

PSALM CIV.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Here we have one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse. The Psalm gives an interpretation to the many voices of nature, and sings sweetly both of creation and providence. The poem contains a complete cosmos : sea and land, cloud and sunlight, plant and animal, light and darkness, life and death, are all proved to be expressive of the presence of the Lord. Traces of the six days' of creation are very evident, and though the creation of man, which was the crowning work of the sixth day, is not mentioned, this is accounted for from the fact that man is himself the singer : some have even discerned marks of the divine rest upon the seventh day in verse 31. It is a poet's version of Genesis. Nor is it alone the present condition of the earth which is here the subject of song ; but a hint is given of those holier times when we shall see " a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," out of which the sinner shall be consumed, verse 35. The spirit of ardent praise to God runs through the whole, and with it a distinct realization of the divine Being as a personal existence, loved and trusted as well as adored.

We have no information as to the author, but the Septuagint assigns it to David, and we see no reason for ascribing it to any one else. His spirit, style, and manner of writing are very manifest therein, and if the Psalm must be ascribed to another, it must be to a mind remarkably similar, and we could only suggest the wise son of David—Solomon, the poet preacher, to whose notes upon natural history in the Proverbs some of the verses bear a striking likeness. Whoever the human penman may have been, the exceeding glory and perfection of the Holy Spirit's own divine authorship are plain to every spiritual mind.

DIVISION.—After ascribing blessedness to the Lord the devout Psalmist sings of the light and the firmament, which were the work of the first and second days (verses 1—6). By an easy transition he describes the separation of the waters from the dry land, the formation of rain, brooks, and rivers, and the uprising of green herbs, which were the produce of the third day (7—18). Then the appointment of the sun and moon to be the guardians of day and night commands the poet's admiration (19—23), and so he sings the work of the fourth day. Having already alluded to many varieties of living creatures, the Psalmist proceeds from verse 24 to verse 30 to sing of the life with which the Lord was pleased to fill the air, the sea, and the land ; these forms of existence were the peculiar produce of the fifth and sixth days. We may regard the closing verses (31—35) as a Sabbath meditation, hymn, and prayer. The whole lies before us as a panorama of the universe viewed by the eye of devotion. O for grace to render due praise unto the Lord while reading it.

EXPOSITION.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great ; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment : who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters : who maketh the clouds his chariot : who walketh upon the wings of the wind :

4 Who maketh his angels spirits ; his ministers a flaming fire.

5 *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment : the waters stood above the mountains.

1.—" Bless the Lord, O my soul." This Psalm begins and ends like the Hundred and Third, and it could not do better : when the model is perfect it deserves to exist in duplicate. True praise begins at home. It is idle to stir up others to praise if we are ungratefully silent ourselves. We should call upon our inmost hearts to

awake and bestir themselves, for we are apt to be sluggish, and if we are so when called upon to bless God, we shall have great cause to be ashamed. When we magnify the Lord, let us do it heartily: our best is far beneath his worthiness, let us not dishonour him by rendering to him half-hearted worship. "*O Lord my God, thou art very great.*" This ascription has in it a remarkable blending of the boldness of faith, and the awe of holy fear: for the Psalmist calls the infinite Jehovah "*my God,*" and at the same time, prostrate in amazement at the divine greatness, he cries out in utter astonishment, "*Thou art very great.*" God was great on Sinai, yet the opening words of his law were, "I am the Lord thy God;" his greatness is no reason why faith should not put in her claim, and call him all her own. The declaration of Jehovah's greatness here given would have been very much in place at the end of the Psalm, for it is a natural inference and deduction from a survey of the universe: its position at the very commencement of the poem is an indication that the whole Psalm was well considered and digested in the mind before it was actually put into words; only on this supposition can we account for the emotion preceding the contemplation. Observe also, that the wonder expressed does not refer to the creation and its greatness, but to Jehovah himself. It is not "the universe is very great!" but "Thou art very great." Many stay at the creature, and so become idolatrous in spirit; to pass onward to the Creator himself is true wisdom. "*Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*" Thou thyself art not to be seen, but thy works, which may be called thy garments, are full of beauties and marvels which redound to thine honour. Garments both conceal and reveal a man, and so do the creatures of God. The Lord is seen in his works as worthy of *honour* for his skill, his goodness, and his power, and as claiming *majesty*, for he has fashioned all things in sovereignty, doing as he wills, and asking no man's permit. He must be blind indeed who does not see that nature is the work of a king. These are solemn strokes of God's severer mind, terrible touches of his sterner attributes, broad lines of inscrutable mystery, and deep shadings of overwhelming power, and these make creation's picture a problem never to be solved, except by admitting that he who drew it giveth no account of his matters, but ruleth all things according to the good pleasure of his will. His *majesty* is, however, always so displayed as to reflect *honour* upon his whole character; he does as he wills, but he wills only that which is thrice holy, like himself. The very robes of the unseen Spirit teach us this, and it is ours to recognise it with humble adoration.

2. "*Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment:*" wrapping the light about him as a monarch puts on his robe. The conception is sublime: but it makes us feel how altogether inconceivable the personal glory of the Lord must be; if light itself is but his garment and veil, what must be the blazing splendour of his own essential being! We are lost in astonishment, and dare not pry into the mystery lest we be blinded by its insufferable glory. "*Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain*"—within which he might dwell. Light was created on the first day and the firmament upon the second, so that they fitly follow each other in this verse. Oriental princes put on their glorious apparel and then sit in state within curtains, and the Lord is spoken of under that image: but how far above all comprehension the figure must be lifted, since the robe is essential light, to which suns and moons owe their brightness, and the curtain is the azure sky studded with stars for gems. This is a substantial argument for the truth with which the Psalmist commenced his song, "*O Lord my God, thou art very great.*"

3. "*Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters.*" His lofty halls are framed with the waters which are above the firmament. The upper rooms of God's great house, the secret stories far above our ken, the palatial chambers wherein he resides, are based upon the floods which form the upper ocean. To the unsubstantial he lends stability; he needs no joists and rafters, for his palace is sustained by his own power. We are not to interpret literally where the language is poetical, it would be simple absurdity to do so. "*Who maketh the clouds his chariot.*" When he comes forth from his secret pavilion 'tis thus he makes his royal progress. "*His chariot of wrath deep thunder-clouds form,*" and his chariot of mercy drops plenty as it traverses the celestial road. "*Who walketh [or rather goes] upon the wings of the wind.*" With the clouds for a car, and the winds for winged steeds, the Great King hastens on his movements whether for mercy or for judgment. Thus we have the idea of a king still further elaborated—his lofty palace, his chariot, and his coursers are before us; but what a palace must we imagine, whose beams are of crystal, and whose base is consolidated vapour! What a stately car is that which

is fashioned out of the flying clouds, whose gorgeous colours Solomon in all his glory could not rival ; and what a Godlike progress is that in which spirit wings and breath of winds bear up the moving throne. " O Lord, my God, thou art very great ! "

4. " *Who maketh his angels spirits ;* " or *winds*, for the word means either. Angels are pure spirits, though they are permitted to assume a visible form when God desires us to see them. God is a spirit, and he is waited upon by spirits in his royal courts. Angels are like winds for mystery, force, and invisibility, and no doubt the winds themselves are often the angels or messengers of God. God who makes his angels to be as winds, can also make winds to be his angels, and they are constantly so in the economy of nature. " *His ministers a flaming fire.* " Here, too, we may choose which we will of two meanings : God's ministers or servants he makes to be as swift, potent, and terrible as fire, and on the other hand he makes fire, that devouring element, to be his minister flaming forth upon his errands. That the passage refers to angels is clear from Heb. i. 7 ; and it was most proper to mention them here in connection with light and the heavens, and immediately after the robes and palace of the Great King. Should not the retinue of the Lord of Hosts be mentioned as well as his chariot ? It would have been a flaw in the description of the universe had the angels not been alluded to, and this is the most appropriate place for their introduction. When we think of the extraordinary powers entrusted to angelic beings, and the mysterious glory of the seraphim and the four living creatures, we are led to reflect upon the glory of the Master whom they serve, and again we cry out with the Psalmist, " O Lord, my God, thou art very great. "

5. " *Who laid the foundations of the earth.* " Thus the commencement of creation is described, in almost the very words employed by the Lord himself in Job xxxviii. 4. " Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, and who laid the corner stone thereof ? " And the words are found in the same connection too, for the Lord proceeds to say, " When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. " " *That it should not be removed for ever.* " The language is, of course, poetical, but the fact is none the less wonderful : the earth is so placed in space that it remains as stable as if it were a fixture. The several motions of our planet are carried on so noiselessly and evenly that, as far as we are concerned, all things are as permanent and peaceful as if the old notion of its resting upon pillars were literally true. With what delicacy has the great Artificer poised our globe ! What power must there be in that hand which has caused so vast a body to know its orbit, and to move so smoothly in it ! What engineer can save every part of his machinery from an occasional jar, jerk, or friction ? yet to our great world in its complicated motions no such thing has ever occurred. " O Lord, my God, thou art very great. "

6. " *Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment.* " The new-born earth was wrapt in aqueous swaddling bands. In the first ages, ere man appeared, the proud waters ruled the whole earth, " *the waters stood above the mountains,* " no dry land was visible, vapour as from a steaming cauldron covered all. Geologists inform us of this as a discovery, but the Holy Spirit had revealed the fact long before. The passage before us shows us the Creator commencing his work, and laying the foundation for future order and beauty : to think of this reverently will fill us with adoration ; to conceive of it grossly and carnally would be highly blasphemous.

7 At thy rebuke they fled ; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains ; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over ; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field : the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers : the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man : that he may bring forth food out of the earth ;

15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.

18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

7. "*At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*" When the waters and vapours covered all, the Lord had but to speak and they disappeared at once. As though they had been intelligent agents the waves hurried to their appointed deeps and left the land to itself; then the mountains lifted their heads, the high lands rose from the main, and at length continents and islands, slopes and plains were left to form the habitable earth. The voice of the Lord effected this great marvel. Is not his word equal to every emergency? potent enough to work the greatest miracle? By that same word shall the waterfloods of trouble be restrained, and the raging billows of sin be rebuked: the day cometh when at the thunder of Jehovah's voice all the proud waters of evil shall utterly haste away. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great."

8. The vanquished waters are henceforth obedient. "*They go up by the mountains,*" climbing in the form of clouds even to the summits of the Alps. "*They go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them:*" they are as willing to descend in rain, and brooks, and torrents as they were eager to ascend in mists. The loyalty of the mighty waters to the laws of their God is most notable; the fierce flood, the boisterous rapid, the tremendous torrent, are only forms of that gentle dew which trembles on the tiny blade of grass, and in those ruder shapes they are equally obedient to the laws which their Maker has impressed upon them. Not so much as a solitary particle of spray ever breaks rank, or violates the command of the Lord of sea and land, neither do the awful cataracts and terrific floods revolt from his sway. It is very beautiful among the mountains to see the divine system of water supply—the rising of the fleecy vapours, the distillation of the pure fluid, the glee with which the new-born element leaps adown the crags to reach the rivers, and the strong eagerness with which the rivers seek the ocean, their appointed place.

9. "*Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.*" That bound has once been passed, but it shall never be so again. The deluge was caused by the suspension of the divine mandate which held the floods in check: they knew their old supremacy, and hastened to reassert it, but now the covenant promise for ever prevents a return of that carnival of waters, that revolt of the waves: ought we not rather to call it that impetuous rush of the indignant floods to avenge the injured honour of their King, whom men had offended? Jehovah's word bounds the ocean, using only a narrow belt of sand to confine it to its own limits: that apparently feeble restraint answers every purpose, for the sea is obedient as a little child to the bidding of its Maker. Destruction lies asleep in the bed of the ocean, and though our sins might well arouse it, yet are its hands made strong by covenant mercy, so that it cannot break loose again upon the guilty sons of men.

10. "*He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.*" This is a beautiful part of the Lord's arrangement of the subject waters: they find vents through which they leap into liberty where their presence will be beneficial in the highest degree. Depressions exist in the sides of the mountains, and adown these the waterbrooks are made to flow, often taking their rise at bubbling fountains which issue from the bowels of the earth. It is God who sends these springs even as a gardener makes the water courses, and turns the current with his foot. When the waters are confined in the abyss *the Lord* sets their bound, and when they sport at liberty *he* sends them forth.

11. "*They give drink to every beast of the field.*" Who else would water them if the Lord did not? They are *his* cattle, and therefore he leads them forth to watering. Not one of them is forgotten of him. "*The wild asses quench their thirst.*" The good Lord gives them enough and to spare. They know their Master's crib. Though bit or bridle of man they will not brook, and man denounces them as unteachable, they learn of the Lord, and know better far than man where flows the

cooling crystal of which they must drink or die. They are only asses, and wild, yet our heavenly Father careth for them. Will he not also care for us? We see here, also, that nothing is made in vain; though no human lip is moistened by the brooklet in the lone valley, yet are there other creatures which need refreshment, and these slake their thirst at the stream. Is this nothing? Must everything exist for man, or else be wasted? What but our pride and selfishness could have suggested such a notion? It is not true that flowers which blush unseen by human eye are wasting their sweetness for the bee finds them out, and other winged wanderers live on their luscious juices. Man is but one creature of the many whom the heavenly Father feedeth and watereth.

12. "*By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*" How refreshing are these words! What happy memories they arouse of plashing waterfalls and entangled boughs, where the merry din of the falling and rushing water forms a sort of solid background of music, and the sweet tuneful notes of the birds are the brighter and more flashing lights in the harmony. Pretty birdies, sing on! What better can ye do, and who can do it better? When we too drink of the river of God, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, it well becomes us to "sing among the branches." Where ye dwell ye sing; and shall not we rejoice in the Lord, who has been our dwelling-place in all generations. As ye fly from bough to bough, ye warble forth your notes, and so will we as we flit through time into eternity. It is not meet that birds of Paradise should be outdone by birds of earth.

13. "*He watereth the hills from his chambers.*" As the mountains are too high to be watered by rivers and brooks, the Lord himself refreshes them from those waters above the firmament which the poet had in a former verse described as the upper chambers of heaven. Clouds are detained among the mountain crags, and deluge the hill sides with fertilizing rain. Where man cannot reach the Lord can, whom none else can water with grace he can, and where all stores of refreshment fail he can supply all that is needed from his own halls. "*The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*" The result of the divine working is fulness everywhere, the soil is saturated with rain, the seed germinates, the beasts drink, and the birds sing—nothing is left unsupplied. So, too, is it in the new creation, he giveth more grace, he fills his people with good, and makes them all confess, "of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace."

14. "*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.*" Grass grows as well as herbs, for cattle must be fed as well as men. God appoints to the lowliest creature its portion and takes care that it has it. Divine power is as truly and as worthily put forth in the feeding of beasts as in the nurturing of man; watch but a blade of grass with a devout eye and you may see God at work within it. The herb is for man, and he must till the soil, or it will not be produced, yet it is God that causeth it to grow in the garden, even the same God who made the grass to grow in the unenclosed pastures of the wilderness. Man forgets this and talks of his produce, but in very truth without God he would plough and sow in vain. The Lord causeth each green blade to spring and each ear to ripen: do but watch with opened eye and you shall see the Lord walking through the cornfields. "*That he may bring forth food out of the earth.*" Both grass for cattle and corn for man are food brought forth out of the earth, and they are signs that it was God's design that the very dust beneath our feet, which seems better adapted to bury us than to sustain us, should actually be transformed into the staff of life. The more we think of this the more wonderful it will appear. How great is that God who from among the sepulchres finds the support of life, and out of the ground which was cursed brings forth the blessings of corn and wine and oil.

15. "*And wine that maketh glad the heart of man.*" By the aid of genial showers the earth produces not merely necessities but luxuries, that which furnishes a feast as well as that which makes a meal. O that man were wise enough to know how to use this gladdening product of the vine; but, alas, he full often turns it to ill account, and debases himself therewith. Of this he must himself bear the blame; he deserves to be miserable who turns even blessings into curses. "*And oil to make his face to shine.*" The easterns use oil more than we do, and probably are wiser in this respect than we are: they delight in anointings with perfumed oils, and regard the shining of the face as a choice emblem of joy. God is to be praised for all the products of the soil, not one of which could come to us were it not that he causeth it to grow. "*And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" Men have more

courage after they are fed : many a depressed spirit has been comforted by a good substantial meal. We ought to bless God for strength of heart as well as force of limb, since if we possess them they are both the bounties of his kindness.

16. The watering of the hills not only produces the grass and the cultivated herbs, but also the nobler species of vegetation, which come not within the range of human culture :—

“ Their veins with genial moisture fed,
 Jehovah's forests lift the head :
 Nor other than his fostering hand
 Thy cedars, Lebanon, demand.”

“ *The trees of the Lord* ”—the greatest, noblest, and most royal of trees, those too which are unowned of man, and untouched by his hand. “ *Are full of sap,*” or are full, well supplied, richly watered, so that they become, as the cedars, full of resin, flowing with life, and verdant all the year round. “ *The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*” They grow where none ever thought of planting them, where for ages they were unobserved, and where at this moment they are too gigantic for man to prune them. What would our Psalmist have said to some of the trees in the Yosemite valley ? Truly these are worthy to be called the trees of the Lord, for towering stature and enormous girth. Thus is the care of God seen to be effectual and all-sufficient. If trees uncared for by man are yet so full of sap, we may rest assured that the people of God who by faith live upon the Lord alone shall be equally well sustained. Planted by grace, and owing all to our heavenly Father's care, we may defy the hurricane, and laugh at the fear of drought, for none that trust in him shall ever be left unwatered.

17. “ *Where the birds make their nests : as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.*” So far from being in need, these trees of God afford shelter to others, birds small and great make their nests in the branches. Thus what they receive from the great Lord they endeavour to return to his weaker creatures. How one thing fits into another in this fair creation, each link drawing on its fellow : the rains water the fir trees, and the fir trees become the happy home of birds ; thus do the thunder clouds build the sparrow's house, and the descending rain sustains the basis of the stork's nest. Observe, also, how everything has its use—the boughs furnish a home for the birds ; and every living thing has its accommodation—the stork finds a house in the pines. Her nest is called a house, because this bird exhibits domestic virtues and maternal love which make her young to be comparable to a family. No doubt this ancient writer has seen storks' nests in fir trees ; they appear usually to build on houses and ruins, but there is also evidence that where there are forests they are content with pine trees. Has the reader ever walked through a forest of great trees and felt the awe which strikes the heart in nature's sublime cathedral ? Then he will remember to have felt that each bird was holy, since it dwelt amid such sacred solitude. Those who cannot see or hear of God except in Gothic edifices, amid the swell of organs, and the voices of a surpliced choir, will not be able to enter into the feeling which makes the simple, unsophisticated soul hear “ the voice of the Lord God walking among the trees.”

18. “ *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats ; and the rocks for the conies.*” All places teem with life. We call our cities populous, but are not the forests and the high hills more densely peopled with life ? We speak of uninhabitable places, but where are they ? The chamois leaps from crag to crag, and the rabbit burrows beneath the soil. For one creature the loftiness of the hills, and for another the hollowness of the rocks, serves as a protection : —

“ Far o'er the crags the wild goats roam,
 The rocks supply the coney's home.”

Thus all the earth is full of happy life, every place has its appropriate inhabitant, nothing is empty and void and waste. See how goats, and storks, and conies, and sparrows, each contribute a verse to the Psalm of nature ; have we not also our canticles to sing unto the Lord ? Little though we may be in the scale of importance, yet let us fill our sphere, and so honour the Lord who made us with a purpose.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons : the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

19. The appointed rule of the great lights is now the theme for praise. The moon is mentioned first, because in the Jewish day the night leads the way. "*He appointed the moon for seasons.*" By the waxing and waning of the moon the year is divided into months, and weeks, and by this means the exact dates of the holy days are arranged. Thus the lamp of night is made to be of service to man, and in fixing the period of religious assemblies (as it did among the Jews) it enters into connection with his noblest being. Never let us regard the moon's motions as the inevitable result of inanimate impersonal law, but as the appointment of our God. "*The sun knoweth his going down.*" In finely poetic imagery the sun is represented as knowing when to retire from sight, and sink below the horizon. He never loiters on his way, or pauses as if undecided when to descend; his appointed hour for going down, although it is constantly varying, he always keeps to a second. We need to be aroused in the morning, but he arises punctually, and though some require to watch the clock to know the hour of rest, he, without a timepiece to consult, hides himself in the western sky the instant the set time has come. For all this man should praise the Lord of the sun and moon, who has made these great lights to be our chronometers, and thus keeps our world in order, and suffers no confusion to distract us.

20. "*Thou makest darkness, and it is night.*" Drawing down the blinds for us, he prepares our bedchamber that we may sleep. Were there no darkness we should sigh for it, since we should find repose so much more difficult if the weary day were never calmed into night. Let us see God's hand in the veiling of the sun, and never fear either natural or providential darkness, since both are of the Lord's own making. "*Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*" Then is the lion's day, his time to hunt his food. Why should not the wild beast have his hour as well as man? He has a service to perform, should he not also have his food? Darkness is fitter for beasts than man; and those men are most brutish who love darkness rather than light. When the darkness of ignorance broods over a nation, then all sorts of superstitions, cruelties, and vices abound; the gospel, like the sunrising, soon clears the world of the open ravages of these monsters, and they seek more congenial abodes. We see here the value of true light, for we may depend upon it where there is night there will also be wild beasts to kill and to devour.

21. "*The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*" This is the poetic interpretation of a roar. To whom do the lions roar? Certainly not to their prey, for the terrible sound tends to alarm their victims, and drive them away. They after their own fashion express their desires for food, and the expression of desire is a kind of prayer. Out of this fact comes the devout thought of the wild beast's appealing to its Maker for food. But neither with lions nor men will the seeking of prayer suffice, there must be practical seeking too, and the lions are well aware of it. What they have in their own language asked for they go forth to seek; being in this thing far wiser than many men who offer formal prayers not half so earnest as those of the young lions, and then neglect the means in the use of which the object of their petitions might be gained. The lions roar and seek; too many are liars before God, and roar but never seek.

How comforting is the thought that the Spirit translates the voice of a lion, and finds it to be a seeking of meat from God! May we not hope that our poor broken cries and groans, which in our sorrow we have called "the voice of our roaring" (Ps. xxii. 10), will be understood by him, and interpreted in our favour. Evidently he considers the meaning rather than the music of the utterance, and puts the best construction upon it.

22. "*The sun ariseth.*" Every evening has its morning to make the day. Were it not that we have seen the sun rise so often we should think it the greatest of miracles, and the most amazing of blessings. "*They gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*" Thus they are out of man's way, and he seldom encounters them unless he desires to do so. The forest's warriors retire to their quarters when the

morning's drum is heard, finding in the recesses of their dens a darkness suitable for their slumbers ; there they lay them down and digest their food, for God has allotted even to them their portion of rest and enjoyment. There was one who in this respect was poorer than lions and foxes, for he had not where to lay his head : all were provided for except their incarnate Provider. Blessed Lord, thou hast stooped beneath the conditions of the brutes to lift up worse than brutish men !

It is very striking how the Lord controls the fiercest of animals far more readily than the shepherd manages his sheep. At nightfall they separate and go forth each one upon the merciful errand of ending the miseries of the sickly and decrepit among grass-eating animals. The younger of these animals being swift of foot easily escape them and are benefited by the exercise, and for the most part only those are overtaken and killed to whom life would have been protracted agony. So far lions are messengers of mercy, and are as much sent of God as the sporting dog is sent by man on his errands. But these mighty hunters must not always be abroad, they must be sent back to their lairs when man comes upon the scene. Who shall gather these ferocious creatures and shut them in ? Who shall chain them down and make them harmless ? The sun suffices to do it. He is the true lion-tamer. They gather themselves together as though they were so many sheep, and in their own retreats they keep themselves prisoners till returning darkness gives them another leave to range. By simply majestic means the divine purposes are accomplished. In like manner even the devils are subject unto our Lord Jesus, and by the simple spread of the light of the gospel these roaring demons are chased out of the world. No need for miracles or displays of physical power, the Sun of Righteousness arises, and the devil and the false gods, and superstitions and errors of men, all seek their hiding places in the dark places of the earth among the moles and the bats.

23. "*Man goeth forth.*" It is his turn now, and the sunrise has made things ready for him. His warm couch he forsakes and the comforts of home, to find his daily food ; this work is good for him, both keeping him out of mischief, and exercising his faculties. "*Unto his work and to his labour until the evening.*" He goes not forth to sport but to work, not to loiter but to labour ; at least, this is the lot of the best part of mankind. We are made for work and ought to work, and should never grumble that so it is appointed. The hours of labour, however, ought not to be too long. If labour lasts out the average daylight it is certainly all that any man ought to expect of another, and yet there are poor creatures so badly paid that in twelve hours they cannot earn bread enough to keep them from hunger. Shame on those who dare so impose upon helpless women and children. Night work should also be avoided as much as possible. There are twelve hours in which a man ought to work : the night is meant for rest and sleep.

Night, then, as well as day has its voice of praise. It is more soft and hushed, but it is none the less true. The moon lights up a solemn silence of worship among the fir trees, through which the night wind softly breathes its "songs without words." Every now and then a sound is heard, which, however simple by day, sounds among the shadows startling and weird-like, as if the presence of the unknown had filled the heart with trembling, and made the influence of the Infinite to be realized. Imagination awakens herself ; unbelief finds the silence and the solemnity uncongenial, faith looks up to the skies above her and sees heavenly things all the more clearly in the absence of the sunlight, and adoration bows itself before the Great Invisible ! There are spirits that keep the night watches, and the spell of their presence has been felt by many a wanderer in the solitudes of nature : God also himself is abroad all night long, and the glory which concealeth is often felt to be even greater than that which reveals. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches.

25 *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships : *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee ; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

24. "*O Lord, how manifold are thy works!*" They are not only many for number but manifold for variety. Mineral, vegetable, animal—what a range of works is suggested by these three names! No two even of the same class are exactly alike, and the classes are more numerous than science can number. Works in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, works which abide the ages, works which come to perfection and pass away in a year, works which with all their beauty do not outlive a day, works within works, and works within these—who can number one of a thousand? God is the great worker, and ordainer of variety. It is ours to study his works, for they are great, and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. The kingdom of grace contains as manifold and as great works as that of nature, but the chosen of the Lord alone discern them. "*In wisdom hast thou made them all,*" or wrought them all. They are all his works, wrought by his own power, and they all display his wisdom. It was wise to make them—none could be spared; every link is essential to the chain of nature—wild beasts as much as men, poisons as truly as odoriferous herbs. They are wisely made—each one fits its place, fills it, and is happy in so doing. As a whole, the "all" of creation is a wise achievement, and however it may be chequered with mysteries, and clouded with terrors, it all works together for good, and as one complete harmonious piece of workmanship it answers the great Worker's end. "*The earth is full of thy riches.*" It is not a poor-house, but a palace; not a hungry ruin, but a well-filled store-house. The Creator has not set his creatures down in a dwelling-place where the table is bare, and the buttery empty, he has filled the earth with food; and not with bare necessities only, but with *riches*—dainties, luxuries, beauties, treasures. In the bowels of the earth are hidden mines of wealth, and on her surface are teeming harvests of plenty. All these riches are the Lord's; we ought to call them not "the wealth of nations," but "thy riches" O Lord! Not in one clime alone are these riches of God to be found, but in all lands—even the Arctic ocean has its precious things which men endure much hardness to win, and the burning sun of the equator ripens a produce which flavours the food of all mankind. If his house below is so full of riches what must his house above be, where

"The very streets are paved with gold
Exceeding clear and fine"?

25. "*So is this great and wide sea.*" He gives an instance of the immense number and variety of Jehovah's works by pointing to the sea. "Look," saith he, "at yonder ocean, stretching itself on both hands and embracing so many lands, it too swarms with animal life, and in its deeps lie treasures beyond all counting." The heathen made the sea a different province from the land, and gave the command thereof to Neptune, but we know of a surety that Jehovah rules the waves. "*Wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts;*" read *moving things and animals small and great*, and you have the true sense. The number of minute forms of animal life is indeed beyond all reckoning: when a single phosphorescent wave may bear millions of infusoria, and around a fragment of rock armies of microscopic beings may gather, we renounce all idea of applying arithmetic to such a case. The sea in many regions appears to be all alive, as if every drop were a world. Nor are these tiny creatures the only tenants of the sea, for it contains gigantic mammals which exceed in bulk those which range the land, and a vast host of huge fishes which wander among the waves, and hide in the caverns of the sea as the tiger lurks in the jungle, or the lion roams the plain. Truly, O Lord, thou makest the sea to be as rich in the works of thy hands as the land itself.

26. "*There go the ships.*" So that ocean is not altogether deserted of mankind. It is the highway of nations, and unites, rather than divides, distant lands. "*There is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*" The huge whale turns the sea into his recreation ground, and disports himself as God designed that he should do.

The thought of this amazing creature caused the Psalmist to adore the mighty Creator who created him, formed him for his place and made him happy in it. Our ancient maps generally depict a ship and whale upon the sea, and so show that it is most natural, as well as poetical, to connect them both with the mention of the ocean.

27. "*These wait all upon thee.*" They come around thee as fowls around the farmer's door at the time for feeding, and look up with expectation. Men or marmots, eagles or emmets, whales or minnows, they alike rely upon thy care. "*That thou mayest give them their meat in due season;*" that is to say, when they need it and when it is ready for them. God has a time for all things, and does not feed his creatures by fits and starts; he gives them daily bread, and a quantity proportioned to their needs. This is all that any of us should expect; if even the brute creatures are content with a sufficiency we ought not to be more greedy than they.

28. "*That thou givest them they gather.*" God gives it, but they must gather it, and they are glad that he does so, for otherwise their gathering would be in vain. We often forget that animals and birds in their free life have to work to obtain food even as we do; and yet it is true with them as with us that our heavenly Father feeds all. When we see the chickens picking up the corn which the housewife scatters from her lap we have an apt illustration of the manner in which the Lord supplies the needs of all living things—he gives and they gather. "*Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*" Here is divine liberality with its open hand filling needy creatures till they want no more: and here is divine omnipotence feeding a world by simply opening its hand. What should we do if that hand were closed? there would be no need to strike a blow, the mere closing of it would produce death by famine. Let us praise the open-handed Lord, whose providence and grace satisfy our mouths with good things.

29. "*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled.*" So dependent are all living things upon God's smile, that a frown fills them with terror, as though convulsed with anguish. This is so in the natural world, and certainly not less so in the spiritual: saints when the Lord hides his face are in terrible perplexity. "*Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*" The breath appears to be a trifling matter, and the air an impalpable substance of but small importance, yet, once withdrawn, the body loses all vitality, and crumbles back to the earth from which it was originally taken. All animals come under this law, and even the dwellers in the sea are not exempt from it. Thus dependent is all nature upon the will of the Eternal. Note here that death is caused by the act of God, "*thou takest away their breath*"; we are immortal till he bids us die, and so are even the little sparrows, who fall not to the ground without our Father.

30. "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*" The loss of their breath destroys them, and by Jehovah's breath a new race is created. The works of the Lord are majestically simple, and are performed with royal ease—a breath creates, and its withdrawal destroys. If we read the word *spirit* as we have it in our version, it is also instructive, for we see the Divine Spirit going forth to create life in nature even as we see him in the realms of grace. At the flood the world was stripped of almost all life, yet how soon the power of God refilled the desolate places! In winter the earth falls into a sleep which makes her appear worn and old, but how readily does the Lord awaken her with the voice of spring, and make her put on anew the beauty of her youth. Thou, Lord, doest all things, and let glory be unto thy name.

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

31. "*The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever.*" His works may pass away, but not his glory. Were it only for what he has already done, the Lord deserves

to be praised without ceasing. His personal being and character ensure that he would be glorious even were all the creatures dead. "*The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*" He did so at the first, when he rested on the seventh day, and saw that everything was very good; he does so still in a measure where beauty and purity in nature still survive the Fall, and he will do so yet more fully when the earth is renovated, and the trail of the serpent is cleansed from the globe. This verse is written in the most glowing manner. The poet finds his heart gladdened by beholding the works of the Lord, and he feels that the Creator himself must have felt unspeakable delight in exercising so much wisdom, goodness, and power.

32. "*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth.*" The Lord who has graciously displayed his power in acts and works of goodness might, if he had seen fit, have overwhelmed us with the terrors of destruction, for even at a glance of his eye the solid earth rocks with fear. "*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*" Sinai was altogether on a smoke when the Lord descended upon it. It was but a touch, but it sufficed to make the mountain dissolve in flame. Even our God is a consuming fire. Woe unto those who shall provoke him to frown upon them, they shall perish at the touch of his hand. If sinners were not altogether insensible a glance of the Lord's eye would make them tremble, and the touches of his hand in affliction would set their hearts on fire with repentance. "*Of reason all things show some sign,*" except man's unfeeling heart.

33. "*I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live,*" or, literally, *in my lives*. Here and hereafter the Psalmist would continue to praise the Lord, for the theme is an endless one, and remains for ever fresh and new. The birds sang God's praises before men were created, but redeemed men will sing his glories when the birds are no more. Jehovah, who ever lives and makes us to live shall be for ever exalted, and extolled in the songs of redeemed men. "*I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*" A resolve both happy for himself and glorifying to the Lord. Note the sweet title—*my God*. We never sing so well as when we know that we have an interest in the good things of which we sing, and a relationship to the God whom we praise.

34. "*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*" Sweet both to him and to me. I shall be delighted thus to survey his works and think of his person, and he will graciously accept my notes of praise. Meditation is the soul of religion. It is the tree of life in the midst of the garden of piety, and very refreshing is its fruit to the soul which feeds thereon. And as it is good towards man, so is it towards God. As the fat of the sacrifice was the Lord's portion, so are our best meditations due to the Most High and are most acceptable to him. We ought, therefore, both for our own good and for the Lord's honour to be much occupied with meditation, and that meditation should chiefly dwell upon the Lord himself: it should be "*meditation of him.*" For want of it much communion is lost and much happiness is missed. "*I will be glad in the Lord.*" To the meditative mind every thought of God is full of joy. Each one of the divine attributes is a well-spring of delight now that in Christ Jesus we are reconciled unto God.

35. "*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.*" They are the only blot upon creation.

"Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

In holy indignation the Psalmist would fain rid the world of beings so base as not to love their gracious Creator, so blind as to rebel against their Benefactor. He does but ask for that which just men look forward to as the end of history: for the day is eminently to be desired when in all God's kingdom there shall not remain a single traitor or rebel. The Christian way of putting it will be to ask that grace may turn sinners into saints, and win the wicked to the ways of truth. "*Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.*" Here is the end of the matter—whatever sinners may do, do thou, my soul, stand to thy colours, and be true to thy calling. Their silence must not silence thee, but rather provoke thee to redoubled praise to make up for their failures. Nor canst thou alone accomplish the work; others must come to thy help. O ye saints, "*Praise ye the Lord.*" Let your hearts cry HALLELUJAH,—for that is the word in the Hebrew. Heavenly word! Let it close the Psalm: for what more remains to be said or written? HALLELUJAH. *Praise ye the Lord.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is an inspired “Oratorio of Creation.”—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—The Psalm is delightful, sweet, and instructive, as teaching us the soundest views of nature (*la mas sana fisica*), and the best method of pursuing the study of it, viz., by admiring with one eye the works of God, and with the other God himself, their Creator and Preserver.—*Sanchez, quoted by Perowne.*

Whole Psalm.—It might almost be said that this one Psalm represents the image of the whole Cosmos. We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labour of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalisation in the conception of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent invisible power, which can renew the earth or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted rather than a glowing and gentle form of poetic creation.—*A. Von Humboldt's Cosmos.*

Whole Psalm.—Its touches are indeed few, rapid—but how comprehensive and sublime! Is it God?—“He is clothed with light as with a garment,” and when he walks abroad, it is on “the wings of the wind.” The winds or lightnings?—They are his messengers or angels: “Stop us not,” they seem to say; “the King’s business requireth haste.” The waters?—The poet shows them in flood, covering the face of the earth, and then as they now lie, enclosed within their embankments, to break forth no more for ever. The springs?—He traces them, by one inspired glance, as they run among the hills, as they give drink to the wild and lonely creatures of the wilderness, as they nourish the boughs, on which sing the birds, the grass, on which feed the cattle, the herb, the corn, the olive-tree, the vine, which fill man’s mouth, cheer his heart, and make his face to shine. Then he skims with bold wing all lofty objects—the trees of the Lord on Lebanon, “full of sap,”—the fir-trees, and the storks which are upon them—the high hills, with their wild goats—and the rocks with their conies. Then he soars up to the heavenly bodies—the sun and the moon. Then he spreads abroad his wings in the darkness of the night, which “hideth not from him,” and hears the beasts of the forest creeping abroad to seek their prey, and the roar of the lions to God for meat, coming up upon the winds of midnight. Then as he sees the shades and the wild beasts fleeing together, in emulous haste, from the presence of the morning sun, and man, strong and calm in its light as in the smile of God, hieing to his labour, he exclaims, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!” He casts, next, one look at the ocean—a look glancing at the ships which go there, at the leviathan which plays there; and then piercing down to the innumerable creatures, small and great, which are found below its unlifted veil of waters. He sees, then, all the beings, peopling alike earth and sea, waiting for life and food around the table of their Divine Master—nor waiting in vain—till, lo! he hides his face, and they are troubled, die, and disappear in chaos and night. A gleam, next, of the great resurrection of nature and of man comes across his eye. “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth.” But a greater truth still succeeds, and forms the climax of the Psalm—(a truth Humboldt, with all his admiration of it, notices not, and which gives a Christian tone to the whole)—“*The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*” He contemplates a yet more perfect Cosmos. He is “to consume sinners” and sin “out of” this fair universe: and then, when man is wholly worthy of his dwelling, shall God say of both it and him, with a yet deeper emphasis than when he said it at first, and smiling at the same time a yet warmer and softer smile, “It is very good.” And with an ascription of blessing to the Lord does the poet close this almost angelic descent upon the works of nature, the glory of God, and the prospects of man. It is not merely the unity of the Cosmos that he had displayed in it, but its progression, as connected with the parallel progress of man—its thorough dependence on one Infinite Mind—the “increasing purpose” which runs along it—and its final purification, when it shall blossom into “the bright consummate flower” of the new heavens and the new earth, “wherein dwelleth righteousness;”—this is the real burden and the peculiar glory of the 104th Psalm.—*George Gilfillan, in “The Bards of the Bible.”*

Whole Psalm.—It is a singular circumstance in the composition of this Psalm, that each of the parts of the First Semichorus, after the first, begins with a participle. And these participles are accusatives, agreeing with *אֲנִי*, the object of the verb *בָּרַךְ*, at the beginning of the whole Psalm. Bless the Jehovah—putting on—extending—laying—constituting—travelling—making—setting—sending—watering—making—making. Thus, this transitive verb, in the opening of the Psalm, extending its government through the successive parts of the same semichorus, except the last, unites them all in one long period.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Whole Psalm.—As to the details,—the sections intervening between verses 2 and 31,—they may be read as a meditation upon creation and the first “ordering of the world,” as itself the counterpart and foreshadowing of the new and restored order in the great Sabbath or Millenary period, or, it may be, they are actually descriptive of this—beginning with the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven (verse 3 with Ps. xviii. 9—11), attended with “the angels of his power” (verse 4 with 2 Thess. i. 7, Gr.); followed by the “establishing” of the earth, no more to be “moved” or “agitated” by the convulsions and disturbances which sin has caused: after which Nature is exhibited in the perfection of her beauty—all things answering the end of their creation: all the orders of the animal world in harmony with each other, and all at peace with man; all provided for by the varied produce of the earth, no longer cursed, but blessed, and again made fruitful by God, “on whom all wait . . . who openeth his hand and fills them with good”; and all his goodness meeting with its due acknowledgment from his creatures, who join in chorus to praise him, and say—“O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. Hallelujah.”—*William De Burgh.*

Verse 1.—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*” A good man’s work lieth most within doors, he is more taken up with his own soul, than with all the world besides; neither can he ever be alone so long as he hath God and his own heart to converse with.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—With what reverence and holy awe doth the Psalmist begin his meditation with that acknowledgment! “*O Lord, my God, thou art very great;*” and it is the joy of the saints that he who is their God is a great God: the grandeur of the prince is the pride and pleasure of all his good subjects.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1.—“*Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*” That is, as Jerome says, Thou art arrayed and adorned with magnificence and splendour; Thou art acknowledged to be glorious and illustrious by thy works, as a man by his garment. Whence it is clear that the greatness celebrated here is not the intrinsic but the exterior or revealed greatness of God.—*Lorinus.*

Verses 1—4.—Each created, redeemed, regenerated soul is bound to praise the Lord, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier; for that God the Son, who in the beginning made the worlds, and whose grace is ever carrying on his work to its perfect end by the operation of the Holy Ghost, has been revealed before us in his exceeding glory. He, as the eternal High-priest, hath put on the Urim and Thummim of majesty and honour, and hath clothed himself with light, as a priest clothes himself with his holy vestments: his brightness on the mount of transfiguration was but a passing glimpse of what he is now, ever hath been, and ever shall be. He is the true Light, therefore his angels are the angels of light, his children the children of light, his doctrine the doctrine of light. The universe is his tabernacle; the heavens visible and invisible are the curtains which shroud his holy place. He hath laid the beams and foundations of his holy of holies very high, even above the waters which are above the firmament. The clouds and the winds of the lower heaven are his chariot, upon which he stood when he ascended from Olivet, upon which he will sit when he cometh again.—“*Plain Commentary.*”

Verse 2.—“*Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.*” In comparing the light with which he represents God as arrayed to “a garment,” he intimates, that although God is invisible, yet his glory is conspicuous enough. In respect of his essence, God undoubtedly dwells in light that is inaccessible; but as he irradiates the whole world by his splendour, this is the garment in which he, who is hidden in himself, appears in a manner visible to us. The knowledge of this truth is of the greatest importance. If men attempt to reach the infinite height to which God is exalted, although they fly above the clouds, they must fail in the midst of their

course. Those who seek to see him in his naked majesty are certainly very foolish. That we may enjoy the sight of him, he must come forth to view with his clothing; that is to say, we must cast our eyes upon the very beautiful fabric of the world in which he wishes to be seen by us, and not be too curious and rash in searching into his secret essence. Now, since God presents himself to us clothed with light, those who are seeking prettexts for their living without the knowledge of him, cannot allege in excuse of their slothfulness, that he is hidden in profound darkness. When it is said that *the heavens are a curtain*, it is not meant that under them God hides himself, but that by them his majesty and glory are displayed, being, as it were, his royal pavilion.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—“*With light.*” The first creation of God in the works of the days was the light of sense; the last was the light of reason; and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of the spirit.—*Francis Bacon.*

Verse 2.—“*Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.*” It is usual in the East, in the summer season, and upon all occasions when a large company is to be received, to have the court of the house sheltered from the heat of the weather by an umbrella or veil, which being expanded upon ropes from one side of the parapet wall to another may be folded or unfolded at pleasure. The Psalmist seems to allude to some covering of this kind in that beautiful expression of *stretching out the heavens like a curtain.*—*Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

Verse 2.—“*Like a curtain.*” With the same ease, by his mere word, with which a man spreads out a tent-curtain, Isai. liv. 2. Is. xl. 22 is parallel, “that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” Ver. 3 continues the description of the work of the second day. There lie at bottom, in the first clause, the words of Gen. i. 7: “God made the vaulted sky and divided between the waters which are under the vault and the waters which are above the vault.” The waters above are the materials with which, or out of which, the structure is reared. To construct out of the movable waters a firm palace, the cloudy heaven, “firm as a molten glass” (Job xxxvii. 18), is a magnificent work of divine omnipotence.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 2.—“*Like a curtain.*” Because the Hebrews conceived of heaven as a temple and palace of God, that sacred azure was at once the floor of his, the roof of our, abode. Yet methinks the dwellers in tents ever loved best the figure of the heavenly tent. They represent God as daily spreading it out, and fastening it at the extremity of the horizon to the pillars of heaven, the mountains: it is to them a tent of safety, of rest, of a fatherly hospitality in which God lives with his creatures.—*Herder, quoted by Perowne.*

Verse 3.—The metaphorical representation of God, as *laying the beams of his chambers in the waters*, seems somewhat difficult to understand; but it was the design of the prophet, from a thing incomprehensible to us, to ravish us with the greater admiration. Unless *beams* be substantial and strong, they will not be able to sustain even the weight of an ordinary house. When, therefore, God makes the waters the foundation of his heavenly palace, who can fail to be astonished at a miracle so wonderful? When we take into account our slowness of apprehension, such hyperbolic expressions are by no means superfluous; for it is with difficulty that they awaken and enable us to attain even a slight knowledge of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3.—“*Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;*” or, “*who layeth his upper chambers above the waters.*” His upper chamber (people in the East used to retire to the upper chamber when they wished for solitude) is reared up in bright æther on the slender foundation of rainy clouds.—*A. F. Tholuck.*

Verse 3.—“*Who layeth the beams,*” etc. “He flooreth his chambers with waters,” i. e., the clouds make the flooring of his heavens.—*Zachary Mudge.*

Verse 3.—“*Who walketh upon the wings of the wind;*” see Ps. xviii. 10; which is expressive of his swiftness in coming to help and assist his people in time of need; who helps, and that right early; and may very well be applied both to the first and second coming of Christ, who came leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills, when he first came; and, when he comes a second time will be as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 8, and viii. 14. The Targum is, “upon the swift clouds, like the wings of an eagle”; hence, perhaps, it is the heathens have a notion that Jupiter is being carried in a chariot through the air when it thunders and lightens.—*John Gill.*

Verse 3.—“*Who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*” In these words there is

an unequalled elegance; not, he *fleeth*—he *runneth*, but—he *walketh*; and that on the *very wings of the wind*; on the most impetuous element raised into the utmost rage, and sweeping along with incredible rapidity. We cannot have a more sublime idea of the Deity; serenely walking on an element of inconceivable swiftness, and, as it seems to us, uncontrollable impetuosity!—*James Hervey, 1713-14—1758.*

Verse 4.—“*Who maketh his angels spirits.*” Some render it, *Who maketh his angels as the winds*, to which they may be compared for their invisibility, they being not to be seen, no more than the wind, unless when they assume an external form; and for their penetration through bodies in a very surprising manner; see Acts xii. 6—10; and for their great force and power, being mighty angels, and said to excel in strength, Ps. ciii. 20; and for their swiftness in obeying the divine commands; so the Targum, “He maketh his messengers, or angels, swift as the wind.”—*John Gill.*

Verse 4.—“*Who maketh his angels spirits.*” The words, “*creating his angels spirits,*” may either mean ‘creating them spiritual beings, not material beings,’ or ‘creating them winds’—*i.e.*, like the winds, invisible, rapid in their movements, and capable of producing great effects. The last mode of interpretation seems pointed out by the parallelism—“*and his ministers*”—or, ‘servants’—who are plainly the same as his angels,—“*a flame of fire,*” *i.e.*, like the lightning. The statement here made about the angels seems to be this: ‘They are created beings, who in their qualities bear a resemblance to the winds and the lightning.’

The argument deduced by Paul, in Heb. ii. 7, from this statement for the inferiority of the angels is direct and powerful:—He is the Son; they are the creatures of God. “*Only begotten*” is the description of his mode of existence; *made* is the description of theirs. All their powers are communicated powers; and however high they may stand in the scale of creation, it is in that scale they stand, which places them infinitely below him, who is so the Son of God as to be “God over all, blessed for ever”—*John Brown, in “An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.”*

Verse 4.—“*A flaming fire.*” Fire is expressive of irresistible power, immaculate holiness, and ardent emotion. It is remarkable that the seraphim, one class at least of these ministers, have their name from a root signifying to burn; and the altar, from which one of them took the live coal, Isai. vi. 6, is the symbol of the highest form of holy love.—*James G. Murphy, in “A Commentary on the Book of Psalms,” 1875.*

Verse 5.—“*Not be removed for ever.*” The stability of the earth is of God, as much as the being and existence of it. There have been many earthquakes or movings of the earth in several parts of it, but the whole body of the earth was never removed so much as one hair’s breadth out of its place, since the foundations thereof were laid. *Archimedes*, the great mathematician, said, “If you will give me a place to set my engine on, I will remove the earth.” It was a great brag; but the Lord hath laid it too fast for man’s removing. Himself can make it quake and shake, he can move it when he pleaseth; but he never hath nor will remove it. He hath laid the foundations of the earth that it shall not be removed, nor can it be at all moved, but at his pleasure; and when it moves at any time, it is to mind the sons of men that they by their sins have moved him to displeasure.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—The philosophical mode of stating this truth may be seen in *Amedée Guillemin’s* work entitled “THE HEAVENS.” “How is it that though we are carried along with a vast rapidity by the motion of the earth, we do not ourselves perceive our movement? It is because the entire bulk of the earth, atmosphere, and clouds, participate in the movement. This constant velocity, with which all bodies situated on the surface of the earth are animated, would be the cause of the most terrible and general catastrophe that could be imagined, if, by any possibility, the rotation of the earth were abruptly to cease. Such an event would be the precursor of a most sweeping destruction of all organized beings. But the constancy of the laws of nature permits us to contemplate such a catastrophe without fear. It is demonstrated that the position of the poles of rotation on the surface of the earth is invariable. It has also been asked whether the velocity of the earth’s rotation has changed, or, which comes to the same thing, if the length of the sidereal day and that of the solar day deduced from it have varied within the historical period? Laplace has replied to this question, and his demonstration shows that it has not varied the one hundredth of a second during the last two thousand years.”

Verses 5—9.—

God of the earth and sea, Thou hast laid earth's foundations :
Because thy hand sustaineth,
It ever firm remaineth.

Once didst thou open its deep, hidden fountains,
And soon the rising waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder,
The flood thy mandate heeded,
And hastily receded :

The waters keep the place Thou hast assigned them,
And in the hills and vales a channel Thou dost find them.

A limit Thou hast set, which they may not pass over ;
The deep within bound inclosing,

Strong barriers interposing,
That its proud waves no more bring desolation,
And sweep away from earth each human habitation.

—John Barton, in "*The Book of Psalms in English Verse : a New Testament Paraphrase*," 1871.

Verses 6—8.—"*Stood*," "*fled*," "*hasted away*." The words of the Psalm put the original wondrous process graphically before the eye. The change of tense, too, from past to present, in verses 6, 7, 8, is expressive, and paints the scene in its progress. In ver. 6 "*stood*" should be STAND : in ver. 7 "*fled*" should be FLEE : and "*hasted away*" should be HASTE AWAY, as in the P. B. V.—"*The Speaker's Commentary*."

Verse 7.—"*At thy rebuke they fled*." The famous description of Virgil comes to mind, who introduces Neptune as sternly rebuking the winds for daring without his consent to embroil earth and heaven, and raise such huge mountain-waves : then swifter than the word is spoken, he calms the swollen seas, scatters the gathered clouds, and brings back the sun.—*Lorinus*.

Verse 7.—"*At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away* ;" ran off with great precipitance : just as a servant, when his master puts on a stern countenance, and speaks to him in a thundering, menacing manner, hastes away from him to do his will and work. This is an instance of the mighty power of Christ ; and by the same power he removed the waters of the deluge, when they covered the earth, and the tops of the highest hills ; and rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry land ; and drove back the waters of Jordan for the Israelites to pass through ; and who also rebuked the Sea of Galilee when his disciples were in distress ; and with equal ease can he and does he remove the depth of sin and darkness from his people at conversion ; rebukes Satan, and delivers out of his temptations, when he comes in like a flood ; and commands off the waters of affliction when they threaten to overwhelm ; who are his servants, and come when he bids them come, and go when he bids them go.—*John Gill*.

Verse 7.—"*At the voice of thy thunder*." It is very likely God employed the electric fluid as an agent in this separation.—*Ingram Cobbin*.

Verse 7.—"*They hasted away*."

God said,
Be gather'd now, ye waters under heaven
Into one place, and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds ; their tops ascend the sky :
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters : Thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry :
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste : such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods : As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)

Troop to their standard ; so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing ; nor withstood them rock or hill ;
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent error wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore ;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their tumid train.
The dry land, Earth ; and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters, he called Seas :
And saw that it was good.

—John Milton.

Verse 8.—“ *They go up by the mountains,*” etc. The Targum is, “ They ascend out of the deep to the mountains ” ; that is, the waters, when they went off the earth at the divine orders, steered their course up the mountains, and then went down by the valleys to the place appointed for them ; they went over hills and dales, nothing could stop them or retard their course till they came to their proper place ; which is another instance of the almighty power of the Son of God.—*John Gill.*

Verse 9.—“ *Thou hast set a bound,*” etc. The Baltic Sea, in our own time, inundated large tracts of land, and did great damage to the Flemish people and other neighbouring nations. By an instance of this kind we are warned what would be the consequence, were the restraint imposed upon the sea, by the hand of God, removed. How is it that we have not thereby been swallowed up together, but because God has held in that outrageous element by his word ? In short, although the natural tendency of the waters is to cover the earth, yet this will not happen, because God has established, by his word, a counteracting law, and as his truth is eternal, this law must remain stedfast.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—“ *Thou hast set a bound,*” etc. In these words the Psalmist gives us three things clearly concerning the waters. First, that once (he means it not of the deluge, but of the chaos), the waters did cover the whole earth, till God by a word of command sent them into their proper channels, that the dry land might appear. Secondly, that the waters have a natural propension to return back and cover the earth again. Thirdly, that the only reason why they do not return back and cover the whole earth is, because God hath “ *set a bound, that they cannot pass.*” They would be boundless and know no limits, did not God bound and limit them. Wisdom giveth us the like eulogium of the power of God in this, Prov. viii. 29, “ He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment.” What cannot he command, who sendeth his commandment to the sea and is obeyed ? Some great princes, heated with rage and drunken with pride, have cast shackles into the sea, as threatening it with imprisonment and bondage if it would not be quiet ; but the sea would not be bound by them ; they have also awarded so many strokes to be given the sea as a punishment of its contumacy and rebellion against either their commands or their designs. How ridiculously ambitious have they been, who would needs pretend to such a dominion ! Many princes have had great power at and upon the sea, but there was never any prince had any power over the sea ; that’s a flower belonging to no crown but the crown of heaven.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—“ *Thou hast set a bound,*” etc. A few feet of increase in the ocean wave that pursues its tidal circuit round the globe, would desolate cities and provinces innumerable. . . . But with what immutable and safe control God has marked its limits ! You shall observe a shrub or a flower on a bank of verdure that covers a sea cliff, or hangs down in some hollow ; nay, you shall mark a pebble on the beach, you shall lay a shred of gossamer upon it ; and this vast, ungovernable, unwieldy, tempestuous element shall know how to draw a line of moisture by its beating spray at the very edge, or on the very point of your demarcation, and then draw off its forces, not having passed one inch or hand’s breadth across the appointed margin. And all this exact restraint and measurement in the motion of the sea, by that mysterious power shot beyond unfathomable depths of space, from orbs rolling in ether ! a power itself how prodigious, how irresistible, yet how invisible, how gentle, how with minutest exactness measured and exerted.—*George B. Cheever, in “Voices of Nature to her Foster Child, the Soul of Man,” 1852.*

Verse 9.—“A bound that they may not pass over.”

Now stretch your eye off shore, o'er waters made
To cleanse the air, and bear the world's great trade,
To rise and wet the mountains near the sun,
Then back into themselves in rivers run,
Fulfilling mighty uses, far and wide,
Through earth, in air, or here, as ocean-tide.
Ho ! how the giant heaves himself, and strains
And flings to break his strong and viewless chains ;
Foams in his wrath ; and at his prison doors,
Hark ! hear him ! how he beats, and tugs, and roars,
As if he would break forth again, and sweep
Each living thing within his lowest deep.

—Richard Henry Dana (1787—).

Verse 10.—“He sendeth the springs into the valleys,” etc. Having spoken of the salt waters, he treats afterwards of the sweet and potable, commending the wisdom and providence of God, that from the lower places of the earth and the hidden veins of the mountains, he should cause the fountains of water to gush forth.—Lorinus.

Verse 10.—“He sendeth the springs into the valleys.” The more of humility the more of grace ; if in valleys some hollows are deeper than others the waters collect in them.—Martin Luther.

Verse 10.—“He sendeth the springs into the valleys.” Men cut places for rivers to run in, but none but God can cut a channel to bring spiritual streams into the soul. The Psalmist speaks of the sending forth of springs as one great act of the providence of God. It is a secret mystery which those that have searched deepest into nature cannot resolve us in, how those springs are fed, how they are maintained and nourished, so as to run without ceasing in such great streams as many of them make. Philosophy cannot show the reason of it. The Psalmist doth it well : *God sends them into the valleys*, his providence and power keeps them continually running : he that would have his soul watered must go to God in prayer.—Ralph Robinson.

Verse 10.—“Which run among the hills.” That is, the *streams or springs* run. In many a part of the world can be found a Sault, a *dancing water*, and a *Minne-ha-ha, a laughing water*. The mountain streams *walk, and run, and leap*, and praise the Lord.—William S. Plumer.

Verse 10, 13, 14.—“HE.” “HE.” “HE.”

All things are here of *Him* ; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore.
Kissing his feet with murmurs.

—Byron.

Verse 11.—“The wild asses quench their thirst.” It is particularly remarked of the *asses*, that though they are dull and stupid creatures, yet by Providence they are taught the way to the waters, in the dry and sandy deserts, and that there is no better guide for the thirsty travellers to follow, than to observe the herds of them descending to the streams.—Thomas Fenton.

Verse 11.—“The wild asses quench their thirst.” As evening approached we saw congregated, near a small stream, what appeared to be a large company of dismounted Arabs, their horses standing by them. As we were already near them, and could not have escaped the watchful eye of the Bedouins, we prepared for an encounter. We approached cautiously, and were surprised to see that the horses still remained without their riders ; we drew still nearer, when they galloped off towards the desert. They were *wild asses*.—Henry Austen Layard.

Verse 12.—“By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation.” Never shall I forget my first ride from Riha to Ain Sultân ; our way lay right across the oasis evoked by the waters. It may be that the contrast with the arid desert of the previous day heightened the feelings of present enjoyment, but certainly they echoed the words of Josephus,—a “Divine region.” At one time I was reminded of Epping Forest, and then of a neglected orchard with an undergrowth of luxuriant vegetation.

Large thorn bushes and forest shrubs dotted the plain on every side. In some places the ground was carpeted with flowers, and every bush seemed vocal with the cheerful twittering of birds. I use the word "twittering," because I do not think that I ever heard a decided warble during the whole time I was in Syria. Coleridge speaks of the "merry nightingale,"

"That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast, quick warble, his delicious notes."

The song of my little Syrian friends seemed to consist of a series of cheerful chirps. Other travellers have been more fortunate. Bonar speaks of the note of the cuckoo; Dr. Robinson of the nightingale. Lord Lindsay tells us of the delight of an evening spent by the Jordan, "the river murmuring along, and the nightingale singing from the trees." Canon Tristram, describing the scenery near Tell-el-Kady, says that "the bulbul and nightingale vied in rival song in the branches above, audible over the noise of the torrent below." In the face of these statements it seems to me remarkable, considering the innumerable references to nature in the Bible, that the singing of birds is only mentioned three times. In the well-known passage which so exquisitely depicts a Syrian spring, we read "the time of the singing of birds is come" (Song of Solomon ii. 12). The Psalmist in speaking of the mighty power and wondrous Providence of God, mentions the springs in "the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches." Canon Tristram commenting on this passage, says, that it may refer especially to the "bulbul and the nightingale, both of which throng the trees that fringe the Jordan and abound in all the wooded valleys, filling the air in early spring with the rich cadence of their notes."—*James Wareing Bardsley, in "Illustrative Texts," 1876.*

Verse 12.—"By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation," etc. To such birds may saints be compared; being, like them, weak, defenceless, and timorous; liable to be taken in snares, and sometimes wonderfully delivered; as well as given to wanderings and strayings; and to fowls of the heaven, being heaven-born souls, and partakers of the heavenly calling. These have their habitation by the fountain of Jacob, by the river of divine love, beside the still waters of the sanctuary, where they sing the songs of Zion, the songs of electing, redeeming, and calling grace.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"The fowls . . . which sing among the branches." The music of birds was the first song of thanksgiving which was offered from the earth, before man was formed.—*John Wesley.*

Verse 12.—"The fowls of the heaven which sing among the branches." How do the blackbird and thrassel [thrush], with their melodious voices, bid welcome to the cheerful spring, and in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to? . . . But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it makes mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad man such music on earth?"—*Izaak Walton.*

Verse 12.—

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.
The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

—*Robert Burns, 1759—1796.*

Verse 13.—"The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works;" that is, with the rain, which is thy work, causing it to be showered down when thou pleasest upon

the earth ; or, with the rain, which proceeds from the clouds ; or, with the fruits, which thou causeth the earth by this means to bring forth.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 14.—“ *He causeth the grass to grow.*” Surely it should humble men to know that all human power united cannot make anything, not even the grass to grow.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 14.—“ *For the cattle,*” etc. To make us thankful, let us consider, 1. That God not only provides for us, but for our servants ; the cattle that are of use to man, are particularly taken care of ; grass is made to grow in great abundance for them, when “ the young lions,” that are not for the service of man, often “ lack, and suffer hunger.” 2. That our food is nigh us, and ready to us : having our habitation on the earth, there we have our storehouse, and depend not on “ the merchant ships that bring food from afar,” Prov. xxxi. 14. 3. That we have even from the products of the earth, not only for necessity, but for ornament and delight, so good a master do we serve. Doth nature call for something to support it, and repair its daily decays ? Here is “ *bread which strengtheneth man’s heart,*” and is therefore called the staff of life ; let none that have that complain of want. Doth nature go further, and covet something pleasant ? Here is “ *wine that maketh glad the heart,*” refresheth the spirits, and exhilarates them, when it is soberly and moderately used ; that we may not only go through our business, but go through it cheerfully ; it is a pity that that should be abused to overcharge the heart, and disfit men for their duty, which was given to revive their heart, and quicken them in their duty. Is nature yet more humoursome, and doth it crave something for ornament too ? Here is that also out of the earth ; “ *oil to make the face to shine,*” that the countenance may not only be cheerful, but beautiful, and we may be the more acceptable to one another.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 14.—“ *For the service of man.*” The common version of these words can only mean for his benefit or use, a sense not belonging to the Hebrew word, which, as well as its verbal root, is applied to man’s servitude or bondage as a tiller of the ground (Gen. iii. 17—19), and has here the sense of husbandry or cultivation, as in Exod. i. 14, Lev. xxv. 39, it has that of compulsory or servile labour, the infinitive in the last clause indicates the object for which labour is imposed on man.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 14.—“ *That he may bring forth food out of the earth.*” The Israelites at the feast of the Passover and before the breaking of bread, were accustomed to say, “ Praise be to the Lord our God, thou King of the world, who hath brought forth our bread from the earth ” : and at each returning harvest we ought to be filled with gratitude, as often as we again receive the valuable gift of bread. It is the most indispensable and necessary means of nourishment of which we never tire, whilst other food, the sweeter it is, the more easily it surfeits : everybody, the child and the old man, the beggar and the king, like bread. We remember the unfortunate man, who was cast on the desert isle, famishing with hunger, and who cried at the sight of a handful of gold, “ Ah, it is only gold ! ” He would willingly have exchanged for a handful of bread, this to him, useless material, which in the mind of most men is above all price. O let us never sin against God, by lightly esteeming bread ! Let us gratefully accept the sheaves we gather, and thankfully visit the barns which preserve them ; that we may break bread to the hungry, and give to the thirsty from the supplies God has given us. Let us never sit down to table without asking God to bless the gifts we receive from his gracious hand, and never eat bread without thinking of Christ our Lord, who calls himself the living bread, who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. And above all, may we never go to the table of the Lord without enjoying, through the symbols of bread and wine, his body and blood, whereby we receive strength to nourish our spiritual life ! Yes, Lord, thou satisfiest both body and soul, with bread from earth and bread from heaven. Praise be to thy holy name, our hearts and mouths shall be full of thy praises for time and eternity !—*Frederick Arndt, in “ Lights of the Morning,” 1861.*

Verse 15.—When thou wert taken out of the womb, what a stately palace did he bring thee into, the world, which thou foundest prepared and ready furnished with all things for thy maintenance, as Canaan was to the children of Israel ; a stately house thou buildedst not, trees thou plantedst not, a rich canopy spangled, spread as a curtain over thy head ; he sets up a taper for thee to work by, the sun, till thou art weary (v. 23), and then it goes down without thy bidding, for it *knows*

its going down" (v. 19); then he draws a curtain over half the world, that men may go to rest: "*Thou causest darkness, and it is night*" (v. 20). As an house this world is, so curiously contrived that to every room of it, even to every poor village, springs do come as pipes to find thee water (v. 10, 11). The pavement of which house thou treadest on, and it brings forth thy food (v. 14), "*Bread for strength, wine to cheer thy heart, oil to make thy face to shine*" (v. 15). Which three are there synecdochically put for all things needful to strength, ornament, and delight.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 15.—"*Wine that maketh glad the heart of man.*" The wine mentioned had the quality of fermented liquors; it gladdened the heart. Thus, if taken to excess, it would have led to intoxication. The Hebrew term is *yayin*, answering to the Greek *oinos*, and including every form which the juice of the grape might be made to assume as a beverage. It was this of which Noah partook when he became drunken (Gen. ix. 21, 24). Melchizedek brought it forth to Abraham (Gen. xiv. 18). Lot's daughters gave it to their father and made him drunk (Gen. xix. 35). From this the Nazarite was to separate himself (Num. vi. 3—20). This is the highly intoxicating drink so often mentioned by Isaiah (v. 11—22, xxii. 13, xxviii. 1—7, etc.); but just because of this, it might become to man one of those mercies in connection with the use of which he was to exercise constant self-control. Taken to excess it was a curse; enjoyed as from God, it was something for which man was called to be thankful.—*John Duns*.

Verse 15.—"*And oil to make his face to shine.*" Observe, after the mention of wine, he speaks of oil or ointment, because at the banquets among the Jews and other Eastern people, as afterwards among the Greeks and Romans, there was a frequent use of ointments. The reasons why ointment was poured upon the head were: To avoid intoxication: To improve the health: To contribute to pleasure and delight. Homer often refers to this custom, and there is an allusion to it by Solomon, Eccles. ix. 8, "*Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.*" See also Ps. xxiii. 5.—*Le Blanc*.

Verse 15.—The ancients made much use of oil to beautify their persons. We read of "*oil to make man's face to shine.*" Ruth anointed herself for decoration (Ruth iii. 3), and the woman of Tekoah and the prophet Daniel omitted the use of oil for the contrary reason (2 Sam. xiv. 3; Dan. x. 3). The custom is also mentioned in Matt. vi. 17; Luke vii. 46.—*Ambrose Serle* in "*Horæ Solitariae*," 1815.

Verse 15.—"*Bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" In hunger not only the strength is prostrated, but the natural courage is also abated. Hunger has no enterprise, emulation, nor courage. But when, in such circumstances, a little bread is received into the stomach, even before concoction can have time to prepare it for nutriment, the strength is restored, and the spirits revived. This is a surprising effect; and it has not yet been satisfactorily accounted for.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 15.—"*Bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*" In Homer's *Odyssey* we meet with the expression "*Bread, the marrow of men.*"

Verse 15.—"*Man's heart.*" It is not without reason that instead of the word *אָדָם* of *Adam*, which was used in v. 14, there is here employed the word *אָנָשׁ*, an *infirm* and *feeble* man, because he mentions those nourishments of which there was no need before the fall, and which are specially suitable to nourish and exhilarate feeble man.—*Venema*.

Verse 15.—If the transitory earth is so full of the good things of God, what will we have when we come to the land of the living?—*Starke*, in *Lange's Commentary*.

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the Lord.*" The transition which the prophet makes from men to trees is as if he had said, It is not to be wondered at, if God so bountifully nourishes men who are created after his own image, since he does not grudge to extend his care even to trees. By "*the trees of the Lord,*" is meant those which are high and of surpassing beauty; for God's blessing is more conspicuous in them. It seems scarcely possible for any juice of the earth to reach so great a height, and yet they renew their foliage every year.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the Lord*" may be so named from their size and stature—this name being used as a superlative in the Hebrew, or to denote aught which is great and extraordinary.—*Thomas Chalmers*.

Verse 16.—"*The trees of the Lord,*" etc. The cedars are indeed the trees of the Lord. They are especially his planting. There is a sense in which, above all other trees, they belong to him, and shadow forth in a higher degree his glory. The peculiar expression of the text, however, must not be limited to one particular species of

cedar. . . . Encouraged by this Scripture usage, I shall use the word in a somewhat wider sense than the conventional one, to denote three remarkable examples which may be selected from the *coniferæ* to show the power and wisdom of God as displayed in the trees of the forest. These are, the cedar of Lebanon, the cedar of the Himalayas, and the cedar of the Sierra Nevada. The epithet which the Psalmist applies to one, may most appropriately be applied to all of them; and there are various reasons why the Lord may be said to have a special interest and property in each of them, to a few of which our attention may now be profitably directed.

1. They are "trees of the Lord" on account of the *peculiarities of their structure*. In common with all the pine tribe, they are exceptional in their organization. They reveal a new idea of the creative mind. 2. The cedars are "the trees of the Lord" on account of the *antiquity of their type*. It was of this class of trees that the pre-Adamite forests were principally composed. 3. The cedars are the "trees of the Lord," on account of the *majesty of their appearance*. It is the tree, *par excellence*, of the Bible—the type of all forest vegetation.—*Condensed from Hugh Macmillan's "Bible Teachings in Nature,"* 1868.

Verse 16.—"Full of sap." The cedar has a store of resin. It flows from wounds made in the bark, and from the scales of the cones, and is abundant in the seeds. Both the resin and the wood were much valued by the ancients. The Romans believed that the gum which exuded from the cedar had the power of rendering whatever was steeped in it incorruptible; and we are told that the books of Numa, the early king of Rome, which were found uninjured in his tomb, five hundred years after his death, had been steeped in oil of cedar. The Egyptians also used the oil in embalming their dead.—*Mary and Elizabeth Kirby, in "Chapters on Trees,"* 1873.

Verse 17.—"Birds." The word rendered "birds" here is the word which in Ps. lxxxiv. 3 is translated *sparrow*, and which is commonly used to denote small birds. Comp. Lev. xiv. 4 (*margin*), and 5—7, 49—53. It is used, however, to denote birds of any kind. See Gen. vii. 14; Ps. viii. 8; xi. 1; cxlviii. 10.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 17.—"The stork" is instanced as one of the largest of nest-building birds, as the cedars of Lebanon were introduced in verse 16 as being the largest of uncultivated trees.—*A. C. Jennings and W. H. Lowe, in "The Psalms, with Introductions and Critical Notes,"* 1875.

Verse 17.—"The stork, the fir trees are her house." In many cases the stork breeds among old ruins, and under such circumstances it is fond of building its nest on the tops of pillars or towers, the summits of arches, and similar localities. When it takes up its abode among mankind, it generally selects the breeding-places which have been built for it by those who know its taste, but it frequently chooses the top of a chimney, or some such locality. When it is obliged to build in spots where it can find neither rocks nor buildings, it builds on trees, and, like the heron, is sociable in its nesting, a whole community residing in a clump of trees. It is not very particular about the kind of tree, provided that it be tolerably tall, and strong enough to bear the weight of its enormous nest; and the reader will at once see that the *fir trees* are peculiarly fitted to be the houses for the stork.

The particular species of *fir tree* to which the Psalmist alludes is probably the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), which comes next to the great cedars of Lebanon in point of size. It was this tree that furnished the timber and planks for Solomon's temple and palace, a timber which was evidently held in the greatest estimation. This tree fulfils all the conditions which a stork would require in nest-building. It is lofty, and its boughs are sufficiently horizontal to form a platform for the nest, and strong enough to sustain it. On account of its value and the reckless manner in which it has been cut down without new plantations being formed, the Aleppo pine has vanished from many parts of Palestine wherein it was formerly common, and would afford a dwelling-place for the stork. There are, however, several other species of fir which are common in various parts of the country, each species flourishing in the soil best suited to it so that the stork would never be at a loss to find a nesting-place in a country which furnished so many trees suitable to its purposes.—*J. G. Wood, in "Bible Animals."*

Verse 17.—"The stork, the fir trees are her house." Well-wooded districts are for the most part the favourite resorts of the storks, as they constantly select trees both for breeding purposes and as resting-places for the night; some few species, however, prove exceptions to this rule, and make their nests on roofs, chimneys, or

other elevated situations in the immediate vicinity of men.—From “*Cassell's Book of Birds.*” From the *Text of Dr. Brehm.* By T. R. Jones, F.R.S.

Verse 17.—“*The fir trees.*” The doors of the temple were made of the fir tree; even of that tree which was a type of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Consider Heb. ii. 14. The fir tree is also the house of the stork, that unclean bird, even as Christ is a harbour and shelter for sinners. “*As for the stork,*” saith the text, “*the fir trees are her house;*” and Christ saith to the sinners that see their want of shelter, “*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*” He is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. He is, as the doors of fir of the temple, the inlet of God's house, to God's presence, and to a partaking of his glory. Thus God did of old, by similitudes, teach his people his way.—*John Bunyan, in “Solomon's Temple Spiritualized.”*

Verse 17.—

The eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.

—*John Milton.*

Verse 18.—“*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats.*” There is scarcely any doubt that the *Azel* of the Old Testament is the *Arabian Ibex* or *Beden* (*Capra Nubiana*). This animal is very closely allied to the well-known *Ibex* of the Alps, or *Steinbock*, but may be distinguished from it by one or two slight differences, such as the black beard and the slighter make of the horns, which moreover have three angles instead of four, as is the case with the *Alpine Ibex*. . . . The colour of its coat resembles so nearly that of the rocks, that an inexperienced eye would see nothing but bare stones and sticks where a practised hunter would see numbers of *Beden*, conspicuous by their beautifully curved horns.

The agility of the *Beden* is extraordinary. Living in the highest and most craggy parts of the mountain ridge, it flings itself from spot to spot with a recklessness that startles one who has not been accustomed to the animal, and the wonderful certainty of its foot. It will, for example, dash at the face of a perpendicular precipice that looks as smooth as a brick wall, for the purpose of reaching a tiny ledge which is hardly perceptible, and which is some fifteen feet or so above the spot whence the animal sprang. Its eye, however, has marked certain little cracks and projections on the face of the rock, and as the animal makes its leap, it takes these little points of vantage in rapid succession, just touching them as it passes upwards, and by the slight stroke of its foot keeping up the original impulse of its leap. Similarly the *Ibex* comes sliding and leaping down precipitous sides of the mountains, sometimes halting with all the four feet drawn together, on a little projection scarcely larger than a penny, and sometimes springing boldly over a wild crevasse, and alighting with exact precision upon a projecting piece of rock that seems scarcely large enough to sustain a rat comfortably.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 18.—“*Conies.*” When we were exploring the rocks in the neighbourhood of the convent, I was delighted to point attention to a family or two of the *Wubar*, engaged in their gambols on the heights above us. Mr. Smith and I watched them narrowly, and were much amused with the liveliness of their motions, and the quickness of their retreat within the clefts of the rock when they apprehended danger. We were, we believe, the first European travellers who actually noticed this animal, now universally admitted to be the shaphan, or coney of Scripture, within the proper bounds of the Holy Land; and we were not a little gratified by its discovery. . . . The preparer of the skin mistook it for a rabbit, though it is of a stronger build, and of a duskier colour, being of a dark brown. It is destitute of a tail, and has some bristles at its mouth, over its head, and down its back, along the course of which there are traces of light and dark shade. In its short ears, small, black, and naked feet, and pointed snout, it resembles the hedgehog. It does not, however, belong to the insectivora, but, though somewhat anomalous, it is allied to the pachydermata, among which it is now classed by naturalists.—*John Wilson, in “The Lands of the Bible,”* 1847.

Verse 18.—“*Conies.*” People used to think the conies of Solomon the same as our rabbits, which are indeed “a feeble folk,” but which do not “make their houses in the rock.” Now that the *coney* is ascertained to be the *Damon* or *Hyrax*,—a shy defenceless creature, which lurks among the cliffs of the mountains, and darts into its den at the least approach of danger, the words of *Agar* acquire their full significance.—*James Hamilton.*

Verse 19.—“*He appointed the moon for seasons.*” When it is said, that the moon was appointed to distinguish seasons, interpreters agree that this is to be understood of the ordinary and appointed feasts. The Hebrews having been accustomed to compute their months by the moon, this served for regulating their festival days and assemblies, both sacred and political. The prophet, I have no doubt, by the figure synecdoche, puts a part for the whole, intimating that the moon not only distinguishes the days from the nights, but likewise marks out the festival days, measures years and months, and, in fine, answers many useful purposes, inasmuch as the distinction of times is taken from her course.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 19.—“*He appointed the moon for seasons.*” “He made the moon to serve in her season, for a declaration of times, and a sign to the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven; the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord.”—*Ecclesiasticus x. 7.*

Verse 19.—“*The sun knoweth his going down.*” The second clause is not to be rendered in the common way, “*The sun knoweth his going down,*” but according to the usual idiom, *He, i. e., God knoweth the going down of the sun.* Not to mention the unwonted and harsh form of the phrase, by which the knowledge of his setting is attributed to the sun, there appears no reason why it should be here used, since it is destitute of force,* or why he should turn from God as a cause, to the moving sun, when both before and afterwards he speaks of God, saying, “*He appointed the moon,*” “*Thou makest darkness.*” Far more fitly, therefore, is he to be understood as speaking of God, as before and after, so in the middle, of the directing cause of the appearances of the moon, the setting of the sun, and the spread of darkness. God also is said more correctly to know the going down of the sun, than the sun himself, since to know has in effect the force of to care for, as is often the case in other passages.—*Venema.*

Verse 20.—“*Thou makest darkness.*” Some observe with Augustine that in Genesis it is said that light was made, but not that darkness was made, because darkness is nothing, it is mere non-existence. But in this passage it is also said that night was made; and the Lord calls himself the *Maker of light and the Creator of darkness.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 20.—“*Thou makest darkness,*” etc. It would be interesting to consider the wonderful adaptation of the length of the day to the health of man, and to the vigour and perhaps existence of the animal and vegetable tribes. The rejoicing of life depends so much upon the grateful alternation of day and night. For a full consideration of this subject I must refer the reader to Dr. Whewell’s *Bridgewater Treatise*. The subjoined extracts may, however, aid reflection. “The terrestrial day, and consequently the length of the cycle of light and darkness, being what it is, we find various parts of the constitution both of animals and vegetables, which have a periodical character in their functions, corresponding to the diurnal succession of external conditions; and we find that the length of the period, as it exists in their constitution, coincides with the length of the natural day. The alternation of processes which takes place in plants by day and by night is less obvious, and less obviously essential to their well-being, than the annual series of changes. But there are abundance of facts which serve to show that such an alternation is part of the vegetable economy. . . .

“Animals also have a period in their functions and habits; as in the habits of waking, sleeping, etc., and their well-being appears to depend on the coincidence of this period with the length of the natural day. We see that in the day, as it now is, all animals find seasons for taking food and repose, which agree perfectly with their health and comfort. Some animals feed during the day, as nearly all the ruminating animals and land birds; others feed only in the twilight, as bats and owls, and are called *crepuscular*; while many beasts of prey, aquatic birds, and others, take their food during the night. These animals, which are nocturnal feeders, are diurnal sleepers, while those which are *crepuscular* sleep partly in the night and partly in the day; but in all, the complete period of these functions is twenty-

* This excellent expounder cannot see the beauty of the poetic expression, and so proses in this fashion.

four hours. Man in like manner, in all nations and ages, takes his principal rest once in twenty-four hours; and the regularity of this practice seems most suitable to his health, though the duration of time allotted to repose is extremely different in different cases. So far as we can judge, this period is of a length beneficial to the human frame, independently of the effect of external agents. In the voyages recently made into high northern latitudes, where the sun did not rise for three months, the crews of the ships were made to adhere, with the utmost punctuality, to the habit of retiring to rest at nine, and rising a quarter before six; and they enjoyed, under circumstances apparently the most trying, a state of salubrity quite remarkable. This shows, that according to the common constitution of such men, the cycle of twenty-four hours is very commodious, though not imposed on them by external circumstances."—*William Whewell* (1795—1866).

Verse 21.—"The young lions . . . seek their meat from God." God feeds not only sheep and lambs, but wolves and lions. It is a strange expression that young lions when they roar after their prey, should be said to *seek their meat of God*; implying that neither their own strength nor craft could feed them without help from God. The strongest creatures left to themselves cannot help themselves. As they who fear God are fed by a special providence of God, so all creatures are fed and nourished by a general providence. The lion, though he be strong and subtle, yet cannot get his own prey; we think a lion might shift for himself; no, 'tis the Lord that provides for him; the young lions seek their meat of God. Surely, then, the mightiest of men cannot live upon themselves: as it is of God that we receive life and breath, so all things needful for the maintenance of this life.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 21.—"The young lions roar." The roar of a lion, according to Burchell, sometimes resembles the sound which is heard at the moment of an earthquake; and is produced by his laying his head on the ground, and uttering a half-stifled growl, by which means the noise is conveyed along the earth. The instant it is heard by the animals reposing in the plains, they start up in alarm, fly in all directions, and even rush into the danger which they seek to avoid.—*From Cassell's Popular Natural History*.

Verse 21.—The roaring of the young lions, like the crying of the ravens, is interpreted, *asking their meat of God*. Doth God put this construction upon the language of mere nature, even in venomous creatures, and shall he not much more interpret favourably the language of grace in his own people, though it be weak and broken groanings which cannot be uttered?—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 22.—"The sun ariseth . . . they lay them down in their dens." As wild beasts since the fall of man may seem to be born to do us hurt, and to rend and tear in pieces all whom they meet with, this savage cruelty must be kept under check by the providence of God. And in order to keep them shut up within their dens, the only means which he employs is to inspire them with terror, simply by the light of the sun. This instance of divine goodness, the prophet commends the more on account of its necessity; for were it otherwise, men would have no liberty to go forth to engage in the labours and business of life.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 23.—"Man goeth forth unto his work," etc. Man alone, among all creatures, in distinction from the involuntary instruments of the Almighty, has a real daily work. He has a definite part to play in life; and can recognise it.—*Carl Bernhard Moll, in Lange's Commentary*.

Verse 23.—When the light of truth and righteousness shineth, error and iniquity fly away before it, and the "roaring lion" himself departeth for a time. Then the Christian *goeth forth to the work* of his salvation, and to his *labour* of love, until the *evening* of old age warns him to prepare for his last repose, in faith of a joyful resurrection.—*George Horne*.

Verse 24.—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works!" etc. If the number of the creatures be so exceeding great, how great, nay, immense, must needs be the power and wisdom of him who formed them all! For (that I may borrow the words of a noble and excellent author) as it argues and manifests more skill by far in an artificer, to be able to frame both *clocks* and *watches*, and *pumps* and *mills*, and *granadoes* and *rockets*, than he could display in making but one of those sorts of

engines; so the Almighty discovers more of his wisdom in forming such a vast multitude of different sorts of creatures, and all with admirable and irrefragable art, than if he had created but a few; for this declares the greatness and unbounded capacity of his understanding. Again, the same superiority of knowledge would be displayed by contriving engines of the same kind, or for the same purposes, after different fashions, as the moving of clocks by springs instead of weights: so the infinitely wise Creator hath shown in many instances that he is not confined to one only instrument for the working one effect, but can perform the same thing by divers means. So, though feathers seem necessary for flying, yet hath he enabled several creatures to fly without them, as two sorts of fishes, one sort of lizard, and the bat, not to mention the numerous tribes of flying insects. In like manner, though the air-bladder in fishes seems necessary for swimming, yet some are so formed as to swim without it, *viz.*, First, the *cartilaginous* kind, which by what artifice they poise themselves, ascend and descend at pleasure, and continue in what depth of water they list, is as yet unknown to us. Secondly, the *cetaceous* kind, or sea-beasts, differing in nothing almost but the want of feet. The air which in respiration these receive into their lungs, may serve to render their bodies equiponderant to the water; and the construction or dilatation of it, by the help of the diaphragm and muscles of respiration, may probably assist them to ascend or descend in the water, by a light impulse thereof with their fins. . . .

Again, the great use and convenience, the beauty and variety of so many springs and fountains, so many brooks and rivers, so many lakes and standing pools of water, and these so scattered and dispersed all the earth over, that no great part of it is destitute of them, without which it must, without a supply other ways, be desolate and void of inhabitants, afford abundant arguments of wisdom and counsel: that springs should break forth on the sides of mountains most remote from the sea: that there should way be made for rivers through straits and rocks, and subterraneous vaults, so that one would think that nature had cut a way on purpose to derive the water, which else would overthrow and drown whole countries.—*John Ray* (1678–1705), in “*The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation.*”

Verse 24.—“*How manifold are thy works!*” When we contemplate the wonderful works of Nature, and walking about at leisure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, considering the stately beauty, constant order, and sumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious splendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleasant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant sweetness of plants; the exquisite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God, especially his transcendent goodness, are more conspicuously displayed: so that by them, not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were, of praise have been extorted from the mouths of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and such like men, never suspected guilty of an excessive devotion; then should our hearts be affected with thankful sense, and our lips break forth in praise.—*William Barrow*, 1754—1836.

Verse 24.—He does not undertake to answer his own question, “*How manifold?*” for he confesses God’s works to be greater than his own power of expression; whether these “*works*” belong to the creation of nature or to that of grace. And observe how the concurrent operation of the Blessed Trinity is set forth: “*O Lord, how manifold are thy works,*” teaches of the Father, the Source of all things; “*in wisdom hast thou made them all,*” tells of the Son, the Eternal Word, “*Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God, by whom were all things made, and without him was not anything made that was made*” (1 Cor. i. 24; John i. 3); “*the earth is full of thy riches,*” is spoken of the Holy Ghost, who filleth the world.—*Augustine, Hugo, and Cassiodorus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 24.—“*In wisdom hast thou made them all.*” Not only one thing, as the heavens, Ps. cxxxvi. 5; but everything is wisely contrived and made; there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God in the most minute thing his hands have made; he has made everything beautiful in its season. A skilful artificer, when he has finished his work and looks it over again, often finds some fault or another in it: but when the Lord had finished his works of creation, and looked over them, he saw that all was good; infinite wisdom itself could find no blemish in them: what weak, foolish, stupid creatures must they be that pretend to charge any of the works of God with folly or want of wisdom?—*John Gill.*

Verse 24.—“*The earth is full of thy riches,*” literally, *thy possessions*; these thou keepest not to thyself, but bleesest thy creatures with.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 25.—“*Things innumerable.*” The waters teem with more life than the land. Beneath a surface less varied than that of the continents, the sea enfolds in its bosom an exuberance of life, of which no other region of the globe can afford the faintest idea. Its life extends from the poles to the equator, from east to west. Everywhere the sea is peopled; everywhere, down to its unfathomable depths, live and sport creatures suited to the locality. In every spot of its vast expanse the naturalist finds instruction, and the philosopher meditation, while the very varieties of life tend to impress upon our souls a feeling of gratitude to the Creator of the universe. Yes, the shores of the ocean and its depths, its plains and its mountains, its valleys and its precipices, even its *débris*, are enlivened and beautified by thousands of living beings. There are the solitary or sociable plants, upright or pendant, stretching in prairies, grouped in oases, or growing in immense forests. These plants give a cover to and feed millions of animals which creep, run, swim, fly, burrow in the soil, attach themselves to roots, lodge in the crevices, or build for themselves shelters, which seek or fly from one another, which pursue or fight each other, which caress each other with affection or devour each other without pity. Charles Darwin truly says that the terrestrial forests do not contain anything like the number of animals as those of the sea. The ocean, which is for man the element of death, is for myriads of animals a home of life and health. There is joy in its waves, there is happiness upon its shores, and heavenly blue everywhere.—*Moquin Tandon*, in “*The World of the Sea*,” *Translated and enlarged by H. Martin Hart*, 1869.

Verses 25, 26.—“*Both small and great beasts.*”

The sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
 Of fish that with their fins and shining scales
 Glide under the green wave, in shoals that oft
 Bank the mid sea; part single, or with mate,
 Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
 Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
 Show to the sun their wav'd coats drop't with gold;
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
 In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal
 And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
 Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
 Stretch'd like a promontory sleeps or swims,
 And seems a moving land; and at his gills
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.

—*John Milton.*

Verse 26.—“*Ships.*” The original of ships was doubtless Noah's ark, so that they owe their first draught to God himself.—*John Gill.*

Verse 26.—“*There go the ships.*” Far from separating from each other the nations of the earth (as the ancients, still inexperienced in navigation, supposed), the sea is the great highway of the human race, and unites all its various tribes into one common family by the beneficial bonds of commerce. Countless fleets are constantly furlowing its bosom, to enrich, by perpetual exchanges, all the countries of the globe with the products of every zone, to convey the fruits of the tropical world to the children of the chilly north, or to transport the manufactures of colder climes to the inhabitants of the equatorial regions. With the growth of commerce civilization also spreads athwart the wide causeway of the ocean from shore to shore; it first dawned on the borders of the sea, and its chief seats are still to be found along its confines.—*G. Hartwig*, in “*The Harmonies of Nature*,” 1866.

Verse 26.—“*Leviathan.*” There is ground for thinking (though this is denied by some) that in several passages the term *leviathan* is used generically, much as we employ *dragon*; and that it denotes a great sea-monster.—*E. P. Barrows*, in “*Biblical Geography and Antiquities.*”

Verse 26.—“*To play therein.*” Dreadful and tempestuous as the sea may appear, and uncontrollable in its billows and surges, it is only the field of *sport*, the *play-ground*, the *bowling green*, to those huge marine monsters.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 26.—“*Leviathan . . . made to play therein.*” With such wonderful strength is the tail of the whale endowed, that the largest of these animals, measuring some

eighty feet in length, are able by its aid to leap clear out of the water, as if they were little fish leaping after flies. This movement is technically termed "breaching," and the sound which is produced by the huge carcass as it falls upon the water is so powerful as to be heard for a distance of several miles.—*J. G. Wood, in "The Illustrated Natural History," 1861.*

Verse 26.—"Leviathan . . . made to play therein." Though these immense mam-miferous fish have no legs, they swim with great swiftness, and they gambol in the mountains of water lashed up by the storms.—*Moquin Tandon.*

Verse 26.—"Leviathan . . . made to play." He is made to "play in the sea"; he hath nothing to do as man hath, that "goes forth to his work"; he hath nothing to fear as the beasts have, that lie down in their dens; and therefore he plays with the waters: it is a pity any of the children of men, that have nobler powers, and were made for nobler purposes, should live as if they were sent into the world like the leviathan into the waters, to play therein, spending all their time in pastime.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 26.—"Therein." Fish, great and small, sport and play in the element, but as soon as they are brought out of it, they languish and die. Mark, O soul! what thy element is, if thou wouldest live joyful and blessed.—*Starke, in Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 27.—There are five things to be observed in God's sustaining all animals. His power, which alone suffices for all: "*These wait all upon thee.*" Wisdom, which selects a fitting time: "*That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*" His majesty rising above all: "*That thou givest them they gather,*" like the crumbs falling from the table of their supreme Lord. His liberality, which retains nothing in his open hand that it does not give: "*Thou openest thine hand.*" His original goodness that flows down to all: "*They are filled with good,*" that is, with the good things that spring from thy goodness.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 27.—"That thou mayest give them their meat in due season;" or, in his time; every one in its own time which is natural to them, and they have been used to, at which time the Lord gives it to them, and they take it; it would be well if men would do so likewise, eat and drink in proper and due time, Eccles. x. 17. Christ speaks a word in season to weary souls; his ministers give to every one his portion of meat in due season; and a word spoken in due season, how good and sweet is it? Is. vii. 4; Luke xii. 12; Prov. xv. 23.—*John Gill.*

Verses 27—32.—

These, Lord, all wait on thee, that thou their food may'st give them;
Thou to their wants attendest;
They gather what thou sendest;
Thine hand thou openest, all their need supplying,
O'erlookest not the least, the greatest satisfying.

When thou dost hide thy face a sudden change comes o'er them
Their breath in myriads taken,
They die, no more t' awaken;
But myriads more thy Spirit soon createth,
And the whole face of nature quickly renovateth.

The glory of the Lord, changeless, endures for ever;
In all his works delighting,
Nor e'en the smallest slighting;

Yet, if he frown, earth shrinks with fear before him,
And, at his touch, the hills with kindling flames adore him.

—*John Burton.*

Verse 28.—"That thou givest them they gather." This sentence describes *The Commissariat of Creation*. The problem is the feeding of "the creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts," which swarm the sea; the armies of birds which fill the air, and the vast hordes of animals which people the dry land; and in this sentence we have the problem solved, "*That thou givest them they gather.*" The work is stupendous, but it is done with ease because the Worker is infinite: if he were not at the head of it the task would never be accomplished. Blessed be God for the great Thou of the text. It is every way our sweetest consolation that the personal God is still at work in the world: leviathan in the ocean, and the sparrow

on the bough, may be alike glad of this ; and we, the children of the great Father, much more.

The general principle of the text is, God gives to his creatures, and his creatures gather. That general principle we shall apply to our own case as men and women ; for it is as true of us as it is of the fish of the sea, and the cattle on the hills : “ *That thou givest them they gather.*” I. *We have only to gather, for God gives.* In temporal things : God gives us day by day our daily bread, and our business is simply to gather it. As to *spirituals*, the principle is true, most emphatically, we have, in the matter of grace, only to gather what God gives. The natural man thinks that he has to earn divine favour ; that he has to purchase the blessing of heaven ; but he is in grave error : the soul has only to receive that which Jesus freely gives. II. *We can only gather what God gives ;* however eager we may be, there is the end of the matter. The diligent bird shall not be able to gather more than the Lord has given it ; neither shall the most avaricious and covetous man. “ It is vain for you to rise up early and to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness ; for so he giveth his beloved sleep.” III. *We must gather what God gives, or else we shall get no good by his bountiful giving.* God feeds the creeping things innumerable, but each creature collects the provender for itself. The huge leviathan receives his vast provision, but he must go ploughing through the boundless meadows and gather up the myriads of minute objects which supply his need. The fish must leap up to catch the fly, the swallow must hawk for its food, the young lions must hunt for their prey. IV. The fourth turn of the text gives us the sweet thought that, *we may gather what he gives.* We have divine permission to enjoy freely what the Lord bestows. V. The last thing is, *God will always give us something to gather.* It is written, “ The Lord will provide.” Thus it is also in spiritual things. If you are willing to gather, God will always give.—C. H. S.

Verse 28.—“ Gather.” The verb rendered “ gather ” means to pick up or collect from the ground. It is used in the history of the manna (Ex. xvi. 1, 5, 16), to which there is obvious allusion. The act of gathering from the ground seems to presuppose a previous throwing down from heaven.—J. A. Alexander.

Verse 28.—“ Thou openest thine hand.” The Greek expositors take the opening of the hand to indicate facility. I am of opinion that it refers also to abundance and liberality, as in Ps. cxlv. 16 :—“ *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*” Using this same formula, God commands us *not to close the hand, but to open it to the poor.*—Lorinus.

Verse 29.—“ They are troubled.” They are confounded ; they are overwhelmed with terror and amazement. The word “ troubled ” by no means conveys the sense of the original word—*bahal*—which means properly to tremble ; to be in trepidation ; to be filled with terror ; to be amazed ; to be confounded. It is that kind of consternation which one has when all support and protection are withdrawn, and when inevitable ruin stares one in the face. So when God turns away, all their support is gone, all their resources fail, and *they must die.* They are represented as conscious of this ; or this is what would occur if they were conscious.—Albert Barnes.

Verse 30.—“ Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created.” The Spirit of God creates every day : what is it that continueth things in their created being, but providence ? That is a true axiom in divinity, *Providence is creation continued.* Now the Spirit of God who created at first, creates to this day : “ *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created.*” The work of creation was finished in the first six days of the world, but the work of creation is renewed every day, and so continued to the end of the world. Successive providential creation as well as original creation is ascribed to the Spirit. “ *And thou renewest the face of the earth.*” Thou makest a new world ; and thus God makes a new world every year, sending forth his Spirit, or quickening power, in the rain and sun to renew the face of the earth. And as the Lord sends forth his power in providential mercies, so in providential judgments.—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 31.—“ The Lord shall rejoice in his works.” Man alone amongst the creatures grieves God, and brought tears from the eyes of Christ, who rejoiced in Spirit, because the Father had deigned to reveal the mysteries to the little ones. It repented God that he had made man, because as a wise son maketh a glad father, so a foolish one is a vexation to him.—Lorinus.

Verse 31 (last clause).—What the Psalmist adds, *Let Jehovah rejoice in his works*, is not superfluous, for he desires that the order which God has established from the beginning may be continued in the lawful use of his gifts. As we read in Gen. vi. 6, that “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth;” so when he sees that the good things which he bestows are polluted by our corruptions, he ceases to take delight in bestowing them. And certainly the confusion and disorder which take place, when the elements cease to perform their office, testify that God, displeased and wearied out, is provoked to discontinue, and put a stop to the regular course of his beneficence; although anger and impatience have strictly speaking no place in his mind. What is here taught is, that he bears the character of the best of fathers, who takes pleasure in tenderly cherishing his children, and in bountifully nourishing them.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 32.—“*He looketh on the earth and it trembleth.*” As man can soon give a cast with his eye, so soon can God shake the earth, that is, either the whole mass of the earth, or the inferior sort of men on the earth when he “*looketh*,” or casteth an angry eye “*upon the earth, it trembleth.*” “*He toucheth the hills*” (that is, the powers and principalities of the world), “*and they smoke* ;” if he do but touch them they smoke, that is, the dreadful effects of the power and judgment of God are visible upon them.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 32.—No one save a photographer can sketch the desert around Sinai. Roberts’ views are noble, and to a certain extent true; but they do not represent these desert cliffs and ravines. No artist can rightly do it. Only the photographer can portray the million of minute details that go to make up the bleakness, the wildness, the awfulness, and the dismal loneliness of these unearthly wastes.

About noon I went out and walked upon the convent roof. The star-light over the mountain-peaks was splendid, while the gloom that hung round these enormous precipices and impenetrable ravines was quite oppressive to the spirit. This is the scene of which David spoke. “*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*” This is the mountain “that was touched, and that burned with fire” (Heb. xii. 18). Not the mount that “might be touched,” as our translators have rendered it, but the mount “that was touched,” $\psi\eta\lambda\alpha \phi\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$,—the mount on which the finger of God rested.

We could imagine the black girdle of the thick darkness with which the mountain was surrounded, and the lightnings giving forth their quick fire through this covering, making its blackness blacker. We could imagine, too, the supernatural blaze, kindled by no earthly hand, that shot up out of the midst of this, like a living column of fire, ascending, amid the sound of angelic trumpets and superangelic thunders, to the very heart of heaven.—*Horatius Bonar*, in “*The Desert of Sinai*,” 1858.

Verse 32.—The philosopher labours to investigate the natural cause of earthquakes and volcanoes. Well, let him account as he will, still the immediate power of Jehovah is the true and ultimate cause. God works in these tremendous operations. “*He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*” This is the philosophy of Scripture: this, then, shall be my philosophy. Never was a sentence uttered by uninspired man so sublime as this sentence. The thought is grand beyond conception; and the expression clothes the thought with suitable external majesty. God needs no means by which to give effect to his purpose by his power, yet, in general, he has established means through which he acts. In conformity with this Divine plan, he created by means, and he governs by means. But the means which he has employed in creation, and the means which he employs in providence, are effectual only by his almighty power. The sublimity of the expression in this passage arises from the infinite disproportion between the means and the end. An earthly sovereign looks with anger, and his courtiers tremble. God looks on the earth, and it trembles to its foundation. He touches the mountains, and the volcano smokes, vomiting forth torrents of lava. Hills are said to melt at the presence of the Lord, “Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.” How chill and withering is the breath of that noxious philosophy, that would detach our minds from viewing God in his works of Providence! The Christian who lives in this atmosphere, or on the borders of it, will be unhealthy and unfruitful in true works of righteousness. This malaria destroys all spiritual life.—*Alexander Carson*.

Verse 32.—“*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*” It’s therefore ill falling into his hands, who can do such terrible things with his looks and touches.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 33.—“*I will sing unto the Lord.*” The Psalmist, exulting in the glorious prospect of the renovation of all things, breaks out in triumphant anticipation of the great event, and says, “*I will sing unto the Lord,*” *בְּעַחַיָּאִי* *bechaiyai*, “with my lives,” the life that I now have, and the life that I shall have hereafter.

“*I will sing praise to my God,*” *בְּעוֹדִי* *beodi*, “in my eternity;” my going on, my endless progression. What astonishing ideas! But then, how shall this great work be brought about? and how shall the new earth be inhabited with righteous spirits only? The answer is (verse 35), “*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.*”—Adam Clarke.

Verses 33—35.—All having been admonished to glorify God, he discloses what he himself is about to do: with his voice he will declare his praises, “*I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live:*” with his hand he will write Psalms, and set them to music, “*I will sing Psalms to my God while I have my being:*” with his mind he will make sweet meditations, “*My meditation of him shall be sweet:*” with will and affection he will seek after God alone, “*I will be glad in the Lord:*” he predicts and desires the destruction of all sinners who think not of praising God, but dishonour him in their words and works, “*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more:*” lastly, with his whole soul and all his powers he will bless God, “*Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.*”—Le Blanc.

Verse 34.—“*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*” A Christian needs to study nothing but *Christ*, there is enough in Christ to take up his study and contemplation all his days; and the more we study Christ, the more we may study him; there will be new wonders still appearing in him.—John Row, 1680.

Verse 34.—“*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*” The last words ever written by Henry Martyn, dying among Mohammedans in Persia, was: I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God, in solitude my company, my Friend and Comforter.

Verse 34.—“*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*” I must meditate on Christ. Let philosophers soar in their contemplations, and walk among the stars; what are the stars to Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person? God manifest in the flesh is a theme which angels rejoice to contemplate.—Samuel Lavington.

Verse 34.—“*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*” First. Take this as an assertion. The meditation on God is sweet. And the sweetness of it should stir us up to the putting of it in practice. Secondly. Take it as a resolution—that he would make it for his own practice; that is, that he would comfort himself in such performances as these are; whilst others took pleasure in other things, he would please himself in communion with God, this should be his solace and delight upon all occasions. David promises himself a great deal of contentment in this exercise of divine meditation which he undertook with much delight: and so likewise do others of God’s servants of the same nature and disposition with him in the like undertakings. Thirdly. Take it as a prayer and petition. It “*shall be,*” that is, *let it be*, the future put for the imperative, as it frequently uses to be; and so the word *gnatam* is to be translated, not, of God, but to God. Let my meditation, or prayer, or converse, be sweet unto him.

Placeat illi meditatio mea, so some good authors interpret it. The English translation, “*Let my words be acceptable,*” and the other before that, “*Oh that my words might please him,*” which comes to one and the same effect, all taking it in the notion of a prayer: this is that which the servants of God have still thought to be most necessary for them (as indeed it is); God’s acceptance of the performances which have been presented by them.—Condensed from Thomas Horton.

Verse 34 (first clause).—All the ancients join in understanding it thus, “*My meditation shall be sweet to him,*” or, as the Jewish Arab, *עִוְוָה* with him, according to that of the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 14: “*Let the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight.*” Thus the Chaldee here, *קִרְבָּה*, before him; the LXXII. *ἡδοναίῳ αὐτοῦ*, “*Let it be sweet to him*”; the Syriac *ܩܪܒܐ* to him, and so the others also. And so *ו* signifies to as well as on.—Henry Hammond.

Verse 34.—“*I will be glad in the Lord.*” Compare this with verse 31, and observe the mutual and reciprocal pleasure and delight between God who is praised and the soul that praises him. God, who rejoices in his works, takes the highest delight in man, the compendium of his other works, and in that work, than which none more excellent can be pursued by man, the work of praising God in which the

blesed are employed. Thus in this very praise of God which is so pleasing to him, David professes to be evermore willing to take delight. *My beloved is mine, sings the Spouse, and I am his.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 35.—“*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,*” etc.—It fell to my lot some years ago, to undertake a walk of some miles, on a summer morning, along a sea-shore of surpassing beauty. It was the Lord’s day, and the language of the Hundred and fourth Psalm rose spontaneously in my mind as one scene after another unfolded itself before the eye. About half way to my destination the road lay through a dirty hamlet, and my meditations were rudely interrupted by the brawling of some people, who looked as if they had been spending the night in a drunken debauch. Well, I thought, the Psalmist must have had some such unpleasant experience. He must have fallen in with people, located in some scene of natural beauty, who, instead of being a holy priesthood to give voice to nature in praise of her Creator, instead of being, in the pure and holy tenor of their lives, the heavenliest note of the general song,—filled it with a harsh discord. His prayer is the vehement expression of a desire that the earth may no longer be marred by the presence of wicked men,—that they may be utterly consumed, and may give place to men animated with the fear of God, just and holy men, men that shall be a crown of beauty on the head of this fair creation. If this be the right explanation of the Psalmist’s prayer, it is not only justifiable, but there is something wrong in our meditations on nature, if we are not disposed to join in it.—*William Binnie.*

Verse 35.—“*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth.*” This imprecation depends on the last clause of the 31st verse, “*Let Jehovah rejoice in his works.*” As the wicked infect the world with their pollutions, the consequence is, that God has less delight in his own workmanship, and is even almost displeased with it. It is impossible, but that this uncleanness, which, being extended and diffused through every part of the world, vitiates and corrupts such a noble product of his hands, must be offensive to him. Since then the wicked, by their perverse abuse of God’s gifts, cause the world in a manner to degenerate and fall away from its first original, the prophet justly desires that they may be exterminated, until the race of them entirely fails. Let us, then, take care so to weigh the providence of God, as that being wholly devoted to obeying him, we may rightly and purely use the benefits which he sanctifies for our enjoying them. Further, let us be grieved, that such precious treasures are wickedly squandered away, and let us regard it as monstrous and detestable, that men not only forget their Maker, but also, as it were, purposely turn to a perverse and an unworthy end, whatever good things he has bestowed upon them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 35.—“*The sinners.*”

All true, all faultless, all in tune,
Creation’s wondrous choir,
Opened in mystic unison,
To last till time expire.

And still it lasts : by day and night,
With one consenting voice,
All hymn thy glory, Lord, aright,
All worship and rejoice.

Man only mars the sweet accord,
O’erpowering with harsh din
The music of thy works and word,
Ill matched with grief and sin.

—*John Keble, in “The Christian Year.”*

Verse 35.—“*Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.*” Rehearse the first words of the Psalm which are the same as these. They are here repeated as if to hint that the end of good men is like their beginning, and that he is not of the number who begin in the spirit and seek to be made perfect in the flesh. A worthy beginning of the Psalm, says Cassiodorus, and a worthy end, ever to bless him who never at any time fails to be with the faithful. The soul which blesses shall be made fat. . . Reined in by this rein of divine praise, he shall never perish.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 35.—This is the first place where HALLELUJAH (“*Praise ye the Lord*”) occurs in the Book of Psalms. It is produced by a retrospect of *Creation*, and by

the contemplation of God's goodness in the preservation of all the creatures of his hand, and also by a prospective view of that future Sabbath, when, by the removal of evil men from communion with the good, God will be enabled to look on his works, as he did on the first Sabbath, before the Tempter had marred them, and see "everything very good." See Gen. i. 31; ii. 2, 3.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 35.—"Praise ye the Lord." This is the first time that we meet with *Hallelujah*; and it comes in here upon occasion of the destruction of the wicked; and the last time we meet with it, it is upon the like occasion, when the New Testament Babylon is consumed, this is the burthen of the song, "*Hallelujah*," Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6.—*Matthew Henry.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1 (first clause).—An exhortation to one's own heart. I. To remember the Lord as the first cause of all good. Bless not man, or fate, but *the Lord*. II. To do this in a loving, grateful, hearty, praiseful manner. *Bless the Lord*. III. To do it truly and intensely. *O my soul*. IV. To do it *now*—for various reasons and in all possible ways.

Verse 1 (second clause).—He is all this essentially, and in nature, providence, grace, and judgment.

Verse 2 (first clause).—The clearest revelation of God is still a concealment; even light is but a covering to him. God is clothed with light as we see him in his omniscience, his revelation, his glory in heaven, and his grace on earth.

Verse 3 (last clause).—I. God is leisurely in his haste: "he walketh," etc. II. God is swift even in his slackness: "he walketh on the wings of the wind." III. The practical conclusions are that there is time enough for the divine purposes, but none for our trifling; and that we should both wait with patience for the victory of his cause and hasten it by holy activity.

Verse 4.—I. The Nature of Angels. Spirits. II. The Lord of Angels. "Who maketh," etc. What must his own spirituality be who maketh spirits? III. The ministry of Angels. 1. Their office: "ministers." 2. Their activity or zeal: "a flaming fire." 3. Their dependence: *made ministers.*—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 7.—The power of the divine word in nature shows its power in other spheres.

Verse 9.—I. All things have their appointed bounds. II. To pass those bounds without special permission by God is transgression. "Thou hast set a bound that they *may not pass.*" III. Extraordinary cases should be followed by a return to ordinary duties. "That they turn not again," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—The thoughtfulness of God for those who, like the valleys, are lowly, hidden, and needy: the abiding character of his supplies: and the joyous results of his care.

Verses 10, 11.—God's care for wild creatures, reflections from it. (1.) Shall he not much more care for his people? (2.) Will he not look after wild, wandering men? (3.) Ought we not also to care for all that live?

Verses 10—12.—From the fertility, life and music which mark the course of a stream, illustrate the beneficial influences of the Gospel.—*C. A. Davis.*

Verse 14.—"In the Hayfield." (See "*Spurgeon's Sermons*," No. 757.) "*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle.*" I. Grass is in itself instructive. 1. As the symbol of our mortality: "All flesh is grass." 2. As an emblem of the wicked. 3. As a picture of the elect of God. *Isai. xxxv. 7; xlv. 4; Ps. lxxii. 6, 16.* 4. Grass is comparable to the food wherewith the Lord supplies the necessities of his chosen ones. *Ps. xxiii. 2; S. of Sol. i. 7.* II. God is seen in the growing of the grass. 1. As a worker: "He causeth," etc. See God in common things—in solitary things. 2. See God as a care-taker: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle." God cares for the beasts—the helpless—dumb and speechless things—providing suitable food for them: "grass." Let us, then, see his hand in providence at all times. III. God's working in the grass for the cattle gives us illustrations concerning grace. 1. God "cares for oxen" and satisfies their wants: there must then be something somewhere to satisfy the needs of the nobler creature man, and his immortal soul. 2. Though God provides the grass for the cattle, the cattle must eat it themselves.

The Lord Jesus Christ is provided as the food of the soul. We must, by faith, receive and feed upon Christ. 3. Preventing grace may here be seen in a symbol: before the cattle were made, in this world there was grass. There were covenant supplies for God's people before they were in the world. 4. Here is an illustration of free grace: the cattle bring nothing to purchase the food. Why is this? (1) Because they belong to him, Ps. l. 10. (2) Because he has entered into a covenant with them to feed them, Gen. ix. 9, 10.

In the text there is a mighty blow to free-will: "*He causeth the grass to grow.*" Grace does not grow in the heart without a divine cause. If God cares to make grass grow he will also make us grow in grace. Again; the grass does not grow without an object; it is "for the cattle": but the cattle grow for man. What, then, does man grow for? Observe, further, that the existence of the grass is necessary to complete the chain of nature. So the meaneast child of God is necessary to the family.

Verse 16.—"The Cedars of Lebanon." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 529.) I. The absence of all human culture. These trees are peculiarly the Lord's trees, because, 1. They owe their planting entirely to him: "He hath planted." 2. They are not dependent upon man for their watering. 3. No mortal might protects them. 4. As to their inspection—they preserve a sublime indifference to human gaze. 5. Their exultation is all for God. 6. There is not a cedar upon Lebanon which is not independent of man in its expectations. II. The glorious display of divine care. 1. In the abundance of their supply. 2. They are always green. 3. Observe the grandeur and size of these trees. 4. Their fragrance. 5. Their perpetuity. 6. They are very venerable. III. The fulness of living principle: "The trees of the Lord are full of sap." 1. This is vitally necessary. 2. It is essentially mysterious. 3. It is radically secret. 4. It is permanently active. 5. It is externally operative. 6. It is abundantly to be desired.

Verses 17, 18.—"Lessons from Nature." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1,005.) I. For each place God has prepared a suitable form of life: for "the fir trees," "the stork"; for "the high hills," "the wild goat," etc. So, for all parts of the spiritual universe God has provided suitable forms of divine life. 1. Each age has its saints. 2. In every rank they are to be found. The Christian religion is equally well adapted for all conditions. 3. In every church spiritual life is to be found. 4. God's people are to be found in every city. II. Each creature has its appropriate place. 1. Each man has by God a providential position appointed to him. 2. This is also true of our spiritual experience. 3. The same holds good as to individuality of character. III. Every creature that God has made is provided with shelter. IV. For each creature the shelter is appropriate. V. Each creature uses its shelter.

Verse 19.—I. The wisdom of God as displayed in the material heavens. In the changes of the moon and the variety of the seasons. II. The goodness of God as there displayed. In the adaptation of these changes to the wants and enjoyments of men. III. The faithfulness of God as there displayed. Inspiring confidence in his creatures by their regularity.

"So like the sun may I fulfil
The appointed duties of the day;
With ready mind and active will
March on and keep my heavenly way."

Verse 20.—Darkness and the beasts that creep forth therein. 1. Ignorance of God, and unrestrained lusts. Rom. i. 2. Sins discovered. Beasts there before, but not noticed, now terrify man. 3. Spiritual despondency, dismay, despair, etc. 4. Church lethargy. All sorts of heresies, etc., begin to creep forth. 5. Papal influence. Monks, friars, priests, etc., creep about in this dark age.—A. G. Brown.

Verses 20—23.—I. Night work is for wild beasts: "Thou makest darkness," etc. II. Day work is for men: "Man goeth forth," etc. Good men do their work by day; bad men by night: their work is in the dark. Ministers who creep into their studies by night, and "roar after their prey," and "seek their meat from God," are more like wild beasts than rational men.—G. R.

Verse 21.—Inarticulate prayers, or how faulty the expression may be and yet how real the prayer in the esteem of God.

Verse 22.—From the effect of sunrise on the beasts of prey, exhibit the influence of Divine Grace on our evil passions.—C. A. D.

Verse 23.—"Early Closing." A sermon preached on behalf of the "Early Closing Association," by James Hamilton, D.D., 1850. In the "Pulpit," Vol. 57.

Verse 24.—I. The language of wonder: "O Lord, how manifold," etc. Their number, variety, co-operation, harmony. II. Of admiration: "In wisdom," etc. Everywhere the same wisdom displayed. God, says Dr. Chalmers, is as great in minutiae as in magnitude. III. Of gratitude: "The earth is full," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 24.—I. The works of the Lord are multitudinous and varied. II. They are so constructed as to show the most consummate wisdom in their *design*, and in the *end* for which they are formed. III. They are all God's *property*, and should be used only in reference to the end for which they were created. All *abuse* and *waste* of God's creatures are spoil and robbery on the property of the Creator.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 26.—"There go the ships." (See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1,259.) I. We see that the ships go. 1. The ships are intended for going. 2. The ships in going at last disappear from view. 3. The ships as they go are going upon business. 4. The ships sail upon a changeful sea. II. How go the ships? 1. They must go according to the wind. 2. But still the mariner does not go by the wind without exertion on his own part. 3. They have to be guided and steered by the helm. 4. He who manages the helm seeks direction from charts and lights. 5. They go according to their build. III. Let us signal them. 1. Who is your owner? 2. What is your cargo? 3. Where are you going?

Verses 27–30.—Trace the analogy in the spiritual world. The saints waiting, v. 27; their sustenance from the opened hand, v. 28; their trouble under the hidden face; their death if the Spirit were gone, v. 29; their revival when the Spirit returns, v. 30.

Verses 29, 30.—I. The commencement of life is from God: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit," etc. II. The continuance of life is from God: "Thou renewest," etc. III. The decline of life is from God: "Thou hidest thy face," etc. IV. The cessation of life is from God: "Thou takest away their breath," etc. V. The resurrection of life is from God: "Thou renewest," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 30.—The season of Spring and its mortal analogies. See John Foster's "Lectures," 1844.

Verse 32.—I. What there is in a look of God. "He looketh," etc. 1. What in a look of anger. 2. What in a look of love. He looked out of the fiery pillar upon the Egyptians. "The Lord hath looked out from his pillar of glory," etc. He gave another look from the same pillar to Israel. II. What there is in a Touch of God: "He toucheth," etc. A touch of his may raise a soul to heaven, or sink a soul to hell.—*G. R.*

Verse 33.—I. The singer—"I." II. The song—"praises." III. The audience—"The Lord," "My God." IV. The length of the song—"long as I live; while I have my being."—*A. G. B.*

Verse 33.—Two "I wills." I. Because he made me live. II. Because he has made me to live in him. III. Because he is *JEHOVAH* and "my God." IV. Because I shall live for ever, in the best sense.

Verse 34.—I. David's contemplation. II. David's exultation.—*Thomas Horton*.

Verse 35.—I. They who praise not God are not fit to be on the earth: "Let the sinners be consumed," etc. II. Much less are they fit to be in heaven. III. They who praise God are fit both for earth and heaven. Though others do not praise him here, the saints will. "Bless thou the Lord," etc. 1. In opposition to others, they praise him on earth. 2. In harmony with others, they praise him in heaven, etc. Everywhere it is with them, "Praise ye the Lord."—*G. R.*