

## PSALM CIII.

**TITLE.**— A Psalm of David.—*Doubtless by David ; it is in his own style when at its best, and we should attribute it to his later years when he had a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon, because a keener sense of sin, than in his younger days. His clear sense of the frailty of life indicates his weaker years, as also does the very fullness of his praiseful gratitude. As in the lofty Alps some peaks rise above all others, so among even the inspired Psalms there are heights of song which overtop the rest. This one hundred and third Psalm has ever seemed to us to be the Monte Rosa of the divine chain of mountains of praise, glowing with a ruddier light than any of the rest. It is as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and its golden fruit has a flavour such as no fruit ever bears unless it has been ripened in the full sunshine of mercy. It is man's reply to the benedictions of his God, his Song on the Mount answering to his Redeemer's Sermon on the Mount. Nebuchadnezzar adored his idol with flute, harp, sacbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music ; and David, in far nobler style, awakens all the melodies of heaven and earth in honour of the one only living and true God. Our attempt at exposition is commenced under an impressive sense of the utter impossibility of doing justice to so sublime a composition ; we call upon our soul and all that is within us to aid in the pleasurable task ; but, alas, our soul is finite, and our all of mental faculty far too little for the enterprise. There is too much in the Psalm for a thousand pens to write, it is one of those all-comprehending Scriptures which is a Bible in itself, and it might alone almost suffice for the hymn-book of the church.*

**DIVISION.**—*First the Psalmist sings of personal mercies which he had himself received, 1—5 ; then he magnifies the attributes of Jehovah as displayed in his dealings with his people, 6—19 ; and he closes by calling upon all the creatures in the universe to adore the Lord and join with himself in blessing Jehovah, the ever gracious.*

### EXPOSITION.

**B**LESS the LORD, O my soul : and all that is within me, *bless his holy name.*

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits :

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things* ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

1. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*" Soul music is the very soul of music. The Psalmist strikes the best key-note when he begins with stirring up his inmost self to magnify the Lord. He soliloquizes, holds self-communion and exhorts himself, as though he felt that dulness would all too soon steal over his faculties, as, indeed, it will over us all, unless we are diligently on the watch. Jehovah is worthy to be praised by us in that highest style of adoration which is intended by the term *bless*—"All thy works praise thee, O God, but thy saints shall *bless* thee." Our very life and essential self should be engrossed with this delightful service, and each one of us should arouse his own heart to the engagement. Let others forbear if they can : "*Bless the Lord, O MY soul.*" Let others murmur, but do thou *bless*. Let others *bless* themselves and their idols, but do thou *bless the Lord*. Let others use only their tongues, but as for me I will cry, "*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*" "*And all that is within me, bless his holy name.*" Many are our faculties, emotions, and capacities, but God has given them all to us, and they ought all to join in chorus to his praise. Half-hearted, ill-conceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord. If the law of justice demanded all our heart and soul and mind for the Creator, much more may the law of gratitude put in a comprehensive claim for the homage of our whole being to the God of grace. It is

instructive to note how the Psalmist dwells upon the *holy* name of God, as if his holiness were dearest to him ; or, perhaps, because the holiness or wholeness of God was to his mind the grandest motive for rendering to him the homage of his nature in its wholeness. Babes may praise the divine goodness, but fathers in grace magnify his holiness. By *the name* we understand the revealed character of God, and assuredly those songs which are suggested, not by our fallible reasoning and imperfect observation, but by unerring inspiration, should more than any others arouse all our consecrated powers.

2. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*" He is in real earnest, and again calls upon himself to arise. Had he been very sleepy before ? Or was he now doubly sensible of the importance, the imperative necessity of adoration ? Certainly, he uses no vain repetitions, for the Holy Spirit guides his pen ; and thus he shews us that we have need, again and again, to bestir ourselves when we are about to worship God, for it would be shameful to offer him anything less than the utmost of our souls can render. These first verses are a tuning of the harp, a screwing up of the loosened strings that not a note may fail in the sacred harmony. "*And forget not all his benefits.*" Not so much as one of the divine dealings should be forgotten, they are all really beneficial to us, all worthy of himself, and all subjects for praise. Memory is very treacherous about the best things ; by a strange perversity, engendered by the fall, it treasures up the refuse of the past and permits priceless treasures to lie neglected, it is tenacious of grievances and holds benefits all too loosely. It needs spurring to its duty, though that duty ought to be its delight. Observe that he calls *all* that is within him to remember *all* the Lord's benefits. For our task our energies should be suitably called out. God's all cannot be praised with less than our all.

Reader, have we not cause enough at this time to bless him who blesses us ? Come, let us read our diaries and see if there be not choice favours recorded there for which we have rendered no grateful return. Remember how the Persian king, when he could not sleep, read the chronicles of the empire, and discovered that one who had saved his life had never been rewarded. How quickly did he do him honour ! The Lord has saved us with a great salvation, shall we render no recompense ? The name of *ingrate* is one of the most shameful that a man can wear ; surely we cannot be content to run the risk of such a brand. Let us awake then, and with intense enthusiasm bless Jehovah.

3. "*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*" Here David begins his list of blessings received, which he rehearses as themes and arguments for praise. He selects a few of the choicest pearls from the casket of divine love, threads them on the string of memory, and hangs them about the neck of gratitude. Pardoned sin is, in our experience, one of the choicest boons of grace, one of the earliest gifts of mercy,—in fact, the needful preparation for enjoying all that follows it. Till iniquity is forgiven, healing, redemption, and satisfaction are unknown blessings. Forgiveness is first in the order of our spiritual experience, and in some respects first in value. The pardon granted is a present one—*forgiveth* ; it is continual, for he still *forgiveth* ; it is divine, for God gives it ; it is far reaching, for it removes *all* our sins ; it takes in omissions as well as commissions, for both of these are *in-equities* ; and it is most effectual, for it is as real as the healing, and the rest of the mercies with which it is placed. "*Who healeth all thy diseases.*" When the cause is gone, namely, iniquity, the effect ceases. Sickesses of body and soul came into the world by sin, and as sin is eradicated, diseases bodily, mental, and spiritual will vanish, till "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick." Many-sided is the character of our heavenly Father, for, having forgiven as a judge, he then cures as a physician. He is all things to us, as our needs call for him, and our infirmities do but reveal him in new characters.

" In him is only good,  
In me is only ill,  
My ill but draws his goodness forth,  
And me he loveth still."

God gives efficacy to medicine for the body, and his grace sanctifies the soul. Spiritually we are daily under his care, and he visits us, as the surgeon does his patient ; *healing still* (for that is the exact word) each malady as it arises. No disease of our soul baffles his skill, he goes on healing *all*, and he will do so till the last trace of taint has gone from our nature. The two *alls* of this verse are further reasons for *all* that is within us praising the Lord.

The two blessings of this verse the Psalmist was personally enjoying, he sang not of others but of himself, or rather of his Lord, who was daily forgiving and healing him. He must have known that it was so, or he could not have sung of it. He had no doubt about it, he felt in his soul that it was so, and, therefore, he bade his pardoned and restored soul bless the Lord with all its might.

4. "*Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.*" By purchase and by power the Lord redeems us from the spiritual death into which we had fallen, and from the eternal death which would have been its consequence. Had not the death penalty of sin been removed, our forgiveness and healing would have been incomplete portions of salvation, fragments only, and but of small value, but the removal of the guilt and power of sin is fitly attended by the reversal of the sentence of death which had been passed upon us. Glory be to our great Substitute, who delivered us from going down into the pit, by giving himself to be our ransom. Redemption will ever constitute one of the sweetest notes in the believer's grateful song. "*Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.*" Our Lord does nothing by halves, he will not stay his hand till he has gone to the uttermost with his people. Cleansing, healing, redemption, are not enough, he must needs make them kings and crown them, and the crown must be far more precious than if it were made of corruptible things, such as silver and gold; it is studded with gems of grace and lined with the velvet of lovingkindness; it is decked with the jewels of mercy, but made soft for the head to wear by a lining of tenderness. Who is like unto thee, O Lord! God himself crowns the princes of his family, for their best things come from him directly and distinctly; they do not earn the crown, for it is of *mercy* not of merit; they feel their own unworthiness of it, therefore he deals with *tenderness*; but he is resolved to bless them, and, therefore, he is ever *crowning* them, always surrounding their brows with coronets of mercy and compassion. He always crowns the edifice which he commences, and where he gives pardon he gives acceptance too. "Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." Our sin deprived us of all our honours, a bill of attainder was issued against us as traitors; but he who removed the sentence of death by redeeming us from destruction, restores to us more than all our former honours by crowning us anew. Shall God crown us and shall not we crown him? Up, my soul, and cast thy crown at his feet, and in lowliest reverence worship him, who has so greatly exalted thee, as to lift thee from the dunghill and set thee among princes.

5. "*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,*" or rather "filling with good thy soul." No man is ever filled to satisfaction but a believer, and only God himself can satisfy even him. Many a worldly is satiated, but not one is satisfied. God satisfies the very soul of man, his noblest part, his ornament and glory; and of consequence he satisfies his mouth, however hungry and craving it might otherwise be. Soul-satisfaction loudly calls for soul-praise, and when the mouth is filled with good it is bound to speak good of him who filled it. Our good Lord bestows really *good things*, not vain toys and idle pleasures; and these he is always giving, so that from moment to moment he is *satisfying* our soul with good: shall we not be still praising him? If we never cease to bless him till he ceases to bless us, our employment will be eternal. "*So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*" Renewal of strength, amounting to a grant of a new lease of life, was granted to the Psalmist; he was so restored to his former self that he grew young again, and looked as vigorous as an eagle, whose eye can gaze upon the sun, and whose wing can mount above the storm. Our version refers to the annual moulting of the eagle, after which it looks fresh and young; but the original does not appear to allude to any such fact of natural history, but simply to describe the diseased one as so healed and strengthened, that he became as full of energy as the bird which is strongest of the feathered race, most fearless, most majestic, and most soaring. He who sat moping with the owl in the last Psalm, here flies on high with the eagle: the Lord works marvellous changes in us, and we learn by such experiences to bless his holy name. To grow from a sparrow to an eagle, and leave the wilderness of the pelican to mount among the stars, is enough to make any man cry, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Thus is the endless chain of grace complete. Sin is forgiven, its power subdued, and its penalty averted, then we are honoured, supplied, and our very nature renovated, till we are as new-born children in the household of God. O Lord, we must bless thee, and we will; as thou dost withhold nothing from us so we would not keep back from thy praise one solitary power of our nature, but with all our heart, and soul, and strength praise thy holy name.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, *so* he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

6. "*The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*" Our own personal obligations must not absorb our song; we must also magnify the Lord for his goodness to others. He does not leave the poor and needy to perish at the hands of their enemies, but interposes on their behalf, for he is the executor of the poor and the executioner of the cruel. When his people were in Egypt he heard their groanings and brought them forth, but he overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Man's injustice shall receive retribution at the hand of God. Mercy to his saints demands vengeance on their persecutors, and he will repay it. No blood of martyrs shall be shed in vain; no groans of confessors in prison shall be left without inquisition being made concerning them. *All* wrongs shall be righted, *all* the oppressed shall be avenged. Justice may at times leave the courts of man, but it abides upon the tribunal of God. For this every right-minded person will bless God. Were he careless of his creature's good, did he neglect the administration of justice, did he suffer high-handed oppressors finally to escape, we should have greater reason for trembling than rejoicing: it is not so, however, for our God is a God of justice, and by him actions are weighed; he will mete out his portion to the proud and make the tyrant bite the dust,—yea, often he visits the haughty persecutor even in this life, so that "the Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth."

7. "*He made known his ways unto Moses.*" Moses was made to see the manner in which the Lord deals with men; he saw this in each of the three periods of his life, in the court, in retirement, and at the head of the tribes of Israel. To him the Lord gave specially clear manifestations of his dispensations and modes of ruling among mankind, granting to him to see more of God than had before been seen by mortal man, while he communed with him upon the mount. "*His acts unto the children of Israel.*" They saw less than Moses, for they beheld the deeds of God without understanding his method therein, yet this was much, very much, and might have been more if they had not been so perverse; the stint was not in the revelation, but in the hardness of their hearts. It is a great act of sovereign grace and condescending love when the Lord reveals himself to any people, and they ought to appreciate the distinguished favour shown to them. We, as believers in Jesus, know the Lord's *ways* of covenant grace, and we have by experience been made to see his *acts* of mercy towards us; how heartily ought we to praise our divine teacher, the Holy Spirit, who has made these things known to us, for had it not been for him

we should have continued in darkness unto this day. "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Why hast thou made us "of the election who have obtained it" while the rest are blinded?

Observe how prominent is the personality of God in all this gracious teaching—"He made known." He did not leave Moses to discover truth for himself, but became his instructor. What should we ever know if he did not make it known? God alone can reveal himself. If Moses needed the Lord to make him known, how much more do we who are so much inferior to the great law-giver?

8. "*The Lord is merciful and gracious.*" Those with whom he deals are sinners. However much he favours them they are guilty and need mercy at his hands, nor is he slow to compassionate their lost estate, or reluctant by his grace to lift them out of it. Mercy pardons sin, grace bestows favour; in both the Lord abounds. This is that way of his which he made known to Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 6), and in that way he will abide as long as the age of grace shall last, and men are yet in this life. He who "executeth righteousness and judgment," yet delighteth in mercy. "*Slow to anger.*" He can be angry, and can deal out righteous indignation upon the guilty, but it is his strange work; he lingers long, with loving pauses, tarrying by the way to give space for repentance and opportunity for accepting his mercy. Thus deals he with the greatest sinners, and with his own children much more so: towards them his anger is shortlived and never reaches into eternity, and when it is shown in fatherly chastisements he does not afflict willingly, and soon pities their sorrows. From this we should learn to be ourselves slow to anger; if the Lord is longsuffering under our great provocations how much more ought we to endure the errors of our brethren! "*And plenteous in mercy.*" Rich in it, quick in it, overflowing with it; and so had he need to be or we should soon be consumed. He is God, and not man, or our sins would soon drown his love; yet above the mountains of our sins the floods of his mercy rise.

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,  
Grace to cover all my sin;  
Let the healing streams abound;  
Make and keep me pure within."

All the world tastes of his sparing mercy, those who hear the gospel partake of his inviting mercy, the saints live by his saving mercy, are preserved by his upholding mercy, are cheered by his consoling mercy, and will enter heaven through his infinite and everlasting mercy. Let grace abounding be our hourly song in the house of our pilgrimage. Let those who feel that they live upon it glorify the plenteous fountain from which it so spontaneously flows.

9. "*He will not always chide.*" He will sometimes, for he cannot endure that his people should harbour sin in their hearts, but not for ever will he chasten them; as soon as they turn to him and forsake their evil ways he will end the quarrel. He might find constant cause for striving with us, for we have always something in us which is contrary to his holy mind, but he refrains himself lest our spirits should fail before him. It will be profitable for any one of us who may be at this time out of conscious fellowship with the Lord, to inquire at his hands the reason for his anger, saying, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?" For he is easily entreated of, and soon ceaseth from his wrath. When his children turn from their sins he soon turns from his chidings. "*Neither will he keep his anger for ever.*" He bears no grudges. The Lord would not have his people harbour resentments, and in his own course of action he sets them a grand example. When the Lord has chastened his child he has done with his anger; he is not punishing as a judge, else might his wrath burn on, but he is acting as a father, and, therefore, after a few blows he ends the matter, and presses his beloved one to his bosom as if nothing had happened; or if the offence lies too deep in the offender's nature to be thus overcome, he continues to correct, but he never ceases to love, and he does not suffer his anger with his people to pass into the next world, but receives his erring child into his glory.

10. "*He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*" Else had Israel perished outright, and we also had long ago been consigned to the lowest hell. We ought to praise the Lord for what he has not done as well as for what he has wrought for us; even the negative side deserves our adoring gratitude. Up to this moment, at our very worst estate, we have never suffered as we deserved to suffer; our daily lot has not been apportioned upon the rule of what we merited, but on the far different measure of undeserved kindness.

Shall we not bless the Lord? Every power of our being might have been rent with anguish, instead of which we are all in the enjoyment of comparative happiness, and many of us are exceedingly favoured with inward joy; let then every faculty, yea, all that is within us, bless his holy name.

11. "*For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*" Boundless in extent towards his chosen is the mercy of the Lord; it is no more to be measured than the height of heaven or the heaven of heavens. "*Like the height of the heaven*" is the original language, which implies other points of comparison besides extent, and suggests sublimity, grandeur, and glory. As the lofty heavens canopy the earth, water it with dews and rains, enlighten it with sun, moon, and stars, and look down upon it with unceasing watchfulness, even so the Lord's mercy from above covers all his chosen, enriches them, embraces them, and stands for ever as their dwelling-place. The idea of our version is a very noble one, for who shall tell how exceeding great is the height of heaven? Who can reach the first of the fixed stars, and who can measure the utmost bounds of the starry universe? Yet so great is his mercy! Oh, that great little word so! All this mercy is for "*them that fear him*;" there must be a humble, hearty reverence of his authority, or we cannot taste of his grace. Godly fear is one of the first products of the divine life in us, it is the beginning of wisdom, yet it fully ensures to its possessor all the benefits of divine mercy, and is, indeed, here and elsewhere, employed to set forth the whole of true religion. Many a true child of God is full of filial fear, and yet at the same time stands trembling as to his acceptance with God; this trembling is groundless, but it is infinitely to be preferred to that baseborn presumption, which incites men to boast of their adoption and consequent security, when all the while they are in the gall of bitterness. Those who are presuming upon the infinite extent of divine mercy, should here be led to consider that although it is wide as the horizon and high as the stars, yet it is only meant for them that fear the Lord, and as for obstinate rebels, they shall have justice without mercy measured out to them.

12. "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*" O glorious verse, no word even upon the inspired page can excel it! Sin is removed from us by a miracle of love! What a load to move, and yet is it removed so far that the distance is incalculable. Fly as far as the wing of imagination can bear you, and if you journey through space eastward, you are further from the west at every beat of your wing. If sin be removed so far, then we may be sure that the scent, the trace, the very memory of it must be entirely gone. If this be the distance of its removal, there is no shade of fear of its ever being brought back again; even Satan himself could not achieve such a task. Our sins are gone, Jesus has borne them away. Far as the place of sunrise is removed from yonder west, where the sun sinks when his day's journey is done, so far were our sins carried by our scapegoat nineteen centuries ago, and now if they be sought for, they shall not be found, yea, they shall not be, saith the Lord. Come, my soul, awaken thyself thoroughly and glorify the Lord for this richest of blessings. Hallelujah. The Lord alone could remove sin at all, and he has done it in a godlike fashion, making a final sweep of all our transgressions.

13. "*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*" To those who truly reverence his holy name, the Lord is a father and acts as such. These he pities, for in the very best of men the Lord sees much to pity, and when they are at their best state they still need his compassion. This should check every propensity to pride, though at the same time it should yield us the richest comfort. Fathers feel for their children, especially when they are in pain, they would like to suffer in their stead, their sighs and groans cut them to the quick: thus sensitive towards us is our heavenly Father. We do not adore a god of stone, but the living God, who is tenderness itself. He is at this moment compassionating us, for the word is in the present tense; his pity never falls to flow, and we never cease to need it.

14. "*For he knoweth our frame.*" He knows how we are made, for he made us. Our make and build, our constitution and temperament, our prevailing infirmity and most besetting temptation he well perceives, for he searches our inmost nature. "*He remembereth that we are dust.*" Made of dust, dust still, and ready to return to dust. We have sometimes heard of "the Iron Duke," and of iron constitutions, but the words are soon belied, for the Iron Duke is dissolved, and other men of like vigour are following to the grave, where "dust to dust" is an appropriate requiem. We too often forget that we are dust, and try our minds and bodies unduly by ex-

cessive mental and bodily exertion, we are also too little mindful of the infirmities of others, and impose upon them burdens grievous to be borne; but our heavenly Father never overloads us, and never fails to give us strength equal to our day, because he always takes our frailty into account when he is apportioning to us our lot. Blessed be his holy name for this gentleness towards his frail creatures.

15. "*As for man, his days are as grass.*" He lives on the grass and lives like the grass. Corn is but educated grass, and man, who feeds on it, partakes of its nature. The grass lives, grows, flowers, falls beneath the scythe, dries up, and is removed from the field: read this sentence over again, and you will find it the history of man. If he lives out his little day, he is cut down at last, and it is far more likely that he will wither before he comes to maturity, or be plucked away on a sudden, long before he has fulfilled his time. "*As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*" He has a beauty and a comeliness even as the meadows have when they are yellow with the king-cups, but, alas, how shortlived! No sooner come than gone, a flash of loveliness and no more! Man is not even like a flower in the conservatory or in the sheltered garden border, he grows best according to nature, as the field-flower does, and like the unprotected beautifier of the pasture, he runs a thousand risks of coming to a speedy end. A large congregation, in many-coloured attire, always reminds us of a meadow bright with many hues; and the comparison becomes sadly true when we reflect, that as the grass and its goodness soon pass away, even so will those we gaze upon, and all their visible beauty. Thus, too, must it be with all that comes of the flesh, even its greatest excellencies and natural virtues, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and therefore is but as grass which withers if but a breath of wind assails it. Happy are they who, born from above, have in them an incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

16. "*For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.*" Only a little wind is needed, not even a scythe is demanded, a breath can do it, for the flower is so frail.

"If one sharp wind sweep o'er the field,  
It withers in an hour."

How small a portion of deleterious gas suffices to create a deadly fever, which no art of man can stay. No need of sword or bullet, a puff of foul air is deadlier far, and fails not to lay low the healthiest and most stalwart son of man. "*And the place thereof shall know it no more.*" The flower blooms no more. It may have a successor, but as for itself its leaves are scattered, and its perfume will never again sweeten the evening air. Man also dies and is gone, gone from his old haunts, his dear home, and his daily labours, never to return. As far as this world is concerned, he is as though he ne'er had been; the sun rises, the moon increases or wanes, summer and winter run their round, the rivers flow, and all things continue in their courses as though they missed him not, so little a figure does he make in the affairs of nature. Perhaps a friend will note that he is gone, and say,

"One morn, I miss'd him on the accustom'd hill.  
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;  
Another came, nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he."

But when the "dirges due" are silent, beyond a mound of earth, and perhaps a crumbling stone, how small will be the memorial of our existence upon this busy scene! True there are more enduring memories, and an existence of another kind coeval with eternity, but these belong, not to our flesh, which is but grass, but to a higher life, in which we rise to close fellowship with the Eternal.

17. "*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.*" Blessed but! How vast the contrast between the fading flower and the everlasting God! How wonderful that his mercy should link our frailty with his eternity, and make us everlasting too! From old eternity the Lord viewed his people as objects of mercy, and as such chose them to become partakers of his grace; the doctrine of eternal election is most delightful to those who have light to see it and love wherewith to accept it. It is a theme for deepest thought and highest joy. The "*to everlasting*" is equally precious. Jehovah changes not, he has mercy without end as well as without beginning. Never will those who fear him find that either their sins or their needs have exhausted the great deep of his grace. The main question is, "*Do we fear him?*" If we are lifting up to heaven the eye of filial fear, the gaze of

paternal love is never removed from us, and it never will be, world without end. "And his righteousness unto children's children." Mercy to those with whom the Lord makes a covenant is guaranteed by *righteousness*; it is because he is just that he never revokes a promise, or fails to fulfil it. Our believing sons and their seed for ever will find the word of the Lord the same; to them will he display his grace and bless them even as he has blessed us. Let us sing, then, for posterity. The past commands our praise and the future invites it. For our descendants let us sing as well as pray. If Abraham rejoiced concerning his seed, so also may the godly, for "instead of the fathers shall be the children," and as the last Psalm told us in its concluding verse, "the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

18. Children of the righteous are not, however, promised the Lord's mercy without stipulation, and this verse completes the statement of the last by adding: "*To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*" The parents must be obedient and the children too. We are here bidden to abide by the covenant, and those who run off to any other confidence than the finished work of Jesus are not among those who obey this precept; those with whom the covenant is really made stand firm to it, and having begun in the Spirit, they do not seek to be made perfect in the flesh. The truly godly keep the Lord's commands carefully—they "*remember*"; they observe them practically—"to do them": moreover they do not pick and choose, but remember "*his commandments*" as such, without exalting one above another as their own pleasure or convenience may dictate. May our offspring be a thoughtful, careful, observant race, eager to know the will of the Lord, and prompt to follow it fully, then will his mercy enrich and honour them from generation to generation.

This verse also suggests praise, for who would wish the Lord to smile on those who will not regard his ways? That were to encourage vice. From the manner in which some men unguardedly preach the covenant, one might infer that God would bless a certain set of men however they might live, and however they might neglect his laws. But the word teaches not so. The covenant is not legal, but it is holy. It is all of grace from first to last, yet it is no pandering to sin; on the contrary, one of its greatest promises is, "I will put my laws in their hearts and in their minds will I write them"; its general aim is the sanctifying of a people unto God, zealous for good works, and all its gifts and operations work in that direction. Faith keeps the covenant by looking alone to Jesus, while at the same time by earnest obedience it remembers the Lord's commandments to do them.

19. "*The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens.*" Here is a grand burst of song produced by a view of the boundless power, and glorious sovereignty of Jehovah. His throne is *fixed*, for that is the word; it is established, settled, immovable.

"He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be."

About his government there is no alarm, no disorder, no perturbation, no hurrying to and fro in expedients, no surprises to be met or unexpected catastrophes to be warded off;—all is prepared and fixed, and he himself has prepared and fixed it. He is no delegated sovereign for whom a throne is set up by another; he is an autocrat, and his dominion arises from himself and is sustained by his own innate power. This matchless sovereignty is the pledge of our security, the pillar upon which our confidence may safely lean.

"*And his kingdom ruleth over all.*" Over the whole universe he stretches his sceptre. He now reigns universally, he always has done so, and he always will. To us the world may seem rent with anarchy, but he brings order out of confusion. The warring elements are marching beneath his banner when they most wildly rush onward in furious tempest. Great and small, intelligent and material, willing and unwilling, fierce or gentle,—all, all are under his sway. His is the only universal monarchy, he is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. A clear view of his ever active, and everywhere supreme providence, is one of the most delightful of spiritual gifts; he who has it cannot do otherwise than bless the Lord with all his soul.

Thus has the sweet singer hymned the varied attributes of the Lord as seen in nature, grace, and providence, and now he gathers up all his energies for one final



outburst of adoration, in which he would have all unite, since all are subjects of the Great King.

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

20. "*Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength.*" Finding his work of praise growing upon his hands, he calls upon "the firstborn sons of light" to speak the praises of the Lord, as well they may, for as Milton says, they best can tell. Dwelling nearer to that prepared throne than we as yet have leave to climb, they see in nearer vision the glory which we would adore. To them is given an exceeding might of intellect, and voice, and force which they delight to use in sacred services for him; let them now turn all their strength into that solemn song which we would send up to the third heaven. To him who gave angelic strength let all angelic strength be given. They are *his* angels, and therefore they are not loth to ring out his praises. "*That do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*" We are bidden to do these commandments, and alas we fail; let those unfallen spirits, whose bliss it is never to have transgressed, give to the Lord the glory of their holiness. They hearken for yet more commands, obeying as much by reverent listening as by energetic action, and in this they teach us how the heavenly will should evermore be done; yet even for this surpassing excellence let them take no praise, but render all to him who has made and kept them what they are. O that we could hear them chant the high praises of God, as did the shepherds on that greatest of all birth nights—

"When such music sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet  
As never was by mortal finger struck;  
Divinely-warbled voice  
Answering the string'd noise,  
As well their souls in blissful rapture took:  
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,  
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close."

Our glad heart anticipates the hour when we shall hear them "harping in loud and solemn guise," and all to the sole praise of God.

21. "*Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts;*" to whatever race of creatures ye may belong, for ye are all his troops, and he is the Generallissimo of all your armies. The fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea, should all unite in praising their Creator, after the best of their ability. "*Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure*"; in whatever way ye serve him, bless him as ye serve. The Psalmist would have every servant in the Lord's palace unite with him, and all at once sing out the praises of the Lord. We have attached a new sense to the word "ministers" in these latter days, and so narrowed it down to those who serve in word and doctrine. Yet no true minister would wish to alter it, for we are above all men bound to be the Lord's servants, and we would, beyond all other ministering intelligences or forces, desire to bless the glorious Lord.

22. "*Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion.*" Here is a trinity of blessing for the thrice blessed God, and each one of the three blessings is an enlargement upon that which went before. This is the most comprehensive of all, for what can be a wider call than to all in all places? See how finite man can awaken unbounded praise! Man is but little, yet, placing his hands upon the keys of the great organ of the universe, he wakes it to thunders of adoration! Redeemed man is the voice of nature, the priest in the temple of creation, the precursor in the worship of the universe. O that all the Lord's works on earth were delivered from the vanity to which they were made subject, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God: the time is hastening on and will most surely come; then will all the Lord's works bless him indeed. The immutable promise is ripening, the sure mercy is on its way. Hasten ye winged hours!

"*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*" He closes on his key-note. He cannot be content

to call on others without taking his own part ; nor because others sing more loudly and perfectly, will he be content to be set aside. O my soul, come home to thyself and to thy God, and let the little world within thee keep time and tune to the spheres which are ringing out Jehovah's praise. O infinitely blessed Lord, favour us with this highest blessing of being for ever and ever wholly engrossed in blessing thee.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Title.*—A *Psalm of David*, which he wrote when carried out of himself as far as heaven, saith Beza.—*John Trapp*.

*Whole Psalm.*—How often have saints in Scotland sung this Psalm in days when they celebrated the *Lord's Supper* ! It is thereby specially known in our land. It is connected also with a remarkable case in the days of John Knox. Elizabeth Adamson, a woman who attended on his preaching, "because he more fully opened the fountain of God's mercies than others did," was led to Christ and to rest, on hearing this Psalm, after enduring such agony of soul that she said, concerning racking pains of body, "A thousand years of this torment, and ten times more joined, are not to be compared to a quarter of an hour of my soul's trouble." She asked for this Psalm again before departing : "It was in receiving it that my troubled soul first tasted God's mercy, which is now sweeter to me than if all the kingdoms of the earth were given me to possess."—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

*Whole Psalm.*—The number of verses in this Psalm is that of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet ; and the completeness of the whole is further testified by its return at the close to the words with which it started, "Bless the LORD, O my soul."—*J. F. Thrupp*.

*Whole Psalm.*—The Psalm, in regard to number, is an alphabetical one, harmonised in such a way as that the concluding turns back into the introductory verse, the whole being in this manner finished and rounded off. In like manner, the name Jehovah occurs eleven times. The Psalm is divided into two strophes, the first of ten and the second of twelve verses. The ten is divided by the five, and the twelve falls into three divisions, each of four verses. Jehovah occurs in the first strophe four, and in the second seven times.

The Psalm bears the character of quiet tenderness. It is a still clear brook of the praise of God. In accordance with this, we find that the verses are of equal length as to structure, and consist regularly of two members. It is only at the conclusion, where the tone rises, that the verses become longer : the vessel is too small for the feeling.

The testimony which the *title* bears on behalf of the composition of the Psalm by David, is confirmed by the fact that the Psalm in passages, the independence of which cannot be mistaken, bears a striking resemblance to the other Psalms of David, and by the connection with Psalm cii. David here teaches his posterity to *render thanks*, as in the previous Psalm he had taught them to *pray* : the deliverance from deep distress which formed there the subject of prayer, forms here the subject of thanks.—*E. W. Hengstenberg*.

*Whole Psalm.*—It is observable that no petition occurs throughout the entire compass of these twenty-two verses. Not a single word of supplication is in the whole Psalm addressed to the Most High. Prayer, fervent, heartfelt prayer, had doubtless been previously offered on the part of the Psalmist, and answered by his God. Innumerable blessings had been showered down from above in acknowledgment of David's supplications ; and, therefore, an overflowing gratitude now bursts forth from their joyful recipient. He touches every chord of his harp and of his heart together, and pours forth a spontaneous melody of sweetest sound and purest praise.—*John Stevenson*, in "*Gratitude : an Exposition of the Hundred and Third Psalm*," 1856.

*Verse 1.*—"Bless the Lord, O my soul." O how well they are fitted ! for what work so fit for my soul as this ? Who so fit for this work as my soul ? My body, God

knows, is gross and heavy, and very unfit for so sublime a work. No, my soul, it is thou must do it; and indeed what hast thou else to do? it is the very work for which thou wert made, and O that thou wert as fit to do the work as the work is fit for thee to do! But, alas, thou art become in a manner earthy, at least hast lost a great part of thy abilities, and will never be able to go through with this great work thyself alone. If to bless the Lord were no more but to say, Lord, Lord, like to them that cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;" then my tongue alone would be sufficient for it, and I should not need to trouble any other about it; but to bless the Lord is an eminent work, and requires not only many but very able agents to perform it; and therefore, my soul, when thou goest about it, go not alone; but, take with thee "*all that is within thee*;" all the forces in my whole magazine, whether it be my heart, or my spirits; whether my will, or my affections; whether my understanding, or my memory; take them all with thee, and bless the Lord.—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 1.*—"All that is within me." The literal translation of the form here used is *my insides* or *inner parts*, the strong and comprehensive meaning of the plural being further enhanced by the addition of *all*, as if to preclude exception and reserve, and comprehend within the scope of the address all the powers and affections.—*J. A. Alexander.*

*Verse 1.*—"All that is within me," etc. Let your *conscience* "bless the Lord" by unvarying fidelity. Let your *judgment* bless him, by decisions in accordance with his word. Let your *imagination* bless him, by pure and holy musings. Let your *affections* praise him, by loving whatsoever he loves. Let your *desires* bless him, by seeking only his glory. Let your *memory* bless him, by not forgetting any of his benefits. Let your *thoughts* bless him, by meditating on his excellencies. Let your *hope* praise him, by longing and looking for the glory that is to be revealed. Let your every *sense* bless him by its fealty, your every *word* by its truth, and your every *act* by its integrity.—*John Stevenson.*

*Verse 1.*—"Bless the Lord, O my soul." You have often heard, that when God is said to bless men, and they on the other hand are excited to bless him, the word is taken in two very different senses. God is the only fountain of being and happiness, from which all good ever flows; and hence he is said to bless his creatures when he bestows mercies and favours upon them, gives them any endowments of body and mind, delivers them from evils, and is the source of their present comforts and future hopes. But in this sense, you'll see there is no possibility of any creature's blessing God; for as his infinite and unblemished perfection renders him incapable of receiving any higher excellency, or improvement in happiness; so, could we put the supposition that this immense ocean of good might be increased, it is plain that we, who receive our very being and everything that we have or are from him, could in no case contribute thereto. To *bless* God, then, is, with an ardent affection humbly to acknowledge those divine excellencies, which render him the best and greatest of beings, the only object worthy of the highest adoration; it is to give him the praise of all those glorious attributes which adorn his nature, and are so conspicuously manifested in his works and ways. To *bless* God, is to embrace every proper opportunity of owning our veneration and esteem of his excellent greatness, and to declare to all about us, as loudly as we can, the goodness and grace of his conduct towards men, and our infinite obligations for all our enjoyments to him, *in whom we live, move, and have our being.* And a right *blessing of God* must take its rise from a heart that is full of esteem and gratitude, which puts life into the songs of praise.

And then, of all others, the most lively and acceptable method of blessing God, is a holy conversation and earnest endeavour to be purified from all iniquity; for blessing of God consists, as I told you, in adoring his excellencies, and expressing our esteem and veneration of them: but what can be so effectual a way of doing this, as the influence that the views of them have upon our lives? That person best exalts the glory of the divine power, who fears God above all, and trembles at the apprehensions of his wrath; and of his justice, who flees from sin, which exposes him to the inexorable severity thereof; and of his love, who is softened thereby into grateful returns of obedience; and then we celebrate his holiness, when we endeavour to imitate it in our lives, and abandon everything that is an abomination to the eyes of his purity.—*William Dunlop, 1692—1720.*

*Verse 1.*—"O my soul." God's eye is chiefly upon the soul: bring a hundred dishes to table, he will carve of none but this; this is the savoury meat he loves. He who is best, will be served with the best; when we give him the soul in a duty, then

we give him the flower and the cream ; by a holy chemistry we still out the spirits. A soul inflamed in service is the cup of "spiced wine of the juice of the pomegranate" (Cant. viii. 2) which the spouse makes Christ to drink of.—*Thomas Watson*.

*Verse 1.*—"Bless his holy name." The name of God frequently signifies his nature and attributes, in Scripture. Now, *holiness* is the glory of this name ; the purity of God is that which beautifies all his perfections, and renders them worthy to be praised. His eternity, and knowledge, and power, without justice, and goodness, and truth, might indeed frighten and confound us ; but could not inflame our love, or engage us to hearty blessing. But when infinite mightiness, and unerring wisdom, and eternal dominion, are mixed with unchangeable love, and inviolable veracity and goodness, which exalts itself above all his works ; when thus it becomes a *holy name*, then the divine perfections are rendered truly amiable, and suitable objects of our hope and confidence and loudest songs ; so that you see how elegantly the Psalmist upon this occasion mentions the purity of God : "Bless his holy name."

And besides this, there is indeed nothing that more exalts the glory of divine grace and of redeeming love towards a soul, than the consideration of *God's holiness* ; for if your Maker were not of *purer eyes than man is*, yea, if his hatred to sin, and love to righteousness, were not greater than that of the noblest angel, his pardoning of sin, and patience towards transgressors would not be such a wonderful condescension ; but is his name infinitely holy so that "*the heavens are not clean in his sight* ?" Is the smallest iniquity the abhorrence of his soul, and what he hates with a perfect hatred ? Surely, then, his grace and love must be incomparably greater than our thoughts.—*William Dunlop*.

*Verses 1, 2.*—The well is seldom so full that water will at first pumping flow forth ; neither is the heart commonly so spiritual, after our best care in our worldly converse (much less when we somewhat overdo therein) as to pour itself into God's bosom freely, without something to raise and elevate it ; yea, often, the springs of grace lie so low, that pumping only will not fetch the heart up to a praying frame, but arguments must be poured into the soul before the affections rise. Hence are those soliloquies and discourses which we find holy men use with their own hearts to bring them into a gracious temper, suitable for communion with God in ordinances. It seems [by these verses] David either found or feared his heart would not be in so good a frame as he desired ; consequently he redoubles his charge : he found his heart somewhat drowsy, which made him thus rouse himself.—*William Gurnall*.

*Verses 1—3.*—The Psalmist's gratitude here has four attributes. The first is *personal*. "Bless the Lord, *my soul*." He has the self-same application in the close of the Psalm, after he has called on others to do this work. Our religion must be social as well as personal : but while it must not end at home, it must begin at home ; and relative religion, without personal, will always be found wanting in excitement, in energy, in extent, in continuance, and very commonly in success. Secondly, it is *fervent*. "And all that is *within me*, bless his holy name"—all my thoughts, my feelings, my understanding, my will, my memory, my conscience, my affections, my passions.

"If there be passions in my soul,  
(And passions, Lord, there be) ;  
Let them be all at thy control,  
My gracious Lord, for thee."

Thirdly, it is *rational*, and demanded by the facts of his past life. Therefore "forget not all his benefits." Nothing can properly affect or influence us when it is out of our recollection. "Out of sight out of mind" ; and out of mind, out of motive. Whence arose the ingratitude of the Jews of old ? Bad memories. "Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee." "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." It should therefore be your concern, not only to recall your mercies, but to reckon them. Lastly, it is *specific* : "Who forgiveth all *thine iniquities* ; who healeth all *thy diseases*." When all the words in a discourse are emphatic, nothing is emphatic, when we dwell on everything, we dwell on nothing effectively. We are more struck, in a landscape, with a selected point of vision for inspection, than by the general prospect. David was a poet, and understood poetry well ; and poetry differs from philosophy. The one seeks to rise from particular facts and instances, to establish general principles and rules : the other is always for

descending from generalization to particularization ; and much of its beauty and force arises from individualities.—*William Jay*, 1849.

Verse 2.—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*” David found some dulness and drowsiness ; hence he so often puts the thorn to his breast ; hence he so impetuously instigateth his soul, as one here phraseth it.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 2.—“*Forget not.*” This touches the secret spring of so much ingratitude—forgetfulness, the want of re-collection, or gathering together again of all the varied threads of mercy. Compare Deut. vi. 12 ; viii. 11, 14. “*Si oblivisceris, tacebis*” (If thou forgettest, thou wilt be silent).—*J. J. S. Perowne*.

Verse 2.—“*Forget not all his benefits.*” That is, forget not any of his benefits, as the form of speech in the original doth import.—*David Dickson*.

Verse 2.—“*Benefits.*” The word rendered “benefits”—*נָסַח*, *gemul*, means properly an act, work, doing, whether good or evil, Ps. cxxvii. 8 ; and then, *desert*, or what a man deserves for his act ; *recompense*. It is rendered *deserving* in Judges ix. 16 ; *benefit*, as here, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 25 ; *desert*, Ps. xxviii. 4 ; *reward*, Ps. xciv. 2 ; Isai. iii. 11 ; Obad. 15 ; *recompense*, Prov. xii. 14 ; Isai. xxxv. 4 ; lix. 18 ; lxxvi. 6 ; Jer. li. 6 ; Lam. iii. 64 ; Joel. iii. 4, 7. The proper reference here is to the Divine *dealings*, to what God had *done*, as a reason for blessing his name. His *dealings* with the Psalmist had been such as to call for praise and gratitude. What those *dealings* particularly were he specifies in the following verses.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 3.—“*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*” Thine iniquities are more than can be numbered ; and they are an intolerable burden, so that thy soul under them “can in no wise lift up herself.” He forgiveth them *all*. He relieveth thee of *all*. He taketh the dreadful burden from thy back, the galling yoke from thy neck, and makes thee free. . . . Thine iniquities are in-equities. There is nothing just or right in thee. Thy very nature is an in-equity, bringing forth nothing but in-equities. In-equities towards thy God, in-equities towards thy neighbour, and in-equities towards thyself, make up the whole of thy life. Thou art a bad tree, and a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit.—*John Pulsford*, in “*Quiet Hours*,” 1857.

Verse 3.—“*All thine iniquities.*” In this lovely and well-known Psalm, we have great fulness of expression, in reference to the vital subject of redemption.

“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.” It is not “*some*” or “*many* of thine iniquities.” This would never do. If so much as the very smallest iniquity, in thought, word, or act, were left unforgiven, we should be just as badly off, just as far from God, just as unfit for heaven, just as exposed to hell, as though the whole weight of our sins were yet upon us. Let the reader ponder this deeply. It does not say, “Who forgiveth thine iniquities previous to conversion.” There is no such notion as this in Scripture. When God forgives, he forgives like himself. The source, the channel, the power, and the standard of forgiveness are all divine. When God cancels a man’s sins, he does so according to the measure in which Christ bore those sins. Now, Christ not only bore *some* or *many* of the believer’s sins, he bore them “*all*,” and, therefore, God forgives “*all*.” God’s forgiveness stretches to the length of Christ’s atonement ; and Christ’s atonement stretches to the length of every one of the believer’s sins, past, present, and future. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i.—“*Things New and Old*,” 1858.

Verse 3.—“*Who healeth all thy diseases.*” In one of the prisons of a certain country, was a man who had committed high treason : for this crime he was in due time tried, and, being found guilty, was condemned to die. But more than this ; he was afflicted with an inward disease, which generally proves mortal. Now we may truly say, that this man is *doubly* dead ; that his life is forfeited twice over : the laws of his country have pronounced him guilty of death, and therefore his life is forfeited *once* to the laws of his country, and, if he had not died in *this* way, he must die of his disease ; he is, therefore, “*twice* dead.” Now suppose that the sovereign of that country had made up his mind to wish to save that prisoner’s life, could he save it ? He could indeed take off the penalty of the law ; he could give him a free pardon, and so restore the life, as sure as it is forfeited by the just sentence of the law ; but, unless he could also send a physician, who could cure the man of his disease, he would die by *that*, and his pardon would only lengthen out for a few weeks or months, a miserable existence. And if this disease were not only a mortal disease, but an *infectious* one, likely to spread itself by the *breath* of the patient, and a *contagious* one, likely to spread by the *touch* of the patient’s body or clothes, then it

would be dangerous to others to come near that man ; and unless he were cured, and thoroughly and entirely cured, the man, though pardoned, would still be a fit inmate only for the pest-house, and could not be received into the houses of the healthy. You have *seen* such a case as this, brethren ; you are at this very moment, perhaps, sitting close by a person in this case ; yes, and perhaps you are in this very case yourself ! *Perhaps*, do I say ? I should say, you *ARE* in this very case, unless you are really and truly a Christian, a believer in Christ Jesus.—*W. Weldon Champneys*, 1842.

*Verse 3.*—“ *All thy diseases.*” The body experienceth the melancholy consequences of Adam’s offence, and is subject to many infirmities ; but the soul is subject to as many. What is pride, but lunacy ; what is anger, but a fever ; what is avarice, but a dropsy ; what is lust, but a leprosy ; what is sloth, but a dead palsy ? Perhaps, there are spiritual maladies similar to all corporeal ones.—*George Horne*.

*Verse 3.*—“ *All thy diseases.*” O my soul, consider the multitude of infirmities, to which thou art subject ; thou hast many suggestions of the flesh ; and thou art apt to yield unto them, and strivest not against them by earnest prayer and holy meditations ; this is an infirmity. In thy prayers to God, thy thoughts are often wandering, and thou thinkest of other matters, far unworthy of that great Majesty to whom thou prayest : or if not so, yet thou art quickly weary, thy spirits are drowsy in it, and thou hadst rather be doing of something else ; this is an infirmity. And indeed thou hast infirmities in all thy senses. In thy seeing, thou canst see a mote in thy brother’s eye, and canst not see a beam in thine own eye. In thy smelling, thou thinkest *suavis odor lucris ex re qualibet*, that the savour of gain is sweet, from whence soever it rise. In thy hearing, thou art gladder to hear the profane and idle discourses, than such as be serious and holy ; these are thy infirmities : and, O my soul, if I should cut thee up into as many parts as an anatomist, and examine the infirmities of every part, should I not have cause, just cause, to cry out with Saint Paul, O wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin ? Who shall heal me of all these infirmities ? for whether we call them sins, and then God forgives them ; or call them infirmities, and then he heals them ; they are to us, all one benefit ; in God, all one kindness ; that as either of them is well worth remembering ; so for both of them, we have just cause to bless him and to praise his name.—*Sir Richard Baker*.

*Verse 3.*—“ *All thy diseases.*” Our *understandings* are so bad that they understand not their own badness ; our *wills*, which are the queens of our souls, become the vassals of sin ; our *memory*, like jet, good only to draw straws and treasure up trifles of no moment ; our *consciences*, through errors in our own understanding, sometimes accusing us when we are innocent, sometimes acquitting us when we are guilty ; our *affections* all disaffected and out of order. Must not that needs be a monstrous face, wherein the blueness which should be in the veins is in the lips, the redness which should be in the cheeks, in the nose ; the hair that should grow on the head, on the face ? and must not our souls needs seem ugly in the sight of God, who have grief growing there where joy should, and joy where grief should ? We love what we should hate and hate where we should love ; we fear where no fear is, and fear not where we ought to fear ; and all our affections either mistake their object, or exceed their due measure.—*Thomas Fuller*.

*Verse 4.*—“ *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.*” From his earliest days the Psalmist was the child of Providence. Many were the hairbreadth escapes, and the wonderful deliverances, which he experienced. Dangers of various kinds presented themselves as his years advanced. The jaw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, at various times threatened to terminate his existence, and at others the ruthless hand of man. The same God who delivered him from the sword of Goliath, rescued his life from the javelin of Saul. The Almighty Friend who had covered his head in the day of battle, delivered him, at one moment, from the lords of the Philistines, saved him at another out of the hands of the men of Keilah ; and again preserved to him his life and throne from the unnatural rebellion of his own son. Well, therefore, might the Psalmist stir up his soul, and all that was within him, to bless the Lord with most fervent gratitude, who, by so many signal deliverances, had “ *redeemed his life from destruction.*”—*John Stevenson*.

*Verse 4.*—“ *Who redeemeth.*” Preservation from destruction, *הַגּוֹעַל* *haggoel*, properly, *redemption of life by the kinsman* ; possibly looking forward, in the spirit of prophecy,

to him who became partaker of our flesh and blood, that he might have the right to redeem our souls from death by dying in our stead.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 4.—“*From the pit*,” including death, the grave, Hades. The Targum renders “from Gehenna.”—*J. J. S. Perowne*.

Verse 4.—“*Tender mercies*.” I do not know that I can do better than tell you a little incident that took place in my native town of Stirling. Workmen were blasting the castle rock, near where it abuts upon a walk that lies open to the street. The train was laid and lit, and an explosion was momentarily expected. Suddenly trotting round the great wall of the cliff, came a little child going straight to where the match burned. The men shouted—(it was *mercy*)—and by their very terror in shouting, alarmed and bewildered the poor little thing. By this time the mother also had come round: in a moment saw the danger; opened wide her arms, and cried from her very heart, “*Come to me, my darling*,”—(that was *tender mercy*)—and instantly, with eager pattering feet, and little arms opened to her arms, and tear-filled eyes answering to her eyes—the little thing ran back and away, and stopped not until she was clasped in her mother’s bosom—wealth of sunny hair loosened on it, and lips coral red pressed to mother’s pallid lip of fear—as the motherly heart gave way to tears, in the thought of so imperilled an escape: for it was barely by a second, as the roar of the shattered rock told.—*Alexander B. Grosart*, in “*The Pastor an Helper of Joy*,” 1865.

Verse 5.—“*Who satisfieth thy mouth*.” The word rendered “*mouth*” is מִוּחַ, which is rendered *ornaments* in our version in all other passages—eleven in number—where it occurs, except here and in xxxii. 9, where it is rendered “*mouth* ;” and even there it ought properly to be translated *ornament*, and here the sense seems to be *thy ornament*, that which is thy glory, thy spirit, xvi. 9; lxii. 8. It is true that the soul (נַפְשׁ) is here addressed (see v. 1); but the spirit may be called the *ornament* or *glory of the soul*.—*Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 5.—“*Satisfieth thy mouth*.” Kimchi understands the phrase as expressing David’s recovery from sickness. In sickness the soul abhorreth bread, and even dainty meat, Job xxxiii. 20. The physician, too, limits the diet of the patient, and prescribes things which are nauseous to the palate. The commentator, therefore, supposes that David here describes the blessing of health, by *his mouth being filled with good things*.—*Editorial Note to Calvin in loc*.

Verse 5.—“*Satisfieth*.” God can so satisfy the soul, that each chink and cranny therein shall be filled with spiritual joy.—*Thomas Fuller*.

Verse 5.—“*With good things*.” Mark, what does the Lord satisfy with?—“*good things*.” Not rich things, not many things, not *everything* I ask for, but “*good things*.” All my need fully supplied, and everything “*good*.” Goodness is God expressed. All his blessings partake of his own nature. They are holy blessings, holy mercies. Everything that *satisfies* must have the nature of God in it. Nothing else will ever “*satisfy*.” The heart was made for God, and only God can meet it.—*Frederick Whitfield*, 1874.

Verse 5.—“*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s*.” It is an ancient fable that the eagle is able to renew his youth when very old, and poetical allusion is made to it in this Psalm; but this idea is doubtless founded in reality on the great longevity of the bird, and its power, in common with other birds, of moulting its plumage periodically, and so increasing its strength and activity.—*Hugh Macmillan*.\*

Verse 5.—“*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s*.”—The Scripture knows nothing of the idea that the eagle when old renews its youth. That there is nothing of this kind contained in Is. xl. 31, which is commonly appealed to, but that it is rather the powerful flight of the eagle that is there referred to, “*they mount up on wings like the eagle, they run and are not weary*,” is evident from the parallel, to *fly, run, march*.—*E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 5.—“*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s*.” *Thy activity will renew itself like the eagle*. That is to say, From day to day he will receive and increase his strength and vigour, so that he may thrive and flourish like the eagle. The comparison with the eagle is not drawn in point of *renovation*, but in point of vigour and *activity* con-

\* We might have filled much of our space with fables from the rabbis and the fathers in reference to eagles; but they are too absurd, and ought never to be repeated. We hope, therefore, that the reader will excuse if not commend the omission.

tinually renewing itself; as Is. xl. 31, says, "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles.*"—Venema.

Verse 5.—"*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*"—This renovation of his youth may be understood three ways. First, as to his natural state, or bodily strength. Secondly, as to his civil state, or worldly successes, as to his honour and kingly renown. Thirdly, as to his spiritual state, or the heightening of his gifts, graces, and comforts. 'Tis probable David had found a declension in all these, and at last, through the goodness of God and his blessing upon him, the renewing of them all from that oldness to a youthfulness again, like that of eagles.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—"*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*"—However bold it may sound, we say not too much when we speak of an *eternal youth*, as the glorious privilege of the devout servant of the Lord, but of him alone. All that with reason charms and captivates in the appearance of youth, is seen in heightened measure where the spiritual life develops itself undisturbed in fellowship with God. Does the *innocence* of youth attract you? In the natural life it is but too frequently a misleading appearance; but in the life of the soul it returns to a certain extent when the heart is purified through the power of the Holy Ghost, and the life is renewed in conformity with that of Christ the Lord. Does the *enjoyment* of youth surpass in your estimation that of any other here below? Be it so; yet all too speedily it is driven away by the cares of later years, whilst enjoyment free from care even in the dark days may dwell in the heart whereon has descended the peace of God through faith. The *strength* of youth, seems it to you desirable? Ah! day by day stamps truth upon the words: "Youth shall faint and be weary;" but even when the natural strength has already long attained its zenith, the Christian often feels himself elevated through a power from on high, which lifts him above physical weakness; and what no strength of sinew or muscle could accomplish is attained through the power of implicit faith. Yea, even the beautiful *development* which the period of youth shows you, ye would not seek in vain in that man who, leaning on God's hand, forgetting the things that are behind, stretches forward from light to light, from strength to strength, from bliss to bliss. How, finally, can *hope*, that makes the youthful heart beat high with throbs of joy, be lacking to him? The fairest part of life the sensual man sees soon behind him, the spiritual man always in prospect; and like the eagle, this last can often from the low atmosphere around him soar to the pure, clear ether, whence already from afar the image, nay, the ineffable reality, shows him a more than earthly joy.

Eternal youth: it may, yet much more than for David, now be the portion of every Christian, but for these alone. Without faith and hope in the heart, even the bravest determination to remain young always, or at least as long as possible, must give way before the first great storm of life. Yet even when faith and hope are not strangers to us, whence is it that in our spiritual life there is frequently so little of the "*eagle*" spoken of here, and so much of the "*sparrow alone upon the house top,*" referred to in Psalm cii. 7? Can it be that we allow ourselves too little to be satisfied with the good things of which David had spoken immediately before; that is to say, that we *live* so little on the best things which God has to bestow,—his word, his Spirit, his grace? Only through these do we attain that lasting second birth, of which the eagle is the emblem, and an unfading youth of heart the inestimable fruit. Ye who are young in years, seek this undying youth above all the joys of early life! Recover it, ye middle-aged, in living fellowship with him who maketh all things new within! Preserve it, old friends of God and of his Christ, as your fairest crown here on earth, and the earnest of your bliss in heaven. And thou, Christian, who sittest down disconsolate, bethink thyself; the eagle lets his wings hang down, only thereafter to soar with stronger flight!—*J. J. Van Oosterzee, in "The Year of Salvation," 1874.*

Verse 6.—"*The Lord executeth righteousness,*" &c. Rising from personal blessings to general, the comprehensive fact, evermore to the glory of God, is his sympathy with the suffering and oppressed, and his ready and effective interposition in their case. Who will not praise him that he careth so kindly and so gloriously for those who suffer cruel wrongs from wicked oppressors?—*Henry Cowles.*

Verse 7.—"*He made known his ways unto Moses.*" When Moses went up to Mount Sinai and tarried there with God the space of forty days, we may well think that God in that time, revealed many secrets to him; and particularly "*made known*



his ways ;" (Ex. xxxiii. 19) ; not only his ways in which he would have us to walk, but his ways in which he walks himself, and the course he holds in the government of worldly affairs ; why he suffers the wicked to prosper, and why the godly to be oppressed. These "ways" of his he made known to Moses ; to the children of Israel, only "his acts." He showed them his wonders upon Pharaoh, and that was his judgment ; and he showed them his wonderful favours to themselves in the wilderness, and that was his righteousness ; but he showed them not his ways, and the course he held in them : they saw only the events of things, they saw not the reasons of them, as Moses did.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 8.*—"Merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." O my soul, here are four properties spoken of to be in God, and are all so necessary, that we could not miss one of them. If he were not "merciful" we could hope for no pardon ; and if he were no more but merciful we could hope for no more but pardon ; but when besides his being merciful he is also "gracious," this gives us a further hope, a hope of a donative ; and then it will not be what we are worthy to receive, but what it is fit for him to give. If he were not "slow to anger" we could expect no patience ; but when besides his slowness to anger he is also "full of compassion ;" this makes us expect he will be the good Samaritan, and not only bind up our wounds, but take care also for our further curing. What though he chide and be angry for a time ; it is but our being patient a while with him, as he a long time hath been patient with us.—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 8.*—"Slow to anger." In Scripture we find that slowness to anger, and hastiness to be angry, are expressed by the different frame of the nostrils ; as, namely, when the Lord is said to be "slow to anger," the Hebrew is, *long of nostrils.*—*Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 8.*—"Plenteous in mercy." *גביר ברחמים* "great, mighty in mercy," placing his chief glory in this attribute, and hereby teaching us how to estimate true greatness.—*George Horne.*

*Verse 8.*—"Plenteous in mercy." It is a thing marvellously satisfactory and pleasing to the heart of a man to be still taking from a great heap ; and upon this ground are those proverbial sayings, There is no fishing like to fishing in the sea, no service like the service of a king : because in one there is the greatest plenty and abundance of that kind of pleasure that fishers look after ; and for them that serve, and must live by their service, there is none like that of princes, because they have abundance of reward and of opportunity whereby to recompense the services of those that do wait and attend upon them. . . . And upon the same ground it is that the Scriptures, in several places, do not only assert and testify that God is "merciful" and "gracious," but abundant in mercy and full of grace ; and not simply that there is redemption in him, but plenteousness of redemption, Ps. lxxxvi. 5 ; and cxxx. 7 ; Isai. lv. 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way," etc. ; "Let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." The commodity which we stand in need of is mercy and the pardon of our sins, because we have been unholy and ungodly creatures ; this commodity is abundantly in God. There it is treasured up as waters are in the store-house of the sea ; there is no end of the treasures of his grace, mercy, pardon, and compassion. There is no man, being in want, but had rather go to a rich man's door to be relieved, than to the door of a poor man, if he knoweth the rich man to be as liberal and as bountifully disposed as the poor man can be.—*John Goodwin, on "Being filled with the Spirit."*

*Verse 9.*—"He will not always chide."—Certainly it is as displeasing to God to chide, as it is to us to be chidden ; and so little he likes of anger, that he rids his hands of it as fast as he can : he is not so slow in coming to it, but he is as quick in getting from it ; for chiding is a bar to mercy, and anger an impediment to compassion ; nothing is so distasteful to God as that any block should lie in the way of his mercy, or that the liberty of his compassion should have any cause of restraint : and then we may be sure he will not himself lay a block in the way with chiding, nor be a cause to restrain his compassion by keeping his anger.—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 9 (Second clause).*—To keep anger for ever, corresponds with the French phrase, *Je lui garde, Il me l'a gardé,\** which we use when the man, who cannot forgive

\* "I am watching him, as he has watched to do a bad turn to me"

the injuries he has received, cherishes secret revenge in his heart, and waits for an opportunity of retaliation. Now David denies that God, after the manner of men, keeps anger on account of injuries done to him, since he condescends to be reconciled.—*Calvin*.

*Verse 10.*—“*He hath not dealt with us after our sins.*” Might we not have expected, with such conduct, that God would have withdrawn from us the blessing of his providence, withheld from us the communication of his Spirit, permitted us to find the means of grace profitless, left our temptations to multiply, and suffered us to sink into a state of fixed backsliding?—and then, with our hearts at last sinking into too natural depression, might we not have seemed to hear him saying to us this day, “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.”—*Baptist W. Noel, 1798—1873.*

*Verse 10.*—“*He hath not dealt with us after our sins.*” Why is it that God hath not dealt with us after our sins? Is it not because he hath dealt with another after our sins? Another who took our sins upon him; of whom it is said, that “God chastened him in his fierce wrath”? and why did he chasten him, but for our sins? O gracious God, thou art too just to take revenge twice for the same faults; and therefore, having turned thy fierce wrath upon him, thou wilt not turn it upon us too; but having rewarded him according to our iniquities, thou wilt now reward us according to his merits.—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 11.*—Our mind cannot find a comparison too large for expressing the superabundant mercy of the Lord toward his people.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 12.*—“*As far as the east is from the west.*” The expression taken from the distance of the *east* from *west* is pitched upon, saith Kimchi, because those two quarters of the world are of greatest extent, being all known and inhabited. From whence it is that geographers reckon that way their longitudes, as from north to south their latitudes.—*Henry Hammond.*

*Verse 12.*—When sin is pardoned, it is never charged again; the guilt of it can no more return than east can become west, or west become east.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verse 13.*—“*Like as a father pitieth his children,*” etc. A chaplain to seamen, at an American port, visited a sailor who appeared to be near death. He spoke kindly to the man upon the state of his soul, and directed him to cast himself on Jesus. With an oath, the sick man bade him begone. The chaplain then told him that he must be faithful to him, for if he died impenitent he would be lost for ever. The man was sullen and silent, and pretended to fall asleep. The visit was repeated more than once, with similar ill success. At length the chaplain, suspecting that the sailor was a Scotchman, repeated a verse of the old version of the Psalms:

“Such pity as a father hath  
Unto his children dear,  
Like pity shows the Lord to such  
As worship him in fear.”

Tears started into the sailor's eyes as he listened to these words. The chaplain asked him if he had not had a pious mother. The man broke into tears. Yes, his mother had, in years gone by, taught him these words, and had also prayed to God for him. Since then he had been a wanderer by sea and land; but the memory of her faith and love moved his heart. The appeals made to him were blessed by the Spirit of God. His life was spared, and proved the reality of his conversion.

*Verse 13.*—“*Like as a father.*” It is to be observed in this verse, what kind of mercy the prophet attributes to God. He says not, As man pities man, as the rich the poor man, as the strong the feeble, as the freeman the captive, but he makes mention of that pity which a father shews to his son, which is the greatest of all. The word *אב* itself supports this view, as it properly signifies *viscarum commotis*. An example of this we have in 1 Kings iii. in the case of the woman who could not bear the slaughter of her child. . . . And afterwards in the case of the father of the prodigal. Luke xv.—*Musculus.*

*Verse 13.*—"As a father pitieth his children." The father pitieth his children that are weak in knowledge, and instructs them; pities them when they are froward, and bears with them; pities them when they are sick, and comforts them; when they are fallen, and helps them up again; when they have offended, and upon their submission, forgives them; when they are wronged, and rights them. Thus "the Lord pitieth them that fear him."—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 13.*—"So the Lord pitieth," &c. So and ten thousand times more than so. For he is the "Father of all mercies," and the Father of all the fatherhoods in heaven and earth. Eph. iii. 15.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 13.*—"The Lord pitieth." Though it be commonly said, "It is better to be envied, than pitied;" yet here it is not so; but it is a far happier thing to be pitied of God, than to be envied of men.—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 13.*—"Them that fear him." The fear of God is that deference to God which leads you to subordinate your will to his; makes you intent on pleasing him; penitent in view of past wilfulness; happy in his present smile; transported by his love; hopeful of his glory.—*George Bowen.*

*Verse 13.*—"Them that fear him." It may be understood of those who have not yet "received the spirit of adoption," but are yet "trembling at his word," those he "pities."—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verses 13, 14.*—The good father doth not turn off the child for being weak and sickly; but is so much the more indulgent, as his necessity requires succour. If his stomach refuse meat, or cannot answer it with digestion, will he put him out of doors? No; when the Shunamite's son complains of his head, she lays him in her bosom. A mother is good to all the fruit of her womb, most kind to the sick infant: when it lies with its eyes fixed on her, not able to declare its grief, or to call for what it desires, this doubles her compassion: "So the Lord doth pity us, remembering our frame, considering that we are but dust"; that our soul works by a lame instrument; and therefore he requires not that of an elemental composition, which he doth of angelical spirits. The son is commanded to write out such a copy fairly; he doth his best, far short of the original; yet the father doth not chide, but encourage him. Or he gives him a bow and arrows, bids him shoot to such a mark; he draws his utmost strength, lets go cheerfully; the arrow drops far short, yet the son is praised, the father pleased. Temptation assaults us, lust buffets us, secular business diverts us, manifold is our weakness, but not beyond our Father's forgiveness: "He will spare us, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," Mal. iii. 17.—*Thomas Adams.*

*Verse 14.*—"He knoweth our frame." "Our formation;" the manner in which we are constructed, and the materials of which we are made.—*Adam Clarke.*

*Verse 14.*—"He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Not like some unskilled empiric, who hath but one receipt for all, strong or weak, young or old; but as a wise physician considers his patient, and then writes his bill. Men and devils are but God's apothecaries, they make not our physic, but give what God prescribes. Balaam loved Balak's fee well enough, but could not go a hair's breadth beyond God's commission.—*William Gurnall.*

*Verse 14.*—"He remembereth that we are dust." As if the very matter out of which man was first made, though without sin, were a disadvantage to him in the resisting of sin. It was a disadvantage before man had any sin in him, how much more is it now when most men have nothing at all in them but sin, and the best have very much. "That which is born of the flesh," saith Christ "is flesh." Corrupt nature can produce none but corrupt acts.—*Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 14.*—"We are dust."

O how in this thy quire of souls I stand,  
—Propt by thy hand—  
A heap of sand!  
Which busie thoughts—like winds—would scatter quite,  
And put to flight,  
But for thy might;  
Thy hand alone doth tame  
Those blasts, and knit my frame.

—*Henry Vaughan.*

*Verses 14, 16.*—"We are dust." I never see one of those spiral pillars of dust which, like a mimic simoom, rush along the road upon a windy day, without thinking, "There

is an image of life." Dust and a breath! Observe how the apparent "pillar" is but a condition, an active condition, of the particles of dust, and those particles continually changing. The form depends upon the incessant movement. The heavy sand floats on the impalpable air while it partakes its motion; let that cease and it falls. So the dull clods of the field, smitten by force, take wings and soar in life, partake for a time its rapid course, and then, the force exhausted, fall back into their former state. A whirl, a flux, maintained by forces without, and ceasing when they are withdrawn; that is our life.—*James Hinton*, in "*Thoughts on Health and some of its Conditions*," 1871.

Verse 15.—"*As for man.*" The insignificance of man is especially brought out by the use of ENOSH here.—*Robert Baker Girdlestone*.

Verse 15.—Man comes forth, says Job, like a flower, and is cut down; he is sent into the world the fairest and noblest part of God's works, fashioned after the image of his Creator, with respect to reason and the great faculties of the mind; he cometh forth glorious as the flower of the field; as it surpasses the vegetable world in beauty, so does he the animal world in the glory and excellence of his nature. The one, if no untimely accident oppress it, soon arrives at the full period of its perfection,—is suffered to triumph for a few moments, and is plucked up by the roots in the very pride and gayest stage of its being;—or if it happens to escape the hands of violence, in a few days it necessarily sickens of itself, and dies away. Man likewise, though his progress is slower, and his duration somewhat longer, yet the periods of his growth and declension are nearly the same, both in the nature and manner of them. If he escapes the dangers which threaten his tenderer years, he is soon got into the full maturity and strength of life; and if he is so fortunate as not to be hurried out of it then by accidents, by his own folly and intemperance—if he escapes these, he naturally decays of himself,—a period comes fast upon him, beyond which he was not made to last. Like flowers or fruits which may be plucked up by force before the time of their maturity, yet cannot be made to outgrow the period when they are to fade and drop of themselves; when that comes, the hand of nature then plucks them both off, and no art of the botanist can uphold the one, or skill of the physician preserve the other, beyond the periods to which their original frames and constitutions were made to extend. As God has appointed and determined the several growths and decays of the vegetable race, so he seems as evidently to have prescribed the same laws to man, as well as all living creatures, in the first rudiments of which there are contained the specific powers of their growth, duration and extinction; and when the evolutions of those animal powers are exhausted and run down, the creature expires and dies of itself, as ripe fruit falls from the tree, or a flower preserved beyond its bloom, drops and perishes upon the stalk.—*Lawrence Sterne*, 1713—1768.

Verse 15.—The Psalmist saith of man, "*as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*" It is not a flower of the garden, but of the "*field.*" This latter is more subject to decay than the former, because it lies more open to the nipping air and violent winds, and to the browsing mouth of the beast, and is more liable to be trampled upon: by all these ways it decayeth as well as by the scorching sun, and its own fading temper.—*John Edwards*, in "*Theologia Reformata.*"

Verse 15.—"*As a flower of the field.*"

What is life! like a flower, with the bane in its bosom,  
To-day full of promise—to-morrow it dies!—  
And health—like the dew-drop that hangs in its blossom,  
Survives but a night, and exhales to the skies!  
How oft 'neath the bud that is brightest and fairest,  
The seeds of the canker in embryo lurk!  
How oft at the root of the flower that is rarest—  
Secure in its ambush the worm is at work?

—*James Beattie*, 1735—1803.

Verse 16.—"*The wind passeth over it, and it is gone,*" etc. A breath of air, a gentle wind (πνεύμα) passes over him and he is gone. It would not be so strange if a tempest, a whirlwind, passing over should sweep him away. The Psalmist means much more than this. The gentlest touch, the whispering breeze, bears him off. He soon becomes a stranger, no more known in the little space he once filled, going out and coming in.—*Henry Cowles*.

Verse 16.—"*The wind passeth over it, and it is gone.*" It is well known that a hot wind in the east destroys at once every green thing. Nor is this to be wondered

at, if as Dr. Russell says, the winds sometimes "bring with them a degree and kind of heat, which one would imagine came out of an oven, and which, when it blows hard, will affect metals within the houses, such as locks of room doors, nearly as much as if they had been exposed to the rays of the sun." The blasting effect which seems to be here alluded to, of certain pestilential winds upon the animal frame, is by no means exaggerated by the comparison to the sudden fading of a flower. Maillet describes hundreds of persons in a caravan as stifled on the spot by the fire and dust, of which the deadly wind, that sometimes prevails in the eastern deserts, seems to be composed. And Sir John Chardin describes this wind "as making a great hissing noise," and says that "it appears red and fiery, and kills those whom it strikes by a kind of stifling them, especially when it happens in the day time."—*Richard Mant.*

*Verse 16.*—"The place thereof shall know him no more," &c. Man, once turned to dust, is blown about by every wind, from place to place; and what knows the place, when dust falls upon it; whether it be the dust of a prince, or of a peasant; whether of a man, or of a beast? And must not man then needs be very miserable, when time and place, the two best helps of life, do both forsake him? for what help can we have of time, when his days are but as grass? What help of place, when his place denies him, and will not know him?—*Sir R. Baker.*

*Verse 17.*—"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." No human benevolence is perpetually the same; but by experience we see that those who are kind to-day, may be changed into tyrants to-morrow. Examples of this we have in the life of Nero, and many other rulers. Therefore lest we should suspect the goodness of God to bear any similar character, it is said with inconceivable consolation, that it shall never cease, but is prepared for ever for all those who fear and serve God.—*Musculus.*

*Verse 17.*—"From everlasting to everlasting." From everlasting, by predestination; to everlasting, by glorification: the one without beginning, the other without end.—*Bernard.*

*Verse 18.*—"To do them." Commands are to be remembered in order to practice; a vain speculation is not the intent of the publication of them.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verse 19.*—"The Lord hath prepared his throne." The word signifies established as well as prepared, and might be so rendered. Due preparation is the natural way to the establishment of a thing; hasty resolves break and moulder. This notes,

1. The peculiarity of his authority. He prepares it, and none else for him. It is a dominion that originally resides in his nature, not derived from any by birth or commission; he alone prepared it. He is the sole cause of his own kingdom; his authority therefore is unbounded, as infinite as his nature. None can set laws to him, because none but himself prepared his throne for him. As he will not impair his own happiness, so he will not abridge himself of his own authority.

2. Readiness to exercise it upon due occasions. He hath prepared his throne, he is not at a loss, he needs not stay for a commission or instructions from any how to act. He hath all things ready for the assistance of his people, he hath rewards and punishments; his treasures and axes, the great mark of authority lying by him, the one for the good, the other for the wicked. His mercy he keeps by him for thousands, Exod. xxxiv. 7; his arrows he hath prepared by him for rebels, Ps. vii. 13.

3. Wise management of it. It is prepared: preparations imply prudence; the government of God is not a rash and heady authority. A prince upon his throne, a judge upon the bench, manages things with the greatest discretion, or should be supposed so to do.

4. Successfulness and duration of it. He hath prepared or established it. It is fixed, not tottering; it is an unmovable dominion; all the strugglings of men and devils cannot overturn it, not so much as shake it. It is established above the reach of obstinate rebels; he cannot be deposed from it, he cannot be mated in it. His dominion, as himself, abides for ever. And as his counsel, so his authority, shall stand; and "he will do all his pleasure," Isai. xlvi. 10.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verse 19.*—"His throne in the heavens," denotes: 1. The glory of his dominion. The heavens are the most stately and comely pieces of the creation; his majesty is there most visible, his glory most splendid, Ps. xix. 1. In heaven his dominion is more acknowledged by the angels: his dominion is not disputed there by the angels

that attend him, as it is on earth by the rebels that arm themselves against him. 2. The supremacy of his empire. The heavens are the loftiest part of the creation, and the only fit palace for him. 3. Peculiarity of this dominion. He rules in the heavens alone. His authority is not delegated to any creature, he rules the blessed spirits by himself; but he rules men that are on his footstool by others of the same kind, men of their own nature. 4. The vastness of his empire. The earth is but a spot to the heavens. What is England in a map to the whole earth, but a spot you may cover with your finger; much less must the whole earth be to the extended heavens. You cannot conceive the many millions of little particles that are in the earth; and if all put together be but one point to that place where the throne of God is seated, how vast must his empire be! He rules there over the angels, which excel in strength, those hosts of his which do his pleasure, in comparison of whom all the men in the world, and the power of the greatest potentates, is no more than the strength of an ant or fly. And since his throne is in the heavens, it will follow that all things under the heaven are part of his dominion; the inferior things of earth cannot but be subject to him; and it necessarily includes his influence on all things below, because the heavens are the cause of all the motion in the world. See Hosea ii. 21, 22. 5. The easiness of managing this government. His throne being placed on high, he cannot but behold all things that are done below; the height of a place gives advantage to a clear eye to behold things below it. "*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand,*" Ps. xiv. 2. He looks not down from heaven as if his presence were confined there, but he looks down majestically, and by way of authority. 6. Duration of it. The heavens are incorruptible, his throne is placed there in an incorruptible state. The throne of God outlives the dissolution of the world.—*Condensed from Charnock.*

*Verse 19.*—"His kingdom ruleth over all." His Lordship is universal. First, over all *time*: other lords die, but he is eternal. Eternity is properly the duration of an uncreated Ens. It is improperly taken, either for things that have both beginning and end, as everlasting mountains; divers such phrases in Scripture; or for things that have a beginning but shall have no end; so are angels and men's souls eternal; so, eternal life, eternal fire. But God calls himself, "I AM," Exod. iii. 14: I am what I have been, I have been what I am, what I am and have been I shall be. This attribute is incommunicable: all other things had a *non esse* preceding their *esse*; and they have a mutation tending to nothing. "They that war against thee shall be as nothing," Isa. xli. 12: all come to nothing unless they be upheld by the manutency of God: but "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," Ps. cii. 27. Thou turnest man to destruction, and again sayest, Return: "even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God," Ps. xc. 2; the sole umpire and measurer of beginning and ending. Secondly, over all *places*, heaven, earth, hell, Ps. cxxxv. 6. Kings are limited, and cannot do many things they desire: they cannot command the sun to stand still, nor the wind to blow which way they would: in the lofty air, in the depths of the sea no king reigns. They fondly flatter the pope with his long arms that they reach to purgatory; (but indeed both power and place are alike imaginary;) it is Christ alone that hath the keys of all places. Thirdly, over all *creatures*; binding the influences of Pleiades, and loosing the bands of Orion, Job xxxviii. 31; commanding the fire against the nature of it, to descend, 2 Kings i. 12; creating and ruling the stars, Amos v. 8; overruling the lions, Dan. vi. 22, sending the meteors, Psal. cxlviii. 8, hedging in the sea, lapping it up like a child in swaddling-clothes, Job xxxviii. 8, dividing, diverting, filling it. In both fire and water, those two raging elements that have no mercy, he shows mercy; delivers us from both in both. He calls the fowls, and they come; the beasts, and they hear; the trees, and they spring to obey him. He hath a raven for Elijah, a gourd for Jonah, a dog for Lazarus. Makes the leviathan, the hugest living creature, preserve his prophet. That a terrible lion should be killed, as was by Samson; or not kill, as they forbore Daniel; or kill and not eat, as that prophet, 1 Kings xiii.: here was the Lord. Over metals; he makes iron to swim, stones to cleave asunder. Over the devils; they must obey him though unwillingly. But they continually rebel against him, and break his will! They do indeed against his complacency, not against his permission. There is then no time, not the hour of death; no place, not the sorest torment; no creature, not the devil; but the Lord can deliver us from them. Therefore at all times, in all places, and against all creatures, let us trust in him for deliverance.—*Thomas Adams.*

*Verse 19.*—"His kingdom ruleth over all." When Melancthon was extremely

solicitous about the affairs of the church in his days, Luther would have him admonished in these terms, *Monendus est Philippus ut desinat esse rector mundi*: Let not Philip make himself any longer governor of the world.—*David Clarkson*.

*Verse 20.*—“*Bless the Lord, ye his angels,*” etc. The weight of offering praise unto God is too heavy for men to lift; and as for angels, it will take up all their strength and their best abilities to go about it.—*David Dickson*.

*Verse 20.*—“*Angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments.*” The chief excellence of the angels, the main cause of their strength and power, and of their immense superiority to mankind, is that which is set forth in the following words of the text. After the Psalmist has described the angels as excelling in strength, he adds that they *do God’s commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word*. For this is the only living source of lasting strength and power. They who do the will of God faithfully and obediently, have God for them; and then what can be against them? Then work itself strengthens them, and is like a tide bearing them onward; because it is *his* work. They on the other hand who run counter to the will of God, have God against them; and then what can be for them? Can a man push back the sea? can he lay hold on the sun, and drag him out of his course? Then may he hope to be strong, when he is fighting against the will of God. . . .

Hence we see the falsehood of that maxim, so common on the lips of those who plume themselves upon their mastery in the wisdom of this world,—that *Might is Right*,—a maxim which exactly inverts the truth, and whereby the Prince of darkness is ever setting himself up against the Lord of heaven. The true principle, which is inverted and perverted in this falsehood,—the principle which ought to be written up in the council-chambers of princes and on the walls of senate-houses,—the principle which explains the secret of the strength of the angels, and indeed of all true strength, that is in accordance with the will of God,—may be stated in the selfsame words, if we only invert their order, *Right is Might*.—*Julius Charles Hare*, 1849.

*Verse 20.*—“*His angels that do his commandments,*” etc. They hearken to the voice of his word, they look upon God as the great General, and if he give out the word, they give out their strength, and go about the work willingly. They are very attentive to his commands; if he says, Go smite Herod for his pride, Balaam for his covetousness, David for his vainglory, Sennacherib for his blasphemy, and Sodom for its uncleanness, presently they go.—*William Greenhill*.

*Verse 20.*—“*Commandments.*” *Davar* (דָּבָר), to speak, is rendered, “*command*” twenty times. . . . direct personal communion between the Lord and his messengers seems to be implied.—*R. B. Girdlestone*.

*Verse 20.*—“*Hearkening unto the voice of his word.*” Not only, mightily executing the word when heard; but, ever intently listening, *ready to catch the intimation of his will*.—*William Kay*.

*Verse 20.*—“*Hearkening unto the voice of his word.*” Angels are vigilant creatures, and wait for opportunities, and when they come they will not lose them. They neither slumber nor sleep, but hearken constantly what the Lord will say, what opportunity there will be for action; so, in Ezekiel i. 11, they are described with their wings stretched upward, manifesting their watchfulness and readiness for service. When Christ was born, a multitude of them appeared and celebrated his nativity, Luke ii. 13; when Christ was taken by Judas and his train, Peter drew his sword in his Master’s defence; but what saith Christ? “Put up thy sword, it is not a time now to fight, but to suffer: thinkst thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? It is not a time now to pray for help, I must die, and the Scripture must be fulfilled; but if I would, my Father would bid the angels to aid me, and they presently would come, whole legions of them, yea, all the angels in heaven.” Let us learn of angels to watch for opportunities, and take them. There are nicks of time wherein to do the work of Christ.—*William Greenhill*.

*Verse 21.*—“*Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts . . . that do his pleasure.*” The sun, moon, stars, and planets do “*his pleasure*” (Ps. xix. 1) unconsciously; the “*angels*” consciously, and with instinctive love, “*hearken unto the voice of his word*” (v. 20). Both together constitute the Lord’s hosts.—*A. R. Fausset*.

*Verse 22.*—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*” That is to say, “Let thy vocation be that of the seraphim, O my soul, and enter on the life of heaven!” Why should

I praise him? Can my praise be of any advantage to him? No; nor that of all the heavenly hosts. It is infinite condescension in him to hearken unto the praises of his most exalted creatures.

Let me bless the Lord, because no function will be more rich in blessings to my soul than this. The admiring contemplation of his excellence is in reality the appropriation thereof; the heart cannot delight in God, without becoming like God. Let me do it, because it is the peculiar privilege of man on this earth to bless the Lord. When he would find any to join him in this, he has to ascend the skies. Let me do it, because the earth is fully furnished with the materials of praise. The sands, the seas, the flowers, the insects; animals, birds, fields, mountains, rivers, trees, clouds, sun, moon, stars,—all wait for me to translate their attributes and distinctions into praise. But, above all, the new creation.

Let me do it, because of him, through him, and to him, are all the things that pertain to my existence, health, comfort, knowledge, dignity, safety, progress, power, and usefulness. A thousand of his ministers in earth, sea, and sky, are concerned in the production and preparation of every mouthful that I eat. The breath that I am commanded and enabled to modulate in praise, neither comes nor goes without a most surprising exhibition of the condescension, kindness, wisdom, power, and presence of him whom I am to praise. Is it not dastardly to be receiving benefits, without even mentioning the name, or describing the goodness of the giver? Let candidates for heaven bless the Lord. There is no place there for such as have not learned this art. How shall I praise him? Not with fine words. No poetic talent is here necessary. Any language that expresses heart-felt admiration will be accepted. Praise him so far as you know him; and he will make known to you more of his glory.—*George Bowen, 1873.*

*Verse 22.*—The last specification is completely comprehensive; “*all his works in all places of his wide dominions*”—all that he has made, whether intelligent or not intelligent; “*in all places*”—above, beneath, around: in heaven, earth, or hell: let them all fall into this universal chorus of praise and blessing, extolling Jehovah, the One supremely great, supremely good! Nor will he exempt himself; for his personal responsibilities as to his own heart, are his highest. Therefore he closes as he begun, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*”—*Henry Coules.*

*Verse 22.*—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*” Inasmuch as the poet thus comes back to his own soul, his Psalm also turns back into itself and assumes the form of a converging circle.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

*Verse 22.*—“*Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.*” We are very much struck by this sudden transition from “*all God’s works, in all places of his dominion,*” to himself, a solitary individual. Of course he had already included himself; himself had been summoned when he summoned all God’s works in all places of his dominion; but it seems as if a sudden fear had seized the Psalmist, the fear of by any possibility omitting himself; or, if not a fear, yet a consciousness that his very activity in summoning others to praise, might make him forgetful that he was bound to praise God himself, or sluggish in the duty, or ready to take for granted that he could not himself be neglecting what he was so strenuous in pressing on all orders of being. We have a great subject of discourse here. Solomon has said, “*They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*” Alas! how possible, how easy, to take pains for others, and to be neglectful of one’s self: nay, to make the pains we take for others the reason by which we persuade ourselves that we cannot be neglecting ourselves. How important, then, that, if with the Psalmist we call on all God’s works in all places of his dominions to bless the Lord; how important, I say, that we add, like persons bent on self-examination, and fearful of self-deceit, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*”—*Henry Melvill.*

*Verses 1, 2, 22.*—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . Bless the Lord, O my soul,*” with the “*Bless the Lord all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul,*” *verse 22;* these two form the thrice-repeated blessing from the Lord to the soul in the Mosaic formula, Num. vi. 24—26.—*A. R. Fausset.*



## HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verse 1.*—"The Saints blessing the Lord." See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1,078.

*Verse 1.*—I. We should bless the Most High himself. It is possible to fail to bless him, while we praise his gifts, his word, his works, his ways. II. We should bless him individually: "My soul." Not merely the family through the father, nor the people through the pastor; nor the congregation through the choir; but personally. III. We should bless him spiritually: "soul." Not only with organ, voice, offering, works, &c. IV. We should bless him unreservedly: "All that is within me." V. We should bless him resolutely, David preached self-communion, self-encouragement, and self-command.—*W. Jackson.*

*Verse 1.*—Here is, I. Self-converse: "Oh my soul." Many talk freely enough to others, but never talk to themselves. They are strangers to themselves—not on speaking terms with themselves—take no interest in their own souls—are dull and melancholy when alone. II. Self-exhortation: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Thy Creator, thy Benefactor, thy Redeemer. III. Self-encouragement: "All that is within me"—every faculty of my mental, moral and spiritual being; with ten strings—every chord in motion. No need for one faculty of the soul to say to another, "know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least even unto the greatest."—*G. R.*

*Verse 1 (First clause, and v. 22, last clause).*—Personal worship the Alpha and Omega of religion.—*C. Davis.*

*Verse 2.*—Inquire into the causes of our frequent forgetfulness of the Lord's mercies, show the evil of it, and advise remedies.

*Verse 3.*—I. Forgiveness is in God: "There is forgiveness with thee." It is his nature to forgive as well as to punish sin. II. It is from God. None can forgive sin but God. None can reveal forgiveness but God. III. It is like God, full, free, and everlasting—"all thine iniquities."—*G. R.*

*Verse 3.*—"Who healeth all thy diseases." I. Why is sin called a disease? 1. As it destroys the moral beauty of the creature. 2. As it excites pain. 3. As it disables from duty. 4. As it leads to death. II. The variety of sinful diseases to which we are subject. Mark vii. 21—23; Gal. v. 19, &c. III. The remedy by which God heals these diseases. 1. His pardoning mercy through the redemption of Christ. 2. The sanctifying influences of grace. 3. The means of grace. 4. The resurrection of the body.—*From "The Study," 1873.*

*Verse 3 (last clause).*—Our diseases by nature, our great Physician, the perfect soundness which he works in us, results of that soundness.

*Verses 3, 4, 5.*—Mercy's Hexapla. I. Three curses removed. 1. Guilt put away. 2. Corruption cured. 3. Destruction averted. II. Three blessings bestowed. 1. Favours that can gratify. 2. Pleasures that can satisfy. 3. Life that can never die. Or (*Verse 3*) I. Pardon. II. Purification. (*Verse 4*) III. Redemption. IV. Coronation. (*Verse 5*) V. Plenty bestowed. VI. Power renewed.—*W. Durban.*

*Verse 4 (first clause).*—The Redemption of David's life from destruction. 1. His shepherd life. 2. His military life. 3. His persecuted life. 4. His regal life. 5. His spiritual life.—*W. J.*

*Verse 4.*—What is redeemed, and from what? Who are redeemed, and by whom?

*Verse 5.*—I. A singular condition—satisfaction. II. A singular provision—good things. III. A singular result—youth renewed.

*Verse 5.*—"Rejuvenescence." See Macmillan's "Ministry of Nature," pp. 321—347.

*Verse 7.*—I. God would have men know him. II. He is his own revealer. III. There are degrees in the revelation. IV. We may pray for increased knowledge of him.

*Verse 8.*—I. Mercy specified: "Merciful and gracious." II. Mercy qualified: "Slow to anger." Mercy itself may be angered, and then how terrible is the anger. III. Mercy amplified: "Plenteous in mercy." "He will abundantly pardon;" and he only knows what abundant pardon means.—*G. R.*

*Verse 9.*—I. What God will do to his people. He will sometimes chide—contend with them. 1. Providentially, by outward trials. 2. Experimentally, by inward conflicts. II. What he will not do to them. 1. Not chide continually in this life. 2. Not chide in the least hereafter. "The days of their mourning shall be ended."—*G. R.*

*Verse 10.*—Work out the terrible supposition, show the reasons why it has not yet been actually so ; then suggest that it may yet become a terrible fact, and exhort the guilty to seek mercy.

*Verses 11, 12, 13.*—The height, length and depth of divine love.

*Verse 12.*—“Plenary Absolution.” See “Spurgeon’s Sermons,” No. 1,108.

*Verse 12.*—I. The union implied. Between man and his transgressions. 1. Legally. 2. Actually. 3. Experimentally. 4. Eternally, in themselves considered. II. The separation effected. 1. By whom ? “He hath,” etc. 2. How ? By his own Son coming between the sinner and his sins. III. The Re-union prevented. “As far,” etc. When east and west meet, then, and not till then, will the re-union take place. As the two extremities of a straight line can never meet, and cannot be lengthened without receding further from each other, so it will ever be with a pardoned sinner and his sins.—*G. R.*

*Verses 13, 14.*—“The Tender Pity of the Lord.” See “Spurgeon’s Sermons,” No. 941.

*Verses 13, 14.*—I. Whom God pities ; “them that fear him.” II. How he pities “as a father pitieth his children.” III. Why he pities ; “for he knoweth our frame.” He hath reason to know our frame, for he framed us, and having himself made man of the dust, “he remembers that we are dust.”—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 14.*—I. Man’s Constitution. II. God’s Consideration.—*W. D.*

*Verse 15.*—Man’s earthly career. His rise, progress, glory, fall, and oblivion.

*Verses 15—18.*—I. What man is when left to himself. “As for man,” etc. 1. What here ? His days are as grass, his glory as the flower of grass. 2. What hereafter ? swept away by a blighting wind, by a blast of divine anger—known no more on the earth, known only in perdition. II. What the mercy of God does for him. 1. Makes a covenant of grace on his behalf from everlasting. 2. Makes a covenant of peace with him in this life. 3. Makes a covenant of promise to him for an eternity to come. III. Who are the objects of this mercy ? 1. Those who fear God. 2. Who walk in the footsteps of pious ancestors. 3. Who rely upon covenant mercy. 4. Who are faithful to their covenant engagements.—*G. R.*

*Verse 18.*—The covenant, in what respects we can keep it, in what frame of mind it must be kept, and what is the practical proof of so doing.

*Verse 19.*—“A Discourse upon God’s Dominion.” See Charnock’s Works [Nicol’s Edition, Vol. II., pp. 400—499].

*Verse 19.*—I. The nature of the throne. II. The extent of the dominion. III. The character of the monarch. IV. The consequent joy of the subjects : “Bless the Lord.”

*Verse 20.*—The angels’ service instructive to us. I. Their personal strength is excellent. As servants of God we also should see to our own spiritual health and vigour. II. They are practical in their obedience, not theorists. III. They are attentive while at work, ready to learn more, and holding fellowship with God, who speaks personally to them. IV. They do all in the spirit of joyful praise, blessing the Lord.

*Verses 20, 21.*—I. The centre of praise : “Bless the Lord.” All praise centres in him. II. The concert of praise. 1. Angels. 2. The hosts of the redeemed. 3. Ministers in particular. 4. The surrounding creation. III. The climax of praise : “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” This has the highest claim upon me for gratitude and praise. Vast as the chorus may be, it will not be perfect without my note of praise. This is the culminating note : “Bless the Lord, O my soul.”—*G. R.*

*Verse 21.*—Who are God’s ministers ? What is their business ? To do his pleasure. What is their delight ? To bless the Lord.

*Verses 21, 22.*—Henry Melvill has a notable sermon upon “The Peril of the Spiritual Guide.” The drift of it may be gathered from the extract which we have placed as a note upon the passage.

*Verse 22.*—I. The Chorus. II. The Echo.—*W. D.*