

PSALM 92

It is a groundless opinion of some of the Jewish writers (who are usually free of their conjectures) that this psalm was penned and sung by Adam in innocency, on the first sabbath. It is inconsistent with the psalm itself, which speaks of the workers of iniquity, when as yet sin had not entered. It is probable that it was penned by David, and, being calculated for the sabbath day,

I. Praise, the business of the sabbath, is here recommended (v. 1-3).

II. God's works, which gave occasion for the sabbath, are here celebrated as great and unsearchable in general (v. 4-6). In particular, with reference to the works both of providence and redemption, the psalmist sings unto God both of mercy and judgment, the ruin of sinners and the joy of saints, three times counterchanged.

- 1.** The wicked shall perish (v. 7), but God is eternal (v. 8).
- 2.** God's enemies shall be cut off, but David shall be exalted (v. 9, 10).
- 3.** David's enemies shall be confounded (v. 11), but all the righteous shall be fruitful and flourishing (v. 12-15). In singing this psalm we must take pleasure in giving to God the glory due to his name, and triumph in his works.

PSALM 92:1-6

INCITEMENTS TO PRAISE GOD

A psalm or song for the sabbath day.

This psalm was appointed to be sung, at least it usually was sung, in the house of the sanctuary on the sabbath day, that day of rest, which was an instituted memorial of the work of creation, of God's rest from that work, and the continuance of it in his providence; for *the Father worketh hitherto*. Note,

- 1.** The sabbath day must be a day, not only of holy rest, but of holy work, and the rest is in order to the work.

2. The proper work of the sabbath is praising God; every sabbath day must be a thanksgiving-day; and the other services of the day must be in order to this, and therefore must by no means thrust this into a corner. One of the Jewish writers refers it to the kingdom of the Messiah, and calls it, *A psalm or song for the age to come*, which shall be all sabbath. Believers, through Christ, enjoy that *sabbatism which remains for the people of God* (⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾Hebrews 4:9), the beginning of the everlasting sabbath. In these verses,

I. We are called upon and encouraged to praise God (v. 1-3): *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord*. Praising God is good work: it is good in itself and good for us. It is our duty, the rent, the tribute, we are to pay to our great Lord; we are unjust if we withhold it. It is our privilege that we are admitted to praise God, and have hope to be accepted in it. It is good, for it is pleasant and profitable, work that is its own wages; it is the work of angels, the work of heaven. It is good to give thanks for the mercies we have received, for that is the way of fetching in further mercy: it is fit to sing to his name who is Most High, exalted above all blessing and praise. Now observe here,

1. How we must praise God. We must do it by *showing forth his lovingkindness and his faithfulness*. Being convinced of his glorious attributes and perfections, we must show them forth, as those that are greatly affected with them ourselves and desire to affect others with them likewise. We must show forth, not only his greatness and majesty, his holiness and justice, which magnify him and strike an awe upon us, but his lovingkindness and his faithfulness; for his goodness is his glory (⁽⁴³⁸⁾Exodus 33:18, 19), and by these he proclaims his name. His mercy and truth are the great supports of our faith and hope, and the great encouragements of our love and obedience; these therefore we must show forth as our pleas in prayer and the matter of our joy. This was then done, not only by singing, but by music joined with it, *upon an instrument of ten strings* (v. 3); but then it was to be *with a solemn sound*, not that which was gay, and apt to dissipate the spirits, but that which was grave, and apt to fix them.

2. When we must praise God — *in the morning and every night*, not only on sabbath days, but every day; it is that which the duty of every day requires. We must praise God, not only in public assemblies, but in secret, and in our families, showing forth, to ourselves and those about us, his lovingkindness and faithfulness. We must begin and end every day with

praising God, must give him thanks every morning, when we are fresh and before the business of the day comes in upon us, and every night, when we are again composed and retired, and are recollecting ourselves; we must give him thanks every morning for the mercies of the night and every night for the mercies of the day; going out and coming in we must bless God.

II. We have an example set before us in the psalmist himself, both to move us to and to direct us in this work (v. 4): *Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work.* Note,

1. Those can best recommend to others the duty of praise who have themselves experienced the pleasantness of it. “God’s works are to be praised, for they have many a time rejoiced my heart; and therefore, whatever others may think of them, I must think well and speak well of them.”

2. If God has given us the joy of his works, there is all the reason in the world why we should give him the honour of them. Has he made our hearts glad? Let us then make his praises glorious. Has God made us glad through the works of his providence for us, and of his grace in us, and both through the great work of redemption?

(1.) Let us thence fetch encouragement for our faith and hope; so the psalmist does: *I will triumph in the works of thy hands.* From a joyful remembrance of what God has done for us we may raise a joyful prospect of what he will do, and triumph in the assurance of it, triumph over all opposition, ^{<512>}2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14.

(2.) Let us thence fetch matter for holy adorings and admirings of God (v. 5): *O Lord! how great are thy works* — great beyond conception, beyond expression, the products of great power and wisdom, of great consequence and importance! men’s works are nothing to them. We cannot comprehend the greatness of God’s works, and therefore must reverently and awfully wonder at them, and even stand amazed at the magnificence of them. “Men’s works are little and trifling, for their thoughts are shallow; but, Lord, *thy works are great* and such as cannot be measured; for *thy thoughts are very deep* and such as cannot be fathomed.” God’s counsels as much exceed the contrivances of our wisdom as his works do the efforts of our power. *His thoughts are above our thoughts,* as his *ways are above our ways,* ^{<2519>}Isaiah 55:9. *O the depth of God’s designs!* ^{<4113>}Romans 11:33. The greatness of God’s works should lead us to consider the depth of his

thoughts, that counsel of his own will according to which he does all things — what a compass his thoughts fetch and to what a length they reach!

III. We are admonished not to neglect the works of God, by the character of those who do so, v. 6. Those are fools, they are brutish, who do not know, who do not understand, how great God's works are, who will not acquaint themselves with them, nor give him the glory of them; they *regard not the work of the Lord nor consider the operation of his hands* (~~185~~ Psalm 28:5); particularly, they understand not the meaning of their own prosperity (which is spoken of v. 7); they take it as a pledge of their happiness, whereas it is a preparative for their ruin. If there are so many who know not the designs of Providence, nor care to know them, those who through grace are acquainted with them, and love to be so, have the more reason to be thankful.

~~186~~ PSALM 92:7-15

THE TRIUMPH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The psalmist had said (v. 4) that from the works of God he would take occasion to triumph; and here he does so.

I. He triumphs over God's enemies (v. 7, 9, 11), triumphs in the foresight of their destruction, not as it would be the misery of his fellow-creatures, but as it would redound to the honour of God's justice and holiness. He is confident of the ruin of sinners,

1. Though they are flourishing (v. 7): *When the wicked spring as the grass in spring* (so numerous, so thickly sown, so green, and growing so fast), *and all the workers of iniquity do flourish* in pomp, and power, and all the instances of outward prosperity, are easy and many, and succeed in their enterprises, one would think that all this was in order to their being happy, that it was a certain evidence of God's favour and an earnest of something as good or better in reserve: but it is quite otherwise; it is *that they shall be destroyed for ever*. The very *prosperity of fools shall slay them*, ~~210~~ Proverbs 1:32. The sheep that are designed for the slaughter are put into the fattest pasture.

2. Though they are daring, v. 9. They are thy enemies, and impudently avow themselves to be so. They are contrary to God, and they fight against God. They are in rebellion against his crown and dignity, and therefore it is easy to foresee that they shall perish; for *who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered?* Note, All the impenitent workers of iniquity shall be deemed and taken as God's enemies, and as such they shall perish and be scattered. Christ reckons those his enemies that will not have him to reign over them; and they shall be brought forth and slain before him. The workers of iniquity are now associated, and closely linked together, in a combination against God and religion; but they shall be scattered, and disabled to help one another against the just judgment of God. *In the world to come they shall be separated from the congregation of the righteous;* so the Chaldee, ^{<H15>}Psalm 1:5.

3. Though they had a particular malice against the psalmist, and, upon that account, he might be tempted to fear them, yet he triumphs over them (v. 11): *“My eye shall see my desire on my enemies that rise up against me; I shall see them not only disabled from doing me any further mischief, but reckoned with for the mischief they have done me, and brought either to repentance or ruin:”* and this was his desire concerning them. In the Hebrew it is no more than thus, *My eye shall look on my enemies, and my ear shall hear of the wicked.* He does not say what he shall see or what he shall hear, but he shall see and hear that in which God will be glorified and in which he will therefore be satisfied. This perhaps has reference to Christ, to his victory over Satan, death, and hell, the destruction of those that persecuted and crucified him, and opposed his gospel, and to the final ruin of the impenitent at the last day. Those that rise up against Christ will fall before him and be made his footstool.

II. He triumphs in God, and his glory and grace.

1. In the glory of God (v. 8): *“But thou, O Lord! art most high for evermore.* The workers of iniquity who fight against us may be high for a time, and think to carry all before them with a high hand, but *thou art high, most high, for evermore.* Their height will be humbled and brought down, but thine is everlasting.” Let us not therefore fear the pride and power of evil men, nor be discouraged by their impotent menaces, for the moth shall eat them up as a garment, but *God's righteousness shall be for ever,* ^{<250>}Isaiah 51:7, 8.

2. In the grace of God, his favour and the fruits of it,

(1.) To himself (v. 10): “Thou, O Lord! that art thyself most high, *shalt exalt my horn.*” The great God is the fountain of honour, and he, being *high for evermore*, himself will exalt his people for ever, for *he is the praise of all his saints*, ^{<148>}Psalm 148:14. The wicked are forbidden to *lift up the horn* (^{<75>}Psalm 75:4, 5), but those that serve God and the interest of his kingdom with their honour or power, and commit it to him to keep it, to raise it, to use it, and to dispose of it, as he pleases, may hope that he will *exalt their horn as the horn of a unicorn*, to the greatest height, either in this world or the other: *My horn shalt thou exalt, when thy enemies perish; for then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun*, when the wicked shall be doomed to *shame and everlasting contempt*. He adds, *I shall be anointed with fresh oil*, which denotes a fresh confirmation in his office to which he had been anointed, or abundance of plenty, so that he should have fresh oil as often as he pleased, or renewed comforts to revive him when his spirits drooped. Grace is the anointing of the Spirit; when this is given to help in the time of need, and is received, as there is occasion, from the fulness that is in Christ Jesus, we are then anointed with fresh oil. Some read it, *When I grow old thou shalt anoint me with fresh oil. My old age shalt thou exalt with rich mercy*; so the Septuagint. Compare v. 14, *They shall bring forth fruit in old age*. The comforts of God's Spirit, and the joys of his salvation, shall be a refreshing oil to the *hoary heads that are found in the way of righteousness*.

(2.) To all the saints. They are here represented as *trees of righteousness*, ^{<61>}Isaiah 61:3; ^{<1>}Psalm 1:3. Observe,

[1.] The good place they are fixed in; they are *planted in the house of the Lord*, v. 13. The trees of righteousness do not grow of themselves; they are *planted*, not in common soil, but in paradise, *in the house of the Lord*. Trees are not usually planted in a house; but God's trees are said to be planted in his house because it is from his grace, by his word and Spirit, that they receive all the sap and virtue that keep them alive and make them fruitful. They fix themselves to holy ordinances, take root in them, abide by them, put themselves under the divine protection, and bring forth all their fruits to God's honour and glory.

[2.] The good plight they shall be kept in. It is here promised, *First*, That they shall grow, v. 12. Where God gives true grace he will give more grace. God's trees shall grow higher, like the cedars, the tall cedars in Lebanon; they shall grow nearer heaven, and with a holy ambition shall aspire towards the upper world; they shall grow stronger, like the cedars,

and fitter for use. *He that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* Secondly, That they shall flourish, both in the credit of their profession and in the comfort and joy of their own souls. They shall be cheerful themselves and respected by all about them. *They shall flourish like the palm-tree*, which has a stately body (^{<210>}Song of Solomon 7:7), and large boughs, ^{<234>}Leviticus 23:40; ^{<004>}Judges 4:5. Dates, the fruit of it, are very pleasant, but it is especially alluded to here as being ever green. The wicked flourish as the grass (v. 7), which is soon withered, but the righteous as the palm-tree, which is long-lived and which the winter does not change. It has been said of the palm-tree, *Sub pondere crescit — The more it is pressed down the more it grows*; so the righteous flourish under their burdens; the more they are afflicted the more they multiply. Being planted in *the house of the Lord* (there their root is), *they flourish in the courts of our God* — there their branches spread. *Their life is hid with Christ in God*. But their light also shines before men. It is desirable that those who have a place should have a name in God's house, and within his walls, ^{<265>}Isaiah 56:5. Let good Christians aim to excel, that they may be eminent and may flourish, and so may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, as flourishing trees adorn the courts of a house. And let those who flourish in God's courts give him the glory of it; it is by virtue of this promise, *They shall be fat and flourishing*. Their flourishing without is from a fatness within, from the *root and fatness of the good olive*, ^{<511>}Romans 11:17. Without a living principle of grace in the heart the profession will not be long flourishing; but where that is *the leaf also shall not wither*, ^{<903>}Psalms 1:3. *The trees of the Lord are full of sap*, ^{<1416>}Psalms 104:16. See ^{<345>}Hosea 14:5, 6. Thirdly, That they shall be fruitful. Were there nothing but leaves upon them, they would not be trees of any value; but *they shall still bring forth fruit*. The products of sanctification, all the instances of a lively devotion and a useful conversation, good works, by which God is glorified and others are edified, these are the fruits of righteousness, in which it is the privilege, as well as the duty, of the righteous to abound; and their abounding in them is the matter of a promise as well as of a command. It is promised that they shall bring forth fruit in old age. Other trees, when they are old, leave off bearing, but in God's trees the strength of grace does not fail with the strength of nature. The last days of the saints are sometimes their best days, and their last work is their best work. This indeed shows that they are upright; perseverance is the surest evidence of sincerity. But it is here said *to show that the Lord is upright* (v. 15), that he is true to his promises and faithful

to every word that he has spoken, and that he is constant to the work which he has begun. As it is by the promises that believers first partake of a divine nature, so it is by the promises that that divine nature is preserved and kept up; and therefore the power it exerts is an evidence that the *Lord is upright*, and so he will show himself *with an upright man*, ~~1825~~ Psalm 18:25. This the psalmist triumphs in: “*He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him*. I have chosen him for my rock on which to build, in the clefts of which to take shelter, on the top of which to set my feet. I have found him a rock, strong and stedfast, and his word as firm as a rock. I have found” (and let every one speak as he finds) “that there is no unrighteousness in him.” He is as able, and will be as kind, as his word makes him to be. All that ever trusted in God found him faithful and all-sufficient, and none were ever made ashamed of their hope in him.