

## PSALM CXXXVI.

We know not by whom this Psalm was written, but we do know that it was sung in Solomon's temple (2 Chron. vii. 3, 6), and by the armies of Jehoshaphat when they sang themselves into victory in the wilderness of Tekoa. From the striking form of it we should infer that it was a popular hymn among the Lord's ancient people. Most hymns with a solid, simple chorus become favourites with congregations, and this is sure to have been one of the best beloved. It contains nothing but praise. It is tuned to rapture, and can only be fully enjoyed by a devoutly grateful heart.

It commences with a three-fold praise to the Triune Lord (1—3), then it gives us six notes of praise to the Creator (4—9), six more upon deliverance from Egypt (10—15), and seven upon the journey through the wilderness and the entrance into Canaan. Then we have two happy verses of personal gratitude for present mercy (23 and 24), one (verse 25) to tell of the Lord's universal providence, and a closing verse to excite to never-ending praise.

### EXPOSITION.

○ GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1. "*O give thanks unto the LORD.*" The exhortation is intensely earnest: the Psalmist pleads with the Lord's people with an "O," three times repeated. Thanks are the least that we can offer, and these we ought freely to give. The inspired writer calls us to praise Jehovah for all his goodness to us, and all the greatness of his power in blessing his chosen. We thank our parents, let us praise our heavenly Father; we are grateful to our benefactors, let us give thanks unto the Giver of all good. "*For he is good.*" Essentially he is goodness itself, practically all that he does is good, relatively he is good to his creatures. Let us thank him that we have seen, proved, and tasted that he is good. He is good beyond all others; indeed, he alone is good in the highest sense; he is the source of good, the good of all good, the sustainer of good, the perfecter of good, and the rewarder of good. For this he deserves the constant gratitude of his people. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" We shall have this repeated in every verse of this song, but not once too often. It is the sweetest stanza that a man can sing. What joy that there is mercy, mercy with Jehovah, enduring mercy, mercy enduring for ever. We are ever needing it, trying it, praying for it, receiving it: therefore let us for ever sing of it.

"When all else is changing within and around,  
In God and his mercy no change can be found."

2. "*O give thanks unto the God of gods,*" If there be powers in heaven or on earth worthy of the name of gods he is the God of them; from him their dominion comes, their authority is derived from him, and their very existence is dependent upon his will. Moreover, for the moment assuming that the deities of the heathen were gods, yet none of them could be compared with our Elohim, who is infinitely beyond what they are fabled to be. Jehovah is our God, to be worshipped and adored, and he is worthy of our reverence to the highest degree. If the heathen cultivate the worship of their gods with zeal, how much more intently should we seek the glory of the God of gods—the only true and real God. Foolish persons have gathered from this verse that the Israelites believed in the existence of many gods, at the same time believing that their Jehovah was the chief among them; but this is an absurd inference, since gods who have a God over them cannot possibly be gods themselves. The words are to be understood after the usual manner of human speech, in which things are often spoken of not as they really are, but as they profess to be. God as God is worthy of our warmest thanks, "*for his mercy endureth*

*for ever.*" Imagine supreme Godhead without everlasting mercy! It would then have been as fruitful a source of terror as it is now a fountain of thanksgiving. Let the Highest be praised in the highest style, for right well do his nature and his acts deserve the gratitude of all his creatures.

Praise your God with right good will,  
For his love endureth still.

3. "*O give thanks to the Lord of lords.*" There are lords many, but Jehovah is the Lord of them. All lordship is vested in the Eternal. He makes and administers law, he rules and governs mind and matter, he possesses in himself all sovereignty and power. All lords in the plural are summed up in this Lord in the singular: he is more lordly than all emperors and kings condensed into one. For this we may well be thankful, for we know the superior Sovereign will rectify the abuses of the underlings who now lord it over mankind. He will call these lords to his bar, and reckon with them for every oppression and injustice. He is as truly the Lord of lords as he is Lord over the meanest of the land, and he rules with a strict impartiality, for which every just man should give heartiest thanks. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Yes, he mingles mercy with his justice, and reigns for the benefit of his subjects. He pities the sorrowful, protects the helpless, provides for the needy, and pardons the guilty; and this he does from generation to generation, never wearying of his grace, "because he delighteth in mercy." Let us arouse ourselves to laud our glorious Lord! A third time let us thank him who is our Jehovah, our God, and our Lord; and let this one reason suffice us for three thanksgivings, or for three thousand—

For his mercy shall endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

4 To him who alone doth great wonders: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4. "*To him who alone doeth great wonders.*" Jehovah is the great Thaumaturge, the unrivalled Wonderworker. None can be likened unto him, he is alone in wonder-land, the Creator and Worker of true marvels, compared with which all other remarkable things are as child's play. His works are all great in wonder even when they are not great in size; in fact, in the minute objects of the microscope we behold as great wonders as even the telescope can reveal. All the works of his unrivalled skill are wrought by him alone and unaided, and to him, therefore, must be undivided honour. None of the gods or the lords helped Jehovah in creation, or in the redemption of his people: his own right hand and his holy arm wrought for him these great deeds. What have the gods of the heathen done? If the question be settled by doings, Jehovah is indeed "alone." It is exceedingly wonderful that men should worship gods who can do nothing, and forget the Lord who alone doeth great wonders. Even when the Lord uses men as his instruments, yet the wonder of the work is his alone; therefore let us not trust in men, or idolize them, or tremble before them. Praise is to be rendered to Jehovah, "*for his mercy endureth for ever.*" The mercy of the wonder is the wonder of the mercy; and the enduring nature of that mercy is the central wonder of that wonder. The Lord causes us often to sit down in amazement as we see what his mercy has wrought out and prepared for us: "wonders of grace to God belong," yea, great wonders and unsearchable. Oh the depth! Glory be to his name world without end!

Doing wondrous deeds alone,  
Mercy sits upon his throne.

5. "*To him that by wisdom made the heavens.*" His goodness appears in creating the upper regions. He set his wisdom to the task of fashioning a firmament, or

an atmosphere suitable for a world upon which mortal men should dwell. What a mass of wisdom lies hidden in this one creating act ! The discoveries of our keenest observers have never searched out all the evidences of design which are crowded together in this work of God's hands. The lives of plants, animals, and men are dependent upon the fashioning of our heavens : had the skies been other than they are we had not been here to praise God. Divine foresight planned the air and the clouds, with a view to the human race. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" The Psalmist's details of mercy begin in the loftiest regions, and gradually descend from the heavens to "our low estate" (verse 23) ; and this is an ascent, for mercy becomes greater as its objects become less worthy. Mercy is far-reaching, long-enduring, all-encompassing. Nothing is too high for its reach, as nothing is beneath its stoop.

High as heaven his wisdom reigns,  
Mercy on the throne remains.

6. "*To him that stretched out the earth above the waters.*" Lifting it up from the mingled mass, the dank morass, the bottomless bog, of mixed land and sea ; and so fitting it to be the abode of man. Who but the Lord could have wrought this marvel ? Few even think of the divine wisdom and power which performed all this of old ; yet, if a continent can be proved to have risen or fallen an inch within historic memory, the fact is recorded in the "transactions" of learned societies, and discussed at every gathering of philosophers. "*For his mercy endureth for ever,*" as is seen in the original upheaval and perpetual upstanding of the habitable land, so that no deluge drowns the race. By his strength he sets fast the mountains and consolidates the land upon which we sojourn.

From the flood he lifts the land :  
Firm his mercies ever stand.

7. "*To him that made great lights.*" This also is a creating miracle worthy of our loudest thanks. What could men have done without light ? Though they had the heavens above them, and dry land to move upon, yet what could they see, and where could they go without light ? Thanks be to the Lord, who has not consigned us to darkness. In great mercy he has not left us to an uncertain, indistinct light, floating about fitfully, and without order ; but he has concentrated light upon two grand luminaries, which, as far as we are concerned, are to us "great lights." The Psalmist is making a song for common people, not for your critical savans,—and so he sings of the sun and moon as they appear to us,—the greatest of lights. These the Lord created in the beginning ; and for the present age of man made or constituted them light-bearers for the world. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Mercy gleams in every ray of light, and it is most clearly seen in the arrangement by which it is distributed with order and regularity from the sun and moon.

Lamps he lit in heaven's heights,  
For in mercy he delights.

8. "*The sun to rule by day.*" We cannot be too specific in our praises ; after mentioning great lights, we may sing of each of them, and yet not outwear our theme. The influences of the sun are too many for us to enumerate them all, but untold benefits come to all orders of beings by its light, warmth, and other operations. Whenever we sit in the sunshine, our gratitude should be kindled. The sun is a great ruler, and his government is pure beneficence, because by God's mercy it is moderated to our feebleness ; let all who rule take lessons from the sun which rules to bless. By day we may well give thanks, for God gives cheer. The sun rules because God rules ; it is not the sun which we should worship, like the Parsees ; but the Creator of the sun, as he did who wrote this sacred song. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Day unto day uttereth speech concerning the mercy of the Lord ; every sunbeam is a mercy, for it falls on undeserving sinners who else would sit in doleful darkness, and find earth a hell. Milton puts it well :

He, the golden tressed sun  
Caused all day his course to run ;  
For his mercy shall endure  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

9. "*The moon and stars to rule by night.*" No hour is left without rule. Blessed be God, he leaves us never to the doom of anarchy. The rule is one of light and

benediction. The moon with her charming changes, and the stars in their fixed spheres gladden the night. When the season would be dark and dreary because of the absence of the sun, forth come the many minor comforters. The sun is enough alone; but when he is gone a numerous band cannot suffice to give more than a humble imitation of his radiance. Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, alone, can do more for us than all his servants put together. He makes our day. When he is hidden, it is night, and remains night, let our human comforters shine at their full. What mercy is seen in the lamps of heaven gladdening our landscape at night! What equal mercy in all the influences of the moon upon the tides, those life-floods of the earth! The Lord is the Maker of every star, be the stars what they may; he calleth them all by their names, and at his bidding each messenger with his torch enlightens our darkness. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Let our thanks be as many as the stars, and let our lives reflect the goodness of the Lord, even as the moon reflects the light of the sun. The nightly guides and illuminators of men on land and sea are not for now and then, but for all time. They shone on Adam, and they shine on us. Thus they are tokens and pledges of undying grace to men; and we may sing with our Scotch friends—

For certainly  
His mercies dure  
Most firm and sure  
Eternally.

10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

11 And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

10. We have heard of the glory of the world's creation, we are now to praise the Lord for the creation of his favoured nation by their Exodus from Egypt. Because the monarch of Egypt stood in the way of the Lord's gracious purposes it became needful for the Lord to deal with him in justice; but the great design was mercy to Israel, and through Israel mercy to succeeding ages, to all the world. "*To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn.*" The last and greatest of the plagues struck all Egypt to the heart. The sorrow and the terror which it caused throughout the nation it is hardly possible to exaggerate. From king to slave each one was wounded in the tenderest point. The joy and hope of every household was struck down in one moment, and each family had its own wailing. The former blows had missed their aim compared with the last; but that "*smote Egypt.*" The Lord's firstborn had been oppressed by Egypt, and at last the Lord fulfilled his threatening, "*I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.*" Justice lingered but it struck home at last. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Yes, even to the extremity of vengeance upon a whole nation the Lord's mercy to his people endured. He is slow to anger, and judgment is his strange work; but when mercy to men demands severe punishments he will not hold back his hand from the needful surgery. What were all the firstborn of Egypt compared with those divine purposes of mercy to all generations of men which were wrapt up in the deliverance of the elect people? Let us even when the Lord's judgments are abroad in the earth continue to sing of his unfailling grace.

For evermore his love shall last  
For ever sure, for ever fast.

11. "*And brought out Israel from among them.*" Scattered as the tribes were up and down the country, and apparently held in a grasp which would never be

relaxed, the Lord wrought their deliverance, and severed them from their idolatrous task-masters. None of them remained in bondage. The Lord brought them out; brought them out at the very hour when his promise was due; brought them out brought them all out; despite their being mingled among the Egyptians; brought them out never to return. Unto his name let us give thanks for this further proof of his favour to the chosen ones, "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Once the Israelites did not care to go out, but preferred to bear the ills they had rather than risk they knew not what; but the Lord's mercy endured that test also, and ceased not to stir up the nest till the birds were glad to take to their wings. He turned the land of plenty into a house of bondage, and the persecuted nation was glad to escape from slavery. The unailing mercy of the Lord is gloriously seen in his separating his elect from the world. He brings out his redeemed, and they are henceforth a people who show forth his praise.

For God doth prove  
Our constant friend;  
His boundless love  
Shall never end.

12. "*With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm.*" Not only the matter but the manner of the Lord's mighty acts should be the cause of our praise. We ought to bless the Lord for adverbs as well as adjectives. In the Exodus the great power and glory of Jehovah were seen. He dashed in pieces the enemy with his right hand. He led forth his people in no mean or clandestine manner. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there was not one feeble person in all their tribes." Egypt was glad when they departed. God worked with great display of force, and with exceeding majesty; he stretched out his arm like a workman intent on his labour, he lifted up his hand as one who is not ashamed to be seen. Even thus was it in the deliverance of each one of us from the thralldom of sin: "according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." "*For his mercy endureth for ever*"—therefore his power is put forth for the rescue of his own. If one plague will not set them free there shall be ten; but free they shall all be at the appointed hour; not one Israelite shall remain under Pharaoh's power. God will not only use his hand but his arm—his extraordinary power shall be put to the work sooner than his purpose of mercy shall fail.

See he lifts his strong right hand,  
For his mercies steadfast stand.

13. "*To him which divided the Red sea into parts.*" He made a road across the sea-bottom, causing the divided waters to stand like walls on either side. Men deny miracles; but, granted that there is a God, they become easy of belief. Since it requires me to be an atheist that I may logically reject miracles, I prefer the far smaller difficulty of believing in the infinite power of God. He who causes the waters of the sea ordinarily to remain as one mass can with equal readiness divide them. He who can throw a stone in one direction can with the same force throw it another way: the Lord can do precisely what he wills, and he wills to do anything which is for the deliverance of his people. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" and therefore it endures through the sea as well as over the dry land. He will do a new thing to keep his old promise. His way is in the sea, and he will make a way for his people in the same pathless region.

Lo, the Red Sea he divides  
For his mercy sure abides.

14. "*And made Israel to pass through the midst of it.*" HE gave the people courage to follow the predestined track through the yawning abyss, which might well have terrified a veteran host. It needed no little generalship to conduct so vast and motley a company along a way so novel and apparently so dangerous. He made them to pass, by the untrodden road; he led them down into the deep and up again on the further shore in perfect order, keeping their enemies back by the thick darkness of the cloudy pillar. Herein is the glory of God set forth, as all his people see it in their own deliverance from sin. By faith we also give up all reliance upon works and trust ourselves to pass by a way which we have not known, even by the way of reliance upon the atoning blood: thus are we effectually sundered from

the Egypt of our former estate, and our sins themselves are drowned. The people marched dry shod through the heart of the sea. Hallelujah! "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Mercy cleared the road, mercy cheered the host, mercy led them down, and mercy brought them up again. Even to the depth of the sea mercy reaches,—there is no end to it, no obstacle in the way of it, no danger to believers in it, while Jehovah is all around. "Forward!" be *our* watchword as it was that of Israel of old, for mercy doth compass us about.

Through the fire or through the sea  
Still his mercy guardeth thee.

15. "*But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea.*" Here comes the thunder-clap. Though we hear them sounding peal upon peal, yet the judgments of the Lord were only loud-mouthed mercies speaking confusion to the foe, that the chosen might tremble before him no longer. The chariots were thrown over, the horses were overthrown. The King and his warriors were alike overwhelmed; they were hurled from their chariots as locusts are tossed to and fro in the wind. Broken was the power and conquered was the pride of Egypt. Jehovah had vanquished the enemy. "Art thou not it which cut Rahab and wounded the crocodile?" None are too great for the Lord to subdue, none too high for the Lord to abase. The enemy in his fury drove after Israel into the sea, but there his wrath found a terrible recompense beneath the waves. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Yes, mercy continued to protect its children, and therefore called in the aid of justice to fulfil the capital sentence on their foes. Taken red-handed, in the very act of rebellion against their sovereign Lord, the audacious adversaries met the fate which they had themselves invited. He that goes down into the midst of the sea asks to be drowned. Sin is self-damnation. The sinner goes downward of his own choice, and if he finds out too late that he cannot return, is not his blood upon his own head? The finally impenitent, however terrible their doom, will not be witnesses against mercy; but rather this shall aggravate their misery, that they went on in defiance of mercy, and would not yield themselves to him whose mercy endureth for ever. To the Israelites as they sung this song their one thought would be of the rescue of their fathers from the fierce oppressor. Taken like a lamb from between the teeth of the lion, Israel justly praises her Deliverer and chants aloud:

Evermore his love shall reign;  
Pharaoh and his host are slain.

16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

17 To him which smote great kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

19 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

20 And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

16. "*To him which led his people through the wilderness.*" He led them into it, and therefore he was pledged to lead them through it. They were "his people," and yet they must go into the wilderness, and the wilderness must remain as barren as ever it was; but in the end they must come out of it into the promised land. God's dealings are mysterious, but they must be right, simply because they are his. The people knew nothing of the way, but they were led; they were a vast host, yet they were all led; there were neither roads nor tracks, but being led by unerring wisdom they never lost their way. He who brought them out of Egypt, also led them through the wilderness. By Moses, and Aaron, and Jethro, and the pillar of cloud he led them. What a multitude of mercies are comprehended in the conduct of such an enormous host through a region wherein there was no provision even for single travellers; yet the Lord by his infinite power and wisdom conducted a whole nation for forty years through a desert land, and their feet did not swell, neither did their garments wax old in all the journey. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Their conduct in the wilderness tested his mercy most severely, but it bore the

strain; many a time he forgave them; and though he smote them for their transgressions, yet he waited to be gracious and speedily turned to them in compassion. *Their* faithfulness soon failed, but *his* did not: the fiery, cloudy pillar which never ceased to lead the van was the visible proof of his immutable love—

For his mercy, changing never,  
Still endureth, sure for ever.

17. "*To him which smote great kings.*" Within sight of their inheritance Israel had to face powerful enemies. Kings judged to be great because of the armies at their back blocked up their road. This difficulty soon disappeared, for the Lord smote their adversaries, and a single stroke sufficed for their destruction. He who had subdued the really mighty ruler of Egypt made short work of these petty sovereigns, great though they were in the esteem of neighbouring princes. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Mercy, which had brought the chosen tribes so far, would not be balked by the opposition of boastful foes. The Lord who smote Pharaoh at the beginning of the wilderness march, smote Sihon and Og at the close of it. How could these kings hope to succeed when even mercy itself was in arms against them.

Evermore his mercy stands  
Saving from the foeman's hands.

18. "*And slew famous kings.*" What good was their fame to them? As they opposed God they became infamous rather than famous. Their deaths made the Lord's fame to increase among the nations while their fame ended in disgraceful defeat. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Israelitish patriots felt that they could never have too much of this music; God had protected their nation, and they chanted his praises with unwearied iteration.

Kings he smote despite their fame,  
For his mercy's still the same.

19. "*Sihon king of the Amorites.*" Let the name be mentioned that the mercy may be the better remembered. Sihon smote Moab, but he could not smite Israel, for the Lord smote *him*. He was valiant and powerful, so as to be both great and famous; but as he wilfully refused to give a peaceful passage to the Israelites, and fought against them in malice, there was no choice for it but to let him run into that destruction which he courted. His fall was speedy and final, and the chosen people were so struck with it that they sung of his overthrow in their national songs. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" His mercy is no respecter of persons, and neither the greatness nor the fame of Sihon could protect him after he had dared to attack Israel. The Lord will not forsake his people because Sihon blusters.

Come what may  
By night or day,  
Still most sure,  
His love shall dure.

20. "*And Og the king of Bashan.*" He was of the race of the giants, but he was routed like a pigmy when he entered the lists with Israel's God. The Lord's people were called upon to fight against him, but it was God who won the victory. The fastnesses of Bashan were no defence against Jehovah. Og was soon ousted from his stronghold when the captain of the Lord's host led the war against him. He had to exchange his bedstead of iron for a bed in the dust, for he fell on the battlefield. Glory be to the divine conqueror, "*for his mercy endureth for ever.*"

Giant kings before him yield,  
Mercy ever holds the field.

If Sihon could not turn the Lord from his purpose we may be sure that Og could not. He who delivers us out of one trouble will rescue us out of another, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his grace in us.

21. "*And gave their land for an heritage.*" As Lord of the whole earth he transferred his estate from one tenant to another. The land did not become the property of the Israelites by their own sword and bow, but by a grant from the throne. This was the great end which all along had been aimed at from Egypt to Jordan. He who brought his people out also brought them in. He who had promised the and

to the seed of Abraham also saw to it that the deed of gift did not remain a dead letter. Both our temporal and our spiritual estates come to us by royal charter. What God gives us is ours by the best of titles. Inheritance by God's gift is a tenure which even Satan cannot dispute. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Faithful love endures without end, and secures its own end. "Thou wilt surely bring them in," said the prophet poet; and here we see the deed complete.

Till they reach the promised land  
Mercy still the same must stand.

22. "*Even an heritage unto Israel his servant.*" Repetitions are effective in poetry, and the more so if there be some little variation in them, bringing out into fuller light some point which else had not been noticed. The lands of the heathen kings were given to "Israel," the name by which the chosen seed is here mentioned for the third time in the Psalm, with the addition of the words, "his servant." The leasehold of Canaan to Israel after the flesh was made dependent upon suit and service rendered to the Lord-of-the-manor by whom the lease was granted. It was a country worth singing about, richly justifying the two stanzas devoted to it. The division of the country by lot, and the laws by which the portions of ground were reserved to the owners and their descendants for a perpetual inheritance were fit subjects for song. Had other nations enjoyed land-laws which ensured to every family a plot of ground for cultivation, much of the present discontent would never have arisen, beggary would soon have become uncommon, and poverty itself would have been rare. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Yes, mercy fights for the land, mercy divides the spoil among its favoured ones, and mercy secures each man in his inheritance. Glory be to God the faithful One.

For his mercy full and free,  
Wins us full felicity.

23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

23. "*Who remembered us in our low estate.*" Personal mercies awake the sweetest song—"he remembered us." Our prayer is, "Lord remember me," and this is our encouragement—he has remembered us. For the Lord even to think of us is a wealth of mercy. Ours was a sorry estate,—an estate of bankruptcy and mendicancy. Israel rested in its heritage, but we were still in bondage, groaning in captivity: the Lord seemed to have forgotten us, and left us in our sorrow; but it was not so for long: he turned again in his compassion, bethinking himself of his afflicted children. Our state was once so low as to be at hell's mouth; since then it has been low in poverty, bereavement, despondency, sickness, and heart-sorrow, and we fear, also, sinfully low in faith, and love, and every other grace; and yet the Lord has not forgotten us as a dead thing out of mind; but he has tenderly remembered us still. We thought ourselves too small and too worthless for his memory to burden itself about us, yet he remembered us. "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*" Yes, this is one of the best proofs of the immutability of his mercy, for if he could have changed towards any, it would certainly have been towards us who have brought ourselves low, kept ourselves low, and prepared ourselves to sink yet lower. It is memorable mercy to remember us in our low estate: in our highest joys we will exalt Jehovah's name, since of this we are sure,—he will not now desert us—

For his mercy full and free  
Lasteth to eternity.

24. "*And hath redeemed us from our enemies.*" Israel's enemies brought the people low; but the Lord intervened, and turned the tables by a great redemption. The expression implies that they had become like slaves, and were not set free without price and power; for they needed to be "*redeemed.*" In our case the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is an eminent reason for giving thanks unto the Lord. Sin is our enemy, and we are redeemed from it by the atoning blood; Satan is our enemy, and we are redeemed from him by the Redeemer's power; the world is our

enemy, and we are redeemed from it by the Holy Spirit. We are ransomed, let us enjoy our liberty; Christ has wrought our redemption, let us praise his name.

"For his mercy endureth for ever." Even to redemption by the death of his Son did divine mercy stretch itself. What more can be desired? What more can be imagined? Many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it.

E'en to death upon the tree  
Mercy dureth faithfully.

25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

25. "Who giveth food to all flesh." Common providence, which cares for all living things, deserves our devoutest thanks. If we think of heavenly food, by which all saints are supplied, our praises rise to a still greater height; but meanwhile the universal goodness of God in feeding all his creatures is as worthy of praise as his special favours to the elect nation. Because the Lord feeds all life therefore we expect him to take special care of his own family. "For his mercy endureth for ever." Reaching downward even to beasts and reptiles, it is, indeed, a boundless mercy, which knows no limit because of the meanness of its object.

All things living he doth feed,  
His full hand supplies their need;  
For his mercy shall endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

26. "O give thanks unto the God of heaven." The title is full of honour. The Lord is God in the highest realms, and among celestial beings. His throne is set in glory, above all, out of reach of foes, in the place of universal oversight. He who feeds ravens and sparrows is yet the glorious God of the highest realms. Angels count it their glory to proclaim his glory in every heavenly street. See herein the greatness of his nature, the depth of his condescension, and the range of his love. Mark the one sole cause of his bounty—"For his mercy endureth for ever." He hath done all things from this motive; and because his mercy never ceases, he will continue to multiply deeds of love world without end. Let us with all our powers of heart and tongue give thanks unto the holy name of Jehovah for ever and ever.

Change and decay in all around I see,  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm was very probably composed by David, and given to the Levites to sing every day: 1 Chron. xvi. 41. Solomon his son followed his example, and made use of it in singing at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. vii. 3—6); as Jehoshaphat seems to have done when he went out to war against his enemies (2 Chron. xx. 21).—*John Gill.*

*Whole Psalm.*—The grand peculiarity of form in this Psalm . . . is the regular recurrence, at the close of every verse, of a burden or *refrain*. . . . It has been a favourite idea with interpreters that such repetitions necessarily imply alternate or responsive choirs. But the other indications of this usage in the Psalter are extremely doubtful, and every exegetical condition may be satisfied by simply supposing that the singers, in some cases, answered their own questions, and that in others, as in that before us, the people united in the burden or chorus, as they were wont to do in the Amen.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

*Whole Psalm.*—The Psalm is called by the Greek church *Polyteos*, from its continual mention of the mercy of God.—*Neale and Littledale.*

*Whole Psalm.*—In the liturgical language this Psalm is called *par excellence* the

great Hallel, for according to its broadest compass the great Hallel comprehends Ps. cxx. to cxxxvi., whilst the Hallel which is absolutely so called extends from Ps. cxlii. to cxviii.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

*Whole Psalm.*—“Praise ye (יהוה) *Jehovah*”; not as in Ps. cxxxv. 1, “Hallelujah,” but varying the words,—“Be ye *Judahs* to the Lord!”

Praise him for what he is (ver. 1—3).

Praise him for what he is able to do (ver. 4).

Praise him for what he has done in creation (ver. 5—9).

Praise him for what he did in redeeming Israel from bondage (ver. 10—15).

Praise him for what he did in his providence toward them (ver. 16—22).

Praise him for his grace in times of calamity (ver. 23, 24).

Praise him for his grace to the world at large (ver. 25).

Praise him at the remembrance that this God is the God of heaven (ver. 26).—

*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Whole Psalm.*—When, in the time of the Emperor Constantius, S. Athanasius was assaulted by night in his church at Alexandria by Syrianus and his troops, and many were wounded and murdered, the Bishop of Alexandria sat still in his chair, and ordered the deacon to begin this Psalm, and the people answered in prompt alternation, “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*”—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

*Verse 1.*—“*O give thanks unto the LORD.*” When we have praised God for reasons offered unto us in one Psalm, we must begin again, and praise him for other reasons; and even when we have done this, we have not overtaken our task, the duty lieth still at our door, to be discharged afresh, as this Psalm doth show.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 1.*—“*For he is good.*” Observe what we must give thanks for: not as the Pharisee that made all his thanksgivings terminate in his own goodness—“*God, I thank thee*” that I am so and so—but directing them all to God’s glory: “*for he is good.*”—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 1.*—“*His mercy endureth for ever.*” This appears four times in Ps. cxviii. 1—4. This sentence is the wonder of Moses, the sum of revelation, and the hope of man.—*James G. Murphy.*

*Verse 1.*—“*His mercy.*” Many sweet things are in the word of God, but the name of mercy is the sweetest word in all the Scriptures, which made David harp upon it twenty-six times in this Psalm: “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*” It was such a cheerful note in his ears when he struck upon mercy, that, like a bird that is taught to pipe, when he had sung it, he sang it again, and when he had sung it again, he recorded it again, and made it the burden of his song: “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*” Like a nightingale which, when she is in a pleasant vein, quavers and capers, and trebles upon it, so did David upon his mercy: “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*”—*Henry Smith.*

*Verse 1.*—“*Mercy.*” By “*mercy*” we understand the Lord’s disposition to compassionate and relieve those whom sin has rendered miserable and base; his readiness to forgive and to be reconciled to the most provoking of transgressors, and to bestow all blessings upon them; together with all the provision which he has made for the honour of his name, in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ.—*Thomas Scott.*

*Verse 1.*—“*His mercy endureth for ever.*” It is everlasting. Everlastingness, or eternity, is a perfect possession, all at once, of an endless life (saith Boëthius). Everlasting mercy, then, is perfect mercy, which shuts out all the imperfections of time, beginning, end, succession, and such is God’s mercy. First, his *essential* mercy is everlastingness itself; for it is himself, and God hath not, but *is*, things. He is beginning, end, being; and that which is of himself and even himself is eternity itself. Secondly, his *relative* mercy (which respects us, and makes impression on us), is everlasting, too, in a sense; for the creatures, ever since they had being in him, or existence in their natural causes, ever did and ever will need mercy, either preserving or conserving. Preventing or continuing mercy in the first sense is *negatively* endless, that is, incapable of end, because unboundable for being: in the second sense, it is *privatively* endless, it shall never actually take end, though in itself it may be, and in some ways is, bounded; the first is included in the latter, but the latter is chiefly here intended; and therefore the point arises to be this,—*God’s mercy (chiefly to his church) is an endless mercy*; it knows no end, receives no interruption. Reasons hereof from the word are these (for as touching testimony this Psalm shall be our security), first, from *God’s nature*, “*he is good.*” Mercy pleaseth him. It is

no trouble for him to exercise mercy. It is his delight: we are never weary of receiving, therefore he cannot be of giving; for it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive; so God takes more content in the one than we in the other.—*Robert Harris, 1578—1658.*

*Verses 1.*—"His mercy endureth for ever." God's goodness is a fountain; it is never dry. As grace is from the world's beginning (Ps. xxv. 6), so it is to the world's end, à *seculo in seculum*, from one generation to another. Salvation is no term; grace ties not itself to times. Noah as well as Abel, Moses as well as Jacob, Jeremy as well as David, Paul as well as Simeon hath part in this salvation. God's gracious purpose the Flood drowned not, the smoke of Sinai smothered not, the Captivity ended not, the ends of the world (Saint Paul calls them so) determined not. For Christ, by whom it is, was slain from the beginning.—Saint John saith so. He was before Abraham, he himself saith so. And *Clemens Alexandrinus* [tom. v. page 233] doth Marcion wrong, though otherwise an heretic, in blaming him for holding that Christ saved those also that believed in him before his incarnation. The blood of the beasts under the law was a type of his. And the scars of his wounds appear yet still, and will for ever, till he cometh to judgment. The Apostle shall end this: he is *heri*, and *hodi*, and *semper idem*: Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.—*Richard Clerke, 1634.*

*Verses 1—3.*—The three first verses of this Psalm contain the three several names of the Deity, which are commonly rendered *Jehovah, God, and Lord*, respectively; the first having reference to his essence as *self-existent*, and being his proper name; the second designating him under the character of a *judge* or of an all-powerful being, if *Aleim* be derived from *Al*; and the third, *Adondi*, representing him as *exercising rule*.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

*Verses 1—3.*—"O give thanks."

What! give God thanks for everything,

Whatever may befall—

Whatever the dark clouds may bring?

Yes, give God thanks for all;

For safe he leads thee, hand in hand,  
To thy blessed Fatherland.

What! thank him for the lonely way

He to me hath given—

For the path which, day by day

Seems farther off from heaven?

Yes, thank him, for he holds thy hand  
And leads thee to thy Fatherland.

Close, close he shields thee from all harm:

And if the road be steep,

Thou know'st his everlasting arm

In safety doth thee keep,

Although thou canst not understand  
The windings to thy Fatherland.

What blessing, thinkest thou, will he,

Who knows the good and ill,

Keep back, if it is good for thee,

While climbing up the hill?

Then trust him, and keep fast his hand,

He leads thee to thy Fatherland.

*B. S., in "The Christian Treasury," 1865.*

*Verses 1—9.*—Like the preceding Psalm, this Psalm allies itself to the Book of Deuteronomy. The first clauses of verses 2 and 3 ("*God of gods*" and "*Lord of lords*") are taken from Deut. x. 17; verse 12, first clause ("*with a strong hand and stretched out arm*") from Deut. iv. 34, and v. 15. Verse 16, first clause, is like Deut. viii. 15 (cf. Jer. ii. 6).—*Franz Delitzsch.*

*Verses 1—26.*—All repetitions are not vain, nor is all length in prayer to be accounted babbling. For repetitions may be used, 1. When they express *fergency and zeal*: and so we read, Christ prayed over the same prayer thrice (Matt. xxvi. 44); "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And another evangelist showeth that he did this out of special fervency of spirit (Luke xxii. 44); "Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly." 2. This repetition is not to be disapproved

when there is a *special emphasis*, and spiritual elegance in it, as in Psalm cxxxvi. you have it twenty-six times repeated, "*For his mercy endureth for ever,*" because there was a special reason in it, the Psalmist's purpose there being to show the unweariedness, and the unexhausted riches of God's free grace; that notwithstanding all the former experiences they had had, God is where he was at first. We waste by giving, our drop is soon spent; but God is not wasted by bestowing, but hath the same mercy to do good to his creatures, as before. Though he had done all those wonders for them, yet his mercy was as ready to do good to them still. All along God saved and blessed his people, "*For his mercy endureth for ever.*"—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 2.—"*The God of gods.*" "*God of gods*" is an Hebrew superlative, because he is far above all gods, whether they be so reputed or deputed.—*Robert Harris*.

Verse 2.—"*The God of gods.*" One, as being Creator, infinitely higher than all others, his creatures, who have at any time been regarded as gods.—*French and Skinner*, 1842.

Verses 2, 3.—Before proceeding to recite God's works, the Psalmist declares his supreme Deity, and dominion: not that such comparative language implies that there is anything approaching Deity besides him, but there is a disposition in men, whenever they see any part of his glory displayed, to conceive of a God separate from him, thus impiously dividing the Godhead into parts, and even proceeding so far as to frame gods of wood and stone. There is a depraved tendency in all to take delight in a multiplicity of gods. For this reason, apparently, the Psalmist uses the plural number not only in the word *Elohim* but in the word *Adonim*, so that it reads literally, *Praise ye the Lords of lords*: he would intimate, that the fullest perfection of all dominion is to be found in the one God.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 3.—"*The Lord of lords.*" The meaning of the title "*Lord,*" as distinct from "*Jehovah*" and "*God,*" is "*GOVERNOR.*" And in this view also he is eminently entitled to praise and thanksgiving, in that his rule and government of the world are also eminently marked by "*mercy*" and "*goodness*:" not the display of power only, but of power declared chiefly in showing mercy and pity: as again all subject to that rule are witnesses. Such is God *in himself*. Nor is it without intention that the doxology is threefold, indicating, doubtless, like the threefold invocation of the Name of the Lord in the blessing of the people (Num. vi. 24—26)—God in Trinity, "*Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,*" as now fully revealed.—*William De Burgh*.

Verse 4.—"*To him who alone doeth great wonders.*" God hath preserved to himself the power of miracles, as his prerogative: for the devil does no miracles; the devil and his instruments do but hasten nature or hinder nature, antedate nature or postdate nature, bring things sooner to pass or retard them; and however they pretend to oppose nature, yet still it is but upon nature and by natural means that they work. Only God shakes the whole frame of nature in pieces, and in a miracle proceeds so, as if there were no creation yet accomplished, no course of nature yet established. *Facit mirabilia magna solus*, says David here. There are *mirabilia parva*, some lesser wonders, that the devil and his instruments, Pharaoh's sorcerers, can do; but when it comes to *mirabilia magna*, great wonders, so great that they amount to the nature of a miracle, *facit solus*, God and God only does them.—*Abraham Wright*.

Verse 4.—"*To him who alone doeth great wonders.*" Does he "*alone*" do great wonders? that means, he does so by himself, unaided, needing nothing from others, asking no help from his creatures. As the Nile from Nubia to the Mediterranean rolls on 1,300 miles in solitary grandeur, receiving not one tributary, but itself alone dispensing fertility and fatness wherever it comes; so our God "*alone*" does wonders. (See Deut. xxxii. 12; Ps. lxxii. 18, etc.) No prompter, no helper; spontaneously he goes forth to work, and all he works is worthy of God. Then we have no need of any other; we are independent of all others; all our springs are in him.—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 4.—"*Who alone doeth great wonders.*" There are three things here declared of God; that he doeth wonders, that the wonders he doeth are great; that he *only* doeth them.—*Augustine, in Neale and Littledale*.

Verse 4.—"*Who alone doeth great wonders.*" Whatsoever instruments the Lord

is pleased to use in any of his wonderful works, he alone is the worker, and will not share the glory of the work with any creature.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 4.*—It becomes the great God to grant great things. “*To him who alone doeth great wonders.*” When you ask great things, you ask such as it becomes God to give, “whose mercy is great above the heavens!” Nothing under heaven can be too great for him to give. The greater things he bestows, the greater glory redounds to his Name.—*David Clarkson, 1622—1686.*

*Verse 4.*—Christians should not be ashamed of the mysteries and *miracles* of their religion. Sometimes of late years there has been manifested a disposition to recede from the defence of the supernatural in religion. This is a great mistake. Give up all that is miraculous in true religion and there is nothing left of power sufficient to move any heart to worship or adore; and without worship there is no piety.—*William Swan Plumer.*

*Verse 4.*—The longer I live, O my God, the more do I wonder at all the works of thy hands. I see such admirable artifice in the very least and most despicable of all thy creatures, as doth every day more and more astonish my observation. I need not look so far as heaven for matter of marvel, though therein thou art infinitely glorious; while I have but a spider in my window, or a bee in my garden, or a worm under my feet: every one of these overcomes me with a just amazement: yet can I see no more than their very outsides; their inward form, which gives their being and operations, I cannot pierce into. The less I can know, O Lord, the more let me wonder; and the less I can satisfy myself with marvelling at thy works, the more let me adore the majesty and omnipotence of thee, that wroughtest them.—*Joseph Hall.*

*Verse 5.*—“*To him that by wisdom made the heavens.*” We find that God has built the heavens in wisdom, to declare his glory, and to show forth his handiwork. There are no iron tracks, with bars and bolts, to hold the planets in their orbits. Freely in space they move, ever changing, but never changed; poised and balancing; swaying and swayed; disturbing and disturbed, onward they fly, fulfilling with unerring certainty their mighty cycles. The entire system forms one grand complicated piece of celestial machinery; circle within circle, wheel within wheel, cycle within cycle; revolutions so swift as to be completed in a few hours; movements so slow, that their mighty periods are only counted by millions of years.—*From “The Orbs of Heaven,” 1859.*

*Verse 5.*—“*To him that by wisdom made the heavens.*” Not only the firmament, but the third heavens, too, where all is felicity, where is the throne of glory. Then, I infer, that if the *mercy* which visits earth is from the same Jehovah who built that heaven and filled it with glory, there must be in his *mercy* something of the same “*understanding*” or “*wisdom.*” It is wise, prudent mercy; not rashly given forth; and it is the mercy of him whose love has filled that heaven with bliss. The same architect, the same skill, the same love!—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Stretched out the earth above the waters.*” The waters of the great deep (Gen. vii. 11) are meant; above which the crust of the earth is outspread. In Prov. viii. 27 the great deep encircles the earth.—“*Speaker’s Commentary.*”

*Verse 7.*—“*Great lights.*” The luminaries of heaven are unspeakable blessings to the children of men. The sun, in the greatness of his strength, measures their day, and exerts an influence over animal and vegetable life, which surrounds them with innumerable comforts; and the moon and stars walking forth in their brightness, give direction to them amidst the sable hours of night, and both by land and sea proclaim the wisdom, and benignity, and gracious arrangement of the adorable Creator. By these luminaries, day and night, heat and cold, summer and winter are continually regulated; so that God’s covenant with the earth is maintained through their medium. How truly, then, may we exclaim, “His mercy endureth for ever!”—*John Morison.*

*Verse 7.*—“*To him that made great lights.*” Light is the life and soul of the universe, the noblest emblem of the power and glory of God, who, in the night season, leaves not himself without witness, but gives us some portion of that light reflected, which by day we behold flowing from its great fountain in the heart of heaven. Thy church and thy saints, O Lord, “are the moon and the stars,” which, by the communication of doctrine, and the splendour of example, guide our feet, while we

travel on in the night that hath overtaken us, waiting for the dawn of everlasting day. Then we shall behold thy glory, and see thee as thou art.—*George Horne.*

*Verse 8.—“The sun to rule by day.”* This verse showeth that the sun shineth in the day, by the order which God hath set, and not for any natural cause alone, as some imagine and conjecture.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

*Verse 8.—“The Sun.”* The lantern of the world (*lucerna Mundi*), as Copernicus names the sun, enthroned in the centre—according to Theon of Smyrna, the all-vivifying, pulsating heart of the universe, is the primary source of light and of radiating heat, and the generator of numerous terrestrial, electro-magnetic processes, and indeed of the greater part of the organic vital activity upon our planet, more especially that of the vegetable kingdom. In considering the expression of solar force, in its widest generality, we find that it gives rise to alterations on the surface of the earth,—partly by gravitative attraction,—as in the ebb and flow of the ocean (if we except the share taken in the phenomenon by lunar attraction), partly by light and heat-generating transverse vibrations of ether, as in the fructifying admixture of the aerial and aqueous envelopes of our planet, from the contact of the atmosphere with the vaporizing fluid element in seas, lakes, and rivers. The solar action operates, moreover, by differences of heat, in exciting atmospheric and oceanic currents; the latter of which have continued for thousands of years (though in an inconsiderable degree) to accumulate or waste away alluvial strata, and thus change the surface of the inundated land; it operates in the generation and maintenance of the electro-magnetic activity of the earth's crust, and that of the oxygen contained in the atmosphere; at one time calling forth calm and gentle forces of chemical attraction, and variously determining organic life in the endosmose of cell-walls and in tissue of muscular and nervous fibres; at another time evoking light processes in the atmosphere, such as the coloured coruscations of the polar light, thunder and lightning, hurricanes and waterspouts.

Our object in endeavouring to compress in one picture the influences of solar action, in as far as they are independent of the orbit and the position of the axis of our globe, has been clearly to demonstrate, by an exposition of the connection existing between great, and at first sight heterogeneous, phenomena, how physical nature may be depicted in the *History of the Cosmos* as a whole, moved and animated by internal and frequently self-adjusting forces. But the waves of light not only exert a decomposing and combining action on the corporeal world; they not only call forth the tender germs of plants from the earth, generate the green colouring matter (chlorophyll) within the leaf, and give colour to the fragrant blossom—they not only produce myriads of reflected images of the Sun in the graceful play of the waves, as in the moving grass of the field—but the rays of celestial light, in the varied gradations of their intensity and duration, are also mysteriously connected with the inner life of man, his intellectual susceptibilities, and the melancholy or cheerful tone of his feelings. This is what Pliny the elder referred to in these words, “*Cæli tristram discutit sol, et humani nubila animi serenat.*” [“The sun chases sadness from the sky, and dissipates the clouds which darken the human heart.”]—*F. H. Alexander Von Humboldt* (1769—1859), in “*Cosmos.*”

*Verse 8.—“The sun.”*

O sun! what makes thy beams so bright?  
The word that said, “Let there be light.”

*James Montgomery.*

*Verse 9.—“The moon and stars to rule by night.”* While the apparent revolution of the sun marks out the year and the course of the seasons, the revolution of the moon round the heavens marks out our months; and by regularly changing its figure at the four quarters of its course, subdivides the months into two periods of weeks, and thus exhibits to all the nations of the earth a “watch-light,” or signal, which every seven days presents a form entirely new, for marking out the shorter periods of duration. By its nearness to the earth, and the consequent increase of its gravitating power, it produces currents in the atmosphere, which direct the course of the winds, and purify the aerial fluid from noxious exhalations; it raises the waters of the ocean, and perpetuates the regular returns of ebb and flow, by which the liquid element is preserved from filth and putrefaction. It extends its sway even over the human frame, and our health and disorders are sometimes partially

dependent on its influence. Even its eclipses, and those it produces of the sun, are not without their use. They tend to arouse mankind to the study of astronomy, and the wonders of the firmament; they serve to confirm the deductions of chronology, to direct the navigator, and to settle the geographical position of towns and countries; they assist the astronomer in his celestial investigations, and exhibit an agreeable variety of phenomena in the scenery of the heavens. In short, there are terrestrial scenes presented in moon-light, which, in point of solemnity, grandeur, and picturesque beauty, far surpass in interest, to a poetic imagination, all the brilliancy and splendours of noon-day. Hence, in all ages, a moonlight scene has been regarded, by all ranks of men, with feelings of joy and sentiments of admiration. The following description of Homer, translated into English verse by Pope, has been esteemed one of the finest night-pieces in poetry:—

“ Behold the moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er Heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,  
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole;  
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,  
And tip with silver every mountain's head;  
Then shine the vales; the rocks in prospect rise;  
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;  
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,  
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.”

Without the light of the moon, the inhabitants of the polar regions would be for weeks and months immersed in darkness. But the moon, like a kindly visitant, returns at short intervals, in the absence of the sun, and cheers them with her beams for days and weeks together. So that, in this nocturnal luminary, as in all the other arrangements of nature, we behold a display of the paternal care and beneficence of that Almighty Being who ordained “the moon and the stars to rule by night,” as an evidence of his superabundant goodness, and of “his mercy which endureth for ever.”—*Thomas Dick* (1774—1857), in “*Celestial Scenery*.”

*Verse 9.*—“*Stars to rule by night.*” The purpose of the sacred narrative being to describe the adaptation of the earth to the use of man, no account is taken of the nature of the stars, as suns or planets, but merely as signs in the heavens.—“*Speaker's Commentary.*”

*Verse 9.*—“*Stars.*” The stars not only adorn the roof of our sublunary mansion, they are also in many respects *useful* to man. Their influences are placid and gentle. Their rays, being dispersed through spaces so vast and immense, are entirely destitute of heat by the time they arrive at our abode; so that we enjoy the view of a numerous assemblage of luminous globes without any danger of their destroying the coolness of the night or the quiet of our repose. They serve to guide the traveller both by sea and land; they direct the navigator in tracing his course from one continent to another through the pathless ocean. They serve “for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.” They direct the labours of the husbandman, and determine the return and conclusion of the seasons. They serve as a magnificent “time piece,” to determine the true length of the day and of the year, and to mark with accuracy all their subordinate divisions. They assist us in our commerce, and in endeavouring to propagate religion among the nations, by showing us our path to every region of the earth. They have enabled us to measure the circumference of the globe, to ascertain the *density* of the materials of which it is composed, and to determine the exact position of all places upon its surface. They cheer the long nights of several months in the polar regions, which would otherwise be overspread with impenetrable darkness. Above all, they open a prospect into the regions of other worlds, and tend to amplify our views of the Almighty Being who brought them into existence by his power, and “whose kingdom ruleth over all.” In these arrangements of the stars in reference to our globe, the Divine wisdom and goodness may be clearly perceived. We enjoy all the advantages to which we have alluded as much as if the stars had been created solely for the use of our world, while, at the same time, they serve to diversify the nocturnal sky of other planets, and to diffuse their light and influence over ten thousands of other worlds with which they are more immediately connected, so that, in this respect, as well as in every other, the Almighty produces the most sublime and diversified effects by means the most simple and

economical, and renders every part of the universe subservient to another, and to the good of the whole.—*Thomas Dick.*

*Verse 9.*—“*Stars.*” When the First Consul crossed the Mediterranean on his Egyptian expedition, he carried with him a cohort of *savans*, who ultimately did good service in many ways. Among them, however, as might be expected at that era, were not a few philosophers of the Voltaire-Diderot school. Napoleon, for his own instruction and amusement on shipboard, encouraged disputation among these gentlemen; and on one occasion they undertook to show, and, according to their own account, *did* demonstrate, by infallible logic and metaphysic, that there is no God. Bonaparte, who hated all idealogists, abstract reasoners, and logical demonstrators, no matter what they were demonstrating, would not fence with these subtle dialecticians, but had them immediately on deck, and, pointing to the stars in the clear sky, replied, by way of counter-argument, “Very good, messieurs! but who made all these?”—*George Wilson, in “Religio Chemicæ,”* 1862.

*Verse 10.*—“*To him that smote Egypt in their first-born.*” The Egyptians are well said to have been *smitten in their first-born*; because they continued in their outrageous obstinacy under the other plagues, though occasionally terrified by them, but were broken and subdued by this last plague, and submitted.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 10.*—“*To him that smote Egypt in their first-born, for his mercy,*” etc. Remember his sovereign grace, when righteousness would show itself upon the guilty. There was mercy even then to Israel—drops of that mercy that for ever endureth—at the very time when judgment fell on others. Should not this give emphasis to our praises? The dark background makes the figures in the foreground more prominent.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Verse 11.*—“*And brought out Israel from among them.*” Such an emigration as this the world never saw. On the lowest computation, the entire multitude must have been above two millions, and in all probability the number exceeded three millions. Is the magnitude of this movement usually apprehended? Do we think of the emigration of the Israelites from Egypt as of the emigration of a number of families twice as numerous as the population of the principality of Wales, or considerably more than the whole population of the British Metropolis (in 1841), with all their goods, property, and cattle? The collecting together of so immense a multitude—the arranging the order of their march—the provision of the requisite food even for a few days, must, under the circumstances, have been utterly impossible, unless a very special and overruling Providence had graciously interfered to obviate the difficulties of the case. To the most superficial observer it must be evident, that no man, or number of men, having nothing but human resources, could have ventured to undertake this journey. Scarcely any wonder, wrought by Divine power in Egypt, appears greater than this emigration of a nation, when fairly and fully considered.—*George Smith, in “Sacred Annals,”* 1850.

*Verse 12.*—“*With a stretched out arm.*” The figure of an *outstretched arm* is appropriate, for we stretch out the arm when any great effort is required; so that this implies that God put forth an extraordinary and not a common or slight display of his power in redeeming his people.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 13.*—“*Divided the Red Sea into parts.*” The entire space between the mountains of Ataka and Abon Deradj was dry. At the former point the gulf is eight miles across, at the latter more than double that distance. The waters that had filled this broad and deep chasm stood in two huge mounds on the right hand and on the left. The light of God shone brightly on the astonished multitude. The word was given, they advanced abreast; awe-stricken, but quiet and confident. . . . “Then the Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, even his chariots and his fleet horses”: Exod. xiv. 23.—*William Osburn, in “Israel in Egypt,”* 1856.

*Verse 14.*—“*And made Israel to pass through the midst of it,*” etc. Willingly, without reluctance; with great spirit and courage, fearless of danger, and with the utmost safety, so that not one was lost in the passage; see Ps. lxxviii. 53; and thus the Lord makes his people willing to pass through afflictions, he being with them;

and able to bear them, he putting underneath the everlasting arms, even when in the valley of the shadow of death. He carries them safely through them, so that they are not hurt by them; the waters do not overflow them, nor the flames kindle upon them; nor are any suffered to be lost: but all come safe to land.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 14.*—“*And made Israel to pass through the midst of it.*” It is a work of no less mercy and power to give his people grace to make use of an offered means of delivery, than to prepare the deliverance for them; but the constancy of God’s mercy doth not only provide the means, but also giveth his people grace to make use thereof in all ages.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 14.*—“*And made Israel to pass through the midst of it.*” It is many times *hail* with the saints, when *ill* with the wicked. Abraham from the hill seeth Sodom on fire.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 15.*—“*But overthrew Pharaoh,*” etc. Thus fell Sethos II. It was his terrible destiny to leave to after-times the strongest exemplification of daring wickedness and mad impiety in his life, and of the vengeance of God in his death, that ever was enacted on the earth. Never had such a judgment befallen any nation, as his reign in Egypt. Accordingly the memory of this fearful event has never departed from among men. The gulf in which he perished is named Bahr-Kolzoum, “the sea of destruction,” to this day.

The memory and name of Sethos II. were infamous in Egypt. His tomb was desecrated, and his sarcophagus publicly and judicially broken. The vault seems to have been used as a burying-place for slaves. The distinctive title of his name, *Sethos*, has been mutilated on all the monuments of Egypt. In Lower Egypt the mutilation has even been extended to the same title in the rings of his great-grandfather (Sethos I.), such was the deep abhorrence in which the name had fallen, after it had been borne by this wicked king. His is the only one in the whole range of the kings of Egypt which has suffered this mark of public infamy.—*William Osburn.*

*Verse 15.*—“*But overthrew Pharaoh,*” etc. Margin, as in Hebrew, *shaked off*. The word is applicable to a tree shaking off its foliage, Isa. xxxiii. 9. The same word is used in Ex. xiv. 27: “And the Lord overthrew (Margin, *shook off*) the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.” He shook them off as if he would no longer protect them. He left them to perish.—*Albert Barnes.*

*Verse 15.*—“*But shook off Pharaoh.*” This translation gives an image of locusts. They fell into the sea like a swarm of locusts.—*Zachary Mudge—1769.*

*Verse 15.*—“*But overthrew Pharaoh,*” etc. I know that the Gospel is a book of mercy; I know likewise that in the prophets there are many expressions of mercy; I know likewise that in the ten commandments, which are the ministration of death, there is made express mention of mercy, “I will have mercy on thousands”: yet, notwithstanding all this, if every leaf, and every line, and every word in the Bible were nothing but mercy, it would nothing avail the presumptuous sinner. Our God is not an impotent God with one arm; but as he is slow to anger, so is he great in power. And therefore though in this Psalm there is nothing but “*his mercy endureth for ever,*” which is twenty-six times in twenty-six verses: yet mark what a rattling thunder-clap is here in this verse. In our addresses therefore unto God, let us so look upon him as a just God as well as a merciful; and not either despair of or presume upon his mercy.—*Abraham Wright.*

*Verse 16.*—“*Led his people through the wilderness.*”

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,  
Out of the land of bondage came,  
Her father’s God before her moved,  
An awful guide, in smoke and flame.  
By day, along the astonished lands,  
The cloudy pillar glided slow;  
By night Arabia’s crimsoned sands  
Returned the fiery column’s glow.

*Sir Walter Scott, 1711—1832.*

*Verse 16.*—“*He led his people through the wilderness.*” It was an astonishing miracle of God to support so many hundreds of thousands of people in a wilderness totally deprived of all necessaries for the life of man, and that for the space of forty years.—*Adam Clarke.*

*Verse 16.*—“*He led his people through the wilderness,*” etc. It is a very sweet

truth which is enunciated in this verse, and one which I think we need very much to realize. His own people, his peculiar people, his chosen, loved, and favoured ones, whom he cherished as the apple of his eye, who were graven on the palms of his hands, and loved with an everlasting love, even these he led through the wilderness; and all this *because* "His mercy endureth for ever." In another Psalm it is said, "He leadeth them beside the still waters, he maketh them to lie down in green pastures"; but the barren wilderness has no green pastures, the parched and arid desert has no still waters. And yet "in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and an highway shall be there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" It is one of the Lord's sweet truths that so perplex those that are without, but which are so full of consolation to his own children, that the wilderness and mercy are linked together of God in indissoluble union here. "I will allure her," saith the Lord, "and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."—*Barton Bouchier*.

*Verse 16.*—"Who led his people." Note that in what precedes this, in this verse itself, and in what follows, God's three ways of leading are set forth. He leads *out*, he leads *through*, and he leads *into*; out of sin, through the world, into heaven; out by faith, through by hope, into by love.—*Michael Aygvan* (1416), in *Neale and Littledale*.

*Verse 17.*—"Great kings." *Great*, as those times accounted them, when every small city almost had her king. Canaan had thirty and more of them. *Great* also in regard of their stature and strength; for they were of the giants' race. Deut. iii.; Amos ii.—*John Trapp*.

*Verses 18, 20.*—The profane of our times may hence learn to take heed how they wrong the faithful. God is "wise in heart and mighty in strength:" Job ix. 4. Who ever waxed fierce against his people and hath prospered? For their sakes he hath destroyed great kings and mighty, "*Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan.*" He can pluck off thy chariot wheels, strike thee in the hinder parts, cause thy heart to fail thee for fear, and in a moment fetch thy soul from thee: better were it for thee to have a millstone hanged about thy neck, and thou to be cast into the bottom of the sea, than to offend the least of these faithful ones; they are dear in his sight, tender to him, as the apple of his eye.—*John Barlow*, 1632.

*Verse 19.*—"Sihon" occupied the whole district between the Arnon and Jabbok, through which the approach to the Jordan lay. He had wrested it from the predecessor of Balak, and had established himself, not in the ancient capital of Moab-Ar, but in the city still conspicuous to the modern traveller from its wide prospect and its cluster of stone pines—Heshbon. The recollection of his victory survived in a savage war-song, which passed into a kind of proverb in after-times:—

"Come home to Heshbon;  
Let the city of Sihon be built and prepared,  
For there is gone out a fire from Heshbon,  
A flame from the city of Sihon.  
It hath consumed Ar of Moab,  
And the lords of the high places of Arnon:  
Woe to thee, Moab; thou art undone, thou people of Chemosh!  
He hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity  
To the king of the Amorites, Sihon."\*

The decisive battle between Sihon and his new foes took place at Jahaz, probably on the confines of the rich pastures of Moab and the desert whence the Israelites emerged. It was the first engagement in which they were confronted with the future enemies of their nation. The slingers and archers of Israel, afterwards so renowned, now first showed their skill. Sihon fell; the army fled † (so ran the later tradition), and devoured by thirst, like the Athenians in the Assinarus on their flight from Syracuse, were slaughtered in the bed of one of the mountain streams. The memory of this battle was cherished in triumphant strains, in which, after reciting, in bitter

\* Num. xxi. 27-29, repeated, as is well known, in Jer. xlvi. 45, 46.

† Joseph. Ant. iv. 5, § 2.

irony, the song just quoted of the Amorites' triumph, they broke out into an exulting contrast of the past greatness of the defeated chief and his present fall :—

“ We have shot at them : Heshbon is perished :  
We have laid them waste : even unto Nophah :  
With fire : even unto Medeba.”\*

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in “*The History of the Jewish Church.*”

Verse 20.—“*Og the king of Bashan.*” There is continued victory. The second hindrance disappears after the first. “*Og, king of Bashan,*” last of the giants (Deut. iii. 11), fared no better for all his strength than *Sihon*. It was not some peculiar weakness of *Sihon* that overthrew him. All enemies of God, however different in resource they may appear when they measure themselves among themselves, are alike to those who march in the strength of God. The power by which the Christian conquers one foe will enable him to conquer all. And yet because *Og* did look more formidable than *Sihon*, God gave his people special encouragement in meeting him : Numb. xxi. 34. God remembers that even the most faithful and ardent of his people cannot get entirely above the deceitfulness of outward appearances.—*Pulpit Commentary.*

Verse 20.—When “*Og king of Bashan*” took the field—a giant, a new and more terrific foe—he, too, fell. And the *mercy* that thus dealt with enemies so great, enemies so strong, one after another, “*endureth for ever.*” When Antichrist raises up his hosts in the latter days, one after another—when the great, the famous, the mighty, the noble, the gigantic men, in succession assail the Church, they shall perish : “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 22.—“*Israel his servant.*” He speaks of all that people as of one man, because they were united together in one body, in the worship of one and the same God. Thus God calleth them all his “*first-born*” : Exod. iv. 22.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 23.—“*Who remembered us.*” We should echo in our thankfulness the first intimation that God gives in his providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear when the king is on his road towards your town you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entered the gates. The birds rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our harps in praising God at the first appearance of a mercy.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 23.—“*Who remembered us.*” The word “*remembered*” is a pregnant word, it bears twins twice told, it is big of a six-fold sense, as so many degrees of mercy in it. 1. *To remember* signifies to think upon, in opposition to forgetfulness. We may dwell in man's thoughts and not be the better for it, but we cannot be in God's remembering thoughts but we shall be the better for it. 2. *To remember* (as the second degree of the mercy) signifies to take notice of a thing, in opposition to neglect ; so it is used in Exod. xx. 8 : “*Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy :*” take notice, that is, neglect it not, “*remember*” to keep holy the Sabbath-day. So God “*remembered*” us in our low estates : how ? Why, he did not barely think upon us, but he did observe and take notice of us, and considered what our case was. But, 3. It signifies (as the third degree of mercy), to lay to heart, to pity and compassionate persons in such a case. What am I better for anybody's thinking of me, if he do not take notice of me, so as to pity me in my low estate ? So God doth, as in Jer. xxxi. 20. 4. *To remember*, signifies yet more (as the fourth degree of mercy) to be well pleased with a person in such a case, to accept of a person in such a case ; so the word is used in Ps. xx. 3 : “*The Lord remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice*” ; remember, that is accept. 5. *To remember* signifies (as the fifth degree of mercy) to hear and to grant a request ; so it is used in 1 Sam. i. 19, 20, 27 : “*God remembered Hannah,*” and the next word is, “*He gave her what she asked.*” 6. *To remember* signifies (as the sixth degree of mercy) to help and succour, or to redeem and deliver from that which we were appointed to, from the low estate ; and so it is in Gal. ii. 10 : “*Only they would that we should remember the poor.*” Remembering the poor is not barely a thought, but a relieving thought ; therefore saith the Psalmist in the following verse, “*who hath redeemed us from our enemies :*” this was the *remembrance* of God, *redemption* from enemies.

\* Numb. xxi. 30.

I might draw considerations [for thanksgiving] from the *Author* of the mercy, *God*; a God that was offended by us, a God that needed us not, and a God that gains nothing by us; and yet this God remembered us in our low estate; that should engage us. I might also draw obligations from the *objects*, and that is *us* that were not only an undeserving but an ill-deserving, and are not a suitable returning people. I might draw arguments from the *mercy*, itself,—that God remembered us. . . . and I might draw arguments from the *season*, “in our low estate,” and from the *excellency of the duty* of thanksgiving; ’tis a comely thing; it makes us like the angels, whose whole employment and liturgy is to give and live praise to God. And from this also I might enlarge the discoveries of the obligation, that “*his mercy endureth for ever.*”

“*For his mercy endureth for ever.*” There is no reason to be given for grace but grace; there is no reason to be given for mercy but mercy; who remembered us: “*for his mercy endureth for ever.*”—*Ralph Venning* (1620—1673), in “*Mercies Memorial.*”

*Verse 24.*—“*And.*” If the end of one mercy were not the beginning of another, we were undone.—*Philip Henry*, 1631—1696.

*Verse 24.*—“*And hath redeemed us.*” Or, *broken us off*, pulled us away, as by violence; for they would never else have loosed us.—*John Trapp*.

*Verse 25.*—“*Who giveth food to all flesh,*” etc. The very air we breathe in, the bread we eat, our common blessings, be they never so mean, we have them all from grace, and all from the tender mercy of the Lord. Ps. cxxxvi. 25, you have there the story of the notable effects of God’s mercy, and he concludes it thus: “*Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Mark, the Psalmist doth not only ascribe those mighty victories, those glorious instances of his love and power, to his unchangeable mercy, but he traces our daily bread to the same cause. In eminent deliverances of the church we will acknowledge mercy; yea, but we should do it in every bit of meat we eat; for the same reason is rendered all along. What is the reason his people smote Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan, and that they were rescued so often out of danger? “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*” And what is the reason he giveth food to all flesh? “*For his mercy endureth for ever.*” It is not only mercy which gives us Christ, and salvation by Christ, and all those glorious deliverances and triumphs over the enemies of the church; but it is mercy which furnisheth our tables, it is mercy that we taste with our mouths and wear at our backs. It is notable, our Lord Jesus, when there were but five barley loaves and two fishes (John vi. 11), “*He lift up his eyes and gave thanks.*” Though our provision be never so homely and slender, yet God’s grace and mercy must be acknowledged.—*Thomas Manton*.

*Verse 25.*—“*Who giveth food to all flesh.*” We might fancy that they who have so much to sing of in regard to themselves, so much done for their own souls, would have little care for others. We might fear that they would be found selfish. But not so; the love of God felt by a man makes the man feel as God does toward men; and as God’s love is ever going forth to others, so is the heart of the man of God. We see how it is even as to patriotism—a man’s intensest patriotic feelings do not necessarily make him indifferent to the good of other countries, but rather make him wish all countries to be like his own; so it is, much more certainly and truly, with the Lord’s people in their enjoyment of blessing. Their heart expands towards others; they would fain have all men share in what they enjoy. They therefore cannot close their song without having this other clause—Praise him who is “*the giver of bread to all flesh.*” Not to Israel only does he give blessing. Israel had their manna; but, at the same time, the earth at large has its food. So in spiritual things. Israel’s God is he who giveth himself as the Bread of Life to the world. Perhaps at this point the Psalmist’s eye may be supposed to see *earth in its state of blessedness*, after Israel is for the last time redeemed from all enemies, and become “*life from the dead*” to the world—when Christ reigns and dispenses the bread of life to the New Earth, as widely as he gave common food—“*the feast of fat things to all nations,*” (Isa. xxv. 6.); for his mercy will not rest till this is accomplished.—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

*Verse 25.*—“*Who giveth food to all flesh.*” In the close the Psalmist speaks of the paternal providence of God as extending not only to all mankind, but to every living creature, suggesting that we have no reason to feel surprise at his sustaining

the character of a kind and provident father to his own people, when he condescends to care for the cattle, and the asses of the field, and the crow, and the sparrow. Men are much better than brute beasts, and there is a great difference between some men and others, though not in merit, yet as regards the privilege of the divine adoption, and the Psalmist is to be considered as reasoning from the less to the greater and enhancing the incomparably superior mercy which God shows to his own children.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 25.*—"Who giveth food to all flesh." Of Edward Taylor, better known as "Father Taylor," the Sailor Preacher of Boston, it is said that his prayers were more like the utterances of an Oriental, abounding in imagery, than a son of these colder western climes. The Sunday before he was to sail for Europe, he was entreating the Lord to care well for his church during his absence. All at once he stopped and ejaculated, "What have I done? Distrust the providence of heaven! A God that gives a whale a ton of herrings for a breakfast, will he not care for my children?" and then went on, closing his prayer in a more confiding strain.—*C. H. Spurgeon, in "Eccentric Preachers," 1880.*

*Verse 26.*—"The God of heaven." The phrase "God of heaven" is not found in the earlier Scriptures. We meet it nowhere else in the Psalms; but we meet it in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Ezra i. 2; v. 11, 12; vi. 9; vii. 12, 23; Neh. i. 4; ii. 4; Dan. ii. 18, 19, 44; Jonah i. 9. It is twice found in the Apocalypse, Rev. xi. 13; xvi. 11. It is a sublime and appropriate designation of the true God, expressive of his glorious elevation above the passions and perturbations of earth. To him all flesh should give thanks, for all receive his mercy in many forms and ways. His favours come down on generation after generation, and to his willing, obedient people they shall flow on during eternal ages.—*William Swan Plumer.*

*Verse 26.*—My brethren, God's mercies are from everlasting; and it is a treasure that can never be spent, never exhausted, unto eternity. In Isa. lxiv. 5, we read, "In thy mercy is continuance." If God will but continue to be merciful to me, will a poor soul say, I have enough. Why, saith he, "in his mercies is continuance, and we shall be saved." Hath God pardoned thee hitherto? but hast thou sinned again? Can he stretch his goodness and mercy a little further? Why, he will stretch them out unto eternity, unto everlasting; and if one everlasting be not enough, there are twenty-six everlastings in this one Psalm. In Isa. liv. 8, "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

*Verse 26.*—"O give thanks unto the God of heaven." His mercy in providing heaven for his people is more than all the rest.—*John Trapp.*

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#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verse 1.*—I. Consider his name—"Jehovah." II. Carry out your joyful duty: "O give thanks." III. Contemplate the two reasons given—goodness and enduring mercy.

*Verse 1.*—I. Many subjects for praise. 1. For the goodness of God: "He is good" (verse 1). 2. For his supremacy: "God of gods; Lord of lords" (verses 2, 3). 3. For his works in general (verse 4). 4. For his works of creation in particular (verses 5—9). 5. For his works of Providence (verses 10—26). II. The chief subject for praise:—"For his mercy endureth for ever." 1. For mercy. This is the sinner's principal need. 2. For mercy in God. This is the sinner's attribute, and is as essential to God as justice. 3. For mercy enduring for ever. If they who have sinned need mercy for ever, they must exist for ever; and their guilt must be for ever.—*G. R.*

*Verse 1.*—"The LORD is good." God is originally good—good of himself. He is infinitely good. He is perfectly good, because infinitely good. He is immutably good.—*Charnock.*

*Verses 1—3.*—I. The triplet of names: "Jehovah," "the God of gods," "the Lord of lords." II. The threefold adjuration, "O give thanks." III. The irrepressible attribute and argument—"for his mercy," etc.—*W. B. H.*

*Verses 1—26.*—"For his mercy endureth for ever." See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 787: "A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons."

*Verse 4.*—I. The Lord does great wonders of mercy. II. He does them unaided. III. He does them as none else can do. IV. He should have unique praise.

*Verse 4.*—*The great lone Wonderworker.* I. God was alone in the wonderwork of Creation: Gen. i. II. Alone in the wonderwork of redemption: Isa. lxiii. 5. III. Is alone in the wonderwork of Providence: Ps. civ. 27, 28. IV. Alone in the wonderwork of Sanctification: 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. V. Will be alone in the wonderwork of Universal Triumph: 1 Cor. xv. 25.—*C. A. D.*

*Verse 4.*—The merciful in the wonderful. The wonderful in the merciful.

*Verse 7.*—The mercy which dwells in the creation and distribution of light.

*Verses 7—9.*—I. The constancy of rule. II. The association of light with rule. III. The perpetuity of mercy in this matter.

*Verses 8, 9.*—I. The glory of the day of joy. II. The comforts of the night of sorrow. III. The hand of God in each.

*Verse 10.*—Mercy and judgment. In the stroke that filled Egypt with anguish there was conspicuous mercy.—I. Even to Egypt; the sharp stroke should have wrought repentance. So God still strives with men. II. Evidently to Israel; they being thus delivered; their firstborn saved. III. Emphatically to the whole world: power made known, Christ foreshadowed, an important link in the chain of redemption.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 11.*—The bringing out of God's people from their natural state, from their misery, and from association with the ungodly, a great marvel of everlasting mercy.

*Verse 11.*—Effectual calling; the intervention at the determined moment of the mercy of infinite ages.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 12.*—Displays of divine power in the history of the saints a reason for song.

*Verses 13, 14.*—God to be praised not only, I. For clearing our way; but also, II. For giving faith to traverse it. The last as great a mercy as the first.

*Verses 13—15.*—Mercy queen of the Exodus. I. Her sceptre upon the sea. What cannot Love divine conquer for its chosen! II. Her standard in the van. Whither shall saints fear to follow her? III. Her frown upon the pursuers; life to the beloved, fatal to the foe. IV. To her let there be brought the chaplet of our praises.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 15.*—Final victory. I. Battalions of evil annihilated. II. Love unharmed mounting immortal above the wave: "for his mercy endureth for ever." III. Heaven resonant with the song of Moses and the Lamb, to him give thanks.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 16.*—I. Personal care: "To him which led." II. Peculiar interest: "His people." III. Persevering goodness: "Through the wilderness."

*Verse 16.*—*Led through the wilderness.* I. God's people must enter the wilderness for trial, for self knowledge, for development of graces, for preparation for Canaan. II. God leads his people while in the wilderness. Their route, their provision, their discipline, their protection. III. God will bring his people out of the wilderness.—*C. A. D.*

*Verses 17—22.*—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1285: "Sihon and Og; or, Mercies in Detail."

*Verse 21.*—I. Our portion, a heritage. II. Our title-deed, a royal grant: "And gave." III. Our praise, due to enduring mercy.

*Verse 23.*—Prayer of the dying thief turned into a song.

*Verses 23, 24.*—The gracious remembrance and the glorious redemption.—*C. A. D.*

*Verse 24.*—Our enemies, our accomplished redemption, the author of it, and his reason for effecting it.

*Verse 24.*—The multiplied redemptions of the Christian life, and their inexhaustible spring.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 25.*—Divine housekeeping. I. The Royal Commissariat. II. Its spiritual counterpart: God's august provisioning for our immortal nature. III. The queenly grace that hath the keeping of the keys: "for his mercy," etc.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 26.*—Consider, I. How he rules in heaven. II. How he rules earth from heaven. III. How mercy is the eternal element of that rule, and therefore he is the eternal object of praise.