

## PSALM CXLV.

*This is one of the alphabetical Psalms, composed with much art, and, doubtless, so arranged that the memory might be aided. The Holy Spirit condescends to use even the more artificial methods of the poet, to secure attention, and impress the heart.*

**TITLE.**—**DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE.** *It is David's, David's very own, David's favourite. It is David's Praise just as another (Psalm lxxxvi.) is David's Prayer. It is altogether praise, and praise pitched in a high key. David had blessed God many a time in other Psalms, but this he regarded as his peculiar, his crown jewel of praise. Certainly David's praise is the best of praise, for it is that of a man of experience, of sincerity, of calm deliberation, and of intense warmth of heart. It is not for any one of us to render David's praise, for David only could do that; but we may take David's Psalm as a model, and aim at making our own personal adoration as much like it as possible: we shall be long before we equal our model. Let each Christian reader present his own praise unto the Lord, and call it by his own name. What a wealth of varied praise will thus be presented through Christ Jesus!*

**DIVISION.**—*The Psalm does not fall into any marked divisions, but is one and indivisible. Our own translators have mapped out this song with considerable discernment. It is not a perfect arrangement, but it will suit our convenience in exposition. David praiseth God for his fame or glory (1—7), for his goodness (8—10), for his kingdom (11—13), for his providence (14—16), for his saving mercy (17—21).*

### EXPOSITION.

**I** WILL extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

6 And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness.

7 Thy shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

1. "*I will extol thee, my God, O king.*" David as God's king adores God as his king. It is well when the Lord's royalty arouses our loyalty, and our spirit is moved to magnify his majesty. The Psalmist has extolled his Lord many a time before, he is doing so still, and he will do so in the future: praise is for all tenses. When we cannot express all our praise just now, it is wise to register our resolution to continue in the blessed work, and write it down as a bond, "I will extol thee." See how David testifies his devotion and adherence to his God by the pronoun "my," how he owns his allegiance by the title "king," and how he goes on to declare his determination to make much of him in his song.

"*And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.*" David determined that his praise should rise to blessing, should intelligently spend itself upon the name or character of God, and should be continued world without end. He uses the word "bless" not merely for variation of sound, but also for the deepening and sweetening of the sense. To bless God is to praise him with a personal affection for him, and a wishing well to him; this is a growingly easy exercise as we advance in experience and grow in grace. David declares that he will offer every form of praise, through every

form of existence. His notion of duration is a full one—"for ever" has no end, but when he adds another "ever" to it he forbids all idea of a close. Our praise of God shall be as eternal as the God we praise.

2. "*Every day will I bless thee.*" Whatever the character of the day, or of my circumstances and conditions during that day, I will continue to glorify God. Were we well to consider the matter we should see abundant cause in each day for rendering special blessing unto the Lord. All before the day, all in the day, all following the day should constrain us to magnify our God every day, all the year round. Our love to God is not a matter of holy days: every day is alike holy to holy men. David here comes closer to God than when he said, "I will bless thy name": it is now, "I will bless thee." This is the centre and kernel of true devotion: we do not only admire the Lord's words and works, but himself. Without realizing the personality of God, praise is well-nigh impossible; you cannot extol an abstraction. "*And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*" He said he would bless that name, and now he vows to praise it; he will extol the Lord in every sense and way. Eternal worship shall not be without its variations; it will never become monotonous. Heavenly music is not harping upon one string, but all strings shall be tuned to one praise. Observe the personal pronouns here: four times he says "I will": praise is not to be discharged by proxy: there must be your very self in it, or there is nothing in it.

3. "*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.*" Worship should be somewhat like its object—great praise for a great God. There is no part of Jehovah's greatness which is not worthy of great praise. In some beings greatness is but vastness of evil: in him it is magnificence of goodness. Praise may be said to be great when the song contains great matter, when the hearts producing it are intensely fervent, and when large numbers unite in the grand acclaim. No chorus is too loud, no orchestra too large, no Psalm too lofty for the lauding of the Lord of Hosts.

"*And his greatness is unsearchable.*"

"Still his worth your praise exceeds,  
Excellent are all his deeds."

Song should be founded upon search; hymns composed without thought are of no worth, and tunes upon which no pains have been spent are beneath the dignity of divine adoration. Yet when we meditate most, and search most studiously, we shall still find ourselves surrounded with unknowable wonders, which will baffle all attempts to sing them worthily. The best adoration of the Unsearchable is to own him to be so, and close the eyes in reverence before the excessive light of his glory. Not all the minds of all the centuries shall suffice to search out the unsearchable riches of God: he is past finding out; and, therefore, his deserved praise is still above and beyond all that we can render to him.

4. "*One generation shall praise thy works to another.*" There shall be a tradition of praise: men shall hand on the service, they shall make it a point to instruct their descendants in this hallowed exercise. We look back upon the experience of our fathers, and sing of it; even thus shall our sons learn praise from the Lord's works among ourselves. Let us see to it that we praise God before our children, and never make them think that his service is an unhappy one. "*And shall declare thy mighty acts.*" The generations shall herein unite: together they shall make up an extraordinary history. Each generation shall contribute its chapter, and all the generations together shall compose a volume of matchless character. David began with "I," but he has in this verse soon reached to an inconceivable multitude, comprehending all the myriads of our race of every age. The praise of the Lord enlarges the heart, and as it grows upon us our minds grow with it. God's works of goodness and acts of power make up a subject which all the eras of human story can never exhaust. A praiseful heart seems to live in all the centuries in delightful companionship with all the good. We are not afraid that the incense will ever cease to burn upon the altars of Jehovah: the priests die, but the adoration lives on. All glory be unto him who remains the same Lord throughout all generations.

5. "*I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty.*" 'Tis fit a king should speak of the majesty of the King of kings. David cannot give over the worship of God into the hands of others, even though all generations should undertake to perpetuate it: he must have his own individual share in it, and so he saith, "I will speak." What a speaker! for he no sooner begins than he heaps up words of honour—"the glorious honour of thy majesty," or "the beauty of the honour

of thy majesty." His language labours to express his meaning; he multiplies the terms by which he would extol Jehovah, his King. Everything which has to do with the Great King is majestic, honourable, glorious. His least is greater than man's greatest, his lowest is higher than man's highest. There is nothing about the infinite Lord which is unworthy of his royalty; and, on the other hand, nothing is wanting to the splendour of his reign: his majesty is honourable, and his honour is glorious: he is altogether wonderful.

"*And of thy wondrous works.*" All the works of God among men are Godlike, but certain of them are specially calculated to create surprise. Many works of power, of justice, of wisdom, are wonderful; and his work of grace is wondrous above all. This specially, and all the rest proportionately, should be spoken of by holy men, by experienced men, and by men who have the ability to speak with power. These things must not be permitted to pass away in silence; if others do not remember them, representative men like David must make a point of conversing upon them in private, and speaking of them in public. Let it be the delight of each one of us according to our position to speak lovingly of our Lord.

6. "*And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts.*" If unobservant of other matters these acts of judgment shall seize their attention and impress their minds so that they must talk about them. Did not men in our Saviour's day speak of the falling tower of Siloam and the slaughtered Galileans? Are there not rumours of wars, when there are not even whispers of other things? Horrible news is sure to spread: under mercies men may be dumb, but concerning miseries they raise a great outcry. The force of dread is a power which loosens the tongue of the multitude: they are sure to talk of that which makes the ear to tingle and the hair to stand upright.

While they are thus occupied with "fearsome facts," such as the drowning of a world, the destruction of the cities of the plain, the plagues of Egypt, the destruction at the Red Sea, and so forth, David would look at these affairs in another light, and sing another tune. "*And I will declare thy greatness.*" Those acts which were terrible deeds to most men were mighty deeds, or *greatnesses* to our holy poet: these he would publish like a herald, who mentions the titles and honours of his royal master. It is the occupation of every true believer to rehearse the great doings of his great God. We are not to leave this to the common converse of the crowd, but we are personally to make a declaration of what we have seen and known. We are even bound in deep solemnity of manner to warn men of the Lord's greatness in his terrible acts of justice: thus will they be admonished to abstain from provoking him. To fulfil this duty we are already bound by solemn obligations, and we shall do well to bind ourselves further by resolutions, "I will—God helping me, I will."

7. "*They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.*" They shall pour forth grateful memories even as springs gush with water, plenteously, spontaneously, constantly, joyously. The Lord's redeemed people having been filled with his great goodness, shall retain the happy recollection of it, and shall be moved often and often to utter those recollections. Not content with a scanty mention of such amazing love, they shall go on to an abundant utterance of such abundant favour. It shall be their delight to speak with one another of God's dealings with them, and to compare notes of their experiences. God has done nothing stintedly; all his goodness is great goodness, all worthy to be remembered, all suggestive of holy discourse. Upon this subject there is no scarcity of matter, and when the heart is right there is no need to stop from want of facts to tell. Oh, that there were more of these memories and utterances, for it is not meet that the goodness of the living God should be buried in the cemetery of silence, in the grave of ingratitude.

"*And shall sing of thy righteousness.*" They shall say and then sing. And what is the theme which impels them to leave the pulpit for the orchestra? What do they sing of? They sing of that righteousness which is the sinner's terror, which even good men mention with deep solemnity. Righteousness received by gospel light is in reality the secret foundation of the believer's hope. God's covenant of grace is our strong consolation, because he who made it is righteous, and will not run back from it. Since Jesus died as our substitute, righteousness requires and secures the salvation of all the redeemed. This attribute is our best friend, and therefore we sing of it.

Modern thinkers would fain expunge the idea of righteousness from their notion of God; but converted men would not. It is a sign of growth in sanctification



when we rejoice in the justice, rectitude, and holiness of our God. Even a rebel may rejoice in mercy, which he looks upon as laxity; but a loyal subject rejoices when he learns that God is so just that not even to save his own elect would he consent to violate the righteousness of his moral government. Few men will shout for joy at the righteousness of Jehovah, but those who do so are his chosen, in whom his soul delighteth.

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

8. "*The LORD is gracious.*" Was it not in some such terms that the Lord revealed himself to Moses? Is not this Jehovah's glory? To all living men this is his aspect: he is gracious, or full of goodness and generosity. He treats his creatures with kindness, his subjects with consideration, and his saints with favour. His words and ways, his promises and his gifts, his plans and his purposes all manifest his grace, or free favour. There is nothing suspicious, prejudiced, morose, tyrannical, or unapproachable in Jehovah,—he is condescending and kind. "*And full of compassion.*" To the suffering, the weak, the foolish, the despondent, he is very pitiful: he feels for them, he feels with them: he does this heartily, and in a practical manner. Of this pitifulness he is full, so that he compassionates freely, constantly, deeply, divinely, and effectually. In God is fulness in a sense not known among men, and this fulness is all fragrant with sympathy for human misery. If the Lord be full of compassion there is no room in him for forgetfulness or harshness, and none should suspect him thereof. What an ocean of compassion there must be since the Infinite God is full of it. "*Slow to anger.*" Even those who refuse his grace yet share in long-suffering. When men do not repent, but, on the contrary, go from bad to worse, he is still averse to let his wrath flame forth against them. Greatly patient and extremely anxious that the sinner may live, he "lets the lifted thunder drop," and still forbears. "Love suffereth long and is kind," and God is love. "*And of great mercy.*" This is his attitude towards the guilty. When men at last repent, they find pardon awaiting them. Great is their sin, and great is God's mercy. They need great help, and they have it though they deserve it not; for he is greatly good to the greatly guilty.

9. "*The LORD is good to all.*" No one, not even his fiercest enemy, can deny this; for the falsehood would be too barefaced, since the very existence of the lips which slander him is a proof that it is slander. He allows his enemies to live, he even supplies them with food, and smooths their way with many comforts; for them the sun shines as brightly as if they were saints, and the rain waters their fields as plentifully as if they were perfect men. Is not this goodness to all? In our own land the gospel sounds in the ears of all who care to listen; and the Scriptures are within reach of the poorest child. It would be a wanton wresting of Scripture to limit this expression to the elect, as some have tried to do: we rejoice in electing love, but none the less we welcome the glorious truth, "Jehovah is good to all."

"*And his tender mercies are over all his works.*" Not "his new-covenant works," as one read it the other day who was wise above that which is written, yea, contrary to that which is written. Kindness is a law of God's universe: the world was planned for happiness; even now that sin has so sadly marred God's handiwork, and introduced elements which were not from the beginning, the Lord has so arranged matters that the fall is broken, the curse is met by an antidote, and the inevitable pain is softened with mitigations. Even in this sin-stricken world, under its disordered economy, there are abundant traces of a hand skilful to soothe distress and heal disease. That which makes life bearable is the tenderness of the great Father. This is seen in the creation of an insect as well as in the ruling of nations. The Creator is never rough, the Provider is never forgetful, the Ruler is never cruel. Nothing is done to create disease, no organs are arranged to promote misery; the incoming of sickness and pain is not according to the original design, but a result of our disordered state. Man's body as it left the Maker's hand was neither framed for disease, decay, nor death, neither was the purpose of it discomfort and anguish; far otherwise, it was framed for a joyful activity, and a peaceful enjoyment of God. Jehovah has in great consideration laid up in the world cures for our ailments, and

helps for our feebleness, and if many of these have been long in their discovery, it is because it was more for man's benefit to find them out himself, than to have them labelled and placed in order before his eyes. We may be sure of this, that Jehovah has never taken delight in the ills of his creatures, but has sought their good, and laid himself out to alleviate the distresses into which they have guiltily plunged themselves.

The duty of kindness to animals may logically be argued from this verse. Should not the children of God be like their Father in kindness ?

10. "*All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD.*" There is a something about every creature which redounds to the honour of God. The skill, kindness, and power manifested in the formation of each living thing is in itself to the praise of God, and when observed by an intelligent mind the Lord is honoured thereby. Some works praise him by their being, and others by their well-being ; some by their mere existence, and others by their hearty volition. "*And thy saints shall bless thee.*" These holy ones come nearer, and render sweeter adoration. Men have been known to praise those whom they hated, as we may admire the prowess of a warrior who is our foe ; but saints lovingly praise, and therefore are said to "bless." They wish well to God ; they would make him more blessed, if such a thing were possible ; they desire blessings upon his cause and his children, and invoke success upon his work and warfare. None but blessed men will bless the Lord. Only saints or holy ones will bless the thrice holy God. If we praise Jehovah because of his works around us, we must go on to bless him for his works within us. Let the two "shalls" of this verse be fulfilled, especially the latter one.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power ;

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

11. "*They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom.*" Excellent themes for saintly minds. Those who bless God from their hearts rejoice to see him enthroned, glorified, and magnified in power. No subject is more profitable for humility obedience, hope, and joy than that of the reigning power of the Lord our God. His works praise him, but they cannot crown him : this remains for holy hands and hearts. It is their high pleasure to tell of the glory of his kingdom in its justice, kindness, eternity, and so forth. Kingdoms of earth are glorious for riches, for extent of territory, for victories, for liberty, for commerce, and other matters ; but in all true glories the kingdom of Jehovah excels them. We have seen a palace dedicated "to all the glories of France" ; but time, eternity, and all space are filled with the glories of God : on these we love to speak. "*And talk of thy power.*" This power supports the kingdom and displays the glory, and we are sure to talk of it when the glory of the divine kingdom is under discussion. God's power to create or to destroy, to bless or to punish, to strengthen or to crush, is matter for frequent rehearsal. All power comes from God. Apart from him the laws of nature would be inoperative. His power is the one source of force—mechanical, vital, mental, spiritual. Beyond the power of God which has been put forth, infinite force lies latent in himself. Who can calculate the reserve forces of the Infinite ? How, then, can his kingdom fail ? We hear talk of the five great powers, but what are they to the One Great Power ? The Lord is "the blessed and only Potentate." Let us accustom ourselves to think more deeply and speak more largely of th' power which ever makes for righteousness and works for mercy.

12. "*To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts.*" These glorious deeds ought to be known to all mankind ; but yet few reckon such knowledge to be an essential part of education. As the State cannot teach these holy histories the people of God must take care to do it themselves. The work must be done for every age, for men have short memories in reference to their God, and the doings of his power. They inscribe the deeds of their heroes upon brass, but the glorious acts of Jehovah are written upon the sand, and the tide of time washes them from present memory ; therefore we must repeat the lesson, and yet again repeat it. The saints are the religious instructors of the race ; they ought to be not only the historians of the past, but the bards of the present, whose duty it is to keep the sons of men in memory of the great deeds which the Lord did in the days of their fathers

and in the old time before them. Note the contrast between the great deeds of God and the puny sons of Adam, who have even degenerated from their father, though he was as nothing compared with his Maker.

"*And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.*" What a grand subject! Yet this we are to make known; and the publication of it is left to us who bless the Lord. "The glory of the majesty of his reign." What a theme! Jehovah's reign as sovereign Lord of all, his majesty in that dominion, and the glory of that majesty! The threefold subject baffles the most willing mind. How shall we make this known to the sons of men? Let us first labour to know it ourselves, and then let us make it a frequent subject of discourse, so shall men know it from us, the Holy Spirit attending our word.

13. "*Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.*" His meditation has brought him near to God, and God near to him: he speaks to him in adoration, changing the pronoun from "his" to "thy." He sees the great King, and prostrates himself before him. It is well when our devotion opens the gate of heaven, and enters within the portal to speak with God face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. The point upon which the Psalmist's mind rests is the eternity of the divine throne,—"thy reign is a reign of all eternities." The Lord's kingdom is without beginning, without break, without bound, and without end. He never abdicates his throne, neither does he call in a second to share his empire. None can overthrow his power, or break away from his rule. Neither this age, nor the age to come, nor ages of ages shall cause his sovereignty to fail. Herein is rest for faith. "The Lord sitteth King for ever." "*And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*" Men come and go like shadows on the wall, but God reigneth eternally. We distinguish kings as they succeed each other by calling them first and second; but this King is Jehovah, the First and the Last. Adam in his generation knew his Creator to be King, and the last of his race shall know the same. All hail, Great God! Thou art ever Lord of lords!

These three verses are a reverent hymn concerning "the kingdom of God": they will be best appreciated by those who are in that kingdom in the fullest sense, and are most truly loyal to the Lord. It is, according to these verses, a kingdom of glory and power; a kingdom of light which men are to know, and of might which men are to feel; it is full of majesty and eternity; it is the benediction of every generation. We are to speak of it, talk of it, and make it known, and then we are to acknowledge it in the homage directed distinctly to the Lord himself—as in verse thirteen.

14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

In these three verses Jehovah is adored for his gracious providence towards men and all other creatures; this fitly follows the proclamation of his royalty, for we here see how he rules his kingdom, and provides for his subjects.

14. "*The LORD upholdeth all that fall.*" Read this verse in connection with the preceding and admire the unexpected contrast: he who reigns in glorious majesty, yet condescends to lift up and hold up those who are apt to fall. The form of the verb shows that he is always doing this; he is Jehovah upholding. His choice of the fallen, and the falling, as the subjects of his gracious help is specially to be noted. The fallen of our race, especially fallen women, are shunned by us, and it is peculiar tenderness on the Lord's part that such he looks upon, even those who are at once the chief of sinners and the least regarded of mankind. The falling ones among us are too apt to be pushed down by the strong: their timidity and dependence make them the victims of the proud and domineering. To them also the Lord gives his upholding help. The Lord loves to reverse things,—he puts down the lofty, and lifts up the lowly.

"*And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*" Another deed of condescension. Many are despondent, and cannot lift up their heads in courage, or their hearts with comfort; but these he cheers. Some are bent with their daily load, and these he strengthens. Jesus loosed a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had so bound that she was bowed down, and could by no means lift up herself. In this he proved



himself to be the true Son of the Highest. Think of the Infinite bowing to lift up the bowed, and stooping to be leaned upon by those who are ready to fall. The two "alls" should not be overlooked: the Lord has a kindly heart towards the whole company of the afflicted.

15. "*The eyes of all wait upon thee.*" They have learned to look to thee: it has become their nature to turn to thee for all they want. As children look to a father for all they need, so do the creatures look to God, the all-sufficient Provider. It were well if all men had the eye of faith, and if all waited therewith upon the Lord. "*And thou givest them their meat in due season.*" They wait, and God gives. The thought of this brings God so near to our poet-prophet that he is again speaking with God after the style of thee and thou. Is it to be wondered at when the Lord is feeding the hungry all around us,—giving food to all creatures, and to ourselves among them? Like a flock of sheep the creatures stand around the Lord as their great Shepherd; all eyes are to his hand expecting to receive their food; nor are they disappointed, for when the hour comes suitable provender is ready for each creature. Observe the punctuality of the Lord in giving food at meal-time,—in the season when it is due. This he does for all, and each living thing has its own season, so that the Lord of heaven is feeding his great flock both by day and by night, during every moment of time.

16. "*Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*" Thou alone providest, O Jehovah! Thou doest it liberally, with open hand; thou doest it easily, as if it were only to open thine hand; thou doest this at once as promptly as if all supplies were ready to hand. Living things have needs, and these create desires; the living God has suitable supplies at hand, and these he gives till inward satisfaction is produced, and the creature sighs no longer. In spiritual things, when God has raised a desire, he always gratifies it; hence the longing is prophetic of the blessing. In no case is the desire of the living thing excited to produce distress, but in order that it may seek and find satisfaction.

These verses refer to natural providence; but they may equally well apply to the stores of grace, since the same God is king in both spheres. If we will but wait upon the Lord for pardon, renewing, or whatever else we need, we shall not wait in vain. The hand of grace is never closed while the sinner lives.

17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

In these verses we behold our God in the realm of his free grace dealing well with his believing people.

17. "*The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*" His ways and works are both worthy to be praised. Jehovah cannot be unjust or impure. Let his doings be what they may, they are in every case righteous and holy. This is the confession of the godly who follow his ways, and of the gracious who study his works. Whatever God is or does must be right. In the salvation of his people he is as righteous and holy as in any other of his ways and works: he has not manifested mercy at the expense of justice, but the rather he has magnified his righteousness by the death of his Son.

18. "*The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him.*" Not only near by his omnipresence, but to sympathize and favour. He does not leave praying men, and men who confess his name, to battle with the world alone, but he is ever at their side. This favour is not for a few of those who invoke him; but for each one of the pious company. "All" who place themselves beneath the shield of his glorious name by calling themselves by it, and by calling upon it in supplication, shall find him to be a very present help in trouble. "*To all that call upon him in truth:*" for there are many whose formal prayers and false professions will never bring them into communion with the Lord. To pray in truth, we must have a true

heart, and the truth in our heart; and then we must be humble, for pride is a falsehood; and be earnest, or else prayer is a lie. A God of truth cannot be nigh to the spirit of hypocrisy; this he knows and hates; neither can he be far removed from a sincere spirit, since it is his work, and he forsakes not the work of his own hands.

19. *"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him:"* that is, those who reverence his name and his law. Inasmuch as they have respect unto his will, he will have respect unto their will. They shall have their way for they have his way in their hearts. A holy heart only desires what a holy God can give, and so its desire is filled full out of the fulness of the Lord. *"He also will hear their cry, and will save them."* Divinely practical shall his nearness be, for he will work their deliverance. He will listen to their piteous cry, and then will send salvation from every ill. This he will do himself personally; he will not trust them to angels or saints.

20. *"The Lord preserveth all them that love him."* They keep him in their love, and he keeps them by his love. See how these favoured ones have advanced from fearing the Lord and crying to him, even to loving him, and in that love they are secure from all danger. Mark the number of "alls" in these later verses of the Psalm. In each of these God is all in all. *"But all the wicked will he destroy."* Wickedness is an offence to all holy beings, and therefore those who are determined to continue in it must be weeded out. As good sanitary laws remove all creators of pest and plague, so does the moral government of God mark every evil thing for destruction; it cannot be tolerated in the presence of a perfectly holy God. What ruins wicked men frequently become in this life! What monuments of wrath will they be in the world to come! Like Nineveh and Babylon, and other destroyed places, they shall only exist to declare how thoroughly God fulfils his threatenings.

21. *"My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord."* Whatever others may do, I will not be silent in the praise of the Lord: whatever others may speak upon, my topic is fixed once for all: I will speak the praise of Jehovah. I am doing it, and I will do it as long as I breathe. *"And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."* Praise is no monopoly for one, even though he be a David; others are debtors, let them also be songsters. All men of every race, condition, or generation should unite to glorify God. No man need think that he will be rejected when he comes with his personal note of praise; all are permitted, invited, and exhorted to magnify the Lord. Specially should his holiness be adored: this is the crown, and in a certain sense the sum, of all his attributes. Only holy hearts will praise the holy name, or character of the Lord; oh, that all flesh were sanctified, then would the sanctity of God be the delight of all. Once let the song begin and there will be no end to it. It shall go on for ever and a day, as the old folks used to say. If there were two for-ers, or twenty for-ers, they ought all to be spent in the praises of the ever-living, ever-blessing, ever-blessed JEHOVAH. Blessed be the Lord for ever for having revealed to us his name, and blessed be that name as he has revealed it; yea, blessed be he above all that we can know, or think, or say. Our hearts revel in the delight of praising him. Our mouth, our mind, our lip, our life shall be our Lord's throughout this mortal existence, and when time shall be no more

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

This has been happily characterized as the "new song" promised in Ps. cxliv. 9. In other words, it is the song of praise, corresponding to the didactic, penitential, and supplicatory Psalms of this series.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

The ancient Hebrews declare him happy whoever, in after times, utters this Psalm thrice each day with the mouth, heart, and tongue.—*Victorinus Bythner,*—1670.

The last six or seven Psalms are the Beulah of the book, where the sun shineth night and day, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. Coming at the close after all the mournful, plaintive, penitential, prayerful, varying notes, they unconsciously typify the joy and rest of glory.—*George Gilfillan.*



*Title.*—*The Praise of David.* Psalms are the praises of God accompanied with song; Psalms are songs containing the praise of God. If there be praise, but not of God, it is not a Psalm. If there be praise, and praise of God, if it is not sung, it is not a Psalm. To make a Psalm there go these three—praise, God's praise, and song.—*Augustine.*

*Title.*—It is observable concerning David's entitling the Psalm "*The Praise of David,*" that in the original no Psalm else beareth such a title. It is appropriated to it, because this wholly consists of praise; he was elevated therein to a frame of spirit made up of the pure praise of God, without any touch of what was particular to himself. It was not thanks, but altogether praise, and wholly praise.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

*Title.*—This Psalm, which is designated a *Tehillah*, or a Psalm of *praise*,—a name which has passed from this Psalm to the whole Psalter, which is commonly called *Sepher Tehillim*, or "*Book of Praises,*"—is the last of the Psalms ascribed to David.

It is remarkable, that although that is the name given to the Psalter (which is entitled in Hebrew *Sepher Tehillim*, or *Book of Praises*), this is the only Psalm in the whole number which is designated in the title as a *Tehillah*—a word derived from the same root as *Hallelujah*. It seems as if this name *Tehillah* had been studiously reserved for the *last* of David's Psalms, in order to mark more emphatically that all his utterances are consummated in *praise*. And this view is more clearly manifested by the circumstance that the word *Tehillah* is introduced into the *last* verse of this Psalm, "My soul shall speak the *praise*" (*tehillah*) "of the Lord," (observe this preparation for Hallelujah, *Praise ye the Lord*); "and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever." As much as to say, that though David's voice was now about to be hushed in this life, yet it would never be silent in the world to come, and would ever "praise the Lord"; and as much, also, as to say that his last exhortation should be to all nations to praise him, "Let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

*Title.*—This Psalm is entitled "*David's praise.*" For howsoever the prayers and the praises (all) in this book, are (for the most part) of David's penning: yet two there are he hath singled out from the rest, and set his own mark on them as proper to himself: the lxxxvi. Psalm, his *Tephilla*, *David's own Prayer*; and there is here his *Tehilla*, his own *Praise* or thanksgiving. As if he had made the rest for all in common, but reserved these peculiarly for himself.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

*Whole Psalm.*—In regard to its alphabetic structure, it has one peculiarity, *viz.*, the *nun* is omitted; the reason of which may be, that (as we have seen in some others Psalms of this structure) by means of that or some other such omission, we might be kept from putting stress on the mere form of the composition.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Whole Psalm.*—Cassiodorus quaintly remarks that the Psalms in which the alphabetical order is complete, are especially fitted for the righteous in the Church Triumphant, but those in which one letter is missing, are for the Church Militant here on earth, as still imperfect, and needing to be purified from defect.—*Neale and Littledale.*

*Verse 1.*—"I will extol thee, my God, O King." To extol is to set pre-eminently on high; to exalt above all others; it is the expression of the greatest possible admiration; it is letting others know our high opinion of a person, and endeavouring to win them over to it. The man who has such a high opinion of another as to induce him to extol him, will not be likely to rest without bringing forth into prominent observation the object of his praise.—*Philip Bennett Power.*

*Verse 1.*—"O King"; or *the King*, by way of eminency; the King of kings, the God by whom kings reign, and to whom I and all other kings owe subjection and obedience.—*Matthew Pool.*

*Verse 1.*—"O king." The Psalmist in rapt ecstasy seems as though he saw God incarnate in Christ present to inspire his praise. Christ is our God and King, to be extolled in the heart, with the mouth, and by the life.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

*Verse 1.*—"King." God is King in verity; others are called kings in vanity.—*Martin Geier.*

*Verse 1.*—"I will bless thy name for ever and ever." The name of God in Scripture

is taken, first, for *God himself*. The name of a thing is put for the thing named, Ps. xlv. 5: "Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us." "Through thy name," that is, through *thee*. Secondly, the name of God is often in Scripture put for the *attributes of God*. Thirdly, the name of God is put for *his ordinances or worship*. "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first" (Jer. vii. 12), that is, where I first set up my public worship; because, as a man is known by his proper name, so is God by his proper worship. Fourthly, the name of God is *that reverence, esteem and honour which angels and men give unto God*. As we know amongst us, the report and reputation that a man hath among men is a man's name; what men speak of him, that is his name; such an one hath a good name, we say; such an one hath an ill name, that is, men speak or think well or ill of such persons. So Gen. vi. 4. When Moses describes the giants, he saith, "They were men of renown"; the Hebrew is, "They were men of name," because the name of a man is the character he hath amongst men; as a man is esteemed, so his name is carried, and himself is accepted in the world. So the name of God is that high esteem, those honourable apprehensions, which angels and men have of God; such as the thoughts and speeches of men are for the celebration of God's glory and praise, such is his name in the world.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 1.—"For ever and ever." לעולם ועד, *leolam vaed, for ever and onward*, in this and the coming world. Expressions of this sort are very difficult to be translated, but they are, on the whole, well interpreted by those words of Mr. Addison:—

"Through all eternity to thee,  
A joyful song I'll raise;  
But oh, eternity's too short  
To utter all thy praise!"

*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"For ever and ever." Praise is the only part of duty in which we at present engage, which is lasting. We pray, but there shall be a time when prayer shall offer its last litany; we believe, but there shall be a time when faith shall be lost in sight; we hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, but there shall be a time when hope lies down and dies, lost in the splendour of the fruition that God shall reveal. But praise goes singing into heaven, and is ready without a teacher to strike the harp that is waiting for it, to transmit along the echoes of eternity the song of the Lamb. In the party-coloured world in which we live, there are days of various sorts and experiences, making up the aggregate of the Christian's life. There are waiting days, in which, because Providence fences us round, and it seems as if we cannot march, we cannot move, as though we must just wait to see what the Lord is about to do in us and for us; and there are watching days, when it behoves us never to slumber, but to be always ready for the attacks of our spiritual enemy; and there are warring days, when with nodding plume, and with ample armour, we must go forth to do battle for the truth; and there are weeping days, when it seems as if the fountains of the great deep within us were broken up; and as though, through much tribulation, we had to pass to heaven in tears. But these days shall all pass away by-and-by—waiting days all be passed, warring days all be passed, watching days all be passed; but

"Our days of praise shall ne'er be past  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
And immortality endures."

*William Morley Punshon, 1824—1881.*

Verse 1.—"For ever and ever." To praise God now does not satisfy devout aspiration, for in this age the worshipper's devotion is interrupted by sin, fear, sickness, etc.; but in eternity praise will proceed in unbroken procession.—*John Lorinus*.

Verses 1, 2.—"I will bless thee for ever and ever," and again, verse 2. This intimates, 1. That he resolved to continue in this work to the *end of his life*, throughout his "for ever" in this world. 2. That the Psalms he penned should be made use of in praising God by the church to the *end of time*. 2 Chron. xxix. 30. 3. That he hoped to be praising God to *all eternity* in the other world: that they that make it their constant work on earth, shall have it their everlasting bliss in heaven.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 2.—“*Every day.*” Then God is to be blessed and praised in dark as well as bright days.—*Johannes Paulus Palanterius*, 1600.

Verse 2.—“*Every day (in the week) will I bless thee,*” the Psalmist seems to signify. As there are “seven spirits” peculiarly existing in nearness to God, David holds the seven days of the week like seven stars in his hand, or like a seven-branched candlestick of gold, burning every day with his devotion. He calls the seven days to be as seven angels with trumpets.—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 2.—“*I will bless thee : I will praise thy name.*” The repetition intimates the fervency of his affection to this work, the fixedness of his purpose to abound in it, and the frequency of his performances therein.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 2.—“*Praise.*” If we are to define it in words, we may say that *praise* is thankful, lowly, loving worship of the goodness and majesty of God. And therefore we often find the word “praise” joined with “blessing” and “thanksgiving”: but though all three are akin to each other, they are not all alike. They are steps in a gradual scale—a song of degrees. Thanksgiving runs up into blessing, and blessing ascends into praise; for praise comprehends both, and is the highest and most perfect work of all living spirits.—*Henry Edward Manning*, 1850.

Verse 3.—“*Great is the Lord.*” If “great” here be referred to God as a king, then a *great* king he is in respect of the breadth of his empire, for all creatures, from the highest angel to the poorest worm, are under him. “Great” for length; for “his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.” “Great” for depth; for he rules even in the hearts of kings, of all men, overrules their thoughts, affections, nothing is hid from him. And “great” again for height; being “a great King above all gods,” ruling by his own absolute power and authority; whereas all other kings have their sword from him, and rule by a delegated and vicarious power.—*William Nicholson*.

Verse 3.—“*His greatness is unsearchable.*” God is so great, that till Christ revealed the Father, Deity was lost in its own infinity to the perception of men. He who attempts to navigate an infinite ocean must come back to his starting point, never being able to cross. So the ancient philosophers, disputing as to the Divine Nature, were baffled by their own ingenuity, they had to confess that they comprehended nothing of God except that he was incomprehensible. Without Christ, men can only find out about God that they can never find him.—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The Vulgate renders thus, “Of his greatness no end.” The Hebrew is, “Of his greatness no investigation.” As the classic Greeks would say, ἀνεξιχνίαστος, *not to be traced out*.—*Simon de Muis*, 1587—1644.

Verse 3.—God had searched David through and through (Ps. cxxxix. 1), but David proved he could not search God’s greatness.—*Martin Geier*.

Verses 3—6.—Verses 3 and 4 contain the material of praise, and verses 5 and 6 the praise itself. Verse 3 states a proposition, and verse 4 gives the amplification.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 4.—“*One generation shall praise thy works to another,*” etc. Deut. iv. 9, and vi. 7. Fathers teaching their sons the goodness and glory of God. This was a legal ordinance. The church and its worshippers are *collecting praises* of successive generations for the final Hallelujah celebration.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 4.—“*One generation shall praise thy works to another.*” Singular is exchanged for plural in the Hebrew, “One generation shall praise (sing) thy works to another, and shall declare (plural) thy mighty acts.” Here is melody first, the antiphony of the choirs responding to each other; then harmony; all generations will burst into chorus together.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 4.—“*One generation to another.*” The *tradition* of praise! Each generation catches the strains from the last, echoes it, and passes it along to the next. One generation declares what it has seen, and passes on the praise to the generation which has not seen as yet the wonders celebrated.—*Simon de Muis*.

Verse 4.—“*One generation shall praise thy works to another,*” etc. Thus God provides for his Church. When Elijah is carried into heaven, Elisha must follow in the power and spirit of Elias. When one stream is slid and shed into the ocean, another circulates from the same ocean through the bowels of the earth into the springs under the mountains, and refreshes the scorched plains. When one star sets, another rises to guide the wandering traveller, and at length the bright morning



lamp glitters in the east, and then the glorious Sun of Righteousness. While the Church sits fainting under a juniper-tree in the wilderness, there shall fly prophets to feed her till the blessed resurrection of the witnesses. It's our high duty to study present work, and prize present help, and greatly rejoice when the Lord sends forth, as once he did, both Boanerges and Barnabas together. Pray for the mantle, girdle, and blessing of Elijah, for the love of John, and the zeal of Paul, to twine hands together to draw souls to heaven; till the Beloved comes like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices; till the shadows flee away; till the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts.—*Samuel Lee, in his Preface to Row's "Emmanuel,"* 1679.

Verse 4.—“*One generation shall praise thy works to another.*” There is no phenomenon of human life more solemn than its succession of generations. “*One generation passeth away, another generation cometh.*” And, as if to put this in a light as affecting and indelible as possible, the Psalmist immediately adds, “*but the earth abideth for ever.*” A thought that gleams like a lightning flash across this panorama of life, burning it into the beholder's brain for ever. Even the rude, gross, material earth, which we were created to subdue, and upon which we so proudly tread, is represented as having to the palpable sense this advantage over us. The abiding earth constitutes a little eternity, compared with the duration of its changing inhabitants. We come into it, and pass over it, obliterating, perhaps, some footprints in its dust by the impress of our own, to be in their turn effaced, and then leave it with amazing rapidity, as a hireling man accomplishes his days.—*Henry Allon, 1852.*

Verse 5.—“*I will speak of the glorious honour,*” etc. The word which we here translate “*speak,*” is considered by Hebrew critics to include also the idea of “*expatiating,*” “*speaking at large*”; not merely “*alluding to incidentally,*” but “*entering into particulars*”; as though one took delight in speaking upon the matter in hand. Now there is something very satisfactory in entering into particulars; we can often gather light upon a great truth by having had set before us some of the particulars connected with it; we can often understand what is too high for us, *in itself and by itself*, by some examples which bring it within reach of our dull understandings. We are like men who want to attain a height, who have not wings to fly up to it, but who can reach it by going up a ladder step by step. Particulars are often like the rounds of a ladder, little, it may be, in themselves, but very helpful to us; and to dwell upon particulars is often of use to ourselves; it certainly is to many with whom we converse.

Let us remember, that circumstanced as we are in our present state, we have no faculties for grasping in its simple grandeur the glorious honour of the majesty of God. We know most of God from what we know of his doings amongst the children of men. Hereafter, the Lord's people shall, no doubt, have much revealed to them of the glorious honour of the majesty of God, which they could now neither bear nor understand; meanwhile they have to know him chiefly by what he has said and done; and if only our eyes be open, we shall be at no loss to recognise in these the glorious honour of his majesty.—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 5.—“*I will speak,*” etc. “*I will muse*” is better than “*speak,*” as being the primary and more usual sense of the Hebrew word. It suggests that these glorious qualities of God's character and deeds should be not merely talked about and extolled in song, but be deeply pondered, laid close upon our very heart, so that the legitimate impression may be wrought into our very soul, and may mould our whole spirit and character into God's own moral image.—*Henry Cowles.*

Verse 5.—With what a cumulus of glowing terms does Holy Writ seek to display the excellence of Deity! By these descriptions, those attributes which are feebly imitated or reflected in what we call *good* among created things are declared to exist in God, infinitely, immutably, ineffably.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 5.—“*Thy wonderful works.*”—Heb.: “*the words of thy wonderful works.*” Thus the Psalmist declares that the records left of God's olden doings in the history of Israel are very precious. He has heard them. Moses and Aaron and others spoke them. He delights in them; he will sing them again on his own harp.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verses 5 and 6.—Verse 5 speaks of God's *opera mirabilia*; verse 6 of his *opera terribilia*. The former delight his saints; the latter terrify the wicked.—*John Lorinus.*

Verse 6.—“*And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts.*” When men do not mark his works of mercy and bounty, the Lord will show unto them works of justice, that is, terrible works, and give them matter of talking upon this account.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6 (last clause).—To “*declare*” here means either in speech or song; not merely to *predicate* as a fact, but to *proclaim* in praise. The Hebrew word has this width of meaning; not merely to declare in cold utterance, concerning mere history.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6.—“*Thy greatness.*” All men are enamoured of greatness. Then they must seek it in God, and get it from God. David did both. All history shows the creature aspiring after this glory. Ahasuerus, Astyages, Cyrus, Cambyses, Nebuchadnezzar, were all called *the great*. Alexander the Great, when he came to the Ganges, ordered his statue to be made of more than life size, that posterity might believe him to have been of nobler stature. In Christ alone does man attain the greatness his heart yearns for—the glory of perfect goodness.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 6.—“*Thy greatness.*” Or, according to the written text, *greatnesses*. So Aquila and Jerome. The parallelism is decidedly in favour of the plural.—*A. S. Aglen.*

Verse 7.—There is an extensive and an intensive greatness, and both must be found in our praises of God. First, an extensive greatness in regard of their number; we must be frequent and plentiful in the duty: we must “*Abundantly utter the memory of God’s great goodness.*” Secondly, there must be an intensive greatness in our praises, in regard of the degree, fervour and heat of them. They must be high, and vehement, fervent, flaming, zealous and affectionate, full of life and vigour; our spirits must be raised, our hearts and tongues enlarged in the performance of this duty. God’s glorious name, as it is in Nehem. ix. 5, “is exalted above all blessing and praise,” above our devoutest and most zealous praises; and therefore surely faint, heartless, and lifeless praises are so far from reaching him, as that they may seem to be meant of another, and a lower object. God then is not praised at all if he be not greatly praised. Weak and dull praises are dispraises; for a person or thing is not honoured or praised, unless there be some proportion between the honour and praise and the worthiness of the person or thing honoured and praised.—*Henry Jeanes, in “The Works of Heaven upon Earth,”* 1649.

Verse 7.—“*Abundantly utter.*” The word contains the idea of boiling or bubbling-up like a fountain. It signifies, a holy fluency about the mercy of God. We have quite enough fluent people about, but they are many of them idlers for whom Satan finds abundant work to do. The Lord deliver us from the noise of fluent women; but it matters not how fluent men and women are if they will be fluent on the topic now before us. Open your mouths; let the praise pour forth let it come, rivers of it. Stream away! Gush away, all that you possibly can. “*They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.*” Do not stop the joyful speakers, let them go on for ever. They do not exaggerate, they cannot. You say they are enthusiastic, but they are not half up to the pitch yet; bid them become more excited and speak yet more fervently. Go on, brother, go on; pile it up; say something greater, grander, and more fiery still! You cannot exceed the truth. You have come to a theme where your most fluent powers will fail in utterance. The text calls for a sacred fluency, and I would exhort you liberally to exercise it when you are speaking on the goodness of God.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 7.—Too many witnesses of God’s goodness are silent witnesses. Men do not enough speak out the testimonies that they might bear in this matter. The reason that I love the Methodists—good ones—is, that they have a tongue to their piety. They fulfil the command of God,—to be fervent in spirit.—*Henr. Ward Beecher.*

Verse 7.—

The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benedictions.

*William Wordsworth, 1770—1805.*

Verse 7.—“*They shall sing of thy righteousness,*” or *justice.* To sing of goodness, mercy, forgiveness, is natural; but a *song of justice* is singular. Here is the beauty of David’s praise, that he sees subject of delight as much in the righteousness of God as in his mercy.—*John Lorinus.*

Verse 7.—“*They shall sing of thy righteousness.*” The righteousness of God, whereby he justifieth sinners, and sanctifieth the justified, and executeth judgment for his reconciled people, is the sweetest object of the church’s joy.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 7.—“*Thy righteousness*” (read in connection with next verse). It is an easy thing to conceive the glory of the Creator, manifested in the good of an innocent creature; but the glory of the righteous Judge, manifested in the good of the guilty criminal, is the peculiar, mysterious wisdom of the Cross. It is easy to perceive God’s righteousness declared in the punishment of sins; the Cross alone declares “His righteousness for the remission of sins.” It magnifies justice in the way of pardoning sin, and mercy in the way of punishing it.—*John M’Laurin, 1693—1754.*

Verse 8.—“*The LORD is gracious,*” etc. The proclamation of the Lord to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6) is the fountain-head of these epithets.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 8.—In God there is no passion, only compassion.—*Richard Rothe, 1799—1867.*

Verse 8.—“*Of great mercy.*” Mercy hath misery for its object, and is that attribute towards which the eyes of a fallen world must necessarily be turned. The Psalmist hath, accordingly, introduced her last with great pomp and splendour, seated in her triumphal chariot, and invested with a supremacy over all the works of God. She is above the heavens, and over all the earth, so that the whole creation findeth that refuge under the shadow of her wings of which, by reason of man’s transgression, it standeth in need.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 9.—“*The LORD is good to all,*” etc. According to the doctrine of Christianity, we are not the creatures of a God who takes no care of his beings, and leaves them to themselves; not the offspring of a father who disowns his children, who does not concern himself about them, and is indifferent to their happiness and their misery. No; never has God, according to that comfortable doctrine, left himself unwitnessed to man; never withdrawn from him his fatherly providence and love; never abandoned the fortunes of his feeble, helpless, untutored children, to blind chance or to their own ignorance. No; from their first progenitor, to his latest posterity, he has himself provided for their support, their instruction, their guidance, their progress to higher attainments. He has constantly revealed himself to them in various ways; constantly shed innumerable benefits on them; sometimes lovingly correcting, and sometimes bountifully blessing them; has constantly been nigh to them, and has left them in want of no means for becoming wiser and better.—*George Joachim Zollikofer, 1730—1788.*

Verse 9.—“*The LORD is good to all,*” etc. God’s pity is not as some sweet cordial, poured in dainty drops from a golden phial. It is not like the musical water-drops of some slender rill, murmuring down the dark side of Mount Sinai. It is wide as the whole scope of heaven. It is abundant as all the air. If one had art to gather up all the golden sunlight that to-day falls wide over the continent, falling through every silent hour; and all that is dispersed over the whole ocean, floating from every wave; and all that is poured refulgent over the northern wastes of ice, and along the whole continent of Europe, and the vast outlying Asia and torrid Africa—if we could in any wise gather up this immense and incalculable outflow and treasure that falls down through the bright hours, and runs in liquid ether about the mountains, and fills all the plains, and sends innumerable rays through every secret place, pouring over and filling every flower, shining down the sides of every blade of grass, resting in glorious humility upon the humblest things—on sticks, and stones, and pebbles—on the spider’s web, the sparrow’s nest, the threshold of the young foxes’ hole, where they play and warm themselves—that rests on the prisoner’s window, that strikes radiant beams through the slave’s tear, and puts gold upon the widow’s weeds, that plates and roofs the city with burnished gold, and goes on in its wild abundance up and down the earth, shining everywhere and always, since the day of primal creation, without faltering, without stint, without waste or diminution; as full, as fresh, as overflowing to-day as if it were the very first day of its outlay—if one might gather up this boundless, endless, infinite treasure, to measure it, then might he tell the height, and depth, and unending glory of the pity of God! That light, and the sun, its source, are God’s own figure of the immensity and copiousness of his mercy and compassion.—*Henry Ward Beecher, 1873.*

Verse 9.—Even the worst taste of God’s mercy; such as fight against God’s mercy taste of it; the wicked have some crumbs from mercy’s table. “*The Lord*



is good to all." Sweet dewdrops are on the thistle as well as on the rose. The diocese where mercy visits is very large. Pharaoh's head was crowned though his heart was hardened.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 9.—"His tender Mercies are over all his works." When the sensible sinner is seeking faith of God, he may plead the largeness of mercy. God's mercy is like the firmament spread over all this lower world; and every infirm creature partakes more or less of its influence, according to its exigence and capacity. True, may he say, I have made myself, by sin, the vilest of all creatures; I am become worse than the beasts that perish; as vile as a worm, as loathsome as a toad, by reason of the venomous corruption that is in my heart, and my woeful contrariety to the nature of a holy God. But there is "mercy over all," even over such vile and loathsome creatures as these; there may be some over me, though wrath do now abide on me. Oh, let that mercy, whose glory it is to stretch itself over all, reach my soul also! Oh, that the blessed and powerful influence thereof would beget faith in my heart!—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 9.—"His tender mercies." The nature and force of the word רַחֲמִים, is properly the bowels; that is, there are tender mercies in God (so we term it in the *Benedictus*). Not of the ordinary sort, slight, and such as pierce not deep, come not far; but such as come *de profundis*, from the very bowels themselves, that affect that part, make the bowels relent. And what bowels? Not the bowels of the common man (for then רַחֲמִים had been the right word,) but רַחֲמִים are the bowels of a parent (so, we said, the word signifies), and this adds much; adds to mercy *σπογγή*, natural love; to one strong affection another as strong or stronger than it.

And what parent? the more pitiful of the twain, the mother. For רַחֲמִים (the singular of this word) is Hebrew for the womb. So as this, to the two former addeth the sex; the sex holden to be the more compassionate. Of all mercies, those of the bowels; and of the bowels, the bowels of a parent; and of the two parents, those of the mother: such pity as the mother takes of the children of her womb. Mercies are in God; such mercies are in God.

"Over all." It is good news for us that these mercies are in God; but, better yet, that they are in him with a *super*—"over." But, best of all, that that *super* is a *super omnia*—"over all." Much is said in few words to mercy's praise when 'tis said, *super omnia*. *Nihil supra* were much, none above it: but it is written *super omnia, above all*. He that saith this, leaves no more to say: there is no higher degree; *super omnia* is the superlative.

All that are above are not over. It is not above only, as an obelisk or Maypole, higher than all about them, but have neither shadow nor shelter; no good they do! Mercy hath a broad top, spreading itself over all. It is so above all, as it is over them, too. As the vault of this chapel is over us, and the great vault of the firmament over that; the *super* of latitude and expansion, no less than of altitude and elevation. And this to the end that all may retire to it, and take covert: it over them, and they under it. Under it, under the shadow of it, as of Esay's "great rock in the wilderness," from the heat: under the shelter of it as of Daniel's "great tree," from the tempest. (Isa. xxxii. 2; Dan. iv, 11, 12).—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 10.—"All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord." It is a poor philosophy and a narrow religion which does not recognise God as all in all. Every moment of our lives, we breathe, stand, or move in the temple of the Most High; for the universe is that temple. Wherever we go, the testimony to his power, the impress of his hand, are there. Ask of the bright worlds around us, as they roll in the everlasting harmony of their circles, and they shall tell you of him whose power launched them on their courses; ask of the mountains, that lift their heads among and above the clouds, and the bleak summit of one shall seem to call aloud to the snow-clad top of another, in proclaiming their testimony to the Agency which has laid their deep foundations. Ask of ocean's waters; and the roar of their boundless waves shall chant from shore to shore a hymn of ascription to that Being, who hath said, "Hitherto shall ye come and no further." Ask of the rivers; and, as they roll onward to the sea, do they not bear along their ceaseless tribute to the ever-working Energy, which struck open their fountains and poured them down through the valleys? Ask of every region of the earth, from the burning equator to the icy pole, from the rock-bound coast to the plain covered with its luxuriant vegetation; and will you not find on them all the record of the Creator's presence? Ask of the countless tribes of plants and animals: and shall they not testify to the action

of the great Source of Life? Yes, from every portion, from every department of nature, comes the same voice; everywhere we hear thy name, O God! everywhere we see thy love! Creation, in all its length and breadth, in all its depth and height, is the manifestation of thy Spirit, and without thee the worlds were dark and dead. The universe is to us as the burning bush which the Hebrew leader saw: God is ever present in it, for it burns with his glory, and the ground on which we stand is always holy.—“Francis” (*Viscount Dillon*).

Verse 10.—Marvellous is it that man is not always praising, since everything amid which he dwells is continually inviting praise.—*Gregory the Great*.

Verse 10.—“*All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD,*” etc. “All” God’s “works” do “praise” him, as the beautiful building praiseth the builder, or the well-drawn picture praiseth the painter: but his “saints bless” him, as the children of prudent and tender parents rise up and call them blessed. Of all God’s works, his saints, the workmanship of his grace, the first-fruits of his creatures, have most reason to bless him.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 10.—“*All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD,*” etc. There are two words by which our thankfulness to God is expressed, *praising* and  *blessing*. What is the difference? Praise respecteth God’s excellences, and blessing respecteth God’s benefits. We may praise a man that never hath done us good, if he be excellent and praiseworthy; but blessing respecteth God’s bounty and benefits; yet they are often used promiscuously.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 10.—“*And thy saints shall bless thee.*” The lily lifts itself upon its slender stem, and displays its golden petals and its glittering ivory leaves; and by its very existence it praises God. Yonder deep and booming sea rolls up in storm and tempest, sweeping everything before it; and every dash of its waves praises God. The birds in the morning, and some of them all through the night, can never cease from praising; uniting with the ten thousand other voices which make ceaseless concert before the throne. But observe, neither the flower, nor the sea, nor the bird, praises with intent to praise. To them it is no exercise of intellect, for they do not know God, and cannot understand his worthiness; nor do they even know that they are praising him. They exhibit his skill, and his goodness, and so forth, and in so doing they do much; but we must learn to do more. When you and I praise God, there is the element of will, of intelligence, of desire, of intent; and in the saints of God there is another element, namely, that love to him, of reverent gratitude towards him, and this turns the praise into blessing. A man is an eminent painter, and you exclaim, “His pencil is instinct with life.” Still, the man is no friend of yours, you pronounce no blessings on his name. It may be that your feeling towards him is that of deep regret that such abilities should be united with so ill a character. A certain person is exceedingly skilful in his profession, but he treats you unjustly, and therefore, though you often praise him for his extraordinary performances, you cannot bless him, for you have no cause to do so. I am afraid that there might be such a feeling as that of admiration of God for his great skill, his wonderful power, his extraordinary justness, and yet no warmth of love in the heart towards him: but in the saints the praise is sweetened with love, and is full of blessing.—*C. H. S.*

Verses 10, 11.—If not only irrational, but inanimate creatures praise God by giving occasion for his praise; then how much more should men set forth his praise, who are not only living, but reasonable creatures! And if creatures without life and reason should provoke mankind in general, as having life and reason, to praise God; how much more should godly men be provoked by them to sing his praise, they having not only life, which stars have not; and reason, which birds and beasts have not; but grace, which the most of men have not! Among visible creatures, men have most reason (because they have reason) to praise God; and among men gracious men have most reason to praise God, because they have grace. And therefore as soon as ever David had said, “*All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD,*” he adds in the next words, “*and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.*” As if he had said, As all thy works, O Lord, praise thee, so saints (who are the choicest pieces of thy workmanship) have cause to do it above all: they cannot but be speaking and talking of thy kingdom and power, which are very glorious.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 11.—“*They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,*” etc. The glory of a kingdom is synonymous with its power. The power of a kingdom consists in

the number of its subjects, and the sufficiency of its revenues to maintain them. Now, the glory, or the power of God's kingdom, may be inferred from the difference between it and that of man. There are four points of difference. First, the kings of this world have but *few subjects*, with but little wealth,—not more than the population and riches of one kingdom, or one province, while God reigns over all angels, all men, all demons; and all wealth on land, in the sea, or in the air, belongs to him. There is another difference, that while the kings of this world rule their subjects, they are still ruled by them, they are *dependent on them*, could do nothing without them; and, however abundant their revenues may be, they are generally in want, nay, even in debt, and, consequently, always calling for fresh tributes and taxes; but God, while he governs all, is subject to none, because he needs nobody's help or assistance. Instead of being in want, he abounds in everything, because he could, in one moment, bring from nothing much more than he now beholds or enjoys. The third difference is a consequence of the second, while the kings of this world seem so to enjoy their honours and dignities, they are, at the same time, *suffering acutely from interior fears*, doubts, and cares, which have sometimes been so burdensome, as to cause them to abdicate altogether. God never suffers such pressure, is subject to no fear, no misgivings, but reigns absolutely in perfect tranquillity. The fourth difference, an essential one, is, that the kings of the world *reign but for a time*; but God reigneth for ever.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 11.—“*They shall speak . . . and talk.*” Joy and sorrow are hard to conceal; as from the countenance, so from the tongue. There is so much correspondence betwixt the heart and tongue that they will move at once: every man therefore speaks of his own pleasure and care; the hunter and falconer of his game; the ploughman of his team; the soldier of his march and colours. If the heart were as full of God, the tongue could not refrain from talking of him: the rareness of Christian communication argues the common poverty of grace. If Christ be not in our hearts, we are godless; if he be there without our joy, we are senseless; if we rejoice in him and speak not of him, we are shamefully unthankful. Every man taketh, yea, raiseth occasion, to bring in speech of what he liketh. As I will think of thee always, O Lord, so it shall be my joy to speak of thee often; and if I find not opportunity, I will make it,—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 13.—The Kingdom of God is his government of the world. The glory of it becomes especially conspicuous in this, that he raises the dominion of his anointed over all the kingdoms of the world: comp. Ps. lxxxix. 27. “*Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all eternities*” (verse 13), and so must also the kingdom of thine anointed be an eternal one, and will survive all the transitory kingdoms of this world, however highly they may puff themselves up.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 13.—On the door of the old mosque in Damascus, which was once a Christian church, but for twelve centuries has ranked among the holiest of the Mahomedan sanctuaries, are inscribed these memorable words: “*Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*” Though the name of Christ has been regularly blasphemed, and the disciples of Christ regularly cursed for twelve hundred years within it, the inscription has, nevertheless, remained unimpaired by time, and undisturbed by man. It was unknown during the long reign of Mahomedan intolerance and oppression; but when religious liberty was partially restored, and the missionaries were enabled to establish a Christian church in that city, it was again brought to light, encouraging them in their work of faith and labour of love.—*From John Bate's "Cyclopædia of Illustrations," 1865.*

Verses 13, 14.—What we admire in these verses, is their combining the magnificence of unlimited power with assiduity of unlimited tenderness. It is this combination which men are apt to regard as well-nigh incredible, supposing that a Being so great as God can never concern himself with beings so inconsiderable as themselves. Tell them that God lifteth up those that be bowed down, and they cannot imagine that his kingdom and dominion are unbounded; or tell them, on the other hand, of the greatness of his empire, and they think it impossible that he should uphold all that fall.—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 14.—“*The LORD upholdeth all that fall,*” etc. It is noteworthy how the Psalmist proceeds to exhibit the mightiness of God's kingdom, not by its power “to break in pieces and bruise,” like the iron legs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's



vision (Dan. ii. 40), but by the King's readiness to aid the weak. Even a heathen could see that this was the noblest use of power.

Regia (crede mihi) res est succurrere lapsis.

Ovid., Ep. de Panto, ii. 9, 11.

It is a kingly thing to help the fallen.

Neale and Littledale.

Verse 14.—“*The LORD upholdeth all that fall,*” etc. נִשְׁבָּרִים, *nophelim*, the falling, or those who are not able to keep their feet; the weak. He shores them up; he is their prop. No man falls through his own weakness merely; if he rely on God, the strongest foe cannot shake him.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 14.—“*And raiseth up all those that be bowed down,*” *incurvatos*. Many who do not actually fall are reduced to distress that may be even more painful; for the struggling are greater sufferers than the actually passive. Men are bowed down physically by infirmity; mentally, by care; spiritually, by remorse; some are even crushed by all three burdens. For all such there is help in a Mighty One. But none can help themselves alone: none are raised but by supernatural interposition—*non nisi opitulante Domino*.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 14.—“*The LORD upholdeth all that fall.*” The word here used is a participle, literally, “*The Lord sustaining*”; that is, the Lord is a Sustainer or Upholder of all that fall.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 14.—“*And raiseth up all those that he bowed down.*” Alphonsus, King of Arragon, is famous for helping with his own hand one of his subjects out of a ditch. Of Queen Elizabeth it is recorded, to her eternal praise, that she hated (no less than did Mithridates) such as sought to crush virtue forsaken of fortune. Christ bruise not the broken reed, but upholdeth it, he quencheth not the smoking wick, but cherisheth it.—*John Trapp*.

Verses 14—19.—The Psalmist sets up a splendid argument. Having praised the kingdom, he goes on to display *seven glories* peculiar to kings, and shows that in Jehovah these shine supremely. Verses 14 to 19 contain each a royal virtue.—*John Lorinus*.

Verse 15.—“*The eyes of all wait upon thee.*” God cannot be overmastered by what is great and enormous, so neither can he overlook what is small and insignificant. God is that being to whom the only great thing is himself; and, therefore, when “the eyes of all wait upon him,” the seraph gains not attention by his gaze of fire, and the insect loses it not through the feebleness of vision. Archangels, and angels, and men, and beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, and fish of the sea, draw equally the regard of him, who, counting nothing great but himself, the Creator, can pass over as small no fraction of the creature.—*Henry Melvill*.

Verse 15.—Doth not nature teach you to pray? Ask the brutes, the ravens, lions, etc. (Job xxxviii. 41; Ps. cxlvii. 9; civ. 27; cxlv. 15); not as if these unreasonable creatures could know and worship God, but because nature hath taught them so much of this duty as they are capable of and can bear; they have some sense of their burdens and wants, they groan and cry, and desire to be eased; and the Lord hearkeneth to this voice and saith, “Now the poor creature is crying to me, and I will pity it.” Ah! shall the beasts in their own way cry to God, and wilt thou be silent? Hath the Lord elevated thee so far above these inferior creatures, and fitted thee for the immediate acts of his worship, and for a higher communion with himself, and wilt thou not serve him accordingly? Hath he given thee a heart and a spiritual soul, as he hath given the brutes a sensitive appetite and natural desires, and shall they cry to God with the one, and not thou with the other?—*Alexander Pitcairne*, 1664.

Verse 15.—“*Eyes . . . wait upon thee.*” Many dumb beggars have been relieved at Christ's gate by making signs.—*William Secker*.

Verse 15.—In agony nature is no atheist, the mind which knows not where to fly, flies to God.—*Hannah More*, 1745—1833.

Verse 15.—The creatures are his, and therefore to be received with thanksgiving; this our Saviour performed with great vigour and zeal; thus teaching us, when “looking up to heaven,” that “the eyes of all” ought, in the most literal sense, “to wait” upon that Lord “who gives them their meat in due season.” . . . A secret sense of God's goodness is by no means enough. Men should make solemn and outward expressions of it, when they receive his creatures for their support;

a service and homage not only due to him, but profitable to themselves.—*George Stanhope, 1660—1728.*

*Verse 15.*—While atheism, in its strict signification, namely, that of total denial of God's existence, is scarcely, if at all, to be found on earth; atheism, as regards the denial of God's providence, is the espoused creed of hundreds amongst us. . . . Providence, which is confessed in great things, is rejected in small things; and even if you can work up men to an easy confession that God presideth over national concerns, you will find them withdrawing individuals from his scrutiny. We bring against this paring down of God's providence a distinct charge of atheism. If we confess the existence of a God at all, we read it in the workmanship of the tiniest leaf, as well as the magnificent pinnacles of Andes and Alps; if we believe in the providence of God at all, we must confess that he numbers the hairs of our heads, as well as marshals the stars of the firmament; and that providence is not universal, and therefore cannot be godlike, if a sparrow, any more than a seraph, flit away unregarded.

Now, the words before us set themselves most strenuously against this popular atheism. The whole creation is represented as fastening its gaze on the universal Parent, and as drawing from his fulness the supply of every necessity. "*The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.*" There is made, you observe, no exception whatever; the exhibition is simply that of every rank and order of beings looking to the Almighty, confessing dependence upon him, and standing environed by his guardianship. So that, in place of anything which approximates to the abandonment of our creation, the Psalmist asserts a ceaseless attention to its wants, the suspension of which for an instant would cause chill and darkness throughout the whole universe.—*Henry Melvill.*

*Verse 15.*—"Thou givest them their meat in due season." The meat which endures to everlasting life; the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; the doctrines of the gospel, which, as some of them are milk for babes, others are meat for strong men, or strong meat for experienced believers; and these are given forth under Christ's direction, by his ministering servants, who are his wise and faithful stewards, that give to everyone of the family their portion of meat in due season, which is the word fitly spoken; and, when it is so, how good it is! Luke xii. 42; Prov. xv. 23. This is food convenient for them, given out *in his time*, as in the original; either in the Lord's time, when he sees best, or in *their time*, as the Syriac version, when they most need it, and it will do them most good.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 15.*—(second clause.) It is said that God gives them "*their food,*" and "*in its season,*" for the very variety of it serves more to illustrate the providence of God. Each has its own way of feeding, and the different kinds of aliment are designed and adapted for different uses. David therefore speaks of the food which is particular to them. The pronoun is not in the plural, and we are not to read *in their season*, as if it applied to the animals. The food he notices as given in its season; for here also we are to notice the admirable arrangements of divine providence, that there is a certain time appointed for harvest, vintage, and hay crop, and that the year is so divided into intervals, that the cattle are fed at one time on grass, at another on hay, or straw, or acorns, or other products of the earth. Were the whole supply poured forth at one and the same moment, it could not be gathered together so conveniently; and we have no small reason to admire the seasonableness with which the different kinds of fruit and aliment are yearly produced.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 15.*—Mr. Robertson told of a poor child who was accustomed to see unexpected provision for his mother's wants arrive in answer to prayer. The meal-barrel in Scotland is everything to a hungry boy: so he said, "Mither, I think God aye hears when we're scraping the bottom o' the barrel."—"*The Christian.*"

*Verses 15—17.*—Who can fear that, because God's ways are unsearchable, they may not be all tending to the final good of his creatures, when he knows that with the tenderness of a most affectionate parent this Creator and Governor ministers to the meanest living thing? Who can be disquieted by the mysteriousness of the Divine dealings when he remembers that they are those of one who never ceases for a solitary moment to consult the happiness of whatsoever he hath formed? Who, in short, can distrust God because clouds and darkness are round about him, when there is light enough to show that he is the vigilant guardian of every tenant of this earth, that his hand upholds, and his breath animates, and his bounty nourishes, the teeming hordes of the city, and the desert, and the ocean? It seems

that there is thus a beautiful, though tacit process of reasoning in our text, and that the seventeenth verse is set in its proper connection. It is as though David had said, "Come, let us muse on the righteousness of God. He would not be God if he were not righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works; and therefore we may be sure that whatsoever he does is the best that could be done, whether or not we can discover its excellence."

Yes, this may be true, but when we look on the divine dealings what an abyss of dark waters there is! How unsearchable, how unfathomable are God's judgments! We admit it; but being previously convinced of God's righteousness, we ought not to be staggered by what is dark in his dispensations.

"True," you reply, "but the mind does not seem satisfied by this reasoning; it may be convincing to the intellect, but it does not address itself to the feelings." Well, then, pass from what is dark in God's dealing to what is clear. He is about your path and about your bed; he "preserveth man and beast"; "his tender mercies are over all his works." Is this a God of whom to be suspicious? Is this a God to mistrust? Oh! surely if you will fortify yourselves by such facts as these—"Thou, O Lord, satisfiest the desire of every living thing," "*The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season*"—if, I say, you will fortify your minds by such facts as these, you will be able at all times and in all circumstances to join heartily in the acknowledgment of the Psalmist—"The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works."—Henry Melvill.

Verse 16.—

Thou openest thy hand of grace  
And thou dost satisfy  
The wants of all in every place  
Who for thy presence cry.

Thomas MacKellar, 1883.

Verse 16.—"*Thou openest thy hand.*" This seems as if depicted from a house-keeper's habit of feeding a brood of chickens and other creatures. She flings abroad with full and open hand a large supply, not measuring to a grain just what might be enough.—Martin Geier.

Verse 16.—"*Thou openest thy hand.*" What an idea does this convey of the paternal goodness of the great Father of his creation! How opposite to the conduct of many of his creatures one to another, whose hands and hearts are shut! What an idea also does it convey of the ease with which the wants of the whole creation are supplied! Let me pause a moment and think of their wants. What a quantity of vegetable and animal food is daily consumed in one town: what a quantity in a large city like London: what a quantity in a nation: in the whole world! But men do not compose a hundredth part of "every living thing"! What innumerable wants throughout all animate nature; in the earth, in the air, in the waters! Whence comes their supply? "Thou openest thy hand," and all are satisfied. And can all these wants be supplied by only the opening of his hand? What then must sin be, and salvation from it? That is a work of wonderful expense. God openeth his hand and satisfieth all creation, but he must purchase the Church with his blood. . . . In what a variety of ways are our wants supplied. The earth is fruitful, the air is full of life, the clouds empty themselves upon the earth, the sun pours forth its genial rays; but the operation of all these second causes is only the opening of his hand! Nay further: look we to instruments as well as means? Parents feed us in our childhood, and supply our youthful wants; ways are opened for our future subsistence; connexions are formed, which prove sources of comfort; friends are kind in seasons of extremity; supplies are presented from quarters that we never expected. What are all these but the opening of his hand? If his hand were shut, what a world would this be! The heavens brass, the earth iron; famine, pestilence, and death must follow. See Ps. civ. 27—29.

Consider next the term "*hand*." There is a difference between the hand and the heart. God opens his hand, in the way of providence, towards his worst enemies. He gave Nebuchadnezzar all the kingdoms of the earth. But he opens his heart in the gospel of his Son. This is the better portion of the two. While we are thankful for the one, let us not rest satisfied in it: it is merely a hand portion. Rather let us pray with Jabez to be blessed *indeed*; and that we might have a Joseph's portion; not only the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof, but "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush!"



"*Thou satisfiest the desire,*" etc. God does not give grudgingly. It seems to be a characteristic of the divine nature, both in the natural and moral world, to raise desires, not with a view to disappoint, but to satisfy them. O what a consoling thought is this! If there be any desires in us which are not satisfied, it is through their being self-created ones, which is our own fault; or through artificial scarcity from men's luxury, which is the fault of our species. God raises no desires as our Creator, but he gives enough to satisfy them; and none as our Redeemer and Sanctifier but what shall be actually satisfied. O the wonderful munificence of God! "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"—*Andrew Fuller.*

*Verse 16 (second clause).*—The word *ῥατσον*, some render "*desire,*" as though he meant that God supplies each kind of animal with food according to its wish. And a little afterwards we do indeed find it used in that sense. Others, however, refer it rather to God's feeding them of his mere good pleasure and kindness; it is not enough to say that our food is given us by God, unless we add, as in the second clause of the verse, that his kindness is gratuitous, and that there is no extrinsic cause whatever moving him to provide so liberally for every living creature. In that case the cause is put for the effect; the various kinds of provision being effects of his good pleasure—*χαρισματα της χαριτος.*—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 17.*—"The LORD is righteous in all his ways," etc. The ground upon which praise is here ascribed to God may seem a common one, being in every one's mouth; but in nothing is wisdom shown more than in holding fast the truth, that God is just in all his ways, so as to retain in our hearts an unabated sense of it amidst all troubles and confusions. Though all acknowledge God to be just, most men are no sooner overtaken by affliction than they quarrel with his severity; unless their wishes are immediately complied with, they are impatient, and nothing is more common than to hear his justice impeached. As it is everywhere abused by the wicked imputations men cast upon it, here it is very properly vindicated from such ungrateful treatment, and asserted to be constant and unfeeling, however loudly the world may disparage it. It is expressly added, "*in all his ways and works*"; for we fail to give God due honour unless we recognise a constant tenor of righteousness in the whole progress of his operation. Nothing is more difficult in the time of trouble, when God has apparently forsaken us, or afflicts us without cause, than to restrain our corrupt feelings from breaking out against his judgments; as we are told of the Emperor Mauricius in a memorable passage of history, that seeing his sons murdered by the wicked and perfidious traitor Phocas, and being about to be carried out himself to death, he cried out—"Thou art righteous, O God, and just are thy judgments."—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 17.*—"Holy in all his works." God is good, the absolute and perfect; and from good nothing can come but good: and therefore all which God has made is good, as he is; and therefore if anything in the world seems to be bad, one of two things must be true of it.

Either it is *not* bad, though it seems so to us; and God will bring good out of it in his good time, and justify himself to men, and show us that he is holy in all his works, and righteous in all his ways. Or else—

If the thing be really bad, then God did not make it. It must be a disease, a mistake, a failure, a man's making, or some person's making, but not of God's making. For all that he has made he sees eternally; and behold, it is very good.—*Charles Kingsley, in "The Good News of God," 1878.*

*Verse 18.*—"The LORD is nigh." The nearness or remoteness of a friend is very material and considerable in our troubles, distresses, wants, dangers, etc. I have such a friend and he would help me, but he lives so far off; and I have another friend that has a great love for me, that is able to counsel me, and to speak a word in season to me, and that in my distress would stand close to me, but he is so remote. I have a special friend, that did he know how things stand with me would make my burdens his, and my wants his, and my sorrows his; but he is in a far country, he is at the Indies, and I may be undone before I can hear from him. But it is not thus with you, O Christians! who have a God so nigh unto you, who have the signal presence of God in the midst of you, yea, who have a God always standing by you, "The Lord stood by me," etc.: 2 Tim. iv. 17.—*Thomas Brooks.*

*Verse 18.*—"Them that call upon him." To call upon the name of the Lord implies *right faith*, to call upon him as he is: *right trust* in him, leaning upon him, *right*

*devotion*, calling upon him as he has appointed; *right life*, ourselves who call upon him being, or becoming by his grace, what he wills. They "call" not "upon the Lord," but upon some idol of their own imagining, who call upon him as other than he has revealed himself, or remaining themselves other than those whom he has declared that he will hear. For such *deny* the very primary attribute of God, his truth. Their God is not a God of truth.—*Edward Bouverie Pusey*, 1800—1882.

Verse 18.—"To all that call upon him in truth." Because there is a counterfeit and false sort of worshipping, and calling upon God, which is debarred from the benefit of this promise, to wit, when the party suppliant is not reconciled, nor seeking reconciliation through Christ the Mediator, or is seeking something not promised, or something for a carnal end, that he may bestow it on his lusts; therefore he who hath right unto this promise must be a worshipper of God in faith, and sincere intention; and to such the Lord will show himself "*nigh*."—*David Dickson*.

Verse 18.—To call upon God in truth is, first, to repose an implicit confidence in the faithfulness of his promise, and to look for unlimited answers to prayer from the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. But it is also, in the next place, to feel our own urgent need of the things for which we supplicate, and to realize an earnest and unfeigned concern to obtain them. "What things ye desire when ye pray," said the Lord, "believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;" and hence we gather, that the hearty desire, arising out of the consciousness of need, is an integral and inseparable part of genuine and effectual prayer.—*Thomas Dale*, 1853.

Verses 18, 19.—God's people are a praying people, a generation of seekers, and such commonly are speeders. God never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain. They seek his face, righteousness and strength, and he is found of them. . . . The saints alone betake themselves to God and his help, run to him as their sanctuary; others fly from God's presence, run to the rocks, and the tops of the ragged rocks, call to the hills and the mountains; but a child of God goes only and tells his Father, and before him lays open his cause; as good Hezekiah did, when Rabshakeh came out against him; "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me"; or the Church (Isa. xxxiii. 2), "Be thou our arm every morning, and our salvation in time of trouble." They only sensibly need, and so alone crave and implore divine succour; and God will not suffer his people to lose the precious treasure of their prayers. "*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; he will fulfil their desire, he will hear their cry*," etc. That God who prepares his people's heart to pray, prepares also his own ear to hear; and he that promiseth to hear before we call, will never deny to hearken when we cry unto him. As Calvin saith: "Oppressions and afflictions make man cry, and cries and supplications make God hear."—*F. E.*, in "*The Saint's Ebenezer*," 1667.

Verse 19.—"*He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.*" This is for comfort for all poor broken hearts in whom God hath ingenerated the true desire of grace. Let such know that the first step to grace is to see they have no grace; and the first degree of grace is the *desire* of grace. It is not with the body as with the soul, if you will be healed you shall be healed. A man may desire to be healed corporally, and yet his disease continue upon him; but it is not so with the soul: if thou wilt say, "Christ heal me," thou shalt be made whole. If a man have but the true desire of grace it shall be given him: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble" (Ps. x. 17): when the poor soul is humbled before God in the sense of the want of grace, and breathes and desires after it, the Lord will grant such desires: "*He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*" One said, "The greatest part of Christianity is to desire to be a Christian." And another said, "The total sum of a man's religion in this life consists in the true desires of saving grace." This was the perfection Saint Paul attained unto (Rom. vii. 18): "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Saint Paul we know was the child of God, and one dearly beloved of God; yet that was the pitch of his godliness; it consisted more in desire than accomplishment. Canst thou approve by evident and sound arguments that thou hast the true desires of grace? Then know for thy comfort that the Lord's spirit of grace hath been moving and stirring in thee: "It is God that worketh in you both the will and the deed" (Phil. ii. 13), and that of his good pleasure, not only of his bounty, from whence he hath bestowed many graces, even upon such as he will damn afterwards for their accursed abuse of them, with the neglect of the power thereof. But if God hath set thy will, and the stream of thy affections

and desires, to himself and to grace, it is an evidence of God's good pleasure from which he did at first elect thee, and gave his Son to redeem thee.—*William Fenner* (1560—1640), in "*The Riches of Grace*."

*Verse 19.*—"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him." God will not grant us every desire, that is our mercy; for, 1. Some of them are *sinful*. David desired to be revenged on Nabal and his innocent family. Jonah desired Nineveh's ruin. 2. Others would *not be for our good*. David desired the life of the child he had by Bathsheba; David also desired the life of Jonathan; neither of which would have been for his good. Nay, not every *righteous* desire. It is a righteous desire for a minister to desire the salvation of those that hear him. So Paul declared, "I would to God that all that are here present were altogether such as I am"; Acts xxvi. 29. So again, "I could wish that myself were accused from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"; Rom. ix. 1. David *desired* to build a house for God, and it was a righteous desire, for God took it well at his hands; yet he did not grant it. Kings and prophets desired to see the Lord Messiah, and yet did not see him. How then are we to understand it? Answer. The sum or substance of their desires shall be fulfilled. What is the main desire of a seaman? that he may arrive at the haven. So saints will be brought to their desired haven. What of a pilgrim? See Heb. xi. 16. So all the desires of a Christian are summed up in this, *That he may eternally enjoy God and be like him*. Doubtless there is great mystery in these things. However I think it is certain that, when God raises a spiritual desire in a person, it is *often*, though not *always*, with an intention to bestow the object desired.—*Andrew Fuller*.

*Verse 19 (first clause).*—God will fulfil the will of those who fear to disobey his will.—*Simon de Muis*.

*Verse 19.*—"Desire" is the largest and most comprehensive word that can be used; it contains all things in it . . . Nothing good, nothing necessary, nothing profitable, but comes under this word "*desire*." When God promises to "*fulfil the desires of them that fear him*," he doth promise all good things; desire comprehends all that can be desired.—*Ralph Robinson*.

*Verse 19.*—"He will hear their cry," etc. A mark of a great king—he gives willing audience to suppliants.—*Johannes Paulus Palanterius*.

*Verse 19.*—"He will hear and save." How true a description of Christ in his constant office. He heard Mary Magdalene and saved her. He heard the Canaanitish woman, and saved her daughter. He heard the cry of the two blind men and enlightened them. He heard the lepers and cleansed them. He heard the cry of the dying thief and promised him Paradise. Never has one yet cried to King Jesus who has not been heard and delivered.—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

*Verse 20.*—"The Lord preserveth," etc. God's mercy and God's justice; he preserves and he destroys. Philip IV. of France, surnamed the Beautiful, on his escutcheon emblazoned a sword and an olive branch, with the motto, *Utrumque*, i.e. "one or the other." A truly great king is master of either art—war and peace.—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

*Verse 20.*—Those who were called "them that fear him" are now denominated "them that love him."—*Simon de Muis*.

*Verse 20.*—"All the wicked will he destroy." God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world, and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man at any moment.—*Jonathan Edwards*.

*Verse 20.*—"All the wicked will he destroy." It must not be overlooked that this declaration occurs in a song of praise. The whole of the context is utterly inconsistent with the expression of emotions of anger or revenge.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

*Verse 20.*—"All the wicked will he destroy." [Prayer-Book Version, "*scattereth abroad*."] Like the ruins of a demolished building; or rather, like an army, which the enemy has completely routed.—*William Keatinge Clay*.

*Verse 20.*—"Preserveth" . . . "*destroy*." Notice this recurrent thought, that the guardianship of the good implies the destruction of the wicked.—*A. S. Aglen*.



## HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verses 1, 2.*—Praise. 1. Personal Praise. 2. Daily praise. 3. Enthusiastic praise. 4. Perpetual praise. Or: I. The attractive theme of the song. II. The increasing fulness of the song. III. The unending life of the singer.—C. A. D.

*Verses 1 & 2.*—The four "I wills" of praise. Praise to the King; praise to the divine character; praise for all time; praise for all eternity.

*Verse 2.*—*Every day; for ever.* I. Day by day for ever God and I will endure. II. Day by day for ever our present relations will continue. He the God, I the creature; he the Father, I the child; he the blessing, I the blest. III. Day by day for ever he shall have my homage.—W. B. H.

*Verse 3.*—I. The dignity of man is here implied in his capacity for praising God greatly. II. His immortality in his capacity for praising his unsearchable greatness.—G. R.

*Verse 3 (last clause).*—The unsearchable greatness of God. Consider it, I. As a fact amply demonstrated. II. As a rebuke to despondency: see Isaiah xl. 28. III. As the stay of a soul oppressed by mysteries. IV. As indicating a subject for our everlasting study.—J. F.

*Verse 4.*—I. Our obligation to past generations. II. Our duty to generations to come.—G. R.

*Verses 5—7.*—The Antiphon. I. To praise God is a personal duty: "I will." II. Its right performance will excite others to engage in it; "And men shall." III. The accompaniment of others in praise will re-act upon ourselves. "And I will"; "And they shall abundantly," etc. IV. Such praise widens and expands as it rolls along. Beginning with God's majesty and works, it extends to his acts, greatness, goodness, and righteousness.—C. A. D.

*Verses 5—7.*—I. Subjects for praise. 1. Divine majesty. 2. Divine works. 3. Divine judgments. 4. Divine greatness. 5. Divine goodness. 6. Divine righteousness. II. Of whom is it required. 1. Personal; "I will speak." 2. Universal; "men shall speak."—G. R.

*Verses 6, 7.*—I. *The awe-struck talk.* Silent as to mercies and promises, men must speak when God's terrible acts are among them. II. *The bold avowal.* One individual declares God's greatness in power, wisdom, truth and grace. This leads others to the same conclusion, and hence—III. *The grateful outpouring.* Many bless the Lord's great goodness in a song fresh, free, constant, joyous, refreshing, abundant, like the gush of a spring. IV. *The select song.* They utter goodness but sing of righteousness. This is a noteworthy topic for a discourse.

*Verse 7.*—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1468: "The Philosophy and Propriety of Abundant Praise."

*Verse 8.*—I. Grace to the unworthy. II. Compassion to the afflicted. III. Forbearance to the guilty. IV. Mercy to the penitent.—G. R.

*Verse 9.*—The universal goodness of God in no degree a contradiction to the special election of grace.

*Verse 10.*—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1796: "Concerning Saints."

*Verse 11.*—The glory of Christ's kingdom. The glory of this kingdom is manifested,—I. In its origin. II. In the manner and spirit of its administration. III. In the character of its subjects. IV. In the privileges that are attached to it.—Robert Hall,

*Verses 11, 12.*—Talk transfigured. I. The faculty of talk is extensively possessed. II. Is commonly misused. III. May be nobly employed. IV. Will then be gloriously useful.—C. A. D.

*Verses 11—13.*—To show the greatness of God's kingdom, David observes, 1. *The pomp of it.* Would we by faith look within the veil, we should "speak of the glory of his kingdom" (verse 11); "and the glorious majesty of it" (verse 12). 2. *The power of it.* When "they speak of the glory of God's kingdom," they must "talk of his power," the extent of it, the efficacy of it. 3. *The perpetuity of it* (verse 13). The thrones of earthly princes totter, and the flowers of their crowns wither, monarchs come to an end; but, Lord, "thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."—Matthew Henry.

*Verse 14.*—The grace of God in his kindness to the undeserving and the miserable, who look to him for help. I. He "upholdeth all that fall." 1. A description, embracing (1) Sinners who have fallen lowest: (2) Backsliders who have tripped

most foully. 2. An act implying (1) Pity which draws nigh; (2) Power which places the fallen upon their feet; (3) Preservation which keeps them standing. II. He "raiseth up all those that are bowed down." Consolation for those who are—1. Bowed down with shame and penitence. 2. Oppressed with perplexities and cares. 3. Weighed with a sense of weakness in the presence of onerous duties. 4. Depressed because of prevailing error and sin around them.—*J. F.*

*Verse 14.*—Help for the fallible. I. Whatever our present position we are liable to fall. Sickness. Loss. Friendlessness. Sin. II. However low we fall we are not below the reach of God's hand. III. Within the reach of God's hand we shall experience the action of God's love. "Upholdeth." "Raiseth up."—*C. A. D.*

*Verses 15, 16.*—Universal dependence and divine support. The Psalmist here teaches—I. The Universality of Dependence amongst creatures: "The eyes of all wait upon thee." We depend upon God for "life, and breath, and all things." Entire dependence should beget deep humility. II. The Infinitude of the Divine Resources: "And thou givest them their meat." His resources must be, 1. Infinitely vast. 2. Infinitely various. Both sufficient and adapted for all. III. The Timeliness of the Divine Communications: "In due season." A reason for patience if his gifts seem delayed. IV. The Sublime Ease of the Divine Communications: "Thou openest thine hand," and the countless needs of the universe are satisfied. An encouragement to believing prayer. V. The Sufficiency of the Divine Communications: "And satisfiest the desire of every living thing." "God giveth to all liberally." Our subject urges all men to, 1. Gratitude. Constant provision should lead to constant thankfulness and consecration. 2. Trust. (1) For temporal supplies. "Grace to help in time of need" will surely be given to all who look to him.—*William Jones, in "The Homiletic Quarterly," 1878.*

*Verse 17.*—I. What God declares himself to be. II. What his people find him to be. III. What all creatures will ultimately acknowledge him to be.—*G. R.*

*Verses 18—20.*—Gather from these verses the character of God's people. I. They call upon God. II. They fear God. III. They have desires towards God. IV. They have answers from God. V. They love God.

*Verse 18 (last clause).*—True prayer, in what it differs essentially from mere formalism.

*Verse 18.*—At the palace gates. I. Directions to callers. 1. "Call upon him"; let the repetition suggest pertinacity. 2. Call "in truth"; sincerely, with promises, in appointed way. II. Encouragement for callers. Jehovah is nigh, with his ready ear, sympathizing heart, and helpful hand.—*W. B. H.*

*Verses 18, 19.*—The blessedness of prayer. I. Definition of prayer: "calling upon God." II. Variety in prayer: "call, desire, cry." III. Essential characteristic of prayer: "truth." IV. God's nearness in prayer. V. Assured success of prayer. "He will fulfil, hear, save."—*C. A. D.*

*Verse 20.*—Those who love God are preserved from excessive temptation, falling into sin, despair, apostasy, remorse, famishing; preserved in trial, persecution, depression, death; preserved to activity, holiness, victory, glory.

*Verse 20.*—Solemn Contrasts. 1. Between human characters. "Them that love him." "The wicked." 2. Between human destinies. "Preserveth." "Destroy."—*C. A. D.*

*Verse 20.*—How the love of God is the opposite of wickedness, and wickedness inconsistent with the love of God.

*Verse 21.*—Individual praise suggests the desire for universal praise. We like company in a good deed; we perceive the inadequacy of our own song; we desire others to be happy; we long to see that done which is right and good.