

At that time it is appropriate to honor the Lord in song, that being a part of the exercises performed in public worship.

Verse 3. The distinctive meanings of *Lord* and *God* should be observed in the first clause. For the critical information on the subject see my comments at ch. 86: 12. David uses the distinction between the words as a basis of an exhortation. The thought is that the One who always existed is the one who only has the right to be the object of worship. Such a thought should have prevented the Israelites from worshipping the heathen gods. Furthermore, the Creator of our being certainly is entitled to all of our devotions. *Sheep of his pasture* signifies that God is able to nourish us. But that is not all; for if we are the sheep of *His* pasture, we have no right nor need to feed in any other pasture.

Verse 4. A gate is an entrance to a city and a court is an enclosure for the vicinity of a king or other dignified person. If a human being is permitted to enter into a city of the King of Heaven, and to go even as far as into the final enclosure of his palace, then thanksgiving and praise should be forthcoming.

Verse 5. Many good men are merciful at times, but the mercy of the Lord continues. The truth of the Lord will stand the test of all time. That truth does not change, but will bless the generation that exists now and will be alive through the time of the generations yet to come and continue its blessed effects on all who accept it.

PSALMS 101

Verse 1. *Judgment* is used here in its fundamental sense of justice. The word means a decree or verdict that is according to the facts in the case, and whether the sentence is supposed to be favorable or not. But in such cases where the strict justice would require an unfavorable sentence, the mercy of God would modify it. That is why the Psalmist would sing of both. For the blended attributes of God the song of praise was to be offered as an expression of sincere gratitude.

Verse 2. The preceding verses showed that God tempers justice with mercy. However, there must be some indications of worthiness before the mercy will be extended. The Psalmist recognized that principle and promised to behave himself accordingly,

which would constitute a perfect way. On the condition of his devotion David appealed to God for divine assistance and direction in the chosen course.

Verse 3. The promise of this verse refers especially to the sin of idolatry. David hated that evil and pledged himself not to place any idol before him as an object to be worshiped or adored in any sense.

Verse 4. *Froward* means perverse or stubborn and David declared he would not have such a heart. He also determined not to *know* or recognize a wicked person.

Verse 5. Slander is always wrong, but it is worse when done *privily*, which means to do done "behind one's back." If any such man came under the knowledge of David he was to be cut off. There is not much difference between the meaning of *high* and *proud*. The second refers to the condition of the heart, and the first shows how that condition affects the outward attitude. David gave his word that he would not tolerate such a man to be in his presence.

Verse 6. To *be upon* means to look with favor upon the faithful, and see that they have opportunity for dwelling in the land under the protection of the king. But the Psalmist would not accept service from those whose way of life was not right.

Verse 7. *Deceit* is one form of a lie and David would not harbor such a character. With all of the fault to be found with the Psalmist for his sin with another man's wife, he was truthful when confronted with the facts. He was a lover of truth and could not endure the sight of an untruthful man.

Verse 8. *Early* has no word in the original in this verse. *Destroy* is from a word that is defined by Strong, "to extirpate." *The city of the Lord* means the capital city and David proposed to defend it by destroying all of the wicked enemies.

PSALMS 102

Verse 1. This verse is an example of the supplication form of prayer. The simple word "prayer" means merely an address or request offered to God. A supplication is a request in more urgent and earnest terms.

Verse 2. This verse is similar to the preceding one except that it specifies the subject of the supplication. The Psalmist is worried over the

trouble that his enemies were causing him. He appeals to the Lord in earnest tones to assist him.

Verse 3. Of course we will understand this verse to be figurative. David used the strong language to illustrate the great distress his enemies had forced upon him.

Verse 4. This means that he did not have the heart to face the situation without the help of the Lord. It had even taken his appetite which is what he meant by the words *forget to eat my bread* in the close of the verse.

Verse 5. This is another highly figurative passage, referring to David's miserable experiences. But the thought will be grasped more readily by transposing the two clauses of the verse. The idea is that on account of the condition of his skin and bones, his voice gave way to groaning.

Verses 6, 7. These fowls are somewhat "on their own" and isolated. They are liable to meet up with some hostile creatures, so that their hours have to be taken up in being constantly and nervously on the alert.

Verse 8. To *reproach* means to speak evil with the intent to slander one. To be *mad* is to rave about another. David's enemies were so determined to slander him that they gave way to rage, and declared with an oath that they would oppose him.

Verse 9. Ashes were used in ancient times to indicate distress or great humiliation. David uses the word figuratively by saying he had to eat them. Partaking of drink was a desirable act in itself, but the opposition of his enemies caused the Psalmist to weep while partaking of the blessing.

Verse 10. David attributed his unpleasant experiences to the Lord; that is, he believed the Lord suffered the enemies to oppose him as a test of his faith. He never found fault with the Lord for such treatment, but frequently lamented over it and entreated that the afflictions might be lifted or lessened.

Verse 11. This verse is a figurative description of David's trials. *Declineth* is from NATAH and Strong defines it, "to stretch or spread out." The idea is that as the lengthening of a shadow indicates the approach of the day's end, so David compared it to his own declining day of life under the oppression of his enemies. He made a like comparison to the withering grass that

yielded to the depressing effect of heat.

Verse 12. The endurance of the Lord encouraged David to look for mercy in his afflictions, for He ever remembers his faithful servants.

Verse 13. *Zion* was said in reference to the nation because that spot was the headquarters. It is interesting to note that David usually associated his own interests with those of his people and country. He expressed the hope that God would *arise* or "show himself" on behalf of the nation because the need for it had come.

Verse 14. *Stones* and *dust* were materials of the capital city. The citizens of the city had sincere love for the great city of God; so much so that even the dust falling from its stones was dear to them.

Verse 15. *The heathen* were the foreign nations that surrounded Israel. They were to *fear* the name of the Lord, which means they would see the mighty works performed under that holy name and would be led to respect it.

Verse 16. *Build up* means to defend and strengthen. David believed that the Lord would do that for Zion and that it would thus be an exhibition of His glory.

Verse 17. *Despise* means to belittle or ignore. God will not ignore the prayer of the *destitute* or needy, but will attend to their requirements in his own way of wisdom.

Verse 18. The reference from this verse correctly cites Rom. 15: 4. The things God did to his ancient people were first for their own benefit. Then he caused an account of them to be *written for the generation to come* for the purpose expressed by the apostle Paul. The motive stated by the apostle, that we might have hope, is similar in thought to the one in the present verse, that people would be led to praise God.

Verse 19. *Sanctuary* means any holy place or where some holy person occupies his place. The religious institution on earth is one such place, but this verse refers to the one in Heaven, hence the phrase *height of his sanctuary*.

Verse 20. This verse gives the purpose of the preceding one. God does not actually have to *look* in order to obtain information. The language simply means that God concerned himself on behalf of his servants, and

gave a merciful ear to their groaning. He further determined to give relief by delivering his afflicted ones from oppression.

Verse 21. Not only does the Lord wish to take the side of his mistreated servants, but will also see that His name is recognized in Zion, the particular spot in Jerusalem that was the headquarters of the holy nation.

Verse 22. The objectives mentioned in the two preceding verses will be attained when the present verse is carried out. It is only when people recognize the Lord's authority and respect his kingdom, that he will extend his favors to them.

Verse 23. David again took up the subject of his personal afflictions. *Shortened* is from a word that Strong says has both a literal and figurative meaning. Figuratively it would mean to cut off some of the enjoyment of his days. That was done by suffering his enemies to oppose him for the purpose of testing his faith.

Verse 24. God had no beginning and will have no ending in his existence. He therefore is prepared to extend the life of his servants according to his judgment and mercy. The Psalmist expressed another of his earnest pleas to God for his favor.

Verses 25-28. I have grouped these verses into one paragraph because they are thus grouped in Heb. 1: 10-12. The connection in that place shows that Christ is the one spoken of. The present verse is a prophecy of Christ and the Psalmist made it as an inspired prophet. But while he may not have intended it as a change in subject, it at first appears so to us. Upon close consideration we will see a connection in thought. The writer had just mentioned the endless existence of God; that time would not bring any changes in Him. It was an appropriate place to speak of another person whose work would outlive the existence of material things. That person was Christ and his work would be the great institution of his kingdom that was to stand forever. (Dan. 2: 44.)

PSALMS 103

Verse 1. When *bless* is used towards the Lord it means to praise and adore Him as the source of all blessings. In the language of the familiar Doxology: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." *Soul* as used here means the entire living being which is why the Psalmist

added the specification in the second clause of the verse.

Verse 2. The close of the preceding verse stipulated the entirety of man's being should bless the Lord. This verse indicates the reason for such praise to the Lord, that it is on account of the benefits received. *Forget not* means not to be inattentive to, not merely that the facts have "slipped the memory." When man fails to give proper consideration to the goodness of God it is as bad as if he had entirely forgotten it.

Verse 3. The emphasis in this verse should be on the pronoun *who* and not on the word *all*. Other passages teach that forgiveness for sin is offered on certain conditions, and that disease is healed only when the Lord's will calls for it. But the thought of the Psalmist is that when these favors are bestowed upon man, the Lord should receive *all* the credit and praise for it.

Verse 4. One way to redeem a thing is to prevent the condition threatened. Those who are faithful to God will be protected from the destruction intended by the enemies. To *crown* means to bestow abundantly the good things considered. The faithful servants of God will thus be given the kindness that springs from divine love, and the mercy that is prompted by His *tender* or mild regard for his children.

Verse 5. The Lord does not always give us what we may think we should have. But he will give us that which actually *satisfieth*, which means to leave no real want of *good things*. These good things of life are what will sustain our existence. No man will actually be made or be kept young. However, if the Lord sustains him he will be kept comparatively young and strong. *Like the eagle's* is a comparison drawn from the enduring strength of that mighty bird. Funk and Wagnalls' Bible Dictionary says that the eagle is used as a figure of various traits. Strength is one quality mentioned and Isa. 40: 31 would justify the figure.

Verse 6. *Judgment* refers to the relief due those who are oppressed unjustly. It will be done according to the Lord's righteousness.

Verse 7. *Ways* is from a Hebrew word that means "a course of life or mode of action," and *acts* is from one that means "an exploit of God." The verse means that God used Moses to teach the people how they should live,

and he performed his own great deeds in the sight of the children of Israel for their example and information.

Verse 8. *Merciful* means to be less exacting with another than his conduct demands. *Gracious* indicates the disposition to be pleasantly considerate toward one who is supposed to be lower in rank or deserts. A person might let his debtor off with less than he deserved, yet do so with a haughty attitude. God is both merciful and gracious, combining the two very desirable traits. *Plenteous* in mercy denotes that God does not merely show his debtors some reduction in his just demands, but the reduction he grants them is great which would amount to a great sacrifice when measured by justice.

Verse 9. The two clauses of this verse have practically the same meaning, but the second one should be considered first. Since God does not keep (cherish or hold to as with a grudge) his anger forever, he therefore will not be always chastising his servants. He corrects his children for their good and is prompted thereto by his love.

Verse 10. The simple force of this verse is that God does not deal with mankind to the extent that his wrongs deserve. If it were not for the mercy of the Lord, no man could exist for a single moment.

Verse 11. Here we have some material things to measure the immaterial. The height of the heaven or sky above the earth is taken to compare the greatness of God's mercy. But it must not be overlooked that such mercy is promised only toward *them that fear him*, which means to them who show Him the proper respect.

Verse 12. This is similar to the preceding verse in the nature of its illustration. That verse compared the height or greatness of God's mercy; this one shows the completeness of divine forgiveness. When God "forgives" he also "forgets."

Verse 13. An explanation is given why God is so complete in his favors. The comparison is made to the relationship of parent and child; but again the proviso should not be overlooked. The abundant mercies of the Lord are for *them that fear him*.

Verse 14. *Frame* is from a word that is defined "form," specifically the human form or body. God realizes that man's body is of the *dust* which is another word for "earth." As man's

body is of that origin it is inclined to uncertainty in conduct and God takes that into consideration in his dealings with human beings.

Verse 15. The connection shows the remarks in this and the following verse apply to the earthly part of man. His body came from the ground, the place that also supports vegetation. Hence his existence in the flesh is subject to the same conditions that cause the plants to flourish and take on the appearance of strength.

Verse 16. This does not mean that the passing of the wind removes man, but that his fleshly existence is as uncertain and comparatively short-lived as the passing of a breeze. *Its place shall not know it* means that man will not again be seen in the place where he once lived on the earth. (See comments at Job 7: 9, 10.)

Verse 17. *From everlasting to everlasting* means without beginning or end. But mercy is a favor shown to man, and he *did* have a beginning. The statement means that the quality of love and pity and mercy is a fixed attribute of God and hence it always existed. But the application of it came only after there was a man who needed the favor. And again we should note that it is limited to *them that fear him*. There never was and never will be a time or place when God would not do right. *Righteousness* is used in reference to the benefits that it brings to generation after generation.

Verse 18. The favor mentioned in the close of the preceding verse is here based on condition that they *keep his covenant*. The additional thought is given that they remember his commandments in a particular way; that they do them.

Verse 19. *Heavens* is plural and is used as a form of emphasis. It indicates that God's throne is high, and for that reason his kingdom is over all other kingdoms.

Verse 20. See the comments at V, 1 on *bless*. *Excel in strength* refers to the various ranks of the angels. We are not told how or why some angels are above others, we are only made to know that they are. The term archangel (1 Th. 4: 16) indicates a distinction in the rank and importance of some, and Jude 6 does the same. Our verse calls upon these greatest of the angels to *bless the Lord*. *Do his commandments*, etc. The Bible does not inform us just what laws are placed over the

angels, but this passage clearly shows that they are under law. And that further agrees with the fact that angels are capable of sinning. (2 Pe. 2: 4.)

Verse 21. This verse is a general call for all classes of the Lord's creatures to bless him. A motive is suggested in the phrase *do his pleasure*. This means they do things that please Him and do so for that purpose.

Verse 22. The call is made still more general and bids the works of creation all to express praise. This is not a new thought with the Psalmist, it is the same as expressed at Ch. 19: 1. The chapter closes with the same words with which it began, *bless the Lord, O my soul*; see the comments at that place.

PSALMS 104

Verse 1. This verse starts with the same expression as Ch. 103: 1, and I request the reader to see my comments at that place. *Honour* has special reference to grandeur of appearance, and *majesty* refers especially to dignity.

Verse 2. To be covered with anything means to be completely surrounded by it. When light is used figuratively it means that which is good, pure and truthful. The Lord is thus equipped and hence he is properly possessed of power. This power gave him the ability to hold up the heavens or parts of the universe as easily as if they were so many curtains in the hands of a human being.

Verse 3. The clauses of this verse are figurative, and are intended to show the ease with which God manages the parts of His creation. The deep waters, the soaring clouds and the boisterous winds would baffle the limited power of man. But the great One who brought them into existence controls all with infinite might.

Verse 4. Happily the apostle Paul comments on this verse in Heb. 1: 7. And verses 13, 14 of that chapter as well as the general connection, shows the passage has direct reference to the intelligent beings who live in Heaven with God. The Psalmist meant to show some more of the power or authority of God in that he had such control over these angels. For instance, he was able to use them as spirits (1 Ki. 22: 19-24), or to make a flaming fire out of them (Ex. 3: 2). However, even in thus controlling these celestial creatures, God was be-

stowing a great honor upon them, which was the point the writer of Hebrews was making.

Verse 5. We do not think of the earth as having a foundation in the ordinary sense of that word. The verse has the idea that the existence of the earth is well founded as it is sustained by the almighty power of its Creator.

Verse 6. God's knowledge and control of the works of creation is the theme running through several verses. The mighty ocean as it envelops the earth presents as easy a task in the Lord's hands as the handling of a garment would be in the grasp of a man. See a similar thought in the comments at V. 2. *The waters stood*, etc., refers to the flood in the days of Noah. At that time they were said to have been 15 cubits above the mountains. (Gen. 7: 20.)

Verse 7. *At thy rebuke they fled* refers to the fact recorded in Gen. 8: 1, etc.

Verse 8. This refers to the further abatement of the waters of the flood. After the bulk of the water had been driven away by the wind (similar to Gen. 1: 6, 7), the rest of it sought its original places in the valleys which God had founded for them.

Verse 9. *Set a bound* is the same as Gen. 8: 22.

Verse 10. The residue of the flood waters was to serve the needs of living creatures. In order to do so it was necessary to have springs and running streams.

Verse 11. Man needed the services of the beasts and that made it necessary to sustain these dumb creatures with the water.

Verse 12. The fowls were to furnish food for man, also be used in sacrifice to God. It was thus needful that they likewise be supplied with water.

Verse 13. *From his chambers* is a figure of speech, referring to the great bounty and storehouse of God, "from whom all blessings flow."

Verse 14. This verse is more specific and includes much the same list of good things as was mentioned in Gen. 8: 22 regarding the continuance of the seasons.

Verse 15. The products that are named in this verse are necessary for the use of man. Those products, however, could not have been provided naturally after the destructive volume of the flood came upon the earth had the Lord not been able and willing

to take control of the situation and turn everything to good account.

Verse 16. This verse considers some items of vegetation that are greater than the herbs of the field. These serve mankind in various ways; fruit, building material, beauty and shade all come from the wonderful plant that towers above all other plants.

Verse 17. Not only do the trees serve man directly in the manner mentioned in the preceding verse, but they make shelter for birds which also serve man.

Verse 18. The Psalmist somewhat departs from the conditions in and after the flood. He is concerned with the great works of God as they have always been from the creation. The perfect adaptation of the various parts of creation to the different kinds of living creatures is the thought in this verse. For instance, the wild goats are "at home" while scrambling over the hills, while the coney, being a small and less rugged animal, would prefer finding its home in the clefts of the rocks.

Verse 19. One shade of meaning of the original for *appointed* is "to use." The thought is that the moon was depended upon to set the dates for certain seasons. For an example, the months of the Jewish calendar were started by the moon as it came "new." (1 Sam. 20: 24-27.) The argument of David is that God has such control of the moon that he could rely on it to signal the season of period called the month. The feasts and other rituals of the Jewish worship were to be at regular intervals, and if they were to be regulated as to date by the moon, then the changes of that body would have to be reliable. The appearances of the sun also would need to be according to God's wish.

Verse 20. In strictness of speech, darkness does not have to be "made." It is a negative condition and is merely the absence of light. In the passage we are considering the Psalmist is discussing God's power to manage the things of the universe, including the "going down" of the sun. That condition was necessary in order to bring the rest in sleep for the comfort and welfare of living creatures.

Verse 21. The darkness is seen to be an advantage to some of the beasts which God created. The lions find the night time the best for their necessity

and they unconsciously *roar* the praises of the Maker of all things.

Verse 22. After the lions have captured their prey under cover of darkness, they may confidently use the light of the sun to deposit it in their dens.

Verse 23. This verse was written before the days of "24-hour" programs in the industrial world. The Lord designed the day as the time for work, and the darkness of night as best adapted for sleep and rest. That is why we have such expressions as are in John 9: 4; 11: 9; 12: 35. I realize that Jesus was using the words figuratively, but all figures of speech are based on some literal fact.

Verse 24. This verse is a fitting summing up of the great works of the Lord. Having specified some of them, the Psalmist concludes with this general statement regarding the products of the land and their several uses.

Verse 25. Passing from the wonders of the dry land, David takes up the vast realm of the seas that occupies most of the surface of the globe. *Creeping* is from an original with more general meaning than we are accustomed to give to it. The word merely means to move, and refers to all living things that go from place to place on their own power. That would include the fish as well as mammals that live in the ocean.

Verse 26. The ocean is so formed that man can travel on its bosom, while in its vastness underneath, the *leviathan* (some kind of large water animal) can *play* (be perfectly at home) and move about at will.

Verse 27. *These* as a pronoun refers to the leviathans mentioned in the preceding verse. They are powerful creatures, yet they must *wait upon* God, or depend on him.

Verse 28. *Openest thine hand* is understood to refer to the handiwork of God in providing for the needs of these living things.

Verse 29. This verse is to show the dependence of even the sea monsters upon God. When (or if) He hides his face, these creatures are troubled because of their helplessness. Should this desertion continue it would result in the death of them, and they would return to the source from which they were formed. (Gen. 3: 19.)

Verse 30. This verse is very general, because all things were created by the power and through the spirit of God.

To *renew* means to enliven and keep alive the things belonging to the face of the earth. In other words, God started the existence of all things, and he it is who keeps them in existence.

Verse 31. When God had finished his creative work he declared it was "very good" (Gen. 1: 31). He has never changed his estimate of the great works. That is why David here says the glory of the Lord shall *endure for ever*. The additional thought is given to strengthen the one just expressed in that the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

Verse 32. *Trembleth and smoke* are figures of speech, meaning the complete dependence of all the earth upon God.

Verse 33. The greatness of the works and goodness of God caused David to sing praises. This vow was made in view of the many excellencies of which he had been writing.

Verse 34. Not only would the Psalmist audibly sing the praises of God, but he would meditate upon them when alone. This was according to what he wrote in ch. 1: 2.

Verse 35. The *sinners* in this particular connection would be those who do not appreciate the wonderful works of God. David considered them as unworthy to live in the enjoyment of the blessings of the Lord.

PSALMS 105

Verse. 1. This verse has two separate thoughts. Man should thank God for his favors, then show his appreciation for such deeds of benefit by making them known among the people. Jesus taught the same lesson in Matt. 5: 16. But in that case the matters were to be made known before the world by the lives of those benefited by the favors.

Verse 2. The singing and talking that David called for was not to be mere words. There was a subject that was to be the basis for all the expressions and that was the wondrous works of God, manifested for the benefit of the creatures of His care.

Verse 3. Another instance is seen in this verse where the motive was to be the background of the action. A desire to glory in the name of God was urging the persons to *seek the Lord*. When such was the motive for the action, the Psalmist wished for them a heart filled with sincere rejoicing.

Verse 4. This means to seek the strength that comes from the Lord. No man can actually see the face of God and live (Ex. 33: 20), but the word is used in the sense of favor. Seek to be in favor with God by doing that which will please him.

Verse 5. The wonderful doings of God are not confined to the acts of material creation. His judgments also are marvelous, which means his dealings with the conduct of human beings. When the Lord passes judgment upon the activities of man, whether favorable or unfavorable, they are marvelous in wisdom and fairness.

Verse 6. The *seed of Abraham* and the *children of Jacob* refer to the same people. When God called upon Abraham to leave his native land he obeyed and received the title of servant. When Jacob begat the 12 sons and they became numerous enough to compose a nation, then God chose them to become a nation as his peculiar possession.

Verse 7. See the comments at ch. 86: 12 for explanation of *Lord* and *God*. *Judgments* are the verdicts or decisions of God, and they affect the conduct of all mankind.

Verse 8. God never forgets as we commonly use that word. The statement here means that he had respect unto his covenant and always kept his word with the children of men. We might inquire why speak of "keeping" a word that He had *commanded*? It is because the promises of God were made on condition of obedience to the commandments.

Verses 9, 10. These verses should be grouped into one paragraph because of the unity of thought. When fairly considered, the passage throws much light on the subject of the length of the sojourn in Egypt. For detailed discussion of the matter see my comments at 1 Chr. 16: 16, 17 in Volume 2 of this Commentary.

Verse 11. Since Abraham was the first one called, he was the one to whom the promise was made as to the possession of the land. The pronoun *your* is directly addressed by David to the people of his day. He is telling them that the land of Canaan is theirs by lot by right of inheritance, since they were descended from Abraham.

Verse 12. In the beginning of their living in Canaan they were few in number. Even as late as the time of Jacob and they were about to enter

the country of Egypt, they numbered only 70 souls according to the account in Gen. 46: 27.

Verses 13-15. This paragraph is a reference to some facts that are clearly set out in the following passages: Gen. 12: 11-20; 20: 1-16; 26: 6-11.

Verse 16. *Called for a famine* shows that the famine in Egypt was a miraculous one. There could not be a natural famine in that country because the annual overflow of the Nile insured the moisture needed for the crops. That was why a miraculous famine had to be *called for* when the Lord had use for one in his plans.

Verse 17. The simple facts of the history are recorded in the book of Genesis and would not need to be repeated in all of their details. However, some observations may profitably be made. *Sent a MAN* is significant as a contrast with the divine agency of the famine. God wished to employ a human agency in conjunction with His own work.

Verse 18. The original history of this verse is in Gen. 39: 20 and 40: 3. Those passages indicate that these *fetters of iron* were not allowed to remain on Joseph. He was given charge of the other prisoners which could scarcely be of any avail if he were hampered with the metallic shackles.

Verse 19. *His word came* refers to the interpreting of Pharaoh's dream. When he was wanted for that purpose he was released from prison and never went back to it. The last clause of the verse means that it was in accordance with the word of the Lord for Joseph's faith to be tested. That test went with him through those years that had been forgotten by the butler. (Gen. 40 and 41.)

Verse 20. This was King Pharaoh who had some dreams that troubled him. Having been informed of Joseph's former work of interpreting dreams, the king sent for him that he might obtain a like service. That plan would make it necessary to remove the prison sentence from Joseph hence the verse says he *let him go free*.

Verse 21. Joseph was given the management of the crops for distribution among the people during the famine predicted by the dreams of Pharaoh.

Verse 22. *Bind his princes* does not refer to any literal bonds that Joseph

was to fasten on Pharaoh's princes for he never did anything of that kind. It means that Joseph was given authority over the people of Egypt. "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (Gen. 41: 40), was the sense in which Joseph was to *bind* the princes.

Verse 23. *Israel and Jacob* are the same, the two names being used to make the identification easier. *Land of Ham* was Egypt according to Ps. 78: 51. That was because the inferior nations came from Ham (Gen. 9: 25: 10: 6, 7), and the Egyptians were of the lower grade of nations when compared with descendants of Shem and Japheth.

Verse 24. The history of this verse is in Ex. 1: 7. The Israelites increased in spite of, not by the help of, the Egyptians.

Verse 25. He (God) turned their (the Egyptians') heart to hate his (God's) people. This hatred was prompted by envy and fear. They could not bear to see the Israelites so prosperous; also they feared they might become strong enough to rise up in rebellion. *Dealt subtilly* means they were treacherous and dishonest in their treatment of Israel.

Verse 26. Moses was sent to be the leader for the people in their escape from the land of Egypt. Aaron was sent to work with Moses and to be his spokesman.

Verse 27. *They* means Moses and Aaron. They worked together in performing the miracles that were to convince the Israelites first, then to bring about their enforced freedom.

Verse 28. *Rebelled not* is rendered "would not heed" in Moffatt's translation, and the context justifies that wording. We know the Egyptians would not submit to God's demands even at the plague of darkness.

Verse 29. This verse refers to one of the plagues sent on the Egyptians when they refused to let the children of Israel go. The history of it is in Ex. 7: 17-21.

Verse 30. This was the 2nd plague upon Pharaoh and his people. See Ex. 8: 5-7 for the original account to which this verse applies.

Verse 31. Since all of this history is so completely given in the book of Exodus, the query might arise why the Psalmist took up so much space repeating it. No specific statement can be cited in the Bible as an answer.

We know, however, that many hundreds of years had gone by since those things occurred. In repeating them in such detail, David showed not only that the account of the transactions in Egypt was preserved down to his time, but that he believed it to be true, and that the Lord was worthy to be praised for the great work. The original account of this verse is in Ex. 8.

Verse 32. This was a regular thunderstorm with lightning. The marvelous phase of the case was the fact that it came at a specified time, and in Egypt where even an ordinary rain would have been regarded as wonderful.

Verse 33. *Brake the trees* means the foliage and fruit was stripped off the trees, not the body of the tree being broken down. In Ex. 9: 25 the trees were said to be broken, but in Ch. 10: 15 of that book it says that the locusts ate the fruit of the trees "which the hail had left."

Verses 34, 35. This paragraph is practically explained in the preceding one.

Verse 36. The firstborn of the Egyptians were the ones smitten. This distinction is made to prevent confusion over the pronouns later on in the chapter.

Verse 37. The pronouns in this verse refer to the children of Israel. The *silver and gold* was given them by the Egyptians, and the account is in Ex. 11: 2, 3; 12: 35, 36.

Verse 38. *Egypt was glad when they departed*. This clause will be better understood and appreciated if the student will read Ex. 12: 31-33 and the entire connection. The readiness of Pharaoh to let the Israelites go was not from conviction that he was wrong and they were right. It was purely a selfish move on his part and was prompted by his desire to get rid of a troublesome element that he could not manage.

Verse 39. The account now passes from the original encampment of the Israelites and is describing some scenes in the march. The description of this unusual cloud is in Ex. 13: 21, 22; 14: 19, 24, which I request the student to read again.

Verse 40. The scene changes again, and the children of Israel are across the Red Sea and journeying in the wilderness. Their tendency toward murmuring was evident very often.

They complained that they lacked food and God gave it to them by miracle. The history of this verse is in Ex. 16 where the reader may see the goodness of God.

Verse 41. The next complaint was because of a shortage of water to drink. In Ex. 17 is an account of the provision which the Lord made for them on this subject.

Verses 42-45. These closing verses of the chapter are in the nature of a general summing up, hence I have grouped them into one paragraph. The Lord *remembered* means he had respect for the promise he had made to Abraham. That promise included all of the good things already done for the Israelites, as have been detailed in this chapter, and also the ones to come as indicated in this paragraph.

PSALMS 106

Verse 1. There is nothing new in this verse in addition to the oft-repeated call for praise to God. However, we can never be reminded too many times that the Lord is worthy to be praised. Let us note also that David's call for praise was not a mere expression of sentiment without some practical motive for it. In this verse the reason given is the mercy of the Lord that *endureth for ever*.

Verse 2. We are sure David means that no one can *fully* utter or describe the mighty acts of the Lord. It is practically the same idea in the second clause.

Verse 3. This means that they are blessed who show their good judgment by always doing that which is according to the Lord's law of righteousness.

Verse 4. The Psalmist did not ask for any "favoritism" from the Lord. He wished only the same favors that the people of the nation received.

Verse 5. *See the good of thy chosen* meant he asked to see the good things being bestowed upon God's chosen people. It is virtually the same thought that was expressed in the preceding verse and the comments offered at that place.

Verse 6. The Psalmist was consistent in classing himself with the people in general. He had asked only for the kind of favors that the people received. Now he places himself on a level with them regarding the mistakes of life.

Verse 7. A glance at the history in the book of Exodus will tell us why David wrote this verse. *Understood* not means the fathers did not consider all the wonderful works of God. They seemed to "take them for granted," and thus they underestimated their importance. This lack of appreciation led them to act foolishly and provoke the Lord who was being so good to them in spite of their indifference.

Verse 8. Their disobedience did not cause God to desert them. His own name was at stake and he took care of them, thus showing to the nations near them that He was more powerful than all their gods to which they gave such frantic devotion.

Verse 9. When an inanimate object like a sea is *rebuked* it means that it was taken charge of by One who was able to control it. This rebuke was in the form of a "strong east wind," and the original account of it is given in Ex. 14: 21.

Verse 10. This verse is a brief reference to the thing accomplished by the act in opening the Red Sea for the Israelites, then closing it upon the Egyptians.

Verse 11. This language is very definite. Sometimes a statement may be made about the fate of a group. If the thing said to be done affected the group as a whole, the language will be worded in a general way even if some individual exceptions existed. But in this case we are to understand there were no exceptions. *Not one of them* was permitted to escape. Ex. 14: 6 states that Pharaoh took his people "with him." So we know that the king of Egypt perished in the Red Sea together with his people.

Verse 12. The pronouns *they* stand for the Israelites. They believed his words *then*; which means just as they got across the Red Sea. *Sang his praise* refers to the "song of deliverance" which is recorded in Exodus 15.

Verse 13. Scarcely had they reached the east shore of the sea when they forgot the wonderful works of God. They murmured because of the unsavory taste of the water. *Waited not for his counsel* means they "jumped to the conclusion" that they were to suffer for want of drinking water, without waiting to seek counsel or instruction from God.

Verse 14. Even after this emergency was met, the people continued to complain and call for further things of

life that they claimed they needed to preserve themselves.

Verse 15. God gave the Israelites the quail for flesh because of their murmuring. *Sent leanness* refers to the sickness that came upon them even while they were eating the food. See the account of this in Num. 11: 31-33.

Verse 16. This verse takes us down to the time when Korah and his confederates rebelled against Moses and Aaron on account of their authority. (Num. 16: 1.)

Verse 17. This fact is recorded in Num. 16: 30-34.

Verse 18. Following up the history as it was in the making, this verse will refer to Num. 16: 35 which records the miraculous fire that destroyed these princes.

Verse 19. Horeb and Sinai are the same general location. The first is the place as a whole and the second is the peak; but the two words are used interchangeably in the Bible. It was there that the children of Israel made the idol in the form of a calf. It is here called a *molten image* which means it was cast. Ex. 32: 4 agrees with this only it gives an additional item. The calf was first molten or cast "in the rough," then it was shaped more perfectly with the engraving tool.

Verse 20. *Changed* is from *muwr* which Strong defines, "a primitive root; to alter; by implication to barter, to dispose of." The glory of God cannot actually be changed or altered. The statement means that the Israelites gave up their glorying and praise for God and gave it to the idol which they had made with their own hands.

Verse 21. *They forgot* does not mean their memory failed them. It had been only a few months since they had seen those great works of God and the mind of a human being does not forget that soon. The word means they dismissed the subject from their minds and turned their attention elsewhere, to something immediately before their eyes.

Verse 22. The Psalmist does not specify the works themselves, but does designate where they were done. The land of Ham was Egypt (see Ch. 105: 23), and the other place named was the body of water that brought salvation to the children of Israel while it brought destruction to their enemies.

Verse 23. After the Israelites had made the golden calf, the Lord was so provoked that he threatened to destroy the nation and start a new one by Moses. But the man Moses acted as mediator and God turned from his wrath. (Ex. 32: 11-13.)

Verse 24. *Despise* means to belittle or refuse to consider. The Israelites closed their eyes of faith against the attractions of the promised land and became impatient on account of some unpleasant conditions connected with obtaining it.

Verse 25. The original word for *murmur* is defined in the lexicon, "to grumble, i. e. to rebel." In 1 Cor. 10: 10 Paul refers to the same subject and Thayer defines the word, "to discontentedly complain." It means a situation where the complainant is dissatisfied, but is not able to specify any valid reason for his discontent.

Verse 26. This verse is a specific reference to the death of the men of war after the return of the 12 spies. (Num. 14.)

Verse 27. This verse refers to the captivity of all the nations of Israel. The history of that tragic event is in 2 Ki. 24 and 25.

Verse 28. The preceding verse covered a wide range of time and events that reached hundreds of years beyond the ones in the wilderness. This one comes back to some details of the misconduct of the nation that led up to the events of the other verse. Baal-peor was one of the forms of heathen worship. Its chief characteristic was the mixing up with immoral conduct in the name of religion. *Sacrifices of the dead* means the religious feasts which the heathen held in honor of their idol gods. As they were sacrificial feasts (those in which eating was done in the name of religion), they would naturally consider their eating as an act of worship toward their gods. There is a good description of these "dead" gods in Ps. 115: 4-8.

Verse 29. *Inventions* is from a word that simply means a work or action. The verse means that God was provoked by the idolatrous actions of his people. *The plague* refers to the various afflictions that were imposed on the nation from time to time, but the specific one in the mind of the Psalmist was the slaying of thousands of Israelites after the affair with Baalam recorded in Num. 25.

Verse 30. The Mosaic system was a combination of religious and civil government. It therefore included both spiritual and physical punishments. When the people fell into the sin of idolatry and its attendant immorality, Phinehas rose up in defence of the purity of the congregation and slew a notable actor and his partner on sight. That execution appeased the wrath of God and he stopped the plague.

Verse 31. It is always right to oppose evil by whatever means the law provides for the purpose. The law had prescribed death as punishment for idolaters (Deut. 17: 2-5), and this man was carrying out the requirements of the law in killing these people. That was why the good citizens counted his act a righteous one.

Verse 32. There was more than one occasion when the people caused a disturbance in connection with water. The circumstances in the present case indicate the one reported in Num. 20. *For their sakes* means on their account or because of them.

Verse 33. *Spake unadvisedly* means he spoke unwisely or rashly. This is the only sin that the scriptures specify against Moses in this noted case. For extended comments on the subject see those at Num. 20: 9-12 in Volume 1 of this Commentary.

Verses 34-36. This paragraph is on the one subject of the mixing up with the heathen. The reader may see a detailed account of the subject in Judges 1 and 2.

Verse 37. The Hebrew word for *devils* that is used here occurs only twice in the Bible; the other place being in Deut. 32: 17. This verse is concerned with the human sacrifices to idolatrous worship. For further comments and numerous citations on the subject see comments at 2 Ki. 16: 3 in the Commentary.

Verse 38. Shedding of *innocent blood* is the slaying of innocent persons. When a man is slain who is worthy of death it is not the shedding of innocent blood. The children of these idolaters were not guilty of any wrong, therefore it was the shedding of innocent blood to slay them in sacrifice to idols.

Verse 39. *Went a whoring* means they went lusting for the practices of false worship. Their *inventions* means their conduct that sprang from their own hearts.

Verse 40. It requires something unusual to cause one to reject his own possessions or people. The Israelites were the personal possession of God, descended through his devoted servant Abraham, yet they were cast off when they followed after idols.

Verses 41-45. It would serve no practical purpose to separate the verses of this paragraph. They all refer to the history recorded in the book of Judges. Since that epoch has been carefully commented upon in its proper place in the Commentary, I shall not take up space to repeat it here but will ask the reader to consult it in that place.

Verse 46. This verse is a prophecy although in the past tense. It was fulfilled when the Israelites were in the captivity. (See Ezra 1: 1-4; Neh. 2: 1-8.)

Verses 47, 48. This paragraph also is prophecy, and pertains to the return of the Jewish nation from Babylonian captivity. For a detailed account of that great event the reader should examine the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

PSALMS 107

Verse 1. The short or momentary extension of mercy does not require so much of a condescension, but the mercy of the Lord endures *forever*. That does not mean that nothing can terminate it. Unless a person complies with the terms of God's mercy he will not receive it at all. But as long as those conditions are met, the Lord never fails in his mercy toward the unfortunate.

Verse 2. The Psalmist is a little more specific in his call for praise. The very fact that a man has been redeemed is proof of the mercy of God. No one will be redeemed on the ground of his own merit; it will be through the mercy of God.

Verse 3. Most of my comments on the preceding verse had in view the general fact of God's mercy and its agency in bringing redemption to man. However, the Psalmist had in mind especially the rescuing of the nation from their enemy nations. Such favors took place in so many instances and under such a variety of circumstances that we will need to be careful in the application of the separate verses of this chapter. Even in the present verse the four points of the compass are named, which shows the writer was taking in a wide scope of history.

Verse 4. This verse could have been said of the children of Abraham's descendants on more than one occasion, hence I will not try to specify anything here.

Verse 5. For the evidence of history as an explanation of this verse, one needs only to remember the quail and manna, the smitten rock and the water at Meribah.

Verse 6. *They cried* includes the frequent murmurings at their misfortunes. In even such cases, the Lord heard his people and provided the things needed for comfort.

Verse 7. Both *city* and *habitation* are from words with wide range of meaning. The outstanding thought is of a place that is settled and permanent, contrasting with the wandering life they had in the wilderness. The passages that illustrate the above thought are too numerous to cite here; let the student read Lev. 25: 18; 26: 5 for two.

Verse 8. No writer in the Bible had more to say about praise and thanksgiving to God than David. It is interesting to note, also, that he always had a strong motive for the praise. It was not merely a meaningless expression of sentiment.

Verse 9. *Soul* is used for the whole human being. We should get the thought that both spiritual and temporal blessings all come from God. (James 1: 17.)

Verse 10. God punished his people very severely for their departures from his law. When they had been chastised sufficiently, their darkness and threat of death was lifted and they were given another opportunity to show their faith in God.

Verse 11. This refers to the corrective treatment described in the preceding verse, and states the reasons why it was inflicted; the people rebelled against the words of God. *Contemned* means they disrespected the counsel of the Lord.

Verse 12. *Labor* is used figuratively and refers to the hard time the Israelites suffered for their disobedience. *Fell down* denotes their defeat because of having deserted the Lord. When He decides to punish his servants, there is no one who can hinder.

Verse 13. The mercy of the Lord is again mentioned as being extended to the people when they cried unto Him out of their distress.

Verse 14. *Brake their bands* is figurative and refers to the hardships that had been allowed to come on the Israelites. After suffering them to be brought very low in affliction, the Lord came to their rescue and released them from their troubles.

Verse 15. The quality of *goodness* could be negative only. That is, a person might be considered good just because he had done nothing bad. But that was not David's description of the Lord, for he not only is free from doing wrong, but performs wonderful works for the benefit of man.

Verse 16. *Gates of brass and bars of iron* refer to the hardness of the enemies of God and his people. Such obstacles are nothing in the hands of the Almighty.

Verse 17. This verse teaches that men may bring affliction or other evil conditions on themselves. One who thus works transgression and iniquity is a fool.

Verse 18. By such an evil manner of life as described in the preceding verse, these foolish men developed a depraved or deranged appetite. They became so abnormal that they loathed all kinds of food. They had carried on after that manner so long they had been brought *unto the gates of death*.

Verse 19. Some men never call upon God unless they are in trouble. Strict justice would say that all such people should be ignored. But God is merciful as well as just, and when a soul in trouble appeals to Him sincerely he is never turned down.

Verse 20. There are conditions that need curing that are spiritual and not physical. The Lord's means of healing all such is his word.

Verse 21. This is the same as v. 15.

Verse 22. Animal and other material sacrifices were good and were required under the law. But the immaterial kind also is required and the same agrees with the teaching of the New Testament. (Heb. 13: 16.)

Verses 23, 24. The Psalmist has said much in general about the wonderful works of God. He gets a little more specific in this paragraph and calls attention to scenes on the large bodies of water as they were known in that day.

Verse 25. Men were astonished because Christ could calm the sea. David was impressed with the Lord's

power to cause the stormy condition of it in the first place.

Verse 26. *They* has direct relation to the men who go to sea to deal in merchandising. But the movements described here are those of the waves caused by the storms. The ships are tossed up and down on the bosom of the deep, and the men in them are frightened; *their soul is melted*.

Verse 27. This is a further description of the state of fear into which the men in the ships are thrown because of the raging sea. A fair instance of this state of fear is recorded in Jonah 1: 5 on the occasion of the run-away prophet, whose presence in the ship provoked the Lord to bring on the storm that threatened to wreck the vessel.

Verses 28, 29. Again we see that man is disposed to appeal to God when in trouble. The voice of divine power is able to calm the raging of the waters, and rescue the human creatures from the threatened destruction.

Verse 30. The men in the storm rejoice because they are saved from what seemed to be certain death. In too many instances, though, they stop with their personal rejoicing when they should think more reverently on Him whose mercy gave them their escape. That is why the Psalmist so frequently gave the statement in the verses below.

Verse 31. This statement is commented upon at v. 15.

Verse 32. Personal or private praise for God is right and pleasing to Him. Yet men should be willing to express themselves for that feeling before others. Jesus taught that idea in Matt. 10: 32, 33.

Verse 33. Many of the statements in this and some following verses have a general meaning or may be said to be true either as history or prophecy. God's absolute control of all the parts of the earth is the basic thought in the mind of the Psalmist. Considering the first clause of this verse as prophecy, I will make a quotation from ancient history to show a noted instance of its fulfillment. "Alexander, designing to fix the seat of his empire at Babylon, projecting the bringing back the Euphrates into its natural and former channel, had actually set his men to work. But the Almighty, who watched over the fulfilling of his prophecy, defeated this enterprise by the death of Alexander,

which happened soon after. It is easy to comprehend how, after this, Babylon being neglected to such a degree as we have seen, its river was converted into an inaccessible pool . . . By means of all these changes, Babylon became an utter desert, and all the country around fell into the same state of desolation and horror; so that the ablest geographers at this day (A.D. 1729) cannot determine the place where it stood."—Rollin's History, Vol. 1, pp. 558-560.

Verse 34. A noted instance of this kind of performance was in the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain, recorded in Gen. 13: 10; 19: 24, 25.

Verse 35. I do not know whether the Psalmist had any specific event in mind when he wrote this. We have plenty of evidence in the Bible that God can reverse any condition of the earth and the seasons that he wishes.

Verse 36. The purpose in bringing about the conditions mentioned in the preceding verse was to supply the needs of the hungry people. *City for habitation* meant to prepare a substantial place for them to live.

Verse 37. Although the ground was cursed after the sin of Adam, the normal condition since is the production of crops upon the labor of man with the soil. However, certain times have been when special judgments were placed upon the fields because of the misdeeds of the people. When God's wrath had been satisfied, he then permitted the earth to resume its service for man and *yield fruits of increase*.

Verse 38. The preceding verse has to do with the blessings of the land. This one pertains to the increase of livestock. When the people do that which is right, God will *not suffer their cattle to decrease*.

Verse 39. This verse returns to the thought of God's corrective measures when people depart from the right way. He sometimes accomplishes it through the agency of enemy nations and suffers them to bring *oppression and affliction* on his own seed.

Verse 40. The different social classes among God's people were sometimes set in array against each other. When that was the case the *princes* were generally wrong and God would deal with them with contempt, and cause them to *wander in the wilderness* in order to bring them to a better state of humiliation and dependence.

Verse 41. Just as God would humble the prince who exalted himself and went wrong, so He would exalt the poor and meek persons who had been unjustly treated.

Verse 42. Righteous individuals will approve the actions of the Lord as described in the preceding two verses; but workers of iniquity will be forced to *stop her mouth*.

Verse 43. Here is a definition of a wise man; it is the one who *observes these things*. It shows that he understands or appreciates the lovingkindness of the Lord.

PSALMS 108

Verse 1. *Fixed* is from a Hebrew word that means to be prepared or ready. David meant he was prepared to praise the Lord and give him all of the glory due Him.

Verse 2. *Awake* as an intransitive verb means to be aroused to some action of importance. The Psalmist was calling on people to be interested in the praises of God. There is nothing unusual in suggesting the psalter and harp, for he was known to be a specialist in using such instruments in connection with religious worship.

Verse 3. Private praise was not all that David proposed to offer to the Lord. The *people of the nations* were to be witnesses of his praise. (See comments at 107: 32.)

Verse 4. The *heavens* or the *clouds* are inanimate things and are not subjects for the mercy of God. The exalted status that they represent in the universe was used to compare the greatness of divine mercy towards living beings.

Verse 5. The preceding verse affirmed the fact of the exaltation of God's mercy. In this verse the Psalmist endorses such exaltation by bidding the Author of the quality to be himself exalted.

Verse 6. *Thy beloved* means the people of God. Since the divine mercy is so high and great, David felt free to ask its Author to extend some of it to the people who had ever been the objects of divine love.

Verse 7. The first person pronoun *I* refers to God, and he was declaring his claims to certain territories and groups of people, and what he intended to do with them. He would *divide* or reduce Shechem and Succoth.

Verse 8. *Gilead* was a district east of the Jordan and was a very noted

territory. It was logical for God to claim it, not only on the ground that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," but his people had taken it over in the march from Egypt to Canaan. *Manasseh* and *Ephraim* are mentioned in this way because they were the sons of Joseph and each formed a complete tribe. (Gen. 48: 5.) *Judah is my lawgiver* was said in prospect, for the Old Testament law came through Moses who was of the tribe of Levi. But Judah was the tribe through whom Christ was to come, who was to give the final law of Heaven to the world. (Gen. 49: 10; Heb. 7: 12-14.)

Verse 9. This verse is the same as Ch. 60: 8, and the reader is requested to see my comments at that place.

Verse 10. David was thinking about the mighty support that would be needed to help him encounter his many obstacles. To invade a strong territory (Edom was a powerful enemy) would be an instance of great deeds. The Psalmist was enquiring as to who could enable him to accomplish such an exploit.

Verse 11. David turned in hope toward God, although he was the one who had *cast us off* in the sense of the bitter chastisements. But God has been merciful and the Psalmist expects to be led into victory at last.

Verse 12. The main thought in this verse is the contrast between the help from God and that from man. The former is great while the other is vain.

Verse 13. This is practically the same in thought as the preceding verse. *Valiantly* means forcefully, and David meant that the people could manifest force if they relied on the Lord. This is the same thought Paul expressed in Eph. 6: 10.

PSALMS 109

Verse 1. The word *peace* as used here means to be silent. The Psalmist is begging God to say or do something about the wicked conduct of the enemy.

Verse 2. Mere opposition would not baffle a brave man like David. What he dreaded was the effect of deceitful words spoken against him. It is difficult to make a proper defence against a foe who attacks from ambush.

Verse 3. David was never the kind of man who would deny any act of which he was guilty. Therefore we

can appreciate his complaint at being opposed *without a cause*.

Verse 4. Too much favor shown to some men will make them enemies of their benefactors. It has been said that a sure way to lose a man's friendship is to loan him some money. It does not always work that way but often does. Instead of plotting some form of vengeance against the ingratitude of those whom he had favored, David said he would pray for them. That reminds us of the teaching of Christ in Matt. 5: 44.

Verse 5. Ingratitude is a grievous fault and is severely condemned in the Bible in places too numerous to mention here. But it is still worse when a person shows that spirit by doing something evil against the one who has favored him.

Verse 6. *Satan* is spelled with a capital but the lexicon does not justify it. We are sure that David would not wish even the wickedest of men to be presided over by the archenemy of souls. Strong's definition of the original word is, "an opponent." The Psalmist meant that some human adversary should be on hands to oppose those who had rewarded evil for good.

Verse 7. This verse means to wish for the conviction of the enemy whenever he was brought to trial. *Let his prayer become sin* has a clear explanation in Prov. 28: 9, which I request the reader to see. David meant that the prayer of such people as he had been describing should be regarded as an abomination.

Verse 8. We should not be confused by the similarity of language in different passages. This verse sounds *somewhat like that which Peter cited* in Acts 1: 20, but that case is the one in Ps. 69: 25. The present verse merely means to condemn a character such as the writer has been describing. Such a person is not worthy to retain his *office*, which means any charge or responsibility he may have been exercising.

Verse 9. The gist of this short verse is to wish for the death of the man.

Verse 10. These wishes seem cruel, but they were in line with other harsh measures that David sometimes used against those who opposed the Lord's people.

Verse 11. An *extortioner* is a man who forces another to pay an unreasonable sum in payment of a debt or in

the purchase of some necessity of life. *Spoil his labor* means to rob him of the fruits of his labor.

Verse 12. I would make the same comment on this verse as I did on v. 10.

Verse 13. It has always been a natural desire to have children. It is also usual to hope for a continuation of one's children (posterity) through the coming years. The severe wish, therefore, that David expresses in this verse is in line with some others already commented upon above.

Verse 14. As a help in studying this strange verse, let the reader see my comments at Ex. 20: 4-6 in the first volume of this Commentary. Not all of the remarks in that place will apply here, but they will throw some light on the subject. This verse does not mean to put any physical penalties on the present generation that had been imposed on their forefathers. However, since this generation was as wicked as the previous ones, they were to be punished with the unpleasant memory of their ancestors and the punishments that God inflicted upon them for their personal wickedness.

Verse 15. At first sight this verse might seem to contradict the preceding one. *Memory* is from *ZEKER* and Strong defines it, "a memento, abstractly, recollection; by implication, commemoration." The idea is that the people were not to be remembered as far as granting them any public memorials.

Verse 16. The reason for the foregoing severe wishes is stated here. The men had been cruel toward the poor and needy.

Verse 17. The Psalmist never advocated returning evil for good, but he did call for evil or unpleasant treatment to come upon the workers of evil as a punishment.

Verse 18. *Clothed himself* is figurative, meaning the wicked man enclosed and surrounded himself with his wickedness as if it were a garment. *Bowels* is from a word that is defined "the center" in the lexicon, and *bones* is from one that means the substance of the body as a whole. If water was to saturate the inner body and oil was made to penetrate the whole body, it would be a very undesirable condition. It describes the lot that David was wishing on this wicked man.

Verse 19. The antecedent of *it* is "cursing" in vs. 17, 18, which signifies a state of disgrace or humiliation.

The thought in the present verse is that the wicked man who delighted in disgracing others should himself be disgraced. As a garment is used to cover a man and a girdle to bind him, so the Psalmist wished the wicked man to be enclosed and bound by the same kind of disgrace he had been imposing on others.

Verse 20. *From the Lord* is a phrase that shows David was not planning any personal vengeance against his enemies. His idea was that all just punishment should come from the Lord. Paul taught the same thing in Rom. 12: 19 and he also cited Deut. 32: 35.

Verse 21. *Do thou for me* means for God to act on behalf of David. This was in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the preceding verses.

Verse 22. *Poor and needy* referred to his condition of affliction brought on by his enemies. He was in prosperous circumstances as far as temporal things were concerned.

Verse 23. These figures of speech again refer to the helpless situation surrounding the Psalmist. It was the result of hatred from his envious foes.

Verse 24. This weakness may have been literal and physical. However, it was not from lack of food or other necessities at hand. David often resorted to deep devotions when great distress and worry surrounded him. At such times he engaged in prolonged fasting (see 2 Sam. 12: 21, 22) which would cause the weakness he mentioned.

Verse 25. When his enemies saw the wretched condition of David's body, they took much satisfaction from it. They pretended to think it was some just punishment placed upon him for his sins and they reproached him for it.

Verses 26, 27. The finest sentiment in this paragraph is the motive the Psalmist expresses for asking the Lord to help him. It is that the people might know that He was the one doing the work. David was longing for relief from his troubles, but he wanted the Lord to have the glory for it.

Verse 28. *Curse* and *bless* are opposite terms as used in this place. The first means to wish evil and the second to wish good. *Ashamed* and *rejoice* also are used as opposite ideas. If the good wishes of the Lord were brought to pass it would confuse

(make ashamed) the enemy, but would cause the Psalmist to rejoice.

Verse 29. The thought in this verse is the same as that in the preceding one. The writer expresses it in figures as he did in v. 18, those of articles of clothing.

Verse 30. Again we see the distinction of making one's praise for God public; David would let it be known *among the multitude*.

Verse 31. *At the right hand* is a figure of speech. It means that the hand of the Lord will do the right thing on behalf of the poor, that they might be protected from the intended destruction at the hands of their enemies.

PSALMS 110

Verse 1. This verse is quoted at Matt. 22: 44; Mark 12: 36; Luke 20: 42; Acts 2: 34. The New Testament passages furnish the information that identify the persons in the verse. *The Lord* is the God of Heaven and *my Lord* is Christ. The whole verse is the direct speech of David, making a prophecy (although past tense in form) of the ascension and crowning of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. *Until* looks to the same period mentioned in Heb. 10: 12, 13, and is practically the same thought expressed by Peter in Acts 3: 21.

Verse 2. *The Lord* is the same person so termed in the preceding verse, and the pronoun *thy* refers to Christ. The thought is that God would empower his Son to become a successful ruler. The reign was to issue from Zion which was that part of Jerusalem that was headquarters for the kingdom of Christ.

Verse 3. One word in the lexicon definition for *willing* is "spontaneity." The force of the word lies chiefly in its contrast with the Mosaic system which included infants in its membership. Such members had no will in the matter but were enrolled in the list as soon as they were circumcised. In the system of Christ a person must be old enough to accept the service of his own choice before he can become a part of the institution. It is the same thought indicated in Heb. 8: 10, 11 which was cited from Jer. 31: 31-34. The added thought would be logical, therefore, that such persons would be expected to be *willing* to obey a ruler whom they had voluntarily accepted over them. *Day of thy power* means the Christian Dispensation. The material appointments of the taber-

nacle and temple service were designed "for glory and for beauty" (Ex. 28: 2). That was a type of the spiritual service that was to be rendered under Christ, and a service that is rendered willingly would indeed constitute the *beauties of holiness*. Dew appears in the morning and soon disappears as a general thing. As a contrast, the vigor and strength and freshness of the reign of Christ will continue throughout the "day" of the Dispensation; will continue as it was from *the womb of the morning*, or from the time the reign started. (Dan. 2: 44.)

Verse 4. The same identity of persons and pronouns should be observed here as in the preceding verses. God assured his Son that he was to be a priest, and confirmed the promise with an oath. *Will not repent* means that God will not change his mind. In v. 3 a contrast was shown between the priesthood of Christ and the Levitical priesthood. In the present verse another contrast is revealed. That is, the priesthood of Christ was to differ from that of the Levites in the same way that the Levitical priesthood differed from that of Melchisedek. I shall note only one of the types here, and will reserve the more detailed discussion of the subject for its proper place in the book of Hebrews. The family history of Melchisedek was purposely left out of the divine record. The apparent lack of any genealogy for Melchisedek was to be a type of the actual lack of it in the case of Christ. (Isa. 53: 8; Acts 8: 33.)

Verse 5. *The Lord* in this place is Christ, for he is the one who is at the right hand of God. *Strike through kings* refers to the authority of Christ over all other rulers, bringing them either into obedience to his law, or shaming them by his condemnation of them for their rebellion against his divine rule.

Verse 6. This is a highly figurative passage and means the triumph of Christ over all enemies of righteousness. *Judge among the heathen* has special reference to the universal domain of the Christian Dispensation. It was to include all nations, not the Jews only. The same thought is signified by the phrase *many countries*.

Verse 7. When a commander is engaged in a successful campaign into the territory of an enemy, he does not wish to take "time out" to return to

headquarters for provisions. If he is being successful in his invasion, he will find drinking water right in the path of the march. Such an exploit will not only supply the army with the physical necessity of the body, but will strengthen the moral by the encouraging prospect, so that all parties will *lift up the head* in the spirit of a conqueror.

PSALMS 111

Verse 1. Wholehearted service is the only kind that will be accepted by the Lord. This was taught by the Saviour of the world when he was on the earth. (Matt. 22: 37.) David was aware of this principle and declared that he would praise the Lord with his whole heart. *Assembly* referred to any gathering of good men, and the *congregation* had more specific reference to the nation as a whole when gathered officially.

Verse 2. The primary meaning of the original for *pleasure* is desire, and a man whose desire is to follow the works of the Lord will seek after them. Jesus taught that if a man would seek he should find. Anything that is worth having is worth seeking after with a sincere and earnest devotion of heart.

Verse 3. *Honorable* and *glorious* mean practically the same thing. When a distinction is to be made, the former refers to the actual character and the latter to the appearance. Everything pertaining to God is enduring, and the righteousness that is prompted by Him will endure throughout the ages.

Verse 4. The material creation of God is not the most important of his works, but the spiritual favors toward the children of men are the great works that the Psalmist was praising. His *compassion* refers to the state of his mind and his *graciousness* denotes the Lord's dealing with his creatures based on that compassion.

Verse 5. This verse is somewhat general and refers to the goodness of God, whether manifested in the form of temporal, or spiritual favors. He has promised such to all who fear or respect him, and he never forgets or breaks his promises.

Verse 6. *Heritage of the heathen* means the lands that had been held in possession by the alien nations. God made a covenant to give these things to his people, and it was fulfilled in

proportion as the people complied with the conditions or terms.

Verse 7. *Verity* means truthfulness and *judgment* means fairness; the works of God are according to both of these qualities. This not only applies to his actual dealings with the children of men, but also to the commandments regarding their conduct.

Verse 8. If anything is established it becomes mature, and the passing of the ages will not overthrow it. The works of God are established on truth and uprightness.

Verse 9. *Sent redemption* could be understood as both history and prophecy. God redeemed his ancient people in Egypt from their bondage and brought them out from under their oppression, and this was history at the time David wrote. Then as prophecy it would first apply to the return from Babylonian captivity, and next it was fulfilled when God sent his Son to offer redemption to all the world. The word *reverend* has been greatly misunderstood by many students of the Bible. We should be careful not to let one extreme drive us to another. The popular use of this word is wrong and indicates a tendency toward pride and the desire for personal distinction. I am as much opposed to such usage of the word as anyone can be. But I am also opposed to the extravagant language that has been the stock in trade argument (?) that is made with reference to the word, which is generally stated as follows: "The word *reverend* is used only once in the Bible, and then it is applied to God." This is a misleading assertion, for the word is a translation of the Hebrew word *YARE*, which occurs several hundred times in Bible. It has been rendered by such words as fear, terrible and dreadful. The inspired writers have used the word with reference to some of the worst of characters. The thought intended by the Psalmist is that God is holy and deserves to be respected.

Verse 10. *Fear* is from a Hebrew word that has practically the same meaning as the one for "reverend" in the preceding verse. Its principal idea is to have the proper respect for any character who is good, and to have a feeling of dread or terror for one who is evil. If we respect the Lord we will wish to learn about him, which is the reason David says it is the beginning of wisdom. People who obey the commandments of God thereby show

they have good judgment or good understanding. Praise that is prompted by the spirit of flattery is fickle and often changes over night. On the contrary, the praise of God is genuine and lasting.

PSALMS 112

Verse 1. *Praise ye the Lord* is abbreviated to the simple word "Hallelujah" in the margins of some Bibles and the religious dictionaries agree with it. A number of the Psalms begin with it and probably it was not an integral part of the text originally, but was a sort of heading or introduction to the chapter. The man who fears or respects the Lord will be blessed or happy. Such a man will logically take delight in the commandments of the Lord, and such a life can result only in happiness.

Verse 2. *His seed* refers to the posterity of the man described in the foregoing verse. It is here termed also the *generation of the upright*.

Verse 3. There is no practical difference between *wealth* and *riches*; they are used for emphasis. God does not offer material gain as an inducement for men to live right, but a righteous man has the prospect of such blessings as a result of right living. This lesson was taught by Jesus in Matt. 6: 33. The righteousness practiced by a man who fears God will be lasting because it is based on the truth.

Verse 4. As light will penetrate the darkness, so the influence of an upright man is enlightening to those about him. For explanation of *gracious* and *compassion* see my comments at Ch. 111: 4.

Verse 5. Some men may be *good* and yet not be able to lend unto others through lack of business management. The Psalmist explains the kind of good man he is considering in the close of the verse. It is the one who uses *discretion* or judgment in the management of his business affairs, always acting with fairness and due consideration.

Verse 6. Apply the comments at v. 3 as explanation of this verse.

Verse 7. *Heart is fixed* means his heart is settled in the Lord through an abiding faith. Such a person needs have no fear of *evil tidings*, for even death cannot sever him from the favor of God and the reward of a righteous life.

Verse 8. *Established* in this verse has the same force of meaning as *fixed* in the preceding verse. The reference to his enemies has the same bearing as the mention of *evil tidings* in the other verse.

Verse 9. This verse is still considering the righteous man, and makes a specific mention of part of his righteous conduct. It consists in helping the poor by the blessings that he had himself received from the Lord. The results of such a life will *endure for ever*. The original for *horn* has a various definition in the lexicon, but its simple meaning is "power." When used figuratively it indicates great strength and influence. The Psalmist specifies that when such qualities are possessed by a righteous man, the exaltation following will be an honorable one.

Verse 10. Wicked men are *grieved* or envious at the good standing of righteous men. To *melt away* means to decrease or diminish. The wicked desire prompted by envy will not endure the test of time.

PSALMS 113

Verse 1. For comments on the first clause see those at Ch. 112: 1. The servants of the Lord are those who have such respect for Him that they will wish to obey his law. It is further appropriate that such people will praise the Lord.

Verse 2. To be *blessed* means literally to be happy. It would not make good sense to say that the name of the Lord is happy. It is good usage, however, to say that the name of the Lord brings happiness to men. Such happiness will endure always.

Verse 3. In other words, all of man's waking hours should be filled with praise for the goodness of the Lord.

Verse 4. *High above all nations* means His power or authority is supreme. His glory is logically above the heavens because he was the creator of them all.

Verse 5. *Dwelleth on high* denotes the exalted position of His dwelling. For the distinctive meaning of *Lord* and *God* see the comments at Ch. 86: 12.

Verse 6. The pronoun *who* refers to the person who will observe the things of creation, and give God the credit for such works. True humility will prompt a man to make such an observation, while pride will cause him

to ignore all such evidences of divine power; even denying the existence of a Supreme Being.

Verse 7. When *dust* and *dunghill* are used figuratively, they refer to the humiliating situation of many poor people. It has special application when that situation has been imposed upon them by the more fortunate ones.

Verse 8. True merit is often hidden from view by the opposition of jealous enemies. God recognizes it, however, and will reward the humble and worthy persons with proper exaltation. Jesus taught this lesson in Matt. 23: 12 and many other places.

Verse 9. This does not mean that a barren woman would not have a house in which to live. The leading thought will be recognized by considering the verse as a whole. When God acts with compassion on behalf of a childless wife, it turns her into a happy house-keeper with children. The case of Hannah is a noted instance of it, recorded in 1 Samuel 1.

PSALMS 114

Verse 1. *Israel* and *house of Jacob* are the same since the event recorded in Gen. 32: 28. *Strange* means foreign or alien; the Egyptian language was foreign to Israel.

Verse 2. The pronoun *his* applies to the Lord, who was named at the close of the preceding verse. One meaning of *sanctuary* is "sacred thing." Judah was the most numerous of the 12 tribes and Israel stood as a name for all of the tribes. The whole congregation, therefore, was a sacred possession of God.

Verse 3. This verse is a figurative reference to the opening of the Red Sea for the Israelites in escaping from Egypt, and the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua.

Verse 4. Since we know that the mountains did not literally move we must look for the thought implied. The mountains and hills and valleys and all the parts of the land were made to serve the needs of God's people when they reached the promised land.

Verses 5, 6. David addressed these inanimate objects in the spirit of fable. Of course they could not speak, and the language was a challenge to the unbeliever to explain the wonderful control of these things in nature. The only way it could be ex-

plained would be to acknowledge the existence of the God of all creation.

Verse 7. The language of this verse was used in the same figurative manner as the preceding paragraph. However, instead of asking a challenging question, the Psalmist put it in the form of a command. *Tremble* means to be filled with awe and respect.

Verse 8. God brought water out of the rock to quench the thirst of the congregation. *Standing water* is figurative, meaning there was an abundance of it. See the accounts of this kind of performance in Ex. 17: 6 and Num. 20: 10, 11.

PSALMS 115

Verse 1. How different this is from the attitude of Moses and Aaron at the rock, referred to in the last verse of the preceding chapter. They took the glory for the deed performed on behalf of the congregation and were punished for the same.

Verse 2. The word *heathen* in the Old Testament is from *goi* in every place, and the first definition in Strong's lexicon is, "a foreign nation." It has also been rendered by Gentiles, nation, and people, in the King James version. The word would not have to mean idolaters, although about all of the "foreign nations" at the time David wrote had gone into the worship of false gods. The word in this and the following verses is used in the sense of idolaters. Since many of them worshiped the imaginary gods, it explains why they asked *where is now their (Israel's) God?*

Verse 3. In the preceding verse the pronoun for God is in the 3rd person because the writer was quoting the heathen. In this verse it is the 1st person (*our*) because the Psalmist is speaking for himself and his people. *In the heavens* is the answer to the question of the heathen in the last clause of the preceding verse.

Verses 4-8. It would have weakened the argument not to include all of these verses in one paragraph. It should be noted that 7 of the most important members of the human body are named in the description of the idols. The heathen people had drifted into gross ignorance of the true God, yet they had retained the impression that He was a being with body and parts similar in form to those of man. The fact that the writer is the one who has named them here

proves that this idea is correct. We observe that David makes no criticism of the items, except that the man-made gods which have them cannot make any use of them. *They that make them are like unto them.* This statement involves more thought than at first might be realized. No person can make anything that could have any more ability than the maker of it. So the fundamental thought is, since man cannot perform the functions named in any supernatural degree, neither can he make a god that can.

Verse 9. The "switch" from the 2nd to the 3rd person should not confuse us. The Psalmist is admonishing Israel to trust in the Lord, not in the dumb idols he had just described. Then, as a basis for such an admonition he states that this Lord is their (everybody's) help and shield, making a general application of the fact.

Verse 10. *House of Aaron* means the same as "Israel" in the preceding verse, and the same comments should apply here that were made at that place.

Verse 11. This verse is like the two foregoing ones except that it is more general as to the persons addressed.

Verse 12. *House of Israel* means the whole nation, and the *house of Aaron* refers specifically to that portion of the nation that composed the priesthood. That function belonged exclusively to Aaron and his descendants. (Ex. 28: 1; 2 Chr. 26: 18.)

Verse 13. *Small and great* refer to what might have been the personal advantages and disadvantages of the men involved. God does not show partiality in the bestowal of his favors. The apostle Peter said that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10: 34.)

Verse 14. *Increase* is from a word with a very general meaning. The outstanding thought is that God will continue to bless the person who is righteous.

Verse 15. The importance of a blessing would depend on the quality of the one bestowing it. The blessing of which David was writing comes from the Maker of heaven and earth, therefore it will be all the more important.

Verse 16. *Heaven and heavens* refer to the firmament where the birds fly, and the expanse in which the planets exist. Actually, all creation is the Lord's, so the expression here has a special significance. It is a contrast

with the last clause of the verse which declares the earth is given to the children of men, or is intended as the temporal dwelling place of man. This is not very favorable to the notion that the moon and other heavenly bodies were intended to be inhabited.

Verse 17. This verse and others like it are relied upon by the advocates of materialism. They are the people who teach that man is wholly mortal and all there is of him dies at the same time. This verse claims only that the dead praise not the Lord. We all believe that, for when the spirit leaves the body it results in the death of the body, and then, of course, the body cannot praise the Lord.

Verse 18. *To bless the Lord* means to acknowledge Him as the source of all blessings. *Praise the Lord* is from a Hebrew term sometimes rendered "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 116

Verse 1. The Lord heard the voice of David in that he granted his requests. For such a favor the Psalmist was led to love Him.

Verse 2. One favor encourages a man to ask for and expect another. *Inclined his ear* means the Lord lent a favorable ear to the prayer of David. For this reason he would continue to call upon God throughout life.

Verse 3. Since the word for *hell* has several phases of meaning, the thought here is that David's sorrows and pains were of the severest degree.

Verse 4. In the darkest hours of his distress, the Psalmist always called upon the Lord. *Deliver my soul* meant to rescue his entire being from the threatened injuries that were about to come from the hand of his enemies.

Verse 5. There is only a technical difference between *gracious* and *merciful*. The first has reference to the attitude of God's mind, and the second denotes the dealing with man as a result of that attitude. And then we would understand that the whole program would be *righteous* since it was from the Lord.

Verse 6. *Simple* is from PATHAIY and Strong defines it, "silly (i.e. seducible)." *Preserveth* is from SHAMAR, which Strong defines as follows: "properly to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally to protect, attend to, etc." David cited himself as an example of the Lord's protection, which indicates that he regarded the word with a more liberal

meaning than is generally attached to the word "silly." The main thought is that God will not suffer the unsuspecting and innocent characters to be taken advantage of by the better informed ones.

Verse 7. *Return unto thy rest* means about the same as bidding one's self to "take it easy," or to feel reassured. The basis for such a feeling is the bountiful dealing that the Lord had shown.

Verse 8. This verse is largely general and figurative, although some of the favors indicated had literally been bestowed upon David.

Verse 9. This verse is an indirect expression of David's to the effect that he would not be destroyed by his enemies. He fully expected to survive all attempts to destroy him and take him from the association of living beings.

Verse 10. In other words, the Psalmist was not merely desiring the things of which he had been speaking. Or, using a familiar proverb that "the wish was father of the thought," David was more settled than that in his conclusion. He believed the things he had named, and that was the reason he had been outspoken on the subject.

Verse 11. *Haste* is from a Hebrew word that includes the meaning of fear or distraction. In his distracted state of mind over the many afflictions imposed upon him, David had felt that about everybody was unreliable.

Verse 12. The goodness of God is so great that no human service can repay it. However, we are assured that it is not expected of man to match the Lord in any respect. All that is required is that we show our appreciation by a life of faithful service.

Verse 13. *Cup of salvation* is a figure of speech, meaning the gracious provision that God has made for the salvation of the world. But all of this provision will be of no avail unless it is received wholeheartedly. That is why David said he would *take the cup*, which denoted a willingness to accept it on the terms attached.

Verse 14. The cup of salvation is offered to man on certain conditions. Among them, in the days of the Mosaic system, were the ceremonies pertaining to the religious activities, and David lived under that system. That is why he stated he would pay his vows, for he had just agreed to

take the cup of salvation, and he knew that he would be required to do his part.

Verse 15. The word for *precious* is defined in the lexicon as "valuable," and it also is used in the sense of being weighty and important. The death of a righteous man would seem to be a matter to be deplored, not thought of as something valuable. The thought is derived from what such a death indicates. It is somewhat like the passage in Acts 5: 41 where the rejoicing was over their being "worthy" to suffer for Christ. On that principle the Psalmist regarded it as meaning so much for a man to die because of his devotion to a righteous life.

Verse 16. The leading thought in this verse is in the line of humility. David acknowledged himself to be a servant of God, and also placed his mother in that class by designating her as the handmaid of the Lord. The last clause of the verse refers generally to the many "tight places" from which the Lord had delivered him.

Verse 17. *Sacrifice of Thanksgiving* is similar in thought to Heb. 13: 15.

Verse 18. This is a repetition of verse 14.

Verse 19. Again the Psalmist is willing for the public to witness his devotions to God. The pronoun *thee* refers to the courts of the Lord's house. *Praise ye the Lord* is from a word that is sometimes rendered "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 117

Verse 1. While this is the shortest chapter in the Bible, it contains some of the most significant truths. Paul quoted the first verse in Rom. 15: 11 where he was discussing the universal love of God. The Jews were thus not the only people whom God loved and was willing to accept, but *all ye nations* were invited to join in His praise. Logically, then, if all people are invited to engage in the praise service to the Lord, they may expect to receive his spiritual favor.

Verse 2. Mercy and kindness are practically the same, and the two words are used for the sake of emphasis. God not only extends the favor toward his people, but does so in large measure; it is *great* toward them. Another important item in this situation is the quality of truth out of which all favors spring. It is also noted that this truth is not short-

lived; it *endureth for ever*. The chapter closes with the familiar expression that means "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 118

Verse 1. Appreciative servants of God will thank him for the simple fact of his goodness. That appreciation will be increased upon considering that the good attitude of the Lord is everlasting, thus holding out encouragement for the endless future.

Verses 2, 3. The goodness of God will be a fact whether anyone ever acknowledges it or not. But *Israel* (the congregation in general), and the *house of Aaron* (the priestly family in particular), are called upon to express their appreciation of the fact.

Verse 4. This verse is still more general than the preceding two. Anyone in any station of life who professes to fear God is asked to make acknowledgement of it.

Verse 5. *Large place* means a place of liberty, so that one would not be hampered by the conditions. That from which David had been relieved was a condition of distress. The Lord heard when the Psalmist prayed for deliverance and granted his petition.

Verse 6. *On my side* is worded "for me" in the marginal rendering which is correct. It is the same thought that Paul expressed in Rom. 8: 31.

Verse 7. This verse contains the same thought as the preceding one, except that it is more specific. The other merely said that God was for David; this shows to what extent he was for him namely, he helped him in his time of need.

Verses 8, 9. Whether one considers man in general, or the special classes such as princes, it is better to trust in the Lord than in them.

Verse 10. Various peoples had opposed David and envied him because of his exalted position. *Destroy them* is rendered "cut them off" in the margin of the Bible, and the Lexicon agrees with it. The meaning is that he would cut short the attempts of his enemies to destroy him.

Verse 11. *They* means the same evil people referred to in the preceding verse. To *compass* means to surround for the purpose of capturing someone. These enemies of David thought to take such an advantage of him, but he expected to *destroy* (cut short) them.

Verse 12. The comparison is not especially to the bee as an individual insect, but rather to the fact that bees swarm in great numbers. But regardless of their great number, the enemies of David were to be *destroyed* (cut off or cut short).

Verse 13. *Thou* refers to the enemy who had been persecuting David. The wicked intention of the foe had been cut short by the Lord.

Verse 14. *Strength and song* is a fine combination. Because David was strengthened by the Lord, he would praise Him in song. The importance of that strength was indicated by the fact that it brought salvation to David.

Verse 15. *Tabernacles* is used in the sense of assemblies or groups. Such groups who are righteous only have the right to rejoice in salvation. Paul taught a like principle in Phil. 3: 1. *Right hand of the Lord* means that whatever is done by the hand of the Lord is right.

Verse 16. *Right hand* is explained in the preceding verse.

Verse 17. David's enemies would wish him to die. Their expectations were to be disappointed, for David was assured of continuing in life, and of being permitted to declare the works of God to the generations to come.

Verse 18. David believed that the opposition of his enemies was an instrument in God's hands to test his faith. He was aware that it would not go far enough to slay him.

Verse 19. *Gates of righteousness* is a figure of speech, meaning the ways of right doing. It is similar in thought to the expression "door of opportunity." The direct meaning of David was that as the Lord showed him the good and the right way, he would gladly walk therein all the days of his life.

Verse 20. The Psalmist identifies the *gates of righteousness* of the preceding verse by the words *gates of the Lord* in this verse. He furthermore declares that the righteous will enter thereat.

Verse 21. David was ever ready to give God the praise for all blessings. *Become my salvation* here has special reference to his escape from the hands of his enemies.

Verse 22, 23. I have put these verses into one paragraph because it requires both to complete the quotation

of Jesus in Matt. 21: 42 and Mark 12: 10. Since our Saviour made the application to himself we know we are correct in considering this passage as a prophecy of Christ and his work on earth. It had special application to the action of the Jewish people in rejecting Christ, whom God afterward exalted to be the head piece in the great edifice of salvation, the church. *This is the Lord's doing* means that it would be the Lord of Heaven who would reverse the work of the Jews and exalt him whom they had tried to debase. No wonder that it was such a marvelous thing in their eyes, for they were completely baffled in their wicked designs.

Verse 24. *Day* is from *yom*, and a part of Strong's definition is, "figuratively a space of time defined by an associated term." In the King James version it has been rendered by day, time, age, season, space, year, and many others. Thus we need not just think of a 24-hour period, but of an age or epoch. The context shows the Psalmist was making a prediction of the Christian Dispensation, which was ushered into being by the exaltation of this head stone over all things to the church. *Made* is from a Hebrew word that has been rendered by such English words as accomplish, appoint, bring forth, fashion, grant and prepare. Hence the verse means that God ordained the day or age or period of Christ's reign, and all of us should rejoice in it.

Verse 25. Having interrupted his line for a prophecy concerning his illustrious Descendant, the Psalmist resumes where he had stopped. The *prosperity* he requested was not the temporal kind for he already had that in abundance. He meant for the Lord to prosper him in his conflicts with the foes of righteousness.

Verse 26. The first clause is a general statement that could have been said in any age of the world. It has no specific application as to when or by whom the coming would be done. *You* refers to anyone who had qualified under the terms of the first clause. The blessing upon all such was to proceed from the house of the Lord.

Verse 27. For the peculiar meanings of *God* and *Lord* see the comments at Ch. 86: 12. When anything is bound it is secure. As a figure, indicating the steadfastness of his devotions to God, the Psalmist bids

the sacrifices to be fastened to the altar with cords.

Verse 28. Again see the meaning of *God* at Ch. 86: 12.

Verse 29. This verse is a summing up of the words of adoration with which the chapter abounded. God's goodness is worthy to be praised because it includes mercy, and the mercy is the kind that never faileth.

PSALMS 119

General remarks. The main subject of this long chapter is the Word of God. With exception of 3, 37, 90, 121, 122 and 132, each verse of the psalm makes direct mention of that Word under one of the following terms: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, word, judgments and ordinances. The chapter is divided into 22 sections of 8 verses each, and the word that stands as a heading of each section is one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, thus giving us the spelling in English letters of the complete Hebrew alphabet. I shall make brief comments on the several verses.

Verse 1. *Blessed* is from a Hebrew word that Strong defines as "happy." We should include the idea of the future in the definition. Most of the happiness of the righteous is in the future, although they will be happy now over the prospect of what is in store for them. God's word is designated by *law* in this verse, and the blessing or happiness is upon those who walk according to that law. Those who do so are regarded as *undefiled* in God's sight.

Verse 2. To keep the *testimonies* means to observe the requirements contained therein. They are called by this name because they have been tested and proved true.

Verse 3. The pronoun *his* refers to the Lord in the first verse. *His ways* means the manner of life that is expected of the servants of God.

Verse 4. *Precepts* is used 21 times in this chapter and I will quote the definition in Strong's lexicon for the original. "properly, appointed, i.e. a mandate (of God; plural only, collectively for the law)." The leading idea is of a rule of action that has been fixed by some authority that is specific in form but general in its application. To keep them, therefore, means to observe diligently the specific rule of action.

Verse 5. *Statutes* is another term for the Word of God and it is used 22 times in this chapter. Its meaning is practically the same as that of precepts, so I will not repeat the definition. See the comments on "precepts" in verse 4.

Verse 6. To be ashamed means to be confused and defeated. Such a state will be avoided by having respect unto the *commandments*. This is another term for the Word of God, and carries the idea of an order or positive requirement.

Verse 7. *Judgments* is used as one of the terms for the Word of God because it means a verdict or decision. God has always used the proper judgment in forming his Word for the guidance of mankind. When a man is brought to realize this fact he will do the upright thing by giving the Lord due praise for it.

Verse 8. For *statutes* see the comments at v. 5. David did not believe that even a keeper of them could entirely avoid all testing afflictions; he asked only that he be not *utterly* forsaken.

Verse 9. God's word is designated by a Hebrew term that is here rendered by the simple English one, which is *word*. It is used 38 times in this chapter and indicates that God said or spoke the document intended as a rule of action, rather than merely influencing that action of man by bodily contact or power over him. God has always proposed to lead man into righteous living by appealing to his intelligence; by saying something to him. In this verse the Psalmist is thinking especially of the young man who should cleanse his way by hearing what God says to him.

Verse 10. Wholeheartedness is the main thought in this verse. A half-hearted profession will cause one to wander from the *commandments*.

Verse 11. It will do very little good to depend upon a manual turning to the Word of God if we do not retain it in the heart. That is why David hid it there that he might always be fortified against sin. It is the same thought that is suggested in 1 Peter 3:15, in which one has the Lord dwelling in him through the Truth.

Verse 12. *Bless* in this place is from a word that means to praise and adore. Such adoration would logically prompt one to desire a knowledge of His *statutes*.

Verse 13. The *judgments* are defined at V. 7. David had such faith in them that he wished to repeat them for the instruction of others.

Verse 14. There will not be any additional term introduced for the Word of God until verse 91. I therefore request the reader to recognize the particular term in each verse, which will be italicized, and see its definition at the proper place near the beginning of the chapter. Paul bade Christians to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1), and David said he would rejoice in the Lord's *testimonies*.

Verse 15. Both parts of this verse are related to the same thought. If one meditates on the *precepts* of the Lord, it will cause him to show respect to the ways of life that are expected of the servants of the Lord.

Verse 16. We have the interesting circumstances of seeing two of the terms used in this verse. It is logical that if one takes delight in the sacred *statutes*, he will not forget the divine *word* coming from the same source.

Verse 17. The highest motive for wanting to live is expressed in this verse. It is that the Psalmist would have opportunity to keep the *word*.

Verse 18. This meant for God to help David see the beautiful things revealed in the *law*. The thought for general consideration is that if people would earnestly search the Sacred Volume they would be surprised at the *wondrous things* found therein.

Verse 19. A stranger is a foreigner within the meaning of the word here, as the words of a familiar song, "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home," indicates. Such a person would feel the need of the holy *commandments*.

Verse 20. *My soul breaketh* means he was overwhelmed with desire for God's *judgments*.

Verse 21. A proud man is one who feels above the *commandments* of God. Such a man will be cursed and rebuked by the Author of those *commandments*.

Verse 22. David seldom asked for a favor from God without including some condition on which he expected it. The removal of reproach and contempt was to be as a reward for his keeping the divine *testimonies*.

Verse 23. The original for princes is defined, "a head person (of any rank or class)." Hence it does not always mean officials, but leading

characters in a community. Such persons often feel important and are disposed to persecute good men like David. But the Psalmist met the situation by meditating in the holy *statutes*.

Verse 24. The Psalmist said in the first chapter that the happy man was the one who delighted in the law of the Lord. He now says that he delights in the *testimonies*, and also that he takes counsel or instruction from them.

Verse 25. *Cleaveth unto the dust* is a figure of speech, meaning the low condition to which the enemies of David were trying to bring him. But he asked to be quickened or enlivened by the *word*.

Verse 26. *Declared my ways* means he had professed or declared how he wanted to conduct himself. As a guide in such a life, David wished to be taught the divine *statutes*.

Verse 27. The first clause of this verse is like the preceding verse in thought, only the Psalmist uses the term *precepts* that he wished to understand. After having understood them, he proposed to talk about them to others.

Verse 28. Soul is used for the whole being. *Melith* signifies a state of depression or discouragement. But David never quite gave up hope. When things looked very dark and trying he always turned to the *word* for help.

Verse 29. There had been so much falsehood devised against David by his enemies that he prayed for the removal of all such activities. Granting him the *law* does not imply that God would deny anyone the benefit of it. The Psalmist meant he craved the help of that law in combatting those who were devising falsehoods against him.

Verse 30. In this verse the Psalmist considers the *way of truth* as the equivalent of walking after the *judgments* of the Lord.

Verse 31. A mere profession of interest in a thing, or an occasional use of it, will not avail very much, hence David said he stuck or clung to the divine *testimonies*. On that condition he felt free to pray for help in avoiding an experience of shame.

Verse 32. To *run the way* means to travel it eagerly, referring to the way pointed out in the *commandments*. Enlarging the heart has about

the same thought as opening up an avenue of opportunity. Paul wrote along the same line of thought in 2 Cor. 6: 11.

Verse 33. This verse is another prayer for instruction. David craved to know the *statutes* of the Lord, and promised to keep them always.

Verse 34. A man might have a great deal of understanding of some kind and still not be on the right course. David desired that which the Lord would give him, which would come through the divine *law*. He promised to give it wholehearted observance, for he realized that knowing the law alone would not suffice. Jesus brought out that same great lesson in John 13: 17.

Verse 35. In the 23rd Psalm it was declared that God would lead his sheep in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. The same thought is suggested by the path of the Lord's *commandments*. With such a motive anyone would take delight in traveling over such a pathway.

Verse 36. A man's heart cannot be inclined in two directions at the same time. (Matt. 6: 24.) David places the way of God's *testimonies* as leading in one direction, and the way of covetousness as leading in the opposite direction.

Verse 37. A thing of vanity is something that is useless even though it may have a showy appearance. To quicken means to enliven, and the Psalmist wished to be active in the way of life ordained by the Lord.

Verse 38. The original for stablish means to "rise." The Psalmist means for God to cause his *word* to rise or have a standing before him, since he was devoted to the attitude of fear or reverence for Him.

Verse 39. The reproach that David feared was a threat from his enemies. He believed that God could divert the course of that reproach with his *judgments*.

Verse 40. To long after the *precepts* is similar to taking delight in them. (Ch. 1: 2.) To quicken means to enliven, and such a quickening would be in righteousness.

Verse 41. Salvation does not come to mankind on the ground of merit, but through the mercy of God. This truth is an outstanding one that is taught in the holy *word*.

Verse 42. By trusting in the *word* the Psalmist would be prepared to

answer his enemies. We should compare this with the teaching in 1 Pe. 3: 15.

Verse 43. No one who loves God would think he would deprive a man of the privilege of speaking the *word*. This was just David's way of expressing his desire and determination to continue speaking it. One of his motives was his confidence in the *judgments* of God as revealed in the divine revelation.

Verse 44. *For ever and ever* is an emphatic form of saying it would continue to the end of life. David pledged himself to keep the *law* that long.

Verse 45. *Liberty* means to have plenty of room or opportunity to walk. That can be said of one who seeks to find the Lord's *precepts*.

Verse 46. The Psalmist has frequently expressed the sentiments of this verse. His confidence in the *testimonies* of God was so great that he wished others to know about them, neither was he ashamed to speak about them even in the hearing of great men. Jesus taught the same idea in Mark 8: 38.

Verse 47. It is not enough merely to tolerate the *commandments* of God, but a true servant will delight in them. Of course we would expect to find delight in anything we love or have set our affection upon.

Verse 48. Here is another verse that uses two of the terms under consideration, *commandments* and *statutes*. To lift up the hands means to do something about it, not merely make the profession of being interested in the great instrument of right living.

Verse 49. David uses the word "remember" in the sense of a petition only, not that he thinks God ever forgets. The prayer is made because of his hope in the *word*.

Verse 50. It is comparatively easy to bear affliction if one has a reliable basis of support. David was quickened or enlivened by the *word* of God.

Verse 51. Pride is often a symptom of envy at another's good fortune. As a solace the proud man may pretend to belittle the greatness of the other person and he will deride or ridicule him. All of such treatment, however, could not induce David to give up the *law* of God, for he believed that in it there was true greatness.

Verse 52. The record of the Lord's dealings with man was known to

David. In that record he observed the form of divine *judgments* and took comfort from it.

Verse 53. Wickedness does not always consist in outright acts of violence. Instead, it is an act of wickedness to forsake the *law* of God. When men do that it may cause the friends of righteousness to be filled with horror.

Verse 54. Pilgrimage means that David regarded himself as only a stranger here on the earth. While passing his days on the earth he composed songs and had them used to reflect the *statutes* of the Lord.

Verse 55. To remember the name of the Lord in the night is similar to the thought in ch. 1: 2. After a man would pass a meditative night over the name of the Lord, he would be likely to pass the next day keeping the *law* in his actions.

Verse 56. *This* refers to the situation described in the preceding verse. David attributes such a state to his keeping the *precepts* of the Lord.

Verse 57. Portion means allotment or share. The most valuable possession one can have, in David's estimation, is that which comes from the Lord. That was the reason he had kept the *words* of the Lord.

Verse 58. In his appeals for the favor of God the Psalmist had been wholehearted. Paul taught practically the same idea when he said for Christians to come boldly unto the throne of grace (Heb. 4: 16). That same mercy of which Paul wrote was expected by the Psalmist because it was according to the *word* which offered that mercy.

Verse 59. *Thought on my ways* means the same as "walk circumspectly" (Eph. 5: 15). When David did this he realized the need for being guided by the *testimonies*.

Verse 60. To make haste does not have reference to speed in action, but to a readiness of mind. It prompted the Psalmist to keep the *commandments*.

Verse 61. Bands means companies, and the thing of which David was complaining was the forming of conspiracy by his enemies. Those who are wicked enough to plot against a righteous man would not likely care anything about the principles of the *law* of God. The meaning of the clause is that even the persecutions of his enemies could not distract the attention of David from the *law*.

Verse 62. A righteous man will not be awakened from midnight sleep by any disturbances of conscience. But other conditions might disturb his sleep, and at such times he will find comfort in going to the Lord and thanking him for his righteous judgments; for the benefits he was deriving from them.

Verse 63. David's choice of associates were those who revered the Lord, and that meant those whose reverence was proved by their keeping His precepts.

Verse 64. The Psalmist believed that all of the blessings enjoyed by the people of the earth were indications of God's mercy. He wished to return the proper conduct in appreciation for those mercies, and for guidance wanted to know the statutes.

Verse 65. Not only was the dealing of God well toward David, but it was in harmony with the general principles taught in the word.

Verse 66. A man might have knowledge but not possess good judgment in applying it. David prayed for the Lord to give him both, seeing he already had faith in the commandments and the correctness of their requirements.

Verse 67. *Went astray* does not especially refer to actions that were considered as sinful although it could include that meaning. It is true that David did sin and had to be corrected by afflictions. But the statement is also one of a great principle regarding the discipline necessary to hold a man in the line of duty. The Psalmist was always an honest and humble servant of God, and realized that his afflictions had influenced him in keeping the word in connection with his daily walk.

Verse 68. There is a familiar saying that a man ought to "practice what he preaches." We should not expect God to do that exactly since he is divine and man is human. However, David says that God not only teaches his statutes, but does good things himself.

Verse 69. *Forged* is from TAPHAL which Strong defines, "a primitive root; properly to stick on as a patch; figuratively, to impute falsely." The thought is that David's enemies had besmirched him with lies. The mistreatment, however, did not prevent him from keeping the Lord's precepts.

Verse 70. The pronoun *their* stands for the "proud" in the preceding verse.

Fat is from TAPHASH and Strong's definition is, "to be thick; figuratively to be stupid." *Grease* is from a word that refers to the richest part of any animal. That being the part without muscles, it would be inactive and a fitting illustration of a man who is stupid or inactive as to any great usefulness. In contrast with such a character, David was actively delightful in God's law so that he meditated thereon day and night.

Verse 71. This verse takes the same comments as v. 67 except it uses the term *statutes* in referring to the same subject that is under consideration in this chapter.

Verse 72. The Psalmist was a possessor of great wealth, yet he did not value it as he did the law of God. He expressed the same sentiment in ch. 19: 10.

Verse 73. This verse is logical in its reasoning. Since God made and fashioned man, he certainly knows what is best for his manner of life. Consequently, David craved an understanding of the Lord's commandments.

Verse 74. David's respect for the word caused him also to respect those who feared its Author. He intended to show that respect in such desirable measure when they met the Psalmist that it would make them glad.

Verse 75. The main thought in this verse is the justice of the afflictions that had been suffered to come upon David. Since they were beneficial to him, their infliction proved that God was doing the part of a faithful Friend when he suffered them to come. Consideration for all these truths caused him to affirm that the judgments of God are right.

Verse 76. When one is tortured with fears of what the enemy might be plotting, he is hungry for the comfort that is genuine. That comfort that would come from the merciful kindness of God would certainly bring the support that could come from no other source. David had reason to expect this relief because it had been promised in the word which did not contain any false promises.

Verse 77. This verse is much after the same thought as the preceding one. *Tender* is not in the original as a separate word. *Mercies* is from RACHAM, which is defined by Strong by the simple word "compassion." The motive for requesting this favor from God was David's delight in the

law of God, the subject of his meditations.

Verse 78. A proud man is not one who is ashamed. David means for him to be brought to shame as a punishment for his wicked pride. These enemies had dealt perversely or stubbornly with David without a cause. And again he looked for support and solace by meditating on the *precepts* of the Lord.

Verse 79. For comments on the first part of this verse see those at v. 74. To know the Lord's *testimonies* in an available sense means to fear Him.

Verse 80. To be sound means to be established in the *precepts* of God. In that condition the Psalmist felt that he would not be ashamed or confused.

Verse 81. David's whole being was hungering and thirsting for the salvation that comes from God. To that end he relied on the *word* for instruction.

Verse 82. This is some more figurative language, denoting the earnestness of the Psalmist in his desire for the *word* of the Lord. His particular desire was for comfort in his afflictions and persecutions at the hands of his enemies.

Verse 83. Bottles were made of skins of animals, and when new were moist and pliable and strong. (Matt. 9: 17.) But when old or if subjected to smoke or fumes they would become shriveled and weak. David compared himself in the midst of afflictions to a bottle in the midst of smoke or fumes. Nevertheless, he remembered the *statutes* of the Lord and took courage.

Verse 84. The Psalmist means in his questioning, how many more days of persecution must he suffer? He believed that relief would come whenever God saw fit to apply his law or execute his *judgment* against the enemies.

Verse 85. Pride is often manifested by a rebellious spirit against those who are righteous. *Dugged a pit* means they plotted to bring about the downfall of David, and the reason they had such wicked desires was because they were not keeping the *law*.

Verse 86. *Faithful* is rendered "faithfulness" in the margin which expresses the thought correctly. The meaning is that obedience to the *commandments* will cause a man to be a true servant of God. The pronoun *they* stands for the personal enemies

of David, so he prayed for the Lord to help him.

Verse 87. *They* again refers to David's enemies who had almost brought him to the brink of ruin. But he clung to the *precepts* of the Lord and thus won the victory.

Verse 88. To quicken means to enliven or cheer up another, and the lovingkindness of the Lord will have that effect on a man. With such an incentive, David felt assured that he would keep and observe the *testimony* that had been spoken by the Lord.

Verse 89. *Settled* is from NATSAB, and the following is the definition: "A primitive root; to station, in various applications (literal or figurative)." —Strong. The verse means that God's *Word* is stationed or established in heaven for ever. If it were possible for infidels to destroy every copy of the Bible that is on the earth, that would not get rid of it. The Sacred Text is repositied in the eternal vault to which no enemy will ever have access. However, I am not in the least uneasy that the copies of the *Word* will all be destroyed. Many attempts have been made to do so but all have failed. At the present time the Bible is placed at the top of the list of "best sellers" by those who are unbiased, and whose chief motive is one of statistical accuracy and not one prompted by any partisan religious interests.

Verse 90. Faithfulness is used in the sense of keeping one's word. God made the earth for man's temporal abode and has promised to preserve it as long as it is needed. At the time David wrote the earth was at least 3000 years old and had been keeping up its daily and annual revolutions with the accuracy of a perfect time-piece.

Verse 91. This verse introduces the one additional term referred to earlier in the chapter, which is *ordinances*. It is from MISPEAT and Strong defines it, "properly a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a particular right or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style." This is the only place this Hebrew word is used for *ordinance* in this chapter, but it is a word with

such a comprehensive meaning that I have copied the definition in full. *They* is a plural pronoun and refers to the items of God's control over the universe.

Verse 92. There was no physical connection between the *law* and the afflictions of David. But he would have given up in despair and thus perished (figuratively speaking) had he not been encouraged by the moral support of the law.

Verse 93. This verse is similar in thought to the preceding one. The *precepts* of the Lord had quickened or enlivened the morale of the Psalmist.

Verse 94. *Save me* did not have reference to spiritual things especially, but to relief from the afflictions of the enemy. The basis on which David expected the Lord to help him was the relation between them, and the fact he had sought His *precepts*.

Verse 95. *Have waited* means the wicked had been spying and watching to detect something in the life of David for which they could ruin him. He had defeated their expectation by observing the Lord's *testimonies* in his daily life.

Verse 96. This verse is a contrast between the best there is in the world and the *commandments* of God. The first is limited while the second is broad.

Verse 97. A person might occasionally think about a matter in which he does not have any interest, but if he loves a thing he will think about it constantly. That was why David passed whole days meditating on the *law* of the Lord.

Verse 98. The wisest man in the world is the one who knows the *commandments* of God. Moses taught this truth in Deut. 4: 5, 6, and the same principle is set forth in other places in the Bible too numerous to cite here. The pronoun *they* refers to the commandments just mentioned by the Psalmist. In order for them to benefit him, however, they must be ever with him as his constant rule of life.

Verse 99. *Teachers* is from a Hebrew word that is defined "a goad," and is used in reference to those who would insist that David observe his obligations but who do not attend to them in their own lives. They were somewhat like the persons of whom Paul wrote in Rom. 2: 21. David set a better example than was ever demanded by these "teachers," because

his manner of life was the result of meditation on the *testimonies*.

Verse 100. This verse is much like the preceding one except the contrast is made with the *ancients*. It was thought because a man was old that he would possess superior wisdom. That would be true as a general thing, but even "age and experience" will not contribute as much understanding to a person as comes from keeping the divine *precepts*.

Verse 101. A man cannot travel over the evil ways of the world and at the same time be keeping the requirements of the *word* of the Lord.

Verse 102. A man's faithfulness to the things he has been taught sometimes is affected by his confidence in his teacher. David had clung to the *judgments* of God because he had been taught by Him.

Verse 103. The Psalmist had taught practically this same truth concerning the *words* of God in ch. 19: 10. Please see the comments at that place.

Verse 104. The understanding coming through the *precepts* of God was set forth in vs. 98-100 above. Such knowledge so exposed all false ways that David hated them.

Verse 105. This verse is a very similar saying and full of beautiful thought. When one has to make his way through a pathway that is somewhat obscure, and that is beset with dangerous snares and pitfalls, he feels the need of a light to guide him in his walk. The *word* was that light for David and will be so for all who will accept it.

Verse 106. Oaths were permitted in the Old Testament but not in the New. (Matt. 5: 33-37; James 5: 12.) David had made an oath that he would keep the *judgments* of the Lord. He here affirmed that he would not break it and thus violate Lev. 19: 12.

Verse 107. The Psalmist asked to be quickened, which means to be enlivened or cheered up, by the consolation in the *word*.

Verse 108. Some sacrifices were literal or material, such as the offering of animals or products of the ground. Others consisted in the offerings of praise and thanksgiving. Paul set forth this truth in Heb. 13: 15. In reward for such offerings David expected to be taught the *judgments* of the Lord.

Verse 109. The first clause is a figure of speech, somewhat like saying

"my heart was in my mouth," meaning that the danger of death was very near. In all such circumstances the Psalmist relied upon the *law* for help.

Verse 110. A snare is a trap that is generally set near a beaten path and not right in it because such a path would be clean of anything with which to hide the trap. But being to one side it could be covered in the hope that the traveler would leave the path through the spirit of adventure or perhaps of thoughtlessness and then be caught. The literal meaning of "err" is to wander to one side. The clauses of this verse are hence logical, for David says he did not *err* (wander) from the Lord's *precepts*; he kept within the strait and narrow way.

Verse 111. *Heritage* is used in the sense of a possession, and the Psalmist considers the *testimonies* as a valuable inheritance that he is holding for ever.

Verse 112. It is not the most natural thing for a human being to prefer the spiritual rules of life. But David acted upon his own heart and inclined or trained it for the performance of the *statutes* of the Lord. This service was not for a brief period only but *unto the end*.

Verse 113. Vain thoughts are those that are useless and not containing anything solid. In contrast with these things David loved the *law* of God.

Verse 114. *Hiding place* and *shield* mean the same and are used figuratively. The Psalmist meant that he hoped to be cared for amid all his trials by the *word*.

Verse 115. *Depart from me* is said as an indirect disowning of evil characters. In contrast with this David said he would keep the *commandments* of God. This teaches that one cannot harbor or endorse evilworkers while keeping the commendments of the Lord. Jesus taught the same thing in Matt. 6: 24.

Verse 116. God will not uphold an unrighteous man and David knew it. He therefore prayed to be upheld according to His *word*. A hope based on such foundation would be permanent and not one of which a person would be ashamed.

Verse 117. This verse has the same thoughts as the preceding one, except that it uses a different term which is *statutes*.

Verse 118. To *err* from the *statutes* means to step aside from them. Those who did so were trodden down by the Lord. Sometimes the truth may be handled in such a manner that the hearer will be deceived. The characters David had in mind, however, were bold and misled their hearers with direct falsehood.

Verse 119. The wicked persons were not made literally to disappear, for they were at that very hour alive and tormenting David. But he was speaking prospectively of the fate of all the wicked. They were destined to be brought to ruin while the Psalmist would survive to enjoy the blessings provided for in the *testimonies* of God.

Verse 120. The testing afflictions that God suffered to come upon David were often very severe. For that reason he trembled, which means he was on the alert in expectation of them. To fear and be afraid of the *judgments* as used here meant that he had respect for them to such an extent that he wished to observe them.

Verse 121. The Psalmist really had been a good ruler and judged his people rightly. On this ground he asked the Lord for protection against his oppressors.

Verse 122. The request in this verse is similar to that of the preceding one. "Proud" is from a word that means to be arrogant or overbearing.

Verse 123. *Eyes fail* means he was looking eagerly, and *salvation* means relief from his oppression. The Psalmist relied upon God's righteous *word* for such relief, and for safe guidance through the storms of life.

Verse 124. David never did ask for absolute freedom from trials; he only asked for them to be sent in mercy. In order to conduct himself properly amid the conflicts before him, he desired to be taught the *statutes* of the Lord.

Verse 125. A powerful king was placing himself in the class of servants. Of course such a person would want to render acceptable service, and to do so he should understand how to observe the Master's *testimonies*.

Verse 126. *It is time*, etc., should not be considered as an impertinent speech of David. His meaning was that an instance of great need had come for God to vindicate his *law*, because the enemies had broken it.

Verse 127. The value here placed on the Lord's *commandments* is the same as in ch. 19: 10; see the comments at that place.

Verse 128. It is right to hate the false ways of evil men even though we should love the deluded travelers in those ways. In harmony with those principles we should consider all the *precepts* of God as being right.

Verse 129. *Wonderful* in this verse means outstanding, and David placed that estimate on the *testimonies* of God. By the same token, the man who would keep them would be made into an outstanding character in God's sight. For this reason the Psalmist resolved to keep them with his soul or whole being.

Verse 130. *The simple* does not mean people who are unintelligent, but those who are uninstructed. The entrance or acceptance of the *word* will bring the light of instruction to all people if they will open their hearts to receive it.

Verse 131. *Open my mouth* is a figure of speech, meaning that the Psalmist was as hungry for spiritual food as the birdling was for material, when it opens its mouth eagerly to receive the nourishment ready to be dropped into it. The food that David was craving was the *commandments* of the Lord.

Verse 132. "As thou usest" does not imply that God ceased to extend mercy to those who love Him. The marginal rendering is "according to the custom." It has always been the manner of the Lord to show mercy to good men and David was praying for it now.

Verse 133. This verse should always be considered in connection with ch. 37: 23. God does not order the steps of man in any direct manner independent of teaching. Instead, he does it through the directions in the *word*.

Verse 134. David had such a spirit of justice and fairness that he did not expect favors of God unconditionally. He asked for deliverance from oppression of evil men, but promised to keep the Lord's *precepts*.

Verse 135. *Face to shine* means to look with favor. As return for such a mercy David offered to be taught the *statutes* of the Lord.

Verse 136. *Rivers of waters* is a figure of speech, meaning that the Psalmist had not fully used his eyes in keeping with the *law*, and as a

result he had been brought to tears of shame. The event of himself and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11: 2) was a noted instance of misusing his eyes, and the 51st Psalm indicates his anguish and tears over it.

Verse 137. No request is expected in this verse. The Psalmist makes another reference to the excellencies of God's *judgments*.

Verse 138. The same kind of praise is meant in this verse as was given in the preceding one. The term *testimonies* is used and David says they are *righteous* and *faithful*. That means that obedience to them will result in righteousness and faithfulness in the lives of those who observe them.

Verse 139. Strong defines "consumed" as being either literal or figurative; the latter is the meaning in this verse. David had been so active in his zeal for the *words* of God that his enemies had all but destroyed him in their hatred.

Verse 140. The general definition of *pure* is "unmixed." The marginal rendering here is "tried or refined." Both definitions amount to the same thought. If a metal has been put through the refinery until all the dross has been burned out it naturally will be unmixed. That condition is used to illustrate the quality of the *word* of God. There is this exception, however, that God's word was always unmixed.

Verse 141. David means that his enemies regarded him as of little importance. To despise means to belittle another, and the evil men in that day were envious of David's true greatness, so they consoled themselves by making light of him. But such evil treatment could not make him forget the *precepts* of the Lord.

Verse 142. Not only is God everlastingly righteous, but those who obey Him will reap the benefits of right living even to everlasting life. The key to these conclusions is in the truth of the *law* that had been approved by the power of God.

Verse 143. Trouble and anguish may disturb our earthly interests, but that need not hinder our delight in the Lord's *commandments*. In fact, in times of distress is when we should take the greatest delight in such a document.

Verse 144. The reader will please apply the comments at v. 142 to this

one. The difference is that the term here is *testimonies*.

Verse 145. This means that David's cry or prayer to God was wholehearted. And being thus wholly devoted to the Lord, the Psalmist would logically keep the *statutes*.

Verse 146. David stated a good motive for wanting to be preserved from his enemies. It would give him opportunity to keep the *testimonies*.

Verse 147. To prevent means to preclude. David prevented or arose before dawn to go to God in prayer because of his hope in the *word*.

Verse 148. The same word is used as in the foregoing verse, only this time David preceded the night with his prayer. Also, this time he began meditating in the *word* before the night had come, doubtless to continue into the night according to ch. 1: 2.

Verse 149. The Psalmist's cry was not based on his own merit, but on the Lord's lovingkindness. He wished to be quickened or enlivened by the Lord's *judgment*.

Verse 150. The pronoun *they* refers to David's personal enemies. *Draw nigh* means they were approaching David, and their motive was to do him some mischief. The reason for their evil design was their disconnection from the *law* of God.

Verse 151. The way to be near the Lord is to keep his *commandments*. That is because they are according to truth, and the Lord is the source of all true principles.

Verse 152. *Known of old* means that David had known for many years that the *testimonies* of God had been well founded. Their foundation was so firm that it was destined to stand *for ever*, even after the heavens and earth had passed away.

Verse 153. This verse contains the same request that David has uttered a number of times. The affliction of which he complains is not physical, but refers to the oppression from his enemies. He backs up his prayer by profession of his interest in the *law*, which he will demonstrate by remembering it.

Verse 154. To plead the cause of David meant to take an active interest in it by delivering him from his enemies. To *quicken* meant to enliven or cheer up the *Psalmist*, and it was to be done according to the *word* of the Lord.

Verse 155. *Salvation* in this connection means the spiritual kind, and the wicked did not have it because they were far from the *statutes* of God. There could be no salvation through any other source than what is found in the divine document.

Verse 156. In most of the verses the Psalmist connects his petition for further favors with acknowledgement of those already received. The mercies already received from God were many. Now David asks to be quickened or encouraged according to the *judgments* of the Lord, which are recorded in the Sacred Text.

Verse 157. *Persecutors* and *enemies* would be considered the same, only a different form of opposition. The first might be more personal and violent than the second. But all mistreatment failed to draw the Psalmist away from the holy *testimonies*.

Verse 158. David's unpleasant feelings in this verse were not for personal complaints, but because of the transgressions of those who would not keep the *word*.

Verse 159. The basis for his request was named first by the Psalmist; it was his love for the *precepts*. He then asked to be quickened or cheered up in keeping with the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Verse 160. This verse uses two of the terms for the subject being considered in this long chapter, *word* and *judgments*. The significant assertion is made that covers both the past and future. They were true to begin with, were the truth at the time of their introduction, and will be found to be so to the end of their existence, or until they have fulfilled their divine purpose in the conduct of man on the earth.

Verse 161. *Princes* were not officials but were leading persons of any class. Such might feel as if they were privileged characters and would *envy* a man like David. Their persecution of such a good man would be without a cause to be sure. In spite of such treatment the Psalmist stood in awe, or had deep reverence for the *word*.

Verse 162. David's estimate of the *word* was that it was of more value than *great spoil*, which means great wealth stored away and then accidentally found by another.

Verse 163. The record of David's life will bear out the statement of this verse. In the sad affair with Bath-

sheba he did not attempt even to modify his guilt but plainly admitted, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12: 13). This would give force to the other part of the verse, that he loved the *law* of God which was divine truth.

Verse 164. *Seven* as a figurative term denotes completeness and it is used evidently in that way here. It means that David's entire life was filled with praise for the Lord and for his righteous judgments.

Verse 165. The word *offended* means to stumble or falter in one's pathway. Those who love the *law* of the Lord will have the peace that "passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4: 7), and they will have no occasion to stumble because such persons will be watching where they go. They will be walking "circumspectly" (watching their steps, Eph. 5: 15), and will thus avoid the snares laid for them by the enemy of souls.

Verse 166. David has made frequent reference to salvation, but it is generally concerning relief from his many persecutions. And even the temporal benefits which he expected from the Lord were to be had on condition of doing the *commandments*.

Verse 167. *Soul* is used for the whole being, because a true servant of God will keep the *testimonies* with his mind and body.

Verse 168. This is another verse that uses two of the terms, *precepts* and *testimonies*. The Psalmist had kept them so that all his ways (manner of life) would be before or in the favorable view of the Lord.

Verse 169. When David speaks of his *cry* he generally means his earnest prayer. To *come near* means for it to be heard and considered by the Lord. The Psalmist realized that he needed understanding both as a king and also as an individual servant of God, and he wished it to be according to the *word*.

Verse 170. *Supplication* is used in the same sense as "cry" in many of the other verses. And, as always, the Psalmist depended on the *word* as the instrument of God through which he was to obtain all divine favors.

Verse 171. Misdirected praise is not desired by the Lord and David realized it. He therefore wished to be first taught by the *precepts* of God.

Verse 172. Here is another verse

with two of the terms, *word* and *commandments*. David's reason for speaking of them was the righteousness of the inspired document.

Verse 173. The same One whose hand could help David was the Author of the *precepts* that he had chosen as his rule of action in life.

Verse 174. *Salvation* would be used in its broadest sense in this place, including relief from personal enemies and salvation for his soul spiritually. The Psalmist was not willing merely to accept this salvation but longed for it. This is like the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 5: 6. In keeping with the statement David says he delighted in the *law* which was the instrument that was to guide him.

Verse 175. The word *soul* is used with reference to the whole being. David's life had been threatened many times by his enemies, and he is praying for the preservation coming from the Lord, and it was to come through means of the divine judgments.

Verse 176. *I have gone astray* is just a general admission of his mistakes in life, and not necessarily in reference to any specific sin. He prayed for restoration to the divine favor as a sheep that had been found after having wandered. The noted chapter closes with the promise that David will not forget the Lord's *commandments*.

PSALMS 120

Verse 1. David's distress was always that which came from the persecutions of his enemies, not any bodily affliction. In such times he prayed to God and was heard.

Verse 2. The word *soul* is used for the whole being, for the enemies did not have any effect on David's inner man spiritually. But they used falsehood and deceit in trying to persecute him and making his life as miserable as possible.

Verse 3. This verse is addressed to the foes who were resorting to lies in their enmity against David. It is a question for them to answer as to what they expected to gain by such evil means as they were using against the Psalmist.

Verse 4. In this verse the Psalmist answers the question he asked in the preceding verse. The lying enemy was to receive his just dues from the *mighty*; that is, some force greater than he. Those just dues are figuratively called sharp arrows and coals

of juniper. This last word is really a name of several evergreen trees. These great plants contain much rosin which is very inflammable, and referred to here to indicate the intensity of the punishment to come on the evil characters.

Verse 5. *Mesech* and *Kedar* were some barbarous tribes of the ancient times. David was not literally living among them, but he used the names figuratively to designate the wicked people who were continually hounding him with their persecutions.

Verse 6. This verse is more along the same line with the preceding one. However, David does not use any figures but makes the plain charge that he was and has been long tormented with people who do not want to be at peace with him.

Verse 7. The Psalmist never advocated "peace at any price," but his enemies did not want peace at all. They preferred to keep up a state of hostility by all means.

PSALMS 121

Verse 1. Hills and mountains are often used figuratively in the Bible, meaning some prominent place or government. David was using it to mean the government and institution of the Lord. From that holy and exalted situation he expected to get help.

Verse 2. This verse gives the same thought as the preceding one, only it speaks in direct language and names the Lord as the source of all help. The logical thought is that a Being who could make *heaven and earth* could surely help a human creature.

Verse 3. The Psalmist addresses himself in the 2nd person; it is a form of self-assurance. The surety of constant help is due to the fact that the Helper never slumbers on the situation, but is always alert and ready for the needed action.

Verse 4. If the care of one servant would require that God should never slumber, then surely the care of all Israel would require as much. There is not much difference between *slumber* and *sleep*, yet there is a slight distinction if the original words are considered. The first means to allow oneself to fall asleep from lack of interest, the second means to go to sleep from physical drowsiness. The Lord will not fail of his care through either cause.

Verse 5. The Psalmist is still addressing himself in a tone of assurance; he believed the Lord would help him in all of his trials. He then used a figure of speech in the form of a shade which would be a great relief from the scorching heat of the sun.

Verse 6. For the undesirable effect of the sun and the relief therefrom, see comments on the preceding verse. There is no actual harm or discomfort that can come from the moon, so the expression is used to complete the sum of protection that may be had from the Lord. In other words, it is an accommodative form of saying to include all extremes. It is somewhat like saying that God will care for one under all circumstances, whether cold or hot, wet or dry, day or night.

Verse 7. There is nothing specific in this verse, but a general assurance that the Lord will abundantly care for his own.

Verse 8. This verse is also a general assurance of the care exercised by the Lord. However, the Psalmist uses some more figures of speech to express the completeness of that care. *Going out* and *coming in* does not have any technical meaning, but being two opposite terms they denote that the preservation which God provides for his people is thorough in its character and complete in its extent.

PSALMS 122

Verse 1. Some people look upon going to the house of the Lord as a duty only, and they go with a kind of "have-to" feeling. It is doubtful whether such service is acceptable. It has already been learned (Ch. 110: 3) that the Lord's people were to be a willing people. If Christians are true to their profession they will be glad for the opportunity of meeting in God's assembly.

Verse 2. In the time of David the house of the Lord was in Jerusalem. That gave the occasion of standing within the gates of the city.

Verse 3. *Compact* means to be united and knit together, both literally and figuratively. Jerusalem was the capital of the Israelite government as well as the headquarters of the Mosaic religious system. It was important, then, for the city to be thus strong and able to resist the attacks of the heathen around it.

Verse 4. *The tribes* refers to the 12 tribes of Israel that went up to Jerusalem at the annual feasts. *Unto*

the testimony means they went to the place where the tables of the testimony had originally been deposited. (Ex. 25: 16.)

Verse 5. Jerusalem was the capital of the Israelite national government. That means that the thrones (seats) of judgment would be located in that city.

Verse 6. There were many heathen nations not far from Jerusalem that would envy its power among the governments of the world. David called for prayers that the capital of his beloved country might reign in peace over her citizens.

Verse 7. The walls were for the protection of the city as a whole, and the palaces were for the housing of citizens. The Psalmist prayed for the peace of all.

Verse 8. David became more personal and prayed for the peace of Jerusalem for the sake of his brethren who lived in the city, also for all who were his companions.

Verse 9. Coming back to the religious point of interest, David promised to work for the good of the city. That was because the house of God was located there.

PSALMS 123

Verse 1. The word *heaven* in the Old Testament is always from the same Hebrew word, so the connection must be considered in determining which of the 3 heavens is meant. The word is plural in this verse which shows it is used somewhat figuratively. The idea expressed is that the Lord's dwelling is high and above all other things.

Verse 2. A servant and maid are looking for the reward of their services. But they know they must wait until the proper time to receive it. Likewise, the servant of God will wait until he receives his reward.

Verse 3. *Contempt* means an impudent belittling of another. The enemies of David had so treated him and his brethren that they were filled or "had their fill" of it.

Verse 4. The *soul* here means the person as a whole. *Scorning* and *contempt* have practically the same meaning, and it was manifested by those at ease, or those who had been spoiled by too much indulgence in earthly prosperity. There were the ones who were designated as *proud* by the Psalmist. Such a person would show this evil attitude toward a good man

like David, because he realized that he was a better person than this proud man and took that way to so-lace himself for his wounded pride.

PSALMS 124

Verses 1, 2. These 2 verses are grouped because they are practically the same in thought. They state a condition (that of the Lord's being with Israel), on which a certain result had depended, and that will be named in the following verse.

Verse 3. This is what would have happened had the fact of the foregoing paragraph not been true. *Swallowed* is a figure of speech which Strong defines, "to make away with." The protection assured is like that expressed in Rom. 8: 31.

Verse 4. When *waters* or the equivalent is used symbolically (such as streams or floods), it means great volumes of afflictions or persecutions.

Verse 5. *Proud waters* refers to the people who would have overwhelmed God's people with their persecutions. To go over the *soul* refers to the effect of their persecutions in this life, not to the spiritual effect in the world to come.

Verse 6. Since God had extended such merciful protection for his own, this verse blesses or praises Him for it.

Verse 7. David used the occupation of a trapper for an illustration. A fowler is one who sets snares to catch fowl and other objects of prey. David's soul (his present life) had escaped the trap through the watchfulness of the Lord.

Verse 8. The Psalmist drops his figures and uses literal terms. His reasoning is that deliverance had come from the One who was maker of heaven and earth.

PSALMS 125

Verse 1. The logic of this verse is evident. Zion was the headquarters for the Lord's interests on earth and had been protected by His might. To trust in the Lord, then, would bring the same protection as had been given to the holy city.

Verse 2. The physical protection of mountains for a city is used to illustrate the encircling shield of the Lord for his people whom he has chosen.

Verse 3. *Rod* is used in the sense of rule or control. If the wicked had been suffered to control the conduct of God's people, they would have been

forced to take part in evil deeds. The Lord prevented these evil persons from having such a control.

Verse 4. *Do good* does not refer to the personal conduct of God for he could not do otherwise. It means to ask God to extend good and desirable favors to those who are entitled to such treatment.

Verse 5. *Crooked ways* means the ways of life followed by those who forsake the pathway of righteousness. They shall be classed at the end with the ones who had never professed a life of goodness. This suggests the awful thought in Matt. 25: 41.

PSALMS 126

Verse 1. This verse is in the past tense in form, and as such had been true of Israel more than once, for the nation had been rescued from the sage was also prophetic and was full-hand of the oppressor. But the past-filled when Israel was returned from Babylonian captivity, recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Verse 2. *Laughter and singing* are used in about the same sense and neither indicates a feeling of lightness or levity. It refers to the spirit of rejoicing that the nation of the Israelites felt after their release from captivity. The last half of the verse was fulfilled by the attitude of the Persians toward Israel after the overthrow of the Babylonians who had taken the Israelites captive. (Ezra 1: 1-4.)

Verse 3. For comments on this verse see those on verse 1.

Verse 4. This verse is in the form of a request, but it is actually a prophecy of the return of the nation of Israel from the Babylonian captivity.

Verse 5, 6. This entire passage is figurative in its application. The thought is somewhat like the old saying, "A bad beginning may have a good ending." The paragraph sets forth a principle of action that would have many opportunities for practice. For instance, if a man was not willing to plant the seed because it was in the early spring and the unpleasant weather that often comes then, he might not have the privilege of reaping a harvest. But the specific application is to the experiences of the Israelite nation in their captivity and the return. The *tears and weeping* came at the time of the captivity, and the reaping of the sheaves occurred upon the return.

PSALMS 127

Verse 1. The gist of this verse is that man is wholly dependent on the Lord for the ability to accomplish the things of which he sometimes wishes to boast.

Verse 2. God provides all that is necessary for man's existence on this earth. It is true that he must co-operate, but it is *vain*, or unnecessary for him to spend both day and night to gain the wealth of the world; that is, the amount of it that is needed for his comfort and well-being. I do not believe the Lord planned the night as a work time, but for the time of rest. Or, in the words of our passage, the night is the time that God *giveth his beloved sleep*. If man were satisfied with the things actually necessary for his happiness in this life, he could do enough in the day time to get the production of the earth going, whether direct or indirect, that would be required for his consumption, and then while he was sleeping the Lord would be still at work with the laws of nature while *his beloved* was thus getting his needful rest in sleep.

Verse 3. *Heritage* means something received from another. Hence, although children are the offspring of human beings, their presence should be regarded as a gift from the Lord. This is far different from the attitude manifested by many people who regard children in an objectionable light.

Verse 4. *Arrows* are referred to as an illustration of the value of children. The comparison is with the idea of defense or support. If a man is equipped with arrows he has wherewith to defend himself. And if he begets children in the days of his youth and strength, they will be a support for him when he is old.

Verse 5. The illustration is still drawn from the bow and arrow. A quiver is a case for holding arrows. A man with a quiver full of arrows would be well supplied for a conflict; so a man with many children would be equipped for the battles of life. He would not be ashamed nor afraid to meet the enemy at the gate of his city.

PSALMS 128

Verse 1. A man proves he fears the Lord by walking in his ways. That means to walk as the Lord has directed. (See chapter 119: 133.)

Verse 2. An unrighteous man may

be permitted to consume what he produces, but he cannot have much appreciation for it if he leaves the fear of God out of consideration.

Verse 3. In the days of special providence, God rewarded a righteous man frequently with the joys of a happy family. (See Job 42: 15-17.)

Verse 4. This virtually repeats the thought in verse 1.

Verse 5. Zion was a place in Jerusalem where the temple was located. The verse indicates that the promised blessings would issue from the divine headquarters.

Verse 6. The prospect of seeing one's children's children means that he will have a long life. *Peace upon Israel* would be welcomed by a righteous man.

PSALMS 129

Verses 1, 2. *Israel* as a nation is meant, and the passage refers to the frequent oppressions that came upon it beginning in the sojourn in Egypt. *Yet they have not prevailed against me.* In the outcome the nation was saved by the Lord.

Verse 3. This is figurative, drawing the likeness from the action of a plow that agitates the earth. *Long furrows* indicates extensive sieges of persecutions at the hands of the national enemies.

Verse 4. It was wrong for the wicked people to bind God's people with the cords of oppression, therefore the righteous Lord properly severed the cords.

Verse 5. *To be confounded* means to be confused, and to be *turned back* means to be defeated and humiliated.

Verse 6. In times of unusual moisture a scant growth of grass would appear on the housetops, but it would have such a weak bed for rooting that the sun would soon kill it. David used the circumstance to illustrate the lot he wished to come upon the enemies of Zion.

Verse 7. Such a short crop would not fill the hand of the harvester. Neither would the reaper be able to fill his bosom (or body) with food, since he had not gathered sheaves of which to make bread.

Verse 8. These wicked men would not enjoy even the good wishes of the passers by. They would become a class of beings rejected by the Lord and ignored by men.

PSALMS 130

Verse 1. The *depths* referred to the great depression into which David's enemies had plunged him with their persecutions. While in that condition he cried to God.

Verse 2. *Supplications* means the more urgent and earnest prayers. That kind of petition to God usually is offered when personal distress is the motive. However, a servant of God might make a supplication if he felt a deep personal concern for some special friends who were in a situation of distress or were threatened with such.

Verse 3. *Mark* is from SHAMAR and also means "regard." The verse means that if the Lord should take our iniquities seriously, intending to hold all to strict account, then none of us would stand to "get by."

Verse 4. Instead of holding us to strict account of justice, *there is forgiveness* from the Lord. However, this leniency must not be abused, but the favored person should thereby be led to *fear* or respect God for his goodness.

Verse 5. *Wait* and *hope* are used in the same sense here. This first is from a word which Strong defines partly, "to expect," and we know that is also a part of the definition of *hope*, the second word in the verse.

Verse 6. *Waiteth* is not in the original as a separate word. The thought is justified by the previous verse which does have the word in the original text. David means that his longing for the favor of God is more intense than that of man generally in wishing for the morning to come to relieve him from the shadows of night.

Verse 7. All true hope is in the Lord; any other will be disappointing. And what man receives from Him will be on the basis of divine mercy, not human merit.

Verse 8. The redemption coming from God is complete and based on his mercies. Redemption from *all his iniquities* means that all redemption that Israel obtains must come from the Lord and not from any human source.

PSALMS 131

Verse 1. *Haughty* is from GABAH and Strong defines it, "A primitive root; to soar, i.e. be lofty." It has a meaning opposite of humility. Paul instructed Christians to "be not high

minded" (Rom. 12: 16), and this sort of humbleness is professed by David in this passage. The latter part of the verse has practically the same meaning, except the Psalmist makes a practical application of the humble feelings he professes to have in the beginning of the verse. If he feels humble as to his ability he will also refrain from meddling in matters above his qualifications.

Verse 2. When a child is being weaned he will need special tenderness from his mother to quiet and calm him. David uses the event as a comparison of his feelings of contentment under the Lord. The general context shows he had been made satisfied by the reassuring goodness of God, and was content, like a trusting child, to wait for whatever further favors and support his divine Parent had in store for him.

Verse 3. The Psalmist had trained himself as an individual to behave after the manner described in the preceding verse; he now exhorts Israel as a whole to do the same.

PSALMS 132

Verse 1. The heading placed at the top of this psalm says it was offered on the occasion of removing the ark. The language of several verses will verify it, as also does the history of the event which may be read in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13. Considering all the circumstances confronting him at that time we can understand why David would ask the Lord to remember him.

Verse 2. In this verse David makes indefinite reference to his previous vows of devotion to the Lord.

Verse 3. Here the Psalmist starts to specify items in which he had promised to sacrifice his personal pleasure to the interests of the Lord. He would not give priority to his own house and comforts of his own bed.

Verse 4. The comforts referred to at the close of the preceding verse are those of rest and sleep. Such joys are right and David did not belittle their importance. He meant that all such pleasures would be given secondary consideration.

Verse 5. This verse states the thing that was uppermost in the mind of the Psalmist. He wished to build a house for the Lord but was not to have that privilege. But the ark was not even with the tabernacle where it originally belonged. The next best

thing that David could do was to bring it to Jerusalem and house it in a tent which he pitched for that purpose. The ark was the most important article in the service, for it had received the tables of the law and in its presence the high priests met and communicated with God. That accounts for the language of this verse.

Verse 6. *Heard of it* means the ark was spoken of at *Ephratah*, which is another form of Bethlehem. The ark had been moved about from place to place and had received some prominence among the people in general.

Verse 7. *Tabernacle* is used in a general sense to mean any place where the presence of God would be represented. Such a place would be in the vicinity of the ark that was soon to be brought into the city by David. *Worship at his footstool* indicates the humble attitude of those who would worship the Lord.

Verse 8. This verse might be called a speech of welcome made by David. It was for the coming of the Lord as represented by the ark that was about to arrive.

Verse 9. The pronoun *thy* refers to the Lord, and the priests were the men who were to administer the religious services under the Mosaic system. *Clothed with righteousness* means that those in charge of the high and holy service of the priesthood should be righteous men. If such a condition could be realized it would cause the saints to *shout for joy* because of the spiritual encouragement it would mean.

Verse 10. The Psalmist presents himself in two different phases; the first as a servant and then as a king. Then the prayer is for God to support him as king remembering his faithfulness as a servant while in his early relations with the Lord.

Verse 11. One peculiar trait of inspiration is to break abruptly into a line of thought with a prophecy. And yet it might not be regarded as so abrupt after all. It can often be seen that some relation will exist between the passages. Here we see David in earnest petition for God's favor in this time of important action in the service of God. His prayer was to be heard for the sake of present-day conditions. Then what could be more appropriate than to give him a prediction whose fulfillment would be honoring to him. Of course we know it was a prediction of Christ who was to

be a lineal descendant of David. *I set* might be confusing to us if we did not observe that "set" is a transitive verb with the object named first. It is as if the clause said, "I will set the fruit of thy body on a throne."

Verse 12. The passage is still looking to the service to be carried on under this offspring of David. *Thy children* refers to the ones who would be produced by this offspring. If they will be faithful the Lord will continually bless them. This blessing is figuratively referred to as a reigning on a throne, not that Christians were to sit on a literal throne in the kingdom of Christ.

Verse 13. Zion was that part of Jerusalem that was the headquarters for the Lord's institution in the time of David. It was likewise to be the starting place for the institution under this noted son of David. (Isa. 2: 3.)

Verse 14. Let the reader not forget that the passage is still a prophecy of Christ and the religious system that was to be set up under Him. The verse represents God as recognizing that system (headquarters at Zion in Jerusalem) as his last and complete regime. That is why it says it was to *rest for ever* there. This is the same prediction in thought that the prophet made in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 2: 44.)

Verse 15. This verse is a reference to the bountiful spiritual provisions that were to be made under the reign of Christ in a spiritual kingdom.

Verse 16. This refers to all Christians who are elsewhere designated as priests. (1 Pe. 2: 9.) They were to be clothed with salvation in that their service will be entirely religious and done for the salvation of those related thereto. *Saints* is another name for the same people called priests above.

Verse 17. *Horn* in symbolic language means power or authority. Christ was a son of David and was to be given great power (Matt. 28: 18). That is why it is said that David would have a horn to bud or spring forth. *Lamp* is another result that was to come into the world through this offspring of David; he was to be the light of the world and the same great truth is set forth in John 1: 4-9.

Verse 18. This is a prediction of the penalties that will be imposed on those who reject the authority of Christ. Their description and various

references to fulfillment are too numerous even to cite in this place.

PSALMS 133

Verse 1. *Pleasant* is from a Hebrew word that means delightful and agreeable. A thing might be good and yet not delightful; or, it might be agreeable and delightful and yet not be a good thing. The Psalmist declares that it is both good and delightful for brethren to dwell together in *unity*. That word is from YACHAD and the following is the definition: "Properly a unit, i.e. (adverbially) unitedly."—Strong. It is the word for "alike" in Job 21: 26. the word is stronger than a mere "agreeing to disagree," so as to present merely the appearance of unity. Such a condition is not acceptable to God. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3: 3) is a question that has a negative answer implied. For a group of people merely to meet under the same roof does not constitute unity in the Lord's sight. It can be accomplished only by all parties who are proposing to dwell together to agree on the teaching of God's word as the bond of unity between them.

Verse 2. The comparison is to the sweetness of the olive oil and the great extent to which it was in evidence. The oil was used when Aaron was consecrated for the office of priest (Ex. 29: 7). David means that when brethren dwell together in unity of the Spirit it makes a situation of sweet consecration that is as agreeable to the mind as the olive oil was sweet to the eyes of those present.

Verse 3. *Hermon* is the highest mountain in Palestine and its summit is not attained by man. Yet the dew falls upon it which generally turns into snow and betokens an idea of freshness to the sight of people in the lowlands. The blessing of this snow on the mountains of Palestine, coming from the Lord upon humankind as a benediction of nature, was an illustration in the mind of David of the satisfying effect of the peaceful fellowship of loving brethren.

PSALMS 134

Verse 1. *Servants of the Lord* is indefinite, but 1 Chr. 9: 33 shows that the singers were the ones specifically meant here. None of the services of the set feasts required the presence of the men at night. But the singers often remained in the holy place

after the hours of day had passed. The Psalmist is calling upon them to use the songs that would bless or praise the Lord.

Verse 2. The lifting up of the hands was a gesture of both respect and appeal. *Sanctuary* means a holy place when the idea of locality is being considered, and it means holiness when the attitude of the worshipers is the point. Certainly none but holy or righteous men would be invited to engage in a praise service to God. The New Testament teaches the same truth in 1 Tim. 2: 8.

Verse 3. The creation of the heavens and the earth is frequently mentioned in connection with some other favor from God. The reasoning of it is that a Being who can perform such a mighty deed is certainly able to bestow other blessings. But it should not be overlooked here that the blessing was to come *out of Zion*. God had a certain headquarters for his religious system on earth, and only through that means might men expect to receive spiritual benefits from Him.

PSALMS 135

Verse 1. In the Book of Psalms the word "praise" occurs a great many times and generally comes from HALAL or YADAH. These Hebrew words have practically the same definition, meaning to celebrate, respect or worship, and it may be expressed either by some motions of the hands or head, or by the voice in song or words of compliment, or, by all of these combined. Hence, when an order or request is made for men to praise the Lord, and no particular form is suggested, it is left to the actor to choose his own method of praising God. The above explanation of "praise" covers so nearly all of the places where the word is used in the Old Testament, that I suggest the reader mark this verse for future reference when the word is under consideration.

Verse 2. The servants of the Lord had been mentioned in a general way in the preceding verse. In this verse the Psalmist signifies the group of servants he had in mind. He refers especially to the ones who appear in the assemblies of the Lord.

Verse 3. Another motive for praising the Lord is stated here; it is because he is good. And here the manner of praise is suggested, that of singing. (see definition above.) Another motive is offered for praising the Lord, which is the pleasantness of

the exercise, so that both man and the Lord have motives in this matter.

Verse 4. *Jacob* and *Israel* refer to the same people in the way the names are used here. They are both named because Israel as a nation and people are so named because they sprang from Jacob who had the name "Israel" applied to him personally. *Peculiar* treasure means the Israelite nation belonged to the Lord and to no one else.

Verse 5. See the comments at ch. 86: 12 for the technical meaning of *Lord*. The gods mentioned in this verse mean the idolatrous objects of worship that were honored by the heathen nations in their religious practices.

Verse 6. The things or places named are parts of what we call the universe, and they were all created by the Lord whom David and his people worshiped. The heathen worshipped the things created instead of the Creator.

Verse 7. *Ends of the earth* is said to indicate that man is not the maker of the vapors or rain since they come where no man is. Lightning is the visible sign of the conditions that bring rain and God is the maker of those conditions. *Treasures* is a figurative name for the vast storehouse of God's resources in the universe. Out of that storehouse he projects the winds in all of their variety of intensity.

Verse 8. This verse is a simple historical statement of an instance of the Lord's power. The original account is in Ex. 12, and nothing but a miracle could cause such an event to occur. A man might slay a few children in the course of several nights before he would be stopped. But the wonderful feature of this great circumstance is the fact that not in one or a few families was there a death, but one in each house. Neither was it upon whichever member of the household who happened to be available, but upon a certain one, the oldest of the family. Nor was the work spread out over a long period of time, but was accomplished in one night.

Verse 9. The death of the first-born was the last of the 10 plagues sent upon the Egyptians. This verse refers to the 9 that preceded this one.

Verse 10. After the Israelites left Egypt they started for the "promised land" that had been guaranteed to their forefathers. On the way they

encountered the heathen nations who disputed their right to march through their territories, and it was necessary to overcome them which they did with the Lord's help.

Verse 11. The conflicts with Sihon and Og are recorded in Numbers 21. The kingdoms of Canaan were conquered by Joshua as recorded in the book bearing his name.

Verse 12. *Heritage* is something inherited from another, either by right of a will or through relationship. God had willed that the land of Canaan should become the possession of the descendants of Abram (Gen. 12: 7; 15: 18), and this verse accounts for the fulfillment of that promise.

Verse 13. The Lord had performed such wonderful deeds in the sight of many people that his holy name was spoken with a feeling of awe. Of course such a Being could never be forgotten, which is the reason for mentioning "thy memorial."

Verse 14. One part of the definition for the original of *judge* is, "to judge (as umpire)."—Strong. The word is used in regard to Israel's disputes with the heathen nations. God was the umpire and "decided" in favor of his people. *Repent himself* means the Lord had compassion for his people in view of their afflictions. They were required to fight for their rights, and at times were subjected to rigorous experiences for their chastisements. The Lord then "repented," which means he decreed that their afflictions should be turned into victories over their foes.

Verse 15-18. This paragraph is the same as ch. 115: 4-8 and has been fully commented upon at that place.

Verse 19. *Israel* was the name of the people as a whole, and *house of Aaron* was the particular family in which the priesthood was settled. (Ex. 28: 1; 1 Chr. 23: 13.) The verse is a call for all to bless (or praise) the Lord.

Verse 20. Levi was the tribe from which the house of Aaron sprang. The Levites (other than the house of Aaron) had charge of the congregational activities, except those of the priesthood, and hence were in a rank of importance. They were called upon to bless or praise the Lord for they had been given special attention of honor. A general call was then made for all who feared the Lord to bless or praise him.

Verse 21. *Out of Zion* or in connection with Zion; that was the headquarters of the Lord's institution on earth, and all devotions offered to Him had to be done with due regard for this capital. *Praise ye the Lord* is from a wording meaning "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 136

Verse 1. Giving of thanks is an oral expression of gratitude for favors received. There are two facts mentioned in this verse for which the Psalmist requested that thanks be given to the Lord, one pertaining to his personal character, the other to his treatment of the people. They are the words *good* and *mercy* or at least they indicate the two facts. What is significant about the mercy of the Lord is that it is not just occasional or of brief duration, but it endureth for ever. If at any time the Lord's mercy ceases to be enjoyed by some person, it will not be because that mercy has run out or run its course or worn out. It will be on account of the shortcoming of the person in that he has failed to meet the terms on which divine mercy is offered. This clause about the mercy of the Lord is identical in the last part of each verse of this chapter, hence no further comment will be offered on it.

Verse 2. See the comments at ch. 86: 12 for the detailed explanation of the name *God*. He is the only true object of worship, hence the Psalmist declares him to be above the gods whom the heathen worshiped. There is also something significant in the phrase *God of gods*. It means not only that the true God is greater than all, but he is also in control of all these objects that are falsely called gods.

Verse 3. *Lord of lords* will have about the same significance as "God of gods" in the preceding verse. It will be well also again to see comments at ch. 86: 12.

Verse 4. The key word in this verse is *alone*. It denotes that the Lord is independent of all other beings and does things by his own infinite power.

Verse 5. The thought is not that wisdom was the force by which the heavens were made, but that all of the work of the Lord in forming the heavens was wisely done.

Verse 6. *Above* is from a Hebrew word that has also been rendered "beside" 17 times, and "against" over 100 times. It is the word for "beside"

in Num. 24: 6, in the words "beside the waters." The verse evidently means that God stretched out the earth by the side of or in connection with the waters, and each maintaining its own proper place in the order of things. This suggests the statements in Gen. 1: 9, 10.

Verse 7. The *great lights* is a general reference to the heavenly bodies whose creation is recorded in Gen. 1: 14-18.

Verse 8. *To rule* means to regulate or measure the day as to the light. In other words, the daylight was to continue as long as the sun was visible.

Verse 9. The moon and stars were to "rule" the night on the same principle that the sun was to rule the day as explained in the preceding verse.

Verse 10. For comments on this event see those at ch. 135: 8.

Verse 11. *Brought out Israel* was accomplished on the night of the first passover, when the Egyptians forced the Israelites to leave in haste. (Ex. 12.)

Verse 12. *Strong hand* would indicate the strength of the Lord, and *stretched out arm* refers to the long reach of that strength.

Verse 13. The *parts* of the Red Sea were the walls of ice on each side of the passage. See Ex. 15: 8 and the comments at that place for further information.

Verse 14. Passing through the midst of the sea would indicate that a miracle was performed. An army could travel around a body of water without requiring anything but human strength or that which would be required in the ordinary walks of life.

Verse 15. Both Pharaoh *AND* his army were destroyed in the sea. See my comments on this subject at Ex. 14: 4 in volume 1 of this Commentary.

Verse 16. This short verse refers to the 40-year journey through the wilderness and the original history is in the books of Exodus and Numbers.

Verses 17, 18. *Great and famous* would mean that the kings were not only great in fact, but that it was generally known among the peoples of the country.

Verse 19, 20. The original record of the overthrow of these kings is Num. 21.

Verse 21. The land taken from the above named kings was in the territory that God had promised to the descendants of Abram (Gen. 15: 18), so the children of Israel rightfully obtained it as an inheritance (heritage).

Verse 22. Servants may inherit the property of their master if he so wills it. The passage in Gen. 15: 18 shows that such a provision was made for these servants.

Verse 23. By the pronoun *us* David includes himself with the Israelites who inherited the land having been held by those heathen kings. *Low estate* refers to the time when the children of Israel were wanderers in the wilderness and exposed to the hostility of the heathen living along their route.

Verse 24. *Redeemed* has an indefinite application. It first occurred to the nation when the Egyptians were forced to let Israel go. And it was done many times afterward, when the heathen people sought to conquer them and hinder their travels.

Verse 25. This is too general to admit of any specific detail. In all the earth, wherever there is a creature that lives on food, the hand of God is the provider of it.

Verse 26. The chapter ends about like it began, with a request for the Lord to be thanked for his goodness to the children of men.

PSALMS 137

General remarks. This chapter is like many prophetic passages in that it is written in the past tense. That, however, is often the prophetic style, and indicates that the prophet is as certain of the future as he is of the past. It is understandable that it would be so if the prophet was inspired as was David. This whole passage gives such a deplorable picture of the state of mind the Israelites were in after being taken to Babylon, that I wish to connect it with a statement of actual history to make the paragraph as a whole a fitting place to cite from the many other sad predictions that will be found in the regular prophetic books. The historical statement referred to is in Ezekiel 37: 11. It is true that this book is one of the major prophets, but we should remember that it was all written in Babylon after the nation had been carried off in captivity. That being

the case, some of the things contained in the book are literal history and comprise a fulfillment of an earlier prediction. Such is the case with the verse just cited, and since it is so considered I shall quote verbatim that sad speech of the Jews, in which they actually made the complaints predicted in the chapter we are now studying. "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." So this speech of the children of Israel, made while they were actually in the land of Babylon, verifies the predictions of the Psalmist. I shall now consider the several verses separately.

Verse 1. As the term *Babylon* is used here it refers to the territory of which the city of Babylon was the capital. This territory had a number of streams, called rivers by the translators. The Jews were scattered over this territory after the captivity and doubtless spent much time wandering about, or sitting down on the banks of the streams. There they would meditate dejectedly on their fallen state, with sad remembrance of their beloved capital in the land of their forefathers.

Verse 2. The harp was a stringed instrument of music and had been used much as an accompaniment in song. The crestfallen Jews did not feel like singing or making music in such a situation, and so they hung their harps up on the willows that grew on the banks of the streams. I shall quote a paragraph from history that will shed light upon this verse. "All the flat whereon Babylon stood being by reason of so many rivers and canals running through it, made in many places marshy, especially near the said rivers and canals, this caused it to abound much in willows; and, therefore, it is called, in scripture, *the valley of willows*, (for so the words, Isa. 15: 7, which we translate *the brook of the willows*, ought to be rendered:) and, for the same reason, the Jews (Ps. 137: 1, 2,) are said, when they were by the rivers of Babylon in the land of their captivity, to have hung their harps upon the willows, that is, because of the abundance of them which grew by the river." *Prideaux's Connexion*, Part 1, Book 2, Year 570.

Verse 3. We are not informed as to the motive that prompted the Babylonians to call for these songs. It

could have been curiosity, or genuine desire for an exhibition of foreign devotions, or a mixture of both. These new people had been brought in from a distant country, and doubtless it was known that their trouble was connected with their religion. They saw these harps in the hands of the captives and knew they were used in connection with their religious devotions. It was natural, then, to wish to hear some of them. But the Jews were in no mood for singing or making music, so they hung up their harps and sat down on the river banks, sad, discouraged, and completely broken in spirit, almost dying with homesickness for their native land.

Verse 4. Even had their feelings permitted them to sing at that time, their sense of propriety forbade their doing so. They were in a strange (foreign) land, a land possessed and controlled by heathen, and where the true God was unknown. Under those conditions they could not engage in devotions to God.

Verse 5. *If I forget thee*. We know that no one would actually forget a city as prominent as Jerusalem, in the ordinary sense of the word. The original is defined also as "failing to pay attention to," and that is the meaning here. *Her cunning* is not in the original and has been supplied from the thought in the context. The hand is not an intelligent thing as is the mind and cannot literally forget. Therefore, the statement is a sort of self-imposed curse or wish for some evil to come, such as losing the use of the hand, if ever they forget to give attention to Jerusalem.

Verse 6. This verse is more along the same line as the preceding one. If one's tongue should stick to the roof of his mouth it would render him speechless. But that would not be the worst of it, for then he could not swallow food and soon would perish. In this verse the speaker does not merely vow to remember Jerusalem, but he promises to give the holy city preference over all other joys.

Verse 7. Before closing their sad speech, they turned their revengeful mind toward some of their enemies who had wished for just such a calamity to come. To rase means to wreck a city and the Edomites had longed to see that done to Jerusalem. The Jews now wish for some penalty to be brought upon their foes.

Verse 8. This verse turns against

Babylon, and the Jews may not have known that they were actually uttering a prophecy in the words *who art to be destroyed*, but it was really brought to pass a half century later. The ones here promised happiness over it were the Persians, the people who overthrew the Babylonian Empire.

Verse 9. This wish seems harsh, but such is the way of warfare, especially as it was done in ancient times. (2 Ki. 8: 12.) Children were the possible soldiers of the future. When one nation conquered another, it was considered military foresight not only to destroy the men in arms, but also those who might later rise up armed.

PSALMS 138

Verse 1. *With the whole heart* means his praise would be wholehearted. The word for *gods* sometimes is defined as magistrates. David meant he would not be ashamed to sing praises of the Lord in the hearing of the rulers of the land.

Verse 2. *Holy temple* is a reverential expression for the throne of God, and the Psalmist would conduct his devotions in view of that heavenly shrine. A good name is always to be desired and means much to a man's influence. However, it is possible to have a good name that is not merited. But if a man so conducts himself that his "word is as good as his bond," his influence will certainly be great. Comparatively speaking, then, the Word of God is the greatest attribute that he possesses. If the Lord so regards his Word, how terrible it must be in His eyes if man disregards it.

Verse 3. The Psalmist acknowledges that the Lord heard him when he cried or prayed unto him. *Soul* is from a word that includes a living creature with all that it takes to comprise such a being. His whole person had been strengthened by the Lord in answer to his earnest prayers.

Verse 4. These kings may not render full service to God, since most of them were idolaters. But they will recognize that the sayings of Israel's God were wonderful and worthy of praise.

Verse 5. *Ways* is from a word that is defined by Strong, "mode of action." The kings will sing to express their adoration of the activities of Israel's God. This was because the actions not only were mighty, but shed glory in the sight of all.

Verse 6. God has spanned the great

difference between himself and the humble of the earth by His great compassion. *Knoweth afar off* means God takes certain notice of the proud, but will not admit such to be near him as far as it pertains to favor.

Verse 7. The meaning of this verse is a simple statement of David's faith in God.

Verse 8. *To perfect* means to make complete. David knew he was an erring creature of the earth and had many defects. However, he believed that if he proved faithful to the Lord he would give him strength to overcome his weakness, and thus would round out his character of righteousness. All of this would be done, not on the merit of the Psalmist, but on the enduring mercy of the Lord. This faith encouraged David to plead that God would not forsake him since he was a part of His handiwork.

PSALMS 139

Verse 1. The main subject of this chapter is the infinite knowledge and existence of the Lord. This verse is a general statement as to that knowledge in regard to the life of the Psalmist, in all of the conditions surrounding his actions.

Verse 2. *Downsitting and uprising* are combined to make a figure of speech. They are opposite terms and hence indicate the completeness of the knowledge of God. *Thought afar off* simply means that not even a single thought of David could be so far away that God could not see it.

Verse 3. *Compasseth* literally means to diffuse or winnow or fan. In order to fan out a mass of grain one would need to have complete mastery of it, so the Psalmist means that God is complete Master of the situation.

Verse 4. The several verses in this part of the chapter are specifications of the complete knowledge of God. David had said that the Lord knew all about his thoughts. Then he surely would *know altogether* the words of his mouth.

Verse 5. *To beset* means to confine or limit. David means that his entire life was within the knowledge and grasp of the Lord.

Verse 6. The Psalmist has reference to himself merely as a human being aside from his inspiration.

Verse 7. This and several verses following will point out various parts of the universe where God's presence exists always. Generally speaking,

since He made all things that exist, it would be foolish to think that a man could find a hiding place from Him in any of the parts of creation. The Psalmist will now specify a number of "hooks and crannies" in which there would be no hiding from God. *Spirit* and *presence* are used for emphasis since the very presence of God would always mean that of his spirit according to the language of Christ in John 4: 24.

Verse 8. *Heaven* and *hell* are named together merely as opposites in location. We know the first refers to the region of the planets, not to the place where God personally lives, for there would be nothing significant in referring to that place and saying *thou art there*. *Hell* is from *sheol* and Strong defines it, "hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat) including its accessories and inmates." The Psalmist does not mean that God personally is to be found in that place, but that he had complete oversight of it. How foolish, then, is the thought of suicide and cremation as an attempt to run away from Him.

Verse 9. The vast expanse of the boundless sea is not sufficient to outreach the presence of the Lord who created them in the first place.

Verse 10. *Lead* and *hold* are both used in a favorable sense, meaning the universal ability of God to care for his faithful servants. And by the same token, it would be useless for one to think of fleeing to that region to hide from the Lord.

Verse 11. *Night shall be light* is another figurative phrase, meaning that God can see in the darkness as well as in the light. For this reason it would be in vain to count on the darkness as a shield from the eyes of God.

Verse 12. This is practically the same thought as was expressed in the preceding verse. Certainly the One who could "command the light to shine out of darkness" (2 Cor. 4: 6; Gen. 1: 2, 3) would be able to see through it and detect a man trying to hide.

Verse 13. *Reins* is from a word that signifies the mind or controlling faculty. It means that the Lord had taken possession of the Psalmist and was guiding his thoughts and actions. Not that he was deprived of personal responsibility in his conduct, but all of his faculties had been the work of the Lord. That is why he credits the

Lord with all of his possibilities, even back to the time he was in his mother's womb.

Verse 14. *Made* has no original as a separate word. *Fearfully* is from the same Hebrew word as "reverend" in Ps. 111: 9, and I ask the reader to consult my comments at that place. *Wonderfully* is from *palah* and Strong defines it, "to distinguish." The whole clause means that God respected and honored man by creating him a distinct living being, different from all others in the whole universe. For this great reason the Psalmist felt constrained to praise God thereby expressing his appreciation.

Verse 15. *Secret* and *lowest part* are used to denote that which is invisible to or unknown by the human mind. But although unknown to finite beings, God knew all about him and how to give distinction as described in the way of strength (here called *substance*) necessary to meet the purposes of the Creator.

Verse 16. God's foreknowledge is infinite and he has performed his works after his own will. He intended to make man just as he is made, and that his *substance* (strength) would be *imperfect*; that is, that man was to have the frailties of a human creature and not the absolute perfection of a divine one. And after making man in that form and nature, He has made his requirements of that creature accordingly. That is why the Psalmist made the statement in ch. 103: 14.

Verse 17. The thoughts of God were precious to David because he knew that they made all due allowances for the frailties of humanity.

Verse 18. A familiar church song says, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one." According to David that would be almost out of the question. Even some of those blessings came when he was asleep, for he said that when he awoke he realized he was still with God; that is, he had been receiving the favors of God during sleep.

Verse 19. Evil and dangerous association was frowned upon by David. He understood that wicked men were to be overthrown by the Lord, and did not want to be near them when that happened for fear of sharing in the penalty.

Verse 20. Those who defy the name of the Lord are considered as His enemies.

Verse 21. The word *hate* has a harsh sound, yet it is attributed to God in more than one instance. The main question is, what does that hatred lead one to do? We know that God's hatred of anything will not prevent him from doing by that thing (or person) that which is right. On this principle, if a man hates that which God hates, or hates those who hate Him, such hatred will not lead him to do what he should not.

Verse 22. *Perfect* hatred is a hatred that is complete. See comments on the preceding verse on the subject of hatred. *Mine enemies* is a significant phrase. Too many people will include the enemies of the Lord among their friends. That should not be done for it makes such people also the enemies of God. (James 4: 4.)

Verse 23. If a man is honestly trying to do right he will even be eager to have his thoughts exposed. This is the teaching in John 3: 19-21.

Verse 24. The *everlasting way* certainly would be the one the Psalmist mentioned in ch. 23: 3. It is everlasting because those who walk therein even down to the "last mile of the way," will close their journey at the throne of God.

PSALMS 140

Verse 1. Violence may be of different kinds. What David dreaded was the man who was violent with evil, and the Lord was asked to deliver him from such a foe.

Verse 2. We usually think of *imagine* as meaning merely to surmise as to the existence of something of which we are not certain. It is used in this place in the sense of scheme or plan. The object of the planning was to prepare war against David.

Verse 3. *Sharpened* is from SHANAN and Strong defines it, "to point (transitively or intransitively); intensively to pierce." We have all seen the pointed projection of the tongue of a snake as he seemed to be in a threatening mood. It is referred to by David to illustrate the vicious attitude of his enemies toward him. An adder is a poisonous snake that coils in a lurking position ready to spring and inject its venom into its victim. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 for explanation of *Selah*.

Verse 4. *Wicked* and *violent* should be understood the same as "evil" and "violent" in verse 1, and *purposed*

will take the same explanation as "imagine" in verse 2.

Verse 5. *Snare, cords, net, and gin*, all signify the same thing. It means that David's enemies were secretly plotting against him. The *proud* were those who were haughty and impudent; men who realized that David was far better than they, and that they could make no headway against him unless it would be by underhanded plots.

Verse 6. See comments at ch. 86: 12 for distinctive meanings of Lord and God, since both are used in this verse. A supplication is a very earnest form of prayer.

Verse 7. Again see above reference for God and Lord. *Strength of salvation* means the strength necessary for salvation is to come from God. *Covered my head* means that David was shielded from fatal results when forced to battle with his enemies.

Verse 8. An unselfish man like David would not begrudge anyone a righteous desire. The connection shows he was asking for the disappointment of the wicked man in his *wicked devices*. The motive, also, that David had was a righteous one. He feared the wicked man would be self-exalted if he were successful in his evil designs.

Verse 9. The head is the part where schemes are formed, and then it is the member of the body that will be shaken in a defiant mood against the intended victim, and finally expressing those formed plots with the lips. The Psalmist prayed that those very lips might feel the sting of the wicked plots.

Verse 10. All of the words used against the foes of David in this verse are used figuratively. The meaning is that very severe treatment should be heaped upon them as punishment for their plots against the Psalmist.

Verse 11. *Be established* means to be successful in his wicked plots. *Evil shall hunt* is a phrase that means David believed the violent man would be overthrown.

Verse 12. As a rule we make a distinction between knowledge and faith. Yet the second word is sometimes used in a sense of emphatic assurance. It is so used in Job 19: 25 and 2 Cor. 5: 1. David's firm confidence in the future assistance of the Lord was based on his knowledge of present and past events.

Verse 13. *Righteous* and *upright* are two words for the same kind of people. They are always thankful for present favors, and have reason to look for the eternal favor of dwelling in the presence of Him whom they have served while in life.

PSALMS 141

Verse 1. *Cry* is another word that means an earnest prayer to God. David very frequently made such petitions to the Lord.

Verse 2. The Psalmist compared his prayers to the literal offerings that were used in the Jewish worship. The same comparison is made in Heb. 13: 15.

Verse 3. This verse is a figurative reference to the function of a group of men stationed at important places. Their duty was to watch and see that nothing unlawful might enter the place, nor that any person therein might unlawfully escape. On that principle David was concerned that no unrighteous words might escape from his mouth. He gave the same thought in literal language in ch. 19: 14.

Verse 4. God will never incline or induce man to do evil. The expression is David's way of asking the Lord to help him avoid the evil. *Let me not eat*, etc. In ancient times the act of eating with another signified an intimate friendship for and endorsement of the persons. That was why we have the statements about *eating* in Luke 15: 2 and 1 Cor. 5: 11.

Verse 5. The best and only comment I will make on this verse is to ask the student to read Proverbs 27: 5, 6.

Verse 6. The foregoing verse closed with a reference to the calamities of certain people. Now the Psalmist expresses sympathy for them in their calamities, some of which was to have their judges mistreated by being handled roughly, which is the idea in the term *stony places*. When that occurs David promises to "speak up" in their behalf with sweet words of comfort.

Verse 7. This verse is a highly figurative description of the near destruction that certain enemies had wrought. It is compared to a body whose members had been cut and slashed, as wood is carved sometimes, and made fit only for burial.

Verse 8. In spite of the sorest of afflictions David maintained his trust

in the Lord. *Soul* is used for the whole being, and the Psalmist prayed that he might not be left entirely defeated; he did not ask for complete freedom from trials.

Verse 9. *Snares* and *gins* are names of traps set in a hidden manner. David knew they had been placed to capture him but could not always know where they were. He prayed for the Lord to direct his way so that he could avoid them.

Verse 10. There was nothing wrong in this wish against the enemies of David. It is the very fate that was decreed for the wicked plotter in Prov. 26: 27.

PSALMS 142

Verse 1. I will refer the reader to my comments on ch. 141: 1 as applying here.

Verse 2. God does not have to be "overpersuaded" to obtain a favor from him. However, he desires to have his servants manifest their confidence, which is done by earnest or supplicating petitions to Him.

Verse 3. This verse makes another reference to the traps that were *privily* (privately) laid for David. The dread of them about overcame him, but the Lord was his helper for He knew where all of the snares were located.

Verse 4. The condition of distress was so terrible with the Psalmist that all human help seemed to be gone or unavailing.

Verse 5. When human help fails, the Lord will be the sure refuge for those who make the proper approach unto Him, willing to comply with the divine requirements.

Verse 6. When a man realizes his own weakness he is in a better prospect of seeking help from the Lord. Human power is small at best, but when the troubled soul comes to God in his own appointed way he will be able to win over his afflictions through the divine strength. This reminds us of the statement of Paul in 2 Cor. 12: 10.

Verse 7. The *prison* was the siege of persecutions that David's enemies had cast around him. To deliver him from that situation would be like delivering one out of a prison. And by the same token, the persons with whom he would be surrounded after coming out of his prison would be righteous persons.

PSALMS 143

Verse 1. The two sides of the divine plan, the human and the divine, are indicated in this verse. They are the *faithfulness* of man and the *righteousness* of God. Recognizing both those factors, David offered his supplications to the Lord.

Verse 2. This verse means that no man would stand any chance if God were to deal with him according to strict justice. Only through God's mercy will he be able to stand.

Verse 3. *Soul* and *life* are used in the same sense. The *darkness* refers to the depression that had been thrust upon David by the persecutions of his enemies.

Verse 4. *Spirit* and *heart* are used in the same sense. The persecutions had been so bitter against David that he did not have the heart to face the situation alone.

Verse 5. The pronoun *thy* refers to the Lord. In the distress of mind under which David labored, he thought back to the happiness of other days. The remembrance of the mighty works of the Lord would give strength and courage to bear up under the present trial.

Verse 6. Stretching forth the hands is a gesture of pleading. A *thirsty land* is one lacking moisture, and is illustrative of a condition lacking the elements of complete encouragement. See ch. 3: 2 on the meaning of *Selah*.

Verse 7. *Pit* is from a word that sometimes means forgetfulness. To *hear speedily* means to hear promptly and favorably and grant the favor requested.

Verse 8. The significance of hearing *in the morning* is that it would start out the day under the care of the Lord. It is genuine kindness for the Lord to show a man how he should walk. Without divine guidance he might wander into crooked and dangerous paths and be lost.

Verse 9. The Psalmist thought of God as a place of refuge to which he would flee for protection from the threatening dangers at the hands of his enemies.

Verse 10. David was an inspired man when writing his part of the Bible. But the sacred document had not been completed as yet, and a man in the official position of king and counselor of a great people was confronted with various conditions of life. At such times he needed specific

instruction concerning the will of the Lord. That was to be given to him by the spirit of God for his infallible guidance.

Verse 11. To *quicken* means to enliven and encourage. *For thy righteousness' sake* meant it would be righteous for God to deliver David's soul (his whole being) from the troubles thrust upon him by his enemies.

Verse 12. Severe treatment of his enemies would be regarded an act of mercy for David. The motive for such an action was the fact that he was a servant of God.

PSALMS 144

Verse 1. *Blessed be the Lord* denotes that all blessings were to be credited to him. Among those blessings was the instruction on how to wage successful and righteous warfare against such wicked foes as were threatening David.

Verse 2. This verse crowds in a goodly number of good things the Lord meant to David. *My goodness* really meant the goodness bestowed on the Psalmist, and the context indicates that it was the good mercy of God that David had in mind. A *fortress* is a fortified place equipped with the means of shelter and defense.

Verse 3. The language and thought of this verse is similar to that in ch. 8: 4.

Verse 4. The frailty of man was what caused David to marvel at the honors that God had bestowed upon him throughout the whole arrangement of creation.

Verse 5. The Lord's absolute mastery of the *heavens* (regions of the air and planets and the earth (mountains)) is the thought in this verse.

Verse 6. Having such control of the universe, David concluded that God could use the elements therein to chastise his enemies. It could be done by using the lightning, having the effect of arrows upon the foes of him and other good men.

Verse 7. *Send thine hand* has about the same meaning as if David has said to the Lord, "lend a helping hand." *Great waters* is a symbol of many afflictions. *Strange children* refers to people outside of the Jewish nation.

Verse 8. One word in the definition of *vanity* in the original is "uselessness." The *strange children* of the preceding verse are the ones who

speak these vain or useless words. Most people are right-handed and hence would be always regarded stronger for evil if they used their right hand for that purpose. When it is used figuratively as it is here, it means that outsiders are guilty of great falsehood.

Verse 9. We should ever bear in mind that David was a great musician, and used his instruments much of the time in religious services to accompany his song. Hence he said he would sing a new song to God and use the psaltery and harp. The last word is the name of the musical instruments that had *ten strings*.

Verse 10. The passage gives God the glory for the preservation of himself and other kings. Without the help of God, the most noted of kings would not be able to escape the *hurtful sword*, a common weapon of warfare in those days.

Verse 11. This verse is the same as verses 7, 8, and the reader is asked to see my comments on that portion of this chapter.

Verse 12. The plea for riddance of the evil work of *strange children* was to be beneficial to the youth of Israel.

Verse 13. A garner is a place for storing grain. It is desirous that one's sheep be enabled to reproduce abundantly. All of these benefits would be had if the evil work of the strange children were ridded out of the land.

Verse 14. The first clause of this verse continues to wish for temporal prosperity as a result of being rid of the evil men. The rest of the verse refers to the success of the leaders of the land. *Breaking in* means there would not be any raids by these strange (outside) people. *Going out* denotes that the leaders would be able to maintain their place of authority in peace and not be compelled to sally forth to drive the invaders away. With such a condition there would be no occasion for complaints in the peaceful streets, for all things would be satisfactory.

Verse 15. The general conclusion is that people described above will be a happy people. The specific key to the situation is that God is their Lord. It is very important now that the reader sees the explanation of *God and Lord* at ch. 86: 12.

PSALMS 145

Verse 1. To *extol* means to elevate or lift up. It is impossible literally

to elevate an infinite God, so the clause signifies the giving to Him a high acknowledgment, and recognize his name as the highest of all names.

Verse 2. The significant idea in this verse is that David would make his praises to God a *daily* practice. Too many professed servants of the Lord wish to give their devotions to God secondary consideration only.

Verse 3. To be unsearchable means it is beyond the full understanding of Man. God is infinite while man is finite, hence no human being can go to the end of the greatness of the Lord with his investigations.

Verse 4. The fact of God's greatness has been so well demonstrated from generation to generation that it has been established like a "continued story."

Verse 5. A king or other person in high places might have *glory and majesty* showered upon him by an admiring populace and yet not have attained to it by a life of *honor*. David proposed to ascribe all of these virtues to the Lord.

Verse 6. *Terrible* is from the same word as "reverend" in ch. 111: 9. The performances of God in the presence of man had been so awe-inspiring they were being spoken of by the public. David had the same opinion of God's greatness and used his opportunities to declare the same to others among whom he associated.

Verse 7. *They* means the people in general who were impressed with the goodness of the Creator; they made known their impressions in song.

Verse 8. *Compassion* denotes the feeling of God for humanity, and graciousness his treatment of them because of it. *Slow to anger* is one of the marks or indications of this gracious treatment of human beings.

Verse 9. *Good to all* does not mean that God makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked, for he does. But there are certain natural blessings that are created for human beings regardless of their personal character. As an instance of this fact we might consider the case of rain and sunshine in Matt. 5: 45.

Verse 10. This verse is a companion to ch. 19: 1. The saints *bless* God by acknowledging Him as the maker of these great things of the universe which are real blessings, because they meet the needs of human creatures.

Verse 11. The praise for God does not stop with the works of creation. The people of God will talk of the *power* or authority of the kingdom that pertains to the spiritual interests of mankind, and the divine wisdom portrayed therein.

Verse 12. Unselfish citizens of the Lord's institutions will not be content to enjoy its benefits alone. Their joy will prompt them to tell others the glad story.

Verse 13. *Kingdom* is a very general word and may refer to the rule of God among men in all ages. It evidently has that force in this verse. The specific kingdom or dispensation in which David lived was intended to be discontinued at a certain event (the coming of Christ). But in all ages of the world the God of Heaven was destined to have a rule among men which would continue as long as man was on the earth.

Verse 14. The good things declared here must be understood in the light of the conditions on which they have been promised. Those who are bowed down and fallen will be helped up if they will reach up and take the hand of the Lord stretched out to them.

Verse 15. The thought of this verse is similar to the preceding one; that is, there is a proviso understood. God will give the good things of life to those who *wait* (took toward) upon Him, which indicates their faith in the divine provision.

Verse 16. It should be understood that David was considering the blessings that God gives through nature and necessary for man's temporal comfort and existence.

Verse 17. In all of God's provisions for the creatures of his care he has done the right thing. For that reason we should be satisfied with his providence.

Verse 18. To call upon the Lord in *truth* means to call in the manner taught in His revelation of truth. That will make it necessary for man to study the Word of God.

Verse 19. The condition for granting the favors of this verse is that the persons seeking them must *fear him*. That does not mean merely to be afraid of the Lord, but they must respect him enough to obey his commandments.

Verse 20. The same kind of condition is connected with the favor of God in this verse as that of the pre-

ceding one except here it is worded to *love him*. But that will result in the same obedience for Jesus taught the principle that love is proved by obedience. See the passage in John 14: 23 on the subject of love and obedience.

Verse 21. David personally determined to praise the Lord with his own mouth. He was desirous also that *all flesh* (all beings with human flesh) should praise Him, since no man lives who does not owe his very existence to the goodness of God.

PSALMS 146

Verse 1. The first 4 words are sometimes rendered "Hallelujah." To praise the Lord with the soul means to praise him with one's whole being.

Verse 2. *While I live* is equivalent in thought to "faithful unto death."

Verse 3. Nothing permanent or spiritually helpful can be obtained from man, even though he be a prince or leader among the people.

Verse 4. This verse is considering the earthly part of man which lives by breathing air. When the breath ceases to come into the body it results in the death of the body and it goes back to dust. Some people try to make the last clause of the verse mean that when a man dies no part of him is conscious since at that instant his thoughts perish. It is true that all of the plans or purposes that a man meditated over while in the flesh will come to an end at death. But that does not even touch the subject of his mental condition afterward.

Verse 5. *Jacob* is frequently used in the Bible to mean the nation of Israel, because Jacob was the father of the 12 tribes. The *God of Jacob*, then, would be the God who was worshiped by the nation. Certainly it would be a true source of happiness to lean upon Him for help.

Verse 6. The argument is that a Being who could make the universe could certainly help one of the little creatures of that vast domain. *Keepeth truth* means that God always makes his word good, and that proves that his promises were truthful.

Verse 7. *Judgment for the oppressed* would be to decide their case in their behalf and then *execute* or enforce the decision. The last clause means the Lord will loose the prisoners from their bondage to the state of oppression.

Verse 8. All miraculous deeds of kind-

ness are done by power coming from the Lord. Likewise, all favors of a spiritual and mental nature originate with Him. The motive for the blessings is God's love for the righteous.

Verse 9. The *strangers* is defined in the original as "a guest; by implication a foreigner." God is good to all unfortunate people if they are deserving, even though they are not of his own. The same principle is taught by Paul in Gal. 6: 10. *Turneth upside down* means the Lord will upset or defeat the way of the wicked.

Verse 10 This verse should be read in connection with the comments at ch. 145: 13. *Praise ye the Lord* is an exclamation, pronounced "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 147

Verse 1. Shouts and exclamations addressed to the Lord in Bible circumstances were not mere emotional outbursts. They were intelligent expressions regarding some of the virtues of the Lord, and the desirable effects they were having on the servants of God. For instance, the present verse names three of such points; *good, pleasant and comely*. These combine to form a strong motive for praising the God of Heaven.

Verse 2. This verse is a prophecy of the return of the children of Israel from Babylonian captivity; the history is in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Verse 3. This verse refers to those who are discouraged over the trials of life.

Verse 4. *Telleth* means to count or enumerate the number of the stars. The statement aims to express the boundless knowledge of God. *Names* is from a word that has the idea of individuality. The verse as a whole means that God is so great and his spiritual presence so wide that each individual star is present to his all-seeing eye. (How Foolish, then, for a feeble man to think that he could hide from Him!)

Verse 5. We generally think of the word "infinite" as meaning unlimited, and it does have that force with reference to the goodness or knowledge of God. However, in this passage it is from a Hebrew word that means "indefinite." It signifies that no human being can state the number or size or extent of God's understanding.

Verse 6. The *meek* are those who humble themselves and they are the ones whom God will exalt. Jesus

taught the same truth in Luke 14: 11. It is interesting to note that David contrasts the *meek* with the *wicked*.

Verse 7. As a rule when the Psalmist suggests the use of a musical instrument in service to God, it is as an accompaniment for singing.

Verse 8. *Heaven* in this connection refers to the first of the 3 heavens, the region of the atmosphere. The verse is concerned with the operation of God through nature in producing rain. *Grass to grow upon the mountains* suggest the power of God in producing the blessing independent of man, since he does not live there as a rule.

Verse 9. The blessings of providence are for the use of dumb creatures, even though they are not capable of engaging in productive pursuits. (Matt. 6: 26.)

Verse 10. Both the *horse* and *men* are parts of God's great plan of this earth. However, they are instruments only in His hands, not that God could not work alone.

Verse 11. While God does not need the assistance of feeble man, yet He loves the one who has fear or respect for the divine source of his existence.

Verse 12. All praise and other service offered to God must be done through the proper channel. The headquarters of God's system at that time were in *Zion*, and that was a particular part of the city of *Jerusalem*.

Verse 13. *Jerusalem* is the antecedent of *thy*. It refers to the support the Lord had given to the capital city of his beloved nation.

Verse 14. The same city is meant and the *peace* has special reference to the successful rule of Jerusalem over the enemy. *Finest of the wheat* denotes the temporal blessings which God assured to the citizens of the holy city.

Verse 15. This is still on the control of God over the works of creation. The word of the Lord is sufficient to bring to pass any result that is divinely desired.

Verse 16. This is a comparative description of the work of God in the elements of the weather or seasons.

Verse 17. God controls the rainfall for the crops, and he likewise has complete charge of the winter season with its products.

Verse 18. When the cold temperature of winter has served the Lord's

purposes, he brings the thawing forces of the springtime, filling the streams and rills. All of this agrees with the promise made in Gen. 8: 22.

Verse 19. The special covenant that God made was with his own people. *Jacob* was the father of the 12 sons who composed the nation. That nation was called *Israel*, one of the names of their common ancestor (Gen. 32: 28).

Verse 20. God has bestowed the blessings of nature on all nations alike, but his statutes of government were given only to Israel. The chapter closes with the familiar words that are sometimes rendered "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 148

Verse 1. A part of Strong's definition of *praise* in the original is "to celebrate." The outstanding idea in the word is to give God the most respectful attention, and to accord him the credit for all the great and good things ever done or that exist. When dumb or inanimate things are called upon to praise God, it means that God deserves praise because of those things. When a call is made for praise to God, and no specific motive is mentioned, the phrase may be translated "Hallelujah." This definition of *praise* will not always be repeated, but attention will be called in the following verses to various creatures who are called upon to praise the Lord, or where things will be named for which he should be praised.

Verse 2. The *angels* were the heavenly messengers or ministers of the Lord; the *hosts* were those who made up the Lord's army.

Verse 3. The sun, moon and stars were made by the Lord and are of great service to man; for that reason He should be praised.

Verse 4. *Heavens of heavens* is a phrase for the sake of emphasis. *Waters above* refers to the event recorded in Gen. 1: 6, 7.

Verse 5. The word of God was sufficient to bring the parts of the universe into physical existence. This is also the teaching in Ps. 33: 6-9 and Heb. 11: 3.

Verse 6. About six thousand years have passed since God brought the universe into being. In all of that time there has never been a variation in the revolutions of the earth around its axis, or of its orbital journeys around the sun, except those miraculously caused by the Creator

himself, recorded in Josh. 10: 12-14; 2 Ki. 20: 11.

Verse 7. Let praise come from, or because of, the earth. Even the dragons and others of the creatures in the deeps are evidences of the praiseworthy might of God.

Verse 8. The storms and other "weather conditions" fulfill the word of God by occurring just as He decreed they should.

Verse 9. These are all inanimate things and cannot praise God, yet He should be praised because of them and their benefit to the living creatures of the earth.

Verse 10. This verse lists things that are living but are not intelligent, as man, yet they exist by the power of God and for the benefit and control of the human being (Gen. 1: 26), therefore he should praise the Lord for them.

Verse 11. In several verses the writer mentioned inanimate things for which great praise was due to God. He then named some things that are living but not intellectual, and called for praise on account of them. And in the present verse the Psalmist calls upon the intelligent creatures, the ones who have been benefitted by the works of God, to give praise for the same. Even the greatest persons of the earth; *kings, princes and judges*, are bidden to praise the Lord, for they owe their greatness to Him.

Verse 12. No class is exempt from obligation to praise the Lord, and none should desire to be excused from the service if they are appreciative of God's goodness.

Verse 13. *Excellent* is not merely a term of flattery; it describes a state of actual superiority. The name of the Lord is above all other names. There is only one thing in the universe any higher than the name of the Lord (ch. 138: 2).

Verse 14. *Horn* means power and authority. God gave his people a place of power among the nations of the earth because he loved them. This psalm closes with the familiar term, "Hallelujah."

PSALMS 149

Verse 1. This verse is another that starts with the term that means "Hallelujah." There is never any good reason for casting away a song because it is old, but there are always *new* reasons for singing praises to the Lord.

Verse 2. Israel owed his existence to the Lord, whether considered as a man or a nation of men. *Zion* and *king* are appropriately named together because the first refers to the capital of the kingdom.

Verse 3. The *dance* is a noun and named as one item in the praise activities offered to the Lord. There was a musical instrument also used in ancient times called the dance. In some passages of the Bible it is clearly what was meant. The following are places where the musical instrument was meant. Ex. 15: 20; Judges 11: 34. But it is also evident that dancing as an exercise of the body was engaged in by people of ancient times. It was sometimes under approved circumstances, but at others was connected with unlawful practices. But however the subject may be viewed, there is nothing in either Old or New Testament that justifies the modern promiscuous dance, engaged in together by the sexes where bodily contact is maintained in the performance.

Verse 4. According to this verse meekness is an adornment of beauty. We have about the same teaching in 1 Pe. 3: 4. *The Lord taketh pleasure* means he is pleased with the conduct and standing of his people.

Verse 5. One of the most glorious actions is to rejoice in the Lord. In the first psalm David endorsed the man who meditated at night in the law of the Lord. In this verse he suggests that the saints sing aloud while in their beds.

Verse 6. *High places* means those in which the saints exalted the name of God. That age was one in which warfare was used by the people of God. Hence David not only called for religious activities of the saints while in the privacy of their homes, but bade them wield a keen sword when they went forth to fight with the foe.

Verse 7. While God's people took vengeance on the heathen it was counted as His vengeance. This principle is taught in Rom. 12: 19 and 2 Cor. 7: 11.

Verse 8. The kings of the heathen nations fought with God's people. The Psalmist wished that those kings and their associates would be defeated by the people of God and be handcuffed. That would be winning a victory against the vicious enemies of God.

Verse 9. *The judgment written* referred to such instructions as Deut. 7: 1, 2. To have carried out that in-

struction would have brought honor upon the nation. Their forefathers failed to do so and the nation was brought under great shame (Judges 1).

PSALMS 150

Verse 1. The final chapter of the Book of Psalms is an intensive exhortation to praise the Lord. For a detailed definition of "praise" as a word, see my comments at ch. 135: 1 and 148: 1. Sanctuary means any holy assembling of the people of God. *Firmament* has a figurative and very extensive meaning, referring to the heavenly or exalted character of His power; that it is awe-inspiring and full of dignity.

Verse 2. *Mighty acts*. The second word has no original as a distinct term. The first is from one that means force and power. The clause, then, would include the entire field of God's performances, beginning with his creation of the Son (Rev. 3: 14), and considering all that has been done in the realm of "creation, providence and redemption." For all of these things God deserves wholehearted praise. Many things and persons may have greatness, but *excellent* greatness means that it is superior to all other. The contrast is made between the Lord and other persons having greatness.

Verse 3. The *trumpet* was the same as our cornet and played with the mouth. The *psaltery* and *harp* were stringed instruments and played with the fingers. Sometimes a clip was worn on the fingers and at other times the bare fingers were used in playing.

Verse 4. A *timbrel* was a kind of drum. See comments at ch. 149: 3 on *dance*. *Stringed instruments* is a general name, applying to all of those played with the fingers. *Organs* were any kind of instruments played with the mouth, but having the pipes so perforated that a scale of tones could be produced.

Verse 5. Both of these *cymbals* were sheets of metal and struck together with a loud sound. They were used in rhythmic meter to accompany the music or singing, in about the same manner as drums and symbols are used in modern orchestras and other musical organizations.

Verse 6. I will request the reader again to see my comments on "praise" at ch. 135: 1 and 148: 1. Dumb beasts cannot render intelligent praise to God, any more than can inanimate

things, yet all are told by the Psalmist to praise the Lord. Hence, we understand him to mean that we should praise the Lord for all the innumerable things in creation that bring us so much joy and other blessing. The book closes with the words on which we have had frequent comments and that are rendered "Hallelujah."

PROVERBS 1

General remarks. Concerning the authorship of this book, Smith's Bible Dictionary has this to say: "The superscriptions [titles] which are affixed to several portions of the book, in chs. 1: 1; 10: 1; 25: 1, attribute the authorship of those portions to Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. With the exception of the last two chapters, which are distinctly assigned to other authors, it is probable that the statement of the superscriptions is in the main correct, and that the majority of the proverbs contained or collected were by Solomon . . . The Proverbs are frequently quoted or alluded to in the New Testament, and the canonicity [authority] of the book thereby confirmed."—Article, Book of Proverbs. Since it is certain, then, that the authorship of the book belongs to Solomon, it will be well to settle the question of his qualifications and authority for writing the book. The wisdom of Solomon has been a subject of discussion among the friends of the Bible. Some have said that, while it was far above what any other person had, it was not in the form of inspiration; that it was mental talent such as all people have through nature, except that his exceeded others. That will not hold, for Solomon was already a mature man, with all natural endowments possessed and developed, when God gave to him the wisdom we are speaking about. Again, it is claimed that his wisdom pertained to his ability as king and judge of disputes, not to his writings; wrong again. In 1 Kings 4: 32, immediately after mentioning his wisdom, the writer tells us of the songs and proverbs he composed. The conclusion is, then, that Solomon was divinely inspired in all of his writings that have been included in the Bible. The fact of his unrighteous life does not affect his inspiration, any more than Peter's hypocrisy at Antioch (Gal. 2: 11-13) affected his inspiration at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 7-11) or his epistles.

Verse 1. The word *proverbs* is from MASHAL and Strong defines it, "prop-

erly a pithy maxim, usually of a metaphorical [figurative] nature; hence a simile [comparison], (as an adage, poem, discourse)." The importance of the author is indicated by telling of his ancestry. He was not only a son of David, but David was a king. And David was not only a king, but was king of Israel.

Verse 2. This verse states the purpose of these proverbs; that it was to know *wisdom* and *instruction*, and to perceive words of *understanding*. The three nouns that are italicized have about the same meaning. Generally speaking, they have the idea of information necessary to wise and proper living, and correction when one gets out of the line of duty. The key to the verse is the word *know*. It is from YADAH, and Strong says it is used in a great variety of senses "including observation, care, recognition." In the King James version it has been rendered acknowledge 5 times, be aware 2, discern 4, consider 7, have respect 1, perceive 18. So the force of the verse is, the proverbs of Solomon were written to the end that the reader would be led to recognize and give attention to the things mentioned. Or, using a popular saying, to "know a good thing when he sees it."

Verse 3. *Perceive* is still a stronger word than *know* in the preceding verse. It means not only to recognize and give some attention to the instruction, but actually to accept it. The four items of the list have much in common in their meaning, yet there is some distinction. I shall state the leading idea in each as drawn from the lexicon. *Wisdom* means to be on the alert; *justice*, to be strictly or technically right; *judgment*, a proper verdict when called upon for a decision; *equity*, to show the spirit of fair play in one's relations with others.

Verse 4. *Subtly* means the exercise of common sense instead of being *simple*, which means to be easily misled. A man might not be "simple" in the sense of the word here, but if he were young he would need to be given knowledge and *discretion*. This word is from an original that means the ability to think for himself.

Verse 5. A *wise* man is one who will hear so as to increase his *learning*. In other words, the wisest man in the world is the one who realizes he does not know it all. Paul taught this same thing in 1 Cor. 3: 18. The last clause of the verse has practically the same meaning as the first.