

BOOK OF DEVOTION:
THE PSALMS

WITH

PREFACES, SUMMARIES, AND PRAYERS,

FOR FAMILY USE.

COMPILED FROM THE ALTENBURG BIBLE AND OTHER
SOURCES.

BY

F. KUEGELE,

AUTHOR OF "COUNTRY SERMONS."

(EDITED BY REQUEST OF THE ENGLISH EVANG. LUTHERAN SYNOD OF MISSOURI.)

Motto: As for me and my house we will serve the Lord – Joshua 29:15.

PUBLISHED BY THE
American Lutheran Publication Board,
Chicago, Illinois.

Republished by Michael L. McCoy

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ISBN # 978-1-387-22275-9

Michael L. McCoy
10 September Anno Domini 2017
Soli Deo Gloria!

COMPILER'S REMARKS

The compiler of these prefaces and summaries requests the Christian reader not to expect a learned commentary in this book. The object was not to give a complete exposition of the Psalms, or to attempt an explanation of all the difficult passages found in them; the object was to furnish a book for family devotion. Hence mainly such truths were made most prominent which seemed most conducive for instruction and edification. For the same reason a simple style of language was used, because family devotion is not only for the learned, but specially also for children and uneducated servants. Counting himself debtor both to the wise and to the unwise, the author trusts what is edifying to the simple will not be valueless to the learned.

These prefaces and summaries are taken from or patterned after those of the famous "Altenburg Bible." They are not a translation, but rather a reproduction in another language. Those summaries which were originally from the pen of Dr. M. Luther, were treated in like manner. This seemed preferable to a literal translation in order to make the book more adapted for use in our time and country. Many of the prefaces and summaries, especially where psalms are divided, are the compiler's own production.

In using this book the housefather may himself read or have a child do it. The references to Scripture passages were placed in brackets so that they can be easily skipped in reading. A proper time for reading a psalm is in the morning at the breakfast table, and at night before retiring. When the time is short the preface, or the summary, or both may be omitted, and only the psalm and the prayer used. Morning and evening prayers will be found in an appendix. To these may be added the Lord's Prayer and the benediction.

I, the compiler of this little work, hereby bear witness to my fellow housefathers, that family devotion in this form has been a great benefit to my own soul, as well as to my family.

May the blessing of God rest on every house where this booklet is used.

F. KUEGELE.
Trinity Grove, Va., Sept. 10, 1895.

REPUBLISHER'S NOTE

An attempt was made to reproduce the author's original intent in his publishing of this *Book of Devotion —The Psalms*. The deviations from this were consistent with the original author's own desire, namely, "to make the book more adapted for use in our time and country."

There are a number of notable changes incorporated into this work. First, the Psalms are not shown in columns as the original book has them, but are full-page width. Second, certain archaic words have been replaced. For example, a *lease* once meant a *falsification* or a *lie*. Hence, *leasing* has been replaced with *lying*. Other words are left as is since the meaning can be inferred. Again, an example is helpful. The word used to describe people living in a household is *inmates*, which is easily understood and thought-provoking. Third, punctuation has been added for clarity and flow in reading. Fourth, the capitalization of the first letter of pronouns referring to God has been applied. Finally, certain word forms have been updated. The preeminent example of this need might best be demonstrated by the word *strengthenedst* in Psalm 138.

Once again, may the blessing of the LORD our God abide with all who read or hear what is written on the following pages.

MICHAEL L. MCCOY.
Rogue River, OR, Sept. 10, 2017.

BOOK OF DEVOTION.

PSALM 1.

PREFACE.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. So that pious and God-fearing prince Joshua declared after he had divided the land of promise among the twelve tribes, and all Israel declared, they too would serve the Lord, and the same day they made a covenant that the Lord should be their God and they would serve none other. So should every household in all Christendom be a house serving the Lord; for certainly that house shall be blessed. The house in which the Word of God is daily read, in which praise is heard in the morning and prayer and thanksgiving at night, and where the inmates adorn their Christian profession by a walk of godliness, that house is a dwelling of the Most High, a resort of the angels, a stronghold against Satan, and there the Lord will command His blessing. The house in which is not the fear of God, in which the Lord is forgotten and His Word is not heard, that house may prosper for a time, but the storm will come upon it, and then its prosperity and happiness will fly away like chaff driven by the wind. Whereas the house serving the Lord, though it be but a hut, has a safe mooring, a sure comfort in afflictions and is compassed about by the love of God. All this is confirmed by the first Psalm which reads as follows.

Happiness of the Godly, punishment of the ungodly.

1. Blessed *is* the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.
2. But his delight *is* in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law does he meditate day and night.
3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.

4. The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
6. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

SUMMARY.

This psalm exhorts us to love the Word of God and to delight in hearing and learning it. It promises that goodness and mercy shall follow him who loves the testimony of the Lord and who meditates in His Law. He shall be like a palm-tree planted by a well of water, which grows and thrives though the scorching rays of the sun and the hot winds of the desert beat upon it. So shall the lover of the Lord's statutes flourish and his soul shall find comfort in the midst of the most dire afflictions. This the teachings of men can not accomplish; for when the day of trial comes they are consumed as stubble in the fire. But the Word of God is a safe anchor, and will not pass away.

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, O God, belong thanks and praise, because Thou hast given unto us Thy Holy Word. Enlighten our eyes by Thy Holy Spirit to understand Thy counsel of grace in Jesus Christ, to love Thy Word and to take delight in learning Thy statutes and walking in Thy Law. Bestow Thy blessing and prosperity on the works of our hands in our Christian calling and all our conversation. Amen.

PSALM 2.

PREFACE.

With the Jews the kiss was counted a peculiar token of love and friendship. Esau, when reconciled to his brother Jacob, fell upon his neck and kissed him (*Gen 33:4*). Jonathan and David sealed their

covenant of friendship with a kiss (*1 Sam 20:41*). When the prodigal returned confessing and repenting of his sin his father embraced him and kissing him manifested his joy over his return and showing his free forgiveness (*Luke 15:20*). Hence David exhorts at the end of this psalm: *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way*. We kiss the Son when we love the Lord Jesus Christ, when we encourage our hearts to draw nigh unto Him and to embrace Him as our own. We are indeed sinners, and should justly perish from the way, but for this purpose the Son of God became our brother, clothing Himself in our flesh and bone, that we should have a cheerful heart towards Him, seeing He did not come to judge and to condemn, but to redeem and to save us from our sins. This, our loving and lovely Savior is always ready to be embraced by us, and He will in no wise cast us out, if we do but sincerely repent, seek forgiveness with Him and believing it that He is the propitiation for our sins strive to follow Him in righteousness and true holiness. Hereunto we are persuasively urged by the second Psalm.

Prophecy of Christ and His Kingdom.

1. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed, *saying,*
3. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."
4. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
5. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.
6. Yet have I set My King upon My Holy Hill of Zion.
7. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, "Thou *art* My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.
8. Ask of Me, and I shall give *Thee* the heathen *for* Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* Thy possession.
9. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; Thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
12. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in Him.

SUMMARY.

In this beautiful psalm we have a clear prophecy of Christ in which it was foretold that after pouring out His soul unto death He would be exalted and would become a ruler over all the earth. Hence this psalm threatens destruction to those kings and nations who would persecute Him and would refuse to submit themselves to Him, and it promises salvation and every blessing to those who believe on Him. When Jesus Christ had given Himself a ransom for all and the preaching of the Gospel among all nations had commenced, then this raging of Jews and Gentiles against the Lord and His Anointed began. But the enemies of Christ — kings and emperors — are here compared with earth vessels which are easily broken and no more to be mended. So have the persecutors been shattered. But those putting their trust in Him the Lord ever upholds and makes them triumphant even at the stake.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto You, O Lord Jesus Christ, because You were once dead and by Your Blood did redeem us from sin and everlasting torment. You do we own as our King and You do we desire to serve all the days of our life. Preserve us in the midst of so many enemies, and by Your mighty hand keep us unto Your eternal Kingdom. Amen.

PSALM 3.

PREFACE.

God is a just and righteous judge Who will surely punish sin, though His long-suffering is great and His vengeance often seems to

tarry. Receiving the well deserved chastisements from the hand of God we should therefore never murmur against Him or accuse Him of injustice, but should possess our souls in patience acknowledging that we receive what our deeds are worth. Willingly should we bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against Him. Neither should we despair in our sins remembering that in Jesus Christ there is grace unto forgiveness. Rather should we return heartfelt thanks unto God, because He does not pour out upon us the full measure of His wrath, but has compassion upon us according to the multitude of His mercies. He remembers that we are dust, and for the sake of His dear Son, He delights in remitting unto us those everlasting punishments which we so richly deserve. To this our kind and merciful Father in Heaven we should lift up our hearts, imploring Him to deal leniently with us and to forgive our transgressions. And this prayer we should offer up trusting and knowing that He will not cast us away, that He will walk among us and will be our God, and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Unto such cheerful trust we are exhorted in the third Psalm.

David's prayer and comfort against his persecutors.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

1. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many *are* they that rise up against me.
2. Many *there be* which say of my soul, "*There* is no help for him in God." Selah.
3. But Thou, O LORD, *are* a shield for me: my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
4. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and He heard me out of His Holy Hill. Selah.
5. I laid me down and slept; I awoke; for the LORD sustained me.
6. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.
7. Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God; for Thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8. Salvation *belongs* unto the LORD: Thy blessing *is* upon Thy people. Selah.

SUMMARY.

This prayer David composed when he was fleeing from his undutiful and rebellious son, Absalom. In it David expresses this firm conviction, though his enemies were many and ten thousand set them against him, yet the Lord would be his Shield and his Help. Of this he was so fully persuaded that, committing his cause to the Lord, he could lay himself down quietly and could sleep sweetly. This trust of David was not put to shame. The counsels of his enemies were confounded, that ungrateful son, Absalom, perished miserably, and with many honors was David conducted back to Jerusalem. Those calling upon Him in distress and anguish the Lord will surely hear, and He will not fail to be a very present help to them that trust in His mercy.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, be with us as the sure defense of Your Church. Defend us against our enemies, preserve us from the persecutions of the wicked, and when our last hour has come, deliver us from all evil, both of body and soul, and receive us into Your everlasting Kingdom. Amen.

PSALM 4.

PREFACE.

In the sorrows and afflictions of this life and under the cross we should earnestly strive to practice four virtues. In the first place, we should not allow the happiness and the prosperity of the wicked to excite us to discontent with our own lot or to murmuring against Divine providence, but banishing envy from the heart we should commit our own cause and the rewarding of the wicked to the hands of God and should be quiet in Him. In the second place, we should willingly bear the cross being instant in prayer, and should console

ourselves with the certainty that no harm can come to us without the will of our Father in Heaven. Hence, whatever befalls us in this earthly pilgrimage must serve for our good, and the journey, once over, our sorrows will be turned into everlasting joy. In the third place, we should offer up the sacrifices of righteousness, acknowledging ourselves poor sinners who deserve chastisement alone and who have no other righteousness to bring before God save alone the obedience of Christ which we hold in faith. Having this faith we will always be ready to confess that God is just in His judgments and to say with heart and soul: “*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory*” (Psalm 115:1). In the fourth place, we should quietly wait for the Lord’s deliverance firmly believing that, for Christ’s sake, He will grant grace unto us poor sinners, will forgive us our sins, and will be a kind Father unto us in all our needs. Further instruction on these things is found in the fourth Psalm.

A psalm of comfort against the enmity of the world.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth [Stringed instruments],
A Psalm of David.

1. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: Thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
2. O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame? *How long* will ye love vanity, *and* seek after leasing [lies]? Selah.
3. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto Him.
4. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.
5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.
6. *There be* many that say, “Who will show us *any* good?” LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.
7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, LORD, only makes me dwell in safety.

SUMMARY.

This psalm teaches us to hope in God in the time of distress, trusting that He will make a way for us to escape. It rebukes the ungodly who are not willing to bear the cross, who seek after carnal ease, and whose trust is in earthly things and not in God, Who is alone the true Comforter. His eyes are upon them that fear Him, and He deals with them wonderfully, often hiding Himself from them as though He would forsake them, yet hearing their prayers. To the ungodly this Divine comfort is foolishness. They want garner and cellar replenished. Their trust is in well filled barns. The preaching of faith and patience only excites their ridicule and mockery. "Should this fellow," say they, "teach us what is good and wise? Let him stop baking, and see if God will hand him a loaf from Heaven." So this psalm rebukes unbelief and distrust, and exhorts us patiently to wait for the Lord in the time of need. While those who trust in earthly things are disquieted by fears and troubles, they that trust in the Lord can lay themselves down in peace and sleep knowing themselves safe under the shadow of the Almighty. And arising in the morning with a gladsome heart, they go forth to their labors cheerfully because their God is with them.

PRAYER.

O God, our merciful Father in Heaven, fill our hearts with patience under the cross, strengthen our faith and so govern us that we give offence to none, neither in word nor deed. Grant us also this day all that we need for body and soul. Amen.

PSALM 5.

PREFACE.

It is by the just judgment of God, if at any time the true prophets, the fearless witnesses for the full and pure truth, are

diminished in a land; and it is by the wiles and power of Satan, if false prophets, infidels and seducers are multiplied. Therefore we should daily cry unto God with instant prayer, to guard us against such teachers who proclaim their own dreams and to preserve unto us the truth of His Word. Morning and night we should offer up supplications and petitions that the Name of the Lord may be glorified and that our own and the souls of those committed unto us may be preserved in the evil day. This is the more necessary because of the deceitfulness of false teachings. The hawthorn with its smooth bark and waxen leaves presents an attractive appearance, but it produces only stinging thorns and useless haws. So the teachers of another and a new gospel, which is not a gospel, come in “sheep’s clothing” with a show of godliness or of wisdom, but their doctrines rob the heart of true comfort and destroy the soul. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and they are proclaimed in the inspired Word which is able to save the soul. But the doctrines and inventions of men are hay and stubble which are consumed in the day of trial and leave the soul unsaved. An illustration of this truth is found in the fifth Psalm.

A prayer for the church against false teachers.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth
A Psalm of David.

1. Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.
2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I pray.
3. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto Thee and will look up.
4. For Thou art not a god that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with Thee.
5. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.
7. But as for me, I will come *into* Thy House in the multitude of Thy mercy: *and* in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy Holy Temple.

8. Lead me, O LORD, in Thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make my way straight before my face.
9. For *there is* no faithfulness* in their mouth; their inward part *is* very wickedness; their throat *is* an open sepulcher; they flatter with their tongue.
10. Destroy Thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against Thee.
11. But let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy Name be joyful in Thee.
12. For Thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt Thou compass him as *with* a shield.

[* No faithfulness; that is, their doctrine makes the conscience restless, because they preach only works and not grace.]

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a prayer for the pious against the wicked, the hypocrites and all blind leaders who do much harm in the Kingdom of God, because they corrupt the Word of God and cease not to speak evil against the true followers of Jesus Christ. Of these spoilers of the Lord's vineyard — the hypocrites and false prophets — David makes bitter complaint, praying that the pious may be preserved in the pure Word and the true worship of God. At the end David expresses the confidence that his prayer is heard, that the Lord will bless the righteous and will be his shield. Hence this psalm should urge us to hallow the Name of the Lord, calling upon it in every need and worshiping Him with prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Light of the world and alone the Way which leads unto Eternal Life, restrain the corrupters of Thy Word and all the enemies of Thy Truth. Preserve unto us Thy Word in these latter days and faithful teachers unto the Day of Thy appearing unto judgment. And grant us to serve Thee in steadfast faith and a good conscience unto our end. Amen.

PSALM 6.

PREFACE.

When sin becomes alive in the conscience and begins to sting, when the thunderbolts of the Divine Law with its threats and curses strike into the soul, then the heart is cast to and fro like a frail craft in an angry sea. A heart filled with remorse over sin and terrified at the wrath to come has no peace. The light of day can not gladden it, and in the night it finds no rest, because it sees the jaws of hell open to devour it. This stinging of sin, these pangs of eternal death our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the highest degree, when in the agony of death on the cross the cry burst from His lips: "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" But when it seems to us that God is turned against us, that He has forsaken us and is minded to consign us to destruction we should remember, though for a while He may hide His face from us as in anger, yet He will have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. And we should imitate the example of our Lord in the darkest hour of His woe; we should cry unto God for light, for comfort and deliverance. The fervent prayer of faith, offered up in the Name of Jesus Christ, is like refreshing rain on parched ground; for it extinguishes the fire of temptation and despair which Satan has kindled in the heart. No one shall remain without comfort who, in the day of trouble, will call upon the Name of the Lord from a believing heart. Of this we are reminded by the sixth Psalm.

A penitential prayer for the healing of the soul.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith,*

A Psalm of David.

[*Probably an instrument of eight strings.]

1. O LORD, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure.
2. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* weak: O LORD, heal me: for my bones are vexed.

3. My soul is also sore vexed: but Thou, O LORD, how long?
4. Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for Thy mercies' sake.
5. For in death *there is* no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?
6. I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.
7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxes old because of all mine enemies.
8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.
9. The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.
10. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David complains of that high, spiritual temptation, the siftings of Satan, when the darts of the Law pierce the conscience when hope seems lost and the heart trembles on the brink of despair. This spiritual affliction, in which the heart is barren of comfort, is also called *the sorrows of hell and the snares of death* (*Psalm 18:5*), and St. Paul describes it as the buffetings of Satan's messenger. The soul, so afflicted, must cry out with the prophet: "Woe is me." But at the end David expresses the assurance that the Lord heard the voice of his weeping and received his supplications in his sore afflictions. In this he is a comforting ensample to all those who are exercised in the same conflicts. Of these conflicts the proud, who trust in themselves that they are righteous, know nothing. Thinking themselves worthy of God's favor they despise the penitent sinners and, like the Pharisee in the temple, they are not justified in the sight of God. But when death approaches the night of despair which knows no morning falls upon them. But the soul which seeks alone the righteousness of faith in Jesus Christ, though it must often pass through fire and must grapple with the powers of darkness, will finally triumph and the light of eternal glory will shine upon it.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou God of mercy, forgive us all our sins for the sake of the bitter sufferings of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Grant us a triumphant faith by which we may obtain the victory in all afflictions and temptations and, by Thy grace, uphold us when we must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. Amen.

PSALM 7.

PREFACE.

Let the Christian live ever so peaceably, let him be ever so diligent to avoid giving occasion for offence to others, or to awaken enmity, yet he cannot always remain altogether without adversaries. Slanderers and defamers will rise up against him and will attempt to lay his honor in the dust. When he is so defamed without a cause the Christian must by no means cast away his trust in God; he must rather cry unto the Lord in true faith and Christian patience. Implore the Lord in instant prayer to silence the tongues of malicious enemies and by the power of His grace to enable you to abide in His fear through evil report and good report. Though slanderers and deceivers prevail for a while, they finally come to grief and will be punished with everlasting destruction. Truly does the poet say:

“If thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He’ll give thee strength, whate’er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.
God never forsook in need
The soul that trusted him indeed.”

Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose Hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought (Jeremiah 17:7-8). This is illustrated in the seventh Psalm.

Prayer for the vindication of a righteous cause.

Shiggaion* of David, which he sang unto the LORD,
concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

[*Shiggaion, a song.]

1. O LORD my God, in Thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:
2. Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending *it* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.
3. O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;
4. If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)
5. Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take *it*; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honor in the dust. Selah.
6. Arise, O LORD, in Thine anger, lift up Thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me *to* the judgment *that* Thou hast commanded.
7. So shall the congregation of the people compass Thee about: for their sakes therefore return Thou on high.
8. The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.
9. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God tries the hearts and reins.
10. My defense *is* of God, which saves the upright in heart.
11. God judges the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.
12. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow, and made it ready.
13. He has also prepared for him the instruments of death; He ordains His arrows against the persecutors.
14. Behold, he travailes with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.
15. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.
17. I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness: and will sing praise to the Name of the LORD Most High.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David makes great complaint of the deceit and malice of the wicked and of those who have only the form of godliness, because they are quick to defame the true children of God and to accuse them wrongfully. When David was fleeing before Absalom, then Shimei, the Benjamite, publicly railed at him calling him a bloody man and accusing him of taking the kingdom from the house of Saul by violence and wickedness. In like manner did the Jews, with hearts full of malice, falsely accuse Jesus before Pilate. And at all times the true Christians who adhere closely to the words of the Scripture and show their faith by their works are hated and evil-spoken of by the world, the hypocrites and the false Christians. But David appeals to his innocence insisting that he gave no cause for enmity. And in beautiful and comforting words he declares that his prayer was heard and he was delivered. But the slanderers and the spiteful fall into the pit which they have digged for others.

PRAYER.

Lord, our God, Who is a Lover of the truth, succor those who, for Thy Name's sake are belied and slandered innocently. Strengthen, comfort and preserve those who suffer wrongfully, and break and hinder the craftiness of evil men who would suppress Thy truth and destroy Thy Kingdom. Amen.

PSALM 8.

PREFACE.

Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior, had his day of humiliation and sufferings in which He was compassed about by

innumerable evils and was tormented with the pangs of eternal death. He was abased to atone for our pride. He was crowned with thorns to earn for us the crown of heavenly glory. He became a servant to emancipate us from the bondage of Satan. He was mocked and he was spitted on to deliver us from the taunts of our enemies and to save us from all misery.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had also His glorious Easter Day, when He was raised again to make us poor, lost and condemned creatures inhabitants of Heaven. He was exalted to the right hand of the Father, already in this life to grant us His righteousness with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and after this life to crown us with unceasing bliss and glory. This cannot be otherwise, because the glory which the Head possesses must glorify also the members. This we should daily remember with thanksgiving towards the Father Who gave His only begotten Son to suffer for us and to rise again. Justly were the ancients accustomed to say: "For nothing else should we returns thanks unto God, the Lord, so often, so diligently and so heartily, as for the suffering and the Resurrection of His Beloved Son." Of this we are reminded in the eighth Psalm.

Of Christ's Kingdom, suffering and glory.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith,*

A Psalm of David.

[*Guitar or harp.]

1. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent *is* Thy Name in all the earth!
Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens.
2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
3. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;
4. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the Son of Man that Thou visitest Him?
5. For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honor.
6. Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all *things* under His feet:

7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passes through the paths of the seas.
9. O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* Thy Name in all the earth!

SUMMARY.

Here we have a prophecy of Christ, His suffering, Resurrection and rule over all creatures in Heaven and earth; for in the 21st chapter of Matthew the Lord quotes this psalm as treating of Him. When the children in the temple sang hosanna to Him, celebrating Him as the Messiah and the chief priests and scribes took exception to this, Jesus said unto them: "*Have ye never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise'?*" This Jesus Christ is the Lord our Lord Whose Name is so excellent in all the earth, even as at this day His Kingdom extends over all lands.

And this, His Kingdom, is not established with sword and buckler, but through the mouth of babes, through the foolishness of preaching. By the voice of the Gospel, His children are brought from far and His heirs from the ends of earth. *Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts (Psalm 95:8).*

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus — Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification — bless and defend Thy Holy Church. Endue Thy Word with power, strengthen our faith and, after the sufferings of this life, grant us to celebrate a happy Easter, rising again to live and reign with Thee to all eternity. Amen.

PSALM 9.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Never for a single day should we forget to return thanks unto our God for the many blessings which He has bestowed on us. Neither should we attribute the benefits which we enjoy to our own merits and worthiness, but steadfastly we should give all honor alone

unto the mercy of the Lord. Nor must we give thanks with the lips only or in a half-hearted manner, but with all the heart and with all the soul; for God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. He is a searcher of the hearts and reins; so we must worship Him without guile, in singleness of heart. So St. Paul teaches us to worship God saying: *“Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ: (Ephesians 5:19-20).* And though his neighbors and kindred do not join him in bringing thank-offerings to God, yea rather deride him for his piety, yet should the Christian not cease from giving thanks and the praise of the Lord should be continually in his mouth. This worship of praise is more pleasing unto God, than the offering of a bullock having horns and hoofs. But His anger is kindled, if He is not glorified as God and no thanks are returned Him. Praise David offers in the first part of the ninth Psalm.

Trust in God's faithfulness.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben,
A Psalm of David.

1. I will praise *Thee*, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all Thy marvelous works.
2. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee: I will sing praise to Thy Name, O Thou Most High.
3. When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at Thy Presence.
4. For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause; Thou satest in the Throne judging right.
5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.
6. O thou enemy! Destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.
7. But the LORD shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His Throne for judgment.
8. And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister

judgment to the people in uprightness.

9. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.
10. And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.

SUMMARY.

In the first part of this psalm David gives thanks, because the Lord made him to triumph over his enemies who had beset him on every side. At the same time it is also a prophecy of the people of the New Testament who must suffer with Christ and must enter in to the Kingdom of God through much tribulation, being tormented and persecuted by the enemy. This prophecy is properly contained in words of praise, be the Christians, chiefly the holy martyrs, in the midst of sufferings offer praise unto God, comforting themselves with the assurance that the Lord will not forsake them, but will multiply their number in the midst of persecutions, until the persecutors themselves are converted and become Christians, or perish in their wickedness; for God is both merciful and just.

PRAYER.

With all our hearts do we give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, because Thou, at all times, dwell with Thy Christians and graciously preserves in the true faith all those who confess Thy Name. Dwell in us, O Lord, with Thy grace. Increase Thy Church daily and grant us to be and to remain true members of the same unto our latter end. Amen.

PSALM 9.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

It is a wholesome consideration daily to bear in mind, that we are but men. Once indeed the name *man* denoted a most noble creature. Adam was made in the image of God in righteousness and

true holiness, endowed with immortality and made a lord of the earth. But blinded by the old Serpent, man turned away from his Maker, and now, corrupted by sin, man must return again to dust from which he was originally taken. He is of few days and full of trouble. Why, O Man, is thy heart lifted up with pride? Art not thou a creature fallen from the state of perfection? Must thou not shortly become a prey to decay? Hast thou not sinned against the Most High, and dost thou not deserve to be cast out into outer darkness where is weeping a gnashing of teeth?

Yet God has again highly honored man. The Only Begotten of the Father is made partaker of our flesh and bone and in Him our nature is exalted to the very Throne of God. And now as many as call upon this Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior, are made the children of adoption, and after this mortality they will again be clothed with immortality and will shine as the brightness of the firmament for ever and ever. Let us remember that we are but men, fallen creatures, dust and ashes; but men, purchased by God's own Blood and called unto His everlasting Glory. Let us magnify the mercy of our God, as we are exhorted in the second part of the ninth Psalm.

11. Sing praises to the Lord, Who dwells in Zion: declare among the people His doings.
12. When he makes inquisition for blood, He remembers them: He forgets not the cry of the humble.
13. Have mercy upon me, O LORD: consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, Thou that lifts me up from the gates of death:
14. That I may show forth all Thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in Thy salvation.
15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
16. The Lord is known *by* the judgment *which* He executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.
17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.
18. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

19. Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in Thy sight.
20. Put them in fear, O LORD: *that* the nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.

SUMMARY.

In this text David teaches that God will not forget, either the pride of the wicked or the lowliness and the sufferings of the righteous. They that fear not God are taken in their own cunning and are destroyed by their own wickedness. But they that hope in God will find help in time of need, and though for a season they must sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto them. The poor, the humble souls, have the Gospel preached unto them, and from it they receive strength in the day of trial, comfort against death, and in the day of darkness it is a light of hope unto them. Remember to do what David here commands saying, “Higgaion,” that is, meditate in the Word of the Lord, and though earthly might and means fail you, you shall not want; for *in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength (Isaiah 30:15)*.

PRAYER.

Teach us, O Lord, to know and to consider, what a vain thing man is that we may walk before Thee in true humility, not trusting in ourselves, but seeking Thy grace in Thy Son Jesus Christ, in Whom Thou hast promised unto us the forgiveness of our sins. Amen.

PSALM 10.

PREFACE.

To those under the cross God often seems to be asleep and altogether unconcerned about them. In the days of adversity the flesh yet remaining in the Christian is quick to think that God has forgotten the unfortunate and has utterly abandoned them. By these

thoughts the heart is filled with anxieties and fears, and is made to cry out: “*The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*” (Isaiah 49:14). But what says the Divine answer? “*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.*” Considering this, and many similar Divine promises, the Christian should never give place to the suggestions of the flesh. He should never allow fears and doubts to distress his mind, and least of all should he murmur against God. Neither should he be tempted to help himself out of trouble by resorting to sinful means or turning to evil ways, but having recourse to God in prayer he should persist in beseeching help from above. Nor must the Christian ever doubt the Lord’s mercy and faithfulness, although He seems to hide Himself and to stand afar off; yet he should patiently wait for the salvation of the Lord, knowing that He will not cast off for ever. Those trusting in His Name and crying unto Him the Lord will comfort. He will preserve them and deliver them, and He will heal all their diseases. Of this comforting truth we are reminded in the tenth Psalm.

Prayer against the enemies of the Church.

1. Why standest Thou afar off, O LORD? *Why* hidest Thou *Thyself* in times of trouble?
2. The wicked in *his* pride does persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
3. For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire, and blesses the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhors.
4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God *is* not in all his thoughts.
5. His ways are always grievous; Thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight; *as for* all his enemies, he puffs at them.
6. He hath said in his heart, “I shall not be moved: for *I shall* never *be* in adversity.”
7. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.
8. He sits in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places does he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9. He lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lies in wait to catch the poor: he does catch the poor, when he draws him into his net.
10. He crouches, *and* humbles himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.
11. He has said in his heart, “God has forgotten: He hides His face; He will never see *it*.”
12. Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Thine hand: forget not the humble.
13. Wherefore does the wicked contemn God? He has said in his heart, “Thou will not require *it*.”
14. Thou has seen *it*; for Thou beholds mischief and spite, to requite *it* with Thy hand: the poor commits himself unto Thee; Thou art the Helper of the fatherless.
15. Break Thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* Thou find none.
16. The LORD *is* King for ever and ever; the heathen are perished out of his land.
17. LORD, Thou has heard the desire of the humble; Thou will prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear:
18. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

SUMMARY.

This text gives a graphic description of the extreme wickedness of man’s heart. Hence many of the fathers explained it as being a prophecy of the great antichrist and the wickedness of the latter days. And in this explanation there is nothing improper. The pope, as the true antichrist, exalts himself against God, oppressing His Church. By his fraud and deceit he draws the world’s riches into his coffers, and by his false doctrines and his cursing the truth he catches the souls of men as in a net. And as to the latter days our Lord has told us before, it would again be as in the days of Noah, when the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Every one having eyes enlightened by the Holy Ghost cannot but see, that the signs of those latter evil days are fast multiplying. O how watchful should we Christians be, that our souls are not deceived by the seductive teachings of men and the evil examples surrounding us.

But at the end of this psalm we have this glorious promise that the Lord will incline His ear to the prayer of the humble, and will be a just Judge over the oppressors.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou faithful and jealous God, restrain the craftiness and the power, the oppression and the deceit of Thine enemies. Save the souls of the innocent from the snares of falsehood and lead them to the knowledge of Thy salvation in Thy Son Jesus Christ. Keep us in the true and saving faith and grant us to walk worthy of Thy Name for the sake of Thy Son, our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 11.

PREFACE.

God, the Lord, Who is purity in Himself and is a seeker and promoter of all that is right and good, most dearly loves all those who comfort their souls with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and who, for a testimony of the righteousness which they have received through faith, earnestly strive to walk also in the righteousness of the Holy Ten Commandments. Remembering this we should not despair or give way to faint-heartedness in the day of affliction and temptation. Firmly should we cling to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as the beautiful dress of our soul in the sight of the Father, daily striving to preserve an untarnished conscience by walking in the straight path of duty and of the law. If we so do, then we have this precious comfort — though Satan and the world hate us — yet God loves us and is well pleased with us. But with all unrighteousness, God is sorely displeased, and the unjust and the impenitent who repented not in the time of grace will, like those ten foolish virgins, find the door of the marriage-hall locked and themselves excluded. This truth we are taught in the eleventh Psalm.

Trust in God gives true comfort against the enemies.

To the chief Musician,

A Psalm of David.

1. In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, "Flee *as* a bird to your mountain?"
2. For lo, the wicked bend *their* bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.
3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?
4. The LORD *is* in His Holy Temple, the LORD's Throne *is* in Heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men.
5. The LORD tries the righteous: but the wicked and him that loves violence His soul hates.
6. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their cup.
7. For the righteous LORD loves righteousness; His countenance does behold the upright.

SUMMARY.

This psalm makes great complaint of those who would destroy the very foundations of our most holy religion. These destroyers of God's Temple are — in these latter days — the Infidels, Agnostics, Rationalists, Spiritualists and all who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures and the fundamental truths of the Gospel. These would bid us to flee to *their* mountains, teaching us to build on the wisdom of men and to trust for righteousness in our own piety and works. What can the righteous do when such evil doctrines prevail, by which the foundations of Christianity are destroyed? Then the simple and the upright must remain without comfort, because there is none to lead them in the right way. When Christ's faithful ministers become few, when the true doctrine of God's Word is scarce in the land, then is fulfilled with many the Word of the Lord by the prophet *Hosea (4:6)* saying: "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*" Yet this psalm gives also this comforting assurance that God will preserve His Word, and, though His saving truth may be suppressed for a time, it must and will come to light again to gladden the hearts of the upright. But the portion of the wicked shall be snares and a horrible tempest.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who did come into this world to reveal unto us the will of Thy Father and to teach us the way everlasting, behold, how Thy Sacred Word is denied and corrupted in these our days so perilous. Have mercy upon us and save us from the snares of unbelief and the seductive teachings of science falsely so called, and grant us to abide in Thy Word that, made free from error and sin, we be found Thy disciples indeed. Amen.

PSALM 12.

PREFACE.

If we value gold and silver as the most costly of metals, much rather should we value the Bible as the most precious of books. Gold and silver are corruptible things and will pass away, but the Word of the Lord is an incorruptible seed and will not pass away. With gold and silver we can obtain the things which are necessary for our support and comfort in this bodily life, but through the Word of God we obtain better and nobler treasures, even the Holy Ghost, the grace of the Father, the forgiveness of sins, sonship and eternal life. Silver and gold are tried and refined by the fire; in the smelting oven the baser metals are separated and the impurities consumed. In like manner the fire of affliction purifies the affections, consumes the lustings of the flesh, and prepares the way for the Word of God to bring fruit with us. Without affliction our hearts are cold and rarely relish the Word of God, but in the day of trouble it becomes lovely to the heart and sweet to the soul. From his own experience David declares: "*Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy Word*" (*Psalm 119:67*). The same he teaches in this twelfth Psalm.

Prayer for the preservation of the little flock by the Lord's Word.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith,

A Psalm of David.

1. Help, LORD; for the Godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.
2. They speak vanity every one with his neighbor: *with* flattering lips *and* with a double heart do they speak.
3. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaks proud things:
4. Who have said, “With our tongue will we prevail; our lips *are* our own: who *is* lord over us?”
5. “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise,” says the LORD; “I will set *him* in safety *from him that* puffs at him.”
6. The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
7. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.
8. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

SUMMARY.

As Isaiah, in his first chapter, speaks of an evil and a deplorable time in Israel, when the daughter of Zion, the company of true believers, had become like unto a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, so this psalm describes a time when piety has diminished and wickedness increased. It pictures a time when there is great pride and much hypocrisy; when there is much boasting about the abilities, the wisdom and the achievements of man. A time when men flatter with their lips and are of an inconstant heart ready to betray. A time when men will not be bound by the Word of God, claiming the liberty to teach what they please and wanting to walk after their own thoughts. A time when the venal and the vile occupy high positions and oppress the poor. Who could deny that the picture drawn in this psalm suits our times? But thanks be to God for this precious promise that they who continue in His Word shall have the Light of Life and shall never perish. Purer than gold refined seven times are God’s promises. When the pious seems utterly devoted to destruction the Lord says: “*Now will I arise, and will set him in safety*” (v. 5).

PRAYER.

O Lord our God, the Lord of hosts, guard us that we err not from the way of Truth, and keep us from the temptation to sit where the mockers sit. Preserve us in the faith of Thy Son and in a walk of godliness all the days of our pilgrimage. Be with us when we much walk among the wicked, surrounded by so many evil examples, and keep us from the evil. Amen.

PSALM 13.

PREFACE.

Melancholy of the heart, sorrowfulness of the soul, is a heavy burden, and it profits nothing. The man who abandons himself to a melancholy mood will, every day and every night, find some new reason to be low spirited. He is continually full of apprehensions and fears and he must soon experience that melancholy is a cause of infirmities and of premature old age. Now it is not the will of God that man should be continually sad. God has no pleasure in melancholy, He rather earnestly warns against it by the holy apostle saying: "*The sorrow of the world works death*" (2 Corinthians 7:0). When tempted to sorrowfulness we should cry unto God in fervent prayer, and casting all our cares upon Him should bid our hearts be still and trust the grace and mercy of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a more effectual remedy for melancholy and sadness than fervent and believing prayer, because it draws the heart away from the cause of sorrow and unto God Who is the Author of light and life. Dear people, pour out your troubles unto the Lord, and soon He will cause the clouds of heaviness to part and will show you a smiling face, filling your hearts with joy and gladness. An illustration of this is found in the thirteenth Psalm.

A prayer in sorrowfulness of heart.

To the chief Musician — A Psalm of David.

1. How long wilt Thou forget me, O LORD? For ever How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?
2. How long shall I take counsel in my soul, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
3. Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of death*;
4. Lest mine enemy say, “I have prevailed against him;” *and* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
5. But I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation.
6. I will sing unto the LORD, because He hath dealt bountifully with me.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a fervent petition against melancholy and sadness of heart with which Satan often torments the Christian, as St. Paul complains of the buffetings of Satan’s messenger. Frequently such heaviness of heart is also caused by the deceit, malice and treachery of men who do violence to the Christian or slander him without a cause; for it grieves the heart to reap evil for good and to experience the ingratitude of those whom we trusted. But in David we see that the prayer of an afflicted heart is mighty and there is no sorrow so great persistent prayer will overcome it. Wherefore *St. James (5:13)* exhorts: “*Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.*” We should accustom ourselves to be cheerful in all manner of afflictions and misfortunes, and should never suffer sorrow to gnaw the heart, but should present our petitions before the Lord being assured that His ears are open to our prayers, because He has promised and said: “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me*” (*Psalm 50:15*).

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who in the days of Thy flesh was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, graciously remember us who are yet walking in this vale of tears and must enter Thy Kingdom

through many tribulations. As Thou hast promised to be with Thine own and to support them unto the end, so grant us Thy Holy Spirit — the Spirit of joy and of peace — to comfort our hearts and the hearts of all Thy afflicted Christians with Thy everlasting comfort. Amen.

PSALM 14.

PREFACE.

As a clock is made to run correctly and to show the exact time, so God created man in perfection that he should walk in righteousness and should live. But as a clockwork which is filled with dust and filth, or otherwise spoiled, will not keep time correctly, running either too fast or too slow, so man, spoiled by the wiles of Satan can do nothing truly good in the sight of God. By the corruption which is in him, man's understanding is so darkened that he receives not the things of the Spirit of God; yea, that they are foolishness unto Him (*1 Corinthians 2:14*). His will is turned unto evil away from God, so that he wants to do what God has forbidden, and does not want what God has commanded. We must verily all confess that our heart breeds many evil affections and sinful lusts. What God likes the flesh dislikes, and what God hates the flesh craves. This, our miserable condition, we should know and acknowledge; we should sorrow over it, asking God to enlighten our eyes to know His will and to teach our feet to walk in His ways. Daily we should sigh: "Lord, take from me what separates me from Thee. Give me what will draw me to Thee. Take me from myself and make me all Thine own." This confession and prayer is contained in the fourteenth Psalm.

Of man's corruption and his redemption.

To the chief Musician — A Psalm of David.

1. The fool hath said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that does good.*

2. The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.
3. They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that does good, no, not one.
4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up My people *as* they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.
5. There were they in great fear: for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.
6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is* his refuge.
7. Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice *and* Israel shall be glad.

SUMMARY.

This psalm pictures sin as a dire and a general disease. It is an epidemic which has spread wide as the world through all the race of Adam. All are conceived and born in sin. Not one has remained untainted, and they are all gone out of the way. By this corruption which is in them, men are led to the very height of presumption and folly, even to denying the very existence of God. And this men will do against the testimony of their own conscience, against reason and in spite of every-day experience. Yea, sin has so blinded man that without a Divine revelation he cannot even know what is pleasing to God. Hence all teachings which men invent, all worship which they institute without the Word of God, is all wrong, tending only to the dishonor of God. The fear of God is not in them, but the fear of signs and omens, and they are full of superstition. But at the end this psalm prophesies the coming of the Gospel; for salvation is of the Jews (*John 4:22*), and out of Zion did the Gospel go forth. This Gospel proclaims and brings the forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ, in Whom, as in the Beloved, we are accepted. Though many blindly believe what infidel scientists say, our hearts shall abide in the faith of the Gospel of Christ, and we will rejoice and be glad in the Lord our Savior.

PRAYER.

Lord, from Thy Throne on high look with a pitying eye upon us poor, sinful mortals. Preserve us that we be not led astray by infidelity or superstition, and grant us in all simplicity of faith to receive the Gospel of Thy Son, Who has the words of eternal life, that in Him we may be Thine in time and eternity. Amen.

PSALM 15.

PREFACE.

Paul, the apostle to the Ephesians, in the second chapter, verse 10, says: "*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.*" In Jesus Christ God makes us new creatures, forgiving our sins and imputing to us the righteousness and merits of His Beloved Son, and so, without our worthiness, aid or assistance, we are made the children and heirs of God. The immediate purpose for which we are made new creatures is, that we should walk in good works, and, indeed, the new man cannot remain idle. He will forthwith begin to do new and truly good works. But beginning to do good is not enough, we must also persevere therein unto death, if we would reach the end of faith, the salvation of the soul. We must not fall away like withered bloom or worm-eaten fruit; neither must we suffer the new man to be choked again by thorns: the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, but walking in the fear of the Lord continually, we must be wide awake and watchful to maintain good works, each in his calling. In all humility, calling upon God to grant us perseverance, we must not expose ourselves to temptation — avoiding places and societies where we might be seduced to sin. Daily we must be on our guard that we lose not the grace of God, offend not our heavenly Father, grieve not the Holy Ghost, cause not joy to the devil, forfeit not faith and salvation, offend not the weak and bring upon ourselves eternal woe and misery. An earnest warning is contained in the fifteenth Psalm.

Of a Christian life and walk.

A Psalm of David.

1. Lord, who shall abide in Thy Tabernacle: Who shall dwell in Thy Holy Hill?
2. He that walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.
3. *He that* backbites not with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor.
4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honors them that fear the LORD. *He that* swears to *his own* hurt, and changes not.
5. *He that* puts not out his money to usury, nor takes reward against the innocent. He that does these *things* shall never be moved.

SUMMARY.

This psalm urges us unto a truly Christian life, which consists in walking uprightly before God, speaking the truth in the heart and dealing righteously towards all men. This no one can do save only he who, acknowledging himself a poor sinner by a living faith, holds fast the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ according to the Gospel. This faith prompts to work righteousness, to walk honestly and to avoid hypocrisy. The man who walks uprightly towards God will not sit in the seat of the scornful, neither will he oppress the poor and the innocent, nor yet secretly smite his neighbor with his tongue. And though it is to his own temporal loss, yet he will perform his promise and will not break his oath. This walking in faith and charity has its promise that is shall not remain unrewarded.

PRAYER.

O Lord, our gracious and merciful Father, grant us steadfastly to believe in Thy Son Jesus Christ, our Savior, fearlessly to confess Him before men – to the reproving of the unbelieving and the wicked. And strengthen us by Thy Spirit to walk honestly as in the day, both in secret and in public. Amen.

PSALM 16.

PREFACE.

In Heaven we shall obtain the fullness of joy; joy unspeakable and unalloyed. At God's right hand we shall enjoy pleasures, not only an hundred, or a thousand, or an hundred thousand years, but for evermore, without interruption and without end. This joy eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it descended into the heart of man, but God has prepared it and they that love Him sigh for it. Contrariwise in hell there will be the fullness of misery with never ending torments and terrors at Satan's right hand, where the wicked shall be gnawed with remorse in the lake of fire burning with brimstone where is wailing and gnashing of teeth. *For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.* O ye that live without God, consider this latter end of the wicked, and repent that ye may escape the wrath to come. But ye lovers of the Lord, rejoice over the hope which is set before us Christians. May it please God to preserve us body and soul in true repentance unto this everlasting joy by virtue of the merits and the advocacy of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And now let us hear the sixteenth Psalm.

Prophecy of Christ's suffering and resurrection.

Michtam of David.

1. Preserve Me, O God: for in Thee do I put My trust.
2. *O My Soul*, Thou hast said unto the LORD, "Thou *art* My Lord: My goodness *extends* not to Thee;
3. *But* to the saints that *are* in the earth, and *to* the excellent, in whom *is* all My delight.
4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another *god*: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into My lips."
5. The LORD *is* the portion of Mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest My lot.

6. The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant *places*; yea, I have a goodly heritage.
7. I will bless the LORD, Who hath given Me counsel: My reins also instruct Me in the night seasons.
8. I have set the LORD always before Me: because *He is* at My right hand, I shall not be moved.
9. Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices: My flesh also shall rest in hope.
10. For Thou wilt not leave My Soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.
11. Thou wilt show Me the path of Life: in Thy Presence *is* fullness of joy; at Thy Right Hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

SUMMARY.

This is a clear prophecy of Christ's suffering and Resurrection; for as such, it is established by the New Testament. In the sermon which the apostle Peter preached at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost he adduces the four last verses of this psalm and then adds: "*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. He, seeing this before, spoke of the Resurrection of Christ, that His Soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption*" (Acts 2:29 & 31). And St. Paul (Acts 13:35) speaks in this manner: "*He saith also in another psalm, 'Thou shalt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.' For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but He Whom God raised again saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.*" Here is included the promise that the old Jewish worship, with its emblems and manifold types, would be abolished after the coming of the Holy One, and those are threatened with dire punishments who would reject this Holy One and would look for another. Clearly is this prophecy fulfilled before our eyes. No infidel can deny that sorrows have been multiplied upon the Jews since they

have rejected and crucified the Lord of glory. But this Holy One, Who poured out His Soul unto death, has obtained an inheritance from among all kindreds and tongues and nations.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Lord Jesus, for Thy bitter sufferings, Thy shameful death and Thy joyous Resurrection. Enlighten our eyes to see in Thee the way unto Life. Uphold us by Thy truth that we fall not into Jewish blindness, idolatry and false worship. And preserve us in the true faith unto Eternal Life. Amen.

PSALM 17.

PREFACE.

When, at any time or place, the light of the Gospel is made to shine brightly, when God is glorified by the preaching of His Word, and Satan's lies and soul-destroying errors are exposed, then that prince of darkness will always exert his utmost power and skill to obscure and to extinguish this Light. Unto this end the enemy often awakens false teachers and deceitful workers who transform themselves into angels of light (*2 Corinthians 11:13*) and do great harm in the Lord's Vineyard. In this Satan is most successful, when the Christians have fallen to slumbering and, thinking themselves secure, are not so earnestly intent on working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. In His wise providence God often permits false teachers to arise in order to try His own and to awaken them a sense of their danger that they do not become lukewarm and lose their heavenly treasure which they carry in an earthen vessel (*2 Corinthians 4:7*). It is a truth what Hilerius says: "We care little for the Word of God when we are secure and in no danger." This we should daily bear in mind, taking heed lest we fall. *No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:62)*. Remember Lot's wife, who, when looking back to Sodom, was turned into a pillar of salt. To watchfulness we are urged by the seventeenth Psalm.

Prayer for purity of doctrine and holiness of life.

A Prayer of David.

1. Hear* the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, *that goes* not out of feigned lips.
2. Let my sentence come forth from Thy Presence; let Thine eyes behold the things that are equal.
3. Thou hast proved mine heart; Thou hast visited *me* in the night; Thou hast tried me, *and* shall find nothing: I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.
4. Concerning the works of men, by the Word of Thy lips I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer.
5. Hold up my goings in Thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.
6. I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God: incline Thine ear unto me, *and* hear my speech.
7. Show Thy marvelous loving-kindness, O Thou that saves by Thy right hand them which put their trust *in Thee* from those that rise up *against them*.
8. Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings,
9. From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.
10. They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.
11. They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;
12. Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.
13. Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, *which is* Thy sword:
14. From men † *which are* Thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, *which have* their portion in *this* life, and whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid *treasure*: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.
15. As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.

- I know that I teach Thy Word and not lies; therefore if Thou hear not me, hear Thy just cause.
- † Who fall into Thy hand. Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee (Psalm 21:8).

SUMMARY.

This psalm makes great complaint of the wicked, who hate the pious, because they will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (*Ephesians 5:11*). They lay in wait to find a reproach against the pious, and it is joy unto them when misfortune comes upon him. They are often increased in riches, prosperity surrounds their house, and they seem to be the favorites of Heaven. But they have their portion in this life, and after death they fare like Dives to whom it was said: "*Son, remember that thou, in thy life-time, received thy good things: but now thou art tormented*" (*Luke 19:25*). Chief among these enemies of the true Christians are those who boast of their morality and those who teach justification and salvation by man's own works and self-chosen piety. These, being spiritually proud, are sullen enemies of the doctrine of salvation alone by grace through faith in Christ, and they hate the witnesses of this truth with a bitter hatred. But what are the sufferings of this present time more than shadows which soon past away? When we awake out of the dust of the earth we will be in the image of our Lord.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, the true Shepherd and Defender of Thy people, grant us wisdom, strength and patience. Wisdom to know and to walk in the way everlasting; strength to resist all temptations to error and sin, and boldly to confess Thy truth before men; patience to bear the cross without murmuring, being gladly ready to suffer with Thee that we may also rule with Thee. Amen.

PSALM 18.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you, so St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians (*1st Epistle 5:18*), and the *Colossians (3:17)* he exhorts: “*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*” Never should we forget to return thanks for the good which God has done unto us. Daily should hymns of praise dwell on our lips, heart and soul being filled with thanksgiving towards Him Whose mercies are so great and His blessings unnumbered. God has commanded us to be thankful. He delights in a grateful heart which is joyous before Him, and with manifold blessings in body and soul will He crown those who give thanks and praise unto Him. But the ungrateful who do not appreciate His gifts and give no thanks unto Him, He will not hold guiltless. A beautiful hymn of sincere thanks is contained in the eighteenth Psalm, the first part reading as follows: *Thanksgiving for Divine deliverance and help.*

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, Who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the Hand of Saul: And he said,

1. I will love Thee, O LORD, my Strength.
2. The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in Whom I will trust; my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, *and* my High Tower.
3. I will call upon the LORD, *Who is worthy* to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.
4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.
5. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God; He heard my voice out of His Temple, and my cry came before Him, *even* into His ears.
7. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth.
8. There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.
9. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under His feet.
10. And He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.
11. He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies.
12. At the brightness *that was* before Him His thick clouds passed, hail *stones* and coals of fire.
13. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail *stones* and coals of fire.
14. Yea, He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
15. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.
16. He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters.
17. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.
18. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my Stay.
19. He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me.
20. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me.
21. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.
22. For all His judgments *were* before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me.
23. I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight.

SUMMARY.

When David had triumphed over his foreign and domestic enemies and had attained unto more peaceable days, he sang this hymn of praise to God, giving glory to God for the great things which He had accomplished. Giving the glory to God, David nevertheless also says: "*The Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands.*" These words we must not construe, as though David counted himself without sin, or thought himself just before God by his own righteousness or the works of his hands. In the same connection David confesses himself a sinner saying: "*I kept myself from mine iniquity.*" The lust of sin was in him, but he suppressed it and indulged it not. Although a sinner before God, David was a righteous man in comparison to his enemies. Saul hated him without a just cause, Shimei cursed him without provocation, and even so with others. In his conflicts and wars David was the innocent party. Now it is written: *Evil pursues sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid (Proverbs 13:21)*. Absalom perished miserably, and David was soon reinstated in the kingdom. Confessing ourselves unworthy sinners we must appeal to the merits of Christ as alone being our righteousness in Heaven, but in this world we should so live as to be able to say, when men hate us and persecute us, that they do it without a cause.

PRAYER.

Praise, honor and thanksgiving do we offer unto Thee, O Lord, from Whom comes every good and every perfect gift, because Thou daily preserve us from many evils, guard us in many dangers, crown us with many blessings and enable our hearts to appreciate Thy goodness and to rejoice before Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 18.

PART 2 — PREFACE .

To Titus in the first chapter at the 15th verse, St. Paul writes: *Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* A mind full of unchastity will find a score of occasions for filthy thoughts, where a chaste heart finds no stumbling-block. From beholding the same picture very different thoughts may be awakened in different persons. Whilst the one is filled with filthy imaginings, the other is edified with thoughts of God and of Heaven. The object being the same, the difference in the result is owing to the disposition and the sentiment of the beholders. It is owing to the purity or the impurity of the mind. To the believer, who has learned to trust God, *the Lord is righteous in all His ways; and holy in all His works (Psalm 145:17).* Even when smarting under the chastening rod of the Lord, the righteous is ready to say with Job: *“Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (2:10).* To the righteous, God’s ways are always right. But to the wicked, all God’s doings appear wrong. Whatever God does it will not suit the froward. Therefore God will also show Himself froward with them and will make them eat the fruit of their own doings. From the second part of the eighteenth Psalm let us learn to accept in humility all the Lord’s words and works.

25. With the merciful Thou will show Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou will show Thyself upright.
26. With the pure Thou will show Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou will show Thyself froward.
27. For Thou will save the afflicted people; but will bring down high looks.
28. For Thou will light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.
29. For by Thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.
30. *As for* God, His way *is* perfect: The Word of the LORD is tried: He *is* a buckler to all those that trust in Him.

31. For who *is* God save the LORD? Or who *is* a Rock save our God?
32. *It is* God that girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect.
33. He makes my feet like hinds' *feet*, and sets me upon my high places.
34. He teaches my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.
35. Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation: and Thy right hand has held me up, and Thy gentleness has made me great.
36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.
37. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.
38. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.
39. For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.
40. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies: that I might destroy them that hate me.
41. They cried but *there was* none to save *them*; *even* unto the LORD, but He answered them not.
42. *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*
43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; *and* Thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.
44. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.
45. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.
46. The LORD lives; and blessed *be* my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.
47. *It is* God that avenges me, and subdues the people under me.
48. He delivers me from mine enemies; yea, Thou lifts me up above those that rise up against me; Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
49. Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy Name.
50. Great deliverance gives He to His king; and shows mercy to His anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

SUMMARY.

This song of triumph, which David sang after vanquishing his enemies, is at the same time a prophecy of the victories of Christ over our enemies. St. Paul (*Romans 15:9*) quotes this psalm in proof that the heathen should glorify God for His mercy in Jesus Christ, and from the concluding verse it is clear that he is not speaking alone of his own person, but of Him Who should sit on the Throne of David forever. As David triumphed over and subdued all the surrounding enemies of Israel, so our David has bruised the head of the hellish Goliath, has redeemed us from that strong man, the Law and has burst the bars of death. And though Satan may yet tempt, and the Law may yet threaten, and death may yet terrify while we sojourn in the flesh, if we will but lean on our David, taking refuge under His cross, He will not fail to do what David of old (*verse 27*) said: "*Thou will save the afflicted people.*" Nestling under His wings neither death nor hell shall rule over us.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, both David's Son and David's Lord, thanks be to Thee, because Thou didst undertake the battle against our enemies, and didst ransom us from the power of them that hated us. And as Thou now sits at the right hand of Thy Father, a Lord over all things, be Thou our Rock and our Defense, our Buckler and the Captain of our salvation, that in Thy Name we may defy and despise the very gates of hell, triumphing over them for ever and ever. Amen.

PSALM 19.

PREFACE.

Surely, *if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)*. Often we do unwittingly what we ought not to do, and omit what we ought to do. In the time of need we are quick to doubt the truthfulness and mercy of God, and, under the cross, discontent and murmuring soon arise in our hearts. Who can know and who can number the sins yet daily overtaking

and besetting the Christian who earnestly strives after sanctification? Not one of us can know all the sinful thoughts and cravings arising in his heart in a single day. And these are truly sins which would surely condemn us, if God did not graciously cover them over the mantle of Christ's merits. This we should continually bear in mind that we do not trust in our own innocency and purity, but daily draw nigh unto the Throne of Grace, seeking the forgiveness of sin in Christ our Mediator. Neither should we suffer any sin to rule over us, and should strive to walk innocently in all things. Unto this we are exhorted in the nineteenth Psalm.

Of the preaching of the Gospel and true repentance.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handywork.
2. *Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge.*
3. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*
4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun,
5. Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoices as a strong man to run a race.
6. His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.
7. The law of the LORD, *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.
8. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.
9. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
10. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned; *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward.
12. Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret *faults*.

13. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.
14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my Strength, and my Redeemer.

SUMMARY.

In beautiful words does David here picture the preaching and the triumphs of the Gospel. Beginning at Jerusalem the voice of the Gospel spreads under the whole canopy of the heavens and without interruption its proclamation continues day and night until there is not a language in which the voice of Christ is not heard. Even as the sun rising at one end of the firmament encircles the heavens, giving light to land and sea and dispelling the darkness in mountain and vale, so the Gospel encircling the earth enlightens the nations and shining into the recesses of the soul gladdens the heart with joy and hope. This "New Law," the Gospel, he praises as being far more glorious than the Law given by Moses; for this New Law he describes as bringing salvation and enduring forever. Blessed are the ears which hear this New Law, the Word of Christ, which is able to save the soul.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou Who art the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings, enlighten our darkened understanding by Thy Holy Word. Enkindle our hearts and mould our will to walk in faith, love and hope unto all pleasing. Enlighten the nations that sit in darkness and preserve Thy Church unto the Day of Thy Coming. Amen.

PSALM 20.

PREFACE.

Good, liberal and permanent institutions of government are a peculiar and noble gift of the Father of light, through which a nation

enjoys many blessings, as bad government is one of God's scourges, with which He punishes nations for their sins. This punishment God threatened to the Jews (*Isaiah 3:4*) saying: "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed." Solomon also (*Ecclesiastes 10:16*) exclaims: "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!" Unhappy the nation which is oppressed by a tyrant regarding neither law nor right, or whose government meddles in matters of conscience and is intolerant in religion. Unhappy the land in which anarchy and civil disorders prevail. On the other hand, by a good government, peace and righteousness, morality, culture and art are greatly promoted. "I exhort," says Paul, "that, first of all, supplications, prayers intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (*1 Timothy 2:1-2*). Christians are to offer up supplications and prayer for the government, and to remember to do this, we Americans have great reason. To this, our native country, God has granted good and liberal civil institutions, and petitions for the perpetuation of our free government should rise up to God from our hearts and our churches, and that the public offices be filled with wise, honest and patriotic men. A prayer for the government is contained in the twentieth Psalm.

A prayer of Israel for David, its king.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee.
2. Send thee help from the Sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.
3. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah.
4. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all thy counsel.
5. We will rejoice in thy Salvation, and in the Name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfill all thy petitions.

6. Now know I that the LORD saves His anointed; He will hear him from His Holy Heaven with the saving strength of his Right hand.
7. Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the Name of the LORD our God.
8. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.
9. Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.

SUMMARY.

Here again applies what was said in the eighteenth psalm, that David was a figure of Christ. Therefore this psalm is both a prayer of Israel for David, the son of Jesse, and of Zion, or the Church for Christ her King. For, and in the place of all Israel, did David go forth to meet Goliath, and David's victory was Israel's victory. So Christ, our King, made war on our enemies, and He did more than David; for David only risked his life for Israel, but our King poured out His Soul an offering for sin, laying down His Life for us. David made offering of beasts and birds, but our King offered Himself a sacrifice for us, and, bearing our sins on the tree, He was consumed in the fire of eternal wrath, that He cried unto God as one forsaken. But the Father accepted the offering of the Son, and exalting Him to His Right Hand, has made Him an everlasting King, *Who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him (Hebrews 7:25)*. Let us rejoice over His salvation and, in the name of our King, let us set up our banners; for His Name must prevail.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, O God, Thou King of kings, because Thou hast granted a good and a free government unto our land. What Thou hast given, do Thou graciously preserve unto us and our children. Grant also that the civil liberty which we enjoy may remind us to seek that spiritual and everlasting freedom which is found alone in the Kingdom of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

PSALM 21.

PREFACE.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is both our King and our High Priest. As our King, He governs and protects us, restraining our enemies that, without His will, they can not touch a hair of our head. As our High Priest, He offered Himself on the high altar of the cross for the sins of the whole world, and so He *gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Ephesians 5:2)*. And as He, in the days of His flesh, offered up *prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears and was heard, (Hebrews 5:7)*, even so He is yet at the Right Hand of God making intercession for us and is heard, obtaining for us all that is needful and good for soul and body, in time and eternity. As the promised Seed of Abraham, He crowns us with the blessing of Abraham. To Him we should look for help in every need, and should rejoice in His salvation. And because, in these latter, evil days, temptations are strong and spiritual delusions are many, we should daily call on our King to perform His royal office in us, and so to guide us as it is conducive to our true welfare in time and eternity. The praise of this, our King, is sung in the twenty-first Psalm.

David's hymn of triumph over the victories of Messiah.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. The King shall joy in Thy strength, O LORD; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice!
2. Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hast not withheld the request of His lips. Selah.
3. For Thou prevents Him with the blessings of goodness: Thou sets a crown of pure gold on His head.
4. He asked life of Thee, *and* Thou gave *it* Him, *even* length of days for ever and ever.
5. His glory *is* great in Thy salvation: honor and majesty hast Thou laid upon Him.
6. For Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance.

7. For the King trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High, He shall not be moved.
8. Thine hand shall find out all Thine enemies: Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee.
9. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them.
10. Their fruit shalt Thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.
11. For they intended evil against Thee; they imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able *to perform*.
12. Therefore shalt Thou make them turn their back, *when* Thou shalt make ready *Thine arrows* upon Thy strings against the face of them.
13. Be Thou exalted, LORD, in Thine own strength: *so* will we sing and praise Thy power.

SUMMARY.

In the first part this psalm speaks in elegant words of the King Whom the Father has set up in His holy mountain, Christ, the King of Zion. Him the Father heard in all His petitions and granted Him all the desires of His heart. Him the Father highly exalted and crowned Him with a crown the like of which no other monarch has ever received. His Kingdom extends to the uttermost seas, and it will last when the kingdoms of this world have long since passed away. The latter part of this text is a prophecy of the overthrow of the Jewish nation and the synagogue, because they would not receive this King, but said: "*We will not have this man to reign over us*" (*Luke 19:14*). Because the Jews rejected and crucified their long promised King, therefore God made *them turn their back* (v. 12), that they must be burden bearers in all the world, and are hated and despised of all nations, as it is at this day. Let us take warning by the Jews to avoid their sin and their punishment.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, our High Priest and our victorious King, wash us by Thy Blood and plead for us with the Father, showing Him Thy

opened side and Thy pierced hands. Preserve us in Thy Kingdom to serve Thee in true faith and piety. Restrain the enemies of Thy Church, both visible and invisible, and keep us unto eternal life. Amen.

PSALM 22.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

The wounds of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Redeemer, are like unto a transparent pane of glass, through which we can see into the Fatherly heart of our merciful God, and can read His mind towards us. The sentiment of loving kindness hidden in the Father's heart is revealed to us in the wounds which Christ, our Lord, received in His Holy Body. In the Blood streaming from His veins, we behold the Father's fervent desire for our salvation. In these wounds of Christ, we may take shelter from the storms winds which Satan raises against us, and in these clefts of the Rock of Ages, our soul is more secure than the conies hiding in the high cliffs. He is our Physician Who took on Himself our sickness and Who, by His Sacred Wounds, heals the wounds of conscience and the sores of the soul; for *He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)*. He came into the world, and humbled Himself to be fastened hand and foot to the shameful tree, that we, delivered from bondage, might enter into the glorious liberty of the saints in light. What a desperate struggle our ransom cost Him is pictured to us in the first part of the twenty-second Psalm.

Prophecy of Christ's suffering and glory.
To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar,
A Psalm of David.

1. My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? *Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?*

2. O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hears not; and in the night season, and am not silent.
3. But Thou *art* Holy, O *Thou* that inhabits the praises of Israel.
4. Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.
5. They cried unto Thee, and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded.
6. But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
7. All they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,
8. "He trusted on the LORD *that* He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him."
9. But Thou *art* He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon My mother's breasts.
10. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou *art* My God from My mother's belly.
11. Be not far from Me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.
12. Many bulls have compassed Me; strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset Me round.
13. They gaped upon Me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion.
14. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels.
15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaves to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death.
16. For dogs have compassed Me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet.
17. I may tell all My bones; they look *and* stare upon Me.
18. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.
19. But be not Thou far from Me, O LORD; O My strength, haste Thee to help Me.
20. Deliver My soul from the sword; My darling from the power of the dog.
21. Save Me from the lion's mouth; for Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns.

SUMMARY.

Here Christ Himself personally speaks through David, describing the agony which He suffered in body and soul on the cross. This is, indeed, so clear and expressive a picture of what transpired on Mount Calvary, as there is none other in the Old Testament. He introduces words which He Himself spoke, speeches which the high-priests and scribes, those strong bulls of Bashan, uttered, and He notices other details: the people wagging their heads over Him, the parting of His garments, and the casting of lots over His seamless coat. All this was spoken long ages before it came to pass. Verily, Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified on Calvary, is God Himself. He was before He was born at Bethlehem. He knows all that is to come, and He is able to finish whatever He undertakes to do. His salvation is a sure salvation. Trust Him, my soul, and forget not what pangs and sorrows thy salvation cost Him, and murmur not if thou must carry the cross after Him.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou Lamb of the Father's own choosing, Who did offer Thyself a bloody sacrifice for our sins on the place of skulls without the gate, receive our thanks for Thy love beyond measure. Let Thy wounds be the solace of our hearts, and Thy merits the ornaments of our souls in life and death, that, with Thy perfected saints on high, we may for ever sing Thy praise. Amen.

PSALM 22.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

When Jesus returned from the wilderness where He had been tempted by Satan, and John saw Him walking, he said: "*Behold the Lamb of God, Which takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Jesus was the Lamb chosen of the Father to be sacrificed, not for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles; for on Him was laid the sin of the world. The sacrificial lambs by which He was prefigured were,

indeed, sacrificed for the Jews only, and not for the Gentiles, and so Christ was a minister of the Circumcision and did not go to preach to the Gentiles, but His vicarious suffering was for the Gentiles no less than for the Jews. By His Death, He did not redeem a select few only, but as the second Adam, He died for all the children of the first Adam. Therefore He gave command to the apostles to preach the Gospel to every human creature promising: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). And unto this day He cries out over land and sea: "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*" (Isaiah 45:22). This general redemption and universal preaching of grace we are to appropriate each one to his or her own soul, to say in undoubting confidence: "He Who redeemed all has also purchased my soul; and He Who commands all to repent and believe is also calling me to His Kingdom. To Him I will go, to Him I will hold. He will save me and will not suffer my soul to perish." This precious truth is confirmed in the second part of this twenty-second Psalm.

22. I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.
23. Ye that fear the LORD, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel.
24. For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard.
25. My praise *shall be* of Thee in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear Him.
26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the LORD that seek Him; your heart shall live for ever.
27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.
28. For the Kingdom *is* the LORD's; and He *is* the Governor among the nations.
29. All *they that be* fat upon earth, shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him; and none can keep alive his own soul
30. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done *this*.

SUMMARY.

As the first part of this psalm is a clear prophecy of Christ's suffering on the cross, even so this last part clearly foretells, that His suffering and death would not be in vain, but He would see the fruit of His labors. The Word of His Salvation would be proclaimed abroad in the great congregation, (v. 25) among all nations in all corners of the earth. And His Salvation would be preached to all classes of men, to "the fat," the great and mighty on earth, and to them that go down to the dust. Neither would the preaching of His Word be in vain, but His Name would be glorified at all places, and many of the mighty and many of the lowly would be converted to Him. Abundantly is this prophecy fulfilled. Kings and princes bow down to Him, and many vagabonds, yea they that were cannibals, worship Him. His Gospel does not return void; it begets a church. Keep it in thy heart; meditate on it in the night-watches, and it will be in thee a living seed.

PRAYER.

Merciful and kind art Thou, O Lord of Hosts, because Thou hast sent the Gospel of Thy Son to us of the Gentiles. Our fathers went to worship idols as they were led, but unto us, their children, Thou hast sent the Light, though we deserved it not. Cause it to dwell richly with us and our children, and by Thy Spirit make it grow in our hearts and bring fruit unto eternal Life. Amen.

PSALM 23.

PREFACE.

Never a day should we suffer to pass by without returning thanks to our kind and merciful Father in Heaven for His benefactions. He is surely deserving of it, for day by day, yea every

hour He preserves us in body and soul, and gives us richly all things to enjoy. Thankfulness shall also be abundantly rewarded to every Christian. It is a truth taught in the Word of God and attested by experience, the more diligently a man returns thanks for the blessings received, the more is he prospered in temporal and spiritual things, and protection, help and deliverance are multiplied upon him in body and soul. Giving thanks for past and present benefits, we should also be instant in asking our Heavenly Father and benefactor for future protection and guidance, to continue His goodness towards us, granting us all things needful both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. And when our pilgrimage in this world will be ended, and we must walk through the valley of the shadow of death, then may Jesus, our Good Shepherd, crown all His mercies by granting us to depart from this vale of tears with peace and joy, and defending us against the angels of Satan, receive us unto His Father's House, in which are many mansions. Amen. Daily to offer up thanksgiving and prayer we are taught in the Twenty-third Psalm.

Christ our Good Shepherd.

A Psalm of David.

1. The LORD *is* my Shepherd; I shall not want.
2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters.
3. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou *art* with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the House of the LORD for ever.

SUMMARY.

This is one of David's most lovely hymns of thanksgiving, in which he, from a heart overflowing with gratitude, praises the Lord

for teaching him to walk in the right way — for defending, preserving and comforting him in every need by His Holy Word. In words wonderfully expressive of intimate love and trust, he pronounces the Lord his Shepherd, regaling his soul with the verdant pastures and the sparkling waters of the Word of salvation. Artfully does David also introduce the oil, the table, the cup used in the worship of the Old Testament — all emblemizing the Word of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is our Shepherd, and the Word of His salvation is the pasture of our soul, the fountain of living water, our staff and the cup of our joy. Having the Word of Christ dwell among us richly, we are like a flock in the best of pasture, under the best of shepherds. Though the wolves howl, and the lions roar, protected by our Shepherd, our souls are refreshed at the table of the Gospel, and even death, the last enemy, is turned into a friend, introducing us into the mansions of undisturbed peace.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who alone are that One, Good Shepherd, thanks be unto Thee for all Thy spiritual and bodily benefits. Let the Word of Thy salvation dwell among us richly, and suffer not that trusty staff — the Word of Thy promise — to be taken from us. And when the shadow of death spreads over us, do Thou conduct us safely to the fold of perfected saints — the Tabernacle not made with hands — eternal in the heavens. Amen.

PSALM 24.

PREFACE.

Those ascend the Hill of the Lord and stand in His Holy Place who arise from sin, and entering the Christian Church, become living members of Christ's spiritual Body, which is the Lord's Holy Temple. These, the true Christians, David describes in this manner: They have clean hands, which are not yielded to the service of sin, have no part in the works of darkness, are not soiled with unjust gain, or stained with the oppression of the poor, but are often lifted

up in prayer and are ready to do good. They have a pure heart, purified by faith (*Acts 15:9*), washed by the Blood of Christ, and rendered without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing in the sight of the Father; a heart from which the old leaven of malice and wickedness is daily purged out, to make room for the sweet bread of sincerity and truth (*1 Corinthians 5:7*). They do not life up their souls unto vanity, to trust in earthly things, to make flesh their arm, or to adhere to the traditions of men; but their delight is in the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the doctrine which is according to godliness (*1 Timothy 6:3*). They do not swear deceitfully, to practice hypocrisy and to deceive others, but walk in sincerity and honesty. The Lord grant us to be and to remain living members of His Church by faith in Christ Jesus, and grant us grace to adorn our profession by a holy and unblamable life, as the twenty-fourth Psalm exhorts.

Of Christ, the King of Glory.

A Psalm of David.

1. The earth *is* the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
2. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in His Holy Place?
4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
5. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6. This *is* the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.
7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.
8. Who *is* this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.
9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even life *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

10. Who is this King of Glory? The LORD of Hosts, He *is* the King of Glory. Selah.

SUMMARY

This King of Glory is none other than Jesus Christ, Who said unto Pilate: "*I am a king,*" and of whom Paul writes: "*They crucified the Lord of Glory*" (1 Corinthians 2:8). He proved Himself mighty in battle; for as the stronger, He came upon that strong man, Satan, and storming his palace, took from him his armor; and now, in the chariot of the Gospel, He rides over the face of the earth, even unto the remotest isles of the sea, as a victorious King. And this psalm charges all nations, and cities, and people, the old and the young, the great and the small, to open their gates unto this King of Glory. This world, with all its inhabitants, belongs to God by the right of creation, and to this King of Glory by the right of purchase and conquest. O ye people, open the door of your hearts that the King may come in and dwell and rule therein.

PRAYER

Come, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee. Amen.

PSALM 25.

PREFACE.

That which is good and needful many remember least and do last, and that which is vain and harmful many remember most and do first. There is nothing better and more needful than to watch unto prayer in true humility and faith. But this many leave undone, and rather, day after day, revile God and take His Name in vain. In the place of praying, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. From such withdraw thyself and sit not where the ear is insulted with the

revilings of the mockers. And as the forgiveness of sin, preservation in faith, and the final deliverance from all evil are indispensably necessary for our salvation, therefore let us every day, with heart and soul, call upon God graciously to forgive us all our sins for the sake of Christ's bitter suffering and death. Day after day let us implore God, not to remember the sins of our youth and our transgressions, by His Holy Spirit henceforth to preserve us from shameful sins and vices, to lead us in His ways, to guard us against His and our enemies, and finally to take our souls unto Himself by a quiet and peaceable death. Such is the urgent prayer of David in the twenty-fifth Psalm.

Prayer for Divine guidance, grace and deliverance.

A Psalm of David.

1. Unto Thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
2. O my God, I trust in Thee; let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
3. Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.
4. Show me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths.
5. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me; for Thou *art* the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.
6. Remember, O LORD, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.
7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O LORD.
8. Good and upright *is* the LORD; therefore will He teach sinners in the way.
9. The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way.
10. All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.
11. For Thy Name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great.
12. What man *is* he that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.
14. The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.
15. Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.
16. Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.
17. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; *O* bring Thou me out of my distresses.
18. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.
19. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.
20. *O* keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee.
21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee.
22. Redeem Israel, *O* God, out of all his troubles.

SUMMARY.

In this prayer David shows great confidence and boldness towards God, because of His Divine faithfulness and mercy. From it we should learn always to bring out petitions before God with a believing and undoubting heart, particularly when we pray for the forgiveness of sin and for protection against the enemies of our soul. God has promised the forgiveness of sin in His Son Jesus Christ, and has established His Promise with an oath. *“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:9).* Cheerfully should we ask the remission of sin for Christ’s sake, never doubting that God will hear and forgive according to His Covenant made in Baptism. Agreeably to this Covenant we should remember in the days of youth to walk in the commandments of the Lord, avoiding the ways of wickedness and sin, that when the snow of age covers our head, our conscience may not be tormented with remorse over a wicked and misspent youth.

PRAYER.

O Lord, our most merciful Father in Heaven, be gracious unto us and forgive us our sins. So overrule our lives that we may

hate and forsake all manner of evil. Restrain our enemies who would deprive us of our salvation, and be unto us and Thy whole Church on earth a very present help in time of need. Amen.

PSALM 26.

PREFACE.

Every true Christian must forsake and avoid the fellowship of the ungodly. At Rome one must do as Rome does. Therefore the farther away from the congregation of the wicked, the safer. Neither must we carry water on both shoulders, or halt between two opinions (*1 Kings 18:21*). Unto the church of the Laodiceans the Lord sent this threatening message: *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth (Revelation 3:16)*. No fountain can yield both salt water and fresh (*James 3:12*). No one can belong both to the company of the wicked and to the congregation of the righteous. True Christians must remain steadfast in the confession of the truth and a holy life unto their end. Having once put the hand to the plow we must not look back like Lot's wife (*Genesis 19:26*), or with the Israelites crave again the flesh pots of Egypt (*Exodus 16:3*). We abhor and flee from those suffering with pestilential and other contagious diseases that we may not be infected by them. How much rather should we flee the poison of false doctrines and the evil examples of the wicked, lest we be infected by them to the destruction both of body and soul. *Be not deceived — evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Corinthians 15:33)*. A like warning is contained in the twenty-sixth Psalm.

*Prayer for deliverance of the innocent.
A Psalm of David.*

1. Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity; I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.
2. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

3. For Thy loving kindness *is* before mine eyes; and I have walked in Thy truth.
4. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.
5. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.
6. I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass Thine altar, O LORD:
7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works.
8. LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth.
9. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:
10. In whose hands *is* mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.
11. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
12. My foot standeth in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This psalm might seem to conflict with the preceding one, in which David, confessing also the sins of his youth, implored the forgiveness of God, whereas he here appeals to his integrity and his walking in innocency. But this apparent discrepancy is not difficult to understand. Before God we must not be such dissemblers as to appeal for righteousness to our integrity and morality, as the Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous in their own works of piety; for such deceitful workers will not go down to their house justified (*Luke 18:14*). Before God we must confess ourselves guilty of all sins, also of those which we do not know, and must appeal to the gracious promise of forgiveness in Christ, acknowledging freely that we must live alone by grace. Yet this, our profession, we should adorn with such a life as to be able, when men hate us and speak evil of us, to appeal to our integrity and innocency, as David did towards Saul. Hence, on the day of rest, we should frequent the House of God to learn His Word, and in the week, reduce to practice what we have heard.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, abide with us in these latter evil days. Grant to Thy Church true shepherds and faithful pastors, who will preach Thy Word in its purity, and will lead us in the way of Truth. Preserve our souls from being deluded by wisdom — falsely so-called — and the teachings of men who walk after their own thoughts, and keep us steadfast in Thy Word unto our end. Amen.

PSALM 27.

PREFACE.

Every true Christian should every day offer up unto God the sacrifices of joyful praise and fervent prayer. Every morning we should give praise, and every night we should return thanks unto Him Who is the true Helper in need, Who guards and defends us against seducers and all enemies, Who strengthens us under the cross and comforts us in misfortune. In instant supplication should we appeal to the faithfulness of our God, beseeching Him to preserve us in the true and saving faith, and to keep us in the community of the true Christian Church, in which the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. Neither should we neglect to pray against all false prophets, tyrants and persecutors, as disturbers of the peace of the Church and destroyers of God's Vineyard, that we may dwell in peace and grow in the love of Christ and the knowledge of His will. Unto prayer we are exhorted in the twenty-seventh Psalm.

*The believer's comfort and delight in God and His Word.
A Psalm of David.*

1. The LORD *is* my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
2. When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3. Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.
4. One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His Temple.
5. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His Pavilion; in the secret of His Tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a Rock.
6. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in His Tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.
7. Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice; have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
8. *When Thou said*, “Seek ye My Face;” my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.
9. Hide not Thy face *far* from me; put not Thy servant away in anger; Thou hast been my Help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my Salvation.
10. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.
11. Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.
12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.
13. *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
14. Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen Thine heart; wait, I say, on the LORD.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David expresses his great confidence in God by which he despised all enemies: *Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid? (verse 1)*. No courage like that of faith. Knowing God on our side we can boldly say: *“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)*. If we but possess the grace and favor of our

God, then let all the powers of darkness surround us, we must nevertheless abide. Yea, with God we can run through a troop and can scale walls (*Psalm 18:29*). Them that trust in Him the Lord hides in His Pavilion, securing them under the shadow of His wings. But such trust in God we can have only through His Word. Therefore David, when strong in faith, had also a strong desire for the sanctuary of the Lord, to hear the preaching of His Word. Indeed, hearing and having the Word of God, he represents as the one thing needful, the one thing to be desired. Let us love the Word of our God. It fills the heart with confidence, and is a two-edged sword against the enemies.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, Who art merciful and kind, true and faithful, preserve us in Thy Word and guard Thy Church against all oppressors and blind leaders. Grant peace to our country and wisdom to our government to protect right and truth, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 28.

PREFACE.

When about to enter on His passion, Christ, our High-Priest, offered up a most fervent prayer for His disciples and His whole future Church (*John 17*). Following His example we too should pray for all men, and more especially for them that are of the household of faith, the whole Christian Church. For her we should daily offer up supplications, imploring God to cover her with the shadow of His wings in times of danger, to bless her when Satan and the world curse, to exalt her when she is oppressed and to adorn her with the manifold gifts of His Spirit. And as God alone knows what is best for His own, how much of sorrow and joy He must apportion to them for their eternal welfare we should commit ourselves and others into

His hands, asking Him so to guide us by His counsel that afterwards we may be received unto glory. Never should we yield our hearts to discontent, if in this life we must pass through man tribulations, *bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:10)*, if only the life also of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in us, and we are finally transported to dwell with Him in one tabernacle. And now let us hear the twenty-eighth Psalm, containing . . .

*A prayer against false friends.
A Psalm of David.*

1. Unto Thee I will cry, O LORD my Rock; be not silent to me; lest, *if* Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.
2. Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto Thee, when I lift up my hands toward Thy Holy Oracle.
3. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief *is* in their hearts.
4. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.
5. Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build them up.
6. Blessed *be* the LORD, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications.
7. The LORD *is* my Strength and my Shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him.
8. The LORD *is* their Strength, and He *is* the saving strength of His Anointed.
9. Save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

SUMMARY.

This psalm David prayed against his enemies, chiefly against the hypocrites at his court and among his officers. Flattery and

treachery are vices prevalent at courts and in the palaces of the great and the ambitious; but are not rare also in the humbler walks of life. Flattery is on their lips and death in their hearts. Thus Joab, David's general, slew Abner and Amasa in the time of peace and David could not avenge it (*1 Kings 2:5*). Therefore David, fearing that guilt might accrue to him because of innocent blood shed at his court, prayed the Lord should not reckon him among the wicked, nor punish him with the evil doers (*verse 3*). We may pray this psalm against seducers and all who, under the garb of friendship, seek our harm. And against all false prophets who come in sheep's clothing, pretending great piety and sanctity, but who, pernicious doctrines, destroy the soul (*Matthew 7:15*).

PRAYER.

Thou, God of all grace, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who knows the enemies of Thy Church and art able to thwart all their designs, protect us against all tyrants, heretics and hypocrites. Hear our prayer and grant us to love Thy Word, to promote Thy honor upon earth, and to continue in Thy service always even unto the end. Amen.

PSALM 29.

PREFACE.

If our prayers are to penetrate the clouds and to be accepted in Heaven we must not pray with a bad conscience; we must not be minded to do evil and must not be living in sins and vices, but must worship in the beauty of holiness. This we do when we pray in the Name and faith of Jesus Christ, as then we are dressed in the beauteous robe of His righteousness, and sincerely resolved to follow holiness. The prayers of the impenitent, who are not minded to abandon sin, God will not hear, but of the believer, St. John writes: *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His*

sight (1 John 3:21-22). On the other hand the Lord says: “When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood” (Isaiah 1:15). Idle is the prayer of those who lift up hands given to the service of sin. To lift up holy hands in prayer we are reminded in the twenty-ninth Psalm.

*The victorious power of the Gospel.
A Psalm of David.*

1. Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
2. Give unto the LORD the glory due His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
3. The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD *is* upon many waters.
4. The voice of the LORD powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.
5. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yea, the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
6. He makes them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
7. The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire.
8. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
9. The voice of the LORD makes the hinds to calve, and discovers the forests; and in His Temple does every one speak of *His* glory.
10. The LORD sits upon the flood; yea, the LORD sits King for ever.
11. The LORD will give strength unto His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is an elegant prophecy of the preaching of the Gospel, of which it is foretold that it would be proclaimed in all the world with victorious power. David foresaw this Voice from Heaven, proclaiming Christ, the only Lord and Savior, would put to shame the greatness, the wisdom and holiness of this world and would call

many out of darkness unto light. Therefore He would also institute the flood of Holy Baptism — the washing of regeneration through which the multitudes of the Gentiles are brought into the covenant of God, through which also the old man is drowned and the new created. Kings and princes, the great and mighty of the earth, David likens to the cedars of Lebanon; the many waters, the forests, the floods are the nations of the earth. Among them all the Voice of the Gospel resounds. Despise it not; for blessed is the ear that hears and inclines to it.

PRAYER.

Thanks and praise be unto Thee, our God and Lord, for sending us the Gospel of Thy Son Jesus Christ, in which Thou dost teach us the way of salvation and dost comfort us with the hope of everlasting life. Make Thy Word in us a power unto salvation and the anchor of our soul in life and death. Cause also the Voice of Thy Word to be sounded abroad that the nations which know Thee not may come unto Thy Light. Amen.

PSALM 30.

PREFACE.

Our God is a true Father over all that are called children in heaven and earth, but He is also a jealous God who will not leave sin unpunished. When His children sin, God rises up early to chasten them that they may not continue in sin and be condemned with the world. God's reckoning with the impenitent is often postponed, so that they seem to be exempt from punishment, but He keeps account with them until their measure of sin is full; for He is a righteous God and a consuming fire against the wicked. But over His beloved children His anger endures but for a moment, and soon He has mercy upon them with everlasting kindness (*Isaiah 54:8*). Show all patience, ye afflicted Christians; for soon your sorrow shall be turned into joy. And what a brooklet is in comparison to the mighty ocean, what a mite is towards the riches of Peru, such are the

Christian's sufferings of this present time in comparison to the glory which shall be revealed in him. A fervent thanksgiving for Divine help is contained in the thirtieth Psalm.

*Thanksgiving for God's goodness in afflictions.
A Psalm and Song at the Dedication of the House of David.*

1. I will extol Thee, O LORD; for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
2. O LORD my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.
3. O LORD, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.
4. Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His Holiness.
5. For His anger *endureth but* a moment; in His favor *is* life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.
6. And in my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved."
7. LORD, by Thy favor Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide Thy face, *and* I was troubled.
8. I cried to Thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.
9. What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth?
10. Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me; LORD, be Thou my helper.
11. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;
12. To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.

SUMMARY.

Here David returns heartfelt thanks to God for delivering his soul in great distress from doubt, despondency, melancholy, fear of death and other poisonous and fiery darts of Satan (*verse 3*). And he breaks forth into joyous singing of praise unto the Lord, because His anger lasts but for a moment, passing over in a night, and because he has no pleasure in our death or in our wearing of sackcloth and mourning, but delights in seeing us girded with gladness and singing

with joy. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Rejoice thou in God, even in the day of sorrow; for He is the health of thy countenance and thy God (Psalm 42:11).*

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, our Father in Heaven, for the countless blessings which Thou hast bestowed on us from our childhood days, and because Thou hast so often been our Helper in spiritual and bodily need. As in the past, be thou with us in the future, to give us a joyous heart, to uphold us in trials, to strengthen us in temptations and to comfort us by Thy Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 31.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

The Roman emperor, Cæsar Augustus, though a heathen, daily called on the gods to grant him a quiet and happy death. How much rather should we Christians, who know what death is and whence it comes, every day call upon God, when our last hour has come, to grant us to go hence with peace and joy. Both this world and we ourselves also are hastening to the end. The signs of the Lord's coming are being multiplied, and any day the sign of the Son of Man may appear in the clouds. Daily we are approaching the grave a step nearer, yea we are liable to be touched by the wand of death at any hour. Hence, when seeking sleep at night, we should never neglect to pray with David: *Unto Thy hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth (verse 5).* Entrusted to the keeping of that shrine — the hand of God — our soul is for ever safe; for God will suffer no man to pluck His sheep out of His hand (*John 10:29*). In the Resurrection of the just, God will faithfully return what was entrusted to Him, and the soul reunited with the glorified body, they will be separated no more. And now let us hear the first part of the thirty-first Psalm.

Hope maketh not ashamed.
To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. In Thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy Righteousness.
2. Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily; be Thou my strong Rock, for an house of defence to save me.
3. For Thou *art* my Rock and my Fortress; therefore for Thy Name's sake lead me, and guide me.
4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me; for Thou *art* my Strength.
5. Into Thine hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities; but I trust in the LORD.
7. I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy; for Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities;
8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; Thou hast set my feet in a large room.
9. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul and my belly.
10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.
11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that did see me without fled from me.
12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.
13. For I have heard the slander of many; fear *was* on every side; while they took council together against me, they devised to take away my life.

SUMMARY.

In the first part of this psalm David spoke in the person of Christ. On the cross, when about to render up His soul, Jesus used the words of the *5th verse*, saying: "*Father, into Thy hands I*

commend My Spirit.” Moreover, in his persecutions, afflictions and sorrows, David was a figure of Christ. As David was hated by many, and was driven out of his native land, so was our Lord Jesus Christ despised and rejected of men — *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3)*. But when the Scriptures present suffering, David, as a figure of Christ in his sufferings, we must well remember this distinction: David was subject to suffering, because he was born flesh of the flesh, and his sufferings could therefore in no way atone for sin, but Christ was not a sinner, He suffered only for other men’s sins, as He complains saying: *“I restored that which I took not away” (Psalm 69:4)*. For this purpose He came from the bosom of the Father to take our place. By His suffering Christ paid for our sins, and hence by His stripes we are healed.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, we thank Thee for taking from us that heavy load of our sins which we could not bear, but which Thou didst bear in Thine own Body of the tree, whereby Thou hast ransomed us from eternal death. Grant us patience and resignation in suffering with Thee, that we may willingly take up our cross daily and follow Thee through suffering to glory. Amen.

PSALM 31.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

In the days of His flesh Jesus Christ abundantly experienced revilings, slander and mockery. The Pharisees decried Him as a Samaritan and a traitor to His country, and falsely accused Him of instigating rebellion. The chief priests wagged their heads over Him and ridiculed Him. And as to the multitude of the Jews, He uttered this complaint: *“They that sit in the gate speak against Me; and I was the song of the drunkards” (Psalm 69:12)*. In all these things He retaliated not. *When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not (1 Peter 2:23)*. The reason why He suffered these things He states (*Psalm 69:9*) saying unto the Father:

“The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon Me.”
We deserved shame and contempt and the revilings of the angels of darkness in everlasting torment, but the shame and contempt fell upon the Son of God that we might be crowned with honor and glory. Is it then a great thing if we suffer reproach for Christ’s sake? What, though men revile us and speak all manner of evil against us falsely? Should we be ashamed to own His cause, or blush to speak His Name? Let us embrace Him as the Friend of our soul and our only Savior, and let us cheerfully confess Him before men, who was not ashamed to suffer for us. Unto this we are encouraged in the second part of the thirty-first Psalm.

14. But I trusted in Thee, O LORD; I said, “Thou *art* my God.
15. My time *are* in Thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
16. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; save me for Thy mercies’ sake.
17. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon Thee: let the wicked be ashamed, *and* let them be silent in the grave.
18. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.
19. *Oh* how great *is* Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; *which* Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!
20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”
21. Blessed *be* the LORD; for He hat shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city.
22. For I said in my haste, “I am cut off from before Thine eyes;” nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee.
23. O love the LORD, all ye His saints; *for* the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer.
24. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

SUMMARY.

When those who are belied and slandered by men for the confession of Christ and His truth commit their cause to God and cry unto Him for help they can not cry in vain; for He has promised to be the help of the miserable and the defense of the needy. For a time He may suffer the proud to vaunt themselves, but when the downtrodden sigh unto Him, He says: "*Now will I arise; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him*" (*Psalm 12:5*). And often does God help in this wise, when the clouds are most lowering and the storm beats highest, He makes the hearts of His children most joyous, filling their hearts with such confidence as to place them upon a high rock that they can despise not only the treasures and pleasures of the world, but even the very sufferings of this present time. While evil tongues are most busy against them, their souls are regaled in the Presence of the Lord and they rest at peace in His pavilion.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who didst suffer men to slander Thee and to bear false witness against Thee, yet didst not open Thy mouth save only to pray for Thy tormentors, shed abroad Thy love in our hearts that we hate not them that hate us and speak evil against us, but enable us to love our enemies, being always ready to suffer wrong for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

PSALM 32.

PREFACE.

The highest, best, most necessary and most useful science is the knowledge: how to become rid of sin and how to obtain the grace of God unto the salvation of the soul. Though a man should possess all knowledge, though he could number the stars and comprehend the firmament, and though he could explain all the secrets and the

powers of nature, yet this vast knowledge would be of temporary and subordinate value only; yea, it would be a vain thing without the knowledge: how to be made free of sin and to obtain righteousness before God; for we are all sinners, and sin subjects man to God's temporal and eternal wrath. Therefore there is not a more grievous and harmful thing between Heaven and earth than sin, nor a more dreadful thing than the wrath of God. Even so there is nothing more precious and beneficial than the forgiveness of sin and possessing the grace of God. Possessing God's grace, nothing can harm us Christians, though all men on earth and all devils in the lowest pit of hell combine against us, because God is for us, and He is mightier than they and rules over them all. An elegant testimony for this is contained in the thirty-second Psalm.

Of justification.
A Psalm of David, Maschil.

1. Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered.
2. Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.
3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
4. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.
5. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD;" and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.
6. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.
7. Thou *art* my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.
8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.
9. Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10. Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked; but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.
11. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

SUMMARY.

This is a most excellent psalm of instruction (Maschil), teaching us what sin is and how we become rid of it and obtain righteousness before God. Reason — darkened by the Fall — does not truly know what sin is, and thinks it might be atoned for by man's own works, as though sin was a light thing, only something external. But here (*verse 5*) we behold that even the most advanced of saints are yet sinners, and they cannot be justified and saved in any other way, than through the forgiveness of sin, by being counted righteous of God without their own worthiness and works. Our righteousness consists in the forgiveness of sins, the covering over, the not imputing of sin. Here are the words — clear and strong — that all saints are yet sinners and remain sinners as long as they live on earth. They are saints only for this reason: because God, from pure grace for Christ's sake, does no more regard or account their sins, but has forgiven and forgotten them. The difference between believers and unbelievers is not this: that the latter are sinners and the former not, — the Christians also come short every day, — but the difference is this: the sins of the believers are covered and are no more counted, the sins of the unbelievers are not covered and are yet recorded against them. Both are really wounded, but the Christian's bruises are bandaged, the sores of the unbeliever are undressed. My soul, take thou cover under Christ's robe.

PRAYER.

O God, our heavenly Father, with Whom is grace and plenteous forgiveness, be merciful unto us who were born in sins and cannot but sin and come short every day. Forgive us our manifold sins and account them to us no more, but make us Thine heirs through Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son, Who was delivered into death for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Amen.

PSALM 33.

PREFACE.

The pious, those who have become pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, should return praise and thanks unto God, the sole Author of all that is good, for the manifold benefits which they have received; and this they should do with gladsome hearts knowing that praise is comely. The self-righteous and the hypocrites indeed also praise God with their lips, yet both they and their worship are an abomination unto the Lord. The tree which is not of a good kind can not bring good fruit, and the person not pleasing to God can perform no works pleasing to Him, however good such works may be in the sight of men. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the earth, looking unto the upright in heart. Now, *without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6); for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23)*. When the hypocrites praise God they are only taking His Name in vain, as David (*Psalm 50:16*) teaches, saying: "*Unto the wicked God saith, 'What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldst take My covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.'*" Consider and mark well: if our thanksgiving and praise is to be pleasing to God and beneficial to us we must be godly, not ungodly; we must abstain from sin and must practice faith and love towards God and men. Let us now hear the thirty-third Psalm.

Our heart's delight is in praising God for His goodness.

1. Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous; *for* praise is comely for the upright.
2. Praise the LORD with harp; sing unto Him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.
3. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.
4. For the Word of the LORD *is* right; and all His works *are done* in truth.
5. He loves righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6. By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
7. He gathers the waters of the sea together as an heap; He lays up the depth in storehouses.
8. Let all the earth fear the LORD let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9. For He spake, and it was *done*; He commanded, and it stood fast.
10. The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen to naught; He makes the devices of the people of none effect.
11. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.
12. Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* He hath chosen for His own inheritance.
13. The LORD looks from Heaven; He beholds all the sons of men.
14. From the place of His habitation He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth.
15. He fashions their hearts alike; He considers all their works.
16. There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
17. A horse *is* a vain thing for safety; neither shall He deliver *any* by his great strength.
18. Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy;
19. To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.
20. Our souls waits for the LORD; He *is* our Help and our Shield.
21. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His Holy Name.
22. Let Thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee.

SUMMARY.

This psalm gives thanks to God for being the help of them that fear Him and for never forsaking them. He is fully able to help; for He is the Creator of all things. And He is good and faithful and keeps the Promise given in the First Commandment, saying: "I will be thy God," that is, I will be thy Help, thy Comfort, thy Salvation; for this is what it means to be one's God. Particularly does David

here praise the wonderful providence of God, by which He so overrules the thoughts of kings, princes and nations as to bring to naught their counsels against Him, so disposing them that His will is accomplished and their wicked designs are frustrated. When they intend evil against the righteous, God causes their devices to work for His good. Though the proud and mighty take counsel together, yet is the eye of the Lord on them that fear Him to deliver their soul from death. But the proud perish and their name is forgotten.

PRAYER.

We thank Thee, Lord, for all the good which Thou hast showed us from the days of our childhood. Continue to multiply Thy mercies upon us, keep us in Thy fear and favor, cause us to walk in Thy praise, protect us from all enemies both visible and invisible and grant us, like Thy servant Simeon, to depart in peace through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 34.

PREFACE.

When the Lord our God does not forthwith answer our petitions as we desire and as our need seems to require, we should nevertheless not despair, and much less should we employ forbidden ways and means to help ourselves out of difficulties, but we should cheerfully and confidently continue in prayer, as did the Canaanite woman (*Matthew 15:25*), and the poor widow with the unjust judge (*Luke 18:5*). Holding God by His Word and Promise, we should say, as Jacob did to the Angel wrestling with him: "*I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me*" (*Genesis 32:26*). If we do not quickly tire, but persevere in presenting a petition to an earthly court, should we not also patiently wait in the antechambers of the Lord of hosts and persevere in presenting our supplications to Him? With the hammer of instant prayer we should continue to knock until He opens to grant us an audience. This is the Christian's best advice in fear and need, yea even in the midst of death; for God will and must finally hear the

prayer of faith and must deliver according to His promise from all that would harm the soul. This David teaches in the thirty-fourth Psalm.

Praise of God for His kindness.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

1. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.
3. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His Name together.
4. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
5. They looked unto Him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.
6. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.
7. The Angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.
8. O taste and see that the LORD *is* good; blessed *is* the man *that* trusts in Him.
9. O fear the LORD, ye His saints; for *there* is no want to them that fear Him.
10. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.
11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12. What man *is he that* desires life, *and* loves *many* days, that he may see good?
13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.
14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.
15. The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and His ears *are open* unto their cry.
16. The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
17. *The righteous* cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

18. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit.
19. Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20. He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken.
21. Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.
22. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.

SUMMARY.

Besides teaching us to persevere in prayer and thanksgiving, this psalm, in a peculiar manner reminds us, that Jesus Christ is the sun and centre of all Scripture. David indited this hymn to express his thankfulness for his deliverance from the hand of Abimelech, and how then should we expect to find any thing of Christ in this song? Yet the Spirit of God speaking through David even in this psalm inserted a clear prophecy of Christ, when he (*verse 20*) says: "*He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken.*" These words St. John (*19:36*) introduces as fulfilled in Christ, when the soldiers brake not His bones as they did those of the two malefactors. Here we should learn, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are full of Christ, as He testifies, saying: "*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal Life: and they are they which testify of Me*" (*John 5:39*). At a hundred places a careless reader may see nothing of Christ, but searching with care and prayer we find Him there. So search the Scriptures as to find Christ in them, and you find eternal Life.

PRAYER.

O God, Thou Spirit of truth, Who didst speak of old by kings and prophets, enlighten the eyes of our understanding that we may read aright the psalms of Thy servant David, learning from them that Jesus of Nazareth is He of Whom the Scriptures speak. Cause us ever more clearly to see that He, and He alone, is the Savior of our souls, that our heart may cling to Him alone. Amen.

PSALM 35.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

No true follower of Christ can expect to enjoy the love and the fellowship of the enemies of Christ. The disciple is not above His master. If he is a true disciple he will be like his master and must expect similar treatment (*Luke 6:40*). Hypocrites and such professing Christians who conform to the world may be popular with the world, but the true followers of Jesus never were and never will be loved of the world. “*If ye were of the world,*” says the Lord, “*the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*” (*John 15:19*). Moreover, He distinctly declares that those are not His true followers who are beloved by His enemies, saying, “*Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets*” (*Luke 6:26*). The preacher whose preaching and practice is pleasing to the world, rendering him popular with those who are not Christians, is surely not a true servant of Christ; for no man can be the friend of Christ and the friend of His enemies at the same time. If we are hated of men for no other reason than because in word and deed we confess Christ and His Truth, this should not be an offense unto us, but we should rather rejoice over it. Better to suffer with Christ and to be exalted with Him, than to enjoy the friendship of the wicked and be condemned with the world. This let us learn from the first part of the thirty-fifth Psalm.

Prayer for deliverance from the craftiness of the enemies.

A Psalm of David.

1. Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me.
2. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.
3. Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, “*I am thy Salvation.*”
4. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the Angel of the LORD chase *them*.
6. Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the Angel of the LORD persecute them.
7. For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have dug for my soul.
8. Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he has hid catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall.
9. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; it shall rejoice in His Salvation.
10. All my bones shall say, "LORD, who *is* like unto Thee, which delivers the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from that spoils him?"
11. False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.
12. They rewarded me evil for good *to* the spoiling of my soul.
13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
14. I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend *or* brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourns *for his* mother.
15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:
16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

SUMMARY.

Though the wicked take counsel together, and the enemies devise crafty schemes to destroy the righteous, yet shall he not perish; for the Lord is his defense. And here we learn this comforting truth that the holy angels are on the side of the righteous against their enemies, as David already in the preceding psalm said: "*The Angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them*" (verse 7). Those invisible spirits who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (*Hebrews 1:14*), are by no means idly hovering around them, they, as it were, form a

breastwork around the Christians for their defense and they was against Satan and his angels. When Elisha was surrounded by a detachment of the Syrian army and his servant was in great fear, the prophet said, "*Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them*" (2 Kings 6:16). And when Sennacherib thought to destroy Jerusalem and Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, the Angel of the Lord fought for Jerusalem and in one night slew in the Assyrian camp 185,000 men. So that proud king had to return with shame to his own country. Call upon God every morning with prayer and praise, and walk in His ways, and you will have such a strong protection that the enemy will have no power over you.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, we give thanks unto Thee that Thou didst bruise the head of the old Serpent and didst deliver us from his power. And as Thou hast purchased us with Thy Holy Blood, keep us Thine own and suffer not the enemy to seduce our soul. Let Thy Angel war against them that seek our soul and drive them far from us. Amen.

PSALM 35.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

We Christians are not to hate our enemies as the heathen do; for our Lord has commanded: "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you*" (Matthew 5:44). Neither must we return evil for evil, but rather do good and commit vengeance to God. Herein we have the example of our Lord Who prayed for those raising Him on the cross. Remembering the example and command of our Lord, we should daily strive to overcome the vindictiveness of the flesh and to forgive as we are forgiven. But, we are not to love the Lord's enemies *as such*, neither dare we wish them prosperity in their opposition to the Lord, otherwise we render ourselves partakers of their evil deeds (2 John

11). Love the person and hate the sin. This distinction is made in the third petition of the Lord's Prayer; for when we say, "*Thy will be done,*" that implies that every evil counsel and will striving against the will of God should be broken and frustrated. A prayer for the conversion of the wicked is, at the same time, a prayer against his wickedness and against him, if he is determined wantonly to continue in his evil way. A sample of a right prayer against the enemies is contained in the thirty-fifth Psalm, of which the latter part reads as follows:

17. LORD, how long wilt Thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.
18. I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise Thee among much people.
19. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.
20. For they speak not peace; but they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.
21. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, "Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it.*"
22. *This* Thou hast seen, O LORD keep not silence; O Lord, be not far from me.
23. Stir up Thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord.
24. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.
25. Let them not say in their hearts, "Ah, so would we have it;" let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."
26. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt; let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify *themselves* against me.
27. Let them shout for joy, and be glad that favor my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."
28. And my tongue shall speak of Thy righteousness *and* of Thy praise all the day long.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is an instant prayer of David against malicious hypocrites and all those who hate the righteous because of his piety. This genus of cringing flatters was certainly not lacking at the court of David — flatterers to his face, slanderers behind his back. To these David's piety and uprightness were a hindrance that they could not do after the lustings of their evil heart, and they were not his well-wishers. Such hypocritical flatterers do vast harm in all walks of life, chiefly in the Church and at the courts of rulers. Of treacherous friends David often complains in the psalms, and to many a house applies what the Lord says: "*A man's foes shall be they of his own household*" (*Matthew 10:36*). O how necessary to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, or be seduced by the evil examples surrounding us.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, Who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, retrain the enemies of Thy Kingdom, destroy the devices of those who take counsel against Thy Truth and stop the mouth of infidels and blasphemers, that the Kingdom of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, may be built and righteousness and truth may be spread abroad. Amen.

PSALM 36.

PREFACE.

As often as we enter the House of worship, which all true Christians frequent with joy, we should remember these words of David: *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy House; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures* (*verse 8*). This "fatness," the precious treasures, distributed in the House of God, are the Father's grace, the Son's Blood and the Spirit's cheer. Herein are comprised these noble jewels: the forgiveness of sin, the sonship of God, deliverance from death and hell, and the inheritance of eternal Life. For these precious goods and golden treasures, the gifts of His grace, God has given us a

charter in the Gospel of His Son, in which He makes us a free grant of them all. As a pledge for the complete and perpetual enjoyment of all these treasures granted in our charter, God has given us the earnest of His Spirit which He sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior — the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, *Abba, Father*. This golden charter God has sealed unto us by the Holy Sacraments — Baptism and the Lord's Supper — which are given us as seals of the righteousness of faith (*Romans 4:11*), the forgiveness of sins. And “where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.” Frequenting the House of worship, let us come with an open heart and incline our ears to drink in the words of our charter that we may return home abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His House. In excellent words does David speak of this in the thirty-sixth Psalm.

Trust in the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD.

1. The transgression of the wicked says within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.
2. For he flatters himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
3. The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit; he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.
4. He devises mischief upon his bed; he sets himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhors not evil.
5. Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* Thy faithfulness *reaches* unto the clouds.
6. Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; Thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, Thou preserves man and beast.
7. How excellent *is* Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.
8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy House; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.
9. For with Thee *is* the fountain of life; in Thy Light shall we see Light.
10. O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee; and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let no the hand of the wicked remove me.
12. There are the workers of iniquity fallen they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

SUMMARY.

With those who willfully walk in sin there is no fear of God, neither with those who deal deceitfully with the Word of the Lord. If the fear of God was in them, the former would not do that which is hateful to God and must kindle His anger; neither would the latter dare to pervert the teachings of His Word, of which He has so earnestly commanded that we should neither add to nor take from it (*Revelation 22:18-19*). Yet it often seems as though the vicious and the heretics were the favorites of God, and they flatter themselves that they shall never fall. But the pitcher goes to water until it breaks. At last their iniquity is found to be hateful and then their pride is brought low. But God's righteousness is like great mountains settled forever. Though at times the Lord seems to be unjust because His enemies prosper and His children are afflicted, yet at last, His judgments are seen to be right. The proud perish and those keeping His Word and walking in uprightness see the Light which knows no fading.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou Bishop and Shepherd of Thy Church on earth, do Thou enlighten with Thy Light all who err in the way, and restrain those who corrupt Thy Word and pervert Thy Counsel, for the salvation of their souls. Always grant unto us such pastors who do not lead us to the sterile sandbars of proud science, but to the verdant fields of Thy Gospel, and create in us hearts eager to receive Thy saving Truth. Amen.

PSALM 37.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

A most blessed thing it would be, if every Christian in his peculiar station and calling would daily practice this golden rule laid down by David: *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass (verse 5)*. It is verily true what King Alphonsus was accustomed to say, an hundred tons of fretting will not subtract one ounce from discontent, but will rather, multiply it. Hence with the sling of faith each and every one of us should cast his cares, fears and anxieties on God's strong shoulders and, having committed them to Him, should patiently wait for the salvation of the Lord. If God does not just now presently do what you ask and desire, wait *a little while (John 16:16)* and He will answer your petition to your satisfaction, yea even beyond your expectation, as surely as He is a faithful and almighty God. It is a Word of the Lord — and His Word is for ever settled in Heaven (*Psalms 119:89*) — that all things must work together for good to them that love God (*Romans 8:28*). God gives to each one what is good and wholesome for him, and will finally deliver him from all evil. This promise is repeated in the first part of the thirty-seventh Psalm.

Offense at the prosperity of the wicked to be avoided.

A Psalm of David.

1. Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
2. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.
3. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
4. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
5. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring *it* to pass.
6. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.
7. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass.

8. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
9. For evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.
10. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*; yea, Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.
11. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
12. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth.
13. The Lord shall laugh at him; for he sees that his day is coming.
14. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.
15. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.
16. A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.
17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but the LORD upholds the righteous.
18. The LORD knows the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.
19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
20. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.
21. The wicked borrows, and pays not again; but the righteous shows mercy, and gives.
22. For *such as be* blessed of Him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of Him shall be cut off.

SUMMARY.

This excellent psalm teaches us to exercise patience in this world, and it specially warns us against enviousness. Beholding the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the pious is a strong temptation to discontent to the unlearned and to those weak in faith.

To see the wicked obtaining riches and honors, perhaps gaining high offices and becoming money-magnets by employing smart and sly ways and means, and yet not to envy them and not to murmur against the providence of God, is indeed a virtue which but few can practice. So it is often in this world, the ungodly proud and prosperous, the Godly humble and afflicted. Here learn to possess your soul in patience. Commit it to God and let not envy rule in your heart, or lead you to wish evil to your neighbor and to murmur against God. Let it go and wait. The day is coming when all will be made square, when Lazarus will be comforted and Dives will be tormented.

PRAYER.

Come, Thou Spirit of the Father, make us Thy temples and so govern our hearts that envy and discontent may be banished from us. Teach us Godliness with contentment that we may account food and raiment sufficient for this life, and may devote our souls to seeking those treasures which thieves can not steal and rust will not corrode. Amen.

PSALM 37.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

God has nowhere promised that His Christians should become rich in this world, to be clothed in purple and fine linen and to fare sumptuously every day, but He did promise that the righteous shall have daily bread; for so the Lord spake in the sermon on the mount: "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). Those who, above all other things, seek the Kingdom of God, shall not lack food and raiment. To this experience bears ample testimony, as David here (verse 25) says: "*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" This we must not construe, as froward infidels would, as excluding the possibility of a righteous man ever being brought to

the necessity of begging; for David himself begged bread when fleeing from Saul (*1 Samuel 21:3*), and Lazarus lay at the door of Dives waiting for the fragments which fell from the rich man's table; but when David was grown old and had seen much of the world, he laid down this general rule: the righteous is never forsaken of God and His seed will be blessed and need not go begging. And even though it does occur that a righteous man must knock as a mendicant at the door of the unrighteous, yet even then he is not forsaken of God. Pray and labor every day and God will give always, is a truth taught in the second part of the thirty-seventh Psalm.

23. The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD; and he delights in His way.
24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds *him with* His hand.
25. I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.
26. *He is* ever merciful, and lends; and His seed *is* blessed.
27. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.
28. For the LORD loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved for ever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
29. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.
30. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment.
31. The Law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.
32. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.
33. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.
34. Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.
35. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.
36. Yet he passed away, and lo, he *was* not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
37. Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright; for the end of *that* man *is* peace.
38. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39. But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble.
40. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.

SUMMARY.

This text teaches that earthly riches and honors and prosperity without the fear of God are vain; for they bring no true satisfaction to the heart; they easily lead to pride and often occasion a sudden downfall, because God resists the proud. The way of the wicked is self-chosen; it leads over slippery places and ends at a precipice or is lost in bogs and the dismal gloom of swamps. In the pride of his heart Haman aspired to destroy the whole nation of God's chosen people in one day, but he was hanged on the gallows which he himself had prepared. But the steps of the righteous are ordered by the Lord, and though the way which the Lord chooses for him lead through the fire of trials and the waters of affliction, yet the end is glory. Joseph was sold into slavery and in after-years his brothers found him ruler over Egypt. Lazarus died and his soul was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Pursue not in self-chosen ways after the riches and honors of this world. Let the Lord order your steps, and trusting His wisdom and mercy say: "*Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory*" (*Psalm 73:24*).

PRAYER.

Lord, as Thou wilt, deal Thou with me,
No other wish I cherish;
In life and death I cling to Thee,
O Lord, let me not perish!
Let but Thy grace ne'er from me part,
Else as Thou wilt; grant patient heart;
Thy will the best is ever. Amen.

PSALM 38.

PREFACE .

The best science and most useful knowledge is to know ourselves, what we are, and to know God and what is His gracious will towards us. Know thyself. Consider the depravity and the weakness of thy nature. Thou art a frail and weak vessel ready to halt and soon overtaken by sin. So humble thyself under the mighty hand of God and be on the watch to guard against sin. It is a penetrating poison, a burning fire, and sooner or later will be followed by punishment. Battle against sin; yet build not on thy own strength and ability to overcome it. Cry unto that Lord of Whom it is said: "*He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increases strength*" (*Isaiah 40:29*). Know also the LORD thy God Who so loved the world as to give His only Begotten Son for the salvation of sinners. Despair not, though thy sins as a flood threaten to overwhelm thee. Lay hold on the Rock of Ages by the hand of faith. Let the Word of His mouth be thy staff and comfort, and girded with His righteousness and shod with the Gospel of His peace, press into the Kingdom as one entitled to possess it (*Matthew 11:12*). May the Lord, blessed forever, teach us this science and grant us this wisdom. Amen.

David's humble petition for deliverance from the burden of sin.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

1. O LORD, rebuke me not in Thy wrath; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure.
2. For Thine arrows stick fast in me, and Thy hand presses me sore.
3. *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin.
4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
5. My wounds stink, *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.
6. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7. For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*; and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.
8. I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.
9. Lord, all my desire *is* before Thee; and my groaning is not hid from Thee.
10. My heart pants, my strength fails me; as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.
11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.
12. They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*; and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.
13. But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* opens not his mouth.
14. Thus I was as a man that hears not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.
15. For in Thee, O LORD, do I hope; Thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.
16. For I said, "*Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slips, they magnify *themselves* against me.
17. For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me.
18. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.
19. But mine enemies *are* lively, *and* they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.
20. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that* good *is*.
21. Forsake me not, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me.
22. Make haste to help me, O Lord my Salvation.

SUMMARY.

This is one of David's penitential psalms in which he makes great complaint of the torment which his sins caused him in his conscience, a torment as of sharp, pointed arrows shot into his flesh. He composed this psalm at a time when he had a lively perception of his own guiltiness, and of Divine wrath and vindictive justice. This sorrow and terror of his heart consumed his strength, robbed him of peace, and made him go wringing his hands and groaning all the day

long. These pants were greatly increased when he saw the malicious joy of his enemies and even his friends shyly standing aloof from him. It is the sorrow of sorrows when sin becomes truly alive in the conscience. Yet David did not despair. He sought relief in prayer, comforting himself with God's promise to hear. When we must experience the power of sins, when our transgressions come home and our conscience is lashed by the threats and curses of the Law, we must yet not despair; for as truly as we are sinners, so truly did Jesus Christ come into the world to save sinners.

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou righteous and merciful God, punish us not in Thy hot displeasure as we so richly deserve, but be Thou gracious unto us according to Thy mercies; for we are poor and miserable. Remember not the guilt of our many sins, but remember for us the bloody merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Strengthen our hearts with the comfortings of Thy Spirit, and preserve us in faith and hope unto our end. Amen.

PSALM 39.

PREFACE.

To bear with the malice and frowardness of the wicked, not to be offended at their prosperity, and to be patient under the cross without murmuring against the will of God is a noble virtue, a most beneficial art, which is given to those who ask it of God. That sweet flavored shrub, contentment with cheerfulness, can grow only in the heart of the Christian, because it does not spring from flesh and blood, but God must plant it. Diligently therefore should we appeal to that Heavenly Gardener — the Holy Ghost — to adorn our hearts with this wholesome plant, to water it with the dew of His grace, to prevent Satan, that enemy of every thing good, from destroying it, and to cause it to grow and to crowd out envy and discontent. A most

wholesome antidote against enviousness is also the consideration of the vanity of earthly treasures, because man must leave to others the riches which he has gathered. *And what man knows whether the man, to whom he must leave the fruit of his labors, will be a wise man or a fool? (Ecclesiastes 2:19).* Blessed the man who looks beyond the grave for his true treasure; for with that treasure there is no parting. There moth and rust do not corrupt, and when the Lord comes He will introduce His own into the unceasing enjoyment of their treasure, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. This we are taught in the thirty-ninth Psalm.

The right preparation for death — a sure remedy for discontent.

To the chief Musician, *even* to Juduthun,

A Psalm of David.

1. I said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."
2. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.
3. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; *then* spake I with my tongue:
4. "LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*."
5. Behold, Thou hast made my days *as* a handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity." Selah.
6. Surely every man walks in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heaps up *riches*, and knows not who shall gather them.
7. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope *is* in Thee.
8. Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.
9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou did *it*.
10. Remove Thy stroke away from me; I am consumed by the blow of Thine hand.

11. When Thou, with rebukes, dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makes his beauty to consume away like a moth; surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.
12. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears; for I *am* a stranger with Thee *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.
13. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

SUMMARY.

Here is an earnest prayer of the righteous beseeching God to preserve him from enviousness against the ungodly who live securely heaping up riches as thought they should remain on earth always. Often the wicked spread themselves like a green bay tree and to them applies what Asaph says: "*They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagues like other men*" (Psalm 73:5). But of the godly it is said: "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous*" (Psalm 34:19). Nevertheless, rather than to live securely like those gathering and enjoying riches without a thought of death and eternity, David desired daily to be reminded of the brevity and uncertainty of this life. We are sojourners here making only a short stay. Is it not folly to consume our life in pursuing after the dollar which none can take along? Far better to think of the journey's end, remembering that those treasures which are of value in death are the forgiveness of sin and the grace of God. These let us seek.

PRAYER

Almighty God Who lives forever, but has set bounds which we cannot pass to our lives on the earth, grant us true wisdom that we set not our hearts on earthly things, neither follow after Mammon, but seek first Thy Kingdom and the Righteousness of Thy Son. By the operation of Thy Spirit do Thou cause us, as pilgrims to a better world, to fix our hearts and hopes above, where Christ is, sitting on Thy Throne. Amen.

PSALM 40.

PREFACE.

Learning to know Jesus Christ and continually to become more intimately acquainted with Him is the best application of our time and the most useful study. Philosophy and science, arts and accomplishments, good and commendable as they are for this life, will vanish away, but the knowledge of Jesus Christ will abide and will be made more perfect in Heaven. To know and to believe on Him is true wisdom, which He confirms saying: "*This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent*" (John 17:3). To Christ the Scriptures direct us. Of Him the prophets spake; to Him the Law of Moses with its ceremonies, its sacrifices, its washings, its purifications, pointed as with a finger. To this Peter bears witness saying: "*To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins*" (Acts 10:43). Now if the Old Testament in all its parts bears witness of Christ, much more the New. Let us never tire of seeking Him in the volume of the Book as the fortieth Psalm charges.

A prophecy of Christ, His suffering and His prophetic office.

To the chief Musician — A Psalm of David

1. I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry.
2. He brought Me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock, *and* established My goings.
3. And He hath put a new Song in My mouth, *even* praise unto our God; many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
4. Blessed *is* that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5. Many, O LORD my God, *are* Thy wonderful works *which* Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee; *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

6. Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required.
7. Then said I, "Lo, I come; in the Volume of the Book *it is* written of Me,
8. I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy Law *is* within My heart.
9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained My lips, O LORD, Thou knowest.
10. I have not hid Thy righteousness within My heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.
11. Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from Me, O LORD; let Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth continually preserve Me.
12. For innumerable evils have compassed Me about; Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of Mine head; therefore My heart fails Me.
13. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver Me; O LORD, make haste to help Me.
14. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after My soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish Me evil.
15. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto Me, 'Aha, aha.'
16. Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; let such as love Thy salvation say continually, 'The LORD be magnified.'
17. But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinks upon Me; Thou *art* My Help and My Deliverer; make no tarrying, O My God."

SUMMARY.

This psalm is spoken in the person of Christ, as crying for help in the pangs of death. Besides complaining of the multitude of evils which surrounded Him in His sufferings, He declares that He is come to do the will of the Father and to fulfill the Law, as it was written of Him in the scroll of the Law. Because the sacrifices commanded in the Law could not ransom us from sin, therefore He

came to be the one true Sacrifice for sin. Hence He calls the sins of the world laid on Him “mine iniquities,” for which He must suffer the punishment. Herein is our salvation that our sins are made His and His righteousness is made ours. Blessed are we, if we make this Lord our trust looking for the soul’s salvation alone in Him and His work, and if we turn not aside to the proud whose trust for righteousness is in their own piety and works. Because we could not keep the Law by our works, therefore Christ came to do the work for us and through faith His work is accounted to us.

PRAYER.

We give thanks to Thee, Lord Jesus, for Thy bitter suffering and painful death, whereby Thou didst purchase us from the pangs of eternal death. Thanks be to Thee that Thou hast sent the Word of Thy salvation to us. Preserve it with us - pure and unadulterated - and whenever we hear or read it do Thou reveal Thyself unto us as the Savior of our souls. Amen.

PSALM 41.

PREFACE.

To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Hebrews 13:16). Many are the praises and promises which the Scriptures give to true Christian benevolence. The merciful shall obtain mercy. God will be with him with His gracious Presence, to uphold him both in spiritual and bodily need, and to defend him against his enemies — both visible and invisible. The liberal almsgiver, as all the children of God, will also be chastened of the Lord, but it is the chastening of love and not of anger, for his good and not his hurt. What the Christian gives freely for Christ’s sake will bring an abundant return; for the Lord’s blessing will be on his person and on his goods. Yea, at the last day Christ, the ordained Judge, will say to them that pity the poor: *“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My*

brethren, ye have done it unto Me” (Matthew 25:40). These, His poor brethren, will themselves also be witnesses of the Christian’s benevolence and faith, and he will be received into everlasting habitations (*Luke 16:9*). Surely, these great promises and rich rewards should persuade us to open our hearts and hands and to count it a privilege to do good to our brethren who are afflicted with poverty or other visitations. A strong persuasive to give freely is contained in the forty-first Psalm.

Prophecy of the enmity and treachery of the Jews against Christ.

To the chief Musician — A Psalm of David.

1. Blessed *is* he that considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
2. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth; and Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.
3. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.
4. I said, “LORD, be merciful unto Me: heal My soul; for I have sinned against Thee.
5. Mine enemies speak evil of Me, ‘When shall He die, and His Name perish?’
6. And if he comes to see *Me*, he speaks vanity; his heart gathers iniquity to itself; *when* he goes abroad, he tells *it*.
7. All that hate Me whisper together against Me; against Me do they devise My hurt.
8. ‘An evil disease,’ *say they*, ‘cleaves fast unto Him; and *now* that He lies He shall rise up no more.’
9. Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *is* heel against Me.
10. But Thou, O LORD, be merciful unto Me, and raise Me up, that I may requite them.
11. By this I know that Thou favors Me, because Mine enemy does not triumph over Me.
12. And as for Me, Thou upholds Me in Mine integrity, and sets Me before Thy face for ever.

13. Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.”

SUMMARY.

As the preceding psalm, this too is spoken in the person of Christ, Who here complains that the Jews hated Him without a cause and took counsel together to put Him to death, and he refers also to the treachery of Judas. Knowing the malicious stubbornness of these His enemies, He uttered this prayer: “*Raise Me up that I may requite them*” (verse 10). And He did repay them. They cried: “*His Blood be on us, and on our children*” (Matthew 27:25), and it did come on their guilty heads and scattered them to the four winds of heaven, as it is at this day. But for us who believe, it affords a peculiarly sweet comfort that Christ here confesses Himself a sinner, when He had no sin of His own. Speaking of our sins, He said in the preceding psalm: “*Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me,*” (verse 12), and here He uses still stronger language, saying: “*Heal My soul; for I have sinned against Thee*” (verse 4). So fully did Christ take our sins on Himself that He bare them as His own, as though He had Himself committed them. Now, as fully as our sins were accounted unto Christ, so completely is His righteousness imputed unto us; it is made our own — our eternal possession. Hence the beginning of this psalm does not only refer to giving to the poor, but under this figure it pronounces him blessed who considers Christ in His lowliness, embraces Him and his Savior, and confesses Him before men.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who came unto Thine own and they received Thee not, grant us Thy Spirit to glorify Thee in our hearts. Enlighten our hearts with this living knowledge that Thou art the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, that we may never be offended in Thee, but may hold Thy righteousness in an unwavering faith, and may not be ashamed to confess Thee before men. Amen.

PSALM 42.

PREFACE.

The Christian's life in this world is pictured in the words of Paul saying: "*When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears*" (2 Corinthians 7:5). In this vale of tears the Christian meets with sickness, poverty, slander, mockery, persecution and other afflictions, and in his heart he must feel the fiery darts of Satan. Experiencing such manifold temptations the follower of Jesus frequently becomes discouraged, downcast and sorrowful, perhaps even imagines that God is angry with him or had forsaken and abandoned him to temporal misery and eternal destruction. But thanks be to God, it is also true what St. Paul likewise writes: "*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed*" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). Through His word and Spirit, God endues the Christian with cheerfulness and strength cheerfully to bear, and finally to overcome, every affliction. God does with the Christian even as Hannah, the mother of Samuel, said: "*The Lord kills, and makes alive: He brings down to the grave, and brings up. The Lord makes poor, and makes rich; He brings low, and lifts up*" (1 Samuel 2:6-7). The arm of the Lord is never shortened, and after the night of affliction, He will surely make the sun of joy to rise again, as the forty-second Psalm teaches.

Misery and comfort of the afflicted.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

1. As the hart pants after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after Thee, O God.
2. My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God; when shall I come and appear before God?
3. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, "Where is thy God?"

4. When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the House of God, with them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept Holyday.
5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And *why* art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him *for* the help of His countenance.
6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.
7. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.
8. *Yet* the LORD will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.
9. I will say unto God my Rock, “Why hast Thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”
10. *As* with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, “Where *is* thy God?”
11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, *Who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

SUMMARY.

When penning this psalm the author was in great distress of soul, imagining himself forsaken of God. In addition to this anguish of soul, he was probably also in some great bodily affliction, because his enemies mockingly said: “*Where is thy God?*” (*verse 3*). When the pious are afflicted the ungodly cannot but rejoice over and scoff at them. “Good for him,” say they, “so it must go with the hypocrites.” When the Christian is plagued, the children of the world are quick to judge, that he must be guilty of some secret sin and God must be angry with him. Perverse, blind and rancorous people do not know, or do not want to know, that God chastens His own, but comforts them again and will not forsake them. And this God does, that we should long for His House to be comforted by His word; for God’s House is where His Word is preached and His countenance is

His Presence, by which He manifests His love and grants us to taste of His grace.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Lord, Who art a God of consolation, comfort and strengthen all struggling hearts and set Thou bounds to the malice of their tempters and tormenters. Preserve and lead us in that way which Thou hast mapped out for us, that, taking up our cross daily, we may follow in the footprints of our Lord unto eternal glory. Amen.

PSALM 43.

PREFACE.

A wounded deer pursued by huntsmen and hounds will cry aloud that his voice re-echoes through the forest, and exerting his utmost strength and celerity he will seek to gain a stream of flowing water. Scenting the water afar off, he will, regardless of impediments, make for it to find in it relief and safety. The stream affords him safety; for, swimming it, he escapes from his pursuers, and the water revives him, restoring his exhausted strength. In like manner, the Christian should be practiced in escaping the arts and snares of that hunter of souls who *as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8)*. Whenever tempted and tried by his spiritual enemies it should be an invariable habit with the Christian to seek safety and comfort in that broad stream of Divine grace which flows so freely in the Word of the Cross. Neither should he neglect the use of the Holy Sacraments and should cry with all his heart for the help and comfort of the Holy Ghost. So doing, the Christian, however hard pressed he may be, cannot perish; for the sword of the Spirit will not fail to repulse the enemy and fervent prayer relieves the burden of the soul. The Word of the Lord enlightens the eyes, quickens the soul, rejoices the heart, and the Holy Ghost gives comfort, life and joy to the sorrowing. Of this we

are reminded in the forty-third Psalm. *An appeal to God the highest Judge.*

1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
2. For Thou *art* the God of my strength; why dost Thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
3. O send out Thy Light and Thy Truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy Holy Hill, and to Thy Tabernacles.
4. Then will I go unto the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God my God.
5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, *Who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

SUMMARY.

This psalm David composed at a time when he had to experience the deceitfulness and the fickleness of men, perhaps when Absalom rebelled and Ahithophel gave pernicious counsel against him. Therefore he pleaded the justice of his cause before God, not doubting God would hear him and would cause him again to go up to His Sanctuary with joy. Always we should so walk in this world as to have a good conscience when men speak evil of us and persecute us. And justly should this be our chief joy to frequent the courts of the Lord and to hear His word. While we have it, let us hear the Word of our God, and while we are able to go, let us not be missing in the House of worship.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou God of the afflicted and of all those suffering wrongfully, have compassion upon those tempted by Satan and persecuted by the world. Comfort and strengthen them and us by Thy Word and Spirit, uphold us, and finally deliver us from all evil and receive us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 44.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Repeating the Law in the plains of Moab, Moses charged Israel throughout all their generations never to forget what the Lord had done for their fathers; for thus he said: “*Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel*” (Deuteronomy 32:7-8). In all ages God has so governed the world that the great events of history worked together for the promotion of His Kingdom. Often indeed, the Lord suffered His people to be oppressed, yea even sold them under the power of the heathen, but the very tyranny exercised against them was turned into a blessing. Was not the cruelty of Pharaoh the occasion for Israel to flee from Egypt and to become an independent nation? Did not Jews and Gentiles, by their persecutions promote the spreading of Christianity and bring about their own destruction? Moreover, the history of Hagar and many others shows that this same providence of God, by which He overrules mighty nations, extends also to the meanest fugitive and the lowliest on earth. Now God is the same today as of yore. He is not grown old and weak. His eyes are sharp to detect the distresses of His people, and His hand is as mighty to help as in the days of Joseph. Let our hearts trust and our lips praise His wonderful providence, as we are charged in the first part of the forty-fourth Psalm.

The general condition and prayer of the saints.

To the chief Musician, for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

1. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old.
2. *How* Thou didst drive out the heathen with Thy hand, and planted them; *how* Thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arms save them; but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favor unto them.
4. Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob.
5. Through Thee will we push down our enemies; through Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us.
6. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.
7. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.
8. In God we boast all the day long, and praise Thy Name for ever. Selah.

SUMMARY.

Israel did not obtain the land of Canaan because it was so excellent a nation and worthy of God's favor; neither did the children of Israel conquer the land by their own valor and superiority in arms. The Lord gave them this goodly land because He loved them, and He cast out the Canaanites because of the abominations which they practiced. Even so we do not obtain the Heavenly Canaan by works of righteousness which our own hands have done; for we are unprofitable, yea evil servants, and deserve no reward at the hands of the Lord. Neither do we possess the Kingdom by our own strength and valor in with-standing the evil one and overcoming temptations and sins, but we are saved by sovereign grace abounding through His Son. O, an excellent thing that we must not depend on our own works for righteousness, but our Captain, even Jesus Christ, has made all things ready, that whosoever believes on Him shall be saved. This grace of God, which is so great, we should daily praise with heart and hand.

PRAYER.

Father of all mercy, we thank Thee that Thou didst send Thy Son into our flesh to redeem us unto Thyself. For the sake of His obedience and suffering, grant us the forgiveness of all our sins and shortcomings, and keep us from the evil, as Thy Son, our Lord, prayed for us. Amen.

PSALM 44.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

In His Word of Truth, God has promised grace and every blessing to all who trust in Him and who, under the cross and in the very midst of death, persevere in faith, and this, His promise, God has always kept towards all His children. But flesh and blood is quickly discouraged in the day of affliction. It is ready to murmur and, notwithstanding all God's promises, the flesh soon argues God tarried too long or did not want to help. Seeing the prosperity of the wicked and the wrongs which they inflict on others, the old Adam is prone to say: "Shall the ungodly enjoy blessing? Where is the righteousness of God Who has said that the wickedness of the wicked shall not remain unpunished? Why does God forget those who call on His Name, honor and praise Him, and walk in His ways?" This perverse inclination of our nature we should learn to know and should resist it accustoming ourselves patiently to wait for God's appointed time to help, knowing this, that His tarrying is but for a little while (*John 16:16*). It is well to remember the saying of Augustine: "Earthly prosperity is an indication of eternal damnation. If, in this world thou wilt be without strife, thou shalt not rule with Christ in eternal Life." Rightly does the poet sing: "The greater cross, the nearer Heaven; who without cross, is without God." Of this we are reminded in the latter part of the forty-fourth Psalm.

9. But Thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goes not forth with our armies.
10. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us spoil for themselves.
11. Thou hast given us like sheep *appointed* for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.
12. Thou sellest Thy people for nought, and dost not increase *Thy wealth* by their price.
13. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.
15. My confusion *is* continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,
16. For the voice of him that reproaches and blasphemes; by reason of the enemy and avenger.
17. All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant.
18. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from Thy way;
19. Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.
20. If we have forgotten the Name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
21. Shall not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.
22. Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
23. Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, cast *us* not off for ever.
24. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, *and* forgets our affliction and our oppression?
25. For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaves unto the earth.
26. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a common prayer of all the saints, especially those of the New Testament, in which they complain that God has resigned them to be trodden down and persecuted by pagans and tyrants. In the days when we must experience the hatred of men against Christ and His Church, the very deeds of God are apt to become a source of perplexity to us, because of old, God often delivered His people by mighty wonders, and we must be as forsaken of God and rejected. When we have walked right and have not departed from the way of the Lord, why are we hated of men and treated like as evildoers? So, this psalm expresses the sighings and

strugglings of the spirit against the flesh; for the flesh will always dispute against God, because (according to the judgment of carnal reason) He deals so unjustly, and rules so badly that the pious, who ought to be exalted, are trodden down, and the wicked, who ought to be punished, are exalted. Remember to abide in the Word of the Lord, and judge not by reason.

PRAYER.

Lord, our gracious Father, grant us at all times, Christian resignation to the dispensations and guidances of Thy providence. Preserve us from discontent under the cross and from envy against those who enjoy prosperity. Lead us as Thou wilt, but at our latter end, take us home unto Thyself. Amen.

PSALM 45.

PREFACE.

In this elegant psalm, David says of Jesus Christ, our King: *“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness”* (verse 7). To dwell with this King in the New Jerusalem, we must possess the most perfect righteousness without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (*Ephesians 5:27*). And because we are sinners and perfection is beyond our reach, therefore our King dresses us in His own livery, accounting to us His obedience to the Law and His atonement for our sin. For this purpose He was of God made unto us righteousness (*1 Corinthians 1:30*), that, in Him, we might be made that righteousness which avails before God (*2 Corinthians 5:21*). The souls dressed in His own righteousness the King acknowledges as His subjects and loves them as His brothers and sisters.

But this King hates wickedness. Transgression is odious to Him. He abhors it as an abomination and those consenting to the service of sin, He does no more acknowledge as His citizens. Hence we must flee sin as the most dangerous poison of the soul. The sin, yet dwelling in our members, we must not suffer to rule over us, but must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. The subjects are

to be like unto their King - loving righteousness, hating wickedness, avoiding sin and walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (*Colossians 1:10*). A strong persuasive for following Holiness is contained in the forty-fifth Psalm.

Prophecy of Christ our King, and the Church His Bride.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim,
for the sons of Korah, Maschil,
A Song of loves.

1. My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.
2. Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips; therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever.
3. Gird Thy sword upon *Thy* thigh, O *Most* Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty.
4. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things.
5. Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under Thee.
6. Thy Throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy Kingdom *is* a right sceptre.
7. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.
8. All Thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad.
9. King's daughters *were* among Thy honorable women; upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.
10. Harken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's House.
11. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He *is* thy Lord; and worship thou Him.
12. And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.

13. The King's daughter *is* all glorious within; her clothing *is* of wrought gold.
14. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee.
15. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace.
16. Instead of Thy fathers shall be Thy children, whom Thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
17. I will make Thy Name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever and ever.

SUMMARY.

This is a prophecy of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ in beautiful, attractive and impressive words. It pictures Christ in His Royal majesty, beautiful, eloquent, equipped with glittering armor, prosperous in war, just, mild and gracious. And He possesses a Bride arrayed in Royal apparel of wrought gold and the finest of needlework. All this is an emblem of the spiritual gifts with which Christ adorns His Bride - the Church - as well as of His war and victory over Satan, sin, death and hell.

Clearly does this psalm also foretell the abolition of the Old Covenant of the Law, charging the King's daughter to forget her own people and her father's house - the Jewish synagogue - and to worship this King as God besides Whom there is no other God. It gives to this King the honor of Divine worship, calls Him God and makes Him an everlasting King Who rules in righteousness and takes away sin. Being an everlasting King, He is by nature God and able to save His Bride.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, our King and Savior, make us Thy subjects and so guide and govern us that, as loyal subjects, we may serve Thee in true faith and a good conscience all the days of our life. Adorn our souls with Thy righteousness, that white robe in which we shall be found pleasing to Thy Father and worthy to dwell with Him. Amen.

PSALM 46.

PREFACE.

The ungodly take counsel together, Satan rages, the jaws of hell are opened wide, death threatens, sin accuses and other enemies combined with these against the Lord and His Anointed strive to overthrow His Kingdom, but amongst and against all these enemies, God, strong and mighty, preserves His Church. This the Lord (*Matthew 16:18*) promised saying: “*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,*” and again (*John 10:28*): “*My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.*” For this great benefit, the protection of His own, which we enjoy this very day, we should return cordial thanks to God and to Him we should cheerfully entrust all our cares and troubles. Yet we should never presume to prescribe unto Him the time, mode and manner of helping us. If God does not help just when and as we desire, we should persist in crying unto Him, committing all to His Fatherly and good will, and trusting that He will answer in the time and manner most conducive unto His glory and our good. In these latter days of the world, when the end is fast drawing on, God will not forsake His Church and will not leave her enemies unpunished. And now let us hear the reading of the forty-sixth Psalm.

The Church's refuge and safety.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah,
A Song upon Alamoth.

1. God *is* our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble.
2. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
3. *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.
4. *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God, the Holy *Place* of the Tabernacle of the Most High.

5. God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.
6. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.
7. The LORD of Hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our Refuge. Selah.
8. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations He hath made in the earth.
9. He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder; He burns the chariot in the fire.
10. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
11. The LORD of Hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our Refuge. Selah.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was probably sung by the Israelites in praise of God for defending the City of Jerusalem - His chosen dwelling place - against mighty kings and powerful nations, and preserving peace in it. Most beautifully does He say, this city was gladdened by the River of God. In it was His House, His Word, His Worship and His gracious Presence. This rivulet continued to flow and to gladden the city after many broad streams of the Gentiles had run dry. Jerusalem witnessed the rise and fall of mighty empires: Syria, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia. Though it was once destroyed it was built again and continued to be the Holy City. God did with Jerusalem as *Isaiah (31:5)* says: "*As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over, He will preserve it.*" This faithfulness of the Lord was well worthy a psalm of praise by His people. We, too, should sing this psalm in praise of God for planting His Church at this place and preserving it unto this day. And in fervent prayer we should ask Him to cause the rivulet of His grace to continue to flow unto us and our children for generations to come.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, our Father, for all the mercy and truth which Thou hast shown unto us these many years. Grant Thy Word to dwell with us continually, defend Thy Church against all her enemies, keep us in Thy grace and preserve unto us temporal and eternal peace through Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 47.

PREFACE.

When He had finished His work on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended up on high, and is seated at the Right Hand of God the Father. Ruling mightily over all things in Heaven and earth, He makes His Church His special care, gathering and building it through His Word and Sacraments, and adorning it with the gifts of the Spirit. Entering in once by His own Blood into the Most Holy not made with hands, He is become our everlasting King, High Priest and only Mediator. Having redeemed us, He is gone before to prepare mansions and to make intercession for us. He is with us always as a very present help, and He will come again visibly and will receive us into the New Heaven and the New Earth where we shall see and enjoy His Glory. For His triumphant Ascension, we should daily praise Him and with it, we should comfort our hearts in all afflictions and in the very midst of death. Day by day our prayers should rise up to Heaven and there we should lay up treasures for ourselves in works of benevolence and a Holy conversation, that when He comes to wake the dead, we may rise up with a shout of joy to meet Him in the air and to be with Him always. His Ascension was prophesied in the forty-seventh Psalm.

Of Christ's Ascension and Dominion.

To the chief Musician.

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1. O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
2. For the LORD Most High *is* terrible; *He is* a great King over all the earth.
3. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
4. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved. Selah.
5. God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
6. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
7. For God *is* the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding.
8. God reigns over the heathen; God sits upon the Throne of His Holiness.
9. The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God; He is greatly exalted.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a very clear prophecy of Christ's Ascension to Heaven and the spreading of His Kingdom over all the earth without sword or spear - alone by singing and trumpeting, that is, by the preaching of the Gospel among all nations, as the walls of Jericho fell without the use of battering rams alone, but by the sound of trumpets and the shout of the people. This Gospel, proclaiming to us the victory of our King and assuring us of the grace of the Father has broken the power of sin and the love of the world, and has kindled in us the blessed hope of a better world above. Bless the Lord, O my soul. But let us not forget that when ascending up, the Lord gave the command to His disciples, to go and to preach the Gospel to every creature. Yet there are vast multitudes walking in the darkness of idolatry. Let us not forget to make intercession for them with the Lord and let us open our purse to provide the means that the Gospel may be preached to heathen nations and they may be converted from the power of darkness to the living God.

PRAYER.

Thanks and praise be unto Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, for Thy triumphant Ascension to Heaven, by which we know that Thy work of redemption is finished and mansions are prepared for us, in which we shall be Thy associates for ever. Draw our affections after Thee that, dying unto the world, we may look and haste unto those things which are above. Grant also the light of Thy Gospel to those sitting in darkness and spread Thy Kingdom to the remotest isles. Amen.

PSALM 48.

PREFACE.

In this psalm, King David says of the Lord: “*Thy Right Hand is full of righteousness*” (verse 10). But virtue of His righteousness, God punishes the ungodly and defends the godly as a just and almighty Lord. By this, the haters and persecutors of the Christians should take warning to repent in the time of grace and to cease fighting against the Christians lest they lose soul and salvation; for what is done to His own who believe in Him the Lord regards as done unto Himself. From this, Christians should learn not to be offended or to think it is a strange thing if they are hated by the world and evil spoken of by men; for Satan and his agents cannot otherwise than hate the Christians. But God has also promised, if we but hold to Christ He will be our friend and protector and the enemy of our enemies. If we must suffer wrong in this world, for the sake of truth and right, we should not become sorrowful and discontented, but should rather rejoice to be conformed to the image of Christ and should patiently wait for His deliverance. Let us but diligently hear the Word of our God and heartily rejoice over its promises, and we shall surely experience that God judges righteously, delivering His own and overthrowing His enemies. On this, let us hear the words of the forty-eighth Psalm.

The Ornaments and Privileges of the Church.

A Song *and* Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1. Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the City of our God, *in* the Mountain of His Holiness.
2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* Mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the City of the great King.
3. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
4. For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.
5. They saw *it*, *and* so they marveled; they were troubled, *and* hasted away.
6. Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.
7. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.
8. As we have heard, so have we seen in the City of the LORD of Hosts, in the City of our God; God will establish it for ever. Selah.
9. We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple.
10. According to Thy Name, O God, so *is* Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy Right Hand is full of righteousness.
11. Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of Thy judgments.
12. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.
13. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.
14. For this God *is* our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide *even* unto death.

SUMMARY.

Like the forty-sixth, this psalm glorifies God as the defense of Jerusalem and the protection of Zion against mighty kings who threatened to destroy it, but had to retreat with shame. The Lord had promised to be the God of Israel and to dwell at Jerusalem and He certainly proved Himself the God, the Guard, the Benefactor and the Defender of the people and the city. We should sing this psalm in praise to God for the preservation of the Gospel against the raging of kings and princes, of popes and infidels, who often threatened to

extinguish the truth of Christ, but soon were troubled and hasted away in confusion and fear. God is the Guide of His people. He conducts them safely on in the midst of their enemies; He guides them unto death, yea, and through death and beyond the grave that no torment can touch them. And as a just Judge, He apports the richest rewards to the greatest sufferers. Those whom He leads down to the portals of deepest humiliation, He will exalt the higher and will adorn them with the brightest crowns.

PRAYER.

Thou, O God, didst aforetime uphold Thy Church and defend it with a might hand and an outstretched arm against the violence of tyranny and the wiliness of malice. Thy providence extends over all and Thy Name is great unto the ends of the earth. Continue to show thyself the God of Thy people, convert their enemies or restrain their malicious counsels, and keep us in Thy faith and fear, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 49.

PREFACE.

In his first chapter, verse 18, the Prophet Zephaniah sharply rebukes those who are proud of their earthly possessions and who put their dependence on their riches, saying: *“Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath.”* The trust of the wicked is called a spider’s web (*Job 8:14*), and to that country gentleman who enlarged his barns and filled them and said unto his soul: *“Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry,”* it was said: *“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”* (*Luke 12:19*). Death spares none, taking away the wise and the unwise, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the master and the servant, the great and the small. Neither can any man make a covenant with death or obtain from him a policy insuring his life for a year, a month, a

week, or ever a single day, because death often darts his spear suddenly upon him who is least expecting it. Then they, who glory in their riches, must leave them to others, and they carry as much out of the world as they brought into it. We should, therefore, apply our hearts unto true wisdom and should seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, laying up for ourselves heavenly and everlasting treasures and, striving to be rich toward God, that in death our soul enter the pearly gates and walk the golden streets of that city whose Sun is the Lamb. From this forty-ninth Psalm we should learn to be content with food and raiment.

Delusiveness of earthly prosperity.

To the chief Musician.

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1. Hear this, all *ye* people; give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world;
2. Both low and high, rich and poor, together.
3. My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.
4. I will incline mine ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
5. Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?
6. They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
7. None *of them* can, by any means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;
8. (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceases for ever;)
9. That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.
10. For he sees *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.
11. Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling-places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.
12. Nevertheless, man *being* in honor abides not; he is like the beasts *that* perish.

13. This their way *is* their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.
14. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.
15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Selah.
16. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;
17. For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.
18. Though while he lived he blessed his soul, (and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself,)
19. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.
20. Man *that is* in honor, and understands not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is directed against that great god of this world, whose name is Mammon. It accuses all those of blindness and folly who worship this idol, those whose soul is sold to making money and who pride themselves in their riches. Riches cannot deliver from death, and those who set their heart upon them must die like the beast, that is, without any hope for eternity. Let us seek after God Who is able to save in death, and let us trust in Christ washing our garments and making them white in His Divine Blood; then shall our souls appear before God dressed in garments of wrought gold, whereas they that would be rich in this world must go hence naked — heirs only to shame and everlasting contempt.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, preserve our hearts from covetousness and grant us true wisdom that we seek not after the treasures of this earth, nor put our trust in uncertain riches. Fill our hearts with contentment, that, satisfied with daily bread, we seek first the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and inherit with Him. Amen.

PSALM 50.

PREFACE.

“The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (1 Cor. 4:20). Translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ, man becomes a new creature. Faith and the service of sin, righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and Belial, the Holy Ghost and the prince of darkness can have no communion with each other, neither can they dwell together peaceably in one and the same heart (*2 Cor. 6:14*). The Christian — who willingly commits sin against the protest of his own conscience loses grace and faith, offends God, grieves the Holy Ghost, and drives away his guardian angels, and if he impenitently remains in his fallen condition — he loses soul and salvation. Neither will it be of any avail to him that he once a child and heir of God. Hating instruction, despising reproof and rejecting the Word of God is a sure way to everlasting destruction; but inclining the ear to reproof and to hear instruction, confessing and forsaking sin is stepping on the way unto life. Let us be doers of the Word and not hearers only (*James 1:22*). Let us present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God (*Romans 12:1*), letting our light so shine before men that, seeing our good works, they may glorify our Father Which is in Heaven (*Matthew 5:16*). So we are taught in the fiftieth Psalm.

The Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1. The mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
2. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.
3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.
4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.

5. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.
6. And the heavens shall declare His Righteousness; for God *is* Judge Himself. Selah.
7. Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.
8. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before Me.
9. I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he-goats out of thy folds.
10. For every beast of the forest *is* Mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.
11. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field *are* Mine.
12. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world *is* Mine, and the fullness thereof.
13. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
14. Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High;
15. And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.
16. But unto the wicked God saith, “What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take My Covenant in thy mouth?
17. Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My Words behind thee.
18. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consented with him, and hast been partakers with adulterers.
19. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frames deceit.
20. Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.
21. These *things* thou hast done, and I kept silence; thou thought that I was altogether *such a one* as thyself; *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.
22. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.
23. Whoso offers praise glorifies Me; and to him that orders *his* conversation *aright* will I show the salvation of God.

SUMMARY.

Here is a strong testimony against the spiritual pride of all those who trust for righteousness in their own works of piety and worship. These count their life and virtues so precious as to imagine that God is indebted to them and owes them a reward. But Asaph inverts it and teaches us to thank and praise God for His mercies, confessing that we are not able to repay Him even for the very least of His benefactions. To call upon God in the time of need, and to return thanks and praise for His mercies, is the true worship, the best sacrifice and the right way to see the Salvation of the Lord. Unto this praise belongs the paying one's vows, not such self-chosen and foolish vows as those of monkery, but those made in Holy Baptism and comprised in the Ten Commandments, especially the two first, in which we are pledged to trust in God, to call on His Name, and to worship Him with prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

Lord, our Savior, enlighten our eyes to know all Thy mercies and create in us such hearts which may be truly grateful unto Thee. Forgive us our sins for the sake of the Sacrifice of Thy Son on the cross, and enlarge our hearts to walk in the way of Thy Commandments and so to pay unto Thee the sacred vow made in Holy Baptism. Amen.

PSALM 51.

PREFACE.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile (Psalm 32:1-2). Now the way to become rid of sin before God is by repentance, if we acknowledge that we have transgressed against the Lord our God

and have richly deserved His wrath and both temporal and eternal punishment. Nevertheless, we must not despair in our sins, imagining them greater than that they could be forgiven, but must account God's grace greater than our sin (*Romans 5:20*), imploring pardon and forgiveness in the Name of Christ and for the sake of His perfect obedience, atonement and advocacy. And never doubting that God does forgive sin according to His Promise, we should beseech the Holy Ghost for strength to forsake sin, to live a truly Christian and pious life in all things, to walk in the Commandments of the Lord and so to war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience (*1 Timothy 1:18*). This we should learn from the example of David in the fifty-first Psalm.

David's penitential prayer.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David,
When Nathan the Prophet came unto him,
After he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin *is* ever before me.
4. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, *and* be clear when Thou judgest.
5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
6. Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden *part* Thou shalt make me to know Wisdom.
7. Purge me with hyssop*, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* Thou hast broken may rejoice.
9. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
11. Cast me not away from Thy Presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
12. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me *with Thy free Spirit*.
13. *Then* will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinner shall be converted unto Thee.
14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.
15. O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.
16. For Thou desires not sacrifice; else would I give *it*; Thou delightest not in burnt offering.
17. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.
18. Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion; build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.
19. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

SUMMARY.

This is one of David's most excellent psalms, in which he teaches us what sin is, whence it originates, how harmful it is, and how we become rid of sin before God. Sin is inherited in the natural generation. Grapes do not grow on a hawthorn bush. The children of sinful parents cannot be angels. Born flesh of the flesh, we were the children of wrath by nature. Now it is clear that inherited sin can not be remedied by our own works, because, being of a sinful nature, all our works are tainted with sin. Alone God's grace and forgiveness can remedy it. He must new-create us by His Spirit, so that, from heart and soul, we can call Christ our Lord, comforting ourselves with the forgiveness of our sins in Him. Having obtained the forgiveness of sin freely for Christ's sake, and made new creatures with new powers and a right spirit, we can truly thank and praise God also in the evil day. Humble praise David at the end describes as

the true sacrifices pleasing unto God, and he prays for the prosperity of Jerusalem that, in it, such right sacrifices might be continually offered.

PRAYER.

O God, our merciful Father, by Thy Holy Law do Thou work in us the true knowledge of our sin that our heart may be penitent and our soul humble before Thee. Blot out our iniquities with the Blood of Thy Son, cleanse our souls from the dark spots with which we have soiled them, and comfort us with the assurance of Thy grace, and build Thy Church with us and our children that Thy Name may be glorified by many thousands. Amen.

PSALM 52.

PREFACE.

Neither unwise nor unprofitable would it be to make an adage of the words of David and to repeat them daily, saying: "*The goodness of God endures every morning, and great is His faithfulness*" (*Lamentations 3:23*). The fountain of God's mercy is not exhausted, neither indeed can be. His mercy is like unto a well of living water which flows daily and abundantly and can not run dry. With this mercy and faithfulness of the Lord, let us comfort our souls in good days and evil, in prosperity and adversity, in life and in the hour of death, and let us not despair, however evil and perilous our days may be. A patron and friend, true and kind, is our God. Our dangers and needs are not hid from Him and nevermore will He leave us without counsel or help, though we cry unto Him seventy times a day, provided we trust His mercy and do not doubt His faithfulness. *Though a woman forget her sucking child, yet the Lord will not forget His own (Isaiah 49:15)*; He will comfort them as one is comforted by his mother (*Isaiah 66:13*). Yea when father and mother forsake us, the Lord will take us up (*Psalms 27:10*). Trusting under the shadow of His wings, let us cheerfully say "*Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*" (*Romans 14:8*).

David's complaint over the treachery of Doeg
To the chief Musician, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David when
Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him,
"David is come to the house of Ahimelech."

1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God *endures* continually.
2. Thy tongue devises mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3. Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.
4. Thou lovest all devouring words, O *thou* deceitful tongue.
5. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.
6. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:
7. Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.
8. But I *am* like a green olive tree in the House of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
9. I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hast done *it*; and I will wait on Thy Name; for *it is* good before Thy saints.

SUMMARY.

The title of this psalm states the occasion on which it was made and the subject which it treats. Doeg, the Edomite, betrayed unto Saul that David, when fleeing out of the land of Judah, received bread and a sword from Ahimelech, the priest of the Lord, and so Doeg brought about the shedding of much innocent blood. This treacherous Edomite is a sample of wicked counselors who slander the guiltless and cause the oppression of the innocent. Doeg's followers are the tale-bearers and slanders who betray others and blacken the character of their neighbors. Though such false tongues may prevail for a while they shall, at last, fare as Doeg did. They shall be taken away, and plucked out of their dwelling, and rooted

out of the land. But of the righteous this psalm says, though slandered by the wicked and betrayed by false friends, he shall yet thrive in the House of God like a green olive tree.

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou righteous and almighty God, remember Thy weather-beaten and tempest-tossed Church on this earth. Restrain her enemies, destroy their wiles and hinder their violence. Preserve Thy saving truth to us and our children, and grant us to praise Thee with gladsome hearts now in the Church Militant and forever in the Church Triumphant. Amen.

PSALM 53.

PREFACE.

Our God is the Living God and the Author of Life. He delights in life and not in death, as He says: "*Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*" (*Ezekiel 18:23*). Therefore God gives His Word and sends forth His servants to forewarn the wicked of their impending destruction and everlasting ruin, that they should repent and should cease treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath (*Romans 2:5*) and He also grants them time for repentance. Alas, that the greatest number will not hear, but caught in the snares of the devil, by whom they are taken captive at His will (*2 Timothy 2:26*), they willfully and impenitently continue to live in sin. Woe, forever woe unto those who close their ears and will not hear the Word of the Lord. In them, as in the children of disobedience, Satan has his work, and the longer they harden their hearts the more firmly does he secure his rule over them. O let us hear the reproof of the Lord while we have ears to hear, that he also may hear us when we cry unto him (*Proverbs 1:33*). Let us gird our loins to do His will, then He will also hear our cry and will fulfill our desire in the day of

trouble. And if we persevere in His faith and fear, Jesus will be our Light in the night of death and our eternal joy. And now hear the words of the fifty-third Psalm.

Of man's corruption and redemption.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath,
Maschil, *A Psalm* of David.

1. The fool hath said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; *there is none* that does good.
2. God looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.
3. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; *there is none* that does good, no, not one.
4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread; they have not called upon God.
5. There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was; for God hath scattered the bones of him that encamps *against* thee; thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.
6. Oh that the Salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When God brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

SUMMARY.

As in the 14th Psalm, so here the infidel is called a fool. Not as if those denying the Deity were fools in earthly things; for many of them are highly educated in the learning of this world, but they are called fools with respect to spiritual and divine things. It is folly to deny that an All-wise One created the heavenly bodies and prescribed to them their revolutions. It is folly to say that man, with his vast abilities of mind, is nothing but a cultured reptile. What more foolish thing could ever be invented, than to pronounce a frog the ancestor of man! Why it is that men of a liberal education and a comprehensive mind can be guilty of producing such folly, David

here tells us saying: “*Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity*” (verse 1). Man is born carnal and the carnal mind is enmity against God (*Romans 8:7*). From this enmity springs forth infidelity, and infidelity leads to abominable works, as modern history so abundantly shows. The Most Perfect One framed the world and man in His image, and when this noblest of His creatures was spoiled by the artfulness of Satan, the Maker Himself came into our flesh to be the salvation of Israel out of Zion and purchased us poor, lost and condemned creatures by His own Blood and now, in the Gospel, He offers us salvation free and gratis. Here is Wisdom worthy of all acceptance. Learn it and adhere to it.

PRAYER.

Lord our Saviour, weapon our hearts with the faith of Thy Word against the foul contamination of the infidelity of these latter days, when folly is called science and is lauded to the skies. Cause us to grow in faith, that our hearts may be rooted and grounded in the saving truth of Thy Word, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 54.

PREFACE.

The united prayer of an assembly of believers can never be in vain; for the crying of the poor and needy will penetrate the clouds and will ring in the ears of the Lord of hosts. When the disciples prayed with one accord, the place was shaken where they were assembled (*Acts 4:31*), in token that their prayer was heard. God will hear and He will graciously help, often in a mysterious and wonderful manner before we are rightly aware of it. As a true Father He defends His children against the cunning and power of Satan and all the wicked. However many and raging the enemies, if God is on our side, we are safe; for *there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord (Proverbs 21:30)*. Christ our Lord also promised, what two or three ask shall be done for them of the Father

in Heaven (*Matthew 18:19*). Well founded are the words of Origen saying: “The prayer of a pious Christian is stronger and accomplishes more, than the weaponed hand of a might host.” Hence we should this exhortation of St. Cyprian: “Let us be diligent to come before God in prayer calling upon Him without ceasing; for prayer is our strength, our shield and our weapon. It upholds and encourages. It is our fortress and our defense in time of need.” Neglect not to frequent the House of Prayer. There is a power in the united prayer of a Christian assembly. And forget not that there is a blessing also in family prayer. Unto instant prayer the fifty-fourth Psalm urges.

Prayer for deliverance from the enemies.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil,
A Psalm of David, when Ziphom came and said to Saul,
“Doth not David hide himself with us?”

1. Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me by Thy Strength.
2. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.
3. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul; they have not set God before them. Selah.
4. Behold, God *is* mine Helper; the Lord *is* with them that uphold my soul.
5. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies; cut them off in Thy Truth.
6. I will freely sacrifice unto Thee; I will praise Thy Name, O LORD; for *it is* good.
7. For He hath delivered me out of all trouble; and mine eye hath seen *His desire* upon mine enemies.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is an instructive example teaching the true Christian behavior towards the enemies. Twice did the Ziphites betray David to Saul, but David did not avenge himself upon them, he rather too refuge with God in prayer. On the second occasion

David took Saul's spear and when Abishai asked permission to spear Saul to the ground, David refused. Yet thereafter David cried after Saul and upbraided him for persecuting an innocent man without a cause. When men hate us and harm us and persecute us without a cause, we must not retaliate by returning evil for evil, but should commit our cause to God to Whom vengeance belongs, leaving it to Him, in His own time and way, to bring to light our right and our innocency. And as to our enemies, we should do them good and not evil. Then we preserve a good conscience and will never be forsaken of God.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, Who desires not the death of the wicked, convert those who hate us without a cause and turn the hearts of those who persecute Thy Christians. Protect the poor and the innocent against the oppression of unjust men. Grant us patience under the cross and preserve us in the true faith unto our end. Amen.

PSALM 55.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Among the many sorrows which our Lord Jesus Christ endured upon earth, that caused Him by the treachery of Judas, was one of the most poignant. Of this He makes bitter complaint in the 41st Psalm saying: "*Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*" Jesus loved His disciples with a love stronger than that of a bridegroom, more tender than a mother's love, and the loss of this one disciple caused Him exquisite pain. "*Those,*" says He to the Father, "*that Thou gave me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition*" (*John 17:12*). What a grand testimony of the Lord's love and forbearance! He knew the hypocrisy and He foresaw the betrayal of Judas, yet He walked with him and lovingly warned him even

when Judas had already contracted with the chief priests. What happened to the Master may befall the servant. Indeed, the Lord foretold, brother would deliver up brother to death, and the father the child; and a man's foes would be they of his own household (*Matthew 10: 21, 36*). When intimate friends prove insincere we are to learn to put our trust in God and not in men. When those near and dear to us make their love and good will dependent on our denying right and truth we must cut off the right hand and cast it from us, than offend against God. And if, for our love of Christ, we are avoided and shunned, let us not forget that One remains with us, He to Whose Image we shall be conformed. This let us remember from the first part of the fifty-fifth Psalm.

Prayer for deliverance from false friends.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil,
A Psalm of David

1. Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not Thyself from my supplication.
2. Attend unto me, and hear me; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;
3. Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.
4. My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
5. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.
6. And I said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove!" *For then* would I fly away, and be at rest.
7. Lo, *then* would I wander far off, *and* remain in the wilderness. Selah.
8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm *and* tempest.
9. Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
10. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof; mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.

11. Wickedness *is* in the midst therefore; deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
12. For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it*: neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him;
13. But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance.
14. We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the House of God in company.
15. Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell; for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.

SUMMARY.

Most likely David composed this psalm when he was fleeing from Absalom and nearly the whole nation had fallen away from him. This false friend, of whom David complains, was probably Ahithophel, David's counselor and a wise man. Departing from Jerusalem, David prayed: "*O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*" (2 Samuel 15:31). This treacherous counselor did indeed give cunning counsel against David, but it was rejected and he went and hanged himself. He was a type of Judas the betrayer. Jesus had to suffer the anguish of being betrayed by one of His own disciples, because He had to make Atonement for the hypocrisy and faithlessness of false friends, as well as for envyings and strifes between brethren. For these sins also there is forgiveness with God, and though we may, as David here does, pray against those who war against God, yet as God is ready for forgive, so should we too be ready to forgive a friend who has wronged us, if he repents; for our Lord has taught us to pray: "*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*" (Matthew 6:12).

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who did teach us to forgive those who trespass against us, do Thou break and hinder in us the will of the flesh in its vindictiveness and pride, and shedding abroad Thy love in our hearts, do Thou enable us to do Thy precept, truly to love our

enemies and freely to forgive our offending brother as often as he asks us. Amen.

PSALM 55.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). In our prayers we must be in full earnest. Prayer is not to be sleepy, indifferent, cold, so that the lips are babbling and the heart knows nothing thereof, but mouth and heart must be in agreement. Should God hear the prayer of one who is so absentminded as not to hear his own words? When Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed in the sanctuary her lips moved and her heart spoke (*1 Samuel 1:13*), and the Lord understood well the language of her heart. Moreover, with that persistent widow (*Luke 18:5*), the importunate friend (*Luke 11:8*), and the patriarch Jacob (*Genesis 32:26*), we should persevere in prayer besieging the Throne of Grace, and we should not let the Lord go except He bless us and grant us our petition. And though we must wait for an answer like they that watch for the morning (*Psalms 130:6*), yet we should not be discouraged. God will not fail, He will surely come and will do what is for our good. Should God be able to close His ears against the cries of His own beloved children? If for a while He behaves Himself as though He were deaf, cry aloud evening and morning and noon and He must hear. From this latter part of the fifty-fifth Psalm, we should learn to persevere in prayer.

16. As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.
17. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.
18. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me; for there were many with me.
19. God shall hear, and afflict them, even He that abides of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.
20. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him he hath broken his covenant.

21. *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.
22. Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
23. But Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in Thee.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a prayer against false friends and brethren, whose lips utter smooth words, but their heart is full of guile. They sit at the same table with us, kneel at the same altar, their words are soft as oil and their boast is love, but their hearts is ruled by selfishness and by their friendship they seek only their own gain. Such are the flatterers and the hypocrites who, if only their own interest is promoted, are ready to drop a lifelong friend. Alas, that Christendom is so full of such who have a form of godliness, and the power thereof is not in them (*2 Timothy 3:5*). To be delivered from such is David's prayer and the apostle charges us to withdraw ourselves from them.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou faithful God, behold how faithfulness is diminished among the children of men. Guard us against the hurtful deceit of wicked men and grant us grace to be true and faithful towards all men — both friends and foes. Grant us wisdom to prove all things that we may not be carried away by the slight and cunning of men from the straight path of honesty and truth. Amen.

PSALM 56.

PREFACE.

With a good grace to give way to a rude and unfeeling man and to bear with the selfishness and frowardness of a hard and unjust

master is trying to the soul. Meekly to suffer injustice and silently to bear oppression requires a triumph over one's own resentful heart. Hence patience, that noble, lovely and wholesome herb, does not grow in every garden. But with us Christians the evil inclination of the heart to spitefulness and retaliation must be overcome and patience must be planted and fostered in the heart. "*Ye have need of patience,*" says the apostle, "*that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise*" (Hebrews 10:36). Suffering wrongfully belongs to our Christian calling (1 Peter 2:21), and has its promise of reward. If, without anger or murmuring, we commit our cause to God, He will, in His own time and way, certainly do what the Scriptures declare of Him, saying: "*The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed*" (Psalm 103:6). And the suffering Thessalonians, Paul comforted with these words: *It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven* (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7). In this fifty-sixth Psalm we have an example of patience.

A prayer for deliverance.

To the chief Musician upon *Jonath-elemrechokim,
Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

[*The silent dove in exile, A golden Psalm of David]

1. Be merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresses me.
2. Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up; for *they be* many that fight against me, O Thou Most High.
3. What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.
4. In God I will praise His Word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
5. Every day they wrest my words; all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.
6. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.
7. Shall they escape by iniquity? In *Thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

8. Thou tellest my wanderings; put Thou my tears in Thy †bottle; *are they* not in Thy Book?
9. When I cry *unto Thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back; this I know; for God *is* for me.
10. In God will I praise His Word; in the LORD will I praise His Word.
11. In God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
12. Thy vows *are* upon me, O God; I will render praises unto Thee.
13. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; *wilt* not *Thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

[†In Persia, tears of mourners are gathered in a vial.]

SUMMARY.

Here David makes great complaint of Saul and his adherents, by whom he was driven out of the land of Israel and obliged to seek safety with the Philistines, the enemies of his people. A fugitive from his native country, David comforted himself with the Lord's Word and Promise, which conferred on him the rightful title to the Kingdom, and he expresses his undoubting confidence that he would escape the hand of Saul, and the Lord would reward him for all his afflictions. We may pray this psalm both against those who deny and corrupt the Word of God, and those who would deprive us of the liberty to teach and to worship according to the Scriptures. And though we must suffer many things for Christ and His truth, God will number our tears and in due time He will wipe them away.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, by Thy mighty power and Thy outstretched arm, do Thou protect Thy Word and Church against all adversaries. Graciously preserve unto us peace in Church and state, and grant us to be and to remain members of Thy true, invisible Church, now in time and hereafter in eternity. Amen.

PSALM 57.

PREFACE.

As Daniel, the Lord's pious and holy prophet, lay in a den surrounded by savage lions, so the true Christians must dwell in this world, as in the domain of Satan, among tyrants, heretics, hypocrites and the outspoken enemies of the Lord. So long as the Christian lives in this world he is exposed to the assaults of the enemies and is in danger of yet losing his soul; for Satan is desirous to sift the Christians as wheat (*Luke 22:31*). Evil examples corrupt the virtuous and the enticing lust seduces the innocent. But if a lion is frightened away by the crowing of a cock, much rather is the devil driven away and his temptings overcome by instant prayer. Against the devices of Satan and all his accomplices and the snares of sin in which the Christian is so easily entangled we should pray every day, heartily trusting that God will keep us and will preserve our souls from evil. As a hen gathers her chicklings under her wings to protect them against wind and weather, so will the Lord secure His children under the shadow of His wings against the tempests excited by the enemies, will strengthen and refresh them in the hardships, adversities and inclemencies of their pilgrimage and will cause them to sing on the way as David in the fifty-seventh Psalm.

David's prayer against the cruelty of his enemies.

To the chief Musician, *Al-taschith, Michtam of David,
when he fled from Saul in the cave.

[*Destroy not, a prayer of David that he should not be destroyed by Saul.]

1. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusts in Thee; yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.
2. I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performs *all things* for me.
3. He shall send from Heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

4. My soul *is* among lions; *and* I lie *even among* them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.
5. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let* Thy glory *be* above all the earth.
6. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.
7. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.
8. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I *myself* will awake early.
9. I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto Thee among the nations.
10. For Thy Mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and Thy Truth unto the clouds.
11. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let* Thy Glory *be* above all the earth.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is very much like the preceding, and it was made on a similar occasion, a time when David was in great danger. We may pray it against the enemies of God's Word and Church. Especially worthy of note is the contrast between the first and the last part of this hymn. The first part sounds like the scream of a drowning man. It is an urgent, instant, pressing cry for help. It is the prayer of one who is about to be swallowed up. Then follows a Selah, as it were a pause, and the psalm suddenly changes into praise and thanksgiving. This very arrangement of the present and many other psalms should teach us this very practical lesson, that in need our prayer should lay hold upon God like the hand of a drowning man clutches a plank. Then an answer would come early enlarging our heart to the singing of praise. But a lukewarm prayer and a tardy answer suit together. *Ye people, pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us (Psalm 62:8).*

PRAYER.

God, Who hast commanded us to pray and hast promised to hear, behold we are not able and know not how to pray as we ought. Grant us Thy Spirit, the Spirit of prayer, to teach us to pray in Spirit and in Truth, and to intercede for us with sighings which cannot be uttered; and whenever we pray, hear Thou from Heaven, Thy Throne, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 58.

PREFACE.

What the pious and faithful do in their office and calling is pleasing to God, however lowly their person and mean their labor may appear in the estimation of men. And what the wicked do is displeasing to God, however high their standing or great their undertakings. God will also prosper the labors of the pious that they shall not be altogether in vain, but the designs of the wicked He will hinder that their hand cannot perform their enterprise (*Job 5:12*), or if God suffers them to ride prosperously it results in their own destruction. The groans of His poor, oppressed and persecuted children God records in His Book and their every sigh He will repay on the heads of their drivers. The tears of the widow flow down her cheeks, but they cry to Heaven against him who causes them to fall. Consider the Lord's judgments and beware of harming Christ and His members, or be ready to fare as one touching the apple of God's eye. So David teaches in the fifty-eighth Psalm.

David's complaint over the slanders of his enemies.

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David.

1. Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?
2. Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.
4. Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent; *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stops her ear.
5. Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.
6. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
7. Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually; *when* he bends *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.
8. As a snail *which* melts, let *every one of them* pass away; *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun.
9. Before your pots can *feel the thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living and in *His* wrath.
10. The righteous shall †rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
11. So that a man shall say, “Verily *there is* a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judges in the earth.”

[*Before the wicked can half accomplish their design,
God’s wrath will destroy them, and He helps the righteous.]

[†The righteous does not avenge himself,
but the just judgments of God are his delight.]

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David comforts his heart against the enemies of right and truth, who are hardened in their wickedness and in the error of their way. As an adder stops up her ear against the voice of the charmer lest she be subdued by his charming, so the ungodly foreclose their hearts against the Word of the Lord and will not be reproved, but rather lay plans to cause the pious to fall. Against them David comforts himself with five comparisons. Rushing waters come threatening destruction, but they soon flow away doing no harm. A bent bow looks dangerous, but the cord snapping it is harmless. A snail protrudes its horns, but a grain of salt makes it melt. As an untimely birth disappoints the hopes parents, so are the hopes of the wicked blasted. When they have reached their bounds the wicked are carried away as in a whirlwind, quicker than pots are

heated over a fire of thorns. The proud proposes to accomplish great things, but God disposes and it comes to naught.

PRAYER.

Lord, Who art the supreme Judge over all the earth, thanks be unto Thee, because Thou judgest equally and deals rightly with the children of men, abasing the wicked and exalting the pious. Teach us to trust Thy Providence, and whether we rest on beds of ease or must wade through water, grant us grace always to say: "The Lord is good, and right are His ways." Amen.

PSALM 59.

PREFACE.

For various reasons God did not suffer the Jews to be exterminated, but rather scattered them among all nations. One object of God was that they should be a living and perpetual monument of Christ's suffering and death, as David here says: "*Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by Thy power*" (verse 11). Whenever you meet a Jew, remember that the Jews crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Corinthians 2:8), and consider what bitter sufferings and what a shameful death the Son of God endured for the redemption of our soul. Another object of God was that the Jews should be a warning example to us Christians, reminding us, if we obey not the Gospel of Christ, God will punish us likewise, yea more severely, because greater light is given to us. By the judgment which fell on them we should be made wise to walk in the fear of God and not to despise or persecute His Word. If God spared not the natural branches, His own people whom He had chose for His inheritance, much less will He spare us of the Gentiles, if we prove ungrateful. Day by day let us give thanks unto Christ for His Holy and Innocent Suffering and Death. Daily let us examine our lives and walk in penitence, lest being steeped in sin we share the fate of the Jews. Of this we are earnestly reminded in the fifty-ninth Psalm.

Prayer against the persecutors.

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David;
when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God; defend me from them that rise up against me.
2. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.
3. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul; the mighty are gathered against me; not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.
4. They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault; awake to help me, and behold.
5. Thou therefore, O LORD God of Hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen; be not *merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.
6. They return at evening; they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.
7. Behold, they belch out with their mouth; swords *are* in their lips; for who, *say they*, doth hear?
8. But Thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.
9. *Because of* His strength will I wait upon Thee; for God *is* my Defense.
10. The God of my mercy shall prevent me; God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.
11. Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by Thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our Shield.
12. *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride; and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.
13. Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may* not *be*; and let them know that God rules in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.
14. And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.
16. But I will sing of Thy Power; yea, I will sing aloud of Thy Mercy in the morning; for Thou hast been my Defense and Refuge in the day of my trouble.
17. Unto Thee, O my Strength, will I sing; for God *is* my Defense, *and* the God of my Mercy.

SUMMARY.

David composed this psalm with reference to the house of Saul which lost the kingdom and, though eagerly seeking it, did not obtain it again. But this psalm is very properly regarded as a prophecy of Christ, of whom David was a figure. He foretells the wickedness of the Jews and that they would not be extirpated, but scattered among all nations, and all their teaching would be cursing and lying. So they do at this day; for all their teaching is to deny and to curse Christ. Therefore at evening they go round about the city like starving dogs and find nothing (*verse 14*), that is, since the time of the apostles in the evening of the world, they are scattered among the Gentiles wandering from land to land and eagerly seeking a kingdom of their own, but in vain. They must remain hungry dogs, wandering Jews, because they received not the true Messiah. When He knocks let us open.

PRAYER.

Help us, Lord our God, to profit by the dire punishment which came upon the Jews, that we may strive to hate and forsake all manner of evil and may be found in an order of good works. Grant us daily to live in penitence that we may escape the deserved punishment and may inherit the blessing of Abraham, promised to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 60.

PREFACE.

A good and peace-loving government, by which full liberty of conscience is guaranteed all citizens to worship God according to His Word and by which equity and righteousness is promoted, such a government is one of the greatest earthly blessings, one of the best temporal gifts. Such a government God gives to the people which He loves. Such a good and well ordered government God, in His goodness, has granted to our country and has preserved it since more than a century. Considering the good providence of God over our land, we have great reason to say with joyful hearts, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*" (*Psalm 33:12*). This, our gratitude, we should show by making the right use both of religious and civil liberty, according to the Word of the Lord; *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's* (*Matthew 22:21*). Using our liberty of conscience we should let the Word of God, in its fullness and purity, dwell among us richly, causing the Law to be preached in all its sharpness and the Gospel in all its sweetness, and seeing that the Sacraments are administered strictly in accordance with the Lord's institution. In the House of God our faces should be familiar and in all things we should adorn the Gospel of Christ with a pious life. By the government we should deal loyally and honestly, performing the duties of citizens, paying taxes, obeying the laws and so we should show ourselves both good Christians and good citizens. An example of a good ruler we have in the sixtieth Psalm.

David's prayer for the welfare of Israel.

To the chief Musician upon *Shushaneduth, Michtam of David,
to teach, when he strove with Aram-nahariam and
with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote Edom
in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand.

[*An ornament or costly jewel in the shape of a rose;
So David called his kingdom.]

1. O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast scattered us, Thou hast been displeased; O turn Thyself to us again.
2. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; Thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof; for it shakes.
3. Thou hast shown Thy people hard things; Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
4. Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the Truth. Selah.
5. That Thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* Thy right hand and hear me.
6. God hath spoken in His Holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the Valley of Succoth.
7. Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;
8. Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; Philistia, triumph thou because of me.
9. Who will bring me *into* the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?
10. *Wilt* not Thou, O God, *which* had cast us off? And *Thou*, O God, *which* did not go out with our armies?
11. Give us help from trouble; for vain *is* the help of man.
12. Through God we shall do valiantly; for He *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

SUMMARY.

Here David gives thanks to God for giving him so noble a kingdom and so prosperous a reign under which the fear of God greatly increased. Under Saul tyranny and oppression had been practiced, the priests of the Lord were innocently put to death, the fear of the Lord diminished, the Ark of the Covenant was little regarded (*1 Chronicles 13:3*), and the kingdom was hard pressed by the Philistines. Where a tyrant rules and God is not at home, there can be neither peace nor prosperity. Nevertheless, God preserved them a banner, His Covenant, Tabernacle and Mercy-seat, from which He heard the prayers of the oppressed. Succeeding to the kingdom, David brought the Tabernacle to Jerusalem and greatly

beautified the worship of the Lord, introducing singers and instruments of music. He also subdued the surrounding nations and made Israel to rule from the borders of Egypt to the river Euphrates, wherefore He here enumerates various nations as being subject to him. This psalm reminds us to pray for the spreading of David's, that is, Christ's Kingdom from sea to sea.

PRAYER.

Praise and thanks be unto Thee, our bountiful Father in Heaven, for all the good which Thou hast shown to us and our land. Preserve civil and religious liberty to us and our children, and grant peace and prosperity. Cause the Kingdom of Thy Son to flourish among us and keep us in the true and saving faith. Amen.

PSALM 61.

PREFACE.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is an everlasting King and of His Kingdom there will be no end. He died as the King of the Jews; for so read the superscription on His cross. But in His Death, He did not descend from His Throne as other kings do, He ascended to sit down on the Right Hand of the Majesty on high, mightily to rule over all things. So is fulfilled the oath of the Father saying, "*I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy Seed will I establish forever, and build up Thy Throne to all generations*" (*Psalm 89:3-4*). Long as the earth stands, the Kingdom of Christ can never become extinct. The pope, as the great Antichrist, had almost extirpated the true Church; God and Magog tread on the broad of the earth (*Revelation 20:9*), threatening utterly to overthrow the Holy City; yet Christ has His company of believers in every generation. He rules in the midst of His enemies (*Psalm 110:2*). Abiding in the Kingdom of Christ, we abide forever. In death we do not lose our citizenship, but as our King after death reassumed the

full splendor of that glory which He had with the Father before ever the world was (*John 17:5*), so shall we after death be made like Him; for we shall see Him as He is (*1 John 3:2*). To praise our King we should remember in reading the sixty-first Psalm.

Prayer for the prosperity of David's Kingdom.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah,
A Psalm of David.

1. Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
2. From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.
3. For Thou hast been a Shelter for me, *and* a strong Tower from the enemy.
4. I will abide in Thy Tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of Thy wings. Selah.
5. For Thou, O God, hast heard my vows; Thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear Thy Name.
6. Thou wilt prolong the king's life; *and* his years as many generations.
7. He shall abide before God for ever; O prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.
8. So will I sing praise unto Thy Name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was a prayer for the king of Israel that God should be his strong Tower and that his reign should be long and prosperous. Frequent changes of rulers are a misfortune to a land as Solomon (*Proverbs 28:2*) says: "*For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof; but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.*" The adage is true: "A new king, a new law, and this is seldom for the better." From this psalm we should learn to pray for the stability of our government, that God may, at all times, grant us rulers who govern wisely in agreement with the fundamental principles both of the general and

state government, and that our county be spared destructive revolutions and wars. This should be the petition of every Christian citizen, because blessed the land having good, old, settled and stable institutions. By its peculiar wording this psalm reminds us of that King of Israel Who sits on the Throne of David for ever, the King under Whose Sceptre we go in and out and find pasture for the soul (*John 10:9*).

PRAYER.

O God, Thou King of kings and Lord of lords, thanks be unto Thee, because Thou hast given to our land a good and a liberal government. Endow the civil officers with wisdom to rule this wide land and with integrity to seek the good of the people. Preserve the liberty which we enjoy to children and children's children, and increase among us the Kingdom of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 62.

PREFACE.

This we are never to doubt and in this faith our heart is to be fixed that God is able to succor us in every need of body and soul. *With God nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37); His hand is not shortened that it can not save (Isaiah 59:1); He is great in counsel and mighty in work (Jeremiah 32:19); He can do whatever He pleases in Heaven and earth, in the sea and all deep places (Psalm 135:6).* "Though great our needs and sore our woes, His grace much more aboundeth; His helping love no limit knows, Our utmost need it soundeth, Our Shepherd is the Lord, and He At last shall set His Israel free From all their sin and sorrow." On His Power and Truth let us cheerfully and joyfully build. If we are poor, He is rich; if we are sinful, He has righteousness; if we are cursed, He can bless; if we are weak, He is strong. If we, in anguish of heart, must cope with Satan, death and the fear of hell, He has these enemies under His thumb, and He will suffer no harm to come to them that fear Him.

Blessed are they that trust in Him. *Happy the people whose God is the LORD (Psalm 144:15)*. They will be instructed both to abound and to suffer need, *yea to do all things through Christ which strengthens them (Philippians 4:12)*. Unto a cheerful trust in God the sixty-second Psalm exhorts us.

God is our Refuge.

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

1. Truly my soul waits upon God; from Him *comes* my salvation.
2. He only *is* my Rock and my Salvation; *He is* my Defense; I shall not be greatly moved.
3. How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you; as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as* a tottering fence.
4. They only consult to cast *Him* down from His excellency; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but the curse inwardly. Selah.
5. My soul, wait Thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from Him.
6. He only *is* my Rock and my Salvation; *He is* my Defense; I shall not be moved.
7. In God *is* my salvation and my glory; the Rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.
8. Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him; God *is* a Refuge for us. Selah.
9. Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree *are* a lie; to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.
10. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*.
11. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongs* unto God.
12. Also unto Thee, Lord, *belongs* mercy; for Thou renders to every man according to his work.

SUMMARY.

It is a good thing to trust in God, but a vain thing to trust in man. Many imagine themselves well provided for and in need of nothing more, when they possess the friendship and favor of the rich and mighty or are popular with the multitude. Made proud and secure by their dependence on men, they fear no evil, thinking they shall not fall and trusting to help themselves by their own cunning. But the great of the earth are mortal and the multitude is fickle. Trust in man must at last be put to shame, but God is the same and He changes not. Trust in God and do wrong to no man; for this is well pleasing with God and men.

PRAYER.

Lord, our God, Who art a sure Refuge in need, grant us to love one another, and to honor and obey those whom Thou hast placed over us. But teach us Thy Spirit to trust alone in Thee, and not to make flesh our arm, that we may look alone unto Thee for our salvation, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 63.

PREFACE.

King David was a man highly enlightened of God, thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, and undoubtedly he excelled the priests of his day in godly knowledge; yet he had a strong desire to attend public worship in the Lord's sanctuary, where he could hear the voice of public preaching. He did not neglect preaching with the pretext that he had the knowledge of God and could edify himself by reading and meditating the Word of God. We must not imagine ourselves so wise and well grounded as to derive no more benefit from attendance at public worship. Through the hearing of the Word, the Holy Ghost works with peculiar power and effect, as the apostle says: "*Faith cometh by hearing,*" (*Romans 10:17*), wherefore the Lord commanded: "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*" (*Luke*

8:8). Hence those who despise this command of the Lord and will not go to hear the preaching of His Word when they have the opportunity are not to be counted Christians. But if the public preaching of the right Gospel is not in reach, or Christians are prevented from attending public worship by sickness or other impediments they are nevertheless members of the true, invisible Church, the spiritual Body of Christ, provided they adhere to Him in true faith. They that *will not* hear when they have the opportunity, cannot be Christians, but they that *can not* hear when they want to, can well be the children of God. This we learn from David's example in the sixty-third Psalm.

David's longing to be at public worship.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1. O God, Thou *art* my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh longs for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;
2. To see Thy Power and Thy Glory, so *as* I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary.
3. Because Thy loving-kindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.
4. Thus will I bless Thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy Name.
5. My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *Thee* with joyful lips;
6. When I remember Thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on Thee in the *night* watches.
7. Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.
8. My soul follows hard after Thee; Thy Right Hand upholds me.
9. But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it*, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
10. They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes.
11. But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that swears by Him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

SUMMARY.

When a fugitive in the wilderness, David, in this beautiful psalm, expressed his strong desire to attend public worship and to hear preaching in the Lord's Sanctuary, he complains of Saul and his helpers who, seeking his life, obliged him to hide in waste places and so prevented him from going up to the Tabernacle. It is a psalm of comfort for those who are deprived of hearing the Gospel preached, and it challenges all those to thankfulness and the praise of God who have His Word dwelling among them richly. The concluding verse is rightly explained as referring to Christ and His enemies. Saul and his house persecuted David, but lost the kingdom and did not obtain it again. The Jews rejected Christ, and they were cast out of the Kingdom and have not obtained it again. But Christ sits on the Throne of David, able to save those that look to Him.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, our most merciful Father in Heaven, for the Word of Thy Gospel which is able to save the soul. Grant Thy saving Truth to them that have it not and cause Thy Light to shine unto the nations sitting in the darkness of idolatry. Through Thy Word draw us to Thy Son that we may have Life in Him. Amen.

PSALM 64.

PREFACE.

He that sinks a pit for another shall himself fall into it. The slanderer will fall by his own tongue. Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had built for Mordecai (*Esther 7:10*). Those deceitful counselors at the Persian court were themselves cast into the den of lions into which they had caused Daniel to be thrown (*Daniel 6:24*). The Keeper of Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep (*Psalms 121:4*). He faithfully watches over His own and by His

Wisdom, He entangles those, who would harm His children, in their own snares. Let us trust His Goodness and let us commit all our ways to Him. He is mighty to save. For a while He may leave us in suspense, but when His hour is come, He will deliver. He endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath (*Romans 9:22*), but when they have shown that they will not repent, He breaks them in pieces. Though hidden, His ways, yet all must finally acknowledge that His judgments are right. This comforting truth is taught in the sixty-fourth Psalm.

*David's prayer for deliverance from
the deceitful tongues of slanderers.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
2. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity;
3. Who whet their tongue like a sword, *and bend their bows to shoot* their arrows, *even bitter words*;
4. That they may shoot in secret at the perfect; suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
5. They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter; they commune of laying snares privily; they say, "Who shall see them?"
6. They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search; both the inward *thought* of ever one *of them*, and the heart, *is* deep.
7. But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.
8. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves; all that see them shall flee away.
9. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing.
10. The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory

SUMMARY.

This is an earnest prayer of David against those who maliciously betrayed and slandered him, as Doeg, Ahithophel and others. His enemies were many, and they took counsel together and used many deceitful arts to destroy him. But David comforted himself with the assurance that the Lord would take them in their own craftiness and their own tongue would cause them to fall. And David lived to see that his confidence in the Lord was not put to shame. He saw the wickedness of those who abused his confidence to betray him, repaid upon themselves. Many a plot has the arch-enemy of Christ devised against His Church, and his cunning rebounded upon his own head. When men speak evil against you without a cause, commit it to God and be quiet. He will be your Advocate and He will bring it to pass, and the right shall come to light.

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou Keeper of Israel and alone the true Defense of Thy people, defend Thy Church against the power of persecutors and the delusions of false prophets. Convert and make Thine enemies Thy friends. And if any will harden their hearts in their perverse ways, do Thou bring their counsels to naught, and bless Thy inheritance, and cause the world to see that Thou judges righteously. Amen.

PSALM 65.

PREFACE.

The true Christian orders and societies are not those invented by men, such as the orders of monks and nuns, the lodges of secretists, and the like; and to enter these is not a service of God. The true Christian orders and estates are those instituted of God: the ecclesiastical, the civil and the domestic. To the ecclesiastical order all those belong who are in Christ Jesus. They are the true, invisible Church, the Community of Saints. To them are given the keys of the

Kingdom of Heaven, the administration of the Word and the Sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost delivers men from the power of darkness and translates them into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, in Whom they have the forgiveness of sin and are made heirs of eternal Life (*Colossians 1:13*). The civil authority does not extend over conscience and religion; it has not the duty to provide for the eternal salvation of the soul; it deals only with earthly morality and temporal goods for the protection of the good and the punishment of the wicked (*Romans 13:3-4*). The domestic is the estate of wedlock, in which husband and wife are to dwell together in love and unity, to govern their household and to rear a family of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (*Ephesians 6:4*). These are the three orders or estates instituted of God, and blessed the land where they are conducted right, where the Gospel is preached in its purity, where the government seeks righteousness and peace, and where husband and wife dwell together as one soul. For these blessings we are reminded to pray in the sixty-fifth Psalm.

Thanksgiving for spiritual and temporal blessings.

To the chief Musician,
A Psalm and Song of David.

1. Praise waits for Thee, O God, in Zion; and unto Thee shall the vow be performed.
2. O Thou that hears prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come.
3. Iniquities prevail against me; *as for* our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away.
4. Blessed *is the man whom* Thou chooses, and causes to approach *unto Thee, that* he may dwell in Thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy House, *even* of Thy Holy Temple.
5. *By* terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation; *Who art* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off *upon* the sea:
6. Which by His strength sets fast the mountains; *being* girded with power:
7. Which stills the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens; Thou makes the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.
9. Thou visits the earth, and waters it; Thou greatly enriches it with the river of God, *which* is full of water; Thou prepares them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it.
10. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; Thou settles the furrows thereof; Thou makes it soft with showers; Thou blesses the springing thereof.
11. Thou crowns the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness.
12. They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side.
13. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

SUMMARY.

This is a song of thanksgiving for God's spiritual and temporal gifts. For His spiritual blessings, in that He hears prayer, provides the forgiveness of sin, and grants the preaching of His Word in His Holy Temple. For God's temporal gifts in granting good government, whereby wars and tumults are stilled, and the husbandman can cultivate the soil with safety and gather his harvests with rejoicing. Alas! That so many, instead of giving thanks to God, abuse His gifts unto luxurious and vicious living, as they did in Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us rather consider the abundance which God gives as a strong inducement to repentance, seeing we are unprofitable servants and have not deserved the least of His gifts.

PRAYER.

Father of mercy, by Thy gracious Spirit, so guide and govern us as to use aright Thy spiritual and temporal gifts. Preserve the estates which Thou hast instituted both for the eternal salvation and the temporal welfare of mankind, and by Thy might arm, do Thou hinder and destroy that revolutionary spirit of anarchy which would subvert Thy order, and do Thou keep us in Thy Word. Amen.

PSALM 66.

PREFACE.

In the time of affliction we are to offer prayer and supplication to God, trusting His truth and His mercy, and not doubting that He will hear and will help. Thereafter, when God has answered our prayer and we have experienced His help, then we are to show ourselves grateful, giving thanks unto Him and charging our soul not to forget His benefits (*Psalm 103:2*). The receiving of gifts solicits the returning of thanks. Even so, the Lord commanded, “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me*” (*Psalm 50:15*). When, in the days of Samuel, God had given a great victory over the Philistines, the prophet took a stone and, setting it up for a memorial between Mispheh and Shen, he “*called the name of it Ebenezer saying, ‘Hitherto hath the Lord helped us’*” (*1 Samuel 7:12*). When we have been saved from danger or restored from sickness, when we have received peculiar blessings from God, when He has prospered our house, when we have completed another period of our life, yea also when our days are drawing to an end and we are about to go to sleep in the cemetery, we should erect a monument of thanksgiving in our heart, inscribing upon it: “Ebenezer, hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Praise be unto His Holy Name.” Unto prayer and praise we are exhorted in the sixty-sixth Psalm.

Praise of God for His wonderful works.

To the chief Musician, A Song *or* Psalm.

1. Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands;
2. Sing forth the honor of His Name; make His praise glorious.
3. Say unto God, “How terrible *art Thou in Thy works!* Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee.
4. All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing *to Thy Name*. Selah.

5. Come and see the works of God; *He is terrible in His* doing toward the children of men.
6. He turned the sea into dry *land*; they went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in Him.
7. He rules by His power for ever; His eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.
8. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard;
9. Which holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved.
10. For Thou, O God, hast proved us; Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
11. Thou brought us into the net; Thou laid affliction upon our loins.
12. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou brought us out into a wealthy *place*.
13. I will go into Thy House with burnt offerings; I will pay Thee my vows.
14. Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.
15. I will offer unto Thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.
16. Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.
17. I cried unto Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue.
18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*;
19. *But* verily God hath heard *me*; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
20. Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me.

SUMMARY.

This is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise for the many mercies and deliverances which God showed unto His people Israel. Often did the Lord save them from the hand of their oppressors and wonderfully did He nourish them in the wilderness. The books of the

Judges, of Samuel and the Kings are replete with histories showing how often God awakened saviors for His people and how He cause their very afflictions to promote their true welfare. These histories should confirm our trust in God and should encourage us unto prayer and praise. But, in offering up our prayers, let us well remember what is said in the 18th verse: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* God will not hear the prayer of those who willfully live in sin. We must repent, we must forsake sin and turn to Christ, then will our prayers enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, then will our praise be comely before Him.

PRAYER.

Thanks and praise be unto Thee, Thou God of all grace, because Thou hast delivered our souls from the bondage of Satan, leading them through the Red Sea of the Blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ, our Savior. Cleanse us evermore with His Blood that, with all Thy saints, we may continually praise Thee. Amen.

PSALM 67.

PREFACE.

The highest, noblest and most precious of all trinkets and treasures is the grace and blessing of our God. More to be desired are they than all the world's treasures and pleasures. What could the world, with all its wisdom and riches, help us in the Day of God's vengeance? And what harm can the world, together with all the angels of darkness, do to us, if God is gracious unto us and His Fatherly blessing is resting upon us? *If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).* Though we were cast into the deepest dungeon, or our bodies were burnt to ashes, yet living or dying, we are the Lord's *(Romans 14:8).* For His grace and blessing, let us daily return fervent thanks unto God, imploring Him so to govern our hearts that we receive not His grace in vain. Day by day, grasping His grace more firmly, let us look for and haste unto the coming of the great Day of our Lord Jesus Christ *(2 Peter 3:12),*

when faith will end and sight begin (*2 Corinthians 5:7*), and we will be filled with unspeakable joy seeing Him as He is. In the meantime, while we are yet sojourning in this nether world, may the Father of all mercy cause His face continually to shine upon us, that, saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us, we may serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him (*Luke 1:71, 75*). On His saving grace, let us hear the sixty-seventh Psalm.

Prayer for Divine grace and blessing on the Church.

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

1. God be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause His face to shine upon us. Selah.
2. That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.
3. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.
4. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.
5. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.
6. *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; *and* God, *even* our own God shall bless us.
7. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

SUMMARY.

Here we again have a prophecy of Christ and His Kingdom spreading among all nations even unto the ends of the earth. The psalmist pictures Christ as so governing the nations that they rejoice before Him and sing praise; for this King deals with His subjects through the Gospel and not through the Law. He is not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved (*John 3:17*). This King brings to His people the forgiveness of their sins and, assuring them of the Father's grace, He enlarges their hearts to walk before Him in righteousness and joy. This is the new and true worship of the new and true Covenant in the Son. For He does not say, the Gentiles would come to Jerusalem and be

circumcised, He speaks of them as remaining Gentiles, and yet praising God and serving Him with joyous hearts.

PRAYER.

Praise and thanks be unto our God for calling us of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of His dear Son, and making us partakers of His grace and salvation. May He grant us grace to walk worthy of the Gospel whereby we are called and to serve Him in joy and gladness all our days through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 68.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Let Satan and the world rave and rage against the Kingdom of Christ with might and main, they can not overthrow it. As the Lord is invincible, so His Kingdom is founded on a rock which cannot be moved. This truth let us well remember in these latter days when Satan has great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time (*Revelation 12:12*). He does not now excite to violent persecution as he did of old, he works with greater craftiness. In the very Name of Christ, and with pretended zeal for religion, he is striving to undermine the foundation and to destroy the Divine authority of the inspired Word in the minds of men. And indeed, irreligion has greatly increased and infidelity is spread wide. But thou, my soul, consider: what the Word foretold of old, is fulfilled at this day. The Word of our God stands sure, when the wisdom of the wise fails and cunning of the crafty forsakes them. Often have the infidels prophesied the overthrow of Zion, and it has grown and has spread to the ends of the earth. He that sitteth on the Throne of Power has made the Church His own Abode and her enemies are but captives in His hand. Of this the first part of the sixty-eighth Psalm assures us.

Of Christ's exaltation and His glorious Kingdom.
To the chief Musician, A Psalm of Song of David.

1. Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him.
2. As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away; as wax melts before the fire, *so* let the wicked perish at the Presence of God.
3. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
4. Sing unto God, sing praises to His Name; extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His Name JAH, and rejoice before Him.
5. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in His Holy Habitation.
6. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those which are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.
7. O God, when Thou went forth before Thy people, when Thou didst march through the wilderness, Selah.
8. The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the Presence of God; *even* Sinai itself *was moved* at the Presence of God, the God of Israel.
9. Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was weary.
10. Thy Congregation hath dwelt therein; Thou, O God, hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor.
11. The Lord gave the Word; great *was* the company of those that published *it*.
12. Kings of armies did flee apace; and *she that tarried at home divided the spoil.
13. Though ye have lain among the pots, *yet shall ye be as* the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.
14. When the Almighty scattered †kings in it, it was *white* as snow in ‡Salmon.
15. The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; a high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.
16. Why leap ye, ye high hills? *This is* the hill *which* God desired to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.
17. The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels; the LORD *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the Holy *Place*.
18. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

[*The church, the mistress of the house, Christ's bride.]

[† Teachers turning many to righteousness.]

[‡ A dark place.]

SUMMARY.

This entire psalm treats of Christ and His Kingdom, and the right understanding we must gather from the fulfillment in the New Testament. In this first part it speaks of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, the sending of the Holy Ghost and the commissioning of the apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, to bring glad tidings to the poor and to break the bands of the captives. He calls the apostles kings. Because they are the leaders among the hosts of disciples who, with the weapons of the Gospel, war against sin, death, hell, science falsely so called, the world's hypocritical piety and whatever belongs to the kingdom of darkness. To picture the success of the Gospel, He calls the Church a high and fruitful hill, and the chariot of God with ten thousand saints. This chariot of God impelled by zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles has rolled to the uttermost isles conquering many thousands, and now the missionaries, the captains whom the Lord has scattered among His enemies, are storming the strongholds of idolatry. Postpone not to secure a place in the chariot, let the pagans go into the Kingdom before you.

PRAYER.

Glory and praise and honor belong unto Thee, Thou Lamb of God, because Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood and hast led our captivity captive. Pour out Thy Spirit upon the dry soil of our hearts, that He may cause faith and love to spring up in it and to bring fruit unto Eternal Life. Amen.

PSALM 68.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

In the time of the Old Testament God had separated unto Himself a peculiar people, to whom He gave His oracles and statutes

and among whom He dwelt in a peculiar manner in the Holy of Holies. The worship instituted for this people consisted in sacrifices, washings, keeping of days and the like. It was a worship in which time, place and manner were minutely determined and these outward observances were a shadow of things to come. Hence in the New Testament, these shadows are done away and the worship of God is no more bound to a particular place, or the observing of days, or any outward ceremonies. The temple of the New Testament is built of living stones, it being the company of those who are led by the Spirit of God (*Romans 8:14*). The builder of this temple is the Holy Ghost — faithful ministers are His helpers and the Church the building (*1 Corinthians 3:9*). The instrument which the Holy Ghost uses in building is His Word, which is the voice of Christ, and the sacraments as the visible Word of God. The material for this spiritual temple, the Holy Ghost gathers out of every nation and kindred and tongue and people (*Revelation 14:6*). When His voice, by which He builds, falls on your ear, harden not your hearts; when He draws you resist Him not. The temple of God is built by the Word of His mouth; so let it dwell with you richly. Remember it when thou rises up in the morning and meditate on it in the night when you lie down. And now, let us hear the Word as contained in the latter part of the sixty-eighth Psalm.

19. Blessed *be* the LORD, *Who* daily loads us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. Selah.
20. *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death.
21. But God shall wound the head of His enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such a one as goes on still in His trespasses.
22. The Lord said, “I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *My* people again from the depths of the sea;
23. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, *and* the tongue of thy dogs in the same.”
24. They have seen Thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the Sanctuary.
25. The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels.

26. Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
27. There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.
28. Thy God hath commanded thy strength; strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us.
29. Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto Thee.
30. Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter Thou the people *that* delight in war.
31. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.
32. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord. Selah.
33. To Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *where were* of old; lo, He doth send out His voice, *and that* a mighty voice.
34. Ascribe ye strength unto God; His excellency *is* over Israel, and His strength *is* in the clouds.
35. O God, *Thou art* terrible out of Thy holy places; the God is Israel *is* He that gives strength and power unto *His* people. Blessed *be* God.

SUMMARY.

The time of the New Testament is here described as a time of joy and gladness, when His people glorify God with singing and music, when the Bridegroom is present and the Bride rejoices. Hence the Word of Christ is called Gospel, good news, glad tidings, because it proclaims to us the grace of God, the forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, and assures us of it as a sure salvation, because it is in Jesus Christ, Who is God over all, a mighty Savior. He who was able to visit His Blood on the head of the Jews and to scatter them to the four winds, the same is also mighty to gather His people and to save them from the very jaws of hell. For to Him belong the issues from death and He holds the keys of hell and of death. Seeing then so great and so sure a salvation is offered unto us, let us rejoice and be glad trusting our souls to Him and glorying under the shadow of His wings.

PRAYER.

Lord, I will tell, while I am living,
 Thy goodness forth with every breath,
And greet each morning with thanksgiving
 Until my heart is cold in death,
Yea, when at last my lips grow cold,
 Thy praise shall in my sighs be told. Amen.

PSALM 69.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Our Lord Jesus Christ endured anguish and suffering such as no man, no, nor an angel of Heaven could have endured. Inwardly, in His soul, He was loaded with the world's sin, lashed by the fiery wrath of God and the inexorable curse of the Law, tormented by the utmost power of Satan, stung by the pangs of death, oppressed and racked by all the powers of darkness. This internal anguish of soul caused His Blood to ooze from His veins and to redden the soil of the Valley of the Oil-press. Outwardly, He suffered all manner of torments and indignities. They bound Him; they smote Him on the cheek; they scourged Him and crowned Him with thorns; they spat Him in the face; they spiked Him to the cross; they mocked Him and wagged their heads over Him, and He was the song of the drinkers in the taverns. And when He had suffered all these things and many more, they laid Him in the sepulcher stark and dead. O what a terrible, dreadful thing is sin in the sight of God, because it pressed so heavily on Jesus Christ that His humanity must have been utterly crushed, had it not been upheld by His Divinity. Attempt not to bear your own sins before God, or even the very least of them will cause you everlasting pain. Embrace Christ's Sacrifice as alone the propitiation for your iniquities and flee sin as the most deadly poison of the soul. Learn the bitterness of sin from Messiah's sorrowful complaint in the first part of the sixty-ninth Psalm.

Christ's prayer in His suffering.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, *A Psalm* of David.

1. Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *My* soul.
2. I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me.
3. I am weary of My crying; My throat is dried; Mine eyes fail while I wait for My God.
4. They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of Mine head; they that would destroy Me, *being* Mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; then I restored *that* which I took not away.
5. O God, Thou knowest My foolishness; and My sins are not hid from Thee.
6. Let not them that wait on Thee O Lord GOD of Hosts, be ashamed for My sake; let not those that seek Thee be confounded for My sake, O God of Israel.
7. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered My face.
8. I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children.
9. For the zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me.
10. When I wept, *and chastened* My soul with fasting, that was to My reproach.
11. I made sackcloth also My garment; and I became a proverb to them.
12. They that sit in the gate speak against Me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards.
13. But as for Me, My prayer *is* unto Thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy hear Me, in the truth of Thy salvation.
14. Deliver Me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let Me be delivered from them that hate Me, and out of the deep waters.
15. Let not the water-flood overflow Me, neither let the deep swallow Me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon Me.
16. Hear Me, O LORD; for Thy loving-kindness *is* good; turn unto Me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies.

17. And hide not Thy face from Thy Servant; for I am in trouble; hear me speedily.
18. Draw nigh unto My soul, *and* redeem it; deliver Me because of Mine enemies.
19. Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor; Mine adversaries *are* all before Thee.

SUMMARY.

It is Jesus Christ Who is speaking in this psalm, and it might properly be called His song of complaint in His suffering. He declares that He must restore what He took not away. We robbed God of His Glory, and Christ was sent to restore it. Therefore, our sins were so accounted to Him, and He was so made to suffer for them as though He had committed them Himself, wherefore He also calls them His sins (*verse 5*). My soul, leave thou thy sins upon Him and embrace Him as thy Righteousness and thy Life, and thou shalt never be put to shame before God. He also complains that His own received Him not, but rejected Him as being a reproach unto them. He became a curse and an execration to His own people that we should be blessed forever. He humbled Himself to be made a reproach on earth that we should be heirs with the saints in light.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Thou Friend of our soul, because Thou didst bear our sins in Thine own Body on the tree, that by Thy stripes we might be healed. Let Thy cross be our comfort and strengthen our faith to confess Thy Name upon earth and never to be ashamed of Thee or of Thy Word. Amen.

PSALM 69.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

When Jesus Christ was about to yield up His Soul and to give His Life for the life of the world, He yet said: "*I thirst*" (*John 19:28*). This was done that it might be fulfilled what He had spoken

by the mouth of David, they would give Him vinegar to drink; for a soldier filled a sponge with vinegar and held it to His lips. Our Redeemer had to suffer the torments of thirst, such thirst that His strength was dried up like a potsherd and His tongue clave to His jaws (*Psalms 22:15*). This was done to make atonement for the thirst after honor, power, riches and pleasures which the ambitious entertain, and because the sins of drunkenness and intemperance also fell upon Him. What bloodshed and misery has the ambition of heartless men brought on mankind in all ages! How many thousand souls have been drowned in the cup and have gone down to the fiery pit! How many a house, which might and ought to have been a resort of the angels, has the drink-devil made a lion's den or a dog's kennel! But the Lord's bodily thirst shows the longing of His Soul. He thirsts for our salvation, the salvation also of the ambitious, the avaricious and the drunkards. With arms spread wide, He invitingly says: "*Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" (*Matthew 11:28*). Repent of sin and come unto Me, and you shall find forgiveness and rest for your soul. This, His desire, is expressed also in the latter part of the sixty-ninth Psalm.

20. Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was none*; and for comforters, but I found none.
21. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.
22. Let their *table become a snare before them; and *that which should have been* for their welfare, *let it become* a trap.
23. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.
24. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them.
25. Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents.
26. For the persecute *him* whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded.
27. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into Thy righteousness.
28. Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not be written with the righteous.

29. But I *am* poor and sorrowful; let Thy salvation, O God, set Me upon on high.
30. I will praise the Name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
31. *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
32. The humble shall see *this, and* be glad; and your heart shall live that seek God.
33. For the LORD hears the poor, and despises not His prisoners.
34. Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and every thing that moves therein.
35. For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.
36. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it; and they that love His Name shall dwell therein.

[*Their doctrine, by which they think to nourish souls]

SUMMARY.

Here the Messiah gave both a sad and a glad prophecy. The sad refers to the willful and malicious rejection of Christ by the Jews, after which followed their blinding and the destruction of their city and nation. Their table, the Law given by Moses, became a snare unto them. The builders — the chief priests and elders — thought to insure the safety of the nation, the temple and the worship by putting Jesus of Nazareth to death, but O how dreadfully was their sin visited upon them! Even to this day, the Jews seek righteousness in the Law and find it not as Paul argues Romans 10.

The glad prophecy refers to the new Church which would take the place of the Jewish synagogue. The members of this new — the Christian Church — would no more bring sacrifices of beasts and birds, but would give themselves, with body and soul, a living sacrifice unto God, praising Him with heart and lips, in word and deed, as our eyes see it.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, by Thine own mercy, Thou didst thirst for our salvation before ever the foundations of the earth were laid, and in

the fullness of time, Thou was made flesh and didst suffer thirst on the cross that Thy thirst for our souls might be stilled. Grant us the water of Life, preserve us from ingratitude and take not the Word of Thy salvation from us. Amen.

PSALM 70.

PREFACE.

In misfortunes, sorrows and afflictions lift up your eyes unto God and let your needs and your petitions be made known unto Him. When those who envy and hate you without a cause lay snares for you and devise plans to harm you in reputation or property, entrust your cause with all your fears and cares unto God. He is wise and faithful and mighty, able to help in every need, and powerful to foil the designs of the wicked. He has promised to be the Helper, Deliverer and God of them that trust in Him and commit themselves into His care. We Christians are not to seek revenge, to return evil for evil, or to murmur in afflictions; for this is against the Divine injunction. To cry unto God is the best, and to trust that He can and will help at the right time and in the right way is the most comforting. And if it seems as though He would not hear, persevering prayer must at last prevail. But to the wicked will be done what they intended to do and what they did do unto others; for the Lord has said, "*With the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again (Luke 6:38)*". Budding already is the calamity of those who rejoice over the afflictions of God's children. So David teaches in the seventieth Psalm.

David's prayer for help against the enemies.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, to bring to remembrance.

1. *Make haste*, O God, to deliver Me; make hast to help Me, O LORD.
2. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after My soul; let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire My hurt.

3. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, "Aha, aha."
4. Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; and let such as love Thy salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified."
5. But I *am* poor and needy; make hast unto Me, O God; Thou *art* My Help and My Deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is take almost verbatim from the fortieth Psalm, and the words in the title, "to bring to remembrance," were perhaps intended to bring to remembrance that psalm and Him of whom it treats, that is the Messiah. Remember Jesus Christ. Whenever you open the Bible, alone or in the family circle, remember that Jesus Christ is the sun and centre, the beginning and the end of all Scripture. To Him this psalm also applies. He cries unto His Father to help Him early and to put His enemies to shame. For a while His enemies seemed to prevail, but soon He ascended the Father's Throne and His Victory is our salvation. Since Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, sits on the Throne of Glory ... Lord over all ... none are put to shame who seek salvation by Him. *Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).*

PRAYER.

It is meet and right for all on earth to give glory unto Thee, O Father of mercy, because Thou didst send Thy Son to war against and to overcome our enemies. Endow us with strength and fortitude never to despair in the strife with the powers of darkness, but at all times grant us victory and perseverance through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 71.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Early and youthful piety has its peculiar advantages, and is highly praiseworthy. The young man and maiden who walk in the

paths of worldliness and sin, will in all likelihood wander farther away from God, will become worse from year to year, and will finally perish in their sins. As the twig is bent so the tree will be. As the boy, so the man. Though some, who in young days lived in sin do, by the grace of God in after years, come to repentance and seek the Lord, yet remorse for the sins of their youth will follow them throughout their life. But they who seek the Lord early will walk in the obedience of the fourth commandment and will obtain the blessing added to it. They have a lifetime before them in which to serve God and to be a blessing unto the world. Increasing in experience and knowledge they grow after the inner man from year to year until they reach that perfection which the apostle marked out for the Ephesians (4:13), *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*, that is, they become settled Christians, rooted in the faith, experienced in withstanding the temptations of Satan and the world and practiced in crucifying the flesh and in resisting its affections and lusts. God also will carry them unto old age and, like Simeon, they shall depart in peace. Early and lifelong piety is commended in the first part of the seventy-first Psalm.

A prayer in time of need.

1. In Thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.
2. Deliver me in Thy Righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Thine ear unto me, and save me.
3. Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort; Thou hast given commandment to save me; for Thou *art* my Rock and my Fortress
4. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
5. For Thou *art* my hope, O Lord GOD; *Thou art* my Trust from my youth.
6. By Thee I have been holden up from the womb; Thou art He that took me out of my mother's bowels; my praise *shall be* continually of Thee.
7. I am as a wonder unto many; but Thou *art* my strong Refuge.
8. Let my mouth be filled *with* Thy praise *and with* Thy honor all the day.

9. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.
10. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,
11. Saying, "God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him; for *there is none to deliver him.*"
12. O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste for my help.
13. Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt.

SUMMARY.

In the first part of this psalm David prays with a peculiarly strong confidence, calling God his strong Habitation, his Rock and his Fortress. A strong castle built on a high rock is a safe habitation. It is a shelter in the heat of the day, a protection against the chilliness of the night, a refuge from the enemies. The soul dwelling in God inhabits a strong tower built on a high cliff. When bearing the heat of the day, that soul is refreshed by God's loving kindness. Experiencing the coldness of this world, it is enlivened by the assurance of His unchanging love. Though its enemies are many and mighty, the wings of the Almighty cover it and the potentates of Heaven encamp round about it. They that trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall live to see their enemies put to shame, and in old age they will not be forsaken.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who in Thy childhood, did set an example for the young to follow, by Thy Holy Word do Thou Thyself teach our children and all the rising generation the beginning of wisdom, which is the fear of God. Cause our young men and maidens to shun the by-ways of vanity and vice and to walk in the straight path of godliness and virtue and make them ornaments of Thy Holy Church. Amen.

PSALM 71.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Concerning the time of His coming to Judgment, the Lord says: "*When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8). The community of saints will not have become entirely extinct when the trumpet sounds to Judgment, but the true believers will be comparatively few. Of the age preceding the end of the world, Paul draws this picture: *In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* (2 Timothy 3:1-2). Into these perilous times our lives have fallen; for in these words Paul certainly draws a true picture of the life and doings of men in these our days. But too many profess to be Christians when the Life and Spirit of Christ are not in them. The faith, even of the true believers, is with many but a weak and sickly plant. It is as though old age, with its feebleness and debility had crept on Christendom. Well may we pray with David, "*Help, Lord; for the Godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men*" (Psalm 12:1). Forsake us not, O Lord of Hosts. Keep us from infidelity, that infecting plague of the latter days. Strengthen our feeble faith and let not seductions overpower us, but do as Thou has promised: *Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you* (Isaiah 46:4). For this David prays in the latter part of the seventy-first Psalm.

14. But I will hope continually, and will yet praise Thee more and more.
15. My mouth shall show forth Thy Righteousness *and* Thy Salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*.
16. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Thy Righteousness, *even* of Thine only.

17. O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works.
18. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shown Thy Strength unto *this* generation, *and* Thy Power to every one *that* is to come.
19. Thy Righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who has done great things; O God, who *is* like unto Thee?
20. *Thou*, which hast shown me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
21. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.
22. I will also praise Thee with the psaltery, *even* Thy Truth, O my God; unto Thee will I sing with the harp, O Thou Holy One of Israel.
23. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto Thee; and my soul, which Thou hast redeemed.
24. My tongue also shall talk of Thy Righteousness all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

SUMMARY.

“This psalm,” says Dr. Luther, “in my opinion is spoken in the person of all Christendom from the beginning till the end, against all enemies and persecutions. Particularly does he pray for his old age, that is, for the latter day Christians, when the times are perilous, when faith diminishes, and the Gospel is oppressed, as Daniel foretold, the Truth would be oppressed and unrighteousness would prevail. This we abundantly experienced under Mohammed and the pope. Hence he praises alone God’s righteousness which he learned of God from his youth or from the beginning. Highly comforting, therefore, is the prophecy that before the end of the world, the Gospel had to be brought to light again, by which He has brought us up again from the depths of the earth (*verse 20*). To this, that common saying among the Christians refers, that Elias and Enoch should come to expose the lies of Antichrist and to restore all things.”

PRAYER.

Lord our Father in Heaven, thanks be to Thee that Thou didst awake Thy servant Martin Luther to restore again to Christendom the Gospel of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and have preserved unto us the knowledge of Thy saving Truth. Grant us hearts to appreciate Thy Truth that we may steadfastly continue in Thy Word and may escape the snares of these evil days. Amen.

PSALM 72.

PREFACE.

For a true and saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must first know who and what He is in His own nature and person — that He is by nature God, begotten from the essence of the Father, and also true man born of the virgin Mary. Furthermore, we must know what He earned for our lost and condemned race by His Holy Life, His bitter suffering, His shameful death and His joyous Resurrection and Ascension. In the third place, we must also eat the fruit of His work, claiming His merits as ours and so dressing our souls in His garments of salvation, in them to appear before the Father. And having been made heirs through faith, we must also praise Him with hearts and hands and voices, showing our faith by our works.

If we so honor Jesus Christ, there will be fulfilled in us what He promised saying: *“If any man serve Me, Him will My Father honor”* (John 12:26). But in those who despise Christ, will be accomplished what He threatens in the same chapter (verse 48) saying, *“He that rejects Me, and receives not My Words, hath One that judges him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”* As our King and Savior, Christ is described in the seventy-second Psalm.

Prophecy of Christ and His Kingdom.

A Psalm for Solomon.

1. Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son.
2. He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment.
3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.
4. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.
5. They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.
6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers *that* water the earth.
7. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures.
8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.
9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust.
10. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.
12. For He shall deliver the needy when He cries; the poor also, and *him* that has no helper.
13. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.
14. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in His sight.
15. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for Him continually; *and* daily shall He be praised.
16. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17. His Name shall endure for ever; His Name shall be continued as long as the sun; and *men* shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed.
18. Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things.
19. And blessed *be* His glorious Name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled *with* His Glory. Amen, and Amen.
20. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

SUMMARY.

This last of his psalms David composed in his old age, and it is a peculiarly lovely song of Christ and His Kingdom. The disciples were indeed but a handful of grain, but their preaching shook the nations and they quickly multiplied into a grain field extending over city and country. In this Kingdom, sin and an evil conscience have no sway as under the Law. It is a Kingdom of forgiveness and righteousness in which peace of heart and joy in the Holy Ghost abounds and rules. Yet he also foretold the persecutions of the Christians, but pronounces the blood of the martyrs precious in the sight of the Lord. The worship in this Kingdom of Christ is prayer and praise — prayer for its prosperity and praise for the King's benefits. This is the daily offering of the Gentiles; for he describes kings and nations as bowing to Christ, acknowledging Him their King and worshiping Him as being by nature God with prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, our Heavenly Father, do we lift up our hearts with joyous thanks, because Thou hast granted us the knowledge of Thy Son Jesus Christ, in Whom we have everlasting Life. Preserve in us this saving knowledge that we may hear His voice with joy and go with Him into His eternal Kingdom. Amen.

PSALM 73.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

In the day of adversity, it is a grievous thing for the heart to contemplate the prosperity of the wicked. Abel is murdered, Cain lives. Jacob must depart from home and must flee for his life, Esau remains in the house. Joseph the chaste and innocent is cast into prison, Potiphar's wife, the adulterous and guilty, lives in luxury. Sennacherib is lifted up to speak proud words of blasphemy against the God of Israel, Hezekiah is besieged and greatly distressed. Herod banquets, feasting his lustful eyes on the voluptuous dance of the daughter of Herodias, and John the Baptist is beheaded. This prosperity of the wicked and adversity of the pious is a stumbling-block to carnal reason, and St. Augustine calls it a mountain too high for our understanding to measure. Hence we should well remember the words with which Asaph begins this psalm, *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*. Now, those are of a clean heart who hold fast the forgiveness of their sins in Jesus Christ, Who by the power of the Holy Ghost crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts and who walk in the Law of the Lord, following godliness and honesty. So Peter declares that God purifies the heart by faith (*Acts 15:9*), and to the twelve the Lord said, "*Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you*" (*John 15:3*). The Israelites, without guile, must swelter in the oven, but God will uphold, defend, preserve them unto their soul's salvation. On this hear the first part of the seventy-third Psalm.

*Comfort and warning against offense
at the prosperity of the wicked.*

A Psalm of Asaph.

1. Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.
2. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

3. For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4. For *there are* no bands in their death; but their strength *is* firm.
5. They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.
6. Therefore pride compasses them about as a chain; violence covers them *as* a garment.
7. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.
8. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression; they speak loftily.
9. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.
10. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them.
11. And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?”
12. Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.
13. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency.
14. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
15. If I say, “I will speak thus;” behold, I should offend *against* the generation of Thy children.

SUMMARY.

This psalm teaches us to avoid envy against the wicked and offense at their prosperity. When we see the wicked rich and successful, not afflicted with sickness and misfortunes, and hear them speak proudly with their tongue; and when we see the pious, as it were, daily pursued by afflictions, we must not envy the children of the world, neither must we question the justice of God. Unto the rich man in torments, Abraham said, “*Son, remember that thou, in thy lifetime, received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus, evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*” (Luke 16:25). However crooked God’s ways may look to us, He is just, and will make all things equal. Dear soul, wait thou on the Lord.

PRAYER.

Lord, Who art the only wise God, Whose thoughts and ways are higher than ours as the heavens are high above the earth. Hidden are Thy ways and Thy guidances, often beyond our searching out. Work in us such hearts which murmur not against Thy judgments, but are always ready to say, "Thou art the LORD my God, and Thou doest all things well." Amen.

PSALM 73.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

With much long-suffering does God bear the vessels of wrath, but when their measure of wickedness is full they are suddenly broken. To the people of the first world, God granted a respite of one hundred and twenty years, but when they repented not, they suddenly perished in the Flood. The people of Sodom dwelt in a land beautiful and fertile as a garden of the Lord, enjoying peace and plenty and despising Lot, the preacher of righteousness, and to this day the dead waters and the dead surroundings of the Dead Sea speak to us of the fate of the wicked. When proud Herod was sitting on his throne arrayed in royal apparel and his heart was lifted up, the angel of the Lord suddenly smote him (*Acts 12:23*). Do we not hear of persons dropping dead on the dancing floor, or their life abruptly coming to an end in the drink-house or the banquet-hall? Let us beware and not live in sin putting off repentance, lest sudden destruction come upon us. Humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God and implicitly trusting His guidance, because we know that His thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace to give us an expected end (*Jeremiah 29:11*). Let us be ready always at the shortest notice to lay down the staff and to enter in to the rest in store for the people of God. To such readiness, we are urged in the second part of the seventy-third Psalm.

16. When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me;
17. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end.
18. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; casted them down into destruction.
19. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.
20. As a dream when *one* awakes; *so*, O Lord, when Thou awakes, Thou shalt despise their image.
21. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.
22. So foolish *was* I, and ignorant; I was *as* a beast before Thee.
23. Nevertheless I *am* continually with Thee; Thou hast held *me* by my right hand.
24. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.
25. Whom have I in Heaven *but Thee*? And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside Thee.
26. My flesh and my heart fails; *but God is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.
27. For, lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish; Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee.
28. But *it is* good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Thy works.

SUMMARY.

Of God's providential dealings towards the children of men, both towards the pious and the impious, we must not judge according to carnal reason as the world is accustomed to do, but entering into the Sanctuary of God, we must search in His Word for the mind of the Lord. By His goodness, God strives to lead men to repentance and He is diligent in chastening His children with the rod of a father. Be not offended at the prosperity of the wicked. It is their portion, and if they repent not, eternal torment in darkness will be the portion of their cup (*Ps. 11:6*). Pine not, if thou art plagued every morning. The rod of a father is for good and not for ill. Be thou content to have the Lord for thy portion, holding fast the grace of the

Father in the Blood of the Son, and the day will show that thou hast chosen that good part which can not be taken from Thee (*Luke 10:42*).

PRAYER.

Lord our God, Thou hast a counsel of mercy over us by which Thou desires to lead us to those mansions prepared for us by Jesus our Savior. Because we are ignorant and often know not what is for our good do Thou by Thy grace prevent us from thrusting our hand into Thy clockwork and thwarting Thy counsel, but in all things grant us resignation to Thy will that we may reach the Home of the soul with Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 74.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Believing Christians who walk in the fear of God and persevere in prayer are a wall against the enemies and a defense to the Church and the land in which they live. Many a generation and people would be swept away as with a flood of destruction, but for a company of pious souls who daily offer up to God prayer and praise, imploring His protection and blessing on their house, their community and their country. A strong bulwark of defense is also the prayer of the children. Hence we should be diligent in training our children to pray, teaching them daily to ask God to avert calamities, war and pestilence, and to preserve the quiet of peace with its noble blessings. When a nation or community neglects the Christian education of the children, when they are not taught to pray, a most effective safeguard is lacking; for in the eighth Psalm, David says, "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*" With baptized infants, God has established this covenant that He will be their God, and when their infant lips lisp the words, "*Abba, Father,*" that is a surer protection to the house than watchdog and sword. Ye Christian parents, teach your children

to pray. Both the Church and the state are in need of their prayers, as the first part of the seventy-fourth Psalm teaches.

A prayer for the preservation of the Church.

Maschil of Asaph.

1. O God, why hast Thou cast *us* off for ever? *Why* doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture?
2. Remember Thy Congregation, *which* Thou hast purchased of old; the rod of Thine inheritance, *which* Thou hast redeemed; this Mount Zion, wherein Thou hast dwelt.
3. Lift up Thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; *even* all *that* the enemy hath done wickedly in the Sanctuary.
4. Thine enemies roar in the midst of Thy congregations; they set up their ensigns *for* signs.
5. *A man* was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.
6. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.
7. They have cast fire into Thy Sanctuary, they have defiled *by casting down* the dwelling place of Thy Name to the ground.
8. They said in their hearts, "Let us destroy them together." They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.
9. We see not our signs. *There is* no more any prophet; neither *is there* among us any that knows how long.
10. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy Name for ever?
11. Why withdraw Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? Pluck *it* out of Thy bosom.

SUMMARY.

This is an earnest prayer for the Jewish people and church against their enemies, who laid waste the land, destroyed the cities and burned up the synagogues; who also mocked the God of Israel as though He could not save His people from their hands, as did Sennacherib and Antiochus. Most cruel was the tyranny of Antiochus

who, with excruciating torments forced the Jews to abandon the worship of the Lord and to sacrifice to idols. Now, according to the prophecies of Daniel, this Antiochus was a figure of the great Antichrist. Rightly may we pray this psalm against the pope who, by false doctrines, utterly corrupted the Christian worship, converting the sanctuaries of God into temples of the saints for the invocation of images. May the Lord preserve us in His Truth and cause the Light to shine unto the people groping in the darkness of popery.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thy power make known,
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;
Shield Thy poor Christendom, that we
May evermore sing praise to Thee. Amen.

PSALM 74.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

In troublous times and days of affliction, it gives comfort and reassurance to the heart to remember the examples of Divine deliverance recorded of old, how often God, with a mighty hand, overthrew His enemies and preserved His Church. This David urges on us in the words, “Remember His marvelous works that He hath done — His wonders and the judgments of His mouth: O ye seed of Israel His servant” (1 Chronicles 16:12). To those three men who refused to worship his golden image, that mighty man Nebuchadnezzar said, “Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” (Daniel 3:15). But that same day, he had to confess, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Who hath sent His Angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him” (v. 28). When Elias thought he alone was left of the Lord’s worshipers in Israel, God said, “I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal” (Romans 11:4). When the pope ruled supreme, and emperors and

councils sought a reformation in vain, God awakened a solitary monk to preach the Gospel, and the Church was delivered. This same God is living yet, and He is mighty to save. Your need His strength will not exceed. Your sore is not so severe, His skill can heal it. Let your requests be made known unto Him and trust under the shadow of His wings, as the second part of the seventy-fourth Psalm teaches.

12. For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13. Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength; Thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
14. Thou brakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, *and* gave him *to be* meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
15. Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood; Thou dried up mighty rivers.
16. The day *is* Thine, the night also *is* Thine; Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
17. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth; Thou hast made summer and winter.
18. Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed Thy Name.
19. O deliver not the soul of Thy turtledove unto the multitude *of the wicked*; forget not the Congregation of Thy poor for ever.
20. Have respect unto the Covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.
21. O let not the oppressed return ashamed; let the poor and needy praise Thy Name.
22. Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause; remember how the foolish man reproaches Thee daily.
23. Forget not the voice of Thine enemies; the tumult of those that rise up against Thee increases continually.

SUMMARY.

Asaph here teaches us cheerfully to trust in God. He is the King of Zion Who often protected and delivered His Church. He is the Lord of nations Who appoints unto each its bounds how far and long it is to dwell. He is the God of nature Who makes heat and cold,

spring with its flowers and autumn with its fruits. He is not a helpless God like the idols of the heathen. He is able to help. And He is our covenant God. As in circumcision He pledged Himself to be the God of Israel, even so, in Baptism, He has covenanted to forgive us our sins, to be a merciful Father unto us and finally to save us. Remember this Covenant made in infancy and walk in it. Look steadfastly to the Blood of Christ for the cleansing of your soul, walk in love towards your neighbor and, in the day of trouble, put God in remembrance of His Covenant, and you will not find Him a covenant breaker; He will draw your feet out of the net.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Who art our covenant God, have promised us the cleansing from sin in the Blood of the Lamb and has obligated Thyself to be a merciful Father unto us. Grant us the Spirit of faith that we may trust the Word of Thy Covenant and doubt not Thy faithfulness through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 75.

PREFACE.

Rich in long-suffering and patience, God has forbearance with sinners giving them room for repentance. He makes His sun to rise over the evil and sends rain on the unjust that, persuaded by His goodness, they might turn from their evil ways; for He is not willing that any should perish. On the other hand, as a true and faithful Father, He chastens His children, burdening them with the cross, and not unfrequently, He suffers the cross to bear on them so long and so heavily that, in anguish of heart, they cry out, "*How long, Lord? Wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever?*" (*Psalm 89:46*). But though for a while it may appear as if the wicked were God's favorites and the pious under His displeasure, it does not always remain so. In due, that is at the right and proper time, He punishes the wicked and exalts His own. "Though a while it be delayed, He denieth not His

aid; Though it come not oft with speed, It will surely come at need.” Hence let us never prescribe to God when and where and how He must help us; for such presumption might stir up His anger. We should commit all to His wisdom and mercy, because He knows best what is for our good, and persevering in prayer, we should wait His time. On this let us hear the seventy-fifth Psalm.

The pious comforted, the wicked warned.

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

A Psalm *or* Song of Asaph.

1. Unto Thee, O God, do we give thanks, *unto Thee* do we give thanks; for *that* Thy Name is near, Thy wondrous works declare.
2. When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.
3. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.
4. I said unto the fools, “Deal not foolishly” and to the wicked, “Lift not up the horn;
5. Lift not up your horn on high; speak *not* with a stiff neck.”
6. For promotion *comes* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.
7. But God *is* the Judge; He puts down one, and sets up another.
8. For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He **pours* out of the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, *and* drink *them*.
9. But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
10. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; *but* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

*To each of his own, his measure of tribulations,
But the wicked must drink the dregs.

SUMMARY.

This psalm gives a note of warning to the proud and arrogant who depend on their riches, their wisdom and power. They dwell

without fear as though they could never be moved and presumptuously they say in their hearts, "*With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own. Who is lord over us?*" (*Psalm 12:4*). In all ages, the company of those witnessing Christ's Truth has been despised and often oppressed and persecuted with fire and sword by proud tyrants both in state and church. The ungodly and the false Christians act as if they alone had a right to rule on the earth, and the true disciples of Jesus must be as the filth of the earth and the off-scouring of all things (*1 Corinthians 4:13*). But this psalm assures us that the judgments of God are coming, when the proud will be laid low and the wicked will be made to drink the cup of wrath. But in the day of wrath, God bears up the pillars of the earth, preserving the pious, for whose sake the earth is yet spared. He saved Lot from sinking Sodom — the believing Jews from the calamities of Jerusalem. When He spoils a land, He secretes His own in a pavilion.

PRAYER.

Christ, Thou the Champion of the band who own
Thy cross, O make Thy succor quickly known!
The schemes of those who long our blood have sought
 Bring Thou to naught.
Do Thou Thyself for us Thy children fight,
Withstand the devil, quell His rage and might,
Whate'er assails Thy members left below,
 Do Thou o'erthrow. Amen.

PSALM 76.

PREFACE.

No greater gift can God bestow on a land and people, than to give it the saving truth of His Gospel and the right knowledge of His will. Blessed is that people; for, knowing the Word and the will of God, it has a sure staff in every need. As the gold of Arabia is superior to hay and stubble, so is the living knowledge of God's saving Truth nobler than all earthly gifts. Even so, no greater plague

or punishment can befall a people, than when God sends a famine, not of bread, but of hearing the Word of the Lord, when the people sit in darkness and the shadow of death hungering for the Word of salvation and not able to obtain it (*Amos 8:11*). When the Word of the Gospel is banished from the land, when Christ, as it were, has emigrated, then the prince of darkness has free scope to fill the minds of the people with superstition and harmful errors, leaving them without hope, as we behold in those unfortunate lands where popery rules supreme. O let us be grateful unto the Lord Who has granted us His saving Truth in its fullness and purity. Let us beware lest, by ingratitude, satiety and luke-warmness, we cause the Lord to take this Treasure from us. Let us watch over it and teach it to our children in our houses and in our schools, that it abide with them for generations to come. Amen.

God is the glory and defense of His people.

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

1. In Judah *is* God known; His Name *is* great in Israel.
2. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion.
3. There brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield and the sword, and the battle. Selah.
4. Thou *art* more glorious *and* excellent than the mountains *of prey.
5. The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep; and none of the men of might have found their hands.
6. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.
7. Thou, *even* Thou, *art* to be feared; and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?
8. Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from Heaven; the earth feared, and was still.
9. When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.
10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.

11. Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God; let all that be round about Him bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared.
12. He shall cut off the spirit of princes; *He is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

*Great empires, as Babylon, Assyria, which spoiled many lands.

SUMMARY.

This psalm, like the forty-sixth, gives thanks unto God for having His dwelling on Zion — His Word and His Worship at Jerusalem. And because there was His dwelling and His fireside (*Isaiah 31:9*), therefore, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, He protected Zion and defended Jerusalem against mighty kings and great warriors. Sennacherib boasted that the Lord could not deliver Jerusalem out of his hand, but in dismay did he return to his own land. God is such a warrior Who can chase His enemies by their own fears when no one pursues. The hearts of kings are as wax in the hand of God and the very raging of the heathen against Him must serve to exalt His glory and to spread His praise. Trust him, dear people; for He is able to help.

PRAYER.

Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, for planting Thy Gospel at this place and gathering a Church continuing in Thy Word. Drive far from us the indifferentism and luke-warmness of these latter evil days. Cause our hearts to burn with zeal for the Truth of Thy word, and preserve Thy Doctrine true at this place that our children after us may be still praising Thee. Amen.

PSALM 77.

PREFACE.

In the siftings of Satan, passing through high spiritual conflicts, the Christian's anchor must hold in the Word of God. Our

best art and highest accomplishment is to hold the Word of Promise, steadfastly to receive it as the Word which has proceeded from the mouth of the Most High and with it to meet all temptations to doubt and despair. When the tempter insists, "Thou art a sinner," answer: "Indeed I am, but it is written that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*" (1 Timothy 1:15). When the enemy says, "Thou art cursed; for thou hast not kept *what is written in the Book of the Law to do it*" (Galatians 3:10), reply, "Read on; for thus it is written, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us*" (verse 13). If he suggests, "A man must be saved by faith, and where is thy faith?" answer him, "Weak I am, but my Lord is strong, and He has said, *My strength is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9). With this sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the Christian can meet and ward off every assault of the enemy. Therefore, as the ant improves the summer to lay up a store for winter, so should we improve our young days, and every opportunity throughout lifetime to store our mind with sayings both of the Old and the New Testament, that whenever and wherever the enemy assaults us, we may be prepared to point at him a drawn sword. Of spiritual temptations, Asaph speaks in the seventy-seventh Psalm.

The temptation and comfort of the pious.

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

1. I cried unto God with my voice, *even* unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me.
2. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my soul refused to be comforted.
3. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.
4. Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.
6. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

7. Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will He be favorable no more?
8. Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth *His* promise fail for evermore?
9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He, in anger, shut up His tender mercies? Selah.
10. And I said, "This *is* my infirmity," *but I will remember* the years of the right hand of the Most High.
11. I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Thy wonders of old.
12. I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings.
13. Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary; who *is so* great a God as *our* God?
14. Thou *art* the God that does wonders; Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people.
15. Thou hast, with *Thine* arm, redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
16. The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled.
17. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; *Thine* arrows also went abroad.
18. The voice of Thy thunder *was* in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook.
19. Thy way *is* in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.
20. Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

SUMMARY.

From his own experience Asaph here pictures what a bitter thing it is when the conscience becomes unruly and the heart is filled with the fear of God's wrath. His torment was such that he was not able to express it in words. Sleep fled his eyelids and his soul refused to be comforted, fearing it had been cast off for ever. But he teaches us to put away such thoughts out of the mind, and rather, to contemplate the wonderful works of God narrated in the histories of old. From these we learn, it has always been God's custom to help the forsaken, the poor and miserable, and to overthrow the proud and

the arrogant. The Israelites, just from hard slavery, walk safely through the sea. Haughty Pharaoh, with his army, goes to the bottom. When his help seems dearest, then is it nearest. Never despair. Hope steadfastly in the Lord. He that said, "*Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*" (*Matthew 11:28*), will not suffer your soul to perish.

PRAYER.

Thou God of all comfort, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, comfort with Thy Holy Spirit all comfortless and afflicted souls. Grant us to be rooted and grounded in faith, armed with the breastplate of Christ's righteousness, furnished with the helmet of an unwavering hope, and provided with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of Truth, by which we shall triumph over all enemies. Amen.

PSALM 78.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

The Scriptures, both of the Old and of the New Testament, set before us the punishment of sin and the reward of virtue. By their threats and the examples of punishment narrated in them the Scriptures urge us to abandon sin, to fear God and to walk in the obedience of His Commandments. By the promises of good and the examples of Divine blessings over the pious, the Scriptures persuade us to put our trust in God and cheerfully to praise Him in word and deed. In the field of Moab beyond Jordan, Moses said unto Israel; "*See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil*" (*Deuteronomy 30:15*). Since, by our shortcomings, we have deserved punishment, let us seek the grace of God unto the forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ, in Whom we are made meet to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light* (*Colossians 1:12*). And being made new creatures through faith in Christ, let us walk as it is becoming the children of God, that grace and not wrath may show forth in us. Of God's threats and punishments the seventy-eighth Psalm speaks.

Narration of God's blessings and punishments over Israel.

Maschil of Asaph.

1. Give ear, O My people, *to* My Law; incline your ears to the words of My mouth.
2. I will open My mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old;
3. Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
4. We will not hide *them* from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done.
5. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children;
6. That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children;
7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His Commandments;
8. And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.
9. The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, *and* carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.
10. They kept not the Covenant of God, and refused to walk in His Law;
11. And forgot His works, and His wonders that He had shown them.
12. Marvelous things did He in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.
13. He divided the sea, and caused them *to* pass through; and He made the waters to stand as a heap.
14. In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.
15. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.
16. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

17. And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness.
18. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.
19. Yea, they spake against God; they said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"
20. Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can He give bread also? Can He provide flesh for His people?"
21. Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;
22. Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation;
23. Though He had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of Heaven,
24. And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of Heaven.

SUMMARY.

Asaph here urges us to a diligent hearing of God's Word and a frequent contemplation of His wonderful works; for thereby we are prompted to fear God, to trust in Him and to walk piously. Occupying the mind with the examples - both of grace and of wrath recorded in the Scriptures - draws us to forsake the evil, to follow the good and to practice faith toward God and love toward man. Like works obtain like reward, and a wise man will profit by the examples of others. Hence Asaph also charges us to transmit the Word of God to our children, teaching them to walk in the Lord's ways, and to do what is right and good, as the Lord commanded Israel saying: "*Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen; but teach them - thy sons, and thy son's sons*" (Deuteronomy 4:9). Parents can bequeath no better treasure to their children than to raise them in the fear of God and to have them instructed in the way of salvation in church and school. The reason why we should daily occupy ourselves with the Word of God and should spare neither labor nor cost to instill it into the minds of our children is, because the Word is the instrument through

which the Holy Ghost gives the knowledge of Christ, works faith and prompts to a holy life. To excite us to a diligent study of the Word, Asaph promises to speak in parables and dark sayings of old (*verse 2*). From this it does not follow that the Scriptures are dark; they make wise the simple (*Psalms 19:7*), but St. Matthew, quoting these words explains them thus; *“I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (13:35)*. Jesus was the Master in parables. He fully opened to us the heart of the Father, and He has the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to him that is weary (*Isaiah 50:4*). My soul, art thou weary? Sit thou at Jesus’ feet.

PRAYER.

Thou Heavenly Dove, Spirit Divine, fill our hearts with the love of Thy Word, and by it create in us the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Endow all parents with wisdom to rear their children in the fear of God, and bless all our Christian schools that these folds for Jesus’ lambs may prosper and multiply in our land. Amen.

PSALM 78.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

In the wilderness the children of Israel did eat angels’ food - bread from Heaven. The angels are spirits and need no bodily food, but the manna is so called because it was given from Heaven. On this bread from Heaven the children of Israel subsisted in the wilderness, and it was a food which could be prepared in manifold ways to suit the taste. This manna was an emblem of the promised Savior. Eating it, the Israelite was to argue, *“As this bread from Heaven sustains my bodily life in this waste wilderness, so will God send One from Heaven Who will be the Life of my soul.”* Christ is the true Bread from Heaven, as He says: *“My Father gives you the true Bread from Heaven. For the Bread of God is He Which comes down from Heaven, and gives Life unto the world” (John 6:32)*.

Eating this Bread gives the soul a new and Heavenly Life; for He says, "*He that eats Me, even he shall live by Me*" (verse 57). This eating is not done with the mouth, as is the sacramental eating of Christ's Body in the Lord's Supper, but this is a spiritual eating which is done with the faith of the heart, when we embrace Him as the propitiation for our sins and our righteousness. So He explains this eating in the words, "*I Am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst*" (verse 35). If we daily provide food for the body, we ought not forget to nourish the soul with this Bread of Life. And often should we approach the Lord's Table that the sacramental eating be unto us a seal of the spiritual eating and we can cheerfully say, "He is mine and I am His." And now, let us hear the second part of the seventy-eighth Psalm.

25. Man did eat angels' food; He sent them meat to the full.
26. He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven; and by His power He brought in the south wind.
27. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea;
28. And He let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.
29. So they did eat, and were well filled; for He gave them their own desire;
30. They were not estranged from their lust; but while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,
31. The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.
32. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for His wondrous works.
33. Therefore their days did He consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.
34. When He slew them, then they sought Him and they returned and inquired early after God.
35. And they remembered that God *was* their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer.
36. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues.

37. For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His Covenant.
38. But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not; yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up His wrath.
39. For He remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passes away, and comes not again.
40. How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, *and* grieve Him in the desert!
41. Yea, they turned back and tempted God and *limited the Holy One of Israel.
42. They remembered not His hand, *nor* the day when He delivered them from the enemy;
43. How He had wrought His signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan;
44. And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.
45. He sent diverse sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.
46. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labor unto the locust.
47. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.
48. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.
49. He cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.
50. He made a way to His anger; He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence.
51. And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in the tabernacle of Ham;
52. But made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

*Prescribing when, how and in what measure He must help,
which is mastering and provoking God.

SUMMARY.

This text shows the desperate wickedness of man's heart. God granted the wish of the Israelites, sending them bread from Heaven and meat by an east wind, yet they did not repent to ask pardon for their murmuring and to eat with thanksgiving. Therefore the Lord's anger was kindled, the plague came upon them, and the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, the graves of the lusters (*Numbers 11:34*). Under the Lord's chastening hand they indeed repented, but not right. For their unbelief and many revoltings they had to spend their days in vanity, pitching their tents in the desert, and they did not reach the land of promise. Legion is the name of their followers. Good days men abuse unto sin; in affliction they repent, but not right, and when the affliction is over they are worse than before. Let us not abuse God's good gifts to pander to the flesh. On the day of His visitation, let us turn to Him with all our heart in sincerity and truth, watching lest we miss that great salvation and perish.

PRAYER.

Thou, our Father in Heaven, art a Father indeed - merciful, good and kind. Teach us to know and to acknowledge Thee as the Giver of every good gift that we abuse it not unto sin. Deal not with us after our ingratitude and luke-warmness, but chasten us with measure so as to keep us in the way everlasting. Amen.

PSALM 78.

PART 3 — PREFACE.

God beholds all our acts, hears all our words and sees the very thoughts of our hearts from afar off. Nothing can we hide from Him, and His wrath against the wicked burns like an oven. This is attested by the history of Israel as a nation, as well as by the

punishments visited on individual persons. Sin cries unto God in Heaven, as is demonstrated by the examples of the Sodomites and the builders of Babel, and it draws down His vengeance as magnet draws the iron. Ingratitude, despising God's Word, idolatrous trust in earthly things and carnal vices can and shall not remain unpunished. Neither can hypocritical and insincere repentance, or the mere form and profession of godliness appease the Divine anger. To say "*Lord, Lord,*" is not enough, we must also do the will of the Father in Heaven (*Matthew 7:21*). If you have sinned, flee to the cross of Christ for refuge from impending wrath, and henceforth avoid sin, lest it bring on you temporal punishment and eternal destruction. Strong words of warning are recorded in the latter part of the seventy-eighth Psalm.

53. And He led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54. And He brought them to the border of His sanctuary, *even to* this mountain, *which* His Right Hand had purchased.
55. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
56. Yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God, and kept not His testimonies;
57. But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
58. For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images
59. When God heard *this*, He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;
60. So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* He placed among men;
61. And delivered His *strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.
62. He gave His people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with His inheritance.
63. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.
64. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

65. Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, *and* like a mighty man that shouts by reason of wine.
66. And He smote His enemies in the hinder parts; He put them to a perpetual reproach.
67. Moreover, He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
68. But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved.
69. And He built His sanctuary like high *palaces*, like the earth which He has established for ever.
70. He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds;
71. From following ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.
72. So He fed them according to the integrity of His heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of His hands.

*The Ark of the Covenant.

SUMMARY.

Highly does this text praise the mercy and long-suffering of God. Much forbearance has He with sinners - sparing them and granting them time for repentance. How often did He send Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh, showing mighty wonders before him, and only when that unhappy king persisted in hardening his heart was he finally abandoned to destruction. How many a time did Israel, forsaking the Lord, provoke Him to anger by serving other gods, yet He chastened them only with the rod of men (*2 Samuel 7:14*), with moderate stripes so as not to destroy them. Whenever they cried unto Him, He gave them saviors to deliver them from the hand of their enemies, and finally He chose David, the shepherd boy, and seated him on the Throne of Israel. The whole world lay in wickedness (*1 John 5:19*), but God spared it and sent His Son, born in the city and of the seed of David, Who redeemed us by His Blood and earned for us that righteousness which is imputed by faith and which avails before God, wherefore He is now seated on the Throne of David as everlasting king. Let us be thankful to Him and show ourselves loyal subjects to our King of a twofold royalty.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, O Lord, for Thy manifold blessings in temporal and spiritual things. Punish us not as we deserve, but chasten us with the rod of a father, and remember that Thy Son Jesus Christ did endure the punishment due to our transgressions. For His sake, blot out our iniquities and account them to us no more, but grant our eyes to see Thy salvation. Amen.

PSALM 79.

PREFACE.

It is an unalterable truth: Sin is followed up by punishment. If we would escape punishment, we must avoid sin. But if we have sinned and receive what our deeds are worth, we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, must acknowledge our transgressions with heart and mouth, and ask forgiveness for Christ's sake. As a wise physician will aim first to remove the cause of the disease, so the foremost petition in all our prayers should be for the remission of our sins. Whether asking for temporal or eternal, for heavenly or earthly gifts, this petition should always precede: "*Forgive us our trespasses.*" Deal not with us after our sins, and reward us not according to our iniquities (*Psalms 103:10*). When a son who has sinned against his father wants to obtain the granting of a petition from him, he must first ask pardon for his offense and thereafter present his petition; for then only can he confidently count on a kind hearing. We have sinned against our Father in Heaven and, presenting ourselves before Him, let us first of all ask His forgiveness for Christ's sake. Neither must we forget, that piling on wood will never extinguish a fire. Add not sin to sin; it will increase wrath. And when you have asked the forgiveness of sin, then go, and by the grace of God, sin no more. This let us learn from the seventy-ninth Psalm.

Prayer against the enemies of the truth and their tyranny.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1. O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy Holy Temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
2. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given *to be* meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
3. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*.
4. We are become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
5. How long, LORD? Wilt Thou be angry for ever? Shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?
6. Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy Name.
7. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.
8. O remember not against us former iniquities; let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.
9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy Name's sake.
10. Wherefore should the heathen say, "Where *is* their God?" Let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of Thy servants *which is* shed.
11. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee; according to the greatness of Thy power, preserve Thou those that are appointed to die;
12. And render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached Thee, O Lord.
13. So we, Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture, will give Thee thanks for ever; we will show forth Thy praise to all generations.

SUMMARY.

Composing this psalm Asaph most likely foresaw in spirit the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, who burned the city and the temple, brake down the walls and left but a very small remnant

of the people. Like the Lamentations of Jeremiah, this psalm is a song of sorrow over the desolation of Sion. Very properly may we apply it to the present enemies of the Church, such as popery, infidelity, anarchism, indifferentism and manifold heresies which besiege the Church and threaten its overthrow. In these enemies, Gog and Magog have stepped on the broad of the earth and have encamped against the holy city. But however gloomy the outlook, we should, with Asaph, at all times, give thanks to God. The Church will stand as long as the moon endures. In every generation Christ has His chosen ones, and living or dying, they are His.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide,
For round us fall the even-tide;
Nor let Thy Word, that Heavenly Light,
For us be ever veiled in night.

In these last days of sore distress,
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness,
That pure we keep - till life is spent -
Thy Holy Word and Sacrament. Amen.

PSALM 80.

PREFACE.

The Church of Jesus Christ has two kinds of enemies - the external and the internal. The external are the infidels, persecutors and all that hate the Name of Christ. The internal enemies are false prophets, heretics and hypocrites. The external enemies assail the Church by violence, slander, mockery and the like; the internal harm the Church by teaching and living otherwise than the Word of God teaches. In this exigency the Christian Church is at this day. From without she is assailed by agnostics, mockers and science falsely so

called; from within she is torn into a multitude of divisions and sects, and the rubbish of human opinions and the commandments of men has been brought into the Church by heaps. Therefore we should remember the affliction of Joseph (*Amos 6:6*), being diligent to bend the knee in prayer for the Church of God, asking Him to send faithful laborers into His Vineyard who will preach His Word and not their own dreams or the commandments of men. Restrain, O Lord, those haughty men who will not be subject unto Thy Word, but teach and walk after their own thoughts, and graciously grant to Thy Christians right doctrine and a right life. Such prayers we should bring before God with all cheerfulness and confidence, because He has purchased the Church, not with corruptible things as silver or gold, but with the precious Blood of His own Son. In the eightieth Psalm we have a sample prayer for the Church.

Prayer for the welfare of the Heavenly Vineyard.

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

1. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest *between* the cherubim, shine forth.
2. Before *Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Thy strength and come *and* save us.
3. Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
4. O LORD God of Hosts, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of Thy people?
5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.
6. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbors; and our enemies laugh among themselves.
7. Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
9. Thou prepared *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

10. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars.
11. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.
12. Why hast Thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
13. The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
14. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts; look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;
15. And the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* Thou made strong for Thyself.
16. *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance.
17. Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man *Whom* Thou made strong for Thyself.
18. So will not we go back from Thee; quicken us, and we will call upon Thy Name.
19. Turn us again, O LORD God of Hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

*These three tribes camped to the west behind the mercy-seat.

SUMMARY.

This is a fervent prayer for the Church in a time of great need, when the people of God were down-trodden by their enemies. The Jewish Church is compared with a vine of noble quality, which the lord brought out of Egypt and planted in Canaan, where it flourished till its branches extended from the sea to the river Euphrates. But when it would no more bring fruit as it should, it was over run by the enemies. Of Christ's Church, the Father is the Husband-man. He prunes it and trails it over a frame to form an arbor affording shade and delicious fruit to the weary. But when it runs wild, it falls under the power of the enemy, is torn from its support, cast down and trampled over by men. Such times of sore affliction to the Church are, when she is ruled over by spiritual tyrants as in the days of popery, or when she is over run by divers

and false teachers who, instead of opening the pure fountain of Israel, substitute their own opinions and the comfortless teachings of human wisdom. Then are the true branches of this vine pronounced obnoxious and those who abide in the Word of the Lord are decried as disturbers in the House of God. In such evil times we must cry to God to have compassion on us for the sake of the Man of His Right Hand, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, and we shall be preserved.

PRAYER.

Blessed be Thy Holy Name, O Lord God of Heaven, because Thou hast planted in our land that noble vine, the Christian Church. Cause it to grow and to spread forth its branches and to overshadow the land and bring forth prolific fruit for the good of our nation and the salvation of many through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 81.

PREFACE.

Our beloved country and the world generally is full of tears, suffering and misery. Neither can it be otherwise, because the land is full of sin and we are so thankless toward God Who has given us His precious Word, and has heaped so many blessings upon us. Surely we must confess, the Lord has favored us before many. He has planted us in a goodly land, has crowned our country with peace and plenty, and has given us full liberty to worship Him according to His Word, and surely we should be a God-fearing and virtuous nation. But alas! His Word is despised, His precious Truth is corrupted, His Holy Name is blasphemed every day; cursing is heard in our streets and the service of mammon and manifold vices prevail in the land. O that the merciful Father in Heaven, by His Holy Spirit, would send an awakening on our people! O that He would cause one and all to repent and to be converted to Jesus Christ our Savior, and to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the

glory and praise of God (*Philippians 1:11*). Doing this we shall be blessed in body and soul, in church and state, in house and field. But if we continue in stubbornness and will not obey the Gospel of Christ, we willfully bring ourselves into temporal calamities and eternal destruction. So, let us lay to heart the warning contained in the eighty-first Psalm.

Exhortation unto the true worship of God.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith,

A Psalm of Asaph.

1. Sing aloud unto God our Strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
2. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.
4. For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.
5. This He ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when He went out through the land of Egypt; *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.
6. I removed his shoulder from the burden; his hands were delivered from the pots.
7. Thou called in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.
8. Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee; O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me;
9. There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
10. I *am* the LORD thy God, Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11. But My people would not hearken to My Voice; and Israel would none of Me.
12. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; *and* they walked in their own counsels.

13. Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, *and* Israel had walked in My ways!
14. I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries.
15. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him; but their time should have endured for ever.
16. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the Rock should I have satisfied thee.

SUMMARY.

This psalm seems to have been sung by the children of Israel at the Feast of Tabernacles and at the new moons. On these and other festival days the Israelites were wont to make a joyful noise unto the Lord with the singing of psalms and the playing of musical instruments. It is right and meet that we praise the Lord in His Sanctuary with song and music; for He is worthy of praise. Especially were the people reminded to worship Him alone Who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and to call on no other god. But they, after their own thoughts, went to the high places to sacrifice to the host of heaven, for which the Babylonian Captivity was their reward. So this psalm should remind us not to seek salvation in self-chosen worship, nor in the works of the law by which no flesh is justified (*Galatians 2:16*), but alone by faith in Jesus Christ without Whom there is no salvation. This name - Jesus - is to live in our hearts, His praise to dwell on our lips, then will our hymns sound harmonious in the ears of the Lord.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou God of all grace, anoint us with the Oil of Joy, causing Thy Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts, that He may teach us to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. And whenever we enter Thy courts let it be done with a joyous heart to give glory to Thee and to praise Thy Holy Name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 82.

PREFACE.

As just rulers and a good government are a noble gift of God, by which virtue and justice are protected, wickedness repressed and peace with all its concomitant blessings is promoted; so tyrannical rulers and a corrupt or incompetent government are one of the scourges which God uses for the punishment of a people. Hence, when God grants us a good government, we should be thankful to Him, praying for the continuance of this His gift, and we should improve quiet days to worship God and to build His Kingdom according to His Word and should practice all civil virtues as good citizens seeking the good of the land. But, when it pleases God to scourge us with bad and corrupt government, we should submit ourselves without murmuring against Him. Least of all should we undertake to help ourselves by unlawful means, bearing in mind Solomon's warning words, "*My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change; for their calamity shall rise suddenly*" (Proverbs 24:21). Yet, as good citizens of a Republic, we should use those means which the Constitution of the land and the commonwealth gives into the hands of the people to correct wrongs and to remedy abuses. Meanwhile, a bad government should increase our longing for that glorious Kingdom, when injustice and corruption are not known - where we shall follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Now let us hear the eighty-second Psalm.

On the duties of the civil government.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1. God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.
2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
3. Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4. Deliver the poor and needy; rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
5. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
6. I have said, “Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the Most High.”
7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for Thou shalt inherit all nations.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is intended for the instruction of civil rulers, magistrates and all in authority. Asaph calls the rulers gods, because they have an authority given unto them, but He reminds them that the Highest Judge sees them in their office, and they must die like other men and must come before the Judgment-Seat of the Supreme One. Hence He charges them not to favor the wicked who have money and influence, but to judge justly and to help the oppressed. This psalm should be heeded also by employers, overseers, masters, mistresses and all who exercise any kind of authority. They all should remember, there is a Lord over them, and it shall be done to them as they do to others. At the end of this psalm, reference is had to the Kingdom of Christ Who should inherit the heathen and possess the uttermost parts of the earth (*Psalms 2:8*). Certainly a peculiar King, who does not punish sin and demand righteousness, but forgives sin and imputes righteousness. To this King let us hold.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Thou Ruler of nations, because to this, our native land, Thou hast granted free institutions of government, under which we enjoy both civil and religious liberty. Protect, by Thy mighty hand, the government of this free Republic, and suffer it not to be overthrown by revolutions and civil wars; and always grant us honest and wise men for offices high and low. Amen.

PSALM 83.

PREFACE.

The true believers are and remain God's beloved children, His hidden ones, even when He allows the enemies to torment and persecute them and behaves Himself as though their affliction did not concern Him. The Scriptures testify that judgment begins at the House of God (*1 Peter 4:17*), and whom the Lord loves, He corrects, even as a father the son in whom he delights (*Proverbs 3:12*). As a true Father, God is diligent in chastening His children that they should not be condemned with the world (*1 Corinthians 11:32*). If we but cling to Him and do not let Him go, it is indeed not possible for God to forsake us. His own faithfulness must prevent this. Therefore we can rest assured, when the need is greatest, He will hide us from the enemy, as a hen hides her chicklings under her wings when danger is near. He that protected Moses and Aaron against the rebellious Israelites, He that hid Jeremiah and Baruch that the mighty in Judah durst not lay hands on them (*Jeremiah 36:26*), the same will also cover us with the shadow of His Hand from spiritual and bodily enemies and in the very jaws of death. This comforting assurance is imparted in the eighty-third Psalm.

Prayer for Divine help against the enemies of the Church.
A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

1. Keep not Thou silence, O God; hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God.
2. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head.
3. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones.
4. They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."
5. For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against Thee;

6. The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ismaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;
7. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;
8. Assur also is joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot. Selah.
9. Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites; as *to* Sisera, as *to* Jabin, at the brook of Kison;
10. *Which* perished at Endor; they became *as* dung for the earth.
11. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb; yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna;
12. Who said, "Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession."
13. O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.
14. As the fire burns a wood, and as the flame sets the mountains on fire;
15. So persecute them with Thy tempest, and make them afraid with Thy storm.
16. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Thy Name, O LORD.
17. Let tem be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish;
18. That *men* may know that Thou, Whose Name alone is JEHOVAH, *art* the Most High over all the earth.

SUMMARY.

This psalm of Asaph is an urgent cry unto the Lord to save His people from their enemies. The Gentile nations from the borders of Egypt to the confines of Persia hated the Jews with bitter hatred, because of the difference of religion, and because the Jews would not conform to them. So in the reign of King Jehoshaphat, a number of these nations formed a confederacy against Judah and they invaded the land with an innumerable multitude. But they fared as Asaph here prays. Before they reached Jerusalem they were divided into hostile parties and destroyed each other, so that Judah had nothing to do but to gather the spoil. If we hold faithfully to the

Lord's Word and freely confess His Truth before the world, we need not fear, though men hate us and the wicked combine against us. Without the will of our Father, they can do us no harm, and what they undertake must result in our good. God will hide us in His pavilion until the indignation is overpast (*Isaiah 26:20*).

PRAYER.

How many a time, O Lord of Hosts, hast Thou protected Thy Church and put her enemies to shame. Grant us unflinching faith to abide in Thy Word that we yield not one jot or tittle of Thy Truth to please men. Continue to be our defense, expose the snares which the hypocrites artfully lay for Thy people, hinder the plans of Thine enemies, and show Thyself Lord over all, as so many a time Thou hast done of old. Amen.

PSALM 84.

PREFACE.

We daily hear the voice of Jesus in His Word and we behold the sign and seal of His Covenant in the Holy Sacraments; for, in Baptism, is the Name of our Covenant God, and in the Lord's Supper we orally receive Christ's Body and Blood for a testimony that He is ours. So both by the Word and the Sacraments we are assured that God is our good and gracious Father, Christ our beloved brother and the friend of our soul, the Holy Ghost our comforter, teacher and counselor, the angels our companions and guardians, and Heaven our sure inheritance. These things are the treasure and the glory of God's believing children, the community of saints. What thing is there more precious, what more glorious, what more comforting and useful under the heavens, that to be a citizen in the Kingdom of Christ, a living member of the Christian Church, His mystical Body? Let us be thankful unto our God Who has so graciously called and received us into His Congregation and has hitherto kept us in the true faith. Let us be faithful to the Church which abides in the words of

Christ; for those continuing in His Word He pronounces His disciples indeed, and He has promised that they shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make them free (*John 8:32*). Let us love the Church holding purely the Word of Truth, and rather, suffer all things, even death itself, than fall away from her, as also the eighty-fourth Psalm exhorts.

Love and longing for the House of Worship.

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

1. How amiable *are* Thy tabernacles O LORD, of Hosts!
2. My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the Living God.
3. Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* Thine altars, O LORD of Hosts, my King, and my God.
4. Blessed *are* they that dwell in Thy House; they will be still praising Thee. Selah.
5. Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in Thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.
6. *Who*, passing through the valley of *Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools.
7. They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appears before God.
8. O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
9. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed.
10. For a day in Thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11. For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good *thing* will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12. O LORD of Hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusts in Thee.

*Weeping. Blessed those who open to others
the fountains of grace in the wastes of this world.

SUMMARY.

This psalm praises the excellency of God's Word, commending it above all things, treasures and pleasures, money and honors. Rather should we sacrifice all else than to be without the Word of God. Better a doorkeeper in the House of God, better poor and despised but enjoying the comfortings of God's Word, than to dwell in palaces among luxuries and filled with enticing lusts luring on in the broad way of carnal indulgence. Vastly superior is the spiritual joy of the heart to all the carnal enjoyments of the senses. The assurance of forgiveness and the certainty of grace is softer to a weary soul than a pillow of down to an effeminate body. The Word of God gives light and peace, strength and hope, victory and joy. It upholds and comforts in life and death. Blessed are they who love the Word of God, being always ready to incline their ears and hear. Well trodden should be the way to the House of Worship, like the way to the market.

PRAYER.

Praise and thanks be unto Thee, Lord our God, because Thou hast granted us Thy Word showing to us the way of salvation. Do Thou, by Thy Holy Spirit, work effectually in us through this Thy Word, that it may prove in us a living and fruitful seed, bringing an hundred fold, and that the fruit remain unto eternal life. Amen.

PSALM 85.

PREFACE.

The best treasure of the Christian Church is purity of doctrine, the possession of the unadulterated Divine Truth. The

highest honor of the civil government is justice and integrity. The loveliest adornment of domestic life is the fear of God, unity and industry. Blessed the land and community possessing the pure preaching of the Gospel, good government and where every house is a temple of the Lord. But, by sin and vice, these treasures are either entirely lost or their usefulness is greatly impaired. For where sin prevails the Word of the Gospel will be despised, and there righteousness and peace can have no abiding place. O let us live in penitence and follow holiness; let us love the Word of God and abstain from sin; let us persevere in prayer daily and fervently beseeching God to multiply and to prolong His blessings over us in Church and state, in family and field, as we pray in the eighty-fifth Psalm.

Pray for deliverance and prosperity in Church and state.

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

1. LORD, Thou hast been favorable unto Thy land; Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people; Thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.
3. Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath; Thou hast turned *Thyself* from the fierceness of Thine anger.
4. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease.
5. Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations?
6. Wilt Thou not revive us again; that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?
7. Show us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy Salvation.
8. I will hear what God the LORD will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints; but let them not turn again to folly.
9. Surely His Salvation *is* nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land.
10. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

11. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from Heaven.
12. Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good*; and our land shall yield her increase.
13. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set *us* in the way of His steps.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was made in a time of great distress, when there was a lack of true prophets, when the government, both in Church and state, was in an evil condition and when the harvest was scant and the fruits of husbandry small. Therefore, the psalmist appeals to what the Lord had formerly done for His people. As He had of old been gracious unto His people, had forgiven their sins and had turned away His anger, so He should now remember their calamities and should again speak to His people through true and faithful prophets, that the land would be filled with mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, and He should cause also the earth again to yield its increase. The last verse, in remarkable words, shows the way of obtaining true righteousness before God saying, "*Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the Way of His steps.*" Jesus Christ has earned righteousness for us, and in the Gospel and the Sacraments, He comes to adorn us with this righteousness - forgiving our sins and accounting our transgressions to us no more, but imputing unto us His obedience. By this wonderful grace, He enlarges our hearts with joy and gladness to follow in His steps - walking in righteousness, truth and charity.

PRAYER.

Remember not, O God, our transgressions against us, and record not our sins, but cast them into the depth of the sea, and remember them no more for ever. Impute unto us the obedience of Thy Son Jesus Christ, Who fulfilled all righteousness for us and gave Himself a Sacrifice for our sins, and let us live for His sake, and enable us to walk worthy of our calling. Amen.

PSALM 86.

PREFACE.

Those judging by corrupt human reason imagine that God did not regard the poor and needy, and cared nothing for the miserable; but God's Word testifies to the contrary. The more needy His children are, the more kindly affectioned is God towards them, to comfort and to help them. This He attests saying, "*To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My Word*" (Isaiah 66:2). The heart of parents goes out to a sick child. Though they do not forget their other children, yet above all else they give themselves to nurse and care for the sick one. So God lays to heart the misery of His Christians. His heart is moved towards them, and He pities them as a father pities His children. Therefore, in every need, we should cry to God for help and deliverance, believing that He will hear us and not doubting that He is able to save, because with Him there is plenteous redemption. "Though great our sins and sore our woes, His grace much more aboundeth; His helping love no limit knows, Our utmost need it soundeth." Think not thy need greater than the power of God. Divine power is greater than human misery. Believe it and wait God's help, as the eighty-sixth Psalm teaches.

A prayer for help in temporal and spiritual need.

A Prayer of David.

1. Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, hear me; for I *am* poor and needy.
2. Preserve my soul; for I *am* *holy; O Thou my God, save Thy servant that trusts in Thee.
3. Be merciful unto me O Lord; for I cry unto Thee daily.
4. Rejoice the soul of Thy servant; for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
5. For Thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.

6. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.
7. In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee; for Thou wilt answer me.
8. Among the gods *there is* none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither *are there any works* like unto Thy works.
9. All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy Name.
10. For Thou *art* great, and do wondrous things; Thou *art* God alone.
11. Teach me Thy Way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy Truth; unite my heart to fear Thy Name.
12. I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify Thy Name for evermore.
13. For great *is* thy mercy toward me; and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.
14. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent *men* have sought after my soul; and have not set Thee before them.
15. But Thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
16. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save the son of Thine handmaid.
17. Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed; because Thou, LORD, has helped me, and comforted me.

*Consecrated by God and to God.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David prays for deliverance from his enemies who sought his life. Being in sore straits, David lifted up his soul to God from Whom his help must come, and in a masterly manner does he portray the grace, the faithfulness and the power of God, praising Him that He alone is God and that none other can do the works which He does. By these considerations David strengthened his faith and made fervent his prayer. We do well, if we herein imitate David. Whatever our afflictions, needs and temptations may be, we should remember the goodness, faithfulness, power and wisdom of our God

Whose Throne is in the heavens and who can do whatsoever He pleases. Such considerations encourage the heart cheerfully to call upon God and to commit our troubles to Him.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jehovah, Thou alone art God, and besides Thee there is none other. Heaven is Thy Throne and the earth Thy footstool. But seated high Thou yet looks upon the poor and lowly. Remember that we are dust and without Thee can do nothing, and be Thou Thyself the help of our countenance. Remove our sins from us and save us from the hand of our enemies through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 87.

PREFACE.

When we speak of the Christian Church, we do not mean the house or building constructed of wood and stone, and dedicated to the exercise of public worship, but we mean the congregation of those who, in the Name of Jesus Christ, assemble together for the worship of God. Neither do we actually comprise the hypocrites and sham Christians as forming a part of the Church; for though these are in the visible assembly of the Church, yet they are not members of the Body of Christ. The Church is the company of those who have been implanted into Christ by Holy Baptism (*Galatians 3:27*), who are called by the Gospel and sanctified by the Spirit. Members of the Church are those who, with the ears of the heart, hear God speak to them in His Word, who receive the Word of Christ in the simplicity of faith, and keep it in an honest and good heart. Members of the Church are those who speak to God in prayer by the language of faith, who live unto the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbor, doing good and not evil. To be a living member of the Christian Church is honor and glory greater and higher than that the tongue or pen of man could worthily express. The Church is God's

Kingdom on earth, His Holy Temple. Of this Church the eighty-seventh Psalm sings.

Zion a type of the Christian Church.

A Psalm *or* Song for the sons of Korah.

1. His foundation *is* in the Holy mountains.
2. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3. Glorious things are spoken of thee O City of God. Selah.
4. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me; behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there.
5. And of Zion it shall be said, "This and that man was born in her; and the Highest Himself shall establish her."
6. The LORD shall count, when He writes up the people, *that* this *man* was born there. Selah.
7. As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs *are* in thee.

SUMMARY.

This psalm praises the Christian Church, describing it as a city wide as the world, a city whose suburbs are the isles of the uttermost sea. Into this city are gathered together Ethiopians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Philistines and many other nations and tongues and people. All these were to be brought into the new Zion by the Gospel, which preaches glorious things, even the saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, teaching us how to become rid of sin, how to be reconciled to God, and how to die and to enter into glory. The worship in this new city is no more conducted after the statutes of Moses with his commandments and threats, it is performed with singing and music, with rejoicing and thanksgiving over the grace of God. Remarkable are the closing words comprising the song they sing of this new Zion saying, "*All my springs are in thee.*" In the Church all spiritual gifts, all salvation is daily and richly distributed through the Word and the Sacraments; and outside

the Church, where there is no Gospel, there is also no grace, no forgiveness of sin and no salvation. Those deceive themselves who imagine they could do as well and would stand as good a chance without the Church as those within it. In Zion alone are the springs of Salvation.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, our Heavenly Father, because Thou hast called us in the Church of Thy Son Jesus Christ and hast begotten us again unto a lively hope through the Gospel. Keep us steadfast in the faith that we may remain living stones in this Thy spiritual Temple unto our latter end, and cause us always to rejoice over Thy Salvation. Amen.

PSALM 88.

PREFACE.

The fear of death affects bone and marrow, appalls the heart and consumes the strength, but to be terrified at the wrath of God and eternal damnation on account of sin is a torment above all torments. When sin looms up before the soul and lashes the conscience with remorse, when the very thought of God brings to the heart the remembrance of avenging justice, when the mind's eye sees the jaws of hell open to devour, then the blackness of darkness envelops the soul and the heart is pierced with unutterable anguish. These pangs of eternal death our Lord Jesus Christ endure in the highest degree during His struggle in the garden and when He cried out on the cross, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (*Psalms 22:1*). Such high spiritual temptations God sometimes suffers to fall upon some of His saints, yet in a smaller measure. In such distress of his soul, Job (*30:21*) exclaimed that God had become cruel to him, and he cursed the day of his birth. But when our soul, for a time must sit in darkness, we must, nevertheless, not despair, but must sigh unto God to grant us a ray of His grace, and though He

does not take away the whole burden at once, yet He will lighten it and will give the strength needful to bear it. He knows what burden and what comfort is good for every soul, and though His Salvation often seems to tarry, it will come, and it will come at the right and proper time. This let us remember in the reading of the eighty-eighth Psalm.

Prayer in a time of strong temptation.

A Song *or* Psalm for the sons of Korah,
to the chief Musician
upon Mahalath Leannoth
Maschil of Heman the Ezreahite.

1. O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before Thee;
2. Let my prayer come before Thee; incline Thine ear unto my cry;
3. For my soul is full of troubles; and my life draws nigh unto the grave.
4. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man *that hath* no strength;
5. Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from Thy hand.
6. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.
7. Thy wrath lies hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted *me* with all Thy waves. Selah.
8. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; Thou hast made me an abomination unto them; *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.
9. Mine eye mourns by reason of affliction; LORD, I have called daily upon Thee, I have stretched out my hands unto Thee.
10. Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise *and* praise Thee? Selah.
11. Shall Thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? *Or* Thy faithfulness in destruction?
12. Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
13. But unto Thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent Thee.

14. LORD, why cast Thou off my soul? *Why* hide Thou Thy face from me?
15. I *am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up; *while* I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted.
16. Thy fierce wrath goes over me; Thy terrors have cut me off.
17. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.
18. Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

SUMMARY.

This psalm pictures the suffering which our Lord Jesus Christ endured in His soul when struggling with eternal death, the greatest of all His torments. A taste of it the author of this psalm experienced, and he compares it with death, the grave and hell. It is indeed the pang of pangs and a very little taste of it will not fail to fill the soul with horror. St. Paul (*2 Corinthians 12*) describes it as a thorn in the flesh, Satan's angel buffeting him. In this struggle of His soul, the high-priests, the scribes, the Pharisees and all the people wagged their heads over Jesus, mocking Him, and their cruel words must have pierced His heart like sharp arrows. In this life the Christians must be made like unto their Master, being railed at in their afflictions, and often even their friends and relatives will stand aloof from them. But rejoice and be exceeding glad, ye followers of Jesus! In due time a radiant crown of glory will take the place of the crown of thorns.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who did endure the pangs of death and the torments of hell for our sake, be with us and save us from the spirit of despondency, which would drive us to despair and would swallow up our soul. Pour out abundantly upon us the Spirit of joy and comfort to draw out souls out of the slough of despond, and to strengthen and comfort us through Thy Sacred Wounds. Amen.

PSALM 89.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is twofold: the Kingdom of Grace and the Kingdom of Glory. They are also called the Kingdom of Heaven (meaning the Kingdom of Grace on earth), and eternal Life. The Kingdom of Grace is in this present time, the Kingdom of Glory is in eternity; and yet they are inseparably linked together; “for where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.” Whosoever would enter the Kingdom of Glory in eternity must first be in the Kingdom of Grace, in which alone is obtained the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, as He says, “*This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent*” (*John 17:3*). Here the Lord is speaking of the Kingdom of Grace in which eternal Life begins through the living knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ; for when man is born spiritually of the Spirit, he is born into an eternal Life, which does not cease when this carnal and bodily life ends. Then, in the world to come, we shall enjoy peace, glory and salvation, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath descended into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him (*1 Corinthians 2:9*). On Christ’s Kingdom let us hear the first part of the eighty-ninth Psalm.

Prophecy of the Messiah and His Kingdom.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

1. I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever; with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations.
2. For I have said, “Mercy shall be built up for ever; Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens.”
3. I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant,
4. Thy Seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy Throne to all generations. Selah.

5. And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O LORD; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.
6. For who in the Heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *Who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?
7. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about Him.
8. O LORD God of Hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto Thee? Or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?
9. Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them.
10. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; Thou hast scattered Thine enemies with Thy strong arm.
11. The heavens *are* Thine, the earth also *is* Thine; *As for* the world and the fullness thereof, Thou hast founded them.
12. The north and the south Thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name.
13. Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is Thy hand, *and* high is Thy right hand.
14. Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of Thy Throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.
15. Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Thy countenance.
16. In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted.
17. For Thou *art* the glory of their strength; and in Thy favor our horn shall be exalted.
18. For the LORD *is* our defense; and the Holy One of Israel *is* our King.

SUMMARY.

This whole psalm is a prophecy of Christ and His Kingdom. It begins by praising this Kingdom greatly as a Kingdom of mercy enduring for ever. Other kingdoms endure while they continue in virtue and morality — corruption and the degeneracy of their inhabitants are their ruin. But Christ's Kingdom essentially consists in forgiving sin and imputing righteousness, and this Kingdom of Grace and Mercy will never become extinct, it will endure while the

earth stands. Then the psalm refers to the promise made unto David from whose house Christ was to be born, and it affirms, God would surely keep His covenant and oath unto David, because He is faithful and a Ruler over all things, able to fulfill His promise. Therefore He pronounces blessed the nation knowing the joyful sound (*verse 15*), hearing and believing the glorious things proclaimed in the Gospel. That nation, says He, shall walk in the light of God's countenance and shall be exalted. The fulfillment of this prophecy our eyes behold; for the nations possessing the Light of the Gospel are exalted, and rule upon earth.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, we thank Thee, because Thou hast called us by Thy Gospel into Thy Kingdom of Grace. Grant that we be members, not only of Thy visible Church, but of the invisible Community of Saints — living temples of Thy Spirit. Keep us steadfast in the true faith and finally receive us into Thy Kingdom of eternal Glory. Amen.

PSALM 89.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

When Jesus once put the question to the Pharisees, "*What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?*" They answered, "*The son of David.*" By this answer they meant to say, Christ would be a descendant of David and only of David. They meant, He would be only a man who would restore David's earthly kingdom. Therefore, Jesus put to them the further query, "*How then doth David, in spirit, call him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' If David then call Him Lord, how is He His Son?'"*" (*Matthew 22:42f*). Jesus Christ is both David's Son and David's Lord, and being David's Lord, He is the eternal God. Jesus Christ is Man, born of the seed of David in the fullness of time, and He is God, born of the Father in eternity. This fact that Christ would be God and Man in one person

ought to have been well known to the Pharisees, because there are so many testimonies for it in the Old Testament. So the Father here calls Him the First-Born, higher than the kings of the earth, and describes His Dominion as lasting for ever. In this mystery, that in the one person of Christ, Divinity and humanity are united, rests our salvation. Being man, He was capable to suffer and die, and His Divinity, gave infinite value to what He did and suffered. Because, in Christ, God Himself bare our sins on the cross, because Christ's Blood is God's own Blood (*Acts 20:28*), therefore we know that the Ransom paid for us is of infinite and everlasting value. Verily, He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him (*Hebrews 7:25*). Of this we are assured in the second part of the eighty-ninth Psalm.

19. Then Thou spakest in vision Thy Holy One, and said, "I have laid help upon *One that is* mighty; I have exalted *One* chosen out of the people.
20. I have found David my servant; with My Holy Oil have I anointed Him;
21. With Who My hand shall be established; Mine arm also shall strengthen Him.
22. The enemy shall not exact upon Him; nor the son of wickedness afflict Him
23. And I will beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him.
24. But My faithfulness and My mercy *shall be* with Him; and in My Name shall His horn be exalted.
25. I will set His hand also in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers."
26. He shall cry unto Me, "Thou *art* My Father, My God and the Rock of My Salvation."
27. Also I will make Him *My* Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.
28. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him.
29. His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and His Throne as the days of Heaven.
30. If His children forsake My Law, and walk not in My judgments;

31. If they break My statutes, and keep not my commandments;
32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.
33. Nevertheless, My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail.
34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.
35. Once have I sworn by My Holiness that I will not lie unto David.
36. His Seed shall endure for ever, and His Throne as the sun before Me.
37. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in Heaven. Selah.

SUMMARY.

This text testifies of a Chosen One Who is mighty, upon Whom God has laid help. This Chosen One is the One Seed of Abraham, that One Son of David, of Whom the Father says, "*Behold My servant, Whom I uphold; Mine elect, in Whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon He; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*" (*Isaiah 42:1*). There is but One Mediator, Jesus Christ, from Whom we bring all our help. In Him the Covenant is sure to all them that believe. But He warns us that we, who have received the Covenant, should not turn again to sin. If the righteous man, who was once justified, turns from his righteousness and willfully sins, he must die (*Ezekiel 18:24*). Yet God will not utterly take away His Covenant from the earth though many fall away. If we cast away the Covenant, it will be given unto others. It is not bound to a certain people, nor limited to a certain land, but it must always endure. Christ must, and will, have His seed on earth while the moon lasts. Keep the Covenant and sin not. But if you have sinned, repent and return as Peter did.

PRAYER.

We glorify Thee, O God, our most merciful Father in Heaven, because Thou hast given us a Savior of Whom we know that He is able to save even the greatest of sinners, and because in Him, Thou

hast made a covenant which shall endure for ever. And since Thou hast so graciously received us into this covenant in Holy Baptism, grant us also grace to walk therein and to reach the end of faith, the salvation of the soul. Amen.

PSALM 89.

PART 3 — PREFACE.

Before God fulfills His promises, He often suffers the very contrary to transpire, so that it is hard, yea impossible for carnal reason to believe that His promises will ever come to pass. God's object is that we should humble ourselves under His mighty hand and should learn that in quietness and in confidence is our strength (*Isaiah 30:15*). In due time God performs all His promises. Not one of them can fail. In Isaac was the promise, yet when commanded to sacrifice him, Abraham went about to obey and obtained the honor of being called the father of the faithful. When David had been anointed to be king over Israel, he had to become a fugitive in the wilderness, but he waited and doubted not, and what was promised him was gloriously fulfilled. Under popery, notwithstanding all attempts at a reformation, the condition of the church became worse and worse and hope seemed lost, when suddenly a solitary monk raised the voice of the Gospel, and the power of darkness was broken. However contrary appearances may be, God infallibly fulfills all His promises. Believe and wait and your eyes shall see it. This remember in reading the last part of the eighty-ninth Psalm.

38. But Thou hast cast off and abhorred, Thou hast been wroth with Thine Anointed.
39. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant; Thou hast profaned His crown *by casting it* to the ground.
40. Thou hast broken down all His hedges; thou hast brought His strong holds to ruin.
41. All that pass by the way spoil Him; He is a reproach to His neighbors.

42. Thou hast set up the right hand of His adversaries; Thou hast made all His enemies to rejoice.
43. Thou hast also turned the edge of His sword, and hast not made Him to stand in the battle.
44. Thou hast made His glory to cease, and cast His Throne down to the ground.
45. The days of His youth hast Thou shortened; Thou hast covered Him with shame. Selah.
46. How long, LORD? Wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever? Shall Thy wrath burn like fire?
47. Remember how short My time is; wherefore hast Thou made all men *in vain?
48. What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.
49. Lord, where *are* Thy former loving-kindnesses, *which* Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?
50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants; *how* I do bear in My bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty people;
51. Wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Thine Anointed.
52. Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

*If Christ had not come and earned eternal life,
all men had been created in vain.

SUMMARY.

This last part of this beautiful psalm may properly be regarded as a complaint of the Church under the tyranny of the popes and of Mohammedanism. Under these, the true Church of Christ was persecuted and trodden down, and many faithful witnesses of Jesus were tortured to death. It seemed as though God had forgotten His promises, and as though the Church must perish instead of becoming great and glorious in all the earth. Nevertheless, Christ had His seed; there was yet a remnant of believing souls, and in His time God caused the Gospel to shine again, and it is, even now, sending its rays to the uttermost ends of the earth. In the day of trouble, call upon God, and if the affliction, instead of being forthwith taken

away, is rather increased, waver not; wait and say, "Seems it is my anguish lone, As though God forsook His own, Yet I hold this knowledge fast, God will surely help at last."

PRAYER.

Wonderfully hast Thou, O God, preserved Thy Church throughout the ages according to Thy promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. In many and mighty conflicts against many and mighty enemies hast Thou been the Salvation of Thine own people. Grant us faith to trust Thy promises, and let us not fall from Thee for any earthly affliction or in the pains of death, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PSALM 90.

PREFACE.

The children of the world live securely, not considering either the mercy or the anger of God. By the goodness of God, the children of the world will not be drawn, and by His punishments, they will not be driven to repentance. They do not want to repent. But there is a snare fixed in which finally all are entangled and which none can escape. Death sooner or later comes upon all. Woe unto them that are unprepared, because, through temporal, they pass into eternal death. But blessed they that live in repentance and die in the Lord. Those are well prepared for death who sorrow over their sins, who sincerely ask forgiveness of God in the Name of Jesus Christ, and who truly believe it that in Christ they are the children and heirs of God. Blessed they who, from grateful hearts, show their faith by their works, walking in the fear of God, fleeing sin and crucifying the flesh. Blessed they who, preserving a good conscience, commit themselves, body and soul, with all that they are and have into the hands of God. Walk in the faith of Christ, following godliness, and when you come to die, be it in youth or in age, you shall enter that city whose light is the Lamb, and your eyes shall see what your heart believed. To be prepared for death, we are urged in the ninetieth Psalm.

The vanity of man's life.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

1. LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.
2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou *art* God.
3. Thou turnest man to destruction; and say, "Return, ye children of men."
4. For a thousand years in Thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.
5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as* a sleep; in the morning *they are* like grass *which* grows up.
6. In the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down, and withers.
7. For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled.
8. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret *sins* in the light of Thy countenance.
9. For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.
10. The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11. Who knows the power of Thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, *so is* Thy wrath.
12. So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.
13. Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants.
14. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15. Make us glad according to the days *wherein* Thou hast afflicted us, *and* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
16. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.

17. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

SUMMARY.

Here Moses teaches whence death originated and why it came upon all men. The cause of death is sin, which Adam introduced and which, by natural generation, is transmitted to all His children. Hence life on this earth is short and full of misery, and man compares well with the grass which grows in the morning and is cut in the evening. Yet the brevity of life serves this good purpose that it urges us to seek the grace of God Who alone can save from sin. Those who do not remember death will live for this world only seeking earthly treasures and pleasures, and caring nothing for God's grace and salvation. With Moses we should ask God for the wisdom so to employ our time on earth as to prepare for death, possessing the assurance of the forgiveness of sin and the sonship of God. At the end, Moses also prays for the earthly prosperity of the people of God, that the work of our hands in our calling should prosper.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou eternal God, so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, embracing Christ and His Gospel as Thy wisdom and Thy counsel unto our salvation. Grant us grace to live honestly as in the day that when our last hour is come, we may be found in true faith and godliness, ready to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Amen.

PSALM 91.

PREFACE.

In afflictions and misfortunes the ungodly soon become impatient and are quick to murmur against God, and though they do

not blaspheme Him with the tongue, yet in the heart they are at variance with God, ready to accuse Him of injustice and cruelty. But the godly are not soon offended at the cross. As gold is purified in the fire, so is the faith of the Christian purified in the oven of affliction. The more and longer a man exercises his shoulder in bearing burdens, the stronger his muscles. Even so with the Christian's faith; the longer under the cross, the stronger. Hence sickness and sorrow, disappointments and afflictions must serve to strengthen the Christian's faith and to increase his hope. The greater cross, the nearer Heaven. The rod of affliction makes obedient children, and sorrow makes comfort sweet. It is a good thing for a man to bear the yoke in his youth (*Lamentations 3:26*), because it early teaches him to know that the cross is for his good, preventing him from running to an excess of riot and to be condemned with the world. To this usefulness of the cross St. Paul bears witness saying, "*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God*" (*Romans 8:28*). The same we are taught in the ninety-first Psalm.

Comfort in distress and danger.

1. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2. I will say of the LORD, *He is my Refuge and my Fortress; my God; in Him will I trust.*
3. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and from the noisome pestilence.*
4. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His Truth *shall be thy shield and buckler.*
5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor for the arrow that flies by day;*
6. *Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday.*
7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but it shall not come nigh thee.*
8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
9. Because thou hast made the LORD *which is my Refuge, even the Most High, thy Habitation;*

10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
12. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, let thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
14. Because He hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known My Name.
15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.
16. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My Salvation.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is full of consolation for the afflicted children of God, strongly urging us to a cheerful trust in the protection of the Almighty. Though a multitude of the strong be gathered against us, covered by the wings of the Lord of Hosts, we are safe. Though the very atmosphere be poisoned with noisome pestilence, yet we can not be infected without the will of our Father in Heaven. Though Satan and his angels surround us, watching an opportunity to harm us, yet the angels of the Lord will protect us, if we do but walk in right and good ways. If men hate us and the world account us as the filth of the earth and the off-scouring of all things (*1 Corinthians 4:13*), we have here the promise that God will be with us in trouble and will show us His Salvation. So are protected those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High (*verse 1*), dwelling in Christ by faith. In Christ is the good pleasure of the Father; in Him is the secret of the Lord, unknown to the world, but known to the believer. In Jesus is rest for the soul.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the Author and Finisher of faith, grant us the true and saving faith and preserve us in it against all temptations to doubt and unbelief. Blot out our iniquities by Thy

Blood; cover our sins with Thy Righteousness, and let Thy angels be as a fenced wall around us against all our enemies, and evermore teach us to know the secret of Thy Father's will. Amen.

PSALM 92.

PREFACE.

The joy of the children of this world is in the lust of sin and in the vanities and the pride of life. Their career may be described in this short sentence, "The beginning without God, the middle against God and the end from God." For those who are not, from a child, brought up in the fear of the Lord, are soon led into the ways of wickedness, and on the day of judgment, those having their heart and treasure on earth will be cast out into outer darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth. But the joy of the pious is in God, in His works and mercies. God has created me, giving me a wonderfully constituted body and immortal soul; He has redeemed me by His Son and has cleansed me by His own Blood; He has called me by the Gospel and has sanctified me by His Spirit. He gives me His angels for guardians and daily provides for my body and soul. When the Christian remembers these and other benefits, his heart is enlarged with joy, and he is prompted to join with the hosts of angels, crying, "*Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His Glory*" (*Isaiah 6:3*). God, our Benefactor, is worthy to receive from us honor and praise and thanksgiving at all times while we have our being, as we are taught in the ninety-second Psalm.

God is to be praised and why.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day.

1. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O Most High;*
2. *To show forth Thy loving-kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night,*

3. Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.
4. For Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through Thy work; I will triumph in the works of Thy hands.
5. O LORD, how great are Thy works! *And* Thy thoughts are very deep.
6. A brutish man knows not; neither does a fool understand this.
7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever;
8. But Thou, LORD, *art* Most High for evermore.
9. For, lo, Thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, Thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
10. But my horn shalt Thou exalt like *the horn of* a unicorn; I shall be anointed with fresh oil.
11. Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, *and* mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.
12. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13. Those that be planted in the House of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;
15. To show that the LORD *is* upright; *He is* my Rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in Him.

SUMMARY.

This hymn of praise charges us daily and continually, every morning and night to glorify God, because this is comely and well pleasing unto our God. We are not to be like the irrational beasts which consume their food and know nothing of returning thanks or giving praise to God. And in a most attractive manner does this psalm picture the reward of those walking in grateful praise. The prosperity of brutish men, who remember not God to praise Him, is like the grass which grows quickly and luxuriantly, but soon withers and is cut down. The happiness of the wicked is of short duration. But the righteous compares with the cedars of Lebanon, a tree of solid wood, living long and ever greening. Yea, even when the

Christian becomes old and feeble, his heart daily gathers new strength from the Word of Christ, and at the very verge of the grave, he still brings the fruit of thankfulness and praise. Neither will death end it; praise will be sweeter and fuller in the life to come.

PRAYER.

O that I had a thousand voices!
A mouth to spread with thousand tongues!
My heart which in the Lord rejoices,
Then would proclaim in grateful songs,
To all, wherever I might be,
What great things God hath done for me.
Amen.

PSALM 93.

PREFACE.

The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is an everlasting kingdom. Though Satan and the world, tyrants and heretics rave and rage against Him, yet Christ remains King and His Kingdom is continually enlarged. Often have infidels and persecutors prophesied the overthrow of Christ's Kingdom, but those false prophets have returned to dust, and the Church of Christ is clothed with strength being crowned with victory after victory. The Eternal Word preserves His Word by the Word; Christ sustains the Truth of the Gospel by the preaching, the hearing and the reading of His Word. At all times, till to the day of judgment, will He have a flock on earth. Remember it and forget it not, *O daughter of Zion, who art afflicted and tossed with tempest (Isaiah 54:11)*. Out of the hand of thy King no man shall pluck thee. Against His Church the gates of hell shall not prevail, and Christ being for us, neither things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of our God. Ye that love the Lord, praise the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Ghost, as does the ninety-third Psalm.

Praise of Christ and His Kingdom.

1. The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* He hath girded Himself; the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.
2. Thy Throne *is* established of old; Thou *art* from everlasting.
3. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.
4. The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.
5. Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becomes Thine House, O LORD, for ever.

SUMMARY.

This psalm pictures Christ as a triumphant conqueror establishing His Kingdom in all the world and ruling forever. Turbulent floods and many waters rise up against His Kingdom. Satan and the powers of hell, tyrants and the forces of the wicked rage against it, boasting that not a trace of it shall be left. But Christ is girded with strength; His Throne is higher than that the waves of the sea could reach it, and the assaults of the enemies only give occasion for new victories to the Kingdom of Christ. All this is accomplished by His Word. It is the sword and buckler of this Hero. By His Word the power of idolatry was broken; by His Word is saving knowledge planted among the nations; His Word is the Church's beauty and armor. The testimonies of the Gospel are sure and it adorns with holiness. Hence the worship in Christ's Kingdom is no more in outward observances as under Moses, it is preaching and hearing the Word of salvation, praising and giving of thanks.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou triumphant Victor and glorious King, continue to spread abroad Thy Kingdom on earth, converting the nations from the power of darkness unto Thy Light. Preserve Thy Gospel in its truth and purity to us and our children in all generations. Grant us to worship Thee in righteousness and true

holiness all our days, and finally receive us into those glorious mansions which Thou hast prepared in the House of Thy Father. Amen.

PSALM 94.

PREFACE.

The weapons which we, who love the Lord Jesus and strive to follow Him, should use against our enemies are the Word of God and instant prayer with a good conscience. When the Christians in the right spirit pray against their enemies, they are by no means violating the command of Christ, "*Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you*" (*Matthew 5:44*). Inasmuch as the wicked are our personal enemies, we must pray *for them* and be ready to forgive them, but inasfar as they are the enemies of Christ we must pray *against them* that His cause may be promoted. Diligently should we pray for the conversion of our enemies, and this very prayer includes that God would break and hinder their evil counsel and will, and would make them friends. But if they will not discard their malice, if they continue to blaspheme Christ and His Truth and to destroy His Vineyard, then we must pray against them, calling on God to defend His cause and to frustrate their counsels. Such prayers are in agreement with the Word of the Lord saying, "*To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand*" (*Deuteronomy 32:35*). The prayers of the pious against the enemies do not proceed from personal animosity; they do not use prayer as a means of revenge; but they are moved by love and zeal for the honor and truth of God, as the defender of His own. A sample of such prayer is contained in the ninety-fourth Psalm.

Prayer against the enemies of the Church.

1. O LORD God, to Whom vengeance belongs; O God, to Whom vengeance belongs, show Thyself.
2. Lift up Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.
3. LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?
4. *How long* shall they utter *and* speak hard things? *And* all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?
5. They break in pieces Thy people, O LORD, and afflict Thine heritage.
6. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.
7. Yet they say, “The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.”
8. Understand, ye brutish among the people; and *ye* fools, when will ye be wise?
9. He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?
10. He that chastises the heathen, shall not He correct? He that teaches man knowledge, *shall not He know*?
11. The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they *are* vanity.
12. Blessed *is* the man whom Thou chastens, O LORD, and teaches him out of Thy Law;
13. That Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.
14. For the LORD will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance.
15. But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.
16. Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? *Or* who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
17. Unless the LORD *had been* my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.
18. When I said, “My foot slips;” Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul.
20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frames mischief by a law?

21. They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.
22. But the LORD is my defense; and my God *is* the Rock of my refuge.
23. And He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; *yea*, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

SUMMARY.

This prayer of the Church against her enemies was chiefly a prayer of the true Israelites against the false Israelites. It was a prayer of “the remnant” against kings and princes, the priests and rulers who introduced a false worship; and against the false prophets who preached their own dreams and said, “*The Lord hath said, and so caused the people to err by their lies and by their lightness*” (*Jeremiah 23:32*). Idolatrous kings, proud priests and false prophets seduced the people to depart from the statutes of the Lord, and they persecuted the true prophets, condemning them as deceivers and rebels (*1 Kings 22:24, 27*). Against this throne of iniquity lording it over God’s heritage, this psalm is directed, imploring help and deliverance. How often is the true Church defamed and *put out of the synagogue by those who think they are doing God service* (*John 16:2*). But this psalm comforts the “remnant” that, abiding in the Word, it has the Truth, and God will not uphold the throne of iniquity. In due time it will be destroyed and its falsehood and violence will be avenged upon it.

PRAYER.

Lord, Who art a merciful and a jealous God, convert Thine enemies and draw unto Thee those going astray, but restrain the malicious persecutors of Thy Church and the willful corrupters of Thy Truth. Bring their counsels to naught and show that Thou art the Lord. Build Thy Church and make it a city upon a hill for the salvation of many through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 95.

PREFACE.

Ever should we remember and never should we lose sight of these words of this psalm, *To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart (verse 7)*. Those especially should well consider these words who profess faith with their lips, but whose heart is full of guile and unbelief. The word *to-day* urges to repentance being a solemn reminder of the uncertainty of human life. *To-day* we are not to have hardened and impenitent hearts. *To-day* we are to incline our ears to hear the voice of Christ. *To-day* we are to lay to hear the Word of the cross and of salvation. While it is said *to-day* let us walk in the fear of God, showing forth the example of an unblameable life in faith, love, and patience. *To-day* let us hold ourselves in readiness, through death to enter in to the rest of the people of God, lest any of us, lagging behind fall by unbelief and fail of that rest, as did the Israelites in the wilderness. Those neglecting to hear the voice of the Gospel neglect their soul's salvation, and will never more come to that eternal Sabbath in Heaven. Their unalterable lot will be in the place where mercy never came. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Luke 8:8)*. The longer repentance is postponed, the harder and more deceitful does the heart become. So, let us give ear to the words of the ninety-fifth Psalm.

Exhortation to praise and obey the Messiah.

1. O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.
2. Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.
3. For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.
4. In His Hand *are* the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills *is* His also.
5. The sea *is* His, and He made it; and His hands formed the day land.

6. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
7. For He *is* our God; and we *are* the people of His pasture and the sheep of His Hand. To-day if ye will hear His voice,
8. Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and as in* the day of temptation in the wilderness;
9. When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My work.
10. Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, “It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.
11. Unto whom I swear in My wrath, that they should not enter into My Rest.

SUMMARY.

This psalm calls on us to hear the voice of our Redeemer and to praise His Name. The epistle to the Hebrews treats of it extensively, applying it specially to the preaching of the Gospel in the time of the New Testament. It directs us to Christ and His Word, to receive from Him the living Manna for the soul, as sheep receive their food from the hand of their shepherd. For our warning it introduces the example of the Israelites in the wilderness, who did not reach the land of promise because of their unbelief.

This psalm must not be divided as though only a part referred to Christ. Jesus Christ is that God Who is the Maker of all things, a great King above all gods. Jesus Christ is the Lord Whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness. This same Jesus Christ Whom the Israelites worshiped with sacrifices, washings and keeping of days, now wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth, with preaching, hearing, singing and praise. Wash in His Blood, and come and worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, teach us to profit by the warning examples of others. So govern us that we harden not our hearts as did those at Meribah. Incline our hearts to Thy Gospel and enable us, by Thy good Spirit, to receive with meekness, the engrafted Word which is able to save the soul. Suffer us not, O Lord, to fall from Thee, neither in life nor death. Amen.

PSALM 96.

PREFACE.

Most assuredly is it our bounden duty, with rejoicing hearts, to give thanks unto our God, because He has called us, of the Gentiles, into the Kingdom of His dear Son Jesus Christ. Our fathers went to worship dumb idols as they were led, and why is it that the Light of the Gospel has come to us, their children? Were we better than our fathers? O, it is owing alone to the love and mercy of our God, as St. Paul also testifies, that the Gentiles glorify God for His mercy (*Romans 15:9*). Not because we deserved it, but because He loved us, did God make us the people of His pasture. O, let us approve our thankfulness unto Him by loving the Gospel of Christ, by embracing Him our only Helper, by seeking the cleansing from sin in His Blood, and laying apart the filthy and ragged garment of our own works, let us wrap our souls alone in His righteousness. Thereafter, let us also show forth His praises in our lives, adorning the doctrine of the Gospel in a walk of godliness, that others too may be drawn unto Christ, with us to glorify the Father in Heaven. Surely those who profess the faith, but do not thank God for His mercies, are not Christians indeed, and those who name the Name of Christ, yet do not depart from iniquity (*2 Timothy 2:19*) heap shame on His Gospel, and their damnation is just. To thankfulness we are charged in the ninety-sixth Psalm.

The new song of the Gospel.

1. O sing unto the LORD a new song; sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
2. Sing unto the LORD, bless His Name; show forth His Salvation from day to day.
3. Declare His Glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people.

4. For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised; He *is* to be feared above all gods.
5. For all the gods of the nations *are* idols; but the LORD made the heavens.
6. Honor and majesty *are* before Him; strength and beauty *are* in His Sanctuary.
7. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
8. Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* His Name; bring an offering, and come into His courts.
9. O worship the LORD in the beauty of Holiness; fear before Him, all the earth.
10. Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigns; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; He shall judge the people righteously.
11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.
12. Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
13. Before the LORD; for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His Truth.

SUMMARY.

This is an excellent prophecy of Christ's Kingdom established in all the world and full of rejoicing and praise. The prophet calls on all Gentile nations — on lands, seas, forests, trees — to sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving, because He comes to judge with righteousness and truth. Now His Truth is the Word of grace and forgiveness, and His judgment is that every one believing on Him shall be counted righteous. For this purpose He comes, to bring righteousness and to help the contrite and broken-hearted from sin and the power of Satan, and finally to deliver them from all evil, causing them to sing of His mercy. This is the new song of the new Kingdom, sung by those who have been made new creatures from heart, mind and soul, having been born again, not of the Law and works, but of water and of the Spirit. This new people singing this

new Song is the Christian Church, Christ's mystical Body. Ye that know the salvation of Christ, sing unto His Name.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, O Father of Light, because Thou didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ to establish a Kingdom of grace and forgiveness among men on this earth. By Thy Spirit, make us new creatures from heart, mind, soul and sentiment, and teach us to sing the new Song of this new Kingdom with rejoicing and gladness through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 97.

PREFACE.

Whosoever will not have the righteousness of faith must suffer the judgment of unbelief. In this life already, the Word of God pronounces the sentence of condemnation on those who believe not, and St. Paul testifies that the ordained Judge will be revealed from Heaven to take vengeance on those who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to punish them in flaming fire with everlasting destruction (*2 Thessalonians 1:8*). May God Awaken us out of spiritual slumber and enlighten us by His Spirit that we receive the Gospel in true faith, confess it with joy and be saved in it. And let us henceforth no more live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died for us and rose again, being diligent unto good works and bringing for the fruits of the Spirit. Watch against the enemy to avoid sin and to preserve a good conscience that you lose not again grace and the righteousness of faith. Because the Gospel is a doctrine of faith and not of works, it pronounces the sentence that the believers shall be saved and the unbelievers exclude themselves from the salvation of Christ. Yet we must never forget that true faith and evil works can not stand together. Name thou the Name of Christ, then show thy faith by departing from iniquity. Unto a joyous faith we are exhorted in the ninety-seventh Psalm.

Of Christ and His Kingdom.

1. The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.
2. Clouds and darkness *are* round about Him; righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of His Throne.
3. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.
4. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled.
5. The hills melted like wax at the Presence of the LORD, at the Presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His Glory.
7. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols; worship Him, all *ye* gods.
8. Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of Thy judgments, O LORD.
9. For Thou, LORD, *art* high above all the earth; Thou art exalted far above all gods.
10. Ye that love the LORD, hate evil; He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.
11. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.
12. Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of His Holiness.

SUMMARY.

This psalm, like the preceding one, is a prophecy of Christ and His Kingdom, which He was to establish in all the world through the Gospel. It is a kingdom of righteousness, that is such a kingdom in which sin is forgiven and the King's righteousness is imputed to His subjects. And this King establishes His rule in the very midst of His enemies by the Gospel. It is the fire which goes before Him, consuming His enemies, enlightening the world and causing the hills to melt. By the Gospel Christ lowers the lofty, humbles the haughty, condemns the wisdom and holiness of the

world and teaches that sinners can become wise and righteous and holy alone through Him. In this fire of the Gospel is consumed the false and idolatrous worship both of Jew and Gentile that Christ may be all in all. The Rock, which Nebuchadnezzar saw cut from the mountain without hands, crushed the image, representing the great kingdoms of the earth, and itself became a mountain filling the whole earth. This is the Rock of Ages cut from the bosom of the Father.

PRAYER.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side that flowed
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.
Amen.

PSALM 98.

PREFACE.

Come, let us worship before the Lord and give praise unto our God; for He deserves to be glorified of us for all His benefits. He gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness (*Acts 14:17*). Day by day He provides us food and raiment and sends His holy angels as our guardians to minister unto us. He has purchased us from everlasting destruction by His own Blood, and has prepared mansions for our souls which are not built with hands. He baptizes us with the Holy Ghost, that Spirit of grace and prayer, Who teaches us to worship in spirit and in truth, and Who is the seal of God's promises and the earnest of our inheritance (*Ephesians 1:13*). All this is proclaimed to us in the Gospel, by which God has called us out of darkness unto His marvelous Light, has made us children of adoption, temples of the Holy Ghost, and

heirs of His everlasting blessings. Come, let us worship Him with prayer and praise, ascribing unto Him glory and might both morning and night. Unto such worship, with sounding praise, the ninety-eighth Psalm invites us.

An exhortation to praise Christ.

A Psalm.

1. O sing unto the LORD a new song; for He hath done marvelous things; His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory.
2. The LORD hath made known His salvation; His righteousness hath He opened shown in the sight of the heathen.
3. He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the House of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
4. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
5. Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
6. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.
7. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
8. Let the floods clap *their* hands; let the hills be joyful together
9. Before the LORD; for He cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.

SUMMARY.

This hymn of praise is a lovely prophecy of Christ's Kingdom, in which righteousness and salvation are preached in the uttermost parts of the earth. It charges us to rejoice and be glad over this salvation and to praise God for our redemption in Jesus Christ. The worship here commended is not washings, keeping of days and bringing of sacrifices at Jerusalem, but preaching the Gospel among the nations and praising Christ, the King of righteousness, Who has ransomed us from sin and death, without our aid, by His own right

hand and His holy arm. Let all nations acknowledge Jesus Christ the King of Glory, and let the heathen receive Him with acclamations of joy, that land and sea may be filled with His praise.

PRAYER.

Honor, praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee, O Christ, our God and Savior, for all Thy wonderful works and the numberless blessings with which Thou enriches us. Fill us with Thy Spirit to new-create our hearts that we may rejoice over Thy works and gifts all our days, and at our latter end, receive us into that Kingdom of Light in which we shall follow Thee wherever Thou goest. Amen.

PSALM 99.

PREFACE.

The body of man is so constituted that it must daily receive nourishment, if it is to live and thrive, and properly nourished, the muscles become strong and the members active. So likewise the Christian's inner man needs daily nourishment, if he is to thrive and grow. Now the food by which the new man is nourished and strengthened is Christ and the Word of His grace. Hence that Christian will be healthy and strong after the inner man who is diligent to hear the Word of God and who receives it in faith and with instant prayer. Of Christ's Word St. Paul confesses, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Romans 1:16). Of faith the Lord says, "*I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst*" (John 6:35). Concerning prayer, we have this precious promise, "*If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him*" (Luke 11:13). That we may grow after the inner man and be armed against the day when the soul is tried in afflictions and temptations, let us frequent the House of Prayer where is heard the

voice of Christ's Word, and let us exercise ourselves in all godliness. Now hear the ninety-ninth Psalm.

Nature of Christ's Kingdom.

1. The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble; He sitteth *between* the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
2. The LORD *is* great in Zion; and He *is* high above all the people.
3. Let them praise Thy great and terrible Name; *for it is* Holy.
4. The King's strength also loveth judgment; Thou doest establish equity, Thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
5. Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool; *for He is* Holy.
6. Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name; they called upon the LORD, and He answered them.
7. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies, and the ordinance *that* He gave them.
8. Thou answered them, O LORD our God; Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.
9. Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His Holy Hill; for the LORD our God *is* Holy.

SUMMARY.

This psalm teaches and exhorts Israel to praise God in Zion, though the heathen raged against them and they had to suffer many things for their devotion to the Lord and His statutes. It praises Moses, Aaron and Samuel with whom God spoke personally, who were full of fiery zeal for the God of Israel and walked in His ways. Hence it teaches the Israelites that the true worship of God does not consist in bringing many sacrifices of beasts and birds, but in acknowledging His wonderful works and praising His mercy in making them His people. It is, therefore, a prophecy of Christ Who is the King of Zion governing and protecting His own in the midst of

His enemies. And though all the world set itself against Zion, she shall not perish, defended by Him Whose Throne is in the heavens.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, be Thou our Guide and our Defense in this evil world, that we may never be ashamed to confess Thee before men, but may serve Thee in a holy conversation and constant fidelity. Restrain the evil counsels of those who set themselves against Thee and Thy Church, and cause them to see the evil of their ways that they may be turned unto Thee. Amen.

PSALM 100.

PREFACE.

The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is an everlasting mercy, and His truth will not pass away. In Him we should, at all times, seek grace, forgiveness of sin, peace with God and life everlasting. His Word we should steadfastly believe, not doubting that, in Him, we have the true riches, namely life, joy, and peace. And if, by the artfulness of Satan, the seductiveness of the world or the deceitfulness of our own flesh, we have strayed from Him, we should say unto our souls, "I will arise and I will go to my Savior, and will implore His mercy; for it is everlasting, and the fountain of His grace can not go dry, neither can it be exhausted. Of this saving grace Paul (*Titus 2:11*) says, that it has appeared to all men. The rays of His kindness shall fall upon all who seek His Light. For this, Thy unspeakable grace, we return unto Thee, Lord Jesus — honor, praise and thanksgiving — imploring Thee to shed abroad Thy love in our hearts and to cause Thy faithfulness to encompass us, until we enter the courts of Thy everlasting Temple to dwell with Thee in One Tabernacle. Unto joyous praise we are exhorted in the one hundredth Psalm.

Praise of God for His Mercy and Truth.

A Psalm of praise.

1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
2. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His Presence with singing.
3. Know ye that the LORD He *is* God; *it is* He *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* His people, and the sheep of His pasture.
4. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *and* into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, *and* bless His Name.
5. For the LORD *is* good; His mercy *is* everlasting; and His truth *endureth* to all generations.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a hymn of praise to Christ, charging all lands to rejoice before Him, to enter His gates with praise and His courts with thanksgiving, and to call upon Him with all confidence and boldness. He is the Good Shepherd Who loves to see His flock full of life and gladness. Jesus Christ, indeed, rejoices over the sinner's sorrow of repentance, because that sorrow leads unto life, but the Lord's delight is in gladness and not in sadness. And well may we rejoice before Him; for His Kingdom is everlasting, of His peace there is no end, and His truth endures in all generations.

PRAYER.

Thou Spirit of grace and of prayer, that proceeds from the Father and the Son, grant us Thy power and even Thyself intercede for us with sighings which can not be uttered, that in spirit and in truth we may give thanks unto our Savior Jesus Christ for His love and truth. Anoint us with the oil of gladness to walk before our God in an holy conversation and to run the way of His Commandments. Amen.

PSALM 101.

PREFACE.

A government permeated by integrity and diligent in ruling according to good and just laws is one of the best earthly blessings which we can enjoy in this life. That we are enabled to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty is largely dependent on the government, whose office it is to protect and promote the virtuous, and to restrain and to punish the vicious. So, St. Peter (*1st Epistle 2:13-14*) writes, “*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.*” Civil officers, elected by their fellow citizens, are to seek the good of their country with diligence and prudence. In their office they are to show all good fidelity, setting an example of industry, honesty and integrity, and the receiving of bribes should be far from them. Neither should they soil their hands with unjust gain and oppression of the poor, always remembering, in all things, that the example of the officers has a great influence on the morals of the citizens either for good or for evil. And because, in a republic, the officers are elected by the people every citizen should do his part to promote the election of men of integrity and ability and should not forget his country in his prayers. Some virtues which rulers and all house-fathers should practice are described in the one hundred and first Psalm.

David’s instructions to rulers.

A Psalm of David.

1. I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O LORD, will I sing.
2. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
3. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it shall not cleave to me.*

4. A froward heart shall depart from me; I will not know a wicked *person*.
5. Whoso privily slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off; him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.
6. Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
7. He that works deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
8. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

SUMMARY.

Here David sets forth himself as a pattern for civil rulers and heads of families, laying down excellent rules which will apply both for the government of a nation and a household. Legislators and executive officers in all departments, and all householders, each in his sphere, are to encourage virtue and piety, and to check and suppress all wickedness. This David calls singing of mercy and judgment, because all who have the rule over others should so use their authority as to make it a terror to the evil, a praise to the good, and protection for the weak, a refuge for the oppressed. Specially worthy of note is that David wanted no slanderers or proud men at his court, neither did he countenance liars and deceivers. When he wanted a servant, he sought him among the faithful and the upright. This is a rule of observance of which is very conducive to the welfare of a household, because the wickedness of the servants is very apt to corrupt the minds of the children.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, Who art Lord of lords and King of kings, thanks be unto Thee, because Thou hast blessed our beloved country with good and liberal institutions of government. Preserve to our land civil and religious liberty. Give able and faithful rulers in offices high and low, and cause righteousness and peace to flourish in the land unto its welfare and Thy praise. Amen.

PSALM 102.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

In this present life the believing Christians are subject to manifold crosses, and the fountains of their tears must often flow copiously. As a true Father, God corrects His children and scourges every son whom He receives (*Hebrews 12:6*). God chastens His children in time that He may the more gladden them in eternity. If we humble ourselves before God, commit our fortunes to Him and persevere in faith, our temporal trials will be followed by everlasting peace — temporal sorrows by eternal joy — temporal sickness by eternal health — temporal poverty by eternal riches — temporal death by eternal life. With this great and blessed change, we should comfort our souls in all our afflictions. What is this earth but a vale of tears, a house of sorrow, full of disappointments and calamities. Justly did Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, picture this life as overflowed with so many misfortunes, that death is rather to be counted a relief than a punishment. It is even as Asaph says of them that love God, “*Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure*” (*Psalms 80:5*). The same is taught in the first part of the one hundred and second Psalm.

Prayer of an afflicted soul hungering after righteousness.

A prayer of the afflicted, when he is over-whelmed,
and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

1. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto Thee.
2. Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline Thine ear unto me; in the day *when* I call answer me speedily.
3. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as a hearth.
4. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

5. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.
6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.
7. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop.
8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; *and* they that are mad against me are sworn against me.
9. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,
10. Because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath; for Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
11. My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.
12. But Thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and Thy remembrance unto all generations.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was composed by one in great affliction of heart and soul, and it may be regarded as spoken in the person of all the afflicted children of God; for God's greatest saints are often the greatest cross-bearers. And it is the way of the world, when misfortune befalls the Christian, many prove fickle friends and stand aloof from him, that, in his distress, he must be like a long sparrow upon the roof — forsaken and neglected. But there is One, with Whom the afflicted can find a refuge, Who remains the same and Whose faithfulness reaches unto the clouds. Before Him we should pour out our prayers, and here the Holy Ghost puts the very words into our mouth which we should speak before God, as He also bids us do by the prophet Hosea (14:2) saying, "*Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.'*" If, in childlike faith and trust, we hold up to Him His own words, it must surely be pleasing unto Him and His own heart's compassion will constrain Him to incline His ear unto us graciously.

PRAYER.

Help, Helper, help in fear and need,
Have mercy, to my prayer give heed!

I know Thou lov'st me still as Thine,
Though 'gainst me world and hell combine.

My God and Lord, I trust in Thee.
What need I, if Thou art with me?
And Thou Lord Jesus Christ art mine:
My God and Savior, I am Thine. Amen.

PSALM 102.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Without Jesus Christ there is nothing but weakening of strength and shortening of days in this world (*verse 23*). By malice, anger, in chastity, intemperance and other sins, the strength of many is consumed early and they sink into a premature grave. On account of sin man must eat his bread in the sweat of his face, consuming his strength in hard labors. By sin, sickness with a host of diseases has come into the world, which weaken man's strength and deliver him over into the power of death. Without Christ, even the very seeking of righteousness before God is nothing but a weakening of strength and shortening of days. Those seeking to be justified by the keeping of the Law expend their energies in vain, because there is not a just man on earth that does good and sins not (*Eccl. 7:20*). Spurred on by the consciousness of imperfection, those seeking righteousness in their own works consume their strength of body and soul, and yet find no peace, because sin will cleave unto them, and their own conscience, together with the Scriptures, bears them witness that they are under the curse (*Galatians 3:10*). My soul, be thou wise, and cling to Christ Who is come into the world to be the strength of the weak, the Savior of the perishing, the Life of the dying. A prophecy of Christ's Kingdom is contained in the latter part of the one hundred and second Psalm.

13. Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come.
14. For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.
15. So the heathen shall fear the Name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Thy Glory.
16. When the LORD shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory.
17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.
18. This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
19. For He hath looked down from the height of His Sanctuary; from Heaven did the LORD behold the earth;
20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;
21. To declare the Name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem;
22. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.
23. He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days.
24. I said, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; Thy years *are* throughout all generations."
25. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens *are* the work of Thy hands.
26. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed;
27. But Thou *art* the same, and Thy years shall have no end.
28. The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee.

SUMMARY.

Here we have the fervent expression of the strong desire which lived in the hearts of the fathers under the Covenant of the Law for the coming of the promised Kingdom of Grace in the Messiah. Fervently did they implore the Lord to prepare stone and

mortar to build the walls of Zion, that is, He should make haste to favor Zion, spreading her and making her great among the Gentiles that the captives might be freed and those saved who were sitting in the shadow of death. O that all nations would enter into His Kingdom; for this life is short and transitory, but in Christ's Kingdom there is no end of life and peace. He was before Heaven and earth; by Him were all things made, and He will again change them as a garment and will create a new Heaven and a new Earth. He is above time and changes not. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Christ and His righteousness; for here we have no abiding city.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Lord Jesus, because in the fullness of time Thou didst come and didst redeem us from the power of that strong man armed. Build Thy Kingdom of Grace among us, make us free from the bonds of sin and the fear of death, and when the appointed time has come, receive us graciously out of this vale of tears into Thine everlasting Kingdom of Glory. Amen.

PSALM 103.

PREFACE.

Born sinners and of a corrupt nature we are inclined to unthankfulness and prone to forget the loving-kindness and the manifold blessings of our God. Now, as there is not a more hateful vice than unthankfulness and not a more lovely virtue than true gratitude, therefore by prayer and the aid of the Holy Ghost we should excite our hearts unto thankfulness, considering from how many evils God has delivered us, in how many dangers He has guarded us, and how well He has provided for us in body and soul. It excites our anger or bows down our soul with sorrow, when we experience ingratitude from those to whom we did good, or whom we served in singleness of heart; and should we then give cause to God to complain of our ingratitude, when His benefactions come down to us unnumbered like dewdrops in the morning? The praise of

our God should enlarge our hearts when the light shines from the east, and in the night-watches we should meditate on His mercies. Day by day we should charge our soul to bless the Lord, as David does in the one hundred and third Psalm.

Praise of God for His Benefactions in the Kingdom of Grace.

A Psalm of David.

1. Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, *bless* His Holy Name.
2. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;
3. Who forgives all thine iniquities; Who heals all thy diseases;
4. Who redeems thy life from destruction; Who crowns thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;
5. Who satisfies thy mouth with good *things*; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.
7. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.
8. The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.
9. He will not always chide; neither will He keep *His anger* for ever.
10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
11. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.
12. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.
13. Like as a father pities *his* children, so the LORD pities them that fear Him.
14. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust.
15. *As for* man, his days *are* as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
16. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17. But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children;
18. To such as keep His Covenant, and to those that remember His Commandments to do them.
19. The LORD hath prepared His Throne in the heavens; and His Kingdom rules over all.
20. Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His Commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.
21. Bless ye the LORD, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure.
22. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His Dominion; bless the LORD, O my soul.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a lovely hymn of praise, in which David gives thanks to God for His blessings, for the forgiveness of sin, health of soul and body, a joyous heart, deliverance from the enemies, the protection of the angels and so on. That God is surely worthy of our praise Who remembers us weak, frail creatures, and who deals with us as a loving Father according to His mercy and not as we deserve. Hence we should show ourselves grateful, girding our loins to keep His Covenant and to run in the way of His Commandments. And as the forgiveness of sin and all spiritual gifts belong into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, without Whom there is neither grace nor forgiveness, therefore, in true Christian gratitude we should hearken unto His voice, should cling to Him, love and praise Him, and should glorify His Name upon the earth.

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, Thou Father of Light, do we give praise, because Thou forgivest iniquity and dost not reward us according to our sins. What Thou didst promise to the fathers, Thou hast fulfilled in Thy Son. As the east and the west can never come together, so remove our sins from us that they can be accounted to us no more, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 104.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

God's manifold creatures and His wonderful works we should not behold or use without thinking, as do the beasts of the field, but by His creatures we should learn to know and to praise the Creator. As the pictures praises the skill of the artist, so the works of creation praise the power and wisdom, the mercy and goodness of their Maker. The very formation of our bodily frame should teach us to look upward and to search after the Author of all visible things. The irrational beasts God created with face turned earthward, but man He made with stature erect and the countenance turned Heavenward. We are not like the beast to look only downward, thinking of nothing but eating and drinking. We are to look upward that we may learn to know and to praise that Lord Who spanned the heavens and founded the earth. Heaven and earth are to be unto us an open book in which we read of the perfections of our God. The glittering star, the sunlit cloud, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, flowers and shrubs, and even the tiny creature inhabiting the dewdrop should be to man a school of the knowledge of God. This is established by the Apostle Paul saying, "*The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead*" (*Romans 1:20*). The praise of God for the works of creation is sung in the one hundred and fourth Psalm.

Praise of God from the Works of Creation.

1. Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty;
2. Who covers *Thyself* with light as *with* a garment; Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain;
3. Who lays the beams of His chambers in the waters; Who makes the clouds His chariot; Who walks upon the wings of the wind;

4. Who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire;
5. *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.
6. Thou covered it with the deep as *with* a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
7. At Thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away.
8. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which Thou hast founded for them.
9. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.
10. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.
11. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst.
12. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.
13. He waters the hills from His chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.
14. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth;
15. And wine *that* makes glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengthens man's heart.

SUMMARY.

The greatness and majesty of God are reflected in the visible works of His hands. He thrones in the heavens and Light is His garment. The canopy of the sky is stretched over the earth and the clouds hang in the air, laden with water to give moisture to the ground. The globe of the earth swims in space without pillars to rest on, yet it does not sink. Year after year the soil of the earth produces food for beast and bird, and abundance for the enjoyment of man. Like the author of this psalm, we should delight in contemplating the works of God, because they are so beautiful, so wisely ordered and so beneficial to man. But who considers this and returns thanks to God? Using God's creatures, let us use them unto His glory, and not abuse them unto vanity and sin.

PRAYER.

Thou, God, art worthy of praise, Who in six days did make so many and great creatures, and have ordered them for the benefit of man. Teach us to know that Thou art the Author of all that is, and grant that we may never abuse Thy creatures unto our own destruction, but use them unto Thy glory and our welfare, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 104.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

This earth did not start into existence accidentally; the heavens did not spread of themselves; sun, moon and stars were not formed spontaneously. That which is nothing can not make itself something. And when matter has been created, it can not give life and activity to itself. What folly to say that this earth made itself! That plants, birds, animals and even man, with his vast abilities, are a product of blind accident! Surely, *every house is built by some man; but He that built all things is God (Hebrews 3:4)*. An all wise and almighty God built the universe. He suspended the earth in a balance, giving it motions more exact than those of any clock made by man. A clock with swinging pendulum and hands showing the hours bears testimony that some one made it and set it to running. Ever since man came upon earth there has been day and night, seedtime and harvest, and these changes come about with the greatest precision. Surely, One of unlimited knowledge and skill made it so, and He yet preserves the swinging of the earth which brings about the changing of the seasons. To this Lord we should ascribe honor and praise, as does the second part of the one hundred and fourth Psalm.

16. The trees of the LORD are full *of sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted;

17. Where the birds make their nests; *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.
18. The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.
19. He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows His going down.
20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.
21. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.
22. The sun arises, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.
23. Man goes forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening.
24. O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches.
25. *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.
26. There go the ships; *there is* that leviathan, *whom* Thou hast made to play therein.
27. These wait all upon Thee; that Thou may give *them* their meat in due season.
28. *That* Thou givest them they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good.
29. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled; Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.
30. Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth.
31. The Glory of the LORD shall endure for ever; the LORD shall rejoice in His works.
32. He looks on the earth, and it trembles; He touches the hills, and they smoke.
33. I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34. My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the LORD.
35. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

Unto His own glory and for the use of man, God caused the earth to bring forth plants and trees bearing grain and fruit. And He peopled the sea with fishes, the forest with beasts, the field with cattle, the air with birds. Great is the variety and vast the number of these living creatures. Who can number them after their kind from the leviathan sporting in the ocean's deep to the insect inhabiting a drop of water? And for all these God provides. He has food for them all. When He opens His hand, they are filled. Now He Who provides for the fishes, shall He not also provide for man? He Who cares for the beasts of the forest, shall He not care for His children who love Him and call upon His Name? He that prepared a refuge for the conies, shall He not watch over His people? Worship Him in His majesty and strength. Trust Him in His mercy and goodness.

PRAYER.

Our Father in Heaven, Who provides for all Thy creatures, supply us at all times with all that we need for the support of this bodily life, as Thy Son taught us to pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Fill our hearts with joyous confidence towards Thee, not doubting that Thou wilt so bless our labors as to provide food and raiment, and teach us to be therewith content. Amen.

PSALM 105.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

To give thanks unto God is a duty of all His intelligent creatures, chiefly those who have the book of His revelation. Now that our thanks may be truly pleasing to God, we must hold fast the Lord Jesus Christ, not doubting that, in Him, we have the grace and forgiveness of the Father. When heart and soul are persuaded that in Christ, we at all times, have free access to the Throne of Grace so that, with a free and easy conscience, we can say, "*Abba, Father,*" then does our thanks flow freely, then are they joyous and genuine.

And not only must we bring thank-offerings to God from a sense of duty, but rather, as we receive the gifts of grace freely for Christ's sake, so should also our thank flow forth freely from a heart constrained by the love of Jesus. Unto such thankfulness St. Paul exhorts in these words, "*Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Ephesians 5:20). And again, he says, "*In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). But never must we forget that deeds speak louder than words. If we sing and say of His praise, we must also so walk before God that our works bear witness of our gratitude. Unto such thanksgiving the one hundred and fifth Psalm charges us.

*Praise of God for His Mercy and Goodness
shown unto His People.*

1. O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the people.
2. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him; talk ye of all His wondrous works.
3. Glory ye in His Holy Name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
4. Seek the LORD, and His strength; seek His face evermore.
5. Remember His marvelous works that He hath done; His wonders and the judgments of His mouth;
6. O ye seed of Abraham His servant, ye children of Jacob His chosen.
7. He *is* the LORD our God; His judgments *are* in all the earth.
8. He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the Word *which* He commanded to a thousand generations.
9. Which *covenant* He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac;
10. And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant;
11. Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;"
12. When they were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

13. When they went from one nation to another, from *one* kingdom to another people;
14. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, He reproved kings for their sakes;
15. *Saying*, “Tough not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.”
16. Moreover, He called for a famine upon the land; He brake the whole staff of bread.
17. He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant;
18. Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron;
19. Until the time that His Word came; the Word of the LORD tried him.
20. The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
21. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance;
22. To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

SUMMARY.

This hymn of praise celebrates the great and marvelous works which God did for His chosen people even from the day when He called Abraham out of his country and the worship of idols, and led him into the land of promise. The covenant which He established with the patriarchs and confirmed with an oath God kept inviolate, and though they had to be strangers and suffer many privations in the land which was promised them for their possession, yet God was with them to uphold them and to avenge the wrong which was done to them. God suffered Joseph to be sold into slavery and to be bound with iron fetters, yet not to torment him, but to make him a mighty ruler, and to save much people alive. The Covenant made with us in Holy Baptism God will neither break nor alter, and though we must pass through fiery trials and must wade the waters of affliction, He will remain our Covenant God, and will make all things work together for our good, if we will but trust Him and walk in His ways.

PRAYER.

According to Thy mercy Thou, O God, hast established a Covenant with us in Holy Baptism, in which Thou hast obligated Thyself to be our God and to forgive our sins for Christ's sake. Thanks, everlasting thanks be unto Thee for this Thy Covenant. And now do Thou grant us grace to believe and strength to persevere unto the end that we may adorn our profession in all things through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 105.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

What happened to the children of Israel at the time of their deliverance out of Egypt did not only serve for the benefit of that one generation, it was also to be an ensample for the warning and comfort of God's people in all ages and in all countries. In many things Jesus Christ was clearly prefigured. The first-born in Israel were saved from bodily death by the blood of a yearling, which signified the salvation of the soul by the Blood of Christ. Having passed through the Red Sea, the children of Israel could sing a song of triumph over the Egyptians. Having washed our garments and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, we triumph over all enemies, and can defy Satan himself to lay any thing to our charge. The pillar of cloud spread over the armies of Israel as they marched, and it shaded their camps, protecting them from the hot rays of the sun. Christ is a shadow over our right hand, protecting our head against the curse of the Law; for He was made a curse for us, that the blessing promised to Abraham, might come upon us (*Galatians 3:13*). The pillar of fire showed the way to Israel when they marched by night, and it gave light to their camps. Jesus Christ is the Light of Life, following Him we are not left in darkness; for this Star of Bethlehem beckons to us from beyond the grave and guides our souls to the Canaan above. On His faithfulness towards His people, hear the second part of the one hundred and fifth Psalm.

23. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
24. And He increased His people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.
25. He turned their heart to hate His people; to deal subtly with His servants.
26. He sent Moses His servant; *and* Aaron whom He had chosen.
27. They showed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.
28. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against His Word.
29. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish,
30. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.
31. He spoke, and there came diverse sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.
32. He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land.
33. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.
34. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number,
35. And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.
36. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.
37. He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.
38. Egypt was glad when they departed; for the fear of them fell upon them.
39. He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.
40. *The people* asked, and He brought quails, and satisfied them with the Bread of Heaven.
41. He opened the Rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.
42. For He remembered His Holy promise *and* Abraham His servant.
43. And He brought forth His people with joy, *and* His chosen with gladness;

44. And gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labor of the people;
45. That they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

In this text we have a memorable example of God's justice and mercy. For their cruelty and hardness of heart, God sent ten destructive plagues on the Egyptians, visiting such dire calamities on those oppressors of His people that they finally rejoiced when Israel departed. But the Israelites were not delivered from bondage because they deserved the Lord's favor, but because the Lord remembered the promise which He had made unto Abraham. They inherited the land of promise, where they dwelt in houses which they had not built and ate of vineyards which they had not planted, not because of their righteousness and piety; for they were a stiff-necked people, but because the Lord loved them and had sworn to give this land to the seed of Abraham (*Deuteronomy 9:5-6*). We are counted the children of God and are entitled to the inheritance of the saints in Light, not because we deserve it; for at the best we are unprofitable servants, but because God loved us and has sent His Son to cleanse us from our sins.

PRAYER.

Let us worship the Lord our God and give thanks unto His Holy Name, because He has awakened unto us the Prophet like unto Moses, by Whom we are delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and made heirs of everlasting Light. Praise ye the Lord. Amen.

PSALM 106.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

As thankfulness is one of the most lovely virtues and the best service of God, so unthankfulness is one of the most hateful vices by

which God is provoked to anger. Yet the world is full of, yea overflowed with ingratitude towards God. Men daily walk among the creatures of God, and they praise not their Creator. Men day by day enjoy God's manifold gifts and return no thanks to the Giver. Many on whom God has bestowed many gifts murmur against Him and blaspheme His Holy Name, and few there are whose soul walks in praise. If God were not more longsuffering than man, He would long since have ceased to bestow one single gift on the children of Adam. But though God does visit His vengeance on the head of the ungrateful when their measure of wickedness is full, yet He has great forbearance with the vessels of wrath, and *maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45)*. Over this surprising goodness of our God we should rejoice and should exalt His praise daily, returning thanks to Him, as the Father of Light from Whom cometh *every good and ever perfect gift*. Unto thankfulness we are exhorted in the one hundred and sixth Psalm.

*Israel's unthankfulness for
God's blessings and its punishment.*

1. Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *He is good; for His mercy endureth* for ever.
2. Who can utter the might acts of the LORD? *Who* can show forth all His praise?
3. Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that does righteousness at all times.
4. Remember me, O LORD, with the favor *that Thou bearest unto Thy people; O visit me with Thy salvation;*
5. That I may see the good of The chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance.
6. We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
7. Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked *Him* at the sea, *even* at the Red Sea.
8. Nevertheless He saved them for His Name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known.

9. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.
10. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11. And the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left.
12. Then believed they His Words; they sang His praise.
13. They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel;
14. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.
15. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

SUMMARY.

Awakening his soul unto the praise of God because of His great goodness and enduring mercy, the psalmist remembered the favor which the Lord had shown the fathers, and he asked to be remembered with like favor. Now God heard the prayers of the fathers and He visited them with His salvation. And though He punished them when they sinned against Him, yet He did not utterly destroy them. Often have we heard how He saved His people of old when they turned from their evil ways and appealed to His mercy. In the day of trouble we should confess our guilt and should cry unto God for help, not because of our worthiness, but because of His great mercy. As unworthy sinners we must appeal for mercy, lest our prayer be evil, like that of the Israelites when, with murmuring hearts, they demanded meat. God gave it, but sent leanness into their soul, that they had a bad conscience and loathed the meat.

PRAYER.

Good, O Lord, have been Thy thoughts and great Thy loving-kindness towards us. Grant us Thy Spirit to work in us such hearts which know and acknowledge Thy mercies, and withdraw not Thy hand from us. Remember not our ingratitude and unworthiness, but remember the grace which Thou hast promise to sinners in Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 106.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

The good works of the Christian are an expression of his faith in Jesus Christ; for the true faith cannot be idle, it will prompt to good works, as St. Paul testifies that in Christ Jesus alone that faith avails which works by love (*Galatians 5:6*). Hence, when the Holy Scriptures at various places, ascribe righteousness unto the works of the saints, the meaning is not that they become righteous by the performing of works, but their works are regarded as an evidence and a testimony of their faith. When Phinehas put idolatrous fornicators to death, and it is said this deed was *counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations (verse 31)*, it is clear that this was a deed of faith, an act of zeal for the true worship of God. By faith in the Messiah, Phinehas was justified before already in the sight of God, but this act was a testimony of his faith, and his reward for this deed of faith was that the priesthood remained in his family. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone in which we are justified from sin in the sight of God, and this righteousness we obtain alone by faith and not by works. Nevertheless, we must daily bear in mind that we are justified from sin, that we should go and sin no more, but should follow righteousness as Phinehas was zealous for God; for if we willfully sin after obtaining forgiveness, we lose God's grace and again incur His anger. Of this we are warned in the second part of the one hundred and sixth Psalm.

16. They envied Moses also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.
17. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.
18. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.
19. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten image.

20. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass.
21. They forgot God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt;
22. Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red Sea.
23. Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy *them*.
24. Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His Word;
25. But murmured in their tents, *and* hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.
26. Therefore He lifted up His hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness;
27. To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.
28. They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.
29. Thus they provoked *Him* to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them.
30. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; and *so* the plague was stayed.
31. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.
32. They angered *Him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;
33. Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

SUMMARY.

Here we have a long list of sins which Israel committed in the wilderness; envy and rebellion against Moses and Aaron, setting up a golden calf as an image of the LORD, distrust towards God and despising His Words, taking part in the idolatrous worship of Moab and the uncleanness connected with it. For all these sins, the punishment quickly followed; they were swallowed up by the earth, consumed by fire from the Lord, bitten by fiery serpents, destroyed

by the plague. Of the multitude collected around Mt. Horeb, only two entered the land of promise, the others were overthrown in the wilderness. Even Moses, the mediator of the Law, was not permitted to cross over the Jordan, because, provoked by the people, he too sinned against the Lord. Beware of sin. It will not go unpunished. Holding fast the grace of the Father in His Son Jesus Christ, let us live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

PRAYER.

O Lord, teach us to profit by the examples which were written for our warning, the punishments which Thou didst visit on Thy people Israel for their sins. Enlighten our eyes to see the abomination of sin, that we may dread Thy avenging justice, may strive to avoid all manner of evil and may flee to the cross of Christ as the only refuge for the soul. Amen.

PSALM 106.

PART 3 — PREFACE.

As the children of Israel mingled with the nations among whom they dwelt and many sacrificed their sons and daughters to Molech, so but too many professing Christians are eager to mingle with the worldlings, and they lead their children to walk in the ways of the world by their own example. O ye parents who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, consider what responsibility you incur by leading your children into the ways of the world. Surely, if you are minded like the world, do like the world and walk like the world, you will also be condemned with the world. And if you instill the spirit of this world into the minds of your children, you are devoting them to the prince of this world, and you will be found the destroyers of their souls. In Baptism your infants were implanted into Christ and were made His own. Rob Him not of His own. They are Christ's members; so speak to them of their Savior so soon as they are able to

understand, and teach them to love Jesus by your word and ensample. So bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and you shall have praise of Him when He comes to gather His wheat into His barns. And now, hear the last part of the one hundred and sixth Psalm.

34. They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD, commanded them;
35. But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.
36. And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them.
37. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,
38. And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, who they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.
39. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.
40. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance.
41. And He gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.
42. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.
43. Many times did He deliver them; but they provoked *Him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.
44. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry;
45. And He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies.
46. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.
47. Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Thy Holy Name, *and* to triumph in Thy praise.
48. Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, "Amen." Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm we have a long record of the sins of Israel, by which they offended against God, showing themselves unworthy of His grace and undeserving of the many blessings which they enjoyed. Therefore it is so emphatically declared that the Lord helped them for His Name's sake to make it known among the nations, and because He remembered the covenant which He had made with their fathers. If God had dealt with that nation as it deserved, it would have been destroyed root and stem before it ever reached the Jordan; and if God would deal with us according to justice, we would lose both body and soul. Israel had nothing to boast of, save alone the mercy of the Lord, and so have we nothing wherein to glory, save alone the grace of our God. Spread abroad the praise of His love.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, we give Thee most hearty thanks because Thou hast revealed unto us the saving truth of Thy Gospel. Grant us grace to continue in Thy Word, that we walk not after our own thoughts, but worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Preserve Thy Word unto our children that they may walk in Thy ways and remain Thy people for generations to come. Amen.

PSALM 107.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22); for Christ was born of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, and he was a minister of circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Romans 15:8). But by Isaiah (49:6), the Father said unto the Messiah, "I will give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth." And Christ Himself also said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold;

them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd” (John 10:16). These other sheep were then walking in the darkness of idolatry, worshipping the fabrics of man’s hands, and their soul was without hope; but the Lord sent forth His Word and gathered them out of the lands *from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south (verse 3)*, and so He continues to do unto this day. *By the brightness of His Light, He in the faith does men unite of every tongue and every nation.* Our forefathers also went to worship dumb idols as they were led, but unto us their children shines the Light of God’s revealed Word, by which we are called out of darkness into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ *in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)*, and from Whom our soul derives the hope of eternal Life. To praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful deliverances, we are charged in the one hundred and seventh Psalm.

Praise of God for deliverance out of manifold needs.

1. O give thanks unto the LORD, for *He is* good; for His mercy *endureth* for ever.
2. Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
3. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, and from the north and from the south.
4. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.
5. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
6. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* He delivered them out of their distresses.
7. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
8. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
9. For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.
10. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11. Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High;
12. Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.
13. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* He saved them out of their distresses.
14. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

SUMMARY.

All should give thanks to God; for His goodness is over all. His mercy extends wide as the heavens, and He is the supporter of all, because through Him alone the creatures have their being. Especially should those sing His praise who have experienced His deliverance. The wanderer whom He has led, the hungry whom He has fed, the prisoner whom He has freed, the distressed who found help I need, let them praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works. And if we give thanks to God for His bodily help, as this psalm exhorts, how much rather for His spiritual deliverance, that He has redeemed us from the power of the enemy and has gathered us unto His dear son. In Whom we are free indeed, free from the yoke of the Law, free from condemnation, free from the fear of death.

PRAYER.

I will sing my Maker's praises,
 And in Him most joyful be;
For in all things I see traces
 Of His tender love to me.
Nothing else but love could move Him,
 With such sweet and tender care
Evermore to raise and bear
 All who try to serve and love Him.
All things else have but their day,
 God's great love abides for aye. Amen.

PSALM 107.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Bodily sickness is one of the rods which God most commonly uses to correct His children and to punish the wicked. God is, indeed, not the author of sickness; for He created man in perfection, but by sin, death and hence also sickness came into the world. Hence the original cause of all sickness is sin. If we were not sinners, we would not be subject to sickness. All, the most pious not excepted, are liable to be taken sick, because all are of a corrupt nature. Many also bring diseases upon themselves by abusing God's creatures in eating and drinking. These are rightly called fools, because by their own intemperance, they bring affliction upon themselves (*verse 17*). Delicate living and luxurious eating brings many into a premature grave and drunkenness slays its victims by the thousand. Surely, we should avoid sin and should live temperately in all things, that when bodily distemper befalls us, we must not account it the just wages of our vices, but may receive it as the chastening of the Lord. Then we can bear it with a quiet heart and can cry unto God cheerfully with the assurance that He will hear our prayer, and if it is for our good, He will restore us to health. Of this we are assured in the second part of the one hundred and seventh Psalm.

15. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
16. For He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.
17. Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
18. Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.
19. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* He saves them out of their distresses.
20. He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

21. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.
23. They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;
24. These see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.
25. For He commands, and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves thereof.
26. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.
27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like drunken man, and are at their wit's end.
28. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses.
29. He makes the storm a calm, so that the wave thereof are still.
30. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He brings them unto their desired haven.

SUMMARY.

This text teaches us that God arms His creatures against the wicked for their punishment, and if they repent not, for their destruction; and the same creatures He will use to promote the true welfare of His children. Food and drink, which God created for the benefit of man, becomes a poison to those abusing it. Many wicked are carried away by pestilence, or are suddenly destroyed by wind or water. But if we avoid sin, fear God and walk in His ways, and sickness befalls us, or we meet with an accident when we are following a right and legitimate calling, then we should not forget that it is by the good providence of our God. Knowing the ailings of our soul, He knows also the right remedy, and He so disposes that we may be led to give heed to His Word and may obtain the healing of the soul in Jesus Christ. Let us trust His providence and be still.

PRAYER.

With bitter suffering, pain and anguish didst Thou, O Jesus, redeem our souls from the power of Satan. Enlighten our eyes to see

Thy love and grant us patience in the sufferings, pains and labors of this present life. Keep us steadfast in Thy faith that through Thee we attain unto that better life, where pain and sickness shall be no more and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Amen.

PSALM 107.

PART 3 — PREFACE.

The fortunes of men are under the disposition of God, and He divides to each his portion of good or ill as He sees proper. When God had heard the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and had granted her joy for sorrow, she returned thanks saying, “*The Lord makes poor, and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up*” (1 Samuel 2:7). Often does God set on high the poor and the lowly. When He was looking for a man to make him king over His people Israel, He did not seek him among the great and mighty in the land. He chose the shepherd boy, David. And often does God bring low them that are high, pouring contempt upon princes (*verse 40*). Hence, our trust must not be in friendship and popularity with men; for the mightiest are mortal, and they must return to dust. Neither must our hope stand in riches; for these frequently take wings and fly away. We are to trust in the living God Who is able to help in every need, and Whose very goodness and love to His people are security for it, that He will do nothing for our harm, but will, at all times, apportion to us what is for our true good. With the wicked God deals in His anger, but the believers who hear the voice of Christ and follow Him are the apple of His eye, and He can not forget them. His good providence is praised in the last part of the one hundred and seventh Psalm.

31. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
32. Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.

33. He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground;
34. A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
35. He turns the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs.
36. And there He makes the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;
37. And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.
38. He blesses them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffers not their cattle to decrease.
39. Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow.
40. He pours contempt upon princes, and causes them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is* no way.
41. Yet sets He the poor on high from affliction, and makes *him* families like a flock.
42. The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
43. Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.

SUMMARY.

The entire psalm praises God for His goodness towards mankind, both the Gentiles and His own people. He is the Helper of all men, the Helper in every need. Their deliverance in the time of need the heathen ascribed to their idols, and under popery we too were led to give the honor of our deliverance to many saints. St. Leonard was called the helper of the prisoners, St. Sebastian took away the pestilence, St. George was the protector in battle, St. Erasmus gave riches, St. Christopher was the god of the sea. So the pope and his clergy seduced the people to rob God of His honor and to give it to the saints, like the heathen to their idols. But it is God, the Lord alone, from Whom comes our help. On Him call, Him glorify, to Him give thanks.

PRAYER.

Thanks and praise be unto Thee, Thou Keeper of Israel, because Thou hast hitherto guarded us in many a danger and helped us in many a need. Let Thy good providence be over us in the future as in the past. Cause us steadfastly to trust in Thee and to look to none other for help, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 108.

PREFACE.

If God would enter into judgment with us and would use His Divine knowledge to set our sins before us, they would be found numberless as the grains of sand on the seashore, more than leaves in the forest or blades of grass in the meadows. Every day and every hour of our lives we have committed much sin even by this one thing; that we did not give thanks to God as we should and did not praise Him as we ought to have done. Let us no more multiply sin by ingratitude, and let us henceforth be more thankful unto our God. He has given and He preserves unto us eyes, ears and all our senses, and His merciful kindness daily encompasses us. Above all things we should give thanks and praise unto God for establishing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, in which the Gospel is preached and the forgiveness of sin, grace and salvation are offered freely to all sinners. Awake, my glory; arise, my soul, and sing the praise of thy Creator and Redeemer, as David does in the one hundred and eighth Psalm.

David's Thanksgiving and Prayer for His Kingdom.

A Song or Psalm of David.

1. O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.
2. Awake, psaltery and harp; I *myself* will awake early.

3. I will praise Thee, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations.
4. For Thy mercy *is* great above the heavens; and Thy truth *reaches* unto the clouds.
5. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and Thy glory above all the earth;
6. That Thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* Thy right hand, and answer me.
7. God hath spoken in His Holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.
8. Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;
9. Moab *is* my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.
10. Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?
11. *Wilt* not *Thou*, O God, *Who* hast cast us off? And wilt not Thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?
12. Give us help from trouble; for vain *is* the help of man.
13. Through God we shall do valiantly; for He *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm David gives thanks for his kingdom which did not only extend over the twelve tribes of Israel, but comprised also the surrounding nations which the Lord had subdued unto David, and even far distant peoples brought tribute to David. Now David's kingdom was a figure of the Kingdom of the Messiah, of Whom it was said that He should sit on the Throne of David forever (*Isaiah 9:7*). This figure was amply fulfilled; for the Kingdom of Christ was first established among the Jews and thence it spread among all nations. So Christ came to rule also in this far western land, and under His scepter we are safe. Let us be His loyal subjects, never ashamed to confess His Name, and in the power of His might we shall be able to tread down the enemy and to triumph over sin, death and hell.

PRAYER.

Thee, Lord Jesus, do we acknowledge our King. To Thee we have vowed allegiance and under Thee do we desire to live. So govern us by Thy Spirit that we always remain citizens in Thy Kingdom of Grace, and when our earthly pilgrimage is ended, receive us into Thy Kingdom of Glory, that with all the Host of Heaven, we may for ever magnify Thy Holy Name. Amen.

PSALM 109.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

Whenever the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are mentioned, we should remember three things. Firstly, that it was our sin which brought suffering, crucifixion and death on the Son of God, as it is written, *He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)*. Remembering that our sin was laid upon Him, we should, in the second place, with sincere sorrow of the heart, confess that we are not thankful enough to Him for His work of love, and do not so consider and appreciate His untold sufferings and His shameful death as we ought; for our hearts are cold and sluggish in apprehending the loving-kindness of the Lord, and we are of a slow and heavy tongue when His praise is to be sounded. Finally, we should pray for the gracious forgiveness of our sins appealing to and trusting in Christ's Blood and death, and we should so live as to show, by our works, that we are truly redeemed from sin. Verily this is the greatest of all God's works towards the children of men, that He delivered His Only Begotten Son into the painful and shameful death of the cross for the redemption of our race. Of this, the Father's wonderful love, Christ Himself speaks to us in the one hundred and ninth Psalm.

*Prophecy of the treachery of Judas and the Jews,
And of the curse falling upon them.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. Hold not Thy peace, O God of My praise;
2. For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against Me; they have spoken against Me with a lying tongue.
3. They compassed Me about also with words of hatred; and fought against Me without a cause.
4. For My love they are My adversaries; but I *give myself unto* prayer.
5. And they have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My love.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is spoken in the person of Christ, making bitter complaint of the Jews, because He came to His own to save them from their sins and they received Him not (*John 1:11*), but rejected Him with hatred and malice. They spoke against Him with a lying tongue (*verse 2*), calling Him a Samaritan, and saying that He cast out devils by Beelzebub. The bitterness of gall was in their words when they pronounced Him a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners (*Matthew 11:19*). Jesus Christ never did the Jews the least harm. He went about doing good to all needing and desiring His help, but the greater love He showed to that benighted generation, the more intensely did they hate Him, and going on from bad to worse, they finally fell into such frenzy as to crucify their own Messiah. Think it not strange if the world hates and ridicules you for the confession of Christ. It is a sign that you are His disciple indeed; for He said, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you*" (*John 15:18*).

PRAYER.

Excellent, O Lord Jesus, is Thy love which Thou hast shown toward us, in that Thou came into our flesh and did suffer such contradiction of sinners against Thyself. Grant us to be minded like unto Thee, that we fear not the hatred and the mockery of the wicked, but suffering patiently, follow Thee unto the end. Amen.

PSALM 109.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

The dreadful power of sin is pictured to us in Judas, the traitor. He was covetous, and his love of money made him a thief, so that he defrauded his Master and withheld from the poor the gifts intended for them. Soon he was led on to betray his Master for a paltry sum of money into the hands of his enemies, and when his conscience awoke and pictured to him the enormity of his dastardly act, he fell into despair and ended as a suicide. When we ask, what was it that put the rope around his neck? we must answer: It was the love of money. Had he resisted this and put it away early, he would not have ended as he did. Sin is like a whirlpool. It first attracts, and those enticed by it are drawn in stronger and stronger until they are hopelessly engulfed. Tamper not with the wine-cup and gratify not the craving for liquor; it is the way to the drunkard's grave. Associate not with persons of loose morals; it is the way to the ruin of body and soul. Sit not where the scoffers sit; it may cost you your soul. Beware of the first step, bearing in mind the exhortation of Solomon; "*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not*" (*Proverbs 1:10*). On the power and curse of sin, hear the second part of the one hundred and ninth Psalm.

6. Set thou a wicked man over Him; and let Satan stand at His right hand.
7. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.
8. Let his days be few; *and* let another take his office.
9. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.
10. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.
11. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor.

12. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children.
13. Let his posterity be cut off; *and* in the generation following let their name be blotted out.
14. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
15. Let them be before the LORD continually, that He may cut off the memory of them from the earth.
16. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.
17. As he loving cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
18. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.
19. Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covers him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
20. *Let this be* the reward of Mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against My soul.

SUMMARY.

That it was Christ Who, through David, spoke these words of His betrayer Judas Iscariot, is certain from the first chapter of Acts, where the words of the eighth verse are quoted as referring to that unhappy disciple, and there it is also related, how Matthias was chosen in the place of Judas. So these words were not words of King David cursing an enemy, they are the words of Jesus, the ordained Judge, pronouncing the curse which would fall on Judas. The selling of that innocent Blood did fall on Judas and the Jews, and the curse is there unto this day. The persecutors, blasphemers and despisers of Jesus will not go unpunished. The day is coming when He will be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (*2 Thessalonians 1:8*). O my soul, flee thou to the hills from which cometh thy Help. Hasten to Calvary and seek refuge under the cross that the curse of sin remove from thee and thou may inherit the blessing.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus, how deeply wast Thou humbled, since Thou didst condescend daily to walk with Thy betrayer, though the malice of his heart was not hid from Thee. Surely, Thou desires the salvation of sinners. Have compassion on my poor soul, wash it with Thy Blood and grant me strength to resist sin that I may overcome and inherit the blessing. Amen.

PSALM 109.

PART 3 — PREFACE.

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ we must not regard in like manner as the death of the martyrs. He did not die simply for the confession of the truth, neither did He die because He fell into the hands of His enemies. This knowledge is to be in us of which He here (*verse 27*) says, *That they may know that this is Thy hand; that Thou, LORD, hast done it.* Whatever came to pass with Jesus Christ was all before determined in the counsel of God (*Acts 2:23*). Indeed, it was the Father Who inflicted punishment upon Him, as the prophet Isaiah (*53:10*) says, *“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief.”* Because Jesus Christ has taken on Himself the sins of sinners, therefore eternal justice levied on Him the wages of sin, torment without end. But because all this was from the hand of the Lord, therefore it is certain beyond a question that our redemption is accomplished and the heavenly Paradise is reopened for our souls to enter in. Hold to this Jesus Christ, and claim His merits to bring them before God. Your soul dressed in the mantle of Christ, the eye of the Father will see nothing in you worthy of condemnation. And now, let us hear His prayer continued in the third and last part of the one hundred and ninth Psalm.

21. But do Thou for Me, O God the LORD, for Thy Name’s sake; because Thy mercy *is* good, deliver Thou Me.

22. For I *am* poor and needy, and My heart is wounded within Me.
23. I am gone like the shadow when it declines; I am tossed up and down as the locust.
24. My knees are weak through fasting; and My flesh fails of fatness.
25. I became also a reproach unto them; *when* they looked upon Me they shook their heads.
26. Help Me, O LORD My God; O save me according to Thy mercy;
27. That they may know that this *is* Thy hand; *that* Thou, LORD, hast done it.
28. Let them curse, but bless Thou; when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let Thy servant rejoice.
29. Let Mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.
30. I will greatly praise the LORD with My mouth; yea, I will praise Him among the multitude.
31. For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save *Him* from those that condemn His soul.

SUMMARY.

This is a prayer of the Christ, spoken in the very height of His misery, when hanging on the cross; for then the chief priests mocked Him and the passersby wagged their heads over Him saying contemptuously, "*If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (*Matthew 27:40*). But He cried unto His Father, and was heard. Delivered out of prison, He was seated on the Throne of Glory, and now His enemies are made His footstool. He is mighty to save and no poor sinner will cry unto Him in vain. Learn of Jesus Christ to pray in the day of trouble. Call on His Name and doubt not, He Who by His own experience, knows what it is to be poor and needy, will have an open ear for your complaints.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, O Lord Jesus, for Thy bitter suffering and death, by which Thou, as a faithful High Priest, hast purchased us from the curse of the Law. Grant us the gift of Thy Spirit that we may live in true repentance and may bring before Thy Father a soul sprinkled with Thy Sacred Blood. Amen.

PSALM 110.

PREFACE.

The dew is formed in the air, and in a clear, still night it spreads over the earth, moistening the dry soil and gathering in pearly drops on flowers, grass and shrubs. Invisibly and silently as the dew did the Son of God come down from Heaven to be born of a virgin and to become the life and the salvation of sinners. Cold was the night with the children of men sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and the storm-wind of Divine anger over sin threatened to carry them away into everlasting night; but since Jesus Christ has come into the world, the dark cloud on the face of the Father has given place to a smile, and Heaven is become serene and still; for by Jesus Christ peace and good will are restored between God and men. And now, by His Holy Gospel, this same Jesus Christ falls into the dry and barren hearts of those repenting of their sins, and He makes the swelling bud of faith, the red rose of love, and the green twig of hope to grow in them. And by His Gospel, He ever anew visits the hearts of His people, refreshing them after the inner man that they thrive like verdure nourished by the dew. Through the Word of the Cross is the new man born silently as dew in the morning, and by it he is nourished, because it is the living Word of the living Christ. Of Him David indited this beautiful hymn, the one hundred and tenth Psalm.

Christ our Prophet, Priest and King.

A Psalm of David.

1. The LORD, said unto My LORD, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."
2. The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.
3. Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; Thou hast the dew of Thy youth.

4. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, “Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”
5. The LORD at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.
6. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries.
7. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall He lift up the head.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a most excellent prophecy of Christ describing Him as an everlasting King and Priest, the true God sitting at the right hand of the Father, and known and worshiped by His people as God over all, blessed for ever. This psalm is indeed worthy that every Christian should commit it to memory, word for word, because no where else in the Scriptures of the Old Testament is Christ declared God and man in such strong, clear words, or His everlasting priesthood so distinctly named. Because He is man, He was capable of suffering in our stead, and because He is God, He is a priest Whose Sacrifice is valid for all sins and all sinners. Because He is God and man, therefore He is a Savior able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him (*Hebrews 7:25*). Trust Him and be ye saved.

PRAYER.

Praise and honor belong unto Thee, Thou everlasting Word, because Thou was made flesh and did sacrifice Thyself upon the cross — an offering for sin. Govern us according to Thy Wisdom, defend us against our enemies, speak for us with Thy Father, and let us live under Thee in Thy Kingdom in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. Amen.

PSALM 111.

PREFACE.

Great and wonderful are the works of God which we observe in our own body and soul. Rightly did the ancients call man a world in miniature, because in man the most wonderful of God's works are concentrated. Among the many millions walking the earth, not two are perfectly alike, a diversity delightful to the eye. There is an ever active power in man, a soul which thinks, reasons, plans, invents. How does the soul originate thoughts? How does the mind react on the body? Who can understand the mystery of speech and hearing? A man formulates his thoughts into words and articulates them with his tongue and lips; the sound strikes the ear of another, and through his ear, he perceives the thoughts in his neighbor's heart. So let us give thanks unto our God, by Whose hand we are so fearfully and wonderfully made, that we may not be found like unto that cardinal who, walking over a meadow and meeting with a toad, stopped and began to weep. Asked for the cause of his tears, he answered that he had never yet returned thanks to God for creating him a man with understanding and not such a deformed reptile. A hymn of sincere thanks is found in the one hundred and eleventh Psalm.

Praise of God for bodily and spiritual blessings.

1. Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.
2. The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
3. His work *is* honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endures for ever.
4. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered; the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
5. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him; He will ever be mindful of His Covenant.
6. He hath shown His people the power of His works, that He may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7. The works of His hands *are* verity and judgment; all His commandments *are* sure.
8. They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness.
9. He sent redemption unto His people; He hath commanded His Covenant for ever; Holy and Reverend *is* His Name.
10. The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do *His Commandments*; His praise endureth for ever.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was composed to be sung by the people of Israel, that they might learn to give thanks to God for His gifts and benefactions in spiritual and bodily things. Great are the works of the Lord and wonderful. They that contemplate them must find delight in them, because they bear witness of His might and skill, and proclaim His goodness towards the children of men. He makes full provision, preparing meat for the body and salvation for the soul. To acknowledge this with grateful hearts, we should be the more ready, because our forefathers went to worship dumb idols. Know that the Lord, He is God, and there is none other. Walk in His fear. Praise His Name. Trust His Covenant of Grace in His Son; for this is true wisdom.

PRAYER.

Praise belongs to Thee, our God, because Thou hast fulfilled Thy promises to Thy people Israel in the Incarnation of Thy Son, and did send the Light of Thy Truth to our fathers, when they were walking in ignorance of Thee. Grant us steadfastly to trust Thy Covenant of Grace that we may live therein. Make Thy works of mercy and truth known also to our children, that they may praise Thy Name in generations to come. Amen.

PSALM 112.

PREFACE.

Experience teaches abundantly that those who trust in God through Jesus Christ and walk in His Commandments have, at all times, a quiet conscience and need fear no evil. When they are visited by afflictions they possess their souls in patience, being more comforted by God and His Word than the cross can afflict. Though they must lose what is dearest unto them on this earth, yet they know the will of their Father in Heaven is good over them, His grace in Jesus Christ is sure, and without fail He will, in due time, exalt the humble (*1 Peter 5:6*). And even though they are overtaken by sin, as Solomon says that a just man falls seven times (*Proverbs 24:16*), yet they continue not in sin, but quickly repent and rise up again by the Rock of our salvation which is Jesus Christ, for whose sake they again seek and obtain grace and forgiveness. Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, that delights in His Commandments and preserves a conscience void of offense. In the day of affliction the light of comfort shall shine unto Him, and He shall triumph over all His enemies. This is attested by the one hundred and twelfth Psalm.

Blessedness of those that fear the Lord.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* fears the LORD, *that* delights greatly in His Commandments.
2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.
3. Wealth and riches *shall be* in His house; and His righteousness endures for ever.
4. Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; *He is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5. A good man shows favor, and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion.
6. Surely he shall not be moved for ever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
8. His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid, until he sees *his desire* upon his enemies.
9. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honor.
10. The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.

SUMMARY.

They that fear the Lord are here praised for their piety and virtues, and deliverance from evil and everlasting comfort are promised them. Special praise is here accorded to the fixedness of the heart, trusting the mercy of the Lord with an undoubting confidence, which indeed is the right, true and saving faith. To those who trust the mercy of God and walk in His fear, this psalm promises that their seed shall be blessed, they shall be remembered among the pious, they shall find comfort in affliction, they shall be delivered from evil, and shall be given an everlasting righteousness in the Kingdom of the Lamb. But the wicked, seeing the righteous delivered and honored, shall bite their own tongue, and shall sink into the pit gnawed by remorse. Fear God, and envy not His people.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Lord, Who art the Reward of them that fear Thee and the Defense of Thy people, and in Thy Son Jesus Christ has promised grace and everlasting righteousness to them that believe, establish our hearts by Thy grace that, rooted in the faith of Thy Word, we may be able to stand in the day of trial. Indue us with strength to resist the enticing lust of sin and to triumph over Satan, death and hell through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 113.

PREFACE.

There is a vast difference between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world. Christ's is a spiritual and heavenly Kingdom, comprising spiritual and heavenly gifts, whereas earthly republics and monarchies comprise only earthly treasures. Christ's is an everlasting Kingdom; built on the Rock of Ages it will never be subverted; but earthly kingdoms, though their sway lasts for many centuries, are finally overthrown. In the kingdoms of this world, the noble, the proud, the ambitious enjoy the highest honors, in the Kingdom of Christ, the humblest is the greatest. Remembering what blessings the Kingdom of Christ brings unto men, we should imitate the multitude which went before and followed after at Christ's regal entrance into Jerusalem, crying, "*Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*" (Matthew 21:9). So should we also wish prosperity and increase to His Kingdom. Daily we should pray that it might grow and be spread abroad from the rising to the setting sun. Come, Thou King of Glory, and reign in our hearts that we may sing Thy praise, as we are exhorted in the one hundred and thirteenth Psalm.

Praise of God for giving grace to the humble.

1. Praise ye the LORD, praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the Name of the LORD.
2. Blessed be the Name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.
3. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's Name *is* to be praised.
4. The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* His Glory above the heavens.
5. Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, Who dwells on high,
6. Who humbles *Himself* to behold *the things that are* in Heaven, and in the earth!

7. He raises up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifts the needy out of the dunghill;
8. That He may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of His people.
9. He makes the barren woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm is contained a prophecy of Christ's Kingdom which was to spread from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same among all Gentile nations. All these are called on to praise Christ and to proclaim His grace. He is pictured as a lovely and a loving Lord Who is seated high above the heavens, but looks to the poor and needy upon earth, to exalt them out of the dust. This is Christ's special office and work in His Kingdom, to abase the lofty-minded, to manifest the wisdom of this world as being folly, to bring low those trusting in themselves that they are pious, to exalt the lowly, to enlighten the simple, to sanctify the sinners and to make those His people who were not a people. My soul, trust Thou in the Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

Blessed be the Son of David, Who came in the Name of the Lord to establish a Kingdom of Grace on the earth; Who has also called us and has made us citizens of His Kingdom, partakers of His grace. May He, our King, by His good Spirit, so guide and govern us, as to bring us out of this world, so full of sin, into that eternal Kingdom wherein dwells righteousness. Amen.

PSALM 114.

PREFACE.

The histories contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were written that we should remember the wonders which God performed of old, and should comfort ourselves with

them, being confident of this very thing, that God can help in the greatest of needs when with man there is no way of escape. Likewise, the history of God's chosen people should be unto us an exhortation unto perseverance in the confession of the truth and to increase in leading a holy life. So St. Paul speaks of the Scriptures, saying, "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope*" (Romans 15:4). Ye who are called after the Sacred Name of Christ, let not your Bible lay on the mantle covered with dust; make it your textbook for instruction and comfort, from which you daily anew receive strength to bear the burdens of life, and to resist the temptations of Satan and sin. The Lord will [not], yea, He can not forget His people. He will deliver them in due time, as He did Israel from the hand of his oppressors, whereof sings the one hundred and fourteenth Psalm.

Of the Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

1. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
2. Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.
3. The sea saw *it*, and fled; Jordan was driven back.
4. The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.
5. What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fled? Thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?
6. Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?
7. Tremble, thou earth, at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of Jacob;
8. Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

SUMMARY.

This psalm celebrates that great and wonderful deed of God that He brought forth His people out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, dividing the sea before them, guiding and sheltering them in the waste wilderness, causing the mountains and

hills to tremble at the giving of the Law, and stopping the flowing of the waters in Jordan. In a way which no people had before traveled and by many wonderful works did He bring them to the promised land. These things were a shadow of Christ in Whom is the reality. He delivers us out of the Kingdom of Darkness, cleansing us from sin by His Blood. He guides us on the pilgrimage through this life, and in due time, He will come to wake the dead and to receive His own into His Heavenly Kingdom. So let heart and tongue praise Him and say, "*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*"

PRAYER.

Teach us, O God, to know Thy mighty works and Thy wondrous ways that our soul may bow to Thy Majesty and may give unto Thee honor and praise. Enlighten our eyes to see in Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life, and grant us grace to walk in this Way, to adhere to this Truth and to win eternal Life. Amen.

PSALM 115.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

By the good providence of our God, we were born in a Christian land, and in our infancy, were received into His Covenant of Grace in Holy Baptism, and to a greater or less extent, we enjoy or have enjoyed the advantages of a Christian education at home and in school. Every day we can read the Scriptures, and gathered around the family altar, we can edify our souls with singing and prayer, and every Lord's Day we can go up to the house of prayer with the multitude of them that worship. But, alas! How little do we appreciate these blessings! Because we enjoy them continually, we little regard them and rarely think of returning thanks for them. Often, therefore, should we remember the woeful ignorance and misery of the heathen who worship idols which can neither hear nor help. Though they make long prayers, torture their bodies and bring

many offerings, yet they are without hope and comfort in the world. Surely if we love not the Word of our God when it dwells with us richly, the heathen will rise up against us on the day of judgment and will condemn us. Let us employ our eyes to read, our ears to hear and our hearts to meditate the Word of grace, giving glory to God for His goodness, as the one hundred and fifteenth Psalm urges us.

Idolatry rejected and the Lord's Blessing invoked.

1. Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory for Thy mercy, *and* for Thy truth's sake.
2. Wherefore should the heathen say, "Where *is* now their God?"
3. But our God *is* in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.
4. Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
5. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;
6. They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not;
7. They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.
8. They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusts in them.

SUMMARY.

In these words God is exalted as the Savior Who is able to deliver them that call on Him, while others that are called gods are nothing but dead idols. Made by man's hands, they are powerless to help than those who made them. Therefore in the very first words of this psalm, this petition is expressed that God should have regard of His own Name and of His mercy and truth, and not of our worthiness. For if God would help us only when we are so pious as to be worthy of it, then must our God appear as helpless as the idols of the heathen, and then must we remain without deliverance, because we are never worthy of it. But because He is the true and living God, the Helper, therefore we call on Him to deal with us according to His own Name for the sake of His mercy and truth. If

He is our God, He must be our Helper; for He has promised to be a merciful Father unto us.

PRAYER.

Thou, O God, has been our Helper in the past, preserving us unto this day in body and soul. Forsake us not, but demonstrate to the world that Thou art God of Heaven, ruling over all and mighty to save. Cast down the idols of the heathen by the Word of the Cross and build the Kingdom of Thy Son in our hearts. Amen.

PSALM 115.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Judging by carnal reason, the world thinks that those are under the displeasure of God who are visited by calamities and sufferings. In its pride the world accounts the humble and suffering Christians the off-scouring of society (*1 Corinthians 4:13*). The friends of Job argued that he must have been guilty of some great wickedness, because he was subjected to such severe sufferings. Concerning a blind-born man, the disciples asked, "*Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*" (*John 9:2*). When Paul had escaped in shipwreck on the sea, and a viper darted out of a bundle of sticks and fastened on his hand, the inhabitants of the island, Melita, concluded he must be a murderer whom divine vengeance would not suffer to live (*Acts 28:4*). Now, vengeance does pursue transgressors, but it does not follow that all those are wicked who are afflicted. Though the Christians must bear the cross, and must suffer many tribulations, they are, nevertheless, the blessed of the Lord. Now what the Lord blesses, is blessed indeed, and can not be cursed. "*How shall I curse,*" said Balaam, "*whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?*" (*Numbers 23:8*). The words which the Lord spoke to Abraham, the father of the faithful, apply to all believers, "*I will bless them that*

bless thee, and curse him that curses thee” (Genesis 12:3). This same is taught in the second part of the one hundred and fifteenth Psalm.

9. O Israel, truth thou in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.
10. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.
11. Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.
12. The LORD hath been mindful of us; He will bless *us*; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.
13. He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.
14. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.
15. Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made Heaven and earth.
16. The Heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD’s; but the earth hath He given to the children of men.
17. The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.
18. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

SUMMARY.

As He is in Whom our trust stands, so will our help be. Now our trust is in the Lord Who made Heaven and earth. He is our Help and our Shield. For His hand, no need is too great, for His arm, no enemy too strong. His blessing is upon them that fear Him, and it continues with the righteous generation for generation. Let His praise enlarge your hearts and flow from your lips. Praise Him in His high habitations; praise Him in His mighty strength. Praise Him while ye have life. Trust His Covenant and bless His Name.

PRAYER.

I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath:
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:

My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures. Amen.

PSALM 116.

PREFACE.

The most delicate child is the dearest. For a sickly child, parents are in far greater concern than for the healthy. The more miserable and oppressed His children are, the more is the Father in Heaven moved to help and deliver them, if they but trust in Him; even as fond parents will spare neither labor nor cost to procure help and health for an invalid child. Hence, as a child will seek help with father and mother, so should we have recourse to God in anguish and need, knowing that He, as an almighty Lord, can, and as a gracious and loving Father, will help them that cry unto Him. This He has promised saying, "*Because He hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him; I will set Him on high, because He hath known My Name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer Him; I will be with Him in trouble; I will deliver Him, and honor Him. With long life will I satisfy Him, and show Him My Salvation*" (Psalm 91:14-16). Of the same we are reminded in the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm.

Comfort in Temptation and Affliction.

1. I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.
2. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *Him* as long as I live.
3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.
4. Then called I upon the Name of the LORD; "O LORD, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul."
5. Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He helped me.
7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears *and* my feet from falling.
9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
10. I believed, therefore have I spoken; I was greatly afflicted;
11. I said in my haste, "All men *are* liars."
12. What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all His benefits toward me?
13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the LORD.
14. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people.
15. Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of His saints.
16. O LORD, truly I *am* Thy servant; I *am* Thy servant, *and* the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast loosed my bonds.
17. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the LORD.
18. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people,
19. In the courts of the LORD's House, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks does the psalmist here give to God for delivering him out of high, spiritual temptations when his soul was nigh unto despair. Such temptations are hard trials which some of God's children must experience. He also, with great complaint, tells how ill he fared for confessing God's truth and rejecting human piety, virtue and holiness as delusive things which must, at last, fail. For this he was hated and denounced by men; for the self-righteous think highly of their own works and do not want them condemned. But the psalmist comforts his soul with the Word of the Lord. If men hate us, and in many ways vent their rancor against us for our confession of Christ and His truth, it should only

cause us to drink the more deeply from the cup of salvation which is set before us in the Word of our God, and nothing should prevent us from confessing this Word and commending the cup of salvation to me. We have nothing to give to God for which He would owe us a return, but this is the right service of God — to receive from His hand and to return thanks to Him.

PRAYER.

We give thanks unto Thee, our God, Who has hitherto graciously and mightily helped us in all our needs. Be Thou henceforth our Refuge and our Help, and grant us, at our latter end, to fall asleep commending our souls into the hands of Thy Son Jesus Christ, that through His Name, our death may be precious in Thy sight. Amen.

PSALM 117.

PREFACE.

The Gentiles, our forefathers, sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, dead in trespasses and sins, walking in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and children of wrath who belonged not to the fold of Christ. But our Lord Jesus Christ has brought us, their children, into His fold, granting us to sit in the Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and has made us partakers of His grace, fellow citizens with the saints. We, who were a wild tree, are grafted into Christ, the sweet olive which the Father in Heaven planted into the world that we should live in Him. Yea, God has taken the Kingdom from the Jews and has given it to the Gentiles, and has made us fellow heirs and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel (*Ephesians 3:6*). For this, His loving-kindness, we should give thanks to God every day of our lives with hearts and hands and voices, as the Scriptures say, that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy (*Romans 15:9*). The same we are called on to do in the one hundred and seventeenth Psalm.

The Gentiles to Praise God in the Kingdom of Christ.

1. O praise the LORD, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.
2. For His merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This shortest of all the psalms is a prophecy of Christ's Kingdom which was to be spread among all nations, and in which rules grace and truth, that is the forgiveness of sin and eternal life — a grace and truth affording comfort against sin, death and hell. This Kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world, and does not give earthly treasures. It is a spiritual and everlasting Kingdom bringing Heavenly and abiding treasures. Neither is it a kingdom of works and human merit, but in it all is grace, because in it sinners are justified freely by grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (*Romans 3:24*). In this Kingdom there is no boast of worth, but the citizens look alone for mercy. Hence the worship in this Kingdom is giving glory to God, praising the grace and magnifying His Holy Name, as this psalm charges, and as the following psalm begins with the words, *O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good.*

PRAYER.

Honor and praise do we, of the Gentile nations, ascribe unto Thee, O Lord, for Thy mercy, because Thou hast called us into the Kingdom of Thy dear Son. Grant Thy grace and truth to abide with us and to guide us through the valley of death into Thine everlasting Kingdom of Heavenly glory through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 118.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

The heart of King David, the sweet singer of Israel, was often full to overflowing with the consideration of God's goodness. He delighted to behold the goodness of God displayed in His works; he loved to muse on it, he loved to speak of it and he took pleasure in inditing hymns of praise, for which his psalms are an abiding monument. In this he has left us a noble example which we should strive to imitate. Many think only of the evil which is upon them, and have no eye for the goodness of God, and because they suffer the evil which is upon them to engross their mind, they are full of murmuring and discontent, always ready to quarrel with God over His providence. But we Christians should accustom ourselves to observe the traces of God's goodness in His creatures around us, and we should daily call to remembrance the much good which we enjoy at His hand. Give thanks to God for the air you breathe, the clothes you wear, the bread you eat and other benefits which you daily enjoy, and you will soon find that you have enough to thank for to employ your heart every day. Unto such joyful praise we are exhorted in the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm.

Thanksgiving for the Benefits Obtained by Christ's Suffering.

1. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *He is* good; because His mercy *endures* for ever.
2. Let Israel now say, that His mercy *endureth* for ever.
3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy *endureth* for ever.
4. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that His mercy *endureth* for ever.
5. I called upon the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
6. The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?
7. The LORD taketh my part with them that help me; therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
8. *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
9. *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
10. All nations compassed me about; but in the Name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about; but in the Name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns; for in the Name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall; but the LORD helped me.
14. The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

SUMMARY.

From God we continually receive good gifts for body and soul. His merciful kindness endures as long as we live, and it changes not. In Him we are to trust and not to put our confidence in man. The affections of men are changeable as the moon. They that flatter today may curse tomorrow. And even the mightiest princes cannot always protect, neither can they help in every need. But God is able to save to the uttermost them that call upon Him, and if He is on our side we need have no fear of man, for God is stronger than man, and His arm is skillful enough to thwart the crafty in their cunning. Though the wicked flock together like bees in a swarm to suppress God's truth, it will abide, when then enemies have long since perished.

PRAYER.

Give thanks unto the Lord, O my soul. Worship Him and trust His mercy and truth; for they are as great as He Himself is, and they endure forever. Let the Lord be Thy meditation and Thy song in the house of Thy pilgrimage, because He has hitherto given thee strength and has set before thee the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PSALM 118

PART 2 — PREFACE

We Christians are living in that blessed time whereof this psalm says, *“This is the day which the LORD hath made”* (verse 24). This day of the LORD was the day on which Jesus entered into Jerusalem, the multitude singing and crying, *“Hosanna to the Son of David,”* and so wishing prosperity to His Kingdom. But this blessed time was not limited to that one day. It comprises the whole time of the Gospel dispensation, as the Lord, on another occasion, said to the disciples, *“Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them”* (Luke 10:23-24). Our eyes see the Christian Church spread among many nations as it was foretold by the prophets, and our ears hear the blessed Gospel of the forgiveness of sin by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. What our God had promised is gloriously fulfilled. In the Gospel of Christ, salvation is brought nigh unto us. Therefore, today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. In the Gospel, Jesus Christ speaks with thee, so foreclose not thy heart against Him. When He calls, hear thou — when He knocks, open thou — when He draws, resist Him not — when He invites, refuse Him not. In the day of His grace, do thou greet Him with heart and soul saying, *“Welcome, Thou Son of David, Who comes in the Name of Thy Father to save me from my sins. Come to the house of my heart and make Thy abode with me.”* Hear now the prophecy as found in the latter part of the one hundred an eighteenth Psalm.

15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
16. The right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
17. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.
18. The LORD hath chastened me sore; but He hath not given me over unto death.
19. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD;
20. This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.
21. I will praise Thee; for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22. The Stone *which* the builders refused is become the Head *Stone* of the corner.
23. This is the LORD's doing; *it is* marvelous in our eyes.
24. This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
25. Save now, I beseech Thee, O LORD; O LORD, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity.
26. Blessed *be* he that comes in the Name of the LORD; we have blessed you out of the House of the LORD.
27. God *is* the LORD, which hath shown us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.
28. Thou *art* my God, and I will praise Thee; *Thou art* my God, I will exalt Thee.
29. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *He is* good; for His mercy *endureth* for ever.

SUMMARY.

Here is a clear prophecy of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ — that He would be rejected and shamefully put to death by the rulers of the Jewish church, but would be exalted again and be made the Cornerstone and Head of the Church, being given all power in Heaven and upon earth. Strong was the enemy and hot the battle, but the Lord's right arm hath gotten Him the victory. Over this victory we justly sing hymns of triumph, because it is ours. Jesus Christ waged our war, He vanquished our enemies and He won the spoils for us. If we but believe in His Name, His valiant hand is with us; and though afflictions and temptations are multiplied, yet we can cheerfully sing, "*I shall not die, but live and declared the works of the LORD*" (*verse 17*). In the faith of Christ, Paul in all his afflictions said, "*In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (*Romans 8:37*).

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who did bleed and die in our sins and did rise again triumphing over Thine and our enemies, grant us to be

partakers of Thy victory that we, delivered from the hand of them that hate us, may serve Thee without fear in time and eternity. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 1 — LESSON 1 — PREFACE.

This longest of all the psalms was chiefly composed to endear unto us the Word of God. It is a eulogy, an excellent and an elegant hymn of praise on the inspired Word. David, who in all probability, was the composer of this psalm, here sings of that which was the nearest and dearest to his heart, the Law of the Lord and the Word of his God, and this is his aim: to inspire our hearts with the love of this Word. Possessing this Word is the best of treasures, hearing it the most useful employment, doing it the noblest of works. When we have the Word of God in its fullness and purity, and love to hear and learn it, it can not and will not return void. This seed of the spirit will bring forth the fruit of the spirit. Where the Word of God is heard, learned, contemplated, it will bring forth what is pleasing to God and displeasing to Satan. There will follow prayer and praise, comfort and hope, sanctification and all virtue. But where the Word of God is not, there is nothing truly good. And where it is corrupted and its teachings are perverted, all worship is vain, because what is not in agreement with His Word, can not be pleasing to God. But the worship according to His Word is right and good. So, let us incline our hearts and ears to hear the first lesson of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

*The Christian's golden A B C teaching:
the love and praise of God's Word.*

ALEPH.

1. Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD.
2. Blessed *are* they that keep His testimonies, *and that* seek Him with the whole heart.

3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.
4. Thou hast commanded *us* to keep Thy precepts diligently.
5. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!
6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.
7. I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments.
8. I will keep Thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly.

BETH.

9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed *thereto* according to Thy Word.
10. With my whole heart have I sought Thee; O let me not wander from Thy commandments.
11. Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.
12. Blessed *art* Thou, O LORD; teach me Thy statutes.
13. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth.
14. I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.
15. I will meditate in Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways.
16. I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy Word.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that man's life without the Word of God is vain and valueless. Better never to have been born than to live and die without the Word of God. This Word alone shows the way to eternal Life. From it alone we learn how to obtain the forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ and how to find righteousness and life. But without the Word, all is unholy and displeasing to God; for, corrupt in our nature, we are blind in spiritual things and can not know the good and gracious will of God, except by His revealed Word.

The second part teaches that man's youth, virtue and culture, without the Word of God, is vain and valueless. A polite youth, an accomplished virgin may be flattered by many, but if they love not

the Word of God, they are none of His, and must perish in soul and body. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Genesis 8:21)*, and there is no remedy for sin save that revealed in the Word of God, which directs us to Jesus Christ, the Savior, in Whom alone is our help. Hear His Word and cling to Jesus.

PRAYER.

Blessed be Thou, our beloved Father in Heaven, for granting us the Word of Thy grace in which Thou hast revealed unto us Thy will concerning our salvation. Teach us to love Thy Word, diligently to hear and willingly to learn it, that, guided by this lamp, our feet may walk in the way everlasting. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 2 — LESSON 2 — PREFACE.

To avoid the crooked and slippery paths of sin and vice, and to keep in the straight road of right and virtue, no better guide and rule has ever been found than the Holy Scriptures. The moral teachings of the sages are defective and their doctrines often dubious, but the Scriptures teach the way of God right. The book of God's revealed Word sets before us a perfect standard of right; its teachings are not defective and its doctrines not uncertain. This book teaches with the voice of authority. If a man walks according to this rule, if a man continues in the written Word and deviates not from it, his feet will not slip, neither will his steps be uncertain, but his conversation will be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. For the Holy Scriptures do not only tell us what is right, they also direct us to a fountain from which we obtain willingness and strength to do what is right. This fountain is the Blood of the Lamb which was slain to make atonement for our sins. When the assurance of grace and forgiveness in the Blood of Christ enlarges the heart, then we are ready, not only to *walk* in the Law of the Lord, but to *run* the way of His Commandments. On this and others uses of the Word of God, let us hear the second lesson.

GIMEL.

17. Deal bountifully with Thy servant, *that* I may live, and keep Thy Word.
18. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.
19. I *am* a stranger in the earth; hide not Thy commandments from me.
20. My soul breaks for the longing *that it hath* unto Thy judgments at all times.
21. Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from Thy commandments.
22. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Thy testimonies.
23. Princes also did sit *and* speak against me; *but* Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes.
24. Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counselors.

DALETH.

25. My soul cleaves unto the dust; quicken Thou me according to Thy Word.
26. I have declared my ways, and Thou heard me; teach me Thy statutes.
27. Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts; so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works.
28. My soul melts for heaviness; strengthen Thou me according unto Thy Word.
29. Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me Thy law graciously.
30. I have chosen the way of truth; Thy judgments have I laid *before me*.
31. I have stuck unto Thy testimonies; O LORD, put me not to shame.
32. I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that man's authority, honor and high estate, without the Word of God, is vain and valueless. Though a man enjoy high honors and great men bow to his authority, yet if he has not the Word of God, he must die like an ignorant slave, not knowing where his soul will go. Honors and flatteries, offices and emoluments, power and authority are not enough; for these are earthly things and men must resign them. Even kings must step from the throne into the coffin. The statutes of the Lord must be our counselors, if it is to be well with us in life and death.

The second part teaches that man's art and skill, without the Word of God, are also vanity. The learned and skillful man who will not subject his reason to the Word of God or place his art into the service of godliness and virtue, that man is apt to do much harm, and his learning and skill will not comfort him in death. Learning and skill are good, if the understanding of the way of the Lord's precepts is added; for His Word is a *joy and rejoicing of the heart* (*Jeremiah 15:16*), and it comforts in death.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, teach us to know and remember how frail we are, that we lean not unto our own understanding and depend not on our wisdom and skill, but seek our true wisdom in Thy Word. Let Thy statutes enlighten our eyes that we behold Thy wondrous counsel for the salvation of our souls in Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 3 — LESSON 3 — PREFACE.

The Christian who labors in his calling according to the Word of God is continually doing good both in prosperity and adversity. Because he walks in the faith and obedience of Christ, all his labors, however humble they may be, are pleasing to God, and so he does

more good in an hour than the unbeliever in a lifetime; for the Scriptures testify, *Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23)*. Hence it follows, what is done in faith is well pleasing and shall not be in vain, but the blessing of God will rest upon it. But all the works of him who cares not for the Word of God are displeasing, and though he may be successful in his undertakings — for God makes His sun to rise also over the evil — yet the blessing of God is not resting upon him. Indeed the more the avaricious gets, the farther is his heart from God. Walk in the faith and fear of God's Word and all your labors will be pleasing to Him, being sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (*1 Timothy 4:5*). To take delight in walking after the Word of God, we are exhorted in the third lesson.

HE.

33. Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.
34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
35. Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein do I delight.
36. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken Thou me in Thy way.
38. Stablish Thy Word unto Thy servant, who *is devoted* to Thy fear.
39. Turn away my reproach which I fear; for Thy judgments *are* good.
40. Behold, I have longed after Thy precepts; quicken me in Thy righteousness.

VAU.

41. Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* Thy salvation, according to Thy Word.
42. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproaches me; for I trust in Thy Word.
43. And take not the Word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in Thy judgments.

44. So shall I keep Thy law continually for ever and ever.
45. And I will walk at liberty; for I seek Thy precepts.
46. I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.
47. And I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved.
48. My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in Thy statutes.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that riches and treasures of gold and silver, without the Word of God, are only vanity. The possession of riches generally begets pride of heart, if not the Word teaches the soul humility. The mind of them that would be rich is engrossed by earthly things, and they fall into the temptation to seek gain in unjust and crooked ways. They are constantly driven about with hopes and troubles and fears, and with sorrow they must, at last, turn their back upon their treasures to go into outer darkness; for the god Mammon can not save from everlasting poverty. The true riches which bring contentment to the heart are found in the Word of God.

The second part teaches that man's conscience, however void of offense it may be, without the Word of God, is vain and valueless. In our dealings towards men, a good conscience is indeed a precious thing, often better than a thousand witnesses, but before God our conscience does not and can not exculpate us. Conscience can not defend us against the accusations of the Law, it rather convicts us of shortcoming and guilt. Alone the Word of God's free forgiveness in Jesus Christ can fortify the heart against the curse of the Law and can give a triumphant hope in death. Seek not to justify yourself before God by an appeal to your conscience, but build freely on the Word of His Promise.

PRAYER.

Lord, our God, Who alone art able to cleanse from sin, preserve us from appealing for righteousness to the testimony of our conscience or the innocency of our heart, and teach us to build our hope alone on the Blood and Death of Thy Son Jesus Christ. For His

sake, blot out our sins and remember our transgressions no more.
Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 4 — LESSON 4 — PREFACE.

We Christians are but pilgrims in this world; for *we have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Hebrews 13:14)*. The city which we seek is not in this world; it is the home of the soul, those mansions which the Son of God purchased with His Blood and which He went to prepare for us (*John 14:2*). Being pilgrims, we must not make this world our home. The traveler who makes the inn his home will not reach his destination. As pilgrims to the Heavenly Canaan, we must set our affections on thing above, and not on things on earth (*Colossians 3:2*). Neither must we allow flowery by-paths to entice us away from the highway. In the paths of carnal pleasures, deadly serpents are lurking which, their fangs once fixed, seldom yield up their prey. *I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11)*. To avoid delusive by-roads and to keep in the straight way, we must be careful to note the directions on the guidepost. The Bible must be our guide. Its teachings we must learn, its instructions we must bear in mind, its directions we must follow. With David we should make the statutes of the Lord our song in this our earthly pilgrimage (*verse 54*), then we shall not err in the way. And now, let us hear the reading of the fourth lesson.

ZAIN.

49. Remember the Word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope.
50. This *is* my comfort in my affliction; for Thy Word hath quickened me.
51. The proud have had me greatly in derision; *yet* have I not declined from Thy law.
52. I remembered Thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.
54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.
55. I have remembered Thy Name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept Thy law.
56. This I had, because I kept Thy precepts.

CHETH.

57. *Thou art my* portion, O LORD; I have said that I would keep Thy Words.
58. I intreated Thy favor with *my* whole heart; be merciful unto me according to Thy Word.
59. I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.
60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.
61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me; *but* I have not forgotten Thy law.
62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments.
63. I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.
64. The earth, O LORD, is full of Thy mercy; teach me Thy statutes.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that all comfort is vain which is not based on the Word of God. Earthly things — honor, riches, friendship, learning, health, strength — afford a temporary staff, and may delight the mind for a while, but how quickly may a single disappointment spoil all man's happiness. Visit our asylums, and you will find many who once dwelt in happy homes surrounded by luxuries. The young man comforts himself with his strength of mind and body which is quickly consumed by the heat of the fever, and when death approaches, all earthly comfort vanishes away. But when heaven and earth pass away, the Word of our God will not pass away. His Word gives abiding comfort — comfort which will not give way when the trumpet sounds to judgment.

The latter part of this text teaches that all is transient save alone the Word of God. *The world passes away and the lust thereof (1 John 2:17); whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away (1 Corinthians 13:8); the earth and the heaven will flee away from the face of Him sitting upon the Throne and no place will be found for them (Revelation 20:11)*, but the Word of the Lord will not pass away. My soul, turn thou thy feet unto His testimonies and make them thy portion in the house of thy pilgrimage.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Who art the same yesterday, to-day and forever, remember us pilgrims in this nether world; for frail is our frame and few are our days. Let the Word of Thy salvation be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, that our soul must not walk in darkness, but may find the way to that city whose light is the Lamb. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 5 — LESSON 5 — PREFACE.

The Word of God is the one true sanctuary by which all other things are sanctified. *“Every creature of God,”* says St. Paul, *“is good, and nothing to be refused; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (1 Timothy 4:4)*. It is the Word which sanctifies the other creatures, as also the Lord said to the disciples, *“Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3)*. It is the Word of God which sanctifies us and consecrates us to be living sacrifices unto Him; for what God says, that is so, as we read, *God said ... and it was so (Genesis 1)*. The Word is the sceptre of the great King which saves from death those that lay hold on it (*Esther 5:2*). If any man will keep His Word, the Father and the Son come to him and make their abode with him (*John 14:23*). And as Moses, with his staff, divided the Red Sea, destroyed the enemies, and brought water out of the rock, so with the staff of God’s Word, we

scatter the enemies and draw living water out of the Rock of Ages, which is Jesus Christ. The rod and staff is praised also in the fifth lesson of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

TETH.

65. Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O LORD, according unto Thy Word.
66. Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed Thy commandments.
67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word.
68. Thou *art* good, and does good; teach me thy statutes.
69. The proud have forged a lie against me; *but* I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart.
70. Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in Thy law.
71. *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.
72. The law of Thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD.

73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.
74. They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy Word.
75. I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments *are* right, and *that* Thou, in faithfulness, hast afflicted me.
76. Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy Word unto Thy servant.
77. Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for Thy Law *is* my delight.
78. Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause; *but* I will meditate in Thy precepts.
79. Let those that fear Thee turn unto me, and those that have known Thy testimonies.
80. Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that all man's works and virtues without the Word of God are vain and valueless. The work of a servant is pleasing only when it has been done agreeably to the instructions received from his master. Whatever plant the Father in Heaven has not planted will be rooted up (*Matthew 15:13*). All self-chosen works, however holy they may appear, will be burned up like stubble in the day of judgment. Only that work will abide which God has commanded in His Word and to which He has added His promise. When the Jews asked, "*What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*" the Lord answered, "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent*" (*John 6:28-29*). Believing on the Son, that is the work for which the Father looks, and those works only are pleasing to Him which proceed from faith. Would thou walk pleasing to God? Walk in the faith of Jesus Christ, otherwise all thy work is labor lost.

The second part teaches that there is no true victory without the word of God. When the devil flees from consecrated water, it is not because he is routed. When an unbeliever quits a vice by his own strength of character, he is nothing holier in the sight of God. Put on the breastplate of righteousness through the faith of Christ and take the sword of the Spirit, then you shall win the true victory, the victory followed by everlasting songs of triumph.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Lord Jesus, Thou Captain of our salvation, for that goodly weapon, even Thy Word, with which we drive the enemy before us and can resist thrones and potentates. Create in us a zeal for Thy Word — willingly to hear and learn it — that we may always have our weapon polished and ready. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 6 — LESSON 6 — PREFACE.

It is not enough to hear the Word of God once in a lifetime, or once a year; for the carnal mind has a weak memory for the Word of God, and it is soon forgotten. As long as our feet can carry us, as long as we have ears to hear, our face should be familiar in the House where is heard the sound of God's Word. Neither is it enough if we are hearers only; we must be doers of the Word. They that are forgetful hearers and not doers of the Word are not profited by it (*James 1:23*). Yea, the servant which knew his Master's will, yet did not prepare himself to do according to it, will be beaten with many stripes (*Luke 12:47*). Hearing with the bodily ears we must also hear with the ears of the soul. We must receive the Word with meekness, and not cast it from us or foreclose the heart against it. The Word of Christ we must store up in a believing heart as the Word of salvation. For this very purpose the Word of the Cross is preached, that we should hear and should believe, and believing should have life through the Name of Him Who bare our sins in His Body on the tree. And having received the Word in a believing heart, we must not allow it to be choked again with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, but must grant it room to bring forth fruit, even the fruit of the Spirit, which is pleasing to God and beneficial to men. As a living seed, the Word is praised in the sixth lesson.

CAPH.

81. My soul faints for Thy salvation; *but* I hope in Thy Word.
82. Mine eyes fail for Thy Word, saying, "When wilt Thou comfort me?"
83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; *yet* do I not forget Thy statutes.
84. How many *are* the days of Thy servant? When wilt Thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?
85. The proud have dug pits for me, which *are* not after Thy Law.

86. All Thy commandments *are* faithful; they persecute me wrongfully; help Thou me.
87. They had almost consume me upon earth; but I forsook not Thy precepts.
88. Quicken me after Thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Thy mouth.”

LAMED.

89. For ever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in Heaven.
90. Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations; Thou hast established the earth, and it abides.
91. They continue this day according to Thine ordinances; for all *are* Thy servants.
92. Unless Thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.
93. I will never forget Thy precepts; for with them Thou hast quickened me.
94. I *am* Thine, save me; for I have sought Thy precepts.
95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me; *but* I will consider Thy testimonies.
96. I have seen an end of all perfection; *but* Thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that all hope is vain which is not founded on the Word of God. All hope for Heaven which is not based on the Word of God is a delusion and a snare for the soul. *The hypocrite's hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spider's web (Job 8:14)*. When the wicked dies, hope is lost, and the expectations of those trusting in their works will perish (*Proverbs 11:7*). Alone the hope built on the promise of grace will remain green and will be realized in everlasting fruition.

The second part teaches that all truth and all perfections without the Word of God are vain. There are many earthly truths, natural facts which man has used to employ the powers of nature for his benefit. Machines are constructed which work to a nicety and

produce many commodities. Inventions have been made which beautify man's life and serve for his convenience. These are earthly truths and earthly perfections of earthly value. But where will all these remain when the earth will be burned up and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Let us hold the Word of God; it is an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

PRAYER.

Thou Spirit of the living God, teach us to know and to consider the vanity of all earthly things, that we may be made truly wise and lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven that our souls may not be left empty. Cause Thy Word to grow in us and bring fruit which will remain unto eternal Life. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 7 — LESSON 7 — PREFACE.

We must not only hear the Word of God and receive it in a believing heart, we must also confess it before men. *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation: (Romans 10:10).* Those who think they could believe the truth of God's Word in their hearts, but they need not confess it before men, deceive themselves and will be found as such who love the praise of men more than the praise of God (*John 12:43*). The true, living and saving faith is not an idle idea, neither is it a cold calculation of the intellect; it is an active power in the heart which will not suffer the tongue to be silent, as David experienced and confessed, "*I believed, therefore have I spoken*" (*Psalms 116:10*). They that have experienced the truth and sweetness of Christ's Word in their hearts will not be ashamed to bear witness of that Word before men, though they must incur ridicule, mockery and suffering. When they were beaten and threatened no more to speak in the Name of Jesus, the apostles answered, "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*" (*Acts 4:20*). The cheerful

confession of Christ's Words will not be in vain; for those who confess Him on earth He has promised to confess before His Father (*Matthew 10:32*). Let the lovers of Christ not be ashamed of His Word, as the seventh lesson teaches.

MEM.

97. O how I love Thy Law! It *is* my meditation all the day.
98. Thou, through Thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they *are* ever with me.
99. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Thy testimonies *are* my meditation.
100. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.
101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word.
102. I have not departed from Thy judgments; for Thou hast taught me.
103. How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste! *Yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!
104. Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

105. Thy Word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light for my path.
106. I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments.
107. I am afflicted very much; quicken me, O LORD, according unto Thy Word.
108. Accept, I beseech Thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Thy judgments.
109. My soul *is* continually in my hand; yet do I not forget Thy law.
110. The wicked have laid a snare for me; yet I erred not from Thy precepts.
111. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.

112. I have inclined mine heart to perform Thy statutes always,
even unto the end.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches, that all wisdom without the Word of God is only vanity. The wisdom of men is foolishness with God (*1 Corinthians 1:20*), and that only is the true wisdom which God teaches in His Word. Reason is indeed also a light and an excellent light in its place. Reason teaches man to cultivate the soil, to build a house, to run an engine, and a hundred useful things; but reason can not teach this wisdom, how we sinners may be justified from sin, may triumph over the fear of death and come to God. This the Word of God alone teaches. Teaching earthly things, reason is like unto the candles and lamps which light up our rooms at night, but the Word of God is like the sun which fills earth and sky with His Light. If we seek after earthly wisdom, let us much rather seek the wisdom which is of God and gives life to the soul. Be not like the infidel, who praises the candle as enlightening the sky, and calls the sun a dark lantern.

The second part teaches that all gifts and sacrifices without the Word of God are nothing before Him. "*In vain,*" says the Lord, "*they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (*Matthew 15:9*), and often did the Lord complain of His people for walking after their own thoughts. What have we with which to bribe God? His is Heaven and earth, and when we give to Him, we are only returning what He first gave to us. He is the Lord and we the servants. It is for Him to say how we are to worship Him, and we are to worship Him according to His Word, then do we walk unto all pleasing.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Thou God of all wisdom, that Thou hast given us Thy Word in which Thou teaches us the true wisdom. Guard us from the seductions of science falsely so called, and keep us in the faith of Thy Word which enlightens the soul unto eternal Life. Draw us to Thy Son that we hear His voice and follow Him. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 8 — LESSON 8 — PREFACE.

When we have received the Word of God in an honest and good heart, we must also confess it with the mouth. Neither is it sufficient to make a confession once, we must persevere in the faith and confession of the Word of truth unto our end. If, for a while, we believe and in the day of temptation fall away, it is only the worse for us. When the unclean spirit returns and finds the heart swept and no more garnished with the Word of God, then he takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than he, and they dwell in that man and it is worse with him than before (*Luke 11:26*). If a man has experienced the truth and power of God's Word, yet turns again unto unbelief and sin, he loads his soul with twofold guilt. When our Lord Jesus Christ had begun the work of our redemption, He did not again abandon it. He prosecuted it until it was finished. Neither shame nor suffering could turn Him from it. So should we persevere in the confession of His Word. Neither the ridicule of the world, nor the hate of the wicked, nor any calamity should draw us away from the Word. In the great earnestness did Paul write to Timothy, *Thou, O man of God, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12)*. O that our hearts were filled with ever growing love to the Word of God, that we joyously join in with David in the eighth less of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm, saying:

SAMECH.

113. I hate *vain* thoughts; but Thy Law do I love.
114. Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Thy Word.
115. Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God.

116. Uphold me according unto Thy Word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope.
117. Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect unto Thy statutes continually.
118. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from Thy statutes; for their deceit *is* falsehood.
119. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross; therefore I love Thy testimonies.
120. My flesh trembles for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of Thy judgments.

AIN.

121. I have done judgment and justice; leave me not to mine oppressors.
122. Be surety for Thy servant for good; let not the proud oppress me.
123. Mine eyes fail for Thy salvation, and for the Word of Thy righteousness.
124. Deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy, and teach me Thy statutes.
125. I *am* Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.
126. *It is* time for *Thee*, LORD, to work; *for* they have made void Thy Law.
127. Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.
128. Therefore I esteem all *Thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that bodily health and strength without the Word of God are vanity. Though a strong and healthy body is one of our best earthly possessions, yet it is not so precious as to attract the favor of God; for *He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man (Psalm 147:10)*. And how often is health and strength suddenly lost. To-day red, to-morrow dead; to-day healthy, to-morrow sickly. Now those without the Word of God are without

true comfort in sickness and death, but he that has the Word of Christ has a sure stay, a staff that will not break, and it will be his Light even when he must sit in darkness.

The second part teaches, that all earthly defense and security without the Word of God is vanity. Though a man be enclosed by steel locks and iron doors, protected by mighty monarchs, surrounded by valiant warriors, guarded by loving friends, yet he cannot secure himself against sin, against Satan, against death or avenging justice without the Word of God. Alone the Word of God furnishes the armor in which we stand and triumph in the day of battle.

PRAYER.

O grant that in Thy Holy Word
We here may live and die, dear Lord;
And when our journey endeth here
Receive us into Glory there. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 9 — LESSON 9 — PREFACE.

By Moses, God commanded His people, they should make them fringes of blue ribbon on the borders of their garments, that it should be unto them a memento, to remember all the commandments of the Lord and to do them (*Numbers 15:39*). They were to inscribe Words of the law on the posts of their houses and on their gates, and Moses distinctly commanded, "*Thou shall teach these Words diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sits in thine house, and when thou walks by the way, when thou lies down and when thou rises up*" (*Deuteronomy 6:7*). It was the Lord's will that His people should often in the day be reminded of His Words, and they should have them like a frontlet before their eyes. O how needful that the Word of God should be continually before our eyes and in our heart; for if we are not armed with the Word of God,

Satan will break in and will lead us into error and sin before we are rightly aware of it. But when the Word of God is kept and pondered in the heart, it is a defense against the evil one, extinguishes the lusts of the flesh, and creates pure and virtuous thoughts. Rooting in the heart, the Word of Christ creates the light of faith, kindles the fire of love and mightily prompts unto good and holy works. The Word makes the heart of garden studded with the flowers and sweet-scented shrubs of manifold virtues. Let it never depart from thy heart, as also the ninth lesson enjoins.

PE.

129. Thy testimonies *are* wonderful; therefore does my soul keep them.
130. The entrance of Thy Words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.
131. I opened my mouth, and panted; for I longed for Thy commandments.
132. Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as Thou used to do unto those that love Thy Name.
133. Order my steps in Thy Word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.
134. Deliver me from the oppression of man; so will I keep Thy precepts.
135. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes.
136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law.

TZADDI.

137. Righteous *art* Thou, O LORD, and upright *are* Thy judgments.
138. Thy testimonies *that* Thou hast commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.
139. My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy Words.
140. Thy Word *is* very pure; therefore Thy servant loves it.
141. I *am* small and despised; *yet* do not I forget Thy precepts.

142. Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and Thy Law *is* the truth.
143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; *yet* Thy commandments *are* my delights.
144. The righteousness of Thy testimonies *is* everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live.

SUMMARY.

Vanity are all the wishes and cravings of man without the Word of God. That restless thing — the heart of man — has a thousand wishes, now craving one thing, then another. But how many of these wishes are vain, being nothing but dreams of youth which are never realized. And though many do obtain what they wish, yet both the wishing and possessing are, nevertheless, vanity. Earthly things cannot satisfy the heart, because its cravings continually grow, its wishes forever multiply. And when the heart stands still in death, its wishes and plans are gone like a shadow that is past. But the Word of God brings us treasures which satisfy the heart, whose full enjoyment is found beyond the grace.

This text likewise teaches that man's zeal and fervor is vain without the Word of God. By zeal and energy, men have performed great works, and zeal is good, yet not such zeal as the Jews had, of whom Paul says, "*I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*" (*Romans 10:2*). Zeal is good, if the faith is right, the object good, the conscience pure, and this can only be where the Word of God is and rules. Be sure that you have the Word of God for your work, then your energy will be well spent.

PRAYER.

Praise and honor belong unto Thee, our God, because Thou hast given us Thy Word, by which Thou dost dress our poor and naked souls in the garments of salvation and dost bring unto us Heavenly and abiding treasures. Do Thou so fashion our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we crave not the things of this earth, but look and haste to the things above. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 10 — LESSON 10 — PREFACE.

In young days, when the mind is active and the memory is strong, we should employ every opportunity to make ourselves at home in the Book of books. It is a great and excellent thing if the soul is early enlightened with the Heavenly wisdom. And not only should young men and maidens diligently read the Bible, they should also store their memory with select passages of the Old and New Testament. Parents also should early teach their children, or have them taught in the Holy Scriptures. What is learned in youth is not apt to be forgotten, and words of the Holy Ghost stored up in the memory are a treasure more precious than gold and silver. In the day of temptation many a one has been restrained from sin and saved from ruin in body and soul by remembering a word of Scripture which was learned in youth. Not a few, after walking in sin and vice for many years, yet remembered what they were taught from the Holy Scriptures when a child, and at a late day it yet proved in them a seed of life. And what an excellent thing, when in sickness, in misfortunes, in distresses, in calamities the memory is supplied with such words of the Bible which serve to bring peace to the conscience, quiet to the heart, comfort to the soul. Also, in spiritual things, it is a true saying, "He that gathers in the summer will find a provision in the winter." The excellency of God's Word is praised also in the tenth lesson.

KOPH.

145. I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD; I will keep Thy statutes.
146. I cried unto Thee; save me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies.
147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried; I hoped in Thy Word.
148. Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches, that I might meditate in Thy Word.

149. Hear my voice according unto Thy loving-kindness; O LORD, quicken me according to Thy judgment.
150. They draw nigh that follow after mischief; they are far from Thy Law.
151. Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all Thy commandments *are* truth.
152. Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them for ever.

RESH.

153. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me; for I do not forget Thy Law.
154. Plead my cause, and deliver me; quicken me according to Thy Word.
155. Salvation *is* far from the wicked; for they seek not Thy statutes.
156. Great *are* Thy tender mercies, O LORD; quicken me according to Thy judgments.
157. Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies; *yet* do I not decline from Thy testimonies.
158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not Thy Word.
159. Consider how I love Thy precepts; quicken me, O LORD, according to Thy loving-kindness.
160. Thy Word *is* true *from* the beginning; and every one of Thy righteous judgments *endures* for ever.

SUMMARY.

The first part of this text teaches that man's prayer without the Word of God is vain and valueless. God has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear our prayer, but that prayer only is pleasing and acceptable with God, which is according to His Word. So St. John writes, *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1 John 5:14)*. Now, no one can pray according to the will of God unless he has the Word of God in which God has revealed His will. If we do not offer up our prayers according to His Word, we have no promise that we

shall be heard. But, if we come before Him with His own Word and do not soon tire, our prayer will pierce the clouds and will fill His ears that He cannot but hear.

The second part teaches that all affliction and suffering without the Word of God are vain and valueless. Self-denials practiced according to the commandments of men are no service of God, and those only delude themselves who think they must be saved, because they suffered so much in this world. Our salvation comes through the grace and faith of Jesus Christ, and our sufferings have no merit before God. Yet, we have this gracious promise that our labor in the Lord shall not be in vain, it shall find its reward.

PRAYER.

Lord, our God, Who has commanded us to pray, grant us that Spirit of prayer Who alone can teach us how to bring our petitions before Thee in a manner acceptable. Cause Thy Spirit to guide us that we seek not self-chosen works after our own thoughts, but continue in Thy Word that we may be found Thy children indeed. Amen.

PSALM 119.

PART 11 — LESSON 11 — PREFACE.

Though we must surrender what is the nearest and dearest on this earth, if we keep the Word of God, we have all that our soul needs. *“The words that I speak unto you,”* says the Lord, *“they are spirit, and they are life”* (*John 6:63*). The words of Jesus Christ are living and life-giving words, and he who has and holds them cannot die, he will and must live. And though his body must die and return to dust, yet his soul cannot die; for God is a God of the living and not of the dead (*Matthew 22:32*). The soul in which lives the Word of Christ — that soul comes to God and enters on a life which excels the life in this world — as the Heaven is high above the earth. O how blind are we that we seek earthly treasures and seek not the Word of

God! What folly that we seek all manner of means to prolong this bodily life, and neglect the life which is of God through the Word of Jesus Christ! Alas! The blindness that our hearts cleave unto silver which is dug out of the ground, and care nothing for that Heavenly Word which gives Life to the soul! Casting off the love of this earth, let us say with Peter, "*Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal Life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God*" (John 6:68). This Word of Life is praised also in the last lesson of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

SCHIN.

161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause; but my heart stands in awe of Thy Word.
162. I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that finds great spoil.
163. I hate and abhor lying; *but* Thy law do I love.
164. Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.
165. Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them.
166. LORD, I have hoped for Thy salvation, and done Thy commandments.
167. My soul hath kept Thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.
168. I have kept Thy precepts and Thy testimonies; for all my ways *are* before Thee.

TAU.

169. Let my cry come near before Thee, O LORD; give me understanding according to Thy Word.
170. Let my supplication come before Thee; deliver me according to Thy Word.
171. My lips shall utter praise, when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes.
172. My tongue shall speak of Thy Word; for all Thy commandments *are* righteousness.

173. Let Thine hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts.
174. I have longed for Thy salvation, O LORD; and Thy Law *is* my delight.
175. Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and let Thy judgments help me.
176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments.

SUMMARY.

This text teaches that all joy without the Word of God is only vanity. The butterfly spends the summer flitting from flower to flower and seeking only enjoyment, but when autumn comes his wings are frostbitten and his joy is at an end. The world calls those the favorites of fortune who have nothing to do but to follow pleasures, but how often is the flower of their joy nipped in full bloom, and when the winter of age comes and death approaches, the long night of eternity settles upon them. There is a nobler joy than the noblest pleasures of earth, the joy of the soul knowing itself one with its Author. Dear soul, love thou the Word of God and commune with it in the morning.

Once more David here summarizes what is comprised in this psalm, and he ends it with the confession that he is dependent alone on God and His Word. He says, "I am a lost sheep, utterly helpless and not knowing what to do. Thou must seek me and save me or I perish. But this I do; I hold to Thy Word! It is the anchor of my hope."

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou art good and gracious, and most heartily do we thank Thee, that Thou hast granted us to read and to hear this song, in which Thou dost commend unto us Thy Heavenly Word. And now do Thou Thyself prepare a place for it in our hearts, that it may shine in us as a light, dispelling the night of unbelief and sin, and filling our souls with the love of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 120.

PREFACE.

The tongue is a small member, but it often kindles a great fire, and does greater harm and slays more than the sword. An evil tongue will divide a house against itself; will set friend against friend, disturb the peace of communities and one treacherous tongue has destroyed great and mighty cities. An unruly tongue will penetrate deeper than the sharpest arrow; its words run faster than fire in the dry brush, and it often kindles a fire which will burn on for generations. Therefore St. James (3:8) calls the tongue *a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of poison*. What thing is there more harmful and vile than a slanderous and perfidious tongue? What thing is there more contemptible than Doeg's tongue, whose treachery caused the death of eighty-five priests of the Lord? A sharp and unruly tongue is a delight to the devil and an abomination to God. But no slanderer shall go unpunished. He that frames deceit with his tongue shall not enter the new Jerusalem. We Christians, every one of us, should adopt the resolution of David, saying, "*I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me*" (Psalm 39:1). Unto this we are urged in the one hundred and twentieth Psalm.

Prayer against slanderers and false teachers.

A Song of degrees.

1. In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and He heard me.
2. Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, *and* from a deceitful tongue.
3. What shall be given unto thee? Or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?
4. Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.
5. Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, *that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar!
6. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hates peace.
7. I *am* for peace; but when I speak, they *are* for war.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a prayer both against slanderers and false teachers. The words of slanderers are like sharp arrows shot by a strong hand which makes deep gashes. Evil reports, started by malicious tongues, spread like fire in juniper brush, and as coals of juniper wood hold the fire a long time, so evil reports, once spread, will not soon die out. The trade of a slanderer is a most mischievous one, because the harm done by a false tongue cannot easily be remedied.

But more harmful than the tongue of the slanderer is the tongue of a false prophet; for false doctrine will spread as does a canker. Mesech and Kedar were the people to the north and east of Jerusalem, idolatrous nations, among whom many Israelites dwelt as merchants or captives. Now, as of old, idolatry spread over all the earth, so yet reasonable doctrine is taking with the multitude. And truly must he sigh, "*Woe is me*" (*verse 5*), who has not the right preaching of the Gospel, but must dwell among those who have reason for their guide, teaching the wisdom of men. Let those be thankful to God who have faithful teachers that corrupt not the truth as it is in Jesus (*2 Corinthians 2:17*).

PRAYER.

Guard us by Thy power, O most merciful Father, that we fall not into the snares of slanderers and the toils of those practicing deceit. Preserve us from soul-destroying errors; give us teachers whose heart is upright with Thy Word, and kindle and increase in us the knowledge of Thy saving truth through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 121.

PREFACE.

God the Lord is the one true Author and Supporter of our lives; for in Him we live and move and have our being (*Acts 17:28*).

God gave us life, watched over us before we were born, preserved us when we were helpless infants, and has hitherto supported us from our youth. God, rich in mercy, has endowed us with manifold faculties in body and soul, and He begrudges us no needed gift. He covers us with the shadow of His wings, defending us against our enemies, both visible and invisible, and protecting us in many evils and dangers. Many are the evils surrounding us every day, and long since would Satan, our arch-enemy, have destroyed us, if God had not been our Keeper. And as God was with us at our incoming into this world, so He is willing and desirous to keep us in our outgoing out of this world. For this very purpose God placed us into this world, that, at our outgoing, we should come to Him. If we will but seek the Father's grace, and will choose Jesus Christ for our companion and guide, He will conduct us safely through the darkness of the grave to the mansions of everlasting peace, and no torment shall touch us. His faithful guidance is praised in the one hundred and twenty-first Psalm.

God the Keeper of man.

A Song of degrees.

1. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
2. My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made Heaven and earth.
3. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
4. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
5. The LORD *is* thy Keeper; the LORD *is* thy Shade upon thy right hand.
6. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
7. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul.
8. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm God is glorified as the Keeper of man and the Helper of the needy. With inspiring words and persuasive figures of speech, the psalmist urges us in all dangers and necessities cheerfully to look to God and patiently to await His help. Often it would seem to us as though God was slumbering, as though He did not see our troubles or cared nothing for our distresses, yet He slumbers not. Also in the night He is our cover that the moon smite us not; for in Arabia and India the light of the moon is said to be more dangerous to man than that of the sun. Thou we must fare like Jacob who complained, "*In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes*" (Genesis 31:40); yet we will be under the wings of the Almighty. His eyes are open to watch over them who have set their love upon Him, and in due time He will deliver them out of this evil world and will receive them unto Himself in Heaven.

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, O God, Who hast hitherto been our Father and our Patron, do we lift up our eyes, knowing that from Thee alone can come our help and our salvation. Grant us a living trust in Thy mercy and truth, that our hearts fear not when we must pass through the fire of trials, or much wade the waters of affliction, but always maintain a cheerful trust in Thy help through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 122.

PREFACE.

Never can we glorify God sufficiently for His good providence over us in causing us to be born in a Christian land within the bounds of the Christian Church, and not in a heathen land, where we would have been led to worship dumb idols and would

have been reared in ignorance of Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners. Born in Christendom, we were received into the Covenant of God in Holy Baptism, and were taught to worship the one true God — Father, Son and Holy Ghost — Who forgives us our sins for Christ’s sake, hears our prayer, helps us in time of need and temptation, and kindles in our hearts this blessed and undying hope, that with prophets and apostles, with the martyrs and all the saints of God, we shall dwell together with God and the Lamb in one tabernacle. O let us be grateful unto the Lord our God in word and deed. Let us not neglect the reading of His Word morning and night, and let us go with gladness to the assembly of the Christians in the House of worship, to receive the Word of the Cross in the simplicity of faith, and to rejoice over the loving-kindness of our God, by which the soul is refreshed like grass by the dew from heaven. Such fond love for the House of God, David expresses in the one hundred and twenty-second Psalm.

The Glory of Jerusalem.

A Song of degrees of David.

1. I was glad when they said unto me, “Let us go into the House of the LORD.”
2. Our feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem.
3. Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together;
4. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the LORD.
5. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.
6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.
7. Peace be within thy walls, *and* prosperity within thy palaces.
8. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, “Peace *be* within thee.”
9. Because of the House of the LORD our God, I will seek thy good.

SUMMARY.

This psalm was composed by David probably, both to express his own love for the house of the Lord and to teach the people to

love Jerusalem, which, in David's time, was chosen to be the resting place for the Ark of the Covenant. Jerusalem was *compact together* (verse 3), a well built city and a figure of the Church of Christ, *in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a Holy Temple in the Lord* (Ephesians 2:21). Perhaps this psalm was sung under way by those going up to Jerusalem on the three great feasts instituted by Moses. The Israelites had great reason to sing psalms like this, because they had the oracles of God, the temple, the priesthood and a certain place, where the tribes met together for the worship of the Lord. Much rather have we Evangelical Lutheran Christians reason to sing psalms of praise; for under popery our fathers sighed for the Word of grace and they received it sparingly indeed, but unto us the Light of the Gospel shines brightly. God has given us faithful pastors, Christian schools for the education of our children, and churches where we can gladly assemble to glorify the grace of our God through Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

Our hearts are glad and our souls rejoice before Thee, Lord our God, because by Thy Word of truth Thou hast made us members of Thy Holy Church, in which Thou dost daily and richly forgive all sins to all those who build their trust on Jesus Christ. Grant us grace to abide in the love of Thy Word, in purity of faith and in piety of life, even unto our end. Amen.

PSALM 123.

PREFACE.

A faithful servant who diligently performs the labor appointed to him justly looks to the hand of his master for provision and protection, trusting that his master as an honest and true man will stand by him, and will not countenance abuse and injury which is heaped upon him. So should our eyes look unto the Lord, our

hearts being fixed in this trust, that He will never leave us nor forsake us. If His help seems to tarry, we should not waver, it will sure come (*Habakkuk 2:3*). And as he who strikes the servant insults the master, so he who maliciously wrongs the Christian insults the Lord, and is found as one touching apple of His eye (*Zechariah 2:8*). If we look unto God as our Lord Who has purchased us with His own Blood in Jesus Christ, and if we serve Him in singleness of heart, who then shall be against us? Balaam was hired and paid to curse Jacob, but he blessed and could not curse (*Number 23:8*). When the Lord blesses, the cursing of man cannot hurt; when He protects, none can harm; when He exalts, no man can abase. Trust in the Lord and be safe, as the one hundred and twenty-third Psalm assures.

Condition and comfort of God's people.

A Song of decrees.

1. Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwells in the heavens.
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; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us.
3. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, *and* with the contempt of the proud.

SUMMARY.

This psalm comforts the humble Christians against the proud and the high-minded who despise and ridicule the simplicity of the Gospel and who contemn the true Christians. Not only did the heathen hate and despise the Jews, but also the Liberalists among the Israelites, those who united the worship of idols with the worship of the Lord, represented as bigoted and narrow-minded who adhered scrupulously to the worship of God as prescribed by Moses. In Isaiah's time, the Liberalists had so increased that he compares *the*

daughter of Zion, that is the number of true worshipers with a *besieged city* (*Isaiah 1:8*). In these latter days of the world, the company of those who scrupulously abide in the Word of the Lord are despised by free-thinkers, decried by liberalists and denounced by fanatics of many minds. But if we must be derided as being bigoted and not progressing with the times, let us remember that God, Who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and Whose Word changes not, will be with us and will not withdraw His grace from us.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who art seated at the right hand of Thy Father, a Lord over Heaven and earth, restrain the enemies of Thy Church and uphold Thy faithful followers. Let us not fall from Thee because of the scorn of the world and the mockery of the proud, but grant us courage to confess Thy Name unto our end, and cause the wicked to see Thy power and the upright, Thy truth. Amen.

PSALM 124.

PREFACE.

It is a truth, if God were not with us as our Helper and Shield, there would be neither peace nor order upon earth. The Light of the Gospel would long since have been extinguished, the Christian Church overthrown, the civil authority destroyed and social order subverted. The true Christians are as a poor and despised handful, the enemies of God and His people are many and mighty, and Satan has great wrath, knowing that his time is sort. In one day would the enemies destroy all the true disciples of Christ, if they only could. Often has Satan tried to obliterate the Name of Christ from the earth, exerting all his power and skill, but he had to experience that the Lord is mightier than he. All history shows, whenever nations, which once had it, lost the Gospel, it was because of their own guilt and supine indifference, and not because Satan prevailed against the

Lord. O if we did but trust the Lord freely and continue in His Word unwaveringly, how utterly powerless would the enemies be against us, and how triumphantly could we sing with David in this one hundred and twenty-fourth Psalm, *Bless the LORD, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.*

God our help in need.

A Song of degrees of David.

1. If *it had not been* the LORD Who was on our side, now may Israel say;
2. “If *it had not been* the LORD Who was on our side, when men rose up against us;
3. Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us;
4. Then the waters had over-whelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul;
5. Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.”
6. Blessed *be* the LORD, Who hath not give us *as* a prey to their teeth.
7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.
8. Our help *is* in the Name of the LORD, Who made Heaven and earth.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a song of deliverance, giving thanks unto God for defending His true worshipers against tyrants and persecutors, and for making a way for His Christians to escape out of the snares of false tongues and malicious slanderers. It is truly meet that songs of deliverance are on our lips; for we are poor and needy and the enemies are many, like a flood of waters. But though their teeth were many times stronger and their nets spread more artfully, yet the Lord is greater than they all. He can break the teeth of the strong and can catch the wise in their own cunning. It is He, the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth, Who is on our side, and He will never suffer the

enemies to devour us. He will be a very present help to them that trust in Him.

PRAYER.

Praise belongs unto Thee, Lord Jehovah, because Thou hast mightily preserved Thy Church against her enemies, both visible and invisible, that the very gates of hell could not prevail against her. Do Thou defend us against all evil and preserve us and our children in the true knowledge of Thee and of Thy Savior Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, that in Him we may have life. Amen.

PSALM 125.

PREFACE.

At the happiness and the prosperity of the wicked in this world, we should not be offended, remembering that their joy will be turned into sorrow and their good days into days of mourning. This sorrowful change all those should well consider who live in sin, and it should induce them to repent and to seek the Lord while He may be found, that they might escape His temporal and eternal punishments. Turn from wickedness, ye workers of iniquity, lest Divine anger arrest you in the midst of your career, and your time of grace be shortened to your everlasting destruction. But pious believers who abide in God and keep His works have this glorious comfort, that their troubles and trials shall once come to an end. Though they must sow in tears, bearing the cross of Christ, yet God will provide them all needed gifts, if not by the ton, yet by the pound, and finally their sorrows will be turned into everlasting joy. Why should those regard much the sufferings of this present time, who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and who have the promise of a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Be not thou envious of the wicked, neither begrudge them the transient gifts which God allows them, but be content with the guidance of thy God, not doubting that He will do by thee what is promised in the one hundred and twenty-fifth Psalm.

The hope of the righteous shall not be put to shame.

A Song of degrees.

1. They that trust in the LORD, *shall be* as Mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.
2. As the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, so the LORD *is* round about His people from henceforth even for ever.
3. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.
4. Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be* good, and to *them that are* upright in their hearts.
5. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; *but peace shall be* upon Israel.

SUMMARY.

Worthy of praise is the Lord our God, because He does not suffer those to be moved who trust in Him and confess His truth before men. For a while God may suffer the sceptre of the wicked to rule over the pious; for a while Christ may suffer the yoke of seducers and false teachers to rest heavily on the necks of His true disciples; but in due time, He will break the rod of the oppressor, lest the righteous also become impatient, and put forth his hand unto iniquity. But the apostates — who willfully deny the truth of God's Word, forsake His ways and desert to the enemy — these shall be destroyed both root and branch. But from those who, though they are hard pressed, steadfastly look unto the Lord, from them the Covenant of Peace in Jesus Christ shall not be removed.

PRAYER.

O Lord — Who aforetime did not forsake Thy people, Who did often protect Zion with an outstretched arm and did defend Jerusalem with a mighty hand — restrain the wicked, convert the sinners, turn the hearts of our enemies, cover us with the shadow of

Thy wings, save Thy Church in these perilous times and always grant us the enjoyment of Thy peace in Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 126.

PREFACE.

When the children of Israel were captives in Babylon, they hanged their harps upon the willows, and the voice of rejoicing was silenced among them. God chastened them and they mourned. But when the Lord turned their captivity, they resumed their harps, and the voice of rejoicing and gladness was again heard among them. The Lord caused His loving-kindness to shine upon them, and they rejoiced. With the children of God there is a time for sadness and a time for gladness. In this mortality, joy and sorrow interchange, and the sorrow must serve to enhance the joy. Never do the harps sound more melodiously than after a time of protracted disuse. And shall we not be as they that dream, when freed from this cumbrous body our ears will be ravished with the strains of those Heavenly harps in the hands of the perfected saints, standing before the Throne of the Lamb? Take courage, ye that must sow in tears. The seed will not be left to rot, it will bring noble fruit, and in the joy of the harvest, the labor of seeding will be long forgotten, as the one hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm promises.

The sorrows of the righteous shall be turned into joy.

A Song of degrees.

1. When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.
2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, "The LORD hath done great things for them."
3. The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.
4. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.
5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

SUMMARY.

This is a beautiful song of thanksgiving for Israel to sing from gratitude for their delivery out of the captivity of Babylon. Going to Babel, their eyes were filled with tears, returning again, their mouth was full of laughter. So it is with the Christian. In this life he must sow with tears, being conformed to the image of his Savior Who, on this earth, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Much good seed does the Christian scatter by word and deed, and few heed it, but God sees it, and in His sight, the sufferings, yea even the death of His saints, is precious. Sow and faint not. "Go, labor on; 'tis not for naught; Thine earthly loss is Heavenly gain; Men heed Thee, love Thee, praise Thee not; The Master praises — what are men." The time of weeping will soon come to an end, as water in the south land is soon dried up. In due time you shall reap and the harvest will be great.

PRAYER.

Merciful Father in Heaven, convert the sinners and comfort Thy believers with Thy Word and Spirit. Grant us willing hearts and understanding minds to sow the seed of Thy Word broadcast among men — and if it seems Thee good to hide the fruit of our sowing from our eyes, do Thou strengthen our hearts that we faint not, but wait for the harvest in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 127.

PREFACE.

Housefathers and rulers are not to put their trust for the success of their undertakings into their own wisdom, skill, care and

energy. It is a vain thing for a man to attempt to add a cubit to his stature by taking thought. It is a vain thing for the sower to harass his mind with anxiety about the harvest, as to whether it will be profuse or meager. With all his anxiety, the farmer cannot make one blade to grow, or one grain to ripen. All is dependent on the blessing of God; for it is He Who must give the increase. The farmer's duty is to cultivate the soil carefully, to seed it rationally, to ask God to give the increase, and then to sleep quietly, not doubting that God will give daily bread. Whatever our station and calling may be, we should perform the duties thereof with prudence and industry, and commit the result to God. He Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us into the shameful death of the cross, to purchase our souls from everlasting starvation, shall He not much rather give what we need for this bodily life? In laboring, do thy share, and unto God, commit thy care, as the one hundred and twenty-seventh Psalm teaches.

It is God that gives the increase.

A Song of decrees for Solomon.

1. Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the city, the watchman wakes *but* in vain.
2. *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; *for* so He gives His beloved sleep.
3. Lo, children *are* a heritage of the LORD; *and* the fruit of the womb *is His* reward.
4. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.
5. Happy *is* that man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

SUMMARY.

Here we are taught that prosperity in state and family is of God and not of man. Without God's blessing the wisdom of the wise and the labor of the strong is in vain. God must give peace and good government to our land, and if God does not give it, the wisest

statesmen cannot prevent the fruits of industry from being consumed by war, tyranny or anarchy. God must give the increase in family and goods, in garden and field, or our labor is lost. Of Him must come both the heirs and the inheritance, and when God does give, then it comes to us as in sleep. The picture which the psalm portrays of a man blessed of God is worthy of note. The man who is industrious in his calling, whose trust is in the Lord, whose table is surrounded by children reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, happy is that man. When his head is become grey and his step tottering, his children will be his honor and his children's children his delight. But they who will not labor with their hands, and they who frustrate the design of wedlock, shall be pursued by the curse in a barren and lonely old age.

PRAYER.

For the benefit of man, Thou, Father of mercies, did institute holy wedlock, and has promised Thy blessing to ever house in which dwells Thy fear. Yea, even Thou Thyself sits at the fireside of them that love Thee, as at Thine own hearth and home. Cause Thy peace to dwell under our roof and bless the labors of our hands. Amen.

PSALM 128.

PREFACE.

As the day without sunshine is uncomfortable and the night without starlight is cheerless, so is life on earth without wedlock and wedlock without children. Wedlock, if conducted in the fear of God, serves greatly to beautify life. It teaches husband and wife mutually to bear the cross, to pray together as with one heart and voice, to comfort each other, from year to year to increase in love one to the other, and many more virtues. Children enlivening the house are one of God's most precious gifts, for which Christians should earnestly pray. And when God blesses a house with many children, the parents should not become discouraged, imagining they would be richer and

have less labor and trouble with less children. It is a truth confirmed in the Word of God; the more children, the more blessing. Often do the parents eat with the children rather than the children with the parents, because God gives more abundantly for the sake of the children. Now, if children are the gift of God, they should also be raised in the fear and love of God. With the talents which God gives, we are so to deal that He may receive His own with usury (*Matthew 25:27*). Ye Christian parents, so educate your children as to return them to the Lord His own sons and daughters, who glorify His Name. What your reward shall be learn from the one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm.

Blessings promised to pious parents.
A Song of degrees.

1. Blessed *is* every one that fears the LORD; that walks in His ways.
2. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands; happy *shalt* thou *be*, and *it shall be* well with thee.
3. Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table.
4. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that fears the LORD.
5. The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
6. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, *and* peace upon Israel.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm, the estate of wedlock is highly praised, and it contains sweet comfort for husband and wife. Though it costs parents much labor, care and trouble to raise a family of children, yet they have this assurance — that their estate is God's own institution, and was blessed of Him before ever sin entered into the world. Certainly it is well pleasing unto the Lord, and He blesses every couple that walk in His fear, granting them much more happiness than labor and sorrow. Even though occupying but an humble station in life, their labors shall be blessed and peace and contentment shall dwell in their house. But let it be remembered well that this psalm speaks of the godly, those who love the Word of God, who grant it a place at their fireside and who are diligent to walk in the ways of the

Lord. That there is no enduring happiness in the dwellings of the ungodly is not surprising.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, our God, for instituting the holy estate of matrimony and preserving it, since so many ages against the assaults of that apostate spirit which is an enemy of all that is pure and godly. Make every house Thy temple, fashioning the hearts of husband and wife that they love one another, and cause both parents and children to walk in the faith of Thy Son and be saved. Amen.

PSALM 129.

PREFACE.

The enemies can conspire against the Church of Christ, but they can never overthrow it. Satan can tempt us to sin, but without our consent, he can not he can not compel us to sin. Death can take the body for a while, but must yield it up again, and can not keep it. Hell can open its mouth, but can not devour us. Sin can fill us with sorrow and remorse, but, forgiven in Jesus Christ, it can not condemn us. Tyrants can threaten, and they can destroy the body, but they have no power over the soul. Infidels can mock and scoff, but they can not overthrow the Word of the Lord. False teachers and seducers can cause us anxiety, care and apprehension, but they can not utterly bury God's saving truth. Though tossed about by many an angry wave we are nevertheless safe; for Jesus Christ is on our side, and He, being at the helm of our craft, can not sink. He must prevail, His enemies must be made His footstool, and He will and must preserve His own now and forever, because He has promised and said, "*I give unto them eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand*" (John 10:28). For His gracious deliverance and His faithful protection, we owe Him hearty thanks, as the one hundred and twenty-nine Psalm teaches.

The Church's triumph over her enemies.

A Song of degrees.

1. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say,
2. “Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me.”
3. The ploughers ploughed upon my back; they made long their furrows.
4. The LORD, *is* righteousness; He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
5. Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.
6. Let them be as the grass *upon* the housetops, which withers afore it grows up;
7. Wherewith them mower fills not his hand; nor he that binds sheaves his bosom.
8. Neither do they which go by say, “The blessing of the LORD *be* upon you; we bless you in the Name of the LORD.”

SUMMARY.

From the time that they began to be a people, the children of Israel were hated of all surrounding nations, and were often oppressed and spoiled by the heathen, as we read in the books of the Judges and the Kings. But as often as the Israelites repented and cried unto the Lord, He awakened saviors for them who broke their yoke and cut asunder their bonds. Many a time has the Zion of the New Testament been oppressed. Tyrants have shed the blood of the Christians in broad streams, false prophets have seduced many and the pope, as the true Antichrist, laid his yoke on the Church, but at all times, when the need was greatest, the deliverance was nearest. The ploughers on Zion's back are like the grass on the housetops. It puts forth vigorously as promising to do wonders, but soon it dies before it matures, and is forgotten. The enemies of Zion spread themselves like a green bay tree, promising to do great things, but they soon disappear, not leaving a trace behind them. But Zion remains and goes on conquering. Courage, ye that feel the tempter's power. The Lord is on your side, and through Him, you must, at last, prevail.

PRAYER.

Thanks be unto Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, Who has triumphed over Thine and our enemies, and has cut asunder our bonds. Be Thou with us on the day of trial, preserve us in the faith, uphold us in the strife, grant us the victory and make us to triumph with all Thy saints. Amen.

PSALM 130.

PREFACE.

The costliest jewel and the most precious treasure which a man can possess is the forgiveness of sin. Where sin is forgiven the demands of Divine justice are stilled, and all is grace and good will. Where sin is forgiven Satan has lost his claim, and his power is broken. Where sin is forgiven there dwells the Holy Ghost with His grace and gifts. Where sin is forgiven the Law, which is not made for the righteous (*1 Timothy 1:9*), can not condemn, and death, which is only the wages of sin (*Romans 6:23*), can not kill. Where sin is forgiven hell can not devour, and the portals of Heaven are wide open. Where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation. For the forgiveness of sin we should fervently pray every day, as do all those that are godly (*Psalms 32:6*). And in such prayer, we should not doubt that sin is truly forgiven before God in Heaven for the sake of Jesus Christ Who is the propitiation for our sins (*1 John 2:2*). Pray ye for the forgiveness of your sins; for *blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity (Psalms 32:1-2)*. This comfort is also contained in the one hundred and thirtieth Psalm.

Prayer for the forgiveness of sin.

A Song of degrees.

1. Out of the depths have I cried unto, O LORD.
2. Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
3. If Thou, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?
4. But *there is* forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.
5. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope.
6. My soul *waiteth* for the LORD more than they that water for the morning; *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.
7. Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with Him *is* plenteous redemption.
8. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a penitential prayer in which the author, King David, confesses that a man can not be justified before God by his own works of righteousness, but alone by grace through the forgiveness of sins which God has promised. With this promise of forgiveness David comforted his soul, and he taught all Israel likewise not to seek righteousness in the keeping of the Law, but through the forgiveness of sin, that is by grace through faith in the promised Redeemer Who is the true Mercy-seat and Throne of Grace. So the author of this psalm had the right key to the Scriptures, right understanding of the promises that the Seed of woman should bruise the head of the Serpent (*Genesis 3:15*), and that in the Seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed (*Genesis 12:3*). All the Old Testament promises of Christ, even the whole Gospel, is comprised in these words: *He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities (verse 8)*. This redemption is in Jesus Christ, in Whom we have the remission of sin.

PRAYER.

God, our Father, Who art rich in mercy and with Whom is plenteous forgiveness, remember not the sins of our youth nor our transgressions. Blot them out for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son Who became the sacrifice for our sins. For the sake of

His crimson Blood, let our sins be forgotten and let them be imputed to us no more. Amen.

PSALM 131.

PREFACE.

In His Word God has told us all that is necessary for us to know for our soul's salvation, and beyond His Word we should not attempt to search. The man who can not content himself to remain within the limits revealed Word, who presumes to search out Divine things by the light of his own understanding, having *no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls (Proverbs 25:28)*. As a city without walls is defenseless, open to the assaults of robbers and invaders, so the mind, departing from the wholesome words inspired by the Holy Ghost, is open to the intrusion of pernicious errors and soul-destroying doctrines; for those who think themselves wise and follow the guide of their own spirit will fall into fanaticism and many foolish and hurtful opinions. As an infant is humble and seeks not strong meat, craving only its mother's milk, so should we not strive to search out high things which God has not revealed to us; but setting aside the wisdom of the world and the pride of reason, our desire should be only to drink from the words which the Holy Ghost has spoken by the apostles and prophets. Then do we remain on safe ground according to the words of the Lord, saying, "*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*" (*John 8:31-32*). Unto such humility we are exhorted in the one hundred and thirty-first Psalm.

Humility a lovely virtue. Pride a hateful vice.

A Song of degrees of David.

1. LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

2. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul *is* even as a weaned child.
3. Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a severe rebuke of the proud and the high-minded who, as the Pharisees did, trust in themselves, that they are righteous, who build their hope on their own morality and keeping of the Law and not on the forgiveness of sin by the mercy of God. David, as it were, says, "I can not boast about my own holiness as those do who trust in their own works of piety, or those who claim to have reached perfection. When I was so lifted up with pride as to think of meriting righteousness by my own virtue and did not quiet my soul with the promise of grace, then I lost my hold of the sure Word, and my soul was disquieted with me, as a child that is weaned, and my heart had no peace." Therefore David, in the concluding words, charges one and all to hope in the Lord, depending alone on His mercy. Accept wise counsel and cling to the promise of grace in simplicity of faith; for in it is Christ, with all His salvation.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who did humble Thyself to bear our sins in Thine own Body and to suffer the shameful death of the cross, grant us Thy Spirit of meekness that we may walk in true humility. Take from us all haughtiness and pride, that we seek not great things, and create in us that mind by which we count Thy grace sufficient unto us. Amen.

PSALM 132.

PREFACE.

God the Lord desires that we should trust Him, and should not doubt that He means well with us, and will surely provide for us

in body and soul. And knowing our frame, how hardly we will be persuaded to trust Him, God employs various ways and means to assure us of His kindness. In Baptism He has made this Covenant with us, the He will be our God and will forgive our sins for Christ's sake. In the Gospel He promises us grace and salvation. In the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's Body and Blood for a testimony that He is ours and we are His. And in addition to all this, He has sword by His own Life, that He has no pleasure in our death, but His delight is, that we turn unto Him and live (*Ezekiel 33:11*). When God swears to a thing it is verily so; for He can not forswear Himself, neither can His oath be broken. He sware unto David, his Seed should sit upon his Throne forever, and wonderfully is this oath fulfilled in Christ, sitting on the Throne of Zion as Zion's everlasting King. If we forsake our own ways and keep ourselves to this Zion, preparing our hearts a throne for Zion's King, we shall live under Him in His Kingdom in everlasting blessedness; for He has chosen Zion for His own habitation, to dwell with her, as He declares in the one hundred and thirty-second Psalm.

Prayer for the preservation of God's true worship.

A Song of degrees.

1. LORD, remember David, *and* all his afflictions;
2. How he sware unto the LORD, *and* vowed unto the mighty *God* of Jacob;
3. "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;
4. I will not give sleep to mine eyes, *or* slumber to mine eyelids,
5. Until I find out a place for the LORD, a habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob."
6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood.
7. We will go into His tabernacles; we will worship at His footstool.
8. Arise, O LORD, into Thy rest; Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength.
9. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy saints shout for joy.

10. For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thine Anointed.
11. The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the Fruit of thy body will I set upon thy Throne.
12. If thy children will keep My Covenant and My Testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy Throne for evermore.
13. For the LORD hath chose Zion; He hath desired *it* for His habitation.
14. This *is* My rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15. I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16. I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17. There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for Mine Anointed.
18. His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon Himself shall His Crown flourish.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a prayer for the preservation of the priesthood and the Kingdom of Israel, a petition for the prosperity of Church and state, for public worship and civil peace. Happy the people among whom the Word of truth is preached abundantly and whose rulers are lovers of peace and justice. God had promised to preserve both priesthood and kingdom at Jerusalem. Yea, the Lord had sworn unto David, if his children would walk in His ways there should not be lacking a man from the house of David to sit on the throne of Israel; the Lord also Himself would dwell at Jerusalem, would crown it with grace and blessing, and would put the enemies to shame. Now David's kingdom was a type of the Christian Church. The oath sworn unto David is gloriously fulfilled in Christ, though His children lost the kingdom because of their wickedness. In Jesus Christ prosperity attends the crown of David; for His Kingdom is victorious, conquering nation after nation, and His enemies are brought to grief.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Christ, art worthy to receive honor and praise, because Thou gathers unto Thyself a Church out of every kindred and tongue and nation. Since Thou hast called us into Thy Kingdom, make us Thy loyal subjects, that, dressed in Thy livery and justified in the sight of the Father through Thy Redemption, we may also walk as Thy subjects, glorifying The Name upon earth. Amen.

PSALM 133.

PREFACE.

Peace and brotherly love is a mother and a nurse of happiness and prosperity, even as discord and war is a cause of misery and ruin. Where peace and unity prevail, there will be blessing and prosperity in Church, state and family. Peace builds up, war pulls down. Envy and contention will beget destruction and poverty. Unity gathers, discord scatters. Unity in love will build a fortune, but the house in which there is no peace must come to grief. So St. Peter writes, *He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it (1 Peter 3:10-11)*. Following peace with all men, we should specially have an eye to strengthening the bond of peace in the Church and family. Christians are members, one of another, and father and mother should be one heart, and by their ensample should show to their children the loveliness of peace. Worthy of note are the words of Sirach, “Three things are approved before God and men — the concord of brethren, and the love of neighbors, and man and wife that agree well together.” The loveliness of peace is pictured in the one hundred and thirty-third Psalm.

The preciousness of brotherly unity.

A Song of degrees of David.

1. Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!
2. *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments;
3. As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

SUMMARY.

Here is an excellent exhortation to peace and unity, that men should live peaceably and treat each other kindly. Christians, as the adherents and followers of the Prince of Peace, should be at peace one with another, and should show unto all men that they are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, of Whom it is written, *He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets (Matthew 12:19)*. Words of quarreling and angry speeches were not heard from the lips of Jesus, neither are they ever becoming in the mouth of Christians; for we are to follow the things which make for peace, and serve for edifying (*Romans 14:19*). The beauty and utility of brotherly unity David illustrates by the costly ointment with which Aaron was anointed and which flavored his beard and all his vestments, and by the dew falling on mountain and valley, and refreshing flowers, grass and shrubs. It is lovely to be where love and unity prevail; for there God dwells and there He commands His multiplex blessing. But where there is envy and contention, there is the dwelling of Satan, and unhappiness must follow.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who art our peace with the Father, because by Thy Blood Thou hast reconciled Him unto us, grant and preserve peace in Church and state, and teach us who dwell under the same roof to be of one heart and one mind. Remove from us all envy and strife, and let Thy peace dwell in every heart, that we may live and die in peace. Amen.

PSALM 134.

PREFACE.

All Christians, both male and female, should stand in the House of the Lord to worship Him night and morning. The House of the Lord in the New Testament is every place, where two or three are gathered together in the Name of Christ; every place where we read or hear the Word of God, in public worship, in the family circle, in conversation with fellow Christians, and even prayer offered in the secret closet is also offered in the House of the Lord. To bless the Lord is to magnify His Name, because He is a God Who is *merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth* (*Exodus 34:6*). To stand in the House of the Lord night and morning is to employ every opportunity to occupy one's self with the Word of God, to meditate on it and to speak of it. "*I remember Thee,*" says David, "*upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches*" (*Psalms 63:6*). Of Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, it is recorded that she *departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day* (*Luke 2:37*). Happy they who are often in prayer; for *whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved* (*Romans 10:13*). Happy they who employ heart and lips unto thanksgiving; for the Lord says, "*Whoso offers praise glorifies Me, and to him will I show the salvation of God*" (*Psalms 50:23*). Happy they who are diligent to hear, to learn and to practice the Word of God; for *blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it*" (*Luke 11:28*). All this we are taught in the one hundred and thirty-fourth Psalm.

An exhortation to praise God.

A Song of degrees.

1. Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the House of the LORD.
2. Lift up your hands *in* the Sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

3. The LORD that made Heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

SUMMARY.

This last of the fifteen songs of degrees charges those who serve in the House of the Lord — that is pastors and teachers — unto diligence in their office, to praise God day and night, to preach His Word and to make known His Name. Even so Paul exhorts Timothy to *preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2)*. And though with many, preaching is in vain, because they turn their ears from the Truth and are turned unto fables, yet Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry. Where the preaching and teaching of God's Word are neglected, fables and the inventions of men will prevail, by which souls are led into the ditch. But where the Word is preached with all patience, the Maker of Heaven and earth will grant success unto the salvation of many souls. For His Word's sake, God will even do good to the wicked and the ungrateful. Ye pastors, teachers, parents, heed this psalm, and spare not labor and pains in teaching the saving truth.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Who art the one true Shepherd and Bishop of Thy Church, grant at all times true and faithful pastors and teachers, men eager to perform all their office. Endow them with the needed gifts to preach Thy Word with power, and to make conquest after conquest unto the glory of Thy Name and the salvation of many souls. Amen.

PSALM 135.

PREFACE.

In the New Testament, the believers are a royal priesthood (*1 Peter 2:9*), and they should daily bring unto God sacrifices which are

holy and acceptable. Morning and night we should bring to God the offerings of praise and thanksgiving for His many and great benefactions. He created us, has given and still preserves body and soul, reason and all our senses, gives food and raiment, guards against misfortunes and spares our lives from day to day. The goodness of God surrounds us on every side, and we should have an open eye for it.

But as a great God, He has done greater things for us than only to grant earthly blessings. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us, when we were yet His enemies, dead in trespasses and sins. In Jesus Christ we are redeemed from all our sins, delivered from the hard sentence of Divine justice, released from the curse of the Law and freed from the bitterness of death and eternal torment. In Jesus Christ, we have that righteousness which avails before God, the Spirit of grace and the hope of unfading glory. Jesus Christ has opened unto us a new way to the Father, a straight and sure way, and He grants us His Holy Spirit to lead us in this way, and to bring us to that new Temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Bless the Lord, ye His servants; for you have reason to praise Him, as the one hundred and thirty-fifth Psalm proves.

Praise of God for His manifold benefactions.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the Name of the LORD; praise *Him*, O ye servants of the LORD.
2. Ye that stand in the House of the LORD, in the courts of the House of our God,
3. Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good; sing praises unto His Name; for *it is* pleasant.
4. For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, *and* Israel for His peculiar treasure.
5. For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
6. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.
7. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures.

8. Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.
9. *Who* send tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
10. Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;
11. Sihon king of the Amorites, an Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan;
12. And gave their land *for* a heritage, a heritage unto Israel His people.
13. Thy Name, O LORD, *endures* for ever; *and* Thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14. For the LORD will judge His people, and He will repent Himself concerning His servants.
15. The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
16. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;
17. They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.
18. They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusts in them.
19. Bless the LORD, O house of Israel; bless the LORD, O house of Aaron;
20. Bless the LORD, O house of Levi; ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.
21. Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwells at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

In this psalm the priests and all the ministers of God are charged to praise Him in His Sanctuary. It is a good thing to praise our God; for praise is lovely. It is pleasant and comely to behold the people of God assembled in the house of worship to praise God with singing and music. He is worthy to be praised of us; for wondrous are His works in the heavens above and the earth beneath. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord delivered His people from Egypt and brought them to rest in Canaan, as He had spoken to Abraham their father. But for our redemption, the Lord awakened a

mightier man than Moses — Jesus the root of Jesse. The gods of the heathen are idols which can neither hear nor see, which can not help, but must be helped by man. But our God is the Lord Who hath done whatsoever He hath pleased in the sea and all deep places. He is worthy of praise. Bless the Lord, ye His servants. Magnify His Name, ye that tread His courts. Cry out His goodness in the streets, and proclaim His salvation wherever men dwell.

PRAYER.

Seeing neither change nor coldness
In my Father's love can be,
Lo! I lift my hands with boldness,
As Thy child I come to Thee.
Grant me grace, O God, I pray Thee,
That I may with all my might,
All my life-time, day and night,
Love and trust Thee, and obey Thee;
And when this brief life is o'er,
Praise and love Thee evermore. Amen.

PSALM 136.

PREFACE.

Skillfully did God make heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land, and wisely did He order the heavenly bodies in their revolutions to make and mark years and months and seasons. And what our God has made He also preserves that it remains in its nature, and does not deviate from its order. The sun departs not from his course, invariably does the night follow the day, regularly do the seasons return; the tree buds, blossoms, brings fruit, sheds its foliage and prepares for its winter sleep. Now the grand building of the sky above and the variety of creatures in the earth beneath, all display the power, the wisdom, the faithfulness and the goodness of our God. Contemplating His works we must confess that He can do what He pleases; for His power and skill, nothing is impossible. As in a

mirror, the creatures show the attributes of their Maker. To this almighty, good, benevolent and only wise God, we should look in all our needs, with Him we should seek refuge in all our troubles, expecting from Him counsel, comfort and help; for His mercy is not merely a streamlet, it is a broad river, yea, a wide and unfathomable ocean, and quickly is He moved to compassion by the cries of His creatures, and His own mercy constrains Him to give whatever is for our good. This — His mercy — is praised highly in the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm.

Praise of God's mercy.

1. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *He is* good; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
2. O give thanks unto the God of gods; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
3. O give thanks to the Lord of lords; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
4. To Him Who alone does great wonders; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
5. To Him that by Wisdom made the heavens; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
6. To Him that stretched out the earth above the waters; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
7. To Him that made great lights; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
8. The sun to rule by day; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
9. The moon and stars to rule by night; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
10. To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
11. And brought out Israel from among them; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
12. With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
13. To Him which divided the Red Sea into parts; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
14. And made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for His mercy *endures* for ever.

15. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
16. To Him which led His people through the wilderness; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
17. To Him which smote great kings; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
18. And slew famous kings; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
19. Sihon king of the Amorites; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
20. And Og the king of Bashan; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
21. And gave their land for a heritage; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
22. *Even* a heritage unto Israel His servant; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
23. Who remembered us in our low estate; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
24. And hath redeemed us from our enemies; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
25. Who gives food to all flesh; for His mercy *endures* for ever.
26. O give thanks unto the God of Heaven; for His mercy *endures* for ever.

SUMMARY.

The contents of this psalm are nearly the same as in the previous one, but it has this peculiarity that the phrase *for His mercy endures for ever*, is repeated twenty-six times. In all probability it was sung by two choirs, the first naming the benefaction of God, the second responding by ascribing it to God's mercy. Fitly is God's mercy so exalted; for to it we owe everything from beginning to end. All creatures were made before we were born, and that we are daily provided with food and raiment is also not by our merit, but by God's mercy; for to sinners God owes nothing. Much less are God's spiritual gifts owing to our works of merit. We are justified by the forgiveness of sin, that is, by the mercy of God without our works. 'Tis not by works of righteousness, Which our own hands have done, But we are saved by sovereign grace, Abounding through His Son. Mercy we should praise from beginning to end all the days of our life. For 'tis the mercy of our God from which our hopes begin. By His mercy, He remembered us in our lost estate, and by His mercy

He sent His Son into our flesh. To this mercy in Jesus Christ, hold and be saved.

PRAYER.

My Father, Thou God of mercy and truth, to Thy mercy do I look for deliverance from sin and death. Thy mercy will I plead before Thy judgment-seat. Thy mercy will I sing all the days of my life. Have mercy upon us, and forgive us our transgressions, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Savior. Amen.

PSALM 137.

PREFACE.

The true Church of God is at all times like a widow afflicted and distressed, and accounted a stranger in this ungrateful and wicked world, but more especially is it prophesied in the Scriptures, that in the latter days before the end of the world, there shall be great tribulation with great offenses and seductive delusions as never had been from the beginning. Scoffers were to come, walking after their own lusts (*2 Peter 2:3*), and people would again live as before the flood (*Matthew 24:39*). Comparing these descriptions with the condition of mankind at this day, we must be impressed with the truth of these prophecies. Scoffers go up and down the land; as in the days of Noah, so is all flesh corrupting its ways, and it seems the long-suffering of God must soon come to an end. Yet God is upholding His Church, and is granting the true preaching of the Gospel at many places. Fitly do we appropriate the words of Jeremiah, saying, "*It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness*" (*Lamentations 3:22-23*). Daily should we offer up fervent prayer, beseeching God to uphold the Church in these latter days, to restrain His enemies who would overthrow it and to preserve unto us His true Word and worship unto the end. A prayer of the afflicted Church is contained in one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm.

Lamentation of the Jews in captivity.

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*, “Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.”
4. How shall we sing the LORD’s Song in a strange land?
5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.
6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
7. Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, “Raze *it*, raze *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof.”
8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy *shall he be*, that rewards thee as thou hath served us.
9. Happy *shall he be*, that takes and dashes thy little ones against the stones.

SUMMARY.

This is a song of lamentation sung by the captive Jews when they remembered Jerusalem with the temple and its beautiful worship, that holy city which was then a pile of ruins. And to increase their anguish of mind, the Jews were taunted by their oppressors, and also their cousins, the Edomites, rejoiced over the destruction of Judah. But they were not to do it with impunity; for as they had done to Israel, so was it done to them in a twofold measure. Merciless conquerors put the people of Babylon to the sword and destroyed their very infants, so that the Chaldeans and the Edomites ceased to be a people, as it is at this day. But the house of Jacob returned out of captivity, Jerusalem was rebuilt and with sounding praise the songs of Zion are yet sung, after the mirth of Babylon and Edom has long since expired. Christians seek no revenge, but they commit their cause to Him Who said, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will*

repay" (*Romans 12:19*), and of Whom St. Paul writes (*2 Thessalonians 1:6*), that *it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you*. Also the scoffers of these latter days, who rail at the Gospel and corrupt many innocent souls, will not escape the avenging hand of God.

PRAYER.

Lord God of Heaven, Who art a Just and a Holy God, avenge Thy Christian Church of her oppressors and mockers. Restrain the tongues of those who blaspheme Thy Holy Name, and let them not go unpunished, who, with the malice of Satan, go about to corrupt the innocent hearts. Make it publicly known that Thou art a living God Who will not be mocked, and uphold Thy downtrodden Church among so many offenses and tribulations to the glory of Thy Name, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 138.

PREFACE.

With indelible letters we should inscribe into our hearts these words of this so beautiful psalm, *Thou I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me (verse 7)*. This is to be our strong comfort under the cross and in every need — that God can not and will not forsake us, nay, not in the midst of death. He has promised it, and He will remain our God, Father, Lord, Physician, Helper and Deliverer. To Him let us at all times look, and in Him let us trust. In due time, He will make an end both of our enemies, sin, death, tyrants and fanatics, and also of our afflictions and tribulations. The work which He has begun in us, He will not abandon; He will finish it for His Name's sake, will finally deliver us from this world so full of trouble, and will receive us unto Himself, where we shall enjoy the fruit of our hope and our sufferings. The work of His hands, the people whom He has prepared unto Himself, whom He has adopted

as His children, and heirs, and whom He has made His temple — these He can never abandon to destruction. Trust His truth and resist the enemy, as the one hundred an thirty-eighth Psalm teaches.

Thanksgiving to God for His mercy and truth.
A Psalm of David.

1. I will praise Thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee.
2. I will worship toward Thy Holy Temple, and praise Thy Name for Thy loving-kindness and for Thy truth; for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name.
3. In the day when I cried, Thou answered me, *and* strengthened me *with* strength in my soul.
4. All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of Thy mouth.
5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD; for great *is* the glory of the LORD.
6. Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly; but the proud He knows afar off.
7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me.
8. The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me; Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; forsake not the works of Thine own hands.

SUMMARY.

David here returns thanks for the goodness and mercy which the Lord had so richly conferred on him. He declares that he will praise the Lord before the gods — before the great of the earth — because God had made His Name great through His Word. David also looks to the future and prophecies the spreading of Christ's Kingdom among the Gentiles, that kings would receive His Word and would rejoice to worship Him and to walk in His ways. This Kingdom of Christ, David describes as a kingdom of deliverance and salvation. Jesus Christ, our King, is exalted to God's right hand; He

is seated high, but He looks to the lowly on earth, to help the needy, to comfort the contrite, to save the sinners, to deliver the captives. Hence, as the Jews, when praying, turned toward the temple, so should we, in our prayers, turn to our exalted Savior, beseeching Him to build His Kingdom and to perfect His Work within us that our eyes may see His Salvation.

PRAYER.

Renewed thanks do we return unto Thee, O Father of mercy, for all Thy loving-kindness towards us, and chiefly, because Thou hast called us into the Kingdom of Thy Son, our Savior. Cleanse us from sin by His Blood and remember not our transgressions against us. Forsake not the work of Thine own hands that, delivered from our enemies, we may evermore praise Thee. Amen.

PSALM 139.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

God the Lord searches us and knows us. He sees our thoughts, hears our words, knows our deeds, and none of our works are hid from Him. Presume not to say, "I shall be hidden from God. In such a multitude I shall not be known; for what is my soul in such an immense creation?" (Sirach 16:17). Every day and ever hour, wherever we are, alone or in company, we should remember that we can do nothing so secretly as to hide it from the sight of God. Hence we should apply ourselves so to live and so to order our conversation, as to have a good conscience, not needing to be ashamed before the pure eyes of the Divine Majesty. So Joseph bare in mind that in the most secret chambers the eyes of the Lord were upon him, and this gave him courage to resist temptations and rather to suffer false accusation and imprisonment than to do evil in the sight of God. Men can not see your thoughts, but God reads them from afar. Men can not unravel your motives, but God searches the

recesses of your heart. From men you can hide your deeds under the cover of darkness, but with God, the darkness is as the day, and the day is coming when He, as a just judge, will bring to light what is hid in darkness, and will give to every man according to his works. Eschew evil and do good. Walk before God and be thou upright, according to the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm.

Of God's omniscience and wonderful providence

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known *me*.
2. Thou knowest by down-sitting and mine up-rising; Thou understandest my thought afar off.
3. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.
4. For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether.
5. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me.
6. *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.
7. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?
8. If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou *art* there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou *art there*.
9. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10. Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.
11. Is I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me," even the night shall be light about me.
12. Yea, the darkness hides not from Thee; but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to Thee*.
13. For Thou hast possessed my reins; Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

SUMMARY.

This is one of David's most excellent psalms, and in it he praises God's knowledge from which nothing is hid; His omnipresence — that none can go where God is not, and His providence — by which He upholds and governs all things in heaven and on earth. David confesses that he exists only because the hand of God support him and without God, he could not so much as think one thought. The hand can move, the brain can reason, the heart can will only because God has given and supports these powers. What then do those who imagine to be justified by works which they do? Our works and what is good in them, we do by the power of God, only the evil is of ourselves. Hence, our works can condemn us, but they can never save us. As we have our physical life from the goodness of God, so we must obtain spiritual and eternal Life from His grace. Not by our own (works, but) by the works of God we must be saved — those works which He performed in Jesus Christ, as it is written, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Corinthians 5:19).*

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, O God, belong praise and glory for Thy wonderful providence, that Thou art present with all Thy creatures and preserves them in their being. Teach us to remember — at all times and all places — that Thine eyes are upon us and our deeds are recorded in Thy Book. Blot out the sins that are past with the Blood of Christ, and cause us to walk in Thy fear and to avoid sin. Amen.

PSALM 139.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Man is most wonderfully made; a noble creature. His stature erect, his limbs beautifully rounded and exactly proportioned, his

whole body with all its members showing elegance and symmetry, strength and activity. Considering his bodily formation, we must confess, there is not a living creature in all the earth which, in the least, would compare with the beauty and nobility of man. And how vast are the capacities of the human mind! With his thoughts man encircles the globe; with his reason he searches out the powers of nature and makes them sub-serve his needs and his ease; by his ingenuity man has found out ways and means to observe and to describe the motions of the heavenly bodies. And what is more, man has a conscience which tells him that there are things which are good and noble, and things which are sinful and ignoble; a conscience which convicts him that he is a responsible creature. What a shameful and contemptible thing to pronounce man a descendant of the apes! The Bible give to man a nobler origin. God made man in His image, after His likeness, and therefore man has reason and an immortal soul. O man, so wonderfully made! Live not like the beast for this earth only. Look upward. Remember thy Creator. Follow that which is pleasing unto Him and let thy soul cleave unto Him, praising Him for His power and goodness, of which David speaks in the latter part of the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm.

14. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; marvelous *are* Thy works; and *that* my soul knows right well.
15. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy Book all *my members* [or *days*] were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.
17. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!
18. *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with Thee.
19. Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God; depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.
20. For they speak against Thee wickedly, *and* Thine enemies take *Thy Name* in vain.

21. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate Thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee?
22. I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.
23. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts;
24. And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

SUMMARY.

This text praises God for the creation of man and His goodness and loving-kindness toward man. The mercies which God show to us are verily numberless as the grains of sand on the seashore. Hence we should fear God and not live in sin; for those who abuse His gifts, placing them in the service of sin, will be called to an account, and will experience His just anger. Considering the goodness of God, we should be filled with zeal for His glory that we hate sin and sit not in the seat of the scoffers. And when we must be in the company of the wicked, we must never, by word or deed, sanction wickedness, but show, on every occasion, that we hate it, even at the risk of losing the friendship of men. The friendship of God we must prize above the love of the world. And knowing the heart to be a deceitful thing, we must ask God to preserve us from being seduced to sin and error and to keep us in the way to everlasting Life.

PRAYER.

How excellent, O Lord, have Thy thoughts been toward us, in that Thou made us after Thine image. And when we were lost in sin, Thou didst send Thy Son to redeem us, and grant Thy Spirit to renew us unto righteousness and true holiness. Thanks be unto Thy mercy now and forever. Amen.

PSALM 140.

PREFACE.

Flatterers are like unto a fowler who lays snares and scatters food as bait to attract the birds, and when they are regaling themselves on the bait, they are suddenly snared and no more able to escape. So are flatterers both in the world and in the church. They pretend great love and friendship; their words are sweet as honey, and they seem to look to the welfare of others, but they seek their own advantage, and having succeeded in decoying others, they even taunt and ridicule their victims. And if flatterers in worldly matters do harm, much more in the church. Pulpit flatterers entertain their hearers with interesting discourses on subjects popular with men and pleasing to itching ears, but lead them away from the Christ of the Bible and deprive them of all true and abiding comfort. But the world wants to be deceived. It will, at all times, prefer the flatterer to the true Gospel preacher. Yea, the world does not like those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ and abide in His Word. But this is the comfort of the humble followers of Christ, that God is their Rock and their Defense, and though tyrants, persecutors, slanderers and hypocrites prosper for a while and do much harm, yet the Lord, in due time, will repay them and will deliver His own. With this David comforts himself in the one hundred and fortieth Psalm.

Prayer for deliverance from the enemies.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1. Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man;
2. Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for* war.
3. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah.
4. Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me

- from the violent man; who has purposed to overthrow my goings.
5. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the way side; they have set gins for me. Selah.
 6. I said unto the LORD, “Thou *art* my God; hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
 7. O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
 8. Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked; further not his wicked device; *lest* they exalt themselves.” Selah.
 9. *As for* the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
 10. Let burning coals fall upon them; let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
 11. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth; evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.
 12. I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, *and* the right of the poor.
 13. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy Name; the upright shall dwell in Thy Presence.

SUMMARY.

This is a fervent prayer of David for protection against his enemies, who hated him without a cause, who spoke against him slanderously with their tongues, who secretly plotted against him and sought his life. Here again, as in so many psalms, we see that David prayed against his persecutors, imploring God to frustrate their evil designs, and to cause their wickedness to recoil upon their own heads, and yet David did not lift up his hand to avenge himself on Saul, Doeg and others of his enemies. David believed it that God is against the wicked and for them that fear Him; therefore he committed his cause to God saying, “*I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor*” (verse 12). Repay not evil for evil, but rather suffer wrong and commit it to God.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou God of strength, bring to naught the counsel of Thine enemies and frustrate their wicked designs. Turn the hearts of our enemies that they may cease their hatred against us and create in us peaceable hearts which cherish no hate and seek no revenge, but crave peace with all men and follow those things which make for peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 141.

PREFACE.

As the pruning hook is beneficial to the tree, and the knife to the vine, although wounding and causing them to bleed, so the preaching of repentance and the bearing of the cross is beneficial to the soul. It teaches us the knowledge of sin, works a godly sorrow and causes us to turn unto God and to seek in Him the healing of our diseases. *Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of (2 Corinthians 7:10)*. The cross renders sin odious, urges repentance upon us, steels our faith, increases hope, makes us fervent in prayer and plants in the heart a longing and a looking for another and a better life. As plowing is good for the soil, so are the cross, sorrows and afflictions to the soul. It sweetens the Word of God, and softens the soil of the heart that the comfortings of the Gospel can take root and grow therein. Blessed they who repent of sin, humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and patiently follow Christ under the cross. To them applies the promise, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him (James 1:12)*. A sample of a penitent and humble heart is found in the one hundred and forty-first Psalm.

Prayer for deliverance in great need.

A Psalm of David.

1. LORD, I cry unto Thee; make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto Thee.
2. Let my prayer be set forth before Thee *as* incense; *and* the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.
3. Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.
4. Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.
5. Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness; and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.
6. When their judges are over-thrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
7. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cuts and cleaves *wood* upon the earth.
8. But mine eyes *are* unto Thee, O GOD the Lord; in Thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.
9. Keep me from the snares *which* they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.
10. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

SUMMARY.

David composed this psalm at a time when he was in great distress, because he so urgently cries unto God for help. He implores God to preserve him from joining the wicked in the service of sin in order to gain their friendship, and that he might not be enticed by their dainties, the seductive pleasures of sin. David rather desires the righteous should reprove him for a warning against transgression, and he prays for the overthrow of seducers that those misled by them might see and accept the truth and turn to that which is right.

In this psalm, mark well that David was accustomed to lift up his hands in prayer as an evening sacrifice. Every night did David, the man after the heart of God, offer up the fruit of his lips, prayer and praise. Forget not that a family without prayer is much like a house without a roof, and let the incense of prayer rise up to the Throne of Grace as a daily sacrifice, night and morning.

PRAYER.

Lord God of Israel, in Thy temple of old Thy people according to Thy Law brought the offering of a lamb morning and evening, and this was well pleasing unto Thee when it was offered as a figure of that Lamb which should come to save Israel from his sins. For the sake of this Lamb, even Jesus Christ, let our sacrifice be acceptable in Thy sight, when we — night and morning — cry for the remission of all our sins. Amen.

PSALM 142.

PREFACE.

As of yore, so to this day, the faithful teachers of the pure truth are envied and despised, and false prophets, fanatics and hypocrites are popular with men. Hence it is highly necessary for us to call upon God in instant prayer, graciously to protect us against errors and false doctrines, and to grant us faithful pastors who, without fear or favor, proclaim the doctrine which is according to godliness in the wholesome words of Jesus Christ. Over and again should we pray God to convert those in error, to put to shame those who maliciously deny and corrupt His Word, to save His Church from sect and schism, and from a false union with science and the world; to cause the Gospel of free grace to be sounded from every pulpit in all parts of our native land and to make it in us a power unto salvation. Now that this and all our prayers may be heard we must live in penitence; for security and impenitence hinder the hearing of prayer. As garlic deprives the magnet of the power to attract iron, so impenitence and wickedness of life rob prayer of the virtue to attract the grace and gifts of God. We must life up holy hands unto God. This we should remember in reading the one hundred and forty-second Psalm.

David's prayer of succor.

Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave.

1. I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make supplication.
2. I poured out my complaint before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.
3. When my spirit was over-whelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.
4. I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul
5. I cried unto Thee, O LORD; I said, “Thou *art* my Refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living.
6. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
7. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name; the righteous shall compass me about; for Thou shall deal bountifully with me.”

SUMMARY.

David made this fervent supplication to God when hiding in the cave from Saul. Now, persecuted and suffering David is a figure of the Church militant. As David had to suffer many privations before he obtained the kingdom, so the Church must also suffer before she is exalted. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. Jacob was hated by Esau; the true prophets were put to death by false prophets and wicked kings; Christ Himself was rejected and condemned to the death of crucifixion by His own people. The true Church has always been like a lonely widow who could truthfully say, “*No man cared for my soul*” (verse 4). Even at this day that Church which insists on the truth of Christ in its fullness and purity is spoken against by all men. Satan and the world never did like the truth, and they never will like those who make full earnest with the Word of truth, and will know nothing of a compromise with error and the world. But if we are taunted of men for the truth’s sake, let us rejoice. Christ was rejected of men and exalted of God, and if we suffer Him we shall also reign with Him.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, help, Thy Church uphold;
For we are sluggish, thoughtless, cold;
Indue Thy Word with power and grace,
And spread its Truth in every place. Amen.

PSALM 143.

PREFACE.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have the forgiveness of sin, and with it, all grace and blessing, life and salvation. Having the forgiveness of sin, nothing can harm us though we are counted the off-scouring of the world, and are pursued by misfortune all the days of our life. But without the forgiveness of sin nothing can insure permanent happiness to us though we would gain the whole world, and would have at our command whatever we could desire for ease and luxury. *The wages of sin is death*, but where there is forgiveness of sin there is also life and salvation. Day by day should we therefore implore the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of His crimson Blood, to forgive us our sins and to avert the deserved punishment from us. And directing our prayer to the grace of the Father, in the Name of the Son, we should rest our petition on these two pillars: His faithfulness and righteousness; not doubting that, as a righteous God, He will faithfully perform what He has promised by His Son. Now, He has promised to forgive our sins, to cast them into the depths of the sea, and to account unto us the righteousness of Christ, wherefore He is called *the justifier of him which believes in Jesus (Romans 3:26)*. A fervent prayer for the remission of sin is contained in the one hundred and forty-third Psalm.

*David's prayer for the forgiveness of sin
and the righteousness of faith.*

.A Psalm of David.

1. Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications; in Thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in Thy righteousness.
2. And enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.
3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.
4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.
5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy works; I muse on the work of Thy hands.
6. I stretch forth my hands unto Thee; my soul *thirsts* after Thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.
7. Hear me speedily, O LORD; my spirit fails; hide not Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
8. Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust; cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee.
9. Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies; I flee unto Thee to hide me.
10. Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou *art* my God; Thy Spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.
11. Quicken me, O LORD, for Thy Name's sake; for Thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.
12. And of Thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I *am* Thy servant.

SUMMARY.

David composed this psalm when he was in great anxiety about his sin; therefore he expressed such strong desire for forgiveness. Into this conflict of conscience those are cast who think to be justified by keeping the Law. The teachers of a legal righteousness cause the penitent souls to dwell in darkness without light and hope, because no man can perform what Moses demands, and hence no man can be confident in his own conscience of being righteous before God by his own works. Therefore David appeals to the loving-kindness, the mercy of God, praying the Lord not to enter

into judgment with him, but to deal with him according to His mercy. Hence he comforted himself with the example of the fathers whom God delivered for His Name's sake, and not because of their merit, as Peter declared that the fathers were not able to bear the yoke of the Law, neither are we, *but believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15:11)*. The fathers were also sinners; yea, Abraham, the father of the faithful, was called out of idolatry. They were saved by grace. Do thou, O my soul, let the grace of Christ be sufficient for thee.

PRAYER.

By Thy grace, O God, grant us the forgiveness of all our sins. And by Thy Holy Spirit, do Thou enlighten our eyes to see both our own sinfulness and the holiness of Thy Law, that our trust may not stand in the righteousness of works, but in Thy grace which Thou hast promised in Thy Son Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for us to sanctify and cleanse us. Amen.

PSALM 144.

PREFACE.

Man is nothing, and his time flits away like a shadow. Therefore Isaiah the prophet compares man unto grass and his goodliness unto the flowers of the field (*Isaiah 40:6*). The Apostle James calls the life of man a vapor which soon vanishes away (*James 4:14*). Therefore Abraham said of himself that he was dust and ashes (*Genesis 18:24*), and David called himself a dead dog, a flea (*1 Samuel 24:14*). Bildad also compares man with a worm (*Job 25:6*). Hence, wisdom should teach us not to trust in this transitory life, but rather to hasten to that better life which is eternal in the heavens. Remembering our frame, pride should be far from us, and fleeing the service of sin we should be humble before our God and should strive to live according to His Commandments. Live not as though you had made a covenant with death, rather watch and pray, being in readiness every day for a blessed departure out of this

mortality to the permanent mansions of Heaven. Trust not in the things which are subject to vanity; live daily in penitence and look to the Word of Promise which will endure when the mountains depart. This we should remember in the one hundred and forty-fourth Psalm.

David's thanksgiving for past and prayer for future victories.
A Psalm of David.

1. Blessed *be* the LORD, my strength, which teaches my hands to war, *and* my fingers to fight;
2. My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer, my shield, and *He* in Whom I trust; Who subdues my people under me.
3. LORD, what *is* man, that Thou takest knowledge of him! *Or* the Son of Man that Thou makest account of Him!
4. Man is like to vanity; his days *are* as a shadow that passes away.
5. Bow Thy heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the mountains and they shall smoke.
6. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; shoot out Thine arrows and destroy them.
7. Send Thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;
8. Whose mouth speaks vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
9. I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God; upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto Thee.
10. *It is He* that gives salvation unto kings; Who delivered David His servant from the hurtful sword.
11. Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaks vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood;
12. That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; *that* our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace;
13. *That* our garners *may be* full, affording all manner of store; *that* our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets;

14. *That our oxen may be strong to labor; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.*
15. *Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*

SUMMARY.

Here David gives praise unto God Who gave him an obedient people rule over and victory over his enemies. And David confesses that these are God's gifts; for man is vanity and could not do such great things. Victory in a just and righteous war, good government and civil virtues are noble and thanks-worthy gifts, and blessed is the people that is in possession of them. Yet David here also offers up a prayer against the *strange children*, the hypocrites and false teachers among his own people, who depend on the mere outward works of worship, drawing nigh unto God with their mouth and honoring Him with their lips while the heart is far from Him (*Isaiah 29:13*). Such are bastards and not true children. But that man is blessed whose heart is upright with the Lord and in whose spirit there is no guile (*Psalms 32:2*).

PRAYER.

Unto Thee, O Lord, do we owe thanks, because Thou hast granted unto our country a liberal form of government. Preserve unto us and our children civil and religious liberty, and teach us to walk before Thee in true faith and singleness of heart that we be found loyal citizens both of our republic and of the Kingdom of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 145.

PART 1 — PREFACE.

After prayer should follow praise. This we are taught by the very arrangement of the book of Psalms in its latter part. The five preceding ones were psalms of prayer in which David offered up manifold petitions, and in the last (*Psalms 144:9*), he promised to

sing praises unto the Lord. This promise he performs in this present and in the following psalm till to the end of the book. Such is the right way, begin with prayer and end with praise. Early, in the days of our youth, we should seek the Lord, offering unto Him a penitent and humble heart, and not doubting His grace, we should give thanks for His loving-kindness in our Savior. Then we should continue instant in prayer, diligent in hearing and meditating God's Word, and should apply ourselves to walk in His ways. And our praise of the Lord should increase as we grow in grace, becoming more settled in faith, more experienced in the love and faithfulness of our God. The nearer we approach eternity, the more should our hearts be filled with praise and our lips with thanksgiving. Even as here, after five psalms of prayer, follow six of praise. After fervent prayer will be found much reason for praise. So let us hear the first part of:

*David's psalm of praise for Christ's greatness
and the benefits of His Kingdom.*

David's *Psalm* of praise.

1. I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever.
2. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever.
3. Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness *is* unsearchable.
4. One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts.
5. I will speak of the glorious honor of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works.
6. And *men* shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts; and I will declare Thy greatness.
7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness.
8. The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.
9. The LORD *is* good to all; and His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

SUMMARY.

This psalm praises God's glory and majesty in high strains. He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; and King not of the earth only but of the universe. He is the greatest. Wide is the earth and unmeasured the heavens, but God is greater. Greater is the Maker than that which is made. He is eternal, Who alone possesses immortality. He is the mightiest. The towering mountains are His work, and to the surging waves He has set their bounds. His glory is unspeakable. Glorious is the light of the sun, but God dwells in a Light which no man can approach. O come, let us kneel and bow down and worship before the Lord our Maker. Magnify His glory and give praise unto His goodness. From the rising to the setting sun, let his Name be great. Praise ye the Lord.

PRAYER.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!

All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!

He is thy Light; Soul keep it always in sight,

Gladly for ever adore Him! Amen.

PSALM 145.

PART 2 — PREFACE.

Jesus Christ our King has a threefold Kingdom. He has a Kingdom of power. Being exalted to the right hand of the Father, He is a Lord and Ruler over all things in Heaven, on earth and under the earth, having power over good and bad; for His enemies are made His footstool. He has a Kingdom of Grace which was founded when the woman's Seed was promised. This Kingdom He fully established when He was born of a virgin and, by bleeding and dying, redeemed the captives of Satan. He has also a Kingdom of Glory. Because He

humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father, raising Him up from the dead, highly exalted Him and gave Him a Name which is above every name (*Philippians 2:9*). This, His Kingdom of Glory which is eternal in the Heavens, all those will enter, who here accept His grace, who confess Him before men and are ready to suffer with Him. By His Holy Gospel He has called us into His Kingdom of Grace. So, let us be loyal to Him, adhere to Him in a living faith, as counting His active and passive obedience our righteousness and salvation. And let us employ our time upon earth to glorify His Name until we come with His saints before His Throne to praise Him without end with psaltery and harp. Him and His Kingdom, David praises in the second part of the one hundred and forty-fifth Psalm.

10. All Thy works shall praise Thee, O LORD; and Thy saints shall bless Thee.
11. They shall speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom, and talk of Thy power;
12. To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom.
13. Thy Kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and Thy Dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.
14. The LORD upholds all that fall, and raises up all *those that be* bowed down.
15. The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season.
16. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
17. The LORD *is* Righteous in all His ways, and Holy in all His works.
18. The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.
19. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
20. The LORD preserves all them that love Him; but all the wicked will He destroy.
21. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; and let all flesh bless His Holy Name for ever and ever.

SUMMARY.

This psalm is a prophecy of the coming of Christ's Kingdom, offering a tribute of praise to Christ the King, and it pictures His Kingdom as a great, a glorious and a mighty kingdom, enduring throughout all generations. Here on earth the Kingdom of Christ is hid under the cross and so many offenses that the proud of the world despise and deride it. By faith we know, where the saving truth of the Gospel is preached and the Holy Sacraments are administered, there Christ has His subjects and He rules in the very midst of His enemies. And His is a lovely kingdom, attractive to the afflicted sufferers. Christ is a king Who lifts up the fallen, receives the penitent, justifies the sinners, raises the dead. He gives to every soul its portion of meat in due season, hears our cries, stills our craving, preserves us among so many enemies and seductive examples, and He has promised to come again in the clouds of heaven, to wake the dead and to receive His own unto Himself.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, my Salvation,
My Light, my Life Divine,
My only Consolation,
O make me wholly Thine!
For Thou hast dearly brought me
With blood and bitter pain;
Let me, since Thou hast sought me,
Eternal Life obtain. Amen.

PSALM 146.

PREFACE.

Thankfulness comprises the knowledge and the acknowledgment of the benefits receive, together with the returning of praise to God for His goodness. Unto true thankfulness we are

urged by the consideration of God's goodness and grace. By His goodness He daily and richly provides us with all that we need for this body and life, and by His grace He purchased us with His own Blood, and adorns us with the righteousness of His dear Son. And looking to ourselves we must confess that we deserve no good at the hands of our God, because we have not praised Him as we ought and have not walked in His Commandments as we should have done. How then should we be so insensible of His mercies as not to be moved unto thankfulness? Without any hypocrisy or dissimulation we should confess that we have nothing of ourselves, but what we have is from above, from the Father of light, from Whom are all good and all perfect gifts (*James 1:17*). And never should we forget that true thankfulness must and will also show in our works. A thankful child will be eager to do what is pleasing to the father. Unto such thankfulness the one hundred and forty-sixth Psalm exhorts.

Of true trust in God.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.
2. While I live will I praise the LORD; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
3. Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.
4. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.
5. Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God;
6. Which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that there in *is*;
Which keeps truth for ever;
7. Which executes judgment for the oppressed; which gives food to the hungry. The LORD looses the prisoners;
8. The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind; the LORD raises them that are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous;
9. The LORD preserves the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down.
10. The LORD shall reign for ever, *even thy* God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

We pilgrims on this earth should look well where we place our trust, that it may rest on a sure and an abiding foundation, and we may not be deceived in our hope. Flesh and blood is always inclined to build its trust on earthly things, especially to look to men of power and influence for promotion, employment and other advantages. This is an uncertain trust which must finally fail. Man is like the grass; today fresh and green, tomorrow withered and dead. Hope thou in God. He is the true Helper. When He helps, we are helped. And He is a God Who looks to those that need help. He has an ear for the cries of the helpless who appeal to Him, and His own compassion soon constrains Him to say, "I must be up and I must help them." Blessed are they whose help is the God of Jacob. Let them praise the Lord.

PRAYER.

Many a time hast Thou, O Lord our God, been our help in the time of need. Many a time hast Thou guarded us in danger and kept us from evil. Thanks and praise be unto Thee for Thy merciful kindness. Withdraw not Thy hand from us because of our sins, but remember Thy great mercy, and let Thy grace and help be with us at all times through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 147.

PREFACE.

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable (Psalm 145:3). He formed the sun, the moon is the work of His hands, the stars are His and He calls them all by name. But His special delight is in comforting the comfortless and in binding up the broken-hearted. He constantly provides for the many millions inhabiting this earth. Annually does He cause the earth to bring forth unmeasured quantities of grain and fruit for the

support of man and beast. He multiplies the fowls of the air; He covers the hills with cattle; the waters must teem with fishes for the use of the children of men. And in providing for vast multitudes, He does yet not overlook the least of His creatures. He remembers the wants of every one of them. Yes, the Lord is great. He makes the clouds to swim in the atmosphere, and He provides food for the ant. O why do we not trust the Lord our God? Why does the heart tremble with fears, and why are we so full of cares? *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father (Matthew 10:29).* Will not He Who cares for the sparrows without fail apportion to us what is for our good? “Cheer up! My heart, rejoice and sing, A cheerful trust maintain! For God, the Source of every thing, Thy portion will remain.” Let us praise God as we are charged to do in the one hundred and forty-seventh Psalm.

Thanksgiving for God's providence and blessing.

1. Praise ye the LORD; for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely.
2. The LORD doth build up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
3. He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.
4. He tells the number of the stars; He calls them all by *their* names.
5. Great *is* our Lord, and of great power; His understanding *is* infinite.
6. The LORD lifts up the meek; He casts the wicked down to the ground.
7. Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God;
8. Who covers the heaven with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow upon the mountains.
9. He gives to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.
10. He delights not in the strength of the horse; He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man.
11. The LORD takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.

12. Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.
13. For He has strengthened the bars of thy gates; He has blessed thy children within thee.
14. He makes peace *in* thy borders, *and* fills thee with the finest of the wheat.
15. He sends forth His Commandment *upon* earth; His Word runs very swiftly.
16. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the hoar frost like ashes.
17. He casts forth His ice like morsels; who can stand before His cold?
18. He sends out His Word, and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.
19. He shows His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.
20. He has not dealt so with any nation; and *as for His* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This psalm ascribes praise unto God, because it is good and praise is comely. Fitley should all offer praise unto God because He provides for all His creatures — great and small. But above all others, the Israel both of the Old and of the New Testament has reason to glorify God, because in Israel He is known. We have His Word of revelation. Unto us the light shines which enlightens the eyes to see the way unto eternal life, even the way of faith in Jesus Christ, whereas many nations unto this day sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being without hope in the world. O let us be thankful unto our God and let us buy while the market is at the door. Let us gather the saving knowledge of the Gospel while we have it, that we may even live thereby.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Lord, our merciful and gracious Father, Who hast given unto us the knowledge of Thy free grace in Jesus Christ, grant us grateful hearts which daily offer unto Thee true sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, and graciously accept such sacrifices for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.

PSALM 148.

PREFACE.

What God made, He made unto His glory. Hence all creatures high and low should lead us to praise God. They all, the animate and the inanimate, the rational and the irrational, each in its way, show forth the wisdom, power, skill and goodness of their Maker. The reason why so many of the wise of this world, who occupy themselves with the observation of nature, ignore the Creator and deify the creature, is not in the creatures of God, but only in the enmity of the corrupt heart against God. This is Paul's testimony: *The Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (Ephesians 4:17-18)*. The blade of grass, the violet, the snowflake, show that there is One Who designed them and made them so skillfully that no art of man can imitate them to perfection. O blindness! To deny the Creator and to ascribe to the creature the glory of developing itself. When the nations of old became vain in their imaginations and thought themselves wise (*Romans 1:22*), they robbed God of His glory and ascribed it to the creature. Even so do they who now pretend to be the enlightened and most progressive. Denying that God created man in His image, they give the origin of man to the meanest reptiles. Let us have no part or portion with them; let us not mistake folly for wisdom, but let us unite with the creatures in praising God, as does the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm.

All creatures called on to praise God.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens; praise Him in the heights.
2. Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts.

3. Praise ye Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light.
4. Praise Him, ye Heavens of heavens, and ye waters that *be* above the heavens.
5. Let them praise the Name of the LORD; for He commanded, and they were created.
6. He has also established them for ever and ever; He has made a decree which shall not pass.
7. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps;
8. Fire and hail; snow and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling His Word;
9. Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars;
10. Beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl;
11. Kings of the earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth;
12. Both young men and maidens; old men and children;
13. Let them praise the Name of the LORD: for His Name alone is excellent; His glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
14. He also exalts the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This psalm charges all creatures in Heaven and earth to praise God. Above all others, His chosen people, Who have His Word and who know His statutes are to spread abroad the praise of our God. Besides His people in general, this psalm also mentions persons occupying various stations in life: kings and princes, young men and maidens, old men and children. State and family are institutions of God, and they are good and beneficial to men. All those who would subvert government and abolish wedlock are blasphemers of God and enemies of mankind. None of God's creatures is evil, they are all good. The evil which is in the world is not of God, it is of Satan. The creatures are subject to vanity only on account of sin. Abuse them not unto sin, but use them unto the glory of God, giving praise unto His loving-kindness.

PRAYER.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
 O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy Health and Salvation!

Join the full throne;
Wake, harp and psalter and song;
Sound forth in glad adoration! Amen.

PSALM 149.

PREFACE.

The New Song repeatedly mentioned in the psalms is none other than the song sung in the Kingdom of Christ — the Song of grace and of glory. This is a new song, even the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began (*Romans 16:25*). The old song was the song of the Law, of sin and of death. It ran in this wise, *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17). Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way (Deuteronomy 27:18). Cursed be he that confirms not all the words of this Law to do them (Deuteronomy 27:26)*. This old song was a sorrowful song of paradise lost and the grave won, a doleful dirge inspiring the fear of death, terror of the judgment coming and a dreadful expectation of never ending wrath. But the new song is the song of love; which strikes up the tune, *God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life (John 3:16)*. It sings of reconciliation in the Blood of the Son of God, of forgiveness to the contrite and brokenhearted, of hope for those walking through the valley of the shadow of death. It is the marriage hymn of the affianced bride of the Heavenly Solomon. It is that New Song which John heard them sing unto the Lamb and whereof He writes, *And they sung a New Song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God — kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10)*.

Zion's Hymn of Thanksgiving for the Gospel of Christ.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a New Song, *and* His praise in the congregation of saints.
2. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
3. Let them praise His Name in the dance; let them sing praises unto Him with timbrel and harp.
4. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation.
5. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds.
6. *Let* the high *praises* of God *be* in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;
7. To execute vengeance upon the heathen, *and* punishments upon the people;
8. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;
9. To execute upon them the judgment written; this honor have all His saints. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This is a hymn of praise to be sung by those who know that they have a gracious and merciful Father in Heaven, Who forgives the sins of the penitent for Christ's sake, and punishes us not as we deserve. Hence it belongs into the New Testament, as it is called a New Song to be sung to the King of Zion. This also belongs into the time of the New Testament, that those whose mouth is full of praise, have a two-edged sword in their hands and fetters of iron to bind the princes of the earth. This sounds war-like and it, indeed, is a prophecy of a holy war; for the Gospel is a two-edged sword which has cut to pieces the idols of the Gentiles, and many kings and princes have yielded their neck to the yoke of Christ and their hands to the bands of the Gospel. Give praise unto Jesus Christ, the King of Zion, and let songs of victory be heard in the tabernacles of the righteous.

PRAYER.

Praise, honor and thanksgiving be unto Thee, O Jesus Christ, Thou King of Glory, because by suffering and death and the shedding of Thy Blood, Thou did redeem us from the kingdom of darkness and does make us partakers of Thy victory over Satan, sin and death. Grant us a cheerful faith with heart and soul to sing of Thy grace and to make known Thy salvation among men. Amen.

PSALM 150.

PREFACE.

Praise, ye people of the Most High, praise God in the greatness of His Majesty. Praise Him with trumpets; for sweetly does the trumpet of the Gospel sound proclaiming the tidings of our salvation, and with the sound of a trumpet will Jesus Christ gather His own and assemble them in His bridal hall. Praise Him with the psaltery, yielding your tongue an instrument of the Lord to sing and to say of His mighty deeds. Praise Him with the harp; let the Holy Ghost tune your heart-strings, then will your praise sound pleasing in the ears of the Lord of Hosts. Praise Him with timbrel and dance. Joy and gladness rule among the guests when the bridegroom is present, and this Bridegroom is always graciously present with His own, and with Him is His salvation. Praise Him with organs; for our skillfully formed body is built to be an organ of praise unto the Creator. Praise Him with high sounding cymbals, with songs of joy and gladness. Our heart should be enlarged with joy over the salvation of Jesus Christ; our soul filled with trust in His mercy and truth; His praise should be continually in our lips. Lord, Thou God of our salvation, grant us day by day to increase in Thy praise and with praise to end our earthly pilgrimage, as the Book of Psalms ends with praise.

An exhortation to praise God.

1. Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power.

2. Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness.
3. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and harp.
4. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.
5. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals; praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.
6. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

SUMMARY.

This last of the psalms is a beautiful hymn of praise in which the people of God are charged to praise the Lord with all manner of musical instruments used in the temple worship; for David, the sweet singer of Israel, had introduced a grand worship with music and singing. With us Christians the right worship of praise is the preaching of the Gospel, the magnifying of God's grace unto the forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ. Only those can truly praise God who are assured of the remission of their sins. O my soul, meditate thou on the love and mercy of thy God. Reconciled unto Thee by the Blood of His Son, He is well pleased with thee and will not despise thy stammering praise.

PRAYER.

Lord our God, we yield Thee most hearty thanks for this Book of Psalms which Thou gave us by servant David. Grant that the reading of them may not have been in vain. Let it make a lasting impression on our hearts, that we may be strengthened in faith and settled in our hope. Keep us steadfast in Jesus Christ until we enter in to the inheritance of the saints in light. Amen.

Grant that Thy Spirit prompt my praises,
 Then shall my singing surely please Thine ear;
 Sweet are the sounds my heart then raises,
 My prayer in truth and spirit Thou wilt hear.
 Then shall Thy Spirit raise my heart to Thee,
 To sing Thee psalms of praise in high degree.

PRAYERS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Lord, our God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Thou alone art God and Thou alone are to be worshiped. Thou inhabits eternity; Thy power is without bounds and Thy mercy reaches unto the clouds. Thanks be unto Thee that Thou hast kept us safe in the past night, and hast preserved our lives unto this morning, the first day after the Sabbath, the morning on which Thy Son Jesus Christ early rose from the dead. Let this morning always remind our souls of this Thy greatest and most wonderful deed, by which Thou didst declare Thyself reconciled to a world lost in sin, and art become our gracious and merciful Father, because for our justification Thou didst raise up Jesus Christ. Therefore we will praise Thee for Thy goodness and for Thy wonderful works to the children of men. Thy praise shall be continually in our lips and we will say, "*Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His Holy Name; for He forgives thine iniquities and heals thy diseases.*" Grant us Thy Spirit to guide and to govern us this day. Preserve us from spending this day of rest in idleness and sin, or engaging in such things which distract the mind, drawing it unto earthly things or worldly pleasures. Fill our hearts with the love of Thy Word that we may eagerly hear and diligently learn it, and that we may meditate in Thy precepts. Grant us peace of conscience through the faith of Christ that we may enjoy the true Sabbath-rest — that rest of the soul in Christ unto which He invites all poor sinners. Teach us to keep our foot in going to the house of worship, and make the Word of Thy grace to find room in our hearts, and to bring fruit which will remain unto eternal Life. Grant our prayer through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING.

Unto Thee, O Lord, do we lift up our hands as an evening sacrifice, and glorify Thy Name for the blessings which we have enjoyed this day. We thank Thee specially that we have been permitted to hear Thy Word, to search the Scriptures and to meditate on Thy wondrous counsel for our salvation in Jesus our Savior. We are no better than many who sit in darkness and are without hope in the world, and it is alone by Thy goodness that the Light of Thy saving Word shines unto us. Take not this Light from us, but cause it to enlighten our souls, and let it continue to shine among us to children's children. Grant us forgiveness for the shortcomings of this day. Do not account against us the lukewarmness of our hearts that we have not so loved and obeyed Thy Word as Thy children ought to do. Remember our frame, how weak we are, and dress our souls with the mantle of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Cover us with the shadow of Thy wings in this night. Send Thy ministering servants, the holy angels, to keep guard over us, that the evil one may have no power to harm us. Committing ourselves, and all those near and dear to us, into Thy hand, we will now lay ourselves down in peace and sleep, knowing that Thou wilt deal with us according to Thy good providence. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING.

Unto Thee, Lord our Heavenly Father, do we bring an offering of praise in this morning hour, because Thy loving-kindness encompassed us in the past night. Without Thy protection, the darkness of death would have spread over us; for alone by Thee do we live. And now, Thou sovereign Ruler and God of our lives, after Thou hast granted us a day of rest and refreshing for the soul, do Thou this morning go forth with us unto our ordinary vocation. Bless our outgoing and our incoming. Be with us in the house and in the field, in the workshop and in the school, and bless the labors of our

hands. Take from us all discontent and murmuring at the toils and burdens of our calling, and grant us a contented heart. Give us wisdom to behave ourselves prudently, willingness to labor industriously, and do not withhold the increase that our labors be not in vain. Guide our feet by the lamp of Thy Word, govern our hands by the light of Thy Law, and teach our fingers to observe Thy Commandments. Let not our heart incline unto covetousness, save us from the allurements of mammon and keep our feet from the crooked paths of dishonesty and fraud. And if temptation, of which the world is full, approaches us, then enlighten our eyes to see the folly of purchasing earthly gain with Heavenly loss, that we may count a good conscience better than treasures of gold. O Lord, keep us this day and all this week in the grace and faith of Thy Son, our Savior. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING.

Again, O Lord our God, a day is passed, and the night is drawing on. Thanks be unto Thee for guarding us in danger and preserving us from evil. If Thou had not protected us, destruction of body and soul would surely have come upon us. We glorify Thy Name, because Thou hast granted us strength to bear the burden of another day. And as the labors and trials of this day are past, so let also our sins and shortcomings be passed away from Thy countenance. Many are our faults, more than we can know or number, but do as Thou hast promised, cast them into the depth of the sea and remember them no more. Did not Thy Son shed His Divine Blood in atonement for our sins? For His sake, let them be blotted out from Thy Book and destroyed for ever. And as Thou art the Keeper of Israel, let Thy protecting hand be over us in this night, that we may lie down and sleep in peace. Suffer not the noisome pestilence to infest us, or fire to kindle upon us, nor yet waters to overflow us, or storm-wind to destroy us. Restrain the violence of the wicked that thieves do not disturb us or robbers despoil us. O Lord, Thou alone art our God, from Thee alone comes our help. Thou alone can be our Protector this night, in Thee alone is our trust. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy. Let the Light of Thy

countenance be upon us, that we awake again unto Thy praise through Jesus Christ. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING.

Glory and honor and praise do we bring unto Thee, our God, at the rising of the sun; for Thou art the Author of light and the Maker of the day and night. Wisely hast Thou made this order that man should rest in the night, and in the morning should arise unto Thy praise, and go forth unto his labors. Therefore, at the dawn of the morning, when the rays of light shine from the east, we come before Thee to give glory unto Thy great Majesty. It is right and meet that all creatures should praise Thy Name; for it is worthy of praise. And now, Lord our God, let our prayer come before Thee, early and graciously receive our stammering praise. As the light of this new day fills mountain and vale and is shed abroad over the plain, so let the light of Thy grace shine into our souls and fill our hearts with the knowledge of Thy salvation. Shed abroad the love of Jesus in our hearts, that it may be a safeguard unto us against the temptations to infidelity and unbelief with which we may meet this day. Weapon our hearts, and let them not be allured by the pomp and wisdom of the world, or abashed by the frivolous speeches of mockers. O Lord! Like the noisome pestilence does the spirit of unbelief walk through the land. O grant us Thy Spirit of power and true wisdom, that we may resist the strong temptations of these latter days and abide in the faith and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING.

We thank Thee, O Father of mercy, that hast kept us in the labors of the day, and hast preserved us to witness the setting of another sun. One by one do our days flit away, and how soon will the appointed bounds of our earthly life have arrived! O Thou Spirit of the Living God, teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom and use the time of grace to prepared for the

world to come, and to gather riches which will not pass away. By Thy grace, O Father, do thou forgive the transgressions of this day and of all the days of our past life. Born sinners and of a corrupt nature, our flesh and blood is always inclined to evil and averse to that which is good, and though we gird our loins to continue in the way of right, yet alas, how often does our own heart deceive us and entrap us in that which can not bear the light of Thy countenance. But remember Thou the crimson Blood of Thy Son, which is the propitiation for our sins, and be gracious unto our souls. Watch also over us in this night. Drive far from us the Prince of this world, that spirit of darkness, who walks about seeking whom he may devour. Relieve our mind of the cares and troubles of the day that this night bring us not restless hours, but sweet sleep, that we may awake refreshed and in health. Be Thou the comfort of the sick and the suffering, the protector of the widows and orphans, the support of the poor and needy. And with the new day, do Thou help us to begin a new and a better life and to show forth Thy praise. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

Merciful Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, early do we appear before Thee to bring unto Thee honor and praise. Birds and fowls, flocks and herds greet the breaking forth of the light with gladsome voices. They show forth Thy praise, for Thou art He that gives them life and joy. But much rather have we reason to sound forth Thy praise, as often as Thou anew makes the light of the morning to shine forth and to dispel the darkness of the night. Thou hast given us reason and an immortal soul, and hast made us intelligent creatures. Thou hast also given us Thy Word in which Thou tells of Thy love with which Thou hast loved us and hast prepared for our souls the cleansing from sin. But how should we number Thy goodness toward us? As the dew of the morning is spread over grass and shrubs and flowers, making them fresh and fragrant, so do Thy gifts cover and surround us. Despise not the grateful thanks which we return unto Thee. Let Thy good Spirit guide us in all our ways that all our life and walk may be pleasing unto Thee. Help us by the power of Thy grace to cast off the works

of darkness and to walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but that we put on the Lord Jesus Christ and be found in a truly Christian life and walk. Teach us also to abstain from those things which have the appearance of evil that we do not give offence either to the world or to our brethren in the faith. Keep us all, parents, children and servants in they ways through Jesus Christ. Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

Unto Thee, O God, Who art our Father and our portion for ever, do we give glory and honor for Thy goodness towards us in the past day. Wisely and graciously hast Thou guided and governed us unto this hour, although, because of our manifold sins, we are not worthy that Thou should remember us. But as Thou hast graciously promised the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus Christ, do Thou not remember the transgressions of this day. Forgive, O Lord, forgive the wicked thoughts which proceeded from our hearts, the unchaste desires to which the flesh is inclined, and the sin committed with the tongue by idle jesting, uncharitable judgments, slander and in other ways. Graciously grant us the remission of these and all other transgressions, and let Thy Divine protection encompass us in this night. As the pillar of fire was a partition between Israel and the Egyptians, that their enemies could do no harm to Thy people, so be Thou a fiery wall round about us to defend us against all our enemies, both visible and invisible. And as we now lie down to sleep, so is the hour coming when we shall fall into that deep sleep which knows no waking until Thy Son will come to judge the quick and the dead. On that day, when soul and body must part, be Thou our stay and staff, strengthen us to commit our souls into the mighty hands of our Savior, Who poured out His soul unto death to purchase our souls from eternal death, and so grant us to triumph over the terrors of the last of foes that, with all Thy perfected saints, we may ever praise Thee. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the Light of the Light, and did come into this world to bring unto us the Light of eternal Life. Thou comest from the bosom of the Father; so enlighten us with the knowledge of His gracious counsel unto our salvation. Thou art the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings; so come unto us and heal our souls. Thou didst send Thy star to guide the wise men from the East; so guide us by the Light of Thy Gospel that our souls must not walk in darkness. We thank Thee that Thou hast dispelled the darkness of the night, and hast granted us to see the light of another morning. Of Thee we will speak in the morning and will praise Thy merciful kindness; for Thou art our Shepherd and Keeper and the Rock of our salvation. If Thou art with us, we need fear no evil; for Thou hast overcome the world and hast made Thy enemies Thy footstool. Therefore under Thy cross do we trust, and hiding in Thy wounds our soul is safe. Keep us this day from sin and from shame. Create in us meekness of heart that we may deport ourselves with becoming reverence towards our parents and superiors. Drive envy far from us, and let us not be overtaken by anger, lest we do harm to our neighbor or seek revenge upon them that do evil unto us. Let us not fall into the snares of gluttony and drunkenness, by which Thy Spirit is grieved and shame is brought upon Thy Name. Thou, Who alone art the true Light, enlighten us that we this day walk as the children of Light. Amen.

THURSDAY EVENING.

Glory, honor and praise do we ascribe unto Thee — Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for it is meet that we praise Thee in the night, when the stars, those witnesses of Thy power and goodness, appear in the heavens. Again Thou hast kept us safe from danger and harm, and hast given us strength to bear the burdens and cares of another day. How many a time hast Thou protected us in danger! How many a day hast Thou prospered the work of our hands! How faithfully hast Thou granted us food and raiment according to Thy Promise.

And now, O Lord, what shall we return unto Thee for Thy loving-kindness? Alas! We are poor, forlorn creatures and we have nothing to give unto Thee, save alone a heart defiled by the filth of this earth, a soul soiled with sin, a conscience defaced by dark spots. This heart full of sin, this soul soiled with the seed of the old serpent, do we present before Thee and implore Thee — wash it with the Blood of the Lamb, cleanse our soul and dress it in the white robe of Christ's righteousness. Forgive us our sins and pardon our iniquities. Remember Thy mercy which Thou didst aforetime extend unto Thy people, and cast us not away from Thy countenance, nor take Thy Holy Spirit from us. And grant us to be ready always, that, whenever Thou callest us, in the night or in the day, our lamps may be burning, and we may enter with rejoicing into the mansions above. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING.

Almighty and everlasting God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise Thee at the rising of the sun, that Thou hast kept us another night. To Thy guarding providence we owe the protection which we have enjoyed; for Thou art the Lord of our lives. For the sake of the bitter suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, do Thou graciously remember us this morning. And since Thou hast vouchsafed to add another day to our lives, we anew consecrate ourselves unto Thee in body and soul, to serve Thee and to walk righteously, soberly and godly all this day. Grant us the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, that He may dwell in us and prompt us to avoid sin and to follow after that which is right and good before Thee. If this day will bring us a cross to bear, or we must experience disappointments and loss, grant us grace with resignation and meekness to bow to Thy will. In all our dealings with others, do Thou cause us to keep in mind the golden rule of love, that we may do by others as we would have them do by us. Work in us a lively sense of Thy love toward us, that by Thy love we may be constrained to practice love toward others, to have compassion of the poor and needy, to show sympathy with the weak and the unfortunate, and to let our kindness be known also to our enemies. Let Thy Divine favor rest upon us in all that we do and leave undone for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

FRIDAY EVENING.

Lord, our God, honor belongs unto Thee; for Thou art a great God. The Heaven is Thy throne and the earth is Thy footstool. We appear before Thee at this eventide to give Thee thanks for Thy protection and guidance in this day. And we acknowledge that it is alone Thy goodness and mercy by which our lives are spared. We are of a corrupt nature, our understanding is darkened and slow to perceive Thy will, and our affections are evil. If Thou would deal with us as we deserve, we must be cast away and undone forever. Do Thou Thyself by Thy Holy Spirit work true repentance in us, and remember the death of Thy Son Who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. For the sake of His bonds save us from the bonds of sin. He was made a curse for us, so let the curse of the Law remove from us. Let the shame which He suffered save us from the everlasting shame and contempt which we so richly deserve. Let the anguish of His soul save our soul from the torments of hell. Account not unto us the sins of this day, but impute unto us the work of Thy Son. And now, Thou Keeper of Israel, let Thine eye watch over our dwelling. Let Thy angels be stationed as guards around our house, and let peace dwell under our roof. Grant quiet slumber to our eyelids and preserve us from evil dreams and frightful nightmares, that we may awake refreshed anew to praise Thee. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING

Praise and honor do we bring unto Thee, Thou Author of our being, Who alone hast immortality, and are the Most High over all the earth. Under Thy protection we slumbered securely, and no harm came unto us. We thank Thee for the light of another day and for the measure of health with which we are permitted to behold it. But above all else we do bless Thy loving-kindness for the Light of Thy Gospel, and for the gift of Him Who is the Light of the world. Grant

us Thy Holy Spirit to enlighten our eyes, that we may perceive Christ to be the chiefest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely. Enable us to receive Him by faith as the Lord our righteousness, and for His sake cleanse us from all our sins. Preserve us this day from sin and from shame; guard us against all dangers; be our Protector in all our needs; our Defender against all our enemies, and grant us victory over all temptations which may befall us. Keep us safe from infecting diseases, from calamities by fire and water, and from the evils of tumults and wars. O Thou, Who into Thy Covenant of Peace, dispose over us according to Thy loving-kindness; for it is great. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING.

With joy and gladness do we come before Thee, Lord our God, Who art the Light of our countenance, because Thou hast kept us this day and hast preserved our lives for an entire week. Therefore we bow down and worship Thee; for not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but alone unto Thy Name belong honor and praise. We pray Thee, forgive the sins of this past week; yea, remember not the sins of our youth, nor our transgressions, and for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ, grant us remission for all that we have done amiss against Thee all the days of our life. Cancel the record against us and write over it: "Forgiven for Christ's sake." And help us in the new beginning week to enter on a new and a better life. Let us no more live in sin for which Christ died, but let us follow after righteousness and true Holiness. Extend also Thy grace unto all men. Spread the preaching of Thy Gospel in all lands, that at all places men may repent and be saved. We commend into Thy care father, mother, sister, brother, our children and all our relatives both far and near. Be Thou pleased to be with us in this night with Thy grace and Thy protection. Into Thy keeping do we commit our body and soul, life and property, house and home, and all our goods. Thy good providence be over us to guide and govern us according to Thy counsel of grace. Lord Jesus! Thou hast bought us; to Thee will we live, to Thee will we die, and Thine will we be for ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR A SICK MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.

Almighty God, Thou Lord over life and death, without Whose will no plague can draw nigh unto us, encouraged by Thy gracious promises, we come to Thee for help in this our time of need. We acknowledge that Thy providence is good and what Thou does is right. We deserve chastisement, because we are so sluggish unto that which is good, and so lukewarm in Thy service. But Thou hast promised to hear prayer, and in submission to Thy will we beseech Thee mercifully to remember him [her] whose illness causes us great anxiety. Grant that this sickness may be unto him [her] for the better and not for the worse. Work in him [her] this lively knowledge that, being sinners, we deserve nothing good at Thy hand and are worthy of all evil. Grant him [her] Thy Spirit to work in him [her] true repentance, a godly sorrow over sin, and a living faith in Jesus Christ. Teach him [her] to build all his [her] trust for righteousness on the merits of our Savior, and blot out all his [her] sins with Christ's crimson Blood. Do Thou grant him [her] grace to suffer patiently without murmuring, as Jesus Christ did. And as Thou hast created herbs and plants to heal diseases, do Thou grant Thy blessing to the remedies which are applied for his [her] restoration, and grant him [her] an early return unto health. And if Thou restorest him [her] to new life and vigor, let us not forget to glorify Thee in our bodies and souls which are Thine. Hear our petitions for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and the Savior of our souls. Amen.

