grace and mercy to them, streaming through his blood. *And bindeth up their wounds; or griefs;* and so gives them ease, health, and peace, for which they have abundant reason to call upon their souls to bless his name and sing his praise; see Psal. ciii. 1—3. compare with this Isa. lxi. 1. Luke x. 30—34.

music used in the times of the Old Testament; an emblem of the heart, and of making melody in it to the Lord: the hearts of believers are the harps of God, on and with which they sing unto him, when they sing aright, and these are in proper tune.

Ver. 8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, &c.*] Which are exhalations of vapours out of the earth, and of waters out of the sea, by the sun, and formed into clouds; which are carried about in the air, and let down in showers of rain upon the earth, in proper places, for the good of the inhabitants; and sometimes, when necessary, the heavens are covered and become black with them, as in the times of Ahab, 2 Kings xviii. 35. and though they look dark, dull, and melancholy, yet are for great usefulness: hereby, as it follows, rain is prepared for the earth, to make it fruitful, to bring forth an increase for men and beasts; and is a wonderful display of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, for which he is to be praised. This may be either an emblem of afflictive dispensations of Providence, which sometimes make a dark and cloudy day, a day of clouds and thick darkness; especially when the Lord covers himself with a cloud, or hides his face from his people; their sins, as clouds interposing between him and them; and yet these afflictions and desertions, though not joyous, but grievous, tend to make the saints more holy, humble, and fruitful: or else of the churches being supplied with Gospel ministers; the *heaven*, and so the *kingdom of heaven*, often signifies the church of God or Christ; consisting of men, partakers of the heavenly calling, being born from above; and in which the Gospel and ordinances, that come from heaven, are ministered; and which, for the communion had with God, and the privileges of it, is as it were the suburbs and gate of heaven. Ministers of the word are *clouds* full of the rain of heavenly and evangelic doctrine, which they drop and distil as the rain and dew upon the mowen grass; and the *covering* the heavens with them may denote the plenty of them, or a sufficient number of them, as in the first times of the Gospel: all which are of God, who gives to his churches pastors after his own heart; and commands and directs those where to drop the rain of doctrine, and where not, for which he is to be praised; see Isa. v. 6. *Who prepareth rain for the earth*; which is purely his preparation, production, and gift, to water the earth and make it fruitful, and is what none of the vanities or idols of the Gentiles could give; and what he prepares in the clouds, the heavens are covered with: to this the word of God and the evangelic doctrine is compared, because of its original; it is of God, and from heaven; it is dispensed and falls by divine direction, and sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and often in great plenty, as at the first, so in the last times of the Gospel dispensation; and brings many blessings of grace and goodness with it; and, like rain, is cooling, softening, refreshing, and fructifying; and this is prepared of God, and ordained by him before the world was, for the good of his people; see Deut. xxxii. 2. Isa. lv. 10, 11. 1 Cor. ii. 6. *Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains*; which would be otherwise dry and barren; but, by the clouds letting down rain upon them, grass grows on them for the cattle on a thousand hills. *Mountains*,

in a figurative sense, signify churches, high, strong, well-founded, visible, and where God makes a feast of fat things for his people, Isa. xxv. 6. *grass* denotes true believers, they of the city which flourish like grass; to which they are like, for their weakness in themselves, their number, verdure, and fruitfulness, and for their growth in the church; which is greatly owing to the Gospel and ordinances as means, the rain of Gospel doctrine, the pure, sincere, and unadulterated word of God; by which souls grow in grace, and in the knowledge of divine things; see Psal. lxxii. 16. Rev. ix. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

Ver. 9. *He giveth to the beast his food, &c.*] Through the plenty of grass growing upon the mountains, by the rain falling from the clouds of heaven upon them: these cannot provide for themselves, but the Lord feeds them; and they wait upon him for their food, and receive it of him, Psal. civ. 27, 28. How much more will he feed his own people, both with temporal and spiritual food; though in their fallen state they are become like the beasts, of which they are sensible when called by grace, and own and acknowledge it! Psal. xlix. 12. and lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2. And to the *young ravens which cry*: which are particularly mentioned, because contemptible creatures, and of no use and service to men, and by the ceremonial law were impure to the Jews; and the rather, because, as naturalists observe, they are very early turned out of their nests, or forsaken by their dams: and this particular instance of the care of Providence is elsewhere observed, Job xxxviii. 41. Luke xii. 24. Aram takes notice of the preservation of this creature in the ark, and the use of it to Elijah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, *that call upon him*; that is, upon God and to him; they are expressly said to cry, Job xxxviii. 41. The ancient fathers interpret this figuratively; and by the *ravens* understand the Gentiles; and by their *young ones* Christians that spring from them, who call upon the true God.

Ver. 10. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse, &c.*] It has been his will and pleasure to give the horse strength for the use and service of men, both for labour and war; and as this is a creature of his, and the work of his hands, it must be agreeable to him, Job xxxix. 19. yet a horse, though prepared for the battle, is a vain thing for safety, which is only of the Lord; neither can it deliver any by its great strength; nor are a king and his country saved by the multitude of an host, or by a large cavalry: nor are these what the Lord delights in, nor does he save men for the sake of them; though a well-mounted cavalry may be a pleasing sight to men, and they may raise their expectations, and promise themselves great things from them; yet these are of no account with God, who can save as well without them as with them, Prov. xxi. 31. Psal. xxxiii. 16, 17. The Targum is, "he delighteth not in the strength of those that ride on "horses;" that are well mounted, and pride themselves in it; and are equipped for war, and are mighty to engage in it, and prepared to make their escape in danger: Kimchi's note is, "he delighteth "not in man, who puts his confidence in the strength "of the horse;" see Psal. xx. 8. Isa. xxxi. 1. *He*

taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man; in which his strength lies, and of which he is apt to glory; but should not, it being displeasing to God; who delights not therein, but in loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, Jer. ix. 23, 24. not in the legs of a man of war, as Arama; which are strong to stand his ground, or swift to flee away when hard-pressed; see Amos ii. 14, 15. so the Targum, "he takes no pleasure in the legs of men that run;" that are swift to run races, or to flee in battle; to this sense are the notes of Jarchi and Kimchi. It seems to intend the infantry in an army, as the cavalry before; and both intimate that neither horse nor foot are to be trusted in for safety, how pleasing or promising they may be, since God seeth not as man does: or reference may be had to athletic exercises of horse and foot-races, of wrestling, combats, &c. men may delight in, but God does not. What are pleasing to him are exercises of a spiritual kind; such as fleeing to Jesus, the strong tower; running the Christian race, to obtain the incorruptible crown; wrestling against principalities and powers, and such acts of grace as are next mentioned.

Ver. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, &c.*] With a filial and godly fear; that serve and worship him, privately and publicly, with reverence and love: as appears by the goodness he lays up for them; the good things he communicates to them; the discoveries of his love, covenant, and grace, they have from him; the guard he sets about them; his eye of providence and grace over them; and his heart full of love, pity, and compassion to them; see Psal. xxxiii. 18. *In those that hope in his mercy*; not general, but special; not in the absolute mercy of God, but as displayed in Christ; and great encouragement there is to hope in it, from the plenty of it in his heart, from the instances of it among men, and from the blessings of grace and salvation that spring from it: and in such the Lord takes pleasure; hope is his own grace, and mercy is his delight; and he is pleased with those that exercise hope upon it: not that the graces of fear and hope, and the exercise of them, are the cause and motives of God's delight in his people, which, as they were considered in Christ, was before the world was, or those graces were in them; but these describe and point out the persons who are openly and manifestly the objects of his delight and pleasure. Plutarch^s, an Heathen writer, seems to have been acquainted with this and the preceding verse, and to refer to them, when he says, "it is somewhere said, that God is not a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of men, and desires to dwell with those that are eminently good; nor does he refuse nor despise the familiar converse of a man divine and wise."

Ver. 12. *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, &c.*] The inhabitants of it, as Kimchi; not Jerusalem in a literal sense, for this respects future time, as A ben Ezra; the world to come, the times of the Messiah: and intends the spiritual Jerusalem, as Arama; that which is free, the mother of us all; the Gospel church, and the members of it; which have great reason to praise the Lord, for their special blessings and peculiar privi-

leges; see Gal. iv. 26, 27. Heb. xii. 22, 23. *Praise thy God, O Zion*; not the house and family of David, as R. Obadiah; nor the priests and Levites in the temple, as others; but the same as before, the church and people of God; the Mount Zion God has loved and chose for his habitation; the city of our solemnities in Gospel times; the perfection of beauty and joy of the whole earth; whose God and King is Christ; and whom Zion and all her children should praise, being her incarnate God, Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh. With this verse the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, begin the psalm.

Ver. 13. *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates, &c.*] Of Jerusalem, of Zion the church of God. *Gates* are for the letting in of persons into the city of our God; which are Christ, faith in him, and a profession of it; see Isa. xxvi. 1, 2, *bars* are for the security of those that are in it, and to keep out the enemy: and these, *strengthened*, denote the utmost safety of the true members of Christ and his church; who have nothing to fear from their spiritual enemies, sin, law, Satan, the world, death, and hell: God is on their side; Christ is the munition of rocks unto them; the Holy Spirit is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world; and angels are guards about them; all which is matter of praise, and a sufficient reason for it. *He hath blessed thy children within thee*; multiplied them and made them fruitful, increased the number of them; even the spiritual children of the church, brought forth to Christ by her; born in her, through the ministry of the Gospel; and brought up by her, with the ordinances of it. These in the first times of the Gospel were very numerous, and will be so again in the latter day, like the drops of the morning-dew; and are and will be blessed with all spiritual blessings, with pardoning, justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, and with eternal life; for which the Lord's name is to be praised.

Ver. 14. *He maketh peace in thy borders, &c.*] Which are usually most infested by enemies. It may denote the universality of peace throughout the land, in all the parts and borders of it; and be understood of the outward peace of the church with her enemies, and of the abundance and continuance of it in the latter day; and of that concord and harmony that shall be among the members of it; and also of that inward spiritual conscience-peace each enjoy through believing; and which is in and from Christ, and flows from his blood and righteousness, applied for pardon and justification; and is another reason for praising the Lord. *And filleth thee with the finest of the wheat*; or, *fat of the wheat*; the best of it; see Deut. xxxii. 14. which is the choicest of grain, and makes the best of bread, and especially the finest flour of it; and to be filled and satisfied with this, or to have enough of it, is a great temporal blessing. Here it may be understood spiritually of the Gospel, which may be compared to wheat, and the finest of it, for its excellency and purity, for its solidity and substantiality; with which the chaff of human doctrine is not to be mentioned, Jer. xxxiii. 28. and for its

^r In Vita Numæ, vol. 1. p. 62.

^s אֲדִיפֵי adipe, Montanus, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

salutary nourishing and strengthening virtue; and especially of Christ, the sum and substance of it, sometimes compared to a corn of wheat, John xii. 24. for his superior excellency to all others, and the purity of his nature; for his great fruitfulness, and for being suitable food to his people; the bread of life, for which he is prepared by his sufferings and death; which may be signified by the beating out of the corn, and grinding the wheat, and making it into bread, fit for use: and for this spiritual food believers are abundantly thankful, and have reason to praise the Lord.

Ver. 15. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, &c.*] Which Kimchi interprets of rain, which causes the wheat to grow; since afterwards mention is made of snow, and of hoar frost and ice. Aben Ezra understands it of the decree of God, which he executes on earth. The Targum, of the *Memra*, or Word of the Lord; the essential Word, the Messiah; whom the Lord sent on earth to perform the great work of redemption and salvation; and who came speedily, and tarried not when the fulness of time was come, as follows. It may design God's word of providence, which answers to his word of power in the first creation of all things; and which orders every thing done in the earth, and is instantly obeyed; which agrees with ver. 18, and Psal. cxlviii. 8. Or rather the word of the Gospel; the doctrines and ordinances of divine revelation, agreeably to ver. 19, 20. and so may have respect to the mission of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, to go into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature. *His word runneth very swiftly*; so the Gospel did in the first times of it, like lightning, from one end of the heaven to the other; the words of it went into all the world, and the sound of it unto the ends of the earth; it had a free course, and was glorified: and so it will in the latter day, when many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased; see Rom. x. 18. 2 Thess. iii. 1. Dan. xii. 4.

Ver. 16. *He giveth snow like wool, &c.*] For colour as white as wool; so the Targum and Kimchi: and for the manner of its falling, lightly and gently as a lock of wool; which for its thinness and fineness it also resembles. Hence the ancients used to call snow *νεμεσις υδατος*, woolly water; and Martial^g gives it the name of *densum vellus aquarum*, a thick fleece of waters: so another poet^h calls clouds flying fleeces of wool, to which they sometimes seem like; Plinyⁱ calls it the froth of the celestial waters. And it is like wool for its usefulness to the earth; for as wool covers the sheep, and clothes made of it cover men, and keep them warm; so snow falling upon the earth covers it and keeps it warm, and secures the wheat and other fruits of the earth from the injuries of the cold: and this lies among the treasures of the Lord, and he brings it out from thence, and commands it to be on the earth; and it is an useful gift of his providence, for which his name is to be praised; see Job xxxvii. 6. and xxxviii. 22. The Jews have a saying, as Arama observes, that one day of snow is better than five of

rain. In the third year of Valens and Valentinianus, with the Atrébates (a people in the Netherlands), real wool fell from the clouds, mixed with rain^l. Several blessings of grace are signified by this figure; as pardon of sin, the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the efficacy of the word of God, Psal. li. 7. Isa. i. 18. and lv. 10, 11. Lam. iv. 7. *He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes*; which is the dew congealed by the intense cold of the air in the night-season^m: this for its colour looks like ashes, and for its infinite number of particles may be compared to them; which are spread here and there, and every where; over gardens, fields, lands, herbs, plants, and trees, as if they were strewed with ashes. And to hot ashes it may be compared, because of its burning nature, shrivelling up leaves, herbs, and plants, as if burnt; hence called *pruina* in the Latin tongueⁿ. The manna is compared to this for its smallness, Exod. xvi. 14. which was typical of Christ, the hidden manna, and of the ministry of the Gospel; little, mean, and contemptible, in the eyes of carnal men; torturing and tormenting to them, as the fire that came out of the mouths of the witnesses; and is the savour of death unto death to some, while it is the savour of life unto life to others.

Ver. 17. *He casteth forth his ice like morsels, &c.*] Divided like morsels, as the Targum; cut into pieces, like morsels of bread. This seems to have respect to hail-stones, which sometimes fall like pieces of ice, and are very prejudicial to the fruits of the earth: this was one of the ten plagues of Egypt; and whereby also many of the Canaanites were destroyed in the times of Joshua, Exod. ix. 23. Josh. x. 11. and there is an exceeding great storm of hail yet to come, very dreadful; see Rev. xvi. 21. This is expressive of the wrath, vengeance, and judgments of God upon men, by which he is known in various perfections of his nature; as his power, justice, and holiness, for which he is celebrated, Isa. xxx. 30. *Who can stand before his cold?* which he has purposed and promised shall be; for he has said, that *cold and heat shall not cease*, as long as *the earth remains*; and which he appoints and orders to be, for *by the breath of God frost is given*, Gen. viii. 22. Job xxxvii. 10. and this is sometimes and in some places so very vehement, that it is intolerable; men are obliged to keep within doors, to make them fires, and put on more clothes; and the *hands of every man are sealed up* from business; even the *beasts go into their dens, and remain in their places*, or get what shelter they can; see Job xxxvii. 7, 8. And if there is no standing before his cold, who can stand before the heat of his anger, or his furious wrath and indignation, when it is poured out like fire? see Psal. lxxvi. 7. Nah. i. 5, 6. Rev. vi. 15—17.

Ver. 18. *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them, &c.*] The snow, the hoar frost, and ice: this he does by a word of his, who can freeze the earth and waters, and thaw them at his pleasure; by ordering the sun to break forth with great heat, or rain to fall in great plenty; of both which Kimchi interprets his word; as well as by causing a warm wind to blow, as follows.

^l Eustathius in Dionys. Perieget. p. 91.

^m Epigram. l. 4. Ep. 3.

ⁿ Aristoph. Nubes, p. 146.

^o Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 2.

^p Orosii Hist. l. 7. c. 32. p. 131.

^q Isidor. Origin. l. 13. c. 10.

^r Frigora nec tantum cana concreta pruina, Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. v. 376.

He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters to flow; the south wind particularly; then the waters, which were still and motionless, flow as before, or more abundantly. Thus the hearts of men in a state of nature are like frozen earth or waters; they are cold, and without the heat of love, and affection to God and Christ, and spiritual things; they are as hard as a stone, and without any motion or desire after things divine and heavenly: but when the Lord sends his word, attended with a divine power and efficacy, it breaks and melts them; when the south wind of the blessed Spirit blows upon them, or his grace becomes effectual in convincing them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and when the sun of righteousness arises on them with healing in his wings; with which being warmed, they are loosened, and flow to the Lord and his goodness for all spiritual blessings.

Ver. 19. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, &c.*] From the things of nature and providence, the psalmist passes to the blessings of grace and goodness; for which the Lord is to be praised, particularly for his word and ordinances. The Targum interprets this of the words of the law; and indeed the law, or decalogue, was given only to the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob; as also the ceremonial and judicial laws; and even the whole Scripture, the oracles of God, were committed to them in a very peculiar manner: all which distinguished them from the Gentiles, and gave them the preference to them; see Deut. iv. 6—8. Rom. iii. 1, 2, and ix. 4. But the Gospel part of the word is also included; the word of grace, peace, reconciliation, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, which was first published to the Jews: it was *shewn* unto them, for it cannot be known by any without a revelation; the Gospel, and the things of it, are hidden things to natural men, and could never have been discerned by any, had they not been shewn by the Lord; as they are externally in the ministration of the word, and internally and effectually by the spirit of God; who is

the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things. *His statutes and his judgments unto Israel;* the ordinances of divine worship under the former dispensation, which were peculiar to literal Israel; and those of the Gospel dispensation, which belong to the spiritual Israel, Jews and Gentiles; and which are shewn and directed to in the word, to be observed by them; and both the Gospel and the ordinances of it are instances of divine favour, for which the Lord is to be praised.

Ver. 20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation, &c.*] Or every nation^b; or all the nations under the heavens; only with the Jewish nation: these only for many hundreds of years were favoured with the divine revelation, with the word and ordinances of God; with the law, and with the Gospel, and with the service and worship of God; as well as with promises and prophecies of Christ, and good things to come by him. These were not communicated to any one nation or body of people besides them; only now and then, to one here and there among the Gentiles: the Gospel was first preached to them at the coming of Christ, and after them to the Gentiles, when rejected by them. And as for his judgments, they have not known them; by which are meant, not the providential dispensations of God, which are unsearchable, and past finding out, till made manifest; nor punishments inflicted on wicked men, unobserved by them; but the word of God, and the ordinances of it, which the Gentile world for many ages were unacquainted with; see Psal. xix. 9. *Praise ye the Lord:* as literal Israel had reason to do, for those distinguishing instances of his favour and goodness; and as the spiritual Israel of God everywhere have; and particularly our British Israel, who are highly favoured with the privileges of having the word of God purely and powerfully preached, and his ordinances truly and duly administered; at least in some parts of it, and that more than in any other nation under the heavens.

P S A L M CXLVIII.

THIS psalm seems to have been written about the same time, and by the same person, as the preceding; even by the psalmist David, when he was in profound peace, and at rest from all his enemies; and the kingdom of Israel was in a well-settled and prosperous condition, both with respect to things civil and ecclesiastical, as appears from ver. 14. And as it may respect future time, the times of the Messiah, of whom David was a type, it will have its accomplishment in the latter day, when there will be just occasion for all creatures, in heaven and earth, to praise the Lord; and which the Evangelist John, in vision, saw and heard them doing, Rev. v. 11—13. Aben Ezra says, this psalm is exceeding glorious and excellent, and has deep secrets in it; in which the psalmist speaks of two worlds, the upper and the lower. As for the title of this psalm, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and Apollinarius, entitle it as the two preceding.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or, *hallelujah:* which, in some versions, and with some interpreters, is the title of the psalm; expressive of the subject-matter of it, the praise of the Lord; and is an exhortation of all creatures to it. *Praise ye the Lord from the heavens;* that is, those that are of the heavens; let their praises of the Lord, of his perfections, works, and benefits, resound from thence; the angels of heaven particularly, who have their habitation and residence there, and sometimes descend from thence on special business, by the order and appointment of their great Creator and Master: so the Targum, “praise the Lord, ye holy creatures from heaven.” Though some take the phrase, *from heaven*, to be descriptive of the Lord, the object of praise, who is the Lord from heaven; the character of Christ, the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 47. who is from above; came down from heaven to do the will of God; and was in heaven, as to

^b כל גוי omni genti, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; omni nationi, V. L.

his divine Person, while here on earth in human nature, working out the salvation of men; for which he justly deserves the praise of all in heaven and in earth. But as all creatures are distinguished in this psalm into celestial and terrestrial, called upon to praise the Lord; this seems to be the general character of the celestial ones, persons, bodies, and things; as the phrase *from the earth*, ver. 7, includes all in the terraqueous globe. *Praise him in the heights*: either in the highest heavens where he dwells, or with the highest notes of praise that can be raised; see Psal. cxlix. 6. Luke ii. 14. The Targum is, "praise him, all the hosts of angels on 'high,'" or the high hosts of angels: but these are particularly mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 2. *Praise ye him, all his angels, &c.*] The Targum adds, who minister before him: the ministering spirits, the angels of Jehovah, even of Christ, who are his creatures, and at his command; and whom he sends forth to minister to others, Heb. i. 7, 14. And great numbers there are of them, thousands and tens of thousands, yea, an innumerable company; and all of them are under obligation to praise the Lord for their creation: for invisible spirits, as well as visible bodies, even the celestial thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, were created by him, by Christ, Col. i. 16. And for their preservation in their beings, and confirmation in that happy estate in which they were created; being chosen and secured in Christ, the head of all principality and power, and so stood whilst others fell: and also for the various excellent powers, and faculties and properties, they are endowed with; they excel in strength, are possessed of great agility and swiftness; have a large share of knowledge, of things natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; are perfectly holy, and without sin; and happy in the enjoyment of God, in whose presence they always are, and whose face they continually behold; and will ever remain in this state, being immaterial and immortal beings. And as praise is their duty, it is their work; in this they were employed at the creation of all things, then these sons of God and morning-stars sang and shouted for joy; and at the incarnation of Christ, when they worshipped him; at the conversion of every sinner; and frequently join the church in this service, and will be concerned in it to all eternity: and when the psalmist calls upon them to engage in it, it does not suppose that they were deficient in it, or backward to it, or that he had any authority over them to require it of them; but it shews his great desire that the Lord might be praised by the noblest creatures, and in the best manner that could be, and how much his heart was in this work; and he does it to stir up himself and others the more unto it, from this consideration; that if those heavenly creatures should praise the Lord, then much more such as he and others, who were so very unworthy of the divine favours, and so much beholden to the Lord for them. *Praise ye him, all his hosts*: meaning either the angels as before, sometimes called the hosts of heaven, and the heavenly host; there being armies and legions of them, and these encamping about the saints in a military way; see

2 Kings xxii. 19. Luke ii. 13. Matt. xxvi. 53. Psal. xxxiv. 7. or else the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as follow, sometimes called the host of heaven; and who are represented as militant, Gen. ii. 1. 2 Kings xxi. 3. Judg. v. 20.

Ver. 3. *Praise ye him, sun and moon, &c.*] The sun praises the Lord, the Creator of it, by doing the work constantly it is appointed to do; to rule by day, and give light and heat to the earth, and the inhabitants of it; and so is the cause of man's praising the Lord for the benefits they receive from it; for its enlightening, warming, and refreshing rays; and for the precious fruits brought forth by it. And so the moon likewise doing its office, ruling by night, and reflecting the light of the sun upon the earth, and producing precious fruits, also praises its Maker, and is the occasion of others praising him; see Psal. cxxxvi. 1, 7, 8, 9. Deut. xxxiii. 14. *Praise him, all ye stars of light*: which are very beneficial in the night-season, especially to mariners and travellers, and shed their benign influences upon the earth and things in it; which are a means of praising the Lord, and in their way they do it, Psal. cxxxvi. 1, 9. Acts xxvii. 20. Job xxxviii. 31. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read it, *stars and light*, wrongly; the stars are luminous bodies, and shine in their own light, though the moon with a borrowed light from the sun.

Ver. 4. *Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, &c.*] All the heavens, the airy and starry heavens; and the third heaven, the residence of God, angels and saints: these are made by the Lord, and declare the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, and shew forth his handy-work, Psal. xix. 1. A voice was heard from heaven, praising Jehovah the Son, when on earth in our nature; a cloud of the lower heavens received him when he went from hence, and in the clouds thereof he will come again: the highest heavens opened to receive him, and will retain him until the restitution of all things; and from hence he will descend to judge the world in righteousness, Matt. iii. 16. and xvii. 5. Acts i. 9. and iii. 21. Rev. i. 7. *And ye waters that be above the heavens*: divided by the firmament from the waters below; and are no other than the thick clouds, in which the waters are bound up, and not rent, but at the pleasure of God, Gen. i. 7. Job xxvi. 9. so Seneca calls the clouds the celestial waters. And these give men occasion to praise the Lord, that those vast bodies of water that are over their heads are not let down in such large quantities upon them as would destroy them; and that they are carried about from place to place, and let down in soft and gentle showers, to water and refresh the earth, and make it fruitful, so that it brings forth food for man and beast. The Targum is, "ye waters, that by the Word (of the Lord) hang above the heavens;" in which is displayed the glory of amazing power, wisdom, and goodness. The most ancient Syrians and Arabians were thoroughly persuaded, that beyond the bounds of the visible heavens there was a great sea, without any limits; which some suppose to be the waters here meant.

* Macrob. in Somn. Scipion. l. 1. c. 19, 20.

† Nat. Quæst. l. 2. c. 23.

* Vid. Steeb. Cælum Sæpirot. Heb. c. 7. s. 3. p. 126, 127. and Gregory's Works, p. 110.

Ver. 5. *Let them praise the name of the Lord, &c.*] Set forth the glory of the nature and perfections of God, and celebrate the praise of them; even all celestial creatures, the angels, the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, and the waters above them; and that for the following reasons. *For he commanded, and they were created;* they are all his creatures, and therefore should praise him: he is the *Father of spirits*, of angelic spirits, as well as the spirits of men; and the *Father of lights*, of all the luminaries of the heavens; and he has made the heavens themselves, and all their hosts, and the firmament dividing the waters above and below; and all this by an almighty *fiat*, a word of command; he spoke, and they came into being at once, Heb. xii. 9. James i. 17. Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9.

Ver. 6. *He hath also stablished them for ever and ever, &c.*] The angels are made immortal, and shall never die; and they are confirmed in their state of happiness by Christ, and shall always continue in it; the hosts of heaven being created by him consist in him, and will remain as long as the world does; hence the duration and never-failing state of other things, even of good men and their felicity, are expressed by them; see Psal. lxxii. 5, 7. and lxxxix. 36, 37. *He hath made a decree which shall not pass;* concerning those creatures and their duration, which shall never pass away, or be frustrated or made void; but shall always continue and have its sure and certain effect; see Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. and xxxiii. 25. and is true of every decree of God, which is eternal and unfrustrable, and is always fulfilled, Isa. xiv. 27. and xxv. 1. and xlvi. 10.

Ver. 7. *Praise the Lord from the earth, &c.*] Let his praise resound from all creatures on earth, and reach him in the highest heavens; this phrase comprehends all terrestrial beings afterwards particularly mentioned; all in the terraqueous globe, all that arise from it, are upon it, or within it. *Ye dragons, and all deeps;* either land-dragons, or rather sea-dragons, the water or sea being the proper place of them, Psal. xlv. 19. and lxxiv. 13, 14. these, as cruel, as poisonous, and pernicious as they are, are made to honour and praise the Lord, Isa. xliii. 20. and such as are mystically signified by them, as Satan, tyrannical and persecuting princes, and antichristian ones, as Pharaoh king of Egypt, Rome Pagan and Papal; out of whom the Lord has or will get himself praise in the deliverance of his people from them, and in the destruction of them, and in the confessions they have been obliged to make of him, Rev. xii. 3, 9, 10, 16, 17. and xiii. 2. Isa. xxvii. 1. Exod. ix. 16. these seem to be set in contrast with the angels. The word is used for the great whales the Lord made, which are thought to be the same with the *le-niathan* of Job; of whom so many things are said, which declare the power and wisdom of God in the formation of it, Gen. i. 21. Job xli. 1, &c. and these may be put for the innumerable creatures in the sea, which in their way shew forth the praise and glory of God, Psal. cii. 24—26. as *all deeps* do, deep waters, especially the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants of them; where the wonders of God are to be seen, and give occasion to

those that go down to the sea in ships to praise his name, Psal. cvii. 23, 24.

Ver. 8. *Fire, and hail, &c.*] These, and what follow in this verse, are in the air, but are what are exhaled or drawn up from the earth or water; *fire* is lightning, which is very swift in its motion, and powerful in its effects; this is the fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; which in Elijah's time came down and destroyed the captains and their fifties; and which attended the Lord's appearance on Mount Sinai; when *the voice of his thunder was in the heaven, the lightnings lightened the world, and the earth trembled and shook*, Psal. lxxvii. 18. and by which the power, majesty, and glory of God are greatly displayed; see Psal. xxix. 3—9. *hail*, which is water frozen in the air and congealed; this was one of the plagues of Egypt; and with hailstones many of the Canaanites were slain in the times of Joshua; and by these God has shewn his power, and has got himself praise from his people by destroying their enemies, though they have blasphemed his name on account of them, as they will when the great hail-storm of all shall fall, Rev. xvi. 21. *Snow, and vapour;* the former is a gift of God, and very beneficial to the earth, and the cause of praise and thankfulness to God; see the note on Psal. cxlvii. 16. the word *f* for *vapour* signifies smoke, and is what rises out of the earth like smoke, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and is hot and dry, and forms lightnings and winds, and has its place among things that occasion praise. *Stormy wind fulfilling his word;* which is raised up by a word of his command; he creates it, brings it out of his treasures, holds it in his fists, and lets it go out at his pleasure to fulfil his will; either, as at some times in a way of mercy, as to dry up the waters of the flood, to make a way for Israel through the Red sea, to bring quails to them in the wilderness, and rain to the land of Israel in Ahab's time; and sometimes in a way of judgment, to drown Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, to break the ships of Tarshish, to fetch Jonah the disobedient prophet back, and to distress him afterwards; see Psal. cvii. 25. to do all this is an argument of divine power, and a proof of deity, as it is of our Lord's, Matt. viii. 27. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read it in the plural number, *which do his word;* referring it not to the stormy wind only, but to fire and hail, snow and vapour; but the Hebrew text restrains it to the stormy wind.

Ver. 9. *Mountains, and all hills, &c.*] Which are originally formed by the Lord, and set fast by his power and strength; these are the highest parts of the earth, and are very ornamental and useful; they include all in them and upon them, the trees and herbage that grow upon them, gold, silver, brass, and iron in them; all very beneficial to mankind, and afford matter of praise to God for them; see Isa. lv. 12. *Fruitful trees, and all cedars;* trees bearing fruit are the fig-trees, pomegranates, vines, and olives, with which the land of Canaan abounded; and such as bear lemons, oranges, plums, pears, apples, cherries, &c. which produce fruit for the use, pleasure, and delight of man, and so a means of praising God: and *cedars*, the trees of the Lord

which he hath planted; though they bear no fruit, yet very useful in building, and were of great service in the temple at Jerusalem; and which are put for all others of like usefulness, and minister just occasion of praise; see Psal. xcvi. 12.

Ver. 10. *Beasts, and all cattle, &c.*] Wild and tame; the beasts of the field, and the cattle on a thousand hills, which are all the Lord's, made, supported, and supplied by him; he gives them their food and drink, which they wait for and receive from him, and in their manner praise him for the same; and these are useful to men for labour or for food, and therefore should praise the Lord for them; see Isa. xliii. 20. *Creeping things, and flying fowl*: of *creeping things* some belong to the sea and others to the land; see Psal. civ. 25. and there is not the least creature on the sea or land, the meanest reptile or worthless worm, but is of such exquisite workmanship as gives praise and glory to the Creator; and so do every fly and every insect, as well as *flying fowl* of the greatest bigness, as the eagle, vulture, &c. these, though they fly in the air, had their original from the waters, Gen. i. 20.

Ver. 11. *Kings of the earth, and all people, &c.*] The order of the creation is pretty much observed throughout the whole of this account; and as man was made last of all, so here he is called upon last to praise the Lord; and the chief among men are begun with, *the kings of the earth*, of the several nations of the earth divided into kingdoms, over which some are set as supreme: and these have reason to praise the Lord, who has raised them to such dignity, for promotion comes not by chance, but by the Lord, who sets up kings and puts them down at his pleasure; and also for those gifts bestowed upon them, qualifying them for government, for it is by him kings reign and princes decree justice; and likewise for the preservation of them, for it is he that gives salvation to kings, and continues them for usefulness, notwithstanding all plots and conspiracies against them, Psal. cxliv. 9, 10. see Psal. lxxv. 6, 7. Prov. viii. 15, 16. and *all people*; their subjects, as they should submit unto them and pray for them, so should praise the Lord on their account, when they rule well, protect and defend them in their persons, property, and liberties, Prov. xxix. 2. *Princes, and all judges of the earth*: the sons of kings, princes of the blood, heirs of the crown; or nobles, ministers of state, counsellors, and all subordinate magistrates, who are in high places of honour, profit, and trust, and so should praise the Lord, by whom they are brought to such honour; and when they fill up their places, and discharge their trust aright, the people have reason to be thankful for them; and especially for the *judges of the earth*, when they are men fearing God and hating covetousness, and impartially minister justice and judgment; see Psal. ii. 10, 11.

Ver. 12. *Both young men, and maidens, &c.*] These should praise the Lord, the one for their strength, the other for their beauty; and both should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and fear, serve, and worship him; so they will praise and glorify him, as did Obadiah, Josiah, Timothy, and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist. *Old men, and children*; the

former have had a large experience of the providential goodness of God, and, if good men, of the grace of God, and are under great obligation to praise the Lord for all that he has done for them; for they have known him that is from the beginning, and have seen many of his wonderful works, which they should not forget to declare to their children, to the honour and glory of God; and even out of the mouth of *children*, of babes and sucklings, who have less knowledge, and less experience, God sometimes does ordain strength and perfect praise to himself; see Psalm viii. 2. compared with Matt. xxi. 15, 16.

Ver. 13. *Let them praise the name of the Lord, &c.*] His nature and perfections, and celebrate the glory of them; and his wonderful works, and the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace; even all the above creatures and things, celestial and terrestrial, for the following reasons. *For his name alone is excellent*: the name of the Lord is himself, who is excellent in power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and in all other perfections of his nature; his works, by which he is known, are excellent, both of nature and of grace, and proclaim his glory; his Son, in whom his name is, and by whom he has manifested himself, is excellent as the cedars; and so are all his precious names by which he is called; and such is the Gospel, by which he is notified to the world: nay, the Lord's name is alone excellent; all creature-excellencies are nothing in comparison of him, in heaven or in earth, those of angels and men; and therefore should be praised by all, and above all. *His glory is above the earth and heaven*; there is the glory of celestial and terrestrial bodies, which differ; the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, and of one star from another; but the glory of the divine Being, the Creator of them, infinitely exceeds the glory of them all: his glorious Majesty resides above heaven and earth; the heaven is the throne he sits upon, and the earth the footstool he stands on; and Christ, who is sometimes called his glory, and is the brightness of it, Psal. lxxiii. 2. Heb. i. 3. is exalted above every name on earth, and is made higher than the heavens, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise; see Psal. viii. 1. Neh. ix. 5.

Ver. 14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people, &c.*] Which is done when he increases their strength, their spiritual strength especially; makes them strong in the Lord, in his grace, and in the power of his might; when their dominion and authority is enlarged, and victory given over all their enemies; particularly when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them, and when they shall reign with Christ on earth; for this phrase denotes the honourable as well as the safe state of the people of God; the horn being an emblem of power, authority, and dominion; the Targum renders it, "the glory of his people;" see Psal. lxxv. 10. Some interpret this of Christ the Horn of David, the Horn of salvation, and the author of it, Psal. cxxxii. 17. Luke i. 69. who is King over his people, as a horn signifies; and is the strength, safety, and security of them; has gotten them the victory over all their enemies, and is now exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, and that for his people^s, as it may

^s קרן לעמו cornu populo suo, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cuccius, Michaelis.

be rendered; he is both raised up and exalted for them. *The praise of all his saints*; that is, the Lord is the object of the praise of all his saints, to whom he has shewed favour and kindness, and on whom he has bestowed the blessings of his grace; it is matter of praise that they are saints, set apart by God the Father, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit of God; and that their horn is exalted, or they raised to dignity and honour; and that Christ is raised and lifted up as an horn for them, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Rev. i. 5, 6. Luke i. 68, 69. Even of the children of Israel; not literal but spiritual Israel, such who are Israelites indeed, whether Jews or Gentiles. *A people near unto him*: in respect of union, being one with him, in the bond of everlasting love; in respect of relation, being near akin, he their father, they his children, not by creation only, but by adopting grace; and Christ their near kinsman, nay, their father, brother, head, and hus-

band; in respect of access unto him, which they have through Christ, with boldness and confidence, being made nigh and brought near by the blood of Christ; in respect of communion and the enjoyment of his gracious presence; and in respect of inhabitation, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelling in them, and making their abode with them: or, as it may be rendered, *the people of his near one*^h; that is, of Christ, who is near to God his father, is one with him, was with him from everlasting, was as one brought up with him, yea, lay in his bosom, drew nigh to him as the surety of his people, and offered himself a sacrifice to him as their Priest, and now is set down at his right hand as their King; and where he also appears for them, is their advocate, and ever lives to intercede for them. *Praise ye the Lord*: even all creatures, especially his saints, his people, the children of Israel, the last spoken of.

P S A L M CXLIX.

THIS psalm is thought by Calvin and others to have been written for the sake of the Jews that returned from the Babylonish captivity; and is a prediction of great and famous things done in the times of the Maccabees to Heathens and their princes, so Theodoret; the Syriac version entitles it, "concerning the new temple;" that is, the second temple, built by Zerubbabel, and the things done under that; but it rather seems to have been written by David in the beginning of his reign, when he obtained victories over the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians; and refers to the times of the Messiah, as Kimchi, R. Obadiah Gaon, and others think; not of the Jews' vainly-expected Messiah, but of the true Messiah, who is come, and will come again, spiritually and personally; and there are many things in it applicable both to the first and latter part of his days.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or *hallelujah*; the title of the psalm, according to many. *Sing unto the Lord a new song*; for a new mercy received, a new victory obtained, or a new salvation wrought; more particularly the new song of redeeming grace through Jesus Christ, the song of the Lamb, in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea, on account of their deliverance, which was typical of salvation by Christ, the oldest, being the first song we read of; but this is a new one, which none but the redeemed of the Lamb can sing; a song suited to Gospel times, in which all things are new, a new church-state, new ordinances, a new covenant, and a new and living way to the holiest of all; a song proper for renewed persons to sing, who have new favours continually to bless and praise the Lord for. And *his praise in the congregation of saints*; such who are partakers of the blessings of divine goodness; are separated and distinguished from others by the grace of God; are sanctified and brought into a Gospel church-state; and who gather and assemble together to worship

God, and attend upon him in his word and ordinances: and in such assemblies the praises of God are to be sung; which being done socially, the saints are assisting to one another in this service; and it is done with greater solemnity, and is more to the public honour and glory of God; thus Gospel-churches are called upon to sing the praises of God among themselves, Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. and have Christ for an example going before them, Psal. xxii. 22, 25.

Ver. 2. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, &c.*] Or, *in his Makers*^l, Father, Son, and Spirit; as in Job xxxv. 10. Isa. liv. 5. see also Eccl. xii. 1. for all three Persons had a concern in the creation of man at first, *let us make man, &c.* Gen. i. 26. and have in the formation of every individual man; of the Israelites as men, and of them as a body politic and ecclesiastic, being raised up, constituted, and formed by the Lord in their civil and church state, and therefore had reason to rejoice in him, Deut. xxxii. 6. and so have all the spiritual Israel of God, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and called; every Israelite indeed, all who are the workmanship of God, the people he has formed for himself, and to shew forth his praise: these should rejoice in God the Father, who has chosen them in Christ, blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him, sent him to redeem them, has justified them by his righteousness, pardoned their sins through his blood, adopted them and made them heirs of glory; and in the Son of God their Redeemer, they should rejoice in his person, in his righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness; and in the Holy Spirit, who has regenerated and sanctified them, is their Comforter, and the earnest of their future glory. *Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King*; not in David, unless as a type, but in his Son, the King Messiah, who is King of Zion; and therefore the children of Zion, the church, who are born of her, the mother of us all, and born in her through the ministry of the word, and brought up

^h קרבו עם populo propinqui sui, Coceius, Schmidt.

^l בראשיתו in factoribus suis, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

there by means of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; such as are regenerate persons, sons of God, and members of Gospel churches, should rejoice in Christ, the King of saints; that they have such a King over them, who is the greatest of Kings, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so righteous in the administration of his government, so wise in making laws for them, so powerful to protect and defend them; and who must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, even for ever and ever. Every appearance of Christ's kingdom is matter of joy to saints; his first coming was as a King, though in a mean and lowly manner; yet joyful to Zion and her children, Zech. ix. 9. his ascension to heaven, when he was declared Lord and Christ; the pouring forth of his spirit, and the success of his Gospel in the Gentile world, to the overthrow of Paganism in it, Rev. xii. 10. and especially it will be an occasion of great joy to his subjects, when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, Rev. xi. 15—17. and xix. 6.

Ver. 3. *Let them praise his name in the dance, &c.*] In a chorus of saints, joining together in their expressions of joy, by words and gestures; an ancient practice that went along with singing praises, Exod. xv. 20. or rather, *with the pipe*^k, as some render it; a musical instrument used in former times in the worship of God, in this part of it, praising his name, with those that follow. *Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp*; the former of these was a vessel of brass, a drum or tabret, on which they beat, perhaps like one of our kettle-drums; the other was a stringed instrument of music much used, and in playing on which David was very skilful: the music of these was typical of the spiritual melody made in the heart to the Lord in singing his praises, to which there are allusions in Gospel times; though the instruments themselves are now laid aside, being only suited to the church in her infant state, when under tutors and governors; see Psal. lxxviii. 25. Rev. v. 9. and xiv. 2. and xix. 2.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people, &c.*] Not all mankind; though they are all his people by creation, and are under the care of his providence; yet they are not all acceptable to him; some are abhorred by him for their sins and transgressions: but these are a special and peculiar people, whom he has foreknown and chosen, taken into the covenant of his grace, and provided in it blessings for them; whom he has given to Christ, and he has redeemed; and who are called by the spirit and grace of God, whereby they appear to be his people. These the Lord loves with a love of complacency and delight; he takes pleasure in their persons, as considered in Christ, in whom they are accepted with him; as they are clothed with his righteousness, and made comely through his comeliness; as washed in his precious blood, and adorned with the graces of his spirit: yea, he takes pleasure in their services done in faith, and from love, and to his glory; in their sacrifices of prayer and praise, as offered up through Christ; in the company of them and communion with them; and in their

prosperity and happiness, here and hereafter. *He will beautify the meek with salvation*; humble and lowly souls, who have been truly humbled under a sense of sin; brought to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and to depend upon the grace of God for salvation; are subject to the yoke of Christ, and patiently submit to the will of God under every dispensation of Providence; are not easily provoked to wrath; are free from envy and malice; have mean thoughts of themselves, and high ones of other saints; these the Lord beautifies now with more grace, with which salvation is connected; with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, which are beautiful ones; and he will beautify them with eternal salvation, with the white robes of immortality and bliss, when they will shine as the sun in the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 5. *Let the saints be joyful in glory, &c.*] In the glory put upon them now, being beautified with salvation; in the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of Christ in them, which makes them all-glorious within; and in the glory they expect to have hereafter, both upon their bodies and souls, and in the hope of that, Rom. v. 2. Some copies of the Ethiopic version render it, *in his glory*; in the glory of Christ, as a divine Person and as Mediator, seen now in the glass of the Gospel, and will be the object of the beatific vision hereafter; and now is, and then will be, matter of joy unspeakable, 2 Cor. iii. 18. John xvii. 24. Or *gloriously*^l, in a glorious manner; as saints do rejoice, when they ascribe all the glory of salvation to the free grace of God and death of Christ, and rejoice on that account; saints have reason to rejoice, and indeed none but they; who being regenerated and sanctified, are meet for and shall partake of eternal glory. *Let them sing aloud upon their beds*; whilst others are taking their rest and ease, let them meditate on the word of God; commune with their own hearts about their state and condition; remember the Lord, and his goodness to them; all which give an occasion to give thanks unto him, and sing aloud his praise, Psal. lxxii. 5, 6. and cxix. 62. and when they awake on their beds in a morning, after sound sleep and a good repose, it becomes them to praise the Lord, who gives his beloved sleep; and who only makes them sleep, and dwell in safety, Psal. iv. 8. And the phrase denotes the safe and secure state of the saints upon their beds, lying down and sleeping comfortably, having nothing to fear, the Lord sustaining them; and so may and should sing upon their beds, Psal. iii. 5, 6. Yea, saints may sing upon their sick beds; since the Lord is with them there, and strengthens them on a bed of languishing, and makes all their bed in their sickness, Psal. xli. 3. and even upon their death-beds may sing aloud the triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting?* &c. 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. Saints in a future state are on beds; the grave is a bed, where their flesh rests in hope; and the bosom and arms of Jesus are the bed in which their souls rest; and where they are, not in a state of insensibility and inactivity, but are walking and talking, and singing aloud the praises of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. So Arama interprets

^k במחול cum tibia, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama.

^l בבור gloriosè, Castalio.

the saints on their beds, those that lie in the grave, when they shall rise from thence.

Ver. 6. *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, &c.] Or throat* ^m; loudly declared by them. The word *praises* is not in the text, and so may be read, *the high things of God* ⁿ; or, *the heights of God*, as the Septuagint; and these are the perfections of God; as his omniscience, which is knowledge too high for a creature to attain unto, and even to conceive of; his omnipotence, for high is his right hand; his omnipresence, this is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea; his love, grace, and mercy, which are in the heavens; and his truth and faithfulness, which reach to the clouds; his eternity, immutability, and other attributes; all which should be often talked of and celebrated: also the high acts and works of God, those more inward and secret; as the thoughts of his heart, which are higher than ours, as the heavens than the earth; the everlasting love of God, which has an height not to be reached; the eternal choice of persons to grace and glory, before all time; the covenant of grace, which exceeds the mountains for height, as well as duration; and the glorious scheme of our peace, reconciliation, and redemption, contrived in the divine mind, and formed in Christ from everlasting: and others more outward, open, and manifest; as the works of creation and providence; of redemption by Christ; the operations of the Spirit, and the powerful success of the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles. The Vulgate Latin version and others render it, *the exaltations of God* ⁿ; Father, Son, and Spirit: Jehovah the Father should be exalted in the mouths of his saints, for his love to them, choice of them, covenant with them, the mission of his Son on their account, and the regeneration of them according to his abundant mercy; and Jehovah the Son should be exalted by them with their mouths and lips, as well as in their hearts, in his person, by honouring him as they do the Father, in his offices, kingly, priestly, and prophetic; and the Holy Spirit should be exalted, by ascribing the work of grace to him, the beginning, carrying on, and finishing of it. *And a two-edged sword in their hand*; which is no other than the word of God, Ephes. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. one of its edges is the law, which sharply reproveth and menaces for sin, threatening with curses, condemnation, and death; and which, in the Spirit's hand, cuts deep into the hearts of men, lays open the corruption of their nature, and the swarms of sin which are in them; it causes pain and grief, working wrath in the conscience; it wounds and kills, and is therefore called the letter that kills, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The other edge is the Gospel, which cuts in pieces the best of men; all their works of righteousness, which it removes from their justification and salvation; and all their wisdom, holiness, free-will power, and creature-abilities; and it cuts down the worst in man, his sinful as well as his righteous self; it teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it is useful to refute errors, and defend truth: and it is an instrument, and only a passive in-

strument, used by the Lord, as his power unto salvation; it is a sword, but only effectual as it is the sword of the spirit; it is a part of the weapons of our warfare, and it is mighty, but only through God; it can do nothing of itself, but as it is in the hand of another; and it should be in the hands of all the saints in common, as well as in the hands of Gospel ministers, to withstand error, maintain truth, and repel the temptations of Satan. The Targum is, "the praises of God" in their throats, and as two-edged swords in their "hands;" making the praises of God and the two-edged swords to be the same: and so Jarchi and R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra interpret them.

Ver. 7. *To execute vengeance upon the Heathen, &c.]* Either upon the Gentile world, in the first times of the Gospel; when the apostles, going there with the two-edged sword of the word, vehemently inveighed against the idolatry of the Heathens, and exhorted them to turn from their idols to serve the living God; and divine power going along with their ministry, multitudes were turned from them; through the success of the Gospel, the oracles of the Heathen were struck dumb, their priests were despised, their idol-temples were forsaken, and idols rejected; now were the judgment of the Heathen world, and the prince of it, cast out, and vengeance in this way taken upon it, or their disobedience to God revenged, John xii. 31. 2 Cor. x. 6. Or else upon the Papists, as will be in the latter times of the Gospel; who are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles, Psal. x. 16. Rev. xi. 2. on whom vengeance will be taken for all their idolatry, superstition, and bloodshed of the saints; and they will be smitten and slain by the two-edged sword, proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, and as in the hands of his servants, Rev. xix. 15, 21. *And punishments upon the people; or reproofs* ^p; sharp and piercing ones; such as the convictions the word of God will strike in the minds of men, and will be very distressing and afflicting to them; as the fire out of the mouths of the witnesses, which is their doctrine, will be to their enemies the Papists; and will torment and kill them, and be the savour of death unto death unto them, Rev. xi. 5.

Ver. 8. *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.]* Which is thought to allude to what was done to the Canaanitish kings, in the times of Joshua; and to the princes of Midian by Gideon; and to Agag by Saul; and to the Ammonites, Syrians, and others, by David: but it refers either to the first times of the Gospel, and the influence of the sword of the spirit over the hearts of men; and on some very great personages, as kings and nobles, brought to Christ and his churches, in chains of powerful and efficacious grace, declaring a ready and cheerful subjection to his Gospel and ordinances; such as Constantine, Theodosius, and others; and who were instruments in subduing, conquering, and destroying tyrannical and persecuting emperors and princes, as Maximilian, Licinius, and others; see Isa. xiv. 14. and more instances of the power of the Gospel, and the influence of divine grace on such persons, there will be

^m בְּפִי בְּרִינָה in gutture eorum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, &c.
ⁿ אֵלֶּיךָ רִמְסוּת אֵלֶּיךָ רִמְסוּת עַד עַד, Sept. celsitudines, Schmidt
^p castigaciones Dei, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

^p תּוֹכַחְוֹת increpationes, V. L. Pagninus, Moutanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; redargutiones, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

in the latter day; see Isa. xlix. 23. and lx. 3, 11. Psal. lxxii. 10, 11. It may also respect the use of the Gospel ministry, compared to a two-edged sword on the hearts of men in common; whereby Satan, the strong man armed, who keeps the palace as a king or prince, is dispossessed; and sin, which reigns like a king unto death, is dethroned, and grace is set up as a governing principle. But it may chiefly regard the destruction of antichristian kings and nobles, and their states, through the prevalence of the Gospel and the power of Christ, and the two-edged sword coming out of his mouth, Rev. xvii. 14. and xix. 19—21.

Ver. 9. *To execute upon them the judgment written, &c.*] In the law, according to the Targum; either upon the seven nations of the land of Canaan, Deut. vii. 12. or upon all the enemies of God and his people, Deut. xxxii. 41. or rather in the Gospel; which declares, that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved,

but whoever believes not shall be damned, Mark xvi. 16. And according to this two-edged sword or word of God, and the sentence pronounced by it, and judgment written in it, things will everlastingly take place. Or it may principally have regard to the judgment upon antichrist in the latter day, written in the word of God; and which will be executed by the saints, with the two-edged sword in their hands, Rev. xvi. 6. and xvii. 8, 16. and xviii. 6, 7. *This honour have all his saints*: which is spoken of throughout the psalm; as to be acceptable unto God, and well-pleasing in his sight; to be adorned with grace, and beautified with salvation; to have the high praises of God in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands, and to do the execution with it above mentioned. *Praise ye the Lord*: even all his saints; who of all men have most reason to do it, for the grace that is given them, and the honour put upon them.

P S A L M C L.

THIS psalm is of the same kind and upon the same subject with the two preceding ones; and very probably was written by the same hand, and about the same time; and is a very proper psalm to conclude this book with, being all praise. Some say^a this psalm was sung by the Israelites, when they came with their first-fruits into the sanctuary, with the basket on their shoulders. *Thirteen* times in this short psalm is the word *praise* used; not on account of thirteen properties or perfections in God, as Kimchi thinks: but it is so frequently and in every clause used, to shew the vehement desire of the psalmist that the Lord might be praised; and to express his sense of things, how worthy he is of praise; and that all ways and means to praise him should be made use of, all being little enough to set forth his honour and glory. And not the Levites only, whose business it was in the temple-service to praise the Lord with musical instruments, are here exhorted to it, as R. Judah the Levite thinks, but all people; not the people of Israel only, as Kimchi; but the Gentiles also, even all that have breath, ver. 6. For, as R. Obadiah Gaon observes, this psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah; to the Gospel dispensation, to the latter part of it, especially when Jews and Gentiles shall be converted; and when all will praise the Lord, as they will have reason for it.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.*] Or, *hallelujah*; which, in the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, is the title of the psalm; and expresses the subject of it, the praise of the Lord. *Praise God in his sanctuary*: in the temple, the house of his sanctuary, as the Targum and R. Judah; or in heaven, as R. Moses, his holy place, where he is praised by holy angels and glorified saints; or in the church below, of which the sanctuary or temple was a type. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the eastern versions, render

it, *in his holy ones*; among his saints, in the assembly of them, where he is to be feared and praised: it may be translated, *in his holy One*^b; and be understood of Christ, as it is by Cocceius; who is holy in both his natures, and is often called God's holy One, and the holy One of Israel; and whose human nature is a tabernacle or temple, wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwells; and in, and through, and for whom, the Lord is to be praised. Some render it, *for or because of his holiness*^c; the perfection of holiness in him; in which he is glorious and fearful in the praises of, and which appears in all his works of providence and grace. *Praise him in the firmament of his power*: the heaven above us, so called, Gen. i. 6, 7. which, in the Hebrew language, has its name from its being spread and expanded over the earth; and, in the Greek and Latin tongues, from the firmness and stability of it; and which is a work of mighty power, and therefore so called; it particularly respects the starry heavens; for the sun, and moon, and stars, were placed in the firmament, Gen. i. 14—17. or the air and atmosphere about us, that presses upon us, and keeps all firm and stable. And now as this shews forth the glory of God, and his handywork, Psal. xix. 1. not only all in it should and do in their way praise the Lord; but especially men on earth, who enjoy the benefit of it. R. Judah understands this of the ark in the temple, called the ark of the Lord's strength.

Ver. 2. *Praise him for his mighty acts, &c.*] The creation of all things out of nothing; the sustentation of all beings; the government of the world; the redemption of man by Christ, and the wonderful works done by him on earth; the work of grace upon the hearts of his people, and the preservation of them in grace to glory. *Praise him according to his excellent greatness*; or, *according to the multitude of his greatness*^d; which appears in his nature, perfections, and

^a Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. s. 4. p. 145.
^b בקדשו in sancto habitaculo suo, Cocceius; in onneto ejus, Gejerus; מן טו טו טו טו טו, Symmachus apud Drusium.

^c Ob sanctitatem ejus, Tirinus, Muis; ob insignem sanctitatem ipsius, Campensis apud Gejerum.
^d מן גדלו secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus, V. L. Montanus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

work, and these both of providence and grace; and in proportion hereunto, and according to the abilities of creatures, angels, and men, is he to be praised; which is giving him the honour due unto his name; see Paal. xcvi. 8. and cvi. 2.

Ver. 3. *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet, &c.*] Which was used in calling the assembly together, for worship and on other occasions; and at the feast of blowing of trumpets, and in the year of jubilee, Numb. x. 1, 2. Lev. xxiii. 23. and xxv. 9, 10. and by the priests in temple-service, 1 Chron. xvi. 6, 42. and was typical of the Gospel, which gives a certain and joyful sound, and is the cause and means of praising God, Isa. xxvii. 13. *Praise him with the psaltery; to which psalms were sung. And harp; which were instruments of music, both used in divine worship under the former dispensation; and in which David was well-skilled and delighted, and appointed proper persons to praise with them, 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21. They were typical of the spiritual melody made in the hearts of God's people, while they are praising him in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; under the Gospel, Ephes. v. 19. Rev. v. 2, 8. and xiv. 2, 3.*

Ver. 4. *Praise him with the timbrel and dance, &c.*] Or *pipe*; see the note on Psal. cxlix. 3. *Praise him with stringed instruments; or divers kinds* of instruments not named, as R. Saadiah Gaon; and which, as Aben Ezra says, had all one sound or note; what they were is not known, as also many of them that are particularly mentioned. *And organs; which have their name from the loveliness of their sound; these are of ancient original and use, Gen. iv. 21. Job xxi. 12. and xxx. 31. but were not of the same kind with those now in use, which are of much later invention.*

Ver. 5. *Praise him upon the loud cymbals, &c.*] Or *cymbals of hearing*; that were heard with pleasure and delight, and afar off: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, *well-sounding cymbals*, which give a grateful sound to the ear; these were made of brass, 1 Chron. xv. 19. to which the apostle alludes, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. *Praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals; or cymbals of shouting*, ovation or triumph; which were used on joyful occasions, as victories, deliverances, and the like; and were used also in the temple-service, see 1 Chron. xvi. 5, 42. according to

the Targum and Septuagint version, these were three-stringed instruments; for so they render the word for them in 1 Sam. xviii. 6. Now these several instruments of music are named, not as to be used in Gospel times; but, being expressive of the highest praise and joy shewn in former times, are mentioned to set forth the highest strains and notes of praise in New-Testament saints; as well as to denote their heartiness, agreement, and unanimity in this service, Rom. xv. 6.

Ver. 6. *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord, &c.*] Even the brute creatures, as in a preceding psalm; but more especially man, in whom God has breathed the breath of life, and is become not only a living but a rational soul; and more especially spiritual men, converted persons, whether Jews or Gentiles; on whom the Spirit of the Lord has breathed, and whom he has quickened; and who breathe in prayer after divine things; and who also have abundant reason to bless and praise his name for what he has bestowed upon them, and has in reserve for them; and for which they should praise him as long as they have breath; see Rev. v. 13. *Praise ye the Lord; all before mentioned, and in the manner as directed, and that in time and to all eternity.* Thus ends the book of Psalms. There is another psalm added in the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in the metaphor of Apollinarius; but is owned to be a supernumerary one, and not to be found in all copies; and is said to be written by David, when he fought with Goliath, and conquered him, and is as follows.

Ver. 1. I was little among my brethren, and a youth in my father's house; I fed my father's sheep. Ver. 2. My hands made (or used) the organ; and my fingers fitted (or played on) the psaltery or harp. Ver. 3. And who hath declared to my Lord? he is Lord, he hath heard. Ver. 4. He sent his angel, and took me from my father's sheep; and anointed me with the oil of his anointing. Ver. 5. My brethren were goodly and great; and the Lord delighted not in them. Ver. 6. I went forth to meet the stranger (the Philistine), and he cursed me by his idols. Ver. 7. And I threw at him three stones into his forehead, by the power of the Lord, and laid him prostrate. Ver. 8. I drew out the sword from him; I cut off his head, and took away reproach from the children of Israel.

¹ ומחול & tibia, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cejerus.

² במנים varia symphonis, Cocceus.

³ בצלצלי שמע in cymbalis auditus, Montanus, Vatablus.

¹ בצלצלי חרועה in cymbalis jubilationis, V. L. Musculus, Cocceus; in cymbalis ovationis, Montanus.

² This verse is only in the Arabic version.

THE PROVERBS.

THIS book is called, in some printed Hebrew copies, *Sepher Mishle*, the Book of Proverbs; the title of it in the Vulgate Latin version is, "the Book of Proverbs, which the Hebrews call *Misle*:" in the Septuagint version it has the name of the writer, the Proverbs of Solomon; and so in the Syriac version, with the addition of his titles, "the son of David, king of Israel." This and Ecclesiastes are both of them by the Jews^a called Books of Wisdom: and it is common with the ancient Christian writers^b to call the book of Proverbs by the names of *Wisdom* and *Panaretos*; names they give also to the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon; and therefore this is to be carefully distinguished from them. The author of this book was King Solomon, as the *first* verse, which contains the inscription of it, shews; for he was not a collector of these proverbs, as Grotius is of opinion, but the author of them, at least of the far greater part; and not only the author, but the writer of them: the Jews^c say that Hezekiah and his men wrote them; it is true indeed the men of Hezekiah copied some, ch. xxv. 1. but even those were written by Solomon. R. Gedaliah^d would have it that Isaiah the prophet wrote this book; but without any foundation. At what time it was written is not certain; the Jewish writers generally say^e it was written by Solomon, as were the books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, in his old age, when near the time of his death; though some think it was written before his fall: and it may

be it was not written all at once, but at certain times, when these proverbs occurred unto him and were spoken by him, and as occasion served: however, it is not to be doubted but that they were written under the inspiration of God. The Jews once thought to have made this book of Proverbs an apocryphal one, because of some seeming contradictions in it; but finding that these were capable of a reconciliation, changed their minds, as became them^f. Among Christians, Theodore of Mopsuest, in the sixth century, denied the divine authority of this book, and attributed it merely to human wisdom; which opinion of his was condemned in the second council at Constantinople: and in later times it has been treated with contempt by the Socinians, and particularly by Father Simon and Le Clerc; but the authority of it is confirmed by the writers of the New Testament, who have cited passages out of it; see Rom. xii. 20. Heb. xii. 5, 6. 2 Pet. ii. 22. from Prov. xxv. 21, 22. and iii. 11, 12, and xxvi. 11. The book consists of *five* parts; *first*, a preface or introduction, which takes up the first *nine* chapters; the *second*, the proverbs of Solomon, put together by himself, beginning at ch. x. to the xxvth; the *third*, the proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah, beginning at ch. xxv. to the xxxth; the *fourth*, the words of Agur, ch. xxx. the *fifth*, the instruction of Solomon's mother, Bath-sheba, ch. xxxi.

C H A P. I.

AFTER the inscription, which gives the title of the book, and describes the author by his name, descent, and dignity, ver. 1, follows the scope and design of it, which is to teach men wisdom and knowledge; even such as are simple and foolish, and particularly young men; nay, hereby wise men may grow wiser, and attain to an higher degree of learning, ver. 2—6. and the *first* doctrine taught in it is the fear of the Lord, or devotion to God; which is the beginning of knowledge, though despised by fools, ver. 7. The next is obedience to parents; whose instructions, attended to, are more ornamental than chains of gold, ver. 8, 9. And then follows a dissuasive from bad company; in which the arguments made use of by wicked men to draw in others with them, and the danger of compliance, are most strongly and beautifully represented, ver. 10—19. When Wisdom, who is the instructor and teacher throughout the whole, is introduced as

calling upon the simple and the scorers to leave their sins and turn to her, with a promise of the spirit to them, ver. 20—23. but they slighting and rejecting her call, are threatened with just and irrevocable ruin and destruction, ver. 24—32. And the chapter is closed with a promise of safety and rest to those that hearken to her, ver. 33.

Ver. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon, &c.*] Who is said to make three thousand proverbs, 1 Kings iv. 32. but whether any of them are contained in this book cannot be said: however, it is certain that they are not all in it, since, if you except the *first nine* chapters, which are the introduction to the Proverbs, there are but six hundred and fifty-nine verses in it; and if they are taken in, they make but nine hundred and fifteen, which are not a third part of the proverbs said to be made by him; however, here are as many and such as God thought fit should be preserved for instruction in

^a Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
^b Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 32. 26.
^c T. Bab. Ibid. fol. 15. 1.

^d Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1.
^e Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41.
^f T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 50. 2.

all future ages. It was usual with the ancients in all countries, when any truth was found, and established by experience, to wrap it up in a few apt words, with or without a figure; that it might be the better understood and more easily retained, and which were always venerable and greatly attended to: and of this kind are these proverbs; only with this difference, that these are of divine inspiration, and the others not. The word used for them comes from one which signifies *similitude* and *dominion*²; because many of them are similes or comparisons, and are delivered out in figurative expressions, in metaphors and allegories, and the like; and have all of them a commanding power, authority, and influence upon the mind, obliging to an attention to them. The name of Solomon is put to them, the more to recommend them; who had a wise and understanding heart, as large as the sand of the sea, and was wiser than all men, 1 Kings iv. 29—31. and was an eminent type of Christ, who spake in proverbs also, John xvi. 25. He is further described by his pedigree and office, *the son of David, king of Israel*: a wise son of a wise father, and king over a wise and understanding people. These titles are added for the further commendation of the book; and it may be observed that they are such as belong to the Messiah, Solomon's antitype, one that is greater than he, Matt. i. 1. John i. 49.

Ver. 2. *To know wisdom and instruction, &c.*] That is, these proverbs were made, and written, and published, to make known or to teach men wisdom and knowledge; not only in things moral, and therefore these proverbs are by some called Solomon's *ethics*; and indeed they do contain the best system of morality in the whole world; nothing like it is to be extracted out of all the writings of the Heathen poets and philosophers: nor only in things civil; for which reason they may be called his *politics*, seeing they are instructive to kings and civil magistrates, and to subjects; and also his *economics*, seeing they furnish out rules for husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, worthy of their attention and observance: but also they are a means of and are designed to teach spiritual and evangelical wisdom and knowledge; things relating to Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the way of life and salvation by him, the knowledge of which is life eternal. These words, with others that follow, seem to be synonymous, and signify much one and the same thing; and are used to shew that the most consummate wisdom and comprehensive knowledge may be attained by means of this book; which, like the rest of Scripture, with a divine blessing, is able to make a man *wise unto salvation*: and is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. where the apostle seems to allude to this text: since *wisdom* here may stand for *doctrine* in general; and *instruction* may signify the means of attaining to it; and it may be observed, that the word is used for *discipline* and *correction*, as well as *instruction*. If these words are to be

distinguished, the first, *wisdom*, may design a wise scheme and plan of truths, and the theory of them, and the latter, *instruction*, the learning it and putting it into practice; and for both theory and practice this book is useful. *To perceive the words of understanding*; which flow from a good understanding, and give a right understanding of things; so that a man may be able to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and error, right and wrong; particularly the doctrines of the Gospel may be meant, which are eminently so, and exceed the understanding of a natural man, and which are only understood by a spiritual man; the means of knowing which are the Scriptures, under the guidance and direction of the spirit of God.

Ver. 3. *To receive the instruction of wisdom, &c.*] Or *prudencie*^b; of wise and prudent men; and especially of Christ himself, who bears those names, whose instructions this book is full of; and the design of which is to engage the attention of men to them, and prevail upon them to receive them, and act conformably to them. Which instructions respect the following things; and which are added by way of illustration and amplification, *viz. justice, and judgment, and equity*; that which is just in itself, and according to the nature of God and his will; and is judged so by right reason; and is equitable between man and man, and agrees with the law of God. These three, R. Levi Ben Gerson says, signify one and the same thing; true righteousness, doing that which is just to God and man; which the doctrines of grace, or the instructions of wisdom, teach men to do; concerning which many rules may be collected from this book.

Ver. 4. *To give subtlety to the simple, &c.*] Men of mean abilities, weak capacities, shallow understandings, incautious, credulous, and easily imposed upon: these, by attending to what is herein contained, may arrive to a serpentine subtlety; though they are simple and harmless as doves, may become as wise as serpents; may attain to an exquisite knowledge of divine things; and know even more than the wise and sage philosophers among the Gentiles, or any of the Rabbins and masters of Israel; or any of the princes of this world, whose wisdom comes to nought; and become very cautious and circumspect how they are drawn aside by the old serpent the devil, or by such who lie in wait to deceive; and perform their duty both to God and man. *To the young man knowledge and discretion*; or *thought*^c; who wants both: this book will teach him the knowledge of things moral, civil, and religious: to think and act aright; how to behave and conduct himself wisely and discreetly before men; and be a means of forming his mind betimes for piety and religion; and of furnishing him with rules for his deportment in future life, in all the periods of it; and in whatsoever state and condition he may come into. A *young man may cleanse his way*, reform his manners, behave with purity and uprightness, by taking heed to the things herein contained.

Ver. 5. *A wise man will hear, &c.*] With great at-

^a A rad. מִשַׁל dominatus est — מִשַׁל נִמְשַׁל comparatus, similis, consimilis factus est, Buxtorf. Mirum est quod radix מִשַׁל significans autoritatem cum imperio, significat etiam parabolas vel sermones figuratos — verba quae מִשַׁלִּים vocantur, habent autoritatem, nobis ideam inmittunt, dicentis ut nos supereminentis, saltem sapientia,

ingenio, doctrina: nos persuadent & pondere suo, quasi imperio noscuntur. Gussel. Ehr. Comment. p. 845.

^b חֲכָמָה prudentia, Munster, Vatablus,

^c חֲכָמָה cogitationem, Pagninus, Mercerus; bonam cogitationem, Michaelis.

ention, and hearken to the proverbs and wise sayings herein delivered; for here are many things entertaining to men of years and wisdom, as well as instructive to young men and simple ones. *And will increase learning*; or *add*^k to his stock of learning; or, as the Targum, "will add knowledge;" see 2 Pet. i. 5. or, *will be wiser*, as the Vulgate Latin version. This is said to shew the excellency of this book, and the extensive usefulness of it; indeed wise men will get knowledge where fools cannot, and increase learning where others can get none: there are few books but a wise man will get something out of; and especially such a book as this, and as the Scriptures are. *And a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels*; a man of a spiritual understanding arrives to the knowledge of the wise counsels of God; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the *whole counsel* of God; are recondite wisdom, the hidden wisdom of God, which no wisdom of man is comparable to. It is the wisest scheme that was ever formed, and which the wit of man could never have devised, even salvation by Jesus Christ; and which was laid in God's *counsels of old*, which are *faithfulness* and *truth*; the knowledge of which is attained unto by one that is spiritually wise. Moreover, a man that thoroughly understands the things contained in this book is fit to be a counsellor of others in things human and divine; in things moral, civil, and spiritual: he is fit to be in the cabinet-council of princes, to be a counsellor of kings; yea, to have the reins of government in his hands. *He shall possess government*; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions: or, *he shall possess the helm*^l; sit as a pilot there, as the word may signify, and steer the ship aright in which he is; whether it be his family, or the church of God, or a city or corporation, or a kingdom: this book, rightly understood by him, will furnish him with rules to do all things well and wisely.

Ver. 6. *To understand a proverb, and the interpretation, &c.]* This may be connected either with the first verse, *the proverbs of Solomon, &c.* are written, as for the above ends and purposes, so for these; or with the preceding verse, a wise and understanding man, by hearkening and attending to what is here delivered, will not only attain to wise counsels, but to the understanding of proverbial sayings, and to see into the *elegancy*^m, the eloquence and beauty of them, as the word signifies; and be able to interpret them to others in a clear, plain, way and manner. *The words of the wise, and their dark sayings*; the words and doctrines, not of the wise philosophers and sages of the Heathen world, but of men truly wise and good; and especially of the wise inspired writers of the Scriptures, whose words come from one Shepherd, Eccl. xii. 11. and the enigmas or riddles contained in their writings, which are so to a natural man, obscure phrases and expressions, things hard and difficult to be understood, yet to a spiritual man, that judgeth all things, plain and easy, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Ver. 7. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, &c.]* Here properly the book begins, and this

is the first of the proverbs, and an excellent one; it is such an one as is not to be found in all the writings of the Heathens. By *the fear of the Lord* is not meant a servile fear, a fear of punishment, of hell, wrath, and damnation, which is the effect of the first work of the law upon the conscience; but a filial fear, and supposes knowledge of God as a father, of his love and grace in Christ, particularly of his forgiving love, from whence it arises, Psal. cxxx. 4. Hos. iii. 5. it is a holy, humble, fiducial fear of God; a reverential affection for him, and devotion to him; it includes the whole of religious worship, both internal and external; all that is contained in the first table of the law, and the manner of performing it, and principle of acting: this is the first of all sciences to be learned, and it is the principal one; it is the basis and foundation of all the rest, on which they depend; and it is the head, the fountain, the root and source, from whence they spring; and unless a man knows God, knows God in Christ, and worships him in his fear, in spirit and in truth, according to his revealed will, he knows nothing as he ought to know; and all his knowledge will be of no avail and profit to him; this is the first and chief thing in spiritual and evangelical knowledge, and without which all natural knowledge will signify nothing; see Job xxviii. 28. Psal. cxi. 10. But *fools despise wisdom and instruction*; the same with *knowledge* before; they do not desire the knowledge of God, and of his ways and worship, but despise it, make no account of it, but treat it with contempt; especially the knowledge of God in Christ, in which lies the highest wisdom, for this is *life eternal*, John xvii. 3. they despise *Christ the Wisdom of God*, and the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are *the hidden wisdom* of God; and all *instruction* into it, and the means of it; they despise the Scriptures, which are able to make a man *wise unto salvation*; and the ministry of the word, and the ministers of it: such sort of *discipline*ⁿ as this, as the word signifies, they dislike and abhor; and especially *correction* or *chastisement*^o, which is also the sense of it; suffering reproach and affliction for the sake of wisdom, a profession of Christ and his Gospel; and they are fools with a witness that despise all this; such fools are atheists, deists, and all profane and wicked men. The Septuagint render it, *the ungodly*; and such sort of men are all along meant by *fools* in this book.

Ver. 8. *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, &c.]* This is not to be understood of God the Father of mankind, and of that law which he has given them, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, but of Solomon and his son in a literal sense; and of any one that came to him for instruction, any pupil, hearer, or reader of his; and it is a direction to all children to hearken to the instruction of their parents, and obey their commands; so, next to the fear and worship of God, he exhorts to obedience to parents, and proceeds just in the same order and method in which the decalogue or ten commands were written; the first table respects God and his worship, and the second follows, which begins with *honour thy father and thy mother, &c.* which, the apostle

^k יוסף addet, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michælis, Schultens.

^l יונה תחבולות gubernacula possidebit, V. L. metaphora a nauclero desumpta, Schultens.

^m מליצת facundiam, Montanus; eloquentiam, Tigurine version; elocutionem, Mercerus, Gejerus.

ⁿ תדישתינא disciplinam, Tigurine version, Piracator, Cocceius, Schultens.

^o Castigationem, correctionem, Vatablus.

ousness lies at the bottom of all this wickedness; the love of money is the root of all evil.

Ver. 14. *Cast in thy lot among us, &c.*] Or *thou shalt cause thy lot to fall among us*⁴; though just entered, as soon as any booty is taken thou shalt cast lots with us, and have thy full share with those that have been longer engaged. *Let us all have one purse*; or *we will all have one purse*⁵; will throw all our booty taken by us into one common stock, and live upon it comfortably and merrily. Jarchi represents it as putting it to the young man's option to do which he would, either to cast lots and take his share separately, or let it be put altogether, and so partake jointly with the rest. According to Gersom the sense is, that there should be such an exact division made, that there should not be more in one purse than in another; their shares should be equally divided by lot, and their purses should be alike; one should not have more than another: these are the arguments used by wicked men to allure and insnare young men to join with them in their sinful ways and practices; from which they are dehorted, as follows.

Ver. 15. *My son, walk not thou in the way with them, &c.*] In the same way as they do, which is the broad way that leads unto destruction; set not one foot in it; make no trial of it, whether it will be pleasant and profitable walking in it; the experiment will be dangerous. *Refrain thy foot from their path*; their manner and course of life; do not follow it, nor join them in it; when there is an inclination or a temptation to it, withstand it; stop in time, do not proceed, but draw back, and go on in the way thou hast been trained up in, and remember the instructions of thy parents.

Ver. 16. *For their feet run to evil, &c.*] To the evil of sin, to commit robberies and murder, and all manner of iniquity; they are eager upon it, and in haste and swift to do it, ch. vi. 18²; being carried away with their inordinate affections, which are as feet to the soul; and drawn aside with their lusts, and pushed on by Satan, and encouraged by one another, and so rush on headlong to the evil of punishment also; and which is a reason why their ways and paths should be abstained from, because they bring upon them swift destruction; it is to their own hurt they run, as Jarchi interprets it; though the first sense seems best to agree with what follows. *And make haste to shed blood*; the blood of innocent persons, in order to get their substance, to cover their iniquity and shame, and that no information may be given of them; this is mentioned as having something very horrible in it, in order to deter from joining with them.

Ver. 17. *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.*] Or *without cause*⁷, as the word is rendered in ver. 11. and so the words are an illustration of the preceding; shewing that the blood of innocent persons is shed without cause, no injury being done by them to those that do it, but is shed without any provocation at all; just as the net is spread for the innocent bird, which has done no harm to the fowler that seeks to take it; so Gersom: or else the sense is,

that though the net is spread by the fowler even in the sight of the bird, yet it is in vain to the bird, though not to the fowler; it is so intent upon the corn that is spread about, that it takes no notice of the net, and so is caught in it; and thus it is with those men that are bent upon their sinful practices, upon theft and murder, though their ruin and destruction are before their eyes; and they daily see their companions in iniquity come to an untimely end; they know that they are liable to suffer death by the hand of the civil magistrate, and to be followed by the justice and vengeance of God, and suffer eternal punishment; yet take no warning hereby, but rush on to their own ruin, as follows.

Ver. 18. *And they lay wait for their own blood, &c.*] Whilst they lie in wait for the blood of others, they lie in wait for their own; and when they shed the blood of innocent persons, it in the issue comes upon their own heads, and is the cause of their own blood being shed; vengeance pursues them, and justice will not suffer them to live. *They lurk privily for their own lives*: whilst they are lurking in secret places to take away the lives of others, they are laying snares for their own souls; and the consequence of it will be, that they will be brought to a shameful and untimely end here, or, however, to everlasting ruin and destruction hereafter.

Ver. 19. *So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain, &c.*] That is set upon getting riches in an unlawful way, by robberies and murder; his ways will end in the loss of his own blood and life, and in the loss of his immortal soul; this will be what his wicked ways and course of life will bring him to, and what will his gain profit him then? it would be of no use and service to him could he have gained the whole world. *Which taketh away the life of the owners thereof*: or *who*, even every one of those that are greedy of gain, and will be rich at any rate; such stick not to take away the life of the proper owners of that gain, or money they are greedy of, in order to get it into their own possession; and such wicked practices cannot fail of meeting with a just recompense of reward: or *which covetous gain, or gain gotten in such a wicked manner, will be the cause of the life of the injurious masters and wrong possessors of it being taken away from them, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by God himself.* These sins of robbery and murder are particularly instanced in, not only because other sins lead unto them, as sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, and lewdness, and issue in temporal and eternal ruin; but because they were very common among the Jews at the time that Wisdom, or Christ, was here on earth; to which time the whole passage refers, as appears from the following verses; and that those sins were frequent then is manifest both from Scripture; see Matt. xxvii. 38. Luke x. 30. and xxiii. 19. and from the confessions of the Jews, who say² that forty years before the destruction of the temple the sanhedrim were obliged to remove from place to place, because that murderers increased, and they could not judge and

⁴ סורתך תבילך sortem tuam conjicies, Junius & Tremellius; pro-jicies, Mercerus, Baynus; jacies, Cœcius, Michaelis, Schultens. ⁵ יהיה לנו יריה יריה יריה erit nobis omnibus, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Cœcius, Schultens, and the Targum.

² Velox ad faciendum, Claudian. in Rufin. l. i. v. 240.

⁷ סין sine causa, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

⁸ T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 8. 2.

condemn them, for fear of being murdered themselves; and it was because of this great increase they were obliged to leave off the beheading of the red heifer^a.

Ver. 20. *Wisdom crieth without, &c.*] Here the person instructing throughout this whole book is represented under the name of *Wisdom*; by which we are to understand not the attribute of divine wisdom displayed in the works of creation; nor the light of nature in man; nor the law of Moses given to the Israelites; nor the revelation of the divine will in general, as it is delivered out in the sacred Scriptures; nor the Gospel, and the ministry of it, in particular; but our Lord Jesus Christ; for the things spoken of *Wisdom*, and ascribed to it in this book, especially in the eighth and ninth chapters, shew that a divine Person is intended, and most properly belong to Christ; who may be called *Wisdom*^b, in the plural number, as in the Hebrew text, because of the consummate and perfect wisdom that is in him; as he is a divine Person, he is *the Logos*, the Word and Wisdom of God; as Mediator, *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him*; and, as man, *the Spirit of Wisdom* rests upon him without measure. This, with what follows to the end of the chapter, is a prophecy of the ministry of Christ in the days of his flesh, and of the success of it; and of the calamities that should come upon the Jews for the rejection of him: and *Wisdom* is here said to *cry*, as Christ did, John vii. 28, 37, the word signifies to cry both in a sorrowful way, as Jesus did when he cried to Jerusalem, weeping over it, Matt. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 41. and in a joyful one, which well suits with the Gospel, as preached by him; a joyful sound expressed by piping, in opposition to John's ministry, which was a mournful one, Matt. xi. 17. for crying here means no other than the preaching of the word; which is such a cry as that of heralds, when they publicly proclaim peace or war; so *Wisdom*, or Christ, is said to *proclaim liberty to the captives*, and *the acceptable year of the Lord*, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. This cry was made *without* the city of Jerusalem, and without that part of the country which was properly called *Jury*; Christ first preached in the land of Galilee; or this may mean the Gentile world, where Christ preached, though not in person, yet by his apostles, whom he sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature. *She uttereth her voice in the streets*; of the city of Jerusalem, and other places; nor is this contrary to Matt. xii. 19. which is to be understood of crying in a bawling and litigious way, of lifting up the voice in self-commendation, neither of which Christ did; and yet might cry and utter his voice in the streets, that is, publicly preach his Gospel there, as he did; and he also sent his servants into the streets and lanes of the city to call in sinners by the ministry of the word, Luke xiv. 21. which perhaps may be meant of places in the Gentile world; nor is this sense to be excluded here; it may be figuratively understood of the public ministration of the word and ordinances in the church, called the streets and broad ways of it, Cant. iii. 2.

Ver. 21. *She crieth in the chief place of concourse &c.*] Where a multitude of people meet together;

the Targum is, "on the top of palaces;" but rather it is to be understood of the synagogues of the Jews, where Christ frequently preached; and which, from hence, they build in the highest part of the city^c; and best of all the temple, whither the tribes of Israel went up to worship in great bodies, and to which the Jews daily resorted; here Christ taught publicly, as he himself says, John xviii. 20. *In the opening of the gates*; either of the city, at which people went in and out in great numbers; or of the temple, where they passed and repassed continually on account of worship; see John x. 23. Acts iii. 10, 11. in allusion hereunto the public worship of God's house is signified by the gates of Zion, and also of *Wisdom*, Psal. lxxxvii. 2. Prov. viii. 34. *In the city she uttereth her words*; the doctrines of the Gospel; even in the city of Jerusalem literally, and in other cities of Judea and Galilee, the singular being put for the plural; and figuratively in the church of God, often compared to a city; and so all these expressions of *without*, in the streets, in the chief place of concourse, the opening of the gates, and the city, may denote in general the openness and publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by Christ in his apostles, in Judea, and in the Gentile world; more especially the former. *Saying*, as follows.

Ver. 22. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? &c.*] Simple foolish things, agreeably to their character, being weak simple men, men of weak capacities and shallow understandings; and such were the first persons that were called by Christ through the ministry of the word, even effectually; they were babes and sucklings in comparison of others, by whom they were despised as illiterate and ignorant of the law; see Matt. xi. 25. John vii. 49. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. though it may respect the Jews in general, who were externally called by Christ, and were a simple and foolish people, addicted to silly customs and usages, to the traditions of the elders, and loved the folly and darkness of them, and to continue in them, rather than the light of the Gospel, John iii. 19, 20. *And the scorners delight in their scorning*; at Christ, because of the meanness of his parentage and education; at his disciples and followers, at his doctrines and miracles, sufferings and death. *And fools hate knowledge*? the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; they hated the light of it, and did not care to come to it, but rather loved the darkness of the law, and even of error and infidelity; they hated Christ, the teacher of true and useful knowledge; they hated his person, though without a cause; they hated him in his offices, as a Prophet to instruct them, as a Priest to be the propitiation for them, and as a King to rule over them; such *fools* were they, and who are therefore expostulated with by *Wisdom*, or Christ; which expostulations shew their continuance in these things, and the danger they were in by them, the pity and compassion of Christ as man and a minister of the word, and the fervour and importunity of his ministrations.

Ver. 23. *Turn ye at my reproof, &c.*] Or rather *my reproof*, for the words are not an exhortation to the conversion of the heart, or to true repentance;

^a Mischah Satah, c. 9. s. 9.

^b חכמה sapientia, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Copceus, Michaelis.

^c Maimon. Hilchot Tephillah, c. 11. s. 2.

but to an attendance to the external ministry of the word preached, which reproveth of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and does not design the turning of the heart to it, which is God's work, but the turning of the face and ears to hear it; and so the Targum, "turn your face to my reproof," and not your backs, as they did, shewing a dislike of it; or, as Aben Ezra, "turn ye to hear my reproof;" turn your ears and listen to it, and do not pull away the shoulder, or stop your ears that you may not hear it. *Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you; not upon you, but unto you:* for the Holy Spirit of God is not here designed, and the effusion of his gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, or of his special grace; but the mind of Wisdom, or Christ, as the word is used in ch. xxix. 11. Some interpret it, *here, my will*; the external revelation of his will made in the ministry of the word, by whom *grace and truth*, the doctrines of grace and truth, came in their full extent; for as the doctrines of grace were poured into his lips, so they were poured out by them again, out of his heart, as out of a fountain or well, as the word *here* used signifies; which denotes the large and abundant revelation of the Gospel by Christ, and is mentioned as an encouragement to men to attend unto it; which sense is confirmed by what follows. *I will make known my words unto you;* the doctrines of the Gospel, words of grace and wisdom, and such as never man spake as Christ did, his enemies being witnesses; the words of peace and reconciliation, of life and righteousness, and of eternal salvation, which were made known in a ministerial way by Christ and his apostles; but the Jews were such fools as to hate and despise the knowledge of these things; wherefore it follows:

Ver. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused, &c.*] This is to be understood not of the internal call of Wisdom, or Christ, which is by the special grace of his spirit; is according to an eternal purpose, the fruit of everlasting love, peculiar to God's elect, and by a divine power; and is also a call to special blessings of grace, and to eternal glory; and which is always effectual, unchangeable, and irreversible, and can never be refused, rejected, and resisted, so as to become void and of no effect: but of the external call by the word, to the natural duties of religion, and to an attendance on the means of grace; which may be where no election goes before, no sanctification attends, nor salvation follows, Matt. xx. 16. and xxii. 14. and this may be refused and rejected, as it often is; as when men, notwithstanding that call, do not attend on the ministry of the word, or, if they do, it is in a negligent careless way; or, they shew an aversion to it, despise, contradict, and blaspheme it, as the Jews did, who were the persons first called to hear it; see Matt. xxii. 2—5. *I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;* this is a gesture of persons calling to others, as orators and preachers, requiring silence and attention; and when eager and fervent, and importunate in their discourses; it is attributed to Christ, Isa. lxxv. 2. Rom. x. 21. but, notwithstanding all Wisdom's eagerness, zeal, warmth, and importunity, expressed by words

and gestures, it was all disregarded; no attention was given to it, which is here complained of.

Ver. 25. *But ye have set at nought all my counsel, &c.*] The same with the *counsel of God*, Acts xx. 27. The whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; the entire scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, which is the produce of divine wisdom, and is according to the counsel of the divine will, and his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus; this the Jews set at nought, made no account of, but despised and rejected, as they did Christ, the author of it, Acts iv. 11, 12. as also his ordinances, which go by the same name, because of the wisdom and will of God in them; particularly baptism, rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, Luke vii. 30. *And would none of my reproof;* would not hearken to it, nor take it, nor receive any instruction from it nor caution by it; did not like it, but contemned it, and trampled upon it; see Matt. xxiii. 37.

Ver. 26. *I also will laugh at your calamity, &c.*] By way of retaliation, measuring measure for measure; even as they scorned him, and delighted in their scorning, now he in his turn will laugh at them and their distress; which act is ascribed to the Lord by an anthropopathy; see Psal. ii. 4. and xxxii. 13. signifying that he should not at all pity them, shew no compassion to them, and have no mercy upon them; but rather express a pleasure and delight in displaying the glory of his justice in their destruction: the plain sense is, that no favour would be shewn them, Isa. xxvii. 11. The word translated *calamity* signifies a vapour^f, or cloud; denoting it would be a very dark dispensation with the Jews, as it was when *wrath came upon them to the uttermost*; even on their nation, city, and temple; as in their last destruction by the Romans, which is here intended. *I will mock when your fear cometh;* which is the same thing in different words; for by *fear* is meant the dreadful calamity on them, which brought dread, terror, and consternation with it, and of which they had fearful apprehensions beforehand: wherefore this is mentioned among the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, *men's hearts failing them for fear*, Luke xxi. 26.

Ver. 27. *When your fear cometh as desolation, &c.*] When such will be the calamity that will occasion this fear, that it shall be like some desolating judgment, as famine, sword, and pestilence, which lays all waste: and such was the destruction of the Jews by the Romans; it not only laid Jerusalem and the temple waste, but the whole country of Judea. These are the *desolations* said to be *determined*, or the *consummation and that determined*, which should be poured upon the desolate, Dan. ix. 26, 27. *And your destruction cometh as a whirlwind;* suddenly and unthought-of, fierce, and boisterous, throwing down and carrying all before it: so the said destruction did; it threw down the walls and houses of the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and its fine buildings, so that not one stone was left upon another not thrown down, Matt. xxiv. 2. *When distress and anguish cometh upon you;* as they did at that time with a witness, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans: what with

^a So some in Ben Melech.

^b עֵיפָה *fluere, vel scaturire faciam, Baynus; scaturire instar ef-*

fundum, Coceius, Michaelis; scaturiam, Gussetius; ebulliam, Schultens; so Ben Melech.

^c עָרִיף *significat vaporem, Vatablus, Mercerus, Amama.*

the sword of the enemy without, and the famine within; together with the vast number of cut-throats and seditious persons among themselves; it was such a time of distress and tribulation as never was from the beginning of the world, nor ever will be, Matt. xxiv. 22. Josephus's history of those times is a proper comment on these words.

Ver. 28. *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, &c.*] As he called them, and they refused to answer to his call, ver. 24. so it was just in him to return no answer to them, when they called on him to deliver them from the Romans, and save them from ruin: for this was what they called out for, and what they expected, that the Messiah would come and deliver them; this was what they buoyed themselves up with, and made them so desperate to the last. *They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me*; this is the very thing that Christ told the Jews, and much in the same words with these, John vii. 34. and viii. 21. for when he was gone, and they were in distress, then they sought after the Messiah, in the desert, and in the secret chambers, and in this and the other place, where they were told he was; but, alas! they could not find him: the true Messiah, whom they had rejected, was come and gone, and would return no more, until his second coming to judgment; or, however, till he came in his kingdom and power, to their ruin and destruction; of which coming of his the Scriptures often speak.

Ver. 29. *For that they hated knowledge, &c.*] Spiritual and evangelical; the knowledge of the Scriptures, of the promises and prophecies of them respecting the Messiah, though they were called upon and exhorted to search them; the knowledge of the Messiah, his person, offices, and grace; the knowledge of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; see ver. 22. *And did not choose the fear of the Lord*: which is the beginning of knowledge, ver. 7. instead of choosing, they cast off the fear of the Lord; and by their rejection of the Messiah, and their usage of him, it plainly appeared that the fear of God was not before their eyes nor upon their hearts; nor did they choose or care for the pure, spiritual, and evangelical worship of God, introduced in the Gospel dispensation; the ordinances of Christ they did not choose to submit to; and would neither go into the kingdom of God or Gospel church-state themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in, Matt. xxiii. 13. but rather chose their superstition and will-worship, according to the tradition of the elders, by which they made the word and worship of God of none effect.

Ver. 30. *They would none of my counsel, &c.*] Neither his doctrines nor his ordinances; nor would they attend to the wholesome counsel and advice he gave them in his sermons upon the mount, and in other discourses of his at other times and places. *They despised all my reproof*; for their hypocrisy, uncleanness, covetousness, and other sins they were addicted to; see Matt. xxiii. but they derided him for it, Luke xvi. 14. where the same word is used as is by the Septuagint here. These things are repeated from ver. 23, to observe

their ingratitude, and how just was their ruin, and what the true cause of it.

Ver. 31. *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, &c.*] Their evil ways; be punished according to their deserts, and receive the just reward of their iniquities; see Isa. iii. 10, 11. *And be filled with their own devices; or counsels*^a: their device and counsel was to put Christ to death; to deliver him to the Roman governor, that he might be crucified, as he was: and they afterwards had their bellyful of crucifixion, as the word^b used signifies; such vast numbers of them were crucified by the Romans before the walls of the city, five hundred a day, and sometimes more; inso-much that room was wanted for crosses, and crosses for bodies^c.

Ver. 32. *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, &c.*] Or be the cause of their being slain; even their turning away from Christ, their aversion to him; their turning their backs on him, and a deaf ear to him; their turning away from his Gospel, and putting it from them, thereby judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: in all which they shewed themselves to be the *simple and foolish* persons they were; and for which wrath and ruin came upon them, and they were slain with the sword and famine, and by one another. Some render it, as Aben Ezra, *the rest or quietness of the simple*^k, &c. taking up their rest in themselves, and in their observance of ceremonies and traditions; and crying Peace, peace, when sudden destruction was at hand: or a stubborn hardened rest in sin, a seared conscience; having no sense of guilt, nor fear of punishment; living in carnal security till death should seize upon them. *And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them*; that is, the abuse of it; leading them to commit sins, which bring destruction upon them; or, seeing sinners live with impunity, and prosper in the world, take encouragement from thence to indulge themselves in sin, which is their ruin; or, being in prosperity, think it will always be well with them, and therefore put away the evil day far from them, which comes upon them at an unawares; which was the case of the Jews.

Ver. 33. *But whoso hearkeneth unto me, &c.*] To Wisdom, or Christ; to the cry and call above; to the voice of his Gospel, not only externally, but internally; so as spiritually and experimentally to understand it, to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; so as to approve of it, and receive it in the love of it, and to delight and take pleasure in it; so as to feel the power of it, and believe it; not only give an assent unto it, but by faith receive it, and appropriate the things of it to a man's self: and also to the voice of his precepts, his ordinances; so as to yield a cheerful obedience to them, from a principle of love, with a view to his glory, and without trusting to and depending upon it. *Such shall dwell safely*; as they must indeed, since they dwell in God; in his heart, *the secret place of the most High*; and in his everlasting and unchangeable love, wherefore they are not consumed; and in the covenant of his grace, which is firm, and sure, and immovable;

^a מַסְוֵתָם de consiliis suis, Pagninus, Montanus; ex consiliis suis, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

^b שָׂבוּרֵם saturabuntur, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurinae version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^c Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 11. s. 1.

^k מְנוּחָתָם requies, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; quies, Junius & Tremellius; so some in Ben Melech.

and in his power, by and in which they are kept, as in a garrison, fortress, or strong hold : and they dwell in Christ the Rock of ages, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and on which their souls are built ; and so remain safe amidst the floods, storms, and tempests, that beat upon them ; the refuge to which they flee, the strong hold to which they turn, and whither they run and are safe ; the ark in which they ride safely, amidst all the waves and billows of affliction and tribulation ; their place of defence, where they are safe from Satan ; and are in his hands out of which none can pluck them, the Lord their righteousness, by whom Judah is saved, and under whom Israel dwells safely ; being by his righteousness secure from divine justice, from the curse of the law, and from wrath to come : besides, such have the Spirit dwelling in them, who is greater than he that is in the world ; who when he, the enemy, comes in upon them as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him ; angels are their guardians, encamp about them ; and they are the inhabitants of a strong city, which has salvation for walls and bulwarks ; and especially they will dwell safely in the other world, in those mansions and everlasting habitations in Christ's Father's house he is preparing

for them ; which are sure dwellings, as well as quiet resting-places, as follows. *And shall be quiet from fear of evil ;* as they may be in the present life, under a comfortable sense of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ : which, when applied and laid hold on by faith, speak peace to the conscience, and yield quietness of mind ; so that such have no reason to be afraid of the evil one, Satan, who cannot devour and destroy them ; nor of the evil of sin ; for, though they may and should be afraid to commit it, yet not of being conquered by it, and coming under the dominion of it, nor of being brought by it into a state of condemnation ; nor of the evil of judgments upon a wicked world ; nor of death and a future judgment ; nor of hell, and everlasting damnation : and hereafter such will enter into peace, and be free from all evils, natural, moral, or spiritual ; and from the fear of them, being out of the reach of them all. The safety and protection of those that hearken to Christ, and believe in him, here promised, had a remarkable accomplishment in the believing Jews ; who, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, were warned to go out from thence to a place called Pella, beyond Jordan¹, as they did, and where they were safe.

C H A P. II.

THIS chapter directs to the means of attaining to the knowledge of divine things, and shews the profit and advantage arising from thence. The means are, embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and retaining in memory and affection the ordinances of it, ver. 1. and an inclination of the ear and an application of the heart to the knowledge of these things, ver. 2. An earnest and importunate desire, expressed by prayer, after the same, ver. 3. and a diligent and unwearied search for them, as for silver and hid treasure, ver. 4. The advantages are, that such shall attain to the fear and knowledge of God ; which may be concluded from these being the gift of God to his people, and from their being laid up for them, whom he carefully keeps and preserves, ver. 5—8. and not only so, but such learn to do that which is just and right among men, ver. 9. And, besides, such is the nature of divine wisdom, that, when it has once got a place in the heart and in the affections, it will be a means of preserving both from the ways of evil men, ver. 10—12. who are described, ver. 13—15. And from the evil woman, whose character is given, ver. 16, 17. whose vicious course of life, and the ways she leads persons into, are represented as very dangerous, ver. 18, 19. And, on the contrary, such is the usefulness of true wisdom, that it leads into the way of good men, who will be happy and safe, when the wicked shall be destroyed, ver. 20—22.

Ver. 1. *My son, &c.*] These are either the continuation of the words of Solomon to his son Rehoboam ; or to any one that came to him for instruction, or was within the reach of being taught by him ; whom he addresses in this tender and affectionate manner, in

order to gain his attention to what he was about to say : or else they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, continued, thus bespeaking his children and people ; and giving them some very wholesome counsel and advice, backed with the most powerful and prevailing arguments. *If thou wilt receive my words ;* or doctrines : the doctrines of the Gospel, relating to the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him ; such as the words of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life ; which are to be received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God ; and with all readiness of mind and willingness, as they were by the Bereans ; and most gladly, as by the three thousand pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon ; and as they are and will be by every sensible sinner. *And hide my commandments with thee ;* in the heart ; so as to have a high esteem of them, and a hearty affection and value for them ; retain them in memory, and frequently think of them and meditate upon them, and constantly observe them ; see Psal. cxix. 11, 127, 128.

Ver. 2. *So that thou incline thine ear unto Wisdom, &c.*] Hearken to Wisdom, that is, Christ ; or rather to the instruction of Wisdom, which is the Gospel ; so called, because it is the produce of divine wisdom, what the wisdom of man could never have devised, and which it opposes ; and in which there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God, in the justification and salvation of his people by Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7. and is worth listening unto with the greatest attention, which is what is designed by this expression. *And apply thine heart to understanding ;* to a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it : for an inclination of the ear, without an application

¹ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 3. c. 5.

of the heart, which signifies the intenseness of the mind, an earnest and hearty desire after knowledge, will signify nothing; a hypocrite may seemingly hear with great attention, and shew much affection, and yet his heart be after the world and the things of it, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. see Psal. cxix. 112.

Ver. 3. *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, &c.*] Of God, Christ, and the Gospel; not only bow the ear and bend the mind to these things, but importunately and fervently pray for them; not only attend the ministry of the word by men, but cry to God to give the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; which supposes some sense of a want of it, an hearty desire for it, having some apprehension of the worth and value of it; and that it is to be had, as there is indeed great reason to hope for and expect it, Jam. i. 5. And *liftest up thy voice for understanding*; for Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom, ch. viii. 14. or rather for an understanding of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which men do not naturally understand; and for which there must be an understanding given, or the eyes of the understanding must be enlightened; or Christ, by his spirit and grace, must open the understanding, that it may understand these things; which is granted to those who lift up their voice in prayer for it.

Ver. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver, &c.*] That is, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; which all signify and relate unto one and the same thing, expressed here by *her*: namely, the doctrine of wisdom, or Christ; that is, the Gospel, and a spiritual and experimental knowledge and understanding of it, and the truths thereof; which are as desirable and valuable as silver, and more so; and which may be fitly compared to it, and be preferred before it, for their purity, solidity, and duration; see Psal. cxix. 72. 1 Cor. iii. 12. and are to be sought after with as much and more eagerness, affection, and diligence, as silver is by those who are most covetous of it, Prov. viii. 10. And *searchest for her as for hid treasures*; the Gospel is a treasure, 2 Cor. iv. 7. an accumulation of riches. It contains rich truths, things valuable for their antiquity; for being far-fetched and dear-bought, coming from heaven, and sealed by the blood of Christ, and the holy martyrs of Jesus; and for the abundance of them; there are treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the Gospel, and in Christ the sum and substance of it, who is full of truth as well as grace, Coloss. ii. 3. John i. 14. It contains rich blessings of grace, such as are spiritual, solid, and substantial, sure and irreversible; and a multitude of them, Rom. xv. 29. and also rich promises, exceeding great and precious ones; which are absolute and unconditional, suited to the various cases of God's people, and sure to all the seed: and it reveals the riches of God's goodness, his special goodness in Christ; the unsearchable riches of Christ; and the riches both of grace and glory. And under this notion of a treasure is it to be searched for, and as an hid treasure; in allusion to what is laid up in the cabinets of princes, or lies in the bowels of the earth, as precious stones: Pliny^m says, that *topazii*, in the language of the Troglodytes, has the signification of seeking, because

topazes are diligently sought for and searched after; see the note on Job xxviii. 19. The Gospel, and the truths of it, were greatly hid under the former dispensation from the Gentile world, and very much from the Jews themselves; being wrapped up in dark prophecies, obscure hints, and shadowy types and sacrifices; and are now, and always were, entirely hid from the wicked and reprobate part of the world, from them that are lost, and from God's own elect before conversion. This is *the fellowship of the mystery* that was *hid in God*, in his heart, from all eternity: the truths of it are the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Christ*; and likewise the *treasure hid in the field* of the Scriptures; which therefore are to be searched into for them, with like labour and resolution with which men dig into the earth, to find the rich ore that is in the bowels of it: and this should be done by diligent reading them; by frequent and deep meditation on them; by constant hearing the truths of the Gospel preached; by earnest prayer for the illumination of the divine Spirit to understand them; and by all the help of the writings of good men, and conversation with them, that can be had. These are things to be sought for and searched after, in the first place, in the early time of life; and with the utmost diligence and labour, as being of the greatest moment and importance; see Matt. xiii. 44. Ephes. iii. 9, 10. Col. ii. 3.

Ver. 5. *Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, &c.*] The grace of fear, and the exercise of it; which is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, and is a treasure itself, ch. i. 7. and ix. 10. Isa. xxxiii. 6. By means of the Gospel the Lord works it in the hearts of his people by his spirit; and by the same leads them into the riches of his special grace and goodness, which they are influenced by to fear, and the Lord for the sake of it: and particularly they are led hereby to the pardoning grace and mercy of God, which is with him, that he may be feared; and it is the Gospel which induces and encourages a true filial fear of God, by which men *depart from evil*; for that teaches them to deny all manner of sin, and to live a godly life and conversation: so that through a diligent search after the knowledge of the Gospel, and an attaining it, men come to have a spiritual, experimental, and practical understanding of the fear of God as a grace; and also, as it includes the whole worship of God, by means of Gospel light, they come to understand what sort of worship that is God is to be worshipped with; that it is pure, spiritual, and evangelical, suited to his nature and will: what the ordinances of divine service are; and that these are to be kept as they were delivered, and in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, without trusting to them or depending on them for salvation. And this is the advantage arising from a diligent search after the doctrine of wisdom, or the Gospel, and a knowledge and understanding of it; and is used as an argument encouraging to it; and another follows. *And find the knowledge of God*; such a knowledge of God as is not to be found by the light of nature, in the whole volume of the creatures, and in all the writings of the philosophers; no, nor in the law

of Moses; for though much of God and his perfections may be seen and known by the things that are made, and much of the will of God by the law he gave; yet by neither of these is the knowledge of God in Christ, which is *life eternal*. This only is to be found in the Gospel, and by means of it; here only it is brought to light; and through this men not only find it, but increase more and more in it: herein is a glorious display of his persons and perfections, of his counsels and purposes, of his covenant and promises, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; and of the way of peace, life, and salvation, by Jesus Christ; which must serve greatly to engage and excite persons to a diligent search and pursuit after it. And all that is here said is designed to encourage a diligent search after divine things; for, as the poet^a says, there is nothing so difficult but by searching may be found out.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord giveth wisdom, &c.*] Natural wisdom in all its branches, with all its improvements, and in its utmost latitude and perfection; and spiritual wisdom, which lies in the knowledge of a man's self, his own folly, impurity, impotence, and misery; in being wise unto salvation; in the knowledge of Christ, as the only way of salvation, and of God in Christ; in partaking of the true grace, which is wisdom in the hidden part; in being acquainted experimentally with the doctrines of the Gospel; and in walking wisely and circumspectly, and as becomes it, which is practical wisdom: and all this is the gift of God; as is also Christ, who is wisdom, and is given to be wisdom to his people. He is the gift of God to them, in all characters he bears, and relations he stands in; he is a very large comprehensive gift, an unspeakable one; which is given freely and liberally, and is never taken away again. Now this is said, partly to caution such who search after wisdom, and find it, not to attribute it to their diligence and industry, but to the grace of God; and partly as a direction where to go for it; and as an encouragement to hope to have it, since the Lord freely gives it, Jam. i. 5. *Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*: by the prophets of the Old Testament, who came with a *Thus saith the Lord*, and were the mouth of the Lord to the people; from whence flowed the knowledge of divine things; of the will of God; of the Messiah, his person and offices; of his coming, sufferings, death, and salvation by him; and by his Son, by whom he has spoke in these last days, and has declared all his mind; and by whom the doctrines of grace and truth, and the knowledge of them, are come fully and clearly, Heb. i. 1. John i. 17, 18, and by the Scriptures of truth, both of the Old and of the New Testament, which are the word of God; what are breathed by him, and come out of his mouth, and are able to make men wise unto salvation: and by the ministers of the Gospel, who speak in the name of the Lord, and the Lord by them; and by means of whom he imparts much spiritual and evangelical knowledge to the sons of men; the mouth of a Gospel minister, who is the mouth of God to men, *speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment*, Psal. xxxvii.

30. This clause is added, to encourage to a search after wisdom in the use of means; namely, by attending on the word, and the ministry of it.

Ver. 7. *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous, &c.*] In order to give it to them that seek for it; which is another encouragement to search after it. By *sound wisdom* may be meant, not the law, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; so called, because it endures for ever, when all beings are defective and come to nothing; but the Gospel, which is sound doctrine, pure and incorrupt; true and real wisdom, in opposition to that which has only the shew of wisdom, and is science falsely so called; and this was hid in God, in Christ, and laid up as a treasure in the sacred Scriptures: or else the true grace of God, in distinction from that which is counterfeit; and is that godness of his, which he has laid up in his heart, and in the covenant of his grace; and the fulness of grace which he has laid up in Christ for them, Psal. xxxi. 19. or eternal glory and happiness. The word here used signifies *essence, substance*; that which really is, and is solid and substantial; and such are the glories of the other world, the crown of righteousness, the hope laid up in heaven, and the inheritance reserved there, Col. i. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Pet. i. 4. These are real things, though invisible, and are rich and valuable; and have substance and solidity in them, in opposition to earthly riches, which are a vain shew, and are things that are not, and at best temporal and perishing; but these are an enduring substance, ch. viii. 21. and xxiii. 5. Heb. x. 34. The Septuagint render it by *salvation*, and the Targum by a word which signifies *glory and honour*; all which may well be understood of eternal life, which is laid up and reserved for the righteous: not for such who are only so in shew and imagination, but for those who are really and truly so; not for those who are legally, but evangelically righteous; or not for such that seek righteousness by the law, but by faith in Christ; for such who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and by faith receive it, and lay hold on it as their righteousness; and in consequence of this live soberly and righteously: for these only eternal life is prepared; they only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it, and shall enjoy it. He is a *buckler to them that walk uprightly*; who are sincere in their deportment before God and men; who walk according to the rule of the divine word; who walk by faith on Christ, and walk on in him as they have received him; and go on living by faith on his righteousness, which is walking in his uprightness, till they come to be with him for ever in heaven. To these the Lord is a *buckler* or shield; he covers them with the *shield of faith*, his own son, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which faith lays hold on and uses as a shield against Satan's fiery darts; and gives them the *shield of salvation*, which secures them from sin and wrath, and every enemy; and encompasses them about with his *favour*, as a *shield*, which is immutable and invariable; and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation, Ephes. vi. 16. Psal. xviii. 35. and v. 12. 1 Pet. i. 5. with this compare Gen. xv. 1. Psal.

^a Terent. Heautont. Act. 4. Sc. 1.

^b תושית essentialiam, Paginus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mer-

cerus, Gejerus; quicquid revera est, Junius & Tremellius; solidam firmanque substantiam, Baynus; solidum, vel solidam rem, Schultens.

iii. 3. and xviii. 2. and lxxxiv. 11. Some ^p read these words by way of apposition, and understand them of sound wisdom; that that is a buckler or shield to the persons here described; see Eccl. vii. 12.

Ver. 8. *He keepeth the paths of judgment, &c.*] That is, the Lord keeps them; he does that which is just and right himself, in the course of his providence, and in the methods of his grace; and as he guides the feet of his people in the ways of righteousness and holiness, he keeps them there from turning out of them. The words may be rendered, *to keep the paths of judgment*^q; and so expresses the end, fruit, and effect of the Lord's being a buckler to them, as he is said to be in the preceding verse: he is their shield and protection, so as either to keep them in the right ways in which they should go; or that they might studiously observe them, and keep walking therein, without stumbling in them, or declining from them. *And preserveth the way of his saints*; to whom he has been kind and bountiful; or who have been merciful, liberal, and generous to others; who having partook of the grace of God themselves, are useful to men: the Targum calls them *righteous ones*. These the Lord preserves by his power and grace, in the way in which he has led them, and which is his own way, safe to his kingdom and glory: for none of his saints, his holy and righteous ones, shall ever perish; the way in which he directs them, and in which he keeps them, leads to everlasting life; see 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Ver. 9. *Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment, &c.*] This is another fruit and effect of the Gospel, and of a spiritual understanding of it; that besides the knowledge of God, and how to behave with reverence towards him, ver. 5, it leads men into a notion of doing that which is right and just among men; it gives them not only a theoretic but a practical understanding of justice, and a true judgment of what is right and wrong; or gives such an understanding thereof as that they practise it; for it teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, Tit. ii. 11, 12. It is not only a revelation and ministration of the righteousness of Christ as the only matter of a sinner's justification before God; and informs a man's judgment so that he can distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, good and bad notions and practices; but it influences his actions, life, and conversation, and engages him to do works of righteousness from the best principles, upon the best motives, and with the best views. *And equity*; yea, *every good path*; that is, so to understand equity, as to do that which is equitable between man and man; and to understand every good path which the word of God directs to, even all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, so as to walk in them; these things the Gospel acquaints men with, and urges them to observe: or the words may be rendered, either *the rectitude or equity of all good paths*, as the Syriac version; how just, and right, and plain, and equitable, every one is, and therefore ought to be walked in; or *plainnesses, or most plain*, is or shall be

every good path^r, to them that have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Gospel; and by it an understanding of their duty. One word signifies *plain* and *straight*, and another *round*^s, and both are true of the path of righteousness; for though it is a circle of duty saints walk in, yet straight and plain.

Ver. 10. *When wisdom entereth into thine heart, &c.*] Either Christ, the Wisdom of God; who enters there at conversion, and sets up a throne in the heart, and dwells there by faith: or else the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery; which enters not into the head only, as in hypocrites and formal professors; nor into the natural affections, as in the stony-ground hearers; but into the heart, opened by the spirit of God to receive it, so as to have a spiritual understanding of it; which is done when the Gospel comes not in word only, but in the demonstration and power of the spirit; when a man truly understands it, approves of it, loves it, believes it; and it has a place in his heart, and richly dwells there. *And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul*; which the Gospel thus entering gives; even the knowledge of God in Christ, as the God of all grace, as gracious and merciful; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the knowledge of Christ, as the only Redeemer and Saviour; and the knowledge of Gospel truths, which lead and relate unto him: all which is pleasant to a gracious soul, and affords unspeakable delight to the mind; and is sweeter, as every truth of the Gospel is, than the honey or the honeycomb; see ch. xvi. 24.

Ver. 11. *Discretion shall preserve thee, &c.*] Which wisdom or the Gospel gives, or the Lord by the means of it; for the Gospel makes a man wise and discreet in the business of salvation, and in his conduct and deportment; and the discretion it gives him will put him upon his guard, and direct him to watch against every error, and every false way. And so the words may be rendered, *discretion will watch over thee*; to keep thee from every thing pernicious in doctrine and practice. The Septuagint version renders it, *good counsel*; which wisdom gives, and the Gospel is full of; and which, if attended to, is a means of the preservation of the saints. *Understanding shall keep thee*; which is only the same thing expressed in other words. The Septuagint version renders it, *an holy thought*; and the Arabic version, *a just thought shall preserve thee in thy last times*. What these are a means of keeping and preserving from is explained in the following verses.

Ver. 12. *To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, &c.*] Who is so by nature and practice, who is hardened in sin and abandoned to it, whose course of life is evil, and who endeavours to draw others into the same evil practices; now the Gospel, and a spiritual knowledge of it, are a means of preserving men from following the examples of such persons, and from walking with them in the ways of sin: or from *the evil way*^t, from every evil way, from a vicious course of life; not from idolatry only, as some interpret it, though this may be included, and chiefly de-

^p So Mercerus, Piscator, Schultens. Gussetius chooses to take the word נָסַח for a verb, and renders it, "he delivers it;" that is, sound wisdom "to them that walk uprightly;" Ebr. Comment. p. 454.
^q נִסְּרָה ad custodiendum, Pagninus, Montanus; ad servandum, Baynus, Schultens.

^r So Schmidt.

^s מִישׁוּרֵי מִישׁוּרֵי מִישׁוּרֵי, Schultens; מִישׁוּרֵי orbitam, Montanus; ab עֲרֹבֹת, Gejerus.

^t מִישׁוּרֵי מִישׁוּרֵי מִישׁוּרֵי, via mala, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

signed; but from all manner of sin, from every thing that is contrary to the law of God and sound doctrine.

From the man that speaketh froward things; perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature, to divine revelation, to the word of God, both law and Gospel; if a single man is meant, he might be thought to be the man of sin, antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein, Rev. xiii. 5, 6. and the Gospel delivers men from following him, and falling in with his perverse doctrines and practices; but the word seems to be a collective one, and to be understood of all wicked men, to whom the description agrees, as it is explained in the following verses in the plural number; who out of their evil hearts, and the abundance of wickedness there, speak evil things, tending to debauch the minds and manners of others; to be delivered from whom is a singular mercy. Jarchi restrains this to heretics, and such as caused Israel to apostatize to idolatry, and turned the law into evil. The Gospel is undoubtedly a means of preserving from error and heresy.

Ver. 13. *Who leave the paths of uprightness, &c.]* Or *righteousness*, or the *right* and plain ways; which the light of nature and the law of God, and especially the Gospel of Christ, direct to; and in which they have been trained up, having had a religious education; for it supposes them to have been externally in these ways, since they are said to leave them; for though persons do not easily and ordinarily leave the ways they have been brought up in, yet sometimes they do; and there are instances of it, and such generally are the worst of men. *To walk in the ways of darkness;* sin, ignorance, and infidelity; in which they that walk know not where they are, nor whither they are a going, and which must be very uncomfortable as well as dangerous; in which only works of darkness are done, and which lead to blackness of darkness, the darkness of hell; a miserable choice, a sad change this! So Schultens renders it, *ways of horrid darkness*.

Ver. 14. *Who rejoice to do evil, &c.]* At the doing of it, or when they have done it; they are glad of an opportunity of doing mischief, and glory when they have done it; it is a sport and pastime to them, Prov. x. 23. they take pleasure in the act of sin, and have no remorse of conscience afterwards; they speak of it in an exulting manner, and boast of it, and glory in their shame. And *delight in the frowardness of the wicked;* of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra and Gersom supply it; in the perversities and contradictions of every wicked man; they not only take pleasure in their own sins, but in the sins of others, and in them that commit them; which is an aggravation of their wickedness, Rom. i. 32. they delight to hear a man speak froward and perverse things; things against God, and Christ, and religion, against all good men, and every thing that is good; against the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it; and they delight to see him do things perverse and contrary to the will of God.

The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *they exult in the worst things*.

Ver. 15. *Whose ways are crooked, &c.]* Which swerve from and are not agreeably to the rule of the divine word, either the law of God or the Gospel of Christ; sin is an aberration, a straying from the rule of God's word, a transgression of his law; and a walk in it is unbecoming the Gospel of Christ; it has many serpentine windings and turnings in it; full of distortions and excursions, and many retrograde actions; see Psal. cxxv. 5. Isa. lix. 8. *And they froward in their paths;* declining here and there, sometimes going one way and sometimes another, but always following that which is evil, and resolute to continue therein.

Ver. 16. *To deliver thee from the strange woman, &c.]* As the Gospel of Christ and its doctrines, or the instructions of wisdom, are a means of delivering persons from the evil man, his company, ways, and works; so from a naughty woman, an adulteress, called a *strange woman*; not because of another nation, or unknown, but because she belongs to another person, and not to him whom she entices into her embraces. Gersom interprets this of the sensitive appetite, and Jarchi of idolatry; as others do also of superstition and all false doctrine, and every thing that is contrary to true wisdom; and the whole that is here and afterwards said may well enough be applied to the whore of Rome, from whose fornication, or spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, will-worship, and anti-christian doctrines, the Gospel delivers men; see ch. vii. 5, &c. Even from the *stranger* which *flattereth with her words;* that useth smooth and soft words to work upon the passions, move the affections, and win the hearts of men; and insnare them and draw them to commit wickedness with her; see ch. v. 3. and vii. 21. and so antichrist, and all false teachers and heretics, with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, Rom. xvi. 18.

Ver. 17. *Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, &c.]* Not God, the God of her life, and who had provided for her from her youth up; nor her parent that had taken care of her in her infancy, and had been the guardian of her virgin state; but her husband, to whom she was married in her youth, and to whom she gave up herself to be guided and directed, ruled and governed, by: and as it is an aggravation of evil in a man to deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, and the wife of his covenant, Mal. ii. 14. so it is in a woman to forsake the *friend or companion of her youth*, as the phrase may be rendered; who loved her and espoused her in his youthful age, and with whom he had lived long in love and friendship, and in great happiness, but now forsakes him; her affections being alienated from him, quits his company and bed, and associates with others. Gersom interprets this of the human understanding, appointed to govern the other powers and faculties of the soul. *And forgetteth the covenant of her God;* not the covenant made with Noah, in which adultery, as well as other things, were forbidden; nor the law of Moses, or covenant at Sinai, in

* אֲרֻחוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל semitas rectas, Mercerus; itinera recta, Piscator; itinera plantissima, Schultens.

* אֲרֻחוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל amicum adolescentiæ suæ, De Dieu, Michaelis; socium juventutis suæ, Schultens.

which it was condemned; but the marriage-covenant, which she entered into with her husband when espoused to him, and when they mutually obliged themselves to be faithful to one another: and this is called *the covenant of God*; not only because God is the author and institutor of marriage, and has directed and enjoined persons to enter into such a contract with one another; but because he is present at it, and is a witness of such an engagement, and is appealed unto in it; which, as it adds to the solemnity of it, makes the violation of it the more criminal. So the church of Rome has forsook Christ, who was her guide in her first settlement, and her husband she professed to be espoused to, as a chaste virgin; and has followed other lovers, and become the mother of harlots; so false teachers leave their guide, the Scriptures, and bring in damnable heresies, and deny the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Ver. 18. *For her house inclineth unto death, &c.*] Bends, verges, and points that way; it lies in the way to death, and brings unto it, and sinks into it as into a ditch; or all that are in her house, that are familiar with her, live and dwell with her, and commit wickedness with her; these incline or are liable to lose, and do lose, their name, character, and reputation, which is a death upon them; and bring diseases upon their bodies, which issue in corporeal death; or are in danger of dying by the hand of the injured husband, or the civil magistrate; and also are exposed unto eternal death: or she *inclines to death, which is her house**, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and to which the Targum agrees, "for in the pit of death is her house:" that is, the house she at last comes to and must dwell in, and all that are insnared by her; see ch. v. 5. and Rev. xxi. 8. and the second death will be the portion of the whore of Rome and all her followers, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. and xvii. 8. and xix. 20. *And her paths unto the dead*: that is, her evil ways in which she walks, and into which she draws others to join with her; these lead both her and them to the *damned* † in hell, to keep company with them, and be punished as they are: the word *rephaim*, here used, sometimes signifies *giants*, and so the Targum renders it here; and may refer to the giants of the old world, who were cut off for their debauchery and uncleanness, Gen. vi. 4, 11, 12. and with whom such persons shall be for ever.

Ver. 19. *None that go unto her return again, &c.*] That is, those that commit whoredom with her return not again by repentance, and to a sober and chaste way of living, at least but very few; hence some of the ancients thought adultery was the unpardonable sin; but it is certain that some have been recovered by the power of divine grace, and have been brought to repentance for their impure manner of life, and have truly believed in Christ, and lived sober and godly lives afterwards; but, as the Targum adds, they do not return *in peace*, but with great distress of mind, remorse of conscience, and bitterness of soul; and these instances are rare; generally speaking, such as are insnared by an adulterous woman, whose heart

is snares and nets, and whose hands are as bands, are held so fast by her that they seldom get out again, though some few may escape, Eccl. vii. 26. The words may be rendered, *all that go into her² shall not return again*; no, very few of them. And it is a very rare thing, when men are fallen into idolatry, superstition, will-worship, and heresy, that they are recovered out of this snare of the devil; there is a peradventure they may, but it is not often that they be loosed from it, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. *Neither take they hold of the paths of life*; Christ, and the ways of Christ, which lead to eternal life; few there be that find these paths and walk in them, Matt. vii. 14. and especially such as are drawn aside by an impure woman, they are held so fast by her alluring charms, and so bewildered by her art of deceiving, that they are like persons that are led out of their way, and cannot find it again.

Ver. 20. *That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, &c.*] Who are not so by nature, but made so by the grace of God; such as the saints, prophets, and patriarchs of old; and who walked in the way of righteousness, holiness, and truth; being directed therein by the spirit and word of God: now the use and profit of wisdom's instructions, or of the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it, and a spiritual understanding of them, are not only to deliver men from the wicked man and the naughty woman, but also to influence and engage them to follow the examples of good men, and to walk in the same good old paths as they have done, Heb. vi. 12. *And keep the paths of the righteous*; not only observe them and walk in them, but continue therein, even in the paths of faith and holiness; for righteous men, such as are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, and are anew created unto righteousness and true holiness, and in consequence thereof live righteously; these walk by faith on Christ, and as becomes his Gospel; and in all the ordinances of it, and in all the duties of religion; and the Gospel teaches all those that receive and profess it to do the same.

Ver. 21. *For the upright shall dwell in the land, &c.*] Such as are upright in heart, who have a right spirit renewed in them; whose hearts are right with God, have the truth of grace in them; whose faith is unfeigned, their love without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who are upright in their lives and conversations; these being Israelites according to the flesh, as well as Israelites indeed in a spiritual sense, shall dwell in the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised to such, and which good men enjoyed by virtue of it: or the sense is, that such shall dwell peaceably and quietly in the world, and possess the good things of it, though in a small quantity, in such a comfortable manner, with the love of God and a sense of it, as wicked men do not; or else they shall inhabit the world to come, as Jarchi interprets it; not only a future state of happiness in heaven, but the Messiah's kingdom on earth, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13. *And*

* ביתה אל מות ביתה ad mortem quoad domum suam, Cocceius; ad mortem domum suam, Gejerus; quod ad domum suam, Michaelis.

† אל רפאים ad damnatos, Tigurine version; ad orcos, Schultens.

² כל באיה omnes ingredientes eam, Pagninus, Montanus.

the perfect shall remain in it; or be left in it^a; or shall be strengthened^b, confirmed, and established in it; or they shall dwell in it as a tent or tabernacle, bound with strong cords; see Isa. xxxiii. 20. or continue there, when others should have no place in it, as follows. By the perfect are meant such as have all grace seminally implanted in them, though it is not come up to maturity; who have a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; are properly men in Christ, though they are not arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; are perfectly holy in Christ, though not in themselves; and are perfectly justified by his righteousness, and perfectly comely through his comeliness, though as yet imperfect in themselves; and those that shall dwell in the new heavens and new earth, and remain there a thousand years, shall be entirely perfect in soul and body, wholly without sin; and complete in knowledge, holiness, and peace: the Targum renders it, who are *without spot*, undefiled persons; such who are not defiled with women, with the strange woman before mentioned; whose garments are not defiled, and who are free from the pollution of false

doctrine, will-worship, superstition, and idolatry, Rev. iii. 4. and xiv. 4.

Ver. 22. *But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, &c.*] Suddenly by death; or in a judicial way by the hand of the civil magistrate, before they have lived out half their days; and shall not enjoy the good things of the earth they have been seeking for, and laying up, and promising themselves a long and quiet possession of; but, on the contrary, like unfruitful trees, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire; and, however, shall not dwell in the second Adam's earth, in the new earth, but shall perish out of his land, Psal. x. 16. see Psal. xxxvii. 2, 9, 22, 28, 38. *And the transgressors shall be rooted out of it*; such as have acted treacherously and perfidiously^c, and are opposed to upright men; as the wicked are to the righteous, pure, and spotless; these shall not only be cut off as trees to the stump, but be rooted up, and have neither root nor branch left them; they shall have no posterity to succeed them, and their memory shall utterly perish; see Mal. iv. 1. or *shall be scraped off, or swept away^d*, as the dust and dross of the earth, and the offscouring of all things.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, delivers out some fresh lessons and instructions to his children; as not to forget his doctrine, but heartily attend to his precepts and ordinances, seeing these are the means of lengthening out their days, and of enjoying peace, ver. 1, 2, as well as had the promise of the mercy and truth of God, and the continuance of them, annexed to them; and therefore are exhorted to keep close to them, and shew the greatest value and affection for them, which was the way to find favour with, and to be taken notice of by, God and man, ver. 3, 4. and then he proceeds to exhort them to a hearty trust in the Lord, without dependence on themselves; and to seek direction from him in every step they took, which they might expect to have, ver. 5, 6. to humility and the fear of God, and fleeing from evil, which they would find would much contribute to their health, ver. 7, 8. to liberality in supporting the worship of God, and the interest of religion, which would turn to account and profit to them, ver. 9, 10. to patience in bearing the chastisement of the Lord, as coming from a loving father, ver. 11, 12. then follows a commendation of wisdom, and the happiness of the man possessed of it is declared, ver. 13. from the profit, preciousness, pleasure, and usefulness of it, ver. 14—18. and from its concern in the works of creation and providence, ver. 19, 20. and from that comfort, honour, safety, and security, which come by the doctrines and instructions of Wisdom, and a steady regard to them, ver. 21—26. and the chapter is concluded with ex-

hortations to beneficence, charity, concord, and peace with neighbours, ver. 27—30. and to shun the ways of wicked men, urged from the different state and condition of wicked men and fools, and of the just, the lowly, and wise, ver. 31—35.

Ver. 1. *My son, forget not my law, &c.*] Or, *doctrine*^e; the doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the several truths of it; which, being of the utmost moment and importance, should be kept in memory, and not let slip, or be in the least slighted and neglected; see Heb. ii. 1—3. *But let thine heart keep my commandments*; as the ark, or chest, kept the two tables of the law put into it; it denotes a cordial affection for the commandments and ordinances of Christ, a hearty attention and obedience to them, and a constant and cheerful observance of them, flowing from love and gratitude to him, John xiv. 15, 21.

Ver. 2. *For length of days, and long life, &c.*] Or, *years of life, or lives*^f; a long life of usefulness and comfort here, and eternal life hereafter: the law of Moses promised a long life to the observers of it; but the Gospel of Christ brings an immortal life to light; and promises to all believers in him that they shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. *Length of days for ever and ever* was asked by Christ of his father, and given him, and is in his right hand, ver. 16. it is in his power to give, and he does give it to all his children, people, and followers, Psal. xxi. 4. John xvii. 2. *And peace shall they add to thee*; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, which not only proclaims peace by

^a יִתְרוּ superstities erunt, Tigurine version, Mercerus: superstitant, Cocceius; reliqui sicut, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; relinquentur, Michaelis.

^b נִרְבְּבוּ, Schultens.

^c נִרְבְּבוּ perfide agentes, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; perfidi, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

^d יִסְחוּ eradentur, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; everrentur, Schultens.

^e תּוֹרַתִּי doctrine mea, Piscator, Michaelis; institutionem meam, Schultens; doctrinam meam, Cocceius.

^f שְׁנֵי שָׁנֹת חייהו annos vitarum, Montanus.

the blood of Christ; but the doctrines of it, such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, are the means of giving and increasing spiritual peace in the hearts of believers; and so are the ordinances of Christ, which in ver. 17 are called, for that reason, *paths of peace*; see Rom. v. 1, 11. Psal. cxix. 165.

Ver. 3. *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee, &c.*] Or, forsake not them, and the exercise of them; shew *mercy* to fellow-creatures, to sinful men, to the bodies of men, by relieving their wants; and to their souls, by pitying and praying for them, and by giving them wholesome counsel and advice: to fellow-Christians, sympathize with them in their troubles, put on bowels of compassion, be tender-hearted, and forgive offences; and, in a spirit of meekness, restore backsliders, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Attend to *truth*; exercise faith on the Lord; cast not away your confidence; speak truth to your neighbour and brother; and hold fast the truth of the Gospel, and never depart from it. Though many interpreters understand this by way of promise, and as an encouragement to regard the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, rendering the words, *mercy and truth shall not forsake thee*; meaning the mercy and truth of God; the *mercy* of God in forgiving sin, in sympathizing under affliction, in helping in time of need, in supplying with all needful grace, and in bringing to eternal life; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, Psal. ciii. 17. the *truth* of God, his faithfulness in performing promises, never fails; the unbelief of man cannot make it of no effect; though we believe not, he abides faithful and true to every word of his; not one shall fail, or pass away; all shall be fulfilled; see Psal. lxxxix. 33. Rom. iii. 3, 4. 2 Tim. ii. 13. *all his paths are mercy and truth*, and he never goes out of them, Psal. xxv. 10. *Bind them about thy neck*; as chains for ornament: not mercy and truth, just before mentioned, as may seem at first sight; but the law and commandments of wisdom, ver. 1. or the doctrines and ordinances of Christ; see ch. i. 8, 9. reckon it as your greatest honour, glory, and beauty, that you steadfastly adhere to these things; nothing makes a believer look more lovely in conversation than a close regard to the truths of Christ, and a constant walking in his ordinances. *Write them upon the table of thine heart*; do not forget them, keep them in memory, and always retain a hearty affection for them; it is the Spirit's work to write them in the heart; and when they are there written, it is the work of saints, under a divine influence, to copy them over in life, and to shew by their conduct and behaviour that they are written there; see Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 3. The allusion, in both phrases, is to the directions given about the law of Moses, Deut. vi. 8, 9. and to the writing of his law on tables of stone: and it was usual with the ancients, in after-times, to write on tables of wood; Solon's laws were written on tables of wood^b; and such were the *tabellæ & pugillares* of the Romans, made of box, beech, and other sorts of

wood, covered with wax, on which they wrote; see the note on Hab. ii. 2. but Solomon would have his law written on the fleshly tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

Ver. 4. *So shalt thou find favour, &c.*] Or *grace*¹; the grace of God, and larger measures of it; as Noah did, Gen. vi. 8. which are communicated to men when in the way of their duty: or good will, esteem, and respect, among men; as Joseph had with Potiphar, and the keeper of the prison, Gen. xxxix. 4, 21. *And good understanding in the sight of God and man*; as Christ, as man, had in the sight of both, Luke ii. 52. that is, to be taken notice of, regarded, and approved by both. Some render it *good success*²; prosperity in things temporal and spiritual; see Psal. cxi. 10. There is something lovely, and of good report, in a close attention to the doctrines and duties of religion; which make a man amiable in the sight of others, and which is followed with a blessing from the Lord.

Ver. 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, &c.*] Not in a creature, the best, the holiest, and the highest; not in any creature-enjoyment, as riches, strength, and wisdom; nor in any outward privilege, arising from natural descent and education; not in a man's self, in his own heart, which is deceitful; nor in any works of righteousness done by him; not in a profession of religion, or the duties of it, ever so well performed; not in frames, nor in graces, and the exercise of them; no, not in faith or trust itself: but in the Lord, the object of all grace, and in him only; in Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal blessings; and as the God of all grace, for all spiritual blessings, and all the needful supplies of grace; and for eternal happiness, which he has provided, promised, and freely gives. Trust in him at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness: there is a great deal of reason for it; all power and strength are in him to help; his love, grace, and mercy, move him to it, and are always the same: the consideration of what he has done for others that have trusted in him, and for ourselves in times past, should induce and encourage to it; as also the happiness of those that trust in him, who enjoy peace and safety; and his displeasure at those that shew any diffidence of him, or distrust him. Trust in Jehovah the Son; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his fulness for supply; in his power for protection and preservation; and in him alone for salvation and eternal life. Trust in Jehovah the Spirit, to carry on and finish the work of grace upon the heart; of which a saint may be confident that where it is begun it will be completed. And this trust in Father, Son, and Spirit, should be *with all the heart*, cordial and sincere. The phrase denotes not so much the strength of faith as the sincerity of it; it signifies a faith unfeigned; it is not saying, or professing, that a man believes and trusts in the Lord; but it is with the heart, and with his whole heart, that he believes unto righteousness, if he believes aright; see Rom. x. 10. Acts viii. 37. *And lean not unto thine own understanding*; or trust not to that; for it stands opposed to trusting

¹ יְבוּרָה non derelinquent te, Piscator; non deserent te, Michaëlis; so Aben Ezra and Gersom.

² Laert. Vit. Solon. A. Gell. Noët. Attic. 1. 2. c. 12.

¹ חַן gratiam, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

² כֶּחֶץ successum optimum, Junius & Tremellius.

in the Lord. Men should not depend upon their own wisdom and understanding, in the conduct of civil life, but should seek the direction and blessing of Providence, or otherwise will meet with disappointment; and, when they succeed, should ascribe it not to their own prudence and wisdom, but to the goodness of God; for *bread is not always to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding*, Eccl. ix. 11. and much less should men lean to their own understanding in matters of religion; a natural man has no understanding of spiritual things, of the things of the Gospel, nor indeed any practical understanding of things moral, Rom. iii. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Jer. iv. 22. The understanding of man is darkened by sin; yea, is darkness itself; it is like the first earth, covered with darkness, till light is let into it, and therefore not to be leaned unto and depended on, Ephes. iv. 18. and v. 8. There is a necessity of a new heart and spirit, of an understanding to be given, in order to understand spiritual and divine things, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 1 John v. 20. for though these are not contrary to the reason and understanding of men; yet they are above them, and cannot be discovered, reached, comprehended, and accounted for by them, Matt. xvi. 17. John iii. 4, 9. Nay, there are some things in the Gospel, which, though plain to an enlightened understanding by the word of God, yet the manner how they are cannot be apprehended: as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons; of the generation of the Son of God; the procession of the Spirit; the union of the two natures in Christ; the resurrection of the dead, &c. In short, not our reason and understanding at best, and much less as carnal and unsanctified, but the word of God only is our rule of judgment, and the standard of our faith and practice; and to that we should have recourse and be directed by it, and not lean to our own understandings.

Ver. 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, &c.* Or *know him*; the Lord: set him before thee; have him always in view; consider him as ever present with thee, observing every step thou takest; and take not one step without his leave, and without his advice; ask wisdom of him who gives liberally; consult his word, and make the Scriptures thy counsellors, or the men of thy counsel, as in Psal. cxix. 24. take him as your guide; observe the footsteps of his providence; follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; when things go cross and adverse, and not to your mind, submit to his sovereignty; and be still and know that he is God, that does all things right, for his own glory and his people's good, Psal. xlvi. 10. and when things succeed, give him the glory of all; own his hand in it, and the bounty of it; acknowledge that all you have, in providence and grace, come from him. *And he shall direct thy paths*; man cannot direct his own; no, not a good man: this is a blessing from the Lord; who orders the steps of his people, keeps the feet of his saints, and directs them aright in things temporal and spiritual, Jer. x. 23. Psal. xxxvii. 23. 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Ver. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes, &c.* So as to

act independently of God; not to trust in him, nor acknowledge him, nor seek to him for help and direction; nor ask nor take the advice of others; but, being conceited and self-sufficient, lean to thine own understanding, as being wise enough to conduct all affairs in life by thy own discretion; and in matters of religion wiser than thy teachers, and even than the Scriptures, being wise above that which is written; pleasing thyself with thine own wisdom, as exceeding others; glorying in it as thine own acquisition, and not ascribing it to God, so far as it any ways deserves the name of wisdom; though for the most part that which men glory in, and are conceited of, is not wisdom, but folly; and at least it is their folly to boast of it and be elated with it; see Isa. v. 21. Rom. xii. 16. *Fear the Lord*; which is true wisdom; and, where this is not, there is none, let men be ever so conceited; and where this is there is humility; these two go together, and make a man wise, rich, and honourable, ch. xxii. 4. The fear of the Lord is opposed to pride, high-mindedness, and vain conceit, Rom. xi. 20. this includes reverence of God, faith in him, dependence on him, acknowledgment of him, seeking to him for direction, and carefulness not to offend him. *And depart from evil*; from the evil of self-confidence and self-conceit, and from all other evil; the fear of God influences men to avoid sin, and abstain from all appearance of it; by means and through the exercise of it men forsake it, and keep at a distance from it, ch. xvi. 6. Nehemiah could not do as others did, because of the fear of the Lord; and Job was a man that feared God, and therefore he avoided that which was evil, Neh. v. 15. Job i. 1.

Ver. 8. *It shall be health to thy navel, &c.* That part of the body which is the knot of the intestines; and may be put for the bowels and inward parts, which being sound, the body is in health; and these may be put for the whole body: and so the Septuagint version renders it, *to thy body*; and this may be put for the whole person. And the sense is, either wisdom, as Jarchi; the doctrine of wisdom, the Gospel; which teaches men to trust in the Lord, and not in themselves, to apply to him for wisdom, and not lean to their own understanding; this contributes much to a man's spiritual health and welfare: or else the fear of the Lord is of this use to men, both in soul and body; since by it they depart from those sins which bring diseases upon the body; and are influenced by it to the exercise of such graces, and the discharge of such duties, as are the means of keeping the soul in good plight. *And marrow to thy bones*; or, *watering*^m to them: that which irrigates and moistens them, and makes and keeps them strong and solid: see Job xxi. 24. What marrow is to the bones, that is wisdom, or the fear of God, to the souls of men; the means of establishing and strengthening them against sin, and snares and temptations, and to do the will and work of God.

Ver. 9. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, &c.* Or, *out of thy substance*ⁿ; for as it should be a man's own that he gives, and not another's, and therefore

¹ טוּרָוּוּ scito eum, Pagninus, Montanus.
^m טוּרָוּוּ irrigatio, V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama, Schultens.

ⁿ טוּרָוּוּ e substantia tua, Montanus; de substantia tua, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; de divitiis tuis, Mercerus, Gejerus; de opibus tuis, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

called *thy substance*; or, as the Septuagint version, *out of thy just labours*, what is righteously and lawfully gotten, and not by fraud and oppression; so it is only a part of it, and not all, that is required; what in proportion to his substance can be prudently spared, and is sufficient and suitable to the call in Providence. A man's *substance* are his wealth and riches; his *mammov*, as the Targum; which, in comparison of heavenly things, indeed have no substance in them: yet these are worldly substance, and of account; and as with these God has honoured men, they should honour him with them again, by giving to the poor, especially his *poorsaints*; for as an oppressing of them is a reproaching of him, so having mercy on them is honouring him, ch. xiv. 31. and especially by contributing to the support of his worship, the keeping up the interest and credit of religion, and for the spread of the Gospel; and chiefly by communicating to the ministers of it, giving them the *double honour* which is due to them; and which, when given them, the Lord takes as done to himself, as an honouring him, 1 Tim. v. 17. *And with the first-fruits of all thine increase*; or, *out of the chief of all thine increase*; God must have the best, and in the first place. The allusion is either to the maintenance of the priests and Levites under the law, and the manner of doing it; which, among other things, was out of the annual produce of the earth, and the first-fruits of it; and may respect the comfortable support of Gospel ministers under the present dispensation; see 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. or to the first-fruits of every kind offered to the Lord, and to the feast kept sacred to him at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, Lev. xxiii. 10, 17, 39. and even among the Heathens formerly were something of the same kind. Aristotle says^p the ancient sacrifices and assemblies were instituted as first-fruits, after the gathering of the fruits, at which time especially they ceased from working.

Ver. 10. *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, &c.* With plenty of corn; so that there will be a sufficient provision of bread for the eater for the ensuing year, and of seed for the sower when the time of sowing returns; so far should they be, it suggests, from being losers by honouring the Lord with their substance, that they should be gainers by it; instead of having less, should have abundantly more. *And thy presses shall burst out with new wine*; not that they should really burst^q, for then the wine would be spilled, which would be a loss; but that they should be so full, that they should be ready to burst or run over: and so the Targum, and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, *and thy presses shall overflow with new wine*. As the former clause denotes plenty of eatables, so this of drinkables; and both fullness of all sorts of provisions, promised to the liberal man; and may be an emblem of the large provisions of grace and glory, which the Lord has made for and bestows upon such that honour him.

Ver. 11. *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, &c.* This seems to be introduced to prevent an

objection that may be made to the above promise of plenty; seeing the children of God are often afflicted in this world; even the wise and pious, and those that fear the Lord, and honour him; which is accounted for, and the reason of it given, in the following verse. These words are cited in Heb. xii. 5, 6. and are represented as an exhortation, spoken unto children, the children of God; by which it appears, that not any single person is meant by *my son*; and, as not here, so neither elsewhere in this book, where the same phrase is used. It is not to be limited to any son of Solomon's according to the flesh; nor to any person or persons, that applied to him for instruction, and were taught by him; nor to all the people of God in his time: but it has respect to the Jews in the times of the apostles; and even to all the children of God in all ages, who more or less endure afflictions, here called *the chastening of the Lord*, because they are from him; whatever concern men or devils, or second causes, may have in them, they are originally from the Lord, either sent or suffered by him; they are indeed by his appointment, and are ordered, limited, and restrained by him, and are overruled for his glory and his people's good: they are not chastisements in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, which would be contrary to the satisfaction of Christ, the justice of God, his everlasting and unchangeable love, and to his word and oath; but they are in love; they are the chastisements of a father, in which he deals with them as with children; and uses them for the good discipline and instruction of them, as the word^r here signifies; and therefore not to be *despised*, or loathed and abhorred, as disagreeable food or physic be; or as if they were unnecessary and unprofitable, or unworthy of notice and regard; or as little, slight, and trifling things, without considering from whence they come and for what they are sent; but, on the contrary, should be regarded as useful and serviceable; see Job v. 17. *Neither be weary of his correction; rebuke or reproof*; so in Heb. xii. 5. *when thou art rebuked of him*, not in wrath and fury, but in love, as before. The same thing is meant by correction as chastening; and supposes a fault to be committed by him that is corrected, for God corrects none but for sin; and authority in the corrector, which he, as the Father of spirits, and as our covenant God and Father in Christ, has a right to do: he corrects by his spirit, by his word, by his ministers, and by his providences, afflictive ones, which last is here meant; and it is always for good, at a proper time, and when necessary, in measure and with judgment: and of this the children should not be *weary*, as grievous and intolerable; and especially should not be weary of their lives on account of it, in which sense the word is used in Gen. xxvii. 46. which has been the case of Job and others; but should bear it quietly and peaceably; and with patience, without fretting and murmuring; or should not *faint*, as it is rendered in Heb. xii. 5. or sink under the weight, but cheerfully support under it. The two extremes, which men are apt to run into, are here

^o כָּל תְּרוּמַתְךָ לְךָ מִפְּרִיטוֹתֶיךָ de præcipuo totius proventus tui, Junius & Tremellius.

^p Ethic. l. 8. c. 11.

^q A like figure see in Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 49. — raperunt horrea messes.

^r מוֹסֵר disciplinam, V. L. Cocceius, Schultens; eruditionem, Junius & Tremellius.

^s אֲדַבְּרָתִי אֶדְרֹגְתִּימָהּ ad increpationem ejus, Tigurinae version, Mercerus, Gejerus; redargutionem ejus, Cocceius; sub redargutione ejus, Schultens.

guarded against; on the one hand, to make little or nothing of an affliction; to outbrave it, not to be affected with it, nor humble under the mighty hand of God; nor consider the rod, and him that has appointed it: and, on the other hand, to aggravate an affliction, as if no sorrow was like theirs, and to be quite dejected and overwhelmed with it.

Ver. 12. *For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, &c.*] This is a reason why the children of God should not despise corrections, nor be weary of them; since they spring from love, are given in love, nor is there any abatement of it in them: when the Lord chastens and corrects, he does not take away his loving-kindness from them; yea, it is because he loves them that therefore he thus deals with them; wherefore they ought to be patiently bore, and kindly taken by them. *Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*; as a father chastens and corrects his son, whom he dearly loves, and has the greatest pleasure in, so the Lord chastens and corrects his people; see Deut. viii. 5. There is such a relation subsisting between them as that of father and son, which flows from the inexpressible love of God to them; and which is a love of complacency and delight in them, and is invariable and unchangeable, and continues the same under all their afflictions; as appears by what he does for them in them, and by the issue of them; he knows their souls in adversity, and chooses them in the furnace of affliction; he pays love-visits to them, and comforts them under all their tribulation; he sympathizes with them, and supports them; he makes their bed in their affliction, and delivers out of it, or takes them to himself: the issue is always his own glory, and their good.

Ver. 13. *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, &c.*] Some connect these words with the preceding; as if the sense was, a good man, though he is chastened by the Lord, yet is a happy man; not only because his chastenings are in love and for good, but because he improves in spiritual knowledge and understanding by them; see Psal. xciv. 12. Aben Ezra connects them with the former, but in a different manner, thus; *happy is the man that findeth wisdom*, for by it he keeps from sinning, that chastisements may not come upon him. But rather the argument in praise of wisdom, and the advantages of it, insisted on in the preceding chapter, is resumed here and enlarged upon; and by *wisdom* is meant Christ, and a saving knowledge of him by means of his Gospel; and *finding* him supposes seeking him; which does not arise from nature, but the grace of God, and follows upon the sight of the need and worth of Christ; and is done in the use of means, as reading, praying, and attendance on the word and ordinances: and finding him is no other than an enjoyment of him by faith; which is a seeing him, a taking hold on him, and possessing him; who is to be found in the covenant of grace, being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; in the Gospel, which is full of him; in the promises of it, which hold him forth, and the blessings of his grace; in the ordinances, which direct unto him, and where he shews himself: for he is not to be found by the light of

nature, nor by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses; but by means of the Gospel, attended with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and a happy finding this, which fills the possessor with inexpressible joy! see John i. 41. *And the man thatgetteth understanding*; Christ, and a spiritual understanding of him: this is not a proper acquisition of a man's own; an interest in Christ is not gotten by any thing of man's; not by his good works, which are the fruits of grace; nor by faith and repentance, which are gifts of grace themselves; but it is given unto a man: and *getting* here signifies, as before, possession and enjoyment of Christ, as God's pure gift; as a man that is said to obtain the favour of God, when he enjoys it, and the effects of it, in consequence of finding Christ, ch. viii. 35. where the same word is used as here. The word signifies to *draw out*; as metals are drawn out of the earth by searching and digging for, or as water out of a well; thus Christ, and the knowledge of him, are drawn out of the mines and fountains of the Scriptures, by such that seek after him aright. Aben Ezra interprets it, that draws or brings it out from another, and learns it; the true believer in Christ hears and learns of the Father, and so comes to Christ, and enjoys him, John vi. 45. The Targum is, "who causes understanding to spring up;" as water out of a well or fountain; out of his heart, as Gersom; or, as Jarchi, who has learned wisdom, that it is ready to break out at his mouth; out of the abundance of it in his heart, his mouth speaketh; as such that know Christ cannot but speak to others of the things they have heard and seen, Matt. xii. 34, 35, Acts iv. 20.

Ver. 14. *For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, &c.*] The believer is a spiritual merchant; faith is a trading with and for Christ, and for spiritual and heavenly things by him; and because there is a parting with something for Christ, as a man's sinful lusts and pleasures, his own righteousness, his friends and relations, when set in opposition to or competition with him, and even life itself, when called for; and because he runs a risk of suffering reproach, afflictions, and death itself; therefore this concern with him, and enjoyment of him, is called a *merchandise*; which is *better than that of silver*, or than silver which is got by merchandise: for Christ, and the things of Christ, are more valuable than silver, and to be preferred unto it; more useful and profitable than silver is, which a man may have a large abundance of, and lose his soul, whereas by Christ is the salvation of it; more satisfying than silver is, with which a man is never satisfied, whereas he that has Christ has enough, having all things; more pleasant in obtaining, and more safe in enjoying; a great deal of anxiety and vexation attend the one, and inexpressible pleasure the other; and more durable and lasting than that, the enjoyment of Christ is for ever. *And the gain thereof than fine gold*; the doctrines and ordinances of Christ are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; the blessings of grace by Christ, such as redemption, pardon of sin, &c. are not obtained by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but are more precious than they; and even the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people, as faith,

* פִּדְיָא' educet, Montanus; eruit, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

hope, and love, are more precious than gold that perisheth; and much more preferable must he himself be, and the gain that accrues to a believer by him, which is cent. per cent. an hundred fold, even in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life: it is all clear gain a believer gets by Christ and trading with him; he has him, and all with him, without money and without price; he has that which is more worth than the gain of the whole world, even the salvation of his immortal soul; the riches he has by Christ are immense and unsearchable, the riches of grace and glory; it cannot be said how great this gain is.

Ver. 15. *She is more precious than rubies, &c.*] Or *pearls**, as some; which were formerly esteemed above all precious stones; the eastern were the more valuable^w, which Solomon had most knowledge of; Christ is the pearl of great price, of more value than any pearl, or all put together, Matt. xiii. 46. see the note on Job xxviii. 18. or *carbuncles**, as others. The Targum and Septuagint render it in general terms *precious stones*; and the Vulgate Latin version, *than all riches*: there is a beautiful gradation in this and the preceding verse, wisdom is first preferred to *silver*, then to *fine gold*^y, and here to *precious stones*. Christ is precious, exceeding precious in his names and titles, Messiah, Jesus, Immanuel, &c.; in his divine nature, and the perfections of it, which shew his condescension and grace to become a Saviour, assure of his ability to save, and render his mediatorial performances valuable; in his person as God and man; in the beauty, fulness, and fitness of it; in his power, wisdom, grace, &c. in his offices, his priestly office; in his satisfaction, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are precious; in his intercession, which is ever acceptable and prevalent; in his prophetic office, his Gospel is precious, every truth and promise of it; in his kingly office, all his ordinances and appointments, his commandments are more to be loved than gold, yea, than fine gold; in all his relations and characters, and in every thing that belongs to him; he is so to them that believe, and to none else; 1 Pet. ii. 7. these see the need and worth of him, receive much from him, and live upon him; and especially he is precious to them at first conversion; and so he is after desertions, and long absence; and under temptations and afflictions, losses and disappointments; and in the hour of death: and he is superlatively precious, *more precious than rubies*, or any precious stones; of a superior lustre and glory to them, being *the brightness of his father's glory*; and of more intrinsic worth and value, of greater price than any pearls, and more enriching to his possessors, for such possess all things. *And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compar'd unto her*: this takes in a very great compass: there are many things that are very desirable, and the desires of man's heart are very extensive, and not easily satisfied; there are the precious things of heaven, brought forth by the sun and moon; and the precious things of the earth, which are either upon it or in it, in the bowels of it, and upon the plains,

and hills; but none of equal worth with Christ; there are many precious and excellent, and desirable persons in the world, neighbours, friends, relations, and acquaintance; saints on earth, and angels in heaven; yet none to be valued with Christ, and compared to him; see Psal. lxxiii. 25.

Ver. 16. *Length of days is in her right hand, &c.*] Wisdom is here represented as a queen, as indeed she is above all kings and queens; see ch. viii. 15, 16, 18. holding in one hand, instead of a sceptre, *length of days*; and in the other, instead of a globe, *riches and honour*: the allusion is thought by some on this clause to be to an ancient custom of numbering things, and the ages of men, by the hand and fingers, beginning with the left hand, and when they came to a hundred went to the right^z; so that in that might be truly said to be *length of days*, few arriving to that number: or rather the reference is to what Solomon received of the Lord, who, asking wisdom, had not that only, but a long life, and riches and honour; see 1 Kings iii. 11—14. Some think that only temporal blessings are here meant, and, because health and long life are preferable to wealth and honour, the former are said to be in the right hand, and the latter in the left; but seeing in the preceding verses the advantages of wisdom are superior to silver, gold, and precious stones, it can hardly be thought that she should be represented as only having temporal blessings in her hands to bestow on her followers. Others are of opinion that spiritual and eternal blessings are the right-hand ones, being the principal; and temporal blessings are the left-hand ones, as being the less valuable, Matt. vi. 33. but to me they seem all of one sort, all spiritual and eternal ones, even those of the left hand, by comparing this passage with ch. viii. 18. *By length of days* is meant *length of days for ever and ever*, Psal. xxi. 4. or eternal life, a life of vision or enjoyment of God; a life of perfect knowledge, holiness, and pleasure; being free from all the imperfections, difficulties, and distresses of the present one, and which will last for ever; this is in the hand of Christ, not the promise and grant of it only, but the thing itself, in consequence of his asking it of his father: and which he has in a covenant-way, and so has a right and power to bestow it: and it being in his hands shews both the valuableness and the security and safety of it; and also that it is to be had from him, and is in his gift, and in no other; and is a pure gift of his grace; wherefore happy is the man that finds Wisdom, or Christ, since he finds and has eternal life in him. *And in her left hand riches and honour*: by *riches* are meant not temporal riches, for these are not always to the wise, nor to the children of Wisdom, nor of Christ; and all that have these are not happy, nor are they durable: but spiritual riches are intended, the riches of grace; of pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and of all supplies of grace; and also the riches of glory, which are solid and satisfying, immense and unsearchable, lasting and durable: and by *honour* is designed not the honour which comes

* מרגלית *præ margaritis*, Montanus, Merceras, Gejerus, Michaëlis.

^w De Boot. Hi. t. Gemm. l. 2. c. 39.

^z Carbunculis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^y *Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum*, Horat. Ep. l. 1. Ep. 1. v. 52.

^z Vid. Nebrissensis. *Quinquagena*, c. 16. & Alex. ab Alex. *Genial. Dier.* l. 1. c. 14. to which Juvencal refers, when speaking of Nestor — *suos jam dextra computat annos*, Satyr. 14. v. 249.

from men, or the honour of this world; for such who find Christ, and are possessed of him, and profess him, have but a small share of this, being, generally speaking, accounted the filth and offscouring of the world; but yet they are the children of God, and so have that name which is better than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest monarch; they are the spouse of Christ, and so his queen that stands at his right hand in gold of Ophir; they are made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ for evermore; this honour have all the saints, and is what is in the hands of Christ to give, and does give, to all that believe in him: or *glory*^a, as the word signifies; the glory of God, eternal glory; this as well as grace is Christ's gift, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

Ver. 17. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, &c.*] The ways and methods which Christ took to bring about the salvation of his people; some in eternity, as engaging as a surety for them, entering into a covenant with his father on their account, taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory; others in time, as the assumption of their nature, obedience to the law, suffering and dying in their room and stead, rising again, ascending to heaven, and interceding for them; calling them by his grace, clothing them with his righteousness, and keeping them by his power unto salvation, and at last introducing them into his kingdom and glory. These are *pleasant*, to view the love of Christ in them, the success that attended them, the glory of God brought about hereby, and the salvation of his people; which is exceedingly pleasant, being agreeable to all the perfections of God; suitable to the case of sinners, full and complete in itself, free to them, and of an everlasting duration; it is this which makes Christ so pleasant to souls, and the Gospel also: or else the *ways* which Christ has prescribed and directed his followers to walk in are here meant; as himself, who is the principal way, and the only way to the Father, and to heaven and happiness; also the ways of faith, holiness, and truth, the ways of Christ's commandments, and all the ordinances of the Gospel and institutions of religion; which are *pleasant*, when the presence of God and Christ is enjoyed in them; when the heart is enlarged with the love of God and Christ; when assisted therein by the Spirit of God, having good food and refreshment in them, and good company with them; and which, though attended with much tribulation, end in eternal pleasure. *And all her paths are peace*; the paths which Christ has trod in to procure the peace of his people; he appeared in the council of peace, and assisted in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his father; he assumed the nature of his people, in order to be their peacemaker; he took the chastisement of their peace upon him; he obtained it by the blood of his cross; he sends his ministers to publish it, and his spirit into the hearts of men to reconcile them to this way of peace and salvation by him; and the result of all this is, that an honourable *peace* is made for sinners, and peace of con-

science is enjoyed, which passeth all understanding, flowing from the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the whole issues in eternal peace in the world to come. Likewise all those *paths* which Christ instructs his people to walk in; as the paths of faith and obedience, these lead to the enjoyment of *peace* here and hereafter; there is much peace had in a way of believing, and great peace have they which love the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and obey them; they may meet with much disquietude at times in their own spirits, by reason of sin, temptation, and desertion; they may bring the malice of the world upon them, and have much trouble from it, and too, too often, disagree amongst themselves; and yet, after all, they have that peace which others have not while they live; and, when they die, they depart in peace, and enter into eternal peace. Now all this is true, not of unregenerate persons, who desire not the knowledge of Christ, and to whom there is no peace, but of true believers in him.

Ver. 18. *She is a tree of life, &c.*] Or *lives*^b; so Christ is called, Rev. ii. 7. and xxii. 2, 14. in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden, Gen. ii. 9. he being the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; which souls may come at, and pluck and eat of the fruit which is upon him in great plenty and variety, even all the blessings of grace and glory. *To them that lay hold upon her*; which is expressive of an act of faith on Christ, Heb. vi. 18. faith lays hold on the person of Christ as a Saviour, and will have him and no other; it comes to the blood of Christ, and deals with it for pardon and purification; it lays hold on his skirt, who is a Jew, on the robe of his righteousness, and puts it on; it lays hold on his strength, and goes forth in it, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; it lays hold on his covenant, the blessings and promises of it, and takes them to itself: and this act supposes danger without him, safety in him, a view of suitable provisions for food and clothing with him; some strength of grace, and some degree of resolution; also condescension on Christ's part to suffer himself to be handled by them; and likewise that he first took hold on them and brought them out of a state of nature to himself: great encouragement there is for sensible sinners to lay hold on Christ; he is set before them in the Gospel to be laid hold on; he never discourages any from so doing, nor casts out any that come to him; he is able to bear the stress of their salvation they lay upon him; multitudes of lost sinners have been saved by him: and he is a tree of life, as the text says, to such persons; they have spiritual life, and the support and comfort of it, from him now, and may expect everlasting life from him hereafter. *And happy is every one that retaineth her*; or *holds her fast*^c; see Cant. iii. 4. Gen. xxxii. 26. as such may be said to do who constantly apply to him for fresh communications of grace; who walk on in him as they have received him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him. The phrase is expressive of great affection to him, and strong faith in him; faith keeps its hold of Christ

^a כבוד gloria, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

^b עץ חיים lignum vitarum, Montanus.

^c תמכה significatur hoc verbo, firmitas & constantia in tenendo, Michaelis; so Mercerus.

through great darkness and many difficulties; oftentimes the soul walks in darkness, and yet stays itself on Christ, and, Abraham-like, believes in hope against hope. Faith is sometimes very low, and yet lets not go its hold; it fails not, through the prevalent intercession of Christ; it cannot so let go its hold as that there is a parting; a partial departing there may be, but not a total one: however, it is sometimes very difficult for faith to keep fast hold of the Redeemer; it is for the honour and comfort of believers so to do; and it is their mercy that interest in Christ, and salvation by him, do not depend on acts of faith; for, though *we believe not*, yet *he abides faithful*: nevertheless happy are they that retain him, or are steadfast in their faith on him; they have much communion with him now, and shall live with him for evermore hereafter.

Ver. 19. *The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, &c.*] He has created all things, and made the world by his Son, the Wisdom of God, Ephes. iii. 9. Heb. i. 2. not using him as an instrument; but, he being an efficient cause with him, to him, as to the first cause, the creation of all things is ascribed, John i. 1—3. Col. i. 16. and particularly the laying the foundation of the earth, Heb. i. 10. and though this is true of the divine perfection of wisdom, Jer. x. 12. yet from the context it appears best to understand it of the essential Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus; the Jerusalem Targum of Gen. i. 1. is, *by wisdom God created*, &c. and this serves greatly to set forth the dignity and excellency of Wisdom, or Christ, and so the happiness of that man that finds him; with this the account of him is closed and crowned. *By understanding hath he established the heavens*: or prepared, adorned, and beautified them, by placing the luminaries in them, and directing their station, motion, and influence; the making of the heavens, with all the host of them, is ascribed to the essential Word or Wisdom of God, Psal. xxxiii. 6.

Ver. 20. *By his knowledge the depths are broken up, &c.*] From whence fountains and rivers flow, and whereby that great cavity was made which holds that large confluence of waters called the sea, Gen. i. 9, 10. Some refer this to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep at the flood, Gen. vii. 11. and others to the dividing of the waters of the Red sea when Israel came out of Egypt, Psal. lxxviii. 13. all wonderful works of divine wisdom, and shew the greatness of him, in whom are *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, by whom they were done. *And the clouds drop down the dew*; which makes the earth fruitful, and is put for all the blessings of nature, Gen. xxvii. 28. the drops of dew are begotten by the Lord, they have no other father but him; the vanities of the Gentiles cannot produce them; he who fills the clouds with them, from whence they descend, is no other than the mighty God; and such is Christ the Wisdom of God. Some understand this in a mystical sense of Gospel ministers, and of the dew of Gospel doctrine, dropped and distilled by them under the influence and direction of Christ; see Deut. xxxii. 2. but the literal sense is best.

Ver. 21. *My son, let not them depart from thine eyes, &c.*] Meaning not the things done by Wisdom; though it is good to contemplate his works of creation and

providence, which serve to set forth the glory of Christ, and lead into adoring and admiring views of him, and to thankfulness to him; but wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, whereby these things are done, which are but so many names of Christ: we should always set him before us, keep him always in view, be ever looking to him by faith, and never suffer him to depart from our eyes; we should always have in sight his divine Person for our acceptance with God, the greatness and glory of it to encourage our faith and hope in him; we should keep in view his righteousness for our justification, and which we should ever make mention of at the throne of grace, and hold it forth in the hand of faith against all charges and accusations of law and justice, Satan, or our own hearts; we should be continually looking to his blood for peace and pardon, healing and cleansing; and our eyes should be at all times on his fulness, for fresh supplies of grace, for spiritual food, or the daily bread of our souls, and for spiritual strength and comfort: we should always consider him as the Saviour, and be exercising faith on him as such, for there is no other; and should always look upon him as the Mediator between God and man, and make use of him; and he should be ever before us as our example, both in the exercise of grace and performance of duty, to copy after; and we should always keep sight of him whilst running our Christian race, as the forerunner for us entered, and as the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. And not only Wisdom, or Christ, but all the things that are said of him in the context, we should never lose sight of; the exceeding great gain got by him, the superlative preciousness of him, the fulness of blessings in both his hands, the pleasantness and peaceableness of his ways, the usefulness of him as a tree of life to those that lay hold upon him and retain him, and the works of nature and providence done by him, ver. 14—20. Moreover, this may include all the truths and doctrines of Wisdom, or Christ; for, if the law and its precepts were to be upon the hands and as frontlets between the eyes of the Israelites, and so be ever in sight, then much more the doctrines of the Gospel, Deut. vi. 8, 9. It is observable that the Septuagint here makes use of the same word the apostle does in Heb. ii. 1. speaking of Gospel truths; see the note there; these are meant in the next clause; and some by a transposition place them thus, *let not sound wisdom and discretion depart from thine eyes, keep them*; for by *sound wisdom* is meant sound doctrine, the wholesome words of Christ, the solid and substantial truths of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *keep the law*; but the Syriac version, much better, *keep my doctrine*, the doctrine of the Gospel; which also is meant by *discretion* or *counsel*, as some render the word, and as the Gospel is called, Acts xx. 27. this should be kept; the doctrines of it should be held fast and not let go, or be departed from; and the ordinances of it should be observed and kept, as they were delivered, from a principle of love, and a view to the glory of Christ; the advantages arising from them follow.

Ver. 22. *So shall they be life unto thy soul, &c.*] Give it a better life than it naturally has, though im-

^d חכמה, תושיה, Sept. consilium, Arabic version.

mortal; Christ is both the spiritual and eternal life of the souls of those that look unto him by faith; and his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the means of reviving drooping saints, and of quickening them to the discharge of their duty; wherefore both he and they should be kept in continual view, and held fast. *And grace to thy neck*; an ornament to that and to the whole man; how ornamental is Christ and his righteousness to a believer! how lovely is the person that is steady in his principles, and regular in his practices! who stands fast in the truths of the Gospel, and whose conversation is as becomes it! see ch. i. 9. and iii. 3.

Ver. 23. *Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, &c.*] In the way of thy duty and business, without fear of any enemy; having in sight the Captain of salvation gone before, and walking in such ways of pleasantness and peace as Wisdom's are; and having such a lamp to the feet, and such a light unto the paths, as the Gospel and its doctrines be. *And thy foot shall not stumble*; at the word and the truths of it, as some men do, being thereunto appointed; and at Christ, the stumbling-stone laid in Zion, particularly at his justifying righteousness; see 1 Pet. ii. 8. Rom. ix. 33.

Ver. 24. *When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid, &c.*] That is, when thou liest down on thy bed at night in order to take sleep, having committed thyself into the hands of a faithful Creator and covenant God and Father, and of Christ the Redeemer and Wisdom of God; thou shalt not be afraid of thieves breaking in to hurt thy person or rob thee of thy property, or of fire to consume thy dwelling and substance, and of nocturnal apparitions and diabolical spectres deceiving thy sight and disturbing thy mind; or when thou art asleep^g, for so the word also signifies; thou shalt not be surprised out of it with any of the above things, or terrified in it with uneasy imaginations, anxious cares, and distressing dreams. *Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet*; free of all uneasy thoughts and cares, sound and refreshing, pleasant and comfortable, like that of the labouring man, Eccl. v. 12. see Psal. iv. 8. This epithet of *sweet* is often given to *sleep* in poetic writings^h.

Ver. 25. *Be not afraid of sudden fear, &c.*] Of any thing terrible that comes unawares, unthought-of, by any of the above things mentioned in the preceding note; or by any rumours and reports of danger being near at hand; always think thyself safe in the arms of Wisdom, and under the care of Israel's keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. *Neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh*; either of the desolation which wicked men threaten to bring, and are suffered to bring, upon the godly for the sake of religion; either on their persons or goods, since suffering at their hands in such a cause is to the honour of saints, and for the glory of God; or of the desolation which comes upon the godly, for God is able to deliver him from it, as Noah and his family from the universal deluge, and Lot and his family from Sodom and Gomorrah; or if they promiscuously fall in it, nevertheless it will be well with them to all eternity.

Ver. 26. *For the Lord shall be thy confidence, &c.*] The object of it, in whom thou shalt put thy confidence, and be safe and secure from all fear and danger: or *the Lord shall be in thy confidence*^k; shall support thee in it, and maintain that, so that thou shalt not cast it away; the word used has sometimes the notion of folly in it, and Jarchi, from the Jerusalem Talmud, produces a sense agreeable to it; "the Lord shall be in things in which thou art foolish;" which, how absurd it may seem to be, will admit of a good interpretation; that the Lord will be with Wisdom's followers in things which may seem foolishness to the world; as Christ, the things of Christ, and the things of the spirit of Christ, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are. The Targum is, "the Lord shall be thine help," in all times of distress, difficulty, and danger. *And shall keep thy foot from being taken*; in the snares of sin, temptation, and mischief; in those which Satan and the world lay for God's people; from these the Lord preserves them; wherefore happy are those that have an interest in Christ, who find and enjoy him.

Ver. 27. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, &c.*] Honour, reverence, and tribute, to civil magistrates, Rom. xiii. 7, 8. just payment of debts to creditors, and alms to the poor, which, by what follows, seems to be chiefly intended; and the Septuagint render it, "do not abstain to do well to the needy;" and A ben Ezra interprets it of the poor; to them alms are due because of their wants, and by the appointment of God; hence called *righteousness*, in some copies of Matt. vi. 1. so money kept from the poor *mammon of unrighteousness*, Luke xvi. 9. They are, as the word in the Hebrew text signifies, *the owners thereof*^l; rich men are not so much proprietors of good things as they are God's almoners or stewards to distribute to the poor; and, as often as men have opportunity, they should do good in this way to all, especially to the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10. this will hold true, as of temporal good things, so of spiritual; as good advice, exhortation, and doctrine. The Vulgate Latin version is, *do not forbid him to do well that can*; which sense is favoured by Jarchi: and as we should not abstain from doing good ourselves, so neither should we forbid, hinder, or discourage others; but the former sense is best. *When it is in the power of thine hand to do it*; not to hinder others, as Jarchi, but to do good; when a man has a sufficiency in his hands to do good with; has not only enough for himself and his family, but something to spare; when he has both opportunity and ability; and when he can do it at once and without delay, as follows.

Ver. 28. *Say not unto thy neighbour, &c.*] Either to whom thou art indebted, and who comes for the payment of a just debt; or to any poor and indigent person that applies for alms: *go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give*; go home, and come to-morrow, and I will pay thee what I owe thee; or do not trouble me now, come another time, and perhaps I may relieve thy wants: this should not be said, because a man cannot be sure of to-morrow that he shall ever see it;

^g תשכב dormieris, V. L. cum dormies, Vatablus.

^h ἄφρονος ὕπνου, Homer. Odyss. 7. v. 289. & 19. v. 511. Theocrit. Id. ll. 11. v. 23, 23.

^k So Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

^l אומר לך אומר לך a dominis suis, Vatablus, Mercurus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

nor may it be in the power of his hands, should he live unto the morrow, to do as he promises; his substance may be taken from him; and besides, in the mean time, the poor object may perish for want of relief. *When thou hast it by thee*; money to pay thy debts with, or to give alms to the poor; and therefore should give readily and at once, and not make any excuses and delays; *bis dat, qui cito dat*. Some make this to be part of the covetous man's words, saying, *and there is with thee*; or thou hast enough, thou hast no need to ask of me; thou hast what thou askest; thou art not in want; thou art richer than I; but the other sense is best. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "for thou knowest not what the day following may bring forth;" or may happen on it.

Ver. 29. *Devise not evil against thy neighbour, &c.] Or, plough not evil*¹; turn not up thy heart to find evil against thy neighbour, as the earth is turned up by the plough; see Hos. x. 13. Do not contrive and form schemes in thy mind and thoughts to do him any injury, in his name and character, in his person, property, or family: a good man should devise all the good he can to his fellow-creatures, but not evil to any; especially to his neighbour, and as described in the next clause. *Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee*: having a good opinion of thee, and not suspecting any ill design against him, thinks himself, goods, and family, in safety; and is under no concern to provide for his security, placing his confidence in thee, and perhaps to such a degree as to intrust with his secrets. Now to project evil against such a man is exceeding base; it is doubly sinful; this is an aggravation of the iniquity.

Ver. 30. *Strive not with a man without cause, &c.]* Either by words, in a wrangling, quarrelsome, and contentious way, for mere trifles; when there is no foundation for it, no just reason given to form a complaint, or pick a quarrel upon; or by deeds, by lawsuits, when there is nothing to proceed upon; or it is so trifling, that it is not worth while to litigate it or contend about: such, who strive either way, are far from following the example of Wisdom or Christ, and from taking his advice, Matt. xii. 19. and v. 40. *If he have done thee no harm*; no real hurt to thy person, nor injury to thy substance; if he has not abused nor defrauded thee, nor taken any thing from thee by force or fraud, nor withheld from thee what is thy right and due. But otherwise the laws of God and man ought to take place; right may be sought for, and justice should be done.

Ver. 31. *Envy thou not the oppressor, &c.]* The man that gets wealth and riches by acts of injustice, by oppressing the poor, by rapine and violence; do not envy his prosperity, and the substance he is possessed of; do not wish to be in his place and circumstances, to enjoy his affluence and ease; do not look upon his happiness with an envious eye and a fretting heart; he is far from being a happy man; his end will be bad; see Psal. xxxvii. 1, 7. *And choose none of his ways*; which he has used to get his riches in; do not follow him in them; for should you do as he has done, and get ever so much, since this would be with the loss of your souls, of what advantage would it be? He

makes the best choice that chooses the *good part* that shall not be taken away; Christ, and the ways of Christ.

Ver. 32. *For the froward is abomination to the Lord, &c.]* The perverse man, that pleases not God, and is contrary to all men, as the Jews were; one froward in his words and actions: *who transgresses the law*, as the Arabic version renders it; one that acts contrary to the nature, will, and word of God; and such an one is not only abominable in his sight, but an *abomination* itself; it is sin, which is that abominable thing that God hates, that makes him so: and the Targum is, "for iniquity is abominable before the Lord." *But his secret is with the righteous*; not such who are outwardly so to others, or trust in themselves that they are righteous, or seek for righteousness by their own works; but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, which faith receives from him, and in consequence of which a man lives soberly and righteously: with these the *secret* of the Lord is; of his love, grace, and favour, which was from everlasting, and is manifested in regeneration; of his purposes of grace, with respect to election, redemption, vocation, and adoption, which is made known in effectual calling; of his covenant, as that he is their covenant-God, Christ is their covenant-head and Mediator, and that they have an interest in all the grace, blessings, and promises of it; of the Gospel, and the several mysteries of it, which are so to carnal men; of his providences, what he is doing, or what he is about to do, and will do hereafter, Amos iii. 7. and of communion and fellowship with him. The phrase denotes friendship and familiarity; God deals with the righteous as a man does with his intimate friend, converses freely with him, and discloses his secrets to him: and the word is rendered *confabulation* by the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; see Job xxix. 4, 5. Psal. xxv. 14.

Ver. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, &c.]* The wicked man, being a transgressor of the law, is under the curse of it; and all that he has, his house, his substance, his very blessings are curses; see Mal. ii. 2. Zech. v. 2—4. he is accursed amidst his greatest affluence, and sometimes from a plentiful estate is reduced to penury and want: and Aben Ezra interprets it, *the curse of want*; and the Vulgate Latin version is, *want from the Lord is, &c.* *But he blesseth the habitation of the just*; the righteous man, as before described; he is blessed himself, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and his sins forgiven him for his sake; and what he has of worldly substance, though it be ever so little, he has it with a blessing; and therefore it is better than the riches of many wicked men; his house, though it is but a cottage, as the word^k here signifies, is blessed with the presence of God in it; his family, his children, and servants, are blessed, having his instructions and example, and especially when made effectual by the grace of God; as the house of Obed-edom was blessed for the sake of the ark, so is a just man's house, being a *bethel*, an house of God, blessed on account of his worship in it; see 2 Sam. vi. 11.

Ver. 34. *Surely he scorneth the scorners, &c.]* That

¹ חורשׁ ne arcs, Amama.

^k תּוּר תּוּרִי tugiuri, Montanus; tugiurium, vel casam pastoritiam, Gejerus.

make a mock at sin, a jest of religion, that scoff at the doctrines of the Gospel and the professors of it; these the Lord looks upon, laughs at, and has them in derision. The Greek version and two apostles render it, *he resisteth the proud*, 1 Pet. v. 5. Jam. iv. 6. Such who are haughty and arrogant, that exalt themselves and despise others; as those of a pharisaical spirit are and do, are abhorred and despised by the Lord; he sets himself against them, is their enemy, and scatters them *in the imagination of their hearts*, Luke i. 51. L'Empereur observes¹ that this version is quite agreeable to the Hebrew text and the sense of Jewish writers: R. Alshech says, that לְצַיֵּב, rendered *scorners*, are such who will not look upon the divine Being, but go on boldly in sin, as if there was no God; and Kimchi explains the word by מְתַנַּחֵם, who exalt themselves, or are proud; and because proud men yield to none, but resist others, hence the verb is used, by the Septuagint, to *resist*; agreeably to which the Targum is, "he shall drive away;" and Alshech, "he shall destroy;" and Gersom, "God shall make others mock them;" which is, to resist them. *But he giveth grace unto the lowly*; or humble souls; such who are made truly sensible of sin, and lie low in their own sight on account of it; who, sensible of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe their salvation, and all the blessings of it, to the free grace of God; own the deficiency of their duties, and disclaim all merit in them; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and are patient under every adverse dispensation of Providence; knowing what their deserts are, how undeserving of any favour, and how deserving of the divine displeasure. Now God first gives grace to these persons to make them thus humble and lowly, which they are not naturally, and then he gives them more grace, according to his promise; and it is in proof of God's giving more grace to such persons that the Apostle James produces this passage, ch. iv. 6. Grace is God's gift, first and last, what is had in first conversion, in after-supplies, and for perseverance to the end: sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are the pure gifts of God, of his own favour and good will, without any merit, motive, or condition in the creature; and which he gives liberally and bountifully; for not favour with men is here meant, as some think, but the grace of God.

Ver. 35. *The wise shall inherit glory, &c.*] *The wise* are the same with the *just and lowly* before mentioned, to whom God gives grace, and to these he gives *glory*.

The *wise* are such who are so, not in a natural, civil, or notional sense, or that are wise in the things of nature, in civil affairs and in speculative matters of religion; but in a spiritual sense, who are wise unto salvation; who know themselves, the sinfulness of their nature, their inability to do that which is good, and their want of righteousness to justify them before God; who are sensible of the sickness and diseases of their souls, their spiritual poverty, and their great folly and ignorance with respect to things of a spiritual nature; who know Christ, and him crucified, the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; that know him, not only notionally, but so as to apply unto him, and rest on him for salvation; who build it on him the foundation, on him only, and give him all the glory of it; and who have also a competent knowledge of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of the truths of it; and who take up a profession of religion upon such an experience, and hold it fast without depending on it, and have a conversation becoming it, walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now these shall *inherit glory*; not the glory of this world, or honour among men in it; but the glory of another, of which the glory of this world, and of the most excellent things in it, is but a faint resemblance: it is unseen, inconceivable, and incomparable; it is an eternal glory which Christ is entered into, and the same the Father has given him; and will lie in the vision of God, and communion with him; in beholding the glory of Christ, and in having a glory put upon them both in soul and body: and this they shall enjoy as an inheritance; not by purchase or acquisition, but by free gift; as a bequest of their Father; which comes to them as children, through the death of Christ the testator, and will be possessed for ever, as inheritances run. *But shame shall be the promotion of fools*; not fools in a natural, but in a religious sense; such who know not themselves, nor the way of salvation; who mock at sin, and scoff at religion: these and every one of these shall *take or lift up shame*^m, as their part and portion, alluding to the heave-offering under the law, in opposition to the glory the wise shall inherit and possess. Or, *shame shall lift up fools*ⁿ; hold them forth, and make them manifest and conspicuous: all the promotion they shall be raised unto will be only shame and confusion, if not in this world, yet in that to come; for, when they shall rise from the dead, it will be *to shame and everlasting contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. The Targum is, "fools shall receive tribulation;" that shall be their inheritance in the other world.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter Solomon advises to seek after wisdom, to avoid bad company, and to continue in the right paths of goodness and truth: he excites attention to what he had to say, from the relation he stood in to

the persons addressed; from the nature of his instructions, which were good and profitable; and from his own example, in attending to those his parents gave him, ver. 1—4. He exhorts above all things to get

¹ Not. in Mos. Kimchi אנוסופוס, p. 34, 35.

^m וְלִשְׂמֵי קִלְיוֹן כְּסִלְיוֹן מְרִיבֵי קִלְיוֹן unusquisque stultorum suscipit, vel sustinet, ignominiam, Vatablus.

ⁿ Stolidos vero tollit ignominia, Junius & Tremellius.

wisdom, from the superior excellency of it, and from the preservation, promotion, and honour, to be had by it, ver. 5—9. and he further enforces his exhortations, from their being the means of a comfortable life, and of the prolongation of it, and of leading in a right way without straitness or stumbling, ver. 10—13. And then proceeds to caution against bad company, and going into a bad way of life; which is enforced from the mischief done by those that walk in it, and from the darkness of it, to which the path of the just is opposed, ver. 14—19. And the exhortation to attend to and observe his instructions, and keep them, is repeated, from the consideration of their being life and health to them, ver. 20—22. and that they might be preserved, and not departed from, directions are given about ordering the heart, mouth, lips, eyes, and feet, ver. 23—27.

Ver. 1. *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, &c.*] Either of God their father, as Gersom interprets it; or rather of Solomon their father: and so he recommends his instruction from the relation he stood in to them; for, since he was their father, he would give them no bad instruction; and, since they were his children, they ought to receive it: by whom are meant, not his children in a natural sense, or the children of his body; but his disciples, such who applied to him for knowledge, and whom he undertook to learn. *And attend to know understanding;* what would serve to enlighten, enlarge, improve, and inform their understandings; what would lead them into the knowledge and understanding of things divine and spiritual, and which would be worth knowing; and of having their understandings stored and enriched with.

Ver. 2. *For I give you good doctrine, &c.*] Whose author, matter, use, and tendency, are good, and therefore should be received; so the Gospel is called, 1 Tim. iv. 6. and no other is here meant: it is the doctrine concerning Wisdom or Christ, as the following verses shew; which serves to exalt him, and makes for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and such is the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, even all the doctrines and truths of the Gospel. *For sake you not my law; or doctrine* °; not the law given on Mount Sinai, as Gersom interprets it; but the doctrine of Christ, which goes out from Mount Zion: this the children of Wisdom should not neglect, relinquish, drop, or depart from; but should keep it, and abide by it.

Ver. 3. *For I was my father's son, &c.*] Or, a son to my father °; so Solomon was to God, his heavenly Father, 2 Sam. vii. 14. which Jarchi observes, and gives as the sense of this place: but his father David is meant, whose son he was; though he was not his only one, he had others besides him. But the sense is, that he was his darling, his beloved son, whom he loved above the rest; as he was beloved of the Lord, and therefore his name was called Jedidiah, so he was beloved of his father; and, because he had a peculiar love for him, he took a particular care of his education. *Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother;* his mother Bath-sheba, who had a most affectionate regard

to him; and therefore in his tender age, as soon as he was susceptible of instructions, gave them to him, which being received, made deep and lasting impressions on him; see ch. xxxi. 1, 2. The marginal reading is, *to the sons of my mother;* for Bath-sheba had more sons, 1 Chron. iii. 5. both readings may be retained, *beloved in the sight of my mother's sons.* Gersom interprets this of the people of Israel, who were sons to God their Father; and were the only nation that received the law, and which they received at the time of their coming out of Egypt, in the days of their youth.

Ver. 4. *He taught me also, and said unto me, &c.*] The Targum is, "they taught me," his father and his mother; and so the Septuagint version, "who said "and taught me;" and the Arabic version, "they both "taught me, and said unto me;" but in the Hebrew it is singular, and is restrained to the father. He taught him when he was very young, and also gave him instructions when he was older, and a little before his own death; see 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9. and xxix. 1. he taught him by the several psalms he wrote; some of which are called *maschil*, instructive or causing to understand; two of them particularly were wrote for him, Psal. lxxii. and cxxvii. and he taught him in the following words. How far the words of David his father reach is not agreed on all hands; some think they end with the fifth verse; others with the sixth; others with the ninth, and the words of Solomon begin at the tenth: some will have it that they take in the whole chapter, which is not probable; nay, others say that the whole of the book following is his, which can by no means be agreed to: it seems most likely to me that they end at the sixth verse, and at most are not to be carried beyond the ninth. *Let thine heart retain my words:* says David to his son: the instructions he gave him by word of mouth, concerning his moral behaviour, relating to political things, the government of the people; and especially such as concerned the everlasting welfare of his soul, or were about Wisdom or Christ, and the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; these he would have him lay up in his heart, and keep them there, as a rich treasure, to have recourse unto upon all occasions. *Keep my commandments, and live;* which commandments may respect him both in his private and public capacity, and in a religious and political one; how he should behave as a man, a king, and one that feared God: as well as they may respect his orders for the building of the temple, and settling and establishing the worship of God in it; by observing which he would live comfortably and honourably, and to a good old age.

Ver. 5. *Get wisdom, get understanding, &c.*] Not only moral and political wisdom and understanding, but that which is spiritual and evangelical; Christ, and the knowledge of him; he being the only happy man that has an interest in him, and is possessed of him by faith, which is the meaning of getting him; see the note on ch. iii. 13. by which it appears, that what Solomon had before delivered, and afterwards repeats and urges, was the same his father David, that wise, great, and good man, taught him; and which he men-

° דורתי *doctrinam* meam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama; instructionem meam, Schultens.

פ חייתי לו בן פלני *fui patri meo*, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercurus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius, Schultens.

tions, the more to recommend the getting of wisdom and understanding to others. *Forget it not*: when gotten, keep it in remembrance; be continually meditating on Wisdom, or Christ, his glories and excellencies; the fulness of grace and truth in him; the blessings of goodness which come by him; the great use and profit of having and enjoying him. *Neither decline from the words of my mouth*; the above instructions, and all others he gave unto him.

Ver. 6. *Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee, &c.*] That is, Wisdom, or Christ. Men may be said to forsake Christ when they forsake the assembly of his church and people, which are his other self; when they forsake his ministers, his ambassadors, and representatives; when they forsake his word and ordinances; when they drop the doctrines of the Gospel, or depart from them; when they quit the profession they have formerly made. Nominal believers and formal professors may forsake him finally and totally; true believers only partially and for a time, through the weakness of the flesh, the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the prevalence of corruption; and therefore such an exhortation is necessary, and ought to be regarded. To forsake Christ is a very great evil; it is against a man's own interest, and is of dangerous consequence, and therefore to be guarded against; to abide by him, his truths and ordinances, is very commendable; such shall be preserved by him safe to his kingdom and glory. *Love her, and she shall keep thee*; Christ is to be loved for the excellencies and perfections of his nature; for the loveliness of his person; for the love he has shewed to his people; for what he in love has done and suffered for them, and is now doing; for the fulness of his grace and salvation, and the suitability of them to them; for the communion he indulges them in with himself; for the relations of an head, husband, father, brother, and friend, he stands in to them: and also under the character of Wisdom, he being the only wise God and their Saviour, the Wisdom of God and Wisdom to them; and whose Gospel is the Wisdom of God in a mystery. He is to be loved, all of him and that belong unto him, and above all creatures and things, ardently, sincerely, and constantly; and such lovers of him shall be kept by him from the evil of the world; from the power and dominion of sin, and condemnation by it; from being destroyed by Satan, and his temptations; and from a final and total falling away, so as not to perish everlastingly; they are kept in his own hands, in his father's love and his own, in the everlasting covenant; and in a state of grace, of sanctification, justification, and adoption. Not that loving Christ, and cleaving to him, are the causes of this preservation; but his love, grace, and power; yet these are descriptive of the persons kept and preserved: and the preservation and keeping of them is used as an argument to love him, and cleave unto him.

Ver. 7. *Wisdom is the principal thing, &c.*] Or principal one; the principal of persons and things; the principal of persons, angels or men: Christ is superior

to angels, having a more excellent name and nature than they; he is the God, the Creator, and head of them, and is above them in the human nature; he is superior to men, to the greatest of men, he is King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the best of men the saints. Are they kings? he is their King: are they priests? he is the great High-priest: are any of them prophets, teachers, shepherds? he is the great Prophet in Israel; a Teacher, that never any taught or spoke like him; the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls: is the church a family? he is the Master of it: is it a body? he is the Head: is it a building? he is the Foundation and Corner-stone; yea, the chief Master-builder. He is the beginning and chief of all God's ways, and the chief in them; in election, in the council of peace, and covenant of grace; in redemption and salvation, in grace and glory; he is all in all. Or the words may be rendered, *Wisdom is the beginning*¹; so Christ is called, Col. i. 18. a phrase expressive of his eternity, and of his being the first cause and author of all things, both in the old and new creation. Or thus, that which is *the beginning of wisdom get*², &c. which is the fear of the Lord; see ch. i. 7. and ix. 10. Therefore *get wisdom*; not an interest in Christ, but a knowledge of it; and make use of all means to obtain a greater knowledge of him, and of interest in him, which is what the apostle calls *winning* Christ; by which he means, not getting an interest in him, that he had already, but gaining a greater degree of knowledge of him, as the context shews, Phil. iii. 8—10. or, *buy wisdom*³; that is, without money and without price; so Christ advises to buy gold and white raiment of him, his grace and righteousness, Rev. iii. 18. Isa. lv. 1. *And with all thy getting get understanding*; another name for Christ; see ch. viii. 14. Or, *along with all thy getting*⁴, or *above all*: let not Christ be wanting; he is the one thing needful, the good and better part and portion, which, if missing, all other substance signifies little: or part with all for this pearl of great price, Wisdom, and prefer it to all worldly substance; look upon all but dross in comparison of Christ and the knowledge of him: all other gettings or substance are only for the body, this for the soul, and the eternal welfare of it; they are only for a time, this for eternity; they are not satisfying, but, having this, a soul has enough, has all things; Christ being his, all things are his; he possesses all things, and all other things are not blessings without him.

Ver. 8. *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee, &c.*] Christ is to be exalted in his person, by asserting his proper deity; by ascribing all divine perfections to him; by allowing him to be the author of all divine works; by giving him divine worship and homage; by owning his divine and eternal sonship, and distinct personality: he is to be exalted in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and as the only Redeemer and Saviour; by trusting in him, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his ordinances: and such that exalt him, he will *promote* them here and hereafter; of which more in the next clause. According to the

¹ חכמה ראשית חכמה principium sapientie, Montanus, Mercerus, Jerus.

² Principium sapientie est hec, compara sapientiam, Michaelis; que est caput sapientie eam acquire, &c. Junius & Tremellius.

³ חכמה קנה eme sapientiam, Pagninus, Cocceius.

⁴ לכל קניתי in omne possessione tua, V. L. in omne acquisitione tua, Montanus; prae universis que possides, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Talmudists*, the word for *exalt* signifies a diligent search, by turning things about to find out what is sought; and so the Septuagint interpret the word in the sense of *searching*, Jer. l. 26. *She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her*; by faith: for this is an act of faith, and a very considerable one, and is expressive of great nearness to Christ, of much intimacy and familiarity with him, of strong love and affection to him, of a good degree of boldness used with him, and of joy and exaltation in him; for such an action is used by persons near akin, and are very familiar with, and have a very great affection for one another, and use much freedom with each other, and rejoice at meeting together. Now such who embrace Christ, in the arms of their faith, as their alone Saviour, such he promotes and *brings to honour*; not to honour among men, for to embrace Christ and exalt him is the way to disgrace, though the disgrace is an honour, and will be ere long rolled off; but to honour hereafter. Such will be set at his right hand, and be owned by him before his father and his angels; and they will be placed on the same throne with him, and will reign with him for ever and ever; see 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Ver. 9. *She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, &c.*] This, and the following clause, explain what that honour is Christ promotes and brings his followers to here and hereafter: he gives them grace and more grace; *an increase of grace*, so the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and some think James refers to this passage, ch. iv. 6. The grace that Christ gives is very ornamental to his people: justifying grace greatly beautifies and adorns them; it not only covers the nakedness of their souls, and all their spots and imperfections, and through it all their sins are caused to pass from them; but they are made exceeding beautiful, perfectly comely through this comeliness, a perfection of beauty by it; and which is often signified by that which is very ornamental, rich, and costly, as fine linen, clothing of wrought gold, raiment of needle-work, a wedding garment, stuck with jewels and precious stones: sanctifying grace, which also is Christ's gift, is very ornamental; it is called *the beauty of holiness*; it is that by which a man is made like to God, and conformed to the image of Christ; it is the curious workmanship of the spirit of God; or what makes a man beautiful, and makes him meet for heaven and happiness: every grace is ornamental; faith, hope, love, humility, &c. these are like rows of jewels, and chains of gold, about the neck. And when this ornament is said to be given to *the head*, it is not to be understood of the natural head of a man, but of his whole person, it gives a comeliness to; and may denote the visibility of it, as it appears in the life and conversation. *A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee*; by which is meant eternal glory and happiness, called a *crown*, an ensign of royal dignity, which belongs to such as are made kings and priests unto God; and is given to conquerors, even who are more than conquerors through Christ, and as a reward of diligence and faithfulness, Rev. ii. 10. It is sometimes called a

crown of life, a crown of righteousness, an incorruptible and never-fading one, and, as here, *a crown of glory*; the saints in heaven will have a glory put upon them, both in soul and body; they will appear with Christ in glory, and be crowned with glory and honour, as he is; they will be clothed and surrounded with it: and so some render it, "she will compass thee about with a crown of glory as with a shield"; see Psal. v. 12. This Christ is said to *deliver*; it is in his hands, laid up in him, and is safe with him; he has power to dispose of it, and it may be expected from him; see 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Ver. 10. *Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, &c.*] Some think David is still speaking to his son Solomon, or Solomon continues relating what his father said to him; though I rather think these are Solomon's words to his son, to every one of his children that came to him for instruction, or he took upon him to teach; whom he advises to listen to what he had further to say, and to embrace, and not reject, his doctrines. *And the years of thy life shall be many*; see ch. iii. 1, 2. long life here, and length of days for ever and ever, or eternal life hereafter; which must be a very forcible argument to engage attention to his sayings.

Ver. 11. *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, &c.*] In the way that leads to it, or is concerning it; in the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery, the manifold wisdom of God, and which directs to Christ and the knowledge of him, who is true wisdom; this is another reason or argument why the wise man's instructions should be attended to. *I have led thee in right paths*; in paths of righteousness, holiness, and truth; in such as are agreeable to the will and word of God, and which lead right on to the city of habitation; and therefore such teachings and leadings should be followed, and such ways walked in.

Ver. 12. *When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened, &c.*] By enemies, or attended with difficulties and obstructions, or subject to dangers, but be at freedom and liberty in walking; for though saints do not walk in the broad road with sinners, yet they are brought into a large place, and their steps are enlarged under them, and their hearts are enlarged to run the way of God's commandments; and a wide field of truth and duty such have to walk in, who are taught and led in the ways of wisdom and righteousness, Psal. xviii. 19, 36, and cxix. 32, 45. *And when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble*; such that make haste to keep the commandments of God, that run with alacrity and cheerfulness in their Christian race, and in the way of their duty, shall not stumble, through the deceitfulness of sin, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan, so as to fall and perish.

Ver. 13. *Take fast hold of instruction, &c.*] Not the law, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it; but the instruction of wisdom, the doctrine of Christ or the Gospel; see ch. viii. 1—10. which is an instruction into the mind and will of God, concerning the salvation of men; into the grace of God, shewing that salvation, in all its branches, is of pure grace; into the person

* T. Eab. Roehhasbatub, fol. 26. 9.

* תַּיִתּוֹן מִתְּפִלָּתוֹ עוֹ, Sept. proteget te, V. L. muniet te, Montanus, Tigurine version; cinget te, Gejerus.

and offices of Christ, and into the business of salvation through him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him. This should be taken fast hold of: in order to which, men should take heed unto it, attentively hear it; they should come with a cordial affection to it, and an eager desire after it, or they will never lay fast hold on it; for taking fast hold, as it supposes a careful attention to the Gospel, so a reception of it in the love of it, and an eagerness to be possessed of it: such may be said to take fast hold on it, who receive it into their hearts, and not into their heads only; head-knowledge of the Gospel instruction is not hold fast enough, it must be heart-knowledge of it; it is taken fast hold on when it is mixed with faith when heard; when it is digested and incorporated as it were into men, and becomes the ingrafted word; when men are led experimentally and practically into it, and are not hearers only, but doers of it; and, being thus taken fast hold of, let her not go: the instruction of wisdom, or the Gospel of Christ; do not drop it, nor depart from it, nor waver about it; nor be languid in a profession of it, nor indifferent to it: *be not remiss**, as the word signifies; or let not thine hand be remiss, or let not thine hand go; having, as it were with both hands, took fast hold of the Gospel, hold it fast, neither drop it through negligence and carelessness, nor suffer it to be taken from thee by fraud or force. *Keep her, for she is thy life*; which may be understood either of the Gospel, Wisdom's instruction, which should be kept as a rich treasure, and not parted with at any rate; since it is the means of quickening dead sinners; of shewing sensible ones the way of life by Christ; of producing faith in them, by which they live upon him; and of maintaining and supporting the spiritual life in them, and of reviving and comforting them under the most drooping and afflictive circumstances; a man would as soon part with his life surely as part with this! Or else, seeing the feminine gender is here used, which does not agree with the word translated *instruction*, but with *wisdom*, mentioned ver. 11. so Aben Ezra; therefore Christ may be here meant, who is to be kept as the pearl of great price, being more precious than rubies and all desirable things, and especially since he is the life of his people: he is the author and maintainer of their spiritual life; he is their life itself, it is hid with him; and because he lives, they live also: all the comforts and supplies of life are from him, and he is their eternal life; it is given through him and by him, and lies greatly in the enjoyment of him.

Ver. 14. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, &c.*] Which leads to eternal death; join not with them in their wicked ways and practices; have no fellowship, keep no company, with them; do not set one foot in the path they tread, lest thou shouldst be tempted to proceed to more ungodliness; you do not know where and when there will be a stop, when once you begin, therefore enter not. The Vulgate Latin version is, *do not delight in the paths of the ungodly*: but this supposes not only entrance, but progress and continuance in them, whereas the first is dehorred from

in these words: *and go not in the way of evil men*; if tempted and prevailed upon to take a step and make a trial, do not proceed; withdraw at once, do not go on. Some render it, seeing the word used has sometimes the signification of blessedness in it, *do not esteem the way of evil men blessed*; nor reckon thyself or them happy that walk in such ways; they are far from it: hence the Targum, Septuagint, and Syriac versions are, *do not envy the ways of wicked men*; their seeming pleasure will end in bitterness: the Arabic version is, *do not imitate them*; do not follow their example, and do as they do.

Ver. 15. *Avoid it, &c.*] As dangerous and pernicious, as abominable and detestable; or, *flee from it*, as the Vulgate Latin version: Jarchi and Gerson interpret it, *make it void*; cause it to cease, destroy it, do all you can to hinder the wicked from accomplishing their designs. *Pass not by it*; do not come near it; keep at a distance from it, that you may not be drawn into it; abstain from all appearance of evil, and every thing that may lead to it. *Turn from it, and pass away*; the Targum adds, *from them*, from wicked men. This heap of words is used to shew the danger of bad company; to dissuade from the least approach to it; and to express the vehement desire of the wise man to preserve his son, and all well-inclined persons, from it.

Ver. 16. *For they sleep not, except they have done mischief, &c.*] Or they cannot sleep, as Jarchi and Gerson interpret it. Oftentimes they cannot sleep on their beds for devising mischief, their thoughts are so intensely set on contriving wicked schemes; and when they have so done, they cannot sleep until they have executed them; they are continually restless and uneasy day and night, like the troubled sea, constantly casting up mire and dirt. Who would keep such company as these? *And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall*; into the snares and traps they lay for them, or into sin and calamity by it; the former of which they endeavour by all means to draw men into, and the latter is the unavoidable consequence of it. They imitate their father the devil, both delight in sin, and in the ruin of their fellow-creatures; it is a sport to them to do mischief, and they have no pleasure without it; see ch. xi. 23. What company are such!

Ver. 17. *For they eat the bread of wickedness, &c.*] Either that is gotten by wicked and unlawful means, or wickedness itself is bread unto them; it is that to their minds as bread is to their bodies; they feed upon it with as much eagerness, appetite, gust, and pleasure; it is a sweet morsel to them; it is meat, drink, sleep, and every thing to them; they take the highest satisfaction and the utmost delight in it. *And drink the wine of violence*: either that which is obtained by rapine and violence; or they as greedily commit such acts of oppression and injury as a man drinks a glass of wine; they do not drink up iniquity like water only, but even like wine, the most generous and delicious. Wherefore all society with such men should be avoided.

Ver. 18. *But the path of the just is as the shining*

* אל תרם ne remittas, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

י האשר ברך רעים in via malorum ne te beatum existimes, Tigurine version; ne beatam pradicet viam malorum, Michaelis.

light, &c.] The *just* man is one that is made righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and who is created anew in Christ, in righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, lives soberly, righteously, and godly: the *path* he is directed to walk in, and does, is Christ himself, the way, the truth, and the life; through whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, he goes to God for grace and mercy, for peace, pardon, and acceptance, for fresh supplies of grace, and in order to enjoy communion with him; and who also is the way of salvation, and to eternal life and happiness: and, besides this grand and principal path, there are the paths of truth, righteousness, and holiness; the path of duty and obedience; the way of the commandments of God, and ordinances of Christ: and this path he walks in, whether of grace or duty, is *as the shining light*; or of the morning, when the day first dawns, or at least when the sun rises. Such is the light beamed in at first conversion, which directs men to walk in the above-mentioned paths; it is a light after a night of darkness, as such is the state of unregeneracy; which, though at first is but glimmering, yet afterwards is clear and shining; especially when Christ the sun of righteousness appears, or is revealed, as the hope of glory. The first grace in conversion is a *true light that shines*, by which a soul sees its own vileness and filthiness, the insufficiency of its own righteousness; and the fulness, suitableness, and ability of Christ as a Saviour, and has some discerning of Gospel truths. *That shineth more and more unto the perfect day*; or *going and shining*², or *enlightening*: it shines clearer and clearer, so does true grace; it grows and increases more and more, every grace does, faith, hope, love, patience, humility, &c. the light of the knowledge of Christ the way, though it is imperfect, yet capable of being increased, and is increased by means of the ministry of the word and ordinances; which increase God has promised, saints pursue after, and attain unto. Light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, increases yet more and more; whereby a soul walks pleasantly, comfortably, and safely, in the right path, *until the perfect day of glory comes*, a day without clouds; when there will be nothing to interpose between God and them; when there will be no more clouds of darkness, unbelief, doubts, and fears; when the sun will always be seen, no more withdrawn, eclipsed, or set; even Christ, the sun of righteousness, whose glory will always be beheld by the righteous to all eternity: when there will be no more night of affliction, desertion, and death; when the light of knowledge will be clear and perfect, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known; and when not only the light of the righteous shall be so clear, distinct, and perfect, but they themselves shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. The words may be rendered, *the prepared day*²; appointed in the decrees of God, and firmly established by them: the invisible glories of the heavenly state, which make this everlasting day, are things which God has prepared for his people; the kingdom and glory itself, the inherit-

ance of the saints in light, is prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And, since such is the path of the just, who would walk in the ways of the wicked? which are the reverse of this, as the following words shew.

Ver. 19. *The way of the wicked is as darkness, &c.*] They are in the darkness of sin, ignorance, error, and unbelief; their works are works of darkness; the way in which they are leads to eternal darkness, ruin, and misery, and so must be most uncomfortable and dangerous. *They know not at what they stumble*; they stumble at the word, which they are ignorant of, and at Christ, whom they have no knowledge of; and through the temptations of Satan and snares of the world, which they are not aware of, nor upon their guard against.

Ver. 20. *My son, attend to my words, &c.*] Which go before and which follow after, his doctrines, instructions, cautions, and exhortations. *Incline thine ear unto my sayings*; stoop and bow the ear; listen attentively to what is said, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

Ver. 21. *Let them not depart from thine eyes, &c.*] Commit them to writing, frequently read them over; let them be always in sight, as a rule and directory to steer the course of life by. Some understand this of the wicked, as if the sense was, let not them, the wicked, cause them to depart from thine eyes; nor thee to neglect them, by their bad advice, solicitations to sin, and ill examples; see the note on ch. iii. 21. *Keep them in the midst of thine heart*; lay them up there, and ponder them; often meditate upon them, and do not forget them; shew the most affectionate regard unto them, and look upon them as a most inestimable treasure, for which no place is so fit a repository as the heart.

Ver. 22. *For they are life unto those that find them, &c.*] The words or doctrines of Christ, whose type Solomon was, are to be found in the field of the Scriptures, by diligent searching for them; and being found, they are the means of spiritual life, and of maintaining it, and of shewing the way, and bringing unto eternal life; see John vi. 63. *And health to all their flesh*; the whole man, soul and body, as they are the means of preserving the body from many diseases, which intemperance, lust, and luxury, lead unto, and are curbed by these; so of healing the various diseases of the soul; and, however, of directing to a panacea for them, to the blood of Christ, which is the true balm of Gilead, and he the physician of souls. Moreover, the doctrines of the Gospel are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are sound, salutary, and healthful, and serve to keep the soul in good plight, and the body too. The Septuagint render it, *to all flesh*; that is, to all men; but this is not true in fact; for to some the Gospel of Christ, through contempt and rejection of it, is the savour of death unto death.

Ver. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.*] The mind from vanity, the understanding from error, the will from perverseness, the conscience clear of guilt, the affections from being inordinate and set on evil

² וְאֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ vaders & illuminans, Montanus; ambulans & lucens, Gejerus; pergens & lucens, Michaelis; procedens & lucens, Schultens.

² אֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ usque ad paratum diem, Pagninus, Montanus.

objects, the thoughts from being employed on bad subjects; and the whole from falling into the hands of the enemy, or being the possession of Satan: great diligence had need be used in keeping it, since it is naturally so deceitful and treacherous; a strict eye is to be kept upon it; all the avenues to it to be watched, that nothing hurtful enters, or evil comes out; it is to be kept by all manner of means that can be thought of, by prayer, hearing, reading, meditation; and, above all, by applying to Christ for his grace and spirit to sanctify, preserve, and keep it. Or, *above all keeping, keep thine heart*^b; though other things are to be kept, and care taken of them, as kingdoms and cities, and towns and families, and treasures and riches; yet the heart above all: *for out of it are the issues of life*: of natural life: it is the seat of it, from whence all actions of life are derived; it is, as philosophers say, the first that lives, and the last that dies; and it is the seat of spiritual life the principle of it is formed in it; from whence all spiritual and vital actions flow, and which lead unto and issue in eternal life: as is a man's heart, such is his state now, and will be hereafter; if the heart is quickened and sanctified by the grace of God, the man will live a life of faith and holiness here, and enjoy everlasting life hereafter: and if the heart is right, so will the actions of men be; they are regulated and denominated by it; they will then spring from right principles, and be directed to right ends, and performed with right views; great care therefore should be taken of the heart, since so much depends upon it, and it is so well known to God the searcher of it.

Ver. 24. *Put away from thee a froward mouth, &c.*] A mouth speaking froward and perverse things; things contrary to right reason, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; blasphemies against God or men; every thing that is untrue, unchaste, unjust, foolish, and filthy; all swearing, lying, and every thing that is repugnant to truth and justice. Some understand it of men that are liars, blasphemers, and froward persons, who are to be shunned and avoided, and to be debarred the houses and society of good men. *And perverse lips put far from thee*; do not make use of them thyself, nor keep company with men of such a character. Much the same thing is meant as before.

Ver. 25. *Let thine eyes look right on, &c.*] To the path of truth and holiness, without turning or looking to the right hand or left, as it is afterwards expressed; to the

word of truth, as the rule to walk by; to Christ, the author and finisher of faith, from whom all grace, and the supplies of it, are to be had; and to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God. *And thine eyelids look straight before thee*; to the precepts of the word, to observe them; to the promises of it for encouragement; to the examples of the saints gone before, as motives to excite diligence, and to exercise patience, faith, and hope; to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life, and to the blessed hope laid up in heaven.

Ver. 26. *Ponder the path of thy feet, &c.*] Consider well what path it is, whether right or wrong; or weigh it in the balances of thought, as Aben Ezra; or rather in the balances of the word, and see whether it agrees with that or no. The Septuagint version is, *make straight paths for thy feet*; to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to have respect, Heb. xii. 13. *And let all thy ways be established*; so as to walk on steadily, constantly, uniformly, and not be easily moved out of the ways of religion and truth. Or, *let all thy ways be prepared, or directed, or disposed*^c; according to the rule of the divine word. Some render it as a promise, *and all thy ways shall be established*^d; when care is taken to look well into them; see 2 Chron. xx. 20.

Ver. 27. *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left, &c.*] Either into the road of immorality and profaneness, or into that of error, superstition, and false worship; but attend to the way of holiness and truth, directed to in the word of God; see Isa. xxx. 21. nor be moved out of it by threatenings and menaces, nor by flatteries and promises; neither be cast down with adversity, nor be lifted up with prosperity; but keep on in an even way, attending to that which is just and right; leaving all events with God, as knowing you are in the way of your duty, and in which he would have you walk. *Remove thy foot from evil*; from walking in evil ways and along with evil men, and from doing evil things; abstain from all appearance of evil, keep at a distance from it; the evil of sin brings on the evil of punishment. There are two verses added in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, which are not in the Hebrew text; "for the ways which are on the right hand God knoweth; but those that are on the left are perverse. He will make thy paths right, and promote thy goings in peace."

CH A P. V.

THE general instruction of this chapter is to avoid whoredom, and make use of lawful marriage, and keep to that. It is introduced with an exhortation to attend to wisdom and understanding, ver. 1, 2. one part of which lies in shunning an adulterous woman; who is described by her flattery, with which she deceives; by the end she brings men to, which is destruction and death; and by the uncertainty of her ways, which

cannot be known, ver. 3—6. Wherefore men are advised to keep at the utmost distance from her, ver. 7, 8. lest their honour, strength, wealth, and labours, be given to others, ver. 9, 10. and repentance and mourning follow, when too late, ver. 11—14. And, as a remedy against whoredom, entering into a marriage-state is advised to, and a strict regard to that; allegorically expressed by a man's drinking water out of his

^b כִּסְפֵי מַלְאָכָה *præ omni custodia, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech.*

^c יִכְוֶנוּ *dirigantur, Tigurine version, Mercerus; recte apparentur aut disponentur, Vatablus.*

^d *Stabilientur, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; constabillentur, Schultens.*

fountain, and by his wife being as a loving hind and pleasant roe to him, the single object of his affections, ver. 15—19. As also the consideration of the divine omniscience is proposed, to deter him from the sin of adultery, ver. 20, 21. as well as the inevitable ruin wicked men are brought into by it, ver. 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *My son, attend unto my wisdom, &c.*] Not the wisdom of the world or of the flesh, worldly wisdom and carnal policy; but spiritual and evangelical wisdom; such as one that is greater than Solomon has in him, even Christ; *for in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*; and which he teaches and communicates to others, even all proper instructions for conduct in life: the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it, which are the *wisdom of God in a mystery*; these every child of God, and disciple of Christ, ought carefully and diligently to attend unto. And *bow thine ear to my understanding*; listen attentively to those things which I have, and give an understanding of, even things divine and spiritual; the understanding of which is of the utmost moment and importance.

Ver. 2. *That thou mayest regard discretion, &c.*] Observe it; retain it in thine heart, as Aben Ezra adds, and use it; think, speak, and act discreetly, and so avoid the bad woman afterwards described: the Vulgate Latin version is, *that thou mayest keep the thoughts*; and so Gerson interprets the word; *good thoughts*, according to the Septuagint version; the thoughts of the heart are to be observed. A man of spiritual wisdom will take notice of them; evil thoughts, which lead to uncleanness, are to be repressed and kept in; good ones to be cherished and improved; wise and sagacious ones (such the word here used signifies) are to be attended to, as being of great advantage in the various affairs and business of life; and spiritual and evangelical wisdom helps to such thoughts, and directs to the observance and exercise of them. And *that thy lips may keep knowledge*; may be able to speak of things worthy to be known, and communicate the knowledge of them to others; by which means useful knowledge will be kept and preserved, and be continued in successive ages; see Mal. ii. 7. even the knowledge of God and of Christ, and of the Gospel and its doctrines; and which will be a means of preserving men, as from false doctrine, error, and heresy, so from profaneness and immorality; and particularly from the adulterous woman, next described.

Ver. 3. *For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, &c.*] *Mulsa dicta*, honey-words, as is Plautus's^e expression. The Septuagint and Arabic versions premise something here which is not in the Hebrew text, "do not give heed to a wicked woman;" and the Vulgate Latin version, "to the fallacy of a woman:" but there is no need to connect the words by such a supplement; since, as they lie, they give a reason why it was necessary to attend to wisdom and understanding, in order to act discreetly and speak knowingly; since there is so much danger of being drawn aside by a wicked woman, a lewd and adulterous one; the kisses of whose lips, her confabulations and songs, are

as pleasing to the carnal senses of men as honey is sweet to the taste; she promises them a great deal of pleasure in her embraces, and in the enjoyment of her: so the poet^f describes an agreeable voice to be sweeter than the honeycomb. And *her mouth is smoother than oil*; her fair speeches, enticing words, and flattering fawning language, and amorous expressions, easily find their way and slide into the hearts of men, to prevail upon them to listen to her, and yield to her temptations. Gerson interprets this strange woman of the imaginative faculty; and Jarchi of heresy: it is applicable enough to the whore of Rome; who, by the blandishments of pomp and grandeur, and the allurements of wealth and riches, draws many into her idolatrous practices; which are spiritual adultery, signified by her golden cup, Rev. xvii. 4.

Ver. 4. *But her end is bitter as wormwood, &c.*] Which is opposed to the honeycomb her lips are said to drop; so that, as Juvenal says^g, *plus aloes quam mellis habet*: the end which she brings persons to, or the issue of complying with her, is bitterness; such as loss of credit, substance, and health, remorse of conscience, and fear of death, corporeal and eternal; see Eccl. vii. 26. *Sharp as a two-edged sword*; which cuts every way; as committing sin with an harlot hurts both soul and body; and the reflection upon it is very cutting and distressing, and destroys all comfort and happiness. This is the reverse of her soothing and softening speech, which is as oil. Such also will be the sad case of the worshippers of the beast, or whore of Rome; who will gnaw their tongues for pain, and be killed with the two-edged sword that proceedeth out of the mouth of Christ, Rev. xvi. 10. and xix. 15, 21.

Ver. 5. *Her feet go down to death, &c.*] The ways in which she walks, and in which she leads others, issue oftentimes in corporeal death; and always in eternal death, if grace prevent not; and unless men are brought to a sense of sin, to repent of it and leave it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *the feet of imprudence or folly*, in opposition to wisdom; that is, the feet of the foolish woman, such an one the harlot is; and such is the whore of Rome, notwithstanding all her boasted knowledge and wisdom. And into perdition, or the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, she goes herself, and hither she brings all that follow her idolatrous practices, Rev. xvii. 8. and xix. 20. and xxi. 8. *Her steps take hold on hell*; make sure of it; hell is the certain portion of the harlot, and of all those that follow her lewd courses, unless reclaimed by the grace of God; and this will be the case of the worshippers of antichrist, or who give into the idolatries of the church of Rome, or commit fornication with her, Rev. xiv. 9—11. Or, *her steps support hell*^h; keep it up, and fill it with inhabitants; millions are carried into it by her means; or, reach unto hell; she stops not till she comes there, and her followers with her. The word may be rendered *the grave*, and may respect such whores who haunted burying-places, and prostituted themselves among

^e Rudens, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 84. Poenulus, 1. 2. v. 112.

^f Ομοι γλυκύτατος η μελιωτος, Theocrit. Idyll. 21.

^g Satyr. 6. v. 180. Lingua dicta dulcia dabis, corde amara facilis,

Plauti Truculentus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 77. Cistellarius, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 70, 71, 72.

^h מְסַמְכֵת מְסַמְכֵת, Montanus; sustinant, Vatablus; sustentant, Mercurus, Gejerus.

the graves; and were called from hence *bustuarie moechæ*¹.

Ver. 6. *Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, &c.*] Consider and meditate which is the way to get out of her hands and ways, and escape death, and obtain eternal life; lest those she has drawn into her wicked course of life should be religiously inclined, and think of quitting such a course, and inquire after the way of life and salvation; and be weighing in their minds which is most eligible, to continue with her whose feet lead to death, or to take the path of life: to prevent all this, if possible, *her ways are movable*: she appears in different shapes; changes her dress and habitation; makes use of a thousand arts to ensnare men, to entangle their affections, and retain them in her nets; she first puts them upon one thing, and then on another; she leads them into various mazes and labyrinths of sin, till they have lost all sense of religion, and sight of the path of life. That *thou canst not know* them; her ways, arts, and devices. Or, *thou canst not know*²; that is, the way of life, or how to get out of her ways into that. Or, *thou knowest not*; where she goes, whither she leads thee, and what will be the end and issue of such a course of life. The Targum understands it, and so some other interpreters, of the harlot herself, paraphrasing the whole thus; "in the way of life she walks not; her ways are unstable, and she knows not" the way of life, nor where her ways will end; or, *cares not*³ what becomes of her. And so, in like manner, the former part of the verse is understood and interpreted, *lest she ponder the path of life*⁴; or as others, *she does not ponder the path of life*⁵. The ways of the antichristian harlot are with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and her chief care is to keep persons in ignorance, and from pondering the path of life or true religion, and to retain them in her idolatry, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

Ver. 7. *Hear me now therefore, O ye children, &c.*] Since such is the character, this the wretched end, and these the ways of the adulterous woman; those that are young in years, and liable to be ensnared by her, should hear what Solomon, or Christ, here says, for their caution and instruction; and especially such who are, or profess themselves to be, the children of God and of Christ; and therefore, as dear children, should be followers of them, and not of an harlot. *And depart not from the words of my mouth*; the warnings, directions, and exhortations given to avoid the whorish woman; the doctrines of Christ, the truths of the Gospel: these should not be forsaken, but abode by; and also his precepts and ordinances, which should be closely attended unto.

Ver. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, &c.*] The way of the mind, walk, and conversation; keep at the greatest distance from her; neither come where she is, nor look at her, nor converse with her; shun her, as one would the pest or a loathsome carcass; go a good way about rather than come near her, or be within sight of her, or so as to be in any danger of being ensnared by her. *And come not nigh the door of her house*;

not only not enter her chamber, but go not to her house; no, not over the threshold of the door, nor near the door; but avoid her house, as one would a house that has the plague in it. Men should not go in the way of temptation, trusting to their own strength; they may be entangled and overcome before they are aware; it is good to keep out of the way of it. And as it becomes the children of Wisdom to wait at her gates, and at the posts of her door, to gain knowledge and understanding of divine things; so they should not go within the doors of false teachers, nor near them, nor admit them within theirs. It is a complaint against the church at Thyatira, that she suffered the woman Jezebel, the Romish harlot, to teach and seduce the servants of Christ, or connived at their attendance on her, Rev. ii. 20.

Ver. 9. *Lest thou give thine honour unto others, &c.*] To strumpets, their children, attendants, servants, and friends; that is, either wealth or riches, which make men honourable; or their fame, credit, and reputation, which are lost by keeping company with such persons; or the outward comeliness of the body, and inward vigour of the mind, which are impaired by adulterous practices. The Targum renders it, *thy strength*; and so the Syriac version, *thy strength of body*, which is enervated by such impurities; see ch. xxxi. 3. compare with this the kings of the earth that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, giving their power and strength to the beast, Rev. xvii. 2, 13. Jarchi's note is, "lest thine heart has respect to other gods, to give them the glory of thine honour and praise;" and so understands it not of corporeal but of spiritual adultery or idolatry: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, *thy life*; which agrees with what follows: *And thy years unto the cruel*; youthful years, the flower of age, consumed by the cruel lust of uncleanness, which preys upon and wastes both body and substance, and cuts them off in the prime of days; and deprives of years which otherwise, according to the course of nature, and in all probability, might be arrived unto: so harlots, in Plautus⁶, are said to sup the blood of men, and to deprive of goods, light, honour, and friends⁷. And the harlot herself may be here meant; who, when she has got what she can, has no pity on the man she has ruined, and even will not stick to take away his life upon occasion; as well as is the cause and means of the damnation of his soul: or the jealous husband of the adulterous woman, who will not spare the adulterer when taken by him; or her brethren, her relations and friends; or her other gallants and co-rivals, who, when they have opportunity, will avenge themselves; or the civil magistrate, who executes judgment without mercy on such delinquents, this being a sin punished with death. Jarchi interprets the *cruel* of the prince of hell, the devil; and so the Midrash of the angel of death. The character well agrees with the antichristian beast, the whore of Rome; who, by her sorceries and fornications, has destroyed millions of souls.

Ver. 10. *Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, &c.*]

¹ Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 13. c. 19. & Sept. vers. in Jer. ii. 23.

² חרע לא תדע, Cocceius; non cognoscere, Bayanus.

³ Haud curat, Schultens.

⁴ תפלת מן תפלת iter vitæ ne forte liberavit, Schultens.

⁵ Viam vitæ non appendit, vel ponderat, Gejerus; so Luther; iter vitæ non expandit, Noldius, p. 249. No. 2008.

⁶ Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 5. & Sc. 3. v. 67.

⁷ Truculentus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 20.

The adulteress, her husband, children, friends, bawds, and such-like persons she is concerned with; these share the wealth of the adulterer, abound with it, and live profusely on it, until he is stripped quite bare and destitute: or, *with thy strength*; see the note on the preceding verse. Jarchi interprets it of the prophets of Baal, that exact money by their falsehoods; it may well enough be applied to the fornicating merchants of Rome, [who wax rich through the abundance of her delicacies and adulteries, Rev. xviii. 3. persons, strangers indeed to God and Christ, and all true religion. *And thy labours be in the house of a stranger*; that is, wealth gotten by hard labour, with toil and sweat, grief and trouble, as the word used⁹ signifies; and yet, after all, not enjoyed by himself and his lawful wife and children, but by the strange woman and her accomplices, and spent in maintaining whores, bawds, and bastards; hence the fable of the Harpies eating and spoiling the victuals of Phineus, who were no other than harlots that consumed his substance¹⁰: and sometimes they are carried into a strange country, and possessed by foreigners. These are the wretched effects and miserable consequences of adultery, and therefore by all means to be shunned and avoided. Jarchi understands it of the house of idolatry, or an idol's temple; and every one knows what vast riches are brought into the temples or churches of the Papists by idolatry.

Ver. 11. *And thou mourn at the last, &c.*] Or roar as a lion, as the word¹¹ signifies; see ch. xix. 12. and xx. 2. and xxviii. 15. expressing great distress of mind, horror of conscience, and vehement lamentations; and yet not having and exercising true repentance, but declaring a worldly sorrow, which worketh death. This mourning is too late, and not so much on account of the evil of sin as the evil that comes by it; it is when the man could have no pleasure from it and in it; when he has not only lost his substance by it, but his health also, the loss of both which must be very distressing: it is at the end of life, in his last days; in his old age, as the Syriac version, when he can no longer pursue his unclean practices. *When thy flesh and thy body are consumed*; either in the time of old age and through it, as Gersom; or rather by diseases which the sin of uncleanness brings upon persons, which affect the several parts of it; the brain, the blood, the liver, the back, and loins, and reins; and even all the parts of it, expressed by flesh and body. This may express the great tribulation such shall be cast into that commit adultery with the Romish Jezebel, Rev. ii. 22.

Ver. 12. *And say, how have I hated instruction, &c.*] To live virtuously, and avoid the adulterous woman; this he says, as wondering at his stupidity, folly, and madness, that he should hate and abhor that which was so much his interest to have observed. Gersom interprets it of the instruction of the law; but it is much better to understand it of the instruction of the Gospel; which the carnal mind of man is enmity unto, and which they are so stupid as to abhor; when it is of so much usefulness to preserve from error and heresy, superstition, will-worship, and idolatry. *And*

my heart despised reproof; for following the whorish woman; and which was secretly despised in the heart, and heartily too, if not expressed with the mouth: it is one part of the Gospel ministry to reprove for false doctrine and false worship, though it generally falls under the contempt of the erroneous and idolatrous.

Ver. 13. *And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, &c.*] Parents, tutors, masters, and ministers of the word; neither regarded the advice of parents, nor the instructions of tutors, nor the commands of masters, nor the sermons of ministers: these are all lost on some persons; they are proof against them all; these make no impressions upon them, and are of no use to them. *Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!* or to my masters, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; turned away the ear from them, stopped it to them, and would not hear what they had to say; at least would not receive it, and act according to it.

Ver. 14. *I was almost in all evil, &c.*] Scarce a sin but he was guilty of; contempt of private and public instructions, the instructions of parents and ministers of the Gospel, and following lewd women, commonly lead to the commission of all other sins, even the most atrocious. Some understand this, not of the evil of sin, but of the evil of punishment; and that the sense is, that there is scarce any calamity, distress, or misery, that a man can be in, but his profaneness and lewdness had brought him into; and he was just upon the brink of hell itself: and so Jarchi paraphrases it, "there was but a step between me and hell." Aben Ezra observes, that the past is put for the future, *I shall be*; and then the meaning is, in a little or in a short time I shall be in complete misery; and so they are the words of one under consciousness of sin, despairing of mercy. *In the midst of the congregation and the assembly*; that is, either he despised and neglected the instructions which were given in a public manner; or he committed all the evil he did openly; not only in company with wicked men, which he frequented, but even in the presence and before the people of God; yea, before the civil magistrates, the great sanhedrim, which is sometimes designed by the last word here used: or when he was in the house of God, attending public worship, his eyes were full of adultery, and his heart of impure lusts; and neither place, service, nor people of God, where he was, commanded any awe and reverence in him, nor in the least restrained his unclean thoughts and wanton desires; and which is mentioned as an aggravation of guilt. Or else the sense is, that his calamities and miseries were as public as his crimes; he was made a public example of, and all the people were witnesses of it; which served to spread his infamy, and make his punishment the more intolerable: both the sins and punishment of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome will be public and manifest, Rev. xviii. 5. and xiv. 10.

Ver. 15. *Drink waters out of thine own cistern, &c.*] Arguments being used to dissuade from conversation with an adulterous woman, taken from the disgrace, diseases, poverty, and distress of mind on reflection,

⁹ דולורס *dolores tui*, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

¹⁰ *Heracilus de Incredibil. c. 3.*

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¹¹ רוגים *rugies*, Pagninus, Montanus, Merceus, Baynus, Gejerus, Anania, Michaelis.

it brings a man to; the wise man proceeds to direct to marriage, as a proper antidote against it: take a wife and cleave to her, and enjoy all the pleasures and comforts of a marriage-state. As every man formerly had his own cistern for the reception of water for his own use, 2 Kings xviii. 31. so every man should have his own wife, and but one: and as drinking water quenches thirst, and allays heat; so the lawful enjoyments of the marriage-bed quench the thirst of appetite, and allay the heat of lust; for which reason the apostle advises men to marry and not burn, 1 Cor. vii. 9. and a man that is married should be content with his own wife, and not steal waters out of another cistern. The allusion may be to a law, which, Clemens of Alexandria¹ says, Plato had from the Hebrews; which enjoined husbandmen not to take water from others to water their lands, till they themselves had dug into the earth, called virgin earth, and found it dry and without water. *And running waters out of thine own well*; the pure, chaste, and innocent pleasures of the marriage-state, are as different from the embraces of an harlot, who is compared to a deep ditch and a narrow pit, ch. xxiii. 27. as clear running waters of a well or fountain from the dirty waters of a filthy puddle; see ch. ix. 17. Some interpret these words, and what follows, of persons enjoying with contentment the good things of life they have for the support of themselves and families; and of a liberal communication of them to the relief of proper objects; but not to spend their substance on harlots. Jarchi understands by the *cistern* the law of Moses: but it may be better applied to the Scriptures in general, from whence all sound doctrine flows, to the comfort and refreshment of the souls of men; and from whence all doctrine ought to be fetched, and not elsewhere.

Ver. 16. *Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, &c.] Or shall abound, as the Targum*; that is, streams of water from fountains; which Aben Ezra interprets of a multitude of children, namely, that are lawfully begotten: the *fountains* are the man and his wife in lawful marriage; the streams are their offspring lawfully procreated by them; which may be said to be *dispersed abroad*, when being grown up they are disposed of in marriage in other families, and so become fountains to others, and public blessings. *And rivers of waters in the streets*; meaning a numerous posterity as before; and such as a man is not ashamed publicly to own, whereas he is ashamed of such as are unlawfully begotten; but these are to his honour in the streets, and for public good; and particularly to those to whom they are given in marriage; see Isa. xlvi. 1. Jarchi interprets this of multiplying disciples, and of teaching them the law publicly, and of getting a name thereby; but it might be interpreted much better of spreading the doctrines of the Gospel, and of the public ministry and profession of that, for the good of others.

Ver. 17. *Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee.] Or they shall be thine own**, as the Targum; meaning not the cistern, the well, or the

wife, but the fountains and rivers, or the children; by a man's cleaving to his own wife, who is a chaste and virtuous woman, he is satisfied that the children he has by her are his own, and not another's; whereas if he has to do with a common harlot, it is uncertain whose children they are, she prostituting herself to many: it may be applied to the peculiar possession and steadfast retention of the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to all divers and strange doctrines propagated by others; see Rev. ii. 25. and iii. 11.

Ver. 18. *Let thy fountain be blessed, &c.] Thy wife*; make her happy by keeping to her and from others; by behaving in a loving, affable, and respectful manner to her; by living comfortably with her, and providing well for her and her children: or reckon her a happiness, a blessing that God has bestowed; or "thy fountain shall be blessed," as the Targum; that is, with a numerous offspring, which was always reckoned a blessedness, and was generally the happiness of virtuous women, when harlots were barren. *And rejoice with the wife of thy youth*: taken to be a wife in youth, and lived with ever since; do not despise her, nor divorce her, even in old age, but delight in her company now as ever; carry it not mockingly and churlishly to her, but express a joy and pleasure in her; see Eccl. ix. 9. Mal. ii. 14, 15. Jarchi interprets this of the law learned in youth; but it might be much better interpreted of the pure apostolic church of Christ, the *beulah*, to whom her sons are married, Isa. lxii. 4, 5. to whom they should cleave with delight and pleasure, and not follow the anti-christian harlot.

Ver. 19. *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe, &c.] That is, the wife of youth*; let her always appear to thee as amiable and lovely as these creatures are; or let her be loved by thee as these are by princes and great men², who used to keep them tame, keep them clean, wash, comb them, and adorn them, and play with them; or rather, as these creatures are loving to their mates, let thy love be single, chaste, pure, and fervent, as theirs; see Cant. ii. 9, 17. and viii. 14. The pure church of Christ is very different from the apostate church of Rome; the one is compared to a loving and lovely creature, innocent and chaste; the other to a cruel and savage beast, Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 11. *Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times*; even as it were to be inebriated therewith, and so as not to seek out elsewhere to strange women for satisfaction; see Cant. i. 13. The church's breasts are the ordinances of the Gospel, which are said to be like young roes, and afford great pleasure, satisfaction, and refreshment to true believers, Cant. iv. 5. and vii. 3. *And be thou ravished always with her love*; greatly delighted with it, both in loving her and being loved by her; and let this always continue in old age as well as in youth; or now as well as formerly, and not for a short time, but for continuance: or, *err thou always in her love*³; if any error is committed by thee, let it be on the side of love, in loving her too much; better err in loving her than in loving a strange woman.

¹ Stromat. l. 1. p. 274.

² ערובי יתן לך, Mercurus, Cocceius; erunt tibi, Baynus; ex-tentus tibi, Schultens.

³ Cervus erat forma præstanti, &c. Virgil. Æneid l. 7.

⁴ ערובי יתן לך, erabis, Montanus, Baynus, Cocceius; hallucinaberis, Vatablus; errato, Janius & Tremellius, Piacator.

Ver. 20. *And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, &c.] Or err with her?* after all those inconveniences and miseries that follow upon a conversation with a harlot, and all those advantages of a marriage-state set before thee; why wilt thou be so foolish and mad as to have a fondness for an harlot and dote upon her, and neglect entering into a marriage-state, or forsake the wife of youth? and yet though things are so clearly stated and aptly represented, and the expostulation made in the most tender and affectionate manner; it is suggested as if after all it would not be attended unto, but a harlot be preferred to a wife of youth, a filthy beast to a loving hind, and dirty puddles of water in a ditch to running streams from a well or fountain. *And embrace the bosom of a stranger?* that is not thy wife; a description of unlawful love and impure embraces, which are dissuaded from.

Ver. 21. *For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, &c.]* Both good and bad; the ways of a chaste and virtuous man, who cleaves to his own wife and shuns the harlot, which are approved of by the Lord; and the ways of a lewd man, all the impure thoughts, desires, and contrivances of his mind, and all the steps he takes to commit lewdness, and all the filthy actions he is guilty of, these are all open and naked to the omniscient God: the adulterer seeks the twilight, and flatters himself with secrecy, not considering that the eye of God is upon him; there are many, that, were their filthy actions known to men, they would be ashamed of them; and this consideration greatly deters from them, and puts them upon secret ways of committing them; much more should the consideration of the divine omniscience weigh with them to avoid them; which is the argument here made use of. *And he pondereth all his goings;* he not only sees them, but takes notice of them, and observes them, and ponders them in his mind, and lays them up there, in order to bring to an account for them hereafter; yea, he weighs them in the balance of justice, and will proportion the punishment unto them, according to the rules of it; when it must go ill with those that follow such lewd practices, Heb. xiii. 4. Rev. xxii. 12, 15.

Ver. 22. *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, &c.]* As in a snare or net, as Gersom observes; in which the adulterer is so entangled that he cannot

extricate himself; he may fancy that when he grows old his lusts will be weakened, and he shall be able to get clear of them, and have repentance for them, but he will find himself mistaken; he will become but more and more hardened by them and confirmed in them, and will have neither will nor power to repent of them, and shake off those shackles with which he is bound: and it may be understood of the guilt and punishment of his sins; that the horrors of a guilty conscience shall seize him, there will be no need of any others to arrest him, these will do that office; or diseases shall come upon him for his sins, and bring him to the dust of death, and so to everlasting destruction. *And he shall be holden with the cords of his sins;* which he has been all his life committing and twisting together, and made as it were cords of, which by constant practice become strong as such; with the guilt of which he is bound as a malefactor, and will be brought to justice, being reserved in these cords, as the angels that sinned in their chains, unto the judgment of the great day; the phrase denotes the strength of sin, the impotency of man to get rid of it, and the sure and inevitable ruin that comes by it.

Ver. 23. *He shall die without instruction, &c.]* Into the evil of sin, and the danger he is in, and so without repentance for it; for instruction is the means of repentance, and productive of it when blessed, Jer. xxxi. 19. but it is but just that those who have hated and rejected it in health and life, that when they come to die should have none given them about the evil of sin, the danger of their state, and the way of salvation; or rather *because of instruction?* because they would not hear and receive, but neglected, rejected, and despised it, so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; or *without correction?* or discipline and amendment by it. *And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray;* being left to the exceeding great folly of his mind, he shall continue to go astray as he has done from God and his good ways, from the precepts of his law, and the rules of his word; going after his own heart's lusts, which will drown him in perdition. This *folly* may be understood either of his fornication and adultery, which is egregious folly; or of his imagining that he should be able to repent of sin when he pleased, and free himself from the bondage of it, and escape the punishment due unto it.

CH A P. VI.

IN this chapter the wise man dissuades from rash suretyship; exposes the sin of idleness; describes a wicked man; makes mention of seven things hateful to God; exhorts to attend to parental instructions and precepts, and cautions against adultery. Suretyship is described, ver. 1. and represented as a snare and a net, in which men are taken, ver. 2. and advice is given what to do in such a case, for safety in it, and deliver-

ance from it, ver. 3—5. The sin of slothfulness is exposed, by observing the industry of the ant, ver. 6—8. by expostulating with the sluggard for his continuance in sloth, and by mimicing him, ver. 9, 10. and by the poverty it brings upon him, ver. 11. Then a naughty wicked man is described, by his mouth, eyes, feet, fingers, and heart, whose ruin is sudden and inevitable, ver. 11—15. The seven things hateful to God are par-

† Errares, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; aberrares, Cocceius.

‡ מוסר eo quod non audivit eruditionem, Pagninus, Mercerus,

Gejerus; propter neglectam institutionem, Piscator; propter non admissam disciplinam, Noldius, p. 181.

* Sine correctione & emendatione, Vatablus.

ticularly named, ver. 16—19. And next the exhortation in some preceding chapters is reassumed, to attend to the instructions of parents; which will be found ornamental, pleasant, and useful, ver. 20—23. Especially to preserve from the lewd woman cautioned against, ver. 24, 25. whose company is dissuaded from; on account of the extreme poverty and distress she brings persons to, and even danger of life, ver. 26. from the unavoidable ruin such come into, ver. 27—29. from the sin of uncleanness being greater than that of theft, ver. 30, 31. from the folly the adulterer betrays; from the destruction of his soul, and the disgrace he brings on himself, ver. 32, 33. and from the rage and irreconcilable offence of the husband of the adulteress, ver. 34, 35.

Ver. 1. *My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, &c.*] To another; hast engaged thyself by promise or bond, or both, to pay a debt for him, if he is not able, or if required; or hast laid thyself under obligation to any, to see the debt of another paid. *If thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger; or to him^b; whom thou knowest not, and to whom thou owest nothing; and hast given him thine hand upon it, as well as thy word and bond, that what such an one owes him shall be paid; a gesture used in suretyship for the confirmation of it, ch. xvii. 18. and xxii. 26. or, for a stranger^c.* And the sense is, either if thou art become bound for a friend of thine, and especially if for a stranger thou knowest little or nothing of, this is a piece of rashness and weakness; or, as Gerson, if thou art a surety to thy friend for a stranger, this also is a great inadvertency and oversight. It is a rash and inconsiderate entering into suretyship that is here cautioned against; doing it without inquiring into, and having sufficient knowledge of the person engaged for; and without considering whether able to answer the obligation, if required, without hurting a man's self and family; otherwise suretyship may lawfully be entered into, and good be done by it, and no hurt to the surety himself and family. Jarchi interprets it of the Israelites engaging themselves to the Lord at Sinai, to keep his commandments.

Ver. 2. *Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, &c.*] Got into a snare out of which an escape is not easy; art no longer free, and thine own man, but under obligation to pay the debt if required; by the verbal agreement made and confirmed by striking hands, and this before witnesses. *Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth; as in a net, and held fast therein and thereby, and cannot get loose without paying the debt, if the debtor does not, or without the leave of the creditor.*

Ver. 3. *Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, &c.*] Take the following advice, as the best that can be given in such circumstances, in order to be freed from such an obligation, or to be safe and easy under it. *When thou art come into the hand of thy friend; or, "because or seeing thou art fallen into the hand of "thy friend," as the Targum; or "though thou art,"*

&c. as Aben Ezra; which may be understood either of the creditor to whom a man is bound, or of the debtor for whom he is bound, or of both; for a surety is in the hands or power of both: he is in the hands of the creditor, who may demand payment of the debt of him; and he is in the hands of the debtor, who, if a careless or crafty and deceitful man, may leave him to the payment of it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "for thou art come into the hands of evil men for thy "friend;" and the Syriac version, "seeing for thy "friend thou art fallen into the hands of thine enemy;" and therefore must make the best of it thou canst, and in the following way: *go, humble thyself; that is, to the creditor, prostrate thyself before him; lie down upon the ground to be trodden on, as the word^d signifies; fall down on thine knees, and entreat him to discharge thee from the bond, or give longer time for payment, if up; for thou art in his hands, and there is no carrying it with a high hand or a haughty spirit to him; humility, and not haughtiness, is most likely to be serviceable in such a case. And make sure thy friend; for whom thou art become a surety, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add; solicit him, as the former of these versions render it; stimulate him, as the Septuagint; stir him up, urge him to pay off the debt quickly, and discharge the bond, or give thee security and indemnity from it. Or, magnify thy friend^e; that is, to the creditor; speak of him as a very able and responsible man, and as an honest and faithful one, that will pay in due time. Some render it magnify, and speak well of the debtor to thy friend, which may please and appease him: or, multiply thy friends^f; get as many as thou canst to intercede for thee, and get thee discharged from the obligation by some means or another; to this purpose Jarchi.*

Ver. 4. *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.*] Until the above things are done; which denotes of what consequence and importance they are; and that persons in such circumstances should not be careless, dilatory, and unconcerned; but should use great diligence, and leave no stone unturned, or method untried, to extricate themselves; see Psal. cxxxii. 4.

Ver. 5. *Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, &c.*] As such a creature, which is very swift, when it is got into the hand of the hunter, will strive and struggle to get out; so should a man try all ways and means to get out of his suretyship-engagements, especially when he finds himself liable to danger by it; this he should do *immediately and out of hand^g*, as the phrase here used sometimes signifies with the Jewish writers. *And as a bird from the hand of the fowler; another metaphor, signifying the same thing.*

Ver. 6. *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, &c.*] That art become surety for another, and got into a snare and net, and yet takest no pains to get out. Or this may be directed, not to the surety, but the debtor; who, through his slothfulness, has contracted debts, and uses no industry to be in a capacity to pay them. Or, it may

^b לור extraneo, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceus, Schultens.

^c Pro alieno, Tigurine version; pro alio peregrino, Michaelis.

^d החרסם præbe conciliandum te, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

^e רעך רעה evehe proximum tuum, Tigurine version; magnifica, so some in Vatablus.

^f Multiplica amicos tuos, so some in Bayne.

^g מרי statim, De Dieu; subito, Noldius, p. 606. No. 1630. ilice, repente, so some in Elie: Tishbi, p. 143.

be, this has no connexion with the former; but the wise man proceeds to a new subject, and to dissuade from idleness, which brings ruin on families, and leads to all sin; and, for the instruction of idle and slothful men, proposes the example of the ant, and sends them to it to learn industry of it^h. Consider her ways; what diligence and industry it uses in providing its food; which, though a small, weak, feeble creature, yet will travel over flints and stones, climb trees, enter into towers, barns, cellars, places high and low, in search of food; never hinder, but help one another in carrying their burdens; prepare little cells to put their provisions in, and are so built as to secure them from rain; and if at any time their corn is wet, they bring out and dry it, and bite off the ends of it, that it may not grow. These, with others, are taken notice of by Frantziusⁱ; and some of them by Gerson on the place. *And be wise*; learn wisdom of it, and be wiser than that, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions: this is a mortification of proud men, that would be reckoned wise, to be sent to so despicable a creature to get wisdom from.

Ver. 7. *Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler.* None to guide and direct her what to do; nor any to overlook her, to see that she does aright, or to oblige her to work, and keep her to it; nor any to call her to an account, and correct her for doing amiss; and nevertheless diligent and industrious, doing every thing of herself, by the instinct of nature, readily and willingly: and yet how slothful are men; who, besides the dictates of nature, reason, and conscience, have parents, masters, ministers, and magistrates, to guide, direct, exhort, instruct, and enforce! so Aristotle^k says of the ant, that it is *αεργος*, without any ruler or governor.

Ver. 8. *Provideth her meat in the summer, &c.* Against the winter, of which it is mindful, when it never comes out of its place, having in the summer-time got a sufficiency laid up in cells for its use: she toils in the heat of summer to get in her provision for the winter, being sensible that nothing is to be gotten then; she works at it night and day whilst the season lasts; so diligent is it in laying up its stores at the proper opportunity^l. And *gathereth her food in the harvest*; the time when corn is ripe, and is shed on the earth; this it gathereth, and lays up in its repositories against a time of need. The seeds it gathers and lays up; it bites off the chit or bud-end of them, that they may not grow, as Pliny^m and others observe, but be a winter-store; hence its name in Hebrew is *nemalah*, from *namal*, to cut off; it being done by biting. Yea, according to *Ælianus*ⁿ, it seems to have some sense of futurity with respect to famine, which being near, it will work exceeding hard to lay up food, fruits, and seed; and, according to Virgil^o and others, it seems to presage old age, and therefore provides against it. An

instruction this to work, whilst persons are in health, and have youth on their side; that they may have not only a sufficiency for present use, but to lay up against a time of sickness and old age. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "or go to the bee, and learn " what a worker she is, and what an admirable work " she performs; whose labours kings and private persons use for health: she is desirable to all, and famous; and though weak in strength, honouring wisdom is advanced." But this is not in the Hebrew text; but perhaps being wrote in the margin of some copy of the Septuagint as a parallel instance, was by some unskilful copier put into the text of the Greek version, from whence the Arabic version has taken it; it crept in very early, for Clemens of Alexandria makes mention of it^p.

Ver. 9. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? &c.* Or *lie*^q in bed, indulging in sloth and ease; whilst the industrious ant is busy in getting in its provisions, even by moonlight, as naturalists^r observe. *When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* and be about thy lawful calling? doing the duties of religion, and the business of life; providing things honest in the sight of all men; things necessary for thyself and family, and wherewith to do good to others; exercising a conscience void of offence both to God and men. Time should not be slept away, to the neglect of the affairs of life, nor of the concerns of the immortal soul and a future state; men should not be slothful in things temporal or spiritual: whatever may be the proper time to awake and arise out of sleep in a morning, which seems to be according to a man's circumstances, health and business; it is always high time for the sinner to awake out of the sleep of sin, and arise from the dead; and for the drowsy saint to arise out of his lethargy and carnal security.

Ver. 10. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, &c.* Or, *little sleeps, little slumbers*^s. These are the words of the sluggard, in answer to the call of him to awake and arise, desiring he might not be disturbed, but be suffered to sleep on longer: there is a very beautiful climax or gradation in the words, aptly expressing the disposition and actions of a sluggard; he first desires a *few sleeps* more, some sound sleeps one after another; which is quite agreeable to his character: and if he cannot be allowed them, then he requests a *few slumbers* at least, some dozings, till he can get himself thoroughly awake; and if these cannot be granted, yet he prays however that this might be admitted, a *little folding of the hands to sleep*; or, *to lie down*^t; a few tossings and tumblings upon the bed more, with his hands folded about his breast; a sleeping gesture, and the posture of sluggards. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, a *little thou wilt embrace the breast*

^h So Horace gives it as an example of labour — *Parvula* (nam exemplo est) *usigni formica laboris*, &c. *Sermou. l. 1. Sat. 1. v. 23, 34, 35.* & *Phocylides*, v. 153—159.

ⁱ *Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 8.* Vid. *Ælian. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 25. & l. 6. c. 43.*

^k *Hist. de Animal. l. 1. c. 1.*

^l *Ac veluti ingentem formicæ farris acervum*, &c. *Virgil. Æneid. l. 4. v. 402, &c.* So *Horat. Satyr. 1. v. 36.*

^m *Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30.* *Plutarch. vol. 2. de Solert. Animal. p. 968.*

ⁿ *Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.*

^o *Inopi metuens formica senectæ*, *Georgic. l. 1. v. 186.* So *Horace*, ut supra. *Juvenal. Satyr. 6. v. 360.*

^p *Stromat. l. 1. p. 286.*

^q *לשכב* *jacabis*, *Montanus*, *Janius* & *Tremellius*, *Gejerus*; *cubabis*, *Piscator*, *Coecelius*.

^r *Ælian. de Animal. l. 4. c. 43.*

^s *לשכב* *parvis somnis*, *parvis dormitationibus*, *Pagninus*; *pauculis somnis*, *pauculis dormitationibus*, *Junius* & *Tremellius*, *Piscator*.

^t *לשכב* *cubando*, *Junius* & *Tremellius*; *cubare*, *Piscator*; *ad cubandum*, *Coecelius*.

with the hands; and the Syriac version, and a little thou wilt put thine hand upon thy breast. The Jewish commentators understand this as a direction and command to sleep and slumber but little, since a little sleep is sufficient for nature; or otherwise poverty will come, &c. but the former sense is best.

Ver. 11. *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, &c.*] Either swiftly and suddenly, as a traveller makes haste to get to his journey's end, and comes upon his family or friends at an unawares; or though he moves gradually, by slow paces and silent steps, yet surely: and so it signifies that poverty should come upon the sluggard very quickly, and before he was aware: and though it might come by degrees, yet it would certainly come. *And thy want as an armed man; or, thy wants as a man of shield*^a: denoting many wants that should come rushing in one upon another, like a man armed with shield and buckler; appearing with great terror and force, not to be resisted. It denotes the unavoidable nature of being brought into penury and want by sloth, and the terrible nature of such a condition. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, add, "but if thou art not slothful, thy harvest shall come as a fountain (as the inundation of a fountain, Arabic); but want shall flee as an evil racer (as an evil man, Arabic; far from thee, Vulgate Latin):" but this is not in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 12. *A naughty person, a wicked man, &c.*] Or, *a man of Belial, a man of iniquity*^w. The former signifies an unprofitable man, a man good for nothing, that is of no use to God or man; or one that is lawless, that has thrown off the yoke of the law, and will not be subject to it; Belial is the name of the devil; and here it may design such as are his children, and will do his lusts: the latter phrase signifies one that is wholly given up to work wickedness. The characters well agree with the ἀνομος, the lawless one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8. Who walketh with a froward mouth; speaking perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature and reason, to law and Gospel; uttering lies, and deceit, and blasphemies against God and man; to which he has used himself, and in which he continues, as the word *walketh* signifies: so antichrist has a mouth opened in blasphemies against God and his saints, Rev. xiii. 5, 6.

Ver. 13. *He winketh with his eyes, &c.*] Not through natural infirmity, but purposely and with design; with one of his eyes, as Aben Ezra, as is usual with such persons: it is the air and gesture of a sneering and deceitful man, who gives the wink to some of his friends, sneering at the weakness of another in company; or as signifying to them some secret design of his against another, which he chooses not to declare in any other way. *He speaketh with his feet*; the motions of the

feet have a language; the stamping of the feet expresses rage; here it seems to intend the giving of a hint to another, by privately pressing his foot with his, when he should be silent or should speak, or do this or the other thing he would have him do. *He teacheth with his fingers*; by stretching them out or compressing them; and so shewing either scorn and contempt^z, or rage and fury. The whole of it seems to design the secret, cunning, artful ways, which wicked men have to convey their meanings to one another, without being understood by other persons; they have a language to themselves, which they express by the motions of their eyes, feet, and fingers: and this character of art and cunning, dissimulation and deceit, fitly agrees with the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Rev. xiii. 11. So mimics are said to speak with their hands; some have been famous in this way^y.

Ver. 14. *Frowardness is in his heart, &c.*] Or perverse things; evil habits and principles of sin; all manner of wickedness, errors and heresies; things contrary to right reason, repugnant to the will and law of God, and the reverse of sound doctrine; all evil thoughts and evil things; see Matt. xv. 19. *He deviseth mischief continually*; against his neighbours, and especially against good men; he is continually planning schemes, contriving methods, ways, and means, how to disturb, distress, and ruin men; being a true child of Belial, or of the devil, his heart is the forge where he is continually framing wickedness in one shape or another; and the ground which he is always ploughing up and labouring at to bring forth sin and wickedness, and with which it is fruitful. *He soweth discord*; or *strifes*^z; the Syriac version adds, *between two*: which Jarchi interprets between a man and his Maker; rather between a man and his neighbour; between one friend and another; between husband and wife, parents and children, brethren and brethren, magistrates and subjects; between kings and princes of the earth in which sort of work the man of sin, antichrist, has been very busy. The Targum is, *he casteth out strifes*, as firebrands among men. The words in the Hebrew text are, *he sendeth out discord, or strifes*^z; these are the messengers sent out by him to make mischief.

Ver. 15. *Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly, &c.*] Unthought-of and unexpected: he that deviseth mischief to others secretly shall have no warning of his own ruin, nor time and means of preventing it; the destruction of antichrist will be sudden, and of all wicked men at the coming of Christ, 1 Thess. v. 3. Rev. xviii. 7, 8. *Suddenly shall he be broken without remedy*; or, *and there shall be no healing*^b: his bones will be broken to pieces, and there will be no cure for him; or he shall be like an earthen vessel, which, when broke, cannot be put together again. The ruin of wicked men is sudden, inevitable, and irreparable;

^a כַּיֵּשׁ מִן־וְיָ תַנְּקָמִיּוּם tanquam vir clypei, Montanus; vir clypeatus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^w אִישׁ אִישׁ מִן־וְיָ בִּלְיָהָלִיּוּם homo Belijahal, vir iniquitatis, Montanus, Vatablius, Baynus, Michaelis.

^z In hunc intende digitum, Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 45. — alius dat digito literas, Ennius.

^y Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Consul. Mallii Paneg. v. 311.

^z מִדְּוִיּוּם contentiones, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; jurgia, V. L. lites, Baynus, Cocceius; litigia, Schultens.

^a יִשְׁלַח mittet, Pagninus, Montanus; immittit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens, Michaelis.

^b אִישׁ מִדְּוִיּוּם & non sanitas, Pagninus, Montanus; curatio, Junius & Tremellius; medicina, Piscator, Cocceius.

so antichrist will come to his end, and none shall help him, Dan. xi. 45.

Ver. 16. *These six things doth the Lord hate, &c.*] That is, the six following, which are all to be found in a man of Belial, a wicked man before described. There are other things besides these that God hates, and indeed more so; as sins against the first table, which more immediately strike at his being, honour, and glory; these being such as are against the second table, but are mentioned, as more especially appearing in the character of the above person; and must be hateful to God, as contrary to his nature, will, and law. *Yea, seven are an abomination unto him; or, the abomination of his soul*^c; what his soul abhors, or he abhors from his very heart: including not seven others, but one more along with the six, which make seven; a like way of speaking, see in ch. xxx. 15, 18, 29. Job. v. 19. Nor is the word *abomination* to be restrained to the *seventh*, or *hatred* to the *sixth*; but they are all to be supposed to be hateful and abominable to the Lord; though some think the cardinal number is put for the ordinal, *seven* for the *seventh*; as if the *seventh*, which is sowing discord among brethren, was of all the most abominable, ver. 19. it being what was last mentioned in the character of the wicked man, ver. 14. and which seems to have given occasion to, and for the sake of which this enumeration is made.

Ver. 17. *A proud look, &c.*] Or, *eyes elated*^d; scorning to look down upon others; or looking upon them with disdain; or reckoning them as unworthy to be looked upon, having an high opinion of their own worth and merit. Pride is the first of the hateful things mentioned; it being the first sin committed, as is probable, the sin of the angels, and of the first man; and is a predominant evil in human nature, and is directly opposite to God and to his nature, and against which he sets himself; for *he resisteth the proud*, Jam. iv. 6. the pride of the heart shews itself in the eyes, or by the looks of a man; Gerson says, the phrase denotes impudence and haughtiness. *A lying tongue*; that is the second of the hateful things; a tongue speaking falsehood, knowingly and willingly, with an intention to deceive others; to hurt the character of a neighbour, or to flatter a friend, is a most detestable evil; it ought to be so to men, it must be so to God, who is a God of truth: nor is there any thing in which a man more resembles the devil, who is the father of lies. *And hands that shed innocent blood*; human blood; and that of persons who have not been guilty of any capital sin, for which they ought to die by the laws of God or men, and yet shed or poured out as common water; such hands must be defiled, and such men must be hateful to God, they destroying his image, and being like to the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning. These *three* sins are plainly to be seen in the son of Belial, antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, the kings and princes of the earth; he and his followers speak lies in hypocrisy; and is the whore that is drunk with the blood of the saints, 2 Thess. ii. 4. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Rev. xvii. 6.

Ver. 18. *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, &c.*] Or, *thoughts of wickedness*^e; which are framed and formed in the heart: and this being the source and fountain of all wickedness, is placed in the midst of these hateful and abominable things; see the note on ver. 14. evil thoughts and designs, both against God and men, are intended, which are forged and fabricated in the wicked heart of man; and may respect the depths of Satan in the antichristian beast of Rome, Rev. ii. 24. *Feet that be swift in running to mischief*; to commit all manner of sin with greediness, especially murder; see ch. i. 16.

Ver. 19. *A false witness that speaketh lies, &c.*] Or, *that speaketh lies, even a false witness*^f; and so this is distinguished from a lying tongue, the second of these evils: this is the sin of bearing false witness against one's neighbour, a breach of the eighth command. It may be rendered, *he that bloweth lies*^g; that raises lies, and spreads them abroad, and swears to them, to the damage of others. This makes the sixth; and the seventh follows, *and him that soweth discord among brethren*; whether in a natural relation; or in a civil society, or in a religious community.

Ver. 20. *My son, keep thy father's commandment, &c.*] These are not the words of David to Solomon continued from ch. iv. 4. but the words of Solomon to his son; and not to his son only, in a strict natural relation, but to every one that came to him for and put himself under his instruction; and to every one that stood in such a relation to a religious father; for not the divine Being, the Father of all, is here meant, according to some Jewish writers; though the commandment no doubt is the commandment of God taught by godly parents; or such a system of precepts that is founded upon and agrees unto the revealed will of God, and which being so should be laid up and kept in the heart, and not forgotten; and should be observed and attended to and obeyed throughout the whole course of life, as if it was the commandment of God himself; and indeed it is no other than that which pious parents train up their children in the knowledge of, instil into them, and urge upon them the observance of. *And forsake not the law of thy mother*; the same as before, and which is mentioned to shew that the same respect is to be had to a mother as to a father, the commandment and law of them being the same, and they standing in the same relation; which yet children are apt to make a difference in, and while they stand in awe of their father and his precepts, slight their mother and her directions, which ought not to be. Some understand this of the congregation of Israel, as some Jewish writers; and others of the church of God, the mother of us all.

Ver. 21. *Bind them continually upon thine heart, &c.*] Not upon the head or arm, as the words of the law were to be bound, Deut. vi. 8. to which there seems to be an allusion; and which may confirm the sense of the words given, that this respects the law of God itself, and the precepts of it, instructed in by parents; but they should be bound upon the heart, and have an

^c חַמְסוּת נַפְשׁוֹ abominatio ejus animae, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^d רָמָה רָמָה וְעֵינָיו מִרְמָה oculi eius elati, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

^e מַחְשְׁבוֹת חַמְסוּת cogitationis iniquitatis, Montanus; cogitationes vanitatis, Cocceus.

^f So Vatablus, Mercerus, &c.

^g מַחְשְׁבוֹת חַמְסוּת קוֹלֵי מִדְּבָרִים cogitationes mendaciae, Piscator, Michaelis.

abiding place in the understanding, affections, memory, and will. And tie them about thy neck; as an ornament, instead of a necklace of pearl, or chains of gold; they should be so far from being thought burdensome and troublesome, that they should be reckoned comely and graceful; see ch. i. 9. and iii. 3, 22.

Ver. 22. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee, &c.* The law of God taught by parents; this directs man in the path of duty and business of life; teaches him what way to shun, and which to walk in; it leads out of the paths of sin, and into the way in which he should go, which is most conducive to his good, and to the glory of God; it will lead him safely, so that he shall not stumble, ch. iii. 3. *When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee;* from terrifying dreams, evil spirits, dangers by fire or thieves; one that observes it conscientiously may lie down and sleep, secure of the guardianship of divine Providence, and not fear any evil; or *shall watch over thee* in the night-season. *And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee;* familiarly; and instruct what to do, and how to behave the day following; or *it shall go out with thee*, into the fields for a morning's walk, and assist in meditation. Jarchi interprets this of sleeping by death, and of awaking at the resurrection of the dead.

Ver. 23. *For the commandment is a lamp, &c.* The law of God is a lamp or candle to see to work by and to walk by; it enlightens the eyes and directs the feet, and makes working more pleasant, and walking more comfortable; and indeed without it a man knows not rightly what to do or where he should walk, or where he is walking; see Psal. cxix. 105. *And the law is light;* it makes things clear and manifest, what is right and what is wrong; it enlightens the eyes of the understanding, whereby persons come to see both their sin and their duty; and it directs them to avoid the one and do the other; see Psal. xix. 8. *And reproofs of instruction are the way of life;* kind reproofs given by parents agreeable to the word of God, which instruct what should be shunned and what should be performed, when attended to, put men in the way of an honourable and useful life; and are the means of preserving them from a scandalous and useless one.

Ver. 24. *To keep thee from the evil woman, &c.* This is one use of the profit arising from attending to the instructions of parents, and to the law of God, as taught by them; to preserve from fornication and adultery, one of its precepts expressly forbidding adultery and all corporeal uncleanness; and the whole of it directing to an observance of all duties respecting God and our neighbour, which requires diligence and industry, and prevents idleness, that inlet to all sin, and especially to uncleanness^k. *From the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman;* the same with the evil woman, the lewd and adulterous one; see ch. ii. 16. and v. 3. Jarchi interprets this of idolatry; the character well agrees with the idolatrous church of Rome, or antichrist, represented by a whore, Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 5. as this

woman is called the *woman of evil*^l, for so it may be rendered, one very evil, given up and abandoned to sin; so antichrist is called the *man of sin*, 2 Thess. ii. 3. and as this woman is said to have the *smoothness of a strange tongue*^m, as the words may be translated, and are by the Targum; so the religion of this false church is delivered in a strange language the people understand not, by which they are kept in ignorance and deception; now the word of God read and explained in the mother-tongue, and especially the Gospel part of it, the doctrine of wisdom, is a means of preserving persons from the errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, of the church of Rome, and from being carried away with their false glosses, and gaudy worship, and all its deceptible ways of unrighteousness.

Ver. 25. *Lust not after her beauty in thine heart, &c.* Do not look upon it with the eye, nor dwell upon it in the thought; the one will lead on to and kindle lust in the heart, and the other will cherish it and blow it up into a flame; and lust thus conceived and nourished in the heart is no other than committing adultery, Matt. v. 28. *Neither let her take thee with her eyelids;* let her not take thee from instruction with them, so Aben Ezra, from attending to that; or let her not take thy wisdom from thee, so Jarchi; or rather let her not take thee as in a net, with the sparkling of her eyes, with the wanton and amorous glances of them; so the Syriac version, *let her not captivate thee, &c.* which applied to the antichristian church, may signify the outward pomp and grandeur of it, its pretensions to antiquity, to the apostolic see, to infallibility, miracles, great devotion, &c. which are taking to men, and are the Circean cup with which she bewitches and allures, Rev. xvii. 4. The Targum is, "let her not seduce thee," &c.

Ver. 26. *For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread, &c.* To be glad of one, and to beg for one, for the least morsel; it is expressive of the extreme poverty and want which harlots bring men to, who strip them of all their substance, and then send them going to get their bread as they can; thus the prodigal, having spent his substance with harlots, was so reduced as to desire the husks which swine ate, Luke xv. 13—16. so spiritual fornication or idolatry leaves men without bread for their souls, brings them into spiritual poverty, and even to desperation and death. *And the adulteress will hunt for the precious life; or soul*ⁿ; not content with his precious substance, his jewels, his gold and silver; having stripped him of his goods and livelihood, though some think that is here intended; she lays snares for him, and draws him into those evils which bring him into the hands of her husband, who avenges himself by slaying the adulterer; or into the hands of the civil magistrate, by whom this sin of adultery was punished with death; nay, is the occasion of the ruin of his precious and immortal soul to all eternity: the precious souls of men are part of the wares of antichrist, Rev. xviii. 13.

^a עֲלֵיךָ תִשְׁמֵר excubabit apud te, Cocceius; excubias ager super te, Michaelis, Schultens.

^b וְהַחֲמֵלָהּ אִתָּךְ illa ipsa spatiabitur tecum, Schultens.

^c וְהַחֲמֵלָהּ אִתָּךְ illa ipsa spatiabitur tecum, Schultens.
^d Otia si tollas periere cupidinis arcus, Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 139. Queritur Ægistheus, quare sit factus adulter?—in promptu causa est, desidiosus erat. Ibid. v. 161, 162.

^l מִלְּפִי אִשָּׁה רָעָה a muliere mali, Baynus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^m מִלְּפִי אִשָּׁה רָעָה a lenitate lingue extraneæ, Montanus; a levitate lingue peregrinæ, Michaelis; ex lubrica glabritie lingue peregrinæ, Schultens.

ⁿ מִלְּפִי אִשָּׁה רָעָה animam, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Ver. 27. *Can a man take fire in his bosom, &c.*] A whore is compared to fire, and is so called by the poets; and it is a saying of Pythagoras, "it is a like thing to fall into fire and into a woman"; the Hebrew words **אֵשׁ**, *esh*, fire, and **אִשָּׁה**, *ishah*, a woman, have some affinity; and the phrase of taking it into the bosom fitly expresses the impure embraces of a harlot. *And his clothes not be burned?* he cannot, it is impossible; and equally vain is it to think that a man can commit whoredom and it not be known, or he not hurt by it in his name and substance, or in his body, soul, and life.

Ver. 28. *Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?*] He cannot; if he sets his feet upon them, and continues them ever so little on them, they will be burnt, and much more if he walks upon them; and so if a man gives way to the burning lusts of his heart after a whorish woman, and commits adultery with her, though not with frequency, he will not escape punishment in one shape or another; and much more if he continues such a lewd course of life; such practices are extremely dangerous, and there is no possibility of being unhurt by them: see Job xxxi. 12. the lake of fire and brimstone, everlasting burnings, will be the portion of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

Ver. 29. *So he that goeth into his neighbour's wife, &c.*] To converse with her, or lie with her, as the Targum; for it means not barely going into her house or chamber, or into her company, though without any ill design at first, which yet may be dangerous; but committing adultery with her, as this phrase is often used, Gen. xix. 31. and xxix. 21, 23, 30. *Whosoever toucheth her;* by impure dalliances, and especially by carnal copulation with her, in which sense it is used 1 Cor. vii. 1. see the note there. *Shall not be innocent; or free* from disgrace and infamy, from loss of substance or health; from punishment in this life, either by the jealous husband or civil magistrate; and in the world to come by the Lord himself; for *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4.

Ver. 30. *Men do not despise a thief, if he steal, &c.*] They do not discommend or reproach him for it, or fix a mark of infamy upon him, or expose him to public shame by whipping him; but rather excuse him and pity him when it appears what his case is, what put him upon it, and that he had no other intention in it than to do as follows. *To satisfy his soul;* his craving appetite for food, having none to eat, nor no other way of getting any: the words should be supplied thus, *for he does this to satisfy his soul;* or, as the Syriac version, *for he steals to satisfy his soul;* and so they are a reason why men do not despise him, nor use him ill, because it is done with no other view; not with a wicked design to hurt his neighbour, nor with a covetous intent to increase his own substance in an unlawful way, but only to satisfy nature in distress; and another reason follows, or the former confirmed. *When he is hungry;* or for *he is hungry*; pressed with famine; the temptation is great, nature urges him to

it; and though it is criminal, men in such cases will not bear hard upon him for it. The Targum is, "it is not to be wondered at in a thief that he should steal to satisfy his soul when it is hungry." The Vulgate Latin version is, "it is not a great fault when any one steals, for he steals to fill a hungry soul;" it is a fault, but it is not a very heinous one, at least it is not so heinous as adultery, for the sake of which it is mentioned, and with which it is compared: the design of the instance is to shew that adultery is far greater than that; and yet in our age we see that the one is severely punished even with death for trifling things, when the other goes unpunished.

Ver. 31. *But if he be found, he shall restore seven-fold, &c.*] According to the law in Exod. xxii. 1, 4. in case of theft double was to be restored, if the theft was found alive in his hand; and in some cases four-fold and five-fold. Aben Ezra observing that double and five-fold being near together in the law, joins them, and so makes seven-fold. Some think Solomon has reference to a law in other nations, which obliged to a seven-fold restoration; or that the penalty was increased in his time, but neither appears; rather the meaning is, that a thief should make restoration according to law as often as he is found guilty, be it seven times, or seventy times seven, Matt. xviii. 21, 22. or the sense is, that he should make perfect restoration, full restitution as the law requires: but then this finding him is not to be understood of finding him in the fact, stealing to satisfy hunger, for then to insist upon a legal restitution, as it is incompatible with such a man's circumstances, so would contradict what is before said, that such an one is not usually reproached and found fault with; but the sense is, if it should be found otherwise, or it should be found that he has food to satisfy his soul, as Gersom observes, and has no need to steal; or if he is found in a man's house, then he shall make restitution as the law directs, even a full one, Exod. xxii. 2, 3, *He shall give all the substance of his house:* to pay the seven-fold, or to make full restitution; nay, if necessary, he himself may be sold, as the above law requires.

Ver. 32. *But whoso committeth adultery with a woman, &c.*] Which is a greater degree of theft than the former, it being the stealing of another man's wife. *Lacketh understanding;* or *an heart*; the thief lacks bread, and therefore steals, but this man lacks wisdom, and therefore acts so foolish a part; the one does it to satisfy hunger, the other a brutish lust. *He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul;* is liable to have his life taken away by the husband of the adulteress; so according to Solon's law the adulterer taken in the act might be killed by the husband: or by the civil magistrate; for according to the law of Moses he was to die, either to be strangled or stoned, John viii. 5. see the note there; and besides, he not only ruins the natural faculties of his soul, besotting, corrupting, and depraving that, giving his heart to a whore, but brings eternal destruction on it; yet so foolish is he, though

o Plauti Bacchides, Act. 4. Sc. 9. v. 15. Accede ad ignem hunc, Terent. Eunuchus, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 5.

p Το επι της κας της υλης, apud Maximam, Eclog. c. 90.

q Periculose plenum opus gleæ tractas: & incedis per ignes supposito cineri doloso, Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 1.

r חָפְזִי לֹא יִשְׁמַע, vel immunis, Schultens; so Gejerus.

s חָפְזִי לֹא quia currit, Corceus, Michaelis.

t חָפְזִי לֹא deficit corde, Pagninus, Montanus; caret corde, Nercus, Gejerus; so Michaelis.

u Plutarch. in Vita Solon. p. 90.

it issues in the ruin of his precious soul ; *he does this* *, for so the first part of this clause, which stands last in the original text, may be rendered.

Ver. 33. *A wound and dishonour shall he get, &c.*] A wound, stroke, or blow, either from the husband of the strumpet, as was often the case ² in after-times; or from the civil magistrate, being ordered by him to be beaten ³ or stoned; or from God himself inflicting diseases on him; see Gen. xii. 17. where the same word is used as here: and *dishonour* from men; for though they do not despise a thief in circumstances before related, yet they will despise an adulterer, and speak reproachfully of him, whenever they have occasion to make mention of him. *And his reproach shall not be wiped away*; as long as he lives, though his life may be spared; yea, it shall even continue after death; and though he may repent of his sin and reform, as in the case of David.

Ver. 34. *For jealousy is the rage of a man, &c.*] Fills a man with rage against him of whom he is jealous; which keeps boiling within him, till he has an opportunity of venting it: and very severe it is; it is strong as death, and cruel as the grave. *Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance*; when he has an opportunity of avenging himself; whenever he finds the adulterer in his house, or catches him and his wife in bed together, he spares not to take away his life, and sometimes the life of both of them; instances of this

nature history furnishes us with: or he will spare no cost and pains to prosecute him before a civil magistrate, and bring him to public justice; prayers and entreaties, bribes and gifts, will be of no avail, as follows.

Ver. 35. *He will not regard any ransom, &c.*] So that his case is much worse than a thief's; if he is taken, he makes restitution according to law, and he is freed, and no more is said and done to him; and, at most, it is but parting with all the goods in his house; but in this case it will not do. In the Hebrew text it is, *he will not accept the face of any ransom* ²; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it, "he will not accept the face of any one that gives a gift." he will have no respect unto him for the sake of the gift; whatever gift is offered, be it what it will, for the ransom of his life from death, it will be disregarded. *Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts*; increase them, and keep continually giving; nothing but the life of the adulterer will satisfy him, which he will either take away himself, or obtain it in a way of legal prosecution. How foolish therefore is the man that will expose his name and credit, his health and substance, his life in this world, and his soul in another, to utter ruin, for the sake of gratifying a sordid lust! This may be interpreted of God, who is a jealous God in matters of worship, and will not suffer idolatry to go unpunished, which is spiritual adultery.

C H A P. VII.

THE sum of this chapter is to exhort men to attend to the doctrines and precepts of Wisdom, in order to avoid the adulterous woman; the exhortation to keep them with care, affection, and delight, in order to answer the end, is in ver. 1—5. A story is told, of Solomon's own knowledge, of a young man insnared and ruined by a lewd woman; it begins ver. 6. The young man is described as foolish, and as throwing himself in the way of temptation, ver. 7—9. the harlot that met him is described by her attire, her subtlety, her voice, her inconstancy, her impudence, and pretensions to piety, ver. 10—14. The arguments she made use of to prevail upon him to go with her are taken partly from the elegance of her bed, the softness of it, and its sweet perfume, and satiety of love to be enjoyed in it, ver. 15—18. and partly from the absence of her husband, who was gone a long journey, and had made provision for it for a certain time, ver. 19, 20. By which arguments she prevailed upon him to his utter ruin: which is illustrated by the similes of an ox going to the slaughter, a fool to the stocks, and a bird to the snare, ver. 21—23. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to hearken to the words of Wisdom, and to avoid the ways and paths of the harlot, by which many and mighty persons have been ruined;

they being the direct road to hell and death, ver. 24—27.

Ver. 1. *My son, keep my words, &c.*] Doctrines and instructions; which, as a father to a son, or a master to his scholars, he had delivered; these he would have him observe and attend to. *And lay up my commandments with thee*; as a treasure in his heart, to be brought out upon occasion; to be kept as valuable, and made use of as an antidote against and a preservative from sinning; see Psal. cxix. 11. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, what is not in the Hebrew text, "son, honour the Lord, and thou shalt be strong;" (the Arabic adds, "and he shall strengthen thee;) and fear "none besides him."

Ver. 2. *Keep my commandments and live, &c.*] Not the commandments of the law only, but the commandments of Christ; and even the doctrines of Christ are so called, as faith in him, and love to the saints, 1 John iii. 23. John xiv. 21, 23. which is the way to live comfortably, peaceably, pleasantly, and honourably. *And my law as the apple of thine eye*: the doctrine of Christ, the law of the Lord, that goes out of Zion; which should be as dear to men as the apple of their eye, and as carefully preserved, that the least injury is not done to it; it should be kept inviolate.

* יְשׁוּבָה יִשְׁלַח ipse faciet illud, Montanus; ipse faciet hoc, so some in Vatinius; is id faciet, sive faciet, Cocceius; ille faciet id, Michaelis; is patrabit illud, Schultens.

² Secat ille cruentis verberibus, Juvenal. Satyr. 10. v. 316. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 17. c. 18. Horat. Satyr. l. 1. Sat. 2. v. 41, 42.

¹ Valer. Maximus, l. 6. c. 1. s. 13.

² וְיִשְׁלַח לֹא לֹא non accipiet facies, Montanus; non acceptabit faciem ullius redemptionis, Mercerus, Gejerus; ullius lytri, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Ver. 3. *Bind them upon thy fingers, &c.*] Let the above words and doctrines be as ready and familiar as if they were at the fingers' ends; or let them be always fresh in memory, as a piece of thread is tied about the fingers, to put in mind of any thing to be done; or let them be as rings put upon the fingers, both memorial and ornamental: or put into practice the things taught and commanded; the fingers being the instruments of action, and especially of doing things nicely and accurately. *Write them upon the table of thine heart*; that they may be strong in the memory, deep in the affection, and abiding in the understanding and will; see ch. iii. 3.

Ver. 4. *Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister, &c.*] Intimately acquainted, greatly beloved, and highly delighted in: this may be understood both of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, which men should be conversant with, be strongly affected to, and take delight and pleasure in; and of Christ, the essential Wisdom of God, and who stands in the relation of a brother to his people, and should be respected as such. *And call understanding thy kinswoman; or kinsman*^a; such Christ is in our nature, our *goel*, our near kinsman, partaker of the same flesh and blood, and therefore is not ashamed to call us brethren, nor should we be ashamed to call him kinsman: moreover, his Word and Gospel, and the understanding of it, should be familiar to us; it should be well *known*^b by us, as the word used signifies, and dwell richly in us.

Ver. 5. *That they may keep thee from the strange woman, &c.*] Nothing has a greater tendency than Christ and his Gospel, and an intimate acquaintance with them, and a retention of them, to keep from all sin, from all fleshly lusts, from the sin of uncleanness; and also from all the errors, heresies, idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, of the whore of Rome; a stranger to God and true godliness, to Christ and his truths, the Spirit and his operations. *From the stranger which flattereth with her words*; see the notes on ch. ii. 16. and v. 3. and vi. 24.

Ver. 6. *For at the window of my house, &c.*] This is either an historical account of a matter of fact known to Solomon, or a parable made by him, setting forth the cunning artifices of an harlot, the folly and weakness of a young man insnared, and the ruin he is brought into by her. As Solomon was a public magistrate, he is here represented as a private observer of the behaviour of his subjects, as sitting in his palace at a window, at the small windows of it, as the Targum, where he could see and not be seen himself; near to which was an harlot's house; for they generally get about the courts of princes, where they make their prey. *I looked through my casement; or lattice*^c; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, understand this of the harlot looking out of the window of her house and through the casement, when she spied a young man, as follows; but this agrees not with the Hebrew text, which carries it to Solomon; though a greater than he may be designed, the omniscient God,

^a מִתְּכָּהּ cognatum, Piscator.

^b Notam, Montanus, Michaelis.

^c מַשְׁכָּנִי בַּעַרְתִּי per cancellum meum, Montanus; per cancellos, Targumie version, Michaelis.

^d בְּבָנָי inter filios, Paginus, &c.

who looks through the windows and lattice of heaven, and beholds all the actions of the children of men; those that are most private, and done in the dark; and Christ the Son of God, whose eyes are *like unto a flame of fire*, to look through all the darkness of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church-state; into all the intrigues of the Romish harlot, and behold all the follies of those that commit fornication with her, Rev. ii. 18.

Ver. 7. *And beheld among the simple ones, &c.*] Such as are easily persuaded and drawn into sin; simple and foolish in things moral and spiritual, and not arrived to any ripeness of understanding in things natural and civil; have seen but little of the world, and know less of religion, and are easily imposed upon and carried away with the company they keep; such simple foolish creatures are the followers of antichrist; see 2 Tim. iii. 6, 9. *I discerned among the youths; or children*^d; at least in understanding, the children of Jezebel, Rev. ii. 23. *A young man void of understanding; or wanting a heart*^e; to know and fear the Lord, and not in the way to learn and improve; but in company like himself, and so in a fair way to continue foolish and simple, and destitute of the true understanding of things, and exposed to the snares and delusions of such that lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 8. *Passing through the street near her corner, &c.*] The house of the harlot that stood in a corner to take in persons that came both ways; to come near which is dangerous; this was putting himself in the way of temptation: or the corner of the street where she stood to pick up young men; it could be with no good design to walk the streets in the night, and to go where harlots haunt, and where they dwell or stand; or, however, it was exposing himself to danger, and had he took the wise man's advice, would not have done it, ch. v. 8. we should abstain from all appearance of evil, and from every thing that leads to sin; and as to immorality and uncleanness, so to false doctrine and false worship; the synagogues of Satan and Popish chapels should be avoided. *And he went the way to her house*; that led directly to her house, which shews a bad intention; and if his design was not to commit fornication, yet to gratify his lusts by looks, dalliances, and impure discourse with her; and hither he went in a set, stately manner, as the word^f signifies; with an air pleasing to the harlot, as a beau and fop of the town; and by which air and gait he was known by her to be a proper person to attack.

Ver. 9. *In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, &c.*] Which is the usual time adulterers take to commit their works of darkness in, by which they think to conceal them; they being such as they themselves do not care should be seen and known, Job xxiv. 15. their works will not bear the sun and daylight, therefore they take the twilight and when the sun is set; and choose the night, and not moonlight nights neither, but the blackest and darkest nights, as fittest for their purpose; most likely to meet

^e כָּרֵעַ carentem corde, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; destitutum corde, Schultens.

^f יָצַר intelligitur incessus, compositus & pomposus, Piscator; magnis & patheticis possibus, Michaelis; est aliquid grande & audax in verbo, Schultens.

with harlots, and less liable to be seen by their neighbours; but always to be seen by the omniscient God, with whom the darkness and the light are both alike. Perhaps these several words may express the time from the young man's first setting out to his drawing nigh to the harlot's house, and his being attacked and insnared by her; when he first set out from his own or his father's house, it was *twilight*, the sun was declining; by that time he had got good part of his way the sun set, and then it was *evening*; and when he came near the harlot's house it was *black and dark night*: and this may represent the gradual and progressive growth of Popery; there was first a *twilight*, a decline of the purity of Gospel light and knowledge, and then the sun of the Gospel set, which brought on an *evening*, and issued in the gross *darkness* of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church-state, as before observed; since that, the *morning-star* of the Reformation has appeared, but this is become obscure, we are in a twilight again; it is neither day nor night with us as yet, but a dark black night is hastening on; and it is easy to observe how many, like this foolish young man, are marching on in a stately manner to the harlot's house, or are verging to Popery, whether they design it or no.

Ver. 10. *And, behold, there met him a woman, &c.*] A married woman, and an adulteress, as the following account of her shews; as soon as ever she discerned the young man before described, who she knew, by his air, walk, and dress, was a fit person for her turn, she at once set out from her house, or the corner where she stood, and met him; she did not wait till he came up and made his suit to her, but she went out, and first attacked him; wherefore the word *behold* is prefixed as a note of admiration at the impudence of the woman, and as a note of attention to observe the consequence of this affair. This woman represents the woman on a scarlet-coloured beast, the mother of harlots, who, though she pretends to be the spouse of Christ, is an arrant whore, Rev. xvii. 3, 5. With the *attire of a harlot*; not with her face veiled, as Tamar was, Gen. xxxviii. 14, 15. for though that might be the sign of a harlot in the day-time, yet not in the night, as this was; rather with shewy gaudy garments, such as the Athenian whores wore, or short ones, as the Romans; the word signifies one fitted to her body, neat and well shaped, to recommend her: so the woman, the whore of Rome, is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; signifying the outward pomp and splendour of the Romish religion, designed to captivate weak and unwary minds, Rev. xvii. 4. see the note there. *And subtle of heart*; mistress of all artful and intriguing methods to seduce and insnare²; or, *reserved of heart*³, cautious and wary what she said, told every thing that was encouraging, but kept back what was discouraging; or she kept her own heart to herself, whilst she stole the hearts of others; so the Targum renders it, "which takes away the hearts of young men;" and to the same purpose are the versions of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic: the sub-

tlety of the popes, priests, jesuits, and other emissaries of Rome, to deceive the hearts of the simple, is well known; the coming of antichrist was after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

Ver. 11. *She is loud and stubborn, &c.*] *Loud*; not that her voice may be heard, and so be found by those that seek her in the dark, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but rather clamorous, noisy, and talkative, when she has got her gallant with her; pouring out foolish and unchaste words to allure and entice him; unless it is to be understood of her bawling and scolding, when within-doors, at her husband, in order to get him out, and be rid of him; to whom she is *stubborn or rebellious*, as the Targum, breaking covenant with him, and disobeying his commands; and departing from him, declining out of the way, as Jarcli; speaking rebellion, as Aben Ezra: all which agree with the whore of Rome, who is rebellious against Christ, whose spouse she professes to be; is perfidious to him, disobedient to his commandments; is gone out of the way of his truths and ordinances, and publishes and encourages every thing that is contrary thereunto; as well as has a mouth speaking blasphemies, Rev. xiii. 5, 6. *Her feet abide not in her house*; to attend the business of it; but she is gadding abroad to seek her lovers, and bring them in; it is the character of good women that they are keepers at home, but it is the sign of a harlot to gad abroad, which is enlarged upon in the following verse.

Ver. 12. *Now is she without, &c.*] The word for *whore* is sometimes rendered in the Targum¹ one that goes abroad, or without her house; sitting or standing at the door of it, in an idle posture, and in order to invite her lovers in; and if she can get none this way, or quickly, grows impatient: she is *now in the streets*; takes her walks abroad in the streets of the city, to see who she can light of, to pick up and bring home. *And lieth in wait at every corner*; of the street, where more ways meet, sometimes at one corner, and sometimes at another, that she may take all that comes; sometimes she is *without* in the fields, and in the country, to see what she can meet with there; and sometimes in the *streets* of the city, and in the populous places of it, in the markets, and courts, and in every private corner, trying all ways to gain lovers, and satisfy her lust²: all which may represent the diligence and industry, art and cunning, of the Romish emissaries to gain proselytes to their idolatrous worship, who everywhere lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 13. *So she caught him, and kissed him, &c.*] The young man that went near her corner where she was plying, or in the way to her house, where she was sitting, or standing, waiting and watching for such an opportunity, for such a person, as a prey to fasten on; and no sooner she saw him, and come up to him, but, without any ceremony or address, she laid hold upon him, as the word¹ signifies, threw her arms about his neck, and embraced him in them; and, what is unusual for women to do, kissed him, in order to stir up wan-

¹ Fallendique vias mille ministret amor, Tibullus ad Junonem, 6.

² v. 12.

³ לב נצורה casta corde, Tigarine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; re-

tento corde, Cocceius.

¹ Targ. Onk. in Gen. xxxiv. 31.

² Mille modi veneris, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3. prope finem.

³ לב נצורה apprehendit eum, Paguius, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

are said to use with their garments and bed-clothes^a. Even this the harlot did, *with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon*; all odorous, and of a sweet smell: Horace^b speaks of the anointed beds of such persons; and of the above spices ointments were made, with which the harlot's bed might be perfumed. Cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, or the church of Rome, Rev. xviii. 13.

Ver. 18. *Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning, &c.*] Taking him by the hand, and pulling him along, she says, *come*; let us not stand here in the streets, but let us go within, and after supper to bed; and there enjoy ourselves, till *inebriated* with love, as the word^c signifies: so the poet^d speaks of *ebrios oculos*, eyes drunk, that is, with love; and so continue till the morning-light, the night being the fittest season for those works of darkness: this expresses the insatiableness of her lust. *Let us solace ourselves with loves*; mutual love, not lawful, but criminal; more properly lusts; denoting the abundance of it, and the pleasure promised in it, which is very shortlived, and bitterness in the end.

Ver. 19. *For the good man is not at home, &c.*] Or, *for the man is not in his house*^e. She does not say, *my man, or my husband*; though the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions so render it; lest this should throw some difficulty in the young man's way, or remind herself of her conjugal obligation; but *the man*, by way of contempt, as disowning him for her husband, or, however, having no regard for him in comparison of others: and this she says to encourage the young man to go with her; since her husband was gone, and she was alone, and mistress of the house. *He is gone a long journey*; or, *a way afar off*^f; into a distant country, and therefore need not fear a return of him that night; she was prepared to answer all objections. The good man of the house may be understood of Christ, who is gone into a far country, to heaven, to take a kingdom to himself, and return, Luke xix. 12. and in the mean while the church of Rome, who professes herself the true church and spouse of Christ, is committing fornication with the kings of the earth; and has set up another in his room and stead, whom she calls Christ's vicar on earth; and flatters herself and her lovers with impunity, from his distance from her, and his vicar having a right to do as he pleases.

Ver. 20. *He hath taken a bag of money with him, &c.*] Or, *in his hand*^g; either for merchandise, as Gersom; or for defraying the charges of his journey; and both suppose length of time: if for merchandise, it required time to purchase goods, and see them packed up and sent away; or if for his journey, since it was not a few pieces of money he put in his pocket to defray ex-

penses, but a bag of it he carried in his hand, it shews that he should be out a considerable time. And *will come home at the day appointed*; and not before: Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning of the month, at the new moon, when the moon is covered^h, which Horace^c calls *tricesima sabbata*: but rather it is to be understood of the full moon, as Aquila and the Vulgate Latin version render it; when it is light all night, and so a proper time for travelling home again. Gersom takes it to mean the beginning of the year, when the holy blessed God, parabolically speaking, sits upon a throne to judge the world in righteousness: the Targum calls it the day of the congregation; some fixed festival day, when the congregation meets together; and at such a festival, or appointed time, this good man had fixed for his return, and when, and not before, he would. This she says to remove all fears from the young man of being surprised and caught by her husband. There is an appointed time for Christ's second coming, when he will certainly come, and not before; and which is supposed to be at a great distance of time: and therefore wicked men and seducers, and such as the apostate church of Rome make use of to encourage themselves in their wickedness, in hopes of impunity, put the evil day far away from them; but in the appointed time Christ will come, and call his servants to an account, good and bad.

Ver. 21. *With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, &c.*] Or, *to decline from the right way*: or, *inclined him*ⁱ; his ear to listen to her, and his heart to go after her and along with her. This she did, by using a great many words, by her prolixity, and by some taking and striking expressions; lewd women are generally very talkative^j. It may be rendered, *by her much doctrine*^k, as the word is in ch. iv. 2. so Jezebel calls herself a prophetess, and sets up for a teacher of men; and, by her false doctrine, deceives some that are called the servants of Christ to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols, Rev. ii. 20. *With the flattering of her lips she forced him*; to go along with her, not against his will, but with it: though at first there was some reluctance, conscience rose up and opposed; but her words, which were smoother than oil, found a way into his heart, and prevailed upon him to yield to her entreaties; he could no longer withstand her attacks, but surrendered to her; her charming voice, and flattering lips, had more effect upon him than her kisses; notwithstanding these he was reluctant, but could stand it out no longer against her alluring words and soothing language. With this compare the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish through antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 10.

Ver. 22. *He goeth after her straightway, &c.*] Or

^a Clemens Alex. Paedagog. l. 2. c. 8. p. 177.

^b Uctis cubilibus pellicum, Epod. Ode 5. v. 69, 70.

^c נרתי inebriatur, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^d Catullus de Aemulo, Ep. 43. v. 11.

^e בַּבַּיְתָא בְּבִימוֹ לִי כִי אִין הָאִישׁ בְּבִימוֹ, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, &c.

^f בְּרִיחַ בְּרִיחַ in via longinqua, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; in via longinquo, Montanus.

^g בִּידוֹ in manu sua, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^h הַחֹסֶה in die plene lune, V. L. Michaelis; novilunii, so some in Vatablus, Piscator; ad diem interlunii, Cocceius, Schultens.

ⁱ Satirar. l. 1. Sat. 9. v. 69.

^j נְדַבְרָה declinare fecit eam, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; flexit, Tigarine verston, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis; inclinavit illum, Cocceius.

^k Verbosa gaudet Venus loquela, Catullus ad Camer. Ep. 53. v. 90.

^l לַקָּחָה ברַב מְלִטְוִינָה discipline suae, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; doctrinae suae, Michaelis.

suddenly⁵; and inconsiderately, giving himself no time to think of what would be the sad consequences of it. *As an ox goeth to the slaughter*; as senseless and stupid as that; and as ignorant of the issue as that is, led by the butcher, as if it was going to a pasture, when it is going to the slaughter-house. So such persons as are ensnared by harlots; they follow them in a view of pleasure, but it ends in ruin; if not in the loss of bodily life, by the revengeful husband or civil magistrate; yet in the destruction of their immortal souls. *Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks*; a drunken besotted fool, who, while he is leading to the stocks, is insensible whether he is going; but when he has been there awhile, and is come out of his drunken fit, then he is sensible of his punishment and his shame. *Or, as the stocks are for the correction of a fool*⁶; or, as a man goes to the stocks, to the correction of a fool¹; so the young man went after the harlot: or, as *one fettered*², goes thither, bound hand and foot; he cannot help himself, nor avoid the shame. It denotes both the power of sin, there is no withstanding its allurements and blandishments, when once given way to, and the shame that attends or follows it. The Targum is, “as a dog to a chain;” and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 23. *Till a dart strike through his liver, &c.*] The fountain of blood, and so of life; which, being pierced through and poured out, is certain death, Lam. ii. 11. the meaning is, till he is slain either by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate, or by the jealous husband; and be thrust through by him, as Zimri and Cosbi were by Phinehas. The *liver* may be particularly mentioned, not only for the reason before given, but because it is the seat of lust³; so he is stricken in the part where his lust begins, where he has been smitten by Cupid's darts: or this dart through the liver may denote some disease, infecting the blood through sinful lust. The Targum is, “as an hart into whose liver an arrow flies;” or is wounded by an arrow in the liver, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: and so the meaning is, that this young man went as swiftly after the harlot as a hart does when it is wounded. *As a bird hasteth to the snare*; it has its eye upon the bait, and flies swiftly to that, insensible of the snare that is laid for it. *And knoweth not that it is for his life*; the bird knows not that the snare is set for its life, as Jarchi; or the fool knows not that it is for his soul; that it shall die, which hates correction, as Aben Ezra. The man that goes after the harlot knows not, or does not consider, that it is to the destruction of his precious and immortal soul; so the Targum, “he knows not that it tends to the death of his soul;” and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions; the second death, which adulterers and idolaters shall have their part in, Rev. xxi. 8. The souls of men, and the ruin of them, are what the whore of Rome deals in, Rev. xviii. 13. she goes into perdition, into the bottom-

less pit, herself, and carries all her worshippers with her, Rev. xvii. 8. and xiv. 9—11.

Ver. 24. *Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, &c.*] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, in the singular number, *my son*, in the same manner as the chapter begins; but it is in the plural number in the Hebrew text; and so read the Targum and Syriac version, *children*, the children of Solomon; not only those of his own body, but all such that put themselves under his instruction, or were willing to take his advice: it may be extended to all the children of men, for all are interested herein; especially such who profess to be the children of God and of Christ, the followers of wisdom. This is the epilogue, or application of the above story. Since this is the case, that young men are in danger of being ensnared and brought to ruin by this harlot, therefore take the advice of the wisest of men, even of Wisdom herself. *And attend to the words of my mouth*; the doctrines of Christ; the best preservative from the allurements of the whore of Rome.

Ver. 25. *Let not thine heart decline to her ways, &c.*] Or turn not aside from the right way, the path of truth and holiness, to those of the whorish woman, that lead to ruin and destruction; do not so much as think of going out of the one into the other; let there not be the least wandering thought, affection, or disposition of the mind thereunto; stop and check the first motion of the heart, which leads to a compliance with her, and seems to be directed to her ways, or to betray any love and liking of them. *Go not astray in her paths*; for whoever walks in her paths goes astray from God and his law; from Christ and his Gospel; and from the true church of God; and from the right paths of faith, duty and worship.

Ver. 26. *For she hath cast down many wounded, &c.*] *Wounded* in their name, character, and reputation; in their bodies by diseases; and in their souls by guilt, shame, and horror, through a compliance with her sinful lusts: these *she cast down* from the honours they were possessed of, from the health they enjoyed, and from the peace and tranquillity of mind they formerly felt within them. And not a single person, as the young man instanced in, or a few only, but *many*; great multitudes, hundreds and thousands, and those not weak, and foolish, and inconstant, as he might be thought to be; but such as were *great*⁴ and mighty, as the word also signifies; men of great riches, and wisdom, and courage; as soldiers⁵, mighty men of war, such as wound and kill others; which seems the true sense of the word here used: and therefore none ought to trust in themselves, nor trust themselves in her company, nor in the least decline to her ways; and especially such as are weak and unskilful, and ignorant of her devices, as the *children* here addressed. *Yea, many strong men have been slain by her*; men famous for martial exploits, as Samson and others, have been

⁵ פתחם subito, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

⁶ חויל כעס אל מוסר חויל sicut compes ad castigationem stulti, Paganus, Montanus, Baynus.

¹ Abiens post cana, quasi veniens ad compedes ad castigationem stultorum, Gejerus.

⁴ Velut compeditus, Junius & Tremellius; velut in compe ibat, Michaelis; tanquam consto eto ad pedes capite, Schultens.

⁵ Splen ridere facit, coegit amare jecur, Ovid. Si torere jecur queris idoneum, Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 1. v. 12. Cum tibi flagrans amor & libido serviet circa jecur ulcerosum. Ibid. l. 1. Ode 25. v. 13, 15.

⁶ רבנים multos magnosque, Gejerus.

⁷ See Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. l. p. 110.

overcome by her: some of great fortitude of mind have not been able to withstand her, she has prevailed over them; and others of robust constitutions have been weakened by diseases, contracted through incontinency with her; and some have suffered death by her means, either from her husband, or her gallants, or the civil magistrate: and of these there have been *innumerable* instances; so the word * for *strong men* sometimes signifies; and so it is here rendered in the Septuagint and Arabic versions, *and innumerable are they whom she has slain*. All the world have wondered after the whore of Rome; kings of the earth and mighty men have committed fornication with her; high and low, rich and poor, have been ruined by her; thousands have gone to hell by her means; and some of the sycophants of Rome have even said, that if the pope of Rome should send thousands to hell, of which they seem themselves to be conscious, no one should say to him, What dost thou?

Ver. 27. *Her house is the way to hell, &c.] Or ways;*

the broad highway to it; either to the grave, as *sheol* often signifies; or to hell itself, the place of the damned: to go into her house, and commit wickedness with her, is to take a step to destruction, a large stride towards hell; and, if grace prevent not, will bring a man thither. Who would go into such a house, and much less dwell there, which is the very suburbs of hell? *Going down to the chambers of death*; to enter her chamber, to step into her bed, howsoever decked and adorned, entertaining and inviting it is, not only leads to the chambers of the grave, as the Targum; but to the lowest and innermost parts of hell; the apartments of the second death, the lot of all unclean and idolatrous persons, without repentance and faith. The Phœnicians called Pluto, the god of hell, by the name of *Moth* †, a word similar to this used here; and so those chambers are no other than the chambers of hell. Plautus † also calls the gate of a whore's house the gate of hell; which agrees with the first clause of the verse.

C H A P. VIII.

THIS chapter contains the instructions of Wisdom or Christ; shewing the excellency of them, and the author of them, in opposition to the harlot and her allurements, in the preceding chapter. Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is represented as an herald, publishing the Gospel in the ministry of the word, either in person or by his servants, ver. 1. The places where this proclamation is made are described, ver. 2, 3. the persons to whom, ver. 4, 5. The excellency of the things delivered, being right things; truth, agreeably to the word of God, plain and easy to be understood, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones, ver. 6—11. And then Wisdom, or Christ, is commended and recommended by his consummate prudence and knowledge, by his hatred of evil, and by his influence on the political affairs of kings and princes, ver. 12—16. and the advantages of those that are early seekers of him are pointed out; their enjoyment of his favour, of his riches, honour and righteousness; and their being led by him in right paths now, and inheriting eternal glory hereafter, ver. 17—21. And next follows an account of his existence from eternity as a divine Person, illustrated by a variety of phrases, ver. 22—29. and of his being with the Father; of his great affection for him, and complacency in him; and of Christ's wonderful delight and pleasure in the sons of men, ver. 30, 31. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to them to hearken to his instructions; setting forth the happiness of those that wait on him in public ordinances, and find him; and the misery of those that hate and reject him.

Ver. 1. *Doth not Wisdom cry?* &c.] Christ, who is the Wisdom of God; see the note on ch. i. 20. and which clearly appears from his subsistence with the

Father, his eternal existence, and from many personal properties, characters, and actions ascribed to him throughout the whole of this chapter, and in the following. *Crying* is here attributed to him, which signifies proclaiming, publishing, preaching the everlasting Gospel, which directs men in the right way of enjoying peace, comfort, honour, and eternal happiness; the allusion is to an herald that lifts up his voice aloud at noon-day in the public streets when he proclaims; and is opposed to the whispers of a harlot, at night, in a corner; truth seeks no corner, its voice is heard at noon-day, it will bear the light. Now, *does not* or *shall not Wisdom cry*, or Christ preach; verily he does or will, in his word, by his prophets under the former dispensation; in his own person, and by his apostles and ministers, under the present; who then would hearken to the alluring voice of a harlot, or hear Jezebel the wicked prophetess teach, when Christ himself preaches, or however by his faithful ministers? *And Understanding put forth her voice?* the same with *Wisdom*, or Christ, see ver. 14. by whose voice the Gospel is meant, which is the voice of Christ, which is heard and followed by the sheep of Christ, and not the voice of a stranger; and *putting it forth*, giving or uttering it, signifies the publication of it.

Ver. 2. *She standeth in the top of high places, &c.]* To be both seen and heard, for which reason Christ went up into a mountain and preached, Matt. v. 1. *by the way*; the road-side, to instruct and direct passengers as they go along, to shew them the right way, and caution them against taking wrong ways; so did Christ, Matt. xvi. 6. and xxii. 16. *In the places of the paths*; or, *between the paths* †; where more ways than one met together, and so difficult to know which was the

* מַעֲבָדִים *magistratus*, Sept.; so Arab. *numerosi*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Bootius, Anaciv. l. 4. c. 11. s. 2.

† מִבְּיַת הַדֶּבַר *via*, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

‡ Sauchoniathe apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38.

† Januam hanc orci, Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 1.

* בית נתיבות *in mediis semitis*, V. L. *inter semitas*, Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablus; *in mediis compitis*, Schultens; so the Targum, Sept. and Arabic versions.

right path to take; here Christ stands in the ministry of the word to direct, and says, *this is the way, walk ye in it*, Isa. xxx. 21. and as there are many ways which are proposed to men to walk in, some of open profaneness and impiety, and others that have a shew of religion and devotion, but both lead men wrong; the ministers of Christ shew, and he by them, the way of salvation, and how to avoid such as lead to destruction, Acts xvi. 17.

Ver. 3. *She crieth at the gates, &c.*] Of the temple, or of the city, where the courts of judicature were, and persons met on civil accounts; and where people were continually passing and repassing. *At the entry of the city*; meeting those that came out of the country to the city upon trade and business. *At the coming-in at the doors*; of the temple, or city, or private houses; all these expressions denote the publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by Christ himself, who spake openly to the world, always taught in the synagogues and temple, and in secret said nothing; and who ordered his disciples to preach what they heard and received from him upon the house-tops, John xviii. 20. Matt. x. 27. so did the Apostle Paul, Acts xx. 20, 27.

Ver. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call, &c.*] Not angels, the fallen angels; for, as they had nothing to do with Christ, he had nothing to do with them, or say unto them, Matt. viii. 29. nor the brutes, irrational creatures; for, though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet only to rational ones, Mark xvi. 15. *men*, whom God has loved and Christ has redeemed; these are by the Gospel called, and called effectually. There are some men indeed who are only externally called; but there are others who are also called with a holy calling, of which see the note on ch. i. 24. Some think men of eminence are here meant, as rich men, so Aben Ezra; or men of wisdom and knowledge, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, and learned doctors among the Jews; but it rather seems to design men indefinitely, of whatsoever rank or order, state or condition. *And my voice is to the sons of men*; which some interpret of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or those who are more illiterate, or the common people; so that high and low, rich and poor, have the Gospel preached unto them; but the phrase seems to intend the same as before, the same thing is said in different words.

Ver. 5. *O ye simple, understand wisdom, &c.*] The Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, particularly the doctrine of salvation by Christ; it is the highest wisdom to know Christ and him crucified; and they are *the simple* who are weak and easy to be imposed upon, who are here called unto; and generally speaking such are they to whom the mysteries of grace are made known, whilst they are hid from the wise and prudent. *And ye fools, be of an understanding heart*; or *cause the heart to understand*; or *get an understanding heart*¹; make use of all means to get spiritual wisdom and understanding; all men, let them be what they will in other respects, are *fools* as

to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of divine things; and that man can only be said to have truly an understanding heart that knows his own folly, the plague of his heart, his need of Christ, the worth of him; and has an understanding given him to know him and his interest in him.

Ver. 6. *Hear; for I will speak of excellent things, &c.*] Such are the things of the Gospel; they not only excel what the light of nature dictates and directs to, but even what the law of Moses commands and requires; the doctrines of the Gospel are excellent in their author, nature, and use; particularly those which respect the love, grace, and mercy of God, the person and offices of Christ, the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and the great salvation which he has wrought out. These are the doctrines of grace which proceed out of Wisdom's mouth, and are such as never man spake the like; they are to be approved of, being what differ from others, and to be preferred unto them, Phil. i. 9. or *princely things*², as the word may be rendered; which became him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Prince of peace to speak; and are worthy to be received by princes, though little known and valued by the princes of this world; and are embraced and esteemed by those who are the princes of the Lord's people: or they are *principal ones, or leading truths*³; of the greatest importance, interesting ones; *praiseworthy*, as Aben Ezra, or *honourable*, as Gersom, and to be had in the highest esteem and veneration. *And the opening of my lips shall be right things*; agreeable to right reason, though above it; consonant to the righteous law of God, and even to the perfection of God's righteousness, which is greatly glorified by the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and redemption through him; and these are the excellent and principal doctrines of the Gospel, even justification by Christ's righteousness, atonement by his sacrifice, and redemption through his blood; all which are consistent with and greatly display the justice of God: nor are any of the doctrines of the Gospel licentious ones, but on the contrary teach men to live soberly and righteously; as well as they are plain and easy to such who are conversant with them, as is often expressed, and may be the sense of the word here used also.

Ver. 7. *For my mouth shall speak truth, &c.*] And nothing but the truth; and nothing more or less can be spoken by Wisdom, or Christ, who is truth itself; nothing else can come out of his mouth, or drop from his lips; all the doctrines of Christ are agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and are what the Spirit of truth leads into; and the whole is called *the word of truth*; there are many very particular and special truths, but the principal one is salvation by Jesus Christ. *And wickedness is an abomination to my lips*; the sin of lying more especially, as opposed to truth; this is detestable to wisdom, what Christ never suffered his lips to utter; for no lie is of the truth, but of Satan the father of lies; and, as it is abhorred by Christ, it ought to be by all good men.

¹ כּוּבֵרֵינִי facite cor intelligere, Baynus, Mercerus; facite ut cor vestrum intelligat, so some in Vatablus; acquirite animum aspicentem, Gejerus.

² מַלְכוּתֵינִי principalia, i. e. digna principibus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; ducalia, Gussetius, p. 485.

³ Principia quædam, Tigurine version.

Ver. 8. *All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, &c.*] Or with *righteousness*²; are connected with it, are agreeable to it; are righteous ones, consistent with righteousness, with the righteous nature, will, and law of God: or are concerning *righteousness*⁷, the necessity of righteousness in order to eternal life; the insufficiency of man's own righteousness to entitle to it; the need, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ for that purpose; and of the propriety and usefulness of a life of righteousness and holiness, which the grace of God instructs men in. There is *nothing froward or perverse in them*; that is contrary to right reason, or to the law of God, or to the Scriptures of truth, or to the analogy of faith; nor is there any contradiction in the doctrines of the Gospel one to another, but an entire harmony and uniformity in them; they are not *yea and nay*.

Ver. 9. *They are all plain to him that understandeth, &c.*] Whose understanding is enlightened by the spirit of God; who is a spiritual man, that has a discerning, and can judge of spiritual things: as for the carnal man, let him have what natural knowledge or wisdom he will, he cannot know these things; for they are spiritually discerned, and can only be discerned by spiritual men. The Bible is a sealed book to others, learned or unlearned; the mysteries or doctrines of the Gospel are hid in parables from such; but those to whom Christ has given an understanding to know him, these know them, and they are plain unto them: for though there are some things hard to be understood in the Scriptures, as in Paul's epistles, and some sublime truths in the Gospel; yet those which are necessary to salvation are easily understood; that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a very plain one. *And right to them that find knowledge*; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and his truths. The Targum is, "to them who desire knowledge;" and so the Syriac version; that seek for it heartily and diligently, in a right way, in the use of proper means, under the direction and by the assistance of the spirit of God.

Ver. 10. *Receive my instruction, and not silver, &c.*] Not but that silver may be desired, sought after and received, consistent with the instructions of wisdom; though an anxious, immoderate, sinful pursuit after it, hinders the reception of them; and when they are in competition, the one is to be preferred to the other: the doctrines of the Gospel are of more worth, and more to be desired, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore the meaning is, that the instruction of wisdom should be received rather than silver; it should have the preference; so Gersom interprets it, and with which agrees the following clause: *and knowledge rather than choice gold*; that is, the knowledge of Christ, and the knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of these things is of more value

than the finest gold, than the gold of Ophir; see Psal. xix. 10. and cxix. 72.

Ver. 11. *For wisdom is better than rubies, &c.*] A sort of precious stones: or, *than precious stones*² in general; so the Targum and Septuagint, Arabic and Syriac versions; even than all of them, as the Vulgate Latin version; or, *than pearls*³, or *carbuncles*^b: there are none equal to it, nor is it to be procured by them; see Job xxviii. 16—19. *And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it*; see the note on ch. iii. 15.

Ver. 12. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, &c.*] Here Wisdom begins to speak in her own person, and continues to do so unto the end of the chapter; or Christ describes himself, pencils out and draws his own picture, and a most lovely one it is. In this clause Christ is described by the habitation in which he dwells, *I Wisdom inhabit Prudence*^c; so the words may be rendered; that is the house in which I dwell: or by his companion with whom he dwells, *with Prudence*; that is my companion with whom I am familiarly conversant. The phrase, taken both ways, shews that Christ is very largely, yea, fully possessed of prudence; as a man that dwells in a house is the proprietor and possessor of it, so prudence is Christ's; it belongs to him, he enjoys it; he dwells in prudence, and prudence dwells in him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and the spirit of wisdom rests upon him: and also it shews that prudence is natural to him, and not adventitious; it does not come from abroad, nor does he go abroad for it; he and Prudence are as it were born and brought up together in one and the same house: and likewise that there is an intimacy and familiarity between them; Prudence is most present with Christ, is always near him, and ready at hand to be exercised by him; as it was when he was incarnate on earth; he *dealt prudently*, as it was prophesied he should, Isa. lii. 13. which appeared in his disputation with the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age; by his prudent answers to the insnaring questions of his enemies; and throughout the whole of his ministry, both as to the manner and matter of it; and particularly at the time of his seizure, arraignment, trial, and crucifixion. Or by *prudence* may be meant prudent men, such as are possessed of this quality or virtue, and with such Wisdom, or Christ, dwells; not with the wise and prudent of this world; nor with such who are so in their own conceit; but with such who are sensible of their folly; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and are made wise unto salvation; who believe in Christ, which is a point of the highest prudence; and who walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; such as these have the presence and company of Christ. *And find out knowledge of witty inventions*; the word *כחוכות* is sometimes used in an ill sense, and is rendered *wicked devices*, ch. xii. 2. Psal. xxxvii. 7. and may be taken in this sense here. Christ, who is God omniscient, knows all that is in the hearts of men; all their thoughts, schemes, and devices; he found out, he

² בַּזָּבִיבָה cum justitia, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; *μαργαριτῶν*, Sept.

⁷ Gloriatio de justitia sua, vel invitatio ad accipiendam justitiam per fidem, Cocceius.

² *גִּמְמֵי מַלְּוָה* gemmis, Baynus; *præ gemmis politis*, Schultens.

^a Margaritas, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercurus, Gejerus, Michaelis; unioibibus, Cocceius.

^b Carbunculis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^c *עִרְמָה* habito astutiam, Cocceius; *prudentiam*, Michaelis; *solertiam*, Schultens.

scented the knowledge of them when here on earth; he was privy to the secret thoughts and wickedness of men's hearts; he knew all the hypocritical designs and views of the Pharisees, when they tempted him with insinuating questions; he was apprised of all the ways and methods they devised to take away his life before the time, and so escaped them; he found out the knowledge of Judas's wicked scheme to betray him, and spoke of it to him and others before it was executed; and he knew all the wicked devices and stratagems of Satan against himself, in tempting him in the wilderness, and in putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and he knows all his wiles and artful schemes to decoy his people, and makes them known unto them, so that they are not ignorant of his devices. Moreover, it may be understood and interpreted in a good sense, of the thoughts, devices, and purposes of God's heart, as in Jer. xxiii. 20. and li. 11. and particularly as relating to man's redemption and salvation: this is a device or *invention* of God; sin is man's invention, by which he fell; but the recovery of man is the invention of God; he found out the persons to be saved in his eternal decrees; and the person that should be the Saviour of them in his council and covenant, and appointed him for the work; and he found out the way and manner of saving men by him, even by the ransom and sacrifice of himself: and this is a *witty* invention, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; as appears by pitching upon so proper a person to be the Saviour as his own son; by bringing it about in a way so agreeable to all his perfections, to the satisfaction of his justice, and the honour of his law; and in making such partakers of it, and in such a way, as most glorifies the riches of his grace. And this scheme Christ has full knowledge of, being in the bosom of his Father, as one brought up with him; and was the Angel of the great council, and present when the design was formed; and besides he has found it to his cost, even at the expense of his precious blood; and so has *obtained*, or *found redemption* for us, as the phrase is in Heb. ix. 12. and having found it, and the knowledge of it, he makes it known to others by his spirit, word, and ministers. Likewise these *witty inventions* may be interpreted of the whole Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the Gospel is an *invention*, not of men, but of God; not a scheme and device of men, but of God; it is not taught by men, and learned of them, or of them only, but of God; and a *witty* one it is, it is the wisdom of God, the manifold wisdom of God, though esteemed foolishness by men. This Christ has *found out the knowledge* of; he has full and perfect knowledge of it, it is hid in him; it came and was preached by him, as it never was before or since; and he communicated, and still does communicate the knowledge of it; and blessed are they that know the joyful sound!

Ver. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, &c.* All evil in general, evil thoughts, evil words, evil actions, evil company, evil worship, and evil doctrines; and by *the fear of the Lord*, which shews itself in an hatred of evil, because of the loathsome nature of it, and being contrary to God and his will, and as it appears in the glass of the law, and especially in the glass of pardoning love, is meant not the fear of his

judgments and wrath, or a distrust of his grace and goodness, much less an hypocritical fear, or a mere shew of devotion; but a reverential affection for him, which is peculiar to children; a filial, godly fear, which is consistent with strong faith, great joy, and true courage; and is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and is accompanied with real holiness; it takes its rise from the grace of God, and is greatly increased and promoted by the discoveries of his love and goodness: this is brought into the account and description of wisdom, to distinguish it from carnal wisdom; to commend wisdom from its holiness; for this is the beginning of wisdom, yea, wisdom itself, Job xxviii. 28. Psal. cxi. 10. ch. i. 7. and ix. 10. *Pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate*; these are the particulars of evil, which Wisdom, or Christ, declares his hatred of. *Pride*, which appears in men in thinking too highly of themselves, in speaking too well of themselves, in despising others, in setting up and trusting to their own righteousness for salvation, and in crying up the purity and power of human nature; this is very contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, and must be hateful to him: *arrogancy* differs little from pride, and the two words in the Hebrew are very much the same, very little differ; it is an ascribing that to a man's self which does not belong to him, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual; when men attribute their justification and salvation to their own works, it is arrogance, and must be hateful to Christ; who has been at so much pains and expense to bring in everlasting righteousness, and work out salvation for men: it is the height of arrogance in a man to conceit he has a power to regenerate, renew, and convert himself, and, with the haughty Arminian, Greinchovius, to say, he has made himself to differ from others; this must be hateful to Christ, by whose spirit and grace this only is done: and it is a piece of arrogance when men ascribe all the good works done by them to their own power, when without Christ they can do nothing; which therefore must be displeasing to him. *The evil way*, as Aben Ezra observes, is an evil custom and course of sinning; a man's own way, which he chooses and delights in, and which leads to destruction: *and the froward mouth is the mouth that speaks perverse things*; things contrary to a man's own heart, contrary to truth, to the rule of the divine word, to the Gospel, to Christ and his people, and to all men; which must be hateful and abominable to him who is truth itself.

Ver. 14. *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom, &c.* The words and sentiments in this and the following clause are the same with those in Job xii. 13. and seem to be taken from thence, which are spoken of God; and being here applied to Wisdom, shew that a divine Person is meant; and are very applicable to him who is the Wisdom of God, and the power of God; and on whom rests the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel, and of night, and of the fear of the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 24. Isa. xi. 2. *Counsel* belongs to him, and is used and exercised by him, as concerned with the Father and Spirit, both in the words of nature and grace; to whom all the purposes and counsels of God are known; and who was consulted in the creation of man, and in his redemption, reconciliation, and sal-

vation; the council of peace being between them both: and it belongs to him, and is used by him with respect to his people; he is council to them; he gives them counsel and advice, he being the wonderful Counsellor; he gave it in person when here on earth, both to sinners and to saints, and which continues on record: the Gospel is the counsel of Christ, and it is very suitable and seasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful; is freely given, and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; see Rev. iii. 18. And he is council for them; he appears for them in court; introduces their persons, and presents their petitions to his father; pleads their cause, is their advocate, answers to all charges and accusations; and calls for and requires, in point of law and justice, every blessing of goodness for them. *Sound wisdom* belongs to Christ; *wisdom*, from whence he has his name in this book; *sound wisdom*, such as is solid and substantial, real and true, in opposition to the wisdom of the world, to knowledge falsely so called, to carnal, sensual, and earthly wisdom. The Gospel may be meant, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; sound doctrine, a form of sound words, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus: both grace and glory may be intended, which are both in the gift of Christ; grace is that *wisdom* which he makes his people to *know in the hidden part*; and glory is that *sound wisdom laid up* for the righteous, the better and more enduring substance in heaven. The word here used signifies essence or substance; and some render it, *whatsoever is*^d; whatever has a being, that is Christ's; all creatures are his, the earth and the fulness of it, and they that dwell therein. *I am understanding*; essentially as a divine person; his understanding is infinite; there is no searching of it; it reaches to all persons and things: as Mediator, the spirit of wisdom and understanding rests on him without measure, by which he was furnished for his prophetic office; as man, his understanding was amazing to all that knew him, and heard him. Christ not only has an understanding, but he is understanding itself; he is the fountain, author, and giver of understanding; of all the natural understanding there is in men; of the light of nature and reason, of those intellectual faculties which men are possessed of; and of all the spiritual understanding in divine things, which his people are partakers of, 1 John v. 20. *I have strength*: as the mighty God; which appears in his creation of all things out of nothing, in his upholding all things by his power, and in his government of the world. As Mediator, he has the spirit of might upon him; all power in heaven and earth is given him; his strength is manifest in the salvation of his people, when he came travelling in the greatness of it to save them; by fulfilling the law for them; by bearing their sins, and the punishment due to them; and by destroying all their enemies: and in his plucking them out of the hands of Satan, out of the burning, out of the mire and clay at conversion; in bearing and supporting them under all their burdens, afflictions, and temptations, and in preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory; and in giving them strength in the mean time to bear the cross, to withstand temptations and cor-

ruptions, to exercise the graces of the spirit, and perform the duties of religion.

Ver. 15. *By me kings reign, &c.*] Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; they are made kings by him, and are under him; he sets them up, and deposes them at pleasure; they have their kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres from him, and are accountable to him. The Syriac version renders it, *for me*; it is for the sake of Christ they reign; and they ought to seek his glory, and the good of his kingdom and interest. Moreover, as it is by him they are set up as kings and governors, and are preserved and continued in their governments by him; so it is by him that they rule well who do so, that they reign justly, wisely, happily, and successfully; all the wisdom which appears in their administrations is all from him; all those wise laws, which are enacted by them for the good of their subjects, is owing to the wisdom and prudence he gives them. *And princes decree justice*; these may design such who are under kings, are assisting to them in government; who are of their privy council, and give advice in making laws, and putting them into execution. Here it particularly regards their making just and righteous laws for the good of the state, in which they are employed by kings; or their advising to them, and assisting in drawing them up: and now all the wisdom that is necessary hereunto, and which is conspicuous herein, is all from Christ; who has the spirit of princes in his hands, and orders and directs them as he pleases. The Targum is, "I anoint princes with *justice*."

Ver. 16. *By me princes rule, &c.*] All governors of provinces and cities, who are under the king as supreme; the discharge of whose office in a right manner requires much wisdom, prudence, justice, and integrity; all which they have from Christ, as well as their power of ruling, that rule well. *And nobles, even all the judges of the earth*; the word^e for *nobles* signifies persons of a free spirit, generous, bountiful men; such as are called *benefactors*, Luke xxii. 25. so one of the Ptolemys, king of Egypt, was called Evergetes. Such who govern, not in a cruel and rigorous manner, but with clemency and gentleness; who, as they are *free* and noble themselves, their subjects are a free people, and enjoy their privileges and liberties fully and quietly. And the *judges of the earth* are such as sit on benches of justice, hear and try causes, and pass sentence on men; which requires great skill and knowledge, and much faithfulness and integrity, which all that perform their office aright have from Christ. How great therefore must he be! how wise and just! from whom all rulers, supreme and subordinate, have their power, prudence, generosity, and justice!

Ver. 17. *I love them that love me, &c.*] Those that love Christ are such who are born again, and have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; that believe in him, have seen his loveliness, have had his love shed abroad in their hearts, and a view of his fullness and suitableness; some comfortable apprehensions of their relation to him, and interest in him, and

^d עֵשֶׂתִּי *essentia*, Montanus, Tigurine version; *quicquid est*, Junius & Tremellius; *realitas*, Michaelis; *soliditas*, Schulzens.

^e מְנוּחִים *munifici sive liberales*, Vatablus; *ingenui*, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; *munifici*, Piscator; *generosi*, Schulzens.

are indulged with communion with him: the love with which such souls love Christ springs from their very hearts, is cordial and sincere; it gives him the preference to all objects, to all creatures, angels or men, and to all creature-enjoyments; it is drawn out to all of Christ, and to all that belong to him, or are his; and though it may be lost, become remiss and abate in its fervency, it cannot be lost; and is what is very acceptable to Christ, and highly esteemed of by him: it shews itself by a high veneration for the truths and doctrines of his Gospel; by a strict regard to his commands and ordinances; by a hearty affection for his people; by parting with and bearing all for his sake; by a carefulness of offending him, and losing his company; by an earnest desire after his presence, and delight in it, and by a concern at his absence; by a diligent inquiry after him in the use of means until he is found, and by the joy expressed at finding of him: now such Christ *loves*; not that he begins to love his people when they begin to love him, for he loved them from everlasting; as appears by his espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, and taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory, so early; and by his assumption of their nature in time, and by his suffering and dying for them; all which were before they had any love to him: but this points out and describes the persons, who may be assured of the love of Christ to them, since their love to him springs from his to them; besides, it designs some fresh manifestations of his love, and the continuance of it; as well as suggests that he has future blessings to bestow on such, as fresh marks of his affection, and instances of his love to them; such as granting them his gracious presence, giving them more grace; causing all things, even afflictions, to work together for their good; preserving and keeping them from falling, and at last giving them eternal glory and happiness; see John xiv. 21—23. *And those that seek me early shall find me*; and they are such who see their need of Christ, and know the worth of him; and those seek to him in the use of means, the word and ordinances, and as assisted by his spirit and grace, for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which are only to be had in him: and they may be said to *seek him early*, or *morning him*^f, who seek him in the morning of youth, or in the first place, above all things else, and that with the greatest eagerness and earnestness, diligence and importunity; and such always are successful; they *find* Christ, and life, righteousness, and salvation in him, and every blessing, and therefore are happy, as in ch. iii. 13. see the note there.

Ver. 18. *Riches and honour are with me, &c.*] By *riches* are meant not the riches of Christ's person, the perfections of his nature, his works, and his vast empire over all creatures, and the revenues arising from thence, which though durable, yet not communicable; nor temporal riches, which, though with him, and at his dispose, yet these, at least a large share of them, and in common, is not given to his people, nor are they durable; but the riches of grace, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace, are intended, and the riches of glory in another world: and so *honour* designs

not that which he has as a divine Person, or as Mediator, which is incommunicable; much less temporal honour, for though this is with him and from him, as appears ver. 15, 16. yet it is not usually given to his followers, who are not the great and noble, but generally reckoned the offscouring of all things; nor is such honour durable; but the honour he gives his people lies in their being espoused to him, in being the sons of God through him, in being made by him kings and priests unto God, and in reigning with him here and for ever. *Yea, durable riches and righteousness*; which last some understand as another adjunct and epithet of riches, and represent them in opposition to mammon of unrighteousness, or to riches either ill-gotten or ill-managed; and expresses another property of Christ's riches of grace and glory, as being what are come by in a way of righteousness into his hands, and are distributed faithfully by him; though rather it respects a distinct thing which is with Christ, and in his hands to give, even his justifying righteousness, consisting of his active and passive obedience, which he has wrought out, is in him, and given by him to his people; and is what is called the righteousness of God and of faith; which secures from condemnation and entitles to eternal life; and is an everlasting one, as durable as his riches are, which are his fulness that ever continues with him: pardon is *simul* and *semel*, and for ever; sanctifying grace, as faith, hope, and love, always abide; and about the riches of glory there can be no doubt of the permanency of them; and the same may be said of honour both here and hereafter.

Ver. 19. *My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold, &c.*] This is said in allusion to the fruit that grows on trees, Wisdom, or Christ, being a tree of life, ch. iii. 18. see the note there; and so he is compared to other trees, Cant. ii. 3. Hos. xiv. 8. His *fruit* are the blessings of grace, such as redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; these are his by covenant, are procured by him, and are communicated from him; also the graces of his spirit called fruits, as faith, hope, love, &c. of which he is the author and object; and even good works, the fruits of his grace; they are done in virtue of union to him, by his strength, and are directed to his glory: and all these, especially his grace and the blessings of it, are preferable to the finest gold; they are more valuable as to their intrinsic worth and excellency; they are more useful and profitable, being for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and they are more satisfying and more lasting, and which cannot be obtained with such a corruptible thing as gold is. *And my revenue than choice silver*; as the former word refers to fruits that grow on trees, this to such as spring from seed sown in the earth; see Lev. xxiii. 39. where the same word is used as here, and is also rendered *revenue* in Jer. xii. 13. Christ himself is compared to seed, and so his word, John xii. 24. Luke viii. 11. and the fruit or revenue thereof is the same as before: or else the allusion is to the profit arising from riches, from estates, and their annual rent; or from money put out to use, or improved by commerce, and so signifies the same with the gain and mercha. -

^f מְשַׁחֵרֵי *querentes diluculo me, Montanus; qui me mane quaerunt, Tigurine version, Michaelis.*

dise of wisdom, ch. iii. 14. see the note there. Aben Ezra construes the words thus, *my revenue is choicer than silver*; but our version is best.

Ver. 20. *I lead in the way of righteousness, &c.*] As a king his subjects, a shepherd his flock; as a guide to persons that are ignorant and out of the way; as parents their children, teaching them to go; or as a master his scholars: and the way Wisdom, or Christ, leads his people in, is *the way of righteousness*; the doctrine of righteousness, or the way and manner of a sinner's justification in the sight of God; all men are out of the way of it, and are ignorant of the right way; Christ leads them into it: he leads them off of their own righteousness by shewing that it does not deserve the name of one; that it is unacceptable to God, unprofitable to him, and insufficient to justify them before him; and he leads them to his own righteousness, which he has wrought out; and shews them that this is answerable to the demands of law and justice, is acceptable to God, and imputed by him without works; and this he does in his word and by his spirit: and in this way of righteousness he leads them into his father's presence with acceptance; to himself, in which he beholds them with pleasure; and to eternal glory, which gives them a title to it: he also leads into the practice of righteousness; he teaches them, and they learn of him works of righteousness; he goes before them by way of example, and he gives them his spirit and grace to enable them to perform them; and which may more especially be intended in the next clause. *In the midst of the paths of judgment*: of truth and holiness; in his commandments and ordinances; in all which they are led not against their wills but with them; and not only walk but run with the greatest cheerfulness in those ways and paths of his.

Ver. 21. *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, &c.*] Substantial blessings, blessings indeed, as all spiritual ones are; and substantial grace, as every grace is; and substantial communion with God and Christ, which is a real thing, and had in the way of righteousness; also substantial happiness hereafter, as eternal life is; which being expressed by *substance*, or *that which is*, as the word used signifies, denotes the reality of it; it being not only actually promised, prepared, and laid up for the saints, but is what is known by them now, and of which they have the earnest and pledge; as also the solidity of it, being opposed to the vain and shadowy things of this life; as well as the riches, valuableness, and continuance of it; it is enduring substance, which cannot be wasted nor taken away; which is in its own nature incorruptible, and the saints will always continue to enjoy it. God himself may be meant, who is most eminently *שׁ*, that which is, a self-existent Being, and the Being of beings, essence itself, and of whom the saints are heirs, and who will be their portion now and for ever, Rom. viii. 17. Psal. lxxiii. 26. and such that shall enjoy this inheritance are those that *love* Christ; to them it is promised, for them it is prepared, and to them it will be given, Jam. i. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 8. not that their love to Christ is the meritorious

cause of so valuable a blessing; but this describes the persons that shall have it, and points out a proper disposition for it, without which none would be fit to enjoy it; and besides there is a connexion between grace and glory; to which may be added, that this shews that Christ does not love in word only, saying, *I love them that love me*, ver. 17. but in deed also; and how much he esteems the love of his people; and it is designed to encourage the faith and hope of weak believers, who, though they do not so strongly believe in Christ, yet truly love him. And be it further observed, that this substance is enjoyed by way of inheritance; it is not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed and given to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever, as inheritances are; and so Aben Ezra observes, that it signifies an eternal possession. *And I will fill their treasures*; the treasures of their hearts, Matt. xii. 35. Christ now fills their understandings with spiritual knowledge, their souls with grace, their minds with peace and joy, and their hearts with food and gladness; and hereafter he will fill them to full satisfaction with knowledge, holiness, and joy, and will be all in all to them.

Ver. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, &c.*] *Not created me*, as the Targum and the Septuagint version; which version Arius following gave birth to his pernicious doctrine; who from hence concluded Christ is a creature, and was the first creature that God made, not of the same but of a like nature with himself, in some moment or period of eternity; and by whom he made all others: the Word, or Wisdom of God is never said to be created; and if as such he was created, God must have been without his Wisdom before he was created; besides, Christ, as the Word and Wisdom of God, is the Creator of all things, and not created, John i. 1—3. but this possession is not in right of creation, as the word is sometimes used, Gen. xiv. 19, 22. but in right of paternity; see Gen. iv. 1. Deut. xxxii. 6. it might be more truly rendered, *the Lord begat me*, as the word is translated by the Septuagint in Zech. xiii. 5. it denotes the Lord's having, possessing, and enjoying his word and wisdom as his own proper son; which possession of him is expressed by his being with him and in him, and in his bosom, and as one brought forth and brought up by him; as he was *in the beginning of his way* of creation, when he went forth in his wisdom and power, and created all things; then he did possess his son, and made use of him, for by him he made the worlds: and *in the beginning of his way* of grace, which was before his way of creation; he began with him when he first went out in acts of grace towards his people; his first thoughts, purposes, and decrees concerning their happiness, were in him; the choice of their persons was made in him; God was in him contriving the scheme of their peace, reconciliation, and salvation; the covenant of grace was made with him, and all fullness of grace was treasured up in him: the words may be rendered, *the Lord possessed me, the beginning of his way*^b; that is, who am the beginning, as he is; the beginning

^a *שׁ* id quod est, Junius & Tremellius; rem solide vereque substantem, Gejerus; solidum illud, Schultens.

^b *שׁ* קננו ראשית דרכו possidet me principium viae suae, Pagninus, Michaelis, Schultens; habuit me principium viae suae, Cocceius.

of the creation of God, the first cause, the efficient of it, both old and new; see Col. i. 18. Rev. iii. 14. So Aben Ezra, who compares with this Job xl. 19. This shews the real and actual existence of Christ from eternity, his relation to Jehovah his Father, his nearness to him, equality with him, and distinction from him: it is added, for further illustration and confirmation-sake, *before his works of old*: the creation of the heavens and the earth; a detail of which there is in the following verses.

Ver. 23. *I was set up from everlasting, &c.*] I, a person, and not a quality; a person, and not a nature; the person of Christ as the Son of God, and not the human nature of Christ, which then did not exist; this phrase designs the ordination and constitution of Christ in his office as Mediator. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *I was ordained*; Christ was fore-ordained to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, to be the propitiation for their sins, to be the head of the church, and the Judge of the world. It intends likewise his inauguration into his office, and his investiture with it; and because anointing with oil was used in installing persons into the offices of prophet, priest, and king; hence Christ's instalment into his office as Mediator is here expressed by an anointing; for the words may be rendered, *I was anointed*¹; it takes in all that goes to his constitution as Mediator, his call, appointment, and investiture; and the whole of his office, every part and branch of it; and chiefly his kingly office, with reference to which the same word is used Psal. ii. 6. and so Gerson paraphrases it, "and there were given to me power, dominion, and greatness;" all which suppose the eternity of his person; for had he not existed from everlasting, he could not have been set up, and anointed as Mediator, or invested with his office as such. *From the beginning, or ever the earth was*; or from the first of the earth, or the original of it; that is, before all time, before the earth or any thing was created; this further confirms the eternal existence of Christ's person, the antiquity of his office, the early provision of grace in him as Mediator for his people, and may lead to entertain high and honourable thoughts of him.

Ver. 24. *When there were no depths, I was brought forth, &c.*] Not only in the decree of God, as the head of the elect; fore-ordained to be the Redeemer of them, and to be the propitiation for their sins; and appointed the Judge of the world, and heir of all things; but *was begotten*, as the Targum and Syriac version; the Septuagint is, *he begot me*: and so it is to be understood of the eternal generation and sonship of Christ; for the word *דוללתי* is used of generation, Job xv. 7. Psal. li. 5. Christ is the first-born of every creature, begotten, born, and brought forth before any creature was in being; see Psal. ii. 7. before the depths of the great sea were formed, for they were made by him, Psal. xciv. 1, 5. when there were no depths, but the infinite being and perfections of God, and the thoughts

and purposes of his heart, which are his deep things, Job xi. 7, 8. Psal. xcii. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 10. *When there were no fountains abounding with water*; or *heavy*, or *honoured*^k with it; when the fountains of the great deep were not; and when there were no other fountains which form rivers, and water the earth; when there were none but God the fountain of living waters; then was Christ as the only-begotten son of God; and who was also set up as the fountain of all grace, life, and salvation for his people.

Ver. 25. *Before the mountains were settled, &c.*] *Plunged*^l, or fixed in the earth; and which was done by the great strength of the Lord, upon their proper bases, Psal. lxxv. 6. and which were *ab origine*, or from the beginning of the world, and therefore called the ancient mountains, Deut. xxxiii. 15. to be before the mountains is a periphrasis of eternity, and is a phrase expressive of God's eternity; and being here used of the Son's, shews his eternity is the same with his Father's, Psal. xc. 2. *Before the hills was I brought forth*; which is repeated partly to shew the importance of it; this being a matter of infinite moment and concern, and deserving of the strictest attention and observation; and partly to shew the certainty of it; the eternal generation of Christ being an article of faith most surely to be believed.

Ver. 26. *While as yet he had not made the earth, &c.*] That is, the Lord, who possessed Wisdom, or Christ, and by whom he was set up; he as yet had not made the earth, when this was done; this shews that the earth had a beginning, contrary to those philosophers who asserted the eternity of it; that Christ was before that was, for it was made by him; and consequently he must be eternal, and was before any man was, since the earth was made before man; and that he was not of the earth, earthy, as was the first man. *Nor the fields*: the plain parts of the earth, in opposition to the mountains and hills before mentioned; the valleys and meads that lay between them, full of grass, flowers, and fruits; pleasant to behold, and profitable to be enjoyed; so the word is also rendered Job v. 10. and *valleys*, by the Targum here: or the *out-parts*^m; the extremities of the earth, the two poles of it; the uninhabitable parts of the earth, as distinct from the habitable part of it afterwards mentioned: or all *without* it; the ambient and spacious ether. *Nor the highest part of the dust of the world*; meaning, not the mountains and hills, which are before mentioned, and are the highest part of the earth; but rather *the chief of the dust of the earth*ⁿ, as the words may be rendered; these are the metals and minerals within it; the gold, silver, and precious stones, of which we read very early, Gen. ii. 12. or the *beginning*, the first and chief, the *prima materia*, even the dusts of the world, out of which man and all the creatures were made, Gen. ii. 6. and iii. 19. Job iv. 19. Eccl. iii. 20. and xii. 7. Dr. Lister^o was of opinion that sand was once the most exterior and general cover of the surface of the

¹ ונצחתי uncta sum, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; inuncta fui, Gejerus.

^k ונצחתי aggravati, Pagninus; prægravati, Vatablus; gravati, Michaelis; honwabites, Gejerus.

^l ונצחתי defsi, Montanus; mergerentur, Tigurine version; immera, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

^m ונצחתי quæ extra sunt, Tigurine version, Vatablus; exteriora, Cocceius, Michaelis.

ⁿ ונצחתי caput, Montanus, Tigurine version; summan, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

^o In Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 9. p. 452, 453.

whole earth; partly because all our northern mountains are covered with it, more or less, at this day; and partly because of its great hardness, durability, and unalterable quality; and the higher the mountains be, he says, still the more and coarser the sand is; and if so, this might with propriety be called the highest part of the dust of the earth. But Christ was before any of them, as well as is more excellent than they. Or it may be man is designed, who was made of the dust of the earth; even the first man Adam, so Jarchi, Gen. ii. 7. before whom Christ was: yea, the human nature of Christ himself may be meant, which is fairer than any of the children of men, and the chief of all the individuals of human nature; being without sin, and united to the Son of God, and also the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God. Now Christ, as the Son of God, as the only-begotten of the Father, existed before his human nature did, or before he was the Son of man.

Ver. 27. *When he prepared the heavens, I was there, &c.*] Made, beautified, and adorned them; when he gave them their form, figure, magnitude, and motion; when he garnished them with the sun, moon, and stars; then was Christ present, not as a mere spectator, but as a co-worker; see Heb. i. 10. and even the third heaven, the place and state of glorified saints, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, Matt. xxv. 34. *When he set a compass upon the face of the depth; or compassed the waters with bounds,* as Job says, ch. xxvi. 10. or made the earth with the sea globular, which make one terraqueous globe: or *made a circle*; all around it, called the circle of the earth, on which he sits, Isa. xl. 22. this compass may design the vast expanse or firmament of heaven, which is stretched and drawn around the terraqueous globe as a canopy or curtain. Christ was with his Father on the first day's creation of the heavens; and on the second day, when the firmament was made, and was before them both.

Ver. 28. *When he established the clouds above, &c.*] In which the waters are bound, and yet are not rent under them; and where, in the thin air, they hang heavy with them; where they are weighed by measure, and a decree made for them when they shall fall; and when they do, the Lord makes small the drops of water, which the clouds do drop and distil on men abundantly; the spreadings of which are beyond understanding, and are unaccountable, and must be referred to the power of God; who has settled and established them in the heavens, and the laws of them, Job xxvi. 8. and xxviii. 25, 26. and xxxviii. 28, 29. *When he strengthened the fountains of the deep; gave them strength,* and still continues it, to cast out their waters, which run into the main sea, and feed and fill it, and return to their place again; which strength of flowing and reflowing can be attributed to nothing else but to the great power of God, Gen. vii. 11. Eccl. i. 7.

Ver. 29. *When he gave to the sea his decree, that the*

waters should not pass his commandment, &c.] A perpetual decree, which never has been altered nor never will: he has placed the sand for the bounds of the sea everywhere, which it cannot pass, though its waves toss, foam, and roar; this is his decreed place, with which he has shut it up, as with doors, bars, and bolts; so that those proud waves may come litherto and no further, Jer. v. 22. Job xxxviii. 10, 11. *When he appointed the foundations of the earth:* which are laid on the seas and floods; nay, the earth is hung like a ball in the air upon nothing; and yet its foundations are such as that it shall not be removed; being the purpose and decree, the power and might, of the Lord himself, Job xxvi. 7. Psal. xxiv. 2. and civ. 5. Now Christ was present when those were laid, for he was concerned in the laying of them himself, Heb. i. 10. The Lord asks Job where he was then, Job xxxviii. 4. he was not then in being, but Christ was.

Ver. 30. *Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, &c.*] He was then, and from all eternity, *by him, or with him*; which denotes his co-existence with God, and his relation to him as his Father; his nearness to him, his equality with him, and his distinction from him: he was by him when the names of God's elect were put down in the book of life; he was by him and with him in the council and covenant of grace and peace; and so in the creation of all things, and has been ever since; not as a looker-on, but as a party concerned; and not as subordinate and inferior to his Father, but equal with him. The word אֲנִי, translated *brought up*, is differently rendered; Symmachus and Theodotion render it *strengthened*; as Christ was set up in his mediatorial office, he was strengthened in it by his Father; and was in his view, council, and covenant, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself: the Targum renders it *faithful*, so the Tigurine version; as Christ was to him that appointed him, faithful to all he promised and was intrusted with. Many translate it an *artificer or workman*; as אֲנִי in Cant. vii. 1. and so Christ was a co-worker, a worker with God in the making of all things, the heavens, earth, and sea, and all in them; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause of them; which is a proof of his proper deity, and equality with God. But others think the word has the sense of nursing, or being nursed, educated, or brought up. Some take it actively, as in Ruth iv. 16. Esth. ii. 7. Isa. xlix. 23. and interpret it of Christ's nursing the creation, or cherishing, supporting, and preserving all creatures in their being when made; particularly of his nourishing and cherishing the church and people of God committed to his care. Others passively, of his being *brought up*, as our version; and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum renders it *nursed up at his side*; which expresses the tender regard of his Father to him, as his begotten Son; in whose bosom he lay and was bore, as a nursing father bears his son in his bosom, Numb. xi. 12. and by whom, as Mediator, he was trained up in the per-

^P פְּרָקוֹן דָּוִד describing circulum, Montanus, Mercerus, Coecceus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^Q אֲנִי cum eo, V. L. apud eum, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^R אֲנִי equivalet, Sept. cuncta componens, V. L. artifex vel opifex, Gejerus; so Schindler, col. 90.

^S Nutritius, Montanus, Pagninus, Baynus; educans, Junius & Tremellius.

^T Alumnus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus; alumna, Schultens; in sinu gestatus filius, Coecceus; so Gusssetius, p. 77. and Noldius, p. 379. No. 1884. and Stockius, p. 71.

formance of his office. *And I was daily his delight; or delights*^a; exceeding delightful to him. The Father loved the Son from all eternity, with a love of complacency and delight, John xvii. 24. Matt. iii. 17. this delight was founded in relation to him, in sonship; and in likeness, he being the express image of his person; in sameness of nature, he being of the same nature and perfections with his father: and he delighted in him as a workman, in the works which he did, being the same he saw him do; and in him as Mediator, in his constitution as such, and in engaging as a surety, to obey and suffer in the stead of his people, Isa. xlii. 1. he not only delighted in him day by day, throughout the six days of the creation, when he was by him as a workman, but before, and even from the days of eternity; from the date of his commencement as Mediator; in the foreviews of his human nature, obeying and suffering in it; and of the salvation of the elect by him, and of his own glory in it. *Rejoicing always before him*; being always in his presence, and acceptable to him; rejoicing in having the same nature and perfections with him, and in the relation he stood in to him; and also in the view of the works of creation and redemption he would be jointly concerned in with him; which joy always did and ever will continue. There is a mutual pleasure and delight which the Father and Son have in each other, and in all that they are concerned; and especially in what respects the salvation of the chosen people. The allusion in the word used in this clause is to children's playing in the presence of their parents; which is a diversion to the one, and a pleasure to the other.

Ver. 31. *Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, &c.*] In that part of the earth which is habitable; in filling it with inhabitants; in preserving and sustaining it in being, and the inhabitants of it; in governing it, and ordering all things in it for the best, according to his infinite wisdom and the counsel of his will; in bestowing the bounties of his providence, and in being the light and life of men: all which were done by him with the greatest ease, as well as pleasure and delight; it was a kind of sport or play unto him, as the word used signifies^b; and so in the preceding verse, which shews the allusion is to a nurse-child. Moreover, this may have a peculiar view to the saints and people of God, and to those particular spots of ground in God's earth where they should dwell; for as the earth was made, and is continued on their account; so the very place of their birth and abode, as well as of their conversion, were afore appointed and fixed by the Lord, which Christ in his eternal mind had a foreview of, and took a pleasure in: besides, they themselves are the habitation of God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; the church of God is his dwelling-place on earth, where he delights to dwell, over whom he rejoices to do good, and whom he makes glad; so some read the words, *making glad the habitable part of his earth*^c. Once more, the new earth, which will be after this is passed away, may be truly called his, or the second Adam's earth; and in which only righteous

persons shall dwell, and with whom the tabernacle of God shall be, or with whom Christ shall dwell a thousand years; and in the foreview of this he may be thought to take delight and pleasure, even before the world was. The human nature of Christ may not be amiss thought of, which was formed in the lower parts of the earth, and therefore he is called the fruit of the earth, Psal. cxxxix. 15. Isa. iv. 2. and may be said to be habitable, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and the Word tabernacled, and is the true tabernacle; in the foreview of which the Son of God rejoiced, as to be produced without sin by the Holy Spirit, and adorned with his graces, and to be united to his person; in which he was to work out the salvation of his people, and be glorified; and his joy, in the foreview of it, appears by his frequent appearances in a human form before his actual incarnation, as preludiums of it. *And my delights were with the sons of men*; or of Adam, of fallen Adam; not with angels, but with men; not with all men, only some; and those as considered as the objects of his own and his father's love; as beheld in the glass of his father's decrees; as chosen in him, and given him by his father; as his children, and as his spouse and bride. The word for *delights* is not only in the plural number, but its two first radical letters are doubled, which, in the Hebrew language, increases the signification of the word; and so expresses the exceeding great delight and pleasure which Christ took in his people from everlasting; his love was then a love of the utmost complacency and delight, and continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, though by nature children of wrath, and transgressors from the womb. This appears by his early engagement as a surety for them; by his espousing their persons and their cause; by assuming their nature in time; by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and working out salvation for them; by bearing them on his heart in heaven, and there interceding for them; by taking them out of a state of nature; by visiting them with his grace and presence; and by bringing them, through a variety of trials, safe to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, &c.*] Children of his and his father, with whom his delights were; predestinated to the adoption of children; children of the covenant and promise, given to him as such in the covenant; for whom he became man, suffered and died, to gather together regenerated ones, by which they appear to be the children of God: these Wisdom here addresses in the most affectionate manner; Christ, having finished the account and description of himself, reassumes his former exhortation, ver. 5—10. and enforces it by the several particulars in the above description. From the consideration of his wisdom, riches, eternity, nearness to God, and his delights with men, he exhorts them to *hearken* to him, to his voice in the Gospel, and to what he says there; such who see themselves lost and perishing, the hungry and thirsty, the naked and weary, the disconsolate and afflicted, the poor and indigent; and also to his

^a טענותיו delicie, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; oblectationes, Schultens.

^b משוקות ludens, V. L. Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; iudebam,

Pagninus; iudo, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, lusitans, Michaelis, Schultens.

^c Lætificans in orbe habitabili terram ejus, Junius & Tremellius, Amama; ridens, vel faciens ridere alios, Baynus.

voice in his precepts and commands, to embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances. *For blessed are they that keep my ways*; it is a happiness to be in the ways of Christ, to be kept in them, and to keep them; Christ has promised and does vouchsafe his presence in them; there is a pleasure enjoyed in observing them; and though not for keeping, yet in keeping Christ's commands, there is great reward, *Psal. xix. 11.*

Ver. 33. Hear instruction, &c.] The instruction of wisdom, the Gospel of Christ; which instructs men in things relating to God the Father; as that he is the God and Father of his people, the God of all grace, the giver and sender of Christ, and all good things by him; in things respecting Christ, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; in things that appertain to the Spirit of God, his deity, personality, and operations of grace on the souls of men; in the knowledge of themselves, their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness; and in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and therefore to be hearkened to. *And be wise*; this is the way to be wise to that which is good, both as to the knowledge and practice of it; to be wise unto salvation, and with respect to everlasting things and a future state; and the Gospel instruction teaches men to behave wisely, to walk in wisdom towards them that are without. *And refuse it not*; for this is not to be wise, but to act the part of fools; and such as do so despise their own souls, shew that they have no care of them, or concern for their eternal welfare, *ch. i. 7. and xv. 32.* for, if this is rejected, there is no escaping eternal damnation, *Heb. ii. 3.*

Ver. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, &c.] Christ in his Gospel, as speaking by his ministers; for hearing them is hearing him, *Luke x. 16.* they have their commission from him; are his ambassadors, and personate him; receive their gifts from him; speak according to his mind and will, revealed in his word, and preach him himself. This shews with what attention and reverence the Gospel should be heard; what credit should be given unto it; how it ought to be put in practice; this accounts for the efficacy of it on the souls of men, it being no other than the word of Christ, or Christ himself speaking; and from hence it appears how sad and dreadful will be the case of such that despise it: to hear it is the way to have the knowledge of Christ, and an increase of it; faith in Christ, and a growth therein; the joy of faith, and a furtherance of it; love to Christ, and aboundings in it; and to have spiritual food and nourishment; wherefore it is both the duty and privilege of persons to hear the Gospel of Christ, since these things come by it. *Watching daily at my gates*; the gates of Wisdom's house, the church of Christ, which are the public ordinances thereof; called in Scripture the gates of Zion, *Psal. lxxxvii. 2.* in allusion to the gates of cities, where Wisdom cries, or the ministers of Christ preach, *ch. i. 21. and viii. 3.* see *Isa. xxvi. 1, 2.* or to the gates of kings, palaces, where courtiers watch to be admitted and received as favourites, or to give in their petitions for themselves or others, *Esth. vi. 10.* The church is

the palace of the great King; it is an honour to be admitted here, to have a name and a place here, and to sit with the King at his table. Or to the door of the tabernacle, where the people of Israel assembled for worship; or to the gates of the temple, where the priests and Levites watched, *Exod. xxix. 42. Psal. c. 4. and cxxii. 2.* *Watching* is opposed to sleep, both to bodily sleep and to sleepy frames of soul; and to intemperance, not only by eating and drinking, but with the cares of this life; and it denotes circumspection, diligence, and attention. Here sensible sinners watch in the ministry of the word and ordinances, if any thing drops that they can catch at, suitable to their case and circumstances; as Benhadad's servants did, *1 Kings xx. 33.* and here souls, under darkness and desertion, watch for spiritual light and comfort, as they that watch for the morning; and here every believer watches for his spiritual edification and establishment in the truth; and which should be *daily or day after day*, one Lord's day after another; taking all opportunities, in season and out of season, consistent with the duties of their calling, to hear the word; and so they are to continue to the end of life; for happy is he that shall be found thus watching when his Lord cometh, *Luke xii. 37.* *Waiting at the posts of my doors*; either in allusion to scholars, who wait the opening of the school-doors to go in first, as Jarchi observes: Christ is a teacher; sensible souls are his disciples or scholars; the church is the school where they learn of him, and learn him; and waiting at the door-posts of it shews early seeking to Christ, and eagerness for instruction from him, *Luke xxi. 38.* Or the allusion may be to clients, waiting at the doors of counsellors', for counsel, and for patronage and protection, to plead their cause for them; Christ is the wonderful Counsellor, the Advocate with the Father, the Redeemer, mighty and strong, to plead the cause of his people; and therefore it is right to wait at his doors, with whom are counsel and sound wisdom: or else to beggars, that wait at the door for alms; who knock, and wait until the door is opened; tell their case, and wait for relief; receive repulses, and wait still; and will not depart till something is given. So saints should wait at the throne of grace, and upon the word and ordinances, for answers of prayer, performance of promises, and the presence of God and Christ: and so should sinners wait on the outward ministry of the word, remembering the case of the poor man at the pool, who waited long, and at last had a cure, *John v. 5—7.* since faith comes hereby; the Spirit and his graces, Christ and the knowledge of him, are had by such means, as follows.

Ver. 35. For whoso findeth me findeth life, &c.] Of finding Christ, see the note on *ch. iii. 13.* Such that find Christ find *life or lives**, life spiritual and eternal; till they are found of Christ, and find him in effectual calling, they are dead; but, when called by his grace and converted, they live a life of justification and sanctification; they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and such that find life in this sense find spiritual food in and from

* *Sub galli cantum consolor ubi ostia pulsant, Horat. Sat. l. 1. Sat. l. v. 10.*

* *חיים vitas, Montanus.*

Christ, to support this life; and spiritual clothing, a justifying righteousness, called the justification of life, and which is the comfort of it; and rest in him, which makes life pleasant and delightful. Such an one finds that which of all things is most valuable, the life of his immortal soul; and which he can find nowhere else; and which, being found, can never be lost, for he finds eternal life in him; and has both a right unto it, and a meetness for it; yea, has the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it, 1 John v. 11, 12. *And shall obtain favour of the Lord*; by which is meant, not favour among men, though that is had from the Lord, it is he that gives it; nor temporal blessings, for in this sense favour is not to men of spiritual skill and wisdom; rather spiritual blessings, an access to God, acceptance with him; the presence of God, and communion with him; peace of conscience, and every needful supply of grace: but it seems most principally to design the love, grace, and good will of God, the spring and fountain of all blessings: and *obtaining* it does not intend getting an interest in it, for that is free and sovereign; nor is there any thing in men, or done by them, which can procure it; but an enjoyment of it. The word^a used signifies a drawing it out, as water out of a well; and denotes that it is before it is drawn out or manifested; that it is in the heart of God, and lies hid there, from whence it flows as from a well or fountain; and is enjoyed in the exercise of the grace of faith; when the Lord remembers his people, and encompasses them about with it; or draws it out in great lengths, or grants continued and comfortable manifestations of it; see Psal. xxxvi. 10.

Ver. 36. *But he that sinneth against me, &c.*] Or misses the mark, as the word^a signifies; and which is observed by Aben Ezra; see Judg. xx. 16. Christ is the mark and scope of the counsels of God; of the covenant of grace; of the Scriptures; of the Gospel, the truths and promises of it; of the graces of the Spirit, and of all spiritual duties and services; and to whom we are to look for heaven and eternal happiness, Phil. iii. 14. and such miss the mark who look for salvation elsewhere, either by the light of nature; or by the law of Moses; or by any moral performances, or

any religious exercises; or by a mere profession of religion, even the best. The word is frequently used for sinning; which is an aberration or straying from, or missing, the mark of the law. Some sin against Christ doctrinally, who say he is not come in the flesh, or that Jesus is not the Christ; who deny his proper deity, his divine and eternal Sonship; and treat his blood, righteousness and salvation, with any degree of contempt: they sin against him practically that slight his Gospel, neglect his ordinances, transgress his laws, and evilly treat his people. Sinning against him is very aggravating; it is against him in whom all grace and mercy is, and from whom it comes to the sons of men; who is the Saviour of men from sin, and in whom alone salvation is. Wherefore every one that thus sins against him *wrongeth his own soul*; is injurious to it, and to the spiritual and eternal welfare of it; all sin is hurtful to the souls of men, especially sins against Christ; since there is no other Saviour but him, no other sacrifice for sin but his; and therefore to such there can be no other than a fearful looking-for of judgment, that trample him under foot, and treat his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in a contemptuous manner, Heb. x. 26—29. *All they that hate me*; as do the seed of the serpent, the whole world that lies in wickedness, all unregenerate persons, and even many professors of religion; they hate him privately, being without love to him, or loving others more than him; and positively and practically, by despising his Gospel, or not walking worthy of it; by disclaiming his doctrines, casting off his yoke, and maltreating his people; all which arise from the corruption of their nature; for this hatred or enmity is original and natural; it is deeply rooted in their minds, and irreconcilable without the grace of God, and is always undeserved. Wherefore such are said to *love death*; not formally and intentionally, for death in any shape cannot be desirable; not a corporeal death, and much less an eternal one; but interpretatively and consequentially, as they love that which brings death upon them both in body and soul, and so are reckoned to love death itself.

C H A P. IX.

IN this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, is represented as having built a stately house or palace for the entertainment of his guests, ver. 1. as having made large and suitable provisions for them, ver. 2. and as having sent his servants to invite them to come and partake of them, and quit all other company but his, ver. 3—6. When it is observed who are and who are not to be reproved, with the reasons of it, ver. 7—9. and what is the sum and substance of true wisdom; and what the advantages of it both here and hereafter, ver. 10—12. And the chapter is concluded with the description of the foolish woman, the opposite of Wisdom; who is represented as clamorous, simple, and ignorant,

ver. 13. and plying passengers that go by her door, and inviting them in to partake of her provisions, ver. 14—17. the consequence of which is sure and certain death and destruction to her guests, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Wisdom hath builded her house, &c.*] Or *Wisdoms*; of which see ch. i. 20. Christ, the Wisdom of God, is meant, in whom and from whom all wisdom is. Various are the opinions concerning this *house* built by him. Some take it to be the whole circle of sciences, and the seven pillars to be the seven liberal ones, as Aben Ezra; though rather, as others, it may design the schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in the knowledge of divine and spiri-

^a יָדַע educet, Pagninus, Montanus; hauriet, V. L. haurit, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; depromit, Schultens.

^b יָדַע qui vero aberraverit a me, Michaelis.

tual things. Some would have the whole universe to be meant, and the seven pillars to be the seven days of creation, as Jarchi; or the seven planets, as others: it is an odd notion of Grotius, that the human body is intended, with its five senses; and, to make up the number seven, adds the voice and memory: rather the human nature of Christ, which is a temple, a tabernacle, a house in which the Godhead dwells, is built by Wisdom, made without the hands of men; and then its seven pillars are the graces of the Spirit, by which it was supported and adorned; see Isa. xi. 2. Some understand it of the temple of a regenerate man's heart; in which God, Father, Son and Spirit, dwell. But there are two other senses, which bid fairest one of them to be right; either the heavenly glory, the house not made with hands, Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions for his people; and which is a city whose builder and maker is God, and is prepared by Christ; and stands firm upon the promises of God, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the blessed Spirit: or rather the church of Christ on earth, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; this is built by Christ upon himself, the rock and foundation; the materials of it are true believers, precious and lively stones; built up a spiritual house, and a fit and suitable habitation for God through the Spirit. Such a house there was under the Old Testament, and such an one there is under the New; and which is continually building up by Christ by means of the word and ordinances, and will continue to the end of the world; see 1 Tim. iii. 15. Matt. xvi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. iii. 6. *She hath hewn out her seven pillars*; ministers of the Gospel, compared to pillars for strength and stability, and for their being instrumental in supporting the interest and church of Christ; in allusion to the pillars in Solomon's temple, Jachin and Boaz; see Gal. ii. 9. 1 Kings vii. 21. These are said to be *hewn*, being polished, beautified, and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit by Christ, and thereby fitted for their work and service; and said to be *seven*, because there is a complete and sufficient number of them, which Christ has provided, and always will provide for his churches, as long as they continue in the world. Though it may be these seven pillars may denote in general the firmness and solidity of this spiritual building, the church, and the continuance of it by the power of God; or they may have respect to the seven states of the church in so many periods of time, to last to the end of all things, signified by the seven churches in the book of the Revelation; so Cocceius^c.

Ver. 2. *She hath killed her beasts, &c.*] Or, *her sacrifice*^d: a crucified Christ, the principal of the provisions in Wisdom's house, or the church of Christ. The death of Christ was prefigured by the slaying of beasts for sacrifice under the old law; was foretold in prophecy, and is expressed by *killing* him in the New Testament; and which shews his death not to be natural, but violent. It is commonly ascribed to the

Jews as a wicked action of theirs; but was not without the counsel and determination of God, and the will and consent of Christ; and this death was as a victim to justice, by way of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and was vicarious; was offered up in the room and stead of his people, to make atonement for their sins; and which is no other than himself, his soul and body, as in union with his divine person; a sacrifice voluntarily offered up by himself, exceeding acceptable, and well-pleasing to God; effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and so never to be repeated: and his death, being a sacrifice, becomes a feast; a crucified Christ is suitable food for faith, as he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain; he is evidently set forth in the Gospel as crucified, and as such is spiritual and savoury food to his people, nourishing and strengthening, quickening and comforting, and extremely satisfying: thus the Gospel feast, in which the slain Lamb of God makes the chiefest part, is expressed in the same language as here, *my oxen and my fattings are killed*, Matt. xxii. 4. *She hath mingled her wine*; which also makes a considerable part in a banquet or feast, Esth. v. 6. and the church is called a banqueting-house, or a house of wine, Cant. ii. 4. The love of Christ is compared to wine, Cant. i. 2, 4. to old wine for the antiquity of it, being more ancient than ours to him, or than ourselves, even as old as eternity; to wine, on the lees well refined, for the purity of it, being free from all motives and conditions in the creature; to strong generous wine, which exhilarates and refreshes the weak, the weary, and distressed. The Gospel of Christ is also compared to wine, Cant. vii. 9. to old wine, for the ancient doctrines of it; and to neat wine, for the purity of it; and to generous wine, for the pleasure, joy, and comfort it gives: the blessings of grace which it exhibits may be so called from their comforting and refreshing nature, which are had freely, Isa. lv. 1. and so are the joys of heaven, Matt. xxvi. 29. Now the *mingling* of this wine is in allusion to the mixture of wine, either with something richer, as spice, Cant. viii. 2. or rather with water, as Jarchi observes, which was usual in those hot countries, to make it fit and suitable drink for the bodies of men: the mixture was no doubt according to the strength of the wine; the wine of Sharon, being strong wine, was mixed two parts water and one wine^e; which, with the ancients^f, were three parts water and two wine; though, according to Plutarch^g, they had three ways of mixing, which they called by three different names; the one was three parts water and two wine, the other three parts water and one wine, the third was one wine and two water; the first of them was reckoned the best mixture^h: one Cerassus is said to be the inventor of mixing wine with waterⁱ; others ascribe it to Melampus^k, and others to Amphictyon. And this, spiritually understood, does not design any impurity or degeneracy, such as is complained of, Isa. i. 22. for the love of Christ is pure and sovereign; the Gospel of Christ is free of all mixtures of human doctrines; the blessings of grace are all

^c Vid. Lexic. Heb. col. 623.

^d *וּמִצְרֵי* victimam suam, Pagninus, Montanus, Figurine version, Bayanus, Mercerus, so Ben Melech.

^e T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. & Nidda, fol. 19. 1.

^f Sidas in voce Πυμα.

^g Apud Philander. in Vitruv. de Architect. l. 16. c. 5. p. 281.

^h Aristoph. Equi, Act. 3. Sc. 1. p. 353. & Scholia in ib.

ⁱ Hygin. Fab. 274.

^k Athenæi Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 6. p. 45. & l. 4. c. 27. p. 179.

of free grace, without the mixture of men's works, and so is eternal life; salvation is all of free grace, and not by works of righteousness done by men mixed with it. But this may design the various displays of the love of Christ in the several acts of it, before time, in time, and now in heaven; or the joint display of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the salvation of men, and the harmony and agreement of the divine perfections therein; and the publication of the Gospel, and the accommodation of the truths of it to the capacities of men: and perhaps some respect may be had to the blood and water that issued from the side of the slain Lamb of God, here prophetically and figuratively held forth. *She hath also furnished her table*; which seems to design the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances in Gospel times; especially the ordinance of the supper, called the table of the Lord, 1 Cor. x. 21. a well-furnished table has a variety of excellent provision upon it: and such is the ministry of the Gospel, which is signified by various sorts of food, as bread, meat, milk, honey, and delicious fruits; and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is expressed by several things that are eatable, as by a slain lamb, a fatted calf, the hidden manna, the bread of God and of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and so is he held forth in the ordinances, particularly in the ordinance of the supper; the table he sits at, and welcomes his guests; encourages them to eat and drink, and sups with them himself. Here his broken body, and his blood shed, are presented to the faith of his people, to be eaten and drank in a spiritual manner; a table richly furnished indeed!

Ver. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens, &c.*] Not moral virtues, or good works, which subserve the interest of Christ and religion, adorn the Gospel and its professors; nor the liberal arts and sciences, said to be handmaids to divinity; nor angels, ministering spirits to Christ; but the ministers of the Gospel, who being so called does not suppose or encourage women's preaching; but have the name to keep up the decency of the parable, and the propriety of the allegory: for since Wisdom is represented as a lady, a princess or queen, it is proper that her attendants should be maidens, or that she should employ such in inviting her guests; as Rebekah, Pharaoh's daughter, Esther, and others, are said to have their maidens to wait upon them: and besides, it very fitly expresses the character of Gospel ministers; as that they are the servants of Christ, followers of him, obsequious to him, humble and modest, incorrupt in doctrine, pure in conversation, and whose voice is soft, pleasant, and delightful; being not the rough voice of the law, but the still, small, musical voice of the Gospel; a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, and righteousness, liberty, life, and salvation; very charming, alluring, and drawing. These Christ has a property in; he chooses and calls them, and fits them for his service; and they give up themselves to him, and willingly engage in it. And these he *sends forth*: from him they have their mission and commission to preach the Gospel; to invite persons to the Gospel feast, to partake of the provisions

he has made: he sends them forth publicly into the world, into all places where his people are, into the streets and lanes; yea, to the hedges and highways, to invite, and even to compel them to come in. And this supposes superiority in him, and authority given to them. *She crieth upon the high places of the city*; this is to be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, both by Christ himself in person, in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, and other public places; and by his ministers, and by him speaking in them there or elsewhere; and which is not a mere whisper, but a cry, a proclamation made aloud, and to be delivered with fervency and earnestness: the *city* may mean the church of God, and the *highest places* the ordinances thereof; and may in general denote the publicness of them; which are in the church, as the wings or pinnacles of the higher parts or buildings of a city are in that, as the word¹ signifies.

Ver. 4. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither, &c.*] Into Wisdom's house, so well built and furnished; the church of Christ, as a house of instruction; a school, where such who are *simple*, weak, and foolish, may learn. Here are many instructors; saints instruct one another; ministers of the word are teachers; yea, Father, Son, and Spirit, here teach and instruct, and none teach like them. Here many lessons are to be learned concerning themselves, concerning Christ, and concerning their duty to God and men; all sorts of persons may learn here, such who know ever so much or ever so little. Or let him turn in here, as into an inn, into which passengers or travellers turn for accommodations; see ver. 15, 16. The saints are travellers here, at a distance from their father's house, and need refreshment by the way; the church of God is an inn of good accommodations; here is room enough to entertain them; here are good lodgings for rest and safety, and good provisions, and all of free cost. And now these are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, either in person, or by his maidens, his ministers, inviting such who are *simple* to turn in hither, and partake of the provisions in it; that is, not such who are quite stupid and insensible, sottish, incorrigible, and irreclaimable; but who are sensible of their folly and simplicity; who are but of weak capacities, apt to be credulous, and so easily imposed upon and deceived. As for him that *wanteth understanding*; not the natural faculty of the understanding, nor an understanding of things natural and civil; but of things spiritual and evangelical, as of the grace of God; of salvation by Christ; of the work of the Spirit; of themselves and their state; of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and who are sensible of their ignorance and want of understanding; which is the first thing the spirit of God convinces men of; or who are so in comparison of others, are weak in knowledge and experience. Now these Christ does not despise, but invites them into his house for instruction; and where can they be better? and who so fit and proper to be here, and be with Wisdom, than such as these? *She saith to him*: as follows.

Ver. 5. *Come, eat of my bread, &c.*] Which stands

¹ על גבי super alas, Montanus, so Ben Melech; super pinnis,

Piscator, Amama; in pinnaculis, Cocceius; super convexitatibus, Schulteus.

for all the provisions of Christ's house; it designs the Gospel, which to a believer is more than his necessary food; and the ordinance of the supper, one of the symbols of which is bread; and more especially Christ himself, the bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven, which is to be eaten by faith; and this only, for every thing else is that which is not bread; and this daily, as the Israelites ate their manna; this is the believer's daily bread; and largely and freely, to which they are welcome by Christ; and with gladness and singleness of heart, joyfully and with sincerity. *And drink of the wine which I have mingled*; of the love of Christ; or of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which meet and mingle together: to drink of this is to partake of it by faith, and be persuaded of interest in it; this may be drank largely of, for there is enough, a river of it; and without danger, it is not intoxicating as wine, wherein is excess; and it may be had freely, without money and without price, Cant. i. 2, 4. and v. 1. Isa. lv. 1.

Ver. 6. *Forsake the foolish, &c.*] Foolish men and their company; not men of weak abilities in things natural and civil, or who are reckoned foolish by the world; for so the saints are, whose company is not to be neglected and forsaken; but such who are wickedly foolish, who are ignorant of divine things, and make a mock at sin and at religion; such company is very unsuitable for Wisdom's guests; such as turn in to her house ought to forsake these; it is quite out of character for Wisdom's followers to be the companions of fools; it is very unprofitable to keep company with such vain men, yea, very pernicious and hurtful, and of very bad consequence; it corrupts good manners, and causes grief, and breaks peace, sooner or later; it is quite unbefitting them to converse with them; they are called out from among them by Christ, and should obey: and, besides, they have better company to attend unto: and they should also forsake foolish things; the Septuagint version renders it, *foolishness*; and the Arabic version, *imprudence*; the Targum and Syriac version, *want of understanding, or judgment*; foolish lusts, which are hurtful, and war against the soul, and which should be denied and abstained from; and all foolish ways, their own or others', which are dangerous and lead to ruin; and all foolish doctrines, such as are contrary to the Scriptures, to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; that tend to degrade any of the Persons of the Trinity, to obscure or lessen the grace of God in man's salvation, or to exalt the creature; all such are to be forsaken, shunned, and avoided, and by no means countenanced and encouraged. *And live*; which may be considered either as an exhortation, as the foregoing; live on the provisions of Wisdom's house, on her bread and her wine; live on Christ himself by faith; live not as the foolish do, but as the wise; live not to yourselves, nor to the lusts of men, but to the will and glory of God; live not in sin, but unto righteousness; live not to the flesh, nor after it, but to and after the spirit: or as a promise by way of encouragement, and as enforcing the preceding exhortation, *and ye shall live*⁶; honourably, and not scanda-

lously, as they do that keep company with the foolish; comfortably and delightfully, as they do that turn into Wisdom's house, and are her guests; such live in communion with Christ, and with his people; they live a spiritual life now, and shall live an eternal one hereafter. *And go in the way of understanding*: as such do that quit the conversation of foolish men, and become the guests of Wisdom; such are in, and go in the way of understanding, who frequently attend the throne of grace, and ask wisdom of the Father of lights; the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things, which they that ask have; Solomon got all his wisdom and understanding this way: such are in the way of it, and go in the way of it, who constantly and carefully read the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; who go up to the house of the Lord as often as they have opportunity, that they may be taught by him; who sit under the ministry of Gospel preachers, that feed men with knowledge and understanding; who submit to Gospel ordinances, and keep the commandments of Christ; for such are said to have a good understanding; they shew that they have, and by these means get and increase it; see Psal. cxi. 10. and cxix. 104. and who also converse with knowing and experienced Christians; for *he that walketh with wise men shall be wise*, Prov. xiii. 20.

Ver. 7. *He that revileth a scorner getteth to himself shame, &c.*] Intimating, that though the simple, and such as want understanding, and of whom there is hope of doing them good, are to be invited into Wisdom's house; yet not the haughty scorner, the abandoned sinner, the scoffer at all religion, who walks after his own lusts, and is quite irreclaimable; it is but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs, to prove and exhort such persons; though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet when men despise it, and make a mock at it, they are to be turned from, and no more is to be said to them; as the Jews of old, they were the first invited to the Gospel feast, the same that is described in the context; they made light of it, contradicted and blasphemed the word, and so judged themselves unworthy of it; wherefore Wisdom's maidens, or Christ's ministers, were bid to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them; for it is to no purpose to address such persons; *shame* is the sure consequence of it, because a man is disappointed of the end he has in view, which is doing good. *And he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot*; this shews who is meant by a scorner, a very profligate man, bent on his wicked ways, and quite incorrigible; to rebuke such an one is not only labour lost, and in vain, but the rebuker getteth himself an ill name, and is sure to have the dirt of reproach and scandal cast upon him; though this a man might patiently bear, if there was any hope of doing good.

Ver. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee, &c.*] For wicked men are apt to hate those that publicly rebuke them, Amos v. 10. Hence ministers of the word are of all men most hated; though this also

⁶ חַיִּים imperitiam, Tigurine version; stultitias, Vatablus; faitaitates, Piscator, Schultens; stoliditates, Gejerus, Guesetius, p. 703.

⁷ וְיִבְרִיחַ & vivetis, Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

should be bore with, could it be thought, or there was any reason to believe, that the reproof would be of any service. The scorner here, and in the preceding verses, may not only design profane sinners, sensualists, and atheists, that despise all religion, and scoff at all that is good; but also proud scornful Pharisees, such who derided Christ himself, and trusted in themselves, and despised others, Christ and his apostles, and their ministrations, Luke xvi. 14. and xviii. 9. and such, as Christ came not to call them himself, so he bid his disciples let them alone, Matt. ix. 13. and xv. 14. *Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee*; as David did Nathan; and who was determined to take kindly the reproof of any righteous man, Psal. cxli. 5. Such who are spiritually wise will be thankful for the reproof of Gospel ministers, and even of private Christians, and will love and esteem them for their faithfulness and uprightness, and for the good which they themselves receive hereby.

Ver. 9. *Give instruction to a wise man, &c.*] In the Hebrew text it is only *give to a wise man*; give him reproof, correction, chastisement, doctrine, or instruction, be it what it will, he will be the better for it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, *give occasion*; to him of shewing his wisdom and of improving in it: *and he will be yet wiser*; he will learn something by every hint that is given him, whether it be by way of rebuke, or by way of instruction. *Teach a just man*; one that is truly so, that has seen the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and has renounced that, and does not trust in it; and who has learned Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; has seen the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his righteousness, and trusts unto it and depends upon it; and in consequence of this lives soberly, righteously, and godly; teach such a man the doctrines of the Gospel, and every lesson of obedience and duty, *and he will increase in learning*; he will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ and all divine things; see Matt. xiii. 12.

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, &c.*] This shews who the wise men are, and in what true wisdom lies; no man is wise till he fears the Lord, and he that does so is a wise man, at least then he begins to be one; this is the principal part of wisdom, ch. i. 7. and is at the first of it; it is the beginning of grace; it is the first act of wisdom, or grace; or which appears as soon as a man is converted and caused to know wisdom in the hidden part; as repentance, faith, and love, quickly shew themselves in one act or another, so does the fear of God; for the former are never without the latter; for fear is an awe and reverence of the divine Being, joined with love to him, trust in him, and a desire to serve and worship him in a right manner; no sooner is a man converted, but presently there is in him a fear of offending God, from a principle of love to him; for not a slavish but a filial fear is here intended. *And the knowledge of the Holy is understanding*; either the knowledge of the holy Ones, as the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are so called, Josh. xxiv. 19. Prov. xxx. 3. Hos. xi. 9. the knowledge of God the Father, who is holy in

his nature and works; not a mere natural knowledge of him by the light of nature; nor a mere notional knowledge of him by revelation; not a legal knowledge of him as a lawgiver, and an offended Judge; but an evangelical knowledge of him in Christ, as his God and Father; and as the God of all grace in him; so as to have faith and hope in him, access unto him, and communion with him; this is right understanding; so the knowledge of Christ, God's holy One; a knowledge of him in his person, offices, and grace; an inward knowledge of him, a spiritual acquaintance with him, so as to approve of him, believe in him, and appropriate him to one's self; this is to attain to a good degree of understanding: as likewise the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the author of sanctification; of his person, and operations of grace; as a convincer and comforter; as a spirit of illumination and faith, of regeneration and sanctification; and as the spirit of adoption, and the earnest of glory; this is another branch of spiritual understanding. Moreover, such knowledge which holy men have, and which makes them so; and which holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost, have communicated in the sacred Scriptures, of which they are the penmen. The knowledge of holy things may also be meant; of the holy mysteries of religion, of the holy doctrines of the Gospel, which are all according to godliness, and teach men to live in a holy manner: the faith once delivered to the saints is a most holy faith, encourages and promotes holiness of heart and life; as the doctrines of God's everlasting love; eternal election; the unconditionality of the covenant of grace; redemption by Christ; conversion by efficacious grace; justification by Christ's righteousness; pardon by his blood; satisfaction by his sacrifice; and perseverance by his power; and now a knowledge of these things, not notional, but experimental, is understanding indeed; as well as a knowledge of holy and gracious experiences.

Ver. 11. *For by me thy days shall be multiplied, &c.*] These are the words of Wisdom, and contain a reason and argument why her call and advice in the preceding verses should be listened unto, since she gives long life to her followers. She is a tree of life unto them, the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life; by means of her bread and her wine spiritual life is maintained, promoted, and preserved; and length of days, for ever and ever, is the gift of her right hand; see ch. iii. 16, 18. The Targum is, "for by it thy days shall be multiplied;" which seems to refer it to the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom, in the preceding verse, to which long life is attributed; see ch. x. 27. *And the years of thy life shall be increased*; or, *they shall add years of life to thee*; wisdom and understanding, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Holy; if not in this world, yet in the world to come, which will be without end.

Ver. 12. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, &c.*] He is wise that hearkens to Wisdom's advice, that obeys her call, turns in to her house, and becomes her guest; and such an one is wise for himself, it is for his own good, profit, and advantage; for the good of his soul, for his present peace and comfort,

and for his future bliss and happiness. It is not for her own sake that Wisdom presses her exhortations, and is so urgent on men to take her counsel and advice; it is for their own good; their wisdom is not profitable to her, but to themselves; they, and they only, reap the advantage and usefulness of it; see Job xxii. 2, 3. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, *and unto thy friends*; and the Septuagint version is, *if thou becomest wise to thyself, thou wilt be wise to neighbours*; they will receive some profit by it. *But if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it*; the evil, as the Vulgate Latin; the sin of scorning, and the punishment due unto it; it will bring no real hurt to Wisdom, or Christ, nor to his ministers, nor to his Gospel and ordinances, scoffed at; all the hurt will redound to the scoffer himself; and he alone shall bear it, and feel the smart of it, and all the dreadful consequences following upon it. The Septuagint version here adds the following clause, "he that trusteth in lies, he feedeth on winds; the same pursues birds flying; for he forsakes the ways of his own vineyard; he wanders from the paths of his own husbandry; he passes through a desert without water, and a land destined to thirst, and he gathers unfruitfulness with his hands;" and which are retained in the Syriac and Arabic version, but are not in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 13. *A foolish woman is clamorous, &c.*] Some by this woman understand folly itself, as opposed to wisdom; others blind reason, ignorant of divine things; others carnal sensual pleasure, which entices and draws men to that which is evil; others heresy and superstition; others the old serpent, the devil; she seems to be the same with the strange woman and harlot before described, ch. ii. 16. and v. 3. and vii. 5, &c. and being set in direct opposition to Wisdom, or Christ, seems to design antichrist, who is described in the book of the Revelation as the great whore; and all the characters here agree with the same. Antichrist is represented as a woman, Rev. xvii. 3, 4, 6, 18. and is *foolish*; for whatever worldly cunning and craft, and wicked subtlety, there may be in the Romish antichrist, yet he is destitute of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; and is *clamorous* and noisy, has a mouth speaking great swelling words of vanity and blasphemy, boasting of infallibility, works of supererogation, merits, miracles, wealth, and riches; and very pressing and importunate to gain proselytes to his religion; the priests and jesuits are compared to noisy, clamorous, croaking frogs, Rev. xvi. 13. She is *simple*, and *knoweth nothing*; a woman of follies, extremely foolish and simple, and most grossly ignorant; knows nothing that is good, as the Targum; that is, spiritually good; knows not God aright; is without the fear and love of him, and faith in him; nor knows Christ, and the way of righteousness and life by him; nor the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace upon the heart; nor the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; nor the ways, worship, and ordinances of God. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, *she knows not shame*; but is bold and impudent, having a whore's forehead, and on it

written, *Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth*, Rev. xvii. 5.

Ver. 14. *For she sitteth at the door of her house, &c.*] Idle and inactive, looking out for her prey; not active and laborious, as Wisdom, building her house, killing her beasts, furnishing her table, and sending out her maidens to call in her guests; but exposing herself in the most public manner, and being at the utmost ease, sitting as a queen; see Rev. xviii. 7. and as it follows, *on a seat, or throne*; the same seat, or throne, power, and authority, which the dragon gave to the beast, or antichrist, placed at Rome, where this woman reigns; see Rev. xiii. 2. and xvii. 8. *In the high places of the city*; the city of Rome, and its jurisdiction, the high places of which are their temples, or churches; where this foolish woman is noisy and clamorous, proclaims her folly, and endeavours to seduce and draw persons to her superstition and idolatry. *Merome*, the word for *high places*, has some affinity with Rome, and comes from the same root.

Ver. 15. *To call passengers who go right on their ways.*] Who have been religiously educated, and trained up in the principles of true Christianity; and who walk outwardly according to the rule of the divine word, and are in a fair way for heaven and eternal happiness. These she has her eye upon as they pass along, and calls unto them, and endeavours to turn them aside out of the way they are going, to make them proselytes to her antichristian religion; which, when she succeeds in, she glories and boasts of; just as harlots are very desirous of seducing and debauching chaste, innocent, and virtuous persons; see Rev. ii. 20. Saying as follows:

Ver. 16. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither, &c.*] The harlot's house, Popish chapels and churches. She uses the same form of words that Wisdom does, ver. 4. having a form of godliness, a shew of religion, but without the power of it; her priests are wolves in sheep's clothing, and speak lies in hypocrisy: and such that she fixes upon as proper persons to work on are the *simple*, the credulous and unwary; who are not on their guard, and are easily persuaded and imposed on. *And as for him that wanteth understanding*; is not well-grounded in the principles of Christianity he professes; has not a spiritual and experimental understanding of them: *she saith to him*; addresses him in such language as follows:

Ver. 17. *Stolen waters are sweet, &c.*] Wells and fountains of waters in those hot countries were very valuable, and were the property of particular persons; about which there were sometimes great strife and contention; and they were sometimes sealed and kept from the use of others; see Gen. xxvi. 18—22. Cant. iv. 12. now waters got by stealth from such wells and fountains were sweeter than their own, or what might be had in common and without difficulty, to which the proverb alludes. By which in general is meant, that all prohibited unlawful lusts and pleasures are desirable to men, and sweet in the enjoyment of them; and the pleasure promised by them is what makes them

[†] RND לַי super solium, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; super solio, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens; in thronum, Cocceius.

[‡] From אֲלֵט altus; hence that of Virgil—altæ mœnia Romæ, Æneid. l. 1. v. 7.

so desirable, and the more so because forbidden: and particularly as adultery, which is a sort of theft⁵, and a drinking water out of another's cistern, ch. v. 15. being forbidden and unlawful, and secretly committed, is sweeter to an unclean person than a lawful enjoyment of his own wife; so false worship, superstition, and idolatry, the inventions of men, and obedience to their commands, which are no other than spiritual adultery, are more grateful and pleasing to a corrupt mind than the true and pure worship of God. *And bread eaten in secret is pleasant*; or, *bread of secret places*⁶; hidden bread, as the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that which is stolen and is another's⁷, and is taken and hid in secret places, fetched out from thence, or eaten there: the sweet morsel of sin, rolled in the mouth, and kept under the tongue; secret lusts, private sins, particularly idolatry, to which men are secretly enticed, and which they privately commit, Deut. xiii. 6. the same thing is designed by this clause as the former.

Ver. 18. *But he knoweth not that the dead are there, &c.*] In the house of this foolish and wicked woman, into which she invites passengers to turn; the simple,

that is persuaded by her, does not consider that there are none there to be his companions, but such who are dead in a moral or spiritual sense; that, though they live in pleasure, they are dead whilst they live. Aben Ezra refers this to *hell* in the next clause; where her guests are, and where those that are slain by her have their everlasting abode; and where the giants are, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; or the mighty ones she has cast down there, as the Targum; so the word *rephaim* sometimes signifies: and some think that reference is had to the giants of the old world, that corrupted their way on earth, and brought a deluge on it; see ch. vii. 26. And that *her guests are in the depths of hell*; not only in the way to it, and on the brink of it, but in the very midst of it: there are many in hell she has invited into her house, and persuaded to turn in there, and commit fornication with her; and all that worship the beast, or commit spiritual adultery with the whore of Rome, will go down to perdition with her, and have their portion in hell-fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which they do not consider that are drawn into her idolatrous practices, Rev. xiv. 9—11.

C H A P. X.

FROM this chapter to the *twenty-fifth* are various proverbial sentences, without any very apparent connexion or coherence with each other; describing righteous and wicked men; setting forth their different temper, conduct, and actions, and the fruits and effects of them. It should be observed, that frequently in the preceding chapters two persons are represented as women; one goes by the name of *Wisdom*, the other is called the *foolish* woman and a *harlot*: the former is clearly to be understood of Christ; and the latter, being opposed to him, must be antichrist, the whore of Rome, and mother of harlots: now in the following part of this book two sorts of persons are spoken of; the one as wise, righteous, good, &c. and the other as foolish, wicked, &c. who are no other than the followers of Christ and antichrist; which observation is a key to the whole book.

Ver. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon, &c.*] This title is repeated from ch. i. 1. and very properly stands here; since here begin those pithy sentences of Solomon, which bear the name of proverbs; the preceding chapters being a sort of preface or introduction to them; in which Solomon recommends the study of wisdom, shews the profit and advantage of it, gives directions about it, and prepares for the reception of those wise sayings that follow; which are for the most part independent of each other, and consist generally of clauses set in a contrast to one another, and often expressed by similes and metaphors. *A wise son maketh a glad father*; as Solomon made glad his father David: for no doubt there were appearances of his wisdom before he came to the throne, though greater afterwards;

which made David rejoice that he was placed on the throne before his death, to whom he had committed the charge of building the house of the Lord. *But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother*; brings grief and trouble to her, as perhaps Rehoboam did to his mother: though all this is to be understood conjunctly of both parents, and not separately of each; not as if a wise son only was matter of joy to his father, who may be thought to be a better judge of his wisdom, and more abroad to hear the fame of it, and to observe the effects of it; or as if a foolish son only caused grief to his mother, because more at home, and more privy to his foolish behaviour; but as being equally joyous or afflicting to both parents. Nor is this to be understood of such who are wise and foolish as to their natural capacities only; but who are so in a moral sense, either virtuous or vicious, good or wicked. Wherefore parents should be concerned for the education of their children, whose behaviour much depends upon it; and children for their conduct towards their parents and in the world, since their joy and grief are influenced by it. Some interpret the words mystically, the *father*, of God; the *mother*, of the church; and the *sons*, of the children of them both: and so may fitly describe the different followers of Christ and antichrist; the one being wise, the other foolish; the one acceptable to God, the other not.

Ver. 2. *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, &c.*] By which are meant either a large abundance of riches in general, which for the most part are enjoyed by wicked men, and abused to wicked purposes, ch. xi. 4. or an affluence of them, obtained in a wicked way, by

⁵ *Fartiva Venus*, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1. *Furta Jovis*, *fartiva manuscula*, Catullus ad Mantium, Ep. 66. v. 140, 145. So Propertius, l. 2. eleg. 30. v. 28. *ἄλοιοι καὶ κλεψίμοροι μάλα καὶ κωλύειν*, Pindar; see

which he was indebted to Solomon, according to Clemens of Alexandria, *Paedagog.* l. 3. p. 255.

⁶ *לחם סודי* *latham sudi*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

⁷ *ἄλλοθεν ἄλλοθεν* *allogen allogen*, Juvenal. *Satyr.* 13.

fraud, oppression, and the like; see Mic. vi. 10. Or are either not used at all, or put to wicked uses: what are not used profit not the possessors of them, for they are kept to the hurt of the owners of them; and those which are got by ill means, or put to an ill use, perish by evil travel, Eccl. v. 13, 14. Nor can any one by his riches either redeem himself or his brother from destruction, or give to God a ransom for him; nor can he by them save himself from a corporeal death one year, one month, one day, one hour, one moment; nor will they be of any service to him in the day of judgment, when wrath comes forth against him. *But righteousness delivereth from death*; either that which is righteously got, though it be ever so little, is a means of preserving life, and keeps their souls from famishing, ver. 3. or else what is liberally dispensed, for alms are called *righteousness*, Psal. cxii. 9. Dan. iv. 27. Matt. vi. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 10. These are oftentimes the means of saving the lives of persons ready to perish, on whom they are bestowed, and who will venture their lives to save their benefactors; and such liberal persons are oftentimes blessed with long life, and are kept alive when threatened with death, Psal. xli. 1—3. and though their good deeds are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are rewarded with it in a way of grace, Matt. xxv. 34—38. Moreover, righteousness may be considered as legal and evangelical; a legal righteousness, or the righteousness of men in obedience to the law, cannot deliver from the sentence of death the law has passed; it is not properly a righteousness; it is imperfect, cannot justify, save, or bring to heaven, or entitle to life; notwithstanding this a man must die: but there is an evangelical righteousness; and this is either imparted and implanted in men, is the new man, which is created in righteousness and holiness; and this delivers from a moral or spiritual death, a death in trespasses and sins men are in; for by it they are quickened, live a life of faith on Christ, and have communion with God; have his image instamped on them, and live to him, and to Christ, and to righteousness, being freed from the servitude and dominion of sin; living in which is no other than death: or this righteousness is imputed, which is the righteousness of Christ; wrought out for them, reckoned to them, received by them, and by which they are justified; this delivers them, though not from a corporeal death, yet from the sting and curse of it, and from it as a penal evil, or as a punishment for sin; and it delivers from a legal death, or from the sentence and condemnation of the law, and from the second and eternal death, and entitles them to life everlasting.

Ver. 3. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish, &c.*] Or to perish by famine: not but that good men may be afflicted with it, as Jacob and his sons were, when the famine was in Egypt and in other lands; and as the apostles, particularly the Apostle Paul, were often in hunger and thirst, yet not so as to be destroyed by it; for in famine the Lord redeems such from death; though the young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing; at least whatever they may

suffer this way does not arise from the wrath of God, nor does it nor can it separate from the love of God and Christ, Job v. 20. Psal. xxxiv. 8, 9. Rom. viii. 35. Moreover, the souls of such shall not be famished for want of spiritual food; shall not have a famine of the word and ordinances; their souls shall be fed, as with marrow and fatness, with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock: the church, though in the wilderness, is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, Rev. xii. 14. *But he casteth away the substance of the wicked*; that which is got in a wicked way; as sometimes he causes it to diminish by little and little; at other times he forcibly and suddenly drives it away, and causes it to take wings and fly away; though it has been swallowed down with great greediness and in great abundance, he makes them throw it up again, and casts it out of their belly, whether they will or no, so that it does not profit them, Job xx. 15.

Ver. 4. *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, &c.*] That is either remiss in giving to the necessities of others, according to his abilities, and as cases require; or that is negligent and slothful in his business. Or, *that worketh with a deceitful hand*: or, *with a hand of deceit**, as it may be rendered; who pretends to work, but does not; makes a shew as if he did, but acts deceitfully; or who uses many tricking and deceitful ways and methods to live, as usually slothful persons do. Aben Ezra observes, it may be rendered and interpreted, *he becometh poor that makes a deceitful balance*; thinking to enrich himself by such fraudulent practices: or, as others, *a deceitful balance maketh poor*†; such seldom or ever thrive, or it does not long prosper with them who use such unlawful methods. *But the hand of the diligent maketh rich*; that is, with the blessing of God along with it, as in ver. 22. such who are sharp‡ and acute, as the word signifies; who are careful and industrious, mind their business, and do the honest part; these, with a divine blessing, frequently grow rich: or rather who are like those that dig in the earth for gold, who search for it with great eagerness and diligence; for from this root is a word often used for gold, Prov. iii. 14. and viii. 19. and xvi. 16. All this is true in a spiritual sense; such who are slothful in attendance on the means of grace, the word and ordinances, are slack and negligent in duty, bring a spiritual poverty upon them; and like the Laodicean church, who, through her lukewarmness and carnal security, became poor and wretched, blind and naked: on the other hand, such who are diligent in the use of means are frequent at the throne of grace, forsake not the assembly of the saints, constantly wait at Wisdom's gates; these grow rich in grace and in all good works.

Ver. 5. *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son, &c.*] Which is the time of gathering the fruits of the earth, and laying them up against winter, as the ant is said to do, ch. vi. 8. *But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame*; to himself, and to his parents and relations. The sum of the proverb is, that, in the time of health and youth, persons should be active and industrious in their several callings and stations, and

* *vola doli*, Montanus; *fraudulenta manu*, Tigurine version, Cocceus, Schultens; so Janus & Tremellius, Michaelis.

† So Mercerus.

‡ *אָטוּי* acuti, Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 55. col. 66a.

provide against a time of sickness and old age; and that they should lose no opportunities, neither in a natural nor spiritual way, of doing or receiving good.

Ver. 6. *Blessings are upon the head of the just, &c.*] That seeks for righteousness, not by the works of the law, but by faith; that lives by faith upon the righteousness of Christ, and is justified by it, made, accounted, and reckoned just through it; and, in consequence of his faith, does justly, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly: upon his *head*, who is Christ, blessings are; for he is the *head of every such man*, 1 Cor. xi. 3. not the pope of Rome, but Christ, is head of the church; he is the representative and federal head of all the elect, both in eternity and time; he is a political head to them, as a king is to his subjects; an economical one, as the husband is the head of the wife, a father the head of his family, and a master the head of his servants: and he is in such sense a head to them as a natural head is to its body; he is of the same nature with them, superior to them, a perfect, only, ever-living, and everlasting head. Upon him all the blessings of grace and goodness are; his people are blessed with them in him, their head, Ephes. i. 3. and from him they descend to them, the members of his body, just as the oil on Aaron's head ran down his beard to the skirts of his garments. So in an ancient writing of the Jews⁷, this passage being mentioned, it is asked, Who is the head of the righteous? The answer is, the middle pillar; by whom they seem to mean a middle person, the Mediator, the Messiah. Or else, a part being put for the whole, the meaning is, that blessings are upon the persons of righteous ones, as the word is used in ch. xi. 26. and xxv. 92. the Targum renders it, "the heads of the righteous." All covenant-blessings, spiritual ones, such as are blessings indeed, solid and substantial, irreversible, and for ever; particularly a justifying righteousness, from whence they are denominated just; pardon of sin, peace of soul, every sanctifying grace, the blessing of adoption, and a right to eternal life: these being said to be on the *head* of them, may denote that they come from above, and descend in a way of grace upon them; that they are visible and manifest; that they reside, continue, and remain upon them; that they are as an ornament and crown unto them; and that they are a security of them that no wrath and vengeance can fall upon them. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, *the blessing of the Lord is upon the head of the just*; and such are all the blessings before mentioned. *But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked*; that is, either his violent dealings are open and manifest, and are a scandal to him, as well as entail a curse on him; or rather the fruit and effect of his violence and oppression, the punishment due thereunto, is so righteously inflicted on him, that his mouth is stopped, and he has not one word to say against the just judgments of God upon him, for his violent usage of men, whether here or hereafter; see Psal. cvii. 42. Some render the words, *the mouth of the wicked covereth violence*⁸; palliates and excuses it, and calls it by another name; or

hides and conceals that which is in the heart, and does not utter it; see ver. 18. The Targum is, "in the mouth of the wicked rapine is covered;" as a sweet morsel under their tongue, though in the end bitterness.

Ver. 7. *The memory of the just is blessed, &c.*] Men to whom he has been useful, either in temporals or spirituals, bless him, or wish all blessings to him whilst alive, whenever they make mention of his name; and after death they speak well of him, and pronounce him blessed; for such are had in everlasting remembrance; the memory of them is sweet and precious; their name is famous and valuable, and always spoken of with honour and commendation; see Psal. cxii. 6. The Jewish writers take it for a command, and render it, *let the memory of the just be blessed*; and say, that he that transgresses it breaks an affirmative precept; they make an abbreviation of the word by the initial letters, and join them to the names of their celebrated men. *But the name of the wicked shall rot*; shall be forgotten, be buried in oblivion, and never mentioned: and though they may call their houses, lands, and cities, by their own names, in order to transmit their memory to posterity; yet these, by one means or another, are destroyed, and their memorials perish with them; see Eccl. viii. 10. Psal. xlix. 11. and ix. 6. and if their names are mentioned after they are gone, it is with detestation and abhorrence, as things putrefied are abhorred; so they leave an ill savour behind them, when the good name of the righteous is as precious ointment, Eccl. vii. 1. It is a saying of Cicero⁹, that "the life of the dead lies in the memory of the living."

Ver. 8. *The wise in heart will receive commandments, &c.*] Such who have true wisdom in the hidden part of the heart, of which the fear of the Lord is the beginning: these will not only, as good subjects, honour their king, and attend to his lawful commands; and, as dutiful children, regard those of their parents; and, as faithful servants, hearken to those of their masters; but, as such that fear the Lord, will receive and cheerfully obey the commandments of God and Christ. *But a prating fool shall fall*; like Diotrophes, that prated against the Apostle John and other saints. Or, *a fool of lips*¹⁰; whose folly is proclaimed and made known by his lips; who, out of the abundance of it in his heart, speaks and pours it out by his lips: such an one falls into sin and into mischief; he falls into disgrace in this world, and into hell in the next. The Targum is, "the fool by his lips shall be taken;" as in a snare.

Ver. 9. *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, &c.*] Or, *that walketh in perfection*¹¹, as the Targum. Not that walks without sin, no man does that; but that walks in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his heart, both before God and men; who worships God in spirit and in truth, and speaks the truth in his heart to his neighbour; who is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile; who walks uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel; who makes the word of God the rule of his life and actions; who walks by faith on Christ,

⁷ Tikkune Zohar. Correct. 47. fol. 87. 2.

⁸ יכסה פיהו מן כל עוונותיו or impiorum operisq; injuriam, Montanus, Bayus; operit iniquitatem, Vatablus, Mercerus.

⁹ Orat. 51. Philip. 9.

¹⁰ יכסה פיהו stultus labiis, Montanus, &c.

¹¹ יכסה פיהו qui ambulat perfecte, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

using him as the way to the Father; believing in him for salvation; walking on in him as he has received him, and especially dealing with his uprightness or righteousness for his justification before God; who walks, as Christ did, in imitation of him; who walks in love, as he did, and in all humility, meekness, patience, and self-denial; who walks in and after the spirit of Christ; and in the truths of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances thereof; and in all holy conversation and godliness, studying to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men. Such a man *walks surely*, or securely, safely, confidently, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the word. Such an one has nothing to fear in his walk; he walks on *terra firma*, on good ground, in a good way, which leads to life eternal: he has a good guide, the spirit of God, which goes before him, and will be his guide even unto death, and lead him in the way everlasting, unto the land of uprightness; he has a good guard about him, not only the angels of God that encamp around him, but God himself is a wall of fire to him, and his power surrounds and protects him; he has many precious promises to support him; not only that the Lord will be a buckler to him, but will withhold no good thing from him, ch. ii. 7. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. he has the gracious and supporting presence of God, when he passes through the fire and water of afflictions, and even through the valley of the shadow of death, so that he has nothing to fear; and has moreover the testimony of a good conscience; and having a good hope through grace, he *walks in hope*, as the Targum is; yea, rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and holds fast that rejoicing to the end. *But he that perverteth his ways shall be known*; who does not walk in a plain, direct, and even path, according to the rule of the word, as the upright man; but winds about here and there, goes into crooked paths, walks in craftiness as deceitful workers, whose folly shall be made manifest; though they think to hide it, and deceive men, they and their wickedness shall be exposed, their tricks and artful methods shall be laid open, and they be known to be what they are; if not in this life, yet at the last judgment, 1 Tim. v. 24. 2 Tim. iii. 9. Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe another sense of the word, *he shall be broken*, and compare with it Judg. viii. 16. Isa. liii. 3.

Ver. 10. *He that winketh with the eye, &c.*] The Syriac and Arabic versions add, *with fraud*. A descriptive character of a wicked man, ch. vi. 13. who so does, either to draw and allure persons to go along with him, and join him in his evil practices; or by way of scorn and contempt of others; or as a token to another of its being the proper time to circumvent his neighbour, or do him an injury. Such an one *causeth sorrow*; to himself in the issue, however he may for the present please himself with his evil doings; and to others, whom he allures and deceives. The Arabic version is, *heaps afflictions or sorrows on men*; whom he corrupts and draws into his evil company and conversation. *But a prating fool shall fall*; or, *be taken*, as the Targum; or *beaten*, as the Vulgate Latin; see the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 11. *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of*

life, &c.] Like a fountain of living water, continually running and flowing with water, wholesome, reviving, and refreshing; so the righteous man's mouth, out of the abundance of his heart, overflows with good things, which minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying; things that are pleasant and profitable, grateful and acceptable, comforting, refreshing, and pleasing, and which tend to the good of the life that now is, and that which is to come. *But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked*; so that nothing comes out of it but what is pernicious and hurtful; what savours of rapine and violence; nothing but lying and deceit, cursing and swearing, and such-like filthy and corrupt communication; see the note on ver. 6. The Targum is, *the mouth of the ungodly covers injury*; which is meditated in the heart; so the Vulgate Latin version.

Ver. 12. *Hatred stirreth up strifes, &c.*] A man, whose heart is full of hatred and malice against his neighbour, will stir up, or awake, as the word ⁴ signifies, contentions and quarrels which were happily laid asleep; these he renews by tale-bearing, and whisperings, and evil surmises; by raising lies, spreading false reports and calumnies, and by virulent reproaches and slanders. *But love covereth all sins*; not its own, but others; in imitation of the pardoning love and grace of God, which covers all the sins of his people with the blood and righteousness of his son. Love spreads its mantle over the sins of its fellow-creatures and Christians, and forgives them, even all of them: instead of exposing them, hides and conceals them; and, instead of loading and aggravating the infirmities of others, puts the best constructions on them, hopes and bears, and believes all things, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. see 1 Pet. iv. 8. where the apostle seems to have respect to this passage. This is not to be understood as conniving at or suffering sin upon others, or as contrary to Christian reproofs and rebukes for it.

Ver. 13. *In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found, &c.*] He that has an understanding, especially of divine, spiritual, and evangelic things, which is the pure gift of God; wisdom will be found in his lips, his mouth will speak of it; not of mere natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom; of the wisdom of God in his works; of Christ, the Wisdom of God; of the Gospel, the hidden wisdom; of inward experience of the grace of God, wisdom in the inward part, Psal. xxxvii. 30. from his lips will drop wise sayings, very instructive and informing; which those that seek for and observe may find to their profit and advantage, and to the great credit and honour of the understanding man; whilst the foolish man gets both stripes and disgrace, as follows. *But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding*; or, *wants a heart*: that has no understanding of spiritual things in his heart, and so utters nothing but what is foolish and wicked, and, sooner or later, is chastised for it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read this clause in connexion with the former, thus; *he that brings forth wisdom out of his lips smites with a rod him that is void of understanding*.

Ver. 14. *Wise men lay up knowledge, &c.*] Which

* תעורר.

* חסר לב *careatis corde, Moutanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.*

they get by reading, prayer, meditation, hearing the word of God, and conversation with good men: this they lay up in their hearts, minds, and memories, that they may not forget it, and as a rich treasure they highly value it; that they may bring it forth at proper times, and on proper occasions, for the benefit of others; see Matt. xii. 35. and xii. 52. or *hide* ^f it; conceal it; do not boast and brag of it, as foolish men do. *But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction*: who rashly and unguardedly utters things which bring swift and sudden destruction on himself and others; or terror and consternation, as the word ^g also signifies. The Vulgate Latin version is, *but the mouth of the foolish is near to confusion*: he boasts of his knowledge, betrays his ignorance, and so brings himself to shame and confusion.

Ver. 15. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, &c.*] What a fortified city is to persons in time of war, that is a rich man's wealth to him; by it he can defend himself from the injuries of others, and support himself and family in times of public calamity; for money is a defence, and answers all things, Eccl. vii. 12. and x. 19. Or his wealth is so in his own apprehension and conceit; he puts his trust and confidence in it, and thinks himself safe and secure by it; when he is trusting to uncertain riches, which will fail him; these may fly away from him in life, and leave him exposed to distress and danger; and, however, will not secure him at death from the wrath of God and everlasting destruction. Or he is lifted up with his riches, is in high spirits, and despises others; thinking himself safe, as in a strong castle, and fears nothing, distresses, diseases, or death. *The destruction of the poor is their poverty*; or their poverty is their consternation, as the word ^h signifies, it frights them; they, knowing their circumstances, are afraid of every body and of every thing; not being able to defend themselves against their enemies, or support themselves in times of public calamity, as war, famine, or pestilence.

Ver. 16. *The labour of the righteous tendeth to life, &c.*] To natural life, and the support of it; all that he labours for is to get a livelihood for himself and family; that is all he desires, nor does he seek great things for himself: or to spiritual life; so his spiritual exercises in praying, reading, and hearing the word, and waiting upon ordinances, have a tendency to promote and maintain a spiritual life in him: or to eternal life; not that the works of a righteous man (so the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, render it in the plural number) are meritorious of eternal life; for life and righteousness are not to be had by the works of men, but by the grace of God; yet, as the righteous man labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, given by the Son of God, his labour may be said to tend to life eternal, John vi. 27. *The fruit of the wicked to sin*; whatever he enjoys, whether got by labour; though the word seems purposely omitted, as some observe, to signify that is not intended; or whe-

ther left him as an inheritance; or whatever way acquired, lawfully or unlawfully; all his revenues and riches, the increase of his substance and fields, are all used to sinful purposes, to pride, luxury, and wantonness; and so tend to death, even death eternal, the just wages of sin.

Ver. 17. *He is in the way of life, &c.*] Of eternal life, which is truly, properly, and by way of eminency, *life*, Matt. xix. 17. and which is a life of glory; a life of perfection, of perfect holiness, knowledge, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the inconveniences of the present life, animal or spiritual; a life of pleasure, and which will last forever: the way to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, since by these the law is not fulfilled, nor justice satisfied; and therefore no justification of life by them, or what entitles to eternal life; it is sinful, dangerous, and a vain thing, to seek for eternal life in this way; Christ is the only true way to it; who, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has opened the new and living way; and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, way is made for all that believe in him to enter into eternal life: and such are in the way to it who are in Christ, secretly in election, openly in effectual vocation; when they are made new creatures, are quickened by the spirit and grace of Christ, and have that principle in them which is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; who have a sight of Christ, and come unto him by faith; who truly believe in him, with which eternal life is connected. Particularly he is in the way unto it *that keepeth instruction*; the instruction in righteousness which the Scriptures give, especially the Gospel part of them; which is an instruction into the mind and will of God about man's salvation; into the grace of God, as displayed therein; into the person and offices of Christ, and salvation by him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, through him. Now he to whom this instruction comes with power, and is the savour of life unto life; who receives it in the love of it; who *observeth* ⁱ it, as the word here used signifies; takes notice of and follows its direction, pointing out Christ as the way of salvation, instructing to look to him and believe in him, and be saved; and who retains and holds fast such instruction, and abides by it; and finds the word of the Gospel, and eats it, and is nourished by it unto everlasting life; he is most assuredly in the way of it. *But he that refuseth reproof erreth*; that is, from the way of life. He that rejects the counsel and advice, the admonitions and reproofs, given in the word of God, by the ministers of it; or by parents and masters, friends or relations, that wish him well; he wanders far off from the way that leads to life, and goes into the paths of sin, and consequently is in the way of death. Some render it, *causeth to err* ^k; either others, as Aben Ezra; or both himself and others, as Jarchi: and then it may be understood of him *that forsaketh reproof* ^l, as it may be

^f אֲסוּר abscondent, Pagninus, Montanus; abscondunt, V. L. occultant, Michaelis.

^g מַחֲתָה מתעה faciens errare, Tigurine version; consternatio proliqua, Cocceius; terror, Vatablus, Michaelis.

^h מַחֲתָה consternatio, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ⁱ שׁוֹמֵר observat, Tigurine version; servat, Cocceius; observans, Schultens.

^k מַחֲתָה faciens errare, Montanus, Gejerus; seducens see, Tigurine version; errare facit, some in Vatablus; facit oberrare, Cocceius.

^l מַחֲתָה qui relinquit increpationem, Pagninus; deserens, Montanus, Schultens; derelinquit, Piscator; deserit, Cocceius.

rendered; that is, that declines giving reproof, when it lies in his way, and is his duty to do it. Aben Ezra reads this clause in connexion with the former, as said of one and the same person, "he is in the way of life" that keepeth instruction, and forsakes or rejects the "reproof of him that causeth to err."

Ver. 18. *He that hideth hatred with lying lips, &c.*] Or he whose *lying lips hide hatred*, which is much the same; who pretends to be a friend, and outwardly behaves as one, but inwardly nourishes and cherishes hatred in his heart, which he covers and conceals, till he has a proper opportunity of shewing it; as Absalom to Amnon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ; see ch. xxvi. 24—26. Or, *he that hideth hatred is a man of lying lips*^m; he is a liar, as the person next described is a fool. *And he that uttereth slander is a fool*; that brings it out by wholesale, and hides it not; who openly defames his neighbour, and in the most public manner; and with a multitude of words detracts from his good name, credit, and reputation, and loads him with calumny and reproach; such a man is a fool, a very wicked man: yea, not only the public slanderer, but the secret dissembler, who thinks himself a cunning man because he hides himself; each of these is a fool, the one as well as the other. Gerson thinks there is a comparison made between the dissembler and the slanderer; the one being a liar, and the other a fool; and that the former is more abominable and pernicious than the latter.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, &c.*] Where a great deal is said, without care and forethought, there will not only be many weak things uttered, but much falsehood, and at least many idle things, which cannot be excused from sin; not but that much and long speaking may be to great profit and advantage, when it is with care and judgment, and founded on close meditation and study. Or, *sin ceaseth not*ⁿ; along with a torrent of words is a flow of sin, which ceases not as long as that continues: it is a saying of the Jewish Rabbins, "he that multiplies words brings on or brings unto sin." *But he that refraineth his lips is wise*; lays a restraint on his mouth, bridle his tongue; does not suffer his lips to utter any thing rashly and inconsiderately; is sparing of his words, and is careful of what he says, that it is true and proper to be spoken; and considers well the time when, place where, and persons to whom he speaks; and, all circumstances weighed, conducts accordingly: such a man is a wise, prudent, and understanding man; see ch. xvii. 27, 28.

Ver. 20. *The tongue of the just is as choice silver, &c.*] Which utters things precious, pure, pleasant, and profitable; things for worth and value as choice silver; the doctrines of the Gospel, the power of which he has felt upon his heart; the precious promises of it, which have been applied unto him; and the rich experience of grace he has been favoured with: things pure and incorrupt, like silver free from dross; as the doctrines of grace, fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scripture, free from the dross of error, without any

human mixture; consistent and all of a piece, and which tend to purity of heart and life; things the reverse of a corrupt communication, nothing filthy and unclean; a pure language, the language of Canaan; the language of repentance, faith, and love, of prayer and thankfulness: things which are grateful and acceptable, are with grace, and minister grace to the hearers; things profitable and edifying; for the righteous man's mouth speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment; and his lips feed many, as in the next verse; see Psal. xxxvii. 30. *The heart of the wicked is little worth*: good for nothing, as the Vulgate Latin version. The righteous man's tongue is better than the wicked man's heart; there is no good thing in his heart naturally; all manner of evil is in it, and comes out of it; no sin can be named but what is in his heart; all that is in it is sinful; the thoughts of it, and the imagination of his thoughts, are only evil, and that continually; the affections are inordinate, and set on sinful lusts and pleasures; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; the understanding is darkened with it, and the will is obstinate and perverse, and bent upon it: his heart is wicked, and exceedingly wicked; it is wickedness itself, very wickedness, desperately wicked, incurably so without the grace of God. Such therefore know not their hearts who say they have good hearts; and they are fools that trust in them: this shews the necessity of regeneration, and that powerful and efficacious grace is requisite to it.

Ver. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many, &c.*] Not their bodies; words are but wind, and will not feed; it is not enough to say to the distressed, *be ye warmed and filled*, and give nothing; unless this can be understood of obtaining food for others by their prayers, as Jarchi interprets it: but the souls of many; these the righteous feed, by communicating the spiritual knowledge and understanding of divine things they are partakers of; by setting before them the bread of life, the honey and milk of the Gospel, they have under their tongue; and by the good counsel and advice, comforts and admonitions, they give them; see Jer. iii. 15. Cant. iv. 11. *But fools die for want of wisdom*: not a corporeal death, which is common to men of every rank and quality; wise men die even as fools; but they continue under the power of a spiritual death, for want of enlightening and quickening grace, and so die an eternal death: not for want of natural wisdom, which they may have a greater share of than those who live spiritually and eternally; but for want of spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the knowledge of Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him, and the knowledge of God in Christ; and not always for the want of the means of such wisdom and knowledge; as the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; and the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; but through the neglect and contempt of them: though sometimes men perish through want of the means of knowledge, and the neglect of those who should instruct them, Hos. iv. 6.

Ver. 22. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, &c.*] In the diligent use of means; see ver. 4. riches

^m Est vir laborum falsitatis, Piscator, vel fallacium, Gejerus.

ⁿ לא יחדל לא non cessabit, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; non cessat, Piscator.

are from the Lord, and should be acknowledged as such, and not attributed to the industry, diligence, sagacity, and merit of men; but should be looked upon as had through the blessing of the Lord upon the labours of men; and when they come this way they come as a blessing, and with one: it may be understood of being made rich in a spiritual sense; it is the blessing, good will, and favour of God, that makes men rich in Christ; that bestows upon them his unsearchable riches; that enriches them with all spiritual blessings in him; that makes them rich in faith and in good works, and with the riches of grace and of glory. *And he addeth no sorrow with it*; no sorrow goes along with the blessing, but what is a blessing itself, as one observes; riches enjoyed through the blessing of God are not attended with that sorrow in getting, keeping, and losing them, as the riches of wicked men unlawfully gotten are; see 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. for as the good man comes by them easily, without any anxious care and sinful solicitude, he seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are added to him, over and above, without much thought about them, or expectation of them, Matt vi. 33. so it is with great delight, pleasure, and cheerfulness, he enjoys them, and readily communicates them to others; whilst the wicked man is full of anxiety, distress, and sorrow; see Eccl. v. 12, 13, 18. and vi. 2. This is eminently true of spiritual riches; there is no sorrow attending them; the fruit and effect of them are peace, joy, and comfort.

Ver. 23. *It is as sport to a fool to do mischief, &c.*] To do any injury to the persons and properties of men; which shews a most wicked and malicious spirit, a very depraved nature indeed: or rather to *commit sin* of any sort, which he has devised in his own heart; it is *as a laughing* ^p, as the words may be rendered; it is a laughing matter to him, he commits sin, and, when he has done it, laughs at it; instead of being ashamed of it, and humbled for it, he makes a mock at it, and a jest of it, as well as of all religion, and of the reproofs and admonitions of good men. Sin is pastime, he takes as much delight and pleasure in it as men do in their sports, and commits it as openly and freely; yea, not only takes pleasure in doing it himself, but in them that do it; see Prov. xiv. 9. Rom. i. 32. *But a man of understanding hath wisdom*; to avoid sin, and not to do it, which is true wisdom, Job xxviii. 28. for he has, as it may be rendered, from the use of the word in the Arabic language ^q, a *bridle or restraint* upon him, that he cannot do mischief and delight in it, as the fool does: or *so is wisdom to a man of understanding* ^r; that is, to do it; as it is a pleasure to a fool to commit sin, so it is a delight to an understanding man to do that which is wise and good; it is *meat and drink* to do the will of God; he takes as much pleasure in it as men can do in their sports and pastimes; he has a truer pleasure and a better relish than they have; he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and Wisdom's ways, or the ways of Christ, are pleasant-

ness to him; he runs the ways of his commandments with great alacrity and cheerfulness.

Ver. 24. *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him, &c.*] What he dreads in his own mind will be his unhappy case, sooner or later it comes upon him; his fear of distresses, calamities, and judgments in this life, and of eternal wrath and vengeance hereafter; for the most profligate and abandoned wretches, the greatest atheists, who endeavour to work themselves up to a disbelief of a God and a future state, have at times their frights and fears about these things; and as are their fears of God, so will his wrath be, Psal. xc. 11. Jarchi illustrates this in the instance of the builders of Babel, who were afraid of being scattered upon the face of the earth, which thing feared came upon them through and for their building of the tower; and so it sometimes is, that the very thing which men fear comes upon them by the means which they take to prevent it; so the Jews were afraid that if their people believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Romans would come and seize their city and nation, and therefore endeavoured to persuade them to reject him; for which rejection of him the thing they feared came upon them. *But the desire of the righteous shall be granted; or he shall give* ^s; that is, God shall give it; who has it in his hands or power to give it, as Jarchi's note is: what a righteous man desires from right principles, and with right views; what is for his own good and the glory of God; what he asks in faith, and with submission to the divine will, and is according to it, is sooner or later, in God's own time and way, granted unto him: particularly his desires after righteousness; after the righteousness of Christ, and to be found alone in that, living and dying; after holiness of heart and life, that he might be cleansed and kept from sin, and preserved to the coming of Christ; after more grace, an increase of it, and fresh supplies from Christ; after more communion with God and Christ, and conformity to them; after glory and happiness, and a being with them to all eternity. Some understand this of the righteous man's desire upon the wicked; that his fear might come upon him, and the glory of divine justice appear in his swift and sudden destruction; as expressed in the following verse; so Aben Ezra.

Ver. 25. *As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more, &c.*] The wicked themselves are like a whirlwind, noisy, boisterous, and blustering; such is the man of sin, who speaks like a dragon, breathing out slaughter and threatening against the saints; and so are his followers, fierce and heady, and like a whirlwind, pernicious and destructive, bearing down, carrying away, and destroying all before it; so the locusts of the bottomless pit, under their king Abaddon, or Apollyon, the destroyer; and all tyrannical persecutors, who are as the boar out of the forest, and the wild beast of the field: and these *pass away* like a whirlwind, swiftly, suddenly, and at once; now they are seen in great power and authority, and anon they are not any more, Jer. iv. 13. Psal. xxxvii. 35, 36, as the whirlwind, which

^o עשות *facere scelus*, Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceus, Michaelis; *perpetrare scelus*, Piscator; *patrare facinus*, Schultens.

^p כִּשְׂחֹן *veluti risus*, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^q Vid. Schultens de Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 216.

^r So some in Gejerus.

^s דָּבַת *dabit*, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; *justis dat quod cupiunt*, Tigurine version; *dabit Deus*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; *dat Deus*, Mercerus, Gejerus.

expectation, either of riches, and honour, and pleasure in this world, or of a long life in it; or of happiness in the other, and of escaping the wrath of God, and the vengeance of eternal fire; all which, being grounded on a wrong bottom, shall be frustrated; see Job viii. 13. and xi. 20. and xxvii. 8.

Ver. 29. *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, &c.*] Who are upright in heart and life; who have the uprightness or righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and right spirits renewed in them; in consequence of which they walk uprightly, ver. 9. To these *the way of the Lord is strength*; both the way which he himself takes, and the way which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in: the way in which he walks in providence towards them is the strength of them; he is their shade on their right hand; he shews himself strong on their behalf; he is their fortress and strong tower, as the God of providence, even a wall of fire round about them: and the way he takes in the discoveries of his love; in the communications of his grace; in the application of precious promises; by granting the influences of his spirit; and by leading to his son, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself and them, is very strengthening unto them: so likewise the way in which he leads his people, the way of his word and ordinances; which, as it is pleasant, so strengthening; the more they walk in them, the stronger they are; they go from strength to strength, they grow stronger and stronger by them; whilst they are waiting on the Lord in them, their spiritual strength is renewed: moreover, walking in the way of the Lord gives them spirit and courage, and makes them bold and intrepid; so that they fear no enemy, nor any dangers and difficulties, but go on their way cheerfully and pleasantly. *But destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity*; not to all that do iniquity, for no man lives without sin; but to those who give up themselves to it, make a trade of it; whose course of life is sinful, and do nothing else but sin; this their way leads to ruin; destruction and misery are now in all their ways, and will be the certain issue of them, even destruction of both soul and body; which will be swift and sudden, come upon them before they are aware, and will be everlasting; it will continue for ever, and there will be no deliverance from it. The word * signifies terror and consternation; and such seize on a wicked man at death, to whom death is the king of terrors; and which will still more strongly possess him when in hell he lifts up his eyes; and also at the day of judgment, when he shall see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, sitting on a fiery throne, and shall hear him pronounce him cursed. The clause may be rendered, *but the way of the Lord is terror to the workers of iniquity*; the way of the Lord in his works of providence, in which he oftentimes does terrible things in righteousness; and he is very terrible to men in his judgments here, and will be more so in his awful procedure at the last judgment.

Ver. 30. *The righteous shall never be removed, &c.*] They may be removed from place to place in this world, through the persecutions of their enemies, or

through one providence or another, as they often are; they may be removed from a state of outward prosperity to a state of adversity, as Job was; they may be removed from spiritual and comfortable frames of soul to carnal or uncomfortable ones; for good frames are very precarious and uncertain things; and they will be removed out of this world into another; here they have no continuing city: but they shall never be removed from the love of God, nothing can separate them from that; they are set as a seal on his heart, and are engraven on the palms of his hands, and there is no removing them from thence; they may be staggered about their interest in the love of God; they may be without the manifestations and discoveries of it to their souls; they may be under the hidings of God's face; they may be at a distance from his house and ordinances, or may not enjoy the presence of God in them for a time; yet not separated from his affections; they shall never be removed out of the hands of Christ, into which they are put for security, and out of which none can pluck them, men or devils; how should they, since they are in those hands that made the heavens and the earth, support all in being, and hold the reins of government? Was it possible they could be removed from hence, it would impeach the wisdom of God, who has put them there; argue weakness in Christ, and suppose danger to them. Nor can they be removed out of the family of God; sons of God abide in his house for ever; they are no more foreigners and strangers; once children, no more servants; they may be corrected and chastised, yet be children; they may judge themselves unworthy of the relation, and be ready to conclude that their spots are not the spots of God's children, and fear they are none of them, and yet the relation continues: nor will they ever be removed from their state of justification, by which they are denominated righteous, into a state of condemnation; for full satisfaction is given to law and justice for them; their justification is complete, it is from all sin; the righteousness by which they are justified is everlasting, and even their faith which receives it shall never fail; to which may be added, that they are secured from wrath to come, and entitled to eternal life. In a word, they are on the sure foundation of electing grace; they are in the immovable covenant of grace; they are on the Rock of ages, Christ Jesus; all the divine Persons and perfections are on their side; they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; see Psal. lv. 22. and ccxv. 1, 2. *But the wicked shall not inhabit the earth*; but a very little while, as Gerson observes; and the time of their abode on earth is so short, as scarce to be called an habitation of it. Moreover, they shall not inhabit the earth the righteous will, even the new earth, which none but righteous persons shall inhabit, 2 Pet. iii. 13. see Psal. xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29.

Ver. 31. *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom, &c.*] As the earth brings forth its increase, and a tree brings forth its fruit; hence speech is called the fruit of the lips; wisdom is good fruit; a good man is comparable to the fruitful earth, and to a good tree; whose mouth brings forth wise things in abundance, which are

* מוֹחָה פּוֹרֵר, V. L. Paganus, Tigurine version, Mercurus, Gejerus; consternatio, Vatablus, Cocceus, Michaelis.

† So Mercurus, Gejerus.

very pleasant and profitable; not worldly wisdom, much less devilish; not merely natural wisdom, but spiritual and evangelical; see Psal. xxxvii. 30. *But the froward tongue shall be cut out*; or *cut down*²; as an unprofitable tree, which brings forth nothing but perverse things; things contrary to God and good men, to truth and right reason, to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ. Such a *tongue of perversities*³, as it may be rendered, that brings forth blasphemies against God, his tabernacle and his saints, as the tongue of antichrist does, deserves to be cut out, as the tongue of a blasphemer.

Ver. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, &c.*] To God and man; what is well-pleasing to God, and what ministers grace to the hearers, or

what is grateful: and such things they will deliver out; they are used and accustomed to them; not only the righteous know in their judgment what is acceptable, but they use themselves to say those things; they not only know them in theory, but practise them: some men know what is acceptable, but their lips do not know it; they are not used to it, but the contrary. *But the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness*; or perverse things, as before. Or, *the mouth of the wicked knoweth frowardness*^b; or perverse things; or is used only to speak froward things; things contrary to truth and righteousness, and which they know to be so; their mouth speaks things contrary to their hearts; their hearts and mouths do not agree, when they both flatter and lie.

C H A P. XI.

Ver. 1. *A FALSE balance is abomination to the Lord, &c.*] Under which are included all false weights and measures, and all fraudulent practices in commerce and dealing; which are forbidden by the Lord, and are abominable to him, as being injurious to the estates and properties of men: and more especially must be abominable in professors of religion, as being contrary to the grace of God; for though there may be common honesty where there is not the grace of God, yet there cannot be the true grace of God where there is not honesty; for the grace of God teaches to deny all such worldly lusts. *But a just weight is his delight*; or a *perfect stone*^c; the ancient practice being to make use of stones for weights. Now to give just weight, and also just measure, and to do justly in all civil dealings with men, is what God requires, and is well-pleasing in his sight^d; see Lev. xix. 35, 36. This may be understood of balances and weights in religious affairs; the balance of the sanctuary is the word of God, with which all doctrines are to be weighed, and, if found wanting, they are to be rejected; this is agreeable to the will of God: false balances are abominable to him; such as carnal reason, vain philosophy, and the traditions of men, used by antichrist and his followers; the harlot, described in some preceding chapters, opposed to Wisdom or Christ, who directs to the search of the Scriptures, and the use of them to try doctrines by, John v. 39. see Acts xvii. 11. 1 John iv. 1.

Ver. 2. *When pride cometh, then cometh shame, &c.*] The one follows the other, or rather keep pace together; as soon as one comes, the other comes; as in the case of the angels that sinned, Adam and Eve, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others; and will be the case of the Romish antichrist, who, whilst vaunting and priding himself in his glory and grandeur, will fall into shame, disgrace, and destruction, Rev. xviii. 7, 8. *But with the lowly is wisdom*; or wisdom shall come, as Jarchi: the consequence of which is honour

and glory; as with Christ, who is meek and lowly, are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; so with his humble followers, who reckon themselves the least of saints, and chief of sinners, and own that it is by the grace of God they are what they are, is true wisdom; they are wise unto salvation, and in the way to honour and glory; such humble souls shall be exalted, Luke xiv. 11.

Ver. 3. *The integrity of the upright shall guide them, &c.*] The spirit of God is the best guide of an upright man; he leads into all truth, and unto the land of uprightness, and continues to be a guide, even unto death; and it is right to walk after him, and not after the flesh: and besides him, the upright man has the word of God as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths, which he does well to take heed to; and next to that is the sincerity and uprightness of his heart, which will not suffer him, knowingly and willingly, to go aside into crooked paths, or to do amiss: integrity of heart and innocency of hand go together; such are the followers of the Lamb, as described Rev. xiv. 4, 5. see Psal. xxv. 21. *But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them*; the perverse ways, words, and actions of such as transgress the law of God, deal treacherously with God and men, as the word^e signifies, shall be their ruin: the perverse doctrines and worship of the man of sin, and his followers, shall bring destruction upon them, 2 Thess. ii. 4, 8, 12. The word for *perverseness* is only used here and in ch. xv. 4. and there plainly signifies the perverseness of the tongue or speech, and so may have respect to corrupt doctrine.

Ver. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath, &c.*] When God takes away the soul, and summons to judgment, and brings to it; and as riches profited not Rome Pagan, in the day of the Lamb's wrath upon it; so neither will they profit Rome Papal, when it will come in remembrance before God, to give it the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; see Rev. vi. 15—17. and xviii. 15—17. *But righteousness deliver-*

^a חכרת succidetur, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
^b Μετρα ουνομα λισον τραπεζοταμ, Montanus, Janius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
^c Novit tantum perversa, Michaelis.

^d שלמה lapid perfectus, Montanus, Gejerus.
^e Μετρα ουνομα λισον τραπεζοταμ, &c. Phocylid. Poem. Admon. v. 12, 13.
^f פרידורום peridororum, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator; peridorum, Cocceius, Michaelis.

eth from death; from the curse of a corporeal death; from the power of a spiritual one; and from dying the second or an eternal one; see the note on ch. x. 2. the Targum is, "from an evil death."

Ver. 5. *The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, &c.*] Or *make it plain*^f; that is, the righteousness of those who are perfect in Christ, complete in him, perfectly justified by his righteousness; that righteousness makes their way plain; it is the direct way, the highway, the pathway to eternal life and happiness; see ch. xii. 28. *But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness*; or, *in his wickedness*^g: in his own wicked way, which he has chosen and delights to walk in; he shall stumble therein, and fall into ruin and destruction, into hell and damnation: or by means or because of it he will fall; his wickedness will be the cause of his fall; as it will be the cause of the fall of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 2, 5.

Ver. 6. *The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, &c.*] From death, as in ver. 4. and from falling by sin, totally and finally; or into it, so as to perish eternally; as well as it shall deliver those out of Babylon, who are the Lord's people, that will be found therein when that is about to fall; see Rev. xviii. 4. *But transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness*; in the very act of sin, and be punished for it; taken in it as in a net, and which they have spread for others, or as in a pit, which they have dug for others; taken as wild beasts are taken, to be destroyed; and that in the very midst of their wickedness, when fighting against God and the Lamb, as the beast and false prophet will, Rev. xix. 20.

Ver. 7. *When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, &c.*] His expectation of a longer life, of getting more riches, attaining to more honour, enjoying more pleasure here, and of having happiness hereafter, and of being delivered from wrath to come; he will then find, when he comes to die, that his expectations in this world are vain, and those which respect happiness in another world are ill-grounded; or when he dies, the expectation of others that depended on him, trusted in him, and looked for great things from him, will then be at an end. *And the hope of unjust men perisheth*; which is as the giving up of the ghost, and expires when a man does; it is only in this life, or however it ceases when that does; he has no hope in his death, as the righteous man has; if he does not live without hope in the world, he has none when he goes out of it, or that will be of any use unto him: moreover, the hope of unjust men to oppress and injure others ceases when they die, Job iii. 17. The word rendered *unjust men* is by some^h understood of strength, substance, riches; and so the meaning may be, that such a hope that is placed in strength and riches perishes at death. Jarchi interprets it of children, which are a man's substance; as if the sense was, that the hope of the children of such persons is then cut off.

Ver. 8. *The righteous is delivered out of trouble,*

^f תישר rectam facit, Cocceius; complanat viam ejus, Schultens.
^g בְּרִשְׁוֹתָיו in impietate sua, Tigurine version, Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis; improbitate sua, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; in injustitia sua, Cocceius; in improbitate sua turbulenta, Schultens.

^h אֲוִיֹתָם expectatio virium, Gejerus; spes in viribus col-

&c.] One after another he comes into, if not in this life, yet at death; which is to him a perfect deliverance out of all tribulation; see Rev. vii. 14. or when the wicked die, as in the preceding verse, then the righteous are delivered from the trouble they gave them, or designed to give them; though it seems rather to design deliverance from trouble in the first sense, since it follows, *and the wicked cometh in his stead*; as Haman did in the room of Mordecai, and was hanged upon the gallows the other was delivered from, and he had prepared for him; and as Daniel was delivered from the lion's den, and his enemies thrown into it; and as in the latter day the righteous will be delivered from all their persecutors, and antichrist will be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and then they that destroyed the earth shall be destroyed themselves, Rev. xi. 18.

Ver. 9. *An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour, &c.*] Deceives him with his flatteries and lies, and draws him into destructive schemes and practices; or *corrupts* him, as the wordⁱ signifies, and as the Targum renders it, with false doctrines; so, with fair words and good speeches, such who lie in wait to deceive impose upon the simple and credulous; and false teachers, with their damnable heresies, bring swift destruction on men; and particularly antichrist and his emissaries, through speaking lies in hypocrisy, corrupt and destroy many, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. *But through knowledge shall the just be delivered*; from the hypocrite and deceitful worker, and from being corrupted and destroyed by the words of his mouth: Jarchi says, through the knowledge of the law, which warns against him; but rather through the knowledge of the Gospel, which the just man has; for as by this such escape the pollutions of the world, so likewise they are delivered, are kept and secured, from the error of the wicked: through a man's knowledge of himself, of his descent from Adam, of the corruption of his nature, of the plague of his heart, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; of his lost and undone state; of his impotency to that which is good, of his incapacity to fulfil the law, and atone for sin; and of the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; he is delivered and preserved from giving into the notions of the purity of human nature, the power of free will, and the doctrine of justification by works: through his knowledge of the person of Christ; of his offices and relations; of him as a Saviour; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the completeness of his sacrifice; and through the knowledge of God in Christ, and of the Spirit and of his operations of grace, as well as of the sacred Scriptures in general; he is safe from being carried away with any errors concerning any of the divine Persons, particularly concerning the deity, sonship, and satisfaction of Christ; in short, as ignorance is the mother of devotion, superstition, and error, in the church of Rome, spiritual experimental knowledge

locata, Michaelis; spes confidentium in divitiis, Munster; so some in Vatablus; divitiarum, Pagninus, Baynus; roborum, Montanus, Amama.

ⁱ יִשְׁחָת׃ corrupet, Schultens; so Pagninus, Montanus; corrupit, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.

of the above things is the best preservative from all errors and heresies which corrupt and destroy the souls of men, to be found in that apostate church, or elsewhere.

Ver. 10. *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth, &c.*] As it always does, even in the worst of times; in times of public calamity and distress, and when enemies rise up on all hands; it is well with them in life, in death, and to all eternity; see Isa. iii. 10. but there are particular times when it goes well with them, which is matter of joy to others; when they prosper in the world, increase in riches and honour, and are advanced to places of authority and trust; just magistrates in a city or commonwealth are a blessing, and so cause joy; see ch. xxix. 2. and when it goes well with them in spiritual things, they increase in gifts and grace, the humble hear of it and are glad; the city or church of God, the community of the saints, rejoice: and as it went well with them in Constantine's time, when Paganism was destroyed and persecution ceased; and at the time of the reformation, when the pure doctrines of the Gospel were revived, which were both times of joy to the city of God; so in the latter day, when the Lord's people will be righteous, the church will be the joy of many generations; and when the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the most High, and the kingdoms of the world become the Lord's and his Christ's, there will be great voices in heaven, rejoicings in the church, and a new song sung, Isa. lx. 21, 15. Rev. xi. 15, 17. and xiv. 3, 4. *And when the wicked perish, there is shouting:* as there will be great rejoicings, shoutings, and hallelujahs, when Babylon is fallen, Rev. xviii. 20, 21. and xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 11. *By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, &c.*] That is, either by the blessings with which they are blessed; and these are either temporal or spiritual: when good men are blessed with temporal blessings, the place where they live is the better for it; and especially the poor, for they do not eat their morsel alone; and where there are many of these, and in prosperous circumstances, it is the exaltation and glory of a city taken in a literal sense; and which is the more blessed for their sakes, as well as they themselves are a blessing to it: and as the upright are blessed with spiritual blessings, with blessings indeed, with the gifts and graces of the spirit of God; when they are fruitful and flourishing in grace, the city or church of God is in an exalted state: or rather this is to be understood of the blessings with which the upright bless others; and may be interpreted of the blessed deeds or good works which they do, and which are profitable to men; or of their blessed counsel and advice which they give on emergent occasions, and which proves salutary, and for the good of the city; or rather for their blessed prayers which they put up for the peace and prosperity of it, and which succeed. So by the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, or by the blessed doctrines of his apostles, those upright and sincere ministers of the word, the city of the living God was greatly exalted in their times; as it also was in the times of

Constantine, and at the reformation; and this now is a reason why the city rejoices at its going well with the righteous, whether in temporals or spirituals. So Abu Ezra thinks the words have a connexion with the former. *But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked:* by the corrupt communication which proceeds out of their mouths; by their obscene and filthy talk the inhabitants of a place are corrupted; evil communications corrupt good manners; by their swearing and cursing, their oaths and imprecations, by their lying and perjury, they bring the judgments of God upon a city, to the overthrow of it. So by false doctrines, as the faith of particular persons is subverted, so whole cities, or visible congregated churches, have been corrupted and destroyed, as with the Ariau heresy and others.

Ver. 12. *He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour, &c.*] Not only in his heart, but by giving him opprobrious language; he speaks contemptibly of him, either because he thinks he is wiser than his neighbour, and therefore calls him fool at every turn; as those who are most destitute of wisdom conceit they have the largest share of it, and despise others; or else because he is richer than his neighbour, as the poor is generally despised by the rich; or because he fancies he is holier than he, as the Pharisee who trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others: or a man *that wants a heart^k*, as it may be rendered; that wants a good one, or wants grace in his heart; he despises the counsel and advice, the admonitions and instructions, which his neighbour gives him for his good. *But a man of understanding holdeth his peace:* and will not despise his neighbour, or give him ill language, because he is not so wise, or so rich, or so righteous as he; if he cannot speak any good of him, he will not speak evil of him; or he holds his peace, is silent, and will not answer the man void of wisdom, that despises and reproaches him; he will not render railing for railing; when he is reviled he will revile not again; and by so doing he shews himself to be a man of understanding, or of intellects; a wise and prudent man.

Ver. 13. *A talebearer revealeth secrets, &c.*] The Arabic version adds, in the congregation, openly and publicly; that goes about with tales from place to place, who is like a walking merchant or pedlar, as the word ¹ signifies; who takes up his wares at one place, and exposes them to sale, and vends them at another; so a talebearer, he goes from house to house, and picks up tales at one place and carries them to another and tells them; and as by his going about he gets into the secrets of persons and families, or is intrusted with them, his character not being known, he reveals them to others, and so breaks the trust committed to him; see 1 Tim. v. 13. The Targum and Syriac version render it *an accuser*; and the same name is given to the devil in the New Testament, and indeed such a man is no better. *But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter;* that is *faithful* to his friend, that trusts him with his secrets, of which there are but few; he *conceals the matter* he is intrusted with;

^k קרען לב *carens corde, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; destitutus est corde, Schultens.*

¹ קוּלָךְ רַבִּי *obambulat ut mercator, Tigurine version; qui incedit undinatim, Schultens.*

the things, as the Septuagint version; the secrets which are imparted to him; or the word ^m that he has heard, and has been spoken to him in privacy, and in strict friendship: or he covers the matter ⁿ or thing; he hides the infirmities of his friend and neighbour, and does not expose them as the talebearer does; see 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Ver. 14. *Where no counsel is the people fall, &c.*] Where there is no wise and prudent, sound and good counsel, as the word signifies; where that is not, there had as good be none, or better; a people, a kingdom, a commonwealth, nation, or city, fall into ruin and destruction, or into schemes which bring them to it; they are like a ship without a pilot, or without a helm, or one to steer it: the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, "where there is no governor;" and the Arabic version, "they that have no providence (or forecast) fall as a leaf falls;" and so the Septuagint version, "they that have no government fall as leaves," as leaves fall in autumn; and the word signifies the helm of government ^o, in allusion to a ship. *But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety;* because what one may miss another may hit upon; and, if they agree in their advice, it may be the more depended upon; and, if not, yet their different sentiments being compared together, and the reasons of them, a person may the better judge which is best to follow, and what is fit to be done: it may be rendered, *in the greatness or largeness of a counsellor ^p*, for the word is in the singular number; that is, in the large capacity or endowments of a counsellor; in one that is abundantly qualified for a counsellor; whose abilities are not to be questioned; in the advice of such an one a man may safely confide; and who that answers to this character as Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counsellor? in whose counsel we may rest with the greatest safety; and which may be found in his word, in the Scriptures, which David says should be the men of his counsel, Psal. cxix. 24. see Isa. ix. 6. and xxviii. 29.

Ver. 15. *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, &c.*] Or *in breaking shall be broken ^q*, ruined and undone; he engaging or becoming a bondsman for one whose circumstances he knew not; and these being bad bring a load upon him, such an heavy debt as crushes him to pieces. Mr. Henry observes that our Lord Jesus Christ became a surety for us when we were strangers, and he smarted for it, he was bruised and wounded for our sins; but then he knew our circumstances, and what the consequence would be, and became a surety on purpose to pay the whole debt and set us free; which he was capable of doing without being broken or becoming a bankrupt himself; for he was not broken, nor did he fail, Isa. xlii. 4. Jarchi's note is, "the wicked shall be broken, to whose heart ^r idolatry is sweet." *And he that hateth suretyship is sure;* or those *that strike ^s*, that is, with the hand,

used in suretyship; see ch. vi. 1. such an one is safe from coming into trouble by such means. The Targum is, "and hates those that place their hope in God."

Ver. 16. *A gracious woman retaineth honour, &c.*] Or *a woman of grace ^t*; one that has the grace of God in her heart, and is of a virtuous conversation, and by both amiable and lovely to others; as she receives honour or glory from them, which she deserves, so she retains the same. The Targum is, "a gracious woman divides glory;" that is, between herself and her husband; to which the Arabic version agrees, which renders it, "a gracious woman raises up glory to her husband." Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of Israel; his note is, "the congregation of Israel continually draws nigh to the glory of God and his law;" and it may be applied to the true church of Christ, which seeks the glory of Christ, and retains the glory of Gospel doctrines, of Gospel ordinances, of Gospel discipline, and of Gospel conversation, when the harlot, the apostate church, has lost all honour of these things. *And strong men retain riches;* some render it, *as strong men retain riches ^u*; as they, when they have got them into their possession, keep them, it being in the power of their hands so to do, against all that would take them from them; so a gracious woman is as tenacious of her honour for chastity, modesty, wisdom, and conduct: or by those *strong men, or terrible and violent ones, as the word ^v* signifies, may be meant the beast of Rome and his followers, cruel persecutors; whose principal care it is to amass the riches and wealth of others, which, when they have got, they hold fast.

Ver. 17. *The merciful man doeth good to his own soul, &c.*] Or *to himself;* a man of mercy or grace, a liberal bountiful man, he comfortably enjoys what God has given him, Eccl. v. 18. and he does good to others with it, and thereby does good to himself also; as well as he is solicitous in a spiritual sense for the good and welfare of his immortal soul. *But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh;* a sordid avaricious man withholds from himself that which is meet, will not allow himself the necessaries of life, nor will he provide that which is fit and convenient for his family; he hides himself from his own flesh, and will not communicate to the wants of his nearest friends and relations, and shuts up his bowels of compassion against his own brother; all which may be called a troubling his own flesh; see Isa. lviii. 7. R. Levi Ben Gersom interprets this of such who place religion in afflicting and macerating the body by fasting, which the law does not require; and it may fitly be applied to the Papists, who do this by penances and fastings, and whippings and scourgings; and which the apostle calls a neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh, Col. ii. 23.

Ver. 18. *The wicked worketh a deceitful work, &c.*] Such a wicked man as before described; that neither

^m דבר verbum, Paginus, Montanus, Mercerus, Baynus.

ⁿ דבר מטסה tegit rem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; velat negotium, Schultens.

^o חתבלות gubernationes, Schultens.

^p דבר יועץ in amplitudine consiliorum, Junius & Tremellius.

^q דבר יועץ frangendo frangetur, Michaelis; so Paginus and others.

^r חוקקים complodentes, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceus; defigentes, Mercerus.

^s אשת חן mulier gratie, Montanus, Baynus, Gejerus, Michaelis; que gratia pradita est, Tigurine version; uxor gratia pollens, Schultens.

^t ו ut, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.

^u חזקים violenti, Piscator, Schultens; formidabiles, Gejerus.

enjoys the good things of life he has, nor suffers others to enjoy them; and all to accumulate riches, which are deceitful and perishing; and who abstains from meats, which God has created for use, under a pretence of religion, and so deceives his own soul; and indeed every sin which a wicked man commits is a deceitful work; it promises him that pleasure, or profit, or liberty, which it does not give him, and in the issue is the ruin of him; and so all false doctrines, propagated by deceitful workers, are deceitful works, by which they deceive the simple, and at last themselves; they *obtain a deceitful reward of their work*, as Gussetius * renders it. *But to him that soweth righteousness*; does acts of beneficence and liberality; see 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10. and all other good works, or works of righteousness, shall be *a sure reward*: according to what a man sows, and the manner in which he sows, so shall he reap, 2 Cor. ix. 6. Gal. vi. 8. or, *a reward of truth*; instead of being given up to believe a lie, he shall receive the love of the truth, and abide in it, which will bring him to eternal glory and happiness; he being chosen to it through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 10—13. and, instead of a deceitful reward, shall have a true, real, solid, and substantial one.

Ver. 19. *As righteousness tendeth to life, &c.*] Or, is *unto life*: not mere outward acts of moral righteousness; these may be done where there is no principle of spiritual life, and are no other than dead works, and will never bring to everlasting life; indeed the best righteousness of man's is no justification of life, nor can it entitle to it, nor is meritorious of it. Godliness, or true holiness, has the promise of this life and that to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. and so here in the Hebrew text it is, *unto lives* †, in the plural number. Internal grace, or powerful godliness, which is the new man that is created in righteousness, gives a meetness for everlasting life, and issues in it; particularly the righteousness of Christ, as that is a perfectly justifying one; it makes a man alive in a law-sense, and gives a title and claim to eternal life. *So he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death*; or, it is *to his own death*; it issues in that: not he that is overtaken in a fault, or falls into sin through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation, but such who eagerly follow after it and overtake it; who give up themselves unto it, weary themselves in committing it, draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-ropes; these often by their sins bring diseases upon them, which end in a corporeal death; or by means of which they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and are capitally punished; and, however, die the second death, or an eternal one, the just wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23.

Ver. 20. *They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord, &c.*] Such as are men of perverse dispositions and principles; that are contrary to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; who, like the Jews of old, please not God, and are contrary to all men, to all good men; as antichrist and his followers, these work abomination, and make

a lie, and speak lies in hypocrisy; are double-hearted men, hypocrites, that say one thing and mean another; and, under the pretence of religion, do the vilest things: such of all men are abominable in the sight of God, and will have their portion in the lake of fire, in the hottest place in hell, as hypocrites will, Rev. xxi. 8, 27. Matt. xxiv. 51. *But such as are upright in their way are his delight*; or, *in the way*; there being no need of a supplement: such as are in the way, Christ, and walk by faith in him, and in the paths of truth and holiness, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless, who are the *undefiled in the way*, as in Psal. cxix. 1. where the same words are used as here: or, are *perfect* in Christ; though not in faith, nor in their walk and conversation; yet are sincere, Israelites indeed, and walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. These the Lord takes delight and pleasure in; he is well-pleased with their persons in Christ; and in their walk and works, as they flow from right principles, and are directed to right ends, and being upright in all; see Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

Ver. 21. *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished, &c.*] Though they give the hand to one another, unite in their counsels, enter into combinations, confederacies, and strict alliances, and join all their force and strength together; or though with both hands, with all their might and main, endeavour to secure themselves, yet they shall not go unpunished. This may be exemplified in the kings of the earth, that will join each other, and gather their armies together, to make war against Christ; when they will be conquered, taken, and slain, Rev. xix. 19—21. Jarchi interprets it, *from hand to hand*, and explains it thus; from the hand of God into their hand shall come the reward of their work, and shall not go unpunished: to which may be added, even though there may be a succession of parents and children, and their substance may be handed down from the one to the other, yet at last just punishments will take place. To which is opposed, *but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered*; these are the seed of the church in all successive ages; the seed that are accounted of by the Lord for a generation; particularly the remnant of the woman's seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; against whom the dragon, the old serpent the devil, was wroth, and went forth to make war, in order utterly to destroy them; but they escaped his hands, were delivered from him, and preserved by the power and grace of God, as a seed to serve him, Rev. xii. 17.

Ver. 22. *As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, &c.*] The allusion seems to be to the ringing of swine, to prevent their rooting up the earth; which is usually done by putting an iron ring into their snout; which is much more proper and suitable than a gold ring, or a jewel set in gold, which is very unbecoming such a creature; and is soon had to the dunghill, or to some miry place, and there defiled. *So is a fair woman which is without discretion*; or, *has departed from taste*; from a taste of virtue and honour; lost all sense of modesty and chastity; forsaken her husband, and given

* Ebr. Comment. p. 692.
† כחיים לחיים ad vitas, Montanus.

‡ וסרת טעם Heb. recedens a gusta, Piscator; cujus recessit aspor, Schultens.

up herself to the embraces of others. As her beauty is fitly expressed by a *jewel of gold*, which is valuable and desirable, and, rightly placed and used, is ornamental; so she is properly represented by a swine, wallowing in the impurities of lust; to which her beauty was the snare, and whereby it is quickly sullied and lost. Jarchi applies this to a disciple of a wise man, or a scholar that departs from the good way, or from the law; which he explains by taste or sense: but it may be better applied to the scarlet whore, or apostate church of Rome; which has departed from Christ, once her professed husband; from the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; from all taste and savour of true religion; and even from common sense and right reason, as in the affair of transubstantiation, and other things; and may be fitly compared to a swine with a jewel of gold in its snout, being *decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls*; and yet *drunk with the blood of the saints, and martyrs of Jesus*; and wallowing in all the filth of fornication, of idolatry, and superstition; as well as in all manner of other sins and iniquities, Rev. xvii. 4—6.

Ver. 23. *The desire of the righteous is only good, &c.*] Or, *what is good*; only good is the object of it. His desire is to do good, and that only; though he does not always do what he would do: as he delights in the law of God, after the inward man; as he is a righteous, holy, and good man, and would be conformable thereunto, and serves it with his mind, will, and affections; his desires are to the Lord, and to the remembrance of his name; he desires his favour, the discoveries of his love, communion with him, and communications of grace from him; he desires all spiritual good things, and every thing that is good, for himself and others, and which he desires in submission to the will of God; and all things do work for and issue in his good. Good is what he is continually desirous of, wishing and praying for; and good is what he has eventually here and hereafter: though there may be many irregular and unlawful desires in him at times, and all things he has may not seem good; yet acting as a good man, his desires are only good, and there is nothing attends him but what is for his good. But *the expectation of the wicked is wrath*; what he is desirous of, wishing, and looking for, is wrath and vengeance upon all that displease him, and he is angry with; he desires no good to them, but evil; he desires and hopes for nothing but what is offensive to God, and will bring upon him his fierce wrath and sore displeasure; so that eventually nothing else will be the fruit and consequence of his expectation and hope; and some are so shockingly profane, and so dreadfully hardened, that they wait for hell, as Jarchi on the place observes; they look for damnation and expect it, and are easy about it.

Ver. 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, &c.*] That scattereth *his own*, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions add: that disperses his money here and there, among many poor

objects, plentifully and liberally; and his substance is so far from being lessened by such a conduct, that, by the blessing of God, it is increased more and more; or *become richer*, as the Vulgate Latin; see Psal. cxii. 9. So he that disperses and dispenses the word of God, and spreads the truths of the Gospel, and freely and fully preaches them, increases himself in spiritual knowledge and understanding. *And there is that withholdeth more than is meet*; or, *right or just*; by the laws of God and men; from himself, from his family, from his friends and relations, and from the poor of the church and of the world; and from the cause and interest of Christ, and what is necessary to support that, according to his ability. *But it tendeth to poverty, or want*: such a man is often brought to beggary; there is a moth and rottenness sent into his substance, which secretly consume it: so he that withholdeth any truth or doctrine, that keeps back any thing that may be profitable to the saints; this tends to the impoverishing of his soul, and the souls of them that attend on his ministry.

Ver. 25. *The liberal soul shall be made fat, &c.*] Or, *the soul of blessing*: that is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the soul which blesseth*; not that merely prays for a blessing upon others, and wishes them well, and gives them good words; but bestows blessings on them, gives good things unto them liberally, cheerfully, and plentifully; and so is a blessing to the poor, and receives a blessing from them again; as such also do from the Lord, by whom they are *made fat*; or are blessed with temporal and spiritual blessings; and are in thriving and flourishing circumstances, both in soul and body. So he that comes full fraught with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to others is enriched with it himself, and becomes more and more flourishing in gifts and grace. *And he that watereth shall be watered also himself*; he that largely communicateth to others, like a flowing fountain of water, shall have an abundance communicated to him again from God, the inexhaustible fountain of mercies. Watering the plants in Christ's vineyard is one part of the work of a Gospel minister; *I have planted, Apollos watered, &c.* 1 Cor. iii. 6—8. and such who do their work well are watered, rewarded, refreshed, and comforted of God, being largely taught and richly furnished for such service by him; so the Targum, "and he that teacheth, also he himself shall learn."

Ver. 26. *He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him, &c.*] That hoards it up for a better price, in hopes of a better market; and does not bring it out, and expose it to sale, when there is a scarcity of it; so the Targum adds, *in famine*; or, *in straits*, as the Syriac version; in a time of distress through famine: this will bring the curse of the poor upon him, who will imprecate the most dreadful things on him and his family. Jarchi interprets it of the law, and of withholding the teaching of it; but it may be better applied to the Gospel, and the withholding the mini-

² תַּנְתּוּמֹדוֹ אֵין טוֹב ² tantummodo bonum quid est, Michaelis; tantum bonum, Cocceius; nihil cupiant quod bonum non sit, Mercerus; tamen bonum quid, Gussetius, p. 39.

³ מִיֶּשֶׁר plus æquo, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; plus quam æquum est, Cocceius; præ quam rectum est, seu plus æquo, Michaelis.

⁴ לְמַחֲסוֹר ad egestatem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ad penuriam, Cocceius; ad rasam egestatem, Schultens.

⁵ בְּרִבְכָּה anima benedictionis, Montanus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; anima benedictionis dedita, Schultens.

stration of that, and so causing a famine, not of bread and of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; which is done by the Papists, by prohibiting Gospel ministers preaching the word; forbidding the people to read it in their own language; locking it up from them in a language they understand not; and so starve the souls of men, which brings upon them a curse. *But blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it; at a moderate price, so that the poor may be able to come at it; such will have their blessing; they will wish all happiness to them and their families, here and hereafter. Or, that breaks^d it; separates it from the heap, breaks and grinds it into flour, and then sells it: or imparts it freely; so the Septuagint version, that communicates: and the Arabic version, that gives; and may be fitly applied to a faithful minister of the Gospel, who breaks the bread of life, and freely and plentifully imparts it to the souls of men; and who has the hearty prayers and good wishes of the people to whom he ministers. The master of a family used to break the bread, as Christ often did.*

Ver. 27. *He that diligently seeketh good, &c.] Or early: who rises betimes in the morning, as the word^e signifies, and seeks both to do good, and to enjoy it all the day; who, in the first place, seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousness; who, in the morning of his youth, inquires after the best things; and diligently pursues what is for his own good and welfare, and that of others, and for the glory of God: procureth favour, both of God and men: or, seeketh favour^f; or that which is acceptable and well-pleasing unto God. *But he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him; that seeks to do hurt to others; that which he seeks to do to them shall come upon himself; see Psal. ix. 15. so antichrist, that leads into captivity, shall go into captivity; and that kills with the sword, shall be killed by it, Rev. xiii. 10.¹**

Ver. 28. *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, &c.]* As leaves in autumn, which are withered and dry. To trust in riches is to trust in uncertain things; things not to be depended on, being here to-day and gone to-morrow; it is like leaning upon a broken staff, which giving way, the person falls: and so the fall of Babylon will be, whilst she is trusting in and boasting of her riches and grandeur, Rev. xviii. 7, 8. *But the righteous shall flourish as a branch; that abides in the tree, is alive and green, full of leaves, and laden with fruit: so the righteous are as branches in Christ, and receive life and nourishment from him, and abide in him; and bring forth fruit and flourish, like palm-trees and cedars, in the house of the Lord, and grow in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; see Jer. xvii. 7, 8.*

Ver. 29. *He that troubleth his own house, &c.]* His family, his wife, and children, and servants; by being bitter to the one, and by provoking the others to wrath, and continually giving out menacing words to the rest; or through idleness, not providing for his family; or through an over-worldly spirit, pushing on business, and hurrying it on beyond measure; or through a nig-

gardly and avaricious temper, withholding meat and drink, and clothes convenient for them; see ch. xv. 27. or through profuseness and prodigality. Such an one shall inherit the wind; nothing but vanity and emptiness; he shall come to nothing, and get nothing; and what he does, he shall not keep, and on which he cannot live. *And the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart; he who has both got and lost his substance in a foolish way shall be so reduced as to become a servant to him who has pursued wise measures, both in getting and keeping what he has; and to whom perhaps the fool formerly stood in the relation of a master. Such a change will be with respect to antichrist and the saints, Dan. vii. 23—27.*

Ver. 30. *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, &c.]* Either the fruit which grows upon Christ, the tree of life, and which they receive from him; even all the blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, Rev. ii. 7. or the fruits which the righteous bring forth under the influence of divine grace; they are trees of righteousness, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by Christ, and have their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life. Aben Ezra interprets it, "the fruit of the righteous is as the fruit of the tree of life;" that is, lovely, beautiful, desirable, salutary, and issues in life. *And he that winneth souls is wise; antichrist trades in the souls of men, that is one part of his wares, Rev. xviii. 13. but his negotiations about them are to the loss, and not to the saving of them: whereas wise and faithful ministers of the word, such as are here described, use all prudent methods to gain and save the souls of men, 1 Cor. ix. 19—22. even their precious immortal souls, which are of more worth than a world, are the immediate production of God, made after his image, which by sin they come short of; and having sinned, are liable to eternal death; the redemption of which is precious; the charge of which Christ has taken, and therefore is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and which he commits to the care of his under-shepherds, who watch for them, as they that must give an account. To win them is to teach them, for the word^g has the signification of teaching or doctrine; see ch. iv. 2. the ministers of Christ are teachers, qualified and sent by him as such; and their business is to teach men their state by nature, how sinful, miserable, and helpless they are; and also Christ, and the way of life by him; that salvation is in him, and in no other; that justification is only by his righteousness, peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice: they also teach various other things; as the fear of God, faith in Christ, love to him, and obedience to all his commands. To win souls is to proselyte them and convert them to the true religion; to bring them into a love and liking of it, and to embrace it: the souls that Abraham got or made in Haran are supposed to be such; and the same with those trained or instructed in his house, whom he armed for the rescue of Lot, Gen. xii. 5. and xiv. 14. the former of which texts Jarchi compares with this, as explanative of it. The phrases of turning many to*

^d משביר frangentis, Montanus.

^e חזק qui manet, Vatablus; querens mane, Montanus; qui mane vestigat, Schultens; bene consurgit diluculo, V. L. so the Targum and Ben Melech.

^f יבקש רצון querit favorem, beneplacitum, Vatablus, Michaelis; benevolentiam, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^g לקק qui docet, Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

righteousness, done by the *wise*; and of *converting a sinner from the error of his way*, whereby a *soul is saved from death*, Dan. xii. 3. Jam. v. 20. are a proper comment on these words: which, moreover, may be rendered, *he that taketh souls*^b; as a fort or castle is taken, and which is sometimes expressed by *winning*: see 2 Chron. xxxii. 1. ch. xviii. 9. The soul of man is a hold, and a strong hold, of foul spirits; it is Satan's palace or castle, which he keeps and holds against Christ, but is won and taken by him; which is usually done by means of the word, and the ministry of it, which are made effectual to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Or the allusion is to the taking or catching of birds in a snare, or fishes in a net. The souls of men are got into the snare of the devil, and they are taken out from hence by breaking this snare; by which means they escape the hands of the fowler, Satan, and come into better hands: the old serpent laid a bait for our first parents, by which he gained his point, and that was the fruit of the forbidden tree; but the bait which wise men lay to catch souls is the fruit of the tree of life, mentioned in the former clause, the blessings of grace in Christ. Again, Christ's ministers are called *fishers* of men, and are said to *catch men*, Matt. iv. 19. Luke v. 10. which they do by casting and spreading the net of the Gospel; the Gospel is the net; the world is the sea into which it is cast; where natural men are in their element, as fishes in the sea: the casting of the net is the preaching of the Gospel; and by means of this souls are caught and gathered in to Christ and his churches, Matt. xiii. 47, 48. Once more, the words are by some rendered, *he that allureth souls*^c; which is done, not by the terrors of the law, but by the charming voice of the Gospel; by which souls are drawn to God and Christ, and brought among his people: and one that is an instrument of all this had need be *wise*, and so he appears to be; he that teacheth men the knowledge of divine and spiritual things had need to be as he is, as a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; he who is to be the instrument of converting sinners must have a

mouth and wisdom to address them in a proper manner; as he that wins a castle, or takes a fort, ought to have military skill as well as courage; and to cast a net well requires art as well as strength.

Ver. 31. *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, &c.*] Which Aben Ezra understands of the recompense of their good works. There is a reward for the righteous, and which they have now *in* keeping, though not *for* keeping, the commandments of God; they have the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come, and which is made good to them; they have every good thing now which is proper and convenient for them; and they shall be recompensed in the new earth, in which only righteous persons will dwell. But it seems better, with Jarchi, to interpret it of the recompense of their sins and transgressions; that is, of their chastisements and afflictions, with which they are chastised by their heavenly Father, when they sin against him; which are all in love and for their good; and which they have only here on earth, whilst they are in this world; they will be all over in another, when there will be no more sin, and no more chastisement for it, much less condemnation; see 1 Cor. xi. 32. *Much more the wicked and the sinner; who shall not only be punished on earth, as they often are, but in hell to all eternity.* The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render the whole thus; *if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Which words are used by the Apostle Peter, to shew, that if judgment or chastisement begin at the house of God, or with the righteous, that the end of the wicked must be very bad; which entirely agrees with the sense of this passage; see 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. a *behold* is prefixed to the whole, as a note, either of admiration, or rather of attention to what is sure and certain, and worthy of regard and consideration. The Targum is, "behold, the righteous are strengthened in the earth; but the wicked and the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth:" which seems to agree with Aben Ezra's sense of the words; see Psal. civ. 35.

C H A P. XII.

Ver. 1. *WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge, &c.*] That loves the instruction of Wisdom, or Christ, ch. iv. 13. and viii. 10. the means of instruction, the Scriptures, which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, and are written for our learning; the Gospel, which instructs into the person, office, and grace of Christ; the ministers of the word, who are so many instructors in Christ; and even the rod of afflictions, by which men are taught their duty, and the will of God: and these are to be loved; and he that loves them clearly shews that he loves knowledge; since the means of instruction, making use of them, and getting instruction by them, are attended with labour, trouble, and difficulty; which a man would not

choose, had he not a love unto and a desire after knowledge, and an increase of it; as the knowledge of God, of Christ, and of his truths. Aben Ezra inverts the words; "he that loves knowledge loves instruction;" but the sense is much the same. *But he that hateth reproof is brutish; or a beast*^k: as the man that is willing to be instructed, in order to gain knowledge, shews himself to be a wise and understanding man; so he that hates the reproof the word of God gives, or the ministers of it, or God by them, appears to be no better than a brute, than the horse or mule that want understanding: so the man of sin hates the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the ministers of it, and the reproofs and convictions they give of his idolatry, superstition, and

^b Capit, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; capit salutari doctrina, Michaelis.

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ⁱ Allicit, Drusius, Gejerus.

^k כִּנְיָ instar bruti indocilis est, Michaelis.

will-worship; nor does he care that his doctrines and practices should be brought to this test, or that the people should have knowledge of them; but keeps them from them, and sets up his own infallibility as the rule of judgment; and it is one character of his followers, that they *receive not the love of the truth*, 2 Thess. ii. 10. and both he and they are represented by a beast, Rev. xiii. 1, 11. and xvii. 3. and are more brutish than any man; see ch. v. 11, 12.

Ver. 2. *A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord, &c.]* One that is made so by the grace of God, for no man is so naturally; there is none good, nor does good, no, not one, until some good thing is put into him, or the good work of grace is begun in him. And such a man obtains favour or good will from the Lord; that is, as Gerson explains it, what he himself wills, for the will of God is his will; or rather the good will of God, his grace, and favour; fresh manifestations and discoveries of which he obtains and enjoys, not by merit, through any goodness of his own, or by means of his obedience; but he draws it out, as the word ¹ signifies, as out of a fountain, by prayer and supplication, and by fresh repeated acts of faith upon it; which may be said to be had and enjoyed, when it is remembered to him, he is encompassed with it, or it is shed abroad in his heart, or his heart is directed into it; and he also obtains and enjoys all the blessings of grace here, and glory hereafter, as springing from it. *But a man of wicked devices will he condemn;* whose thoughts, and the imaginations of his heart, are evil continually; who is always contriving mischief to others: such a man shall be so far from enjoying the favour of God, that he shall be pronounced guilty of death, and condemned to it; he shall be banished from the presence of the Lord, and be punished with everlasting destruction. As the man of sin is continually devising wicked things against God, against Christ, against his interest and people; he shall be condemned by the Lord, consumed with the breath of his mouth; go into perdition, and be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone: and this will be the portion of all his followers, that join with him in forming and executing his wicked devices.

Ver. 3. *A man shall not be established by wickedness, &c.]* Not any man, though he may be established in his wickedness, so as not to be rooted out of it; yet he cannot be so established by it as not to be removed from a prosperous state and condition into an unhappy and distressed one; he may seem to be in a firm and settled state of prosperity, amidst all his wickedness; be like a green bay-tree, spreading itself, and seemingly immovable, when on a sudden it is blown down and rooted up, and is no more: so Babylon will seem to be in a settled state of grandeur, ease, and rest, and say, *I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow*; when in one day, and in one hour, her destruction shall come upon her, Rev. xviii. 7, 8. *But the root of the righteous shall not be moved*; they are rooted and grounded in the love of God, which is immovable; they are rooted and built up in Christ, and so are as Mount Zion, which can

never be removed; the root of the matter, or of grace, is in them, which can never be lost; whilst others wither away, because they have no root in them, these abide; and though they may be shaken with the persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the errors of the wicked, and their own corruptions, yet they afresh take root again downward, and bring forth fruit upward.

Ver. 4. *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, &c.]* One that is loving and chaste, constant and faithful, obsequious and submissive to him; that is diligent in the affairs of her house, takes care of her family, brings up her children, and keeps up a good order and decorum among her servants, is an honour and credit to her husband. Such is the true church of Christ, who is compared to a woman, Rev. xii. 1. to a woman of purity and chastity, whose members are virgins, not defiled with the corruptions, errors, and superstition of the apostate church; to a woman of fortitude and courage, as the word ^m signifies, who resists sin, temptation, error, heresy, and idolatry, even unto blood; and whose true members love not their lives unto death, but freely lay them down in the cause of truth; such an one is an honour to Christ her husband. *But she that maketh ashamed;* makes her husband ashamed, by her levity and wantonness, her negligence and slothfulness, so that he is ashamed to be seen with her, or to be known that he stands in such a relation to her; she is *as rottenness in his bones*; a constant grief to his mind, a pressure upon his spirits, a wasting of his body, and a consumption of his estate; she is, as the Targum has it, *as a worm in wood*, which rots and consumes itⁿ; so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Thus the apostate church of Rome, that professes to be the spouse of Christ, has made him ashamed of her; as being the Jezebel, that seduces his servants to fornication or idolatry; and whose doctrine and superstition eat, like a canker, the vitals of religion.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the righteous are right, &c.]* Or *judgment*^o. The thoughts of men's hearts are naturally evil, nor can any think a good thought of themselves; but the thoughts of the righteous are directed and influenced by the grace of God, and are formed according to that Word which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; their thoughts concerning God and religion, concerning Christ and his Gospel, his ways and worship, his truths and ordinances, they are judiciously framed according to the rule of God's word, the revelation he has made, and so are right; and such are their resolutions and designs to serve the Lord their God, and him only, and to cleave to him with full purpose of heart. *But the counsels of the wicked are deceit*; the designs, schemes, and contrivances of wicked men, are to trick, and overreach, and defraud their neighbours in civil affairs; and of false teachers, to deceive the hearts of the simple in religious ones. The coming of the man of sin was with all deceivableness; and all the gaudy shew and pageantry he makes, and pretended miracles he works, are to deceive the inhabitants of the earth; and by his

¹ עֲדָנָה ednet, Pagninus, Montanus; hauriet, V. L. haurit, Mercerus, Gejerus.
^m מְשֻׁמֵּת mulier virtutis, Montanus, Vatablus; uxor strenua, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; mulier fortis, Pagninus, Gejerus.

ⁿ Such as are called Cossi, Tabani, Teredines, Thyrypes; Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 33. & l. 16 c. 41.
^o מְשֻׁמֵּת judicium, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

sorceries all nations are deceived, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Rev. xiii. 14. and xviii. 23.

Ver. 6. *The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood, &c.*] Which some understand of perjury and false witness, as Jarchi, whereby the lives of innocent persons are taken away: or it may be interpreted either of the smooth words and fair speeches, and secret artifices, antichrist and his emissaries make use of to entrap the innocent, and draw them into their net, to their ruin; see Psal. x. 7—10. as the Jews attempted to deal with Christ, Luke xx. 20, 21. or of the laws and edicts of the beast, that such should be killed who would not worship his image; and with the blood of these innocent ones the whore of Rome is said to be drunk, Rev. xiii. 15. and xvii. 6. *But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them;* the innocent laid in wait for; either by their prayers to God, which are of great avail with him, and through whose importunity he will avenge his elect, and deliver them; or through their apologies for them, and defences of them, as in the times of Pagan persecution; or rather through the doctrines of the reformation, whereby many simple and unwary souls were delivered, who were in danger of being insnared; and whereby the eyes of many princes were opened, and were stirred up to protect those innocent ones, and prevent their blood being shed.

Ver. 7. *The wicked are overthrown, and are not, &c.*] With such an overthrow as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The kingdom of the beast shall not only be full of darkness, as at the pouring of the fifth vial, and be in the utmost confusion, but it shall be brought to ruin and destruction; which stands opposed to the *house of the righteous*, in the next clause: the ten kings, the supporters of antichrist, shall be overcome by the Lamb, with whom they will make war; the beast, and the false prophet, shall be taken by him, and destroyed; and Babylon shall sink like a millstone into the sea, and be no more; the wicked shall be consumed out of the earth; these Heathens shall be no more in the land; the man of sin shall never revive again. *But the house of the righteous shall stand;* not his material dwelling-house; nor the earthly house of his tabernacle, his body; nor his family, as the generality of interpreters, for the family of the righteous may be extinct, and especially not continue as righteous; but the church of God, as the gloss upon the text, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; the church which is built on the Rock, Christ; the mountain of the Lord's house, which shall be established upon the top of the mountains in the latter day, when the kingdom of antichrist shall be overthrown, and be no more. This is the same with the household of faith, and the household of God, and here called *the house of the righteous*; because they dwell in it, have a place and a name in it better than sons and daughters; and indeed none but they ought to be in it, that have on the wedding-garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness; and who walk uprightly, and work righteousness. Now this house shall stand; its foundation, which is Christ, is sure, an everlasting one; its pillars are

firm and stable, the ministers of the word, who will be to the end of the world; the ordinances of it will continue till Christ's second coming; the doctrines of it are the word of God, which standeth for ever, when all flesh is as grass. This house stands, notwithstanding all the persecutions of men; it has stood against all the fury of Rome, Pagan and Papal, and still will continue, notwithstanding the craft of false teachers to undermine it; and though it may sometimes be in a waste and ruinous condition seemingly, yet the Lord will raise it up again, and glorify this house of his glory, and make it beautiful and honourable: it shall stand, because it is the Lord's house, of his building, and where he delights to dwell in; because it is the house of Christ, which he, Wisdom, has built; and where he presides as a Son, as a Prophet, Priest, and King; and because it is the house where his people are born and brought up, and therefore shall continue till every one are brought in; and because it is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, Matt. xvi. 18. compare with this Matt. vii. 24, 25.

Ver. 8. *A man shall be commended according to his wisdom, &c.*] Not according to his birth and pedigree; not according to his riches and wealth; not according to the places of honour and trust he may be in; but according to his wisdom, which he discovers in his words and actions, in his life and conversation: not according to the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish; not according to the wisdom of the world, which comes to nought, either natural or civil; especially that which lies in sophistry and subtlety, in wicked craft and cunning, whereby men trick, overreach, and defraud one another; but according to that which is spiritual and evangelical; which lies in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of those things which belong to salvation; the beginning of which is the fear of the Lord, and which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable. A man possessed of this is commended by all wise and good men, and by the Lord himself; as the wise man is by Christ, Matt. vii. 24, 25. who builds his house on a rock; for which reason it stands, as in the preceding verse. *But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised;* and which appears by the perverse words he speaks against God and Christ; against his people, ways, and worship, as antichrist and his followers do; and by his perverse actions, which are contrary to the light of nature, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ: and such vile persons are contemned in the eyes of all good men, and are had in abhorrence by the Lord himself; for such who despise him are lightly esteemed; see ch. xviii. 3.

Ver. 9. *He that is despised, and hath a servant, &c.*] Meaning not the same person as before, but one in mean circumstances of life; and because he has not that substance as others have, at least does not make that shew and figure in the world as some; and is mean in his own eyes, as Jarchi; and does not affect grandeur, and to look greater than he is; has just a sufficiency to keep a servant to wait upon him; or, as some render it, is a *servant to himself*; to this pur-

pose the Septuagint; and so Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, who does his own work at home and abroad, in the house and in the field, and so gets himself a competent living. He is *better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread*; that boasts of his pedigree, and brags of his wealth; dresses out in fine clothes, keeps a fine equipage, makes a great figure abroad, and has scarce bread to eat at home, and would have none if his debts were paid; the former is much the better man on all accounts, and more to be commended; see ch. xiii. 7. And so, as Cocceius observes, the least shepherd (under Christ) that has ever so few sheep, one or two under his care, whom he brings to righteousness, and by whom he is loved, is preferable to the pope of Rome, who is adored by all; and yet neither has nor gives the bread of souls; and without the offerings of others has not any thing to eat.

Ver. 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, &c.*] Or *knoweth it*⁹; knows the worth of it and values it, and takes care of it, and is concerned for the preservation of it; he provides sufficient food for it, and gives it; he does not overwork it, but allows it proper rest from labour; and, if in any disorder, will make use of all suitable means to heal it; see an instance of the care of Jacob, that righteous man, of his cattle, Gen. xxxiii. 14. and, on the other hand, see an instance of a wicked man's cruelty to his beast in Balaam, for which he was reproved, Numb. xxii. 28. by various laws and rules which God has given, it is his will that men should be merciful to their beasts, Deut. xxv. 4. Exod. xx. 10. and such who are so will be more especially pitiful and tender-hearted to their fellow-creatures. *But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*; or are *the mercies of a cruel one*⁷; the most tender things which are expressed or done by them are nothing but cruelty; and what then must be their more severe expressions and actions? so the most tender concern which antichrist and his followers shew to the souls of men breathes nothing but cruelty; the compassionate methods they take to convert heretics, as they call them, are dark dungeons and stinking prisons, racks and tortures, fire and faggots; these are their wholesome severities; this their kindness to men, to deliver them up to the secular power, to inflict pains and punishments on them the most grievous to save their souls. Thus, while the beast of Rome looks like a lamb, he speaks like a dragon, and exercises all the cruelty of the first beast, Rome Pagan, Rev. xiii. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread, &c.*] This was man's work in innocence; this he was doomed to do with the sweat of his brow after his fall; every man has his land to till, or some calling, work, or business, to be employed in, either civil or sacred; and it becomes him to be diligent therein, and such as are shall not want bread, but shall have a sufficiency of it. *But he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding*; that neglects his business,

loiters away his time, spends it in the company of vain, empty, and unprofitable persons; as he shews himself by such a choice that he is void of understanding, or *wants a heart*⁸, to improve his time and talents; so ere long it is much if he does not want a piece of bread. Thus he that is concerned to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and righteousness, truth, and holiness, sown therein, that it may bring forth fruit; or who is careful about the welfare and salvation of his immortal soul, and makes diligent use of all means to promote its spiritual good, shall be filled with the bread of life, shall find it and eat it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and, on the contrary, he that associates himself with vain persons, empty of all that is spiritually good, that have only empty notions of religion; or who attend to the profane and vain boastings of antichrist, and all false teachers; and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, whose words eat as do a canker; these, as they shew themselves to want wisdom, so they are and will be brought into starving and famishing circumstances in a spiritual sense. Jarchi interprets the former clause of a man that is studious in his doctrine, that revolves it in his mind, that he may not forget it; and the Arabic version renders the last clause, "they that run after false demons, their minds are deficient;" see Rev. ix. 20.

Ver. 12. *The wicked desireth the net of evil men, &c.*] To be master of all the wicked arts and methods evil men use to ensnare and oppress others; to get them and their substance into their hands; or *desireth the evil net*, as the Targum; the evil net of antichrist, which he lays for the poor, whom he draws into it and catches them; see Psal. x. 9. Jarchi understands it of *hunting*¹, and of wicked men desiring to be fed and nourished with what evil men get by hunting; compare with this Ezek. xiii. 18—21. Some render it the *fortress* or *strong hold*² of evil men, in which they fortify and secure themselves to do mischief to others, and to prevent any besieging them, so Gersom; and this is what all wicked men are desirous of. *But the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit*; or *shall give*³ that; that security and protection from real evil and mischief which the wicked cannot obtain; or *he*, that is, God, *shall give the righteous root*⁴, firmly fix them that they shall not be moved; or as we supply it, and so Aben Ezra, *yieldeth fruit*, much more desirable than the net of evil men the wicked covet: righteous men are compared to trees, they are called *trees of righteousness*, Isa. lxi. 3. these have a root in the love of God, in the person of Christ, and in the grace of the Spirit, and this root yieldeth fruit; the love of God is the root and source of all good things, of all the blessings of grace, of the fruit of grace, faith, hope, and love, and of evangelical obedience; the person of Christ is the source of all spiritual blessings, of salvation and eternal life; the righteous have their being in him as a root; they are bore by him, have all their life, grace, holiness,

⁹ יודע novit, Mercerus, Michaelis; so Vulgate Latin.

⁷ מוכרי sunt miserationes crudelis, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Aben Ezra in Mercerus, so some Jewish writers in Vatablus.

⁸ דליל deficiens corde, Pagninus; carene corde, Montanus; deficitur corde, Schultens.

¹ מזור venationem, Munster, Schultens; venatum, Tigurine version.

² Praesidium, Mercerus, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator.

³ דתן dabit, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus.

⁴ Radicem justorum dabit Deus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

himself, and gains more credit and reputation from others.

Ver. 17. He that *speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness, &c.*] He that *blows or breathes out truth*^a, as the word signifies; that utters it freely and fully without any hesitation; that speaks nothing but truth, and speaks out the whole truth without any reserve; such a man upon every occasion will declare that which is just and right, and shew himself to be an honest and upright man; he that uses himself to speak truth in common conversation, will, in a court of judicature, whether upon his oath or not, testify that which is just and the real matter of fact; there is a connexion between truth and righteousness, for though they are distinct things they go together, what is true is just, and what is just is true; so he that speaks the truth of the Gospel, or is a faithful preacher of it, will shew forth righteousness, what is the righteousness of the law, and what is the righteousness of faith; how insufficient a man's own righteousness is to justify him in the sight of God; the necessity of the righteousness of Christ, how free and full, excellent and glorious, suitable and useful it is, Rom. i. 17. *But a false witness deceit*; that is, one that is used to lying, when he is called to give testimony upon any affair in judgment, he will declare that which is false and deceitful, having no regard to truth and justice. So a false teacher, instead of shewing men the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and directing them to the righteousness of Christ for justification, will utter deceitful doctrine, and build up their hopes upon the sandy and deceitful foundation of their own works; as Popish teachers, and such as verge towards them.

Ver. 18. *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword, &c.*] Whose words are like sharp swords, cutting, wounding, dividing, killing; see Psal. lvii. 4. and lix. 7. and lxiv. 3. such are the words of false witnesses, who by their false testimonies and perjuries are as guilty of the murder of men as cut-throats; such are the words of slanderers, backbiters, and talebearers, who grieve the innocent, wound their characters, destroy their good name and credit, and separate chief friends; and such are the words of antichrist, who looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, Rev. xiii. 11. *But the tongue of the wise is health; or healing*^c; by giving a faithful testimony which sets matters right; by clearing and defending the character of those who are falsely accused and wrongfully charged; by making up differences, and reconciling persons at variance through the detraction and lying insinuations of others; and by speaking comfortable, cheerful, and refreshing words to the injured and abused; especially the tongue of a wise minister of the Gospel is health, or healing, to wounded souls, to whom he ministers the Gospel of the grace of God, which directs to Christ for healing, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.

Ver. 19. *The lip of truth shall be established for ever, &c.*] The man that speaks truth is and will be established in his credit and reputation among men; he is uniform and all of a piece, and what he says is believed;

truth, though it may be opposed, will prevail against lies and falsehood; the word of truth, the Gospel of Christ, will stand for ever; the ministers of truth and righteousness will be continued to the end of the world; Christ, who is truth itself, abides the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. *But a lying tongue is but for a moment*; if a liar speaks truth for once, he does not continue in it long, but quickly returns to his former course; or rather the lie he tells is very short-lived, it is soon discovered, and he comes into contempt and disgrace, and loses all his credit and reputation among men of honour and honesty, and is sometimes suddenly snatched away by death, as Ananias and Sapphira; all error and heresy in a short time will cease and be no more; and antichrist, whose coming is with lying wonders, the direct opposite of the lip of truth, will be brought to ruin in a moment. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, who are followed by some Christian interpreters, as Montanus, and some in Vatablus, render it, *but, or for ever, I will cause the lying tongue to cease, or be at rest from speaking*; as if they were the words of God, threatening to cut off the lying tongue; but Jarchi and Gerson render it *for a moment, or a very short time, as we and others do; or, whilst one winks*^f, in the twinkling of an eye; so soon is such a person removed.

Ver. 20. *Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil, &c.*] That secretly devise mischief in their hearts against their neighbours; that plough evil, as the word^g signifies, and sow discord among men; and by many artful and deceitful methods promote contention and division, in order to answer some base designs of theirs; but sooner or later they are deceived themselves, are disappointed of their views, the consequence of which is vexation and sorrow. *But to the counsellors of peace is joy*; such who consult the good of others, who advise to peace, concord, and unity; who seek to cultivate it in their families and neighbourhoods, and in the church of God, in which, if they succeed, they have joy and pleasure; if not, they have a satisfaction, in their own minds and consciences that they have done what is right and good; such have a conscience-peace now, and an eternal one hereafter; or, as Aben Ezra calls it, the joy of salvation; see Matt. v. 9.

Ver. 21. *There shall no evil happen to the just, &c.*] The evil of sin; no iniquity, as the Targum; which, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, interpret of sin not being agreeable, convenient, suitable, and pleasing to a righteous man. Moreover, the Lord, by his spirit and grace, weakens the power of sin in them; and, by his providence, prevents and removes occasion of sinning; and by his power preserves from it, from being overcome and carried away with it, at least finally and totally. Or the evil of punishment is here meant; no penal evil shall befall them; the punishment of their sin has been inflicted on Christ their surety, and therefore shall never be laid on them; and whatever afflictions may happen to them, which have the name and appearance of evil, these work together for their good, spiritual and eternal; so that, in reality, no

^a עִיֵּת efiat, Junius & Tremellius; spirat, Schultens.

^c מְרַפֵּא medicine, Junius & Tremellius; medicina, Piscator, Cocceius; sanatio, Michaelis; sanatrix, Schultens.

^f עַד אֶרְבֵּי עֵינַי at dum nictem, Schultens.

^g דָּרְשִׁי.

evil thing, properly speaking, happens to them; see Psal. xci. 10. Or whatever does come to them comes not by chance unto them, but by the decree and will of God, and is overruled for good. *But the wicked shall be filled with mischief; or with evil^b, the evil of sin; with malice and wickedness, with all impiety and unrighteousness, with ignorance and error; with all kind of sins, both against the first and second table of the law, and so with all the consequents of sin: with the evil of punishment; with an evil conscience, with the terrors of it; with many distresses here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter. Some understand it of the mischief they devise to others, which they are full of and big with; and though they are, as Aben Ezra interprets the word, yet no evil shall happen to the righteous; the mischief contrived by them shall fall upon themselves.*

Ver. 22. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord, &c.]* Such that speak lies in common talk; and that deliver out doctrinal lies, false doctrines, lies in hypocrisy, as are the doctrines of Rome; these are abominable unto God; as being contrary to his nature as the God of truth; contrary to the Scriptures of truth he has edited; contrary to the truth of the Gospel he has published; contrary to his Son, who is truth itself; and to the Spirit of truth, which leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; wherefore an abomination and a lie are joined together, Rev. xxi. 27. *But they that deal truly are his delight; or the objects of his good will and pleasure, as the word¹ signifies; they are grateful and acceptable to him; he is well-pleased with them, and delights in them. Not only such that speak the truth, but do the truth², as the words may be rendered; whose words and actions, doctrine and life, agree together: it is not enough to embrace, profess, or preach the truth, but he must practise it; see John iii. 21. 1 John i. 6. he must deal truly with God and men, or faithfully, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; he must be true to his word and promises, and faithfully perform what he has agreed unto. Or, that work faith; that work the work of faith, that faith which works by love; that live on Christ and his righteousness; such are well-pleasing to God; without which faith it is impossible to please him, Heb. xi. 6.*

Ver. 23. *A prudent man concealeth knowledge, &c.]* Of things natural or divine, which he is furnished with; not but that he is willing to communicate it, as he should, at proper times, in proper places, and to proper persons; but he does not needlessly and unseasonably speak of it; he does not make a shew of it, or boast and brag of it: he modestly forbears to speak of what he knows, but when there is a necessity for it, even of that which may be lawfully divulged; which is a point of prudence and modesty; otherwise it is criminal to reveal secrets, or publish what should be kept private or should not be known. Aben Ezra interprets it of a wise man's hiding his knowledge in his heart, that he may not forget it. *But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness; that which they have in their hearts and*

minds, and which they take for deep knowledge, profound and recondite learning, they proclaim with their mouths in a noisy and clamorous way; and while they declare their ill-shaped notions, their incoherent and unconnected ideas of things, they betray their ignorance and folly, as ostentatious men do.

Ver. 24. *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, &c.]* Shall become rich, so Jarchi interprets it, according to ca. x. 4. Through diligence men get riches, and through riches they arrive to power and authority over others: from apprentices and journeymen-workmen they become masters of their business; diligent men become masters of families, and have servants and workmen under them; become magistrates in cities, and bear rule over their fellow-citizens, and are advanced to places of power and authority in the commonwealth; see ch. xxii. 29. *But the slothful shall be under tribute; the slothful or deceitful hand³, for so it may be rendered and supplied; for usually such who are slothful, and do not care for business, get their living by deceitful methods, by tricking and sharpening; and such become subject to others, to them that are diligent; hence said to be under tribute, or tributary; because those that are tributary are in subjection to those to whom they pay tribute.*

Ver. 25. *Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, &c.]* Either an anxious care and solicitude about living in the world, as the word⁴ signifies; when it seizes a man's spirits, it depresses them, and keeps them down: or a fear and dread of adversity, or sorrow and grief, on account of some calamity and distress; when it gets into a man's heart, it sinks and bows it down, that it cannot take any pleasure or comfort in any thing. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *a terrible word troubles the heart of a just man; or troubles the heart of man*, as the Syriac version; the Targum is, "a word of fear in the heart of man causes 'fear:'" such is the law, which is a word of terror; which speaks terrible things to men; fills the mind with terror; works wrath in the conscience, and induces a spirit of bondage to fear; bows and keeps under the spirits of men, through a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation. *But a good word maketh it glad; a comforting, cheering, and encouraging word from any friend, that compassionates their distressed case; this lifts up the heart and inspires it with joy; so a word in season, spoken by a Gospel minister, raises up a soul that is bowed down, and gives it comfort and joy: such a good word is the Gospel itself; it is good news from a far country, which is like cold water to a thirsty soul, very refreshing and reviving. The Septuagint and Arabic versions here render it, a good message, and such the Gospel is; which, when brought to the heart of a poor sinner, depressed with the terrors of the law, causes joy in it; such is the word of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ; such is the word that he himself spoke, Matt. ix. 2. Kimchi instances in Psal. lv. 22.*

Ver. 26. *The righteous is more excellent than his*

^a רעוּ מַלּוּ, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.
^b רַחֲמֵי עַלְּיָהּ est beneplacitum ejus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; accepti sunt ei, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
^c וְיַחֲזִיקוּ אֶת־הַיָּשָׁרִים facientibus veritatem, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; facientes veritatem, Montanus; qui faciunt veritatem, Cocceius.

¹ Manus fraudulentæ, Michaelis; dolosa, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus; fraudulenta, Tigurine version, Vatablus.
² וְיַחֲזִיקוּ solicitude, Tigurine version, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis; sollicitudo anxia, Mercerus, Gejerus; sollicita anxietas, Junius & Tremellius; anxietatem, Schulteus.

neighbour, &c.] Not than his neighbour who is righteous also; for though one may have more excellent gifts than another, or a larger measure of grace; one righteous man may have more faith than another, yet not more righteousness; every truly righteous man is justified by the same righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; and therefore one cannot be more excellent, considered as righteous: but the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, who is ungodly and unrighteous, or however who has no other righteousness than his own; though his neighbour may be of more noble birth, and have even the title of *his excellency* given him; though he may have a larger share of wealth and riches; and though he may have attained a greater degree of natural wisdom and understanding, be a man of brighter parts, and of a larger capacity; yet, being righteous, he is more excellent than he: his superior excellency lies in his righteousness, from whence he is denominated; the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him, is far better than the best righteousness of his neighbour; it being the righteousness of God, his is the righteousness of a creature; a perfect righteousness, whereas his is imperfect; a splendid and glorious one, his filthy rags; a very extensive one, by which all the seed of Israel are justified, his such as not one individual person can be justified by it; an everlasting one, that will answer for him that has it in a time to come, his like the morning cloud and early dew that passes away; yea, the inherent righteousness of a righteous man, or the grace of Christ, imparted to him and implanted in him, that principle of holiness in him is greatly better than the righteousness of his neighbour a Pharisee; for this is true and real holiness, truth in the inward part, whereas the other's is only a shadow of holiness, a form of godliness without the power; this has the spirit of God for its author, it is his workmanship, and a curious piece it is, whereas the other is only the produce of nature; this makes a man all-glorious within, and gives him a meetness for heaven, whereas, notwithstanding the other, the man is inwardly full of all manner of iniquity, and has neither a right nor meetness for eternal glory. Nay, the external works of righteousness done by a truly righteous man are preferable to his neighbour's, destitute of the grace of God; the one being a course of obedience to the will of God, and a respect to all his commandments; when the other consists only of a little negative holiness, and of an observance of a few rituals of religion: the one spring from a heart purified by the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit, and from principles of grace and love, and are done to the glory of God; whereas the other do not arise from a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; nor are they done sincerely, with a view to the glory of God, only to be seen of men, and gain credit and reputation among them; and in these respects the righteous man is more excellent as such than his neighbour, who at most and best is only externally and morally righteous: his superior excellency does not lie in nature, in which they are both

alike; nor in outward circumstances, in which they may differ; nor in the opinion of men, with whom the saints are the offcoursing of all things; but in the esteem of Christ, and through his grace and righteousness; see Psal. xvi. 3. Some render the words, *the righteous explores his way more than his neighbour*; seeks and finds out a better way than he does; and is careful that he is not seduced and carried out of the way, and perish. *But the way of the wicked seduceth them*; or causes them to err; it deceives, by promising the honour, pleasure, and profit, which it does not lead unto and give, and which they find not in it; and hereby they are led to wander from the way of the righteous, by which they attain a superior excellency to them.

Ver. 27. *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, &c.*] Because he takes none. The slothful man takes no pains to get any thing for a livelihood, by hunting or otherwise; and though he loves to live well, and eat roast meat, yet what he roasts is not what he has got himself, but what another has laboured for. It is observed^o, that fowlers burn the wings of birds taken by them, that they may not fly away; to which the allusion may be. Or, *the deceitful^p man*, as it may be rendered; though he may get much in a fraudulent way, yet it does not prosper with him, he does not enjoy it; it is taken away from him before he can partake of it, or receive any comfort from it, or advantage by it; just as a man that has took any thing in hunting, he cannot keep it; it is taken away from him, perhaps by a dog or some man, before he can roast it, and make it fit for eating. Ben Melech, from Joseph Kimchi, observes, that fowlers, when they catch fowls, burn the top of their wings, that they may not fly away at once; and they do not cut their wings off, that they may be left, and appear beautiful to them that buy them: but the slothful or deceitful man does not let the fowl remain in his hands till he burns it; for before that it flies out of his hands, and it is lost to him; which is figuratively to be understood of riches and wealth, gathered by violence and deceit, and lost suddenly. What is ill-gotten does not spend well; it does not last long, it is presently gone; there is no true enjoyment of it. Or he will not shut it up within lattices^q, and reserve it, but spend it directly; see Cant. ii. 9. *But the substance of a diligent man is precious*; what is gotten by industry and diligence, and in an honest way, is valuable; it comes with a blessing; there is comfort in the enjoyment of it, and it continues. Some render it, *the substance of a precious man is gold*^r; so the Targum, "the substance of a man is precious gold"; and to the same purpose the Vulgate Latin version: a diligent man grows rich; and what he gets spends well, and his substance is daily increasing.

Ver. 28. *In the way of righteousness is life, &c.*] The life of the soul, or spiritual life, as Aben Ezra; and eternal life, as Gersom. One that is in the true way of righteousness is one that is justified by the righteousness of Christ, which justification is the justification of life: such an one is made alive, and reckons himself

^o Vid. Stockium, p. 388.
^p Vid. Schindler, Lexic. col. 653.
^q Vid. Dolorus, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; fraudulentus, Montanus.

^o Vid. Stockium, p. 388.
^r Vid. Stockium, p. 388.
^s Vid. Stockium, p. 388.
^t Vid. Stockium, p. 388.

alive in a law-sense; and enjoys true spiritual peace and comfort, arising from the love and favour of God, and acceptance with him, in which he sees his interest, and in which is life; and this righteousness, by which he is justified before God, entitles him to eternal life; to which the path of holiness, he is directed and enabled to walk in, leads; though it is a narrow way, and a strait gate, Matt. vii. 14. Christ, and righteousness and holiness in and by him, are the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life; and all in this way now live spiritually, and shall live eternally, John xiv. 6. *And in the pathway* thereof there is *no death*; no condemnation to them that are in Christ, the way, and are justified by his righteousness; the law's sentence

of death shall not be executed on them, though it passed upon them in Adam; spiritual death shall not again prevail over those who are passed from death to life; nor shall they be hurt at the second death; they shall never die that death, it shall have no power over them; life and immortality are the sure effects of being in the way of righteousness. The Targum renders it, *the way of the perverse*; and the Septuagint version, *of those that remember evil*; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, *the way of angry men is unto death*: and so the Vulgate Latin version, "the out-of-the-way path leads to death:" and so some Hebrew copies read, *instead of no death, unto death*; but the most read as we do, and which the Jewish commentators follow.

C H A P. XIII.

Ver. 1. *A WISE son* heareth his father's instruction, &c.] As he should, and has good reason to do; since it must be cordial, faithful, and disinterested, as well as the effect of age and experience. He asks for it and loves it, as Jarchi supplies the text; he likes and approves of it, is well-pleased with it, and delights in it; seeing it tends to his profit and advantage; he receives it, as the Targum, so Ben Melech; he listens to and obeys it, and acts agreeably to it, which shews him to be wise; and this is the way to be wiser and wiser. So one that is spiritually wise will attend to and receive the instruction of Wisdom or Christ; who stands in the relation of an everlasting father to his children; whose instruction is the doctrine of the Gospel; which a wise man hears, so as to understand it; to love and like it, and approve of it; cordially to embrace and obey it, and put it in practice; see Matt. vii. 24. The word also signifies *correction*, because instruction often comes by it; and he that is a wise man will bear the rod and him that has appointed it, and learn to know his mind by it, and receive instruction from it: or is chastised by his father, and takes it well, Mic. vi. 9. *But a scooner* heareth not rebuke; that is, a son who is a scooner, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; one that makes a mock at sin, and scoffs at religion: such a man will be so far from hearing, attending to, and receiving the rebuke and reproof of his father, that he will scoff also at that; such as were the sons-in-law of Lot, and the sons of Eli and Samuel. So scornful men, that make a jest of every thing that is sacred, will not hearken to the reproof of God's word, to the rebukes of Gospel ministers, or even to the rebukes of Providence, which will issue in their destruction, ch. v. 11. 12.

Ver. 2. *A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth, &c.*] Or, *of the mouth*; either another's or his own, since the word *his* is not in the text; though it is supplied by the Targum, Aben Ezra, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, as by us. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *shall eat of the fruits of righteousness*. I should choose to translate the whole

thus; *a good man shall eat of the fruit of his mouth*: so Aben Ezra interprets it, *a good man shall eat*; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it. The sense is, that a good man brings forth good things out of the good treasure of his heart by his mouth; which not only minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying to others, but also to himself; whilst he gives wholesome counsel and advice to others, it is of service to himself; whilst he comforts others, he comforts himself; and whilst he teaches and instructs others, he teaches and instructs himself: so a good minister of Jesus Christ, whilst he feeds others with knowledge and understanding, he himself is nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine; so Jarchi refers it to a man's doctrine, and the reward of it here and hereafter. *But the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence*; Jarchi interprets it, "the delight of transgressors is violence"; that is, what their souls desire, choose, will, and take pleasure in, even using violence, and doing mischief to others; and to the same purpose is the note of Gersom; but Aben Ezra supplies it from the former clause, as we do; and the sense is, that the same measure they mete out to others shall be measured out to them again; what they give others to eat, they shall eat themselves, even the bread of violence; see ch. iv. 16. and x. 6. And this will be the case of all perfidious and treacherous ones, as the word * used signifies; of false teachers and cruel persecutors; and of Babylon, of whom it will be said, *reward her as she rewarded you*, Rev. xviii. 6.

Ver. 3. *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life, &c.*] He that keeps his mouth shut keeps it as with a bridle; keeps it from speaking things of other persons, particularly of such as are in high places, of kings and princes, and civil magistrates: he keeps himself quiet and comfortable; keeps himself from many troubles, which otherwise he would come into; keeps his life from danger, to which it would be exposed, should he speak evil of dignities, or give himself the freedom, as some do, whereby they are brought to an untimely

* עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ obediuit castigationem, Baynes, so Gejerus.

† Castigator a patre, vel castigatus patris, Schultens, so De Dien.

‡ Anima seu cupido prævaricatorum est violentia, Gussetius, p. 524.

* עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ perfidorum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; peridorum, Cocceius, Schultens.

end; see ch. xviii. 21. besides, persons ought to be careful of their words, since by them a man will either be justified or condemned hereafter, Matt. xii. 37. But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction; or consternation²: he that is rash and inconsiderate, hasty with his lips, a talkative man; that speaks freely every thing that comes into his mind, regardless of the characters of men, or consequences of things; is often brought into frights and fears, through the menaces and threatenings of men in power, whose characters he has made too free with, and oftentimes is brought to ruin and destruction: so he, whose throat is as an open sepulchre, belching out filthy words, horrid oaths, curses, and imprecations, destruction is near him, even in all his ways; and the man of sin, that opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, shall go into perdition, Rev. xiii. 5, 6. and xvii. 8.

Ver. 4. *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, &c.*] He desires knowledge, but does not care to be at any pains to get it, and so has it not; he desires riches, but chooses not to make use of the means, to be diligent and industrious, and so he is without them; he desires to wear good clothes and rich raiment, but is unwilling to labour for them, and therefore is clothed with rags; he desires food, and plenty of it, but refuses to work for it; and he that will not work should not eat, and therefore he has it not, but starves and famishes: and, in spiritual things, the sluggard desires heaven and happiness, but does not care to do the duties of religion; he would die the death of the righteous, but is unwilling to live his life; to abstain from sin, and live soberly and righteously, is too hard service for him; he does not choose to do or suffer any thing for the cause of Christ and true religion. Jarchi's note is, that "in the future state he shall see the glory of the wise man, and desire it; but shall not attain to it." *But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*; become rich; increase in temporal things, and have great plenty and prosperity; and so, in spiritual matters, such who are diligent in the use of means, constantly attend on the word and ordinances, and labour for the meat which endures to everlasting life; such are filled and satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and become fat and flourishing, and fruitful in every good word and work; and shall at last arrive to that state where there will be no more hunger and thirst.

Ver. 5. *A righteous man hateth lying, &c.*] Or, *a word of falsehood*¹; as being contrary to honour, truth, and conscience. He hates it in himself and others; he hates all sorts of lies, lies in common conversation, religious lies, doctrinal ones, false doctrines, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such as the followers of antichrist spread, being given up unto them that they might be damned, 1 Tim. iv. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. these are an abomination to God and all good men, Rev. xxi. 27. *But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame*;

or, *causes or spreads a stink*²: all wicked men are loathsome and abominable, being very corrupt in principle and practice; all over defiled with sin, and covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; and especially liars, who are often brought to shame and confusion in this life, and will hereafter come to everlasting shame and contempt. Or, *makes himself to stink*²: in the nostrils of all good men, and so brought to shame: or *digs*; a metaphor, as Cartwright thinks, from those that dig in the earth, where such as are covered with shame would gladly put their heads.

Ver. 6. *Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way, &c.*] Men of uprightness and integrity, whose hearts are sincere in the ways of God; the principle of grace and righteousness in them keeps them in those ways, and will not suffer them to turn aside into crooked paths; the word of righteousness, the doctrine of the Gospel, is a means of preserving them from sin, and of keeping them in the right way; particularly the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, and justification by it, is a great antidote against sin, and a powerful motive and incentive to the performance of good works, and all the duties of religion: it engages men to observe every command of Christ, to walk in all his ways; and is a great preservative from false doctrine and antichristian worship. *But wickedness overthroweth the sinner*; it is the cause of his utter overthrow, of his being punished with everlasting destruction. It is, in the Hebrew text, *sin*¹ itself; the sinner is so called, because he is perfectly wicked, as Jarchi observes; he is nothing but sin, a mere mass of sin and corruption. Aben Ezra renders it, *the man of sin*; and it may be well applied to him, who is emphatically called so, and is likewise the son of perdition; who, for his wickedness, will be overthrown and destroyed at the coming of Christ, and with the brightness of it, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8.

Ver. 7. *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing, &c.*] Some persons make a great shew of riches, and would be thought to be rich; put on fine clothes, live at a high rate, and appear in great pomp, and yet not worth a farthing; which they do to gratify their pride and ambition, and to draw in others to trust them with their substance. So in spirituals; some persons, as hypocrites, would be thought to be rich in grace, and to be possessed of all the graces of the spirit, faith, hope, and love; and yet have nothing of true grace, only what is counterfeit; the root of the matter is not in them; no principle of life and grace, only a name to live; nothing of the power, only the form, of godliness; no oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, only the lamp of an outward profession: some, as the Pharisees, would be thought to be rich in good works, when they have no good thing in them, and do nothing that is spiritually good; either what they do is not done according to the revealed will of God, as many things done by the Pharisees formerly, and by

¹ מוֹתָחָה consternatio, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; terribitur, Tigurine version.

² מוֹתָחָה verbum falsitatis, Montanus, Michaelis; verbum fuci, Schultens.

³ מוֹתָחָה fœtere facit, Vatablus, Mercerus; fœtere faciet, Mon-

tanus; fœtere facit fœtorem, Gussetius, p. 114. fœtorem spargit, Schultens.

⁴ Se ipse fœtere facit, Coccei Lexic. col. 77. fœtidum se reddit, Piscator.

⁵ מוֹתָחָה peccatum, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis; lap-sationem, Schultens.

the Papists now, or they do not flow from love; nor are they done in faith, nor in the name and strength of Christ, nor to the glory of God by him: some, as the same persons, would be thought to be rich in righteousness, when they have no true righteousness at all; not the righteousness of the law, which requires perfection of obedience; not the righteousness of faith, which is the righteousness of another; the righteousness of God is imputed, and is without the works of men; they have no righteousness that can justify them, or save them, or bring them to heaven: some, as the Arminians, would be thought to be rich in spiritual strength, and in the power of their free will, when they have neither will nor power to any thing spiritually good; neither to regenerate and convert themselves, nor to come to Christ, nor to do any good work: some, as the Perfectionists, would be thought to be so rich as to be free from sin, and perfect in grace, when they have none at all, as says the apostle, 1 John i. 8. their picture is drawn in Ephraim, and their language spoke by him, Hos. xii. 8. The apostate church of Rome would be thought rich with the merits of saints, and works of supererogation, when she has no merit at all; nor is it possible for a creature to merit any thing at the hands of God; compare with all this Rev. iii. 17. There is *that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches*; there are some, on the other hand, who greatly degrade themselves; live in a very mean way, as though they were very poor; either through covetousness, or because they would not draw upon them the envy of their neighbours, or encourage their friends to borrow of them, or invite thieves to steal from them, or for some low end or another: the pope of Rome sometimes affects to seem poor, though at other times, and in other respects, he would be thought rich; at the Lateran procession the new-elected pope scatters pieces of brass money among the people, saying, as Peter, whose successor he pretends to be, did, *Silver and gold have I none*; yet comes into great riches. These words may be applied spiritually, in a good sense; there are some who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and own it; they ingenuously express the sense they have of their own nothingness and unworthiness; they declare they have nothing, and can do nothing; they renounce all their own works in the business of salvation, and ascribe it wholly to the grace of God; they have very mean thoughts, and speak very meanly of themselves, as less than the least of saints, and the chief of sinners: yea, some carry the matter too far in the expressions of their poverty; will not be persuaded that they have the true riches of grace, at least will not own it; but give way to their doubts and fears about it, when they are possessed of much; to whom some think these words are applicable. However, they are to such who are *poor in spirit*, as before described; who have, notwithstanding, *great riches*, the riches of justifying grace, the riches of Christ's righteousness; the riches of pardoning grace, a large share thereof, much being forgiven them; the riches of sanctifying grace, faith, more precious than that of gold that perisheth, with all other graces; the riches of spiritual knowledge, preferable to

gold and silver: they have Christ, and all things along with him; they have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have a large estate, an incorruptible inheritance, in heaven; they have a better and a more enduring substance there; *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. v. 3. it is prepared for them, and given to them; compare with this 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Ver. 8. *The ransom of a man's life are his riches, &c.*] As Benhadad's were to him, when he was in the hands of the king of Israel, 1 Kings xx. 34. and as the treasures the ten men had in the field were to them, for the sake of which Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them not, Jer. xli. 8. This is the advantage of riches; when a man is taken captive in war, or by pirates, or is in the hands of thieves and robbers, he can redeem himself by his money; or when his life is in danger by diseases, he can procure healing medicines; or by famine, he can get food to preserve it, when a poor man cannot: but this is not to be done always, and is only to be understood of a temporal life; for, as to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the soul of man, that requires a greater ransom-price than such corruptible things as silver and gold; nothing short of the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for that, Job xxxvi. 18. Psal. xlix. 6—8. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Moreover, these words may not so much design the convenience as the inconvenience of riches to men; since these often invite thieves to assault their persons, and break into their houses, and threaten their lives; and put wicked men upon forming schemes, and drawing up charges and accusations against them, purely to get their money; which bring their lives into danger, and which they can only redeem by their riches. *But the poor heareth not rebuke*; no charge and accusation is brought against him; no rebuke or reproof is given him; no notice is taken of him, because nothing is to be got from him; he may sleep with his door unlocked, thieves will give him no disturbance; he may travel upon the road without being bid to stand. Jarchi interprets this of him that is poor in the law; that hearkens not to reproofs and admonitions, given him to depart from evil: but rather it may be applied to the poor in spirit; who trust not in themselves and their own righteousness, but in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; who indeed hear the rebukes of good men, and take them kindly; and of bad men, and return not revilings for them; and also the rebukes of Providence, or the chastisements of their heavenly Father, yet they will never hear any rebuke in wrath from him here or hereafter; when the rich in their own conceit, who trust in their riches and righteousness, and think to ransom their souls from death by them, will have rebukes with flames of fire.

Ver. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth, &c.*] The light of joy and gladness, which is sown for them, and arises to them; the light of spiritual knowledge and experience they have; the light of sound doctrine; the light of good works, and a Gospel conversation; all this, as it is delightful to themselves and others, so it is increasing more and more to the perfect day, and it continues: so the Septuagint and

Arabic versions, *light is always for the righteous*; especially it will be in the latter day, and particularly in the New-Jerusalem state, when there will be no night, Rev. xxi. 23—25. *But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out*; the light of the righteous is like that of the sun, bright and pleasant; but the light of the wicked is like that of a lamp, lesser and not so agreeable, nor will it last; their prosperity is shortlived, their joy is but for a moment; the pleasures of sin are but for a season; their candle soon goes out; it is put out in obscure darkness, and they themselves are reserved to blackness of darkness, Job xviii. 5, 6. and xx. 5. Prov. xx. 20. as prosperous and flourishing as the kingdom of antichrist has been or is, it will be full of darkness, Rev. xvi. 10.

Ver. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention, &c.* Though it comes by other things, yet by this chiefly, and there are no contentions without it: or *truly, verily, certainly*^d, by *pride, &c.* Unless the words may be better rendered, *an empty man through pride will give contentions*^e, or make it; such as are empty of knowledge and wisdom; and such are generally the most proud, and are very apt to raise contentions, and foment divisions: contentions in families, in neighbourhoods, in towns, cities, and countries, and in churches, are generally owing to pride; what contentions and confusions has the pride of the pope of Rome brought into kingdoms and states, into councils, and into the church of God! *But with the well-advised is wisdom*; such who are humble and modest will seek counsel of God; will consult the sacred oracles, and ask advice of those who are superior to them in knowledge and understanding; and so will neither raise contentions themselves, nor join with those that make them, but do all they can to lay them; these shew that true wisdom is with them.

Ver. 11. *Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, &c.* In an unjust or unlawful way, either by robbery and theft, as Aben Ezra; or by fraud and tricking, by overreaching and circumventing others; or by vain practices, as by cards or dice, and by stage-playing and the like; or by curious and illicit arts, as necromancy, judiciary astrology, and such-like things; whatever is gotten in a wicked way very seldom lasts long; it lessens by little and little till it comes to nothing^f; see Jer. xvii. 11. and sometimes very quickly and suddenly, all at once; thus that mass of riches which the church of Rome has got together by her vain and wicked practices, by her idolatry, pardons, and indulgences, will in one hour come to nought, Rev. xviii. 17. *But he that gathereth by labour shall increase, or that gathereth by the hand or in it*^g; by hand-labour in an honest way, or with the diligent hand, which maketh rich; who labours with his hand and gets by it sufficient to support himself and his family, and to give to the necessities of others; who does not lay it up in coffers, but keeps it in his hand to distribute; such generally thrive and flourish: some copies read it, *he that gathereth, וְעַל הַיָּד*^h, that gathers and puts it into the hands of others; that

liberally communicates to the poor; he shall increase, as commonly liberal persons do; so the Targum, "he that gathereth and giveth to the poor shall increase in substance."

Ver. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, &c.* That is, the object hoped for; if it is not enjoyed so soon as expected, at least if it is delayed any length of time, the mind becomes uneasy, the heart sinks and fails, and the man is dispirited and ready to despond, and give up all hope of enjoying the desired blessing; whether it be deliverance from any evil, or the possession of any good. *But when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life*; when that which is hoped and wished for, and has been long expected and desired, comes; when there is an accomplishment of men's wishes, it is as grateful to him as the tree of life was in Eden's garden; it gives him an unspeakable pleasure and delight. This may be applied to many things in a spiritual way, as to the first coming of Christ; and some have thought this is greatly regarded and chiefly intended; this was the object of the hope of Old-Testament saints; and it was hoped for on a good foundation, on the promise of God, which was frequently repeated, enlarged, and confirmed; yet this promised and hoped-for blessing was deferred a long time; from the first promise of it to its accomplishment were four thousand years; though not deferred longer than the appointed time, yet longer than the saints expected, and which sometimes made their hearts sick; they became weak and feeble, fearful and dispirited, lest it should never come to pass, which occasioned fresh promises and assurances to them; see Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. Hab. ii. 3. Mal. iii. 1. but when *the desire* came, Christ the desired object; and who is desirable for the excellencies of his person, his mediatorial qualifications, the work of redemption and salvation he came about, and the blessings he brought with him; and who is *the desire of all nations* that was to come, Hag. ii. 7. it was exceeding joyful and delightful to all that expected him, and were looking for redemption in Israel, or Christ; *the coming desire*ⁱ, as it may be rendered, is *a tree of life, or lives, the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal*; see ch. iii. 18. It may be applied also to the spiritual presence of Christ, and communion with him; this is what believers, being sometimes without, hope and wait for; and sometimes it is deferred a long time, at least they think it so, which makes them very uneasy, and even sick of love, as the church was, Cant. v. 8. but when what they so earnestly desire is granted them, it is as if they were in Eden's garden, or rather in the paradise above, plucking the fruit of the tree of life: likewise it may be applied to eternal glory and happiness; this is the object of hope in the present state; it is sometimes impatiently expected and desired, and the language of the soul is, *Why is his chariot so long in coming? come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*; and when this desired happiness is enjoyed, how sweet will it be! and the sweeter for having been so much longed and wished for; and when the saints will be in the paradise of God, and

^d וְכֵן certe, Vatablus; vero, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus.

^e Levis per superbiam dabit contentionem, Gejerus.

^f De malo questis vix gaudet tertius heres, Horat.

^g וְעַל הַיָּד in manu, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; super manu, Gossuetius, p. 210; super manum, Michaelis, Schultens.

^h Usque ad manum, Montanus.

ⁱ וְעַל הַיָּד desiderium veniens, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Coeccius, Michaelis, Schultens.

eat of the tree of life in the midst of it, and never hunger more.

Ver. 13. *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, &c.*] The word of God. Either Christ, the essential Word; which must be a great evil, considering the dignity of his person; great ingratitude, considering the grace of his office; very dangerous, considering what a quick, sharp, and powerful Word he is: and such may be said to despise him who despise his ministers, and the Gospel preached by them; and which may be meant by the word, that being the word of God and of truth, the word of righteousness, peace, life, and salvation; and is to them that perish foolishness; and to whom it is so, they shall perish, and be punished with everlasting destruction, for their contempt of it, and disobedience to it. Or the written word may be meant, the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and therefore ought to be had in the greatest reverence; and yet are greatly slighted and despised by the man of sin and his followers; who set up and prefer their unwritten traditions to them, and so make them of none effect: such are all false teachers, that despise or abuse them, they bring destruction to themselves; for so the words may be rendered, *shall bring destruction to himself*, or shall receive detriment from it: so the Targum, from the word itself; the Syriac version, *by it*; and the Arabic version, *by the commandment itself*; by the threatenings in it, and according to them: or, *because of it*; because of the contempt of it. *But he that feareth the commandment*; receives the word with reverence, trembles at it; fears God, and keeps his commandments, and fears to break them: *he shall be rewarded*; with good, as the Targum adds; for in keeping the commandments of God there is great reward: or, *shall enjoy peace, or be in safety*^k; for great peace have they which love the law of God, and serve it: or, *shall be sound, and in health*^l; when those that despise it *shall be corrupted*^m; as the word in the preceding clause may be rendered.

Ver. 14. *The law of the wise is a fountain of life, &c.*] Or *doctrine*ⁿ; the doctrine of those who are taught by the word, and are wise unto salvation; the words or doctrines of the wise, which are given forth by one Shepherd; the instructions of such who are like Scribes, well instructed themselves unto the kingdom of heaven: these are as a fountain of living water; which are the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving and refreshing the souls of weary saints; and bring life and immortality to light, and point and lead to eternal life: and so direct souls to depart from the snares of death; the snares of sin, Satan, and the world, to shun and avoid them; with which men being entangled, are brought to destruction and death.

Ver. 15. *Good understanding giveth favour, &c.*] A good understanding in things natural and civil gives

favour among men; and so a good understanding in divine and spiritual things gives a man favour among religious people, makes him taken notice of by them, and acceptable to them: and such an understanding no man has, unless it be given him; and such appear to have one that do the commandments of God, Psal. cxi. 10. The Israelites, for having and keeping the statutes of the Lord, were accounted by others a wise and an understanding people; and Christ, as man, when he increased in wisdom, grew in favour with God and men. It may be rendered, *good doctrine*, as the Vulgate Latin version, or *right doctrine*, as the Arabic version, *gives grace*^o; is the means of conveying grace into the hearts of men, and of increasing it. What if it should be rendered, *grace gives a good understanding*^p? since it is certain, that an understanding to know God and Christ is a gift of grace, 1 John v. 20. *But the way of transgressors is hard*; ungrateful and unpleasant to themselves and others; it is a rough and rugged way, in which they stumble and fall; and cannot walk with pleasure themselves, when their consciences are awakened, and they are loaded with guilt, and filled with terror; and must be very disagreeable to those who have seen the evil of them.

Ver. 16. *Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge, &c.*] In order to get more, and with men of knowledge for the same purpose; all he does is with knowledge and discretion; he does not meddle with things, nor has he to do with persons, he knows nothing of; he both acts and speaks with knowledge, cautiously, wisely, considering well time, place, and persons: and every wise and good man deals with evangelical knowledge, and studies to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the issue of which is life eternal. *But a fool layeth open his folly*; or *spreads*^q it; and exposes it to the view of every one, by his foolish talk and indiscreet actions.

Ver. 17. *A wicked messenger falleth into mischief, &c.*] That does not do his errand right, nor deliver his message faithfully; such an one falls from the degree of honour in which he was into disgrace; he loses his master's favour that sent him; he is degraded from his post and office: he falls *by evil, or into evil*^r; by the evil of sin, into the evil of punishment. So wicked ministers and false teachers, such who transform themselves into the apostles of Christ and into angels of light, who corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully; these shall receive their just condemnation; since they do a deal of mischief to the souls of men, and therefore shall fall into mischief themselves, even into everlasting perdition. *But a faithful ambassador is health*; or, *an ambassador of truths*^s; one that performs his embassy well and truly, he is salutary, useful, and profitable to himself, and to them that send him: the word for ambassador is translated an *hinge*, ch. xxvi. 14. and he is so called, because upon his nego-

^k כִּי יִשְׁלַח in pace versabitur, V. L. fruetur pace, Vatablus; donatur pace, Junius & Tremellius; pacabitur, Cocceius; salvabitur, Syriac version.

^l פְּרִיָּהּ Sept.

^m יִפְּרֵט יִפְּרֵט petur, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

ⁿ תּוֹרָה doctrina, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

^o חן gratiam, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis, Schultens.

^p Successum bonum dat gratia, Junius & Tremellius.

^q פִּרְשׁ expandit, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^r בָּרַע in malum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^s אֲמוֹנִים legatus veritatum, Montanus, Vatablus.

ciations abroad the hinge of political affairs turn at home. An ambassador of Christ, who does his work faithfully, keeps back nothing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God; the sound doctrines he delivers are health to the souls of men; as well as he is approved of God and Christ; and so it turns to his own health and advantage, who will hear one day said unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant.*

Ver. 18. *Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, &c.*] Of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; the instruction of wisdom, the instruction of the Gospel, in things relating to their present spiritual peace, and to their eternal welfare: such generally come to poverty and disgrace in this life, and to everlasting shame and contempt in another; see ch. v. 11, 12. *But he that regardeth reproof; the reproof of the word, and of the ministers of it, and of all good men, and takes it kindly, and acts according to it, shall be honoured:* with riches and reputation; if not with the riches of this world, yet with the riches of grace and glory; and shall have honour among the saints, and from the Lord himself; who will honour those that honour him, as they do who regard the reproof and instruction of his word, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, &c.*] Whether the desire be after riches and honour, after wisdom and knowledge; or after the best things, the knowledge of God, and communion with him; an interest in Christ, and the blessings of his grace, as pardon, righteousness, &c. and a right and title to eternal glory and happiness, and the enjoyment of that: and how sweet are these things the soul desires, when they are possessed! see ver. 12. such are *the desires of the godly*, as the Septuagint render the word. *But it is abomination to fools to depart from evil;* they cannot bear the thoughts of parting with their lusts; they are so delightful to them, not knowing any thing of the sweetness of the things before mentioned; and which they can never enjoy without departing from sin, to which they are exceedingly averse.

Ver. 20. *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, &c.*] Who is a companion of them that fear the Lord; converses frequently with them in private about spiritual and experimental things, and walks with them in public in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; he by those means grows wiser and wiser, gains a large stock of spiritual knowledge and experience; for this holds good both in natural and spiritual wisdom, a man of any capacity at all will improve by keeping wise company. *But a companion of fools shall be destroyed;* the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *shall become like them;* be a fool as they are, and grow still more and more foolish. The Septuagint version is, *shall be known;* known by the company he keeps to be a fool also: or rather, *shall be broken;* ruined and destroyed, *evil communications corrupt good manners,* and so bring to ruin and destruction.

Ver. 21. *Evil pursueth sinners, &c.*] They pursue the

evil of sin, and the evil of punishment pursues them, and at last overtakes them; their damnation, though it may seem to slumber and linger, it does not; it is upon the full speed after them, and will quickly seize upon them. Some understand this of the evil of sin in the conscience, which pursues the sinner, and fills him with terror. *But to the righteous good shall be repaid;* or, *he shall recompence the righteous with good*^u, or good to the righteous; that is, God shall do it; for all the good things they have done, from a right principle, and to a right end; which good works of theirs will pursue and follow them; and for all the ill things they have suffered for righteousness-sake, a reward of grace, though not of debt, will be given them; as they have had their evil things here, they shall have their good things hereafter; as well as are often recompenced in this life, either in themselves or in their posterity, as follows.

Ver. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children, &c.*] He not only has a sufficiency for the present support of himself and family; but is so prospered and succeeded, as to leave an inheritance after him; and which is continued to and enjoyed, not only by his immediate offspring, but theirs also; for being got honestly, it wears well; see ver. 11. *And the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just;* the riches which wicked men get are laid up in the purposes of God for good men; and in his providence they are translated from the one to the other: so the riches of the Egyptians were designed for the Israelites, and by the providence of God were put into their hands; see Job xxvii. 16, 17. Prov. xxviii. 8. Eccl. ii. 26.

Ver. 23. *Much food is in the tillage of the poor, &c.*] The poor are generally employed in tilling land; from whose labours in ploughing and sowing much food arises to men, bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: or a poor farmer, that has but a small farm, a few acres of land, to till; yet through his diligence and industry, with the blessing of God upon it, he gets a comfortable livelihood for himself and family; much food, or a sufficiency of it for the present year, and seed to sow his land again the following year. *But there is that is destroyed for want of judgment;* or discretion in tilling his land, and managing the affairs of husbandry, which is God's gift, Isa. xxviii. 26. or, *through injustice*^v, as some render it; for want of doing that which is right and just; not paying his labourers their hire and wages, as he ought, and so it is blasted, and comes to ruin. This may be spiritually applied. By the *poor* may be understood the poor ministers of the Gospel; who, though poor, make many rich, 2 Cor. vi. 10. much spiritual food is to be had under their labours and ministrations, they being employed in cultivating the churches: or else the poor saints and poor churches themselves may be meant; who are tilled by them, among whom is plenty of spiritual provisions; as in the poor Protestant churches, who, though in the wilderness, are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, when there is no food in the apostate

^u עֲרִיבֵי כֹנֶרֶת, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; conquisibitur, Cocceius; frangetur, Michaelis; infringetur, Schultens, so Ben Melech.

^v וְזֶמְרָתוֹ יִשְׁלַם טוֹב & justis reddet bonum, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; justos remunerabit Deus bono,

Michaelis; justis autem bonum rependet, Tigurine version, Piscator, so Cocceius.

^w וְזֶמְרָתוֹ יִשְׁלַם טוֹב ob non jus, Vatablus; i. e. ob injustitiam, Michaelis; sine justitia, Gejerus.

church of Rome: and so by the *tillage* may be meant the church of Christ itself, which is *God's husbandry*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. his agriculture, his tillage, his arable land; which he has separated and distinguished from the wide world, and employs his power and care about. For he is the husbandman, John xv. 1. it is he that breaks up the fallow ground of men's hearts; that makes the ground good which he tills; who sows the seed of the word, and the seed of his grace there; who waters it with the dews of his grace, and causes his people to grow as the corn, and ripens them for glory: and when the harvest is come, the end of the world or of life, he sends his reapers, his angels, to gather them, the wheat, into his garner. And he employs the ministers of the word as under-husbandmen, as labourers under him and with him; these are the ploughmen that hold the plough of the Gospel, and manage that; these are his seedsmen that go forth, bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it under his direction; and these water the ground that is sown and planted; their doctrines distil as the rain and dew upon it; and these bring in their sheaves with joy at last. And now in this tillage is much spiritual food; in God's husbandry, the church, are the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men, salutary, wholesome, nourishing, and strengthening food; here Christ, the best food, is set forth to faith to feed upon; true and real food, meat and drink indeed, spiritual, savoury, satisfying food; soul-reviving, refreshing, and nourishing food; here is plenty of it, enough and to spare: and yet there are some that are destroyed for want of spiritual judgment and discerning; who take the poison of false teachers instead of the food to be had under a Gospel ministry; so the followers of the man of sin are given up to believe a lie and be damned; for want of judgment, they receive the grossest absurdities, and perish; as others also give in to damnable heresies, denying the deity, satisfaction, and righteousness of Christ, and other soul-destroying notions; see Hos. iv. 6. 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Ver. 24. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son, &c.*] Who withholds or withdraws his rod of correction, which is in his hand, which he has power to use, and ought to exercise at proper times; he, instead of loving his son, may be said to hate him; for such fond love is no better than hatred; and, if he really hated him, he could scarcely do a more ill thing by him than not to correct him for a fault; which was the sin of good old Eli, and both he and his sons suffered for it. *But he that loveth him*; that has a true love for his son, and a hearty concern for his welfare and future good; he will regulate his affections by his judgment, and not give way to a fond passion, to the prejudice of his child: but he *chasteneth him betimes, or in the morning**; in the morning of his infancy, before vicious habits are contracted, or he is accustomed to sinning, and hardened in it; or as soon as a crime is perpetrated, before it is forgot or repeated: or every morning, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; that is, continually, as often as it is necessary, or as faults are committed.

Ver. 25. *The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul, &c.*] He is blessed with a sufficient competency to live upon; and he is contented with what he has, and uses it moderately; he has enough to eat, and is contented with his portion, and eats no more than sufficient; he eats to the satisfying of his appetite, and no more; he does not indulge to luxury and excess: and so as to spiritual things; he eats to the satisfying of his soul, with the goodness and fatness of God's house, with the word and ordinances, with the promises of the Gospel, and with Jesus Christ, the bread of life; with these he is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness. *But the belly of the wicked shall want*; not only spiritual food, which he has no appetite for, but corporeal food; he shall starve in the midst of plenty, not having a heart to put that food into his mouth, and fill his belly with it, as nature requires, through his covetousness; or, having spent his substance in rioting and wantonness, wants bread to satisfy the craving of his appetite.

C H A P. XIV.

Ver. 1. *EVERY wise woman buildeth her house, &c.*] Not only by her fruitfulness, as Leah and Rachel built up the house of Israel; but by her good housewifery, prudent economy; looking well to the ways of her household; guiding the affairs of her house with discretion; keeping all things in a good decorum; and bringing up her children in virtue, and in the fear and admonition of the Lord. So Christ, who in this book goes by the name of *Wisdom*, or the wise woman, builds his house upon himself, the Rock; and all his people on their most holy faith, by means of the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances: he guides and governs his house, where he is, as a son in it and over it; and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, taken care of, and wisely and plentifully

provided for: and so Gospel ministers, who are wise to win souls, being well instructed in the kingdom of God; these *wise women*?, so it is in the original text, or *wise virgins*; these wise master-builders lay the foundation Christ ministerially, and build souls on it; and speak things to the edification of the church and people of God, and the building of them up in faith and holiness. *But the foolish plucketh it down with her hands*; the Vulgate Latin version adds, *being built*; this she does by her idleness and laziness; by her lavish and profuse way of living; by her negligence and want of economy; by her frequenting playhouses, and attention to other diversions; and so her family and the affairs of it go to wreck and ruin. Thus the apostate church of Rome, who is called a *woman*, and may

* מוֹרֵר *mane castigat eum*, *Monster*; *maturnat ei disciplinam*, *Michaëlis*.

† חֲכָמִים *sapientes mulieres*, *Munster*, *Baynus*; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

be said to be a *foolish* one, being a wicked one and a harlot; see Rev. xvii. 2, 3. pulls down the true church and house of God with both hands, as much as in her lies, by her false doctrines, and superstitious worship and idolatry; and by her murders and massacres of the saints, with the blood of whom she is said to be drunk; nay, not only pulls it down with her hands, but treads upon it with her feet, Rev. xi. 2. So likewise all false teachers do as this foolish woman does, by their impure lives and impious doctrines, defile the temple of God, subvert the faith of many; by means of whom the tabernacle of David, or house of God, is fallen down; the ruins and breaches of which Christ will repair in the latter day.

Ver. 2. *He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord, &c.*] It is plain that the fear of the Lord is upon the heart and before the eyes of such that walk according to the word of God, with a sincere desire to glorify him; for it is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil, and because of that they cannot do what others do; and therefore when a man walks uprightly, and his conversation is in all holiness and godliness, it shews that the fear of God has a place in his heart, which influences his outward behaviour. *But* he that is *perverse in his ways despiseth him*; either God himself, whom the upright walker fears; for he that acts perversely, contrary to the law of God, or transgresses that, and goes out of the way, despises God the lawgiver, tramples upon his authority, stretches out his hand, and commits acts of hostility against him; and he that perverts the Gospel of Christ despises his ministers, and despises Christ himself, and him that sent him. Or else the meaning is, that such a perverse walker despises him that fears the Lord; so Aben Ezra interprets it; and such are generally the contempt of wicked men: to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version, "he that walks in a right way, and fears God," is despised by him that walks in an infamous way;" but the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *is despised*; meaning the perverse man.

Ver. 3. *In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, &c.*] A proud tongue, or a tongue speaking proud and haughty things; with which foolish or wicked men smite others, and wound and hurt their reputation and credit, and in the issue hurt themselves also; their tongue is not only a rod to others, but a scourge to themselves, or is the cause of evil coming upon them; such was the tongue of Pharaoh, as Jarchi on the place observes, Exod. v. 2. and of those the psalmist speaks of, Psal. lxxiii. 9. and particularly of antichrist, whose mouth is opened in blasphemies against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, Rev. xiii. 5, 6. *But the lips of the wise shall preserve them*: from speaking such proud and haughty things against God and men; or from being hurt by the tongues of men or their own; yea, what comes out of their mouth is confounding and destructive to their enemies, Rev. xi. 5.

Ver. 4. *Where no oxen are the crib is clean, &c.*] Or empty², so Jarchi and Aben Ezra. Oxen were

used in Judea in several parts of husbandry; in ploughing the land, bringing home the corn, and in threshing or treading it out, Deut. xxii. 10. and xxv. 4. Now where these are not, or not used, where husbandry is neglected, there is no straw in the crib for beasts, and much less food for men; or rather, no corn or *wheat*^a on the *threshing-floor*^b, or in the barn, granary, or storehouse; for so the same word is rendered, Jer. I. 26. and in this manner it is interpreted by Gersom here, as also by Kimchi^c: the word translated *clean* is used for *wheat*, Amos viii. 5. By supplying the negative particle, the whole may be rendered thus; *where no oxen are, the threshing-floor, granary, or storehouse, is without wheat*; or there is no wheat on the floor, or in the barn, &c. the note of Jarchi on the text is, "where there are no scholars of the wise men, there is no instruction in the constitutions." But much better is the mystical sense, thus; that where there are no ministers of the Gospel, there is no food for souls. Oxen are an emblem of faithful and laborious ministers. The ox was one of the emblems in the cherubim, which design Gospel ministers; the names by which oxen are called agree with them. Here are two words used of them in the text; the one comes from a root which signifies to *teach, lead, guide, and govern*; and the same word for *oxen* signifies *teachers, leaders, guides, and governors*; names which most properly belong to ministers of the word: the other word comes from a root which signifies to *see, to look*; because these creatures are sharp-sighted. Ministers are seers, overseers, and as John's living creatures in Rev. iv. 6. one of which was an ox, were full of eyes, within, and before, and behind. So ministers of the word had need to have good sight, to look into the Scriptures, and search them; to look to themselves and to their flock, and to look out to desecrate enemies, and danger by them; and to look into their own experience, and into things both past and to come. There is a likeness in ministers to these creatures, as to the nature of them; they are clean creatures, as such should be that minister in holy things; and chew the cud, as such should revolve in their minds and constantly meditate upon divine things; and, like them, are patient and quiet under the yoke; and are not only strong to labour, but very laborious in the word and doctrine; submit to the yoke, draw the plough of the Gospel; bring home souls to Christ, to his church, and to heaven; and tread out the corn, the mysteries of grace, out of the sacred writings. Now where there are no such laborious and diligent ministers of the word, as there are none in the apostate church of Rome, there is no spiritual food for the souls of men; but a famine of the word, and men perish for lack of knowledge. *But much increase is by the strength of the ox*; as there is a large increase of the fruits of the earth, through the tillage of it by proper instruments; as by the strong and laborious ox, whose strength is employed in ploughing the ground^d, and treading the corn; which is put for all means of husbandry, where that is used

^a בָּרָא vacuum, V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Amama; so the Syriac version.

^b Triticum, Bayanus.

^b אֲרָא area, Gussetius, p. 14. Michaelis, Schultens.

^c Sopher Shorash. ראָ אֲרָא & R. Joseph Kimchi in Abendana in loc.

^d Fortis arat valido rusticus arva bove, Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 2. v. 14.

or not: so through the unwearied labours of Gospel ministers, the blessing of God attending them, there is much spiritual food; see ch. xiii. 23. There is an increase of converts, a harvest of souls is brought in; and an increase of gifts and of grace, and of spiritual light and knowledge, and plenty of provisions; which spiritual increase, through the ministry of the word, is owing to God, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

Ver. 5. *A faithful witness will not lie, &c.*] For that would be contrary to his character as faithful; and as he will not witness to a falsehood upon oath in a court of judicature, so neither will he tell a lie in common conversation. This may be applied to Gospel ministers, who are witnesses of Christ; the Gospel they preach is a testimony concerning him, and they bear a faithful witness to the truth; nor will they, knowingly and willingly, deliver out a falsehood, or a doctrinal lie, since *no lie is of the truth*: the character of a faithful witness is given to Christ, Rev. i. 5. and iii. 14. who is a witness of his father's love and grace, of his mind and will, and of the doctrines of the Gospel relating to himself, and the method of salvation by him; and he is faithful to him that appointed him; nor can he nor will he lie, for he is truth itself. *But a false witness will utter lies; or blow^c them out, and spread them abroad in great plenty; he will not stick to tell them, and, having no conscience, will utter them as fast as he can, with all boldness and confidence; for one that fears not to bear testimony to a falsehood upon oath, will not scruple to lie in common talk. Or the words may be rendered, he that uttereth lies will be a false witness; he that accustoms himself to lying, in his conversation with men in private company, will become a false witness upon occasion in a public court of judicature: such an one is not to be depended on; lesser sins lead to greater, lying to perjury. So false teachers, and the followers of the man of sin, speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, which they are given up to believe; and such as do so are false witnesses, deceivers, and antichrist.*

Ver. 6. *A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not, &c.*] So the scornful Greeks, that scoffed at the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, sought natural wisdom, and thought they found it, and professed they had; but professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and with all their wisdom knew not God; and false teachers, that boasted of their evangelical wisdom, and of their great attainments in Gospel light, and derided others, were ever learning, and never came to the knowledge of the truth; and the scornful Jews, that mocked at the true Messiah, would seek him, the Wisdom of God, as they have done, and find him not; see John vii. 34. Men often seek for wisdom in a wrong way and manner, in the use of wrong means; and seek it of wrong persons, and to wrong ends and purposes, and so seek amiss and find not; and some seek for wisdom, even evangelical wisdom, in a scornful manner, in a jeering sarcastic way, as the scoffing Athenians did, Acts xvii. 18, 19. and find it not, nor Christ the substance of it, and so perish for lack of knowledge of him. *But knowledge*

is easy unto him that understandeth; the knowledge of Wisdom, or of Christ, is easy to him that has a spiritual understanding given him; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, is easy to him to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; there is nothing perverse or froward in the words and doctrines of Christ; they are all plain to a man whose understanding is opened by the spirit of God; especially such as relate to the glory of Christ's person, and to the way of life and salvation by him; see ch. viii. 8, 9.

Ver. 7. *Go from the presence of a foolish man, &c.*] A wicked one; avoid him, shun his company, depart from him, have no fellowship with him, it being dangerous, infectious, and hurtful. *When thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge; when it is observed that his lips pour out foolishness, what is corrupt and unsavoury, unchaste and filthy; what does not minister grace to the hearers, nor is for the use of edifying, nor any ways improving in useful knowledge, but all the reverse: the Targum is, "for there is no knowledge in his lips," in what is expressed by them; some understand this ironically, and render the words thus, go right against a foolish man^d; join in company with him, and thou shalt not know the lips of knowledge, or learn any thing by him; if you have a mind to be ignorant, keep company with a foolish man; so Jarclui and Gersom: or rather to this sense the words may be rendered, go to a foolish man, seeing thou knowest not the lips of knowledge^e, since thou dost not approve of wise and knowing men, whose lips would teach knowledge; and despisest the Gospel, and Gospel ministers; go to the pope of Rome, as Cocceius on the text observes, and hear him, what his holiness and infallibility says; or some other false teacher.*

Ver. 8. *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, &c.*] The way of his calling, in which he should abide, and how to manage it in the best manner: the way of his duty, that he may walk inoffensively both towards God and men; and the way of life and salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, which to understand and to walk in is the highest wisdom and prudence. *But the folly of fools is deceit: or the wisdom of fools, which the opposition requires, and is meant, and is what the Holy Ghost calls folly, as elsewhere, 1 Cor. iii. 19. this is itself deceit; it is science, falsely so called; it lies in tricking and deceiving; and the issue of it is, not only the deceiving of others, but themselves also: such is the folly of the man of sin and his followers, which lies in deceiving the inhabitants of the earth with their sorceries and superstitions, with their lying wonders and miracles; see 2 Thess. ii. 10. Rev. xiii. 14. and xvii. 23.*

Ver. 9. *Fools make a mock at sin, &c.*] At sinful actions, their own or others; they make light of them, a jest of them, call evil good, and good evil; take pleasure in doing them themselves, and in those that do them; yea, sport themselves with the mischief that arises from them unto others; they make a mock at reproofs for them, and scoff at those that instruct and rebuke them; and laugh at a future state, and an awful

^a אֲבִי אֶתְּרֵס כֹּסֶם בִּינֹו סְטוֹלִידוֹ, Montanus; אֲבִי, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^b אֲבִי אֶתְּרֵס כֹּסֶם בִּינֹו סְטוֹלִידוֹ, e regione viri stultii, De Dieu; so Crussetius, p. 495. and Schultens.

^c Abi ut stes coram viro stolido, Cocceius.

judgment they are warned of, and in a scoffing manner say, *where is the promise of his coming?* Some, as Aben Ezra observes, render it a *sin-offering*; and interpret it of the sin-offerings and sacrifices under the law, as derided by wicked men; but may be better applied to the sin-offering or sacrifice of Christ, who made his soul an offering for sin, to make satisfaction and atonement for the sins of his people; this is mocked at by false teachers, who deny it; and is exposed to derision and contempt by the Papists, by their unbloody sacrifice of the mass, and by their merits and works of supererogation, which they prefer to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ. The words may be rendered, *sin makes a mock of fools*^b; it deceives them, it promises them pleasure, or profit, or honour, but gives them neither, but all the reverse. *But among the righteous there is favour*; they enjoy the favour of God and man; or *there is good will*^c, good will towards men; they are so far from making a mock at sin, and taking delight in the mischief that comes by it to others, that they are willing to do all good offices unto men, and by love to serve their friends and neighbours: or *there is acceptance*^d; they are accepted with God upon the account of the sin-offering, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ, which fools mock and despise.

Ver. 10. *The heart knoweth his own bitterness, &c.*] Or *the bitterness of his soul*^e, the distress of his conscience, the anguish of his mind; the heart of man only knows the whole of it; something of it may be known to others by his looks, his words, and gestures, but not all of it; see 1 Cor. ii. 10. Job xxiii. 2. bitterness of soul often arises from outward troubles, pains, and diseases of body, losses, crosses, and disappointments, 1 Sam. i. 10, 15. Job iii. 20. and vii. 11. and x. 1. Isa. xxxviii. 15, 17. Sometimes it is upon spiritual accounts; but this is not the case of every heart; men may be in the gall of bitterness, and have no bitterness of soul on account of it; the sensualist and voluptuous worldling feels nothing of it, nor the hardened and hard-hearted sinner; only such who are awakened and convinced by the spirit of God; to these, as sin is a bitter thing in itself, it is so to their taste; it makes bitter work for repentance in them; it brings trembling and astonishment on them; fills them with shame and confusion of face, causes self-loathing and abhorrence, and severe reflections upon themselves; seeing sin in its own colours, they are cut to the heart and killed with it; they are pressed down with the guilt of sin, and the load of it; and, having no views of pardon, are in that distress and bitterness of soul which no tongue can express nor heart conceive but what has felt the same. *And a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy; or mingle himself with it*^m; he does not share in it or partake of it; this is more especially true of spiritual joy, which, as it is unspeakable to the man that possesses it, it passes the understanding of a natural man; he can form no true idea of it: spiritual joy is what a sensible sinner partakes of upon the Gospel, the joyful sound of salvation, reaching his ears and his

heart, at the revelation of Christ in him and to him, as a Saviour; when an application of pardoning grace is made to his soul, and he has a view of the complete righteousness of Christ, and his interest in it, and can see all his sins expiated and atoned for by his sacrifice; when he is favoured with a sight of the fulness of grace in Christ, and of the spiritual and eternal salvation he has wrought out for him; and likewise when he is indulged with a visit from him, and enjoys communion with him; and when he has a glimpse of eternal glory, and a well-grounded hope of right unto it, and meetness for it: now a stranger, one that is a stranger to God and godliness, to Christ and the way of salvation by him, to the Spirit and his work of grace upon the heart, to the Gospel and the doctrines of it, to his own heart and the plague of it, to the saints and communion with them; knows nothing at all of the above joy, nor can he interrupt it, nor take it away.

Ver. 11. *The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, &c.*] Houses built to perpetuate their names and eternize their memory; and which, though built high and stately, strong and firm, yet by one accident or another shall come to ruin, when they imagined they would continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations, Psal. xlix. 11. or their families shall become extinct, none to be their heirs and inherit their estates, and transmit their name to posterity; or the substance of their house, their riches and wealth, especially that gotten dishonestly, shall waste away: and in a spiritual sense the house or hope of such, as to eternal salvation, being built on the sand, or something of their own, their external duties, or an outward profession of religion, shall not stand; though they lean upon it and would hold it fast, but it shall fall, and great shall be the fall of it; and particularly the apostate church of Rome, that synagogue of Satan, that habitation of devils, that hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean bird, shall be overthrown with an utter overthrow, shall fall and never rise more, Rev. xviii. 2. *But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish*: their low and mean cottages, which are run up slightly, like tents movable from place to place, yet shall be established, ch. xv. 23. their families shall become numerous like a flock of sheep, Psal. cvii. 41, 42. and their substance increase; they shall flourish in worldly things and grow rich, or however in spirituals, in gifts and grace; shall flourish in the courts of the Lord, and tabernacles of the most High, like palm-trees and cedars; for the allusion is to the flourishing of trees, Psal. xcii. 13, 14. especially they will be in such flourishing circumstances in the latter day, when antichrist will be destroyed, and when the tabernacle of God will be with men, Psal. lxxii. 8. Rev. xxi. 3.

Ver. 12. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, &c.*] As the way of sin and wickedness does, it promising much carnal pleasure and mirth; there is a great deal of company in it, it is a broad road, and is pleasant, and seems right, but it leads to destruction; so the way of the hypocrite and Pharisee that

^a אֵשׁוּן אֵשׁוּן אֵשׁוּן φρονεα χλαμαζει ἀληθινότητα, Aquila & Theodotion in Drusius; delictum illud fatuus, Gejerus.

^b רָוַח benevolentia, Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^c אַכְזָב Acceptatio, Cocceus, Gussetius.

¹ אַמְרִיטוּדִינֵה אַנִּיָּאֵה סוּעָה, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^m לֹא יִחְמַדְבֵּי לֹא יִחְמַדְבֵּי non immisceat se, Michaelis, so Tigurine version; non miscabit sese, Baynus; non intemisceat se, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

trusts to his own righteousness, and despises others, and even the righteousness of Christ; or however does not submit to it, but tramples upon him, and counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and so is deserving of sorer punishment than the profane sinner; yet on account of his good works, as he calls them, fancies himself to be in a fair way for heaven and happiness; so Popery, through the pomp and grandeur and gaudiness of worship, through the lying miracles of the priests, and the air of devotion that appears in them, seems to be a right way. *But the end thereof are the ways of death*: which lead unto eternal death; for that is the wages of sin, let it appear in what shape it will.

Ver. 13. *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, &c.*] As Belshazzar's was in the midst of his feast and jollity, when he saw the writing on the wall; so sin may stare a man in the face, and guilt load his conscience and fill him with sorrow, amidst his merriment; a man may put on a merry countenance, and feign a laugh, when his heart is very sorrowful; and oftentimes this sorrow comes by sinful laughter, by mocking at sin and jesting at religion. *And the end of that mirth is heaviness*: sometimes in this life a sinner mourns at last, and mourns for his wicked mirth, or that he has made himself so merry with religious persons and things, and oftentimes when it is too late; so the end of that mirth the fool in the Gospel promised himself was heaviness, when his soul was required of him; this was the case of the rich man who had his good things here, and his evil things hereafter.

Ver. 14. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways, &c.*] One that is a backslider at heart, whose heart departeth from the Lord; in whom there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; and indeed apostacy begins at the heart, and shews itself in the life and conversation: there may be a backsliding when the heart does not wickedly depart from God; but is through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation; from which backslidings the Lord's people are recovered, and which are healed by his grace; but here such an one is meant who willingly and heartily backslides; and such shall have the reward of their hands and actions given them, or the full and due punishment of their sins; they shall have their bellyful of their own wicked ways and works, the just recompense of reward for them. *And a good man shall be satisfied from himself*: shall eat the fruit of his own doings, shall be blessed in his deeds, and have peace and satisfaction therein; though not salvation by them, or for them: he shall be satisfied with the grace of God bestowed on him and wrought in him; and, from a feeling experience of the grace of God within him, shall be satisfied that he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance; or he shall be satisfied *from above himself*^m, from the grace that is in Christ, out of the fulness which is in him; and shall be filled with all the fulness of God he is capable of; and especially in the other world, when he shall awake in his likeness. The Targum is, "a good man shall be satisfied with his fear;" and so the

Syriac version, with the fear of his soul; it may be rendered, as by the Vulgate Latin version, *a good man shall be above him*ⁿ; that is, above the backslider; shall be better filled, and be more happy than he.

Ver. 15. *The simple believeth every word, &c.*] Every thing that is said to him, every story that is told him, and every promise that is made him; and so is easily imposed upon, and drawn in to his hurt: every word of God, or doctrine of his, ought to be believed; because whatever he says is true, he cannot lie; every word of his is pure, free from all error and falsehood; it is a tried word, and found to bear a faithful testimony, and, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is ^sgreater; besides, his word is profitable for instruction, and for the increase of peace, joy, and comfort, and is effectual to saving purposes: every word of Christ is to be believed, who is a teacher sent from God; whose mission is confirmed by miracles, and whose doctrine is not his own as man, but his father's; he is the faithful witness, and truth itself; his words are more than human, and besides are pleasant and wholesome: and every word and doctrine of his apostles, who received their mission, commission, and doctrines from him, is also to be believed; but every spirit, or every one that pretends to be a spiritual man, and to have spiritual gifts, is not to be believed; but the words and doctrines of ordinary men and ministers are to be first tried by the unerring rule of the sacred Scriptures; yea, the doctrines of the apostles were examined by them; see 1 John iv. 1. Acts xvii. 11. they are *simple*, weak, silly, foolish persons, that believe all they hear, whether right or wrong, true or false, good or hurtful; they are children in knowledge, who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and are deceived with good words and fair speeches, Ephes. iv. 14. Rom. xvi. 18. This truly describes the followers of the man of sin; who give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; who believe as the church believes; that believe with an implicit faith; believe every word and doctrine the pope and councils say they should, though ever so absurd; as, for instance, the doctrine of transubstantiation: these are *simple* or fools with a witness, who give up their understandings, and even their senses unto, and pin their faith upon, another. *But the prudent man looketh well to his going; or its going*^o; to the course and tendency of the word he hears, or the doctrine which is proposed to his faith; he considers well whether it is agreeable or is contrary to the perfections of God; whether it derogates from the glory of any of the divine Persons; whether it makes for the magnifying the riches of God's grace, and for the debasing of men; or for the depreciating of the one, and setting up of the other; and whether it is a doctrine according to godliness, or no, that tends to promote holiness of heart and life, or to indulge a loose conversation; and according to these criteria he judges and determines whether he shall believe it or no. Or, *to his going*; that is, to the going of the deceiver and impostor; he observes narrowly the methods he takes, the artifices he makes use of, the cunning sleight by which he lies in

^m מעליו de super eo, Montanus; de super semet, Schultens.
ⁿ Et super eum erit vir bonus, V. L. De Dieu.

^o לאשרו grossum illius, sc. sermonis, Baynus, so some in Mercetius.

wait to deceive; how craftily he walks, and handles the word of God deceitfully; and he takes notice of his moral walk and conversation, and, as our Lord says, *ye shall know them by their fruits*, Matt. vii. 16. Or else the meaning is, and which seems to be the sense of our version, that he looks well unto, and carefully observes, his own goings; he takes heed to his ways, that they are right; that he is not in ways of his own devising and choosing, but in God's ways; in the way of life and salvation by Christ; in the path of faith on him, and in the way of holiness; that he has chosen the way of truth, and walks in that; and that every step he takes in doctrine is according to the word of truth; and that whatever he does in worship is agreeably to the divine rule; and that every path of duty he treads in is according to the same, and as he has Christ for a pattern, and the Spirit for a guide; and that his walk is as becomes the Gospel, worthy of the vocation wherein he is called, and that it is circumspect and wise; and such a man may be truly said to be a *prudent* man: the Targum is, "he attends to his good;" and so he does.

Ver. 16. *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, &c.*] He fears God, and is careful not to offend him; wherefore he departs from sin, stands at a distance from it, abstains from all appearance of it; being influenced by the goodness and grace of God unto him, he fears the Lord and his goodness, and therefore avoids all occasions of sinning against him: his motive is not merely fear of punishment, as Jarchi, but a sense of goodness; and now, as it is through the influence of divine fear that men depart from evil; so to do this shews a good understanding, and that such a man is a wise man, ch. xvi. 6. Job xxviii. 28. *But the fool rageth, and is confident;* he fears neither God nor men, he sets his mouth against both; he *rages* in heart, if not with his mouth, against God and his law, which forbid the practice of such sins he delights in; and against all good men, that admonish him of them, rebuke him for them, or dissuade him from them: and *is confident* that no evil shall befall him; he has no concern about a future state, and is fearless of hell and damnation, though just upon the precipice of ruin; yet, as the words may be rendered, *he goes on confidently*, nothing can stop him; he pushes on, regardless of the laws of God or men, of the advices and counsels of his friends, or of what will be the issue of his desperate courses in another world.

Ver. 17. He that is *soon angry dealeth foolishly, &c.*] A man that is quick and short, of a hasty spirit, and presently discovers anger and resentment in his face; he says and does many foolish things, which he afterwards is sorry for, and repents, and is ashamed of; and he is to be pitied and forgiven. *And a man of wicked devices is hated;* one that hides his anger, covers his resentment, contrives schemes to revenge himself, and waits an opportunity to put them in execution, is justly hateful to God and men.

Ver. 18. *The simple inherit folly, &c.*] It is natural and hereditary to them, they are born like wild asses' colts; the foolish sayings and proverbs, customs and

practices, of their ancestors, though they have been demonstrated to be mere folly, yet these, their posterity, approve them; they love, like, and retain them as their patrimony, Job xi. 12. Psal. xlix. 13. Such are the foolish traditions, customs, principles, and doctrines, of the church of Rome, handed down from father to son; and because Popery is the religion they have been bred and brought up in, though so foolish and absurd, they will not relinquish it. *But the prudent are crowned with knowledge;* natural, civil, and spiritual, especially the latter; evangelical knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of Gospel truths; they are honoured with an acquaintance with them; and they esteem the knowledge of these above all things else, and reckon all things else but loss and dung in comparison of them; they are as a crown unto them, and the knowledge of them is the way to the crown of life; yea, is itself life eternal, Phil. iii. 8. John xvii. 3. Or, *they crown themselves with knowledge*?; they labour after it, pursue it with eagerness, follow on to know the Lord, and attain to a large share of it; surround, encompass, and lay hold upon it, and gird themselves about with this girdle of truth. Or, *they crown knowledge*?; do honour to that, by putting it in practice; by adding to it temperance, and every virtue, and by bringing others to it; and are an ornament to it in their lives and conversation; they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

Ver. 19. *The evil bow before the good, &c.*] Wicked men before good men. This, as Jarchi observes, respects future time; even the latter-day glory, or the spiritual times of the Messiah, when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most High: for though there may have been some few instances of this kind, as Haman bowing before Mordecai, and the Heathen emperors before Constantine; and there may be some now, in some cases where obligation requires; yet this is far from being general, as it will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; when the sons of those that afflicted the church will come bending to her, and they that have despised her shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet; and even great personages too shall bow down and lick the dust of her feet; the kings of the earth, who before have been in confederacy with antichrist, and have persecuted the saints, now shall hate the whore, and honour the true church of Christ: this will be in the Philadelphian state, which is the same with the spiritual reign of Christ; such who called themselves Jews, and are not, shall come and worship before the feet of the church, and own that she and her members are the favourites of heaven, Dan. vii. 27. Isa. xlix. 23. and lx. 14. Rev. iii. 9. *And the wicked at the gates of the righteous;* or, *come to the gates of the righteous*, as the Syriac version supplies it; they come and knock there, stand and wait, or lay themselves down; become prostrate and humble supplicants for relief and protection, as beggars do. This may also respect their attendance at Wisdom's gates, at the gates of Zion, on public ordinances, for counsel and instruction, which before they despised, ch.

* יתחנן כתרין רעת imponent coronam sibi scientiam, Moutanus; coronant se scientia, Picator, so Ben Melech.

* Coronabant scientiam, Bayanus; ornant scientiam, Druaius.

viii. 34. The Septuagint version is, *shall serve thy gates*; that is, at them; see Isa. lx. 11, 12.

Ver. 20. *The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, &c.*] As well as of strangers; that is, he is shy of him; he does not care to take any notice of him, or be friendly with him, lest he should be burdensome to him. Poverty brings a man into contempt and disgrace; the same man, in affluence and indigence, is respected or disrespected: this is true, as Gerson observes, of a man that is poor, whether in money or in knowledge, in his purse or in his understanding. *But the rich hath many friends*; or, *many are the lovers of the rich*: for the sake of their riches; either for the sake of honour or profit, or because the rich want nothing of them, or because they themselves may gain something by them: this also is observed by the above Jewish commentator to be true of the rich in substance or in wisdom; but the former sense is best; for a wise man, if poor in the world, is but little regarded.

Ver. 21. *He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth, &c.*] He that despiseth his neighbour in his heart, speaks slightly of him, overlooks him, is not friendly to him, will neither converse with him, nor relieve him in his necessity; for it seems to be understood of his poor neighbour; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *he that despiseth the poor*; that despises him for his poverty; because of his pedigree and education, and the low circumstances he is in; or on account of his weakness and incapacity, or any outward circumstance that attends him; such an one sins very greatly, is guilty of a heinous sin; and he will be reckoned and dealt with as a sinner, and be condemned and punished, and so be unhappy and miserable. *But he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*; or, “that gives to the poor,” as the Targum; who has compassion on him in his distress, and shews it by relieving him: he that shews favour to the meek and humble ones, as the word^a may be rendered, and as they generally are that are in affliction and poverty, for these tend to humble men; and such who regard them in their low estate are *happy* or blessed; they are blessed in things temporal and spiritual, and both here and hereafter; see Psal. xli. 1—3. Matt. v. 7.

Ver. 22. *Do they not err that devise evil? &c.*] Certainly they do; they go astray from the right way, from the word of truth, from the Gospel of Christ, who contrive schemes to commit sin, and do mischief to their neighbours; or who *plough*^b it, and sow it, and expect a fine harvest; but they will be mistaken, and find it will not turn to account, and that they have took a wrong course, and have gone out of the way: none more mischievous devisers or contrivers of evil than the Papists, and none more sadly and fatally err. *But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good*; who devise liberal things, to do good to the poor and needy; to their neighbours, their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians: such receive grace and *mercy* at the hands of God, and his *truth* will ap-

pear in making good all promises to them; mercy and truth will preserve them from the evil way, and guide them in the right way, so that they shall not err as others do; neither from the doctrines of grace and truth, nor from the practice of them.

Ver. 23. *In all labour there is profit, &c.*] Or *abundance*^c; much is got by it, food, raiment, riches, wealth, wisdom, honour; either with the labour of the hands or head, and nothing is to be got without labour; and he that is laborious in his calling, whether it be by manual operation, working with his hands that which is good; or by hard study, much reading, and constant meditation, is like to gain much for his own use and the good of others. *But the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury*; or *want*^d, of food and raiment, the common necessities of life; a man that spends his time in idle talk, boasting of what he can do and does, and yet does nothing, is in a fair way to come to beggary: so all talk about wisdom, and knowledge, and religion, without making use of the proper means of improvement, tends to the poverty of the mind; and generally they are most empty of knowledge, natural or spiritual, that talk and brag most of it; empty casks make the greatest sound; good discourse, wholesome words, sound doctrine, thoroughly digested, tend indeed to edification, to the enriching of the mind; but vain words, the enticing words of men's wisdom; logomachies, striving about words to no profit; and all great swelling words of vanity, which are all mere lip-labour; they tend to spiritual poverty and leanness of soul.

Ver. 24. *The crown of the wise is their riches, &c.*] Riches being used by them to increase and improve their knowledge and wisdom, and for the good of men, are an honour to them, and give them credit and reputation among men of sense and goodness; see Eccl. vii. 11, 12. *But the foolishness of fools is folly*; mere folly, extreme folly, just the same as it was; riches make them never the wiser; yea, their folly is oftentimes made more manifest through the ill use they make of their riches; spending them in the gratification of their sinful lusts; and making no use of them for their own improvement in knowledge, or for the good of their fellow-creatures. The Targum is, “the glory of fools is their folly;” and that is no other than their shame, and in which they glory; such fools are wicked men.

Ver. 25. *A true witness delivereth souls, &c.*] Or, *a witness of truth*^e: one that witnesses truth upon oath in a court of judicature, he *delivers souls*; men, not one man only, but many; a whole family, or more, in danger of being ruined; he delivers them, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, *from evils*; from evil charges and accusations brought against them; from the oppression of their enemies, from the loss of their good name, and from ruin and destruction, that otherwise would have come upon them; he delivers their *lives*^f, as it may be rendered, in danger of being

^a וְאִתּוֹ עֵשֶׂר רִבִּים & amatores divitiis spissi, Schultens; dilectores autem divitis multi sunt, Piscator. Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos, Ovid. Trist. Eleg. 8. Dat census honores, census amicitias, ib. Fasti, l. 1. 1. 10 Phocylides, v. 925, 926.

^b עֲנוּיִם modestorum, Montanus, Mercerus; mansuetos, Cocceius.

^c אֲרָנִים arant, Baynus; arantibus, Amama; verbum proprie significat arare, Piscator.

^d אַבּוּנְדַנְטִיא abundantia, Tigurine version, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejevus. ^e לְמַחְסוֹר ad defectum, Pagnius, Montanus; ad egestatem, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius.

^f אִתּוֹ אֵת testis veritatis, Montanus, Cocceius, Schultens.

^g אִתּוֹ נַפְשׁוֹ animam pro vita usurpari auctum, Gejevus.

lost by false accusations: so a witness of the truth of Christ, or a faithful minister of the Gospel, not only saves himself, but them that hear him; and is an instrument of delivering the souls of men from error and damnation. *But a deceitful witness speaketh lies; boldly, openly, by wholesale; he blows them out², to the ruin of the good names and characters, and to the destruction of the lives, of the innocent; and so a false teacher, one that lies in wait to deceive, speaks lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal lies, to the ruin of the souls of men.* The Targum is, "he that speaketh lies is deceitful;" he is *deceit*³ itself, as in the Hebrew text. Such is the man of sin, and such are his emissaries.

Ver. 26. *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, &c.*] Such who fear the Lord may be confident that he has a love to them, a delight in them; that his eye is upon them, and his heart towards them; and will communicate every needful good to them, and protect and defend them: or the Lord himself that is feared, who is the object of fear, called the fear of Isaac, Gen. xxxi. 42. he is a strong tower, a place of defence to those that fear him and trust in him, ch. xviii. 10. *And his children shall have a place of refuge;* the children of God, as those that fear him are; the Lord is a place of refuge to them, from the avenger of blood, from the vindictive justice of God; from the storm and tempest of divine wrath, and from the curses of a righteous law; as well as from the rage and persecutions of men.

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, &c.*] Where the true fear of God is, there is a real principle of grace, which is a *well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life;* eternal life is connected with it; it makes meet for it, and issues in it: or the Lord, who is the object of fear, he is the fountain of life: as of natural, so of spiritual and eternal life; spiritual life springs from him, is supported and maintained by him, the consequence of which is life everlasting. *To depart from the snares of death:* sins, transgressions, as *Aben Ezra* interprets it; these are the works of men's hands, in which they are snared; these are the cords in which they are holden, and so die without instruction; the wages of them are death, even death eternal: likewise there are the snares of the world and of the devil, temptations to sin, with which being insnared, lead to death; now the fear of the Lord is a means of delivering from and of avoiding those snares, and so of escaping death.

Ver. 28. *In the multitude of people is the king's honour, &c.*] For it is a sign of a good and wise government, of clemency and righteousness being exercised, of liberty and property being enjoyed, of peace, plenty, and prosperity; which encourage subjects to serve their king cheerfully, and to continue under his reign and government peaceably; and which invites others

from different parts to come and settle there also; by which the strength and glory of a king are much increased. This is true of the King of kings, of Jesus Christ, who is King of saints; his honour and glory, as Mediator, lies in a large number of voluntary subjects, made *willing* to serve him *in the day* of his power upon them, as numerous as the drops of the morning-dew; such as he had in the first times of the Gospel, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; and as he will have more especially in the latter day, when those prophecies shall be fulfilled in Isa. lx. 4—8. and so this is interpreted of the King Messiah, in an ancient writing^b of the Jews. *But in the want of people is the destruction of the prince;* or, the consternation^c of him; if his people are destroyed in wars his ambition or cruelty has led him to; or they are driven out from his kingdom by persecution or oppression; hence follows a decay of trade, and consequently of riches; uncultivation of land, and so want of provision: in course of time there is such a decrease, that, as there are but few to carry on trade and till the land, so to fight for their prince, and defend his country; wherefore, when attacked by a foreign power, he is thrown into the utmost consternation, and is brought to destruction. This will be the case of the prince of darkness, the man of sin, antichrist; who, though however populous he may be, or has been, ruling over tongues, people, and nations, yet ere long he will be deserted by them; one nation after another will fall off from him; they and their kings will hate him, make him bare and desolate, and burn him with fire, Rev. xvii. 15, 16. Some render it, *the consternation of leanness*^d; such consternation as causes leanness in a king.

Ver. 29. *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, &c.*] Or *long in wrath*^e; it is long before he is angry; he is long-suffering, bears much and long, is very patient; such an one appears to understand himself and human nature, and has a great command over his passions; which shews him to be a man of great wisdom and understanding. *But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly:* or is *short of spirit*^f; is soon angry; presently discovers resentment in his words, looks, and gestures; such an one *exalts folly*, prefers it to wisdom, sets it above himself, and makes it his master: or he *lifts it*^g up; exposes his folly to public view, so that it is seen of all men to his disgrace.

Ver. 30. *A sound heart is the life of the flesh, &c.*] A heart made so by the grace of God, in which are sound principles of truth, righteousness, and holiness; these preserve from sin, and so from many diseases; whereby the life of the flesh or body is kept safe and sound, or that is kept in health and vigour; or a *quiet heart*^h; a heart free from wrath, anger, and envy, and such-like passions and perturbations; this contributes much to the health of the body, and the

² עָפַף *effat*, Tigurine version, Piscator, Gejerus; *spirat*, Schultens; *effabit*, Montanus.

³ זָוָה *dolus*, Montanus, Vatablus; *fraus*, Cocceius.

⁴ Zohar in Exod. fol. 67. 3. 4.

⁵ חִסְדָּת *formidat principes*, Tigurine version; *conservatio*, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

⁶ *Consternatio maciei*, Gassettina, p. 785. *consternatio tabifici*, Schultens; *contritio maciei*, Gejerus; *terror tenuitatis*, Mercurus e Gerson.

^a עֵינֵי אִיר *longus iris*, Vatablus; *longus naribus*, Montanus; *longus narium*, Schultens.

^b רִחוּ *brevis spiritus*, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Mercurus, Michaelis; *curtus spiritus*, Schultens.

^c מִרְוֵם *attollit*, Mercurus, Piscator; *alte proclamat*, Schultens; *elevat*, Bayanus.

^d מִרְוֵם *cor levis*, Bayanus; *cor lenis*, Mercurus; *cor lenitatis*, Gejerus, so Ben Melech.

comfort of life: or a *healing heart*, or *spirit*¹; that is humane, kind, and friendly; that pities and heals the distresses of others, and makes up differences between persons at variance: such an one is *the life of flesh*², as in the original text; or of men, of the same flesh and blood; the life of others, as well as of his own flesh; such an one contributes to the comfortable living of others as well as of himself. *But envy the rottenness of the bones*; a man that envies the happiness and prosperity of others, this preys upon his own spirits, and not only wastes his flesh, but weakens and consumes the stronger parts of his body, the bones; it is as a *moth* within him, as the Arabic version: the Targum is, “as rottenness in wood, so is envy in the “bones;” hence Ovid³ calls it *livor edax*, and so Martial⁴.

Ver. 31. *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker, &c.*] That does him any injury, either by scoffing at him, and reproaching him for his poverty; or by vexatious law-suits; or by withholding from him his wages; or not giving him that relief which he ought: such an one not only injures the poor man; but reproaches God that made him, not only a man, but a poor man; and who is the Maker of the rich man also, ch. xxii. 2. *But he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor*; he that is desirous of honouring God, and glorifying him, will give of his substance to the poor; having compassion on him in his necessitous circumstances, will relieve him; and in so doing he honours God, whose image the poor man bears, and who has commanded him so to do. The words may be rendered, *he that hath mercy on the poor honoureth him*; that is, his Maker: so the Targum, “he that hath mercy on him that suffers in—jury honoureth him.”

Ver. 32. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, &c.*] That is, at death, as the opposite clause shews; he is driven out of the world, his heart is so much set on; from all the good things of it, which are his all, his portion; from the place of his abode, which will know him no more; and from all his friends and acquaintance, with whom he has lived a merry and jovial life; he shall be driven out of light into darkness, even into outer darkness; into hell, which is a place of torment, a prison, a lake burning with fire and brimstone; he shall be driven as a beast is driven; and such is the man of sin, who shall go into perdition; and such are his followers, and that will be their end, Rev. xiii. 1, 11. and xvii. 8. he shall be driven sore against his will; the righteous depart, and desire to depart; but the wicked are driven, and go unwillingly, with reluctance; they would fain flee out of the hand of God, and yet they have no power to withstand; go they must, they are driven forcibly and irresistibly: and it may also denote the suddenness of their death, and the swiftness of their destruction. The driver is not mentioned; it may be understood of the Lord himself, who, in and by a storm of his wrath, hurls them out of their place; or of death, as having a commission from him, when a

man has no power over his spirit to retain it; or of angels, good or bad, employed by the Lord in driving their souls to hell upon their separation from their bodies. The circumstance, *in his wickedness*, may denote their dying in their sins, unrepented of, unforgiven, and without faith in Christ; in the midst of them, in their full career of sin, under the power, filth, and guilt of it; and as sometimes, in the horror of a guilty conscience, in black despair, without any hope or view of pardon, the reverse of the righteous man; and so will have all their wickedness to answer for, it being not taken away, but found upon them: or this may be expressive of the cause of the wicked man's being driven away, namely, his wickedness; for so it may be rendered and interpreted, *because of his wickedness*⁵; it is for that he shall die and go to hell: or it may be rendered, *into his evil*⁶; and so denote the everlasting punishment into which he shall go, being driven. *But the righteous hath hope in his death*; not in the death of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra, when he shall be delivered, and he can do him no more hurt; but in his own death; he dies as other men; his righteousness, though it delivers him from eternal death, yet not from a corporeal one; though the death of a righteous man is different from others; he dies in Christ, in the faith of him, and in hope of eternal life by him; and to die his death is very desirable: he has a hope of interest in the blessings of grace and glory; which is a good hope through grace; is wrought in him at regeneration; and is founded on that righteousness from whence he is denominated righteous, even the righteousness of Christ; and is of singular use and advantage to him in life: and this grace he exercises at death; it carries him through the valley of death, and above the fears of it; he hopes, though he dies, he shall rise again; and he hopes to be in heaven and happiness, immediately upon his dissolution, and to all eternity; he hopes to see God, be with Christ, angels and good men, for evermore. Jarchi's note is, “when he dies, he trusts “he shall enter into the garden of Eden, or paradise.”

Ver. 33. *Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding, &c.*] It is in his heart, as the treasury where it is laid up, and where it is kept in safety; here it lies hid and undiscovered, unmolested and undisturbed; no noise is made about it, or any ostentation of it; it dwells quietly and constantly there. *But that which is in the midst of fools is made known*; the least share of knowledge which such persons have, or think they have, does not lie long in the midst of them; they take every opportunity of shewing it to others, or of letting others know what they have attained to; and thereby, instead of getting the character of wise and prudent men, obtain that of fools; for, though a prudent man is communicative of his knowledge to others, it is at proper times, and in proper places, and to proper persons, which fools do not observe; but, without any manner of judgment or discretion, or regard to persons, places, and seasons, vainly thrust out their knowledge, and so proclaim

¹ Animus sanans, Junius & Tremellius, so the Tigurine version; sanator, Gusssetius, p. 800.

² חַיִּים בְּשָׂרָא וְחַיִּים בְּשָׂרָא, Montanus; vita carniū, V. L. Paganus, Michaelis.

³ Amorum, l. 1. Eleg. 15. v. 1. & de Remed. Amor. l. 1. in fine.

⁴ Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 21.

⁵ חַיִּים בְּשָׂרָא propter suam malitiam, Paginus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

⁶ In malum suum, Junius & Tremellius, Amama, so some in Mercerus.

their folly. The Syriac version is, "in the heart of fools it shall not be known;" it has no place there.

Ver. 34. *Righteousness exalteth a nation, &c.*] Administered by the government, and exercised by subjects towards one another; doing justice between man and man; this exalts a nation, as it did the people of Israel, whilst practised among them; this sets a people above their neighbours, and high in the esteem of God and men; and is attended with privileges and blessings, which make a nation great and honourable. Some understand this of alms-deeds, or beneficence to the poor; which, both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, is called righteousness; see Matt. vi. 1. and the note there. It may be put for the whole of true religion, which is an honour to a nation, where it obtains; and is what makes the holy nation, and peculiar people, so truly illustrious; and particularly the righteousness of Christ makes such who are interested in it really great and noble, and promotes and exalts them to heaven and happiness. *But sin is a reproach to any people;* where vice reigns, iniquity abounds, profaneness, impiety, and immorality of all sorts prevail, a people become mean and despicable; they fall into poverty and contempt; are neither able to defend themselves, nor help their neighbours, and so are despised by them. The word rendered *reproach* most commonly signifies *mercy* or *goodness*; and some render it, *and the mercy of a people is a sin-offering*; or as one; or it is so to the nations; it is as good as a sacrifice for sin, of which

the word is sometimes used, or better, more acceptable to God, who *will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; even beneficence and kindness to the poor, the same with righteousness, as before. I think it may be as well rendered, *the piety* or religion of the nations is *sin*; it being idolatry, as Aben Ezra observes: such is the religion of the antichristian nations, who worship idols of gold and silver; and though they may afflict themselves, as Gersoni remarks of the idolatrous nations, with fasting and penance, with whippings and scourgings; yet it is nothing else but sin, will-worship, and superstition.

Ver. 35. *The king's favour is toward a wise servant, &c.*] Who does his prince's business well, committed to him; manages all his affairs wisely and prudently; is diligent and careful to do every thing for the king's honour, and the good of his subjects; such an one has a share in royal favour, a place in the affections of his master; and is sure to be promoted to honour by him, and exalted to higher places of trust and profit, as well as to be protected and defended by him: so Christ, the King of kings, shews favour to his wise and faithful servants, Luke xii. 42—44. *But his wrath is against him that causeth shame;* who neglects his business, or does it foolishly; in such a manner as his prince is ashamed of him, and which brings shame and disgrace to himself; all which provokes the anger of his master, who discharges him from his service, and this fixes a mark of infamy upon him; see Luke xii. 45—48.

C H A P. XV.

Ver. 1. *A SOFT answer turneth away wrath, &c.*] Mild words, gentle expressions, delivered with kindness and tenderness, humility and submission; these will work upon a man's passions, weaken his resentments, and break and scatter the storm of wrath raised in his breast, just breaking forth in a very boisterous and blustering manner; so high winds are sometimes laid by soft showers. Thus the Ephraimites were pacified by Gideon's mild answer; and David by Abigail's very submissive and respectful address, Judg. viii. 1—3. 1 Sam. xxv. 25—32. *But grievous words stir up anger;* such as are rough and menacing, scornful and sneering, reproachful and reviling, proud, haughty, and overbearing; like those of Jephtha to the Ephraimites; and of the Ephraimites to the Gileadites; and of Nabal to David's servants, concerning him; and of Rehoboam, who answered the people roughly: in all which instances anger was stirred up, and either were or like to have been attended with bad consequences, Judg. xii. 1—4. 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11, 21, 22. 1 Kings xii. 13, 14. Or a word causing, or rather expressing, *grief*; upbraiding others with being the cause of grief to them.

Ver. 2. *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, &c.*] As the heart of a wise and good man is filled with useful knowledge, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; so he takes care to communicate it, at proper times and seasons, in proper places, and to proper persons; adapting it to their case and circumstances, so as it may be for their comfort, edification, and instruction, and minister grace unto them; which is using knowledge *well*, as the word ' signifies: such an use of it recommends it, and makes it appear beautiful and lovely, decorates and adorns it. Thus every good man, out of the good treasure of knowledge in his heart, brings forth his good things seasonably, to the use of edifying; in like manner, ministers of the word, scribes well instructed in the things of God, bring forth both new and old, to the profit of those to whom they minister; so Christ, as man and Mediator, had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls. *But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness;* their knowledge, as they take it to be, but it is no other than folly; this they throw out in great plenty, in a hurry, without fear or wit; they *bubble* it out, as the word ' signifies, as water out of a fountain; their

^p פְּחַתָּא לְאִמִּים חֲסֵדִי בENEFCENTIA EXPIATIO EST POPULI, Grotius; sacrificium expiatorium, Tigurine version; velut sacrificium pro peccato, Vatablus, Gejerus; gratuita beneficentia nationibus est aliud sacrificium peccati expiatorium, Gusssetius, p. 74.
^q Pietas nationum est peccatum, Munster, Mercerus; studium nationum peccatum, Cocceius.

^r דְּבַר עֵצִי V. L. verbum vel sermo doloris, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaëlis; vid. Gusssetium, p. 177.

^s וְיִשֶׁבֶט utitur bene, Castalio; pulchre, Vatablus.

^t יִפְּוֹץ effudit, ebullit, fundit, Vatablus; eructat, Junius & Tremelius, Piscator; ebullit, V. L. Tigurine version, Schultens; scaturire facit, Michaëlis.

hearts are full of it, and their mouths proclaim it, ch. xii. 23.

Ver. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, &c.*] Which are expressive of his omniscience, of the full, clear, distinct, and perfect knowledge, which he has of all creatures and things; so that nothing is hid from him, but all open and manifest to him; as they are to Christ the essential Word, Heb. iv. 13. and also of the providence of God with respect to all persons in general, and to his own people in particular; and as he is infinite and immense, omnipresent and in all places of the world, so his omniscience and providence reach everywhere, to places most distant and secret, and to persons in them, who cannot be concealed from him, since he fills heaven and earth, Jer. xxiii. 23, 24, *beholding the evil and the good*; meaning not evil things and good things, though that is true; the one he beholds with dislike, the other with pleasure; but evil men and good men: he beholds them as from a watch-tower, as the word ³ signifies, from above, from heaven, where he is; see Psal. xxxiii. 13. 14. By *evil men* may be meant both profane sinners and carnal professors; such as are more openly wicked, and declare their sin, as Sodom, or more secretly so; he sees into all the wickedness there is in their hearts, all their secret devices against his people; the works done by them in the dark, as well as their more open ones; and his eyes are upon all of them, to bring them into judgment at the last day: his eyes are particularly on the proud, to abase them; such as are under a disguise of religion, and have a form of godliness, he has his eyes upon; he sees through all their disguises; he knows on what foot they took up their profession; he discerns between that and true grace; he sees how they retain their lusts with their profession; observes the springs and progress of their apostacy; and will fix his eyes on the man without a righteousness, not having on the wedding-garment, and order him into outer darkness. He also beholds *good men*; he sees all their bad things, their sins, and corrects them for them; their good things, their graces, and the exercise of them; their good works, the fruits of his own grace; their weaknesses, and supports and strengthens them; their wants, and supplies them; their persons, and never withdraws his eyes from them: these are on them continually, to protect and defend them: nor will he leave them till he has brought them safe to heaven; see 1 Chron. xvi. 9.

Ver. 4. *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, &c.*] A tongue that delivers out salutary instructions, wholesome advice and counsel; a *healing tongue* ⁴, as it may be rendered, which pacifies contending parties, and heals the divisions between them; to have the benefit of such a man's company and conversation is like being in paradise. Such is the tongue of a Gospel minister, which delivers out the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; sound speech and doctrines, which cannot be condemned; healing truths to wounded consciences, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement by the blood of Christ. These are the means of quickening dead sinners, reviving and com-

forting distressed ones, and shew the way of eternal life unto them. *But perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit*; impure, unchaste, unsavoury, and corrupt language, does mischief to the spirits of men; evil communications corrupt the heart and manners, defile the soul and the conversation; false and unsound doctrines eat as a canker; and as they make the heart of God's people sad, whom he would not have made sad; so they bring distress and despair into the spirits of others, and make sad wounds and breaches there, which are never healed, and that both in the spirits of speakers and hearers; for damnable heresies bring swift destruction on the propagators of them, and them that receive them.

Ver. 5. *A fool despiseth his father's instruction, &c.*] They are fools that despise any instruction that is wise, good, and profitable; and especially a father's instruction, whose love, tender affection, and care, will not suffer him, knowingly, to give any but what is good and wholesome: wherefore to despise it is not only a contempt of his authority, but a slight of his love; which are both very aggravating, and sufficiently demonstrate his folly; and of which he may be himself convinced when it is too late, and say, *how have I hated instruction and despised reproof?* He is a fool that despises the instruction of any one superior to him in years and experience; of ministers of the word; and especially of our Father which is in heaven, declared in the sacred Scriptures, which are written for instruction in righteousness. *But he that regardeth reproof is prudent*; the reproof of a father, whose corrections are to be submitted to, and received with reverence; and especially of the Father of spirits, whose rebukes are, in love, and for profit and advantage; yea, he is a wise man that regards the reproof of the word of God, and the ministers of it; and indeed of any Christian, whether his superior, equal, or inferior, as David did, Psal. cxli. 5.

Ver. 6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure, &c.*] God sometimes blesses the righteous with great riches, as he did Abraham; or, however, if they have but little, it is better than the riches of many wicked; because they have what they have with a blessing, and they are content with it: and they have abundance of spiritual treasure; they have God for their portion; Christ, and all good things along with him; the rich graces of the Spirit; a rich experience of the grace of God; and all this is but a pledge and earnest of what they shall possess hereafter. *But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble*; they have much trouble in getting their riches, by which they pierce themselves through with many sorrows; they have much trouble in keeping them; cannot rest nor sleep because of their abundance, lest it should be taken away from them; and they have much trouble in parting with them, when they are, by one providence or another, stripped of them; and, besides, they have them with a curse, and are ever attended with uneasiness, on one account or another.

Ver. 7. *The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, &c.*] Scatter it about for the benefit of others; they are communicative and diffusive of it unto others, that

³ מַדְבַּר prospectantes velut a specula, Michaelis; speculatores, Schultens; speculantes, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; speculatur, Cocceius.

⁴ מַדְבַּר sarrans, so some in Vatablus

fruit may abound to their account: so the first ministers of the Gospel diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel in every place; their words went into all the earth, and their sound to the end of the world; and so every Gospel minister will speak according to the oracles of God, and according to the abilities and measure of the gift which he has received; and to the utmost of his power feeds souls with knowledge and understanding. *But the heart of the foolish doth not so; does not disperse knowledge, for he has no solid substantial knowledge in him: or, the heart of the foolish is not right^x; it is full of folly and wickedness: or the heart of the foolish does not disperse that which is right^y; true and right things, and the knowledge of them; but, on the contrary, as in ver. 2, pours out foolishness.*

Ver. 8. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, &c.*] Even those sacrifices which were of divine appointment under the former dispensation, when offered by wicked men, without faith in Christ, without any sense of sin, repentance for it, and reformation from it; when these were used as a cloak for sin, under which they sheltered and satisfied themselves, and went on in sin; when they brought them with a wicked mind, as in ch. xxi. 27. when either what they brought were not according to the law, the lame and the blind; or were not their own, but robbery for burnt-sacrifice; or supposing that these would atone for their sins of themselves; when either of these, or all this, was the case, it was an abomination to the Lord; see Isa. i. 11—15. and lxi. 8. and lxvi. 3. Wherefore much more must Pagan sacrifices be an abomination to him; which were not of his appointing, and were offered to devils, and not to him; and which were many of them very inhuman and shocking; as giving a man's first-born for his transgression, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul: and so likewise Papal sacrifices, the sacrifice of the mass; the unbloody sacrifice, the offering up again of the body and blood of Christ, they pretend to; which, as it is wicked and blasphemous, is an abomination to the Lord, and perhaps is chiefly intended. Sacrifice may stand for every religious duty performed by a wicked man, being hypocritically done, and with no good view; and all their good works, which seem to be so; and are either not according to the word and will of God, being never commanded by him, of which sort are many among the Papists; or they are not done in faith, and so sin, and do not spring from love to God; but are done with a heart full of enmity to him, and are not directed to his glory: in short, whatever is done by them, let it have ever such an appearance of devotion and goodness; yet if it is placed in the room of Christ, and used to the setting aside of his righteousness, satisfaction, and sacrifice, it is an abomination to the Lord. *But the prayer of the upright is his delight:* the prayer of such, whose hearts are right with God; who have right spirits renewed in them; are Israelites indeed; have the truth of grace and root of the matter in them; are honest, sincere, and upright in heart: the prayer of such, which is an inwrought one, wrought in his heart

by the spirit of God, and so comes from God, and is his own breathing in him, must be well-pleasing to him; that which is fervent, earnest, and importunate, which cometh not out of feigned lips, but from the heart, and is put up with a true heart, in the sincerity of it; the prayer of faith, the cry of the humble; the prayer which is addressed to God as a Father, in the name of Christ the Mediator, which comes perfumed with the incense of his mediation, introduced with the celebration of the divine perfections, contains humble confessions of sin and unworthiness, ascribes all blessings to the grace of God, and expresses thankfulness for favours received, is very acceptable and delightful to God; though it is the prayer of a poor, mean, despicable creature in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others, Psal. cii. 17. and ix. 12. Cant. ii. 14. Luke xviii. 11—14. This stands opposed to the pompous rites and ceremonies, the gaudy worship and costly sacrifices, of wicked men; such as used by the Papists.

Ver. 9. *The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, &c.*] The way his heart devises, which he chooses and delights in, in which he walks; nor will he leave it, nor can he be diverted from it, but by the powerful grace of God. This is a way not good, but evil, and so an abomination to the Lord; and the whole tenour and course of his life, which is meant by his way being evil: hence his sacrifices, and all his external duties of religion performed by him, are abominable to the Lord; for, whilst he continues in a course of sin, all his religious exercises will be of no avail, cannot be pleasing and acceptable to God. *But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness;* either after a justifying righteousness; not the righteousness of the law, which the carnal Jews followed after, but did not attain unto; nor is righteousness to be had by the works of the law, nor any justification by it, nor can a man be acceptable to God on account of it; but the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out, and is revealed in the Gospel: to follow after this supposes a want of one; a sense of that want; a view of the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness; an eager desire after it, sometimes expressed by hungering and thirsting after it, as here by a pursuit of it; which means no other than an earnest and importunate request to be found in it: and such, as they shall be satisfied or filled with it, so they are loved by the Lord, and are acceptable to him through the righteousness they are seeking after: or else it may be understood of following after true holiness of heart and life, without which there is no seeing the Lord; and though perfection in it is not attainable in this life, yet a gracious soul presses after it, which is well-pleasing in the sight of God.

Ver. 10. *Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way, &c.*] The right way, the way of God; the way of his commandments: the Vulgate Latin version is, *the way of life;* the same with the way of righteousness, which apostates, having known and walked in, turn aside from; see 2 Pet. ii. 15, 21. And such deserve severe correction, the chastisement of a cruel one, correction in wrath and hot displeasure;

^x כן לא non erit rectum, Pagninus, Baynus; non est rectum, Piscator, Mercerus.

^y Spargit quod abest a recto, Junius & Tremellius, Amama; eventilant non rectum, Schultens, Cocceius.

which, when they have, is very disagreeable to them; they behave under it like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and yet they are but dealt righteously with. Or the words may be rendered, *he has had bad discipline or instruction² that forsakes the way*; due care has not been taken of him; he has not been properly instructed, nor seasonably corrected; had he, he would not easily have departed from the way in which he should go; see ch. xxii. 6. The Targum is, "the discipline of an evil man causes his way to err;" or him to err from his way. And *he that hateth reproof shall die*; that hates the reproof of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; as he may be said to do that neglects and rejects it, and does not act agreeably to it: and such a man, dying in impenitence and without faith in Christ, dies in his sins; and sometimes shamefully, or a shameful death, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, or an untimely one; as well as dies the second death, an eternal one.

Ver. 11. *Hell and destruction are before the Lord, &c.]* Or *the grave²*, which is the pit of destruction; where bodies being put, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms: this is known by the Lord, even the grave of every one from the beginning; the graves of Adam, Abel, Abraham; he knows where their dust lies, and will raise it up again at the last day. Hades, or the invisible state of the departed, as the Septuagint has it, is manifest before him; he knows where departed spirits are; what their condition and employment be; and so the place and state of the damned, known by the name of *hell*; and may be called *destruction*, where soul and body are destroyed by the Lord with an everlasting destruction; and is the destruction which the broad way of sin leads unto. Now though we know not where this place is, who are there, and what the torments endured in it; yet all is before the Lord, and known to him: *tophet* is ordained of old; everlasting fire is prepared by the Lord for devils and wicked men; see Job xxvi. 6. *How much more then the hearts of the children of men?* which, though desperately wicked, are known by him; who is the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men: he to whom hell is naked, and can look into that outer darkness, the blackness of darkness, can look into a man's heart, a second hell, in which all manner of wickedness is, and observe it all; he needs no testimony of man; he knows what is in man, all his secret thoughts, wicked purposes, designs, and devices; see Jer. xvii. 9, 10. John ii. 25. Heb. iv. 12, 13.

Ver. 12. *A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him, &c.]* He that makes a jest of religion; scoffs at godliness and godly men; treats the Gospel and the ministers of it with contempt; makes a mock at good men, and all that is good; a pestilent fellow, as the Vulgate Latin version: such an one not only does not love, for more is intended than is expressed; but hates him that reproves him, and especially if publicly, Amos v. 10. he thinks ill of him; bears him a grudge, and abhors him; and speaks evil of him, and reproaches him; and does all he can to the injury of his

person and name; hence the advice of the wise man, ch. ix. 7, 8. Some render it, *he loves not reproof himself, or to reprove himself³*; he does not care to look into his own heart and ways, or to call himself to an account for what he does; nor to check himself in the pursuit of sin, nor argue with and reprove himself for it. *Neither will he go unto the wise*; to the private houses of wise and good men; nor to the house of wisdom, or place of public instruction, where wise dispensers of the word give good advice and counsel; scorners do not choose to go to either, lest they should be reprov'd for their evil ways, and be advised to leave them; neither of which is agreeable to them; see John iii. 20, 21.

Ver. 13. *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, &c.]* Or, *a joyful heart⁴*; that is joyful in the God of its salvation; that rejoices in Christ Jesus; is filled with joy and peace through believing in him, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; that has a comfortable view of his justification by his righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, of the atonement of his sins by his sacrifice; to whom he has said, *be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*; who has peace in him, though tribulation in the world: as such a man's heart must be made glad, this will make his countenance cheerful, or cause him to lift up his head with joy; as it is in natural things, so it is in spiritual ones. *But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken*; a man is dejected, his spirits sink, and it is seen in his countenance: there is a great sympathy between the body and mind, the one is much affected by the other; when the heart is full of sorrow, the animal spirits are low, the nerves are loosened, the whole frame of nature is enfeebled, and the body emaciated; this is often the case through outward troubles⁴: physicians say⁵ that grief weakens the strength, and destroys the spirits, more than labour does. *The sorrow of the world worketh death*; and sometimes, through spiritual troubles, a sense of sin and guilt of it, a legal sorrow, which produces a legal contrition of spirit; and such a *wounded spirit who can bear?* This is the effect of a mere work of the law upon the conscience; and stands opposed to the spiritual joy, and the effects of it, the Gospel brings.

Ver. 14. *The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge, &c.]* He that has in his heart an understanding of divine and spiritual things, of the Gospel and of the truths of it, will seek earnestly and diligently in the use of proper means after more knowledge; as he will desire to know more of Christ, his person, offices, and grace, he will follow on to know him, and not be content with the present degree of knowledge he has attained unto; he will hear and read the word, and pray and meditate, in order to come to a more perfect knowledge of the son of God, and of those things which relate to his spiritual peace and eternal welfare. *But the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness*; on foolish talking and jesting; on foolish and unlearned questions; on foolish and false doctrines; on foolish and hurtful lusts; on wind and

² רעק fuit illi mala disciplina, vel castigatio, Bayanus.

³ שפחחן sepulchrum, Munster, Piscator, Mercerus, so Ben Melech.

⁴ רעק corripere se, Gejerus.

⁵ רעק לב cor gaudens, V. L. Baynus.

⁴ Frangit fortia corda dolor, Tibullus, l. 3. Eleg. 2. v. 6.

⁵ Fernel. Method. McCendi, l. 7. c. 9. p. 54.

ashes, a deceived heart having turned them aside: they take pleasure and satisfaction in those things; feed their fancy with them and feast upon them, which shews what fools they are; and such all unregenerate men be.

Ver. 15. *All the days of the afflicted are evil, &c.*] And some are afflicted all their days, from their youth up; so that not only the days of old age are evil days, in which they have no pleasure, but even the days of their youth; all their days, as Jacob says, *few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*, Gen. xlvii. 9. because they had been filled up with affliction and trouble of one sort or another. Or, *all the days of the poor*^f; either in purse, who want many of the good things of life; or in knowledge, as Gersom and Aben Ezra observe. *But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast*; a heart that has the kingdom of God in it, which lies not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: which has the love of God shed abroad in it by the Spirit, where Christ dwells by faith; and that lives by faith on him, and on the provisions of his grace; all this is a constant continual feast to a gracious soul, made joyful hereby.

Ver. 16. *Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.*] Not that a little is better than much of that which is good, as the things of this world are in themselves; poverty is not better than riches, simply considered; but as these are attended with different circumstances: if a man has but little of worldly substance, yet if he has the fear of God in his heart, and before his eyes; that fear which has God for its author and for its object, and which is itself a treasure; and may be here put for all grace, for the riches of grace saints are partakers of; such a man's little is better than another man's abundance without the fear of the Lord, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: for such a man, though he has but little, which is the common portion of good men, yet he does not lack; he has enough, and is content; what he has he has with a blessing, and he enjoys it, and God in it, and has communion with him; and has also other bread to eat, the world knows nothing of: and particularly having the fear of God, the eye of God is upon him with pleasure; his heart is towards him, and sympathizes with him in all his troubles; his hand communicates unto him both temporal and spiritual meat, which is given to them that fear the Lord; his angels encamp about him, his power protects him; his secrets are with him, and inconceivable and inexpressible goodness is laid up for him: wherefore he is better off with his little, having the fear of God, than another with his great abundance and affluence, being destitute of it: and besides, having a great deal of trouble along with his treasure; trouble in amassing and getting it together; trouble in keeping it from being lost, or taken away by thieves and robbers, for fear of which he cannot sleep; trouble through an

insatiable desire of having more; he has no rest nor peace because he has not so much as he would have, or as others have. Besides, he has what he has with a curse; God sends upon him cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all he sets his hand to, Deut. xxviii. 2. where the same word is used as here: and he has it also with the cry of the poor; so some render the word, *a noise or tumult*^g; and interpret it of the cries and tears of those that are oppressed and injured; so Jarchi and Gersom; or, *with terror*^h, as some render it; with the terrors of a guilty conscience, with the fear of hell and everlasting damnation. Better have a little with a good conscience, than ever so much attended with such circumstances; it is not any man's little, but the good man's little, that is preferable to the wicked man's much; see Psal. xxxvii. 16.

Ver. 17. *Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, &c.*] What Plautusⁱ calls *asperam & terrestrem cœnam*, a harsh and earthly supper, made of what grows out of the earth; which is got without much cost or care, and dressed with little trouble; a traveller's dinner, as the word^k signifies, and a poor one too to travel upon, such as is easily obtained, and presently cooked, and comes cheap. Now, where there are love and good nature in the host that prepares this dinner; or in a family that partakes of such an one, having no better; or among guests invited, who eat friendly together; or in the person that invites them, who receives them cheerfully, and heartily bids them welcome: such a dinner, with such circumstances, is better than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith: than an ox kept up in the stall for fattening; or than a fatted one, which with the ancients was the principal in a grand entertainment; hence the allusion in Matt. xxii. 4. Luke xv. 23. In the times of Homer, an ox was in high esteem at their festivals; at the feasts made by his heroes, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Ajax, an ox was a principal part of them, if not the whole; the back of a fat ox, or a surloin of beef, was a favourite dish^l. Indeed in some ages, both among Greeks and Romans, an ox was abstained from, through a superstitious regard to it, because so useful a creature in ploughing of the land; and it was carried so far as to suppose it to be as sinful to slay an ox as to kill a man^m: and Aratusⁿ represents it as not done, neither in the golden nor silver age, but that in the brassen age men first began to kill and eat oxen; but this is to be confuted by the laws of God, Gen. ix. 3. Deut. xiv. 4. and by the examples of Abraham and others. Now if there is hatred, either in the host, or in the guests among themselves, or in a family, it must stir up strifes and contentions, and render all enjoyments unpleasant and uncomfortable; see ch. xvii. 1. Eccl. iv. 6. but where the love of God is, which is better than life, and the richest enjoyments of it; which sweetens every mercy, and cannot be purchased with money; and secures the best of blessings, the riches of grace and glory, and itself can never be lost; where this is, the meanest diet

^f פנין pauperis, V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

^g תולדות tumultus, Tigurine version, Montanus, Vatablus; strepitus, Mercerus.

^h Terror, Aben Ezra.

ⁱ Capiteivi, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 80. & 2. Sc. 1. v. 37.

^k ארקות vinticum, Montanus, Asnana; comœtatus, Cocceius.

^l Iliad. 7. v. 320, 321. Odys. 4. v. 65. & 8. v. 60. Vid. Suidam in voce Οξοππος. Virgil. Æneid. 8. v. 189.

^m Ælian. 1. 5. c. 14. Plin. Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 45.

ⁿ Phœnomena, v. 139.

is preferable to the richest and most costly banquets of wicked men; who are hated and abhorred by the Lord, for their oppression and injustice, their luxury, or their covetousness; for poor men may be loved of God, and the rich be abhorred by him, Psal. x. 4. Luke xv. 19—23.

Ver. 18. *A wrathful man stirreth up strife, &c.*] A man of a wrathful disposition, of a furious spirit, of an angry temper; that is under the power and dominion of such a passion, and indulges it, and takes all opportunities to gratify it; he stirs up strife and contention where there was none, or where it was laid; as a man stirs up coals of fire and raises a flame; see ch. xxvi. 21. He stirs up strife in families, sets one relation against another, and the house in an uproar; he stirs up contentions in neighbourhoods, and sets one friend and neighbour against another, whence proceed quarrels and lawsuits; he stirs up strife in churches, breaks brotherly love, and causes animosities and divisions; he stirs up strife in kingdoms and states, whence come wars and fightings, confusion, and every evil work. *But he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife*: a man of a quiet and peaceable disposition, possessed of the true grace of charity; who is not easily provoked, long-suffering, bears and endures all things; he allays the heat of anger; he quenches the coals of contention; he calms the storm, and makes it quiet, as the word ° signifies; he “mitigates strifes raised,” as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; he composes differences, reconciles the parties at variance, and makes all hush and still; and so prevents the ill consequences of contention and strife.

Ver. 19. *The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns, &c.*] Or, *strewed with thorns*, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the Targum is, “the ways ° of the slothful are briars and thorns.” Either really being made so by his own conduct; who, by his slothfulness, has implicated and entangled himself in such difficulties, that he cannot extricate himself; his way is not passable, at least not very easily; it is as it were hedged up with thorns; see Hos. ii. 6. or in his own apprehensions; who raises such difficulties about doing business, which to him seem unsurmountable; at least which discourage him from attempting it, it being like breaking through thorns and briars; hence he will not plough because of the cold, nor go abroad because there is a lion in the streets, ch. xx. 4. and xxii. 13. and xxvi. 13. or the way of his duty, especially of virtue and religion, is as troublesome and disagreeable to him as breaking through a thorn hedge, or treading upon briars and thorns; to attend the duties of public worship, prayer, and hearing the word, is very irksome to him; to be present at family-worship, at prayer, and hearing the Scriptures or religious discourses read, is like sitting upon thorns unto him. This, as Aben Ezra observes, is to be understood of a wicked man, as the opposition in the next clause shews. *But the*

way of the righteous is made plain: it is a cast-up way, as the word ° signifies; a causeway, a highway, and a plain one, in which a truly righteous and good man finds no difficulty; yea, it is so plain, that men, though fools in other respects, shall not err therein, Isa. xxxv. 8. nor is it grievous and troublesome, but, on the contrary, very delightful, as the ways of Christ and wisdom are; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy, and his paths pleasant; and the righteous man walks at liberty and with pleasure in them; and without offence or stumbling, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it.

Ver. 20. *A wise son maketh a glad father, &c.*] See the note on ch. x. 1. *But a foolish man despiseth his mother*; that bore him and brought him up, and perhaps was too indulgent to him; which aggravates his sin and her sorrow; see the note on ch. x. 1. or causes her to be despised by others, as Jarchi interprets it; such a man's sin, which is great folly, and shews him to be a foolish man, is highly resented by the Lord, and will be severely punished; see ch. xxx. 17. The Targum is, “a foolish son despises his mother;” and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which makes the antithesis more clear; and the Hebrew text designs one grown up to man's estate.

Ver. 21. *Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom, &c.*] Or *that wants a heart* °, a wise and understanding one; by *folly* is meant sin, for all sin is folly; and that is very pleasing and joyous to a wicked man, he chooses it and delights in it; instead of being ashamed of it, and sorry for it, he glories in it, and makes his boast of it; and not only takes pleasure in committing it himself, but also in those that do it; see ch. x. 23. *But a man of understanding walketh uprightly*; who has his understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God; who has an understanding given him by the Son of God; who has a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it: he walks according to the rule of the divine word; he walks as he has Christ for an example, and by faith on him; and after the spirit, and not after the flesh: or *directs himself in walking* °, his goings, as the Vulgate Latin version, according to the above rule, example, and guidance, by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God; otherwise it is not in man that walketh of himself to direct his steps, Jer. x. 23.

Ver. 22. *Without counsel purposes are disappointed, &c.*] If a man determines and resolves upon a matter, and at once hastily and precipitately goes about it, without mature deliberation, without consulting with himself, and taking the advice of others in forming a scheme to bring about his designs, it generally comes to nothing; see Luke xiv. 28—32. or *without a secret* °, without keeping one; if a man divulges his intentions, it is much if they are not frustrated; so the Targum, “vain are the thoughts (or designs) where there is no ° secret;” if a man makes no secret of what he designs

° פקיעו faciet quiescere, Pagninus, Montanus; sedat, Mercerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; sedabit, Schultens.

° סללה aggestum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; elevata, Mercerus, Gejerus; strata, Montanus.

° לב חסר carenti corde, Montanus; ei qui corde deficitur, Schultens.

° ישר לכת diriget seipsum ambulando, Montanus; diriget ambulare, vel ad ambulandum, Vatablus; diriget viam suam ad ambulandum, Mercerus, Gejerus.

° סוד in non secreto, Montanus; cum non sit secretum, Bayanus; quum nullum est arcanum, Schultens; ubi non est secretum, Coccejus.

to do, he is easily counterworked, and his purposes disappointed. *But in the multitude of counsellors they are established*; his purposes are, as in ch. xx. 18. having the advice of others, and these many, he is confirmed that he is right in what he has thought of and purposed to do; and therefore goes about it with the greater spirit and cheerfulness, and is most likely to succeed, and generally does; see ch. xi. 14.

Ver. 23. *A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth, &c.*] When his advice is asked, and he gives good and wholesome counsel, and that being taken succeeds; it is a pleasure to a man that he is capable of assisting his friend, and doing him service, or a common good, whether it be in things natural, civil, or religious; when his speech is with salt, seasoned with grace, and he knows how he ought to answer every man; when that which is good proceeds from him, and is to the use of edifying, and ministers grace to the bearers, and is acceptable to them; when with readiness he gives an answer to every man that asks him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear, Col. iii. 6. Ephes. iv. 29. 1 Pet. iii. 15. *And a word spoken in due season, how good is it?* whether by way of advice and counsel to such who stand in need of it, or of exhortation and instruction to those that want it, or of comfort to those that are distressed; such is a word of promise spoken and applied by the spirit of God to the hearts of his people in a time of need; and such is the Gospel of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, as spoken by Christ and his ministers to weary and wounded souls; it cannot be well and fully expressed how sweet, how good, how suitable, as well as seasonable, it is: see ch. xxv. 11. Isa. l. 4.

Ver. 24. *The way of life is above to the wise, &c.*] *Of the way of life*; see the note on ch. x. 17. this is said to be *above*, or it tends to what is *above*; it leads to heaven and happiness above; the *life* itself it is the way of or to is above, it is hid with Christ in God; eternal life, glory, and happiness, is above; it is a house eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved there, and will be there enjoyed by the saints: the *way* to it is above; Christ is the way, and he is in heaven, at the Father's right hand, through whom only men can come at this life; wherefore those who are in the way of it have their thoughts, their hearts, their affections and conversations, above, Matt. vi. 21. Col. iii. 1, 2. Phil. iii. 20. Faith, which deals with Christ the way, and by which men walk in him, is signified by soaring aloft, mounting up with wings as eagles, by entering within the veil, and dwelling on high, and by looking upwards, and at things unseen, and being the evidence of them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the way of life is above the learned man, or wise man*; the man that has no other than natural learning and wisdom, this way of life and salvation by Christ lies out of his knowledge; it is what the most sagacious and penetrating man could never discover; it is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes; or this is only known to such who are truly wise unto salvation; it is plain to them, and they highly esteem it, and choose to walk in it; it is an *ascent to him that understands*, as the Syriac version renders it; it is a going up hill, it is an ascending upwards and heavenwards; such a man is continually looking upwards unto Christ, the

author and finisher of his faith; pressing towards him, the mark for the prize; keeping his eye, not on things on earth, things temporal, which are seen here below, but on things above, things unseen, which are eternal in the heavens. *That he may depart from hell beneath*; not from the grave, as *sheol* sometimes signifies: for wise men die as well as fools, and come to the grave, which is the house appointed for all living; even those who are in the way of life that is above do not escape death and the grave: but such are secured from everlasting ruin and destruction, from being destroyed soul and body in hell; they steer quite a different course and road from that; every step they take upwards carries them so far off from hell; which is the contrary way; the broad road of sin is the lower way, or what leads to hell and destruction beneath; the narrow way of faith in Christ is the upper way, and that leads to eternal life above.

Ver. 25. *The Lord will destroy the house of the proud, &c.*] To whom he has the utmost aversion; he sets himself against them and resists them, and will not only destroy them, but their stately houses too, which they have fancied shall continue for ever; and also their families, their children and posterity; these shall be as stubble, and shall be burnt up in his wrath, and neither root nor branch left. Moreover, the man of sin, the son of perdition, may be more especially intended, that exalts himself above all that is called God, with all the sons of pride supported by him; his house, which is the house of the foolish and adulterous woman, the idolatrous church of Rome, shall be rooted up; the city of Rome, the seat of the beast itself, where his house or palace is, shall be destroyed, and all that belong unto him, even all they that have destroyed the earth, Rev. xi. 18. *But he will establish the border of the widow*; whose advocate, judge, and defender he is; when men, rich, proud, and oppressive, attempt to remove the landmark of the widow's border, and so lessen her land and enlarge their own, God will not suffer it to be done, but will establish it in its place; that is, such who are weak and helpless, as widows are, and cannot defend themselves and their property, he will protect them and secure it for them. So the church of Christ, during the reign of antichrist, being obliged to flee into the wilderness, looks like a widow deprived of her husband, and has but *little strength* to support and defend herself, as is said of the church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 8. yet the Lord will secure and preserve her, and firmly settle and establish her, yea, enlarge her borders, and make them of pleasant stones; spread the kingdom of Christ from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Frequent mention is made of the establishing of the church in the latter day, Psal. xlviii. 8. and lxxxvii. 5. Isa. ii. 2.

Ver. 26. *The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, &c.*] They are known unto the Lord, who is the searcher of the heart, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of it; he knows they are vain and sinful, yea, that they are only evil, and that continually, and therefore are hateful and abominable to him; it may be rendered *the thoughts of evil*, as by the Targum; or evil thoughts, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but Aben Ezra interprets as we, the thoughts of a wicked man, which are

never otherwise but evil; whereas in a good man, though there are many evil thoughts which are abominable to himself, yet there are some good thoughts, and which are pleasing to the Lord, as follows. *But the words of the pure are pleasant words*; that is, unto the Lord; which are the same with their thoughts, and are the effect of them, and so stand opposed to the thoughts of the wicked; these, expressed either in a way of prayer or of praise, are sweet and pleasant, and acceptable unto God through Christ; as likewise their words and discourse in religious conversation, which also minister grace unto the hearer, and are very delightful and pleasing to saints; the words may be supplied thus, *but the thoughts of the pure*, of such who are pure in heart, whose hearts are purified by faith in the blood of Christ, are *words of pleasantness*, so Gersom; there is a language in thought which is known to a man's self, and by the Lord; there is the meditation or discourse of the heart, and this being about divine and spiritual things is pleasing to God; he hearkens to it, and writes a book of remembrance for them that fear him, and have thought on his name; see Psal. xix. 14. Mal. iii. 16.

Ver. 27. *He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house, &c.*] Or *that covets a covetousness*¹, an evil one, as in Hab. ii. 9. that seeks riches by unlawful means, that gathers the mammon of falsehood, or unrighteousness, as the Targum; he entails a curse and brings ruin and destruction upon his family; the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, *he destroys himself; or his own soul*, as the Syriac version; it may be understood of a man that is over-anxious and eager to be rich, and hurries on business, and gives his servants no proper time for food and rest; see the note on ch. xi. 29. *But he that hateth gifts shall live*; that rejects them with abhorrence, when offered to bribe him to pervert judgment, or to do an unjust thing; otherwise gifts may be lawfully received from one friend by another; the sin is when they are given and taken for the sake of doing what is base and sinful; and a man that shakes his hand from receiving gifts on such a foot, he and his family shall prosper and increase in worldly things; and, doing this from a right principle of grace, shall live comfortably in a spiritual sense, and thrive and flourish in his soul, and live an eternal life hereafter; see Psal. xv. 1, 5, 6.

Ver. 28. *The heart of the righteous studieth to answer, &c.*] He thinks before he speaks, meditates what he shall say, what answer to give to men; whether in things civil, natural, or religious; and what to return to the Lord when he is reproved by him; or what to say in prayer to him, or by way of thankfulness for mercies received from him; see ch. iii. 6. Hab. ii. 1. though our Lord advises his disciples, when summoned before their persecutors, not to meditate before-hand what they should answer, since they should have immediate assistance, Luke xxi. 14. but this was in extraordinary cases; in common ones the observation of the wise man should be attended to. A Jewish² writer renders the words, *the heart of the righteous meditates wormwood, or bitter things*; see

ch. v. 4. as the judgment of God, death, and hell; this sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra, but rejected. *But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things*; without any previous thought and consideration, without fear or wit; in great abundance, as water out of a fountain; thus an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things readily and at once, having no concern about the consequences of things, Matt. xii. 25. see the note on ver. 2.

Ver. 29. *The Lord is far from the wicked, &c.*] Not as to his essence or powerful presence, which is everywhere, for he is God omnipresent; but with respect to his favour and good will, he is far from helping in distress, and from hearing their cries when they apply unto him in desperate circumstances; nor does he admit them to nearness and communion with him now, as he does the righteous; nor will he receive them to himself at the last day, but bid them depart from him; they are far from him and from his law, and from all righteousness; and he is far from them, and keeps them at a distance from him. *But he heareth the prayer of the righteous*; they draw nigh to him, and he draws nigh to them; he is nigh to all that call upon him in truth; and there is none like them that has God so nigh them as they have; his eyes are upon them, and his ears are open to their cries; he is a God hearing and answering their prayers, and bestows upon them the favours they ask for, and stand in need of.

Ver. 30. *The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart, &c.*] Not so much the visive power, the faculty of seeing, a strong and clear eyesight; though this is a great mercy, and from the Lord, and to be prized, and does give joy of heart; but rather the objects seen by the light of the eyes, as Jarchi; as green gardens, flowing rivers, pleasant meadows, rising hills, lowly vales, herbs, plants, trees, birds, beasts, and creatures of every kind; nor is the eye ever satisfied with seeing; especially light itself beheld rejoiceth the heart, and particularly that grand luminary and fountain of light, the sun. *Light is sweet*, says the wise man, Eccl. xi. 7. *and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun*, which is a proper comment on this text: and much more pleasant and delightful, cheering and rejoicing, must be the spiritual light of the eyes of the understanding, when opened by the spirit of God at conversion; it is marvellous light souls are then called into, and wonderful things do they then behold, which rejoice their hearts; as Christ the sun of righteousness himself, the light of the world, the glories of his person and office, the fulness of grace that is in him, pardon of sin by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and free and full salvation through him for the worst and chief of sinners: in the light which is thrown into them they see light; the light of God's countenance, his face and favour, which put gladness into them; the light of the divine word, and the precious truths of it; yea, the light, joy, and happiness of the world to come, in the hope of which their hearts rejoice. Jarchi mystically interprets this of the light of the eyes in the

¹ בועז appetens concupiscentiam, Montanus; qui avaritiam inhiat, Targum version; concupiscent concupiscentiam, Vatablus.

² Kabrenaki.

law; but it is much better to understand it of the light of the eyes in the Gospel, and the inysteries of it. And a good report maketh the bones fat; or a good hearing¹; not the sense of hearing, or a quick exercise of that, though a very great blessing; but good things heard. Some understand this of a good name, or fame², which is sometimes the sense of the phrase; either a good report which a man hears of himself, which makes his spirit cheerful; and this affects his body and the juices of it, which fill his bones with marrow, and cover them with fatness; or which he hears of his friends, and is pleasing to him, as it was to the Apostle John that Demetrius had a good report of all men, 3 John 12. But rather this is to be understood of the good news, or good hearing, from a far country, as the same phrase is rendered in ch. xxv. 25. and here in the Arabic version is so translated, even the Gospel, which is a report; see Isa. liii. 1. Rom. x. 16. a report concerning God, the perfections of his nature, the purposes of his heart, the covenant of his grace, his love, grace, and mercy towards men in Christ Jesus; a report concerning Christ, concerning his person and offices, concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; concerning his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning salvation, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him; a report concerning the good land, the heavenly Canaan, and the glories of it, the way unto it, and the persons that shall possess it: and this is a good report; it is good tidings of good things, a report of good things laid up in covenant, which are come by Christ the great High-priest, which saints are interested in, and shall partake of here and hereafter; it is a true report, and to be believed, since it is made by God himself, by Jesus Christ the faithful witness, and by the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of the things they reported; and such a report being heard, received, and embraced, greatly contributes to the spiritual health and prosperity of the children of God, it makes them fat and flourishing; such pleasant words are as the honeycomb, sweet to the soul, make glad the heart, and are marrow and health to the bones; see ch. iii. 8. and xii. 25. and xvi. 24.

Ver. 31. *The ear that heareth the reproof of life, &c.*] That is given according to the word of life, in a warm, fervent, and lively manner, with zeal, and in good earnest; which reproveth the life of another by his own, as well as by words; and which tends to the spiritual and eternal life of the person reprov'd; being taken, a man that diligently hearkens to, kindly and cordially receives, and cheerfully obeys such reproof given him, abideth among the wise; he not only

chooseth to be among them, that he may have the advantage of their wise counsels and reproofs, but he becomes wise himself thereby, and attains to the character of a wise man, and is numbered among them; such a man abides in the house of wisdom, the church of God, and attends upon and has conversation with the wise dispensers of the word, and shall have a part with them in the church above, in the kingdom of heaven, where the wise will shine as the firmament; the word here used does not denote a lodging for a night, as it sometimes signifies, but a perpetual abiding.

Ver. 32. *He that refuseth instruction, &c.*] The instruction of parents, masters, ministers, and of God himself; or correction¹, instruction either by the word or by the rod; he that withdraws himself from it, will not be in the way of it, that shuns, neglects, and despises it, or carelessly and contemptuously attends it: despiseth his own soul; shews that he makes no account of it, has no regard for it or care about it, when it is so precious a jewel, and the loss of it irreparable; not that a man can strictly and properly despise his soul, but comparatively, having a greater regard for his body, and especially for his carnal lusts and pleasures, than for that; or as a man diseased and refuses proper medicines may be said to despise his health. *But he that heareth reproof getteth understanding; or a heart²*; he gets understanding by listening to reproof, and behaving according to it; he better understands himself and his case, what he should shun and avoid, what he should receive, embrace, and do; instead of losing his soul, as the man that refuses correction does, he finds the life of it, and possesses it, and with it a large share of experience and spiritual wisdom.

Ver. 33. *The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, &c.*] It is the beginning of wisdom, ch. ix. 10. it leads unto it, instructs a man in it; by means of it he attains to true spiritual and evangelical wisdom; it teaches him to abstain from sin, and to serve the Lord; and to seek the salvation of his soul in the way God has appointed, which is by his Son Jesus Christ, which to do is the highest wisdom. *And before honour is humility*; the fear of God and humility go together, where the one is the other is; and as the one is the way to wisdom, the other is the way to glory; Christ's humiliation was before his exaltation; men are first humbled and laid low in their own eyes, and then they are raised out of their low estate, and are set among princes; and shall inherit the throne of glory, being made kings and priests unto God; it is a frequent saying of Christ's, *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*, Luke xiv. 11. such an one is raised to a high estate of grace, and at last to eternal glory.

¹ שמעוה טובה *auditus bonus, Vatablus; auditio bona, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.*

² *Fama bona, V. L. Tigurine version, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.*

¹ מוסר *correctioem, Pagninus, Vatablus; qui abstrahit se a cogitatione, Piscator.*

² לב *cor, Pagninus, Piscator, Schultens, Michaelis, &c.*

C H A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. *THE preparations of the heart in man, &c.]*

The sense of these words, according to our version, depends upon the next clause, and the meaning of the whole is, that a man can neither think nor speak without God: the *orderings* or *marshallings* of the heart*, as it may be rendered; that is, of the thoughts of the heart, which are generally irregular and confused; the ranging them in order, as an army in battle-array, or as things regularly placed on a well-furnished table; the fixing them on any particular subject, though about things civil and natural, so as closely to attend to them, and proceed in a regular manner in the consideration of them, are not without the concurrence of divine Providence: and whereas the thoughts of men's hearts are evil, and that continually, and nothing but evil thoughts naturally proceed from thence; the ordering and marshalling of them, and fixing them to the attention and consideration of divine and spiritual things, are not without the supernatural grace of God; for we cannot think a good thought of ourselves, nor indeed any thing of ourselves in a spiritual manner, 2 Cor. iii. 5. all preparations for religious service and duty, whether it be to pray unto God, or to preach in his name, are from the Lord; it is he that works in men both to will and to do: that gives them the willing mind, or a suitable frame for service, as well as ability to perform it; that pours out the spirit of grace and supplication on them, and disposes and directs their minds to proper petitions, and furnishes his ministering servants in their studies with agreeable matter for their ministrations, Psal. x. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. *And the answer of the tongue is from the Lord; who made man's mouth, and teaches him what to say, both before God and man; what he shall say in prayer to him, or in preaching to others; for the door of utterance in either service is from him, as well as the preparation for it: most versions and interpreters make these clauses distinct, the one as belonging to men, the other to God; thus, to men belong the preparations of the heart, but from the Lord is the answer or speech of the tongue; the former is said by way of concession, and according to the opinion of men; and the sense may be, be it so, that man has the marshalling and ordering of his own thoughts, and that he can lay things together in his mind, and think pertinently and properly on a subject, and is capable of preparing matter for a discourse; yet it is as easy to observe, that men can better form ideas of things in their minds, than they can express their sense and meaning; and though they may be ever so well prepared to speak, yet they are not able to do it, unless the Lord gives them utterance, and assists their memories; they lose what they had prepared, or de-*

liver it in a disorderly and confused manner, and sometimes think to say one thing, and say another; their tongues are overruled by the Lord to say what they never intended, as in the cases of Balaam and Caiaphas. The Targum is, "from man is the counsel of the heart, and from the Lord is the speech of the tongue."

Ver. 2. *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, &c.]* All right and well, not only some, but all, having a high opinion of himself; for this is to be understood of a self-righteous man, who is pure in his own eyes, though not cleansed from his filthiness, and so fancies every way he walks in, and every thing he does, is pure; this is owing to want of knowledge of the impurity of his nature; was he sensible of this, he would see that his best righteousness is as filthy rags; and to his ignorance of the spirituality of the law, which, was he acquainted with, he would find, on comparing himself with it, that he and all he did was polluted and unclean: some read the words, *all the ways of a pure man are before his eyes*: the eyes of the Lord, he sees them, and approves of them; so *Aben Ezra*; and to this agrees the Septuagint version, *all the works of an humble man are manifest with God*; and the Arabic version, *all the works of an humble man are clean before God*; but the former reading and sense seem best. *But the Lord weigheth the spirits*; he searches and tries the hearts; he sees, knows, and observes the principles of all actions, and can as exactly adjust the nature and quality of them, as a man, with a pair of scales in his hands, can tell precisely the weight of any thing put into them; the Lord weighs the spirits, or hearts, from whence all actions flow, by his omniscience, and accordingly judges of them by that, and not by the outward appearance; and he weighs all actions by his law, in the balance of the sanctuary, where they are found wanting, and come greatly short of that purity and perfection pharisaical persons imagine there is in them.

Ver. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, &c.]* Natural, civil, or religious; seek to him for strength and assistance in all, and leave the success of all with him: or *roll thy works on or unto the Lord*^b; devolve all upon him, cast all care upon him and his providence for supply, support, and sustenance in life; and commit the business of the salvation of thy soul, and the important affairs of it, wholly to him, who is able, willing, and faithful, to keep what is committed to him; and, having so done, may sit down easy and satisfied, as one that is rid of a burden by casting it on another, better able to bear it, or more equal to the work committed to him: the Targum is, *reveal thy works to God*; and so the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, *reveal thy works to the Lord*; thy case, con-

* מַעְרָבֵי לֵב dispositiones sive ordinationes, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; instructiones adversæ scilicet in corde, Schultens.

^b אֵל אֱלֹהִים תִּשְׂבֹּג אֶת מַעְשֶׂיךָ devolve in Jehovam facta tua, Junius &

Tremellius; negotia tua, Piscator; volve in Dominum quæ tibi facta sunt, Michaelis; volve ad Jehovam opera tua, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; so Mercurus, Gejerus, Schultens, Tigurine version.

dition, and circumstances; thy wants and necessities; seek and ask for a supply of him, make known thy requests to him; for though he is not ignorant of the affairs of his people, yet he will be sought unto to do the things for them he intends to do, and they stand in need of. *And thy thoughts shall be established*; when a man has, by faith and in prayer, committed himself, his case, his ways and works, to the Lord, his mind is made easy, his thoughts are composed and settled, and he quietly waits the issues of things; he says, the will of the Lord be done; he knows that he causes all things to work together for good; and whatever is for his good and God's glory shall be brought to pass; and this makes him calm, sedate, and easy; and he is in a fair way of having his designs, desires, and endeavours accomplished; see Psal. xxxvii. 5.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself, &c.*] This is true of the Lord with respect to the creation of all things by him. All things are made by him, the heaven, earth, and sea; and all that are in them, angels, men, beasts, birds, fishes, and all creatures; and these are made for himself, and not another; not for the pure or good men, as Aben Ezra, though all things are for the elect's sake; but for God himself, besides whom there was no other before the creation, nor is there any other God but him, who is the first cause and last end of all things: nor were those all things made for him, through any want he had of them, being God all-sufficient and blessed for evermore, but to shew his greatness, and communicate his goodness; they are made for his service, which all creatures are obliged unto, and whom all in their way obey, and for his honour and glory. It is also true of his works of providence, and of his ordering and disposing of all things in the course of that, to answer ends of his own glory; his kingdom of providence rules over all; there is a general providence, which respects all creatures and things; and there is a particular providence attending the Lord's own people; and in all the glory of his wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness, is conspicuous: but this is chiefly, if not solely, to be understood of God's decrees and purposes; and of his ordering and appointing all things, to bring about his own glory. Every thing is appointed of God; he has fore-ordained whatever comes to pass; there is a purpose for every thing under the heavens, and a time fixed for the execution of it. Junius restrains it to *all men*; but it is true of all creatures and things, though especially men: all things are appointed by the Lord, respecting the temporal estate of men; their birth, and the time of it, with all the circumstances attending it; the place of their abode, their calling, station of life, and usefulness; all adverse and prosperous dispensations; their death, with all the events leading to it: and so likewise all things respecting their spiritual and eternal estate; the choice of them to salvation; their redemption by Christ; the time of his coming, sufferings, and death, and the circumstances thereof; the conversion of God's elect, the time, place, and means; these are all according to the purpose of God; as are also all their times of affliction,

temptation, desertion, and of joy and comfort. In a word, the final state of all men, good and bad, is fixed by the Lord; and all this is *for himself*, which some render, *to answer to himself*^c; all creatures are made to answer to his original design in making them, to the laws of their creation, and to answer his ends and purposes; and which is ultimately his own glory: or for his praise, as Jarchi; for his will and pleasure, as R. Isaac; for the thing in which he is well-pleased, as R. Jonah; or for his own sake, as Kimchi; and all which agree, as with the sense of the words, so with Rev. iv. 11. The Targum and Syriac version very wrongly render them, "all the works of God, or the Lord, are for them that obey him." *Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*; this is added to illustrate the general proposition in the preceding clause, and to obviate an objection, that might be taken from the destruction of the wicked, against all things being for the glory of God; for even the destruction of the wicked, which is under a divine appointment, is for his glory. It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of Scripture, that God made man to damn him; nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination: God made man, neither to damn him, nor to save him, but for his own glory; and that is secured, whether in his salvation or damnation; nor did or does God make men wicked; he made man upright, and he has made himself wicked; and, being so, God may justly appoint him to damnation for his wickedness, in doing which he glorifies his justice. *The day of evil, or evil day*, is the day of wrath and ruin, unto which wicked men are reserved by the appointment of God, agreeably to the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. This is true of wicked angels, wicked men, and particularly of that wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist; the word here used is in the singular number.

Ver. 5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord, &c.*] Though he may dissemble his pride, and not discover it in his looks, by his words and gestures; yet the Lord sees and knows the heart, the naughtiness of it, and the pride that is in it: and not only a proud look, but a proud heart, is abominable to him: every one that is so arrogant as to arraign the decrees of God, and quarrel with him about them, to whom the apostle says, *Nay, but, O man, O proud vain man, who art thou, that repliest against God?* Rom. ix. 19—21. every proud Pharisee, that trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others, that justifies himself before men, is an abomination in the sight of God, Luke xviii. 9. and xvi. 15. particularly antichrist, who has not only a proud look, a look more stout than his fellows, but a proud heart; exalts himself above all that is called God; and not only speaks big words against the most High, but has it in his heart to change times and laws; and proudly imagines he shall always continue in his grandeur and prosperity, Dan. vii. 20. 25. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xviii. 7. *Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished*; though he endeavours with both hands, with all his might and main, to secure himself and prevent his ruin, he shall not be able to do it; though he enters into confederacy with,

* למעורו ad responsum suam, Coccejus, Gejerus, Michaelis; ad

responsum proprium ejus, Gussetus, p. 623. ad responsum sui, Schultens.

and calls in the kings of the earth to his assistance, it will be of no avail, both he and they shall be destroyed; or out of hand, immediately, his destruction will come upon him, Rev. xvi. 14, 16. and xviii. 8. and xix. 19—21. see the note on ch. xi. 21. The Targum is, "from evil he shall not be cleared;" and the Syriac version, "he that stretcheth out his hand against his "neighbour shall not be cleared from evil."

Ver. 6. *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, &c.*] Or *expiated*^d, and atoned for: not by the mercy and truth of men; not by alms-deeds or shewing mercy to the poor; nor by speaking truth and keeping promises, and doing justice between man and man; for, though these are duties to be performed, they will not atone for sin; and may be done by persons destitute of the grace of God, and whose iniquities are not purged or pardoned: but by the mercy and truth of God; through his *mercy*, in sending Christ to be the propitiation for sin; and through his *truth*, in fulfilling his promises concerning Christ; and particularly concerning pardon on the foot of his sacrifice and satisfaction, where mercy and truth have met together: or through the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ; or through his atoning sacrifice, by which he has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity; in which there is a rich display of his own and of his father's grace and mercy, truth and faithfulness. *And by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*: having that put into their hearts, and excited and influenced by the grace and goodness of God, men are engaged to abstain from evil, and the appearance of it; it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and godly in this world.

Ver. 7. *When a man's ways please the Lord, &c.*] As they do when a man walks according to the rule of his word; when he walks as he has Christ for an example; when he walks after the spirit, and not after the flesh; when he walks by faith, and does all he does in faith; without which it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. and when all his ways and actions are directed to the glory of God. *He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*; as Abimelech with Isaac, Esau with Jacob; and the enemies of the church and people of God with them in the latter day, Rev. iii. 9.

Ver. 8. *Better is a little with righteousness, &c.*] Gotten in a righteous way, held by a righteous claim, used in a righteous manner, attended with a life of righteousness and holiness; and also along with an interest in the righteousness of Christ, which renders acceptable unto God, yields peace and comfort, and entitles to eternal glory and happiness. A truly righteous man may have but little of this world's goods; but his small pittance is better than great revenues without right; obtained in an unjust way; detained from the right owner of them, and used in an unrighteous manner, in a course of sin and wickedness: or, *without judgment*^e; how to make use of them aright, and without a righteousness that will justify them at the day of judgment; see the note on ch. xv. 16. A little the

true church of Christ enjoys in the wilderness; having Christ and his grace, Christ and his righteousness, is better than all the revenues of the church of Rome, gotten by the unlawful methods they are; and which in one hour will come to nought, Rev. xviii. 17.

Ver. 9. *A man's heart deviseth his way, &c.*] This is to be understood, not of a wicked man, in whose heart is frowardness, and who devises mischief and evil imaginations continually, ch. vi. 14, 18. for such are an abomination to the Lord; nor will he direct their goings, or prosper and succeed them in their ways: but of a good man, or righteous man, as Aben Ezra; who thinks of the way in which he should go, and desires to walk in a right way, as Jarchi; and who is influenced by the spirit and grace of God to think and act in this manner; for otherwise the way of man is not in himself; it is not of his own devising and finding out; nor is his disposition to walk in it of himself; and it is only such a man, a good man, whose steps are ordered by the Lord, as follows; see Jer. x. 23. Psal. xxxvii. 23. *But the Lord directeth his steps*; to go right on, and not turn to the right hand or the left; and to walk safely and surely, through a variety of troubles and difficulties, to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 10. *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king, &c.*] Or *divination*^f, as the word signifies; or what is like to divination, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret it^g. What he says is as an oracle, and should be strictly true. Some understand it of the sagacity and penetration of kings, as was in Solomon, and appeared in his judging the two harlots; but such is not to be found in kings in common: rather therefore this expresses and designs what should be, and not what is, in kings. These, as the kings of Israel, ought to have the book of God before them, and read in it, and judge and pronounce sentence in every case according to it; they should speak as the oracles of God; and, when they do, a divine sentence may be said to be in their lips. But it is best to understand this of the King of kings, of the King Messiah; into whose lips grace is poured, and from whence none but words of wisdom, grace, and truth, flow; who taught the way of God in truth; who had the word of God in his heart and in his mouth continually; and on whom the spirit of wisdom without measure dwelt; and is the wisdom and word of God, as well as the power of God. *His mouth transgresseth not in judgment*; this cannot be said of any earthly king; they ought not indeed to transgress in judgment with their mouths, but it is notorious that they too often do: could this be applied to kings in common, they would have a better claim to infallibility than the pope of Rome has. But this is true of Christ, the King of saints; who is a King that reigns in righteousness, and decrees judgment; sits upon his throne, to order and establish it with judgment: nor does his mouth ever transgress in judgment, or ever say, or he do, a wrong thing; his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness.

Ver. 11. *A just weight and balance are the Lord's, &c.*] These are of his devising; what he has put into the hearts

^d יִפְּאֵר expiabitur, Montanus, Vatablus; expiatur, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^e בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט absque judicio, Paginus, Montanus.

^f דִּבְרֵי דִּיּוּנָא divinatio, V. L. Paginus, Montanus, Cuceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^g So Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator.

of men to contrive and make use of, for the benefit of mankind, for the keeping and maintaining truth and justice in commercial affairs; these are of his appointing, commanding, and approving, Lev. xix. 35, 36. *All the weights of the bag are his work; or, all the stones*^b; greater or smaller, which were formerly used in weighing, and were kept in a bag for that purpose; these are by the Lord's appointment and order. This may be applied to the Scriptures of truth, which are of God; are the balance of the sanctuary, in which every doctrine is to be weighed and tried; what agrees with them is to be received, and what is found wanting is to be rejected. The Targum is, "his works, all of them, are weights of truth."

Ver. 12. *It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness, &c.*] The Targum is, "the abomination of kings are they that work wickedness." It should be an abomination to kings to commit wickedness themselves, and those that do it should be abhorred by them, or they should shew their resentment at it by removing them from their presence, or by punishing them: and though there have been such kings as David, Psal. ci. 4, 7. yet there are but few such; this is not true of kings in common; and therefore rather expresses what they should be than what they are; but is perfectly applicable to Christ, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, Psal. xiv. 7. *For the throne is established by righteousness*: this is the support, strength, and security of every kingdom, and of the thrones of kings; and it is with judgment and righteousness that the throne of Christ is established; yea, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, Isa. ix. 7. Psal. lxxxix. 14.

Ver. 13. *Righteous lips are the delight of kings, &c.*] Such that speak truth and righteousness, and advise to the administration of justice and judgment, and to do that which is most for their own true honour and the people's good, are, or ought to be, highly valued and esteemed by kings; but the contrary is too often the case; kings hearken to those that speak lies, that flatter them, and gratify their pride, ambition, and love of power, to the hurt of their subjects. *And they love him that speaketh right*: agreeably to right reason; which makes for the honour of kings, and the good of those over whom they rule. Christ loves and delights in those that deliver out his doctrines in the taught words of the Holy Ghost, without any mixture or corruption; that explain, inculcate, and enforce his laws and commands; and faithfully declare the whole counsel of God, both with respect to faith and practice; all which is for his glory, as King of saints, and to the profit and advantage of those who submit to the sceptre of his kingdom.

Ver. 14. *The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, &c.*] Or, *angels of death*, as the Targum. As the wrath of Ahasuerus was to Haman; when it is either discovered in the countenance of a king, or expressed by his words, or signified by a messenger; it sometimes has been immediate death to a person, and often as terrible as if a messenger brought the sentence of death; yea, it is as if one messenger after another was sent on such an errand, and therefore the word is in

the plural number. How terrible is the wrath of the King of kings; and even to kings themselves, who are represented as flying to rocks and mountains to hide them from it! Rev. vi. 15—17. *But a wise man will pacify it*; by a proper acknowledgment of the offence committed; or by a prudent representation of his case, or the case of his friends; by soft answers and strong arguments, as Jonathan pacified the wrath of King Saul his father against David. He is a wise man that believes in Christ, and pleads his propitiatory sacrifice for the expiation of his sin, at the same time frankly acknowledging it.

Ver. 15. *In the light of the king's countenance is life, &c.*] When he looks with a pleasant smiling countenance on a person that has been under his displeasure, and especially if under a sentence of death, it is as life from the dead: so the light of the countenance of God, the King of kings; the discoveries of his love, the manifestations of himself, his gracious presence, communion with him, the comforts of his spirit, the joys of his salvation, are life unto his people, invigorate their graces, quicken their souls, and make them cheerful; see Psal. xxx. 5. and iv. 6, 7. And how delightful and pleasant is the countenance of Christ; which is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; and is as the sun when it shineth in its strength; and who himself is the sun of righteousness, that arises on his people with healing in his wings! How reviving his love! how comfortable fellowship with him! his absence is as death, his presence gives life. *And his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain*: which falling a little before harvest, as was usual in Judea, revived the corn and filled it: and such is the favour of God in Christ, which is free, distinguishing, and undeserved, as rain is; the objects of it are very unworthy; and it is given often unasked for, as well as undesired, and in great abundance, and causes great cheerfulness and fruitfulness: and such is the favour of Christ, in coming into the world in the last days to save sinners; his coming is said to be as the former and the latter rain, Hos. vi. 3. He came from heaven, as that does; is the free gift of God, as that is; is in consequence of a decree, as that; and came suddenly, and with great acceptance to those, who knew him and waited for him; and his spiritual coming unto his people, and the discoveries of his love and free favour to them, are very reviving, cheering, and refreshing; see Psal. lxxii. 6.

Ver. 16. *How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? &c.*] To obtain and possess Christ, the fountain of wisdom, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which treasures are infinitely preferable to thousands of gold and silver; to gain the knowledge of him, and of God in him, with which eternal life is connected, and in comparison of which all things are loss and dung; to have wisdom in the hidden part, or grace in the heart, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth; to have a spiritual experimental knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; all which are to be got by diligent search and inquiry, by prayer and asking for, and to be had or bought without money and without

^b יָסִידִים lapides, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

price; and the getting of them is above all other gettings; such wisdom is more valuable in itself, has a greater intrinsic worth in it than gold; it is more profitable and useful, more solid and satisfying; it is not only better, but it is abundantly better, it is inexpressibly so; it cannot be well said how much better it is, and therefore it is put by way of question and admiration; see ch. iii. 13—15. and iv. 7. *And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver?* the same thing is designed as before, expressed in different words; a spiritual understanding of Christ and the Gospel, and an experience of the grace of God; though some, as Gersom, think that wisdom is something better than understanding, as gold, to which it is preferred, is better than silver. The Septuagint render it, “nests of wisdom, and nests of understanding;” and the Arabic version, “buds of wisdom, and buds of understanding.”

Ver. 17. *The highway of the upright is to depart from evil, &c.]* Upright persons, such who are upright in heart, and walk uprightly; these walk in the highway of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err; in the King's highway, the highway of the King of kings; in the plain beaten path of God's commandments; and so shun the by-paths of sin, and abstain from all appearance of it: this is their common constant course of life; they are studiously concerned to walk herein, and take delight in so doing; whereby they escape many evils others fall into. *He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.* that keeps on in his way, the way in which the upright walk; whose eyes look right on, and his eyelids straight before him; who ponders the path of his feet, and turns neither to the right hand nor the left; who walks circumspectly and carefully; observes the road he is in, to keep in it, and not go out of it; such a man preserves his soul from many snares and temptations, troubles, dangers, and evils, which he would be otherwise liable to. Here the Masorites put the word רָצַי, signifying that this is the half or middle of the book.

Ver. 18. *Pride goeth before destruction, &c.]* As it did in the angels that sinned, who, through pride, fell into condemnation, not being able to bear the thought that the human nature, in the person of the son of God, should be advanced above theirs; and as it did in our first parents, who, not content with their present state and circumstances, and ambitious of being as gods, knowing good and evil, ruined themselves and all their posterity; and as it has done in many of their sons, as in Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others. *And a haughty spirit before a fall; or, a high spirit, or height of spirit¹;* a man that carries his head high; looks upwards, and not to his goings, sees not at what he may stumble, and so falls: moreover, the higher a person or thing is, the greater is the fall; and very often when a man has got to the height of his riches and honour, and is swelling with pride and vanity on account of it, he is on the precipice of ruin, and his fall is immediate; which was the case of Nebuchadnezzar, who whilst he was expressing himself in the haughtiness of his spirit, being in the height of his

glory, his kingdom departed from him, Dan. iv. 30, 31. and this will be the case of the man of sin, or anti-christ, Rev. xviii. 7, 8.

Ver. 19. *Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, &c.]* The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose spirits are humbled under a sense of sin; have mean thoughts of themselves and their own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of the son of God, and wholly trust in him for salvation; and ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; humble themselves under the mighty hand of God; are resigned to his will, and patiently bear all afflictions without murmuring, and think better of others than themselves: these are not in so much danger of falling as the proud and haughty, and are more grateful to men, and acceptable to God; with these he vouchsafes to dwell; to these he gives more grace, and they shall inherit the earth. Wherefore it is better to be of such a spirit, and be ranked among and keep company with the meek and lowly, *than to divide the spoil with the proud;* the spoils of the poor with proud oppressors; or spoils gotten in war with proud and ambitious princes; or the spoils of kingdoms and states with anti-christ, divided by him among his proud followers: it is better to be the followers of Christ, and have but little, than to be his, and have ever so much.

Ver. 20. *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good, &c.]* That frames and composes his discourse well on any subject he takes in hand; or manages his affairs prudently and discreetly, in which he is concerned; or that wisely attends to the affair of humility, as Aben Ezra: or rather to the word, that is, to the word of God; is not a careless, negligent, unconcerned hearer of the word, but a diligent and attentive one; whose heart is opened by the spirit of God to attend to what is spoken in it; who lays it up in his heart, and makes it the rule of his conduct in life: such a man finds good things; things which are for his profit, edification, and instruction; good truths, good doctrines, good counsel and advice, good directions and instructions; promises of good things, things for his present comfort and future happiness. *And whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he;* not to his own wisdom; nor in his own strength; nor in his riches, nor righteousness; nor in the favour of men, no, not of princes; but in the Lord, and in his Word; he shall want no good thing, he is kept in perfect peace; he is in the utmost safety, is like Mount Zion, that can never be removed, Jer. xvii. 7. Isa. xxvi. 3. Psal. lxxxiv. 11, 12. and cxxv. 1.

Ver. 21. *The wise in heart shall be called prudent, &c.]* He that has true wisdom in the inward part; who knows his heart and the naughtiness of it; who has the fear of God in it, which is the beginning of wisdom; who is wise unto salvation, not only knows the scheme of it, but is experimentally acquainted with it; who has not head-knowledge and wisdom only, but heart-knowledge and wisdom, and behaves wisely in his life and conversation; who is so wise and endued with knowledge, as, out of a good conversation, to

¹ רָצַי elatio spiritus, Pagoinus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus,

Michaelis; altitudo spiritus, Piscator; celsitudo animi, Cocceius; altifrons elatio spiritus, Schulcens.

shew his works with meekness of wisdom; such a man is called, reckoned, accounted, and spoken well of, as a prudent man among all wise and knowing persons. *And the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning*; who, besides a wise heart and a knowing head, have the gift of elocution; can deliver themselves in a flowing easy style; can clothe their thoughts with proper words, and convey their ideas in clear expressions, in a very edifying and instructive manner: these communicate knowledge to others, and increase it in themselves; for, whilst they are improving others, they improve themselves and learning also, whether it be divine or human; these are such who are *apt to teach*; and if they have proper hearers to attend them, they will *increase in learning*, as a just man does, ch. ix. 9.

Ver. 22. *Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it, &c.*] *The master or owner of it**. As he only is to whom an understanding is given; for, whatever understanding men may have of natural and civil things, they have none of things spiritual and divine, unless it be given them by Christ. This is no other than the grace of the spirit of God, who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; and this is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, and it issues in it; with the knowledge of Christ, and God in Christ, eternal life is connected, John iv. 14. and xvii. 3. and as this knowledge and understanding of things is communicated by wise and knowing men, they are the means and instruments of the spiritual life of those to whom they minister, and are made useful. *But the instruction of fools is folly*; the best instruction they are capable of giving is downright folly, and issues in death.

Ver. 23. *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, &c.*] That is, a man that is wise in heart, as in ver. 21. his heart will teach his mouth what to say, when to say it, and before whom; it will prompt him to matter, that he shall not be at a loss what to say, nor how to say; it will furnish him with words and things; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Matt. xii. 34. *and addeth learning to his lips*; so that he does not deliver out mere words, but solid learning along with them, instructive to himself and others. The Targum is, "and by his lips he addeth doctrine;" or increases knowledge.

Ver. 24. *Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, &c.*] Jarchi interprets it of the words of the law; but it may be much better understood of the doctrines of the Gospel; such as the doctrines of God's everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the person of Christ as God-man; of peace and reconciliation by his blood; of remission of sins through his atoning sacrifice; of justification by his righteousness; of life and salvation by his obedience, sufferings, and death; all the doctrines of grace, which shew that salvation in all its parts is owing entirely to the free grace of God; these are all pleasant to the ear of him that knows the joyful sound, and to the taste of every one that has tasted that the Lord is gracious. The precious promises of the Gospel may be meant; which are free and unconditional, irrevocable, and immutable, never fail of accomplishment; are yea and amen in Christ, and

are suited to the various cases of God's people; these are very pleasant and delightful, when they are fitly spoken, and seasonably applied. Moreover, the speech of such as are wise in heart, true believers in Christ; their words, whether expressed in prayer or in praise, are pleasant to the Lord, and very grateful and acceptable to him: so their speech one to another, when about spiritual things; when it is with grace, then it ministers grace, and is very pleasant. Now all these, and especially the doctrines of the Gospel, are as *an honeycomb*; they are like unto it for the manner of its production; it is wrought and filled by the laborious bee, which goes from flower to flower, and gathers honey, and brings it into the hive, and there disposes of it: so laborious ministers of the Gospel gather their doctrines from the sacred Scriptures, which they diligently search, and go from one to another, and gather something from each; and, being richly laden with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, bring it into the hive of the church, and there feed men with knowledge and understanding; and the doctrines of the Gospel are like unto the honeycomb for the manner of its communication, by dropping freely, gradually, and constantly; so Gospel ministers drop the pleasant words of the Gospel freely, and without pressing, having no other constraint but love to Christ and the souls of men; they do it gradually, as men are able to bear; and constantly preach the word, in season and out of season: and as the honey which drops from the honeycomb is the choicest honey, called *life-honey*; such are the truths of the Gospel, they are excellent things, the most excellent. Likewise these are as the honeycomb for the honey in it; they are like the honey out of the rock the Israelites ate of; and like that out of the lion Samson fed upon; and like that which Jonathan tasted, that enlightened his eyes. The Gospel flows from Christ, the Rock; and is to be found in him, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and as slain, and has an enlightening virtue in it; and particularly these pleasant words are said to be as the honeycomb for its sweetness and healthfulness, as follows: *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones*; they are *sweet to the soul* of him that understands them, and that has a spiritual taste of them; not to a natural and unregenerate man, whose natural taste remains in him, and is not changed; who calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to him the doctrines of the Gospel are insipid, tasteless, and disagreeable things: nor are they sweet to a carnal professor; who, though he may express some value for them, has no spiritual gust and relish of them; but to them that believe, to whom Christ is precious, who have tasted that he is gracious; to these they are sweet, even sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb, Psal. xix. 10. and cxix. 103. Cant. ii. 3. Ezek. 2, 3. And they are *health to the bones*; they are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are the means of curing the diseases of the mind; of healing wounded spirits, and broken hearts, and broken bones; they make the bones which were broken to rejoice; what heals the bones strengthens the whole man, a man's strength lying much in his bones; these strengthen the inward man, cause believers to go from

* בעליו dominus sui, Pagninus; domino suo, Mercerus, Gejerus; dominorum suorum, Michaelis.

strength to strength, and to hold on and persevere to the end.

Ver. 25. *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, &c.*] The same is said in ch. xiv. 12. and is here repeated because of the excellence, importance, and usefulness of the observation, and to excite an attention to it; that men may be more diligent to look into their ways, and be more cautious where and how they walk, and be more considerate and thoughtful of the issue of them.

Ver. 26. *He that laboureth, laboureth for himself, &c.*] Man is born for labour; it is a part of the curse inflicted on him for sin; and his condition and circumstances are such as make it necessary, for such who will not work ought not to eat; and it is labouring for food and raiment which is here meant, and that is for a man's self; for if he labours to be rich and lay up money, and purchase estates, these are more for others than himself, and indeed he knows not for whom he labours. It is indeed in the original, *the soul of him that labours¹, labours for himself*; and it may be understood of the labour of the soul for spiritual things, for spiritual food, for that meat which endures to everlasting life; and may intend the various exercises of religion in which men employ themselves, that they may have food for their souls, and grow thereby; such as praying, reading the Scriptures, attending on the ministry of the word and ordinances: and this labouring is for themselves; for the good and welfare of their immortal souls, for their spiritual prosperity, for the nourishing of them up unto everlasting life. It may be applied to Gospel ministers, who labour in the Lord's vineyard, in the word and doctrine; and though in the first place they labour to promote the glory of God and the interest of Christ, and the good of souls, yet it also turns to their own account; and indeed they labour to be accepted of the Lord, and at last shall hear, *Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord*. Some render the words, *he that is troublesome is troublesome to himself²*, as such an one is, not only to others, but to himself also; he is the cause of great disquietude to his own mind. *For his mouth craveth it of him*; that he should labour, in order to satisfy his appetite; *for all the labour of man is for his mouth*, to feed that and fill his belly, Eccl. vi. 7. *or his mouth boweth unto him³*; it is as if it were an humble supplicant to him, entreating him to labour to get food for it, and satisfy its wants; or as a beast bows down to feed itself; *or boweth upon him⁴*; it obliges him, as the Vulgate Latin version; it compels him, whether he will or no, to work, its necessities are so pressing: and this holds good in spiritual things; a man's mouth, or spiritual appetite, puts him upon the use of means of spiritual exercises, without which he must otherwise be in a starving condition; and is true of the ministers of the word, whose mouth obliges them, as it were; they cannot but speak the things they have heard and seen: *or his mouth reflects upon him*: upon the man that has been troublesome to himself

and others; the Targum is, "for from his mouth humiliation shall come to him;" or his destruction, as the Syriac version.

Ver. 27. *An ungodly man diggeth up evil, &c.*] Or a man of Belial⁵, a worthless unprofitable man; a man without a yoke, unsubjected to the law of God; such a man digs for sin as for a treasure; nor need he go far for it, he has enough in his own heart, out of the evil treasure of which he brings forth evil things; though he is more solicitous and diligent to search into the sins of others, and dig up them, which have long lain buried; as the Manichees raked up the sins of Austin in his youth; and as the Papists served Beza: but perhaps the evil of mischief is here rather intended, which a wicked man contrives and devises; a ditch he digs for others, though oftentimes he falls into it himself; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *digs evils for himself*; not intentionally but eventually; see Psal. vii. 15. *and in his lips there is as a burning fire*; his tongue is a fire, it is set on fire of hell, and it sets on fire the course of nature; and with its lies, calumnies, and detractions, devours and consumes the good names, characters, and credit of men; and deserves no other than sharp arrows of the Almighty, and coals of juniper; even the everlasting fire and flames of hell, Jam. iii. 6. Psal. lii. 2, 4. and cxx. 3, 4.

Ver. 28. *A froward man soweth strife, &c.*] Or a man of perversenesses⁶; in whose heart is frowardness and perverseness; and whose mouth speaketh froward and perverse things, contrary to reason, law, and Gospel; and who has a spirit of contradiction, and is contrary to all men in his principles and practices; such a man sows discord and strife wherever he comes, in families, in neighbourhoods, in churches, in commonwealths, in civil and religious societies; and he seldom fails of finding a soil fit for his purpose, or ground susceptible of the seed he sows, where it takes root and thrives; see ch. vi. 19. *And a whisperer separateth chief friends*: one that goes from place to place, from house to house, carrying tales, whispering into the ears of persons things prejudicial to the characters of others, mere lies and falsehoods; such a man by his conduct separates one friend from another, even chief friends, that have been for a long time in the closest and most intimate friendship; he alienates their minds one from another, so that they will not come near one another, or keep up any correspondence as before. The word for *chief friends* is in the singular number, and signifies a prince or leader; and such men, according to the station they are in, and the influence they have, separate princes, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, from their subjects, and stir up the latter to rebel against them; at least alienate their affections from them; and pastors of churches from their flocks, and husbands from their wives: and such a man, at last, when found out, separates his best friends from himself, as well as from one another; who drop him as a worthless person, yea, as dangerous to converse with;

¹ עמל anima laborantis, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; anima laboriosi, Cocceius.
² Ipse molestus molestiam affert sibi, Junius & Tremellius.
³ עמל עמל פיהו
⁴ incurvat se ei os suum, Pagninus; incurvat se ei os suum, Mercerus, Gejerus.

⁵ Inflexit se super cum os suum, Montanus; innititur super cum, Vatablus.
⁶ בליעל vir Belijahal, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus.
⁷ vir perversitatis, Montanus, Bayanus, Schultens; vir perversitatis deditus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

so sin, that whisperer and makebate, separates between God and men, Isa. lix. 2.

Ver. 29. *A violent man enticeth his neighbour, &c.*] As false teachers do, who are grievous wolves, not sparing the flock, and who by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple; and as the man of sin, that has shed the blood of the saints, and been drunk with the same, deceives with his miracles and sorceries them that dwell on the earth. *And leadeth him into the way that is not good*; yea, into one that is very bad; so far are false teachers from leading their neighbours into the good old way of truth and righteousness, that they lead them into pernicious ways, by whom the way of truth is spoken evil of; they lead them into a ditch, and into destruction hereafter; as does the man of sin and violence his followers.

Ver. 30. *He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things, &c.*] Or *perverse or contrary things*^r; he shuts his eyes, that his thoughts might not be disturbed and distracted by visible objects, but might be more free and composed, and intent upon the things he is meditating and devising; or he shuts his eyes against light, against Scripture evidence, which he does not care to come to, lest his principles and practices should be reproved; he shuts his eyes, and will not look into the Scriptures, that he may form and devise schemes of doctrine and worship contrary to them. Some render it, he winks with his eyes, as in ch. vi. 13. so the Targum; he gives the hint thereby to his companions, when is the proper time to circumvent an innocent person, and to put in execution the scheme he had devised. *Moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass*; either as persons in deep thought used to do; or as a token to others to set about the evil designed and contrived; or rather as acting a deceitful part, as a false teacher; not speaking out his mind freely, but muttering out his words, handling the word of God deceitfully, and not by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, as a faithful minister does; and by such artful methods brings his evil designs to pass. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *biting his lips*; so a wicked man does through indignation at a good man, and through desire of revenge; and when he plots against him, he gnashes at him with his teeth, Psal. xxxvii. 12. The Targum is, "threatening with his lips;" he gives out menaces of evil things, and performs them; which is true of the man of sin, Rev. xiii. 5—7.

Ver. 31. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, &c.*] Gray hairs, white locks through age are very ornamental; look very beautiful, bespeak gravity, wisdom, and prudence, and command reverence and respect; with the ancient Romans^s, greater honour was paid to age than to family or wealth; and the elder were revered by the younger next to God, and in the stead of parents; see the note on Lev. xix. 32. *If it be found in the way of righteousness*; that is, if such who are old and stricken in years are like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of

the Lord blameless; when they are found in Christ, having on his righteousness; and when they live soberly, righteously, and godly; when they walk in the ways of God and true religion; keep up family-worship, and private devotion; as well as constantly attend the ministry of the word and ordinances; then are they very venerable and respectable; their old age is a good old age; and in a short time they shall have the crown of glory which fadeth not away: but otherwise a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed; an old man in the open ways of sin and vice, laden with iniquity, is a very contemptible and shocking sight.

Ver. 32. *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, &c.*] Than a mighty warrior or conqueror; as Alexander who conquered his enemies, and even all the world, and yet in his wrath slew his best friends: a man that is slow to anger is esteemed by the Lord, respected by men, and is happy in himself; and is preferable to the strongest man that is not master of himself and of his passions. *And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*; one that has the command of his temper, that can govern himself, and not suffer his passions to exceed due bounds, is superior in strength to him that can storm a castle or take a fortified city; it is easier to do the one than the other; courage of mind joined with wisdom, and assisted by a proper number of persons, may do the one; but it requires the grace of God, and the assistance of his spirit, thoroughly to do the other. Cicero says^t, "in all ages fewer men are found who conquer their own lusts than that overcome the armies of enemies."

Ver. 33. *The lot is cast into the lap, &c.*] Of a man's garment, or into his bosom, or into a hat, cap, urn, or whatsoever he has in his lap, and from whence it is taken out; which used to be done in choosing officers, civil or ecclesiastical; in dividing inheritances, and determining doubtful cases; and making up differences, and putting an end to strife and contentions, which otherwise could not be done: and this ought not to be used in trivial cases, or to gratify curiosity, or for the sake of gain, or rashly and superstitiously; but seriously and religiously, with prayer, and in faith, and with a view to the divine direction, and submission to it; for a lot has the nature of an oath, and is an appeal to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent Being. *The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*; or the judgment^u of it; the judgment that is to be made by it concerning persons or things; it being so directed and ordered by him as to fall upon the person it should; or to make known the thing in doubt and debate according to his will, in which all parties concerned should acquiesce. This is to be ascribed, not to blind chance and fortune, to the influence of the stars, or to any invisible created being, angel or devil, but to the Lord only; there is no such thing as chance, or events by chance; those events which seem most fortuitous or contingent are all disposed, ordered, and governed, by the sovereign will of God.

^r פְּרַוְסָתַיטַת peruersitates, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; res peruersas, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; peruersas, Michaelis.

^s Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 15.

^t Epist. l. 15. Ep. 4.

^u מִשְׁפָּטֵי דִּיכְרִיָּא judgmente ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Coccius, Gejerus, Schulteus; judicium eorum, Tigurine version.

C H A P. XVII.

Ver. 1. *BETTER* is a dry morsel, and quietness thereof, &c.] A small quantity of bread; a broken piece of bread, as the word ^w signifies; which has been long broken off, and become dry ^a; a dry crust of bread; old bread, as the Arabic version; an old, mouldy, dry piece of bread; and the word used has the signification of destruction in it: bread that has lost its taste and virtue; or, however, a mere piece of bread is meant, without any thing to eat with it, as Gerson, butter, cheese, or flesh: this, with quietness and peace among those that partake of it, peace in the family, in a man's own mind, especially if he has the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; this is better than a house full of sacrifices with strife; than a house ever so well furnished with good cheer, or a table ever so richly spread; or where there is plenty of slain beasts for food, or for sacrifice, which were usually the best, and part of which the people had to eat, and at which times feasts used to be made; but the meanest food, with tranquillity and contentment, is preferable to the richest entertainment where there is nothing but strife and contention among the guests; for, where that is, there is confusion and every evil work: peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are better than meats and drinks. Mr. Dod used to say, "brown bread and the Gospel" are good fare;" see ch. xv. 17.

Ver. 2. *A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, &c.*] That does wicked and shameful actions; that is slothful, and will not attend to instruction or business; that is prodigal, wasteful, and luxurious, and causes shame to his parents, who blush at his conduct. Now a servant that behaves well and wisely in a family is observed and respected by his master, and he puts his wicked and extravagant son under him, makes him a tutor to him, and sets him to watch over him, and obliges his son to obey his orders. Jarchi illustrates this in Nebuchadnezzar ruling over the children of Israel. *And shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren;* be appointed by his master's will to a share in his estate among his children, for his faithful service to him in life, and to encourage him to take care of his family, his children, and his affairs, after his death; or through gifts in his lifetime shall have what is equal to what his sons have; or growing rich shall purchase a part of theirs, as Gussetius ⁷: *or shall part the inheritance among the brethren* ²; being a wise man, his master shall leave him executor of his will, to divide his substance among his children, and see that every one have their proper portion and equal share; but it rather is to be understood of his being a co-heir with them. So the Gentiles, through the will of the Lord, become fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise

in Christ with the Jews, and share in the same inheritance with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their children; nay, when the children of the kingdom shall be shut out; see Ephes. iii. 6. Matt. viii. 11, 12. Jarchi gives an ancient exposition of it thus, "a proselyte of righteousness is better than a wicked native; and in time to come he shall divide the spoil and the inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel, as it is said in Ezek. xlvii. 23."

Ver. 3. *The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, &c.*] Refiners of silver have their fining-pots, in which they purify the silver from the dross; and goldsmiths have their crucibles to melt and purify their gold, by which assays of the worth and value of it may be made. *But the Lord trieth the hearts:* there is no vessel, as Gerson observes, in which they can be put and tried by creatures; a man does not know, nor can he thoroughly search and try his own heart, and much less the hearts of others; God only knows and tries them, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it by way of similitude, *as the fining-pot is for silver, &c.* as silver is refined in the pot, and gold in the furnace, so are the hearts of God's people, and their graces tried and purified by him in the furnace of affliction; the variety of troubles they are exercised with are made useful for the purging away of the dross of sin and corruption, and for the brightening of their graces, 1 Pet. i. 7.

Ver. 4. *A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips, &c.*] A man of an ill spirit, of a mischievous disposition, that delights in doing wickedness; he carefully attends to such as speak falsehood; he listens to lies and calumnies, loves to hear ill reports of persons, and takes pleasure in spreading them to the hurt of their characters; and men of bad hearts and lives give heed to seducing spirits, to false teachers, to such as speak lies in hypocrisy, who sooth and harden them in their wickedness. *And a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue:* or, to a tongue of destruction ^a; a calumniating, backbiting tongue, which destroys the good name and reputation of men; and he that is given to lying is made up of lying, or is a lie itself, as the word signifies; who loves and makes a lie, as antichrist and his followers; such an one hearkens diligently to every thing that may detract from the character of those especially he bears an ill will to: or it may be better rendered, *he that hearkens to a lie gives heed to a naughty tongue* ^b; for a lying tongue is a naughty one, evil in itself, pernicious in its effects and consequences.

Ver. 5. *Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker, &c.*] He that mocks the poor for his poverty, upbraids him with his mean appearance, scoffs at the clothes he wears or food he eats, such an one reproaches his

^a פרום frustum, א פתח fregit, Gejerus.
^b סחבת siccum frustum panis, Tigurine version; cibi sicci, Junius & Tremellius; buccella sicca, V. L. Mercerus, Piscator; buccia sicca, Cocceius; frustum sicci, sc. cibi, Michaelis; frustum sicca buccella, Schultens, so Ben Melech.

⁷ Ebr. Comment. p. 253.

^a חלקי dividet, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Syriac version and the Targum; partitur, Junius & Tremellius; partietur, Piscator.
^b לשון הרע perniciosa lingua, Tigurine version; lingue confractionum calummatum, injuriarum, Vatablus; ad linguam calidioram, Michaelis.

^c So Michaelis.

Creator; or, as the Targum, “provokes his Creator to “anger;” him who is his own Creator as well as the poor man’s; him who made the poor man, both as a man and as a poor man; and who could have made him rich if he would, as well as the man that mocks at him; whose riches are not of himself, but of God; and who can take them away, and give them to the poor man if he pleases; and therefore rich men should be careful how they mock the poor; for, as Gerson observes, he that derides a work derides the workman. And *he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished; or at calamity*; at the calamity of another, as the Vulgate Latin; and so Gerson; for no man rejoices at his own calamity; at the calamity of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or of his neighbour or companion, as the Targum; or at the calamity of any of his fellow-creatures, as the Edomites rejoiced at the calamity of the Jews, but were in their turn destroyed; and as the Jews rejoiced when the Christians were persecuted by Nero, and at length were destroyed themselves by the Romans; and as the Papists will rejoice when the witnesses are slain, and quickly after seven thousand men of name will be slain of them, and the rest affrighted, Rev. xi. 10, 13.

Ver. 6. *Children’s children are the crown of old men, &c.*] Ancient parents. Grandfathers with the Jews are called old men, as Buxtorf^a observes. A numerous progeny was reckoned a great blessing to a man; to have his table surrounded with children, as olive-plants; to be encircled with a large family was a crown of glory^c; and to live to see children’s children, a large number of grandchildren, was still a greater glory; and especially, as Jarchi observes, when these children, or children’s children, were walking in a good way, in the good ways of religion and godliness, they trained them up in. Christ is the Ancient of days, the everlasting Father; and it is his glory, as Mediator, to see his seed, to have a numerous offspring; and which will endure for ever, as the days of heaven: ministers of the Gospel are spiritual fathers; and those who have been converted under their ministry will be their joy and *crown of rejoicing* at the last day. *And the glory of children are their fathers*; who are wise, as Aben Ezra observes; and righteous, as Jarchi: if they are wise and good men, it is an honour to their children that they descend from them; nor are they ashamed to own their relation to them, but glory in it, as the Jews did in Abraham, saying, *We have Abraham for our father*; but, on the contrary, if their fathers are foolish or wicked, their children are ashamed of them, and do not care to acknowledge their descent from them; and such parents, who are an honour to their children, their children should be careful to tread in their steps, that they reflect no dishonour on them; particularly as it is our great honour and glory to have God for our father, to be his adopted sons and daughters, we should be followers of him as dear children, and be obedient ones.

Ver. 7. *Excellent speech becometh not a fool, &c.*]

^a לֵאמֹר ad calamitatem, Schultens; ob calamitatem, Cocceius; calamitate, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^b In Lex. Talmud. col. 684.

^c Te felix natorum turba coronat, Claudian. de Raptu Proserp. l. 1. v. 109

A wicked man. Eloquence, or a sublime grand way of speaking, a copiousness and fluency of expression, become not such; because hereby he may be capable of doing more mischief; or such a style is unsuitable to the subject of his discourse, which is nothing but folly and wickedness. The Gospel is excellent speech, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; it treats of excellent things; concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him; and very unfit is a wicked man to take it into his mouth, talk of it, and declare it. *Much less do lying lips a prince*; they rather become a fool, as excellent speech does a prince; who neither should speak lies himself, nor encourage, but abhor them in others. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, a *just man*; but the word more properly signifies a liberal man, as it is rendered in Isa. xxxii. 8. where it stands opposed to a churl or covetous man: and some Jewish^f writers think by the *fool* is meant such an one to whom a *lip of abundance*^g, as it may be rendered, is very unsuitable; or to talk of his abundance, when he makes no good use of what he has for himself or others; and so, on the other hand, it is very disagreeable to the character of an ingenuous and liberal man to promise and not perform, and never intended it. It is true of such who are made a *willing* people in the day of Christ’s power, Psal. cx. 3. where the same word is used as here; of his volunteers; that to speak lies one to another very ill becomes them; or to receive, or to speak, or profess false doctrines; for no lie is of the truth.

Ver. 8. *A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, &c.*] Or *is a stone of grace*^h, the note of similitude being wanting. It is an ornament of grace, adorns the person that wears it, makes him look lovely and amiable; is very grateful and desirable in itself, attracts and dazzles the eyes, and fills the mind with pleasure; so is a gift in the eyes of him that has it, that is the owner of it; either that has it in his possession to give, is the giver of it, as Aben Ezra; which, as it is valuable in his own eyes, he judges it to be so with others, and thinks he can do what he pleases with it, and engage persons by it to do as he would have them: or that is the receiver of it, as the Targum; who, having it given him, is master of it, and is so acceptable to him, and has such an influence upon him, as to do anything for it the giver of it directs him to, as follows: *whithersoever it turneth it prospereth*: to whatsoever cause, or to whatsoever persons, judge or jury, it is given and received; it succeeds far better than the most eloquent orations, or learned pleadings in law, or appeals to statutes, and the production of them. Money answers all things; a gift blinds the eyes; it is like a diamond, so sparkling and dazzling, so charming and attracting, that the person to whom it is offered cannot resist it; and it draws him to do whatever is desired of him; it carries the cause, it succeeds according to the wish of the giver: or, as the Arabic version renders it, “he shall find his business plain;” done as he would

^f Kabvenaki in Mercer. in loc.

^g יתר עֵשֶׂת labium abundantiarum.

^h לֵבן lapis gratiæ, Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis.

have it. Jarchi applies the proverb thus; "when a man comes before the Lord, and bribes him with words, and returns unto him, it is a precious stone in his eyes; and in all that he asks of him he prospers."

Ver. 9. *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, &c.*] He that hides the transgression of another, or of his friend, committed against himself or against another, which he is privy to; but the matter being made up, and the offence forgiven, he forgets it, and no more speaks of it to his friend, or upbraids him with it, nor spreads it among others: such a man shews that he loves his friend, and is desirous that love and friendship should be continued; and this is the way to continue it; and a man that thus seeks it finds it. Or it may be rendered, *he covereth a transgression who seeketh love*¹; for *love covereth all things*, ch. x. 12. *But he that repeateth a matter*; the matter of the transgression, the thing that has given the offence; that takes it up again, when it has been covered; upbraids his friend with it, when it has been passed over and forgiven; will frequently hit him on the teeth with it, and talk of it wherever he comes, and spread the knowledge of it in all places: *he separateth very friends*; he sets the best of friends at variance one with another by such a practice; for this pursued, friendship cannot subsist long among men: he separates his best friend from himself, and himself from him. The word signifies a prince, leader, or governor; see the note on ch. xvi. 28. and Jarchi interprets it thus; "he separates from himself the Governor of the world, the holy blessed God."

Ver. 10. *A reproof entereth more into a wise man, &c.*] A single verbal reproof, gently, kindly, and prudently given, not only enters the ear, but the heart of a wise and understanding man; it descends into him, as the word² signifies; it sinks deep into his mind; it penetrates into his heart, and pierces his conscience; brings him easily to humiliation, confession, and reformation. Or, *reproof is more terror to a wise man*; as Jarchi interprets it, and the Tigurine version; it awes and terrifies him more; a single word has more effect upon him, entering more easily into him, *than an hundred stripes into a fool*; or, *than smiting a fool a hundred times*³: a word to a wise man is more than a hundred blows to a fool, will sooner correct and amend him; a word will enter where a blow will not; stripes only reach the back, but not the heart of a fool; he is never the better for all the corrections given him; his heart is not affected, is not humbled, nor brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it; nor is he in the least reformed: or a single reproof to a wise man is of more service than a hundred reproofs to a fool; which are sometimes expressed by smiting, *let the righteous smite me, &c.* Psal. cxli. 5.

Ver. 11. *An evil man seeketh only rebellion, &c.*] For he seeks nothing but what is evil; and all sin is rebellion against God, a contempt of his laws, and a transgression of them; a trampling upon his legisla-

tive power and authority; an act of hostility against him, and a casting off allegiance to him. Or rather the words may be rendered, *rebellion*, that is, *the rebellious man*, so the Targum, the abstract for the concrete, *verily or only seeketh evil*⁴; a man that is rebellious against his prince, that is of a rebellious disposition, is continually seeking to do mischief in the commonwealth; he is continually plotting and contriving destructive schemes, and stirring up sedition, and causing trouble; and so a rebel against God is always seeking that which is sinful, which is evil in its own nature, and contrary to the law and will of God; and in the issue brings the evil of punishment on himself. *Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him*; if a rebel against his lawful sovereign, a messenger shall be sent by him to take him into custody, who will shew him no mercy; or an executioner to dispatch him, who will not spare to perform his orders: and if a rebel against God, some judgment of God shall fall upon him in a very severe manner; or his own conscience shall accuse him, and shall be filled with dreadful apprehensions of divine vengeance; or Satan, the angel of death, shall be let loose upon him, to terrify or destroy him; or death itself, which spares none. The Septuagint and Arabic versions ascribe this to God as his act, rendering it, *the Lord shall send, &c.* and so Aben Ezra; who also refers the former clause to him, and gives it as the sense of it; that he shall seek to do the rebellious man evil, inflict on him the evil of punishment for the evil of sin.

Ver. 12. *Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, &c.*] A bear is a very fierce and furious creature, especially a she-bear; and she is still more so when robbed of her whelps, which she has just whelped, and been at great pains to lick into shape and form, by which her fondness to them is increased; and therefore, being stripped of them, is full of rage; and ranging about in quest of them, falls furiously upon the first she meets with. Jerom⁵ observes, that those who have written of the nature of beasts say, that, among all wild beasts, there is none more fierce than a she-bear, when she has lost her whelps, or wants food. And yet, as terrible and as dangerous as it is, it is safer and more eligible of the two, to meet an enraged bear in those circumstances, *than a fool in his folly*; in the height of his folly, in a paroxysm or fit of that; in the heat of his lusts, and the pursuit of them, in which there is no stopping him, or turning him from them; especially in the heat of passion and anger, which exceeds that of a bear, and is not so easily avoided. Jarchi applies it to such fools as seduce persons to idolatry, whom to meet is very dangerous: such are the followers of the man of sin, who have no mercy on the souls of men they deceive, and whose damnation they are the cause of; and who are implacably cruel to those who will not join with them in their idolatrous worship; the beast of Rome, his feet are as the feet of a bear, Rev. xiii. 2. and one had better meet a bear than him and his followers.

Ver. 13. *Whoso rewardeth evil for good, &c.*] As

¹ So Cocceius.

² תחת descendet, Montanus; descendit, Vatablus, Mercurus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejorus.

³ מאה מאות מהיות כסוי מאה מאה
Junius & Tremellins, Piscator, so, Pagninus, Michaelis.

⁴ מן מרי בקש רע מן profecto rebellio querret malum, Montanus; so Schultzeus, Piscator, Tigurine version, Cocceius.

⁵ Comment. in Hos. xiii. 8. So Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 18.

the enemies of David and Christ rewarded them, Psal. xxxv. 12. and cix. 5. this is base ingratitude, contrary to the law and light of nature; worse than beastly, is really devilish. *Eoil shall not depart from his house;* from him and his family; they shall be continually visited with one disease and calamity or another; so hateful and offensive is the sin of ingratitude to God, and therefore ought to be carefully avoided. This might be illustrated by the judgments of God on the nation of the Jews, for their ingratitude to Christ.

Ver. 14. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water, &c.*] As when a man makes a little hole in the bank of a river, or cuts a small passage in it, to let the water into an adjoining field; by the force of the water, the passage is widened, and it flows in, in great abundance, to the overflow and prejudice of the field; nor is it easily stopped: so a single word, spoken in anger, with some warmth, or in a way of contradiction, has been the beginning and occasion of great strife and contention. The words in the Hebrew text lie thus; *he that letteth out water is the beginning of strife*; which some understand of letting out water into another man's field, which occasions contentions, quarrels, and lawsuits; but the former sense is best: the Targum is, "he that sheddeth blood as water stirreth up strifes." *Therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with;* cease from it as soon as begun; leave it off before it is well entered: or *before one mixeth himself* with it, or is implicated with it; got so far into it, that it will be difficult to get out of it: or *before thou strivest with any openly;* which sense the word has in the Arabic language, as Schultens¹ observes; that is, before you come to open words and blows, put an end to the contention; do not suffer it to proceed so far; since it cannot be known what will be the consequence of it: or rather, leave it off, as the same learned writer in his later thoughts, in his commentary on the place, by the help of Arabism, also renders it, *before the teeth are made bare*: or shewn, in quarrelling, brawling, reproaching, in wrath and anger.

Ver. 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, &c.*] That absolves and clears the guilty, and pronounces him righteous in open court, where he stands arraigned, accused, and the fact proved; and that adjudges an innocent man to condemnation; or passes the sentence of it upon him, when it is a clear case he is not guilty. *Even they both are abomination to the Lord:* being contrary to law and justice, to the declared will of God, and the orders and instructions given by him to judges, Deut. xxv. 1. such an abominable action were the Jews guilty of in desiring Barabbas, a wicked man, to be released, and Christ, the just One, to be condemned; and Pilate in complying with them. From this passage we learn, that the word *justify* is used in a forensic sense, for pronouncing persons just in a court of judicature; and in which sense it is used in the article of a sinner's justification before God: by which act, though it is an ungodly person that is jus-

tified, yet it is through the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and is quite agreeable to law and the justice of God; and not at all inconsistent with this passage, which represents the justification of a wicked man as an abomination: it is so where there is no righteousness, but not where there is; agreeably to which is the saying of an Heathen poet, "it is not righteous, neither rashly to adjudge bad men good, nor good men bad."

Ver. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, &c.*] Natural wisdom and knowledge. By this *price* may be meant money, riches, worldly substance, of which a foolish man is possessed; by means of which he might purchase useful books for the improvement of his mind, and procure himself instructors that might be very useful to him; but instead of seeking after that which he most wants, and making use of his substance to furnish him with it, he spends it on his back and belly, in fine clothes and luxurious living; in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, at balls and plays, in taverns and brothel-houses: or spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the means of which are reading the word, hearing the Gospel, frequent opportunities of attendance on a Gospel ministry, in season and out of season, and conversation with Gospel ministers and other Christians; but, instead of making use of these, he neglects, slights, and despises them. And it is asked, with some degree of indignation and admiration, why or to what purpose a fool is favoured with such means. *Seeing he hath no heart to it?* to wisdom; he does not desire it, nor to make use of the price or means, in order to obtain it; all is lost upon him; and it is hard to account for it why he should have this price, when he makes such an ill use of it.

Ver. 17. *A friend loveth at all times, &c.*] A true, hearty, faithful friend, loves in times of adversity as well as in times of prosperity: there are many that are friends to persons, whilst they are in affluent circumstances; but when there is a change in their condition, and they are stripped of all riches and substance; then their friends forsake them, and stand at a distance from them; as was the case of Job, ch. xix. 14. it is a very rare thing to find a friend that is a constant lover, such an one as here described. *And a brother is born for adversity:* for a time of adversity, as Jarchi: he is born into the world for this purpose; to sympathize with his brother in distress, to relieve him, comfort and support him; and if he does not do this, when it is in his power to do it, he does not answer the end of his being born into the world. The Jewish writers understand this as shewing the difference between a friend and a brother: a cordial friend loves at all times, prosperous and adverse; but a brother loves when *adversity is born*, or is, so Aben Ezra; he loves when he is forced to it; when the distress of his brother, who is his flesh and bone, as Gersom observes, obliges him to it: but this may be understood of the same person who is the friend; he is a brother, and acts the part of one in a time of adversity, for which he

* מִן אֲשֶׁר מֵרָחֵק אֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה וְאֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה וְאֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה
(est) principium contentions, Pagninus, Montanus.

† אֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה וְאֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה וְאֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה
antequam sese immisceat, Junius & Tremellius.

‡ אֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה p. 481.

† Sophocles (Edipus Tyran. v. 692, 693.

‡ אֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה וְאֵשֶׁת מִיָּדָאָה & frater diligit quando tribulatio nascitur, Manster; so some in Vatablus.

is born and brought into the world; it being so ordered by divine Providence, that a man should have a friend born against the time he stands in need of him'. To no one person can all this be applied with so much truth and exactness as to our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a *friend*, not of angels only, but of men; more especially of his church and people; of sinful men, of publicans and sinners; as appears by his calling them to repentance, by his receiving them, and by his coming into the world to save them: he *loves* them, and loves them constantly; he loved them before time; so early were they on his heart and in his book of life; so early was he the surety of them, and the covenant of grace made with him; and their persons and grace put into his hands, which he took the care of: he loved them in time, and before time began with them; thus they were preserved in him, when they fell in Adam; were redeemed by his precious blood, when as yet they were not in being, at least many of them: he loves them as soon as time begins with them, as soon as born; though impure by their first birth, transgressors from the womb, enemies and enmity itself unto him; he waits to be gracious to them, and sends his Gospel and his Spirit to find them out and call them: and he continues to love them after conversion; in times of backsliding; in times of desertion; in times of temptation, and in times of affliction: he loves them indeed to the end of time, and to all eternity; nor is there a moment of time to be fixed upon, in which he does not love them. And he is a *brother* to his people; through his incarnation, he is a partaker of the same flesh and blood with them; and through their adoption, they having one and the same father; nor is he ashamed to own the relation; and he has all the freedom, affection, compassion, and condescension, of a brother in him: and now he is a brother *born*; see Isa. ix. 6. born of a woman, a virgin, at Beth-lehem, in the fulness of time, for and on the behalf of his people; even for *adversity*: to bear and endure adversity himself, which he did, by coming into a state of meanness and poverty; through the reproaches and persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the ill usage of his own disciples, the desertion of his father, the strokes of justice, and the sufferings of death; also for the adversity of his people, to sympathize with them, bear them up under it, and deliver them out of it. The ancient Jews had a notion that this Scripture has some respect to the Messiah; for, to shew that the Messiah, being God, would by his incarnation become a brother to men, they cite this passage of Scripture as a testimony of it*.

Ver. 18. *A man void of understanding striketh hands, &c.*] With his friend's creditor, and becomes surety for him; and thereby acts a very unwise part, and shews himself to want understanding, by taking such a step, which may prove the ruin of himself and family: for though a man may and should love his friend at all times; yet he is not obliged, under a notion of friendship, to injure himself and his family, or to run the risk of it; if he does, it is a plain case he wants wisdom and

discretion, see ch. vi. 1. And *becometh surety in the presence of his friend*: not the creditor, but the debtor; and to pass his word for him, when he is present, shews that his own word will not be taken; and that he is either thought to be in bad circumstances, and incapable of payment at the proper time; or else that he is a bad man, of dishonest principles, and will not; and in either case it is not advisable to become a surety for such a man: and besides, doing it in his presence may make him more careless and unconcerned about making good his payment or contract at the appointed time, when he knows his friend is engaged for him.

Ver. 19. *He loveth transgression that loveth strife, &c.*] For strife is transgression, when it flows from a malignant spirit, is with bad views, about things to no profit, and for contention-sake; otherwise to contend earnestly for the truth; to strive together for the faith of the Gospel, for matters of moment and importance, and not mere words; to strive lawfully in a cause that is just, and for truth and justice, is commendable and praiseworthy. And *he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction*; that opens the door of his lips, and speaks proudly, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; who compare it with Mic. vii. 5. who set their mouths against heaven, and God in it; and whose tongue walks through the earth, and spares none there, Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9. as antichrist, who opens his mouth in blasphemy against God and his tabernacle, and exalts himself above all that is called God; and such, sooner or later, bring destruction on themselves, and find it as surely as if they sought for it. Or this may be understood of proud ambitious persons, that build houses more magnificent than their substance will allow of, the gate being put for the whole; by which means they bring themselves to ruin. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, have it in ver. 16. *he that buildeth his house high*: or who behaves proudly.

Ver. 20. *He that hath a froward heart findeth no good, &c.*] Who is of a perverse spirit, meditates and devises evil things; is not ingenuous and sincere, but false and deceitful to God and men: such an one gets no good from either; he obtains not the favour of God, nor a good name, credit, and reputation among men. And *he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief; or that turns himself, or is turned in his tongue*; whose tongue is changeable, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; who sometimes says one thing, and sometimes another, and is not consistent with himself; as well as is contrary to all men: sooner or later he falls into mischief, into a pit, which he himself has dug for others; see Jam. iii. 6, 8.

Ver. 21. *He that begetteth a fool doth it to his sorrow, &c.*] As it proves in the issue; though it was joy to him when a man-child was born, and took delight in him whilst in infancy and childhood, and promised himself much happiness in him when at years of discretion; but, instead of that, he departs from his education-principles, despises all parental counsels and advice, and goes into all the extravagance

* Nihil homini amico est opportuno amicus, Planti Epidicus, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 43.

* Mephila apud Galatin. Cathol. Ver. Arcan. l. 3. c. 20.

* מְפִילָא בִּלְשׁוֹנוֹ הַיְהוָה קִי וְרָעִיתִי בְּלִשְׁוֹנוֹ, Pagninus; & veritas se in lingua sua, Montanus; qui vertitur in lingua sua, Mercerus, Gejerus.

of sin and folly; which is an heartbreaking to his godly and religious parents; for this is to be understood, not of an idiot, but of a wicked son, taking bad courses. *And the father of a fool hath no joy*: in his son, but sorrow, and has scarce any joy or pleasure in any thing else in all his enjoyments; the trouble he is filled with on his account embitters all he has, that he can take no satisfaction, or have any comfort of life; the concern for his son is uppermost in his thoughts, and hinders him from taking that pleasure which otherwise he might enjoy.

Ver. 22. *A merry heart doth good like a medicine, &c.*] Does the body good, makes it healthful and vigorous. Cheerfulness of spirit has a great influence upon the body, and much contributes to the health and welfare of it; see Eccl. ix. 7—9. and especially a heart full of spiritual joy, peace of conscience, flowing from the blood of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, a rejoicing in Christ Jesus and his righteousness, and in hope of the glory of God, much affect even the outward man. Or, *a merry heart makes a good medicine*; it is a good medicine of itself; raises the spirits, invigorates the body, and fits it for service and business: or, *does a medicine good*; makes that operate kindly, and to a good purpose: or, as Jarchi, makes the countenance shine well, makes a serene countenance; which Schultens approves, and, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, confirms. *But a broken spirit drieth the bones*: a spirit broken with sorrow, whether on spiritual or temporal accounts; as it weakens the nerves, it dries up the marrow in the bones, and emaciates the body, and reduces it to a skeleton: the joy or grief of the mind, those passions of the soul, have a very great influence upon the body, either for its good or hurt.

Ver. 23. *A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom, &c.*] Of another, of a rich man, who takes it out from thence, and offers it to him as a bribe. This he takes in the most secret manner, that it might not be seen by others; though the Arabic version renders it, *he that receives a gift in his own bosom commits iniquity*; it is true of both the giver and the receiver; the one gives out of his bosom, and the other takes it from thence, and puts it into his own, and both are wicked. And the words are by some rendered, though it seems contrary to the accents, *a gift out of the bosom of the wicked he will take*; the unjust judge, who is bribed with it: *to pervert the ways of judgment*; to turn the course of justice, and hinder it from taking place; favouring a bad cause, and pronouncing a wrong sentence, which is wresting judgment.

Ver. 24. *Wisdom is before him that hath understanding, &c.*] Is near him, to direct and assist him; it is before him as a rule to walk by, and it is the mark he aims at. A man of spiritual understanding has the book of wisdom before him, the Scriptures of truth, which are able to make a man wise to salvation; and he steers

his course according to them; he sets Christ, the Wisdom of God, always before him; and keeps his eye on the mark for the prize, all the while he is running his Christian race: or, *in the face of an understanding man is wisdom*; it is to be seen in his countenance, which is grave and composed. *But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*: where wisdom is not to be found, it is far off from him; his mind is wandering after every object, is unsettled and unfixed to any thing; and which may be discerned in his eyes, which are rolling about and turning, first one way and then another; and which shews the levity and inconstancy of his mind.

Ver. 25. *A foolish son is a grief to his father, &c.*] Because of his folly and wickedness, and the ruin he is bringing himself to. *And bitterness to her that bare him*; a cause of bitterness of soul to his mother, more distressing than the bitter pains with which she brought him forth into the world. Jarchi, by the father, understands the blessed God; and by her that bare him, the congregation of Israel; to whom Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was bitterness, who caused Israel to sin; see ch. x. 1.

Ver. 26. *Also to punish the just is not good, &c.*] It is evil, and an abomination to the Lord, ver. 15. Evil-doers indeed should be punished; but to punish the righteous also, as well as them, is far from being commendable. Nor to *strike princes for equity*: to strike princes, judges, civil magistrates, for doing the duty of their place and office, for doing that which is just and equitable among men, is very criminal, who ought to be encouraged and supported therein. Or it may be rendered, *nor that princes should strike for that which is right*; or cause men to be stricken, scourged, and whipped for doing well. The Targum is, “nor to smite the righteous, who say right things;” and so the Syriac version renders it, *righteous ones*; and the word signifies ingenuous liberal persons, good men, such as princes are or ought to be; and who should neither be stricken in the due discharge of their office, nor strike others that do well.

Ver. 27. *He that hath knowledge spareth his words, &c.*] Or, *he that knows knowledge*; one that is very knowing, has a fund of knowledge in him, *spareth his words*; is generally a man of few words, he thinks much and says little; and though he may be communicative of his knowledge to proper persons, and at proper times, yet never speaks of it in a boasting and ostentatious way: or, *he restrains his words*; he puts a bridle on them; and suffers not himself to speak hastily and angrily, and in a reproachful manner, when he is provoked to it. *And a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit*; here is a various reading; the Cetib is לקר, *of a cool spirit*; in opposition to a warm fiery spirit; such as was that of the apostles, who were for calling for fire from heaven on those that slighted their master, and, as he told them, knew not what spirits

* שמה יישוב גדה לב cor hilare bonam facit sanationem, Michaelis.

† So R. Joseph Kimchi; bonificat sive meliorem reddit medicinam, some in Vatablus; bene medicinam facit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

‡ מוקים רשעו מוקים רשעו munus de sinu impium accipiet, Bayanus.

§ את פני מבין חכמה in facie prudentis (luet) sapientia, V. L. so

Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Piscator, Noldius, p. 140. No. 665. in vultu intelligentis sapientia, Schultens.

¶ לכתוב נתיבים על יושר Mercurus; propter recta facta, Piscator, Gataker.

‡ וידע דעת qui scit scientiam, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus.

§ חושך אמריו qui cohibet sermones suos, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

¶ וקר רוח frigidus spiritu, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gæccius.

they were of; but a cool spirit is one that is not soon angry, calm, sedate, and not easily provoked to wrath: the Keri, or marginal reading, is יקר, of an excellent or precious spirit^f; and such an one is a right spirit; a spirit of faith and love, and of a sound mind; and of such a spirit is a man of understanding in things divine and spiritual; to have a spirit of prayer, and to be tender-hearted, and of a sympathizing and forgiving spirit, is to be of an excellent spirit. The Targum is, "humble in spirit;" and a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price; the Lord has a great regard to such who are of an humble and contrite spirit: with these he dwells, to these he gives more grace; these are like to Christ, and have the fruits of his spirit, and are very useful and ornamental. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, *patient* or *long-suffering*; and to be of a patient spirit is to be of an excellent spirit: such bear afflictions and reproaches quietly; wait God's own time for hearing and

helping them, and live in the comfortable expectation of heaven and happiness; and such shew themselves to be wise and understanding men.

Ver. 28. *Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise, &c.:*] Not only one that is sparing of his words, and is really a man of knowledge and understanding; but even a fool, if he is but silent, and does not betray his folly by his words, will be reckoned a wise man by those that do not know him; and, whatever fool he may be in other respects, yet in this he acts the wise part, that he holds his peace and says nothing. And he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding; and keeps them shut, lest he should say any thing rashly and hastily; a man that has so much command of himself as not to speak unadvisedly, through the heat of his own passions, and through the provocations of others, will pass for a man that understands himself, and knows how to behave well before others.

C H A P. XVIII.

Ver. 1. **T**HROUGH *desire a man having separated himself, seeketh, &c.*] Or, *a separated man seeketh desire*^g; his own desire, will, and pleasure. This is either to be understood in a good sense, of one that has a real and hearty desire after sound wisdom and knowledge, and seeks in the use of all proper means to attain it; and in order to which he separates himself from the world and the business of it, and retires to his study, and gives up himself to reading, meditation, and prayer; or goes abroad in search of it, as Aben Ezra: or of a vain man that affects singularity; and who, through a desire of gratifying that lust, separates himself, not only from God, as Jarchi interprets it, pursuing his civil imagination and the lust of his heart; and from his friends, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but from all men, like the Jews, who *please not God, and are contrary to all men*; so such a man sets himself to despise and contradict the sentiments and opinions of others, and to set up his own in opposition to them. This is true of the Pharisees among the Jews, who had their name from separating themselves from all others, having a high opinion of their own wisdom and sanctity; and also of the Gnostics among the Christians, who boasted of their knowledge, and separated themselves from the Christian assemblies; and were sensual, not having the spirit, being vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind. And *intermeddleth with all wisdom*: the man who is desirous of being truly wise and knowing grasps at all wisdom, every branch of useful knowledge; would gladly learn something of every art and science worthy of regard; and he makes use of all means of improving himself therein; and covets the company and conversation of men of wisdom and knowledge, that he may attain to more; he inter-

mingles himself with men of wisdom, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and walks and converses with them. Or if this is to be understood of a vain-glorious person, the sense is, *he intermeddles or mingles himself with all business*^h, as it may be rendered; he thrusts himself into affairs that do not concern him, and will pass his judgment on things he has nothing to do with; or he monopolizes all knowledge to himself, and will not allow any other to have any share with him. Jarchi interprets this clause thus, "among wise men his reproach shall be made manifest;" and observes, that their Rabbins explain it of Lot separating from Abraham, following the desires of his heart: but R. Saadiha Gaon better interprets it of an apostate from religion; that objects to every thing solid and substantial, in a wrangling and contentious manner; and *shews his teeth*ⁱ at it, as Schultens, from the use of the Arabic word, renders it.

Ver. 2. *A fool hath no delight in understanding, &c.*] In natural understanding, and in the improvement of his mind in it; he delights not in books, nor in the conversation of men of learning and sense: or in spiritual understanding, in the understanding of spiritual things; these are foolishness to a natural man; nor does he delight in reading the Scriptures, nor in hearing the word, and attendance on it in the house of God, but is weary of such exercises. *But that his heart may discover itself*: and the folly that is in it: such men only desire to have some knowledge and understanding, to make a shew of it, that they may be thought to be wise, and to be capable of talking of things as if they understood them, when it is only to the exposing of themselves and their ignorance; some persons attain to no more learning and knowledge than just to be ca-

^f יקר pretiosus spiritu, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gesenius, Bayanus.

^g So the Targum.

^h בכל תושייה יתנלע immiscet se omni negotio, Munster; omnibus que sunt immiscet se, Junius & Tremellius.

ⁱ Et in omne solidum dentes destringet, Schultens.

pable to shew that they are fools. Or, *but in the discovery of his heart*^k; he delights in discovering that; not the wisdom, but the folly that is in it.

Ver. 3. *When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, &c.*] When he comes into the world, as Aben Ezra; as soon as he is born, he is liable to contempt, being born in sin; but this is true of all: rather, as the Vulgate Latin, and with which the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions agree, when he cometh into the depth of sin, or to the height of his wickedness; he commences a scoffer at, and contemner of all that is good; when he comes into the house of God, it may be said, *there comes contempt*; for he comes not to hear the word, in order to receive any profit by it, but to contemn it, and the ministers of it. *And with ignominy reproach*; or, *with the ignominious man reproach*^l: he that despises all that is good, and treats divine things in a ludicrous way, will not spare to reproach the best of men, and speak evil of them falsely, for the sake of religion. Or the meaning of the whole is, that wicked men, sooner or later, come into contempt, ignominy, and reproach, themselves; they that despise the Lord are lightly esteemed by him; and a vile person is contemned in the eyes of a good man: such bring shame and disgrace upon themselves and families while they live; and, when they die, they are laid in the grave with dishonour; an infamy rests upon their memories, and they will rise to everlasting shame and contempt.

Ver. 4. *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, &c.*] The words of a great and mighty man; of an excellent and valuable man, as Jarchi; or of a wise man, as Aben Ezra. The doctrines which such a man has imbibed, and his heart is full of, and his mouth utters, are like to *waters*, pure, purifying, and refreshing; to *deep waters*, which make no noise, and cannot be easily fathomed: such are the deep mysteries of grace, the wisdom of God in a mystery, spoken among them that are perfect; of which a good man makes no boast, but humbly declares; out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks. *And the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook*; there is a spring of spiritual wisdom and knowledge in him; a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; and from thence it flows freely and constantly; communicating itself liberally unto others, and ministering grace to the hearers, for their edification.

Ver. 5. *It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, &c.*] For a judge to have respect to a wicked man in a cause before him, and to favour him, because he is a rich man, or a relation, or he has received some kindness from him; none of these things should have any influence upon him *to overthrow the righteous in judgment*: though he may be a poor man and a stranger, and to whom the judge is under no private and personal obligation; yet justice ought to be done without any

respect to persons; to do otherwise is not only not good, but very bad, very sinful and criminal; it is contrary to law and justice; it is doing injury to men, and is repugnant to the will of God, and offensive to him, Lev. xix. 15.

Ver. 6. *A fool's lips enter into contention, &c.*] That is, between others, when he has nothing to do with it; but he must be meddling, and make himself a party in the contention, which is an argument of his folly; he says things which occasion disputes, raise contentions among men, and provoke to wrath and anger. The Septuagint version is, *the lips of a fool lead him to evils*: for, as they lead him to contention and strife, the issue of that is confusion and every evil work. *And his mouth calleth for strokes*; as he stirs up and encourages contention, so he proceeds to blows, and excites others to them; from words he goes to blows, and, by the ill and provoking language of his mouth, gets many a blow to himself. Jarchi seems to understand it of chastisements from the hand of God; see ch. xxvi. 3.

Ver. 7. *A fool's mouth is his destruction, &c.*] The cause of it; for his contentions, and quarrels, and evil-speaking, lawsuits are commenced against him, which bring ruin upon himself and his family now; as well as for his idle and wicked words he will be condemned hereafter, Matt. xii. 35. there is a world of iniquity in the mouth and tongue of a wicked man, which bring destruction upon himself and others, Jam. iii. 6, 8. *And his lips are the snare of his soul*: from speaking in his own defence, he says things which should not be said, and by which he is entangled yet more and more; he is caught by his own words, and condemned by them; or his loquacity, in which he delights, is a snare unto him to say things which neither become him, nor are for his advantage, but the contrary; see ch. xii. 13.

Ver. 8. *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, &c.*] Or rather they are wounds; they wound the credit and reputation of the person of whom the tale is told; they wound the person to whom it is told, and destroy his love and affection to his friend; and in the issue they wound, hurt, and ruin the talebearer himself. Or, they are *as of those that are wounded*^m; they pretend to be affected with the case they tell, and to be grieved for the failings and infirmities of those they are secretly exposing, when at the same time they rejoice at them: or, they are *secret hidden ones*, as Aben Ezra interprets it; they are spoken secretly, and wound secretly, in a backbiting way: or, they are *smooth or flattering*ⁿ, as Kimchi; they are smoother than oil, and glide easily into the minds of others: rather, *are greedily swallowed down*^o, as the word in the Arabic language signifies; as Schultens has shewn, and so renders it. Hence it follows: *and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly*; go down pleasantly, and sink deep into the hearts of those to whom they are told; where they have a place and remain, both to the injury of the persons that receive them, and of them

^k לבו בהתגלותו כי אדם sed in patefacere cor ejus, Vatablus; sed in detectione cordis sui, Piscator; sed sane ut euadet cor suum, Schultens.

^l עם קלון חרפה cum ignominioso probum, Junius & Tremellius; cum probroso opprobrium, Schultens, so Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^m כמתלהמים similia sunt verbis eorum, qui aspernamero contusi sunt, Junius & Tremellius; at contusorum, Cocceius.

ⁿ Ut lenientia, Montanus; velut blanda, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; quasi blandientia, Schmidt, so Ben Melech.

^o Tanquam avidè deglutita crustula, Schultens.

of whom they are told; and, though pleasing at first, they are as wounds in the inner parts, which are mortal.

Ver. 9. *He also that is slothful in his work, &c.]* Remiss in it; hangs down his hands, and does not care to make use of them, but neglects his business: *is brother to him that is a great waster*: a prodigal man, who spends his substance in riotous living: the sluggard and the prodigal are brethren in iniquity; for, though they take different courses, they are both sinful, and issue in the same manner; both bring to poverty and want. Or, *brother to a master that wastes*^p; a slothful servant and a wasteful master are near akin, and come into the same class and circumstances. Jarchi interprets it, "he that separateth from the law, though a "disciple of a wise man, is a brother to Satan;" whose name is Apollyon, the waster and destroyer. A man that is slothful in spiritual things, though a professor of religion, and has a place in the house of God, is brother to him that is a waster and persecutor of it; see Matt. xii. 30.

Ver. 10. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, &c.]* By the name of the Lord may be meant, either the attributes and perfections of God, by which he is made known, and which are the strength and security of his people; his goodness, grace, and mercy, are their defence; his favour encompasses them about, as a shield; his justice protects them from all injuries and insults; his truth and faithfulness preserve them; they are kept by his power, as in a garrison; and his unchangeableness is a reason why they are not consumed: or else the Lord himself; his name is put for himself, Psal. xx. 1. and may be well interpreted of the Messiah, as it is by the ancient Jews^q; in and by whom God is manifested unto men as the God of grace; in whom he proclaims his name, a God gracious and merciful; whose name is in him, and who has the same nature and perfections with him; his name is Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; the mighty God, and Prince of peace; and who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, and so is their security from eternal destruction. What a strong tower is to them that are within it, against an enemy without, that is the power, strength, and might of Christ to his people; as a divine Person, he is strong and mighty, the most mighty, the Almighty; as man, he is the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself and us; as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and earth: in him is everlasting strength for his people; he is their Betzer, their fortified place, or city of refuge, to flee unto on all occasions; he is the strong hold, whither prisoners of hope are directed to turn to; he is their place of defence, and the munition of rocks; a strong tower, inexpugnable; so deeply founded, no pioneer can work under it; and spring a mine to blow it up; so highly built, no scaling ladders can reach it; so fortified, no cannon-balls can break through it, or demolish any of its walls and bulwarks, which are his salvation; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it is not to be

taken by storm, or by the most violent attack of the whole posse of men and devils. *The righteous runneth into it*: not self-righteous persons, they run from Christ and his righteousness, not to him and that; but such who see their own righteousness will not justify them; who indeed are sinners, know and acknowledge themselves to be such; as sinners go to Christ, who, as such, receives them; and these are righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and it is the continual business or employment of their faith to betake themselves to Christ upon all occasions; they are continually coming to him, and exercising faith upon him, as the Lord their righteousness, which is meant by *running* to him; this supposes knowledge of him, as the strong tower and city of refuge; of the way unto him, and of the reception by him which may be expected; it supposes a principle of spiritual life, and some degree of spiritual strength; a sense of danger or of want in themselves, and of safety and fulness in Christ; it is expressive of haste, readiness, and cheerfulness, and is owing to the drawings of efficacious grace. *And such an one that thus runs is safe*: from the avenging justice of God; from the curse and condemnation of the law; from sin, and all its dreadful consequences; from Satan, and all spiritual enemies; from wrath to come, hell, and the second death: or *is set aloft*^r; is on high; for this tower, as it is a strong one, it is a high one; a rock of refuge, higher than men, or angels, or heaven itself; and such who are in it are out of the reach of all danger and every enemy.

Ver. 11. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, &c.]* In which he dwells, over which he presides; in which he places his trust and confidence, and thinks himself safe from every enemy and from all trouble: as one^s observes, "the abundance of a rich man's wealth he conceives to be as it were the abundance of people in a city: the telling of his money he imagines to be the walking of people up and down the streets; his bags standing thick together to be so many houses standing close one to the other; his iron-barred chests to be so many bulwarks; his bonds and bills to be his cannons and demi-cannons, his great ordnance; and in the midst of these he thinketh himself environed with a great wall, which no trouble is able to leap over, which no misery is able to break through." As it follows; *and as a high wall in his own conceit*: which not only separates and distinguishes him from others; but, as he imagines, will secure him from all dangers, and will be abiding, lasting, and durable: but all this is only in his own conceit, or *imagery*^t; in the chambers of his imagery, as Jarchi, referring to Ezek. viii. 12. where the same word is used; for this wall shall not stand; these riches cannot secure themselves, they take wing and fly away; and much less the owner of them, not from public calamities, nor from personal diseases of body, nor from death, nor from wrath to come.

Ver. 12. *Before destruction the heart of man is*

^p מְשֻׁחָת לִבְלֵל דִּמְנוֹ devastationis, Gejerus; domino dissipanti, Mercerus.

^q Midrash Tillim in Psal. xviii. 50. fol. 19. 1.

^r מְשֻׁחָת & exaltabitur, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; erit in

loco alto & tuto, Vatablus; & exaltatur, Michaelis; in celsoque aget, Schultens.

^s Jermin in loc.

^t מְשֻׁחָת in imaginatione ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Coccicus, Gejerus, Schultens; in imagine sua, Mercerus.

haughty, &c.] Lifted up with his riches. Rich men are apt to be high-minded, and therefore are to be charged and cautioned against it; they are apt to look above their poor neighbours, and with contempt upon them; and very often this haughtiness of theirs is a presage of their ruin and destruction: and those haughty airs are put on from the pride of their hearts, when a *breach* is near, as the word ^u signifies, or when they are ready to break; however, their haughty spirits are, sooner or later, humbled by one distressing providence or another; see ch. xvi. 18. *And before honour is humility*; see the note on ch. xv. 33.

Ver. 13. *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, &c.*] Who is impatient, and cannot wait to hear it out, but breaks in upon the speaker before he has finished what he has to say; or is rash and precipitate, and returns an answer at once, without weighing and considering, and thoroughly understanding, what is said: *it is folly and shame unto him*; his answer must be a foolish one, and bring shame and confusion upon him; men should be *swift to hear, and slow to speak*.

Ver. 14. *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, &c.*] The spirit of a mighty man, as Jarchi; a man of spirit, that has a spirit of fortitude, even of natural fortitude, and especially of Christian fortitude; that has a spirit of might upon him, of power, and of a sound mind; a man of a Christian spirit, that is renewed in the spirit of his mind; who is a spiritual man, and has the spirit of God in him, as well as a rational soul, an immaterial, immortal, and never-dying substance. Such a man will bear up under many trials and exercises of life; will support under bodily infirmities; will take patiently the loss of friends and of substance; endure reproach, and the loss of a good name, credit, and reputation, cheerfully, for righteousness-sake; and suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, with an undaunted and unbroken spirit: the peace of conscience he feels within; the presence of God with him; the love of God shed abroad in his heart; seeing all his afflictions flowing from love, and working for his good; and having in view the glories of another world; he bears up under and goes through all afflictions with ease and pleasure; his conscience is clear, his heart is whole, his mind is easy; his wounds being healed, his sins pardoned, and his soul saved in Christ. *But a wounded spirit who can bear?* or a *smitten* ^v one, smitten by the Lord; by the word of the Lord, which he uses as a hammer to break rocky hearts in pieces; by the law of God, which produces wrath, and a looking-for of fiery indignation; by the spirit of God, awakening the conscience, and convicting it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; which smittings are very grievous, though they tend to bring to repentance; are in order to healing, and are in love. Or, *a broken spirit* ^x, as in ch. xvii. 22. broken with a sense of sin, and with an excess of sorrow for it; when a man becomes lifeless and hopeless, has no hope of life and salvation, and is in the utmost confusion; all his measures and purposes are broken, as well as his heart; he knows not what to do, nor what

way to take; he is disconsolate, and refuses to be comforted; and which for the present is intolerable: though the Lord has a regard to such, is nigh unto them; has sent his son to bind up their broken hearts; yea, has himself been broken for them; and happy it is for them that they fall on him and are broken, and not he on them. Or, *a wounded spirit*; with a view of sin, as committed against the omniscient and omnipotent Being, a pure and holy God; a righteous one, whose nature is infinite; and so sin committed against him requires an infinite satisfaction, which a creature cannot give; and a God also, who is the author of their beings, and the father of their mercies; all which makes sin against him the more cutting and wounding; likewise they are wounded with a view of the evil nature of sin, and the aggravated circumstances that attend it; and with the terrors of the law, that are set in array against them. And such a spirit *who can bear?* not without the sight of a wounded Saviour; or without a view of atonement by his sacrifice; or without the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace; or without a sense of peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ; or without some hope of salvation by him; and unless the good Samaritan pours in oil and wine into the wounds, and binds them up.

Ver. 15. *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge, &c.*] More knowledge; for he must have some, and a considerable share, to be denominated *prudent*, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual: and such will be heartily desirous of more, and make use of all means to attain it, by which they do come at a large share of it. *And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge*; a wise man seeks to get it by hearing; he listens to what others say, and especially such that are wiser and more knowing than himself: so such as are wise to salvation, as they desire to know more of Christ and of divine things, and make use of all means for that purpose; among the rest, hearken to what Christians, of a superior class to themselves, drop in private conversation; and particularly they constantly attend to the ministry of the word; and thus seeking it, they find an increase of it.

Ver. 16. *A man's gift maketh room for him, &c.*] Or *enlarges him* ^y; brings him out of prison, or out of straits and difficulties with which he has been pressed; or it makes way for him to a judge, and for a favourable hearing of his cause; or it enlarges his acquaintance, and gains him respect among men. *And bringeth him before great men*; it opens a way for him into the presence and company of great men, being a fee to their servants; or with it he procures a place to wait on them. It is not necessary to understand it of a gift by way of bribe; but to introduce a person to another, and render him acceptable, and appease anger; as in the cases of Jacob and Abigail, Gen. xxxii. 20. and xliii. 11. 1 Sam. xxv. 27.

Ver. 17. *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, &c.*] As perhaps Tertullus did, before Paul made his defence; and as Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, before his master detected him: this often ap-

^u לפני שבר ante contractionem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

^v פצעו percussum, Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; percussum, Vatablus, Cocceius.

^x Contritum, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; fractum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^y ירחיב.

pears true in telling a tale, in private conversation, in lawsuits before a judge and a court of judicature, and in theological controversies. *But his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him*; his neighbour comes into the house, where he is telling his tale, and reports it in another manner, and shews the falsehood of his relation; or he comes into a court of judicature, and sets the cause in quite another light; or he comes out into the world by public writing, and exposes the errors of a man engaged in a wrong cause, and refutes his arguments. It is generally understood of judicial affairs, that the first that opens a cause is very apt to prejudice the judge and court in his favour, and they are ready to think at first hearing that he is in the right; but it is not proper to be hasty in forming a judgment till the other side is heard; for his antagonist comes and traverses the point, unravels the whole affair, shews the weakness of his cause, the vanity of his pretences, and makes void all his allegations; and then *he*, the judge, so some interpret it, *searcheth*; inquires more narrowly into the case, in order to find out truth, and pass a right judgment and sentence.

Ver. 18. *The lot causeth contentions to cease, &c.*] When a case cannot be determined among parties at variance in a private way, nor in a court of judicature, the lot is cast, and that puts an end to all strife, and makes each party easy; they submit to it, and acquiesce in it. *And parteth between the mighty*; the kings and princes of the earth; men of great power and authority, and of great riches and affluence; and so in a capacity of contending with each other, and of prolonging the contention, which may be attended with bad consequences; and who are not easily dissuaded from it: or it may intend such who most vehemently disagree; persons of great spirits, who are obstinate and stubborn, and will by no means yield, and there is no parting them by arguments or legal decisions; these the lot parts, and causes them to cease from their quarrels and contentions, and to rest satisfied with the distributions the lot makes to them; as the children of Israel were with their portion of the land of Canaan, assigned them by lot.

Ver. 19. *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, &c.*] A fortified city may sooner be taken by an enemy, than one brother offended can be reconciled to another; their resentments against each other are keener than against another person that has offended them; and their love being turned into hatred, it is more bitter; and it is more difficult to compose differences between brethren than between enemies; wherefore such should take care that they fall not out by the way: this is true of brethren in a natural sense; as the cases of Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brethren, Amnon and Absalom, and others, shew; and of brethren in a spiritual sense, as Paul and Barnabas, Luther and Calvin, and others. *And their contentions are like the bars of a castle*; which cannot be easily broken or cut asunder: so contentions, especially those among brethren, are with great difficulty made to cease, and their differences composed; they will stand it out against one another as long as a strong city, or a barred castle, against an enemy.

Ver. 20. *A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, &c.*] With his own words and discourses, when they are prudent, pious, and savoury; when they are with grace, and minister it; they are satisfying to himself, to his own mind and conscience, and to his family; to all within his house, which is, as it were, his belly; but, if otherwise, it will not be profitable nor satisfying to either; and therefore, if a man would keep conscience easy, and be useful to others, he ought to take care what he says; see ch. xii. 14. and xiii. 2. *And with the increase of his lips shall he be filled*; the same thing as before, expressed in different words, alluding to the sowing of seed in the earth, and the increase of it; as a man sows he reaps, and enjoys the fruits of his labour; according to what a man sows with his lips, such is his harvest he is afterwards a partaker of.

Ver. 21. *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, &c.*] Of witnesses, according to the testimony they bear; of judges, according to the sentence they pass; of teachers, according to the doctrine they preach; of all men, who, by their well or ill speaking, bring death or life to themselves and others. Some, by their tongues, by the too free use of them, or falsehood they utter, are the cause of death to themselves and others; and some, by their silence, or by their prudent speech and prevalent intercession, secure or obtain life for themselves and others; yea, judgment at the last day will proceed according to a man's words, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*, Matt. xii. 37. the tongue is the instrument either of a great deal of good, or of a great deal of evil. *And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*; that delight to be talkative; that love to use the tongue, whether in a good or in a bad way, shall accordingly be recompensed; shall enjoy the advantages or disadvantages arising from it.

Ver. 22. *Whoso findeth a wife, &c.*] A good one; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply it; and so the Targum, though it leaves out the word *good* in the last clause; and no other can be meant, even a good-natured one, wise, prudent, careful, and industrious; a proper help-meet, a virtuous woman, as in ch. xxxi. 10. *whoso seeks after such an one, and finds one, especially one that has the grace of God, which he should seek after among his friends, and by their assistance, and by prayer to God: findeth a good thing*; that will be good for him, both upon a civil and spiritual account; the Septuagint version adds, "he that casts out a good wife casts out good things, but he that retains a whore is foolish and ungodly;" which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but is not in the Hebrew text. Jarchi interprets it of the law in a mystic sense, but, according to the literal sense, of a good wife. *And obtaineth favour of the Lord*: it is from the Lord, and under his direction and guidance in seeking, that he finds a good wife; and which he ought to esteem as a favour from the Lord, and as an evidence of his favour to him, and may encourage himself to hope for others of him. * He-

siod says, a man cannot obtain any thing better than a good wife.

Ver. 23. *The poor useth entreaties, &c.*] Or supplications^a; he is an humble supplicant to others for favours he asks in a submissive and lowly manner; he does not demand any thing, nor prescribe what shall be done for him, but modestly tells his case, and submits it; so such who are poor in spirit are humble supplicants at the throne of grace. *But the rich answereth roughly*; being proud and haughty, lifted up with their riches, and in fear of none, they answer others with hard and rough words, especially their inferiors, and particularly the poor. This is not what ought to be, but what commonly is. This and the following verse are not in the Arabic version.

Ver. 24. *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly, &c.*] Friendship ought to be mutual and reciprocal, as between David and Jonathan; a man that receives friendship ought to return it, or otherwise he is guilty of great ingratitude. This may be spiritually applied; a believer is a man of friends^b, as it may be rendered; he has many friends: God is his friend, as appears by his early love to him, his choice of him, and provisions of grace for him; by sending his son to save him; by visiting him, not only in a way of providence, but of grace; by disclosing his secrets, shewing his covenant to him, and by making him his heir, and a joint heir with Christ. Christ is his friend, as is evident from his visiting him at his incarnation; and in a spiritual way, by the communication of his secrets to him; by his hearty counsel and faithful reproofs; by his undertaking and doing for him what he has; and especially by suffering and dying in his room and stead. The Holy Spirit is his friend, which he has shewn by discovering to him his woeful estate by nature, and the way of salvation by Christ; by working all his works in him; by acting the part of a Comforter to him; by revealing divine things to him, by helping him under all his infirmities; by making intercession for him according to the will of God; and by making him meet

for eternal glory and happiness: angels are his friends, as is plain by their well-pleas'dness with the incarnation of Christ for men; and which they express at their conversion; by their ministering to them, their protection of them, and the good offices they do them both in life and at death; and saints are friends to one another: and such should shew themselves friendly to God, their covenant God and Father; by frequently visiting him at the throne of grace; by trusting in him; by a carefulness not to offend, but please him; and by a close and faithful adherence to his cause and interest: to Jesus Christ their Redeemer, by a ready obedience to his commands; by owning and using him as their friend; by taking notice of his friends, and shewing them respect, his ministers and poor saints; by cleaving to him, and renouncing the friendship of his enemies: and likewise to the Holy Spirit, by not grieving, quenching, and despising him; but by making use of him, and giving up themselves to his influence and direction; and by acknowledging him as the author of all their grace: also to angels, by speaking well of them, owning their good offices, and reckoning it an honour that they are come and joined to such a company; and to the saints, by Christian conversation with them, by sympathizing with them in all conditions, by hearty counsel, faithful reproofs and admonitions, and by helping them in every distress, inward and outward. *And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*; who is to a man as his own soul, Deut. xiii. 6. and so are of one heart and soul, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians, were; this is true of Christ, and may be expressive of the close union between him and his people; and of his close adherence to their cause and interest; and of his constancy and continuance as a friend at all times; and of his faithfulness and unchangeableness as such; see ch. xvii. 17. The Heathens had a deity which presided over friendship, which they called Jupiter Philios^c: the character best agrees with the true God, who is a friend to men himself, and loves friendship among them.

C H A P. XIX.

Ver. 1. *BETTER* is the poor that walketh in his integrity, &c.] In the uprightness of his heart before God and men; who is sincere in the worship of God, and in the profession of his name, and walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and is upright, harmless, and inoffensive in his conversation with men; and studies to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, and continues herein. A man may be a poor man with respect to worldly things, and yet be rich towards God; may be a truly gracious good man, honest, sincere, and upright in heart and life: and such an one is better than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool; that is, than a rich man, as the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions supply it, and as the antithesis requires; *that is perverse in his lips,*

or whose ways are perverse, as the Syriac version; that acts the deceitful part both by words and actions towards those that are about him, not being honest and plain-hearted as the poor man is; and who uses those beneath him very roughly; and concerning oppression speaks loftily, and lets his tongue run both against God in heaven and man on earth, by which he shews he is a fool: for his riches do not give him wisdom, and his words and actions declare he wants it; men may be poor, and yet wise; and a man may be rich, and yet a fool: or is confident^d; that is, trusts in his riches, and is opposed to a poor man, so R. Saadiah Gaon. This and the following verse are not in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Ver. 2. *Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is*

^a תַּחֲנוּנִים supplicationes, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

^b אִישׁ אִישׁ vir amicorum, Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; vir sodalium, Coccejus, Schultens.

^c Aristoph. Acharn. Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 2. Pausan. Arcadica sive, l. 8. p. 506.

^d כֹּסֵיף confidens divitiis, Coccejus Lexie. col. 384.

not good, &c.] Without knowledge of things natural and civil, especially without the knowledge of God and Christ, and divine and spiritual things; to be without this is not good, yea, very bad; for men without such knowledge and understanding are like the beasts that perish, and for lack of it do. Jarchi interprets it, without the law. Or, to be without the knowledge of the soul is not good; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, "he that knoweth not his soul, it is not good for him;" that does not know he has a soul, or however takes no more care of it than if he had none; who knows not the worth and value of it, its state and condition, and the danger it is in, and the only way of attaining the salvation of it. *And he that hasteth with his feet sinneth;* who engages in any thing ignorantly and rashly, he misses the mark, and fails in the performance of it, for want of due consideration and care. The Targum is, "he that is swift with his feet to evil" "is a sinner;" whose feet run to evil, to commit robbery, as Aben Ezra; or to shed blood; see ch. i. 16.

Ver. 3. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way, &c.]* The sinfulness of his heart and nature; the folly which is bound up in it causes him to go astray out of the way in which he should go, or makes things go cross with him; so that the ways he takes do not prosper, nor his schemes succeed; but every thing goes against him, and he is brought into straits and difficulties. *And his heart fretteth against the Lord;* laying all the blame on him; and ascribing his ill success, not to his own sin and folly, but to divine Providence, which works against him; and therefore frets and murmurs at him; and, instead of charging his own ways with folly, charges the ways of God with inequality; see Ezek. xviii. 25. Jude 16.

Ver. 4. *Wealth maketh many friends, &c.]* Or adds^f; it increases the number of them: so the poet^e, *donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos;* and to this agrees what the wise man says, ch. xiv. 20. *But the poor is separated from his neighbour; or friend^b;* he will not visit him as he did in his prosperity, nor suffer him to come into his house or company, or come near him; he is separated from his affection, friendship, and presence: so another poet^l, "if thou art rich, thou wilt have many friends; but, if poor, few.

Ver. 5. *A false witness shall not be unpunished, &c.]* He that bears false witness against his neighbour in an open court of judicature; though he may not be detected by men, and so escape the punishment due to such offenders by the laws of God and men; yet God, who knows all hearts and actions, will not suffer him to go with impunity; if not punished in this world, he shall be in the world to come; for bearing false witness, or perjury, is a grievous offence to God. *And he that speaketh lies shall not escape;* even he that useth himself to lying in private conversation shall not escape the reproach of men; for nothing is more scandalous than lying; nor the wrath of God, such shall

have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8.

Ver. 6. *Many will entreat the favour of the prince, &c.]* Or of the liberal and bountiful man; as kings and princes generally are, Luke xxii. 25. such have many to wait upon them, and are humble petitioners to them. Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the *many* of great and honourable men, who are courtiers to kings and princes; who wait upon them, ask favours of them, and seek for places under them. The Targum is, "there are many that minister before a prince;" he has many servants, and some of them nobles. *And every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts;* or to a *man of gift^k;* who has it in his power to give, and has a heart to it; who is both a rich man and a liberal man; who is both able and willing to communicate to the necessities of others: such a man not only has the poor his friends, but others will speak well of him, and will make application to him on account of the poor; and, for the sake of doing good to them, will court his friendship and acquaintance. Bayne interprets this *man of gift* of Christ, who ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gives them to men.

Ver. 7. *All the brethren of the poor do hate him, &c.]* They despise him on account of his poverty; they neglect him, and do not take care of him; they reckon him a reproach unto them, and do not choose to own him; all which may be interpreted an hatred of him. *How much more do his friends go far from him? or his friend,* every one of his friends; or *his neighbour^l;* for if his brethren, who are his own flesh and blood, shew so much disrespect unto him; much more will those who are only his neighbours, or were in friendship with him whilst in prosperity; these will stand at a distance from him, and not come near him, now he is poor and in distress; see Job xix. 13, 14. *He pursueth them with words;* yet they are wanting to him; or, they are not^m; he presses them with earnest entreaties to relieve him; he urges their own words and promises, and fetches arguments from them, and uses them as far as they will go; but all signifies nothing; his own words and petitions are to no purpose; and their words and promises are all smoke and vapour, vain and empty. Some understand this, as Gersom, not of the poor man that follows vain wordsⁿ and empty promises, and buoys himself up with them; that such an one and such an one has promised to be his friend, of which nothing comes; but of the friend that separates from the poor man, and pursues him with words of accusation, charging it on him as his own fault that he is poor; which accusations are not true. This is one of the fifteen places observed by the Masoretes, in which it is written לא, not, and read לו, to him; both may be retained, and read, they are not to him^o; not profitable to him; either his own words, his petitions; or the words of others, their promises.

^e So Vatablus; or without care of it, Schultens.

^f יסית addit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^g Ovid.

^h מרעהו ab amico suo, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; a sodali suo, Schultens.

^l Theognis.

^k מן לאיש מן viro doni, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

^l מרעהו amicorum ejus, Vatablus; omnium amicorum, Cocceius; i. e. quisque amicorum ejus, Michaelis.

^m מן לא non sunt ii, Junius & Tremellius; & non sunt, Mercerus.

ⁿ Nihil illa, Cocceius, Schultens.

^o Vid. Amasæ Antibarb. Bibl. l. 3. p. 745.

Ver. 8. *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul, &c.*] Wisdom and knowledge in things natural and civil; and especially in things divine, spiritual, and evangelical; particularly he that gets Christ, the Wisdom of God, and a saving knowledge of him; see ch. iii. 13. Or, *he that getteth a heart*^p; a good heart, as the Targum explains it; which is a new heart, and a new spirit; a clean heart and a right spirit; a heart of flesh, a soft, tender, and contrite one, in opposition to a hard heart, a heart of stone: a wise and understanding heart, such an one as Solomon had; a heart to know the Lord, and to fear him; in which his laws are written, the graces of his Spirit are implanted; and in which God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, dwell: he who is desirous of such a heart seeks after it, prays for it, and uses all means to obtain it; and who, through the grace of God, does possess it, as the word signifies; he by all this shews that he has a regard to the good and welfare of his immortal soul; when such, who indulge to ignorance and a wicked heart, wrong and hate their own souls; see ch. xxix. 24. *He that keepeth understanding shall find good*; retains the wisdom he has got; holds fast instruction, and keeps it, which is committed to him; abides by the doctrines of the Gospel, and does not depart from them; keeps the ordinances of it, which it is his wisdom and understanding to do; see Deut. iv. 6. he finds his account in all this; he finds that which is good, good for him now and hereafter; he finds Christ, and life in him; peace, joy, and comfort in this world: and, in the world to come, glory, honour, and happiness.

Ver. 9. *A false witness shall not be unpunished, &c.*] See the note on ver. 5. *And he that speaketh lies shall perish; or be lost*, shall be undone for ever; he shall not enter into the holy city, but have his part in the lake of fire: they that speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, and are given up to believe and profess them, such shall be damned, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

Ver. 10. *Delight is not seemly for a fool, &c.*] Such an one as Nabal, whose name and nature were alike; and whose prosperity ill became him, and the mirth and delight he had in it, 1 Sam. xxv. 25, 36. for, as the wise man elsewhere says, *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them*, ch. i. 26. they do not know how to make a right use of their prosperity; nor to moderate their enjoyments, pleasures, and delights. Some understand this of spiritual delight in the Lord; in his ways and ordinances, which wicked men are strangers to: and a very uncomely thing it is for such persons to talk of spiritual joy and delight, and of their communion with God, when they live in sin. *Much less for a servant to have rule over princes*; this was a sight which Solomon had seen, but was very disagreeable to him; and was one of the four things the earth cannot bear; the insolence of a servant, when he becomes master over his superiors, is intolerable; see ch. xxx. 22. Eccl. x. 7. It may be spiritually applied to such who are servants of sin; to whose sensual appetites and carnal affections the more noble and princely powers of the soul, the understanding and mind, become subject; which is very improper and unseemly.

Ver. 11. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, &c.*] That he does not shew it immediately; but takes time to consider of the offence given him, and makes use of a proper time to resent what is fit should be resented; he is a wise and discreet man that is slow to anger, ch. xiv. 29. and xvi. 32. He is most like to God, who is *long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth*; and it is to the honour of his name that he *defers his anger*, and *refrains from cutting off* those that offend him, Exod. xxxiv. 6. Isa. xlvi. 9. *And it is his glory to pass over a transgression*; to forgive an offence committed; it is the duty and interest of a man to do so, and it is to his honour; as the contrary greatly reflects dishonour on him, and tends to his disgrace and reproach, if not to his ruin; see Matt. xviii. 32—35.

Ver. 12. *The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion, &c.*] Which is very terrible when hungry, and is after its prey, and has got it. Kings, especially tyrannical ones, are compared to lions; as Nebuchadnezzar by Jeremiah, Jer. iv. 17. and l. 17. and Nero by the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7. and the rage of such is very dreadful, as Ahasuerus's was to Haman. Jarchi interprets the king, of the holy blessed God. It may be applied to Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who is said to cry with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and whose wrath is terrible to wicked men, and even to the kings of the earth, Rev. v. 5. and x. 3. and vi. 15—17. *But his favour is as dew upon the grass*; which refreshes and revives it, and causes it to grow and flourish: and so the favour and good will of a king to his subjects delights them, and causes joy and cheerfulness in them; and such an effect has the love of God and Christ on the children of men, Hos. xiv. 6.

Ver. 13. *A foolish son is the calamity of his father, &c.*] Or, *the calamities of his father*^q; he brings them to him. A very great affliction he is, and which has many distresses and sorrows in it; as loss of reputation and credit in his family, which is sunk by his behaviour, instead of being supported and increased; loss of substance, through extravagance and riotous living, and the ruin of his soul and body by his wicked practices; see ch. x. 1. *And the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping*; or like the dropping of rain, in a rainy day, into a house out of repair, and which is very uncomfortable to the inhabitants of it; see ch. xxvii. 15. Such are the contentions of a peevish, ill-natured, and brawling wife, who is always scolding; and which is a continual vexation to a man, and renders him very uneasy in life: such a continual dropping was Xantippe to Socrates, who teased him night and day with her brawls and contentions^r. A great unhappiness each of these must be!

Ver. 14. *Houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers, &c.*] Which they are careful to provide and leave to their children. This they may and often do, build or purchase houses, and procure great riches, and put their children into the possession of them. *And, or but, a prudent wife is from the Lord*; one that behaves well to her husband, manages the affairs of her house with wisdom, and brings up her children in an orderly manner: such a wife no man has from the

^p לֵב cor, Pageinus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, &c.
 הַחַיִּים calamitates, Vatablus: sermone, Piscator, Michaelis; causa
 sermunarum, Junius & Tremelius.

^q A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. i. c. 17.

care and provision of his parents; nor so much from his own good choice and industry as from the kind providence of God, to which he should ascribe it; his parents may give him houses and lands, but it is God that gives him a wise and discreet woman to be an help-meet to him; see ch. xviii. 22.

Ver. 15. *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, &c.*] Slothful persons are generally sleepy, and are very desirous of sleep, and indulge themselves in it; they spend their time, day and night, in sleep and drowsiness; and are quite careless and unconcerned about either their temporal or eternal good; see ch. vi. 9—11. *And an idle soul shall suffer hunger;* and perish with it, both in a temporal and spiritual sense: an idle person, that will not work, ought not to eat; and an idle soul, or one that is unconcerned about his soul, and the spiritual food of it, shall perish for want of it.

Ver. 16. *He that keepeth the commandment, &c.*] Either of parents, as children ought to do; or of masters, as servants should; or of kings and princes, as is the duty of subjects in all things lawful: or rather of God; every command of his, whether of a moral or positive nature, which, though they cannot be perfectly kept, yet should as much as in man lies, in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God: and such a man *keepeth his own soul, or observes* it; he shews that he has a concern for its welfare and peace; for though peace does not arise from keeping the commandments of God, yet such have great peace of soul who do love and keep the law of God; though there is no reward for, yet there is a reward in keeping the divine commands; though salvation is not hereby, yet blessed are they that do his commands; by which it appears they have a right to enter into the city, into eternal happiness, Psal. cxix. 165. and xix. 11. Rev. xxii. 14. *But he that despiseth his ways:* which are fit and proper for him to walk in, as Aben Ezra observes; or who is negligent of his ways, does not care in what ways he walks, or what is the issue of them; he walks in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his eyes; has his conversation according to the course of this world; walks with a multitude, with a crowd, to do evil, in the broad road which leads to destruction, and yet is quite careless about it: or that despises the ways of the commandment or word of God, which that directs to; for that is a lamp and a light, which men would do well to take heed to, as it shews them the ways in which they should walk; but these they neglect and condemn: or he that despises the ways of God, the ways he himself takes in the salvation of men, all whose ways are mercy and truth; that despises the ways of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Jesus Christ: he *shall die*; he is dead in sins already, and he shall die the second death, that neglects and despises so great salvation, and all the ways of the Lord, Heb. ii. 3. and x. 26—29. There is a Keri, or marginal reading, which we follow; but the Cetib, or written text, is, *he shall be killed*, or put to death; and so the Syriac version; immediately, by the hand of heaven, by the Lord himself, before his time; or by the judges and civil magistrates; his sins being openly known, as Aben Ezra.

¹ שמר observat.

² איל ad interficiendum eum, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus,

Ver. 17. *He that hath pity unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord, &c.*] A man, whose heart is full of compassion to the poor, and whose hands distribute to their necessities, from a true principle of love and charity to men, and with a view to the glory of God, and not from any selfish principle, and with a mercenary end; such a man's gift to the poor is a loan to the Lord; it is not cast away upon the creature, but is a depositum in the hands of God, and shall be returned with advantage. *And that which he hath given will he pay him again:* either in this life, in things temporal and spiritual, increasing his worldly substance, blessing his posterity, granting him larger measures of grace, indulging him with his gracious presence, and giving him peace of mind, which passeth all understanding; or in the world to come; not as a reward of debt, but of grace; see Eccl. xi. 1, 2. Matt. x. 42. and xxv. 35.

Ver. 18. *Chasten thy son while there is hope, &c.*] Of guiding and keeping him in the right way, as long as corrections are or can be hoped to be of use; whilst in a state of infancy, childhood, and youth; whilst under parental government; and before habits in sin are grown strong, and the case become desperate, and he is hardened, and proof against all instruction and discipline. *And let thy soul spare for his crying;* the noise he makes, the tears he sheds, the entreaties he uses to keep off the rod; let not a foolish pity and tenderness prevail to lay it aside on that account, the consequence of which may be bad to parent and child; see ch. xiii. 24. and xxiii. 13, 14. The Targum is, "but unto his death do not lift up thy soul;" or to the slaying of him¹, as the Vulgate Latin version; and this sense Jarchi gives into: and then the meaning is, that though parents should be careful to give due correction to their children, so long as there is hope of doing them good, yet not in a brutal and barbarous manner, to the endangering of their lives: as some parents are too indolent, mild, and gentle, as Eli was; others are too wrathful and furious, and use no moderation in their corrections, but unmercifully beat their children; such extremes ought to be avoided. Gersom interprets the word of crying, as we do.

Ver. 19. *A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, &c.*] Either a child that is of a wrathful disposition, and provokes his parent to wrath; or a parent that chastises his child in wrath; each shall suffer for it; or any man that gives way to wrath and anger, and is continually quarrelling, he involves himself in trouble; and is punished, as his offence requires, according to law, either in his person or estate. *For if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again;* if he is got out of one broil, he will get into another quickly; if he is clear of one lawsuit, another will be commenced against him in a short time; if he is discharged and freed from a penalty he is justly subject to, it must be done again and again; he will fall into the same evil, and there is no end of appearing for him and serving him; a wrathful man brings himself into great trouble, as may be seen in Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Kings ii. 46.

Ver. 20. *Hear counsel, and receive instruction, &c.*]

Gejrens; ad accidendum eum, Piscator, Cuccius, Tigurinae version, Michaelis, Schultens, Gussetius, p. 534.

Of parents, masters, and ministers; especially the counsel and instruction of Wisdom, of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, the wonderful Counsellor; and of his Gospel and of the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation. *That thou mayest be wise in thy latter end*; in the latter end of life, at death; that then it may appear a man has been so wise as to be concerned for a future state, for the good of his soul in another world; by listening to the counsel and instruction of Christ, in his word; by looking to him, and believing in him, for life and salvation; by leaning and living upon him; and committing the affairs of his soul, and the salvation of it, to him.

Ver. 21. There are *many devices in a man's heart*, &c.] Some about civil things; to get wealth and riches: to obtain honour and glory among men; to attain to a long life, and to perpetuate their memories after death: some about sinful things; to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites; and to do mischief to others, particularly the people of God, and the cause and interest of Christ: some about religious things; coining new doctrines, devising new ordinances and modes of worship; contriving other methods of salvation than by Christ; as by the light of nature; by the law of Moses; by mere morality, civility, and external justice between man and man; by keeping to the religion they were born and brought up in; and by a mere outward profession of religion, and submission to ordinances, and performance of duties, and a multitude more of the like kind. *Nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*; and can never be frustrated by the devices of man's heart, though there are many, and that but one; see Psal. xxiii. 10, 11. Isa. xlvi. 10. This may be applied to the Gospel, and the scheme of salvation in it, called the whole counsel of God, Acts xx. 27. it being the fruit of infinite wisdom, and the effect of a divine council between the eternal Three, and full of the best advice and instructions to the sons of men; and which has stood, and shall stand, notwithstanding the persecutions of wicked men, the craft of false teachers, and the ridicule of a profane world; it will continue till all the elect are gathered in, even to the end of the world; and so will the ordinances of it, which are also called the counsel of God, Luke vii. 30. and which will continue till the second coming of Christ. Moreover, the purposes of God, his counsels of old, or his eternal decrees, may be here meant; which are wisely formed in his own breast, and are infrustrable; and according to which counsel of his will all things are done in nature, providence, and grace; all things in this world are ordered as he pleases, and all things are done as he has ordered them; all his purposes are or will be fulfilled; his designs will be accomplished in the world and in his church, maugre all the schemes, contrivances, and opposition of men and devils.

Ver. 22. *The desire of a man is his kindness*, &c.] Either the grace and kindness of God, which is desirable by every sensible man, as being most excellent, and better than life and any thing in it; or it is his de-

sire to shew kindness. A good man is desirous of riches, that he might have it in the power of his hands to do good to others; and a beneficent man, who has it in his power, is desirous of an opportunity of shewing kindness to his fellow-creatures and friends; and such a disposition and conduct render a man very desirable and amiable; it is the beauty of a man, as Ben Melech; yea, a man that is not able to do a kindness to another, yet has a desire to do it, his good will is his kindness, and the will is taken for the deed. Gersom takes the word in the sense of *reproach*, as it is sometimes used; and understands it of the sinful desires of the heart, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, which are evil continually, and so matter of reproach. *And a poor man is better than a liar*; who is a rich man, as the Septuagint and Syriac versions add; who denies that he has ability to relieve the poor, when he has; or promises to do it, and does it not; such men of high degree are a lie indeed! and the poor man, whom he should relieve, is a better man than he; or that would relieve another, but it is not in his power to do it.

Ver. 23. *The fear of the Lord tendeth to life*, &c.] *Godliness*, of which the fear of the Lord is a principal part, has the *promise of this life and that to come*: the fear of God is the beginning of a spiritual life; and it leads to eternal life, as Gersom observes, and is connected with it. *And he that hath it shall abide satisfied*; with his lot and portion in this life; with the good things of it he has, being content therewith; and *godliness with contentment is great gain*: such a man has enough; he has all things in a spiritual sense; he is full of the blessings of goodness; he is blessed with all spiritual blessings; his mouth is satisfied, and his mind is filled with good things; and so he rests and abides night after night, and day after day. *He shall not be visited with evil*; nothing shall hurt him; all his afflictions, his worst things, his evil ones, work together for his good; and they shall never separate from the love of God, nor any thing that befalls him in this life, Rom. viii. 28, 38, 39. see Psal. xci. 10.

Ver. 24. *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom*, &c.] In cold weather to keep it warm, and at other times, as unwilling to use it in labour; it is the proper posture and just attitude of a slothful man. The word for *bosom* is sometimes used for a *pot or platter*; and then the sense is, that he puts his hands under a pot over a fire to warm them; or in one removed at some distance from the fire, as Jarchi; or rather it may signify his putting his hand into a plate of food, and yet so slothful, as it follows, *and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again*; so sluggish, that he will rather starve than be at the pains to feed himself; he will not take his hand out of his bosom, to take food out of the dish to feed himself with; and even when his hand is in the dish, he will not take it from thence again, and lift it to his mouth; an hyperbolical expression. Gussetius * thinks, it may have respect to such slothful men, who are careless and negligent to their souls; who, though they have the holy Scriptures in their hands, like a vessel full of wholesome food for

* בוצלות in patinam, Tigurine version; in lebete, Mercerus, Michaelis; in patina, Cocceius; in paropsidem, Schultens.

* Ebr. Comment. p. 715.

the soul, yet will not make use of the least mite out of them, that they may receive eternal life.

Ver. 25. *Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware, &c.*] That is, give reproof to a man that scoffs at religion, and makes a jest of all that is good; for though it may be of no use to him who will despise it, yet it may be observed, and be useful to another that hears it; who, though void of understanding, yet not hardened in impiety as the other, but open to conviction, *will become cunning* ^x, as it may be rendered; or learns wisdom, and becomes hereby a knowing and understanding man; he hears another reproof, and fears, and becomes a wise man; so that though reproof may be lost on one, it succeeds in another, which is an encouragement to give it. *And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge*; he will grow wiser and wiser; he will improve in the knowledge of things; see ch. ix. 8.

Ver. 26. *He that wasteth his father, &c.*] His father's substance, which he gave him first as his portion, and afterwards by paying his debts, and getting him out of prison and out of broils, and that wastes his spirits and his health, and brings his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. *And chaseth away his mother*: alienates her affections from him, who once had too great a fondness for him; causes her to quit her house, not being able to bear the sight of him and of his actions: *is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach*; causes shame to his parents, as well as to himself; and a reproach upon them, as well as on his own character. It may be read thus, "a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach, wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother."

Ver. 27. *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction, &c.*] The counsel of bad men, or the doctrine of false teachers. The words are spoken either by Solomon to his son; or by Wisdom, that is, Christ, to every one of his children, to beware of false prophets, and take heed what they hear; see Matt. vii. 15. Mark iv. 24. such as the doctrines of the church of Rome; concerning the Scriptures, forbidding the people to read them; setting unwritten traditions upon a level with them, and making the pope an infallible interpreter of them; concerning merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, purgatory, &c. such as the instruction of the Arians, Sabellians, Socinians, Pelagians, and Arminians, concerning the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his satisfaction, imputed righteousness, the power and purity of human nature, and man's free will. That causeth to err from the words of knowledge; the words of the living God, the Scriptures of truth; which communicate knowledge, and are profitable for instruction in righteousness; are the means of the true knowledge of God; that there is one, and that he is possessed of all perfections: particularly that he is

gracious and merciful, and pardons all manner of sin; that he is in Christ, the God of all grace; that he is the God and Father of Christ, and the covenant God and Father of all his people in him; they give knowledge of his mind and will concerning the salvation of men, and of his ways and worship. The wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, the salutary doctrines of the Gospel, may be here meant; those words of grace, wisdom, and knowledge, which come from him, and give knowledge of his person, offices, relations, incarnation, and blessings of grace by him; from whence they are called the word of peace and reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of salvation. Now these are all words of knowledge; and are the means of a spiritual, experimental, and fiducial knowledge of Christ, which is preferable to all other knowledge, and even to every thing in the world; and therefore care should be taken, and every thing avoided that tends to cause to err from these words and doctrines, which convey, promote, and improve this knowledge. Jarchi and Aben Ezra transpose the words, thus: "cease, my son, to err from the words of knowledge, to or that thou mayest hear instruction;" and the latter makes mention of such an interpretation, "cease, my son, from the words of knowledge, if thou wouldst hear instruction, and after that err:" that is, better never hear and know at all, than to turn from those doctrines and instructions; see 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

Ver. 28. *An ungodly witness scorneth judgment, &c.*] Or, *a witness of Belial* ^x. A false witness is not awed by the place of judgment where he is; nor by the judge before whom he is; nor by the law, the rule of judgment, nor by the punishment of perjury; he scorns all these, and scoffs at them, and proceeds in bearing a false testimony: or he covers that which is right and just, and eludes judgment by specious and sophistic arguments and pretences. Or this may be understood of a false teacher, that scorns the rule of judgment, or colours over things, to make them plausible, and seem to be agreeable to it. *And the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity*; greedily, and with pleasure commits it; as a hungry man takes in his food; or a thirsty man drinks down water: and in like manner are false doctrines imbibed by men of perverse minds.

Ver. 29. *Judgments are prepared for scorers, &c.*] Either by the civil magistrate, or by the Lord, and indeed by both; and if they miss the one, they will certainly meet the other; though they mock at present punishment and a future judgment, yet everlasting fire is prepared for them, Matt. xxv. 41. *And stripes for the back of fools*; as scorers are; which shall be inflicted on them sooner or later; if they are not stricken with the stripes of men, they shall endure the strokes of divine justice and vengeance hereafter.

^x אָסְטוּטוּ astutus efficietur, Pagninus, Montanus; astutus fiet, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; astutus fiet, Michaelis; solertiam parabit, Schultens.

^y So Gejerus, Schultens.

^z אֵלֶּיךָ בֵּלְיָאֵל testis Belijah, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus.

C H A P. XX.

Ver. 1. *WINE is a mocker, strong drink is raging, &c.*] Wine deceives a man; it not only overcomes him before he is aware, but it promises him a pleasure which it does not give; but, on the contrary, excessive drinking gives him pain, and so mocks him; yea, it exposes him to reproach and disgrace, and to the mockery and derision of others; as well as it sets him to scoff at his companions, and even to mock at religion, and all that is good and serious; see Hos. vii. 5. and strong drink not only disturbs the brain, and puts the spirits in a ferment, so that a man rages within, but it sets him a raving and quarrelling with his company, and every body he meets with; such generally get into broils and contentions, and get woe, sorrow, and wounds, ch. xxiii. 29, 30. Aben Ezra gives this as the sense of the words, "a man of wine," (*i. e.* one that is given to wine, a wine-bibber), so Ben Melech, "is a mocker, and he cries out for strong drink, that it may be given him;" which is no bad sense of the words. *And whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; whosoever gives himself to it, is not on his guard against it, but is overcome by it, does not act a wise but an unwise part: wine besots as well as deceives men.* This may be applied to the wine of fornication, or to the false doctrine and superstition of the church of Rome; with which the nations of the earth are deceived and made drunk, and which puts them upon blaspheming God, deriding his people, and using cruelty to them, Rev. xvii. 2, 3, 6. and xviii. 3, 23.

Ver. 2. *The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion, &c.*] The wrath and displeasure of a king, which causes fear; see ch. xix. 12. kings should be terrors to evil works and workers, though not to good ones, Rom. xiii. 3. This is true of the King of kings, who one day will be terrible to the drunkards, the mockers, and murderers of his people, before spoken of. *Whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul; he exposes his life to danger: the Targum supplies it as we do.* It may be rendered, *his soul sinneth*^a; he is guilty of sin, as well as is in danger of punishment; see ch. viii. 36.

Ver. 3. *It is an honour for a man to cease from strife, &c.*] As Abraham did, Gen. xiii. 7, 8. when engaged in a quarrel with his neighbour, or in a lawsuit, or in a religious controversy, especially when he finds he is in the wrong; and indeed, if he is in the right, when he perceives it is like to issue in no good, and is only about words to no profit, it is an honour to drop it. *But every fool will be meddling; with things he has no concern in, or is not equal to; yet will carry on the debate, though it is to his disgrace; see ch. xvii. 14.*

Ver. 4. *The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold, &c.*] Or, *in the cold; in the time of cold, as Aben Ezra; in the time of autumn, which is the time of ploughing, when it begins to be cold weather, and winter is drawing on: and this is discouraging to the*

sluggard, who does not care to take his hands out of his bosom to feed himself, and much less to plough; see ch. xix. 24. *Therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing; he shall ask of those who have ploughed and sowed, and are now reaping and gathering in their increase at harvest-time; but they shall give him nothing; for such as will not work should not eat; and if a man will not plough and sow, he cannot expect to reap, nor should he be encouraged in begging.* This holds good in spiritual things; such who have been slothful and sluggish about their spiritual affairs, unconcerned for the grace of God, and indolent in the use of means, or performance of duty, will ask when too late, or of wrong persons, and shall not have it; as the foolish virgins ask oil of the wise, when the bridegroom is come; and the rich man water of Abraham, when in hell, Matt. xxv. 8. Luke xvi. 24.

Ver. 5. *Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, &c.*] Pure and undisturbed, but secret, hidden, and hard to be come at: such are the things of the spirit of a man, the thoughts of his mind, the devices of his heart; which, though easily known by the searcher of hearts, are not easily penetrated into by men; or it is not easily got out of them what is in them, especially in some men, who are very close and reserved. This is true of wicked men, who seek deep to hide their counsel; and of good men, especially studious men, who have got a great deal of wisdom and knowledge in them, but not very communicative, being slow of speech, and silent in conversation. *But a man of understanding will draw it out; he will find ways and means to discover the secret designs of wicked men, whether against church or state; and, by asking proper questions, an understanding man will get out useful things from men of knowledge, the most reserved: some men must be pumped, and a good deal of pains must be taken with them, to get out any thing of them, as in getting water out of a deep well, and which when got is very good; and so is that wisdom and knowledge which is gotten by an inquisitive man from another of superior knowledge, but not very diffusive of it.*

Ver. 6. *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, &c.*] As the Pharisee did, in Luke xviii. 11, 12. and as the Pharisees in common did; who did all their works to be seen of men, and made clean the outside of the cup and platter; and were very careful to appear outwardly righteous to men, Matt. xxiii. 5, 25, 28. And indeed this is the general cast of men; every one is proclaiming his goodness to others, and would be thought to be good men; and cannot be easy with doing a good action, unless it is known, and particularly acts of beneficence and alms-deeds; and are like the Pharisees, who, on such occasions, sounded a trumpet before them, Matt. vi. 2. And the word may be rendered, *his mercy*^b, or his kindness to the poor:

^a וְהוֹסֵף לְעַוְבָתוֹ.

^b וְהוֹסֵף לְעַוְבָתוֹ misericordiam suam, benignus, so some in Vatablus; uniuscujusque misericordiam, Mercerus, Gejerus.

the Targum renders it, "many of the children of men" are called merciful men;" and so the Vulgate Latin version; and they like to be so called and accounted, whether they are so or no. *But a faithful man who can find?* who answers to the character he gives of himself, or others upon his own representation give him; who is as good as his word, and, having promised assistance and relief, gives it; and who, having boasted that he has done a kindness to such an one and such an one, does the same likewise to another when applied to; or who sticks to his friend, and does not forsake him in his adversity, but supports and supplies him whom he knew in prosperity; it is hard and rare to find such a man; see Psal. xii. 1. Or, though every man is talking of his good works, and boasting of his goodness, it is difficult to find an Israelite indeed, in whom the true grace of God is.

Ver. 7. *The just man walketh in his integrity, &c.*] This is the faithful and upright man, who is made righteous by the obedience of Christ; and walks by faith in him, and according to the truth of the Gospel. *His children are blessed after him;* with temporal blessings; and, walking in the same integrity as he does, they are blessed with spiritual blessings here, and eternal blessedness hereafter; see Psal. xxxvii. 26. It is an observation of an Heathen poet^c, that good things befall the children of the godly, but not the children of the ungodly.

Ver. 8. *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment, &c.*] That executes judgment himself, as David and Solomon did; who ascends the throne, and sits personally there, and hears and tries causes himself, and not by his servants: *scattereth away all evil with his eyes;* all evil men, as the Targum; every one that is evil, as Aben Ezra: he will easily and quickly discern who is evil, or who is in a bad cause before him, and will pass sentence on him, and drive him away from him with shame and disgrace, and to receive deserved punishment; or he will terrify persons from coming before him with false witness against their neighbour, or with a wrong cause. This may be applied to Christ, the King of kings, and Judge of all; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; who will clearly see into all hearts and actions, when he shall sit on his throne of judgment; and shall pass the righteous and definitive sentence, and shall drive the wicked into hell, into everlasting punishment.

Ver. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, &c.*] The heart of man is naturally unclean, the mind, conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no part clean, all are defiled with sin; and though there is such a thing as a pure or clean heart, yet not as made so by men; it is God that has made the heart, that can only make it clean, or create a clean heart in men; it is not to be done by themselves, or by any thing that they can do; it is done only by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: God has promised to do it, and he does it; and to him, and to him only, is it to be ascribed. *I am pure from my sin?* the sin of nature or of action: such indeed who are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ; whose sins are

all pardoned for his sake, and who are justified from all things by his righteousness; they are pure from sin, none is to be seen in them, or found upon them in a law-sense: they are all fair and comely, and without fault in the sight of God; their iniquities are caused to pass from them; and they are clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints: but then none are pure from in-dwelling sin, nor from the commission of sin; no man can say this, any more than the former; if he does, he is an ignorant man, and does not know the plague of his heart; and he is a vain pharisaical man; yea, a man that does not speak the truth, nor is the truth in him, 1 John i. 8.

Ver. 10. *Divers weights, and divers measures, &c.*] Or, *a stone and a stone, and an ephah and an ephah*^d. Stones being in old time used in weighing, and an ephah was a common measure among the Jews; and these ought not to be different; one stone or weight for buying, and another for selling; and one measure to buy goods in with, and another to sell out with; the one too heavy, the other too light; the one too large, and the other too scanty; whereby justice is not done between man and man; whereas they ought to be just and equal, Lev. xix. 35, 36. *Both of them are alike abomination to the Lord;* who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and requires of men to do justly; and abhors every act of injustice, and whatever is detrimental to men's properties; see ch. xi. 1. and xvi. 11.

Ver. 11. *Even a child is known by his doings, &c.*] As well as a man; *ye shall know them by their fruits,* Matt. vii. 16. professors and profane. So a child soon discovers its genius by its actions; it soon shews its inclination and disposition; and some shrewd guesses may be made how it will turn out, a wise man or a fool, a virtuous or a vicious man; though this does not always hold good, yet something may be observed, which may be a direction to parents in the education of their children, and placing them out to what is proper and suitable for them. Some observe, that the word has a quite contrary meaning, that *a child carries himself a stranger by his doings*^e; so that he is not known by them: he so conceals and disguises himself, he acts so fraudulently and deceitfully, and plays the hypocrite, and puts the cheat on men, that they cannot tell what he is, nor what he will be; and if children can thus dissemble, as not to be known by their actions, then much more grown persons. *Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right;* not what his present work is, or actions are, but what his after-life and conversation will be; which in some measure may be judged of, though not with certainty and exactness; see ch. xxii. 6. especially when he acts a covert and deceitful part.

Ver. 12. *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, &c.*] There may be an ear that hears not, and an eye that seeth not, and which men may make; the painter can paint an ear and an eye, and a carver can carve both; but they are ears that hear not, and eyes that see not, Psal. cxv. 5, 6. but such as can hear and see

^c Theocrit. Idyll. 27. v. 39.

^d So Montanus, Schultens.

^e יתנכר ignotus erit, i. e. non facile cognoscitur, Vatablus; so R. Joseph Kimchi; simulat se alium esse, Gusevius, p. 413. dissimulatoreum agit, Schultens.

are of the Lord's own make. *The Lord hath made even both of them*; they are the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness; see Exod. iv. 11. Psal. xciv. 7, 8. they are both senses of excellent use and service; great mercies and blessings of life, for which men should be abundantly thankful, and pray for the continuance of, and make use of to the best purposes; they are means of conveying much knowledge to the mind, and by which it may be cultivated and improved in it. The words may be considered in a figurative as well as a literal sense. Some by *the seeing eye* understand the civil magistrate, who is that to the body politic as the eyes are to the natural body, eminent in it, overlook it, watch and provide for its good, and against its hurt; see Numb. x. 31. Job xxix. 14—16. and by *the hearing ear* the obedient subject, that hearkens to the laws and directions of his governors, and cheerfully obeys them, and both these are of the Lord's making; civil magistracy is his ordinance, and civil magistrates are ordained by him; and from him they have their qualifications fitting them for their office; and it is owing to the overruling providence of God on the hearts of men that they are inclined to yield subjection to them. Others think that by *the seeing eye* are meant the ministers of the word, who are set in the highest place in the church; whose business it is to inspect, take the oversight of, and watch the souls of men; to pry and search into the truths of the Gospel, and shew them to others: and by *the hearing ear* the hearers of the word, that receive it readily in the love of it, and heartily obey it. I am rather of opinion that one and the same sort of persons are intended; converted ones, who have the *hearing ear*, who try what they hear by the word of God; understand what they hear, know it experimentally; can distinguish truth from error, approve and love the Gospel, receive it with all gladness and readiness, with eagerness and pleasure; keep it when they have it, and practise what they hear, and bring forth fruit to the glory of God: this they have not of themselves, being naturally averse to and dull of hearing, and even stop their ears to the truth; but it comes by the word, and is the Lord's work, and owing to his mighty power, who opens their ears, gives them new ears, which they have in regeneration; when they hear spiritually, profitably, pleasantly, comfortably, and to their great astonishment: these also have the *seeing eye*, a sight of themselves, their sinful and lost estate; of the plague of their own hearts, their want of righteousness, and impotence to do any thing that is good; a sight of Christ, of the loveliness of his person, of the fulness of his grace, of their need of him, and of his suitableness as a Saviour and Redeemer; and this is not of themselves, who are dark and darkness itself, but they are made light in the Lord; he opens their eyes by his spirit and by means of his word, which is a work of almighty power.

Ver. 13. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty, &c.*] Sleep is a very great natural blessing; it is a gift of God, what nature requires, and is desirable; it is to be loved, though not immoderately; it is sweet to a man, and what he should be thankful for; yet should not indulge himself in to the neglect of the proper business of life; nor to be used but at the pro-

per time for it; for the eye is made for sight, and not for sleep only, as Aben Ezra observes, connecting the words with the preceding; and therefore should not be kept shut and inattentive to business, which must necessarily end in poverty and want; see ch. vi. 9—11. and so spiritual sleep and slothfulness bring on a spiritual poverty in the souls of men, both as to the exercise of grace and the performance of duty. *Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread*; that is, open thine eyes from sleep, awake and keep so, and be sedulous and industrious in the business of thy calling; so shalt thou have a sufficiency of food for thyself and family; see ch. xii. 11. It may be applied to awaking out of sleep in a spiritual sense, and to a diligent attendance to duty and the use of means, whereby the souls of men come to be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, and the fatness of his house; see Ephes. v. 14. Psal. lxxv. 4.

Ver. 14. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, &c.*] When he comes to the shop of the seller, or to market to buy goods, he undervalues them, says they are not so good as they should be, nor so cheap as he can buy them at. *But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth*; after he has brought the seller to as low a price as he can, and has bought the goods, and gone away with them, and got home among his friends; then he boasts what a bargain he has bought, how good the commodity is, how he has been too many for the seller, and has outwitted him; and so glories in his frauds and tricks, and rejoices in his boasting, and all such rejoicing is evil, Jam. iv. 16. Jarchi applies this to a man that is a hard student in the law, and through much difficulty gets the knowledge of it, when he is ready to pronounce himself unhappy; but when he is got full-fraught with wisdom, then he rejoices at it, and glories in it.

Ver. 15. *There is gold, and a multitude of rubies, &c.*] A man may have a large quantity of either, or of both of them, as some men have; for there is much of them in the world, not only in mines and quarries, but in the houses and cabinets of men. *But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel*; knowledge even of things natural, and a gift of elocution to express it by, are a rare jewel, and much more precious than gold and rubies, than a multitude of them; these are not to be mentioned with it, it is not equalled by them, it is greatly superior to them; see Job xxviii. 12—19. and much more spiritual knowledge, and a capacity of expressing that to the edification of others; and especially Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the knowledge of him, who is more precious than rubies, and all desirable things, in comparison of which all things are loss and dung, ch. iii. 14, 15. Phil. iii. 8.

Ver. 16. *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, &c.*] Which a man is cautioned against, ch. vi. 1. but if a man will be so weak and foolish, others ought to take care of him, and be cautious how they trust him; for he is in danger of being ruined by his suretyship, and therefore nothing should be lent him without a pledge, without a proper security; for though it was not lawful to take the garment of a poor man for a pledge, at least it was not to be kept after sunset, Exod. xxii. 26. yet it was right to take such a man's garment who had or would be thought to have such

an abundance as to be surety for a stranger. Some think these words are to be taken as a prophecy of what would be the case of such a man that is a surety for a stranger; in the issue he will be stripped of all he has, and have not a coat to put on. It has been applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, who became a surety for such who were foreigners and strangers, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and who had the garment of his human nature taken from him, and which was a pledge and ransom for the sins of his people. *And take a pledge of him for a strange woman*; a harlot; such as have to do with lewd women are not to be trusted; for they are in a fair way for ruin, and therefore should not be intrusted with any thing without a pledge; all in connexion with such creatures lose their credit; it is dangerous having any concern with them in trade, for they are liable to be brought to a piece of bread; and therefore persons should be cautious how they trade with them, and should observe to secure themselves.

Ver. 17. *Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, &c.*] Which may be understood of sin in general, which is bread to the sinner, he eats it: it is called the *bread of wickedness*, ch. iv. 17. but it is but poor bread, no other than ashes, Isa. xlv. 20. it is *bread of deceit*; there is a deceitfulness in all sin; it is in appearance fair and pleasant to the eye, like the fruit our first parents ate of; or like the apples of Sodom, of which it is reported that they are very beautiful to look at, but when touched drop into ashes; sin promises pleasure, profit, honour, liberty, peace, and impunity, yet gives neither; but the reverse, pain, loss, shame, servitude, distress, and destruction; and yet it is sweet to an unregenerate man, one of a vicious taste, or whose taste remains unchanged; it is natural to him, and he takes as much delight in it as in eating and drinking; and especially such sins as are called constitution ones, which he is not easily prevailed upon to part with; wickedness is sweet in his mouth, he rolls it and keeps it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, and forsakes it not, Job xx. 12—14. It may be applied to particular sins, as to adultery, as it is by Jarchi, and with which may be compared ch. ix. 17. and to riches unlawfully gotten; see Job xx. 15. 16. and to the cruel usage and persecution of the people of God, called the bread of wickedness and wine of violence, which wicked men take as much delight in as in eating and drinking, ch. iv. 17. Psal. xiv. 4. particularly the cruelty of the church of Rome, who has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, in which she delights, and will be bitter to her in the end, Rev. xvii. 6. and xvi. 6. and xviii. 7. 8. It may be interpreted of false doctrine; so the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees is signified by leavened bread, Matt. xvi. 6. 12. this is not true bread, does not strengthen, nourish, and refresh, as the Gospel does, but eats as a canker; it is not solid and substantial, but mere chaff, it is bread of falsehood and lying; false teachers lie in wait to deceive, their doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, and yet these are sweet unto, and taken down greedily by carnal persons; particularly the doctrine of justification by works: this is the bread some men live on, but it

is only husks which swine eat; it is feeding on wind, and filling the belly with east wind, which swells and vainly puffs up the fleshy mind; it is contrary to the Gospel, and is not of the truth, and will deceive persons that trust to it; and yet it is sweet to a natural man; his own righteousness, and to trust to it, is natural to him; it is his own, and what he has laboured for, and is fond of; it affords room for boasting, and he does not care to part with it. *But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel*; with that which will be ungrateful, uncomfortable, and distressing to him; the conscience of a sinner, who has been taking his fill of sin and pleasure in it, shall be filled with remorse and distress; and with bitter reflections upon himself; with a dreadful sense of divine wrath, and fearful apprehensions of it now; and destruction and damnation will be his portion hereafter; and this will be the consequence of all false doctrine, and of a man's trusting to his own righteousness and despising Christ's; see 2 Pet. ii. 1. Matt. xxii. 12, 13.

Ver. 18. *Every purpose is established by counsel, &c.*] Or *the thoughts* of a man, every one of them, what he has thought to do, formed a scheme of in his mind, and resolved upon, by taking advice of his friends, and especially by asking counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally, and upbraids not; he is confirmed in his good designs; and he cheerfully pursues them, and they are ordered and directed to the glory of God, his own good, and the good of others; for this can only be understood of wise and good thoughts and purposes. *And with good advice make war*; this should not be entered upon rashly, without first considering whether there is a just and lawful cause of it; and without consulting the necessary charge and expense of it; whether there is a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and what may probably be the issue of it. It is right in a king to advise with his privy council, or with the chief council of the nation; but, above all, both he and his people should seek advice of the Lord on such an occasion; see Luke xiv. 31, 32. This may be applied to our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, and the world; not that it should be any doubt with us whether we should engage in such a war; but we should advise with experienced soldiers, and especially with God and his word, what weapons to take, and how to use them; and consider in whose name and strength we are to fight; and inquire and learn the force, methods, and designs of the enemy, and where to guard against them or attack them. Jarchi interprets it of making war with Satan by repentance, prayer, and fasting.

Ver. 19. *He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets, &c.*] Or, *he that revealeth secrets goeth about as a talebearer*; a man that has really got the secrets of others out of them respecting themselves and families, and the affairs of them, or however pretends he is master of them; goes about telling his tales from house to house, to the great prejudice of those whose secrets he is intrusted with, or pretends to be; and to the great prejudice of those to whom he tells them, as well as to his own; this is contrary to the law of Moses, and the rules of Christianity, Lev. xix. 16. 1 Tim. v. 13.

^f מַחְשָׁבוֹת cogitationes, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; unquamque cogitationum, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips; or mingle not with him; do not associate with him, do not keep him company, have nothing to say to him or do with him; for when he flatters you, and highly praises and extols you, he has a design upon you to get what he can out of you, in order to expose you elsewhere; therefore suspect him, be upon your guard, shun him and avoid him. It may be applied to false teachers, and their deceptions with good words and fair speeches; the word used signifies to deceive with the lips; see Rom. xvi. 18. and well agrees with the parasites of Rome, Rev. xviii. 23.

Ver. 20. *Whoso curseth his father or his mother, &c.*] This is dreadful indeed! a person must be got to a great pitch of wickedness to do this; to curse his parents, one or other of them, that have been the instruments of his being, and by whom he has been brought up and put out into the world; to slight them, despise them, and mock at them, is highly base and criminal, but to curse them is shocking! what can such expect but the curse of God upon them? *His lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness;* he shall be deprived of his natural sight; see ch. xxx. 17. or the very light of nature shall be extinct in him; and indeed such an one acts as if not guided by it, nor under its influence; or whatsoever favour from the Lord he has enjoyed, it shall be taken from him; his lamp or candle of outward felicity shall be quenched, and burn no longer; see Job xviii. 5. and xxii. 17. or his soul, the candle of the Lord, in him, ver. 27. shall be removed; or he shall die, not only a corporeal but an eternal death; see Exod. xxi. 17. *blackness of darkness*^a, as the words may be rendered, are reserved for him in the world to come, and which will be his portion, Jude 13.

Ver. 21. *An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, &c.*] Of a man's setting out in the world in trade and business; and which sometimes is got lawfully, and this must be excepted from this proverb; but generally what is got hastily and in a short time is got unlawfully, and so does not prosper. Some Jewish interpreters, as Gersom, understand it of an inheritance which comes to persons from their friends, without any labour or industry of theirs; and which they are not careful to keep, but, as it lightly comes, it lightly goes: here is a various reading; our version follows the marginal reading, and which is followed by the Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, and by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; but the written text is, *an inheritance loathsome or abominable*: an ill-gotten one, so the word is used in Zech. xi. 8. Schultens, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies to be *covetous*, renders it *covetously got or possessed*¹; and so the Arabic version is, *an inheritance greedily desired*, obtained through covetousness and illicit practices; but in his late commentary on this book he renders the passage, by the help of Arabism, *an inheritance smitten with the curse of sordidness*, as being sordidly got and enjoyed. *But the end thereof shall not be blessed*; it will not continue, it will be taken away from them, and put into some other hands. Jarchi

illustrates it by the tribes of Gad and Reuben making haste to take their part on the other side Jordan before their brethren, and were the first that were carried captive.

Ver. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompense evil, &c.*] With evil; do an injury to one that has done one to you; private revenge is not to be taken, but should be left to God, to whom vengeance belongs, Deut. xxxii. 35, 41. *But wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee*; commit thyself and cause to God; leave it with him to avenge thy wrongs; wait upon him in the way of thy duty, and wait his own time to do thee justice; he will at the proper season, and in his own way, save thee from thine enemy, and make a righteous retribution to him.

Ver. 23. *Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord, &c.*] As in ver. 10. see the note there; which is here repeated for the further confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of and avoided; and perhaps this sin of using false weights and measures was common with the Jews. *And a false balance is not good*; in the sight of God; but an abomination, as in ch. xi. 1. nor is it good for men in the issue; for though they may gain by it at present, it will prove a loss to them in the end, since it will bring a curse on all they get.

Ver. 24. *Man's goings are of the Lord, &c.*] In a natural and literal sense, the instruments of going are of the Lord; the act of motion from place to place is not without the concurrence of his providence; as in him we live, and move, and have our being, so *in and by him we move*; he preserves our going out and coming in; and as the preservation, so the success and prosperity of journeying are owing to his providence, and the whole is under his care and direction: and so likewise, in a civil sense, all the civil concerns, business, and actions of life, are guided by his providence; there is a time for every purpose under heaven, and the success of all depends on a divine blessing; and things are with every man in civil life according to the providence of God, and as it is his pleasure they should be; and it is by him they are directed to take this and the other step, the issue of which is according to his will; and this may be applied to men's goings in a spiritual and religious sense; faith, which is properly a man's going to Christ as a perishing sinner for pardon and cleansing, for righteousness and life, for food and rest, and for eternal salvation, is not of a man's self, it is of God; it is his gift, and of his operation; no man can go to Christ in this way unless it be given him of God, or he is drawn by his grace, John vi. 35, 37, 44, 65. and all spiritual actions which flow from hence are by the grace of God, and under his influence and direction; as walking in the path of truth, it is the Lord that teaches it, causes to choose it, leads into it, and preserves there; walking in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, and in the ways of righteousness and holiness, is of him, and owing to his spirit he puts within his people; and indeed all good works done by them, which may be called their goings, he

^a לא תחערב non misceris te, Pagninus, Montanus; ne misceris te, Baynus, Mercerus; ne admisceto te, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ne commisceris, Michaelis; ne admisceas te, Schultens.

^b באישון חשך in obscuritate tenebrarum, Pagninus, Mercerus; in nigredine tenebrarum, Michaelis.

¹ Animadv. ad V. T. p. 248.

has fore-ordained that they should walk in them; it is by the grace of God, and in the strength of Christ, and with the assistance of the blessed Spirit, they walk on in them; and their perseverance in faith and holiness, or their going from strength to strength, is all of the Lord. *How can a man then understand his own way?* even of a journey in a literal sense, what will be the issue and event of it, when or whether ever he shall return to his own house again, since all is under the direction and providence of God; and also of his civil affairs, he knows his beginning, and how he goes on for the present; but what will be the end he knows not; and a natural and unregenerate man knows not what way he is in, where he is going, and what his last end will be; being in darkness, in which he was born, brought up, and continues, he does not rightly understand what is his duty, what he should do, what is the good and perfect will of God, what the way is in which he should go, and which is for his good; nor the way everlasting, which leads to eternal life, few find this way. Or it may be understood of the way of the Lord, *how can a man then understand his way?* the Lord's way, not man's; the way of the Lord in providence, which is as the deep, and unsearchable; and the way of life and salvation by Christ, which is of the Lord's devising and resolving on; this way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, is not known by the natural man; and when it is externally revealed in the word, and by the outward ministry of it, it is not understood so as to be approved of, but is despised, unless God gives a heart to know it, or a spiritual and experimental understanding of it.

Ver. 25. It is *a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy*, &c.] Which is separated to sacred uses, is devoted to the Lord, as first-fruits, tithes, offerings, &c. which if a man converts to his own use is sacrilege, and this is a sin and a snare, and brings ruin on him; see Mal. iii. 8, 9. *And after vows to make inquiry*; that is a sin and a snare also; a man should first inquire before he vows, whether it is right for him to make a vow, and whether he is able to keep it; it is too late after the vow is made to inquire about the lawfulness or expedience of it, and how to find out ways and means to dissolve it and be clear of it; for it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay, Eccl. v. 4, 5. when a thing is in a man's own hands, he may do what he will; but when he has devoted it to another use, it is no longer in his power; as the case of Ananias and Sapphira shews, Acts v. 1—4.

Ver. 26. *A wise king scattereth the wicked*, &c.] Or *fans them away*¹; separates them from his good counsellors, courtiers, and subjects; scatters them from his presence and court, and breaks their counsels and confederacies one with another; he discovers, discouragements, and discourages them; see the note on ver. 8. *And bringeth the acheel over them*; alluding to the custom of the eastern nations turning a cart-wheel over the grain in threshing it out, and agreeably to the metaphor in the preceding clause; see Isa. xxviii. 27, 28. Though some think it refers to a sort of punishment inflicted on malefactors in those times and coun-

tries, by putting them under harrows drawn on wheels, as breaking upon the wheel has been since used; see 2 Sam. xii. 31. The Arabic version understands it of exile. Jarchi interprets the wise king of the Lord, and the wicked of Pharaoh and his host, on whom he brought the wheel, or gave measure for measure, and punished in a way of retaliation; and to this sense it is by some^k interpreted, "as the wheel turns over, just in the same place, so as the wicked hath done, it shall be done to them." It may be applied to Christ, the wise King, who scatters all his and our enemies; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, Matt. iii. 12.

Ver. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*, &c.] The rational soul of man is a light set up in him; this is what is commonly called the light of nature; it was a bright and burning light at first, but through sin is become a very feeble one; by which men have only a glimmering view of divine things, of God and his worship, and of what he would have done, or not done; by this light men do but grope after him, if happily they may find him and know his will; it is but like a candle-light at best, in comparison of divine revelation, or the Gospel of the grace of God, which has shone out like the sun in its meridian glory; and especially in comparison of the sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus, and the light of the divine Spirit; yet this is a light set up by the Lord, a candle of his; it comes from the Father of lights, he is the author and maintainer of it; it is a spirit and understanding which is by the inspiration of the Almighty; see Gen. ii. 7. Job xxxii. 8. Zech. xii. 1. *Searching all the inward parts of the belly*; or heart; the thoughts, intents, and purposes of it; which are the things of a man that only the spirit of man knows; by this candle, or light, he can look into his own heart, the inmost recesses of it, and reflect upon his thoughts and schemes, and judge in some measure whether right or wrong; there is a conscience in man, which, unless seared, passes sentence on what is in man, or done by him, and either excuses or accuses; see 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Ver. 28. *Mercy and truth preserve the king*, &c.] Which are two good qualifications in a prince; not ruling his subjects with rigour and cruelty, but with tenderness and clemency; easing them as much as he can of burdens and pressures; shewing compassion to the distressed, and pardoning delinquents when the case will admit of it; as also being faithful to his word, promises, and engagements; inviolably adhering to the laws and constitution of the nation, and steady in his administrations of justice; these preserve him in the affections of his people, and make him safe and secure on his throne; and because of these the Lord preserves him from his enemies. It may be rendered, *grace and truth*¹; and applied to Christ, who is full of both, and which are said to preserve him, Psal. xl. 11. *And his throne is upholden by mercy*; this explains what is meant by the preservation of him, and what is the security of his throne and kingdom, which is clemency and goodness to his subjects.

Ver. 29. *The glory of young men is their strength*, &c.] That is the excellent thing in them, and it is

¹ מורה ventilat, Junius & Tremellius, Schultens.

^k Vid. Schindler. Lexic. col. 109, & Weemse's Christ. Synag.

l. 1. c. 6. s. 8. p. 187.

¹ וחסד ונאמון gratia & veritas, Cocceius.

to their honour when it is employed in the service of their king and country, and especially in the service of God and religion; though it does not become them to glory in it, Jer. ix. 23. *And the beauty of old men is the gray head*; an index of wisdom and prudence; see Job xii. 12. The design of the proverb is to shew that both have their excellencies and usefulness, young men and old men, and should not despise one another; nor either of them be despised in a commonwealth, both being useful in it, the one for strength, the other for counsel; and so in the church of Christ; see 1 John ii. 13, 14.

Ver. 30. *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil, &c.*] Rubs it off and scours it away, as the word^m signifies, or is a clearing and rubbing it off; some men must be beaten black and blue, or must have very sore correction, before they can be reclaimed and reformed from their evil ways; so some interpret it of

the evil manⁿ: sanctified afflictions to God's people are the means of purging away their iniquities, their dross, and their sin; but there is nothing so effectually cleanses from sin as the blood of Jesus, or heals or cures of it as his blue wounds and stripes; see Isa. xxvii. 9. and liii. 5. *So do stripes the inward part of the belly*; or heart and conscience; by means of corrections and chastisement men are brought to an inward sense of sin; they are shewn their transgressions wherein they have exceeded, and are commanded to return from iniquity, Job xxxvi. 9, 10. they lament and mourn over sin, confess it and forsake it; and then may the inwards of the belly, the mind and conscience, defiled with them, be said to be cleansed from them; especially when led by these stripes and corrections to the stripes, wounds, and blood of Christ, which, being applied, cleanse from all sin inwardly and outwardly.

C H A P. XXI.

Ver. 1. *THE king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, &c.*] The heart of every king, and all that is in it, his thoughts, counsels, purposes, and designs; the hearts of bad kings, as Pharaoh, whom the Lord hardened and softened at pleasure; the antichristian kings, into whose hearts he put it to give their kingdoms to the beast, Rev. xvii. 17. the hearts of good kings, as David, Solomon, Cyrus, and others: and if the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord, which are full of things of the greatest importance with respect to the government of the world; and which are generally more untractable and unmanageable; and who are more resolute and positive, and will have their own wills and ways, especially arbitrary princes; then much more the hearts of other persons. And which are as *rivers of water*; for so the words may be rendered, as *rivers of water is the heart of a king*, which is *in the hand of the Lord*; unstable, fluid, and fluctuating; and yet the Lord can stay and settle, and fix them, and keep them steady and within bounds: or which, like a torrent of water, comes with force and impetus; and so the Septuagint render it, *the force of waters*; and bears all before it, as do the wills of despotic kings; and yet these the Lord can stop and bound, and rule and overrule: or like rivers of water, reviving and refreshing, so is the heart of a good king, full of wisdom and prudence, of integrity and faithfulness, of clemency and goodness; the streams of whose bounty and kindness flow among his subjects, to their great pleasure and profit; so Christ, the King of kings, is said to be as *rivers of water*, Isa. xxxii. 2. The allusion is to gardeners, that make channels for the water to run in, to water their gardens; or to husbandmen, that cut aqueducts from rivers, to water their fields; or to the turning of the course of rivers, as Euphrates was by Cyrus, when he took Babylon. The heart of a king is as much at the

dispose of the Lord, and can be turned by him as easily as such canals may be made, or the course of a river turned; for it follows: *he turneth it whithersoever he will*; contrary to their first designs, and to answer another purpose; oftentimes towards his people, and for the good of his cause and interest, which they never designed; and to bring about such things as were out of their view. And so, in conversion, the Lord can turn the hearts of men as he pleases; their understanding, will, and affections, are in his hands: he can make the understanding light which was darkness, and so turn it from darkness to light; he can take off the stiffness of the will, and turn it from its bias and bent, and make it willing to that which is good in the day of his power: he can turn the channel and course of the affections from sinful lusts and pleasures, to himself, his son, his truths, word, worship, ordinances, and people; he can take out of the heart what he pleases, its ignorance, hardness, enmity, unbelief, pride, and vanity; and he can put in what he pleases, his fear, his laws, his spirit, and the gifts and graces of it; he can change and turn it just as he will; he that made the heart can operate upon it, and do with it as seems good in his sight. The Heathens very wrongly call one of their deities Verticordia^o, from the power of turning the heart they ascribe to it; however, this shews their sense, that to turn the heart is the property of deity.

Ver. 2. *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, &c.*] This is repeated, from ch. xvi. 2, 25. for the confirmation of it; and that it might be observed and taken notice of, and men be brought under a conviction of it; which is not easily done, it being what affects all men: every man is conceited of himself and his own way, and is not easily persuaded off of it; his sinful ways are agreeable to him, promising him pleasure, profit, or honour; and his self-righteous ways

^m אַבְסֵרְסוֹ abstersio, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceus; detersio, Montanus, Michaelis; effricatio, Schultens.

ⁿ בַּרַע in malo, sub, homine, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; in malo (homine nequam), Schultens, so Aben Ezra.

^o Valer. Maximus, l. 8. c. 15. s. 12. Vid. Ovid. Fasti, l. 4. v. 154.

suit with the vain opinion he has of himself, whereby he promises himself eternal life and happiness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it to this sense, "every man seems righteous to himself." But the Lord pondereth the hearts: weighs them in the balance of righteousness and truth; considers them, having a perfect knowledge of them, and all the springs of action in them; and knows that every way of man is not right, though they may seem so to him.

Ver. 3. *To do justice and judgment, &c.*] The moral duties of religion, what is holy, just, and good, which the law requires; what is agreeably to both tables, piety towards God, and justice to men; that which is just and right between man and man; which, especially if done from right principles and with right views, is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice; not than any sacrifice; than the sacrifice of a broken heart, or the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or of acts of goodness and beneficence, or of a man's whole self to the Lord; but than ceremonial sacrifices; which, though of divine institution, and typical of Christ, and when offered up in the faith of him, were acceptable to God, whilst in force; yet not when done without faith and in hypocrisy, and especially when done to cover and countenance immoral actions; and, even when compared with moral duties, the latter were preferable to them; see 1 Sam. xv. 22. Mark xii. 33.

Ver. 4. *An high look, and a proud heart, &c.*] The former is a sign of the latter, and commonly go together, and are both abominable to the Lord; see Psal. ci. 5. Prov. vi. 16, 17. A man that looks above others, and with disdain upon them, shews that pride reigns in him, and swells his mind with a vain opinion of himself; this may be observed in every self-righteous man; the parable of the Pharisee and publican is a comment upon it; sometimes there may be a proud heart under a disguise of humility; but the pride of the heart is often discovered by the look of the eyes. It may be rendered, *the elevation of the eyes, and the enlargement of the heart*?; but not to be understood in a good sense, of the lifting up of the eyes in prayer to God, with faith and fear; nor of the enlargement of the heart with solid knowledge and wisdom, such as Solomon had; but in a bad sense, of the lofty looks and haughtiness of man towards his fellow-creatures, and of his unbounded desires after filthy lucre or sinful lusts: the Targum renders it, "the swelling of the heart," with pride and vanity. And *the ploughing of the wicked is sin*; taken literally; not that it is so in itself; for it is a most useful invention, and exceeding beneficial to mankind, and is to be ascribed to God himself; and of this the Heathens are so sensible, that they have a deity to whom they attribute it, and whom they call Ceres⁹, from דררש, to plough; it only denotes that all the civil actions of a wicked man, one being put for all, are attended with sin; he sins in all he does. Or, metaphorically, for his schemes, contrivances, and projects, which are the ploughing of his mind; these

are all sinful, or tend to that which is so. Some understand this particularly of his high look and proud heart, which are his ploughing and his sin; so Ben Melech; and others of his ploughing, or persecuting and oppressing the poor. The word is sometimes used for a lamp or light, and is so rendered here by some, *the light of the wicked is sin*¹; their outward happiness and prosperity leads them into sin, involves them in guilt, and so brings them to ruin and destruction: and this way go the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness, &c.*] A man that is thoughtful and studious, and wisely forms schemes in his mind, and diligently pursues them; the issue of it is, generally speaking, prosperity and plenty: such a man is usually thriving and flourishing; and this holds good in things spiritual, as well as in things temporal, Matt. xxv. 29. *But of every one that is hasty only to want*; that is in haste to be rich, and is resolved to be so, right or wrong, he comes at last to poverty and want: or he who is rash and precipitate in acting, who never thinks before he acts, but rashly engages in an affair; or, however, does not give himself time enough to think it over, but, as soon as ever it has entered his thoughts, he immediately attempts to put it in execution; a man so thoughtless and inconsiderate, so rash and hasty, brings himself and family to poverty; see ch. xx. 21.

Ver. 6. *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, &c.*] By telling lies in trade; by bearing false witness in a court of judicature; or by preaching false doctrines in the church of God: is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death: such treasures, though ever so great, are like any light thing, smoke or vapour, straw, stubble, chaff, or a feather, tossed about by the wind; which is expressive of the instability and uncertainty of riches ill-gotten; they do not last long, but are taken away and carried off by one providence or another; and they are likewise hurtful and pernicious; they issue in death: and those that seek after them, and obtain them in a bad way, are said to seek death: not intentionally, but eventually; this they certainly find, if grace prevent not; see ch. viii. 36. Jarchi reads it, they are the snares of death to him; and so the Septuagint version.

Ver. 7. *The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them, &c.*] Or cut them, so Ben Melech: dissect or saw² them; cut them to the heart; that is, when the sins they have been guilty of, in robbing God of his due, or doing injury to men in their properties, cheating them or stealing from them, are set home on their consciences, they are in the utmost agonies and distress; it is as if a saw was drawn to and fro over them, and will be their case for ever without true repentance: this is the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched; this is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and is very just and righteous. *Because they refuse to do judgment*; to do that

⁹ פרי עינים ורחם לב פרי etatio oculorum & latitudo cordis, Piscator, Michaelis, Cocceius, Schultens.

¹ Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram instituit, Virgil. Georgic. l. 1.

¹ ירשעים Incerua impiorum, V. L. Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

² ירררר dissectabit eos, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; serrabit eos, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Mercer. Michaelis; gravem ipsis uterum trahit, Schultens.

which is just between man and man, to let every one enjoy his own property: as it is true of private robbers, so of men in public offices, whose business it is to defend men in the quiet possession of property; which, if they refuse to do, as it is a refusal to do judgment, it is in effect a robbery of them; and will be charged on their consciences at one time or another.

Ver. 8. *The way of man is froward and strange, &c.*] Not the way of any and every man; not the way of righteous and good men, of believers in Christ; who know him, the way, and walk in him and after him, and being led by him; who have his spirit to be their guide, and do walk in his ways, and find pleasure in them; the way of such is not froward or perverse, but upright and even, and is not strange, for the Lord knows and approves of it: but the way of wicked and impure men, as may be learned from the opposition in the next clause; the way of unregenerate men, who are gone out of the good way, and turned to their own way, which is according to the course of the world, and after the prince of it, and according to the flesh, and dictates of corrupt nature, which is the common and broad road that leads to destruction. This is a *froward* or perverse way, a way contrary to reason and truth; contrary to the word of God, and the directions of it; it is a crooked distorted path; it is not according to rule; it is a deviation from the way of God's commandment, and is a *strange* one; the Scriptures know nothing of it, and do not point and direct unto it; it estranges a man from God, and carries him further and further off from him. It may be rendered, *perverse is the way of a man, even of a stranger*¹; of one that is a stranger to God and godliness; to Christ and his Gospel; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace on the heart; to his own heart, and his state and condition by nature; and to all good men, and all that is good. *But as for the pure, his work is right.* God is pure, purity itself, in comparison of whom nothing is pure; and his work in creation, providence, and grace, is right; there is no unrighteousness in him; and this sense is favoured by the Septuagint and Arabic versions: or rather every good man, who, through the pure righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and through his precious blood being sprinkled on him, or rather through being washed in it, and through the grace of God bestowed on him, is pure, wholly cleansed from sin; has a pure heart, speaks a pure language, and holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience or conversation: and his work, or the work of God upon him, is right and good; or his work of faith, which he exercises on God, is hearty and genuine: and even his works, as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have it in the plural number; all his good works are right; being done from love, in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God.

Ver. 9. *It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, &c.*] The roofs of houses in Judea were flat, encompassed with battlements, whither persons might retire for solitude, and sit in safety: and it is better to

be in a corner of such a roof alone, and be exposed to scorching heat, to blustering winds, to thunder-storms and showers of rain, *than with a brawling woman in a wide house*; large and spacious, full of rooms, fit for a numerous family: or, *an house of society*²; where many families might dwell and live sociably with each other; or a house where a man, his wife and family, might dwell together, and have communion with each other; it is opposed to the corner of the house-top, and the solitariness of it; as the scolding of the brawling woman, or a *woman of contentious*³, who is always noisy and quarrelsome, her violent passions, her storming language, and thundering voice, are to the inclinations of the heavens, to which a man on the house-top is exposed; and yet these are more eligible than the other; see ver. 19. and xvii. 1. and xix. 13.

Ver. 10. *The soul of the wicked desireth evil, &c.*] The evil of sin, it being natural to him; he chooses it, delights in it, craves after it, under a notion of pleasure or profit: or the evil of mischief; it is a sport and pastime to him to do injury to others; see ch. x. 23. he desires both the one and the other with all his soul; his heart is in it, he is set upon it, which shews him to be a wicked man. *His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes*; not only he delights to do mischief to an enemy or a stranger, but even to a neighbour and friend; he will do him no kindness, though he asks it of him; he will shew him no mercy, though an object of it; he will spare him not, but do him an injury, if he attempts to hinder or dissuade him from doing mischief, or reproves him for it.

Ver. 11. *When the scorner is punished, &c.*] Either by the immediate hand of God, or by the civil magistrate; he who scoffs at Deity, blasphemeth the most High, mocks at all religion, despises dominion, and speaks evil of dignities: *the simple is made wise*; who is weak and foolish, easily persuaded and drawn into sin, yet not hardened in it, but open to reproof and conviction; he takes notice of the punishment of scorners, and takes warning from it, and behaves more wisely and cautiously for the future; see ch. xix. 25. *And when the wise is instructed*; by others, superior to him in wisdom; by the ministers of the Gospel, by reading and hearing the word of God, and the writings of good men; or by corrections and chastisements: *he receiveth knowledge*; the wise man receives it, he attends to the instruction given him, and improves in knowledge: or rather the simple man gains knowledge by the instructions given to wise men; he learns by them, as well as by what he is taught himself. It is by some rendered, *when the wise prospers, he receiveth knowledge*⁴; the simple man learns much both from the adversity and prosperity of others; and to this sense is the note of Gersom, "when he sees "how the ways of a wise man prosper, then he studies "to get knowledge."

Ver. 12. *The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked, &c.*] Not so much the stately palace he lives in, and the furniture of it, as the glory, splendour, riches, and largeness of his family; the

¹ וְיָרֵךְ וְאֲלִינִי, Pagninus, Montanus; & extranei, Vatablus; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.

² אֵת הַבַּיִת וְכִי הוּא שׂוֹכֵת, Montanus, Vatablus, Bayuse, Mercerus, Michaelis; & domus societatis, Schultens.

³ אִשָּׁה מְדַבֵּרֶת מְרִיבֵי אִישׁ muliere contentionum, Montanus, Schultens.

⁴ So Munster, and some in Mercerus.

flourishing condition he and they are in: he considers how they came into it, the short continuance of it, and what the end will be, which in a short time will be ruin and destruction; and therefore he does not envy their present happiness, or fret at it. Gersom renders it, "the righteous maketh the house of the wicked to prosper;" as Joseph did Potiphar's, and Jacob Laban's; or rather the Lord made them to prosper for their sakes. Jarchi interprets the righteous of God himself; who gives his heart, or has it in his heart to cut off the house of the wicked, as follows. But *God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness*; or removes them into evil, as the Targum; into the evil of punishment, for the evil of sin. Aben Ezra supplies the word *God*, as we do; and understands it of God's destroying wicked men for their sins, though they have flourished for a while in this world: but some interpret it of the righteous man, even of a righteous magistrate, who is prudent and diligent in his office; who looks into the houses of wicked men, and inquires who they are that are in them, and how they live; and what they have in their houses, whether stolen goods, the properties of others; or arms, either for treasonable practices or for robberies; and takes them and punishes them according to the laws of God and men.

Ver. 13. *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, &c.*] For want of bread; or, of the weak, as the Septuagint and other versions; for want of help and protection, when in the greatest distress; and, with the most pressing importunity, entreats his assistance, and yet refuses to hear him out: or, if he does, will not relieve him, which is all one as if he heard him not, or denied him a hearing. *He also shall cry himself*; the Targum and Syriac version add, *unto God*. The sense is, that even such an one shall be brought into the like distressed circumstances, when he shall make application to God, and to his fellow-creatures, for relief and assistance: *but shall not be heard*; a deaf ear will be turned to him by both: the same measure he has measured shall be measured to him again; no mercy shall be shewn to an unmerciful man, either by God or man; see Jam. ii. 13.

Ver. 14. *A gift in secret pacifieth anger, &c.*] Appeases an angry man; humbles and brings his anger down, as Aben Ezra and Gersom observe the word signifies; which before rose very high, and shewed itself in big words and disdainful looks, as proud wrath does; or extinguishes it, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it, and very fitly. Anger is a fire in the breast; and a restraining or causing it to cease is properly expressed by an extinguishing of it: this a gift or present does, as it did in Esau from Jacob, in David from Abigail; but then it must be secretly given, otherwise it may more provoke; since it may shew vanity in the giver, and covetousness in the receiver; and the former may have more honour than the latter. Some understand this of a gift for a bribe to a judge, to abate the severity of the sentence; and others of

alms-deeds to the poor, to pacify the anger of God: Jarchi interprets it of alms; and the Jews write this sentence upon the poor's box, understanding it in this sense; but the first sense is best. *And a reward in the bosom strong wrath*; the same thing in different words; the meaning is, that a reward or gift, secretly conveyed into the bosom of an angry man, pacifies his wrath, when at the greatest height. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, understand it in a quite different sense, of a gift retained in the bosom, and not given, and render it thus, *he that spareth gifts stirreth up strong wrath*.

Ver. 15. *It is joy to the just to do judgment, &c.*] It is with pleasure he does it; he delights in the law of God, after the inward man, and finds much peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost in keeping it, and observing its commands, which are holy, just, and good; yea, it gives him pleasure to see justice done by others; both by private persons in their dealings with one another; and especially by judges putting the laws in execution, as their office requires; whereby much good comes to a nation in general, and to particular persons. *But destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity*; that make a trade of sinning; whose whole life is a continued series of sin and iniquity; who take much pains in committing sin, and are constant at it; everlasting destruction is in their ways, and they lead unto it: or, *terror*² shall be to them; terror of mind now at times, in opposition to the joy and peace a good man finds; and dreadful horror at death and to all eternity: or, as it is joy to a just man to see public justice done, and good laws put in execution, it is a terror to evildoers, Rom. xiii. 3.

Ver. 16. *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, &c.*] The way of getting understanding, the good ways and word of God; that wanders from the house of God, the assembly of the saints, where the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances are administered; that, instead of attending on them, where he might gain the understanding of divine and spiritual things, wanders about in the fields, gets into bad company, walks with them in their ways, and turns to his own, as a sheep that goes astray: he shall remain in the congregation of the dead; among those that are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins; such an one he himself is, and such he is like to continue, and not be written among the living in Jerusalem; or among those who die the second and eternal death, among the damned in hell; so Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of hell; and a large congregation that will be, but dreadful to have an abode with them. The words are rendered by the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, *shall rest in the congregation of the giants*; which some interpret of devils, and others of the giants of the old world³, damned spirits: resting with them does not design peace and quietness, for there will be none there; but a fixed settled abode, in opposition to wandering, in the preceding clause.

Ver. 17. *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man,*

¹ יִצְרָחֵם deprimit, Piscator; so some in Mercerus; subigit, Cocceius; pensat nasum, Schultzeus.

² Munera (crede mihi) placant hominesque deosque, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3.

³ מחמת pavor, V. L. horror, Tigurine version; terror, Vatablus, Mercerus; consternatio, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultzeus.

⁴ See Mede's Discourse 7. p. 32.

&c.] Or *sport* and pastime, music and dancing, cards and dice, hunting and hawking, and other sensual gratifications; a man that indulges himself in these things, and spends his time and his money in such a way, is very likely to be a poor man, and generally is so in the issue. *He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich*; that is, that loves them immoderately; otherwise in moderation they may be both loved and used; *wine* and *oil* are put for high living, luxurious feasts, costly entertainments; which being so, and continually made, will not suffer a man to be rich. The sense is, that an epicure, one that makes a god of his belly, that is both a winebibber and a glutton, that indulges to rich eating and drinking, in course lessens his substance, and leaves little for his heir: and this holds good with respect to spiritual as to temporal things; such persons are poor, and not rich in spiritual things, that indulge to carnal pleasure, and the gratification of their sensual appetite.

Ver. 18. *The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, &c.*] Not to make satisfaction for them, as Christ is a ransom for his people; but as a ransom is in the room of another, so the wicked cometh in the stead of the righteous, and into the trouble he is delivered from; as Haman for Mordecai, which instance Jarchi mentions; see ch. xi. 8. or when a body of people are threatened with divine vengeance; and this falls upon the wicked, whose sins caused it, and the righteous are delivered from it; as in the case of Achan, and the seven sons of Saul, Josh. vii. 26. 2 Sam. xxi. 1—6. And sometimes God turns the wrath of the princes of the earth from his own people, and causes it to fall upon the wicked, and so they are a ransom for them; as Sennacherib intended the destruction of the Jews, but was called off in providence to fall upon the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, and therefore they are said to be a ransom for them; see Isa. xliii. 3. and sometimes wicked men are the means of a ransom or deliverance of the righteous, as Cyrus was of the Jews: and it may be considered, as the word used signifies a *cover*^d, whether it will not bear this sense, that the wicked are a cover for the righteous, and oftentimes protect and defend them; so the earth helped the woman, Rev. xii. 16. *And the transgressor for the upright*; which are but different characters of the same persons, bad and good men; and the sense is the same as before.

Ver. 19. *It is better to dwell in the wilderness, &c.*] Where persons live without shelter, and are not only exposed to storms and tempests, but to beasts of prey; where is want of the necessaries of life, and no society; where no *speech* is, as the word^e for wilderness may signify; yet it is better to dwell in such a place, where no human voice is heard, *than with a contentious and an angry woman*; that is always brawling and scolding, ever in a quarrelsome and angry disposition, and provoking to anger all about her; see the note on ver. 9. In a mystical sense, it is better to be with the church in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14. than with the furious,

bloodthirsty, and persecuting church of Rome, in all its worldly glory and splendour.

Ver. 20. *There is a treasure to be desired, &c.*] Gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones; all sorts of food, as Aben Ezra explains it, and rich and costly raiment; all which may be lawfully desired and sought after, and, when obtained, laid up for future use; which may be spared for their own service and that of posterity: but there are riches of grace, a pearl of great price and treasure in heaven, more desirable than these, Matt. vi. 19, 20. *And oil in the dwelling of the wise*; which is particularly mentioned, because a principal blessing of the land of Canaan; much used for food, and was for delight and refreshment: and something of this was in the house of every wise, provident, and industrious man, for the use of him and his family; even though he lived but in a *cottage*, as the word^f signifies: this is an emblem of the grace of God, which is sometimes compared to oil; which a wise man is chiefly concerned, that it may be in his heart, in his house, and in his family. *But a foolish man spendeth it up*; the oil; he swallows it up at once, as soon as he has got it, and wastes and lavishes away what his wise father had provided for him. This may refer not to oil only, but to the desired treasure, wealth, riches, substance of every sort, he is heir to and becomes possessed of; and which, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to a foolish wicked man, who mispends his time, neglects the means of grace, and all opportunities by which men grow rich and wise in spiritual things; see Matt. xxv. 1—10.

Ver. 21. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, &c.*] Is eager, diligent, and fervent in his pursuit of these things: *after righteousness*; not a legal righteousness, such as the Jews followed after, but did not attain to; because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 31, 32. by which there is no righteousness or justification before God; but an evangelical righteousness, the righteousness of Christ; see Isa. li. 1. To follow after it is to seek, desire, and thirst after it, Matt. v. 6. and vi. 33. which supposes a want of righteousness, a sense of that want; a view of a righteousness without them, even in Christ; a love and liking of it, and therefore follow after it; it being pure, perfect, agreeably to the law and justice of God, which justifies now, and will answer for them in a time to come. And such follow after *mercy or grace*^g; seeing themselves miserable by sin, and having no merit of their own, apply to God for pardoning grace and mercy; and seek for righteousness in a way of grace, as a free gift; and for the whole of salvation in the same way, as well as all grace and fresh supplies of it: it may be understood, in consequence of the former, of a diligent and eager performance of works of righteousness and mercy, and an earnest desire after both. And such a man *findeth life, righteousness, and honour*; which is more than he is said to follow after: *life* spiritual, which he has from Christ by his spirit, and which is

^e שמחה lætitiám, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
^f כופר.

^e דבר מדרבן loqui.
^f תגורולמ turgurium, Mercerus, Gejerus.
^g חסד gratiam, Cocceius.

owing to the grace and mercy of God; and eternal life, through the righteousness of Christ, in whom it is only to be found, and from whom all the blessings of life come; who has it in his hands to give, and does give it to all his people: *righteousness* also he finds, not in himself, nor by the works of the law, but in Christ; being directed to him by the spirit and word of God; and an excellent finding this is; a robe of righteousness, which he lays hold upon, puts on, and rejoices in: and likewise *honour*, through relation to God and Christ; through grace received from them; by enjoying the presence of them, and being made a king and priest to God; and hereafter will be placed at Christ's right hand, inherit the kingdom of glory, sit on the same throne with Christ, and wear the crown of life and righteousness.

Ver. 22. *A wise man scaleteth the city of the mighty, &c.* Which makes good what is elsewhere said, that *wisdom is better than strength*, Eccl. ix. 16. and sometimes more is done by prudence and wisdom, by art and cunning, by schemes and stratagems, than by power and force; especially in military affairs, and particularly in besieging and taking fortified cities; when one wise man, by his wisdom, may so order and manage things, as to be able, with a few under his command, to mount the walls of a city and take it, though defended by a mighty garrison in it. This may be applied to our Lord Jesus Christ entering into the city of a man's heart, possessed by the strong man armed; overcoming him, taking from him his armour, and dividing his spoil, Luke xi. 21, 22. compare with this Eccl. ix. 14, 15. *And casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof*: the strong walls, bulwarks, and such fortifications, in which the mighty in the city placed their confidence: and the like does Christ, when he enters into the heart of a sinner by his word and spirit; he destroys all its former strong confidences, and brings it into subjection to himself, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Ver. 23. *Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, &c.* Guards the one and bridles the other; is careful of what he says, that it is truth, and without dissimulation and guile; and is not injurious to the characters of men, and is not offensive and provoking; who abstains from ill and wrathful language, and which tends to stir up wrath and contention. Aben Ezra distinguishes between the mouth and tongue, and interprets it, that keeps his mouth from eating, that is, immoderately and intemperately; and his tongue from speaking evil: but it is best to understand both of the same thing, of speech or language, which when a man is careful of, he *keepeth his soul from troubles*; his conscience clear of guilt and distress, and his person from being concerned in quarrels, contentions, and lawsuits, which such who give their tongues too much liberty are involved in.

Ver. 24. *Proud and haughty scorner is his name, &c.* He shall be called a proud fool, a haughty fellow, a scornful blockhead; he shall get himself an ill name, and be treated with contempt. *Who dealeth in proud wrath*: whose pride shews itself in wrathful expressions and actions; who is proud and passionate in all his dealings with men, and who as it were makes a

trade of pride and passion: to none is this character more applicable than to antichrist, the man of sin, that sits in the seat of the scornful; exalts himself above all that is called God, has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and a look more stout than his fellows, and deals in proud wrath against the saints of the most High.

Ver. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him, &c.* His desire after food and raiment, and riches; for because he cannot have what he desires, being unwilling to work for them, it frets and vexes him to death, or puts him upon unlawful methods to obtain them, which bring him to a shameful death; see ch. xiii. 4. *For his hands refuse to labour*: when he is ordered by his superiors, or his wants are such as call for labour; and he seems to be willing and desirous of it, necessity obliging to it, yet he cannot bring his hands to it; these do in effect say, as Aben Ezra observes, *Thou shalt not do it*. Maimonides says this is to be understood of sloth in seeking wisdom ^b.

Ver. 26. *He coveteth greedily all the day long, &c.* The slothful man does, as he has nothing to do to employ his time and his thoughts with; he is always craving something to eat and drink, or wishing he had such an estate, or so much wealth and riches, that he might live as such and such persons do; and this is what his head runs upon all the day long. *But the righteous giveth and spareth not*; not gives to the slothful, which does not restrain his desire, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but to the poor and necessitous, to proper objects; a good man will work with his hands, that he may have a sufficiency for himself and his family, and may have something to give to others that are in want; and *he spares not*, or withholds not his hands, neither from working nor from giving.

Ver. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination, &c.* That is, to the Lord, as in ch. xv. 8. and as it is here added in the Septuagint and Arabic versions. *How much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?* the Arabic version is, *with a mind alien from the law*; or when it is not brought according to law; when it is a corrupt thing, that which is torn, lame, or sick, or robbery for burnt sacrifice; when it is done with an evil intention, to cover sin, to atone for it without repenting of it or forsaking it; that they may go on in sin with impunity, and be allowed to commit it; for which cause Balak and Balaam offered sacrifices, which is the instance Jarchi produces; and indeed every religious action not done in faith, and love, and sincerity, and with a view to the glory of God, but in hypocrisy and with selfish views, in order to procure acceptance with God and justification in his sight; setting aside the righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction of the son of God, is done with a wicked mind, and is an abomination to the Lord. Some render it, *even though he brings it diligently, or with great art and skill*¹; is constant at his devotion, and carries it so artfully, and with such a shew of religion, as to deceive men, yet he cannot deceive the Lord.

Ver. 28. *A false witness shall perish, &c.* As a witness he shall perish in his reputation, no credit shall be given him, he shall not be admitted an evi-

^b Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 34. p. 47.

¹ בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ solerter, De Dieu.

dence, or a witness in any cause, being found a false one; and, as a man, he shall be punished in body or estate by the civil magistrate, and his soul shall perish eternally, unless he has true repentance for his sin: or, a witness of lies shall perish^k; it may be applied to any teacher of false doctrine; and to the man of sin, and his followers, that speak lies in hypocrisy; every one that loves and makes a lie shall die the second death, and be excluded from eternal happiness, Rev. xxi. 8, 27. *But the man that heareth*; before he speaks, and speaks what he hears, and does not devise things himself; but witnesses the truth, and nothing else, to the best of his knowledge: *speaketh constantly*; invariably and consistently, what is all of a piece, and by which he abides; or *continually*, as Jarchi; or *for ever*; he is made use of as a witness as long as he lives, whenever there is occasion for him; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *he speaks victory*: his testimony, being true and valid, carries the cause: it may be applied to a faithful teacher, who hearkens to the word of God, and speaks according to that; such an one speaks out the doctrine of the word constantly, boldly, with certainty, without any hesitation or staggering.

Ver. 29. *A wicked man hardeneth his face, &c.* Against all corrections and reproofs of parents, masters, ministers, and others; he blushes not at sins committed, and is not ashamed of them, but glories in them: or, he *strengthens with his face*^l; he puts an impudent face upon his words, and confirms them by his impudence; if he tells the most notorious lies, and says things the most shameful and scandalous, his countenance does not alter, by which he would be thought to have spoken what is right and true. *But as for the upright, he directeth his way*; or *his ways*^m; according to the various reading; the man that is upright in heart, and walks uprightly, he directs his way according to the word of God; and, if he does amiss, when sensible he is ashamed of it, and amends.

Ver. 30. *There is no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.* No human schemes whatever, formed with the greatest wisdom and prudence, can ever prevail against God, or set aside or hinder the execution of any design of his; nothing that is pointed against his church, his cause, and interest, his truths and ordinances, in the issue shall succeed; all that are found fighters against him shall not prosper, let them be men of ever so much sagacity and wisdom; though there may be ever so many devices in a man's heart, and these ever so well planned, they shall never defeat the counsel of the Lord; see ch. xix. 21. The Targum is, "there is no wisdom, &c. as God's;" and so the Syriac version, *as the Lord's*; there is none like his, there is none to be compared with his; there is none of any value and worth but his; all is folly in comparison of that: or there is none *before the Lord*ⁿ; no wisdom of the creature can stand before him, it presently vanishes and disappears.

Ver. 31. *The horse is prepared against the day of battle, &c.* The horse is a warlike creature, and was much used formerly, as now, in war; these are prepared against the day of battle, to mount the cavalry with; and men are apt to put too great confidence in them: this is mentioned instead of all other military preparations and instruments of war. *But safety is of the Lord*; a horse is a vain thing for safety, Psal. xxxiii. 17. victory is only of the Lord; salvation depends upon him; it is he that covers men's heads in the day of battle, and gives them victory over their enemies: or *salvation is of the Lord*^o; this is true of spiritual and eternal salvation, as well as of temporal salvation; it is of the Lord, Father, Son and Spirit; and so is the safety of the saints; and their final perseverance to eternal glory, which is owing to the love of God, covenant-interest, security in Christ, the grace of the Spirit, and the power of God; see Hos. xiv. 3.

C H A P. XXII.

Ver. 1. *A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, &c.* The word *good* is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions; for it is not any name that is more eligible than riches; nor is it a good name among any sort of persons; for to have a good name with some turns to a man's reproach rather than to his credit; but a good name among good men, a name in the house of God, which is better than sons and daughters; a new name, the name of the children of God, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; this is to be performed to a multitude of riches: it is not to be procured by them, and is where they are not, or are lost, but this continues; see Eccl. vii. 1. *And loving favour rather than*

silver and gold; favour with God and man, especially with God, whose loving-kindness is better than life, and all the enjoyments of it: or, as it may be rendered, *grace is better than silver and gold*^p; the grace of God through Christ, the grace of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells, the grace of the Spirit of Christ; faith is more precious than gold that perisheth; and if a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be contemned; the Spirit and his grace are not to be purchased for money.

Ver. 2. *The rich and poor meet together, &c.* In an hostile way, as some; they rush upon one another; the rich despise the poor, and the poor envy the rich; they cannot speak well one of another, as the Arabic version; or they are dependent on one another, they

^l תבנים תעיס תנעלעורמו, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Corcecius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^m רובוראט ואלטא סו, Baynus; in facilius suis, Montanus.

ⁿ רובוראט ואלטא סו, Sept. vias suas, Baynus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^o רובוראט ואלטא סו, in conspectu Jehovæ, Gejerus; coram Domino, Gusselius, p. 495.

^p ליהוה החשועה a Domino autem (datur) salus, Tigurine version; Domino est salvatio, Corcecius; Jehovæ est salus, Schultens; so Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^q רובוראט ואלטא סו, gratia melior, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; so Schultens.

cannot do without each other; as in the natural body one member cannot say to another, I have no need of thee; so, in the body politic, the rich and the poor cannot say they have no need of one another; the rich stand in need of the poor to till their land, to plough and sow, and do all other servile works for them; and the poor have need of the rich to employ them; have need of their money as their wages for their work, to support themselves and families with: or they sometimes change conditions, and so meet; the poor grow rich, and the rich become poor; the one goes up-hill and the other down-hill, and so meet in their passage. They meet together in all places of the earth; go where you will, there are rich and poor. The godly rich and poor meet together in one place to worship God; they meet together in a Gospel church-state, enjoying the same privileges and ordinances; and will all meet the Lord, and all meet together at his judgment-seat; and they will meet in heaven, and be together to all eternity, where the distinction will cease: and the wicked rich and poor meet together to commit sin; and they meet together in the grave⁴, where there is no difference; and they will meet at the bar of God at the last day, and in hell, where they will be together for evermore. *The Lord is the Maker of them all*: not only as men, but as rich men and poor men; God gives riches to whom he pleases, and poverty to whom he pleases; riches and poverty are according to the order of divine Providence; and he can and does change scenes at his pleasure; wherefore the rich should consider themselves as dependent on him, and not despise and crush the poor; and the poor should be content with their state, as being allotted to them by the Lord, who can alter it when he thinks fit.

Ver. 3. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, &c.*] A wise man, whose eyes are in his head, who looks about him and before him, and is cautious and careful of his conduct and behaviour; he foresees the evil of sin he is liable to be drawn into by such and such company, snares, and temptations; and therefore he keeps from them, and abstains from all appearance of evil, or what would lead him to it; and he foresees the evil of punishment, or the judgments of God that are coming on for sin; and he betakes himself to the Lord, to those hiding-places and chambers of retreat and protection he has provided for his people, till the indignation be overpast; see Isa. xxvi. 20. *But the simple pass on, and are punished*: foolish persons, devoid of the grace of God and the fear of him, go on careless and unconcerned in their sinful course of life, transgressing the law of God; they proceed from evil to evil, from lesser to greater sins; they go on in the broad road to destruction, and are punished with temporal judgments here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter.

Ver. 4. *By humility and the fear of the Lord, &c.*] Some render it, *the reward of humility, which is the fear of the Lord*⁵; so the Targum; an humble man is blessed

with it. Jarchi's note is, "because of humility, the fear of the Lord comes;" humility leads on to the fear of the Lord; he that behaves humbly towards man comes at length to fear the Lord, and be truly religious; though these are rather to be considered as the graces of the spirit of God, which go together: where there is one, there is the other; he that is humbled under a sense of sin, and his own unworthiness, fears the Lord; and he that fears the Lord, and his goodness, will walk humbly before him; they both flow from the grace of God, are very ornamental, and attended with the following happy consequences. *Are riches, and honour, and life*: spiritual riches, the riches of grace and glory; honour with God and men now, and everlasting life in the world to come.

Ver. 5. *Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward, &c.*] Who walks contrary to the will and law of God; such a man meets with troubles, which are as thorns, grieving and distressing to him; and is taken in snares, and brought into difficulties, out of which he is not easily extricated; the thorns of affliction, and the snares of Satan: by the one his way is hedged up, and in the other his feet are taken. *He that doth keep his soul shall be far from them*; he that is concerned for the good of his soul, is careful for the welfare of that, and takes heed to his ways where and how he walks, will be far both from the way of the froward, and from the thorns and snares which are in his way.

Ver. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go, &c.*] As Abraham trained up his children, and those born in his house, in the way of the Lord, in the paths of justice and judgment; which are the ways in which they should go, and which will be to their profit and advantage; see Gen. xiv. 14. and xviii. 19. and which is the duty of parents and masters in all ages, and under the present Gospel dispensation, even to bring up such who are under their care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephes. vi. 4. by praying with them and for them, by bringing them under the means of grace, the ministry of the word, by instructing them in the principles of religion, teaching them their duty to God and man, and setting them good examples of a holy life and conversation; and this is to be done according to their capacity, and as they are able to understand and receive the instructions given them: *according to the mouth of his way*⁶, as it may be literally rendered; as soon as he is able to speak or go, even from his infancy; or as children are fed by little bits, or a little at a time, as their mouths can receive it. *And when he is old he will not depart from it*; not easily, nor ordinarily; there are exceptions to this observation; but generally, where there is a good education, the impressions of it do not easily wear off, nor do men ordinarily forsake a good way they have been brought up in; and, however, when, being come to years of maturity and understanding, their hearts are seasoned with the grace of God, they are then enabled to put that in practice which before they had only in theory, and so continue in the paths of truth and holiness.

⁴ Victor cum victis pariter miscetur unbris — Lydus De lichio, non dicit Croesus ab Iro, Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 5. v. 15, 17.

⁵ יהורו קרוס עמב עקב יגורו יראת יהורו — Ezechiel Johove, Schultens; merces humilitatis timor Domini, Baynus; primum humilitatis est timor Domini, Tigurine version; so Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius.

⁶ על פי דרכו super os viae suae, Montanus; ad os viae ejus, Schultens.

⁷ Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu, Horat. l. 1. Ep. 2. v. 69.

Ver. 7. *The rich ruleth over the poor, &c.*] Usurps a dominion over them, and exercises it in a rigorous, oppressive, and tyrannical manner; otherwise they are generally the rich that rule, and if they rule well, in a lawful, gentle, and righteous manner, it is commendable. *And the borrower is servant to the lender;* being under obligation to him, he is forced to be subject to him, and comply with his humours, and do and say as he would have him; it was a happiness promised to the Israelites, that they should lend to many nations, but not borrow, Deut. xv. 6. compare with this Neh. v. 4, 5.

Ver. 8. *He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity, &c.*] He that practises sin, and is frequent in the commission of it; indulges to it in a profuse way, as the sower plentifully scatters his seed; such shall reap or possess nothing but sin and wickedness; for, what a man sows, that shall he reap; he shall eat the fruit of his doings, and have the reward of his works; see Job iv. 8. Gal. vi. 7, 8. or *nothing**, mere emptiness; it shall not answer; he shall have in the end neither pleasure nor profit, but the contrary; *shall reap evil things*, as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions render it. *And the rod of his anger shall fail;* with which he has ruled and smitten others in an angry and cruel manner; this shall be taken from him; his authority shall fail, and he shall become subject to others, and be used in like manner; see Isa. xiv. 4—6. it. Joseph Kimchi interprets it of *the rod of the increase of the earth*, or the rod or flail with which the fruits of the earth are threshed or beaten out, which should fail before they were reaped; and Schultens² has reference to the same, and gives the sense, that a wicked man that sows iniquity, when he thinks his harvest is ripe, shall be beaten with the flail, by which he shall be consumed; and he that threshed others shall be threshed himself.

Ver. 9. *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, &c.*] Or *a good eye*? who looks about him for proper objects to do good unto; looks pleasantly on them, and deals out cheerfully and bountifully to them; he shall be blessed with an increase of temporal good things, with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; when he does what he does from principles of grace, with a view to the glory of God, not depending on what he does, but upon the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ. *For he giveth of his bread to the poor;* what is his own and a part of it; not all, for he reserves some as he ought for himself and his; but he does not eat his morsel alone, he gives of it to the necessitous; his beneficent hand is a proof of his bountiful eye and liberal heart.

Ver. 10. *Cast out the scorner, &c.*] That makes a mock at sin, a jest at religion, and scoffs at all good men, and every thing serious and spiritual; cast such an one out of all company and conversation; out of the family, as mocking Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's family; and out of the church, and all religious societies. Jarchi interprets it of the evil imagination or corruption of nature; but this will continue with a

man as long as he lives, and, though it may be weakened and subdued, it is not cast out. *And contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease;* which are caused by the scorner, who stirs up contention and strife in all company where he is, in families, and churches; and is continually casting reproach on good men and things; but, when he is cast out, every thing of this nature ceases, and peace and love take place.

Ver. 11. *He that loveth pureness of heart, &c.*] Though man's heart is naturally impure, and all that is in it, the thoughts, affections, mind, conscience, understanding, and will; yet there is such a thing as pureness of heart; as where the grace of God is; where there it pure love to God, Christ, and to holy and heavenly things and persons; where there is pure and unfeigned faith in Christ, and a purifying hope of eternal life by him; where the Holy Spirit dwells as a sanctifier, and Christ dwells by faith; where there is sincerity and integrity; and where the heart is sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience: and, though none are entirely free from impurity of flesh and spirit, yet every good man hates the impurity that is in him, and loves purity, and is desirous of it, and makes use of all means for it; and he loves a man of a pure heart, as Aben Ezra interprets it; he loves pureness of heart in himself and others. Some versions understand this of God: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, *God loveth holy hearts;* and so the Targum, "God loveth the pure in heart." The Syriac version differs, "he loves God that is pure in heart;" but all wrong; the sense is as before given. *For the grace of his lips;* or, *grace is in his lips;* or, *his lips are grace*?, or gracious; as the lips of Christ, though in a greater measure and degree, Psal. xlv. 2. as is a man's heart, so are his lips. A man of a pure heart will speak a pure language; a good man will talk of good things; a wise man of wisdom, and a gracious man of the grace of God; of the doctrines of grace he has received; of the blessings of grace bestowed on him; of the promises of grace applied unto him; of the experiences of grace he has been favoured with; of things grateful and acceptable to others, which minister grace, and are to the use of edifying. *The king shall be his friend;* carry himself friendly to him, admit him to familiarity with him, take him into his court, and make him of his privy council; this is what a king should do, and what a wise and good king will do, and it is his interest so to do: a man of an upright heart, and of a graceful speech, is or should be regarded by princes; as Hushai the Archite by David; and Daniel even by Nebuchadnezzar, a Heathen king. Jarchi's note is, "the holy blessed God loves and embraces him;" and this sense may very well be received: the Lord loves purity of heart; he is good to them that are of a clean heart; he loves graceful lips, or lips speaking grace, in prayer, praise, or Christian conversation: he is a friend to such; to the pure he shews himself pure; the pure in heart shall see him, and ever dwell with him: Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, loves purity and righteousness, and hates iniquity; the

oculo, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

² שפתיו דין gratia sunt labia ejus, De Dieu, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; ejus labia sunt grata, i. e. gratioosa, Mercerus; gratia in labiis ejus est, some in Vatablus.

* So, serere fallaciam, in Plauti Pomulo, l. 1. v. 67.
 † in inauitatem ac nihilum, Michaelis.
 ‡ Et virga in eum deservitura, erit deceptoria.
 § עין עין bonus oculus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius; bonus

lips of his people are pleasing to him, they are like a thread of scarlet; he loves to hear their voice, especially speaking of his own grace; he is a friend unto them, one that loves at all times, and sticks closer than a brother.

Ver. 12. *The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, &c.*] That is, the providence of God, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth; these preserve the knowledge of himself, even among the Heathens in some measure; for what may be known of God is manifest in them, and shewed to them: more particularly his providence has preserved the Scriptures, the means of knowledge, which men would have destroyed; and preserves men of knowledge, as Aben Ezra interprets it, the ministers of the word, the stars he holds in his right hand; and he preserves spiritual and experimental knowledge in the hearts of his people, and causes it to increase; and continues his Gospel and a Gospel ministry in the world, till they all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the son of God. Or his eyes observe, look unto with delight and pleasure, knowledge and men of knowledge, that know him, and do his will. *And he overthroweth the words of the transgressor*; the perfidious, treacherous man; the false teacher, that corrupts the word of God, and handles it deceitfully: the doctrines of such he overthrows, and confutes, and brings to nothing, by his spirit in his faithful ministers; and causes truth to prevail, and all iniquity to stop its mouth: particularly the words and doctrines of the great transgressor, the lawless and wicked one, the man of sin, antichrist; these have been exposed and overthrown already, and will be more and more so in God's due time.

Ver. 13. *The slothful man saith, there is a lion without, &c.*] Or, *in the street*. This he says within himself; or to those who call him out, and put him on doing the business of his proper calling, whether in the field or elsewhere, which, through his slothfulness, he has a disinclination to; and therefore frames excuses, and suggests this and that difficulty or danger in the way, expressed by a *lion without*; and which shews the folly and weakness of his excuses, since lions do not usually walk in cities, towns, and villages, and in the streets of them, but in woods and mountains. *I shall be slain in the streets*; by the lion there; or I shall never be able to get over the difficulties, and through the dangers, which attending to business will expose me to. Some apply this to the difficulties that slothful persons imagine in the learning of languages, arts, and sciences; as Jarchi applies it to the learning of the law.

Ver. 14. *The mouth of strange women is a deep pit, &c.*] The mouth of harlots; the kisses of their mouth, their fair speech and flattering words, their amorous talk, and lascivious and wanton language, insure and draw unwary persons to commit lewdness with them, which bring them into a pit of ruin and destruction; a filthy one, and very deep, out of which it is not easy nor usual to be extricated: the allusion is to beasts taken in a pit dug for them; and these are as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed. *He that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein*; who has been guilty of other sins, and such as have caused

the Lord to abhor him, and therefore leaves him to fall into this: one sin not only leads on to another, but is the punishment of another; men are seldom guilty of this sin of whoredom, but who have been first abandoned to other vices very provoking to God; see Eccl. vii. 26. Jarchi interprets all this of idolatry; and it may be very well applied to the whore of Rome, and the harlots she is mother of; who, by her fair words and false doctrines, by her mouth speaking blasphemies and lies in hypocrisy, by her golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of fornication, and by her sorceries, have deceived many, and brought them into the pit of perdition and ruin: and these are such whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life; but are rejected of God, and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, Rev. xvii. 4, 5, 8. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

Ver. 15. *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, &c.*] That is, sin, the greatest of all folly; this is naturally in the heart of man; it is in the heart of a child, it is in him from his infancy; it is bound in his heart, it is rooted and riveted in him, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; it is what cleaves close to him, and he has a strong affection for and desire after: the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. viii. 21. so that he is not easily brought off of sin, or becomes wise. *But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him*; the rod used by parents, for the correction of sin and folly, is a means of making children wise, and of restraining the folly that is bound up in them; and of reclaiming them from those sinful ways, which the folly of their hearts leads them to, and so in some measure of driving it far from them.

Ver. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, &c.*] By taking away from them the little they have; by keeping back their hire, defrauding them of the just wages of their labours; or by usury and extortion, or any other unjust method, whereby they distress the poor, and enrich themselves. *And he that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want*; that gives to those that are richer than he; or that are in greater power and authority, that they may protect him in the possession of his ill-gotten riches; yet, after all, it shall not thrive and prosper with him, it will all issue in poverty and want: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *he shall give to one more rich, and shall want*; he shall be forced to give it to another richer than he, and of greater power, and so shall get nothing by his oppression of the poor; but as he has served the poor, so shall he be served himself, and be brought to beggary and want; see ch. xxi. 13.

Ver. 17. *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, &c.* Here begins a new part or division of this book. According to some, the *third*: the *first* ending with the *ninth* chapter, the *second* at the preceding verse, and a *third*, beginning here, and ending with the *twenty-fourth* chapter. It is certain that what follows from hence to the end of that is written in another style, by way of exhortation, caution, and instruction, and is directed to particular persons: as here an exhortation is made to Solomon's son, or to those that attended his instruction; or rather to the children of Wisdom, that is, Christ; to listen attentively to the words of the wise; of Solomon, and other:

wise men before him, or cotemporary with him; or rather of Wisdom and her maidens, Christ, and the wise men sent by him; who are made wise to salvation, and furnished for every good work by him, from whom the words of the wise come; and who speak the wisdom of God in a mystery; and whose doctrines are to be heard and received, not as the word of men, but as the word of God. *And apply thine heart unto my knowledge; the knowledge of divine and spiritual things Christ instructs in, and the knowledge of himself; which is preferable to all other knowledge, and to thousands of gold and silver; and in comparison of which all things are but loss and dung; and therefore should be applied unto with intenseness of mind, and cordially received.*

Ver. 18. *For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, &c.] Or, in thy belly².* That is, in thine heart, in the inmost recesses of it; where the words or doctrines of the wise should be received in the love of them, and carefully laid up and retained; which will upon reflection yield much pleasure, like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his belly as honey for sweetness; and which also is very profitable as an antidote against sin, Psal. cxix. 11. *They shall withal be fitted in thy lips; become them, and be suitable and graceful to them; or, shall be ordered and disposed in or by thy lips³; being received into the heart, and digested there, they shall easily and freely go off the tongue, which shall be as the pen of a ready writer; they shall be delivered in a regular manner, with great liberty and facility; by a good digestion of Gospel truths, and a comfortable experience of them, persons become apt to teach others.*

Ver. 19. *That thy trust may be in the Lord, &c.]* By means of the words of the wise, or doctrines of the Gospel, faith in Christ is first had; men are directed and encouraged hereby to believe in him; and by the same means faith is increased, confirmed, and established. This is the end of penning the Scriptures, and of the Gospel ministry, as follows: *I have made known to thee this day, even to thee; the said words and doctrines in the ministry of the word, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them; giving not only a notional, but a spiritual and experimental knowledge of them. The Lord has particular persons to whom he will make known these things in a saving way; it is to thee, even to thee; and to every one whom God has chosen, and Christ has redeemed: and he has particular times and seasons for it, this day; which is a time of life and love; when darkness is removed, and the light of grace shines, and makes it day; and may respect the whole Gospel dispensation, which is the accepted time and day of salvation.*

Ver. 20. *Have not I written to thee excellent things, &c.]* In the Scriptures. Some render it, *three things⁴*; and think that Solomon refers to the three divisions of the Scriptures among the Jews, the law, the prophets, and holy writings; so Jarchi; but some of those writings then were not: or to the three books wrote

by him; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Others render it, *in a threefold way⁴*, as the Targum and several versions; that is, in various ways, in different forms and styles, in order the better to inform and instruct. But it is best, with Kimchi, Gerson, and Ben Melech, to render it, *excellent things*, as we do; such are the truths of the Gospel; they are more excellent than those that are only known by the light of nature, or by the law of Moses: such as suspect the love and grace of God; the person and offices of Christ; peace, pardon, righteousness, atonement, life and salvation, by him. And these are said to lie *in counsels and knowledge*; in disclosing the counsels of God, according to which they are; in giving the best of counsels to men; to perishing sinners, to look to Christ for salvation; to naked ones, to buy of him white raiment, or the robe of his righteousness; to guilty and filthy ones, to apply to his blood for pardon and cleansing; to hungry and thirsty ones, to come unto him for food, the bread of life, and water of life; and to weary ones, to him for rest; and all to do their duty both to God and men: and they also respect knowledge; the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; the knowledge of God in Christ, and of his perfections, as displayed in his salvation; the knowledge of Christ, what he is in himself, what he has done for his people, and is unto them; and especially the knowledge of salvation by him; all which the Gospel is a means of.

Ver. 21. *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth, &c.]* Such are the doctrines of the Gospel; they are *the words of truth*; are written in the Scriptures of truth; come from the God of truth; the subject-matter of which is Christ, who is the truth, and which the spirit of truth leads into: there is a *certainty* in these; they are in the sure word of prophecy; are contained in the inspired and infallible word of God, and are no other than the Gospel of God; nothing is more sure than that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and truly and properly God; and that salvation is alone by him; and that whoever believes in him shall be saved; with many other things, which ministers of the word should affirm with boldness and assurance; and which others may come to a certain knowledge of, even to the riches of a full assurance of understanding; and which is the end of their being written in the word, and made known in the ministry of it. *That thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee; or, return⁵ them to those that send to know what are the words of truth; that inquire concerning them with meekness and fear, and to whom a reason of the hope is to be given; as such are capable of, who have had the certainty of these words made known unto them, or who have been assured of the truth of them: and so Jarchi interprets it, to them that ask of thee instruction; as if it was written, as Lyra says it should, לשאלך, to them that inquire of thee.* It may be rendered, *to them that send thee⁶*; to search for those things, and get the knowledge of them, in order to communicate them, which,

² בבתוך in ventre tuo, V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

³ חוץ dissonantur, Vatablus.

⁴ שלשה torn, Montanus, Vatablus, so Jarchi.

⁴ Τριπλις, Sept. tripliciter, V. L. and Arabic version; tribus vicibus,

Baynus, Targum and Syriac version; triplici filo nexa, Schultens; triplicata, Cocceius.

⁵ חזרתי

⁶ מיסרתך qui miserant te, V. L. mittentibus te, Fagnius, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Aben Ezra; missoribus tui, Schultens.

when obtained, may be done. Unless God, Father, Son, and Spirit, should be intended, who are concerned in the sending of ministers to preach the Gospel to men; to whom they are to return an account of the words of truth, and of their dispensation of them to the souls of men; which when faithfully done, and with success, they give up their account with joy, and not with grief.

Ver. 22. *Rob not the poor, because he is poor, &c.*] And cannot help himself; cannot go to law with him that has injured him, and defend his own cause; which the other knowing, is the more emboldened to spoil and defraud him, which is an aggravation of his sin: or, *for he is poor*^k; to rob any man is an evil and an injurious thing; but to rob the poor is cruel and barbarous; rather something should be given them, and not any thing taken from them: or, *though he is poor*^h; let not that be an inducement to injure him, but the contrary. *Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; or the poor*ⁱ; the same as before, only a different word used: when he comes into a court of judicature, which was usually held in the gates of a city, Ruth iv. 1, 2. and applies for redress of any grievance, do not crush him in the gate, or oppress him in judgment; nor wrest his cause, and do him wrong; but let him have justice done him, though poor. Some understand this of using the poor ill, when they come to their gates to beg; which sense is favoured by the Septuagint version; but the former is best. One might have expected, after such a preface or introduction as in the preceding verses, that something of more importance, something more spiritual and evangelical, would have followed: this shews the great regard the Lord has to the poor, and how much they are on his mind, and how near they lie to his heart; especially the poor of the flock, worried and spoiled by antichrist; see Zech. xi. 7, 11.

Ver. 23. *For the Lord will plead their cause, &c.*] If counsellors at the bar will not, he will; if judges on the bench will not do them justice, he will; he will judge the poor of the people; he will plead their cause, and plead it thoroughly, till he has brought forth judgment unto victory: woe to the man against whom Jehovah pleads; happy the poor on whose side he is; for their Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of hosts is his name, Psal. lxxii. 4. Jer. l. 34. *And spoil the soul of those that spoiled them;* they could only spoil the poor of their goods, but the Lord can and will spoil and destroy the souls of the spoilers in hell: or, *spoil them that spoiled their soul or life*^k; that is, who spoiled them of their goods, and took away that small pittance they had, which was their life or livelihood; they shall be spoiled themselves that spoil others; the same measure they have meted out shall be measured out to them again; God will destroy them that destroy the earth, even antichrist and his followers, the oppressors of Christ's poor on earth, Rev. xi. 18.

Ver. 24. *Make no friendship with an angry man, &c.*] Do not associate with him; contract not a familiarity with him; make him not a companion; take him not

into an intimacy, or use him as a particular friend and acquaintance: a man should be courteous, and carry it civilly to all men; but he should take care whom he admits as his bosom-friend; he should be cautious in his choice of a familiar friend, and not receive any; and, among the rest, avoid an angry and passionate man, one who is much given to passion himself, and stirs it up in others; for there can be no lasting peace and pleasure in such a man's company and conversation. *And with a furious man thou shalt not go;* not take a walk with him, much less a journey; or shalt not be frequently together. It may be rendered, *unto a man of wraths,* or of great wrath and fury, *thou shalt not come;* not enter into his house, nor seek his company, and court his conversation, which rather should be shunned.

Ver. 25. *Lest thou learn his ways, &c.*] And be as wrathful and furious, as quarrelsome and contentious, as he is. Evil works and ways are soon learned; men are more ready to imitate what is evil than what is good: Joseph learned to swear in Pharaoh's court; and the Israelites learned the works of the Heathen, among whom they were mingled; *evil communications corrupt good manners.* Many men, naturally mild and gentle, tender-hearted and compassionate, by being brought up among or conversing with bloodthirsty Papists, and imbibing their cruel notions and sentiments, have become fierce, and as furious persecutors of others. *And get a snare to thy soul;* be drawn into sin, by speaking passionate words, or doing rash actions, which will bring on punishment, either in this world, or in that to come, or in both; which may affect the soul or life here; the taking of it away, or the eternal damnation of the soul hereafter.

Ver. 26. *Be not thou one of them that strike hands, &c.*] Or among them^m, of the number of them, that do as they do, give their hand or their bond for others; be surety for them, as it is explained in the following clause; see ch. vi. 1. and xvii. 18. Or of them that are sureties for debts; contracted by others; that engage for the payment of them, in case the principal fails: and it is much if persons that keep indifferent company, angry and furious men, who are often in broils and quarrels, and spend their time and substance in strife and contention, are not drawn into engagements of this kind.

Ver. 27. *If thou hast nothing to pay, &c.*] When the debtor fails, and the creditor demands the debt of the surety: it is weakness in a man to be a surety for another, when he knows he is not able to pay the debt he is bound for, since it may be an injury to himself and family; but it is a piece of wickedness to engage for the payment of a debt, in case of insolvency, which he knows he is not able to answer; for this is deceiving and imposing upon the creditor; and therefore it is no wonder, being provoked by such ill usage, if he goes to extremity, as follows: *why should he take away thy bed from under thee?* as in all likelihood he will, being irritated by such a conduct; and as he might, notwithstanding the law in Exod. xxii. 26, 27. for that respects

^k כִּי לֹא יִשְׁעֶה נַפְשׁוֹ כִּי נַפְשׁוֹ נִשְׁעָה, so some in Mercerus.

^h Et si; so some in Mercerus; quamvis, Lutherus.

ⁱ אֲנִי יְהוָה, inopem, Schultens, so Cocceius; pauperem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^k וְיִמְצָא אֶת קִבְעֵיהֶם נַפְשׁוֹ & vim faciet illis, qui animæ eorum vim intulerunt, Munster, Vatablus; & spoliabit eos qui spoliavit ipsoe anima, Michaelis.

^m אֲנִי יְהוָה, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejrus, Michaelis.

a pledge, and not a debt; and raiment pledged, the covering of a man when in bed, and not the bed itself; for even wife and children might be taken for debt, 2 Kings iv. 1. Matt. viii. 25. This is said to deter from suretyship, especially in such circumstances; since a man may bring himself into such a condition as not to have a bed to lie on; yea, to have it taken from under him when upon it; and be turned out from house and home, naked and destitute.

Ver. 28. *Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.*] Or, *the ancient border or boundary*; by which lands, estates, and inheritances, were marked, bounded, and distinguished; set by ancestors in agreement with their neighbours; which to remove was contrary to a law, and a curse is denounced upon those that did it, Deut. xix. 14. and xxvii. 17. and was always reckoned a very heinous crime in early times; see the note on Job xxiv. 2. This was so sacred a thing among the Romans, that they had a deity which presided over those bounds, and had its name from them. Some apply this, in a political sense, to laws of long standing, and customs of long prescription; and others interpret it, in a theological sense, of doctrines and practices settled by the fathers of the church; which, if understood of Christ and his apostles only, will be allowed; but if of the ancient fathers of the church that followed them, it should not be received; since they were but fallible men, and guilty of many errors and mistakes, both in doctrine and practice.

Ver. 29. *Seekest thou a man diligent in his business?* &c.] In the business of his calling, be it what it will, whether for himself or his master; constant in it, swift, ready, and expeditious at it; who industriously pursues it, cheerfully attends it, makes quick dispatch of it; does it off of hand, at once, and is not slothful in it, nor weary of it; when you have observed and taken notice of such a man, which is not very common, you may, without a spirit of prophecy, foresee that such a man will rise in the world. *He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men, or obscure persons*;

he shall not continue in the service of ignoble persons, or keep company with them; but he shall be taken into the service of princes and noble men, and be admitted into their presence, and receive favours from them; as Joseph, who was industrious and diligent in his business in Potiphar's house, was in process of time advanced, and stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt, Gen. xxxix. 4. and xli. 46. This may be spiritually applied. Every good man has a work or business to do in a religious way; some in a higher sphere, as officers of churches, ministers and deacons; the work of the one lies in reading, study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and other duties of their office; and the business of the others in taking care of the poor, and the secular affairs of the churches; others in a lower way, and common to all Christians, which lies in the exercise of grace, and performance of all good works, relative to themselves, their families, and the church of God. Now ministers that are diligent in teaching and ruling; and deacons that do their office well; and private Christians, who are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; are ready to every good work, heartily engaged in it, and constantly at it; shall not be company for the sons of darkness, unregenerate men, who are in the dark, and darkness itself; what communion has light with darkness, with works of darkness, they should be not workers of? or have any fellowship with the prince of darkness, from whose power they are delivered; but shall have society with the saints, who are made kings and priests unto God; shall be admitted into the presence of the King of kings now, and have communion with him; and shall stand before him at the great day with confidence, and not be ashamed; shall stand at his right hand, and shall be for ever with him. So the Jews^p interpret this place, *he shall not stand before dark ones*, in hell; *he shall stand before kings*, in the garden of Eden, in paradise; that is, in heaven.

C H A P. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, &c.*] Either a supreme ruler, a king, or a subordinate ruler, a nobleman, a judge, a civil magistrate, a person of honour, dignity, and authority; and to sit at table with such is sometimes allowed, and is always reckoned an honour; this particularly diligent and industrious persons are admitted to, who not only are brought to stand before kings and great persons, but to sit at table with them, and eat food with them. And now the wise man advises such how to behave themselves when this is the case: *consider diligently what is before thee*; or, *considering consider*^q; take special notice of the food and drink set upon the table, and consider well which may be most proper

and safe to eat and drink of; for though a man may lawfully eat of whatsoever is set before him; every creature of God being good, if it be received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer; yet it is a piece of wisdom to make use of that which is most conducive to health, and less insuaring; and to observe moderation in all, and not indulge to gluttony and drunkenness: and he should consider also who is before him, which sense the words will bear; the ruler that has invited him, and sits at the table with him, and take care that he says or does nothing that may give him offence; and also the noble personages that are guests with him, and behave towards them suitably to their rank and dignity; observe

^q מִלֵּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ terminum antiquum, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

^r לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ ante obscuros, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; coram obscuris, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; in conspectu obscurorum, Schultens.

^p Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 2.

^q מִלֵּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ considerando considera, Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.

their words and conduct, and imitate the same; yea, even he should consider the servants and waiters that attend, lest, behaving in an indecent and disorderly manner, they should report it to his disadvantage to their ruler or others. But how much greater an honour is it to sit at table with the King of kings, and with his princes, and sup with him! when it becomes the saints, who have this honour, to consider what is set before them: the richest dainties, a feast of fat things, the body and blood of Christ, which should be spiritually discerned by faith; and not the elements of bread and wine only: likewise the persons before whom they are should be considered; Christ, who sits at his table, and the princes of his people with him; and therefore should not feed without fear, and in a disorderly and indecent manner, as the Corinthians are charged, but with all reverence and humility.

Ver. 2. *And put a knife to thy throat, &c.*] Refrain from too much talk at the table; give not too much loose to thy tongue, but bridle it, considering in whose presence thou art; do not use too much freedom, either with the ruler or fellow-guests; which, when persons have ate and drank well, they are too apt to do, and sometimes say things offensive to one or the other; it is good for a man to be upon his guard; see Eccl. v. 2. Or restrain thine appetite; deny thyself of some things agreeable, that would lead thee to what might be hurtful, at least if indulged to excess: put as it were a knife unto thine appetite, and mortify it; which is the same as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye, Matt. v. 29, 30. Or whilst thou art at such a table, at such a sumptuous entertainment, consider thyself as in danger, as if thou hadst a knife at thy throat; and shouldst thou be too free with the food or liquor, it would be as if were cutting thine own throat. *If thou be a man given to appetite*; there is then the more danger; and therefore such a person should be doubly on his guard, since he is in the way of temptation to that he is naturally inclined to. Or, *if thou art master of appetite*: so the Targum, “if thou art master of thy soul;” if thou hast power over it, and the command of it, and canst restrain it with ease; to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version: but the former sense is more agreeable to the Hebrew idiom.

Ver. 3. *Be not desirous of his dainties, &c.* His savoury food, which is very grateful to the taste, his rich provisions and royal dainties; do not lust after them, as the word ³ signifies, in an immoderate way, as the Israelites lusted after the flesh-pots in Egypt: these may be lawfully desired, but not sinfully lusted after; and in feeding on them nature may be satisfied, and not the sensual lusts gratified in such a manner they crave, which would be criminal. *For they are deceitful meat, or, bread of lies*: through the pleasant and agreeable taste of them, they lead on to luxury and excess before a man is aware, and so deceive him; they promise him a great deal of pleasure, but, being too much indulged to, they produce sickness and nauseaousness. Some

think they are called so, from the intention and issue of them; being designed to draw out secrets, which men are very apt to divulge, when they have ate and drank freely. Some apply this to false doctrines, which are framed sometimes in a very plausible manner, and deceive the simple; are bread of lies, lies in hypocrisy, and are very pernicious; such words eat, as do a canker, instead of yielding solid nourishment.

Ver. 4. *Labour not to be rich, &c.*] In an immoderate over-anxious way and manner, to a weariness, as the word ⁴ signifies, and even as to gape for breath; men ought to labour, that they may have wherewith to support themselves and families, and give to others; and, if they can, lay up for their children; but then persons should not toil and weary themselves to heap up riches when they know not who shall gather them; and much less make use of indirect and illicit methods to obtain them; resolving to be rich at any rate: rather men should labour for durable riches, lay up treasure in heaven, seek those things which are above, and labour to be accepted of God both here and hereafter; which only is in Christ. The Targum is, “do not draw nigh to a rich man;” and so the Syriac version; to which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions. *Cease from thine own wisdom*; worldly wisdom in getting riches, as if this was the highest point of wisdom; do not be always laying schemes, forming projects, inventing new things in order to get money; or do not depend upon thine own wisdom and understanding, and expect to be rich by means thereof; for bread is not always to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, Eccl. ix. 11. The Targum is, “but by those understanding depart from him;” the rich man; and to the same purpose the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version is, “do not lift up thine eyes to riches which thou canst not have;” riches no doubt are intended, and which may be said to be *not*; they are not the true riches, have only the shadow and appearance of riches; they are not lasting and durable; in a little time they will not be; they are perishing things, they have no substance or solidity in them; they are not satisfying; they do not make them happy; they are rather nonentities than realities; and therefore the eyes of the mind and the affections of the heart should not be set on them: it may be rendered, *wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not*? denoting the intensesness of the mind, and the eagerness of the affections, and with what rapidity and force they move towards them. The Targum is, “if thou fixest thine eyes on him, he shall not appear to thee;” meaning the rich man: and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Ben Melech makes mention of other senses very different; according to R. Judah, the word signifies darkness, *wilt thou make thine eyes dark*? according to others, it signifies light, *wilt thou make thine eyes to shine*? and, according to Jarchi, *wilt thou double, or shut thine eyes*?

¹ נפש בעל דומינא, Vatablus, Mercerus, Michacis.

² אל תתאו ne concupiscas, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; ne concupiscito, Piscator.

³ לחם כוביא panis mendaciorum, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; cibus mendaciorum, Piscator, Schultens.

⁴ אל תתגע ne fatiges, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius; ne lascias, Schultens.

⁵ חתך numquid involare facies, Michaelis; ut involent, Junius & Tremellius; ut volent, Piscator; an sines volare, Cocceius.

For riches certainly make themselves wings; or, it in making makes itself wings*; even that which is not, on which men cause their eyes to fly; no sooner are their eyes upon that, but that flies away from them like a bird with wings; see Hos. ix. 11. Either men are taken from that, or that from them, and sometimes very swiftly and suddenly. They fly away as an eagle towards heaven; the eagle flies very swiftly, none more swiftly; it flies towards heaven, out of sight, and out of reach, and out of call; so riches flee away to God, the original giver of them, from whence they came, and who is the sole disposer of them; they own him as the proprietor and distributor of them; and they flee to heaven as it were for fresh orders where they should be, and into whose hands they should come next; they flee away, so as not to be seen any more, and be recovered by those who have formerly enjoyed them.

Ver. 6. *Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, &c.*] A sordid covetous man, that grudges every bit that is eaten, in opposition to a man of a good eye, or a bountiful one, that is liberal and generous, ch. xxii. 9. if he invites to a meal, do not accept of it, sit not down at his table to eat with him: neither desire thou his dainty meats; or savoury food, so as to lust after it; see the note on ver. 3.

Ver. 7. *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he, &c.*] He is not the man his mouth speaks or declares him to be, but what his heart thinks; which is discovered by his looks and actions, and by which he is to be judged of, and not by his words. *Eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart is not with thee;* he bids you eat and drink, but he does not desire you should, at least but very sparingly; it is only a mere compliment, not a hearty welcome.

Ver. 8. *The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, &c.*] It shall turn in thy stomach, thou shalt not be able to keep it, when thou understandest thou art not welcome; or thou wilt wish thou hadst never eaten a bit, or that thou couldest vomit up what thou hast; so disagreeable is the thought of being unwelcome, or when this appears to be the case. *And lose thy sweet words;* expressed in thankfulness to the master of the feast, in praise of his food, in pleasantry with him, and the other guests at table; all which are repented of when a man finds he is not welcome.

Ver. 9. *Speak not in the ears of a fool, &c.*] For it is only beating the air, and speaking to the wind; it is casting pearls before swine, and that which is holy to dogs. By the fool is meant a wicked man, one abandoned to sin, and hardened in it; that scoffs at all admonitions and reproofs, that derides the word, and the preachers of it, and makes a mock at all good men, and every thing they say; and therefore what is serious and sacred should not be said to them, since it only becomes the object of their banter and ridicule. *For he will despise the wisdom of thy words;* not only the words of doctrine, reproof, and correction, but the wisdom of them; or let them be ever so wisely spoken; for if the wisdom of God and his words, the truths of the Gospel, are foolishness with such, and despised by

them, then much more the wisdom even of the best of men, and the wisest things they say; yea, when they deliver the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, the Gospel of Christ, which therefore should be spoken among them that are perfect, 1 Cor. i. 24, 25, and ii. 6, 7.

Ver. 10. *Remove not the old landmark, &c.*] See the note on ch. xxii. 28. *And enter not into the fields of the fatherless;* to carry off the increase of them, to reap their wheat, or mow their grass, or turn in cattle to eat it; or to encroach upon them, take in any part of them, or join the whole to their own; for if there is a woe to them that lay field to field, much more to them that enter into and take the fields of the fatherless, and join them to their own, Isa. v. 8.

Ver. 11. *For their Redeemer is mighty, &c.*] As he must needs be, since the Lord of hosts is his name; who sympathizes with them, has mercy on them, is their father, and their friend; see Jer. i. 34. Hos. xiv. 3. Psal. lxxviii. 5. *He shall plead their cause with thee; or against thee,* as the Vulgate Latin version; and will certainly carry it for them, and against thee; for, when he undertakes a cause, he pleads it thoroughly.

Ver. 12. *Apply thine heart unto instruction, &c.*] To the instruction of parents, and to the instruction of ministers of the word; to the Scriptures, which are profitable to instruction in righteousness; to the instruction of Wisdom, or to the Gospel of Christ, which instructs in things relating to him, and to salvation by him: or, *bring in thine heart to instruction*†; not only bring thy body to the place of instruction, the house of God, but bring thine heart thither also. *And thine ears to the words of knowledge;* the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the means of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of all divine, spiritual, and heavenly things; and of a growth in the knowledge of them; and therefore should be diligently hearkened and cordially attended to.

Ver. 13. *Withhold not correction from the child, &c.*] When he has committed a fault, and correction is necessary; for to spare it is the ruin of the child, and no proof of true affection in the parent, but the reverse; see ch. xiii. 24, and xix. 18. *For, if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die;* if he be beaten moderately, there is no danger of his dying under the rod, or with the stripes given him; besides, such moderate and proper corrections may be a means of preserving him from such crimes as would bring him to a shameful and untimely death, and so he shall not die such a death; and by such means, through the grace of God, he may escape the second, or eternal death.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt beat him with the rod, &c.*] Or, correct him with the stripes of the children of men, in a moderate and suitable manner, proportionable to the fault committed; and as he is able to bear it, both as to body and mind. *And shalt deliver his soul from hell;* be a means of preventing those sins which would bring to hell and destruction; and of bringing to repentance for those committed; and so of saving his soul, which should be the chief thing parents should have in view in chastising their children; the salvation of whose

* *קִישָׁה עֵשָׂה כִּי* quia faciendo faciet, Montanus, Baynus.

† *תְּבִיאה* adduc, Piscator; vel fac ingredi, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercurus; adduc & quasi præsens siste, Michaelis.

souls should be dear unto them, as it is to all truly gracious and thoughtful ones.

Ver. 15. *My son, if thine heart be wise, &c.* To that which is good; so as from it to understand in a spiritual and experimental manner things divine and heavenly; he may be said to have a wise heart who knows in some measure what his heart is, the wickedness, the original depravity and corruption, of it; the plague of his own heart; the weakness and inability of it to do that which is good; the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; the poverty of his spirit, and the folly of his mind: and who also is wise unto salvation; that knows the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and who applies to him for the same; builds on him, the foundation; prizes and values him; rejoices in him, and gives him the glory of his salvation; receives his doctrines, and obeys his commands; takes up and makes a profession of him on right principles, and walks wisely, becoming his character and profession. *My heart shall rejoice, even mine;* it shall certainly and greatly rejoice; these words are spoken either by Solomon, who had a wise heart himself, and that either to his son, for whom he desired the same, nothing being more rejoicing to pious parents than to see their children become wise, especially in spiritual things; or else to those that attended on him for instruction, who was a preacher in Jerusalem; and what is the joy and crown of rejoicing of ministers but their converts, and to see them walking in the truth? 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. 2 John 4. 3 John 4. or these words are spoken by Wisdom, that is, by Christ, to his children; who rejoices when he has found them, or when they are converted, and become wise in a spiritual sense, and walk worthy, whereby Wisdom is justified of her children, Luke xv. 5, 6. Matt. xi. 19. yea, there is joy in heaven, joy among the angels there, and even in the father of Christ, and of his people, Luke xv. 7, 10, 23, 24.

Ver. 16. *Yea, my reins shall rejoice, &c.* Which is only another phrase expressive of the same thing, and confirming the greatness of joy on the above occasion; not only his heart rejoiced, which was affectionately concerned for his son, near which he lay, the desires of which were frequently drawn out for his good, but his reins also; the seat of the affections rejoiced at it; shewing how vehement, sincere, and hearty the joy was. *When thy lips speak right things;* as they will, when the heart is wise; things agreeably to right reason, to the Scriptures of truth, the oracles of God; to the law and to the testimony; to the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it; and such things as are savoury, pleasant, and profitable, and minister grace to the hearers. The Targum is, "when my lips speak right things;" see ch. viii. 6.

Ver. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners, &c.* Their present prosperity and happiness, the pleasure, profit, and honour, they seem to enjoy; all which is but a shadow, fading and temporary; and yet good men are apt to envy it in their hearts, if they do not express it

with their lips; and are ready to murmur and think it hard that they should be in straitened circumstances whilst the wicked are in flourishing ones; and inwardly fret and are uneasy at it, which they should not, Psal. xxxvii. 1, 7. and lxxiii. 2. or do not *emulate* or *imitate* them, or do as they do, thinking thereby to enjoy the same prosperity and happiness; choose not their ways, nor desire to be with them, to have their company, or be ranked among them, ch. iii. 31. and xxiv. 1. *But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long;* let the fear of God be always before thine eyes and in thine heart; be continually in the exercise of fear, which is attended with faith and trust in the Lord; with love and affection to him, and joy and delight in him; be constantly employed in the duties of religion, private and public, which the fear of God includes; and this will be a preservative from envying, murmuring, and fretting at the outward happiness of wicked men; and from joining with them in their evil ways. *Aben Ezra, and who is followed by some others, render it, but emulate or imitate the men that fear the Lord all the day long;* be followers of them, and do as they do; let their constant piety and devotion stir up a holy emulation in thee to copy after them and exceed them; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 18. *For surely there is an end, &c.* Both of the prosperity of the wicked, which is but for a short time; and of the afflictions of the righteous, which are but as it were for a moment; and therefore there is no reason to envy the one, nor to be fretful under the other; the end to a good man will be peace and prosperity for ever: there is a *reward*^b, as some render it here, for the righteous, though not of debt, but of grace; upon which account they have ground to expect much here and hereafter. *And thine expectation shall not be cut off;* or *hope*^c; as an hypocrite's is; for the hope of a saint is well founded upon the person and righteousness of Christ, and is an anchor sure and steadfast; his expectation of grace, and every needful supply of it, whilst in this life, and of eternal glory and happiness in the world to come, shall not perish; but he shall enjoy what he is hoping, expecting, and waiting for.

Ver. 19. *Hear thou, my son, and be wise, &c.* Hear the instruction of a father, of the word of Wisdom, of the ministers of the Gospel, which is the way to be wise unto salvation; faith comes by hearing; spiritual wisdom, and an increase of it; the spirit of God, and his gifts and graces. *And guide thine heart in the way;* in the way of the Lord, in the way of wisdom and understanding, in the way of truth and faith, in the way of religious worship, in the way of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; in all which the heart should be guided and directed, or otherwise it will be of no avail.

Ver. 20. *Be not amongst winebibbers, &c.* Who drink to excess, otherwise wine may be drunk, provided moderation is used; but it is not good to be in company with excessive drinkers of it, lest a habit of excessive drinking should be acquired. *Among riotous*

^a יקנא אל נקמא, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

^b Emulare virum timentem, Jehovah, Vatablus.

^b מרחות merces, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ben Melech.

^c יקנא ספס תו, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

caters of flesh; flesh may be lawfully eaten, but not in a riotous manner, so as to indulge to gluttony and surfeiting; nor should such persons be kept company with that do so, lest their ways should be learned and imitated.

Ver. 21. *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, &c.*] They consuming their substance upon their bellies, in eating and drinking; see ch. xxi. 17. *And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*; excessive eating and drinking brings drowsiness on men, unfits them for business, and makes them idle and slothful; and spending all on their bellies, they have nothing for their backs, and are clothed in rags; see ch. xxiv. 33, 34.

Ver. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, &c.*] And who has a true and hearty affection for thee, and whatever he says is for thy good and welfare, which he studies and has at heart; and who therefore also has an authority over thee, and what he enjoins ought to be strictly regarded; and, having lived longer in the world, must be thought to have a larger experience and knowledge of things, and therefore should be hearkened unto. *And despise not thy mother when she is old*; despise not her counsels, instructions, and advice, though she is old; and because she is so, do not reject them as old wives' fables, or as the silly talk of an old woman, as young men are too apt to do.

Ver. 23. *Buy the truth, and sell it not, &c.*] Evangelical truth, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, which comes from the God of truth; has Christ, who is the truth, for the sum and substance of it; men are directed and led into it by the spirit of truth; the whole matter of it is truth; truth, in opposition to the law, that was typical and shadowy; to the errors of false teachers, to every thing that is fictitious, or another Gospel; and to that which is a lie, for no lie is of the truth: there are several particular doctrines of the Gospel which are so called; those which respect the knowledge of one God, and three Persons in the Godhead; the deity and sonship of Christ, his incarnation and Messiahship, salvation alone by him, a sinner's justification by his righteousness, and the resurrection of the dead; the whole of which is truth, and is an answer to Pilate's question, John xviii. 38. and this men should *buy*, not books only, as Aben Ezra interprets it, such as explain and confirm truth, though these should be bought; and especially the Bible, the Scriptures of truth; yet this does not reach the sense of the text: nor is it merely to be understood of persons supporting the Gospel ministry with their purses, by which means truth is preserved, propagated, and continued: no price is set upon it, as being above all; it should be bought or had at any rate, let the expense be what it will: *buying* it supposes a person to have some knowledge of it, of the excellency, usefulness, and importance of it; and shews that he sets a value upon it, and has a high esteem for it: it is to be understood of his using all means and taking great pains to acquire it; such as reading the word, meditating upon it, attending on the public ministry, and fervent and frequent prayer for it, and a greater degree of knowledge of it; yea, it signifies a person's parting with every

thing for it that is required; as with his former errors he has been brought up in, or has imbibed; with his good name and reputation, being willing to be accounted a fool or a madman, and an enthusiast, or any thing for the sake of it; and even with life itself, when called for; and such a man will strive and contend for it, stand fast in it, and hold it fast, and not let it go, which is meant by *selling* it; truth is not to be sold upon any account, or for any thing whatever; it is not to be slighted and neglected; it should not be parted with neither for the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this life, nor for the sake of a good name among men, nor for the sake of peace, nor for the avoiding of persecution; it should be abode by, and not departed from, though the greater number is against it, and they the rich, the wise, and learned; and though it may be traduced as novel, irrational, and licentious, and be attended with affliction. Also *wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*; that is, buy these also, and sell them not; *wisdom* is to be prized above every thing; it is the principal thing, and should be got; all means should be used to obtain it; it may be bought without money; it should be asked of God, who gives it liberally, and, being had, should be held fast: the *instruction* the Scriptures give, the instruction of the Gospel, the instruction of Wisdom, should be valued above gold and silver, and diligently sought after; should be laid fast hold on and not parted with: *understanding* of divine and spiritual things is to be gotten; happy is the man that gets it; and above all gettings this should be got, and all means made use of to improve and increase it. The Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, connect these with the word *sell* only, thus, *buy the truth, and sell not wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*; but as buying and selling both refer to truth, so likewise to these also. The whole verse is wanting in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Ver. 24. *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, &c.*] Or *in rejoicing shall rejoice*^d, in his son; not that he is rich, but righteous, truly righteous, internally and externally; having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and righteousness and true holiness wrought in him, and so lives soberly, righteously, and godly: this must be understood of a father who is himself righteous; for otherwise wicked men, if their sons do but thrive in the world, they are unconcerned about their character as righteous, or their state and condition Godward. *And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him*; especially if he is wise in the best things; if he is wise unto salvation; he may be wise and knowing in things natural, have a good share of wit and sense, and be wise in worldly things, which may yield a pleasure to a natural man his parent; but, if he is a good man, he will have greater joy of his son if he is wise in the first sense. The mother and grandmother of Timothy had no doubt great joy of him, who, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures; and so had the elect lady of her children, who were walking in the truth; and so has our heavenly Father of his children, who are righteous and wise through his grace.

Ver. 25. *Thy father and thy mother shall be glad,*

^d זָרָה זָרָה exultando exultabit, Pagnianus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; gaudendo gaudebit, Cocceius.

&c.] That, is when thou art righteous and wise; see ch. x. 1. or *let thy father and thy mother be glad*^c; do every thing that may make their hearts glad, and their lives easy and comfortable in their old age; by ministering to their necessities, if in any; by treading in their steps, and following their examples; by living soberly and righteously, and behaving wisely; by not only honouring them, but by seeking the honour and glory of God; shewing a regard to religion, and supporting it to the utmost of their power; these are things which make the hearts of pious parents glad. *And she that bare thee shall rejoice*; thy mother particularly, who bore and brought thee forth with so much pain, and brought thee up with so much care and trouble, will think it an over-recompense for all, if thou art truly wise and religious. Some accommodate this to God our heavenly Father, and to the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

Ver. 26. *My son, give me thine heart, &c.*] These words are not the words of Solomon to his son, for a greater than Solomon is here; besides, the claim and possession of the heart do not belong to a creature, but to God; but they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, to every one of his sons, the children the Father has given him in covenant; who are adopted through him, regenerated by his spirit and grace, begotten by his word and ministers as instruments, and born and brought up in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father. The heart of a wicked man is little worth, and not worth having; Satan has the possession of it, and fills it, and influences and draws it at his pleasure; the world is set in it, and there is no room for any other; sensual lusts and pleasures, whoredom, wine, and new wine, take away the heart, Hos. iv. 11. and it is to those this exhortation is opposed, as appears from the following verses; and the sense is, give not thine heart to women, nor to wine, but to me. Christ should have the hearts and affections of his people, and he only; he is to be loved with the whole heart, sincerely, and above all things else; and it is a good man's heart he desires; a broken and a contrite heart is not despised by him, he binds it up; a heart purified by faith in his blood, a new heart and a new spirit, in which his laws are put and written; a heart to know him, fear him, love him, and believe in him: and as he requires the heart in the exercise of every grace, as faith, fear, and love; so in the performance of every duty, which, without the heart, is of no avail; as in prayer, singing of praise, and hearing the word, and other religious services. And it is but reasonable service, that Christ should have the hearts of his children, since he stands in such near relations to them; as father, husband, friend, and brother; is all in all unto them; is so lovely a person himself, and has so loved them, and given himself, his life, his blood, his all, for them. *And let thine eyes observe my ways*; the ways which Wisdom, or Christ, took in eternity and time, in order to bring about the

salvation of his people; his steps in the covenant of grace, as their surety; his coming down from heaven to earth, to do the will of his father; his going away from hence, by submitting to the accursed death of the cross, thereby making peace and reconciliation for sin; his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to intercede for us; the various methods of his grace, in calling and visiting his people, supplying their wants, protecting their persons, and preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory: these should be observed, with attention and wonder, to the encouragement of faith, and for the magnifying of the riches of grace: also the ways which he prescribes and directs his children to walk in; as himself, who is the way to the Father, the way of life and salvation; the way of faith in him, the way of truth concerning him; the way of holiness and righteousness he leads in; the ways of his commandments; the ways in which he himself walked: all which should be observed by the enlightened eyes of the understanding, and be imitated, and copied after, and walked in; respect should be had unto them all; they should be observed and kept, as they are directed to, and in faith and love, without depending on them. Some render the words, *let thine eyes run through my ways*^f: take a thorough and exact view of them. There is a letter transposed in the word rendered *observe*, which occasions a different reading; as is a man's heart, so are his eyes; if his heart is to Christ, his eyes will be in his ways; and, where Christ's ways are not observed, the heart is not given to him.

Ver. 27. *For a whore is a deep ditch, &c.*] Or, *as a deep ditch*, so Aben Ezra, to which she may be compared for the filthiness of her whoredoms, and for her insatiable lust, as well as for her being never satisfied with what she receives from her lovers. Plautus compares ^g her to the sea, which devours whatever you give, and yet nothing appears; and another ^h calls a whore Charybdis, from her swallowing up and devouring all a man has. She is as a ditch that has no bottom, into which those that fall are ever sinking deeper and deeper, till they get into the bottomless pit; for there is seldom any recovery from this dreadful evil. *And a strange woman is a narrow pit; or well*ⁱ; into which when men fall, they bruise themselves in a terrible manner, by beating from side to side; and out of which they cannot extricate themselves; at least not easily, but with great difficulty, if ever. This may very well be applied to the whore of Rome, and the filthiness of her fornications; and the dreadful state of those who are drawn in to commit fornication with her.

Ver. 28. *She also lieth in wait as for a prey, &c.*] At the door of her house, in the corner of the streets, in the dark of the night; laying her snares, and spreading her nets, for unwary persons, to make a prey of their virtue and of their money. Or, *as a man of prey*^k; a thief and robber, so Gersona; thus she watches and takes all opportunities to seize on persons, and

^c שמח¹ gaudeat, V. L. letetur, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; fac ut letetur, Mercerus, Gejerus; exhilaretur, Schultens.

^f תרצה currant, Mercerus; currere edomentur, Schultens.

^g Truculentus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 16, 17. Luculentum coenum, Barchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 11. Lutea cretreix, Trucul. Act. 4. Sc. 4. v. 1.

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^h Sydonius Apollinar. l. 9. Ep. 6.

ⁱ בור¹ puteus, V. L. Fagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

^k כחתי² tanquam vir prædæ, Vatablus; ut prædator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; ut raptor, Cœceius; velut prædæ, Michaelis; ut harpago, Schultens.

rob them of their substance, health, and credit; or rather as a beast of prey; ravenous, devouring, and insatiable; so the Targum, "as a beast ravening, she lies "in wait with her eyes." And increaseth the transgressors among men; there is none that occasions more sin, or makes more sinners, than a whorish woman; swearing, lying, drunkenness, thieving, stealing, house-breaking, robbing on the highway, &c. are the sins she leads into. Or, increaseth treacherous¹ persons; to God, to their king, to their wives, to their masters; and all that they may consume, what they can get by perfidious practices, upon them, or, "perfidious persons among men, she adds to herself"; she gets a parcel of abandoned wretches about her, whom she employs as her panders for her lust, or as bullies to spoil her gallants of their substance, or murder them for the sake of it.

Ver. 29. *Who hath woe?* &c.] In this world and in the other, in body and soul; diseases of body, distress of mind, waste of substance, and all manner of evils and calamities; if any man has these, the drunkard has: from whoredom, the Holy Ghost proceeds to drunkenness, which generally go together; and dissuades from it, by observing the mischiefs that come by it. *Who hath sorrow?* through pains of body, with the head-ach, &c. or through the agonies of the mind, and tortures of conscience, for sin committed; or through poverty and want, so Aben Ezra derives the word from one that signifies poor; and so it may be rendered, *who hath poverty?* the drunkard; see ver. 21. *Who hath contentions?* quarrels and lawsuits, which often come of drunken bouts. *Who hath babbling?* or *loquacity*? which drunkards are subject to; much vain babbling, foolish talk, scurrilous language, scoffs, jeers, especially at religion and religious men; and sometimes such men are full of talk about religion itself, and make great pretensions to it, and the knowledge of it, in their cups, when out of them they think and talk nothing about it. *Who hath wounds without cause?* from words, oftentimes, drunkards go to blows upon the most frivolous accounts; fight with one another for no reason at all, and get themselves beaten and bruised for nothing. *Who hath redness of eyes?* the drunkard has, inflamed with wine or strong drink; which, drank frequently and to excess, is the cause of sore eyes, as well as of weakening the sight; or, however, leaves a redness there, and in other parts of the face, whereby those sons of Bacchus may be known: so it is observed² of Vitellius the emperor, that his face was commonly red through drunkenness. Hillerus renders it, *blackness of eyes*; such as comes from blows received; taking the word to be of the same signification with the Arabic word כרל, which so signifies: this agrees with the preceding clause; and is countenanced by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 30. *They that tarry long at the wine, &c.]* At drinking it. Do not care to stir from it when at it; spend whole days and nights in it, and are

overcome by it, and so bring upon them all the above evils. *They that go to seek mixed wine.* not wine mixed with water, as used commonly by temperate people in hot countries; but either mixed with spices, to make it more palatable, or with different sorts of wine, some very strong, and more heady and intoxicating; or mere wine is meant; wine poured out, as the word³ signifies, where there is plenty of it; and such as are given to wine go and seek out such places, and where the best is to be had. So the Targum, "they go and seek the house of mixture, or mixed wine;" or, as the Syriac version, "the house of feasting;" and so the Arabic: "where there is junketing and drinking bouts," as the Septuagint.

Ver. 31. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, &c.]* Or, because it is red⁴; or shews itself red. Which was the only wine used in the land of Canaan, or, however, the most esteemed of, and that most of all which had the best colour; when it had a good, bright, red colour, or sparkled, and looked bright and beautiful, so the word signifies; and then it should not be looked upon: not that it is unlawful to look upon the colour of wine, and thereby judge of its goodness; but it should not be looked upon with a greedy eye, so as vehemently to desire it, which will lead to an intemperate use of it; just as looking upon a woman, so as to lust after her, is forbidden, Matt. v. 28. *When it giveth his colour in the cup:* or, its eye in the cup⁵; such a bright, brisk, and beautiful colour, as is like a bright and sparkling eye. Here is a various reading; it is written in the text, *in the purse*⁶; it is read in the margin, *in the cup*; and Jarchi's note takes in both, "he that drinks wine sets his eye on the cup; and the vintner sets his on his purse." When it moveth itself aright: sparkles in the glass, or goes down the throat pleasantly; or rather looks well to the eye, and appears right and good, and promises a great deal of satisfaction and delight.

Ver. 32. *At the last it biteth like a serpent, &c.]* Though it goes down sweetly, yet it leaves a sting behind it, intemperately drank; a nausea in the stomach, a stink in the breath, pains and giddiness in the head, weakness in the eyes, trembling in the members of the body, palsy, gout, and other distempers, very painful and grievous to be bore; and, what is worse, if the conscience is awakened, sharp and cutting reflections there; and, without true repentance, torments intolerable in the world to come. *And stingeth like an adder;* or *spreads*⁷, or separates and scatters; that is, its poison. So the Vulgate Latin version, *diffuseth poisons as a basilisk*, or *cockatrice*: the Targum and Syriac version, "as a serpent which flies;" it signifies the same as before.

Ver. 33. *Thine eyes shall behold strange women, &c.]* Being inflamed with wine, shall look upon women, other men's wives, and lust after them; or harlots, whom seeking after or meeting with, when in their cups, are drawn into their embraces; excess of wine leads to whoredom. So Aben Ezra supplies the

¹ בונדיס perfidos, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.
² תוסיה adjunctique sibi, Tigurine version.
³ אבוי cui egestas, Montanus, Amama; cuinam penuria, Vatablus.
⁴ שית loquacitas, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; so the Targum.
⁵ Sueton. Vita ejus, c. 17.

⁶ ממשך calicibus epotandi, V. L.
⁷ quia, some in Mercerus, Gejerus.
⁸ עינו oculum suum, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
⁹ בנים in crumena, vel marsupio, Mercerus.
¹⁰ יפרש jecur diffindet, Schultens.
¹¹ Vins parant animos Veneri, Ovid, de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

word *women*, and Jarchi interprets it to this sense; but the Targum renders it, *strange things*; and so many others: a drunken man, through the fumes and vapours that ascend into his brain, fancies he sees strange sights; he sees things double; imagines that he sees trees walk, and many such-like absurd and monstrous things. *And thine heart shall utter perverse things*; or the mouth, from the abundance of the heart, and imagination of it, shall utter things contrary to sense and reason, contrary to truth and righteousness, contrary to chastity and good manners, contrary to their own honour and credit, contrary to God and men; the mouth then utters all that is in the heart, which it at other times conceals. It may have a particular respect to the unchaste, filthy, and obscene words, uttered to strange women, into whose company men fall when in liquor.

Ver. 34. *Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, &c.*] Not in the open sea, and the waves of it, there fluctuating and tossed about; nor in an island encompassed by sea; but in a ship at sea. a drunken man reels and tumbles about, just as a ship does at sea; hence the motions and agitations of it, and of the men in it, are compared to the reeling and staggering of a drunken man, Psal. cvii. 26, 27. *Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast*; where the motion is the greatest. Or all this may be expressive of the dangers which a drunkard is exposed unto, and of his stupidity and insensibility; for though he is in as great

danger as one in the circumstances described, in a storm at sea, yet is not sensible of it; which agrees with what follows.

Ver. 35. *They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick, &c.*] *Or grieved not*; or was not wounded or skin-broken?; see Jer. v. 3. The drunken man is here represented as saying, that though his companions, with whom he quarrelled and fought in his drunken frolics, beat him very much, yet he was not sensible of the pain and smart; and it had left no sickness nor disorder upon him; he did not find himself much the worse for it. *They have beaten me*; as with hammers?; battered and bruised him terribly, laying very hard and heavy strokes upon him; and *I felt it not*; or *knew it not*?; did not perceive it, was not sensible of it, when the blows were given, or who gave them; and thus feeling no more, and coming off so well, as he thinks, he is so far from being reclaimed from this vice, that he is more strengthened in it, and desirous of it. *When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again*; that is, the wine and his boon companions, though he has been so used. So the Vulgate Latin version, *when shall I awake, and again find wines?* being heavy with sleep through intemperance, and yet thirsty, is desirous of shaking off his sleep, that he may get to drinking again, and add *drunkenness to thirst*, Deut. xxix. 19. so the Septuagint version, “when will it be morning, that going I may seek with whom I may meet?”

C H A P. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *BE not thou envious against evil men, &c.*] Or, *men of evil*. Such who are addicted to evil, and given up to it, whose principles and practices are bad; such as are before described in the preceding chapter; gluttons and drunkards, men given to women and wine: envy not their present prosperity, or seeming pleasure they have in the gratification of their sensual appetites; since woe and sorrow, wounds and strife, now attend them, and poverty and want will follow them; as well as everlasting ruin and destruction will be their portion hereafter; see the note on ch. xxiii. 17. and compare with this ver. 21, 27, 29, 32. *Neither desire to be with them*; to be in their company; to have any conversation and fellowship with them, which is very infectious, dangerous, and pernicious; nor even to be in the same state, condition, and circumstances they are in; much less to do as they do, and imitate them in their sinful courses; as you would not choose to be with them in hell hereafter, do not desire to be with them here.

Ver. 2. *For their heart studieth destruction, &c.*] To others; to good men, that separate from them, and reprove them, or are in their way; or any ways hinder them in the prosecution of their wicked designs; as Haman's heart studied the destruction of the Jews: or their hearts study to draw men into their destructive methods of living, and therefore should be shunned

and avoided. Moreover, their hearts study destruction to themselves; they study what they shall eat and drink, which they pursue to intemperance; and how they shall compass their lewd designs, and which issue in their ruin; destruction and misery are in all the ways they devise and walk in. *And their lips talk of mischief*; which they study in their hearts against others; as are their hearts, so are their lips; out of the abundance of the wickedness of their hearts their mouths speak mischievous things; and which, though they design for others, oftentimes fall upon themselves.

Ver. 3. *Through wisdom is a house builded, &c.*] A family is built up, furnished and supplied with the necessaries and conveniences of life, and brought into flourishing and prosperous circumstances, by wise and prudent management, by diligence and industry, through the blessing of God upon them, without taking such methods as evil men do. The house of God, the church of the living God, is built by Wisdom, that is, by Christ; on a good foundation, a rock, upon himself, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; see ch. ix. 1. Every good man's house, himself, his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, are built on the same; and he is a wise man that builds his house through wisdom; that builds on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the one and only foundation which God

^a בל חליתי non dolui, Tigurine version, Michaelis.

^b Schultens Orig. Heb. l. 1. c. 9. s. 20.

^c חלתי contulerunt me, velut malleis, Michaelis, et Grotius.

^a בל ידעתי non cognovi, Pagninus, Montanus; non novi, Cocceius.

^b בראשי דעה viros mali, Berynus, Piscator, Michaelis.

has laid, which is Jesus Christ. *And by understanding it is established*; the prosperity of a man's family is continued and secured by his prudent conduct. The church of God is established by Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom; see ch. viii. 14. Psal. lxxxvii. 5. and every true believer is established in Christ, and in the faith of him; and that as he has more and more an understanding of him and of divine things.

Ver. 4. *And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*] That are both of worth, value, and usefulness, and for ornament and delight; the more private and retired parts of a man's dwelling-house, as well as his shops, warehouses, out-houses, and granaries, shall be filled with all kind of valuable substance, through his knowledge in improving trade or husbandry, in which he is concerned. This may be understood spiritually, of the fulness which the church has from Christ, and of those unsearchable riches of his she receives from him; and of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the chambers of the soul of a believer are filled with by him; and of all the riches put into them, which are both precious and pleasant; such as precious promises, pleasant doctrines, the valuable truths of the Gospel, and blessings of grace.

Ver. 5. *A wise man is strong, &c.*] He can do that sometimes by his wisdom, and which requires strength and courage too, which another cannot do by his strength; see ch. xxi. 22. Eccl. ix. 15, 16. This may be understood of one that is spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, wise for another world, is made to know true wisdom in the hidden part. The Stoic philosophers say much of their wise man; that he is happy, and rich, and mighty, and even a king; all which may be said more truly of a good man; he is strong, not absolutely, but comparatively, in comparison of what he himself was; and wicked men are without strength, and do not seek for any elsewhere; nor do they, nor can they do, that which is spiritually good, and are ignorant of their weakness: but so is not a wise man; he has some spiritual strength; he seeks to Christ for more, and, through Christ strengthening him, does all things; and is sensible of his own weakness, and finds that when he is weak he is strong: one eminently wise is strong, in comparison of less knowing and more feeble saints; some are children in knowledge, weak in faith and in conduct, more easily drawn into sin and temptation than others; and, in comparison of these, some are strong, who are to bear with and support the weak, and restore them. A wise man is strong, not in and of himself; he cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, nor preserve himself from sin and Satan; but he is strong in Christ, and in the power of his might, and in his grace; and, through spiritual strength communicated to him, his heart is strengthened, and the work of grace in his heart; he is strengthened to exercise grace more strongly, to perform the duties of religion, to bear the cross of Christ, to withstand temptations, and to oppose his own corruptions. It may be rendered, *a wise man is in strength*; he is in Christ the strong hold, whither, as a prisoner of hope, he has fled

and turned into; he is in the strong tower, into which he has run and is safe; he is surrounded with the might and power of God on all sides, by which he is kept. *Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength*; a spiritual man, a man endued with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; as he has a degree of spiritual strength, he increases therein; he grows stronger and stronger, he goes from strength to strength; the more he knows of Christ, the more strongly he trusts in him and loves him, and the more able he is to resist Satan's temptations; and is a better match for false teachers, who deceive the hearts of the simple: spiritual strength is increased by means of the word of God, by the promises of the Gospel, and by the ordinances of it.

Ver. 6. *For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war, &c.*] Counsel, as well as strength, is necessary for war: kings and states, before they enter on a war, should not only well consider the justness of their cause, but should consult whether they have a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and should concert the wisest methods to attack the enemy, or defend themselves; and, above all, should ask counsel of God; see 2 Kings xviii. 20. Luke xiv. 31, 32. And this is true of our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; which requires not only strength to wage war with them, but wise counsel, that we may be able to understand and guard against their cunning, wiles, and stratagems: and this is principally to be asked of God, who is wonderful in counsel; and of good and experienced men, skilled in those matters. *And in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*; to take the advice of wise counsellors, and many of them, even among men, is safe for princes and states, in the above case and in all others; and especially to ask and take counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally to them that ask it; and of Christ, the wonderful Counsellor; and from the Scriptures, whom David made his counsellors; and from old experienced Christians, and ministers of the word, with whom are wisdom, counsel, and understanding; see the note on ch. xi. 14.

Ver. 7. *Wisdom is too high for a fool, &c.*] It is out of his reach, he cannot attain it; natural wisdom, or the knowledge of many things in nature; at least it seems so to himself, and therefore will not take any pains, or make use of any means, to obtain it; as the knowledge of human laws; of medicine, of philosophy, of languages, or of any of the liberal arts and sciences; or he has not really a capacity for it. This is more especially true of spiritual wisdom, or of the knowledge of divine things in a spiritual way; or of the things of the spirit of God, which a natural man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned; it is God only makes men to know this kind of wisdom in the hidden part, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Psal. li. 6. for as a *fool* here denotes a wicked man, let his natural parts be what they will; so *wisdom* spiritual knowledge, and experience of divine things, which is too high for an unregenerate man to reach; see a like phrase in Psal. cxxxix. 6. *He openeth not his mouth in the gate*; he is not qualified for it; and if he has any knowledge of himself, he will not venture to speak in a public assembly, in the house of

* חזק in fortitudine, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; in robore, Michaelis.

parliament, in a court of judicature, or in the company of men of knowledge and sense; and indeed it is his highest wisdom to keep silence, and not betray his ignorance: and so with regard to spiritual things; a man that wisdom is too high for, and he has no share of it, shall not or ought not to open his mouth where Wisdom cries; even in the gates of the cities, or in the public assemblies of the saints, ch. i. 21. and viii. 3.

Ver. 8. *He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.*] To do evil is natural to men, all are prone to it; being conceived and born in sin, and, from the womb, more or less commit it: but for a man to sit down and contrive evil, as some men are inventors of evil things; contrive new sins, or at least new methods of sinning, such as new oaths, new games, new ways of tricking and deceiving men; and are always studying and devising ways and means of committing sin, and doing that which is evil in the sight of God and men. Such a man, with great propriety, may be called, and will be called by those that know him, a mischievous man, a very pernicious one, and to be shunned and avoided as such; men will reckon him and call him a *master* or *author* ^d of evil devices, as it may be rendered; a name agreeable to his character.

Ver. 9. *The thoughts of foolishness is sin, &c.*] The thought of sin is sin ^e, before it comes into action; the motions of sin in the mind, the workings of corrupt nature in the heart, the sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind: these are forbidden and condemned by the law of God as sin, which says, *Thou shalt not covet*, and stand in need of pardoning grace and mercy; see Rom. vii. 5, 7. Acts viii. 22. Or, *the thoughts of a foolish man are sin* ^f; that is, of a wicked man; in all whose thoughts God is not, but sin is; the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, and that continually; he thinks of nothing else but sin, Gen. vi. 5. *And the scorner is an abomination to men*; who not only thinks ill of divine things, and despises them in his heart, which is only known to God; but scoffs at them with his lips, makes a jest of all that is good, derides religion and religious men; and to such he is an abomination: and indeed one that is proud and haughty, scorner is his name, and that deals in proud wrath, and scorns all around him, in whatsoever company he comes, and that ridicules every person, and every thing that is said in conversation, is usually hated and abhorred by all sorts of men.

Ver. 10. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, &c.*] When under bodily afflictions, stripping providences, reduced to great straits and wants; or under the violent persecutions of men, which is sometimes the case of the people of God; whose times are in his hands, times of adversity, as well as prosperity; and which are appointed by him, when they shall come, and how long they shall last; which is but for a short time, it is but a *day*, and yet they are apt to *faint* under them, through the number and continuance of

their afflictions; and especially when they apprehend them to be in wrath; when they have a sense of their sins at such a time, and no view of pardon; when they are under the hidings of God's face, their prayers do not seem to be heard, and salvation and deliverance do not come so soon as they expected; which, notwithstanding, shews the truth of what is next observed. *Thy strength is small*; such who are truly gracious are not indeed at such times wholly without strength; they are in some measure helped to bear up; but yet their sinkings and faintings shew that they have but little strength; they have some faith that does not entirely fail, Christ praying for it; yet they are but of little faith; they have but a small degree of Christian fortitude and courage; there is a want of manliness in them; they act the part of children and babes in Christ; they do not quit themselves like men, and much less endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, as they should; they are, Ephraim-like, without a heart, a courageous one, Hos. vii. 11. Some think the words have reference to what goes before, and the sense to be this, *if thou art remiss* ^g; that is, if thou art careless and negligent in time of health and prosperity, in getting wisdom, as thinking it too high for thee, ver. 7. *in the day of adversity thy strength will be small*; thou wilt not have that to support thee which otherwise thou wouldest have had. Aben Ezra connects the sense with the following, *if thou art remiss*, in helping and delivering thy friend in affliction, ver. 11, 12. *in the day of adversity, or of straitness, thy strength shall be strait*; thou shalt be left in thy distress and difficulties, and have none to help thee.

Ver. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, &c.*] Or *taken for or unto death* ^h, in a violent way; who are taken by thieves and robbers, and used in a barbarous manner, as the man in the parable, whom the priest and Levite took no notice of, and was helped by the good Samaritan; or who are unjustly sentenced and appointed to death by the civil magistrate; if any know their innocence, it becomes them to do all they can to save their lives, by bearing a testimony for them; for a *true witness delivereth souls*, ch. xiv. 25. or by interceding for them, and giving counsel and advice concerning them, or by any lawful way they can; as Reuben delivered Joseph, Jonathan interceded for David, and Ahikam and Ebed-melech for Jeremiah. Life is valuable, and all means should be taken to save it, and to prevent the shedding of innocent blood; and a man should not forbear or spare any cost, or pains, or time, to such service: likewise such as are drawn into snares and temptations, into immorality or heresy, which tend to the ruin of the souls of men, and bring them to eternal death; all proper methods should be taken to restore such persons, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, which is saving souls from death, and covering a multitude of sins; see 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Jam. v. 19, 20. *And those that are ready to be slain*; or ⁱ *bending to*

^d בעל סומות patronum malorum cogitationum, Montanus; dominum, Mercerus, Gejerus; auctorem, Michaelis.

^e Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat illum, facti crimen habet, Jureanl. Statyr. 13. v. 209, 210.

^f אומלם stulti, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus.

^g התרפית si remiseris, Tigurine version; remissus fuisti, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; si remisse te geras, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; se Michaelis.

^h לקחים captos ad mortem, Montanus, Piscator, Schultens.

ⁱ להרג inclinantes ad necem, Mercerus; nutantes ad occisionem, Montanus, Cocceius; nutantes ad lanienam, Schultens.

slaughter; are within a little of being executed, or put to death, upon a false accusation; for about others that suffer righteously there need not be that concern here pressed, or whose works and ways incline to destruction and lead to it, of which they seem not very far off.

Ver. 12. *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, &c.*] The danger the person was in; or the innocency of his cause; or what method to take to deliver him; or that it was in our power to do any thing for him; so the Vulgate Latin version, *if thou sayest, strength is not sufficient: or we knew him not*^k, who he was or what he was; had no knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him, and so did not think ourselves under any obligation to regard his case; such excuses will not do. *Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?* he that searches the heart and tries it, and weighs every thought of it, and excuse it makes, considers and understands whether it is a mere excuse or no; though such excuses may appear plausible to men, yet to God that knows the heart they are of no avail; for he knows it to be a mere shift, and that it was unwillingness to help the distressed, and a neglect of their case; and that all that is said on their own behalf is a vain pretence. *And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?* he that upholds it in life, and whose visitation preserves it, and therefore should be careful of the life of another; and if not, may justly fear the Lord will withdraw his care and preservation of them; he knows perfectly well what regard a man has to the welfare of another, or to the preservation of another man's life when in danger; and whether what he says on his own behalf is well founded: or *he that obsereth thy soul*^l; all the inward motions of it, the thoughts, affections, purposes, and inclinations; he knows whether what is said is true or no. *And shall not he render to every man according to his works?* and behave towards him according to the law of retaliation; the same measure he measures to others, he will measure to him again; and who having shewn no mercy in saving the lives of others, when he could have done it, shall have judgment executed on him without mercy, when he is in distress.

Ver. 13. *My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, &c.*] It is good for food; there was plenty of it in Palestine, and it was eaten for food, not only by children, but grown persons; and was very nourishing, strengthening, and refreshing to them, as Samson, Jonathan, John Baptist, and others; and is good for medicine, is healthful and salutary, and useful in many diseases: it is said^m to conduce much to prolong life and preserve from diseases; it has been observed that those who have much used it have lived to a great age. *And the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste;* because it is so, as all honey is, and especially that which is immediately squeezed or drops from the honeycomb; this is said not so much on account of honey, and the eating of that, as for what follows concerning the knowledge of wisdom, which is com-

parable to it for pleasure and profit; see ch. xvi. 24. Psal. xix. 11. and cxix. 103ⁿ.

Ver. 14. *So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul, &c.*] Or let it be taken in as greedily and with as good an appetite; as pleasant, useful, delightful, and profitable; even the knowledge of Christ, the Wisdom of God, which is preferable to all things else, and more desirable than the most pleasant and profitable things in the world; and of the Gospel of Christ, the wisdom of God in a mystery, than which nothing is more sweet and comfortable to a truly gracious soul; it is like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his mouth as honey for sweetness. *When thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward;* for though there may be some difficulty and trouble to attain it, in the use of means, by reading, hearing, prayer, and meditation, yet, being enjoyed, it carries its own reward with it; a man is abundantly recompensed for all his pains in the pursuit of it, by the pleasure and profit it yields him now and hereafter; for it is the beginning of life eternal, and will issue in it, John xvii. 3. see ch. ii. 3—5. and iii.

13. *And thy expectation shall not be cut off; or hope*^o; as the hope of the hypocrite will, Job viii. 14. the hope of eternal life, as founded on Christ and his righteousness, where such that know Wisdom place their hope; and this hope will not make them ashamed; they will not be disappointed, their expectation shall not perish, they will have what they are waiting and hoping for, and what is promised unto them, see ch. xxiii. 18. and the note there. The Targum is, "which if thou findest, the last shall come better than the first, and thy hope shall not be consumed."

Ver. 15. *Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous, &c.*] The church of God, which is the righteous man's dwelling-place, and where he desires and delights to dwell; or his own dwelling-house; it may be rendered, *at the dwelling of the righteous*^p; lay not wait at his door to observe who goes in and out, and what is done there; and to watch for his halting, and take notice of his infirmities, slips, and falls, and improve them to his disadvantage; and so the Vulgate Latin version, *and lay not wait and seek ungodliness in the house of the righteous;* or lay not wait there for him, as Saul set men to watch the house of David to kill him, 1 Sam. xix. 11. or to take an opportunity and get into it and plunder it, as follows. *Spoil not his resting-place;* by pulling it down, or stripping it of its furniture; by robbing him of the substance in it, and thus disturbing his rest, and destroying the place of it; or the place where he lies down as a sheep in its fold, or as the shepherd in his cottage, of which the words in the text are used; and so denote that as the righteous man is like a sheep, harmless and innocent, those that lay in wait for him and spoil him are no other than wolves.

Ver. 16. *For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again, &c.*] This is to be understood of a truly just man; not of one that is only outwardly and seemingly so, or of temporary believers and nominal

^k לא ידענוהו, Sept. non noverimus istum, Gejerus; non novimus huic, Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.

^l וְיִשְׁמַר אֶתְּנִיפָה וְיִשְׁמַר אֶתְּנִיפָה וְיִשְׁמַר אֶתְּנִיפָה, & qui observat animam tuam, Michaelis, Schultens; observator animæ tuæ, Tigurine version, Gejerus.

^m Athenæi Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 7. p. 46, 47. ⁿ Plerius Valerian. spud Steeb. Cælam Sephiroth Heb. c. 7. s. 5. p. 132.

^o Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 30. p. 37.

^p וְיִשְׁמַר אֶתְּנִיפָה, Mercerus.

^q וְיִשְׁמַר אֶתְּנִיפָה, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; habitationi, Michaelis; mansioni, Cocceius, Schultens.

professors; but of such who are thoroughly convinced of their own unrighteousness, and believe in Christ for righteousness, and have it applied and imputed to them; as well as have principles of grace and righteousness implanted in them, and live righteously in this evil world; these often fall either into troubles or into sins, and indeed into both, and the one is the cause of the other; and both senses may be retained: the former seems more agreeable to the context, and runs thus, lay not wait to a just man's dwelling to do him any hurt; for though he should be insnared, and stumble, and fall into distress and calamity, yet he will rise again out of it, and so all attempts upon him are vain and fruitless; many are the righteous man's afflictions he falls into, but the Lord delivers out of all; he delivers him in six troubles, and even in seven, Psal. xxxiv. 19. Job v. 19. or in many, one after another; he rises out of them all; he comes out of great tribulations, and at last safely enters the kingdom of heaven; and therefore it is to no purpose to lie in wait for him; and this sense is strengthened by the words following, *rejoice not when thine enemy falleth*; but the latter sense of falling into sin has been anciently received, and not to be rejected; and which generally precedes and is the cause of falling into trouble. A just man, though he does not fall from his righteousness, which is an everlasting one, nor from the grace of God; yet he may fall into temptation, and by it he may fall into sin, as every just man does; for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, Eccl. vii. 20. and that frequently, even every day; and therefore stands every day in need of fresh application of pardoning grace, for which he is directed to pray daily; and he may be left to fall foully into very gross sins, as David, Peter, and others; but not totally and finally, so as to perish; being on the heart of God, in the hands of Christ, on him the foundation, united to him, and kept by the power of God, he shall and does rise again sooner or later; not by his own power and strength, but by the strength of the Lord; he rises by renewed repentance, and under the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy to heal his backslidings. *But the wicked shall fall into mischief; or evil*⁹; into the evil of sin, and there lie and wallow in it, as the swine in the mire, and never rise out of it; and into the evil of punishment, into hell itself, from whence there will be no deliverance; and oftentimes they fall into mischief in this world, into trouble and distress, into poverty and want, in which they live and die, and never recover out of it; to which agrees what follows.

Ver. 17. *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, &c.*] These words are spoken not to the wicked man, ver. 15. but to the just man, or Solomon's son, or the children of Wisdom; for by the *enemy* is meant such who are at enmity with the people of God, as the seed of the serpent, and those after the flesh, are: and when these fall, saints should not rejoice; as when they fall into sin; for so to do would be to act as wicked men who delight in sin, and take pleasure in them that do it; and is contrary to the grace of God, to that

charity which rejoiceth not in iniquity: or rather when they fall into calamity and distress; for this is also the part which wicked men act towards the people of God, and should not be imitated in; see Obad. 12. Mic. vii. 8. Rev. xi. 10. Joy may be expressed at the fall of the public enemies of God and his people, as was by the Israelites at the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, Exod. xv. 1. and as will be by the church at the destruction of antichrist, and which they are called upon to do, Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. 1, 2. partly on account of their own deliverance and safety, and chiefly because of the glory of God, and of his justice displayed therein; see Psal. lvi. 10. but as private revenge is not to be sought, nor acted, so joy at the calamity and ruin of a private enemy, or a man's own enemy, should not be expressed; but rather he is to be pitied and helped; see ch. xxv. 21, 22. for to love an enemy, and shew regard to him, is the doctrine both of the Old and of the New Testament. *And let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth*; even secret joy should not be indulged, gladness in the heart, though it does not appear in the countenance, and is not expressed in words; no, not at the least appearance of mischief, when he only stumbles and is ready to fall; and much less should there be exultation and rejoicings made in an open manner at the utter ruin of him.

Ver. 18. *Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, &c.*] Who sees all things, not only external actions, but the heart, and the inward motions of it; and though men may hide the pleasure they feel at the misery of an enemy from others, they cannot hide it from the Lord; nor is this said by way of doubt, but as a certain thing; and which the Lord not barely sees, but takes notice of, and to such a degree as to resent it, and shew his displeasure at it by taking the following step. *And he turn away his wrath from him*; remove the effects of it, raise him out of his fallen and distressed condition, and restore him to his former prosperous one; and not only so, but turn it upon thee, as Gersom supplies the words, and not amiss; so that there is a strange and sudden change of circumstances; thou that wert pleasing thyself with the distress of thine enemy art fallen into the same, and he is delivered out of it; which must be a double affliction to such a man; so that by rejoicing at an enemy, he is doing his enemy good and himself hurt; see ch. xvii. 5.

Ver. 19. *Fret not thyself because of evil men, &c.*] Because of their outward prosperity and worldly happiness, any more than rejoice at their adversity; neither do the one nor the other; where the one prevails, the other does also; by the frequent repetition of this advice, it looks as if this evil is what good men are prone to, and which was very common in Solomon's time, and in the time of his father David, from whom he seems to have borrowed these words, Psal. xxxvii. 1, 7. see ch. xxiii. 17. and xxiv. 1. *Neither be thou envious at the wicked*; though they may stand when thou fallest, or be in prosperity when thou art in adversity; the reasons follow.

Ver. 20. *For there shall be no reward to the evil man, &c.*] No reward of good things, such as is for the

⁹ בַּרְעָה in malum, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

righteous in a way of grace; but he shall have a reward of evil things, a just recompense of reward for his sins: or *no end*¹; there will be an end of his life in this world, and there will be an end of his prosperity; but, as the Targum is, there will be no *good end* to him; his end will not be like that of the perfect and upright man, for it will be cut off, Psal. xxxvii. 37, 38, or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the wicked have no hope of future things*: no good hope of everlasting happiness; they have their good things now, and their evil things hereafter; and therefore are not to be fretted at and envied. *Aben Ezra* interprets it, they shall have no offspring or issue, son or nephew; the word is sometimes used for posterity. *The candle of the wicked shall be put out*; meaning not the dim light of nature in them, nor the light of life before their time, so *Aben Ezra*; but their prosperity, riches, splendour, and glory, which candle is often put out while they live, and always at death; after which they have no more light, honour, and happiness; even not so much as the light of a candle, to which their prosperity in this life is compared, it being at best but small, and of a short continuance; see Job xviii. 5, 6, and xxi. 17. and therefore should not be the object of the envy of good men, who are in a more happy and stable condition than they.

Ver. 21. *My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king, &c.*] First the Lord, and then the king; and such as fear the Lord are generally loyal to their king; the fear of God includes love to him, reverence of him, faith in him, submission to him, and the whole worship of him, inward and outward, attended with holiness of life and conversation: and the king, who is under God, is to be feared also, with a fear suitable to him; he is to be loved and revered, to be trusted in and submitted to, in every thing consistent with the fear of God and obedience to him; in whatever is not contrary to his laws, commands, and ordinances; see 1 Pet. ii. 13—17. And *meddle not with them that are given to change*; in political things; that are for new laws, new forms of government, a new ministry, and a new king; never easy with the government under which they are, but are continually entering into plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, who, instead of fearing God and the king, change the laws and commandments of God and the king, and therefore to be shunned. Some render it, *with rebels*; the Targum and Syriac version, *with fools*; as all such persons are, and should be avoided as scandalous and dangerous: mix not with them, as the word¹ signifies; keep no company, and have no conversation with them, lest you be brought into danger and mischief by them. Or who are given to change in religious things; make innovations in doctrine and practice, always love to hear or say some new thing; turn with every wind, and shift as that does; are tossed about with every wind of doctrine, fickle and inconstant, carried about like meteors in the air, with *divers and strange doctrines*; such as disagree with the perfections of God, the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, the Scriptures of

truth, the analogy of faith, and form of sound words; and so the word here used signifies *divers*, and is so rendered Esth. iii. 8. and may design such who hold doctrines and give into practices divers and different from the faith once delivered to the saints, and from the institutions and appointments of Christ; innovations in doctrine and worship ought not to be admitted of; and such who are for introducing them should not be meddled or mixed with; they should not be countenanced and encouraged; they should not be attended upon or given heed unto; have no fellowship, and join not in communion with them. This is interpreted by some of such who repeat¹ their sins after repentance, or who return a second time to their wickedness after they have repented, as *Ben Melech* observes.

Ver. 22. *For their calamity shall rise suddenly, &c.*] And come upon those that fear not God, and rebel against the king and the state, and innovate in matters of religion; and especially that bring in damnable heresies, and, while they cry Peace, peace, and are pleasing themselves with their new schemes and prosperous success, swift and sudden destruction comes upon them, 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 3. *And who knoweth the ruin of them both?* of those that fear not the Lord, nor the king; or of those who are given to change, and innovate in things civil and religious; and of those who meddle with them and join themselves to them: the ruin of themselves and families, in a civil sense, is great and inexpressible, who rebel against their prince, and endeavour to change and subvert the present government; and the ruin of the souls of men, both of the deceivers and the deceived, is beyond all conception and expression.

Ver. 23. *These things also belong to the wise, &c.*] Both what is said before concerning fearing God and the king; these belong to the wise and unwise, rich and poor, great and small; particularly judges and civil magistrates, and all subordinate governors, who have, or ought to have, a competency of wisdom; these ought to fear God and the king, as well as private subjects; and also what follows after, especially in this and the three next verses. Some render the words, *these things also* are the sayings of *wise men*²; not of Solomon, but of other wise men in his time, or who lived after him, and before the men of Hezekiah copied out the proverbs in the following chapters; see ch. xxv. 1. but it seems more than probable that what follows to the end of the chapter are the words of Solomon, as the two last verses most clearly are, compared with ch. vi. 10, 11. It is *not good to have respect of persons in judgment*; in trying causes in a court of judicature, no regard should be had to the persons of men by the judge on the bench, as the rich more than to the poor; or to a relation, a friend, an intimate acquaintance, more than to a stranger; but the justice of the cause ought to be attended to, and sentence given according to it, let it fall as it will: God does not accept persons, nor regard the rich more than the poor; nor should they that stand in his stead, and who in some sense represent him, Lev. xix. 15.

¹ אחרית *fnis*, Pagninus, Vatablus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

² אל תחשב *ne miscas te*, Pagninus, Montanus; *ne commisceto te*, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Michaelis, Schultens.

¹ כעם שונים *cum iterantibus*, Pagninus, Montanus; *sub. iniquitates suas*, so some in Vatablus, Baynus.

² כל חכמים *hæc quoque sapientum sunt*, Tigurine version; *etiam hæc a sapientibus profecta sunt*, Piscator; *etiam hæc sapientum*, Cocceius, Schultens, so Grolius.

Deut. i. 17. Job xxxiv. 19. nor should Christians in their communities act such a partial part, Jam. ii. 1—3.

Ver. 24. *He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous, &c.*] Not in a private way, or as giving his opinion or character of a man that is wicked, whom either through ignorance or flattery another may call righteous; which may be done and not resented by people and nations; but in an open court of judicature pronounced by the judge, justifying the wicked for reward, and condemning the just, which is an abomination unto the Lord; see ch. xvii. 15. Isa. v. 23. nor should the ministers of the Gospel flatter the wicked, and call them righteous and good men, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, promising them life though they continue in their evil ways; for though God justifies the ungodly, man should not; nor does he justify them in, but from, their ungodliness; see Ezek. xiii. 23. *Him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him;* the people of the land shall curse him as an unjust judge, as a patron of wickedness and wicked men; as an enemy to justice, and a discourager of truth and honesty, and all good men; and even nations that have not so immediate a concern in the affair, yet hearing of it shall express their indignation at him and abhorrence of him.

Ver. 25. *But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, &c.*] That is, such that rebuke in the gate, or openly, in a court of judicature; that reprove delinquents, such as are found guilty of mal-practices, and punish them as they ought to be, according to the laws of God and man; they shall have delight in themselves, peace and pleasure in their own minds; or the people shall delight in them, and speak well of them, and think themselves happy under such a just administration; or the Lord shall delight in them, the beauty or sweetness of the Lord shall come unto them, as Ben Ezra explains it; the Lord shall be sweet and delightful to them, and they shall have pleasure in him. *And a good blessing shall come upon them* or a *blessing of good*; a blessing of good things, temporal and spiritual, here and hereafter; the blessing of a good God, and a blessing from him; and a blessing of good men, as opposed to the curse of the people in the preceding verse.

Ver. 26. *Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*] Either as a witness to a question put to him in court, to which he answers aright and uprightly; or rather as a judge, who, having heard a cause, answers and gives his opinion of it faithfully, and pronounces a righteous sentence; every one will love and respect him, and hearken to him and obey him; both affection and obedience are signified by a kiss; see Psal. ii. 12. Cant. viii. 1.

Ver. 27. *Prepare thy work without, &c.*] As Solomon did for the building of the temple; timber and stones were prepared, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building before brought thither, 1 Kings v. 18. and vi. 7. or diligently attend to thy business without doors, whatever it is, that thou mayest provide for

thyself and family the necessaries and conveniences of life, which are in the first place to be sought after. *And make it fit for thyself in the field;* let nothing be wanting in managing the affairs of husbandry, in tilling the land, in ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and gathering in the increase, that there may be a sufficiency for the support of the family. *And afterwards build thine house;* when, though the blessing of God upon thy diligence and industry, thou art become rich, or however hast such a competent substance as to be able to build a good house, and furnish it in a handsome manner, then do it; but first take care of the main point, that you have a sufficiency to finish it; see the advice of Christ, Luke xiv. 28, 29. necessaries are first to be sought after, before things ornamental and superfluous; first take care to live, and then, if you can, build a fine house. Jarchi interprets this of a man's first getting fields, vineyards, and cattle, something before-hand in the world, and then take a wife, when he is able to maintain her, whereby his house may be built up; see Ruth iv. 11.

Ver. 28. *Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause, &c.*] Unless forced unto it, except there is some urgent reason for it; not upon any trivial account, or in any frivolous matter; never appear forward and eager to bear witness against him, and, whenever obliged to it, be not a false witness, but speak truth, whether thy neighbour be a friend or a foe. *And deceive not with thy lips;* by bearing a false testimony, the judge, thy neighbour and thyself; for though men may be deceived, God cannot; or, shouldst thou do so, *thou wouldst break and cut him to pieces with thy lips*; which is the sense of the words according to R. Judah, as Ben Melech relates.

Ver. 29. *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me, &c.*] He has falsely accused and reproached me, and bore a false testimony, or suborned false witnesses against me, and I will do the same to him, now an opportunity serves; but as private revenge itself is sinful, so especially when it is pursued in a wicked way. *I will render to the man according to his work;* this should be left to the Lord, whose prerogative it is; see ver. 12. Rom. xii. 19.

Ver. 30. *I went by the field of the slothful, &c.*] This very probably was a real matter of fact; King Solomon's way lay at a certain time by the field of a slothful man, who never went into it himself, there being a lion in the way; and which he took no care of to manure and till, to plough and sow, but let it lie waste and uncultivated; an emblem of a carnal and worldly professor, and especially an unregenerate man, neglecting the affairs of his soul, his heart remaining like the fallow field unopened and unbroken, hard, obdurate, and impenitent; nothing sown in it, no seed of grace; nor has the seed of the word any place in it, but falling on it lies like seed by the way-side, caught up by every bird. *And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;* as the slothful man is, that takes no care to plant and dress it, that it may bring forth fruit to his own profit and advantage; and as every unre-

* ברכת טוב benedictio boni, PAVANUS, Mercerus, Cocceius, GERJERUS, Michaelis, Scaultens; benedictio cujusque boni, JUNIUS & TREMELIUS, Piscator.

* והפתית בשפתך & ne atters labiis tuis, Vatablus; & ne comminus cum labiis tuis, Syriac version.

generate man is, who is unconcerned about his soul, and the welfare of it; whatever understanding he may have of things natural and civil, he has no knowledge of spiritual things, of God in Christ, of himself, his state and condition; of Christ, and the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the heart; and of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and so has no regard to the vineyard of his soul, and the plantation and fruitfulness of it; see Cant. i. 6.

Ver. 31. *And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, &c.*] Or *thistles*; which grow up of themselves, are the fruit of the curse, and the effect of slothfulness. *And nettles had covered the face thereof*; so that nothing was to be seen but thorns and thistles, nettles and weeds; and such is the case of the souls of men when neglected, and no concern is had for them; so it is with carnal and worldly professors, who are overrun with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, comparable to thorns and nettles for their piercing and stinging nature, and the unfruitfulness and unprofitableness of them; such are the thorny-ground hearers, Matt. xiii. 22. and such is the case of all unregenerate persons, whose souls are like an uncultivated field, and a neglected vineyard; in which grow naturally the weeds of sin and corruption, comparable to thorns and nettles for their spontaneous production, for the number of them, for their unfruitfulness, and for the pain and distress they bring when conscience is awakened; and because as such ground that bears thorns and nettles is high to cursing, and its end to be burned, which is their case; see Heb. vi. 8. *And the stone wall thereof was broken down*; the fence about the fields, the wall about the vineyard, to keep out men and beasts; see Isa. v. 2. which through slothfulness, and want of repair and keeping up, fell to decay, Eccl. x. 18. and thus carnal professors and unregenerate men, having no guard upon themselves, are open and exposed to every sin, snare, and temptation; Satan has free egress and regress; the evil spirit can go out and come in when he pleases, and bring seven evil spirits more wicked than himself: indeed such is the evil heart of man that it needs no tempter; he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed; he is liable to every sin, and to fall into the utmost ruin; he has nothing to protect and defend him; not the spirit, nor grace, nor power of God.

Ver. 32. *Then I saw, and considered it well, &c.*] Or

when I saw, I considered it well; or *set my heart upon it*; when he saw as he passed along the field and the vineyard, he considered who was the owner and proprietor of them; what a sluggish and foolish man he was, and what a ruinous condition his field and vineyard were in. *I looked upon it, and received instruction*; looked at it again, and took a thorough view of it, and learned something from it; so great and wise a man as Solomon received instruction from the field and vineyard of the slothful and foolish man; he learned to be wiser, and to be more diligent in cultivating his own field, and dressing his own vineyard: so from the view and consideration of the slothfulness and folly of unregenerate man, and of the state and condition of his soul, many lessons of instruction may be learned; as that there is no free will and wisdom in men with respect to that which is good: the ruinous state and condition of men, as being all overspread with sin and corruption, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; and that there is nothing in them agreeable to God, but all the reverse; also the necessity of divine grace to put them into a good state, and make them fruitful; moreover, the distinguishing grace of God, which makes others to differ from them; and likewise it is teaching and instructive to good men to use more diligence themselves in things relating to their spiritual good, and to the glory of God.

Ver. 33. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, &c.*] The sight of the field and vineyard of the slothful put Solomon in mind of an observation he had made before, which fitly describes the disposition and gesture of the sluggard, by which means his field and vineyard came to ruin; whilst he should be up and tilling his field and planting his vineyard, he is in his bed; and awaking, instead of rising, craves for and indulges himself in another little doze, and which he repeats again and again. *A little folding of the hands to sleep*; which ought to have been employed another way; see the note on ch. vi. 10.

Ver. 34. *So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, &c.*] Swiftly and suddenly, both in a temporal and spiritual sense. *And thy want as an armed man*; irresistibly. Here ends according to some the second, according to others the third part of this book of Proverbs, another beginning with the following chapter.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *THESE* are also proverbs of Solomon, &c.] These that follow to the end of the book, as well as those which go before. Here begins a third, some say a fourth part of this book. The Targum and Syriac version read, "these are also the deep proverbs of Solomon;" and the Arabic version adds, "the ex-
"position of which is difficult." *Which the men of*

Hezekiah king of Judah copied out; out of the writings of Solomon; out of his three thousand proverbs, it may be; or out of the public records, which contained an account of his words and deeds. Who these men were is not certain; perhaps his ministers of state, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah; or the prophets of his time, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea: the Targum and Syriac version call

7 חמלענות chameleones, Junius & Tremellins; cardui, Piscator, Cocceius; carduis, Michaelis, Schultens.

2 ז אשית לבי quum ergo contemptus essem, adjuuxi animum meum, Mercurus; cum intuerer, apposui cor meum, Gejerus; cum igitur viderem ego, adponebam cor meum, Michaelis.

them his *friends*. Whoever they were, no doubt they were employed by Hezekiah; and which is recorded to his honour, that he was so careful to preserve such useful sayings, and annex them to those that were already collected and put together as above. This verse, it is likely, was wrote by one of the copiers. The proverbs begin in the next verse.

Ver. 2. It is the *glory of God to conceal a thing, &c.*] Secret things belong unto him, and they are kept so by him: many things which he does reveal, yet the modus or manner of them remains hidden; as what relates to his own being, and manner of subsisting; the trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the filiation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the like: the predestination of men to life and death, though that there is such a thing is certain, yet who they are is not known; the purposes and decrees of God, all that he determines to do, or shall be done, are known unto him from eternity; but then the times and seasons in which they will be accomplished are kept in his own power; the day and hour of the last judgment none knows but himself: his judgments, and ways in providence, are unsearchable and past finding out; there are many things in it unaccountable to men; nor does he give an account of them to the sons of men; these are at present secrets in his own breast, his judgments will be made manifest. Now it is his glory to conceal them; they are all known to him, and the reasons of them; he is the omniscient all-wise God, and stands in no need of the advice of creatures; nor are they taken into his privy council. Some apply this to his pardoning sin, which is sometimes expressed by *covering* it; and in which the glory of his grace and mercy is greatly displayed. Jarchi interprets it of the history of the work of creation, and Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, the understanding of which is very difficult; and which the Jews forbid the reading of, as also Solomon's Song, until men are come to ripeness of years. *But the honour of kings is to search out a matter*; to investigate every thing relating to civil government, and that may be of use to them in the exercise of it; particularly to search into the word of God, and observe the laws in it, and rule according to them; or make such laws as are agreeably to it, and execute them: and to inquire diligently into all causes that are brought before them, that they may find out the truth of things, and pass judgment accordingly; and be able to give reasons for what they do in the public affairs of government, and make it appear that they are according to the rules of truth and justice; and to do so will gain them immortal honour! see Job xxix. 16.

Ver. 3. *The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, &c.*] These are eminent for what are ascribed to them; nothing is higher than the heavens, nor any thing deeper than the earth; the height of the heavens cannot be reached, and the centre of the earth cannot easily be got unto; the heavens above cannot be measured, and the foundation of the earth cannot be searched beneath; at least not by common persons, whatever

may be done in their way by astronomers and geome-
tricians. And thus, as the heavens and the earth are
immeasurable, Jer. xxxi. 37. so *the heart of kings is un-
searchable*; especially such an one as Solomon was, who
had largeness of heart as the sand on the sea-shore:
and this must be understood of such who have the art
of governing; for some are so weak in their conduct,
and so much expose themselves, that it is easy to see
what is in their hearts, and what are the springs of
their actions. Wise princes lay their schemes deep,
and conceal their designs, and keep their reasons of
state secret, so that it is not an easy thing to penetrate
into their councils and views: for this does not so much
respect the multitude of business they have upon their
hearts and hands, as Jarchi and others understand it,
as the privacy and secrecy in which they are managed,
and the reasons of which are kept from common per-
sons, who therefore are not proper judges of them;
and who yet will often take upon them to censure and
condemn, when they are ignorant of the true cause of
such conduct.

Ver. 4. *Take away the dross from the silver, &c.*] By putting it into the furnace, and purging it from it: and *there shall come forth a vessel for the finer*; not, out of the furnace, a vessel formed and shaped, but pure silver shall come out of it for the finer; of which a vessel may be made, very honourable, beautiful, and fit for use: the application of it is in the following verse.

Ver. 5. *Take away the wicked from before the king, &c.*] Wicked ministers and counsellors; they are the *dross*, worthless and useless; yea, hurtful and pernicious. The king is the *finer*, for whom the vessel is; the kingdom is the silver vessel refined; and which becomes much the better, when wicked men are removed from the court and cabinet council of kings; as well as the king is the happier, and his throne more firm and secure, as follows: *and his throne shall be established in righteousness*; which he shall execute, wicked ministers being removed from him, who advised him to take unrighteous measures; and others being put in their room, who counsel him to do acts of justice; whereby his throne is secured, and he sits firm upon it, which before was tottering and shaking, and he in great danger of being removed from it.

Ver. 6. *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, &c.*] Intrude not thyself into his presence; or rush not into it in a rude and irreverent way; or be not ambitious to be a courtier: or *do not appear glorious*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or *honour thyself*, as the word signifies; do not appear too gay at court, or make too splendid an appearance, above thy fortune and station; and which may seem to vie with and outdo the king himself, which will not be well taken; princes love not to be equalled, and much less excelled. *And stand not in the place of great men*; where the king's family or his nobles should stand, his ministers and counsellors of state, and those that wait upon him.

Ver. 7. *For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come*

* אל תחזיר ne tibi assumas honorem, Cocceius; ne honores teip-

sum, Michaelis; ne magnificum te facias, Schultens; ne magnifices te, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

up hither, &c.] It is much more to thine honour and credit to seat thyself in a place rather beneath than above thee; which being observed by some of the officers at court, or by him whose business it is to look after such things, he will beckon or call to thee to come up to a higher and more honourable place: *than that thou shouldst be put lower, in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen;* than that thou shouldst be thrust away with a severe rebuke for thy boldness and arrogance, in approaching too near the king's person, and taking the place of some great man, which did not become thee, and be forced down to a lower place, to thy great mortification; and the more, as this will be in the presence of the prince thou hadst the curiosity of seeing, and the ambition of making thyself acceptable to, by a gay and splendid appearance; and now with great disgrace turned out of his presence, or at least driven to a great distance from him. Our Lord seems to refer to this passage, in Luke xiv. 8—10.

Ver. 8. *Go not forth hastily to strive, &c.]* To go to law with a neighbour; think well of it beforehand; consider the nature of the cause, whether right or wrong; or whether it is a matter of such moment as to go to law about; whether it will not be deemed a frivolous and vexatious suit; whether able to bear the expenses of it, and what may probably be the success of it. *Lest* thou know not *what to do in the end thereof;* for a livelihood, having spent all thy substance in the lawsuit, and so reduced to poverty as not to know how to live, or how and where to shew thy face, through the disgrace that shall fall upon thee by losing the cause. *When thy neighbour hath put thee to shame;* in open court, and proved himself to be in the right, and that thou art in the wrong; himself an honest man, and thee a litigious person.

Ver. 9. *Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, &c.]* Between thee and him alone; lay the matter before him, and hear what he has to say for himself, by which you will better judge of the nature of the cause; try to compromise things, and make up the difference between you, which is much better than to commence a lawsuit; at least such a step should be taken first; see Matt. v. 25. *And discover not a secret to another;* if the thing in controversy is a secret, do not acquaint another person with it; keep it among yourselves, if the affair can be made up without bringing it into a court of judicature; besides, by communicating it to others, you may have bad counsel given, and be led to take indirect methods: or, *the secret of another, or, another secret do not discover;* if you know any thing scandalous and reproachful of your neighbour and his family, you are contending with, which does not concern the cause in hand, do not divulge it, as persons from a spirit of revenge are apt to do, when they are quarrelling or litigating a point with each other.

Ver. 10. *Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame,*

&c.] Or, *reproach thee* with treachery and deceit. Either the person of whom it is told, or the person to whom it is told; who may make thee ashamed, either by fixing the odious character of a defamer, a whisperer, and backbiter, on thee; or by making a retaliation, and in his turn make known some secret things concerning thyself, which before were not known, and, now published, will be to thy disgrace. *And thine infamy turn not away;* it shall stick so close to thee, that thou shalt never get clear of it as long as thou livest, or ever retrieve thy credit; the brand of infamy shall ever be upon thee.

Ver. 11. *A word fitly spoken, &c.]* Or, *a word spoken on its wheels*^d: that proceeds aright, keeps due order, is well circumstanced as to matter, method, time, place, and persons; a discourse well put together, properly pronounced, roundly, easily, and fluently delivered to proper persons, and adapted to their circumstances; and *seasonably* spoken, as the Targum and many versions render it: is like *apples of gold in pictures of silver;* either like apples made of gold, and so valuable and precious; or as apples, called golden from their colour, as golden pippins, and golden rennets; or oranges, which are sometimes called golden apples: either of these in silver cases and enclosures, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the word, or in a silver cup, as the Syriac version, or in silver lattices, as Maimonides, through which they may be seen, look very pleasant and delightful. The words may design, as some think, silver baskets of net-work^e; into which golden apples or oranges being put, and placed on a table, look very beautiful; and to such a word fitly spoken is compared. This may be applied to the word of the Gospel, as spoken by Christ, the great Prophet of the church; who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls, Isa. l. 4. and by his ministers, who publish the Gospel, that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: this being the word of salvation, is fitly spoken to all sensible sinners, and must be exceeding agreeable to them; since it is of salvation from all sin, and for the chief of sinners, and entirely of free grace; includes all blessings in it, and is for ever; and since it is a proclamation of pardon of all sorts of sins and sinners, and of all their sins, and according to the riches of grace; and is also the word of reconciliation, and publishes peace to rebels, who could not make their own peace with God; and yet this is done by the blood of Christ, as the Gospel declares: and, seeing it is likewise the word of righteousness, which reveals the righteousness of Christ as justifying, when a man's own righteousness will not acquit him; and invites weary souls to Christ for rest, and therefore must be grateful to all such persons, and be esteemed as valuable as balls or apples of gold; and as pleasant and delightful to see and hear of as those set in silver baskets of net-work; and be as refreshing and comfortable, and as grateful to the taste, as real apples of the best kind; see Cant. ii. 2, 5. It may also be applied to the promises of grace, season-

^b אחרך סוד secretum alterius, Pagninus, Montanus; arcanum alterius, Tigurine version, Julius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens, so Cocceius, Gejerus; arcanum aliud, Munster; alienum, Syriac version.
^c יחסדן probis officiat te, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; favore afficiet te, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

^d אפני על super rotis suis, Montanus, Piscator, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; super rotationibus suis, Schultens.
^e במשניות in theis transparentibus, Montanus; cancellis, Bayuus; cancellaturis, sive reticulis, Glassius; in speciosis calicibus, Cocceius.

ably spoken, and suitably applied by the Spirit of God; who takes the promises which are in Christ, and shews and opens them to souls in distress, at the most proper and seasonable time; and which are exceeding great and precious, yield abundance of pleasure and delight, and are very comfortable. Yea, this may be applied to the words of good men, in private conversation, either by way of counsel, or comfort, or admonition; and to every word that is with grace, and ministers grace to the hearer, and is for the use of edifying, when time, place, persons, and circumstances, are observed. Maimonides^f thinks the external sense of the word is meant by the silver, and the internal sense by the gold; which latter is seen through, and is much better than the former.

Ver. 12. *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, &c.* As a golden ear-ring, when first put on, gives pain and uneasiness; but, being well hung and fixed, is very ornamental, being of fine gold, and especially when any jewels are upon it; which may be meant by the ornament, as the word is rendered, Cant. vii. 1. So is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear: such is the reproof of a wise man, which is seasonably given, in a fit and proper manner; and which appears to proceed from love, and is designed for good, and done in great affection and faithfulness: this, though it may be a little grating to the ear at first, yet, when well considered and received, instead of leaving any infamy or reproach on the person reproofed, it is an ornament to him, as well as reflects honour upon the reproofer. It may be rendered, so is he that reproveth a wise man, upon or with an obedient ear^g; a wise man that has an obedient or hearing ear, who is so wise as to attend to reproofs given him, and which he takes kindly, and receives profit and advantage from them; see ch. ix. 8. and xv. 31.

Ver. 13. *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, &c.* As water as cold as snow; or as a breeze of air, such as in a time of snow; and so Jarchi, “as the cold of the days of snow, which a man desires in summer, and not snow simply, for snow itself is not good in the time of harvest;” see ch. xxvi. 1. Or rather as a shield or covering of snow^h, as the word signifies: perhaps, as Gussetiusⁱ thinks, a vessel in such a form, in which snow was kept in summer, is meant; and the same word, the two first radical letters being doubled, is used for the pot, or urn, in which the manna was kept, Exod. xvi. 33. As snow, that in those hot countries used to be kept in vessels, in places underground, to cool their drink with in summer-time; just as ice is kept with us, in like places, for the same purpose; and then the sense is, as drink cooled with snow is very agreeable, and exceeding refreshing to those that labour in the field in the time of harvest; so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters: such an one that is sent with a message, and faithfully executes it, whilst he is gone, the mind of his master is very thoughtful about the issue and success of it; but when he returns and gives him an account of it, and especially when he

succeeds to his wish; it restores and settles his mind, as the word^k signifies; and gives him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, and renders the messenger dear and valuable to him. Christ is the messenger, one of a thousand, sent by his divine Father on a message of grace and salvation, in which he has succeeded, being faithful to him that appointed him; and so is exceeding acceptable to him, his servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighteth! Gospel ministers are messengers, and faithful ones, whose feet are beautiful, and their words acceptable to souls to whom they are sent, and are a sweet savour to him that sent them; and who will commend them as good and faithful servants, and appoint them rulers over many cities, and introduce them into his joy.

Ver. 14. *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, &c.* Of his charity and alms-deeds; bragging of great things he does this way, when he does nothing; or who is very vain in making large promises of what he will give, when he does not perform; either not having it in his heart, or in the power of his hands, to give what he promises; Satan-like, who offered to give all the kingdoms of this world to Christ, if he would worship him, when nothing of it belonged unto him, or was in his power to give: and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, a glorious man; that is, a vain-glorious man, and not fulfilling promises. It may very well be applied to false teachers, who boast of their gifts and spiritual knowledge, when they have none; speaking great swelling words of vanity, when they are empty of all that is good, and are as follow: like clouds and wind without rain; which make a show and appearance of rain, promise much, but produce none; see 2 Pet. ii. 17, 18. Jude 12.

Ver. 15. *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, &c.* To come into measures, and do that which his council and ministry advise him to, and to which he may seem at first very averse; but by a mild and gentle representation of things, by an humble submission of them to him, and by frequent remonstrances and patient waiting, his mind is softened, bent, and inclined to take their advice, and pursue the measures suggested to him; which, had they been pressed with heat, haughtiness, and haste, would have been rejected. And a soft tongue breaketh the bone; or hardness, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; soft words, or words delivered in soft language, remove hardness and roughness from the minds of men; and work upon, influence, and bend men, whose wills are obstinate and stubborn, and make them pliable and tractable: so David, with a soft tongue, wrought upon Saul, his enemy; and Abigail, by her soft language, turned the mind of David, who was bent upon the destruction of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. and xxv. 32. see ch. xv. 1. Jarchi interprets this soft tongue of prayer and supplication, by which severe things against sinners are removed from them; and so he understands the former clause of the forbearance of God, which gives encouragement to sinners, to persuade him in their favour by repentance and prayer; see Matt. xviii. 26, 27.

^f Praefat. Moreh Nevochim.

^g מוכיח חכם qui arguit sapientem, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^h כַּנֶּחֱם כַּנֶּחֱם שֶׁלֵּגַנּוּ sicut acutum ex nive, some in Gejerus, so Aben Ezra; sicut tectio nivis, Michaelis.

ⁱ Comment. Ebr. p. 718.

^k יָשׁוּבָה restitit, Junius & Tremellius, Picator; faciet requiescere, Pagninus, Baynus.

Ver. 16. *Hast thou found honey?* &c.] Of which there was great plenty in Judea; and was to be found in fields and woods, 1 Sam. 14. 25, 26. *Eat so much as is sufficient for thee*; to satisfy appetite, without overcharging the stomach; what may be conducive to health, and no more. *Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*; that is, overfilled; filled to a loathing of it, so as to cause a casting of it up. This is not merely to be understood in a literal sense; something more is intended, as in ch. xxiv. 13. and according to the sense there, that which Maimonides¹ gives of this seems agreeable; that it respects the getting of wisdom and knowledge, which, like honey, is sweet and desirable, and excellent, and nourishing, moderately used: but then persons should take care to keep within due bounds, and not seek to be over wise; or to exercise themselves in things too high for them, and aim at that which is above their capacity; but should content themselves with what is within their reach and compass: and so Gerson understands it. Some think that moderation in the use of worldly things and lawful pleasures is here recommended: and others that the words refer to what follow; that when a man has got a pleasant and delightful friend, he should not visit him too often; lest, too much familiarity bringing contempt, he should lose his friend: so Jarchi connects the words.

Ver. 17. *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house,* &c.] Not but that it is commendable to be neighbourly and friendly, or for one neighbour to visit another; but then it should not be very frequent; a man should not be always or often at his neighbour's house. So the words may be rendered, *make thy foot precious or rare at thy neighbour's house*²; be seldom there. *Lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee*; or, *lest he be sated with thee*³; filled with thy company to a loathing of it, as the stomach with eating too much honey, and so his friendship be turned into hatred.

Ver. 18. *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour,* &c.] In whose house he has often been, and whom he has frequently visited; and, observing what was done there, not only discovers and tells abroad the secrets of his family, but even things which are false; yea, in a court of judicature, appears a witness against him, and swears falsely to his hurt and prejudice. Such a man is *a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*; that is, to his neighbour, against whom he bears false witness; and, by so doing, he mauls his fame, his credit, character, and reputation; and, as with a sword, takes away his life; and against whom there is no more guarding than against a sharp arrow, that comes from afar, suddenly and swiftly.

Ver. 19. *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble,* &c.] It is not good to put confidence in any man, not in princes, nor in the best of men; much less in an unfaithful, prevaricating, and treacherous man; and especially in a time of distress and trouble, depend-

ing on his help and assistance, which is leaning on a broken reed, and trusting to a broken staff. Or, *the confidence of an unfaithful man in time of trouble*⁴; that which he puts confidence in; who trusts in his riches, or in his righteousness, or in his own heart, all which are vain and deceitful: is like *a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint*; which are so far from being of any use, the one in eating food, and the other in walking, that they are both an hinderance to those actions, and cause pain and uneasiness: or, *a bad tooth, so the Targum and Syriac version*; a rotten one.

Ver. 20. *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather,* &c.] Either takes it off of himself, or another person, when it would be rather more proper to put another garment on, and so is exposed to the injury of cold weather. And as *vinegar upon nitre*: nitre was found in Egypt, beyond Memphis, as Strabo says⁵; there were two mines of nitre, which produced much, and thence it was called the Nitrotic Nome: others say, nitre has its name from Nitria, a town in Egypt⁶, which gives name to the Nitrian desert, where there is a lake called Latron; from the bottom of which, that sort of nitre, called Natron, arises to the top, as is apprehended, and there, by the heat of the sun, condenses into this kind of substance⁷, which will ferment with an acid; and so vinegar poured upon it will irritate and disturb it, cause it to ferment, and make a noise and a hissing. This must be understood only of this sort of nitre, of the nitre of the ancients; not of the moderns, which is no other than saltpetre: for though this will ferment with vinegar, saltpetre will not⁸: nitre is dissolved by a liquid, but not any, only that which is cold, as Aristotle observes⁹, as is vinegar; and therefore, with great propriety, this is joined to what goes before. *So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart*; rather distresses and afflicts him the more; as he cannot sing himself, he cannot bear to hear others sing; such rather should be consoled and wept with than to have songs sung to them. Some understand the words in a sense the reverse; the word rendered *take them away*, in the first clause, has the signification of adorning with a garment; hence they render it, *as he that putteth on a garment*¹⁰ *for ornament in cold weather, and as vinegar to nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart*; that is, as an additional garment drives away cold, and vinegar dissolves nitre, so singing songs to a heavy-hearted man drives away sorrow; as in the case of Saul, such an effect had music on him, 1 Sam. xvi. 24. or rather, to put on a thin garment for ornament in cold weather is as absurd and unseasonable as to put vinegar to nitre, or to a wound, as Schultens, and to sing songs to a heavy heart; all absurd.

Ver. 21. *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat,* &c.] Which includes all manner of food; whatever persons may have in their houses, that they should bring out and feed the hungry with, even though an enemy. *And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink*;

¹ Moreh Nervochim, par. 1. c. 32. p. 41.

² מן ררררן פאן, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Cocceius; Heb. pretiosum fac, Piscator.

³ יבשך מן פן פורט סאקור תוי, Schultens; so Montanus; saturatus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

⁴ בורג מררררן פורט סאקור תוי, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; fiducia pravaricatoris, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; fiducia peritidi, Cocceius, Michaelis.

⁵ Geograph. l. 17. p. 552.

⁶ Isidor. Origin. l. 16. c. 2.

⁷ Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 530.

⁸ Ibid. p. 532. Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 1009, 1010

⁹ Meteorolog. l. 4. c. 6.

¹⁰ מרררן פורט סאקור תוי, Gusssetius, p. 480; ornata veste instruens, Schultens.

which was what was usually and in common drank in those countries. These two, bread and water, take in all the necessities of life; and giving them is expressive of all acts of beneficence and humanity to be performed to enemies; see 2 Kings vi. 20. or *drink to him*, so Pagninus and Montanus; which is still more expressive of respect and kindness.

Ver. 22. *For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, &c.*] Not to increase his punishment and damnation, the more aggravated by kindness shewn him; but to bring him by such means to a sense of former injuries, and to shame for them, repentance of them, and love of the person injured, and carefulness for the future of doing him any further wrong. *And the Lord shall reward thee*; with good things, for all the good done to thine enemy, whether it has the desired effect on him or not; or whether he rewards thee or no; see Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Ver. 23. *The north wind driveth away rain, &c.*] So the geographer^w says, the swift north wind drives away the moist clouds; which usually come from the opposite quarter, the south. The word used has the signification of conceiving, and begetting, and bringing forth; hence some^x render it to a different sense, and so the Targum, “the north wind bringeth forth rain;” and in this sense Gersom interprets it, and says, “the north wind produceth rain in Jerusalem, because it brings there the vapours that ascend from the sea, which lies north unto it;” and the philosopher^y says, that in the northern parts of the world the south wind produces rain; and in the southern parts the north wind produces it, as in Judea. But in Job xxxvii. 22, *fair, fine, golden, serene weather*, is said to come out of the north; agreeably to which, the north wind is by Homer^z called *αἰθρῶγενος*, the producer of serene weather; and by Virgil^a *clarus aquilo*, i. e. what makes serene. The Arabic version reads it, *the south wind*; and that does bring rain, and, as that version has it, excites the clouds. But the first reading and sense of the words seem best^b, and agree with what follows: *so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue*; drives it away, discourages and silences it. When a man puts on a stern countenance, a frowning and angry look, on such who bring him slanderous reports and idle tales of their neighbours, and reproach and backbite them, it checks them, and puts a stop to their practices; whereas listening to them, and especially with an air of pleasure, encourages them in them; were there not so many that take pleasure in hearing those talebearers and backbiters, were they more roughly dealt with, as the blustering north wind does with the rain, there would not be so much of this evil practised.

Ver. 24. *It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, &c.*] The same is observed in ch. xxi. 9. see the note there.

Ver. 25. *As cold waters to a thirsty soul, &c.*] Water is naturally cold; and is by classic writers expressed

by *cold* itself^c, and is very refreshing to one athirst through heat: or, *to a weary soul*^d; to one wearied with labour; or to a traveller weary with travelling, especially in hot countries, as in the deserts of Arabia, or in places where it is rare to meet with a brook, stream, or fountain of water; which, when he does, it is exceeding pleasant and agreeable to him. *So is good news from a far country*; so acceptable is it to, hear from a friend in a distant part of the world, and particularly to hear good news of him. Such is the Gospel; it is *good news*, and glad tidings of good things; it brings the good news of the grace, and favour, and good will of God to men; of his appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; of the incarnation of Christ; of salvation being wrought out by him for the chief of sinners, which is free, full, and for ever; and of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him. And this comes *from a far country*; from heaven, the better country than Canaan, which was a type of it, or any country in this world, and which is afar from hence; the Gospel comes from God in heaven, and it is a report concerning that; it is good news to saints, of an estate they have there, an inheritance, a house, a city and kingdom prepared for them there: this news is brought by the prophets of the Old Testament, who diligently inquired of salvation by Christ; by the angels at Christ's incarnation; by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; by Christ himself, who was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek; and by his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the word: and the message they bring is good news; not to carnal and self-righteous persons, but to sensible sinners; and to them it is as cold waters to a weary or thirsty soul; it assuages the heat of the law, and the wrath that works in the conscience; it quenches the thirst of carnal things, and after a man's own righteousness; it revives and refreshes his weary drooping spirits, and fills him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; as Jacob's spirits were revived on hearing the good news of Joseph, Gen. xlv. 26—28.

Ver. 26. *A righteous man falling down before the wicked, &c.*] Either falling into calamity and distress by means of the wicked man, through his malice and cunning, and which he seeing, rejoices at; or crouching unto him, bowing before him, yielding to him, not daring to oppose or reprove him; or falling into sin in his presence, which he ever after reproaches him for, and openly exposes him, so that his usefulness is lost; and especially if he joins with the wicked man in his course of living; and particularly if a civil magistrate, and acts unrighteously in his office: he is as *a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring*; like a spring or fountain bemudded with the feet of men or beasts; so that he who was before as a clear spring of flowing water, a fountain of justice to his neighbours, from whom good doctrine and wholesome advice flowed, is now of no use by instruction or example, but the contrary.

Ver. 27. *It is not good to eat much honey, &c.*] That

^w Dionysii Perieg. v. 522.

^x מַלְאִכִּים parturiet, Montanus; gignit, Junius & Tremellius; parturit, Schultens.

^y Aristot. Metaphysic. l. 2.

^z Iliad. 19. v. 358. Odys. 5. v. 295.

^a Georgic. l. 1. prope finem.

^b Ventorum frigidissimi quos a septentrione diximus spirare, & reliquos compescunt, & nubes abigunt, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 47.

^c Perfundit gelida, Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 7. v. 91.

^d יַסָּסָה lassā, Montanus; Iasso, Tigurine version, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

cursed? yea, such shall be cursed themselves; see Psal. cix. 17.

Ver. 3. *A whip for the horse, &c.*] One that is dull of going, or refractory and wants breaking. *A bridle for the ass*: not to curb and restrain it from going too fast, asses being generally dull; but to direct its way and turn it when necessary, it being stiff-necked and obstinate; though the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it a *spear* or *goad*, something to prick with, and excite it to motion; and so the Targum; or otherwise one would have thought the whip was fitter for the ass and the bridle for the horse. *And a rod for the fool's back*; suggesting that the fool, or wicked man, is like the horse or the mule; though not without understanding of things natural, yet of things divine and moral; and as stupid as the ass, however wise he may conceit himself to be, being born like a wild ass's colt; and instead of honour being given him, stripes should be laid upon him; he should be reprov'd sharply, and corrected for his wickedness, especially the causeless curser, ch. xix. 29.

Ver. 4. *Answer not a fool according to his folly, &c.*] Sometimes a fool, or wicked man, is not to be answered at all; as the ministers of Hezekiah answered not a word to Rabshakeh; nor Jeremiah the prophet to Hananiah; nor Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees; and when an answer is returned, it should not be in his foolish way and manner, rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing, in the same virulent, lying, calumniating, and reproachful language. *Lest thou also be like unto him*; lest thou also, who art a man of understanding and sense, and hast passed for one among men, come under the same imputation, and be reckoned a fool like him.

Ver. 5. *Answer a fool according to his folly, &c.*] The Targum is, "but speak with a fool in thy wisdom;" and the Syriac version, "yea, speak with a fool according to thy wisdom;" which would at once remove the seeming contradiction in these words to the former, but then they are not a true version; indeed it is right, and must be the sense, that when a fool is answered, as it is sometimes necessary he should; that it be done in wisdom, and so as to expose his folly; he is to be answered and not answered according to different times, places, and circumstances, and manner of answering; he is to be answered when there is any hope of doing him good, or of doing good to others; or of preventing ill impressions being made upon others by what he has said; when the glory of God, the good of the church, and the cause of truth, require it; and when he would otherwise glory and triumph, as if his words or works were unanswerable, as follow. *Lest he be wise in his own conceit*; which fools are apt to be, and the rather when no answer is given them; imagining it arises from the strength of their arguments, and their nervous way of reasoning, when it is rather from a neglect and contempt of them.

Ver. 6. *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, &c.*] Who knows not how to deliver it in a proper manner, and is incapable of taking the answer,

and reporting it as he should; or unfaithful in it, and brings a bad or false report, as the spies did upon the good land. *Cutteth off the feet*; he may as well cut off his feet before he sends him, or send a man without feet, as such an one; for prudence, diligence, and faithfulness in doing a message, and bringing back the answer, are as necessary to a messenger as his feet are. *And drinketh damage*; to himself; his message not being rightly performed, and business not done well; which is a loss to the sender, as well as to his credit and reputation with the person to whom he sends him; he hereby concluding that he must be a man of no great judgment and sense to send such a fool on his errand. Such are the unskilful ambassadors of princes; and such are unfaithful ministers, the messengers of the churches; see ch. x. 26. The words in the original are three sentences, without a copulative, and stand in this order, he *that cutteth off feet*; he *that drinketh damage*; he *that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool*: that is, they are alike.

Ver. 7. *The legs of the lame are not equal, &c.*] Or as the *lifting up the legs by one that is lame*^m, to dance to a pipe or violin, is very unseemly, and does but the more expose his infirmity, and can give no pleasure to others, but causes derision and contempt. So is a *parable in the mouth of fools*; an apophthegm, or sententious expression of his own, which he delivers out as a wise saying, but is lame and halts; it is not consistent with itself, but like the legs of a lame man, one higher than the other: or one of the proverbs of this book, or rather any passage of Scripture, in the mouth of a wicked man; or any religious discourse of his is very unsuitable, since his life and conversation do not agree with it; it is as disagreeable to hear such a man talk of religious affairs as it is to see a lame man dance; or whose legs imitate buckets at a well, where one goes up and another down, as Gusestiusⁿ interprets the word.

Ver. 8. *As he that bineth a stone in a sling, &c.*] That so fastens it to it that it cannot be slung out of it, it becomes useless and does not answer the end for which it is put there; or that places it there that it may be cast out, and is cast out, and so is thrown away, and of no more use; or that puts a precious stone, so some interpret it, in a heap of common stones, even in such a heap as is used at the stoning of malefactors; or increases the heap of stones on such, which the more exposes them, and the greater reproach they are loaded with; so the more a fool is praised, it does but bring to mind his folly, and issues in his greater disgrace, so Gusestius^o: or rather it has respect to a precious stone put in such a heap of stones, as Luther; or else, according to Schultens, to such an one put into a heap of sepulchral stones; or, as Aben Ezra, that binds up a stone, a common stone, in purple, which to do is ridiculous, so R. Joseph Kimchi; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "as he that casts a stone to Mercury's heap;" a Heathen deity, called by the eastern people Mertholin and Margenah^p, which last is near the same with the Hebrew word here

^m crura ex claudio, Schultens; instar binarum sitularum in puteo alternatim ascendentium ac descendentium, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ⁿ Femora claudi imitantur situlas, Gusestius, p. 188; situlas agunt

crura ex claudio, Schultens; instar binarum sitularum in puteo alternatim ascendentium ac descendentium, Gejerus.

^o Ehr. Comment. p. 777.

^p D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 7. p. 58.

used; whose statue was set up where two or more ways met, to direct travellers; and who therefore out of respect to the deity, and to shew gratitude to him, used to cast a stone to the heap for the support of it; and which stones, set up in such doubtful places, were dedicated to him, and were called after his name⁹; and not only travellers did this in honour of the deity, and to make his statue more manifest¹, but also for profit, to clear the way from stones; and this custom obtained with the Indians, Arabs, Saracens, and now does with the Mahometans²: and such heaps of stones were also placed in cities, and at the doors of houses, in honour of Mercury, and were called from him *Hermæ*³; these stones were also erected for borders of countries⁴. But it is not probable that this custom obtained in Solomon's time; and yet some Jewish writers interpret it to this sense, as if he that gives honour to a fool is like him that casts a stone to Mercury; and Jarchi in the text observes it as the sense of some of their Rabbins, "that he that teacheth the law to a "disciple that is not fit, is as he that casts a stone to "Mercury;" and to cast a stone to Mercury is with them the same as to commit idolatry⁵; but either of the former senses is best. *So is he that giveth honour to a fool*; it is all thrown away and lost, as a stone out of a sling; or as unseemly as to put a precious stone among a heap of stones, or a common stone in purple; see the note on ver. 1.

Ver. 9. *As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, &c.*] And he perceives it not; or being in his hand he makes an ill use of it, and hurts himself and others with it. *So is he that giveth honour to a fool*, a proverbial sentence respecting religious matters; or a passage of holy Scripture which either he understands not, and has no spiritual perception of, any more than the drunkard has of the thorn in his hand; or which being used as a pun, or by way of jest, as it is the manner of some to pun upon or jest with the Scripture, hurts himself and others, wounds his own conscience, and ruins the souls of others; for it is dangerous meddling with edge-tools, and hard to kick against the pricks; so to do is like a drunken man's handling thorns, which he does without judgment, and to his own prejudice and others. Gussetius⁶ understands this of a fish-hook coming up into the hand of a drunkard empty, without taking any thing by it, and so alike useless is what is said by a fool.

Ver. 10. *The great God, that formed all things, &c.*] That made the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that are in them; who is great in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands, and greatly to be praised. *Both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors*; according to their works; every transgression of the law receiving its just recompense of reward, whether a man transgresses it ignorantly or wilfully; as his transgressions are, whether through error or presumption, so shall his punishment be;

though some understand this, as Kimchi, of the Lord's doing good in a providential way, to the wise and unwise, the righteous and the wicked: the words are by some rendered to another sense, *a great one grieveth all, and he hireth the fool, and he hireth the transgressors*⁷; that is, a great man, a tyrannical prince, grieves all his good subjects; or, as Hottinger⁸, from the use of the word in the Arabic tongue, changes all things, inverts their order, or administers all at his will, that is, wrongly; when he hires fools and wicked men to do those bad things for him which others would not, to the great detriment of the commonwealth; and rewards them for it, putting them into posts of honour and trust, to the great grief and trouble of all his best subjects.

Ver. 11. *As a dog returneth to his vomit, &c.*] Who being sick with what he has eaten, casts it up again, and afterwards returns unto it and licks it up. *So a fool returneth to his folly, or repeats*⁹ it, time after time, many times, as Ben Melech; or a wicked man turns to his wickedness, who, having had some qualms upon his conscience for sin, for a while forsakes it; but that fit being over, and he forgetting all his former horror and uneasiness, returns to his old course of life: a wicked man is here compared to a dog, as he is elsewhere, for his impudence and voraciousness in sinning; and the filthiness of sin is expressed by the vomit of a dog, than which nothing is more nauseous and loathsome; and the apostacy of the sinner, from an external course of righteousness into open profaneness is signified by the return of this creature to it. This is said to be a *true proverb*, 2 Pet. ii. 22. where it is quoted and applied.

Ver. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? &c.*] Or *in his own eyes*¹⁰; as multitudes may be seen, by looking round; man is a creature but of small knowledge in things natural, civil, mechanical, philosophical, moral, or divine; yet greatly conceited for the most part of his knowledge and wisdom. As by a *fool* in this book is generally understood a wicked profane man, so by a *wise man* is meant a good and righteous man, and may be so understood here; and many there are who are good and righteous only in their own conceit and esteem, not truly so; they place their righteousness in outward things, in the observance of external duties; and though there may be some little imperfection in them, yet they think, as they mean well, God will accept the will for the deed; and some have imagined they have arrived to perfection; and such are generally conceited, proud, and haughty, and despise others; all which flows from ignorance; for, though they fancy themselves to be wise, they are very ignorant of themselves; of the plague of their own hearts; of the law of God, and the spirituality of it, and the extensiveness of its demands; of the strict justice and righteousness of God, which will not admit of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect

⁹ Suidas in voce *Eppaion*.

¹⁰ Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 33.

¹¹ Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury, ut supra, p. 59.

¹² Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Alcibiad. l. 7. c. 3.

¹³ Pausan. Corinth. sive, l. 2. p. 157.

¹⁴ Mism. Sanhedrin, c. 7. s. 6. & Maimon. in ib.

¹⁵ Ebr. Comment. p. 244.

¹⁶ So Mercerus, Pincator.

¹⁷ Sinegn. Oriental. l. 1. c. 2. p. 171.

¹⁸ שוֹנֵה who iterat, Tigurine version, Michælis; iterans, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; duplicans, Schultens.

¹⁹ בְּעֵינָיו in oculis suis, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

one; and also of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the nature and necessity of that to justify: and this being their case, they are in very dangerous circumstances; they are building on a sand; they are liable to fall into a ditch; they cannot be justified nor saved by their own works; they oppose themselves to God's way of justifying and saving sinners; and he sets himself against them, he resisteth the proud. Wherefore there is *more hope of a fool than of him*; of a profane sinner than of a self-righteous person; for Christ came to save sinners, to call them to repentance, and he receives them as such; but not self-righteous persons; and, humanly speaking, there is a greater likelihood and greater hopes of convincing sinners, and bringing them to repentance and to forsake their sins, than there is of convincing a self-righteous man of the insufficiency of his righteousness, and the folly of trusting to it, and of bringing him to repent of such a confidence, and to forsake it; for it is most natural to him; it is his own, and the effect of great labour and pains; and encourages vanity and boasting, which would be excluded should he part with it; see Matt. xxi. 31, 32.

Ver. 13. *The slothful man saith, &c.*] Within himself; or to such that excite him to diligence and industry, to go about the business of his calling, to till his field, and dress his vineyard. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, *being sent into the way*; ordered by his master to go out to work, when he makes the following excuse: *there is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets*; in the way to his field or vineyard, and in the streets, where his business lies or leads unto it: a very idle excuse this; since lions are usually in woods, forests, and desert places, and not in public roads, and much less in streets of cities; see ch. xxii. 13. This may be applied to a man slothful in the duties of religion; the *way* and *streets* may denote public ordinances, which are the ways of God's appointing, prescribing, and directing to; and in which good men walk, and find pleasure and profit; and are the streets where Wisdom cries, or Christ is preached, and where he is sought for and found: but many are the excuses some men make not to attend them; see Luke xiv. 17—20. though they are vain, frivolous, and foolish, as this here; for in these ways and streets may be seen the feet of the messengers of peace; here the turtle's voice, the joyful sound of salvation by Christ, may be heard; here the Lamb of God is directed to, to be looked at, as taking away the sins of men, having been slain, and having shed his blood for the redemption of them: and though the terrible voice of the law may be sometimes heard, which is necessary to arouse and awaken sleepy sinners, and unhinge self-righteous persons from a dependence on the works of the law; yet, afterwards comes the still small voice of the Gospel, proclaiming freedom from the curse and condemnation of the law by Christ. Indeed, in some ages, there have been violent persecutors, comparable to lions; and informers have been in the way and in the streets, to terrify saints from their duty; but none of these could move them from it, nor separate truly gracious souls from their love to Christ: though car-

nal slothful professors are offended, when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word, these are lions to them; and, in times of peace and liberty, they can paint lions, very terrible to themselves, and raise such difficulties as are insuperable to them; a slight disorder of body, a small inclemency of the weather, little danger of catching cold, and the like, shall be a lion to them: not considering they have a devouring lion nearer them in their houses, chambers, and on their beds with them; even Satan, in whose clutches they are, who keeps their goods in peace, by whom they are led captive, and to whom they fall a prey: nor fearing the wrath of the King of kings, which is as the roaring of a lion: the wrath of God and of the Lamb, who is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and whose day of wrath will be such as none will be able to bear.

Ver. 14. *As the door turneth upon his hinges, &c.*] And moves this way and that way, and opens and shuts, and yet hangs where it did, is not moved from its place: *so doth the slothful upon his bed*; he turns himself from side to side, but is still on his bed, and does not move out of it, and go about his business. Aben Ezra makes mention of another reading and sense, *the door turneth upon his hinges*, and is opened to let men out, one and another, to his work; *but yet the slothful man is upon his bed*; though one and another rise and go about business, and he hears the door open again and again, he stirs not, but keeps his bed. So profane sinners lie on the bed of sinful lusts and sensual pleasures, indulge themselves in chambering and wantonness, and do not care to rise from hence, and walk honestly as in the day-time; and though their consciences are sometimes jogged by inward pricks, and they are moved a little by the reproofs of their friends, or awakened by the judgments of God; yet these are quickly over, and they give themselves a turn and go to sleep again: sometimes there are some motions in them, some thoughts and resolutions of amendment, some purposes to do good works; but, alas! their slothfulness is so great, and the habits and customs of sin so strong, that they cannot break through them, shake off their sloth, and come out, but remain as they were: and so it is with carnal professors, resting in their own works, and in a round of duties; and after ten, twenty, thirty years' profession, or more, they are just where they were; have no spiritual knowledge, judgment, and experience.

Ver. 15. *The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom, &c.*] To keep it warm; Jarchi's note is, "he puts his hand in a hot basin, because of the cold." The word *c* for *bosom* does sometimes signify a pot or basin. Or he hides it under his *arm-holes*, as some render it, not caring to make use of it for labour; or covers it out of sight in his bosom, pretending some weakness or ailment in it, which hinders him from working; see ch. xix. 24. *It grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth*: from under his arm-holes, or out of his bosom, or even out of the platter, where his food is; an hyperbolic expression, setting forth his excessive sloth; and such an one ought not to eat, but starve indeed. It

^c בולחת in patina vel olla, Vatablus; in patinam, Tigurine ver-

sion; lebetes, Mercerus; in paropside, Cocceius; in paropsidein, Schultens.

may be rendered, *he is weary*: it is a *weariness*^d to him; it is even a labour too much for him to feed himself, so great is his sloth: and such is the sloth of carnal men; it is a weariness to them to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, and to lift up their hands in prayer to God; or to make use of any means, that they may have food for their souls; praying, hearing, and reading, are a burden to them; and therefore it is but just with God to send them a famine of the word, and take away the whole stay and staff of bread and water.

Ver. 16. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, &c.*] It is a sort of a solecism, a kind of a contradiction in terms for a sluggard to be wise, who is so slothful as to make no use of the means of getting wisdom and knowledge. And it must be a mere conceit in him that he is wise, and especially that he is wiser than seven men that can render a reason; not alluding to the number of a king's counsellors, who return him an answer to what he inquires of them, as Aben Ezra thinks; such as were the seven princes of the king of Persia, Esth. i. 14. Since to have such an exact number might not obtain in Solomon's time, either in Persia, or in his own court, or elsewhere: but it signifies a large number, many wise men, as Gersom observes, that render a reason to every one that asks it of them; who, having been diligent and industrious, have got such a competency of knowledge, that they are able to give a proper reason of what they say, believe, or do: and such are they, who, by the blessing of grace in the use of means, are wise in a spiritual sense; know themselves, and Christ Jesus, and the way of salvation by him; have an understanding of the Scriptures, and of the doctrines of the Gospel; have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between truth and error; are of established judgments, and capable of teaching others good judgment and knowledge; and of giving a reason of their faith, hope, and practice; see 1 Pet. iii. 15. Now such is the conceit of an ignorant sluggard, that he is wiser than ten thousand or ever so many of these; he thinks himself the wisest man, inasmuch as he enjoys ease and quiet in his stupid sottish way, whilst they are toiling and labouring, and taking a great deal of pains to get knowledge; and that he sleeps in a whole skin, and escapes the censure and reproaches of men, which they endure for being precise in religious duties, and constant in the performance of them; and fancies he can get to heaven in an easier way, without all this care and toil and trouble, only by saying, Lord, have mercy on me, at last.

Ver. 17. *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, &c.*] One that going along the streets, and passing by the door, where two or more persons are quarrelling, and he thrusts himself in and intermeddles in the affair he has no concern in; and interests himself in the cause of the quarrel he has nothing to do with, on account of acquaintance, relation, or office; and especially when, instead of being a

mediator and peacemaker, he takes on one side, and acts the angry part, as Aben Ezra interprets the word rendered *meddleth*; blows things up into a greater flame, and enrages the one against the other. Such a man is like one that taketh a dog by the ears; which are short, and difficult to be held, and tender; and therefore cannot bear to be held by them, especially to be pulled and lugged by them, and which is very provoking; and as such a man has work enough to do to hold him, so he is in danger of being bitten by him, at least when he is forced to let go his hold: and so it is with a man that interferes in a quarrel in a furious manner; it is much if one or other of the contending parties do not fall upon him and abuse him. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *as he that holdeth the tail of a dog*.

Ver. 18. *As a mad man, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death.*] Or the instruments of death, as Aben Ezra; or the sharp arrows of death, as the Targum and Syriac version; who casts firebrands into the houses and barns of his neighbours, to consume them; or arrows at their persons and cattle, to destroy them; or any other instruments of death, which none but a mad man, or one wickedly mad, would do. Or, *as one that makes himself mad*^e; that feigns himself mad, and, under colour of this, does mischief to his neighbour's person and property: or, *as one that hides himself*^f; that casts firebrands, arrows, and other deadly things, in a private way, so as not to be seen, and that it may not be known from whence they come: or, *as one that wearies himself*^g, so Jarchi; in doing mischief in such a way. The word in the Arabic language signifies to play and be in sport; and so it means one that does these things in sport, as it is a sport to a fool to do mischief; which sense agrees with what follows.

Ver. 19. *So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, &c.*] By telling him a lie; or by reporting false things concerning him; or by cheating him in trade and commerce; or by taking his goods privately from him; and, when caught in either of these, saith, *Am not I in sport?* do not be angry, I designed no hurt; it is all in jest, a mere joke: but, had he not been apprehended, it would have been in earnest, as he was. This is only an excuse, and as absurd an one as if a man should set fire to his neighbour's house and barns, or throw arrows at him, or strike him with any instrument of death, as the sword, &c. and then say he was only in jest, or pretend madness.

Ver. 20. *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out, &c.*] Or *woods*^h; where there is a large quantity of wood or fuel, the fire is kept up; but where there is little, scarce any or none at all, it goes out of course. *So where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth*; or *is silent*ⁱ: men cease to quarrel one with another; they hold their peace and are silent, when there are none to bring tales from one to another, or any whisperer or backbiter to suggest evil things of each other; or when such are discouraged on both sides, and their

^d נִלְוָה fatigatur, Mercurus, Gejerus; defessus sit, Michaelis; defatigatur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schulzens.
^e כַּמְתַּלְוֶה ut se habet qui insanum se simulat, Piscator; ut qui se insanire fingit, Cocceus.

^f Sicut ascendit se, Pagninus, Mercurus, Gejerus.

^g Ut qui sece fatigat, Tigurine version.

^h כֵּסֵי דְבַרִּים deficientibus lignis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; in deficientia lignorum, Michaelis; quum expirarunt ligna, Schulzens.

ⁱ יִשְׁתָּקֵי silet, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercurus, Gejerus; silet, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; consilerit, Cocceus, Schulzens.

tales are not listened to; or when they are detected and thrust out of doors, as they deserve, then strife subsides, and peace ensues. Contention is like a fire, the flame of which is blown up by talebearers and whisperers, who are as incendiaries, and as such are to be treated.

Ver. 21. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, &c.] As brands, wood half-burnt, or dead coals put to live and burning ones, soon take fire and become like them, and fit and proper fuel for them, and add to their heat: so is a contentious man to kindle strife; or a man of contentions^k; who is given to it, is full of it; it is agreeable to his natural temper and disposition; he is in his element when at it: such a man is as fuel to the fire, as a dead coal to a living one, which increases the heat of it; so does he, he kindles and spreads the flame of contention and strife.

Ver. 22. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, &c.] These expressions are the same with those in ch. xviii. S. see the note there; and are here repeated, as being found along with others by the men of Hezekiah, ch. xxv. 1. as some others likewise are; and also because of the importance of them; and to impress the minds of men with a sense of the evil of such a practice, that they may shun it, and avoid those that are given to it.

Ver. 23. Burning lips, and a wicked heart, &c.] Either burning with wrath and malice; breathing out threatenings and slaughter; pursuing men with reproaches and slanders, arising from a wicked heart: or rather, burning with profession of love to God, and affection to good men; with great pretensions of kindness, and promises of good things, when their hearts are wicked, and they design nothing less; say one thing with their lips, with the greatest show of affection and sincerity, and mean another in their hearts. These are like a potsherd covered with silver dross: which at a distance, or to less discerning persons, looks like silver, and is taken for it; when the covering is only dross, and what is within is only a potsherd, or a piece of an earthen vessel, good for nothing: such are the specious professions and deceitful words, which flow from a wicked heart.

Ver. 24. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, &c.] He that bears a grudge in his mind, and retains hatred in his heart against any person, hides it all he can, till he has an opportunity of shewing it as he would; he pretends a great deal of friendship with his lips, that his hatred might not be known; he would be thought to be a friend, when he is really an enemy; he does not choose as yet to make himself known what he is. Some render it to a sense the reverse, the enemy, or he that hateth, is known by his lips^l; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions: if you carefully watch him, mark his words, and observe what he says, you will find out the hatred that lies in his heart; he cannot forbear saying something, at one time or another, which betrays the malignity of his mind. And layeth up deceit within him: or, though^m

he layeth up, &c. hides it as much as he can, yet it will shew itself in some way or another.

Ver. 25. When he speaketh fair, believe him not, &c.] Gives good words, flatters with his lips, pretends great kindness and favour, expresses himself in a very gracious and amiable manner, in order to gain attention and respect; or when he delivers himself in a submissive and suppliant way, with great humility and deference; or in a morose and pitiful strain, as if he had the most tender affection and concern; be not too credulous; do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by him; be upon your guard, distrust him, suspect a snake in the grass. For there are seven abominations in his heart; a multitude of wicked purposes, schemes, and designs, which he has formed there against you, and which he only waits a proper time to put in execution; things abominable to God and men. Aben Ezra thinks reference is had to the seven abominations in ch. vi. 16.

Ver. 26. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, &c.] The hatred of whose heart is covered by deceitful words, and strong expressions of love and esteem; so that those to whom they are made are deceived by them. Or, whose hatred is covered in a waste or desert placeⁿ; it being not seen; as what is done in desert places is not obvious to view, being little frequented; which agrees with what follows, and keeps up the antithesis between the two clauses: Schultens renders it, with a tumultuous noise, with loud and public acclamations; see Zech. iv. 7. His wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation; in an open court of judicature, where he shall be brought, arraigned, and tried for his wickedness; which, though covertly done, shall be exposed and proved upon him: or before the church of God, where he shall be convicted by the word, and be obliged to acknowledge his sin; and, if a member, be reproved before all, and rejected: or however, at the great day of judgment, before angels and men, when all will be convened together; and where every secret work will be brought, and will be brought to light, and receive its just reward.

Ver. 27. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein, &c.] That devises mischief against others, it shall come upon himself. The allusion is to the digging of pits for catching wild beasts, which are slightly covered with earth; and which sometimes the pursuers, through inadvertency, fall into themselves; the passage seems to be taken from Psal. vii. 15, 16. And he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him; that rolls a stone up hill, if he does not take care, it will return back, and fall with great force upon himself; so the mischief which a wicked man labours hard at, as men do in digging a pit, or rolling a stone, in time revolves upon themselves; the measure they mete out to others is measured to them. Jarchi makes mention of an *hagaduh*, or exposition, which illustrates this passage, by the case of Abimelech; who slew threescore and ten persons on one stone, and was himself killed with a piece of a millstone cast upon him,

^k מְתוּרֵם אִישׁ וִירֵם אִישׁ vir contentionum, Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Gejers.

^l יִכְרַתֵּם אִישׁ וְיִכְרַתֵּם אִישׁ agnoscutur, Montanus, Vatablus; cognoscutur, Tigurine version; cognoscutur, Amama, so Luther.

^m quavis, Luther. apud Gejer. Baynus.

ⁿ מְתוּרֵם אִישׁ in desolatione, Montanus; in solitudine, Baynus, Vatablus; in vastatione, Tigurine version; in vastitate, Mercerus, Piscator, so Ben Melech.

Judg. ix. 18, 53. this may put in mind of the fable of Sisyphus^o, feigned in hell to roll a great stone to the top of a mountain, which presently falling down on his head, made his labour fruitless.

Ver. 28. *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, &c.*] That is, a man of a lying tongue, that is given to lying, hates those that are hurt and crushed by his lies; the reason why he hurts them with his lies is because he hates them; and, having hurt them, he hates them, being made his enemies, and from whom he may expect and be in fear of revenge: moreover, he hates those that are troubled and disturbed with his lies; or the *contrite*^p and humble men: or those who *smite* or *strike*^q him, as some render the word, actively; that is, reprove him, and bring him to

shame for lying. The words are by some translated, a *contrite person*, or every one of the *contrite ones, hateth a lying tongue*^r; such as are of a broken and of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at the word of God, or are hurt by lies, these abhor a liar. The Targum is, "a lying tongue hates the ways of truth;" and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, a *lying tongue hates truth*: and so the Vulgate Latin version, a *lying tongue loves not truth*: for nothing is more contrary to a lie than truth. And a *flattering mouth worketh ruin*, both to itself and to the persons flattered by it: or, *makes an impulse*^s; a pushing, a driving away; it drives away such as cannot bear its flatteries: and pushes on such that are taken with it, both into sin and into ruin.

C H A P. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *BOAST not thyself of to-morrow, &c.*] *Or, of to-morrow day*^t. Either of having a to-morrow, or of any future time; no man can assure himself of more than the present time; for, however desirable long life is, none can be certain of it; so says the poet^u: for though there is a common term of man's life, threescore years and ten, yet no one can be sure of arriving to it; and, though there may be a human probability of long life, in some persons of hale and strong constitutions, yet there is no certainty, since life is so frail a thing; the breath of man is in his nostrils, which is soon and easily stopped; his life is but as a vapour, which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; all flesh is as grass, which in the morning flourishes, in the evening is cut down, and on the morrow is cast into the oven: man is like a flower, gay and beautiful for a season, but a wind, an easterly blasting wind, passes over it, and it is gone; his days are as a shadow that declineth towards the evening; they are as a hand's breadth; yea, his age is as nothing before the Lord. Death is certain to all men, as the fruit of sin, by the appointment of God; and there is a certain time fixed for it, which cannot be exceeded; but of that day and hour no man knows; and therefore cannot boast of a moment of future time, or of a to-morrow, nor of what he shall enjoy on the morrow^v; for, what he has to-day he cannot be certain he shall have the next; he cannot assure himself of health and honour, of pleasures, riches, and friends; he may have health to-day, and sickness to-morrow; be in honour to-day, and in disgrace on the morrow: he may bid his soul eat, drink, and be merry, seeing he has much goods laid up for many years, and vainly say, to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant, when this night his soul may be required of him; he may have his wife and children, friends and relations, about him now, and before another day

comes be stripped of them all; he may be in great affluence, and have great substance for the present, and in a short time all may be taken from him, as Job's was; riches are uncertain things, they make themselves wings and flee away. Nor should a man boast of what he will do on the morrow; either in civil things, in trade and business; to which the Apostle James applies this passage, Jam. iv. 13—16. or in acts of charity, so Aben Ezra explains it, boast not of an alms-deed to be done to-morrow; whatever a man finds to be his duty to do in this respect, he should do it at once, while he has an opportunity: or in things religious; as that he will repent of his sins, and amend his life on the morrow; that he will attend the means of grace, hear the Gospel, the voice of Christ; all which should be to-day, and not be put off till to-morrow. Nor should true believers procrastinate the profession of their faith; nor should any duty, or exercise of religion, be postponed to another season; but men should work while it is day, and always abound in the work of the Lord, and be found so doing; see Isa. lvi. 12. Luke xii. 19, 20. *For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*; time is like a teeming woman, to which the allusion is, big with something; but what that is is not known till brought forth: as a woman, big with child, knows not what she shall bring forth till the time comes, whether a son or a daughter, a dead or a living child; so the events of time, or what is in the womb of time, are not known till brought forth; these are the secret things which belong to God, which he keeps in his own breast; the times and seasons of things are only in his power, Acts i. 6. We know not what the present day, as the Targum renders it, will bring forth; and still less what to-morrow will do, what changes it will produce in our circumstances, in our bodies and in our minds; so that we cannot be certain what we shall be, what we shall have, or what

^o Aut petis aut urges ruitum, Sisyphus, saxum, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. v. 460.

^p פְּרִיטִים *contritos suos*, Montanus, Michaelis.

^q Percutientes, Gejerus.

^r Linguam falsitatis odit quisque contritorum ejus, Cocceus Lexic. col. 158. quisque contritorum ab ea, ibid. versio.

^s מְדַחֵה *expulsionem*, Pagninus, Montanus; *impulsum sive lapsum*,

Vatablus; *impulsionem*, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^t מִדְּמָחָה *in die crastino*, Pagninus, Montanus.

^u Sophocles *Œdipus Colon.* v. 560. *Neque tam divos habuit faventes, crastinum ut possit sibi polliceri*, Senec. Thyest. v. 617, 618.

^v Quid sit futurum cras, fuge querere, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 9.

we shall do, on the morrow, even provided we have one.

Ver. 2. *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth, &c.*] Men should do those things which are praiseworthy; and should do them openly, that they may be seen and praised for them: for it is honourable to have such a character as Demetrius had, who had a good report of all men; and as the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was in all the churches. To be commended by others, by any but a man's self, is to his credit and reputation; but nothing more hurtful to it than self-commendation; see 2 Cor. x. 18. in some cases it is right for a man indeed to commend himself, when the glory of God, the credit of religion, the cause of truth and self-vindication, require it; as the prophet Samuel, the Apostle Paul, and others, have been obliged to do, 1 Sam. xii. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 12, &c. *A stranger, and not thine own lips;* a stranger means any other than a man's self; and if it is one that he knows not, or has little acquaintance with; or if a foreigner, that does not personally know him, only has good testimonies of him, or has read his works; and especially if in other respects an enemy; it is greatly to his honour to be praised by him: and such a commendation comes with much better grace than from himself, and from whom indeed it would not come with any.

Ver. 3. *A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty, &c.*] As was the stone which was at the well's mouth, where Laban's flocks were watered, which could not be rolled away till all the shepherds were gathered together, Gen. xxix. 2, 3, 8. and like the burdensome stone Jerusalem is compared to Zech. xii. 3. and as that at the sepulchre of Christ, rolled away by the angel, Matt. xxviii. 2. And sand is a very ponderous thing; difficult to be carried, as the Septuagint render it, as a bag of it is; and to which heavy afflictions are sometimes compared, Job vi. 2, 3. *But a fool's wrath is heavier than them both;* it cannot be removed, it rests in his bosom; it is sometimes intolerable to himself; he sinks and dies under the weight of it, as Nabal did: *wrath killeth the foolish man,* Job v. 2. and it is still more intolerable to others, as Nebuchadnezzar's wrath and his fiery furnace were.

Ver. 4. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, &c.*] Or an inundation^{*}; it is like the breaking in of the sea, or a flood of mighty waters, which know no bounds, and there is no stopping them: so cruel and outrageous were the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the Shechemites; of Pharaoh, in making the Israelites to serve with hard bondage, and ordering their male children to be killed and drowned; and of Herod, in murdering the infants in and about Bethlehem. *But who is able to stand before envy?* which is secret in a man's heart, and privately contrives and works the ruin of another, and against which there is no guarding. All mankind in Adam fell before the envy of Satan; for it was through the envy of the devil that sin and death came into the world, Wisd. ii. 24. Abel could not stand before the envy of Cain; nor Jo-

seph before the envy of his brethren; nor Christ before the envy of the Jews, his bitter enemies; and, where it is, there is confusion and every evil work, Jam. i. 14, 16. An envious man is worse than an angry and wicked man; his wrath and anger may be soon over, or there may be ways and means of appeasing him; but envy continues and abides, and works insensibly.

Ver. 5. *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*] This is to be understood, not of rebuke publicly given; though Aben Ezra thinks public reproof is meant, which, arising from love, is better than that which is done in secret, though in love, as being more effectual; for rebuke among friends should be given privately, according to our Lord's direction, Matt. xviii. 15. but it signifies reproof given faithfully and plainly, with openness of heart, and without mincing the matter, and palliating the offence; but speaking out freely, and faithfully laying before a person the evil of his sin, in all the circumstances of it, as the Apostle Paul did to Peter, when he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, Gal. ii. 11. Now such kind of reproof is better than such love to a person as will not suffer him to tell him of his faults, for fear of grieving him, or losing his friendship; or than such love as does not shew itself in deeds, and particularly in faithful reproofs; for so to act is to hate a person, and suffer sin to be upon him, Lev. xix. 17.

Ver. 6. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, &c.*] That is, friendly reproofs; which, though they may be severe, at least thought so, and may grieve and wound, and cause pain and uneasiness for the present, yet, proceeding from a spirit of love, faithfulness, and integrity, and designed for the good of the person reproofed, ought to be kindly received; see Psal. cxli. 5. *But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful;* flow from a deceitful heart, and not to be confided in, as the kisses of Joab and Judas. It may be rather rendered, *are to be deprecated*[†]; prayed against, as real evils, hurtful and pernicious; and so the Targum renders it, *are evil*. Gool is the advice of Isocrates[‡], “reckon them faithful, not who praise every thing thou sayest or doest, but those that approve what is amiss.”

Ver. 7. *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb, &c.*] Or *tramples upon it*[‡], as the word signifies, and most versions render it, expressive of contempt and abhorrence; and suits with the situation of the honeycomb, which was usually in trees and rocks in Palestine; and so might drop from thence, and be trampled upon by passengers; and especially such as are here described, whose appetites have been sated with dainties, and their stomachs heave at the most delicious food. Jarchi interprets this of one that has no desire after the doctrines of the law; and so the senses of it are not esteemed by him; whereas he that has a desire for it, even the things which come to him with bitterness and labour are sweet to him. But it may be better applied to a self-sufficient man, that is full of himself; of his own wisdom and knowledge in divine things; of his strength, and the power of his free will; of his purity, holiness, goodness, and righteousness; who

^{*} inundatio, Michaelis, so Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; exundatio, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; inundatio sulcaus, Schultens.

[†] deprecanda, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama.

[‡] Ad Nicolem, p. 39.

[§] calcabit, Paquinius, Montanus; calcat, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; conculeat, Cocceius; proculcat, Michaelis, Schultens.

loaths the Gospel, comparable to the honeycomb for its sweetness; see ch. xvi. 24. it being disagreeable to his taste, and as insipid as the white of an egg to him; and as being against him, which makes him out an arrant fool, blows a blast on all his goodness and goodliness, strips the creature of his righteousness, and excludes boasting. *But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*; that is in want of provision, has an appetite for it; any thing, though ever so mean and disrelishing to others, is sweet to such an one; as were barley-bread to Artaxerxes king of Persia, and country bread made of bran to Ptolemy Lagus king of Egypt, when in great distress for food^a: Seneca says^b, hunger will make bad bread fine manchet. And so is the Gospel, and every doctrine of it, to a sensible sinner; that is in want, and knows its wants, and has desires after spiritual things created in it; hungers and thirsts after the word and ordinances; after Christ, the bread of life; after the blessings of grace in him; particularly after the pardon of sin, and justifying righteousness and salvation by him; and after more knowledge of him, and communion with him. Now, though there is nothing bitter in the Gospel, properly speaking, as in the law; yet, that which is bitter to others, and had been bitter to the above persons, is now sweet, and which are disagreeable to the flesh; as the denial of sinful, civil, and righteous self, which the Gospel teaches; and even that which is the most contemptible to men; as the preaching of the cross, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; the doctrines of electing grace, imputed righteousness, the satisfaction of Christ, &c. How sweet are these to the taste of a hungry soul! and even though they are attended with bitter afflictions, the reproaches, revilings, and persecutions of men; as the paschal lamb, a type of Christ, was eaten with bitter herbs. This may also be applied to the hearing of the word; where and when there is plenty of means, men grow weary of the word, sick of it, and surfeit upon it and loath it; or, however, are very curious and nice, and cannot take up with plain preaching, but must have something suited to their palate, dressed up in a very elegant manner: but when the word of the Lord is precious or rare, and where there are few opportunities of hearing it, sensible souls; that have spiritual appetites, are glad of it; and it is sweet unto them, though not so nicely dressed, and though brought to them in a homely manner.

Ver. 8. *As a bird that wandereth from her nest, &c.*] To seek for food for herself and her young; or that leaves it without returning to it, and so her eggs or her young are exposed, and she herself liable to fall into the hands of birds of prey, or of the fowler, when she would be safe in her nest; as there was a law in Israel in her favour, Deut. xxii. 6. or as one that is forced out and obliged to wander from place to place, Isa. xvi. 2. *So is a man that wandereth from his place*; who, in time of famine and distress, goes into other parts for bread, as Jacob's sons went down into Egypt; and such are they in a spiritual sense who leave all, and

follow Christ for food for their souls; or who are forced to flee from place to place, and wander about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, because of the persecution of their enemies; or rather it is to be taken in an ill sense, and applied to such who abide not in the calling whereunto they are called; dislike, and are unsatisfied with, their present business of life, and seek new employments, which oftentimes is to the hurt and detriment of themselves and families; and also to such who wander from the way of spiritual understanding, from the place of divine worship, from the word, ordinances, and commandments of the Lord; see ch. xxi. 16.

Ver. 9. *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, &c.*] Meaning not the holy anointing oil for sacred use, or the perfume or incense offered on the altar of incense; but common oil or ointment used at entertainments, poured on the heads of the guests; and incense in censuring of rooms, which were very delightful, pleased the senses, and so exhilarated the heart. *So doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel*; so the sweet and pleasant words, the wise and cordial counsel, of a man's friend, rejoice his heart; he takes it well, he is highly delighted with it; he receives it kindly, and pursues it to advantage: or *by counsel of soul*^c, such as relates to the welfare of the soul here and hereafter; such is the counsel Christ gives, to buy of him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, eye-salve; and such as the Scriptures give, which, with the saints, are the men of their counsel, as they were David's; and which ministers of the Gospel give, who are therefore like ointment and perfume, *a sweet savour of life unto life*: some render the words, and they will bear it, *so the sweetness of a man's friend, more than the counsel of his soul*^d, or than his own; that is, the sweet counsel of a friend is better than his own, and more rejoices his heart, and gives him more pleasure than that does; and this way go the Jewish commentators.

Ver. 10. *Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not, &c.*] Who have been long tried and proved, and found faithful; these should be kept to and valued, and not new ones sought; which to do is oftentimes of bad consequence. Solomon valued his father's friend Hiram, and kept up friendship with him; but Rehoboam his son forsook the counsel of the old men, his father's friends and counsellors, and followed the young men his new friends, and thereby lost ten tribes at once. Jarchi interprets this of God, the friend of Israel and of their fathers, who is not to be forsaken, and is a friend that loves at all times; and to forsake him is to forsake the fountain of living waters. *Neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity*; poverty and distress, to tell him thy case, expecting sympathy, relief, and succour from him; but rather go to thy friend and father's friend, who sticks closer than a brother; see ch. xviii. 24. *For better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off*; a neighbour that is a fast and faithful friend, and who is not only near as to place, but as to affections, is more serviceable and useful to a man in time of distress than a brother,

^a Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit, Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 2.

^b Epist. 123.

^c מִשְׁעַר אֶל מַגִּיד אֶל מַגִּיד אֶל מַגִּיד, Montanus; propter consilium animæ, Pagninus, Gejerus, so Michaelis.

^d Magis quam consilium animæ, sub. propria, Vatablus, Bayus; quam consilium proprium, Janius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Piscator, Amama.

though near in blood, yet as far off in place, so much more in affection, and from whom a man can promise nothing, and little is to be expected. The phrase in the preceding clause signifies a cloudy day, and such a day of distress through poverty is; in which sense it is used by Latin^e writers, when a man is alone, and former friends care not to come nigh him.

Ver. 11. *My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, &c.*] That is, shew thyself to be a wise man by thy words and actions; endeavour to get a good share of wisdom and knowledge, and make a good use of it, and that will rejoice my heart; as nothing more gladdens the heart of a parent than the wisdom and prudent behaviour of his son; see ch. x. 1. and xxiii. 15, 24, 25. *That I may answer him that reproacheth me;* with betgetting a foolish son, or a wicked man; or making him such by ill examples; or through neglect of education; or by using too much severity in it.

Ver. 12. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, &c.*] See the note on ch. xxii. 3: or *seeth the evil*¹; the evil of sin, as it is contrary to the nature, will, and law of God, and abominable in his sight; and not only the evil of gross actions of sin, but of indwelling lust; and such an one, who is wise to that which is good, sees the sad work sin has made in the world, and in himself; how it has defaced the image of God in man, stripped him of his righteousness, and defiled all the powers and faculties of his soul; upon which sight of it he is filled with shame, reflects upon himself for his past conduct, loaths sin, and himself for it, repents of it, confesses and forsakes it: he likewise sees the evil of punishment for sin, the just demerit of it, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the second and eternal death, a separation from God, a sense and feeling of divine vengeance, anguish, and distress intolerable, and that for ever. *And hideth himself:* not in secret places, that he may not be seen by the Lord; nor in his own works of righteousness, to secure him from the wrath of God: nor is it to be understood of his hiding himself from sinners and their company, and so escaping the pollutions of the world; but of his betaking himself to Christ, who is the city of refuge, the strong hold, the rock, in the clefts of which the people of God hide themselves; even in his wounds, or in him as a suffering crucified Saviour, and who is the hiding-place from the wind, and covert from the storm of divine wrath; such are redemption by him, his sacrifice and satisfaction, his blood and righteousness, and intercession; see Isa. xxxii. 2. see also the note on ch. xxii. 3. *But the simple pass on, and are punished;* such who are thoughtless and foolish, have no sight nor sense of sin and danger, go on in their sinful course of life without any care or concern, without any fear or dread, till their feet stumble on the dark mountains of eternity; and they fall into the bottomless pit of perdition, from whence there is no recovery.

Ver. 13. *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, &c.*] See the note on ch. xxvi. 16. where the same proverb is, and is expressed in the same words as here.

Ver. 14. *He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice,*

&c.] So as not only to be heard by him, but by others; who is extravagant in his praises and commendations of him; who exceeds all bounds of modesty, truth, and decency; who affects pompous words, and hyperbolical expressions; and shews himself to be a real sycophant and flatterer, having some sinister end to serve by it. *Rising early in the morning;* lest any should be before him, and get the benefit he seeks by his flattery; or as if he had not time enough in the day to finish his encomium, unless he began early in the morning, and continued it all the day; and so it denotes his being incessant at this work, always harping on this string, or expressing himself in this adulatory way; or, as some think, this is mentioned as an aggravation of his sin, that he should be acting this low, mean, and criminal part, when he should be employed in devotion and prayer to God. *It shall be counted a curse to him;* either to the flatterer, by his friend whom he blesses, and by all wise men that hear him, who will despise him all one as if he cursed him: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it to this sense, that such an one nothing differs, or nothing seems to differ, from one that curses: or else to the person blessed, whom others will curse, or however detract from his character, because of the profuse praises bestowed upon him; nay, sometimes God himself curses such a man, who listens to, is fond of, and receives the fulsome flatteries of wicked men, as in the case of Herod, Acts xii. 22, 23.

Ver. 15. *A continual dropping in a very rainy day, &c.*] That is, through the roof of a house which is not well covered, or which lets in rain by one means or another; so that in a thorough rainy day it keeps continually dropping, to the great annoyance of those within, and which is very uncomfortable to them: it is observed² that rain is called by the name in the text, because a man is shut up under a roof whilst it falls; and continuing long he is shut up within doors and cannot come out. *And a contentious woman are alike;* troublesome and uncomfortable; as in a rainy day a man cannot go abroad with any pleasure, and if the rain is continually dropping upon him in his house he cannot sit there with any comfort; and so a contentious woman, that is always scolding and brawling, a man has no comfort at home; and if he goes abroad he is jeered and laughed at on her account by others; and perhaps she the more severely falls upon him when he returns for having been abroad; see ch. xix. 13.

Ver. 16. *Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, &c.*] Whoever attempts to stop her brawls and contentions, to repress and restrain them, and hinder her voice being heard in the streets, and endeavours to hide the shame that comes upon herself and family, attempts a thing as impossible as to hide the wind in the palm of a man's hand, or to stop it from blowing; for as that, by being restrained or pent up by any methods that can be used, makes the greater noise, so, by all the means that are used to still a contentious woman, she is but the more noisy and clamorous, and becomes more shameful and infamous. *And the ointment of his*

^e Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris, Ovid. Trist. 1. Eleg. 8.

^f נִסְתָּר וִידֵן, V. L. Tigarine version, Piscator; vidit, Pagninus, Montanus; videt, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens.

² David de Pœmis, Lexic. fol. 107. 3.

right hand, which *betrayeth* itself: or *will call* or *calls*^b, and says, in effect, Here am I; for the smell of it, which cannot be hid when held in a man's hand, betrays it; and the faster he holds it, and the more he presses and squeezes it, and the more it is heated hereby, the more it diffuses its savour, and is known to be where it is; and so all attempts to stop the mouth of a brawling woman does but cause her to brawl the louder.

Ver. 17. *Iron sharpeneth iron, &c.*] A sword or knife made of iron is sharpened by it; so butchers sharpen their knives. *So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend*; by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works. So Jarchi and Gerson understand it of the sharpening of men's minds to the learning of doctrine; but Aben Ezra takes it in an ill sense, that as iron strikes iron and sharpens it, so a wrathful man irritates and provokes wrath in another. Some render the words, *as iron delighteth in iron, so a man rejoiceth the countenance of his friend*^c, by his company and conversation.

Ver. 18. *Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof, &c.*] That takes care of a fig-tree, either his own or another's, planted in his garden or vineyard; see Luke xiii. 6. who cultivates it, digs about and dungs it, and prunes it, and does every thing necessary to it; when it brings forth fruit, and that is ripe and fit to eat, he eats of it, as it is but just he should; see 1 Cor. ix. 7. *So he that waiteth on his master*; or *that keeps his master*^d, his person from danger, and his goods faithfully committed to his trust; or *that observes his master*^e, that looks to his hand, observes his motions, directions, and commands. *Shall be honoured*; as Joseph was in Potiphar's house, and elsewhere; and as all those are who observe the commandments of God, and are the servants of Christ; see 1 Sam. ii. 30. John xii. 26.

Ver. 19. *As in water face answereth to face, &c.*] As water is as a looking-glass, in which a man may behold his own face and another's; or as the face in the water answers to the face of a man, and there is a great likeness between them. All things through water appear greater, as Seneca^m observes, and so more clear and plain. *So the heart of man to man*; one man's heart may be seen and discerned in some measure by another, as by his countenance; for though, as the poetⁿ says, *frontis nulla fides*, yet the countenance is often the index of the mind, though not an infallible one; wrath and anger in the breast may be seen in the face, as were in Cain's; thus Jacob saw some resentment at him in the mind of Laban, and judged he had some design of mischief against him by the change of his countenance; also what is in the heart of man is discerned by what comes out of it, by his words, and also

by his actions; yea, a man may know in a good measure what is in another man's heart, by what he finds in his own: the word of God is a glass, or medium of vision, and like water, in which a man's face is seen, through which a man sees his own heart; the law is a glass, in which an enlightened person sees not only the perfections of God, the nature of righteousness, but also his sin, and the sinfulness of it; this glass neither magnifies nor multiplies his sins, but sets them in a true light before him, by which he discerns heart-sins, and sees and knows the plague of his heart; and the Gospel is a glass, wherein he beholds the glory of Christ, sees and can discern whether Christ is formed in him, and he has the grace of the spirit of God wrought in his soul, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, &c. moreover, as the face seen in the water is similar to a man's face, so the hearts of men are alike, not merely in a natural sense, see Psal. xxxiii. 15. but in a moral and spiritual sense the hearts of unregenerate men are alike, and answer to each other; for they are all equally corrupted and depraved; the heart of every man is desperately wicked; the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts of wicked men, one and all of them, are only evil, and that continually; their affections are inordinately the same, they love and hate the same persons and things; their minds and consciences are all defiled; their understandings are darkened; their wills are averse to that which is good, and bent on that which is evil: and so the hearts of good men are alike; they have all one heart and one way given them; their experiences agree as to the work of grace and conversion; they are all made sensible of sin, the evil of it, and danger by it; they are all brought off of their own righteousness, and are led to Christ to depend on him alone for righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; they are partakers of the same promises in the Gospel, and have the same enemies to grapple with, and the same temptations, trials, and exercises from sin, Satan, and the world; and they have the same things put into their hearts, the laws of God, the doctrines of Christ, and the several graces of the Spirit of Christ; so that there cannot be a greater likeness between a man's face and that seen in the water, than there is between the heart of one saint and another; the hearts of Old and New Testament saints, and of all in all ages and places, answer to one another. The Targum paraphrases it to a sense quite the reverse, "as waters and as faces which are not like one to another, so the hearts of the children of men are not like one to another;" and to the same sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 20. *Hell and destruction are never full, &c.*] The grave, as the word used often signifies; and which may be called *destruction*, because bodies laid in it are soon corrupted and destroyed; and though bodies are cast into it and devoured by it, it is ready for

^b יקרא clamabit, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus; vocabit, Baynus; clamat, Piscator, Michaelis; præconem agit, Schultens.

^c יתר letatur, אהרן letari; ferrum in ferro letatur, & virum letificat ora socii ejus, Guesetius, p. 242; ferrum ferro hilaratur, & vir exhilarat vultum sodalis sui, Schultens.

^d שמר qui custodit, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; custodiens, Montanus; qui custos est domini sui, V. L.

^e Observat, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; observans, Cocceus, Schultens.

^m Nat. Quæst. l. 1. c. 6.

ⁿ Juvenal. Satyr. 2. v. 8.

more; it is one of the four things which never have an end. The place where Gog is said to be buried is called Hamon-gog, the multitude of Gog, Ezek. xxxix. 11. and by the Septuagint there Poiyandriion, which is the name the Greeks give to a burying-place, because many men are buried there; and with the Latins the dead are called Plures^o, the many, or the more; and yet the grave is never satisfied with them, Prov. xxx. 16. Or hell, the place of everlasting damnation and destruction, is meant, which has received multitudes of souls already, and where there is room for more, nor will it be full until the last day. *So the eyes of man are never satisfied*; as not the eyes of his body with seeing corporeal objects, but still are desirous of seeing more, and indeed every thing that is to be seen, and are never gluttoned, Eccl. i. 8. so neither the eyes of the carnal mind, or the lusts of it, which are insatiable things, let the objects of them be what they will; as in an ambitious man, a covetous person, or an unclean one.

Ver. 21. *As the snoring-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, &c.]* For the trying, proving, and purifying these metals; see ch. xvii. 3. *So is a man to his praise; or according to the mouth of his praise*^o; if his own mouth praises him, as in ver. 2, he is known to be what he is, a foolish and vain-glorious person: or so a man is proved by the mouth of him that praises him, as the Vulgate Latin version; or of them that praise him, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the Targum; the meaning is, either a man is known by the persons that praise him, according to what their characters are; if he is praised by good and virtuous men, he may be thought to be so himself; and if by wicked men, he may be concluded to be so likewise; see ch. xxviii. 4. or he is known by the effect that praise has upon him; if it swells him with pride, and makes him haughty, conceited, and overbearing, he will appear to be a weak and foolish man; but if he continues modest and humble, and studious and diligent to answer his character, thankful to God for what he has, and to whom he gives all the glory, he will approve himself a wise and good man.

Ver. 22. *Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, &c.]* As the manna was, Numb. xi. 8. and as wheat beat and bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, retains its own nature; so, let a wicked man be used ever so roughly or severely, by words, admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; or by deeds, by corrections and punishment, by hard words or blows, whether publicly or privately; in the midst of the congregation, as the Targum and Syriac version; or of the sanhedrim and council, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions. *Yet will not his foolishness depart from him*; his inbred depravity and natural malignity and folly will not remove, nor will he leave his course of sinning he has been accustomed to; he is stricken in vain, he will revolt more and more, Isa. i. 5. Jer. v. 3. and xlii. 23. Anaxarchus the philosopher was ordered by the tyrant Nicocreon to be

pounded to death in a stone mortar with iron pestles^o, and which he endured with great patience.

Ver. 23. *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, &c.]* In what condition they are; what health they enjoy; how fat and fruitful they be; what pasture they have; and that they want nothing fitting for them that can be had and is necessary; and also the number of them. The calling of the shepherd is here particularly mentioned, because valiant, honourable, innocent, and useful; but the same diligence is to be used in all other callings and business men are employed in, that they may provide for themselves and their families. It is in the original text, *the face of thy flocks*^o; perhaps the allusion is to the exact and distinct knowledge some very diligent careful shepherds might have, so as to know each sheep in their flocks distinctly; see John x. 3. The Septuagint version renders it, *the souls of thy flock*, as if it was an instruction to spiritual pastors or shepherds, who have the care of the souls of men: and certain it is, that if it is the duty of shepherds in common to be diligent in looking after their sheep, and doing every thing the duty of their office requires; then it must become the indispensable duty of pastors of churches to take heed to the flock of God committed to them, and to look into their state and condition, and provide for them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding, Acts xx. 28. *And look well to thy herds*; or, *put thy heart*^o to them: shew a cordial regard for them, and take a hearty care of them, that they have every thing needful for them; and which is for the owner's good as well as theirs.

Ver. 24. *For riches are not for ever, &c.]* A man cannot be assured of the continuance of them; they are uncertain things, here to-day and gone to-morrow: wherefore, though a man has a considerable share of them, yet should follow one calling or another; particularly husbandry is recommended, or keeping sheep and cattle, which are increasing; by which means his substance will be continued and augmented, which otherwise is not to be depended on, but in a diligent attendance to business. *And doth the crown endure to every generation?* the royal crown, that is not to be depended upon; a king that wears a crown is not sure he shall always wear it, or that it shall be continued to his family one generation after another. And it is suggested, that it is not even beneath such persons to have a regard to their flocks and herds, and the increase of their riches in this way: the Chinese kings, many of them, formerly employed themselves in husbandry, and set examples of industry and diligence to their subjects^o; King Hezekiah provided himself possessions of flocks and herds in abundance, 2 Chron. xxix. 17.

Ver. 25. *The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, &c.]* Some think this is mentioned to illustrate the uncertainty of riches, which soon vanish away; as the tender grass shews itself, and is presently cut down and quickly appears hay, and that soon consumed; but rather this contains an argument

^o Plauti Tripum, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 14.

^o מודללי ad os laudis suae, Gejerus.

^o Laert. in Vit. Anaxarch. l. 9. p. 668.

^o פני פני faciem pecoris tui, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; vultum, V. L. Pagninus; facies, Montanus.

^o לברך pone cor tuum, Pagninus, Montanus; adverte cor, Cocceius; adverte animum tuum, Michaelis; apponere cor tuum, Schultens.

^o Vid. Martin. Hist. Sinica, p. 92, 93, 226.

to take to the pastoral life and calling, since it may be performed with so much ease; for the earth, the valleys and hills, are covered with grass for the cattle; so that there is no further trouble than to drive the flocks into the pastures, and feed them there; or to cut down the grass, and make hay of it, and lay it up against the winter for fodder for them. The first clause, I think, may be rendered, *the hay removes**, or is carried off; the grass being fit to cut, is mowed and made hay of, and that is carried off, and laid up for the winter: *and the tender grass sheweth itself*; springs up after the hay is carried off, and so makes a second crop; or, however, becomes good pasture for cattle to feed on. *And herbs of the mountains are gathered*; for the present use of the cattle; or being made hay of, are laid up for future use; or are gathered for medicine; many of this kind grow on mountains.

Ver. 26. *The lambs are for thy clothing, &c.*] This is another argument, exciting to diligence in the pastoral calling, taken from the profit arising from it: the wool of the lambs, or rather *sheep*, as many versions render it; of it cloth is made, and of that garments to be worn, to keep decent, warm, and comfortable; see Job xxxi. 20. *And the goats are the price of thy field*: these, being brought up and sold, furnish the husbandman with money to purchase more fields to feed his cattle on. The Targum is, "the goats are for negotiation;" with the price of them a man may purchase any of the necessaries of life for himself and fa-

mily; these are negotiated, Ezek. xxvii. 21. The Syriac version is, *the goats are for thy food*; and so, between both the sheep and goats, man has both food and raiment; though his food is particularly mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 27. *And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, &c.*] The word for *goats*, in the preceding verse, signifies he-goats, which were sold to buy fields, pay servants or rent, or purchase the necessaries of life; and this here signifies she-goats, which were kept for their milk; and which was daily used for food in some countries, and is still in use for the same purpose in some parts of our kingdoms; and in medicine it has been preferred by some physicians above all others, next to the milk of women^u: and the diligent husbandman is promised not only plenty of this for his own eating, at least a sufficiency of it, but for his family. *For the food of thy household*: his wife and children: *and for maintenance for thy maidens*: or the *Virgins*^v of them, on which they should live; for, though men-servants might require strong meat, yet the maidens might live upon milk; besides, Athenæus^w speaks of most delicious cheese made of goats' milk, called *tromilicus*. The design of the whole is to shew that a man diligent in his business shall have a sufficiency for himself and his family; and, though it may be but the meaner sort of food and clothing he may get, yet, having food and raiment, he should therewith be content.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *THE wicked flee when no man pursueth, &c.*] Through the terrors of a guilty conscience, as in Cain and others; who fear where no immediate cause of fear is, are frightened with their own shadows; and as Gaal was with the shadow of the mountains, he took for an army of men, as his friend told him, Judg. ix. 36. they are chased with the sound of a shaken leaf, and fancy men are at their heels to destroy them, and therefore with all haste flee to some place of safety; see Lev. xxvi. 17, 36. Deut. xxviii. 7, 25. *But the righteous are bold as a lion*: which turns not away from any creature it meets with, nor mends its pace when it is pursued, but walks on intrepidly, and oftentimes lies down and sleeps in open places, and as securely as in woods and dens, being devoid of all fear; hence the heart of a valiant man is said to be as the heart of a lion, 2 Sam. xvii. 10. see Prov. xxx. 30. so Pindar^x compares a courageous man to a lion for boldness. Now righteous men are as bold as this creature, or more so; some of them have stopped the mouths of lions, and have dwelt securely in the midst of them, as righteous Daniel: and all righteous men are or may be as fearless as the lion; fear God they do, but have no reason to fear any other; and many of them are fearless of men, of their menaces and reproaches, or of any thing they can do to

them; since not only angels are their guardians, but God is on their side, and Christ has overcome the world for them: they are fearless of Satan and his principalities; they are delivered out of his hands; they know he is a coward, though a roaring lion, and when resisted will flee from them; yea, that he is a chained, conquered, enemy: and, though they are afraid of committing sin, yet are fearless of the damning power of it; Christ having bore their sins, made satisfaction for them; for whose sake they are pardoned; and whose righteousness justifies and blood cleanses from all sin: they are fearless of death; its sting being removed, itself abolished as a penal evil, and become a blessing, and is the righteous man's gain: they are fearless of wrath to come; Christ having delivered them from it, and they being justified by his blood: they are courageous as the lion in fighting the Lord's battles with sin, Satan, and the world, and in enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ; knowing their cause is good, that Christ is the Captain of their salvation, their spiritual armour is proved, and they are sure of victory and of a crown. They are *confident*^y as the lion, as the world may be rendered; they are confident of the love of God, of their interest in Christ, of the grace of God in their hearts, and that all things work together

^u מִלְּחַם מִיגַר, Cocceus; cum migraverit, Michaelis.

^v Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 9. Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 5. p. 1016.

^w מִלְּחַם מִיגַר, vltas, Montanus; ad vitam, Gejerus; life is often put for bread; or for that by which life is maintained, both in Greek and

Latin writers; so *Æne*, in Hesiod. Opera, l. 1. v. 31, 328. and vita, in Plaut. Stichus, Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 9. Trinum, Act. 2. Sc. 4. v. 76.

^x Diphonoph. l. 14. c. 92. p. 658. see also l. 1. c. 8. p. 10.

^y Isthm. 4. Antistroph. 3. col. 1. v. 5.

^z מִלְּחַם מִיגַר, confidant, Mercurus, Gejerus, Tigurine version; confidit, vel confidere solet, Eaynus; confidit, Michaelis.

for their good; and that it is, and always will be, well with them, let things go how they will in the world, and so are secure. They are bold and undaunted, both before God and men; before God in prayer, knowing him to be their covenant God in Christ, having in view the blood and righteousness of Christ, and being assisted by his Spirit: and they are undaunted before men; if the righteous man is a minister of the word, he speaks it boldly, as it ought to be spoken, fearing the faces of none, knowing it to be the Gospel of Christ, the truth, as it is in him, and the power of God to salvation; and if a private Christian, he is a public professor of Christ, his word and ordinances, which he is not ashamed to own before all the world. In short, the righteous are bold in life and in death, and will be so in the day of judgment; and it is their righteousness which makes them so, from which they are denominated righteous, even not their own, but the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 2. *For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof, &c.*] Either together; that is, reigning princes, such as lay claim to the crown, and usurp it; otherwise it is a happiness to a nation to have many princes of the blood, to inherit in succession, to support the crown in their family, and defend a nation, and study the good of it; but it is a judgment to a nation when many rise up as competitors for rule, or do rule, as at Athens, where thirty tyrants sprung up at once; by which factions and parties are made, and which issue in oppression, rapine, and murder: or successively, very quickly, one after another, being de-throned the one by the other: or removed by death, as in the land of Israel, in the times of the judges, and of the kings of Israel and Judah, after the revolt of the ten tribes; which frequent changes produce different administrations, new laws, and fresh taxes, disagreeable to the people; and oftentimes children come to be their princes, which is always reckoned an infelicity to a nation; see Eccl. x. 16. Isa. iii. 12. and all this is usually for some national sin or sins indulged to, which draw upon a people the divine resentment, and provoke God to suffer such changes among them. *But by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged:* either by a set of wise and understanding, good and virtuous men, who will oppose the growing vice and immoralities of a people, and form themselves into societies for the reformation of manners; the word *man* being taken collectively for a body of men: or by a wise and prudent minister or ministry, or a set of civil magistrates, who will shew themselves to be terrors to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well: or by a wise and prudent prince, who seeks to establish his throne by judgment and mercy; who will take care that justice and judgment be executed in the land, and that vice and profaneness be discouraged; by means of such, the state of a kingdom, which seemed near to ruin, will be prolonged, and the happiness and prosperity of it secured and established; and God, in mercy to it, may long preserve the life of their king, who being a good one, a long reign is always a happiness to a nation. And to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version, *the life of the*

prince shall be longer; and the Targum, which is, "and the sons of men that understand knowledge shall endure;" see Eccl. ix. 15.

Ver. 3. *A poor man that oppreseth the poor, &c.*] Either one that is poor at the time he oppresses another like himself, either by secret fraud or open injury; from whom the oppressed can get no redress, as sometimes he may and does from a rich man: or rather one that has been poor, but now become rich, and got into some place of authority and profit, who should remember what he had been; and it might be expected that such an one would put on bowels of compassion towards the poor, as knowing what it was to be in indigent circumstances; but if, instead of this, he exercises his authority over the poor in a severe and rigid manner, and oppresses them, and squeezes that little out of them they have: he is like a *sweeping rain which leaveth no food*: like a violent hasty shower of rain; which, instead of watering the seed, herbs, and plants, and causing them to grow, as moderate rain does, it washes away the very seed sown in the earth, or beats out the ripe corn from the ears, or beats it down, so that it riseth not up again; the effect of which is, there is no bread to the eater, nor seed to the sower, and consequently a famine. The design of the proverb is, to shew how unnatural as well as intolerable is the oppression of the poor, by one that has been poor himself; even as it is contrary to the nature and use of rain, which is to fructify, and not to sweep away and destroy; and which when it does, there is no standing against it or diverting it.

Ver. 4. *They that forsake the law praise the wicked, &c.*] Who are like them; who forsake and transgress the law, as they do; every like loves its like; wicked men delight in sin, the transgression of the law, and in those that do it. One covetous man will bless and praise another, whom the Lord abhors, and commend his covetousness as frugality and good husbandry: one proud man will call another happy, and praise him as a man of spirit, that will not debase himself, but keep up his authority, rank, and dignity, and not condescend to men of low estates; the workers of wickedness are set up and extolled, and tempters of God, men of atheistical and deistical principles, are not only delivered from the punishment they deserve, but are commended for their bold spirits; see Psal. x. 3. Mal. iii. 15. Or, *every wicked man praises those that forsake the law*, so Schultens. *But such as keep the law contend with them*; that is, with them that forsake it, and praise the wicked; they are displeased with them, and shew their resentment at them; they contend with them by arguments, and endeavour to convince them of their folly and wickedness; they reprove them for it, even though they may be in high places, as John the Baptist reprov'd Herod. The Targum is, "they contend with them, that they may return," or be converted; they strive and take pains with them, to convince them and bring them to repentance, and to a change of sentiments, life, and manners.

Ver. 5. *Evil men understand not judgment, &c.*] Or, *men of wickedness*; that are under the governing power

^b וְיָמֵי מַלְיָא viri mali, (in genitivo casu), Mercerus; vel malitiæ, Baynus, Gejerus.

of it; who are given up and give up themselves unto it; who, like Ahab, sell themselves to work wickedness: these know not what is just and right between man and man, at least not to do it; they know it not practically; they are wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge, Jer. iv. 22. they know not the law of God, the rule of judgment, justice, and equity; at least not the extensiveness and spirituality of it, Jer. viii. 7. and much less the Gospel of Christ, which is sometimes so called, Isa. xlii. 1, 4. and li. 4. Nor do they advert, as they should, to the judgments of God in the ear; they do not consider his work, and the operation of his hand; the vengeance he takes on wicked men, so Jarchi interprets it; nor do they take any notice of the judgment to come, at which they must appear, and into which they will be brought, and all things done by them. *But they that seek the Lord understand all things*; this character describes all good men that seek the Lord, in private and in public, that seek him by prayer and supplication, that wait upon him in the ordinances of his house; and all sensible sinners, who seek to Christ for righteousness, for rest, for life and salvation, for more grace from him, for more communion with him, for a greater degree of knowledge of him, and for immortality and eternal life, his kingdom and glory. And such *understand all things*; not in the most full and absolute sense; for this is proper and peculiar to God: nor all things natural and civil, which truly righteous persons, generally speaking, have the least share of, as arts, sciences, languages, trade and commerce in all its branches; and indeed universal knowledge of these things does not belong to any one man: nor all things in a religious sense; not all the difficult passages of Scripture, in which there are many things hard to be understood; but all things necessary to salvation; all things relating to their fallen, depraved, and miserable state and condition by nature, and to the way and means of their recovery and salvation by Christ; all things relating to a spiritual and saving knowledge of God in Christ; and to the knowledge of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and to the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart; and of the doctrines of the Gospel, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and so as to be food for their souls: and which understanding is given them, and they attain unto and increase in, by seeking the Lord, and using the means of knowledge, the word and ordinances; see 1 Cor. ii. 15. 1 John ii. 20, 27. The Targum and Syriac version render it, "that understand all good things;" and so Aben Ezra interprets it: the Arabic version is, *they understand it in all things*; that is, judgment, justice, and equity, in all its branches, and practise it.

Ver. 6. *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, &c.*] See the note on ch. xix. 1. *Than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich*; or, *in his two ways*: that halts between two ways, or makes use of both; sometimes turns to the one, to the right hand, and sometimes to the other, to the left hand;

or that pretends to the one, and walks in the other; would be thought to be a virtuous and religious man, and to walk in the paths of righteousness and truth, when he walks in those of sin and wickedness. And now a poor man that walks evenly and uprightly, according to the word of God and truth of the Gospel, in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the paths of faith and holiness, is better than he; more honourable, more comfortable, and happy in life and in death; he has grace now, and will have glory hereafter.

Ver. 7. *Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son, &c.*] That observes the law of God; for, though he cannot perfectly keep it, yet he delights in it after the inward man; and with his spirit serves it, from a principle of love, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God, without mercenary and sinister ends. Such a man enjoys peace, and has a reward in though not for keeping the commands of it; so that it is his wisdom to observe it; and he may be truly called a wise man, Deut. iv. 6. Or that observes the law or commandments of his parents, which they enjoin him; see ch. vi. 20, 21. and particularly the law of God, which requires honour and obedience to be given to parents, and which turns to the account of children; it is well with them, and their days are prolonged on earth, and therefore they are wise that keep it, Ephes. vi. 1—3. and such a wise son makes a glad father, as the contrary brings shame to him, as in the next clause. *But he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father*; that keeps company with gluttons, and indulges his sensual appetite with them; that feeds^d such persons and himself, as some render the word; that gives up himself to an epicurean life: he brings himself at last to disgrace and poverty, and so causes shame to his father; who will be charged with neglecting his education, and indulging him in such a luxurious way of living; see ch. x. 5. and xxix. 15.

Ver. 8. *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, &c.*] By biting and oppressing the poor; letting him have money at an exorbitant interest, and goods at an exorbitant price, and so increases his substance in this scandalous manner; hence usury is in Lev. xxv. 36, called *increase*, and by the Greeks *τοκος*, a *birth*, because money is the birth of money, as Aristotle^e observes; and so by the Latins *fenus*, as if it was *factus*^f, a *birth*. The word for usury here signifies biting; and so usury, with classical writers^g, is said to bite; and whilst it increases the substance of the usurer, it lessens and devours that of others. *He shall gather it for him that will pity the poor*; not for himself, nor for his posterity; but for such, though not intentionally but eventually, as will make a good use of it, and distribute it to the necessities of the poor. The meaning is, that things should be so overruled by the providence of God, that what such an avaricious man gets in his dishonest way should not be enjoyed by him or his; but should be taken out of his hands, and put into the hands of another,

^c דרכים Heb. duabus viis, Piscator, Cocceius; pervertens duas vias, Baynus; duplici via, Michaelis; gemina via, Schultens, so Ben Melech.

^d פתק qui pascit, V. L. Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; pascitur, Michaelis; pascens, Montanus.

^e Politic. l. 1. c. 10.

^f A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 16. c. 12.

^g Plauti Pseudolos, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 23, 24. Habet argentum, jam admordere hunc mihi lubet, Lucan. l. 1. v. 131. Vorax usura.

that will do good with it, by shewing mercy to the poor; see Job xxvii. 16, 17.

Ver. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, &c.*] Not merely the moral law, but the word of God in general, and any and every doctrine of it; though the law is to be heard and attended to, what it commands and forbids, its precepts, menaces, and curses: indeed the spirit of God is not received by the hearing of the law, nor does faith come by that; but by hearing the word of God, particularly the Gospel; which yet men turn away their ears from, and are turned to fables, and choose to hearken to any thing rather than that; and, like the deaf adder, stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely; the folly and sad effects of which will be seen when too late. *Even his prayer shall be abomination;* that is, to God; not only his ungodly actions, but even his outward exercises of religion, which carry in them some shew of goodness and holiness; and particularly his prayer to God, which in upright persons is the delight of the Lord; yet in such an one it will be abhorred by him; when he is in distress, and shall pray to the Lord, he will not only turn a deaf ear to him, as he has to his law or word, but he will despise and abhor him and his prayer; because he has set at nought his counsel, and despised his reproof, ch. i. 24—28.

Ver. 10. *Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, &c.*] That is, who attempts to deceive them, and draw them into errors or immoralities, and so into a snare, into mischief and ruin; first into the evil of sin, in order to bring them into the evil of punishment; I say, who attempts to do it; for it is not possible that God's elect, those who are truly righteous and good, should be totally and finally deceived, Matt. xxiv. 24. *He shall fall himself into his own pit;* which he had dug and prepared for the righteous, who through the grace and goodness of God is preserved from it; the mischief intended for the good man falls upon himself in righteous judgment, Psal. vii. 15, 16. *But the upright shall have good things in possession; or shall inherit good things¹;* they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and shall inherit all things; they have all good things in Christ, with him and from him now; nor can they be taken from them, or they be caused to lose them by all the policy and craft of men and devils, who seek to draw them into sin and snares with that view; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, they shall keep possession of their good things here, the grace of the spirit, and the blessings of grace, and shall enjoy glory hereafter.

Ver. 11. *The rich man is wise in his own conceit, &c.*] Ascribing his getting riches to his great sagacity, wisdom, and prudence; and being flattered with it by dependents on him. *But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out;* a man of good understanding, whether in things natural, civil, moral, or spiritual, though poor, as a man may be poor and yet a wise man; such an one, when he comes into company with a rich man, wise in his own conceit, he soon

by conversation with him finds him out to be a very foolish man, and exposes him as one; for riches are not always to men of understanding, or all that have them are not such; and better is a poor wise man than even a foolish king; see Eccl. ix. 11, 15. and iv. 13.

Ver. 12. *When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory, &c.*] When it is well with them; when they are in prosperous circumstances; when they are countenanced and encouraged by the government under which they are; when they have the free exercise of their religion; and especially when they are advanced to places of profit, honour, and trust, which must make them cheerful and joyful; it is a glory to a land, it adds greatly to the glory of it, and a fine prospect there is of the increase and continuance of it. *But when the wicked rise;* to honour and dignity, and are set in high places, and are in great power and authority, which they exercise to the distress of the righteous, and all good men: *a man is hidden;* a good man; he hides himself, as in ver. 28. he withdraws himself from court, from city, from company, from commerce, and business, because of the tyranny and persecution of wicked men; and flees to distant places, and wanders in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; as some saints, under the Old Testament, did, and as the Church, in Gospel-times, fled from the tyranny of antichrist into the wilderness, to hide herself: or, *a man is or shall be sought for¹,* and searched out; as wicked persecutors are very diligent to search for and find out such persons that hide themselves, and fetch them out of their hiding-places, and cruelly use them.

Ver. 13. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, &c.*] God may cover a man's sins, and it is an instance of his grace, and it is the glory of it to do it, but a man may not cover his own: it is right in one good man to cover the sins of another, reproving him secretly, and freely forgiving him; but it is wrong in a man to cover his own: not that any man is bound to accuse himself before a court of judicature, or ought to expose his sins to the public, which would be to the hurt of his credit, and to the scandal of religion; but whenever he is charged with sin, and reproved for it by his fellow-Christian, he should not cover it, that is, he should own it; for not to own and acknowledge it is to cover it; he should not deny it, which is to cover it with a lie, and is adding sin to sin; nor should he justify it, as if he had done a right thing; nor extenuate or excuse it, or impute it to others that drew him into it, as Adam, which is called a covering transgression, as Adam, Job xxxi. 33. for such a man shall not prosper; in soul or body, in things temporal or spiritual; he shall not have peace of mind and conscience; but, sooner or later, shall feel the stings of it; he shall not succeed even in those things he has in view by covering his sins; he shall not be able to cover them long, for there is nothing covered but what shall be revealed; if not in this life, which yet often is, however at the day of judgment, when every secret thing shall be made manifest; nor shall he escape the

¹ חַרְפָּה hæreditas accipient bonum, Pagninus, Montanus; hæreditabunt bonum, Michaelis; so Mercerus, Cocceius; hæreditatem cernent ubertatem boni, Schultens.

¹ חַרְפָּה investigabitur, Pagninus, Montanus; exploratur, Tigurine version; explorabitur, Baynus; perversigatur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

shame and punishment he thought to avoid by covering it, as may be observed in the case of Achan, Josh. vii. 11—25. in short, he shall have no mercy shewn him by God or man, as appears by the antithesis in the next clause. *But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*: who confesses them to men privately and publicly, according to the nature of the offences, from whom they find mercy; but not to a priest, in order for absolution, which no man can give; sin is only in this sense to be confessed to God, against whom it is committed, and who only can pardon it; and though it is known unto him, yet he requires an acknowledgment of it, which should be done from the heart, with an abhorrence of the sin, and in the faith of Christ, as a sacrifice for it; and it is not enough to confess, there must be a forsaking likewise, a parting with sin, a denying of sinful self, a leaving the former course of sin, and a quitting the company of wicked men before used to, and an abstaining from all appearance of evil; as is and will be the case, where there is a true sight and sense of sin, and the grace of God takes place: and such find *mercy*, pardoning grace and mercy, or pardon in a way of mercy, and not merit; for, though the sinner confesses and forsakes it, it is not that which merits pardon; it is still an act of grace and mercy in God, who is rich in it, delights in shewing it, and from whom it may be hoped for and expected by all such persons; see Psal. xxxiii. 5. 1 John i. 9. So the Targum and Syriac version, God will have mercy on him.

Ver. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway, &c.* Not men, but the Lord; there is a fear and reverence due to men, according to the stations in which they are; but a slavish fear of man, and which deters from the worship of God and obedience to him, is criminal, and brings a snare; and a man, under the influence of it, cannot be happy: nor is a servile fear of God intended, a fear of wrath and damnation, or a distrust of his grace, a continual calling in question his love, and an awful apprehension of his displeasure and vengeance; for in such fear is torment, and with it a man can never be happy; but it is a reverence and godly fear, a filial one, a fear of God and his goodness, which he puts into the hearts of his people; a fear, indeed, of offending him, of sinning against him, by which a man departs from evil, and forsakes it, as well as confesses it; but is what arises from a sense of his goodness: and it is well when such a fear of God is always before the eyes, and on the hearts of men: in their closets and families, in their trade and commerce, in all companies into which they come, as well as in the house of God and the assembly of his saints, where he is to be feared; as also in prosperity and adversity, even throughout the whole course of life, passing the time of their sojourning here in fear: and such a man is happy; the eye of God is on him, his heart is towards him, and he delights in him; his secret is with him, he sets a guard of angels about him, has laid up good-

ness for him, and communicates largely to him. *But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief*; that hardens his heart from the fear of the Lord; neither confesses his sin, nor forsakes it; bids, as it were, defiance to heaven, strengthens and hardens himself in his wickedness, and by his hard and impenitent heart treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath; he falls *into evil*⁸, as it may be rendered, into the evil of sin yet more and more, which the hardness of his heart brings him into, and so into the evil of punishment here and hereafter.

Ver. 15. *As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, &c.* Which are both terrible; the lion that roars for want of food, or when it is over its prey; and the bear, when it runs from place to place in quest of provision, being *hungry* and very *desirous* of food, has a keen appetite, as some think the word¹ signifies. The Targum and Jarchi take it to be expressive of the cry and roaring it makes at such a time, as well as the lion; see Isa. lix. 11. so the Tigurine version. Roaring is the proper epithet of a lion, and is frequently given it in Scripture, and in other writers^m; and the bear, it is thought to have its name, in the Oriental language, from the growling and murmuring noise it makes when hungry; hence that of Horaceⁿ. *So is a wicked ruler over the poor people*: one that rules over them in a tyrannical manner, sadly oppresses them, takes away the little from them they have, which is very cruel and barbarous; when he ought to protect and defend them, and against whom they cannot stand, and whom they dare not resist; and who therefore must be as terrible to them, being as cruel and voracious as the above animals. Tyrants are frequently compared to lions, Jer. iv. 7. and I. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 17. and the man of sin, the wicked ruler and great oppressor of God's poor people, is compared to both; his feet are as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion, Rev. xiii. 2.

Ver. 16. *The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor, &c.* Or, *much in oppressions*^o; he multiplies them, and abounds in them; he distresses his subjects in a variety of ways and methods he uses to extort money from them, by which he shews his want of understanding: he is a wise prince that uses gentle methods, and gains the affections of his people, and who cheerfully supports his crown and government with honour and glory; but he is a foolish prince that uses them with rigour. It may be rendered, *and a prince that wanteth understanding, and is much, or abounds, in oppressions*; in laying heavy burdens and taxes on his people, in an arbitrary manner; *shall shorten, and not prolong his days*^p, as it may be supplied from the next clause; either his subjects will rise up against him, and dethrone him, and destroy him; or God, in mercy to them, and in judgment to him, will remove him by death. *But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days*: to hate covetousness is a good qualification of a civil magistrate, prince, or ruler, Exod. xviii. 21. This sin is the cause of a wicked

¹ ברעהו in arslum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.

² שוקק avidus, Pagninus, Montanus; ganelicus, Castalio, Schultens; esuriens, V. L. Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Bochart; adpetens, Michaelis.

³ Leo fremit, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. Spumat aper, fluit unda, fremit leo, sibilat anguis; Licentius de Protheo.

^m Nec vesperitius circumgemit nrsoe ovile, Epod. Ode 16. v. 51.

ⁿ ממשקרו רב ממשקרו רב multus oppressioibus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Baynus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^o So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, and some Jewish writers in Vatablus.

prince oppressing his subjects; but where it is hated, which is seen by moderation in government, and easing of the people as much as possible; such a prince, as he has the hearts of his subjects, is well-pleasing to God, by whom he reigns; and such an one, through the prayers of the people for him, and the goodness of God unto him, lives long, and reigns prosperously; and dies, as David, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

Ver. 17. *A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person, &c.*] That sheds the blood of any in a violent manner; that lays violent hands upon a man, and takes away his life, contrary to the law in Gen. ix. 6. Or, *that is pressed because of the blood of any person*; pressed in his own mind; filled with horror, and tortured in his conscience, for the innocent blood he has shed: the letter *daleth* in the word *Adam* is lesser than usual; and Vitrings, on Isa. xxxiv. 6. observes, that it signifies a man red with blood, oppressed in his conscience, and depressed by God, which this minute letter is a symbol of; and thinks it applicable to Edom or Rome: or it signifies one pressed, pursued, and close followed by the avenger of blood. *Shall flee to the pit: let no man stay him: support or help him.* When such a murderer flies, and is pursued, and unawares falls into a pit, or is like to do so, let no man warn him of it, or help him out of it; or if he flees to a pit to hide himself, let no man hold him or detain him there, or suffer him to continue in such a lurking-place, but discover him or pluck him out; or, if he is a fugitive and a vagabond all his days, as Cain, the murderer of his brother, was, till he comes to the pit of the grave, let no man yield him any support or sustenance.

Ver. 18. *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved, &c.*] Or *be safe* from those that seek his life, plot against him, shoot at him, as the wicked do at the upright in heart, but the Lord protects him; and it is even well with him in times of public calamities; the Lord has his chambers and hiding-places for him; and he is safe from falling, as may be gathered from the opposite clause; for he walks surely, and is in the hands of Christ, and is kept by him from a final and total falling away: and he shall be saved also with an everlasting salvation; from sin, and all the effects of it; from the curse of the law, from wrath to come, from hell and damnation. Not that his upright walk is the cause of this; the moving cause of salvation is the grace of God; the procuring cause, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Author of it: but this is a descriptive character of the persons that are and shall be saved; it is a clear case that such have the grace of God, and therefore shall have glory; see the note on ch. x. 9. *But he that is perverse in his ways; in his two ways, as in ver. 6. or many ways, and all perverse and wicked: shall fall at once; his destruction shall come suddenly upon him, when he is not aware of it, and when he*

cries, Peace, peace, to himself: or in one of them; in one or other of his perverse ways.

Ver. 19. *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread, &c.*] Or, *shall be filled or satisfied with bread*: shall have bread enough, and to spare; provisions of all sorts, and in great plenty; see the note on ch. xii.

11. *But he that followeth after vain persons; empty idle persons; keeps company and spends his time with them, when he should be about the business of his calling: shall have poverty enough; or be filled with it*; he shall be exceeding poor, reduced to the utmost distress, be clothed in rags, and destitute of daily food.

Ver. 20. *A faithful man shall abound with blessings, &c.*] Or, *a man of faithfulness*. A very faithful man, that is truly so; that is so in a moral sense; true to his word, makes good his promises, fulfils his contracts, abides by the obligations he lays himself under: is faithful in every trust reposed in him, be it greater or lesser matters, in every station in which he is, and throughout the whole course of his life. Such a man abounds with the blessings and praises of men; all value him, and speak well of him: and with the blessings of divine Providence; he is *much in blessings*, as it may be rendered; as in receiving blessings from God, so in giving them to men; such a man is usually charitable and beneficent. And it may be understood of one that is faithful, in a spiritual and evangelic sense; for of such characters are the followers of the Lamb, Rev. xvii. 14. It is in the original, *a man of truths*; one that has the truth of grace in him; that knows the grace of God in truth; with whom the truth of the Gospel is; who has learnt it, known it, embraced it, values it, and abides by it; and who has a concern with Christ, who is the truth, who is formed, lives, and dwells in his heart; of whom he has made a good profession, and holds it fast, and whom he cleaves unto. The character of *faithful* belongs both to the true ministers of Christ, who preach the pure Gospel, and the whole of it; who seek not to please men, but God; and not themselves, and their own glory, but the things of Christ, and his glory; and continue to do so in the face of all opposition: and to private Christians, the faithful in Christ Jesus; who truly believe in him, stand by his truths, abide by his ordinances, and are faithful to one another, and continue so till death: these abound with the blessings of the covenant of grace, with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; they have an abundance of grace in them, given them in conversion, faith, hope, love, humility, and many other graces, in the exercise of which they are made to abound; and they have an abundance of blessings of grace bestowed on them, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, meetness for and right unto eternal life; they have Christ, and all things along with him; so that they may be truly said to have all things.

* עָשָׂה פֶּשַׁע *pressus propter sanguinem animæ, Amama, Cartwright; so R. Joseph Kimchi in D. Kimchii Sopher Shorash rad. עָשָׂה.*
 עָשָׂה *erit salvus, Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.*
 עָשָׂה *saturabitur pane, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens.*

* יָשַׁע *satiabitur, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; saturabitur, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Schultens.*

* אִישׁ אֱמוּנָתוֹ *vir fidelitatum, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.*

* בְּרַבְרַת *multus benedictionibus, Montanus, Vatablus, Daynes, Michaelis.*

* *Vir veritatus, Montanus.*

and abound. *But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent*; he that is over-anxious, and immoderately desirous of being rich, and pursues every method of obtaining his desires, with all his might and main; that labours night and day for it; though he takes no criminal nor unlawful methods, properly so called, nor does he do any thing injurious to others, yet he is not innocent; that over-anxiety in him is criminal; nor is he free from covetousness; see ch. xxiii. 4. and if he uses any unjust and unlawful means to acquire wealth, and resolves to be rich, right or wrong, *per fas, per nefas*, he shall not be innocent, neither before God nor men: so the Targum renders it, "he that runs into iniquity, that he may be rich;" and indeed when a man hastily, or in a short time, becomes rich, though he cannot be directly charged with fraud and injustice, yet he is not innocent in the minds of men, or free from their suspicions and jealousies of him. A man that makes haste to be rich is opposed to him that is faithful and true to his word and contracts, and is the same that Juvenal^v calls *avarus properans*; see 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

Ver. 21. *To have respect of persons is not good, &c.*] In courts of judicature, to give a cause or pass sentence in favour of a person, because he is rich, or is a relation, a friend, an acquaintance, or has done a kindness: and against another, because of the reverse, Lev. xix. 15. Deut. xvi. 19. nor in religious assemblies, making a difference between the rich and the poor, Jam. ii. 1, 2. this is not good in itself, nor productive of good effects, and cannot be well-pleasing to God, who himself is no respecter of persons. *For for a piece of bread that man will transgress*; the laws of God and men; having used himself to such unrighteous methods of proceeding, he will do any base action for a small gain, he will stick at nothing, and do it for any thing; as Cato used to say of M. Caelius the tribune, "that he might be hired, for a morsel of bread, to speak or hold his peace;" see Ezek. xiii. 19.

Ver. 22. *He that hasteth to be rich, &c.*] As every man that is eagerly desirous of riches is; he would be rich at once^z, and cannot wait with any patience in the ordinary course of means: hath *an evil eye*; on the substance of others, to get it, right or wrong; is an evil man, and takes evil methods to be rich^a; see 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. or an envious one; is an envious man; as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; he envies others, as the Vulgate Latin version, the riches of other men; he grudges every thing that goes beside himself; and that makes him in haste to be rich, that he may be equal to or superior to others: or he is a sordid, avaricious, illiberal man, that will not part with any thing for the relief of others, and is greedy of every thing to amass wealth to himself; an evil eye is opposed to a good or bountiful one, that is, to a man that is liberal and generous, ch. xxii. 9. Matt. xx. 15. *And considereth not that poverty shall come upon him*; for wealth gotten hastily, and especially wrongfully, diminishes, wastes, and comes to nothing in the end; it sometimes flies away as fast as it comes; it has

wings to do the one, as well as the other: this the man in haste to be rich does not consider, or he would have taken another method; since this is not the true way of getting and keeping riches, but of losing them, and coming to want; see ch. xiii. 11. and xx. 21.

Ver. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, &c.*] His friend and acquaintance, for any fault committed by him; which reproof he gives in a free and faithful manner, yet kind, tender, and affectionate. The word rendered *afterwards*, which begins the next clause, according to the accents belongs to this, and is by some rendered, *he that rebuketh a man after me^b*; after my directions, according to the rules I have given; that is, after God, and by his order; or Solomon, after his example, and who delivered out these sentences and instructions. The Targum so connects the word, and renders the clause, "he that rebukes a man before him;" openly, to his face: but rather it may be rendered *behind*; that is, as Cocceius interprets it, apart, alone, privately, and secretly, when they are by themselves; which agrees with Christ's instructions, Matt. xviii. 15. *Afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue*; for though the reproofs given him may sit uneasy upon his mind at first, and may be cutting and wounding, and give him some pain, and so some dislike to the reproof; yet when he coolly considers the nature and tendency of the reproof, the manner in which it was given, and the design of it, he will love, value, and esteem his faithful friend and rebuker, more than the man that fawned upon him, and flattered him with having done that which was right and well; or, as the Targum, than he that divideth the tongue, or is double-tongued; and so the Syriac version; see ch. xxvii. 5, 6. Psal. cxli. 3.

Ver. 24. *Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, &c.*] As Micah did of eleven hundred shekels of silver, Judg. xvii. 2. *And saith, it is no transgression*; what is his father's or his mother's is his own, or as good as his own, it will come to him at their death; and if he wants it before, he thinks he ought to have it; and if they are not willing to give it him, it is with him no sin to rob them of it; and this he says within himself, to quiet his conscience when he has done it; or to others who may charge him with it: but, whatever such a man thinks, sins against parents are greater than against others; as parricide is a greater sin than any other kind of murder, so robbing of parents is greater than any other kind of theft; it is more aggravated, especially when parents are aged, and cannot work for themselves, but depend on what they have for their livelihood; whereas a young man can, and ought, and should rather give to his parents than rob them of what they have. *The same is the companion of a destroyer*; of a murderer; either he has got into such company which have put him upon such wicked practices; or he will soon get into such a society, and, from a robber of his father and mother, become a robber on the highway, and a murderer; and he has wickedness enough to be a destroyer of the lives of his pa-

^v Satyr. 14. v. 178.

^z Nam dives qui ferri vult, & cito vult fieri, Juvenal. Satyr. 14. v. 176.

^a Sed que reverentia legum? quis metus, aut pudor est usquam propterantibus avari? Juvenal. ib.

^b אחריו post me, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablo and Michaelis, R. Saadiak Gaon; ut sequatur me, Julius & Tremellius.

rents, as well as of their substance; and sometimes the one sin leads to the other.

Ver. 25. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife, &c.*] Or, of a *large heart*^c, or has an enlarged one; not with useful knowledge and understanding, as Solomon had; nor a heart enlarged with love and affection to the souls of men, as the Apostle Paul had; but either has a covetous one, who enlarges its desire as hell, and is never satisfied with what he has, and so is continually contending with his neighbours, engaging in law-suits for their property, or unwilling to pay his lawful debts; or of a proud spirit, and despises all around him, and cannot bear opposition and contradiction; and is of a wrathful and revengeful spirit, and always at variance with his neighbours, and quarrelling with them; see ch. xviii. 15. *But he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat*; that trusts in the Lord, both for things temporal and spiritual; does not covet his neighbour's goods, nor disturbs his peace, nor injures his person or property to increase his own, but depends upon the Lord for a supply of necessary good things; such an one shall be fat and flourishing, both in his temporal and spiritual estate; all he does shall prosper; he shall want no good thing, Psal. lxxiv. 11. 12. Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

Ver. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, &c.*] Since the thoughts and imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually; they are vain and vague, sinful and corrupt; the affections are inordinate, the conscience defiled, the understanding darkened, and the will perverse; there is no good thing in it, nor any that comes out of it, but all the reverse; it is deceitful and desperately wicked: he must be a fool, and not know the plague of his heart, that trusts in it; and even for a good man to be self-confident, and trust to the sincerity of his heart, as Peter did, or to the good frame of the heart, as many do, is acting a foolish part; and especially such are fools as the Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, when a man's best righteousness is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify him in the sight of God; it is moreover a weak and foolish part in men to trust to the wisdom and counsel of their heart, to lean to their own understanding, even in things natural and civil, and not to ask wisdom of God, or take the advice of men, and especially in things religious and sacred; see ch. iii. 5, 6. *But whoso walketh wisely*; as he does who walks according to the rule of the divine word; who makes the testimonies of the Lord his counsellors; who consults with his sacred writings, and follows the directions of them; who walks as he has Christ for his pattern and example, and makes the Spirit of God his guide, and walks after him, and not

after the flesh; who walks with wise men, and takes their advice in all matters of moment, not trusting to his own wisdom and knowledge; who walks as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and in all the ordinances of it; who walks inoffensively to all men, and so in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them who are within; who walks circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. *He shall be delivered*; he shall be delivered from the snares of his own deceitful heart, which he will not trust; and from the temptations of Satan; and from all afflictions and troubles he meets with in the way; and from a final and total falling away; and from eternal death and destruction: *he shall be saved*, as some versions render it, even with an everlasting salvation. The Targum is, "he shall be protected from evil."

Ver. 27. *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack, &c.*] That gives alms unto them, relieves them in their distress, supplies them with money, food, or clothes, and does it cheerfully, largely, and liberally, as the case requires; such an one shall not want any good thing; he shall not be the poorer for what he gives; he shall not miss it, nor his substance be diminished; he shall not come to poverty and want, yea, he shall be enriched, and his substance increased, for more is intended than is expressed. Jarchi interprets this of a wise man not restraining doctrine from a disciple, but giving it to him liberally. *But he that hideth his eyes*; that is, from the poor, as the Targum and Syriac version add; that does not care to see his person, to behold his miseries, or know his case, lest his heart should be moved with compassion, and should draw out any thing from him; see Isa. lviii. 7. Such an one shall have many a curse; not only from the poor he hardens himself against, but from other persons, who observe his miserable and covetous disposition; and from the Lord himself, who abhors such persons, and curses their very blessings now, and will bid them depart from him as accursed persons hereafter.

Ver. 28. *When the wicked rise, men hide themselves, &c.*] When wicked men are raised to places of power and authority, rich men hide themselves, lest they should become a prey to them; and good men hide themselves, that they may not be put to death by them; or as ashamed to behold their evil actions; see the note on ver. 12. *But when they perish*; wicked men, either by a natural or violent death; or perish as to their authority and power, being turned out of their places: *the righteous increase*; such who before hid themselves appear, and, being put into the places of the wicked, encourage truth and righteousness, by which means the number of good men is multiplied; and which is a great happiness to a nation, and shews the usefulness and advantage that good magistrates are of unto it.

C H A P. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *HE, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, &c.*] Or a man of reproofs^d; either a man that

takes upon him to be a censurer and reprov'er of others, and is often at that work, and yet does those things

^c *amplius animo suo, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; latus animo, Mercerus, Cocceius.*

^d *איש תוכחות vir increpationum, Vatablus, Moutanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; vir correptionum, Piscator, Michaelis; vir redargutionum, Schultens.*

himself which he censures and reproves in others; and therefore must have an impudent face and a hard heart, a seared conscience, and a stiff neck; his neck must be an iron sinew, and his brow brass: or rather a man that is often reproved by others, by parents, by ministers of the Gospel, by the Lord himself, by the admonitions of his word and spirit, and by the correcting dispensations of his providence; and yet despises and rejects all counsel and admonition, instruction and reproofs of every kind, and hardens himself against them, and shews no manner of regard unto them. The metaphor is taken from oxen, which kick and toss about, and will not suffer the yoke to be put upon their necks. Such an one *shall suddenly be destroyed*; or *broken*^e; as a potter's vessel is broken to pieces with an iron rod, and can never be put together again; so such persons shall be punished with everlasting destruction, which shall come upon them suddenly, when they are crying Peace to themselves, notwithstanding the reproofs of God and men. *And that without remedy*; or, *and there is no healing*^f; no cure of their disease, which is obstinate; no pardon of their sins; no recovery of them out of their miserable and undone state and condition; they are irretrievably lost; there is no help for them, having despised all advice and instruction; see ch. v. 12, 13.

Ver. 2. *When the righteous are in authority, &c.]* Or *are increased*^g; either in number or in riches, or in power and dominion; are set in high places, and have the exercise of civil government and the execution of the laws in their hands; for the protection of good men in their civil and religious privileges, and for the punishment of evil men; for the encouraging of all that is good, and for the discouraging of every thing that is bad. *The people rejoice*; the whole body of the people, because of the public good; a state is happy under such an administration; every one feels and enjoys the advantage of it; see 1 Kings iv. 20. *But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn*; or *groan*^h, or *will groan*, under their tyranny and oppression, and because of the sad state of things; the number of good men is lessened, being cut off, or obliged to flee; wicked men and wickedness are encouraged and promoted; heavy taxes are laid upon them, and exorbitant demands made, and cruelty, injustice, and arbitrary power, exercised; and no man's person and property safe; see ch. x. 11. and xxviii. 12, 28.

Ver. 3. *Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father, &c.]* He that is a philosopher, especially a religious one, that not only loves and seeks after natural wisdom, but moral wisdom and knowledge; and more particularly evangelical wisdom, Christ the Wisdom of God, who is to be valued and loved above all things; and the Gospel of Christ, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; and the knowledge of it, which is the

wisdom which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable; and which lies much in the fear of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ, attended with all the fruits of righteousness: such a son makes glad his father, both because of his temporal good, since he does not waste but improve the substance he has given him; and because of his spiritual and eternal welfare; and since instead of being a reproach he is an honour to him; see ch. x. 1. *But he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance*; his father has given him, and comes to want and beggary; all which is a grief to his parents: or, *that feeds harlots*ⁱ; who live in a riotous and voluptuous manner, and soon drain a man of his substance, and bring him to a morsel of bread; see Luke xv. 13, 14, 30. Prov. vi. 26. and such a son grieves his father, seeing he spends his substance and damns his soul.

Ver. 4. *The king by judgment establisheth the land, &c.]* By executing judgment and justice among his subjects, he establishes the laws of the land, and the government of it; he secures its peace and prosperity, and preserves his people in the possession of their properties and privileges; and makes them rich and powerful, and the state stable and flourishing, so that it continues firm to posterity; such a king was Solomon, 2 Chron. ix. 8. *But he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it*; that is, a king that does so; Gerson observes that he is not called a king, because such a man is not worthy of the name, who takes gifts and is bribed by them to pervert judgment and justice; whereby the laws of the nation are violated, and the persons and properties of his subjects become the prey of wicked men; and so the state is subverted and falls to ruin: it is in the original text, *a man of oblations*^k; the word is generally used of the sacred oblations or offerings under the law; hence some understand it of a sacrilegious prince, who of his own arbitrary power converts sacred things to civil uses. The Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, a wicked and ungodly man; and the Vulgate Latin version, a covetous man; as such a prince must be in whatsoever light he is seen, whether as a perverter of justice through bribes, or as a sacrilegious man; though it may be rendered, *a man of exactions*^l, for it is used of the oblation of a prince which he receives from his people, Ezek. xlv. 9, 13. as Aben Ezra observes; and so it may be interpreted of a king that lays heavy taxes upon his people, and thereby brings them to distress and poverty, and the state to ruin.

Ver. 5. *A man that flattereth his neighbour, &c.]* That speaks smooth things to him, gives him flattering titles, speaks fair to his face, highly commends him on one account or another: *spreadeth a net for his feet*; has an ill design upon him, and therefore should be guarded against; his view is to draw him into a snare, and make a prey of him; he attacks him on

^e יִשְׁבֵּר conteretur, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. confingetur, Schultens; so Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

^f מְרַפֵּא וְאִין מְרַפֵּא (erit) sanitas, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; non sit curatio, Junius & Tremellius; medicina, Piscator.

^g בְּרִבּוּת cum augmentur, Junius & Tremellius; cum multiplicati fuerint, vel multiplicauerit, Vatablus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; in multiplicari justos, Montanus.

^h יִגְמֹל gemet, Pagninus, Montanus, V. L.; gemat, Michaelis; inge-

misit, Schultens; so the Tigurine version, Mercerus; suspirat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

ⁱ רָעָה nutrit, V. L. pascit, Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; pascitur, Michaelis; pascens, Montanus, Mercerus.

^k אִישׁ תְּרוּמַת vir oblationum, Montanus, Baynus, Grotius, Gejerus, Schultens.

^l Vir exactionum, Mercerus; qui levat exactiones, Munster; qui tributa impouit, so come in Vatablus; qui tributa extorquet, Tigurine version.

his weak side, and hopes to make some advantage of it to himself; wherefore flatterers should be avoided as pernicious persons; or he spreads a net for his own feet, and is taken in the snare which he had laid for his neighbour; or falls into the pit he dug for him, as Gersom observes; see Psal. cxl. 5. Hos. v. 1.

Ver. 6. *In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare, &c.*] Or, according to the accents in some copies, *in the transgression of a man is an evil snare*, as Abcu Ezra observes the words may be read; there is a snare in sin to man himself; one sin leads on to another, and a man is snared by the works of his own hands, and is implicated and held in the cords of his own iniquity, and falls into the snare of the devil, out of which he is not easily recovered; and the transgression of one man is a snare to another; he is drawn into sin by ill examples; and, by indulging himself in sin, the evil day comes upon him unawares as a snare; and sooner or later he is filled with horrors of conscience, anguish, and distress. *But the righteous doth sing and rejoice*; not at the snares of others, their sin or punishment; for such a man rejoices not in iniquity, though he sometimes does at the punishment of sinners, because of the glory of the divine justice; and Gersom thinks this is here meant; see Psal. lviii. 10. but rather, as he also observes, the righteous man rejoices at his deliverance from the snares of sin and Satan, and of the world; he rejoices in the righteousness by which he is denominated righteous; not his own, but the righteousness of Christ, it being so rich and glorious, so perfect and complete; he rejoices in salvation by him, it being so suitable, so great, so full, so free, and so much for the glory of God; he rejoices in the pardon of his sins through the blood of Christ, and in the expiation of them by his sacrifice; he rejoices in his person, in the greatness, fitness, fullness, and beauty of it; he rejoices in all his offices he bears and executes, and in all the relations he stands in to him; he rejoices in his word and ordinances, in the prosperity of his cause and interest, in the good of his people, and in hope of the glory of God; and even sings for joy in the view of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and eternal life and happiness; he has peace of conscience now, fears no enemy, nor any danger, and expects a life of glory in the world to come; and oftentimes sings on the brink of the grave, in the view of death and eternity.

Ver. 7. *The righteous considereth the cause of the poor, &c.*] Not his poverty and distress, so as to relieve him, which yet he does, Psal. xli. 1. nor the person of the poor in judgment, and which he ought not to do; for as he should not regard a rich man's person, and favour him, because he is rich; so neither a poor man, because he is poor, through an affectation of mercy, Lev. xix. 15. but the cause of the poor, and the justice of that, and do him justice, though a poor man. This is to be understood chiefly of a civil magistrate, a judge in civil courts, that is righteous; who will take notice of and regard a poor

man's cause, and take a good deal of pains and care that he is not injured. Or, *knoweth the judgment of the poor*^m; he acquaints himself with his case, makes himself thoroughly master of it, searches out his cause as Job did, ch. xxix. 16. But *the wicked regardeth not to know it*; or, *does not understand knowledge*ⁿ of the poor man's cause and case; and there being no money to be had, he does not care to consider it, and look into it, and get knowledge of it, and do him justice; he will not take his cause in hand, or plead it.

Ver. 8. *Scornful men bring a city into a snare, &c.*] Such as despise dominion, speak evil of dignities; proud and haughty men, that speak loftily, and with a contempt of their superiors; or who make a mock at religion, and scoff at all that is good and serious; these bring the inhabitants of a city into a snare, to rebel against their governors, and so into mischief and ruin: or, they *burn a city*, as the Septuagint and Syriac versions^o; they inflame it, or blow it up into a flame; raise a combustion in it, and fill it with strifes and contentions; and bring down the wrath of God upon it, like fire: or, they *blow upon a city*^p; raise storms and tempests in it; turn all things upside down, and throw it into the utmost confusion, or blow it up. *But wise men turn away wrath*; the wrath of men, by their wise counsels and advice, and appease tumults and seditions, and restore things to a quiet and settled state; or the wrath of God, by interposing with their prayers between him and a sinful people, as Moses did, Psal. cvi. 23.

Ver. 9. *If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, &c.*] Enters into a controversy with him, either by word or writing, in order to convince him of his folly and wickedness, of his errors and mistakes. *Whether he rage or laugh*, there is no rest; that is, either whether the fool is angry with the wise man, and rages at him and abuses him, and calls him names, or laughs at him, and scoffs at all his arguments, reasons, and advice; yet the wise man does not cease from proceeding in the contest with him; or he is not dejected and cast down, and discouraged; or, as the Targum is, "he is not broken;" but patiently bears his wrath and fury, his scoffs and jeers: or else whether the wise man deals roughly or gently with the fool, in a more morose or in a more jocose way: it has no influence upon him; he is never the better for it; he does not acquiesce or rest in what he says; like the Pharisees in Christ's time, who are compared to surly children: who, when *piped to, danced not*; and, when *mourned to, lamented not*, Matt. xi. 16, 17. see the note there. The design of the proverb is to shew, that all labour to reclaim a fool from his folly is lost, let a man take what methods he will, ch. xxvii. 22.

Ver. 10. *The bloodthirsty hate the upright, &c.*] As Cain did Abel; and as the wicked world hate all good men, and persecute them, even unto death. *But the just seek his soul*: either the soul of the bloodthirsty, and that either the good of their souls; seek their spiritual welfare, and pray for it, even though they are

^m ידע צדק דין דלים novit justus causam pauperum, V. L. cognoscit, Pagninus, Targum version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. novit & curat justus judicium pauperum, Michaelis; cognoscit justus litem tenuium, Schultens.

ⁿ לא יבין דעת non intelligit scientiam, Pagninus, Montanus, intelligit, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

^o ידלמאט ארבה, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
^p יתפוצצו קריה sufflavit, vel perfavit civitatem, Gejerus; diffiant civitatem, Gussetius, p. 667; exsufflavit civitatem, Coccejus, Schulters.

so cruel and inhuman: or just magistrates will seek after such persons, to punish them for shedding the blood of the upright. Or else the meaning is, that just persons seek the soul of the upright, and make inquisition for the blood of such, to punish for it; which comes to the same sense, as *Aben Ezra* observes: or rather, such seek to defend and preserve the soul or life of upright men from those that hate and persecute them. *Jarchi* illustrates it by 1 Sam. xxii. 23. the 'Targum is, "men that shed blood hate integrity; but "the upright seek it."

Ver. 11. *A fool uttereth all his mind, &c.*] At once; tells all he knows, all that is in his breast; whatever he thinks, and all that he intends to do; what or whom he loves or hates. Or, *a fool brings out all his wrath*: so the *Targum*, *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* versions: he cannot restrain it, nor hide it; it breaks out at once, even all of it, and is soon known, as in ch. xii. 16. *But a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards*: reserves his mind, and thoughts, and designs, to himself; and does not discover them until a proper opportunity offers, when to disclose them is most to advantage; or he restrains his wrath and anger, defers shewing it to a proper time, when it may answer a better purpose, and he may do it without sin.

Ver. 12. *If a ruler hearken to lies, &c.*] To men that tell them in order to soothe and flatter him, or to hurt the character and reputation of others, that they may raise their own: rulers should not listen to and encourage such sort of persons; for, as lying lips do not become a prince, so it is not right to have liars about him; *David* would not suffer such to dwell in his court, *Psal. ci. 7. All his servants are wicked*; or the greatest part of them: for a ruler of such a disposition will take none but such into his service, that flatter him, and calumniate others; and such a conduct, being pleasing and agreeable to him, is a temptation to his ministers to act the same wicked part; as is a prince, such are his courtiers; his example has a great influence upon them.

Ver. 13. *The poor and the deceitful man meet together, &c.*] Or *the usurer*⁹; who by usury, by fraud and deception, is possessed of the mammon of unrighteousness, and is become rich; he and the poor man meet together; and so the sense is the same as in ch. xxii. 2. see the note there. *The Lord lighteneth both their eyes*; with the light of natural life, and with the light of natural reason, *John i. 4, 9.* and so is the same as being *the Maker of them all*, in the above place; or he bestows his providential favours on both; causes his sun to shine upon the rich and poor, the wicked and the righteous, *Matt. v. 45.* Or it may be understood of the light of grace; for though, for the most part, God chooses and calls the poor of the world, and lightens their eyes with the light of his grace, when not many wise and noble are called and enlightened; yet this is not restrained wholly to men of one and the same condition of life; yea, God sometimes calls and enlightens publicans, tax-gatherers, and extortioners, as *Matthew* and *Zaccheus*.

Ver. 14. *The king that faithfully judgeth the poor,*

&c.] That truly executes justice and judgment among all his subjects, particularly the poor, who are too often neglected, because they cannot see persons to plead their cause: such a king was *Solomon*; and especially the *Messiah*, of whom he was a type, *Psal. lxxii. 1, 2, 4, 12, 13. His throne shall be established, or ever*: be secure to him as long as he lives, and to his posterity after; justice to all men, and mercy to the poor, are the support of a prince's throne; see ch. xx. 28. and xxv. 5.

Ver. 15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom, &c.*] Are the means of giving wisdom to a child, reproved by its parent with the rod; and of driving out foolishness from him, and of making him wiser for the time to come; he shunning those evils for which he was before corrected, ch. xxii. 15. So the children of God grow wiser by the corrections and chastisements of their heavenly Father, which are always for their good; and he is a man of wisdom that hearkens to the rod, and to him that has appointed it, and learns the proper instructions from it, *Mic. vi. 9. But a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame*; a child that has the reins thrown upon his neck, is under no restraint of parents, but suffered to take his own way, is left to do his own will and pleasure; he does those things which his parents are ashamed of, one as well as another; though the mother is only mentioned, being generally most fond and indulgent, and most criminal in suffering children to have their own wills and ways; and so has the greater share in the shame that follows on such indulgences.

Ver. 16. *When the wicked are multiplied, &c.*] Or *are in authority*[†]; as the word is rendered, ver. 2. *transgression increaseth*; among the common people, being encouraged by their wicked rulers, whose examples they follow; or as the wicked themselves increase, in numbers, in age, in power, and riches, their sins increase too. *But the righteous shall see their fall*: from their places of authority and power, of honour, riches, and grandeur, into a low and despicable condition, into ruin and destruction; and that with pleasure, because of the glory of God, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness, displayed therein; see *Psal. lviii. 10.*

Ver. 17. *Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest, &c.*] Ease of mind, satisfaction and contentment, freedom from all anxious thoughts and cares; the correction being taken in good part, and succeeding according to wish and design. *Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul*; by his tenderness to his parents, obedience to them, and respect for them; by his prudent behaviour among men; by his sobriety, diligence, and industry in his calling; by his fear of God, and walking in his ways; than which nothing can give a greater delight and pleasure to religious parents.

Ver. 18. *Where there is no vision, the people perish, &c.*] That is, *no prophecy*, as the *Vulgate Latin* version renders it; and which is often the sense of the word, as the vision of *Isaiah* is the prophecy of *Isaiah*; and, in the *New Testament*, prophesying is often put for preaching; and here vision, or prophecy, signifies

⁹ אִישׁ חֲכִימִים vir usurarum, Mercerus; fenerator, Piscator, Tigurine version; usurarius, Munster.

[†] דְּבָרֵי דִּמְרֵי דְּמִיִּים dominantibus impiis; some in Mercerus; quum præsunt impii, Tigurine version.

the public ministration of the word and ordinances, and want of persons to administer them; no expounder, as the Septuagint version; or interpreter, as the Arabic. This was the case in the latter end of Eli's life, 1 Sam. iii. 1. in Asa's times, and before, 2 Chron. xv. 3. in the Babylonish captivity, Ezek. vii. 26. Lam. ii. 9. in the times of Antiochus, Psal. lxxiv. 9. when John Baptist and Christ first came preaching the word, Matt. ix. 36. and now is the case of the Jews, and will be till the time of their conversion. So it was in the Gentile world, before the Gospel was brought into it, Acts xvii. 30. and so it now is in those places where the seven churches of Asia were; and in all Asia, which once heard the word of the Lord, even all that large country; and now it is not heard at all in it, but covered with Mahometan darkness. And this is the case in all Popish countries, subject to the see of Rome, where the word of God is not preached to the people, nor suffered so much as to be read by them; and even in reformed churches, for the most part, only a little morality is preached, and not the Gospel of Christ; so that here the people are perishing for lack of knowledge, Hos. iv. 6. and when the witnesses will be slain, who now prophesy in sackcloth, there will be an entire stop put to prophesying or preaching for a while; but, when they shall rise, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, through the ministry of the word. Now, where there is no preaching, men perish in their sins; the word being the ordinary means of grace, of regeneration, conversion, faith, and salvation; without which, men know nothing of Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him: and where there is preaching, yet it not being of the right kind, there is no spiritual knowledge spread by it, no food for souls under it; they perish with hunger, as the prodigal did, or are in starving and famishing circumstances; no comfort for the people of God, who perish in their comforts under such a ministry, 1 Cor. xiii. 11. and poison is spread among others; false doctrine eats as a canker, and destroys souls. Again, where there is right vision and prophecy, or true preaching of the word, and that is despised and neglected, men perish notwithstanding; as the Jews of old, and all deniers and contemners of the word now, Acts xiii. 41. Heb. ii. 3. and this seems to be intended here, as appears by the following clause. The word translated *perish* has various senses, which agree with the text. It may be rendered, *the people become idle, or cease*; from the performance of good works, grow dissolute in their manners, and licentious in their practices: or they *become refractory*; fierce, obstinate, and ungovernable, and rebel against their superiors: or they are *made naked*; stripped of their ornaments; of their privileges, civil as well as religious, which is often the case where no vision is; as well as of all virtue and morality, and of the blessing and protection of God. *But he that keepeth the law, happy is he*: not the moral law, which no man can keep perfectly, but the law of faith. It may be rendered, *happy is he that*

observes doctrine; the doctrine of the Gospel, where it is preached; that attends to it, values and esteems it, receives it by faith, and with meekness; blessed is he, blessed are his eyes and ears; he sees wondrous things out of this law or doctrine, and he hears and knows the joyful sound, which brings salvation and eternal life unto him!

Ver. 19. *A servant will not be corrected by words, &c.*] Not by them only, especially one that is of a servile, surly, and untractable disposition; otherwise a good servant, and well disposed to his master, and willing to serve him, and promote his interest, a word is sufficient for such an one; when he is bid to go, he goes; or to come, he comes, Matt. viii. 9. or if he has done wrong, and his fault is told him, he will amend another time; whereas a rough ill-natured servant will not regard words, but must have blows to correct him. *For though he understand*; what his master says, and what is his will, and knows he has done wrong, and ought to do otherwise, which is an aggravation of sin: *he will not answer*; own his fault and promise to do better for the future; through the surliness of his nature, and contempt of his master, whom he does not think worthy of an answer: so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *he despises to answer*; thus Job was used by his servants, Job xix. 16. There is an answering which is forbidden servants, Tit. ii. 9. but this is what becomes them, and is expressive of their respect and reverence to their masters, and their ready, hearty, and cheerful obedience to them; and which especially should be in Christian servants to Christian masters, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Ephes. vi. 5—7.

Ver. 20. *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words, &c.*] Swift to speak either before God or men; that takes upon him to speak upon a subject, or return an answer to a question, before he has thoroughly thought of it, and well considered it, and digested what he should say; see Eccl. v. 2. Jam. i. 19. or *hasty in his matters*; in his business; runs rashly and precipitately into things, without duly considering within himself what is right and proper to be done, and without taking the advice of others. There is *more hope of a fool than of him*; of one that has not the gift of elocution, or not so much sagacity in business, and yet takes time to think, and advises with others.

Ver. 21. *He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, &c.*] In a very tender and affluent way; uses him with great familiarity; makes him sit at table with him, feeds him with dainties, and clothes him in the most handsome manner, as if he was one of his own children: *shall have him become his son at the length*: he will expect to be used as a son; he will not care to do any servile work, or any thing, especially that is hard and laborious; he will be for supplanting the son and heir, and think to inherit all himself; or, however, become proud, haughty, and saucy. Jarchi interprets this of the evil imagination, or the corruption of nature, which is in a man from a child; which, if cherished and not subdued, will in the issue

* פֶּרֶק feribatur, Montanus.

† Rebellis erit. Pagninus; retroagitur, Mercerus; deficit, recedit, Vatablus; refractarius, Gejerus.

‡ Nudatur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; denudatur, Cocceius; cessabit & otiosus erit, deficit & retrocedit atque denudatur, Bayanus.

* שֹׁמֵר הַדֶּבַר qui observat legem, h. e. verbum Dei, Cocceius; doctrinam, Amama.

† אִם בְּרִבְיוֹ יִשָּׁע precipitem in negotiis suis, Vatablus, Piscator; in rebus suis, Mercerus.

rule over a man: and some apply it to the body; which, if delicately pampered, and not kept under, will be master of the soul, instead of servant to it, and its members be instruments of unrighteousness.

Ver. 22. *An angry man stirreth up strife, &c.*] In families, neighbourhoods, communities, churches, and commonwealths; that is, one that is given to anger, and gives way to it, in whom it prevails and rules. *And a furious man aboundeth in transgression;* or, *a master of wrath or fury*; one much addicted to it: or, *the husband of wrath*: wedded to it, as a man to his wife: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *who is easy to be angry*: is easily provoked, wrath rises up in him at once; this leads him on to many sins, as cursing, swearing, murder, &c.

Ver. 23. *A man's pride shall bring him low, &c.*] As the pride of Adam, in affecting to be as gods, knowing good and evil; he lost the image of God; was brought into a state of darkness and ignorance, into debt and to a dunghill, to beggary and rags; filled with loathsome diseases, and left in thralldom and bondage to sin and Satan; and so all his posterity were brought into the same low estate. This might be exemplified in particular persons, in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and others; and, as will be in that monster of pride, the man of sin and antichrist; who will be humbled and brought low in the midst of his pride and boasting, Rev. xviii. 7, 8. *But honour shall uphold the humble in spirit*; not who are humble in appearance only, or merely in words, having a shew of humility, a voluntary and affected one; but really in their hearts; whose spirits are humble and contrite; who are so in spiritual things, and are made so by the spirit of God: they are such who are truly sensible of sin; of their folly, and want of spiritual knowledge; of their impotence, and weakness to do any thing that is spiritually good; of their spiritual poverty, and want of righteousness; who see that salvation is all of grace; and that whatever they have is owing to the grace of God; that they are deficient in all their duties, and these insufficient to justify them before God; who submit to the righteousness of Christ, and give all the glory of salvation to the grace of God. These, as they are honourable, being clothed with humility, which is itself an ornament of great price; so they are honoured with more grace from the Lord; they are beautified with the garments of salvation; they have the honour to have the spiritual and gracious presence of God, and fellowship with him, who dwells with such as are of an humble spirit: these are the meek and lowly, that shall inherit the new earth, and reign as kings with Christ in it; and the poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs: and this honour is durable, they shall always abide in it; the grace they have, which makes them glorious, springs up unto eternal life; and the glory they shall have is an eternal weight of glory, a crown of glory that fadeth not away: for so the words may be rendered, *the humble in spirit shall lay hold on glory*² or *honour*; possess it and enjoy it: or rather *shall retain*³ it; shall hold it fast, as the word

is translated in ch. iii. 18. and xi. 16. The sum of the proverb, in both parts, is the same with the words of Christ, often used by him, Matt. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11. and xviii. 14.

Ver. 24. *Whoso is partner with a thief, &c.*] That robs and steals, and takes away another man's property; which to do is sinful and contrary to the law of God, and punishable by it; and so it is to join with him in the theft, or to devise, or consent unto it; or to receive the stolen goods, or to hide and conceal them; or to hide the thief, or the theft, and not declare them; see Psal. l. 18. Isa. i. 23. Such an one *hateth his own soul*; that is, he is not careful of it, he is not concerned for its welfare as he should be; for otherwise no man, properly speaking, hates his own flesh or body, and much less his soul; but he is negligent of the good of it, and, for the sake of the manimon of unrighteousness, runs the risk of the ruin of it; by which he shews that he loves the world more than his own soul; when the profit of the whole world is nothing to the soul of man, Matt. xvi. 26. see ch. viii. 36. *He heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not*: or, *does not declare it*^b; he heareth the cursing of those that have lost their goods, and yet he does not declare where they are, and who is the author of the theft, though he knows; or, being suspected of being concerned in it, or, at least, of knowing who did it, he is had before a civil magistrate, and an oath is given him, which he takes, and yet he conceals the matter: which is an aggravation of his sin, and brings ruin to his soul. So the Targum, “an oath is determined (or brought to “him) and he confesseth not.” Some understand this of a distinct evil, of hearing cursing and swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, and blasphemy against him; yet, through fear of incurring the displeasure of men, and being reckoned a busy-body, or through indifference and want of zeal for the glory of God, do not discover it, or inform of it, to a proper person, for the punishment of such; see Lev. v. 1. and render the words^c, *as he that is partner with a thief hateth his own soul*; so *he that heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not*.

Ver. 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare, &c.*] Either that which is subjectively in man; not a divine fear, or the fear of God, that grace which is put into the heart, for that leads to no snare, but tends to life; but a human fear, a servile one, a distrust of the power and providence, grace and goodness, of God, which has torment in it; which brings into bondage, and into many distresses and difficulties, and is opposed to trust in the Lord: or objectively, which has man for its object; a fear of losing the favour and friendship of men, of not having honour and applause from them; and a fear of their reproaches and reviling; of the wrath of men, of persecution from them, and of sufferings by them, even death itself; which has been sometimes a snare to ministers of the word, to drop or conceal some truths of it; and to professors of religion, not to embrace, own, and profess them; as many, through fear of the Jews, would not profess Jesus to be the Messiah, though they knew he was, John vii. 13. and ix.

¹ חמה בעל dominus furoris, so Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis.
² יתקן יתקן assequetur gloriam, Montanus; potietur gloria, Vatablus.

³ Tenebit honorem, Piscator; tenebit gloriam, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; apprehendit gloriam, Schultens.

^b ולא יגיד & non indicat, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens, Michaelis.

^c So Gejerus.

21. and xii. 42, 43. yea, such a fear has been a snare to the best of men, and leads into temptation and sin; as particularly Abraham and Peter, Gen. xii. 12, 13. and xx. 11. Matt. xxvi. 69—74. *But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe*: that trusts in the Lord as the God of nature and providence, and the God of all grace, for all mercies, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, and leaves himself and case with him; such an one is safe from men, and the fear of them, and from snares and temptations, and sin and mischief, which come by them: or, *shall be lifted up on high*^d; he is upon a high rock, firm and sure; he dwells on high, his place of defence is the munition of rocks; he is in a high tower which is impregnable, in a city of refuge where he is safe; he is as immovable as Mount Zion; he is above the fear of man, or danger from him; he is out of the reach of all his enemies, men or devils; see ch. xviii. 10.

Ver. 26. *Many seek the ruler's favour, &c.*] Or *face*^e; are very desirous of being admitted into his presence, and of having his company and conversation; of having an opportunity to ask a favour of him, and of receiving honour from him, and of gaining him on their side, to take their part in a cause depending; see ch. xix. 6. *But every man's judgment cometh from the Lord*; who has the hearts of kings and rulers in his hand, and directs them in bestowing their favours, and

in determining causes; so that all things are ultimately from the Lord; and therefore it is best to seek unto him, and trust in him: or the state and condition and circumstances of men, as to riches and honour, and the like, are all from the Lord, according as he sees fit; who sets up one and pulls down another, according to his pleasure.

Ver. 27. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just, &c.*] Not his person, but his actions, his unrighteous actions, his ungodly life and conversation; which a man, holy, just, and good, loaths and abhors, and cannot forbear expressing his abhorrence of; and therefore shuns his company, and will have no fellowship with him. And, on the other hand, he that is *upright in the way is abomination to the wicked*: that man that is upright in heart and life, that walks according to the rule of the divine word, in the path of holiness, in the way of truth and righteousness, he is abhorred by a wicked man; he cannot have any pleasure in his company; he is under some awe and restraint which is disagreeable to him; and he cannot bear the reproofs he gives him; besides, if he is silent, his whole life and conversation carries in it a tacit reproof, conviction, and condemnation of him. There always has been a mutual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15.

C H A P. XXX.

Ver. 1. *THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, &c.*] Here begins, according to Aben Ezra, the fourth part of this book; though, according to others, it is the fifth; see the note on ch. xxii. 17. Who this Agur was is a matter of doubt; some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Gersonom, and likewise some Christian writers^f, take him to be Solomon himself, who calls himself Agur, which is said to signify a *gatherer*; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the words of the gatherer, the son of the vomiter*; just as he calls himself *Kohleth*, or *the caller, or preacher*, Eccl. i. 1, 12. The reason given of this name is, because he gathered wisdom and the law^g; or, as Jarchi, he gathered wisdom, and vomited it; that is, delivered it out to others; so he did, he sought after and attained to more wisdom than any before him, for he was wiser than all men; and it may be added, that he *gathered silver and gold, and the treasure of kings, and increased in riches more than any before him*, Eccl. i. 13, 16. and ii. 8. But then all this does not agree with the person whose words these are; for he speaks of himself as being very ignorant, and as not having learned wisdom, ver. 2, 3. and desires neither poverty nor riches, ver. 8. besides, the word *Agur* signifies not a *gatherer*, but *gathered*, as Hillerus^h renders it; and so Cocceius, who thinks also that Solomon is meant,

yet not for the above reasons, but translates the clause thus, *the words of the recollected son of the obedient*; as if it described Solomon the son of David, the obedient one, the man after God's own heart, when he was restored by repentance; but it seems better, with Aben Ezra, to understand this of some very good, knowing, and worthy man, who lived in those times, either before the times of Solomon, or in the same, whose pithy sayings and sentences he had a great regard for, and joined them to his own; or who lived in the times of Hezekiah, or before, whose proverbs were collected by his men, and added to those of Solomon's they had copied in the preceding chapters; see ch. xxv. 1. Even *the prophecy*; or *burden*ⁱ, as many of the prophecies are called; it designs something received from the Lord, taken up and carried to others; so Balaam is said to *take up his parable*, Numb. xxiii. 7. Here it does not design a prediction of future events, unless it can be thought that there is in the following words a prophecy of the Messiah; but an instruction, a declaration of things useful and profitable; so preaching in the New Testament is called *propheying* often, 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3, 4. This is a part of the word of God, of the prophecy which came not by the will of man, but by the inspiration of God, 2 Pet. i. 19—21. which prophecy *the man spake*, this excellent good man Agur,

^d עָלָה sublevabitur, V. L. elevabitur, Pagninus, Montanus; exaltabitur, Vatablus; in edito collocatur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; sublimabitur, Cocceius, Michaelis; celsa in arce locabitur, Schultens, so Ben Melech.

^e אָגוּר faciem, V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, so Michaelis, Schultens.

^f De Dieu, Cocceius, Teclman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 378.

^g Jellammedenu apud Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 26.

^h Onomastic. Sacr. p. 39.

ⁱ אָגוּר onus, Mercurus; prophetia gravis, Tigurine version.

who was divinely inspired; see Numb. xxiv. 3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. *Unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal*; who were either the children of Agur, whom he instructed in the knowledge of divine things; or they were, as Aben Ezra, either his companions with whom he conversed about sacred things, or his disciples who inquired of him about these things, and learned them of him. Some think^k these are titles of God himself, to whom Agur directs his speech, and acknowledges his ignorance of the divine Being, whom he might justly call Ithiel and Ucal, that is, *God with me, and the mighty One*; and certain it is that Agur does direct a prayer to God, ver. 7—9. And some read these words themselves as a prayer, *let God be with me, and I shall prevail*^l, that is, over all mine enemies; for, if God is on the side of his people, who shall be against them? or, *I shall be able to do all things through the Lord's strength*, Rom. viii. 31. Phil. iv. 13. But I rather think the words should be read, as Jarchi observes, *concerning Ithiel and Ucal*^m; that is, concerning the Messiah, to whom these names agree. Ithiel, or *God with me*, is very similar to a phrase used by Christ himself in the days of his flesh, John viii. 29. and xvi. 32. God was with him as the eternal Word, and his only-begotten Son, from all eternity, which denotes his co-existence, nearness of union, equality of nature, and distinction of persons; he was with him as Mediator before the world began, in the council of peace, which was between them both; in the covenant of grace made with him, in which all things were agreed upon respecting the salvation of his people; he was with him in the beginning of time down to his incarnation; he was with him in the creation of all things, in the sustentation of them; in the works of providence, and in the government of the church; he was with him during his state of humiliation; in his infancy, to protect him from the malice of Herod; he was with him when disputing with the doctors in the temple, to direct him; he was with him at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; he was with him throughout his public ministry, from the beginning to the end of it; he did good and healed all manner of diseases, and wrought amazing miracles, God being with him, John iii. 2. Acts x. 38. and he was with him in his sufferings and at his death; and so he is with him in his exalted state; he raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, and ever attends to his prevalent intercession; and will be with him in raising the dead and judging the world. *Ucal*, which has the signification of being able, strong, mighty, and powerful, agrees with Christ, who is the mighty God, the most mighty, the Almighty; and which appears by the works he did before his incarnation, as the creation of all things out of nothing, the preservation of all things, and the several wonderful events in which he was concerned, as the confuson of languages, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, with others; also what he did when here on earth, the mighty works and miracles

done by him, and especially the great work of man's redemption, and also the raising of himself from the dead: moreover, what he now does and will do for his people shew him to be the mighty One; taking the care of all the churches and providing for them: supplying all the wants of his people, bearing all their burdens, supporting them under all their temptations, and delivering them out of them; strengthening them for his service, protecting them from their enemies, keeping them from falling, raising their dead bodies, and bringing all the sons of God to glory: or if the word should be rendered, as it may, *eaten or consumed*ⁿ, it is true of Christ, whose zeal ate him up, Psal. lxxix. 9. and who is the antitype of the sacrifice consumed by fire.

Ver. 2. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, &c.] Every man is become brutish in his knowledge*; man in his original state was a knowing creature, but sinning lost his knowledge, and became like the beasts that perish; hence we read of the *brutish among the people*: but Agur thought himself not only brutish among the rest, but more brutish than any. So Plato^o says of some souls living on earth, that they are *ἡμιωδεις*, of a brutish nature; see Jer. x. 14. Psal. xlix. 20. and xciv. 8. Or I think the words may be rendered, *a brute am I rather than a man*^p; have more of the brute than of the man, especially in the sight and presence of God; a very beast before him, or in comparison of other wise, holy, and good men; or with respect to the knowledge of spiritual, divine, and heavenly things, Psal. lxxiii. 22. or *a brute was I from the time, or ever since I was a man*^q; as soon as he was born, being born in sin, and like a wild ass's colt, Job xi. 12. *And have not the understanding of a man*; or of *Adam*^r; who was made after the image of God, which consisted in knowledge as well as holiness; who knew much of God, his nature, perfections, and persons; of the creatures, and the works of his hands, and of all things in nature; but, affecting more knowledge than he should, lost in a great measure what he had, and brought his posterity in and left them in a state of blindness and ignorance, one of whose sons Agur was: or his meaning is, that he had not the understanding, as not of Adam in innocence, and of prophets and other eminent men of God, so not of ordinary men, of those who had the least share of the knowledge of divine things. Aben Ezra, who takes Ithiel and Ucal to be scholars or companions of Agur, supposes, that they asked him questions concerning the divine Being, nature, and perfections, to which he answers in this strain; shewing his insufficiency to give them any instruction or satisfaction in such matters, or to discourse on such sublime subjects: or rather his view was to shew the blindness and ignorance of human nature with respect to divine things he was about to treat of; and particularly to observe, that the knowledge of a Saviour, and salvation by him, were not from nature, and attainable by that; and that a man must first know himself, his own folly and

^k Jermin in loc.

^l See Trapp in loc.

^m So Junius & Tremellius, Amama, Calovius, Cartwright.

ⁿ Vid. Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 391.

^o De Leg. l. 10. p. 959.

^p מְאִישׁ בְּעַר אֲנֹכִי מֵאִישׁ *hardus sum præ viro, Mercerus; brutus ego præ viro, Cocceius, Schultes.*

^q *Nam brutus sum ex quo vir sum, Junius & Tremellius, so Cartwright.*

^r *Nec est mihi intelligentia Adami, Cartwright.*

ignorance, before he can have any true knowledge of Ithiel and Ucal, the mighty Saviour and Redeemer; of the need of him, and of interest in him. Some think his view is to prove that his words, his prophecy, or what he was about to say, or did say, must be owing entirely to divine inspiration; since he was of himself, and without a divine revelation, so very blind, dark, and ignorant; it could not be owing to any natural sagacity of his, who was more brutish than any; nor to any acquired knowledge, or the instruction of men, since he had none, as follows; and so כִּי, with which the words begin, may be rendered *for* or *because*^r, as it usually is, *for I am more brutish than any man, &c.*

Ver. 3. *I neither learned wisdom, &c.* Natural wisdom or philosophy, so as to understand the nature of things, and reason about them in a philosophical manner; or political wisdom, so as to know how to govern states, and manage the affairs of kingdoms; or in a lower sphere, to transact the affairs of life to any peculiar advantage; he had not a polite or liberal education: or spiritual and evangelical wisdom; that is, not of himself, through the mere strength and force of his genius and natural capacity, or of others; he was not the son of a prophet, nor brought up in the schools of the prophets; he did not learn it, nor was he taught it by men; for this is not acquired by human teaching; it is what comes from above, from heaven, and by the revelation of God. *Nor have the knowledge of the holy; or holies*^s; either of holy persons, such knowledge as holy men of God had; or of the holy angels, not of their nature, capacities, influence, and operations; nor such as they have: or rather of the holy Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit; their nature, modes of subsisting, perfections, purposes, and the like; at least not a full and comprehensive one: or of holy things, of the holy Scriptures, and the holy doctrines of them; however, not what is perfect and complete. It may be rendered, *but I have the knowledge of the holy*^t; though he had not the advantage of human literature, nor had ever been under the instructions of men on one account or another, and therefore what he knew, or was about to discourse of, was from God. Some understand this and the preceding verse of Ithiel, or Christ^u, as in the esteem of men, 1 Cor. i. 23. John vii. 15.

Ver. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? &c.* That has been thither to fetch knowledge of God and divine things, and has returned to communicate it. Enoch was taken up to heaven before this time: and Elijah, as is very probable, after; but neither of them returned again, to inform mortals what was to be seen, known, and enjoyed there: since, the Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and came back again; but then the things he heard were such as it was not lawful for a man to utter: and indeed, since the coming of Christ, there is no need of any further revelation to be made, nor of any such ex-

pedition, in order to obtain it, Rom. x. 6—8. And, properly speaking, there never was any besides him, whose names are Ithiel and Ucal, that ever did this: he lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to his whole mind and will; he descended from heaven to earth, not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; and when he had made known his father's will, and done his work, he ascended far above all heavens, and received gifts for men; to fill his churches and ministers with them, in order to communicate and improve spiritual and divine knowledge; and therefore, with great propriety and pertinence, he applies these words to himself, John iii. 13. *Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?* not any mere creature; not any man or set of men; it is not in the power of any, either men or angels, to restrain or let loose the winds at pleasure; nor has Satan, though called *the prince of the power of the air*, that is, of the devils in the air, any such command of them; none but he that made them can command them to blow, or be still; even he who brings them out of his treasures, and his own son, whom the wind and seas obeyed; see Psal. cxxxv. 7. Matt. viii. 26, 27, and xiv. 32. *The Heathens*^v themselves are so sensible of this, that the power of the winds only belongs to God, that they have framed a deity, they call Æolus; whom the supreme Being has made a kind of steward or store-keeper of the winds, and given him a power to still or raise them as he pleases^w. *Who hath bound the waters in a garment?* either the waters above, which are bound in the thick clouds as in a garment, which hold them from pouring out; or the waters of the sea, which are as easily managed by the Lord as an infant by its parent, and is wrapped about with a swaddling-band, Job xxvi. 8. and xxxvii. 8, 9. But can any creature do this? none but the mighty God; and his almighty Son, the Ithiel and Ucal, who clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering; even he who is the Redeemer of his people, and has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them, Isa. l. 2—4. *Who hath established all the ends of the earth?* fixed the boundaries of the several parts of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the several countries in them? settled the foundations of the earth, and secured the banks and borders of it from the raging of the sea? None but these next mentioned; see Job xxxviii. 4, 5. *What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?* if thou sayest it is a mere man that does all these things, tell his name; or, if he be dead, say what is the name of his son, or of any of his family; so Jarchi and others interpret it: or rather, since it is the Lord alone, and his own proper Son, to whom these things can be ascribed, say what is his name; that is, his nature and perfections, which are incomprehensible and ineffable; otherwise he is known by his name Jehovah, and especially as his name is proclaimed in Christ, and

^r כִּי nam, Junius & Tremellius; quia, Pagninus, Montanus; quoniam, Michaelis.

^s קְדוֹשִׁים sanctorum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

^t דַּעַת קְדוֹשִׁים אֵלֶיךָ ad cognitionem sanctorum novi, Michaelis; ex parte sum humanarum artium, & divinarum guarus sum, Vatablus in Gejerus.

^u Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 391.

^v Κείνοι γὰρ τὰ μύητα ἀνέμω, &c. Homer. Odys. 10. v. 21, 22. Æole, namque tibi divum pater atque hominum rex, & mulcere dedit fluctus, & tollere vento, Virgil. Æneid. 1. v. 69, 70.

^w See a Sermon of mine, called, "Christ the Saviour from the Tempest," p. 17, 18.

manifested by him and in his Gospel: and seeing he has a son of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections, co-essential, and co-existent, and every way equal to him, and a distinct person from him, say what is his nature and perfections also; declare his generation and the manner of it; his divine filiation, and in what class it is; things which are out of the reach of human capacity, and not to be expressed by the tongue of men and angels; see Matt. xi. 27. and xvi. 15—17. Otherwise, though his name for a while was a secret, and he was only called the seed of the woman and of Abraham, Gen. iii. 15. and xxii. 18. and xxxii. 29. Judg. xiii. 17, 18. yet he had many names given him under the Old Testament; as Shiloh, Immanuel, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of peace; the Lord our righteousness, and the Man, the Branch: and under the New Testament, Jesus the Saviour, Christ the Anointed; the Head of the church, the Judge of the world; the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords. This Scripture is a proof of Christ's being the eternal Son of God; of his equality with his divine Father as such, their name and nature being alike ineffable; of his co-existence with his Father as such; and of his omnipresence and omnipotence, expressed by the phrases here used of ascending, &c. and of his distinct personality from the Father; the same question being distinctly put of him as of the Father. Some render the last clause, *dost thou know?* thou dost not know God and his Son, their being and perfections are not to be known by the light of nature, only by revelation, and but imperfectly.

Ver. 5. *Every word of God is pure, &c.*] The whole word of God. *All Scripture*, given by inspiration of God, to which Agur directs, as giving the best account of God, of his name, nature, and perfections; of his Son, person, offices, and grace; being pure, very pure, purified like silver, purified in a furnace of earth. The whole of Scripture is pure, free from all falsehood and error; coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie, and therefore called the *Scriptures of truth*: every promise is pure as well as precious, made without dissimulation, faithfully performed, and all yea and amen in Christ; every doctrine is pure, free from the mixtures and inventions of men; the sincere milk of the word; consistent and all of a piece, not yea and nay; and tending to promote purity of heart and life; wholesome words, and doctrines according to godliness; see Psal. xii. 6. and xviii. 30. and cxix. 140. *He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him*; not the word, but God, whose the word is; and which represents him as a proper object of trust, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, at all times; and as a shield to protect such, by his power and grace, from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also from all errors and false doctrines; see Psal. iii. 3. and v. 12. and xviii. 33. and lxxxiv. 9, 11, 12.

Ver. 6. *Add thou not unto his words, &c.*] To the words of God; as the Jews did, by joining their oral law, or the traditions of the elders, to the written word,

and preferring them before it; and as the Papists, by making their unwritten traditions, and the sense and determinations of their church, equal to the Scriptures; and as all enthusiasts do, who set up their pretended dreams, visions, revelations, and prophecies, upon a foot with the word of God, or as superior to it; whereas that is, and that only, the rule and standard of faith and practice, and is a sufficient and perfect one; see Deut. iv. 2. *lest he reprove thee*; that is, God; either by words or by blows, by threatenings and denunciations of his wrath and displeasure; or by chastisements and corrections for such daring pride, blasphemy, and wickedness; those who add to his words, he threatens to add plagues unto them, Rev. xxii. 18. *And thou be found a liar*; a forger, speaker, and spreader of doctrinal lies, such doctrines as are contrary to the word of truth; not being built on that, but upon human inventions, and additions to it.

Ver. 7. *Two things have I required of thee, &c.*] Or, *have asked of thee, O God*; as may be supplied, for the words are addressed to him. The following is a prayer made unto him, which contains the two requests here referred to; his requests are not many, his words are few; he did not make long prayers, or expect to be heard for much speaking. *Deny me them not before I die*; not that he thought he was near his end; nor is it his sense that he desired some time or other, at least before he died, that he might have these two requests granted him after mentioned; for what are poverty and riches, or convenient food, to a man just dying? but his meaning is, that he might be thus favoured as long as he lived; that all the while he was in the world, he might be kept from sin, and be free from anxious worldly thoughts and cares, having a moderate competency of good things: faith in prayer will have no denial; a wrestling Jacob will not let the angel go without a blessing; impurity in prayer gets much from the hands of God; *the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much*, Jam. v. 16.

Ver. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies, &c.*] This is the first request, to be preserved from sin, in general; which is a vain, lying, and deceitful thing; promising pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, which it does not give. Agur desires to have vain thoughts removed out of his mind, vain words from his mouth, and vain actions from his life and conversation; to have his eyes turned from beholding vanity, and his feet from walking in it; and his affections taken off from the vain things of the world, the lusts, pleasures, profits, and honours of it; as well as to be kept from all errors and false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; with which men that lie in wait to deceive would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect: Agur, conscious of his own weakness, and proneness to evil, desires the Lord would not lead him into temptation, but deliver him from all evil, doctrinal and practical. Some understand this of the forgiveness of sin; which is sometimes expressed by a putting or removing it away, 2 Sam. vii. 13. Psal. ciii.

י כִּי תִרְעָה an nosti? Noldius, p. 393. No. 1337.

פִּרְיָהּ purgatus, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Gejerus; purgatissimus, Junius & Tremellius; Heb. confatus, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultzeus.

* מִתְּוֹתֵי מִתְּוֹתֵי postulavi a te, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurina version, Mercerus, Gejerus; peto ab te, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; petii a te, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultzeus.

12. *Give me neither poverty nor riches*; this is the second request, not to be extremely poor nor over-rich; but to be in a middle state between both, neither rich nor poor; which Horace^b calls the golden mean, and which Agur wisely judged to be the happiest state; most free from care, least liable to temptation, and the best situation to serve the Lord in: a like wish was made by Theognis^c, "I neither love to be rich, nor desire it; but to live on a little, having no evil;" so Martial^d. Both riches and poverty are of God; men are rich or poor, as the Lord pleases; he suffers poverty in some, and gives riches to others: Agur deprecates both, as having their separate, peculiar, snares and temptations; though no doubt this request was made with submission to the will of God; and not as considering either of them as evils in themselves, but as they might be attended with bad consequences, and what is next mentioned being more eligible. *Feed me with food convenient for me*; not merely what was agreeable to his palate, suitable to his constitution, and sufficient for nature; nor for him personally, but for his family also; and what was proper and suitable to the condition and circumstances in which he was, and to the rank and quality he held, whether in a more private or in a more public capacity. Some render it, *the food of my allowance*^e; what is allotted and appointed for me. It seems to be the same which Job calls his *necessary food*, and Christ *our daily bread*: it takes in both food and raiment, which having, men should be contented with; see Job xxiii. 12. Matt. vi. 11. 1 Tim. vi. 8. The allusion seems to be to the stated measure of food allowed to servants by the day, or rather by the month, called *demensum*, and which was but small and scanty^f; yet with this Agur could be content.

Ver. 9. *Lest I be full, and deny thee, &c.*] This is the dangerous consequence of riches, and the temptation they expose men unto; who, being full of the things of this world, are tempted to deny the Lord; not his being and perfections directly, but chiefly his providence; to deny that what they have, they have received of him, but attribute it to their own care, diligence, and industry; and now think they can live without him, without any dependence on his providence, having a large affluence of the things of life: yea, they may be said to deny him, when they forget the bounties of his providence; are not thankful to him for them; that flatter themselves with a continuance of them, without any regard to him, as if he had no concern in the affairs of life; see Deut. xxxii. 15. *And say, Who is the Lord?* as Pharaoh did, Exod. v. 2. I am not obliged to him; I can live without him, I have enough of my own. *Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*; this is the snare that attends poverty; men, for want of food and raiment, are tempted to steal from their neighbours, which is a sin against the law of God, the eighth command; and then to cover the theft, when an oath is

offered to purge them from the charge and suspicion of it, they take it, and so are guilty of false swearing, or taking the name of God not only in vain, but falsely, and so become guilty of the breach of the third command. Agur, a good man, is desirous he might not be exposed to temptations to such evils, and especially which so affected the honour and glory of God.

Ver. 10. *Accuse not a servant unto his master, &c.*] Wrongly, rashly, and without any foundation, nor for any trifling thing; unless it be in a case of moment and importance, when his master's business is sadly neglected, or he is injured in his property by him: especially care should be taken not to calumniate a servant, to abuse him with the tongue, as the word^g signifies; the circumstance he is in should be considered, as a servant; and how severe masters are apt to be towards them, and therefore little matters should be hid from them; and much less should they be aggravated, and least of all should falsehoods be told of them. So Doeg the Edomite accused David to Saul, and the Pharisees accused the disciples of Christ to their Master, 1 Sam. xxii. 9. Matt. xv. 2. the apostle's advice is good, and agrees with Agur's, Rom. xiv. 4. *Lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty*; or, *and thou shouldest sin*^h; that is, afterwards; and so the curse come upon thee he has wished for: or the sense is, lest he should curse thee before men, and hurt thy character and reputation; or imprecate a curse from the Lord, which he may suffer to come upon thee for sin. Aben Ezra interprets this of a servant, that flies from Heathen countries to the land of Israel, to be made a proselyte of; who should not be discovered, and returned to his old master.

Ver. 11. *There is a generation that curseth their father, &c.*] A sort of men that neither fear God nor regard men; and are so inhuman as to be without natural affections to their parents; have no reverence of them, love to them, nor give them any honour or obedience; so far from it, that they curse their father that begot them; imprecate on him all the evils in life they can think of, and wish him out of the world. *And doth not bless their mother*; cannot give her a good word, who bore them, and brought them up in the most tender and indulgent manner; yea, so unnatural as to curse her also, for that is intended by this way of speaking; see ver. 17.

Ver. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, &c.*] Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous; but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency

^b Carmin. l. 2. Ode 10. v. 5.

^c Sententiae, v. 1151, 1152.

^d Nunquam divitias deos rogavi, contentus modicis, meoque latus; paupertas, veniam dabis, recede, Epigr. l. 4. Ep. 65.

^e חֵקֵי panem statuti mei, Montanus; demeni mei, Tigurine

version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

^f Vid. Juvenal. Sat. 14. v. 126. & Not. in ibid.

^g אֵל חַלְשׁוֹ ne crimineris linguam, Montanus.

^h וְאִשְׁמַת & delinquas, Paguinus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; q. d. peccabis, Vatablus.

of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves. No man is pure by nature, or through any thing done by them; but by the grace of God, and through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and such are far from being pure in their own eyes, or as considered in themselves: but those who are pure neither by nature nor by grace, yet think they are so. There were some such in Agur's time, and such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; there were a generation of them; and there are of the same sort in our days, as Papists, Perfectionists, and all self-justiciaries; see Luke xviii. 9. *And yet is not washed from their filthiness*; their native, original, and universal pollution by sin they have from their birth, and which is increased by numerous actual transgressions; and from which none are or can be washed but those who are born of water and of the spirit, or are washed with the washing of regeneration; and are washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, whose blood cleanses from all sin; and are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, which is the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: whatsoever is short of these leaves men unwashed from their filthiness, whatever opinion they may have of themselves; see Job ix. 30, 31. Jer. ii. 22.

Ver. 13. *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.*] Above others, on whom they look with scorn and contempt; as those do who have more riches than others, and boast of them; they despise their poor neighbours, and disdain to look upon them: and such also who have more knowledge and wisdom than others, or at least think so; they are puffed up in their fleshly minds, and say of the illiterate or less knowing, as the proud Pharisees did, *this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed*: and likewise those who fancy themselves more holy and righteous than others; these, in a scornful manner, say, *stand by thyself, I am holier than thou*; and thank God they are not as other men are, as publicans and sinners; see ch. xix. 4, 7. John vii. 49. Isa. lxxv. 4. Luke xviii. 11, 12. Hence Pliny¹ says, that in the eyebrows there is a part of the mind; those especially shew haughtiness; that pride has a receptacle elsewhere, but here it has its seat; it is bred in the heart, but here it comes and here it hangs: wherefore Juvenal² calls pride and haughtiness, *grande supercilium*; and proud haughty persons are said to be supercilious.

Ver. 14. *There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, &c.*] As sharp as swords; like such the beasts of prey have; cruel, barbarous, and inhuman creatures; see Psal. lvii. 4. *And their jaw-teeth as knives*; exceeding sharp and biting: *to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men*: by their tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, to deprive them of the little they have; and even to take away their lives from them, and utterly destroy them; of this disposition are all tyrants and persecutors: such were Rome Pagan, compared to a red dragon in the times of the

ten Heathen persecutions; and such is Rome Papal, signified by a beast, like a leopard, bear, and lion; and which has been drunk with the blood of the saints.

Ver. 15. *The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, Give, give, &c.*] Or *the blood-sucker*³; so it began to be called in the times of Pliny⁴, to which the last generation of men may well be compared: blood-thirsty creatures, that never have enough, and are not satisfied with the flesh of men, nor with their blood; and such particularly the Papists are: and not only this generation of men, but there are three or four things besides, which resemble the horse-leech for its insatiableness; for the horse-leech has not two daughters only, but more. Some, by her two daughters, understand the two forks of its tongue, which some naturalists say it has; though later ones, and more diligent inquirers into those things, find it has not; but either with its three teeth, or by the compression of its mouth on all sides, sucks the blood, and will not let go until it is filled with it⁵: others have proposed the two sorts of leeches as its daughters, the sea-leech, and that which is found in feyny and marshy places. But it is best, by its daughters, to understand such that resemble it, and are like unto it; as those that are of like nature and quality, and do the same things as others, are called their children; see Matt. xxiii. 31, 33. John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 10. and so the number of its daughters, which are always craving and asking for more, and are never satisfied, are not only two, but more, as follows. *There are three things; or, yea, there are three things that are never satisfied: yea, four things say not, It is enough; not two only, but three, and even four, that are quite insatiable, and are as follow.* The Syriac version renders the whole thus, "the horse-leech hath three beloved daughters; three, I say, they are, which are not satisfied; and the fourth says not, It is enough." Some, as Abendana observes, interpret it of hell, by a transposition of the letters; because every one that perverts his ways descends thither. Bochart⁶ interprets it of fate, and so Noldius⁷; and Schultens renders the word, the most monstrous of evils; it signifying in the Arabic language, as he observes, any thing monstrous and dreadful; such as wood-demons, serpents, and dragons, which devour men and beasts. Suidas⁸, by the *horse-leech*, understands sin, whose daughters are fornication, envy, and idolatry, which are never satisfied by evil actions, and the fourth is evil concupiscence.

Ver. 16. *The grave, &c.*] Which is the first of the four daughters, or insatiable things, which resemble the horse-leech: the grave is the house appointed for all living; it stands ready for them, it is open to receive them when dead; and though such multitudes have been put into it, since death reigned in the world, yet it is not full, it waits for more; nor will its mouth be shut till the last enemy, death, is destroyed; see ch. xxvii. 20. This is an emblem of a covetous man, who enlarges his desire as hell or the grave; and is never satisfied with gold, silver, and increase of substance he

¹ Nat. Hist. l. ii. c. 37.

² Satyr. 6. v. 168.

³ קרן קרן sanguisuga, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus.

⁴ Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 10.

⁵ Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo, Horat. de Arte Poet. fine.

⁶ Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 10. col. 801.

⁷ Concord. Ebr. Par. p. 467. No. 1425.

⁸ In voce Βίλλα.

by the vast numbers which go the same way, which a man can see with his eyes or follow. *And the way of a man with a maid*; or to a *maid*⁷; the many artful ways and methods he uses to get into her company, who is kept recluse; and to convey the sentiments and affections of his heart unto her, to gain her love to him, and obtain her in an honourable way of marriage; or to decoy and deceive her, and draw her into impure and unlawful embraces: it may design the private and secret way of committing fornication with her; which sense seems to be confirmed by the following verse. Some of the ancients, particularly Ambrose⁷, interpreted the whole of this verse of Christ: *the way of an eagle in the air*, of his ascension to heaven, with men his prey, taken out of the jaws of the enemy; and which is such as is beyond the comprehension of men, that one of so great majesty should vouchsafe to come down from heaven, or ascend thither: *the way of a serpent upon a rock* he understands of the temptations of Satan, the old serpent, with which he attacked Christ, the Rock; but could imprint no footsteps of his malice and wickedness on him; could find nothing in him to work upon, nor leave any sign behind him, as upon Adam: *the way of a ship in the midst of the sea* he interprets of the church; which though distressed with storms and tempests of persecution and false doctrine, yet cannot suffer shipwreck, Christ being in it; and the last clause he renders as the Vulgate Latin version does, *and the way of a man in youth*; which he explains of the journeys which Christ took, and the ways of virtue he pursued, to do good to the bodies and souls of men, which are so many as not to be numbered. But it may be better interpreted of the wonderful incarnation of Christ, his conception and birth of a virgin; which was a new and unheard-of thing, and the way and manner of it quite inscrutable, and more hard and difficult to be understood than any of the rest; for the words may be rendered, *the way of a man in a maid or virgin*; that is, the conception of Geber, the mighty man, in the virgin; see Jer. xxxi. 22. Gussetius² gives the mystical sense of the whole, as referring to the ascension of Christ; his coming out of the stony grave; his conversation among the people, like the tumultuous waves; and his incarnation of a virgin.

Ver. 20. *Such is the way of an adulterous woman, &c.*] It is equally unknown as the way of a man with a maid; it is difficult to detect her, she takes so much care and caution, and uses so many artful methods to conceal her wickedness from her husband; though she lives in adultery, it is in a most private manner, and carried on so secretly and artfully that she is not easily discovered. *She eateth, and wipeth her mouth*; like one that eats what he should not, wipes his mouth that it might not be known or suspected he had ate any thing; so such an adulteress commits the sin of adultery; and when she has done looks as grave and demure, and carries it so to her husband and all her friends, as if she was the chastest person upon earth.

The allusion may be to harlots, who after an impure congress used to wash themselves⁸, and had servants to wait upon them and serve them with water, called from hence *aquarioli*⁹. *And saith, I have done no wickedness*; she says by her behaviour, by her demure looks; and if suspected and challenged with it utterly denies it. This is an emblem of the antichristian whore of Rome, who, though the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; though guilty of the foulest adultery, that is, the grossest idolatry, yet pretends to be the pure and chaste spouse of Christ; and, under the guise of purity and holiness, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, seduces the minds of many; see Rev. xvii. 1, 5. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

Ver. 21. *For three things the earth is disquieted, &c.*] The inhabitants of it are made very uneasy. *And for four which it cannot bear*; they are a load and burden upon it, and are intolerable to those that dwell on it, and make them very uncomfortable.

Ver. 22. *For a servant, when he reigneth, &c.*] Being unfit for it through his education, not having been trained up in and learned the arts of government and maxims of it; and through the disposition of his mind, which is mean, abject, and servile; and as he has been used himself when a servant, so he will use others⁵; and through his circumstances, being poor, he will take oppressive methods to become rich; and being raised from a low estate, he is the more imperious, proud, and haughty⁶; all which and more make his reign intolerable; see ch. xix. 10. and xxviii. 3. This may be applied to antichrist, the *servus servorum*, who in a haughty, tyrannical, and insolent manner, exalts himself above all that is called God: and reigns over the kings of the earth, at least has done so, and that in such a manner as was unbearable; deposing kings at pleasure, disposing of their kingdoms, and trampling upon their necks, and making their subjects his vassals; see 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17, 18. *And a fool, when he is filled with meat*: as Nabal at his feast, when he behaved so intolerably in his cups towards David and his messengers, that he determined on his destruction, had not Abigail interposed, 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11, 36. and there are many such fools, who having their bellies full of food, and their heads full of liquor, are very overbearing in company, and give their tongues such a loose as is very disturbing: or this may intend such fools, or wicked men, who are full of wealth and riches, and being purse-proud, are exceeding haughty and insolent; set their mouths against the heaven, and blaspheme God that is in it; and their tongues walk through the earth, and spare none, but lash all in an insufferable manner. These disquiet families, neighbourhoods, communities, and commonwealths; see Psal. lxxiii. 7—9.

Ver. 23. *For an odious woman, when she is married, &c.*] Odious for her person, her ugliness, and the deformity of her body; or rather for the ill qualities of her mind, which, whilst single, she endeavours to conceal, but, being married, hides them no longer; but

⁷ בַּעֲיָמָה ad virginem, Glassius, Gejerus, Noldius, p. 144. No. 678.

⁸ De Salomone, c. 2, 3, 4, 5.

⁹ Ebr. Comment. p. 195.

⁵ *Dedecus hoc sumpta dissimulavit aqua, Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 6. in fine.*

⁶ Tertull. Apolog. c. 43. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 14. c. 12.

⁷ *Nec bellua tetrior ulla est, quam servi rabies in libera colla ferentis, Claudian. in Entrop. l. 1. v. 183, 184.*

⁸ *Asperius nihil est humili, cum surgit in altum, Claudian. ib. v. 181.*

becomes imperious, proud, scornful, and malicious, and behaves in an ill-natured way to her husband and all about her, to such a degree, that there is no bearing the place where she is. *And an handmaid, that is heir to her mistress*; that has got so much into her affections that she leaves all she has to her when she dies, which makes her insufferably proud and vain; or she marries her master after the death of her mistress, and so coming into her place enjoys all she had, but only her wisdom and humility; which being wanting, she behaves in such a manner as to make the whole family uneasy. This might be exemplified in the case of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, a type of those that are under the law of works, and seek the inheritance by it; and who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others, Gen. xvi. 4—6. and xxi. 10. Gal. iv. 24—31.

Ver. 24. *There be four things which are little upon the earth, &c.]* Small in bulk, that have little bodies, are the lesser sort of animals. *But they are exceeding wise*; shew a great deal of art and wisdom in what they do; or *but they are wise, made wise* by the instinct of nature, by the direction of Providence, by which they do things that are surprising. Some versions, that have no regard to the points, read the words, *but they are wiser than the wise*; than even wise men; wise men may learn much from the least of creatures; see Job xii. 7.

Ver. 25. *The ants are a people not strong, &c.]* Far from it; what is weaker than an ant? a multitude of them may be destroyed at once, with the crush of a foot. Pliny calls it *minimum animal*, the least animal; and the Arabians use it as a proverb, to call a weak man one weaker than an ant: and there is one sort of ants called *dsar*, so small that one hundred of them will not weigh more than a barley-corn²; they are called a people, because they associate together in great numbers; though small in bulk, and weak as to power and strength; and which is a figure elsewhere used in the sacred Scriptures; see Joel i. 6. and by profane writers, as Homer and Virgil, who speak of bees as a people and nation³; and of nations of flies, and of flying birds, geese, cranes, and swans⁴. *Yet they prepare their meat in the summer*; build granaries with great art and wisdom, carry in grains of corn with great labour and industry, in the summer season, when only to be got, and lay them up against winter. Phocylides⁵ the poet says much the same things of them; he calls them a tribe or nation, small but laborious, and says, they gather and carry in their food in summer for the winter, which is a proof of their wisdom. Cicero⁶ says, the ant has not only sense, but mind, reason, and memory. Ælianus⁷ ascribes unspeakable wisdom to it; and Pliny⁸ discourse and conversation;

see the notes on ch. vi. 16—18. It is a pattern of industry and diligence both as to temporal and spiritual things, Eccl. ix. 10. Matt. vi. 19, 20.

Ver. 26. *The conies are but a feeble folk, &c.]* Or rabbits; though some think these creatures are not intended, because they are not so little as those with which they are ranked, the ant, the locust, and spider; and because of the places in which they burrow and make their houses, which though in holes and caverns of the earth, yet not in rocky but sandy places; rather therefore it is thought that the mountain-mouse, or bear-mouse⁹, as Jerom calls it, is meant; of which, he says¹⁰, there were great numbers in Palestine, and which had their habitations in the holes of rocks; though if Spain has its name from צפן, as some say, because of the multitudes of conies in it; and hence that part of Spain called Celtiberia is called by Catullus¹¹ Cuniculosa; the coney may be thought to be meant by this word, and so it is translated in Lev. xi. 5. Deut. xiv. 7. Psal. civ. 18. the only places where it is elsewhere used; and the word may be derived either from צפן, to cover, by a change of the letters פ and ס; or from צפן, which has the signification both of breaking, and of hiding and covering, Gen. iii. 15. Psal. cxxxix. 11. and this creature breaks the earth and hides itself in it¹². *Yet make they their houses in the rocks*, it is usual with other writers to call the receptacles of any creatures, beasts, birds, or insects, their houses; so we read of the house of the ant, and of the tortoise and snail¹³; and which, because it carries its house on its back, it is called by Cicero¹⁴ *domiporta*; see Psal. civ. 17, 18. the conies make theirs in the rocks, to secure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they want in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection. These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are the inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed! see Isa. xxxiii. 16. and xlii. 11.

² חַכְמַיִם מִחַכְמַיִם sapientia, sapientia imbuta; Heb. sapientificata, Piscator, Gejerus.

³ Sapientiora sapientibus, so Sept. V. L. Arabic and Syriac versions; sapientia superant, vel prudentissimas, Tigurine version.

⁴ Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 22. col. 598.

⁵ Ælia. μύλωνων, Iliad. 2. v. 87. Et populus & prælia dicam, Georgic. l. 4. v. 4, 5.

⁶ Iliad. 2. v. 459, 469. & 15. v. 690, 691.

⁷ Poem. Admon. v. 158, 159.

⁸ De Natura Deorum, l. 3.

⁹ De Animal. l. 16. c. 15.

¹⁰ Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30.

¹¹ Ἰνδῶν ἢ χερρογυλίων, Sept. cherrogyllyi, Vatablus; mures montani, Junius & Tremellius, Cartwright; arctomyes, Schultens.

¹² Epist. ad Sun. & Fretell, fol. 30. C. tom. 3.

¹³ Cuniculosa Celtiberia, Epigram. ad Contubernales, 35. v. 18.

¹⁴ Gaudet in effossis habitare cuniculus autris, Martial. Epigr. l. 13. Ep. 58.

¹⁵ Phædri Fab. 37. 80.

¹⁶ De Divinat. l. 2. c. 64. and so by Hesiod and Anaxilas in Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 23. p. 63.

Ver. 27. *The locusts have no king, &c.]* These are small creatures also, yet very devouring ones; and consume the fruits of the earth, wherever they come and light; see Exod. x. 13—15. they are very numerous, and move in large bodies, and yet with great regularity and order; which shews the wisdom there is in them by natural instinct, though they have no king to command, guide, and direct them: in this the mystical locusts differ from them, who have a king, whose name is Abaddon, Rev. ix. 11. *Yet they go forth all of them by bands;* the Targum is, “they are all gathered together as one.” They get together in one place; they associate and join themselves in bands, and keep together, though they have no ruler over them; an emblem of unity, concord, and harmony, let the form of government be what it will, as the best security to a people: and these creatures, when they move from place to place, they move in a body, in a very regular manner; *in precise order**, as the words may be rendered, with great exactness, every one in his proper place, all in rank and file; and though they have no general to marshal them, yet are in, and march in as good order as the most regular army does. So the Arabic version, “yet in their army, their affairs and manner are in a beautiful disposition;” indeed they are God’s army, as they are called, Joel ii. 25. and it is he that gives them their wisdom, instructions, directions, and commission. It is rendered by some, *every one cutting*; that is, as Kimchi^w interprets it, cutting the green grass and trees; or, *every one dividing*†; that is, to himself, the prey or spoils, as kings do; see Isa. xxxiii. 4.

Ver. 28. *The spider taketh hold with her hands, &c.]* On the thread she spins, or on the flies and bees she catches in her web. This is a small creature, yet very wise; what a curious thread does she spin! what a fine web does she weave! with what exactness and proportion is it framed! as if she understood the rules of mathematics and architecture. *And is in kings’ palaces;* as well as in the houses of poor people, and in temples also; we read^v of one in the temple of Ceres, which drew its web over the face of the image: and though her webs are oftentimes destroyed, especially in kings’ palaces; yet such is her constancy and assiduity, and her unwearied application to business, that, as fast as they are destroyed, she attempts to restore them. This creature is an emblem of diligence in things temporal and spiritual; which those that use in the former sense shall stand before kings, and not before mean men; and in the latter sense shall have the presence of the King of kings, and dwell in his palace here and hereafter: also of worldly-minded men, who labour to be rich; spend their time, and take a great deal of pains for mere trifles; weave curious webs, and, after all, only catch flies; and those they cannot hold, uncertain riches, which make themselves

wings and fly away. Likewise this creature may resemble hypocrites, whose hope and trust are as the spider’s web, built upon their own righteousness, spun out of their own bowels; a fine, thin, slender thread, which cannot bear one stroke of the besom of divine justice; such as these are in the palaces of Christ the King, are in his churches, hypocrites in Zion; see Job viii. 13, 14. Aben Ezra interprets it of the *ape*; the same David de Pomis^z observes, and Mr. Weemse^a, who seems to incline to this sense; and this creature King Solomon, no doubt, had in his palace, since his navy brought many of these, every three years, from those parts to which it was sent, 1 Kings x. 22. and to these hands more properly belong than to spiders, and are taken into king’s palaces for their pleasure and diversion; but to these there is one objection, that this creature is not a little one. Others understand it of the *lizard*, that sort which is called *stellio*; but it is a question whether this is to be found in king’s palaces. Bellonius^b makes mention of a kind of lizard, which creeps into walls and catches flies, and is called by the Greeks *samiamiton*, a name very near the Hebrew word here used: and Pliny^c speaks of the *stellio*, or lizard, as being in doors, windows, and chambers; and as a very fraudulent and deceitful creature to men, none more so; and also as poisonous, as this creature in the text by its name seems to be: and Austin^d makes mention of the lizard as a domestic animal; which catches flies as the spider, with whom he joins it. The Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, take it to be the spider, as we do; which may be thought most likely, since the creature here meant seems to have its name from the Arabic word *sam*, which signifies poison^e; though it is affirmed^f the spider is not poisonous; as is well known by persons who have frequently swallowed them, without any more harm than happens to hens, robin-redbreasts, and other birds, who make them their daily food; and so men have been bit by them, without any ill consequence: wherefore it is still thought by some that the lizard is more probably meant; since some sorts of them are poisonous^g, though not all, for some are eatable; see the note on Lev. xi. 30.

Ver. 29. *There be three things which go well, &c.]* In a very orderly and composed manner; with constancy and cheerfulness, with great stateliness and majesty, intrepidly, and without fear. *Yea, four are comely in going;* very beautiful and lovely to look at as they walk.

Ver. 30. *A lion, which is strongest among beasts, &c.]* For what is stronger than a lion, or more courageous and undaunted? it walks with great majesty, very slowly, step by step, the left foot first; shaking its shoulders as it goes, as the philosopher^h describes its going, and as here intended, and this without fear. *And turneth not away for any;* it does not go out of its

^w Vid. Hilier. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 187.

^x Sopher Shorash. rad. שָׁרַח; so Stockius, p. 377. excidens omnia, herbas, scilicet & fruges, Schindler. col. 633. so Ben Melech.

^y 172 שָׁרַח unaqueque sibi dividens, Bochart; so Schultens.

^z Elian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 57.

^a Lexic. fol. 216. 1.

^b Exercitat. l. 1. exercitat. 4. p. 31.

^c Apud Dieteric. Antiq. Biblic. p. 470.

^a Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 10.

^b Confess. l. 10. c. 35.

^c Goltius, col. 1208. Hottinger. Smegm Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 299.

^d Philosopher. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 800. and vol. 5. part. 1. p. 24.

^e Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 25. & l. 29. c. 4.

^f Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. & Physiog. c. 5.

way for any creature it meets with ; nor does it hasten its pace when pursued, nor shew the lest sign of fear ; nor does it turn its back to any ; which is observed and confirmed by Aristotle¹, Ælianus², Pliny¹, and other naturalists ; particularly what Homer^m and Virgilⁿ say of this animal agrees with this account of Solomon. This creature is an emblem of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is stronger than the strong man armed ; who never turned his back to any of his enemies ; nor turned aside from the way of his duty, or the work of his office, on account of any ; not Herod the fox, who threatened to kill him ; nor Satan, the roaring lion, when he knew he was on the march to meet him ; nor any of those, who, though they had a band of soldiers, that came to take him ; see Luke xiii. 31, 32. John xiv. 30, 31. and xviii. 4—8. and also it is an emblem of righteous men, who are as bold as a lion ; and cannot be moved from their duty by any thing they meet with, but remain steadfast and constant in it ; see ch. xxviii. 1. Acts xx. 23, 24.

[Ver. 31. *A greyhound*, &c.] So Gersom interprets the word ; but Jarchi owns he does not know what is meant ; and Aben Ezra only says, it is the name of a living creature, but does not say what ; but observes, that some interpret it of the *bee*, and others of the *eagle*. The words of the original text only describe something *girt about the loins* : and Kimchi^p observes, that some say it is a hunting-dog so called, because it is thin about the loins, as if it was bound and girt ; and Aristotle^q describes hunting-dogs as well girded about their loins : but others, as Kimchi in the same place observes, interpret it of the leopard, which is small, and strong in its loins ; and others of a bird called the starling ; but he owns he cannot understand the meaning of its loins being girt : David de Pomis^r interprets it of a cock ; others, he says, interpret it a hunting-dog ; others, a leopard ; and some, a species of an unclean bird ; perhaps he means the starling, as before ; and so the word is used for that bird in the Talmud^s, and in the Arabic language^t. Most likely the *horse* is meant ; which is a very stately and majestic creature in its going, and is very comely when it has its harness girt on ; and especially a war-horse, with all its warlike accoutrements, when it proceeds to battle, and stalks on in it ; this creature, one should think, could not be omitted among the four, which is described in so magnificent a manner in Job xxxix. 19—25. and is called the goodly horse in the battle, Zech. x. 3. unless a fine slender-bodied race-horse should be meant : the horse bids fairer than any other creature named to be what is designed. The third creature follows, which goes well, and is comely in going : *an he-goat also* ; which with its long beard walks very gravely, and in a stately manner, before the flock ; and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, *going before the flock* ; see Jer. l. 8. This

stately walk of the goat is very particularly taken notice of by Ælian^u ; he observes, that the she-goat disdains to be last in a flock of sheep, but declares by her walk that she ought to be first ; he adds, that the he-goat goes before the she-goats, glorying in his beard ; and, by a kind of wonderful instinct in nature, judges the male is to be preferred to the female^v. Kings, rulers, and governors, are compared to this creature ; as Alexander the great is in Dan. viii. 5, 11. see Zech. x. 3. especially such resemble it who rule well, and set good examples to their subjects : and to such, ministers of the Gospel are like ; who go before their flocks, guide and direct them, and are examples to them : and likewise all believers ; who strive to go before others in good works, and who then are comely in their going. The fourth is, *and a king, against whom there is no rising up* ; no insurrection, no opposition ; who is not to be resisted or withstood ; a lawful king, in the lawful administration of government, who rules in the fear of God, and according to his word, and the good and wholesome laws of a nation, ought not to be resisted, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. and a powerful, successful, and victorious king cannot be resisted, withstood, and prevailed over ; he drives all before him, and subdues all under him, as David, Cyrus, Alexander, and others. But to none can this better be applied than to Christ, the King of kings ; against whom there is no rising, before whom none can stand, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail ; who, even in his state of humiliation, conquered and subdued all his and our enemies ; destroyed the tyrant, sin ; spoiled Satan, and his principalities and powers ; overcame the world ; abolished death, the last enemy ; and delivered his people out of the hands of all, and made them more than conquerors : and who went forth in the ministry of the Gospel, into the Gentile world, conquering and to conquer ; bearing down all opposition before him, and subduing the people under him ; and who, in the latter day, will engage with his antichristian enemies, the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth, and shall overcome them, and clear the world of them. And this is a King who is comely in his going ; as he was in his goings of old from everlasting ; when he drew nigh to his divine Father, and became the surety of his people ; and in his coming into this world, by the assumption of our nature, to save lost perishing sinners : and so he is in his spiritual visits to his saints ; in his goings in the sanctuary, and walks he takes amidst the golden candlesticks, his churches ; as he will be also when he comes a second time in the clouds of heaven : it will be a glorious appearing ; he will come with all the saints, and be attended with his mighty angels ; he will come in their glory, in his own, and in the glory of his father ; and will be comely in his going indeed ; it will be with great stateliness and majesty. The learned

¹ Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 44.

² De Animal. l. 4. c. 24.

³ Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 10.

^m Εἰς δὲ λαῶν ὁπιστροφός, &c. Iliad. 12. v. 299.

ⁿ Ceu sævum turba leonem, &c. Æneid. l. 9. prope finem.

^p צִיָּוִן צִיָּוִן accinctus lumbis equus, Junius & Tremellius, Picator, Cartwright, Glassius, Bochart, Buxtorf ; infibulatus lumbis equus, Schultens.

^q Sepher Shorash. in voce צִיָּוִן.

^r De Physiognom. c. 6.

^s Lexic. fol. 29. l.

^t T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 2.

^u Goliath, col. 1092.

^v De Animal. l. 7. c. 26.

^w Dux pecoris hircus, duxerat hircus oves, Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 1. v. 58.

Dr. Pococke*, from the use of the word *alkum* in the Arabic language, renders the words thus, *and a king with whom the people is*; who agree together; the one rules well, and the other obey cheerfully; such a king walking with majesty is comely to his people, and terrible to his enemies. The Targum is, "and a king, who stands and speaks in the house of his people."

Ver. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, &c.*] Against a king, against whom there is no rising up; by speaking evil of him, or rebelling against him; which is acting a foolish part, since it brings a man into troubles and difficulties inextricable; or by self-commendation, which is the height of folly, and the fruit of pride; or carried it in such a haughty and overbearing manner to others, as to provoke to wrath and anger. *Or if thou hast thought evil*; purposed and designed it, and contrived the scheme of doing it, though not yet put in execution; though folly is not actually committed, yet since the thought of it is sin, care should be taken to prevent it. *Lay thine hand upon thy mouth*; think again before the thing resolved on is done; as studious and thoughtful men put their hand to their mouth, when they are deeply considering any affair before them: or put a stop to the design, let it go no further; what has been thought of in the mind, let it never come out of the mouth, nor be carried into execution; stifle it in the first motion: or if this respects a foolish action done, as it also may, since it stands connected with both clauses, then the sense is, be silent; do not pretend to deny the action,

nor to excuse it; nor to say one word in the defence of it; nor to lay the blame upon others; and much less to calumniate and reproach such who faithfully reprove for it; take shame to thyself in silence, and repent of the iniquity done. *Aben Ezra* thinks these words are said to *Ithiel* and *Ucal*; but rather, to any and every one, to all that should hear and read these proverbs. The Targum is, "do not lift up thyself, lest thou be foolish; and do not stretch out thine hand to thy mouth."

Ver. 33. *Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, &c.*] Or the pressing of it. This is a thing well known and certain, that of milk, when pressed out of the udder, and put into a churn, and there is shook together, by a constant violent agitation or motion, called churning, butter is produced; and cheese is sometimes called pressed milk⁷, and is pressed with the runnet, and by the hand also⁸. *And the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood*: a too violent compression of it, or forcible blowing of it, in order to purge it from any impurity in it; instead of doing which it may break the tender skin, and bring forth blood, which may be of bad consequence. *So the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife*; irritating the passions of men, and provoking them by scurrilous and reproachful words to wrath and anger, produce contentions, feuds, and lawsuits, which are not soon and easily ended; and therefore such a conduct should be carefully avoided. The same word is used in the three clauses, and signifies pressing, squeezing, forcing.

C H A P. XXXI.

THIS chapter contains the last part of the book of Proverbs; which some reckon the fifth, others the sixth. It contains the instructions of the mother of a prince, whose name was *Lemuel*, which she gave unto him; and which are so valuable, as to be annexed to the proverbs of *Solomon*. The preface or introduction to them is in ver. 1. the address to her son, ver. 2. The vices she cautions him against are uncleanness and intemperance; which she dissuades from, because of the pernicious consequences of both to kings and to their subjects, ver. 3—5. Advises rather to give wine and strong drink to poor people, such as are in distress; as being more useful to them, at least less prejudicial, ver. 6, 7. and exhorts her son to the duties of his office; by pleading the cause of the poor and injured, and administering justice to them, ver. 8, 9. And then at large describes a virtuous woman; perhaps designed as an instruction to her son in the choice of a wife, ver. 10—31. though more than that may be intended by it.

Ver. 1. *The words of King Lemuel, &c.*] Not what were spoken by him, but what were spoken to him; or declaring what his mother said, as what follows shews; of this king we have no account elsewhere under this name. *Grotius* thinks that *King Hezekiah*, whose mother *Abijah*, the daughter of *Zechariah*,

whom he supposes to be a wise man, from whom she had learned much, instructed her son in the following manner; but gives no other reason for this conjecture but that this chapter follows the collection of proverbs made by the men of *Hezekiah*; but they are expressly said to be *Solomon's*, and the words of *Agur* more immediately follow them; and besides *Hezekiah* does not appear ever to be addicted to the vices this prince was; much more probable is the conjecture of *Bishop Patrick*, that he was a prince of another country, perhaps in *Chaldea*, since a *Chaldee* word is three times used in his mother's address to him, and another word in a *Chaldee* termination; and he supposes his mother to be a *Jewish* lady, that taught her son the lessons herein contained. But the general sense of *Jewish* and *Christian* writers is, that *Solomon* himself is meant; whose name *Lemuel* is either a corruption of his name *Solomon*, a fond pretty name his mother *Bath-sheba* gave him when young, and he thought fit to write it just as his mother spoke it; as mothers often do give such broken names to their children in fond affection to them: or it was another name of his, as it appears he had more than one; it signifies *to God*, one that was devoted to him, as he was by his parents and by himself; or one that belonged to *God*, was his, as *Solomon* was; he was beloved of

* Specimen. Arab. Hist. p. 203. So *kuma* is used for people in the *Alcoran*, *Surat*. *Joseph*. v. 9.

⁷ *Pressi copia lactis*, *Virgil*. *Bucolic*. eclog. 1. v. 82. *Et lactia massa coacti*, *Ovid*. *Metamorph*. l. 8. v. 666.

⁸ *Casum bubulum manu pressum*, *Sueton*. in *Octav*. c. 76.

God, and therefore called Jeridiah, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25. one to whom God was a father, and he a son to him; and he was chosen and appointed by him to succeed his father David in the kingdom, 2 Sam. vii. 13. 1 Chron. xxviii. 5. Hillerus ^a makes the word to signify *over-against God*, or *before the face of the first*, or of God; and was a type of the *angel of faces*, or of God's presence, Isa. lxiii. 9. *The prophecy that his mother taught him*; either in his youth, or when he was come to the throne; to whom she had access, and with whom she used freedom; and particularly when she saw he was inclined unto, or going into, the vices she cautions him against. Her instruction is called a *prophecy*, because she delivered it on a foresight of the sins her son would be tempted with, and liable to fall into; and this foresight was either through her natural sagacity, or under a spirit of prophecy; or rather it is so called, because any wise saying, or doctrine of moment and importance, and especially if it was by divine inspiration, was so called; see ch. xxx. 1. as Solomon tells us what his father David taught him, so here what his mother Bath-sheba instructed him in; and it would have been well if he had taken the advice she gave him, and he gave to his son; see ch. iv. 3, 4. and i. 8.

Ver. 2. *What, my son? &c.*] What shall I call thee? though thou art a king, can I address thee in more suitable language, or use a more endearing appellation than this, and what follows? permit me, thy mother, to speak unto thee as my son: and what shall I say to thee? I want words, I want wisdom; O that I knew what to say to thee, that would be proper and profitable; or what is it I am about to say to thee? things of the greatest moment and importance, and therefore listen to me; and so the manner of speaking is designed to excite attention: or what shall I ask of thee? no part of thy kingdom, or any share in the government of it; only this favour, to avoid the sins unbecoming a prince, and to do the duty of a king, after mentioned. The Targum and Syriac version represent her as exclaiming, reproving, and threatening; as, Alas, my son! is this the life thou designest to live, to give up thyself to wine and women? fy upon it, my son, is this becoming thy birth, education, and dignity? is this the fruit of all the pains I have taken in bringing thee up? consider the unbecoming part thou art acting. *And what, the son of my womb?* whom I bore in sorrow, brought forth in pain, and took so much care and trouble to bring up in a religious way, and form for usefulness in church and state? not an adopted son, but my own flesh and blood; and therefore what I say must be thought to proceed from pure affection to thee, and solely for thy good; see Isa. xlix. 15. *And what, the son of my vows?* whom I asked of God, and promised to give up to him again, and did; for which reason she might call him Lemuel, as Hannah called her son Samuel, for a like reason, 1 Sam. i. 28. a son for whom she had put up many prayers, for his temporal and spiritual good; and on whose account she had made many vows, promises, and resolutions,

^a Onomastic. Sacr. p. 268.

^b Venus enervat vires, Avienus.

^c Don Joseph apud Schindler. col. 990.

^d וְאֵי שֶׁחַר? ubi sechar? Montanus, Vatablus; ubi (est) sicera? Cocceius, Michaelis, so Ben Melech.

that she would do so and so, should she be so happy as to bring him into the world, and bring him up to man's estate, and see him settled on the throne of Israel.

Ver. 3. *Give not thy strength unto women, &c.*] Strength of body, which is weakened by an excessive use of venery ^b with a multiplicity of women; see ch. v. 9. and strength of mind, reason, and wisdom, which is impaired by conversation with such persons; whereby time is consumed and lost, which should be spent in the improvement of knowledge: or *thy riches*, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, thy substance, which harlots devour, and who bring a man to a piece of bread, as the prodigal was, ch. vi. 26. Luke xv. 30. and even drain the coffers of kings and princes. *Nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings*; do not give thy mind to take such courses, and pursue such ways and methods, as bring ruin on kings and kingdoms, as conversation with harlots does; see ch. vii. 26. Some think the design of this advice is to warn against any ambitious views of enlarging his dominions by invading neighbouring countries, and making war with neighbouring kings, to the ruin of them; but the former sense seems best. The Targum is, "nor thy ways to the daughters of kings." Solomon was given to women, who proved very pernicious to him, 1 Kings xi. 1—5. Some render it, *which destroyeth counsel*; for whoredom weakens the mind as well as the body.

Ver. 4. *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, &c.* It is not fit for them, it is very unbecoming them; it is dishonourable to them, to such as Lemuel was, or was likely to be; or far be it from kings, let no such thing be done by them, nor by thee. It is *not for kings to drink wine*; nor for princes strong drink; it is lawful for kings to drink wine in a moderate manner, and for princes, counsellors, and judges, to drink strong drink; meaning not such as is made of malt, which in those times was not used; but of honey, dates, pomegranates, and such-like things; but then it was very unbecoming for either of them to drink any of these to excess; it is very disgraceful to any man to drink immoderately, to make a beast of himself, and much more a king or judge, who, of all men, ought to be grave and sober; both that they may perform their office well, and maintain the grandeur and dignity of it, which otherwise would become useless and despicable, yea, pernicious, as follows. Solomon, notwithstanding this advice, gave himself unto wine as well as women, Eccl. ii. 3. The Targum is, "take care of kings, O Lemuel, of kings who drink wine, and of princes that drink strong drink." So the Syriac version, keep no company with them, nor follow their example; see Eccl. x. 17. Hos. vii. 5. The last clause may be rendered, *nor for princes to say, where is strong drink?* where is it to be had? where is the best? as drunkards do; which is according to the marginal reading; but the Cetib, or writing, is וְאֵי שֶׁחַר; but some render it as a noun, *the desire of strong drink*: it does not become princes to covet it.

Ver. 5. *Lest they drink, and forget the law, &c.*]

^e וְאֵי שֶׁחַר aut siceram, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gussenius, p. 90. Schultens.

^f Nunc vino pellite curas, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 7. v. 31. Tu spem reducis, &c. ib. l. 3. Ode 21. v. 17.

The law of God by Moses, which the kings of Israel were obliged to write a copy of, and read over daily, to imprint it on their minds, that they might never forget it, but always govern according to it, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. or the law of their ancestors, or what was made by themselves, which through intemperance may be forgotten; for this sin stupifies the mind and hurts the memory, and makes men forgetful. *And pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted*; a king on the throne, or a judge on the bench, drunk, must be very unfit for his office; since he must be incapable of attending to the cause before him, of taking in the true state of the case; and, as he forgets the law, which is his rule of judgment, so he will mistake the point in debate, and put one thing for another; and *change* and alter, as the word signifies, the judgment of the afflicted and injured person, and give the cause against him which should be for him; and therefore it is of great consequence that kings and judges should be sober. A certain woman, being undeservedly condemned by Philip king of Macedon, when drunk, said, "I would appeal to Philip, but it shall be when he is sober;" which aroused him; and, more diligently examining the cause, he gave a more righteous sentence.^h

Ver. 6. *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, &c.*] Thou, O Lemuel, and other kings and judges, rather than drink strong drink yourselves, at least to excess; give it out of your great abundance and liberality to poor persons in starving circumstances, who must perish, unless relieved; it will do them good, moderately used; and should they drink too freely, which they ought not, yet it would not be attended with such bad consequences as if kings and princes should. *And wine to those that be of heavy heart*; of melancholy dispositions, under gloomy apprehensions of things; pressed with the weight of their affliction and poverty: or, *bitter in soul*ⁱ; such as God has dealt bitterly with, as Naomi says was her case, and therefore called her own name Marah, which signifies bitter; of such a sorrowful spirit, and one thus bitter in soul, was Hannah; and so Job, and others; persons in great affliction and distress, to whom life itself is bitter; see Ruth i. 20. 1 Sam. i. 10. Job iii. 20 and x. 1. now wine to such is very exhilarating and cheering; see Judg. ix. 13. Psal. civ. 13.

Ver. 7. *Let him drink, and forget his poverty, &c.*] Which has been very pressing upon him, and afflicting to him; let him drink till he is cheerful, and forgets that he is a poor man; however, so far forgets as not to be troubled about it, and have any anxious thoughts how he must have food and raiment^k. *And remember his misery no more*; the anguish of his mind because of his straitened circumstances; or *his labour*^l, as it may be rendered; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, the labour of his body, the pains he takes to get a little food for himself and family. The Targum is, "and

"remember his torn garments no more;" his rags, a part of his poverty. Such virtue wine may have for the present to dispel care, than which it is said nothing can be better^m; and to induce a forgetfulness of misery, poverty, and of other troubles. So the mixed wine Helena gave to Telemachus, called Nepenthe, which, when drank, had such an effect as to remove sorrow, and to bring on forgetfulness of past evilsⁿ; and of which Diodorus Siculus^o and Pliny^p speak as of such use. The ancients used to call Bacchus, the god of wine, the son of forgetfulness; but Plutarch^q thought he should rather be called the father of it. Some, by those that are *ready to perish*, understand condemned malefactors just going to die; and think the Jewish practice of giving wine mingled with myrrh or frankincense, or a stupefying potion to such that they might not be sensible of their misery^r, such as the Jews are supposed to offer to Christ, Mark xv. 23. is grounded upon this passage; but the sense given is best: the whole may be applied in a spiritual manner to such persons who see themselves in a *perishing* state and condition: whose consciences are loaded with guilt, whose souls are filled with a sense of wrath, have a sight of sin, but not of a Saviour; behold a broken, cursing, damning law, the flaming sword of justice turning every way, but no righteousness to answer for them, no peace, no pardon, no atoning sacrifice, but look upon themselves lost and undone: and so of *heavy hearts*; have a spirit of heaviness in them, a heaviness upon their spirits: a load of guilt on them too heavy to bear, so that they cannot look up: or are *bitter in soul*; sin is made bitter to them, and they weep bitterly for it: now to such persons *wine*, in a spiritual sense, should be given; the Gospel, which is as the best wine, that goes down sweetly, should be preached unto them; they should be told of the love of God and Christ to poor sinners, which is better than wine; and the blessings of grace should be set before them, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, by Christ, the milk and wine to be had without money and without price; of these they should drink, or participate of, by faith, freely, largely, and to full satisfaction; by means of which they will *forget* their spiritual *poverty*, and consider themselves as possessed of the riches of grace, as rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom; and so remember no more their miserable estate by nature, and the anguish of their souls in the view of that; unless it be to magnify and adore the riches of God's grace in their deliverance.

Ver. 8. *Open thy mouth for the dumb, &c.*] Not who are naturally so, but who cannot speak in their own behalf, either through want of elocution, or knowledge of the laws; or who are bashful, timorous, and fearful, being overawed by the majesty of a court of judicature, or by their prosecutors; or who, as they have not a tongue, so not a purse, to speak for them, the fatherless and the widow; which latter has her name, in

^f יְשֻׁנָה mutet, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Merceus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; dennotet, Schultens.

^g Valer Maxim. l. 6. c. 2. extern. 1.

^h נֶפֶשׁ his qui amaro sunt animo, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version: amaris animo, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; amaris animo, Vatablus, Piscator.

ⁱ Tunc dolor & cura rugaque frontis abit, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

^l עֲמֹלֵי laboris sui, Pagninus, Montanus.

^m Cyprius poeta apud Suidam in voce Ouz.

ⁿ Homer. Olyss. 4. v. 220, 221.

^o Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 87, 88.

^p Nat. Hist. l. 21, c. 21.

^q Symposiac. l. 7. Probl. 5. p. 705.

^r Vid. T. Eab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 10. fol. 198. 4.

the Hebrew language, from dumbness. Here Lemuel's mother advises him to open his mouth freely, readily, boldly, and intrepidly, and plead for such persons. Even in the *cause of all such as are appointed to destruction*; whose destruction is resolved on by their accusers and prosecutors; and who are in danger of it, being charged with capital crimes; unless some persons of wisdom, power, and authority, interpose on their behalf. It may be rendered, *in the cause of all the children of change, or passing away*¹; the children of the world, which passeth away with all things in it, as Kimchi; or orphans, whose help passeth away, as Jarchi; or rather strangers, as others, who pass from place to place, and whose state and condition is liable to many changes; who may be ignorant of the laws of the country where they are, and may stand in need of persons to plead for them.

Ver. 9. *Open thy mouth, judge righteously, &c.*] Having heard the cause, pronounce a righteous sentence; deliver it freely and impartially, with all readiness and boldness, not caring for the censures of wicked and unjust men. *And plead the cause of the poor and needy*; who are oppressed by the rich, cannot plead for themselves, nor fee others to plead for them; do thou do it freely and faithfully. Thus as Lemuel's mother cautions him against women and wine, she advises him to do the duties of his office in administering impartial justice to all, and particularly in being the advocate and judge of the indigent and distressed.

Ver. 10. *Who can find a virtuous woman, &c.*] This part of the chapter is disjoined from the rest in the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and Huetius¹ thinks it is a composition of some other person, and not Lemuel's mother, whose words he supposes end at the preceding verse; but it is generally thought that what follows to the end of the chapter is a continuance of her words, in which she describes a person as a fit wife for her son. Some think that Bath-sheba gave the materials, the sum and substance of this beautiful description, to Solomon; who put it in the artificial form it is, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order till the whole is gone through; though rather it seems to be a composition of Solomon's, describing the character and virtues of his mother Bath-sheba. But, be this as it will, the description is drawn up to such a pitch, and wrote in such strong lines, as cannot agree with any of the daughters of fallen Adam, literally understood; not with Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon; nor with the Virgin Mary, as the Papists, who, they fancy, was immaculate and sinless, of which there is no proof; nor indeed with any other; for though some parts of the description may meet in some, and others in others, yet not all in one; wherefore the mystical and spiritual sense of the whole must be sought after. Some by the *virtuous woman* understand the sensitive soul, subject to the understanding and reason, as Gerson; others the Scriptures, as Lyra, which lead to virtue, contain much

riches in them, far above rubies; in which men may safely confide as the rule of their faith and practice; and will do them good, and not evil, continually. Others, *Wisdom*, who in the beginning of this book is represented as a woman making provision for her household, and said to be more precious than rubies; and is to be understood of Christ; which I should have readily given into, but that this virtuous woman is said to have a husband, ver. 11, 23, 28. which cannot agree with Christ, who is himself the husband of his church and people, which church of his, I think, is here meant; nor is this a novel sense of the passage, but what is given by many of the ancient Christian writers, as Ambrose, Bede, and others; and whoever compares ver. 28, 29, with Cant. vi. 8, 9, will easily see the agreement; and will be led to observe that Solomon wrote both, and had a view to one and the same person, the church of Christ, who is often represented by a *woman*, Isa. liv. 1, 5, 6. Gal. iii. 26. Rev. xii. 1. a woman grown and marriageable, as the Gospel church may be truly said to be, in comparison of the Jewish church, which was the church in infancy; a woman actually married to Christ; a woman fruitful, bringing forth many children to him; a woman beautiful, especially in his eyes, with whom she is the fairest among women; a woman, the weaker vessel, unable to do any thing without him, yet every thing through him: a *virtuous* one, inviolably chaste in her love and affection to Christ, her husband; steadfast in her adherence to him by faith, as her Lord and Saviour; incorrupt in doctrine, sincere and spiritual in worship, retaining the purity of discipline, and holiness of life; and holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience: or a *woman of strength*², valour, and courage, as the word signifies, when used of men, 1 Sam. xvi. 18. Psal. lxxvi. 6. The church is militant, has many enemies, and these powerful and mighty, as well as cunning and crafty; yet, with all their power and policy, cannot overcome her; the gates of hell cannot prevail against her; she engages with them all, and is more than a conqueror over them; she is of great spiritual strength, which she has from Christ, to fight the Lord's battles, to withstand every enemy, to exercise grace, and do every good work; and all her true members persevere to the end: or a *woman of riches*³; that gets wealth and riches by her wisdom and prudence, so Aben Ezra; a woman of fortune, as is commonly said: such is the church of Christ, through his unsearchable riches communicated to her; riches of grace she now possesses, and riches of glory she is entitled to. But *who can find* such an one? there is but one to be found⁴; though there are many particular churches, there is but one church of the first-born, consisting of God's elect, of which Christ is the head and husband, Cant. vi. 9. and there is but one that could find her, even her surety, Saviour, and Redeemer; compare with this Rev. v. 3—5. This supposes her lost, as she was in Adam; Christ's seeking of her, as he did in redemption, and does in effectual vocation; and who perfectly knows

¹ בְּנֵי הַלִּיף filiorum transitus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; transeuntis, sub. seculi, Vatablus, so Ben Melech; filiorum mutationis loci, Piscator; filii mutationis, h. e. hujus mundi, Baynus.

² Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 234

³ אִשְׁת׃ מְצִיבָה mulierem fortem, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus; mul-

ierem virtutis, Montanus, Vatablus; strenuam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

⁴ Mulierem opam, so Aben Ezra.

⁵ Conjux dea contigit uni, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 11. fol. 6. v. ult.

her, and all her members, and where they are; and whom he finds out, and bestows on them the blessings of grace and goodness. *For her price is far above rubies*; shewing the value Christ her husband puts upon her, the esteem she is had in by him; who reckons her as his portion and inheritance; as preferable to the purest gold, and choicest silver; as his peculiar treasure; as his jewels, and more valuable than the most precious stones: this appears by his undertaking for her; by doing and suffering what he has on her account; the price he has paid for her is far above rubies; she is bought with a price, but not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; the ransom-price paid for her is himself, who is more precious than rubies, and all the things that can be desired, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 1 Tim. ii. 6. ch. iii. 15.

Ver. 11. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, &c.*] Christ her Maker is her husband, who has asked her in marriage, and has betrothed her to himself in righteousness; and of whose chaste love, and inviolable attachment to him, he is fully satisfied, as well as of her fidelity in keeping what he commits unto her; he trusts her with his Gospel and ordinances, which she faithfully retains and observes; and with his children born in her, who are nursed up at her side, to whom she gives the breasts of ordinances, bears them on her sides, and dandles them on her knees, as a tender and careful mother does, Isa. lx. 4. and lxxvi. 11, 12. *So that he shall have no need of spoil*: he shall never want any; by means of the word preached in her, prey and spoil shall be taken out of the hands of the mighty, and he shall divide the spoil with them; or have souls snatched out of the hands of Satan, and translated into his kingdom, Isa. liiii. 12. The Septuagint version understands it of the virtuous woman, and not of her husband; *such an one as she shall not want good spoils*; now, prey or spoil sometimes signifies food, as in Psal. cxi. 5. and so Jarchi interprets it here; and then the sense is, she shall not want spiritual provisions; she shall have plenty of them from her husband, who reposes such confidence in her; or shall not want excellent treasures, as the Arabic version, which also understands it of her; such are the word and ordinances, and particularly precious promises, which are more rejoicing than a great spoil, Psal. cxix. 162. and so Ambrose interprets⁷ it of the church, who needs no spoils because she abounds with them, even with the spoils of the world, and of the devil.

Ver. 12. *She will do him good, and not evil, &c.*] Or, repay good unto him, give him thanks for all the good things bestowed by him on her; will seek his interest, and promote his honour and glory to the uttermost; all the good works she does, which she is qualified for, and ready to perform, are all done in his name and

strength, and with a view to his glory; nor will she do any evil willingly and knowingly against him, against his truths and ordinances; or that is detrimental to his honour, and prejudicial to his interest, 2 Cor. xiii. 8. *All the days of her life*: through which she desires to serve him in righteousness and true holiness; and to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work, Luke i. 74, 75.

Ver. 13. *She seeketh wool and flax, &c.*] To get them, in order to spin them, and work them up into garments; she stays not till they are brought to her, and she is pressed to take them; but she seeks after them, which shews her willingness to work, as is after more fully expressed. It was usual in ancient times for great personages to do such works as these, both among the Grecians² and Romans: Lucretia with her maids were found spinning, when her husband Collatinus paid a visit to her from the camp³: Tanaquilis, or Caia Cæcilia, the wife of King Tarquin, was an excellent spinster of wool⁴; her wool, with a distaff and spindle, long remained in the temple of Sangus, or Sancus, as Varro⁵ relates: and a garment made by her, wore by Servius Tullius, was reserved in the temple of Fortune; hence it became a custom for maidens to accompany new-married women with a distaff and spindle, with wool upon them⁶, signifying what they were principally to attend unto; and maidens are advised to follow the example of Minerva, said to be the first that made a web⁷; and, if they would have her favour, to learn to use the distaff, and to card and spin⁸: so did the daughters of Minyas, in Ovid⁹; and the nymphs, in Virgil¹⁰. When Alexander the great advised the mother of Darius to use her nieces to such employments, the Persian ladies were in great concern, it being reckoned reproachful with them for such to move their hands to wool; on hearing which, Alexander himself went to her, and told her the clothes he wore were wrought by his sisters¹¹: and the daughters and granddaughters of Augustus Cæsar employed themselves in the woollen manufacture by his order¹²; and he himself usually wore no other garment than what was made at home, by his wife, sister, daughter, and granddaughters¹³. The Jews have a saying¹⁴, that there is no wisdom in a woman but in the distaff; suggesting, that it is her wisdom to mind her spinning, and the affairs of her household: at the Roman marriages, the word *thalassio* was often repeated¹⁵, which signified a vessel in which spinning-work was put; and this was done to put the bride in mind what her work was to be. Now as to the mystical sense of these words; as of wool outward garments, and of flax linen and inward garments, are made; by the one may be meant external, and by the other internal, acts of religion; both are to be done, and not the one without the other: outward acts of religion are, such as hearing the word, attendance on

⁷ Enarrat. in loc. p. 1099. tom. 2.

⁸ Vid. Homer. Iliad 3. v. 125. & 6. v. 490, 491. & 22. v. 440. Odys. 1. v. 357. & 5. v. 62.

⁹ Cuius, ante torum calathi, lanaque mollis erat, Ovid. Fasti, l. 2.

prope vicem.

¹⁰ Valerius Maximus, l. 10. p. 348.

¹¹ Auct. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 49.

¹² P. in ibid.

¹³ Pomponius Sabinus in Virgil. Cyren, p. 1939.

¹ Pallade placata, lanam molliore puella discant, & plenas exonerare color, Ovid. Fast. l. 2. prope finem.

² Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 34, 35.

³ Georgic. l. 4.

⁴ Curt. Hist. l. 5. c. 2.

⁵ Sueton. in Vit. August. c. 64.

⁶ Ibid. c. 73.

⁷ Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabbin. col. 1748.

⁸ Varro apud Chartar. de Imag. Deorum, p. 64.

ordinances, and all good works, which make up a conversation-garment that should be kept; and they should be done so as to be seen of men, but not for that reason: and internal acts of religion are, the fear of God, humility, faith, hope, love, and other graces, and the exercises of them, which make up the new man, to be put on as a garment; and these should go together; bodily exercise, without powerful godliness, profiteth little; and pretensions to spirituality and internal religion, without regard to the outward duties of religion, are all vain. Hence Ambrose, on the text, observes that one may say, "It is enough to worship and serve God in my mind; what need have I to go to church, and visibly mingle with Christians? Such a man would have a linen, without a woollen garment, this woman knew not; she does not commend such works." She sought all opportunities of doing good works externally, as believers do; and sought after the kingdom of God, inward godliness, which lies in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Not that such garments are to be joined with Christ's robe of righteousness, to make up a justifying one; a garment mingled with linen and woollen, in this sense, is not to come upon the saints, Lev. xix. 19. *And worketh willingly with her hands*; or, *with the pleasure of her hands*; as if her hands took delight in working, as the church and all true believers do; who are made willing in the day of the Lord's power upon them, to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; in whose hearts he works, both to will and to do; and these do what they do cheerfully: these do the work of the Lord, not by the force of the law, nor through fear of punishment, but in love; not by constraint, but willingly, having no other constraint but the love of God and Christ; and not with mercenary selfish views, but with a view to his glory; and they find a pleasure and delight in all they do; Christ's ways are ways of pleasantness; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy.

Ver. 14. *She is like the merchant ships, &c.* Not like a single one, but like a navy of them, that cross the seas, go to foreign parts, and come back laden with rich goods: so the church of Christ, and her true members, like ships of burden, trade to heaven, by prayer and other religious exercises, and return with the riches of grace and mercy, to help them in time of need; and though they have often difficult and dangerous passages, are tossed with tempests, and covered with billows; yet, Christ being their pilot, faith their sail, and hope their anchor, they weather the seas, ride out all storms, and come safe home with their merchandise. *She bringeth her food from afar*: from a far country, from Egypt particularly, from whence corn for bread, as the word here used signifies, was fetched and carried in ships to divers parts of the world; to which the allusion may be: in a spiritual sense, it may mean that the church brings her food or bread from heaven, the good land afar off; where God her father, Christ her husband, and her friends the angels are; with whom she carries on a correspondence, and

from hence she has her food for her family; not from below, on earth; not dust, the serpent's food; nor ashes, on which a deceitful heart feeds; nor husks, which swine eat; but the corn of heaven, angels' food, the hidden and heavenly manna; the bread of life, which comes down from heaven; the Gospel of the grace of God, the good news from a far country.

Ver. 15. *She riseth also while it is yet night, &c.* That is, before the ascent of the morning, as Ben Ezra explains it, before break of day; a great while before day, as Christ is said to rise to pray, Mark i. 35. while it was yet dark; so the church here: which shews her affection for her family, her care of her children, and fervent zeal for her husband's interest and good; a different frame of spirit this from that of her's in Cant. v. 2, 3. *And giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens*. in allusion to a daily stated allowance^a of food given to such; and spiritually may be meant, by her *household* or family, the same with the family of Christ, that is named of himself, which consists of various persons, fathers, young men, and children; and by her *maidens* the ministers of the word; see ch. ix. 3. who are stewards in the family, and have the food for it put into their hands to dispense; it is by these the church gives meat to her household, feeds them with knowledge and understanding, with the wholesome words of Christ, with the good doctrines of the Gospel; these have a certain portion given them, and they rightly cut and divide the word of truth, and give to every one their portion of meat in due season, according to their age and circumstances; milk indeed to babes, and meat to strong men; see Luke xii. 42. The Targum renders the word for *portion* by *service*; understanding not a portion of food, but of work, a task set them, and so the word is used in Exod. v. 14. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, *works*: which may be very well applied to the work and service of the Gospel ministry, and the several parts of it.

Ver. 16. *She considereth a field, and buyeth it, &c.* The field are the Scriptures, in which are hid the rich treasures of Gospel doctrines and promises; and the church, and all truly enlightened persons, consider to what use this field may be put, to what account it will turn; how profitable the Scriptures are, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; what a rich mine and valuable treasure is in them; things more desirable, and of greater worth, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore will buy this field at any rate, and not sell it; will part with all they have before they will part with that; even life itself, which, in an improper sense, is called buying of it, though it is without money and without price; see Matt. xiii. 44. *With the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard*; her own vineyard, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, Cant. i. 6. and iv. 13. who, through the ministry of the word, are planted in the house of the Lord, and flourish there; this the church is said to do by her ministers, who plant and water, as Paul and Apollos did, 1 Cor. iii.

^a כִּפְיָהּ בְּפָנֶיךָ cum voluptate altro neis manibus, so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Piscator, Gejerus, Schulzens.

^b Bacchylides apud Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 3. p. 39.

^c Gaudetque diurnos, ut famulas, præbere cibos, Claudian. de Belle Gild. v. 71, 72.

6, 7. And it is observable, that in the Hebrew text there is a double reading; the Keri, or marginal reading, is feminine; but the Cetib, or writing, is masculine; to shew that she did it by means of men, she made use of in her vineyard for that service; it being, as Aben Ezra observes, not the custom and business of women to plant vineyards, but men. It may be rendered, *he planted*, and be applied to her husband, Christ; who, through the ministry of the word in his church, plants souls in it; and happy are they who are the planting of the Lord! trees of righteousness, that he may be glorified, Isa. lxi. 3.

Ver. 17. *She girdeth her loins with strength, &c.*] Shewing her readiness to every good work; and with what cheerfulness, spirit, and resolution, she set about it, and with what dispatch and expedition she performed it: the allusion is to the girding and tucking up of long garments, wore in the eastern countries, when any work was set about in earnest, which required dispatch; see Luke xvii. 8. and xii. 35. the strength of creatures being in their loins, Job xl. 16. the loins are sometimes put for strength, as in Plautus²; and the sense is much the same with what follows. *And strengtheneth her arms*; does all she finds to do with all her might and main, as the church does; not in her own strength, but in the strength of Christ; to whom she seeks for it, and in whose strength she goes forth about her business; by whom the arms of her hands are made strong, even by the mighty God of Jacob; and because she thus applies to him for it, she is said to do it herself, Gen. xli. 24. Phil. iv. 13. *hereshe plays the man*, and acts the manly part, 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Ver. 18. *She perceiveth that her merchandise is good, &c.*] That it turns to good account; that her trading to heaven is of great advantage; that she grows rich hereby; that her merchandise with Wisdom, or Christ, is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereby than fine gold; and though her voyages are attended with trouble and danger, yet are profitable, and therefore she is not discouraged, but determined to pursue them; she is like the merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls, who finds a pearl of great price, worth all his trouble; see the note on ver. 14. and ch. iii. 14. Matt. xiii. 45, 46. *Her candle goeth not out by night; or lamp*³; her lamp of profession, which is always kept burning, Luke xii. 35. or the glorious light of the Gospel, which always continues in the darkest times the church ever has been in; or her spiritual prosperity, which, though it may be damped, will never be extinct; when the candle of the wicked is often put out, Job xxi. 17. It may denote her diligence in working; who, as she rises betimes in the morning, ver. 15, so sits up late at night, and is never weary of well-doing, night and day. Ambrose interprets it of the lamp of hope, which burns in the night, and by and for which men work, Rom. viii. 24. 1 Cor. ix. 10.

Ver. 19. *She layeth her hands to the spindle, &c.*] As Penelope and her maidens did⁴. Or spinning-

wheel, more properly, the wheel itself, which is laid hold on by the right hand, and turned round. *And her hands hold the distaff*; the rock, stick, or staff, about which the wool is wrapped, which is spun, and is held in the left hand; for though hands are mentioned in both clauses, yet it is only with one hand the wheel is turned, and the distaff held with the other. Not only wool and flax were sought by her, ver. 13. but she spins them, and works them up into garments; her web is not like the spider's, spun out of its own bowels, on which it hangs; to which the hope and trust of a hypocrite are compared, and whose webs do not become garments to cover them, Job viii. 14. Isa. lix. 5, 6. but the church's web is both for ornament, to the adorning of her profession, and for defence and protection from the calumnies of the world; for by these are meant good works, as Ambrose interprets them.

Ver. 20. *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, &c.*] Her liberality is very extensive, reaches to many, and at a distance; it is done with great cheerfulness and readiness; to do good and communicate, she forgets not, it being acceptable to her Lord and husband, Heb. xiii. 16. *Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy*; she gives with both hands, liberally and largely. It may be applied to the church, giving spiritual food by her ministers to those who are poor in spirit, spiritually poor and needy, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Ver. 21. *She is not afraid of the snow for her household, &c.*] That her family should suffer through the rigour of a cold season, when it is frost and snow. *For all her household are clothed with scarlet*: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *with double*⁵, i. e. with double garments; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, joining the words to a following verse; and this, by some, is thought to be the better rendering of the words; since the scarlet colour is no fence against cold, no more than any other, whereas double garments are; and which may be applied to the garment of justification, or the robe of Christ's righteousness, as one; and to the garment of sanctification, internal and external, as the other; the one, even the righteousness of Christ, or Christ the Lord our righteousness, is an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; a sufficient shelter from the cold of snow, and all inclemencies of the weather; by which the vindictive wrath and justice of God may be signified: and the other is a skreen from the malicious insinuations and reproaches of men. But had the word been designed to signify *double*, it would have been in the *dual* number; as it is not, and is always used in this form for *scarlet*; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra interpret it; which colour is an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which the church is justified, Rom. v. 9. and all the household of faith, the whole family of Christ and household of God, are all justified by the same righteousness of Christ, consisting of his active and passive obedience, for the whole of which his crimson blood is put; it is a garment down to the feet,

¹ Lambos defractos velim, Sticlus, Act. 2. Sc. 1. v. 37.

² לְרֵךְ lucerna ejus, V. L. Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens.

³ Homer. Odysse. l. v. 357. & 31. v. 351.

⁴ שֵׁטֶל indigat vestem duplo crassiore, Stockius, p. 1192. duplicibus, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version, Gataker, Gejerus; penulis

duplicibus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; duplicatis, Cocceius: such as Homer describes, made by the wife of Hector, Iliad 22. v. 440, 441. see Odysse. 19. v. 225, 226, 241. change of raiment, David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 218. f.

which covers all his people; they are all made righteous by the one obedience of Christ; they are all clothed in scarlet alike, all kings and priests unto God, all alike justified, and shall be glorified alike. The literal sense is, that if her household are clothed in scarlet in common; much more may it be thought that coarse and suitable garments would be provided for them, to protect them from the cold in winter *.

Ver. 22. *She maketh herself coverings of tapestry, &c.*] For the furniture and ornament of her house, or for her bed; which may signify the ordinances of the Gospel, and the decent, orderly, and beautiful administration of them, wherein the church has communion with her Lord; see Cant. i. 16. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *garments of divers colours*, such as was Joseph's coat, Gen. xxxvii. 3. and, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to the above-mentioned garments, and agrees with what goes before and follows. *Her clothing is silk and purple*; the Tyrian purple, which, Strabo says †, is the best; or purple silk, silk of a purple colour: or rather fine linen of this colour; a dress suitable to a queen, as the church is, who is represented as clothed with clothing of wrought gold, with raiment of needle-work, Psal. xlv. 9, 13, 14. see Ezek. xvi. 10, 13. This is not her own natural clothing, for she has none by nature that deserves the name; nor of her own working, not works of righteousness done by her; nor of her own putting on, but what Christ has wrought out for her, and clothes her with; and which is very rich in itself, the best robe, very ornamental to her; her wedding-garment, and which will last for ever; see Isa. lxi. 10.

Ver. 23. *Her husband is known in the gates, &c.*] Of the city, where courts of justice were kept, and causes heard and tried by the judges, the elders of the land, after mentioned; among whom the husband of the virtuous woman was, where he was known, taken notice of, and celebrated; not so much for the beautiful garments she made him, as Jarchi; but rather for his wisdom, as Gersom, and for being the husband of such a woman; who, taking such care of his domestic affairs, he was more at leisure to attend public business, and transact it with reputation. Christ is the husband of the church in general, and of particular churches, and of every private believer; he fell in love with them, asked them of his father, and betrothed them to himself; and is a kind, tender, loving, and sympathizing husband to his church and people; that nourishes and cherishes them, and provides all things for them, and interests them in all he has: and he is known by them, in the dignity of his person, in the excellency of his offices, and the fulness of his grace; he is known by them in the relation of an husband; he is well known in the church of God, in the assembly of his saints, Psal. lxxvi. 1. he is known in the gates of Zion, in the public ministration of the word and ordinances; his name is celebrated, it becomes great and famous, wherever his Gospel is preached in the world; he is, "known in the provinces," as the Targum; or, "among the cities," as the Syriac version; among the

nations of the world, in the cities of the Gentiles; as he will be, even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, Mal. i. 11. *When he sitteth among the elders of the land*; when he sits in his house, at his table, encircled by his saints, his ancient ones; or as King, head, and husband of his people, on his throne in the church, encompassed with the four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of Gospel churches, Rev. iv. 2—4. And especially when he shall take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously before his ancients, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and all his saints, which will come with him; whom he has loved with an everlasting love; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them, in him, before the world began, Isa. xxiv. 23. and when he shall come to judge the world, and will appear in great glory, and be seen and known of all; and shall sit on his throne of glory, and his elders also, sitting on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel, Matt. xix. 28. so Ambrose interprets it of the universal judgment.

Ver. 24. *She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, &c.*] She not only seeks wool and flax, and spins it, but makes it up into fine linen, which she disposes of to advantage to herself and family. Kimchi says †, the word signifies coverings for the night, as well as day; he seems to design linen sheets: the Arabic version adds, and *sells it to the inhabitants of Bosra*. This, in the mystic sense, may signify either the good works the church does, and which she proposes as a pattern and example to her members; or divine instruction, as others, the preaching of the Gospel, and the truths of it; which she sells, and others buy, though both without money and without price; for, as she freely receives, she freely gives: or the righteousness of Christ, which is called fine linen and white raiment; which, properly speaking, is made by Christ, and sold by him, or bought of him, as before, without money; see Rev. xix. 8. and iii. 18. yet this the church makes her own, by laying hold upon it by faith, and which she holds forth freely to others in the Gospel; which is therefore called *the ministration of righteousness*, 2 Cor. iii. 9. *And delivereth girdles unto the merchant*; to dispose of them for her; either to sell to others, to the Egyptian priests which wore them; or for their own use, to put their money in, girdles being used for that purpose, see the note on Matt. x. 9. Or, *a girdle to the Canaanite* †; the Canaanites or Phœnicians being generally merchants, the word is put for one. By these may be meant ministers of the word; for, as the priests of Rome are called the merchants of the earth, and false teachers are said to make merchandise of men, Rev. xviii. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 3. so faithful ministers, who trade for the good of souls, and seek not theirs, but them, and not their own things, but Christ's, may be called merchants: and to these *the girdle of truth* is given; and these the church exhorts to gird their loins with it, as well as all her members; that they may be ready to every good work, and particularly prepared to preach the Gospel of peace, Ephes. vi. 14, 15.

* Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. i. 1. c. 15. p. 309.

† Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.

‡ Sepher Shoraah. rad. ךד.

† חנאנא, Chananao, V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; negotiatori Phœnicie, Schultens.

Ver. 25. *Strength and honour are her clothing, &c.]* Strength, not of body, but of mind. The church is clothed with strength, as her Lord, head, and husband, is said to be, Psal. xciii. 1. and which she has from him; for though she is the weaker vessel, and weak in herself, yet is strong in him; and is able to bear and do all things, with a fortitude of mind to withstand every enemy, and persevere in well-doing: and she is clothed with *honour*; with honourable garments, suitable to her rank and dignity; in cloth of gold, in raiment of needle-work; with the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness. *And she shall rejoice in time to come*; Aben Ezra interprets it of old age, or of the world to come; and Jarchi and Gersom of the day of death: having fulness of food and clothing, she is not afraid of want in old age, or in any time of distress that may come; and having a good name, laughs at death, and departs in peace; so these interpreters. The church of Christ fears no want at any time, nor need any of her members; they have a clothing that never waxes old, a righteousness that will answer for them in a time to come; their bread is given, and their waters are sure; they shall want no good thing; all their need is supplied from Christ; they have hope in their death, and rejoice then and sing, *O death, where is thy sting?* they will have confidence in the day of judgment, and not be ashamed; shall come to Zion with everlasting joy; and shall rejoice with Christ, angels and saints, to all eternity.

Ver. 26. *She openeth her mouth with wisdom, &c.]* When she opens her mouth, for it is not always open, she expresses herself in a discreet and prudent manner; as well as speaks of things not foolish and trifling, but of moment and importance, and of usefulness to others: or *concerning wisdom*; the church and people of Christ talk of the wisdom of God in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and as made so to them; of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; and of wisdom in the hidden part, or the truth of grace in their souls; of their gracious experiences; nor will they suffer any foolish, filthy, and corrupt communication to proceed out of their mouths, but speak the pure language of Canaan; what is for the use of edifying, and being taken out of the Scriptures is profitable for instruction in righteousness; see Psal. xxxvii. 30. *And in her tongue is the law of kindness*; or the law of love^b, grace and mercy; which is the law of Christ, Gal. vi. 2. speaking kindly and tenderly to every one, exhorting to acts of mercy and kindness, and doing them herself: or the doctrine of grace is in her tongue^c; the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of the grace of God, and the grace of God itself; it is the doctrine of the grace and love of God the Father towards men in Christ, as it appears in their election in him and redemption by him; of the grace of Christ in his incarnation, sufferings, and death; and of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; and which contains various doctrines of grace, as of justification, pardon of sin, and effectual

vocation; and of salvation itself, which is all of grace: and this doctrine of grace, in the several branches of it, the church, and all gracious souls, cannot forbear speaking of; it is often in their mouths, it dwells upon their tongues; and careful are they in other respects that their speech be seasoned with grace, and be such that ministers grace to the hearers, Ephes. iv. 29. Col. iii. 6.

Ver. 27. *She looketh well to the ways of her household, &c.]* The business of her house, her domestic affairs; that her children and servants have convenient food, and in due season; that they have proper clothing, and keep their garments close about them, and unspotted; that every one does the business of his calling, her several officers, and private members; that a good decorum is kept, that all things are done decently and in order; that the rules of her lord and husband are observed; that the conversations of all in her house are according to the word of God, and becoming their character: she takes care of the sick and weak, comforts the feeble-minded, and supports the infirm; she cannot bear them that are evil, whether in principle or practice; that are immoral in their lives, or unsound in their faith; but admonishes them according to the nature of their offences, and casts out the obstinate or incorrigible. The words may be rendered, *she looks well to the ways of her house*^d; that lead unto it, so Gersom; either her house below, the way or entrance into which is by faith in Christ, and a profession of it; and she takes care that none be admitted but such who have it: or the ways in it, the commands, ordinances, appointments, and constitutions of Christ, called the ways of Zion; and concerned she is that all in her family walk in them, and observe them: or her house above, which is eternal in the heavens; Christ's Father's house and her's, in which are many mansions, and everlasting habitations; the way to this also is Christ, who is the true way to eternal life, the strait gate and narrow way that leads to it; without his imputed righteousness, and the regenerating grace of his spirit, there is no entrance into it: besides this, there are lesser paths which agree and coincide; as the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, and the ways of Christ's commandments, which issue in it, and which the church and her true members are careful to look unto and observe. The Arabic version renders it, *the paths of her house are strait*; with which compare Matt. vii. 13, 14. Jarchi interprets these ways of the law, which teaches the good way, and to separate from transgression. *And eateth not the bread of idleness*; of an idle woman, as Aben Ezra; or she being idle does not eat bread; she does not eat it without labour; it is the bread of labour, of many labours she eats, as in Psal. cxxvii. 2. she labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, John vi. 27. the Gospel, that bread which strengthens man's heart, refreshes his spirit, is made of the finest of the wheat, contains the wholesome words of Christ, and by which men are nourished up unto everlasting life; and which particularly directs to Christ the true bread,

^a בחכמה de sapientia, Mercerus.

^b תורת רוקי lex misericordie, Montanus.

^c instructio gratia, Gejerus; lex, vel doctrina gratia, Cocceius, so the Targum; doctrina benignitatis, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^d הליכות ביתה vias domus suae, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; ambulaciones domus suae, Cocceius.

the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but live for ever; and on which true believers feed by faith; but though this is prepared for them, and is the gift of God to them, yet must be laboured for; it is not eaten without labour: believers read, hear, and pray, and diligently attend all ordinances for the sake of this food.

Ver. 28. *Her children arise up, &c.*] As olive-plants around her table; grow up to maturity of age, and ripeness of judgment, and so capable of observing things, and doing the work here ascribed to them: or they rise up in reverence of her, and respect to her, suitable to the relation they stand in to her: or rather it signifies their readiness to shew a regard unto her, and their setting about the work of commendation of her in earnest: or else their earliness in doing it; they rise in the morning, as Aben Ezra's note is; her lamp not being extinct in the night. Jarchi interprets these children of disciples; but they are to be understood of regenerate persons, young converts, born in Zion, and brought up by her; the children of that Jerusalem that is the mother of us all, Isa. liv. 1. Gal. iv. 26. *And call her blessed:* bless God for her, for such a mother, and wish themselves as happy as she is; they pray for her blessedness, peace, and prosperity, as all Zion's children should, Psal. cxxii. 6—9. they pronounce her blessed, as well they may, since she is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; and so are all in her family that truly belong to her, her children and her servants, Psal. lxxxiv. 4. 1 Kings x. 8. see Cant. vi. 9. *Her husband also, and he praiseth her;* that is, he is ready also to rise up and speak in her praise and commendation. Jarchi says this is the holy blessed God. Christ is the church's husband, who is her Maker; see the note on ver. 23. he praises her for her beauty, though she owes it all to him; for her comely parts and gracefulness, which he describes with wonder; for her dress, her garments, though they are his own; for her faith, love, humility, and other graces, though they are his gifts; see Cant. i. 8, 10, 15. and iv. 1—11. and vii. 1—7.

Ver. 29. *Many daughters have done virtuously, &c.*] This, according to Aben Ezra and Gerson, is what was said by her husband and children, and which seems to be right; especially they may be thought to be the words of her husband. By these daughters may be meant false churches, such as the church of Rome and her daughters, who is the mother of harlots, Rev. xvii. 5. These are many, when the true church of Christ is but one, to whom she is opposed, Cant. vi. 8, 9. These may do many virtuous things externally; may make a great shew of religion and devotion; may have a form of godliness, without the power of it; and a name to live, and be dead. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *many daughters have gathered riches; or have possessed riches*, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so the Targum; and in this sense the phrase is sometimes used for getting riches and wealth; see Deut. viii. 17, 18. Ezek. xxviii. 4. and may

well be applied to the false churches, the church of Rome and her daughters, who possess great riches and large emoluments, which yet in a short time will come to nothing, Rev. xviii. 17. *But thou excellest them all;* in real beauty, in true riches, in purity of doctrine, in simplicity of worship, in holiness of life and conversation, in undefiled religion, in doing good works, properly so called. Christ's church is *the fairest among women*, Cant. i. 8. So Ambrose interprets the daughters of heresies and heretics.

Ver. 30. *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, &c.*] A well-favoured look, a graceful countenance, symmetry and proportion of parts, natural or artificial beauty, are vain and deceitful; oftentimes under them lies an ill-natured, deformed, and depraved mind; nor is the pleasure and satisfaction enjoyed as is promised along with these; and particularly how do they fade^e and consume away by a fit of illness, and through old age, and at last by death? And so vain and deceitful are the favour and beauty, the artificial paintings, of Jezebel, that whore of Rome; all her meretricious deckings, dressings, and ornaments; her gaudy pomp and shew in her worship, and the places of it; see Rev. xvii. 4. Jarchi interprets this of the grandeur and glory of the kings of the nations. *But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised;* any single individual, man or woman, that fears the Lord; or a collective body of them, a society consisting of such persons, as the true church of Christ does; who have the grace of fear in their hearts, which is the beginning of wisdom, and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external, private and public: such are taken notice of and highly valued by the Lord; his eye is upon them; his hand communicates to them much grace; and many benefits are bestowed upon them here, and great honour is conferred upon them, and great goodness is laid up for them.

Ver. 31. *Give her of the fruit of her hands, &c.*] According to Aben Ezra, these are the words of her husband to her children; exhorting them to give her the praise and glory that is due unto her. Jarchi interprets it of the world to come; at which time, it is certain, the graces of the church, and of all believers, which are the fruits of the Spirit in them, and of their hands, as exercised by them, such as faith, hope, love, humility, patience, and others, will be found to honour and praise; and every such person shall have praise of God, 1 Pet. i. 7. 1 Cor. iv. 5. and also of men and angels; to whom these words may be an exhortation to give it to them. *And let her own works praise her in the gates;* where her husband is known, in public assemblies; before angels and men, in the great day; when her works will follow her, and speak for her, and she will be publicly praised by Christ, as all the faithful and righteous will, Rev. xiv. 13. Matt. xxv. 21, 34—40. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, *let her husband be praised in the gate;* see ver. 23. so Ambrose, who interprets it of the happiness of the saints in heaven.

^e Forma bouum fragile est, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 2.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR,

THE PREACHER.

THIS book has been universally received into the canon of the Scriptures, by Jews and Christians. The former, indeed, had once some controversy ^a about it; and they thought to have hid it, or put it among the apocryphal books; because, at first sight, some things seemed contradictory to each other^b, and to incline to heresy^c, atheism, and epicurism, and to assert the eternity of the world^d: but they better considered of it; and when they observed those passages were capable of a good sense, and that the whole agreed with the law of God, they changed their minds^e. And so likewise it has been rejected by some heretical persons, of the Christian name, as Theodore and Mopsuest, and others; and by deists, and some deistically inclined. But it carries in it such internal evidences of a divine original, as cannot well be denied; it delivers out and inculcates such divine instructions, concerning the duties of men to God, and one another; concerning the contempt of the world, and the carnal pleasures of it; the fear and worship of God, and a future judgment; as none but the wisdom of God could suggest. There are various things in it which seem to be referred to by Christ and his apostles; at least there is an entire agreement between them: among the many things that might be observed, compare ch. xi. 5. and xii. 11. with John iii. 8. and x. 16. ch. xi. 9. and xii. 14. with 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5. and ch. vii. 20. with 1 John i. 8. As to the author of it, there are evident marks of its being wrote by Solomon; yet, by some Jewish writers, it is ascribed to Isaiah^f, which seems exceeding strange; for though he was a great prophet, and an evangelical preacher, yet no king in Jerusalem; whatever may be said for his being of the house of David, and of the royal family, as some have thought: and, besides, there is no agreement in style between this book and the writings of Isaiah. Others of them ascribe it to Hezekiah and his men^g: Hezekiah was indeed the son of David, and David is expressly called his father; and he was a prince of great character, both

with respect to religion, and to wealth and grandeur; see 2 Chron. xxix. 2. and xxxii. 27—29. 2 Kings xviii. 5. which might induce them to such a conceit; though it seems to take its rise from Hezekiah's men being the copiers of some of Solomon's proverbs, Prov. xxv. 1. but the proof from thence must be exceeding weak; that because they were the transcribers of some of his proverbs, therefore were the writers of this book; and especially King Hezekiah; for, whatever may be said of his character, it falls greatly short of Solomon's, for wisdom or riches; and such things are said, with respect to both, in this book, as cannot agree with him: and, on the other hand, it does not appear that he was addicted to wine and women, and gave himself a loose to carnal pleasures, as the writer of this book had formerly done. Grotius thinks it was wrote by some persons in the times of Zorobabel, and published under the name of Solomon, as a penitent; which is quite shocking, that an inspired writing should have a false title put to it, and be imposed upon the church of God under a wrong name: besides, the name of Solomon is never mentioned in it; though this, by the way, betrays a conviction that he is intended in the title of it: nor are many persons concerned in it; it appears throughout the whole to be the work of a single person, who often speaks as such in it. That Zorobabel should be meant by the one shepherd, ch. xii. 11. is a mere fancy; it is better interpreted, as by many, of Jesus Christ: his chief argument for this conjecture is, because there are three or four Chaldee words in it, as he supposes; which yet does not appear, and are nowhere to be found but in Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldee interpreter: and so there are in the book of Proverbs, ch. xxxi. 2, 3. but it does not follow, that because these words, or others, are but once used in Scripture, that they are not originally Hebrew; since the language was more extensive and better understood in Solomon's time than now, when we have only the copy of the Old Testament in which it is preserved.

^a Misn. Yadaim, c. 3. s. 5. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 7. 1.

^b T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

^c Midrash Kohenet, fol. 60. 4. Vajikra Rabba, s. 22. in principio, fol. 168. 4.

^d Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, c. 28. p. 268.

^e T. Bab. Sabbat, ut supra.

^f R. Gedaliah in Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1. R. Moses Kimchi & alii.

^g T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1.

In short, what is said of the descent and dignity of the writer of this book, of his wisdom, wealth, riches, and grandeur, of his virtues and of his vices, agrees with none as with Solomon; to which may be added, that there is one passage in it, the same he used in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, ch. vii. 20. compared with 1 Kings viii. 46. As to the time in which it was written by him, it seems to have been in his old age, as the Jewish writers observe^b; after his sin and fall, and recovery out of it, and when he was brought to true repentance for it: it was after he had made him great works, and built houses, his own house and the house of God, which were twenty years in building; it was after he had acquired not only vast riches and treasures, which must require time, but had got knowledge of all things in nature; and had seen all the works that are done under the sun, and had made trial of all pleasures that were to be enjoyed; see ch. i.

and ii. it was after he had been insnared by women, which he confesses and laments, ch. vii. 26. and his description of old age seems to be made, not merely upon the theory of it, but from a feeling experience of the evils and infirmities of it, ch. xii. 1—6. The general scope and design of it is to expose the vanity of all worldly enjoyments; to shew that a man's happiness does not lie in natural wisdom and knowledge; nor in worldly wealth; nor in civil honour, power, and authority; nor in the mere externals of religion; but in the fear of God, and the worship of him. It encourages men to a free use of the good things of life in a moderate way, with thankfulness to God; to submit with cheerfulness to adverse dispensations of Providence; to fear God and honour the king; to be dutiful to civil magistrates, and kind to the poor; to expect a future state, and an awful judgment; with many other useful things.

C H A P. I.

AFTER the title of the book, which describes the author of it, by his office, as a preacher; by his descent, as the son of David; and by his dignity, king in Jerusalem, ver. 1. the principal doctrine insisted on in it is laid down, that the world, and all things in it, are most vain things, ver. 2. Which is proved in general, by the unprofitableness of all labour to attain them, be they what they will, wisdom, knowledge, riches, honours, and pleasures, ver. 3. by the short continuance of men on earth, though that abides, ver. 4. by the constant revolution, going and returning, of the most useful creatures, the sun, winds, and water, ver. 5—7. by the unfruitful and unsatisfactory labour all things are full of, ver. 8. by the continual repetition of the same things, and the oblivion of them, ver. 9—11. and by Solomon's own experience in one particular thing; his search after, and acquisition of, knowledge and wisdom, which he attained a large share of; and which he found attended with labour, difficulty, and little satisfaction; nay, was vanity and vexation of spirit; for, as his knowledge increased, so did his grief and sorrow, ver. 12—18.

Ver. 1. *The words of the preacher, &c.*] Or the preacher's sermon. The whole book is one continued discourse, and an excellent one it is; consisting not of mere words, but of solid matter; of things of the greatest importance, clothed with words apt and acceptable, which the preacher sought out, ch. xii. 10. The Targum is, "the words of the prophecy, which the preacher, who is Solomon, prophesied." According to which this book is prophetic; and so it interprets it, and owns it to be Solomon's. The word *Koheleth*, rendered *preacher*, is by some taken to be a

proper name of Solomon; who, besides the name of Solomon, his parents gave him, and Jedidiah, as the Lord called him, had the name of *Koheleth*; nay, the Jews say¹, he had seven names, and to these three add four more, Agur, Jake, Ithiel, and Lemuel; the word by many is left untranslated²; but it seems rather to be an appellative, and is by some rendered *gathered*, or the *soul-gathered*³. Solomon had apostatized from the church and people of God, and had followed *idols*; but now was brought back by repentance, and was gathered into the fold, from whence he had strayed as a lost sheep; and therefore chooses to call himself by this name, when he preached his recantation-sermon, as this book may be said to be. Others rather render it, *the gatherer*⁴; and was so called, as the Jewish writers say⁵, either because he gathered and got much wisdom, as it is certain he did; or because he gathered much people from all parts, to hear his wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 34. and x. 1. in which he was a type of Christ, Gen. xlix. 10. John iii. 26. Matt. xxiii. 37. or this discourse of his was delivered in a large congregation, got together for that purpose; as he gathered and assembled together the heads and chief of the people, at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 1. so he might call them together to hear the retraction he made of his sins and errors, and repentance for them: and this might justly entitle him to the character of a *preacher*, as we render it, an office of great honour, as well as of great importance to the souls of men; which Solomon, though a king, did not disdain to appear in; as David his father before him, and Noah before him, the father, king, and governor of the new world, Psal. xxxiv. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 5. The word

^b Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut in Kohelet, 1. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. Scder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41. R. Gedaliah in Shalshet Hukabala, fol. 8. e.

¹ Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 60. a.

² קוהלת Koheleth, Broughton, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Rambachius.

¹ Η ψυχη η συναγαγωμεν, anima congregata, Cocceius.

² Collector, Arabic version; congregator, q. d. sapientia congregatrix, Amama, Rambachius; the gathering soul, either recollecting itself, or by aduonitions gathering others, Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 76.

³ Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. & Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Baruch in loc. Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut, ut supra.

used in the feminine gender, as ministers of the Gospel are sometimes expressed by a word of the like kind; and are called maidens, Psal. lxxviii. 11. Prov. ix. 3. to denote their virgin purity, and incorruptness in doctrine and conversation: and here some respect may be had to Wisdom, or Christ, frequently spoken of by Solomon, as a woman, and who now spoke by him; which is a much better reason for the use of the word than his effeminacy, which his sin or his old age had brought him to. The word *soul* may be supplied, as by some, and be rendered, *the preaching soul*; since, no doubt, he performed his work as such with all his heart and soul. He further describes himself by his descent, *the son of David*; which he mentions either as an honour to him, that he was the son of so great, so wise, so holy, and good a man; or as an aggravation of his fall, that being the descendant of such a person, and having had so religious an education, and so good an example before him, and yet should sin so foully as he had done; and it might also encourage him, that he had interest in the sure mercies of David, and in the promises made to him, that when his children sinned, they should be chastised, yet his loving-kindness and covenant should not depart from them. *King of Jerusalem*; not of Jerusalem only, but of all Israel, for as yet no division was made; see ver. 12. In Jerusalem, the city of Wisdom, as Jarchi observes, where many wise and good men dwelt, as well as it was the metropolis of the nation; and, which was more, it was the city where the temple stood, and where the worship of God was performed, and his priests ministered, and his people served him; and yet he, their king, that should have set them a better example, fell into idolatry!

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, &c.*] This is the preacher's text; the theme and subject he after enlarges upon, and proves by an induction of particulars; it is the sum of the whole book. *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*; most extremely vain, exceedingly so, the height of vanity: this is repeated, both for the confirmation of it, men being hard of belief of it; and to shew how much the preacher was affected with it himself, and to affect others with the same. The Targum reads, *vanity of vanities in this world*; which is right as to the sense of the passage; for though the world, and all things in it, were made by God, and are very good; yet, in comparison of him, are less than nothing, and vanity; and especially as become subject to it through sin, a curse being brought upon the earth by it; and all the creatures made for the use of men liable to be abused, and are abused, through luxury, intemperance, and cruelty; and the whole world usurped by Satan, as the god of it. Nor is there any thing in it, and put it all together, that can give satisfaction and contentment; and all is fickle, fluid, transitory, and vanishing, and in a short time will come to an end: the riches of the world afford no real happiness, having no substance in them, and being of no long continuance; nor can a man procure happiness for himself or others, or avert wrath to come, and secure from it; and especially these are vanity, when compared with the true riches, the riches of grace and

glory, which are solid, substantial, satisfying, and are for ever: the honours of this world are empty things, last a very short time; and are nothing in comparison of the honour that comes from God, and all the saints have, in the enjoyment of grace here, and glory hereafter: the sinful pleasures of life are imaginary things, short-lived ones; and not to be mentioned with spiritual pleasures, enjoyed in the house of God, under the word and ordinances; and especially with those pleasures, for evermore, at the right hand of God. Natural wisdom and knowledge, the best thing in the world; yet much of it is only in opinion; a great deal of it false; and none saving, and of any worth, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; all the forms of religion and external righteousness, where there is not the true fear and grace of God, are all vain and empty things. Man, the principal creature in the world, is *vain man*; that is his proper character in nature and religion, destitute of grace: every man is vain, nay, vanity itself; high and low, rich and poor, learned or unlearned; nay, man at his best estate, as worldly and natural, is so; as even Adam was in his state of innocence, being fickle and mutable, and hence he fell, Psal. xxxix. 5, 11. and lxii. 9. and especially his fallen posterity, whose bodies are tenements of clay; their beauty vain and deceitful; their circumstances changeable; their minds empty of all that is good; their thoughts and imaginations vain; their words, and works, and actions, and their whole life and conversation; they are not at all to be trusted in for help, by themselves or others. The Targum is, "when Solomon, king of Israel, saw, by the spirit of prophecy, that the kingdom of Rehoboam his son would be divided with Jeroboam, the son of Nebat; and that Jerusalem, and the house of the sanctuary, would be destroyed, and the people of the children of Israel would be carried captive; he said, by his word, Vanity of vanities in this world, vanity of vanities; all that I and my father David have laboured for, all is vanity!"

Ver. 3. *What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*] This is a general proof of the vanity of all things, since there is no profit arises to a man of all his labour; for, though it is put by way of question, it carries in it a strong negative. All things a man enjoys he gets by labour; for man, through sin, is doomed and born unto it, Job v. 7. he gets his bread by the sweat of his brow, which is a part of the curse for sin; and the wealth and riches got by a diligent hand, with a divine blessing, are got by labour; and so all knowledge of natural and civil things is acquired through much labour and weariness of the flesh; and these are things a man labours for *under the sun*, which measures out the time of his labour: when the sun riseth, man goeth forth to his labour; and, by the light and comfortable warmth of it, he performs his work with more exactness and cheerfulness; in some climates, and in some seasons, its heat, especially at noon, makes labour burdensome, which is called, bearing *the heat and burden of the day*, Matt. xx. 12. and, when it sets, it closes the time of service and labour, and therefore the servant earnestly desires the evening

shadow, Job vii. 2. But now, of what profit and advantage is all this labour man takes under the sun, towards his happiness in the world above the sun? that glory and felicity, which lies in super-celestial places in Christ Jesus? none at all. Or, *what remains of all his labour?* as it may be rendered; that is, after death: so the Targum, "what is there remains to a man after he is dead, of all his labour which he laboured under the sun in this world?" nothing at all. He goes naked out of the world as he came into it; he can carry nothing away with him of all his wealth and substance he has acquired; nor any of his worldly glory, and grandeur, and titles of honour; these all die with him, his glory does not descend after him; wherefore it is a clear case that all these things are vanity of vanities; see Job i. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 7. Psal. xlix. 16, 17. Eccl. v. 15. And, indeed, works of righteousness done by men, and trusted in, and by which they labour to establish a justifying righteousness, are of no profit and advantage to them in the business of justification and salvation; indeed, when these are done from right principles, and with right views, the labour in them shall not be in vain; God will not forget it; it shall have a reward of grace, though not of debt.

Ver. 4. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, &c.*] This shews that a man can have no profit of all his labour under the sun, because of his short continuance; as soon almost as he has got any thing by his labour, he must leave it: not only particular persons, but families, nations, and kingdoms; even all the inhabitants of the world, that are contemporaries, live together in the same age, in a certain period of time; these gradually go off by death, till the whole generation is consumed, as the generation of the Israelites in the wilderness were. Death is meant by passing away; it is a going out of time into eternity; a departure out of this world to another; a quitting of the earthly house of this tabernacle for the grave, the house appointed for all living; it is man's going to his long home: and this is going the way of all the earth; in a short time a whole race or generation of men go off the stage of the world, and then another succeeds¹; they come in by birth; and men are described from their birth by such as *come into the world*: for which there is a set time, as well as for going out, John i. 9. Eccl. iii. 2. and these having been a while in the world, go off to make room for another generation; and so things have been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end of it. Homer² illustrates this by the succession of leaves of trees; as is the generation of trees, he says, such is that of men; some leaves, the wind sheds them on the ground; others the budding forest puts forth, and they grow in their room in the spring-time; so is the generation of men; one is born, and another ceases. Now death puts an end to all a man's enjoyments got by labour, his riches, honour, and natural knowledge; these all cease with

him, and therefore he has no profit of all his labour under the sun. *But the earth abideth for ever*; for a long time, until the dissolution of all things; and then, though that and all in it will be burnt up, yet it will rather be changed than destroyed; the form of it will be altered, when the substance of it will continue; it will not be annihilated, but renewed and refined. This is mentioned to shew that the earth, which was made for man, of which he is the inhabitant and proprietor, is more stable than he himself; he soon passes off from it, but that continues; he returns to the earth, from whence he came, but that remains as it did; he dies, and leaves the earth behind him, and all his acquisitions in it; and therefore what profit has he of all his labours on it? Besides, that remains to have the same things transacted on it, over and over again, as has been already; God, that made it for men to dwell in, has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations in it; he has appointed who shall dwell on it, and where, in successive generations; and till all these men are born and gone off, age after age, the earth shall continue, and then pass through its last change. The Targum is, "the earth stands for ever, to bear the vengeance that is to come upon the world for the sins of the children of men." The Midrash Tanchuma, as Jarchi observes, interprets it of all the righteous of Israel, called the earth; and he himself, of the meek that shall inherit the earth: says R. Isaac³, "one kingdom comes, and another goes, but Israel abideth for ever."

Ver. 5. *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.*] The sun rises in the morning and sets at evening in our hemisphere, according to the appearance of things; and then it makes haste to go round the other hemisphere in the night: it *pants*, as the word⁴ signifies; the same figure is used by other writers⁵; like a man out of breath with running; so this glorious body, which rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, and whose circuit is from one end of the heavens to the other, Psal. xix. 5, 6. is in haste to get to the place where he rose in the morning, and there he makes no stop, but pursues his course in the same track again. By this instance is exemplified the succession of the generations of men: one after another, as the rising and setting of the sun continually follows each other; and also sets forth the restless state of things in the world, which, like the sun, are never at a stand, but always moving, and swiftly taking their course; and likewise the changeable state of man, who, like the rising sun, and when at noon-day, is in flourishing circumstances, and in the height of prosperity, but as this declines and sets, so he has his declining times and days of adversity. Moreover, like the rising sun, he comes into this world and appears for a while, and then, like the setting sun, he dies; only with this difference, in which the sun has the preference to him, as the earth before had;

¹ וְאֵלֶּיךָ יָשׁוּב׃ quid habet amplius homo? V. L. quid residui? Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius; quantum enim homini reliquum est, post omnem suum laborem? Tigurine version.

² Nihil enim semper floret, astas succedit etati, Cicero. Orat. 53. Philip. 11.

³ Hlad. 6. v. 146, &c. So Musæus apud Clement. Stromat. l. 6. p. 619. Ut silvæ foliis, &c. Horat. de Arte Poetica, v. 60.

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⁴ Apud R. Joseph. Titatzak in lœc.

⁵ אֶחָדָם אַחֲלֵל, Montanus, Tigurine version; anhelat, Drusius, Piscator, Cocecius, Ananias; anhelans est, Rambachius; doth he breathe, Droughton.

⁶ Phœbus anhelat, Claudian. Epigram. 26. v. 1. Equis oriens afflavit anhelis, Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 250. Æneid. l. 5.

the sun hastens and comes to its place from whence it arose, but man lies down and rises not again till the heavens be no more, and never returns to his place in this world, that knows him no more, Job vii. 10. and xiv. 12. The Jews^w say, before the sun of one righteous man sets, the sun of another righteous man rises.

Ver. 6. *The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north, &c.*] The word *wind* is not in this clause in the original text, but is taken from the next, and so may be rendered, *it goeth towards the south, &c.* that is, the sun^x before mentioned, which as to its diurnal and nocturnal course in the day-time goes towards the south, and in the night towards the north; and as to its annual course before the winter solstice it goes to the south, and before the summer solstice to the north, as interpreters observe. And the Targum not only interprets this clause, but even the whole verse, of the sun, paraphrasing the whole thus, “it goes all the side of the south in the day-time, and goes round to the side of the north in the night, by the way of the abyss; it goes its circuit, and comes to the wind of the south corner in the revolution of Nisan and Tammuz; and by its circuit it returns to the wind of the north corner in the revolution of Tisri and Tebet; it goes out of the confines of the east in the morning, and goes into the confines of the west in the evening.” But Aben Ezra understands the whole of the wind, as our version and others do, which is sometimes in the south point of the heavens, and is presently in the north. *It whirlleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits;* which may be meant of the circuits of the sun, which has a great influence on the wind, often raising it in a morning and laying it at night; but it is the wind itself which whirls and shifts about all the points of the compass, and returns from whence it came, where the treasures of it are. Agreeably to Solomon’s account of the wind is Plato’s definition of it, “the wind is the motion of the air round about the earth.” This also exemplifies the rotation of men and things, the instability, inconstancy, and restless state of all sublunary enjoyments; the unprofitableness of men’s labours, who, whilst they labour for riches and honour, and natural knowledge, labour for the wind, and fill their belly with east wind, which cannot satisfy, ch. v. 16. Job xv. 2. as well as the frailty of human life, which is like the wind that passes away and comes not again; and in this respect, like the rest of the instances, exceed man, which returns to its place, but man does not, Job vii. 7. Psal. lxxviii. 39.

Ver. 7. *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full, &c.*] Which flow from fountains or are formed by hasty rains; these make their way to the sea, yet the sea is not filled therewith, and made to abound and overflow the earth, as it might be expected it would. So Seneca says^y, we wonder that the accession of rivers is not perceived in the sea; and Lucretius^z observes the same, that it is wondered at

that the sea should not increase, when there is such a flow of waters to it from all quarters; besides the wandering showers and flying storms that fall into it, and yet scarce increased a drop; which he accounts for by the exhalations of the sun, by sweeping and drying winds, and by what the clouds take up. Homer^b makes every sea, all the rivers, fountains, and wells, flow from the main ocean. Hence Pindar^c calls the lake or fountain Camarina the daughter of the ocean. But Virgil^d makes the rivers to flow into it, as the wise man here; with which Aristotle^e agrees. So Lactantius^f says, *mare quod ex fluminibus constat*, the sea consists of rivers. Both may be true, for, through secret passages under ground, the waters of it are caused to pass back again to their respective places from whence they flowed, as follows. *Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again;* this also illustrates the succession of men, age after age, and the revolution of things in the world, their quiet and unsettled state; and the unsatisfying nature of all things; as the sea is never full with what comes into it, so the mind of man is never satisfied with all the riches and honour he gains, or the knowledge of natural things he acquires; and it suggests that even water, as fluctuating a body as it is, yet has the advantage of men; that though it is always flowing and reflowing, yet it returns to its original place, which man does not. And from all these instances it appears that all things are vanity, and man has no profit of all his labour under the sun.

Ver. 8. *All things are full of labour, &c.*] Or are laborious^g; gotten by labour, and attended with fatigue and weariness; riches are got by labour, and those who load themselves with thick clay, as gold and silver be, weary themselves with it; honour and glory, crowns and kingdoms, are weighty cares, and very fatiguing to those that have them; much study to acquire knowledge is a weariness to the flesh; and as men even weary themselves to commit iniquity, it is no wonder that religious exercises should be a weariness to a natural man, and a carnal professor. *Man cannot utter it;* or declare all the things that are laborious and fatiguing, nor all the labour they are full of; time would fail, and words be wanting to express the whole; all the vanity, unprofitableness, and unsatisfying nature of all things below the sun; particularly *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing;* both one and the other require new objects continually; the pleasure of these senses is blunted by the same objects constantly presented; men are always seeking new ones, and when they have got them they want others; whatever curious thing is to be seen the eye craves it; and, after it has dwelt on it a while, it grows tired of it, and wants something else to divert it; and so the ear is delighted with musical sounds, but in time loses the taste of them, and seeks for others; and in discourse and conversation never easy, unless, like the Athenians, it hears some new things, and

^w Apud R. Joseph. Titatzak in loc. Midrash Kohelet in loc.

^x Jarchi, Alshech, and Titatzak, interpret it of the sun; so Mercerus, Varenus, Gejerus; accordingly Mr. Broughton renders it, “he walketh to the south.”

^y Definition, p. 137. Ed. Ficini.

^z Nat. Quæst. l. 2. c. 4.

^a De Rerum Natura, l. 6.

^b Iliad. 21. v. 195, &c.

^c Olymp. Ode 5. v. 4.

^d Omnia sub magna, c. Georgic. l. 4. v. 366, &c.

^e Meteorolog. l. 1. c. 13.

^f De Orig. Error. l. 2. c. 6.

^g עָבֵר laboriose, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schmidt.

which quickly grow stale, and then wants fresh ones still : and indeed the spiritual eye and ear will never be satisfied in this life, until the soul comes into the perfect state of blessedness, and beholds the face of God, and sees him as he is ; and sees and hears what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard below. The Targum is, " all the words that shall be in the world, the ancient prophets were weary in them, and they could not find out the ends of them ; yea, a man has no power to say what shall be after him ; and the eye cannot see all that shall be in the world, and the ear cannot be filled with hearing all the words of all the inhabitants of the world."

Ver. 9. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, &c.*] The thing that has been seen and heard is no other than what shall be seen and heard again ; so that what is now seen and heard is only what has been seen and heard before ; it is but the same thing over again ; and that is the reason why the eye and ear are never satisfied ; the same objects, as the visible heavens and earth, and all therein, which have been from the beginning, these are they which shall be, and there is nothing else to be seen and heard, and enjoyed. *And that which is done, is that which shall be done ;* what is done in the present age, nay, in this year, month, or day, shall be done over again in the next. *And there is no new thing under the sun ;* which is to be understood of things natural, as the works of creation, which were finished from the beginning of the world, and continue as they were ever since, Heb. iv. 3. 2 Pet. iii. 4. the various seasons of day and night, of summer and winter, of spring and autumn, of heat and cold, of seed-time and harvest, come in course, as they always did ; these ordinances never fail, Gen. viii. 22. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. and xxxiii. 20, 21. The things before mentioned, the constant succession of men on earth, who are born into the world and die out of it, just as they always did ; the sun rises and sets at its appointed time, as it did almost six thousand years ago ; the winds whirl about all the points of the compass now as formerly ; the rivers have the same course and recourse, and the sea its ebbing and flowing, they ever had ; the same arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, obtained formerly as now, though in some circumstances there may be an improvement, and in others they grow worse ; see Gen. iv. 2, 20—22. Exod. xxxi. 3—5. and even such things as are thought of new invention, it may be only owing to the ignorance of former times, history failing to give us an account of them ; thus the art of printing, the making of gunpowder, and the use of guns and bombs, and of the loadstone and mariner's compass, were thought to be of no long standing ; and yet, according to the Chinese histories, that people were in possession of these things hundreds of years before ; the circulation of the blood, supposed to be first found out by a countryman of ours in the last century, was known by Solomon, and is thought to be designed by him in Eccl. xii. 6. and the like may be observed of other things. The emperor Mark Antonine, l. 7. de seipso, c. 1. has the very phrase *οὐδὲν καινόν*, nothing new :

so Seneca, ep. 24. " nothing new I see, nothing new I do." This will likewise hold good in moral things ; the same vices and virtues are now as ever, and ever were as they are ; men in every age were born in sin, and were transgressors from the womb ; from their infancy corrupt, and in all the stages of life ; there were the same luxury and intemperance, and unnatural lusts, rapine and violence, in the days of Noah and Lot, as now ; in Sodom and Gomorrah, and in the old world, as in the present age ; and there were some few then, as now, that were men of sobriety, honesty, truth, and righteousness. There is nothing to be excepted but preternatural things, miraculous events, which may be called new, unheard-of, and wonderful ones ; such as the earth's opening and swallowing men alive at once ; the standing still of the sun and moon for a considerable time ; the miracles wrought by the prophets of the Old and the apostles of the New Testament, and especially by Christ ; and particularly the incarnation of Christ, or his birth of a virgin, that new thing made in the earth ; these and such-like things are made by the power of the divine Being, who dwells above the sun, and is not bound by the laws of nature. Spiritual things may also be excepted, which are the effects of divine favour, or the produce of efficacious grace ; and yet these things, though in some sense new, are also old ; or there have been the same things for substance in former ages, and from the beginning, as now ; such as the new covenant of grace ; the new and living way to God ; new creatures in Christ ; a new name ; the New Testament, and the doctrines of it ; new ordinances, and the new commandment of love ; and yet these, in some sense, are all old things, and indeed are the same in substance : there is nothing new but what is above the sun, and to be enjoyed in the realms of bliss to all eternity ; and there are some things new^b, new wine in Christ's Father's kingdom, new glories, joys, and pleasures, that will never end.

Ver. 10. *Is there any thing whereof it may be said, see, this is new ? &c.*] This is an appeal to all men men for the truth of the above observation, and carries in it a strong denial that there is any thing new under the sun ; and is an address to men to inquire into the truth of it, and thoroughly examine it, and see if they can produce any material objection to it ; look into the natural world, and the same natural causes will be seen producing the same effects ; or into the moral world, and there are the same virtues, and their contrary ; or into the political world, and the same schemes are forming and pursuing, and which issue in the same things, peace or war ; or into the learned world, and the same languages, arts, and sciences, are taught and learned ; and the same things said over again^c : or into the mechanic world, and the same trades and businesses are carrying on ; or the words may be considered as a concession, and carry in them the form of an objection, *there is a thing^a whereof it may be said, or a man may say, see, this is new ;* so the Targum ; there were some things in Solomon's time it is allowed that might be objected,

^a Vid. R. Alshech in loc.

^b Nullum est jam dictum, quod non dictum sit prius, Tertius Prolog. Eunuch. v. 41.

^c כִּי דָבָר יֵשׁ est quidpiam, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus ; est res, Drusius, Coccejus, Rambachius.

as there are in ours, to which the answer is, *it hath been already of old time which was before us*; what things are reckoned new are not so; they were known and in use in ages past, long before we had a being. R. Alshech takes the words to be an assertion, and not an interrogation, and interprets it of a spiritual temple in time to come, which yet was created before the world was.

Ver. 11. There is *no remembrance of former things, &c.*] Which is the reason why some things that are really old are thought to be new; because either the memories of men fail them, they do not remember the customs and usages which were in the former part of their own lives, now grown old; or they are ignorant of what were in ages past, through want of history, or defect in it; either they have no history at all, or what they have is false; or if true, as there is very little that is so, it is very deficient; and, among the many things that have been, very few are transmitted to posterity, so that the memory of things is lost; therefore who can say with certainty of any thing, this is new, and was never known in the world before? and the same for the future will be the case of present things; see ch. ii. 16. *Neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after*; this will be the case of things present and future, that they will be buried in oblivion, and lie unknown to posterity that shall come after the things that are done; and if any person or persons should rise up and do the same things, they may be called new, though they are in fact old, for want of knowing that they were before. The Targum is, "there is no remembrance of former generations; and even of after-ones, that shall be, there will be no remembrance of them, with the generations of them that shall be in the days of the King Messiah." R. Alshech interprets it of the resurrection of the dead.

Ver. 12. *I the preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.*] Solomon having given a general proof of the vanity of all things here below, and of the insufficiency of them to make men happy, proceeds to particular instances, and begins with human wisdom and knowledge, which of all things might be thought to be most conducive to true happiness; and yet it falls short of it: he instances in himself for proof of it; and he could not have pitched on any one more proper and pertinent to the purpose, who had all the advantages of obtaining wisdom, was assiduous in his pursuit of it, and made a proficiency in it above all mankind; wherefore he must be owned to be a proper judge, and whatever is concluded by him may be taken for granted as certain; and this is the sum of the following verses to the end of the chapter. Now let it be observed, that he was a *preacher*, not a private person, and must have a good share of knowledge to qualify him for teaching and instructing others; and, more than this, he was a *king*, and did not want money to purchase books, and procure masters to instruct him in all the branches of literature; and when he entered upon the more profound study of wisdom, and especially when he said this, it was not in his infancy or childhood, or before he came to the throne, but after; even after he had

asked wisdom of God to govern, and it had been given him; yea, after he had been a long time king, as he now was; though the Jewish writers, as the Targum, Jarchi, and others, conclude from hence that he was not now a king, but become a private person, deposed or driven from his throne, which does not appear: moreover, he was king of Israel, not over a barbarous people, where darkness and ignorance reigned, but over a *wise and understanding people*, as they are called Deut. iv. 6. and he was king over them in Jerusalem too, the metropolis of the nation; there he had his royal palace, where were not only the temple, the place of divine worship, but a college of prophets, and a multitude of priests, and an abundance of wise and knowing men, whom he had opportunity of conversing with frequently; to which may be added, his large correspondence abroad; persons from all kings and kingdoms came to hear his wisdom, as the queen of Sheba; and by putting questions to him, and so exercising his talents, not a little contributed to the improvement of them. Now a person so qualified must be a judge of wisdom, and what he says deserves attention; and it may be observed, that what he says, as follows, is *in verbo regis & sacerdotis*, on the word of a king and preacher, who would never risk his honour, or forfeit his character, by saying an untruth.

Ver. 13. *And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom, &c.*] As he had all advantages and opportunities, so he did not want for industry and application to obtain knowledge; he gave his mind to it; he took up a resolution not to be discouraged by any difficulties, but to break through them, if possible; he set about the work with great readiness and cheerfulness; he had a price in his hand to get wisdom, and he had a heart unto it; see Prov. xvii. 16. and he pursued it with all diligence, with all his might and main: nor did he content himself with a superficial knowledge of things; but *searched* after the most recondite and abstruse learning, and penetrated into the utmost recesses of it, to find out all that was to be known; and this he did *by* using all the *wisdom* and sagacity, the light and strength of reason, and all those bright natural parts, which God had given him in a very extraordinary manner. And his inquiry was very extensive; it was *concerning all things that are done under heaven*; into the nature of all things, animate and inanimate; trees, herbs, plants, fossils, minerals, and metals; beasts, birds, fish, and all creeping things; see 1 Kings iv. 33. with every thing else in nature: he sought to make himself master of all arts and sciences; to get knowledge of all trades and manufactures; to understand every thing in politics, relating to kingdoms and states, and the government of them; to observe all the actions of men, wise and foolish, that he might know the difference, and be a judge of what was right and wrong. And his observation upon the whole is, *this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith*; he found by experience it was a heavy task, which God had put upon the children of men, to get wisdom and knowledge in the way it was to be gotten; which was very burdensome and wearisome to the flesh; nay, he found it was an *evil*

business, as it may be rendered; or there was something sinful and criminal, which God suffered men in their pursuit after knowledge to fall into, and which their studies exposed them to; as to indulge a vain and sinful curiosity, to pry into things unlawful, and to be wise above what is written; or to be over-anxious in attaining natural knowledge, to the neglect of things of great importance; or to abuse or trust in knowledge attained unto, or be vainly elated and puffed up with it. Or this may be understood of the evil of punishment, which God inflicts on men for the sin of eating of the tree of knowledge; and that as he is doomed to get his bread, so his knowledge, with the sweat of his brow, that is, with great pains and labour; which otherwise would have been more easily obtained: but this God has done to afflict or humble^m men, as the word may be rendered; to afflict or punish them for sin; and to humble them by shewing them how weak are the powers and faculties of their minds, that so much pains must be taken to get a small share of knowledge. The Targum is, "and I saw all the works of the children of men obnoxious to an evil business; the Lord gave to the children of men, to be afflicted with it."

Ver. 14. *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, &c.*] All things done by the Lord, that were on the earth, and in it, and in the sea; he considered them, and endeavoured to search into the nature of them; and did attain to a very great knowledge of them, so that he could speak of them to the instruction of others; see 1 Kings iv. 33. and all that were done by men, by their head, or by their hands; all that were written or wrought by them; all their philosophical works and experiments, and all their mechanic operations; as well as all their good and bad works, in a moral sense; so the Targum, "I saw all the deeds of the children of men, which are done under the sun in this world." And, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit; not only the things known, but the knowledge of them; it is mere vanity, there is nothing solid and substantial in it, or that can make a man happy; yea, on the contrary, it is vexatious and distressing; it is not only a weariness to the flesh to obtain it, but, in the reflection of it, gives pain and uneasiness to the mind: it is a breaking of the spiritⁿ of the man, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Alshech, interpret the phrase; it wastes and consumes his spirit, as well as his time, and all to no purpose; it is, as some ancient Greek versions and others render it, and not amiss, a feeding on wind^o; what is useless and unprofitable, and like labouring for that; see Hos. xii. 1. Job xv. 2. Eccl. v. 16. and so Aben Ezra.

Ver. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made straight, &c.*] By all the art and cunning, wisdom and knowledge of man, that he can attain unto; whatever he, in the vanity of his mind, may find fault with in the works of God, either of nature or providence, and which he may call crooked, it is not in his power

to make them straight, or to mend them; see ch. vii. 13. There is something which, through sin, is crooked, in the hearts, in the nature, in the principles, ways and works, of men; which can never be made straight, corrected or amended, by all the natural wisdom and knowledge of men, which shews the insufficiency of it: the wisest philosophers among men, with all their parade of wit and learning, could never effect any thing of this kind; this only is done by the spirit and grace of God; see Isa. xlii. 16. And that which is wanting cannot be numbered; the deficiencies in human science are so many, that they cannot be reckoned up; and the defects in human nature can never be supplied or made up by natural knowledge and wisdom; and which are so numerous, as that they cannot be understood and counted. The Targum is, "a man whose ways are perverse in this world, and dies in them, and does not return by repentance, he has no power of correcting himself after his death; and a man that fails from the law and the precepts in his life, after his death hath no power to be numbered with the righteous in paradise:" to the same sense Jarchi's note and the Midrash.

Ver. 16. *I communed with my own heart, &c.*] That is, looked into it, examined it, and considered what a stock and fund of knowledge he had in it, after all his researches into it; what happiness accrued to him by it, and what judgment upon the whole was to be formed upon it; and he spoke within himself after this manner: saying, lo, I am come to great estate; or become a great man; famous for wisdom, arrived to a very great pitch of it; greatly increased in it, through a diligent application to it. And have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; or, that before me were over Jerusalem^p; governors of it, or in it; not only than the Jebusites, but than Saul, the first king of Israel, or than even his father David; or, as Gussetius^q, than any princes, rulers, and civil magistrates in Jerusalem, in his own days or in the days of his father; and also than all the priests and prophets, as well as princes, that ever had been there: and indeed he was wiser than all men, 1 Kings iv. 30—32. and even than any that had been in Jerusalem, or any where else, or that should be hereafter, excepting the Messiah; see 1 Kings iii. 12. and x. 27. Matt. xii. 42. And seeing this is said of him by others, and even by the Lord himself, it might not only be said with truth by himself, but without ostentation; seeing it was necessary it should be said to answer his purpose, which was to shew the vanity of human wisdom in its highest pitch; and it was nowhere to be found higher than in himself. Yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge; or, saw much wisdom and knowledge^r; he thoroughly understood it, he was a complete master of it; it was not a superficial knowledge he had attained unto, or a few lessons of it he had committed to memory; some slight notions in his head, or scraps of things he had collected together,

^m לענות ad affligendum. Montanus, Gejerus; ut affligent se in ea, Vatablus, Rambachius; ut ea humilis redderet, Tigurine version.

ⁿ אפיקורוס afflictio spiritus, V. L. Junius & Tremellius; contritio spiritus, so some in Vatablus.

^o נשוא אקוויז, Aquila; pastio venti, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Amama.

^p על ירושלים super Jerusalem, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; qui profuerunt ante me Jerusalemis, Junius & Tremellius.

^q Comment. Heb. p. 604.

^r ראו הרבה חכמה ודעת vidit multum sapientie & scientie, Montanus, Amama; vidit plurimam sapientiam & scientiam, Tigurine version.

in an undigested manner; but he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with every thing worthy to be known, and had digested it in his mind.

Ver. 17. *And I gave my heart to know wisdom, &c.*] Which is repeated, for the confirmation of it, from ver. 13. and that it might be taken notice of how assiduous and diligent he had been in acquiring it; a circumstance not to be overlooked. *And to know madness and folly*; that he might the better know wisdom, and learn the difference between the one and the other, since contraries illustrate each other; and that he might shun madness and folly, and the ways thereof, and expose the actions of mad and foolish men: so Plato^a says, ignorance is a disease, of which there are two kinds, madness and folly. The Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the last word, translated *folly*, by understanding, knowledge, and prudence; which seems to be right, since Solomon speaks of nothing afterwards, as vexation and grief to him, but wisdom and knowledge: and I would therefore read the clause in connexion with the preceding, thus, *and the knowledge of things boasted of, vain-glorious knowledge; and prudence, or what may be called craftiness and cunning; or what the apostle calls science, falsely so called*, 1 Tim. vi. 20. see Prov. xii. 8. Dan. viii. 25. *I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit*; see the note on ver. 14. the reason follows.

Ver. 18. *For in much wisdom is much grief, &c.*] In getting it, and losing it when it is gotten: or *indignation*^b, at himself and others; being more sensible

of the follies and weakness of human nature. *And he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow*: for, the more he knows, the more he would know, and is more eager after it, and puts himself to more pains and trouble to acquire it; and hereby becomes more and more sensible of his own ignorance; and of the difficulty of attaining the knowledge he would come at; and of the insufficiency of it to make him easy and happy: and besides, the more knowledge he has, the more envy it draws upon him from others, who set themselves to oppose him, and detract from his character; in short, this is the sum of all human knowledge and wisdom, attained to in the highest degree; instead of making men comfortable and happy, it is found to be mere vanity, to cause vexation and inquietude of mind, and to promote grief and sorrow. There is indeed wisdom and knowledge opposite to this, and infinitely more excellent, and which, the more it is increased, the more joy and comfort it brings; and this is wisdom in the hidden part; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of divine and evangelical truths; but short of this knowledge there is no true peace, comfort, and happiness. The Targum is, "for a man who multiplies wisdom, when he sins and does not turn by repentance, he multiplies indignation from the Lord; and he who increases knowledge, and dies in his youth, increases grief of heart to those who are near akin to him."

C H A P. II.

SOLOMON, having made trial of natural wisdom and knowledge in its utmost extent, and found it to be vanity, proceeds to the experiment of pleasure, and tries whether any happiness was in that, ver. 1. As for that which at first sight was vain, frothy, and frolicsome, he dispatches at once, and condemns it as mad and unprofitable, ver. 2. but as for those pleasures which were more manly, rational, and lawful, he dwells upon them, and gives a particular enumeration of them, as what he had made full trial of; as good eating and drinking, in a moderate way, without abuse; fine and spacious buildings; delightful vineyards, gardens, and orchards; parks, forests, and enclosures; fish-pools, and fountains of water; a large retinue, and equipage of servants; great possessions, immense riches and treasure; a collection of the greatest rarities, and curiosities in nature; all kinds of music, vocal and instrumental, ver. 3—8. in all which he exceeded any that went before him; nor did he deny himself any of these pleasures, in a lawful way, that could possibly be enjoyed, ver. 9, 10. And yet on a survey of the whole, and after a thorough experience of what could be found herein, he pronounces all vanity and vexation of spirit, ver. 11. and returns again to his former subject, wisdom; and looks that over again, to

see if he could find real happiness in it, being sadly disappointed in that of pleasure, ver. 12. He indeed commends wisdom, and prefers it to folly, and a wise man to a fool; ver. 13, 14. and yet observes some things which lessen its value; and shews there is no happiness in it, the same events befalling a wise man and a fool; both alike forgotten, and die in like manner, ver. 15, 16. And then he takes into consideration business of life, and a laborious industry to obtain wealth; and this he condemns as grievous, hateful, and vexatious, because, after all a man's acquisitions, he knows not to whom he shall leave them, whether to a wise man or a fool, ver. 17—21. And because a man himself has no rest all his days, nothing but sorrow and grief, ver. 22, 23. wherefore he concludes it is best for a man to enjoy the good things of this life himself; which he confirms by his own experience, and by an antithesis between a good man and a wicked one, ver. 24—26.

Ver. 1. *I said in mine heart, &c.*] He communed with his heart, he thought and reasoned within himself, and came to this resolution in his own mind; that since he could not find happiness in natural wisdom and knowledge, he would seek for it elsewhere, even in pleasure; in which, he observed, some men placed their happiness; or, however, sought for it there: or,

^a In Timæo, p. 1094.

^b מלחמה multa ira, Pagninus, Montanus; indignatio, V. L. Ti-

gurine version, Vatobius, Drusius; multum indignationis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

I said to my heart, as the Syriac version. *Go to now; or, go, I pray thee*; listen to what I am about to say, and pursue the track I shall now point out to thee. *I will prove thee with mirth*; with those things which will cause mirth, joy, and pleasure; and try whether any happiness can be enjoyed this way, since it could not be had in wisdom and knowledge. Jarchi and Aben Ezra render it, *I will mingle*, wine with water, or with spices; or, *I will pour out*, wine in plenty to drink of, with joy, and to promote mirth: but the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, interpret it as we do, and which sense Aben Ezra makes mention of. *Therefore enjoy pleasure*; which man is naturally a lover of; he was so in his state of innocency, and this was the bait that was laid for him, and by which he was drawn into sin; and now he loves, lives in, and serves sinful pleasures; which are rather imaginary than real, and last but for a season, and end in bitterness: but such sordid lusts and pleasures are not here meant; Solomon was too wise and good a man to give into these, as the *summum bonum*; or ever to think there could be any happiness in them, or even to make a trial of them for that purpose: not criminal pleasures, or an impure, sottish, and epicurean life, are here intended; but manly, rational, and lawful pleasures, for no other are mentioned in the detail of particulars following; and, in the pursuit of the whole, he was guided and governed by his wisdom, and that remained in him, ver. 3, 9. It may be rendered, *therefore see good*; look upon all the good, pleasant, and delectable things of life; and enjoy them in such a manner as, if possible, happiness may be attained in them. *And, behold, this also is vanity*; it will be found, by making the experiment, that there is no solid and substantial happiness in it, as it was by himself.

Ver. 2. *I said of laughter, it is mad, &c.*] The risible faculty in man is given him for some usefulness; and when used in a moderate way, and kept within due bounds, is of service to him, and conduces to the health of his body, and the pleasure of his mind; but when used on every trivial occasion, and at every foolish thing that is said or done, and indulged to excess, it is mere madness, and makes a man look more like a madman and a fool than a wise man; it lasts but for a while, and the end of it is heaviness, ch. vii. 6. Prov. xiv. 13. Or, *I said to laughter, thou art mad*; and therefore will have nothing to do with thee in the excessive and criminal way, but shun thee, as one would do a mad man: this therefore is not to be reckoned into the pleasure he bid his soul go to and enjoy. *And of mirth, what doth it?* what good does it do? of what profit and advantage is it to man? If the question is concerning innocent mirth, the answer may be given out of Prov. xv. 13. and xvii. 22. but if of carnal sinful mirth, there is no good arises from that to the body or mind; or any kind of happiness to be enjoyed that way, and therefore no trial is to be made

of it. What the wise man proposed to make trial of, and did, follows in the next verses.

Ver. 3. *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, &c.*] Not in an immoderate way, so as to intoxicate himself with it, in which there can be no pleasure, nor any shew of happiness; but in a moderate, yet liberal way, so as to be innocently cheerful and pleasant, and hereby try what good and happiness were to be possessed in this way. By *wine* is meant, not that only, but every thing eatable and drinkable that is good; it signifies what is called good living, good eating and drinking: Solomon always lived well; was brought up as a prince, and, when he came to the throne, lived like a king; but being increased in riches, and willing to make trial of the good that was in all the creatures of God, to see if any happiness was in them; determines to keep a better table still, and resolved to have every thing to eat or drink that could be had, cost what it will; of Solomon's daily provision for his household, see 1 Kings iv. 22, 23. the Midrash interprets it, of the wine of the law. It may be rendered, *I sought in mine heart to draw out my flesh with wine, or my body*; to extend it, and make it fat and plump; which might be reduced to skin and bones, to a mere skeleton, through severe studies after wisdom and knowledge. The Targum is, "I sought in my heart to draw my flesh into the house of the feast of wine;" as if there was a reluctance in him to such a conduct; and that he as it were put a force upon himself, in order to make the experiment. (*Yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom*); or, *yet my heart led me in wisdom*; he was guided and governed by wisdom in this research of happiness; he was upon his guard, that he did not go into any sinful extravagancies, or criminal excesses in eating and drinking. *And to lay hold on folly*; that he might better know what folly was, and what was the folly of the sons of men to place their happiness in such things; or rather, he studiously sought to lay hold on folly, to restrain it, and himself from it, that it might not have the ascendant over him; so that he would not be able to form a right judgment whether there is any real happiness in this sort of pleasure, or no, he is speaking of; for the epicure, the voluptuous person, is no judge of it. *Till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life*: where the *summum bonum*, or chief happiness of man lies; and which he should endeavour to seek after and pursue, that he might enjoy it throughout the whole of his life, whilst in this world: and that he might still more fully know it, if possible, he did the following things.

Ver. 4. *I made me great works, &c.*] He did not spend his time in trifling things, as Domitian*, in catching and killing flies; but in devising, designing, directing, and superintending great works of art and skill, becoming the grandeur of his state, and the greatness of his mind: the Midrash restrains it to his great

* לכה נא age, quæso, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Rambachius.
 * וידע in buzum, Montanus; & vide bonum, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gypsius; fræne bono, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Amanus, Raabachius.
 * רישו רישו רישו רישו רישו rishu רישו, Isaais, Mercerus, Drusius, Amanus; רישו רישו רישו, Piscator, Schmidt, Rambachius.

† למשוך בין את בשרי † ad diducere vino carnem meam, Piscator; ut protraherem, & inds. distenderem carnem meam, Rambachius.

‡ וליבי נהג בנחמה ‡ et cor meum duces in sapientia, Montanus; interim cor meum duces in sapientiam, Drusius.

* Sueton. Vit. Domitian. c. 3. Aurel. Victor. De Cæsar. & Epitome.

throne of ivory, overlaid with gold, 1 Kings x. 18. but it is a general expression, including all the great things he did, of which the following is a particular enumeration. *I builded me houses*; among which must not be reckoned the house of God, though that was built by him, and in the first place; yet this was built, not for his own pleasure and grandeur, but for the worship and glory of God: but his own house and palace is chiefly meant, which was thirteen years in building; and the house of the forest in Lebanon, which perhaps was his country-seat; with all other houses and offices, for his stores, for his servants, his horsemen, and chariots; see 1 Kings vii. 1, 2. and ix. 1, 19. and in fine spacious buildings men take a great deal of pleasure, and promise themselves much happiness in dwelling in them, and in perpetuating their names to posterity by them; see Psal. xlix. 11. Job xxi. 21. The Targum is, "I multiplied good works in Jerusalem; I builded me houses; the house of the sanctuary, to make atonement for Israel; the king's house of refreshment, and the conclave and porch; and the house of judgment, of hewn stones, where the wise men sit and do judgment; I made a throne of ivory for the royal seat." *I planted me vineyards*; perhaps those at En-gedi were of his planting; however, he had one at Baal-hamon, and no doubt in other places, Cant. i. 14. and viii. 11. the Targum makes mention of one at Jabne, planted by him; these also add to the pleasure of human life; it is delightful to walk in them, to gather the fruit and drink of the wine of them; see Cant. vii. 12.

Ver. 6. *I made me gardens and orchards, &c.*] Of the king's garden, we read Jer. xxxix. 4. Adrichomius^b makes mention of a royal garden in the suburbs of Jerusalem, fenced with walls; and was a paradise of fruit-trees, herbs, spices, and flowers; abounded with all kind of fruit, exceeding pleasant and delightful to the senses: and, as Solomon was so great a botanist, and knew the nature and use of all kinds of trees and herbs, 1 Kings iv. 33. no doubt but he had a physic-garden, well stocked with every thing of that kind, curious and useful; see 1 Kings xxi. 2. Gardens are made for pleasure as well as profit; Adam, as soon as created, was put into a garden, to add to his natural pleasure and felicity, as well as for his employment, Gen. ii. 8. and the pleasure of walking in a garden, and partaking of the fruits of it, are alluded to by Solomon, Cant. iv. 12, 13, 16. and v. 1. and vi. 2. *And I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits*; which, as before observed, he had thorough knowledge of, and many of which were brought him from foreign parts; and all served to make his gardens, orchards, parks, forests, and enclosures, very pleasant and delectable. The Targum adds, "some for food, others for drink, and others for medicine."

Ver. 6. *I made me pools of water, &c.*] For cascades and water-works to play in, as well as to keep and produce fish of all kinds: mention is made of the king's pools, Neh. ii. 14. the fish-pools at Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim, perhaps belonged to Solo-

mon, Cant. vii. 4. Little more than a league from Bethlehem are pools of water, which at this day are called the fish-pools of Solomon; they are great reservatories cut in the rock, the one at the end of the other; the second being a little lower than the first, and the third than the second, and so communicate the water from one to another when they are full^c; and of which Mr. Maundrell^d gives the following account: "They are about an hour and a quarter distant from Bethlehem, southward; they are three in number, lying in a row above each other, being so disposed, that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third; their figure is quadrangular; the breadth is the same in all, amounting to above ninety paces; in their length there is some difference between them; the first being about 160 paces long, the second 200, the third 220; they are all lined with a wall, and plastered, and contain a great depth of water." And to these, he observes, together with the gardens adjoining, Solomon is supposed to allude, Eccl. ii. 5, 6. There are to be seen, he says^e, some remains of an old aqueduct, which anciently conveyed the waters from Solomon's pools to Jerusalem; this is said to be the genuine work of Solomon, and may well be allowed to be in reality what it is pretended for. So Rauwolff^f says, "beyond the tower of Ader, in another valley, not far from Beth-lehem, they shew still to this day a large orchard, full of citron, lemon, orange, pomegranate, and fig trees, and many others, which King Solomon did plant in his days; with ponds, canals, and other water-works, very pleasantly prepared, as he saith himself, Eccl. ii. 5. this is still in our time full of good and fruitful trees, worthy to be seen for their sakes, and ditches there: wherefore I really believe it to be the same Josephus^g makes mention of, called Ethan, one hundred furlongs from Jerusalem; where Solomon had pleasant gardens and water-pools, to which he used to ride early in a morning." Mr. Maundrell^h also makes mention of some cisterns, called Solomon's cisterns, at Roselayn, about an hour from the ruins of Tyre; of which there are three entire at this day; one about a furlong and a half distant from the sea, the other two a little further up; and, according to tradition, they were made by that great king, in recompense to King Hiram, for supplying materials towards building the temple: but, as he observes, these, though ancient, could not be built before the time of Alexander; since the aqueduct, which conveys the water from hence to Tyre, is carried over the neck of land, by which he joined the city to the continent. Jarchi interprets these pools in the text of places to keep fish alive in, and so the Midrash understands by them fish-pools; though they seem to be canals made in the gardens, orchards, and parks. *To water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees*; the young nurseries, which in time grew up to large fruit-bearing trees; which, being numerous and thick, looked like a wood or forest, as the word is; and which canals and nurseries both added greatly to the delight

^a Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 170.

^b Thevenot's Travels, B. 2. ch. 47. p. 202.

^c Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 88. edit. 7.

^d Ibid. p. 90.

^e Travels, part 3. ch. 22. p. 322. Vid. Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 367, 368.

^f Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 13.

^g Ut supra, p. 50, 51.

and pleasure of those places. In this manner the Indians water their gardens; who commonly have in them a great pit, or kind of fish-pool, which is full of rain-water; and just by it there is a basin of brick, raised about two feet higher than the ground; when therefore they have a mind to water the garden, it is filled with water from the fish-pool, or pit; which, through a hole that is at the bottom, falls into a canal, that is divided into many branches, proportionable in bigness to their distance from the basin, and carries the water to the foot of each tree, and to each plat of herbs; and when the gardeners think they are watered enough, they stop up, or turn aside, the canals with clods of earth¹. The beauty of a plant, or tree, is thus described by Ælianus²; “branches generous, leaves thick, stem or trunk firm and stable, roots deep; winds shaking it; a large shadow cast from it; changing with the seasons of the year; and water, partly brought through canals, and partly coming from heaven, to water and nourish it; and such beautiful, well-watered, and flourishing trees, contribute much to the pleasure of gardens.”

Ver. 7. *I got me servants and maidens, &c.*] Men-servants, and maid-servants; the Targum adds, “of the children of Ham, and of the rest of the strange people;” these were such as he hired, or bought with his money. *And had servants born in my house*; and these were all employed by him; either as his retinue and equipage, his attendants and life-guards; or to take care of his household, his gardens, and pools; or for his horses and chariots, and for various offices; see 1 Kings iv. 26, 27. Ezra ii. 58. Villalpandus computes the number of his servants to be 48,000; if there were any pleasure and happiness in such a numerous attendance, Solomon had it. *Also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me*; oxen, cows, horses, asses, camels, mules, &c. also sheep and goats; which, as they were profitable, so it was pleasant to see them grazing on the hills and valleys, in the fields, mountains, and meadows.

Ver. 8. *I gathered me also silver and gold, &c.*] In great quantities: the weight of gold which came to him in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents; see 1 Kings ix. 14, 23. and x. 14, 22, 27. *And the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces*; whatsoever was valuable and precious, such as is laid up in the cabinets of kings, as jewels and precious stones; and every thing rare and curious, to be found in all provinces of the earth, or which were brought from thence as presents to him; the Targum is, “and the treasures of kings and provinces, given to me for tribute;” wherefore, if any pleasure arises from these things, as do to the virtuous, Solomon enjoyed it. Moreover, among the treasures of kings were precious garments of various sorts, as were in the treasury of Ahasuerus³; and when Alexander took Shushan, he

found in the king's treasures, of Hermionic purple, to the value of five thousand talents, which had been laid up there almost two hundred years⁴; and to such treasure Christ alludes, Matt. vi. 19. *I got me mensingers and women-singers*; the harmony and music of whose voices greatly delight; see 2 Sam. xix. 35. the Targum interprets it both of instruments of music for the Levites to use in the temple, and of singing men and women at a feast: and such persons were employed among other nations⁵, on such occasions, to entertain their guests; and are called the ornaments of feasts⁶; as were also *chorales*, or pipers⁷. *And the delights of the sons of men*; as musical instruments, and that of all sorts; such as David his father invented; and to which he might add more, and indeed got all that were to be obtained; see Amos vi. 5. The two last words, rendered *musical instruments, of all sorts*, are differently interpreted; the Targum interprets them of hot waters and baths, having pipes to let out hot water and cold; Aben Ezra, of women taken captive; Jarchi, of chariots and covered waggons; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, of cupbearers, men, and women, that pour out wine and serve it; and the Vulgate Latin version, of cups and pots, to pour out wine. It seems best to understand it of musical instruments, or of musical compositions⁸; sung either with a single voice, or in concert; which, according to Bochart⁹, were called *sidoth*, from Sido, a Phœnician woman of great note, the inventor of them; or rather from giving unequal sounds, which, by their grateful mixture and temperament, broke and destroyed¹⁰ one another.

Ver. 9. *So I was great, &c.*] Became famous for the great works wrought by him before mentioned. *And increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem*; the Targum adds, *in riches*; but it seems rather to respect his fame and glory among men; though in general it may include his increase of wealth, power, and honour, and every thing that contributed to his external happiness. *Also my wisdom remained with me*; the Targum adds, *and it helped me*; which he exercised and shewed in the government of his kingdom, in the conduct of his family, in his personal deportment and behaviour; amidst all his pleasures, he did not neglect the study of natural knowledge, nor give himself up to sordid and sinful lusts; and so was a better judge of pleasure, whether true happiness consisted in it or no.

Ver. 10. *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, &c.*] Though this sense is only mentioned, all are designed; he denied himself of nothing that was agreeable to him, that was pleasing to the eye, to the ear, to the taste, or any other sense; he indulged himself in every thing, observing a proper decorum, and keeping himself within the due bounds of sobriety and good sense. *I withheld not my heart from any joy*; the Targum says, *from all joy of the law*; but it is to

¹ Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, Art. 21. p. 78.

² Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 14.

³ Targum Sheeni in Esther vi. 10.

⁴ Plutarch. in Alexandro, p. 686. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 24. v. 224—234.

⁵ Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 19. c. 9. Homer. Odys. 8. v. 62,

73, 74. & 9. v. 5—7.

⁶ Homer. Odys. 21. v. 430.

⁷ Vid. Gutberleth. Conjectanea, &c. p. 162, &c.

⁸ Vid. Gassett. Comment. Heb. p. 432.

⁹ Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 6. c. 13. col. 847.

¹⁰ Buxtorf. in voce שָׁשׂוּ. See Weemse's Christian Synagog. p. 144.

Ver. 14. *The wise man's eyes are in his head, &c.*] And so are the eyes of every man; but the sense is, he makes use of them, he looks about him, and walks circumspectly; he takes heed to his goings, he foresees the evil, and avoids it; or the danger he is exposed unto, and guards against it. Some understand it, in a more spiritual and evangelical sense, of Christ, who is the head of the body the church, and of every true believer; of every one that is wise unto salvation, whose eyes are on him alone for righteousness, salvation, and eternal life; or on whom Christ's eyes are; who is said to have seven eyes, with which he guides, guards, and protects his people. *But the fool walketh in darkness*; his eyes are to the ends of the earth; he walks incautiously, without any circumspection or guard; he knows not where he is, nor where he is going, nor where he shall set his foot next, nor at what he may stumble; wherefore a wise man is to be preferred to a fool, as wisdom is to folly. The Midrash interprets the wise man of Abraham, and the fool of Nimrod. *And I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all*; the wise man and the fool; or, *but I myself perceived**, &c.; though it is allowed that a wise man is better than a fool; yet this also must be owned, which Solomon's experience proved, and every man's does, that the same things befall wise men and fools; they are liable to the same diseases of body, and disasters of life; to poverty and distress, to loss of estate, children, and friends, and to death itself.

Ver. 15. *Then said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me, &c.*] The wisest of kings, and the wisest of men; that is, he looked over things in his mind, and considered what had befallen him, or what were his present circumstances, or what would be his case, especially at death; and said within himself, the same things happen to me, who have attained to the highest pitch of wisdom, as to the most errant fool; and therefore no true happiness can be in this sort of wisdom. The Targum paraphrases it thus, "as it happened to Saul the son of Kish, the king who turned aside perversely, and kept not the commandment he received concerning Amalek, and his kingdom was taken from him; so shall it happen to me." *And why was I then more wise?* the Targum adds, than he, or than any other man, or even than a fool; why have I took so much pains to get wisdom? what am I the better for it? what happiness is there in it, seeing it gives me no advantage, preference, and excellency to a fool; or secures me from the events that befall me? *Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity*; this worldly wisdom has nothing solid and substantial in it, as well as pleasure; and it is a vain thing to seek happiness in it, since this is the case, that the events are the same to men that have it, as to one that has it not.

Ver. 16. *For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever, &c.*] The Targum interprets it, in the world to come; but even in this world the remembrance of a wise man, any more than of a fool, does not always last; a wise man may not only be caressed in life, but may be remembered after death

for a while; the fame of him may continue for a little time, and his works and writings may be applauded; but by-and-by rises up another genius brighter than he, or at least is so thought, and outshines him; and then his fame is obscured, his writings are neglected and despised, and he and his works buried in oblivion; and this is the common course of things. This shews that Solomon is speaking of natural wisdom, and of man's being wise with respect to that; and his remembrance on that account; otherwise such who are truly good and wise, their memory is blessed; they are had in everlasting remembrance, and shall never be forgotten in this world, nor in that to come, when the memory of the wicked shall rot; whose names are only written in the dust, and not in the Lamb's book of life. *Seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten*; what now is in the esteem of men, and highly applauded by them; what is in the mouths of men, and in their minds and memories, ere long, in future time, after the death of a man, as the Targum, or in some time after, will be thought of no more, and be as if it never had been, or as if there never had been such men in the world. Many wise men have been in the world, whose names are now unknown, and some their names only are known, and their works are lost; and others whose works remain, yet in no esteem: this is to be understood in general, and for the most part; otherwise there may be some few exceptions to this general observation. *And how dieth the wise man? as the fool*; they are both liable to death; it is appointed for men, wise or unwise, learned or unlearned, to die, and both do die; wisdom cannot secure a man from dying; and then wise and fools are reduced to the same condition and circumstances; all a man's learning, knowledge, and wisdom, cease when he dies, and he is just as another man is; in that day all his learned thoughts perish, and he is upon a level with the fool. Solomon, the wisest of men, died as others; a full proof of his own observation, and which his father made before him, Psal. xlix. 10. But this is not true of one that is spiritually wise, or wise unto salvation; the death of a righteous man is different from the death of a wicked man; both die, yet not alike, not in like manner; the good man dies in Christ, he dies in faith, has hope in his death, and rises again to eternal life. The Targum is, "and how shall the children of men say, that the end of the righteous is as the end of the wicked?"

Ver. 17. *Therefore I hated life, &c.*] Not strictly and simply understood, since life is the gift of God; and a great blessing it is, more than raiment, and so dear to a man, that he will give all he has for it: but comparatively, in comparison of the loving-kindness of God, which is better than life; or in comparison of eternal life, which a good man desires to depart from this world, for the sake of enjoying it. The sense seems to be this, that since the case of wise men and fools was equal, he had the less love for life, the less regard to it, the less desire to continue in it; no solid happiness being to be enjoyed in any thing under the sun: though some think that he was even weary of life, impatient of it, as Job, Jonah, and others have

* יירעתי sed agnovi, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; sed cognovi, Rambachius; but I saw, Broughton.

been. The Targum is, "I hate all evil life." Alshech interprets it of the good things of this world, which were the cause of hurt unto him; and Aben Ezra understands, by life, living persons. *Because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me*: which was either wrought by himself; particularly his hard studies, and eager pursuits after knowledge and wisdom, which were a weariness to his flesh; or which were done by others, especially evil ones: so the Targum, "for evil to me is an evil work, which is done by the children of men under the sun in this world." *For all is vanity and vexation of spirit*; see the note on ch. i. 14.

Ver. 18. *Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, &c.*] The great works he made, the houses he built; the vineyards, gardens, and orchards he planted, &c.; what he got by his labour, his riches and wealth; and what he also got, not by the labour of his hands, but of his mind. Some understand this of the books he wrote; which were a weariness to his body, and fatigue to his mind; and which he might fear some persons would make an ill use of: Aben Ezra interprets it of his labour in this book. All which he had no great regard unto, since it was to be left to another. *Because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me*; because he could not enjoy the fruits of his labour himself, at least but a very short time: but must be obliged to leave all to another, his possessions, estates, riches, and treasure; which a man cannot carry with him when he dies, but must leave all behind him, to his heirs and successors². The Targum is, "because I shall leave it to Rehoboam my son, who shall come after me; and Jeroboam my servant shall come and take ten tribes out of his hands, and possess half the kingdom."

Ver. 19. *And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? &c.*] The king that should be after him, as the Targum, that should be his successor and heir; and so whether he would make a good or bad use of what was left; whether he would keep and improve it, or squander it away; suggesting, that could he be sure he would be a wise man that should come into his labours, it would be some satisfaction to him that he had laboured, and such a man should have the benefit of it; but as it was a precarious thing what he would be, he could take no pleasure in reviewing his labours he was about to leave. Some think that Solomon here gives a hint of the suspicion he had, that his son Rehoboam, his successor and heir, would turn out a foolish man, as he did. *Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise, under the sun*; be what he will, all will come into his hands; and he will have the power of disposing of all at his pleasure; not only of enjoying it, but of changing and altering things; and perhaps greatly for the worse, if he does not entirely destroy what has been wrought with so much care and industry, toil and labour, wisdom and prudence; the thought of all which was afflicting and distressing: and therefore he adds, *this is also vanity*. and shews there is no happiness in all that a man does,

has, or enjoys; and this circumstance, before related, adds to his vexation and unhappiness.

Ver. 20. *Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair, &c.*] Of ever finding happiness in any thing here below. He turned about¹, as the word signifies; dropped his severe studies of wisdom, and his eager pursuits of pleasure; and desisted from those toilsome works, in which he had employed himself; and went from one thing to another, and settled and stuck at nothing, on purpose to relax his mind, as the Syriac version renders it; to divest it of all anxious thought and care, and call it off from its vain and fruitless undertakings; and be no more concerned about or thoughtful of all the labour which I took under the sun; and what will be the consequence and issue of it; but quietly leave all to an all-wise disposing Providence; and not seek for happiness in any thing under the sun, but in those things that are above it; not in this world, but in the world to come.

Ver. 21. *For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity, &c.*] Who does all he does, in natural, civil, and religious things, in the state, in his family, and the world, and whatsoever business he is engaged, in the wisest and best manner, with the utmost honesty and integrity, according to all the rules of wisdom and knowledge, and of justice and equity; meaning himself; the Midrash interprets this of God. *Yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion*; to his son, heir, and successor; who never took any pains, or joined with him, in acquiring the least part of it; and yet all comes into his hands, as his possession and inheritance: the Targum interprets this of a man that dies without children; and so others² understand it of his leaving his substance to strangers, and not to his children. *This also is vanity, and a great evil*; not any thing sinful and criminal, but vexatious and distressing.

Ver. 22. *For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart? &c.*] What profit has he by it, when there is so much vexation in it, both in getting it, and in the thought of leaving it to others? What advantage is it to him, when it is all acquired for and possessed by another; and especially of what use is it to him after his death? Even of all wherein he hath laboured under the sun? the Targum adds, *in this world*; though he has been labouring all his days, yet there is not one thing he has got by his labour that is of any real advantage to him, or can yield him any solid comfort and satisfaction, or bring him true happiness, or lead him to it.

Ver. 23. *For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief, &c.*] All his days are full of sorrows, of a variety of them; and all his affairs and transactions of life are attended with grief and trouble; not only the days of old age are evil ones, in which he can take no pleasure; or those times which exceed the common age of man, when he is got to fourscore years or more, and when his strength is labour and sorrow; but even all his days, be they fewer or more, from his youth upward, are all evil and full of trouble, Gen. xlvii. 9. Job xiv. 1. *Yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night*;

* Rape, congere, aufer, posside, relinquendum est. Martial. Epigr. l. 8. Ep. 43.

¹ וְיָשַׁב וְעָשָׂה וְעָשָׂה וְעָשָׂה, Montanus; & ego verti me, Vatubius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

² R. Joseph Titatzak in loc.

which is appointed for rest and ease; and when laid down on his bed for it, as the word signifies; yet, either through an eager desire of getting wealth, or through anxious and distressing cares for the keeping it when gotten, he cannot sleep quietly and comfortably, his carking cares and anxious thoughts keep him waking; or, if he sleeps, his mind is distressed with dreams and frightful apprehensions of things, so that his sleep is not sweet and refreshing to him. *This is also vanity*: or one of the vanities which belong to human life.

Ver. 24. There is *nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, &c.*] Not in an immoderate and voluptuous manner, like the epicure and the atheist, that disbelieve a future state and the resurrection of the dead, and give up themselves to all sinful and sensual gratifications; but in a moderate way, enjoying in a cheerful and comfortable manner the good creatures of God, which he has given; being contented with them, thankful for them, and looking upon them as the blessings of divine goodness, and as flowing from the love of God to him; and thus freely using, and yet not abusing them. Some render it, *it is not good for a man to eat*^a, &c. immoderately and to excess, and to place his happiness in it: or, *there is no good with man*^b; it is not in the power of man to use the creatures aright. Jarchi renders it by way of interrogation, *is it not good?* which comes to the same sense with ours, and so the Vulgate Latin version. *And that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour*: not leave off labouring; nor eat and drink what he has not laboured for, or what is the fruit of other men's labour; but what is the effect of his own, and in which he continues: and this is the way to go on in it with cheerfulness, when he enjoys the good, and reaps the benefit and advantage of it; which is certainly preferable to a laying up his substance, and leaving it to he knows not who. *This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God*; not only the riches a man possesses, but the enjoyment of them, or a heart to make use of them; see ch. v. 18, 19. The Midrash interprets this eating and drinking, of the law and good works: and the Targum explains it, causing the soul to enjoy the good of doing the commandments, and walking in right ways; and observes, that a man that prospers in this world, it is from the hand of the Lord, and is what is decreed to be concerning him.

Ver. 25. *For who can eat? &c.*] Who should eat, but such a man that has laboured for it? or, who has a power to eat, that is, cheerfully, comfortably, and freely to enjoy the good things of life he is possessed of, unless it be given him of God? see ch. vi. 1, 2. *Or who else can hasten hereunto more than I?* the word *chush*, in Rabbinical language, is used of the five senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting: and R. Elias says^c, there are some that so interpret it here, *who has his sense better than I?* a quicker sense, particularly of smelling and tasting what he eats, in which lies much of the pleasure of eating; and this is of God; which interpretation is not to be despised. Or, *who*

can prepare? according to the Arabic sense of the word^d; that is, a better table than I? No man had a greater affluence of good things than Solomon, or had a greater variety of eatables and drinkables; or had it in the power of his hands to live well, and cause his soul to enjoy good; or was more desirous to partake of pleasure, and hasten more to make the experiment of it in a proper manner; and yet he found, that a heart to do this was from the Lord; that this was a gift of his; and that though he abounded in the blessings of life, yet if God had not given him a heart to use them, he never should have really enjoyed them.

Ver. 26. *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, &c.*] No man is of himself good, or naturally so, but evil, very evil, as all the descendants of Adam are; there are some that are good in their own eyes, and in the sight of others, and yet not truly good; they are only really good, who are so in the sight of God, who sees the heart, and knows what is in man; they are such who are made good by his efficacious grace; who are inwardly, and not merely outwardly so; who are good at heart, or who have good hearts, clean hearts, new and right spirits created in them; who have a good work of grace upon their hearts, and the several graces of the spirit implanted there; who have the good spirit of God in them, in whose heart Christ dwells by faith; and who have the good word of Christ dwelling in them, and have a good treasure of rich experience of the grace of God; and who, in one word, are born again, renewed in the spirit of their minds, and live by faith on Jesus Christ. The phrase is rendered, *whoso pleaseth God*, ch. vii. 26, and he is one that is accepted with God in Christ, his beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleased; who is clothed with his righteousness, made comely through his comeliness, and so is irreprouvable in his sight; and who by faith looks to and lays hold on this righteousness, and does all he does in the exercise of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. To such a man God gives *wisdom, and knowledge, and joy*; wisdom to acquire knowledge, to keep, use, and improve it; and joy, to be cheerful and thankful for the good things of life: or rather this may design, not natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom, wisdom in the hidden part, so as to be wise unto salvation, and to walk wisely and circumspectly, a good man's steps being ordered by the Lord; and knowledge of God in Christ, and of Christ, and of the things of the Gospel, and which relate to eternal life; and so spiritual joy, joy and peace in believing, in the presence of God, and communion with him; joy in Christ, and in hope of the glory of God, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory; all which, more or less, at one time or another, God gives to those who are truly good; and which is not to be found in worldly wisdom, pleasure, riches, power, and authority: the Targum is, "to the man, whose works are right before God, he gives wisdom and knowledge in this world, and joy with the righteous in the world to come." *But to the sinner*

^a כֹּחַ אֲכִילָהּ non est igitur bonum, Vatablus.

^b Non est bonum penes hominem, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Gasselius.

^c In Tishbi, p. 109.

^d Vid. Rambachium in Joc.

he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up; to gather mannon, and to heap up a large possession, as the Targum; to gather together a great deal of riches, but without wisdom and knowledge to use them, without any proper enjoyment of them, or pleasure in them; all he has is a deal of trouble and care to get riches, without any comfort in them, and he has them not for his own use: the Midrash illustrates this of the good man and sinner, by the instances of Abraham and Nimrod, of Isaac and Abimelech, of Jacob and Laban, of the Israelites and Canaanites, of Hezekiah and Sennacherib, and of Mordecai and Haman. But

that he may give to him that is good before God; so it is ordered by divine Providence sometimes, that all that a wicked man has been labouring for all his days should come into the hands of such who are truly good men, and will make a right use of what is communicated to them. This also is vanity, and vexation of spirit; not to the good man, but to the wicked man: so the Targum, "it is vanity to the sinner, a breaking " of spirit;" it grieves him that such a man should have what he has been labouring for; or it would, if he knew it.

C H A P. III.

THE general design of this chapter is to confirm what is before observed, the vanity and inconstancy of all things; the frailty of man, and changes respecting him; his fruitless toil and labour in all his works; that it is best to be content with present things, and cheerful in them, and thankful for them; that all comes from the hand of God; that such good men, who have not at present that joy that others have, may have it, since there is a time for it; and that sinners should not please themselves with riches gathered by them, since they may be soon taken from them, for there is a time for every thing, ver. 1. of which there is an induction of particulars, ver. 2—8. so that though every thing is certain with God, nothing is certain with men, nor to be depended on, nor can happiness be placed therein; there is no striving against the providence of God, nor altering the course of things; the labour of man is unprofitable, and his travail affliction and vexation, ver. 9, 10. and though all God's works are beautiful in their season, they are unsearchable to man, ver. 11. wherefore it is best cheerfully to enjoy the present good things of life, ver. 12, 13. and be content; for the will and ways and works of God are unalterable, permanent, and perfect, ver. 14, 15. and though wicked men may abuse the power reposed in them, and pervert public justice, they will be called to an account for it in the general judgment, for which there is a time set, ver. 16, 17. and yet such is the stupidity of the generality of men, that they have no more sense of death and judgment than the brutes, and live and die like them, ver. 18—21. wherefore it is best of all to make a right use of power and riches, or what God has given to men, for their own good and that of others, since they know not what shall be after them, ver. 22.

Ver. 1. *To every thing there is a season, &c.] A set determined time, when every thing shall come into being, how long it shall continue, and in what circumstances; all things that have been, are, or shall be, were fore-ordained by God, and he has determined the times before appointed for their being, duration, and end; which times and seasons he has in his own power: there was a determined time for the whole universe, and for all persons and things in it; a settled fixed moment for the world to come into being; for it did not exist from everlasting, nor of itself, nor was formed*

*by the fortuitous concourse of atoms, but by the wisdom and power of God; nor could it exist sooner or later than it did; it appeared when it was the will of God it should; in the beginning he created it, and he has fixed the time of its duration and end; for it shall not continue always, but have an end, which when it will be, he only knows: so there is a determined time for the rise, height, and declension of states and kingdoms in it; as of lesser ones, so of the four great monarchies; and for all the distinct periods and ages of the world; and for the several seasons of the year throughout all ages; for the state of the church in it, whether in suffering or flourishing circumstances; for the treading down of the holy city; for the prophesying, slaying, and rising of the witnesses; for the reign and ruin of antichrist; for the reign of Christ on earth, and for his second coming to judgment, though of that day and hour knows no man: and as there is a set time in the counsels and providence of God for these more important events, so for every thing of a lesser nature. And a time to every purpose under the heaven; to every purpose of man that is carried into execution; for some are not, they are superseded by the counsel of God; some remora or another is thrown in the way of them, so that they cannot take place; God withdraws men from them by affliction or death, when their purposes are broken; or by some other way; and what are executed he appoints a time for them, and overrules them to answer some ends of his own; for things the most contingent, free, and voluntary, fall under the direction and providence of God. And there is a time for every purpose of his own; all things done in the world are according to his purposes, which are within himself wisely formed, and are eternal and unfrustrable; and there is a time fixed for the execution of them, for every purpose respecting all natural and civil things in providence; and for every purpose of his grace, relating to the redemption of his people, the effectual vocation of them, and the bringing them to eternal glory; which are the things that God wills, that he takes delight and pleasure in, as the word * signifies. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, *to every thing under the heaven there is a time*; and Jarchi observes that in the Misnic language the word used so signifies. The Targum is, "to every*

* כל חפץ omni voluntati, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius; i. e. rei proprie cupite ac desiderate, Drusius

“man a time shall come, and a season to every business under heaven.”

Ver. 2. *A time to be born, &c.*] The Targum is, “to beget sons and daughters;” but rather it is to bear them, there being a time in nature fixed for that, called the hour of a woman, Job xvi. 21. *And a time to die;* the time of a man’s coming into the world and going out of it, both being fixed by the Lord[†]: this is true of all men in general, of all men that come into the world, for whom it is appointed that they shall die; and particularly of Christ, whose birth was at the time appointed by the Father, in the fulness of time; and whose death was in due time, nor could his life be taken away before his hour was come, John vii. 30. and viii. 20. and xiii. 1. and this holds good of every individual man; his birth is at the time God has fixed it; that any man is born into the world, is of God; no man comes into it at his own pleasure or another’s, but at the will of God, and when he pleases, not sooner nor later; and the time of his going out of the world is settled by him, beyond which time he cannot live, and sooner he cannot die, Job xiv. 5. and though no mention is made of the interval of life between a man’s birth and death, yet all events intervening are appointed by God; as the place of his abode; his calling and station of life; all circumstances of prosperity and adversity; all diseases of body, and what lead on to death, and issue in it: the reason why these two are put so close together is, to shew the certainty of death; that as sure as a man is born, so sure shall he die; and the frailty and shortness of life, which is but an hand’s breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, yea, is as nothing; so that no account is made of it, as if there was no time allotted it, or that it deserved no mention; and also to observe that the seeds of mortality and death are in men as soon as they are born; as soon as they begin to live they begin to die, death is working in them. *A time to plant;* a tree, as the Targum, or any herb. *And a time to pluck up* that which is *planted;* a tree or herb, as before, when grown to its ripeness, and fit for use; or when grown old, barren, and unfruitful; there are particular seasons for planting plants, and some for one and some for another. This may be applied in a civil sense to planting and plucking up kingdoms and states; see Jer. i. 10. and xviii. 7—10. as it is by the Jews, particularly to the planting and plucking up of the kingdom of Israel; the people of Israel were a vine brought out of Egypt and planted in the land of Canaan, and afterwards plucked up and carried captive into Babylon; and afterwards planted again, and then again plucked up by the Romans; and will be assuredly planted in their own land again; see Psal. lxxx. 8. Jerem. xlv. 4. and xxxi. 28. and xxxii. 41. It may be illustrated in a spiritual sense by the planting of the Jewish church, sometimes compared to a vineyard; and the plucking it up, abolishing their church-state and ordinances; and by planting Gospel churches in the Gentile world, and plucking them up again, as in the seven cities of Asia; or removing the candlestick out of its place; and by planting particular persons in churches, and removing them again: some indeed that are planted in the house of the Lord are

planted in Christ, and rooted and grounded in the love of God; are plants which Christ’s Father has planted, and will never be rooted up; but there are others who are planted through the external ministry of the word, or are plants only by profession, and these become twice dead, plucked up by the roots; and there are times for these things, Psal. xcii. 14. Matt. xv. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 6—8. Jude 12.

Ver. 3. *A time to kill, and a time to heal, &c.*] A time to kill may be meant of a violent death, as a time to die is of a natural one; so the Targum, “a time to kill in war;” or else, by the hand of the civil magistrate, such who deserve death. Aben Ezra interprets it *to wound*, because of the opposite *to heal*; and so there is a time when wounds and diseases are incurable, and baffle all the skill of the physician, being designed unto death; and there is a time when, by the blessing of God on means, they are healed; the wound or sickness not being unto death: so the Targum paraphrases the last clause, “to heal one that lies sick.” This may be applied in a civil sense to calamities in kingdoms, and a restoration of peace and plenty to them; which is the property of God alone, who in this sense kills and makes alive in his own time, Deut. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Hos. vi. 1. And in a spiritual sense to the ministers of the word, who are instruments of slaying souls by the law, which is the killing letter, and of healing them by the Gospel, which pours in the oil and wine of peace and pardon through the blood of Christ, and so binds up and heals the broken-hearted; and there is a time for both. *A time to break down, and a time to build up;* to break down a building, and build a waste, as the Targum; to break down cities and the walls of them, as the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and to build them up, as in the times of Nehemiah and Zerubbabel: and so in a spiritual sense to break down the church of God, the tabernacle of David, and to raise up and repair the breaches of it; to build up Zion, and the walls of Jerusalem, or to restore the Gospel church-state to its glory, for which there is a set time; see Amos ix. 11. Psal. cii. 13, 16.

Ver. 4. *A time to weep, and a time to laugh, &c.*] There is a time for these things, as it goes ill or well with persons, as to their health, estate, or friends; and as it goes ill or well with kingdoms and states. The Jews wept when they were in Babylon, and their mouths were filled with laughter when their captivity was returned, Psal. cxxxvii. 1. and cxxvi. 1, 2. and as it goes ill or well with the church of Christ, when there are corruptions in doctrine and worship, a neglect of ordinances, declensions in faith and practice, few instances of conversion, and there are divisions and contentions, it is a time for the mourners in Zion to weep; but when God creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, or makes her an eternal excellency, and the praise of the whole earth, then it is a time to rejoice and be glad, Isa. lxi. 3. and lxxv. 18. and as it is with believers, when Christ is withdrawn from them, it is a time to lament; but, when the bridegroom is with them, it is a time of joy; when it is a night of darkness and desertion, weeping endures, but when

[†] Stat sua cuique dies, breve & irreparabile tempus omnibus est vite, Virgil. Æneid. l. 10.

the morning comes, the day breaks, and the sun of righteousness arises, joy comes with it, Matt. ix. 15. John xvi. 19, 20. Psal. xxx. 5. Now in the present state is the saints' weeping-time; in the time to come they will laugh, or be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, Luke vi. 21. *A time to mourn, and a time to dance*; to mourn at funerals, and to dance at festivals; in a spiritual sense, God sometimes turns the mourning of his people into dancing, or joy, which that is expressive of; see Psal. xxx. 11.

Ver. 5. *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together, &c.*] To cast stones out of a field or vineyard where they are hurtful, and to gather them together to make walls and fences of, or build houses with; and may be understood both of throwing down buildings, as the temple of Jerusalem, so that not one stone was left upon another; of pouring out the stones of the sanctuary, and of gathering them again and laying them on one another; which was done when the servants of the Lord took pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favoured the dust thereof. Some understand this of precious stones, and of casting them away through luxury, wantonness, or contempt, and gathering them again: and it may be applied, as to the neglect of the Gentiles for a long time, and the gathering of those stones of which children were raised to Abraham; so of the casting away of the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah, and of the gathering of them again by conversion, when they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign on his land, Zech. ix. 16. *A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing*; or to be far from^e it; it may not only design conjugal embraces^h, but parents embracing their children, as Jacob did his; and one brother embracing another, as Esau Jacob, and one friend embracing another; all which is very proper and agreeable at times: but there are some seasons so very calamitous and distressing, in which persons are obliged to drop such fondnesses: it is true, in a spiritual sense, of the embraces of Christ and believers, which sometimes are, and sometimes are not, enjoyed, Prov. iv. 8. Cant. ii. 6, 9. and iii. 1—3.

Ver. 6. *A time to get, and a time to lose, &c.*] To get substance, as the Targum, and to lose it; wealth and riches, honour and glory, wisdom and knowledge: or, to seek, and to loseⁱ; a time when the sheep of the house of Israel, or God's elect, were lost, and a time to seek them again; which was done by Christ in redemption, and by the Spirit of God, in effectual vocation. *A time to keep, and a time to cast away*. to keep a thing, and to cast it away, into the sea, in the time of a great tempest, as the Targum; as did the mariners in the ship in which Jonah was, and those in which the Apostle Paul was, Jon. i. 5. Acts xxvii. 38. It may be interpreted of keeping riches, and which are sometimes kept too close, and to the hurt of the owners of them; and of scattering them among the poor, or casting them upon the waters; see ch. v. 13. and xi. 1. Prov. xi. 24.

Ver. 7. *A time to rend, and a time to sew, &c.*] To rend garments, in case of blasphemy, and in times of

mourning and fasting, and then to sew them up when they are over; see Isa. xxxvii. 1. Joel ii. 13. This the Jews apply to the rending of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, signified by the rending of Jeroboam's garment, 1 Kings xi. 30, 31. the sewing up or uniting of which is foretold, Ezek. xxxvii. 22. Some interpret it of the rending of the Jewish church-state, signified by the rending of the vail, at the death of Christ; and of the constituting the Gospel church-state among the Gentiles. *A time to keep silence, and a time to speak^k*; when it is an evil time, a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be loquacious and talkative, especially in a vain and ludicrous way, Amos v. 13. or when a particular friend or relation is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends, Job ii. 13. or when in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of every thing serious and religious, Psal. xxxix. 1. and so when under afflictive dispensations of Providence, it is a time to be still and dumb, and not open the mouth in a murmuring and complaining way, Lev. x. 3. Psal. xxxix. 9. and xlvii. 10. And, on the other hand, there is a time to speak, either publicly, of the truths of the Gospel, in the ministry of it, and in vindication of them; or privately, of Christian experience: there is a time when an open profession should be made of Christ, his word and ordinances, and when believers should speak to God in prayer and praise; which, should they not, the stones in the wall would cry out.

Ver. 8. *A time to love, and a time to hate, &c.*] For one to love his friend, and to hate a man, a sinner, as the Targum; to love a friend while he continues such, and hate him, or less love him, when he proves treacherous and unfaithful; an instance of a change of love into hatred may be seen in the case of Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 15. A time of unregeneracy is a time of loving worldly lusts and sinful pleasures, the company of wicked men, and all carnal delights and recreations; and a time of conversion is a time to hate what was before loved, sin, and the conversion of sinners, the garment spotted with the flesh, the principles and practices, though not the persons, of ungodly men; and even to hate, that is, less love, the dearest friends and relations, in comparison of, or when in competition with, Christ. *A time of war, and a time of peace*; for nations to be engaged in war with each other, or to be at peace, which are continually revolving; and there is a time when there will be no more war. In a spiritual sense, the present time, or state of things, is a time of war; the Christian's life is a warfare state, though it will be soon accomplished, in which he is engaging, in fighting with spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world: the time to come, or future state, is a time of peace, when saints shall enter into peace, and be no more disturbed by enemies from within or from without. In the Midrash, all the above times and seasons are interpreted of Israel, and applied to them.

Ver. 9. *What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?*] That is, he has none. This is an inference drawn from the above premises, and confirms what has been before observed, ch. i. 3. and

^e תּוֹרֵק עַתְּמָּוּס elongandi se, Pagninus, Montanus; tempus longe fieri, V. L.

^h Optatos dedit amplexus, Virgil. Æneid. 8. v. 405.

ⁱ לִבְקַשׁ עַתְּמָּוּס tempus quaerendi, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius.

^k ἄρα μὲν ἀπολαύων μῦθου, ὅρα δὲ καὶ ἄρα, Homer. Odys. 11. v. 378.

ii. 11. Man has no profit of his labour, since his time is so short to enjoy it, and he leaves it to another, he knows not who; and, whilst he lives, is attended with continual vicissitudes and changes; sometimes it is a time for one thing, and sometimes for its contrary, so that there is nothing certain, and to be depended on; and a man can promise himself nothing in this world pleasant or profitable to him, and much less that will be of any advantage to him hereafter. The Targum adds, "to make treasures and gather mammon, unless he is "helped by Providence above;" though it is man's duty to labour, yet all his toil and labour will be fruitless without a divine blessing; there is a time and season for every thing in providence, and there is no striving against that.

Ver. 10. *I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men, &c.*] The pains and trouble they are at to get a little wisdom and knowledge, ch. i. 13. and so to obtain riches and honour, peace and plenty, which sometimes they do obtain, and sometimes not; and when they do, do not keep them long, for there is a time for every thing. This the wise man had observed, in a variety of instances; and he considered the end of God in it, which was for men to be exercised in it, or by it: or to afflict or humble them by it¹; to let them see that all their toil and labour signified little; all depended on a divine blessing, and no happiness was to be had in the creatures; all was vanity and vexation of spirit; see the note on ch. i. 13.

Ver. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time, &c.*] That is, God has made every thing; as all things in creation are made by him, for his pleasure and glory, and all well and wisely, there is a beauty in them all: so all things in providence; he upholds all things; he governs and orders all things according to the counsel of his will; some things are done immediately by him, others by instruments, and some are only permitted by him; some he does himself, some he wills to be done by others, and some he suffers to be done; but in all there is a beauty and harmony; and all are ordered, disposed, and overruled, to answer the wisest and greatest purposes; every thing is done in the time in which he wills it shall be done, and done in the time most fit and suitable for it to be done; all things before mentioned, for which there is a time, and all others: all natural things are beautiful in their season; things in summer, winter, spring, and autumn; frost and snow in winter, and heat in summer; darkness and dews in the night, and light and brightness in the day; and so in ten thousand other things: all afflictive dispensations of Providence; times of plucking up and breaking down, of weeping and mourning, of losing and casting away, are all necessary, and seasonable, and beautiful, in their issue and consequences: prosperity and adversity, in their turns, make a beautiful chequer-work, and work together for good; are like Joseph's coat, of many colours, which was an emblem of those various providences which attended that good man; and were extremely beautiful, as are all the providences of God to men: and all his judgments will

be, when made manifest; when he shall have performed his whole work, and the mystery of God in providence will be finished; which is like a piece of tapestry; when only viewed in parts, no beauty appears in it, scarce any thing to be made of it, but when all is put together, it is most beautiful and harmonious. The words may be rendered, *the beautiful One hath made all things in his time*²; the Messiah; who, as a divine Person, is the brightness of his Father's glory; as man, is fairer than the sons of Adam; as Mediator, is full of grace and truth; is white and ruddy, altogether lovely, exceeding precious to his people: this fair and lovely One has made all things in creation; works with his Father in the affairs of providence; and has done all things well in grace and redemption, John i. 2. and v. 17. Mark vii. 37. *Also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end; not a sinful love of the world, and the things of it; not a criminal desire after them, and a carking care for them, whereby persons have no heart and inclination, time and leisure, to search into and find out the works of God; for though all this is in the heart of the sons of men, yet not placed there by the Lord: nor an opinion of living for ever, or a long time, in this world, the word for world having the signification of perpetuity in it; so that they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, to-morrow being with them as this day, and much more abundant; but this sense meets with the same difficulty as the former. Rather the meaning is, that God hath set before the minds of men, and in them, the whole world of creatures, the whole book of nature, in which they may see and read much of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in his works; and to some he gives an inclination and desire hereunto; but yet the subject before them is so copious, there is such a world of matter presented to them, and their capacity so small, and life so short, that they cannot all their days find out the works of God, either of creation or providence, to perfection; or find out what God works, from the beginning of the world to the end of it; for, of what he has wrought, but a small portion is known by them, and they know less still what shall be done hereafter: some of God's works of providence are set on foot and but begun in the life of some men; they do not live to see them finished, and therefore cannot find them out; and others are so dark and obscure, that they are obliged to say, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* see Rom. i. 19, 20. and xi. 33. and though every thing is beautiful in its time, yet till they are made manifest, and all viewed together, they will not be perfectly understood, or the beauty of them seen, Rev. xv. 4. For God has put something hidden, or sealed up, in the midst of them, as it may be rendered³, so that they cannot be perfectly known.*

Ver. 12. *I know that there is no good in them, &c.*] In these things, as the Arabic version; in the creatures, as Jarchi; in all sublunary enjoyments; in every

¹ עָוָה בָּרַע ad affligendum se in ea, Montanus; ut eos adfigat in eis, sc. per eam, Rambachius; ut ea redderet humiles, Tigurine version.

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² אֵלֶּה הַכֹּל עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּתוֹרָהּ hæc omnia facit pulcher in tempore suo, i. e. Messias; so some in Rambachius.

³ Vid. Scultetus de Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 180.

thing the wise man had made a trial of before, as natural wisdom and knowledge, worldly pleasure, riches, and wealth; the *summum bonum*, or happiness of men, did not lie in these things; this he knew by experience, and had the strongest assurance of it: or in them, that is, the children of men, as the Targum: there is no real good thing in them, nor comes out of them, nor is done by them; they cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, of themselves. Or rather the sense is, I know there is nothing better for them than what follows: *but for a man to rejoice*; not in sin and sinful pleasures, in a riotous, voluptuous, and epicurean manner; but to be cheerful, and enjoy the blessings of life in a comfortable way, and with a thankful heart; and especially to rejoice in spiritual things, and above all in Christ; and not in any self-boastings or carnal confidences, all such rejoicing is evil; see ch. ix. 7. Phil. iv. 4. Jam. iv. 16. The Targum is, "but that they rejoice in the joy of the law;" but it is much better to rejoice in the things of the Gospel, which is indeed a joyful sound. *And to do good in his life*; to himself and family, by making use of the good things of life, and not withholding and hoarding them up; and to others, to all men, as opportunity offers, and especially to the household of faith; and not only by liberality and alms-deeds, but by doing all good works, from right principles and to right ends, and that always, as long as he lives, Gal. vi. 9, 10. Luke i. 75.

Ver. 13. *And also that every man should eat and drink, &c.*] Not to excess, but in moderation; and yet freely, plentifully, and cheerfully; and not alone, but giving the poor a portion with him; and in all having in view the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. *And enjoy the good of all his labour*; take the comfort of what he has been labouring for, and not lay it up for, and leave it to, he knows not who: the Targum is, "and see good in his days, and cause his children, at the time of his death, to inherit all his labour." *It is the gift of God*: not only to have, but to enjoy, and make a proper use of the mercies of life. This is the same doctrine which is delivered ch. ii. 24.

Ver. 14. *I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, &c.*] Which some, as Jarchi, understand of the works of creation, the heavens and the earth, which are however of long standing and duration; and though they shall be dissolved and perish, as to their form and quality, yet not as to the substance of them: the earth particularly is said to abide for ever, ch. i. 4. the sun and moon, and stars, keep their course or station; and the several seasons of the year have their constant revolution, and shall as long as the earth endures; see Gen. viii. 22. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. and xxxiii. 20, 21. the several kinds of creatures God has made, in the earth, air, and sea, though the individuals die, their species remain; and man, the chief of creatures, though he dies, shall live again, and live for ever; so the Arabic version, "I have learned that all the creatures which God hath made shall perpetually remain in the same order and condition:" though Abarbinel* interprets this of the continuance of the world for a certain time, and then of the destruction of it; which he thinks is sup-

ported by the verse following, and which is to be understood of the creation of one world after another; and that which is past he explains of the world that is destroyed. But rather this is to be understood of the decrees of God, which are his works *ad intra*; the thoughts of his heart, that are to all generations; the counsel of his will, which always stands, and is performed; his mind, which is one, the same always, and invariable, and which he never changes; his pleasure he always does; his purposes and appointments, which are always accomplished, never frustrated and made void: for he is all-wise in forming them, all-knowing, and sees the end from the beginning, so that nothing unforeseen can turn up to hinder the execution of them; he is unchangeable, and never alters his will; and all-powerful, able to effect his great designs; and faithful and true, cannot deny himself, nor ever lie nor repent. To this sense is the Targum, "I know, by a spirit of prophecy, that all which the Lord does in the world, whether good or evil, after it is decreed from his mouth, it shall be for ever." This holds good of all his works, and acts of grace; election of persons to eternal life stands firm, not on the foot of works, but of grace, and has its certain effect; it can never be made void, nor be surer than it is; it will ever take place, and continue in its fruit and consequences: the covenant of grace, as it is made from everlasting, continues to everlasting; its promises never fail, its blessings are the sure mercies of David: redemption by Christ is eternal; such as are redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, are ever so, and shall never be brought into bondage to either again: the work of grace upon the heart being begun, shall be performed and perfected; the graces wrought in the soul, as faith, hope, and love, ever remain; the blessings of grace bestowed, as pardon, justification, adoption, and salvation, are never reversed, but ever continue; such as are regenerated, pardoned, justified, adopted, and saved, shall be ever so; and the work of God, as it is durable, so perfect. *Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it*: the works of nature have been finished and perfected from the foundation of the world; the decrees of God are a complete system of his will, according to which he does all things invariably, in providence and grace; the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and nothing wanting in it; the work of redemption is completely done by Christ, who is a rock, and his work is perfect; and the work of grace on the heart, though at present imperfect, shall be perfected; nor is it in the power of men to add any thing to it, nor take any thing from it. *And God doth it, that men should fear before him*; his works of creation being done in so much wisdom, and giving such a display of his power and godness, command an awe of him in his creatures, Psal. xxxiii. 6—9. his works of providence, being all according to his wise purposes and decrees, should be patiently and quietly submitted to; and men should be still, and know that he is God, and humble themselves under his mighty hand: his decrees, respecting the present or future state of men, do not lead to despair, nor to a neglect of means, nor to a dissolute life, but tend to promote the

* Miphahot Elohim Tract. 8. c. 7. fol. 57. 4.

fear of God and true holiness, which they are the source of; and the blessings of grace have a kind influence on the same; particularly the blessing of pardoning grace, which is with God, that he may be feared, Psal. cxxx. 4. Hos. iii. 5. and one principal part of the work of grace on the heart is the fear of God; and nothing more strongly engages to the whole worship of God, which is often meant by the fear of him, than his grace vouchsafed to men; see Heb. xii. 28. Eccl. xii. 14. The Targum refers this to the vengeance of God in the world: and Jarchi, to the unusual phenomena in it; as the flood, the sun's standing still and going backward, and the like.

Ver. 15. *That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been, &c.*] That which has been from the beginning now is; that which cometh, and what shall be in the end of days, has been already, as the Targum. Jarchi interprets this of God and his attributes, which are always the same; he is the *I am that I am*; the immutable and eternal Jehovah, which is, and was, and is to come, invariably the same. Or rather it designs his decrees and purposes; what has been decreed in his eternal mind is now accomplished; and what is future has been already in his decrees; nor does any thing come to pass but what he has appointed. So it is interpreted, in an ancient tract^p of the Jews, of "what was before it came into the world, so that there is nothing new under the sun; now it is obliged to come into this world, as it is said, *before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee*, Jer. i. 5." This will also hold true of natural things, and of the identity of them; of some individuals, as the sun, moon, and stars, which are as they always were, and will be; the sun rises and sets as it used to do; and the moon increases and decreases, as it always has done; and the stars keep the same station or course, and so they ever will, as they have: the same seasons are now in their turn as heretofore, and such as will be have been already; as summer, winter, spring, autumn, seed-time, harvest, cold, heat, night, and day: the same kinds and species of creatures, that have been, are; and what will be have been already; so that there is no new thing under the sun; the same thing is here expressed as in ch. i. 9. *And God requireth that which is past*; his decrees and purposes to be fulfilled, which are past in his mind; the same seasons to return which have been; and the same kinds and species of creatures to exist which have already. The words may be rendered, *and God seeketh that which is pursued, or persecuted*^q; and accordingly the whole will bear a different sense; and the preacher may be thought to have entered upon a new subject, which he continues in some following verses, the abuse of power and authority: and the meaning then is, the same acts of injustice, violence, and persecution, have been done formerly as now, and now as formerly; and what hereafter of this kind may be, will be no other than what has been; from the beginning persecution was; Cain hated and slew his brother, because of his superior goodness; and so it

always has been, is, and will be, that such who are after the flesh persecute those who are after the spirit; but God will make inquisition for blood, and require it at the hands of those that shed it; he will seek out the persecuted, and vindicate him, and avenge his persecutor. This way the Midrash, Jarchi, and Alshech, and the Septuagint version, render the words; and so the Syriac version, *God seeketh him that is afflicted, who is driven away*; and to this agrees the Targum, "and in the great day which shall be, the Lord will require the mean and poor man of the hands of the wicked that persecute him." And what follows seems to confirm this sense.

Ver. 16. *And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, &c.*] Courts of judicature, where judges sit, and causes are brought before them, and are heard and tried; such as were the Jewish sanhedrim, of which the Midrash and Jarchi interpret it; that *wickedness* was there, wicked judges sat there, and wickedness was committed by them; instead of doing justice they perverted it; condemned the righteous, and acquitted the wicked; and oppressed the widow, fatherless, and stranger, whose cause, being just, they should have defended. So the Targum, "in which lying judges condemn the innocent." Well does the wise man say he saw this *under the sun*, for there is nothing of this kind above it; nor approved of by him that is above it. *And the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there*; this signifies the same as before, only it is expressed in different words. The Midrash and Jarchi interpret this of the middle gate in Jerusalem, where Nergal Sharezer, and other princes of the king of Babylon, sat, and which Solomon foresaw by a spirit of prophecy; but the better sense is, that Solomon had observed a great deal of this kind in reading the histories and annals of nations; knew that much of this sort was practised in other countries, and had seen a great deal of it in his own, done in inferior courts, and by subordinate officers; and though he was a wise and righteous prince, yet was not able to rectify all these abuses, for want of sufficient proof, which yet he lamented, and it gave him a concern; compare with this Isa. i. 21—23.

Ver. 17. *I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, &c.*] This he considered in his mind, and set it down for a certain truth, and which relieved him under the consideration of the sad perversion of justice; and made him easy under it, and willing to leave things to him that judgeth righteously, and wait his time when every thing that was now wrong would be set right: he knew from reason, from tradition, and from the word of God, that there was a judgment to come, a general, righteous, and eternal one; that this judicial process would be carried on by God himself, who is holy, righteous, just, and true, omniscient, and omnipotent; and, being the Judge of all the earth, would do right; when he would vindicate the righteous, and clear them from all calumnies and charges; acquit and justify them, and condemn the wicked, pass a just sentence on them, and execute it. *For there is a time there for every purpose, and*

^p Tikkune Zohar Correct. 69. fol. 104. 2.

^q ואלהים יבקש את נרדף Deum querit propulsam, seu quod persecutionem veluti passum est, Gejerus, Schmidt.

for every work; or then, as Noldius; in the day of the great judgment, as the Targum adds; and which continues to paraphrase the words thus, "for a time is appointed for every business, and for every work which they do in this world they shall be judged there;" there is a time fixed, a day appointed, for the judgment of the world; though of that day and hour knows no man; yet it is settled, and will certainly come, Acts xvii. 31. Matt. xxiv. 36. and when it is come, every purpose, counsel, and thought of men's hearts, will be made manifest, as well as every work, good or bad, open or secret, yea, every idle word, and men will be judged according to these; see 1 Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10. Eccl. xii. 14. Matt. xii. 36, 37. Jude 14, 15.

Ver. 18. *I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, &c.*] He thought of the condition of the children of men, their sinful and polluted state; he weighed and considered in his mind their actions, conversation, and course of life; and was concerned how it would go with them at the day of judgment on account of the same. Some render it, *I said in mine heart after the speech of the children of men*; speaking in their language, and personating the atheist and the epicure, as some think the wise man does in the following verses; though he rather speaks his own real sentiments concerning men, as they are in their present state, and as they will appear in the day of judgment. *That God might manifest them; or separate them*; as the chaff from the wheat, and as goats from the sheep; as will be done at the day of judgment, Matt. iii. 12. and xxv. 32, 33. *or that they might clear God*; as they will, when he shall judge and condemn them. *And that they might see that they themselves are beasts*; as they are through the fall, and the corruption of nature, being born like the wild ass's colt, stupid, senseless, and without understanding of spiritual things; nay, more brutish than the beasts themselves, than the horse and the mule that have no understanding, Psal. xxxii. 9. *mulo inscitior*, as is Plautus's phrase; see Psal. xlix. 12, 20. Job xi. 12. Isa. i. 3, Jer. viii. 7. this is now made manifest to the people of God by the word and spirit; is seen, known, and acknowledged by them, Psal. lxxxiii. 21. Prov. xxx. 2. and the wicked themselves will see, know, and own what beasts they are and have been, at the day of judgment; how they have lived and died like beasts; how like brute beasts they have corrupted themselves in things they knew naturally; and that as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, spoke evil of things they understood not, and perished in their own corruption, Jude 10. 2 Pet. ii. 12. and that they have been beasts to themselves, as Jarchi renders and interprets it; made beasts of themselves by their brutish gratifications; have been cruel to themselves, ruining and destroying their own souls; or among themselves, and to one another, *homo lupus homini*; hence wicked men are compared to lions, foxes, evening-wolves, vipers, and the like. So Mr. Broughton renders it, *how they are beasts, they to themselves*.

Ver. 19. *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, &c.*] *Aben Ezra* says this verse is according to the thoughts of the children of men that are not wise; but rather the wise man says what he does according to his own thoughts, and proceeds to prove the likeness and equality of men and beasts. *Even one thing befalleth them*; the same events belong to one as to another; the same diseases and disasters, calamities and distresses: Noah's flood carried away one as well as another; they both perished in it; several of the plagues of Egypt were inflicted on both; and both are beholden to God for their health, preservation, and safety; see Gen. vii. 21. Exod. xvii. 18. and ix. 9, 25. Psal. xxxvi. 6. *As the one dieth, so dieth the other*: the Targum compares a wicked man and an unclean beast together, in the former clause; and paraphrases this after this manner, "as an unclean beast dies, so dies he who is not turned to repentance before his death;" he dies unclean in his sins, stupid, senseless; no more thoughtful of his future state, and of what will become of his precious and immortal soul, than a beast that has none; see Psal. xlix. 14. perhaps unjust judges, persecuting tyrants, may particularly be regarded: who, though princes, shall not only die like men, but even like beasts, Psal. lxxxii. 7. *Yea, they have all one breath*; the same vital breath, or breath of life, which is in the nostrils of the one as of the other; they breathe and draw in the same air, and have the same animal and vegetative life, and equally liable to lose it, Gen. ii. 7. and vii. 22. *So that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast*: he has reason and speech, which a beast has not; which gives him a preference to them, did he make a right use of them; but, as an animal, he has no pre-eminence, being liable to the same accidents, and to death itself: the Targum excepts the house of the grave, man being usually buried when he dies, but a beast is not: yea, in some things a beast has the pre-eminence of a man; at least some have, in strength, agility, quickness of the senses, &c. *For all is vanity*: all the gratifications of the senses; all riches, honours, pleasures, power, and authority, especially when abused.

Ver. 20. *All go unto one place, &c.*] The earth, from whence they came. *All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*: Adam's body was made of the dust of the earth, and so all his posterity, all of them; in which they agree with beasts, who are made of the dust also; and, when they die, return to it; see Gen. ii. 7. and iii. 19. Psal. civ. 29.

Ver. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward? &c.*] There is indeed a difference between a man and a beast; though they have one breath, they have not one spirit or soul; man has a rational and immortal soul, which, when he dies, goes upwards to God that gave it; to be judged by him, and disposed of by him, in its proper apartment, until the day of the resurrection of the body. *And the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth*: when the beast dies, its spirit goes down to the earth, from whence it came, and is resolved into it, and is no more. But who

^r וְהָאִם עַל דְּבַר בְּנֵי הָאָדָם super verbum filiorum Adam, Moutanus; verbis hominum, Arabic and Syriac versions.

^s לְבָרִים וְהָאִם עַל דְּבַר בְּנֵי הָאָדָם, Sept. ut discernat illos, Cocceius; quia delegit eos, some in Vatablus; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech.

^t Ut ipsi expurgent Deum, Anglic. in Reinbeck; some in Rambachius render it thus, ut seligant ipsi (homines) Deum; so Varenus.

^u Cistellaria, Act. 4. Sc. 2. v. 12.

^w Magna parens terra est, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 7.

is it that sees, or can see and know with the eyes of his body, the difference of these two spirits, or the ascent of the one, and the descent of the other? Or who knows by the dint of reason, by the strength of his own understanding, without a divine revelation, that man has an immortal soul which goes upwards at death, when that of a beast goes downwards? No man, clearly and fully, as appears from the doubts and half faith of the wisest Heathens concerning it: or rather who knows and considers this difference between the spirit of a man and the spirit of a beast, and thinks within himself what a precious and immortal soul he has, and is concerned for the salvation of it? Very few; and hence it is they live and die like beasts, as they do. The Midrash interprets this of the souls of the righteous that go up to heaven, and of the souls of the wicked that go down to hell.

Ver. 22. *Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, &c.*] The Targum is, *in his good works*; not as justifying him before God, but as vindicating him before men, from unjust censures and charges: rather the sense is, that this is the wise man's conclusion, and

this his sentiment, upon the whole; that there is nothing better for a man, than cheerfully to enjoy the fruit of his labours; to eat and drink in moderation, freely, joyfully, and thankfully; and make use of his riches, power, and authority, for his own good, the good of his family for the present, and the good of his fellow-creatures; see ch. ii. 21. and iii. 13. *For that is his portion*; what is allotted to him, and thus enjoyed, is a very good one, and for which he has reason to be thankful. *For who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?* to see who shall succeed him, and what use they will make of what he leaves them; he shall never return after death to see any thing of this kind, nor shall any acquaint him with it; he shall not be able to know when he is dead what shall befall his sons, whether they will prosper or no, so Jarchi; wherefore it is best for him to enjoy his substance himself in a comfortable way, and be beneficial to others, and not oppressive to them. The Midrash illustrates it thus, "who shall bring David to see what Solomon did? and who shall bring Solomon to see what Rehoboam did?"

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the wise man reassumes the consideration of the case of the abuse of power, to shew that there is no happiness in this world, in grandeur and authority enjoyed; since, as he had observed before, on the one hand, the oppressor shall be judged and condemned at the great day of account; so, on the other hand, the oppressed have their lives made so uncomfortable, that the dead are preferred unto them, and unborn persons to them both, ver. 1—3. Another vanity he observes, that whereas men expect to be happy by their diligence and industry, this brings upon them the envy of others, ver. 4. hence some, on the other hand, place their happiness in sloth and ease, which is another vanity, ver. 5, 6. and others again in covetousness; who are described by their unsocial life, toilsome labour, unsatisfied desires, and withholding good things from themselves, ver. 7, 8. upon which some things are said, to shew the benefits of a social life, ver. 9—12. And the chapter is concluded with exposing the vanity of the highest instance of worldly power and grandeur, royal dignity, through the folly of a king; the effects of which are mentioned, ver. 13, 14. and through the fickleness of the people, who are soon weary of a prince on the throne, and court his successor, ver. 15, 16.

Ver. 1. *So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, &c.*] The wise man, according to Aben Ezra, returned from the thought, which he had expressed in the latter part of the preceding chapter, that it was good for a man to rejoice in his works, and called it in; since he could not rejoice, when he considered the oppression and vio-

lence that were in the world; but it does not appear that he did call it in, for he afterwards repeats it: or rather he returns to his former subject, the abuse of power and authority, mentioned ch. iii. 16. and from whence he had digressed a little by the above observation; and takes a review of all kinds of oppressions which are done, and of all sorts of *oppressed*^x ones, as some render it, which become so, under the sun; subjects by their prince; the stranger, widow, and fatherless, by unjust judges; the poor by the rich; servants and labourers by their masters; and the like. Moreover, he saw by the Holy Ghost, as Jarchi paraphrases it, all oppressions by a spirit of prophecy; he foresaw all the oppressions that would be done under the sun; as all the injuries done to the people of Israel in their several captivities; so to the church of Christ in Gospel times; all the persecutions of Rome Pagan, and also of Rome Papal; all that has or will be done by antichrist, the man of the earth, who ere long will oppress no more, Psal. x. 18. the Targum restrains these oppressions to those which are done to the righteous in this world: and it is well observed by the wise man, that they are such as are under the sun, for there are none above it, nor any beyond the grave, Job iii. 17, 18. *And behold the tears of such as were oppressed*; which their eyes poured out, and which ran down their cheeks, and were all they could do, having no power to help themselves: it is in the singular number, *and behold the tear*^y; as if it was one continued stream of tears, which, like a torrent, flowed from them; or as if they had so exhausted the source of nature by weeping, that the fountain of tears was dried up, and scarce

^x דַּעֲסִיִּים *oppressos*, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Schmidt, Rambachius, so Broughton; fraudatos, Cocceius.

^y דַּמְעָה *lachryma*, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Rambachius.

another could drop; or it was as much as could be, that another should drop from them: and this the wise man could not well behold, without weeping himself; it being the property of a good man to weep with them that weep, especially with good men oppressed. *And they had no comforter*; to speak a comfortable word to them; not so much as to do that which would be some alleviation of their sorrow, much less to help them, no human comforter; and this is a very deplorable condition, Lam. i. 2, 9, 16, 17. Psal. lxxix. 20. indeed, when this is the case, good men under their oppressions have a divine Comforter; God comforts them under all their tribulations; one of the names of the Messiah is *the Consolation of Israel*; and the Spirit of God is *another Comforter*; and such are well off, when all other comforters are miserable ones, or other men have none. *And on the side of their oppressors there was power*; to crush them and keep them under, or to hinder others from helping or comforting them: or there was *no power* to deliver them *out of the hand of their oppressors*²; so some render and supply the words; with which sense agrees the Targum, “and there is none to redeem them out of the hand of their oppressors, by strength of hand and by power.” It may be rendered, *out of the hand of their oppressors comes power, or violence*; such as the oppressed are not able to withstand; so the Arabic version. *But they had no comforter*: which is repeated, not so much for confirmation, as to excite attention and pity, and to express the affliction of the oppressed, and the cruelty of others; and this following on the other clause, leads to observe, that the power of the oppressor is what hinders and deters others from comforting. Jarchi interprets this whole verse of the damned in hell, punished for their evil works, weeping for their souls oppressed by the destroying angels; and so, he says, it is explained in an ancient book of theirs, called Siphri.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead, &c.*] Truly and properly so; not in a figurative sense, as dead sinners, men dead in trespasses and sins; nor carnal professors, that have a name to live, and are dead; nor in a civil sense, such as are in calamity and distress, as the Jews in captivity, or in any affliction, which is sometimes called death: but such who are dead in a literal and natural sense, really and thoroughly dead; not who may and will certainly die, but who are dead already and in their graves, and not all these; not the wicked dead, who are in hell, in everlasting torments; but the righteous dead, who are taken away from the evil to come, and are free from all the oppressions of their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world. The Targum is, “I praised those that lie down or are asleep, who, behold, are now dead;” a figure by which death is often expressed, both in the Old and New Testament; sleep being, as the poet³ says, the image of death; and a great likeness there is between them; Homer⁴ calls sleep and death twins. The same paraphrase adds, “and see not the vengeance which comes upon the world after their death;” see Isa.

lvii. 1, 2. The wise man did not make panegyrics or encomiums on those persons, but he pronounced them happy; he judged them in his own mind to be so; and to be much *more happy than the living which are yet alive*; that live under the oppression of others; that live in this world in trouble until now, as the Targum; of whom it is as much as it can be said that they are alive; they are just alive, and that is all; they are as it were between life and death. This is generally understood as spoken according to human sense, and the judgment of the flesh, without any regard to the glory and happiness of the future state; that the dead must be preferred to the living, when the quiet of the one, and the misery of the other, are observed; and which sense receives confirmation from the next verse: otherwise it is a great truth, that the righteous dead, who die in Christ and are with him, are much more happy than living saints; since they are freed from sin; are out of the reach of Satan’s temptations; are no more liable to darkness and desertions; are freed from all doubts and fears; cease from all their labours, toil, and trouble; and are delivered from all afflictions, persecutions, and oppressions; which is not the case of living saints: and besides, the joys which they possess, the company they are always in, and the work they are employed about, give them infinitely the preference to all on earth; see Rev. xiv. 13. Phil. i. 21. 23.

Ver. 3. *Yea, better is he than both they which hath not yet been, &c.*] That is, an unborn person; who is preferred both to the dead that have seen oppression, and to the living that are under it; see Job iii. 10—16. and x. 18, 19. This supposes a person to be that never was, a mere nonentity; and the judgment made is according to sense, and regards the dead purely as such, and so as free from evils and sorrows, without any respect to their future state and condition; for otherwise an unborn person is not happier than the dead that die in Christ, and live with him: and it can only be true of those that perish, of whom indeed it might be said, that it would have been better for them if they had never been born, according to those words of Christ, Matt. xxvi. 24. and is opposed to the maxim of some philosophers, that a miserable being is better than none at all. The Jews, from this passage, endeavour to prove the pre-existence of human souls, and suppose that such an one is here meant, which, though created, was not yet sent into this world in a body, and so had never seen evil and sorrow; and this way some Christian writers have gone. It has been interpreted also of the Messiah, who in Solomon’s time had not yet been a man, and never known sorrow, which he was to do, and has, and so more happy than the dead or living. But these are senses that will not bear; the first is best; and the design is to shew the great unhappiness of mortals, that even a nonentity is preferred to them. *Who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun?* the evil works of oppressors, and the sorrows of the oppressed.

Ver. 4. *Again I considered all travail, and every right*

² ומיך עסקיהם כח & quia deest facultas se vindicandi e manu opprimentium ipsos, Tigrine version; aut evadendi e manu opprimentium se virtus, Junius & Trenellius; nec vires ad evadendum a manu opprimentium ipsos, Piscator.

³ Stultie, quid est omnino glidire nisi mortis imago? Ovid. Plato in Ciceron. Tuscul. Quæst. l. 1 c. 58.

⁴ Il. ad. 16. v. 672, 682. Vid. Pausan. Laconica, sive l. 3. p. 195.

work, &c.] The pains that men take to do right works. Some apply themselves, with great diligence and industry, to the study of the liberal arts and sciences; and to attain the knowledge of languages; and to writing books, for the improvement of those things, and the good of mankind: and others employ themselves in mechanic arts, and excel in them, and bring their works to great perfection and accuracy; when they might expect to be praised and commended, and have thanks given them by men. But instead thereof, so it is, *that for this a man is envied of his neighbour*; who will be sure to find fault with what he has done, speak contemptibly of him and his work, and traduce him among men. This is also true of moral works, which are right, when done from a right principle, from love to God, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and which when done, and ever so well done, draw upon a man the envy of the wicked, as may be observed in the case of Cain and Abel, 1 John iii. 12, though some understand this, not passively, of the envy which is brought upon a man, and he endures, for the sake of the good he excels in; but actively, of the spirit of emulation with which he does it; though the work he does, as to the matter of it, is right; yet the manner of doing it, and the spirit with which he does it, are wrong; he does not do it with any good affection to the thing itself, nor with any good design, only from a spirit of emulation to outvie his neighbour: so the Targum paraphrases it, "this is the emulation that a man emulates his neighbour, to do as he; if he emulates him to do good, the heavenly Word does good to him; but if he emulates him to do evil, the heavenly Word does evil to him;" and to this sense Jarchi; compare with this, Phil. i. 15—18. *This is also vanity, and vexation of spirit*; whether it be understood in the one sense or the other; how dissatisfying and vexatious it is, when a man has taken a great deal of pains to do right works for public good, instead of having thanks and praise, is reproached and calumniated for it? and if he does a right thing, and yet has not right ends and views in it, it stands for nothing; it was only the appearance of good, but is not truly so, and yields no solid peace and comfort.

Ver. 5. *The fool foldeth his hands together, &c.*] In order to get more sleep, or as unwilling to work; so the Targum adds, "he folds his hands in summer, and will not labour;" see Prov. vi. 10. Some persons, to escape the envy which diligence and industry bring on men, will not work at all, or do any right work, and think to sleep in a whole skin; this is great folly and madness indeed: such a man *cateth his own flesh*; he is starved and famished for want of food, so that his flesh is wasted away; or he is so hungry-bitten, that he is ready to eat his own flesh; or he hereby brings to ruin his family, his wife, and children, which are his own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7. The Targum is, "in winter he eats all he has, even the covering of the skin of his flesh." Some understand this of the envious man, who is a fool, traduces the diligent and industrious, and will not work himself; and not only whose idleness brings want and poverty on him as an armed man, but whose envy eats up his spirit, and is rottenness in his bones, Prov. vi. 11. and xiv. 30. Jarchi, out of a book of theirs called Siphri, interprets this of

a wicked man in hell, when he sees the righteous in glory, and he himself judged and condemned.

Ver. 6. *Better is a handful with quietness, &c.*] These are the words of the fool, according to Aben Ezra; and which is the sense of other interpreters, particularly Mr. Broughton, who connects this verse with the former by adding at the end of that the word *saying*; making an excuse or an apology for himself and conduct, from the use and profitableness of his sloth; that a little had with ease, and without toil and labour, is much better than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit; than large possessions gotten with a great deal of trouble, and enjoyed with much vexation and uneasiness; in which he mistakes slothful ease for true quietness; calls honest labour and industry travail and vexation; and supposes that true contentment lies in the enjoyment of little, and cannot be had where there is much; whereas it is to be found in a good man in every state: or else these words express the true sentiments of Solomon's mind, steering between the two extremes of slothfulness, and overtoilsome labour to be rich; that it is much more eligible to have a competency, though it is but small, with a good conscience, with tranquillity of mind, with the love and fear of God, and a contented heart, than to have a large estate, with great trouble and fatigue in getting and keeping it, especially with discontent and uneasiness; and this agrees with what the wise man says elsewhere, Prov. xv. 16, 17. and xvii. 1. The Targum is, "better to a man is a handful of food with quietness of soul, and without robbery and rapine, than two handfuls of food with robbery and rapine;" or with what is gotten in an ill way.

Ver. 7. *Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.*] Another vanity besides what he had taken notice of, and is as follows. Aben Ezra's note is, "I turned from considering the words of this fool, and I saw another fool, the reverse of the former."

Ver. 8. *There is one alone, and there is not a second, &c.*] According to Aben Ezra, either no friend or companion, or no servant, or no wife, which last sense he prefers; no friend or companion he chooses, because friendship and fellowship lead to expenses; and no servant, who would be chargeable to him; and no wife, which would be more expensive, and bring on a family of children; wherefore, to save charges, he chooses to have neither of these; for this is a covetous man who is here described. *Yea, he hath neither child nor brother*; to inherit his substance, as the Targum adds; some worldly men, whose bellies are filled with hidden treasures, having enjoyed much, when they die, leave the rest of their substance to their babes; but the man here described has no children, nor any relations to leave his wealth unto. *Yet is there no end of all his labour*; when he has executed one scheme to get riches, he forms another; and having finished one work, he enters upon another; he rises early and sits up late, and works and toils night and day, as if he was not worth a groat, and had a large and numerous family to provide for; or there is no end of what he labours for, or gets by his labour; there is no end of his treasures, Isa. ii. 7. he is immensely rich, so Aben Ezra interprets it. *Neither is his eye satisfied with riches*: with seeing his bags of gold and silver, though he takes a great deal of plea-

sure in looking upon them too, without making use of them; yet he is not satisfied with what he has, he wants more, he enlarges his desire as hell, and like the grave never has enough; see ch. v. 10. *Neither* saith he, *for whom do I labour?* having neither wife nor child, nor relation, nor friend, and yet so wretchedly stupid and thoughtless as never once to put this question to himself, *Who am I toiling for?* I am heaping up riches, and know not who shall gather them; it is a vexation to a worldly man to leave his substance behind him, and even to a man that has an heir to inherit it, when he knows not whether he will be a wise man or a fool; but for a man that has no heir at all, and yet to be toiling and labouring for the world, is gross stupidity, downright madness, and especially when he deprives himself of the comfort of what he is possessed of. *And bereave my soul of good?* instead of richly enjoying what is given him, he withholds it from himself, starves his back and belly, lives in pinching want amidst the greatest plenty; has not power to eat of what he has, and his soul desireth; see ch. vi. 2. *This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail;* a very vain and wicked thing; *an evil business,* as it may be rendered; a very great sin and folly indeed; it is thought by some divines to be the worst species of covetousness, most cruel and unnatural.

Ver. 9. *Two are better than one, &c.*] The wise man takes occasion, from the solitariness of the covetous man before described, to shew in this and some following verses the preferableness and advantages of social life; which, as it holds true in things natural and civil, so in things spiritual and religious; man is a sociable creature, was made to be so; and it was the judgment of God, which is according to truth, and who can never err, that it was not good for man to be alone, Gen. ii. 18. It is best to take a wife, or at least to have a friend or companion, more or less to converse with. Society is preferable to solitariness; conversation with a friend is better than to be always alone; the Targum is, "two righteous men in a generation are better than one;" such may be helpful to each other in their counsels and comforts, and mutual aids and assistances in things temporal and spiritual. The Midrash interprets this of the study in the law together, and of two that trade together, which is better than studying or trading separately. *Because they have a good reward for their labour;* the pleasure and profit they have in each other's company and conversation; in religious societies, though there is a labour in attendance on public worship, in praying and conferring together, in serving one another in love, and bearing one another's burdens, yet they have a good reward in it all; they have the presence of Christ with them, for, where two or three are met together in his name, he is with them; and whatsoever two of them agree to ask in his name they have it; and if two of them converse together about spiritual things, it is much if he does not make a third with them; besides they have a great deal of pleasure in each other's company, and much profit in their mutual instructions, advices, and reproofs; they sharpen each other's countenances, quicken and comfort each other's souls, establish one another in divine truth, and strengthen each other's hands and hearts.

Ver. 10. *For if they fall, the one will lift up his fel-*

low, &c.] That is, if any one of them fall, the other will lift him up, as they are travelling together, in whatsoever manner; if one falls from his horse, or out of his carriage, or into a ditch, the other will endeavour to raise him up again: this, as it is true in a natural, so in a figurative and metaphorical sense, with religious persons especially; "if one of them falls upon the bed, and lies sick," as the Targum paraphrases it, his friend and brother in a religious community will visit him, and sympathize with him, and speak a word of comfort to him, and pray with him, which may issue in his restoration. So the Targum, "the other will cause his friend to rise by his prayer;" or if he fall into outward distress, poverty, and want, his spiritual friend or friends will distribute to his necessity: if he falls into errors, as a good man may, such as are of the same religious society with him will take some pains to convince him of the error of his way, and to convert him from it, and to save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins; and if he falls into sin, to which the best of men are liable, such as are spiritual will endeavour to restore him in a spirit of meekness. *But woe to him that is alone when he falleth!* for he hath not another to help him up; no companion to raise him up when fallen; no Christian friend to visit and comfort him when sick, to relieve him under his necessities, when poor and afflicted, or to recover him from errors in judgment, or immoralities in practice; and especially if he has not Christ with him to raise him up, keep, and uphold him.

Ver. 11. *Again, if two lie together, then they have heat, &c.*] The Targum adds, in the winter; when it is a cold season, they warm one another by lying together. The Targum interprets it of a man and his wife; it is true of others; see 1 Kings i. 1, 2. *But how can one be warm alone?* not soon, nor easily, in time of cold weather. This is true in a spiritual sense of persons in a Christian communion and religious society; when they are grown cold in their love, lukewarm in their affections, and backward and indifferent to spiritual exercises, yet by Christian conversation may be stirred up to love and good works: so two cold flints struck against each other, fire comes out of them; and even two cold Christians, when they come to talk with each other about spiritual things, and feel one another's spirits, they presently glow in their affections to each other, and to divine things; and especially if Christ joins them with his presence, as he did the two disciples going to Emmaus, then their hearts burn within them.

Ver. 12. *And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, &c.*] If an enemy, or a thief, or a robber, attack any one of them, in friendship and fellowship together, and is an over-match for him; both joined together will be able to resist him; so that he shall not succeed in his enterprise, and do the mischief he designed; see 2 Sam. x. 11. Thus, when Satan attacks a single believer, which he chooses to do when alone; so he tempted Eve in the garden, and Christ in the wilderness; and one or more fellow-Christians know of it, they are capable of helping their tempted friend, by their advice and counsel, they not being ignorant of Satan's devices; and by striving together in their prayers to God for him: so when false teachers

make their efforts, as they usually do, Satan-like, upon the weaker sex, and, when alone, they too often succeed; but when saints stand fast in one spirit, and strive together for the faith of the Gospel, they stand their ground, withstand the enemy, and maintain truth. *And a threefold cord is not quickly broken; or in haste*; as two are better than one, so three or more united together, it is the better still; they are able to make head against an enemy; and to conquer him, *vis unita fortior est*: if a family, community, city, or kingdom, are divided against themselves, they cannot stand; but, if united, in all probability nothing can hurt them. This doctrine is taught in the fable of the bundle of sticks the old man gave to his sons to break; which, while fastened together, could not be done; but, when unbound, and took out singly, were easily snapped asunder; teaching them thereby unity among themselves, as their greatest security against their common enemy. The same instruction is given by this threefold cord; whilst it remains twisted together, it is not easily broke; but if the threads are untwisted and unloosed, they are soon snapped asunder: so persons in religious fellowship, be they more or fewer, whilst they keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, they are terrible, as an army with banners, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. And if this is true of the united love and affections of saints, it must be much more so of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit; that threefold cord, with which the saints are drawn and held; and of which it may be said, that it not only is not quickly broken, but that it cannot be broken at all; and therefore those who are held by it are in the utmost safety. Some apply this to the three principal graces, faith, hope, and love, which are abiding ones; and, though they may sometimes be weak and low in their acts and exercise, can never be lost.

Ver. 13. *Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, &c.*] The wise man proceeds to shew the vanity of worldly power and dignity, in the highest instance of it, which is kingly; and, in order to illustrate and exemplify this, he supposes, on the one hand, a person possessed of royal honour; who has long enjoyed it, is settled in his kingdom, and advanced in years; and who otherwise, for his gravity and dignity, would be venerable; but that he is foolish, a person of a mean genius and small capacity; has but little knowledge of government, or but little versed in the arts of it, though he has held the reins of it long in his hand; and, which is worst of all, is vicious and wicked: on the other hand, he supposes one that is in his tender years, not yet arrived to manhood; and so may be thought to be giddy and inexperienced, and therefore taken but little notice of; and especially being poor, becomes contemptible, as well as labours under the disadvantage of an ill education; his parents poor, and he not able to get books and masters to teach him knowledge; nor to travel abroad to see the world, and make his observations on men and things; and yet being wise, having a good genius, which he improves

in the best manner he can, to his own profit, and to make himself useful in the world; and especially if he is wise and knowing in the best things, and fears God, and serves him; he is more happy, in his present state and circumstances, than the king before described is in his, and is fitter to take his place, and be a king, than he is; for though he is young, yet wise, and improving in knowledge, and willing to be advised and counselled by others, older and wiser than himself; he is much to be preferred to one that is old and foolish. *Who will no more be admonished; or, knows not to be admonished any more*: he neither knows how to give nor take advice; he is impatient of all counsel; cannot bear any admonition; is stubborn and self-willed, and resolved to take his own way. The Jews, in their Midrash, Jarchi, and others, interpret it, allegorically, of the good and evil imagination in men, the principle of grace, and the corruption of nature; the one is the new man, the other the old man; the new man is better than old Adam: the Targum applies it to Abraham and Nimrod; the former is the poor and wise child, that feared God, and worshipped him betimes; the latter, the old and foolish king, who was an idolater, and refused to be admonished of his idolatry; and so the Midrash.

Ver. 14. *For out of prison he cometh to reign, &c.*] That is, this is sometimes the case of a poor and wise child; he rises out of a low, mean, abject, obscure state and condition, to the highest dignity; from a prison-house, or a place where servants are, to sit among princes, and even to have the supreme authority: so Joseph, to whose case Solomon is thought to have respect, and which is mentioned in the Midrash; who was but a young man, and poor and friendless, but wise; and was even laid in prison, though innocent and guiltless, from whence he was fetched, and became the second man in the kingdom of Egypt; so David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, was taken from the sheepfold, and set upon the throne of Israel: though Gussetius^e interprets this of the old and foolish king, who comes out of the house or family, *הוֹדְרֵי*, of degenerate persons, as he translates the word, with a degenerate genius to rule; the allusion being to a degenerate vine; which sense agrees with the preceding verse, and with what follows. *Whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor*; who is born of royal parents, born to a kingdom; is by birth heir to one, has it by inheritance, and has long possessed it; and yet, by his own misconduct, or by the rebellion of his subjects, he is dethroned and banished; or by a foreign power is taken and carried captive, and reduced to the utmost poverty, as Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, and others: or if born poor, so Gussetius; with a poor genius, not capable of ruling, and so loses his kingdom, and comes to poverty. Or it may be rendered, *although in his kingdom he is born poor*^f; that is, though the poor and wise child is born poor in the kingdom of the old and foolish king; yet, out of this low estate, in which he is by birth, he comes and enjoys the kingdom in his room; to such a strange turn of affairs are the highest honours

^e במהרה in *festinantis*, Montanus; in *celeritate*, Vatablus; in *festinatione*, Rambachius.

^f לא ידע לחזור עור non novit moneri adhuc, Montanus; necif

admoneri amplius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Rambachius.

^e Ebr. Comment. p. 553.

^f כלום כי quamvis etiam, Gejerus.

subject: or, *for in his kingdom he is born poor*⁵; even the person that is born heir to a crown is born a poor man; he comes as naked out of his mother's womb as the poorest man does; the conditions of both are equal as to birth; and therefore it need not seem strange that one out of prison should come to a kingdom. But the first sense seems best.

Ver. 15. *I considered all the living which walk under the sun, &c.]* All men that were then alive, who were capable of walking upon the earth; even all of them that were under the heavens, in every land and nation, under whatsoever dominion or government: these, and their manners, Solomon had particularly observed, and made his remarks upon, by which it appeared how fickle the minds of the populace were under every government, and how precarious and uncertain were the honour and dignity of princes. *With the second child that shall stand up in his stead:* the heir and successor of every prince, that shall rise up and take the throne of his father or predecessor, and reign in his stead. The wise man observed how the people commonly behaved towards him; how that they generally stood best affected to him, than to the reigning prince; worshipped the rising sun, courted his favour and friendship, soothed and flattered him; expressing their wishes to see him on the throne, and treated with neglect and contempt their lawful sovereign. Some, contrary to the accents, connect this with the word *walk*⁶; that walk with the second child, join themselves to him, converse with him, and shew him great respect and honour: and there are others that, by this second child, understand the poor and wise child, that succeeds the old and foolish king, whom yet, in time, the people grow weary of; such is the levity and inconstancy of people, that they are not long pleased with princes, old or young, wise or foolish. The Targum interprets this of the foresight Solomon had, by a spirit of prophecy, of those that rebelled against his son Rehoboam, and of those that cleaved unto him, who was his second, and reigned in his stead. Nol-

dius¹ thinks Solomon refers to the history of his friend Hiram, king of Tyre, whose kingdom, in his and in his son's time, was very large, flourishing, and opulent, but in a following reign not so; and he renders and paraphrases the words thus, "*I saw all the works under the sun; with Balezarus, the son of a friend*" (Hiram, for זר, rendered *second*, is the same as זרר, "*a friend*), *who shall stand or reign after him: there is no end of all the people,*" &c.; the kingdom in those two reigns being flourishing; yet posterity shall not rejoice in him, in Abdastratus, the grandson of Hiram, destroyed by the four sons of his nurse².

Ver. 16. *There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them, &c.]* Before the present generation, the living that walked under the sun; a vast number they were that lived before them, and they were of the same restless temper and disposition; changeable in their affection and behaviour towards their governors; no end of their number, nor any stable affection for, nor settled satisfaction in, their rulers; but this itch of novelty, of having new princes over them, went from age to age, from generation to generation. Some understand this of the king and his son, the predecessor and successor, and of those that went before them; and of their behaviour to the kings that reigned before them; the people have not their end or satisfaction in their governors, but are restless: which comes to the same sense. *They also that come after shall not rejoice in him;* that come after the present generation, and after both the reigning prince, and even after his successor; they will not rejoice long in him that shall be upon the throne after them, any more than the present subjects of the old king, or those that now pay their court to the heir apparent; they will be so far from rejoicing in him, that they will loath and despise him, and wish him dead or dethroned, and another in his room. *Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit;* to a king, to see himself thus used by his subjects; for a short time extolled and huzzaed, and then despised and forsaken.

C H A P. V.

THIS chapter contains some rules and directions concerning the worship of God; how persons should behave when they go into the house of God; concerning hearing the word, to which there should be a readiness, and which should be preferred to the sacrifices of fools, ver. 1. Concerning prayer to God; which should not be uttered rashly and hastily, and should be expressed in few words; which is urged from the consideration of the majesty of God, and vileness of men; and the folly of much speaking is exposed by the simile of a dream, ver. 2, 3. Concerning vows, which should not be rashly made; when made, should be kept; nor should excuses be afterwards framed for not performing them, since this might bring the anger of God upon men, to the destruction of the works

of their hands, ver. 4—6. and, as an antidote against those vanities, which appear in the prayers and vows of some, and dreams of others, the fear of God is proposed, ver. 7. and, against any surprise at the oppression of the poor, the majesty, power, and providence of God, and his special regard to his people, are observed, ver. 8. And then the wise man enters into a discourse concerning riches; and observes, that the fruits of the earth, and the culture of it, are necessary to all men, and even to the king, ver. 9. but dissuades from covetousness, or an over-love of riches; because they are unsatisfying, are attended with much trouble, often injurious to the owners of them; at length perish, and their possessors; who, at death, are stripped quite naked of all, after they have spent their days in

⁵ Nam etiam, Tigurine version, Cocceius; quia etiam, Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt, Rambachius, so Aben Ezra.

⁶ So the Tigurine version, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

¹ Concord. Part. Ebr. No. 1023.

² Menander apud Joseph. Contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 19.

darkness and distress, ver. 10—17. and concludes, therefore, that it is best for a man to enjoy, in a free manner, the good things of this life he is possessed of, and consider them as the gifts of God, and be thankful for them; by which means he will pass through the world more comfortably, and escape the troubles that attend others, ver. 18—20.

Ver. 1. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, &c.*] The house of the sanctuary of the Lord, the temple built by Solomon; and so any place of divine worship, where the word of God is preached, and his ordinances administered. The wise man, having observed many vanities under the sun, directs men to the house of God, where they might learn the nature of them, and how to avoid them; though if care was not taken, they would find or introduce vanity there; which, of all vanities, is the worst, and ought to be guarded against. Wherefore, when men go to any place of divine worship, which to do is their duty and interest, and for their honour, pleasure, and profit, they should take care to *keep their feet*, for the singular is here put for the plural, not from going into it; nor does it signify a slow motion towards it, which should be quick, in haste, shewing earnestness, fervency, and zeal; but they should keep their feet in proper case, in a suitable condition. The allusion is either to the pulling off of the shoes off the feet, ordered to Moses and Joshua, when on holy ground, Exod. iii. 5. Josh. v. 15. and which the Jews observed, when they entered the temple on their festivals and sabbaths, even their kings, as Juvenal^k jeers them: not that such a rite should be literally used now, or what is analogous to it; putting off of the hat, in a superstitious veneration of a place; but what was signified by it, as the putting off of the old man, with his deeds, laying aside depraved affections and sordid lusts; two apostles, James and Peter, have taught us this, when we come to the house of God to hear his word, Jam. i. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. or the allusion is to the custom of persons in those eastern countries dressing or washing their feet when they visited, especially those of any note; and entered into their houses on any business, as Mephibosheth, when he waited on David, 2 Sam. xix. 24. or to the practice of the priests, who washed their feet when they went into the tabernacle of the Lord, Exod. xxx. 19, 20. Schindler^l says, that hence (because of this text) the Jews had before their synagogues an iron fixed in the wall (which we call a *scraper*), on which they cleaned their shoes before they went into the synagogue. All which may denote the purity and cleanness of the conversation of the true worshippers of God; for, as the feet are the instruments of the action of walking, they may intend the conduct and behaviour of the saints in the house of God, where they should take care to do all things according to his word, which is a lamp to the feet, and a light unto the path: moreover, what the feet are to the body, that the affections are to the soul; and these, when a man enters into the house of God for worship, should be set on divine and spiritual things, and not

on the world, and the things of it, which will choke the word heard, and make it unprofitable; the thoughts should be composed, sedate, and quiet, and the mind attentive to what is spoken or done; or otherwise, if diverted by other objects, the service will be useless. *And be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools*; there are sacrifices to be offered unto God in his house, which are acceptable to him; the sacrifices of beneficence and alms-deeds to the poor, with which he is well-pleased; and the presentation of the bodies of men, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto him; and especially their hearts, and those as broken and contrite, which are the sacrifices of God; as also the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, which are acceptable to him through Jesus Christ: and under the former dispensation, while sacrifices were in use by divine appointment, when they were offered up in the faith of the sacrifice of Christ, they were well-pleasing to God; but when they were not done in faith, and were without repentance for sin and reformation of life; when men retained their sins with them, and made these a cover for them, and thought by them to make atonement for their crimes, they were no other than the sacrifices of fools, and abominable unto God; see Isa. i. 11—16. Jer. vii. 9, 10. Prov. xxi. 27. when these sacrifices were performed in the best manner, moral duties, as hearing and obeying the word of the Lord, and shewing mercy to men, and offering up the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, were preferred unto them, 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hos. vi. 6. Psal. lxix. 30, 31. Mark xii. 33. and much more to the sacrifices of fools. To be ready, or near^m, is to hear the word of the Lord, as Jarchi interprets it; though Aben Ezra understands it of God being near to hear his people, when they call upon him in truth. The word of the Lord was not only read publicly in the temple and synagogues, but was explained by the priests and prophets, the ecclesiastical rulers of the people; see Mal. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 15. and xv. 21. so the Targum, “draw near thine ear to receive the doctrine of the law, from the priests and wise men:” and so the people of God should draw near to hear the word; be swift to hear it, attentive to it, and receive it with all reverence, humility, love, and affection; and should not take up with mere outward forms, which is but the sacrifice of fools. *For they consider not that they do evil; or know not*”; they think they are doing well, and doing God good service, when they are doing ill; they know not truly the object of worship, nor the spiritual nature of it, nor the right end and true use of it: or, *they know not, only to do evil*, so Aben Ezra supplies it: to do good they have no knowledge: or, *they know not to do the will, or good pleasure*”; that is, of God; this sense of the word Aben Ezra mentions.

Ver. 2. *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, &c.*] In private conversation care should be taken that no rash and unadvised words be spoken in haste, as were by Moses and David; and that no evil, nor even any idle

^k Observant ubi festa mero pede sabbata reges, Satyr. 6. v. 158.

^l Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 1692.

^m קרוב propinquus, Moutanus; propinquior, Mercerus, Schmid.

ⁿ יודעים אִינֵם non ipsi scientes, Montanus; nesciunt, Pagninus, Mercerus, Cocceus; scire nolunt, Schmid.

^o יודעים אִינֵם facere voluntatem ejus, Pagninus, Mercerus.

word be uttered, since from the abundance of the heart the mouth is apt to speak, and all is before the Lord; not a word in the tongue but is altogether known by him, and must be accounted for to him, Psal. cvi. 33. and cxvi. 11. and cxxxix. 4. Matt. xii. 34—37. Jefom interprets this of words spoken concerning God; and careful men should be of what they say of him, of his nature and perfections, of his persons, and of his works; and it may be applied to a public profession of his name, and of faith in him; though this should be done with the heart, yet the heart and tongue should not be rash and hasty in making it; men should consider what they profess and confess, and upon what foot they take up and make a profession of religion; whether they have the true grace of God or no: and it will hold true of the public ministry of the word, in which every thing that comes uppermost in the mind, or what is crude and indigested, should not be uttered; but what ministers have thought of, meditated on, well weighed in their minds, and properly digested. Some understand this of rash vows, such as Jephtha's is supposed to be, which are afterwards treated of; but rather speaking unto God in prayer is intended. So the Targum, "thy heart shall not hasten to bring out speech at the "time thou prayest before the Lord;" any thing and every thing that comes up into the mind should not be uttered before God; not any thing rashly and hastily; men should consider before they speak to the King of kings; for though set precomposed forms of prayer are not to be used, yet the matter of prayer should be thought of before-hand; what our wants are, and what we should ask for; whether for ourselves or others; this rule I fear we often offend against: the reasons follow. *For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth*; his throne is in the heavens, he dwells in the highest heavens, though they cannot contain him; this is expressive of his majesty, sovereignty, and supremacy, and of his omniscience and omnipotence; he is the high and lofty One, that dwells in the high and holy place; he is above all, and sees and knows all persons and things; and he sits in the heavens, and does whatever he pleases; and therefore all should stand in awe of him, and consider what they say unto him. Our Lord seems to have respect to this passage when he directed his disciples to pray, saying, *Our Father, which art in heaven*; and when we pray to him we should think what we ourselves are, that we are on the earth, the footstool of God; that we are of the earth, earthly; dwell in houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; crawling worms on earth, unworthy of his notice; are but dust and ashes, who take upon us to speak unto him. *Therefore let thy words be few*; of which prayer consists; such was the prayer of the publican, *God, be merciful to me, a sinner*; and such the prayer which Christ has given as a pattern and directory to his people; who has forbid vain repetitions and much speaking in prayer, Matt. vi. 7, 8. not that all prolix prayers are to be condemned, or all repetitions in them; our Lord was all night in prayer

himself; and Nehemiab, Daniel, and others, have used repetitions in prayer, which may be done with fresh affection, zeal, and fervency; but such are forbidden as are done for the sake of being heard for much speaking, as the Heathens; and who thought they were not understood unless they said a thing a hundred times over^p; or when done to gain a character of being more holy and religious than others, as the Pharisees.

Ver. 3. *For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, &c.*] Or, *for as a dream*^q, so Aben Ezra; as that comes through a multiplicity of business in the day-time, in which the mind has been busied, and the body employed; and this brings on dreams in the night-season, which are confused and incoherent; sometimes the fancy is employed about one thing, and sometimes another, and all unprofitable and useless, as well as vain and foolish. *And a fool's voice is known by multitude of words*; either his voice in conversation, for a fool is full of words, and pours out his foolishness in a large profusion of them; or his voice in prayer, being like a man's dream, confused, incoherent, and rambling. The supplement, *is known*, may be left out.

Ver. 4. *When thou vowest a vow unto God, &c.*] Or *if thou vowest*^r, as the Vulgate Latin version; for vows are free and indifferent things, which persons may make or not; there is no precept for them in the word of God; instances and examples there are, and they may be lawfully made, when they are in the power of man to perform, and are not inconsistent with the will and word of God; they have been made by good men, and were frequent in former times; but they seem not so agreeable to the Gospel dispensation, having a tendency to insnare the mind, to entangle men, and bring on them a spirit of bondage, contrary to that liberty wherewith Christ has made them free; and therefore it is better to abstain from them: holy resolutions to do the will and work of God should be taken up in the strength of divine grace; but to vow this, or that, or the other thing, which a man previous to his vow is not obliged unto, had better be let alone: but however, when a vow is made that is lawful to be done, *defer not to pay it*; that is, to God, to whom it is made, who expects it, and that speedily, as Hannah paid her's; no excuses nor delays should be made. *For he hath no pleasure in fools*; that is, the Lord hath no pleasure in them, he will not be mocked by them; he will resent such treatment of him, as to vow and not pay, or defer payment and dally with him. So the Targum, "for the Lord hath no pleasure in fools, "because they defer their vows, and do not pay." *Pay that which thou hast vowed*; precisely and punctually; both as to the matter, manner, and time of it.

Ver. 5. *Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, &c.*] For a vow is an arbitrary thing; a man is not bound to make it, and whilst he vows not, it is in his own power, and at his option, whether he will do this or that, or not; but when he has once vowed, he is then brought under an obligation, and must perform; see Acts v. 4. and therefore it is better not to vow; it is more acceptable to God, and it is better for a man

^p Ohe jam desine deos obtundere — Ut nihil credas intelligere, nisi talem dictum eat centies. Terent. Heautont. Act. 5. Sc. 1. v. 6, 8.

^q בַּמָּוֶה ut prodit somnium, Junius & Tremellius; nam at venit, Piscator; quis sicut venit, Mercerus, Rambachius, so Broughton.

^r כִּי אִשֶׁר תִּוַּוֶה כִּי אִשֶׁר תִּוַּוֶה, quid vovisti, V. L.

Than that thou shouldst vow and not pay; for this shews great weakness and folly, levity and inconstancy, and is resented by the Lord.

Ver. 6. *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, &c.*] That is, himself, who is corrupt and depraved; either by making a rash vow, which it is not in his power to keep; or such is the corruption of his nature, and the weakness of the flesh, that he cannot keep it; or by making sinful excuses after he has made the vow, and so is guilty of lying, or false swearing, or other sins of the flesh. Jarchi by *flesh* understands his children, on whom his iniquity may be visited and punished; and the Targum interprets this punishment of the judgment or condemnation of hell; see Prov. xx. 25. *Neither say thou before the angel that it was an error; that it was done ignorantly and through mistake: that it was not intended, and that this was not the meaning of the vow; and therefore desires to be excused performing it, or to offer a sacrifice in lieu of it.* Interpreters are divided about the angel before whom such an excuse should not be made. Some think angel is put for angels in general, in whose presence, and before whom, as witnesses, vows are made; and who were signified by the cherubim in the sanctuary, where they were to be performed, and who are present in the worshipping assemblies of saints, where these things are done, 1 Tim. v. 21. 1 Cor. xi. 10. others think the guardian-angel is meant, which they suppose every man has; and others that Christ, the Angel of the covenant, is designed, who is in the midst of his people, sees and knows all that is done by them, and will not admit of their excuses; but it is most probable the priest is intended, called the angel, or messenger, of the Lord of hosts, Mal. ii. 7. to whom such who had made vows applied to be loosed from them, acknowledging their error in making them; or to offer sacrifice for their sin of ignorance, Lev. v. 4, 5. *Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice; either in making a rash and sinful vow, or in excusing that which was made. And destroy the work of thine hands? wrought with success, for which the vow was made; and so, instead of its succeeding, is destroyed, and comes to nothing.* Vows made by the Jews were chiefly about their houses, or fields, or cattle; see Lev. xxvii. 28. and so the destruction suggested may signify the curse that God would bring upon any of these, for excusing or not performing the vow made.

Ver. 7. *For in the multitude of dreams, and many words, there are also divers vanities, &c.*] Or as, *in a multitude of dreams, there are many vanities, so also in a multitude of words*; as dreams are vain things, or there are abundance of vain things that come into the mind in dreams; so vain and idle are the many excuses which are made for the non-performance of vows; or there are many vain things which are uttered in making of them, or in long prayers to God; or in discourses concerning him; to all which is opposed the fear of God. *But fear thou God; give no heed to dreams, nor to the many words of men, which are vain*

and foolish; but keep close to the word of God, and worship him internally and externally, in spirit and in truth; for herein lies the sum and substance of religion; see ch. xii. 13. The Targum is, "for in the multitude of the dreams of the false prophets believe not, nor in the vanities of the authors of enchantments, and the many speeches of ungodly men; but serve the wise and just, and of them seek doctrine, and fear before the Lord;" see Jer. xxiii. 28.

Ver. 8. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of justice in a province, &c.*] Which is a very disagreeable sight, but often seen; the poor are oppressed, and judgment and justice perverted, and that in a very violent and flagrant manner, in open courts of judicature, in the several provinces and kingdoms of the world. *Marvel not at the matter; as though it was some strange and uncommon thing, when nothing is more common: or marvel not at the will or pleasure*; that is, of God, who suffers such things to be. So the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret it; stumble not at it, nor arraign the wisdom and justice of God; let not that temptation prevail in thee as it has done in some good men, who have been tempted from hence to think there was nothing in religion, nor no providence attending the affairs of this world; do not be frightened and astonished, and hurried into such a thought; nor be distressed at the calamities and oppressions of poor and innocent men. *For he that is higher than the highest regardeth; that is, God, who is the most high in all the earth; higher than the kings of the earth, and all high and haughty oppressors; higher indeed than the heavens, and the angels there: he regards all his people, his eyes are on them, and he never withdraws them from them; he regards their cries, and hears and answers them; he regards their oppressors, and their oppressions; and will, in his own time, deliver them; or he keeps his people as the apple of his eye, in the hollow of his hand, night and day, lest any hurt them; he keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation. It may be rendered, the high One from on high observes*; God, who is the high and lofty One, looks down from the high heavens where he dwells, and takes notice of all the sons of men, and considers all their works; see Psal. xxxiii. 13—15. *And there be higher than they; either the holy angels, who are higher than tyrannical oppressors, higher in nature, and excel in strength and power; and these are on the side of the oppressed, have the charge of saints, and encamp about them; and, whenever they have an order, can destroy their enemies in a moment: or rather the three divine Persons are meant, by the plural expression used, Father, Son, and Spirit; Jehovah the Father is above men, the greatest of men, in the things in which they deal proudly; he is greater than all, and none can pluck his sheep out of his hands, and worry them: Christ, the Son of the Highest, is higher than the kings of the earth; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and able to deliver and save his people; and the Holy Spirit is the power of the Highest, and is greater than he or they*

¹ So Luther, Broughton, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

² חספס על הומוס super voluntate, Montanus, Cocceus; de divina voluntate, Pagninus, Mercerus; divinam voluntatem, Tigurine version; de ista voluntate, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus.

³ חספס custodiens, Montanus; custodit, Pagninus; custos, Tigurine version.

⁴ Observat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; observans, observator est, Rambachius.

that are in the world, the avowed enemies of the saints. Aben Ezra interprets it of the secret of the name of God, which he says is inexplicable. So the Midrash understands it of the holy blessed God; and in another tract it is said, on mention of this passage, there are three superiors above them in the way of emanation, and of them it is said ², *there be higher than they*.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all, &c.*] Or, *the excellency of the earth in or above all things is this*? that God most high rules over all the earth, and is higher than the kings of it, and all oppressors in it; or in all respects there is a preference, a superior excellency in the country as opposed to the city, especially in this, that there are not so many tumults, riots, and oppressions there; though this is mostly understood of the preference and superior excellency of agriculture, or tillage of the earth. So the Targum, "the excellency of the praise of tilling the earth is ³ above all things:" and to the same purpose Jarchi and Aben Ezra; and the profit arising from it is enjoyed by all; it is for all, even the beasts of the field have grass from hence, as well as man has bread-corn, and all other necessaries. *The king himself is served by the field*: his table is served with bread-corn, and flesh, and wine, and fruits of various sorts, the produce of the earth, which spring from it, or are nourished by it; were it not for husbandry the king himself and his family could not subsist; and therefore it becomes kings to encourage it, and not oppress those who are employed in it: or *the king is a servant to the field*⁴; some kings have addicted themselves to husbandry, and been great lovers of it, as Uzziah was, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. and some of the Chinese emperors, as their histories⁵ shew; and the kings of Persia⁶: Vulcan, in the shield of Achilles, represented the reapers, gatherers, and binders of sheaves at work in the field, and a king standing among the sheaves with a sceptre in his hand, looking on with great pleasure, whilst a dinner is prepared by his orders for the workmen⁷; many of the Roman generals, and high officers, were called from the plough, particularly Cincinnatus⁸; and these encouraged husbandry in their subjects, as well as took care of their own farms. There is another sense of the words given, besides many more; "and the most excellent Lord of the earth (that is, the most high God) is the King of every field that is tilled; (that is, the King of the whole habitable world;) or the King Messiah, Lord of his field, the church, and who is the most eminent in all the earth⁹." The Midrash interprets it of the holy blessed God.

Ver. 10. *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, &c.*] The tillage of the earth is necessary, a very laudable and useful employment, and men do well to busy themselves in it; without this, neither the common people nor the greatest personages can

be supplied with the necessaries of life; but then an immoderate love of money is criminal, which is here meant by loving silver, one species of money, which when loved beyond measure is the root of all evil; and besides, when a man has got ever so much of it, he is not satisfied, he still wants more, like the horse-leech at the vein cries Give, give; or he cannot eat silver, so Jarchi; or *be fed with money*, as Mr. Broughton renders it; and herein the fruits of the earth, for which the husbandman labours, have the preference to silver; for these he can eat, and be filled and satisfied with them, but he cannot eat his bags of gold and silver. *Nor he that loveth abundance with increase*; that is, he that coveteth a great deal of this world's things shall not be satisfied with the increase of them, let that be what it will; or he shall have *no increase*¹⁰, be ever the better for his abundance, or enjoy the comfort and benefit of it; or, *he that loveth abundance* from whence there is *no increase*¹¹; that loves to have a multitude of people about him, as man-servants and maid-servants; a large equipage, as Aben Ezra suggests, which are of very little use and service, or none at all. *This is also vanity*; the immoderate love of money, coveting large estates and possessions, and to have a train of servants. Jarchi allegorically interprets silver and abundance, of the commands, and the multitude of them.

Ver. 11. *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them, &c.*] When a man's substance increases by trade, or otherwise, very often so it is that his family increases, and he has more mouths to feed, and backs to clothe; or his estate growing larger, if he lives suitably to it, he must keep more servants; and these, as they have but little work to do, are described by their eating, rather than by their working; and besides, such a growing man in the world has more friends and visitors that come about him, and eat with him, as well as the poor, which wait upon him to receive his alms: and if his farms, and his fields, and his flocks, are enlarged, he must have more husbandmen, and labourers, and shepherds to look after them, who all must be maintained. So Pheraulas in Xenophon¹² observes, "that now he was possessed of much, that he neither ate, nor drank, nor slept the sweeter for it; what he got by his plenty was, that he had more committed to his keeping, and more to distribute to others; he had more care and more business, with trouble; for now, says he, many servants require food of me, many drunk, many clothing, some need physicians &c.; it must needs be, adds he, that they that possess much must spend much on the gods, on friends, and on guests." *And what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* he can go into his grounds, his fields, and his meadows, to behold his flocks and his herds, and can say, all these are mine; he can go into his chambers and open his treasures, and feed his eyes with

¹ Tikkune Zohar Correct. 69. fol. 114. 1.

² וְיִרְדּוּן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל יְמֵיהָ & praestantia terrae in omnibus ipsa, Montanus; porro excellentia terrae in omnibus est, Vatablus; & praecellentia terrae in omnibus est, Gejerus.

³ אֶרֶץ לְעֹבְדֵי מְלֶכֶךְ רֶגֶם אֶגְרוֹ סִיטְרָא, Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus; rex agro servit, Merceus, so some in Drusius.

⁴ Vid. Martin. Sinic. Histor. l. 2. p. 36. & l. 4. p. 92. & l. 8. p. 287, 288, 326.

⁵ Xenophon. Oeconom. p. 462.

⁶ Homer. Iliad. 18. v. 550—559.

⁷ Flor. Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 11.

⁸ So Schmidt, Raubachius.

⁹ אֵל תְּבוֹרָה לֹא נִחַי פְּרוֹעַטֵי אֵלֵי, Vatablus, Merceus, Gejerus; nullum fructum percipit, Figurine version.

¹⁰ Qui amat copiam, sc. litigitudinem ex qua non est sperandus profectus, Schmidt, so Gussenius.

¹¹ Cyropædia, l. 5. c. 26.

looking upon his bags of gold and silver, his jewels, and other riches; he can behold a multitude of people at his table, eating at his expense, and more maintained at his cost: and, if a liberal man, it may be a pleasure to him; if otherwise, it will give him pain: and, excepting these, he enjoys no more than food and raiment; and often so it is, that even his very servants have in some things the advantage of him, as follows. The Targum is, "what profit is there to the owner thereof who gathers it, unless he does good with it, that he may see the gift of the reward with his eyes in the world to come?" Jarchi interprets it after this manner, "when men bring many free-will offerings, the priests are increased that eat them; and what good is to the owner of them, the Lord, but the sight of his eyes, who says, and his will is done?"

Ver. 12. *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much, &c.*] Or of a servant^l, who enjoys sleep equally as a king; a tiller of the ground, as Jarchi; who also interprets it of one that serves the Lord, as likewise the Targum; a beloved one of his, to whom he gives sleep, Psal. cxxvii. 2. A refreshing sleep is always reckoned a great mercy and blessing, and which labouring men enjoy with sweetness^k; for if they have but little to eat at supper, yet coming weary from their work, sleep is easily brought on when they lie down, and sound sleep they have, and rise in the morning lively and active, and fit for business; or, if they eat more plentifully, yet through their labour they have a good digestion, and their sleep is not hindered: so that should it be answered to the above question, what has the master more than the servant, though he eats and drinks more freely, and of the best, and lives voluptuously? yet it may be replied, that, in the business of sleep, the labouring man has the preference to him; which must be owned to be a great blessing of life, and is often interrupted by excessive eating and drinking. *But the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep;* either the abundance of food which he eats, which loads his stomach, and fills his head with vapours, and makes him restless, so that he can get no sleep, or what he does get is very uncomfortable: or the abundance of his riches fills him with cares, what he shall do with them, and how to keep and increase them; and with fears, lest thieves should break in and take them away from him, so that he cannot sleep quietly^l. The Targum is, "sweet is the sleep of a man that serves the Lord of the world with a perfect heart; and he shall have rest in the house of his grave, whether he lives a few years or more," &c.; and much to the same purpose Jarchi; and who says, it is thus interpreted in an ancient book of theirs, called Tanchuma.

Ver. 13. *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, &c.*] Or an evil sickness^m. A sinful disease in the person with whom it is found, and very disagreeable to others to behold; it is enough to make one sick to see it; and what he is about to relate he himself was an eye-witness of: namely, *riches kept for*

the owners thereof to their hurt; laid up in barns and granaries, as the fruits of the earth; or in chests and coffers, as gold and silver, for the use and service of the owners of them; and which yet have been to their real injury; being either used by them in a luxurious and intemperate way, so have brought diseases on their bodies, and damnation to their souls; or not used at all for their own good, or the good of others, which brings the curse of God upon them, to their ruin and destruction, both here and hereafter: and oftentimes so it is, and which no doubt had fallen under the observation of Solomon, that some who have been great misers, and have hoarded up their substance, without using them themselves, or communicating them to others, have not only been plundered of them, but, for the sake of them, their lives have been taken away in a most barbarous manner, by cut-throats and villains; sometimes by their own servants, nay, even by their own children. Riches ill gotten and ill used are very prejudicial to the owners; and if they are well got, but ill used, or not used at all, greatly hurt the spiritual and eternal state of men; it is a difficult thing for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and a covetous man cannot; if a professor, the word he hears is choked and made unprofitable; he errs from the faith, and pierces himself through with many sorrows now, and is liable to eternal damnation hereafter. The Targum interprets it of a man that gathers riches, and does no good with them; but keeps them to himself, to do himself evil in the world to come.

Ver. 14. *But those riches perish by evil travail, &c.*] Or, *by an evil business or affair*ⁿ. That is, such riches as are not well got, or are not used as they should be, these waste away and come to nothing; either by the owner's bad management, and misconduct in trade and business; or by fire, tempest, thieves, and robbers, and many other ways and means: these are very uncertain things; and there are various ways by which they make themselves wings and flee away, under the direction of a divine providence. *And he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand;* the riches he had hoarded up, he designed for his son; but being stripped of them by one means or another, when he comes to die, has nothing to leave his son: or if his riches do not perish in his own life-time, yet they are quickly consumed by his son, who, in a short time, has nothing to live upon; and so being brought up a gentleman, and in no business, is in a worse condition than such who have been brought up to work for their living, and in no expectation of an estate after the decease of their friends. The Targum understands it in this latter sense, paraphrasing the words thus, "and those riches, which he shall leave his son after his death, shall perish, because he hath gotten them in an evil way; and they shall not remain in the hand of the son whom he hath begotten; neither shall any thing remain in his hand."

Ver. 15. *As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, &c.*] This may

^l חֶבֶדָּהּ טוֹב מְבִטָּה, Sept. servi, Arab. i. e. agricola; Drusius, Rumbachus; qui par regi famuloque venit, Senec. Hercul. Fur. v. 1073.

^k Somnus agrestium lenis, &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 1. v. 21, 22.

ⁿ Ne noctu, nec diu, quietus unquam eam, Plauti Aulularia, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 28. Aurea rumpunt tecta quietem, Senec. Hercul. Oct. v. 646.

^m רָעָה חוֹלָה רָעָה חוֹלָה, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

^o בְּעִנְיָן רָע occupatione, negotio, vel casu malo, Gejerus.

be understood either of the covetous rich man, or of his son; and that supposing what is before said should not be the case of either of them, but they should possess their substance as long as they live; yet, when they come to die, they will be stripped of them all; of their gold and silver, their plate and jewels, and rich household furniture; of their cattle and possessions, farms and estates, which are no longer theirs; and even of their very clothes, and be as naked as they were when they came into the world; and which is indeed the case of every man, Job i. 21. and is used as an argument, and a very forcible one, against covetousness. *And shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand;* nothing of his substance, which he has got by his labour, and hoarded up with great care; not the least portion of it can he carry away with him when he dies; not any of his jewels, nor bags of gold and silver; and if any of these should be put into his grave, which has been sometimes done at the interment of great personages, these are of no manner of use and service to him, either to comfort and refresh his body, or to save his soul from hell, and procure it an entrance into the heavenly glory; see 1 Tim. vi. 7. Prov. xi. 4. The Targum allegorizes this in a very orthodox way, not very usual, in favour of original sin, and against the doctrine of merit: "as he goes out of his mother's womb naked, without a covering, and without any good; so he shall return to go to the house of his grave, indigent of merit, as he came into this world; and no good reward shall he receive by his labour, to take with him into the world to which he goes, that it may be for merit in his hand."

Ver. 16. *And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go, &c.]* This seems not to be an evil or vanity, distinct from the former; but the same repeated and confirmed, and expressed, if possible, in stronger terms, that a man is in all respects alike, when he goes out of the world, as when he came in. A man's birth is signified by *coming*, that is, out of his mother's womb, and into the world; and which is a description of every man born into it, John i. 9. he is of the earth, earthly; comes forth like a flower, and springs up as grass; he comes not of himself, nor casually, but by means of his parents; and according to the determinate will of God, and to answer some end or other: and his death is signified by *going*; a going the way of all flesh; a going out of the world; a going to the grave, the house of all living, a man's long home; it is like going from one house to another; for death is not an annihilation of man, but a remove of him from hence elsewhere; and a man's birth and death are in all points alike. This is to be understood of natural and civil things; of riches and honours, which men cannot carry with them; and with respect to them, they are as they were born, naked and stripped of them; and with respect to the body, the parts of it then are the same, though more grown; it is as naked as it was born; and a man is as much beholden to his friends for his grave as for his swaddling-clothes; it becomes what it was at first, earth and dust; and as a man comes not into the world at his own will and pleasure, so neither does he go out of it at his will, but the Lord's. The Midrash interprets it

thus, "as a man comes into the world, with crying, weeping, and sighing, and without knowledge, so he goes out." Likewise this is only true of natural and unregenerate men as to moral things; as they are born in sin, they die in sin; with only this difference, an addition of more sin; as they come into the world without the image of God, without a righteousness, without holiness, and without the grace of God, so they go out of it without these things: but this is not true of saints and truly gracious persons; they come into the world with sin, but go out of it without it; being washed in the blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, and all their sins expiated and pardoned through his sacrifice: they are born without a righteousness, but do not die without one; Christ has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for them; this is imputed to them; is received by faith; given them; they are found in it, living and dying; and this introduces them into heaven and happiness: they are born without holiness, but do not live and die without it; they are regenerated and sanctified by the spirit of God, and at the moment of death made perfectly holy. This only therefore is true of men, as natural, and with respect to natural and civil things: the Targum interprets it, "as he comes into this world void of merit, so he shall go into that." *And what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?* for riches, which are as unsatisfying as the wind; which are as shifting, and as swift to flee away, as that; and can no more be held, when it is the will of God they should go, and especially at death, than the wind is to be held in the fist of men; and which are as unprofitable as that in the hour of death. Particularly, what profit has a man of all his riches, which he has got by labour, when he neither makes use of them in life for his own good, nor the good of others; and when he comes to die, they leave him and stand him in no stead; and especially having been unconcerned about his immortal soul; and having been wholly taken up in the pursuit of such vain and transitory things? see Matt. xvi. 26.

Ver. 17. *All his days also he eateth in darkness, &c.]* To all that has been said is added another evil, that attends such whose hearts are inordinately set on riches; that all their days, throughout the whole of their lives, they live a most uncomfortable life; for *eating* is here put for their whole manner of living: such not only eat coarse bread, and very mean food of any sort, but wear sordid apparel, and live in a poor cottage, in a very obscure and miserable manner. Aben Ezra understands it literally of the night, to which time such a man defers eating, that he might lose no time in his labour; and that it might not be seen what sort of food he eats, and how sparingly, and that others might not eat with him; and what he does eat is not eaten freely, but grudgingly, and with anguish and distress of mind, without any real pleasure and joy; and much less with the light of God's countenance, the discoveries of his love, and communion with him: the Targum is, "all his days he dwelleth in darkness, that he may taste his bread alone." *And he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness;* either the sickness of his mind, his covetousness; or the sickness of his body, emaciated by withholding from

himself the necessaries of life : or when he comes upon a sick bed, he is filled with sorrow and indignation, that he must live no longer, to accumulate more wealth, and accomplish his projects and designs; and that he must leave his wealth, he has been at so much pains to gather together. Or, *and he is much angry* ; when things do not answer in trade according to his wishes; when his substance diminishes, or, however, does not increase as he desires; when he is cheated by fraudulent men, or robbed by thieves: *and he hath sickness* ; either of body or mind, or both, because matters do not succeed as he would have them; and through fretfulness at losses and crosses, and disappointments; and through cares in getting and keeping what he has: *and wrath*; at all about him, whom he is ready to charge with slothfulness or unfaithfulness to him; and even at the providence of God, that does not give him the desired success; so that he has no manner of pleasure and comfort in life.

Ver. 18. *Behold that which I have seen, &c.*] Observed, considered and approved of, and which he recommended and excited attention to, and is as follows. It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink; to make use of the creatures God has given for service in a free and liberal manner, without excess, and with moderation; and not deprive a man's self of those things he may lawfully partake of, and are necessary for him: to do this is good for himself, and for the health of his body; and is right in the sight of God, and is comely before men; it is not only lawful, but laudable. There is another version and sense of the words, *it is good to eat and drink him that is fair*, or comely; Christ, who is fairer than the children of men; to live by faith on him, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood; but this, however true, spiritual, and evangelical, it seems foreign to the text. It follows, *and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him*; this last clause, *which God giveth him*, is not to be connected with the good of all his labour; though it is true, that whatever good is got by labour is the gift of God; but with *all the days of his life*; for the life of man, and all the days of it, be they more or fewer, are the gift of God, and according to his determinate will and pleasure; and throughout this time a man should enjoy, in a comfortable way, with thankfulness to God, the good things he has gotten by his labour and industry, through the blessing of God along with them. This Solomon frequently inculcates; Aben Ezra says, this is the third time, but it seems to be the fourth; see ch. ii. 24. and iii. 13, 22. *For it is his portion*; that is, in this life; for otherwise, if a good man, he has a better portion in another: this is the part which God has allotted to him here; and it is his duty, and for his good and comfort, to make use of it.

Ver. 19. *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, &c.*] Which include the whole of a man's substance; all his estate, personal and real; and all his goods and possessions, movable and immovable, as gold, silver, cattle, fields, and farms; which are all the gift of God, by whatsoever means they may be acquired or possessed. *And hath given him power*; or, *caused him to have dominion*, over his wealth and riches, and not be a slave to them, as many are: but to have so much command of them and of himself, as to eat thereof; comfortably enjoy them; and dispose of them to his own good, the good of others, and the glory of God. It follows, *and to take his portion*; which God hath allotted him; to take it thankfully, and use it freely and comfortably. *And to rejoice in his labour*; in the things he has been labouring for, in a cheerful use of them; blessing God for them, and taking the comfort of them. *This is the gift of God*; to have such power over his substance, and not be a slave to it, and to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a cheerful and comfortable manner; this is as much the gift of God as riches themselves.

Ver. 20. *For he shall not much remember the days of his life, &c.*] Be they more or fewer, as Jarchi: he will not think life long and tedious; nor dwell upon, and distress himself with, the troubles he has met with, or is likely to meet with; but, being content with the good things God has given him, and freely and cheerfully enjoying them, he passes away his time delightfully and pleasantly. Some, as Aben Ezra observes, and which he approves of, and is agreeably to the accents, render the words, *if he has not much, he remembers the days of his life*; if he has but little of the good things of this life, he remembers how few his days are he has to live; and doubts not he shall have enough to carry him to the end of his days, and therefore is quite easy and content; he calls to mind how he has been supplied all his days hitherto, and is persuaded that that God, who has provided for him, will continue his goodness to him, and that he shall not want any good thing; and therefore does not distress himself with what is to come. *Because God answereth him in the joy of his heart*; he calls upon God for a blessing on his labours, asks of him his daily food, and desires what may be proper and sufficient for him, or what he judges is necessary and convenient; and God answers his prayers and petitions, and good wishes, by filling his heart with food and gladness; and giving him that cheerfulness of spirit, and thankfulness of heart, in the enjoyment of every blessing; and especially if along with it he lifts up the light of his countenance, and grants him joy in the Holy Ghost; he will go on so pleasantly and comfortably as to forget all his former troubles; and it will dissipate his doubts and fears about how he shall live for the future.

^o וכעם הרבה & irascitur multum, Vatablas, Drusius; & indignatus fuit, vel indignatur multum, Piscator, Rambachius.

^p וחליו & agritudo ei fuit, vel est, Piscator, Drusius; vel fuerit, Gejerus.

^q Bonum est, eum qui pulcher est, edere & bibere, h. e. Christo per fidem frui; nova & singularis expositio, Rambachius.

^r השליטו eumque dominum præfecit, Tigurine version; imperare fecit eum, Gejerus; dominari eum fecit, Rambachius.

^s די תובי divitias dederunt, artemque fruenti, Horat. Ep. 1. 1. Ep. 4. v. 7.

^t כי לא הרבה יוכר quod si non multum recordabitur dierum vite suæ, Junius & Tremellius.

C H A P. VI.

THE wise man goes on to expose the vanity of riches, as possessed by a covetous man, who makes no use of them; an evil, and a common one under the sun, ver. 1. Who is described by the good things he has; which he has not a power to enjoy, but a stranger enjoys them, ver. 2. by his numerous offspring and long life; yet neither is he satisfied with good in life, nor has he a burial at death; wherefore an abortive is preferred unto him, ver. 3. For though many things may be said of that which are disagreeable, yet worse of him, and that has more rest than he; and besides, they both go to one place, the grave, ver. 4—6. and the vanity of an anxious labour for riches is further argued from the use of them, at most and best, which is only for the body, and the sustenance of it, but cannot satisfy the mind or soul, ver. 7. and this use a fool can make of them, as well as a wise man; and a poor man, that is knowing, diligent, and industrious to live, as well as the rich, ver. 8. Wherefore it is best to enjoy and be content with present mercies, than to let loose the wandering desires after what may never be had, ver. 9. and especially it should be considered, that let a man be in what circumstances he will, he is but a man; and these circumstances are determined and appointed by God, which he cannot alter; and therefore it is both vain and sinful to contend with him, ver. 10. And, after all, a man is never the better for his carking cares and wandering desires, since there are so many things that increase vanity, ver. 11. and a man is so ignorant of what is good for him for the present, and of what shall be after him, ver. 12.

Ver. 1. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version reads it, *another evil*; but wrongly, for the same is considered as before, the evil of covetousness; which is one of the evil things that come out of the heart of man; is abominable to the Lord, contrary to his nature and will, and a breach of his law, which forbids it, and is the root of all evil; this is an evil under the sun, for there is nothing of this kind above it; and it fell under the observation of Solomon in various instances. *And it is common among men*; or, *great over men*; or *over the man*, the covetous man: it spreads itself over them; few were free from it, even so long ago, in those early times, and in such times in which silver was made no account of, and was like stones in Jerusalem, as common as they; and yet the sin of covetousness, of hoarding up money and making no use of it, for a man's own good, and the good of others, was very rife among men, 1 Kings x. 27.

Ver. 2. *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, &c.*] By *riches* may be meant gold and silver, things which a covetous man is never satisfied with; and by *wealth*, cattle, with which farms and fields are stocked: the wealth of men, especially in former times, and in the eastern countries, lay very

much in these, as did the wealth of Abraham and Job, Gen. xiii. 2. Job i. 3. and all these, as they are reckoned glorious and honourable in themselves; so they create honour and glory among men, and raise to high and honourable places; and these, as they go, they are usually put together, and are called by the name of honour and glory itself; see Prov. iii. 16. 2 Chron. i. 11, 12. Gen. xxxi. 1. And they are all the gifts of God, which he either as blessings bestows upon men, or suffers men to attain unto, though a curse may go along with them; which is the case here, for no man whatever is possessed of them but by the will of God or his divine permission; see 1 Chron. xxix. 12. and which a man may, and sometimes has, such a plentiful portion of. *So that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth*; he has not only for the supply of his wants, what is necessary for his daily use and service, but even what is for delight and pleasure; yea, as much as he could reasonably wish for; nay, more than heart could wish, Psal. lxxiii. 7. *Yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof*; the Targum adds, *because of his sin*; either he takes it away from him, he making no use of it; or his appetite is taken away, that he has no desire to it; or rather he has no heart to enjoy what he has, and scarce any part of it; not to eat and drink, and wear suitably to his circumstances, but grudges whatever he lays out on his back or belly, or in housekeeping in his family; for though God gives him a large substance, yet not a heart to make use of it, without which he cannot enjoy it; and therefore it would have been as good, or better for him, to have been without it; see ch. v. 19. *But a stranger eateth it*; the Syriac version adds, *after him*; enjoys it, not only a part of it, but the whole; one that is not akin to him, and perhaps was never known by him; and yet, by one means or another, either in a lawful or unlawful way, comes into the possession of all he has; this has been always reckoned a great unhappiness, Lam. v. 2. Hos. vii. 9. Hence it follows, *this is vanity, and it is an evil disease*; it is a vain thing to be possessed of great substance, and not enjoy any thing of it in a comfortable way, through the sin of covetousness; which is a spiritual disease, and a very bad one; very prejudicial to the soul, and the state of it, and is rarely cured. Juvenal * calls it phrensy and madness for a man to live poor, that he may die rich; he is like the ass that Crassus Agelastus saw, loaded with figs, and cropping thorns.

Ver. 3. *If a man beget an hundred children, &c.*] Sons and daughters, a certain number for an uncertain. Some have had many children, and almost this number; Rehoboam had twenty-eight sons and threescore daughters; and Ahab had seventy sons, how many daughters is not said, 2 Chron. xi. 21. 2 Kings x. 1. this was reckoned a great honour and happiness to have many children; happy was the man that had his quiver full of them, Psal. cxxvii. 3. such a case is here

* וְהַמְּאֹדִים הָיָה עָלָיו וְרַבָּה הָיָה עָלָיו הָאָדָם & multum ipsum super hominem, Montanus; & magnum est illud super hominem istum, Rambachius.

* Cum fuerit haud dubius, &c. Satyr. 14. v. 136. exposed by Perrius, Sat. 6. v. 67, &c. unge puer caules, &c.

supposed. *And live many years, so that the days of his years be many; or sufficient, as Jarchi interprets it; he lives as long as life is desirable; lives to a good old age, to the full age of men, threescore years and ten; yea, supposing he was to live to be as old as Methuselah, and his soul be not filled with good: does not he enjoy the good things he has; has no pleasure nor satisfaction in the temporal good things of life, has not the comfort of them, and is always uneasy, because he has not more of them; and especially if his soul is not filled with spiritual good things, the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ. And also that he have no burial; as Jezebel, Jehoiakim, and others; who is either destroyed by robbers and cut-throats, for the sake of his substance, and cast into a ditch or a river, or some place, where he is never found to be interred; or else, being of such a sordid disposition, he provides not for a decent burial, suitably to his circumstances, or forbids one; or, being despised and disesteemed by all men, his heirs and successors either neglect or refuse to give him one; see Jer. xxii. 29. I say, that an untimely birth is better than he an abortive is to be preferred unto him; it would have been better for him if he had never been born, or had been in such a case.*

Ver. 4. *For he cometh in with vanity, &c.]* The Targum adds, *into this world.* Some understand this of the abortive, and render it, *though he cometh in with vanity* ², yet it to be preferred to the covetous man: others interpret it of the covetous man himself; and some of both: or, however, they may be compared together in these instances; the abortive comes into the world in vain, for nothing, and answers no purpose, as can well be observed; and the same may be said of a covetous rich man; he walks in a vain shew, and is altogether vanity, in his coming in, in his conversation, and going out. *And departeth in darkness: or, into darkness* ³; goes out of the world without any notice taken of him; and goes down to the dark grave, where he lies in obscurity. *And his name shall be covered with darkness;* the abortive has no name, and is never spoken of; and so the name and memory of such a man as is here described rot and perish: and in this respect the abortive has the preference to him; for though he is covered with darkness, yet no ill is ever spoken of him; whereas the name of the wicked covetous man is cursed.

Ver. 5. *Moreover, he hath not seen the sun, &c.]* This must be spoken of the abortive, and seems to confirm the sense of the former text, as belonging to it; and whereas it has never seen the light of the sun, nor enjoyed the pleasure and comfort of it, it is no ways distressing to it to be without it. The Targum is, “the light of the law he seeth not; and knoweth not between good and evil, to judge between this world and that to come:” so the Vulgate Latin version, *neither knows the difference of good and evil. Nor known any thing; not the sun, nor any thing else: or experienced* ² and *felt* the heat of the sun, and its comfortable influences; which a man may, who is blind,

and has never seen it, but an abortive has not; and indeed has known no man, nor any creature nor thing in this world, and therefore it is no concern to it to be without them; and besides, has never had any knowledge or experience of the troubles of life, which every living man is liable to. Wherefore this is certain, *this hath more rest than the other*; that is, the abortive than the covetous man; having never been distressed with the troubles of life, and now not affected with the sense of loss.

Ver. 6. *Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, &c.]* Or two thousand years, which no man ever did, nor even one thousand years; Methuselah, the oldest man, did not live so long as that; this is more than twice the age of the oldest man: there is one sort of the Ethiopians, who are said ² to live almost half the space of time longer than usual, called from thence Macrobi; which Pliny ³ makes to be one hundred and forty years, which is just double the common term of life. This here is only a supposition. Aben Ezra interprets it, *a thousand thousand*, but wrongly; so the Arabic version, *though he lives many thousand years. Yet hath he seen no good*, nor enjoyed the good of his labour, what he has been labouring for and was possessed of; and therefore has lived so long as he has to very little purpose, and with very little comfort or credit; and especially he has had no experience of spiritual good. *Do not all go to one place?* that is, the grave; they do, even all men; it is the house appointed for all living, Job xxx. 23. and hither go both the abortive, and the covetous rich man; so that he has in this no pre-eminence to it. Jarchi interprets it of hell, the one place, whither all sinners go; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 7. *All the labour of man is for his mouth, &c.]* For the food of his mouth, as the Targum; for the sustenance of his body, for food and clothing, one part being put for the whole: all that a man labours for is to get this; and if he does not enjoy it, his labour is in vain; meats are for the belly, which are taken in by the mouth, and for these a man labours; and if he does not eat them, when he has got them, he labours to no purpose. *And yet the appetite is not filled;* even the bodily or sensual appetite; no, not even by those who eat the fruit of their labour; for though their hunger is allayed for the present, and the appetite is satisfied for a while, yet it returns again, and requires more food, and so continually: *or, the soul is not filled, or satisfied* ²; it is the body only that is filled or satisfied with such things, at best; the mind of man grasps after greater things, and can find no contentment or satisfaction in earthly or sensual enjoyments. This seems to be a new argument, proving the vanity of riches, from the narrow use of them; which only reaches to the body, not to the soul.

Ver. 8. *For what hath the wise more than the fool? &c.]* More delight and pleasure, in gratifying his senses, by eating and drinking: the wise man enjoys no more than the fool; the fool finds as much pleasure

² כִּי בָּא quavis venit, Drusius.

³ בחושך in tenebrositate, Montanus; in tenebras, Tigurine version, Mercerus, so Broughton.

² ולא דיע neque expertus est, Junius & Trenellius, Piscator, Rambachius, so Broughton.

² Meln de Situ Orbis, i. s. c. 9.

³ Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 2.

² חַיְתָּה לֹא תִמְלֵא anima non implebitur, Pagninus, Montanus; anima non expletur, Mercerus, Gejerus; non impletur, Cocceius, so Broughton; non satiat, Drusius.

in the labour of his hands, which is for his mouth, as the wise man does; and the wise man can get no more satisfaction to his mind, from these outward gratifications, than the fool. *What hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?* either, what does the poor man want more than the rich man, that knows how to get his bread, and is diligent and industrious among men to live, and does get a livelihood for himself and family; he enjoys all the sweets and comforts of life, as well as the rich man: or what hath the poor knowing man? as Aben Ezra interprets it, according to the accents; what has he more or does he enjoy more, than the poor foolish man, provided he has but sense enough to behave himself among men, so as to have bread to eat, and clothes to wear; which is as much as any man can enjoy, be he ever so rich or so wise?

Ver. 9. *Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire, &c.*] By the sight of the eyes is not meant the bare beholding outward riches, as in ch. v. 11. but the enjoyment of present mercies; such things as a man is in the possession of, and with which he should be content, Heb. xiii. 5. and by the wandering of the desire, the craving appetite and insatiable lust of the covetous mind, which enlarges its desire as hell, after a thousand things, and every thing it can think of; such a mind roves through the whole creation, and covets every thing under the sun: now it is better to enjoy contentedly things in sight and in possession, than to let the mind loose in vague desires, after things that may never be come at, and, if attained to, would give no satisfaction. *This is also vanity and vexation of spirit*: a most vain thing, to give the mind such a loose and liberty in its unbounded desires after worldly things; and a vexation of spirit it is to such a craving mind, that it cannot obtain what it is so desirous of.

Ver. 10. *That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man, &c.*] Which may be understood of the first man Adam, who has been, has existed, was produced by the immediate power of God, creating and forming him out of the dust of the earth; was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, a wise and knowing creature, a rich and powerful one, the figure of him that was to come, being the head and representative of all his posterity; and he has been named already, he had his name from the Lord himself, suitable to his nature and formation; he called his name Adam, from *Adamah*, the earth, from whence he was taken; and though he was so wise and great, and even affected deity, which was the snare laid for him by his enemy, it is well known he was but a man, of the earth, earthly, and returned to it again. Some have applied this to the second man, the Lord from heaven, as the ordinary gloss, and Jerom; and render it, *that which shall be*, so the Vulgate Latin version; as yet he was not man, though he had agreed to be and was prophesied of that he should; however he was named already the seed of the woman, Shiloh, Ithiel, the Messiah, or Anointed; hence by Solomon, in allusion to this name, his name is said to be *as ointment poured forth*, Cant. i. 3. and as it was known that he should be man, so it is now known that he is really and truly man; though not merely so, but God as well as man; yet as to his human nature his Father is greater

and mightier than he; but this sense some interpreters despise and laugh at; and indeed though the whole of it is truth, it does not seem to be the truth of the text, nor suitable to the context: rather the words are to be understood of mankind in general, of all men, not only that have been, but that are or shall be; these were all appointed to come into being by the Lord; they have been in his eternal purposes and decrees, and their names are written or not written in the Lamb's book of life; and they have all one common name, that of *man*, weak, frail, mortal, wretched man; they are, as is said of the Egyptians, men and not God, Isa. xxxi. 3. particularly this is true of persons the most famous that have been in the world; such who have been in ages past, and their names have been called, or they have obtained a name among men, men of renown, that are on the list of fame; such who have been the most famous for wisdom, for riches, for strength, or for power and authority, and have even had deity ascribed to them, and divine worship given them; yet it has been notorious that they were but men, and not God, so Jarchi; and died as such; see Psal. ix. 20. and lxxxii. 1, 6, 7. Ezek. xxviii. 2, 3, 9. Acts xii. 22, 23. Moreover, this may be understood of all things relating to men; that all that has been, is, or shall be, has been already named of God, determined and appointed by him; so the Targum renders it, "all is the decree of the Word of the Lord;" all things relating to the temporal affairs of men, as to their birth and place of abode, their callings and stations of life; so to their circumstances of poverty or riches, which with all their craving desires and carking cares it is impossible for them to alter, or make them otherwise than they are; which is observed, to check the wandering and insatiable desires of men after worldly things. *Neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he*; the Lord of the world, as the Targum; not the angel of death, as Jarchi; the devil, which had the power of death, and is stronger than men; nor death itself, as others, against which there is no standing, ch. viii. 8. Isa. xxviii. 15, 18. but God himself, who is mightier than men, and with whom a creature should not strive or contend; either about his being and the make of it, or concerning his circumstances in the world, that they are not greater and better than they be; or about God's decrees concerning these or other things; but quietly submit to his will, and be content in whatsoever circumstances they are, considering that he is the Creator, and a sovereign Being, they are creatures, and dependent on him; and let their circumstances be what they will, wise or unwise, rich or poor, they are but men, and can never rise higher; see Job ix. 3, 4. and xxxiii. 12, 13. Isa. xlix. 9, 10. Rom. ix. 19, 20. It is observed by the Masorites that this is just the middle of the book.

Ver. 11. *Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, &c.*] As appears by all that has been said in this and the preceding chapters; such as wisdom and knowledge, wealth and riches, pleasure, power, and authority. Man is a poor vain creature himself, all he is and has is vanity; and these serve but to increase it, and make him vainer and vainer still. *What is man the better?* for these things? not at all, rather the worse, being more vain; there is no profit by them, no ex-

cellency arises to him from them, no happiness in them, nothing that will be of any service to him, especially with respect to a future state, or when he comes to die. It may be rendered, as it is in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, *seeing there are many words that multiply vanity*; as all such words do that are used with God by way of murmur and complaint concerning a man's lot and condition in this world, and as expostulating and contending with him about it; these increase sin, and by them men contract more guilt, and therefore are not the better for such litigations, but the worse; and so the words stand in connexion with the preceding verse: but the former sense seems best, this being the conclusion of the wise man's discourse concerning vanity. So the Targum and Jarchi understand it of things, and not words.

Ver. 12. *For who knoweth what is good for man in this life? &c.*] To be in a higher or lower station of life, to live in grandeur or meanness, to be rich or poor, learned or unlearned; since that which seems most agreeable to human nature is attended with so much vanity, the occasion of so much sin, and often issues in ruin and misery, that no man knows what is best for him; and therefore it is the wisest way to be content with what a man has, and enjoy it in the most comfortable manner, and use it to the best ends and

purposes he can. The Targum is, "for who is he that knows what is good for a man in this world, but to study in the law, which is the life of the world?" so the Midrash, *All the days of his vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow? or the number of the days of his vain life, which he makes as a shadow*^d; that is, which God makes as a shadow, as Cocceius observes; makes to pass away swiftly: this is a description of the vanity, brevity, and uncertainty of human life; it consists of days, rather than of months and years; and those such as are easily numbered, and which pass away suddenly and swiftly, like a shadow that has no substance and reality in it, and leaves nothing behind it; or like a bird that flies away, as Jarchi, and is seen no more; such is the life of man, a most vain life, vanity itself; so it may be rendered, *the number of the days of the life of his vanity*^e; since therefore he has so short a time to enjoy any thing in, it is hard to say what is best for him to have, and the rather since he is quite ignorant of what is to come. *For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?* he does not know himself, nor can any man inform him, what will become of his wealth and riches after his death, which he has got together; who shall enjoy them, and how long; and what use will be made of them, either to their own good, or the good of others.

C H A P. VII.

THE wise man having exposed the many vanities to which men are subject in this life, and shewed that there is no real happiness in all outward enjoyments under the sun; proceeds to observe what are remedies against them, of which he had interspersed some few hints before, as the fear and worship of God, and the free and moderate use of the creatures; and here suggests more, and such as will protect from them, or support under them, or teach and instruct how to behave whilst attended with them, and to direct to what are proper and necessary in the pursuit of true and real happiness; such as care of a good name and reputation, ver. 1. frequent meditation on mortality, ver. 2—4. listening to the rebukes of the wise, which are preferable to the songs and mirth of fools, ver. 5, 6. avoiding oppression and bribery, which are very pernicious, ver. 7. patience under provocations, and present bad times, as thought to be, ver. 8—10. a pursuit of that wisdom and knowledge which has life annexed to it, ver. 11, 12. submission to the will of God, and contentment in every state, ver. 13, 14. shunning extremes in righteousness and sin, the best antidote against which is the fear of God, ver. 15—18. such wisdom as not to be offended with every thing that is done, or word that is spoken, considering the imperfection of the best of men, the weakness of others, and our own, ver. 19—22. and then the wise man acknowledges the imperfection of his own wisdom and knowledge, notwithstanding the pains he had taken, ver. 23—25. and laments his sin and folly in being drawn

aside by women, ver. 26—28. and opens the cause of the depravity of human nature, removes it from God, who made man upright, and ascribes it to man, the inventor of evil things, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. *A good name is better than precious ointment, &c.*] The word "good" is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by Jarchi; for of no other name can this be said; that which is not good cannot be better. Some understand this of the name of God, which is God himself, who is the *summum bonum*, and chief happiness of men, and take it to be an answer to the question ch. vi. 12. this and this only is what is a man's good, and is preferable to all outward enjoyments whatever; interest in him as a covenant-God; knowledge of him in Christ, which has eternal life annexed to it; communion with him; the discoveries of his loving-kindness, which is better than life; and the enjoyment of him to all eternity. This is true of the name of Christ, whose name Messiah, which signifies anointed, is as ointment poured forth, and is preferable to it, Cant. i. 3. John i. 41. so his other names, Jesus a Saviour; Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; are exceeding precious to those who know the worth of him, and see their need of righteousness and salvation by him; his person, and the knowledge of him; his Gospel, and the fame and report it gives of him; infinitely exceed the most precious and fragrant ointment; see 2 Cor. ii. 14—16. So the name or names given to the people of God, the new names of Hephzibah and Beulah, the name of sons of God, better than

^d ויעשה ככל & facit eos ut umbram, Cocceius.

^e מי חיי הבלו numero dierum vitæ; (vitarum, Montanus,) vanitatis suæ; Fagiuus, Rambachius.

that of sons and daughters; and of Christians, or anointed ones, having received that anointing from Christ which teacheth all things, and so preferable to the choicest ointment, Isa. lvi. 5. and lxii. 3, 4. and lxx. 15. Rev. ii. 17. Acts xi. 26. 1 John ii. 20, 27. Likewise to have a name written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life, and to have one's name confessed by Christ hereafter before his Father and his holy angels; or even a good name among men, a name for a truly godly gracious person; for love to Christ, zeal for his cause, and faithfulness to his truths and ordinances; such as the woman got, better than the box of ointment poured on Christ's head; and which the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was throughout the churches; and as Demetrius, who had good report of all men, and of the truth itself, Matt. xxvi. 13. 2 Cor. viii. 18. 3 John 12. Such a good name is better than precious ointment for the value of it, being better than all riches, for which this may be put; see Isa. xxxix. 2. Prov. xxii. 1. and for the fragrancy of it, emitting a greater; and for the continuance of it, being more lasting, Psal. cxii. 6. Prov. x. 6. The Targum is, "better" is a good name the righteous get in this world, than "the anointing oil which was poured upon the heads of kings and priests." So Alshech, "a good name is better than the greatness of a king, though anointed with oil." And the day of death than the day of one's birth; so render it, in connexion with the preceding clause, as a good name is better, &c. so the day of death than the day of one's birth¹; that is, the day of a man's death than the day of his birth. This is to be understood not of death simply considered; for that in itself, abstracted from its connexions and consequences, is not better than to be born into the world, or come into life, or than life itself; it is not preferable to it, nor desirable; for it is contrary to nature, being a dissolution of it; a real evil, as life, and long life, are blessings; an enemy to mankind, and a terrible one: nor of other persons, with whom men have a connexion, their friends and relations; for with them the day of birth is a time of rejoicing, and the day of death is a time of mourning, as appears from Scripture and all experience; see John xvi. 21. Gen. xl. 20. Matt. xiv. 6. Gen. xxiii. 2. John xi. 31, 33. It is indeed reported² of some Heathenish and barbarous people in Thrace, and who inhabited Mount Caucasus, that they mourned at the birth of their children, reckoning up the calamities they are entering into, and rejoiced at the death of their friends, being delivered from their troubles: but this is to be understood of the persons themselves that are born and die; not of all mankind, unless as abstracted from the consideration of a future state, and so it is more happy to be freed from trouble than to enter into it; nor of wicked men, it would have been better indeed if they had never been born, or had died as soon as born, that their damnation might not have been aggravated by the multitude of their sins; but after all, to die cannot be best for them, since at death they are cast into hell, into everlasting fire, and endless punishment: this is only true of good men, that have a good name living and dying; have a good work of

grace upon them, and so are meet for heaven; the righteousness of Christ on them, and so have a title to it; they are such who have hope in their death, and die in faith and in the Lord: their death is better than their birth; at their birth they come into the world under the imputation and guilt of sin, with a corrupt nature; are defiled with sin, and under the power of it, liable in themselves to condemnation and death for it: at the time of their death they go out justified from sin through the righteousness of Christ, all being expiated by his sacrifice, and pardoned for his sake; they are washed from the filth of sin by the blood of Christ, and are delivered from the power and being of it by the spirit and grace of God; and are secured from condemnation and the second death: at their coming into the world they are liable to sin yet more and more; at their going out they are wholly freed from it; at the time of their birth they are born to trouble, and are all their days exercised with it, incident to various diseases of the body, have many troubles in the world, and from the men of it; many conflicts with a body of sin and death, and harassed with the temptations of Satan; but at death they are delivered from all these, enter into perfect peace and unspeakable joy; rest from all their labours and toils, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels, and glorified saints. The Targum is, "the day in which a man dies and departs to the house of the grave, with a good name and with righteousness, is better than the day in which a wicked man is born into the world." So the Midrash interprets it of one that goes out of the world with a good name, considering this clause in connexion with the preceding, as many do.

Ver. 2. It is better to go to the house of mourning, &c.] For deceased relations or friends, who either lie unburied, or have been lately interred; for the Jews kept their mourning for their dead several days afterwards, when their friends visited them in order to comfort them, as the Jews did Martha and Mary, John xi. 31. So the Targum here, "it is better to go to a mourning man to comfort him;" for at such times and places the conversation was serious and interesting, and turned upon the subjects of mortality and a future state, and preparation for it; from whence useful and instructive lessons are learned; and so it was much better to be there than to go to the house of feasting: the Targum is, "than to the house of a feast of wine of scorners;" where there is nothing but noise and clamour, luxury and intemperance, carnal mirth and gaiety, vain and frothy conversation, idle talk and impure songs, and a jest made of true religion and godliness, death and another world. For that is the end of all men; not the house of feasting, but the house of mourning; or mourning itself, as Jarchi; every man must expect to lose his relation and friend, and so come to the house of mourning; and must die himself, and be the occasion of mourning: death itself seems rather intended, which is the end of all men, the way of all flesh; for it is appointed for men to die; and so the Targum, "seeing upon them all is decreed the decree

¹ So Schmidt, and some in Vatablus.

² Herodot. Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 4. Valer. Maxim. l. 2. c. 6. s. 12. Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25.

"of death." *And the living will lay it to his heart*; by going to the house of mourning, he will be put in mind of death, and will think of it seriously, and consider his latter end, how near it is; and that this must be his case shortly, as is the deceased's he comes to mourn for. So the Targum interprets it of words concerning death, or discourses of mortality he there hears, which he takes notice of and lays to his heart, and lays up in it. Jarchi's note is, "their thought is of the way of "death."

Ver. 3. *Sorrow is better than laughter, &c.*] Sorrow, expressed in the house of mourning, is better, more useful and commendable, than that foolish laughter, and those airs of levity, expressed in the house of feasting; or sorrow on account of affliction and troubles, even adversity itself, is oftentimes much more profitable, and conduces more to the good of men, than prosperity; or sorrow for sin, a godly sorrow, a sorrow after a godly sort, which works repentance unto salvation, that needeth not to be repented of, is to be preferred to all carnal mirth and jollity. It may be rendered, *anger is better than laughter*^h; which the Jews understand of the anger of God in correcting men for sin; which is much better than when he takes no notice of them, but suffers them to go on in sin, as if he was pleased with them; the Midrash gives instances of it in the generation of the flood and the Sodomites: and the Targum inclines to this sense, "better" is the anger, with which the Lord of that world is "angry against the righteous in this world, than the "laughter with which he derides the ungodly." Though it may be better, with others, to understand it of anger in men, expressed against sin, in faithful though sharp rebukes for it; which, in the issue, is more beneficial than the flattery of such who encourage in it; see Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. *For by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*; when the sadness is not hypocritical, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, but serious and real, arising from proper reflections on things in the mind; whereby the heart is drawn off from vain, carnal, and sensual things; and is engaged in the contemplation of spiritual and heavenly ones, which is of great advantage to it: or by the severity of the countenance of a faithful friend, in correcting for faults, the heart is made better, which receives those corrections in love, and confesses its fault, and amends.

Ver. 4. *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, &c.*] When his body is not; when it does not suit him to go thither in person, his mind is there, and his thoughts are employed on the useful subjects of the frailty and mortality of human nature, of death, a future judgment, and a world to come; which shews him to be a wise man, and concerned for the best things, even for his eternal happiness in another state. *But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth*; where jovial company is, merry songs are sung, and the cup or glass passes briskly round, and all is gay and brilliant: here the fool desires to be oftener than he is, and when he cannot; which shews the folly of his mind, what a vain taste he has, and how

thoughtless he is of a future state, and of his eternal welfare.

Ver. 5. *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, &c.*] To listen to it diligently, receive it cordially, and act according to it; though it may be disagreeable to the flesh, and give present pain, yet the effect and issue will be good, and shew that man to be wise that hears it, as well as he that gives it; see Psal. cxli. 1. Prov. xv. 31, 32. and xvii. 10. *Than for a man to hear the song of fools*; the vain and impure songs that foolish men sing in the house of mirth; or the flatteries of foolish men, which tickle and please the mind, as music and songs do: or, *than a man that hears the song of fools*^l, and is pleased with it.

Ver. 6. *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool, &c.*] As thorns are weak, useless, and unprofitable; yea, hurtful and pernicious, and only fit for burning; so are foolish and wicked men, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. Isa. xxvii. 4. and as the noise and sound of the one under a pot is very short, they make a blaze for a while, and is soon over; so though the laughter of a fool is loud and noisy, it makes no melody, no more than the noise of thorns; and is but for a moment, and will be soon changed for weeping and howling, which will last for ever; see Job xx. 5. *This also is vanity*; the carnal mirth of wicked men.

Ver. 7. *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad, &c.*] Which is to be understood either passively, when he is oppressed by others, or sees others oppressed; it raises indignation in him, disturbs his mind, and he is ready to pass a wrong judgment on the dispensations of Providence, and to say rash and unadvised things concerning them, Psal. lxxiii. 2, 3, 12—14. or actively, of oppression with which he oppresses others; when he gives into such measures, his wisdom departs from him, his mind is besotted, he acts the part of a madman, and pierces himself through with many sorrows. Some understand this of wealth got in an ill way; or of gifts given to bribe men to do injury to others; and which the following clause is thought to explain. *And a gift destroyeth the heart*; blinds the eyes of judges otherways wise; perverts their judgment, and causes them to pass a wrong sentence, as well as perverts justice: or, *and destroys the heart of gifts*^k; a heart that is possessed of the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; or a munificent heart, a heart disposed to give bountifully and liberally, that oppression destroys and renders useless.

Ver. 8. *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, &c.*] If the thing is good, otherways the end of it is worse; as the end of wickedness and wicked men, whose beginning is sweet, but the end bitter; yea, are the ways of death, Prov. v. 4. and xvi. 25. and so the end of carnal professors and apostates, who begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh, Gal. iii. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. but the end of good things, and of good men, is better than the beginning; as the end of Job was, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, Job viii. 7. and xlii. 12. see Psal. xxxvii. 37. Matt.

^h כבד כעם משחוק melior est ira risu, Paganus, Mercerus; melior est indignatio risu, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius.

^l כעם משחוק מראש שמע שיר כעם כעם, vir audiens canticum stultorum,

Montanus, Mercerus; præ viro audiente canticum stultorum, Bambachius.

^k ויארב את לב מנהג & frangit cor dotibus præclaris ornatum, Tigurine version; so some Jewish writers in Mercerus.

reignty, and is conducted and directed according to the counsel of his will, and is always wisely done to answer the best ends and purposes: every thing is beautiful in its season; contemplate, adore, and admire the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, displayed therein; it is such as cannot be made better, nor otherwise than it is. *For who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?* or which seems to be so, irregular and disagreeable? No man can mend or make that better he finds fault with and complains of; nor can he alter the course of things, nor stay the hand, nor stop the providence of God: if it is his pleasure that public calamities should be in the world, or in such a part of it, as famine, pestilence, or the sword; or any affliction on families, and particular persons, or poverty and meanness in such and such individuals, there is no hindering it; whatever he has purposed and resolved, his providence effects, and there is no frustrating his designs; it signifies nothing for a creature to murmur and complain; it is best to submit to his will, for no alteration can be made but what he pleases. Some understand this of natural defects in human bodies, with which they are born, or which attend them, as blindness, lameness, &c.; so the Targum, "consider the work of God, and his strength, who made the blind, the crooked, and the lame, to be wonders in the world; for who can make straight one of them but the Lord of the world, who made him crooked?" Others, of spiritual defects in such who walk in crooked ways, and are hardened in them; who can correct them, and make them other ways, if God does not give them his grace to convert them, and soften their hard hearts? he hardens whom he will, and who hath resisted his will? Jarchi's paraphrase is, "who can make straight after death what he has made crooked in life?" see the note on ch. i. 15. Alshech interprets it of the first man Adam.

Ver. 14. *In the day of prosperity be joyful, &c.]* Or, *in a good day*.⁴ When things go well in the commonwealth, in a man's family, and with himself, health, peace, and plenty, are enjoyed, a man's circumstances are thriving and flourishing; it becomes him to be thankful to God, freely and cheerfully to enjoy what is bestowed on him, and do good with it: or, *be in good*; in good heart, in good spirits, cheerful and lively; or, *enjoy good*, as the Vulgate Latin version; for what God gives to men is given them richly to enjoy, to make use of themselves, and be beneficial unto others; so the Targum, "in the day the Lord does well to thee be thou also in goodness, and do good to all the world;" see Gal. vi. 10. Jarchi's paraphrase is, "when it is in thine hand to do good, be among those that do good." *But in the day of adversity consider*; or, *in the day of evil*; consider from whence affliction comes; not out of the dust, nor by chance, but from God, and by his wise appointment; and for what it comes, that sin is the cause of it, and what that is; and also for what ends it is sent, to bring to a sense of sin, and confession of it, and humiliation for it; to take it away, and make good men more partakers of

holiness: or, *look for the day of adversity*; even in the day of prosperity it should be expected; for there is no firmness and stability in any state; there are continual vicissitudes and changes. The Targum is, "that the evil day may not come upon thee, see and be hold;" be careful and circumspect, and behave in a wise manner, that so it may be prevented. Jarchi's note is, "when evil comes upon the wicked, be among those that see, and not among those that are seen;" and compares it with Isa. lxvi. 24. It may be observed, that there is a set time for each of these, prosperity and adversity; and that the time is short, and therefore called a day; and the one is good, and the other is evil; which characters they have according to the outward appearance, and according to the judgment and esteem of men; otherwise, prosperity is oftentimes hurtful, and destroys fools, and adversity is useful to the souls of good men. *God also hath set the one over-against the other*; they are both by his appointment, and are set in their proper place, and come in their proper time; succeed each other, and answer to one another, as day and night, summer and winter, and work together for the good of men. *To the end that man should find nothing after him*; should not be able to know what will be hereafter; what his case and circumstances will be, whether prosperous or adverse; since things are so uncertain, and so subject to change, and nothing permanent; and therefore can find nothing to trust in and depend upon, nothing that he can be sure of: and things are so wisely managed and disposed, that a man can find no fault with them, nor just reason to complain of them; so the Vulgate Latin version, *not find just complaints against him*; and to the same purpose the Syriac version, *that he may complain of him*; the Targum is, "not find any evil in this world."

Ver. 15. *All things have I seen in the days of my vanity, &c.]* Or, *all these things*.⁵ What goes before and follows after, the various changes men are subject unto, both good and bad; these he had made his observations upon, throughout the course of his life, which had been a vain one, as every man's is, full of evil and trouble; see ch. vi. 12. perhaps the wise man may have some respect to the times of his apostacy; and which might, among other things, be brought on by this; observing good men afflicted, and the wicked prosper, which has often been a stumbling to good men. *There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness*; not eternally; no truly just man ever perished, who is made so by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; for though the righteous man is said to be scarcely saved, yet he is certainly saved: it can be true only in this sense of one that is only outwardly righteous, that trusts to his own righteousness, in which he may perish; but this is to be understood temporally and corporeally; one that is really just may perish in his name, in his substance, as well as at death, and that on account of his righteousness; he may lose his good name and character, and his substance, for righteousness-sake; yea, his life also,

⁴ ביום טובה in die bono, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus. ⁵ ביום טובה esto in bono, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius.

⁶ ביום רעה in die mala, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus.

¹ ראה precave, V. L. provide, aut provide ac prospice, Drusius; so Gussetius, p. 766.

² כל illa omnia, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version, Gejerus; omnia hæc, Mercerus; universa hæc, Rambachius.

as Abel, Naboth, and others; this is the case *sometimes*, as Aben Ezra observes, not always: or a just man, notwithstanding his righteousness, dies, and sometimes lives but a short time; which sense the antithesis seems to require. *And there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness*; is very wicked, and yet, notwithstanding his great wickedness, lives a long time in the world; see Job xxi. 7.

Ver. 16. *Be not righteous over-much, &c.*] This is not meant of true and real righteousness, even moral righteousness, a man cannot be too holy or too righteous; but of a shew and ostentation of righteousness, and of such who would be thought to be more righteous and holy than others, and therefore despise those who, as they imagine, do not come up to them; and are very rigid and censorious in their judgment of others, and very severe in their reproofs of them; and, that they may appear very righteous persons, will do more than what the law requires of them to do, even works of supererogation, as the Pharisees formerly, and Papists now, pretend, and abstain from the lawful use of things which God has given to be enjoyed; and macerate their bodies by abstinence, fastings, pilgrimages, penance, scourges, and the like, as the Eremites among the Christians, and the Turks, as Aben Ezra on the place observes; and many there be, who, by an imprudent zeal for what they judge right, and which sometimes are mere trifles, and by unseasonable reproofs for what is wrong, expose themselves to resentment and danger. Some understand this of political and punitive justice, exercising it in too strict and rigorous a manner, according to the maxim, *summum jus saepe summa injuria est*^v; and Schultens², from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, *be not too rigid*; and others, in a contrary sense, of too much mercy and pity to offenders. So the Midrash; and Jarchi illustrates it by the case of Saul, who had mercy on the wicked, and spared Agag. The Targum is, “be not over-righteous at a time that a sinner is found guilty of slaughter in thy court of judicature, that thou shouldst spare and not kill him.” *Neither make thyself over-wise*; above what is written, or pretend to be wiser than others. So the Arabic version, *shew not too much wisdom*; do not affect, as not to be more righteous than others, so not more wise, by finding fault with present times, or with the dispensations of Providence, or with the manners and conduct of men; setting up for a critic and a censurer of men and things; or do not pry into things, and seek after a knowledge of them, which are out of your reach, and beyond your capacity. *Why shouldst thou destroy thyself?* either by living too strictly and abstemiously, or by studying too closely, or by behaving in such a manner to men, as that they will seek thy destruction, and bring it on thee: or *why shouldst thou, or whereby, or lest, thou shouldst be stupid?*³; lose thy sense and reason, as persons who study the knowledge of things they have not a capacity for: or why shouldst thou

become foolish in the eyes of all men by thy conduct and behaviour? or, *why shouldst thou be desolate*⁴; alone, and nobody care to have any conversation and acquaintance with thee?

Ver. 17. *Be not over-much wicked, &c.*] Not that a man should be wicked at all; but some, observing that wicked men prolong their days in wickedness, are encouraged to go into greater lengths in sin than they have yet done, and give up themselves to all iniquity; and run into excess of riot, into the grossest and most scandalous enormities. Some render it, *do not disturb or fright thyself*^a, distress and distract thyself with the business of life, bustling and stirring, restless and uneasy, to get wealth and riches; but be easy and satisfied with what is enjoyed, or comes without so much stir and trouble; this is the original sense of the word. The meaning seems to be, either do not multiply sin, add unto it, and continue in it; or do not aggravate it, making sins to be greater and more heinous than they are, and a man's case worse than it is, and so sink into despair; and thus it stands opposed to an ostentatious shew of righteousness. *Neither be thou foolish*; or give up thyself to a profligate life, to go on in a course of sin, which will issue in the ruin of body and soul; or in aggravating it in an excessive manner. *Why shouldst thou die before thy time?*^b bring diseases on thy body by a wicked course of living, which will issue in death; or fall into the hands of the civil magistrate, for capital offences, for which sentence of death must pass and be executed, before a man comes to the common term of human life; see Psal. lv. 23. and xc. 10. or, as Mr. Broughton renders it, *before thy ordinary time*; not before the appointed time^b. The Targum is, “be the cause of death to thy soul;” or through despair commit self-murder.

Ver. 18. *It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this, &c.*] This advice, as the Arabic version, in the several branches of it; neither to be over-much righteous or wicked, and over-much wise or foolish; to avoid the one and the other, to keep clear of extremes, and pursue the path that is safest; such advice as this it is right to lay hold on, embrace, and hold fast. *Yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand*; from what follows concerning the fear of God; or *this and this* may be rendered *this and that*^c, and the sense be, lay hold on this, that is, the last part of the advice, not to be over-much wicked or foolish, which is often the cause of an immature death; and do not slacken or be remiss in regarding that other and first part of it, not to be over-much righteous or wise. *For he that feareth God shall come forth of them all*; or escape them all; the phrase is become Rabbinical, that is, he shall be free or exempt from them all; from over-much righteousness and over-much wisdom, and over-much wickedness or over-much folly; the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, is the best preservative from, and antidote against, these things; for a man that fears God is humble, and renounces his own righteousness,

^v Terent. Heautont. Act. 4. Sc. 4.

² De Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 230.

³ למד חושמים ut quid obstupesceas? Vatablus, Amama: cur obstupesceas? Mercerus; cur in stuporem te dares? Cocceius; qua te ipsum stupidum facies? Tigurine versio; ne obstupesceas, V. L. so Sept. and Syriac versions.

⁴ Ne quid desolaberis? Pagninus, Montanus; quare desolationem tibi accerseres? Janius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

^a אל תרעע me paves, Pagninus; ne te occupes multum, aut distrahās te, sive inquietes, some in Vatablus; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech.

^b Ante diem, Virgil. Æneid. 4. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 4.

^c So Broughton, Rambachius, and others.

and distrusts his own wisdom; he fears to commit sin, and shuns folly.

Ver. 19. *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise, &c.*] Against such extremes as before mentioned; it is a guard about him, as well as a guide unto him; it is a defence unto him, as before observed, ver. 12. and is better than strength of body, or weapons of war, ch. ix. 16, 18. and a wise man does greater things by it than a strong man with them, and is safer with it than he can be by them. Some understand this of Christ, the Wisdom of God, without whom a good man can do nothing, but all things through him strengthening him; and who being a strong tower and place of refuge to him, he is safer in him than if he was in the strongest garrison, and under the protection of ever so large a number of valiant men: Christ, and grace from him, strengthen *more than ten mighty men which are in the city*: that is, than many mighty men, or men of war, which guard a city; the city of Jerusalem, or any other. The Targum applies this to Joseph, and paraphrases it, “the wisdom of Joseph the son of Jacob” helped him to make him wiser than all his ten “righteous brethren.”

Ver. 20. *For there is not a just man upon earth, &c.*] Or *although, or notwithstanding*^d, wisdom is so beneficial, and guards and strengthens a good man, yet no man has such a share of it as to live without sin; there was not then one on earth, there never had been one, nor never would be, nor has been, excepting the man Christ Jesus; who indeed, as man, was perfectly just, whilst here on earth, and went about doing good, and never sinned in all his life; but this cannot be said of any other, no, not of one that is truly and really just; not externally and in his own opinion only, but who is made so by the obedience of Christ, or by his righteousness imputed to him, whilst he is here on earth; otherwise in heaven, where the spirits of just men are made perfect, there it may be said of them what follows, but nowhere else. *That doeth good, and sinneth not*; it is the character of a just man to do good, to do that which is according to the will of God, from a principle of love to him, through faith in him, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; to do good in such a sense wicked men cannot; only such who are made good by the grace of God, are regenerated and made new creatures in Christ, are quickened by his Spirit, and are true believers in him; who appear to be what they are, by the fruits of good works they bring forth; and this not in a mercenary way, or in order to obtain life and righteousness, but as constrained by the grace of God, by which they are freely justified; and yet these are not free from sin, as appears by their confessions and complaints, by their backslidings, slips, and falls, and their petitions for fresh discoveries of pardoning grace; and even are not without sin, and the commission of it, in religious duties, or while they are doing good; hence their righteousness is said to be as filthy rags, and mention is made of the iniquity of holy things, Isa. lxiv. 6. Exod. xxviii. 38. The Targum is, “that does good all his days, and sins not before the Lord.” Aben Ezra justly

gives the sense thus, “who does good always, and “never sins;” and observes that there are none but sin in thought, word, or deed. The poet says, “to sin “is common to all men;” no man, though ever so good, is perfect on earth, or free from sin; see 1 Kings viii. 46. Prov. xx. 9. 1 John i. 8. Alshech’s paraphrase is, “there is not a righteous man on earth, that does “good, and sins not; בשוב דרורא, *in that good*,” which is the true sense of the words.

Ver. 21. *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken, &c.*] Seeing so it is, that imperfection attends the best of men, no man is wise at all times, foolish words and unguarded expressions will sometimes drop from him, which it is better to take no notice of; they should not be strictly attended to, and closely examined, since they will not bear it. A man should not listen after every thing that is said of himself or others; he should not curiously inquire what men say of him; and what he himself hears he should take no notice of; it is often best to let it pass, and not call it over again; to dissemble the hearing of a thing, or make as if you did not hear it; for oftentimes, by rehearsing a matter, or taking up words spoken, a deal of trouble and mischief follows; a man should not give his heart^f to it, as it is in the Hebrew text; he should not give his mind to what is said of him, but be careless and indifferent about it; much less should he lay it up in his mind, and meditate revenge for it. The Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, restrain it to words spoken by wicked men, whose tongues are their own, and will say what they please; among these may be ranked, more especially, detractors, whisperers, backbiters, and talebearers, who should not be listened unto and encouraged; though there is no necessity of thus limiting the sense, which is more general, and may include what is said by any man, even good men, since they have their infirmities; it seems chiefly to have respect to defamatory words, by what follows. *Lest thou hear thy servant curse thee*; speak slightly, scoffingly, and reproachfully of thee, as Shimei of David; which must be very disagreeable and vexatious to hear from one so mean and abject, and who is dependent on him, earns his bread of him, and gets his livelihood in his service; and to whom, perhaps, he has been kind, and so is guilty of base ingratitude, which aggravates the more; or, if not, if what he says is just, to hear it must give great uneasiness.

Ver. 22. *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth, &c.*] Or *thy conscience*, as the Vulgate Latin version, which is as a thousand witnesses; which, if a man attends to, he will be convinced of his own faults, failings, and infirmities, he is frequently in the commission of. Particularly, *that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others*; either in heart, or with the tongue; thought ill of them, wished ill to them; spoke contemptibly of them, reviled and reproached them; called them by bad names, and abused them; and said some very hard and severe words concerning them, in a passionate fit, being provoked; and afterwards repented of it, being better informed of the state of the case, or

^d ^e ^f ^g ^h ⁱ ^j ^k ^l ^m ⁿ ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{kv} ^{kw} ^{kx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{xg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

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^e Sophocles Antigone, v. 1140.

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being convinced of the evil passion and rash speaking; and therefore such should consider the like passions and infirmities of others, and pass over them, and forgive them: so Alsnech, "if thou hast cursed others, and dost desire men should forgive thee, so do thou also forgive;" see Matt. vi. 14, 15. The word *oftentimes*, in the first clause, is to be connected, not with the word *knoweth*, as if a man often knew this, but with the word *cursed* suggesting, that a man may be often guilty of this himself, and therefore should be more sparing of his censures of others; see Matt. vii. 1—5.

Ver. 23. *All this have I proved by wisdom, &c.*] Referring either to all that he had been discoursing of hitherto in this book, concerning the vanity of natural wisdom and knowledge, of pleasure, power, and riches; or to the several useful instructions given in this chapter, particularly concerning patiently bearing every thing from the hands of God or men, ver. 8—22. This, by the help and use of that wisdom which God had given him, he had made trial of, and found it to be right, and therefore recommended it to others; though he acknowledges that, with all his wisdom, he was far from perfection. *I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me*; he determined, if possible, to attain to the perfection of wisdom, and made use of all means to come at it; that he might know all the works of God in creation, the nature, use, and excellency of them; in providence, his different dispensations towards the sons of men, and the causes of them; and in grace, the redemption and salvation of men, and the mysteries thereof; but the more he knew, the more he was convinced of his own ignorance, and seemed further off from the summit of knowledge than he was before; and plainly saw, that perfection in wisdom is not attainable in this life. The Targum restrains this to the wisdom of the law; but it is better to understand it in a more general sense.

Ver. 24. *That which is far off, &c.*] Or, *far off is that which has been*. That which has been done by God already, in creation and providence, is out of the reach of men, is far from their understandings wholly to comprehend or account for; and likewise that which is past with men, what has been done in former ages, the history of past times, is very difficult to come at: or rather, according to Schmidt, and Rambachius after him, what was of old is now afar off or absent; the image of God in man which consisted of perfect wisdom, and was concreated with him, is now lost, and that is the reason why wisdom is far from him. *And exceeding deep, who can find it out?* the primitive perfect wisdom is sunk so deep and gone, that no man can find it to the perfection it was once enjoyed; see Job xxviii. 12—23. This may respect the knowledge of God, and the perfections of his nature; which are as high as heaven, and deeper than hell, Job xi. 7, 8, and of his thoughts, counsels, purposes, and decrees, which are the deep things of God; as well as the doctrines of the Gospel, and the mysteries of grace, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. and even his providential dispensations to-

wards the sons of men, Rom. xi. 33. The Targum of the whole is, "Lo, now it is far off from the children of men to know all that has been from the days of old; and the secret of the day of death, and the secret of the day in which the King Messiah shall come, who is he that shall find it out by his wisdom?"

Ver. 25. *I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, &c.*] Or, *I and my heart turned about*^h; took a circuit, a tour throughout the whole compas of things; looked into every corner, and went through the circle of knowledge, in order to search and find out what true wisdom is; which is no other than Christ, and a spiritual knowledge of him; a variety of words is used to express his eager desire after wisdom, and the diligent search he made, from which he was not discouraged by the difficulties he met with; see ch. i. 13. *And the reason of things*; either in nature or providence: or the *estimation*¹ of them; the excellency of them, how much they are to be accounted of, esteemed, and valued; as Christ, the Wisdom of God, and all things relating to him, should. *And to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness*; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the folly and madness that are in it; sin is the effect of folly, and the excess of it, and a spiritual madness; it is true of all sin in general, but especially of the sin of uncleanness, which Solomon seems to have in view by what follows; see ch. i. 17. and ii. 12. and may chiefly intend the wickedness of his own folly, and the foolishness of his own madness.

Ver. 26. *And I find more bitter than death the woman, &c.*] This was the issue of his diligent studies and researches, and the observations he had made; this was what he found by sad and woful experience, and which he chose to take particular notice of; that he might not only expose this vanity among others, and caution men against it, even the love of women, which at best is a bitter sweet, as the poet^k calls it, though here adulterous love is meant; but having this opportunity, might express his sincere repentance for this folly of his life, than which nothing had been more bitter to him, in the reflection of his mind upon it: death is a bitter thing, and terrible to nature, 1 Sam. xv. 32. but to be ensnared by an adulterous woman is worse than that; it brings not only such diseases of body as are both painful and scandalous, but such horrors into the conscience, when awakened, as are intolerable, and exposes to eternal death; see Prov. v. 3, 4. By *the woman* is not meant the sex in general, which was far from Solomon's intention to reflect upon and reproach; nor any woman in particular, not Eve, the first woman, through whom came sin and death into the world; but an adulterous woman: see Prov. v. 4. Some interpret this of original sin, or the corruption of nature, evil concupiscence, which draws men into sin, and holds them in it, the consequence of which is death eternal; but such who find favour in the eyes of God are delivered from the power and dominion of it; but obstinate and unpeni-

^h רחוק מה שהיה remotum (est) illud quod fait, Montanus, Mercerus, Vatablus, Drusius, Gejerus.

^k אני ולבי ego & cor meum, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

¹ העשבות estimationem rerum, Mercerus.

^k Muscus, v. 106. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 70.

tent sinners are held under it, and perish eternally. Jarchi, by the *woman*, understands heresy; and so Jerom and others interpret it of heretics and idolaters: it may very well be applied to that Jezebel, the whore of Rome, the mother of harlots, that deceives men, and leads them into perdition with herself, Rev. xvii. 4, 5, 8. and xviii. 23. and who is intended by the harlot, and foolish and strange woman, in the book of Proverbs, as has been observed. *Whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands*: all the schemes and contrivances of a harlot are to ensnare men by her wanton looks and lascivious gestures; which are like snares laid for the beasts, and like nets spread for fishes, to take them in; and when she has got them, she holds them fast; it is a very difficult thing and a very rare one, ever to get out of her hands; so Plautus¹ makes mention of the nets of harlots: the same holds true of error and heresy, and of idolatry, which is spiritual adultery; the words used being in the plural number, shews the many ways the adulterous woman has to ensnare men, and the multitudes that are taken by her; see Rev. xiii. 3, 10, 14. *Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her*: or, *who is good before God, or in his sight*²; see the note on ch. ii. 26. to whom he gives his grace and is acceptable to him; such an one as Joseph was shall escape the snares and nets, the hands and bands, of such a woman; or if fallen into them, as Solomon fell, shall be delivered out of them, as it is observed by various interpreters: nothing but the grace of God, the true fear of God, the power of godliness and undefiled religion, can preserve a person from being ensnared and held by an impure woman; not a liberal nor religious education, not learning and good sense, nor any thing else; if a man is kept out of the hands of such creatures, he ought to esteem it a mercy, and ascribe it to the grace and goodness of God. *But the sinner shall be taken by her*; a hardened and impenitent sinner, that is destitute of the grace and fear of God; who is habitually a sinner, and gives up himself to commit iniquity; whose life is a continued series of sinning; who has no guard upon himself, but rushes into sin, as the horse into the battle; he becomes an easy prey to a harlot; he falls into her snares, and is caught and held by her; see Prov. xxii. 14.

Ver. 27. *Behold, this have I found, &c.*] That a harlot is more bitter than death; and which he found by his own experience, and therefore would have it observed by others for their caution: or one man among a thousand, ver. 28. (*saith the preacher*;) of which title and character see ch. i. 1. it is here mentioned to confirm the truth of what he said; he said it as a preacher, and, upon the word of a preacher, it was true; as also to signify his repentance for his sin, who was now the *gathered soul*, as some render it; gathered into the church of God by repentance. Counting *one by one, to find out the account*; not his own sins, which he endeavoured to reckon up, and find out the general account of them, which yet he could not do; nor the good works of the righteous,

and the sins of the wicked, which are numbered before the Lord one by one, till they are added to the great account; as Jarchi, from the Rabbins, interprets it, and so the Midrash: but rather the sense is, examining women, one by one, all within the verge of his acquaintance; particularly the thousand women that were either his wives or concubines; in order to take and give a just estimate of their character and actions. What follows is the result.

Ver. 28. *Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not, &c.*] He was very earnest and diligent in his inquiry; he took a great deal of pains, and was exceedingly solicitous; he sought with great intenseress of mind, and with an eager desire, to find out a chaste and virtuous woman among them all, but could not. *One man among a thousand have I found*: it is a great rarity to find a good man³, truly wise and gracious; there are many that walk in the broad way, and but few that find the strait gate and narrow way, and are saved; they are but as one to a thousand; see Jer. v. 1. Matt. vii. 13, 14. Or rather, by this one of a thousand, is meant the Messiah, the Wisdom of God, he sought for, ver. 25. and now says he found; to whom he looked for peace, pardon, and atonement, under a sense of his sins; who is the messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand; yea, who is the chiefest among ten thousands, Job xxxiii. 23. Cant. v. 10. who is superior to angels and men, in the dignity of his person; in the perfection, purity, and holiness of his nature; in the excellency of his names; in his offices and relations; and in his concern in the affairs of grace and salvation; and who is to be found by every truly wise and gracious soul that seeks him early and earnestly, in the word and ordinances, under the illumination and direction of the blessed Spirit. If it is to be understood of a mere man, I should think the sense was this; of all the men that have been ensnared and taken by an adulterous woman, but one of a thousand have I observed, and perhaps Solomon has respect to himself, that was ever recovered out of her hands. *But a woman among all those have I not found*; that is, among all the harlots and adulterous women I ever knew or heard of, I never knew nor heard of one that was ever reclaimed from her evil ways, and reformed or became a chaste and virtuous woman: he may have respect to the thousand women that were either his wives and concubines, and, among all these, he found not one that deserved the above character; for this is not to be understood of women in general, for Solomon must have known that there have been good women in all ages, and perhaps more than men; and that there were many in his days, though those with whom his more intimate acquaintance was were not such, which was his unhappiness; and his criminal conversation with them is what he lamented and repented of. It may be interpreted thus, *One man, the Messiah, among all the sons of men, have I found, free from original sin*; but one woman, among all the daughters of Eve, I have not found clear of it. The Targum is, "there is another thing which yet my soul seeketh,

¹ Epidicus, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 32. Illecebrosius nihil fieri potest, ib. Barchides, Sc. 1. v. 55. Truculentus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 14—21.

² ברוך הוה לפני טוב ברוך הוה לפני טוב bonus coram Deo, Pagninus, Mercerus,

Drsius, Amama, Rambachius; qui bonus videtur coram Deo ipso, Junius & Tremellius.

³ Vir bonus & sapiens, quem vix reperit unum, millibus e multis hominum, consultus Apollo. Anson. Idyll. 16. v. 1, 2.

“ and I have not found ; a man perfect and innocent, without corruption, from the days of Adam, till Abraham the righteous was born ; who was found faithful and just among the thousand kings who were gathered together to build the tower of Babel ; and a woman among all the wives of those kings, as Sarah, I found not.”

Ver. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, &c.*] The first man Adam, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it ; and not Adam only, but Eve also with him ; for these were both made by the Lord, and on the same day, and in the same image, and had the same common name of Adam given them, Gen. i. 27. and v. 2. And they were both made upright ; which is to be understood, not of the erectness of their bodies, but of the disposition of their minds ; they were “ right and innocent before him,” or in the sight of God, as the Targum ; which is best explained by their being made in the image and likeness of God, Gen. i. 26, 27. and which, according to the apostle, lay in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, Ephes. iv. 24. Col. ii. 3. agreeably to which Plato makes likeness to God to be righteous and holy, with prudence : for this likeness of Adam and Eve to God, lay not in the shape of their bodies, for God is a spirit, and not a corporeal being, as the Anthropomorphites imagin’d, and so fancied men to be made like unto him in this respect ; but in their souls, and it consisted of knowledge ; of the knowledge of the creatures, their nature, use, and ends for which they were made, and put under their government ; and of God, and his perfections, as made known in the creatures ; and of his mind and will, and manner of worshipping him, he revealed unto them ; and they might know the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, who were concerned in the making of them, though they seem not to have known Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, which was not necessary previous to their fall ; nor evangelical truths suited to a fallen state : also this image lay in righteousness and true holiness, which was original, natural, and created with them ; it was with them as soon as they were ; not acquired, but infused ; not a habit obtained, but a quality given ; and this not supernatural, but natural ; it was perfect in its kind, and entirely agreeable to the holy, just, and good law of God ; it had no defects in it, yet was but the righteousness of a creature, and loseable, as the event shewed ; and so very different from the righteousness of Christ, man is justified by. Likewise, this uprightness is no other than the rectitude of human nature, of all the powers and faculties of the soul of man, as they were when he was created ; his understanding clear of all errors and mistakes, either about divine or human things ; his affections regular and ordinate, no unruly passion in him, no sinful affection, lust, and desire ; he loved God with all his heart and soul, and delighted in him, and

communion with him ; the bias of his will was to that which is good ; the law of God was written on his heart, and he had both power and will to keep it ; and, during his state of integrity, was pure and sinless ; yet he was not impeccable, as the confirmed angels and glorified saints are ; nor immutable, as God only is ; but being a creature, and changeable, he was liable to temptation, and subject to fall, as he did. Now Solomon, with all his diligent search and scrutiny, could not find out the infinity of sin, the boundless extent of it among mankind, the exceeding sinfulness of it, which he sought after, ver. 25. yet this he found out, and this *only*, the fountain of all sin, the origin of moral evil ; namely, the corruption of human nature through the fall of Adam : this he found by reading the Scriptures, the three first chapters of Genesis ; and by consulting human nature he found some remains of the image of God, and of the law that was in man’s heart ; whereby he perceived that man was once another man than he is now ; and that this corruption is not owing to God, who is not the author of any thing sinful, he made man upright ; but to himself, his own sin and folly : and this he found confirmed by sad experience, in himself and others, and by observing the history of all ages, from the times of the first man ; and as this was notorious, it was worth knowing and observing, and therefore he calls upon others to take notice of it ; *lo, behold, consider it*, as well as what follows. *But they have sought out many inventions ;* that is, Adam and Eve, not content with their present knowledge and happiness, they sought out new ways and means of being wiser and happier than God made them, or it was his will they should be. *They sought out the inventions of the many, or great things, or of the mighty and great ones**, as it may be rendered, the eternal Three in One ; they sought to be as wise as God himself ; or, however, as the great and mighty ones, the angels, who excelled them, as in strength, so in knowledge ; see Gen. iii. 5. or they sought out thoughts of sin, as Jarchi says it is interpreted in the Midrash. Sins are the inventions of men, and these are many and numerous ; they sought to gratify their senses, on which followed innumerable evils ; and then they sought for shifts and evasions to excuse themselves ; the man shifting it from himself, and throwing the blame upon the woman, and the woman upon the serpent : and so sinning, they lost the knowledge they had ; their righteousness and holiness, the rectitude of their nature ; the moral freedom of their will to that which is good, and their power to perform it ; and they lost the presence of God, and communion with him : and so their posterity are not only inventors of evil things, of sins, but of new ways of happiness ; some placing it in riches ; others in honours ; others in pleasures ; and some in natural wisdom and knowledge ; and some in their own works of righteousness ; the vanity of all which Solomon has before exposed.

* Thereteto, p. 129.

† תשובות רביים cogitationes magnatum, De Dieu ; ratiocinia

multarum, magnarumque rerum, so some in Rambachius ; see Luke x. 41, 42.

C H A P. VIII.

THE preacher begins this chapter with the praise of wisdom, from its excellency and usefulness, ver. 1. and advises men, if they would live quietly and comfortably, to honour and obey the king that rules over them, and not be rebellious against him, since he has great power and authority, ver. 2—5. and not be anxious about things to come, since there is a set time for every thing, and future things cannot be known nor frustrated; and, particularly, there is no avoiding the hour and stroke of death, ver. 6—8. Though there are times wherein wicked men rule over others, it is to their own hurt, and they must die; and though they may be pompously buried, yet are soon forgotten, ver. 9, 10. and the reason of their insolence is the delay of justice; yet there will come a time when it shall be well with them that fear God, and ill with the wicked, though they may live long in wickedness; and for the present it may befall good men what wicked men deserve, and wicked men may have that which might be thought more proper for good men, ver. 11—14. wherefore this should give no uneasiness; but men should cheerfully and freely enjoy what they have with thankfulness, there being nothing better than that under the sun, ver. 15. and the chapter is concluded with observing the unsearchableness of divine Providence, v. 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *Who is as the wise man?* &c.] Who is as the first man, that was made upright, and was a wise man? not one of his sons. Or who is as the wise man, meaning himself? no man; he was the wisest of men; and yet he could not find out wisdom, and the reason of things, and the wickedness of folly, ch. vii. 25—29. how therefore should any other man? what can the man do that comes after the king? Or who is like to a wise man, to be compared to him for honour and dignity? none; not those of the highest birth and blood, of the greatest wealth and riches, or in the highest places of power and authority; a wise man is above them, they being without wisdom; and especially such as are wise to salvation; these are the excellent in the earth, and the most worthy among men. Or who is a truly wise man? is there really such a person in the world, that has got to the perfection of wisdom? not one; and very few they are that can, in a true and proper sense, be called wise men. The Targum is, “who is a wise man, that can stand against the wisdom of the Lord?” *And who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? or a word?* the word of God, which is not of private interpretation? none know it rightly, but such who have the spirit of God, the enditer of the word: Christ is the interpreter, one among a thousand; and, next to him, are those who have his mind, and rightly divide the word of truth. The Targum is,

“and to know the interpretation of the words in the prophets:” this may be understood of the solution of any difficulties in things natural or civil; and of the interpretation of any of the works of God, either in nature or providence, as well as of his word; and he is a wise man, that not only has wisdom in himself, but is able to teach others, and make them wise; can solve doubts, remove difficulties, interpret nature, the works and word of God. Aben Ezra repeats the note of similitude from the former clause, and so it may be rendered, *Who is as he that knows the interpretation of a thing, or word?* such an one as Solomon was, Prov. i. 6. *A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine;* as Moses, when he came down from the mount, full fraught with the knowledge of the will of God, Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. and as Stephen, whose wisdom and spirit, by which he spoke, were irresistible, Acts vi. 10, 15. wisdom, which discovers itself in a man's words and actions, gives comeliness to his person, makes him look amiable and lovely in the eyes of others: or, it *enlightens his face*; by it he is able to see the difference between truth and falsehood, and what is to be done and not done; what way he should walk in, and what he should shun and avoid. *And the boldness of his face shall be changed;* the ferocity and austerity of his countenance, the impudence and inhumanity that appeared in him before, through his wisdom and knowledge, are changed into meekness, gentleness, and humanity; of an impudent, fierce, and ill-behaved man, he becomes meek, modest, affable, and humane; this effect natural wisdom and knowledge has on men; and much more spiritual and evangelical wisdom, which comes from above, and is first pure, then peaceable and gentle, Jam. iii. 17. Some read it, *the strength of his face shall be doubled, or renewed*; he shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory; his spiritual strength shall be renewed, and his light and knowledge increase yet more and more, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Isa. xl. 31. Eccl. vii. 19. Prov. iv. 18. But Gussetius renders it, *his boldness, or impudence, shall be hated.*

Ver. 2. *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, &c.*] Or, *to observe the mouth of the king*; what he says, and do according to it, when it is agreeably to the law of God, and according to the laws of the kingdom, by which he is to govern; for kings are to be honoured, obeyed, and submitted to, in the lawful discharge of their office: and such counsel and advice as this is wholesome; and, being taken, contributes much, as to the honour of kings, so to the good of kingdoms and states, and to a man's own peace and comfort. Aben Ezra supplies it, “I command thee, or I admonish thee;” for it may be either a charge, or an advice, respecting this and what follows. Jarchi sup-

וְיִדְעוּ דְבָרֵי פִי ה' V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

וְיִדְעוּ דְבָרֵי פִי ה' illustrat, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; illuminat, Cocceus, Gejerus, Rambachius, so Broughton.

Adde quod ingenus didicisse fideliter artes, emollit mores, nec sinit esse ferus, Ovid. de Pontis, l. 2. Elcg. 9.

וְיִדְעוּ דְבָרֵי פִי ה' duplicatur, Junius & Tremellius, Varenius; instauratur, Cocceus, Gejerus.

* Ebr. Coſament. p. 595. so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

* פִּי מֶלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר os regis observat, Tigurine version, Pagninus, Mercerus; observa, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceus, Gejerus, Rambachius.

plies and paraphrases it thus, "I have need, and am prepared, to observe the mouth (or keep the commandment) of the King of the world;" and so Alshech, "observe that which goes out of the mouth of the King of the world." And indeed, to understand it, not of an earthly king, but of the King of kings, as it is understood by other interpreters also, suits better with what is said of this King in the following verses; whose commandments, which are not grievous, but to be loved above fine gold, should be kept from a principle of love, without mercenary and selfish views, as they are delivered out by him, and to his glory; and such a charge as this should be attended to, and such counsel be received. *And that in regard of the oath of God; who has sworn, that if his children forsake his law, and walk not in his statutes, he will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes; and therefore should be careful to keep his commandments, Psal. lxxxix. 30—35. Those who interpret this of an earthly king, by the oath of God understand the oath of allegiance and fidelity to him, taken in the name and presence of God, and therefore for conscience-sake should obey him: or render it, but so that thou observest the manner of the oath of God²; or take care to obey him; or do nothing in obedience to kings, which is contrary to the will of God; for God is to be obeyed rather than men, Acts iv. 19. and v. 29. especially, and above all things, that is to be regarded.*

Ver. 3. *Be not hasty to go out of his sight, &c.]* But of the sight of the King of kings. Do not think to hide thyself from him, for there is no fleeing from his presence, Psal. cxxxix. 7. it is best, when under some consternation, as the word³ signifies, or under some fearful apprehension of his wrath and indignation, to fall down before him, acknowledge the offence, and pray for pardon: and to this purpose is the Targum, "and in the time of the indignation of the Lord, do not cease to pray before him; being terrified (or troubled) before him, go and pray, and seek mercy of him;" and with which agrees the note of Jarchi, "be not troubled, saying that thou wilt go and flee from his presence, to a place where he does not rule, for he rules in every place." Such who interpret this of an earthly king suppose this forbids a man going out from the presence of a king in a pet and passion, withdrawing himself from his court and service in a heat, at once. *Stand not in an evil thing; having done it, continue not in it; but repent of it, acknowledge and forsake it, whether against God or an earthly king. For he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him; which best agrees with the King of kings, who does what he pleases, in heaven above and in earth below, both in nature, providence, and grace; see Job xxiii. 13. Psal. cxv. 3. though earthly kings indeed have long hands, as is usually said, and can reach a great way, and do great things, especially despotic and arbitrary princes, and it is very difficult escaping their hands. The Targum is, "for the Lord of all worlds, the Lord will do what he pleases."*

Ver. 4. *Where the word of a king is, there is power,*

&c.] Or *dominion*². Authority goes along with his word of command; and there is an inferior magistracy, a subordinate power under him, ready to execute his will upon the rebellious and disobedient. Jarchi interprets it, the word of the holy blessed God; and the Targum, the word of that King who rules over all the world; where his word of doctrine comes, not in word only, it is with power: his written word is quick and powerful; the word of his Gospel preached is the power of God to salvation; or is accompanied with power to enlighten dark minds, quicken dead sinners, unstop deaf ears, soften hard hearts, and deliver men from the slavery of sin and Satan; it makes men, of enemies, friends to God, Christ, and good men; transforms them by the renewing of their minds, and comforts and establishes saints; all which is attributed to the word; and are the effects of almighty power, Heb. iv. 12. Rom. i. 16. his word of command also comes with power, being clothed with his authority; and is submitted to by his people in the day of his power upon them, who readily and cheerfully obey it. *And who may say unto him, what dost thou?* call him to an account for, or complain of any of his works of creation, providence, or grace? This best agrees with God than with an earthly king; and is said of him elsewhere, Job ix. 12. and xxxiii. 14. Dan. iv. 35.

Ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil, &c.]* Either the commandment of an earthly king, which should be kept, when agreeably to the laws of the nation, and not inconsistent with the commands of God; and such as do observe it *know no evil*², as it may be rendered, or no sorrow; they live peaceably and quietly, and enjoy the favour and protection of the government under which they are, and have praise of men; see Rom. xiii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 2. or the commandments of the heavenly King, the singular being put for the plural; so the Targum, "whoso keepeth the commandments of the Lord shall know no evil in the world to come." Nor in this world neither; no evil befalls them; what may be thought to be so is for their good; though they know and are conscious of the evil of sin, and commit it, yet not willingly, and with love to it, and so as to make it the work of their lives; but lament it, repent of it, and forsake it, and do not feel the evil of punishment for it; yea, such enjoy much good; have much communion with God; large discoveries of his love; dwell in him, and shall at last dwell with him in the heavenly city; see John xiv. 21, 23. 1 John iii. 22, 24. Rev. xxii. 14. *And a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment;* he knows not only what is his duty to do, both with respect to God and men, to a temporal prince or the King eternal; but he knows also the most fit and convenient time of doing it; and lays hold on every opportunity that offers, and which may be called *redeeming time*, Gal. vi. 10. Ephes. v. 16. and he knows the right manner in which it should be performed, with all the agreeable circumstances of it, which he carefully observes; or he knows the judgment that will be passed, or the punishment that will

¹ ועל רברת שבועת אלהים sed, ita quod ad Deum attinet, observat rationem juramenti Dei, Varenius; attamen, supra serva verbum juramenti Dei, Gussetius, p. 605.

² חבל מל אע consterneris, Gejerus, and some in Rambachius.

² שלטון imperium, Montanus, Rambachius; dominatio, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusus.

³ לא ידע non cognoscat, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius, Cuceius.

be inflicted on delinquents, either by God or men; and therefore is careful to keep the commandment, and avoid it: and especially he remembers there is a judgment to come, when every thing will be brought to an account; and, though he does not know the precise day and hour, yet he knows there will be such a time; so some render it, *the time of judgment*^a; the Targum is, “and the time of prayer, and of judgment, and of truth, is known by the heart of the wise.”

Ver. 6. *Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, &c.*] There is a fit season, and a right and proper manner of doing every thing that is to be done; see ch. iii. 1—8. which a wise man discerns; and which when a man hits upon, it prevents a great deal of mischief, which for want of it comes upon men, as the following clause shews; some refer this to the punishment of the wicked, and to a future judgment. So the Targum, “to every business there is a time good and evil, and according to the judgment of truth the whole world is judged;” and to the same purpose Jarchi, “there is a time fixed for the visitation of the wicked, and there is judgment before the Lord: this is vengeance or punishment.” *Therefore the misery of man is great upon him*; he not observing the right time and manner of doing what he ought, brings much trouble upon himself; his days are few and full of trouble, and every day has a sufficiency of evil in it; because of the evil of sin, the evil of misery presses upon him, and is a heavy burden on him. Jarchi’s note is, “when the wickedness of a man is great, then cometh his visitation.”

Ver. 7. *For he knoweth not that which shall be, &c.*] Or that it shall be^b; that he ever shall have the opportunity again he has lost, nor what is to come hereafter; what shall be on the morrow, or what shall befall him in the remaining part of his days; what troubles and sorrows he shall meet with, or what will be the case and circumstances of his family after his death. *For who can tell him when it shall be? or how it shall be?*^c how it will be with him or his; no one that pretends to judicial astrology, or to the art of divination, or any such devices, can tell him what is to come; future things are only certainly known by God; none but he can tell what will certainly come to pass; see ch. iii. 22. and vi. 12. Jarchi interprets it of a man’s not considering for what God will bring him to judgment, and that no man can tell him the vengeance and punishment that will be inflicted.

Ver. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, &c.*] Which is not to be understood of the wind, which the word used sometimes signifies, and of men’s having no power to restrain that, or hinder it from blowing; for to what purpose should Solomon mention this? rather it may be considered as a check upon despotic and arbitrary princes not to stretch their power too far; since they had none over the spirits or minds of men, and could not hinder them from thinking ill of them, and wishing ill to them, nor restrain their hatred of them; what-

ever power they had or exercised over their bodies and estates, they had none over their spirits, or their consciences; no lawful power to restrain them from their duty to God, nor to oblige them to do that which he has forbidden; nor to compel them to any thing against conscience; nor to bind their consciences in matters indifferent: or as an argument with subjects to obey the commands of their sovereign; since it is not in their power to restrain the spirit and wrath of princes, which is as the roaring of a lion, and as the messengers of death, Prov. xvi. 14. and xix. 12. particularly to be careful that they do not commit any capital offence, for which sentence may be passed to take away life, when it will not be in their power to retain it, nor to rescue themselves out of the hands of justice and the civil magistrate, but must submit. Or else it is to be understood of every man’s spirit at the hour of death, and of the unavoidableness of it, as the next clause explains it; and by *spirit* is meant, either the sensitive soul, the same with the spirit of a beast, without which the body is dead, and is like the wind that passeth away, and ceaseth when the breath is stopped; or the rational soul, the spirit that is committed to God, and returns to him at death, Luke xxiii. 46. Acts vii. 59. Eccl. xii. 7. This a man has not power over to dismiss or retain at pleasure; he cannot keep it one moment longer when it is called for and required by the Father of spirits, the Creator of it; he has not power to restrain^d it, as in a prison, as the word signifies, as Alshech observes; whence Aben Ezra says, that the spirit or soul in the body is like a prisoner in a prison; but nothing that attends a man in this life, or he is in possession of, can keep the soul in this prison, when the time of its departure is come; not riches, nor honours, nor wisdom and learning, nor strength and youth, nor all the force of medicine; the time is fixed, it is the appointment of God, the bounds set by him cannot be passed, Eccl. iii. 2. Heb. ix. 27. Gen. xlvii. 29. Job xiv. 5. The Targum is, “no man has power over the spirit of the soul to restrain the soul of life, that it might not cease from the body of man;” and to the same sense Jarchi, “to restrain the spirit in his body, that the angel of death should not take him.” *Neither hath he power in the day of death; or dominion*^e; death strips a man of all power and authority, the power that the husband has over the wife, or parents over their children, or the master over his servant, or the king over his subjects; death puts down all power and authority: it is an observation of Jarchi’s, that David after he came to the throne is everywhere called King David, but, when he came to die, only David, 1 Kings i. 1. no king nor ruler can stand against death any more than a beggar; no man is lord of death any more than of life, but death is lord of all; all must and do submit to it, high and low, rich and poor; there is a day fixed for it, and that day can never be adjourned, prorogued, or put off to another; and as man has not power to deliver himself in the day of death, so neither his friend, as the Targum, nor any relation whatever. *And there is no discharge in that war; death is a war-*

^a וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^b וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^c וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^d וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^e וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^a וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^b וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^c וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^d וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

^e וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה, Sept.; so some in Drusius.

fare as well as life, with which nature struggles, but in vain; it is an enemy, and the last that shall be destroyed; it is a king, and a very powerful one; there is no withstanding him, he is always victorious; and there is no escaping the battle with him, or fleeing from him; a discharge of soldiers in other wars is sometimes obtained by interest, by the entreaty of friends, or by money; but here all cries and entreaties signify nothing; nor does he value riches, gold, or all the forces of strength; see 2 Sam. xii. 18. Job xxxvi. 19. under the old law, if a person had built a new house, or married a wife, or was faint-hearted, he was excused and dismissed; but none of these things are of any avail in this war, Deut. xx. 5, 6, 8. captives taken in war are sometimes dismissed by their conquerors, or they find ways and means to make their escape; but nothing of this kind can be done when death has seized on the persons of men. Some render it, there is *no sending to or in that war*^f; there is no sending forces against death to withstand him, it is to no purpose; there is no sending a message to him to sue for a peace, truce, or reprieve; he will hearken to nothing; there is no sending one in the room of another, as Jarchi observes, "a man cannot say, I will send my son, or my servant;" no surrogation is allowed of in this case, as David wished for, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Aben Ezra interprets it, no armour, and so many interpreters; and so the Targum; "nor do instruments of armour help in war;" in this war: in other wars a man may put on a helmet of brass and a coat of mail, to protect and defend him, or throw darts and arrows; but these signify nothing when death makes his approach and attack. *Neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it; or the masters of it*^g; that is, from death; neither Satan the wicked one, as Jerom, who is wickedness itself, and with whom wicked men are confederate, can deliver them from death; nor sinners the most abandoned deliver themselves, who have made a covenant with it, and an agreement with hell, Isa. xxviii. 15, 18. such who are masters of the greatest wicked craft and cunning, and who devise many ways to escape other things, can contrive none to escape death; nor will riches gotten by wickedness deliver the owners of them from death; see Prov. x. 2. and xi. 4. This sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra, and not to be despised.

Ver. 9. *All this have I seen, &c.*] Observed, taken notice of, and thoroughly considered; all that is said above, concerning the scarcity of good men and women, the fall of our first parents, the excellency of wisdom, the necessity and advantage of keeping the king's commandment, the time and manner of doing it, the evil consequences that follow an inattention to these things, ignorance of what is to come, and the unavoidableness of death. *And applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun*; not so much to mechanic works and manual operations performed by men, as to moral or immoral works, and chiefly the work of Providence with respect to good and bad men, the consequence of

which were the following observations. There is *a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt*; or *the man ruleth over men*^h; for this is not to be understood of private rule in families, of the parent over his children, or master over his servant, but of a king over his subjects; who is *the man*, the principal man in the kingdom; and such a man ruling in an arbitrary and tyrannical way is to his own detriment in the issue. So Rehoboam, by his oppressive government, lost ten tribes out of twelve. Some have lost their whole kingdoms, and come to an untimely end; as well as his ruled to their immortal souls. Some render it *to his hurt*ⁱ; to the hurt of those that are ruled, when it should be for their good, the protection of their persons and properties; but instead of that they lay heavy burdens upon them, take away their property, and injure and insult their persons. So the Targum, "to do ill to him." But Jarchi interprets it of the king himself. Some take it in both senses; and so it is usually in fact, that wicked princes rule to their own hurt, and the hurt of their subjects.

Ver. 10. *And so I saw the wicked buried, &c.*] Or *truly*^k, verily, as the Targum, this is matter of fact; or *then I saw*, as Aben Ezra and others, upon applying his heart to every work; or when he observed particularly wicked magistrates, he took notice that some of them continued in their power until death, and died in their beds, and were carried to their graves in great pomp and state, and interred in a very magnificent manner, when they deserved no burial at all, but, as King Jeconiah, to be buried with the burial of an ass. *Who had come and gone from the place of the holy*; which most understand of the same persons, of wicked magistrates buried, who kept their posts of honour and places of power and authority as long as they lived; and went to and came from the courts of judicature and tribunals of justice, in great state and splendour; where they presided as God's viceregers, and therefore called the place of the holy, Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6. or though they were sometimes deposed, yet they were restored again to their former dignity; or though they died and were buried, yet in a sense rose again in their children that succeeded them, so Aben Ezra: but it seems better to understand it of other persons, and render the words thus, *and they came, and from the place of the holy, or the holy place they walked*^l; that is, multitudes came to attend the funeral of such rich and mighty men, and walked after or followed the corpse; and even the priests and Levites from the temple made a part of the funeral procession, and walked in great solemnity from thence to the place of interment, which was usually without the city. *And they were forgotten in the city where they had so done*; all their evil deeds were forgotten, their acts of oppression and injustice, as if they had never been done by them. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions are, *and they were praised in the city*; panegyrics upon them were written and rehearsed, monuments were erected to their honour, with large

^f אין משלח במלחמה non est missio ad illud praelium, Varenius apud Gejerum.

^g את בעליו dominos suos, Drusius.

^h האדם homo, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

ⁱ לרוב לו in ipsius perniciem, Tigurine version; in noxam ipsi, Cocceius.

^k ובין & vere, Vatablus.

^l יבאו ומקום קדשו ידלכו & venerunt, immo ex ipso etiam loco sancti itabant, Rambachius.

encomiums of them; and so it may be read by the change of a letter; and Jarchi says, do not read *forgotten*, but *praised*; and so he says it is interpreted by their Rabbins. The whole may be considered in a very different view, thus, *but then I saw*, &c. such arbitrary rulers die, and laid in the grave, one after another, and their names have been buried in oblivion, and never remembered more in the city where they have exercised so much power and authority. The latter part of the text is by many understood of good men, and rendered thus, *and or but on the contrary they were forgotten in the city where they had done right*^m; their persons and their good deeds were remembered no more; but this seems contrary to Psal. cxii. 6. Prov. x. 7. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus; “and in truth I have seen sinners that are buried and destroyed out of the world, from the holy place where the righteous dwell, who go to be burned in hell; and they are forgotten among the inhabitants of the city; and as they have done, it is done to them.” *This is also vanity*; the pompous funeral of such wicked magistrates.

Ver. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily*, &c.] Any evil work done by magistrates, or others, against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and is threatened with his vengeance; the decree is gone forth, the sentence is passed, God is determined upon punishment; but there is a delay of it, he exercises patience and long-suffering to answer some end of his, both towards his own people and the wicked; as well as to display some of his own perfections; but because so it is, the judgment comes not at once. *Therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*; or their heart is full to do evilⁿ; they have not only a fulness of sin in them naturally, as is in every man's heart; but they are filled with resolution, boldness, and courage, to commit sin, promising themselves impunity from the seeming delay of justice; such an abuse do they make of the patience and forbearance of God; they become more and more hardened in sin, and bent upon the commission of it.

Ver. 12. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times*, &c.] That is, ever so many times, a certain number for an uncertain; though he lives in a continued course of sin, being resolved upon the above consideration to give himself a swing to his lusts. The Targum renders it a hundred years; though he should live so long in sin, yet at last should be accursed, Isa. lxxv. 20. This and what follows are said to check the boldness and presumption of the sinner upon the patience of God; and to make the people of God easy under the delay of justice, and the prosperity of the wicked. *And his days be prolonged*; or rather, *and he prolongs unto him*^o; that is, God prolongs unto him, not days only, but the execution of the sentence against his evil works; or defers his wrath and punishment; so Jarchi, “and the holy blessed God prolongs to him, and does not take vengeance on him;” and to this purpose is the Targum, “and from the Lord is given to him space to

“return.” *Yet surely I know*; from the word and promise, and from experience, having observed it in a multitude of instances, which have abundantly confirmed the truth. *That it shall be well with them that fear God*; not with a servile but filial fear, with a holy, humble, fiducial, affectionate, and an obedient fear; not through any terrible apprehension of his majesty, his judgment, his wrath now and hereafter; but under a sense of his being and perfections, and especially his mercy, grace, and goodness: it is well with such persons in all things; with respect to things temporal they shall not want what is proper for them; and with respect to things spiritual they are interested in the love, grace, and mercy of God; have much made known to them; are remembered by him; the sun of righteousness rises upon them; the eye of God is on them, and his heart towards them, and his hand communicates every needful supply to them; and they are guarded, not only by his angels, but by himself; and it is well with them at all times; in times of public calamity they are either taken from it before-hand, or preserved in it; all afflictions are for their good; it goes well with them at death and judgment; and they will be happy both in the millennium-state and in the ultimate glory. So the Targum, “it shall be well in the world to come with them that fear the Lord;” see Psal. xxxiv. 7—9. and xxxi. 15. Rev. xi. 18. with this compare Isa. iii. 10, 11. It is added, *which fear before him*; whose fear is not hypocritical, but sincere and hearty; not in shew only, but in reality; not taught by the precepts of men, and as before them, but as in the sight of God; having always a sense of his omniscience and omnipresence before them; and especially this fear is exercised by them when they are in his house, in the assembly of his saints, attending on his word and ordinances: or *which fear at his presence*; which fills them with a holy awe, as well as with joy and gladness. The Targum is, “which fear before him, and do his will.”

Ver. 13. *But it shall not be well with the wicked*, &c.] It shall be ill with him; more is designed than is expressed, Isa. iii. 11. in life they have no solid peace and comfort; at death they will be turned into hell; at judgment they will hear the awful sentence, *Go, ye cursed*, and will be in torment to all eternity. *Neither shall he prolong his days*, which are *as a shadow*; wicked men sometimes do not live out half their days, which, according to the course of nature, and common term of life, they might be thought to live; or if they do prolong their days in wickedness, as sometimes they do, ch. vii. 15. yet their days at longest are but as a shadow which declines, and is quickly gone; or, however, they do not attain to eternal life, which is sometimes meant by prolonging days, and is length of days for ever and ever, Isa. liii. 10. Psal. xxi. 4. this they never enjoy; but when the righteous go into life everlasting, they go into everlasting punishment. The reason of this is, *because he feareth not before God*; the fear of God is not before his eyes, nor in his heart; he goes on in sin without fear of him, boldly and openly

^m So Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius.

ⁿ כִּי לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת מַעֲשָׂיו רַק plenum ad faciendum malum, Pagninus, Montanus; praegrans ad faciendum malum, Gussetius, p. 469.

^o כִּי יִפְרֹא וְיִפְרֹא לֵיהּ וְיִפְרֹא לֵיהּ et prolongans ei, Montanus; et prolongat in Deus dies,

Pagninus; so Mercerus, Junius, & Tremellius, supply it; & prorogat dei Deus praenam, Piscator; & differt Deus iram suam propter illum, Vatablus.

commits it, and instead of taking shame for it, or repenting of it, glories in it; stretches out his hand against God, and bids defiance to him, and desires not the knowledge of him, and refuses to obey him. The Targum of the whole is, "and it shall not be well with the wicked, and he shall have no space in the world to come; and in this world his days shall be cut off, and they shall flee and pass away as a shadow, because he fears not God."

Ver. 14. *There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, &c.*] Transacted in this lower world under the sun, through the permission and direction of divine Providence; not that it is a vanity on the part of God, who has wise ends to answer by it, for the good of his people, the trial of their graces, &c. or to bring sinners to repentance, or harden them in sin; but this shews the vanity and uncertainty of all worldly things, and that there is no happiness to be had in them. *That there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked:* to whom evil comes, as the Targum and Jarchi; who are treated as if they were wicked men, and dealt with in providence as profane sinners would be, if they had the just desert of their wicked works; being attended with poverty, sickness, and disgrace, and other calamities of life, as Job, Asaph, Lazarus, and others, and yet truly righteous and good men. *Again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous:* to whom good things come, as the Targum and Jarchi; who have an affluence of good things, all the outward blessings of life, as health, wealth, honour, long life, &c. as if they had lived the best of lives, and were the most righteous persons upon earth; see Job xxi. 7—13. Psal. lxxiii. 4, 5, 7. Luke xvi. 19. *I said, that this also is vanity:* this is said, as some think, according to the judgment of corrupt nature; or as it is apprehended by such who do not rightly consider the judgments of God and the wisdom of Providence in the ordering of things to answer good purposes; or rather the sense is, this is one of the miseries and infelicities of this life, and which demonstrates the emptiness of all things here below, and that the chief good and supreme happiness is not to be had here; but there is and must be a future state, when all things will be set right, and every one will have and enjoy his proper portion.

Ver. 15. *Then I commended mirth, &c.*] Innocent mirth, a cheerfulness of spirit in whatsoever state and condition men are; serenity and tranquillity of mind, thankfulness for what they have, and a free and comfortable use of it; this the wise man praised and recommended to good men, as being much better than to fret at the prosperity of the wicked, and the seemingly unequal distribution of things in this world, and because they had not so much of them as others; who yet had reason to be thankful for what they had, and to lift up their heads and be cheerful, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God in another world. The Targum interprets it of the joy of the law. *Because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry:* of earthly things there is nothing better than for a man freely and cheerfully, with moderation and thankfulness, to enjoy what God has given him; this is what had been observed before, ch. ii. 24. and iii. 22. and v. 18. and is not the language of an epicure, or a

carnal man, who observing that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked, that it is as well or better with the wicked than the righteous, determines to give up himself to sensual lusts and pleasures; but it is the good and wholesome advice of the wise man, for men to be easy under every providence, satisfied with their present condition and circumstances, and be cheerful and pleasant, and not distress themselves about things they cannot alter. *For that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun;* man's present life is under the sun, and is continued as long as it pleases God; though it is but short, rather to be counted by days than years, and is a laborious one; and all that he gets by his labour, enjoyed by him, is to eat and drink cheerfully; and this he may expect to have and continue with him as long as he lives, even fool and raiment, and with this he should be content.

Ver. 16. *When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, &c.*] The nature and causes of things; the wisdom of God in his providence, and the grounds and reasons of his various dispensations towards the children of men: the Targum interprets it, the wisdom of the law. *And to see the business that is done upon the earth:* either the business of Providence, in dealing so unequally with the righteous and the wicked, before observed; and which is a business very afflictive and distressing for curious persons to look into, not being able to account for it: or the labour and toil of men to get wealth and riches, and to find happiness in them. *(For also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes;)* or has any sleep in his eyes, through his eager pursuit after worldly things, or, however, has but little; he rises early and sits up late at his business, so close and diligent is he at it, so industrious to obtain riches, imagining a happiness in them there is not: or else this describes persons curious and inquisitive into the affairs of Providence, and the reasons of them; who give themselves no rest, day nor night, being so intent upon their studies of this kind; and perhaps the wise man may design himself.

Ver. 17. *Then I beheld all the work of God, &c.*] Not of creation, but of Providence; took notice of it, contemplated on it, considered it, and weighed it well; viewed the various steps and methods of it, to find out, if possible, at least, some general rule by which it proceeded: but all so various and uncertain, *that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun:* he can find out that it is done, but not the reason why it is done: the ways of God are in the deep, and not to be traced; they are unsearchable and past finding out; there is a *βαθος*, a depth of wisdom and knowledge, in them, inscrutable by the wisest of men, Psal. lxxvii. 19. Rom. xi. 33. *Because, though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it;* Noldius and others render it *although:* not only a man that, in a slight and negligent manner, seeks after the knowledge of the works of divine Providence, and the reasons of them; but even one that is diligent and laborious at it is not able to find them out; they being purposely concealed by the Lord, to answer some ends of his. *Yea, further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it;* a man of a great natural capacity, such an one as Solomon himself, though he pro-

poses to himself, and determines within himself to find it out, and sets himself to the work, and uses all the means and methods he can devise, and imagines with himself he shall be able to find out the reasons of the divine procedure, in his dispensations towards the

righteous and the wicked; and yet, after all, he is not able to do it. The Targum is, "what shall be done "in the end of days;" wherefore it is best for a man to be easy and quiet, and enjoy what he has in the best manner he can, and submit to the will of God.

C H A P. IX.

THOUGH the wise man, with all his wisdom, search, and labour, could not find out the causes and reasons of divine Providence, in the branches and methods of it; yet some things he did find out, and observe, in making this inquiry, and which he declares; as that good and wise men, more especially their persons and their affairs, were in the hand of God, under his guidance, government, and direction; and that an interest in his love and hatred was not to be known by the outward estate of men, ver. 1. That the same events happen to good and bad men, who are variously described; that the hearts of wicked men are full of sin and madness as long as they live, and that they all must and do die, ver. 2, 3. and then the state of such dead is described, as being without hope, knowledge, reward, or memory; and without love, hatred, or envy, or any portion in the things of this life, ver. 4—6. Wherefore good men are advised to live cheerfully, in a view of acceptance with God, both of persons and services; and eat and drink, and clothe well, according to their circumstances, and enjoy their friends and families; since nothing of this kind can be done in the grave, ver. 7—10. Then the wise man observes another vanity; that success in undertakings is not always to persons who bid fair, and might hope for it, but looks like the effect of chance, ver. 11. which want of success is often owing to their ignorance of the proper time of doing things, and to their want of foresight, thought, and care, to prevent evils; for which reason they are compared to fishes and birds, taken in a net or snare, ver. 12. And concludes with a commendation of wisdom, illustrated by an example of it, in a certain person that delivered a city by it, ver. 13—15. and though the man's wisdom was despised, yet it is preferable to strength, or weapons of war, or the noise of a foolish ruler, who destroys much good, ver. 16—18.

Ver. 1. *For all this I considered in mine heart, &c.*] What goes before, in the latter end of the preceding chapter, concerning the various providences of God, the difficulty of finding out the reasons of them, and the fruitlessness of attempting it; and also what follows, the work of Providence: Solomon gave his mind unto, attended it with great application, and strictly considered and examined it, in order to find it out, but could not; and if he could not, no other man could. And he had a good intention in all; his views were, *even to declare all this*; for the end of search and inquiry should be, to make known what is found for the good of others, Job v. 27. and as the wise man had done before, ch. vii. 25—29. or to *purge*, or *pu-*

rify, as the word ² signifies; to make dark providences clear, and consistent with the perfections and promises of God; to free and vindicate them from all charges of unrighteousness and partiality, and to set them in a clear light to others: now though he failed in his attempt, yet having made some discoveries, he imparted them, as follows: and the observations he made were, *that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God*; that those who are truly *righteous* in the sight of God; are so, in an evangelical sense, made so by the obedience of Christ; and who believe in him for righteousness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and who are *wise*, not for the things of this world but another, who are wise unto salvation; and are concerned for the truth of grace, as well as an outward profession, and walk wisely in the world; these, their persons, are under the special care of divine Providence; they receive from the hand of God what is needful and proper for them, and they are preserved and protected by him, 1 Tim. iv. 8, 10. and their *works*, or affairs; all events relating to them, are all appointed, ordered, and directed by the hand of God, and all for their good. In a more evangelic sense, their persons are in the hands of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in the hands of the Father of Christ, being engraven there: he looks at them, and upon them; with delight and pleasure, and never forgets them; he has a high and honourable esteem of them, they are a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; he directs and guides them, holds them, and upholds them with his right hand; and keeps them, by his power, through faith unto salvation, John x. 29. Isa. xlix. 16. and lxii. 3. and xli. 10. Psal. lxxiii. 23, 24. 1 Pet. i. 5. They are in the hands of Christ; put there by his Father, as the effect of his love, care, and wisdom; where they are in his possession, the objects of his delight; and are under his guidance and direction, his care and protection, Deut. xxxiii. 3. Cant. viii. 6. Psal. xcvi. 7. Rev. ii. 1. John x. 28. And they are in the hands of the Spirit, who begins and carries on his own work in them; leads them to Christ, and into all truth, and guides them safe to glory, John xvi. 8, 13, 14. Psal. cxliii. 10. And so their *works* also are in the hands of God; the work of grace upon the soul is in the hand of the Spirit, to carry it on and finish it; good works done by them are done by the assistance of divine grace, the strength of Christ, and the aid of the blessed Spirit; are received and accepted with God through Christ; and will not be forgotten, but are retained, and will be remembered another day; see ver. 7. Heb. vi. 10. Rev. xiv. 13. *No man knoweth*

is cautious about taking an oath, and chooses to be excused from taking one, on any account, could he be excused; preferring such advice as is given, Matt. v. 34. Jam. v. 12. *swear not at all*: the counsel about swearing, which Isocrates¹ gives, seems worthy of notice; “take an oath required on two accounts; either to purge thyself from a foul crime charged with, or to save friends in danger, and deliver them out of it; but on account of money (or goods) swear not by any deity, no, not even if thou canst take an oath safely; for by some thou wilt be thought to be perjured, and by others to be covetous.” The word in Hebrew for swearing is always passive, because a man should not swear, unless obliged; and the same form of language is used by Latin writers²; and the Hebrew word for it comes from a root which signifies *seven*, in allusion, as some think, to seven witnesses required to an oath; the Arabians, when they swore, anointed *seven* stones with blood; and, whilst anointing them, called on their deities³; see Gen. xxi. 30. It may be observed, that all men are here divided into good and bad; this has been the distinction from the beginning, and continues, and ever will.

Ver. 3. *This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all, &c.*] A very great evil, a very sore one, the worst of evils. Not an evil, as the providence of God is concerned with it, who does no evil; nor is there any unrighteousness in him; he is righteous in all his ways: but this is an evil, and distressing thing, to the minds of good men; see Psal. lxxiii. 2, 12—14. Jer. xii. 1. and is what bad men make an ill use of, to harden themselves in sin, and to despise religion as an unprofitable thing, Job xxi. 14, 15. *Yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil*: they are naturally full of evil, of all unrighteousness and wickedness, what comes out of them shew it; and because the same things happen to good and bad men, and the wicked pass with impunity, and are outwardly happy as others, or more so, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil, ch. viii. 11. *And madness is in their heart while they live; or madresses*^{*}: every sin is madness; for who but a madman would stretch out his hand against God, and strengthen himself against the Almighty, and run upon him? who but a madman would rush into sin in the manner he does, and expose himself to dangers and death, even eternal death? Wicked men are mad upon their lusts, and mad against the saints, and all that is good; this insanity is in their hearts, and shews itself in their lives, and continues with them as long as they live, unless called by grace. *And after that they go to the dead*: after all the madness of their lives, they die and go into the state of the dead, and are among them; which refers not so much to the interment of their bodies in the grave, as the company with which their separate spirits are; they go, not to the righteous dead, but to the wicked; see Prov. ii. 18. and ix. 18. so Alshech; they go to the dead; not to the righteous, who, in their death, or when dead, are called living; but, as Jarchi observes, at their end they go down to

hell. The Targum is, “after the end of a man, it is reserved for him that he be corrected with the dead, according to the judgment (or desert) of sins.”

Ver. 4. *For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope, &c.*] That is, who is among the living, is one of them, and, as long as he is, there is hope, if his circumstances are mean, and he is poor and afflicted, that it may be better with him in time; see Job xiv. 7. or of his being a good man, though now wicked; of his being called and converted, as someone at the eleventh hour, even on a death-bed; and especially there is a hope of men, if they are under the means of grace, seeing persons have been made partakers of the grace of God after long waiting. There is here a Keri and a Cetib, a marginal reading and a textual writing; the former reads, *that is joined*, the latter, *that is chosen*; our version follows the marginal reading, as do the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: some, following the latter, render the words, *who is to be chosen*?, or preferred: a living, or a dead man? not a dead but a living man: *to all the living there is hope*; of their being better; and, as Jarchi observes, there is hope, while alive, even though he is a wicked man joined to the wicked; yea, there is hope of the wicked, that he may be good before he dies. *For a living dog is better than a dead lion*; a proverbial speech, shewing that life is to be preferred to death; and that a mean, abject, and contemptible person, living, who for his despicable condition may be compared to a dog, is to be preferred to the most generous man, or to the greatest potentate, dead; since the one may possibly be useful in some respects or another, the other cannot: though a living sinner, who is like to a dog for his uncleanness and vileness, is not better than a dead saint or righteous man, comparable to a lion, who has hope in his death, and dies in the Lord.

Ver. 5. *For the living know that they shall die, &c.*] Death is certain, it is the demerit of sin, the appointment of God, and the time of it is fixed; it may be known that it will be, from the word of God that assures it, from all experience which confirms it, and from the decline of nature, and the seeds of death in men. *The living know that live corporeally, even the wicked themselves, though they put the evil day far from them; and so good men, that live spiritually, being quickened by the spirit and grace of God, and live a life of faith and holiness; they know they shall die, though Christ died for them, and has abolished death, as a punishment and a curse, and took away its sting, and made it a blessing; wherefore it is desirable to them, as being for their good: but there are some things about death they ordinarily know not; they do not know the time of their death; nor the place where they shall die; nor of what death they shall die; nor in what circumstances, both outward and inward: of these the Targum understands the passage; “for the righteous know that if they sin, they shall be reckoned as dead men in the world to come, therefore they keep their ways, and sin not;*

¹ Furgues, ad Demonic. p. 10.

² Juratus sum, Plauti Curculio, Act. 3. v. 88. Fui juratus, ib. Act. 4. Sc. 4. v. 10. Non tu juratus mihi es? juratus sum, ib. Rudens, Act. 5. Sc. 3. v. 16, 17.

³ Herodot. Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 8.

^{*} מְדַמְּתִים הַבָּשָׂרִים מוֹטָאֵס, מֶרְעֵרֵס, דְּרֻסִיִּים, אֲמָמָא, גַּעְגְּרִיִּים, רַמְבַּחֲשִׁי; מְדַמְּתִים הַבָּשָׂרִים, מוֹטָאֵס, מֶרְעֵרֵס, דְּרֻסִיִּים, אֲמָמָא, גַּעְגְּרִיִּים, רַמְבַּחֲשִׁי.

[†] מְדַמְּתִים הַבָּשָׂרִים מוֹטָאֵס, מֶרְעֵרֵס, דְּרֻסִיִּים, אֲמָמָא, גַּעְגְּרִיִּים, רַמְבַּחֲשִׁי.

“but if they sin, they return by repentance.” *But the dead know not any thing*; this is not to be understood of their separate spirits, and of the things of the other world; for the righteous dead know much, their knowledge is greatly increased; they know, as they are known; they know much of God in Christ, of his perfections, purposes, covenant, grace, and love; they know much of Christ, of his person, offices, and glory, and see him as he is; they know much of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and of angels, and the spirits of just men, they now converse with; and of the glories and happiness of the heavenly state; even they know abundantly more than they did in this life: and the wicked dead, in their separate spirits, know there is a God that judgeth; that their souls are immortal; that there is a future state; indeed they know and feel the torments of hell, the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched: but this is to be interpreted of their bodily senses now extinct, and of worldly things they have now nothing to do with; they know not any thing that is done in this world, nor how it fares with their children and friends they have left behind them; see Job xiv. 21. Isa. lxiii. 16. nor therefore are they to be prayed unto, and used as mediators with God. The Targum is; “and sinners know not any good, so that they do not make their works good while they live; and they know not any good in the world to come.” *Neither have they any more a reward*; not but that there will be rewards in a future state, in which every one shall have his own reward; there will be a reward for the righteous; they will receive the reward of the inheritance, though it will be, not of debt, but of grace; and particularly in the millennium-state, Psal. lviii. 11. Col. iii. 24. Rev. xxii. 12. and xi. 18. and every transgression of the wicked will receive a just recompense of reward; to whom the reward of their hands will be given them, Heb. ii. 2. Isa. iii. 11. but the sense is, that after death there will be no enjoyment of a man’s labours; he will not have the use, profit, and advantage of them, but his heirs that succeed him, ch. iv. 9. and ii. 18, 19, 21, 22. *For the memory of them is forgotten*; not the memory of the righteous with God, for whom a book of remembrance is written, and whose names are written in heaven; these are had in everlasting remembrance, and their memory blessed: but the memory of wicked men; who, though they take pains to perpetuate their names, which they give to their lands, yet the Lord causes their memory to cease, and they are forgotten in the place where they lived; not only among the righteous, as the Targum, but among others, Isa. xxvi. 14. Eccl. viii. 19. even among those that enjoy the fruit of their labour; they will scarce think of them any more, or, however, in a little time they will be quite forgotten by them.

Ver. 6. *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished, &c.*] Not that the separate spirits of the dead are without their affections, or these unexercised; the spirits of just men made perfect will love God and Christ, and angels, and good men, and all that is good, more intensely; love will continue after this life, and be in its height, and therefore said to

be the greatest grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. they will hate sin, Satan, and all the enemies of Christ, and be filled with zeal for his glory; so the word * for envy may be rendered; see Rev. vi. 9, 10. and the spirits of the wicked dead will still continue to love sin, and hate the Lord, and envy the happiness of the saints; and will rise again with the same spite and malice against them; see Ezek. xxxii. 27. Rev. xx. 8, 9. but this respects persons and things in this world; they no more love persons and things here, nor are loved by any; death parts the best friends, and the most endearing and loving relations, and puts an end to all their mutual friendship and affection; they hate their enemies no more, nor are hated by them; they no more envy the prosperity of others, nor are envied by others; all such kind of love and hatred, enmity and envy, active or passive, cease at death; out of the world, as the Targum adds. *Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is under the sun*; the worldly man’s portion is only in this life, and when he dies, he carries nothing of it with him; whose ever his possessions will be at death, they are no more his, nor will he ever return to enjoy them any more; his houses, his lands, his estates, his gold and silver, and whatever of worth and value he had, he has no more lot and part in them: but the good man has a portion above the sun; God is his portion, heaven is his inheritance for ever and ever. The Targum understands it of the wicked; “and they have no good part with the righteous in the world to come; and they have no profit of all that is done in this world under the sun.”

Ver. 7. *Go thy way, &c.*] Thou righteous man, as Jarchi paraphrases it; and indeed epicures and voluptuous persons have no need of the following exhortation, and the reason annexed is not suitable to them; but the whole agrees better with religious persons, who under distressing views of Providence, and from gloomy and melancholy apprehensions of things, and mistaken notions of mortification, deny themselves the free and lawful use of the good things of life; and seeing there is no enjoyment of them in the grave, and after death, therefore let the following advice be taken, than which of worldly things nothing is better for a man to do. *Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart*; which includes all things necessary and convenient, and which should be used and enjoyed freely and cheerfully; not barely for refreshment, but recreation; not for necessity only, but for pleasure; yet with moderation, not to excess; and with thankfulness to God; and the rather joy and mirth should mix with these things, since to a good man they are in love. It may be observed that it is said *thy bread and thy wine*, thine own and not another’s; what is got by labour, and in an honest way, and not by rapine and oppression, as Alshech observes; what God in his providence gives, our daily food, what is convenient for us, or is our portion and allotment. The Targum interprets it figuratively of the joys of heaven; “Solomon said, by a spirit of prophecy from the Lord, the Lord of the world will say to all the righteous, in the face of every one, eat thy bread

* זמון זמון emulatio ipsorum, Cœcius, Gejerus; zelus eorum. Drusius, Amama, Rambachius.

hearing the word, making a profession of religion, and attending on ordinances; and, as opportunity serves, should do good to all men, especially to the saints, Gal. vi. 10. and whatsoever is in the power of their hands, as this phrase signifies, Lev. xii. 8. 1 Sam. xxv. 8. Aben Ezra refers it to the delights and pleasures of life, such as before mentioned; which may be allowed, when used in a lawful and moderate manner. *Do it with thy might*; or *strength*: for though men have no might or strength of their own to do good, which is lost by sin; yea, even good men, of themselves, and without Christ, his spirit and grace, can do nothing spiritually good; yet there is strength in him, and to be had from him; and who should be applied to for it, and who gives it, Isa. xl. 29—31. and xiv. 24. Phil. iv. 13. the phrase denotes intenseness of spirit, vigour of mind, activity and fervency; doing that which is good, cheerfully and diligently, and not in a negligent careless manner; see Deut. vi. 5. Jer. xlvi. 10. *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*; this, and not then, is our working-time; good men at death cease from their labours in the grave, as the night in which no man can work, Rev. xiv. 13. John ix. 4. then the liberal man can no more devise liberal ways and means of doing good; his purposes of doing good are broken off; and no more plans can be laid, or designs formed, for the glory of God and the good of fellow-creatures: and no more knowledge of objects to do good unto; nor any improvement in any kind of knowledge, natural or spiritual: nor wisdom and prudence in the management of affairs, to answer some good ends and purposes; nor opportunity of attaining that wisdom by the Scriptures, and by the ministry of the word, which make men wise unto salvation: and now, since every man is going to the grave, his long home, the place appointed for all living, and this is the way of all flesh; and every step he has taken, and does take, is a step to the grave; therefore it is incumbent on him to do all the good he can in life.

Ver. 11. *I returned, and saw under the sun, &c.*] The wise man returned to his former subject, concerning the same events happening to all sorts of persons, righteous and wicked, wise and unwise, ver. 1, 2. and enlarged upon it in his mind; and took notice of various things done under the sun, and made the following remarks: and whereas he had exhorted men to use all their might in doing the duties of their calling while they lived here; he suggests, that they should not depend upon, and promise themselves, any thing from their own strength and wisdom; but have a regard to the providence of God, that superintends all affairs, and gives or withholds success as he pleases; since it may be observed, *that the race is not to the swift*; swiftness oftentimes is of no service to a man to escape dangers, as may be seen in the case of Asahel and others, 2 Sam. ii. 18, 23. Amos ii. 14, 15. so the Targum, "men who are swift as eagles are not helped by running to escape from death in battle." Or the sense may be, that the swift are not always made use of in running a race; or, if they are, they do not al-

ways win the prize, something or other happens to hinder them; they fall, or become lame, when one more slow gets the advantage of them, 1 Cor. ix. 24. and so in spiritual things, one that is ready to halt, as David says of himself, gets to heaven, and is saved, Psal. xxxviii. 17. Zeph. iii. 19. when others, at first starting or setting out in a profession, run well for a while, as the Galatians did, ch. v. 7. but afterwards drop and fall short; for *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix. 16. *Nor the battle to the strong*: as not to the Midianites, nor to Goliath, nor to Abner, in whom Jarchi instances; victory is not always on the side of the mighty and the many, but oftentimes on the side of the weak and few; see 2 Chron. xiv. 9—15. Psal. xxxiii. 16, 17. so in spirituals, such who go forth in their own strength against an enemy, trusting in it, fall; whilst weak believers, depending on the grace and strength of Christ, wrestle with principalities and powers, and come off victorious. *Neither yet bread to the wise*; the Targum adds, in a time of famine, when their wisdom cannot help them; but the sense rather is, that skilful artificers, in any trade or business, do not always get the best livelihood, yea, sometimes want the necessaries of life, or eat the bread of sorrow, when persons of meaner capacities shall thrive and flourish; and even the wisest of men sometimes have been obliged to others for bread, as was the case of David, 1 Sam. xxi. 3. and xxv. 8. and even of a wiser than he, our Lord himself, Luke viii. 2. and as for the wise men of this world, the bread of life, Christ Jesus, is neither enjoyed nor sought after by them. *Nor yet riches to men of understanding*; mention is afterwards made of a wise man that was poor, Jarchi instances in Job; and, on the other hand, sometimes fools are rich, as Nabal and others; and as for the riches of grace, and treasures of spiritual knowledge, they are not usually given to the wise and prudent, Matt. xi. 25. *Nor yet favour to men of skill*; to men of knowledge and learning, whose genius and abilities might be thought sufficient to recommend them to the favour, affection, and applause of men, and yet oftentimes fail herein; such who have the art of address and persuasion are not always able to ingratiate themselves, and gain the esteem of men: Jarchi interprets it of the favour of God, and instances in Moses; than whom there was not a more knowing and understanding man in Israel, yet could not by his prayer find grace and favour to enter into the land: but the Targum is better; "neither they that know understanding are helped by their knowledge to find favour in the eyes of a king." *But time and chance happeneth to them all*; to the swift and strong, the wise, understanding, and skilful; or to the swift and slow, to the strong and weak, to the wise and unwise; every thing befalls them just as it is ordered by divine Providence; for there is a certain time fixed by the Lord for every event; and whatever seems casual and contingent to man, and which he is ready to call chance, is nothing but decree with God, firm and unalterable; Plato^c has the same expression. The word signifies occurrence^f, or event, which is

^c Μῆτε θεοὶ τυχεῖ καὶ καίτοι; Plato de Leg. l. 4. p. 827.

^f εὐβ occursus, Montanus; sive eventus, Mercerus, Rambachius; occurrent, Broughton.

under the wise direction and order of the providence of God, with respect to whom nothing comes by chance; and it is rendered *occurent*, 1 Kings v. 4. and so it is here, by the Septuagint version, *occurrence* or *event*; and in the Targum, event by their star, which is fate: and Aben Ezra interprets it *המשרכה עליהם*, the *superior ordination*; it is something we meet, or meets us, by divine appointment. Aben Ezra and Kimchi, who are followed by others, think that, from ver. 4 to this, Solomon is speaking in the person of epicures and atheists; which is not likely, since it is not in character for such persons to talk of God's acceptance of men's works; of living joyfully with a wife; of this life being a life of vanity; and of death and the grave; and of diligence in working whilst the present life lasts.

Ver. 12. *For man also knoweth not his time, &c.*] Though it is fixed and settled by the Lord, yet times and seasons are kept in his own power, and not known by men; not the time of his death, nor of any calamity and distress coming upon him, nor the proper season and opportunity of doing himself good, and avoiding evil. *As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare*: as fishes are suddenly taken in a net, unhappy for them, which is at once cast over them, while they are sporting and playing in the water, and catching at the bait; and as birds, being decoyed, are unawares taken in a snare; that is, both of them know not the time of their being caught. *So are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them*: they are no more able to guard against a time of adversity and calamity, and the evil of it, which comes at once upon them, than the poor fishes or silly birds are to avoid the net and snare; and are, like them, at such a time, in the utmost security, indulging themselves in ease and pleasure: so the day of death, and of judgment, will come like a thief in the night; or like a snare upon men, when they think nothing of it, but are giving up themselves to their lusts and pleasures; see 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. Luke xxi. 34, 35. and xvii. 26, 30. for pleasure, as Plato says, is the bait of evils, with which men are caught, as fishes with the hook^a.

Ver. 13. *This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, &c.*] Or, *this also I have seen under the sun, even wisdom*^b: besides those things he had just now observed, he took notice that there was such a thing as wisdom among men; though success did not always attend the wise, the understanding, and skilful; and though there was so much ignorance in men, of their own time, and were so easily and suddenly insnared in an evil time. *And it seemed great unto me*: Solomon had a high value for wisdom, and he still retained the same sentiments of it he had before, in ch. ii. 13. and vii. 11, 12, 19. of which he gives the following instance.

Ver. 14. *There was a little city, and few men within it, &c.*] Which some take to be a piece of history, a real matter of fact; that as the city of Abel, when besieged by Joab, was delivered by the counsel of a wise

woman, 2 Sam. xx. 15—22, so there was a city, which Solomon had knowledge of, which was delivered from the siege of a powerful king, by the wise counsel of a poor wise man: though others think it is only a fiction, fable, or parable; the moral of which is, that political wisdom, even in a poor mean person, is sometimes very useful and serviceable, though it does not meet with its proper merit. Many of the Jewish writers understand the whole allegorically and figuratively; so the Targum, by *the little city*, understands the body of man; by *few men in it*, the little righteousness there is in the heart of man; though, according to the Midrash, Jarchi, and Alshech, they are the members of the body; by *the great king*, the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, which is great to oppress, and besieges the heart to cause it to err; and by *the poor wise man*, the good imagination or affection, which prevails over the other, and subdues it, and delivers the body from hell, and yet not remembered; and so the Midrash, and the ancient Jews in Aben Ezra, though he himself understands it according to its literal sense. Some Christian interpreters explain it to better purpose, concerning the church attacked by Satan, and delivered by Christ, who, notwithstanding, is unkindly and ungratefully used: the church is often compared to a city, it is the city of God, and of which saints are fellow-citizens; it is but a *little* one in comparison of the world, and, in some periods and ages of the world, lesser than in others; it is little and contemptible in the eyes of the world, and the inhabitants of it are mean and low in their own eyes; they are a little flock, Luke xii. 32. and *few* in number that are *within it*: some are only of it, but not in it, or are external members only, which sometimes are many; or outward, not inward, court worshippers; they are few, comparatively, that belong to the invisible church, that are chosen, redeemed, called, and saved, Matt. xx. 16. and vii. 13, 14. Rev. iii. 4. Luke xiii. 23. there are but few able men, especially such as are capable of defending the church against its enemies. *And there came a great king against it*; Satan, the prince of devils and of the posse of them in the air, the god and prince of the world of the ungodly, who works in their hearts, and leads them captive at his will; who may be said to be *great* with respect to the numbers under him, legions of devils, and the whole world that lies in wickedness, or *in* or *under* the wicked one; and on account of the power he exercises, by divine permission, over the bodies and minds of men; and in comparison of the little city, and few men in it, being stronger than they, Matt. xii. 24. John xii. 31. Jer. xxxi. 11. he comes from the region of the air, where his posse are; or from going to and fro in the earth; or from hell, into which he is cast down: he comes by divine permission; in the manner evil spirits do, by temptation; in a hostile way, against the church and people of God, to destroy and devour them, if possible. *And besieged it*; surrounded it on all sides, as the Gog and Magog army under him will encompass the camp of the saints, and the

^a Apud Ciceronem de Senectute, c. 12. Hic ubi saepe occultum visus decurrere piscis ad hamum, Horat. Epist. l. 1. Ep. 8. v. 73, 74.

^b *החכם תחת השמש* hoc etiam vidi sub sole,

nempe sapientiam, Tigurine version; etiam hoc vidi, sapientiam sub sole, Coecrius; etiam hoc vidi, videlicet, sapientiam sub sole, Gejerus.

beloved city, Rev. xx. 9. *And built great bulwarks against it*; such as are called strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4. Satan's first attack was upon the elect of God, in Adam; when he brought them, through sin, under a sentence of condemnation and death, though then they were preserved in Christ; and ever since he has been attacking the church by persecution, in order to take it by storm; and by spreading errors and heresies, such as tend to raze the foundation, and to pull down the superstructure of grace; and by promoting schisms, and laying such large principles of church-communion, as tend to take away ordinances and discipline, the fence of the city; and by throwing in hand-granados of strife and contention, to raise an intestine war among the citizens themselves; and, by various temptations to sin, to gain deserters: these are some of his bulwarks, batteries, and engines.

Ver. 15. *Now there was found in it a poor wise man, &c.*] Christ, who is man, though not a mere man, but God as well as man; who was so in purpose, covenant, and promise, before his incarnation, since truly and really so; and *poor*, as it was foretold he should be, and who became so for the sake of his church and people, Zech. ix. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 9. yet *wise*, even as man, being filled with wisdom, in which he increased, and gave such evident proofs of; on whom the spirit of wisdom rested, and in whom the treasures of it were hid, Luke ii. 40, 46, 47, 52. Isa. xi. 2. Col. ii. 3. he was found here by God his Father, who exalted one chosen out of the people, and made him Head over the church, who is the first-born among many brethren, Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20. *Or and, or but he found in it*¹; that is, Satan, the great king, found him here, contrary to his expectation, and to his great regret. *And he by his wisdom delivered the city*; the church, from all enemies; from Satan and all his principalities and powers; from the world, the men and things of it; from sin, and all its sad consequences; from the law, its curse and condemnation; and from the second death, ruin and destruction: and though this deliverance was both by power and by price, yet also by wisdom; for the deliverance and redemption of the church by Christ is the fruit of infinite wisdom; it is a wise scheme to glorify all the divine perfections; to mortify Satan, and save sinners, and yet condemn sin; see Ephes. i. 7, 8. *Yet no man remembered that same poor man*: before the deliverance wrought, as Aben Ezra and others; it never once entered into their thoughts that he could ever be their deliverer; they never imagined he had a capacity to advise, direct, or assist, in such service, or bring about such an affair: so Christ, when he appeared in the world, the Jews saw nothing that was promising in him; they could not believe that he was sent to be the Saviour and deliverer of them, and therefore rejected him, Isa. liii. 2, 3. John i. 10, 11. *Or, after it*, so the Vulgate Latin version, *no man hereafter remembered, &c.* took no notice of him after he had wrought this deliverance; bestowed no honour upon him, nor returned him thanks for what he had done;

but he continued to live and die in obscurity and meanness: thus Christ, though he ought to be remembered and spoken well of, and the glory of salvation should be ascribed unto him, and thanks should be given him for it; yet there are none comparatively, or but a few, who, like the Samaritan, glorify him on account of it. But if any choose to understand these words of political wisdom, and the use of it, by which sometimes a mean and obscure person does more good than others can by their power and strength, though he meets with no reward for it, I am not averse to it; and which agrees with what follows.

Ver. 16. *Then said I, wisdom is better than strength, &c.*] Wisdom of mind, even in a poor man, is better than strength of body, even of the most potent prince and powerful army, as may be concluded from the above instance; since the poor wise man could do more by his wisdom than the great king with his mighty army; who was obliged to break up the siege, in consequence of the counsel given, or the methods directed to, or taken, by the poor man. *Nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard*: notwithstanding such a flagrant instance and example as this just mentioned; yet men still retain their prejudices against a poor man, and despise his wise counsels and advice, for no other reason but because he is poor, and will not attend to what he says: or, *though the poor man's wisdom, &c.*^k, as Aben Ezra; Solomon drew the above conclusion from that instance; though this is usually the case, that men despise the wisdom of a poor man, and will not listen to his advice, this did not lessen the wise man's opinion of it. The words may be rendered, *even the poor man's wisdom despised, and his words not heard*^l; these are better than outward force and strength, and more serviceable and useful; which the Septuagint version favours: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *how is the poor man's wisdom despised!* &c. as wondering at it that so it should be, when so much profit and advantage arose to the city from it.

Ver. 17. *The words of wise men are heard in quiet, &c.*] That is, by some persons and at some times, though not by all persons and always; or they are to be heard, or should be heard, though they seldom be, even the words of wise men that are poor: these are to be heard quietly and patiently, without any tumult and contradiction; or should be heard, being delivered with a low and submissive voice, without any noise, or blustering pride, or passion, sedately and with great humility, submitting them to the judgment of others; which sense the comparison seems to require. *More than the cry of him that ruleth among fools*; more than the noisy words of a foolish governor; or than the dictates of an imperious man, delivered in a clamorous and blustering way; by which he obtains authority among such fools as himself, who are influenced more by the pomp and noise of words than by the force of true wisdom and reason; but all right judges will give the preference to the former. The Targum interprets it of the silent prayer of the

¹ וְיָצַח בָּהּ & invenit in ea, Mercerus, Drusius, Amama; sed invenit in ea, Rambachius.

^k וְהוֹמָחַת quomvis sapientia, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Amama; etsi, Drusius.

^l Et pauperis sapientiam contemptam, &c. Tigurine version.

wise being received by the Lord, more than the clamour of the wicked.

Ver. 18. *Wisdom is better than weapons of war, &c.*] And does what they cannot do; of which the wisdom of the poor wise man is a full proof, which delivered the city from a potent prince, when weapons of war could not: see ch. vii. 19. *But one sinner destroyeth much good*; his own soul by his sins, and the souls of others by his counsels, example, and conversation, which corrupt good manners; so does one sinner in a family,

neighbourhood, and town; as one poor wise man does much good, one sinner mars much; one Achan in a camp or army, one bad counsellor in a cabinet, one false teacher in the church, will do a great deal of mischief, as well as one debauchee in a town or city. The Vulgate Latin version is, *who sins in one*; offends or sins in one, as in Jam. ii. 10. so the Syriac version, *one sin destroys much good, or many good things*; and to the same purpose the Arabic version, *he that committeth one sin*.

C H A P. X.

THIS chapter treats of the difference between wisdom and folly; and of the preferableness of the one to the other, especially in civil government: folly is compared to a dead or deadly fly; a little of which as much hurts a wise man's reputation, as that does the most precious ointment, ver. 1. A wise man and a fool differ in the situation of their heart; which is in the one on the right hand, in the other on the left, ver. 2. the folly of the latter lies not only in his heart, but betrays itself throughout the whole of his conversation, ver. 3. And it is one part of wisdom in a subject to bear patiently the anger of his prince, and not in a passion and at once leave his service, ver. 4. And, among the follies of princes, this is a great one; to bestow their honours and favours on improper persons, to the neglect of such as are deserving, ver. 5—7. And several proverbial expressions are used, as cautions to a wise man against plotting mischief to others; breaking in upon the constitution and laws of a commonwealth; weakening the strength of the state by any methods, and making discord in it, and carrying things by mere strength and force; when, if wisdom was used, it would direct to proper ways and means, by which things would be managed to the best advantage, ver. 8—10. Then the babbling of fools against a government is exposed, which is like the secret bite of a serpent, ver. 11. and the difference between the words of wise men, which express grace and kindness, and are amiable and acceptable to men; and those of fools, which destroy themselves, begin in folly, and end in mischief; are noisy, and without meaning; do not direct to things most plain and easy, but wearisome and fatiguing to themselves and others, ver. 12—15. Next the unhappiness of a land is observed, when the governors of it are childish, intemperate, slothful, and prodigal; the happiness of a country when it is the reverse, ver. 16—19. and the chapter is concluded with advice not to curse a king, or any great personage; no, not in the most private and secret manner; since, by one means or another, it will be discovered ver. 20.

Ver. 1. *Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, &c.*] Such, as Jarchi observes, are in the winter-season, which are weak and near to death, and get into precious ointment, prepared after the best manner, where they die, and corrupt

and spoil it: or, *flies of death*^m; deadly ones, which have something in their nature poisonous and pernicious; which, when they light upon the most sweet and savoury ointment, give it an ill smell. So doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour; a good name is like precious ointment, valuable and fragrant; sin, which is folly, is like a dead fly; not only light and mean, and base and worthless, but hurtful and pernicious, deadly, and the cause of death; and what may seem little, a peccadillo, or, however, one single act of sin, may injure the character of a wise and honourable man, and greatly expose him to shame and contempt, and cause him to stink in the nostrils of men, Gen. xxxvi. 20. and to be reproached by men, and religion and government to be reproached for his sake. Thus the affair of Bath-sheba and Uriah, what a slur did it bring on the character of David, so famous for wisdom and honour, for religion and piety? and the idolatry of Solomon, the wisest of men; Jehoshaphat, that good king, entering into affinity with Ahab; and pious Jeshiah going to war with the king of Egypt, contrary to the word of the Lord; with many other instances. This teaches how careful men eminent for gifts and grace should be of their words and actions; since the least thing amiss in them is easily discerned, and soon taken notice of, as the least speck in a diamond, or spot in fine linen, clean and white; and there are wicked and envious persons enough watching for their halting, glad to have an occasion against them, and improve every thing to the uttermost: this is a caution to wise magistrates, honourable ministers of the word, and eminent professors more especially. The Targum is, "evil concupiscence, which dwells at the gates of the heart, is as a fly, and is the cause of death in the world; and corrupts a good name, which was before like to anointing oil, perfumed with spices:" and to the same purpose the Midrash. One of the names of Satan is Beelzebub, the lord of a fly; who, by his temptations, solicits to sin and folly, which produce the effect here mentioned, and therefore to be shunned as a deadly fly in the ointment, Matt. xii. 24. Gussetiusⁿ renders it, "that which is precious and worthy of honour proceeds from wisdom; and folly comes from glory, worldly glory, in a little time."

Ver. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand, &c.*]

^m מות ובוני מות musca mortis, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Amama, Cuccelius, Rambachius.

ⁿ Ebr. Comment. p. 344.

This is not designed to express the direct position and situation of the heart of man, wise or foolish, which is the same in both; and which, according to anatomists, is in the middle of the body, inclining to the left side; but the understanding and wisdom of men, as Aben Ezra observes; which, with a wise man, is ready at hand to direct and assist him in any affair; and which, under the influence of it, he goes about with great readiness and dexterity, and performs it with great ease and facility, without sinister ends and selfish views; it inclines him to pursue the true way to honour, heaven, and happiness, which lies to the right; to seek things that are above, at the right hand of God; and, in all, his honour and glory. *But a fool's heart is at his left*; he is at a loss for wisdom and understanding to direct him, when he has an affair of any moment upon his hand; which he goes about in an awkward manner, as left-handed persons do, and has sinister ends in what he does; and he is to every good work reprobate and unfit, and seeks earth and earthly things, which lie to the left, and in all himself. The Targum is, "the heart of a wise man is to get the law, which was given by the right hand of the Lord; and the heart of a fool to get the goods of gold and silver;" so Jarchi, "his wisdom is ready to incline him (the wise man) to the right-hand way for his good; but the heart of a fool to pervert him from it." The ancients used to call things wise and prudent the right hand, and things foolish the left hand.

Ver. 3. *Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, &c.*] The king's highway, the common road; as he passeth along the streets, going to any place, or about any business: *his wisdom faileth him; or his heart*; he appears by his gait, his manner of walking, to want a heart, to be a fool; walking with a froward mouth, winking with his eyes, speaking with his feet, and teaching with his fingers; all which shews the frowardness and folly of his heart, Prov. vi. 12—14. or he discovers it throughout his conversation, in all the actions of it, in whatsoever business he is concerned, and in all the affairs of life. The Targum is, "when he walketh in a perplexed way;" then his wisdom fails him; he does not know which way to take, whether to the right or left: this can never be understood of the highway of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err, Isa. xxxv. 8. *And he saith to every one that he is a fool*; his folly is manifest to all; he betrays it, by his words and actions, to every man he has to do with; his sins and transgressions, which are his folly, he hides not, they are evident to all; and, as the Targum expresses it, "all say he is a fool;" though indeed he himself says this of every other man, that he is a fool; for, according to the Vulgate Latin version, he, being a fool himself, thinks every body else is so.

Ver. 4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, &c.*] The wrath of the civil magistrate, the chief ruler of the land, the sovereign prince or king, to whom men are and should be subject: if his wrath on any occasion breaks out in a furious manner, and, like a storm

and tempest, is very blustering and threatening: *leave not thy place*; at court; thine office under the prince, do not throw it up in a passion, and quit his service upon it; and much less forget thy duty and allegiance to him, and go into disloyalty and rebellion; see ch. viii. 3. *For yielding pacifieth great offences*; bearing his anger patiently, submitting to his displeasure quietly, making no returns, or at least giving soft answers, and behaving in a modest and humble manner; in time his wrath will subside, and he will be pacified, and forgive the offences committed; or be convinced that there were none, or however not so great as to require such resentment; see Prov. xv. 1. and xxv. 15. The Targum is, "if a spirit of evil concupiscence rules over thee; thy good place, in which thou wert used to stand, leave not;" some understand this of a man's having a spirit of rule and government coming upon him, or of his being advanced to power and authority, that then he should not forget the low estate in which he had been. Jarchi interprets it of the spirit of the governor of the world, strictly inquiring into the actions of men; and healing their sins by chastisements, which cause them to leave them.

Ver. 5. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, &c.*] Which Solomon had observed in the course of his life, practised in some kingdoms and by some princes on earth, under the sun; for there is nothing of the like kind, as after mentioned, done in heaven, above the sun. *As an error which proceedeth from the ruler*; from the supreme ruler of a nation, the king of it; and it is not only as an error, or like one, a seeming one; but it is a real error, bestowing places of honour and profit on undeserving persons: which error proceeds from ignorance of the persons; or from affection to them, and from friendship cultivated with them in the younger time of life, being educated with them; or through the misrepresentation and imposition of those about him, who have ends to serve by their promotion; or through his own lusts and passions, which these men indulge him in. It may be understood of God, the supreme ruler, who suffers such things to be; and which may seem to some an error in providence, though it is not: but the other sense is best.

Ver. 6. *Folly is set in great dignity, &c.*] Or in great heights; in high places of honour and trust: even foolish and wicked men; men of poor extraction, of low life, and of mean abilities and capacities; and, which is worse, men vile and vicious, as Doeg the Edomite, Haman the Amalekite, and others. *And the rich sit in low places*; men not only of fortune and estates, and above doing mean and little actions, and so more fit for such high places; but men rich in wisdom and knowledge, of large capacities and of great endowments of mind, and so abundantly qualified for posts in the administration of government; and, above all, men rich in grace, fearing God, and hating covetousness, as rulers ought to be, Exod. xviii. 21. and yet these sometimes are neglected, live in obscurity, who might otherwise be very useful in public life. The Targum interprets this and the following

* Suidas in voce Δεψία.

† לכוֹ cor ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

‡ בְּרִמּוֹת רְבִיבִים בְּרִמּוֹתֵי מֶטְעָנוֹס, Sept in celsitudinibus amplis,

Piscator, Amama, Gejerna; in sublinitatibus amplis, Coccejus; in altitudinibus magnis, Rambachius; in great height, Broughton.

verse of the Israelites in exile and poverty among the Gentiles for their sins; so Jarchi.

Ver. 7. *I have seen servants upon horses, &c.*] Which being scarce in Judea, were only rode upon by princes and great personages, or such as were in affluent circumstances; and therefore it was an unusual and disagreeable sight to see servants upon them, which was a token of their being advanced upon the ruin and destruction of their masters; a reigning servant is not only uncomely, but one of the things by which the earth is disquieted, and it cannot bear, Prov. xxx. 21, 22. the Parthians and Persians distinguished their nobles and the vulgar, freemen and servants, by this; the servants went on foot, and the freemen rode on horses. *And princes walking as servants upon the earth;* degraded from their honour; banished from their thrones and palaces, or obliged to leave them, and reduced to the lowest state and condition: so David, when his son rebelled against him, and he was forced to flee from him, and walk on foot, 2 Sam. xv. 30. Alshech thinks it may be a prophecy of the captivity of Israel, when they walked as servants on the earth, and the Gentiles rode on horses.

Ver. 8. *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it, &c.*] This and the three following clauses are proverbial expressions, teaching men to be wise and cautious, lest by their conduct they bring mischief upon themselves; as it often is, the one that digs a pit for another, falls into it himself, as the wise man's father before him had observed, Psal. vii. 15, 16. and ix. 15, 16. as kings that lay snares for their people, and subjects that plot against their sovereign; or courtiers that form schemes for the ruin of those that are in their way; or any man that devises mischief against another, frequently so it is, that the same befalls them; as Haman, who prepared a gallows for Mordecai, was hanged on it himself. *And whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him;* which often lies hid in fences, in old walls, and rotten hedges*, A mos v. 19. Acts xxviii. 3. so he that breaks down the hedges and fences of kingdoms and commonwealths, and breaks through the fundamental laws of a civil constitution, and especially that transgresses the laws of God, moral or civil, may expect to smart for it. Jarchi interprets this hedge of the sayings of their wise men, which those that transgress shall suffer death by the hand of heaven: but it would be much better to apply it to the doctrines contained in the word of God, which are a hedge and fence to the church of God, and whoever transgress them will suffer for it; see 2 John 8, 9. The Targum, by the *serpent*, understands an ungodly king, who bites like a serpent, into whose hands such transgressors shall be delivered: and some have thought of the old serpent the devil, as Alshech, who deceived Adam and Eve.

Ver. 9. *Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith, &c.*] That carries them from the quarry, where they are dug; or takes them from a heap, where they lie; or that attempts to pull them out of a building, where they are put; or removes them from places, where they are set as boundaries and landmarks; all which is

troublesome, and by which men get hurt; the stones fall upon them, or are too heavy for them, or they do what they should not do, and so bring themselves into trouble; as do all such persons who are for removing the boundaries of commonwealths and communities, and for changing laws, and altering constitutions. *And he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby;* of cutting himself: so he that soweth discord among brethren, that makes divisions in families, neighbourhoods, kingdoms, and churches; see Prov. vi. 16, 19. Rom. xvi. 18. Jarchi renders it, *shall be warmed or heated*, according to the sense of the word, as he thinks, in 1 Kings i. 2. though he understands it of being profited by studying in the law and the commandments; of which he interprets the clause; and Ben Melech observes, that the word so signifies in the Arabic language; and Mr. Broughton renders it, *shall be heated thereby*. The Targum paraphrases it, "shall be burnt with fire, by the hand of the Angel of the "Lord:" or, however, he may be overheated and do himself hurt, as men, that kindle the flame of contention and strife, often do.

Ver. 10. *If the iron be blunt, &c.*] With which a man cleaves wood: the axe, made of iron: *and he do not whet the edge;* with some proper instrument to make it sharper, that it may cut the more easily. *Then must he put to more strength;* he must give a greater blow, strike the harder, and use more force; and yet it may not be sufficient, or it may be to no purpose, and he himself may be in the greater danger of being hurt; as such are who push things with all their might and main, without judgment and discretion. *But wisdom is profitable to direct;* this is the excellency of wisdom, that it puts a man in the right way of doing things, and of doing them right; it directs him to take the best methods, and pursue the best ways and means of doing things, both for his own good and the good of others; and so it is better than strength, ch. ix. 16, 18.

Ver. 11. *Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, &c.*] See Jer. viii. 17. Or rather, *without a whisper*; without hissing, or any noise, giving no warning at all: so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *in silence*; some serpents bite, others sting, some both; see Prov. xxiii. 32. some hiss, others not, as here. *And a babbler is no better;* a whisperer, a back-biter, a busy tattling body, that goes from house to house, and, in a private manner, speaks evil of civil governments, of ministers of the word, and of other persons; and, in a secret way, defames men, and detracts from their characters: such an one is like a venomous viper, a poisonous serpent or adder; and there is no more guarding against him than against such a creature that bites secretly.

Ver. 12. *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, &c.* Or *grace*. He speaks kind and good things in favour of the characters of men, and not as the babbling detractor: he speaks well of civil magistrates and rulers in the state; of the ministers of the word in the church; and of all his fellow-creatures, as

* Justin. e Trogo, l. 41. c. 3. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 19.
* Nicander apud Bochart. Hierozoi. par. 1. l. 1. c. 4. col. 26.

* בלא לחש absque susurro, Pagninus; absque sibilo, Tigurinae version.

* ןן gratia, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Rambachius.

far as can with truth be said: and a truly good and gracious man, who is Solomon's wise man, in opposition to a fool and wicked man; his discourse will run upon the grace of God, upon the doctrines of grace, and upon the experience of the truth of grace on his heart: upon the grace of God the Father, in loving and choosing men; in contriving their salvation; in making a covenant of grace with them in Christ; in sending him to die for them, and in accepting his satisfaction and righteousness for them: and on the grace of the Son, in becoming their surety; assuming their nature, dying in their room and stead, interceding for them, taking care of them, and supplying them with grace out of his fulness: and on the grace of the Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification; working in them faith, hope, and love; applying precious promises to them, and sealing them up to the day of redemption: of these things they speak often one to another, and cannot but talk of the things they have felt and seen: and such words and discourses are gracious, graceful, and grateful to truly pious souls, and minister grace unto them; and are also well-pleasing and acceptable to God and Christ, as well as gain them favour among men; see Prov. xxii. 11. Ephes. iv. 29. *But the lips of a fool will swallow up himself*; his words are not only disagreeable and displeasing to others, but bring ruin upon himself; by talking too freely of rulers and others, he brings himself into trouble, and plunges himself into difficulties, out of which he cannot easily get; yea, is swallowed up in them, and destroyed. Or, *his lips swallow up him*”; the wise man, whose words are gracious; and, by his calumny and detraction, his deceit and lies, brings him into disgrace and danger: or, *swallows it up, or that*”; the grace of the wise man, or his gracious words; and hinders the edification of others by them, and the good effects of them. Though the first sense seems best.

Ver. 13. *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, &c.*] As soon as ever he opens his mouth, he betrays his folly; the first word he speaks is a foolish one; or it is from the abundant folly in his heart that he speaks, which is the source and spring of all his foolish talk. *And the end of his talk is mischievous madness*; to himself and others; as he goes on, he appears more and more foolish, and yet more confident of his own wisdom; and is resolutely set on having his own way and will; grows warm, and is violently hot, to have his own words regarded; and, if contradicted, is like a madman, scattering arrows, firebrands, and death; his talk from first to last is a circle of folly; and, though it begins with something weak, and may seem innocent, yet it ends and issues in wickedness and madness, in rage and wrath, in oaths and curses.

Ver. 14. *A fool also is full of words, &c.*] Or, *multiplies words* 7. Is very talkative, says the same thing over and over again; uses an abundance of waste words, that have no meaning in them; utters every thing that comes uppermost, without any order or judgment; affects to talk on every subject, whether he knows any thing of it or no; and will engross all the

conversation to himself, though of all in company the most unfit for it. *A man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him who can tell him?* what the fool is talking of; what is the drift of his discourse; or where it will end, and what he will bring it to, it is so noisy, confused, and incoherent: or no man can tell future things, or what will come to pass; nor can any man inform another of future events; and yet a fool boasts and brags of what he shall do, and what he shall have, as if he was master of futurity, and knew for certain what would come to pass, which the wisest of men do not.

Ver. 15. *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, &c.*] The labour of fools, both in speaking and doing, weary those who have any concern with them, and themselves likewise, since all their labour is vain and fruitless. *Because he knoweth not how to go to the city*; to any city, the road to which is usually broad, and plain and easy to be found, and yet cannot be found by the foolish man; shewing, that he that talks of abstruse things, things too high and wonderful for him, which he affects to know, must needs be a stranger to them, since things the most easy to be understood he is ignorant of, and wears himself to find; or he does not know how to behave himself in a city, among citizens, in a civil and polite manner. The Targum is, “he learns not to go to the city, where wise men dwell, to learn instruction from it.” Some interpret it of the city of Jerusalem, where were the temple, sanhedrim, synagogues, schools, &c. but it may be better applied to the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, which fools or wicked men know not the way unto, nor do they seek after it; see Psal. cvii. 7. Matt. vii. 13, 14. so Alshech interprets it of heaven.

Ver. 16. *Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, &c.*] Not so much in age; though it is sometimes an unhappiness to a nation to be governed by a minor, especially if the young king has not good tutors, guardians, ministers, and counsellors, about him; but, if otherwise, a nation may be very happy under a minority, or the government of a young prince; such were Solomon, Joash, Uzziah, Josiah, and our Edward the VIth: but it rather respects one that is a child in understanding and judgment, in manners and conduct; that minds his pleasures, as children their play; is fickle and changeable, passionate and self-willed, unskilful in government, and yet will not be advised. The Targum applies this to the land of Israel, and instances in wicked Jeroboam, who made the morning-sacrifice to cease; see Isa. iii. 12. From considering the bad effects of folly in men in general, in private persons and in subjects, the wise man proceeds to observe the ill consequences of it to a nation, in kings and princes, in civil magistrates: Jerom or Bede interprets this allegorically; *Woe to the land whose king is the devil, who is always desirous of new things, 2 Cor. iv. 4. And thy princes eat in the morning*; as soon as they are up, children-like; and not only eat, which may be convenient and lawful to do; but eat to excess, in a riotous and intemperate manner, and so unfit them-

7 דגלית עומ, Montanus; absorbent eum, Piscator, Rambachius.

8 Illan, Munster, Cocceius; quam labia stulti velut absorbendo auferant, Tigurine versio.

7 ירבה ל multiplicabit, Pagninus, Montanus; multiplicat, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Awama, Gejerus, Rambachius, Cocceius.

selves for any service all the day: the morning is particularly observed, because the fittest time for consultation about the affairs of government; and was the usual time of sitting in judgment and trying causes, Jer. xxi. 12, and also for acts of religion and devotion. And so the Targum, "and thy princes eat bread before they offer the daily morning sacrifice." Sad is the case of a nation, when not only their king is a minor, or a foolish one; but when his tutors and guardians, or his ministers of state and counsellors, give up themselves to sensual pleasures, and neglect public affairs; and, instead of being in the council-chamber, or in a court of judicature, or at their early devotions, are indulging themselves in riotous eating and drinking.

Ver. 17. *Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, &c.*] Or heroes², called *Ihorim* in the Hebrew, which signifies *white*; either from the white garment they wore, or rather from the purity and ingenuity of their minds and manners; being illustrious persons, not only by birth and education, but in their lives and actions. Now a land is happy when it is governed by a king that is not only descended from a race of heroes and illustrious men, and has a princely and liberal education; but that imitates his ancestors, and treads in their steps, and is famous himself for wisdom, virtue, and real piety, in which true nobility consists; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *whose king is noble*; who is of an ingenuous mind, has princely virtues and qualifications; who is wise and prudent, skilful in the affairs of government, and assiduous and industrious therein; for as, on the one hand, kings may, as they commonly do, descend from illustrious progenitors, and yet be base and wicked, ignoble and infamous, in their administration; and, on the other hand, persons may be raised from a low estate to royal dignity, as David and others, and yet behave with great prudence and ingenuity. The Targum applies this to the land of Israel also, and instances in Hezekiah, a man mighty in the law. *And thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness*; that is, eat their meals at proper times, and that after they have been at business; to refresh nature, and recruit their strength, that they may be fit for further service; and do not indulge themselves, and spend their time, in rioting and drunkenness; which would render them very unfit for public business, to sit in council, or in any court of judicature: according to the Targum, the time was four o'clock, *i. e.* ten o'clock in the morning. Or, *not unto drinking or drunkenness*³; they do not eat so as to cause an appetite, or eager desire for drinking to excess: or, *not with drinking*⁴; their eating is not attended with excessive drinking; they eat and drink moderately. The Egyptians had a law, which fixed such a measure of wine to be allowed their kings daily, and no more⁵; and it was Solon's law, given to the Athenians, that if a

prince was found drunk, death was his punishment⁶; and, with the Indians, if a woman killed a drunken king, her reward was to marry his successor⁷: all which shew how odious drunkenness was with the Heathens, and especially in their kings and princes; see Prov. xxxi. 4, 5. So Plato observes⁸, that "drunkenness ought to be abstained from; and rather it should be allowed to any than to a keeper, (*i. e.* of a city and its laws, a civil magistrate,) for it would be ridiculous for a keeper to need a keeper." Jerom, as before observed, interprets this figuratively, *blessed is the land, of the church*; whose King is Christ, the son of nobles, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and whose princes are the apostles, who seek not pleasure in this world, but shall eat in the world to come.

Ver. 18. *By much slothfulness the building decayeth, &c.*] Or, *by slothfulness*⁹. The word is in the dual number, and so may signify the slothfulness of the hands, as Aben Ezra, of both hands, and of both feet; or the various kinds of slothfulness, as the Arabic version, slothfulness both of body and mind; or of all sorts of persons, superiors and inferiors, princes and subjects; and with respect to all things present and future: and, as through slothfulness a material building decays; or a *beam*, as the word signifies, the raftering of a house, the roof, which consists of rafters and beams joined together; when the tiling is decayed by winds and rains, or any breaches made in the rafters, and no care taken to repair, the whole falls in, and the house is in ruins: so figurative buildings, families, churches, and kingdoms, come to nothing, through the sluggishness of masters of families, ministers of the word, and civil magistrates; to the latter of which more especially this is to be applied, who give up themselves to luxury and sloth. *And, through idleness of the hands, the house droppeth through*; or, *through the letting or hanging down of the hands*¹⁰; the remissness of them, as is to be observed in idle persons, who will not lift them up to work; particularly to repair a breach in a house, by means of which the rain drops through it, and makes it uncomfortable and unsafe being in it; and, in process of time, that itself drops to the ground: and this expresses the same thing, how, through the neglect of the civil magistrate, a commonwealth comes to nothing; or, however, the members of it become wretched and miserable.

Ver. 19. *A feast is made for laughter, &c.*] Or, *who make bread for laughter*¹¹. Not bakers, who make bread for common use, and for all sorts of persons, sorrowful ones as others; but luxurious men, particularly such princes as are before described; they *make bread*, that is, a feast, as the phrase is used, Dan. v. 1. not for mere refreshment, but to promote mirth and gaiety to an excessive degree; being attended with rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, with revelings and dancing. *And wine maketh merry*; or, *and*

² חַיִּים heroum, Montanus.

³ בְּשֵׂתִי non autem ad comotationem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton.

⁴ Non cum ingurgitatione, Cocceius; non eum comotatione, Schmidt.

⁵ Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. in principio. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genit. Diar. l. 3. c. 11.

⁶ Laert. Vit. Solon. p. 38.

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⁶ Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 438.

⁷ De Republic. l. 3. p. 621.

⁸ בְּעֵצְלֵיתִי in pigritiis, Montanus; per duplicem pigritiam, Tigurine version; pigritia amborum, Junius & Tremellius.

⁹ בְּשֵׂפֹלוֹת per remissionem, Tigurine version; demissione, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Cocceius, Rambachius.

¹⁰ לֶחֶם לְשִׂוּק עֵשִׂים ad risum facientes panem, Montanus; faciunt panem, Paginus, Mercerus, Piscator.

they prepare wine^k; which is provided in plenty at feasts; and which is sometimes put for a feast itself, and called a banquet of wine, Esth. vii. 2. which wine makes merry, and men drink of it till they become drunk with it, at such profuse feasts: or, *which maketh life cheerful*^l; as it does, when moderately used: or, *cheers the living*: so Aben Ezra. *But money answereth all things*; is in the room of all things, and by it men obtain every thing they want and wish for; it answers the requests of all, and supplies them with what they stand in need of, or can desire: particularly such expensive feasts, and sumptuous entertainments, are made by means of money; and, in this luxurious way, the coffers of princes are drained, and they are obliged to raise new levies, and impose new taxes upon their subjects, to the oppression of them. Or else the sense may be, that princes should consider, and not be so profuse in their manner of living, but be more frugal and careful of the public money, and lay it up against a time of need; since it is that that answers all things, is the sinew of war when that arises, and will procure men and arms, to secure and protect them from their enemies, and obtain peace and safety for them and their subjects, which otherwise they cannot expect.

Ver. 20. *Curse not the king; no, not in thy thought, &c.*] Though he is a child, and unskilful in government, gives himself to his passions and pleasures, and neglects the affairs of the kingdom; yet be so far from rebelling against him, and doing him any injury, or speaking ill of him, as not even to wish him any ill; or, within thine own breast, imprecate any evil upon him, but rather pray for him, wish him well, and do every thing to promote the welfare of his person and government, and this both for the Lord's sake, and for conscience-sake; and therefore curse him not *in thy conscience*^m, as some render it. Jarchi interprets this of God, the King of the world; see Job ii. 9. and Jerom

of Christ; who should not be blasphemed, lest the angels, that go about the earth, should carry it to heaven. *And curse not the rich in thy bedchamber*; subordinate rulers and magistrates, the king's ministers and counsellors, who are commonly rich; even those luxurious princes, before described, who give up themselves to eating and drinking, and spend the public money in profuse feasts and entertainments: yet a man should be careful how he speaks against them; and not only be cautious of what he says about them, in a vilifying way, in companies and clubs, where disaffected persons speak their minds freely; but even in his own house, where his servants may hear him; nay, even in his bedchamber, where only his wife and children are. *For a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter*; an hyperbolic expression; shewing that, by some strange and unthought-of ways and means, treason, though so very secret, should be brought to the knowledge of the king and his ministers; as if a bird, sitting at the window, or flying by at the same time, should hear and carry it to them: sometimes this is by means of spies and informers, that kings have in all places, to bring them news of the behaviour and sentiments of men, of whom such understand the passage; or by means of such, that bear an ill will to them, or are faithful subjects to the king. With the Persians were certain officers, called the king's ears, and the emperor's eyes; by means of whom the king was believed to be a god, since, by the ears and eyes of others, through those spies, he knew all that was done everywhereⁿ. Some interpret it of angels, good or bad: Jarchi, of the soul of man, which at last flies to heaven, which he thinks is the bird of the air; and of an angel that is associated to him, his guardian angel; meant, as he supposes, by that which hath wings, or *the master of wings*^o.

C H A P. XI.

THIS chapter begins with an exhortation to liberality to the poor, enforced by several reasons and arguments, and the objections to it removed; and the whole illustrated by various similes, ver. 1—6. and then it is observed, that a life attended with outward prosperity and inward peace, and spent in doing good, is very delightful, and very desirable it is to have it continued; yet it should be remembered this will not be always, that many days of darkness in the grave will come; and after all the whole of a man's life is vanity, as is often inculcated, ver. 7, 8. and the chapter is closed with an ironical address to young men, designed to shew them the folly and danger of sinful courses, to reform them from them, and to put them in mind of a future judgment, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters, &c.*] As the wise man had often suggested that nothing was better for a man than to enjoy the good of his labour

himself, he here advises to let others, the poor, have a share with him; and as he had directed in the preceding chapter how men should behave towards their superiors, he here instructs them what notice they should take of their inferiors; and as he had cautioned against luxury and intemperance, he here guards against tenacity and covetousness, and exhorts to beneficence and liberality: that which is to be given is *bread*, which is put for all the necessaries of life, food and raiment; or money that answers all things, what may be a supply of wants, a support of persons in distress; what is useful, profitable, and beneficial; not stones or scorpions, or what will be useless or hurtful: and it must be *thy bread*, a man's own; not independent of God who gives it him; but not another's, what he owes another, or has fraudulently obtained; but what he has got by his own labour, or he is through divine Providence in lawful possession of:

^k ויין & vinum, repete, parant, Piscator.

^l וישמח ויחיי & vitam exhilaret, Tigurine version; exhilarare olet vitam, Mercurus; quod exhilarare debet vitam, so some in Rambachius.

^m ואלוהים יבשרך, Sept. in conscientia tua, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Cocceus, Gejerus.

ⁿ Apuleius de Mundo.

^o ואלוהים יבשרך, dominus alarum, Piscator.

hence alms in the Hebrew language is called *righteousness*: and it must be such bread as is convenient and fit for a man himself, such as he himself and his family eat of: and this he must cast, it must be a man's own act, and a voluntary one; his bread must not be taken and forced from him; it must be given freely, and in such a manner as not to be expected again; and bountifully and plentifully, as a man casts seed into the earth: but here it is said to be *upon the waters*: bread is to be given to such as are in distress and affliction, that have waters of a full cup wrung out unto them, whose faces are watered with tears, and foul with weeping, from whom nothing is to be expected again, who can make no return; so that what is given them seems to be cast away and lost, like what is thrown into a river, or into the midst of the sea; and even it is to be given to such who prove ungrateful and unthankful, and on whom no mark or impression of the kindness is made and left, no more than upon water; yea, it is to be given to strangers never seen before nor after, like gliding water; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *passing waters*: or else to such who may be compared to well-watered ground, or *moist ground*, as Mr. Broughton renders it; where the seed cast will grow up again, and bring forth fruit, and redound to the advantage of the sower, as what is given to the poor does; they are a good soil to sow upon, especially Christ's poor, who are partakers of his living water, grace; see Isa. xxxii. 20. though it may be the multitude of persons to whom alms is to be given are here intended, which are sometimes signified by waters, Rev. xvii. 15. as the next verse seems to explain it. The Targum is, "reach out the bread of thy sustenance to the poor that go in ships upon the face of the water;" and some think the speech is borrowed from navigation, and is an allusion to merchants who send their goods beyond sea, and have a large return for them. For thou shalt find it after many days; not the identical bread itself, but the fruit and reward of such beneficence; which they shall have unexpectedly, or after long waiting, as the husbandman for his seed; it suggests that such persons should live long, as liberal persons oftentimes do, and increase in their worldly substance; and if they should not live to reap the advantage of their liberality, yet their posterity will, as the seed of Jonathan did for the kindness he shewed to David: or, however, if they find it not again in temporal things, yet in spirituals; and shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, and to all eternity. So the Targum, "for after the time of many days, then thou shalt find the reward of it in this world (so it is in the king's Bible), and in the world to come;" see Luke xii. 12, 13, 14. Jarchi instances in Jethro. Noldius^p renders it *within many days*, even before many days are at an end; for seed sown by waters in hot climates soon sprung up, and produced fruit; see Dan. xi. 20.

Ver. 2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, &c.] Or, a *part*^q; not the whole of a man's substance, for he must have to support himself and his family; he that does not take care of that is worse than an infidel; a

man may bestow all his goods on the poor, and not have charity; though no doubt there was true charity, or love, in the poor widow that threw in all her substance into the treasury, which was an extraordinary case, 1 Tim. v. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Mark xii. 44. but a man is to give of such things that he has, ordinarily, and not all that he has, Luke xi. 41. he is to give according to his ability, and what he can spare from the service of himself and family; and this is to be distributed, and given in parts to the poor, according to their necessities; not all to one, but something to every one, *to seven, and also to eight*: if seven persons apply, give them every one a part; and, if an eighth person comes, send him not away empty; give to every one that asketh, Luke vi. 30. compare with this phrase Mic. v. 5. Some think this respects time, so Aben Ezra; that a man should give constantly and continually, should be daily giving, all the seven days of the week, and when the eighth day comes, or the week begins again, go on in the same course. The Targum is, "put a good part of seed in thy field in Tisri (the seventh month), and do not cease from sowing even in Casleu," the eighth month. For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth; what calamities shall come upon it, which may sweep away all a man's substance; it may be destroyed by fire, or washed away by a deluge of water, or plundered by an enemy; or, however, the day of death may quickly come, as it certainly shall, and then it will be no longer in a man's power to do good with what he has. Moreover, the arguments which covetous men use against liberality, the wise man uses for it; they argue that bad times may come, and they may sustain great losses; or have a greater charge upon them, a growing family; or they may live to old age, and want it themselves: be it so, these are reasons why they should give liberally while they can; that when these things they fear shall come upon them, they may be relieved and supplied by others; for those that shew mercy shall find mercy; and this is the way to make themselves friends in a time of need, and against it; see Luke xvi. 9.

Ver. 3. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth, &c.] They do not retain it; sad would it be for the earth if they did; but they let it down softly and gently, in plentiful showers upon the several parts of the earth without distinction, by which it is refreshed, and made fruitful; nor are they losers by it, for they draw up great quantities again out of the ocean, and so constantly answer the ends for which they are appointed. And so rich men, who are full of the good things of this world, should not keep them to themselves, and for their own use only; but should consider they are stewards under God, and for others, and should be like the full clouds, empty themselves; and give to those who want of what God has given them, freely and cheerfully, bountifully and plentifully, and that without respect of persons, imitating their God and Creator, who sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, Matt. v. 45. and such in the issue are no losers, but gainers; they fill again as fast as they empty.

^p Ebr. Concord. Partic. p. 155. No. 704.

^q חלק partem, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be; where the seed falls, and it grows up into a plant, and to a tree, there it continues, whether to the north or to the south; and so accordingly brings forth fruit, and such as it is men partake of it; to which purpose Jarchi, and who applies it to the disciple of a wise man, who is profitable in the place where he is, not only in life, but after death: or where the fruit of a tree fall, there they are, so Aben Ezra reads the last clause in the plural number; that is, there are persons enough to gather the fruit; and so where a rich man is, there are poor enough about him to partake of his bounty: or as when a tree is cut down, let it fall where it will, there it abides, and is no more fruitful; so when a man is cut off by death, as he was then, so he remains; if a gracious and good man, and has done good, he is like a tree that falls to the south, he enters into the paradise of God, the joys of heaven; and if not a good man, and has not done good, he is like a tree that falls to the north, he goes into a state of darkness, misery, and distress; see Rev. xxii. 11, 14, 15. or however, be this as it will, he is no more useful in this world; and therefore it becomes men to do all the good they can in health and life, for there is none to be done in the grave where they are going: or else the sense is, that as when a tree falls, whether it be to the south or to the north, it matters not to the owner, there it lies, and is of the same advantage to him; so an act of beneficence, let it be done to what object soever, a worthy or an unworthy one, yet being done with a view to the glory of God and the good of men, it shall not lose its reward: and so this is an answer to the objection of some against giving, because they do not know whether the object proposed is deserving: though some think the same thing is intended by these metaphorical expressions, as is suggested in the latter part of the preceding verse, that evils or calamities may come upon men like heavy showers of rain, which wash away things; or like storms and tempests of rain, thunder and lightning, which break down trees, and cause them to fall to the north or to the south; and thus in like manner by one judgment or another men may be stripped of all their substance, and therefore it is right to make use of it while they have it.

Ver. 4. *He that observeth the wind shall not sow, &c.* Who before he sows his seed is careful to observe where the wind is, from what corner it blows, and forbears sowing until it is down or changes, lest it should be troublesome unto him in sowing, or blow away his seed, and waits for a better season; such a man may lose his seed-time and never sow at all, and his corn in his barn may be devoured by vermin, or be destroyed by one accident or another, and so he may lose both his seed and his crop. *And he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap;* which are uncertain signs of weather; and if a man gives heed to them, and puts off his sowing from time to time, for the sake of better weather, as he may never sow, so it is impossible that he should reap; and if he sows, and when his corn is ripe and

forbears to reap because of the clouds, lest his grain should be wet, may never reap at all: and so it is with respect to liberality; if a man will raise difficulties, and make objections, and attend unto them; if he puts off giving till such an affliction is removed from him and his family, or that is grown up; or such an estate is obtained, or he has got to such a pitch of riches, or till more proper and deserving objects present, with twenty things more of the like kind; if he defers giving on such accounts, or through fear of want, which may possess his mind for various reasons, he may never give nor get, yet, never do any good work; for, if nothing is done till all difficulties are removed, no good thing will ever be done.

Ver. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, &c.* If indeed a man could foresee and be assured of seasonable weather for sowing and reaping, or a proper opportunity for doing good, all circumstances agreeing, it would be right to wait for it, and take it; but as these things are not in our power, nor within the compass of our knowledge, we should take the first opportunity of doing good, and leave the issue to divine Providence: as in many things in nature we are and should be content to be ignorant of them, and leave them with God, who brings them about by his secret power and providence: as, for instance, we know not the way of the spirit, or of the wind¹, as some render it; from whence it comes and whither it goes, where and when it will subside, or what wind will blow next; or of the spirit or soul of man, how it enters into the body. So the Targum, "how the spirit of the breath of life goes into the body of an infant:" whether it is by traduction, as some, which is not likely; or by transfusion, or by creation out of nothing, or by formation out of something pre-existent, and by an immediate infusion of it: or, *what is the way of the breath;* of the breath of a child in the womb, whether it breathes or not; if it does, how? if not, how does it live? or what is the way of the soul out of the body, how it goes out of it when the body dies. Nor *how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with-child;* or is full, pregnant, big with-child: or *in the womb that is full*²; full of liquids, and yet bones are separated from them, grow out of them, and in them, and are hardened; all which how it should be is unknown: bones are mentioned because they are the more solid and substantial parts of the body, the basis and strength of it; and because it may seem more difficult how any part of the seed should harden into them, whilst other parts are converted into skin and flesh. *Even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all;* the Targum adds, in wisdom; as men are ignorant of many of the works of nature, so of those of Providence, especially which are future; as whether men shall be rich or poor, have days of prosperity or adversity; what their latter end will be, whether they shall not stand in need of the assistance of others, it may be of them or theirs to whom they now give; or what will be the issue of present acts of beneficence and liberality; these, with many other

¹ הַרוּחַ venti, Paginuis, Montanus, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Mercerus, Amama, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton, and the Syriac and Arabic versions.

² בְּבֶטֶן הַמְלֵאָה in utero pleno, Mercerus, Gejerus, Gussetius, p. 936. in ventre pleno, Cocceius, so Aben Ezra.

things of the like kind, should be left with God. Some understand this of the work of grace and conversion, which is a secret and difficult work, only wrought by the power and grace of God; and may be begun, or shortly will, in a poor person, judged an unworthy object of charity for supposed want of it, a thing unknown.

Ver. 6. *In the morning sow thy seed, &c.*] Do all good works early and diligently, which is expressed by sowing in righteousness, Hos. x. 12. particularly alms-deeds, often signified by sowing seed, Psal. cxii. 9. 2 Cor. ix. 6—10. this should be in the morning of youth, that persons may be inured to it betimes, as Obadiah was; and in the morning of prosperity, as soon as ever Providence smiles on men, and puts it into the power of their hands, who should honour the Lord with the first-fruits of their increase. *And in the evening withhold not thine hand;* from sowing seed, from doing good, particularly acts of charity, in the evening of old age, as Jarchi, like old Barzillai; an age in which men are apt to be more tenacious and covetous, and withhold more than is meet; yea, in the evening of adversity do not leave off doing good as much as can be; but do as the Macedonian churches, whose deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality in a great trial of affliction, 2 Cor. viii. 2. in short, good is to be done at all times, as opportunity offers, throughout the whole of life, and in all conditions and circumstances. *For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that:* the seed sown in the morning or in the evening, which good work shall best succeed; therefore do both, try all ways, make use of all opportunities. *Or whether they both shall be alike good;* acceptable to God, and useful to men; and if so, a man will have no occasion to repent of what he has done both in youth and old age.

Ver. 7. *Truly the light is sweet, &c.*] Here begins a new subject, as most think; and some here begin the twelfth and last chapter, and not improperly. This is true of natural light, which is exceeding pleasant, useful, and beneficial; by which men discern objects, behold the things of nature with pleasure, walk in the way without stumbling, and do the work and business of life: and also of civil light or prosperity; for, as afflictions are expressed by darkness, and adversity by night; so the comforts and good things of life by light and day, which are very desirable and delectable: and here *life* itself may be meant, for light is sometimes put for life, which is the light of the living; and what sweeter and more desirable than that, especially a life attended with prosperity and peace? see Job xxxiii. 28, 30. and iii. 20. and ii. 4. Psal. xxxiv. 12. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the light of the law; and which is indeed a light, and so is the whole word of God, Prov. vi. 23. Psal. cxix. 105. 2 Pet. i. 19. but may be better applied unto the Gospel, which is a great and glorious light, Isa. ix. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 4. and a means of enlightening dark minds; not only of shewing men their sinfulness, as the law does; but the insufficiency of their righteousness, of all their own goodness and good works to justify; it reveals Christ, and the glories of his person;

it sets him forth evidently, as crucified and slain, for the worst of sinners; it makes manifest his fulness, ability, and willingness, as a Saviour; righteousness, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; it makes known things not to be discerned by the light of nature, even things wonderful and marvellous, as well as what is the way a man should walk in: and this light is sweet and pleasant, not to a blind and carnal man, who despises it, and reckons it foolishness, but to those who are enlightened by the spirit of God; and to these it is very delightful, even to all their senses; it is sweet to their taste, a joyful sound to their ears, and beautiful to their sight are the feet of them that bring its good tidings. The light of grace, which appears in first conversion, and comes from God suddenly, which at first is small, but increases, is exceeding pleasant, strikes the soul with delight and wonder; it is marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and so is the light of joy and gladness to believers, when it arises to them after a time of darkness, or the light of God's countenance, Psal. iv. 6, 7. and such will be the light of the latter-day glory, and more especially the light of the heavenly state. *And a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun;* the natural sun, shining at noon-day, which is a luminous and glorious body, communicating light and heat to all the world: which is so glorious and so pleasant to behold, that Anaxagoras, the philosopher, being asked what he was born for, answered, "to see the heavens, the sun, and the moon;" and Eudoxus, another philosopher, said, "he could be content to perish, could he get so near to the sun as to learn the nature of it." To see the sun, in the language of this book, is to live in this world, and to enjoy the light of the sun, and the comforts of life; see ch. vii. 11. and now a life, attended with outward prosperity and inward peace, that is spent in doing and enjoying good, is a very desirable and delightful one; though such a man should not think of living always, but of death, and the days of darkness, as in the following verse. This may be applied to Christ, the sun of righteousness, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Mal. iv. 2. the fountain of all spiritual light and heat; the brightness of his father's glory; and who is superior to angels and men; and is to be beheld by faith, and in his own light, as the sun is; and whom to look upon with an eye of faith is exceeding pleasant and delightful, and fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8.

Ver. 8. *But if a man live many years, &c.*] Enjoying light and life, and beholding the sun with much delight and pleasure. The days of men on earth, or under the sun, are but few at most; but some live many days, in comparison of others; they come to a good old age, as Abraham did; and to their graves like a shock of corn fully ripe; and arrive to, or beyond, the common term of human life. *And rejoice in them all* in and throughout the many years he lives, even all his days; that is, is blessed with a plentiful portion of the good things of life, and enjoys them in a free and comfortable manner, with moderation and thankfulness; partakes of the good of his labour, and rejoices in his works, in the fruit and effects of them, through the blessing of divine Providence; not only

is blessed with many days, but those days good ones, days of prosperity: such a man is in a happy case; and especially if he is possessed of spiritual joy, of joy in the Holy Ghost; if he rejoices in Christ, and in what he is to him, and has done for him; and having professed him, and submitted to his ordinances, goes on his way rejoicing. Some render it, *let him rejoice in them all**; a good man has reason to rejoice always, throughout the whole course of his life; because of the goodness of divine Providence to him; because of the blessings of grace bestowed on him; and because of his good hope of eternal glory and happiness. The Targum is, "in all these it becomes him to rejoice, and to study in the law of the Lord." Yet *let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many; or, they may be**; meaning either, that though persons may live long, and enjoy much health and prosperity; yet, in the midst of all, they should consider, that it is possible that days of adversity and distress may come upon them, and continue; and therefore should not please themselves, as Job did, that they shall die in their nest in the height of their prosperity, since they know not what days of evil may come, and how long they will last; or, however, they should remember the night of death that is hastening, the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, they are going to; the dark grave, they will soon be laid in, where they will remain many days; many more than those in which they have lived, enjoying the light of the sun, even till the heavens shall be no more; though these days will not be infinite, they will have an end, and there will be a resurrection from the dead; and particularly if a man is a wicked man, that has lived a long and prosperous life, he should not only remember the above things; but also that outer darkness, that blackness of darkness, reserved for him, the darkness of eternal death, which will be his portion for evermore. The Targum is, "he shall remember the days of the darkness of death, and shall not sin; for many are the days that he shall lie dead in the house of the grave." All that cometh is vanity; Aben Ezra interprets this of every man that comes into the world, as in ch. i. 2, 4. whether high or low, rich or poor, in prosperity or adversity; man, at his best estate, is vanity: let a man therefore be in what circumstances he will, he should not take up his rest here; all that comes to him, every thing that befalls him, is vanity. The wise man keeps in view the main thing he proposed, to prove that all is vanity, all in this life; for what is to come hereafter, in a future state of happiness, cannot come under this name and character.

Ver. 9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, &c.*] This advice may be considered as serious; and either as relating to natural, corporeal, and temporal delight and pleasure, under due limitations; that as mirth and cheerfulness, or a free use of the creatures of God, with moderation and temperance, is allowable to all men in common, and is spoken of throughout this book as commendable, and is healthful and profitable to men; so it is particularly suitable to the youthful

age, whose natural desires may be enjoyed, and their outward senses may be gratified, in a lawful way, so far as is consistent with the fear of God, and the expectation of a future judgment: or it may be considered with respect to religious and spiritual exercises; as young men should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, as it follows; so they should rejoice in God their Maker, Psal. cxlix. 2. they should rejoice, not to do evil, to which human nature is inclined, especially in youth, but to do good; should rejoice, not in the ways of sin, but in the ways of wisdom; not in any outward attainment of beauty, wit, strength, or riches, but in the grace of God; not in themselves, or their boastings, but in Christ, his person, righteousness, and salvation; not in the things of time and sense, but in hope of the glory of God. And *let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth*: here is a different word for youth than the former, which Alshech distinguishes thus; the first designs the time to the age of thirteen, and this from thence to twenty. Or, *let thine heart do thee good*, so the Septuagint. The Targum is, "and let thine heart be good in thee." Symmachus renders it, *and let thine heart be in good*; the thoughts of thine heart be employed about that which is good, spiritual, heavenly, and divine; the affections of thine heart set thereon; and the will and desires of thine heart be drawn out after such things: let thine heart prompt and put thee on doing that which is good, with delight and pleasure; but, in order to all this, the heart must be made good by the spirit and grace of God. And *walk in the ways of thy heart*; being created a clean one, sprinkled, purged, and purified by the blood of Christ; in which the fear of God is put; the laws of God are written; where Christ is formed, and his word dwells richly, and he himself by faith, where the Spirit of God and his graces are: and then to walk in the ways of such a heart is to walk in the fear of God, according to his word, as Christ is an example; and to walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, *and walk in the ways of thine heart unblamable*: the Targum, "and walk in humility in the ways of thine heart:" which all agree with the sense given: so Alshech interprets the ways of the heart; of the ways of the good imagination of good men. And *in the sight of thine eyes*; as enlightened by the spirit of God, directing and guiding in the way in which a man should walk; looking unto Jesus, all the while he is walking or running his Christian race; and walking in him, as he has received him; pressing towards him, the mark, for the prize of the high calling. The Targum is, "and be cautious of the sight of thine eyes, and look not upon evil." The Septuagint and Arabic versions insert the negative; *and not in the sight of thine eyes*. Most interpreters understand all this as an ironical concession to young men, to indulge themselves in carnal mirth, to take their swing of sinful pleasures, to do all their corrupt hearts incline them to; and to gratify their outward senses and carnal lusts to the uttermost; even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, which young

* בכלים ישמח in eis omnibus letetur, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceus, Gejerus.

* כי הרבה יהיה quia multi sint, Amama, so some in Drusius; quod multi futuri sunt, Piscator, Gejerus, Rambachius.

men are most addicted to: do all this, as if it was said, and see what will be the issue of it; or, do all this if you can, with this one thing bore in mind, a future judgment; like those expressions in 1 Kings xxii. 15. Matt. xxvi. 45. Lam. iii. 21. and to this sense the following clause is thought most to incline: and the rather, as the above phrases are generally used in a bad sense. *But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment*: not temporal, but eternal; not in this present life, but in the world to come; the judgment that will be after death, the last and awful judgment; and which is certain, may be known; of which a man may be assured from the light of nature, and from divine revelation; see the note on ch. iii. 17. into which all men will be brought, even whether they will or no; and every work shall be brought into it, good or bad, open or secret, ch. xii. 14. Wherefore *these things* may respect either; and the consideration of a future judgment should influence the lives of men, and engage them both to perform acts of piety and religion in youth, and throughout the whole of life, and to shun and avoid every thing that is evil. Herodotus⁷ speaks of a custom among the Egyptians, at their feasts; that, just at the close of them, one carries about in a coffin the image of a dead man, exactly like one, made of wood, the length of a cubit or two, shewing it to all the guests; saying, look upon it, drink, and take pleasure, for such shalt thou be when dead.

Ver. 10. *Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart,*

&c.] Worldly sorrow, as opposed to lawful mirth and cheerfulness, and especially to spiritual joy: or *anger*⁸, as the word may be rendered, and often is; either at the providence of God, or at the correction of friends; all perturbations of the mind; all fierceness of spirit, and fiery passions, to which youthful age is subject: or all those things, as Jarchi observes, that provoke God to anger; sinful lusts and pleasures, the end and issue of which also is sorrow to men; and which agrees with our version. *And put away evil from thy flesh*; or body; such as intemperance and uncleanness, to which young men are addicted: the advice is much the same, in both clauses, with that of the apostle's, *flee youthful lusts*, 2 Tim. ii. 22. Jarchi interprets this of the evil concupiscence. *For childhood and youth are vanity*; which quickly pass away; come into manhood, and soon slide into old age, and are gone presently, and all things within that compass: all actions done in that age are for the most part vain and foolish; and all the delights, joys, and pleasures thereof, vanishing and transitory. The last word⁹, used to express the juvenile age, either is akin to a word which signifies the *morning*; youth being the morning and dawn of man's age, and increases as that; and as soon as it is peep of day with him, or he enters into life, he possesses vanity: or as having the signification of *blackness*; because, as Jarchi observes, the head of a young man is black: and so the Targum, "childhood, and the days of blackness of hair, are vanity;" whereas the hair of an aged man is gray.

C H A P. XII.

THIS chapter begins with advice to young men, which is continued from the preceding; and particularly to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; enforced from the consideration of the troubles and inconveniences of old age, ver. 1. which, in an allegorical way, is beautifully described, ver. 2—6. and from the certainty of death, when it would be too late, ver. 7. And then the wise man returns to his first proposition, and which he kept in view all along, that all is vanity in youth or old age, ver. 8. and recommends the reading of this book, from the diligence, pains and labour, he used in composing it; from the sententious matter in it; from the agreeable, acceptable, and well-chosen words, in which he had expressed it; and from the wisdom, uprightness, truth, efficacy, and authority of the doctrines of it, ver. 9—11. and from its preference to other books, which were wearisome both to author and reader, ver. 12. And it is concluded with the scope and design, the sum and substance of the whole of it, reducible to these two heads; the fear of God, and obedience to him, ver. 13. and which are urged from the consideration of a future judgment, into which all things shall be brought, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, &c.]* Or *Creators*¹⁰; as *Makers*, Job xxxv. 10. Psal. cxlix. 2. Isa. liv. 5. for more than one were concerned, as in the creation of all things in general, so of man in particular, Gen. i. 26. and these are neither more nor fewer than three; and are Father, Son, and Spirit; the one God that has created men, Mal. ii. 10. the Father, who is the God of all flesh; and the Father of spirits; the former both of the bodies and souls of men, Jer. xxxi. 27. Heb. xii. 9. the Son, by whom all things are created; for he that is the Redeemer and husband of his church, which are characters and relations peculiar to the Son, is the Creator, Isa. xliv. 1. and liv. 5. and the Holy Spirit not only garnished the heavens, and moved upon the face of the waters, but is the Maker of men, and gives them life, Job xxxiii. 4. Now this God, Creator, should be *remembered* by young men; they should remember there is a God, which they are apt to be forgetful of; that this God is a God of great and glorious perfections, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, holy, just, and true; who judgeth in the earth, and will judge the world in righteousness, and them also; and that he is in Christ a God gracious, merciful, and par-

⁷ Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 78.

⁸ כעס iram, Fagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; indignationem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; God's anger, Broughton.

⁹ בוראתי ortus, Junius & Tremellius; aurora, Cocceus, Gejerus,

so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech; dies nigredinis pili; so the Targum. and Abendana.

¹⁰ בוראתי Creatorum tuorum, Drusius, Gejerus, Rambachius; se Broughton.

doing iniquity, transgression, and sin: they should remember him under this character, as a *Creator*, who has made them, and not they themselves; that they are made by him out of the dust of the earth, and must return to it; that he has brought them into being, and preserved them in it, and favoured them with the blessings of his providence, which are all from him that has made them: and they should remember the end for which they are made, to glorify him; and in what state man was originally made, upright, pure, and holy; but that he now is a fallen creature, and such are they, impure and unrighteous, impotent and weak, abominable in the sight of God, unworthy to live, and unfit to die; being transgressors of the laws of their Creator, which is deserving of death: they should remember what God their Creators, Father, Son, and Spirit, must have done or must do for them, if ever they are saved; the Father must have chosen them in Christ unto salvation; must have given his Son to redeem, and must send his Spirit into their hearts to create them anew; the Son must have been surety for them, assumed their nature, and died in their room and stead; and the Spirit must regenerate and make them new creatures, enlighten their minds, quicken their souls, and sanctify their hearts: they should remember the right their Creator has over them, the obligations they are under to him, and their duty to him; they should remember, with thankfulness, the favours they have received from him, and, with reverence and humility, the distance between him, as Creator, and them as creatures: they should remember to love him cordially and sincerely; to fear him with a godly fear; to worship him in a spiritual manner; to set him always before them, and never forget him. And all this they should do *in the days of their youth*; which are their best and choicest days; in which to serve him is most desirable by him, and acceptable to him; who ordered the first of the ripe fruits and creatures of the first year to be offered to him: and then are men best able to serve him, when their bodies are healthful, strong, and vigorous; their senses quick, and the powers and faculties of their souls capable of being improved and enlarged: and to delay the service of him to old age, as it would be very ungrateful and exceeding improper, so no man can be sure of arriving to it; and if he should, yet what follows is enough to determine against such a delay. *While the evil days come not*; meaning the days of old age; said to be *evil*, not with respect to the evil of fault or sin; so all days are evil, or sin is committed in every age, in infancy, in childhood, in youth, in manhood, as well as in old age: but with respect to the evil of affliction and trouble which attend it, as various diseases; yea, that itself is a disease, and an incurable one; much weakness of body, decay of intellects, and many other things, which render life very troublesome and uncomfortable^c, as well as unfit for religious services. *Nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*; that is, corporeal pleasure; no sensual pleasure; sight, taste, and

hearing, being lost, or in a great measure gone; which was Barzillai's case, at eighty years of age: though some ancient persons have their senses quick and vigorous, and scarce perceive any difference between youth and age; but such instances are not common: and there are also some things that ancient persons take pleasure in, as in fields and gardens, and the culture of them, as Cicero^d observes; and particularly learned men take as much delight in their studies in old age as in youth, and in instructing others; and, as the same writer^e says, "what is more pleasant than to see an old man, attended and encircled with youth, at their studies under him?" and especially a good man, in old age, has pleasure in reflecting on a life spent in the ways, work, and worship of God; and in having had, through the grace of God, his conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity; as also in present communion with God, and in the hopes and views of the glories of another world: but if not religious persons, they are strangers to spiritual pleasure, which only is to be had in wisdom's ways; such can neither look back with pleasure on a life spent in sin; nor forward with pleasure, at death and eternity, and into another world; see 2 Sam. xix. 35. Psal. xc. 10.

Ver. 2. *While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, &c.*] The wise man proceeds to describe the infirmities of old age, and the troubles that attend it; in order to engage young men to regard God and religion, before these come upon them, which greatly unfit for his service. This the Targum and Midrash, and, after them, Jarchi, interpret of the splendour of the countenance of man, of the light of his eyes, and the beauty of his cheeks, and other parts of his face; which decrease and go off at old age, and paleness and wrinkles succeed: and others of the adversities and calamities which attend persons at such years; which are sometimes in Scripture signified by the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, Isa. xiii. 10. but some choose to understand this, more literally, of the dimness of sight in old men; by whom the light of the sun, moon, and stars, is scarcely discerned: but as this infirmity is afterwards described, I rather think, with others, that by the *sun, light, and moon*, are meant the superior and inferior faculties of the soul, the understanding, mind, judgment, will, and affections; and, by the *stars*, those bright notions and ideas raised in the fancy and imagination, and fixed in the memory; all which are greatly impaired or lost in old age: so Alshech interprets the sun and moon of the soul and spirit, and the stars of the senses; *light* is not in the Syriac version. *Nor the clouds return after the rain*; which some understand of catarrhs, defluxions, and rheums, flowing at the eyes, nose, and mouth, one after another, which frequently attend, and are very troublesome to persons in years; but may be more generally applied to the perpetual succession of evils, afflictions, and disorders, in old age; as soon as one is got over, another follows, billow after billow; or, like showers in April, as soon as one is gone, another

^c Plautus in *Aulular. Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 4.* Menegh. *Act. 5. Sc. 2. v. 6.* calls old age *mala ætas*; and the winter of old age, *Trinummus, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 7.* And Pindar, *ἄρχας ἀλαστον*, *Pyth. Ode 10. so*

Theognis, v. 272, 776, 1006. And Homer, *ἄρχας ἀλαστον*, *Iliad. 10. v. 79. & 23. v. 644.* *Tristis seuectus*, Virgil. *Æneid. 6.*

^d De *Seuectute, c. 14, 15, 16.*

^e *Ibid. c. 8.*

comes. The Targum paraphrases it of the eyebrows distilling tears, like clouds after rain.

Ver. 3. *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, &c.*] By the house is meant the human body; which is a house of clay, the earthly house of our tabernacle, in which the soul dwells, Job iv. 19. 2. Cor. v. 1. The Targum interprets the keepers of the house, of the knees and the trembling of them; but the Midrash and Jarchi, much better, of the ribs; man being fenced with bones and sinews, as Job says, ch. x. 11. though trembling cannot be well ascribed to them, they being so fixed to the back-bone: rather therefore, as Aben Ezra, the hands and arms are meant; which work for the maintenance of the body, and feed it with food, got and prepared by them; and which protect and defend it from injuries; for all which they are fitted, and made strong by the God of nature. The Arabic version renders it, *both keepers*; and, doubtless, respects both hands and arms; and which, in old age, are not only wrinkled, contracted, and stiff, but attended with numbness, pains, and tremour. Some, not amiss, take in the head; which is placed as a watch-tower over the body, the seat of the senses; which overlooks, guards, and keeps it, and which often through paralytic disorders, and even the weakness of old age, is attended with a shaking. *And the strong men shall bow themselves*; it is strange the Targum and Midrash should interpret this of the arms, designed in the former clause; Jarchi and Aben Ezra, more rightly, of the thighs; it takes in thighs, legs, and feet, which are the basis and support of the human body; and are strengthened for this purpose, having stronger muscles and tendons than any other parts of the body; but these, as old age comes on, are weakened and distorted, and bend under the weight of the body, not being able, without assistance, to sustain it. *And the grinders cease because they are few*; the Targum is, "the teeth of the mouth:" all agree the teeth are meant; only the Midrash takes in the stomach also, which, like a mill, grinds the food. There are three sorts of teeth; the fore teeth, which bite the food, and are called *incisores*: the eye-teeth, called *canini*, which bruise and break the food; and the double teeth, the hindermost, which are called *dentes molares*, the grinding teeth; and which being placed in the upper and nether jaw, are like to millstones, broad and rough, and rub against each other and grind the food, and prepare it for the stomach: these, in old age, rot and drop out, and become few and straggling, one here and another there; and, not being over-against each other, are of no use, but rather troublesome. *And those that look out of the windows be darkened*; the eyes, as the Targum and Ben Melech; and all agree that those that look out are the eyes, or the visive rays: the windows they look through are not spectacles; for it is questionable whether they were in use in Solomon's time, and, however, they are not parts of the house; but either the holes in which the eyes are, and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, to which the Targum agrees, paraphrasing it, the strong bounds of the head; and which are no other than what oculists call the orbits of the eye: or else the eyelids,

which open and shut like the casement of a window, and through which, being opened, the eyes look; or the humours of the eye, the watery, crystalline, and glassy, which are transparent, and through which the visive rays pass; or the tunics, or coats of the eye, particularly the *tunica aranea* and *cornea*; as also the optic nerves, and especially the *puvilla*, or apple of the eye, which is perforated or bored for this purpose: now these, in old age, become weak, or dim, or thick, or contracted, or obstructed by some means or another; by which the sight is greatly hindered, and is a very uncomfortable circumstance; this was Isaac's case, Gen. xxvii. 1. but Moses is an exception to the common case of old men, Deut. xxxiv. 7.

Ver. 4. *And the doors shall be shut in the streets, &c.*] The Midrash and Jarchi interpret these of the holes of the body; in which they are followed by our learned and ingenious countryman, Dr. Smith; who, by them, understands the inlets and outlets of the body; and, by the streets, the ways and passages through which the food goes, and nourishment is conveyed; and which may be said to be shut, when they cease from their use: but it seems much better, with Aben Ezra and others, to interpret them of the lips; which are sometimes called the doors of the mouth, or lips, Psal. cxli. 3. Mic. vii. 5. which are opened both for speaking and eating; but, in aged persons, are much shut as to either; they do not choose to speak much, because of the disagreeableness of their voice, and difficulty of speech, through the shortness of breath, and the loss of teeth; nor do they open them much to eat, through want of appetite; and while eating, are obliged, for want of teeth, to keep their lips close, to retain their food from falling out; they mumble with their lips both in speaking and eating; and, particularly in public, aged persons care not to speak nor eat, for the reason following: though some understand it, more literally, of their having the doors of their houses shut, and keeping within, and not caring to go abroad in the streets, because of their infirmities; so the Targum, "thy feet shall be bound from going in the streets." *When the sound of the grinding is low*: which the above Jewish writers, and, after them, Dr. Smith, understand of the stomach, grinding, digesting, and concocting food, and of other parts through which it is conveyed, and the offices they perform; but sound or voice does not seem so well to agree with that; rather therefore this is to be understood, as before, of the grinding of the teeth, through the loss of which so much noise is not heard in eating as in young men, and the voice in speaking is lower; the Targum is, "appetite of food shall depart from thee." *And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird*; that is, the aged person, the least noise awakes him out of sleep; and, as he generally goes to bed soon, he rises betimes at cock-crowing, or with the lark, as soon as the voice of that bird or any other is heard; particularly the cock, which crows betimes, and whose voice is heard the most early, and is by some writers^f emphatically called the bird that calls men to their work. *And all the daughters of music shall be brought low*: either those that make music, and are the instruments of it, as the

^f *Inque suum miseris excitat ales opus, Ovid. Amorum, l. 1. Eleg. 6. v. 66. Crastatus ales, ib. Fast. l. 1. v. 455.*

lungs, the throat, the teeth, mouth, and lips, so the Targum and Midrash; or those that receive music, as the ears, and the several parts of them, the cavities of them, particularly the tympanum and auditory nerve; all which, through old age, are impaired, and become very unfit to be employed in making music, or in attending to it: the voice of singing men and singing women could not be heard with pleasure by old Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 36. These clauses are expressive of the weakness which generally old age brings on men; very few instances are there to the contrary; such as of Caleb, who, at eighty-five years of age, was as strong as at forty; and of Moses, whose natural force abated not at an hundred and twenty; nor indeed as of Cyrus, who, when seventy years of age, and near his death, could not perceive that he was weaker than in his youth.⁵

Ver. 5. *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, &c.*] Not of the most high God, before whose tribunal they must shortly appear, as some; but rather of high places, as high hills, mountains, towers, &c. which aged persons are afraid to go up, because of the feebleness and weakness of their limbs, their difficulty of breathing, and the dizziness of their heads. *And fears shall be in the way*; they do not care to go abroad, being afraid of every little stone that lies in the way, lest they should stumble at it, and fall: some understand this of their fears of spirits, good or bad; but the former sense is best. *And the almond-tree shall flourish*; which most interpret of the hoary head, which looks like an almond-tree in blossom; and which, as it comes soon in the spring, whence it has its name of haste in the Hebrew language; see Jer. i. 11, 12, and is a sure sign of its near approach; so gray hairs, or the hoary head, sometimes appear very soon and unexpected, and are a sure indication of the approach of old age; which Cicero^b calls *ætas præcipitata*, "age that comes hastily on;" though the hoary head, like the almond-tree, looks very beautiful, and is venerable, especially if found in the way of righteousness, Lev. xix. 32. Prov. xvi. 31. *And the grasshopper shall be a burden*; meaning either, should a grasshopper, which is very light, leap upon an aged person, it would give him pain, the least burden being uneasy to him; or, should he eat one of these creatures, the locusts being a sort of food in Judea, it would not sit well on his stomach: or the grasshopper, being a crumpled and lean creature, may describe an old man; his legs and arms emaciated, and his shoulders, back, and lips, crumpled up and bunching out; and the locust of this name has a bunch on its back-bone, like a camel¹: Bochart^k says, that the head of the thigh, or the huckle-bone, by the Arabians, is called *chagaba*, the word here used for a locust or grasshopper; which part of the body is of principal use in walking, and found very troublesome and difficult to move in old men; and Aben Ezra interprets it of the thigh: the almond-tree, by the Rab-

bins, as Jarchi says, is interpreted of the huckle-bone, which stands out in old age: and the Targum, of this and the preceding clause, is, "and the top of thy back-bone shall bunch out, through leanness, like the almond; and the ankles of thy feet shall be swelled." Some, as Ben Melech observes, understand it of the genital member, and of coitus, slighted and rejected, because of the weakness of the body; all desires of that kind being gone, as follows. *And desire shall fail*: the appetite, for food, for bodily pleasures, and carnal delights; and particularly for venery, all the parts of the body for such uses being weakened. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, *the caper-tree shall be dissipated, or vanish, or its fruit shall shrink*; so Dr. Smith, who understands it of the decrease of the fluids, as he does the former clause of the solid parts of the body; and the berries of this tree are said to excite both appetite and lust¹: and so Munster^m interprets the word of the berries of the caper-tree. *Because man goeth to his long home*; the grave, as the Targum, the house appointed for all living, where he must lie till the resurrection-morn; his eternal house, as Cicero calls itⁿ; and so it may be rendered here, *the house of the world*, common to all the world, where all mankind go: or, *to the house of his world*^o; whether of bliss or woe, according as his state and character be, good or bad: Theognis^p calls it the dark house of *hades*, or the invisible state; and then this must be understood with respect to his separate soul, and the mansion of it; and Alshech^q says, every righteous man has a mansion to himself; see John xiv. 2. *And the mourners go about the streets*; the relations of the deceased; or those that go to their houses to comfort them; or the mourning men and women, hired for that purpose.

Ver. 6. *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, &c.*] As the above are the symptoms and infirmities of old age; these in this verse are the immediate symptoms of death, or what attend it, or certainly issue in it. Some by the *silver cord* understand the string of the tongue; and to this purpose is the Targum, "before thy tongue is dumb from speaking;" and it is observed^r in favour of this sense, that the failing of the tongue is no fallacious sign of death, of which there is no mention at all in this account, unless here; and the tongue may not unfitly be called a *cord*, both from the notation of the word because it binds, and because it scourges like a cord, Job v. 21. and is compared to silver, Prov. x. 20. and in this verse rather the head than the back is treated of. But best, the bond of union between soul and body is meant: the Midrash and Jarchi, and the Jewish writers in general, interpret it of the *spina dorsii*, or back-bone; or rather of the marrow of it, which descends like a cord from the brain through the neck, and down the back-bone to the bottom of it; from whence spring the nerves, fibres, tendons, and filaments of the body, on which the life of it much depends: this spinal marrow may be called a *cord* for the length of it, as well as

^a Cicero in Catone Majore, sive de Senectute, c. 8.

^b Fam. Epist. l. 11. Ep. 56.

^c R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 88. 1.

^d Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 8. col. 494.

^e Avicenna apud Schindler. Lexic. col. 10.

^f Dictionar. Chaldaic. p. 12.

^g Tusculan. Quest. l. 2. prope finem.

^h בֵּית עֵלְמוֹר אֵלֶּם ad domum seculi sui, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus.

ⁱ Γνωμαί, v. 1008. vid. v. 244.

^j Vid. Castel. Lexic. Hept. col. 3669.

what arise from it; and a silver cord, from the colour of it^r, this being white even after death; and for the excellency of it: and this may be said to be *loosened* when there is a solution of the nerves, or marrow; upon which a paralysis, or palsy, follows, and is often the immediate forerunner of death. *Or the golden bowl be broken*; the Targum renders it the top of the head; and the Midrash interprets it the skull, and very rightly; or rather the inward membrane of the skull, which contains the brain, called the *pia mater*, or *meninx*, is intended, said to be a *bowl*, from the form of it; a *golden* one, because of the preciousness of it, and the excellent liquor of life it contains, as also because of its colour; now when this *runs back*, as the word^s signifies, dries, shrinks up, and breaks, it puts a stop to all animal motion, and hence death. *Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain*; not the gall at the liver, as the Targum, which the ancients took to be the fountain of blood; but by the *fountain* is meant the heart, the fountain of life, which has two cavities, one on the right side, the other on the left, from whence come the veins and arteries, which carry the blood through the whole body; and here particularly it signifies the right ventricle of the heart, the spring and original of the veins, which are the *pitcher* that receives the blood and transmits it to the several parts of the body; but when these are broke to shivers, as the word^t signifies, or cease from doing their office, the blood stagnates in them, and death follows. *Or the wheel broken at the cistern*; which is the left ventricle of the heart, which by its *diastole* receives the blood brought to it through the lungs, as a cistern receives water into it; where staying awhile in its *systole*, it passes it into the great artery annexed to it; which is the wheel or instrument of rotation, which, together with all the instruments of pulsation, cause the circulation of the blood, found out in the last age by our countryman Dr. Harvey; but it seems by this it was well known by Solomon; now, whenever this wheel is broken, the pulse stops, the blood ceases to circulate, and death follows. For this interpretation of the several preceding passages, as I owe much to the Jewish writers, so to Rambachius and Patrick on these passages, and to Witsius's Miscellanies, and especially to our countryman Dr. Smith, in his Portrait of Old Age, a book worthy to be read on this subject; and there are various observations in the Talmud^u agreeable hereunto.

Ver. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, &c.*] The body, which is made of dust, and is no other in its present state than dust refined and enlivened; and when the above things take place, mentioned in the preceding verse, or at death, it returns to its original earth; it becomes immediately a clod of earth, a lifeless lump of clay, and is then buried in the earth, where it rots, corrupts, and turns into it; which shews the frailty of man, and may serve to humble his pride, as well as proves that death is not an annihilation even of the body; see Gen. iii. 19. Job i. 21. *And*

the spirit shall return unto God who gave it; from whom it is, by whom it is created, who puts it into the bodies of men, as a depositum they are intrusted with, and are accountable for, and should be concerned for the safety and salvation of it; this was originally breathed into man at his first creation, and is now formed within him by the Lord; hence he is called the God of the spirits of all flesh; see Gen. ii. 4. Zech. xii. 1. Numb. xvi. 22. Now at death the soul, or spirit of man, returns to God; which if understood of the souls of men in general, it means that at death they return to God the Judge of all, who passes sentence on them, and orders those that are good to the mansions of bliss and happiness, and those that are evil to hell and destruction. So the Targum adds, "that it may stand "in judgment before the Lord;" or if only of the souls of good men, the sense is, that they then return to God, not only as their Creator, but as their covenant God and Father, to enjoy his presence evermore; and to Christ their Redeemer, to be for ever with him, than which nothing is better and more desirable; this shews that the soul is immortal, and dies not with the body, nor sleeps in the grave with it, but is immediately with God. Agreeably to all this Aristotle^w says, the mind, or soul, alone enters *ὑπεραθῆναι*, from without, (from heaven, from God there,) and only is divine; and to the same purpose are the words of Phocylides^x, "the body we have of the earth, and we all being resolved "into it become dust, but the air or heaven receives "the spirit." And still more agreeably to the sentiment of the wise man here, another Heathen^y writer observes, that the ancients were of opinion that souls are given of God, and are again returned unto him after death.

Ver. 8. *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, &c.*] The wise man, or preacher, set out in the beginning of the book with this doctrine, or proposition, which he undertook to prove; and now having proved it by an induction of particulars, instanced in the wisdom, wealth, honours, pleasures, and profit of men, and shewn the vanity of them, and that the happiness of men lies not in these things, but in the knowledge and fear of God; he repeats it, and most strongly asserts it, as an undoubted truth beyond all dispute and contradiction, that all things under the sun are not only vain, but vanity itself, extremely vain, vain in the superlative degree. *All is vanity*; all things in the world are vain; all creatures are subject to vanity; man in every state, and in his best estate, is altogether vanity: this the wise man might with great confidence affirm, after he had shewn that not only childhood and youth are vanity, but even old age; the infirmities, sorrows, and distresses of which he had just exposed, and observed that all issue in death, the last end of man, when his body returns to the earth, and his soul to God the giver of it.

Ver. 9. *And moreover, &c.*] *Or besides^z what has been said; or as to what remains^a; or but what is better, or more excellent^b, is to hear the conclusion of the whole*

^r Vid. Waser. de Num. Heb. l. 1. c. 13.

^s תרץ recurrat, V. L. excurrit, Junius & Tremellius.

^t תשבר.

^u T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 151. 2. & 152. 1.

^v De Generat. Animal. l. 2. c. 3.

^w Σωμματα γαρ εκ γαιης, &c. Poem. Admon. v. 102, 103. So Lucretius, l. 2. cedit item retro de terra, &c.

^x Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 10.

^y ייתר præterea, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Schmidt.

^z Quod reliquum est, Piscator, Gejerus, Ananias.

^a Quamobrem potius, Junius & Tremellius; and this is a matter of excellency, Broughton.

matter, the sum and substance of the whole book in a few words, ver. 13. to which ver. 9—12. are a preface; and in which the wise man recommends the reading of this book, and other writings of his, and of other wise men inspired of God; and his own he particularly recommends, from his character as wise and industrious, in this verse; and from the subject-matter of them, their nature, use, and excellency, and their efficacy and authority, in the two next. *Because the preacher was wise*; he was a preacher, a royal one, an extraordinary preacher, and to be regarded; he urges not his title as a king, but his character as a preacher, to recommend what he had written: every good preacher should be regarded; not such who are ignorant preachers of the law, but faithful ministers of the Gospel, who are sent of God, and have felt and experienced what they deliver to others; and especially who are wise as well as faithful, as Solomon was; he had much wisdom given him at first, 1 Kings iii. 12. and iv. 29—31. and in which he improved; and though he turned to folly in his old age, he recovered from that, and gained more wisdom through his fall, and to which he here seems to have reference; for *Koheleth*, which some render the *gatherer*, because he gathered much wisdom, and much people to hear it; others render *gathered*, that is, into the flock and fold again, the church of God, from which he had strayed; see the note on ch. i. 1. and having seen through the follies and vanities of life, and being recovered and restored, was a fitter person to teach and instruct others; see Psal. li. 12, 13. Luke xxii. 32. *He still taught the people knowledge*; or *again*, as the Targum; after his fall and recovery he was communicative of his knowledge; he did not hide his talent in the earth, nor in a napkin; but having freely received he freely gave, and kept back nothing from his people, the people of the house of Israel, as the Targum, that might be profitable to them; he taught them the knowledge of themselves, as fallen men, impure, impotent, and unrighteous; the knowledge of the creatures, and the vanity of them, of riches, honours, and pleasures; and of works of righteousness to save men; the knowledge of Christ the Wisdom of God, the antiquity of his person, his glories, excellencies, and beauties, as in the books of Proverbs and Canticles; the knowledge of God, his fear and worship, mind and will; and the knowledge of a future state, and of the general judgment, as in this book; and in proportion to his own knowledge so he taught: for thus the words with the preceding may be rendered, *that the more that the preacher was wise, the more he taught the people knowledge*; he taught according to the abilities he had received, as preachers should; the more he grew in grace and knowledge, the more largely he communicated to others; and this he did *daily*, as *Aben Ezra* renders the words, constantly, continually, incessantly, in season and out of season, as faithful Gospel ministers do. *Yea, he gave good heed*; to what he heard and to what he read, to which the apostle's advice agrees, 1 Tim. iv. 13. or he caused others to hear, and give good heed to what is

said, as *Aben Ezra*; he engaged their attention by his enlivening discourses; or, as *Kimchi*, he weighed things in his own mind, and in the balance of the sanctuary; and thoroughly considered and digested them before he delivered them to others. *And sought out*; was very diligent in investigating truth, he searched into the mines of knowledge for it, the sacred writings, as one would for gold and silver, and as he himself directs, Prov. ii. 4, 5. *And set in order many proverbs*; three thousand of them, 1 Kings iv. 32. particularly those which are in the book of that name, penned by him; he selected the most choice, pithy, and sententious sayings, of his own and others; and these he huddled not up, or threw them together in a disorderly and confused manner; but put them together in proper order and method, under proper heads, as well as in a correct style, that they might be more received, and more easily retained. The Targum is, "he attended to the voice of the wise men, and searched the books of wisdom; and by a spirit of prophecy from the Lord composed books of wisdom, and very many proverbs of understanding."

Ver. 10. *The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, &c.*] Not mere words, fine and florid ones, the words which man's wisdom teacheth, an elegant style, or eloquent language; not but that it is proper for a preacher to seek out and use words suitable and apt to convey right ideas to the minds of men of what he says; but doctrines are rather here meant, *words of desire, delight, and pleasure*^d, as the phrase may be rendered; even of God's good will and pleasure, so *Alshech*; for the same word is sometimes used of God in this book and elsewhere: see ch. iii. 1. and viii. 6. Isa. liii. 10. and so may take in the doctrine of God's everlasting love to his people, and his delight and pleasure in them; of his good will towards them in sending Christ to suffer and die for them, and save them; in pardoning their sins through his blood, in which he delights; in regenerating and calling them by his grace, and revealing the things of the Gospel to them, when he hides them from others, which is all of his own will and pleasure, and as it seems good in his sight: or words and doctrines, which are desirable, pleasing, and acceptable unto men; not that Solomon did, or preachers should, seek to please men, or seek to say things merely for the sake of pleasing men, for then they would not be the servants of Christ; nor are the doctrines of the Gospel pleasing to carnal men, but the reverse: they gnash their teeth at them, as Christ's hearers did at him; the preaching of a crucified Christ is foolishness, and the things of the Spirit of God are insipid things, to natural men; they are enemies to the Gospel: but to sensible sinners they are very delightful, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, by Christ, 1 Tim. i. 15. for the worth of them, they are more desirable to them than gold and silver, and are more delightful to the ear than the best of music, and more acceptable to the taste than honey or the honeycomb, Psal. xix. 10. and cxix. 72, 103. *And that which was written was upright*; meaning what was written in this

^c So *Mercerus* and *Cocceius*.

^d טובים וברי דמק verba complacentiæ vel beneplaciti, *Vatablus*; verba desiderii, *Amama*, *Rambachius*; verba delectabiliæ, *Junius* & *Tre-*

mellius, *Piscator*, *Drusius*, *Mercerus*, *Gejerus*; so *Broughton*; verba voluptatis, *Cocceius*.

book, or in any other parts of Scripture, which the preacher sought out and inculcated; it was according to the mind and will of God, and to the rest of the sacred word; it was sincere, unmixed, and unadulterated with the doctrines and inventions of men; it shewed that man had lost his uprightness, had none of himself, and where it was to be had, even in Christ; and was a means of making men sound, sincere, and upright at heart; and of directing them to walk uprightly, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world. Even *words of truth*; which come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, as all Scripture does; of which Christ, who is the truth, is the sum and substance; and which are inspired by the Spirit of truth, and led into by him, and made effectual to saving purposes; and which holds good of the whole Scripture, called the Scripture of truth, Dan. x. 21. and of the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and of every doctrine of it, John xvii. 17. Ephes. i. 13.

Ver. 11. *The words of the wise are as goads, &c.*] As the good teacheth the ox; so the Targum. Not the words of the wise philosophers of that age, or of ages before, or since; but of the inspired penmen of the Scriptures, as Moses, David, Solomon, and of others since; and of all good men, whose doctrines are agreeably to them; these are like *goads* or *pricks*, sharp-pointed sticks or staves, with which men push and prick their cattle, when driving them from place to place, or ploughing with them: and of a similar use are the doctrines of the word, when attended with a divine efficacy; these are a means of pricking sinners to the heart; and of laying open their vileness and sinfulness to them; and of repentance and contrition; and of awakening them from a sleep in sin to a sense of their danger; and even of killing them, as to their own sense and apprehension of things, and, with respect to their hopes of life, by their own works; as the Philistines were slain by Shamgar with an ox-goad, Judg. iii. 31. see Acts ii. 37. Hos. vi. 5. and these are also of use to the saints, as goads, to stir them up, when slothful, to the discharge of duty; and to awaken them, when drowsy, out of their carnal security; and to correct them for their faults, by sharp reproofs and rebukes; as well as to excite them to go on to perfection, who are apt to sit still and lie down; and to direct them to walk straight on, without turning to the right hand or left. *And as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies*: like these are the truths and doctrines of the word, when they have a place in the heart, and become the *ingrafted word* there; when they are *planted* ^c in the soul, as the word signifies; when they are fixed in the mind and memory, and dwell and abide there: and when as nails, driven into any thing, fasten what they are drove into; so these are the means of fastening souls; of causing them to cleave to God and Christ; to the church, and his people, and to one another; and to the Gospel, and their profession of it; hence they are not like children, tossed to and fro, wavering and unstable: of all which the *masters of the*

assemblies are the instruments; that is, ministers and pastors of churches. As there were assemblies for religious worship under the law, in which the prophets, priests, and Levites, assisted; so there are assemblies or churches under the Gospel dispensation, which are gathered and meet together for the service of God, and over these the ministers of the word preside; these are set over the churches in the Lord, and have the rule of them; though they are not to lord it over God's heritage, or have the dominion over their faith; but are helpers of their joy, and useful in the above things, through their ministry. Some choose to render it, *masters of collections, or gatherings*^d; and think it may respect their gathering truths out of the sacred writings, as the bee gathers honey out of the flowers; in allusion to those that gathered together the choice and pithy sentences and sayings of others, like the men of Hezekiah, Prov. xxv. 1. or to under-shepherds, gathering the sheep into the fold ^e, by the order of the principal one; who made use of goads, to drive away thieves or wild beasts; and nails, to preserve the sheepfold whole. And others think that not the words, but the masters of the assemblies themselves, are compared to *nails*, and read them, *and the masters of the assemblies are as nails fastened*^b; are well-established, firm and sure; see Isa. xxii. 23. and others take it to be no other than an epithet of the nails themselves, and render it, *as nails fixed, which are binders*; that is, great binding-nails, which, being fixed in boards, bind, compact, and hold them together; to which the words of the wise may be compared, being the means of compacting and holding together the church of God, comparable to a sheepfold; hence mention is made of the shepherd in the next clause: or of fixing the attention of the minds of men unto them, and of retaining them in memory, and to which they advert as first principles, and never swerve from them^f; but, that not ministers, the instruments, but the principal and efficient cause, may have the glory, it is added, *which are given from one Shepherd*; not Zorobabel, as Grotius; nor Moses, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Alshech; but Christ, the one Shepherd, set over the flock; and under whom the masters of assemblies, or pastors of churches, are, Ezek. xxxvii. 23. John x. 16. from whom they have their gifts and qualifications, their mission and commission; and are given to the churches, as pastors and teachers, to feed them, Ephes. iv. 10, 11. Jer. iii. 15. and from whom they have their food, the Gospel and the doctrines of it, to feed the flocks with, assigned to their care, John xvii. 8. and xxi. 15—17. though this is to be understood not to the exclusion of God, the Father of Christ, by whom all Scripture is inspired; nor of the Spirit, by whom holy men of God spake as they were moved, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 21.

Ver. 12. *And further, by these, my son, be admonished, &c.*] Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, may be intended, for whose sake, more especially, this book might be written; though it may take in every hearer

^c פּוֹמֵיכִים plantati, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Rambachius.

^d מְסֻבֵּי אֲדָמָה auctores, vel dominos collectionum, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

^e Vid. Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 575.

^b Veluti clavi infixi sunt domui, vel magistri congregationum, Schmidt.

^f Vid. De Dieu & Cocceium in loc. & Vitringam de Synag. Vet. 1. 1. par 2. c. 6. p. 377. & Hyde Not. in Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 94.

of this divine preacher, every disciple of this teacher, every subject of his kingdom, as well as every reader of this book, whom he thus addresses, and for whom he was affectionately concerned as a father for a son; that they might be enlightened with divine knowledge, warned of that which is evil, and admonished and advised to that which is good; by these words and writings of his own, and other wise men; and by these masters of assemblies, who, and their words, are from the one and chief Shepherd; to these they would do well to take heed, and to these only or chiefly. It may be rendered, *and what is the more excellent of these, he admonished*^k; to observe what is mentioned in the next verse, and lies in a few words, *Fear God, &c.* and especially Jesus Christ, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the sun and substance of the whole Bible; of what had been written in Solomon's time, and has been since: he is the most excellent part of it; or that which concerns him, in his person, offices, and grace: or thus; *and what is above, or more than these, beware of*^l; do not trouble thyself with any other writings; these are sufficient, all that is useful and valuable is to be found in them; and as for others, if read, read them with care and caution, and only as serving to explain these, and to promote the same ends and designs, or otherwise to be rejected. *Of making many books there is no end*; many books, it seems, were written in Solomon's time; there was the same itch of writing as now, it may be; but what was written was not to be mentioned with the sacred writings, were comparatively useless and worthless. Or the sense is, should Solomon, or any other, write ever so many volumes, it would be quite needless; and there would be no end of writing, for these would not give satisfaction and contentment; and which yet was to be had in the word of God; and therefore that should be closely attended to: though this may be understood, not only of making or composing books, but of getting them, as *Aben Ezra*; of purchasing them, and so making them a man's own. A man may lay out his money, and fill his library with books, and be very little the better for them; what one writer affirms, another denies; what one seems to have proved clearly, another rises up and points out his errors and mistakes; and this occasions replies and rejoinders, so that there is no end of these things, and scarce any profit by them; which, without so much trouble, may be found in the writings of wise men, inspired by God, and in which we should rest contented. *And much study is a weariness of the flesh*; the study of languages, and of the several arts and sciences, and of various subjects in philosophy and divinity, particularly in writing books on any of these subjects; which study is as fatiguing to the body, and brings as much weariness on it, as any manual and mechanic operation; it dries up the moisture of the body, con-

sumes the spirits, and gradually and insensibly impairs health, and brings on weakness, as well as weariness. Some render it, *much reading*, as *Jarchi*, and so *Mr. Broughton*; and *Aben Ezra* observes, that the word in the Arabic language so signifies: the Arabic word *lahag* signifies to desire any thing greedily, or to be greedily given and addicted to any thing^m; and so may denote such kind of reading here, or such a person who is *helluo*, a glutton at books, as *Cato* is said to be. And now reading books with such eagerness, and with constancy, is very wearisome, and is to little advantage; whereas reading the Scripture cheers and refreshes the mind, and is profitable and edifying. *Gussetius*ⁿ interprets it of much speaking, long orations, which naake weary.

Ver. 13. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, &c.*] Or the end^o of it. The sum and substance of it, what it all tends to and issues in; even the whole of what is contained in this book, and in all other divinely-inspired writings of Solomon or others; of all that were now written, or before, or since: this the preacher calls upon himself, as well as his hearers, to attend unto. Or it may be rendered, *the end of the whole matter is heard*^p; here ends this book; and you have heard the whole of what deserves regard, and it lies in these few words, *fear God, and keep his commandments*: the *fear of God* includes the whole of internal religion, or powerful godliness; all the graces of the spirit, and the exercise of them; reverence of God, love to him, faith in him, and in his Son Jesus Christ; hope of eternal life from him; humility of soul, patience and submission to his will, with every other grace; so the Heathens call religion *metum Deorum*^q, the fear of God: and *keeping of the commandments*, or obedience to the whole will of God, is the fruit, effect, and evidence of the former; and takes in all the commands of God, moral and positive, whether under the former or present dispensation; and an observance of them in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God. *For this is the whole duty of man*; or, *this is the whole man*^r; and makes a man a whole man, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing; whereas, without this, he is nothing, let him have ever so much of the wisdom, wealth, honour, and profits of this world. Or, *this is the whole of every man*^s; either, as we supply it, the duty, work, and business of every man, of every son of Adam, be he what he will, high or low, rich or poor, of every age, sex, and condition; or this is the happiness of every man, or that leads to it; this is the whole of it; this is the *summum bonum*, or chief happiness of men: *Lactantius*^t says, the *summum bonum* of a man lies in religion only; it lies in this, and not in any outward thing, as is abundantly proved in this book: and this should be the concern of every one, this being the chief end of man, and what, as *Jarchi*

^k ויתר ממהם potius inquam ex istis, Junius & Tremellius; quod potissimum ex istis, Gejerus.

^l Et amplius his, filii mi, Gejer, Mercerus.

^m Vid. Castell. Lexic. col. 1874. who gives an instance of the use of this word in the following sentence; וליקח "he that reads with his mouth, but his heart is not with it;" and so *Kimchi*, in *Sepher Shorash*, fol. 74. col. 2. explains the word here, "learning without understanding."

ⁿ Ebr. Comment, p. 431.

^o וכלל ענין דבר הכלל finis verbi omnis, Paginus, Montanus, Mercerus; finis universi negotii, Tigurine version, so *Vatablus*.

^p אשמע auditus est, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Mercerus.

^q Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 35. v. 36.

^r וזה כלל האדם hoc (est) omnis homo, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus; omnium hominum perfectio, Tigurine version; hoc est totus homo, Cocceus; this is all the man, Broughton.

^s Hoc est omnium hominum, Piscator, Gejerus, hoc est totum hominis, Junius & Tremellius.

^t De Fals. Sep. l. 3. c. 10.

that circle, in hundreds of places, is not used to point out any thing faulty in the copy; but is only a mark referring to the margin, and what is observed there; and be it that it does point out an error, or a faulty word, the same circle is over the word in Canticles, and consequently shews it to be faulty there, and to be corrected and read without the *yod*, as it was originally without it there; which observation destroys the argument from it: and so it is read in that place in the Talmud ^d without it, and in the ancient book of Zohar ^e; and indeed it seems as if it was read without the *yod* in the copies seen by the authors of the Little Masorah; since in their note on 1 Kings iii. 14. besides the five places in the Kings, where it is written full, or with the *yod*, they say, it is so written throughout the Chronicles, the twelve minor prophets, and Ezra, which includes Nehemiah; but make no mention of Solomon's Song, which, one would think, they would have done, had it been so written there in the copies before them: so that, upon the whole, the argument, if it has any force in it, turns out for, and not against, the antiquity of Solomon's Song. This book of Canticles has plain marks of a divine original, and proofs of its being of divine inspiration: it was written by one that was inspired of God, as appears by the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, written by him; and the greatness of the matter contained in it, the dignity, sublimity, and majesty of its style, shew it to be no human composure; the power and efficacy which it has had over the hearts of men, in reading it, and hearing it explained, is another evidence of its being the word of God, which is quick and powerful; the impartiality of it, the bride, who is introduced speaking in it, confessing and proclaiming her own failings and infirmities, is no inconsiderable proof of the same; to which may be added the agreement between this and other portions of Scripture, as particularly Psalm xlv. and there seem to be many allusions and references to various passages of this book in the New Testament; see Matt. ix. 13. and xiii. 52. and xxi. 38. and xxv. 1, &c. John iii. 8, 29. and vi. 44. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Ephes. v. 27. Col. ii. 17. Rev. iii. 20. and xix. 7, 8. compared with Cant. i. 3, 4. and ii. 17. and iv. 7, 16. and v. 1, 2. and vii. 13. and viii. 11, 12. In what time of Solomon's life this book was written is not agreed on: some of the Jewish writers say the book of Proverbs was written first, then the Song of Songs, and last of all Ecclesiastes; others, that the Song was wrote first, then Proverbs, and then Ecclesiastes ^f; though their chronologer ^g says they were all written in his old age, as indeed the last book seems to be; but the Song rather seems to have been written in the middle part of his life, when in the most flourishing circumstances as to body, mind, and estate. Dr. Lightfoot ^h is of opinion it might be written in the thirtieth year of his reign, about ten years before his death, after he had built his summer-house in Lebanon, to which he supposes respect is had in ch. iv. 8. and vii. 4. and upon his bringing Pharaoh's daughter to the house prepared for her, 1 Kings ix. 24. but be this at

it may, it was not a celebration of the amours between Solomon and her, since the literal sense, in many places, would be monstrous and absurd; and besides it must be written twenty years at least after that, if the house of the forest of Lebanon is referred to in the above places; nor does it set forth their amours, and the marriage between them, as typical of the inexpressible love and marriage-union between Christ and his church; though there is a resemblance between natural and spiritual marriage, and the love of persons in such a relation to one another, and to which there may be an allusion in some passages. Nor is this book historical and prophetic, expressing either the state of the people of Israel, from the times of Abraham to Solomon, and so to the Messiah; in which way go many Jewish interpreters, as the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others: nor is it to be considered as describing the state of the church of God, whether legal, from the times of David and Solomon, and before, in and after the captivity, to the birth and death of Christ; or the Gospel church, in its beginning, progress, various changes, and consummation, as Brightman and Cotton: nor as setting forth the several ages and periods of the Christian church, in agreement with the seven churches of Asia, as Cocceius, and those that follow him, Horchius, Hofman, and Heunischius; which latter, particularly, makes this distribution of them: 1. The Ephesian church, Cant. i. 5—17. from the ascension of Christ to heaven, A. C. 33, to 370. 2. The Smyrnan church, Cant. ii. 1—17. from A. C. 371, to 707. 3. The church at Pergamus, Cant. iii. 1—11. from A. C. 708, to 1045. 4. The Thyatirian church, Cant. iv. 1—ch. v. 1. from A. C. 1046, to 1383. 5. The Sardian church, Cant. v. 2—ch. vi. 8. from A. C. 1384, to 1721. 6. The church at Philadelphia, Cant. vi. 9—ch. vii. 14. from A. C. 1722, to 2059. 7. The Laodicean church, Cant. viii. 1—14. from A. C. 2060, and onwards. But these senses are very arbitrary, uncertain, and precarious, and limit the several parts of it to certain periods; whereas it is applicable to believers in all ages of time. The whole is figurative and allegorical; expressing, in a variety of lively metaphors, the love, union, and communion, between Christ and his church; setting forth the several different frames, cases, and circumstances of believers, in this life; so that they can be in no case and condition spiritual whatever, but there is something in this Song suitable to them; and which serves much to recommend it, and shews the excellency of it; and that it justly claims the title it bears, the Song of Songs, the most excellent. M. Bossuet ⁱ is of opinion, that whereas the nuptial feast with the Hebrews was kept seven days, this Song is to be distributed into seven parts, a part to be sung, one each day, during the celebration: The first day, ch. i.—ii. 16. The second day, ch. ii. 7—17. The third day, ch. iii.—v. 1. The fourth day, ch. v. 2.—vi. 9. The fifth day, ch. vi. 10—vii. 11. The sixth day, ch. vii. 12—viii. 3. The seventh day, ch. viii. 4—14. The thought is ingenious, but seems too fanciful, and without foundation.

^d T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 30. 1.

^e In Gen. fol. 114. 3.

^f Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 3. Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 28. 3.

^g Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. so Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 3.

^h See his Works, vol. 1. p. 76.

ⁱ Vid. Lowth de Sac. Poesi Heb. Praelect. 20. p. 393, 394. & Not. Michaelis in ibid. p. 156—159.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the general title of the book, ver. 1, the church expresses her strong desires, and most ardent wishes, for some fresh discoveries of the love of Christ to her, and for communion with him; having tasted of his love, smelt a sweet savour in his grace, and enjoyed fellowship with him in his house, ver. 2—4. She observes her blackness and uncomeliness in herself; the trials and afflictions she met with from others; and her carelessness and negligence of her own affairs, ver. 5, 6, and entreats her beloved to direct her where she might meet with him, feeding his flocks, and giving them rest, to which he returns a kind and gracious answer; gives her proper instructions where to find him, ver. 7, 8, and commends her beauty; sets forth her amiableness and loveliness, by various metaphors; and makes promises of more grace and good things to her, ver. 9—11. And then she declares what a value she had for Christ, her beloved; and how precious he was unto her, like a bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire, ver. 12—14. Christ again praises her beauty; and particularly takes notice of her eyes, and her modest look, ver. 15, and she returns the encomium back to him, and expresses her pleasure and satisfaction in the house he had built for her, and the furniture of it, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *The Song of songs, which is Solomon's.*] Wrote by Solomon, king of Israel, as the *amanuensis* of the Holy Ghost; and not by Hezekiah and his men, as the Jews say^k: or, concerning Solomon^l; Christ, of whom Solomon was a type; see ch. iii. 7, of his person, excellencies, love to his church, care of her, and concern for her; and of the nearness and communion he admitted her to, and indulged her with. The Jews have a saying^m, that wherever the word Solomon is used in this song, the holy One is meant, the holy God, or Messiah: it is called the *Song of songs*, because the most excellent, as the Holy of holies, King of kings, &c. which, with the Hebrews, express a superlative; this being more excellent than the one hundred and five songs, written by Solomon, or than any human composure whatever; yea, preferable to all Scriptural songs, as to subject, manner of style, and copiousness of expression, and the comprehensiveness of it.

Ver. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, &c.*] That is, Solomon; Christ, the antitype of Solomon, the church's beloved; or it is a relative without an antecedent, which was only in her own mind, *let him*; him, whom her thoughts were so much employed about; her affections were so strongly after; and whose image was as it were before her, present to her mind: and the *kisses of his mouth*, she desires, intend some fresh manifestations and discoveries of his love to her; by some precious word of promise from his mouth, applied to her; and

by an open espousal of her, and the consummation of marriage with her. It may be rendered, *with one of the kisses of his mouth*ⁿ; kisses with the ancients were very rare, and used but once when persons were espoused, and as a token of that; and then they were reckoned as husband and wife^o: on which account, it may be, it is here desired; since it was after this we hear of the spouse being brought into the nuptial chamber, and of the keeping of the nuptial feast, ver. 4, 12. *For thy love is better than wine*; or *loves*^p; which may denote the abundance of it; the many blessings of grace which flow from it; and the various ways in which it is expressed; as well as the high esteem the church had of it. This is said to be *better than wine*: for the antiquity of it, it being from everlasting; and for the purity of it, being free from all dregs of dissimulation and deceit on the part of Christ, and from all merit, motives, and conditions, on the part of the church; for its plenty, being shed plentifully in the hearts of believers, and who may drink abundantly of it; and for its freeness and cheapness, being to be had without money and without price; and it is preferable to wine for the effects of it; which not only revives and cheers heavy hearts, but quickens dead sinners, and comforts distressed saints; and of which they may drink plentifully, without hurt, yea, to great advantage.

Ver. 3. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, &c.*] It was usual for lovers to anoint themselves, their hair, garments, &c. to recommend themselves to each other; and it was common to commend, each other's ointments, and the grateful smell of them^q, none being like them, or so agreeable as theirs: by these ointments may be meant the grace of Christ, the fulness of it, the oil of gladness with which he is anointed above his fellows, and without measure; and which so greatly recommends him to his church and people, Psal. xlv. 7. John i. 14. *Thy name is as ointment poured forth*; which emits the greater odour for its being poured forth out of the box. The very names of lovers are dear to one another, sweeter than nectar itself^r; the very mention of them gives an inexpressible pleasure. This may respect not merely the fame of Christ spread abroad in the world through the ministry of the word; nor the Gospel only, which is his name, Acts ix. 15. and is like a box of ointment broke open, which diffuses the savour of his knowledge everywhere; but some precious name of his, as Immanuel, God with us; Jesus, a Saviour; but more particularly his name Messiah, which signifies anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. *Therefore do the virgins love thee*: for the preciousness of his person, the fulness of grace in him, and the truths of his Gospel: and which love shews itself in a desire of his presence, and communion with him; in a

^k T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 7.

^l שלמה של שולמון, de Solomone, Cocceius.

^m Maimon. Yesode Hatorah, c. 6. s. 12.

ⁿ מימיך כמימיך או לאותם, vel altero de oculis oris sui, Michælis; so Guesetius, p. 446.

^o Salmuth. in Pancrol. Memorab. Rer. par. 1. tit. 46. p. 215.

^p פרי ריך amores tui, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

^q Nam omnium unguentum odos præ tua nautæ est, Plauti Curculio, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 5.

^r Nomen nectari dulcius beato, Martial. l. 9. Epigr. 9.

regard to his word and worship, to his truths and ordinances; and to his people, to conversation and communion with them. By these virgins are meant either congregational churches that strictly adhere to Christ, and to his pure worship; or particular believers, for their inviolate attachment to him; for the singleness and sincerity of their love to him; for their incorruptness in the doctrine of faith; for the truth and spirituality of their worship; for the purity of their lives and conversations; for their beauty and comeliness through Christ; for their gay and costly attire, being clothed with his righteousness; and for their modest behaviour, having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

Ver. 4. *Draw me, &c.*] With the cords of love, for what draw lovers to each other more strongly? under the influence of that they cannot bear to be without each other's company. Aben Ezra takes these words to be spoken by the virgins, who every one of them said this, promising upon it to follow after the drawer; but they are rather the request of the church, desirous of nearer and more intimate communion with Christ; for this is not to be understood of drawing at first conversion, as the fruit of love, and under the influence of grace, Jer. xxi. 3. John vi. 44. but of being brought nearer to Christ, and to enjoy more of him. *We will run after thee*: the church and the virgins, she and her companions, or particular believers; every one of them in their respective stations would act with more vigour upon such drawings; would run in a way of duty, follow Christ, and walk in his steps; and as they had him for an example, and according to his word, and in the ways of his commandments: or *that we may run after thee*⁶; intimating that there is no running without drawing; no following Christ, at least no running after him with alacrity and cheerfulness, without being drawn by his love, and influenced by his grace. *The King hath brought me into his chambers*: the blessing she sought after, and was so solicitous for in the preceding verses; namely, to have the marriage consummated, to be owned by Christ as his spouse and bride, by taking her home, and introducing her into the nuptial chamber; by putting her into the enjoyment of himself, and the possession of his substance: and this being done by him as King of saints, yea, of the world, shewed great condescension on his part, and great honour bestowed on her; since by this act, as he was King, she was declared queen! *We will be glad and rejoice in thee*: she and her bridesmaids, the virgins that attended her; that is, *when he should introduce her into his chambers*, as some⁷ render the words; then they should express their joy and gladness on that occasion; and *that in the greatness, glory, and fitness of his person; in the fulness of grace in him; in the blessings of grace from him; in what he has done for, and is to his church and people; in the offices he bears, and in the relations he stands in to them; and particularly that of a husband, now declared. We will remember thy love more than wine*: which, upon the introduction of the bride to the

bridegroom, might be plentifully drank; of the preferableness of Christ's love to wine, see the note on ver. 2. it may design more particularly the love of Christ, expressed at this time of solemnizing the marriage between him and his church in an open manner, Hos. ii. 19. and which would never be forgotten: Christ's love is remembered when thought of and meditated upon; when faith is exercised on it, and the desires of the soul are drawn after it, and the affections set upon it; and when it is often spoken of to others, being uppermost in the mind; saints under the Gospel dispensation have an ordinance for this purpose, to commemorate the love of Christ. *The upright love thee; or uprightnesses*⁸; men of upright hearts and conversations, who have right spirits renewed in them; or Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; who have the truth of grace in them, walk uprightly according to the rule of God's word, and the Gospel of Christ; and do all they do sincerely, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; such love Christ superlatively, sincerely, fervently, and constantly; and *love him rightly, or most uprightly*, as some⁹ render the phrase.

Ver. 5. *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, &c.*] The church having obtained of Christ what she wanted, turns to the daughters of Jerusalem, the same perhaps with the virgins her companions; they seem to be young converts, it may be not yet members of the visible church, but had a great respect for the church, and she for them; and who, though they had but a small knowledge of Christ her beloved, yet were desirous of knowing more of him, and seeking him with her; see ch. iii. 9—11. and v. 8, 9. and vi. 1. to these she gives this character of herself, that she was *black* in herself¹⁰, through original sin and actual transgression; in her own eyes, through indwelling sin, and many infirmities, spots, and blemishes in life; and in the eyes of the world, through afflictions, persecutions, and reproaches, she was attended with, and so with them the offscouring of all things: *but comely* in the eyes of Christ, called by him his *fair one, the fairest among women, and even all fair*, ver. 8. 15. and ch. iv. 7. through his comeliness put upon her, the imputation of his righteousness to her; through the beauties of holiness upon her; through the sanctifying influences of his Spirit; and, being in a church-state, walking in Gospel order, attending to the commands and ordinances of Christ; and so beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem, ch. vi. 4. and upon all accounts *desirable*¹¹ to Christ, and to his people, as the word may be rendered. *As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon*: each of which are thought by some to refer to both parts of her character; and suppose that the tents of Kedar, though they might look mean without, were full of wealth and riches within; and Solomon's curtains, or hangings, might have an outward covering not so rich and beautiful as they were within-side; but rather the blackness of the church is designed by the one, and her comeliness by

⁶ נרצוה at carramus, so some in Marekuis.

⁷ Quum introduce: it me, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Schmidt.

⁸ ארצוה מישרים, arca, Sept. recituidines, Montanus, Vatablus, Marcius, Michaelis, so some in Vatablus.

⁹ Junius & Tremellius, so Cocceius and Jarchi.

¹⁰ Nigra per naturam, formosa per gratiam, Aug. de Tempore, serm. 201. p. 354. tom. 10. Fusca per culpam, decora per gratiam, Ambros. in Peal. cxvii. octon. 2. col. 891. tom. 2.

¹¹ ארצוה optabilis, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus; so Aben Ezra.

the other. With respect to her blackness, she compares herself to the tents of Kedar, to the inhabitants of those tents, who were of a black or swarthy complexion; Kedar signifies the name of a man whose posterity these were, that dwelt in tents, even of Kedar the second son of Ishmael, and who inhabited some part of Arabia; and, their employment being to feed cattle, moved from place to place for the sake of pasturage, and so dwelt in tents, which they could easily remove, and hence were called Scenites; and the tents they dwelt in being made of hair-cloth, and continually exposed to the sun and rain, were very black, and yet a number of them made a fine appearance, as Dr. Shaw relates²; though black, yet were beautiful to behold; he says, "the Bedoween Arabs at this day live in tents called *hhymes*, from the shelter which they afford the inhabitants; and *beet el shaar*, i. e. *houses of hair*, from the materials or webs of goats' hair whereof they were made; and are such hair-cloth as our coal-sacks are made of; the colour of them is beautifully alluded to, Cant. i. 5. for nothing certainly can afford (says he) a more delightful prospect than a large extensive plain, whether in its verdure, or even scorched up by the sunbeams, than these movable habitations pitched in circles upon them; of which (he says) he has seen from three to three hundred." And for her comeliness the church compares herself either to the curtains of Solomon, about his bed, or to the rich hangings of tapestry in the several apartments of his palace, which no doubt were very costly and magnificent.

Ver. 6. *Look not upon me, &c.*] Meaning not with scorn and disdain because of her meanness; nor as prying into her infirmities to expose her; nor with joy at her trials and afflictions; neither of these can be supposed in the daughters of Jerusalem addressed by her: but rather, not look on her as amazed at her sufferings, as though some strange thing had befallen her; not at her blackness only, on one account or another, lest they should be stumbled; but at her beauty also. *Because I am black*; or *blackish*: somewhat black³, but not so black as might be thought, or as she was represented: the radicals of the word being doubled, some understand it as diminishing; but rather it increases the signification; see Psal. xlv. 2. Prov. viii. 31. and so it may be rendered *very black*⁴, exceeding black; and this she repeats for the sake of an opportunity of giving the reason of it, as follows. *Because the sun hath looked upon me*: and had burnt her, and made her black; which effect the sun has on persons in some countries, and especially on such who are much abroad in the fields, and employed in rural services⁵; as she was, being a keeper of vineyards, as in this verse, and of flocks of sheep, as in the following. This may be understood of the sun of persecution that had beat upon her, and had left such impressions on her, and had made her in this hue, and which she bore patiently; nor was she ashamed of it; nor should she be upbraided with it, nor slighted on account of it, see Matt. xiii. 6, 21.

My mother's children were angry with me; by whom may be meant carnal professors, members of the same society, externally children of the same mother, pretend to godliness, but are enemies to it: these were angry with the church for holding and defending the pure doctrines of the Gospel; for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; and for faithful reproofs and admonitions to them and others, for their disagreeable walk; and these grieved the church, and made her go mourning, and in black; and more blackened her character and reputation than any thing else whatever: though it may be understood of any carnal men, who descend from mother Eve, or spring from mother earth, angry with the church and her members for preciseness in religion; and particularly violent persecutors of her, who yet would be thought to be religious, may be intended. *They made me the keeper of the vineyards*; this is another thing that added to her blackness, lying abroad in the fields to keep the vineyards of others, by which may be meant false churches, as true ones are sometimes signified by them; and her compliance with their corrupt worship and ordinances, which was not voluntary, but forced; *they made me, obliged her, and this increased her blackness*; as also what follows. *But mine own vineyard have I not kept*; which made her blacker still; her church-state, or the spiritual affairs of her own, her duty and business incumbent on her⁶, were sadly neglected by her: and this sin of her's she does not pretend to extenuate by the usage of her mother's children; but ingeniously confesses the fault was her own, to neglect her own vineyard and keep others, which was greatly prejudicial to her, and was resented by Christ; upon which it seems he departed from her, since she was at a loss to know where he was, as appears from the following words. With the Romans, neglect of fields, trees, and vineyards, came under the notice of the censors, and was not to go unpunished⁷.

Ver. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, &c.*] With all her heart, cordially and sincerely; for, notwithstanding her sinful compliance with others, and neglect of her own affairs, she had not lost her love to Christ; and, being sensible of her sin and folly, whereby she was deprived of his company, and communion with him, applies to him to guide, direct, and restore her wandering soul; and particularly inform her *where*, says she, *thou feedest*; that is, his flock, like a shepherd: for this phrase supposes him to be a shepherd, as he is, of God's choosing, appointing, and setting up, the chief, the good, the great, and only Shepherd of the sheep; and that he has a flock to feed, which is but one, and a little one, is his property, given him by God, purchased by his blood, called a flock of slaughter, and yet a beautiful one, he has undertook to feed; and feeding it includes the whole business of a shepherd, in leading the sheep into pastures, protecting them from all enemies, restoring them when wandering, healing their diseases, watching over them in the night-seasons, and making all necessary provisions for them. Or, *tell*

² Travels, p. 220. edit. 2. See Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. Solin. Polyhist. c. 46.

³ שחוררורו paululum denigrata, Pagninus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremolinus, Piscator, Cocceius; so Ainsworth and Aben Ezra.

⁴ Valde fusca, Bochart; prorsus vel valde, & tota nigra, Marckius, Michaelis.

⁵ Perusta solibus pernecis uxor, Horat. Epod. Ode 2. v. 41, 42. *Ανακαρνα*, Theocrit. Idyll. 10. v. 27.

⁶ So Horace calls his own works *Vineta*, Epist. l. 2. Ep. 1. v. 230.

⁷ A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 4. c. 12.

me how thou feedest¹; the manner of it, and with what; which he does by his ministers, word, and ordinances; with himself, the bread of life; with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel, and with the discoveries of his love. *Where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.* either at the noon of temptation, when Satan's fiery darts fly thick and fast; when Christ is a shadow and shelter in his person, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, Isa. xxv. 4, 5. or the noon of affliction, when he makes their bed in it, and gives them rest from adversity; or the noon of persecution, when Christ leads his flocks to cooling shades, and gives them rest in himself, when troubled by others: the allusion is to shepherds, in hot countries, leading their flocks to some shady place, where they may be sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun; which, as Virgil says², was at the fourth hour, or ten o'clock, two hours before noon; we read of *περὸ βῆτα μισσηβριαζοντα*³, sheep nooning themselves, or lying down at noon, under a shade, by a fountain, asleep. *For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?* not real associates with Christ, that keep company with him, and are attached to his word and ordinances; but false friends, hypocrites and heretics⁴, rivals with him, who set up schemes of worship and doctrine in opposition to his; such as Papists, Socinians, &c. now such false teachers have had their flocks in all ages, such as have followed them, and have formed separate societies; and therefore the church, sensible of their craftiness, and her own weakness, and liability to go astray, desires she might not be under, and left to such a temptation, as to apostatize from Christ, and join to such persons and their flocks, or seem to do so: or, *be as one that covereth herself, or is covered*⁵; as a harlot; so Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 14. or as a widow in mourning; she chose not to be, or to be thought to be, either as one that left her husband, an unchaste woman; or had lost her husband, or as if she had none, when neither was the case: or, *as one that spreads the tent*⁶; by the flocks of such; as if in communion with them, and joining with them in feeding their flocks; and therefore desires she might speedily know where Christ was, and repair to him, that such an aspersion or suspicion might at once be wiped from her.

Ver. 8. *If thou know not, &c.*] Or, *seeing thou knowest not*^m; the saints in this imperfect state know but in part, are ignorant of many things, and in some measure of themselves; for though they know much of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of their hearts, yet they know not all; and of their imperfection and weakness, yet not the whole of it; and some render the words, *if thou know not to thee, or, for thyself*, as Ainsworth; or *know not thyself*ⁿ, as others; hence Ambrose^o observes, that *nosce teipsum* was not originally from the Pythian oracle; Solomon had it before that, and he from Moses, Deut. iv. 9. Saints have not a perfect knowledge of Christ and his truths, and are sometimes at a loss to know where

he is, his word is purely preached, and his ordinances faithfully administered. *O thou fairest among women*; these are not the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, as some think, who were not capable of giving her the following advice and directions; but of Christ himself, to whom the church applied for it; who, though black in her own eyes, and in the eyes of others, yet was fair, surpassingly fair, fairer than all others in his eye, even notwithstanding her late sinfulness and negligence; which shews the invariableness and unalterableness of his love; who directs her as follows. *Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock*; not from the footsteps^p; as if it was an exhortation to depart from false teachers, their doctrine and worship, and the abettors of them, she was tempted to turn aside to; but the footsteps are the rule and mark by which she was to go, and on which she was to keep her eye, and steer her course by, in seeking after Christ: for by the flock is meant the flock of Christ; and by the footsteps of it the ways and ordinances in which saints walk in obedience to Christ; and who are to be followed so far as they follow him; their steps are to be trod in; and this is the readiest and most likely way to find Christ, even where saints meet together, the word is preached, and ordinances administered. *And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents*; the faithful ministers of the word, who are Christ's under-shepherds, have their mission and commission from him, and are qualified by him to feed his flocks, and do feed them by the pure administration of the word and ordinances; and by the tents are meant the places of public worship, where they usually preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances. The allusion is to the tents of shepherds pitched for the convenience of feeding their flocks; and by or near^q these the church is directed to feed her kids, young converts weak in the faith; men of little faith, as Aben Ezra interprets it; called kids or young goats, lascivious^r, and of an ill smell; because of sin in them, of an ill smell to themselves and others; and of whom the world have an ill opinion; and such on all accounts need encouragement from the church and ministers. It was common in the eastern countries, as Philo says^s of the Arabs, not for men only to keep flocks, but women also, and young virgins; and not the common people only, but nobles; of women keeping flocks see Gen. xxix. 9. Exod. ii. 16. This and the preceding verse shew this song to be a pastoral; since the bridegroom and bride, the principal persons in it, are represented in it as a shepherd and shepherdess.

Ver. 9. *I have compared thee, O my love, &c.*] The church having taken the direction of Christ, had now found him, and was with him; and when for her encouragement and comfort he salutes her as his love, an appellation very usual among lovers; and in the chastest sense between husband and wife; the church was Christ's love, being both the object and subject of it; to whom he had shewed love, and whose love was

¹ *אִיבָה תִּרְעָה* quomodo pascas? Tigurine version; so the Syriac version and Jarchi; see Ainsworth.

² Inde, ubi quarta sitima cœli collegerit hora, Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 327.

³ Platonis Phædrus, p. 1230.

⁴ So Stockius, p. 302.

⁵ *אִיבָה* quasi operiens se, Piscator; ut obnubens, Cocceius; sicut obvelans se, Marckius; velut operata, Michaelis.

⁶ So Junius & Tremellius.

^m *אִיבָה* quandoquidem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ⁿ So the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

^o Hexæmeron. l. 6. c. 6. & in Psal. cxviii. octon. 2. p. 883.

^p So Junius & Tremellius.

^q Juxta, V. L. Piscator, Michaelis; apud, Mercerus, Cocceius.

^r Hoedi petulci, Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. v. 10. Lasciva capella, Bucol.

^s Eclog. 2. v. 64. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 15. v. 12.

^t De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 610. Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 2. c. 11. s. 2.

shed abroad in her heart; or *my friend*¹, another name used among lovers; there is a mutual friendship between Christ and his people; they are Christ's friends, and he is theirs, ch. v. 1, 16. The Septuagint render it *my neighbour*, whom Christ loves as himself; and they dwell near each other; he dwells in them, and they in him, John vi. 56. and here are compared by him to a *company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots*. or *I have likened thee*, or reckoned thee like"; formed such an image of thee in my mind, with regard to some peculiar excellencies in her which agreed therewith: or to *my mare*², as some translate the word, which ran in one of his chariots, called Pharaoh's chariot; because perhaps it was made a present of to him by Pharaoh king of Egypt, his father-in-law, for which he had a particular regard, as Alexander for his Bucephalus; nor is such a comparison of a woman a disagreeable one, since, as Marckius observes, many women have had their names from the horse, because of some celebrated excellency in them³; and Theocritus⁴ compares Queen Helena to a Thessalian horse in a chariot; and it is thought he took the hint from this song, as admiring it; so, by others⁵, persons are compared to mares for their beautiful form. Christ's church and people may be compared to *the horse* for their strength, courage, majesty, and comeliness; they are strong in Christ, and in his grace, and of an undaunted courage in bearing hardships, reproaches, and persecutions for his sake, and in fighting the Lord's battles; and are stately and majestic, especially a company of them in Gospel order, ch. vi. 4. and are very comely and beautiful in their trappings, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and the graces of his Spirit; and to a *company of them*, a collection of goodly ones, as Egyptian ones, reckoned the best; and those in Pharaoh's chariot best of all; choice, costly, well fed, and well taken care of; and not wild and loose, but coupled and joined together in a chariot, all drawing one way. Christ's church and people are a choice and select company, distinguished from others by the grace of God; cost a great price, the blood of Christ; are well fed with the finest of the wheat; and are under the care both of angels and Gospel ministers; and look very beautiful as under the yoke of Christ, and joined together in Gospel bonds, being of the same faith and judgment; drawing one way, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Ver. 10. *Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, &c.*] Or *beautiful as turtle-doves*, as the Septuagint; or it may be rendered *with turtles*, since the word *jewels* is not in the text; not with images of turtles on the bridles of the horses before mentioned, as Aben Ezra; but rather some ornaments of women having such images on them may be meant, called *turtles*, or *turtrellas*; they seem to me to be the same with the

ear-rings, which being fastened to a thin plate of gold or silver, which went across the forehead, or to a ribbon bound on it, as Aben Ezra on Gen. xxiv. 22. observes, hung down by the ears in rows on both sides of the cheeks, and made but one ornament; as they did when another jewel from the same plate or ribbon hung down from the forehead to the nose, called a nose-jewel, Ezek. xvi. 12.⁶; and such an ornament, consisting of these several parts, Abraham's servant is said to put upon the face or cheeks of Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 47. and these may respect the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, with which the church is ornamented; and are many and various, and are orderly and regularly disposed, and make very comely and lovely, and may be further described in the next clause. *Thy neck with chains of gold*; the word *gold* not being in the text, the chains may be understood, as they commonly are by the Jewish writers, of precious stones; as pearls bored and strung, which make a necklace; so Stockius⁷ interprets it of an ornament of pearls and precious stones, orderly disposed and put about the neck, in use with great personages; so the eldest daughter of Priamus had, *collo monile baccatum*⁸, a pearl necklace, which Æneas made a present of to Dido; such was the chain of gold, beset with amber, presented to Penelope by her suitors, which shone like the sun⁹. The church has her golden chain, or pearl necklace; which are either the graces of the spirit, so linked together, that where there is one there are all; and which consists of those ten links, or pearls, faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, self-denial, contentment in every state, spiritual knowledge, long-suffering, or forbearance; sincerity goes through them all. Or else the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, with which the church and all the saints are blessed in Christ at once, and with one and all; and which golden chain of salvation, one link of which cannot be broken, is excellently described by the apostle in Rom. viii. 30.

Ver. 11. *We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.*] Christ here in his own name, and in the name of the other two divine Persons, promises to the church a greater glory than as yet she had enjoyed; and seems to have respect to the Gospel dispensation; for by *golden borders* studded with *silver* may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel, preferable to those under the law,; and therefore said to be of *gold and silver*, for their glory, splendour, and durability; or else the doctrines of the Gospel, being of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and being called *borders*, or rather *rows*¹⁰, may denote their orderly disposition and connexion, their harmony and agreement with and dependence on each other: and the Gospel is full of silver *specks* or *studs* of exceeding great and precious promises; a variety of them useful and pleasant; a greater measure of the grace of the spirit

¹ שְׂמֵיךְ *smica mea*, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Michaelis.
² שְׂמֵיךְ דְּמִיתוּן *similem te judico*, Tigurine version.
³ שְׂמֵיךְ דְּמִיתוּן *similem te judico*, Sept.; *equæ meæ*, Pagninus, Montanus, Guesetius, p. 551. so Aben Ezra, Syriac and Arabic versions; *equabus*, Piscator.
⁴ As Hippo, Hippæ, Hippin, Hippodomia, Hippothoe, Hipponoc, Mercippe, Alcippe, Archippe.
⁵ Idyll. 19. v. 29.

⁶ ἰσπὸς τῶν καλῶν, Theognis Sententia, v. 257. ἢ ὅ ἴσπασ-εἰδὸ ἀριστῆ, Phocylides. So by Plato in Hippias Major, p. 1250. & Horat. Carmiu. l. 3. Ode 11. v. 9.
⁷ Vid. Hieronym. in ibid.
⁸ Clavis Ling. S. p. 387.
⁹ Virgil. Æneid. 1. v. 658.
¹⁰ Homer. Odysse. 18. v. 295.
¹¹ שְׂמֵיךְ *ordines*, Marckius, Michaelis.

may be here promised: or the *borders* may intend the groundwork of the church's faith and hope, the justifying righteousness of Christ, more clearly revealed; and the *studs of silver* the curious work of sanctification, more enlarged and increased; and so take in both Christ's righteousness imputed to her, and his grace implanted in her; but perhaps these phrases may be best of all understood of the New-Jerusalem state, and of the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, sometimes set forth by such similes, Isa. liv. 11, 12. Rev. xxi. 18, 19, 21. Both grace and glory are given by Christ, and in which all the three divine Persons are concerned; for not angels, nor the daughters of Jerusalem, are here the speakers, to whom such things promised cannot agree; nor God, speaking after the manner of men, and for honour's sake, is designed; but the trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are meant; the ordinances are of their institution, and administered in their name, Matt. xxviii. 19. they have all a concern in the Gospel and the doctrines of it, which is called the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ, and the ministration of the Spirit; the grace of God, in regeneration and conversion, is sometimes ascribed to one and sometimes to another; and an increase of it in the heart is wished for from all three, Rev. i. 4. and they have a hand in all the glory the saints shall enjoy hereafter: the Father has prepared the kingdom from the foundation of the world; the Son has made way for it by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and the Spirit is the earnest of it, makes meet for it, and introduces into it.

Ver. 12. *While the King sitteth at his table, &c.*] These are the words of the church, relating what influence the presence of Christ, her Lord and King, had upon the exercise of her graces, while he was keeping the nuptial feast, on account of his marriage with her. He was anointed King of saints from eternity, before his incarnation, when he was rejoicing before God his Father, as if at a feast; and while he was thus distant, the faith, hope, desire, and expectation of the saints, were exercised on him, as their Lord and King, that was to come: when he did come, he came as a King, as was foretold of him, though his kingdom was not of this world; and while he was here, the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven was preached, and emitted a sweet savour in Judea: and when he went up to heaven, after his resurrection, he was declared Lord and Christ, and sat down at the right hand of God, *in his circuit*¹, or at his round table; alluding to such the ancients used, and great personages fed on, peculiar to themselves²; being encircled by angels and glorified saints: and in the mean while, before his second coming as King, when he will appear as such in a more glorious manner, he sits down at his table, in the ordinance of the supper, feasting with, entertaining, and welcoming his church and people. When, as follows, she says, *my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*: or *nard*, of which there are many sorts;

but that which grows in spikes is reckoned the best, and from thence is called *spikenard*: it was a chief ingredient in ointments, as Pliny says³; see John xii. 3. and was much used at festivals, to anoint guests with; and with which their head and hair being anointed, gave a fragrant smell, and therefore used to make them acceptable⁴: in Syria, at royal banquets, as this here was, it was usual to go round the guests, to sprinkle them with Babylonian ointment⁵. This may have respect to the grace of the spirit in the church, comparable to the most excellent ointment; and which grace being in exercise in her, both before and after the incarnation of Christ, and since his ascension to heaven, and whilst he grants his presence in Gospel ordinances, is very delightful and acceptable to Christ; or this spikenard, according to some⁶, may be meant of Christ himself, just as he is said to be in the following verses *a bundle of myrrh*, and *a cluster of camphire*: and as ointments were used at feasts, and the church was at one with Christ, and as he was both master and feast, so he was the ointment of spikenard to her; and it is as if she should say, my beloved is at table with me; he is my food, and he is my spikenard⁷; I need no other; he is instead of spikenard, myrrh, cypress, or any unguents made of these: his person is exceeding precious; his graces, or ointments, have a delightful savour in them; his sacrifice is of a sweet odour; his garments of righteousness and salvation smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; he is all in all.

Ver. 13. *A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me, &c.*] These are the words of the church continued; expressing her great delight in Christ, and her strong love and affection for him, and therefore calls him *my well-beloved*; which is expressive both of the greatness of Christ's love to her, and of the strength of her affection to him, as well as of her faith of interest in him; hence she says, he was as *a bundle of myrrh* to her. Some think⁸ sweet marjoram is meant, or an herb of a sweet smell, very much like it, called *marum*; but myrrh is commonly understood; and not twigs or branches of it but sprigs, or the flowers of it, bound up as a nosegay, and carried in the bosom; or better, liquid myrrh, or *stacte*, as the Septuagint render it, put in a bag⁹ or bottle, as the word is rendered, Job xiv. 7. Hag. i. 6. the allusion being to persons that carry smelling-bottles in their bosoms, for refreshment or for pleasure. Now what these were to such, that, and much more, is Christ to his church; like sweet-smelling myrrh, exceeding delightful and reviving, and make him very acceptable; his very garments smell of myrrh: and *a bundle* of this, or a bag of it, denotes the abundance of the odours of divine grace in Christ, who is full of it, which he communicates in great plenty: and now Christ is all this, not to any and every one; but to his church and people, to whom alone he is precious, *my beloved is unto me*; which expresses not only the strength of her affection to Christ, and the value she had for him, and the delight she had in him;

¹ מְסָבֵב in circuitu suo, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis.

² Vid. Cuperi Observ. l. 1. c. 2. p. 13.

³ Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 12.

⁴ Illius puro destillant tempora nardo, Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 2. v. 7. & l. 3. Eleg. 7. v. 31. Madidas nardo comas, Martial. l. 3. Ep. 56. tinge caput nardi folio, ibid. Assvriaque nardo potum uncti, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 11. v. 16, 17. Vid. Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3.

⁵ Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 15. c. 13. p. 692.

⁶ Theodoret, Sanctius, and Marcius.

⁷ Tu mihi stacte, tu cinnamomum, &c. Plauti Curculio, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 6.

⁸ Vid. Fortunat. Schæce. Eleocharim. Sacr. l. 1. c. 51. p. 256, 257.

⁹ מְבִילֵי פִלְלִימִים, Coecceus; sacculuna, Marckius; fasciculus, vel sacculus, Michaelis.

but the particular application of him to her own soul by faith. *He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts: it or he;* the bundle of myrrh, or Christ, which comes to the same sense: by her *breasts* are meant her heart, where Christ dwells by faith, which is the best room the church has, and where she desires Christ might lodge; so Alshech explains it of being in her heart: and the time in which she would have him continue here is *all night*; meaning the night of affliction, temptation, &c. or rather the whole time of this life, until the everlasting day breaks; and so it is a desire of Christ's presence with her, and of her having communion with him, as long as she lived in the world; and between her breasts, and in her bosom, she desires he might be for an ornament to her, like sweet flowers, and for her delight and pleasure, refreshment and comfort; and that he might be always in her sight, and never be forgotten by her.

Ver. 14. *My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.*] En-gedi was a place near Jericho, and famous for palm-trees, as that was, hence called Hazzazon-tamar, 2 Chron. xx. 2. Pliny⁷, speaking of this place, which he calls Engadda, says, it is second to Jerusalem for fertility and groves of palm-trees; and Josephus⁸ observes, that there grew the best palm-trees and opobalsam; wherefore Aben Ezra, and other Jewish writers, think that dates, the fruit of the palm-trees, which grow in clusters, are here meant: and because the balsam-tree also grew in this place, as observed before from Josephus, and grew in the manner of vines, as others⁹ assert; and this being said to be in vineyards, some have thought that that might be intended; but what is valuable in it is a gum or tear, that drops from it, and not fruit in clusters, which it bears not: nor can it be supposed that what we call *camphire* should be meant, which grows not in clusters, and was unknown to the ancients; nor the *cyperus*, or *cypripus*, as Cocceius and others. The Septuagint version renders it *cyprus*: and there was a tree of this name which grew in Ascalon in Judea, which, according to Pliny⁷, bore a white flower of a sweet smell; and which, in Italy, was called *ligustrum*, the privet-tree, commended by the poets¹⁰ for its peculiar whiteness; and the cypress-tree is reckoned by Josephus¹¹ among the odoriferous trees which grew about Jericho, near to which En-gedi was. The word here used is to be found in the Misnah¹²; and the commentators¹³ on it say, it is the same which, in Arabic, is called *alhena*, the cypress-tree, and refer to this place; of which Dr. Shaw¹⁴ says, "this beautiful and odoriferous plant, *alhenna*, if it is not annually cut, and kept low, grows ten or twelve feet high, putting out its little flowers in clusters, which yield a most grateful smell, like camphire." But, after all, perhaps the Cyprus vine is here meant, which, according

to Pliny⁷, was the best and largest of vines; and which, though it grew in Cyprus, from whence it had its name, yet some plants of it might be obtained by Solomon, and planted in the vineyards of En-gedi; or there were such there like them, and were called by the same name: Jarchi, from an ancient exposition of theirs, relates, that the vineyards of this place brought forth fruit four or five times a year; Alshech says seven. Now as Christ compares himself to a vine, John xv. 1. the church may compare him to a cluster of the grapes of the Cyprus vine, reckoned the best; there being a cluster of all perfections, divine and human, in him; and of all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant, and of all the precious promises in it; and of all the grace of the spirit, and the fulness of it, which is in him. The Jews calls a man, eminent for virtue, and a large share of knowledge, *clusters*¹⁵; and they interpret *eschol*, a cluster, by *יש שוכך בו*, a man that has all things in him¹⁶: such an one is Christ, in the highest sense, having all perfections, excellencies, and virtues, in him. Some leave the word untranslated, *copher*¹⁷, and which has the signification of atonement and propitiation; and so well agrees with Christ, who is the propitiation for sin, and has made atonement for it. Bishop Patrick observes, that the ancient Hebrew doctors, by dividing the first word *eschol*, found out the mystery of the Messiah; considering it as if thus read, *יש כל כופר*, *my beloved is unto me the man that propitiates or expiates all things*: that is, all sins and transgressions: in the Talmud¹⁸ it is explained, "he, whose all things are, has atoned for my iniquity;" which Christ has done for his church and people; and which makes him precious, and is matter of joy and gladness to them, Rom. v. 11. and iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10.

Ver. 15. *Behold, thou art fair, my love, &c.*] These are the words of Christ, commending the beauty and comeliness of the church, expressing his great affection for her, and his high esteem of her; of her fairness and beauty, see the note on ver. 5, 8. of the title of Christ's love, as given her by him, see the note on ver. 9. a *behold* is prefixed to this account of her, as a note of attention, to consider her complete comeliness in Christ, and not pore on her own blackness; and as a note of admiration, that she who was so black and uncomely in herself should be so fair and beautiful in his eyes, through his blood, righteousness, and grace; and as a note of asseveration, assuring her of the truth of it, which she might be apt to call in question; and, to prevent which, it is also repeated, *behold, thou art fair*; exceeding fair, really so, both inwardly and outwardly; both with respect to justification and sanctification. *Thou hast doves' eyes*; or *eyes like doves*¹⁹; these are taken notice of, because much beauty lies in the eyes, either in the size or colour of them²⁰: similes taken from doves are

⁷ Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 17.

⁸ Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. s. 2.

⁹ Justin. c. Trogo, l. 36. c. 3. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25. Vid. Foliot in loc.

¹⁰ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 29.

¹¹ Virgil. Ecol. 2. v. 18. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 13. Fab. 8.

¹² De Bellu. Jud. l. 4. c. 8. s. 3.

¹³ Shevith, c. 7. s. 6.

¹⁴ Maimon. & Bartenora in ibid.

¹⁵ Travels, p. 113, 114. edit. 2.

¹⁶ Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 1.

¹⁷ Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 9.

¹⁸ T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 15. 2. Jarchi, & Ez Chaysim in Sotah ibid.

¹⁹ T. Bab. copher, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Marekius.

²⁰ T. Zab. Sabbat, fol. 83. 2.

²¹ עיניו כעין עיניו oculi tui veluti columbarum, Pagninus, Munster, so Ben Melch.

²² So Juno is called the large-eyed Juno, and Minerva the blue-eyed goddess, and Chryseus the black-eyed maid, Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 99, 206, 551.

frequently used in this sacred poem, both with respect to the bride and bridegroom; see ch. ii. 14. and iv. 1. and v. 2, 12. and vi. 9. and it may easily be observed, that this creature furnishes much matter for poets¹, which they apply to lovers: and here the eyes of the bride are compared to the eyes of doves; meaning either the ministers of the Gospel, who are to the church what eyes are to the body; are set in the more eminent part in the church, to order, guide, and direct the members of it; to watch over them, lest any hurt come to them, and give warning of danger; to hold forth the word of light to them, and instruct them how to behave in the church and in the world: and they may be compared to the eyes of doves, for their clearness and perspicuity in discerning Gospel truths; and for their sincerity and simplicity, uprightness and faithfulness, in preaching them; and for the dove-like gifts of the spirit, whereby they are qualified for it; and for their meekness and humility; or rather the eyes of her understanding are meant, being spiritually enlightened; and particularly the eye of faith, by which believers take a view of Christ, of his glory, fullness, and suitableness, and look to him alone for life and salvation. And it may be compared to the eyes of doves for the clearness and quickness of it, being the evidence of things not seen; and for its singleness and chastity, the dove looks only to its mate, and destroys those that look with lustful eyes on others²; believers, being espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ, look only to him as their beloved, to him only for acceptance, righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; and for its modesty and humility, excluding all boasting in the creature, and giving all glory to Christ; and for its beautifulness in the sight of Christ, so that he is even ravished with it, ch. iv. 9.

Ver. 16. *Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, &c.*] These are the words of the church, giving back to Christ his commendation of her, and much in the same words, as more properly belonging to him than her; he calls her *my love*, she calls him *my beloved*: he says that she was *fair*; the same she says of him, with a like note of wonder, attention, and asseveration, he had prefixed to the commendation of her; suggesting, that his fairness and beauty were essential, original, and undervived, but her's was all from him; and therefore he only ought to have the character: he, as man, is *fairer* than the children of men; as Mediator, is full of grace and truth, which makes him look lovely in the eyes of his people; and, as a divine Person, is the brightness of his Father's glory. To which she adds, *yea, pleasant*; looks pleasantly, with a smiling countenance on his people, being the image of the invisible God; pleasant to behold, as the sun of righteousness, and Saviour of men; pleasant in all his offices and relations; the doctrines of his Gospel are pleasant words; his ways, his ordinances, are ways of pleasantness; and especially having his presence, and com-

munion with him in them; and which may be designed in the next clause. *Also our bed is green*; the same with *his bed which is Solomon's*; his by gift and purchase; the church's, by having a right through him, and an admittance to all the privileges of it: where the word is preached, ordinances administered, souls are begotten and born again, there Christ and his church have fellowship with each other; said to be *green*, in allusion to the strewing of beds with green herbs and leaves, and branches of trees³; particularly the nuptial bed, called from thence *thalamus*⁴; and it may denote the fruitfulness of the saints in grace and holiness, like green olive-trees, in the house of God: or else numerous converts in the church, a large spiritual seed and offspring of Christ and the church, as were in the first times of the Gospel, and will be in the latter day: a green bed is an emblem of fruitfulness in the conjugal state; so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it.

Ver. 17. *The beams of our house are cedar, &c.*] Or *houses*⁵; where their bed was, and where they had fellowship and communion together. By which may be meant particular congregations or churches, in which houses Christ has a property, being of his building and beautifying; where he takes up his rest and residence, and where he feeds and feasts with his people, and to the privileges of which all the saints have a right: and by the *beams* of these houses may be intended the ministers of the word, who are pillars here, as James, John, and Cephas, were; and who are the means of supporting and strengthening such communities, by their excellent doctrines and exemplary lives: or common saints may be meant, who are also beams and pillars in the churches of Christ; and serve greatly to support, strengthen, and cement the spiritual building, fitly framed together: and these being of *cedar-wood*, of a pleasant smell, and durable, may denote their gratefulness and acceptableness to Christ and his church, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; and of their continuance and perseverance therein, having in them the incorruptible and immortal seed of divine grace; see Psal. xcii. 12. And *our rafters of fir*: which Pliny says⁶ is the best and strongest wood for roofing and raftering: by these may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel, which are that to the churches as *rafters* are to a house, the means of supporting and strengthening it; so by the ordinances saints are supported in their spiritual state, and by them their spiritual strength is renewed; and these being said to be of *fir*, which is a pleasant and lasting wood, may signify the delight that is had in ordinances, and the continuance of them. Some render the word by *cypress*⁷; which is also of a pleasant smell⁸, and very durable, never admits of worms, nor ever rots, nor is ever sensible of old age⁹; and so may denote the pleasure that saints take in ordinances, and the long continuance of them, as of the present ones, which will remain until the second coming of Christ. Some think

¹ Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in Nopt. Honor. Ode 4. v. 21.

² Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 54. Elian. Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 5. p. 44.

³ Vid. Alstorph. de Lectia Veterum, c. 1. p. 2, 8, 9, 10. Viridante toro consueverat herbar, Virgil. Æneid. 5. v. 388. In medio torus est de mollibus ulvis impositus lecto, Ovid. Metamorph. s. v. 685.

⁴ Alstorph. libid. c. 13. p. 73, 74.

⁵ ביתו ד' domorum nostrarum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. ædium nostrarum, Marckius.

⁶ Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 42.

⁷ ברוקים אקאטוססו, Sept.; cypressina, V. L. Tigurine versio; so David de Pomis, and others.

⁸ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 33. Ευωδου ακατוסσου, Theocrit. Epigram. 4. v. 7.

⁹ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 33, 40, 42.

the *brutine-tree* ^p is meant, which Pliny calls *bruta* ^q; and is near in sound to the word here used, is much like the cypress, and of a sweet smell, like cedar; it grows beyond Pasitigris, on Mount Zagras. Some will have it to be the tree of paradise; and, so applied to ordinances, may signify the same as before. The word for *rafters* is elsewhere rendered *gutters* and *troughs* for water; and some ^r render it so here, and are so called from water running in them: and as the grace of God is often expressed by water, this is com-

monly conveyed in the use of ordinances; these are the canals in which it runs. Moreover the same word is translated *galleries*, in ch. vii. 5. which, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, were buildings in high houses in which men walked from house to house, or from one end of the house to the other; and might be called by this name, from their running along the sides of houses, and seem to be like our *balconies*: now ordinances are the galleries or *walking places* ^s, where Christ and his people walk and converse together.

CH A P. II.

HERE begins a new colloquy between Christ and his church; in which they alternately set forth the excellencies of each other; and express their mutual affection for, and delight and pleasure they take in, each other's company. Christ seems to begin, in an account of himself and his own excellencies, and of the church in her present state, ver. 1, 2. then she, in her turn, praises him, and commends him above all others; relates some choice proofs she had had of his love to her, and of communion with him in his house and ordinances, to such a degree as to overcome her, ver. 3—6. and then either he or she gives a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb either the one or the other in their sweet repose, ver. 7. Next the church relates how she heard the voice of Christ, and had a sight of him on the hills and mountains, at some distance; then more nearly, behind her wall, and through the lattices, ver. 8, 9. and expresses the very words in which he spake to her, and gave her a call to come away with him; making use of arguments from the season of the year, the signs of which are beautifully described, ver. 10—13. and requests that she would come out of her solitude, that he might enjoy her company, whose countenance and voice are so delightful to him; and gives a charge to her and her friends, to seize on such as were hurtful and prejudicial to their mutual property, ver. 14, 15. And she closes the chapter with expressing her faith of interest in Christ; and with a petition for his speedy approach to her, and continued presence with her, ver 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*] Whether Christ, or the church, is here speaking, is not certain: most of the Jewish writers ^t, and some Christian interpreters ^u, take them to be the words of the church, expressing the excellency of her grace, loveliness, and beauty, she had from Christ; and intimating also her being in the open fields, exposed to many dangers and enemies, and so needed his protection. The church may be compared to a *rose*, for its beautiful colour and sweet odour ^v, and for its delight in sunny places, where it thrives best, and is

most fragrant. This figure is exceeding just; not only the beauty of women is expressed by the colour of the rose ^w, as is common in poems of this kind; to give instances of it would be endless ^x; some have had the name of Rhoda from hence; see Acts xii. 13. No rose can be more beautiful in colour, and delightful to the eye, than the church is in the eyes of Christ, as clothed with his righteousness, and adorned with the graces of his spirit: nor is any rose of a more sweet and fragrant smell than the persons of believers are to God and Christ, being considered in him; and even their graces, when in exercise, yea, their duties and services, when performed in faith; and, as the rose, they grow and thrive under the warming, comforting, and refreshing beams of the sun of righteousness, where they delight to be. The church may also be compared to a *lily of the valleys*, as she is, in the next verse, to one among thorns. This is a very beautiful flower; Pliny ^y says it is next in nobleness to the rose; its whiteness is singularly excellent; no plant more fruitful, and no flower exceeds it in height; in some countries, it rises up three cubits high; has a weak neck or body, insufficient to bear the weight of its head. The church may be compared to a lily, for her beauty and fragrance, as to a rose; and the redness of the rose, and the whiteness of the lily, meeting in her, make her somewhat like her beloved, white and ruddy; like the lily, being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints; and like it for fruitfulness, as it is in good works, under the influence of divine grace, and grows up on high into her head, Christ Jesus; and though weak in herself, yet strong in him, who supports her, and not she him: and the church may be compared to a *lily of the valleys*; which may not describe any particular lily, and what we now call so; but only expresses the place where it grows, in low places, where plants are in danger of being plucked and trodden upon; though they may have more moisture and verdure than those in higher places; so the church of Christ is sometimes in a low estate, exposed to enemies, and liable to be trampled

^p E brutia, Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth, Brightman, Marckius; brutia, Cocceius, Michaelis.
^q Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 17.
^r רַהֲטִינֵי canales nostri; so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; impluvium nostrum, Hiller, de Keri & Kethib, p. 84.
^s Ambulachra nostra, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis.
^t Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 2. Targum, Aben Ezra, & Yalkut in loc.
^u Ainsworth, Brightman, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^w The rose, by the Arcadians, was called εὐοσμῶνος, i. e. sweet-smelling; Timachidas apud Athenæi Deipnosophist. l. 15. c. 8. p. 682. and rose is used for beautiful; rosea cervicæ refulsit, Virgil. Æneid. l. 1. Vid. Servium in ibid.
^x So Helena, for her beauty, is called ἡδονομα Εἰλινα, in Theocrit. Idyll. 19. The rose was sacred to Venus, Pausanias Eliac. 2. sive l. 6. p. 261.
^y Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 247.
^z Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 5.

and trodden under foot by them, and to be carried away with the flood of persecution, were it not guarded by divine power; and, being watered with the dews of grace, it becomes flourishing and fruitful. But the more commonly received opinion is, that these are the words of Christ concerning himself; and which indeed best become him, and are more agreeable to his style and language, John xiv. 6. and xv. 9. and suit best with the words in the following verse, as one observes^a; nor is it unfitly taken by the bridegroom to himself, since it is sometimes given by lovers to men^b. Christ may be compared to a rose for its colour and smell; to the rose for its red colour: and which may be expressive of the truth of his humanity, and of his bloody sufferings in it; and this, with the whiteness of the lily, finishes the description of him for his beauty, ch. v. 10. and for its sweet smell; which denotes the same things for which he is before compared to spikenard, myrrh, and camphire. The rose, as Pliny says^c, delights not in fat soils and rich clays, but in rubbish, and roses that grow there are of the sweetest smell; and such was the earth about Sharon^d; and to a rose there Christ is compared, to shew the excellency and preferableness of him to all others. The word is only used here and in Isa. xxxv. 1. where it is in many versions rendered a *lily*: it seems to be compounded of two words; one which signifies to cover and hide, and another which signifies a *shadow*; and so may be rendered, *the covering shadow*: but for what reason a rose should be so called is not easy to say; unless it can be thought to have the figure of an umbrella; or that the rose-tree in those parts was so large, as to be remarkable for its shadow; like that Montfaucon^e saw, in a garden at Ravenna, under the shadow of the branches of which more than forty men could stand: Christ is sometimes compared to trees for their shadow, which is pleasant and reviving, as in ver. 3. Hos. xiv. 7. Some render it, *the flower of the field*^f; which may be expressive of the meanness of Christ in the eyes of men; of his not being of human production; of his being accessible; and of his being liable to be trampled upon, as he has been. And as he is compared to a rose, so to a *lily*, for its colour, height, and fruitfulness; expressive of his purity in himself, of his superiority to angels and men, and of his being filled with the fruits and blessings of grace; and to a lily of the valleys, denoting his wonderful condescension in his low estate of humiliation, and his delight in dwelling with the humble and lowly: some render the words, *I am the rose of Sharon, with the lily of the valleys*^g; by the former epithet meaning himself; and by the latter his church, his companion, in strict union and communion with him; of whom the following words are spoken.

Ver. 2. *As the lily among thorns*, so is *my love among the daughters*.] These are manifestly the words of Christ concerning his church, whom he calls *my love*, as in ch. i. 9. see the note there; and was his love still,

though in such company, and in such an uncomfortable condition. In what sense she is comparable to a lily has been shewn in the preceding verse; but here she is compared to one among *thorns*: by which may be meant wicked men, comparable to thorns for their unfruitfulness and unprofitableness; for their being hurtful and pernicious to good men; and for their end, which is to be burned; especially persecutors of religion, who are very distressing to the saints who dwell among them; see 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. and her being among such serves for a foil, to set off her excellency the more: and the simile is designed, not so much to observe that Christ's lily grows among thorns, as to shew that the church is as preferable to such persons as a lily is to thorns; which is justly remarked by Carolus-Maria de Veil; and which sense the comparison requires, as appears by the reddition, so is *my love among the daughters*; the nations and men of the world, and even carnal professors, members of the visible church, whom she as much exceeds in beauty, grace, and fruitfulness, as the lily exceeds thorns. Ainsworth thinks the *woodbind* or *honeysuckle* is meant, which grows in thorn-hedges, and is sometimes called *lilium inter spinas*, as Mercer observes; this is indeed of a sweet smell, yet very weak, and cannot support itself; and therefore twists and wraps itself about other trees, their twigs and branches, *convolvens se admniculis quibuscunque*, as Pliny^h says; hence we call it *woodbind*, and for the same reason its name in Greek is *periclymenon*: so saints are of a sweet fragrance to Christ, and, weak in themselves, cannot support themselves; yet they twine about Christ, lean on him, and are upheld by him, and depend on him for all good things. But it is the same word as in the preceding verse, and may be rendered *lily* here as there; and not a *rose*, as it is in the Targum, from which it is there distinguished. The lily is often mentioned in this love-song; it is said to be the delight of Venusⁱ. Some call it *ambrosia*.

Ver. 3. *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, &c.*] As the apple-tree, in a garden or orchard, excels and is preferable to the wild barren trees of a forest^k, especially it appears so when laden with choice fruit; so the church, who here returns the commendation to Christ, asserts, that he as much excels all the *sons*, the creatures of God, angels or men: angels, as the Targum, who, though sons of God by creation, Christ is the Son of God, in a higher sense; he is their Creator, and the object of their worship; they are confirmed by him in the estate they are, and are ministering spirits to him; and he is exalted above them in human nature: men also, the greatest princes and monarchs of the earth, are sometimes compared to large and lofty trees; but Christ is higher than they, and is possessed of far greater power, riches, glory, and majesty. All the sons of Adam in general may be meant; wicked men, who are like forest-trees, wild, barren, and unfruitful;

^a Durham in loc.

^b *Meca rosa*, Plauti *Bacchides*, Sc. 1. v. 50. *Asiaria*, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 74. *Curculio*, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 6.

^c Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 4.

^d *Misnah Sotah*, c. 8. s. 3.

^e *Diar. Italic.* c. 7. p. 100.

^f Ἀνθός τῶ ἀγροῦ, Sept. *flos campi*, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus.

^g *Ego rosa Sharon lilio vallium*, Marckius.

^h Nat. Hist. l. 27. c. 12.

ⁱ Nicander apud Athenæum, l. 15. c. 8. p. 683.

^k *Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cypressi*, Virgil. *Bucolie*. Eclog. l. v. 26. *Lenta salix*, &c. Eclog. 5. v. 16.

yea, even good men, Christ has the pre-eminence of them, the sons of God by adopting grace; for he is so in such a sense they are not; he is their Creator, Lord, Head, Husband, and Saviour, and they have all their fruit from him; and so ministers of the word have their gifts and grace from him, and therefore Christ excels all that come under this appellation of sons. Christ may be compared to an apple-tree, which is very fruitful; and, when full of fruit, very beautiful; and whose fruit is very cooling, comforting, and refreshing. Christ is full of the fruits and blessings of grace, which are to be reached by the hand of faith, and enjoyed; and as he is full of grace and truth, he looks very beautiful and glorious in the eye of faith; and which blessings of grace from him, being applied to a poor sensible sinner, inflamed by the fiery law, and filled with wrath and terror, sweetly cool, refresh, and comfort him. The apple-tree has been accounted an hieroglyphic of love, under which lovers used to meet, and sit under its delightful shade, and entertain each other with its fruit; to which the allusion may be; see ch. viii. 5. the apple was sacred to love¹. The Targum renders it, the pome-citron, or citron-apple-tree; which is a tree very large and beautiful; its fruit is of a bitter taste, but of a good smell; has always fruit on it; is an excellent remedy against poison, and good for the breath, as naturalists^m observe; and so is a fit emblem of Christ, in the greatness of his person, in the fulness of his grace, in the virtue of his blood, and righteousness and grace, which are a sovereign antidote against the poison of sin; and whose presence, and communion with him, cure panting souls, out of breath in seeking him; and whose meditation perfumes their breath, their prayers, whereby they become grateful to God, which otherwise would be strange and disagreeable. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*: under the shadow of the apple-tree, to which Christ is compared; whose person, blood, and righteousness, cast a shadow, which is a protecting one, from the heat of divine wrath, from the curses of a fiery law, from the fiery darts of Satan, and from the fury of persecutors, Isa. xxv. 4, 5. and is a cooling, comforting, and refreshing one, like the shadow of a great rock to a weary traveller, Isa. xxxii. 2. and though the shadow of some trees, as Plinyⁿ observes, is hurtful to plants that grow under them, others are fructifying; and such is Christ; *they that dwell under his shadow shall revive and grow*, &c. Hos. xiv. 7. *Sitting* here supposes it was her choice; that she preferred Christ to any other shadow, looking upon him to be a suitable one in her circumstances, ch. i. 6. 7. it intimates that peace, quietness, satisfaction, and security, she enjoyed under him; it denotes her continuance, and desire of abiding there, Psal. xci. 1. for the words may be rendered, *I desired, and I sat down*^o; she desired to sit under the shade of this tree, and she

did; she had what she wished for; and she sat *with great delight*: having the presence of Christ, and fellowship with him in his word and ordinances, where Christ is a delightful shade to his people. *And his fruit was sweet to my taste*: the fruit of the apple tree, to which the allusion is. Solon^p advised the bride to eat a quince-apple before she went into the bridegroom, as leaving an agreeable savour; and intimating how graceful the words of her mouth should be. By *his fruit* here are meant the blessings of grace, which are Christ's in a covenant way, come through his sufferings and death, and are at his dispose; such as peace, pardon, justification, &c. and fresh discoveries and manifestations of his love, of which the apple is an emblem: and these are sweet, pleasant, and delightful, to those that have tasted that the Lord is gracious; whose vitiated taste is changed by the grace of God, and they savour the things of the spirit of God.

Ver. 4. *He brought me to the banquetting-house, &c.] Or into it*^q. The *house of wine*^r, as it is literally in the original; either the *wine-cellar*^s, as some, where stores of it were kept; or, the *place of feasting*^t, as others, and, as we render it, a *banqueting-house*: where it was distributed and drank; a banquet of wine being put for a feast, and here the nuptial feast; and may design the Gospel feast in the house of God, where there is plenty of the wine of Gospel truths, and provisions of rich food, with which believers are sweetly refreshed and delightfully regaled: and to be brought hither, under the drawings and influences of divine grace, is a special privilege, a distinguishing favour; and shews great condescension in Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to take his people by the hand, as it were, and introduce them into his house, so well furnished, and to a table so well spread: and so the church relates it as an instance of divine favour, and as a fresh token of Christ's love to her; which further appears by what follows: the covenant of grace and the Scriptures of truth may be thought of as a banquetting-house, well stored with blessings, and promises, and rich provisions; which, to be led and let into, is a singular kindness. *And his banner over me was love*: signifying, that she was brought into the banquetting-house in a grand, stately, and majestic manner, with flying colours; the motto on which inscribed was *love*: the allusion may be to the names of generals being inscribed on the banners of their armies; so Vespasian's name was inscribed on the banners throughout his armies^u. Christ's name, inscribed on his, was *love*, his church's love; and by which his company or band was distinguished from all others, even by electing, redeeming, calling love. It may signify the security and protection of the saints, whilst in the house of God, and enjoying communion with him, being under the banner of love, with which they are encompassed as a shield; and it may denote the very manifest

¹ Scholiast. in Aristoph. Nubes, p. 180. The statue of Venus had sometimes an apple in one hand, and a poppy in the other, Pausan. Corinth. sive l. 2. p. 103.

^m Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 3. c. 7. p. 83. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 53. & 12. c. 3. Sulin. Polyhistor. c. 59. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 19.

ⁿ Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 12.

^o חסדו וישיבתו concupivi, & sedi, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Mærcius.

^p Plutarch. Conjug. Præcept. vol. 2. p. 138.

^q וישיבתו in, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius, Nischæus.

^r בית היין domum vini, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^s Cellam vinariam, Tigurine version.

^t Locum convivii, Junius & Tremellius.

^u Suetonii Vita Vespasian. c. 6.

and visible displays of it, which the church now experienced.

Ver. 5. *Stay me with flagons, &c.*] Of wine, which is a supporter of the animal spirits¹. The church was now in a house of wine, where was plenty of it; even of the love of Christ, compared to wine, and preferred unto it, ch. i. 2, 4. the church though she had had large discoveries of it, desired more; and such that have once tasted of this love are eagerly desirous of it, and cannot be satisfied until they have their fill of it in heaven: the flagons, being vessels in which wine is put, and from thence poured out, may signify the word and ordinances, in which the love of Christ is displayed and manifested; the church desires she might be stayed and supported hereby, whilst she was attending on Christ in them. *Comfort me with apples*; with exceeding great and precious promises; which, when fitly spoken and applied, are like apples of gold in pictures of silver, Prov. xxv. 11. and are very comforting: or rather, with fresh and greater manifestations of his love still; for the apple is an emblem of love, as before observed; for one to send or throw an apple to another indicated love². It may be rendered, *strew me with apples*³; in great quantities, about me, before me, and under me, and all around me, that I may lie down among them, and be sweetly refreshed and strengthened: the words, both in this and the former clause, are in the plural number; and so may be an address to the other two divine Persons, along with Christ, to grant further manifestations of love unto her, giving the following reason for it: *for I am sick of love*; not as loathing it, but as wanting, and eagerly desirous of more of it; being, as the Septuagint version is, *wounded*⁴ with it; love's dart stuck in her, and she was inflamed therewith: and *languished*⁵; as the Vulgate Latin version is; with earnest desires after it; nor could she be easy without it, as is the case of lovers.

Ver. 6. *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*] The church, having desired to be stayed, supported, strengthened, and comforted, presently found her beloved with her, who with both hands sustained her; which shews his tender love to her, care of her, and regard for her; and is expressive of the near and intimate communion she had with him, as the effect of union to him, often enjoyed in his house and ordinances; likewise of blessings of every kind she received from him; temporal mercies, or left-hand blessings, which are necessary to support and carry through this wilderness; and spiritual, or right-hand blessings, as justification, pardon, adoption, &c. and, moreover, may denote the safety and security of the church, being encircled in the arms of her beloved, sustained by Christ's left hand, and embraced by his right hand, out of whose hands none can pluck. Some read the words prayer-wise, *let his left hand be, &c.*⁶; still desiring further tokens of his love to her, and

more and nearer communion with him: others read it in the future, *his left hand will be, &c.*⁷; *his right hand shall embrace, &c.*; expressing the strength of her faith that she should for the future enjoy his gracious presence; and that he would support her, that she should not sink and faint.

Ver. 7. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, &c.*] Of whom, see ch. i. 5. There is some difficulty in these words, whether they are spoken by the church, or by Christ: according to our version, they are the words of the church, and bids fair to be the sense; since they are spoken to the virgins, her companions, that waited on her; and the manner of speech is not by way of command, as by way of adjuration; and the matter, style, and language of it, Christ being the church's love; and the phrase, *till he please*, best agrees with his sovereignty and authority, who is at liberty to stay with, and remove from, his people at pleasure; and the context and scope of the place seem to confirm it; the church, enjoying communion with Christ, chooses not that he should be disturbed, and by any means be caused to depart from her. Others think they are the words of Christ, and not without reason; since it was the church that was in Christ's arms, and fallen asleep in them; and the phrase, *my love*, is used by Christ concerning his church, ch. vii. 6. and not this, but another, is used by her concerning him; and besides, both the word for *my love*, and that which is rendered *he please*, are feminine, and best agree with her, *that ye stir not up, the or this love, until she please*: so Michaelis⁸ interprets and renders the word for *love* by *this lovely one*; the word is very emphatical, the love, the famous love, the well-known love⁹: add to which, the following words seem to confirm this sense, *the voice of my beloved!* which she had heard, adjuring the daughters of Jerusalem. This charge is made, *by the roes, and by the hinds of the field*; not that either Christ or his church swore by them; but the words may be descriptive of the persons addressed by the creatures, among whom they were feeding their flocks, or whom they delighted to hunt¹⁰; or were loving and lovely creatures, as they: and the charge is, that they would continue among them, and mind their business, and give no disturbance to Christ or the church; or these creatures are called as witnesses to this charge, which, if not observed, would be brought against them: or the charge is made by all that is dear, these being pleasant and lovely creatures, that they would not interrupt the mutual communion of Christ and his church; or it may be a severe threatening, that, should they disregard the charge, they should become food as common as roes and hinds; and that they should be as cautious of stirring up and awaking the person meant as they would be of starting those timorous creatures. The charge is, *that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he or she please*; if it is the charge of the church,

¹ *Vino fulcire venas cadentes, Senecæ Ep. 95.*

² *Malo me Galatea petit, Virgil. Bucolic. Elog. 3. v. 64. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 3. v. 10. & Idyll. 6. v. 6, 7. & Suidam in voce Μηλον.*

³ *מתן תמיד sterner ante me, so some in Vatablus; subterranite mihi, Tigurine version, Picator.*

⁴ *Τερωμενη, Sept.*

⁵ *Langueo amore, V. L. so Michaelis; ægratus is used in this sense, in Terent. Heautont. 1. 1.*

⁶ Tigurine version, some in Mercer. Marckius; so Ainsworth.

⁷ V. L. Pagninus Montanus.

⁸ Not. in Louth Prælect. de Poes. Heb. p. 158.

⁹ So lovers are frequently called *Amor & Amores, love and loves*, vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 2. & Ovid. Briseis Achilli, v. 12. Plauti Curculio, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 72. Miles, Act. 4. Sc. 8. v. 67. Pœnulus, Act. 5. Sc. 3. v. 42. Mostell. arg. v. 1. Persa, arg. v. 1.

¹⁰ Virgilius *Tyris mos est gætare phœnices, Virgil. Æneid. 1. 1.*

it may lead to observe, that Christ is the object of the church's love; and that she is his resting-place; that he may not be disturbed and raised up from it by an unfriendly carriage to him, or by animosities among themselves; that saints should be very careful that they do not provoke Christ to depart from them; and that communion with him is entirely at his pleasure, when and how long it shall continue; it depends as much upon his sovereign will as the first acts of his grace towards them. But if this is the charge of Christ, not to disturb his church, then it may be observed, that the church is the object of Christ's love, and always continues so; that the church sleeps and takes her rest in Christ's arms; which is not to be understood of a criminal drowsiness and sleep, but of comfortable repose and rest, Christ gives his beloved ones, in communion with himself; that he loves and delights in the company of his people, and would not have them disturbed in their fellowship with him; and though, whilst grace is in exercise, saints are desirous of enjoying Christ's presence always; yet, when it is otherwise, they become indifferent to it, which provokes Christ to depart from them; and therefore it is said, *till she please*: and as this charge is given to the *daughters of Jerusalem*, young converts, or weak believers; it suggests, that they are apt to disturb both Christ and his church; to disturb Christ by their impatience and frowardness, like children; hence the church acts the part of a mother, charging her children to be quiet, and not disturb her loving husband, whilst she enjoyed his company; and to disturb the church, through their weakness, not being able to bear the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, and through their ignorance of Gospel order.

Ver. 8. *The voice of my beloved!* &c.] So says the church, who well knew Christ her beloved's voice; which is known by all believers in him, and is distinguished by them from the voice of others; by the majesty and authority of it; by the power and efficacy of it; by its directing them to himself, and by the pleasure it gives them: and she speaks of it as being very delightful to her; it being the voice of him whom she loved, and a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; and, being observed before, what follows shews that Christ is heard before he is seen; he is first heard of in the Gospel, before he is seen, by an eye of faith: and such would have others observe the voice of Christ as well as they, for here the church speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem; and it seems by this, that, by some means or another, Christ had been disturbed, and had departed from the church for a while, and was now upon the return to her, which made his voice the more joyful to her. *Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills*; this may be understood, either of Christ's first coming in the flesh, much prophesied of, long expected, and was very welcome: this was attended with many difficulties, comparable to mountains and hills; that the son of God should become man; that he should obey, suffer, and die for

men, fulfil the law, satisfy justice, atone for sin, and save from all enemies; but those which seemed insuperable were easily surmounted by Christ: or of his spiritual coming; sometimes he withdraws himself, and then returns again, and faith, spying him at a distance, rejoices at his nearer approach; for impediments in his way, occasioned by the unbelief, carnality, lukewarmness, backslidings, and ingratitude of his people, are removed and got over by him, nothing being able to separate from his love; and his coming, either way, is with all readiness, swiftness, speed, and haste. And a *behold* is prefixed to this, as a note of admiration and attention; and is so, whether applied to the one or other. Christ's incarnation was matter of wonder, *behold, a virgin*, &c. Isa. vii. 14. and so his manifestation of himself to his people, and not to others, is marvellous, *Lord, how is it*, &c. John xiv. 22. and both comings are visible, glorious, and delightful. Ambrose^b has these remarkable words, by way of paraphrase, on this passage, "Let us see him leaping; he leaped out of heaven into the virgin, out of the womb into the manger, out of the manger into Jordan, out of Jordan to the cross, from the cross into the tomb, out of the grave into heaven." The allusion is to the leaping of a roe, or a young hart, as in the next verse, which is remarkable for its leaping, even one just yeaned^a; so a young hart is described, by the poet^c, as leaping to its dam; the leap of one of these creatures is very extraordinary^d.

Ver. 9. *My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart, &c.*] The church, upon the swift and speedy approach of Christ unto her, compares him to these creatures; which are well known for their swiftness¹ in running, and agility in leaping, as before observed: and, besides these things, Christ may be compared to them on other accounts; they are pleasant and lovely, choice and valuable; bear an antipathy to serpents, which they easily overcome; are very good for food, and very agreeable, and are long-lived creatures^m; Christ is lovely and amiable in his person, and high in the esteem of his divine Father, angels and men; is choice and excellent in his nature, offices, and grace; bears an antipathy to the old serpent, the devil, whose works and powers he came to destroy, and has got an entire victory over them; and is very agreeable food to faith; his flesh is meat indeed, and the more so through his sufferings and death; as the flesh of those creatures is said to be the more tender and agreeable, by being hunted; and Christ, though dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. *Behold, he standeth behind our wall*; not the middle wall of the ceremonial law, behind which, Christ, under the Old Testament dispensation, stood, shewing himself to believers; nor the wall of our humanity he partook of, when he came in the flesh, and under which his glorious deity was in some measure covered and hid; but rather the wall of our hearts, Jer. iv. 10. the hardness, infidelity, and carnal reasonings of it, which are so many walls of separation between Christ and his people; behind which he

^a Enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 7. p. 917.

^b Vid. Dionys. Perieg. v. 843, 844.

^c Νετρε αλάρω, &c. Theocrit. Idyll. s. prope fluem.

^d The hart is said to leap sixty feet at a leap, Bochart. Hierozoi. par. 2. l. 3. c. 17. col. 682.

¹ Cervi veloces, Virgil. Æneid. 5. v. 253.

^m Vid. Pausanias Arcad. sive l. 8. p. 472. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 32. Ælian de Animal. l. 2. c. 9. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 31. Frantz. Animal. Sacr. par. 1. c. 15.

stands, shewing his resentment of them, and in order to demolish them, and get admittance: he is represented here, as nearer than when she first saw him, even at her very home. *He looketh forth at the windows*; this is coming nearer still; for, by the manner of the expression, it seems that he was within-doors, since he is said, not to look through the windows, but to look forth at them, meaning the ordinances; which are that to the church as windows to a house, the means of letting in light into the souls of men; and where Christ shews himself, in his glory and beauty, as kings and great personages look out at windows to shew themselves to their people: though Christ may also be said to look in at those windows, to observe the behaviour of his people in his house and ordinances, with what attention, affection, faith, and reverence, they wait upon him in them. *Shewing himself through the lattice*; by which may be meant the same things, only a larger and clearer discovery of Christ in them, of which ordinances are the means; and yet, unless Christ shews himself through them, he cannot be seen in them: and a *behold* being prefixed to these gradual discoveries of himself, shew them to be wonderful! a glance of him behind the wall is surprising; his looking in at the windows still more so; but his shewing himself, in all his glories and excellencies, through the lattice, is enough to throw into the greatest rapture, to fill with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Some render the word *flourishing*^a, like a rose or lily, or like a vine, or jessamine; which grow up by a window or lattice, and, seen through them, look very pleasant and delightful. But the allusion is rather to the quick-sighted roe, or young hart; which, as it is remarkable for its swiftness, referred to, ver. 8, so for the sharpness of its sight; Pliny^b says it is never dim-sighted; it has its name *dorcas*, in Greek, from its sight.

Ver. 10. *My beloved spake, and said unto me, &c.*] Christ, the church's beloved, being so near her, she could distinctly hear and understand what he spoke, and relate the very words: or, *he answered to me*^c; to a secret petition, put up to him for a more full enjoyment of him; for there is mental as well as vocal prayer, which Christ, as God omniscient, knows full well, and gives answer to: or this may be an answer to her petitions in ver. 5. and as some in ver. 6. however, Christ said something after related, that she well knew he spake, and not another, and to her in particular. What he said follows: *rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away*: the affectionate and endearing titles of *love* and *fair one*, have been met with and explained, on ch. i. 5, 8, 9. and are repeated to shew his ardent love to her, notwithstanding the frame she was in, which was very probably a slothful one, by the exhortations given; and to remove her discouragements, arising from her present state; and to prevail upon her to get up from her bed of carnal sloth and security, at least to shake off her indolence; and to

quit her seat and company, and go along with him, or where he should direct, since it would be to her own advantage: for the words may be rendered, *rise up for thyself, and come away for thyself*^d; it will turn to thy account, and to do otherwise will be detrimental to thee. The arguments follow.

Ver. 11. *For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*] A season of the year which keeps persons within-doors, makes going abroad unsafe, unpleasant, and uncomfortable; very unfit for travelling, roads bad, rivers unpassable, and journeying very difficult; but now this season being over, and the spring come, the weather fair, and every thing gay and pleasant, it is inviting to be abroad; winter is by some writers^e used not for the season of the year, but for a storm or tempest. Thus the winter and rain may be descriptive of the state and condition of Jews and Gentiles before the coming of Christ^f, and which then ceased; it having been a stormy dispensation with the one, and a time of darkness and ignorance with the other, Heb. xii. 18—27. Acts xvii. 30. or rather it may in general represent the state of God's people both before and after conversion; before conversion it is a time of darkness, coldness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness; and which are removed by the powerful and efficacious grace of Christ: and after conversion it is often a winter-season with them, through the blustering winds of Satan's temptations; the storms of impending wrath for sin, as they imagine; the nipping blasts of persecution, and sharp and severe afflictions they are at times exposed unto: moreover, they are often in great darkness of soul, clouds interpose between Christ and them; a great deal of coldness attends them, their hearts are frozen up and hard, and no impression made on them by the preaching of the word, or by the providences of God; there is a coldness in their love to God and Christ, his people, ordinances, cause, and interest; great barrenness and unfruitfulness in them, they look like trees in winter, and no appearance of fruit on them; their hands are sealed up from working, and they become indolent and inactive; and by all these fellowship with Christ is greatly interrupted: but, when the spring returns again, light breaks in upon them, and their hearts are melted with a sense of love; they become lively in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and are fruitful in good works; and enjoy much calmness and serenity, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: sometimes they think the winter is not over when it is, and fear more storms are behind, even of divine wrath and vengeance, though without reason; since Christ has bore all wrath for them, and has satisfied law and justice, and has delivered them from wrath to come; and he that has done this says, *the winter is past, &c.*

Ver. 12. *The flowers appear on the earth, &c.*] One of the first signs of the spring being come^g; and make the season delightful and pleasant; the sun returning

^a מַצְיִץ efflorescens, Piscator, Michaelis, so Ainsworth.

^b Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 11.

^c מַצְיִץ respondit, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis.

^d מַצְיִץ surge tibi, & abi tibi, Montanus, Cocceus; so Vatablus, Marckius.

^e Grandævumque patrem supplex, miseranda rogabo unam hyemem, Statii Achill. l. 1. v. 50, 51. Vid. Valer. Flacc. l. 1. v. 197.

^f Ante adventum Christi hyems erat, venit Christus, fecit æstatem, Ambros. Enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 7. p. 821.

^g Ver præbet flores, Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 198. Omnia tum florent, ibid. Metamorph. l. 15. Fab. 3. So flowers are called *rens rose*, the children of the spring, in Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 13. c. 9. p. 609. Vernus sequitur color, omnis in herbas turget bumus, Claudian. de Rapt. Proserp. l. 2. v. 90.

with its warming influences, herbs and plants are quickened and spring up; fields and meadows, as well as gardens, are covered with a variety of beautiful flowers, which make walking abroad very delightful. By these flowers may be meant either the graces of the spirit in the saints, which, when a winter-time with them, seem to be dead, at least are hid; but, upon a return of the sun of righteousness, revive and are seen again: or the saints themselves, when in a flourishing condition, and in the exercise of grace; who may be compared to the flowers of the field for the production of them in the spring, which is a kind of re-creation of them, Psal. civ. 30. and fitly expresses the renovation of the Holy Ghost, to which the revival of them is owing; and for the fragrantcy of them, their persons and services being of a sweet savour through the grace and righteousness of Christ; and for their beauty and ornament to the fields in which they grow, as saints are through Christ in themselves, and to the churches and interest of Christ; and for the gaiety and cheerfulness in which the flowers appear in the spring-season, and so a proper emblem of the joy and consolation of the saints; when grace revives, Christ returns, and they are favoured with communion with him. It may not be improper to observe, that this may represent the large conversions of souls to Christ, and the numerous appearance of so many beautiful flowers in the church of Christ in the first ages of Christianity, after a long winter of Jewish and Gentile darkness. *The time of the singing of birds is come*; another sign of spring, and suits the Gospel dispensation, in which the churches of Christ, and the members of them, sing the praises of the Lord in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and particularly young converts, those little birds that sing in warbling notes and tuneful lays the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, to the glory of God, and to their mutual comfort and edification. Some render it, *the time of the branch*^a, of the vine putting forth its branches; or *the time of cutting*^b, of pruning vines, of lopping trees, and cutting off unfruitful branches; as in the Gospel dispensation, when the Jewish branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were ingrafted in, and being pruned brought forth more fruit; and this agrees with the season of the year, the spring being the time of cutting and pruning vines^c; though this is by some objected to as unseasonable. *And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land*; so one part of rural pleasures is described by the poet^d, not only by the singing of birds of various kinds, but particularly by the note of the turtle; which is a kind of dove that lies hid in the winter-time, or is gone, being a bird of passage, and appears and returns at the spring, when its voice is heard again^e; see Jer. viii. 7. for its voice is never heard in winter, unless on a fine day^f; by which may be meant, not the voice of the law, as the Jewish

writers^g, rather of the Gospel, the joyful sound, which for a while was heard only in the land of Judea, called by way of speciality *our land*; but either of the voice of the Messiah himself^h, preaching the everlasting Gospel in the land of Israel when here on earth; or of John the Baptist his forerunner; and so Alshech interprets it of Elijah, who was to come before the Messiah, and refers to Mal. iv. 5. It may design the voice of all the apostles of Christ, and first ministers of the Gospelⁱ; or of the Holy Ghost, as the Targum, who appeared as a dove at Christ's baptism; and whose voice in the hearts of his people, speaking peace and pardon, and witnessing their adoption, causes joy and gladness; or of the church itself, compared to a turtle-dove for its harmlessness, meekness, chastity, &c. whose voice in prayer and praise is heard, and is acceptable to Christ, ver. 14.

Ver. 13. *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, &c.*] Another sign of spring being come, nay, of its being pretty much advanced, since Christ makes this a token of summer being at hand, Matt. xxiv. 32. Theopompus^k speaks of figs in the middle of the spring. This tree puts forth its fruit at once, and does not flower or blossom^l, wherefore Hab. iii. 17. is wrongly translated; see the note there: though Arianus^m speaks of its flowering: Aben Ezra thinks the word signifies the sweetening of the figs, and so points at the time when they are sweet and eatable. By the *fig-tree* may be meant the saints putting forth their grace in exercise on Christ, who may be compared to fig-trees for their leaves and fruit, and for the putting forth the latter before the formerⁿ; for the fig-tree is a tree full of large leaves, which may be an emblem of a profession of religion, and of a conversation agreeably to it, which yet are no covering, only the righteousness of Christ is that, yet ought to be and are ornamental; and for the fruit of it, which is wholesome, pleasant, and delightful, as are the fruits of the spirit, the fruits of grace and righteousness, fruits meet for repentance, which ought to appear before a profession of religion is made. If the Egyptian fig-tree is meant, that is a very fruitful tree; it is said to bear fruit seven times a year, but ripens no other way than by scratching it with iron hooks^o; and its wood cut down and cast into water, being dry, sinks, but when thoroughly wet will swim. Saints should bear fruit always, and ever continue to do so, even to old age; nor do any ever become fruitful until their hearts have been pricked and cut by the word of God; and they never grow better, or are more fruitful, than when attended with afflictions and tribulations; when they first enter into the waters of affliction, like Peter, they sink, but, when more used to them, they lift up their heads above them, and bear up with great courage and resolution. By the *green figs* may be meant the beginnings of grace in the soul, some stirrings of affection to Christ, desires

^a תְּמִינַת פְּתֵי הַדְּבָרִים tempus palmitis, Gussetius, p. 231.
^b קַצְוֹת הַיַּיִן קַצְוֹת, Sept.; tempus putationis, V. L. Pagninus; so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.
^c Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 22. Hesiod. Opera & Dies, l. 2.
^d Ἐρωτὶς γυγυῖα, Theocrit. Idyll. 7.
^e Plin. ut supra, l. 18. c. 28.
^f Μυδιὸν ἀπὸν Ἀθηναῖον in Deipnosoplist. l. 9. c. 11. p. 394. So Phiny, hyeme mutis, vere vocalibus, l. 10. c. 25. Vid. l. 18. c. 29.
^g In Zohar in Gen. fol. 121. 3.

^h So Pesikta in Yalkut in loc.
ⁱ Vid. Stockium, p. 1181.
^j Apud Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 3. c. 4. p. 77.
^k Plutarch. Sympos. l. 6. problem. 9. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 29.
^l In Epictet. l. 1. c. 15.
^m Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 26.
ⁿ Ibid. l. 13. c. 7. Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 11. p. 51. Solin. Polyhistor. p. 45.

of knowledge of him, pantings and breathings after his ordinances, love to his people; all which appear soon, are very imperfect, and, like unripe figs, liable to be shaken off; and it is a miracle of grace that the first impressions of it are not destroyed by the force of corruption and temptation; and it may be observed, that grace in its first appearance, though but small, is not despised, but taken notice of by Christ; yea, he makes use of it as exercised by young converts to stir up old professors, as here the church, to be more active and vigorous in it. *And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell; or being in flower give a good smell*^k, as the word is used in the Targum in Isa. xviii. 5. and that vines do flower appears from the same place, and from Gen. xl. 10. as well as is observed by naturalists and others^l; and these flowers, and not the tender grapes, emit a sweet smell; and, as some say^m, not in the vineyards only, but in the country round about; and these are fitly mentioned next to figs, since the black fig is by some called the sister of the vineⁿ. By the vines may be intended distinct congregated churches of Christ, or particular believers; vines are very weak, and cannot bear up of themselves, must be fixed to some place, and be supported by something else; and being supported, will run up a great height, and bring forth much fruit. So saints are weak in themselves, and cannot support themselves; their strength is in Christ, and they are upheld by him, and have their dependence on him; and being supported by him they grow up to the stature of the fulness of Christ; and through their ingrafture into him, and abiding in him the true vine, bring forth much fruit to the glory of God, and such as is not to be found in others. The wood of the vine is of very little worth or use, Ezek. xv. 2, 3. and yet is very lasting. Pliny^o ascribes a sort of an eternity to it. Believers in Christ, however weak and worthless they are in themselves, as are their best works and services, yet being in Christ they shall abide in him for ever, and never perish, but have everlasting life. And by the *tender grapes, or flowers*, may be designed either the graces of the spirit, as before; or rather young converts, the fruit of Christ's vines, the churches, who, though weak and tender, yet are dear to Christ; and when there is a large appearance of them, it is a great encouragement to churches, and promises a glorious vintage. And the *smell* of these vines, with their grapes and flowers, may intend the fragrance of believers through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the odour of their graces, as exercised on him; and the sweet savour of their godly conversation, observed by all about them. *Arise, my lone, my fair one, and come away*; repeated from ver. 10. which shews sluggishness on the part of the church, that she needed one exhortation after another; and great love on the part of Christ, that notwithstanding this he persists in calling her; and even importunity

in him, that he will have no denial^p; and it may be observed, that what is entertaining to most of the senses is mentioned to engage the church to arise and go along with her beloved; and the flowery fields would be pleasing to her eye, the chirping birds to her ear, the sweet and ripening figs to her taste, and the refreshing odour of the vines to her smell.

Ver. 14. *O my dove, &c.*] An epithet sometimes used by lovers^q, and is a new title Christ gives to his church, to express his affection for her and interest in her; and to draw her out of her retirement, to go along with him. The dove is a creature innocent and harmless, beautiful, cleanly, and chaste; sociable and fruitful, weak and timorous, of a mournful voice, and swift in flying; all which is suitable to the church and people of God: they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; they are beautiful through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of the Spirit in them; they are clean through the word Christ has spoken, and having their hearts purified by faith; they are as chaste virgins espoused to Christ, and their love to him is single and unfeigned; they cleave to him, are fruitful in grace and good works; and the church being espoused to Christ brings forth many souls unto him in regeneration; saints carry on a social worship and delight in each other's company; they are weak and timorous, being persecuted and oppressed by the men of the world; and mourn for their own sins and others, and often for the loss of Christ's presence; and are swift in flying to him for safety and protection. Under this character the church is said to be *in the clefts of the rock*, the usual place where the dove makes its nest, Jer. xlvi. 28. or retires to it for safety^r. Adrichomius says^s, there was a stone tower near Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of Olives, called *petra columbarum, the rock of the doves*, where often five thousand were kept at once, to which there may be an allusion here; or else it may have respect to the place where doves are forced to fly when pursued by the hawk, even into a hollow rock, as described by Homer^t; and may be expressive of the state of the church under persecution, when obliged to flee into holes and corners, and caves of the earth; when the Lord is a hiding-place to her, in his love, and grace, and power; and particularly Christ is the Rock of his people, so called for height, strength, and duration, and they are the inhabitants of this Rock; and who was typified by the rock in the wilderness, and particularly by that into the clefts of which Moses was put, when the glory of the Lord passed before him: moreover, the clefts of this rock may design the wounds of Christ, which are opened for the salvation of men; and where saints dwell by faith, and are secure from every enemy^u. The Ethiopic version is, *in the shadow of the rock*, to which Christ is compared, Isa. xxxii. 2. and so the Septuagint version, *in the co-*

^k סמור in flore constituta, Mercerus, Michaelis; vitis pars florens, Maister; vinee florentis, Tigurine version; nihil gratius florentis odore vitis, Ambros. Hexameron, l. 3. c. 12.

^l Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25. & l. 17. c. 22. Si bene floerit vinea, &c. Ovid. Fasti, l. 5. so Horat. Epod. Ode 16. v. 44.

^m Daugæs in Hos. xiv. 7. Levini Lemn. Herb. Biblic. c. 2.

ⁿ Hippoxax apud Athenæi Deipnosophi. l. 3. c. 4. p. 78.

^o Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 1.

^p Odit verus amor, nec patitur moras, Seneca Hercul. Fur. v. 587.

^q Mea columba, Plauti Casina, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 50. Doves were birds of Venus; her chariot was drawn by them, Chartar. de Imag. Deor. p. 218. Vid. Apulei Metamorph. l. 6.

^r Qualis spelunca subito commota columba, cui domus & dulces latebrosa in pumice nidi, Virgil. Æneid. 5. v. 213.

^s Theatrum Terræ S. p. 171.

^t Iliad. 91. v. 492, 494.

^u In tegimento petrae, i. e. tuta præsidio passionis meæ & fidei munimento, Ambros. de Isaac, c. 4. p. 281.

ring of the rock, which is no other than the shade of it. Likewise the church is said to be in the secret places of the stairs: Christ is the stairs or steps by which saints ascend up to God, have access to and communion with him; and the secret places may have respect to the justifying righteousness of Christ, and atonement by him, hidden to other men, but revealed to them; and whither in distress they betake themselves, and are sheltered from sin, law, hell, and death, and dwell in safety. Though as such places are dark and dusky, and whither the dove, or any other creature, may in danger betake itself, so upon the whole both this and the preceding clause may design the dark, uncomfortable, and solitary condition the church was in through fear of enemies; in which situation Christ addresses her, saying, *let me see thy countenance, or face*: and encourages her to appear more publicly in his house and courts for worship, and present herself before him, and look him full in the face, and with open face behold his glory, and not be shamefaced and fearful; not to be afraid of any thing, but come out of her lurking-holes, and be seen abroad by himself and others, since the stormy weather was over, and every thing was pleasant and agreeable. *Let me hear thy voice*: in prayer to him and praise of him, commending the glories and excellencies of his person, and giving thanks to him for the blessings of his grace. *For sweet is thy voice*: pleasant, harmonious, melodious, having a mixture of notes in it, as the word signifies; and so exceeds the voice of a natural dove, which is not very harmonious: Herodotus* makes mention of a dove that spoke with a human voice; and such a voice Christ's dove speaks with, and it is sweet; that is, pleasant and delightful to him, who loves to hear his people relate the gracious experiences of his goodness, and speak well of his truths and ordinances; prayer is sweet music to him, and praise pleases him better than all burnt-offerings. *And thy countenance is comely*: fair and beautiful, and therefore need not cover her face, or hang down her head, as if ashamed to be seen, since she was in the eye of Christ a perfection of beauty.

Ver. 15. *Take us the foxes, &c.*] Of which there were great numbers in Judea; see Judg. xv. 4. these words are directed not to angels, nor to civil magistrates, but to ministers of the word; but whether the words of Christ, or the church, is not easy to determine; some think they are the words of the church, who had hitherto been relating what Christ said to her, and who, having neglected her vineyard, ch. i. 6. and now stirred up by Christ to a greater care of it, expresses her concern for its flourishing; and therefore calls upon her attendants and companions, to assist in taking and destroying those which were hurtful to it: but rather they seem to be the words of Christ continued; since they not only shew the care of his vines, the churches; but express power and authority over those they are spoken to: and perhaps they may be the words of them both jointly; since the church, with Christ, and under him, has a right to stir up her officers to do their work, and fulfil their ministry, they

have received of Christ for her service. By foxes may be meant false teachers, to whom the false prophets of old were compared, Ezek. xiii. 3, 4. foxes are crafty and subtle creatures, malignant and mischievous, hungry and voracious, full of deceit and dissimulation, are of an ill smell, and abominably filthy; so false teachers walk in craftiness, use good words and fair speeches, and thereby deceive the hearts of the simple; their doctrines are pernicious, their heresies damnable, and they bring destruction on themselves and others; they are hungry after worldly substance, are greedy of it, and can never have enough; devour widows' houses, and make merchandise of men, to enrich themselves; they put on sheep's clothing, transform themselves into angels of light, mimic the voice of Gospel ministers, use their phrases and expressions, that they may not be easily discovered; and are abominable in their principles and practices, and to be shunned by all good men. Now ministers of the Gospel are ordered to take these, to detect them, and refute their errors, and reprove them sharply for them; and, after proper steps taken, to reject them, to cast them out of the vineyards, the churches, and keep them out. *Even the little foxes*; heresies and heretics are to be nipped in the bud, before they increase to more ungodliness; otherwise errors, which may seem small at first, soon grow larger and spread themselves, and become fatal to the churches: *that spoil the vines*: as foxes do, by gnawing the branches, biting the bark, making bare the roots, devouring the ripe grapes, and infecting all with their noxious teeth and vicious breath*: so false teachers make divisions and schisms in churches; disturb their peace; unsettle some, and subvert others; sap the foundation of religion, and corrupt the word of God; and therefore by all means to be taken, and the sooner the better. *For our vines have tender grapes, or flowers*; as in ver. 13. see the note there. *The vines* are the churches; the *tender grapes, or flowers*, young converts, which Christ has a particular regard unto, Isa. xl. 11. and xlii. 3. and these, having but a small degree of knowledge, are more easily imposed upon and seduced by false teachers; and therefore, for their sakes, should be carefully watched, and vigorously opposed, since otherwise a promising vintage is in danger of being spoiled. Christ, in this address, intimates, that not only he and the church, but the ministers also, had an interest in the vines and tender grapes, as they have; see ch. viii. 11, 12. and therefore should be the more concerned for their welfare; hence he calls them *ours*; interest carries a powerful argument in it.

Ver. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his, &c.*] These are the words of the church; who, having had such evidences of Christ's love to her, and care of her, expresses her faith of interest in him, and suggests the obligations she lay under to observe his commands. The words are expressive of the mutual interest and property Christ and his church have in each other: Christ is the church's, by the Father's gift of him to her, to be her Head, Husband, and Saviour; and by the gift of himself unto her, to be her Redeemer and

* Euterpe, sive l. g. c. 55.

* Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 1. v. 48, 49. & Idyll. 5. v. 112, 113. So soldiers

are compared to foxes, because they eat the grapes in the countries they come into, Aristoph. Equites, Act 3. Sc. 1. p. 350.

ransom-price; and by marriage, having espoused her to himself, in righteousness and loving-kindness; and by possession, he living and dwelling in her, by his spirit and grace: the church also acknowledges herself to be his, as she was, by the Father's gift of her to Christ, as his spouse and bride, his portion and inheritance; and by purchase, he having bought her with his precious blood; and by the conquest of her, by his grace in effectual calling; and by a voluntary surrender of herself unto him, under the influence of his grace: hence all he is, and has, are her's, his person, fulness, blood, and righteousness; and therefore can want no good thing. Moreover, these words suggest the near union there is between Christ and his church; they are one in a conjugal relation, as husband and wife are one; which union is personal, of the whole person of Christ to the whole persons of his people; it is a spiritual one, they having the same spirit, the one without measure, the other in measure; it is a vital one, as is between the vine and its branches; and it is a mysterious one, next to that of the union of the three persons in the Godhead, and of the two natures in Christ; it is an indissoluble one, the everlasting love of Christ being the bond of it, which can never be dissolved; and from this union flow a communication of the names of Christ to his church, conformity to him, communion with him, and an interest in all he has. Likewise these phrases express the mutual affection, complacency, and delight, Christ and his church have in each other; he is beloved by his church, and she by him; she seems to have a full assurance of interest in him, and to make her boast of him; excluding all other beloveds, as unworthy to be mentioned with him: of whom she further says, *he feedeth among the lilies*; which is either an apostrophe to him, *O thou that feedest*, &c. thou only art my beloved; or is descriptive of him to others, inquiring who he was, and where to be seen: the answer is, he is the person that is yonder, feeding among the lilies; either recreating and delighting himself in his gardens, the churches, where his saints are, comparable to lilies; see the note on ver. 1, 2. or feeding his sheep in fields where lilies grow: and it may be observed, it is not said, he feedeth on, or feeds his flock with lilies, but among them; for it is remarked^f, that sheep will not eat them: or the sense may be, Christ feeds himself, and feeds his people, and feeds among them, as if he was crowned with lilies, and anointed with the oil of them; as was the custom of the ancients at festivals^g, thought to be here alluded to by some who read the words, *that feeds*: that is, sups in or with lilies, being anointed and crowned with them. The lily is a summer flower^h; the winter was now past, ver. 11.

Ver. 17. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, &c.*] Which may be connected with the preceding verse; either with the former part, *my beloved is mine*, &c. and then the sense is, as long as night and day continue, and God's covenant with both stands

sure; so long union to Christ, and covenant-interest in him, will abide: or with the latter part, *he feedeth among the lilies until*, &c. even until his second coming; or with the next clause in this verse, *turn, my beloved*; and so is a prayer for Christ's speedy coming to her, and continued presence with her, until the day should break: which may be understood either of the Gospel day made by the rising of Christ, the sun of righteousness, at his first coming in the flesh; when the shadows of the ceremonial law disappeared, Christ, the body and substance of them, being come, and the darkness of the Gentile world was scattered, through the light of the Gospel being sent into it: the words may be rendered, *until the day breathe, or blow*^b; and naturalists observe^c, that, upon the sun's rising, an air or wind has been excited, and which ceases before the middle of the day, and never lasts so long as that; and on Christ's, the sun of righteousness, arising with healing in his wings, some cool, gentle, and refreshing breezes of divine grace and consolation were raised, which were very desirable and grateful: or this may be understood of Christ's second coming; which will make the great day of the Lord, so often spoken of in Scripture: and which suits as well with the Hebrew text, and the philosophy of it, as the former: for, as the same naturalists^d observe, the wind often blows fresh, and fine breezes of air spring up at the setting; as well as at the rising of the sun; see Gen. iii. 8. and may very well be applied to Christ's second coming, at the evening of the world; which will be a time of refreshing to the saints, and very desirable by them; and though it will be an evening to the world, which will then come to an end, with them there will be no more night of darkness, desertion, affliction, and persecution; the shadows of ignorance, infidelity, doubts, and fears, will be dispersed, and there will be one pure, clear, unobscured, and everlasting day; and till then the church prays, as follows: *turn, my beloved*; that is, to her; who seemed to be ready to depart from her, or was gone; and therefore she desires he would turn again, and continue with her, until the time was come before mentioned: or, *turn about*^e; surround me with thy favour and loving-kindness, and secure me from all enemies, until the glorious and wished-for day comes, when I shall be out of fear and danger; or, *embrace me*^f; as in ver. 6. during the present dispensation, which was as a night in comparison of the everlasting day. *And be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel*; the same with Beth-el, according to Adrichomius^g; where were mountains, woody, set with trees, full of grass and aromatic plants; and so may be the same with the mountains of spices, ch. viii. 14. where the Ethiopic version has Beth-el; and so that and the Septuagint version, in an addition to ver. 9. here; see 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. unless Bithron is meant, 2 Sam. ii. 29. a place in Gilead, beyond Jordan, so called, because it was parted from Judea by the river Jordan: and the words are by

^f Tuccius in Soto Major in loc.

^g Vid. Fortunat. Schacc. Eleoehrysm. Sacr. l. 1. c. 28. p. 137.

^h Theophrast. apud Athenæum in Deipnosoph. l. 15. c. 7. p. 679.

^b שֶׁפָּרוּ עַד עוֹלָם וְעַד אֲדָמָה, Sept.; donec, vel dum spirit, Mercerus, Cocceius; aspirat, Marekcius; spiraverit, Michaelis.

^c Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 47. Senecæ Nat. Quæst. l. 5. c. 8.

^d Ibid. Aristot. Problem. s. 25. c. 4. Adspirant auræ in noctem,

Virgil. Æneid. 7. v. 8.

^e צֶדֶק צִרְוִי, Montanus, Sanctius; circumito, some in Michaelis.

^f Complectere, Marekcius.

^g Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 16.

some rendered, *the mountains of division* or *separation*^b; which, if referred to Christ's first coming, may regard the ceremonial law, the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, broke down by Christ, and the two people divided by it, which were reconciled by him; if to his spiritual coming, the same things may be intended by them as on ver. 9. but if to his second coming, the

spacious heavens may be meant, in which Christ will appear, and which now interpose and separate from his bodily presence; and therefore the church importunately desires his coming with speed and swiftness, like a roe or a young hart, and be seen in them; see Rev. xxii. 20.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter an account is given of an adventure of the church, in quest of her beloved; of the time when, and places where, and the persons of whom she sought him; and of her success upon the whole; with a charge she gave to the daughters of Jerusalem, ver. 1—5. by whom she is commended, ver. 6. and then Christ, her beloved, is described by her; by his bed, and the guard about it, ver. 7, 8. by the chariot he rode in, ver. 9, 10. and by the crown he wore on his coronation-day, ver. 11.

Ver. 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth, &c.*] The day being not yet broke, the night of Jewish darkness still on the church, and the shadow of the ceremonial law as yet stretched upon her; and having some knowledge of Christ by types and prophecies, desires more, and seeks it in the use of means: though the words may be taken in a more large sense, and represent the state and condition of the church and of all true believers in any age, and at one time as well as another; who, when their beloved is absent, it is *night* with them; as Christ's presence makes day, his absence makes night; and it was now night with the church, either of affliction, or of darkness and desertion, and indeed of both. The word is plural, *by nights*¹; one night after another, successively, she sought her beloved; which both expresses the continuance of her state, and her diligence and constancy in seeking Christ. The place where she sought him was *her bed*: not the same as in ch. i. 16. and iii. 7. which was both Christ's and her's, and where a different word is used; but this was purely her own: either a bed of affliction, when good men usually seek the Lord, Isa. xxvi. 16. Hos. v. 15. or rather of carnal ease and security, in which she continued, and rose not up from it to seek her beloved; which shews the cold, lukewarm, lazy frame she was in, and formal manner in which she sought him, and so succeeded not: however, he was still the person *whom her soul loved*, cordially and sincerely, though not so fervently as she had done; true love, though it may be abated, cannot be lost. *I sought him, but I found him not*; because she sought him not aright; not timely, nor fervently and diligently, nor in a proper place; not in her closet, by prayer, reading, and meditation, nor in public ordinances, she afterwards did; but on her bed.

Ver. 2. *I will rise now, &c.*] Perceiving she had taken a wrong method, and therefore unsuccessful,

she fixes on another; and, in the strength of divine grace, determines to pursue it, and *now*, at once, immediately, without any delay, *rise* from her bed of sloth and ease, and forego her carnal pleasures, in pursuit of her beloved; which shewed the sincerity of her love to him. *And go about the city*: not the city of Jerusalem, though there may be an allusion to it; but the spiritual city, of which saints are fellow-citizens, where they dwell, and where the word is preached, and the ordinances are administered: and *going about* it, as she proposed, shewed her diligence and industry in seeking him: and the night being an unseasonable time to walk about a city, especially for women, this is a further proof of her great love to Christ, in that she not only exposed herself to reproach and scandal, but to hurt and danger also; but being fired with love, and fearless of danger², and set on finding her beloved, she resolved to proceed, whatever she suffered. Hence she sought him *in the streets, and in the broad ways*; that is, of the city, such as commonly are in cities; so Troy is described³ as a city, having broad ways in it; and also Athens^m: meaning the public ordinances of the Gospel, where he takes his walks, and often shews himself; in seeking him here, she was right, though she did not succeed. *I will seek him whom my soul loveth*; her love was still the same, not abated, more likely to be increased through disappointment; nor was she discouraged, but was determined to go on seeking, till she found him. *I sought him, but I found him not*; this was to chastise her for her former negligence; to try her faith, love, and patience; and to shew that even the best means, though to be used, are not to be depended on; and that Christ has his own time and way to make himself known to his people, which depends on his sovereign will.

Ver. 3. *The watchmen that go about the city found me, &c.*] By whom are meant the ministers of the Gospel; who are called watchmen, as the prophets were under the Old Testament, Isa. lii. 8. and lxii. 6. Ezek. xxiii. 7. in allusion to watchmen in cities; and are so called in regard to themselves, it being their duty to watch over themselves; and to their doctrine, and all opportunities to preach it, and the success of it: their business with respect to others is to give the time of night; to point out the state and condition of the church; to give notice of danger to sinners in the broad road to destruction; and to saints, through the

^b על הרי בחר in montibus divisionis, Vatablus, Piscator; scissionis, Coccinius; dissectionis, Marckius; sectionis vel separationis, Michaelis.
¹ בלילות Sept. per noctes, V. L. Janius & Tremellius, Piscator; in noctibus, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Marckius, Michaelis.

² Audacem faciebat amor. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 4.
³ Homer. Iliad. 2. v. 29, 60, 141, 329. & 14. v. 89. Odysse. 22. v. 330.

^m Ib. Odysse. 7. v. 80.

prevalence of error, heresy, and immorality; all which require sobriety, vigilance, prudence, courage, and faithfulness; and shew the necessity and utility of the Gospel ministry, and the awfulness of it; and the care Christ takes of his churches, in providing such officers in them. These are said to *go about the city*, denoting their industry and diligence; and being in the way of their duty, they *found* the church, fell upon her case in their ministry, and hit it exactly; which shews the efficacy of the word under a divine direction; which finds out sinners, and their sins; saints, and their particular cases, unknown to ministers; and the church, having met with something suitable to her case under their ministry, took an opportunity privately to discourse with them, and put this question to them, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* meaning Christ; who was still the object of her love, and uppermost in her thoughts; whom she thus describes, without mentioning his name, as if he was the only *Him* in the world worthy of any regard; which shews how much he was in her mind, how much the desires and affections of her soul were towards him, and that these ministers needed no other description of him. No answer is returned to her question that is recorded; not because they were not able to give one, nor because they did not; and if they did not, it might be owing to her haste, not waiting for one; and if they did, she not being able to apply it to her case, no notice is taken of it: however, though she did not find immediate relief by them, yet she met with something from them that was of use to her afterwards, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 4. *It was but a little that I passed from them, &c.* Either a small moment of time, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; or a little distance of place, that is, from the watchmen or ministers, from whom she passed; not through disrespect to them, much less contempt of them; nor because she received no benefit at all from them; but her going on shews she did not rest in means, but looked beyond them, and went on further in the exercise of her faith, and hope of finding her beloved: and meeting with him a little after she had passed from the ministers suggests that Christ is not far from his ministers and ordinances; for it follows, *but I found him whom my soul loveth*; which she expresses with the utmost exultation and pleasure, which meeting with him must give her, after such long and fruitless searches, and so many disappointments; see John i. 41. and for Christ to shew himself, without which there is no finding him, is a proof of the greatness of his love, and of the freeness and sovereignty of it; and that means, though to be used, are not to be depended on; nor should we be discouraged when they fail, since Christ can make himself known without them, as he did here to the church; who says, *I held him, and would not let him go*; which on the part of the church is expressive of her faith in him, signified by laying hold on him, his person, righteousness, grace, and strength, Prov. iii. 18. and of her strong affection to him, grasping and embracing him in her arms of faith and love; and of her fear and jealousy lest he should depart from her again; and of her steady resolution to hold him, whatever was the consequence of it: and, on his part, it intimates a seeming

offer to be gone; and a gracious allowance to lay hold on him; and his wonderful condescension to be held by her; and the delight and pleasure he took in the exercise of her faith upon him; for it was not against but with his will he was held by her; and this she determined to do, and not let go her hold, *until*, says she, *I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived me*; the allusion is to the tents and apartments women had in former times, distinct from their husbands, Gen. xxiv. 67. and xxxi. 33. and all this may be understood either of the visible church, and the ordinances of it, the mother of all true believers, where they are born again, brought up and nourished; and where Christ may be said to be brought, when his name is professed, his Gospel is embraced, and his ordinances are submitted to; and here the church is desirous of introducing Christ, that she with others might magnify him, and praise him for all the instances of his grace and goodness, and have communion with him: or else the heart, and the inmost recesses of it, may be meant; where the incorruptible seed of divine grace is cast; where the new creature is conceived, born, and brought up, until it becomes a perfect man; and where Christ is desired to be, and to dwell by faith, and saints may have uninterrupted communion with him: unless the heavenly mansions are intended, the house of the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; where saints long to be with Christ, enjoy him, and never lose his presence more; till then the church resolves to hold him fast in the arms of faith, hope, and love, and not let him go.

Ver. 5. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, &c.* Which are either the words of Christ, adjuring the young converts not to disturb the church; who had now Christ in her arms, taking repose with him, being wearied with running about in search of him: or they are the words of the church; who having experienced a long absence of Christ, and having been at much pains in search of him, and now had found him, was very unwilling to part with him; and fearing these young converts should by any unbecoming word or action provoke him to depart, she gives them a solemn charge. *By the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please*; see the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 6. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, &c.* This is said by the daughters of Jerusalem, adjured in the preceding verse; who, upon the happy meeting of Christ and his church, saw a greater glory and beauty in her than they had seen before; and therefore put this question, not as ignorant of her, but as admiring at her. By the wilderness she is said to *come out* of is meant either a state of nature, as Theodoret; in which all the elect of God are before conversion, and out of which they are brought by efficacious grace; called a wilderness, because of the barrenness and unfruitfulness of persons in such a state; and because of the perplexed ways and tracks in it, which bewilder a man that he knows not which to take; and because of the want of spiritual provisions in it; and because of the danger men are exposed unto through holes and pits, and beasts of prey: in such a state God finds his people, convinces them of it, and brings them out of it; which is an instance of sur-

prising and distinguishing grace: or else the world itself may be meant, the wilderness of the people, Ezek. xx. 35. so called because of the roughness of the way, the many tribulations the saints pass through in it; and because of the traps and snares that are in it, through evil men, the lusts of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan; because of the many evil beasts in it, ungodly men, false teachers, and Satan the roaring lion; and because of the plentiful table God furnishes here for his people, feeding them in the wilderness with Gospel doctrines and spiritual ordinances, Rev. xii. 14. and because of the many windings and turnings of Providence in it, through all which they are led in a right way to the city of their habitation: now though they are in the world, they are not of it; they are called out of it, and quit as much as may be the company and conversation of the men of it; and through the grace of God are more and more weaned from it, and long after another and better world; all which may be intended by their coming out of this: or else this may design a state of sorrow and distress when under desertion, and without the presence of Christ; which had lately been the case of the church, who had been in a bewildered condition, and not knowing where her beloved was, ran about here and there in quest of him, like one in a wood, seeking him and calling after him; but now having sight of him, and some communion with him, is represented as coming out of that state. She is further described as being like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense; her heart being inflamed with love to Christ, her affections moved upwards, heavenwards, and were set on things above; and which were sincere and upright, rose up in the form of palm-trees, as the word ^h signifies, a very upright tree; and these moved steadily towards Christ, and could not be diverted from him by the winds of temptation, affliction, and persecution; and though there might be some degree of dulness and imperfection in them, hence called *pillars of smoke*: yet being perfumed with the sweet-smelling myrrh of Christ's sacrifice, and the incense of his mediation, became acceptable to God. It is added, *with all powders of the merchant*; odorous ones, such are the graces of the spirit, which Christ the merchantman is full of; and makes his people, their affections and prayers, of a sweet-smelling savour with Ben Melech interprets it of garments perfumed with spices; see Psal. xlv. 8. Some render the words, *above or more excellent than all powders of the merchant*^o, druggist or apothecary^p; no such drug nor spice to be found in their shops, that smell so sweet as Christ, his grace and righteousness.

Ver. 7. *Behold his bed which is Solomon's, &c.* Not Solomon the son of David, and penman of this song, but a greater than he, the antitype of him; so it is interpreted of the Messiah by many Jewish writers^q: they were both sons of David and sons of God, and kings and preachers in Jerusalem. Solomon was a type of Christ in his wisdom and wealth, in the

largeness and peaceableness of his kingdom; in his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and in building the temple, a figure of the church: and by *his bed* is meant the place where saints meet together for religious worship, his church visible, which is his resting and dwelling place; where souls are begotten and born again, and have fellowship with Christ; and which he has a property in by gift and purchase: and a *behold* is prefixed to it as a note of attention, directing the daughters of Jerusalem to turn off the discourse from her, and from commendation of her, to consider the greatness of Christ her beloved; who might conclude, that if his bed was so stately as after described, how great must he himself be; and as a note of admiration, to shew how much she was affected with the greatness of his grace to her, and the privileges she enjoyed of having nearness to him, and fellowship with him. *Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel*; ministers of the Gospel, such as are Israelites indeed, faithful and upright; and who are valiant, and heartily concerned for the good and welfare of Christ's people, and are careful that nothing hurt them, nor disturb their rest and repose. In the number of them, the allusion may be to the guard about Solomon's bed; which might consist of so many, partly for the security of his royal person, and partly for grandeur and majesty; and were just double the number of his father's worthies, he excelling him in greatness and glory; though it may be a certain number is put for an uncertain; and this is a competent and sufficient one.

Ver. 8. *They all hold swords, &c.* Or a *sword*^r; the word is singular, which designs the word of God, called the sword of the spirit, and said to be sharper than a two-edged sword, Ephes. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. which every one of the ministers of the Gospel hold in their hands; and which denotes not only their apprehension, but their retention of it, and firm adherence to it; it cleaves to them, and they to that; they and their sword cannot be parted, as Gussetius^s observes the word signifies; these ministers could not be prevailed upon to drop it, or part with it, but retained it to the last; which shews them to be valiant men. Being *expert in war*; in military affairs, in the spiritual war against sin, Satan, and the world, in common with other Christians; and in fighting the good fight of faith, against all opposers of the doctrines of the Gospel; knowing how to use to the best advantage the spiritual sword, the Scriptures of truth, to defend the Gospel, and refute error. *Every man hath his sword upon his thigh*; as a preparation for war, and an indication of readiness to engage in it, Psal. xlv. 3. for, being on the thigh, it is near, easy to come at, at once upon occasion, and so always in a posture of defence; all which expresses the familiar acquaintance ministers have with the word of God, its nearness, so that they can easily come at it, and furnish themselves with a sufficient proof of truth, and with proper arguments for the refutation of error. And this is done *because of fear in the night*: when there is most danger; hence

^o כתימרות at columnæ ad formam palmæ assurgentes, Buxtorf; ut palma, Mercurus, Cocceius; instar palmarum, Tigurine version, Michaelis.

^q So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

^r רבילת רבילת, Sept. pigmentarii, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus;

pharmacopolar, Tigurine version; septisarii, Mercurus, Cocceius; aronarii, Junius & Tremellius, Marckius.

^s Targum, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abendana.

^t רבילת, Sept. gladii, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

^u Ebr. Comment. p. 29.

Cyrus considering that men are most easily taken when eating and drinking, and in the bath, and in bed, and in sleep, looked out for the most faithful men to be his body-guard^a. By *night* or *nights*^b may be meant the nights of desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution; when saints are in fear of their spiritual enemies, and of being overcome and destroyed by them: now Christ has provided a guard for his people, to prevent or remove these fears, and defend them from such as would make inroads upon their faith and comfort; namely, his ministers, that by their ministrations they may be a means of securing their peace and comfort, and of freeing them from all terrible apprehensions of things; which, as it shews the safety and security of the saints, so the tender care and concern of Christ for them.

Ver. 9. *King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.*] The word translated *chariot* is only used in this place; some render it a *bridechamber*^c; others a *nuptial bed*^d, such as is carried from place to place; it is used in the *Misnah*^e for the nuptial bed, or open chariot, in which the bride was carried from her father's house to her husband's. The Septuagint render it by *φορτίον*, a word near in sound to that in the Hebrew text, and was the *lectica* of the ancients, somewhat like our *sedan*; some of which were adorned with gold and precious stones, and had silver feet^f, or pillars, as follows: it seems upon the whole to be the nuptial chariot in which, according to Pausanias^g, three only were carried, the bride, who sat in the middle, then the bridegroom, and then the friend of the bridegroom: something of this kind is the *palki* or *palanquin* of the Indians, in which the bride and bridegroom are carried on the day of marriage on four men's shoulders^h: and by this *chariot* may be meant either the human nature of Christ, in which he descended and ascended to heaven; or his church, in which he shews himself to his people in his ordinances, where he rides in triumph, conquering and to conquer, by his spirit and grace, in his word; or the covenant of grace, in which Christ shews the freeness and sovereignty of his love in being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; and in which his people are bore up and supported under and carried through many trials and exercises in this life, and are brought triumphantly to heaven; or rather the Gospel, and the ministration of it, in which Christ shews himself as in a chariot, in the glory of his person, offices, grace, and love; in this he is carried up and down in the world, Acts ix. 15. and by it is conveyed to the souls of men; and in it he triumphs over his enemies, and causes his ministers to triumph also: and he is the subject, sum, and substance of it, and the alone author of it; for he is the Solomon here spoken of that made it; it is not a device of men's, but a revelation of his, and therefore called *the Gospel of Christ*; and which he gives to men

to preach, a commission to preach it, and qualifications for it: and this he does for *himself*, to set forth the glories of his person and office, to display the riches of his grace, and to shew himself to be the only way of salvation to lost sinners: and this chariot being said to be of the wood of Lebanon, cedar, which is both incorruptible and of a good smell; may denote the incorruptness of the Gospel, as dispensed by faithful ministers, and the continuance and duration of it, notwithstanding the efforts of men and devils to the contrary; and the acceptableness of it to the saints, to whom it is the savour of life unto life; and it being a nuptial chariot that seems designed, it agrees with the Gospel, in the ministry of which souls are brought to Christ, and espoused as a chaste virgin to him, 2 Cor. xi. 2.

Ver. 10. *He made the pillars thereof of silver, &c.*] The truths and doctrines of the Gospel are the *pillars* of it; which, like pillars, are solid and substantial, and continue firm and immovable, and are of great use to support the children of God under the several trials and exercises they are attended with; and, for their utility, value, and duration, are said to be of *silver*, and are as carefully to be sought for and into as that is, and even to be preferred to it, being of more worth than *thousands of gold and silver*; the ministers of the Gospel are sometimes compared to pillars, and the church itself is said to be the pillar and ground of truth, Gal. ii. 9. 1 Tim. iii. 15. *The bottom thereof of gold*; Christ, the golden bottom of the Gospel, the sum and substance of it, the principal subject in it to be insisted on; he is laid in it as the bottom, ground, and foundation of faith and hope, and of everlasting life and salvation; and for its richness, firmness, and duration, may be said to be of gold, as the street of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 21. or its *pavement*^b, as the word here signifies. The Septuagint render it, a *reclining*^c place, to sit and rest, or lean upon; such is Christ. *The covering of it of purple*; or the top of it; the word signifies a chariot itself: it may respect such doctrines of the Gospel which relate to redemption, pardon of sin, and justification through the blood of Christ; and all under the purple covering of the blood of Christ are secure from wrath to come, and go safe to heaven. *The midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem*; the carpet wrought with lovely figures or with love-stories: the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel are full of love, of God in Christ, in providing Christ as a Saviour, and sending him to be one; and of the love of Christ in assuming human nature, and suffering and dying in it for sinners, even for Jerusalem sinners; the Gospel sets forth the heart of Christ as *inflamed*^d, as the word here used signifies, with love to the daughters of Jerusalem, his dear children, which moved him to do all he did and suffered for them; and could his heart be looked into, the very images of these persons would be seen upon

^a Xenophon. Cyropædia, l. 6. c. 29.

^b בלילות in noctibus, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Marckius, Michaëlis.

^c תאמרון thalamum sponsarum, Montanus.

^d So Schmidt, Marckius, David de Pœnis, Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. שורש & Ben Melech in loc.

^e Sotah, c. 9. s. 14. & Jarchi in ibid.

^f Vid. Alostorph. de Lecticis Veter. c. 3.

² Vid. Snidam in voce זופור.

³ Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, artic. 17, p. 68.

⁴ אבן הפזורה pavementum ejus, Vatablus, Grotius.

⁵ Ανακλιτρον, Sept. reclinatorium ejus, Arabic interpreter.

⁶ אבן הפזורה succensum, Montanus, Marckius; accensum, sive exustum, some in Vatablus, so Aben Ezra.

it: the ordinances of the Gospel are designed both to set forth, in the most striking manner, the love of Christ to his sons and daughters, for whose sake he became man and suffered death, and to draw forth their love to him; so the words may be rendered, *paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem*^c, or *with the love of them*^d: how delightful must it be to ride in such a chariot, or sit under such a ministry, where there is nothing but love! moreover, the whole description of the *bridchamber*, which some choose to render the word for *chariot* by, well agrees with the New-Jerusalem state, as given in Rev. xxi. where the church being as a bride prepared for her husband, will be introduced, the nuptial feast will be kept, and Christ will be seen by the daughters of Zion in all his regal glory, with the royal diadem on his head, as he is described in the following verse.

Ver. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, &c.*] The same with the daughters of Jerusalem; the reason of the variation is, because Christ, here so gloriously described, is King of Zion, and they his subjects; these the church observing, being intent on looking at the bed and chariot she had described, calls them from those objects to look at a more glorious one; to whom Solomon in all his glory, on his coronation or marriage day, to which the allusion is, was not equal; therefore she invites them to *go forth* and look at him, as people are forward to go out of their houses to see a crowned king pass along the streets, especially on his coronation-day; and men never see any glory and excellency in Christ, until they go out of themselves, and look off of every other object to him alone. *And behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals*: alluding to a custom with the Jews^e and other nations^f, to put nuptial crowns on the heads of married persons, both men and women, on the marriage-day: Christ is un-

doubtedly here meant by Solomon, who is King of Zion, King of saints; see the note on ver. 7. by whose mother is meant either the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, of Christ mystical; or else every believer, who is not only his brother and sister, but his mother, Matt. xii. 50. and this may refer to the time when Christ is first made known unto and beheld by a sensible sinner, in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, as sitting and riding in the chariot of the everlasting Gospel; when such honour him, and crown him by venturing on him, and believing in him; for every act of faith on Christ is putting the crown upon his head; and every submission to his ordinances is an acknowledging him King of saints; and every ascription of salvation to him and his grace by any, is casting their crowns at his feet, and setting one on his head; and such a time is the time of his open espousals to them, when such consent to be his for ever, and give up their whole selves to him; there was a secret espousal of all the elect to Christ, upon the Father's grant of them to him in eternity; and there is an open espousal of them to him personally, at their conversion under the ministry of the word, when they are espoused as chaste virgins to Christ; at which time there is a large breaking forth of Christ's love to them, and of theirs to him: hence it is called *the love of their espousals*; see 2 Cor. xi. 2. Jer. ii. 2. and here *the day of the gladness of his heart*; when Christ gladly and cheerfully receives such souls into his embraces, and rejoices over them as the bridegroom over the bride: now the church would have the daughters of Jerusalem behold, look at this glorious person with an eye of faith and love, with attention and admiration; there being such astonishing, incomparable, and transcendent excellencies in him, which require such looks as these.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter is contained a large commendation of the church's beauty by Christ; first, more particularly, by an enumeration of several parts, as her eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples, neck, and breasts, ver. 1—5. and more generally, ver. 7. And having observed where he himself was determined to go, he invites her to go with him; which he enforces, partly from the danger she was exposed unto where she was, ver. 6, 8. and partly from the comeliness of her person and graces in his esteem; with which he was ravished, and therefore was extremely desirous of her company, ver. 9—11. And then enters into some new descriptions of her; as a garden and orchard, as a spring and fountain, ver. 12—14. all which she makes to be owing to him, ver. 15. And the chapter is closed with an order from Christ to the winds, to blow on his garden, and cause the spices of it to flow out; and with an invitation of

the church to Christ, to come into his garden, and recreate himself there, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, &c.*] The same as in ch. i. 15. here repeated by Christ, to introduce the following commendation; to express the greatness of his love to his church; and shew that he had the same opinion of her, and esteem for her, notwithstanding what had passed between that time and this. *Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks*; the same comparison as in ch. i. 15. see the note there; only with this difference, here her eyes are said to be *within* her locks: which, whether understood of the ministers of the Gospel; or of the eyes of the understanding, particularly of the eye of faith, as has been observed on the above place; do not seem so much to design the imperfection of the sight of the one or of the other, in the present state, as eyes within or under locks, and

^c מַתְּנֵי אֶבְרָתָא filibus, Montanus, Cocceus; so Sept. a puellis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^d Amore feminarum, Tigurine version; amore filiarum, Vatablus, Mercerus.

^e Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 14.

^f Vid. Paschalium de Coronis, l. 2. c. 16. p. 126. & Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian de Raptu Proserp. l. 2. v. 140. Magnisque coronis conjugium fit, Claudian. Laus Sereus, v. 189, 190. Στεφανος γαρκελων, Dion. Idyll. 1. prope finem.

in some measure covered with them, hinder the sight of them; as the modesty of either of them; locks being decently tied up, as the word signifies¹, is a sign thereof, as the contrary is a sign of boldness and wantonness. Doves' eyes themselves are expressive of modesty and humility, and, this phrase added to them, increases the idea; such ministers, who have the largest gifts, greatest grace, light, and knowledge, are the most humble, witness the Apostle Paul; and this phrase expresses the beauty of them, not only in the eyes of Christ, but in the eyes of those to whom they publish the good tidings of salvation: and so it may denote what an exceeding modest grace faith is, which receives all from Christ, and gives him all the glory, and takes none to itself; and what a beauty there is in it, inasmuch that Christ is ravished with it, ver. 9. and seems rather to be the sense here. *Thy hair is as a flock of goats*; like the hair of goats, so Ben Melech. Hair adds much to the comeliness of persons, and is therefore frequently mentioned, both with respect to the bride and bridegroom, in this song, ch. v. 11. and vi. 5. and vii. 5. and so in all poems of this kind²: and one part of the comeliness of women lies in their hair; "let a woman, says Apuleius³, be adorned with ever such fine garments, and decked with gold and jewels, yet, without this ornament, she will not be pleasing; no, not Venus herself." The women⁴, in Homer, are described by their beautiful hair; nor is it unusual to compare the hair of women, and represent it as superior to a fleece of the choicest flock⁵. And here the church's hair is said to be like the hair of goats, for that is the sense of the expression; and which is thought to be most like to human hair, 1 Sam. xix. 13. and it is compared to that, not so much for its length and sleekness, as for its colour, being yellowish; which, with women formerly, was in esteem, and reckoned graceful⁶; this being the colour of the hair of some of the greatest beauties, as Helena, Philoxena, and others, whose hair was flaxen and yellow; hence great care was taken to make it look so, even as yellow as gold⁷: the Jewish women used to have their perukes, or false hair, of goats' hair, and still have in some places to this day⁸; and it should seem the Roman women also had, to which the poet⁹ refers. And the church's hair here is said to be like the hair of a flock of goats, *that appear from Mount Gilead*; or rather *on Mount Gilead*, as Noldius: Gilead was a mountain in the land of Israel, beyond Jordan, famous for pasturage for cattle, where flocks of goats were fed, as was usual on mountains¹⁰; and, being well fed, their hair was long, smooth, neat, and glistening; and so to spectators, at a distance, looked very beautiful and lovely; especially in the morning at sun-rising, and, glancing on them with its bright and glittering rays,

were delightful. So R. Jonah, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies the morning, interprets it, which *rise early in the morning*; and which, as Schultens¹¹ observes, some render, "leading to water early in the morning;" the Vulgate Latin version is, *that ascend from Mount Gilead*, from a lower to a higher part of it; which is approved of by Bochart¹². Now the hair of the church may be interpreted either of believers, the several members of the church of Christ; the hairs of the head are numerous, grow upon the head, and have their nourishment from it; are weak in themselves, but depend upon the head, and are an ornament to it: so the saints, though few in comparison of the world, yet by themselves are a great number, which no man can number; these grow upon Christ, the Head of the church, and receive their nourishment from him; and, though weak in themselves, have strength from him, and have their dependence on him; and are an ornament and crown of glory to him; and who are cared for and numbered by him, so that no one can be lost; see Ezek. v. 1—5. Or rather it may be interpreted of the outward conversation of the saints; hair is visible, is a covering, and an ornament, when taken care of, and managed aright, and has its dependence and is influenced by the head: the good conversation of the church and its members is visible to all, as the hair of the head, and as a flock of goats on Mount Gilead; and is a covering, though not from divine justice, yet from the reproaches of men; is ornamental to believers, and to the doctrine they profess; especially when their conversation is ordered aright, according to the word of God, and is influenced by grace, communicated from Christ, the Head.

Ver. 2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, &c.*] That is, like the teeth of a flock of sheep; as her eyes were like the eyes of doves, and her hair like the hair of goats: and Galen long ago observed, that human teeth are much like the teeth of sheep, in figure, order, and structure, as well as are small and white; neatly set, innocent and harmless, not ravenous and voracious, cropping herbs and grass only¹³; the whiteness of the teeth is chiefly intended, in which the beauty of them lies, for which they are sometimes compared¹⁴ to Parian marble for whiteness. The Targum interprets these teeth of the priests and Levites; but it is much better to understand them of the ministers of the Gospel: teeth are bony, solid, firm, and strong, sharp to cut and break the food, and prepare it for the stomach: all which well agree with ministers; who are strong in the Lord, and in his grace, to labour in the word and doctrine; to oppose gainsayers, withstand Satan's temptations; bear the reproaches of the world, and the infirmities of weaker saints; and remain firm

¹ לַמַּחְרָא intra ligamina tua, some in Vatablus; vittam suam, Cocceius; constrictam comam tuam, Mickaelis, so Jarchi. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 11. v. 23, 24.

² Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. Nupt. Honor. Ode 1. v. 12.

³ Metamorph. l. 3.

⁴ Juno, Iliad 10. v. 5. Diana, Odys. 20. v. 80. Minerva, Iliad. 6. v. 92. Latona, Iliad. 1. v. 36. & 19. v. 413. Circe, Odys. 10. v. 126, 320, 310. Calypso, Odys. 5. v. 30. Helena, Iliad. 3. v. 329. & passim; Thetis, Iliad. 13. v. 407. & 20. v. 207. Ceres, Odys. 5. v. 125. Nymphs and others, Odys. 6. v. 222, 238. & 12. v. 122. & 19. v. 542. So Venus is described by Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 99. Cassicem tuæ forte Venus subnixæ coruscus fugebat solæ.

¹³ Quæ crine vincit Bœtici gregis vellus, Martial. l. 5. Ep. 38.

¹⁴ Nondum illi flavum, &c. Virgil. Æneid. 4. prope finem. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 5. v. 4. Martial. Epigr. l. 5. Ep. 65.

¹⁵ Aurea Casavies, Virgil. Æneid. 8. v. 659. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Rapt. Proserp. l. 3. v. 86.

¹⁶ Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. l. 1. c. 9. p. 201.

¹⁷ Hocina tibi pelle, &c. Martial. Epigr. l. 12. Ep. 38.

¹⁸ Theocrit. Idyll. 3. v. 1, 2.

¹⁹ Animadv. in loc.

²⁰ Hierozotic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 5. col. 628.

²¹ In Salazar apud Marckium in loc.

²² Theocrit. Idyll. 6. v. 37, 38.

and unmoved in their ministry; unshaken by all they meet with, from without and from within: they are sharp to rebuke such who are unsound in the faith, or corrupt in their morals, and to penetrate into Gospel truths; to cut and rightly divide the word of truth, and break the bread of life to others, and so chew and prepare spiritual food for souls; not raw and crude, nor hard and difficult of digestion, but plain and easy to be understood. And they are like to a flock of sheep, even *shorn*; on which no wool is left, sticking out here and there; which is another good property of teeth, that are of equal size and bigness, do not stand out, nor rise up one above another; and are as if they had been *cut* and *planed*, and made *alike*¹, as some render the word: which may denote the equality of Gospel ministers in power and authority; one having no superiority over another; all having the same mission and commission, employed in the same work, preaching the same Gospel; and though their gifts are different, yet there is a harmony and agreement in the doctrines they preach. *Which came up from the washing*; white and clean, which is another property of good teeth; as the teeth of sheep be, and they themselves are, when just come up out of the washing-pit: this may signify the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which are necessary to ministers of the word, in order to preach it; and more especially the purity of their lives and conversations, in which they should be examples to the flock. *Whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them*; the figures are just and beautiful; it is common with sheep to bear twins, or more, in the eastern countries, as the philosopher observes²; frequent mention is made of goats bearing twins³: these may answer to the two rows of teeth, and the word for *teeth* is in the dual number; and when these are white and clean, and equal, are well set, and not one wanting, none rotten, nor shed, nor fallen out, look very beautiful. This may express the fruitfulness and success of Gospel ministers, in bringing many souls to Christ; and was particularly true of the apostles, and first ministers of the Gospel, who were instrumental in the conversion of many; and who bore twins to Christ, Jews and Gentiles; and none were without their usefulness. Likewise all this may be understood of believers in general, and of meditation and faith in them; by meditation they feed upon Christ, his Gospel, doctrines, and promises; they chew the eud, and ruminate on the word of God; and are *equal*, alike partakers of the same grace, and blessings of it; and are sanctified, and, in some measure, *cleansed*, from the pollution of their minds and actions; *ascend* heavenwards in their thoughts, desires, and affections; and are not *barren* and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel; and generally, through meditation, *bring forth the twins* of prayer and praise: by faith also they feed on Christ and his grace; and which is *alike*, precious faith in all, as to nature and quality; is *pure*, sincere, and unfeigned; is always fruitful, and

bears the *twins* of love to Christ, and of love to his saints; and is not *barren*, but attended with the fruits of righteousness.

Ver. 3. *Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, &c.]* To a *thread* for thinness, to *scarlet* for colour; thin red lips being beautiful, as well as white teeth; so the beautiful Aspasia had red lips^b, and teeth whiter than snow; hence we read of red and purple lips^c. Now as lips are the instruments of speech, the words of the church, and of all true believers, may be designed; what is said by them in their prayers, which are filled, not with great swelling words of vanity, exalting themselves, and magnifying their works, like the Pharisee; but with humble confessions of sin, and acknowledgments of their unworthiness of mercy; and they are constant, like one continued thread, they go on praying all their days: and the scarlet colour may denote the fervency of them, whereby they become available with God; and the acceptableness of them to God, through the mediation of Christ, whose blood, and not any worthiness of theirs, is pleaded in them: their words of praise also may be signified hereby; which are not filled with big swollen encomiums of themselves, and of what they have done; but with expressions of the goodness and grace of God to them; and with thankfulness for all mercies, both temporal and spiritual, bestowed upon them; and these are hearty and sincere, coming from a heart inflamed with the love of God, which make such lips look like scarlet; and that being in great esteem may intimate the acceptableness of them to God, through the blood and sacrifice of Christ. To which may be added, that the doctrines of the Gospel, delivered by the ministers of the church, who are her lips, may be taken into the sense of this clause; which are like a *thread*, spun out of the Scriptures, and are harmonious and all of a piece, consistent and closely connected; the subject and matter of which are the blood, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the blessings that come thereby; and which also, like scarlet, are valuable and precious. *And thy speech is comely*; which explains the preceding clause; and shews, that by her lips her speech is meant, which is *comely*, that is, graceful and amiable; as it is when believers speak of Christ, of his person, offices, and grace; and for him, in vindication of his truths and ordinances; when they speak to him, in prayer or in praise; and when, in common conversation, their speech is with grace. *Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks*; not like a piece of the tree, but of the fruit, when the shell of it bursts of itself, through the abundance of liquor in it; such the Israelites found at one of their stations, and therefore called it *Rimmon-parez*, the pomegranate of rupture, or the burstened pomegranate; and in the tribe of Zebulun was a city called Remmon-methoar, the beautiful pomegranate, Josh. xix. 13. now the rind being broken^d, it appears full of grains or kernels, of a white colour, interspersed with a reddish purple juice, like blood, as Pausanias

¹ קצוות צרעא vel dedolata, Bochart. Hierozoi. par. 1. l. 9. c. 45. col. 483. aquarum, Junius & Tremellius; etatura æqualium, Cocceius.

² Aristot. de Animal. Hist. l. 6. c. 19.

³ Theocrit. Idyll. 1. v. 25. & 3. v. 34. & 5. v. 54. & 6. v. 44.

⁴ Elian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1.

^b Χαίρα σπρρα, Theocrit. Idyll. 15. Purpureis labellis, Ovid. Amor. 1. 3. Eleg. 13.

^c רמון אר למרון, Sept. sicut fragmen, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; pars vel frustum, Michaelis.

remarks*, and looks very beautiful; and is aptly used to set forth the church's beauty, who, like her beloved, is *white* and *ruddy*: by which may be meant ecclesiastical officers, placed on an eminence in the church; to take care, among other things, of the discipline of it, according to the laws of Christ, 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. Rom. xii. 8. The temples, in the Hebrew tongue^f, have their name from the thinness and tenderness of them, having but little flesh on them, and covered with a thin skin; and, in the Greek tongue^g, from the evident beating of the pulse in them; and their situation is between the ear and the eye: all which denote, that such officers should be spiritual men, and have as little carnality in them as may be; that they should use great tenderness in the administrations of their office, particularly in giving admonitions and reproofs: and, as by the beating of the pulse the state of a constitution is discerned, whether healthy or not; so the state of the church may be judged of by the discipline of it; if that is neglected, it is in a bad state, and in a declining condition; but if strictly observed, it is in a healthful and flourishing one: and the temples being between the eye and the ear, may teach, that, in the management of church-affairs, the officers are to make use of both; their ears are to be open to all; and they are not to shut their eyes against clear and plain evidence: and being said to be *within her locks*, may be expressive of the meekness and humility of such officers, who are not to lord it over God's heritage; and of the private manner in which admonitions are to be given, in case of private offences; and of the affairs and concerns of a church being kept private, and not blazed abroad. And these may be compared to a *piece of a pomegranate*, because of their being full of gifts, and grace, and good works, visible to men; and for their harmony and union among themselves, and with the church and its members; and the strict regard that, in all things, is had to the rules and laws of Christ; all which make the officers of the church, and the discipline of it, acceptable to him. It may be further observed, that the temples, taken largely, include the *cheeks* also; and so some render the word^h here; and the purple juice of the pomegranate well expresses the colour of them; hence we read of purple cheeksⁱ: and this may denote the beauty and modesty of the church; whose blushing looks, and ruddy cheeks, made her extremely beautiful in the eye of Christ.

Ver. 4. *Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, &c.*] This was either the strong hold of Zion; or some tower erected by David for an armoury, wherein his worthies or mighty men hung up their shields; Mr. Sandys^k says, it stood aloft in the utmost angle of a mountain, whose ruins are yet extant: though the neck is compared to this, not for its height, seeing a high and stretched-out neck is a token of pride

and haughtiness with the Jews, Isa. iii. 16. see Psal. lxxiv. 5. and so the phrase is used in Latin writers^l; but for its being ornamented with spoils hung up in it, as golden shields after mentioned, as the neck is with pearls, jewels, and chains of gold, ch. i. 10. The word for *armoury* is from *alph*, to teach; not as being a pattern to teach artificers, as Jarchi; nor to shew passengers their way, as R. Jonah and others, who think this tower was built as a *pharus*, for such a purpose^m; but it was as an arsenal, in which young learners of the art of war laid up their weapons, as well as what were taken from an enemy; or what were made and laid up here, as a store in time of need. By the church's *neck* may be meant either the ministers of the word, set in the highest part of the body, the church, next to Christ the Head, and in subjection to him; to whom they hold, and whose name, cause, and interest, they bear up and support in the world; and are the means of conveying spiritual food from him to the souls of men; and are adorned with the gifts and graces of the spirit: and may be compared to the *tower of David*, for their integrity and uprightness, and for their strength and immovableness, standing firm and unmoved against the batteries of Satan and the world, and for the defence of the Gospel; and to that *built for an armoury*, they being furnished with the whole armour of God. An ancient writerⁿ supposes the Apostle Paul is particularly meant; that eminent exalter of Christ the Head, and who was set for the defence of the Gospel: or it may be rather the Scriptures themselves are meant; which point out and hold forth Christ the Head, and make him manifest to the sons of men; and are a means of conveying spiritual breath; when attended with a divine power, then are they spirit and life; and of conveying food to the souls of men, very nourishing and satisfying; and are bespangled with glorious truths and precious promises; where every truth is a golden link, and every promise a pearl, to a believer: and they may be compared to the *tower of David* for their sublimity, being out of the reach and above the capacity of a natural man; and for their firmness and immovableness, which Satan and all his emissaries will never be able to remove out of the world; and like to that as *built for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men*: no other armour is mentioned, as in this armoury, but shields; they being a principal part of armour, and are especially^o so called, as in the Septuagint version of 1 Kings xiv. 25, 27. these shields are armour of mighty men; mighty, through God and his grace, to perform mighty actions, and do great exploits; being furnished from the spiritual armoury with the whole armour of God, to repel Satan's temptations, to defend the Gospel, and refute error; particularly the ministers of the word are those mighty men; though it is applicable to all saints.

* Bœotica, sive l. 9. p. 578.

^f קִמְחֵי טְנִינֵי פְּנֵי הַיָּם, Marckius; tenuior, Michaelis. Vid. Kimchii Sopher Shorash. rsd. קִמְחֵי.

^g ἑστραφοῖ σπαρα τοῦ κροτῆτος τῆς ἀφῆς.

^h Μόλον ἐν, Sept. genæ: tuæ, Pagninus, Cocceius.

ⁱ Purpurea genæ, Ovid. Amor. l. 1. Eleg. 4. Statii Thebaid. l. 1. v. 538. Ausonii Parental. 23. v. 16. Purpurissatæ buccæ, Plauti Trucul. Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 35. genæ, Apulei Apolog. p. 239.

^k Travels, p. 139. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 166.

^l Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in Rufin. l. 1. v. 53. & l. 2. v. 294.

^m Vid. Castell. Lexic. col. 3904. 60 Pagninus and Tigrine version.

ⁿ Pœllus in loc.

^o Vid. Cuperi Observ. l. 1. c. 7. p. 42. & Gutberleth. de Saliis, c. 12. p. 69.

Ver. 5. *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, &c.*] Or, *two fawns, the twins of a doe*: Providence, as Plutarch observes^p, has given to women two breasts, that, should they have twins, both might have a fountain of nourishment; and are fitly compared to twins of the doe. The hind, for the most part, brings but one roe at a time; but there are some, the philosopher says^q, bring twins; by which the beauty of the breasts is expressed: *young roes* may point at the smallness of them, large breasts are not accounted handsome; and *twins*, at their equal size and bigness, not one larger nor higher than the other, that would be a deformity; twins are generally alike. *Which feed among the lilies*; and are fat and plump: the allusion may be to the putting of lilies in the bosom, between the breasts, as other flowers; lilies are reckoned among the decorations of women, Judith x. 3. or rather to the creatures mentioned, the roes and hinds, which feed among lilies, in fields where lilies grow; for these grow in fields as well as in gardens, and are called the *lilies of the field*, Matt. vi. 28. and we read^r sometimes of harts and hinds among lilies. By *breasts* may be meant, either the ministers of the word, who impart the sincere milk of the word, and who deliver out the nourishing doctrines of grace, like milk out of the breast, 1 Cor. iii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 2. and may be like to *roes* for their affection to those who are under their ministry; and pleasant to them, to whom they are made useful; and for their sharp-sightedness and penetration into the mysteries of grace; and for their quick dispatch in doing their work, though through many difficulties, which, like young roes, they leap and skip over: and *two* of them shew a sufficient number of them Christ provides for his church; and being *twins* express their equal authority, and harmony of doctrine; and feeding *among lilies* is where Christ himself feeds, ch. ii. 16. where Christ feeds they feed, and where they feed Christ feeds, even among his saints, comparable to lilies, ch. ii. 2. or these *breasts* may design the two Testaments, the Old and New, which contain the whole sincere milk of the word; are like *young roes*, pleasant and delightful to believers; and, as *twins*, are alike, agree in their doctrines concerning Christ, and the blessings of grace through him; the types, figures, prophecies, and promises of the one, have their completion in the other; and both abound with the lilies of Gospel doctrines and promises: though rather these *breasts* may point at the two ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are breasts of consolation to believers, out of which they suck, and are satisfied; and through feeding on Christ in both, they receive much nourishment and strength; and are very amiable and lovely to the saints, when they enjoy the presence of Christ in them, and have the discoveries of his love to them; and may be said to be *twins*, being both instituted by Christ, and both lead unto him, and require the same subjects; and are received and submitted to by saints, comparable to lilies, as before.

Ver. 6. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee*

away, &c.] Until the day of grace breaks on every elect sinner, and the shadows of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief, are in a great measure fled and gone; or until the everlasting day breaks, and there will be no more night, nor any darkness of affliction, nor any more desertion, doubts, and fears; see ch. ii. 17. They are the words of Christ, declaring whither he would go till that time came, as follows: *I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense*: the allusion may be to the mountains and hills where these odoriferous plants grew. It is said of Pompey the great, that when he passed over Lebanon (after mentioned, ver. 8) and by Damascus, he went through sweet-smelling groves and woods of frankincense and balsam^s; and Lebanon is thought, by some^t, to have its name from the frankincense that grew upon it; though rather from the whiteness of the snow continually on it. By this *mountain and hill* may be meant the church of Christ, gathered together in Gospel order, so called for its visibility and immovableness, Isa. ii. 2. Psal. cxxv. 1. and for the trees of righteousness which are planted and flourish there, the saints; and for the fragrant of their graces; and for the sweet-smelling odour of their sacrifices of prayer and praise; and because of the delight and pleasure Christ takes in his people, and they in him here; where they have mutual communion, so that it is to them both a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense: particularly, here Christ delights to be, and here he resolves to dwell until his second coming.

Ver. 7. *Thou art all fair, my love, &c.*] Being justified by the righteousness of Christ, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his spirit; of the title, *my love*, see ch. i. 9. The church is often said by Christ to be *fair*, his *fair one*, and the *fairest among women*, ch. i. 8, 15. and ii. 10. and iv. 1. but here *all fair*, being a perfection of beauty, and perfectly comely through his comeliness: this is said to shew her completeness in Christ, as to justification; and that, with respect to sanctification, she had a perfection of parts, though not of degrees; and to observe, that the church and *all* the true members of it were so, the meanest and weakest believer, as well as the greatest and strongest. It is added, there is *no spot in thee*; not that the saints have no sin in them; nor any committed by them; nor that their sins are not sins; nor that they have no spots in them, with respect to sanctification, which is imperfect; but with respect to their justification, as having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and covered with that spotless robe, they are considered as having no spot in them; God sees no sin in them, so as to reckon it to them, and condemn them for it; and they stand unblamable and irreprovable in his sight; and will be presented by Christ, both to himself and to his father, and in the view of men and angels, *not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, upon them.

Ver. 8. *Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon, &c.*] This is a new title given the church, *my spouse*; here first mentioned, because

^p De Liberis Educand. vol. 2. p. 3.

^q Aristot. de Animal. l. 6. c. 29.

^r En aspiciis illum, candida qui medius cubat inter lilia, cervum? Calphurnius apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 24. col. 924.

^s Florus de Gest. Roman. l. 3. c. 5.

^t Vid. Gabr. Sionita de Orient. Urb. c. 6. p. 14.

the day of espousals was over, ch. iii. 11. and having on the wedding-garment, in which she was so fair and spotless, as before described, she looked somewhat like a bride, and the spouse of Christ; and is chiefly used by Christ, to prevail upon her to go with him, which relation, duty, and affection, obliged her to do. The invitation is to come with him from Lebanon, which is repeated, to shew earnestness and vehemency; not Lebanon, literally taken, a mountain to the north of the land of Canaan, famous for odoriferous trees, and where to be was delightful; but figuratively, the temple, made of the wood of Lebanon, and Jerusalem, in which it was, which in Christ's time was a den of thieves, and from whence Christ called out his people; or this being a pleasant mountain, may signify those carnal sensual pleasures, from which Christ calls his people off. Some render the words, *thou shalt come with me*, &c. ^u, being influenced by the powerful grace of Christ, and drawn by his love; and what he invites and exhorts unto, he gives grace to enable to perform. *Look from the top of Amanah, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards*; Amanah is thought by some to be the mountain which divided Cilicia from Syria, taken notice of by several writers ^v; but it seems too distant from Lebanon; perhaps it is the same with Abana, from whence was a river of that name, 2 Kings v. 12. where, in the Keri or margin, it is read Amanah; so the Targum here explains it of the people that dwell by the river Amanah, which washed the country of Damascus: Jarchi takes it to be the same with Hor, a mountain on the northern border of Israel; and indeed, wherever mention is made of this mountain, the Targum has it, Taurus Umanus; and, according to Ptolemy ^x, Amanus was a part of Mount Taurus, with which it is joined by Josephus ^y; and with that and Lebanon, and Carmel, by Ælianus ^z. Shenir and Hermon were one and the same mountain, called by different names; Hermon might be the common name to the whole; and that part of it which belonged to the Sidonians was called by them Sirion; and that which the Amorites possessed Shenir, Deut. iii. 9. Now all these mountains might be called *dens of lions*, and *mountains of leopards*; both because inhabited by such beasts of prey; hence we read of the lions of Syria ^a, and of leopards ^b in those parts; in the land of Moab, and in the tribe of Gad, were places called Beth-nimrah, and the waters of Nimrim, which seem to have their names from leopards that formerly haunted those places, Numb. xxxii. 36. Isa. xv. 6. or because inhabited by cruel, savage, and tyrannical persons; particularly Amanah, in Cilicia or Syria, as appears from Strabo ^c, Lucan ^d, and Cicero ^e; and Shenir and Hermon were formerly, as Jarchi observes, the dens of those lions, Og king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites: unless rather these were the names of

some places near Lebanon; for Adrichomius ^f says, "the mountain of the leopards, which was round and high, was two miles from Tripoli northward, three from Arce southward, and one from Lebanon." Now these words may be considered as a call of Christ to his people, to come out from among wicked men, comparable to such creatures; and he makes use of two arguments to enforce it: the one is taken from the nature of such men, and the danger of being with them; who are like to lions, for their cruel and persecuting temper; and to leopards, for their being full of the spots of sin; and for their craftiness and malice, exercised towards those who are quiet in the land; and for their swiftness and readiness to do mischief; wherefore it must be both uncomfortable and unsafe to be with such persons: the other argument is taken from their enjoyment of Christ's company and presence, which must be preferable to theirs, for pleasure, profit, and safety, and therefore most eligible. Besides, Christ chose not to go without his church; she was so fair, as before described, and so amiable and lovely in his sight, as follows.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, &c.* Here another new title is given to the church, *my sister*, with the repetition of the former, *my spouse*: for one and the same person, with the Hebrews, might be sister and spouse; see 1 Cor. ix. 5. and this may be used in a love-strain, and so not improper in a love-poem, as this was ^g; see ch. viii. 8. likewise the church may be called Christ's sister, because of his incarnation, in virtue of which he is not ashamed to call his people his brethren, and so his sisters, Heb. ii. 11. and on account of their adoption; in which respect, he that is Christ's father is theirs; and which is evidenced in regeneration; when they, through grace, do the will of his father, and so are his brother, and sister, and mother, Matt. xii. 50. And, upon the whole, it is used to express the great affection of Christ for the church, and his high esteem of her; and which appears by his saying, *thou hast ravished my heart*; which is but one word in the Hebrew text, and nowhere else used, and is variously rendered: the Vulgate Latin version is, *thou hast wounded my heart* ^h: with one of love's darts, ch. ii. 5. *thou hast drawn my heart unto thee*, so some Jewish writers ⁱ; which is surprising, since no love nor loveliness are in her of herself; this shews how free and unmerited the love of Christ is; according to the use of the word with the Talmudists ^k, the sense is, *thou hast coupled mine heart with thine*; the heart of Christ and his church are so closely knit and joined together in love, that they are but one heart, and can never be separated: others, *thou hast seized my heart*; or, *claimed it for thyself* ^l; thou art master over it; it is no more mine, but thine. The

^u פגניני venies, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius.

^v Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 32. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 51.

^x Geograph. l. 5. c. 8.

^y Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. s. 1.

^z De Animal. l. 5. c. 56.

^a Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 3. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.

^b Vid. Ignatii Epist. ad Roman. p. 58. Brocard. in Cocceii Lexic. p. 123.

^c Geograph. l. 14. p. 465. & l. 16. p. 517.

^d Pharsalia, l. 3. v. 244. venire feroces, & cultor Amanah.

^e Ad Attic. l. 5. Ep. 20.

^f Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 186.

^g Sive tibi conjux, sive futura soror, Tibullus.

^h לַבְּרִיתִי vulnerasti cor meum, V. L. so Ben Melech; and Kimchi Sopher Shorash. rad. לבב.

ⁱ Jarchi, David de Pomis, Lexic fol. 69. 3.

^k Cor copulasti mihi, Buxtorf. Hottinger. Smegma, p. 164. Vid. Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. s. 2.

^l Occupasti, Lutherus, Marcius; vendicasti, Tigurine version.

Septuagint version is, *thou hast unhearsed us*; Father, Son, and Spirit; particularly the second Person: or thou hast stolen away my heart; I have no heart left in me; which, as it is the case through fear, is sometimes through love: this sense is approved by Aben Ezra. Some render it just the reverse, *thou hast heartened me*^m; put heart into me, animated me, made me of good cheer; so the word is used in the Syriac version of Matt. ix. 2. 1 Thess. v. 14. The sense may be, that such was the love of Christ to his church, and so much was he charmed by her, that the thought of his having her company in heaven to all eternity animated him to endure all sufferings he did for her sake, Heb. xii. 2. The Targum is, "thy love is fixed upon the table of my heart;" where the church herself was fixed, ch. viii. 6. *Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes*; the allusion may be to the custom of the eastern women; who, when they walked abroad or spoke to any, shewed but one eye, the other, with the rest of the face, being covered with a veilⁿ: the eyes of women are insnaring to lovers^o; the church has more eyes than one. Mention is made of the eyes of the understanding, Ephes. i. 18. faith is one of them, and may be here chiefly intended; by which a soul looks on Christ, the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and looks to him for the blessings of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter: and with this Christ's heart is ravished; even with one look from it, or glance of it, as some^p render it. *With one chain of thy neck*; with the several graces of the spirit, linked together as in a chain; which were about the neck of the church, and as ornamental to her as a pearl-necklace, ch. i. 10. and with every link in this chain Christ's heart is ravished and delighted. The Vulgate Latin version is, *with one lock of hair of thy neck*; which hung down in it, and looked very beautiful; and with which lovers are sometimes taken^q.

Ver. 10. *How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!* &c.] Of these titles, see the note on ver. 8, 9. and of the love of the church to Christ, see the note on ch. i. 3. here said to be *fair*, lovely and delightful, grateful and acceptable; as it is to Christ, in the several acts and effects of it, and therefore the word is plural, *thy loves*^r; being exceeding beautiful in his eye, and extremely well-pleasing to him; therefore says, *how fair!* as admiring it, it being hard to say how fair it was; and this appears from the large manifestations of Christ's love to those that love him; and from his causing all things to work together for the good of such; and from his preparing and laying up things, unseen and unheard of, for them. *How much better is thy love than wine*; which is saying the same thing of

her love to him she says of his to her, ch. i. 2, 4. her love to Christ is more pleasant, more cheering, and more acceptable to him, than the wine of legal sacrifices, or than all burnt-offerings; or than any duty whatever, unless that is the principle from whence it flows, Mark xii. 33, 34. *And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!* the same with Christ's ointments, commended ch. i. 3. namely, the graces of the spirit, which are in Christ without measure, and from him communicated to his people; and when exercised by them, are very delightful to him, and preferred by him to *all spices*; even to all those used in the holy anointing oil, typical of them, Exod. xxx. 23, 24.

Ver. 11. *Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb*, &c.] Words, for sweetness, delight, and pleasure, like that; so the speech of persons, flowing from their mouth and tongue, is said to be sweeter than the honeycomb^s; and lovers are said to be sweeter to one another than the sweet honey^t: so the lips or words of the church in prayer, as the Targum; or in praise of Christ, and thankfulness to him; or in the ministration of the doctrines of the Gospel, which are pleasant words; or in common conversation, are pleasing to Christ; when, like the honey, they drop freely and without constraint; gradually, at proper seasons and opportunities, as prudence directs; and continually, more or less, ever dropping something to the glory of divine grace, and the good of souls. *Honey and milk are under thy tongue*; rolled, as a sweet morsel, there: the ancients had a sort of food of this mixture, a cake made of honey and milk, called by the Greeks *meligala*^u, and sometimes *candylos*^v, which was the same composition; Galen^w says, it was not safe to take goats' milk without honey; Jove is said^x to be nursed with such a mixture: and this being very grateful to the taste, the speech of the church for pleasantness is compared unto it; so Pindar^y compares his hymn or ode to honey mixed with milk, as being sweet and grateful; and in Plautus^z, "your words are honey and milk;" and it may be further observed, that such a mixture of milk and honey, with poppies in it, was given to the new-married bride, and drank when brought home to her husband^b; which was now the case of the church. The doctrines of the Gospel may be meant, comparable to honey and milk; to *honey*, for their sweetness and acceptableness; for their nourishing nature; and for their being gathered out of the choice flowers of the Scriptures, by the laborious ministers of the word, who are like to bees; see Psal. xix. 10. and cxix. 103. to *milk*, for the purity of them, and the nourishment had by them; for their being easy of digestion, when mixed with faith; and for their being of a cooling nature, to allay

^m Animumste me, Cocceius, Schmid.

ⁿ Tertullian. de Virg. Veland. c. 17. Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 40. p. 157.

^o See Prov. vi. 25. So the poet says of Helena, τὰς πάντας ἐπ' ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔλατο ἴδου, Theocrit. Idyll. 18. Perque tuos oculos qui rapere meos, Ovid. Amor. 1. 3. Eleg. 10. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. Nupt. Honor. v. 6.

^p כַּעֲיִן בְּאֵינֶךָ אִנּוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ Junius & Tremelius, so Ainsworth.

^q Αἰμαρὰ παρ' ἑστέρας ὀφθαλμοῦ, Theocrit. Idyll. 5.

^r אִנּוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ אֶפְסוּ amoris tui, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

^s Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 21. v. 26, 27. Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 249.

^t Plauti Asinaria, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 24.

^u Vid. Cohen de Lara, Ir David, p. 52. The word is used in T. Hieros. Challab, fol. 57. 4.

^v Athenaus, l. 1. c. 8. p. 9. & l. 14. c. 13. p. 644. Suidas in voco Κανδυλος. Aristoph. Pax, & Florent. Christian. in ibid. p. 633.

^w Lib. de Bono Sapore, c. 4.

^x Lactant. de Fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 23. See Isa. vii. 15.

^y Nemea, Ode 3. d. 10, 11.

^z Trucul. Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 75, 76.

^b Nec piget tritum niveo cum lacte papaver sumere, & expressis, mella liquata favis, Ovid. Fasti, l. 4. v. 149, 150.

the heat of a fiery law in the conscience; and for the recovery and restoration of souls by them, in a declining condition; see 1 Pet. ii. 2. these may be said to be *under the tongue*, when they have a place in the heart, are the subject of constant meditation, a sweetness is tasted in them; and they are had in readiness to speak of them upon all occasions. *And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon*: the ancients formerly scented their garments; Calypso gave to Ulysses sweet-smelling garments^c: such are Christ's robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, which are said to *smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia*: with which the saints being arrayed, the smell of their raiment is as the *smell of a field the Lord has blessed*. and so like the smell of Lebanon, a mountain abounding with odoriferous trees and plants; see Psal. xlv. 8. Gen. xxvii. 27. Hos. xiv. 6. Or the outward conversation-garments of the saints may be designed, the mention of which fitly follows the lips and tongue; for when works go along with words, and practice with profession; when to lips dropping the doctrines of the Gospel, like the honeycomb, are joined the sweet-smelling garments of an agreeable life and conversation; the Christian is very much ornamented, and becomes lovely and amiable.

Ver. 12. *A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, &c.*] At a little distance from Beth-lehem are pools of water, and below these runs a narrow rocky valley, enclosed on both sides with high mountains which the friars, as Mr. Maundrell says^d, will have to be the enclosed garden here alluded to; but it is more likely that the allusion is to a garden near Jerusalem, called the king's garden, Adrichomius^e makes mention of, which was shut up, and only for the king's use and pleasure: to which the church may be compared; for its being distinguished from the world's wide waste, by the sovereign grace of God; and for the smallness of it in comparison of that; and for its pleasantness and fruitfulness, having pleasant and precious plants of great renown; or consisting of persons of different gifts and graces; in whose hearts these are not naturally, or do not grow there of themselves; but are sown or planted and raised up by the spirit of God, for which the fallow ground of their hearts is thrown up: and that every thing may be kept in good order, as in a garden, the plants are watered with the grace of God; the trees of righteousness are pruned by Christ's father, the vine-dresser; the fences are kept up, and the whole is watched over night and day; and here Christ, the owner of it, takes his delightful walks, and grants his presence with his people. And the church is like an *enclosed garden*; for distinction, being separated by the grace of God, in election, redemption, effectual vocation, &c. and for protection, being encompassed with the power of God, as a wall about it; and for secrecy, being so closely surrounded, that it is not to be seen nor known by the world; and indeed is not accessi-

ble to any but to believers in Christ; and is peculiarly for his use, who is the proprietor of it; see ver. 16. and v. 1. *A spring shut up, a fountain sealed*: the allusion may be to the sealed fountains great personages reserved for their own use; such as the kings of Persia had, of which the king and his eldest son only might drink^f; and King Solomon might have such a spring and fountain in his garden, either at Jerusalem or at Ethan, where he had pleasant gardens, in which he took great delight, as Josephus^g relates; and near the pools, at some distance from Beth-lehem, supposed to be his, is a fountain, which the friars will have to be the sealed fountain here alluded to; and, to confirm which, they pretend a tradition, that Solomon shut up these springs, and kept the door of them sealed with his signet, to preserve the waters for his own drinking; and Mr. Maundrell^h, who saw them, says it was not difficult so to secure them, they rising under ground, and having no avenue to them, but by a little hole, like to the mouth of a narrow well. Now the church may be thus compared, because of the abundance of grace in her, and in her several members, which is as a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, John iv. 14. and because of the doctrines of the Gospel, called a fountain, Joel iii. 18. with which Gospel ministers water the plants in Christ's garden, the members of the church; whereby they are revived, refreshed, and flourish; and their souls become as a watered garden, whose springs fail not. Though some read this clause in connexion with the former; *a garden enclosed art thou, with a spring or flow of water shut up, and with a fountain sealed*; meaning Christ and his fulness; from whence all grace is received by the church and its members; and with which they are supplied, and their souls are watered: and the phrases, *shut up* and *sealed*, which, whether applied to the doctrines of grace and truth, in and from Christ, may denote the secrecy and safety of them from the men of the world; or to the grace of Christ, communicated by him to the saints, may denote the security of it, the invisible operations of it, and the sole exercise of it on him: for these phrases denote the inviolable chastity of the church to Christ, in her faith, love, service, and worship; see Prov. v. 15—18. and are used in the Jewish writings^k, to express the chastity of the bride. Ambrose affirms^l, that what Plato^m says concerning Jove's garden, elsewhere called by him the garden of the mind, is taken out of Solomon's Song.

Ver. 13. *Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, &c.*] These plants are the members of the church, true converts, believers in Christ; pleasant plants, plants of renown, planted in the church by Christ's heavenly Father, and shall never be plucked up: or, *thy gardens*, as it may be renderedⁿ; particular churches, well taken care of and watered; these make an orchard, or are like one, even a *paradise*, as the

^c Εμπυρα Σουθη, Homer. Odys. v. v. 264. & 21. v. 52.

^d Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 89. Edit. 7.

^e Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 170.

^f Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 12. c. 2. p. 515.

^g Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3. Vid. Adrichom. p. 170.

^h Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 88, 89.

ⁱ Cum fluctu obserato, cum fonte obsignato, Marcius, so some in Michaelis.

^k T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. Apud Wagenseil Sota, p. 240. Seder Te-phillot, fol. 203. 1. Ed. Basil. vid. Targum, Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc.

^l De Bono Mortis, c. 5.

^m In Sympos. p. 1194.

ⁿ Vid. Guisium in Misn. Sheviith, c. 2. s. 2.

word * signifies: it is generally thought to be a Persic word; see Neh. ii. 8. but Hillerus² derives it from פֶּרֶךְ, to separate, it being a garden, separated and enclosed as before; one like Eden's garden, exceeding pleasant and delightful: and not like an orchard of any sort of trees, but of *pomegranates*, of which there were plenty in Canaan, hence called a *land of pomegranates*, Deut. viii. 8. many places in it had their names from thence, Josh. xv. 32. and xix. 13. and xxi. 24. To which believers in Christ may be compared, for the various sorts of them³, for their largeness, fruitfulness, and uprightness; saints have gifts and grace, differing from one another as to size, but all pomegranates, trees of righteousness; some are larger, and excel others, are full of all the fruits of righteousness; but all are, more or less, fruitful and upright in heart: and so the saints of the higher class may be here designed, as those of a lower are by other trees and spices after mentioned. *With pleasant fruits*: that are valuable, precious, and desirable, of which an enumeration follows: *camphire, with spikenard*: or *cypresses*, or *cyprusses with nards*⁴; both in the plural number: the former may intend cypress-trees, so called on account of their berries and fruits growing in clusters; see ch. i. 14. and the latter, because there are different sorts of them, as *nardus Italica, Indica, and Celtica*: to these saints may be compared, because pleasant and delightful, of a sweet smell, and rare and excellent.

Ver. 14. *Spikenard and saffron, &c.*] The former is the best sort of nard, and therefore mentioned and repeated, to which saints may be compared, because of the graces of the spirit in them; which, when exercised, give a sweet odour, and are exceeding grateful to Christ; see ch. i. 12. and the latter, according to Schindler⁵, seems to have been read *carcos*, the same with *crocus*, and is a plant well known by us for its cheering nature; and has its name from the Arabic, *zaffran*, because of its yellow or golden colour; but *crocus*, from *Corycus*⁶, a mountain in Cilicia, where it grew; it is properly joined with spikenard, since itself is a *spica*, and is sometimes called *spica Cilissa*⁷. Next follow *calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense*; calamus is the sweet cane in Isa. xliii. 24. *cinnamon* is the rind or bark of a tree; both grow in India⁸ and in Arabia⁹; as also trees of frankincense, which are only in Arabia; hence one of the Arabias is called *thurifera*⁷, for they do not grow in all Arabia: the two first were ingredients in the holy anointing oil, and the latter in the holy perfume, Exod. xxx. 23, 34. *Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices*; Solomon's gardens might be furnished with all these; and with the above trees, plants, and spices, from Arabia Felix, where, as Appian² says, *casia* grew in marshy places; myrrh and frankincense were

gathered from trees, cinnamon from shrubs, and their meadows naturally produced nard; hence called *aromatifera*, the spicy country⁸: myrrh was also an ingredient in the anointing oil; and aloes, according to the Targum, is the same with lign-aloes; see Numb. xxiv. 6. not the herb which has a very bitter juice, but the tree of a sweet odour, which Isidore^h distinguishes, and is what is meant in Psal. xlv. 8. Prov. vii. 17. and were both of a very fragrant smell. Now all these trees, plants, and spices, signify truly precious souls, possessed of the graces of the spirit; comparable to them for their valuableness and excellency, their sweet smell, and the reviving and refreshing nature of them; which make the subjects of these graces very agreeable to Christ, and to one another. What a garden is the church thus planted!

Ver. 15. *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*] Some^c take these words to be the words of Christ continued, speaking still of his church, and explaining and enlarging upon what he had said of her, ver. 12. but they are rather the words of the church; who, upon hearing herself commended, and knowing that all her fruitfulness, and the flourishing condition she was in, were owing to the grace of Christ, breaks forth in these words, and ascribes all to him, saying, *O fountain of gardens, O well of living waters, &c.* for so the words may be rendered in the vocative case^d. By the *gardens* may be meant particular distinct churches, such as were gathered in the first times of the Gospel, and since, as the churches of Asia, &c. separated from the world, and planted with trees of righteousness, such as are before described: and though there are many gardens or churches, there is but one *fountain* which supplies them all with gifts and grace, and that is Christ, and his fulness, the fountain from whence flow all grace, and the blessings of it: who also is the *well of living waters*; a well deep and large, fathomless and bottomless, dug by sovereign grace, and full of all grace; signified by *waters*, for the abundance of it; and said to be *living*, because by it dead sinners are quickened, and drooping saints revived; and is ever running^e, ever flowing and overflowing; so that there is always a supply for all Christ's gardens, and for all believers in all ages; who, with the bucket of faith, draw water with joy out of this well, or wells of salvation, Isa. xii. 3. and the flows of grace from hence are like *streams from Lebanon*, because of the abundance of it; the constant and continued supplies of it; the rapidity and force with which it comes, bearing down all obstacles in its way, and for the pleasure it gives, the flows of it being as delightful and grateful as streams of water in hot countries. Respect seems to be had to several places called by these names; there was one, called the *Fountain of Gardens*, which

⁰ פֶּרֶךְ *paradise*, Sept.; *paradisi*, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius & Marcius, Michaelis.

¹ Onomastic. Ser. p. 591.

² Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 19.

³ So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

⁴ Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 910.

⁵ Corycii pressura croci, Lucan. Pharsal. l. 9. v. 809.

⁶ Ovid. Fast. l. 1. v. 76. in Ibiu, v. 209. Propert. l. 4. Eleg. 6. v. 74.

⁷ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 19, 22. Strabo, l. 15. p. 478.

^x Herodot. Thalia, c. 107. Cinnamon & multi pastor odoris Arabs, Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 13. v. 8.

⁷ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 14.

² Apud Schindler. Lexic. col. 1192.

³ Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 532. Vid. p. 535.

⁴ Origin. l. 17. c. 8, 9.

⁵ So Cocceius, Schmidt, Heunischius, Marcius, Michaelis.

⁶ So Ainsworth, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marcius.

^c Flumine vivo, Virgil. Æneid. l. 2. v. 715. Semper fluenti, i. e. naturali, Servius in Ibiu.

flowed from Lebanon, six miles from Tripoli, and watered all the gardens, whence it had its name, and all the country that lay between these two places¹; and there was another, called the *Well of living Waters*, a little mile to the south of Tyre; it had four fountains, from whence were cut various aqueducts and rivulets, which watered all the plain of Tyre, and all its gardens; which fountains were little more than a bow's cast from the main sea, and in which space six mills were employed²; and there is a rupture in Mount Lebanon, as Mr. Maundrell³ says, which runs up it seven hours' travelling; and which, on both sides, is steep and high, and clothed with fragrant greens from top to bottom; and everywhere refreshed with *fountains*, falling down from the rocks, in pleasant cascades, the ingenious work of nature; and Rauwolff⁴, who was on this mountain in 1575, relates; "we came (says he) into pleasant groves, by delightful *rivulets* that arose from *springs*, that made so sweet a noise, as to be admired by King Solomon, Cant. iv. 15." and these streams gave rise to some rivers, as Jordan, Eleutherus, &c.⁵ to which the allusion is here. There were two cities, one in the tribe of Judah, and the other in the tribe of Issachar, called Engannim, the fountain of gardens, Josh. xv. 34. and xix. 21.

Ver. 16. *Awake, O north wind*, &c.] These words, according to some¹, are the words of the church continued, praying for the spirit; to which sense the order and connexion of the words seem to incline; though the language suits best with Christ, who has the command of the winds, and a right and property in the garden, the church: nor does it seem so agreeable, that the church should petition Christ to let loose the north wind upon her, if by that are meant afflictive dispensations of Providence; but agrees well enough with Christ, since these come not without his will and order, and by him made to work together for good; by which he nips the corruptions of his people, tries their graces, and causes them to come forth into exercise: though some² think this is a command to the north wind to remove, and be gone, and blow no longer, since it was spring, ch. ii. 11. and would be hurtful to the plants in the garden; and the verb *blow* is singular, and only in construction with the south wind; and, besides, winds diametrically opposite³ cannot blow together in the same horizon, with a continued blast: though others⁴ are of opinion, that both winds are designed, being both useful to gardens; the one to scatter the clouds, and make the air clear and wholesome, and restrain the luxuriancy of the plants; and the other, being moist and warming, of use to bring plants and fruits to maturity; and both may design the spirit of God, in his different operations and effects, through the law and the terrors of

it, and by the Gospel and its comforting doctrines. *And come, thou south, blow upon my garden*; the church, Christ's property, as she asserts in the latter part of the verse: the spirit of God is intended by the *south*, or south wind; who is compared to the *wind*, because it blows like that, freely, and as he pleases, when, where, and on whom, and imperceptibly, powerfully, and irresistibly, John iii. 8. and to the *south wind*, because it is a warm wind, brings serenity, and makes fruitful with showers of rain: so the spirit of God warms the cold heart of a sinner; thaws his frozen soul, and comforts with the discoveries of divine love; brings quietness and peace into the conscience; and makes fruitful in grace and good works, by causing the rain of Gospel doctrines to descend and distil upon men. The end to be answered is, that *the spices thereof may flow out*; the spices in the garden, the odoriferous plants, might emit a fragrant smell; though Virgil⁵ represents the south wind as hurtful to flowers; so it might be in Italy, where it dried them up, as Servius on the place observes; and yet be useful to them in Palestine, where it blew from the sea, and is sometimes so called, Psal. cvii. 3. Spices denote the graces of believers, rare, precious, and odorous; and their *flowing out* the exercise of them, their evidence, increase, and the ripening of them; when they diffuse a sweet odour to Christ and others, and make it delightful to walk in his garden; as it is to walk in one after a delightful shower of rain, and when the wind gently blows upon it. And hence what is prayed for being granted, the church speaks again, and invites Christ, saying, *let my beloved come into his garden*: which *coming* is to be understood, not of Christ's first, nor of his second coming; but of his spiritual coming, to visit his people, grant his presence, and manifest his love; which is very desirable by them; and, when granted, is reckoned a great favour, and is an instance of the condescending grace of Christ, John xiv. 22. the church is *his garden* by his own choice, his father's gift, the purchase of his blood, and the power of his grace: and here he is invited to come, and *eat his pleasant fruits*; meaning either the graces of the spirit, which are his fruits; and called Christ's, because they come from him, and are exercised on him, and he is the author and finisher of them: or the good works of believers, which are performed by virtue of union to him, and abiding in him; are done in his strength, and designed for his glory: and both are *pleasant*, that is, well-pleasing and acceptable to him; the graces of the spirit, when in exercise, as appears from ver. 9, 10. and good works, when done in faith, from a principle of love, and to his glory: and he may be said to *eat* them when he expresses his well-pleas'dness with them, and acceptance of them.

¹ Adrichom. *Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ*, p. 107, 108.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

³ *Journey from Aleppo*, &c. p. 142, 143.

⁴ *Travels*, part. 2. ch. 12. p. 187, 188. Ed. Ray.

⁵ *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 5. c. 20. *Joseph. Antiqu.* l. 5. c. 3. s. 1.

⁶ So Cocceius, Marcius, Michaelis.

¹ Foliot, Sanctius, & Tig. Not. in loc. So Ambrose in *Psal.* i. 5. p. 686.

² *Aristot. Meteorolog.* l. 2. c. 6.

³ Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc.

⁴ *Floribus austrum perditus*, *Bucolic. Eclog.* 2. v. 59.

C H A P. V.

THIS chapter begins with Christ's answer to the church's request; in which he informs her, that he was come into his garden, as she desired, and gives an account of what he had done there; and kindly invites his dear friends to feast with him there, ver. 1. Then she relates her case and circumstances, which followed upon this, her sleepy frame, and ungrateful carriage to her beloved; which he resenting, withdrew from her, and this gave her sensible pain, ver. 2—6. what treatment she met with from the watchmen; her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem; and the questions they asked about her beloved, ver. 7—9. which put her upon giving a large description of him, by his several parts, head, hair, &c. ver. 10—15. And the chapter is concluded with a general commendation of him and his loveliness, and a claim of interest in him, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, &c.*] This verse should rather have concluded the preceding chapter, being Christ's answer to the church's request, which was speedily and exactly granted as she desired; which shews it was according to the will of Christ, and of which he informs her; for sometimes he is present, when it is not known he is: of the titles used, see ch. iv. 8, 9. and of Christ's coming into his garden, ver. 16. What he did, when come into it, follows: *I have gathered my myrrh with my spice*: to make an ointment of, and anoint his guests with, after invited, as was usual in those times and countries, Luke vii. 38, 46. Mark xiv. 3. *oil of myrrh* is mentioned, Esth. ii. 12. These may design, either the sufferings of Christ; which, though like myrrh, bitter to him, are like spice, of a sweet-smelling savour, to God and to the saints; the fruits of which, in the salvation of his people, are delightful to himself, and which he is now reaping with pleasure: or the graces of his spirit in exercise in them, in which Christ delights; see ch. iv. 13, 14. and testifies by his presence; and having got in his harvest, or vintage, as the word^a used signifies, he makes a feast for himself and friends, as was the custom of former times, and now is. *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey*: bread with honey, as the Septuagint version, dipped in honey, or honey put upon it; see Ezek. xvi. 13. or the sugar-cane with the sugar, as Jarchi, approved by Gussetius: the meaning may be, he plucked up a sugar-cane and ate the sugar out of it, which is called by Arrianus, *μὲν κάραμον*, as Cocceius observes; or rather a piece of an honeycomb, full of honey, just taken out of the hive, had in great esteem with the Jews; see Luke xxiv. 42. the word for *honeycomb* properly signifies wood-honey, of which there was plenty in Judea, 1 Sam. xiv. 25. though this was in a garden,

where they might have their hives, as we have. By which may be meant the Gospel and its doctrines, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb; and, being faithfully dispensed, is pleasing to Christ. *I have drunk my wine with my milk*; a mixture of wine and milk was used by the ancients^b; and which, Clemens of Alexandria says^c, is a very profitable and healthful mixture: by which also may be intended the doctrines of the Gospel, comparable to wine and milk; to the one, for its reviving and cheering quality; to the other, for its nourishing and strengthening nature; see Isa. lv. 1. and notes on ch. iv. 11. and vii. 9. Here is a feast, a variety of sweet, savoury, wholesome food and drink; and all Christ's own, *my myrrh, my spice, &c.* as both doctrines and graces be: with which Christ feasts himself, and invites his friends to eat and drink with him: *eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*; the individuals, of which the church consists, are the *friends* who are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and to himself by his spirit and grace; and whom he treats as such, by visiting them, and disclosing the secrets of his heart to them, John xv. 14, 15. and *beloved*, beloved of God, and by Christ and by the saints; there is a mutual friendship and love between Christ and his people: and these he invites to eat of the provisions of his house, of all the fruits of his garden, to which they are welcome; and of his love and grace, and all the blessings of it, which exceed the choicest wine; and of which they may drink freely, and without danger; *yea, be inebriated with loves^d*, as the words may be rendered; see Ephes. v. 18. With the eastern people, it was usual to bid their guests welcome, and solicit them to feed on the provisions before them; as it is with the Chinese now, the master of the house takes care to go about, and encourage them to eat and drink^e.

Ver. 2. *I sleep, but my heart waketh, &c.*] Like persons that are half awake, half asleep, whom Cicero^f calls *semisomni*. Christ and the church having feasted together at his invitation, she soon after fell asleep, as the disciples did after a repast with their Lord; yet not so fast asleep but that she was sensible of it; for this was not the dead sleep of sin, in which unconverted men are, and are insensible of; nor a judicial slumber some are given up unto, and perceive it not, yet a frame of spirit unbecoming saints, and displeasing to Christ; though consistent with grace, which at such a time is not, or very little, in exercise; they are slothful in duty, and backward to it; the phrase is sometimes used to describe a sluggish, slothful man^g; they are indifferent and lukewarm about divine things, content themselves with the bare externals of religion, without the lively exercise of grace, and without fer-

^a אֲרִיזוֹת מִיְּהוּדָא, Sept.; messui, V. L.

^b Comment. Ehr. p. 179, 327.

^c Et nivei lactis parva mista mero, Tibullus, l. 3. Eleg. 5. v. 34.

^d Pedagog. l. 1. c. 6. p. 107.

^e וְיִשְׂכְּרוּ וְיִשְׂכְּרוּ & inebriamini amoribus, Mercerus, Schmidt, Cocceius, so Ainsworth.

^f Semeo's History of China, par. c. 1. 13.

^g Familiar. Epist. l. 7. Ep. 1.

^h Qui vigilans dormiat, Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 1. Sc. 3. v. 151.

veny and spirituality in them, and seem willing to continue so; see the note on Matt. xxv. 6. but the church here was not so overcome with sleep but her *heart was awake*. Jarchi, and some ancient Jewish writers², interpret this and the former clause of different persons; the former, *I sleep*, of the bride; this, *my heart waketh*, of the bridegroom; and then the sense is, though I am in a sleepy frame, he who is *my heart*, a phrase used by lovers³, my soul, my life, my all, he never slumbers nor sleeps, he watches over me night and day, lest any hurt me; but both clauses are rather to be understood of the same person differently considered, as having two principles of grace and corruption, as the church has, which are represented as two persons; see Rom. vii. 18, 20. Ephes. iv. 22, 24. Gal. v. 17. as the carnal part in her prevailed, she was the *sleeping I*; as the new man, or principle of grace appeared, her *heart was awake*: for, notwithstanding her sleepy frame, she had some thoughts of Christ, and stirring of affection to him; some convictions of her sin, and some desires of being in her duty perhaps, though overpowered by the fleshly part; the spirit was willing, but the flesh weak. Christ's carriage to his church in this case follows, and is observed by her; he spoke to her so loud, that though sleepy she heard him, and owns it, *it is the voice of my beloved*: in the ministration of the Gospel, which is to be distinguished from the voice of a stranger, even when dull and sleepy under hearing it, and little affected with it. Christ was the church's beloved still, had an affection for him, though not thoroughly awakened by his voice, but sleeps on still; this method failing, he takes another, or repeats the same with an additional circumstance, *that knocketh, saying, open to me*: which is to be understood not so much of his knocking by the ministry of the word to awaken her out of sleep, but in a providential way, by taking in his hand the rod of affliction, or scourge of persecution, and lashing therewith in order to bring her out of her carnal security; see Rev. iii. 20. and he not only knocked but called, *saying, open to me*, open the door unto me, and let me in; so lovers are represented as at the door or gate to get admittance, and know not which to call most hard and cruel, the door or their lover^b: there is an emphasis on the word *me*; me, thy Lord, thy head, thy husband, thy friend, that loves thee so dearly; to whom her heart was shut, her affections contracted, her desires towards him languid; wherefore he importunes her to *open to him*, which denotes an enlarging of her affections to him, an exercise of grace on him, an expression of the desires of her soul unto him; which yet could not be done without efficacious grace exerted, as in ver. 4. but, the more to win upon her, he gives her good words, and the most endearing titles, expressive of love and relation, *my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled*, which are all made use of before, excepting the last; see ch. i. 9, 14. and iv. 9. that is, *my undefiled*, which she was, not as a descendant of Adam, nor as in herself, but as washed in the

blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his spirit; and as having been enabled by divine grace to preserve her chastity, and keep the *bed undefiled*; not guilty of spiritual adultery among all her infirmities, even idolatry and superstition; see Rev. xiv. 4. or *my perfect one*^c; not in a legal, but in an evangelical sense, being completely redeemed, perfectly justified, fully pardoned, and sanctified in every part, though not to the highest degree; and perfect in Christ, though not in herself: other arguments follow to engage her attention to his request. *For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*; through standing so long at the door, in the night-season, waiting to be let in; so lovers represent their case in such circumstances, as dealt very hardly with^d; by which may be meant the sufferings of Christ, either in the persons of his ministers, who are exposed to the rage and reproach of men for ministering in his name to the church; or which he endured in his own person, in his estate of humiliation; and particularly in the night he was betrayed, and during the time of darkness he hung upon the cross, when he bore the sins of his people, and his father's wrath; compared to *dew, and drops of the night*, because of the multitude of them he endured in soul and body, and because so uncomfortable to human nature; though as dew is useful and fructifying to the earth, so were these the means of many fruits and blessings of grace, and of bringing many souls to glory; now though these arguments were expressed in the most strong, moving, and melting language, yet were ineffectual.

Ver. 3. *I have put off my coat, &c.*] In order to lie down on her bed at night, and take her ease; meaning her conversation-garments, which she had not been careful of to keep, but had betook herself to carnal ease and rest, and was off her watch and guard, Neh. iv. 23. Rev. xvi. 15. and being at ease, and free from trouble, affliction, and persecution, was unwilling to arise and go with her beloved, lest she should meet with the same trials and sufferings as before, for the sake of him and his Gospel; which may be greatly the sense of her next words. *How shall I put it on?* which suggests an apprehension of difficulty in doing it, it being easier to drop the performance of duty than to take it up again; and shews slothfulness and sluggishness, being loth and not knowing how to bring herself to it; and an aversion of the carnal and fleshly part unto it; yea, as if she thought it was unreasonable in Christ to desire it of her, when it was but her reasonable service; or as if she imagined it was dangerous, and would be detrimental to her rest, and prejudicial to her health. *I have washed my feet*; as persons used to do when come off of a journey, and about to go to bed^e, being weary; as she was of spiritual exercises, and of the observance of ordinances and duties, and so betook herself to carnal ease, and from which being called argues, *how shall I defile them?* by rising out of bed, and treading on the floor, and going to the door to let her beloved in; as if hearkening to the voice of Christ,

² Pesikta in Jarchi, & Tanchuma in Yalkut in loc.

³ Meum mel, meum cor, Plauti Pœnulus, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 154, 170, 175. Meum coreulum, melliculum, ibid. Casina, Act. 4. Sc. 4. v. 14.

^b Janua vel domina, &c. Propert. Eleg. 16. v. 17, 18, 19.

^c מִתְּחִילָה מֵעַד, Sept., perfecta mea, Montanus, Tigurine version,

Marcius; integra mea, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

^d Me mediæ noctes, &c. Propert. ut supra, v. 22, &c.

^e Homer. Odys. 19. v. 217.

obeying his commands, and taking every proper step to enjoy communion with him, would be a defiling her; whereas it was the reverse of these that did it: from the whole it appears, that not only these excuses were idle and frivolous, but sinful; she slighted the means Christ made use of to awaken her, by calling and knocking; she sinned against light and knowledge, sleeping on, when she knew it was the voice of her beloved; she acted a disingenuous part in inviting Christ into his garden, and then presently fell asleep; and then endeavoured to shift the blame from herself, as if she was no ways culpable, but what was desired was either difficult, or unreasonable, or unlawful; she appears guilty of great ingratitude, and discovers the height of folly in preferring her present ease to the company of Christ.

Ver. 4. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, &c.*] To remove the bolt or bar which kept him from entering in. By the *door* is meant the door of her heart, which was in a great measure shut against Christ, through the prevalence of corruption; and the *hole* in it shews that it was not entirely shut up, there was a little love broke out from her to him; a little light broke in from him upon her; but her heart was much narrowed and straitened, her grace low in exercise, yet there were some faith, some love, &c. wherefore Christ takes the advantage of the little hole or crevice there was, and *put in his hand*; which is to be understood of powerful and efficacious grace, and the exertion of it on her; which is as necessary to awake a drowsy saint, and reclaim a backsliding professor, and to quicken to the exercise of grace, and performance of duty, as to the conversion of a sinner, Acts xi. 22. and this is a proof of the greatness of Christ's love to his church; that notwithstanding her rude carriage to him, he does not utterly forsake her, but left something behind that wrought upon her; as well as of his mighty power, in that what calls, knocks, raps, good words, and melting language, could not do, his hand did at once. *And my bowels were moved for him*; the passions of her soul; her grief and sorrow for sin, in using him in so ill a manner; her shame for being guilty of such ingratitude; her fear lest he should utterly depart from her; her love, which had been chill and cold, now began to kindle and appear in flames; her heart, and the desires of it, were in motion towards him; and a hearty concern appeared that he should be used so unfriendly by her; that his company and communion with him should be slighted, who had so greatly loved her, and endured so much for her; other effects follow.

Ver. 5. *I rose up to open to my beloved, &c.*] As soon as touched by the hand of mighty grace, she not only resolved to rise, but actually rose, and that directly, not being easy to lie any longer on her bed of carnal security; being now made heartily and thoroughly willing to let in her beloved, who she supposed was still at the door; but in that she was mistaken; however she met with a rich experience of his grace and goodness. *And my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the*

handles of the lock; when she put her hand upon it to draw it back, and let her beloved in; the myrrh, which he had gathered, ver. 1, and left there when he put in his hand at the hole of the door: the allusion seems to be to lovers shut out, who used to cover the threshold of the door with flowers, and anoint the door-posts with sweet-smelling ointment^f: as by the *door* is meant the heart of the church, so by the *lock*, which fastened and kept it shut, unbelief may be designed; and by the *handles* of it lukewarmness and sluggishness, which strengthen unbelief, and keep the heart closer shut against Christ; and by her *hands* and *fingers*, faith in exercise, attended with the fruits of it, attempting to draw back the lock of unbelief; which whilst the church was trying to do, she met with some fresh experience of the grace of Christ: *her hands and fingers dropped with sweet-smelling myrrh, passing or current*^g; such as weeps and drops from the tree of itself, and, being liquid, runs upon and overflows the hands and fingers; and being excellent and valuable, is passing or current as money; and the odour of it diffusive, it passes afar off: now this is either to be understood of myrrh brought by the church, a pot of ointment of it to anoint her beloved with, who had been long waiting at her door in the night-season, to refresh him with it; and this pot being broke unawares, or designedly, or being in a panic her hands shook, the myrrh run over her hands and fingers as she was drawing back the lock; which may denote that her grace was now in exercise and on the flow, in great abundance; which put her on her duty, and which became odorous and acceptable to Christ: or it may signify myrrh brought and left there by Christ; and may express the abundance of grace from him, communicated by him, to draw and allure her to him, to supple and soften her hard heart, to take off the stiffness of her will, and the rustiness of her affections, and make the lock of unbelief draw back easier, and so open a way for himself into her heart; and to excite grace in her, her faith and love, and cause her to come forth in exercise on him: and her hands and fingers *dropping* herewith shews that all the grace a believer has is from Christ, from whom, in the way of his duty, he receives a large measure of it: whilst the church was on her bed of sloth there was no flow of sweet-smelling myrrh; but, now she is up and doing her duty, her hands and fingers are overflowed with it.

Ver. 6. *I opened to my beloved, &c.*] Which was what he desired, and was done in virtue of his putting in his hand by the hole of the door; or by the exertion of his efficacious grace, working in her both to will and to do, without which it would not have been done; namely, her heart dilated, the desires and affections of her soul enlarged towards Christ, and every grace drawn forth and exercised on him; and though the heart of a believer is sometimes shut to Christ, yet when it is opened, it is only patent to him; the church thought Christ was still at the door, and might be the more confirmed in it by what she found on the handles of the lock; but lo her mistake, *but my beloved had*

^f At lachrymans exclusus amator,—posteisque superbos unguis amaracino, Lucet. l. 4. prope finem.

^g מֵרְרִיחַ מֵרְרִיחַ myrrham transcantem, Pagninus, Montanus, &c. probant, Tigurine version; lachrymantem, Bochart; quam Dioscorides vocat Myrrhian Galizæam.

withdrawn himself, and was gone; a sad disappointment this! she expected to have seen him, and been received in his arms, and embraced in his bosom; but instead of that, he was gone out of sight and hearing: this withdrawal was to chastise her for her former carriage, and to shew her more the evil of her sin, and his resentment of it; to try the truth and strength of her grace, to inflame her love the more, and sharpen her desires after his presence, to prize it more when she had it, and be careful not to lose it: her using two words of the same import, *he turned himself*^a, and *was gone*, signifies that he was really gone, and not in her imagination only; and that he was gone suddenly, at an unawares, and, as she might fear, would never return; and these words being without a copulative, *had withdrawn himself, he was gone*, shew her haste in speaking, the confusion she was in, the strength of her passion, the greatness of her disappointment and sorrow; it is as if she was represented wringing her hands and crying, He is gone, he is gone, he is gone. *My soul failed when he spake; or went out*^b; not out of her body, but she fell into a swoon, and was as one dead, for a while; and this was *at or through his word*^c, as it may be rendered; through what he said when he turned about and departed, expressing his resentment at her carriage; or rather at the remembrance of his kind and tender language he used when he first called her to arise, *saying, open to me, my sister, my spouse*, &c.; and when she called to mind how sadly she had slighted and neglected him, it cut her to the heart, and threw her into this fainting fit. *I sought him, but I could not find him*; in the public ordinances of his house; see the note on ch. iii. 2. *I called him, but he gave me no answer*; called him by his name as she went along the streets and broad ways of the city, where she supposed he might be; praying aloud, and most earnestly and fervently, that he would return to her; but had no answer, at least not immediately, and thus he treated her in the same manner she had treated him; he had called to her, and she disregarded him, and now she calls to him, and he takes no notice of her; but this was not in a way of vindictive wrath and punishment, as in Prov. i. 24, 28. but of chastisement and correction.

Ver. 7. *The watchmen that went about the city found me, &c.*] Of the city and the watchmen in it, and of their finding the church, see the notes on ch. iii. 2, 3. *They smote me, they wounded me*; taking her for a night-walker, they gave her ill words and hard blows; this was not very becoming watchmen to use those of the city in this manner; for, as Plato^d says, keepers of cities should be mild and gentle towards their own, but to enemies rough and severe: if these were true ministers of Christ, this they did by reproaching her for and upbraiding her with her lukewarmness and unkindness to Christ, sharply reproving her for them; and, instead of comforting her with the doctrines of grace, cut and wounded her with the terrors of the law; or else hearing some sweet discourses from them

concerning the person and grace of Christ, her heart was smitten and wounded therewith; and hence she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, in the next verse, that if they found her beloved, that they would tell him, that she was *sick of or wounded with love*: but as they rather appear to be false teachers, since the church would have shunned them, nor did she make any application to them, nor any inquiry of them about her beloved, and met with cruel and unkind usage from them, they may be said to smite and wound her by their false doctrines and scandalous lives, by the divisions they made, and by the censures and reproaches they cast upon her, the odious names they gave her, and by stirring up the civil magistrates against her; all which agree with antichristian ministers. *The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me*; there were two sorts of watchmen in a city, one that went about to see that all was right and safe within; and others placed on the walls of it, who kept their stand, and whose business it was to give notice of an enemy approaching, and to defend the city from outward attacks upon it; and such are the ministers of the word, Isa. lxii. 6. but here false teachers are meant as before, as appears from their abuse of the church, taking away her veil from her, such as women wore for ornament, or as a sign of modesty, or as a token of subjection to their husbands, Isa. iii. 23. Gen. xxiv. 65. 1 Cor. xi. 6—10. and may here design either their falsely accusing her good conversation, which was her outward covering; or their attempt to take away from her the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, which is her covering, the wedding garment, the nuptial robe, as Gregory Nysene^e calls the veil here: and such a veil was given by the bridegroom with the Romans, and was called *flammeum*, from its being of a flame-colour^f, either yellow or red, expressive of the blushing and modesty of the new-married bride^g; and the like custom might obtain with the Jews.

Ver. 8. *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, &c.*] Young converts, as before observed; who, upon the hideous outcry the church made in the streets, came to her to know what was the matter, whom she addressed as after related; this shews the humility and condescension of the church, in desiring the assistance of weaker saints in her present case, and her earnestness and resolution to make use of all ways and means she could to find her beloved; and it becomes saints to be assisting to one another; and conversation with one another, even with weak believers, is often useful. And these the church *adjures, or causes to sue ar*^h; charged them on oath, as they would answer it to God; which shews the strength of her love, her sincerity, and seriousness in her inquiry after him: *if ye find my beloved*; who had but little knowledge of him, and communion with him, since at present he was yet to be found by them; and it was possible, notwithstanding, that they might find him before she did, as Christ shewed himself to Mary Magdalen, before he did to the disciples. The charge she

^a חָסַם וַתִּרְעַתְרֵת אֵת, Pagninus; circumerat, Montanus.

^b יָצְאָה מִן הַבַּיִת, Sept. egressa est, Pagninus, Montanus, Marcius.

^c בָּרַבְרוּ מִן הַבַּיִת, Sept. in loquacia ejus, Marcius.

^d De Legibus, l. 2. p. 602.

^e Homil. 12. in Cant. p. 651.

^f Non timidum nupte leviter tinctura pudorem, lutea demissas

velarunt flammea vultus, Lucas. Pharsal. l. 2. v. 360, 361. Vid. Plin.

Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 8. Uti tibi corycio glomerarem flammea luto, Virgil. Cyris. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. Feccen. Ode 4. v. 4.

^g Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Deorum, p. 84, 89. & Kipping. Antiqui

Roman. l. 4. c. 2. p. 693, 694.

^h אֲדַבְּרֵי הַשְּׂבָעוֹת, Sept.; adjuro, V. L. Pagninus, &c.

gave them is, *that ye tell him that I am sick of love; or, what shall ye, or should ye tell him?*⁹ not her blows and wounds, the injuries and affronts she had received from the watchmen and keepers of the wall; nor many things, only this one thing, which was most on her heart, uppermost in her mind, and under which she must die, if not relieved, *tell him that I am sick of love;* and that for him, through his absence, and her eager longing after him, and the discoveries of his love to her; and which, though not incurable, nor a sickness unto death, for Christ suffers none to die through love to him, yet is a very painful one; and is to be known by a soul's panting after Christ, and its prodigious jealousy of his love, and by its carefulness, diligence, and industry, to enjoy the manifestations of it. Of this love-sickness, see more on ch. ii. 5.

Ver. 9. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?* &c.] The same title Christ gives her, ch. i. 8. and from whom these daughters seem to have taken it; and, in giving it to her, might be assured they were right, since he, who knew her perfectly well, so calls her; in what sense she was so fair, see the note there: and this they used to shew their esteem of her, and that they were willing to do all the service they could for her; and what made them so attentive to her charge, and so desirous of knowing her beloved; since they concluded he must be some extraordinary person that one so fair and beautiful as she was should make the object of her love and choice: for this question they put, not in a scornful and disdainful way; nor to shift off any trouble from themselves, through the charge she gave them; nor as altogether ignorant of her beloved, for some knowledge they had, though but small; but as desirous of knowing more of him, and of hearing his excellencies set forth, and especially those which distinguished him from the beloveds of all others: with some, the world, its riches and grandeur, are their beloved; with others, the sinful lusts and pleasures of this life; with others, the praises and applause of men; and with others near and dear relations; and, with all, self: but with a true believer in Christ, he is preferable to them all; to riches, pleasures, honours; to all creatures, and creature-enjoyments; and self, in every sense of it, is parted with for him; he is fairer, wiser, and richer, than all others. And this question is repeated by the daughters, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* to shew their surprise at the charge given them; the suspicion they had of peculiar excellencies in her beloved; and to declare their seriousness and earnestness to know more of Christ; and their impurity to have a speedy answer; and the rather for what follows: *that thou dost so charge us?* so awfully and solemnly, so seriously and strictly, with so much warmth and vehemence.

Ver. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.*] This, and the following verses, contain the church's answer to the question of the daughters; she first gives a general description of her beloved, and then descends to

particulars: the description of him in general is, that he is *white and ruddy;* having the whiteness of the lily, and the redness of the rose, ch. ii. 1. which make a perfect beauty. Some understand this of the two natures in Christ, divine and human; with respect to his divine nature, *white,* expressive of his simplicity, purity and holiness; which colour, Cicero says¹, is chiefly becoming God, it being simple, and having no mixture and composition in it: with respect to his human nature, *red,* being a partaker of the same flesh and blood with his people. Others, only of the human nature; *white* denoting the purity and holiness of it, being without either original or actual sin; *red,* or *ruddy,* his bloody sufferings in it for the sins of his people. But it may denote, in general, his fairness, beauty, and glory; being, as a divine Person, the brightness of his Father's glory; as man, fairer than the children of men; as the Mediator, full of grace and truth; and in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and in all the relations he stands in to his, as Father, Husband, Brother, and Friend, he appears most lovely and amiable. *The chiefest among ten thousand;* whether angels or men; he is the Creator of angels, the object of their worship; and has a more excellent name and nature than they, to whom they are subject, and are ministering spirits; he is superior to men, good and bad, high and low; Lord of all, King of kings, and Head of saints, and has the pre-eminence over all creatures. The Septuagint version is, *chosen out of or from ten thousand;* Christ, as man, is chosen of God, from among the myriads of the individuals of human nature, to union with the divine Word, or Son of God; see Psal. lxxxix. 19. as Godman and Mediator, to be the alone Saviour and Redeemer of his people; to be the Head of the body, the church; and to be the Judge of quick and dead; and he is chosen by sensible sinners to be the object of their love; to be their only Saviour; and to be their Ruler and Governor, whose laws, commands, and ordinances, they choose to obey; see Psal. lxxiii. 24. The words may be rendered, *the standard-bearer, or one standardised by or over ten thousand;* the church is militant, and has many enemies; in the name of the Lord, she sets up her banners against them, and the banner over her is the *love* of Christ, ch. ii. 4. and he is the standard-bearer, who has a multitude of angels and saints under his standard; and how stately and majestic does he look, and what a noble sight is it to see him bearing the standard before such a company! Rev. vii. 9. Or the sense is, Christ is a more excellent standard-bearer than all others; there may be ten thousand persons that carry a flag, but none to be compared with him, for comeliness, strength, and courage: or he is lifted up, as a standard, above others, angels and men; as he was upon the cross, and now, in the ministry of the word, that souls may gather unto him, and enlist themselves in his service; see Isa. xi. 10.

Ver. 11. *His head is as the most fine gold, &c.*] Here the church enters into a particular description and commendation of her beloved, which continues to the

⁹ לָרֵאשִׁיטָה מִהַרְבֵּי מַה quid narrabitis ei? Pagninus, Michaëlis; quid indicabitis ei? Montanus, Marcius.

¹ De Legibus, l. 2.

¹ זָרָבָב דְּעָרְבָב vexillatus a decem millibus, Montanus; sub signis habens exercitum decem millium, Tigurine version.

² זָרָבָב פְּרָעָבָב præ decem millibus, Pagninus, so Cocceius, Marcius.

end of the chapter; and she begins with his *head*, which she compares to the most fine gold. Some think that some ornament of the head is meant, as a diadem or crown of gold; or else the hair of the head, which, though afterwards said to be black, yet being powdered with gold-dust, looked of the colour of gold, especially in the rays of the sun upon it; as did the hair of Solomon's youths that attended him, being thus decorated, as Josephus^a relates; and which custom of powdering the hair with gold-dust was used by some of the Roman emperors^w. The gold here is called *gold of Phaz*, or *Uphaz*, as in Dan. x. 5. *Fez*, with the Arabs, signifies gold; the city of Fez had its name from hence; in a place where it was built, a quantity of gold was found in it, which gave it its name^x: according to Schultens^y, gold is called *phaz*, from its leaping as it were out of the clods of the earth, and shining forth and glistening after a shower of rain falling on the earth, where there is a mine of it, by which means it is discovered; and of such gold, as the finest and purest, Diodorus Siculus^z speaks, as found in Arabia; and which, from the purity of it, was called *apyron*, because it needed no purifying by fire: and this being the best and finest, is used to express the superlative excellence of Christ; for it may be rendered, the *gold of gold*², there is none like it. By Christ's *head* some understand the Father of Christ, said to be the Head of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3. not as Christ is a divine Person, but as man and Mediator, who, as such, was subject to his Father, supported and upheld by him; and who, for his excellent glory, is compared to the most fine gold, there being no glory like his. Or else the divine nature in Christ may be meant, which is the head, the chief and principal nature in him; which puts a glory on him, and an efficacy in all he did and suffered; and which is like pure, fine, shining gold, in which all the perfections of deity shine resplendently. Or rather the headship of Christ over his church is meant; as Nebuchadnezzar's monarchy is represented by a head of gold, Dan. ii. 32, 37, 38. so Christ's, because his kingdom is great and glorious, pure and spiritual, solid and substantial, lasting and durable, yea, everlasting. *His locks* are *bushy*, and *black as a raven*; which figures are used to set forth the beauty and comeliness of Christ: thick, bushy, well-set hair, or *pendulous*^b, as some render the word, hanging down upon the forehead and cheeks in a beautiful manner, makes very comely; and black hair was reckoned comely^c; and the blackness of a raven is accounted a very fine black: and naturalists^d say, that the eggs, brains, and blood of ravens, have been used to make the hair black. By these *bushy* and *black locks* of Christ some understand the thoughts and purposes of God, the Head of Christ; which, like hair, and like black bushy hair, are intricate, dark, and obscure, unsearchable and incomprehensible; and yet, so far as known, are beautiful and delightful;

especially as they appear in the scheme of salvation, drawn in the eternal mind: or rather, as by others, believers in Christ are meant, for their numbers, dependence on Christ, and nourishment from him; see the note on ch. iv. 1. and, being like *locks* of hair beautifully set, as when congregated and united together in Gospel order, are an ornament to Christ the Head, and afford a delightful sight to spectators, Col. ii. 5. and these being like *crisp'd* or *curl'd* hair^e, as some render the word, may denote the hardiess and strength of believers, to perform duty, withstand enemies, and endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; curled hair being the hardest and strongest^f. But it seems best to understand by them the administrations of Christ's kingly office; which are executed with the utmost prudence, vigour, and strength; for curled hair is a sign of a dry brain^g, which produces acuteness and sharpness of wit, as well as of vigour, strength, and courage; and which, how dark and obscure they may seem to be, and to carry in them severity to his enemies; yet being managed with wisdom, as before observed, and also according to the rules of justice and equity, look very beautiful when made manifest, and are admired by the saints, Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Ver. 12. *His eyes are as the eyes of doves*, &c.] As the church's eyes are said to be, ch. i. 15. and iv. 1. which are her ministers, endowed with dove-like gifts in measure, as Christ is without measure, in fulness; but these are Christ's eyes, which may signify his omniscience, who has seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. and iv. 10. especially as that has respect unto and is concerned with his people in a way of grace and mercy, and so must look very beautiful in their view: his eyes are like *doves' eyes*; not fierce and furious, but loving and lovely; looking upon his people, under all their trials and afflictions, with sympathy and concern, to deliver them out of them: and like the eyes of doves *by rivers of waters*: Sanctius thinks the allusion is to the humours in which the eye is enclosed, and, as it were, swims in; hence the eyes are called *natantia lumina*, by Virgil^h; but it denotes eyes like those of doves, quick and lively, as clean as milk-white doves, as if they had been *washed in milk*; clear and perspicuous, sharp-sighted, and behold all persons and things, in all places, and at once; and as doves look only to their mates, so Christ's eyes of love are only on his church; he looks to none but her with his eye of special and peculiar love. Moreover, his eyes are like the eyes of doves *by the rivers of waters*; which denotes the fixedness and constancy of them: doves, by the river-side, keep their eyes fixed on the purling streams, and in drinking, as Plinyⁱ observes, do not erect their necks, and lift up their heads, but, keeping their eyes upon the water, drink a large draught, in the manner the beasts do; and they delight in clean water, of which they drink, and with which they wash^k: Christ, being greatly delighted with his people,

^a Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3.

^w Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 9. c. 9. col. 154.

^x Leo African. Descript. Africae, l. 3. p. 273.

^y Comment. in Prov. viii. 19. & xxi. 5.

^z Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133. & l. 3. p. 179.

² אֶזְרָא aurum auri, Mercerus.

^b תְּלַלְתִּים pendulis, Arabic, Bochart, so Jarchi.

^c Spectandum — nigroque capillo, Horat. de Arte Poet. v. 37. ni-

groque crine decorum, ib. Sermon. l. 1. Ode 39. v. 11.

^d Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 6. Elian. de Animal. l. 1. c. 48.

^e Crispi, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; crispaturæ, Buxtorf. Marckius.

^f Aristot. de Gen. Animal. l. 5. c. 3.

^g Ibid.

^h Æneid. l. 5. So Ovid. Fast. l. 6. animique oculique natabant.

ⁱ Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 34.

^k Varro de Rustic. c. 3. s. 7.

has fixed his eyes on them, and he never withdraws them from them; for these waters may point at the object of Christ's love, even Gospel churches, consisting of such as are justified and sanctified by his grace, compared to *clean water*; among whom the doctrines of the Gospel are powerfully preached, the ordinances purely administered, the waters of the sanctuary flow, by which souls are delighted and refreshed; and to these Christ looks, Isa. lxvi. 2. and his eyes being like doves' eyes, *washed with milk*, may denote the purity of them, being purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and the meekness and mildness of them, not red and wrathful, but full of mercy, pity, and compassion, as if they had been washed with milk. And they are said to be *fitly set*; or *sitting in fulness*¹; such as exactly fill up their holes; are set neither too high nor too low; neither sunk in too much, nor stand out too far; but are like precious stones, in an enclosure of gold or silver, to which the allusion is; as diamonds set in a ring; or as the precious stones in the high-priest's breast-plate, which exactly filled the cavities made for them, and hence are called *stones of fulness*, Exod. xxv. 7. and xxviii. 17, 20. or, *set by fulness*²; that is, by full channels of water, where doves delight to be; and may denote the fulness of grace, and the flows of it, by which Christ sits and dwells, and leads his people to, Rev. vii. 17. or, *setting upon fulness*³; on the world, and the *fulness* of it, which is his, and he gives as much of it to his people as he think fit; and on the vast numbers of persons and things in it, and the vast variety of actions done therein; which shews the extensiveness of his omniscience: and on the *fulness* of time, fixed by him and his father, for his coming into the world, to do the great work of redemption in it; and which, before it came, he was looking, waiting, and watching, and as it were longing till it came: and on his *fulness*, the church, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all, until he has gathered them all in, and filled them with all the gifts and graces of the spirit, designed for them: and on the *fulness* of the Gentiles, until they are all brought in: and on his own *fulness*; both personal, *the fulness of the Godhead*, which he had his eyes upon, when he undertook the work of redemption, and which supported him in it, and carried him through it; and upon his dispensatory *fulness*, or fulness of grace, as Mediator, to supply the wants of his people, under all their straits and difficulties, temptations and afflictions: all which must make him exceeding lovely in the eyes of his people.

Ver. 13. *His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers, &c.* Which may intend the presence of Christ with his people in his word and ordinances; often called his *face*, which he shews, and they seek after, than which nothing is more desirable; walking in the light of his countenance is preferable to walking among spicy beds, where fragrant plants and odoriferous flowers grow: or the cheeks, being the seat of modesty and blushing, may denote the great humility

of Christ, seen in his assumption of our nature, throughout the whole course of his life, and especially at his death, and which renders him very delightful to his people; how lovely does the meek and lowly Jesus look! how beautiful are those blushing cheeks of his, who, being equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant! The cheeks may intend not bare cheeks, but with the hair growing upon them, the hair of the beard; which puts forth itself, and grows upon the cheeks or *jaws*⁴, as it may be rendered, which makes a man look graceful and majestic; so Aben Ezra interprets the word of the beard, and so many Christian⁵ interpreters, which puts out like aromatic plants on spicy beds. This was literally true of Christ, who was a grown man when he suffered, and gave his cheeks to the smiters, and who plucked off the hair of his beard: and in a mystical sense it may intend either believers in Christ, who are the hair of his cheeks, as well as of his head; and who, like spicy beds and fragrant flowers, are odoriferous to Christ and to one another; or as *towers of perfumes*⁶, as some, which ascend upwards in the exercise of faith, hope, and love: or rather the graces of the Spirit in Christ, as man and Mediator; which, like the hair of the beard, are in Christ, in great numbers, without measure, and make him very lovely and graceful; and are like beds of spices and sweet flowers, for the variety and sweet-smelling savour of them. Though it seems, best of all, to be expressive of the manliness, courage, prudence, gravity, and majesty of Christ; of which the beard, thick set and well grown, is an indication; all which appeared in the whole conduct and deportment of Christ among men; in his ministry, in his life and conversation, at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation, sufferings, and death. The cheeks rising, and being a little elevated, are fitly described by beds in a garden, by *towers of perfumes*, or fragrant flowers and fruit-trees, reared up in the form of towers, or pyramids; or by a dish of sweetmeats, placed in such a figure: and the hair of the cheeks, or beard, are aptly represented by spices, rising up from a bed of them; and all denote the beauty, savour, and majesty of Christ. Or, as the Vulgate Latin version, *as beds of spices set by confectioners*; not as aromatic plants, set in rows by the gardener; but the spices themselves, set in rows by the confectioner in vessels⁷, placed in his shop in rows to be sold; which being of various colours, especially white and red, the cheeks, for colour and eminence, are compared unto them. *His lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh*; by which are meant the words of Christ, which drop from his lips; which are like lilies, for their purity, thinness, and beautiful colour: the words of Christ are pure words, free from all pollution, deceit, and human mixtures; nor are his lips big with his own praises, but with expressions of regard for his father's glory; and are very pleasant, gracious, and graceful. But then the comparison is not between them and white lilies, for not white, but red

¹ מלאת על siti insitione, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

² Ad plenitudinem, Tigurine version, Bochart; juxta plenitudinem, Vatablus; so some in Brightman; juxta fluentia plenissima, V. L. Sep-tagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

³ Super plenitudinem, Montanus, Mercerus.

⁴ מלאת עין maxilla ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Marcius, Michaelis.

⁵ Sanctius, Cocceus, Ainsworth, Marcius, Michaelis.

⁶ מנדלות מרקחים מנדלות pigmentorum, Marcius; condimentorum, Schmidt, Michaelis.

⁷ Vid. Fortunat. Scacchi Eleochrys. Sacr. l. 1. c. 18. p. 90.

lilies, are accounted the most beautiful; see ch. iv. 3. wherefore rather red or purple lilies are respected, such as Pliny², and other writers¹, speak of; such as grew in Syria³, a neighbouring country; and also in Egypt⁴ grew lilies like to roses. Some⁵ think the allusion is to crowns, made of red or purple lilies, wore at nuptial festivals, on which were poured oil of myrrh, and so dropped from them; but the phrase, *dropping sweet-smelling myrrh*, is not in construction with *lilies*, but with *lips*: signifying, that the lips or words of Christ were like to lilies; not so much or not only for their thinness and colour, as for the sweet smell of them, very odorous, grateful, and acceptable; as are the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, to sensible souls, delivered in the ministry of the word: the manner of which delivery of them is expressed by *dropping* gradually, by little and little, as Christ's church and people can bear them; seasonably, and at proper times, as their wants require constantly, as while Christ was here on earth, so now he is in heaven, by his ministers, in all ages, to the end of the world; and yet sweetly and gently refreshing, and making fruitful; see Deut. xxxii. 2. Moreover, the kisses of Christ's lips, or the manifestations of his love, may be taken into the sense of this clause; which, together with the grateful matter and graceful manner of his words, render him very acceptable to his church; see ch. i. 2. and such a sentiment is expressed, in much the same language, by others⁷.

Ver. 14. *His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl, &c.*] Beryl is with great propriety mentioned, because it was usual to wear it on the fingers². This was one of the precious stones in the breast-plate of the high-priest, a type of Christ, Exod. xxviii. 20. one of the pearl foundations of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 20. the appearance of the wheels in Ezekiel's vision was like it, Ezek. i. 16. the body of the glorious person, seen by Daniel, is said to be as that, Dan. x. 6. so that it is no wonder the hands of Christ should be compared to gold rings set with it. The word *tarshish*, here rendered by *beryl*, is sometimes used for the sea; and naturalists³ tell us, that the best beryl is that which most resembles the colour of the sea; so all the three Targums, on Exod. xxviii. 20, call it כריס ים, from its sea-colour; and some versions have it here, *the sea-coloured beryl*⁴. Some think the chrysolite is meant, so called from Tarshish, a city in the Indian sea, from whence it was brought, 1 Kings x. 22. which is a precious stone, of a golden colour. Others take it to be the *hyacinth*, or *jacinth*, which is of a violet or purple colour. Cocceius is of opinion that the *sardonyx* is intended, a composition of the *sardius* and *onyx* stones; and is of a white and ruddy colour, and much resembles the nail of a man's hand; which it was usual to set in rings wore on the hand; and a hand adorned with a ring set with a sardonyx, Martial

calls *sardonychata manus*⁵. Now Christ's hands, which are the instruments of action, may be compared to *gold rings*, set with one or other of these stones; because of the variety of his works in nature, providence, and grace; and because of the preciousness and value of them; and because of their perfection and completeness; the circular form being reckoned the most perfect: and never do the hands of Christ appear as thus described, and look more beautiful and lovely, than when he is beheld as grasping, holding, and retaining his people in his hands, out of which they can never be plucked; and who are as so many gold rings, jewels, pearls, and precious stones, in his esteem; and as holding the bright stars, the ministers of the word, in them, who sparkle in their gifts and graces, like so many gems there: and particularly this may be expressive of the munificence and liberality of Christ, in the distribution of his gifts and graces to his people, so freely and generously, so largely and plentifully, and so wisely and faithfully, as he does; and a beautiful sight it is, to the eye of faith, to behold him with his hands full of grace, and a heart ready to distribute it. *His belly* is as *bright ivory*, overlaid with *sapphires*: which most of the ancient interpreters understand of the human nature of Christ, described by one part of it, because of its frailty and weakness in itself; and is compared to bright ivory, partly because of its firmness and constancy in suffering, and partly because of its purity, holiness, and innocence; and is said to be overlaid with *sapphires*, because of its exaltation and glory at the right hand of God. The words may be rendered, *his bowels are as bright ivory*, &c.⁶; as in ver. 4. and may express the love, grace, mercy, pity, and compassion of Christ to the sons of men; compared to *ivory*, or the elephant's teeth, for the excellency of it, Christ's love being better than life itself; and for the purity and sincerity of it, there being no hypocrisy in it; and for the firmness, constancy, and duration of it, it being from everlasting to everlasting, without any change or variation; and to an overlay or enamel of *sapphires*, for the riches, worth, and value of it, it being preferable to all precious stones, or that can be desired. Some interpreters are of opinion, that not any part of the body, the belly or bowels, are here meant, but rather some covering of the same; for it seems not so agreeable with the rules of decency, nor consistent with the spouse's modesty, to describe her beloved by those parts to the daughters of Jerusalem; nor with the scope of the narration, which is to give distinguishing marks and characters, by which they might know him from another. Aben Ezra thinks the girdle is meant; which either may be his royal girdle, the girdle of righteousness and faithfulness; or his priestly girdle, said to be of gold; see Isa. xi. 5. Rev. i. 13. or his prophetic girdle, the girdle of truth. The allusion may be to the embroidered

¹ Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 5.

² Theophrast. apud Athenai Deipnosophist. l. 15. c. 8. p. 691. Maimon. in Min. Sheviith, c. 7. s. 6. & Alshech in loc. Midrash Esther, n. 4. fol. 91. 1.

³ Dioscorides, l. 1. c. 163. Apud Fortunat. Scacch. ut supra, l. 1. c. 27. p. 134.

⁴ Herodot. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 92.

⁵ Scacch. ibid. l. 1. c. 28. p. 138, 139.

⁶ Oleni tua basia myrrham, Martial. Epigr. l. 2. Ep. 10.

² Et solitum digito beryllum adederat ignis, Propert. l. 4. Eleg. 7. v. 9.

³ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 27. c. 5. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 65. Rarum de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 8. De Boot Hist. Gemm. l. 2. c. 70. Βερύλλου γλαυκῆς λίθος, Dionys. Perieg. v. 1012.

⁴ ברתרשיא beryllu thalasio, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

⁵ Epigr. l. 2. Ep. 25.

⁶ מלכין viscera ejus, Marcius, Michaelis.

coat of the high-priest: in the holes and incisures of which, as Jarchi says, were put jewels and precious stones: or rather to the ephod with the breast-plate, in which were twelve precious stones, and among these the sapphire; and which may represent Christ; as the great High-priest, bearing all his elect upon his heart in heaven; having entered there, in their name, to take possession of it for them, until they are brought into the actual enjoyment of it.

Ver. 15. *His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, &c.*] The allusion may be to the *femoralia*, or garments on the thighs of the high-priest when he ministered in holy things, who was a type of Christ; which were made of fine twined linen, and, as the Rabbins say ^a, of thread six times doubled; and so must sit very full and stiff, and be like pillars of marble, for colour, firmness, and stiffness; and below which was the hem of the holy robe: and, round about that, were pomegranates and golden bells, and which may be alluded to in the next clause, *set upon sockets of fine gold*; or else the allusion may be to the custom ^b of the eastern countries, where they wore sandals, bound about the feet with golden ribbands; or had their shoes adorned with gold and precious stones; or were made of gold, as were those which Demetrius wore: snow-white feet, with golden knots, as Manilius ^c expresses it, must look very beautiful; and marble legs or feet, as the poet ^d calls them, with golden shoes, suggest the same idea. Now if a covering of the thighs is alluded to, this may respect the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, and the glory and excellency of it; which covers the nakedness of saints; hides all their impurities, their sins, original and actual; and renders them acceptable in the sight of God: or the legs of Christ being thus compared may denote the strength and power of Christ, to bear up and support what has been or is laid upon him; as the whole universe, the earth, and all that is in it; the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, which he is the basis and foundation of; the whole church, the persons of all the elect, whom he represented in eternity, and now in time; all their sins and transgressions, laid upon him and bore by him, in his body on the cross; the government of his people on his shoulder; their burdens, and them under all their trials, temptations, and afflictions; and as all the vessels, so all the glory of his father's house: and these may set forth also the power of Christ, in treading under and trampling upon all his and his people's enemies, both when on the cross, and now in heaven, where he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. Or legs, being the instruments of walking, may intend either his ways of love, grace, and mercy, in the covenant before time, in favour of his people; and which, like marble pillars, are pure, firm, and constant, and like such, in golden sockets, glorious and excellent: or his walk and conversation, when incarnate and in his state of humiliation; which was always

upright, even, and constant; and upon which were a beauty, glory, and lustre, answerable to the metaphors here used: or his walks in the churches, his golden candlesticks; among whom he delights to be, and to whom his presence is desirable, beautiful, and glorious: or his providential dispensations towards his people; which are straight, upright, and equal, holy and righteous, firm and sure; the basis of which are his eternal purposes and decrees. *His countenance is as Lebanon*: his shape, form, personage, appearance, and mien; which was a goodly mountain on the north of Judea, high, pleasant, and set with fruitful and fragrant trees, and made a very delightful appearance; to which Christ may be compared for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels of heaven, and than the heavens themselves; and for pleasantness, being more glorious and excellent than that or any other mountain; and for the fruitful and fragrant trees of righteousness that grow upon him, have their root in him, and their fruitfulness from him; and which diffuse a grateful odour, by their graces and good works, to Christ and his saints; and who himself more especially, like this mountain, emits a fragrant smell, in his person, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice, to all passers-by, and true believers in him. It is added, *excellent as the cedars*; which grew on Lebanon; being the choicest, and preferable to all others: to which Christ may be compared, for tallness, stateliness, fragrant, and durability; especially the former, which is always thought to add gratefulness and majesty to men; see the note on 1 Sam. ix. 2.

Ver. 16. *His mouth is most sweet, &c.*] Or sweetness itself ^a; yea, *sweetness* ^b; exceeding sweet. That is, the words of his mouth, the doctrines of the Gospel, the precious promises of it, the kind invitations given, and the comfortable things spoken in it; yea, the commands of Christ in his word are not grievous, but pleasant and delightful: or the kisses of his mouth may be meant, the sensible manifestations of his love, ch. i. 2. Some think the voice of Christ is intended, and the sound of it ^c, whether the word be translated *mouth*, *throat*, or *roof of the mouth*, as it may signify either; all which are instruments of the voice, and nothing is more common with lovers than to admire each other's voice; see ch. ii. 14. and may be applied to the voice of the Gospel, which is sweet, delightful, charming, and alluring, being a voice of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. The word may be rendered *taste*, as in ch. ii. 3. and which may be taken, either actively, for the distinguishing taste of Christ between things perverse and good, and between carnal and spiritual ones, and so for the provision of savoury food he makes for his people; or passively, of his being, in his person, offices, and grace, sweet to the taste of a believer. Some interpret it of the breath of his mouth; which being *most sweet*, recommends him to the affections of his people; and may design the expressions of his love to them, and

^a Kimchi Sopher Shorash. rad. שׁוּר, Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. s. 14. Jarchi in loc.

^b Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 35. & l. 37. c. 2.

^c De Margaritis, l. 5.

^d Litora marmoreis pedibus signanda puella, Ovid. Amor. l. 2. Eleg. 11. v. 15.

¹ Et cedro digna locutus, Persii Satyr. l. v. 42.

² So γλυκὴ σῆμα is used of lovers by Solon in Plutarch. in Erotica, p. 751. and in Apulei Apolog. p. 192.

³ מִמְּתִיקִים dulcedines, Paganus, Montanus, Marckius, Michaelis.

⁴ Ἄδω τι σῆμα, &c. Theocrit. Idyll. 8. v. 82.

his intercession for them. *Yea, he is altogether lovely* ; in his person, offices, people, word, and ordinances ; his loveliness is perfect, nothing wanting in it ; he is so to all, to his Father, angels, and saints : or, he is *all desires* ; exceeding desirable, having all excellencies, perfections, and fulness in him ; and being so in all his characters, offices, and relations, he stands in to his people ; to whom he is all things^o, even all in all ; they desire none but him. And now, by this description of him, the daughters of Jerusalem could not be at a loss to know who he was, and that he must be preferable to all other beloveds. And the church closes the account by claiming interest in him ; her faith in him, and love to him, being increased, whilst she was speaking of him : *this is my beloved* ; whom she had often called so ; and still was her beloved ; for though she had suffered much for him, nothing could separate from her love to him : and she adds another endearing character, *and this is my friend* ; which appeared by his espousal of her ; by his becoming a surety for her ; by his assumption of her nature, and suffering in her room and stead ; by paying her debts, and purchasing her person ; by en-

tering into heaven in her name, taking possession of it for her, and acting the part of an advocate on her account ; by gracious visits to her, and familiar converse with her ; by granting her large supplies of grace, and affording her succour and relief in all times of need ; by giving good and wholesome counsel to her, and by disclosing the secrets of his heart unto her, John xv. 15. and he is such a friend that sticks closer than a brother ; that loves at all times ; is constant and faithful, and always to be confided in ; he is a rich, powerful, everlasting, and unchangeable friend. All this the church says, in the strength of faith, with the greatest affection, in the most exulting strains, and as glorying in him, and boasting of him : and now, as if she should say, *O ye daughters of Jerusalem*, is not this enough to describe my beloved to you, to distinguish him from all others ? can you blame me for my affection to him, making such a strict inquiry after him, and giving such a solemn charge to you concerning him ? is it not enough to draw out your love unto him, and set you a seeking after him with me ? And such an effect it had upon them, as appears from the following chapter.

C H A P. VI.

THE discourse between the church and the daughters of Jerusalem is continued in this chapter : they inquire whether her beloved was gone, in order to seek him with her, ver. 1. she tells them where he was gone, and for what purpose he went thither, and what he was doing there ; and claims and asserts her interest in him, ver. 2, 3. Then follows a commendation of the church by Christ, who admires her beauty, and describes her by her eyes, hair, &c. ver. 4—7. and prefers her to all others ; being a singular and choice one to him, and the praise of others, ver. 8—10. and next he gives an account of his going into his garden, and his design in it, and of what happened to him there, ver. 11, 12. And the chapter is concluded with a charge to the Shulamite, to turn herself, that she might be looked upon ; which occasions a question, to which an answer is returned, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women ? &c.*] The title is the same used by them, and by Christ before them, ch. i. 8. and v. 9. and here repeated, to assure her that they were serious in asking this question, and that it was in great respect to her they put it ; and which, to the same sense, in other words, is expressed, *whither is thy beloved turned aside ?* which way did he take ? on what hand did he turn, to the right or left, when he went from thy door ? They ask no longer who or what he was, being satisfied with the church's description of him ; by which they had gained some knowledge of him, and had their affections drawn out unto him ; and were desirous of knowing more of him and of being better acquainted with him, and to enjoy his company and presence ;

though as yet they had but little faith in him, and therefore could not call him *their beloved*, only *her beloved* : and this question is put and repeated in this manner, to shew that they were serious and in earnest ; yea, were in haste, and impatient to know which way he went. *That, say they, we may seek him with thee* ; it was not mere speculation or curiosity that led them to put the above questions ; they were desirous to go into practice, to join with the church in the search of Christ, to seek him with her in the word and ordinances ; upon which they were determined, could they get any hint from her whither he was gone, and where it was most likely to find him : for so the words may be rendered, *and we will seek him with thee* ; this they had resolved on among themselves, and only wanted directions which way to steer their course, or a grant to go along with the church in quest of her beloved.

Ver. 2. *My beloved is gone down into his garden, &c.*] Which may be said by Solomon, in allusion to what he himself was wont to do, as Josephus^q relates ; who used to go very early in a morning in great pomp to Etham, about two miles from Jerusalem, a pleasant place, abounding with gardens and flows of water : or respect may be had to the king's gardens nearer Jerusalem, which were at the descent of Mount Zion, and reached to the lower pool^r ; see Neh. iii. 15. and which lying lower than the king's palace, he might be said to go down to it. And this may point at the low estate of the people of God on earth, depressed with sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions ; and the condescension of Christ, in visiting them in their low estate, and granting them his gracious presence : of the gar-

^o וכלו מחמדיו & totus ipsa desideria, Marekii, Michaelis.

^p Omnia Caesar erat, Lucan. Pharsal. l. 3. v. 108. Id unum dixero, quam ille omnibus omnia fuerit, Patereulus, l. 2.

^q וּבְקִשְׁרוֹ [ὑπονομασται, Sept.; quæremus, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Marekii, &c.

^r Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3.

^s See Lightfoot's Chorograph. Inquiry on John, c. 5. s. 4. p. 509.

den of Christ, and of his coming into it, see the notes on ch. iv. 12, 16, and v. 1. and the church might remember what he said, *I am come into my garden*, ch. v. 1. though she soon fell asleep and forgot it, and now calls it to mind, and so could direct the daughters where he was. She adds, *to the beds of spices*; of odoriferous plants; to which particular believers, planted regularly in the churches of Christ, may be compared, for the excellency and fragrantcy of their graces; and among whom Christ delights to be; see ch. iv. 13, 14. Gussetius¹ thinks the words, both here and in ch. v. 13. should be rendered *rivers of spices*; an hyperbolic expression, shewing that a man walking by rivers of waters, where aromatic plants and fragrant flowers grow, perceives such a sweet odour, that, whilst he is refreshed with the moisture of the waters, he seems to be walking by rivers of spices. The end of her beloved's going thither is, *to feed in the gardens*; to feed his flocks there: not on commons and in fields, but in gardens, which is unusual: and by which are meant particular churches, where Christ feeds his people, by his spirit and by his ministers, word and ordinances, with himself, the bread of life; with the discoveries of his love, better than wine; and with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel: or to feed himself, or that *he himself might be fed* there; by beholding with pleasure how the plants grow, and the spices flow out; by tasting the pleasant fruits of the garden; and by observing with delight the graces of the spirit in his people in lively exercise. *And to gather lilies*; to crop them with the hand²; lilies are liable to be cropped, hence Horace³ calls the lily *breve lilium*, the shortlived lily: to these saints may be compared, for the glory, splendour, and beauty, they receive from Christ; see ch. ii. 2. there was a gathering of these at the death of Christ, Ephes. ii. 10. John xi. 51, 52. and there is a gathering of them in effectual vocation, and into a church-state, and into nearer communion with Christ; but here it seems to signify a gathering them by death, when fully ripe, to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him.

Ver. 3. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, &c.*] Expressive of interest in Christ, and union to him, and of her faith therein; which still continued, notwithstanding her unbecoming carriage to Christ, and her many infirmities, ch. v. 2, 3. Aben Ezra connects the words with the preceding, *my beloved is gone, &c.* but though he is, and I am left alone, I know I am his, and he is mine; which throws a beauty upon the words, and declares the excellency and strength of her faith; for herein lies the glory and excellency of faith, to believe in an unseen Christ: though it may be the Shechinah was with her, as the Targum has it; or Christ had now appeared to her, and was found by her, and therefore, like Thomas, says, *my Lord and my God. He feedeth among the lilies*; see the note on ch. ii. 16.

Ver. 4. *Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, &c.*] These are the words of Christ, who had been absent for some time, and till now silent; but, like

another Joseph, could not refrain any longer, but makes himself known to his church, and bursts out in strong expressions of love to her, and in high commendations of her; for, notwithstanding her carriage to him, she was his love still, and as *beautiful* and as comely in his sight as ever: and for which he compares her here to Tirzah; which is either the name of some beautiful woman, well known in those times; so one of the daughters of Zelophehad is called by this name, Numb. xxvii. 1. but whether from her beauty is nowhere said: or rather a city of this name is here meant, since, in the next clause, the church is compared to the city of Jerusalem for the same reason. There was a city in the land of Canaan, called Tirzah, formerly the seat of one of the ancient kings of Canaan, and, in after-times, of Jeroboam and some of his successors; and which, no doubt, was a very pleasant and delightful place, as its name imports, either from its situation or buildings, Josh. xii. 24. Adrichomius⁴ says, it was an heroic city, situated on a high mountain. In some of the Greek versions, it is read as an appellative, and rendered, as *good will* or *good pleasure*⁵, and so may respect the sweetness of her temper and disposition; which is heightened by using the abstract, she was all good nature and good will; not only *sweet*, as the Vulgate Latin version, but *sweetness* itself, as she says of him, ch. v. 16. and this may be said of her, as she was the object of God's good will and pleasure in election, of Christ's in redemption, and of the Spirit's in effectual vocation; and as she was the subject of good will, bearing one to God, to Christ, to his people, word, worship, ways, and ordinances. The word comes from a root which signifies to be *grateful* and *accepted*; and so Jarchi interprets the word here *acceptable*; and so some ancient writings of the Jews⁶: and may denote the acceptableness of the church in Christ, with whom God is well-pleased in him for his righteousness-sake, in which she appears exceeding fair and lovely. And for the same reason is said to be *comely as Jerusalem*; the metropolis of Judea, and seat of the kings of it; and, as Pliny⁷ says, was far the most famous of any of the cities of the east; it was a city well built and compact together, beautiful for situation, very rich in Solomon's time, the place of divine worship, and was strongly fortified by nature and art: and hence the church of God often bears this name, both in the Old and New Testament, Isa. xl. 2. Heb. xii. 22. being the city of the great King, built on Christ, the Rock; consisting of saints, fitly and closely united together; rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ; where the several parts of spiritual and evangelic worship are performed; possessed of many privileges, and well secured by the power and salvation of God. *Yet terrible as an army with banners*; to her enemies, though so lovely to Christ. This shews that not a single person is meant all along, who could not with propriety be compared to an army; but a collective body, as the church is: and that the church on earth is militant, and, like a well-disciplined army, in good order, and provided with proper officers and

¹ Ebr. Comment. p. 642.

² עָרַץ לְרִיבּוֹן, ubi pascitur, V. L. Munster, Mercerus.

³ Σίσυρος λίαν κερύει, Theocrit. Idyll. 19. v. 32.

⁴ Carmin. l. 1. Ode 36. v. 16.

⁵ Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 74.

⁶ עֲרֵבָה אֶת כְּרִיבָהּ, Sept.; עֲרֵבָה אֶת, Symmachus.

⁷ Siphri in Jarchi, & Shir Hashirim Rabba in loc.

⁸ Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

suitable armour, and in a posture of defence, and ready to fight when attacked; and so *terrible* to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers; who are terrified by their having such a General at the head of them as Christ, and being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are mighty through God; by their close union to one another; and by the constancy, undauntedness, and invincibleness of their faith; and are awed by their pious conversation and good examples. Perhaps some respect may be had by Christ to the church's courage and constancy in seeking after him; the force of whose faith and love he felt, which he could not withstand, and therefore says as follows:

Ver. 5. *Turn away thine eyes from me, &c.*] Her eyes of faith and love; not through dislike of them, but as ravished with them; his passions were so struck by them, and his heart pierced with them, that he could stand it out no longer against her; see ch. iv. 9. 10. Some render the words, *turn about thine eyes over-against me*^b; this being the first time of meeting, after her ungrateful treatment of him, she might be filled with shame and confusion for it, and therefore hung down her head, or looked on one side; wherefore he encourages her to look him full in the face, with a holy confidence; for such looks of faith are very agreeable to Christ; see ch. ii. 14. *For they have overcome me*; that is, her eyes, they had made a conquest of his heart; which does not imply weakness in Christ, but descending grace, that he should suffer himself, as it were, to be overpowered by the faith and love of his people, who has conquered them and all their enemies. This clause is very differently rendered: by some, *they have strengthened me*^c; his desire towards his church, and the enjoyment of her company: by others, the reverse, *are stronger than me, or have taken away my strength*^d; so that he was spiritless, and as one dead, or in an ecstasy: by others, *they have made me fly away*^e; that is, out of himself; so that he was not master of himself, could not bear the force and brightness of her eyes: by others, *they have lifted me up*^f; revived, cheered, and comforted him, through sympathy with her, in virtue of their near union: by others, *they have made me proud, or prouder*^g; see Isa. iii. 5. Christ has a kind of pride as well as pleasure in his church; he is proud of the beauty he has put upon her, of the graces he has wrought in her; and especially of her faith, when in exercise; see Matt. viii. 10. and by others, *they have made me fiercer*^h; not with anger and indignation, but with love; there is a force, a fierceness in love, as well as in wrath: *love is strong as death, and jealousy is cruel as the grave*, ch. viii. 6. it is so in the church, much more in Christ. All which shews the power of faith, to which mighty things are ascribed, Heb. xi. and here the conquest of Christ himself. *Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead*; from Mount Gilead, ch. iv. 1. see the note there.

Ver. 6. *Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep, &c.*

^a מַעֲוָה *ma'ava'ion* μω, Sept.; ex adverso mei, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius; so Montanus and Ainsworth.

^b חֲזַקְתִּי הַחַיִּים *chazakti ha-chayim* corroborant me, Marckius; so Kimchi & Ben Melech.

^c Fortiores fuerunt me, Pagninus; so Aben Ezra.

^d So the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions.

Ver. 7. *As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks, &c.*] The same descriptions are given in ch. iv. 2, 3. see the notes there: and these are repeated, to shew the reality of the church's beauty, and for the sake of confirmation; and that it still continued the same, notwithstanding her failings and infirmities; and that Christ had the same esteem of her, and love to her, he ever had. That part of the description, respecting the church's lips and speech, in ch. iv. 3. is here omitted, though added at the end of the sixth verse by the Septuagint; but is not in the Hebrew copies, nor taken notice of in the Targum; yea, the Masorah, on ch. iv. 2, remarks some words as only used in that place, and therefore could not be repeated here in the copies then in use.

Ver. 8. *There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.*] In this and the following verse the church is commended as she stood related to others; and is compared with them, and preferred to them. The words may be considered either as an assertion, *there are, &c.* or as a supposition, *though there be, &c.* yet Christ's church is but one, and excels them all. *Queens* are principal and lawful wives of kings; *concubines*, secondary or half-wives, as the word¹ signifies; who were admitted to the bed, but their children did not inherit: *virgins*, unmarried persons, maids of honour, who waited on the queen. The allusion is to the custom of kings and great personages, who had many wives, and more concubines, and a large number of virgins to wait on them; see 1 Kings xi. 3. or to a nuptial solemnity, and the ceremony of introducing the bride to the bridegroom, attended with a large number of persons of distinction; and so Theocritus^k speaks of four times sixty virgins attending the nuptials of Menelaus and Helena; see Psal. xlv. 9. By all which may be meant either the kingdoms and nations of the world; by *queens*, the more large, rich and flourishing kingdoms; by *concubines*, inferior states; and by *virgins without number*, the vast multitudes of inhabitants that fill them; but all, put together, are not equal to the church; see ch. ii. 2. or else false churches; by *queens*, such who boast of their riches and number, as the church of Rome, Rev. xviii. 7. by *concubines*, such as are inferior in those things, but equally corrupt, as Arians, Socinians, &c. and by *virgins without number*, the multitudes of poor, weak, ignorant people, seduced by them; and what figure soever these make, or pretensions to be the true churches of Christ, they are none of his, his spouse is preferred to them all. Or rather true believers in Christ, of different degrees, are here meant; by *queens*, those that have the greatest share of gifts and grace, most nearness to Christ, and communion with him; by *concubines*, believers of a lower class, and of a more servile spirit, and yet sometimes are favoured with fellowship with Christ; and by *virgins*, young converts, who have not so large an experience as the former; and this distribution agrees with 1 John ii. 13, 14. and the rather this may be the sense, since

^f Mercerus, Ainsworth.

^g Tigrine version, Piscator; so Jarchi.

^h Montanus, Cocceius.

ⁱ מַעֲוָה *ma'ava'ion* secundariorum uxores, Michaelis.

^k Idyll. 18. v. 24.

each of these are said to praise the church in the next verse, who is preferable to them, and includes them all.

Ver. 9. *My dove, my undefiled, is but one, &c.*] Of these titles, see ch. ii. 14. and v. 2. Christ's church is called *one*, in distinction from the many before mentioned; and either designs her small number, in comparison of the nations of the world, and of false churches, like one to sixty or eighty, and even to an innumerable company; see Eccl. ix. 14. Luke xii. 32. Rev. xiii. 3. and xvii. 15. or else her unity in herself, being but one general assembly and church of the first-born, made up of various particular congregated churches; and *one body*, consisting of various members, united together in affection, and partakers of the same grace, blessings, and privileges; actuated by *one spirit*, the spirit of God; and having but *one Head*, Christ Jesus: and it may signify that the church is the spouse of Christ; that though other princes may have sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number, to wait on them; Christ had but one, and was well-pleased with her, and desired no other. *She is the only one of her mother*; the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all: or the sense is, she was to Christ as a mother's only child, most tenderly beloved by him. *She is the choice one of her that bare her*; esteemed and loved best of all her mother's children. The word may be rendered, *the pure or clean one*¹; so the church is, as clothed in *clean linnen*, the righteousness of Christ; cleansed from sin in his blood; sprinkled with the clean water of the covenant, and of an unspotted conversation. *The daughters saw her, and blessed her*; yea, *the queens and the concubines, and they praised her*: it may seem strange that concubines should praise a queen; but it was not unusual in the eastern countries; with the Persians, as the queen admitted of many concubines by the order of her lord the king, so the queen was had in great veneration, and even adored by the concubines^m: which may respect either the great esteem the church had, or should have, in the world, even from the great men of it, as she will have in the latter day, Isa. xlix. 23. and lx. 3, 10, 11. or which young converts have for her; who may more especially be meant by the *daughters and virgins*, who, in ver. 1, call the church the *fairest among women*: these blessed her, and pronounced her happy, and wished all happiness to her; they *praised her*, spoke well of her, and commended her for her beauty; which was pleasing to Christ, and therefore observed by him.

Ver. 10. *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning? &c.*] These words may be connected with the preceding, by a supplement of the word *saying*; and so may express what the daughters said, when they blessed and praised the church, wondering at her beauty, it being like the rising morning; so Helena is said to shew her beautiful face, *αὐς ἀνιλλοισα*, as the morning, when it springs forthⁿ: there was a city in

the tribe of Reuben, called Zereth-hashahar, the beauty or splendour of the morning, Josh. xiii. 19. Homer often describes the morning by her rose fingers^o, and as clothed with a saffron garment^p; and as beautiful and divine^q, and fair-haired^r; and as on a golden throne and beautiful^s. And as these words describe the progressive gradations of light, so they may set forth the state and condition of the church in the several ages of the world; its first state in this clause, which may reach from the first dawn of light to Adam, Gen. iii. 15. increasing in the times of the patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and in which and to whom were various displays of Gospel light and grace; to the time of the giving of the law by Moses, when the church might be said to be *fair as the moon*; which, though it receives its light from the sun, yet splendour and brightness are ascribed to it, Job xxxi. 26. and, by other writers^t, is represented as fair and beautiful; and the beautiful form of persons is expressed by it^u: and very fitly is the state of the church under the law signified by the *moon*, by which the ceremonial law seems intended, in Rev. xii. 1. that lying much in the observation of new moons, by the which the several festivals under the law were regulated; and which law gave light in the night of Jewish darkness, into the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and though it was imperfect, variable, waxed old, and at length vanished away, yet the church under it was *fair*; there being a beauty and amiableness in the worship of that dispensation, Psal. xxvii. 4. and lxxxiv. 1. The next clause, *clear as the sun*, may describe the church under the Gospel dispensation; when the *sun of righteousness* arose, and made the famous Gospel day; when the shadows of the old law fled away, Christ, the substance, being come; when there were more light and knowledge, and a clear discerning of spiritual and evangelic things: and, in all those periods, the church^v was *terrible as an army with banners*; to her enemies, being in a militant state; see the note on ver. 4. The whole of this may be applied to particular believers; who, at first conversion, *look forth as the morning*, their light being small, but increasing; and, as to their sanctification, are *fair as the moon*, having their spots and imperfections, and deriving all their light, grace, and holiness, from Christ; and, as to their justification, *clear as the sun*, being clothed with Christ, the sun of righteousness, Rev. xii. 1. and so all fair and without spot; and *terrible as an army with banners*, fighting the good fight of faith, under the banners of Christ, against all spiritual enemies.

Ver. 11. *I went down into the garden of nuts, &c.*] This is very properly taken notice of in this song of love; it being usual for new-married persons to get nuts, and throw them among children, to make pastime; to signify, among other things, that they now renounced childish things^w. These are the words of

¹ מוֹדֵה מוֹדֵה, Montanus, Mercerus; pura, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis.

^m Dinon in Persici apud Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 13. c. 1. p. 556.

ⁿ Theocrit. Idyll. 18. v. 26.

^o Πόσειδονος ἄνε, Iliad. 1. v. 477. & passim.

^p Ἡὲς ἠροκρίτου, Iliad. 8. v. 1. & 19. v. 1.

^q Iliad. 18. v. 255.

^r Odys. 5. v. 390.

^s Odys. 15. v. 56, 250.

^t Tanto formosior, formosior omnibus illa est, Ovid. Leander Heroni, v. 73. Pulchrior tanto tua forma lucret, Senecæ Hippolytus, Act. 2. chorus, v. 740.

^u Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 243.

^v Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Decorum, p. 89. & Kipping. Antiqu. Rom. l. 4. c. 2. p. 697. Sparge marite nuce, &c. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 8. v. 30. Da nuce peris, Catulli Julii Epithal. Ep. 59. v. 131.

Christ, declaring to the church where he went, and what he employed himself about, when he departed from her; see ver. 2. Of the garden, as it intends the church, see the note on ch. v. 12. into which he was invited to come, and did, as here; see ch. iv. 16. and v. 1. here it is called a *garden of nuts*, which may design a spot in it destined for this fruit; by which some understand *nutmegs*, which is not very likely, since such grew not in those parts: rather *walnuts*, which the Arabs call *gauz* or *geuz*, which is the same word that is here used; Pistacia nuts were well known in Syria⁷, which joined to Judea. And by *nuts*, which grew in the garden, the church, true believers, may be designed; who, like them, have a mean outward appearance, but are valuable within, having the true grace of God in them; and because of their divers coverings, their outward conversation-garments, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the internal sanctification of the spirit, which answer to the husk and shell, and the thin inward skin over the nut; and because of their hardness in enduring afflictions and troubles, the shell may represent; and because of their best and most excellent parts being hidden, even grace, the hidden man of the heart, signified by the kernel, and which will not fully appear until the shell or tabernacle of the body is broken down; and because of their safety from hurt and pollution, amidst the storms of afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, and pollutions of the world, the principle of grace, like the kernel, remains unhurt and undefiled; and because of the multitude of believers, united and cleaving together, which is delightful to behold, like clusters of nuts in a nut-garden. Some render it, *the pruned garden*, or *garden of pruning*⁸; whose plants, trees, and vines, are pruned and kept in good order, by Christ's father, the husbandman and vine-dresser; see ch. ii. 12. and v. 12. The ends of Christ in going into it were, *to see the fruits of the valley*; to observe the graces of his spirit; the actings, exercise, and growth of them in humble souls, among whom he delights to be, Isa. lvii. 15. the Septuagint version is, *the shoots of the brook or river*; and may denote the fertile soil in which believers are planted, even by the river of divine love; with which being watered, they flourish, Psal. i. 3. *To see whether the vine flourished*; particular churches, or believers, compared to vines; who may be said to flourish, when they increase in numbers, and are fruitful in grace and good works; see ch. ii. 13. And *the pomegranates budded*; of which, see ch. iv. 13. the buddings of them may design the beginnings, or first puttings forth, of grace in the saints; which Christ takes much notice of, and is highly pleased with.

Ver. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib*. These are either the words of the church or of Christ, saying, *I know not*⁹, as the first clause may be rendered: if the words of the church, the sense may be, that though she knew not where her beloved was gone, when he went from her, yet she ran about in search of him as swiftly as the chariots of Ammi-nadib; and when she did know that

he was gone down into the garden, immediately, on a sudden, at an unawares, such was the strength of her love and affection to him, that she moved as swiftly after him as if she had been in one of those chariots; and this may signify also her courage and resolution, that, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements she met with, she drove on as briskly and as courageously after him as ever Ammi-nadib did, in one of his chariots, in the field of battle: or, *I know not*; whether in the body or out of the body; such was the rapture and ecstacy she was in, when she heard her beloved say, *I went down into the garden of nuts*, &c.; or, when she heard the daughters' commendations of her, she did not think that such belonged to her, and therefore said, *I know not*; however, this caused her to make the greater haste to answer such characters, and to enjoy the company of her beloved. But rather they are the words of Christ, who was now in his garden, observing the condition it was in, and says, *I know not*, or do not perceive¹⁰, that it was in a fruitful and flourishing case, and therefore took all the speedy methods he could to bring it into a better; or being in a transport of love to his church, it caused him speedily to return unto her, and grant her his presence; offer all necessary assistance, and be as chariots to her, to carry her through difficulties, and to protect and defend her from all enemies: and this his *soul* caused him to do, not her worth and worthiness, love and loveliness, but his own good will and pleasure, and cordial affection for her. Many take Ammi-nadib to be the proper name of a person, who was one of Solomon's chariot-drivers, that understood his business well, and drove swiftly, and with success, to whom Christ compares himself, when returning to his church with haste: but I rather think, with Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others, that it is an appellative, consisting of two words, *ammi*, my people, and *nadib*, willing or princely, and may be rendered, *the chariots of my willing or princely people*¹¹; meaning, not angels, nor ministers, but the people of Christ themselves, to whom he is as chariots; for so I should choose to translate the words, *my soul made me as chariots to my willing or princely people*; and so describes the persons who share in this instance of his grace; they are such who are made willing by Christ, in the day of his power on them, to be saved by him, and serve him, Psal. cx. 3. and who are of a free, princely, and munificent spirit, Psal. li. 12. being princes, and the sons and daughters of a prince, ch. vii. 1. to these Christ makes himself as chariots, as he now was to the church, and took her up along with him to enjoy his presence, she had sought for and desired. Wherefore the daughters of Jerusalem, who had accompanied her hitherto in search of him, perceiving she was going from them, say what follows.

Ver. 13. *Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, &c.*] By whom the church is meant, so called from her being the spouse of Christ, the true Solomon; it being common for the wife to have the same name with her husband; thus, with the Romans, if the man's

⁷ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 5. Athenæi Deipnosophist. l. 14. c. 17. p. 649.

⁸ אֲבוֹנוֹ hortos putatos, Junius & Tremellius; Heb. תּוֹסִיָּאִים, Piscator; hortum putationis, Marckius.

⁹ וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי, Sept. nescivi, V. L. non novi, Montanus.

¹⁰ Nondum percipientem hæc, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

¹¹ עַמִּי וְעַמִּי מֵי שְׂדֵי מֵי, Pagninus; voluntarii, Piscator, Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis.

name was Caius, the woman's name was Caia : is the name of Christ Solomon? the church's name is Shulamite ; see Jer. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. 1 Cor. xii. 12. The word from which this is derived signifies both perfection and peace ; and the church may be called the Shulamite from her perfection, not in herself, but in Christ, in whom she is complete, and perfectly comely through his righteousness ; and is also denominated from the *peace* which she has from Christ, and he has made for her through his blood, and he gives unto her by his spirit ; and from what she does or should enjoy in her members, and from what she will be possessed of to all eternity. Now the church, the Shulamite, is very importunately desired by the daughters of Jerusalem to return ; which is said no less than four times, which shews how vehemently desirous they were of her company : and perceiving she was about to go from them, most earnestly press her to return, or to *turn* ^b ; to turn herself, that her beauty and comeliness might be more plainly seen ; for this is the end proposed by them, *that we may look upon thee* ; that they might still have more opportunity of viewing her, and more narrowly to examine her beauty, for which she was so much commended ; and that they might enjoy more of her company and conversation, which had been, and they might hope would be, more useful and instructive to

them. A question upon this follows, *What will ye see in the Shulamite?* which question is put, either by the daughters among themselves ; some wishing for her return, and others asking what they expected to see in her, should she return : or rather it is put by the church herself ; who asks the daughters, what they expected to see in her, a poor, mean, unworthy creature, not fit to be looked on, having nothing extraordinary, nor indeed valuable or of worth, in seeing of her? Which question is thus answered, *As it were the company of two armies* ; either by the daughters, declaring what they expected to see in the church ; either such a glorious and joyful meeting between Christ and her, as is often between great persons, attended with singing and dancing ; so the word for *company* is rendered by the Septuagint *choroi*, a company of those that dance and sing ; see Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25. or such an appearance as an army makes at the reception of their prince, when it is divided into two bands, for the sake of greater honour and majesty. Or rather this answer is returned by the church herself ; signifying that nothing was to be seen in her but *two armies*, flesh and spirit, sin and grace, continually warring against each other ; which surely, she thought, could be no desirable and pleasing sight to them ; see Rom. vii. 23. Gal. v. 17.

C H A P. VII.

IN this chapter Christ gives a fresh commendation of the beauty of his church, in a different order and method than before ; beginning with her *feet*, and so rising upwards to the *hair* of her head, and the roof of her mouth, ver. 1—9. And then the church asserts her interest in him, and his desire towards her, ver. 10. and invites him to go with her into the fields, villages, and vineyards, and offers various reasons, by which she urges him to comply with her invitation, ver. 11—13.

Ver. 1. *How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, &c.*] It is no unusual thing to describe the comeliness of women by their feet, and the ornaments of them ; so Hebe is described by Homer ^d as having beautiful feet, and Juno by her golden shoes : particular care was taken of, and provision made for, the shoes of queens and princesses in the eastern countries ; Herodotus ^e tells us, that the city of Anthylla was given peculiarly to the wife of the king of Egypt, to provide her with shoes ; which custom, he says, obtained when Egypt became subject to Persia ; see the note on Esth. ii. 18. Shoes of a red, or scarlet, or purple colour, were in esteem with the Jews ; and so the Targum here is, “ purple shoes :” the word used is thought by some ^f to signify a colour between scarlet and purple ; see Ezek. xvi. 10. and also with the Tyrian virgins ^g ; and so with the Romans ^h ; and with whom likewise white

shoes ⁱ were much in use. That this is said of the church, is plain from the appellation of her, *O Prince's daughter!* the same with the King's daughter, Psal. xlv. 13. the daughter of the King of kings ; for, being espoused to Christ, his Father is her Father, and his God her God : besides, she is born of him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, 1 John ii. 28. she is both a Prince's wife and a Prince's daughter. It may be rendered, *O noble, or princely daughter* ^k ! being of a free princely spirit, in opposition to a servile one, Psal. li. 12. of a bountiful and liberal spirit, as in Isa. xxxii. 5—8. in distributing temporal things to the necessities of the poor ; and in communicating spiritual things to the comfort and edification of others. Some take these to be the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, wondering at the church's beauty, on turning herself to them as they desired : but they are rather the words of Christ ; who, observing the church speak so meanly of herself, in order to encourage her, gives a high commendation of her in this and some following verses, and begins with her *feet* ; not her ministers, who are *shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*, and who appear beautiful in the eyes of those who have any knowledge of the good things they publish and proclaim ; for they are set in the highest place in the church : but here the lowest and meanest members of the church are meant ;

^b שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי, Sept. convertere, Sanctius, Marckius.

^c כְּמִחֹרֶת אֶת צִדְוֹן, Sept. sicut choros, Vatablus, Marckius, Michaelis, & alii.

^d Odys. 11. v. 603, 603. Auratos pedes, Ovid. Amor. 1. 3. Eleg. 12.

^e Euterpe, sive 1. 2. c. 98.

^f Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerd. Heb. 1. 1. p. 295, 306.

^g Virginibus Tyriis mos est, &c. Virgil. Æneid. 1.

^h Vid. Persii Satyr. 5. v. 169. Virgil. Bucolic. Elog. 7. v. 32.

ⁱ Pcs malus in niveo, &c. Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3. Vid. Martialis. 1. 7. Epigr. 27.

^k פְּרִינָה בְּרַת נְרִיבָה puella nobilis, Castalio ; filia voluntarie, Marckius ; principalis, nobilis, & ingenua virgo, sc. filia, so some in Michaelis.

whose outward walk, the feet are the instruments of, may be said to be *beautiful with shoes*, when they are ready to every good work; when their conversation is ordered aright, is agreeably to the word of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which, like shoes, is a fence against the briers and thorns, the reproaches and calumnies, of the world; and when there is such a lustre upon it that it cannot but be seen and observed by spectators, by which they are excited to glorify God, it is so beautiful in the eyes of Christ, that to such he shews the salvation of God. *The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman*; a skilful artificer, a goldsmith or jeweller: the allusion seems to be to some ornaments about the knees or legs, wore by women in those times; see Isa. iii. 18. and this may serve to set off the lustre and beauty of the church's conversation. And since it seems not so decent to describe the parts themselves mentioned, the words may rather design the *femoralia*, or garments, with which they were covered; and may signify the garments of salvation, and robe of Christ's righteousness, whereby the church's members are covered, so that their nakedness is not seen; but with them are as richly adorned as the bridegroom and bride with their ornaments and jewels; and which are not the bungling work of a creature, but of one that is God as well as man, and therefore called the righteousness of God. Some have thought that the girdle about the loins is meant, the thighs being put for the loins, Gen. xlv. 26. and so may intend the girdle of truth, mentioned along with the preparation of the Gospel of peace the feet are said to be shod with, Ephes. vi. 14, 15. and the metaphor of girding is used when a Gospel conversation is directed to, Luke xii. 35. 1 Pet. i. 13. But it seems best by these *joints, or turnings of the thighs*¹, by which they move more orderly and regularly, to understand the principles of the walk and conversation of saints, as one observes^m; without which it cannot be ordered aright; for principles denominate actions, good and bad; and the principles of grace, by which believers move in their Christian walk, are as valuable and as precious as jewels, such as faith and love, and a regard to the glory of God; and which are curiously wrought by the finger of God, by his Holy Spirit, who *works* in them *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*,

Ver. 2. *Thy navel is like a round goblet, &c.*] According to some, not the navel itself is meant; but a covering of it, a jewel or plate of gold in the shape of it; and because the word for *round*, in the Chaldee language, signifies the *moon*, and so Ben Melech interprets it, some have thought of the *round tire like the moon*, Isa. iii. 18. though that was rather an ornament about the neck. Bishop Patrick is of opinion that it refers to the *clothing of wrought gold*, Psal. xlv. 13. which had, on the part that covered the belly, a raised embossed work, resembling a heap or sheaves of wheat; about which was an embroidery of curious

flowers, particularly lilies; and, in the midst of the whole, a fountain or conduit, running with several sorts of liquor, into a great bowl or basin: and Fortunatus Scacchusⁿ interprets it of a garment, covering this part, embroidered with lilies. All which may represent the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness the church is adorned with. But rather the part itself is meant, and designs the ministers of the Gospel; who, in the administration of the word and ordinances, are that to the church as the navel is to a human body; that is in an eminent part of it, is the strength of the intestines, conduces much to the health of the body, and by which the child in the womb is supposed to receive its nourishment: ministers are set in the highest place in the church; are strong in themselves, through the grace and power of Christ and the means of strengthening others; and of keeping the church in a good plight and healthful state, by the wholesome words and sound doctrines they preach; and also of nourishing souls in embryo, and when new born, with the sincere milk of the word: and as the navel is said to be like a *round goblet*, cup, bowl, or basin, this aptly describes that part; and may express the perfection of Gospel ministers, their gifts and grace, not in an absolute, but comparative sense, the round or circular form being reckoned the most perfect; and also the workmanship bestowed on them, the gifts and grace of the spirit, a round goblet being turned and formed by some curious artist; and likewise their capacity to hold and retain Gospel truths. And they are compared, not to an empty one, but to one which *wanted not liquor*; meaning the large and never-failing supplies of gifts and grace from Christ; so that they never want the liquor, the oil and wine of Gospel truths, to communicate to others, Zecl. iv. 12. The word used signifies a *mixture*, or a *mixed liquor*^o, as of wine and milk, ch. v. 1. or rather of wine and water, much used in the eastern countries; so the wine of Sharon used to be mixed, two parts water and one wine^p: and this designs, not a mixture of divine truths and human doctrines, which ought not to be made; but the variety of Gospel truths ministers deliver to others, and that in a manner they are most capable of receiving them. Some^q render the words as a wish, *let there not want*, &c.; and so they declare the tender concern of Christ, that his church might have a continual supply in the ministry of the word. *Thy belly is like a heap of wheat*; which denotes the fruitfulness of the church in bringing souls to Christ, comparable to a pregnant woman; and whose fruit, young converts born in her, are compared to a *heap of wheat* for their number, choiceness, and solidity, being able to bear the fan of persecution: it was usual with the Jews to scatter wheat on the heads of married persons at their weddings, three times, saying, *increase and multiply*^r; see Isa. lxvi. 8. Matt. iii. 12. This heap of wheat is said to be *set about, or hedged, with lilies*^s; which suggests, that it was not a heap

¹ תמוקי vertebrae, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; signat illam agilem versatilem juncturam, qua capite femorum in suis foraminibus expedite moventur, Brightman.

^m Durham in loc.

ⁿ Eleo-chrysm. Scr. l. 2. p. 1016.

^o תבנית המזג, Sept.; mixtio, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; mixtura, Marckius, Michaelis.

^p T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. Nidda, fol. 19. 1.

^q So Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth.

^r Vid. Selden. Uxor. Heb. l. 2. c. 15. p. 195.

^s תבנית המזג, Sept.; vallatus, V. L. circumseptus, Figurine version, Michaelis; septus, Pagninus, Montanus, Brightman, Cocceius, Marckius, & alii.

of wheat on the corn-floor which is meant, but a field of standing wheat, enclosed and fenced, not with thorns, but lilies; and these lilies may signify grown saints, who are often compared to lilies in this book, by whom young converts are encompassed and defended; or the beauties of holiness, in which they appear as soon as born again, Psal. cx. 3.

Ver. 3. *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.*] See the note on ch. iv. 5.

Ver. 4. *Thy neck is as a tower of ivory, &c.*] Two things recommend the neck, erectness and whiteness; both are here expressed, the one by a *tower*, the other by *ivory*; hence a fine beautiful neck is called an ivory one¹; and for the same reason it sometimes has the epithet of *snowy*², and sometimes of *marble*³. Of the church's neck, as it may design either the ministers of the word, or the Scriptures of truth, see the note on ch. iv. 4. where it is compared to the *tower of David*, and here to a *tower of ivory*: Marckius conjectures that they may be the same, or that this is the name of some ancient structure known at this time; however, it is used as expressive of the purity of the lives of Gospel ministers, and the evenness of their doctrines, and of the purity, beauty, glory, and harmony of the Scriptures. *Thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim*: Heshbon was formerly the seat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, Numb. xxii. 26. of which Bath-rabbim was one of its gates; so called, either because it led to Rabbath, a city near it, and mentioned with it, Jer. xlix. 3. or because of the great numbers that went in and out by it; for it may be rendered, *the daughter of many*, or of *great ones*: near this gate, it seems, were very delightful fish-pools, to which the eyes of the church are compared. In the Hebrew language, the word for eyes and fountains is the same; the eyes having humours in them, and so fitly compared to fish-pools. Of the eyes of the church, as they may design either the ministers of the word, or the eyes of her understanding, particularly faith, see the note on ch. i. 15. here they are said to be like *fish-pools*, whose waters are clear, quiet, constant and immovable; and, seen at a distance, between trees and groves, look very beautiful: and, if applied to ministers, may denote the clearness of their sight in discerning the truths of the Gospel; and their being filled with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; and their being blessings to the churches of Christ, and to the souls of men: the word for *fish-pools* comes from a word which signifies *to bless*⁴; and such being observed as were near the gate of Bath-rabbim, may have respect to the multitude that attend their ministry, and receive benefit by it; in which they are constant and invariable, and all of a piece, and appear very beautiful to those to whom they are useful. And if applied to the church's eyes of understanding, those of faith and knowledge, may denote the perspicuity of them, in the discernment of spiritual things; and the fixedness and im-

movableness of them on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; looking alone to him, and off of every other object, and so very attractive to him, and beautiful in his sight, as well as their abounding with the waters of evangelic repentance and humiliation; see ch. iv. 9. and vi. 5. *Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus*: a tower on that part of Mount Lebanon which fronted Damascus, which lay in a plain, and so open to view, as well as exposed to winds; hence called, by Lucan², *Ventosa Damascus*; which tower was so high, as Adrichomius³ says, that from thence might be numbered the houses in Damascus: by which also may be meant the ministers of the word; nor need it seem strange that the same should be expressed by different metaphors, since the work of ministers is of different parts; who, as they are as eyes to see, so like the nose to smell; and having a spiritual discerning of Gospel truths, both savour them themselves, and diffuse the savour of them to others; and are both the ornament and defence of the church: the former is signified by the *nose*, which is an ornament of the face, and the latter by the *tower of Lebanon*, and this is looking towards Damascus, the inhabitants of which were always enemies to the people of Israel; and so may denote the vigilance and courage of faithful ministers, who watch the church's enemies, and their motions, and, with a manful courage, face and attack them. Moreover, this description may respect the majesty and magnanimity of the church herself; the former may be intimated by her nose, which, when of a good size, and well proportioned, adds much grace and majesty to the countenance; and the latter by its being compared to the impregnable tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damascus, signifying that she was not afraid to look her worst enemies in the face: or the whole may express her prudence and discretion in spiritual things; by which she can distinguish truth from error, and espy dangers afar off, and guard against them.

Ver. 5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, &c.*] Set with hair, thick and long, as Carmel with plants and trees. Now Christ is the church's Head in various senses; he is her federal and representative Head in eternity and time; her political Head, as a King to his subjects; an economical Head, as the husband to the wife, as parents to their children, and a master to servants; and, as such, may be compared to Carmel; for the multitude dependent on him, whom he represents, and is connected with under various relations; for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, and all other heads; and for fruitfulness, all the fruits of the church, and of all true believers, coming from him. Some render the word, *as crimson*, or *scarlet*^b; which may set forth his royal dignity and majesty, this colour being wore by kings and great personages; or the ardent love of Christ to his body, the church, and the members of it; or his bloody sufferings for them. *And*

¹ Eburnea cervix, Ovid. Epist. 20. v. 57. Eburnea colla, ib. Metamorph. l. 3. Fab. 3. v. 492. & l. 4. Fab. 5. v. 335.

² Ovid. Anor. l. 2. Eleg. 4. v. 41.

³ Ib. Fasti, l. 4. v. 135. Virgii. Georgic. 4. in fine.

⁴ חֲבֵרָה בְּרִבְרֵי שִׁמְשֹׁן, Sept.; filius multitudinis, V. L. magnatum, Montanus; nobilitum, Pagninus.

^א בְּרִבְרֵי בְּרַדְבֵּי benedixit.

^ב Phasal. l. 3. v. 215.

^ג Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ, p. 100.

^ד חֲבֵרָה veluti coccinum, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus; similia est coccinea, Junius & Tremellius; est ut coccus, Piscator; so Ainsworth; sicut carmesinum, Schindler.

the hair of thine head like purple; purple-coloured hair has been in great esteem. Of this colour was the hair of King Nysus, according to the fable^c; and so the hair of Evadne, and of the Muses^d, were of a violet colour; the hair of Ulysses is said^e to be like to the hyacinth flower, which is of a purple or violet colour; and Milton^f calls the first Adam's hair hyacinthine locks; and here, in a figurative sense, the second Adam's hair is said to be like purple. By which believers that grow on Christ, the Head of the church, may be meant, who have their dependence on him, and their strength and nourishment from him; see ch. iv. 1. and v. 11. and these may be said to be like purple, because of their royal dignity, being made kings unto God by Christ; and because of their being washed in the purple blood of Christ; and because of the sufferings they endure for his sake; and especially such may be so compared, who have spilt their blood and laid down their lives on his account. *The king is held in the galleries*; the same with the Head of the church, the King of Zion, and King of saints, whose kingdom is a spiritual and everlasting one: and by the *galleries* in which he is held may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel; where Christ and his people walk and converse together; where he discloses the secrets of his heart to them, leads them into a further acquaintance with his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and from whence they have delightful views of his person and fulness; see the King in his beauty, and behold the good land which is afar off: the same word as here is rendered *rafters*, and by some *canals*, in ch. i. 17. see the note there. Now Christ being said to be held in these *galleries* may signify his fixed habitation in his house and ordinances; where he has promised to dwell, and delights to be; and where he is as it were fastened to them, and bound in them.

Ver. 6. *How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*] These are the words of the King in the galleries, wondering at the church's beauty, it being incomparable and inexpressible, it could not be said well how great it was; and expressing the strength of his love to her, which was invariably the same as ever. Of the *fairness* of the church, and of this title, *love*, see ch. i. 9, 15. and ii. 7. and here she is said also to be *pleasant* to him, as his spouse and bride, in whom he takes infinite delight and pleasure, loving her with a love of complacency and delight; and therefore adds, *for delights*, which he had in her before the world was, Prov. viii. 31. She was all delight^g to him; her words, her actions and gestures, her comely countenance, her sweet and pleasant voice in prayer and praise, her ravishing looks of faith and love, her heavenly airs, and evangelic walk; in all which she appeared beautiful and delightful, beyond all human thought and expression.

Ver. 7. *This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, &c.*] Made up of the above parts commended, and others

had in view, as appears from the relative *this*. The word for *stature* properly signifies height, tallness, and erectness; and which were reckoned agreeable in women, as well as men; see the note on 1 Sam. ix. 2. hence methods are often made use of to make them look taller, as by their head-dresses, their shoes, and by stretching out their necks, Isa. iii. 16. and the simile of a tree is not an improper one: and so Galatea is, for height and tallness, compared to an alder and to a plane-tree^h; and Helena, to a cypress-tree in a gardenⁱ, on the same account; and here the church to a palm-tree: the Egyptian palm-tree is said to be the best^k; and if Solomon here has any reference to Pharaoh's daughter, his wife, he might think of that, which is described "of body straight, high, round, and slender^l," and fitly expresses a good shape and stature. The church's stature is no other than the *stature of the fulness of Christ*; which will be attained unto when all the elect are gathered in, and every member joined to the body, and all filled with the gifts and graces of the spirit designed for them, and are grown up to a just proportion in the body; and in such a state Christ seems to view his church, and so commends her by this simile: saints are oftentimes compared to palm-trees in Scripture on other accounts; see Psal. xcii. 12. *And thy breasts to clusters of grapes*; on a vine which might be planted by and run up upon a palm-tree, as Aben Ezra suggests: though rather clusters of dates, the fruit of the palm-tree, are designed, since this fruit, as Pliny^m observes, grows in clusters; and to clusters of the vine the church's breasts are compared in the next verse. And by these *breasts* may be meant either the ministers of the Gospel, who communicate the sincere milk of the word to souls; and may be compared to clusters for their numbers, when there is plenty of them, which is a great mercy to the church; and for their unity, likeness, and agreement in their work, in their ministrations, and in the doctrine they preach, though their gifts may be different; or else the two Testaments, full of the milk of the word; and comparable to *clusters of grapes or dates*, because of the many excellent doctrines and precious promises in them; which, when pressed by hearing, reading, meditation, and prayer, yield both delight and nourishment to the souls of men. Some think the two ordinances of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, are intended, which are breasts of consolation; and, when the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love, are enjoyed in them, they afford much pleasure and satisfaction; and as those breasts are full in themselves, they are beautiful in the eye of Christ, and as such commended; see the note on ch. iv. 5.

Ver. 8. *I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, &c.*] Which is easy of ascent; having, in the bark of the trunk or body of the tree, rings like steps, whereby the eastern people climb it with incredible swiftness, as Plinyⁿ relates: these steps are made by the lower

^c Ovid. *Metamorph.* l. 8. Fab. 1. v. 301. *De Arte Amandi*, l. 1. & *de Remed. Amor.* l. 1. v. 68. Hygin. *Fab.* 198. Pausan. *Attica*, p. 33.

^d Pindar. *Olymp. Ode* 6. *Pyth. Ode* 1. v. 3.

^e Homer. *Odys.* 6. v. 231. & 23. v. 158.

^f *Paradise Lost*, Book 4.

^g *Mææ deliciae*, *Plauti Stichus*, Act. 5. Sc. 5.

^h Ovid. *Metamorph.* l. 13. Fab. 8.

ⁱ Theocrit. *Idyll.* 18. v. 30.

^k A. Gellii *Nect. Attic.* l. 7. c. 16. *Vid. Strabo. Geograph.* l. 17. p. 563.

^l Sandys's *Travels*, l. 2. p. 79.

^m *Nat. Hist.* l. 13. c. 4.

ⁿ *Ibid.* *So Sandys's Travels*, l. 2. p. 79.

boughs being lopped off, whose knots, or *pollices*, as Dr. Shaw * calls them, being gradually left upon the trunk of the tree, serve, like so many rounds of a ladder, to climb up the tree; either to fecundate it, or to lop it, or to gather the fruit; and Lucian says †, “those that have seen how men get up into palm-trees, in Arabia, Egypt, and other places, must needs understand what he says about climbing the Phalli, in the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, he is describing.” By the *palm-tree* may be meant the church militant, who yet gets the victory over all her enemies, of which the palm-tree is an emblem; and Christ’s *going up* to it is expressive of his right to it, and property in it, which he has by his father’s gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace, and may go up to it when he pleases; also of his presence with his church, and of the delight he takes in her, viewing her stature, fruit, and flourishing circumstances. *I will take hold of the boughs thereof*; either to crop them, the tops of them, which, of the first year’s growth, are very tender and sweet, and may be eaten †; the top of the palm-tree is said to be very sweet †; and which some call the *cerebrum*, or brain of it, and is spoken of as very pleasant and nourishing †: or to gather the fruit on them; his own grace in exercise, and good works performed under the influence of it; see ch. iv. 16. and v. 1. or to prune them; which he does by the ministry of the word, reproofing sin, and refuting error; and, by afflictive providences, purging away sin; and by suffering persecution to befall his churches, whereby he clears them of carnal professors, and lops off withered and fruitless branches. *Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine*; round, full, soft, and succulent, like the berries of the vine-tree, the grapes that grow in clusters on it; of these, see the note on ver. 7. *And the smell of thy nose like apples*; see the note on ver. 4. Here it may denote the inward constitution and outward conversation of the church, which were sound and healthful; she had an inward principle of grace, from whence proceeded a savoury conversation, a savoury breath, a holy breathing after divine and spiritual things: or it may intend the things she had a savour of, as divine truths and excellent doctrines, comparable to *apples*, ch. ii. 5. Prov. xxv. 11. and all spiritual and heavenly things, when they have the presence of Christ, and the quickening influences of his spirit.

Ver. 9. *And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine, &c.*] Which may intend, either her taste, as the word is rendered in ch. ii. 3. by which she can distinguish good wine from bad, truth from error; or her breath, sweet and of a good smell, like the best wine; the breathings of her soul in prayer, which are sweet odours, perfumed with the incense of Christ’s mediation; or rather her speech, the words of her mouth; the roof of the mouth being an instrument of speech; the same word is sometimes rendered *the mouth*, ch. v.

16. Prov. v. 3. and viii. 7. and may denote both her speech in common conversation, which is warming, refreshing, comforting, and quickening; and in prayer and praise, which is well-pleasing and delightful to Christ; and especially the Gospel preached by her ministers, comparable to the best wine for its antiquity, being an ancient Gospel; for its purity, unadulterated, and free from mixture, and as faithfully dispensed; for its delight, flavour, and taste, to such who have their spiritual senses exercised; and for its cheering, refreshing, and strengthening nature, to drooping weary souls. It follows, *for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly*; is received and taken down with all readiness, by those who have once tasted the sweetness and felt the power of it. Or, *that goeth to righteousnesses* †; leading to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and teaching to live soberly and righteously: or, *that goeth to my beloved, straightway or directly* †; meaning either to his Father, Christ calls his beloved, to whose love the Gospel leads and directs souls, as in a straight line, as to the source of salvation, and all the blessings of grace; or to himself, by a *mimesis*, whom the church calls so; the Gospel leading souls directly to him, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, and atonement: or, *that goeth to my beloved to uprightnesses* †; that is, to the church, who is Christ’s beloved, consisting of upright men in heart and life, whom Christ calls his beloved and his friends, ch. v. 1. and whom Christ treats with his best wine, his Gospel; and which is designed for them, their pleasure, profit, comfort, and establishment: *causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*; either such who are in the dead sleep of sin; who, when the Gospel comes with power, are quickened by it; and it produces in them humble confessions of sin; causes them to speak in praise of Christ, and his grace, and of the salvation which he has procured for lost sinners; it brings them to Zion, to declare what great things God has done for them: or else drowsy professors, in lifeless frames, and much gone back in religion; who, when aroused and quickened by the Gospel, and brought out of their lethargy, are ready to acknowledge their backslidings with shame; to speak meanly and modestly of themselves, and very highly of Christ and his grace, who has healed their backslidings, and still loves them freely; none more ready to exalt and magnify Christ, and speak in praise of what he has done for them. Some render the words, *causing the lips of ancient men to speak* †; whose senses are not so quick, nor they so full of talk, as in their youthful days: wherefore this serves to commend this wine; that it should have such an effect as to invigorate ancient men, and give them a juvenile warmth and sprightliness, and make them loquacious, which is one effect of wine, when freely drank †; and softens the moroseness of ancient men †: wine is even said to make an ancient man dance †.

* Travels, tom. 1. p. 142. Edit. 2.

† De Den Syria.

‡ Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in rad. קור, col 2005.

§ Plutarch. de San. Tuend. vol. 2. p. 123. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4.

¶ Athenæi Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 28. p. 71.

‡ Ibid. ad rectitudines, Montanus; ad ea que rectissima sunt, Tigurine versio.

† Directe, Mercerus; rectissime, Brightman.

‡ Ad rectitudines, i. e. rectos homines, Marckius, Michaelis.

§ veterum, Pagninus; antiquorum, Vatablus.

¶ Philoxenus apud Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 35. Vid. T. Bab. Sauidrin. fol. 38. 1.

‡ Philox. apud Athen. Deipnos. ut supra, l. 11. c. 3. p. 463.

† Ibid. l. 4. c. 4. p. 134. & l. 10. c. 7. p. 498.

Ver. 10. *I am my beloved's, &c.*] These are the words of the church, strongly expressing the assurance of faith she had of her union to Christ, and interest in him; which shews that *that* grace is attainable, and that there may be a continuation of the exercise of it; it may be expressed again and again, as it is by the church in this Song, ch. ii. 16. and vi. 3. and that the exercise of it often follows, upon the enjoyment of Christ's presence, as here, upon his going up to the palm-tree; and that this grace has no tendency to licentiousness, but excites to duty, and makes more careful in it, of which the next verse is a proof, *Come, let us go forth, &c.* Moreover, these words may be considered as a modest acknowledgment of the church's, that all she were and had were Christ's, and came from him; all the beauty he had commended in her; all fruitfulness in grace, and strength in the exercise of it; her light and knowledge in divine truths; her zeal and courage to defend them; her upright stature, and holy walk and conversation, and every good thing else, were owing to his grace. And here she also makes a voluntary surrender of all to him again; as she received all from him, she devotes all to him: *and his desire is towards me*; and only to her, as his spouse and bride: it was towards her from everlasting, when he asked her of his father, and he gave her to him; and so it was in time, to procure her salvation; hence he became incarnate, and suffered and died in her stead: his desire is towards his people before conversion, waiting to be gracious to them; and, after conversion, to have their company, and their grace exercised on him, and to behold their beauty; nor will his desires be fully satisfied until he has got them all with him in glory. And this phrase not only signifies the conjugal relation of the church to Christ, he being her husband, and she his wife, the desire of his eyes, as a wife is called, Ezek. xxiv. 16, 18. but takes in the whole care and concern of Christ for her, as her husband; who sympathizes with her under all her distresses; protects her from all dangers and enemies; and provides every thing necessary for her, for time and eternity. Some render the words, *seeing his desire is towards me*^b; therefore she expresses her faith in him, and gives up herself to him.

Ver. 11. *Come, my beloved, &c.*] The word *come* is often used by Christ, and here by the church, in imitation of him; see ch. ii. 10, 13, and iv. 8. This call is the call of the church upon Christ, to make good his promise, ver. 8. and is an earnest desire after the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love; which desire is increased the more it is enjoyed; and it shews the sense she had of her own insufficiency for the work she was going about: she knew that visiting the several congregations of the saints would be to little purpose, unless Christ was with her, and therefore she urges him to it; not that he was backward and unwilling to go with her, but he chooses to seem so, to make his people the more earnest for his presence, and to prize it the more when they have it; and it is pleasing to him to hear them ask for it. The en-

dearing character, *my beloved*, is used by the church, not only to express her affection for Christ, and faith of interest in him, but as an argument to engage him to go along with her. Her requests follow; *let us go forth into the field*; from the city, where she had been in quest of Christ, and had now found him, ch. v. 7. into the country, for recreation and pleasure: the allusion may be to such who keep their country-houses, to which they retire from the city, and take their walks in the fields, to see how the fruits grow, and enjoy the country-air. The church is for going abroad into the fields; but then she would have Christ with her; walking in the fields yields no pleasure unless Christ is there; there is no recreation without him: the phrase expresses her desire of his presence everywhere, at home and abroad, in the city and in the fields; and of her being with him alone, that she might tell him all her mind, and impart her love to him, which she could better do alone than in company: it may also signify her desire to have the Gospel spread in the world, in the barren parts of it, which looked like uncultivated fields, the Gentile world; and so, in one of the Jewish Midrases^c, these *fields*, and the *villages* in the next clause, are interpreted of the nations of the world. *Let us lodge in the villages*; which, though places of mean entertainment for food and lodging, yet, Christ being with her, were more eligible to her than the greatest affluence of good things without him; and, being places of retirement from the noise and hurry of the city, she chose them, that she might be free of the cares of life, and enjoy communion with Christ, which she would have continued; and therefore was desirous of *lodging*, at least all night, as in ch. i. 13. Some^d render the words, *by, in, or among the Cyprus trees*; see ch. i. 14. and iv. 13. by which may be meant the saints, comparable to such trees for their excellency, fragrant, and fruitfulness; and an invitation to lodge by or with these could not be unwelcome to Christ, they being the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight.

Ver. 12. *Let us get up early to the vineyards, &c.*] After a night's lodging in the fields, or among the *Cyprus trees*. By which *vineyards* may be meant particular churches, gathered according to Gospel order, and distinguished from the world, planted with fruitful vines, and fenced by almighty power: hither the church proposes to *get up early*, betimes in the morning; being willing to take the first and most seasonable opportunity of visiting the saints, to know their state and condition; and, that her visit might not be in vain, she is for taking Christ along with her. *Let us see if the vine flourish*; true believers in Christ; who, though weak and worthless in themselves, yet being ingrafted in Christ, the true vine, bring forth fruit, and become flourishing in grace and good works; of the flourishing or flowering of the vine, see the note on ch. ii. 13. Whether *the tender grape appear*; or when *the flower of the vine opens*^e, and goes off, and the small grape appears: by which young converts may be meant, who are tender, and have but a small degree of

^b So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

^c Shir Hashirim Rabba in loc.

^d So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Brightman, Michaelis.

^e חמורר הנתון num si, vel gemmas suas aperuerit flos vitis, Michaelis; to the same sense Paganus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius.

faith and knowledge; and yet these are not overlooked, much less despised, by Christ and his church, but are delighted with the promising appearance they make. And the pomegranates bud forth; stronger believers, taller and more fruitful than the former; see ch. iv. 13. the actings and exercise of whose grace are signified by budding forth, in an open and visible manner: the church is concerned for the good and welfare of the saints of all ranks and sizes; of vines and pomegranates, as well as tender grapes; and of the budding of the one, as well as of the opening and flowering of the other. And seeing these ends proposed by her are the same with Christ's, ch. vi. 11. she might conclude they would prevail upon him to go with her, particularly what follows: *there will I give thee my loves*; in the fields, villages, and vineyards, when alone, and observing the state and condition of particular churches and saints; and having communion with Christ, the church might hope and expect to have her heart enlarged, and drawn forth in love to Christ more abundantly; and that she should be able to manifest it more largely to him, and give clearer and fuller proofs of it: and this she observes in order to gain her point, and get him to go along with her; knowing that her love, in the actings and exercise of it, was very acceptable to him, ch. iv. 10. I see not why the word for *loves* may not be rendered *my lovely flowers*; as a word nearly the same, in the following verse, is by some rendered, *these lovely flowers give a good smell*, which seems to refer to the flowers here; such as were to be met with in plenty, in fields and vineyards, among vines and pomegranates, as lilies, violets, &c.; and may be an allusion to lovers, who used to give to those they loved sweet-smelling flowers^f; and here may signify the graces of the spirit, and the actings of them, which are fragrant, and acceptable to Christ.

Ver. 13. *The mandrakes give a smell, &c.*] Or, *those lovely flowers*, as Junius and Tremellius, and Piscator, translate the words; even those the church proposed to give to her beloved, when in the fields. Some take them to be violets; others, jessamin; others, more probably, lilies^g; as the circumstances of time and place, when and where they flourished, and their fragrant smell, and figure like cups, shew. Ravius^h contends, that the word signifies, and should be rendered, *the branches put forth their sweet-smelling flowers*; and thinks branches of figs are meant, which give a good smell, agreeably to ch. ii. 13. and which he supposes to be the use of the word in Jer. xxiv. 1. and to his sense Heideggerⁱ agrees; only he thinks the word *branches* is not to be restrained to a particular species, but may signify branches of sweet-smelling flowers, and fruits in general. Ludolphus^k would have the fruit the Arabians call *mauz*, or *muza*, intended; which, in the Abyssine country, is as big as a cucumber, and of the same form and shape, fifty of which grow upon one and the same stalk, and are of a very sweet taste

and smell; from which cognation of a great many on the same stalk he thinks it took the name of *dudaim*, the word here used, and in Gen. xxx. 14—16. But the generality of interpreters and commentators understand by it the mandrakes; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and in both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, on Gen. xxx. 14. but it is questionable whether the same plant that is known among us by that name is meant, since it is of a strong ill-scented and offensive smell; and so Pliny says^l of it: though Dioscorides, Levinus, Lemnius^m, and Augustineⁿ (who says he saw the plant and examined it), say it is of a very sweet smell; which though it does not agree with the plant that now bears the name, yet it does with that here intended; for though it is only said to *give a smell*, no doubt a good one is meant, and such Reuben's mandrakes gave. And by them here may be intended, either the saints and people of God, compared to them for their fragrant, being clad with the garments of Christ, which smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and are anointed with the savoury ointments of the grace of the spirit; whose prayers are sweet odours; and their works, with their persons, accepted with God in Christ: or rather the graces of the spirit in lively exercise may be meant; such as those lovely flowers of faith, hope, love, repentance, patience, self-denial, humility, thankfulness, and others. And at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits; in distinction from the mandrakes and flowers in the fields. Gen. xxx. 14. and in allusion to a custom, in many countries, to garnish the posts of the door of new-married persons with branches of trees, and fruits, and flowers; and at other festivals, besides nuptial ones^o, which made it inviting to enter in: and these all manner of pleasant fruits may denote the plenty, variety, and excellency of the blessings of grace, and of the graces of the spirit, believers have from Christ; and of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which are for their use; and may be said to be at our gates, as being ready at hand, in the hearts of saints, and in the mouths of Gospel ministers; and open and visible, held forth to public view in the word and ordinances; and which are administered at Wisdom's gates, the gates of Zion, where they are to be met with and had. And which are new and old; denoting the plenty of grace and blessings of it, of old laid up in Christ, and from whom there are fresh supplies continually: or rather the doctrines of the Old and New Testament; which, for matter and substance, are the same; and with which the church, and particularly her faithful ministers, being furnished, bring forth out of their treasure things new and old, Matt. xiii. 52. Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved; Christ, whom her soul loved; for though the above fruits, the blessings, promises, and doctrines of grace, which she laid up in her heart, mind, and memory, to bring forth and make use of at proper times and seasons, were for her own

^f Nais amat Thyrsio. Glauce Almona, Nisa Theonem; Nisa rossa, Glauce violas, dat lika Nais. Cythereus Sidonius apud Auson.

^g Pfeiffer. Dubia Vexata, cent. 1. loc. 59. p. 79.

^h Dissert. de Dudaim.

ⁱ Hist. Patriarch. tom. 2. exercit. 19. s. 9, 15.

^k Hist. Ethiop. 1. 1. c. 9.

^l Nat. Hist. 1. 25. c. 13.

^m Herb. Bibl. Explic. l. 2.

ⁿ Contr. Faustum, l. 22. c. 56.

^o Vid. Plutarch. Amator. vol. 2. p. 755. & Barthium ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 208. Longoa crexit janua ramos, Juvenal. Satyr. 12. v. 91. Necte coronam postibus, Satyr. 6. v. 51, 52. Ornantur postes, v. 79. Ornatas paulo ante fores, &c. v. 226, 227. Janua laureata, Tertull. ad Uxor. 1. 2. c. 6.

use and benefit, and of all believers, yet in all for the honour and glory of Christ, the author and donor of them. Respect may be had to a custom with lovers,

to lay up fruits for those they love; at least such a custom may be compared with this².

C H A P. VIII.

THIS chapter begins with an ardent wish of the church for a free and intimate converse with Christ; declaring what she would do to him, and for him, should she have such an interview with him, ver. 1, 2. what familiarity should be between them, ver. 3. charging the daughters of Jerusalem not to give him any disturbance, ver. 4. Upon which they inquire who she was that was in such a posture they saw her in, ver. 5. when the church, instead of giving them an answer, says some things concerning her beloved, on whom they saw her leaning; and makes some requests to him for more nearness to him, and manifestations of his love to her; urged from the strength of her love and affections to him, which was invincible, ver. 6, 7. Next follows a speech of the church about her little sister; expressing a concern for her, and what she would do to her and with her, ver. 8, 9. and the answer of the little sister, declaring what she was, and what she enjoyed, ver. 10. then the words of the church again, concerning her husband's vineyard; the place, keepers, and profit of it, ver. 11, 12. And the chapter, and with it the Song, is concluded with a request of Christ to the church, that he might hear her voice, ver. 13. and with a petition of her's to him, that he would come quickly to her, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *O that thou wert as my brother, &c.*] Or, *who will give thee as a brother to me?* an usual form of wishing, Deut. v. 29. Job xxiii. 2. Psal. xiv. 7. The church here not only requests that Christ would be like a brother to her, but appear to be really one, and to act the part of one towards her; with whom she might as freely converse as brother and sister may. Several Jewish writers own, that the King Messiah is intended here; and in such a relation Christ does stand to his church and people, by virtue of his incarnation, Heb. ii. 11, 14, 17. hence many of the ancients take this to be a wish of the Jewish church, for the coming of Christ in the flesh; and also through their adoption, he and they having one father, John xx. 17. and by being of a like nature, disposition, and practice, Matt. xii. 50. Rom. viii. 29. as well as on the score of love and friendship, Prov. xviii. 24. and this relation Christ fills up, by the intimacy and familiarity he uses them with; by his compassion on them, and sympathy with them, in all their afflictions; by the help, succour, and relief, he gives them; by his condescension to their weaknesses, and by his great love and affection for them. As a further description of him as a brother, it is added, *that sucked the breasts of my mother*: which may denote the truth and rea-

lity of Christ's incarnation, being a sucking infant; and the near relation of Christ to his people, being a brother by the mother's side, reckoned the nearest, and their affection to each other the strongest: by her *mother* may be meant Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; and, by her *breasts*, the ordinances, of which Christ, as man, partook when on earth, and now may be said to suck, as formed in the hearts of his people. When *I should find thee without; or, in the street*¹; in public ordinances, where Christ is to be found; or without Judea, in the Gentile world, where, after his coming in the flesh, his Gospel was preached, the ordinances administered, and he was there to be found; or in the most public place and manner, where she should not be ashamed to own him, his truths and ordinances, before men. *I would kiss thee*; not only with a kiss of approbation, Prov. xxiv. 16. but of love and affection, of faith and confidence, of homage and subjection, of worship and adoration; see Psal. ii. 12. this is an usage with relations and friends, brothers and sisters, at meeting; hence Heunischius refers this to the time when the saints shall meet Christ in the clouds, who will be admitted to the nearest embraces of him, with unspeakable pleasure, and enjoy him to all eternity. *Yea, I should not be despised*; for taking such freedom with Christ, her brother. Or, *they would not despise me*²; neither men nor angels, for such an action, and still less God, the Father, Son, and Spirit; which she might conclude from the relation between them, it being no more unseemly than for a sister to use such freedom with an own brother, even in the street; and from the reception she had reason to believe she should meet with from Christ: who would not turn away his face from her, when she offered to kiss him, which would occasion shame and blushing. The whole expresses her boldness in professing Christ, without fear or shame, in the most public manner.

Ver. 2. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, &c.*] The general assembly and church of the first-born is mother to the church visible, to particular churches and believers, where they are born, educated, and brought up; for which they have a great affection, as persons usually have for the place of their nativity and education. And here the church desires to have Christ with her; either to consummate the marriage between them, Gen. xxiv. 67. or to have the knowledge of him spread among her relations, those of her mother's house, who belonged to the election of grace; or to enjoy his presence there, with great delight

¹ — Sant poma gravantia ramos

Sunt auro similes longie in vitibus uvæ,

Sunt & purpureæ, tibi & has servamus & illas.

Ovid. Metamorph. l. 13. Fab. 9.

² אָרְךָ מִי קוֹס דֵּת דֵּת? Pagninus, Montanus, Marcius.

¹ Targum in loc. Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 3. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 5. 2.

² אֲרֵיךְ in plates, Montanus, Brightman, Marcius; in publico, Coercius, Michaelis.

³ אֲרֵיךְ אֲרֵיךְ non contentent, vel contentemrent me, Montanus, Brightman, Marcius.

to the end, conscious of her own weakness; faith, in every sense of the word, is intended. *I raised thee up under the apple-tree*; not the words of Christ concerning the church, since the affixes are masculine; but what the church said concerning Christ, when leaning on his arm as she went along with him: so the words may be connected with the preceding, by supplying the word *saying*, as Michaelis observes; relating a piece of former experience, how that when she was under the apple-tree, sat under the shadow of it, ch. ii. 3. that is, under the ordinances of the Gospel; where, having no sensible communion with Christ for some time, he being as it were asleep, she, by her earnest prayers and entreaties, awaked him, and raised him up, to take notice of her; whereby she enjoyed much nearness to him, and familiarity with him. *There thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bars thee*: which may be said either concerning the Old-Testament church, who conceived hope of the coming of Christ, waited for it, and was often like a woman in pain until he was brought forth, which at length was done, to the joy of those that looked for him; or of the New-Testament church, hoping, looking, waiting for the second coming of Christ, in the exercise of faith and prayer, and is like a woman in travail, and will be until he makes his appearance; and both may be meant, the one by the former, the other by the latter phrase, and may be the reason of the repetition of it. It may be applied to the apostles of Christ, who travailed in birth, until Christ was brought forth into the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel; and so to all Gospel ministers, who are in like case until Christ be formed in the souls of men; which is no other than the new birth, and is attended with pain like that of a woman in travail; and every regenerate person may be said, in this sense, to be Christ's mother, as well as his brother and sister, Matt. xii. 50, and each of the above things are usually done under and by the means of the word and ordinances; which may be signified by the apple-tree, or, however, the shadow of it.

Ver. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, &c.*] These are still the words of the church, speaking to Christ as she walked along with him, as the affixes in the Hebrew text shew; in which she desires to have a fixed abiding-place in his heart; to continue firmly in his love, and to have further manifestations of it; to be always remembered and supported by him; to be ever on his mind, and constantly under his care and protection; and to have a full assurance of interest in his love, and in his power, which is the sealing work of his spirit, Ephes. i. 13. and iv. 30. The allusion seems to be to the high-priest, a type of Christ, who had the names of the children of Israel engraved on precious stones, and bore by him on his shoulders, and on his heart, for a memorial before the Lord continually; or to the names of persons, engraved on jewels, wore by lovers on their arms or breasts, or

to their pictures put there; not to signets or seals wore on those parts, but to the names and images of persons impressed on them: the Ethiopians¹ understand it of something bound upon the arm, by which persons might be known, as was used in their country. The church's desire is, that she might be affectionately loved by Christ, be deeply fixed in his heart, be ever in his view, owned and acknowledged by him, and protected by the arm of his power. Her reasons follow: *for love is strong as death*; that is, the love of the church to Christ, which caused her to make the above requests: death conquers all; against it there is no standing; such was the love of the church, it surmounted all difficulties that lay in the way of enjoying Christ; nothing could separate from it; she was conquered by it herself²; and could not live without him; a frown, an angry look from him, was as death unto her; yea, she could readily part with life, and suffer death for his sake; death itself could not part her from him, or separate him from her love³; so that her love was stronger than death. *Jealousy is cruel as the grave*: the jealousy she had of Christ's love to her, which was her weakness; and yet it was very torturing and afflicting, though at the same time it shewed the greatness of her love to Christ: or *envy*, that is, of wicked men, she was the object of, which exceeds cruel wrath and outrageous anger, Prov. xxvii. 4. or rather, her *zeal*⁴, which is no other than ardent love for Christ, his Gospel, cause, and interest; which ate up and consumed her spirits, as the grave does what is cast into it, Psal. cxix. 130. Virgil⁵ gives the epithet of *cruel* to love. *The coals thereof are coals of fire*: which expresses the fervency of her love to Christ, and zeal for the honour of his name; which, though sometimes cold and languid, is rekindled, and becomes hot and flaming; and is, like fire, insatiable, one of the four things that say, *It is not enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. Which hath a *most vehement flame*; nothing is more common with other writers⁶, than to attribute flame to love, and to call it a fire; here a most vehement flame. Or, *the flame of Jah or Jehovah*⁷; an exceeding great one: the Hebrews use one or other of the names of God, as a superlative; so the mountains of God, and cedars of God, mean exceeding great ones; and here it expresses the church's love in the highest degree, in such a flame as not to be quenched, as follows: or it signifies, that the flame of love in her breast was kindled by the Lord himself⁸, by his spirit, compared to fire; or by his love, shed abroad in her heart by him. Hence it appears to be false, what is sometimes said, that the name of God is not used in this Song; since the greatest of all his names, Jah or Jehovah, is here expressed.

Ver. 7. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it, &c.*] The love of the church to Christ, which is inextinguishable and insuperable, by the many waters and floods of wicked and ungodly men; neither by their flattery and fair promises; nor by their cruel edicts, force and persecution; by neither

¹ Apud Ludolph. Lexic. Ethiopic. p. 341.

² Omnia vincit amor, & nos cedamus amori, Virgil.

³ Nostros non rumpit funis amores, Lucan. Pharsal. l. 5. v. 761, 769.

⁴ זעזעל zelus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Marcius.

⁵ Crudelis amor, Bucolic. Eclog. 10. v. 29.

⁶ Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 16. & Laude

Stilico, v. 74. So love is said to kindle a more vehement flame than at Vulcan's forge, Theocrit. Idyll. 2. prope finem.

⁷ יהוה - יהוה שמים Domini, Moutanus, Mercerus; Dei, Tigarine version, Cocceius; Jah, Vatablus, so Marcius.

⁸ So the Tigarine version, Castalle.

stands as a wall against the attacks of enemies^b. *We will build upon her a palace of silver*; though at first but as a side-wall, yet should become a complete habitation, even a palace for Christ, the King of kings, and, being designed for so illustrious an inhabitant, should be a *silver* one, denoting its worth, value, and splendour; the builders of it are the church and her ministers; though Christ is the principal builder, Zech. vi. 12, 15. Psal. cxxvii. 1. Or, *a tower of silver*^c; signifying, that she should be well fortified, and be put into a posture of defence against her enemies: the Gentile church at first had but a very small appearance of a building, a foundation just laid, a side-wall erected; but, in a short time, a noble structure, a stately tower, a silver palace, were built for God. *And if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar*; if the door of the Gospel was opened among the Gentiles, it should be succeeded to the building a holy temple to the Lord; which should be not only ornamented, but so well fenced, that it should not be in the power of their enemies to deface and demolish it: or if the door of their hearts was opened to receive Christ, and his glorious train of grace, they should be adorned and beautified with a larger measure of them; or if being come into a church-state, and the door of it was set open to receive good men, and exclude bad men, this would be to their honour, comfort, and safety: or this phrase is expressive of the finishing of the building, the gate or door being set up; though it rather seems to intend the low and mean estate of the Gentile church at first, when there was but little appearance of a building, only a door set up; which afterwards grew up into a stately and magnificent palace, like that of Solomon's, built of cedar-boards of the wood of Lebanon; which may denote her fragrant, perpetuity, and incorruptibility.

Ver. 10. *I am a wall, &c.*] The words of the little sister, or Gentile church; either wishing she was what was supposed, and desiring to be in a well-settled state, *O that I was a wall!* or as asserting^d that she was in such a state, well walled; God was a wall of fire about her; salvation was appointed as walls and bulwarks to her; she was one of the two walls Christ was a cornerstone unto, and cemented together; and was a wall built up of lively stones, of true believers, built on Christ, the foundation; and established in the doctrine of grace; and constant and immovable in her love to Christ. *And my breasts like towers*; round, plump, and high; signifying that she was now marriageable; and the time of her being presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, and of her open espousals to him, was now come: of ministers of the word, of the Scriptures, and of the ordinances of the Gospel, as signified by breasts, see the note on ch. iv. 5. which may be said to be *like towers*: ministers of the word, because set for the defence of the Gospel; the Scriptures, because an armoury from whence saints are supplied with armour, to repel Satan's temptations, refute errors, and defend

truth; and the ordinances of the Gospel, because they stand firm and immovable against all the efforts of men to subvert and abolish them; and these are peculiar to the Gentile church, under the Gospel dispensation. *Then was I in his eyes as one that found favour*; from the time that the Gentile church became a wall, firmly built on Christ, and was formed into a church-state, and had a settled ministry and Gospel ordinances, she became acceptable to Christ, and was admitted to near communion with him; and not only her person, but her services, met with a favourable acceptance from him; and these privileges and blessings were the fruit of his love, favour, and good will, he bore to her; which before was secret and hidden, but now her breasts being fashioned, her time was a time of love, of the open love of Christ to her, and of her espousals to him: and when, as the words may be rendered, she was *as one that found peace*^e; peace being made by the blood of Christ, and the partition-wall broken down between Jew and Gentile, and they peaceably joined together in a Gospel church-state; and when she enjoyed inward peace and tranquillity of mind, which is found in Christ, the word and ordinances; even all kind of prosperity, which peace, with the Hebrews, includes; every spiritual blessing, as reconciliation, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which are all the fruits and effects of divine favour, good will, grace, and love.

Ver. 11. *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon, &c.*] The little sister, or Gentile church, goes on to give an account of the success of the Gospel, the planting of churches, and the establishment of the interest of Christ in the Gentile world, together with the advantages that accrued to Christ from it; for not Solomon literally, but a greater than he, is here, Christ, the antitype of him, the Prince of peace; see the note on ch. iii. 7. By the *vineyard* is meant the church, especially under the New-Testament dispensation; so called, because separated from the world by sovereign grace; planted with precious and fruitful plants, which Christ has a property in, by his Father's gift and his own purchase; and therefore receives of the fruit of it; takes delight and pleasure to walk in it; and takes care to keep it in order, and to protect and preserve it: this is said to be at Baal-hamon; perhaps the same with Baal-gad, the names signifying much the same, and where Solomon might have a vineyard, Josh. xi. 17. the word signifies *the master, or lord of a multitude*^f; the Gentile world, consisting of a multitude of nations; and in which were many churches, and consisting of many persons. *He let out the vineyard unto keepers*: to his apostles, and to ministers of the Gospel in succeeding times; and who have their employment in it; some to plant, others to water; some to prune, to reprove and correct for bad principles and practices, and others to support and uphold weak believers; and others to defend truth, and preserve the church from innovation in doctrine and

^b So Ajax is called the wall of the Grecians, Homer. Iliad. 6. v. 5. & 7. v. 311.

^c כִּסְתָהּ propugnaculum argenteum, Tigurine version; arceum argenteum, Mevcerus; castellum argenti, Michaelis.

^d Hoc est, nolite dubitare utrum murus sum, Ambros. Easarat. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 22. p. 1097.

^e שְׁלוֹמִים *pacem*, Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius, Michaelis.

^f בְּבַעַל הַמִּזְוֹן in ea quæ habet populos, V. L. in domino multitudinis, Piscator.

worship: the *letting* it out to these agrees with the parables in Matt. xx. 1, 2. and xxi. 33. where there seems to be an allusion to this passage. Christ is the proprietor of the vineyard, and the principal vine-dresser; yet he makes use of his ministers to take the care of it, watch and keep it in order; for which purpose he lets, or *gives* ϵ , it to them, as the word is, for he makes them in some sense owners; and they have an interest in the churches, and their life and comfort greatly lie in the fruitfulness and well-being of them; the vines are called *ours*, ch. ii. 15. *Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver or shekels*, amounting to about an hundred and fifty pounds; which shews the fruitfulness of the vineyard, that its produce should be worth so much; and the great usefulness of the Gospel ministry, in bringing souls to Christ; the fruit of his labour is as dear to him as pieces of silver, Luke xv. 8, 9. Christ's ministers are his rent-gatherers, and the collectors of his fruit, John xv. 16. and though they have different talents and success, yet, being honest and faithful, the meanest are reckoned to bring in the same as others, or what make for Christ's delight, pleasure, and glory; as will appear when the reckoning-day comes, and an account will be given in, Matt. xxv. 19—28. Heb. xiii. 17.

Ver. 12. *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me, &c.*] These are either the words of Christ, asserting and confirming his right and property in his vineyard, the church; and which he distinguishes from and prefers to all others; and which being said to be *before* him denotes his exact knowledge of every vine in it, not a plant escaping; his watchful eye; his presence in it, his care of it, the delight and complacency he has therein; or else the words of the church, expressing her care, watchfulness, and diligence in the vineyard, and her concern for the welfare of the several vines and plants in it; see ch. i. 6. and vii. 12. And certain it is that the next clause is spoken by her: *thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand*; a thousand pieces or shekels of silver, as before: the church is willing Christ should have all he desires and demands, his whole due and full revenue of glory from his people; for he is meant, and not Solomon literally, as many Jewish writers ^h acknowledge. And the church being now in his presence, and using familiarity with him, thus addresses him, *and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred*; by which may be meant an honourable maintenance for themselves and families, and much esteem and respect among the people to whom they minister; this is the double honour in 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. Christ has the greatest share, as in reason he should, being the proprietor of the vineyard, and having the chief care and oversight of it, and gives it its increase: however, faithful ministers have their reward, which lies greatly in the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints; for that is their joy, and crown of rejoicing; and in eternal happiness they shall enjoy hereafter, 1 Thess. ii. 19. 1 Pet. v. 4.

Ver. 13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, &c.*] These are the words of Christ to the church, describing

her by her habitation, and may be rendered, *O thou inhabitress of the gardens*¹; the word used being in the feminine gender, which determines the sense of it, as belonging to the church: but the Septuagint version renders it by a word in the masculine gender; and so Ambrose ^k, who interprets the words as spoken by the church to Christ; though he observes that Symmachus and Aquila interpret them as the words of Christ to the church. By the *gardens* are meant particular congregations, the dwelling-places of the church, and where she has work to do by her ministers, to plant, water, prune, and dress the gardens; and of particular believers, whose business it is to attend on the ministry of the word, and other ordinances; and dwelling here may denote diligence and constant attendance here, and which is approved of by Christ, and well-pleasing to him: and it is honourable, as well as profitable and delightful, to have a place in these gardens, and especially an abiding one; and indeed those, to whom Christ gives a place and a name here, are in no danger of being turned or driven out, as Adam^l was from Eden. *The companions hearken to thy voice*; meaning either the divine Persons, the Father and the Holy Ghost, as Piscator; the companions of Christ, of the same nature, perfections, and glory with him; who listen to what the church and true believers say to them and to one another, Mal. iii. 16. or the angels, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, the friends of Christ and his people, who hearken to the conversation of believers, in private and public; and especially to the Gospel, preached in the assembly of the saints, Ephes. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12. or rather the daughters of Jerusalem, who all along attend the bride in this Song, and are the virgins her companions, Psal. xlv. 14. and it is a title that belongs to all truly gracious souls, Psal. cxxii. 8. and cxix. 63. who hearken to the voice of the church, to the Gospel, preached by her ministers; which is a joyful sound, and gives great delight and pleasure. *Cause me to hear it*; that is, her voice; so sweet and charming to him, as in ch. ii. 14. her voice in prayer and praise; in speaking of him, his person, offices, and grace, to others, and confessing his name before men. Some render the words, *preach me*¹; and then the sense is, seeing the companions flock unto thee, and listen with great attention and pleasure to thy voice, take the opportunity of preaching me unto them; let my person, righteousness, and grace, be the subject of thy ministry: and which was done in the first times of the Gospel, by the apostles; has been, more or less, ever since, by faithful ministers; and will be continued until the second coming of Christ, prayed for in the following verse.

Ver. 14. *Make haste, my beloved, &c.*] These are the words of the church to Christ, calling him her *beloved*: a title often used in this Song, see ch. i. 13, 14. and is continued to the last; for Christ was still the object of her love; and she had now a comfortable sense of her interest in him, and claimed it; and makes use of this title, not only to distinguish him from others, but to obtain her request the more easily, that

¹ *גן עדין*, Sept. 1. *dedit*, Morckius, Michaelis.

^h Shir Hashirim R. Sha. & Alshech in loc. R. Abendanae Not. in Mielch Yophi in Psal. lxxii. 20.

¹ *הוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת הַבַּיִת* *habitas*, V. L. Pagninus, Brightman, Janius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis; *que sedes*, Cocceus.

² *עָרַבְתִּי* in Psal. cxxii. octon. 22. p. 1089.

³ *הַמְדַבְּרִים* *predica me*, Janius & Tremellius.

he would *make haste*, and come; which may either be understood of his speedy coming in the flesh, and appearing on Mount Zion and in the temple, where the spicy and sweet-smelling incense was offered; or of his spiritual presence, in his house and upon the mountains, and in all the assemblies of Zion, where the prayers and praises of the saints go up to God, as sweet odours, perfumed with the incense of Christ's mediation: or the petition may respect the first spread of the Gospel throughout the Gentile world; which, being like a box of ointment opened, would diffuse the savour of the knowledge of Christ everywhere: or rather it expresses the breathings of the New-Testament church after the second coming of Christ, being the last petition of the church in this Song; and with which she closes it, as John does the Revelation, and with it the whole canon of Scripture in like manner, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*, that is, come quickly: and when the church says *make haste*, she does not desire Christ to come before the appointed time, nor will he; his coming may and will be *hastened* indeed, yet in his own time; but it shews her eager and earnest desire after it, being as it were impatient for it. The words may be rendered, *flee away*^m; not that the church desired Christ to depart from her; she

valued his presence at another rate; but she being weary of a sinful troublesome world, and breathing after everlasting rest in another, desires him to remove from hence, and take her with him to heaven, where she might enjoy his presence without any disturbance. *And be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices*; where spices and aromatic plants grow, as on Lebanon: of Christ, compared to a roe or a young hart, see the note on ch. ii. 9. These creatures being remarkable for their swiftnessⁿ in running upon mountains and other high places, see Hab. iii. 19, the church desires that Christ would be as swift in his motion as those creatures, and come quickly and speedily, and take her with him to the *spicy mountains*, the heavenly state, and all the joys and glories of it; and there have everlasting and uninterrupted communion with Christ; be out of the reach of every troublesome enemy; be in the utmost safety and security; and in the possession of pleasures that will never end. This state may be expressed by *mountains of spices*; because of the height and sublimity of it; and because of the permanency and everlasting duration of it; and because of its delightfulness and pleasantness; where will be fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

^m כָּרַח פָּרַח, Sept.; fuge, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, & alii.

ⁿ Veloces cervus, Virgil. Æneid. l. 5. Vid. Plauti Pœnulum, Act. 2. Sc. 1. v. 26, 27.

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A.D. Gillette,

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A General History of the Baptist Denomination,
Vol. 2, p. 149

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