

Psalm 1 Commentary

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Treasury of David C H Spurgeon

TITLE. This Psalm may be regarded as THE PREFACE PSALM, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmists's desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon.

DIVISION. This Psalm consists of two parts: in the first (from verse 1 to the end of the 3rd) David sets out wherein the felicity and blessedness of a godly man consisteth, what his exercises are, and what blessings he shall receive from the Lord. In the second part (from verse 4 to the end) he contrasts the state and character of the ungodly, reveals the future, and describes, in telling language, his ultimate doom.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs by a Hebraism, it being the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled, the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains in it the very pith and quintessence of Christianity. What Jerome saith on St. Paul's epistles, the same may I say of this Psalm; it is short as to the composure, but full of length and strength as to the matter. This Psalm carries blessedness in the frontpiece; it begins where we all hope to end: it may well be called a Christian's Guide, for it discovers the quicksands where the wicked sink down in perdition, and the firm ground on which the saints tread to glory. Thomas Watson's Saints Spiritual Delight, 1660.

Whole Psalm. This whole Psalm offers itself to be drawn into these two opposite propositions: a godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable; which seem to stand as two challenges, made by the prophet: one, that he will maintain a godly man against all comers, to be the only Jason for winning the golden fleece of blessedness; the other, that albeit the ungodly make a show in the world of being happy, yet they of all men are most miserable.

Sir Richard Baker, 1640

Whole Psalm. I have been induced to embrace the opinion of some among the ancient interpreters (Augustine, Jerome, etc.), who conceive that the first Psalm is intended to be descriptive of the character and reward of the JUST ONE, i.e. the Lord Jesus.

John Fry, B.A., 1842

Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

BLESSED — see how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even as did the famous Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount! The word translated "blessed" is a very expressive one. The original word is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath

justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. We might read it, "Oh, the blessednesses!" and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man's felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!

Here the gracious man is described both negatively (verse 1) and positively (verse 2). He is a man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He takes wiser counsel, and walks in the commandments of the Lord his God. To him the ways of piety are paths of peace and pleasantness. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of inward grace when the outward walk is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from our actions. Note next, he standeth not in the way of sinners. His company is of a choicer sort than it was. Although a sinner himself, he is now a blood-washed sinner, quickened by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in heart. Standing by the rich grace of God in the congregation of the righteous, he dares not herd with the multitude that do evil. Again it is said, "nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffings. Let others make a mock of sin, of eternity, of hell and heaven, and of the Eternal God; this man has learned better philosophy than that of the infidel, and has too much sense of God's presence to endure to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scorner may be very lofty, but it is very near to the gate of hell; let us flee from it, for it shall soon be empty, and destruction shall swallow up the man who sits therein. Mark the gradation in the first verse:

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor SITTETH in the SEAT of SCORNFUL.

When men are living in sin they go from bad to worse. At first they merely walk in the counsel of the careless and ungodly, who forget God - the evil is rather practical than habitual - but after that, they become habituated to evil, and they stand in the way of open sinners who wilfully violate God's commandments; and if let alone, they go one step further, and become themselves pestilent teachers and tempters of others, and thus they sit in the seat of the scornful. They have taken their degree in vice, and as true Doctors of Damnation they are installed, and are looked up to by others as Masters in Belial. But the blessed man, the man to whom all the blessings of God belong, can hold no communion with such characters as these. He keeps himself pure from these lepers; he puts away evil things from him as garments spotted by the flesh; he comes out from among the wicked, and goes without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. O for grace to be thus separate from sinners.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS

Verse 1. The psalmist saith more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they did but beat the bush, God hath here put the bird into our hand.

John Trapp, 1660

Verse 1. Where the word blessed is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we shall find a godly man within.

Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The seat of the drunkard is the seat of the scornful.

Matthew Henry, 1662 - 1714

Verse 1. "Walketh NOT....NOR standeth....NOR sitteth," etc.

Negative precepts are in some cases more absolute and peremptory than affirmatives; for to say, "that hath walketh in the counsel of the godly," might not be sufficient; for, he might walk in the counsel of the godly, and yet walk in the counsel of the ungodly too; not both indeed at once, but both at several times; where now, this negative clears him at all times.

Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The word (Heb) haish is emphatic, that man; that one among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him.

Adam Clarke, 1844

Verse 1. "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Mark certain circumstances of their differing characters and conduct.

I. The ungodly man has his counsel. II. The sinner has his way; and III. The scorner has his seat.

The ungodly man is unconcerned about religion; he is neither zealous for his own salvation nor for that of others; and he counsels and advises those with whom he converses to adopt his plan, and not trouble themselves about praying, reading, repentance, etc., etc.; "there is no need for such things; live an honest life, make no fuss about religion, and you will fare well enough at last." Now "blessed is the man who walks not in this man's counsel," who does not come into his measures, nor act according to his plan.

The sinner has his particular way of transgressing; one is a drunkard, another dishonest, another unclean. Few are given to every species of vice. There are many covetous men who abhor drunkenness, many drunkards who abhor covetousness; and so of others. Each has his easily besetting sin; therefore, says the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY." (Isaiah 55:7) Now, blessed is he who stands not in such a man's WAY.

The scorner has brought, in reference to himself, all religion and moral feeling to an end. He has sat down is utterly confirmed in impiety, and makes a mock at sin. His conscience is seared, and he is a believer in all unbelief. Now, blessed is the man who sits not down in his SEAT.

Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. In the Hebrew, the word "blessed" is a plural noun, *ashrey* (blessednesses), that is, all blessednesses are the portion of that man who has not gone away, etc.; as though it were said, "All things are well with that man who," etc. Why do you hold any dispute? Why draw vain conclusions? If a man has found that pearl of great price, to love the law of God and to be separate from the ungodly, all blessednesses belong to that man; but, if he does not find this jewel, he will seek for all blessednesses but will never find one! For as all things are pure unto the pure, so all things are lovely unto the loving, all things good unto the good; and, universally, such as thou art thyself, such is God himself unto thee, though he is not a creature. He is perverse unto the perverse, and holy unto the holy. Hence nothing can be good or saving unto him who is evil: nothing sweet unto him unto whom the law of God is not sweet. The word "counsel" is without doubt here to be received as signifying decrees and doctrines, seeing that no society of men exists without being formed and preserved by decrees and laws. David, however, by this term strikes at the pride and reprobate temerity of the ungodly. First, because they will not humble themselves so far as to walk in the law of the Lord, but rule themselves by their own counsel. And then he calls it their "counsel," because it is their prudence, and the way that seems to them to be without error. For this is the destruction of the ungodly their being prudent in their own eyes and in their own esteem, and clothing their errors in the garb of prudence and of the right way. For if they came to men in the open garb of error, it would not be so distinguishing a mark of blessedness not to walk with them. But David does not here say, "in the folly of the ungodly," or "in the error of the ungodly;" and therefore he admonishes us to guard with all diligence against the appearance of what is right, that the devil transformed into an angel of light do not seduce us by his craftiness. And he contrasts the counsel of the wicked with the law of the Lord, that we may learn to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, who are always ready to give counsel to all, to teach all, and to offer assistance unto all, when they are of all men least qualified to do so. The term "stood" descriptively represents their obstinacy, and stiff-neckedness, wherein they harden themselves and make their excuses in words of malice, having become incorrigible in their ungodliness. For "to stand," in the figurative manner of Scripture expression, signifies to be firm and fixed: as in Romans 14:4, "To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." Hence the word "column" is by the Hebrew derived from their verb "to stand," as is the word statue among the Latins. For this is the very self-excuse and self-hardening of the ungodly their appearing to themselves to live rightly, and to shine in the eternal show of works above all others. With respect to the term "seat," to sit in the seat, is to teach, to act the instructor and teacher; as in Matthew 23:2, "The scribes sit in Moses' chair." They sit in the seat of pestilence, who fill the church with the opinions of philosophers, with the traditions of men, and with the counsels of their own brain, and oppress miserable consciences, setting aside, all the while, the word of God, by which alone the soul is fed, lives, and is preserved.

Martin Luther, 1536 - 1546.

Verse 1. "The scornful." *Peccator cum in profundum venerit contemnet*

when a wicked man comes to the depth and worst of sin, he despiseth. Then the Hebrew will despise Moses (Exodus 2:14), "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" Then Ahab will quarrel with Micaiah (1 Kings 22:18), because he doth not prophecy good unto him. Every child in Bethel will mock Elisha (2 Kings 2:23), and be bold to call him "bald pate." Here is an original drop of venom swollen to a main ocean of poison: as one drop of some serpents' poison, lighting on the hand, gets into the veins, and so spreads itself over all the body till it hath stifled the vital spirits. God shall "laugh you to scorn," (Psalms 2:4), for laughing Him to scorn; and at last despise you that have despised him in us. That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face. Your indignities done to your spiritual physicians shall sleep in the dust with your ashes, but stand up against your souls in judgment.

Thomas Adams, 1614.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. May furnish an excellent text upon "Progress in Sin," or "The Purity of the Christian," or "The Blessedness of the Righteous." Upon the last subject speak of the believer as BLESSED

1. By God; 2. In Christ; 3. With all blessings; 4. In all circumstances; 5. Through time and eternity; 6. To the highest degree.

Verse 1. Teaches a godly man to beware, (1) of the opinions, (2) of the practical life, and (3) of the company and association of

sinful men. Show how meditation upon the Word will assist us in keeping aloof from these three evils.

The insinuating and progressive nature of sin.

J. Morrison.

Verse 1. in connection with the whole Psalm. The wide difference between the righteous and the wicked.

WORKS UPON THE FIRST PSALM

The Way to Blessedness: a Commentary on the First Psalm. By PHINEAS FLETCHER. London. 1632

A Discourse about the State of True Happiness, delivered in certain Sermons in Oxford, and at Paul's Cross. By ROBERT BOLTON. London. 1625

David's Blessed Man; or, a Short Exposition on the First Psalm, directing a Man to True Happiness. By SAMUEL SMITH, preacher of the Word at Prittlewell in Essex. 1635 Reprinted in Nicol's Series of Commentaries.

Meditations ad Disquisitions upon the First Psalm of David. Blessed is the Man. By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. London. 1640 The same volume contains Meditations upon "Seven Consolatorie Psalms of David," namely, 23, 27, 30, 84, 103, and 116.

The Christian on the Mount; or a Treatise concerning Meditation; wherein the necessity, usefulness, and excellency of Meditation are at large discussed. By THOMAS WATSON. 1660.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

And now mark his positive character. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day, and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he museth upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing belongeth not to you.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 2. "But his will is in the law of the Lord." The "will," which is here signified, is that delight of heart, and that certain pleasure, in the law, which does not look at what the law promises, nor at what it threatens, but at this only; that "the law is holy, and just, and good." Hence it is not only a love of the law, but that loving delight in the law which no prosperity, nor adversity, nor the world, nor the prince of it, can either take away or destroy; for it victoriously bursts its way through poverty, evil report, the cross, death, and hell, and in the midst of adversities, shines the brightest. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." This delight which the prophet here speaks of is the only delight that neither blushes nor looks pale; the only delight that gives a repast without an after reckoning; the only delight that stands in construction with all tenses; and like AEneas Anchyses, carries his parents upon his back. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. "In His law doth he meditate." In the plainest text there is a world of holiness and spirituality; and if we in prayer and dependence upon God did sit down and study it, we should behold much more than appears to us. It may be, at once reading or looking, we see little or nothing; as Elijah's servant went once, and saw nothing; therefore he was commanded to look seven times. What now? says the prophet, "I see a cloud rising, like a man's hand;" and by-and-by, the whole surface of the heavens was covered with clouds. So you may look lightly upon a Scripture and see nothing; meditate often upon it, and there you shall see a light, like the light of the sun. Joseph Caryl, 1647.

Verse 2. "In His law doth he meditate day and night." The good man doth meditate on the law of God day and night. The pontificians beat off the common people from this common treasury, by objecting this supposed difficulty. Oh, the Scriptures are hard to be understood, do not you trouble your heads about them; we will tell you the meaning of them. They might as well say, heaven is a

blessed place, but it is a hard way to it; do not trouble yourselves, we will go thither for you. Thus in the great day of trial, when they should be saved by their book, alas! they have no book to save them. Instead of the Scriptures they can present images; these are the layman's books; as if they were to be tried by a jury of carvers and painters, and not by the twelve apostles. Be not you so cheated; but study the gospel as you look for comfort by the gospel. He that hopes for the inheritance, will make much of the conveyance. Thomas Adams.

Verse 2. To "meditate," as it is generally understood, signifies to discuss, to dispute; and its meaning is always confined to a being employed in words, as in Psalms 32:30, "The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom." Hence Augustine has, in his translation, "chatter;" and a beautiful metaphor it is as chattering is the employment of birds, so a continual conversing in the law of the Lord (for talking is peculiar to man), ought to be the employment of man. But I cannot worthily and fully set forth the gracious meaning and force of this word; for this "meditating" consists first in an intent observing of the words of the law, and then in a comparing of the different Scriptures; which is a certain delightful hunting, nay, rather a playing with stags in a forest, where the Lord furnishes us with the stags, and opens to us their secret coverts. And from this kind of employment, there comes forth at length a man well instructed in the law of the Lord to speak unto the people. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." The godly man will read the Word by day, that men, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who is in heaven; he will do it in the night, that he may not be seen of men: by day, to show that he is not one of those who dread the light; by night, to show that he is one who can shine in the shade: by day, for that is the time for working work whilst it is day; by night, lest his Master should come as a thief, and find him idle. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. I have no rest, but in a nook, with the book. Thomas a Kempis, 1380 - 1471.

Verse 2. "Meditate." Meditation doth discriminate and characterise a man; by this he may take a measure of his heart, whether it be good or bad; let me allude to that; "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. As the meditation is, such is the man. Meditation is the touchstone of a Christian; it shows what metal he is made of. It is a spiritual index; the index shows what is in the book, so meditation shows what is in the heart. Thomas Watson's Saints' Spiritual Delight.

Verse 2. Meditation chews the cud, and gets the sweetness and nutritive virtue of the Word into the heart and life: this is the way the godly bring forth much fruit. Bartholomew Ashwood's Heavenly Trade, 1688.

Verse 2. The naturalists observe that to uphold and accommodate bodily life, there are diverse sorts of faculties communicated, and these among the rest:

1. An attractive faculty, to assume and draw in the food; 2. A retentive faculty, to retain it when taken in; 3. As assimilating faculty to concoct the nourishment; 4. An augmenting faculty, for drawing to perfection.

Meditation is all these. It helps judgment, wisdom, and faith to ponder, discern, and credit the things which reading and hearing supply and furnish. It assists the memory to lock up the jewels of divine truth in her sure treasury. It has a digesting power, and turns special truth into spiritual nourishment; and lastly, it helps the renewed heart to grow upward and increase its power to know the things which are freely given to us of God. Condensed from Nathaniel Ranew, 1670.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 2. THE WORD OF GOD.

1. The believer's delight in it. 2. The believer's acquaintance with it. We long to be in the company of those we love.

Verse 2. I. What is meant by "the law of the Lord."

II. What there is in it for the believer to delight in. III. How he shows his delight, thinks of it, reads much, speaks of it, obeys it, does not delight in evil.

Verse 2. (last clause). The benefits, helps, and hindrances of meditation.

Psalm 1:3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

"And he shall be like a tree planted" not a wild tree, but "a tree planted," chosen, considered as property, cultivated and secured from the last terrible uprooting, for "every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up:" Matthew 15:13. "By the rivers of water;" so that even if one river should fail, he hath another. The rivers of pardon and the rivers of grace, the rivers of

the promise and the rivers of communion with Christ, are never-failing sources of supply. He is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;" not unseasonable graces, like untimely figs, which are never full-flavored. But the man who delights in God's Word, being taught by it, bringeth forth patience in the time of suffering, faith in the day of trial, and holy joy in the hour of prosperity. Fruitfulness is an essential quality of a gracious man, and that fruitfulness should be seasonable. "His leaf also shall not wither;" his faintest word shall be everlasting; his little deeds of love shall be had in remembrance. Not simply shall his fruit be preserved, but his leaf also. He shall neither lose his beauty nor his fruitfulness. "And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Blessed is the man who hath such a promise as this. But we must not always estimate the fulfillment of a promise by our own eye-sight. How often, my brethren, if we judge by feeble sense, may we come to the mournful conclusion of Jacob, "All these things are against me!" For though we know our interest in the promise, yet we are so tried and troubled, that sight sees the very reverse of what that promise foretells. But to the eye of faith this word is sure, and by it we perceive that our works are prospered, even when everything seems to go against us. It is not outward prosperity which the Christian most desires and values; it is soul prosperity which he longs for. We often, like Jehoshaphat, make ships to go to Tarshish for gold, but they are broken at Ezion-geber; but even here there is a true prospering, for it is often for the soul's health that we would be poor, bereaved, and persecuted. Our worst things are often our best things. As there is a curse wrapped up in the wicked man's mercies, so there is a blessing concealed in the righteous man's crosses, losses, and sorrows. The trials of the saint are a divine husbandry, by which he grows and brings forth abundant fruit.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS

Verse 3. "A tree." There is one tree, only to be found in the valley of the Jordan, but too beautiful to be entirely passed over; the oleander, with its bright blossoms and dark green leaves, giving the aspect of a rich garden to any spot where it grows. It is rarely if ever alluded to in the Scriptures. But it may be the tree planted by the streams of water which bringeth forth his fruit in due season, and "whose leaf shall not wither." A. P. Stanley, D.D., in "Sinai and Palestine."

Verse 3. "A tree planted by the rivers of water." This is an allusion to the Eastern method of cultivation, by which rivulets of water are made to flow between the rows of trees, and thus, by artificial means, the trees receive a constant supply of moisture.

Verse 3. "His fruit in his season." In such a case expectation is never disappointed. Fruit is expected, fruit is borne, and it comes also in the time in which it should come. A godly education, under the influences of the divine Spirit, which can never be withheld where they are earnestly sought, is sure to produce the fruits of righteousness; and he who reads, prays, and meditates, will ever see the work which God has given him to do; the power by which he is to perform it; and the times, places, and opportunities for doing those things by which God can obtain most glory, his own soul most good, and his neighbour most edification. Adam Clarke.

Verse 3. "In his season." The Lord reckons the times which pass over us, and puts them to our account: let us, therefore, improve them, and with the impotent persons at the pool of Bethesda, step in when the angel stirs the water. Now the church is afflicted, it is a season of prayer and learning; now the church is enlarged, it is a season of praise; I am now at a sermon, I will hear what God will say; now in the company of a learned and wise man, I will draw some knowledge and counsel from him; I am under a temptation, now is a fit time to lean on the name of the Lord; I am in a place of dignity and power, let me consider what it is that God requireth of me in such a time as this. And thus as the tree of life bringeth fruit every month, so a wise Christian, as a wise husbandman, hath his distinct employments for every month, bringing forth his fruit in his season. John Spencer's Things New and Old, 1658.

Verse 3. "In his season." Oh, golden and admirable word! by which is asserted the liberty of Christian righteousness. The ungodly have their stated days, stated times, certain works, and certain places; to which they stick so closely, that if their neighbours were perishing with hunger, they could not be torn from them. But this blessed man, being free at all times, in all places, for every work, and to every person, will serve you whenever an opportunity is offered him; whatsoever comes into his hands to do, he does it. He is neither a Jew, nor a Gentile, nor a Greek, nor a barbarian, nor of any other particular person. He gives his fruit in his season, so often as either God or man requires his work. Therefore his fruits have no name, and his times have no name. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "His leaf also shall not wither." He describes the fruit before he does the leaf. The Holy Spirit himself always teaches every faithful preacher in the church to know that the kingdom of God does not stand in word but in power. 1 Corinthians 4:20. Again, "Jesus began both to do and to teach." Acts 1:1. And again, "Which was a prophet mighty in deed and word." Luke 24:19. And thus, let him who professes the word of doctrine, first put forth the fruits of life, if he would not have his fruit to wither, for Christ cursed the fig tree which bore no fruit. And, as Gregory saith, that man whose life is despised is condemned by his doctrine, for he preaches to others, and is himself reprobated. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "His leaf also shall not wither." The Lord's trees are all evergreens. No winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit bearers. C. H. S.

Verse 3. "And whatsoever he doeth, or, maketh or taketh in hand shall prosper." And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understandest not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in spirit; and therefore if thou

hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldest rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the word of God, so does he also those who teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore thou hearest of a miracle the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a blessed man doeth. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. A critical journal has shown that instead of "Whatsoever it doeth shall prosper," the rendering might be, "Whatsoever it produceth shall come to maturity." This makes the figure entire, and is sanctioned by some MSS. and ancient versions.

Verse 3. (last clause). Outward prosperity, if it follow close walking with God, is very sweet; as the cipher, when it follows a figure, adds to the number, though it be nothing in itself. John Trapp.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 3. "The fruitful tree."

I. Where it grows. II. How it came there. III. What it yields. IV. How to be like it.

Verse 3. "Planted by the rivers of water."

I. The origination of Christian life, "planted." II. The streams which support it. III. The fruit expected from it.

Verse 3. Influence of religion upon prosperity. Blair. The nature, causes, signs, and results of true prosperity. "Fruit in his season;" virtues to be exhibited at certain seasons patience in affliction; gratitude in prosperity; zeal in opportunity, etc. "His leaf also shall not wither;" the blessing of retaining an unwithered profession. Verses 3, 4. See No. 280 of "Spurgeon's Sermons." "The Chaff Driven Away." Sin puts a negative on every blessing.

Psalm 1:4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

We have now come to the second head of the Psalm. In this verse the contrast of the ill estate of the wicked is employed to heighten the coloring of that fair and pleasant picture which precedes it. The more forcible translation of the Vulgate and of the Septuagint version is "Not so the ungodly, not so." And we are hereby to understand that whatever good thing is said of the righteous is not true in the case of the ungodly. Oh! how terrible is it to have a double negative put upon the promises! and yet this is just the condition of the ungodly. Mark the use of the term "ungodly," for, as we have seen in the opening of the Psalm, these are the beginners in evil, and are the least offensive of sinners. Oh! if such is the sad state of those who quietly continue in their morality, and neglect their God, what must be the condition of open sinners and shameless infidels? The first sentence is a negative description of the ungodly, and the second is the positive picture. Here is their character "they are like chaff," intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away. Here, also, mark their doom, "the wind driveth away;" death shall hurry them with its terrible blast into the fire in which they shall be utterly consumed.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 4. "Chaff." Here, by the way, we may let the wicked know they have a thanks to give they little think of; that they may thank the godly for all the good days they live upon the earth, seeing it is for their sakes and not for their own that they enjoy them. For as the chaff while it is united and keeps close to the wheat, enjoys some privileges for the wheat's sake, and is laid up carefully in the barn; but as soon as it is divided, and parted from the wheat, it is cast out and scattered by the wind; so the wicked, whilst the godly are in company and live amongst them, partake for their sake of some blessedness promised to the godly; but if the godly forsake them or be taken from them, then either a deluge of water comes suddenly upon them, as it did upon the old world when Noah left it; or a deluge of fire, as it did upon Sodom, when Lot left it, and went out of the city. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 4. "Driveth away," or tosseth away; the Chaldee translateth for "wind," "whirlwind." Henry Ainsworth, 1639. This shows the vehement tempest of death, which sweeps away the soul of the ungodly.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER Verses 3, 4. See No. 280 of "Spurgeons Sermons." "The Chaff Driven Away." Sin puts a negative on every blessing.

Psalm 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

They shall stand there to be judged, but not to be acquitted. Fear shall lay hold upon them there; they shall not stand their ground; they shall flee away; they shall not stand in their own defence; for they shall blush and be covered with eternal contempt. Well may the saints long for heaven, for no evil men shall dwell there, "nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." All our congregations upon earth are mixed. Every Church hath one devil in it. The tares grow in the same furrows as the wheat. There is no floor which is as yet thoroughly purged from chaff. Sinners mix with saints, as dross mingles with gold. God's precious diamonds still lie in the same field with pebbles. Righteous Lots are this side heaven continually vexed by the men of Sodom. Let us rejoice then, that in "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" above, there shall by no means be admitted a single unrenewed soul. Sinners cannot live in heaven. They would be out of their element. Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise. Heaven would be an intolerable hell to an impenitent man, even if he could be allowed to enter; but such a privilege shall never be granted to the man who perseveres in his iniquities. May God grant that we may have a name and a place in his courts above!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment," etc. And may not a reason also be conceived thus, why the ungodly can never come to be of the congregation of the righteous: the righteous go a way that God knows, and the wicked go a way that God destroys; and seeing that these ways can never meet, how should the men meet that go these ways? And to make sure work that they shall never meet indeed, the prophet expresseth the way of the righteous by the first link of the chain of God's goodness, which is his knowledge; but expresseth the way of the wicked by the last link of God's justice, which is his destroying; and though God's justice and his mercy do often meet, and are contiguous one to another, yet the first link of his mercy and the last link of his justice can never meet, for it never comes to destroying till God be heard to say Nescio vos, "I know you not," and nescio vos in God, and God's knowledge, can certainly never possibly meet together. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 5. The Irish air will sooner brook a toad, or a snake, than heaven a sinner. John Trapp.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 5. The sinner's double doom.

1. Condemned at the judgment-bar. 2. Separated from the saints.

Reasonableness of these penalties, "therefore," and the way to escape them. "The congregation of the righteous" viewed as the church of the first-born above. This may furnish a noble topic.

Psalm 1:6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

Or, as the Hebrew hath it yet more fully, "The Lord is knowing the way of the righteous." He is constantly looking on their way, and though it may be often in mist and darkness, yet the Lord knoweth it. If it be in the clouds and tempest of affliction, he understandeth it. He numbereth the hairs of our head; he will not suffer any evil to befall us. "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10.) "But the way of the ungodly shall perish." Not only shall they perish themselves, but their way shall perish too. The righteous carves his name upon the rock, but the wicked writes his remembrance in the sand. The righteous man ploughs the furrows of earth, and sows a harvest here, which shall never be fully reaped till he enters the enjoyments of eternity; but as for the wicked, he ploughs the sea, and though there may seem to be a shining trail behind his keel, yet the waves shall pass over it, and the place that knew him shall know him no more for ever. The very "way" of the ungodly shall perish. If it exist in remembrance, it shall be in the remembrance of the bad; for the Lord will cause the name of the wicked to rot, to become a stench in the nostrils of the good, and to be only known to the wicked themselves by its putridity. May the Lord cleanse our hearts and our ways, that we may escape the doom of the ungodly, and enjoy the blessedness of the righteous!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 6. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Behold how David here terrifies us away from all prosperous appearances, and commends to us various temptations and adversities. For this "way" of the righteous all men utterly reprobate; thinking also, that God knoweth nothing about any such way. But this is the wisdom of the cross. Therefore, it is God alone that knoweth the way of the righteous, so hidden is it to the righteous themselves. For his right hand leads them on in a wonderful manner, seeing that it is a way, not of sense, nor of reason, but of faith only; even of that faith that sees in darkness, and beholds things that are invisible. Martin Luther.

Verse 6. "The righteous." They that endeavour righteous living in themselves and have Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Thomas Wilcocks, 1586.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 6. (first sentence). A sweet encouragement to the tried people of God. The knowledge here meant.

1. Its character. It is a knowledge of observation and approbation. 2. Its source. It is caused by omniscience and infinite love. 3. Its results. Support, deliverance, acceptance, and glory at last.

Verse 6. (last clause). His way of pleasure, of pride, of unbelief, of profanity, of persecution, of procrastinating, of self-deception, etc.: all these shall come to an end.