

END OF PSALM 106

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.*
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 106

All are invited to give thanks to God for His perpetual providence over men.

1. Give glory to the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.
2. Let them say so that have been redeemed by the Lord, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the countries,
3. From the rising and from the setting of the sun, from the north and from the sea.
4. They wandered in a wilderness, in a place without water: they found not the way of a city for their habitation.
5. They were hungry and thirsty: their soul fainted in them.
6. And they cried to the Lord in their tribulation: and he delivered them out of their distresses.
7. And he led them into the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
8. Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him; and his wonderful works to the children of men.
9. For he hath satisfied the empty soul; and hath filled the hungry soul with good things.
10. Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in want and in iron.
11. Because they had exasperated the words of God; and provoked the counsel of the Most High:
12. And their heart was humbled with labors: they were weakened, and there was none to help them.
13. Then they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses.
14. And he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death; and broke their bonds in sunder.

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15. Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.
16. Because he hath broken gates of brass, and burst iron bars.
17. He took them out of the way of their iniquity: for they were brought low for their injustices.
18. Their soul abhorred all manner of meat: and they drew nigh even to the gates of death.
19. And they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses.
20. He sent his word, and healed them: and delivered them from their destructions.
21. Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.
22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise: and declare is works with joy.
23. They that go down to the sea in ships, doing business in the great waters:
24. These have seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.
25. He said the word, and there arose a storm of wind: and the waves thereof were lifted up.
26. They mount up to the heavens, and they go down to the depths: their soul pined away with evils.
27. They were troubled, and reeled like a drunken man: and all their wisdom was swallowed up.
28. And they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he brought them out of their distresses.
29. And he turned the storm into a breeze: and its waves were still.
30. And they rejoiced because they were still: and he brought them to the haven which they wished for.
31. Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.
32. And let them exalt him in the church of the people: and praise him in the chair of the ancients.
33. He hath turned rivers into a wilderness, and the sources of waters into dry ground:
34. A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
35. He hath turned a wilderness into pools of waters, and a dry land into water springs.
36. And hath placed there the hungry: and they made a city for their habitation.
37. And they sowed fields, and planted vineyards and they yielded fruit of birth.
38. And he blessed them, and they were multiplied exceedingly: and their cattle he suffered not to decrease.
39. Then they were brought to be few: and they were afflicted through the trouble of evils and sorrow.
40. Contempt was poured forth upon their princes: and he caused them to wander where there was no passing, and out of the way.
41. And he helped the poor out of poverty; and made him families like a flock of sheep.
42. The just shall see and shall rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
43. Who is wise, and will keep these things, and will understand the mercies of the Lord?

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 106

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Give glory to the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."
2. "Let them say so that have been redeemed by the Lord, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the countries."
- 3.. "From the rising and from the setting of the sun, from the north and from the

43. "Who is wise, and will keep these things, and will understand the mercies of the Lord?" The Prophet now teaches us that there is nothing on earth stable or permanent, for they who have been at one time blessed by God, and multiplied through his blessing, in a little time after have been, by reason of their sins, cut away and reduced to nothing; and they who abound in all the good things of this world have, for the same reason, been driven to the direst extremities, and such has proved to be the case, not only with ordinary mortals, but even with princes whose sins have caused God to bring them to be condemned, by his having deprived them of wisdom and prudence, and thus, in consequence, making many and grievous mistakes in all their affairs. However, at the same time, men of honor and virtue were to be found, raised up by God from poverty and fed and nourished by him as his own sheep. Hence, ultimately, divine providence caused the just to rejoice, and the wicked to be confounded. What has been said, in general, regarding God's providence towards mankind, applies also to his special Providence in regard of the Church, which grew up in a short time; and soon after was lessened, harassed, and afflicted by heresy and schisms; "her princes," that is, her bishops and priests, were held in contempt, for numbers of them fell back from the path of their predecessors, who had set such an example of holiness and piety to the people over whom they had been placed. However, the Church was not abandoned to such an extent altogether as not to leave a considerable number of princes, and bishops, and priests, and holy laics, whom God enriched with spiritual favors, and whom, as being his own sheep, he led to the choicest pastures, and made them increase and multiply. To come now to the text. "Then they were brought to be few," after increasing to such an extent, then numbers began to be reduced "and they were afflicted with the troubles of evil and sorrow;" after having had such a flow of prosperity they began to feel sad reverses. "Contempt was poured forth upon their princes." One of the greatest misfortunes that could befall any people is to have their rulers, whether secular or ecclesiastical, objects of contempt. "And he caused them to wander where there was no passing, and out of the way." The reason why they were despised was, because the princes aforesaid, having been deserted by the light of grace, in consequence of their own sins, as well as those of their people did not walk in the right way; that is to say they led a bad and immoral life, scandalized the people by their bad example, and made bad laws in favor of the wicked, and against the just. Observe, that when God is said to procure those things, he does not do it directly: he does it indirectly, by withdrawing the light of his grace. "And he helped the poor out of poverty." As well as he suffered the proud and haughty princes to fall, and rendered them objects of contempt, so, on the contrary, he raised up the poor and the humble, "and made his families like a flock of sheep;" multiplied his posterity, blessed and protected them as a shepherd would his own sheep. "The just shall see and shall rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth." The consequence of this providence of God will be, that the just will rejoice and express their joy in praising and glorifying God; and "all iniquity," all the malicious and the wicked will be struck dumb, and will not presume to offer the slightest opposition. This we sometimes see in partial instances; but it will be fully developed and made apparent only on the day of general judgment.

35. "He hath turned a wilderness into pools of waters, and a dry land into water springs."

36. "And hath placed there the hungry: and they made a city for their habitation."

37. "And they sowed fields, and planted vineyards: and they yielded fruit of birth."

38. "And he blessed them, and they were multiplied exceedingly: and their cattle he suffered not to decrease." On the other hand, God, when he chose, "turned a wilderness into pools of water;" caused rivers to flow in desert lands, where they were unknown, and made streams of pure water to run where they never ran before. That made the land habitable; men began to build there, to till the land, and to reap its fruits; and thus man and beast began to multiply thereon. It is not easy to determine what land the Prophet alludes to; for, though God brought water from the rock for his people, they did not tarry nor settle there, nor build houses there; and when he brought them into the land of promise, there were rivers, cities, houses, and fields all ready for them. I am, therefore, of opinion that the Prophet refers to some early colonization subsequent to the deluge; for, as well as he turned the fertile plains of Sodom and Gomorrah into a wilderness, so we also caused rivers to run, and cities to spring up in places that were previously waste and desolate. Isaias seems to have this passage in view when he says, "I will turn the desert into pools of water and the impassable land into streams of waters;" and St. Jerome says that he therein alludes to the condition of the Gentiles, who were at one time desert and uncultivated, without faith, without the law, without the prophets or the priesthood; but were afterwards to be highly nourished, through Christ, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, St. Augustine very properly applies this passage to the synagogue, as contrasted with the Church. The synagogue, that one time abounded in the waters of the word of God, and like the fertile soil, produced its prophets and priests, had its altars, sacrifices, miracles, and visions, now desert and barren, is turned into dry ground, with not one of those things; while, on the other hand, the Church of the Gentiles, from having been dry and barren, is turned into pools of water, is become most fertile, replete with the choicest fruit, and has come to be the people of the Lord, the Church of the living God, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, where alone is to be found the true sacrifice, true priests, true miracles, true holiness, true wisdom, and, finally, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

39. "Then they were bought to be few: and they were afflicted through the trouble of evils and sorrow."

4. "Contempt was poured forth upon their princes: and he caused them to wander where there was no passing, and out of the way."

41. "And he helped the poor out of poverty; and made him families like a flock of sheep."

42. "The just shall see and shall rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth."

the sea." This is the preface of the Psalm, in which David exhorts all who have experienced the mercies of the Lord to declare his praise, and especially to give glory to the Lord himself; because he is truly good and merciful, and his mercy never fails. He specially invites the faithful, redeemed by the blood of his only begotten from the bondage of a most powerful enemy, the prince of darkness, who held them in bonds at his own discretion, whom he afterwards collected and gathered together to be one people, one Church, one kingdom, children of his delight, not from Egypt or Babylon, as formally were the Jews, but "from the rising and the setting of the sun, from the north and from the sea;" that is, from the four quarters of the world, as we read in John 10. "And other sheep I have that are not of the fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd;" and in Chapter 11, "for Jesus should die for the nation, and not only for the nation but to gather together into one the children of God that were dispersed." Though all the faithful, whether Jew or Gentile, are specially invited, still the invitation applies in general to all men who may have been at any time, or in any place whatever, delivered by the Lord from any manner of trouble; for redemption is frequently used in the Scripture for any manner of delivery or salvation, without any price having been paid for it. It also applies to those who may have been delivered from the hand – that is, from the power of the enemy; and, finally, to those who may have been delivered from any exile or dispersion in any extremity of the world, and brought back to their country and reunited to their people. The whole world is included in this verse, "from the rising and from the setting of the sun, from the north and from the sea;" in other words, from east to west, from north to south.

4. "They wandered in a wilderness, in a place without water: they found not the way of the city for their habitation."

5. "They were hungry and thirsty: their soul fainted in them."

6. "And they cried to the Lord in their tribulation; and he delivered them out of their distresses."

7. "And he led them into the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

8. "Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him; and his wonderful works to the children of men."

9. "For he hath satisfied the empty soul; and hath filled the hungry soul with good things." This is the first part of the Psalm, containing an explanation of the first affliction. There are four afflictions of the body common to all, and there are also four spiritual afflictions. The corporeal afflictions are hunger and thirst, caused by the infecundity of the earth, or by want of rain; that is to say, from some natural cause extrinsic to the sufferers; secondly, captivity, caused by the violence of others, that is, from some voluntary, extrinsic source; thirdly, disease or sickness, which arises from some intrinsic source, from some bad constitution;

and fourthly, the danger of shipwreck, caused by an external, natural cause, as also by an internal and voluntary cause, namely, man's curiosity, which, not content with the solidity of the earth, must needs make trial of the liquid deep. There are also four spiritual afflictions, called by theologians natural wounds, wounds left in us through original sin; they are ignorance, concupiscence, bad temper and malice; to which are opposed prudence, temperance, patience, and justice, which are called the four cardinal virtues. In this first division of the Psalm, then, the Prophet sings of God's mercy in delivering us from the first of these afflictions, including both corporal and spiritual; and though he appears to allude barely to the hunger and thirst the Jews suffered in the desert, still, the principles laid down by him are universal, and are applicable to all; and thus, he says, "they wandered in a wilderness, in a place without water." Many, in quest of their country have wandered through a pathless country, and one without water, as occurred to the Jews for forty years. "They found not the way of a city for their habitation," after straying for a long time, and in all directions, they found no way leading to a city where they may safely rest and dwell. "They were hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them." In their wanderings they met with neither meat nor drink, and they in consequence, all but gave up the ghost. "And they cried to the Lord in their tribulation;" when all human aid failed them they appealed to God, "and he delivered them out of their distresses." He was not found wanting when they appealed to him, but what that mercy that characterizes him, he delivered them. "And he led them into the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation," the mode he chose for delivering them was to show them the shortest possible way to the city where he dwelt himself. "Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him." It is, therefore, only right and just that such benefits conferred on man by God in his mercy, should be praised and acknowledged by all, as true favors from God; "and his wonderful works to the children of men;" the wonderful things he did for the liberation of mankind should also be duly praised and acknowledged. "For he hath satisfied the empty soul." Because he provided the most extraordinary food, prepared by the hands of the Angels, for a lot of hungry people in the desert, nigh exhausted for want of food. This, as we have already said, is most applicable to the food provided for the Jews; but there can be no doubt but the Prophet meant, by this example, to teach all those who have been rescued from ignorance and from the misery of thirst and hunger, that they owe their deliverance to God, and that they should, therefore, think his mercy. And there can be no doubt but the Prophet had specially before his mind that ignorance of the way of salvation, under which so many labor, and who stray about, as it were in a desert, hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of truth, the source of wisdom and of prudence. We naturally look for happiness. There is no one that does not look for it, and, therefore, for the way that leads to it; however, many preoccupied by the thoughts and desires of passing goods, look for happiness where it is not to be found; nay, even look upon that to be happiness which is anything but happiness; and when they know not in what it consists, naturally know not the way that leads to it. Thus, in their strayings and wanderings, they never find, though they are always hungering and thirsting for the city of their true habitation; because the longings of an immortal soul, capable of appreciating supreme happiness, can never be content with the things of this world, miserable and transitory as they are; while those whom God "hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy," and "gathered out of the countries," beginning to feel their

and reeled like a drunken man and all their wisdom was swallowed up;" a most natural description of the state of those in danger from shipwreck; they lose all presence of mind, can adopt no fixed counsel, and consequently, cannot act upon any; "and all their wisdom," in steering and righting a ship, if ever they had any, seems to have entirely taken leave of them. "And they cried to the Lord in their affliction." This verse, occurring now for the fourth time, has been already explained, and the other verses do not seem to need any. Now the fourth spiritual affliction is that malice of the will, which principally consists in pride, that is the queen of vice. And, in fact, when the blasts of pride begin to play upon the sea of the human heart then the billows of its desires are raised up even to the very heavens. We are all acquainted with the language of the prince of the sons of pride, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." It was by him the giants of old were inspired to set about building the tower of Babel, that was to have reached the sky. The descendants of those people are they who seek to add kingdoms the kingdoms, and empires to empires; and to whose ambition there is no bounds; whereas, if they would enter into themselves and carefully consider the fearful storms of reflection, suspicion, fear, desires, presumption and despair, that continually harass them, and must, finally, overwhelm them they would undoubtedly have cried to God, who would in his pity and mercy have delivered them from such a mass of evils; for he would have infused the spirit of his Son into their hearts, to teach them meekness and humility, that the raging billows of their desires, being thus composed, they may find rest for their souls, and be brought into the harbor of his goodwill; into that harbor of peace and tranquility that is naturally coveted by all mankind. And this being the greatest favor of God's mercy, they would naturally chat, "let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men."

33. "He hath turned rivers into a wilderness, and the sources of waters into dry ground."

34. "A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." This is the fifth part of the Psalm. After having sung of the mercy of God and warding off the four afflictions, he now praises him for the omnipotence and providence through which he sometimes changes the nature of things, proving himself thereby to be their Maker and Ruler. He first says that God sometimes "turned rivers into a wilderness, and the sources of waters into dry ground," that is, that when it pleased him, he dried up entire rivers, and caused the places inundated by them to become perfectly dry; "a fruitful land into barrenness," which is intelligible enough, "for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," as a punishment for the wickedness of its inhabitants; an example of which we have in Genesis, where we read, "and Lot lifting up his eyes saw all the country about the Jordan, which was watered throughout, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, as the paradise of the Lord," and yet this beautiful and fertile country, a paradise in itself, was dried up by sulphur and fire from heaven, and condemned to everlasting sterility.

above, and to taste how sweet is the Lord, let them not take the merit of it to themselves; but “let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him; let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise, and declare his works with joy;” for it clearly is the work of God, and not of man, to make man, accustomed to nothing but the things of this earth, and to what he sees, to have an ardent desire for and feel a sweet relish in the things of the other world, that are forbidden from him.

23. “They that go down to the sea in ships, doing business in the great waters.”

24. “These have seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”

25. “He said the word, and there arose a storm of wind: and the ways thereof were lifted up.”

26. “They moved up to the heavens, and they go down to the depths: their soul pined away with evils.”

27. “They were troubled, and reeled like a drunken man; and all their wisdom was swallowed up.”

28. “And they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he brought them out of their distresses.”

29. “And he turned to storm into a breeze: and its waves were still.”

30. “And they rejoiced because they were still: and he brought them to the haven which they wished for.”

31. “Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.”

32. “And let them exalt him in the church of the people: and praise him in the chair of the ancients.” This is the fourth part of the Psalm, in which God is praised for his care of those that are in danger at sea. No example of such danger, previous to David’s time, occurs in the Scriptures, but subsequent to David, we have that of Jonas, of the apostles, and of St. Paul. “They that go down to the sea in ships.” They who cross the deep, and are engaged either in rowing, reefing, or setting the sails, know from experience many wonderful works of God, that many know nothing whatever of, or if they do, have it only from hearsay; for instance, the fury of the storm, the raging and roaring of the waves, the immense extent and depth of the sea, the constant and imminent danger that surrounds them, and the fear that will so lay hold on them betimes, as to make the hearts of the bravest quail. “He said the word and there arose a storm of wind;” God spoke, and the storm, in obedience to its Creator, at once arose, sprung up, and, in consequence, “the waves were lifted up;” so that they seemed almost to touch the skies; and, ultimately, to expose the lowest depths of the sea; “their soul pined away with evils;” fear so laid hold on them, that they became incapable of any manner of exertion; nay more, “they were troubled

own blindness, through the great gift of God’s mercy, “they cried to the Lord,” and are heard by him; they are “led into the right way, that leads to the city;” they know that the kingdom of God is there ultimate end, and that justice is the means of acquiring it; “hungering and thirsting,” then, for justice, they run to the fountain of grace, and, refreshed from that fountain, they arrive at the heavenly city, where they are filled and satisfied with all manner of good things, so that they never hunger or thirst again for all eternity.

10. “Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in want and in iron.”

11. “Because they had exasperated the words of God; and provoked the counsel of the Most High.”

12. “And their heart was humbled with labors: they were weakened and there was none to help them.”

13. “Then they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses.”

14. “And he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death; and broke their bonds in sunder.”

15. “Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.”

16. “Because he hath broken gates of brass, and burst iron bars.” This is the second part of the Psalm, in which he reviews the deliverance from the second affliction, corporal as well as spiritual. The second corporal affliction consists in captivity, through which poor creatures are shut up in dark prisons, bound with chains, and loaded with manacles. He seems to allude to the captivity of the Jews, under various persecutors, in the time of judges, or perhaps under Pharaoh; for David does not seem to have taken much trouble in relating matters chronologically; the more so as to what he states here is applicable to all captives, to all in chains and fetters, who may at any time have been liberated through the mercy of the Lord. “Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in want and in iron;” that is to say, I have known others who were taken by the enemy and were shut up in loathsome prisons and dense darkness, and were loaded with chains and reduced to beggary, “because they had exasperated the words of God, and provoked the counsel of the Most High.” These were justly afflicted and punished in that manner, because they disregarded God’s precepts and despised his advice. “Exasperating God’s words” means provoking him to anger when he speaks or commands, which is done by those who do not keep his commandments. They, too, may be said to “exasperate God’s words” who provoke his very commandments to anger; for, as the commandments of God crown those that observe them, so they punish those that transgress them; and in this manner they who transgress the

commandments provoke them against themselves. There is a certain amount of figurative language in the whole; for “God’s words” mean God, in his discourse or his commands; and the words “exasperating” means God’s punishment being as grievous as if he were capable of being exasperated. A similar figure of speech appears in the following sentence: “and provoked the counsel of the Most High;” for the “counsel of the Most High” must be understood as applying to God in his goodness, with the best intentions irritated by those who opposed them; or “provoked” may be rendered as condemning or despising, for those who do either provoke, that is, excite to anger. “And their heart was humbled with labor,” their pride was brought down by captivity, chains, and fetters. They had just the things to do it. “They were weakened, and there was none to help them.” They were not able to resist their enemies; and thus, having no one to help them, will lead off in captivity. “Then they cried to the Lord” etc.; then they began to implore the divine assistance, to free them as well from their dark prisons as from their chains and fetters; and, to show the extent of their obligations to him, he adds, “he broke gates of brass and burst iron bars,” to show how firmly secured they had been, and what power is required to liberate them; and thus, on the whole, they are proved to have been delivered from a most severe and wretched captivity. Now, the second spiritual affliction consists in the concupiscence of this world – such as its goods, its wealth, its pleasure, which, like so many chains and fetters, so tie a man down that, though he is fully aware of true happiness existing in God alone, and that, while he remains here below, he must mortify his members, still he remains a captive, without being able to stir, if the grace of God will not set him free. The beginning of his freedom must have its source in his own humility. He must feel that he is a captive, that he has no strength in him, that his heart has been humbled in his labors, and, satisfied of there being no one able to help him but the one heavenly Father, he must, with a contrite and humble heart, with much interior sorrow, exclaim, Lord, I suffer violence; look on me, and have mercy on me. “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The mercy of the Father will most surely be at hand to bring the captive from his prison to burst his fetters, so that, on gaining his liberty, he can with joy exclaim, “Lord, thou hast broken my bonds, I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise.”

17. “He took them out of the way of the iniquity: for they were brought low for their injustices.”

18. “Their soul abhorred all manner of meat: and they drew nigh even to the gates of death.”

19. “And they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses.”

20. “He sent his word, and healed them: and he delivered them from their destructions.”

21. “Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men.”

22. “And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise: and declare his works with joy.” The third part of the Psalm, treating of the third corporeal affliction, which is a most severe disease and languor, such as that of the children of Israel, when God afflicted them with a great plague, through the fiery serpents, so that numbers of them were constantly dying; but no sooner did they cry out to God than they were delivered; and, in like manner, no matter how anyone, or to what extent they may be struck down by sickness or disease, if they will seriously, from the bottom of their heart, in firm faith, and with the other requisites, invoke the Almighty, they will most assuredly be delivered. To enter into particulars, especially as regards expressions not explained before. “He took them out of the way of their iniquity; for they were brought low for their injustices.” We must, of necessity, supply something here; for instance, God saw some of them lying prostrate, “and took them,” that is, raised them up, “out of the way of their iniquity,” in which they were miserably plunged; “for they were brought low for their injustices,” even to the very earth; “their soul abhorred all manner of meat; and they drew nigh even to the gate of death.” The disease must have been very severe when they refused the food necessary to support life, so that death must have, in consequence, then actually at their doors. “He sent his word, and healed them.” And he explains how, by the will or by the command of God alone, without the brazen serpent, or any other created thing; not that things created, such as drugs and medicines, are of no use, but that they have their virtue and efficacy from God, and without his cooperation they are of no value; but God, of himself, without their intervention or application, by his sole word and command, can heal and cure all manner of diseases; in which sense we are to understand that passage in Wisdom, “for it was neither herb nor mollifying plaster that healed them, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things;” and, in a few verses before, speaking of those who had been bitten by the fiery serpents, and were cured by looking on the brazen one, he says, “for he that turned to it was not healed by that which he saw, but by the Savior of all.” David speaks figuratively when he says, “he sent his word, and healed them;” as if his word were a messenger or an ambassador on the occasion; unless, perhaps, he alludes to the mission of the Word incarnate, through whom many were healed of their corporeal diseases, and without whom nobody could be healed of their spiritual diseases. “For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.” The third spiritual affliction consists in the infirmity or weakness and frailty of human nature, corrupted by sin. There are many who understand thoroughly what they ought to do, and are anxious to do it; but they either have no strength, or have not sufficient strength to do it, until they get it from on high. They are also, not infrequently, so affected by a sort of languor or listlessness, that their soul loathes all manner of food; not that they are led into any error, or seduced by any evil consequence, but they take no delight in God’s word, they know not what it is to feel any heavenly aspirations, and they run the risk of suffering from hunger, not for want of wherewith to satisfy themselves, but from sheer fastidiousness; and such temptations are neither trifling nor uncommon. They had great need of “crying to the Lord,” to rectify their bad taste, and bring them to have a desire for the milk of divine consolation; and when they shall have begun to relish the things that are from