



**Verse 3**

כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּעָנָנָיו (hamekareh bammayim aliyothaiv).

☞Laying the beams of his chambers in the waters.☞

The sacred writer expresses the wonderful nature of the air aptly, and regularly constructed, from various and flux elements, into one continued and stable series, by a metaphor drawn from the singular formation of the tabernacle, which, consisting of many and different parts, and easily reparable when there was need, was kept together by a perpetual juncture and contignation of them all together. The poet goes on: -

כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּעָנָנָיו (hassem abim rechubo),

כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּעָנָנָיו (hamehallech al canphey ruach/☞Making the clouds his chariot, Walking upon the wings of the wind.☞

He had first expressed an image of the Divine Majesty, such as it resided in the holy of holies, discernible by a certain investiture of the most splendid light; he now denotes the same from that light of itself which the Divine Majesty exhibited, when it moved together with the ark, sitting on a circumambient cloud, and carried on high through the air. That seat of the Divine Presence is even called by the sacred historians, as its proper name, כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם (hammercabah), The Chariot.

**Verse 4**

כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּעָנָנָיו (oseh rnalachaiv ruchoth),

כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּעָנָנָיו (mesharethaiv esh lohet).

The elements are described as prompt and expedite to perform the Divine commands, like angels or ministers serving in the tabernacle; the Hebrew word כָּסָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם (mesharethaiv) being a word most common in the sacred ministrations.

**Verse 5**

אֲשֶׁר יָסַד אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּעָנָנָיו (yasad erets al mechonepha),

אֲשֶׁר יָסַד אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּעָנָנָיו (bal tammot olam vaed).

☞Laying the earth upon its foundations,  
That it should not be shaken for evermore.☞

This image Bishop Lowth thinks evidently taken from the tabernacle, which was so laid upon its foundations that nothing could move it, and the dispensation to which it was attached, till the end purposed by the secret counsel of God was accomplished: and thus the earth is established, till the end of its creation shall be fully answered; and then it and its works shall be burnt up. On the above ground, the stability of the sanctuary and the stability of the earth are sometimes mentioned in the same words.

**Verse 6**

Thou coveredst it with the deep - This seems to be spoken in allusion to the creation of the earth, when it was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the waters invested the whole, till God separated the dry land from them; thus forming the seas and the terraqueous globe.

The poet Ovid has nearly the same idea: -  
Densior his tellus, elementaque grandia traxit,  
Et pressa est gravitate sua; circumfluis humor  
Ultima possedit, solidumque coercuit orbem.  
Met. lib. i., ver. 29.

Earth sinks beneath, and draws a numerous throng  
Of ponderous, thick, unwieldy seeds along:  
About her coasts unruly waters roar;  
And, rising on a ridge, insult the shore.  
Dryden.

**Verse 7**

At thy rebuke they fled - When God separated the waters which were above the firmament from those below, and caused the dry land to appear. He commanded the separation to take place; and the waters, as if instinct with life, hastened to obey.

At the voice of thy thunder - It is very likely God employed the electric fluid as an agent in this separation.

**Verse 8**

They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys - Taking the words as they stand here, springs seem to be what are intended. But it is difficult to conceive how the water could ascend, through the fissures of mountains, to their tops, and then come down their sides so as to form rivulets to water the valleys. Most probably all the springs in mountains and hills are formed from waters which fall on their tops in the form of rain, or from clouds that, passing over them, are arrested, and precipitate their contents, which, sinking down, are stopped by some solid strata, till, forcing their way at some aperture at their sides, they form springs and fountains. Possibly, however, vapours and exhalations are understood; these by evaporation ascend to the tops of mountains, where they are condensed and precipitated. Thus the vapours ascend, and then come down to the valleys, forming fountains and rivulets in those places which the providence of God has allotted them; that is, continuous valleys, with such a degree of inclination as determines their waters to run in that direction till they reach another river, or fall into the ocean.

Some have thought there is a reference to the breaking up on the fountains of the great deep, at the time of the flood; while the protrusion of the waters would raise the circumambient crust, so as to form mountains, the other parts, falling in to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the waters which were thrown up from the central abyss, would constitute valleys.

Ovid seems to paraphrase this verse: -

Jussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles,  
Fronde tegi sylvas, lapidosos surgere montes.

Met. lib. i., ver. 43.

â€œHe shades the woods, the valleys he restrains

With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.â€•

Dryden.

**Verse 9**

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass - And what is this bound? The flux and reflux of the sea, occasioned by the solar and lunar attraction, the rotation of the earth on its own axis, and the gravitation of the waters to the center of the earth. And what is the cause of all these? The will and energy of God. Thus the sea is prevented from drowning the earth equally where there are flat shores as where the sea seems hemmed in by huge mounds of land and mountains. The above, not these, are the bounds which it cannot pass, so that they cannot turn again to cover the earth.

**Verse 10**

He sendeth the springs into the valleys - Evaporation is guided and regulated by Divine Providence. The sun has a certain power to raise a certain portion of vapours from a given space. God has apportioned the aqueous to the terrene surface, and the solar attraction to both. There is just as much aqueous surface as affords a sufficiency of vapours to be raised by the solar attraction to water the earthy surface. Experiments have been instituted which prove that it requires a given space of aqueous surface to provide vapours for a given space of terrene surface; and the proportion appears ordinarily to be seventeen of water to three of earth; and this is the proportion that the aqueous bears to the terrene surface of the globe. See Rayâ€™s three Physico-theological Discourses.

**Verse 11**

The wild asses quench their thirst - The *perre* (pere), onager or wild ass, differs in nothing from the tame ass, only it has not a broken spirit, and is consequently more lively and active. It is so very swift that no horse except the Arab barb can overtake it. It is a gregarious animal, and they go in troops to feed and to drink. It is very timid, or rather jealous of its liberty, and therefore retires deep into the desert; yet even there the providence of God regards it; springs are provided, and it has the instinct to find them out.

**Verse 12**

By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation - All fowls love verdure, and have their residence where they can find wood and water.

**Verse 13**

From his chambers - The clouds, as in Psalm 104:3.

The earth is satisfied - The inhabitants of it.

**Verse 14**

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle - Doth God care for oxen? Yes, and there is not a beast of the field that does not share his merciful regards.

And herb for the service of man - Plants, esculent herbs, and nutritive grain in general; and thus he brings forth food (חֶמֶד—חֶ (lechem), bread) out of the earth. In the germination and growth of a grain of wheat there is a profusion of miracles. God takes care of man, and of all those animals which are so necessary to the convenience and comfort of man.

#### Verse 15

And wine - Wine, in moderate quantity, has a wondrous tendency to revive and invigorate the human being. Ardent spirits exhilarate, but they exhaust the strength; and every dose leaves man the worse. Unadulterated wine, on the contrary, exhilarates and invigorates: it makes him cheerful, and provides for the continuance of that cheerfulness by strengthening the muscles, and bracing the nerves. This is its use. Those who continue drinking till wine inflames them, abase this mercy of God.

Oil to make his face to shine - That is, to anoint the body; and particularly those parts most exposed to the sun and weather. This is of high importance in all arid lands and sultry climates. By it the pores are kept open, and perspiration maintained.

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

Three of the choicest and most important articles of life are here mentioned: Wine, for the support of the vital and intellectual spirits; Bread, for the support of the nervous and muscular system; and Oil, as a seasoner of food, and for those unctions so necessary for the maintenance of health. Where wine, oil, and bread can be had in sufficient quantities, there animal food, ardent spirits, and all high-seasoned aliments, may be well dispensed with. Heavy taxes on these necessaries of life are taxes on life, itself; and infallibly lead to adulteration of the articles themselves; especially wine and oil, which, in countries where they are highly taxed, are no longer to be found pure.

#### Verse 16

The trees of the Lord are full of sap - יִשְׁבֹּעַ (yisbeu), are saturated.

The cedars of Lebanon - God's providence not only extends to then and cattle, but also to the trees of the field and forest. Many of these are not only sustained, but planted by his providence. Who ever planted the seeds of the cedars of Lebanon, or of the thousands of woods and forests on the globe? God himself sowed those seeds, and they have sprung up and flourished without the care of man.

#### Verse 17

Where the birds make their nests - תְּסִיפּוֹרִים (tsipporim) signifies swallows, sparrows, and small birds in general; here opposed to the חַסִּידָה (chasidah) or stork. Perhaps the heron may be understood, which is said to be the first of all birds to build her nest, and she builds it on the very highest trees. The general meaning is, that God has provided shelter and support for the greatest and smallest birds; they are all objects of his providential regard.

#### Verse 18

The high hills are a refuge - The barren tops of the highest hills, and the craggy abrupt precipices of the most stupendous rocks, are not without their uses: they afford protection, refuge, and food, for creatures whose dispositions and habits are suited to such places; and thus no part of the creation is useless. The creatures who are their inhabitants are necessary links in the great chain of animated beings, and show the wisdom and providence of God.

For a description of the covey, see Leviticus 11:5. The יָאֵל (yael), translated here the wild goat, is no doubt a creature of the stag or deer kind; the ibex, chamois, antelope, etc.

#### Verse 19

He appointed the moon for seasons - The heathens thought that the sun and moon were gods, and worshipped them as such. The psalmist shows, 1. That they are creatures dependent on God for their being and continuance; and, 2. That they were made for the use of man. See what has been said on these luminaries in the notes on Genesis 1:14-16 (note).

#### Verse 20

Thou makest darkness - It is not the design of God that there should be either constant darkness or constant light. That man may labor, he gives him, by means of the sun, the light of the day; and that he may rest from his labor, and get his strength recruited, he gives him night, and comparative darkness. And as it would not be convenient for man and the wild beasts of the forest to collect their food at the same time, he has given the night to them as the proper time to procure their prey, and the day to rest in. When Man labors, They rest; when Man rests, They labor.

#### Verse 21

The young lions roar after their prey - It is said of the lion, that his roaring is so terrible as to astonish and quite unnerve the beast which he pursues; so that, though fleetier than himself, it falls down and becomes an easy prey.

#### Verse 22

The sun ariseth - The dawn of day is the warning for man to arise and betake himself to his work; and is the warning to them to retire to their dens.

#### Verse 24

O Lord, how manifold are thy works - In this verse there are three propositions:

1. The works of the Lord are multitudinous and varied.
2. They are so constructed as to show the most consummate wisdom in their design, and in the end for which they are formed.
3. They are all God's property, and should be used only in reference to the end for which they were created.

All abuse and waste of God's creatures are spoil and robbery on the property of the Creator. On this verse Mr. Ray has published an excellent work, entitled, "The Wisdom of God in the Creation," which the reader will do well, not only to consult, but carefully to read over and study.

#### Verse 25

This great and wide sea - The original is very emphatic: זֶה הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל וְרַחֵב יָדָיו (zeh haiyam gadol urechab yadayim), "This very sea, great and extensive of hands." Its waters, like arms, encompassing all the terrene parts of the globe. I suppose the psalmist was within sight of the Mediterranean when he wrote these words.

#### Verse 26

There go the ships - By means of navigation, countries the most remote are connected, and all the inhabitants of the earth become known to each other. He appears at this time to have seen the ships under sail.

That leviathan - This may mean the whale, or any of the large marine animals. The Septuagint and Vulgate call it dragon. Sometimes the crocodile is intended by the original word.

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

#### Verse 27

These wait all upon thee - The innumerable fry of the smaller aquatic animals, as well as whales, dolphins, porpoises, and sharks, all have their meat from God. He has in his gracious providence furnished that sort of food which is suitable to all. And this provision is various; not only for every kind of fish does God provide food, but a different kind of aliment for each in its different periods of growth. Here are displayed the goodness and infinitely varied providence of God: "He giveth them their meat in due season."

#### Verse 28

That thou givest them they gather - All creatures are formed with such and such digestive organs, and the food proper for them is provided. Infinitely varied as are living creatures in their habits and internal economy, so are the aliments which God has caused the air, the earth, and the waters to produce.

Thou openest thine hand - An allusion to the act of scattering grain among fowls.

#### Verse 29

Thou hidest thy face - If thou bring dearth or famine on the land, contagion in the air, or any destruction on the provision made by the waters, then beasts, fowl, and fish die, and are dissolved.

#### Verse 30

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created -  $\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}'\text{x}''\text{x}\cdot\text{x}\text{Y}$  (yibbareun),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ They are created again. $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$

And thou renewest the face of the earth - Do not these words plainly imply a resurrection of the bodies which have died, been dissolved, or turned to dust? And is not the brute creation principally intended here? Is it not on this account it is said, Psalm 104:31,  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, ( $\text{x}\hat{\text{o}}\text{x}\hat{\text{c}}\text{x}\cdot\text{x}\hat{\text{o}}\text{x}\cdot$  (leolam)), $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$  to be manifest in those times which are secret, when Jehovah himself shall rejoice in his works; when the brute creation shall be delivered from the bondage of its corruption? See the notes on Romans 8:19-23 (note).

#### Verse 32

He looketh on the earth - Even the look of God terrifies all created nature!

He toucheth the hills - So easy is it for God to burn up the earth and the worlds thereof, that even his touch kindles the mountains into flames! See Etna, Vesuvius, Stromboli, etc.; these are ignited by the touch of God. How majestic are these figures!

The renewal of the earth, and re-creation of deceased animals, shall take place when he shall shake terribly the heavens and the earth; when they shall be wrapped together as a scroll, and the earth and its works be dissolved, that is, after the general convulsion and conflagration of the world.

#### Verse 33

I will sing unto the Lord - The psalmist exulting in the glorious prospect of the renovation of all things, breaks out in triumphant anticipation of the great event, and says, I will sing unto the Lord  $\text{x}'\text{x}\text{—}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}$  (bechaiyai), with my lives, the life that I now have, and the life that I shall have hereafter.

I will sing praise to my God -  $\text{x}'\text{x}\hat{\text{c}}\text{x}\cdot\text{x}'\text{x}^{\text{TM}}$  (beodi),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ in my eternity; $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$  my going on, my endless progression. What astonishing ideas! But then, how shall this great work be brought about? and how shall the new earth be inhabited with righteous spirits only? The answer is,

#### Verse 35

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more - Or, He shall consume the wicked and ungodly, till no more of them be found. Then the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God. No wonder, with these prospects before his eyes, he cries out,  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ Bless Jehovah, O my soul! Hallelujah! $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$  And ye that hear of these things, bless the Lord also.