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PSALM 111: 1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, and in the congregation.

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The psalmist praises the Lord, and extols his works as great, honorable, glorious, and magnificent, Psa 111:1-4; his providence and kindness to his followers, Psa 111:5-8; the redemption he has granted to his people, Psa 111:9. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Psa 111:10.

This is one of the alphabetical or acrostic Psalms: but it is rather different from those we have already seen, as the first eight verses contain each two members; and each member commences with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But the two last verses are composed of three members each, characterized the same way, making twenty-two members or hemistichs in the whole, to each of which a consecutive letter of the alphabet is prefixed. But this division is not proper: it should follow the arrangement in the Hebrew poetry, where every hemistich stands by itself, and each contains a complete sense. The Psalm has no title in the Hebrew, unless the word Hallelujah be considered as such; and the thanksgivings which it contains were probably composed for the benefit of the Jews after their return from captivity.

#### Verse 1

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart - If we profess to "sing to the praise and glory of God," the heart, and the whole heart, without division and distraction, must be employed in the work.

In the assembly - בְּסוּד *besod*, in the secret assembly - the private religious meetings for the communion of saints. And in the congregation, עֵדָה *edah*, the general assembly - the public congregation. There were such meetings as the former ever since God had a Church on the earth; and to convey general information, there must be public assemblies.

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PSALM 111: 2 The LORD's works are great, pondered by all those who delight in them.

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#### Verse 2

The works of the Lord are great - גְּדוּלִים *gedolim*, vast in magnitude; as רַבִּים *rabbim* signifies their multitude and variety.

Sought out - Investigated, carefully examined.

Of all them that have pleasure therein - By all that delight in them: by every genuine philosopher; every lover of nature; he who traces out the great First Cause by means of his works. And the man that does so will be astonished at the perfections of the Creator, and admire all the operations of his hands.

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PSALM 111: 3 His work is honour and majesty. His righteousness endures forever.

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#### Verse 3

His work is honorable, etc. - He has done nothing in nature or grace that does not redound to his own honor and glory; and because all is done in righteousness, it endureth for ever.

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PSALM 111: 4 He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered. The LORD is gracious and merciful.

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Verse 4

He hath made his wonderful works - He who seeks them out will never forget them; and every thing of God's framing is done in such a way, as to strike the imagination, interest the senses, and charm and edify the intellect. But the psalmist may here intend principally the works of God in behalf of the Jewish people; and particularly in their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, which this Psalm is supposed to celebrate.

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PSALM 111: 5 He has given food to those who fear him. He always remembers his covenant.

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Verse 5

He hath given meat - תֶּרֶף tereph, Prey. This may allude to the quails in the wilderness. The word signifies what is taken in hunting - wild beasts, venison, or fowls of any kind; particularly such as were proper for food. It also signifies spoil taken from enemies. And he may also refer to the wondrous manner in which they were fed and supported during their captivity; and by his support he proved that he was mindful of his covenant. He had promised such blessings; he was faithful to his promises.

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PSALM 111: 6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

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Verse 6

The power of his works - They have seen that these things did not arrive in the common course of nature, it was not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts they were done. And it required a display of the power of God to give them the heritage of the heathen.

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PSALM 111: 7 The works of his hands are truth and justice. All his precepts are sure.

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Verse 7

Verity and judgment - His works are verity or truth, because they were wrought for the fulfillment of the promises he made to their fathers. And they were just; for their punishment was in consequence

of their infidelities: and the punishment of the Babylonians was only in consequence of their gross iniquities; and in both respects he had proved his work to be according to justice and judgment.

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PSALM 111: 8 They are established forever and ever. They are done in truth and uprightness.

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#### Verse 8

They stand fast for ever - סמוכים semuchim, they are propped up, buttressed, for ever. They can never fail; for God's power supports his works, and his providence preserves the record of what he has done.

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PSALM 111: 9 He has sent redemption to his people. He has ordained his covenant forever. His name is holy and awesome!

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#### Verse 9

He sent redemption - He sent Moses to redeem them out of Egypt; various judges to deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors; Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, to deliver them from Babylon; and the Lord Jesus to redeem a whole lost world from sin, misery, and death.

Holy and reverend is his name - The word reverend comes to us from the Latins, reverendus, and is compounded of re, intensive, and vereor, to be feared; and most or right reverend, reverendissimus, signifies to be greatly feared. These terms are now only titles of ecclesiastical respect, especially in the Protestant ministry; but there was a time in which these were no empty titles. Such was the power of the clergy, that, when they walked not in the fear of the Lord, they caused the people to fear, and they themselves were to be feared; but, when the secular power was added to the spiritual, they were then truly reverendi and reverendissimi, to be feared and greatly to be feared. But reverend is not applied to God in this way; nor does the word נורא nora bear this signification; it rather means terrible: Holy and terrible, or holy and tremendous, is his name. This title belongs not to man; nor does any minister, in assuming the title reverend, assume this. Indeed, the word reverend, as now used, gives us a very imperfect conception of the original term. Holy and tremendous is God's name. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, both in the way of judgment and in the way of mercy.

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PSALM 111: 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. All those who do his work have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever!

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#### Verse 10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom - The original stands thus: ראשית חכמה יראת יהוה reshith chokmah, yirath Jehovah, The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah. Wisdom itself

begins with this fear; true wisdom has this for its commencement. It is the first ingredient in it, and is an essential part of it. In vain does any man pretend to be wise who does not fear the Lord; and he who fears the Lord departs from evil: he who lives in sin neither fears God, nor is wise.

A good understanding have all they that do his commandments - These last words we add as necessary to make up the sense; but there is no need of this expedient, as the words of the original literally read thus: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah; good discernment to the doers." That is, They who act according to the dictates of wisdom, the commencement of which is the fear of Jehovah, have a sound understanding, discern their duty and their interest, and live to secure their own peace, their neighbour's good, and God's glory.