

Psalm 104 and “O Worship the King”

“O Worship the King” is a free paraphrase in six stanzas of Psalm 104 (largely verses 1-13 and 24-33) by Sir Robert Grant (1779-1838). Grant’s hymn was influenced by William Kethe’s (d. 1594) earlier metrical paraphrase, in two stanzas, of the same psalm.

Following are Psalm 104:1-13, 24-33 from Myles Coverdale’s 1539 translation, William Kethe’s short paraphrase, and Robert Grant’s more expansive paraphrase.

Psalm 104:1-13, 24-33 (Coverdale, 1539)

- 1 Praise the Lord, O my soul: * O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious;
thou art clothed with majesty and honor.
 - 2 Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment, * and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.
 - 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, * and maketh the clouds his chariot,
and walketh upon the wings of the wind.
 - 4 He maketh his angels winds, * and his ministers a flaming fire.
 - 5 He laid the foundations of the earth, * that it never should move at any time.
 - 6 Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment; * the waters stand above the hills.
 - 7 At thy rebuke they flee; * at the voice of thy thunder they haste away.
 - 8 They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath; * even unto the place which thou hast
appointed for them.
 - 9 Thou hast set them their bounds, which they shall not pass, * neither turn again to cover the earth.
 - 10 He sendeth the springs into the rivers, * which run among the hills.
 - 11 All beasts of the field drink thereof, * and the wild asses quench their thirst.
 - 12 Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation, * and sing among the branches.
 - 13 He watereth the hills from above; * the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.
-
- 24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works! * in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.
 - 25 So is the great and wide sea also; * wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.
 - 26 There go the ships, and there is that leviathan, * whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.
 - 27 These wait all upon thee, * that thou mayest give them meat in due season.
 - 28 When thou givest it them, they gather it; * and when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.
 - 29 When thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: * when thou takest away their breath,
they die, and are turned again to their dust.
 - 30 When thou lettest thy breath go forth, they shall be made; * and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.
 - 31 The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever; * the Lord shall rejoice in his works.
 - 32 The earth shall tremble at the look of him; * if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.
 - 33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; * I will praise my God while I have my being.

1561 Paraphrase by William Kethe

My soule praise the Lord, speake good of his Name,
O Lord our great God how doest thou appeare,
So passing in glorie, that great is thy fame,
Honour and majestie, in thee shine most cleare.

His chamber beames lie, in the clouds full fure,
Which as his chariot, are made him to beare.
And there with much swiftness his course doth endure:
Upon the wings riding, of winds in the aire.

1833 Paraphrase by Robert Grant

O worship the King, all glorious above!
O gratefully sing his power and his love!
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old,
hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;
thy mercies how tender! how firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless might! Ineffable love!
While angels delight to hymn thee above,
the humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
With true adoration shall lisp to thy praise.