# Psalm 119

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS

Whole eight verses, 1 - 8. Every line begins with Aleph, to which the Jews ascribe the meaning of an ox, that is, the beast of useful service, and thus of many blessings. Key of the section: "O the blessings." -F. G. Marchant.

Whole eight verses, 1 - 8. These eight verses teach that true piety is sincere, consistent, practical, hearty, intelligent, earnest, active, stirring, diligent, humble, distrustful of itself, systematical, guileless, unspotted from the world, self-renouncing, confident in God, delighting in thankfulness, fully purposed to keep the law, and as ready to confess that without divine grace it can do nothing. They also teach us how great is the sin of not believing God s word. As it is a law, the faithless refuse to walk by it; as it is a testimony, they refuse to believe their Maker; as it demands righteousness, they refuse to seek it; as it gives precepts, they will not obey them; as it ordains statutes, they rebel against them; as it has excellent commandments, they stand out in opposition to them; as it abounds with righteous judgments, they refuse to stand by them. They will not pray for grace; they will not praise God for mercies received; they do not feel their depen dence or impotence, and they never look to the Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. -William S. Plumer, 1880.

Verse 1. "Blessed." The Psalmist beginneth with a description of the way to true blessedness, as Christ began his Sermon on the Mount, and as the whole Book of Psalms is elsewhere begun. Blessedness is that which we all aim at, only we are either ignorant or reckless of the way that leadeth to it, therefore the holy Psalmist would first set us right as to the true notion of a blessed man: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD." -Thomas Manton, 1620-1677.

Verse 1. "Blessed." Here the Lord, who in the last day will pronounce some to be blessed and some to be cursed, doth now tell us who they are. What can comfort them to whom the Lord shall say, Depart from me, ye cursed? Where away shall they go when the Lord shall command them to depart from him? And what greater joy can come to a man, than to hear the Judge of all saying unto him, Come to me, ye blessed? Oh that we were wise in time, to think of this, that so we might endeavour to become such men as God in his word hath blessed! -William Cowper, 1566-1619.

Verse 1. The Scripture speaketh of blessedness two ways; casually, in reference to that which is the cause whereby we get a right to this blessed estate; and in this sense it is attributed to faith in Christ, to forgiveness of sin, and to justification of life which we obtain in Christ. Sometimes the Scripture speaketh formally of blessedness, in order to the actual execution of it; and thus it pronounceth them blessed who are perfect in their course; for this is a blessedness actually executed, and doth fit us to have the full execution and consummation of blessedness begun in us; thus they are blessed who endure patiently, who are poor in spirit, who are merciful, who are peacemakers, etc. If I speak of a sick man, and say he is happy, for he hath met with a good physician; here I pronounce him blessed because he hath found one who will restore him to health. If I say of the same man, he is a happy man, he can now digest very well what he eateth, he can sleep, and walk abroad; I speak of him now as actually blessed with health of body.

The end of everything being the good of that thing, and the prosperity of everything being the end of it,--to attain in some latitude this perfection of action must needs make a man actually blessed. Hence blessedness is ascribed to walking in God's way. If we have not the habit of doing anything, we do it with difficulty, we are ready to cease from doing it; as a horse will continually break out of the pace to which he is not perfectly broken. Thence it is that the saints find their estate miserable till they form the habit which maketh them with facility and constancy walk with God; there being no greater misery than to see themselves doing good duties uncheerfully, no sooner entering them than out again, and desisting from them. On the contrary, they count it of all things most blessed to have attained some degree of permanent habit in godliness. The blessedness which is here spoken of is the actual execution of that blessedness which comes to us by faith in Christ. -Paul Bayne 1617.

Verse 1. "The undefiled." You ask, Why does God will that we be undefiled? I reply, because he has chosen us for himself, for servants, for spouses, for temples. These three privileges or names mean that all defilement must be shunned by us. -Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 1. "Undefiled in the way." In the 1st Psalm it was "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly"; but who could think to walk in that way, and not have his feet soiled? "Who could go upon hot coals and his feet be not burned?" Here, however, the caution is, to take heed not to get any soil or defilement "in the way,"--in the Lord's way. Oh! what an insight does this give us of the pit-falls and snares that beset us in the road, and of the plague and evil of our own hearts, that even in the midst of holy tilings, somewhat of stain, or spot, or wrinkle will stick to us! -Barton Bouchier, 1856.

Verse 1. "The undefiled in the way." How can our feet be undefiled? How can our garments be unsoiled? We cannot guide ourselves. Unaided, we stumble into sloughs of defilement. But all help is near. Jesus is at hand to keep us by his mighty power. Let us lean on his supporting arm at every step, and when we fall let us rise and wash our robes in his all-cleansing blood. So may we ever be among "the undefiled in the way"; and let the law of the Lord, lovely in purity, glorious in holiness, perfect in love, be the path in which our feet advance. Jesus is our model and our all. God's law was in his heart. Henry Law, in "Family Devotion," 1878.

Verse 1. "In the way." They are blessed who are in the way, not a way, any chance or uncertain road, but "the King's Highway"; that path which the Lord himself has declared to us, saying, "I am the way." -Hilary and Theodoret, quoted by Neale and Littledale.

Verse 1. "The way." There is much ado now about the way; many say, "Which is the way?" Some say, "This"; some, "That." Would you not mistake, inquire for "the old way, the way of holiness," and follow it, and thou shalt not perish. Some would go a new way; some a shorter, some an easier way. Do you go the holy way. -John Sheffield (about 1660), in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 1. "Who walk." In this way there must be no standing, sitting, or reclining, but walking, so that all our movements may be regular, going on unto perfection: Matt. v. 48; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; James i. 4; Heb. vi. 1. -Martin Geier, 1614-1681.

Verse 1. "Who walk in the law of the LORD." To go on with liberty in good of duties is a point of blessed perfection. He is not truly able to walk who can only go twice or thrice about his chamber, or stir himself on some plain ground for a quarter of an hour; but he which can go strongly and freely up a hill in ways craggy and uneven: so Christians who can go while God maketh their way inoffensive, putting everything away which might hinder, but presently give over if ought disturbeth, they are not come to this free walking in which standeth a traveller's perfection. Look at those who are fat at heart, pursey (as we say), or have inward lameness, and ache of joints, or have caught a thorn from without, so that they are forced to lie by, and cannot walk; or those whose limbs are so feeble, that they cannot trip upon anything, but down they come; all these lame folk do esteem other travellers to be happy who are able to exercise themselves in walking at will. Thus, when Christians find themselves hindered, and wearied, and stumbling, they deem others blessed who can go on constantly in their holy course, through good report and evil report, in want, in abundance, in every estate and condition. Wherefore, let us strive after this blessed walking. -Paul Bayne.

Verse 1. "Who walk in the law of the LORD." Who walk towards heaven in heaven's way, avoiding the corruptions that are in the world through lust. -John Trapp. 1611-1662.

Verse 2. The doubling of the sentence, Blessed... Blessed, in the first verse and second, is to let us see the certainty of the blessing belonging to the godly. The word of God is as true in itself when it is once spoken, as when it is many times repeated: the repetition of it is for confirmation of our weak faith. That which Isaac spake of Jacob, -- "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed, "is the most sure decree of God upon all his children. Satan would fain curse Israel, by the mouth of such as Balaam was; but he shall not be able to curse, because God hath blessed. William Cowper.

Verse 2. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. In the former verse a blessed man is described by the course of his actions, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way": in this verse he is described by the frame of his heart. Thomas Manton.

Verse 2. Keep his testimonies. The careful keeping in mind of God's testimonies is blessedness; for though there is a keeping of them in conversation mentioned in the former verse, here another thing is intimated diverse from the former; he that keepeth this plant or holy seed so that the devil cannot take it out of his heart, he is happy. The word here used signifieth such a careful custody as that is wherewith we use to keep tender plants. Paul Bayne.

Verse 2. Testimonies. The notion by which the word of God is expressed is "testimonies"; whereby is intended the whole declaration of God's will in doctrines, commands, examples, threatenings, promises. The whole word is the testimony which God hath deposed for the satisfaction of the world about the way of their salvation. Now because the word of God branches itself into two parts, the law and the gospel, this notion may be applied to both. First, to the law, in regard whereof the ark was called "the ark of the testimony" (Ex 25:16), because the two tables were laid up in it. The gospel is also called the testimony, "the testimony of God concerning his Son." "To the law, and to the testimony" (Isa 8:20); where testimony seems to be distinguished from the law. The gospel is so called, because therein God hath testified how a man shall be pardoned, reconciled to God, and obtain a right to eternal life. We need a testimony in this case, because it is more unknown to us. The law was written upon the heart, but the gospel is a stranger. Natural light will discern something of the law, and pry into matters which are of a moral strain and concernment; but evangelical truths are a mystery, and depend upon the mere testimony of God concerning his Son. Thomas Manton.

Verse 2. Testimonies. The word of God is called his testimony, not only because it testifies his will concerning his service, but also his favour and goodwill concerning his own in Christ Jesus. If God's word were no more than a law, yet were we bound to obey it, because we are his creatures; but since it is also a testimony of his love, wherein as a father he witnesseth his favour towards his children, we are doubly inexcusable if we do not most joyfully embrace it. William Cowper.

Verse 2. Blessed are they... that seek him with the whole heart. He pronounces "blessed" not such as are wise in their own conceit, or assume a sort of fantastical holiness, but those who dedicate themselves to the covenant of God, and yield obedience to the dictates of his law, Farther, by these words, he tells us that God is by no means satisfied with mere external service, for he demands the sincere and honest affection of the heart. And assuredly, if God be the sole Judge and Disposer of our life, the truth must occupy the principal place in our heart, because it is not sufficient to have our hands and feet only enlisted in his service. John Calvin, 1509-1564.

Verse 2. The whole heart. Whosoever would have sound happiness must have a sound heart. So much sincerity as there is, so much blessedness there will be; and according to the degree of our hypocrisy, will be the measure of our misery. Richard Greenham, 1531-1591.

Verses 2-3. Observe the verbs seek, do, walk, all making up the subject to whom the blessedness belongs. Henry Hammond, 1605-1660.

Verse 3. They also do no iniquity. If it be demanded here, How is it that they who walk in God's ways work no iniquity? Is there any man who lives, and sins not? And if they be not without sin, how then are they to be blessed? The answer is, as the apostle says of our knowledge, "We know but in part": so is it true of our felicity on earth, we are blessed but in a part. It is the happiness of angels that they never sinned; it is the happiness of triumphant saints, that albeit they have been sinners, yet now they sin no more; but the happiness of saints militant is, that our sins are forgiven us; and that albeit sin remains in us, yet it reigns not over us; it is done in us, but not by our allowance: "I do the evil which I would not." "Not I, but sin that dwells in me, "Ro 7:17. To the doing of iniquity, these three things must concur; first, a purpose to do it; next, a delight in doing it; thirdly, a continuance in it; which three in God's children never concur; for in sins done in them by the old man, the new man makes his exceptions and protestations against them. It is not I, says he; and so far is he from delighting in them, that rather his soul is grieved with them; even as Lot, dwelling among the Sodomites, was vexed by hearing and seeing their unrighteous deeds. In a word, the children of God are rather sufferers of sin against their wills than actors of it with their wills: like men spiritually oppressed by the power of their enemy; for which they sigh and cry unto God. "Miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And in this sense it is that the apostle saith, "He who is born of God sinneth not" (1Jo 3:9). William Cowper.

Verse 3. They also do no iniquity. The blessedness of those who walk in the law: they do-- or have done-- no wickedness: but walk-- or have always walked-- in his ways. Throughout the Psalm it may be noticed that sometimes the present tense is employed indicating present action: sometimes the perfect to indicate past and present time: Ps 119:10-11,13-14,21, 51-61,101-102,131,145,147. The Speaker's Commentary, 1873.

Verse 3. They also do no iniquity. That is, they make not a trade and common practice thereof. Slip they do, through the infirmity of the flesh, and subtlety of Satan, and the allurements of the world; but they do not ordinarily and customably go forward in unlawful and sinful courses. In that the Psalmist setteth down this as a part (and not the least part neither) of blessedness, that they work none iniquity, which walk in his ways:the doctrine to be learned here is this, that it is a marvellous great prerogative to be freed from the bondage of sin. Richard Greenham.

Verse 3. They do no iniquity. All such as are renewed by grace, and reconciled to God by Christ Jesus; to these God imputeth no sin to condemnation, and in his account they do no iniquity. Notable is that which is said of David, "He kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, and did that only which was right in mine eyes" (1Ki 14:8). How can that be? We may trace David by his failings, they are upon record everywhere in the word; yet here a veil is drawn upon them; God laid them not to his charge. There is a double reason why their failings are not laid to their charge. Partly, because of their general state, they are in Christ, taken into favour through him, and "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ" (Ro 8:1), therefore particular errors and escapes do not alter their condition; which is not to be understood as if a man should not be humbled, and ask God pardon for his infirmities; no, for then they prove iniquities and they will lie upon record against him. It was a gross fancy of the Valentinians, who held that they were not defiled with sin, whatsoever they committed; though base and obscene persons, yet still they were as gold in the dirt. No, no, we are to recover ourselves by repentance, to sue out the favour of God. When David humbled himself, and had repented, then saith Nathan, "The Lord hath put away thy sin" (2Sa 12:13). Partly, too, because their bent and habitual inclination is to do otherwise. They set themselves to comply with God's will, to seek and serve the Lord, though they are clogged with many infirmities. A wicked man sinneth with deliberation and delight, his bent is to do evil, he makes "provision for lusts" (Ro 13:14), and "serves" them by a voluntary subjection (Tit 3:3). But those that are renewed by grace are not "debtors" to the flesh, they have taken another debt and obligation, which is to serve the Lord (Ro 8:12).

Partly, too, because their general course and way is to do otherwise. Everything works according to its form; the constant actions of nature are according to the kind. So the new creature, his constant operations are according to grace. A man is known by his custom, and the course of his endeavours shows what is his business. If a man be constantly, easily, frequently carried away to sin, it discovers the habit of his soul, and the temper of his heart. Meadows may be overflowed, but marsh ground is drowned with every return of the tide. A child of God may be occasionally carried away, and act contrary to the inclination of the new nature; but when men are drowned and overcome by the return of every temptation, it argues a habit of sin. And partly, because sin never carries sway completely, but it is opposed by dislikes and resistances of the new nature. The children of God make it their business to avoid all sin, by watching, praying, mortifying: "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue" (Ps 39:1), and thus there is a resistance of the sin. God hath planted graces in their hearts, the fear of his Majesty, that works a resistance; and therefore there is not a full allowance of what they do. This resistance sometimes is more strong, then the temptation is overcome: "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" (Ge 39:9). Sometimes it is more weak, and then sin carries it, though against the will of the holy man: "The evil which I hate, that do I" (Ro 7:15,18). It is the evil which they hate; they protest against it; they are like men which are oppressed by the power of the enemy. And then there is a remorse after the sin: David's heart smote him. It grieves and shames them that they do evil. Tenderness goes with the new nature: Peter sinned foully, but he went out and wept bitterly. Thomas Manton.

Verse 3. They that have mortified their sins live in the contrary graces. Hence it is that the Psalmist saith, that they work no iniquity, but walk in thy paths. First, they crucify all their sins, "they do no iniquity": secondly, as they do no iniquity, so they follow all the ways of God, contrary to that iniquity: as they give up all the ways of sin, so they take up all the ways of grace. It is a rule in divinity, that grace takes not away nature that is, grace comes not to take away a man's affections, but to take them up. William Fenner, 1600-1640.

Verse 3. They walk in his ways. It reproves those that rest in negatives. As it was said of a certain emperor, he was rather not vicious than virtuous. Many men, all their religion runs upon nots:"I am not as this publican" (Lu 18:11). That ground is naught, though it brings not forth briars and thorns, if it yields not good increase. Not only the unruly servant is cast into hell, that beat his fellow servant, that ate and drank with the drunken; but the idle servant that wrapped up his talent in a napkin. Meroz is cursed, not for opposing and fighting, but for not helping (Jud 5:23). Dives did not take away food from Lazarus, but he did not give him of his crumbs. Many will say, I set up no other gods; aye, but dost thou love, reverence, and obey the true God? For if not, thou dost fail in the first commandment. As to the second, thou sayest, I abhor idols; but dost thou delight in ordinances? I do not swear and rend the name of God by cursed oaths; aye, but dost thou glorify God, and honour him? I do not profane the Sabbath; but dost thou sanctify it? Thou dost not plough and dance; but thou art idle, and toyest away the Sabbath. Thou dost not wrong thy parents; but dost thou reverence them? Thou dost not murder; but dost thou do good to thy neighbour? Thou art no adulterer; but dost thou study temperance and a holy sobriety in all things? Thou art no slanderer; but art thou tender of thy neighbour's honour and credit, as of thy own? Usually men cut off half their bill, as the unjust steward bade his lord's debtor set down fifty when he owed a hundred. We do not think of sins of omission. If we are not drunkards, adulterers, and profane persons, we do not think what it is to omit respect to God, and reverence for his holy Majesty. Thomas Manton.

Verse 3. They walk in his ways. Not in those of his enemies, nor even in their own. Joseph Addison Alexander, 1860.

Verse 3. They walk in his ways. Habitually, constantly, characteristically. They are not merely honest, upright, and just in their dealings with men; but they walk in the ways of God; they are religious. Albert Barnes, 1798-1870.

Verse 4. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. It is not a matter adiaforov, and left to the discretion of men, either to hear, or to neglect sacred discourses, theological readings, and expositions of the Sacred Book; but God has commanded, and not commanded cursorily when speaking of another matter, but dam, earnestly and greatly he has commanded us to keep his precepts. There should be infixed in our mind the words found in De 6:6, "My words shall be in thy heart:" in Mt 17:5, "Hear ye him." in Joh 5:39, "Search the Scriptures." Above all things, students of theology should remember the Pauline rule in 1Ti 3:, "Give attention to reading." Solomon Gesner.

Verse 4. Thou hast commanded us, etc. Hath God enjoined us to observe his precepts so exceedingly carefully and diligently? Then let nothing draw us therefrom, no, not in the least circumstance; let us esteem nothing needless, frivolous, or superfluous, that we have a warrant for out of his word; nor count those too wise or precise that will stand resolutely upon the same: if the Lord require anything, though the world should gainsay it, and we be derided and abused for the doing of it, yet let us proceed still in the course of our obedience. Richard Greenham.

Verse 4. Diligently. For three causes should we keep the commandments of the Lord with diligence: first, because our adversary that seeks to snare us by the transgression of them is diligent in tempting, for he goes about, night and day, seeking to devour us; next, because we ourselves are weak and infirm, by the greater diligence have we need to take heed to ourselves; thirdly, because of the great loss we sustain by every vantage Satan gets over us; for we find by experience, that as a wound is sooner made than it is healed, so guiltiness of conscience is easily contracted, but not so easily done away. William Cowper.

Verse 4. Diligently. In this verse he reminds the reader how well he knew that this study of the divine law must necessarily be severe, (earnest), since God has commanded that it should be observed diligently; that is, with the profoundest study; as that which alone is good, and as everything is good which it commands. Antonio Brucioli, 1534.

Verse 4. The word translated "diligently, "doth signify in the original tongue wonderful much, so that the words go thus: "Thou hast commanded to keep thy precepts wonderful much." Richard Greenham.

Verses 4-5. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently, Ps 119:4; this is God's imperative. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Ps 119:5; this should be our optative. Thomas Adams, 1614.

Verses 4-5. It is very observable concerning David, that when he prayeth so earnestly, O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes, he premises this as the reason, Thou hast commanded us to keep thy statutes diligently, thereby intimating that the ground of his obedience to God's precepts was the stamp of divine authority enjoining him. To this purpose it is that he saith in Ps 119:94, I have sought thy precepts, thereby implying that what he sought in his obedience was the fulfilling of God's will. Indeed, that only and properly is obedience which is done intuitu voluntatis divinae, with a respect to and eye upon the divine will. As that is only a divine faith which believeth a truth, not because of human reason but divine revelation, so that only is a true obedience which conforms to the command, not because it may consist with any selfish ends, but because it carrieth in it an impression of Christ's authority. Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5. In tracing the connection of this verse with the preceding, we cannot forbear to remark how accurately the middle path is preserved, as keeping us at an equal: distance from the idea of self sufficiency to keep the Lord's statutes, and self justification in neglecting them. The first attempt to render spiritual obedience will quickly convince us of our utter helplessness. We might as soon create a world as create m our hearts one pulse of spiritual life. And yet our inability does not cancel our obligation. It is the weakness of a heart that "cannot be subject to the law of God, "for no other reason than because it is "carnal, "and therefore "enmity against God." Our inability is our sin, our guilt, our condemnation, and instead of excusing our condition, stops our mouth, and leaves us destitute of any plea of defence before God. Thus our obligation remains in full force. We are bound to obey the commands of God, whether we can or not. What, then, remains for us, but to return the mandate to heaven, accompanied with an earnest prayer, that the Lord would write upon our hearts those statutes to which he requires obedience in his word? Thou hast commanded us to keep thy statutes diligently. We acknowledge, Lord, our obligation, but we feel our impotency. Lord, help us; we look unto thee. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes. Charles Bridges, 1849.

Verse 5. O that, etc. In the former verse the prophet David observes the charge which God gives, and that is, that his commandments be diligently kept: here, then, he observes his own weakness and insufficiency to discharge that great duty, and therefore, as one by the spirit desirous to discharge it, and yet by the flesh not able to discharge it, he breaketh out into these words, O that my ways were directed, etc. Much like unto a child that being commanded to take up some great weight from the ground, is willing to do it, though not able to do it: or a sick patient advised to walk many turns in his chamber, finds a desire in his heart, though inability in his body to do that which he is directed unto. Richard Greenham.

Verse 5. O that my ways, etc. It is the use and duty of the people of God to turn precepts into prayers. That this is the practice of God's children appeareth: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God" (Jer 31:18). God had said, "Turn you, and you shall live, "and they ask it of God, "Turn us, "as he required it of them. It was Austin's prayer, Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis, "Give what thou requirest, and require what thou wilt." It is the duty of the saints; for, 1st, It suits with the Gospel covenant, where precepts and promises go hand in hand; where God giveth what he commandeth, and worketh all our works in us and for us. They are not conditions of the covenant only, but a part of it. What God hath required at our hands, that we may desire at his hands. God is no Pharaoh, to require brick where he giveth no straw. Lex jubet, gracia juvat. The articles of the new covenant are not only put into the form of precepts, but promises. The law giveth no strength to perform anything, but the Gospel offereth grace. Secondly, Because, by this means, the ends of God are fulfilled. Why doth God require what we cannot perform by our own strength? He doth it, (1.) To keep up his right. (2.) To convince us of our impotency, and that, upon a trial, without his grace we cannot do his work. (3.) That the creature may express his readiness to obey. (4.) To bring us to lie at his feet for grace. Thomas Manton.

Verse 5. O that, etc. The whole life of a good Christian is an holy desire, saith Augustine; and this is always seconded with endeavour, without the which, affection is like Rachel, beautiful, but barren. John Trapp.

Verse 5. O that my ways were directed, etc. The original word Nwk, kun, is sometimes rendered to establish, and, accordingly, it may seem as if the prophet were soliciting for himself the virtue of perseverance. I am rather inclined to understand it as signifying to direct for, although God is plainly instructing us in his law, the obtuseness of our understanding and the perversity of our hearts constantly need the direction of his Spirit. John Calvin.

Verse 6. Then shall I not be ashamed. No one likes to be ashamed or to blush:therefore all things which bring shame after them must be avoided: Ezr 9:6 Jer 3:25 Da 9:7,9. As the workman keeps his eye fixed on his pattern, and the scholar on the copy of his writing master; so the godly man ever and anon turns his eyes to the word of his God. Martin Geier.

Verse 6. There is a twofold shame; the shame of a guilty conscience; and the shame of a tender conscience. The one is the merit and fruit of sin; the other is an act of grace. This which is here spoken of is to be understood not of a holy self loathing, but a confounding shame. Thomas Manton.

Verse 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, etc. Then shall I have confidence both towards God and man, and mine own soul, when I can pronounce of myself that my obedience is impartial, and uniform, and universal, no secret sin reserved for my favour, no least commandment knowingly or willingly neglected by me. Henry Hammond.

Verse 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, etc. You ask, Why is he not ashamed who has respect unto all the commandments of God? I answer, the sense is, as if he had said, The commandments of God are so pure and excellent, that though thou shouldest regard the whole and each one of them most attentively, thou wouldest not find anything that would cause thee to blush. The laws of Lycurgus are praised; but they permitted theft. The statutes of Plato are praised; but they commended the community of wives. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:" Ps 19:7. It is a mirror, reflecting the beautiful light of the stars on him who looks into it. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 6. The blessing here spoken of is freedom from shame in looking unto all the commandments. If God hear prayer, and establish the soul in this habit of keeping the commandments, there will be yet this further blessing of being able to look unto every precept without shame. Many men can look at some commandments without shame. Turning to the ten commandments, the honest man feels no shame as he gazes on the eighth, the pure man is free from reproach as he reads the seventh, he who is reverent and hates blasphemy is not rebuked by the thought that he has violated the third, while the filial spirit rather delights in than shuns the fifth. So on with the remainder. Most men perhaps can look at some of the precepts with comparative freedom from reproof. But who can so look unto them all? Yet this, also, the godly heart aspires to. In this verse we find the Psalmist consciously anticipating the truth of a word in the New Testament: "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." Frederick G. Marchant.

Verse 6. Ashamed.

I can bear scorpion's stings, tread fields of fire,

In frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie;

Be tossed aloft through tracts of endless void,

But cannot live in shame. Joanna Baillie, 1762-1851.

Verse 6. When I have respect unto all thy commandments. Literally, "In my looking at all thy commandments." That is, in his regarding them; in his feeling that all were equally binding on him; and in having the consciousness that he had not intentionally neglected, violated, or disregarded any of them. There can be no true piety except where a man intends to keep ALL the commands of God. If he makes a selection among them, keeping this one or that one, as may be most convenient for him, or as may be most for his interest, or as may be most popular, it is full proof that he knows nothing of the nature of true religion. A child has no proper respect for a parent if he obeys him only as shall suit his whim or his convenience; and no man can be a pious man who does not purpose, in all honesty, to keep ALL, the commandments of God; to submit to his will in everything. Albert Barnes.

Verse 6. All thy commandments. There is the same reason for obedience to one command as another, -- God's authority, who is the Lawgiver (Jas 2:11); and therefore when men choose one duty and overlook others, they do not so much obey the will of God, as gratify their own humours and fancies, pleasing Him only so far as they can please themselves too; and this is not reasonable; we never yield him a "reasonable service, "but when it is universal. Edward Veal (1632-1708), in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 6. All thy commandments. A partial obedience will never satisfy a child of God. The exclusion of any commandment from its supreme regard in the heart is the brand of hypocrisy. Even Herod could "do many things, "and yet one evil way cherished, and therefore unforsaken, was sufficient to show the sovereign power of sin undisturbed within. Saul slew all the Amalekites but one; and that single exception in the path of universal obedience marked the unsoundness of his profession, cost him the loss of his throne, and brought him under the awful displeasure of his God. And thus the foot, or the hand, or the right eye, the corrupt unmortified members, bring the whole body to hell. Reserves are the canker of Christian sincerity. Charles Bridges.

Verse 6. Unto all thy commandments. Allow that any of God's commandments may be transgressed, and we shall soon have the whole decalogue set aside. Adam Clarke, 1760-1832.

Verse 6. Many will do some good, but are defective in other things, and usually in those which are most necessary. They cull out the easiest and cheapest parts of religion, such as do not contradict their lusts and interests. We can never have sound peace till we regard all. Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Shame is fear of a just reproof. This reproof is either from the supreme or the deputy judge. The supreme judge of all our actions is God. This should be our principal care, that we may not be ashamed before him at his coming, nor disapproved in the judgment. But there is a deputy judge which every man has in his own bosom. Our consciences do acquit or condemn us as we are partial or sincere in our duty to God, and much depends on that. 1Jo 3:20-21, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." Well, then, that our hearts may not reprove or reproach us, we should be complete in all the will of God. Alas, otherwise you will never have evidence of your sincerity. Thomas Manton.

Verse 6. Such is the mercy of God in Christ to his children, that lie accepts their weak endeavours, joined with sincerity and perseverance in his service, as if they were a full obedience... O, who would not serve such a Lord? You hear servants sometimes complain of their masters as so rigid and strict, that they can never please them; no, not when they do their utmost: but this cannot be charged upon God. Be but so faithful as to do thy best, and God is so gracious that he will pardon thy worst. David knew this gospel indulgence when he said, Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, when my eye is to all thy commandments. The traveller hath his eye on or towards the place he is going to, though he be as yet short of it; there he would be, and he is putting on all he can to reach it: so stands the saint's heart to all the commands of God; he presseth on to come nearer and nearer to full obedience; such a soul shall never be put to shame. William Gurnall, 1617-1679.

Verse 7. I will praise thee... when I shall have learned, etc. There is no way to please God entirely and sincerely until we have learned both to know and do his will. Practical praise is the praise God looks after. Thomas Manton.

Verse 7. I will praise thee. What is the matter for which he praises God? It is that he has been taught something of him and by him amongst men. To have learned any tongue, or science, from some school of philosophy, bindeth us to our alma mater. We praise those who can teach a dog, a horse, this or that; but for us ass colts to learn the will of God, how to walk pleasing before him, this should be acknowledged of us as a great mercy from God. Paul Bayne.

Verse 7. Praise thee...when I shall have learned, etc. But when doth David say that he will be thankful? Even when God shall teach him. Both the matter and the grace of thankfulness are from God. As he did with Abraham, he commanded him to worship by sacrifice, and at the same time gave him the sacrifice: so doth he with all his children; for he gives not only good things, for which they should thank him, but in like manner grace by which they are able to thank him. William Cowper.

Verse 7. When, I shall have learned. By learning he means his attaining not only to the knowledge of the word, but the practice of it. It is not a speculative light, or a bare notion of things: "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Joh 6:45). It is such a learning as the effect will necessarily follow, such a light and illumination as doth convert the soul, and frame our hearts and ways according to the will of God. For otherwise, if we get understanding of the word, nay, if we get it imprinted in our memories, it will do us no good without practice. The best of God's servants are but scholars and students in the knowledge and obedience of his word. For saith David, "When I shall have learned." The professors of the Christian religion were primitively called disciples or learners: to plhyov twn mayhtwn; "the multitude of the disciples" (Ac 6:2.) Thomas Manton.

Verse 7. Learned thy righteous judgments. We see here what David especially desired to learn, namely, the word and will of God: he would ever be a scholar in this school, and sought daily to ascend to the highest form; that learning to know, he might remember; remembering, might believe; believing, might delight; delighting might admire; admiring, might adore; adoring, might practise; and practising, might continue in the way of God's statutes. This learning is the old and true learning indeed, and he is best learned in this art, who turneth God's word into good works. Richard Greenham.

Verse 7. Judgments of thy righteousness are the decisions concerning right and wrong which give expression to and put in execution the righteousness of God. Franz Delitzsch.

Verse 8. This verse, being the last of this portion, is the result of his meditation concerning the utility and necessity of the keeping the law of God there take notice:

1. Of his resolution, I will keep thy statutes.

2. Of his prayer, O forsake me not utterly. It is his purpose to keep the law; yet because he is conscious to himself of many infirmities, he prays against desertion.

In the prayer more is intended than is expressed. "O forsake me not", he means, strengthen me in this work; and if thou shouldest desert me, yet but for a while, Lord, not for ever; if in part, not in whole. Four points we may observe hence:

1. That it is a great advantage to come to a resolution as to a course of godliness.

2. Those that resolve upon a course of obedience have need to fly to God's help.

3. Though we fly to God's help, yet sometimes God may withdraw, and seem to forsake us.

4. Though God seem to forsake us, and really doth so in part; yet we should pray that it may not be a total and utter desertion. Thomas Manton.

Verse 8 (with 7). I will keep thy statutes, etc. The resolution to "keep the Lord's statutes" is the natural result of having "learned his righteous judgments." And on this point David illustrates the inseparable and happy union of "simplicity" of dependence, and "godly sincerity" of obedience. Instantly upon forming his resolution, he recollects that the performance of it is beyond the power of human strength, and therefore the next moment he follows it with prayer: I will keep thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly. Charles Bridges.

Verse 8. I will. David setteth a personal example of holiness. If the king of Israel keep God's statutes, the people of Israel wilt be ashamed to neglect them. Caesar was wont to say, Princes must not say, Ite, go ye, without me; but, Venite, come ye, along with me. So said Gideon (Jud 5:17): "As ye see me do, so do ye." R. Greenham.

Verse 8. Forsake me not utterly. There is a total and a partial desertion. Those who are bent to obey God may for a while, and in some degree, be left to themselves. We cannot promise ourselves an utter immunity from desertion; but it is not total. We shall find for his great name's sake, "The Lord will not forsake his people" (1Sa 12:22), and, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). Not utterly, yet in part they may be forsaken. Elijah was forsaken, but not as Ahab: Peter was forsaken in part, but not as Judas, who was utterly forsaken, and made a prey to the Devil. David was forsaken to be humbled and bettered; but Saul was forsaken utterly to be destroyed. Saith Theophylact, God may forsake his people so as to shut out their prayers, (Ps 80:4), so as to interrupt the peace and joy of their heart, and abate their strength, so that their spiritual life may be much at a stand, and sin may break out, and they may fall foully; but they are not utterly forsaken. One way or other, God is still present; present in light sometimes when he is not present in strength, when he manifests the evil of their present condition, so as to make them mourn under it; and present in awakening their desires, though not in giving them enjoyment. As long as there is any esteem of God, he is not yet gone; there is some light and love yet left, manifested by our desires of communion with him. Thomas Manton.

Verse 8. Forsake me not utterly. The desertions of God's elect are first of all partial, that is, such as wherein God doth not wholly forsake them, but in some part. Secondly, temporary, that is, for some space of time, and never beyond the compass of this present life. "For a moment (saith the Lord in Esay) in mine anger I hid my face from thee for a little season, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." And to this purpose David, well acquainted with this matter, prayeth, "Forsake me not overlong." This sort of desertions, though it be but for a time, yet no part of a Christian man's life is free from them; and very often taking deep place in the heart of man, they are of long continuance. David continued in his dangerous fall about the space of a whole year before he was recovered. Luther confesseth of himself, that, after his conversion, he lay three years in desperation. Common observation in such like cases hath made record of even longer times of spiritual forsaking. Richard Greenham.

Verse 8. O forsake me not utterly. This prayer reads like the startled cry of one who was half afraid that he had been presumptuous in expressing the foregoing resolve. He desired to keep the divine statutes, and like Peter he vowed that he would do so; but remembering his own weakness, he recoils from his own venturesomeness, and feels that he must pray. I have made a solemn vow, but what if I have uttered it in my own strength? What if God should leave me to myself? He is filled with terror at the thought. He breaks out with an "O." He implores and beseeches the Lord not to test him by leaving him even for an instant entirely to himself. To be forsaken of God is the worst ill that the most melancholy saint ever dreams of. Thank God, it will never fall to our lot; for no promise can be more express than that which saith, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." This promise does not prevent our praying, but excites us to it. Because God will not forsake his own, therefore do we cry to him in the agony of our feebleness, "O forsake me not utterly." C. H. S.

The eight verses alphabetically arranged:

9. By what means shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

10. By day and by night have I sought thee with my whole heart: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11. By thy grace I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

13. By the words of my lips will I declare all the judgments of thy mouth.

14. By far more than in all riches I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies.

15. By thy help I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16. By thy grace I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Theodore Kuebler.

Whole eight verses, 9-16. Every verse in the section begins with b, a house. The subject of the section is, The Law of Jehovah purifying the Life. Key word, xkz (zacah), to be pure, to make pure, to cleanse. F. G. Marchant.

Verse 9. Whole verse. In this passage there is,

1. A question.

2. An answer given.

In the question, there is the person spoken of, "a young man, "and his work, "Wherewithal shall he cleanse his way?" In this question there are several things supposed.

1. That we are from the birth polluted with sin; for we must be cleansed. It is not direct "his way, "but "cleanse his way."

2. That we should be very early and betimes sensible of this evil; for the question is propounded concerning the young man.

3. That we should earnestly seek for a remedy, how to dry up the issue of sin that runneth upon us. All this is to be supposed.

That which is enquired after is, What remedy there is against it? What course is to be taken? So that the sum of the question is this: How shall a man that is impure, and naturally defiled with sin, be made able, as soon as he cometh to the use of reason, to purge out that natural corruption, and live a holy and pure life to God? The answer is given: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Where two things are to be observed: 1. The remedy. 2. The manner how it is applied and made use of.

1. The remedy is the word; by way of address to God, called "Thy word"; because, if God had not given direction about it, we should have been at an utter loss.

2. The manner how it is applied and made use of, "by taking heed thereto, "etc.; by studying and endeavouring a holy conformity to God's will. Thomas Manton.

Verse 9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? etc. Aristotle, that great dictator in philosophy, despaired of achieving so great an enterprise as the rendering a young man capable of his hyika akroamata, "his grave and severe lectures of morality"; for that age is light and foolish, yet headstrong and untractable. Now, take a young man all in the heat and boiling of his blood, in the highest fermentation of his youthful lusts; and, at all these disadvantages, let him enter that great school of the Holy Spirit, the divine Scripture, and commit himself to the conduct of those blessed oracles; and he shall effectually be convinced, by his own experience, of the incredible virtue, the vast and mighty power, of God's word, in the success it hath upon him, and in his daily progression and advances in heavenly wisdom. John Gibbon (about 1660) in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 9. A young man. A prominent place-- one of the twenty-two parts-- is assigned to young men in the 119th Psalm. It is meet that it should be so. Youth is the season of impression and improvement, young men are the future props of society, and the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, must begin in youth. The strength, the aspirations, the unmarred expectations of youth, are in requisition for the world; O that they may be consecrated to God. John Stephen, in "The Utterances of the 119 Psalm, "1861.

Verse 9. For young man, in the Hebrew the word is reg naar, i.e., "shaken off"; that is to say, from the milder and more tender care of his parents. Thus Mercerus and Savailerius. Secondly, naar may be rendered "shaking off"; that is to say, the yoke, for a young man begins to cast off the maternal, and frequently the paternal, yoke. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 9. Cleanse his way. The expression does not absolutely convey the impression that the given young man is in a corrupt and discreditable way which requires cleansing, though this be true of all men originally: Isa 53:6. That which follows makes known that such could not be the case with this young man. The very inquiry shows that his heart is not in a corrupt state. Desire is present, direction is required. The inquiry is-- How shall a young man make a clean way -- a pure line of conduct-- through this defiling world? It is a question, I doubt not, of great anxiety to every convert whose mind is awakened to a sense of sin-- how he shall keep clear of the sin, avoid the loose company, and rid himself of the wicked pleasures and practices of this enslaving world. And as he moves on in the line of integrity-- many temptations coming in his way, and much inward corruption rising up to control him-- how often will the same anxious inquiry arise: Ro 7:24. It is only in a false estimate of one's own strength that any can think otherwise, and the spirit of such false estimate will be brought low. How felt you, my young friends, who have been brought to Christ, in the day of your resolving to be his? But for all such anxiety there seems to be an answer in the text.

By taking heed thereto according to thy word. It is not that young men in our day require information: they require the inclination. In the gracious young man there are both, and the word that began feeds the proper motives. The awful threatenings and the sweet encouragements both more him in the right direction. The answer furnished to this anxious inquiry is sufficiently plain and practical. He is directed to the word of God for all direction, and we might say, for all promised assistance. Still the matter presented in this light does not appear to me to bring out the full import of the passage. The inquiry to me would seem to extend over the whole verse. (This opinion is confirmed by the quotation which follows from Cowles.) There is required the cleansing that his way be according to the Divine Word. The enquiry is of the most enlarged comprehension, and will be made only by one who can say that he has been honestly putting himself in the way, as the young man in Ps 119:10-11; and it can be answered only by the heart that takes in all the strength provided by the blessed God, as is expressed here in Ps 119:12. The Psalmist makes the inquiry, he shows how earnestly he had sought to be in the right way, and immediately he finds all his strength in God. Thus he declares how he has been enabled to do rightly, and how he will do rightly in the future. John Stephen.

Verse 9. Instead of question and answer both in this one verse, the Hebrew demands the construction with question only, leaving the answer to be inferred from the drift of the entire Psalm-- thus: Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way to keep it according to thy word? This translation gives precisely the force of the last clause. Hebrew punctuation lacks the interrogation point, so that we have no other clue but the form of the sentence and the sense by which to decide where the question ends. Henry Cowles, 1872.

Verse 9. His way. xra, orach, which we translate way here, signifies a track, a rut, such as is made by the wheel of a cart or chariot. A young sinner has no broad beaten path; he has his private ways of offence, his secret pollutions;and how shall he be cleansed from these? how can he be saved from what will destroy mind, body, and soul? Let him hear what follows; the description is from God.

1. He is to consider that his way is impure;and how abominable this must make him appear in the sight of God.

2. He must examine it according to God's word, and carefully hear what God has said concerning him and it.

3. He must take heed to it, rmvl, lishmor, to keep, guard, and preserve his way -- his general course of life, from all defilement. Adam Clarke.

Verse 9. By taking heed, etc. I think the words may be better rendered and supplied thus, by observing what is according to thy word;which shows how a sinner is to be cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, and be clean through his word; and also how and by whom the work of sanctification is wrought in the heart, even by the Spirit of God, by means of the word, and what is the rule of a man's walk and conversation: he will find the word of God to be profitable, to inform in the doctrines of justification and pardon, to acquaint him with the nature of regeneration and sanctification; and for the correction and amendment of his life and manners, and for his instruction in every branch of manners: 2Ti 3:16. John Gill, 1697-1771.

Verse 9. By taking heed. There is an especial necessity for this "Take heed, "because of the proneness of a young man to thoughtlessness, carelessness, presumption, self confidence. There is an especial necessity for "taking heed, "because of the difficulty of the way. "Look well to thy goings"; it is a narrow path. "Look well to thy goings"; it is a new path. "Look well to thy goings"; it is a slippery path. "Look well to thy goings"; it is an eventful path. James Harrington Evans, 1785-1849.

Verse 9. According to thy word. God's word is the glass which discovereth all spiritual deformity, and also the water and soap which washes and scours it away. Paul Bayne.

Verse 9. According to thy word. I do not say that there are no other guides, no other fences. I do not say that conscience is worth nothing, and conscience in youth is especially sensitive and tender; I do not say that prayer is not a most valuable fence, but prayer without taking heed is only another name for presumption: prayer and carelessness can never walk hand in hand together; and I therefore say that there is no fence nor guard that can so effectually keep out every enemy as prayerful reading of the word of God, bringing every solicitation from the world or from companions, every suggestion from our own hearts and passions, to the test of God's word: -- What says the Bible? The answer of the Bible, with the teaching and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, will in all the intricacies of our road be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 9. Thy word. The word is the only weapon (like Goliath's sword, none to equal this), for the hewing down and cutting off of this stubborn enemy, our lusts. The word of God can master our lusts when they are in their greatest pride: if ever lust rageth at one time more than another, it is when youthful blood boils in our veins. Youth is giddy, and his lust is hot and impetuous: his sun is climbing higher still, and he thinks it is a great while to night; so that it must be a strong arm that brings a young man off his lusts, who hath his palate at best advantage to taste sensual pleasure. The rigour of his strength affords him more of the delights of the flesh than crippled age can expect, and he is farther from the fear of death's gunshot, as he thinks, than old men who are upon the very brink of the grave, and carry the scent of the earth about them, into which they are suddenly to be resolved. Well, let the word of God meet this young gallant in all his bravery, with his feast of sensual delights before him, and but whisper a few syllables in his car, give his conscience but a prick with the point of its sword, and it shall make him fly in as great haste from them all, as Absalom's brethren did from the feast when they saw Amnon their brother murdered at the table. When David would give the young man a receipt to cure him of his lusts, how he may cleanse his whole course and way, he bids him only wash in the waters of the word of God. William Gumall.

Verse 9. The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying. John Flavel, 1627-1691.

Verse 10. With my whole heart have I sought thee. There are very few of us that are able to say with the prophet David that we have sought God with our whole heart; to wit, with such integrity and pureness that we have not turned away from that mark as from the most principal thing of our salvation. John Calvin.

Verse 10. With my whole heart have I sought thee. Sincerity is in every expression; the heart is open before God. The young man can so speak to the Searcher of hearts... Let us consider the directness of this kind of converse with God. We use round about expressions in drawing nigh to God. We say, With my whole heart would I seek thee. We are afraid to be direct... See how decided in his conscious acting is the young man before you, how open and confiding he is, and such you will find to be the characteristic of his pious mind throughout the varied expressions unfolded in this Psalm. Here he declares to the Omniscient One that he had sought him with all his heart. He desired to realize God in everything. John Stephen.

Verse 10 (first clause). God alone sees the heart; the heart alone sees God. John Donne, 1573-1631.

Verse 10. O let me not wander from thy commandments. David after he had protested that he sought God with his whole heart, besought God that he would not suffer him to decline from his commandments. Hereby let us see what great need we have to call upon God, to the end he may hold us with a mighty strong hand. Yea, and though he hath already mightily put to his healing hand, and we also know that he hath bestowed upon us great and manifest graces; yet this is not all: for there are so many vices and imperfections in our nature, and we are so feeble and weak that we have very great need daily to pray unto him, yea, and that more and more, that he will not suffer us to decline from his commandments. John Calvin.

Verse 10. The more experience a man hath in the ways of God, the more sensible is he of his own readiness to wander insensibly, by ignorance and inadvertency, from the ways of God; but the young soldier dares run hazards, ride into his adversary's camp, and talk with temptation, being confident he cannot easily go wrong; he is not so much in fear as David who here cries, O let me not wander. David Dickson, 1583-1662.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. There laid up in the heart the word has effect. When young men only read the letter of the Book, the word of promise and instruction is deprived of much of its power. Neither will the laying of it up in the mere memory avail. The word must be known and prized, and laid up in the heart; it must occupy the affection as well as the understanding; the whole mind requires to be impregnated with the word of God. Revealed things require to be seen. Then the word of God in the heart-- the threatenings, the promises, the excellencies of God's word-- and God himself realized, the young man would be inwardly fortified; the understanding enlightened, conscience quickened-- he would not sin against his God. John Stephen.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. In proportion as the word of the King is present in the heart, "there is power" against sin (Ec 8:4). Let us use this means of absolute power more, and more life and more holiness will be ours. Frances Ridley Havergal, 1836-1879.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. It is fit that the word, being "more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold, "a peerless pearl, should not be laid up in the porter's lodge only-- the outward ear; but even in the cabinet of the mind. Dean Boys, quoted by James Ford.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. There is great difference between Christians and worldlings. The worldling hath his treasures in jewels without him; the Christian hath them within. Neither indeed is there any receptacle wherein to receive and keep the word of consolation but the heart only. If thou have it in thy mouth only, it shall be taken from thee; if thou have it in thy book only, Thou shalt miss it when thou hast most to do with it; but if thou lay it up in thy heart, as Mary did the words of the angel, no enemy shall ever be able to take it from thee, and thou shalt find it's comfortable treasure in time of thy need. William Cowper.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. This saying, to hide, imports that David studied not to be ambitious to set forth himself and to make a glorious show before men; but that he had God for a witness of that secret desire which was within him. He never looked to worldly creatures; but being content that he had so great a treasure, he knew full well that God who had given it him would so surely and safely guard it, as that it should not be laid open to Satan to be taken away. Saint Paul also declareth unto us (1Ti 1:19) that the chest wherein this treasure must be hid is a good conscience. For it is said, that many being void of this good conscience have lost also their faith, and have been robbed thereof. As if a man should forsake his goods and put them in hazard, without shutting a door, it were an easy matter for thieves to come in and to rob and spoil him of all; even so, if we leave at random to Satan the treasures which God hath given us in his word, without it be hidden in this good conscience, and in the very bottom of, our heart as David here speaketh, we shall be spoiled thereof. John Calvin.

Verse 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. -- Remembered, approved, delighted in it. William Nicholson on (1671), in "David's Harp Strung and Tuned."

Verse 11. Thy word. The saying, thy oracle; any communication from God to the soul, whether promise, or command, or answer. It means a direct and distinct message, while "word" is more general, and applies to the whole revelation. This is the ninth of the ten words referring to the revelation of God in this Psalm. James G. Murphy, 1875.

Verse 11. In my heart. Bernard observes, bodily bread in the cupboard may he eaten of mice, or moulder and waste: but when it is taken down into the body, it is free from such danger. If God enable thee to take thy soul food into thine heart, it is free from all hazards. George Swinnock, 1627-1673.

Verse 11. That I might not sin against thee. Among many excellent virtues of the word of God, this is one: that if we keep it in our heart, it keeps us from sin, which is against God and against ourselves. We may mark it by experience, that the word is first stolen either out of the mind of man, and the remembrance of it is away; or at least out of the affection of man; so that the reverence of it is gone, before that a man can be drawn to the committing of a sin. So long as Eve kept by faith the word of the Lord, she resisted Satan; but from the time she doubted of that, which God made most certain by his word, at once she was snared. William Cowper.

Verse 12. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. This verse contains a prayer, with the reason of the prayer. The prayer is, "Teach me thy statutes"; the reason, moving him to seek this, ariseth of a consideration of that infinite good which is in God. He is a blessed God, the fountain of all felicity, without whom no welfare or happiness can be to the creature. And for this cause David earnestly desiring to be in fellowship and communion with God, which he knows none can attain unto unless he be taught of God to know God's way and walk in it; therefore, I say, he prayeth the more earnestly that the Lord would teach him his statutes. Oh that we also could wisely consider this, that our felicity stands in fellowship with God. William Cowper.

Verse 12. In this verse we have two things, 1. An acknowledgment of God's blessedness, Blessed art thou, O LORD; i.e., being possessed of all fulness, thou hast an infinite complacency in the enjoyment of thyself; and thou art he alone in the enjoyment of whom I can be blessed and happy; and thou art willing and ready to give out of thy fulness, so that thou art the fountain of blessedness to thy creatures. 2. A request or petition, Teach me thy statutes; q.d., seeing thou hast all fulness in thyself, and art sufficient to thy own blessedness; surely thou hast enough for me. There is enough to content thyself, therefore enough to satisfy me. This encourages me in my address. Again, -- Teach me that I may know wherein to seek my blessedness and happiness, even in thy blessed self; and that I may know how to come by the enjoyment of thee, so that I may be blessed in thee. Further, -- Thou art blessed originally, the Fountain of all blessing; thy blessedness is an everlasting fountain, a full fountain; always pouring out blessedness: O, let me have this blessing from thee, this drop from the fountain. William Wisheart, in "Theologia, or, Discourses of God, "1716.

Verse 12. Since God is blessed, we cannot but desire to learn his ways. If we see any earthly being happy, we have a great desire to learn out his course, as thinking by it we might be happy also. Every one would sail with that man's wind who prospereth; though in earthly things it holdeth not alway: yet a blessed God cannot by any way of his bring to other than blessedness. Thus, he who is blessedness itself, he will be ready to communicate his ways to other: the most excellent things are most communicative. Paul Bayne.

Verse 12. Teach me. He had Nathan, he had priests to instruct him, himself was a prophet; but all their teaching was nothing without God's blessing, and therefore he prays, "Teach me." William Nicholson.

Verse 12. Teach me. These words convey more than the simple imparting of knowledge, for he said before he had such, when he said he hid God's words in his heart; and in Ps 119:7 he said he "had learned the judgments of his justice": it includes grace to observe his law. Robert Bellarmine, 1542-1621.

Verse 12. Teach me. If this were practised now, to join prayer with hearing, that when we offer ourselves to be taught of men, we would there with send up prayer to God, before preaching, in time of preaching and after preaching, we would soon prove more learned and religious than we are. William Cowper.

Verse 12. Teach me thy statutes. Whoever reads this Psalm with attention must observe in it one great characteristic, and that is, how decisive are its statements that in keeping the commandments of God nothing can be done by human strength; but that it is he who must create the will for the performance of such duty. The Psalmist entreats the Lord to open his eyes that he may behold the wondrous things of the law, to teach him his statutes, to remove from him the way of lying, to incline his heart unto his testimonies, and not to covetousness, to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, and not to take the word of truth utterly out of his mouth. Each of these petitions shows how deeply impressed he was of his entire helplessness as regarded himself, and how completely dependent upon God he felt himself for any advancement he could hope to make in the knowledge of the truth. All his studies in the divine law, all his aspirations after holiness of life, he was well assured could never meet with any measure of success, except by the grace of God preventing and cooperating, implanting in him a right desire, and acting as an infallible guide, whereby alone he would be enabled to arrive at the propel sense of Holy Scripture, as welt as to correct principles of action in his daily walk before God and man. George Phillips, 1846.

Verse 12. Teach me thy statutes. If it be asked wily the Psalmist entreats to be taught, when he has just before been declaring his knowledge, the answer is that he seeks instruction as to the practical working of those principles which he has learnt theoretically. Michael Ayguan (1416), in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 13. With my lips have I declared, etc. Above all, be careful to talk of that to others which you do daily learn yourself, and out of the abundance of your heart speak of good things unto men. Richard Greenham.

Verse 13. Having hid the purifying word in his heart, the Psalmist will declare it with his lips;and as it is so pure throughout, he will declare all in it, without exception. When the fountain of the heart is purified, the streams from the lips will be pure also. The declaring lips of the Psalmist are here placed in antithesis to the mouth of Jehovah, by which the judgments were originally pronounced. F. G. Marchant.

Verse 13. As the consciousness of having communicated our knowledge and our spiritual gifts is a means of encouragement to seek a greater measure, so it is an evidence of the sincerity and fruitfulness of what knowledge we have: Teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. David Dickson.

Verse 13. With my lips, etc. The tongue is a most excellent member of the body, being well used to the glory of God and the edification of others; and yet it cannot pronounce without help of the lips. The Lord hath made the body of man with such marvellous wisdom, that no member of it can say to another, I have no need of thee; but such is man's dulness, that he observes not how useful unto him is the smallest member in the body, till it be taken from him. If our lips were clasped for a time, and our tongue thus shut up, we would esteem it a great mercy to have it loosed again; as that cripple, when he found the use of his feet, leaped for joy and glorified God. William Cowper.

Verse 13. Declared all the judgments. He says in another place (Ps 36:6), "Thy judgments are like a great deep." As the apostle says (Ro 11:33-34), "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" If the judgments are unsearchable, how then says the prophet, "I have declared all the judgments of thy mouth"? We answer, -- peradventure there are judgments of God which are not the judgments of his mouth, but of his heart and hand only. We make a distinction, for we have no fear that the sacred Scripture weakens itself by contradictions. It has not said, The judgments of his mouth are a great deep; but "Thy judgments." Neither has the apostle said, The unsearchable judgments of his mouth: but "His unsearchable judgments." We may regard the judgments of God, then, as those hidden ones which he has not revealed to us; but the judgments of his mouth, those which he has made known, and has spoken by the mouth of the prophets. Ambrose, 340-397.

Verse 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, etc. The Psalmist saith not only, "I have rejoiced in thy testimonies, "but, "in the way of thy testimonies." Way is one of the words by which the law is expressed. God's laws are ways that lead us to God; and so it may be taken here, "the way which thy testimonies point out, and call me unto"; or else his own practice, as a man's course is called his way; his delight was not in speculation or talk, but in obedience and practice: "in the way of thy testimonies." He tells us the degree of his joy, as much as in all riches: "as much, "not to show the equality of these things, as if we should have the same affection for the world as for the word of God; but "as much, "because we have no higher comparison. This is that which worldlings dote upon, and delight in; now as much as they rejoice in worldly possessions, so much do I rejoice in the way of thy testimonies. For I suppose David doth not compare his own delight in the word, with his own delight in wealth; but his own choice and delight, with the delight and choice of others. If he had spoken of himself both in the one respect and in the other, the expression was very high. David who was called to a crown, and in a capacity of enjoying much in the world, gold, silver, land, goods, largeness of territory, and a compound of all that which all men jointly, and all men severally do possess; yet was more pleased in the holiness of God's ways, than in all the world: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mr 8:36). Thomas Manton.

Verse 14. The way of thy testimonies. The testimony of God is his word, for it testifies his will; the "way" of his testimony is the practice of his word, and doing of that which he hath declared to be his will, and wherein he hath promised to show us his love. David found not this sweetness in hearing, reading, and professing the word only; but in practising of it: and in very deed, the only cause why we find not the comfort that is in the word of God is that we practise it not by walking in the way thereof. It is true, at the first it is bitter to nature, which loves carnal liberty, to render itself as captive to the word: laboriosa virtutis via, and much pains must be taken before the heart be subdued; but when it is once begun, it renders such joy as abundantly recompenses all the former labour and grief. William Cowper.

Verse 14. Riches are acquired with difficulty, enjoyed with trembling, and lost with bitterness. Bernard, 1091-1157.

Verse 14. A poor, good woman said, in time of persecution, when they took away the Christian's Bibles, "I cannot part with my Bible; I know not how to live without it." When a gracious soul has heard a profitable sermon, he says, "Methinks it does me good at heart; it is the greatest nourishment I have": I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. Oliver Heywood, 1629-1702.

Verse 15. I will meditate in thy precepts, etc. All along David had shown what he had done; now, what he will do. Ps 119:10, "I have sought"; Ps 119:11, "I have hid"; Ps 119:12, "I have declared"; Ps 119:14, "I have rejoiced." Now in the two following verses he doth engage himself to set his mark towards God for time to come. "I will meditate in thy precepts, "etc. We do not rest upon anything already done and past, but continue the same diligence unto the end. Here is David's hearty resolution and purpose, to go on for time to come. Many will say, Thus I have done when I was young, or had more leisure and rest; in that I have meditated and conferred. You must continue still in a holy course. To begin to build, and leave unfinished, is an argument of folly. Thomas Manton.

Verse 15. I will meditate in thy precepts. Not only of thy precepts or concerning them, but in them, while engaged in doing them. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 15. I will. See this "I will" repeated again and again (Ps 119:48,78). In meditation it is hard (sometimes at least) to take off our thoughts from the pre-engagements of other subjects, and apply them to the duty. But it is harder to become duly serious in acting in it, harder yet to dive and ponder; and hardest of all to continue in an abode of thoughts, and dwell long enough, and after views to make reviews, to react the same thinking, to taste things over and over, when the freshness and newness is past, when by long thinking the things before us seem old. We are ready to grow dead and flat in a performance except we stir up ourselves often in it. It is hard to hold on and hold up, unless we hold up a wakeful eye, a warm affection, a strong and quick repeated resolution; yea, and without often lifting up the soul to Christ for fresh recruits of strength to hold on. David, that so excellent artist in this way, saith he will meditate, he often saith he will. Doubtless, he not only said "I will" when he was to make his entrance into this hard work; but likewise for continuance in it, to keep up his heart from flagging, till he well ended his work. It is not the digging into the golden mine, but the digging long, that finds and fetches up the treasure. It is not the diving into the sea, but staying longer, that gets the greater quantity of pearls. To draw out the golden thread of meditation to its due length till the spiritual ends be attained, this is a rare and happy attainment. Nathanael Ranew, 1670.

Verse 15. I will meditate. How much our "rejoicing in the testimonies" of God would be increased by a more habitual meditation upon them! This is, however, a resolution which the carnal mind can never be brought to make, and to which the renewed mind through remaining depravity is often sadly reluctant. But it is a blessed employment, and will repay a thousand fold the difficulty of engaging the too backward heart in the duty. Charles Bridges.

Verse 15. Meditation is of that happy influence, it makes the mind wise, the affections warm, the soul fat and flourishing, and the conversation greatly fruitful. Nathanael Ranew.

Verse 15. Meditate in, thy precepts. Study the Scriptures. If a famous man do but write an excellent book, O how we do long to see it! Or suppose I could tell you that there is in France or Germany a book that God himself wrote, I am confident men may draw all the money out of your purses to get that book. You have it by you: O that you would study it! When the eunuch was riding in his chariot, he was studying the prophet Isaiah. He was not angry when Philip came and, as we would have thought, asked him a bold question: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Ac 8:27-30); he was glad of it. One great end of the year of release was, that the law might be read (De 31:9-13). It is the wisdom of God that speaks in the Scripture (Lu 11:49); therefore, whatever else you mind, really and carefully study the Bible. Samuel Jacomb (1629-1659), in The Morning Exercises.

Verse 15. I will have respect. The one is the fruit of the other: "I will meditate"; and then, "I will have respect." Meditation is in order to practice; and if it be right, it will beget a respect to the ways of God. We do not meditate that we may rest in contemplation, but in order to obedience: "Thou shalt meditate in the book of the law day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein" (Jos 1:8). Thomas Manton.

Verse 15. And have respect unto thy ways. -- As an archer hath to his mark. John Trapp.

Verse 15. Respect unto thy ways. It is not without a peculiar pleasure, when travelling, that we contemplate the splendid buildings, the gardens, the fortifications, or the fine art galleries. But what are all these sights to the contemplation of the ways of God, which he himself has traversed, or has marked out for man? And what practical need there is that we consider the way, for else we shall be as a sleepy coachman, not carefully observant of the road, who may soon upset himself and his passengers. Martin Geier.

Verse 15. Thy ways. David's second internal action concerning the word is consideration; where mark well, how by a most proper speech he calls the word of God the ways of God; partly, because by it God comes near unto men, revealing himself to them, who otherwise could not be known of them; for he dwells in light inaccessible; and partly, because the word is the way which leads men to God. So then, because by it God cometh down to men, and by it men go up unto God, and know how to get access to him, therefore is his word called his way. William Cowper.

Verse 15-16. The two last verses of this section present to us a threefold internal action of David's soul toward the word of God; first, meditation; secondly, consideration; thirdly, delectation: every one of these proceeds from another, and they mutually strengthen one another. Meditation brings the word to the mind; consideration views it and looks at length into it, whereof is bred delectation. That which comes into the mind, were it never so good, if it be not considered, goes as it came, leaving neither instruction nor joy; but being once presented by meditation, if it be pondered by consideration, then it breeds delectation, which is the perfection of godliness, in regard of the internal action. William Cowper.

Verse 16. I will delight myself, etc. He protested before that he had great delight in the testimonies of God: now he saith he will still delight in them. A man truly godly, the more good he doth, the more he desires, delights and resolves to do. Temporisers, on the contrary, who have but a show of godliness, and the love of it is not rooted in their heart, how soon are they weary of well doing! If they have done any small external duty of religion, they rest as if they were fully satisfied, and there needed no more good to be done by them. True religion is known by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, by perseverance in well doing, and an earnest desire to do more. But to this he adds that he will not forget the word. The graces of the Spirit do every one fortify and strengthen another; for ye see meditation helps consideration. Who can consider of that whereof he thinks not? Consideration again breeds delectation; and as here ye see, delectation strengthens memory: because he delights in the word he will not forget the word; and memory again renews meditation. Thus every grace of the Spirit helps another; and by the contrary, one of them neglected, works a wonderful decay of the remnant. William Cowper.

Verse 16. I will delight myself. When righteousness, from a matter of constraint becomes a matter of choice, it instantly changes its whole nature, and rises to a higher moral rank than before. The same God whom it is impossible to move by law's authority, moves of his own proper and original inclination in the very path of the law's righteousness. And so, we, in proportion as we are like unto God, are alive to the virtues of that same law, to the terror of whose severities we are altogether dead. We are no longer under a schoolmaster; but obedience is changed from a thing of force into a thing of freeness. It is moulded to a higher state and character than before. We are not driven to it by the God of authority. We are drawn to it by the regards of a now willing heart to all moral and all spiritual excellence. Thomas Chalmers, 1780-1847.

Verse 16. Meditation must not be a dull, sad, and dispirited thing: not a driving like the chariots of the Egyptians when their wheels were taken off, but like the chariots of Amminadib (So 6:12) that ran swiftly. So let us pray, -- Lord, in meditation make me like the chariots of Amminadib, that my swift running may evidence my delight in meditating. Holy David makes delight such an ingredient or assistant here, that sometimes he calls the exercise of meditation by the name of "delight, "speaking in the foregoing verse of this meditation, "I will meditate of thy precepts, "and in Ps 119:16, I will delight myself in thy statutes; which is the same with meditation, only with superadding the excellent qualification due meditation should have; the name of delight is given to meditation because of its noble concomitant-- holy joy and satisfaction. Nathanael Ranew.

Verse 16. Delight myself. The word is very emphatic: evetva, eshtaasha, I will skip about and jump for joy. Adam Clarke.

Verse 16. I will not forget. Delight prevents forgetfulness: the mind will run upon that which the heart delighteth in; and the heart is where the treasure is (Mt 6:21). Worldly men that are intent upon carnal interests, forget the word, because it is not their delight. If anything displeases us, we are glad if we can forget it; it is some release from an inconvenience, to take off our thoughts from it; but it doubles the contentment of a thing that we are delighted in, to remember it, and call it to mind. In the outward school, if a scholar by his own averseness from learning, or by the severity and imprudence of his master, hath no delight in his book, all that he learns is lost and forgotten, it goeth in at one ear, and out at the other: but this is the true art of memory, to cause them to delight in what they learn. Such instructions as we take in with sweetness, they stick with us, and run in our minds night and day. So saith David here, I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Thomas Manton.

Verse 16. Forget. I never yet heard of a covetous old man, who had forgotten where he had buried his treasure. Cicero de Senectute.

Verse 17. Deal bountifully with thy servant, etc. These words might be-- Render unto thy servant, or upon thy servant. A deep signification seems to be here involved. The holy man will take the responsibility of being dealt with, not certainly as a mere sinful man, but as a man placing himself in the way appointed for reconciliation. Such we find to be the actual case, as you read in Ps 119:16, in the Part immediately preceding-- "I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word." Now, the statutes of the Lord referred preeminently to the sacrifices for sin, and the cleansing for purifications that were prescribed in the Law. You have to conceive of the man of God as being in the midst of the Levitical ritual, for which you find him making all preparations: 1 Chronicles 22-24. Placing himself, therefore, upon these, he would pray the Lord to deal with him according to them; or, as we, in New Testament language, would say, -- placing himself on the great atonement, the believer would pray the Lord to deal with him according to his standing in Christ, which would be in graciousness or bounty. For if the Lord be just to condemn without the atonement, he is also just to pardon through the atonement; yea, he is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. John Stephen.

Verse 17. Deal bountifully, etc. O Lord, I am constantly resolved to obey and adhere to thy known will all the days of my life: O make me those gracious returns which thou hast promised to all such. Henry Hammond.

Verse 17. Deal bountifully... that I may keep thy word, etc. A faithful servant should count his by past service richly rewarded by being employed yet more in further service, as this prayer teacheth; for David entreats that he may live and keep God's word. David Dickson.

Verse 17. Bountifully. And indeed, remembering what a poor, weak, empty, and helpless creature the most experienced believer is in himself, it is not to be conceived that anything short of a bountiful supply of grace can answer the emergency. Charles Bridges.

Verse 17. Thy servant. That he styles himself so frequently the servant of God notes the reverent estimation he had of his God, in that he accounts it more honourable to be called the servant of God who was above him than the king of a mighty, ancient, and most famous people that were under him. And indeed, since the angels are styled his ministers, shall men think it a shame to serve him? and especially since he of his goodness hath made them our servants, "ministering spirits" to us? Should we not joyfully serve him who hath made all his creatures to serve us, and exempted us from the service of all other, and hath only bound us to serve himself? William Cowper.

Verse 17. That I may live. As a man must "live" in order to work, the first petition is, that God would "deal with his servant, "according to the measure of grace and mercy, enabling him to "live" the life of faith, and strengthening him by the Spirit of might in the inner man. George Horne, 1730-1792.

Verse 17. That I may live, and keep thy word. David joins here two together, which whosoever disjoins cannot be blessed. He desires to live; but so to live that he may keep God's word. To a reprobate man, who lives a rebel to his Maker, it had been good (as our Saviour said of Judas) that he had never been born. The shorter his life is, the fewer are his sins and the smaller his judgments. But to an elect man, life is a great benefit; for by it he goes from election to glorification, by the way of sanctification. The longer he lives, the more good he doth, to the glory of God, the edification of others, and confirmation of his own salvation; making it sure to himself by wrestling and victory in temptations, and perseverance in well doing. William Cowper.

Verse 18. Open thou mine eyes. Who is able to know the secret and hidden things of the Scriptures unless Christ opens his eyes? Certainly, no one; for "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Wherefore, as suppliants, we draw near to him, saying, "Open thou mine eyes, "etc. The words of God cannot be kept except they be known; neither can they be known unless the eyes shall be opened, -- hence it is written, "That I may live and keep thy word"; and then, "Open thou mine eyes." Paulus Palanterius.

Verse 18. Open thou mine eyes. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" was the gracious inquiry of the loving Jesus to a poor longing one on earth. "Lord! that I may receive my sight, "was the instant answer. So here, in the same spirit, and to the same compassionate and loving Lord, does the Psalmist pray, "Open thou mine eyes"; and both in this and the preceding petition, "Deal bountifully with thy servant, "we see at once who prompted the prayer. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 18. Open thou mine eyes. If it be asked, seeing David was a regenerate man, and so illumined already, how is it that he prays for the opening of his eyes? The answer is easy: that our regeneration is wrought by degrees. The beginnings of light in his mind made him long for more; for no man can account of sense, but he who hath it. The light which he had caused him to see his own darkness; and therefore, feeling his wants, he sought to have them supplied by the Lord. William Cowper.

Verse 18. Open thou mine eyes. The saints do not complain of the obscurity of the law, but of their own blindness. The Psalmist doth not say, Lord make a plainer law, but, Lord open mine eyes:blind men might as well complain of God, that he doth not make a sun whereby they might see. The word is "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2Pe 1:19). There is no want of light in the Scripture, but there is a veil of darkness upon our hearts; so that if in this clear light we cannot see, the defect is not in the word, but in ourselves. The light which they beg is not anything besides the word. When God is said to enlighten us, it is not that we should expect new revelations, but that we may see the wonders in his word, or get a clear sight of what is already revealed. Those that vent their own dreams under the name of the Spirit, and divine light, they do not give you mysteria, but monstra, portentous opinions; they do not show you the wondrous things of God's law, but the prodigies of their own brain; unhappy abortives, that die as soon as they come to light. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa 8:20). The light which we have is not without the word, but by the word. The Hebrew phrase signifieth "unveil mine eyes." There is a double work, negative and positive. There is a taking away of the veil, and an infusion of light. Paul's cure of his natural blindness is a fit emblem of our cure of spiritual blindness: "Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith" (Ac 9:18). First, the scales fall from our eyes, and then we receive sight. Thomas Manton.

Verse 18. The Psalmist asks for no new revelation. It was in God's hand to give this, and he did it in his own time to those ancient believers; but to all of them at every time there was enough given for the purposes of life. The request is not for more, but that he may employ well that which he possesses. Still better does such a form of request suit us, to whom life and immortality have been brought to light in Christ. If we do not find sufficient to exercise our thoughts with constant freshness, and our soul with the grandest and most attractive subjects, it is because we want the eye sight. It is of great importance for us to be persuaded of this truth, that there are many things in the Bible still to be found out, and that, if we come in the right spirit, we may be made discoverers of some of them. These things disclose themselves, not so much to learning, though that is not to be despised, as to spiritual sight, to a humble, loving heart. And this at least is certain, that we shall always find things that are new to ourselves. However frequently we traverse the field, we shall perceive some fresh golden vein turning up its glance to us, and we shall wonder how our eyes were formerly holden that we did not see it. It was all there waiting for us, and we feel that more is waiting, if we had the vision. There is a great Spirit in it that holds deeper and even deeper converse with our souls.

This further may be observed, that the Psalmist asks for no new faculty. The eyes are there already, and they need only to be opened. It is not the bestowal of a new and supernatural power which enables a man to read the Bible to profit, but the quickening of a power he already possesses. In one view it is supernatural, as God is the Author of the illumination by a direct act of his Spirit; in another it is natural, as it operates through the faculties existing in a man's soul. God gives "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of man's understanding may be enlightened." (Eph 1:17) It is important to remember this also, for here lies our responsibility, that we have the faculty, and here also is the point at which we must begin action with the help of God. A man will never grow into the knowledge of God's word by idly waiting for some new gift of discernment, but by diligently using that which God has already bestowed upon him, and using at the same time all other helps that lie within his reach. There are men and books that seem, beyond others, to have the power of aiding insight. All of us have felt it in the contact of some affinity of nature which makes them our best helpers; the kindred clay upon the eyes by which the great Enlightener removes our blindness (Joh 9:6). Let us seek for such, and if we find them let us employ them without leaning on them. Above all, let us give our whole mind in patient, loving study to the book itself, and where we fail, at any essential part, God will either send his evangelist Philip to our aid (Ac 8:26-40) or instruct us himself. But it is only to patient, loving study that help is given. God could have poured all knowledge into us by easy inspiration, but it is by earnest search alone that it can become the treasure of the soul.

But if so, it may still be asked what is the meaning of this prayer, and why does the Bible itself insist so often on the indispensable need of the Spirit of God to teach? Now there is a side here as true as the other, and in no way inconsistent with it. If prayer without effort would be presumptuous, effort without prayer would be vain. The great reason why men do not feel the power and beauty of the Bible is a spiritual one. They do not realize the grand evil which the Bible has come to cure, and they have not a heart to the blessings which it offers to bestow. The film of a fallen nature, self maintained, is upon their eyes while they read: "The eyes of their understanding are darkened, being alienated from the life of God" (Eph 4:18). All the natural powers will never find the true key to the Bible, till the thoughts of sin and redemption enter the heart, and are put in the centre of the Book. It is the part of the Father of lights, by the teaching of his Spirit, to give this to the soul, and he will, if it humbly approaches him with this request. Thus we shall study as one might a book with the author at hand, to set forth the height of his argument, or as one might look on a noble composition, when the artist breathes into us a portion of his soul, to let us feel the centre of its harmonies of form and colour. Those who have given to the Bible thought and prayer will own that these are not empty promises. John Ker, in a Sermon entitled, "God's Word Suited to Man's Sense of Wonder," 1877.

Verse 18. O let us never forget; that the wonderful things contained in the divine law can neither be discovered nor relished by the "natural man, "whose powers of perception and enjoyment are limited in their range to the objects of time and sense. It is the divine Spirit alone who can lighten the darkness of our sinful state, and who can enable us to perceive the glory, the harmony, and moral loveliness which everywhere shine forth in the pages of revealed truth. John Morison, 1829.

Verse 18. Uncover my eyes and I will look-- wonders out of thy law. The last clause is a kind of exclamation after his eyes have been uncovered. This figure is often used to denote inspiration or a special divine communication. "Out of thy law, "i.e., brought out to view, as if from a place of concealment. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 18. Wondrous things. Many were the signs and miracles which God wrought in the midst of the people of Israel, which they did not understand. What was the reason? Moses tells us expressly what if was: "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (De 29:4). They had sensitive eyes and ears, yea, they had a rational heart or mind; but they wanted a spiritual ear to hear, a spiritual heart or mind to apprehend and improve those wonderful works of God; and these they had not, because God had not given them such eyes, ears, and hearts. Wonders without grace cannot open the eyes fully; but grace without wonders can. And as man hath not an eye to see the wonderful works of God spiritually, until it is given; so, much less hath he an eye to see the wonders of the word of God till it be given him from above; and therefore David prays, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. And if the wondrous things of the law are not much seen till God give an eye, then much less are the wondrous things of the Gospel. The light of nature shows us somewhat of the Law; but nothing of the Gospel was ever seen by the light of nature. Many who have seen and admired some excellencies in the Law could never see, and therefore have derided, that which is the excellency of the Gospel, till God had opened their heart to understand. Joseph Caryl, 1602-1673.

Verse 18. "The word is very nigh" unto us; and, holding in our hand a document that teems with what is wonderful, the sole question is, "Have we an eye to its marvels, a heart for its mercies?" Here is the precise use of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit puts nothing new into the Bible; he only so enlightens and strengthens our faculties, that we can discern and admire what is there already. It is not the telescope which draws out that rich sparkling of stars on the blue space, which to the naked eye seem points of light, and untenanted: it is not the microscope which condenses the business of a stirring population into the circumference of a drop of water, and clothes with a thousand tints the scarcely discernible wing of the ephemeral insect. The stars are shining in their glory, whether or no we have the instruments to penetrate the azure; and the tiny tenantry are carrying on their usual concerns, and a rich garniture still forms the covering of the insect, whether or no the powerful lens has turned for us the atom into a world, and transformed the almost imperceptible down into the sparkling plumage of the bird of paradise. Thus the wonderful things are already in the Bible. The Spirit who indited them at first brings them not as new revelations to the individual; but, by removing the mists of carnal prejudice, by taking away the scales of pride and self sufficiency, and by rectifying the will, which causes the judgment to look at truth through a distorted medium, -- by influencing the heart, so that the affections shall no longer blind the understanding, -- by these and other modes, which might be easily enumerated, the Holy Ghost enables men to recognize what is hid, to perceive beauty and to discover splendour where all before had appeared without form and comeliness; and thus brings round the result of the Bible, in putting on the lip the wonderful prayer which he had himself inspired: Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Henry Melvill, 1798-1871.

Verse 18. The wondrous things seem to be the great things of an eternal world-- he had turned his enquiring eyes upon the wonders of nature, sun, moon, and stars, mountains, trees, and rivers. He had seen many of the wonders of art; but now, he wanted to see the spiritual wonders contained in the Bible. He wanted to know about God himself in all his majesty, purity, and grace. He wanted to learn the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer, and the glory that is to follow. Open mine eyes. -- David was not blind-- his eye was not dim. He could read the Bible from end to end, and yet he felt that he needed more light. He felt that he needed to see deeper, to have the eyes of his understanding opened. He felt that if he had nothing but his own eyes and natural understanding, he would not discover the wonders which he panted to see. He wanted divine teaching-- the eye salve of the Spirit; and therefore he would not open the Bible without this prayer, "Open thou mine eyes." Robert Murray Macheyne, 1813-1843.

Verse 18. Wondrous things. Wherefore useth he this word "wondrous"? It is as if he would have said, Although the world taketh the law of God to be but a light thing, and it seemeth to be given but as it were for simple souls and young children; yet for all that there seemeth such a wisdom to be in it, as that it surmounts all the wisdom of the world, and that therein lie hid wonderful secrets. John Calvin.

Verse 18. Thy law. That which is the object of the understanding prayed for, that in the knowledge whereof the Psalmist would be illuminated, is hrwt. The word signifies instruction; and being referred unto God, it is his teaching or instruction of us by the revelation of himself, the same which we intend by the Scripture. When the books of the Old Testament were completed they were, for distinction's sake, distributed into hrwt, Mybwtk, and Myaybg, or the "Law, "the "Psalms, "and the "Prophets, "Lu 24:44. Under that distribution Torah signifies the five books of Moses. But whereas these books of Moses were, as it were, the foundation of all future revelations under the Old Testament, which were given in the explication thereof, all the writings of it were usually called "the Law, "Isa 8:20. By the law, therefore, in this place, the Psalmist understands all the books that were then given unto the church by revelation for the rule of its faith and obedience. And that by the law, in the Psalms, the written law is intended, is evident from the first of them, wherein he is declared blessed who "meditates therein day and night, "Ps 1:2; which hath respect unto the command of reading and meditating on the books thereof in that manner, Jos 1:8. That, therefore, which is intended by this word is the entire revelation of the will of God, given unto the church for the rule of its faith and obedience-- that is, the holy Scripture.

In this law there are twalpg "wonderful things." alp signifies to be "wonderful, "to be "hidden, "to be "great" and "high; "that which men by the use of reason cannot attain unto or understand (hence twalpg are things that have such an impression of divine wisdom and power upon them as that they are justly the object of our admiration); that which is too hard for us as De 17:8, rkr Kmm alpy yk -- "If a matter be too hard for thee, "hid from thee. And it is the name whereby the miraculous works of God are expressed, Ps 77:11 78:11. Wherefore, these "wonderful things of the law" are those expressions and effects of divine wisdom in the Scripture which are above the natural reason and understanding of men to find out and comprehend. Such are the mysteries of divine truth in the Scripture, especially because Christ is in them, whose name is" Wonderful, "Isa 9:6; for all the great and marvellous effects of infinite wisdom meet in him. John Owen, 1616-1683.

Verse 18. Wondrous things. There are promises in God's word that no man has ever tried, to find. There are treasures of gold and silver in it that no man has taken the pains to dig for. There are medicines in it for the want of a knowledge of which hundreds have died. It seems to me like some old baronial estate that has descended to a man (who lives in a modern house) and thinks it scarcely worth while to go and look into the venerable mansion. Year after year passes away and he pays no attention to it, since he has no suspicion of the valuable treasures it contains, till, at last, some man says to him, "Have you been up in the country to look at that estate?" He makes up his mind that he will take a look at it. As he goes through the porch he is surprised to see the skill that has been displayed in its construction: he is more and more surprised as he goes through the halls. He enters a large room, and is astonished as he beholds the wealth of pictures on the walls, among which are portraits of many of his revered ancestors. He stands in amazement before them. There is a Titian, there a Raphael, there is a Correggio, and there is a Giorgione. He says, "I never had any idea of these before." "Ah, "says the steward, "there is many another thing that you know nothing about in the castle, "and he takes him from room to room and shows carved plate, and wonderful statues, and the man exclaims, "Here I have been for a score of years the owner of this estate, and have never before known what things were in it." But no architect ever conceived of such an estate as God's word, and no artist, or carver, or sculptor, ever conceived of such pictures, and carved dishes, and statues as adorn its apartments. It contains treasures that silver, and gold, and precious stones are not to be mentioned with. Henry Ward Beecher, 1872.

Verse 18. That I may behold wondrous things. The great end of the Word of God in the Psalmist's time, as now, was practical; but there is a secondary use here referred to, which is worthy of consideration, -- its power of meeting man's faculty of wonder. God knows our frame, for he made it, and he must have adapted the Bible to all its parts. If we can show this, it may be another token that the book comes from Him who made man... That God has bestowed upon man the faculty of wonder we all know. It is one of the first and most constant emotions in our nature. We can see this in children, and in all whose feelings are still fresh and natural. It is the parent of the desire to know, and all through life it is urging men to enquire. John Ker.

Verse 18. Wondrous things out of thy law. In 118 we had the "wondrous" character of redemption; in 119 we have the "wonders" (Ps 119:18,27,129), of God's revelation. William Kay, 1871.

Verses 18-19. When I cannot have Moses to tell me the meaning, saith Saint Augustine, give me that Spirit that thou gavest to Moses. And this is that which every man that will understand must pray for: this David prayed for; -- Open thou mine eyes that I may see the wonders of the Law; and (Ps 119:19) hide not thy commandments from me. And Christ saith, "If you, being evil, can give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" so that then we shall see the secrets of God. Richard Stock, 1626.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth. David had experience of peace and war, of riches and poverty, of pleasure and woe. He had been a private and public person; a shepherd, a painful calling; a soldier, a bloody trade; a courtier, an honourable slavery, which joins together in one the lord and the parasite, the gentleman and the drudge; and he was a king, -- a glorious name, filled up with fears and cares. All these he had passed through, and found least rest when he was at the highest, less content on the throne than in the sheepfolds. All this he had observed and laid up in his memory, and this his confession is an epitome and brief of all; and in effect he telleth us, that whatsoever he had seen in this his passage, whatsoever he had enjoyed, yet he found nothing so certain as this, -- that he had found nothing certain, nothing that he could abide with or would abide with him, but that he was still as a passenger and "stranger in the earth." Anthony Farindon, 1596-1658.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth, etc. As a sojourner, he hath renounced the world, which is therefore become his enemy; as "a stranger" he is fearful of losing his way; on these accounts he requests that God would compensate the loss of earthly comforts by affording the light of heaven; that he would not "hide his commandments, "but show and teach him those steps, by which he may ascend toward heaven, rejoicing in hope of future glory. George Horne, 1730-1792.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth. This confession from a solitary wanderer would have had little comparative meaning; but in the mouth of one who was probably surrounded with every source of worldly enjoyment, it shows at once the vanity of "earth's best joys, " and the heavenly tendency of the religion of the Bible. Charles Bridges.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth, etc.

1. Every man here upon earth (especially a godly man) is but a stranger and a passenger.

2. It concerns him that is a stranger to look after a better and a more durable state. Every man should do so. A man's greatest care should be for that place where he lives longest; therefore eternity should be his scope. A godly man will do so. Those whose hearts are not set upon earthly things, they must have heaven. The more their affections are estranged from the one, the more they are taken up about the other (Col 3:2); heaven and earth are like two scales in a balance, that which is taken from the one is put into the other.

3. There is of sufficient direction how to obtain this durable estate, but in the word of God. Without this we are but like poor pilgrims and wayfaring men in a strange country, not able to discern the way home. A blessed state is only sufficiently revealed in the word: "Life and immortality is brought to light through the gospel" (2Ti 1:10). The heathens did but guess at it, and had some obscure sense of an estate after this life; but as it is brought to light with most clearness in the word, so the way thither is only pointed out by the word. It is the word of God makes us wise to salvation, and which is our line and rule to heavenly Canaan; and therefore it concerns those that look after this durable state to consult with the word.

4. There is no understanding God's word but by the light of the Spirit. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Though the word have light in it, yet the spirit of man cannot move till God enlightens us with that lively light that makes way for the dominion of the truth in our hearts, and conveys influence into our hearts. This is the light David begs when he says, "Hide not thy commandments from me." David was not ignorant of the Ten Commandments, of their sound; but he begs their spiritual sense and use.

5. If we would have the Spirit we must ask it of God in prayer; for God gives the "Spirit to them that ask him" (Lu 11:13); and therefore we must say, as David, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me: let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" (Ps 43:33). Thomas Manton.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth, etc. When a child is born, it is spoken of sometimes under the designation of "a little stranger!" Friends calling will ask if, as a privilege, they may "see the little stranger." A stranger, indeed! come from far. From the immensities. From the presence, and touch, and being of God! And going-- into the immensities again-- into, and through all the unreckonable ages of duration. But the little stranger grows, and in a while begins to take vigorous root. He works, and wins, and builds, and plants, and buys, and holds, and, in his own feeling, becomes so "settled" that he would be almost amused with anyone who should describe him as a stranger now.

And still life goes on, deepening and widening in its flow, and holding in itself manifold and still multiplying elements of interest. Increasingly the man is caught by these-- like a ship, from which many anchors are cast into the sea. He strives among the struggling, rejoices with the gay, feels the spur of honour, enters the race of acquisition, does some hard and many kindly things by turns; multiplies his engagements, his relationships, his friends, and then -- just when after such preparations, life ought to be fully beginning, and opening itself out into a great restful, sunny plain-- lo! the shadows begin to fall, which tell, too surely, that it is drawing fast to a close. The voice, which, soon or late, everyone must hear, is calling for "the little stranger, "who was born not long ago, whose first lesson is over, and who is wanted now to enter by the door called death, into another school. And the stranger is not ready. He has thrown out so many anchors, and they have taken such a fast hold of the ground that it will be no slight matter to raise them. He is settled. He has no pilgrim's staff at hand; and his eye, familiar enough with surrounding things, is not accustomed to the onward and ascending way, cannot so well measure the mountain altitude, or reckon the far distance. The progress of time has been much swifter than the progress of his thought. Alas! he has made one long mistake. He has "looked at the things which are seen, "and forgotten the things which are not seen. And "the things which are seen" are temporal, and go with time into extinction; while "those which are not seen, are eternal." And so there is hurry, and confusion, and distress in the last hours, and in the going away. Now, all this may be obviated and escaped, thoroughly, if a man will but say-- I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. Alexander Raleigh, in "The Little Sanctuary, and other Meditations." 1872.

Verse 19. I am a stranger in the earth, etc. In the law, God recommends strangers to the care and compassion of his people; now David returns the arguments to him, to persuade him to deal kindly with him. Robert Leighton, 1611-1684.

Verse 19. In the earth. He makes no exception here; the whole earth he acknowledged a place of his pilgrimage. Not only when he was banished among the Moabites and Philistines was he a stranger; but even when he lived peaceably at home in Canaan, still he thinks himself a stranger. This consideration moved godly Basil to despise the threatening of Modestus, the deputy of Valens the emperor, when he braved him with banishment. Ab exilii metu liber sum, unam hominum cognoscens esse patram, paradisum omnem autem terram commune naturae exilium. And it shall move us to keep spiritual sobriety in the midst of pleasures, if we remember that in our houses, at our own fireside, and in our own beds, we are but strangers, from which we must shortly remove, to give place to others. William Cowper.

Verse 19. Hide not thy commandments from me. The manner of David's reasoning is this. I am here a stranger and I know not the way, therefore, Lord, direct me. The similitude is taken from passengers, who coming to an uncouth country where they are ignorant of the way, seek the benefit of a guide. But the dissimilitude is here: in any country people can guide a stranger to the place where he would be; but the dwellers of the earth cannot show the way to heaven; and therefore David seeks no guide among them, but prays the Lord to direct him. William Cowper.

Verse 19. Hide not thy commandments from me. There is a hiding of the word of God when means to hear it explained by preachers are wanting; and there is a hiding of the comfortable and lively light of the Spirit, who must quicken the word into us. From both those evils we may, and we should, pray to be saved. David Dickson.

Verse 20. My soul breaketh, etc. Here is a protestation of that earnest desire he had to the obedience of the word of God; he amplifies it two ways: first, it was no light motion, but such as being deeply rooted made his heart to break when he saw that he could not do in the obedience thereof what he would. Next, it was no vanishing motion, like the morning dew; but it was permanent, omni tempore, he had it at all times. William Cowper.

Verse 20. My soul breaketh for the longing, as one that with straining breaks a vein. William Gurnall.

Verse 20. My soul breaketh, etc. This breaking is by rubbing, chafing, or crushing. The spirit was so fretted with its yearning desire after the things which Jehovah had spoken, that it was broken as by heavy friction. The "longing" to find out and follow the hidden wonders was almost unbearable. This longing continued with the Psalmist "at all times, "or "in every season." Prosperity could not make him forget it; adversity could not quench it. In sickness or health, in happiness or sadness, in company or alone, nothing overcame that longing. "The wondrous things" were so wonderful, and still so hidden. To see a little of "the beauty of the Lord" is to get to know how much there is which we fail to see, and thus to long more than ever. He who pursues ardently the wonders of the word of the Lord, will never set that longing at rest as long as he remains "in the earth." It is only when we shall "be like him, " and "shall see him as he is, "that we shall cry, "Enough, Lord!" "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." F. G. Marchant.

Verse 20. My soul breaketh for the longing. For the earnest desire. "That it hath unto thy judgments at all times." Thy law; thy commands. This was a constant feeling. It was not fitful, or spasmodic. It was the steady, habitual state of the soul on the subject. He had never seen enough of the beauty and glory of the law of God to feel that all the wants of his nature were satisfied, or that he could see and know no more; he had seen and felt enough to excite in him an ardent desire to be made fully acquainted with all that there is in the law of God. Albert Barnes.

Verse 20. My soul breaketh for the longing, etc. The desire after God's appointments becomes painfully intense. A longing-- an intense longing-- for the judgments of the Lord-- at all times. These are the particulars of his breaking soul. His whole mind is toward the things of God. He prays that he may behold the wondrous things of Jehovah's law, and that he may not hide his commandments from him; and here his soul breaks for longing towards his judgments at all times. The state of the Psalmist's mind would not lead us here to suppose that he was awaiting the manifestation of the Lord's judgments in vindicating his cause against ungodly men, or that he was longing for opportunity of fulfilling all the deeds of righteousness towards his fellow men; for this he was doing to the utmost. Evidently he is intent upon the ordinances of religion, which were called "judgments" in reference to the solemn sanctions with which they were enjoined. The man of God so longed to join with the Lord's people in these, that his heart was ready to break with desire, as he was forced from place to place in the wilderness. The renewed heart is here. Another might long to be delivered from persecution, to be at rest, to be restored to home, relations, and comfort. The man of God could not but desire those natural enjoyments; but, over all, his holy mind longed with ardour for the celebration of Jehovah's worship. John Stephen.

Verse 20. Thy judgments. God's judgments are of two sorts: first, his commands; so called because by them right is judged and discerned from wrong. Next, his plagues executed upon transgressors according to his word. David here refers to the first. Let men who have not the like of David's desire, remember, that they whose heart cannot break for transgressing God's word because they love it, shall find the plagues of God to bruise their body and break their heart also. Let us delight in the first sort of these judgments, and the second shall never come upon us. William Cowper.

Verse 20. Mark that word, at all times. Bad men have their good moods, as good men have their bad moods. A bad man may, under gripes of conscience, a smarting rod, the approaches of death, or the fears of hell, or when he is sermon sick, cry out to the Lord for grace, for righteousness, for holiness; but he is the only blessed man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness at all times. Thomas Brooks, 1608-1680.

Verse 20. At all times. Some prize the word in adversity, when they have no other comfort to live upon; then they can be content to study the word to comfort them in their distresses; but when they are well at ease, they despise it. But David made use of it "at all times; " in prosperity, to humble him; in adversity, to comfort him; in the one, to keep him from pride; in the other, to keep him from despair; in affliction, the word was his cordial; in worldly increase, it was his antidote; and so at all times his heart was carried out to the word either for one necessity or another. Thomas Manton.

Verse 20. At all times. How few are there even among the servants of God who know anything of the intense feeling of devotion here expressed! O that our cold and stubborn hearts were warmed and subdued by divine grace, that we might be ready to faint by reason of the longing which we had "at all times" for the judgments of our God. How fitful are our best feelings! If today we ascend the mount of communion with God, tomorrow we are in danger of being again entangled with the things of earth. How happy are they whose hearts are "at all times" filled with longings after fellowship with the great and glorious object of their love! John Morison, 1829.

Verse 20. If you read the lives of good men, who have been, also, intellectually great, you will be struck, I think, even to surprise, a surprise, however, which will not be unpleasant, to find them, at the close of life, in their own estimation so ignorant, so utterly imperfect, so little the better of the long life lesson. Dr. Chalmers, after kindling churches and arousing nations to their duties, summed up his own attainments in the word "desirousness, "and took as the text that best described his inner state, that passionate, almost painful cry of David, My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments. But how grand was the attainment! To be in old age as simple as a little child before God! To be still learning at threescore years and ten! How beautiful seem the great men in their simplicity! Alexander Raleigh, in "The Little Sanctuary, "1872.

Verse 21. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed. If the proud escape here, as sometimes they do, hereafter they shall not; for, "the proud man is an abomination to the Lord"; Pr 16:5. God cannot endure him; Ps 101:5. And what of that? Tu perdes superbos, Thou shalt destroy the proud. The very heathens devised the proud giants struck with thunder from heaven. And if God spared not the angels, whom he placed in the highest heavens, but for their pride threw them down headlong to the nethermost hell, how much less shall he spare the proud dust and ashes of the sons of men, but shall cast them from the height of their earthly altitude to the bottom of that infernal dungeon! "Humility makes men angels; pride makes angels devils; "as that father said: I may well add, makes devils of men. Alazoneiav outiv ekfeugei dikhn, says the heathen poet, Menander; "Never soul escaped the revenge of pride, " never shall escape it. So sure as God is just, pride shall not go unpunished. I know now we are all ready to call for a bason, with Pilate, and to wash our hands from this foul sin. Honourable and beloved, this vice is a close one; it will cleave fast to you; yea, so close that ye can hardly discern it from a piece of yourselves: this is it that aggravates the danger of it. For, as Aquinas notes well, some sins are more dangerous propter vehementiam impugnationis, "for the fury of their assault"; as the sin of anger: others for their correspondence to nature; as the sins of lust: other, propter latentiam sui, "for their close skulking" in our bosom; as the sin of pride. Oh, let us look seriously into the corners of our false hearts, even with the lanthorn of God's law, and find out this subtle devil; and never give peace to our souls till we have dispossessed him. Down with your proud plumes, O ye glorious peacocks of the world: look upon your black legs, and your snake like head: be ashamed of your miserable infirmities: else, God will down with them and yourselves in a fearful vengeance. There is not the holiest of us but is this way faulty: oh, let us be humbled by our repentance, that we may not be brought down to everlasting confusion: let us be cast down upon our knees, that we may not be cast down upon our faces. For God will make good his own word, one way; "A man's pride shall bring him low." Joseph Hall, 1574-1656.

Verse 21. Thou hast rebuked the proud. Let the histories of Cain, Pharaoh, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and Herod, exhibit the proud under the rebuke and curse of God. He abhors their persons and their offerings: he "knows them afar off": he "resisteth them": "he scattereth them in the imaginations of their hearts." Yet more especially hateful are they in his sight, when cloaking themselves under a spiritual garb, -- "which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." David and Hezekiah are instructive beacons in the church, that God's people, whenever they give place to the workings of a proud heart, must not hope to escape his rebuke. "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions:" Ps 99:8. Charles Bridges.

Verse 21. Thou hast rebuked the proud. David addeth another reason whereby he is more enflamed to pray unto God and to address himself unto him to be taught in his word; to wit, when he seeth that he hath so, "rebuked the proud." For the chastisement and punishments which God layeth upon the faithless and rebellious should be a good instruction for us; as it is said that God hath executed judgment, and that the inhabitants of the land should learn his righteousness. It is not without cause that the prophet Isaiah also hath so said; for he signifieth unto us that God hath by divers and sundry means drawn us unto him, and that chiefly when he teacheth us to fear his majesty. For without it, alas, we shall soon become like unto brute beasts: if God lay the bridle on our necks, what license we will give unto ourselves experience very well teacheth us. Now God seeing that we are so easily brought to run at random, sendeth us examples, because he would bring us to walk in fear and carefully. John Calvin.

Verse 21. The proud. This is a style commonly given to the wicked; because as it is our oldest evil, so is it the strongest and first that strives in our corrupt nature to carry men to transgress the bounds appointed by the Lord. From the time that pride entered into Adam's heart, that he would be higher than God had made him, he spared not to eat of the forbidden tree. And what else is the cause of all transgression, but that man's ignorant pride will have his will preferred to the will of God. William Cowper.

Verse 21. The proud. Peter speaks of the proud, as if they did challenge God like champions, and provoke him like rebels, so that unless he did resist them, they would go about to deprive him of his rule, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram undermined Moses. Nu 16:1-33.

For so the proud man saith, I will be like the highest, Isa 14:12-15, and, if he could, above the highest too. This is the creature that was taken out of the dust, Ge 2:7, and so soon as he was made, he opposed himself against that majesty which the angels adore, the thrones worship, the devils fear, and the heavens obey. How many sins are in this sinful world! and yet, as Solomon saith of the good wife, Pr 31:29, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but you surmount them all"; so may I say of pride, many sins have done wickedly, but you surmount them all; for the wrathful man, the prodigal man, the lascivious man, the surfeiting man, the slothful man, is rather an enemy to himself than to God; but the proud man sets himself against God, because he doth against his laws; he maketh himself equal with God, because he doth all without God, and craves no help of him; he exalteth himself above God, because he will have his own will though it be contrary to God's will. As the humble man saith, Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory, Ps 115:1; so the proud man saith, Not unto Him, not unto Him, but unto us give the glory. Like unto Herod which took the name of God, and was honoured of all but the worms, and they showed that he was not a god, but a man, Ac 12:21. Therefore proud men may be called God's enemies, because as the covetous pull riches from men, so the proud pull honour from God. Beside, the proud man hath no cause to be proud, as other sinners have; the covetous for riches, the ambitious for honour, the voluptuous for pleasure, the envious for wrong, the slothful for ease; but the proud man hath no cause to be proud, but pride itself, which saith, like Pharaoh, "I will not obey, " Ex 5:2. Henry Smith, 1560-1591.

Verse 21. Proud that are cursed. -- Proud men endure the curse of never having friends; not in prosperity, because they know nobody; not in adversity, because then nobody knows them. John Whitecross, in "Anecdotes illustrative of the Old Testament."

Verse 21. This use of God's judgments upon others must we make to ourselves; first, that we may be brought to acknowledge our deserts, and so may fear; and, next, that we may so behold his justice upon the proud that we may have assurance of his mercy to the humble. This is hard to flesh and blood; for some can be brought to rejoice at the destruction of others, and cannot fear; and others, when they are made to fear, cannot receive comfort. But those which God hath joined together let us not separate: therefore let us make these uses of God's judgments. Richard Greenham.

Verse 22. Remove from me reproach and contempt. Here David prays against the reproach and contempt of men; that they might be removed, or, as the word is, rolled from off him. This intimates that they lay upon him, and neither his greatness nor his goodness could secure him from being libelled and lampooned: some despised him and endeavoured to make him mean, others reproached him and endeavoured to make him odious. It has often been the lot of those that do well to be ill spoken of. It intimates, that this burden lay heavy upon him. Hard words indeed and foul words break no bones, and yet they are very grievous to a tender and ingenuous spirit: therefore David prays, Lord, "remove" them from me, that I may not be thereby either driven from any duty, or discouraged in it. Matthew Henry

Verse 22. Remove from me reproach and contempt, etc. In the words (as in most of the other verses) you have, -- 1. A request: Remove from me reproach and contempt. 2. A reason and argument to enforce the request: For I have kept thy testimonies.

First, for the request, Remove from me reproach and contempt; the word signifies, Roll from upon me, let it not come at me, or let it not stay with me. And then the argument: for I have kept thy testimonies. The reason may be either thus: (1) He pleads that he was innocent of what was charged upon him, and had not deserved those aspersions. (2) He intimates that it was for his obedience, for this very cause, that he had kept the word, therefore was reproach rolled upon him. (3) It may be conceived thus, that his respect to God's word was not abated by this reproach, he still kept God's testimonies, how wicked soever he did appear in the eyes of the world. It is either an assertion of his innocency, or he shows the ground why this reproach came upon him, or he pleads that his respect to God and his service was not lessened, whatever reproach he met with in the performance of it.

The points from hence are many.

1. It is no strange thing that they which keep God's testimonies should be slandered and reproached.

2. As it is the usual lot of God's people to be reproached; so it is very grievous to them, and heavy to bear.

3. It being grievous, we may lawfully seek the removal of it. So doth David, and so may we, with submission to God's will.

4. In removal of it, it is best to deal with God about it; for God is the great witness of our sincerity, as knowing all things, and so to be appealed to in the case. Again, God is the most powerful asserter of our innocency; he hath the hearts and tongues of men in his own hands, and can either prevent the slanderer from uttering reproach, or the hearer from the entertainment of the reproach. He that hath such power over the consciences of men can clear up our innocency; therefore it is best to deal with God about it; and prayer many times proves a better vindication than an apology.

5. In seeking relief with God from this evil, it is a great comfort and ground of confidence when we are innocent of what is charged. In some cases we must humble ourselves, and then God will take care for our credit; we must plead guilty when, by our own fault, we have given occasion to the slanders of the wicked: so, "Turn away my reproach, which I fear: for thy judgments are good" (Ps 119:39). "My reproach, "for it was in part deserved by himself, and therefore he feared the sad consequences of it, and humbled himself before God. But at other times we may stand upon our integrity, as David saith here: "Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good." Thomas Manton.

Verse 23. Princes also did sit, under the shadow of justice, and speak against me. Now this was a great temptation to David, that he was not only mocked and scorned at the taverns and inns, being there blazoned by dissolute jesters and scoffers, and talked of in the streets and market places; but even in the place of justice (which ought to be holy); it could not therefore be chosen but that they also would utterly defame and slander him, and condemn him to be, as it were, a most wicked and cursed man. When David then did see that he was thus unjustly entreated and handled, he makes his complaint unto God, and says, "O Lord, the princes and governors themselves do sit and speak evil against me; and yet for all that I have kept thy testimonies." Here in sum we are to gather out of this place, that if it so fall out, when we have walked uprightly and in a good conscience? that we are falsely slandered, and accused of this and that whereof we never once thought; yet ought we to bear all things patiently; for let us be sure of that, that we are not better than David, whatever great protestation of our integrity and purity we may dare to make. John Calvin.

Verse 23 But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. As husbandmen, when their ground is overflowed by waters, make ditches and water furrows to carry it away; so, when our minds and thoughts are overwhelmed with trouble, it is good to divert them to some other matter. But every diversion will not become saints, it must be a holy diversion: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul" (Ps 94:19). The case was the same with that of the text, when the throne of iniquity frameth mischief by a law; as you shall see here, when he had many perplexed thoughts about the abuse of power against himself. But now where lay his ease in diversion? Would every diversion suit his purpose? No; "Thy comforts, "-- comforts of God's allowance, of God's providing, comforts proper to saints. Wicked men in trouble run to their pot and pipe, and games and sports, and merry company, and so defeat the providence rather than improve it: but David, who was God's servant, must have God's comforts. So, elsewhere, when his thoughts were troubled about the power of the wicked: "I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Ps 73:17). He goeth to divert his mind by the use of God's ordinances, and so cometh to be settled against the temptation. Thomas Manton.

Verse 23. But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. -- Perceive here the armour by which David fights against his enemy. Arma justi quibus omnes adversariorum repellit impetus, his weapons are the word and player. He renders not injury for injury, reproach for reproach. It is dangerous to fight against Satan or his instruments with their own weapons; for so they shall easily overcome us. Let us fight with the armour of God-- the exercises of the word and prayer: for a man may peaceably rest in his secret chamber, and in these two see the miserable end of all those who are enemies to God's children for God's sake. William Cowper.

Verse 23. Thy statutes. It is impossible to live either Christianly or comfortable without the daily use of Scripture. It is absolutely necessary for our direction in all our ways before we begin them, and when we have ended them, for the warrant of our approbation of them, for resolving of our doubts, and comforting us in our griefs. Without it our conscience is a blind guide, and leadeth us in a mist of ignorance, error, and confusion. Therein we hear God speaking to us, declaring his good will to us concerning our salvation, and the way of our obedience to meet him in his good will. What book can we read with such profit and comfort? For matter, it is wisdom: for authority, it is divine and absolute: for majesty, God himself under common words and letters expressing an unspeakable power to stamp our heart. Where shall we find our minds so enlightened, our hearts so deeply affected, our conscience so moved, both for casting us down and raising us up? I cannot find in all the books of the world, such an one speak to me, as in Scripture, with so absolute a conquest of all the powers of my soul.

Contemners of Scripture lack food for their souls, light for their life and weapons for their spiritual warfare; but the lovers of Scripture have all that furniture. Therein we hear the voice of our Beloved, we smell the savour of his ointments, and have daily access unto the art of propitiation. If in our knowledge we desire divinity, excellency, antiquity, and efficiency, we cannot find it, but in God's word alone. It is the extract of heavenly wisdom, which Christ the eternal Word brought out of the bosom of his Father. William Struther, 1633.

Verses 23-24. The two last verses of this section contain two protestations of David's honest affection to the word. The first is, that albeit he was persecuted and evil spoken of, and that by great and honourable men of the world, such as Saul, and Abner, and Ahithophel; yet did he still meditate in the statutes of God. It is a hard temptation when the godly are troubled by any wicked men; but much harder when they are troubled by men of honour and authority. And that, first, by reason of their place:the greater power they have, the greater peril to encounter with their displeasure; therefore said Solomon, "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death." Next, because authorities and powers are ordained by God, not for the terror of the good, but of the evil: Ro 13:3. And therefore it is no small grief to the godly, when they find them abused to a contrary end: that where a ruler should be to good men like rain to the fields new mown, he becomes a favourer of evil men and a persecutor of the good. Then justice is turned into wormwood; that which should bring comfort to such as fear God, is abused to oppress them. And therefore it should be accounted a great benefit of God, when he gives a people good and religious rulers. William Cowper.

Verse 23, 51. If the 119th Psalm came from the pen of David, as multitudes believe, then I do not wonder that many have connected its composition with his residence in the school of the prophets of Naioth. The calm in which he then found himself, and the studies which he then prosecuted, might well have led his musings in the direction of that alphabetic code, while there are in it not a few expressions which, to say the least, may have particular reference to the dangers out of which he had so recently escaped, and by which he was still threatened. Such, for example, are the following: "Princes also did sit and speak against me": but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law." William M. Taylor, in "David, King of Israel; his Life and its Lessons." 1880.

Verse 24. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. His delight and his counsellors, that is, his delight because his counsellors; his counsellors, and therefore his delight. We know how delightful it is to any to have the advantage of good counsel, according to the perplexities and distractions in which they may be. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel, "says Solomon, Pr 27:9. Now this is the sweetness of Divine communion, and of meditation on God and his word; it employs a man with seasonable counsel, which is a very great refreshment to us. T. Horton, 1673.

Verse 24. Thy testimonies also are my delight, etc. Those that would have God's testimonies to be their delight, must make them for their counsellors and be advised by them: and let those that take them for their counsellors in close walking, take them for their delight in comfortable walking. Matthew Henry.

Verse 24. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. What could we want more in a time of difficulty than comfort and direction David had both these blessings. As the fruit of his "meditation in the Lord's statutes, "in his distress they were his "delight"; in his seasons of perplexity they were his "counsellors, "directing his behaviour in the perfect way. Charles Bridges.

Verse 24. My counsellors. In the Hebrew it is, "the men of my counsel, "which is fitly mentioned; for he had spoken of princes sitting in council against him. Princes do nothing without the advice of their Privy Council; a child of God hath also his Privy Council, God's testimonies. On the one side there was Saul and his nobles and counsellors; on the other side there was David and God's testimonies. Now, who was better furnished, think you, they to persecute and trouble him, or David how to carry himself under this trouble? Alphonsus, king of Arragon, being asked who were the best counsellors? answered, "The dead (meaning books), which cannot flatter, but do without partiality declare the truth." Now of all such dead counsellors, God's testimonies have the preeminence. A poor, godly man, even then when he is deserted of all, and hath nobody to plead for him, he hath his senate, and his council of state about him, the prophets and apostles, and "other holy men of God, that spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." A man so furnished, is never less alone than when alone; for he hath counsellors about him that tell him what is to be believed or done; and they are such counsellors as cannot err, as will not flatter him, nor applaud him in any sin, nor discourage or dissuade him from that which is good, whatever hazard it expose him to. And truly, if we be wise, we should choose such counsellors as these: "Thy testimonies are the men of my counsel." Thomas Manton.

Verse 24. My counsellors. See here a sentence worthy to be weighed of us, when David calleth the commandments of God his "counsellors." For, in the first place, he meaneth that he might scorn all the wisdom of the most able and most expert men in the world, since he was conducted by the word of God, and governed thereby. In the second place, he meaneth that when he shall be so governed by the word of God, he would not only be truly wise, but that it would be as if he had all the wisdom of all the men in the world, yea, and a great deal more. John Calvin.

The eight verses alphabetically arranged:

25. (D)epressed to the dust is my soul: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26. (D)eclared have I (to thee) my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

27. (D)eclare thou to me the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28. (D)ropping (marg.) is my soul for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29. (D)eceitful ways remove from me; and grant me thy law graciously.

30. (D)etermined have I upon the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me.

31. (D)eliberately I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.

32. (D)ay by day I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Theodore Kubber.

Verse 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust. The Hebrew word for "cleaveth" signifies "is joined, ""has adhered, ""has overtaken, ""has taken hold, ""has joined itself." Our soul is a polypus: as the polypus readily adheres to the rocks, so does the soul cleave to the earth; and hardly can it be torn from the place to which it has once strongly attached itself. Though thy soul be now more perfect, and escaping from the waters of sin has become a bird of heaven, be not careless; earthly things are birdlime and glue; if you rub the wings against these thou wilt be held, and joined to the earth. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust, etc. The word rendered "cleaveth" means to be glued to; to stick fast. It has the sense of adhering firmly to anything, so that it cannot easily be separated from it. The word "dust" here may mean either the earth, and earthly things, considered as low, base, unworthy, worldly; or it may mean the grave, as if he were near to that, and in danger of dying. De Wette understands it in the latter sense. Yet the word cleave would hardly suggest this idea; and the force of that word would be better represented by the idea that his soul, as it were, adhered to the things of earth, that it seemed to be so fastened to them-- so glued to them that it could not be detached from them; that his affections were low, earthly, grovelling, so as to give him deep distress, and lead him to cry to God for Life and strength that he might break away from them. Albert Barnes.

Verse 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust, etc. The first clause seems intended to suggest two consistent but distinct ideas, that of deep degradation, as in Ps 44:25, and that of death, as in Ps 22:29. The first would be more obvious in itself, and in connection with the parallel referred to; but the other seems to be indicated as the prominent idea by the correlative petition for quickening in the last clause. "Quicken, "i.e., save me alive, or restore me to life, the Hebrew word being a causative of the verb to live. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 25. My soul cleaveth to the dust, etc. In this verse, David hath a complaint; "My soul cleaveth to the dust"; and a prayer; Quicken thou me according to thy word. The prayer, being well considered, shall teach us the meaning of the complaint; that it was not, as some think, any hard bodily estate which grieved him, but a very sore spiritual oppression (as I may call it), bearing down his soul; that where he should have mounted up toward heaven, he was pressed down to the earth, and was so clogged with earthly cogitations, or affections, or perturbations, that he could not mount up. His particular temptation he expresses not; for the children of God many times are in that estate that they cannot tell their own griefs, and sometimes so troubled, that it is not expedient, albeit they might, to express them to others.

And hereof we learn, how that which the worldling counts wisdom, to the Christian is folly; what is joy to the one, is grief to the other. The joy of a worldling is to cleave unto the earth; when he gripes it surest, he thinks himself happiest, for it is his portion: to take heed to his worldly affairs, and have his mind upon them (in his estimation) is only wisdom. For the serpent's curse is upon him, he creeps on the earth, and licks the dust all the days of his life. This is the miserable condition of the wicked, that even their heavenly soul is become earthly. Qui secundum corporis appetentiam vivit caro est, etiam anima eorum caro est; as the Lord spake of those who perished in the Deluge, that they were but flesh, no spirit in them; that is, no spiritual or heavenly motion. But the Christian, considering that his soul is from above, sets his affection also on those things which are above: he delights to have his conversation in heaven; and it is a grief to him when he finds his motions and affections drawn down and entangled with the earth. His life is to cleave to the Lord; but it is death to him when the neck of his soul is bowed down to the yoke of the world. William Cowper.

Verse 25. My soul cleaveth to the dust. "Look up now to the heavens." So once spake the Lord to Abraham his friend, and he speaketh thus to us also. Alas! why must it be so always that, when we come to know ourselves even but a little, we are constantly answering with the mournful sigh, "My soul cleaveth to the dust"? Ah! that is indeed the deepest pain of a soul which has already tasted that the Lord is merciful, when, although desiring to soar on high, it sadly feels how impossible it is to rise. There is much hidden pain in every heart of man even in the spiritual life; but what can deeper grieve us than the perception that we are chained as with leaden weights to things concerning which we know that they may weary but cannot satisfy us? Nay, we could never have supposed, when we first, heard the Psalm of the Good Shepherd, that it could issue from a heart that panteth after God so often and so bitterly; we could never have imagined that it could become so cold, so dry, so dark within a heart which at an earlier period had tasted so much of the power of that which is to come. Have we not formerly, with this same Psalm, been able to vaunt, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches"? But afterwards, but now perhaps... Oh sad hours, when the beams of the sun within seem quenched, and nothing but a blond red disc remains! The fervency of the first love is cooled; earthly cares and sins have, as it were, attached a leaden plummet to the wings of the soul which, God knows, would fain soar upwards. We would render thanks, and scarce can pray; we would pray, and scarce can sigh. Our treasure is in heaven, but our soul cleaves to the earth; at least earth cleaves on all sides so to it, and weighs it down, that the eye merely sees the clouds, the tongue can but breathe forth complaints. Ah, so completely can the earth fetter us, that the heavens appear to be only a problem, and our old man is like the Giant of Mythology, who, cast to the ground in the exhausting combat, receives by contact with his mother earth fresh strength. Oh, were it otherwise! Shall it not at last, at last be altered?

Dost thou really desire it, thou who out of the depths of thy soul so complainest, and canst scarcely find more tears to bewail the sorrow of thy heart? Well is it for thee if the pain thou sufferest teach thee to cry to God: "Quicken thou me, according to thy word." Yea, this is the best comfort for him who too well knows what it is to be bowed together with pain; this is the only hope for a heart which almost sinks in still despair. There is an atmosphere of life, high above this dust which streams to us from every side, and penetrates even the darkest dungeon. There is a spring of life by which the weary soul may be refreshed; and the entrance to this spring stands open, in spite of all the clouds of dust which obscure this valley of shadows here. There is a power of life which can even so completely make an end of our dead state, that we shall walk again before the face of the Lord in the land of the living, and, instead of uttering lamentation, we shall bear a song of praise upon our lips. Does not the Prince of life yet live in order also to repeat to us, "Awake and rejoice, thou that dwellest in the dust; "and the Spirit, that bloweth whither he listeth, can, will, shall he not in his own good time, with his living breath, blow from our wings the dust that cleaveth to them? But, indeed, even the gnawing pain of the soul over so much want of spirituality and dulness is ever an encouraging sign that the good work is begun in our hearts: that which is really dead shivers no more at its own cold. "My soul cleaveth to the dust, " sayest thou, with tears? thus wouldest thou not speak except that already a higher hand between the soul and this dust had cleft a hollow which was unknown to it before. No one has less cause for despair than he who has lost hope in himself, and really learns to seek in God that, which he deeply feels, he least of all can give himself.

Yes, this is the way from the deepest pain to procure the best consolation; the humble, earnest, persevering player, that he who lives would also give life to our souls, and continue to increase it, till freed from all dryness and deadness of spirit, and uprooted from the earth, we ascend to the eternal mount of light, where at last we behold all earthly clouds beneath us. This the God of life alone can work; but he is willing-- nay, we have his own word as pledge, that he promises and bestows on us true life. Only, let us not forget that he who will quicken us "according" to his word, also performs this through his word. Let us then draw from out the eternally flowing fountain, and henceforth leave it unconditionally to him, how he will listen to our cry, even though he lead us through dark paths! Even through means of death God can quicken us and keep us alive. Lo, we are here; Lord, do with us as seemeth good to thee! Only let our souls live, that they may praise thee, here and eternally! J. J. Van Oosterzee (1817-1882), in "The Year of Salvation."

Verse 25. Cleaveth to the dust. Is weighed down by the flesh which itself is dust. James G. Murphy.

Verse 25. The dust, is the place of the afflicted, the wounded, and the dead. Quicken me, viz., to life, peace, and joy. A. R. Fausset.

Verse 25. Quicken thou me, etc. Seeing he was alive, how prays he that God would quicken him? I answer, -- The godly esteem of life, not according to that they have in their body, but in their soul. If the soul lacks the sense of mercy, and a heavenly disposition to spiritual things, they lament over it, as a dead soul: for sure it is, temporal desertions are more heavy to the godly than temporal death. According to thy word. This is a great faith, that where in respect of his present feeling he found himself dead, yet he hopes for life from God, according to his promise. Such was the faith of Abraham, who under hope, believed above hope. And truly, many times are God's children brought to this estate, that they have nothing to uphold them but the word of God; no sense of mercy, no spiritual disposition; but on the contrary, great darkness, horrible fears and terrors. Only they are sustained by looking to the promise of God, and kept in some hope that he will restore them to life again, because it is his praise to finish the work which he begins. William Cowper.

Verse 25. Quicken thou me. This phrase occurs nine times, and only in this Psalm. It is of great importance, as it expresses the spiritual change by which a child of Adam becomes a child of God. Its source is God; the instrument by which it is effected is the word, Ps 119:50. James G. Murphy.

Verse 25 Quicken thou me according to thy word. Where there is life there will be the endeavour to rise-- the believer will not lie prone in his aspirations after God. From the lowest depths the language of faith is heard ascending to God most high, who performeth all things for the believer. The true child cannot but look towards the loving Father, who is the Almighty, All sufficient One. Have you not found it so? But will you mark the intelligence that shines around the believer's prayer? He prays that the Lord may quicken him according to his word. The word may be regarded in the light of the standard after which he is to be fashioned; or the Psalmist may have in view the requirements contained in the word regarding the believer's progress; or he may be thinking of the promises found therein in behalf of the poor and needy when they apply. Indeed, all these significations may be wrapped up in the one expression-- "according to thy word" -- the standard of perfection, the requirements of the word, -- the promises concerning it. The great exemplar of the believer is Christ, -- of old it was the Christ of prophecy. Then the requirements of the Lord's will were scattered through the word. The Psalmist, however, may be dwelling upon the large promises which the Lord hath given towards the perfecting of his people. You see after what the spiritual nature aspires. It is quite enough to the natural man or the formalist that he be as the generally well behaved and esteemed among professors-- the spiritual man aspires beyond-- he aspires after being quickened according to God's word. Judge of yourselves. John Stephen.

Verse 25. Quicken thou me according to thy word. By thy providence put life into my affairs, by thy grace put life into my affections; cure me of my spiritual deadness, and make me lively in my devotion. Matthew Henry.

Verse 25. Quicken thou me according to thy word, Albeit the Lord suffer his own to lie so long low in their heavy condition of spirit, that they may seem dead; yet by faith in his word he keepeth in them so much life as doth furnish unto them prayer to God for comfort: "Quicken thou me according to thy word." David Dickson.

Verse 25 Quicken thou me. To whom shall the godly fly when life faileth but to that Wellspring of all life? Even as to remove cold the next way is to draw near the fire, so to dispel any death, the next way is to look to him who is our root, by whom we live this natural life. All preservatives and restoratives are nothing, all colleges of physicians are vanity, if compared with him. Other things which have not life, give life as the instruments of him who is life, as fire burneth being the instrument of heat. "When heart and flesh fail, God is the strength of my heart." As a man can let a fire almost go out which had been kindled, and then blow it up, and by application of new fuel make it blaze as much as ever: so can God deal with this flame of life which he hath kindled. Paul Bayne.

Verse 25. According to thy word. The word removes deadness of conscience and hardness. Is not this word a hammer to soften the heart, and is not this the immortal seed by which we are begotten again? Therefore David, finding his conscience in a dead frame, prayed, "My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word." The word is the first thing by which conscience is purified and set right. John Sheffield, in "A Good Conscience the Strongest Hold, "1650.

Verse 25. According to thy word. What word doth David mean? Either the general promises in the books of Moses or Job; which intimate deliverance to the faithful observers of God's law, or help to the miserable and distressed; or some particular promise given to him by Nathan, or others. Chrysostom saith, "Quicken me according to thy word: but it is not a word of command, but a word of promise." Mark here, -- he doth not say secundum meritum meum, but, secundum verbum tuum;the hope, or that help which we expect from God, is founded upon his word; there is our security, in his promises, not in our deserving: Prommittendo se fecit debitorem, etc.

When there was so little Scripture written, yet David could find out a word for his support. Alas! in our troubles and afflictions, no promise comes to mind. As in outward things, many that have less live better than those that have abundance; so here, now Scripture is so large, we are less diligent, and therefore, though we have so many promises, we are apt to faint, we have not a word to bear us up. This word did not help David, till he had lain so long under this heavy condition, that he seemed dead. Many, when they have a promise, think presently to enjoy the comfort of it. No, waiting and striving are first necessary. We never relish the comfort of the promises till the creatures have spent their allowance, and we have been exercised. God will keep his word, and yet we must expect to be tried.

In this his dead condition, faith in God's word kept him alive. When we have least feeling, and there is nothing left us, the word will support us: "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Ro 4:19-20). One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, Chirographa tua injiciebat tibi Domine, show him his handwriting; God is tender of his word. These arguments in prayer, are not to work upon God, but ourselves. Thomas Manton

Verse 25. One does not wonder at the fluctuations which occur in the feelings and experience of a child of God-- at one time high on the mountain, near to God and communing with God, at another in the deep and dark valley. All, more or less, know these changes, and have their sorrowing as well as their rejoicing seasons. When we parted with David last, what was he telling us of his experience? that God's testimonies were his delight and his counsellors;but now what a different strain! all joy is darkened, and his soul cleaveth to the dust. And there must have been seasons of deep depression and despondency in the heart of David-- given as a fugitive and wanderer from his home, hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, and holding, as he himself says, his life continually in his hands. Yet I think in this portion of the Psalm there is evidence of a deeper abasement and sorrow of heart than any mere worldly suffering could produce. He had indeed said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul"; but, even in that moment of weak and murmuring faith, he knew that he was God's anointed one to sit on the throne of Israel. But, here there is indication of sin, of grievous sin which had laid his soul low in the dust; and I think the petition in Ps 119:29 gives us some clue to what that sin had been: "Remove me from the way of lying." Had David-- you may well ask in wonder-- had David ever lied? had he ever deviated from the strait and honourable path of truth I am afraid we must own that he had at one time gone so near the confines of a falsehood, that he would be but a poor casuist and a worse moralist who should attempt to defend the Psalmist from the imputation. We cannot read the 27th chapter of the 1st of Samuel without owning into what a sad tissue of equivocation and deceit David was unhappily seduced. Well might his soul cleave to the dust as he reviewed that period of his career; and though grace did for him what it afterwards did for Peter, and he was plucked as a brand out of the burning, yet one can well imagine that like the Apostle afterwards, when he thought thereon he wept, and that bitterly. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 26. I have declared my ways, etc. This verse contains a prayer, with a reason after this form: -- O Lord, I have oft before declared unto thee the whole state and course of my life, my wanderings, my wants, my doubts, my griefs: I hid nothing from thee, and thou, according to my necessity, didst always hear me: therefore now, Lord, I pray thee to teach me; by thy light illuminate me that I may know thy statutes and receive grace to walk in them. This is a good argument in dealing with the Lord, -- I have gotten many mercies and favourable answers from thee; therefore, Lord, I pray thee to give me more; for whom he loves, he loves to the end; and where he begins to show mercy he ceaseth not till he crown his children with mercy. And so gracious is he Lord, that he esteems himself to be honoured as oft as we give him the praise that we have found comfort in him, and therefore come to seek more. Next, it is to be marked how he saith, I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: these two go well together, Mercy and Truth: truth in the heart of man confessing; mercy in God, hearing and forgiving: happy is the soul wherein these two meet together. Many there are who are destitute of this comfort; they cannot say, God hath heard me, and all because they deal not plainly and truly with the Lord in declaring their ways unto him. William Cowper.

Verse 26. I have declared my ways. In Ps 119:59 he thinketh upon his ways, that is, his inward imperfections and outward aberrations from the strait and straight ways of God; and here he is not ashamed to declare them, that is, to acknowledge and confess that all this came upon him because he was forgetful to do God's will. Note the connection between this and the previous verse: My soul clave unto the dust, because I clave not to thee. -- Richard Greenham.

Verse 26. I have declared my ways. ytdrm, sipparti, "I have remembered my ways"; I have searched them out; I have investigated them. And that he had earnestly prayed for pardon of what was wrong in them, is evident; for he adds, Thou heardest me. Adam Clarke.

Verse 26. I have declared my ways, etc. Him whom thou hast heard in humble confessing of his sins, him thou must teach thy statutes. The saints lay open to God what they find, both good and evil seeking deliverance, supply, strengthening, directing: even as sick patients tell to their doctor both what good and what otherwise they perceive; or as clients lay bare their case to their counsel. Declared. As if he had read them out of a book. The saints know their ways. A man that hath light with him seeth the way, and can tell you all about it; another is in darkness and knoweth nothing: the one taketh observation of his course, the other doth not. Thou hast heard me. God's goodness is seen in his hearing what we lay open before him. If great ones let a poor man tell his tale at large we count it honourable patience; but it is God's glory to hear our wants, our weakness through sin, the invincibleness of our evils, our utter impotency in ourselves even to seek redress. That mode of procedure would lose the favour of man, but it winneth favour with God. The more humbly we confess all our wants, the more confident we may be that God will hear us. He teacheth the humble, for the humble scholar will give to his master the honour of that he learns. I have rehearsed (said with myself) my ways; and "thou hast beard my private confession." I have declared to others what my way is, and "thou hast heard me" so discoursing; wherefore teach me, seeing I communicate what I receive. It is a plea derived from his carefulness to learn, and from the use he had made of that he had learned. The godly, like candles, light each other. Paul Bayne.

Verse 26. I have declared my ways. They that would speed with God, should learn this point of Christian ingenuity, unfeignedly to lay open their whole case to him. That is, to declare what they are about, the nature of their affairs, the state of their hearts, what of good or evil they find in themselves, their conflicts, supplies, distresses, hopes; this is declaring our ways-- the good and evil we are conscious of. As a sick patient will tell the physician how it is with him, so should we deal with God, if we would find mercy. This declaring his ways may be looked upon,

1. As an act of faith and dependence.

2. As an act of holy friendship.

3. As an act of spiritual contrition, and brokenness of heart: for this declaring must be explained according to what David meant by the expression, "My ways."

First, By his "ways" may be meant his businesses or undertakings: I have still made them known to thee, committing them to the direction of thy providence; and so it is an act of faith and dependence, consulting with God, and acquainting him with all our desires.

Secondly, By his "ways" may be meant, all his straits, sorrows, and dangers; and so this declaration is an act of holy friendship, when a man comes as one friend to another, and acquaints God with his whole state, lays his condition before the Lord, in hope of pity and relief.

Thirdly, By "ways" is meant temptations and sins; and so this declaring is an act of spiritual contrition or brokenness of heart. Sins are properly our ways, as Eze 18:25. Thomas Manton.

Verse 26-30. The way of thy precepts. My ways. The way of lying. The way of truth. Here should be noticed the two contrasts by which the Prophet teaches what must be shunned both in life and in doctrine, and what embraced. The first respects the life of Christians, as the Prophet sets the way of God's commandments over against his own ways, Ps 119:26-27; and respecting these he confesses that they have pressed him down to the dust and have greatly distressed him; but respecting those he declares that they have again raised him up. He means by his own ways a depraved nature, carnal desire, and the carnal mind which is enmity against God, Ro 8:7; but by the ways of the Lord he denotes the will of God expressed in the Word. Therefore the boastings of the papists of the perfect obedience of the renewed are empty: for David, assured by having been renewed, complains bitterly and with many tears that his soul, under the intolerable weight of sins, had been brought down to the dust of death and almost suffocated; but that God had heard his prayers and brought him back to the way of his commandments. We, here, also, gather that in this life all the saints experience the wrestling and contest of the flesh and the spirit, so that they are continually compelled to mourn that their flesh turns them aside from the way of the Lord into the by paths of sin: just as Paul cries out, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, etc. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Ro 7:23-24.

The second contrast concerneth the doctrine;for David opposes the way of lying to the way of truth. We are taught by this contrast that we should eschew false doctrine, and steadfastly adhere to divine truth. To this applies the precept of Paul, Eph 4:25. "Wherefore, having put away the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbour." Further, we learn, if we hate our own ways, i.e., confess our sins to the Lord, and, trusting in the Mediator, pray for forgiveness, that God is wont to hear and mercifully to forgive our sins; as it is written, 1Jo 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Solomon Gesner.

Verse 26. Thou heardest me. Past answers to prayer should encourage us to come the more boldly to the throne of grace. -- Jacob never forgot the night he spent at Bethel. William S. Plumer.

Verse 26. Teach me thy statutes. The often repetition of this one thing in this Psalm argues,

1. The necessity of this knowledge.

2. The desire he had to obtain it.

3. That such repetitions are not frivolous when they proceed from a sound heart, a zealous affection, and a consideration of the necessity of the thing prayed for.

4. That such as have most light have little in respect of what they should have.

5. As covetous men think they have never gold enough, so Christian men should think they have never knowledge enough. Richard Greenhorn.

Verse 26. Teach me. We can never do without teaching, even in old age. Unless the Spirit of God teaches us we learn in vain. Martin Geier.

Verse 26-27. Here is David's earnest desire for the continuance of that intimacy that had been between him and his God; not by visions and voices from heaven, but by the Word and Spirit in an ordinary way: "Teach me thy statutes, "that is, "make me to understand the way of thy precepts." When he knew God had heard his declaration of his ways, he doth not say, Now, Lord, tell me my lot, and let me know what the event will be; but, Now, Lord, tell me my duty, let me know what thou wouldest have me to do as the case stands. Note, Those that in all their ways acknowledge God, may pray in faith that he will direct their steps in the right way. And the surest way of keeping up our communion with God is, by learning his statutes, and walking diligently in the way of his precepts. Matthew Henry.

Verse 27. Make me to understand. Natural blindness is an obstinate disease, and hardly cured: therefore again and again we had need to pray, "Open mine eyes"; "Teach me thy statutes"; Make me to understand the way of thy precepts. Our ignorance is great even when it is cured in part. The clouds of temptation and carnal affection cause it to return upon us, so that we know not what we know. Therefore he cries, "open my eyes; cause me to understand." Yea, the more we know the more is our ignorance discovered to us: "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy" (Pr 30:2-3). "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Alas, a poor, little, hearsay knowledge availeth not; they abhor themselves when they have more intimate acquaintance. None so confident as a young professor that knoweth a few truths, but in a weak and imperfect manner: the more we know indeed, the more sensible we are of our ignorance, and how liable to this mistake and that, so that we dare not trust ourselves for an hour. Thomas Mantels.

Verse 27. Understated the way... so shall I talk. We can talk with a better grace of God's "wondrous works, "the wonders of providence, and especially the wonders of redeeming love, when we understand the way of God's precepts, and walk in that way. Matthew Henry

Verse 27. The way of they precepts. He desireth that God would, partly by his Spirit, partly by his ministers, partly by affliction, partly by study and labour, make him to have a right and sound understanding, not only of his statutes, but of the way of his statutes, that is, after what sort and order he may live and direct his life, according to those things which God hath commanded him in his law. Learn here how hard a thing it is for man overweening himself in his own wisdom, to know God's will till God make him to know. Richard Greenham.

Verse 27. So shall I talk of thy wondrous works. He that is sensible of the wondrous things that are in God's word? will be talking of them. 1. It will be so. 2. It should be so.

1. It will be so. When the heart is deeply affected, the tongue cannot hold, but will run out in expressions of it; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When cheered and revived in their afflictions saints are transported with the thought of the excellency of God. "Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul" (Ps 66:15). The woman, when she had found the lost groat, calleth her neighbours to rejoice with her. He that hath but a cold knowledge, will not be so full of good discourse.

2. It should be so in a threefold respect: for the honour of God; the edification of others; and for our own profit.

(a) For the honour of God, to whom we are so much indebted, to bring him into request with those about us. Experience deserveth praise; when you have found the Messiah, call another to him: "Andrew calleth Peter, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias: and Philip called Nathanael and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Joh 1:41-45).

(b) For the edification of others: "And thou, being converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Lu 22:32). True grace is communicative as fire, etc.

(c) For our own profit. He that useth his knowledge shall have more. Whereas, on the contrary, full breasts, if not sucked, become dry. In the dividing, the loaves increased. All gifts, but much more spiritual, which are the best, are improved by exercise. Thomas Manton.

Verse 27. So shall I talk, etc. Desire of knowledge should not be for satisfying of curiosity, or for ostentation, or for worldly gain, but to edify ourselves and others in wisdom... Thy wondrous works. The works of creation, redemption and providence, either set down in Scripture, or observed in our own experience, transcend our capacity, and cannot but draw admiration from them that see them well. David Dickson.

Verse 27. So shall I talk. It is a frequent complaint with Christians, that they are straitened in religious conversation, and often feel unable to speak "to the use of edifying, that they may minister grace to the hearers, "Eph 4:29. Here, then, is the secret disclosed, by which we shall be kept from the danger of dealing in unfelt truths, for "out of the abundance of the heart our mouths shall speak, "Mt 12:34. Seek to have the heart searched, cleansed, filled with the graces of the Spirit. Humility, teachability, simplicity, will bring light unto the understanding, influence the heart, "open the lips, "and unite every member that we have in the service and praise of God. Charles Bridges.

Verse 27. I shall talk of. There is a close affinity between all the duties of religion. The same word is rendered pray, meditate, and talk of. We think of God's excellent majesty; we cry to him in humble prayer; we study his word until our souls are filled with gladness and admiration; and then how can we but talk of his wondrous works? William S. Plumer.

Verse 28. My soul melteth for heaviness. In the original the word signifies, "droppeth away." The Septuagint hath it thus: "My soul fell asleep through weariness." Probably by a fault of the transcribers, putting one word for another. My soul droppeth. It may relate (1) to the plenty of his tears, as the word is used in Scripture: "My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God" (Job 16:20), or droppeth to God, the same word; so it notes his deep sorrow and sense of his condition. The like allusion is in Jos 7:5; "The heart of the people melted, and became as water." Or (2) it relates to his languishing under the extremity of his sorrow; as an unctuous thing wasteth by dropping, so was his soul even dropping away. Such a like expression is used in Ps 117:96: "Their soul is melted because of trouble"; and of Jesus Christ, whose strength was exhausted by the greatness of his sorrows, it is said, Ps 22:14, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it melteth in the midst of my bowels." Be the allusion either to the one or to the other; either to the dropping of tears, or to the melting and wasting away of what is fat or unctuous, it notes a vehement sorrow, and brokenness of heart. So much is clear, his soul was even melting away, and unless God did help, he could hold out no longer. Thomas Manton.

Verse 28. My soul melteth. The oldest versions make it mean to slumber (LXX enustayen, Vulg. dormitavit), which would make the clause remarkably coincident with Lu 22:45. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 28. Heaviness. There is nothing may comfort a natural man but David had it; yet cannot all these keep him from that heaviness whereunto, as witnesseth S. Peter, the children of God are subject in this life, through their manifold temptations. The men of the world are so far from this disposition, that if they have health and wealth, they marvel what it is should make a man heavy: they are not acquainted with the exercise of a feeling conscience; they know not the defects of the spiritual life, and are not grieved at them: being dead in sin they feel not that they want life; all their care is to eat and drink and make merry. But miserable are they; for in their best estate they are as oxen fed for the slaughter. Woe be to them who laugh now, they shall mourn; but blessed are they who mourn now, for they shall be comforted. William Cowper.

Verse 28. Strengthen thou me according unto thy word. Strengthen me to do the duties, resist the temptations, and bear up under the burdens of an afflicted state, that the spirit may not fail. Matthew Henry.

Verse 28. Strengthen thou me according unto thy word. What is that word which David pleaded? "As thy days, so shall thy strength be, " De 33:25. "Will he plead against me, "said Job, "with his great power? No; but he will put strength in me, "Job 23:6. Charles Bridges.

Verse 28. Strengthen thou me. Gesenius translates this, "Keep me alive." Thus, ygmyq, in this verse, answers to ygyx, in the first verse. This prayer for new strength, or life, is an entreaty that the waste of life through tears might be restored by the life giving word. Frederick G. Marchant.

Verse 29. -- It says, Remove from me the way, and not me from the way; because that way of iniquity is within us, for we are born children of wrath, and the passions innate in us run to the he, and make the wretched way of crimes in our souls. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 29. Remove from me the way of lying. Here he acknowledgeth that although he were already exercised in the law of God and in his knowledge, and that although he were a prophet to teach others, nevertheless he was subject to a number of wicked thoughts and imaginations which might always wickedly lead him from the right way, except God had held him with his mighty and strong hand. And this is a point which we ought here rightly to note; for we see how men greatly abuse themselves. When any of us shall have had a good beginning, we straightway think that we are at the highest; we never bethink us to pray any more to God, when once he hath showed us favour enough to serve our turns; but if we have done any small deed, we by and by lift up ourselves and wonder at our great virtues, thinking straightway that the Devil can win no more of us. This foolish arrogancy causeth God to let us go astray, so that we fall mightily, yea, that we break both arms and legs, and are in great hazard of breaking our necks. I speak not now of our natural body, but of our soul. Let us look upon David himself; for he it is that hath made proof hereof. It came to pass that he villainously and wickedly erred when he took Bathsheba the wife of his subject, Uriah, to play the whoremonger with her, that he was the cause of so execrable a murder, yea, and that of many; for he did as much as in him lay, to cause the whole army of the Lord and all the people of Israel to be utterly overthrown. See, then, the great negligence and security into which David fell; and see also wherefore he saith, "Alas, my good God, I beseech thee so to guide me, that I may forsake the way of lying." John Calvin.

Verse 29. Lying. A sin that David, through diffidence, fell into frequently. See 1Sa 21:2,8, where he roundly telleth three or four lies; and the like he did, 1Sa 27:8,10: this evil he saw by himself, and here prayeth against it. John Trapp.

Verse 29. The way of lying, etc. Lying ways are all ways, except the ways of God's commandments: reason, sense, example, custom, event, deceivable lusts, these tell a man he is safe, or that he shall repent of them, and take no hurt in the end, and they promise ease and blessedness, but perform it not. Such as desire to obey God must be kept from evil ways: we are not so sanctified but that temptation will injure our graces. As a fire in kindling, not thoroughly alight, may be quenched by a little water, so may our holiness be damped by temptation. We find within us a proneness to false ways, as candles new blown out are soon blown in again. Therefore as burnt children dread the fire, so do we fear the way of lying. God doth not suffer temptations to come into the presence of some; and in others God maketh the heart averse from sin when the temptation is present. We must come out of the ways of sin, ere we can walk in the ways of God. Paul Bayne.

Verse 29. The way of lying. The whole life of sin is a lie from beginning to end. The word "lying" occurs eight times in this Psalm. William S. Plumer.

Verse 29. The way of lying. By the way of lying is to be understood all that is in man's nature, not agreeable to the word, whether it be counsels, or conclusions of the heart, or external actions; and it is called a lying way, because nature promises a good to be gotten by sin which man shall not find in it. William Cowper.

Verse 29. The way of lying. The prophet here desireth to be confirmed by God against all corruptions in doctrine, and disorder of conversation, which Satan by his witty and wily instruments doth seek to set abroach in the world. These are called "the way of lying."

1. Because they are invented by Satan, the father of lies.

2. They are countenanced by man's wit, the storehouse of lies.

3. They seem to be that, which they are not, which is of the nature of lies.

4. They are contrary to God and his truth, the discoverers of lies. Richard Greenham.

Verse 29. Grant me thy law graciously. He opposes the law of God to the way of lying. First, because it is the only rule of all truth, both in religion and manners: that which is not agreeable to it is but a lie which shall deceive men. Secondly, it destroys and shall at length utterly destroy all contrary errors. As the rod of Aaron devoured the rods of the enchanters: so the word, which is the rod of the mouth of God, shall, in the end, eat up and consume all untruths whatsoever. Thirdly, according to the sentence of this word, so shall it be unto every man; it deceives none. Men shall find by experience it is true: he who walks in a way condemned by the word, shall come to a miserable end. And, on the contrary, it cannot but be well with them who live according to this rule. William Cowper.

Verse 29. Grant me thy law graciously. David had ever the book of the law; for every king of Israel was to have it always by him, and the Rabbis say, written with his own hand. But, "Grant me thy law graciously; "that is, he desires he might have it not only written by him, but upon him, to have it imprinted upon his heart, that he might have a heart to observe and keep it. That is the blessing he begs for, "the law"; and this is begged "graciously, "or upon terms of grace, merely according to thine own favour, and good pleasure. Here is, --

1. The sin deprecated, "Remove from me the way of lying."

2. The good supplicated and asked, "Grant me thy law graciously."

In the first clause you have his malady, David had been enticed to a course of lying. In the second we have his remedy, and that is the law of God. Thomas Manton.

Verse 30. I have chosen the way of truth. Here you have the working of a gracious soul. This is more than sitting and hearing the word-- having no objection to what you hear. Such hearing is all that can be affirmed of the generality of gospel hearers, except we add, that none are more ready to be caught by false and easy ways of salvation, for they assent to all they hear. The man of God strikes a higher and more spiritual note-- he goes into the choice of the thing; he chooses the way of truth; and he cannot but choose it; it is the bent of his renewed nature, the effect indeed of all he has been pleading. How act we? The way of truth is all that God has revealed concerning his Son Jesus. The willing heart chooses this way, and all of it; the bitterness of it, the self denial of it, as well as the comfort of it; a Saviour from sin as well as a Saviour from hell; a Saviour whose Spirit can lead from prayerlessness to godliness, from idleness upon the Sabbath day to a holy keeping of that day, from self seeking to the seeking of Christ, from slack, inconsistent conduct to a careful observance of all the Lord's will. Where God's people meet, there such will delight to be. O for such to abound among us! John Stephen.

Verse 30. I have chosen the way of truth. Religion is not a matter of chance, but of choice. Have we weighed things in the balance, and, upon mature deliberation, made an election, -- "We will have God upon any terms" Have we sat down and reckoned the cost, -- or what religion must cost us, -- the parting with our lusts; and what it may cost us, -- the parting with our lives? Have we resolved, through the assistance of grace, to own Christ when the swords and staves are up? and to sail with him, not only in a pleasure boat, but in a man of war? This choosing God speaks him to be ours: hypocrites profess God out of worldly design, not religious choice. Thomas Watson, in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 30. I have chosen the way of truth. The choice which David makes here of God's truth proceeds from that choice and election whereby the Lord before all time made choice of David, in Christ, to be one of his elect. For as it is true of love, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us" -- we could never have loved him, if first he had not loved us; so it is true of election; if he before time had not chosen us to be his people, we could never in time have chosen him to be our God. And this I mark in them who love the word of God, and delight in it, who can say out of a good heart, that the Lord is their portion and the joy of their soul: this is a sure seal of their election, imprinted by the finger of God in their heart. William Cowper.

Verse 30. In all our religious exercises, let deliberation precede our resolution, and consideration usher in determination. David did so; and therefore he says here, I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. Indeed, he cannot but resolve upon, and make choice of, the way of piety, who layeth before him the goodness, the rectitude and pleasantness of the way. When the prodigal considereth with himself how well his father's servants fared, he thinketh of, yea, determines to go home: "I will arise and go to my father." Abraham Wright, 1661.

Verse 30. I have chosen. No man ever served the Lord but he first made choice of him to be his Master. Every man when he comes to years of discretion, so as to be master of himself, advises with himself what course he shall take, whether he will serve God or the world. Now all the saints of God have made this distinct choice; we will serve the Lord, and no other. Moses when both stood before him, the pleasures of Egypt on the one hand, and God and his people with their afflictions on the other, he chose the latter before the former, Heb 11:25. So David saith he did, I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me; for to choose, is, when a thing lies before a man, and he considers and takes it. So Joshua, "I and my house will serve the Lord." John Preston, (1587-1628) in "The Golden Sceptre held forth to the Humble." 1638.

Verse 30. Truth. There are three kinds of truth; truth in heart, truth in word, truth in deed (2Ki 20:3 Zec 8:16 Heb 10:22). Ayguan. From "The Preacher's Storehouse, "by J. E. Vaux.

Verse 30. Thy judgments. God's word is called his judgment, because it discerns good from evil; and is not a naked sentence; but, as it points out evil, so it pronounces plagues against it, which shall be executed according to the sentence thereof. William Cowper.

Ver. 30-31. I have chosen; I have stuck. The choosing Christian is likely to be the sticking Christian; when those that are Christians by chance tack about if the wind turn. Matthew Henry.

Verse 30. Thy judgments have I laid before me. The solid consideration that God's word is God's decree or judgment may guard a believer against men's terrors and allurements, and fix him in his right choice, as here. David Dickson.

Verse 30. Thy judgments have I laid before me. Men that mean to travel the right way will lay before them a map: so David, as his will had resolved upon the ways of truth, so he setteth before his eyes the map of the law, which did manifest this unto him, as the ship man hath his card with the compass. Paul Bayne.

Verse 31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies. It is not a little remarkable, that while the Psalmist says (Ps 119:25), "My soul cleaveth to the dust, "he should say here, "I have cleaved unto thy testimonies"; for it is the same original word in both verses. The thing is altogether compatible with the experience of the believer. Within there is the body of indwelling sin, and within there is the undying principle of divine grace. There is the contest between them "the flesh lusteth a against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh" (Ga 5:17), and the believer is constrained to cry out, "O wretched man that I am" (Ro 7:24). It is the case; and all believers find it so. While the soul is many times felt cleaving to the dust, the spirit strives to cleave unto God's testimonies. So the believer prays, Cause that I be not put to shame. And keeping close to Christ, brethren, you shall not be put to shame, world without end. John Stephen.

Verse 31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies. He adhered to them when momentary interests might have dictated a different line of conduct, when unbelief would have been ready to shrink from the path of duty, when outward appearances were greatly discouraging to fidelity, when all were ready to deride his preposterous determination. John Morison.

Verse 31. I have stuck. True godliness evermore wears upon her head the garland of perseverance. William Cowper.

Verse 31. Put me not to shame. Forasmuch as David, in a good conscience, endeavoured to serve God, he craves that the Lord would not confound him. This is two ways done; either when the Lord forsakes his children, so that in their trouble they feel not his promised comforts, and great confusion of mind and perturbation is upon them; or otherwise when he leaves them as a prey to their enemies, who scorn them for their godly and sincere life, and exult over them in their time of trouble; when they see that all their prayer and other exercises of religion cannot keep them out of their enemies' hands. "He trusted in God: let him deliver him." From this shame and contempt he desires the Lord would keep him, and that he should never be like unto them, who, being disappointed of that wherein they trusted, are ashamed. William Cowper.

Verse 32. I will run in the way of thy commandments when, etc. You must remember that the speaker, the Psalmist, is not an unconverted man, but one who had long before been brought under the dominion of religion. He is not, therefore, soliciting the first entrance, but the after and multiplied workings of a principle of grace; and he states his desire in an expression which is singularly descriptive of the outgoing of an influence from the heart over the rest of the man. His wish is that his heart might be enlarged; and this wish amounted to a longing that the whole of himself might act in unison with the heart, so that he might become, as it were, all heart, and thus the heart in the strictest sense be enlarged, through the spreading of itself over body and soul, expanding itself till it embraced all the powers of both. If there be the love of God in the heart, then gradually the heart, possessed and actuated by so noble and stirring a principle, will bring over to a lofty consecration all the energies, whether mental or corporeal, and will be practically the same as though the other departments of man were thus the result turned into heart, and he became, according to the phrase which we are accustomed to employ when describing a character of unwonted generosity and warmth, "all heart." So that the desire after an enlarged heart you may fairly consider tantamount to a desire that every faculty might be brought into thorough subjection to God, and that just as God himself is love -- love being rather the Divine essence than a Divine attribute, and therefore love mingling itself with all the properties of Godhead, so the man having love in the heart might become all heart, the heart throwing itself into all his capacities, pervading but not obliterating the characteristics of his nature. And exactly in accordance with this view of the enlargement of heart which the Psalmist desired is the practical result which was to follow on its attainment. He was already walking in the way of God's commandments; but what he proposed to himself was the running that way: I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. A quickened pace, a more rapid progress, a greater alacrity, a firmer constancy, a more resolute and unflinching obedience, these were the results which the Psalmist looked for from the enlargement of his heart. And truly if all the faculties of mind and body be dedicated to God, with a constant and vigorous step will man press on in the way that leadeth to heaven. So long as the dedication is at best only partial, the world retaining some fraction of its empire, notwithstanding the setting up of the kingdom of God, there can be nothing but a slow and impeded progress, a walking interrupted by repeated halting, if not backslidings, by much of loitering, if not of actual retreat; but if the man be all heart, then he will be all life, all warmth, all zeal, all energy, and the consequence of this complete surrender to God will be exactly that which is prophetically announced by Isaiah: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Henry Melvill, 1798-1871.

Verse 32. I will run. By running is meant cheerful, ready, and zealous observance of God's precepts: it is not go, or walk, but run. They that would come to their journey's end, must run in the way of God's commandments. It notes a speedy or a ready obedience, without delay. We must begin with God betimes. Alas! when we should be at the goal, we have many of us scarce set forth. And it notes earnestness; when a man's heart is set upon a thing, he thinks he can never do it soon enough. And this is running, when we are vehement and earnest upon the enjoyment of God and Christ in the way of obedience. And it notes again, that the heart freely offereth itself to God.

This running is the fruit of effectual calling. When the Lord speaks of effectual calling, the issue of it is running; when he speaks of the conversion of the Gentiles, "Nations that know not thee shall run unto thee"; and, "Draw me, and we will run after thee." When God draws there is a speedy, earnest motion of the soul.

This running, as it is the fruit of effectual calling, so it is very needful; for cold and faint motions are soon overborne by difficulty and temptation: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1). When a man hath a mind to do a thing, though he be hindered and jostled, he takes it patiently, he goes on and cannot stay to debate the business. A slow motion is easily stopped, whereas a swift one bears down that which opposeth it; so is it when men run and are not tired in the service of God. Last of all, the prize calls for running: "So run that ye may obtain" (1Co 9:24). Thomas Manton.

Verse 32. I will run. It was not the walking, "the way of God's commandments, "but the running "the way of God's commandments, "to which David aspired. The text has no connection with the case of one who habitually pursues the opposite path; it has exclusive reference to the pace at which the line of duty is to be traversed... It may not unnaturally excite surprise, that "the sweet singer of Israel" -- he who was emphatically declared to be "a man after God's own heart" -- should, nevertheless, in the words of the text, seem to imply that he was not yet "running the way of God's commandments." But, dear brethren, the greater an individual's comparative holiness, the more intense will be his longing for absolute holiness. To others, David might appear to be speeding marvellously along the path of life; and yet he himself deemed his movements to be far less rapid. It is humility was one of the evidences of his holiness. Hugh B. Moffat, 1871.

Verse 32. I will run the way. His intended course in this way he expresses by running. It is good to be in this way even in the slowest motions; love will creep where it cannot walk. But if thou art so indeed, then thou wilt long for a swifter motion; if thou do but creep, creep on, desire to be enabled to go. If thou goest, but yet haltingly and lamely, yet desire to be strengthened to walk straight; and if thou walkest, let not that satisfy thee, desire to run. So here, David did walk in this way; but he earnestly wishes to mend his pace; he would willingly run, and for that end he desires an enlarged heart. Some dispute and descant too much whether they go or no, and childishly tell their steps, and would know at every step whether they advance or no, and how much they advance, and thus amuse themselves, and spend the time of doing and going in questioning and doubting. Thus it is with many Christians; but it were a more wise and comfortable way to be endeavouring onwards, and if thou make little progress, at least to be desiring to make more; to be praying and walking, and praying that thou mayest walk faster, and that in the end thou mayest run, not satisfied with anything attained. Yet by that dissatisfaction we must not be so dejected as to sit down, or to stand still, but rather we must be excited to go on. Robert Leighton.

Verse 32. Enlarged my heart, or dilated it, namely, with joy. It is obvious to remark the philosophical propriety with which this expression is applied: since the heart is dilated, and the pulse by consequence becomes strong and full, from the exultation of joy as well as of pride. (See Parkhurst on bxr.) Richard Mant.

Verse 32. Thou wilt enlarge my heart. God would enlarge the very seat of life, and thus give his weak servant more strength; such strength that he need no longer lie prone on the dust struggling to arise; but strength to enable him to run in the way of truth. Thus, he who prays, "O Lord, put me not to shame, "finds for himself the truth of an earlier song: "They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." Frederick G. Marchant.

Verse 32. Enlarge my heart. It is said of Solomon, that he had "a large heart, (the same word that is used here,)as the sand of the sea shore:" that is a vast, comprehensive spirit, that could fathom much of nature, both its greater and lesser things. Thus, I conceive, the enlargement of the heart comprises the enlightening of the understanding. There arises a clearer light there to discern spiritual things in a more spiritual manner; to see the vast difference betwixt the vain things the world goes after, and the true solid delight that is in the way of God's commandments; to know the false blush of the pleasures of sin, and what deformity is under that painted mask, and not be allured by it; to have enlarged apprehensions of God, his excellency, and greatness and goodness; how worthy he is to be obeyed and served; this is the great dignity and happiness of the soul; all other pretensions are low and poor in respect of this. Here then is enlargement to see the purity and beauty of his law, how just and reasonable, yea, how pleasant and amiable it is; that his commandments are not grievous, that they are beds of spices; the more we walk in them, still the more of their fragrant smell and sweetness we find. Robert Leighton.

Verse 32. Narrow is the way unto life, but no man can run in it save with widened heart. Prosper, of Aquitaine, (403-463), quoted by Neale and Littledale.

Verse 32. Enlarged. Surely a temple for the great God (such as our hearts should be) should be fair and ample. If we would have God dwell in our hearts, and shed abroad his influences, we should make room for God in our souls, by a greater largeness of faith and expectation. The rich man thought of enlarging his barns, when his store was increased upon him (Lu 12:16-21), so should we stretch out the curtains of Christ's tent and habitation, have larger expectations of God, if we would receive more from him. The vessels failed before the oil failed. We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves; by the scantiness of our thoughts, we do lot make room for him, nor greaten God: "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Lu 1:46). Faith doth greaten God. How can we make God greater than he is? As to the declarative being, we can have greater and larger apprehensions of his greatness, goodness, and truth.

1. There needs a large heart, because the command is exceedingly broad: "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps 119:96). A broad law and a narrow heart will never suit: we need love, faith, knowledge, and all to carry us through this work, which is of such a vast extent and latitude.

2. We need enlarged heart, because of the lets and hindrances within ourselves. There is lust drawing off from God to sensual objects: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas 1:14). Therefore there needs something to draw us on, to carry us out with strength and life another way, to urge us in the service of God. Lust sits as a clog upon us, it is a weight of corruption (Heb 12:1), retarding us in all our flights and motions, thwarting, opposing, breaking the force of spiritual impulsions, if not hindering them altogether (Ga 5:17). Well then, lust drawing so strongly one way, God needs to draw us more strongly the other way. When there is a weight to poise us to worldly and sensual objects, we need a strength to carry us on with vigorous and lively motions of soul towards God, an earnest bent upon our souls, which is this enlargement of heart. Thomas Manton.

Verse 32. My heart. The great Physician knows at once where to look for the cause, when he sees anything amiss in the outward life of his people. He well knows that all spiritual disease is heart disease, and it is the heart remedies that he must apply. At one time, our Physician sees symptoms which are violent in their nature; at another, he sees symptoms of languor and debility; but he knows that both come from the heart; and so, it is upon the heart that he operates, when he is about to perform a cure. The strong action of the heart in all holy things comes from the blessed operation of the Spirit upon it; then only can we "run" the way of God's commandments, when he has enlarged our heart. Heartiness in action is the subject to which the reader's attention is here directed, and it is one of considerable importance. There are many believers, who for want of enlargement of heart are occupying a poor position in the church of God. They are trusting to Jesus for life eternal, and he will doubtless not disappoint them; he will be true to his word, that "he that believeth shall be saved; "but they are still, alas! to a deplorable degree, shut up in self; they have contracted hearts; still do they take narrow views of God's claim, and their own privileges, and the position in which they are set in the world and however much they might be said to stand, or sit, or walk in the way of God's commandments, they cannot be said to "run" in it. Running is a strong and healthy action of the body; it requires energy, it is an exercise that needs a sound heart; none can run in the way of God's commandments, except in strength and vigour imparted by him. The running Christians are comparatively few; walking and sitting Christians are comparatively common; but the running Christian is so uncommon as often to be thought almost mad. Let us, for the sake of order, classify our observations on this subject under the following heads:

1. What heartiness is. The heartiness spoken of here under the term, "enlargement of the heart, "is cheerfulness in doing God's will -- love for that will-- a drawing out of the affections towards it-- an interest in it; all this it is, and a great deal more, which it is not easy to describe or define.

2. What heartiness does. Where there is enlargement of the heart by God, there is an outgoing beyond all the limits which fallen selfishness assigns. The heart contracted at the fall; it shrank when sin entered into it; it became unequal to containing great and generous thoughts; it became a bondaged heart. True! the responsibilities of duty could not be escaped, nor could the directions of conscience; but the affections are voluntary, and the fallen heart drew in its affections from God; it felt that it had the power of withholding them from him and his commandments, and it rejoiced to shew its enmity in withholding its sympathy, where it could not withhold its obedience...

3. Whence heartiness comes. Now, as we have already said, where the heart is operated on by the Spirit, and all its natural evil overruled, it has outgoings which are entirely beyond the limits that fallen selfishness assigns. Love is inwrought with it: the union of sentiment, the identity of interest which love inspires, pervade it, in all belonging to God, for it has received these from God; the heart becomes unbondaged from mere rules, or perhaps to speak more correctly, it rises above them, and it feels-- not merely it knows, but it feels -- so much of the beauty of God's commandments, that it delights to "run" in them; it loves to be hearty in them; its interests, its affections are in them. Philip Bennet Power, in "The I Wills' of the Psalms," 1862.

Verse 32. Disquiets of heart unfit us for duty, by hindering our activity in the prosecution of duty. The whole heart, soul, and strength should be engaged in all religious services; but these troubles are as clogs and weights to hinder motion. Joy is the dilatation of the soul, and widens it for anything which it undertakes; but grief contracts the heart, and narrows all the faculties. Hence doth David beg an "enlarged heart, "as the principle of activity: I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart; for what else can be expected when the mind is so distracted with fear and sorrow, but that it should be uneven, tottering, weak, and confused? so that if it do set itself to anything, it acts troublesomely, drives on heavily, and doth a very little with a great deal ado; and yet, the unfitness were less, if that little which it can do were well done; but the mind is so interrupted in its endeavours that sometimes in prayer the man begins, and then is presently at a stand, and dares not proceed, his words are swallowed up, "he is so troubled that he cannot speak" Ps 77:4. Richard Gilpin, (1625-1699), in "Daemonologia Sacra."

Upon this Octonary the Notes furnished by Mr. Marchant, one of the Tutors of the Pastors' College, are so excellent that we give them entire.

SECTION h HE.

SUBJECT: THE LAW OF JEHOVAH TO BE SET BEFORE THE EYES, THE WIND, THE FEET, AND THE HEART.

Key phrase: dtrma drkel Mqh. Set up before thy servant thy word (Ps 119:38).

Verse 33. THE WORD SET UP BEFORE THE EYES. Teach me; literally, "point out, ""indicate to me." hry, as used here, means "to send out the hand, "especially in the sense of pointing out. Hence "to show, ", "to indicate, ""to teach." The Psalmist here prays for direction in its more superficial form: Many paths were before his eyes leading down to death: one path was before him, leading unto life. He here asks to be shown which is Jehovah's way. If the Lord will ever show his eyes which way is the right way, then he will keep it unto the end. Here is light wanted for the eyes. As the Indian pursues his trail with unerring eye and unfaltering step, so, watching for every deviation which might take us astray, we should pursue the way which leadeth unto life.

Verses 33-40. In this Octonarius, now and again, the same prayer is repeated, of which several times mention has before been made. For he prays that he may be divinely taught, governed, strengthened, and defended against the calumnies, reproaches, and threatenings of his enemies. And the prayer is full of the most ardent longings, which is manifest from the same resolve being so frequently repeated. For the more he knows the ignorance, obscurity, doubts, and the imbecility of the human mind, and sees how men are impelled by a slight momentum, so that they fall away from the truth and embrace errors repugnant to the divine word, or fall into great sins, the more ardently and strongly does he ask in prayer that he may be divinely taught, governed, and strengthened, lest he should cast away acknowledged truth, or plunge himself into wickedness. And by his example he teaches that we, also, against blindness born with us, and the imbecility of our flesh, and also against the snares and madness of devils should fortify ourselves with those weapons; namely, with the right study and knowledge of the divine Word, and with constant prayer. For if so great a man, who had made such preeminent attainments, prayed for this, how much more ought they to do so, who are but novices and ignorant beginners. This is the sum of this Octonarius. D. H. Mollerus.

Verses 33-40. In this part, nine times does the Psalmist send up his petition to his God, and six of these he accompanies with a reason for being heard... These petitions are the utterances of a renewed heart; the man of God could not but give utterance to them-- such was the new refining process that had taken place upon him... The outline runs thus: -- Petitions are offered for Instruction (Ps 119:33) and Understanding (Ps 119:34), and likewise for Spiritual Ability (Ps 119:35) and Inclination (Ps 119:36). These are followed by petitions for Exemption from the Spirit of Vanity (Ps 119:37), and for Divine Quickening (Ps 119:37). The Lord is besought to make good his Word of Promise to his servant (Ps 119:38), and to deliver him from Feared Reproach. Last of all, the man of God places his prayer for quickening upon the ground of the Divine Righteousness (Ps 119:40). May the Divine Spirit teach us to compare ourselves with what we find here, as we would see the salvation of our God! John Stephen.

Verses 33-40. I observe that in this one octonary which is not to be found in any of the rest, namely, that in every several verse there is a several prayer. In the first whereof he prays to be taught, and then promises to take in that which God shall teach him. He had before resolved to run in this way; but he felt forthwith his own natural aberrations, and therefore he cometh to this guide to be taught. Richard Greenham.

Verse 33. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes, etc. Instruction from above is necessary for the children of God, while they continue in this world. The more we know, the more we shall desire to know; we shall beg a daily supply of grace, as well as of bread; and a taste of "the cluster of Eshcol" will make us long after the vintage of Canaan (Nu 13:23). Religion is the art of holy living, and then only known when it is practised; as he is not a master of music who can read the notes which compose it, but he who has learnt to take a lesson readily from the book, and play it on his instrument; after which the pleasure it affords will be sufficient motive for continuing so to do. George Horne.

Verse 33. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes, etc. In the sincerity of your hearts go to God for his teaching. God is pleased with the request. "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing" (1Ki 3:9,10). Oh, beg it of God, for these three reasons--

1. The way of God's statutes is worthy to be found by all.

2. It is hard to be found and kept by any.

3. It is so dangerous to miss it, that this should quicken us to be earnest with God. Thomas Manton.

Verse 33. Teach me, O LORD, etc. "He who is his own pupil, "remarks S. Bernard, "has a fool for his master." A soldier who enters on a march does not settle for himself the order of his going, nor begin the journey at his own will, nor yet choose pleasant short cuts, lest he should fall out of rank, away from the standards, but gets the route from his general, and keeps to it; advances in a prescribed order, walks armed, and goes straight on to the end of his march to find there the supplies provided by the commissariat. If he goes by any other road, he gets no rations, and finds no quarters ready, because the general's orders are that all things of this kind shall be prepared for those who follow him, and turn not aside to the right hand or the left. And thus he who follows his general does not break down, and that for good reasons; for the general consults not for his own convenience, but for the capability of his whole army. And this, too, is Christ's order of march, as he leads his great host out of the spiritual Egypt to the eternal Land of Paradise. Ambrose, quoted by Neale and Littledale.

Verse 33. Teach me, O LORD, the way, etc. It should never be forgotten, as this fifth section teaches us, that there is a way marked out by God's own appointment for all his people to walk in, and in which to persevere. Others lay down a path each for himself, and keeping to it think they are safe. David did not trust to anything of this kind; he was only desirous of being found in the way of God's ordinance, and to be so taught of God as to keep it to the end; or as the original reads, keep it the end, the end of his profession, the salvation of his soul. W. Wilson.

Verse 33. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it, etc. If thou continue a teacher of me, saith David, I shall continue a servant to thee. Perseverance cannot be unless continual light and grace be furnished to us from the Lord. As the tree which hath not sap at the root may flourish for a while, but cannot continue; so a man, whose heart is not watered with the dew of God's grace continually, may for a time make a fair show of godliness, but in the end he will fall away, We bear not the root, but the root bears us: let us tremble and fear. If we abide not in our Lord, we become withered branches, good for nothing but the fire. Let us alway pray that he would ever abide with us, to inform us by his light, and lead us by his power, in that way which may bring us to himself. William Cowper.

Verse 33. Statutes, from a word signifying to mark, trace out, describe and ordain;because they mark out our way, describe the line of conduct we are to pursue, and order or ordain what we are to observe. Adam Clarke.

Verse 33. God's "statutes" declare his authority and power of giving us laws. Matthew Pool, 1624-1679.

Verse 33. Unto the end, or, by way of return, or reward, or gratitude to thee; God's mercy in teaching being in all reason to be rewarded or answered by our observing and taking exact care of what he teaches. Or else by analogy with Ps 19:11, where the keeping his commandments brings great reward with it: it may here be rendered bqe (understanding the preposition l) for the reward, meaning the present joy of it, Ps 119:32, not excluding the future crown. H. Hammond.

Verse 33. Unto the end. Quite through;the Hebrew is, to the heel. The force of the words seems to be, "Quite through, from head to foot." Zachary Mudge, 1744.

Verses 33-34. Unto the end. He will be no temporizer;he will keep it "to the end." He will be no hypocrite;he will keep it "with his whole heart." Adam Clarke.

Verse 34. THE WORD SET BEFORE THE MIND. Give me understanding. The word used here refers to mental comprehension, as distinguished from the mere direction, or pointing out, asked for in the previous verse. Here the prayer is, "Make me to discern, ""Cause me to perceive, "i.e., with the understanding "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing, by the word of God." The outer senses must first see the way, then the mind must understand it, then, with faith and love, the heart should follow it. Thus, too, the Psalmist, if God will cause him to understand the law, will keep it with all his heart. Still, the heart is prone to lean to things earthly and sinful, and divine help has presently to be invoked for that also.

Verse 34. Give me understanding. The Psalmist goes to the root of the matter; he is taught to do so by the Spirit of all teaching. He would not merely be taught, as a master would teach, but he would have his mind remoulded and informed as only the Creator could do. The words imply as much. "Give me understanding" -- make me to understand. Not merely did he want to know a thing-- the general nature of it; but he wished to understand the beginning, the outgoing and the end of it. He wanted to attain the power of distinction between right and wrong-- spiritual discernment that so he might discern the right, and, at the same time, all that was contrary to it; he wanted understanding, that so he might know, and discern, and prize the truth, the true way of God, carefully avoiding all that would be aside from it. John Stephen.

Verse 34. Give me understanding. This is that which we are indebted to Christ for; for "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding" (1Jo 5:20). Matthew Henry.

Verse 34. Understanding. The understanding is the pilot and guide of the whole man; that faculty which sits at the stern of the soul: but as the most expert guide may mistake in the dark, so may the understanding, when it wants the light of knowledge. "Without knowledge the mind cannot be good" (Pr 19:2); nor the life good; nor the external condition safe (Eph 4:18). "My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge" (Ho 4:6). It is ordinary in Scripture to set profaneness, and all kinds of miscarriages, upon the score of ignorance. Diseases in the body have many times their rise from distempers in the head;and exorbitance in practice, from errors in the judgment. And, indeed, in every sin, there is something both of ignorance and error at the bottom: for did sinners truly know what they do in sinning, we might say of every sin what the Apostle speaks concerning that great sin, "Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1Co 2:8). Did they truly know that every sin is a provoking the Lord to jealousy, a proclaiming war against heaven, a crucifying the Lord Jesus afresh, a treasuring up wrath afresh unto themselves against the day of wrath; and that if ever they be pardoned, it must be at no lower a rate than the price of his blood-- it were scarce possible but sin, instead of alluring, should affright, and instead of tempting, scare. From the "Recommendatory Epistle prefixed to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms."

Verse 34. My whole heart. The whole man is God's by every kind of right and title; and therefore, when he requireth the whole heart, he doth but require that which is his own. God gave us the whole by creation, preserveth the whole, redeemeth the whole, and promises to glorify the whole. If we had been mangled in creation we would have been troubled; if born without hands or feet. If God should turn us off to ourselves to keep that part to ourselves which we reserved from him, or if he should make such a division at death, take a part to heaven, or if Christ had bought part: "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God iri your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Co 6:20). If you have had any good work upon you, God sanctified the whole in a gospel sense, that is every part: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:23). Not only conscience, but will and affections, appetite and body. And you have given all to him for his use: "I am my beloved's"! not a part, but the whole. He could not endure Ananias that kept back part of the price; all is his due. When the world, pleasure, ambition, pride, desire of riches, unchaste love, desire a part in us, we may remember we have no affections to dispose of without God's leave. It is all his, and it is sacrilege to rob or detain any part from God. Shall I alienate that which is God's to satisfy the world, the flesh, and the Devil? Thomas Manton.

Verses 34, 35. Give me understanding. Make me to go. The understanding which he seeks leads to going, and is sought to that end. God's teaching begets obedience; he showeth us the path of life, and he maketh us to go in it. It is such instruction as giveth strength, that excites the sluggish will, and breaketh the force of corrupt inclinations; it removeth sluggish will and the darkness which corruption and sin have brought upon the mind, and maketh us pliable and ready to obey; yea, it giveth not only the will, but the deed; in short, it engages us in a watchful, careful, uniform, and constant obedience. Thomas Manton.

Verse 35. THE WORD SET BEFORE THE FEET. The word ygkwddh is from drd "to tread with the feet, ""to trample." Hence, "Make me to go, "alludes here to the very act of walking in the divine way, in distinction from mere perception of the way with the eyes and with the understanding. It is in this matter of practical walking that the actual difficulties of the way seem to come more forcibly into sight; hence we no longer have Kdd used (as in Ps 119:33) which may mean a broad open way, but bytg, which (says Gesenius) "never denotes a public and royal road, such as was raised up and formed by art, but always a footpath." So the younger Buxtorf renders the word by Semita. When the feet really come to tread it, the way of truth is ever found to be "the narrow way."

Verse 35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments. David, in the former verses, had begged for light, now for strength to walk according to this light. We need not only light to know our way, but a heart to walk in it. Direction is necessary because of the blindness of our minds; and the effectual impulsions of grace are necessary because of the weakness of our hearts. It will not answer our duty to have a naked notion of truths, unless we embrace and pursue them. So, accordingly, we need a double assistance from God; the mind must be enlightened, the will moved and inclined. The work of a Christian lies not in depth of speculation, but in the height of practice. The excellency of Divine grace consisteth in this, -- That God doth first teach what is to be done, and then make us to do whet is taught: "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments." Thomas Marten.

Verse 35. The path of thy commandments. They are termed "the paths, "because paths are narrow, short, straight, clean passages for people on foot only, and not for horses and carriages; and such is the way of the Lord, as compared with that of the flesh and of the world, all the ways of which are broad, filthy, and crooked, trodden by the brute beasts, the type of carnal, animal man. He assigns a reason for being heard when he says, For this same I have desired; because, through God's grace, I have chosen this path, and desired to walk in it, and it is only meet that he who gives the will should give the grace to accomplish, as St. Paul says, "Who worketh in you both to will and to do." Robert Bellarmine.

Verse 35. The path is "the path of thy commandments." Not any new way, but the old and pathed way wherein all the servants of God have walked before him, and for which the Grecians (as Euthymius notes) called it tribon quasi viam tritam. But howsoever this way be pathed, by the walking and treading of many in it, yet he acknowledgeth it is but one, yea, and a narrow and difficult path to keep, and therefore seeks he to be guided into it. William Cowper.

Verse 35. The path. It is a "path" not a public road; a path where no beast goes, and men seldom. Adam Clarke.

Verses 35, 37. The path. Thy way: The Hindus call panth or way the line of doctrine of any sect followed, in older to attain to mukti, or deliverance from sin. Way signifies the chief means to an end, and is applied to the Scriptures, Ps 119:27, to God's counsels, to God's works. This spiritual way is-- (1) easy to find, Isa 35:8, (2) clean, no mud of sin; (3) never out of repair. Christ the same now as 6,000 years ago; (4) no lion or wild beasts on; (5) costly, the blood of Christ made it; (6) not lonely, many believers on it, Heb 12:1; (7) no toll, all may come; (8) wide. The way to the cities of refuge was forty-eight feet wide. The map of the Bible shows this path; (9) the end pleasant-- Heaven. J. Long, in "Eastern Proverbs and Maxims illustrating old Truths," 1881.

Verses 35-36. Therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. A child of God hath not the bent of his heart so perfectly fixed towards God but it is ever and anon returning to its old bent and bias again. The best may find that they cannot keep their affections as loose from the world when they have houses, and lands, and all things at their will, as they could when they are kept low and bare. The best may find that their love to heavenly things is on the wane as worldly things are on the increase. It is reported of Pius Quintus that he should say of himself that, when he first entered into orders, he had some hopes of his salvation; when he came to be a cardinal, he doubted of it; but since he came to be pope, he did even almost despair. Many may find a very great change in themselves, much decay of zeal for God's glory, and love to and relish of God's word, and mindfulness of heavenly things, as it fares better with them in the world. Now it is good to observe this before the mischief increaseth. Look, as jealousy and caution are necessary to prevent the entrance and ginning of this mischief, so observation is necessary to prevent the increase of it. When the world doth get too deep an interest in our hearts, when it begins to insinuate and entice us from God, and weaken our delight in the ways of God and zeal for his glory, then we need often to tell you how it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Thomas Manton.

Verse 36. THE WORD SET BEFORE THE HEART. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. It is nothing for the eyes to see, for the mind to understand, nor even for the feet to be made to go in the way of truth, if the heart be not inclined thereunto also. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. To be without love is, according to 1Co 13:1-3, to be without everything. Thus the sense of these four methodical petitions in this section is as follows: Make me to see, make me to understand, make me to go in, and make me to love to go in, the beaten and narrow path of thy testimonies. So far as I gather, Luther gives almost the exact sense of the foregoing exposition; for he translates the opening words of Ps 119:33-36 by terms signifying respectively, "Point out to me, " "Explain to me, ""Lead me, "and "Incline (bend, slope) my heart, "etc.

Verse 36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. We must be convinced that covetousness, I mean that our covetousness, is vice; for it holds something of a virtue, of frugality, which is not to that which one hath: and this makes us entertain thoughts that it is no vice; and we often say that it is good to be a little worldly; a little covetousness we like well; which shows that we do not indeed and in heart, hold it to be a sin. For if sin be naught, a little of sin cannot be good. As good say, a little poison were good, so it be not too much. And so we find, that men will rate at their children for spending, and are ready to turn them of doors, if they be given unto waste; but if they be near and pinching then we like that too much; and I scarce know a man who doth use to call upon his children that they spare not, save not. I know youth is rather addicted the other way, and is more subject to waste and consume, by that the natural heat is quick and active in them; and therefore there is more fear and danger that they prove prodigal and turn and therefore the more may be said and done that way to youth. But the thing I press is, that in case we see our children in their youth to begin to be covetous and worldly, we call them good husbands, and are but too to see it so, and are too much pleased with them for it. Little do think that worldliness is a most guilty sin in respect of God, and hurtful in respect of men. Hark what the word of God saith of it, Eph 5:5: It is idolatry, and idolatry is the first sin of the first table. It is the root of all evils, 1Ti 6:10. There is no evil but a worldly man do it to save his purse. Thus David: "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness": he saith not, this or that testimony, but (as including all the laws of God) he saith "testimonies"; to show us covetousness draws us away, not from some only, but from all God's commandments. So St. Paul: where covetousness is, there are "many lusts, " 1Ti 6:9, and "many sorrows, "1Ti 6:10. "It drowns men in perdition and destruction, "1Ti 6:9. And the Greek word signifies such a drowning as is almost past all hope and recovery. It is the bane all society: men cry out of it, because they would have none covetous, rich but themselves. A hater he is of mankind; he hates all poor, they would beg something of him; and all rich, because they have which he would have. A covetous man would have all that all have. Thus speaks a noble father (Chrysostom). Such believe not the word, they trust neither nor man. For he that trusts not God, cannot trust man. It robs God that confidence we should have in him, and dependence we owe unto him it turns a man from all the commandments. Hence the prophet prays God to turn his heart to his commandments, "and not to covetousness." For not only we ought not, but as the phrase is, "we cannot serve God mammon, "Lu 16:13. Richard Capel, in "Tentations: their Danger, Cure." 1655.

Verse 36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Without a restraining hand the heart is prone to turn aside into the byways of petty love of pelf. The remedy must be from above. Heavenly aid is therefore sought. Henry Law.

Verse 36. Incline my heart. Were we naturally and spontaneously inclined to the righteousness of the law, there would be no occasion for the petition of the Psalmist, "Incline my heart." It remains, therefore, that our hearts are full of sinful thoughts, and wholly rebellious until God by his grace change them. John Calvin.

Verse 36. Incline my heart. In the former verses David had asked understanding and direction to know the Lord's will; now he asketh an inclination of heart to do the Lord's will. The understanding needs not only to be enlightened, but the will to be moved and changed. Man's heart is of its own accord averse from God and holiness, even then when the wit is most refined, and the understanding is stocked and stored with high notions about it: therefore David doth not only say, "Give me understanding, "but, "Incline my heart." We can be worldly of ourselves, but we cannot be holy and heavenly of ourselves; that must be asked of him who is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. They that plead for the power of nature, shut out the use of prayer. But Austin hath said well, Naturn vera confessione non falsa defersione opus habet:we need rather to confess our weakness, than defend our strength. Thus doth David, and so will every broken hearted Christian that hath had an experience of the inclinations of his own soul, he will come to God, and say, Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Thomas Manton.

Verse 36. Incline. Then shall I not decline. James G. Murphy.

Verse 36. Unto thy testimonies. The contrast is most striking. There are the divine testimonies on the one hand, and there is "covetousness" on the other. God stands on one side, the world on the other. The renewed man chooses between the two; he does not require long to think, and God is his choice. John Stephen.

Verse 36. Not to covetousness. He prays in particular that his heart may be diverted from covetousness, which is not only an evil, but as saith the Apostle, "the root of all evil." David here opposes it as an adversary to all the righteousness of God's testimonies: it inverts the order of nature, and makes the heavenly soul earthly. It is a handmaid of all sins; for there is no sin which a covetous man will not serve for his gain. We should beware of all sins, but specially of mother sins. William Cowper.

Verse 36. Covetousness, or rather, "gain unjustly acquired."... The Hebrew word euk can only mean plunder, rapine, unjust gain. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 36. Covetousness. S. Bonaventura, on our Psalm, says Covetousness must be hated, shunned, put away: must be hated, because it attacks the life of nature: must be shunned, because it hinders the life of grace: must be put away, because it obstructs the life of glory. Clemens Alexandrinus says that covetousness is the citadel of the vices, and Ambrose says that it is the loss of the soul. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 36. Covetousness. I would observe to the reader, and desire him duly and seriously to consider, that although this commandment, "Thou shalt not covet, "is placed the last in number, yet it is too often the first that is broken, man's covetous heart leading the van in transgression. William Crouch, in "The Enormous Sin of Covetousness detected," 1709.

Verse 36. Covetousness is an immoderate desire of riches, in which these vices concur.

First, An excessive love of riches, and the fixing of our hearts upon them.

Secondly, A resolution to become rich, either by lawful or unlawful means, 1Ti 6:9.

Thirdly, Too much haste in gathering riches, joined with impatience of any delay, Pr 28:20,22, 20:21.

Fourthly, An insatiable appetite, which can never be satisfied; but when they have too much, they still desire more, and have never enough, Ec 4:8. Like the horseleech, Pr 30:15; the dropsy, and hell itself, Pr 27:20.

Fifthly, Miser like tenacity, whereby they refuse to communicate their goods, either for the use of others, or themselves.

Sixthly, Cruelty. Pr 1:18-19, exercised both in their unmercifulness and oppression of the poor. Covetousness is a most heinous vice; for it is idolatry, and the root of all evil, Col 3:5 1Ti 6:10; a pernicious thorn, that stifles all grace and chokes the seed of the word, Mt 13:22, and pierceth men through with many sorrows, 1Ti 6:10, and drowns them in destruction and perdition. James Usher, 1580-1655.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes, etc. Literally, "Make mine eyes to pass from seeing vanity; "as though he would pray, Whatever is of vanity, make me to pass without seeing it. The sentiment is strikingly like that in our Lord's prayer: "Lead us not into temptation." Having prayed for what he wanted to see, the Psalmist here prays for the hiding of what he would not see.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes, etc. Having prayed for his heart, he now prayeth for his eyes also. Omnia a Deo petit, docens, illum omnia efficere. By the eyes oftentimes, as by windows, death enters into the heart; therefore to keep the heart in a good estate three things are requisite, First, careful study of the senses, specially of the eyes; for it is a righteous working of the Lord, ut qui exteriori oculo negligenter utitur, intertori non injuste caecetur that he who negligently useth the external eye of his body, should punished with blindness in the internal eye of his mind. And for this cause Nazianzen, deploring the calamities of his soul, wished that a door might set before his eyes and ears, to close them when they opened to anything that is not good; malis autem sua sponte uturumque clauderetur. The second thing is, a subduing of the body by discipline. And the third is, continuance in prayer. William Cowper.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. Notice that he does not say, I will turn away mine eyes; but, "Turn away mine eyes." This shows that it is not possible for us sufficiently to keep our by our own caution and diligence; but there must be divine keeping. For, first, wheresoever in this world you turn yourself provocations to are met with. Secondly, with the unwary, and with far different the persons, the eyes, the servants of a corrupt heart, wander after the things which are the vanities. Thirdly, before you are aware, the evil contracted through eyes creeps in to the inmost recesses of the heart, and casts in the seeds perdition. This the Psalmist himself had experienced, not without greatest trouble both of heart and condition. Wolfgang Musculus, 1563.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. It may seem strange prayer of David, to say, "Turn away mine eyes from seeing vanity; "as though God meddled with our looking; or that we had not power in selves to cast our eyes upon what objects we list. But is it not, that we delight in, we delight to look upon? and what we love, we love to seeing? and so to pray to God, that our eyes may not see vanity; is as much as to pray for grace, that we be not in love with vanity. For, vanity hath of itself so graceful an aspect, that it is not for a natural man to leave looking upon it; unless the fairer aspect of God's grace draw our eyes from vanity, to look upon itself; which will always naturally looking upon the fairest. And as David here makes his prayer in the particular, against temptations of prosperity, so Christ teacheth us to make prayer in the general, against the temptations, both of prosperity adversity, and very justly. For many can bear the temptations of one who are quickly overcome by temptations of the other kind. So David could bear persecution without murmuring, but when he came to prosperity could not turn away his eyes from vanity. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. An ugly object loses much of its deformity when we look often upon it. Sin follows the general law, and is to be avoided altogether, even in its contemplation, we would be safe. A man should be thankful in this world that he eyelids; and as he can close his eyes, so he should often do it. Albert Barnes.

Verse 37. Turn away, then quicken, etc. The first request is for the removing the impediments of obedience, the other for the addition of new degrees of grace. These two are fitly joined, for they have a natural influence upon one another; unless we turn away our eyes from vanity, we shall soon contract deadness of heart. Nothing causeth it so much as an inordinate liberty in carnal vanities; when our affections are alive to other things, they are dead to God, therefore the less we let loose our hearts to these things, the more lively and cheerful in the work of obedience. On the other side, the more the rigour of grace is renewed, and the habits of it quickened into actual exercise, the more is sin mortified and subdued. Sin dieth, and our senses are restored to their proper use. Thomas Manton.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. That sin may be avoided we must avoid whatsoever leads to or occasions it. As this caused Job (Job 31:1) to covenant strongly with his eyes, so it caused David to pray earnestly about his eyes. "Turn away mine eyes (or as the Hebrew may be rendered, make them to pass), from beholding vanity." The eye is apt to make a stand, or fix itself, when we come in view of an ensnaring object; therefore it is our duty to hasten it away, or to pray that God would make it pass off from it... He that feareth burning must take heed of playing with fire: he that feareth drowning must keep out of deep waters. He that feareth the plague must not go into an infected house. Would they avoid sin who present themselves to the opportunities of it? Joseph Caryl.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes. Lest looking cause liking and lusting: 1Jo 2:16. In Hebrew the same word signifieth both an eye and a fountain; to show that from the eye, as from a fountain, floweth much mischief; and by that window Satan often winds himself into the soul. This David found by experience, and therefore prays here, "Turn away, "transfer, make to pass "mine eyes, "etc. He knew the danger of irregular glancing and inordinate gazing. John Trapp.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. It is a most dangerous experiment for a child of God to place himself within the sphere of seductive temptations. Every feeling of duty, every recollection of his own weakness, every remembrance of the failure of others, should induce him to hasten to the greatest possible distance from the scene of unnecessary conflict and danger. John Morison.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. From gazing at the delusive mirages which tempt the pilgrim to leave the safe highway. William Kay.

Verse 37. Is it asked-- "What will most effectually turn my eyes from vanity?" Not the seclusion of contemplative retirement-- not the relinquishment of our lawful connexion with the world-- but the transcendent beauty of Jesus unveiled to our eyes, and fixing our hearts. Charles Bridges.

Verse 37. Turn away mine eyes, etc. The fort royal of your souls is in danger of a surprise while the outworks of your senses are unguarded. Your eyes, which may be floodgates to pour out tears, should not be casements to let in lusts. A careless eye is an index to a graceless heart. Remember, the whole world died by a wound in the eye. The eyes of a Christian should be like sunflowers, which are opened to no blaze but that of the sun. William Seeker, 1660.

Verse 37. Vanity, in Hebrew usage, has often special reference to idols and the accompaniments of idol worship. The Psalmist prays that he may never be permitted even to see such tempting objects. Henry Cowles.

Verse 37. Quicken thou me. Every saint is very apt to be a sluggard in the way and work of God. "Quicken me, "says one of the chiefest and choicest of saints, "in thy way"; and it is as much as if he should say in plain terms, "Ah, Lord! I am a dull jade, and have often need of thy spur, thy Spirit." This prayer of David seems proof enough to this point; but if you desire farther confirmation, I shall produce an argument instar omnium, "that none shall dare to deny, nor be able to disapprove"; and that is drawn from the topic of your own experience; and this is argumentum lugubre, like a funeral anthem, "very sad and sorrowful." Do you not feel and find, to the grief of your own souls, that, whereas you should weep as if you wept not, rejoice as if you rejoiced not, and buy as if you possessed not; inverso ordine, "inverting this order, "you weep for losses as if you would weep out your eyes; you rejoice in temporal comforts as if you were in heaven; and you buy as if it were for ever and a day (Ps 49:11). But e contrario, "on the contrary, "you pray as if you prayed not; hear as if you heard not; work for God as' if you worked not. Now, we know, experto credas, ("You may yield credence to that of which you have made trial.") a man that sticks fast in a ditch needs no reason to prove he is in, but remedies to pull him out. Your best course will be to propose the case how you may get rid of this unwelcome guest, spiritual sloth: it is a case we are all concerned in, Asini aures quis non habet ("where is the man who hath not the ears of an ass?") Every man and mortal hath some of the ass's dulness and sloth in him. Simmons, in "The Morning Exercises," 1661.

Verse 37. Quicken thou me. Another quickening ordinance is prayer. How often doth David pray for quickening grace? five or six times in one Psalm. He begins many a prayer with a heavy heart, and before he hath done he is full of life. Therefore, pray much, because all life is from God, and he quickens whom he will. Only let me add this caution, before I let this pass, -- Be sure thy understanding and affection go along together in every ordinance, and in every part of the ordinance, as thou wouldst have it a quickening ordinance. Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith," 1657.

Verse 37. Thy way, by way of emphasis, in opposition to and exaltation of, above, all other ways. There is a fourfold way:

1. Via mundi, the way of the world; and that is spinosa, thorny.

2. Via carnis, the way of the flesh; and that is insidiosa, treacherous.

3. Via Satana, the way of the devil; and that is tenebricosa, darksome.

4. Via Domini, the way of God; and that is gratiosa, gracious. Simmons.

Verses 37-38. Prayer is nothing but the promise reversed, or God's word formed into an argument, and retorted by faith upon God again. Know, Christian, thou hast law on thy side. Bills and bonds must be paid. David prays against the sins of a wanton eve and a dead heart: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way; and see how he urges his argument in the next words, -- Stablish thy word unto thy servant. A good man is as good as his word, and will not a good God be so? But where finds David such a word for help against these sins? Surely in the covenant. It is in the magna charta. The first promise held forth thus much, -- "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." William Gumall.

Verse 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant. In view of the exposition of the previous verses of the section this would be more correctly rendered, "Hold up thy word before thy servant; "i.e., hold it up to my eyes, to my mind, to my steps, and to my heart. Make all that is vain to pass, so that I see it not; but let thy word be so set up before my whole being that I shall always see it, and thus, by it, see my way to thee.

Verse 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, etc. -- Well, but here is a strange thing-- a man who is a true "servant of God, " "devoted to his fear, "praying for what he surely must already have, else how could he be a servant? or be living in Jehovah's fear? He seems to assume, clearly and without any doubt, his own personal consecration, and then he prays for that which must surely be, at least in considerable measure, assumed and comprehended in the very idea of a true personal consecration. Unless God's word is made sure to a man he will never become his servant. If he is his servant, why should he pray, "Stablish thy word"? Why, too, should he say in Ps 119:35, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight"? "Therein do I delight. It is the way of my choice, of my joy!" And yet, "Make me to go in it, "as if I were unwilling. This apparent contradiction or discrepancy is easily solved in a true experience, and can be, in fact, solved in no other way. Is not this the very condition of many and many a one? "Stablished, " yet moved; "devoted, "yet uncertain; "serving" God truly, yet looking and longing for clearer warrant, and higher sanction, and more inward grace, to make the service better; "believing, "yet crying, sometimes, "with tears, Help thou mine unbelief!" Alexander Raleigh.

Verse 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant. Why doth David pray thus, "Stablish thy word to me; "since God's word is most certain and so stable in itself that it cannot be more so? (2Pe 1:19). "We have a more sure, "or a more stable, "word of prophecy, "as the word signifies. How can the word be more stable than it is? I answer, it is sure in regard of God from whom it comes, and in itself. In regard of the things propounded it cannot be more or less stable, it cannot be fast and loose: but in regard of us, it may be more or less established. And that two ways, --

1. By the inward assurance of the Spirit increasing our faith.

2. By the outward performance of what is promised.

First, By the inward assurance of the Spirit, by which our faith is increased. Great is the weakness of our faith, as appears by our fears, doubts, distrusts, so that we need to be assured more and more. We need say with tears as he doth in the gospel: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mr 9:24); and to cry out with the apostles, "Lord, increase our faith" (Lu 17:5). There is none believeth so, but he may yet believe more. And in this sense the word is more established, when we are confirmed in the belief of it, and look upon it as sure ground for faith to rest upon.

Secondly, By actual performance, when the promise is made good to us. Every event which falls out according to the word is a notable testimony of the truth of it, and a seal to confirm and strengthen our faith. Three ways may this be made good.

1. The making good of some promises at one time strengthens our faith in expecting the like favour at another. Christ was angry with his disciples for not remembering the miracle of the loaves, when they fell into a like strait again. "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves?" (Mt 16:9). We are to seek upon every difficulty; whereas former experience in the same kind should be a means of establishment to us: "He hath delivered, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" (2Co 1:10). In teaching a child to spell we are angry, if, when we have showed him a letter once, twice, and a third time, yet when he meets with it again still he misses: so, God is angry with us when we have had experience of his word in this, that, and the other providence, yet still our doubts return upon us.

2. The accomplishment of one promise confirms another; for God, that keepeth touch at one time, will do so at another: "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." (2Ti 4:17-18). In such a strait God failed not, and surely he that hath been true hitherto will not fail at last.

3. When the word is performed in part, it assures us of, the performance of the whole. It is an earnest given us of all the rest: For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen (2Co 1:20). A Christian hath a great many promises, and they are being performed daily; God is delivering, comforting, protecting him, speaking peace to his conscience; but the greater part are yet to be performed. Present experiences do assure us of what is to come. Thus, "Stablish thy word, "that is, make it good by the event, that I may learn to trust another time either for the same, or other promises or accomplishments of thy whole word. Thomas Manton.

Verse 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant. Confirm it; make it seem firm and true; let not my mind be vacillating or sceptical in regard to thy truth. This seems to be a prayer against the influence of doubt and scepticism; a prayer that doubts might not be suffered to spring up in his mind, and that the objections and difficulties of scepticism might have no place there. There is a class of men whose minds are naturally sceptical and unbelieving, and for such men such a prayer is peculiarly appropriate. For none can it be improper to pray that the word of God may always seem to them to be true; that their minds may never be left to the influence of doubt and unbelief. Albert Barnes.

Verse 38. Who is devoted to thy fear. The word may be rendered either which or who; as relating either to thy word or to thy servant.

1. Thy word; for in the original Hebrew the posture of the verse is thus, "Stablish to thy servant thy word, which is to the fearing of thee, "or, "which is given that thou mayest be feared; "there being in the word of God the greatest arguments and inducements to fear, to reverence, and to obey him. The word of God was appointed to plant the fear of God in our hearts, and to increase our reverence of God; not that we may play the wantons with promises, and feed our lusts with them.

2. I rather take our own translation, and it hath such a sense as that passage, "But I give myself unto prayer" (Ps 119:4). In the original it is, "But I prayer." So in this place it may be read, Stablish thy word to thy servant, "Who is to thy fear." Our translators add, to make the sense more full, addicted, or "devoted to thy fear, "that is, who makes it his business, care, and desire to stand in the fear of God. Now this is added as a true note and description of God's servants, as being a main thing in religion, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps 11:10), it is the first in point of order, and it is the first thing when we begin to be wise, to think of God, to have awful thoughts of God, it is a chief point of wisdom, the great thing that makes us wise to salvation. And it is added as an argument of prayer, "O Lord, let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name" (Ne 1:11). The more any are given to the fear of God, the more assurance they have of God's love, and of his readiness to hear them at the throne of grace. Thomas Manton.

Verse 38. Who is devoted to thy fear. He who hath received from the Lord grace to fear him may be bold to seek any necessary good thing from him; because the fear of God hath annexed the promises of all other blessings with it. William Cowper.

Verse 38. He that chooses God, devotes himself to God as the vessels of the sanctuary were consecrated and set apart from common to holy uses, so he that has chosen God to be his God, has dedicated himself to God, and will no more be devoted to profane uses. Thomas Watson.

Verse 39. Turn away my reproach which I fear. "Cause to pass my reproach which I feared." This also, like the vanity spoken of in Ps 119:37, the Psalmist prays that he may not see. He would have the gaze of his whole manhood bent only on the word. The reproach which he feared is that to which he had already referred in Ps 119:21-22, and perhaps again in Ps 119:31. The proud had erred from the commandments, and had inherited rebuke; it was the reproach and shame which were theirs that the Psalmist would have to be turned aside, so that they should not be seen. For thy judgments are good. This is given as a reason why the reproach should be thus turned aside. The proud had thought lightly and contemptuously on the divine judgments, hence their reproach; the Psalmist held those judgments to be good, and thus hoped that he might not see reproach.

Verse 39. Turn away my reproach, etc. In these words you have,

1. A request, "Turn away my reproach."

2. A reason to enforce it. "For thy judgments are good."

First, for the request. "Turn away, "roll from upon me, so it signifies. He was clothed with reproach; now roll from me "my reproach." Some think he means God's condemnatory sentence, which would turn to ills reproach, or some remarkable rebuke from God, because of his sin. Rather, I think, the reproach of his enemies; and he calls it "my reproach, "either as deserved by himself, or as having personally lighted upon him, the reproach which was like to be his lot and portion in the world, through the malice of his enemies: "the reproach which I fear, "that is, which I have cause to expect, and am sensible of the sad consequences of it.

Secondly, for the reason by which this is enforced: "for thy judgments are good." There are different opinions about the form of this argument. Some take the reason thus: Let me not suffer reproach for adhering to thy word, thy word which is so good. But David doth not speak here of suffering reproach for righteousness' sake, but such reproach as was likely to befall him because of his own infirmities and failings. Reproaches for righteousness' sake are to be "rejoiced in; "but he saith, this I "fear, "and therefore I suppose this doth not hit the reason. Neither do I accept the other sense, -- Why should I be looked upon as an evil doer as long as I keep thy law, and observe thy statutes? Others judge badly of me, but I appeal to thy good judgment.

By "judgments" we may understand God's dealings. Thou dost not deal with men according to their desert. Thy dispensations are kind and gracious. Better still: by "judgments" are meant the ways, statutes, and ordinances of God called judgments, because all our words, works, thoughts are to be judged according to the sentence of the word: now these, it is a pity they should suffer in my reproach and ignominy. This is that I fear more than anything else that can happen to me. I think the reason will better run thus: Lord, there is in thy law, word, covenant, many promises to encourage thy people, and therefore rules to provide for the due honour and credit of thy people. Thomas Manton.

Verse 39. Turn away my reproach. In the Hebrew it is, "Take away my rebuke"; as if he should have said, O Lord, I may commit some such evil against thy good law, yea, some such notorious transgression, as may tend to my shame; I beseech thee, take it away. Or else he meaneth, I have already, O Lord, by divers sins, and by name through adultery and murder brought shame and rebuke upon myself among men; I entreat thee to remove this shame and rebuke. Out of the first exposition we learn,

First, that the godly are subject unto notorious sins.

Secondly, that those sins will cause shame in them, though the wicked will not be ashamed.

Thirdly, that God only can take away this shame.

Fourthly, that we may pray for the removing of shame even amongst men, especially that which may bring with it some dishonour to God.

Fifthly, that the godly are most jealous over themselves.

Sixthly, the way to avoid sin is ever to be afraid lest we should sin.

Out of the second exposition note, that the remembrance of our former sins must draw out of us prayers unto God, that for them we may not be rebuked in displeasure in this life, nor confounded and abashed in the life to come. Richard Greenham.

Verse 39. My reproach is the reproach which the world casts on the God fearing. This is dreaded as a great temptation to apostasy. James G. Murphy.

Verse 39. For thy judgments are good. One would have expected him to say-- For thou art merciful-- Cause my reproach which I fear to pass over from me, for thou art merciful. No, he does not add this as his present reason, but "Thy judgments are good." We should catch the meaning at once, were the words these-- For thy judgments are awful -- "Turn away my reproach which I fear, "for thy judgments are awful. But as the words are-- "For thy judgments are good, "we find he verily takes refuge in the "judgments" -- viz., that the Lord would vindicate him against all the unjust judgments of men; and as to judgment with God, since he took refuge in the atonement which the Lord had appointed, the Lord would vindicate him there also. John Stephen.

Verse 39. For thy judgments are good. The judgments of the wicked are bad judgments, but the judgments of God are good; I pray against those, I appeal, to these: I fear the one, I approve the other. Now the judgments which God pronounces in his word, be they threatenings in the law, or consolations in the Gospel, yea, and those also which he executeth in the world, whether upon the godly or godless, they must needs be good.

1. Because God is goodness itself.

2. He cannot be deceived.

3. He will not be bribed.

4. He alone is no respecter of persons, but judgeth according to every man's work. Richard Greenham.

Verse 39. The "reproach" which the poet fears in this verse is not the reproach of confessing, but of denying God. Franz Delitzsch.

Verse 39. For thy judgments are good. This reason shows he feared God's rebuke. Man's "reproach" comes from a corrupt judgment, he condemns where God will absolve, I pass not for it; but I know thy rebuke is always deserved, "for thy judgments are good." William Nicholson.

Verse 40. Behold, I have longed after, etc. This is given as a more intense form of the statement which he had just made, that he esteemed the judgments to be good. They were so good that he longed after them. Blot only so, but he desired to long after them even more. Thus he prays for even more life and rigour in pursuing the path which they pointed out-- Quicken me in thy righteousness. He who really longs after divine truth, mourns that he does not long more. When the heart has no love, thee mind has no light, and can only judge the precepts erroneously. "The pure in heart" see better with the mind than can the impure. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Love so enlarges discernment that he who really loves often finds that his judgment of the blessedness of truth has outstripped even his longing for it. Hence it is the quick who cry, "Quicken me"; it is those who have living desires who pray for yet more life in the way of righteousness.

Verse 40. I have longed after thy precepts. We are sometimes unconsciously led to "long" after the promises, more than "after the precepts" of God; forgetting that it is our privilege and safety to have an equal regard to both-- to obey his precepts in dependence on his promises, and to expect the accomplishment of the promises in the way of obedience to the precepts. Charles Bridges.

Verse 40. Precepts, from a word which means to place in trust, mean something entrusted to man, "that which is committed to thee"; appointments of God, which consequently have to do with the conscience, for which man is responsible, as an intelligent being. The precepts are not so obviously apprehended as the law and the testimonies. They must be sought out. "Behold, my desire is for thy precepts" (Ps 119:40). "Thy precepts I seek" (Ps 119:45). "Thy precepts I have sought" (Ps 119:94)... They are a law of liberty: "And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts" (Ps 119:45). John Jebb.

Verse 40. Quicken me in thy righteousness. He said before, "Quicken me in thy word, "here, "in thy righteousness"; all is one; for the word of God is the righteousness of God, in which is set down the will of righteousness. In this the prophet desires to be quickened, that is, to be confirmed, that in cheerfulness and gladness of spirit he might rely upon the word of God. Richard Greenham.

Verse 40. Quicken me in thy righteousness. The petition is for liveliness in the knowledge and practice of holiness, according to the tenor of God's word and by its operation on the heart. If any prefer by "righteousness" to understand the faithfulness or justice of God, whereby he has bound himself to give grace to those who trust in him, there is no objection to such an interpretation. It is in fact implied in the others. Whoever can truly use the language of this verse is regenerate. Before renewing grace the law was a dead letter. It was more; it was a hated letter. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. A sinner desires no restraint from the divine precepts. William S. Plumer.

Verses 41-48. This commences a new portion of the Psalm, in which each verse begins with the letter Vau, or v. There are almost no words in Hebrew that begin with this letter, which is properly a conjunction, and hence in each of the verses in this section the beginning of the verse is in the original a conjunction, -- vau. Albert Barnes.

Verses 41-48. This whole section consists of petitions and promises. The petitions are two; Ps 119:41,43. The promises are six. This, among many, is a difference between godly men and others: all men seek good things from God, but the wicked so seek that they give him nothing back again, nor yet will promise any sort of return. Their prayers must be unprofitable, because they proceed from love of themselves, and not of the Lord. If so be they obtain that which is for their necessity, they care not to give to the Lord that which is for his glory: but the godly, as they seek good things, so they give praise to God when they have gotten them, and return the use of things received, to the glory of God who gave them. They love not themselves for themselves, but for the Lord; what they seek from him they seek it for this end, that they may be the more able to serve him. Let us take heed unto this; because it is a clear token whereby such as are truly religious are distinguished from counterfeit dissemblers. William Cowper.

Verse 41. Let thy mercies come also unto me. The way was blocked up with sins and difficulties, yet mercy could clear all, and find access to him, or make its own way: "Let it come, "that is, let it be performed or come to pass, as it is rendered: "Now let thy words come to pass" (Jud 13:12) -- Hebrew, "Let it come." Here we read, let it come home to me, for my comfort and deliverance. David elsewhere saith, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Ps 23:6); go after him, find him out in his wanderings. So, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Ps 116:12). They found their way to him though shut up with sins and dangers. Thomas Manton.

Verse 41. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord. The mercies of God everywhere meet the man whom God quickens (Ps 119:40). David understood that God blesses the soul, the body, the household, the ordinances, and all things else that belong to his servants; the whole of which blessing is flora mercy, without merit, bestowed largely, wonderfully, etc. Martin Geier.

Verse 41. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, etc. Ministers of the Word and students of Theology are reminded by this prayer that they ought not only to preach to others the true way of attaining everlasting salvation, but that they should also with earnest prayers cry unto God that they might themselves be made partakers of the Divine mercies, and receive "the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls." Paul, indeed, was greatly anxious respecting this matter, and was constrained to write, that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest after preaching to others he should himself be a castaway. Solomon Gesner.

Verse 41. Thy mercies. Thy word. We should consider here the way in which the Prophet seeks salvation from God. In this prayer he conjoins two things, as those which uphold his confidence, viz., the mercy of God and his Word. These are to the man of faith the two strongest pillars of his hope. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 41. Even thy salvation, etc. It is not any sort of delivery by any means, which the servant of God being in straits doth call for, or desire, but such a deliverance as God will allow, and be pleased to give in a holy way. "Let thy salvation come." As the word of promise is the rule of our petition, so is it a pawn of the thing promised, and must be held fast till the performance come: "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word"; and this is one reason of the petition. David Dickson.

Verse 42. So shall I have, etc. I shall have something by which I may reply to those who calumniate me. So the Saviour replied to the suggestions of the tempter almost wholly by passages of Scripture (Mt 4:4,7,10); and so, in many cases, the best answer that can be given to reproaches on the subject of religion will be found in the very words of Scripture. A man of little learning, except that which he has derived from the Bible, may often thus silence the cavils and reproaches of the learned sceptic; a man of simple hearted, pure piety, with no weapon but the word of God, may often thus be better armed than if he had all the arguments of the schools at his command. Comp. Eph 6:17. Albert Barnes.

Verse 42. So shall I have wherewith to answer, etc. When the heart realizes assured salvation, it is supplied with abundant answers to those who sneer at the delights of faith. Henry Law.

Verse 42. So shall I have wherewith to answer, etc. Hugo Cardinalis observeth that there are three sorts of blasphemers of the godly, -- the devils, heretics, and slanderers. The devil must be answered by the internal word of humility; heretics by the external word of wisdom; slanderers by the active word of a good life. Richard Greenham.

Verse 42. So shall I have, etc. For I should give them a short answer, and a true one, -- that I trust in thy word; I put my confidence in thee, who canst make good thy promises, because thou art omnipotent; and wilt, because thou art merciful. William Nicholson.

Verse 42. So shall I have wherewith to answer, etc. This follows the phrase, "according to thy word." Christians should learn from the example of David what to oppose to the reproaches and false accusations of the enemies of the truth. Nothing is done by railing; but weapons should be taken from the word of God; and these are strong through faith in God for the overturning of both the Devil himself and his instruments. For truly with weapons of this kind the Saviour himself discomfited Satan in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11); and Paul (Eph 6:10-18) puts on himself, and commends to the Christian soldier, the girdle of Divine truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Solomon Gessler.

Verse 42. Wherewith to answer, etc. It is not forbidden to believers, modestly and fully, to answer those that reproach them, and to rebut the lie. See Pr 26:5 27:11. But to be able to answer them is received as a blessing from God. Martin Geier.

Verses 42-43. In Ps 119:42 there is a play upon the two senses of the term "word, "thus: "and I will answer my revilers a word, for I have trusted in thy word." Having trusted in thy word of promise, I shall have a word of reply to make to them when thou shalt graciously hear this prayer. Take not thy word of truth (i.e., of promise) out of my mouth; let me have it still to speak of before my enemies and to rest upon for my own soul. If God were to fail in fulfilling his word of promise, it would, in the sense here contemplated, be quite taken out of his mouth. Henry Cowles.

Verse 43. Take not the word of truth, etc. It is well known that men do, when persecution threatens, either altogether deny the truth, or weakly and lukewarmly confess it; but lest this should happen to him, David therefore prays here, O Lord, take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, i.e., make me, with an intrepid spirit, always to confess the avowed truth boldly and manfully. In the Hebrew text it is dak de, "very, ""very much, "or, as Augustine renders it, "wholly and altogether"; and he thinks that David prayed for this, that, if through human weakness it should happen to him to fall, and at some time or other not steadfastly to confess the word, yet that God would not allow him to continue in that sit, , but again restore and establish him; and he illustrates this by the example of Peter. Further, David adds the reason which has impelled him thus to pray: Because I have for, and even with great desire, as the Hebrew verb lhy signifies, "thy judgments, " with which in the last day thou wilt openly pass sentence on heretics, fanatics, and all tyrants. Solomon Gesner.

Verse 43. Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth. The word is taken out of the mouth, when it is said to the sinner, Wherefore dost thou declare thy statutes? And eloquence itself becomes dumb if the conscience be evil. The birds of heaven come and take the word out of thy mouth, even as they took the seed of the word from off the rock lest it should bring forth fruit. Ambrose.

Verse 43. The word is also taken out of our mouth when in strong temptations all things, as it were, fail, neither can we discover where we may make a stand: Ps 69:2. Martin Geier.

Verse 43. Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth. Sometimes we are afraid to speak for the Saviour, lest we should incur the charge of hypocrisy. At other times we are ashamed to speak, from the absence of that only constraining principle-- "the love of Christ." And thus "the word of truth is taken out of our mouths." Often have we wanted a word to speak for the relief of the Lord's tempted people, and have not been able to find it; so that the recollection of precious lost opportunities may well give utterance to the prayer-- "Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth." Not only do not take it out of my heart; but let it be ready in my mouth for a confession of my Master. Some of us know the painful trial of the indulgence of worldly habits and conversation, when a want of liberty of spirit has hindered us from standing up boldly for our God. We may perhaps allege the plea of bashfulness or judicious caution in excuse for silence; which however, in many instances, we must regard as a self deceptive covering for the real cause of restraint-- the want of apprehension of the mercy of God to the soul. Charles Bridges.

Verse 43. Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth. Oh, what service can a dumb body do in Christ's house! Oh, I think the word of God is imprisoned also! Oh, I am a dry tree! Alas, I can neither plant nor water! Oh, if my Lord would make but dung of me, to fatten and make fertile his own corn ridges in Mount Zion! Oh, if I might but speak to three or four herd boys of my worthy Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in this land, and to live in any place, in any of Christ's basest out houses! But he saith, "Sirrah, I will not send you; I have no errands for you there away." My desire to serve him is sick of jealousy, lest he be unwilling to employ me... I am very well every way, all praise to him in whose books I must stand for ever as his debtor! Only my silence pains me. I had one joy out of heaven, next to Christ my Lord, and that was to preach him to thiss faithless generation; and they have taken that from me. It was to me as the poor man's one eye, and they have put out that eye. Samuel Rutherford.

Verse 43. For I have hoped in thy judgments, the word Mmpvm, judgment, signifieth either the law, or the execution of the sentence thereof.

1. The law or whole word of God; so that, "I have hoped in thy judgments," is no more, but in thy word do I hope; as it is, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope" (Ps 130:5).

2. Answerable execution of the law, when the promise or threatening is fulfilled. (1) When the promise is fulfilled: that is judgment in a sense when God accomplishes what he has promised for our salvation and deliverance. Thus God is said to judge his people, when he righteth and sayeth them according to his word: "O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause" (La 3:59). (2) But the more usual notion of judgment is the execution of the threatening on wicked men; which being a benefit to God's faithful servants, and done in their favour, David might well be said to hope for it. Their "judgment" is our obtaining the promise. Thomas Manton.

Verses 43-44. Lord, let me have the word of truth in "my mouth" that I may commit that sacred depositum to the rising generation (2Ti 2:22), and by them it may be transmitted to succeeding ages; so shall "thy law" be kept "for ever and ever, "i.e., from one generation to another, according to that promise (Isa 59:21): "My words in thy mouth shall not depart out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed." Matthew Henry.

Verse 44. So shall I keep thy law continually, etc. The Lord's keeping our heart in faith, and our mouth and outward man in the course of confession and obedience, is the cause of our perseverance. David Dickson.

Verse 44. So shall I keep. Mark, the promise of obedience is brought in by way of argument; "So shall I keep," "so," that is, this will encourage me, this will enable me.

First, The granting of his requests would give him encouragement: when God answers our hope and expectation, gratitude should excite and quicken us to give all manner of obedience. If he will give us a heart, and a little liberty to confess his name, and serve him, we should not be backward or uncertain, but walk closely with him.

Secondly, This would give him assistance and strength. If God do daily give assistance, we shall stand; if not, we fall and falter; this will be a means of his perseverance, not only to engage and oblige him, but to help him to hold on to the end.

Then mark the consistency of this obedience, "Continually, and for ever and ever." David would not keep it for a fit, or for a few days, or a year, but always, even to the end of his life. Here are three words to the same sense: "continually," "for ever," "and ever." And the Septuagint expresses it thus: "I shall keep thy law always, and for ever, and for ever, and ever;" four words there. This heaping of words is not in vain.

1. It shows the difficulty of perseverance: unless believers do strongly persist in the resistance of temptation, they will soon be turned out of the way; therefore David binds his heart firmly: we must do it now, yea, always, unto the end.

2. He expresses his vehemence of affection: those that are deeply affected with anything are wont to express themselves as largely as they can. As Paul, who had a deep sense of God's power: "Exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph 1:19). He heaps up several words, because his sense of them was so great: so David here doth heap up words-- "continually, and for ever, and ever, and ever."

3. Some think the words are so many, that they may express not only this life, but that which is to come. I will keep them continually, and for ever, and ever; that is, all the days of my life, and in the other world. So Chrysostom, "I will keep them continually, "etc., points out the other life, where there will be pure and exact keeping of the law of God. Here we are every hour in danger, but then we shall be put out of all danger, and without fear of sinning, we shall remain in a full and perfect righteousness; we hope for that which we have not attained unto, and this doth encourage us for the present: so would he make David express himself.

4. If we must distinguish these words, I suppose they imply the continuity and perpetuity of obedience; the continuity of obedience, that he would serve God continually, without intermission; and the perpetuity of obedience, that he would serve God for ever and ever, without defection or revolt, at all times, and to the end. Constancy and perseverance in obedience is the commendation of it. Thomas Manton.

Verse 44. So shall I keep thy law continually. That is, if thou wilt not take the word of thy truth out of my mouth, "I will alway keep thy law." "Yea, unto age, and age of age:" he showeth what is meant by alway. For sometimes by "alway" is meant, as long as we live here; but this is not, "unto age, and age of age." For it is better thus translated than as some copies have, "to eternity, and to age of age, "since they could not say, and to eternity of eternity. That law therefore should be understood, of which the apostle saith, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." For this will be kept by the saints, from whose mouth the word of truth is not taken, that is, by the church of Christ herself, not only during this world, that is, until this world is ended; but for another world which is styled world without end. For we shall not there receive the commandments of the law, as here, to keep them, but we shall keep the fulness of the law itself without any fear of sinning; for we shall love God the more fully when we shall have seen him; and our neighbour too; for "God will be all in all"; nor will there be room for any false suspicion concerning our neighbour, where no man will be hidden to any. Augustine.

Verse 44. Continually, for ever and ever. The language of this verse is very emphatic. Perfect obedience will constitute a large proportion of heavenly happiness to all eternity; and the nearer we approach to it on earth, the more we anticipate the felicity of heaven. Note in Bagster's Comprehensive Bible.

Verse 45. I will walk at liberty. Wherever God pardons sin, he subdues it (Mic 7:19). Then is the condemning power of sin taken away, when the commanding power of it is taken away. If a malefactor be in prison, how shall he know that his prince hath pardoned him? If a jailer come and knock off his chains and fetters, and lets him out of prison, then he may know he is pardoned: so, how shall we know God hath pardoned us? If the fetters of sin be broken off, and we walk at liberty in the ways of God, this is a blessed sign we are pardoned. Thomas Watson.

Verse 45. I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. As he who departs from confessing of God's truth doth cast himself in straits, in danger and bonds; so he that beareth out the confession of the truth doth walk as a free man; the truth doth set him free. David Dickson.

Verse 45. I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. When the Bible says that a man led by the Spirit is not under the law, it does not mean that he is free because he may sin without being punished for it; but it means that he is free because being taught by God's Spirit to love what his law commands he is no longer conscious of acting from restraint. The law does not drive him, because the Spirit leads him... There is a state, brethren, when we recognize God, but do not love God in Christ. It is that state when we admire what is excellent, but are not able to perform it. It is a state when the love of good comes to nothing, dying away in a mere desire. That is a state of nature, when we are under the law, and not converted to the love of Christ. And then there is another state, when God writes his law upon our hearts by love instead of fear. The one state is this, "I cannot do the things that I would; "the other state is this, "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy commandments." Frederick William Robertson, 1816-1853.

Verse 45. I will walk at liberty. The Psalmist's mind takes in the enlargement of his position. A little while ago, and he felt like a man straitenedhemmed in by rocks, in a narrow dangerous pass who could not make his way out. You know the characteristics of Canaan, and you can easily conceive of the position of a traveller exploring his dreaded way through one of the mountain passes. The traveller before us has attained to tread upon secure ground. Now, all at once, favoured of the Most High, and conscious of being in his way, he finds himself in a spacious place, and he walks at large: "And I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts." He had made diligent enquiry into all that the Lord had enjoined, and seeking conformity thereto, he felt that he could walk with comfort. He recreates himself in his spiritual emancipation. The secret evil doer of fair profession cannot know this spiritual liberty at all. As long as a man finds himself to be wrong, and especially a man of a tender conscience, he feels hampered on all sides, depressed in mind, and evilly circumstanced. To what expansion of mind does a man awake when he becomes conscious of being in the appointed way of God! And he is actually at liberty; for the good providence of God is around him, and his grace supports him. John Stephen.

Verse 45. He who goes the beaten and right path will have no brambles hit him across the eyes. Saxon proverb.

Verses 45-48. Five things David promises himself here in the strength of God's grace.

1. That he should be free and easy in his duty: I will walk at liberty: freed from that which is evil, not hampered with the fetters of my own corruptions, and free to that which is good.

2. That he should be bold and courageous in his duty: I will speak of thy testimonies before kings.

3. That he should be cheerful and pleasant in his duty: I will delight myself in thy commandments, in conversing with them, in forming to them.

4. That he should be diligent and vigorous in his duty: I will lift up my hands unto thy commandments; which notes not only a vehement desire towards them, but a close application of mind to the observance of them.

5. That he should be thoughtful and considerate in his duty: I will meditate in thy statutes. Matthew Henry.

Verses 45-48. In these four verses he explains, seriatim, in what the observance of the law consists; a thing he promised, when he said in fourth verse of this division, that he would observe God's law in his in his words, in his mind, and in his acts; and the prophet seems all once, as having been heard, to have changed his mode of speaking, for says, "And I walked at large." When God's mercy visited me, I did walk in the narrow ways of fear, but in the wide one of love; that is to say, observed the law willingly, joyfully, with all the affections of my heart, "because I have sought after thy commandments" as a thing of great and most important to come at; "and I spoke" openly and fearlessly on the justice of his most holy law, even "before kings, and I was not ashamed" and I constantly turned the law in my mind, and made its mysteries the subject of my meditation, "and I lifted up my hands," to carry out his high and sublime commands; that is, his extremely perfect and arduous commands. Finally, in all manner of ways, in heart, mind, word, and "I was exercised in thy justifications." Robert Bellarmine.

Verse 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings. In words he seems to believe that he is in possession of that which he formerly prayed for. He had said, "Take not the word of truth out of my mouth, "and now, as if he had obtained what he requested, he rises up, and maintains that he would not be dumb, even were he called upon to speak in presence of kings. He affirms that he would willingly stand forward vindication of the glory of God in the face of the whole world. John Calvin.

Verse 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings. The terror of kings and of men in power is an ordinary hindrance of free confession God's truth in time of persecution; but faith in the truth sustained in heart by God is able to bring forth a confession at all hazards. David Dickson.

Verse 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings. Before came to the crown kings were sometimes his judges, as Saul and Achish: but if he were called before them to give a reason of the hope that was in: him, he would speak of God's testimonies, and profess to build his hope upon them, and make them his council, his guard, his crown, his all. We must never be afraid to own our religion, though it should expose us to the wrath of kings, but speak of it as that which we will live and die by, like the three children before Nebuchadnezzar, Da 3:16 Ac 4:20. After David came to the crown kings were sometimes his companions, they visited him, and he returned their visits; but he did not, in complaisance to them, talk of everything but religion for fear of affronting them, and making his converse uneasy to them: no, God's testimonies shall be the principal subject of his discourse with the kings, not only to show that he was not ashamed of his religion, but to instruct them in it, and bring them over to it. It is good for kings to hear of God's testimonies, and it will adorn the conversation of princes themselves to speak of them. Matthew Henry.

Verse 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings. Men of greatest holiness have been men of greatest boldness; witness Nehemiah, the three children, Daniel, and all the holy prophets and apostles: Pr 23:1, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion, "yea, as a young lion, as the Hebrew has it, one that is in his hot blood and fears no colours, and that is more bold than any others. Holiness made Daniel not only as bold as a lion, but also to daunt the lions with his boldness. Luther was a man of great holiness, and a man of great boldness: witness his standing out against all the world; and when the emperor sent for him to Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, as sometimes Paul's did him, "Go, "said he, "I will surely go, since I am sent for, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me as there be tiles to cover the houses, yet I would go." And when the same author and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech: "Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm, and then let them do their worst." Latimer was a man of much holiness, counting the darkness and profaneness of those times wherein he lived, and a man of much courage and boldness; witness his presenting to King Henry the Eighth, for a New Year's gift, a New Testament, wrapped up in a napkin, with this posie or motto about it; "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Thomas Brooks.

Verse 46. Note that in this verse we are taught to shun four vices. First, overmuch silence: hence he says, "I will speak." Secondly, useless talkativeness: "of thy testimonies." The Hebrew doctors say that ten measures of speaking had descended to the earth, that nine had been carried off by the women, but one left for all the rest of the world. Hieronymus rightly exhorts all Christians: "Consecrate thy mouth to the Gospel: be unwilling to open it with trifles or fables." Thirdly, we are taught to shun cowardice: "before kings." For, as it is said (Pr 29:25), "The fear of man bringeth a snare." Fourthly, and lastly, we are taught to shun cowardly bashfulness: "and will not be ashamed." Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 46. I will not be ashamed. That is, I shall not be cast down from my position or my hope; I shall not be afraid; nor will I, from fear of danger or reproach, shun or renounce the confession; nor shall I be overcome by terrors or threats. D. H. Mollerus.

Verses 46-48. In these three last verses David promises a threefold duty of thankfulness. First, the service of his tongue. Next, the service of his affections. Thirdly, the service of his actions. A good conscience renders always great consolation; and an honest life makes great boldness to speak without fear or shame, as ye see in David towards Saul, in Elias to Ahab, in Paul to Agrippa, to Festus, and to Felix. William Cowper.

Verse 47. I will delight myself in thy commandments. It is but poor comfort to the believer to be able to talk well to others upon the ways of God, and even to "bear the reproach" of his people, when his own heart is cold, insensible, and dull. He longs for "delight" in these ways; and he shall delight in them. Charles Bridges.

Verse 47. He who would preach boldly to others must himself "delight" in the practice of what he preacheth. If there be in us a new nature, it will "love the commandments of God" as being congenial to it; on that which we love we shall continually be "meditating, "and our meditation will end in action; we shall "lift up the hands which hang down" (Heb 12:12), that they may "work the works of God whilst it is day, because the night cometh when no man can work" (Joh 9:4). George Horne.

Verse 47. Thy commandments, which I have loved. On the word "loved, "the Carmelite quotes two sayings of ancient philosophers, which he commends to the acceptance of those who have learnt the truer philosophy of the Gospel. The first is Aristotle's answer to the question of what profit he had derived from philosophy: "I have learnt to do without constraint that which others do from fear of the law." The second is a very similar saying of Aristippus: "If the laws were lost, all of us would live as we do now that they are in force." And for us the whole verse is summed up in the words of a greater Teacher than they: "If a man love me, he will keep my words": Joh 14:23. Neale and Littledale.

Verses 47-48. What is in the word a law of precept, is in the heart a law of love; what is in the one a law of command, is in the other a law of liberty "Love is the fulfilling of the law, "Ga 5:14. The law of love in the heart, is the fulfilling the law of God in the Spirit. It may well be said to be written in the heart, when a man doth love it. As we say, a beloved thing is in our hearts, not physically, but morally, as Calais was said to be in Queen Mary's heart. They might have looked long enough before they could have found there the map of the town; but grief for the loss of it killed her. It is a love that is inexpressible. David delights to mention it in two verses together: I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, and often in the Psalm resumes the assertion. Before the new creation, there was no affection to the law: it was not only a dead letter, but a devilish letter in the esteem of a man: he wished it razed out of the world, and another more pleasing to the flesh enacted. He would be a law unto himself; but when this is written within him, he is so pleased with the inscription, that he would not for all the world be without that law, and the love of it; whereas what obedience he paid to it before was out of fear, now out of affection; not only because of the authority of the lawgiver, but of the purity of the law itself. He would maintain it with all his might against the power of sin within, and the powers of darkness without him. He loves to view this law; regards every lineament of it, and dwells upon every feature with delightful ravishments. If his eye be off, or his foot go away, how doth he dissolve in tears, mourn and groan, till his former affection hath recovered breath, and stands upon its feet! Stephen Charnock.

Verse 48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, etc. The duty that David promises God here, is the service of his actions, that he will lift up his hands to the practice of God's commandments. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; we are the disciples of that Master, who first began to do and then to teach. But now the world is full of mutilated Christians; either they want an ear and cannot hear God's word, or a tongue and cannot speak of it; or if they have both, they want hands and cannot practise it. William Cowper.

Verse 48. My hands also will I lift up. To lift up the hands is taken variously, and it signifies:

1. To pray: as in Ps 28:2 La 2:19 Hab 3:10.

2. To bless others: as Le 9:22 Ps 134:2.

3. To swear: as Ge 14:22 Ex 6:8.

4. To set about some important matter: as Ge 41:44; "without thee shall no man lift up his hand; "i.e. shall attempt anything, or shall accomplish; Ps 10:12, "lift up thine hand, "viz., effectively, to bring help: Heb 12:12, "lift up the hands, "etc.; i.e. strongly stimulate Christians.

Perhaps all these may be accommodated to the present passage; for it is possible to be either,

1. Prayer for Divine grace for the doing of the precepts: or,

2. Blessing, i.e. praise of God because of them, and the advantages which have thence accrued to us: which the Syriac translator approves, who adds, "and I will glory in thy faithfulness:" or,

3. Vow, or oath of constant obedience, etc.: or,

4. Active and earnest undertaking of them; which, also, appears to be here chiefly meant. Henry Hammond in Synopsis Poli.

Verse 48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments; vowing obedience to them: Ge 14:22. William Kay.

Verse 48. My hands also will I lift up. I will present every victim and sacrifice which the law requires. I will make prayer and supplication before thee, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Adam Clarke.

Verse 48. My hands also will I lift up. Aben Ezra explains, (and perhaps rightly,)that the metaphor, in this place, is taken from the action of those who receive any one whom they are glad or proud to see. Daniel Cresswell, 1776-1844.

Verse 48. I will lift up my hands in admiration of thy precepts, "And meditate on thy statutes." W. Green, in "A New Translation of the Psalms," 1762.

Verse 48. To lift up the hand is a gesture importing readiness, and special intention in doing a thing. My hands (saith David) also will I lift up unto thy commandments; as a man that is willing to do a thing and addresses himself to the doing of it, lifts up his hand; so a godly man is described as lifting up his hand to fulfil the commands of God. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 48. Thy commandments. By commandments he understandeth the word of God, yet it is more powerful than so; it is not, I have loved thy word;but, I have loved that part of thy word that is thy "commandments, "the mandatory part. There are some parts of the will and word of God that even ungodly men will be content to love. There is the promissory part; all men gather and catch at the promises, and show love to these. The reason is clear; there is pleasure, and profit, and gain, and advantage in the promises; but a pious soul doth not only look to the promises, but to the commands. Piety looks on Christ as a Lawgiver, as well as a Saviour, and not only on him as a Mediator, but as a Lord and Master;it doth not only live by faith, but it liveth by rule;it makes indeed the promises the stay and staff of a Christian's life, but it makes the commandments of God the level. A pious heart knows that some command is implied in the qualification and condition of every promise; it knows that as for the fulfilling of the promises, it belongs to God; but the fulfilling of the commands belongs to us. Therefore it looks so, upon the enjoying of that which is promised that it will first do that which is commanded. There is no hope of attaining comfort in the promise but in keeping of the precept; therefore he pitches the emphasis, "I have loved thy word, "that is true, and all thy word, and this part, the mandatory part: "I have loved thy commandments." Observe the number, "thy commandments"; it is plural, that is, all thy commandments without exception; otherwise even ungodly men will be content to love some commandments, if they may choose them for themselves. Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649), in "The Valley of Vision."

Verse 48. Which I love, or have loved, as in Ps 119:47, the terms of which are studiously repeated with a fine rhetorical effect, which is further heightened by the and at the beginning, throwing both verses, as it were, into one sentence. As if he had said: I will derive my happiness from thy commandments, which I love and have loved, and to these commandments, which I love and have loved, I will lift up my hands and heart together. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 48. I will meditate. It is in holy meditation on the word of God that all the graces of the Spirit are manifested. What is the principle of faith but the reliance of the soul upon the promises of the word? What is the sensation of godly fear but the soul trembling before the threatenings of God? What is the object of hope but the apprehended glory of God? What is the excitement of desire or love but longing, endearing contemplations of the Saviour, and of his unspeakable blessings? So that we can scarcely conceive of the influences of grace separated from spiritual meditation in the word. Charles Bridges.

Verse 48. The Syriac has an addition to Ps 119:48, which I am surprised has not been noticed. The addition is, "and I will glory in thy faithfulness." Dathe in a note says, THE SEVENTY seem to have read some such addition, although not exactly the same. Edward Thomas Gibson, 1819-1880.

Verse 49. Remember the word unto thy servant, etc. Those that make God's promises their portion, may with humble boldness make them their plea. God gave the promise in which the Psalmist hoped, and the hope by which he embraced the promise. Matthew Henry.

Verse 49. Remember the word unto thy servant, etc. When we hear any promise in the word of God, let us turn it into a prayer. God's promises are his bonds. Sue him on his bond. He loves that we should wrestle with him by his promises. Why, Lord, thou hast made this and that promise, thou canst not deny thyself, thou canst not deny thine own truth; thou canst not cease to be God, and thou canst as well cease to be God, as deny thy promise, that is thyself. "Lord, remember thy word." "I put thee in mind of thy promise, whereon thou hast caused me to hope." If I be deceived, thou hast deceived me. Thou hast made these promises, and caused me to trust in thee, and "thou never fullest those that trust in thee, therefore keep thy word to me." Richard Sibbes.

Verse 49. Remember the word unto thy servant, etc. God promises salvation before he giveth it, to excite our desire of it, to exercise our faith, to prove our sincerity, to perfect our patience. For these purposes he seemeth sometimes to have forgotten his word, and to have deserted those whom he had engaged to succour and relieve; in which case he would have us, as it were, to remind him of his promise, and solicit his performance of it. The Psalmist here instructs us to prefer our petition upon these grounds; first, that God cannot prove false to his own word: "Remember thy word; "secondly, that he will never disappoint an expectation which himself hath raised: "upon which thou hast caused me to hope." George Horne.

Verses 49, 52, 55. Remember. "I remembered." As David beseeches the Lord to remember his promise, so he protests, in Ps 119:52, that he remembered the judgments of God, and was comforted; and in Ps 119:55, that he remembered the name of the Lord in the night. It is but a mockery of God, to desire him to remember his promise made to us, when we make no conscience of the promise we have made to him. But alas, how often we fail in this duty, and by our own default, diminish that comfort we might have of God's promises in the day of our trouble. William Cowper.

Verse 49. Thy servant. Be sure of your qualification; for David pleadeth here, partly as a servant of God, and partly as a believer. First, "Remember the word unto thy servant; "and then, "upon which thou hast caused me to hope." There is a double qualification: with respect to the precept of subjection, and the promise of dependence. The precept is before the promise. They have right to the promises, and may justly lay hold upon them, who are God's servants; they who apply themselves to obey his precepts, these only can rightly apply his promises to themselves. None can lay claim to rewarding grace but those who are partakers of sanctifying grace. Make it clear that you are God's servants, and then these promises which are generally offered are your own, no less than if your name were inserted in the promise, and written in the Bible. Thomas Manton.

Verse 49. Thou hast caused me to hope. Let us remember, first, that the promises made to us are of God's free mercy; that the grace to believe, which is the condition of the promise, is also of himself; for "faith is the gift of God"; thirdly, that the arguments by which he confirms our faith in the certainty of our salvation are drawn from himself, not from us. William Cowper.

Verse 50. This is my comfort, etc. The word of promise was David's comfort, because the word had quickened him to receive comfort. The original is capable of another modification of thought"This is my consolation that thy word hath quickened me." He had the happy experience within him; he felt the reviving, restoring, life giving power of the word, as he read, as he dwelt upon it, as he meditated therein, and as he gave himself up to the way of the word. The believer has all God's unfailing promises to depend upon, and as he depends he gains strength by his own happy experiences of the faithfulness of the word. John Stephen.

Verse 50. My comfort. "Thy word." God hath given us his Scriptures, his word; and the comforts that are fetched from thence are strong ones, because they are his comforts, since they come from his word. The word of a prince comforts, though he be not there to speak it. Though it be by a letter, or by a messenger, yet he whose word it is, is one that is able to make his word good. He is Lord and Master of his word. The word of God is comfortable, and all the reasons that are in it, and that are deduced from it, upon good ground and consequence, are comfortable, because it is God's word. Those comforts in God's word, and reasons from thence, are wonderful in variety. There is comfort from the liberty of a Christian, that he hath free access to the throne of grace; comfort from the prerogatives of a Christian, that he is the child of God, that he is justified, that he is the heir of heaven, and such like; comforts from the promises of grace, of the presence of God, of assistance by his presence. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 50. Comfort. 'Nechamah', consolation; whence the name of Nehemiah was derived. The word occurs only in Job 6:9.

Verse 50. Comfort. The Hebrew verb rendered 'to comfort' signifies, first, to repent, and then to comfort. And certainly the sweetest joy is from the surest tears. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. When Hannah had wept, she went away, and was no more sad. The bee gathers the best honey from the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water. Gospel comforts are,

First, unutterable comforts, 1Pe 1:8; Php 4:4.

Secondly, they are real, Joh 14:27; all others are but seeming comforts, but painted comforts.

Thirdly, they are holy comforts, Isa 64:5 Ps 138:5; they flow from a Holy Spirit, and nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy.

Fourthly, they are the greatest and strongest comforts, Eph 6:17. Few heads and hearts are able to bear them, as few heads are able to bear strong wines.

Fifthly, they reach to the inward man, to the soul, 2Th 2:17, the noble part of man. "My soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour." Our other comforts only reach the face; they sink not so deep as the heart.

Sixthly, they are the most soul filling and soul satisfying comforts, Ps 16:11 So 4:3. Other comforts cannot reach the soul, and therefore they cannot fill nor satisfy the soul.

Seventhly, they comfort in saddest distresses, in the darkest night, and in the most stormy day, Ps 94:19 Heb 3:7-8.

Eighthly, they are everlasting, 2Th 2:16. The joy of the wicked is but as a glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking; but the joy of the saints is lasting. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 50. Thy word hath quickened me. It is a reviving comfort which quickeneth the soul. Many times we seem to be dead to all spiritual operations, our affections are damped and discouraged; but the word of God puts life into the dead, and relieveth us in our greatest distresses. Sorrow worketh death, but joy is the life of the soul. Now, when dead in all sense and feeling, "the just shall live by faith" (Heb 4:4), and the hope wrought in us by the Scriptures is "a lively hope" (1Pe 1:8). Other things skin the wound but our sore breaketh out again, and runneth; faith penetrates into the inwards of a man, doth good to the heart; and the soul revives by waiting upon God, and gets life and strength. Thomas Manton.

Verse 50. Thy word hath quickened me. Here, as is evident from the mention of "affliction" and indeed throughout the psalm the verb "quicken" is used not merely in an external sense of "preservation from death" (Hupfeld), but of "reviving the heart, " "imparting fresh courage, "etc. J.J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 50. Thy word hath quickened me. It made me alive when I was dead in sin; it has many a time made me lively when I was dead in duty; it has quickened me to that which is good, when. I was backward and averse to it; and it has quickened me in that which is good, when I was cold and indifferent. Matthew Henry.

Verse 50. (Second Clause). Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, "Thy word hath quickened me." Christian, bless God that he has not only given thee his word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness. Bless God that he has not only written his word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? Oh free grace! That God should send out his word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee and not others! That the Same Scripture which to them is a dead letter, should be to thee a savour of life. Thomas Watson.

Verse 51. The proud have had me greatly in derision. The saints of God have complained of this in all ages: David of his busy mockers; the abjects jeered him. Job was disdained of those children whose fathers he would have scorned to set with the dogs of his flock, Job 30:1. Joseph was nicknamed a dreamer, Paul a babbler, Christ himself a Samaritan, and with intent of disgrace a carpenter...Michal was barren, yet she hath too many children, that scorn the habit and exercises of holiness. There cannot be a greater argument of a foul soul, than the deriding of religious services. Worldly hearts can see nothing in those actions, but folly and madness; piety hath no relish, but is distasteful to their palates. Thomas Adams.

Verse 51. The proud, etc. Scoffing proceedeth from pride. Pr 3:34 1Pe 5:5. John Trapp.

Verse 51. Greatly. The word notes "continually, "the Septuagint translates it by afuzra, the vulgar Latin by "usque valde", and "usque longe". They derided him with all possible bitterness; and day by day they had their scoffs for him, so that it was both a grievous and a perpetual temptation. Thomas Manton.

Verse 51. Derision. David tells that he had been jeered for his religion, but yet he had not been jeered out of his religion. They laughed at him for his praying and called it cant, for his seriousness and called it mopishness, for his strictness and called it needless preciseness. Matthew Henry.

Verse 51. It is a great thing in a soldier to behave well under fire; but it is a greater thing for a soldier of the cross to be unflinching in the day of his trial. It does not hurt the Christian to have the dogs bark at him. William S. Plumer.

Verses 50-51. The life and rigour infused into me by the promise which "quickened me, "caused me "not to decline from thy law, "even though "the proud did iniquitously altogether"; doing all in their power, through their jeering at me, to deter me from its observance. Robert Bellarmine.

Verse 52. I remember thy judgments of old. It is good to have a number of examples of God's dealings with his servants laid up in the storehouse of a sanctified memory, that thereby faith may be strengthened in the day of affliction; for so are we here taught. David Dickson.

Verse 52. I remembered thy judgments. He remembered that at the beginning Adam, because of transgression of the divine command, was cast out from dwelling in Paradise; and that Cain, condemned by the authority of the divine sentence, paid the price of his parricidal crime; that Enoch, caught up to heaven because of his devotion, escaped the poison of earthly wickedness: that Noah, because of righteousness the victor of the deluge, became the survivor of the human race; that Abraham, because of faith, diffused the seed of his posterity through the whole earth; that Israel, because of the patient bearing of troubles, consecrated a believing people by the sign of his own name; that David himself, because of gentleness, having had regal honour conferred, was preferred to his elder brothers. Ambrose.

Verse 52. I remembered, etc. Jerome writes of that religious lady Paula, that she had got most of the Scriptures by heart. We are bid to have the "word dwell in" us: Col 3:16. The word is a jewel that adorns the hidden man; and shall we not remember it? "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" (Jer 4:32). Such as have a disease they call lienteria, in which the meat comes up as fast as they eat it, and stays not in the stomach, are not nourished by it. If the word stays not in the memory, it cannot profit. Some can better remember a piece of news than a line of Scripture: their memories are like those ponds, where frogs live, but fish die. Thomas Watson in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 52. I remembered thy judgments, and have comforted myself. A case of conscience may be propounded: how could David be comforted by God's judgments, for it seemeth a barbarous thing to delight in the destruction of any? it is said, "He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished" (Pr 17:5).

1. It must be remembered that judgment implies both parts of God's righteous dispensation, the deliverance of the godly, and the punishment of the wicked. Now, in the first sense there is no ground of scruple, for it is said, "Judgment shall return unto righteousness" (Ps 94:15); the sufferings of good men shall be turned into the greatest advantages, as the context showeth that God will not cast off his people, but judgment shall return unto righteousness.

2. Judgment, as it signifieth punishment of the wicked, may yet be a comfort, not as it imports the calamity of any, but either,

(a) When the wicked is punished, the snare and allurement to sin is taken away, which is the hope of impunity; for by their punishment men see that it is dangerous to sin against God: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa 26:9); the snare is removed from many a soul.

(b) Their derision and mocking of godliness ceaseth, they do no longer vex and pierce the souls of the godly, saying, "Aha, aha" (Ps 40:15); it is as a wound to their heart when they say, "Where is thy God?" (Ps 42:10). Judgment slayeth this evil.

(c) The impediments and hindrances of worshipping and serving God are taken away: when the nettles are rooted up, the corn hath the more room to grow.

(c) Opportunity of molesting God's servants is taken away, and they are prevented from afflicting the church by their oppressions; and so way is made for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom.

(d) Thereby also God's justice is manifested: When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: "and when the wicked perish, there is shouting" (Pr 11:10); "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: lo, this is the man that made not God his strength" (Ps 52:6-7); rejoice over Babylon, "ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her" (Re 18:20). When the word of God is fulfilled, surely then we may rejoice that his justice and truth are cleared. Thomas Mardon.

Verse 52. The word "mishphatim", "judgments, "is used in Scripture either for laws enacted, or judgments executed according to those laws. The one may be called the judgments of his mouth, as, "Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth" (Ps 105:5), the other, the judgments of his hand. As both will bear the name of judgments, so both may be said to be "of old." His decrees and statutes which have an eternal equity in them, and were graven upon the heart of man in innocency, may well be said to be of old: and because from the beginning of the world God hath been punishing the wicked, anti delivering the godly in due time, his judiciary dispensations may be said to be so also, The matter is not much, whether we interpret it of either his statutes or decrees, for they both contain matter of comfort, and we may see the ruin of the wicked in the word, if we see it not in providence. Yet I rather interpret it of those righteous acts recorded in Scripture, which God as a just judge hath executed in all ages, according to the promises and threaten this annexed to his laws. Only in that sense I must note to you, judgments imply his mercies in the deliverance of his righteous servants, as well as his punishments on the wicked: the seasonable interpositions of his relief for the one in their greatest distresses, as well as his just vengeance on the other notwithstanding their highest prosperities. Thomas Manton.

Verse 52, 55. I remembered thy judgments, "thy name in the night." Thomas Fuller thus writes in his "David's Heartie Repentance": "For sundry duties he did dayes deride. Making exchange of worke his recreation; For prayer he set the precious morne aside. The midday he bequeathed to meditation: Sweete sacred stories he reserved for night. To reade of Moses' meeknes, Sampson's might: These were his joy, these onely his delight."

Verse 53. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked. I have had clear views of eternity; have seen the blessedness of the godly, in some measure; and have longed to share their happy state; as well as been comfortably satisfied that through grace I shall do so; but, oh, what anguish is raised in my mind, to think of an eternity for those who are without Christ, for those who are mistaken, and who bring their false hopes to the grave with them! The sight was so dreadful I could by no means bear it: my thoughts recoiled, and I said, (under a more affecting sense than ever before,)"Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?" David Brainerd, 1718-1747.

Verse 53. Horror hath taken hold upon me, etc. Oh who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable; for who knows the power of God's anger? How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! Jonathan Edwards, in a Sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an angry God."

Verse 53. Horror. hpelz, zilaphah, properly signifies the pestilential burning wind called by the Arabs simoon (see Ps 11:6); and is here used in a figurative sense for the most horrid mental distress; and strongly marks the idea the Psalmist had of the corrupting, pestilential, and destructive nature of sin. Note in Bagster's Comprehensive Bible.

Verse 53. Horror. The word for "horror" signifieth also a tempest or storm. Translations vary; some read it, as Junius, "a storm overtaking one"; Ainsworth, "a burning horror hath seized me, "and expounds it a storm of terror and dismay. The Septuagint, aynmia katece me, "faintness and dejection of mind hath possessed me"; our own translation, "I am horribly afraid"; all translations, as well as the original word, imply a great trouble of mind, and a vehement commotion; like a storm, it was matter of disquiet and trembling to David. Thomas Manton.

Verse 53. Because of the wicked that forsake thy law. David grieved, not because he was himself attacked; but because the law of God was forsaken; and he bewailed the condemnation of those who so did, because they are lost to God. Just as a good father in the madness of his son, when he is ill used by him, mourns not his own but the misery of the diseased; and he grieves at the contumely, not because it is cast on himself, but because the diseased person knows not what he does in his madness: so a good man, when he sees a sinner neither reverence nor honour the grey hairs of a parent, that to his face he can insult him, that he does not know in the madness of sinning what unbecoming and shameful things he does, grieves for him as one on the point of death, laments him as one despaired of by the physicians. As a good physician in the first place advises, then, even if he receive hard words, though he be beaten, nevertheless as the man is ill he bears with him; and if he be cursed he does not leave; and any medicine that may be applied he does not refuse; nor does he go away as from a stubborn fellow, but strives with all diligence to heal him as one that has deserved well from him, exercising not only the skill of science but also benignity of disposition. Even so, a righteous man, when he is treated with contempt, does not turn away, but when he is calumniated he regards it as madness, not as depravity; and desires rather to apply his own remedy to the wound, and sympathises, and grieves not for himself but for him who labours under an incurable disease. Ambrose.

Verse 53. The wicked that forsake thy law; not only transgress the law of the Lord, as every man does, more or less; but wilfully and obstinately despise it, and cast it behind their backs, and live in a continued course of disobedience to it; or who apostatize from the doctrine of the word of God; wilfully deny the truth, after they have had a speculation knowledge of it, whose punishment is very grievous (Heb 10:26-29); and now partly because of the daring impiety of wicked men, who stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and run upon him, even on the thick bosses of his bucklers: because of the shocking nature of their sin, the sad examples thereby set to others, the detriment they are to themselves, and the dishonour they bring to God I and partly because of the dreadful punishment that shall be inflicted on them here, and especially hereafter, when a horrible tempest of wrath will come upon them. Hence such trembling seized the Psalmist: and often so it is, that good men tremble more for the wicked than they do for themselves: see Ps 119:120. John Gill.

Verse 54. Thy statutes have been my songs. The Psalmist rejoiced, doubtless, as the good do now,

1. In law itself; law, as a rule of order; law, as a guide of conduct; law, as a security for safety.

2. In such a law as that of God: so pure, so holy, so fitted to promote the happiness of man.

3. In the stability of that law, as constituting his own personal security, the ground of his hope.

4. In law in its influence on the universe, preserving order and securing harmony, Albert Barnes.

Verse 55. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, etc. As the second Clause of the verse depends on the first, I consider the whole verse as setting forth one and the same truth; and, therefore, the prophet means that he was induced, by the remembrance he had of God, to keep the law. Contempt of the law originates in this, that few have any regard for God; and hence, the Scripture, in condemning the impiety of men, declares that they have forgotten God (Ps 1:22 78:11; 106:21.) The word "night" is not intended by him to mean the remembering of God merely for a short time, but a perpetual remembrance of him; he, however, refers to that season in particular, because then almost all our senses are overpowered with sleep. "When other men are sleeping, God occurs to my thoughts during my sleep." He has another reason for alluding to the night seasonthat we may be apprised, that though there was none to observe him, and none to put him in remembrance of it; yea, though he was shrouded in darkness, yet he was as solicitous to cherish the remembrance of God as if he occupied the most public and conspicuous place. John Calvin.

Verse 55. I have remembered thy name in the night, and therefore I "have kept thy law" all day. Matthew Henry.

Verse 55. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night. This verse contains a new protestation of his honest affection toward the word of God. Wherein, first, let us mark his sincerity; he was religious not only in public, but in private; for private exercises are the surest trials of true religion. In public, oftentimes hypocrisy carries men to simulate that which they are not; it is not so in the private devotion; for then, either doth a man, if he make no conscience of God's worship, utterly neglect it, because there is no eye of man to see him; or otherwise if he be indeed religious, even in private he presents his heart to God, seeking it to be approved by him; for his "praise is not of man, but of God." Again, this argues his fervency in religion: for as elsewhere he protests that he loved the word more than his appointed food; so here he protests that he gave up his night's rest that he might meditate in the word. But now, so far is zeal decayed in professors, that they will not forego their superfluities, far less their needful refreshment, for love of the word of God. William Cowper.

Verse 55. Thy name, O Lord. The "name" of the Lord is his character, his nature, his attributes, the manifestations he hath made of his holiness, his wisdom, goodness and truth. John Stephen.

Verse 55. In the night. First, that is, continually, because he remembered God in the day also. Secondly, sincerely, because he avoided the applause of men. Thirdly, cheerfully, because the heaviness of natural sleep could not overcome him. All these show that he was intensely given to the word; as we see men of the world will take some part of the night for their delights. And in that he did keep God's testimonies in the night, he showeth that he was the same in secret that he was in the light; whereby he condemned all those that will cover their wickedness with the dark. Let us examine ourselves whether we have broken our sleeps to call upon God, as we have to fulfil our pleasures. Richard Greenham.

Verse 55. In the night. Pastor Harms of Hermansburg used to preach and pray and instruct his people for nine hours on the Sabbath. And then when his mind was utterly exhausted, and his whole body was thrilling with pain, and he seemed almost dying for the want of rest, he could get no sleep. But he used to say that he loved to lie awake all night in the silence and darkness and think of Jesus. The night put away everything else from his thoughts, and left his heart free to commune with the One whom his soul most devoutly loved, and who visited and comforted his weary disciple in the night watches. And so God's children have often enjoyed rare seasons of communion with him in the solitude of exile, in the deep gloom of the dungeon, in the perpetual night of blindness, and at times when all voices and instructions from the world have been most completely cut off, and the soul has been left alone with God. Daniel March, in "Night unto Night." 1880.

Verse 55. In the night. There is never a time in which it is not proper to turn to God and think on his name. In the darkness of midnight, in the darkness of mental depression, in the darkness of outward providence, God is still a fitting theme. William S. Plumer.

Verse 55. The night.

"Dear night! this world's defeat;

The stop to busy fools; Care's check and curb;

The day of spirits, my soul's calm retreat

Which none disturb!

Christ's progress, and his prayer time;

The hours to which high heaven doth chime."

"God's silent, searching flight;

When my Lord's head is filled with dew, and all

His locks are wet with the clear drops of night;

His still, soft call;

His knocking time; the soul's dumb watch,

When spirits their fair kindred catch."

--Henry Vaughan, 1621-1695.

Verse 55. And have kept thy law; though imperfectly, yet spiritually, sincerely, heartily, and from a principle of love and gratitude, and with a view to the glory of God, and without mercenary, sinister ends. John Gill.

Verse 55. And have kept thy law. Hours of secret fellowship with God must issue in the desire of increased conformity to his holy will. It is the remembrance of God that leads to the keeping of his laws, as it is forgetfulness of God that fosters every species of transgression. John Morison.

Verse 55. And have kept. The verb is in the future, and perhaps is better so rendered, thus making it the expression of a solemn, deliberate purpose to continue his obedience. William S. Plumer.

Verses 55-56. He that delights to keep God's law, God will give him more grace to keep it, according to that remarkable text, "I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts." What had David for keeping God's precepts? He had power to keep his law; that is, to grow and increase in keeping of it. As the prophet (Ho 6:8) speaks of the knowledge of God: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord"; that is, if we industriously labour to know God, we shall have this reward, to be made able to know him more. So may I say of the grace of God: he that delights to keep God's law shall have his reward, to be enabled to keep it more perfectly. A true delight in God's word is grace increasing. Grace is the mother of all true joy (Isa 32:17), and joy is as the daughter, and the mother and daughter live and die together. Edmund Calamy (1600-1666), in "The Godly Man's Ark."

Verse 56. This I had, because I kept thy precepts. As sin is a punishment of sin, and the wicked waxeth ever worse and worse; so godliness is the recompense of godliness. The right use of one talent increaseth more, and the beginnings of godliness are blessed with a growth of godliness. David's good exercises here held him in memory of his God, and the memory of God made him more godly and religious. William Cowper.

Verse 56. This I had, etc. The Rabbins have an analogous saying, The reward of a precept is a precept, or, A precept draws a precept. The meaning of which is, that he who keeps one precept, to him God grants, as if by way of reward, the ability to keep another and more difficult precept. The contrary to this is that other saying of the Rabbins, that the reward of a sin is a sin; or, Transgression draws transgression. Simon de Muis, 1587-1644.

Verse 56. This I had, that is, this happened to me, etc. I experienced many evils and adversities; but, on the other hand, I drew sweetest consolations from the word, and I was crowned with many blessings from God. Others thus render it, This is my business, This I care for and desire, to keep thy commandments; i.e., to hold fast the doctrine incorrupt with faith and a good conscience. D.H. Mollerus.

Verse 56. This I had, etc. I had the comfort of keeping thy law because I kept it. God's work is its own wages. Matthew Henry.

Verse 56. This I had, etc. What is that? This comfort I had, this supportation I had in all my afflictions, this consolation I had, this sweet communion with God I had. Why? "Because I kept thy precepts, "I obeyed thy will. Look, how much obedience is yielded to the commands of God, so much comfort doth flow into the soul: God usually gives in comforts proportionably to our obedience. O the sweet, soul satisfying consolation a child of God finds in the ways of God, and in doing the will of God, especially when he lies on his deathbed; then it will be sweeter to him than honey and the honeycomb; then will he say with good king Hezekiah, when he lay upon his deathbed, "Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight." O the sweet satisfaction that a soul shall find in God, when he comes to appear before God! James Nalton, 1664.

Verse 56. This I had, etc. Or, "This was my consolation, that I kept thy precepts; "which is nearly the reading of the Syriac, and renders the sense more complete. Note in Bagster's Comprehensive Bible.

Verse 56. This I had, etc. When I hear the faithful people of God telling of his love, and saying"This I had, "must I not, if unable to join their cheerful acknowledgment, trace it to my unfaithful walk, and say "This I had not" because I have failed in obedience to thy precepts; because I have been careless and self indulgent; because I have slighted thy love; because I have "grieved thy Holy Spirit, " and forgotten to "ask for the old paths, that I might walk therein, and find rest to my soul" Jer 6:16. Charles Bridges.

Verse 56. David saith indefinitely, "This I had"; not telling us what good or privilege it was; only in the general, it was some benefit that accrued to him in this life. He doth not say, This I hope for; but, "This I had; "and therefore he doth not speak of the full reward in the life to come. In heaven we come to receive the full reward of obedience; but a close walker, that waiteth upon God in an humble and constant obedience, shall have sufficient encouragement even in this life. Not only he shall be blessed, but he is blessed; he hath something on hand as well as in hope: as David saith in this the 119th Psalm, not only he shall be blessed, but he is blessed; as they that travelled towards Zion, they met with a well by the way: "Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools" (Ps 84:6). In a dry and barren wilderness, through which they were to pass, they were not left wholly comfortless, but met with a well or a cistern; that is, they had some comfort vouchsafed to them before they came to enjoy God's presence in Zion; some refreshments they had by the way. As servants, that, besides their wages, have their veils; so, besides the recompense of reward hereafter, we have our present comforts and supports during our course of service, which are enough to counterbalance all worldly joys, and outweigh the greatest pleasures that men can expect in the way of sin. In the benefits that believers find by walking with God in a course of obedience every one can say, "This I had, because I kept thy precepts." Thomas Manton.

This begins a new division of the Psalm, indicated by the Hebrew letter Cheth, which may be represented in English by hh. Albert Barnes.

Verses 57-64. In this section David laboureth to confirm his faith, and to comfort himself in the certainty of his regeneration, by eight properties of a sound believer, or eight marks of a new creature. The first whereof is his choosing of God for his portion. Whence learn,

1. Such as God hath chosen and effectually called, they get grace to make God their choice, their delight, and their portion; and such as have chosen God for their portion have an evidence of their regeneration and election also; for here David maketh this a mark of his regeneration: Thou art my portion.

2. It is another mark of regeneration, after believing in God, and choosing him for our portion, to resolve to bring forth the fruits of faith in new obedience, as David did: I have said that I would keep thy words.

3. As it is usual for God's children, now and then because of sin falling out, to be exercised with a sense of God's displeasure, so it is a mark of a new creature not to lie stupid and senseless under this exercise, but to deal with God earnestly, for restoring the sense of reconciliation, and giving new experience of his mercy, as the Psalmist did; I intreated thy favour with my whole heart; and this is the third evidence of a new creature.

4. The penitent believer hath the word of grace and the covenant of God for his assurance to be heard when he seeketh mercy: Be merciful unto me according to thy word.

5. The searching in what condition we are in, and examination of our ways according to the word, and renewing of repentance, with an endeavour of amendment, is a fourth mark of a new creature: I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

6. When we do see our sin we are naturally slow to amend our doings; but the sooner we turn us to the way of God's obedience, we speed the better, and the more speedy the reforming of our life be, the more sound mark is it of a new creature: I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

7. Enduring of persecution and spoiling of our goods, for adhering to God's word, without forsaking of his cause, is a fifth mark of a new creature: The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.

8. As it is the lot of God's children who resolve to be godly, to suffer persecution, and to be forced either to lose their temporal goods or else to lose a good cause and a good conscience; so it is the wisdom of the godly to remember what the Lord's word requireth of us and speaketh unto us, and this shall comfort our conscience more than the loss of things temporal can trouble our minds: The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.

9. A sixth mark of a new creature is, to be so far from fretting under hard exercise as to thank God in secret cheerfully for his gracious word, and for all the passages of his providence, where none seeth us, and where there is no hazard of ostentation: At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

10. A seventh mark of a renewed creature is, to associate ourselves and keep communion with such as are truly gracious, and do fear God indeed, as we are able to discern them: I am a companion of all them that fear thee.

11. The fear of God is evidenced by believing and obeying the doctrine and direction of the Scripture, and no other ways: I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

12. The eighth mark of a new creature is, not to rest in any measure of renovation, but earnestly to deal with God for the increase of saving knowledge, and fruitful obedience of it; for, Teach me thy statutes, is the prayer of the man of God, in whom all the former marks are found.

13. As the whole of the creatures are witnesses of God's bounty to man, and partakers of that bounty themselves, so are they pawns of God's pleasure to bestow upon his servants greater gifts than these, even the increase of sanctification, in further illumination of mind and reformation of life: for this the Psalmist useth for an argument to be more and more sanctified: The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes. David Dickson.

Verse 57. Thou art my portion, O LORD. The sincerity of this claim may be gathered, because he speaks by way of address to God. He doth not say barely, "He is my portion"; but challengeth God to his face: Thou art my portion, O LORD. Elsewhere it is said, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul" (La 3:24). There he doth not speak it by way of address to God, but he adds, "saith my soul"; but here to God himself, who knows the secrets of the heart. To speak thus of God to God, argues our sincerity, when to God's face we avow our trust and choice; as Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (Joh 21:17). Thomas Manton.

Verse 57. Thou art my portion, O LORD. Luther counsels every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, "Christianus sum, "I am a Christian; and I would counsel every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, "The Lord is my portion." O Christian, when Satan or the world shall tempt thee with honours, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; when they shall tempt thee with riches, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; when they shall tempt thee with preferments, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; and when they shall tempt thee with the favours of great ones, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; yea, and when this persecuting world shall threaten thee with the loss of thy estate, answer, "The Lord is my portion": and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of thy liberty, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of friends, answer, "The Lord is my portion"; and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of life, answer, "The Lord is my portion." O, sir, if Satan should come to thee with an apple, as once he did to Eve, tell him that "the Lord is your portion"; or with a grape, as once he did to Noah, tell him that "the Lord is your portion"; or with a change of raiment, as once he did to Gehazi, tell him that "the Lord is your portion"; or with a wedge of gold, as once he did to Achan, tell him that "the Lord is your portion"; or with a bag of money, as once he did to Judas, tell him that "the Lord is your portion"; or with a crown, a kingdom, as once he did to Moses, tell him that "the Lord is your portion." Thomas Brooks.

Verse 57. Thou art my portion, O LORD. God is all sufficient; get him for your "portion", and you have all; then you have infinite wisdom to direct you, infinite knowledge to teach you, infinite mercy to pity, and save you, infinite love to care and comfort you, and infinite power to protect and keep you. If God be yours, all his attributes are yours; all his creatures, all his works of providence, shall do you good, as you have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory portion. He is an ever living, ever loving, ever present friend; and without him you are a cursed creature in every condition, and all things will work against you. John Mason, 1694.

Verse 57. Thou art my portion, O LORD. If there was a moment in the life of David in which one might feel inclined to envy him, it would not be in that flush of youthful victory, when Goliath lay prostrate at his feet, nor in that hour of even greater triumph, when the damsels of Israel sang his praise in the dance, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands"; it would not be on that royal day, when his undisputed claim to the throne of Israel was acknowledged on every side and by every tribe; but it would be in that moment when, with a loving and trustful heart, he looked up to God and said, "Thou art my portion." In a later Psalm (142), which bears with it as its title, "A prayer of David, when he was in the cave, "we have the very same expression: "I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." It adds immeasurably to such an expression, if we believe it to have been uttered at a time when every other possession and inheritance was taken from him, and the Lord alone was his portion. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 57. He is an exceedingly covetous fellow to whom God is not sufficient; and he is an exceeding fool to whom the world is sufficient. For God is all inexhaustible treasury of all riches, sufficing innumerable men; while the world has mere trifles and fascinations to offer, and leads the soul into deep and sorrowful poverty. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 57. They who are without an ample patrimony in this life, may make to themselves a portion in heavenly blessedness. Solomon Gessler.

Verse 57. I have said that I would keep thy words. This he brings in by way of proving that which he said in the former words. Many will say with David, that God is their portion; but here is the point: how do they prove it? If God were their portion, they would love him; if they loved him they would love his word; if they loved his word they would live by it and make it the rule of their life. William Cowper.

Verse 57. I have said that I would keep thy words. He was resolved to keep his commandments, lay up his promises, observe his ordinances, profess and retain a belief in his doctrines. John, Gill.

Verse 58. I entreated thy favour, or; I seek thy face. To seek the face is to come into the presence. Thus the Hebrews speak when desirous of expressing that familiar intercourse to which God admits his people when he bids them make known their requests. It is truly the same as speaking face to face with God. Franciscus Vatablus, 1545.

Verse 58. I entreated thy favour with my whole heart I have often remarked how graciously and lovingly the Lord delights to return an answer to prayer in the very words that have gone up before him, as if to assure us that they have reached his ear, and been speeded back again from him laden with increase. "I entreated thy favour with my whole heart." Hear the Lord's answer to his praying people: "I will rejoice over them to do them good assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." Barton Bouchier.

Verse 58. With my whole heart. The Hebrew expresses great earnestness and humility in supplication. A. R. Fausset.

Verse 58. With my whole heart. Prayer is chiefly a heart work. God heareth the heart without the mouth, but never heareth the mouth acceptably without the heart. Walter Marshall.

Verse 58. Be merciful unto me, etc. He protested before that he sought the Lord with his whole heart, and now he prayeth that he may find mercy. So indeed it shall be; boldly may that man look for mercy at God's hand who seeks him truly. Mercy and truth are wont to meet together, and embrace one another: where truth is in the soul to seek, there cannot but be mercy in God to embrace. If truth be in us to confess our sins and forsake them, we shall find mercy in God to pardon and forgive them. William Cowper.

Verse 58. According to thy word. He prayeth not for what he lusteth after, but for that which the Lord promised; for St. James saith, "You pray and have not, "etc., and this is the cause, that we have not the thing we pray for, because we pray not according to the word. His word must be the rule of our prayers, and then we shall receive; as Solomon prayed and obtained. God hath promised forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of his word, and many other blessings. If we have these, let not our hearts be set on other things. Richard Greenham.

Verse 58. According to thy word. The Word of God may be divided into three parts; into commandments, threatenings, and promises; and though a Christian must not neglect the commanding and threatening word, yet if ever he would make the Word a channel for Divine comfort, he must study the promising word; for the promises are a Christian's magna charta for heaven. All comfort must be built upon a Scripture promise, else it is presumption, not true comfort. The promises are pabulum fidei, et anima fidei, the food of faith, and the soul of faith. As faith is the life of a Christian, so the promises are the life of faith: faith is a dead faith if it hath no promise to quicken it. As the promises are of no use without faith to apply them, so faith is of no use without a promise to lay hold on. Edmund Calamy.

Verse 58. The rule and ground of confidence is, "according to thy word." God's word is the rule of our confidence; for therein is God's stated course. If we would have favour and mercy from God, it must be upon his own terms. God will accept of us in Christ, if we repent, believe, and obey, and seek his favour diligently: he will not deny those who seek, ask, knock. Many would have mercy, but will not observe God's direction. We must ask according to God's will, not without a promise, nor against a command. God is made a voluntary debtor by his promise. These are notable props of faith, when we are encouraged to seek by the offer, and urged to apply by the promise. We thrive no more in a comfortable sense of God's love, because we take not this course. Thomas Manton.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. The transition which is made in the text from the occasion of this alteration, "I thought on my ways, "to the change itself, is very lofty and elegant. He does not tell us that, after a review of them, he saw the folly and danger of sin, the debasedness of its pleasures, and the poison of its delights; or that, upon a search into God's law, he was convinced that what he imagined so severe, rigid, and frightful before, was now all amiable and lovely; no, but immediately adds, "I turned my feet unto thy testimonies"; than which I can conceive nothing more noble or strong; for it emphatically says, that there was no need to express the appearance his ways had when once he thought upon them. What must be the consequence of his deliberation was so plain, namely, that sin never prevails but where it is masked over with some false beauties, and the inconsiderate, foolish sinner credulously gives ear to its enchantments, and is not at pains and care to enquire into them; for a deep, thorough search would soon discover that its fairest appearances are but lying vanities, and that he who is captivated with that empty show is in the same circumstances with a person in a dream, who can please himself with his fancy only while asleep, and that his awakening out of it no sooner or more certainly discovers the cheat, than a serious thinking upon the ways of iniquity and rebellion against God will manifest the fatal madness of men in ever pursuing them. William Dunlop, 1692-1720.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. Some translate the original, I looked on both sides upon my ways, I considered them every way, "and turned my feet unto thy testimonies" I considered that I was wandering like a lost sheep, and then I returned. George Swinnock.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways, etc. The Hebrew word but that is here used for thinking, signifies to think on a man's ways accurately, advisedly, seriously, studiously, curiously. This holy man of God thought exactly and curiously on all his purposes and practices, on all his doings and sayings, on all his words and works, and finding too many of them to be short of the rule, yea, to be against the rule, he turned his feet to God's testimonies; having found out his errors, upon a diligent search, a strict scrutiny, he turned over a new leaf, and framed his course more exactly by rule. O Christians, you must look as well to your spiritual wants as to your spiritual enjoyments; you must look as well to your layings out as to your layings up; you must look as well forward to what you should be, as backward to what you are. Certainly that Christian will never be eminent in holiness that hath many eyes to behold a little holiness, and never an eye to see his further want of holiness. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways. The word signifies a fixed, abiding thought. Some make it an allusion to those that work embroidery; that are very exact and careful to cover the least flaw; or to those that cast accounts. Reckon with yourselves, What do I owe? what am I worth? "I thought" not only on my wealth, as the covetous man, Ps 69:11; but "on my ways"; not what I have, but what I do; because what we do will follow us into another world, when what we have must be left behind. Many are critical enough in their remarks upon other people's ways that never think of their own, but "let every man prove his own work." This account which David here gives of himself may refer either to his constant practice every day; he reflected on his ways at night, directed his feet to God's testimonies in the morning, and what his hand found to do that was good he did it without delay: or it may refer to his first acquaintance with God and religion, when he began to throw off the vanity of childhood and youth, and to remember his Creator; that blessed change was by the grace of God thus wrought. Note, 1. Conversion begins in serious consideration; Eze 18:28; Lu 15:17. 2. Consideration must end in a sound conversion. To what purpose have we thought on our ways, if we do not turn our feet with all speed to God's testimonies? Matthew Henry.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways. Be frequent in this work of serious consideration. If daily you called yourselves to an account, all acts of grace would thrive the better. Seneca asked of Sextius, Quod hodie malum sanasti? cui vitio obstitisti? You have God's example in reviewing every day's work, and in dealing with Adam before he slept. The man that was unclean was to wash his clothes at eventide. Thomas Manton.

Verse 59. I thought on my ways, etc. Poisons may be made curable. Let the thoughts of old sins stir up a commotion of anger and hatred. We shiver in our spirits, and a motion in our blood, at the very thought of a bitter potion we have formerly taken. Why may we not do that spiritually, which the very frame and constitution of our bodies doth naturally, upon the calling a loathsome thing to mind? The Romans' sins were transient, but the shame was renewed every time they reflected on them: Ro 6:21, "Whereof ye are now ashamed." They reacted the detestation instead of the pleasure: so should the reviving of old sins in our memories be entertained with our sighs, rather than with joy. We should also manage the opportunity, so as to promote some further degrees of our conversion: "I thought or, my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." There is not the most hellish motion, but we may strike some sparks from it, to kindle our love to God, renew our repentance, raise our thankfulness, or quicken our obedience. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 59. And turned my feet unto thy testimonies. Mentioning this passage, Philip Henry observed, that the great turn to be made in heart and life is, from all other things to the word of God. Conversion turns us to the word of God, as our touchstone, to examine ourselves, our state, our ways, spirits, doctrines, worships, customs; as our glass, to dress by, James 1; as our rule to walk and work by, Ga 6:16; as our water, to wash us, Ps 119:9; as our fire to warm us, Lu 24:32; as our food to nourish us, Job 23:12; as our sword to fight with, Eph 6:13-17; as our counsellor, in all our doubts, Ps 119:24; as our cordial, to comfort us; as our heritage, to enrich us.

Verse 59. And turned my feet unto thy testimonies. No itinerary to the heavenly city is simpler or fuller than the ready answer made by an English prelate to a scoffer who asked him the way to heaven; "First turn to the right, and keep straight on." Neale and Littledale.

Verse 59. And turned. Turn to God, and he will turn to you; then you are happy, though all the world turn against you. John Mason.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not, etc. Duty discovered should instantly be discharged. There is peril attending every step which is taken in the indulgence of any known sin, or in the neglect of any acknowledged obligation. A tender conscience will not trifle with its convictions, lest the heart should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It is unsafe, it is unreasonable, it is highly criminal to hesitate to carry that reformation into effect which conscience dictates. He who delays when duty calls may never have it in his power to evince the sincerity of his contrition for past folly and neglect. "I made haste, "said the Psalmist, "and delayed not to keep thy commandments"; that is, being fully convinced of the necessity and excellency of obedience, I instantly resolved upon it, and immediately put it into execution. John Morison.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. We often hear the saying, "Second thoughts are best." This does not hold in the religious life. In the context the Psalmist says, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies, "that is, I did not wait to think again. In religion it may be a deadly habit to take time to reflect. Make haste. Henry Melvill.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not. When anyone is lawfully called either to the study of theology, or to the teaching it in the church, he ought not to hesitate, as Moses, or turn away, as Jonah; but, leaving all things, he should obey God who calls him; as David says, "I made haste, and delayed not." Mt 4:20 Lu 9:62. Solomon Gesner.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not. Sound faith is neither suspicious, nor curious; it believes what God says, without sight, without examining. For since it is impossible for God to lie (for how should truth lie?) it is fit his word be credited for itself's sake. It must not be examined with hows and whys. That which the Psalmist says of observing the law, that must the Christian say of receiving the gospel. ynhmhmnh al, "I disputed not, "saith David; I argued not with God. The word is very elegant in the original tongue, derived in the Hebrew from the pronoun tm, which signifieth quid. Faith reasons not with God, asketh no "quids", no "quares", no "quomodos", no whats, no hows, no wherefores: it moveth no questions. It meekly yields assent, and humbly says Amen to every word of God. This is the faith of which our Saviour wondered in the centurion's story. Richard Clerke, 1634.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not. The original word, which we translate "delayed not", is amazingly emphatic. thmhmth anw, "velo hithmahmahti", I did not stand what what whating; or, as we used to express the same sentiment, shilly shallying with myself: I was determined, and so set out. The Hebrew word as well as the English, strongly marks indecision of mind, positive action being suspended, because the mind is so unfixed as not to be able to make a choice. Adam Clarke.

Verse 60. Take heed of delays and procrastination, of putting it off from day to day, by saying there will be time enough hereafter; it will be time enough for me to look after heaven when I have got enough of the world; if I do it in the last year of my life, in the last month of the last year, in the last week of the last month, it will serve. O take heed of delays; this putting off repentance hath ruined thousands of souls; shun that pit into which many have fallen, shun that rock upon which many have suffered shipwreck; say with David, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." James Nalton, 1664.

Verse 60. I made haste, and delayed not, etc. In the verse immediately preceding, the man of God speaks of repentance as the fruit of consideration and self examining: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." But when did he turn? for, though we see the evil of our ways, we are naturally slow to get it redressed. Therefore David did not only turn to God, but he did it speedily: we have an account of that in this verse, "I made haste, " etc. This readiness in the work of obedience is doubly expressed; affirmatively, and negatively. Affirmatively, "I made haste"; negatively, "I delayed not." This double expression increaseth the sense according to the manner of the Hebrews; as, "I shall not die, but live" (Ps 118:17); that is, surely live; so here, "I made haste, and delayed not; "that is, I verily delayed not a moment; as soon as he had thought of his ways, and taken up the resolution to walk closely with God, he did put it into practice. The Septuagint read the words thus, "I was ready, and was not troubled or diverted by fear of danger." Indeed, besides our natural slowness to good, this is one usual ground of delays; we distract ourselves with fears; and, when God hath made known his will to us in many duties, we think of tarrying till the times are more quiet, and favourable to our practice, or till our affairs are in a better posture. A good improvement may be made of that translation; but the words run better, as they run more generally, with us, "I made haste, and delayed not," etc. David delayed not. When we dare not flatly deny, then we delay. Non vacat, that is the sinner's plea, "I am not at leisure"; but, Non placet, there is the reality. They which were invited to the wedding varnished their denial over with an excuse (Mt 22:5). Delay is a denial; for, if they were willing, there would be no excuse. To be rid of importunate and troublesome creditors, we promise them payment another time: though we know our estate will be more wasted by that time, it is but to put them off: so this delay and putting off of God is but a shift. Here is the misery, God always comes unseasonably to a carnal heart. It was the devils that said, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Mt 8:29). Good things are a torment to a carnal heart; and they always come out of time. Certainly, that is the best time when the word is pressed upon thy heart with evidence, light, and power, and when God treats with thee about thine eternal peace. Thomas Manton.

Verse 60. Delayed. Hithmahmah; the word used of Lot's lingering, in Ge 19:16. William Kay.

Verse 60. Delay in the Lord's errands is next to disobedience, and generally springs out of it, or issues in it. "God commanded me to make haste" (2Ch 35:21). Let us see to it that we can say, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Frances Ridley Havergal.

Verse 60. Avoid all delay in the performance of this great work of believing in Christ. Until we have performed it we continue under the power of sin and Satan, and under the wrath of God; and there is nothing between hell and us besides the breath of our nostrils. It is dangerous for Lot to linger in Sodom, lest fire and brimstone come down from heaven upon him. The manslayer must fly with all haste to the city of refuge, lest the avenger of blood pursue him, while his heart is hot, and slay him. We should make haste, and not delay to keep God's commandments. Walter Marshall.

Verse 60. If convictions begin to work, instantly yield to their influence. If any worldly or sinful desire is touched, let this be the moment for its crucifixion. If any affection is kindled towards the Saviour, give immediate expression to its voice. If any grace is reviving, let it be called forth into instant duty. This is the best, the only, expedient to fix and detain the motion of the Spirit now striving in the heart; and who knoweth but the improvement of the present advantage, may be the moment of victory over difficulties hitherto found insuperable, and may open our path to heaven with less interruption and more steady progress? Charles Bridges.

Verse 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me. Two readings remain, either of which may be admitted: The cords of the wicked have caught hold of me, or, The companies of the wicked have robbed me. Whether we adopt the one or the other of these readings, what the prophet intends to declare is, that when Satan assailed the principles of piety in his soul, by grievous temptations, he continued with undeviating steadfastness in the love, and practice of God's law. Cords may, however, be understood in two ways; either, first, as denoting the deceptive allurements by which the wicked endeavoured to get him entangled in their society; or, secondly, the frauds which they practised to effect his ruin. John Calvin.

Verse 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me. Some have it, "Cords of wicked men have entwined me." Others, "Snares of wicked men surround me." The meaning is that wicked men by their plots and contrivances had beset him, as men would ensnare a wild beast in their toils. They might, indeed, hem him round about in the wilderness, but they could not enthral the free mind; he would still feel at liberty in spirit, he would not forget God's law. John, Stephen.

Verse 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me. They set upon his goods, and spoiled him of them, either by plunder in the time of war, or by fines and confiscations under colour of law. Saul (it is likely) seized his effects; Absalom his palace; the Amalekites rifled Ziklag. Matthew Henry.

Verse 61. The friendship of the wicked must be shunned. First, because it binds us, as they are bound together"bands of the wicked." Every sinner is a gladiator with net and sword, going down into the arena, and endeavouring to enmesh any one who comes near him. A second reason for shunning the friendship of the wicked, which may be taken from the Hebrew word, is their cruelty and barbarity: for not only do the wicked bind their friends, but they make a spoil and a prey of them: "have robbed me." They are decoying thieves, journeying with an unwary traveller, until they have led him into thick and dark woods, where they strip him of heavenly riches. Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me. Then said Christian to his fellow, Now I call to remembrance that which was told me of a thing that happened to a good man hereabout. The name of the man was Little Faith, but a good man, and he dwelt in the town of Sincere. The thing was this; at the entering in of this passage there comes down from Broadway gate a lane called Dead man's lane; so called because of the murders that are commonly done there. And this Little Faith going on pilgrimage, as we do now, chanced to sit down there and slept. Now there happened, at that time, to come down that lane from Broadway gate three sturdy rogues, and their names were Faint heart, Mistrust, and Guilt, (three brothers,) and they espying Little Faith where he was came galloping up with speed. Now the good man was just awaked from his sleep, and was getting up to go on his journey. So they came all up to him, and with threatening language bid him stand. At this, Little Faith looked as white as a cloud, and had neither power to fight nor flee. Then said Faint heart, Deliver thy purse; but he making no haste to do it, (for he was loath to lose his money,)Mistrust ran up to him, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, pulled out thence a bag of silver. Then he cried out, Thieves! Thieves! With that Guilt, with a great club that was in his hand, struck Little Faith on the head, and with that blow felled him flat to the ground, where he lay bleeding as one that would bleed to death...The place where his jewels were they never ransacked, so those he kept still; but, as I was told, the good man was much afflicted for his loss. For the thieves got most of his spending money. That which they got not (as I said) were jewels, also he had a little odd money left, but scarce enough to bring him to his journey's end; nay, (if I was not misinformed,)he was forced to beg as he went, to keep himself alive (for his jewels he might not sell). But beg, and do what he could he went (as we say) with many a hungry belly, the most part of the rest of the way. John Bunyan.

Verse 61. Bands. Howsoever, to strengthen themselves in an evil course, the wicked go together by bands and companies, yet shall it not avail them, nor hurt us. Babel's builders; Moab, Ammon, Edom, conspiring in one, may tell us, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not escape unpunished." The wicked are like thorns before the fire; their multitude may well embolden the flame, but cannot resist it. William Cowper.

Verse 61. It is a salutary reflection to bear in mind, that thousands of spiritual adversaries are ever watching to make us their prey. John Morison.

Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks. Though we cannot enforce the particular observance upon you, yet there are many notable lessons to be drawn from David's practice.

1. The ardency of his devotion, or his earnest desire to praise God: "at midnight, "when sleep doth most invade men's eyes, then he would rise up. His heart was so set upon the praising of God, and the sense of his righteous providence did so affect him, and urge and excite him to this duty, that he would not only employ himself in this work in the daytime, and so show his love to God, but he would rise out of his bed to worship God and celebrate his praise. That which hindereth the sleep of ordinary men, is either the cares of this world, the impatient resentment of injuries, or the sting of an evil conscience: these keep others waking, but David was awaked by a desire to praise God. No hour is unseasonable to a gracious heart: he is expressing his affection to God when others take their rest. Thus we read of our Lord Christ, that he spent whole nights in prayer (Lu 6:12). It is said of the glorified saints in heaven, that they praise God continually: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Re 7:15). Now, holy men, though much hindered by their bodily necessities, will come as near to continual praise as present frailty will permit. Alas, we oftentimes begin the day with some fervency of prayer and praise, but we faint ere the evening comes.

2. His sincerity, seen in his secrecy. David would profess his faith in God when he had no witness by him; "at midnight, "when there was no hazard of ostentation. It was a secret cheerfulness and delighting in God: when alone he could have no respect to the applause of men, but only to approve himself to God who seeth in secret. See Christ's direction: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Mt 6:6). Note also Christ's own practice: "Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mr 1:35): before day he went into a desert to pray; both time and place implied secrecy.

3. We learn hence the preciousness of time: it was so to David; see how he spendeth the time of his life. We read of David, when he lay down at night, he watered his couch with his tears, after the examination of his heart (Ps 6:6); at midnight he rose to give thanks; in the morning he prevented the morning watches; and seven times a day he praised God: morning, noon, and night he consecrated. These are all acts of eminent piety. We should not content ourselves with so much grace as will merely serve to save us. Alas! we have much idle time hanging upon our hands: if we would give that to God, it were well.

4. The value of godly exercises above our natural refreshing. The word is sweeter than appointed food: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 13:12). David prefers the praises of God before his sleep and rest in the night. Surely, this should shame us for our sensuality. We can dispense with other things for our vain pleasures: we have done as much for sin, for vain sports, etc.; and shall we not deny ourselves for God?

5. The great reverence to be used in secret adoration. David did not only raise up his spirits to praise God, but rise up out of his bed, to bow the knee to him. Secret duties should be performed with solemnity, not slubbered over. Praise, a special act of adoration, requireth the worship of body and soul. Thomas Manton.

Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks. He had praised God in the courts of the Lord's house, and yet he will do it in his bedchamber. Public worship will not excuse us from secret worship. Matthew Henry.

Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee. Was he not ready also to praise God at midday? Certainly; but he says "at midnight, "that he may express the ardour and longing of his soul. We are wont to assure our friends of our good will by saying that we will rise at midnight to consult about their affairs. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks, etc. In these words observe three things:

1. David's holy employment, or the duty promised, giving thanks to God.

2. His earnestness and fervency implied in the time mentioned, "At midnight I will rise"; he would rather interrupt his sleep and rest, than God should want his praise.

3. The cause or matter of his thanksgiving, "because of thy righteous judgments": whereby he meaneth the dispensations of God's providence in delivering the godly and punishing the wicked, according to his word. Thomas Manton.

Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks. Cares of this world, impatience of wrongs, a bad conscience, keep awake the ungodly and disturb their sleep (Rivetus); but what I awake for is to give thanks to thee. A. R. Faussett.

Verse 63. I am a companion, etc. He said in the first verse of this section that God was his portion; now he saith, that all the saints of God are his companions. These two go togetherthe love of God and the love of his saints. He that loveth not his brother, made in God's image, whom he seeth, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen? Seeing our goodness extends not to the Lord; if it be showed to his saints and excellent ones upon earth, for his sake, it shall be no small argument of our loving affection towards himself. Godly David, when Jonathan was dead, made diligent inquisition. Is there none of Jonathan's posterity to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake? and at length he found a silly, lame Mephibosheth. So if we enquire diligently, is there none upon earth to whom I may show kindness for Christ's sake who is in heaven? We shall ever find some, to whom whatsoever we do shall be accepted as done to himself. His great modesty is to be marked. He saith not, I am companion of all that follow thee, but of all that fear thee. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. He places himself among novices in humility, though he excelled ancients in piety. William Cowper.

Verse 63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee. How weak is human nature! Verily there are times when the presence of one so great as the Almighty becomes oppressive, and we feel our need of one like ourselves to sympathize with us. And there have been provided for us by the way many kind, sympathizing friends, like Jesus. As we pass on, we get the human supports which the Lord hath provided. We get them for fellowship too. John Stephen.

Verse 63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee. Birds of a feather will flock together. Servants of the same Lord, if faithful, will join with their fellows, and not with the servants of his enemy. When a man comes to an inn you may give a notable guess for what place he is bound by the company he enquires after. His question, "Do you know of any travelling towards London? I should be heartily glad of their company, "will speak his mind and his course. If he hear of any bound for another coast he regards them not; but if he know of any honest passengers that are to ride in the same road, and set out for the same city with himself he sends to them, and begs the favour of their good company. This world is an inn, all men are in some sense pilgrims and strangers, they have no abiding place here. Now the company they enquire after, and delight in, whether those that walk in the "broad way" of the flesh, or those who walk in the "narrow way" of the Spirit, will declare whether they are going towards heaven or towards hell. A wicked man will not desire the company of them who walk in a contrary way, nor a saint delight in their society who go cross to his journey. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The young partridges hatched under a hen go for a time along with her chickens, and keep them company, scraping in the earth together; but when they are grown up, and their wings fit for the purpose, they mount up into the air, and seek for birds of their own nature. A Christian, before his conversion, is brought up under the prince of darkness, and walks in company with his cursed crew, according to the course of this world; but when the Spirit changes his disposition, he quickly changes his companions, and delights only in the saints that are on earth. George Swinnock.

Verse 63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee.

1. The person speaking. The disparity of the persons is to be observed. David, who was a great prophet, yea, a king, yet saith, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee." Christ himself called them his "fellows": "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps 65:7); and therefore David might well say, "I am a companion."

2. The persons spoken of. David saith of "all them that fear thee." The universal particle is to be observed; not only some, but "all": when any lighted upon him, or he upon any of them, they were welcome to him. How well would it be for the world, if the great potentates of the earth would thus think, speak, and do, "I am a companion, of all them that fear thee." Self love reigneth in most men: we love the rich and despise the poor, and so have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons (Jas 2:1): therefore this universality is to be regarded. Hearing of your faith and love to all the saints (Eph 1:15), to the mean as well as the greatest. Meanness doth not take away church relations (1Co 11:20). There are many differences in worldly respects between one Christian and another; yea, in spiritual gifts, some weaker, some stronger; but we must love all; for all are children of one Father, all owned by Christ: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:11).

This, I say, is observable, the disparity of the persons: on the one side, David, on the other, all the people of God. Thomas Manton.

Verse 63. I am a companion, etc.: as if he would say, This is a sign to me that I belong to thy family; because "I am the companion of all those fearing thee" with a filial fear, and keeping "thy precepts." Paulus Palanterius.

Verse 63. A companion, properly is such an one as I do choose to walk and converse with ordinarily in a way of friendship; so that company keeping doth imply three things; first, it is a matter of choice, and therefore relations, as such, are not properly said to be our companions; secondly, it implies a constant walking and converse with another, and so it is expressed, Job 34:8 Pr 13:20. And, thirdly, this ordinary converse or walking with another, must be in a way of friendship. William Bridge, 1600-1670.

Verse 63. Shun the company that shuns God, and keep the company that God keeps. Look on the society of the carnal or profane as infectious, but reckon serious, praying persons the excellent ones of the earth. Such will serve to quicken you when and warm you when cold. Make the liveliest of God's people your greatest intimates, and see that their love and likeness to Christ be the great motive of your love to them, more than their love or likeness to you. John Willisor, 1680-1750.

Verse 64. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy. The humble and devoted servant of God does not look with a jaundiced eye upon that scene through which he is passing to his eternal home. Amidst many sorrows and privations, the necessary fruits of sin, he beholds all nature and providence shining forth in the rich expression of God's paternal benignity and mercy to the children of men. John Morison.

Verse 64. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy. The molten sea, the shewbread, the sweet incense, the smoke of the sacrifices, Aaron's breastplate, the preaching of the cross, the keys of the kingdom of heaven: do not all these proclaim mercy? Who could enter a sanctuary, search conscience, look up to heaven, pray or sacrifice, call upon God, or think of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, if there were no mercy? Do not all visions, covenants, promises, messages, mysteries, legal purifications, evangelical pacification, confirm this? Yes, mercy is in the air which we breathe, the daily light which shines upon us, the gracious rain of God's inheritance; it is the public spring for all the thirsty, the common hospital for all the needy; all the streets of the church are paved with these stones. What would become of the children if there were not these breasts of consolation? How should the bride, the Lamb's wife, be trimmed, if her bridegroom did not deck her with these habiliments? How should Eden appear like the Garden of God, if it were not watered by these rivers? It is mercy that takes us out of the womb, feeds us in the days of our pilgrimage, furnishes us with spiritual provisions, closes our eyes in peace, and translates us to a secure restingplace. It is the first petitioner's suit, and the first believer's article, the contemplation of Enoch, the confidence of Abraham, the burden of the Prophetic Songs, the glory of all the apostles, the plea of the penitent, the ecstasies of the reconciled, the believer's hosannah, the angel's hallelujah Ordinances, oracles, altars, pulpits, the gates of the grave, and the gates of heaven, do all depend upon mercy. It is the load star of the wandering, the ransom of the captive, the antidote of the tempted, the prophet of the living, and the effectual comfort of the dying: there would not be one regenerate saint upon earth, nor one glorified saint in heaven, if it were not for mercy. From G. S. Bowes's "Illustrative Gatherings," 1869.

Verse 64. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy.

"Why bursts such melody from tree and bush,

The overflowing of each songster's heart,

So filling mine that it can scarcely hush

Awhile to listen, but would take its part?

It is but one song I hear where ever I rove,

Though countless be the notes, that God is Love.

"Why leaps the streamlet down the mountainside?

Hasting so swiftly to the vale beneath,

To cheer the shepherd's thirsty flock, or glide

Where the hot sun has left a faded wreath,

Or, rippling, aid the music of a grove?

Its own glad voice replies, that God is Love!"

"Is it a fallen world on which I gaze?

Am I as deeply fallen as the rest,

Yet joys partaking, past my utmost praise,

Instead of wandering forlorn, unblessed?

It is as if an unseen spirit strove

To grave upon my heart, that God is Love!"

--Thomas Davis, 1864.

TETH. In the original each stanza begins with 'T', and in our own version it is so in all but Ps 119:67,70, which can easily be made to do so by reading, "Till I was afflicted, "and "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." C.H.S.

Verse 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, Lord.

1. The party dealing is God himself: all good is to be referred to God as the author of it.

2. The benefit received is generally expressed, "Thou hast dealt well." Some translate it out of the Hebrew, "Bonum feeisti," thou hast done good with thy servant; the Septuagint, krhststhta epoihsav meta ton doulou sou, thou hast made goodness to or with thy servant; out of them, the Vulgate, "Bonitatern fecisti." Some take this clause generally, "Whatever thou dost for thy servants is good": they count it so, though it be never so contrary to the interest of the flesh: sickness is good, loss of friends is good; and so are poverty and loss of goods, to an humble and thankful mind. But surely David speaketh here of some supply and deliverance wherein God had made good some promise to him. The Jewish rabbis understand it of his return to the kingdom; but most Christian writers understand it of some spiritual benefit; that good which God had done to him. If anything may be collected from the subsequent verses, it was certainly some spiritual good. The Septuagint repeat krhstothta twice in this and the following verse, as if he acknowledged the benefit of that good judgment and knowledge of which there he begs an increase. It was in part given him already, and that learned by afflictions, as we see, in the third verse of this portion: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." His prayer is Now, then, go on to increase this work, this goodness which thou hast shown to thy servant.

3. The object, "thy servant": it is an honourable, comfortable style; David delighted in it. God is a bountiful and a gracious master, ready to do good to his servants, rewarding them with grace here, and crowning that grace with glory hereafter: "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6). Thomas Manton.

Verse 65. Thou hast dealt well. If the children of God did but know what was best for them, they would perceive that God did that which was best for them. John Mason.

Verse 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant. He knew that God's gifts are without repentance, and that he is not weary of well doing, but will finish the thing he hath begun; and therefore he pleads past favours. Nothing is more forcible to obtain mercy than to lay God's former mercies before him. Here are two grounds, First. If he dealt well with him when he was not regenerate, how much more will he now? and Secondly, all the gifts of God shall be perfectly finished, therefore he will go on to deal well with his servant. Here is a difference between faith and an accusing conscience: the accusing conscience is afraid to ask more, because it hath abused the former mercies: but faith, assuring us that all God's benefits are tokens of his love bestowed on us according to his word, is bold to ask for more. Richard Greenham.

Verse 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant. "No doubt, " said the late Rev. J. Brown, of Haddington, Scotland. "I have met with trials as well as others; yet so kind has God been to me, that I think if he were to give me as many years as I have already lived in the world, I should not desire one single circumstance in my lot changed, except that I wish I had less sin. It might be written on my coffin, `Here lies one of the cares of Providence, who early wanted both father and mother, and yet never missed them.'" Arvine's Anecdotes.

Verse 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word. The expression, "according to thy word, "is so often repeated in this psalm, that we are apt to overlook it, or to give it only the general meaning of "because of thy promise." But in reality it implies much more. Had God dealt "well" with David according to man's idea? If so, what mean such expressions as these"O forsake me not utterly, "(Ps 119:8) "I am a stranger in the earth, "(Ps 119:19) "My soul cleaveth unto the dust, "(Ps 119:25) "My soul melteth for heaviness, " (Ps 119:28) "Turn away my reproach which I fear, " (Ps 119:39) "The proud have had me greatly in derision, " (Ps 119:51) "Horror hath taken hold upon me" (Ps 119:53)?

In view of such passages as these, can it be said that God "dealt well" with David, according to man's idea? David's experience was one of very great and very varied trial. There is not a phase of our feelings in sorrow which does not find ample expression in his psalms. And yet he says, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, according to thy word."

How, then, are we to interpret the expression, so often repeated here, in accordance with the facts of David's spiritual life?

God dealt well with him "according to his word, "in the sense of dealing with him according to what his word explained was the true goodnot delivering him from all trial, but sending him such trial as he specially required. He felt truly that God had dealt well with him when he could say (Ps 119:67), "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." Again, (Ps 119:71), "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Such dealing was hard for flesh and blood to bear, but it was indeed "well, "in the sense of accomplishing most blessed results.

It was "according to his word" too, in the sense of being in accordance with his revealed manner of dealing with his people, who are chastened for their profit.

Again, God had "dealt well" with David according to his word or covenant; the present fulfilment (even if in itself bitter) being a sure earnest of his final perfecting of his work, and glorifying himself in the entire fulfilment of his word, in the completed salvation of his servant.

According to thy word, O Lord, thou hast dealt well with thy servant. Thy word is the light and lamp that shows things in their true aspect, and teaches us to know that all things work together for good to thy people; that thou doest all things well. "Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law." What can be more wonderful than such views to our eyes?

According to thy word: not only "because of thy promise, "but in such a manner and measure as thy word declares. See how such an understanding of the expression opens out the idea of "Be merciful to me according to thy word" (Ps 119:58). All the sweet promises and declarations of God's infinite mercy rise before us, and make it a vast request. Again, "Quicken thou me, "and "strengthen thou me according to thy word" up to the full measure of what thou hast promised and provided for thy people. See the fulness in this view, of Ps 119:76, "Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word." Again, Ps 119:169, "Give me understanding according to thy word"; Ps 119:170, "Deliver me according to thy word." In each of these we are led to feel that the request includes the thought of all that the word teaches on the subject.

Let our prayer then for mercy, and strength, and comfort, and understanding, and deliverance, ever be a prayer for these, in the full measure in which they are revealed and promised in the word of God. Mary B.M. Duncan (1825-1865), in "Under the Shadow."

Verse 66. Teach me good judgment, etc. David, who discovered a holy taste (Ps 19:10 104:34 119:103) and recommended it to others (Ps 34:8), requests in our text to have it increased. For the word rendered "judgment", properly signifies taste, and denotes that relish for divine truth, and for the divine goodness and holiness, which is peculiar to true saints. I propose therefore to consider the nature and objects of that spiritual taste which is possessed by every gracious soul, and which all true saints desire to possess in a still greater degree.

The original word, which is often applied to those objects of sense which are distinguished by the palate, is here used in a metaphorical sense, as the corresponding term frequently is in our own language. "Doth not the car try words, and the mouth taste meat?" (Joh 12:11). Our translators in this place render it, "judgment, " which is nearly the same thing; yet as the terms are applied among us, there is a difference between them. Taste is that which enables a man to form a more compendious judgment. Judgment is slower in its operations than taste; it forms its decisions in a more circuitous way. So we apply the term taste to many objects of mental decision, to the beauty of a poem, to excellence of style, to elegance of dress or of deportment, to painting, to music, etc., in which a good taste will lead those who possess it, to decide speedily, and yet accurately, on the beauty, excellence, and propriety of the objects with which it has long been conversant without laborious examination.

Just so, true saints have a power of receiving pleasure from the beauty of holiness, which shines forth resplendently in the word of God, in the divine character, in the law, in the gospel, in the cross of Christ, in the example of Christ, and in the conduct of all his true followers, so far as they are conformed to his lovely image. I do not mean by this that they are influenced by a blind instinct, for which they can assign no sufficient reason: the genuine feelings of a true Christian can all of them be justified by the soundest reason: but those feelings which were first produced by renewing grace, are so strengthened by daily communion with God, and by frequent contemplation of spiritual things, that they acquire a delicacy and readiness of perception, which no one can possess who has never tasted how gracious the Lord is. You cannot touch, as it were, a certain string, but the renewed heart must needs answer to it. Whatever truly tends to exalt God, to bring the soul near to him, and to insure his being glorified and enjoyed, will naturally attract the notice, excite the affections, and influence the conduct of one who is born of God. "Sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb." "My meditation of thee shall be sweet." "How sweet are thy words to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth." "O taste and see that the Lord is good." John Ryland, 1753-1825.

Verse 66. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, etc. Literally it may be rendered thus, Teach me goodness, discernment and knowledge; for I have believed or confided in thy commandments. In our system of divine things, we might be inclined to place knowledge and discernment first, as begetting the "goodness." But it is a well ascertained fact, that the intellectual and moral powers are reciprocal that the moral also give strength to the intellectual. Moreover, it is only the spiritual man that discerns the things of God. The state of being spiritually minded, and also conversant with divine things, gives a rigour and breadth to the intellect itself, that remarkably appears in the lives of eminent men. And if you remark that some have been eminent who were devoid of spiritual qualities, the reply might beHow much more eminent would they have been had they possessed these qualities. The petition is, "Teach me goodness, discernment, and knowledge." The principle of pleasing God may be within, and yet the mind may require to be enlightened in all duty; and again, though all duty be known, we may require spiritual discernment to see and feel it aright. John Stephen.

Verse 66. Teach me good judgment. In a lecture of Sir John Lubbock's on the fertilization of flowers by the agency of insects, a striking distinction is noted in regard to this operation between beautiful and hideous plants. Bees, it would appear, delight in pleasant odours and bright colours, and invariably choose those plants which give pleasure to man. If we watch the course of these insects on their visit to a garden, we shall observe them settling upon the rose, the lavender, and all other similar agreeable flowers of brilliant hues or sweet scent. In marked contrast with this is the conduct of flies, which always show a preference for livid yellow or dingy red plants, and those which possess an unpleasant smell. The bee is a creature of fine and sensitive tastes. The fly is "a species of insectoid vulture, "naturally turning to such vegetable food as resembles carrion. Let two plates be placed on a lawn, at a little distance apart, the one containing that ill scented underground fungus, the Stink horn, and the other a handful of moss roses, and this difference will be immediately discerned. The foul odour and unsightly fungus will soon be covered with flies, while the bees will resort to the plate of roses. To this love of bees for fine colours and fragrant perfumes we are indebted for our choicest flowers. For by taking the pollen dust of some conspicuous flower to the stigma of another, they have by this union produced the seed of a still richer variety. Thus, age after age, many blossoms have been growing increasingly beautiful. On the other hand, strange to say, through a similar process, a progress in the opposite direction has taken place in those plants which are frequented by flies, and their unwholesome and repulsive qualities have become intensified. So is it with the two great classes into which mankind may be divided the men of this world, and the men of the next. While the purified affections of the one centre continually on "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, "so the earthward and vile affections of the other fasten on corruption. Not more surely does the laborious bee fly from one beautiful flower to another, than does the Christian seek of set purpose all that is fairest, sweetest, and best on earth. His prayer is that of David, in Ps 119:66, "Teach me good taste" (which is the literal translation); and "if there be any virtue, and if there be any Praise, "he thinks on these things. James Neil, in "Rays from the Realms of Nature," 1879.

Verse 66. Good judgment and knowledge. No blessings are more suitable than "good judgment and knowledge" "knowledge" of ourselves, of our Saviour, of the way of obedienceand "good judgment" to direct and apply this knowledge to some valuable end. These two parts of our intellectual furniture have a most important connexion and dependence upon each other. "Knowledge" is the speculative perception of general truth. "Judgment" is the practical application of it to the heart and conduct. Charles Bridges.

Verse 66. For I have believed thy commandments. These words deserve a little consideration, because believing is here joined to an unusual object. Had it been, "for I have believed thy promises," or, "obeyed thy commandments," the sense of the clause had been more obvious to every vulgar apprehension. To believe commandments, sounds as harsh to a common ear, as to see with the ear, and hear with the eye; but, for all this, the commandments are the object; and of them he saith, not, "I have obeyed"; but, "I have believed." To take off the seeming asperity of the phrase, some interpreters conceive that "commandments" is put for the word in general; and so promises are included, yea, they think, principally intended, especially those promises which encouraged him to look to God for necessary things, such as good judgment and knowledge are. But this interpretation would divert us from the weight and force of these significant words. Therefore let us note,

1. Certainly there is a faith in the commandments, as well as in the promises. We must believe that God is their author, and that they are the expressions of his commanding and legislative will, which we are bound to obey. Faith must discern the sovereignty and goodness of the law maker and believe that his commands are holy, just, and good; it must also teach us that God loves those who keep his law and is angry with those who transgress, and that he will see to it that His law is vindicated at the last great day.

2. Faith in the commandments is as necessary as faith in the promises; for, as the promises are not esteemed, embraced, and improved, unless they are believed to be of God, so neither are the precepts: they do not sway the conscience, nor incline the affections, except as they are believed to be divine.

3. Faith in the commands must be as lively as faith in the promises. As the promises are not believed with a lively faith, unless they draw off the heart from carnal vanities to seek that happiness which they offer to us; so the precepts are not believed rightly, unless we be fully resolved to acquiesce in them as the only rule to guide us in obtaining that happiness, and unless we are determined to adhere to them, and obey them. As the king's laws are not kept as soon as they are believed to be the king's laws, unless also, upon the consideration of his authority and power, we subject ourselves to them; so this believing notes a ready alacrity to hear God's voice and obey it, and to govern our hearts and actions according to his counsel and direction in the word. Thomas Manton.

Verse 66. For I have believed thy commandments. The commandments of God are not alone; but they have promises of grace on the right hand, and threatenings of wrath on the left: upon both of these faith exercises itself, and without such faith no one will be able to render obedience to God's commands, Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 67. Before I was afflicted I went astray, etc. Not that he wilfully, wickedly, maliciously, and through contempt, departed from his God; this lie denies (Ps 18:21); but through the weakness of the flesh, the prevalence of corruption, and the force of temptation, and very much through a careless, heedless, and negligent frame of spirit, he got out of the right way, and wandered from it before he was well aware. The word is used of erring through ignorance (Le 5:18). This was in his time of prosperity, when, though he might not, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick, and forsake and lightly esteem the Rock of his salvation; or fall into temptations and hurtful lusts, and err from the faith, and be pierced with many sorrows; yet he might become inattentive to the duties of religion, and be negligent of them, which is a common case. John Gill.

Verse 67. Before I was afflicted. The Septuagint and Latin Vulgate, "Before I was humbled." The Hebrew word has the general sense of being afflicted, and may refer to any kind of trial. Albert Barnes.

Verse 67. Before I was afflicted. Prosperity is a more refined and severe test of character titan adversity, as one hour of summer sunshine produces greater corruption than the longest winter day. Eliza Cook.

Verse 67. I was afflicted. God in wisdom deals with us as some great person would do with a disobedient son, that forsakes his house, and riots among his tenants. His father gives orders that they should treat him ill, affront, and chase him from them, and all, that he might bring him back. The same doth God: man is his wild and debauched son; he flies from the commands of his father, and cannot endure to live under his strict and severe government. He resorts to the pleasures of the world, and revels and riots among the creatures. But God resolves to recover him, and therefore commands every creature to handle him roughly. "Burn him, fire; toss him, tempests, and shipwreck his estate; forsake him, friends; designs, fail him; children, be rebellious to him, as he is to me; let his supports and dependencies sink under him, his riches melt away, leave him poor, and despised, and destitute." These are all God's servants, and must obey his will. And to what end is all this, but that, seeing himself forsaken of all, he may at length, like the beggared prodigal, return to his father? Ezekiel Hopkins, 1633-1690.

Verse 67. I was afflicted. As men clip the feathers of fowls, when they begin to fly too high or too far; even so doth God diminish our riches, etc., that we should not pass our bounds, and glory too much of such gifts. Otho Wermullerus.

Verse 67. But now have I kept thy word.

Affliction brings Man Home.

"Man like a silly sheep doth often stray,

Not knowing of his way,

Blind deserts and the wilderness of sin

He daily travels in;

There's nothing will reduce him sooner than

Afflictions to his pen.

He wanders in the sunshine, but in rain

And stormy weather hastens home again."

"Thou, the great Shepherd of my soul, O keep

Me, my unworthy sheep

From gadding: or if fair means will not do it,

Let foul, then, bring me to it.

Rather then I should perish in my error,

Lord bring me back with terror;

Better I be chastised with thy rod

And Shepherd's staff, than stray from thee, my God."

"Though for the present stripes do grieve me sore,

At last they profit more,

And make me to observe thy word, which I

Neglected formerly;

Let me come home rather by weeping cross

Than still be at a loss.

For health I would rather take a bitter pill,

Than eating sweet meats to be always ill."

--Thomas Washbourne, 1606-1687.

Verse 67. From the countless throng before the throne of God and the Lamb, we may yet hear the words of the Psalmist, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." There is many an one who will say, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth" (Joh 5:17). One would tell you that his worldly undoing was the making of his heavenly prospects; and another that the loss of all things was the gain of All in All. There are multitudes whom God has afflicted with natural blindness that they might gain spiritual sight; and those who under bodily infirmities and diseases of divers sorts have pined and wasted away this earthly life, gladly laying hold on glory, honour, and immortality instead. William Garrett Lewis, in "Westbourne Grove Sermons," 1872.

Verse 67. By affliction God separates the sin which he hates from the soul which he loves. John Mason.

Verse 68. Thou art good, and doest good. There is a good God set before us, that we may not take tip with any low pattern of goodness. He is represented to us as all goodness. He is good in his nature; and his work is agreeable to his nature; nothing is wanting to it, or defective in it. Nothing can be added to it to make it better. Philo saith, w ontwl wn to prwtoon agayov: the first being must needs be the first good. As soon as we conceive that there is a God, we presently conceive that he is good, He is good of himself, good in himself, goodness itself, and both the fountain and the pattern of all the good that is in the creatures.

1. As to his nature, he is originally "good", good in himself, and good to others; as the sun hath light in himself, and giveth light to all other things. Essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality or superadded gift; but in God it is not a quality, but his essence. In a vessel that is gilded with gold the gilding or lustre is a superadded quality; but in a vessel all of gold, the lustre and the substance is the same. God is infinitely good; the creatures' good is limited, but there is nothing to limit the perfection of God, or give it any measure. He is an ocean of goodness without banks or bottom. Alas! what is our drop to this ocean! God is immutably good; his goodness can never be more or less than it is; as there can be no addition to it, so no subtraction from it. Man in his innocency was 'peccabilis', or liable to sin, afterwards 'peccator,'or an actual sinner; but God ever was and is good. Now this is the pattern propounded to us, but his nature is a great deep. Therefore--

2. As to his work; "he doeth good." What hath God been acting upon the great theatre of the world but goodness for these six thousand years? Ac 14:17, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." He left not himself without a witness, anayopiwn, not by taking vengeance of their idolatries, but by distributing benefits. This is propounded to our imitation, that our whole life may be nothing else but doing good: Mt 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Well, therefore, doth the Psalmist say, "Teach me thy statutes." Thomas Manton.

Verse 68. Thou art good and doest good. We should bless the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God, on every occasion, especially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify God in the fires (Isa 24:15); and this the three children did in the hottest furnace... I grant, indeed, we cannot give thanks for affliction as affliction, but either as it is the means of some good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is some way remarkable therein toward us. In this respect there is no condition on this side of hell but we have reason to praise God in it, though it be the greatest of calamities. Hence it was that David, when he speaks of his affliction, adds presently, "Thou art good, and doest good"; and he declares (Ps 119:65), "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word." Hence Paul and Silas praised God when they were scourged and imprisoned. John Willison, 1680-1750.

Verse 68. Thou art good. The blessed effects of chastisement, as a special instance of the Lord's goodness, might naturally lead to an acknowledgment of his general goodness, in his own character, and in his unwearied dispensations of love. Judging in unbelieving haste of his providential and gracious dealings, feeble sense imagines a frown, when the eye of faith discerns a smile upon his face; and therefore in proportion as faith is exercised in the review of the past, and the experience of the present, we shall be prepared with the ascription of praise"Thou art good". Charles Bridges.

Verse 69. The proud have forged a lie against me. If in the present day the enemies of the truth in their lying writings rail against the orthodox teachers in the Church, that is a very old artifice of the Devil, since David complains that in his day it happened unto him. Solomon Gesner.

Verse 69. The proud have forged a lie. They trim up lies with shadows of truth and neat language; they have mints to frame their lies curiously in, and presses to print their lies withal. William Greenhill, 1591-1677.

Verse 69. The proud. Faith humbleth, and infidelity maketh proud. Faith humbleth, because it letteth us see our sins, and the punishments thereof, and that we have no dealing with God but through the mediation of Christ; and that we can do no good, nor avoid evil, but by grace. But when men know not this, then they think much of themselves, and therefore are proud. Therefore all ignorant men, all heretics, and worldlings are proud. They that are humbled under God's hands, are humble to men; but they that despise God do also persecute his servants. Richard Greenham.

Verse 69. Forged a lie. Vatablus translates it, "coneinnarunt mendacta". So Tremellius: they have trimmed up lies. As Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, so he can trim up his lies under coverings of truth, to make them the more plausible unto men. And indeed this is no small temptation, when lies made against the godly are trimmed up with the shadows of truth, and wicked men cover their unrighteous dealings with appearances of righteousness. Thus, not only are the godly unjustly persecuted, but simple ones are made to believe that they have most justly deserved it. In this case the godly are to sustain themselves by the testimony of a good conscience. William Cowper.

Verse 69. Forged. expresses the essential meaning of the Hebrew word, but not its figurative form which seems to be that of sewing, analogous to that of weaving, as applied to the same thing, both in Hebrew and in other languages. We may also compare our figurative phrase, to patch up, which, however, is not so much suggestive of artifice or skill as of the want of it. The connection of the clauses is, that all the craft and malice of his enemies should only lead him to obey God, with a more undivided heart than ever. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 69. Forged. The metaphor may be like the Greek (raptein doloul), from sewing or patching up: or, from smearing, or daubing (Delitzsch, Moll, etc.), a wall, so as to hide the real substance. The Psalmist remains true to God despite the falsehoods with which the proud smear and hide his true fidelity. The Speaker's Commentary.

Verse 69. A lie. Satan's two arms by which he wrestles against the godly are violence and lies: where he cannot, or dare not, use violence, there be sure he will not fail to fight with lies. And herein doth the Lord greatly show his careful providence, in fencing his children against Satan's malice and the proud brags of his instruments, in such sort, that their proudest hearts are forced to forge lies; their malice being so great that they must do evil; and yet their power so bridled that they cannot do what they would. William Cowper.

Verse 69. I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. Let the word of the Lord come, let it come; and if we had six hundred necks, we would submit them all to his dictates. Augustine.

Verse 70. Their heart is as fat as grease. The word vpj occurs nowhere else in Scripture, but with the Chaldees vpj signifies to fatten, to make fat; also to make stupid and doltish, because such the fat ofttimes are... For this reason the proud, who are mentioned in the preceding verse, are described by their fixed resolve in evil, because they are almost insensible; as is to be seen in pigs, who pricked through the skin with a bodkin, and that slowly, as long as the bodkin only touches the fat, do not feel the prick until it reaches to the flesh. Thus the proud, whose great prosperity is elsewhere likened to fatness, have a heart totally insusceptible, which is insensible to the severe reproofs of the Divine word, and also to its holy delights and pleasures, by reason of the affluence of carnal things; aye, more, is altogether unfitted for good impulses; just as elsewhere is to be seen with fat animals, how slow they are and unfit for work, when, on the contrary, those are agile and quick which are not hindered by this same fatness. Martin Geier.

Verse 70. Their heart is as fat as grease. This makes them--

1. Senseless and secure; they are past feeling: thus the phrase is used (Isa 6:10): "Make the heart of the people fat." They are not sensible of the teaching of the word of God, or his rod.

2. Sensual and voluptuous: "Their eyes stand out with fatness" (Ps 73:7); they roll themselves in the pleasures of sense, and take up with them as their chief good; and much good may it do them: I would not change conditions with them; "delight in thy law." Matthew Henry.

Verse 70. Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law; as if he should say, My heart is a lean heart, a hungry heart, my soul loveth and rejoiceth in thy word. I have nothing else to fill it but thy word, and the comforts I have from it; but their hearts are fat hearts: fat with the world, fat with lust: they hate the word. As a full stomach loatheth meat and cannot digest it; so wicked men hate the word, it will not go down with them, it will not gratify their lusts. William Fenner.

Being anxious to know the medical significance of fatty heart, I applied to an eminent gentleman who is well known as having been President of the College of Physicians. His reply shows that the language is rather figurative than literal. He kindly replied to me as follows: There are two forms of so called "fatty heart". In the one there is an excessive amount of fatty tissue covering the exterior of the organ, especially about the base. This may be observed in all cases where the body of the animal is throughout over fat, as in animals fattened for slaughter. It does not necessarily interfere with the action of the heart, and may not be of much importance in a medical point of view. The second form is, however, a much more serious condition. In this, the muscular structure of the heart, on which its all important function, as the central propelling power, depends, undergoes a degenerative change, by which the contractile fibres of the muscles are converted into a structure having none of the properties of the natural fibres, and in which are found a number of fatty, oily globules, which can be readily seen by means of the microscope. This condition, if at all extensive, renders the action of the heart feeble and irregular, and is very perilous, not infrequently causing sudden death. It is found in connection with a general unhealthy condition of system, and is evidence of general mal-nutrition. It is brought about by an indolent, luxurious mode of living, or, at all events, by neglect of bodily exercise and those hygienic rules which are essential for healthy nutrition. It cannot, however, be said to be incompatible with mental rigour, and certainly is not necessarily associated with stupidity. But the heart, in this form of disease, is literally, "greasy", and may be truly described as "fat as grease." So much for physiology and pathology. May I venture on the sacred territory of biblical exegesis without risking the charge of fatuousness. Is not the Psalmist contrasting those who lead an animal, self indulgent, vicious life, by which body and mind are incapacitated for their proper uses, and those who can run in the way of God's commandments, delight to do his will, and meditate on his precepts? Sloth, fatness and stupidity, versus activity, firm muscles, and mental rigour. Body versus mind. Man become as a beast versus man retaining the image of God. Sir James Risdon Bennett, 1881.

Verse 71. It is good for me, etc. I am mended by my sickness, enriched by my poverty, and strengthened by my weakness, and with S. Bernard desire, "Irasecaris mihi; Domine", O Lord, be angry with me For if you chide me not, you consider me not; if I taste no bitterness, I have no physic; if thou correct me not, I am not thy son. Thus was it with the great grandchild of David, Manasseh, when he was in affliction, "He besought the Lord his God": even that king's iron was more precious to him than his gold, his jail a more happy lodging than his palace, Babylon a better school than Jerusalem. What fools are we, then to frown upon our afflictions! These, how crabbed soever, are our best friends. They are not indeed for our pleasure, they are for our profit; their issue makes them worthy of a welcome. What do we care how bitter that potion be that brings Health. Abraham Wright.

Verse 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Saints are great gainers by affliction, because "godliness", which is "great gain", which is "profitable for all things", is more powerful than before. The rod of correction, by a miracle of grace, like that of Aaron's, buds and blossoms, and brings forth the fruits of righteousness, which are most excellent. A rare sight it is indeed to see a man coming out of a bed of languishing, or any other furnace of affliction, more like to angels in purity, more like to Christ who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; more like unto God himself, being more exactly righteous in all his was, and more exemplarily holy in all manner of conversation. Nathanael Vincent, 1697.

Verse 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. If I have no cross to bear today, I shall not advance heavenwards. A cross (that is anything that disturbs our peace), is the spur which stimulates, and Without which we should most likely remain stationary, blinded with empty vanities, and sinking deeper into sin. A cross helps us onwards, in spite of our apathy and resistance. To lie quietly on a bed of down, may seem a very sweet existence; but, pleasant ease and rest are not the lot of a Christian: if he would mount higher and higher, it must be by a rough road. Alas! for those who have no daily cross! Alas! for those who repine and fret against it! From "Gold Dust," 1880.

Verse 71. It is good for me, etc. There are some things good but not pleasant, as sorrow and affliction. Sin is pleasant, but unprofitable; and sorrow is profitable, but unpleasant. As waters are purest when they are in motion, so saints are generally holiest when in affliction. Some Christians resemble those children who will learn their books no longer than while the rod is on their backs. It is well known that by the greatest affliction the Lord has sealed the sweetest instruction. Many are not bettered by the judgments they see, when they are by the judgments they have felt. The purest gold is the most pliable. That is the best blade which bends well without retaining its crooked figure. William Secker, 1660.

Verse 71. It is good for me, etc. Piety hath a wondrous virtue to change all things into matter of consolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or sad to a pious man: his very sorrows are pleasant, his infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance), do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life. Isaac Barrow, 1630-1677.

Verse 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. In Miss E.J. Whately's very interesting Life of her Father, the celebrated Archbishop of Dublin, a fact is recorded, as told by Dr. Whately, with reference to the introduction of the larch tree into England. When the plants were first brought, the gardener, hearing that they came from the south of Europe, and taking it for granted that they would require warmth, forgetting that might grow near the snow line, put them into a hothouse. Day by day they withered, until the gardener in disgust threw them on a dung heap outside; there they began to revive and bud, and at last grew into trees. They needed the cold. The great Husbandman often saves his plants by throwing them out into the cold. The nipping frosts of trial and affliction are ofttimes needed, if God's larches are to grow. It is under such discipline that new thoughts and feelings appear. The heart becomes more dead to the world and self. From the night of sorrow rises the morning of joy. Winter is the harbinger of spring. From the crucifixion of the old man comes the resurrection of the new, as in nature life is the child of death. "The night is the mother of the day, And winter of the spring; And ever upon old decay, The greenest mosses spring." James Wareing Bardsicy, in Illustrated Texts and Texts Illustrated, 1876.

Verse 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. It is a remarkable circumstance that the most brilliant colours of plants are to be seen on the highest mountains, in spots that are most exposed to the wildest weather. The brightest lichens and mosses, the loveliest gems of wild flowers, abound far up on the bleak, storm scalped peak. One of the richest displays of organic colouring I ever beheld was near the summit of Mount Chenebettaz, a hill about 10,000 feet high, immediately above the great St. Bernard Hospice. The whole face of an extensive rock was covered with a most vivid yellow lichen, which shone in the sunshine like the golden battlement of an enchanted castle. There, in that lofty region, amid the most frowning desolation, exposed to the fiercest tempest of the sky, this lichen exhibited a glory of colour such as it never showed in the sheltered valley. I have two specimens of the same lichen before me while I write these lines, one from the great St. Bernard, and the other from the wall of a Scottish castle, deeply embosomed among sycamore trees; and the difference in point of form and colouring between them is most striking. The specimen nurtured amid the wild storms of the mountain peak is of a lovely primrose hue, and is smooth in texture and complete in outline; while the specimen nurtured amid the soft airs and the delicate showers of the lowland valley is of a dim rusty hue, and is scurfy in texture, and broken in outline. And is it not so with the Christian who is afflicted, tempest tossed, and not comforted? Till the storms and vicissitudes of God's providence beat upon him again and again, his character appears marred and clouded by selfish and worldly influences. But trials clear away the obscurity, perfect the outlines of his disposition, and give brightness and blessings to his piety. Amidst my list of blessings infinite Stands this the foremost that my heart has bled; For all I bless thee, most for the severe. Hugh Macmillan.

Verse 71. That I might fear thy statutes. He speaks not of that learning which is gotten by hearing or reading of God's word; but of the learning which he had gotten by experience; that he had felt the truth and comfort of God's word more effectual and lively in trouble than he could do without trouble; which also made him more godly, wise, and religious when the trouble was gone. William Cowper.

Verse 71. That I might learn. "I had never known, "said Martin Luther's wife, "what such and such things meant, in such and such psalms, such complaints and workings of spirit; I had never understood the practice of Christian duties, had not God brought me under some affliction." It is very true that God's rod is as the schoolmaster's pointer to the child, pointing out the letter, that he may the better take notice of it; thus he points out to us many good lessons which we should never otherwise have learned. From John Spencer's "Things New and Old," 1658.

Verse 71. That I might learn. As prosperity blindeth the eyes of men, even so doth adversity open them. Like as the salve that remedies the disease of the eyes doth first bite and grieve the eyes, and maketh them to water, but yet afterward the eyesight is clearer than it was; even so trouble doth vex men wonderfully at the first, but afterwards it lighteneth the eyes of the mind, that it is afterward more reasonable, wise and circumspect. For trouble bringeth experience, and experience bringeth wisdom. Otho Wermullerus, 1551.

Verse 71. Learn thy statutes. The Christian has reason to thank God that things have not been accommodated to his wishes. When the mist of tears was in his eyes, he looked into the word of God and saw magnificent things. When Jonah came up from the depths of ocean, he showed that he had learned the statutes of God. One could not go too deep to get such knowledge as he obtained. Nothing now could hinder him from going to Nineveh. It is just the same as though he had brought up from the deep an army of twelve legions of the most formidable troops. The word of God, grasped by faith, was all this to him, and more. He still, however, needed further affliction; for there were some statutes not yet learned. Some gourds were to wither. He was to descend into a further vale of humiliation. Even the profoundest affliction does not, perhaps, teach us everything; a mistake we sometimes make. But why should we compel God to use harsh measures with us? Why not sit at the feet of Jesus and learn quietly what we need to learn? George Bowen, in "Daily Meditations," 1873.

Verse 71. Statutes. The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe. The word means a definite, prescribed, written law. The term is applied to Joseph's law about the portion of the priests in Egypt, to the law about the passover, etc. But in this psalm it has a more internal meaning; that moral law of God which is engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart; the inmost and spiritual apprehension of his will; not so obvious as the law and the testimonies, and a matter of more direct spiritual communication than his precepts; the latter being more elaborated by the efforts of the mind itself, divinely guided indeed, but perhaps more instrumentally, and less passively, employed. They are continually spoken of as things yet to be learned, either wholly or in part, not objectively apprehended already, like God's law... They are learned, not suddenly, but by experience, and through the means of trials mercifully ordained by God; lessons therefore which are deeply engraven on the heart. "Good is it for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn thy statutes." "I have more understanding than my teachers, because thy statutes I have observed." John Jebb.

Verse 72. The law of thy mouth is better unto me, etc. Highly prize the Scriptures. Can he make a proficiency in any art, who doth slight and deprecate it? Prize this book of God above all other books. St. Gregory calls the Bible "the heart and soul of God." The rabbins say, that a mountain of sense hangs upon every apex and title of Scripture. "The law of the Lord is perfect": Ps 19:7. The Scripture is the library of the Holy Ghost; it is a pandect of divine knowledge, an exact model and platform of religion. The Scripture contains in it the credenda, "the things which we are to believe, "and the agenda, "the things which we are to practise." It is "able to make us wise unto salvation": 2Ti 3:15. The Scripture is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies; it is the pole star to direct us to heaven: Isa 8:20. "The commandment is a lamp": Pr 6:23. The Scripture is the compass by which the rudder of our will is to be steered; it is the field in which Christ, the Pearl of price, is hid; it is a rock of diamonds; it is a sacred collyrium, or eyesalve; it mends their eyes that look upon it; it is a spiritual optic glass in which the glory of God is resplendent; it is the panacy, or universal medicine for the soul. The leaves of Scripture are like the "leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations": Re 22:2. The Scripture is both the breeder and feeder of grace. How is the convert born, but by "the word of truth"? Jas 1:18. How doth he grow, but by "the sincere milk of the word"? 1Pe 2:2. The word written is the book out of which our evidences for heaven are fetched; it is the sea mark which shows us the rocks of sin to avoid; it is the antidote against error and apostasy, the two edged sword which wounds the old serpent. It is our bulwark to withstand the force of lust; like the Capitol of Rome, which was a place of strength and ammunition. The Scripture is the "tower of David, "wherein the shields of our faith hang: So 4:4. "Take away the word and you deprive us of the sun, " said Luther. The word written is above an angelic embassy, or voice from heaven. "This voice which came from heaven we heard... We have also a more sure Word": 2Pe 1:18,19. O, prize the word written; prizing is the way to profiting. If Caesar so valued his commentaries, that for preserving them he lost his purple robe, how should we estimate the sacred oracles of God? "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Thomas Watson, in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 72. The law of thy mouth is better unto me. The sacred Scriptures are the treasures and pleasures of a gracious soul: to David they were better than thousands of gold and silver. A mountain of transparent pearls, heaped as high as heaven, is not so rich in treasure as these; hence that good man chose these as his heritage for ever, and rejoiced in them as in all riches. A covetous miser could not take such delight in his bags, nor a young heir in a large inheritance, as holy David did in God's word. The word law comes from a root that signifies to try as merchants that search and prove the wares that they buy and lay up; hence also comes the word for gems and jewels that are tried, and found right. The sound Christian is the wise merchant, seeking goodly pearls; he tries what he reads or hears by the standard or touchstone of Scripture, and having found genuine truths he lays them up to the great enriching of this supreme and sovereign faculty of the understanding. Oliver Heywood.

Verse 72.The word of God must be nearer to us than our friends, dearer to us than our lives, sweeter to us than our liberty, and more pleasant to us than all earthly comforts. John Mason.

Verse 72. One lesson, taught by sanctified affliction, is, the love of God's word. "This is my comfort, in my affliction: thy word hath quickened me." In reading a part of the one hundred and nineteenth psalm to Miss Westbrook, who died, she said, "Stop, sir, I never said so much to you beforeI never could; but now I can say, `The word of thy mouth, is dearer to me, than thousands of gold and silver.' What can gold and silver do for me by now?" George Redford, in "Memoirs of the late Rev. John Cooke," 1828.

Verse 72. Thousands of gold and silver. Worldly riches are gotten with labour, kept with care, lost with grief. They are false friends, farthest from us when we have most need of comfort; as all worldlings shall find to be true in the hour of death. For then, as Jonah's gourd was taken from him in a morning, when he had most need of it against the sun; so is it with the comfort of worldlings. It is far otherwise with the word of God; for if we will lay it up in our hearts, as Mary did, the comfort thereof shall sustain us, when all other comfort shall fail us. This it is that makes us rich unto God, when our souls are storehouses, filled with the treasures of his word. Shall we think it poverty to be scant of gold and silver? "An ideo angelus pauperest, quia non habet jumenta", etc (Chrysostom). Shall we esteem the angels poor, because they have not flocks of cattle? or that S. Peter was poor, because he had not gold nor silver to give unto the cripple? No, he had store of grace, by infinite degrees more excellent than it. Let the riches of gold be left unto worldlings: these are not current: in Canaan, not accounted of in our heavenly country. If we would be in any estimation there, let us enrich our souls with spiritual graces, which we have in abundance in the mines and treasures of the word of God. William Cowper.

Verse 72.The Scripture is an ever overflowing fountain that cannot be drawn dry, and an inexhausted treasure that cannot be emptied. To this purpose tend those resemblances of the law made use of by David in this psalm, and no less justly applicable to the gospel; it is not only better than "gold and silver, "which are things of value, but "thousands", which implies abundance. In another verse he compares it to all riches and great spoil, both which contain in them multiplex genus, all sorts of valuable commodities, sheep, oxen, lands, houses, garments, goods, moneys, and the like: thus are all sorts of spiritual riches, yea, abundance of each sort, to be had in the gospel. And therefore the Greek fathers compare Scripture verities to precious stones, and our Saviour to a pearl of great price. A minister, in this respect, is called a merchant of invaluable jewels; for, indeed, gospel truths are choice and excellent, as much worth as our souls, as heaven, as salvation is. Nay, should I go higher, look what worth there is in the riches of God's grace, the precious blood of Christ, that may secondarily be applied to the gospel, which discovereth and offereth both to us. Abraham Wright.

Verses 72, 127. When David saw how some make void the law of God, he saith, "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold: yea, above fine gold." As if he had said, I love thy law all the more because I see some men esteem and reckon it as if it were dross, and throw it up as void and antiquated, or taking the boldness, as it were, to repeal and make it void, that they may set up their own lusts and vain imaginations. Because I see both profane and superstitious men thus out of love with thy law, therefore my love is more enfamed to it, "I love it above gold, "which leads the most of men away captives in the love of it; and I esteem it more than that which is most esteemed by men, and gains men most esteem in this world, "fine gold"; yea, as he said (Ps 19:10) "more than much fine gold." Joseph Caryl.

Verse 72. You that are gentlemen, remember what Hierom reports of Nepotianus, a young gentleman of Rome, qui longs et assidua meditatione Scripturarum pectus suum feterat bibliothecam Christi, who by long and assiduous meditation of the Scriptures, made his breast the library of Christ. Remember what is said of King Alfonsus, that he read over the Bible fourteen times, together with such commentaries as those times afforded.

You that are scholars, remember Cranmer and Ridley; the former learned the New Testament by heart in his journey to Rome, the latter in Pembroke hall walks in Cambridge. Remember what is said of Thomas a Kempis, that he found rest nowhere nisi in angulo, cum libello, but in a corner with this Book in his hand. And what is said of Beza, that when he was above fourscore years old he could say perfectly by heart any Greek chapter in Paul's Epistles.

You that are women, consider what Hierom saith of Paula, Eustochiam, and other ladies, who were singularly versed in the Holy Scriptures.

Let all men consider that hyperbolical speech of Luther, that he would not live in Paradise without the Word; and with it he could live well enough in hell. This speech of Luther must be understood cum grano salis. Edmund Calamy.

In this section each verse begins with the Hebrew letter Jori, or i, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, called in Mt 5:18, jot; one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law. Albert Barnes.

Verses 73-80. The usual account of this section, as given by the medieval theologians, is that it is the prayer of man to be restored to his state of original innocence and wisdom by being conformed to the image of Christ. And this squares with the obvious meaning, which is partly a petition for divine grace and partly an assertion that the example of piety and resignation in trouble is attractive enough to draw men's hearts on towards God, a truth set forth at once by the Passion, and by the lives of all those saints who have tried to follow it. Neale and Littledale.

Verse 73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, etc. This verse hath a petition for understanding, and a reason with it: I am the workmanship of thine hands, therefore give me understanding. There is no man but favours the works of his hands. And shall not the. Lord much more love his creatures, especially man, his most excellent creature? Whom, if ye consider according to the fashion of his body, ye shall find nothing on earth more precious than he; but in that which is not seen, namely, his soul, he is much more beautiful. So you see, David's reasoning is very effectual; all one as if he should say as he doth elsewhere, "Forsake not, O Lord, the work of thine hands"; thou art my author and maker; thine help I seek, and the help of none other. No man can rightly seek good things from God, if he consider not what good the Lord hath already done to him. But many are in this point so ignorant, that they know not how wonderfully God did make them; and therefore can neither bless him, nor seek from him, as from their Creator and Conserver. But this argument, drawn from our first creation, no man can rightly use, but he who is through grace partaker of the second creation; for all the privileges of our first creation we have lost by our fall. So that now by nature it is no comfort to us, nor matter of our hope, that God did make us; but rather matter of our fear and distrust, that we have mismade ourselves, have lost his image, and are not now like unto that which God created us in the beginning. William Cowper.

Verse 73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, etc. Mark here two things: first, that in making his prayer for holy understanding, he justly accuseth himself and all others of blindness, which proceeded not from the Creator, but from man corrupted. Secondly, that even from his creation he conceived hope that God would continue his work begun in him, because God leaveth not his work, and therefore he begs God to bestow new grace upon him, and to finish that which he had begun in him. Thomas Wilcocks, 1586.

Verse 73. Hugo ingeniously notices in the different verbs of this verse the particular vices to be shunned: ingratitude, when it is said, "Thy hands have made me"; pride, "and fashioned me"; confidence in his own judgment, "give me understanding"; prying inquisitiveness, "that I may learn thy commandments."

Verse 73. Thy hands. Hilary and Ambrose think that by the plural "hands" is intimated that there is a more exact and perfect workmanship in man, and as if it were with greater labour and skill he had been formed by God, because after the image and likeness to God: and that it is not written that any other thing but man was made by God with both hands, for he saith in Isaiah, "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth": Isa 48:13. John Lorinus, 1569-1634.

This, however, is an error, as Augustine notes; for it is written, "The heavens are the work of thine hands." Ps 102:25. C.H.S.

Verse 73. Thy hands. Oh, look upon the wounds of thine hands, and forget not the work of thine hands: so Queen Elizabeth prayed. John Trapp.

Verse 73. Some refer the verb hyhn, "made, "to the soul, yhns, "fashioned, "to the body. D.H. Mollerus.

Verse 73. Made me and fashioned me: give me understanding. The greatness of God is no hindrance to his intercourse with us, for one special part of the divine greatness is to be able to condescend to the littleness of created beings, seeing that creaturehood must, from its very name, have this littleness; inasmuch as God must ever be God, and man must ever be man: the ocean must ever be the ocean, the drop must ever be the drop. The greatness of God compassing our littleness about, as the heavens the earth, and fitting into it on every side, as the air into all parts of the earth, is that which makes the intercourse so complete and blessed: "In his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). Such is his nearness to, such is his intimacy with, the works of his hands. It is nearness, not distance, that the name Creator implies; and the simple fact of his having made us is the assurance of his desire to bless us and to hold intercourse with us. Communication between the thing made and its maker is involved in the very idea of creation. "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give we understanding, that I may learn thy commandments." "Faithful Creator" is his name (1Pe 4:19), and as such we appeal to him, "Forsake not the work of thine own hands" (Ps 138:8). Horatius Bonar, in "The Rent Veil," 1875.

Verse 73. Give we understanding, etc. The book of God is like the apothecary's shop, there is no wound but therein is a remedy; but if a stranger come unto the apothecary's shop, though all these things be there, vet he cannot tell where they are, but the apothecary himself knoweth; so in the Scriptures, there are cures for any infirmities; there is comfort against any sorrows, and by conferring chapter with chapter, we shall understand them. The Scriptures are not wanting to us, but we to ourselves; let us be conversant in them, and we shall understand them, when great clerks who are negligent remain in darkness. Richard Stock.

Verse 73. Give me understanding. Let us pray unto God that he would open our understandings, that as he hath given us consciences to guide us, so also he would give eyes to these guides that they may be able to direct us aright. The truth is, it is God only that can soundly enlighten our consciences; and therefore let us pray unto him to do it. All our studying, and hearing, and reading, and conferring will never be able to do it; it is only in the power of him who made us to do it. He who made our consciences, he only can give them this heavenly light of true knowledge and right understanding; and therefore let us seek earnestly to him for it. William Fenner, 1600-1640.

Verse 73. That I may learn thy commandments. That he might learn them so as to know the sense and meaning of them, their purity and spirituality; and so as to do them from a principle of love, in faith, and to the glory of God: for it is not a bare learning of them by heart or committing them to memory, nor a mere theory of them, but the practice of them in faith and love, which is here meant. John Gill.

Verses 73-74. From these verses, learn,

1. Albeit nothing can satisfy unbelief, yet true faith will make use of the most common benefit of creation to strengthen itself: "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me."

2. It is a good way of reasoning with God, to ask another gift, because we have received one; and because he hath given common benefits, to ask that he would give us also saving graces: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments."

3. Seeing that God is our Creator, and that the end of our creation is to serve God, we may confidently ask whatsoever grace may enable us to serve him, as the Psalmist's example doth teach us...

4. It should be the joy of all believers to see one of their number sustained and borne up in his sufferings; for in the proof and example of one sufferer a pawn is given to all the rest, that God will help them in like case: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." David Dickson.

Verse 74. They that fear thee will be glad, etc. They who "fear God" are naturally "glad when they see" and converse with one like themselves; but more especially so, when it is one whose faith and patience have carried him through troubles, and rendered him victorious over temptations; one who hath "hoped in God's word, "and hath not been disappointed. Every such instance affords fresh encouragement to all those, who, in the course of their warfare, are to undergo like troubles, and to encounter like temptations. In all our trials let us, therefore, remember, that our brethren, as well as ourselves, are deeply interested in the event, which may either strengthen or weaken the hands of the multitudes. George Horne.

Verse 74. They that far thee will be glad when they see me, etc. How comfortable it is for the heirs of promise to see one another, or meet together: aspectus boni viri delectat, the very look of a good man is delightful: it is a pleasure to converse with those that are careful to please God, and fearful to offend him. How much affected they are with one another's mercies: "they will be glad when they see me, "since I have obtained an event answerable to my hope. They shall come and look upon me as a monument and spectacle of the mercy and truth of God. But what mercy had he received? The context seemeth to carry it for grace to obey God's commandments; that was the prayer immediately preceding, to be instructed and taught in God's law (Ps 119:73). Now they will rejoice to see my holy behaviour, how I have profited and glorified God in that behalf. The Hebrew writers render the reason, "Because then I shall be able to instruct them in those statutes, when they shall see me, their king, study the law of God." It may be expounded of any other blessing or benefit God had given according to his hope; and I rather understand it thus, they will be glad to see him sustained, supported, and borne out in his troubles and sufferings. "They will be glad when they shall see in me a notable example of the fruit of hoping in thy grace." Thomas Manton.

Verse 74. Because I have hoped in thy word. And have not been disappointed. The Vulgate rendereth it supersperavi, I have over hoped; and then Aben Ezra glosses, "I have hoped in all thy decree"; even that of afflicting me, as in the next verse. John Trapp.

Verse 75. I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right. In very early life the tree of knowledge seemed a very fine, a glorious tree in my sight; but how many mistakes have I made upon that subject! And how many are the mistakes which yet abound upon that which we are pleased to call knowledge, in common speech. He that hath read the classics; he that hath dipped into mathematical science; he that is versed in history, and grammar, and common elocution; he that is apt and ready to solve some knotty question and versed in the ancient lore of learning, is thought to be a man of knowledge; and so he is, compared with the ignorant mass of mankind. But what is all this compared with the knowledge in my text Knowledge of which few of the learned, as they are called, have the least acquaintance with at all.

I know What, David? What do you know? "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

Fond as I may yet be of other speculations, I would rather, much rather, possess the knowledge of this man in this text, than have the largest acquaintance with the whole circle of the sciences, as it is proudly called... I am apprehensive that, in the first clause, the Psalmist speaks, in general: of the ordinances, appointments, providence, and judgments of God; and the assertion is, he doth know that they are right, that they are equitable, that they are wise, that they are fair, and that they are not to be found fault with; and that though men, through folly, bring themselves into distress, and then their hearts fret against God. He was blessed with superior understanding. He excepts nothing: "I know that all thy judgments are right." Then, in the latter part of the text, he makes the matter personal. It might be said, it is an easy thing for you so to think when you see the revolutions of kingdoms, the tottering of thrones, the distresses of some mortals and the pains of others, that they are all right. "Yes," saith he, "but I have the same persuasion about all my own sorrows; I do know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." From a Sermon by John Martin, 1817.

Verse 75. I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, etc. The text is in the form of an address to God. We often find this in David, that, when he would express some deep feeling, or some point of spiritual experience, he does so in this wayaddressing himself to God. Those who love God delight to hold communion with him; and there are some feelings which the spiritual mind finds peculiar comfort and pleasure in telling to God himself. "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right." God orders all things, and his "judgments" here mean his general orderings, decisions, dealingsnot afflictions only, though including them. And when the Psalmist says, "thy judgments, "he means especially God's judgments towards him, God's dealings with him, and thus all that had happened to him, or should happen to him. For in the Psalmist's creed there was no such thing as chance. God ordered all that befell him, and he loved to think so. He expresses a sure and happy confidence in all that God did, and would do, with regard to him. He trusted fully in God's wisdom, God's power, God's love. "I know thy judgments are right" quite right, right in every way, without one single point that might have been better, perfectly wise and good. He shows the firmest persuasion of this. "I know, "he says, not merely, "I think." But these very words, "I know, " clearly show that this was a matter, of faith, not of sight. For he does not say, "I can see that thy judgments are right, "but "I know." The meaning plainly is, "Though I cannot see allthough there are some things in thy dealings which I cannot fully understandyet I believe, I am persuaded, and thus I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right."

Thy judgments. Not some of them, but all. He takes into view all God's dealings with him, and says of them without exception, "I know, 0 LORD, that thy judgments are right." When the things that happen to us are plainly for our comfort and good, as many of them are, then we thankfully receive what God thus sends to us, and own him as the Giver of all, and bless him for his gracious dealing; and this is right. But all the faith required for this (and some faith there is in it) is to own God as dealing with us, instead of thanklessly receiving the gifts with no thought of the Giver. It is a far higher degree of faith, that says of all God's dealings, even when seemingly not for our happiness, "I know that thy judgments are right."

Yet this is the meaning here, or certainly the chief meaning. For though the word "judgments" does mean God's dealings of every kind, yet here the words that follow make it apply especially to God's afflictive dealings, that is, to those dealings of his that do not seem to be for our happiness; "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." The judgments which the Psalmist chiefly had in view, and which he felt so sure were right, were not joys, but sorrows; not things bestowed, but things taken away; those blessings in disguise, those veiled mercies, those gifts clad in the garb of mourning, which God so often sends to his children. The Psalmist knew, and knew against all appearance to the contrary, that these judgments were "right." Whatever they might belosses, bereavements, disappointments, pain, sicknessthey were right; as right as the more manifest blessings which went before them; quite right, perfectly right; so right that they could not have been better; just what were best; and all because they were God's judgments. That one thing satisfied the Psalmist's mind, and set every doubt at rest. The dealings in themselves he might have doubted, but not him whose dealings they were. "Thy judgments." That settled all. "And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." This means that, in appointing trouble as his lot, God had dealt with him in faithfulness to his word, faithfulness to his purposes of mercy, with a faithful, not a weak love. He had sent him just what was most for his good, though not always what was most pleasing; and in this he had shown himself faithful. Gently and lovingly does the Lord deal with his children. He gives no unnecessary pain; but that which is needful he will not withhold. Francis Bourdillon, 1881.

Verse 75. Thy judgments. There are judicia oris, and there are judicia operis;the judgments of God's mouth, and the judgments of God's hands. Of the former there is mention at verse 13: "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth." And by these "judgments" are meant nothing else but the holy law of God, and his whole written word; which everywhere? This psalm are indifferently called his "statutes, "his "commandments", his "precepts, "his "testimonies, "his "judgments." And the laws of God are therefore, amongst other reasons, called by the name of "judgments, "because by them we come to have a right judgment whereby to discern between good and evil. We could not otherwise with any certainty judge what was meet for us to do, and what was needful for us to shun. A lege tua intellexi, at Ps 119:104; "By thy law have I gotten understanding." St. Paul confesseth (Romans 7), that he had never rightly known what sin was if it had not been for the law; and he instances in that of lust, which he had not known to be a sir, if the law had not said, "thou shalt not covet." And no question but these "judgments, " these judicia oris, are all "right" too; for it were unreasonable to think that God should make that a rule of right to us, which were itself not right. We have both the name (that of "judgments; ")and the thing too, (that they are "right") in the 19th Psalm; where having highly commended the law of God, under the several appellations of the "law, "testimonies, statutes and commandments, verses 7 and 8, the prophet then concludes under this name of "judgments," verse 9:" The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Besides these judicia oris, which are God's judgments of directions, there are also judicia operis, which are his judgments for correction. And these do ever include aliquid paenale, something inflicted upon us by Almighty God, as it were by way of punishment; something that breeds in us trouble or grief. The apostle saith in Hebrews 12 that every chastening is grievous; and so it is, more or less; or else it could be to us no punishment. And these, again, are of two sort; yet not distinguished so much by the things themselves that are inflicted, as by the condition of the persons on whom they are inflicted, and especially by the affection and intention of God that inflicts them. For all, whether public calamities that light upon whole nations, cities, or other greater or lesser societies of men (such as are pestilences, famine, war, inundations, unseasonable weather), and the like for private afflictions, that light upon particular families or persons, (as sickness, poverty, disgrace, injuries, death of friends, and the like;)all these, and whatsoever other of either kind, may undergo a twofold consideration; in either of which they may not unfitly be termed the judgments of God, though in different respects.

Now we see the several sorts of God's judgments: which of all these may we think is here meant? If we should take them all in, the conclusion would hold them, and hold true too. Judicia oris, and judicia operis;public and private judgments; those plagues wherewith in fury he punishes his enemies, and those rods wherewith in mercy he correcteth his children: most certain it is they are all "right." But yet I conceive those indicia oris not to be so properly meant in this place; for the exegesis in the latter part of the verse (wherein what are here called judgments ale there expounded by troubles) Seemeth to exclude them, and to confine the text in the proper intent thereof to these judicia operis only; but yet to all them of what sort soever; public or private, plagues or corrections. Of all which he pronounces that they are "right; "which is the predicate of the conclusion: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right." Robert Sanderson.

Verse 75. Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Mark the emphasis: he doth not barely acknowledge that God was faithful, though or notwithstanding he had afflicted him, but faithful in sending the afflictions. Affliction and trouble are not only consistent with God's love plighted in the covenant of grace; but they are parts and branches of the new covenant administration. God is not only faithful notwithstanding afflictions, but faithful in sending them. There is a difference between these two: the one is like an exception to the rule, quae firmat regulam in non exceptis:the other makes it a part of the rule, God cannot be faithful without doing all things that tend to our good and eternal welfare. The conduct of his providence is one part of the covenant engagement; as to pardon our sins, and sanctify us, and give us glory at the last, so to suit his providence as our need and profit require in the way to heaven. It is an act of his sovereign mercy which he hath promised to his people, to use such discipline as conduces to their safety. In short, the cross is not an exception to the grace of the covenant, but a part of the grace of the covenant.

The cause of all afflictions is sin, therefore justice must be acknowledged: their end is repentance, and therefore faithfulness must be acknowledged. The end is not destruction and ruin, so afflictions would be acts of justice, as upon the wicked; but that we may be fit to receive the promises, and so they are acts of faithfulness. Thomas Mantel.

Verse 75. Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. That is, with a sincere intention of doing me good. God thoroughly knows our constitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our distempers; and therefore accordingly disposes to us

Pro jucundis aptissima quaeque

instead of pleasant honey, he sometimes prescribes wholesome wormwood for us. We are ourselves greatly ignorant of what is conducible to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, should make very foolish, very disadvantageous elections.

We should (be sure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful estate; when as, God knows, that would make us slothful and luxurious, swell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares and expose us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourselves and neglectful of him. Therefore he wisely disposes poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of sobriety, the nurse of industry, the mistress of wisdom; which will make us understand ourselves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourse unto his help. And is there not reason we should be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from those desperate mischiefs, and obtain these excellent advantages?

We should all (certainly) choose the favour and applause of man: but this, God also knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with spurious pleasure, would tempt us to ascribe immoderately to ourselves, and sacrilegiously to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he advisedly suffers us to incur the disgrace and displeasure, the hatred and contempt of men: that so we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may pursue more earnestly the purer delights of a good conscience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks?

We would all climb into high places, not considering the precipices on which they stand, nor the vertiginousness of our own brains: but God keeps us safe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We should perhaps insolently abuse power, were it committed to us: we should employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the disturbance of others, and their own ruin: vast knowledge would cause us to over value ourselves and contemn others: enjoying continual health, we should not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A suitable mediocrity therefore of these things the divine goodness allots unto us, that we may neither starve for want, nor surfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages arising from afflictions are so many, and so great, that it were easy to demonstrate that we have great reason, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the crosses and vexations we meet with; to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our soul, and the condiments of our fortune; as the arguments of his goodwill, and the instruments of virtue; as solid grounds of hope, and comfortable presages of future joy unto us. Isaac Barrow.

Verse 75. Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. When a father disowns and banishes a child, he corrects him no more. So God may let one whom he intends to destroy go unchastened; but never one with whom he is in covenant. William S. Plumer.

Verse 75. I know, O Lord, etc.

Yet, Lord, in memory's fondest place

I shrine those seasons sad,

When, looking up, I saw thy face

In kind austereness clad.

I would not miss one sigh or tear,

Heart pang, or throbbing brow:

Sweet was the chastisement severe,

And sweet its memory now.

Yes! let the fragrant scars abide,

Love tokens in thy stead,

Faint shadows of the spear pierced side.

And thorn encompassed Head.

And such thy tender force be still,

When self would swerve or stray,

Shaping to truth the froward will

Along thy narrow way.

--John Henry Newman, 1829.

Verse 76.Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort. In the former verse he acknowledged that the Lord had afflicted him; now in this he prayeth the Lord to comfort him. This is strange that a man should seek comfort at the same hand that strikes him: it is the work of faith; nature will never teach us to do it. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath spoiled, and he will heal us: he hath wounded, and he will bind us up." Again, we see that the crosses which God lays on his children, are not to confound, not to consume them; only to prepare them for greater consolations. With this David sustained himself against Shimei's cursing; "The Lord will look on my affliction, and do me good for this evil": with this our Saviour comforts his disciples; "Your mourning shall be turned into joy." As the last estate of Job was better than his first; so shall the Lord render more to his children at the last than now at the first he takes from them: let us therefore bear his cross, as a preparative to comfort. William Cowper.

Verse 76. Let thy merciful kindness be for my comfort. Several of the preceding verses have spoken of affliction (Ps 119:67,71,75). The Psalmist now presents his petition for alleviation under it. But of what kind? He does not ask to have it removed. He does not "beseech the Lord, that it might depart from him" 2Co 12:8. No. His repeated acknowledgments of the supports vouchsafed under it, and the benefits he had derived from it, had reconciled him to commit its measures and continuance to the Lord. All that he needs, and all that he asks for, is a sense of his "merciful kindness" upon his soul. Thus he submits to his justice in his accumulated trials, and expects consolation under them solely upon the ground of his free favour. Charles Bridges.

Verse 76. Let thy merciful kindness, etc. Let me derive my comfort and happiness from a diffusion of thy love and mercy, kdmh chasdecha, thy exuberant goodness through my soul. Adam Clarke.

Verse 76. According to thy word unto thy servant. If his promise did not please him, why did he make it? If our reliance on the promise did not please him, why did his goodness work it? It would be inconsistent with his goodness to mock his creature, and it would be the highest mockery to publish his word, and create a temper in the heart of his supplicant suited to his promise, which he never intended to satisfy. He can as little wrong his creature as wrong himself, and therefore he can never disappoint that faith which after his own methods casts itself into the arms of his kindness, and is his own workmanship, and calls him author. That goodness which imparted itself so freely to the irrational creation will not neglect those nobler creatures that put their trust in him. This renders God a fit object for trust and confidence. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 76. According to thy word. David had a particular promise of a particular benefit; to wit, the kingdom of Israel. And this promise God performed unto him; but his comfort stood not in it; for Saul before him had the kingdom, but the promises of mercy belonged not to him, and therefore, when God forsook him, his kingdom could not sustain him. But David here depends upon the general promises of God's mercy made to his children; wherein he acknowledgeth a particular promise of mercy made to him. For the general promises of mercy and grace made in the gospel are by faith made particular to every believer. William Cowper.

Verse 76. Thy word unto thy servant. Here we may use the eunuch's question: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" Of himself questionless, under the denomination of God's servant. But then the question returneth, Is it a word of promise made to himself in particular, or to God's servants in the general? Some say the former, the promises brought to him by Nathan. I incline to the latter, and it teacheth us these three truths:

1. First. That God's servants only are capable of the sweet effects of his mercy and the comforts of his promises. Who are God's servants? (1.) Such as own his right and are sensible of his interest in them: "God, whose I am, and whom I serve" (Ac 28:23). (2.) Such as give up themselves to him, renouncing all other masters. Renounce we must, for we were once under another master (Ro 6:17 Mt 6:24 Ro 6:13 1Ch 30:8). (3.) Such as accordingly frame themselves to do his work sincerely: "serve with my spirit" (Ro 1:9); and, "in newness of spirit" (Ro 7:6), even as becomes those who are renewed by the Spirit: diligently (Ac 26:7), and universally (Lu 1:74-75), and wait upon him for grace to do so (Heb 7:28). These are capable of comfort. The book of God speaketh no comfort to persons that live in sin, but to God's servants, such as do not live as if they were at their own disposal, but at God's beck. If he say go, they go. They give up themselves to be and do what God will have them to be and do.

2. Secondly. If we have the benefit of the promise, we must thrust in ourselves under one title or other among those to whom the promise is made; if not as God's children, yet as God's servants. Then the promise is as sure to us as if our name were in it.

3. Thirdly. All God's servants have common grounds of comfort: every one of God's servants may plead with God as David doth. The comforts of the word are the common portion of God's people. Thomas Manton.

Verse 76. Thy word unto thy servant. Our Master has passed his word to all his servants that he will be kind to them and they may plead it with him. Matthew Henry.

Verse 77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live. If we mark narrowly we shall find that David here seeks another sort of mercy than he sought before. For first he sought mercy to forgive his sins; then he sought mercy to comfort him in his troubles; now he seeks mercy to live, and sin no more. Alas, many seek the first mercy, of remission; and the second mercy, of consolation in trouble, who are altogether careless of the third mercy, to live well. It is a great mercy of God to amend thy life: where this is not, let no man think he hath received either of the former. It is a great mercy of God, which not only pardons evil that is done, but strengthens us also to further good that we have not done; and this is the mercy which here David seeks. William Cowper.

Verse 77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, etc. The mercies of God are "tender mercies, "they are the mercies of a father to his children, nay, tender as the compassion of a mother over the son of her womb. They "come unto" us, when we are not able to go to them. By them alone we "live" the life of faith, of love, of joy and gladness. And to such as "delight" in his law, God will grant these mercies, and this life; he will give them pardon, and, by so doing, he will give them life from the dead. George Horne.

Verse 77. Let thy tender mercies, etc. Taking the more literal rendering, the words express high confidence"Thy tender mercies shall come unto me, and I shall live; for thy law is my delight." Had the believer nothing but his own deserts to support his plea at the throne of grace, he could never rise into this high confidence. He goes upon the foundation of the divine goodness, manifested through the anointed One, and he goes surely. John Stephen.

Verse 77. Come. Coming to him notes a personal and effectual application. First. A personal application, as in Ps 119:41; "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word." David would not be forgotten, or left out or lost in the throng of mankind, when mercy was distributing the blessing to them. Secondly. Effectual application: which signifieth, 1. The removal of obstacles and hindrances; 2. The obtaining the fruits and effects of this mercy.

1. First. The removing of obstacles. Till there be a way made, the mercy of God cannot come at us; for the way is barricaded and shut up by our sins: as the Lord maketh a way for his anger (Ps 78:50), by removing the hindrances, so the Lord maketh way for his mercy, or mercy maketh way for itself, when it removeth the obstruction. Sin is the great hindrance of mercy. We ourselves raise the mists and the clouds which intercept the light of God's countenance; we build up the partition wall which separates between God and us; yet mercy finds the way.

2. Secondly. The obtaining the fruits of mercy...It is not enough to hear somewhat of God's saving mercies; but we should beg that they may come unto us, be effectually and sensibly communicated unto us, that we may have experience of them in our own souls. A man that hath read of honey, or heard of honey, may know the sweetness of it by guess and imagination; but a man that hath tasted of honey knoweth the sweetness of it in truth: so, by reading and hearing of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, we may guess that it is a sweet thing; but he that hath had an experimental proof of the sweet effects and fruits of it in his own heart perceives that all which is spoken of God's pardoning and comforting of sinners is verified in himself. Thomas Manton.

Verse 77. Thy law is my delight. A child of God, though he cannot serve the Lord perfectly, yet he serves him willingly; his will is in the law of the Lord; he is not a pressed soldier, but a volunteer. By the beating of this pulse we may judge whether there be spiritual life in us or no. David professes that God's law was his delight; he had his crown to delight in, he had his music to delight in; but the love he had to God's law did drown all other delights; as the joy of harvest and vintage exceeds the joy of gleaning. Thomas Watson.

Verse 78. Let the proud be ashamed, etc. Here is the just recompense of his pride. He would fain have honour and preeminence, but God will not give them unto him: he flies shame and contempt, but God shall pour them upon him. "For they dealt perversely with me without a cause." David complains of the wicked and false dealing of his enemies against him; and his prayer is written to uphold us in the like temptation. For Satan is alway like himself, hating them whom the Lord loveth. He can scarce be worse, lie can never be better; and therefore with restless malice stirs he up all his cursed instruments in whom he reigns, to persecute those who are loved and protected of the Lord. "But I will meditate in thy precepts." David's enemies fought against him with the weapons of the flesh, wickedness and falsehood: lie withstands them by the armour of the Spirit; not meeting wickedness with wickedness, and falsehood with falsehood. For if we fight against Satan with Satan's weapons he will soon overcome us; but if we put upon us the complete armour of God to resist him, he shall flee from us. William Cowper.

Verse 78. Let the proud be ashamed. That is, that they may not prosper or succeed in their attempts; for men are ashamed when they are disappointed. All their endeavours for the extirpation of God's people are vain and fruitless, and those things which they have subtilly devised, have not that effect which they propounded unto themselves. "For they dealt perversely with me without a cause." The Septuagint have it aoikwv unjustly. Ainsworth readeth, "With falsehood they have depraved me." It implies two things: first, that they pretended a cause; but, secondly, David avouches his innocency to God; and so, without any guilt of his, they accused, defamed, condemned his actions, as is usual in such cases. When the proud are troublesome and injurious to God's people the saints may boldly commend their cause to God...The Lord may be appealed unto upon a double account; partly, as he is an enemy to the proud, and as a friend to the humble (Jas 4:6 Ps 138:6); partly, as he is the portion of the afflicted and oppressed (Ps 140:12). When Satan stirreth up his instruments to hate those whom the Lord loveth, the Lord will stir up his power to help and defend them. Is not this a revengeful prayer? Answer, No.

1. First. Because those who pray it are seeking their own deliverance, that they may more freely serve God by consequence. Indeed, by God's showing mercy to his people, the pride of wicked ones is suppressed (Ps 119:134); but mercy is the main object of the prayer.

2. Secondly. As it concerneth his enemies, he expresses it in mild termsthat they may "be ashamed"; that is, disappointed, in their counsels, hopes, machinations, and endeavours. And therefore it is not against the persons of his enemies, but their plots and enterprises. In such cases shame and disappointment may even do them good, They think to bring in the total suppression of God's people, but that would harden them in their sins; therefore God's people desire that he would not let their innocency be trampled upon, but disappoint their adversaries, that the proud may be ashamed in the failing of their attempts.

3. Thirdly. The prayers of the righteous for the overthrow of the wicked, are a kind of prophecies; so that, in praying, David doth in effect foretell, that such as dealt perversely should soon be ashamed, since a good cause will not always be oppressed: "But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" (Isa 66:5).

4. Fourthly. Saints have a liberty to imprecate vengeance, but such as must be used sparingly and with great caution: "Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul" (Ps 71:13). Malicious enemies may be expressly prayed against. Thomas Manton.

Verse 78. Let the proud be ashamed. This suggests a word to the wicked. Take heed that by your implacable hatred to the truth and church of God you do not engage her prayers against you. These imprecatory prayers of the saints, when shot at the right mark, and duly put up, are murdering pieces, and strike dead where they light. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Lu 18:7-8. They are not empty words as the imprecations of the wicked poured into the air, and there vanishing with their breath but are received into heaven, and shalt be sent back with thunder and lightning upon the pates of the wicked. David's prayer unravelled Ahithopel's fine spun policy, and twisted his halter for him. The prayers of the saints are more to be feared as once a great person said and feltthan an army of twenty thousand men in the field. Esther's fast hastened Haman's ruin, and Hezekiah's against Sennacherib brought his huge host to the slaughter, and fetched an angel from heaven to do the execution in one night upon them. William Gumall.

Verse 78. The proud. The wicked, especially the persecutors of God's people, are usually characterized by this term in this psalm, "the proud" (Ps 119:51,69,122). Pride puts wicked men upon being troublesome and injurious to the people of God. But why are the persecutors and the injurious called "the proud"?

1. Because wicked men shake off the yoke of God, and will not be subject to their Maker, and therefore desist not from troubling his people: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go"? (Ex 5:2). What was in his tongue, is in all men's hearts; they contemn God and his laws. Every sin hath a degree of pride, and a deprecation of God included in it, (2Sa 12:9).

2. Because they are drunk with worldly felicity, and never think of changes. "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud" (Ps 123:4). When men go on prosperously, they are apt wrongfully to trouble others, and then to flout at them in their misery, and to despise the person and cause of God's people, which is a sure effect of great arrogancy and pride. They think they may do what they please: "They have no changes; therefore they fear not God, "and put forth their hands against such as be at peace with them (Ps 60:19-20): whilst they go on prosperously and undisturbed, they cannot abstain from violence and oppression.

3. Because they affect a life of pomp, and ease, and carnal greatness, and so despise the affliction, and meanness, and simplicity of God's people. The false church hath usually the advantage of worldly power and external glory; and the true church is known by the Divine power, gifts and graces, and the lustre of holiness.

4. They are called "proud, "because of their insolent carriage towards the Lord's people; partly in their laws and injunctions, requiring them to give them more honour, respect, and obedience, than in conscience can be afforded them; as Haman would have Mordecai to devote himself to him after the manner of the Persians (Es 3:5). Condensed from Manton.

Verse 78.When any of you, says Caesarius, "is singing the verse of the Psalm where it is said, Let the proud be put to shame, let him be earnest to avoid pride, that he may escape everlasting shame." William Kay.

Verse 78. But I will meditate in thy precepts. He repeateth the same thing often, and surely if the world could not contain the books that might be written of Christ, and yet for our infirmity the Lord hath comprised them in such a few books, and yet one thing in them is often repeated, it showeth that the matter is weighty, and of us duly and often to be considered. And again we are taught that this is a thing that none do so carefully look unto as they ought. And he showeth that as his enemies sought by evil means to hurt him; so he sought to keep a good conscience, that so they might not hurt him. Then we must not set policy against policy nor cretizare rum Cretensibus;but let us always tend to the word, and keep within the bounds of that, and fight with the weapons that it lendeth us...If we would give over ourselves to God and his word, and admit nothing but that which agreeth to the word, then should we be made wiser than our enemies. Richard Greenham.

Verse 78. I will meditate in thy precepts. The verb tyva, asiach, in the second clause of the verse, may be rendered, "I will speak of, "as well as, "I will reiterate upon"; implying, that, when he had obtained the victory, he would proclaim the goodness of God, which he had experienced. To speak of God's statutes, is equivalent to declaring out of the law how faithfully he guards his saints, how securely he delivers them, and how righteously he avenges their wrongs. John Calvin.

Verse 78. Meditate. Truths lie hid in the heart without efficacy or power, till improved by deep, serious, and pressing thoughts...A sudden carrying a candle through a room, giveth us not so full a survey of the object, as when you stand a while beholding it. A steady contemplation is a great advantage. Thomas Manton.

Verse 79. Let those that fear thee turn unto me. Some think it intimates that when David had been guilty of that foul sin in the murder of Uriah, though he was a king, they that feared God grew strange to him, and turned from him, for they were ashamed of him; this troubled him, and therefore he prays, Lord, let them "turn to me" again. He desires especially the company of those that were not only honest but intelligent, "that have known thy testimonies, "have good heads as well as good hearts, and whose conversation will be edifying. It is desirable to have an intimacy with such. Matthew Henry.

Verse 79. Let those that fear thee turn unto me, etc. As he had not his own flesh to fight against only, but the world also, so he did not only himself fight, but he seeketh the help of others. When many see that religion cannot be truly professed but danger will come of it, because many set themselves against it, they flee from it, and go to the greater pair, which is the wicked. If we will avoid this, let us join ourselves to God's children, and they will help us with counsel and advice; for one may be strong when we are weak, another may have counsel when we shall not know what to do; therefore by them we shall be kept from many evil things. So Paul (2Ti 1:16), after he had complained of the wrong that many had done unto him, he straightway giveth thanks for the family of Onesiphorus, which refreshed him more than all his enemies could discourage him; so that he durst oppose this one household to the whole rabble of the wicked. Richard Greenham.

Verse 79. Let those that fear thee, etc. You must go to God and beseech him to choose your company for you. Mark what David said and did; in Ps 119:63 he saith, "I am a companion of all them that fear the Lord"; yet in this verse he goes to God, and prayeth, saying, "Let those that fear thee, O Lord, turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies." As if he should say, "Of a truth, Lord, I am a companion of all that do fear thee; but it is not in my power to bend their hearts unto me; the hearts of all men are in thy hands", now therefore "let those that fear thee turn unto me." So do you go to God, and say likewise: Lord, do thou choose my company for me; oh, do thou bow and incline their hearts to be my companions. William Bridge.

Verse 79. Those that fear. "Those that have known. "Fear and knowledge do make up a godly man. Knowledge without fear breeds presumption; and fear without knowledge breeds superstition; and blind zeal, as a blind horse, may be full of mettle, but is ever and anon stumbling. Knowledge must direct fear, and fear must season knowledge; then it is a happy mixture and composition. Thomas Manton.

Verse 79. One great means to restore a good understanding among God's people is prayer. David goeth to God about it: "Lord, let them turn to me." The Lord governs hearts and interests, both are in his hands, and he useth their alienation or reconciliation, either for judgment or mercy. God, when he pleaseth, can divert from us the comfort of godly friends; and when he pleaseth, he can bring them back again to us. The feet of God's children are directed by God himself; if they come to us, it is a blessing of God; if not, it is for a correction. He made Jacob and Laban meet peaceably (Genesis 30), and in the next chapter, Jacob and Esau. Thomas Manton.

Verse 80. Let my heart be sound. What is a sound heart? It notes reality and solidity in grace. The Septuagint hath it, Let my heart be without spot and blemish. It implies the reality of grace, opposed to the bare form of godliness, or the fair shows of hypocrites, and the sudden and vanishing motions of temporaries.

If you would have me unfold what this sound heart is, there is required these four things:

1. An enlightened understanding; that is, the directive part of the soul; and it is sound when it is kept free from the leaven and contagion of error: "A man of understanding walketh uprightly, " Pr 15:21. A sound mind is a good help to a sound heart.

2. There is required an awakened conscience, that warns of our duty, and riseth up in dislike of sin upon all occasions: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Pr 6:22): to have a constant monitor in our bosoms to put us in mind of God, when our reins preach to us in the night season (Ps 16:7): there is a secret spy in our bosoms that observes all that we do, and think, and speak; a domestic chaplain, that is always preaching to us. His heart is his Bible.

3. There is required a rightly disposed will, or a steadfast purpose to walk with God in all conditions, and to do what is good and acceptable in his sight: "He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, "Ac 6:23. Many have light inclinations, or wavering resolutions; but their hearts are not fixedly, habitually bent to please God; therein chiefly lieth this sound heart, that it doth inseparably cleave to God in all things.

4. There is required that the affections be purged and quickened: these are the vigorous motions of the will, and therefore this must be heedfully regarded; purged they must be from that carnality and fleshliness that cleaveth to them. This is called in Scripture the circumcision of the heart (De 30:6). Condensed from Manton.

Verse 80. Let my heart be sound. "A sound mind in a sound body, " was the prayer of a heathen, and his desire was according to the extent of his knowledge; but a heart sound in God's statutes, sound to the very core, with no speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, and like the king's daughter, "all glorious within." this is what the Psalmist prays for, this is what every child of God aims at, and prays for too, "Even as He is pure." Barton Bouchier.

Verse 80. Let my heart be sound.

True hearted, wholehearted, faithful and loyal,

King of our lives, by thy grace will we be!

Under thy standard, exalted and royal,

Strong in thy strength, we will battle for thee!

True hearted, wholehearted! Fullest allegiance

Yielding henceforth to our glorious King;

Valiant endeavour and loving obedience

Freely and joyously now would we bring.

True hearted, Saviour, thou knowest our story;

Weak are the hearts that we lay at thy feet,

Sinful and treacherous! yet for thy glory,

Heal them, and cleanse them from sin and deceit.

Wholehearted! Saviour, beloved and glorious,

Take thy great power, and reign thou alone,

Over our wills and affections victorious,

Freely surrendered, and wholly thine own.

Half hearted! false hearted! Heed we the warning!

Only the whole can be perfectly true;

Bring the whole offering, all timid thought scorning,

True hearted only if wholehearted too.

Half hearted! Saviour, shall aught be withholden,

Giving thee part who has given us all?

Blessings outpouring, and promises golden

Pledging, with never reserve or recall.

Half hearted! Master, shall any who know thee

Grudge thee their lives, who hast laid down thine own?

Nay; we would offer the hearts that we owe thee, --

Live for thy love and thy glory alone.

Sisters, dear sisters, the call is resounding,

Will ye not echo the silver refrain,

Mighty and sweet, and in gladness abounding, --

"True hearted, wholehearted!" ringing again?

Jesus is with us, his rest is before us,

Brightly his standard is waving above.

Brothers, dear brothers, in gathering chorus,

Peal out the watchword of courage and love!

Peal out the watchword, and silence it never,

Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free!

"True hearted, wholehearted, now and for ever,

King of our lives, by thy grace we will be!"

--Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) in "Loyal Responses."

Verse 80.Let my heart be sound, etc. This is a plain difference between a sound heart and a false heart; in the receiving of Christ the sound heart receives him as a favourite receives a prince, he gives up all to him, and lets him have the command of all. A mere innkeeper entertains him that comes next to him; he will take any man's money, and will give welcome to any man; if it be the worst man that comes he cares not, for he loves gain above all things. Not so the good heart; he welcomes Christ alone, and resigns up all to Christ. Whatsoever is pleasing to Christ he will do it, and whatsoever comes from Christ he will welcome. Thomas Hooker (1586-1647) in "The Soules Implantation."

Verse 80. Be sound. Heb. Be perfect; as the word from the same root is rendered in Job 1:1. Dr. R. Young gives as the meaning of the word as used by the Psalmist, whole, complete, plain. Verse 80. Sound in thy statutes, etc. Though an orthodox creed does not constitute true religion, yet it is the basis of it and it is a great blessing to have it. Nicolson, quoted by W. S. Plumer.

Verse 80.If you would be faithful to Christ, be sincere in your profession of him, make David's prayer and desire to be yours: "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed." Religion which is begun in hypocrisy will certainly end in apostasy, and this always carries with it reproach and ignominy. William Spurstowe (1666)

Verse 80. Ashamed. We may be ashamed either before God or men, ourselves or others.

1. Before God: either in our addresses to him at the throne of grace, or when summoned to appear at the last day before the tribunal of his justice.

(a) If you understand it of our approach to him, we cannot come into his presence with confidence if we have not a sound heart. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God": 1Jo 3:21. We lose that holy familiarity and cheerfulness, when we are unbosoming ourselves to our heavenly Father, when our hearts are not sound.

(b) When we are summoned to appear before the tribunal of his justice. Many, now, with a bold impudence, will obtrude themselves upon the worship of God, because they see him not, and have not a due sense of his majesty; but the time will come, when the most impudent and outbraving sinners will be astonished, even then when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open and made manifest, and hidden things brought to light (1Co 4:5); and every one is to receive his judgment from God according to what he hath done, either good or evil.

2. Before men man may be ashamed, and so before ourselves and others.

(a) Ourselves. It was a saying of Pythagoras, Reverence thyself; be not ashamed of thyself. God hath a spy and deputy within us, and taketh notice of our conformity and unconformity to his will, and, after sin committed, lashes the soul with the sense of its own guilt and folly, as the body is lashed with stripes: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Ro 6:21.

(b) Before others. And so our shame may be occasioned by our scandals, or our punishments; it is hard to say which is intended here. Condensed from Manton.

Verses 81-89. The eleventh letter, Caph, signifies the hollowed hand. The expositors, however, looking only to the meaning curved, which is but half of its import, explain the section as signifying the act of bowing down in penitence, or as noting that the fathers of the Old Testament were like veteran soldiers, stooping with years and toil, and bowed down yet further by the heavy weight of the law, only removable by that coming of Christ for which they prayed. Others extend the notion to the saints of the church, weighed down by the sorrows and cares of this life, and therefore desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. The true meaning is to be sought in the full interpretation of the word; for the hand is hollowed either in order to retain something which actually lies in it, or to receive something about to be placed in it by another. Thus the hand may be God's, as the giver of bounty, or man's, as the receiver of it; and the whole scope of the section, as a prayer for speedy help, is that man holds out his hand as a beggar, supplicating the mercy of God. Jerome, Ambrose, and others, in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 81. My soul fainteth for thy salvation. The word here rendered "fainteth" is the same that in Ps 73:26 is translated "faileth": "My flesh and my heart faileth". The idea is, that his strength gave way; he had such an intense desire for salvation that he became weak and powerless. Any strong emotion may thus prostrate us; and the love of God, the desire of his favour, the longing for heaven, may be so intense as to produce this result. Albert Barnes.

Verse 81. My soul fainteth. Fainting is proper to the body, but here it is ascribed to the soul; as also in many other places. The Apostle saith, "Lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds" (Heb 7:3); where two words are used, weariness and fainting, both taken from the body. Weariness is a lesser, fainting is a higher degree of deficiency: in weariness, the body requireth some rest or refreshment, when the active power is weakened, and the vital spirits and principles of motion are dulled; but, in fainting, the vital power is contracted, and retires, and leaveth the outward parts lifeless and senseless. When a man is wearied, his strength is abated; when he fainteth, he is quite spent. These things, by a metaphor, are applied to the soul, or mind. A man is weary, when the fortitude of his mind, his moral or spiritual strength, is broken, or begins to abate, when his soul sits uneasy under sufferings; but when he sinks under the burden of grievous, tedious, or long affliction, then he is said to faint, when all the reasons and grounds of his comfort are quite spent, and he can hold out no longer. Thomas Manton.

Verse 81. My soul fainteth. What is this fainting but the lofty state of raptured contemplation in which the strength of heavenly affections weakens those of earth. Just as the ascent into the highest mountains causes a new respiration, as when Daniel had a great vision from God, he tells us "he fainted and was sick certain days." E. Paxton Hood, 1871.

Verse 81. My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope. Believe under a cloud, and wait for him when there is no moonlight nor starlight. Let faith live and breathe, and lay hold of the sure salvation of God, when clouds and darkness are about you, and appearance of rotting in the prison before you. Take heed of unbelieving hearts, which can father lies upon Christ. Beware of "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" for it was a man, and not God said it. Who dreameth that a promise of God can fail, fall a swoon, or die? Who can make God sick, or his promises weak? When we are pleased to seek a plea with Christ, let us plead that we hope in him. O stout word of faith, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" O sweet epitaph, written upon the gravestone of a departed believer, namely,

"I died hoping, and my dust and ashes believe in life!" Faith's eyes, that can see through a millstone, can see through a gloom of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace. Hold fast Christ in the dark; surely ye shall see the salvation of God. Your adversaries are ripe and dry for the fire. Yet a little while, and they shall go up in a flame; the breath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, shall kindle about them. Samuel Rutherford, 1600-1601.

Verse 81. For thy salvation. Understood in a higher sense, the holy man longs for the coming of the Saviour in the flesh. Cornelius Jansen.

Verse 81. Thy salvation. A believer in God, how afflicted so ever lie be, seeketh not to be delivered but in a way allowed by God; "My soul fainteth for thy salvation"; or, till thou deliver me in thy good way. David Dickson.

Verse 81. I hope in thy word. David knew where he moored his ship. Hope without a promise is like an anchor without ground to helot by; but David's hope fixed itself upon the divine word. William Gurnall.

Verse 81. I hope in thy word: ie. I hope beyond anything I understand, and beyond anything I can possibly do, and beyond anything I deserve, and beyond all carnal and spiritual consolations, for I desire and look for Thee only I seek Thee, not Thine: I long to hear "Thud word, "that I may obey it in patience and meekness. Le Blanc.

Verses 81, 83. It is good in all times of persecution or affliction to have an eve both on the promises and on the precepts; for the looking to the promise doth encourage to hope, and the eyeing of tim precepts doth prove the hope to be sound. The Psalmist hoped in the word (Ps 119:81), and (Ps 119:88), he forgot not the statutes. David Dickson.

Verse 82. Mine eyes fail for thy word. Has a mother promised to visit her son or daughter? should she not be able to go, the remark of the son or daughter will be: "Alas! my mother promised to come to me: how I have I been looking for her? But a speck has grown on my eye. I cannot see, my eyes have failed me"; that is, by looking so intensely for coming. Joseph Roberts.

Verse 82. Mine eyes fail for thy word. He was continuously lifting eyes to heaven, looking for help from God. He was so perpetually this, that at length the eyes themselves became dim. When wilt thou comfort me? He was saying this in his heart; he was saying this with his mouth; he was saying the same thing with his eyes perpetually looking up to heaven. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 82.For thy word. The children of God make more of a mise than others do; and that upon a double account: partly, because value the blessing promised; partly, because they are satisfied with assurance given by God's word; so that, whereas others pass by these thin with a careless eye, their souls are lifted up to the constant and earnest petition of the blessing promised. It is said of the hireling, that he have his wages before the sun go down, because he is poor and hath set heart upon it (De 24:15); or, as it is in the Hebrew, lifted up his to it, meaning thereby both his desire and hope. He esteemeth his for it is the solace of his labours, and the maintenance of his life; and assuredly expects it, upon the promise and covenant of him who him who setteth him awork. So it is with the children of God; they esteem the blessing promised, and God's word giveth them good assurance that they do wait upon him in vain. Thomas Manton

Verse 82. Saying, When. The same spirit of faith which teaches man to cry earnestly, teaches him to wait patiently; for as it assures that mercy is in the Lord's hand, so it assures him, it will come forth in Lord's time. John Mason, 1688.

Verse 82. When wilt thou comfort me? It is a customable manner of God's working with his children, to delay the answer to their; prayers, and to suspend the performance of his promises: not because he is unwilling to give, but because he will have them better prepared to receive. Tardins dando qued pettimus instantia nobis orationis indicit:he is slow to give that which we seek, that we should not seek slowly, but may be awakened to instancy and fervency in prayer, which he knows to be the service most acceptable unto him, and most profitable unto ourselves. William Cowper.

Verse 82. When wilt thou comfort me? Let us complain not of God, but to God. Complaints of God give a vent to murmuring; but complaints to God, to faith, hope, and patience. Thomas Manton.

Verse 82. The prophet, to prevent it from being supposed that he was too effeminate and faint hearted, intimates that his fainting was not without cause. In asking God, "When wilt thou comfort me?" he shows, with sufficient plainness, that he was for a long time, as it were, east off and forsaken. John Calvin.

Verse 82. When wilt thou comfort me? The people of God are sometimes very disconsolate, and need comforting, through the prevalence of sin, the power of Satan's temptations, the hiding of God's face, and a variety of afflictions, when they apply to God for comfort, who only can comfort them, and who has set times to do it; but they are apt to think it long, and inquire, as David here, when it will be. John Gill.

Verse 82. When wilt thou comfort me? A poor woman had been long time questioning herself, and doubting of her salvation; when at last the Lord made it good unto her soul that Christ was her own, then her minister said unto her, The Lord will not always give his children a cordial, but he hath it ready for them when they are fainting. Thomas Hooker.

Verse 82. When wilt thou comfort me? Comfort is necessary because a great part of our temptations lies in troubles, as well as allurements. Sense of pain may discompose us as well as pleasure entice us. The world is a persecuting as well as a tempting world. The flesh troubleth as well as enticeth. The Devil is a disquieting as well as an ensnaring Devil. But yet comfort, though necessary, is not so necessary as holiness: therefore, though comfort is not to be despised, yet sincere love to God is to be preferred, and, though it be not dispensed so certainly, so constantly, and in so high a degree, in this world, we must be contented. The Spirit's comforting work is oftener interrupted than the work of holiness; yet so much as is necessary to enable us to serve God in this world, we shall assuredly receive. Thomas Manton.

Verse 83. A bottle in the smoke. Sleep was out of the question, for I was...almost smothered with the smoke from a wood fire, for there was no chimney. I was indeed "like a bottle in the smoke, " turned black and dried almost to cracking; for this was something of what the Psalmist had in view. The bottles being of leather, and being hung up in rooms with large fires of wood, and without chimneys, they became smoke-dried, shrivelled, and unfit for use. From "My Wanderings", by John Gadby, 1860.

Verse 83. Like a bottle in the smoke. The tent of a common Arab is so smoky a habitation, that I consider the expression of a bottle in the smoke, to be equivalent to that of a bottle in the tent of an Arab. There was a fire, we find, in that Arab tent to which Bishop Peteeke was conducted when he was going to Jerusalem. How smoky must such an habitation be, and how black all its utensils! Le Bruyn in going from Aleppo to Standcroon was made sufficiently sensible of this: for being obliged to pass a whole night in a hut of reeds, in the middle of which there was a fire, to boil a kettle of meat that hung over it, and to bake some bread among the ashes, he found the smoke intolerable, the door being the only place by which it could get out of the hut. To the blackness of a goat skin bottle, in a tent, but to the meanness also of such a drinking vessel, the Psalmist seems to refer, and it was a most natural image for him to make use of, driven from among the vessels of silver and gold in the palace of Saul, to live as the Arabs do and did, and consequently often obliged to drink out of a smoked leather bottle. Thomas Harmer, 1719-1788.

Verse 83.For I am become like a bottle in the smoke. A bottle in the smoke has very little inflation, fatness, moisture, beauty. Thus God wastes away, debases, and empties his people, while he exercises them with tribulations and the disquiet of hoping and waiting. The glory and eagerness of the flesh must be emptied, that the Divine gifts may find room, and the remembrance of the commandments of God may be restrained, which cannot be well kept in bottles which are swollen, inflated, and filled. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 83. A bottle in the smoke. One object amongst the ancients of such exposure was to mellow the wine by the gradual ascent of the heat and smoke from the fire over which the skin was suspended; and thus the words teach us the uses of affliction in ripening and improving the soul. Rosenmuller, quoted in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke, etc. Satan can afflict the body by the mind. For these two are so closely bound together that their good and bad estate is shared between them. If the heart be merry the countenance is cheerful, the strength is renewed, the bones do flourish like an herb. If the heart be troubled, the health is impaired, the strength is dried up, the marrow of the bones wasted, etc. Grief in the heart is like a moth in the garment, it insensibly consumeth the body and disorders it. This advantage of weakening the body falls into Satan's hands by necessary consequence, as the prophet's ripe figs, that fell into the mouth of the eater. And surely he is well pleased with it, as he is an enemy both to body and soul. But it is a greater satisfaction to him, in that as he can make the sorrows of the mind produce the weakness and sickness of the body; so can he make the distemper of the body (by a reciprocal requital) to augment the trouble of the mind. How little can a sickly body do? it disables a man for all services; he cannot, oft pray, nor read, nor hear. Sickness takes away the sweetness and comfort of religious exercises; this gives occasion for them to think the worst of themselves; they think the soul is weary of the ways of God when the body cannot hold out. Richard Gilpin, in "A Treatise of Satan's Temptations," 1677.

Verse 83. Like a bottle in the smoke. In this did the afflicted Psalmist find a striking emblem of his own spiritual state. He waited for the Lord to come. In spirit he was dried up by pressure upon him; and he still waited for the Lord to come, declaring his shrivelled condition. Perhaps his outward man partook of the same sad qualities at this time... The outward appearance of the man of God, to which he may be alluding, was, however, but the semblance of his spiritual nature at this period, whatever may have been the visible effects. David was exposed to the calumnious reports of evil minded men, and to the hot persecution of relentless enemies, till the effect upon his mind was such that his whole spiritual nature resembled, in his own mind, a skin hung up in the smoke for a length of time. Not only was he shrivelled in public estimation, but also in his own mind; not indeed because at this time, and on the ground of the charges made against him, he felt that he deserved it; but because so incessant and multifarious was the bitter invasion of his spirit, that even with all his faith in God, he well nigh literally sunk under it. The term given in our translation to the original would imply, that he bore himself well notwithstanding--For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do not forget thy statutes. Whereas the words rendered more literally would convey the important all this happened to him even while he was in the very way of duty: "I am become like a bottle in the smokeI do not forget thy statutes." He was directly in the way of the Lord's appointments for all salvation; yet trouble came. It is sad when our spiritual man becomes shrivelled and dried up because of our falling into sin, or because of guilty omissions; but here seems to be a falling off of the spiritual man, and of the physical man, while the believer is conscious that he is not forgetting the statutes of his gracious God. John Stephen.

Verse 83. Observe here the difference between the beauty and strength of the body and of the soul: the beauty of the soul groweth fairer by afflictions, whereas that of the body is blasted. David was a bottle shrivelled and shrunk up; yet the holy frame of his soul was not altered; his beauty was gone, but not his grace. Thomas Manton.

Verse 83. I am become like a bottle in the frost (so the Seventy translate it). When spiritual desires burn, carnal desires without doubt cool: on this account followeth, "Since I am become like a bottle in the frost I do not forget thy righteousnesses." Truly he desireth this mortal flesh to be understood by the bottle, the heavenly blessing by the frost, whereby the lusts of the flesh as it were by the binding of the frost become sluggish: and hence it ariseth that the righteousnesses of God do not slip from the memory, so long as we do not meditate apart from them; since what the apostle saith (Ro 13:14) is brought to pass: "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Therefore when he had said, "For I have become like a bottle in the frost, "he added, "and I do not forget thy righteousnesses, "that is, I forget them not, because I have become such. For the fervour of lust had cooled, that the memory of love might glow. Augustine.

Verse 84. How many are the days of thy servant? etc. Some read the two clauses apart, as if the first were a general complaint of the brevity of human life, such as is to be met with in other Psalms, and more frequently in the book of Job; and next, in their opinion, there follows a special prayer of the Psalmist that God would take vengeance upon his enemies. But I rather prefer joining the two clauses together, and limit both to David's afflictions; as if it had been said, Lord, how long hast thou determined to abandon thy servant to the will of the ungodly? when wilt thou set thyself in opposition to their cruelty and outrage, in order to take vengeance upon them? The Scriptures often use the word "days" in this sense... By the use of the plural number is denoted a determinate portion of time, which, in other places, is compared to the "days of an hireling": Job 14:6; Isa 16:14. The Psalmist does not, then, bewail in general the transitory life of man, but he complains that the time of his state of warfare in this world had been too long protracted; and, therefore, he naturally desires that it might be brought to a termination. In expostulating with God about his troubles, he does not do so obstinately, or with a murmuring spirit; but still, in asking how long it will be necessary for him to suffer, he humbly prays that God would not delay to succour him. John Calvin.

Verse 84. When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? He declares that he does not doubt but that there will be at some period an end to his afflictions, and that there will be a time in which his haters and enemies will be judged and punished. He assumes the fact and therefore enquires the date. Thus in the saints their very impatience of delay does itself prove their confidence of future salvation and deliverance. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 84. When wilt thou execute judgment, etc. This is an ordinary prayer, not against any certain persons, but rather generally against God's enemies and their evil courses. For the Lord executeth judgment upon his children for their conversion, as Paul (Acts 9), and upon the wicked for their confusion. He prayeth against them that belonged not to God, and yet not so much against their persons as their evil causes; and no otherwise against their persons than as they are joined with the evil causes. Thus we may pray for the confusion of God's enemies; otherwise we cannot. R. Greenham.

Verse 84. In this verse there is none of the ten words used in reference to God's law. Adam Clarke. Is not judgment one of them? C.H.S.

Verse 85. Pits. Hajji said he would tell me a tale or two about crocodiles, and he would begin by telling me how they catch them sometimes. A deep pit, he said, is dug by the side of the river, and then covered with doura straw. The crocodiles fall into these pits, and cannot get out again... There can be no doubt that formerly pits were dug for the crocodiles, as Hajji described, as is the case still in some parts of the world or other animals. To this custom allusion is made in Ps 7:15 9:15 10:2 35:8 141:10 Pr 26:27 Ec 10:8: etc. "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." Probably also this was the kind of pit referred to in Ex 21:33: "If a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it"; i.e., not cover it effectually; "and an ass or an ox fall therein," etc. Prisoners were sometimes shut up in pits, and left without water, literally to die of thirst. What a dreadful death! It is said that nothing can be more terrible. How dreadful must be their groans! John Gadsby.

The proud have digged pits. It seems strange that a proud man should be a digger of pits; but so it is; for pride for a time can submit itself to gain a greater vantage over him whom it would tread under foot. "The wicked is so proud that he seeks not God, yet he croucheth and boweth, to cause heaps of the poor to fill by his might, "Ps 10:4,10. So proud Absalom abased himself to meanest subjects that so he might prepare a way to usurpation over his king and father. But mark, he saith not that he had fallen into the pits which his enemies had digged. No, no: in God's righteous judgments, the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands, while the good escape free. "He made a pit, and digged it, "and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. Ps 7:15-16. Thus Haman hanselled the gallows which he raised for Mordecai; and Saul, when he thought by subtlety to slay David with the Philistine's sword (when he sent him out to seek two hundred of their foreskins in a dowry) was disappointed of his purpose; but he himself at length was slain by the sword. William Cowper.

Verse 85. Let men beware how they dig pits for others. All God's word testifies against such wickedness. How many tests are invented simply for the purpose of entangling men's consciences and furnishing ground for persecution. William S. Plumer.

Verse 85. Which are not after thy law. Hebrew, Not after thy law. It may refer to the men or to the practice. The men walk not according to thy law, and their fraudulent practices are not agreeable to thy law. The law of God condemned pits for tame beasts: Ex 21:33,84. Though it was lawful for hunters to take wild beasts, yet they were to take heed that a tame beast fell not therein, at their petal. Thomas Manton.

Verse 85. Which are not after thy law. After God's law they could not be while they were doing such things. Perhaps he refers to the deed more than to the men "The proud have digged pits for me, which is not after thy law" which is against thy law; and they would seem to do it because it is against thy lawdelighting in wickedness as they do. Such men would seem to imbibe the foul spirit which Milton ascribes to the fallen archangel: "Evil, be thou my good." Obviously, however, the words contain this sentiment, The proud have sought to overthrow me, because they are not obedient to thy law. Hereupon he sets their conduct in the light of God's holy commandments, that the comparison may be made: "All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully." Whatever the Lord did was done in truth; these men acted against his servant without cause, and in so doing they also acted in defiance of his known will. John Stephen.

Verse 85. The wicked have told me fables, but mot as thy law (So the Septuagint). The special reason why he desires to be freed from the company of the wicked is, because they always tempt the pious by relating the pleasures of the world, which are nothing but fables, filthy, fleeting pleasures, more fallacious than realnothing like the grand and solid pleasure that always flows from a pious observance of the law of the Lord. Robert Bellarmine.

Verse 86. All thy commandments are faithful. David setteth down here three points. The one is that God is true; and after that he addeth a protestation of his good conduct and guidance, and of the malice of his adversaries: thirdly, he calleth upon God in his afflictions. Now as concerning the first, he showeth us that although Satan to shake us, and in the end utterly to carry us away, subtilly and cunningly goeth about to deceive us, we must, to the contrary, learn how to know his ambushes, and to keep us from out of them. So often then as we are grieved with adversity and affliction, where must we begin? See Satan how he pitches his nets and layeth his ambushes to induce and persuade us to come into them, what saith he? Dost thou not see thyself forsaken of thy God? Where are the promises whereunto thou didst trust? Now here thou seest thyself to be a wretched, forlorn creature. So then thou right well seest that God hath deceived thee, and that the promises whereunto thou trustedst appertain nothing at all unto thee. See here the subtlety of Satan. What is now to be done? We are to conclude with David and say, yet God is true and faithful. Let us, I say, keep in mind the truth of God as a shield to beat back whatsoever Satan is able to lay unto our charge. When he shall go about to cause us to deny our faith, when he shall lie about us to make us believe that God thinketh no more of us, or else that it is in vain for us to trust unto his promises; let us know the clean contrary and believe that it is very plain and sound truth which God saith unto us. Although Satan casteth at us never so many darts, although he have never so exceeding many devices against us, although now and then by violence, sometimes with subtlety and cunning, it seemeth in very deed to us that he should overcome us; nevertheless he shall never bring it to pass, for the truth of God shall be made sure and certain in our hearts. John Calvin.

Verse 86. All thy commandments are faithful. The Hebrew is Faithfulness; that is to say, they are true, sure, equal, infallible. "They have persecuted me wrongfully:" no doubt for asserting God's truths and commands, and adhering thereto. John Trapp.

Verse 86. They persecute me wrongfully. There is a stress on the word falsely (or wrongfully); for that is a true saying of a martyr saint, "The cause, not the pain, makes the martyr." Wherefore the apostle teaches us, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Neale and Littledale.

Verse 86. Help thou me. "God help me" is an excellent, comprehensive prayer; it is a pity it should ever be used lightly and as a byword. Matthew Henry.

Verse 88. Quicken me after thy lovingkindness. Finally, the man of God appears entreating to be quickened, that so he may be enabled to keep the divine testimony... Here is a last resort, but it is a sure one. Let the living principles of divine grace be imparted to the soul, and the believer will be raised above dismay at the face of men. How does the spiritual mind triumph over even the infirmities of the body! We may behold this from the deathbed of the believer, and we may recall this in the lives and deaths of many eminent ones. The man of pure mind goes right to the fountain of life. He goes, with understanding, for he takes in the character in which the Lord hath spoken of himself: "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness." All at once he lays aside thought of his enemies; he is present with his God. His desire is to rise into higher spiritual existence, that he may hold closer communion with the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness. John Stephen.

Verse 88. Quicken me, etc. He had prayed before, "Quicken me in thy righteousness" (Ps 119:40); but here "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness." The surest token of God's goodwill towards us is his good work in us. Matthew Henry.

Verse 88. Quicken me. Many a time in this psalm doth David make this petition; and it seems strange that so often he should acknowledge himself a dead man, and desire God to quicken him. But so it is unto the child of God: every desertion and decay of strength is a death. So desirous are they to live unto God, that when they fail in it and find any inability in their souls to serve God as they would, they account themselves but dead, and pray the Lord to quicken them. William Cowper.

Verse 88. The testimony of thy mouth. The title here given to the directory of our duty"The testimony of God's mouth, "gives increasing strength to our obligations. Thus let every word we read or hear be regarded as coming directly from the "mouth of God" (Joh 6:63). What reverence what implicit submission does it demand! May it ever find us in the posture of attention, humility, and faith! each one of us ready to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Charles Bridges.

LAMED. Verse 89. Here the climax of the delineation of the suppliant's pilgrimage is reached. We have arrived at the centre of the psalm, and the thread of the connexion is purposely broken off. The substance of the first eleven strophes has evidently been: "Hitherto hath the Lord brought me: shall it be that I now perish?" To this the eleven succeeding strophes make answer," The Lord's word changeth not; and in spite of all evil foreboding, the Lord will perfect concerning ms the work that he hath already begun." -- Joseph Francis Thruput, 1860.

Verse 89. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. These words are usually rendered as making but one proposition; but the accent athnab showeth there are two branches; the one asserting the eternity of God; the other, the constancy and permanency of his word. Thus,

1. "For ever art thou O LORD."

2. "Thy word is settled in heaven." So the Syriac readeth it; and Geierus, and, after him, others prove and approve this reading. And so this verse and the following do the better correspond one with the other, if we observe beginning and ending: As thou art "for ever, O Lord," and "thy faithfulness is unto all generations," which are exactly parallel. And so also will the last clauses agree: "Thy word is settled in heaven," and," thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."

It implies that as God is eternal, so is his word, and that it hath a fit representation both in heaven and in earth: in heaven, in the constant motion of the heavenly bodies; in earth, in the consistency and permanency thereof; that as his word doth stand fast in heaven, so doth his faithfulness on earth, where the afflictions of the godly seem to contradict it. -- Thomas Manton.

Verse 89. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. When Job considers his body turned to dust and worms (Job 14:19,25), yet by faith he says," My Redeemer lives," etc. Even when patience failed in Job, yet faith failed not. Though God kill all other graces and comforts, and my soul too, yet he shall not kill my faith, says lie. If he separate my soul from my body, yet not faith from my soul. And therefore the just lives by faith, rather than by other graces, because when all is gone, yet faith remains, and faith remains because the promise remains: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." And this is the proper and principal meaning of this place. Matthew Lawrence.

Verse 89. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. If we look at God's word of promise, as it is in our unsettled hearts, we dream that it's as ready to waver as our hearts are; as the shadow of the sun and moon in the water seems to shake as much as the water doth which it shines upon. Yet for all this seeming shaking here below, the sun and moon go on m a steadfast course in heaven. So the Psalmist tells us that however our hearts stagger at a promise through unbelief, nay, and our unbelief makes us believe that the promise often is shaken; yet God's word is settled, though not in our hearts, yet "in heaven"; yea, and there "for ever," as settled as heaven itself is; yea, more than so; for "heaven and earth may pass," but "not one jot or tittle of the law (and therefore of the gospel) shall fail": Lu 16:17. Anthony Tuckney, 1599-1670.

Verse 89. Settled. J. M. Good translates the verse as follows-- "For ever, O Jehovah, hath thy word given array to the heavens," and observes that the Hebrew word bub is a military term, and applies to arraying and marshalling the divisions of an army in their proper stations when taking the field. The hosts of heaven are here supposed to be arrayed or marshalled with a like exact order; and to maintain for ever the relative duties imposed on them: while the earth, like the heavens, has as established a march prescribed to it, which it equally fulfils; for all are the servants of the great Creator; and hence, as they change, produce the beautiful regularity of the seasons, the rich returns of harvest, and daily declare the glory of the Lord.

Verse 89. In heaven. Whenever you look to heaven, remember that within you have a God, who hath fixed his residence and shown his glory there, and made it the seat both of his mercy and justice. You have also there a Saviour who, after he had died for our sins, sat down at the right hand of Majesty, to see his promises accomplished, and by his word to subdue the whole world. There are angels that "do his commandment, hearkening to the voice of his word": Ps 103:20. There are glorified saints, who see God face to face, and dwell with him for evermore, and came thither by the same covenant which is propounded to us, as the charter of our peace and hope. In the outer region of heaven we see the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, move in that fixed course and order wherein God hath set them; and will God show his constancy in the course of nature, and be fickle and changeable in the covenant of grace, wherein he hath disposed the order and method of his mercies? -- Thomas Manton.

Verses 89, 91. In these verses there is affirmed to be an analogy between the word of God and the works of God. It is said of his "word, "that it is "settled in heaven," and that it sustains its faithfulness from one generation to another. It is said of his "works," and more especially of those that are immediately around us, even of the earth which we inhabit, that as it was established at the first so it abideth afterwards. And then, as if to perfect the assimilation between them, it is said of both in Ps 119:91," They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are ray servants"; thereby identifying the sureness of that word which proceeded from his lips, with the unfailing constancy of that Nature which was formed and is upholden by his hands. The constancy of Nature is taught by universal experience, and even strikes the popular eye as the most characteristic of those features which have been impressed upon her. It may need the aid of philosophy to learn how unvarying Nature is in all her processes-- how even the seeming anomalies can be traced to a law that is inflexible-- how what appears at first to be the caprices of her waywardness, are, in fact, the evolutions of a mechanism that never changes-- and that the more thoroughly she is sifted and put to the test by the interrogations of the curious, the more certainly will they find that she walks by a rule which knows no abatement, and perseveres with obedient footstep in that even course from which the eye of strictest scrutiny has never yet detected one hair breadth of deviation. It is no longer doubted by men of science, that every remaining semblance of irregularity in the universe is due, not to the fickleness of Nature, but to the ignorance of man-- that her most hidden movements are conducted with a uniformity as rigorous as Fate -- that even the fitful agitations of the weather have their law and their principle-- that the intensity of every breeze, and the number of drops in every shower, and the formation of every cloud, and all the occurring alternations of storm and sunshine, and the endless shifting of temperature, and those tremulous varieties of the air which our instruments have enabled us to discover but have not enabled us to explain-- that still, they follow each other by a method of succession, which, though greatly more intricate, is yet as absolute in itself as the order of the seasons, or the mathematical courses of astronomy. This is the impression of every philosophical mind with regard to Nature, and it is strengthened by each new accession that is made to science...But there is enough of patent and palpable regularity in Nature to give also to the popular mind the same impression of her constancy. There is a gross and general experience that teaches the same lesson, and that has lodged in every bosom a kind of secure and steadfast confidence in the uniformity of her processes. The very child knows and proceeds upon it. He is aware of an abiding character and property in the elements around him, and has already learned as much of the fire, and the water, and the food that he eats, and the firm ground that he treads upon, and even of the gravitation by which he must regulate his postures and his movements, as to prove that, infant though he be, he is fully initiated in the doctrine, that Nature has her laws and her ordinances, and that she continueth therein, and the proofs of this are ever multiplying along the journey of human observation; insomuch that when we come to manhood, we read of Nature's constancy throughout every department of the visible world.

It meets us wherever we turn our eyes. . . . God has so framed the machinery of my perceptions, as that I am led irresistibly to expect that everywhere events will follow each other in the very train in which I have ever been accustomed to observe them; and when God so sustains the uniformity of Nature, that in every instance it is rigidly so, he is just manifesting the faithfulness of his character. Were it otherwise, he would be practising a mockery on the expectation which he himself had inspired. God may be said to have promised to every human being that Nature will be constant-- if not by the whisper of an inward voice to every heart, at least by the force of an uncontrollable bias which he has impressed on every constitution. So that, when we behold Nature keeping up its constancy, we behold the God of Nature keeping up his faithfulness; and the system of visible things with its general laws, and its successions which are invariable, instead of an opaque materialism to intercept from the view of mortals the face of the Divinity, becomes the mirror which reflects upon the truth that is unchangeable, the ordination that never fails...And so it is, that in our text there are presented together, as if there was a tie of likeness between them-- that the same God who is fixed as to the ordinances of Nature, is faithful as to the declarations of his word; and as all experience proves how firmly he may be trusted for the one, so is there an argument as strong as experience, to prove how firmly he may be trusted for the other. By his work in us he hath awakened the expectation of a constancy in Nature, which he never disappoints. By his word to us, should he awaken the expectation of a certainty in his declarations, this he will never disappoint. It is because Nature is so fixed, that we apprehend the God of Nature to be so faithful. He who never falsities the hope that hath arisen in every bosom, from the instinct which he himself hath communicated, will never falsify the hope that shall arise in any bosom from the express utterance of his voice. Were he a God in whose hand the processes of nature were ever shifting, then might we conceive him a God from whose mouth the proclamations of grace had the like characters of variance and vacillation. But it is just because of our reliance on the one that we feel so much of repose in our dependence upon the other; and the same God who is so unfailing in the ordinances of his creation, we hold to be equally unfailing in the ordinances of his word. Thomas Chalmers.

Verse 90. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations. As he gathered, the certainty of God's word from the endurance of heaven, so now he confirms it by considering the foundation of the earth. Since the foundation of the earth, made by the word of God, abides sure, shall we not think that the foundation of our salvation laid in Jesus Christ, is much more sure? Though the creatures cannot teach us the way of our salvation (for that we must learn by the word), yet do they confirm that which the word saith," Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever:" Jer 31:85,36. As there Jeremy gathers the stability of the church from the stability of the creatures; so here David confirms the certainty of our salvation by the most certain and unchangeable course of creation; and both of them are amplified by Christ Jesus: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot of God's word shall not fall to the ground." Let us therefore be strengthened in faith and give glory to God. William Cowper.

Verse 90. Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. Every time we set foot on the ground, we may remember the stability of God's promises, and it is also a confirmation of faith. Thus,

1. The stability of the earth is the effect of God's word; this is the true pillar upon which the earth standeth; for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power; "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast": Ps 33:9. Now, his word of power helpeth us to depend upon his word of promise.

2. Nothing appeareth whereon the globe of the earth should lean and rest: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing:" Job 26:7. Now, that this vast and ponderous body should lean upon the fluid air as upon a firm foundation, is matter of wonder; the question is put in the book of Job: "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the cornerstone thereof?" Job 38:6. Yet firm it is, though it hang as a ball in the air...Now, since his word beareth up such a weight, and all the church's weight, and our own burden leaneth on the promise of God, he can, by the power of his word, bear up all without visible means. Therefore his people may trust his providence; he is able to support them in any distresses, when no way of help appeareth.

3. The firmness and stability offereth itself to our thoughts. The earth abideth in the same seat and condition wherein God left it, as long as the present course and order of nature is to continue: Ps 104:5. God's truth is as immovable as the earth: Ps 117:2. Surely if the foundation of the earth abideth sure, the foundation of our salvation, laid by Jesus Christ, is much more sure.

4. The stability remains in the midst of changes: Ec 1:4. All things in the world are subject to many revolutions, but God's truth is one and the same.

5. In upholding the frame of the world, all those attributes are seen, which are a firm stay to a believer's heart, such as wisdom, power, and goodness. The covenant of grace is as sure as the covenant made after the deluge. We cannot look upon this earth without seeing therein a display of those same attributes which confirm our faith, in waiting upon God till his promises be fulfilled to us. Condensed from T. Manton.

Verse 90. It abideth. Creation is as the mother, and Providence the nurse which preserveth all the works of God. God is not like man; for man, when he hath made a work, cannot maintain it: he buildeth a ship, and cannot save it from shipwreck; he edifies a house, but cannot keep it from decay. It is otherwise with God; we daily see his conserving power, upholding his creatures; which should confirm us that he will not cast us off, nor suffer us to perish (since we are the works of his hands) if we so depend upon him, and give him glory as our Creator, Conserver, and Redeemer. William Cowper.

Verse 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, etc. Which of the works of God are not pervaded by a beautiful order? Think of the succession of day and night. Think of the revolution of the seasons. Think of the stars as they walk in their majestic courses, -- one great law of harmony "binding the sweet influence of the Pleiades, ...and guiding Arcturus with his sons": Job 38:31-32. Look upwards, amid the magnificence of might, to that crowded concave, -- worlds piled on worlds, -- and yet see the calm grandeur of that stately march; -- not a discordant note there to mar the harmony, though wheeling at an Inconceivable velocity in their intricate and devious orbits! These heavenly sentinels all keep their appointed watch towers. These Levites in the upper firmament, light their altar fires "at the time of the evening incense," and quench them again, when the sun, who is appointed to rule the day, walks forth from his chamber. "These wait all upon thee": Ps 104:27. "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." -- J.R. Macduff, in "Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains," 1862.

Verse 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances. Man may destroy a plant, but he is powerless to force it into disobedience to the laws given it by the common Creator. "If," says one," man would employ it for his use, he must carefully pay attention to its wants and ways, and bow his own proud will to the humblest grass at his feet. Man may forcibly obstruct the path of a growing twig, but it turns quietly aside, and moves patiently and irresistibly on its appointed way.". Do what he may, turf wilt not grow in tile tropics, nor the palm bear its fruit in a cold climate. Rice refuses to thrive out of watery swamps, or cotton to form its fleece of snowy fibres where the rain can reach them. Some of the handsomest flowers in the world, and stranger still, some of the most juicy and succulent plants with which we are acquainted, adorn the arid and desolate sands of the Cape of Good Hope, and wilt not flourish elsewhere. If you twist the branch of a tree so as to turn the under surface of its leaves towards the sky, in a very little while all those leaves will turn down and assume their appointed position. This process will be performed sooner or later, according to the heat of the sun and the flexibility of the leaves, but none the less it will surely take place. You cannot induce the Sorrowful tree of India to bloom by day, or cause it to cease all the year round from loading the night air with the rich perfume of its orange like flowers. The philosopher need not go far to find the secret of this. The Psalmist declares it when, speaking of universal nature, he traces the true cause of its immutable order. God, he says," hath established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass; "or, as it is in the Prayer book version," hath given them a law which shall not be broken": Ps 148:6. Truly is it said in another Ps 114:91," They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." Wilful man may dare to defy his Maker, and set at nought his wise and merciful commands; but not so all nature besides. Well, indeed, is it for us that his other works have not erred after the pattern of our rebellion; that seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, with all their accompanying provision, have not ceased! To the precepts imposed upon vegetation when first called into being on creation's third day, it stilt yields implicit submission, and the most tender plant will die rather than transgress. What an awful contrast to this is the conduct of man, God's noblest work, endowed with reason and a never dying soul, yet too often ruining his health, wasting and destroying his mental power, defiling his immortal spirit, and, in a word, madly endeavouring to frustrate every purpose for which he was framed. James Neil, in "Rays from the Realms of Nature," 1879.

Verse 91. All creatures punctually observe the law he hath implanted on their nature, and in their several capacities acknowledge him their sovereign; they move according to the inclinations he imprinted on them. The sea contains itself in its bounds, and the sun steps not out of his sphere; the stars march in their order: "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." If he orders things contrary to their primitive nature they obey him. When he speaks the word, the devouring fire becomes gentle, and toucheth not the hair of the children he will preserve; the hunger starved lions suspend their ravenous nature when so good a morsel as Daniel is set before them; and the sun, which had been in perpetual motion since its creation, obeys the writ of ease God sent in Joshua's time, and stands still. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 91. All are thy servants. We should consider how great is that perversity by which man only, formed in the image of God, together with reprobate angels, has fallen away from obedience to God; so that what is said of all other creatures cannot be said of him, unless renewed by singular grace. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 91. All are thy servants. Since all creatures must serve God, therefore we ought neither to use them for any other purpose, nor turn them to the service of sin. The creature by the sin of our first parents has been made subject to vanity, and groans, and longs to be delivered, Romans 8: Christians, therefore, who use the creature and the world, should use as not abusing, 1 Corinthians 7; but enjoy them with praise of the divine majesty and goodness, 1 Timothy 4. Solomon Gesner.

Verse 91. All are thy servants.

Say not, my soul," From whence

Can God relieve my care?

Remember that Omnipotence

Has servants everywhere."

-- Thomas T. Lynch, 1855.

Verse 92. Unless thy law had been my delights, etc. This text sets out the great benefit and comfort which David found in the law of God in the time of his affliction. It kept him from perishing: "Had not thy law been my delights, I had perished in ray affliction"...David speaks this (saith Musculus) of the distressful condition he was in when persecuted by Saul, forced to fly to the Philistines, and sometimes to hide himself in the rocks and caves of the earth. It is very likely (saith he) that he had the book of God's law with him, by the reading of which he mitigated and allayed his sorrows, and kept himself pure from communicating with the heathen in their superstitions. The Greek scholiasts say that David uttered these words when driven from Saul, and compelled to live among the Philistines, etc. For he would have been allured to have communicated with them in their impieties had he not carried about him the meditation of the word of God. The word of God delighted in is the afflicted saint's antidote against ruin and destruction. The word of God is the sick saint's salve, the dying saint's cordial, a precious medicine to keep God's people from perishing in time of affliction. This upheld Jacob from sinking, when his brother Esau came furiously marching to destroy him (Ge 32:12). He pleaded," And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good," etc. Thus the promise of God supported him. This also upheld Joshua and enabled him courageously to fight the Lord's battles, because God had said," He would never leave him nor forsake him" (Jos 1:5). Melanethon saith that the Landgrave of Hesse told him at Dresden that it had been impossible for him to have borne up under the manifold miseries of so long an imprisonment, Nisi habuisset consolationem verbo divino in suo corde, but for the comfort of the Scriptures in his heart. Edmund Catamy (1600-1666) in "The Godly Man's Ark."

Verse 92. Certainly the reading of most part of the Scriptures must needs be a very comfortable thing; and I think a godly heart (disposed as it ought to be) can hardly tell how to be sad while it does it. For what a comfort is it for a man to read an earthly father's letters sent to him, though they were written long ago? With what care do we keep such letters in our chests? With how much delight do we ever and anon take them out and look upon them? and with how much sorrow do we lose them? Is my love to my earthly father so great, and shall my love to my heavenly Father be less? Can my heart choose but rejoice and my bones flourish like an herb, as oft as I look upon my Redeemer's last will and testament, whereby I know that he me so much and that he doth so for me continually, and that I shall be ever with him.

How is David ever and anon talking of his delight in the law of God, and in his statutes and testimonies. It was to him instead of all other delights; standing by him when all delights else left him; "Unless thy law had been my delight (or, my very great delight), I should then have perished in mine affliction," Ps 119:92. Let princes sit and speak against him never so much; yet will he meditate in God's statutes, Ps 119:23. Let him have never so many persecutors and enemies; yet will he not decline from God's testimonies, Ps 119:157. Let him be in a strange place, there shall God's statutes be his song, Ps 119:54. Let him be a stranger in the earth all his life; so that he be not a stranger to God's commandments he cares not, Ps 119:19. Although he should have never so much contempt cast upon him, yet will he not forget God's precepts, Ps 119:141. Although his soul should be continually in his hand, yet that should not make him forget God's law. Yea, although he became like a bottle in the smoke, yet will he not forget God's precepts, Ps 119:83. And therefore was it that he rejoiced, because he had been afflicted upon this account, that it made him learn God's statutes. He cared for no other wealth. "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart," Ps 119:111. Neither cared he much for life, but only to keep God's word, Ps 119:17. Whatever he had said before, or meant to say next, he still cries," Teach me thy statutes," and," I have longed for thy precepts," &c.; or some such expression or other. He could not forbear to speak of them, for they were still before him, Ps 119:30. No wonder, then, that he meditated upon them so often, as he saith he did. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day," Ps 119:97. And "Thy testimonies are my meditation," Ps 119:99. God's commandments were to David sweeter in his mouth than honey, to talk and discourse of them, Ps 119:103. Zachary Bogan, 1653.

Verse 92. The persons to whose delight the word of God actually conduces are the children of God, and none else. None but they are prepared to take in the consolation of the word.

1. As they only are spiritually enlightened to discern the great and comfortable things contained in it, enlightened in a manner in which no others are: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Co 2:4).

2. As they have the highest value for the word of God, this prepares them for receiving consolation from it.

3. As they have their hearts and ways suited to the word of God, this is another reason of the delight they fetch from it. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," and take pleasure in them; "but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Ro 8:5). The comforts of the word are spiritual; and only the spiritual heart, as it is renewed by grace, can taste and relish them. The delight which the people of God have from the word, is a privilege peculiar to themselves: and this word hath enough to give delight to all of their numbers -- Daniel Wilcox, 1676-1733.

Verse 92. My delights. The word signifieth delights in the plural number. Many were the sorrows of David's life; but against them all he found as many comforts and delectations in God's word. With such variety of holy wisdom hath God penned his word, that it hath convenient comfort for every state of life, and therefore the children of God account nothing so dear as it; they prefer it to their appointed food. William Cowper.

Verse 92. Thy law...my delights...in mine affliction. I happened to be standing in a grocer's shop one day in a large manufacturing town in the west of Scotland, when a poor, old, frail widow came in to make a few purchases. There never was, perhaps, in that town a more severe time of distress. Nearly every loom was stopped. Decent and respectable tradesmen, who had seen better days, were obliged to subsist on public charity. So much money per day (but a trifle at most) was allowed to the really poor and deserving. The poor widow had received her daily pittance, and she had now come into the shop of the grocer to lay it out to the best advantage. She had but a few coppers in her withered hands. Carefully did she expend her little stock-- a pennyworth of this and the other necessary of life nearly exhausted all she had. She came to the last penny, and with a singular expression of heroic contentment and cheerful resignation on her wrinkled face, she said," Now I must buy oil with this, that I may see to read my Bible during these long dark nights, for it is my only comfort now when every other comfort has gone away." -- Alexander Wallace, in "The Bible and the Working Classes," 1853.

Verse 92. This verse I may call a Perfume against the Plague; The Sick Man's Salve; The Afflicted Man's Consolation; and a blessed Triumph, in and over all troubles. Richard Greenham.

Verse 93. I will never forget thy precepts, etc. Forgetfulness must be striven against in every possible way, lest it should gradually creep in, through ingratitude, old age, weakness of mind, or other overwhelming cares. See Ps 119:16,61,83. Martin Geier.

Verse 93. I will never forget thy precepts, etc. This afflicted good man is now comforted; his comfort came from his delight in God's law; he thinks of it, he feels the force of it, and therefore to the end that he might ever receive the like comforts, he will bind himself by a promise to the Lord that he will never forget his precepts; adding a reason, namely, that they were to him spirit and life. With them hast thou quickened me. Quickened he was, as he saith, by God, but yet also by the word, soundly preached, savingly understood, and particularly applied to the conscience. Thus then doth the power of Christ's death make us to walk on in newness of life. No aqua vitae, or celestis like unto this, by which we have inward peace of conscience, and an outward obedience to God's commandments. David rejoiced in this blessing, , so ought we: we desire to be ever quick, and cheerful to all good duties; it is only God, by his Spirit, in the word, that can give it. Richard Greenham.

Verse 93. With them thou hast quickened me. The quickening Spirit delights to work by means of the word; but though the word be the means, yet the benefit comes from God: "For with them thou hast quickened me." Life comes, from the fountain of life. The gospel is a sovereign plaster; but it is God's hand that must apply it, and make it stick; make it to be peace, comfort, and quickening to our souls. There is a double quickening, when, from dead, we are made living; or when, from cold, and sad, and heavy, we are made lively...and so not only have life, but enjoy it more abundantly, according to Christ's gracious promise (Joh 10:10); that they may be living, lively, kept still in rigour. Now, this second quickening may be taken, either more largely, for the vitality of grace; or, strictly, for actual comfort Largely taken; so God quickens by increasing the life of: grace; either internally, by promising the life of grace; or morally and externally, by promising the life of glory. More strictly, his quickening may be taken for comfort and support in his affliction; so it is likely to be taken here: he had said immediately before, "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction"; and now," I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." It was great comfort and support to him; and therefore he should prize the word as long as he lived. Thomas Manton.

Verse 93. Thou hast quickened me. Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your hearts warmed. Read the word, not only as a history, but labour to be affected with it. Let it not only inform you, but inflame you. "Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord": Jer 23:29. Go not from the word till you can say as those disciples," Did not our hearts burn within us?" Lu 24:32. Thomas Watson.

Verse 94. I am thine, save me. David, a man after God's own heart, would be saved, but not after the manner of the men of this world, that would be saved to be their own and to enjoy themselves at their own will; but he in being saved would be God's, and at his disposing: "I am thine, save me."

There is a threefold strength in this argument.

1. The law of nature, which obliges a father to be good to his child, the husband to his wife, etc., and God hath subjected himself more unto the law of nature, he lies more under it, than any of these; and doth more perfectly, fully, and gloriously fulfil this law of nature than any; there is no father like him, no friend, no husband like him. "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yet will I not forget thee:" Isa 44:15. A mother can hardly do it; nature teacheth her to have bowels, and a merciful remembrance towards her child; much, note will I, saith God.

2. When we can say to God, "I am thine," we plead the covenant which God hath made with us, wherein he is become our father and friend: and this is that which was pleaded in Isa 63:16: "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not (because they are gone, and so have no cognizance of us now); yet thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." See what a conclusion here is made; doubtless thou art our Father, and therefore we call to thee for help.

3. There is this encouragement and strength that the spirit of, a man receives in thus arguing with God, that if he can say in truth," I am thine," God much more will say to the creature," I am thine." If we have so much love to offer ourselves to God, to become his; much more will the love of God make him to become ours; for God loves first, and most, and surest. If mine heart rise toward God, much more is the heart of God toward me; because there love is in the fountain. Never did a spouse speak to her husband, whom her soul loved to the highest, more willingly, and say," I am thine," than the spirit of an upright man saith to God," Lord, I am thine." And he loves him with a love of thankfulness. Hast thou given thyself to me, saith he, and shall I then withhold myself from thee? Hast thou, who art so great, done all this for me, and shall I stand out against thee? The gracious man will willingly acknowledge himself to be the Lord's. The saints often do this: David above twenty times comes with this acknowledgment in this psalm, and in Ps 116:16: "I am thy servant; I am thy servant." To say it once was not enough; he saith it again, to show the sincerity of his spirit, and to witness that his heart was fully pleased with this, that he was not his own, but the Lord's. The knowledge of our interest in God doth much further our approaches to God. When a man is once assured, and can say with a clear spirit," I am thine," he will naturally cry," Save me." Such a man is a man of prayer, he is much in addresses to God, and conversing with him. -- Joseph Symonds, 1653.

Verse 94. I am thine. This is an excellent motive to draw from the Lord help in trouble, -- "I am thine." Thine by creation, I was made by thee; thine by adoption, I was assigned over to thee; thine by donation, I was given to thee; thine by marriage, I was espoused to thee; thine by redemption, I was purchased by thee; thine by stipulation, I have vowed myself unto thee. Richard Greenham.

Verse 94. For I have sought thy precepts. See here how David qualifies his protestation: from his earnest affection to l he word of God, he proves that he was God's man and not his own servant. It is not words, but affections and actions which must prove us to be the Lord's. Tuus sum, quia id solum qued tuum est quaesivi:I am thine because I sought nothing but that which is thine, and how I might please thee. Mihi in tuis justificationibus est omne poatrimonium:in the observance of thy precepts is all my patrimony. William Cowper.

Verse 94.

1. David claims relation to God: "I am thine" -- devoted to thee, and owned by thee, thine in covenant.

2. He proves his claim: "I am thine, save me; for Y have sought thy precepts"; i.e., I have carefully enquired concerning my duty, and diligently endeavoured to do it.

3. He Improves. His claim: "I am thine, save me." Save me from sin, save me from ruin. Mr. Henry.

Verse 94.

1. A great prayer: "Save me."

2. A grand prayer: "I am thine."

3. A gracious experience: "I have sought," etc.

Verse 94.

1. Relation: "I am thine."

2. Preservation: "save me."

3. Obligation: "I have sought," etc. G.R.

Verse 94.

1. God's child humbly points out to him his responsibility: "I am thine."

2. Ventures to urge his own sincerity: he has at least "sought."

3. With these two hands extended, he utters a sharp cry for help: "save me." -- W.B.H.

Verse 94. Multum in parvo.

1. A profession.

2. A prayer.

3. A plea. C.A.D.

Verse 94.

1. God's interest in us.

2. Our interest in God. W.D.

Verse 94. The characteristics of personal religion.

1. Personal devotedness to God: "I am thine."

2. Personal obedience rendered: "I have sought thy precepts."

3. Personal expectation cherished: "save me." -- J.F.

Verse 94. The courage obedience gives.

1. It emboldens us to a firm assurance: "I am thine, for I have," etc.

(a) We become God's by faith alone.

(b) But the assurance of being his cannot exist without obedience; obedience proves the faith to ourselves; satisfies us concerning grace received.

(c) Poor obedience always interferes with assurance.

2. It emboldens us to pray, and in prayer: "Save me."

(a) The Christian's prayers are only of faith and offered in faith.

(b) Yet disobedience makes: him shrink from approaching God in prayer, and renders him feeble in petitioning.

(c) Obedience is humble but bold. The middle clause of the text applies equally to the first and third clauses. J.F.

Verse 95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me. Two things again he notes in his enemies; diligence, in waiting all occasions whereby to do him evil; and cruelty without mercy, for their purpose was to destroy him: wherein, still we see how restless and insatiable is the malice of the wicked against the godly. Daniel's preservation in the lions' den was a great miracle; but it is no less a marvellous work of God, that the godly who are the flock of Christ, are daily preserved in the midst of the wicked, who are but ravening wolves, and thirst for the blood of the saints of God, having a cruel purpose in their heart if they might perform it, utterly to destroy them. -- William Cowper.

Verse 95. But I will consider thy testimonies. It was a grievous temptation to be sought for to be given up to slaughter, but a greater mercy to consider God's testimonies, even then when his life was sought for. Had it not been for the consideration of God's testimonies, a thousand to one he had fallen away. Richard Greenham.

Verse 96. I have seem an end of all perfection, etc. These words are variously rendered and understood by interpreters, who in this variety do very much conspire and agree in the same sense. The Chaldee Paraphrase renders the words thus," I have seen an end of all things about which I have employed my care; but thy commandment is very large." The Syriac version thus, "I have seen an end of all regions and countries" (that is, I have found the compass of the habitable world to be finite and limited) "but thy commandment is of a vast extent." Others explain it thus," I have seen an end of all perfection," that is, of all the things of this world which men value and esteem at so high a rate; of all worldly wisdom and knowledge, of wealth, and honour, and greatness, which do all perish and pass away; "but thy law is eternal, and still abideth the same"; or, as the Scripture elsewhere expresses it," The word of the Lord endureth for ever." -- John Tillotson, 1630-1694.

Verse 96. I have seen an end of all perfection. Poor perfection which one sees an end of! Yet such are all those things in this world which pass for perfections. David in his time had seen Goliath, the strongest, overcome; Asahel, the swiftest, overtaken; Ahithophel, the wisest, befooled; Absalom, the fairest, deformed. Matthew Henry.

Verse 96. I have seen an end of all perfection, etc. The Psalmist's words offer us a double comfort and encouragement. We may read them in two ways:

1. "I have seen an end of all perfection; for thy commandment is exceeding broad"; and

2. "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad."

Read in the first way, they suggest the animating thought, that our haunting consciousness of imperfection springs from the bright and awful perfection of the Law we are bent on obeying, of the ideal we have set before us. It is not because we are worse than those who are without law, or who are a law unto themselves, that we are restless and dissatisfied with ourselves; but because we measure both ourselves and our fellows by the lofty standard of God's commandment. It is because that commandment is so broad, that we cannot embrace it; it is because it is so high, that we cannot attain to it; it is because it is so perfect, that we cannot perfectly obey it. But we may read the verse in another way, and still derive comfort and encouragement from it. We may say: "I have seen an end of all perfection in myself, and in the world; but thy commandment is exceeding broad: that is perfect, though I am imperfect, and in its perfection I find the promise of my own." For shall God give a law for human life, and that law remain for ever unfulfilled Impossible! "The gifts of God are without repentance" -- irreversible, never to be lessened or withdrawn. His purpose is not to be made of none effect by our weaknesses and sins. In the Law he has shown us what he would have us to be. And shall we never become what lie would have us to be? Can the Law remain for ever without any life that corresponds to it and fulfils it? Nay, God will never take back the fair and perfect ideal of human life depicted in his Law, never retract his purpose to raise the life of man till it touches and fulfils its ideal. And so the very Law which is our despair is our comfort also; for if that be perfect we must become perfect; its perfection is the pledge of ours. From "The Expositor," 1876.

Verse 96. I have seen an end of all perfection. David's natural eye had seen the end of many human perfections, and the eye of his understanding saw the end of them all. He had seen some actually end, and he saw that all must end. Adam did not continue in that perfection which had no imperfection in it; how then shall any of his children continue in what is at best an imperfect perfection? -- Abraham Wright.

Verse 96. I have seen an end, etc. The laws of Lycurgus among the Grecians, and of Numa among the Romans, had somewhat of good in them, but not all; prohibited somewhat that was evil, but not all that was evil. But the Christian religion is of a larger extent, both in its precepts and prohibitions: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." A man with the eye of his body may behold an end of many worldly perfections, of many fair estates, great beauties, large parts, hopeful families; but a man with the eye of his soul (or by faith) may see an end of all earthly perfections. He may see the world in a flame, and all its pomp and pride, and glory, and gallantry, and crowns and sceptres, and riches, and treasures, turned into ashes. He may see the heavens passing away like a scroll, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth, with the things thereon, consumed; and all its perfections, which men dented so much on, vanished into smoke and nothing. It is easy to see to the end of all terrene perfections, but it is difficult, yea, impossible, to see to the end of divine precepts: "But thy commandments are exceeding broad," of a vast latitude, beyond our apprehension. They are so deep that none can fathom them, Ps 36:6, so high that they are established in heaven, Ps 114:48; so long that they endure for ever, 2 Peter 1; and so broad, that none can measure them. They are not only "broad," but "exceeding broad": higher than heaven, longer than the earth, broader than the sea. "The commands of God reach the inward parts, the most secret motions and retired recesses of the soul. They reach all the privy thoughts, they pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb 4:12. They reach to all our actions; to those that seem smallest and of less concernment, as well as to those that are greater and of more concernment." -- George Swinnock.

Verse 96. Thy commandment is exceeding broad. As there is more mercy in the gospel than we are able to comprehend, so there is more holiness in the law than we are able to comprehend. No man ever saw into the depths of that righteousness. There is an infinite holiness in the law. "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." He speaks not in the concrete, I have seen an end of perfect things, but in the abstract," an end of perfection," I have come to the outside or to the very bottom of all (a man may soon travel through all the perfections that are in the world, and either see their end, or see that they end); "but thy commandment is exceeding broad," that is, it is exceedingly broader than any of these perfections; I cannot see the end of it, and I know it shall never have an end. There is a vastness of purity and spiritualness in the law. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 96. Thy commandment is exceeding broad. It is so by the comprehensive applicableness of its grand, simple rules. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." It is so by the ample order of its special injunctions. Where is there a spot without a signal of the divine will? It is so by laying an authoritative hand on the first principles and origin from which any thing can proceed, in human spirit and action; then it reaches to all things that do or can proceed thence. It asserts a jurisdiction over all thought and inward affection. All language is uttered under this same jurisdiction. All that the world and each man is in action about. And even over what is not done it maintains its authority, and pronounces its dictates and judgments. It is a positive thing with respect to what is negative, omission, nonexistence Like the divine government in the material world, over the wastes, deserts, and barren sands. And from these spaces of nothing (as it were) it can raise up substantial forms of evil, of sin, in evidence against men. As at the resurrection men will rise from empty wastes, where it would not have been suspected that any were concealed. Let a man look back on all his omissions, and think what the divine law can raise from them against him. Thus the law in its exceeding breadth, is vacant nowhere; it is not stretched to this wide extent by chasms and void spaces. If a man could find one such, he might there take his position for sin with impunity, if not with innocence. John Foster, 1768-1848.

Verse 96. Thy commandment is exceeding broad. In the popular religious literature of the present times, the terms "broad" and "free" are of frequent occurrence. The fascination that surrounds them is enhanced by the use, at the same time, of their opposites," narrow" and "bigoted." By an adroit manipulation of these terms and their equivalents, the heterodoxy of the day is labouring to stamp out the doctrine and spirit of the evangelical faith, and to allure the Christian multitude within the influence of the spreading rationalistic drift. Going to the market where the heterodox wares are exhibited with labels so attractive, the unsuspecting purchaser soon discovers that "their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter." Is the time not come when the adherents of the true faith should make an effort to wrest from their opponents the monopoly in the use of these terms, which they seem desirous of establishing for themselves? Those who, in the spirit of their Master, abide most closely by, and contend most tenaciously for, the whole faith that has been delivered to the saints, must be the most liberal minded and catholic; and those who forsake the "old paths" must, in proportion to the extent of their departures, become contracted in their mental grasp, and narrow in their soul. Is not the Bible-- the whole Bible -- the only manual of Broad churchism in its truest and highest sense? Is not the revelation of God's Son in us, the great soul expanding power? "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Must we not infer, from the words of Christ "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," that the mind which apprehends the truth is a home of mental liberty? Does not strict conformity of the life to God's law produce real breadth of character? For "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Is not the gospel system the only true Broad churchism-- "the perfect law of liberty"? Is not the believer-- and the more so in proportion to the strength of his faith -- the only true Broad churchman," increasing with the increase of God," "filled with all the fulness of God"? -- James Kerr, in "The Modern Scottish Pulpit," 1880.

Verse 96. Exceeding broad. Notwithstanding many things do show the way of life to be narrow, yet unto the godly man it is a way of great breadth; though not for sin, yet for duly and delight. He makes haste and progress in it. Robert Trail, 1642-1716.

Verse 96. Take notice that the law, which is your mark, is exceeding broad. And yet not the more easy to be hit; because you must aim to hit it, in every duty of it, with a performance of equal breadth, or else you cannot hit it at all. Stephen Marshall.

Verse 98. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. Now he praiseth the word for the singular profit and fruit which he reaped by it; to wit, that he learned wisdom by it. And this he amplifies, by comparing himself with three sorts of men; his enemies, his teachers, and the ancients. And this he doth, not of vain glory (for bragging is far from him who is governed by the Spirit of grace); but to commend the word of the Lord, and to allure others to love it, by declaring to them what manifold good he found in it. Wiser than mine enemies. But how can this be, seeing that our Saviour saith that the men of this world are wiser in their own generation than the children of God? The answer is, our Saviour doth not call worldlings wise men simply; but wiser in their own generation; that is, wise in things pertaining to this life. Or as Jeremy calls them," wise to do evil"; and when they have so done, wise to conceal and cloak it. All which in very deed is but folly; and therefore David, who by the light of God's word saw that it was so, could not be moved to follow their course. Well; there is a great controversy between the godly and the wicked: either of them in their judgment accounts the other to be fools; but it is the light of God's word which must decide it. William Cowper.

Verse 98. Wiser than mine enemies. They are wiser than their enemies as to security against their attempts, and that enmity and opposition that they carry on against them; they are far more safe by walking under the convert of God's protection than their enemies can possibly be, who have all manner of worldly advantages. A godly wise man is careful to keep in with God: he is more prepared and furnished, can have a higher hope, more expectation of success, than others have; or, if not, he is well enough provided for, though all things fall out never so cross to his desires. As to success, who hath made wiser provision, think you, he that hath made God his friend, or he that is borne up with worldly props and dependencies? They that are guided by the Spirit of God, or they that are guided by Satan those that make it their business to walk with God step by step, or those that not only forsake him, but provoke him to his face? Those that break with men, and keep in with God, or those that break with God? Surely, a child of God hath more security by piety than his enemies can have by secular policy, whereby they think to overreach and ruin him. The safety of a child of God lieth in two things: 1. God is his friend. 2. As long as God hath work for him to do, he will maintain him, and bear him out in it. Thomas Manton.

Verse 98. They are ever with me. The meaning of the last clause is not merely "it is ever with me, but it is for ever to me," i.e, mine, my inalienable, indefeasible possession. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 98. They are ever with me. God gives knowledge to whom he pleaseth; but those that meditate most, thrive most. This may imply also that the word should be a ready help. Such as derive their wisdom from without cannot have their counsellors always with them to give advice. But, when a man hath gotten the word in his heart, he finds a ready help: he hath a seasonable word to direct him in all difficulties, in all straits, and in all temptations, to teach him what to do against the burden of the present exigence; to teach him what to do and what to hope for. Thomas Manton.

Verse 98. They are ever with me. A good man, wherever he goes, carries his Bible along with him, if not in his hands, yet in his head and in his heart. Matthew Henry.

Verses 98-100. Three sorts of men he mentions," enemies," "teachers," "ancients"; the enemies excel in policy, teachers in doctrine, and ancients in counsel; and yet by the word was David made wiser than all these. Malice sharpens the wit of enemies, and teacheth them the arts of opposition; teachers are furnished with learning because of their office; and ancients grow wise by experience; yet David, by the study of the word, excelled all these. Thomas Manton.

Verse 99. I have more understanding than all my teachers. Even where the preacher is godly, partaker of that grace himself, whereof he is an ambassador to others, it falls out oftentimes that greater measure of light and grace is communicated by his ministry to another than is given to himself; as Augustine first illuminated and converted by Ambrose did far excel, both in knowledge and spiritual grace, him that taught him. And herein God wonderfully shows his glory, that, whosoever be the instrument, he is the dispenser of light and glory, giving more by the instrument than it hath in itself. And this is so far from being to a godly teacher a matter of grief, that it is rather a matter of glory. William Cowper.

Verse 99. I have more understanding than all my teachers. It is no reflection upon my teachers, but rather an honour to them, for me to improve so as to excel them, and no longer to need them. By meditation we preach to ourselves, and so we come to understand more than our teachers, for we come to understand our hearts, which they cannot. Matthew Henry.

Verse 100. I understand...because l keep. Would we know the Lord? Let us keep his commandments. "By thy precepts," saith David, that is, by the observance of thy precepts," I get understanding." "If any man do my will" (saith our blessed Saviour, Joh 7:17)," he shall know my doctrine." boulei yeololov lenesyai? tav entolav fulasse, saith Nazienzen: Wouldst thou be a divine? do the commandments; for action is (as it were) the basis of contemplation. It is St. Gregory's observation concerning the two disciples who, whilst Christ talked with them, knew him not; but in performing an act of hospitality towards him, to wit, breaking bread with him, they knew him, that they were enlightened, not by hearing him, but by doing divine precepts, Quisquis ergo vult audita intelligere; festinet ea quae jam audire potuit, opere implere, Whosoever therefore will understand, let him first make haste to do what he heareth. Nathanael Hardy, 1618-1670.

Verse 100. I understand more than the ancients. The ordinary answer of ignorant people is," What! must we be wiser than our forefathers?" And yet those same people would be richer than their forefathers were. The maximum quod sic of a Christian is this, he must grow in grace, till his head reach up to heaven, till grace is perfected in glory. Christopher Love, 1618-1651.

Verse 100. More than the ancients. Understanding gotten by the precepts of the word is better than understanding gotten by long experience. It is better in four regards. First, It is more exact. Our experience reacheth but to a few things; but the word of God reacheth to all cases that concern true happiness. The word is the result of God's wisdom, who is the Ancient of days; therefore exceeds the wisdom of the ancients, or experience of any men, or all men. Secondly, as it is more exact, so a more sure way of learning wisdom, whereas experience is more uncertain. Many have much experience, yet have not a heart to see and to gather wisdom from what they feel: De 29:2-4. Thirdly, it is a safer and cheaper way of learning, to learn by rule, than to come home by weeping cross, and to learn wisdom by our own smart. Experience is too expensive a way; and, if we had nothing else to guide us, into how many thousand miseries should we run! Fourthly, it is shorter. The way by age and experience is a long way; and so, for a long time, all a man's younger age must needs be miserable and foolish. Now, here you may come betimes to be wise by studying the word of God. It concerns a man, not only to be wise at length, but to be wise betimes. The foolish virgins were wise too late: but never were any wise too soon. Condensed from Thomas Manton.

Verse 100. If this way the Word of God were thus perfect in David's time, what is it by the addition of so many parcels of Scripture since? If it then gave wisdom to the simple (Ps 14:7); if it made David, being brought up but as a shepherd, wiser than his enemies, than his ancients, than his teachers; as an angel of God in discerning right from wrong (1Sa 14:17); able to guide the people by the skilfulness of his hands (Ps 78:72); what kind of wisdom is there, which we may not now gather from thence? What depth of natural philosophy have we in Genesis and Job! What flowers of rhetoric in the prophets! What force of logic in Saint Paul's epistles! what art of poetry in the psalms! What excellent moral precepts, not only for private life, but for the regulation of families and commonwealth in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes! To which may be added in a second rank as very useful, though apocryphal, the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. What reasonable and just laws have we in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which moved the great Ptolemy to hire the Septuagints to translate them into Greek: what unmatchable antiquity, variety, and wonderful events, and certainty of story, in the books of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, the Kings, and Chronicles, together with Ruth and Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah, and, since Christ, in the sacred Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. And, lastly, what profound mysteries have we in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, and the Revelation of Saint John. But in this it infinitely exceeds the wisdom of all human writings, that it is alone "able to make a man wise unto salvation" (2Ti 3:15). Upon these considerations, Charles the Fifth of France, surnamed The Wise, not only caused the Bible to be translated into French, but was himself very studious in the Holy Scriptures. And Alphonsus, King of Arragon, is said to have read over the whole Bible fourteen several times, with Lyra's notes upon it; though he were otherwise excellently well learned, yet was the law of God his delight," more desired of him than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." -- George Hakewell, 1579-1649.

Verse 101. I have refrained my feet, etc.

1. We have David's practice: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way." 2. His end or motive: "That I might keep thy word; "that he might be exact and punctual with God in a course of obedience.

First, In his practice. You may note the seriousness of it: I have refrained my feet. By the feet are meant the affections: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God," Ec 5:1. Our affections which are the rigorous bent of the soul, do engage us to practice; therefore fitly resembled by the feet, by which we walk to any place that we do desire: so that," I have refrained my feet," the meaning is, I keep a close and strict band over my affections, that they might not lead me to sin. Then you may note the extent of it; he doth not only say, I refrained from evil, but universally, "from every evil way." But how could David say this in truth of heart, if conscious of his offence in the matter of Uriah? Answer: This was the usual frame and temper of his soul, and the course of his life; and such kind of assertions concerning the saints are to be interpreted, voce et canatu, licet non semper eventu. This was his errand and drift, his purpose and endeavour, his usual course, though he had his failings.

Secondly, What was his end and motive in this? That I might keep thy word; that I might be exact and punctual with God in a course of obedience, and adhere to his word universally, impartially. Thomas Manton.

Verse 101. I have refrained my feet, etc. Where there is real holiness, there is a holy hatred, detestation, and indignation against all ungodliness and wickedness, and that upon holy accounts:" I have refrained my feet from every evil way." But why? "That I may keep thy word." "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way; "Ps 119:104. The good that he got by divine precepts stirred up his hatred against every false way: Ps 119:128," Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." His high esteem of every precept raised up in him a holy indignation against every evil way. A holy man knows that all sin strikes at the holiness of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the law of God; and therefore his heart rises against all; he looks upon every sin as the Scribes and Pharisees that accused Christ; and as that Judas that betrayed Christ; and as that Pilate that condemned Christ; and as those soldiers that scourged Christ; and as those spears that pierced Christ; and therefore his heart cries out for justice upon all. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 101. Refrained...that I might keep. By doing what is right we come both to know right and to be better able to do it. "Plain Commentary."

Verse 101. I have refrained my feet, etc. The word "refrained" warns us that we are naturally borne by our feet into the path of every kind of sin, and are hurried along it by the rush of human passions, so that even the wise and understanding need to check, recall, and retrace their steps, in order that they may keep God's word, and not become castaways. And further note that the Hebrew verb here translated "refrained" is even stronger in meaning, and denotes "I fettered, or imprisoned, my feet, "whereby we may learn that no light resistance is enough to prevent them from leading us astray. Agellius and Genebrardus, in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 102. By "misphallim"," judgments," is meant God's law; for thereby he will judge the world. And the word "departed not" intimates both his exactness and constancy: his exactness, that he did not go a hair's breadth from his direction; "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (De 5:32); and his constancy is implied in it, for then we are said to depart from God and his law, when we fall off from him in judgment and practice. Jer 32:40. Thomas Manton.

Verse 102. Thou hast taught me. God teacheth two ways: -- 1. By common illumination. 2. By special operation.

1. By common illumination, barely enlightening the mind to know or understand what he propounds by his messengers: so God showed it to the heathen: Ro 1:20. But then,

2. By way of special operation, effectually inclining the will to embrace and prosecute duties so known: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts": Jer 31:33. This way of teaching is always effectual and persuasive. Now, in this sense they are taught of God, so that they do not only get an ear to hear, but a heart to understand, learn, and practise.

This teaching is the ground of constancy, because,

1. They that are thus taught of God see things more clearly than others do; God is the most excellent teacher.

2. They know things more surely, and with certainty of demonstration, whereas others have but dubious conjectures, and loose and wavering opinions about the things of God.

3. This teaching is so efficacious and powerful, as that the effect followeth: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I Will walk in thy truth" (Ps 86:11).

4.God renews this teaching, and is always at hand to guide us, and give counsel to us, which is the cause of our standing. Thomas Manton.

Verse 102. For thou hast taught me. Lest it should seem that David ascribed the praise of godliness to himself, or that it came from any goodness in him that he did refrain his feet from every evil way, he gives here all the glory to God, protesting, that because God did teach him, therefore he declined not. Wherefrom we learn, that if at any time we stand, or if when we have fallen we rise and repent, it is ever to be imputed to God that teacheth us; for there is no evil so abominable, but it would soon become plausible to us, if God should leave us to ourselves. David was taught by his ordinary teachers, and he did reverence them; but that he profited by them he ascribes unto God. Paul may plant, and Apollos water; God must give the increase. William Cowper.

Verse 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Even the words of a fellow creature of earth, how inexpressibly sweet sometimes, how beyond all calculation precious! All gold and silver would be despised in comparison with them. They come freighted with love, and the heart is enriched with them as though the breath of God had come into it. But does not this rainbow of earthly joy die gradually out? Do not the enrapturing words sooner or later become exsiccated in the memory, and may they not meet with contemptuous treatment as reminders of an earthly illusion? Indeed they do; indeed they may. Nevertheless the heart may find its happiness, its true and undying happiness, in words. At this moment there is nothing in the whole world so much to be desired as certain words. Words of love. Words expressive of infinite love. Treasures, pleasures, honours of earth, what are they? My unsatisfied soul cries out, Give me words. Words whereby I may know the love that God has towards me. Words declaring the unchangeable attachment of the Saviour. Words purifying my heart. Emboldening me in prayer. Exhibiting to me the blissful future. Words that shall give life to my dead powers, and change me from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. George Bowen, in "Daily Meditations," 1873.

Verse 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! etc. There is given to the regenerated a new, supernatural sense, a certain divine, spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from anything that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the beauty of holiness is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; or, this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and a spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, Joh 4:32, 34. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures where the nature and evidence of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the 119th Psalm. The Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the great object of the love, the complacence, and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb; and that upon account of their holiness. The same psalmist declares that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law: Ps 19:7-10. Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758.

Verse 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Why does he not rather say, How pleasant are thy words to my ears? than that they are sweet to his taste and his mouth? I answer: It is most meet that when God speaks by the mouth of his ministers we should be hearers, and the words of God should be the most joyous of all to our ears. But it is also the practice of the godly to converse about the words of God, and their words are so sweet to their own taste that they are more pleased and delighted than by any honey from the comb. And this is most necessary when either there is a scarcity of teachers, as with David in the wilderness or dwelling among the Philistines; or when those who hold the office of teaching, adulterate and vitiate the pure word of God. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 103. That which is here called "word," I take rather for "judgments," partly because in the proper tongue the word is left out, and partly because he had used this word "judgments" in the verse immediately going before. But some will say, How can the judgments of God be "sweet," which are so troublesome, fearful, and grievous? I answer, that the godly have no greater joy than when they feel either the mercies of God accomplished towards them that fear him, or his judgments showered upon the reprobates. Richard Greenham.

Verse 103. Unto my taste. "To my mouth." That is, I take as great pleasure in talking, conferring, and persuading, thy judgments, as my mouth, or the mouth of any that loveth honey, is delighted therewith. Richard Greenham.

Verse 103. Sweeter. As there are always among violets some that are very much sweeter than others, so among texts there are some that are more precious to us than others. Henry Ward Beecher, 1879.

Verse 103. An affectionate wife often says," My husband! your words are sweeter to me than honey; yes, they are sweeter than the sugar cane." "Alas! my husband is gone," says the widow: "how sweet were his words! Honey dropped from his mouth: his words were ambrosia." -- Joseph Roberts.

Verse 104. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. In this sentence the prophet seems to invert the order set down in Ps 119:101. He had said," I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word," where the avoiding of evil is made the means of profiting by the word; here his profiting by the word is made the cause of avoiding evil. In the one verse you have an account of his beginning with God; in the other, of his progress. Thomas Manton.

Verse 104. I hate every false way. David saith, "I hate every false way"; I hate not only the way when I have been misled into it, but I hate to go in it; and he professes at the Ps 119:163," I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love." To abstain from and forbear lying is a sign of a gracious heart, much more to hate and abhor it. A godly man not only doth that which is good, but he delights to do it, his soul cleaves to it; he is in his clement when he is doing it, nothing comes more suitably to him than the business of his duty, he loveth to do it, yea, he loveth it when he cannot do it: Ro 7:22. Paul complained much that his corruptions clogged, hindered and shackled him; he was in lime twigs as to the doing of good, yet (saith he) "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; that is, the inward man delightfully moves after the law of God, when I am basely moved by my corrupt heart, and stirred by temptation against it. Now, as a godly man not only chooseth to do the holy will of God, but delights and rejoiceth to do it, and hath sweet content in doing it; so likewise a godly man not only refuseth to do the will of the flesh, or to follow the course of the world, but hates to do it, and is never so discontented with himself as when through carelessness and neglect of his watch he hath been overtaken and hath fallen. A carnal man may forbear the doing of evil, and do what is materially good, but he never abhors what is evil, nor delights in what is good. Though he abstain from acting those things which God forbids, yet he doth not say, with Job," God forbid, I should act them."...To delight in good is better than the doing of it, and to abhor evil is better than abstaining from it. And if we compare the nature of sin with the new nature of a godly man, we may see clear grounds why his abstinence from sin is joined with an abhorrence of it. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 104. Through thy; precepts I get understanding. Spiritual understanding is connected with the taste of spiritual sweetness. (Compare Pr 2:10-11.) "The sweetness of the lips" -- as the wise man observes-- "increaseth learning. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." Pr 16:21, 23. Thus having learned "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," we are encouraged to "go on to perfection" -- "growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ." For the connexion between "grace and knowledge" is clearly manifested. Charles Bridges.

Verse 104. I hate every false way. Universality in this is a sure sign of sincerity. Herod spits out some sins, when he rolls others as sweet morsels in his mouth. A hypocrite ever leaves the devil some nest egg to sit upon, though he take many away. Some men will not buy some commodities, because they cannot have them at their own price, but they lay out the same money on others; so hypocrites forbear some sins, yea, are displeased at them; because they cannot have them without disgrace or disease, or some other disadvantage; but they lay out the same love upon other sins which will suit better with their designs. Some affirm that what the sea loseth in one place it gains in another; so what ground the corruption of the unconverted loseth one way, it gains another. There is in him some one lust especially which is his favourite; some king sin, like Agag, which must be spared when others are destroyed. "In this the Lord be merciful to thy servant," saith Naaman. But now the regenerate laboureth to cleanse himself from all pollutions, both of flesh and spirit. 2Co 7:1. George Swinnock.

Verse 104. I hate. The Scriptures place religion very much in the affection of love; love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and the New, are innumerable. The contrary affection of hatred also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in Scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished. Pr 8:13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Accordingly, the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Ps 97:10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity: Ps 101:2-3," I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside." So Ps 114:128, and the present place. Again, Ps 139:21: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" -- Jonathan Edwards.

Verse 104. I hate. Hatred is a stabbing, murdering affection, it purposes sin with a hot heart to death, as an avenger of blood, that is to say, of the blood of the soul which sin would spill, and of the blood of Christ which sin hath shed. Hate sin perfectly and perpetually and then you will not spare it but kill it presently. Till sin be hated it cannot be mortified; you will not cry against it, as the Jews did against Christ, Crucify it! Crucify it! but shew indulgence to it as David did to Absalom and say, Deal gently with the young man, -- with this or that lust, for my sake. Mercy to sin is cruelty to the soul. Edward Reyner, 1600-1670.

Verse 104. False way. It is not said," evil way," but "false way": or, as it is in the original, every path of lying and falsehood. Falsehood is either in point of opinion or practice. If you take it in the first sense, for falsehood in opinion, or error in judgment, or false doctrine, or false worship, this sentence holds good. Those that get understanding by the word are established against error, and not only established against error, or against the embracing or possession of it, but they hate it. Thomas Manton.

Verse 104. False way. All sin is a lie. By it we attempt to cheat God. By it we actually cheat our souls: Pr 14:12. There is no delusion like the folly of believing that a course of sin will conduce to our happiness. -- William S. Plumer.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light, etc. David was a man of very good wit and natural understanding; but he gives to God the glory of his wisdom, and owns that his best light was but darkness when he was not lightened and ruled by the word of God. Oh that we would consider this, that in all our ways wherein the word of God shines not unto us to direct us, we do but walk in darkness, and our ways without it can lead us to none other end but utter darkness. If we hearken not to the word of God, if we walk not by the rule thereof, how is it possible we can come to the face of God? -- William Cowper.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The use of a lamp is by night, while the light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be day or night with us, we clearly understand our duty by the Word of God. The night signifieth adversity, and the day prosperity. Hence we may learn how to behave ourselves in all conditions. The word "path" notes our general choice and course of life; the word "feet" our particular actions. Now whether the matter, wherein we would be informed, concerneth our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or our dexterous prosecution of the way, still the word of God will direct a humble and well disposed mind. Thomas Manton.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, etc. Basil the Great, interpreting the "word" as God's will revealed in Holy Scripture, observes that the Old Testament, and in especial the Law, was only a lantern (lamp or candle) because an artificial light, imperfectly illumining the darkness, whereas the Gospel, given by the Lord Jesus himself, is a light of the Sun of Righteousness, giving brightness to all things. Ambrose, going yet deeper, tells us that Christ is himself both lamp and light. He, the Word of God, is a great light to some, to others he is a lamp. To me he is a lamp; to angels a light. He was a light to Peter, when the angel stood by him in the prison, and the light shined about him. He was a light to Paul when the light from heaven shined round about him, and he heard Christ saying to him," Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And Christ is truly a lamp to me when I speak of him with my mouth. He shineth in clay, he shineth in a potter's vessel: he is that treasure which we bear in earthen vessels. Neale and Littledale.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp...and a light. Except the "lamp" be lighted-- except the teaching of the Spirit accompany the word-- all is "darkness, gross darkness" still. Did we more habitually malt to receive, and watch to improve, the light of the word, we should not so often complain of the perplexity of our path. Charles Bridges.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, etc. What we all want, is not to see wonders that daze us, and to be rapt in ecstatic visions and splendours, but a little light on the dark and troubled path we have to tread, a lamp that will burn steadfastly and helpfully over the work we have to do. The stars are infinitely more sublime, meteors infinitely more superb and dazzling; but the lamp shining in a dark place is infinitely closer to our practical needs. From "The Expositor," 1864.

Verse 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet. Going two miles into a neighbourhood where very few could read, to spend an evening in reading to a company who were assembled to listen, and about to return by a narrow path through the woods, where paths diverged, I was provided with a torch of light wood, or "pitch pine." I objected; it was too small, weighing not over half a pound. "It will light you home", answered my host. I said," The wind may blow it out." He said," It will light you home." "But if it should rain?" I again objected. "It will light you home," he insisted. Contrary to my fears, it gave abundant light to my path all the way home, furnishing an apt illustration, I often think, of the way in which doubting hearts would be led safely along the "narrow way." If they would take the Bible as their guide, it would be a lamp to their feet, leading to the heavenly home. One man had five objections to the Bible. If he would take it as a lamp to his feet, it would "light him home." Another told me he had two faults to find with the Bible. I answered him in the words of my good friend who furnished the torch," It will light you home." -- From "The American Messenger," 1881.

Verse 105. A lamp unto my feet, etc. All depends on our way of using the lamp. A man tells that when a boy he was proud to carry the lantern for his Sabbath school teacher. The way to their school led through unlit, muddy streets. The boy held the lantern far too high, and both sank in the deep mud. "Ah! you must hold the lamp lower," the teacher exclaimed, as they gained a firm footing on the farther side of the slough. The teacher then beautifully explained our text, and the man declares that he never forgot the lesson of that night. You may easily hold the lamp too high; but you can hardly hold it too low. James Wells, in "Bible Images," 1882.

Verse 105. Light.

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom

Lead thou me on.

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead thou me on.

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step enough for me.

--John Henry Newman (1801).

Verses 105-106. A light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, etc. I have looked upon thy word as a lamp to my own feet, as a thing nearly concerning myself, and then I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. It is a mighty means to stir up a man's spirit, and quicken him to obedience, to look upon the word as written to himself, as a lamp and a light for him. When you come to hear out of God's Word, and God directs the minister so that you apprehend the truth as spoken to you, it will stir and awaken you, and you will say," Oh me thought this day every word the minister spoke was directed to me; I must take heed thereto." And so every word in the Scripture that concerns thee God writes to thee; and if thou wilt take it so, it will be a mighty means to stir thee up to obedience. Jeremiah Burroughs, 1599-1646.

Verse 106. I have sworn, etc. Patrick's paraphrase is, "I have solemnly resolved and bound myself by the most sacred ties, which I will never break, but do now confirm."

Verse 106. I have sworn. I would now urge you to make a solemn surrender of yourself unto the service of God. Do not only form such a purpose in your heart, but expressly declare it in the Divine presence. Such solemnity in the manner of doing it is certainly very reasonable in the nature of things; and sure it is highly expedient, for binding to the Lord such a treacherous heart, as we know our own to be. It will be pleasant to reflect upon it as done at such and such a time, with such and such circumstances of place and method, which may serve to strike the memory and the conscience. The sense of the vows of God which are upon you will strengthen you in an hour of temptation; and the recollection may encourage your humble boldness and freedom in applying to him under the character and relation of your covenant God and Father, as future exigencies may require. Do it therefore, but do it deliberately. Consider what it is that you are to do: and consider how reasonable it is that it should be done, and done cordially and cheerfully," not by constraint, but willingly"; for in this sense, and every other," God loveth a cheerful giver."

Let me remind you that this surrender must be perpetual. You must give yourself up to God in such a manner, as never more to pretend to be your own; for the rights of God are like his nature, eternal and immutable; and with regard to his rational creatures, are the same yesterday, today, and for ever. I would further advise and urge, that this dedication may bc made with all possible solemnity. Do it in express words. And perhaps it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious divines have recommended, to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it," that on such a day of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration and serious reflection, you came to this happy resolution, that whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord." -- Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) in "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

Verse 106. Frequently renew settled and holy resolutions. A soldier un- resolved to fight may easily be defeated. True and sharpened courage treads down those difficulties which would triumph over a cold and wavering spirit. Resolution in a weak man will perform more than strength in a coward. The weakness of our graces, the strength of our temptations, and the diligence of our spiritual enemies, require strong resolutions. We must be "steadfast and unmoveable," and this will make us "abound in the work of the Lord": 1Co 15:58. Abundant exercise in God's work will strengthen the habit of grace, increase our skill in the contest, and make the victory more easy and pleasant to us. Let us frame believing, humble resolutions in the strength of God's grace, with a fear of ourselves, but a confidence in God. David bound himself to God with a hearty vow, depending upon his strength: "I have sworn, and i will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." This was not in his own strength, for, Ps 119:107, he desires God to quicken him, and to "accept the freewill offerings of his mouth," Ps 119:108, namely, the oath which proceeded from a free and resolved will. God will not slight, but strengthen the affectionate resolutions of his creature. We cannot keep ourselves from falling unless we first keep our resolutions from flagging. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 106. I have sworn, and I will perform it. Theodoricus, Archbishop of Cologne, when the: Emperor Sigismund demanded of him the most direct and most compendious way how to attain true happiness, made answer in brief, thus: "Perform when thou art well what thou promisedst when thou wast sick." David did so; he made vows in war, and paid them in peace; and thus should all good men do; not like the cunning devil, of whom the epigrammatist writeth:

"The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;

The devil was well, the devil a monk was he."

Nor like unto many now a days, that, if God's hand do but he somewhat heavy upon them, oh, what promises, what engagements are there for amendment of life! How like unto marble against rain do they seem to sweat and melt but still retain their hardness! Let but the rod be taken of their backs, or health restored, then, as their bodies live, their vows die; all is forgotten: nay, many times it so falleth out, that they are far worse than ever they were before. From John Spencer's "Things New and Old," 1658.

Verse 106. Thy righteous judgments. So David styles the word of God, because it judgeth most righteously between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. And, secondly, because according to the judgment given therein, God will act towards men. Let us take heed unto it; for the word contains God's judgment of men and hath a catalogue of such as shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and another of such as shall dwell in God's tabernacle; let us read and see in which of the two catalogues our two selves are; for according to that word will the judgment go. William Cowper.

Verse 107. I am afflicted very much, etc. Whence learn,

1. It is no strange thing for the most holy men to be acquainted with the saddest sort of affliction, bodily and spiritual: "I am afflicted very much."

2. From whence soever affliction doth come, faith goeth to God only for comfort, as here: "Quicken me, O Lord."

3. When God is pleased to make the word of promise lively, or to perform what the promise alloweth us to expect, such a consolation is a sufficient antidote to the heaviest affliction: "Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word." -- David Dickson.

Verse 107. I am a afflicted very much. We can recommend so persuasively the cheerful drinking of the cup of sorrow when in the hand of others, but what wry faces we make when it is put into our own. Alfred John Morris, 1814-1869.

Verse 107. I am afflicted... quicken me. The Christian lives in the midst of crosses, as the fish lives in the sea. Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney, 1786-1859.

Verse 107. Quicken me, O Lord. How doth God quicken us? By reviving our suffering graces, such as our hope, patience, and faith. Thus he puts life into us again, that we may go on cheerfully in our service, by infusion of new comforts. He revives the heart of his contrite ones, so the prophet saith (Isa 57:15). This is very necessary, for the Psalmist saith elsewhere," Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name" (Ps 80:18). Discomfort and discouragement weaken our hands in calling upon God. Until the Lord cheers us again we have no life in prayer. By two things especially doth God quicken us in affliction, by reviving our sense of his love, and by reviving our hope of glory. Thomas Manton.

Verse 107. According unto thy word. David goes often over with that phrase, which imports that David lay under the sense of some promise which God had made for the quickening of his heart when it was out of frame, and accordingly he recounts the gracious influences of God's Spirit, and professes that he will never forget his precepts, because by them he had quickened him: Ps 119:93. Thus, lay your dead hearts at Christ's feet, and plead in this manner: Lord, my heart is exceedingly dull and distracted; I feel not those enlarging, melting influences which thy saints have felt; but are they not chief material mercies of the covenant? dost thou not promise a spirit of illumination, conviction, and humiliation? is not holiness of heart and life a main branch of it? dost thou not promise therein to write thy law in my heart? to give me oneness of heart, to put thy fear within me, to subdue my corruptions, to help my infirmities in prayer? Now, Lord, these are the mercies my soul wants and waits for, fill my soul with these animating influences, revive thy work of grace in my soul, draw out my heart towards thee, increase my affection for thee, repair thine image, call forth grace into lively exercise. Doth not that gracious word intend such a mercy when thou sayest thou wilt not only give a new heart, but "put a new spirit within me" (Eze 36:26), to make my soul lively, active, and spiritual in duties and exercises? Dear Lord, am not I in covenant with thee? and are not these covenant mercies? why, then, my God, is my heart thus hardened from thy fear? why dost thou leave me in all this deadness and distraction? Remember thy word unto thy servant in which thou hast caused me to hope, and which thou hast helped me to plead; O quicken my dull heart according to thy word. Oliver Heywood.

Verse 107. According unto thy word. David, when he begs for quickening, he is encouraged so to do by a promise. The question is, where this promise should be? Some think it was that general promise of the law, if thou do these things, thou shalt live in them (Le 18:5), and that from thence David drew this particular conclusion, that God would give life to his people. But rather, it was some other promise, some word of God he had, to bear him out in this request. The Lord has made many promises to us of sanctifying our affliction. The fruit of all shall be the taking away of sin (Isa 27:9); of bettering and improving us by it (Heb 4:10), of moderating our affliction, that he will stay his rough wind in the day of the east wind (Isa 27:8); that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear (1Co 10:13). He hath promised he will moderate our affliction, so that we shall not be tempted above our strength. He hath promised he will deliver us from it, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the lot of the righteous (Ps 125:3); that he will be with us in it, and never fail us (Heb 13:5). Now, I argue thus: if the people of God could stay their hearts upon God's word, when they had but such obscure hints to work upon that we do not know where the promise lies, ah! how should our hearts be stayed upon God, when we have so many promises! When the Scriptures are enlarged for the comfort and enlarging of our faith, surely we should say now as Paul, when he got a word," I believed God" (Ac 27:25); I may expect God will do thus for me, when his word speaks it everywhere. Thomas Manton.

Verse 108. The freewill offerings of the mouth, may be the offerings which the mouth had promised and vowed. And who can lay claim to these as the Lord? His are all things. John Stephen.

Verse 108. The freewill offerings of my mouth. This place makes known that species of sacrifices, which neither tribulations nor poverty of means can hinder, and which does not require an external temple, but in desert places and among heathen may be offered by a godly man. And these sacrifices of the mouth God himself makes more of than if all the flocks of the whole earth had been offered to him, and all the treasures of gold, and of silver, and of precious stones. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 108. Freewill offerings. This expression is often used in the law (Le 22:18 Nu 29:39 1Ch 31:14 Am 1:4-5). What are these freewill offerings? They are distinguished from God's stated worship, and distinguished from that service which fell under a vow. Besides the stated peace offerings, there were certain sacrifices performed upon certain occasions, to testify God's general goodness, and upon receipt of some special mercy; and you will find these sacrifices to be expressly distinguished from such services as men bound themselves to by vow (Le 7:16). . . . These serve to teach us two things.

First. They are to teach us how ready we should be to take all occasions of thankfulness and spiritual worship; for, besides their vowed services and instituted sacrifices, they had their freewill offerings, offered to God in thankfulness for some special blessing received, or for deliverance from danger.

Secondly. It shows with what voluntariness and cheerfulness we should go about God's worship in the Gospel, and what a free disposition of heart there should be, and edge upon our affections, in all things that we offer to God; in this latter sense our offerings to God-- prayer and praise should be freewill offerings, come from us not like water out of a still forced by the fire, but like water out of a fountain with native freeness, readily and freely. -- Thomas Manton.

Verse 108. Offerings. All God's people are made priests unto God; for every offering supposes a priest: so it is said, that Christ Jesus hath made us kings and priests (Re 1:6). All Christians have a communion with Christ in all his offices, whatever Christ was, that certainly they are in some measure and degree. Thomas Manton.

Verse 108. Accept...the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord. It is a great grace that the Lord should accept anything from us, if we consider these three things: First, who the Lord is; next, what we are; thirdly, what it is we have to give unto him.

1. As for the Lord, he is all sufficient, and stands in need of nothing we can give him. Our goodness extends not to the Lord

2. As for us, we are poor creatures, living by his liberality; yea, begging from all the rest of his creatures; from the sun and moon; from the air, the water, and the earth; from fowls and fishes; yea, from the worms: some give us light, some meat, some clothes; and are such beggars as we meet to give to a king?

3. And, thirdly, if we well consider, What is it that we give? Have we anything to give but that which we have received from him? and whereof we may say with David," O Lord, all things are of thee, and of thine own have we given thee again" (1Ch 29:14). Let this humble us, and restrain us from that vain conceit of meriting at God's hand.

David at this time, in his great necessity, having no other sacrifice to offer unto the Lord, offers him the calves of his lips; but no doubt, when he might, he offered more. There is nothing so small, but if it come from a good heart, God will accept it: the widow's mite, a cup of cold water; yea, and the praise of our lips, although it has no other external oblation joined with it: but where men may do more, and will not, it is an argument that their heart is not sincerely affected toward him, and their praises are not welcome to him. William Cowper.

Verse 108. Accept...the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. Two things we are here taught to pray for in reference to our religious performances.

1. Acceptance of them: this we must aim at in all we do in religion, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of the Lord. That which David here earnestly prays for the acceptance of is "the freewill offerings," not of his purse, but of his "mouth," his prayers and praises; "the calves of our lips" (Ho 14:2); "the fruit of our lips" (Heb 13:15); these are the spiritual offerings which all Christians, as spiritual priests, must offer to God; and they must be "freewill offerings; "for we must offer them abundantly and cheerfully; and it is this willing mind that is accepted. The more there is of freeness and willingness in the service of God, the more pleasing it is to him.

2. Assistance in them: "Teach me thy judgments." We cannot offer any thing to God which we have reason to think he will accept of, but what he is pleased to instruct us in the doing of; and we must be as earnest for the grace of God in us as for the favour of God toward us. Matthew Henry.

Verse 108. Teach me thy judgments. As if the man of God should say, This is one thing whereunto I will give over myself, even to see how thou dost punish the wicked, and conduct thy children. So that we must learn, that as it is necessary to understand the law and the gospel, so is it requisite to discern God's judgments. For as we cannot learn the one without observing God's mercy; so we cannot attain to the other without marking his vengeance. We must see always by the peculiar teaching of God's Spirit, how the Lord punishes in justice, and yet in mercy; in wrath, and yet in love; in rigour and hatred of our sin, humbling us with one hand; in pity and compassion to our salvation, comforting us with the other hand. We see then how the prophet prayeth, both to see them and to mark them: we need teach this often, because we dream so much of fatal necessity, and of the connections of natural causes, or else because we call not discern between the crosses of the godly and the ungodly. This is then a singular gift of God, to discern how by the self same means the Lord both humbleth the good and overthroweth the wicked. Richard Greenham.

Verse 109. My soul is continually in my hand. He had his soul in his hand, ready to give whenever God should take it. And this is to be observed, that there is no trouble so ready to take away the life of God's children, as they are ready to give it. As Elijah came out to the mouth of his cave to meet with the Lord; and Abraham in the door of his tent to speak to the angel; so the soul of the godly stands ready in the door of the tabernacle of this body to remove when the Lord shall command it; whereas the soul of the wicked lies back, hiding itself, as Adam among the bushes, and is taken out of the body perforce; as was the soul of that worldling; "This night thy soul shall be required of thee; "but they never sacrifice their souls willingly to the Lord. William Cowper.

Verse 109. My soul is continually it, my hand. If any one carry in the hand a fragile vessel, made of glass or any other similar material, filled with a precious liquor, especially if the hand be weak, or if from other causes dangers be threatening, he will scarcely be able to avoid the breaking of the vessel and the running out of the liquor. Such is the condition of my life, which I, set upon by various enemies, carry as it were in my hand; which, therefore, is exposed to such great danger, as that I always have death present before my sight, my life hanging on the slenderest thread. Andreas Rivetus, 1572-1651.

Verse 109. My soul is continually in my hand. The believer is always in the very jaws of death. He lives with wings outstretched to fly away. Paul testified," I die daily." In the extremity of persecution, the fervent desire was to know what God would have him to do. Henry Law.

Verse 109. My soul is continually in my hand. I make no more of life than a child doth of his bird which he carrieth in the palm of his hand held open. John Trapp.

Verse 109. My soul is continually in my hand, etc. Why doth David say," My soul is in mine hand"; had he called it out of the hand of God, and taken the care of it upon himself? Nothing less. His meaning is only this, -- I walk in the midst of dangers and among a thousand deaths continually; I am in deaths often, my life is exposed to perils every day, yet do I not forget thy law: I keep close to thee, and will keep close to thee whatsoever comes of it. Augustine upon that place doth ingeniously confess that he understood not what David meant, by having his soul in his hands; but Jerome, another of the ancients, teacheth us, that it is an Hebraism, signifying a state of most extreme peril. The Greeks also have drawn it into a proverb speaking the same thing. But why doth the holding or putting the life in the hand signify the exposing of the life to peril? There is a twofold reason of it.

First. Because those things which are carried openly in the hand are apt to fall out of the hand, and being carried in sight, they are apt to be snatched or wrested out of the hand. And, therefore, though to be in the hand of God signifies safety, because his hand is armed with irresistible power to protect us; yet for a man to carry a thing in his own hand is to carry it in danger, because his hand is weak, and there are safer ways of carrying or conveying a thing than openly in the hand. If a man be to ride a long journey with any treasure about him, he doth not carry it in his hand, but puts it in some secret and close place where it may be hidden, and so be more secure. The Chaldee paraphrast, to express the elegancy of that place forecited out of the Psalm, gives it thus," My life is in as much danger as if it stood upon the very superficies or outside of my hand," as if he had no hold of it, but it stood barely upon his hand; for that which is set upon the palm of the hand, and not grasped, is in greater danger. Things safe kept are hidden or held fast.

Secondly. There is another reason of that speech, because when a man is about to deliver a thing or to give it up, he takes it in his hand. They that put themselves upon great perils and dangers for God and his people, deliver up their lives and their all to God. Hence that counsel of the Apostle (1Pe 4:19): "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." So here, the life of men in danger is said to be put in the hand, because such are, as it were, ready to deliver and commit their lives unto God, that he would take care of their lives to preserve them from the danger, or to take them to himself if they lose them in his service. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 110. The wicked. He calls them wicked men; which imports three things. First, they work wickedness. Secondly, they love it. Thirdly, they persevere in it. William Cowper.

Verse 110. A snare. One manner of catching wild animals, such as lions, bears, jackals, foxes, hart, roebuck, and fallow deer, was by a trap (paeh), which is the word used in this place; this was set under ground (Job 18:10), in the run of the animal (Pr 22:5), and caught it by the leg (Job 18:9). William Latham Bevan, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 1863.

Verse 110. The wicked have laid a snare for me. In eating, he sets before us gluttony; in love he impels to lust; in labour, sluggishness; in conversing, envy; in governing, covetousness; in correcting, anger; in honour, pride; in the heart, he sets evil thoughts; in the mouth evil words; in actions, evil works; when awake, he moves us to evil actions; when asleep, to filthy dreams. Girolamo Savonarola, 1452-1498.

Verse 110. Laid a snare for me: yet I erred not, etc. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite. Thomas Watson.

Verse 111. Thy testimonies have I taken, etc. The Scripture is called "testimonies" in respect to God himself, because it doth give a testimony to him, and makes God known to us: it gives a testimony of all those attributes that are himself, of his wisdom, of his power, of his justice, of his goodness, of his truth. The declaration of these, we have them all in the various books of the Scriptures: there is never a book, but there is a testification of these attributes. In the book of Genesis we have a testimony of his power in making the world, of his justice in drowning the world, and of his goodness in saving Noah. In the book of Exodus, we have a testimony of his providence in leading the people of Israel through the Red Sea, in bringing them out of Egypt; we have a testimony of his wisdom in giving them his law. What should I name more? In the New Testament, in the Gospel, all is testimony. As the Old gave testimony to God, so the New to Christ: "To him gave all the prophets witness"; not only the Old, but the New: "These are they that testify of me." Everywhere there is testimony of Christ, -- of his humility, in taking our nature; of his power, in working miracles; of his wisdom, in the parables that he spoke; of his patience and love, in the torments that he suffered for us. Both Law and Gospel-- the whole book of Scripture, and every part of it in these regards is fitly called "the testimonies of the Lord." And the holy Psalmist made choice of this name when he was to speak to the honour and glory of it; because it was that name from which he sucked a great deal of comfort, because it was the testimony of God's truth and goodness and wisdom and power to him; thereupon he makes so precious esteem of it as to account it his "heritage." -- Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649), in "The Valley of Vision."

Verse 111. Thy testimonies. By "testimonies" is meant the covenant between God and his people; wherein he bindeth himself to them, and them to him. Some think that the excellency of the word is here set out by many names; but we must look to the propriety of every word: as before by "judgments, "so by this word "testimonies," is meant the covenant: not the commandments, because they cannot be an inheritance, for they cannot comfort us, because we cannot fulfil them, but fail in them, and cannot therefore take comfort in them. It is the gospel that bringeth peace and comfort. "The law," when it is taken generally, containeth all the word, particularly the commandments; so "the word" generally containeth both law and gospel, but particularly the promises, as Rom. 10. So likewise by the "testimonies," when they are opposed to the law, is meant the promises of the covenant, as Isaiah 8, and this testimony is confirmed to us by the sacraments, as to them by sacrifices. Richard Greenham.

Verse 111. As an heritage. Why the divine testimonies should be called by the Psalmist an inheritance; why he brings them within the compass of this notion, may not So easily be understood; for the word of God points out the inheritance, but it is not the inheritance itself. Yes, there is good reason to be given for the expression, were there no more than this, that we consider the inestimable comfort, and heavenly treasure that is to be found in the word of God; it is a rich mine of all celestial treasure, it is a storehouse of all good things, of all saving knowledge. All privileges whatsoever they are that we can expect on earth or heaven, they are all contained in the word of God: here is ground enough why it is called an inheritance; he hath a good heritage that hath all these.

Yet there is a better reason than this; for if it be so that heaven is our inheritance, then the word of God is; because it is the word that points out heaven, that gives the assurance of heaven: we have in the word of God all the evidences of heaven. Whatsoever title any saint hath to heaven, he hath it in and out of the word of God. There are the evidences in the word of God; both the evidence of discovery, it is the holy terrier of the celestial Canaan, and the evidence of assurance, it is as a sacred bond or indenture between God and his creature. St. Gregory said wittily, when he called it God's epistle that he sent to man for the declaration of his will and pleasure, he might as well have called it God's deed of gift, whereby he makes over and conveys to us all those hopes that we look for in heaven. Whatsoever interest we have in God, in Christ, whatsoever hope of bliss and glory, whatsoever comfort of the Spirit, whatsoever proportion of grace, all are made over to us in the promises of the gospel, in the word of God.

Now put this together, look as in human affairs, evidences, though they be not properly the inheritance itself, yet they are called the inheritance, and are the inheritance, though not actually, yet virtually so; because all the title we have to an inheritance is in the deeds and evidences; therefore evidences are precious things. Though it be but a piece of paper, or parchment full of dust and worm eaten, yet it is as much worth sometimes as a county, as much worth as all a man's possessions besides. So likewise it is with the Scriptures; they are not actually and properly the inheritance itself, but they are via, the way to the kingdom. It is called the gospel of the kingdom, nay more, the kingdom itself: "The kingdom of God is come among you," or "to you". Why the kingdom? Why the inheritance? By the same reason, both, because here we have the conveyance, here we have the deed, here we have the assurance of whatsoever title or claim we make to heaven. Richard Holdsworth.

Verse 111. They are the rejoicing of my heart. He saith not that God's testimonies bring joy, but that they are joy; there is no other joy but the delight in the law of the Lord. For all other joy, the wise king said of laughter," thou art mad," and of joy," what is it that thou dost?" Ecclesiates 6. True joy is the earnest which we have of heaven, it is the treasure of the soul, and therefore should be laid up in a safe place; and nothing in this world is safe to place it in. And therefore with the spouse we say," We will be glad in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." Let others seek their joy in wine, in society, in conversation, in music; for me, thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. These indeed are the precious fruits of the earth, but they seal not up special favour; a man may have together with them, an empty, husky, and chaffy soul. And therefore these are not the joys of the saints; they must have God, or else they die for sorrow; his law is their life. Abraham Wright.

Verse 112. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway, etc. In the former verse he showed his faith, and his joy which came thereof; now he showeth that here in this joy he will keep the commandments; whereby he showeth that this was a true joy, because it wrought a care to do good. For if we believe the promises truly, then we also love the commandments, otherwise faith is vain; a care to live a godly life nourisheth faith in God's promises. Here is the cause then why many regard not the word and sacraments; or if they do a little, it is to no purpose, because they labour not to keep the commandments. For unless they have care to do this, the word of God to them cannot be profitable, nor the sacraments sacred. Richard Greenham.

Verse 112. I have inclined my heart to perform, etc. Observe. In Ps 119:36 he prayed to God, saying," Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." And here he speaks about himself, saying," I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway even unto the end." What need, then, was there to ask from God that which he in another place glories to have done himself? I answer: These things are not contrary the one to the other. God inclines, and the godly man inclines. Man inclines by striving; God inclines by effecting. Neither is that which the man attempts, nor that which he by striving achieves goodwards, from the man, but from God, who gives," both to will and to do of His good pleasure:" Php 2:13. Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 112. The sinful heart of itself will run any way; upon earthly things, upon evil things, or upon impertinent and unseasonable things; but it will not come to or keep upon that which it should mind; therefore it must be taken as by strong hand, and set upon spiritual things, set on musing and meditation of heavenly things. A carnal heart is like the loadstone, it cleaves to nothing but steel or iron, and both of them easily unite: but the heart must be of another property, and act in a higher way. And a good heart, though it thinks too much earthward, and runs often wrong, yet it will set itself in its thinking on right objects, and make itself and them to meet and unite. David tells us how he did; he inclined his heart to God's commandments, both to keep them and to meditate on them. He took and bent his heart, as a thing bending too much to other things; set his mind on musing on it. He found his heart and the law of God too far asunder, and so would continue, unless he brought them together and made them one. If he had not brought his heart to the word, he had never meditated: the object cannot apply itself to the mind, but the mind must bring itself to the object. No holy duties will come to us, we must come to them. Nathanael Ranew, in "Solitude Improved by Divine Meditation," 1670.

Verse 112. I have inclined mine heart to perform, etc. In this work he was determined to continue.

1. "I have inclined my heart." The counsel of the soul is like a balance; and the mind, which hath the commanding power over the affections, inclines the balance to that which it judges best.

2. It was to perform it that he thus inclined his heart.

3. And this not for a time, or some particular occasion, but always, and unto the end. Then the end of life would be the beginning of glory. -- Adam Clarke.

Verse 112. I have inclined my heart. The prophet, in order briefly to define what it is to serve God, asserts that he applied not only his hands, eyes, or feet, to the keeping of the law, but that he began with the affection of the heart. John Calvin.

Verse 112. Unto the end. Our life on earth is a race; in vain begins he to run swiftly, that fainteth, and gives over before he come to the end. And this was signified (saith Gregory) when in the law the tail of the beast was sacrificed with the rest: perseverance crowneth all. It is good we have begun to do well; let us also strive to persevere to the end. William Cowper.

Verses 112-113. When David had an inclination in his heart to God's statutes, the immediate effect of it was to "hate vain thoughts." We read," I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes"; and it follows," I hate vain thoughts." The vanity of his heart was a burden to him. A new creature is as careful against wickedness in the head or heart, as in the life. A godly man would be purer in the sight of God than in the view of man. He knows none but God can see the wanderings of his heart or the thoughts of his head, yet he is as careful that sins should not rise up as that they should not break out. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 113. I hate vain thoughts or, the evil devices; or, the double hearted imaginations; or, the intermeddling, counter coursing thoughts: that is to say, that kind of practice of some men, that sail with every wind, and seek still to have two strings to their bow. The Hebrew word doth properly signify boughs Or branches, which shoot up perplexedly or confusedly in a tree. Theodore Haak, 1618-1657.

Verse 113. I hate vain thoughts. In those vacant hours which are spared from business, pleasure, company, and sleep, and which are spent in solitude, at home or abroad; unprofitable, proud, covetous, sensual, envious, or malicious imaginations, occupy the minds of ungodly men, and often infect their very dreams. These are not only sinful in themselves, indicating the state of their hearts, and as such will be brought into the account at the day of judgment; but they excite the dormant corruptions, and lead to more open and gross violations of the holy law. The carnal mind welcomes and delights to dwell upon these congenial imaginations, and to solace itself by ideal indulgences, when opportunity of other gratification is not presented, or when a man dares not commit the actual transgression. But the spiritual mind recoils at them; such thoughts will intrude from time to time, but they are unwelcome and distressing, and are immediately thrust out; while other subjects, from the word of God, are stored up in readiness to occupy the mind more profitably and pleasantly during the hours of leisure and retirement. There is no better test of our true character, than the habitual effect of "vain thoughts" upon our minds-- whether we love and indulge them, or abhor, and watch and pray against them. Thomas Scott, 1747-1821.

Verse 113. I hate vain thoughts, A godly man may have roving thoughts in duty. Sad experience proves this; the thoughts will be dancing up and down in prayer. The saints are called stars; but many times in duty they are wandering stars. The heart is like quicksilver which will not fix. It is hard to tie two good thoughts together; we cannot lock our hearts so close, but that distracting thoughts, like wind, will get in. Hierom complains of himself; "Sometimes," saith he," when I am about God's service, I am walking in the galleries, or casting up accounts." But these wandering thoughts are not allowed: "I hate vain thoughts," they come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied, but turned out of doors. Thomas Watson.

Verse 113. I hate. Every dislike of evil is not sufficient; but perfect hatred is required of us against all sorts and degrees of sin. David Dickson.

Verse 113. Vain thoughts. The word is used for the opinions of men; and may be applied to all heterodox opinions, human doctrines, damnable heresies; such as are inconsistent with the perfections of God, derogate from his grace, and from the son and offices of Christ; and are contrary to the word, and which are therefore rejected and abhorred by good men. -- John Gill.

Verse 113. Vain thoughts. Hebrew," sedphim", halting between two opinions. See 1Ki 18:21. Hence it signifies sceptical doubts. Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 113. Vain thoughts. Our thoughts are set upon trifles and frivolous things, neither tending to our own profit nor the benefit of others: "The heart of the wicked is little worth; "all their debates, conceits, musings, are of no value: for all their thoughts are taken up about childish vanity and foolish conceits. "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Pr 24:9); not only the thought of wickedness, but foolishness. Thoughts are the firstborn of the soul, the immediate issues of the mind; yet we lavish them away upon every trifle. Follow men all the day long, and take account of their thoughts. Oh! what madness and folly are in all the musings they are conscious of: "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Ps 94:11). If we did judge as God judges, all the thoughts, reasonings, discourses of the mind, if they were set down in a table, we might write at the bottom, Here is the sum and total account of all, -- nothing but vanity. The sins that do most usually engross and take up our thoughts are,

First. Uncleanness. Speculative wickedness makes way for active: "Hath committed adultery...in his heart" (Mt 5:28). There is a polluting ourselves by our thoughts, and this sin usually works that way.

Secondly. Revenge. Liquors are soured when long kept; so, when we dwell upon discontents, they turn to revenge. Purposes of revenge are most sweet and pleasant to carnal nature: "Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually" (Pr 6:14), that is to say, he is full of revengeful and spiteful thoughts.

Thirdly. Envy. It is a sin that feeds upon the mind. Those songs of the women, that Saul had slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands, they ran in Saul's mind, therefore he hated David (1Sa 18:9). Envy is an evil disease that dwelleth in the heart, and betrays itself mostly in thoughts.

Fourthly. Pride. Either pride in the desires or pride in the mind, either vain glory or self conceit; this is entertaining our hearts with whispers of vanity: therefore it is said," He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Lu 1:51): proud men are full of imaginations.

Fifthly. Covetousness, which is nothing but vain musings and exercises of the heart: "A heart they have exercised with covetous practices" (2Pe 2:14). And it withdraws the heart in the very time of God's worship: "Their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Eze 33:31).

Sixthly. Distrust is another thing which usually takes up our thoughts -- distracting motions against God's providence. Thomas Manton.

Verse 113. Vain thoughts. Let us see what vanity is. Take it in all the acceptances of it, it is true of our thoughts that they are "vain."

1. It is taken for unprofitableness. So, Ec 1:2-3," All is vain," because there is "no profit in them under the sun." Such are our thoughts by nature; the wisest of them will not stand us in any stead in time of need, in time of temptation, distress of conscience, day of death or judgment: 1Co 2:6," All the wisdom of the wise comes to nought"; Pr 10:20. "The heart of the wicked is little worth," not a penny for them all.

2. Vanity is taken for lightness. "Lighter than vanity, "is a phrase used, Ps 62:9; and whom is it spoken of? Of men; and if anything in them be lighter than other, it is their thoughts, which swim in the uppermost parts, float at the top, are as the scum of the heart. When all the best, and wisest, and deepest, and solidest thoughts in Belshazzar, a prince, were weighed, they were found too light, Da 5:27.

3. Vanity is put for folly. So, Pr 12:11," vain men" is made all one with men "void of understanding." Such are our thoughts. Among other evils which are said to "come out of the heart" (Mr 7:22), afrosunh is reckoned as one, "foolishness"; that is, thoughts that are such as madmen have, and fools-- nothing to the purpose, of which there can be made no use.

4. Vanity is put for inconstancy and frailty; therefore vanity and a shadow are made synonymous, Ps 144:4. Such are our thoughts, flitting and perishing, as bubbles: Ps 144:4," All their thoughts perish."

5. Lastly, they are wicked and sinful. Vanity is Jer 4:14 yoked with wickedness, and vain men and sons of Belial are all one, 2Ch 8:7. And such are our thoughts by nature: Pr 14:9, "The thought of foolishness is sin." And therefore a man is to be humbled for a proud thought. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 113. But thy law do I love Ballast your heart with a love to God. Love will, by a pleasing violence bind down our thoughts: if it doth not establish our minds, they will be like a cork, which, with a light breath, and a short curl of water, shall be tossed up and down from its station. Scholars that love learning will be continually hammering upon some notion or other which may further their progress, and as greedily clasp it as the iron will its beloved loadstone. He that is "winged with a divine love" to Christ will have frequent glances and flights toward him, and will start out from his worldly business several times in a day to give him a visit. Love, in the very working, is a settling grace; it increaseth our delight in God, partly by the sight of his amiableness, which is cleared to us in the very act of loving; and partly by the recompences he gives to the affectionate carriage of his creature; both which will prevent the heart's giving entertainment to such loose companions as evil thoughts. Stephen Charnock.

Verses 113-114. When David was able to vouch his love to the command, he did not question his title to the promise. Here he asserts his sincere affection to the precepts: "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love." Mark he doth not say he is free from vain thoughts, but he "hates" them, he likes their company no better than one would a pack of thieves that break into his house. Neither saith he that he fully kept the law, but he "loved" the law even when he failed of exact obedience to it. Now from this testimony his conscience brought in for his love to the law, his faith acts clearly and strongly on the promise in the next words, "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word." -- William Gurnall.

Verse 114. Thou art my hiding place and my shield, etc. From vain thoughts and vain persons the Psalmist teaches us to fly, by prayer, to God, as our Refuge and Protector. This course a believer will as naturally take, in the hour of temptation and danger, as the offspring of the hen, on perceiving a bird of prey hovering over their heads, retire to their "hiding place," under the wings of the dam; or as the warrior opposeth his "shield" to the darts which are aimed at him. George Horne.

Verse 114. Thou art my hiding place. Christ hath all qualifications that may fit him for this work of being a hiding place to believers].

1. He hath strength. A hiding place must be locus munitissimus. Paper houses will never be good hiding places. Houses made of reeds or rotten timber will not be fit places for men to hide themselves in. Jesus Christ is a place of strength. He is the Rock of Ages: His name is "the Mighty God," Isa 9:6.

2. He hath height. A hiding place must be locus excelsissimus. Your low houses are soon scaled. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to heaven: Ge 28:12. He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls.

3. He hath secret places. A hiding place must be locus abditissimus. The more secret, the more safe. Now, Jesus Christ hath many secret chambers that no creatures can ever find: So 2:14," O my dove, that art in the secret places of the stairs." As Christ hath hidden comforts which no man knows but he that receiveth them; so he hath hidden places of secrecy which none can find out but he that dwells in them. "Come, my people, outer into thy chambers, and shut the doors upon thee" (Isa 26:0).

4. Christ is faithful. He that will hide others had need be very faithful. A false hearted protector is worse than an open pursuer. "Will the men of Keilah deliver me up?" saith David; "They will deliver thee up, "saith the Lord. But now Christ is faithful: Re 3:14, he is "the faithful witness; "he cannot be bribed to surrender up any creature that comes to hide himself with him. Christ will die before he will betray his trust.

5. Christ is diligent. Diligence is as necessary in those that will hide others, as faithfulness. A sleepy guard may betray a castle or garrison as well as a faithless guard. But Jesus Christ is very diligent and watchful, he hath his intelligencers abroad; yea, his own eyes run to and fro in the earth, to see what contrivances are made and set on foot against those who are hid with him: Ps 121:3-4," He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." -- Ralph Robinson (1614-1655), in "Christ All in All."

Verse 114. Hiding place. The first word in the verse means properly a secret, or a secret place. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 114. My shield. Good people are safe under God's protection; he is their "strength and their shield"; their "help and their shield"; their "sun and their shield"; their "shield and their great reward"; and here, their "hiding place and their shield" -- Matthew Henry.

Verse 114. Shield. The excellency and properties of a shield lie in these things: -- 1. In the largeness and breadth of it, in that it hides and covers the person that weareth it from all darts that are flung at him, so as they cannot reach him: Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield (Ps 5:12). 2. The excellence of a shield lies in that it is hard and impenetrable. So this answers to the invincible power of God's providence, by which he can break the assaults of all enemies; and such a shield is God.to his people: "My shield, and he in whom I trust" (Ps 144:2). 3. Shall I add one thing more? Stones and darts flung upon a hard shield are beaten back upon him that flings them; so God beats back the evil upon his enemies and the enemies of his people: "Bring them down, O Lord, our shield" (Ps 59:11). Thomas Manton.

Verse 114. I hope in thy word. Of all the ingredients that sweeten the cup of human life, there is none more rich or powerful than hope. Its absence embitters the sweetest lot; its presence alleviates the deepest woe. Surround me with all the joys which memory can awaken or possession bestow, -- without hope it is not enough. In the absence of hope there is sadness in past and present joys-- sadness in the thought that the past is past, and that the present is passing too. But though you strip me of all the joys the past or the present can confer, if the morrow shineth bright with hope, I am glad amid my woe. Of all the busy motives that stir this teeming earth, hope is the busiest. It is the sweetest balm that soothes our sorrows, the brightest beam that gilds our pleasures. Hope is the noblest offspring, the first born, the last buried child of foreseeing and forecasting man. Without it the unthinking cattle may be content amid present plenty. But without it reflecting man should not, cannot be truly happy. William Grant (1814-1876), in "Christ our Hope, and other Sermons"

Verses 114-115. Thou art my hiding place. "Depart from me, ye evil doers." Safe and quiet in his hiding place, David deprecates all attempts to disturb his peace. The society, therefore, of the ungodly is intolerable to him, and he cannot forbear frowning them from his presence. He had found them to be opposed to his best interests; and he feared their influence in shaking his determination of obedience to his God. Indeed, when have the Lord's people failed to experience such society to be a prevailing hindrance alike to the enjoyment and to the service of God? -- Charles Bridges.

Verse 115. Depart from me, ye evil doers, etc. As if he had said, talk no more of it, save your breath, I am resolved on my course, I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep the commandments of my God; with God's help, there will I hold me, and all the world shall not wrest me from it. -- Robert Sanderson, 1587-1663.

Verse 115. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, etc. It is common to sin for company, and that cup usually goeth round, and is handed from one to another. It is therefore wise to quit the company which is infected by sin. It can bring thee no benefit. At least evil company will abate the good in thee. The herb of grace will never thrive in such a cold soil. How poorly doth the good corn grow which is compassed about with weeds! Cordials and restoratives will do little good to the natural body, whilst it aboundeth with ill humours. Ordinances are little effectual to souls which are distempered with such noxious inmates. It is said of the mountain Kadish, that whatsoever vine be planted near it, it causeth it to wither and die: it is exceeding rare for saints to thrive near such pull backs. It is difficult, even to a miracle, to keep God's commandments and evil company too; therefore when David would marry himself to God's commands, to love them, and live with them, for better for worse, all his days, he is forced to give a bill of divorce to wicked companions, knowing that otherwise the match could never be made: "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God." As if he had said, Be it known unto you, O sinners, that I am striking a hearty covenant with God's commands; I like them so well, that I am resolved to give myself up to them, and to please them well in all things, which I can never do unless ye depart; ye are like a strumpet, which will steal away the love from the true wife. I cannot, as I ought, obey my God's precepts, whilst ye abide in my presence; therefore depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God. George Swinnock.

Verse 115. Depart from me, ye evil doers. Woe be to the wicked man, and woe to those who adhere to him and associate with him, saith Ben Sira. And even the pagans of old thought that a curse went along with those who kept evil company. To inhabit, or to travel with an impious man, and one not beloved of the gods, was held by them to be unlucky and unfortunate.

Vetabo qui Cercris sacrum

Vulgavit, sub isdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecuin

Solvat phaselum,

as Horace speaks.

They who mysteries reveal

Beneath my roof shall never live,

Shall never hoist with me the doubtful sail.

To dwell under the same roof, or to sail in the same yacht or pleasure boat with profane persons was deemed unsafe and dangerous by men of Pagan principles. How much more, then, ought Christians to be thoroughly persuaded of the mischief and danger of conversing with wicked men? It can no ways be safe to hold correspondence with them. Yea, we are in great danger all the while we are with them. You have heard, I suppose, who it was that would not stay in the bath so long as an arch heretic was there. It was St. John the Evangelist; he would not (as Iranaeus acquaints us) remain in that place because Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Christ, was then present there. That holy man thought no place was safe where such persons are. Therefore be mindful of the Apostle's exhortation, and "Come out from among them" (2Co 6:17); listen to that voice from heaven: "Come out, that ye be not partakers of their sins, and that ye receive not of their plagues." Separate yourselves from them lest you not only in damage your souls, but your bodies, lest some remarkable judgment arrest you here, and lest the divine vengeance more furiously assault you hereafter. The fanciful poets tell us that Theseus and Perithous (a pair of intimate friends) loved one another so well that they went down to hell together. I am sure it is no poetical fiction that many do thus; that is to say, that they perish together, and descend into the bottomless pit for company's sake. John Edwards (1637-1716), in "Theologia Reformata."

Verse 115. Depart from them that depart from God. T. Manton.

Verse 115. Of my God. As a man can esteem of anything which he knows is his own; so if once he know that God is his, he cannot but love him, and carefully obey him: neither is it possible that any man can give to God hearty and permanent service, who is not persuaded to say with David, He is my God. All the pleasures, all the terrors of the world cannot sunder that soul from God, who can truly say, The Lord is my God. W. Cowper.

Verse 116. Uphold me. A kite soaring on high is in a situation quite foreign to its nature; as much as the soul of man is when raised above this lower world to high and heavenly pursuits. A person at a distance sees not how it is kept in its exalted situation: he sees not the wind that blows it, nor the hand that holds it, nor the string by whose instrumentality it is held. But all of these powers are necessary to its preservation in that preternatural state. If the wind were to sink it would fall. It has nothing whatever in itself to uphold itself; it has the same tendency to gravitate towards the earth that it ever had; and if left for a moment to itself it would fall. Thus it is with the soul of every true believer. It has been raised by the Spirit of God to a new, a preternatural, a heavenly state; and in that state it is at held by an invisible and Almighty hand, through the medium of faith. And upheld it shall be, but not by any lower in itself. If left for a moment it would fall as much as ever. Its whole strength is in God alone; and its whole security is in the unchangeableness of his nature, and in the efficacy of his grace. In a word, "It is kept by the power of Gad, through faith, unto salvation." -- From "The Book of Illustrations," by H. G. Salter, 1840.

Verse 116. That I may live. The life of a Christian stands in this, to have his soul quickened by the spirit of grace. For as the presence of the soul quickens the body, and the departure thereof brings instant death; and the body without it is but a dead lump of clay: so it is the presence of God's Spirit which giveth life to the soul of man. And this life is known by these two notable effects; for first, it brings a joyful sense of God's mercy; and next, a spiritual disposition to spiritual exercises. And without this, pretend a man what he will, he is but the image of a Christian, looking somewhat like him, but not quickened by his life. William Cowper.

Verse 116. That I may live. The children of God think they have no life if they live not in God's life. For if we think we are alive, because we see, so do the brute beasts; if we think we are alive because we hear, so do the cattle; if we think we are alive because we eat and drink, or sleep, so do beasts; if we think we live because we do reason and confer, so do the heathen. The life of God's children is the death of sin; for where sin is alive, there that part is dead unto God...God's children, finding themselves dull and slow to good things, when they cannot either rejoice in the promises of God, or find their inward man delighted with the law of God, think themselves to be dead. Richard Greenham.

Verse 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. Not only the consciousness of my weakness, but the danger of the slippery path before me, reminds me, that the safety of every moment depends upon the upholding power of my faithful God. The ways of temptation are so many and imperceptible-- the influence of it so appalling-- the entrance into it so deceitful, so specious, so insensible-- and my own weakness and unwatchfulness are so unspeakable-- that I can do nothing but go on my way, praying at every step," Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." -- Charles Ridges.

Verse 117. Hold thou me up. Three things made David afraid. First, great temptation without; for from every air the wind of temptation blows upon a Christian. Secondly, great corruption within. Thirdly, examples of other worthy men that had fallen before him, and are written for us: not that we should learn to fall, but to fear lest we fall. These three should always hold us humble, according to that warning," Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." -- William Cowper.

Verse 117. Up, up above the littleness in which I have lived too long, -- above the snares which have so often caught me, -- above the stumbling blocks upon which I have so often fallen, -- above the world, -- above myself, -- higher than I have ever reached yet, -- above the level of my own mortality: worthy of thee, -- worthy of the blood, with which I have been bought, -- nearer to heaven, -- nearer to thee, -- "hold thou me up." God's methods of holding his people up are many. Sometimes it is by the preacher's word, when the word comes fitly spoken to the heart and conscience. May God, in his infinite condescension, enable his servants in this church so to hold you up. Sometimes it is by the ordained means and sacraments which his grace commanded. Sometimes it is by the efficacy of the Holy Scriptures, when some passage in your own room strikes the mind, Just in season; or the stay of some sweet promise comes in sustaining to your spirit. Sometimes by the simple in working of the Holy Ghost in a man's own thoughts, as he will work "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." Sometimes by the ministration of angels, -- "They shall hold thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Sometimes by putting you very low indeed, making you feel that the safe place is the valley. There is no elevation like the elevation of abasement. Sometimes by severe discipline to brace up the heart, and strengthen it, and make it independent of external things. Sometimes by heavy affliction, which is the grasp of his hand, that he may hold you tighter. Sometimes by putting into your heart to think the exact thing that you need, -- to pray the very prayer which he intends at the moment to grant. Sometimes by appearing to let you go, and forsake you, while at the same time-- like the Syro Phoenician woman-- he is giving you the wish to hold on that he may give you the more at the last. James Vaughan, of Brighton, 1877.

Verse 117. I will have respect unto that statutes continually. I will employ myself, so some; I will delight myself, so others; in thy statutes. If God's right hand uphold us, we must in his strength go on in our duty, both with diligence and With pleasure. Matthew Henry.

Verse 118. Thou hast trodden down, etc. David here, by a new meditation, confirms himself in the course of godliness: for considering the judgments of God, executed according to his word in all ages upon the wicked, he resolves so much the more to fear God and keep his testimonies. Thus the judgments of God, executed on others, should be awe bands to keep us from sinning after their similitude. The Lord in chastising his own children takes them in hand like a father to correct them; but when his wrath is kindled against the wicked he tramples them under his feet, as vile creatures which are no account with him. William Cowper.

Verse 118. Thou hast trodden down. The Septuagint, ebouoenwsav, ad nihil deduxisti;thou hast brought to nothing; Aquila, confixisti, thou hast stricken through: Symmachus, aphlebav, reprobasti, thou hast disproved; the Vulgate sprevisti, thou hast contemned; Apollinarius, aferibav, parvi pependisti, thou hast little esteemed: all to the same purpose. The phrase of treading tinder foot, used by us, implies, 1. A full punishment; 2. A disgraceful one.

1. A full punishment. God will pull them down from their altitudes, even to the dust, though never so high and proudly exalting themselves against God. A full conquest of enemies is thus often expressed in Scripture. The Assyrian is said "to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets" (Isa 5:6).

2. It implies a disgraceful punishment: "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps 105:1); an expression used to show the ignominy and contempt God will put upon them. Thus Sapores, the king of Persia, trampled upon Valentinian the emperor, and Tamerlane made Bajazet his footstool. The meaning is, God will not only bring them under, but reduce them to an abject mid contemptible condition. So Chrysostom on the text expounds this phrase, that God will make them eponeiooistouv kai katalelastouv, ignominious and contemptible. They shall not go off honourably, but with scorn and confusion of face, miserably broken. Thomas Manton.

Verse 118. Thou hast trodden down, etc. There is a disposition to merge all the characteristics of the Divinity into one; and while with many of our most eminent writers, the exuberant goodness, the soft and yielding benignity, the mercy that overlooks and makes liberal allowance for the infirmities of human weakness, have been fondly and most abundantly dwelt upon-- there has been what the French would call, if not a studied, at least an actually observed reticence, on the subject of his truth and purity and his hatred of moral evil. There can be no government without a law; and the question is little entertained-- how are the violations of that law to be disposed of? Every law has its sanctions-- the hopes of proffered reward on the one hand, the fears of threatened vengeance on the other. Is the vengeance to be threatened only, but never to be executed? Is guilt only to be dealt with by proclamations that go before, but never by punishments that are to follow?...Take away from jurisprudence its penalties, or, what were still worse, let the penalties only be denounced but never exacted; and we reduce the whole to an unsubstantial mockery. The fabric of moral government falls to pieces; and, instead of a great presiding authority in the universe, we have a subverted throne and a degraded Sovereign...If there is only to be the parade of a judicial economy, without any of its power or its performance; if the truth is only to be kept in the promises of reward, but as constantly to be receded from in the threats of vengeance; if the judge is thus to be lost in the overweening parent -- there is positively nothing of a moral government over us but the name, we are not the subjects of God's authority; we are the fondlings of his regard. Under a system like this, the whole universe would drift, as it were, into a state of anarchy; and, in the uproar of this wild misrule, the King who sitteth on high would lose his hold on the creation that he had formed. Thomas Chalmers.

Verse 118. For their deceit is falsehood. The true sense of the passage is," for their cunning hath been fallacious," that is, it hath deceived them themselves and brought on their ruin. Samuel Horsley, 1733-1806.

Verse 118. Their deceit is falsehood. He means not here of that deceit whereby the wicked deceive others, but that whereby they deceive themselves. And this is two fold: first, in that they look for a good in sin, which sin deceitfully promises, but they shall never find. Next, that they flatter themselves with a vain conceit to escape judgment, which shall assuredly overtake them. William Cowper.

Verse 119. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross. The godly and the wicked live together in the visible church, as dross and good metal; but God, who is the purger of his church, will not fail by diversity of trials and judgments to put difference between them, and at last will make a perfect separation of them, and cast away the wicked as refuse. David Dickson.

Verse 119. God's judgments upon others may be a necessary act of love to us. They are purged out as "dross," that they may not infect us by their example, or molest us by their persecutions or oppressions. Now, the more we are befriended in this kind, the more we are bound to serve God cheerfully: "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life": Lu 1:74-75. The world is one of those enemies, or the wicked of the earth; therefore we should serve him faithfully. Thomas Manton.

Verse 119. Thou puttest away all the wicked. Many ways are wicked men taken away; sometime by the hand of other men, sometime by their own hand. The Philistines slew not Saul, but forced him to slay himself; yet the eye of faith ever looks to the finger of God, and sees that the fall of the wicked is the work of God. William Cowper.

Verse 119. The wicked of the earth. Why are they thus characterized? Because here they flourish; their names "shall be written in the earth" (Jer 17:13); they grow great and of good reckoning and account here. Judas had the bag; they prosper in the world: "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world" (Ps 73:12). Here they are respected: "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1Jo 4:5). Their hearts and minds are in the world (Mt 6:19-20). It is their natural frame to be worldly, they only savour the things of the world; preferment, honour, greatness, it is their unum magnum; here is their pleasure, and here is their portion, their hope, and their happiness. A child of God looketh for another inheritance, immortal and undefiled. Thomas Manton.

Verse 119. Like dross. The men of this world esteem God's children as the offscourings of the earth; so Paul (a chosen vessel of God) was disesteemed of men; but ye see here what the wicked are, in God's account, but dross indeed, which is the refuse of gold or silver. Let this confirm the godly against the contempt of men: only the Lord hath in his own hand the balance which weigheth men according as they are. William Cowper.

Verse 119. Dross.

1. The dross obscures the lustre and glory of the metal, yea, covers it up, so that it appears not; rust and filth compass and hide the gold, so that neither the nature nor lustre of it can be seen.

2. Dross is a deceiving thing. It is like metal, but is not metal; the dross of silver is like it, and so the dross of gold is like gold, but the dross is neither silver nor gold.

3. Dross is not bettered by the fire: put it into the fire time after time, it abides so still.

4. Dross is a worthless thing. It is of no value-- base, vile, contemptible.

5. It is useless, and to be rejected.

6. Dross is an offensive thing: rust eats into the metal, endangers it, and makes the goldsmith to kindle the fire, to separate it from the gold and silver. -- Condensed from William Greenhill.

Verse 119. Thy testimonies. So, very frequently, he calleth God's word, wherein there are both commands and promises: the commandments of God appertain to all, his testimonies belong to his children only; whereby more strictly, I understand his promises containing special declarations of his love and favour toward his own in Christ Jesus. William Cowper.

The fifteenth letter, SAMECH, denotes a prop or pillar, and this agrees well with the subject matter of the strophe, in which God is twice implored to uphold his servant (Ps 119:16-17), while the utter destruction of those who make light of his law, or encourage scepticism regarding it, may be compared to the fate of the Philistine lords, on whom Samson brought down the roof of the house where they were making merry, by overthrowing the pillars which supported it. Neale and Littledale.

Verse 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee. Instead of exulting over those who fell under God's displeasure he humbleth himself. What we read and hear of the judgments of God upon wicked people should make us (1) To reverence his terrible majesty, and to stand in awe of him. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? 1Sa 6:20. (2) To fear lest we offend him, and become obnoxious to his wrath. Good men have need to be restrained from sin by the terrors of the Lord; especially when judgment begins at the house of God, and hypocrites are discovered, and put away as dross. Matthew Henry.

Verse 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, etc. At the presence of Jehovah, when he appeareth in judgment, the earth trembleth and is still. His best servants are not exempted from an awful dread, upon such occasions; scenes of this kind, shown in vision to the prophets, cause their flesh to quiver, and all their bones to shake. Encompassed with a frail body, and a sinful world, we stand in need of every possible tie; and the affections both of fear and love must be employed, to restrain us from transgression; we must, at the same time," love God's testimonies, and fear his Judgments." -- George Horne.

Verse 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, etc. In prayer, in the evening I had such near and terrific views of God's judgments upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them...I flew trembling to Jesus Christ as if the flames were taking hold of me: Oh! Christ will indeed save me or else I perish. Henry Martyn, 1781-1812.

Verse 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee. Familiarity with men breeds contempt; familiarity with God, not so: none reverence the Lord more than they who know him best and are most familiar with him. William Cowper.

Verses 120, 116. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; I am Afraid....let me not be ashamed of my hope. True religion consists in a proper mixture of fear of God, and of hope in his mercy; and wherever either of these is entirely wanting, there can be no true religion. God has joined these things, and we ought by no means to put them asunder. He cannot take pleasure in those who fear him with a slavish fear, without hoping in his mercy, because they seem to consider him as a cruel and tyrannical being, who has no mercy or goodness in his nature; and, besides, they implicitly charge him with falsehood, by refusing to believe and hope in his invitations and offers of mercy. On the other hand, he cannot be pleased with those who pretend to hope in his mercy without fearing him; for they insult him by supposing that there is nothing in him which ought to be feared; and, in addition to this, they make him a liar, by disbelieving his awful threatenings denounced against sinners, and call in question his authority, by refusing to obey him. Those only who both fear him and hope in his mercy, give him the honour that is due to his name. Edward Payson.

Verse 120. Trembles or shudders, strictly used of the hair as standing erect in terror (comp. Job 4:15). J.J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 121. This commences a new division of the Psalm indicated by the Hebrew letter Ain-- a letter which cannot well be represented in the English alphabet, as there is, in fact, no letter in our language exactly corresponding with it. It would be best represented probably by what are called "breathings" in Greek. Albert Barnes.

Verse 121. I have done judgment against the wicked, "and justice" towards the good. Simon de Muis, 1587-1644.

Verse 121. I have done judgment and justice. -- Here the view of David in his judicial capacity might present itself to us; and if so, we have David in the midst of large experience; for the words would take in a large portion of his life. How blessed were their reflections, if, after a long reign, all sovereign rulers could thus appeal unto God. It should be so; for to him all shall be accountable at last. Even although we only conceive of David as speaking in the character of a private man, the sentiment is worthy of all consideration... For parents to say this of their dealings with their children, masters of servants, a man of his neighbours, is very excellent. John Stephen.

Verse 121. Judgment and "justice," are often put in Scripture for the same, and when put together, the latter is as an epithet to the former. "I have done judgment and justice," that is, I have done judgment justly, exactly, to a hair. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 121.

Do right and be a king,

Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,

Still to preserve thy conscious innocence,

Nor ever turn pale with guilt.

--Francis's Horace.

Verse 121. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God: 1Jo 3:21. This "testimony of conscience" has often been "the rejoicing" of the Lord's people, when suffering under unmerited reproach or "proud oppression." They have been enabled to plead it without offence in the presence of their holy, heart searching God; nay, even when, in the near prospect of the great and final account, they might well have been supposed to shrink from the strict and unerring scrutiny of their Omniscient Judge. Perhaps, however, we are not sufficiently aware of the importance of moral integrity in connexion with our spiritual comfort. Mark the boldness which it gave David in prayer: "I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors." -- Charles Bridges.

Verse 121. Leave me not to mine oppressors. That is, maintain me against those who would wrong me, because I do right; interpose thyself between me and my enemies, as if thou wert my pledge. Impartial justice upon oppressors sometimes lays judges open to oppression; but yet they who run greatest hazards in zeal for God shall find God ready to be their surety, when they pray," be surety for thy servant," as in the next verse. Abraham Wright.

Verses 121-122. I have done judgment and justice; but, that I may always do it, and never fail in doing it, "uphold thy servant unto good," by directing him, so that he may always relish what is good, and then the consequence will be that "the proud will not calumniate me; "for he that is well established "unto good," and so made up that nothing but what is good and righteous will be agreeable to him, he will so persevere that he will have no reason for fearing "the proud that calumniate him." -- Robert Bellarmine.

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. What David prays to God to be for him, that Christ is for all his people: Heb 7:22. He drew nigh to God, struck hands with him, gave his word and bond to pay the debts of his people; put himself in their law place and stead, and became responsible to law and justice for them; engaged to make satisfaction for their sins, to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification, and to preserve and keep them, and bring them safe to eternal glory and happiness; and this was being a surety for them for good. John Gill.

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. There are three expositions of this clause, as noting the end, the cause, the event.

1. Undertake for me, ut sire bonus et justus, so Rabbi Arama on the place; surety for me that I may be good. Theodoret expounds it, "Undertake that I shall make good my resolution of keeping thy law." He that joins, undertakes; though we have precepts and without God's undertaking we shall never be able to perform our duty.

2. Undertake for me to help me in doing good; so some read it: would not take his part in an evil cause. To commend a wrong to God's protection, is to provoke him to hasten our punishment, to us serve under our oppressors; but, when we have a good cause, and good conscience, he will own us. We cannot expect he should maintain us and bear us out in the Devil's service, wherein we have entangled selves by our own sin.

3. Be with me for good: so it is often rendered: "Shew me a token for good" (Ps 86:17); "Pray not for this people for good" (Jer 11:14); so, "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Ne 13:31). So here "Be surety for thy servant for good." -- Thomas Manton.

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. It is the prayer Hezekiah in his trouble, "O Lord, I am oppressed," undertake for, (Isa 38:14); it is the prayer of Job for a "daysman" to between him and God (Job 9:33); it is the cry of the church before Incarnation for the appearance of a Divine Mediator; it is the confidence of every faithful soul since that blessed time in the perpetual of our Great High Priest in heaven, which is to us the pledge of blessedness. Agellius and Cocceius, in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. His meaning is, thou knowest how unjustly I am calumniated and evil spoken of in parts: where I am not present or where I may not answer for myself, answer thou for me. -- William Cowper.

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. The keen eye of world may possibly not be able to affix any blot upon my outward confession; but, "if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities; O Lord, who shall stand?" The debt is continually accumulating, and the prospect of payment as distant as ever. I might well expect to be "left to my oppressors," I should pay all that was due unto my Lord. But behold! "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isa 51:13. The surety is found-- the debt is paid-- the ransom is accepted-- the sinner is free. There was a voice heard heaven-- "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom", Job 33:24. The Son of God himself became Surety for a stranger, and "smarted for it," Pr 11:15. At an infinite cost-- the cost of his precious blood-- he delivered me from "mine oppressors" -- sin-- Satan world-- death-- hell. Charles Bridges.

Verse 122. Some observe that this is the only verse throughout the whole psalm wherein the Word is not mentioned under the name of "law "judgments," "statutes," or the like terms, and they make this note it, -- "Where the Law faileth, there Christ is a surety of a better testament. There are those that render the words thus, -- "Dulcify, or, delight thy servant good," that is, make him joyful and comfortable in the pursuit and of that which is good. John Trapp.

Verse 123. Mine eyes fail flor thy salvation. In times of great sorrow when the heart is oppressed with care, and when danger threatens on every side, the human eye expresses with amazing accuracy the distressed and anguished emotions of the soul. The posture here described is that of an individual who perceives himself surrounded with enemies of the most formidable character, who feels his own weakness and insufficiency to enter into conflict with them, but who is eagerly looking for the arrival of a devoted and powerful friend who has promised to succour him in the hour of his calamity. As his friend delays the hour of his coming, his fears and anxieties multiply, till he finds himself in the condition of one whose eyes fail and grow dim in looking for the approach of his great deliverer. In this condition was the suppliant here described, -- his enemies were ready to swallow him up, and except from heaven he had no hope of final extrication. To the promises of God he betook himself, and while waiting their accomplishment, and looking with the utmost eagerness to the word of God's righteousness, he gives utterance to the desponding sentiment," Mine eyes fail for thy salvation." O for such warm and anxious desires for that great salvation, which will realize the victory over all our spiritual enemies, and enable us to shout triumphantly through all eternity in the name of our almighty Deliverer! -- John Morison.

Verse 123. Mine eyes fail...for the word of thy righteousness. Albeit the words of promise be neither performed, nor like to be performed, yet faith should justify the promise, for true and faithful. David Dickson.

Verse 123. For the word of thy righteousness. This would be the word of promised salvation, which the Lord had given in righteousness. What an amazing plea-- God on the ground of his own righteousness appealed to for deliverance-- and yet how true! Or this might be the word of his justice, the issuing of justice, the exercising of a righteous decision between him and his oppressors. He had looked for the Lord to interpose between them, and so to fulfil all he had promised on behalf of the believer. The Lord will vindicate his own. Are any in great difficulty; and are they waiting for the Lord to interpose, to whom they have committed their concerns? ...Wait on; he will not disappoint a gracious hope. John Stephen.

Verse 123. For the word of thy righteousness, or," the word of thy justice"; that is to say, for the sentence of justice on my oppressors, as the first part of the verse teaches; for the passing this sentence will be equivalent to the granting the salvation which the psalmist so earnestly desired. George Phillips.

Verse 124. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy. If I am a "servant" of God, I can bring my services before him only upon the ground of "mercy"; feeling that for my best performances I need an immeasurable world of mercy-- pardoning-- saving-- everlasting mercy; and yet I am emboldened by the blood of Jesus to plead for my soul-- "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy." But then I am ignorant as well as guilty; and yet I dare not pray for divine teaching, much and hourly as I need it, until I have afresh obtained mercy. "Mercy" is the first blessing, not only in point of importance, but in point of order. I must seek the Lord, and know him as a Saviour, before I can go to him with any confidence to be my teacher. But when once I have found acceptance to my petition-- "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy" -- my way will be opened to follow on my petition-- "Teach me thy statutes. Give me understanding, that if may know thy testimonies" -- that I may know, walk, yea, "run in the way of thy commandments" with an enlarged heart, Ps 119:32. My plea is the same as I have before urged with acceptance (Ps 119:94) -- "I am thy servant." -- Charles Bridges.

Verse 124. Thy mercy. All the year round, every hour of every day, God is richly blessing us; both when we sleep and when we wake, his mercy waits upon us. The sun may leave off shining, but our God will never cease to cheer his children with his love. Like a river, his lovingkindness is always flowing with a fulness inexhaustible as his own nature, which is its source. Like the atmosphere which always surrounds the earth, and is always ready to support the life of man, the benevolence of God surrounds all his creatures; in it, as in their element, they live, and move, and have their being. Yet as the sun on summer days appears to gladden us with beams more warm and bright than at other times, and as rivers are at certain seasons swollen with the rain, and as the atmosphere itself on occasions is fraught with more fresh, more bracing, or more balmy influences than heretofore, so is it with the mercy of God; it hath its golden hours, its days of overflow, when the Lord magnifies his grace and lifteth high his love before the sons of men. C.H.S.

Verse 124. Teach me. David had Nathan and Gad the prophets; and beside them, the ordinary Levites to teach him. He read the word of God diligently, and did meditate in the law night and day; but he acknowledgeth all this was nothing unless God did teach him. Other teachers speak to the ear, but God speaks to the heart: so Paul preached to Lydia, but God opened her heart. Let us pray for this grace. William Cowper.

Verse 125. I am thy servant; give me understanding, etc. I am not a stranger to thee, but thine own domestic servant; let me want no grace, which may enable me to serve thee. William Cowper.

Verse 125. I am thy servant. That thou art the servant of God, thou shouldest regard as thy chiefest glory and blessedness. Martin Geier.

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work. Was ever vessel more hopelessly becalmed in mid ocean? or did crew ever cry with more frenzy for some favouring breeze than those should cry who man the Church of the living God? If God work not, it is certain there is nothing before the Church but the prospect of utter discomfiture and overthrow. Greater is the world than the Church if God be not in her. But if God be in her, she shall not be moved. May he help her, and that right early! When he arises to work we know not what may be the form and fashion of his operations. He worketh according to the counsel of his own will; and who knows but that when once he awakes, and puts on his strength, it may not be confined in its results to the immediate and exclusive quickening of the spiritual life of the Church; but may be associated with providential upheavals and convulsions which will fill the heart of the world with astonishment and dismay. His spiritual kingdom does not stand in isolation. It has relations which closely involve it with the material universe, and with human society and national life. There have been times when God has worked, and the signs of his presence have been seen, in terrible shaking of the nations, in the ploughing up from their foundations of hoary injustice, in the smiting of grinding tyrannies, and in the emancipation of peoples whose life had been a long and hopeless moan. There have been times, too, and many, when he has worked through the elements of nature-- through blasting and mildew, through floods and famine, through locust, caterpillar and palmer worm; through flagging commerce, with its machinery rusting in the mill and its ships rotting in the harbour. All these things are his servants. Sometimes the sleep of the world, and the Church too, is so profound that it can be broken only by agencies like the wind, or fire, or earthquake, which made the prophet shiver at the mouth of the cave, and without which the voice that followed, so still, so small and tender, would have lost much of its melting and subduing power. When society has become drugged with the Circean cup of worldliness, and the voices that come from eternity are unheeded, if not unheard, even terror has its merciful mission. The frivolous and superficial hearts of men have to be made serious, their idols have to be broken, their nests have to be stoned, or tossed from the trees where they had been made with so much care, and they have to be taught that if this life be all, it is but a phantom and a mockery. When the day of the Lord shall come, in which he shall begin to work, let us not marvel if it "shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." But this working of God will also take other shapes. Will it not be seen in the inspiration of the Church with faith in its own creed, so far as that creed has the warrant of the Divine word? Does the Church believe its creed? It writes it, sets it forth, sings it, defends it; but does it believe it, at least with a faith which begets either enthusiasm in itself, or respect from the world? Have not the truths which form the methodized symbols of the Church become propositions instead of living powers? Do they not lie embalmed with superstitious reverence in the ark of tradition, tenderly cherished for what they have been and done But is it not forgotten that if they be truths they are not dead and cannot die? They are true now, or they were never true; living now, or they never lived. Time cannot touch them, nor human opinion, nor the Church's sluggishness or unbelief, for they are emanations from the Divine essence, instinct with his own undecaying life. They are not machinery which may become antiquated and obsolete and displaced by better inventions; they are not methods of policy framed for conditions which are transient, and vanishing with them; they are not scaffolding within which other and higher truth is to be reared from age to age. They are like him who is the end of our conversation," Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever." There is not one of them which, if the faith it awakens were but commensurate with its intrinsic worth, would not clothe the Church with a new and wondrous power. But what would be that power if that faith were to grasp them all? It would be life from the dead. Enoch Mellor (1823-1881), in "The Hem of Christ's Garment, and other Sermons."

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work. expresses emphatically the proper time for the Lord to do his own work; as if the Psalmist had said," It is not for us to prescribe the time and occasion for God to exercise his power, and to vindicate the authority of his own law; he does everything at the proper time, and he will at the proper season punish those who have made void his law, and who have become notorious for their impiety and wickedness." -- George Phillips.

Verse 126. It is time to work, just as when the attack of some illness is becoming more severe, you hurry to the physician, that he may come more quickly, lest he should later be unable to do any good. So when the prophet saw in the Holy Spirit the rebellion of the people, their luxury, pleasures, deceits, frauds, avarice, drunkenness, he runs, for our help, to Christ, whom he knew to be alone able to remedy such sins; implores him to come, and admits of no delay. Ambrose, in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work. -- Infidelity was never more subtle, more hurtful, more plausible, perhaps more successful, than in the day in which we live. It has left the low grounds of vulgarity and coarseness and ribaldry, and entrenched itself upon the lofty heights of criticism, philology, and even science itself. It pervades to a fearful extent our popular literature; it has invested itself with the charms of poetry, to throw its spell over the public mind; it has endeavoured to inweave itself with science; and he must be little acquainted with the state of opinion in this land, who does not know that it is espoused by a large portion of the cultivated mind of this generation. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work." -- John Angell James, 1785-1859.

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work, etc. To send the Messiah, to work righteousness, to fulfil the law and vindicate the honour of it, broken by men. It was always a notion of the Jews that the time of the Messiah's coming would be when it was a time of great wickedness in the earth; and which seems to agree with the word of God, and was true in fact. See Mt 2:17 3:1-3,15-16 4:2. John Gill.

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work, etc. True it is, Lord, that we are not to appoint thee thy times and limits, for thou art the Ancient of Days, Time's Creator and destination. Neither do we presume to press in at the portal of thy privy chamber, to "know the times and seasons" which thou our Father hast reserved in thine own power; yet, Lord, thou hast taught us, as to discern the face of the sky, so to descry the signs of the times, and from the cause to expect the effect which necessarily doth ensue. "Thou art a God full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Ps 103:8); and thou dost sustain many wrongs of the sons of men, being crushed with their sins as a cart is laden with sheaves: but if still they continue to load thee, thou wilt case thyself of that burden, and cast it on the ground of confusion. Thou art "slow to anger, but great in power, and wilt not surely clear the wicked" (Na 1:3). Thou dost for a long space hold thy peace at men's sins, and art still, and dost restrain thyself. But if men will not turn, thou wilt whet thy sword and bend thy bow, and make it ready. Patient thou art, and for a long time dost forbear thine hand; but when the forehead of sin begins to lose the blush of shame, when the bead roll of transgressions doth grow in score from East to West, when the cry of them pierceth above the clouds, when the height of wickedness is come unto the top, and the fruits thereof are ripe and full, then it is time for thee, Lord, to take notice of it, to awake like a giant, and to put to thine all revenging hand. But our sins are already ripe, yea, rotten ripe, the measure of our iniquities is full up to the brim. Doubtless out land is sunken deep in iniquity; our tongues and works have been against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory; the trial of our countenance doth testify against us (Isa 3:8-9), yea, we declare our sins as Sodom; we hide them not, the cry of our sins is exceeding grievouS, the clamours of them pierce the skies, and with a loud voice roar, saying: "How long, Lord, holy and true? How long ere thou come to avenge thyself on such a nation as this?" Re 6:10 Jer 9:9. George Webbe, in "A Posie of Spiritual Flowers," 1610.

Verse 126. It is time for thee, Lord. Some read it, and the original will bear it," It is time to work for thee, O Lord; "it is time for every one in his place to appear on the Lord's side, against the threatening growth of profaneness and immorality. We must do what we can for the support of the sinking interests of religion, and, after all, we must beg of God to take the work into his own hands. Matthew Henry.

Verse 126. They have made void thy law. In the second verse of this section he complained that the proud would oppress him, now he complains that they destroyed the law of God. Who, then, are David's enemies, who seek to oppress him? Only such as are enemies to God, and seek to destroy his law. A great comfort have we in this, that if we love the Lord, and study in a good conscience to serve him we can have no enemies but such as are enemies to God. William Cowper.

Verse 126. They have made void thy law. As if they would not only sin against the Law, but sin away the Law, not only withdraw themselves from the obedience of it, but drive St out of the world; they would make void and repeal the holy acts of God, that their own wicked acts might not be questioned; and lest the Law should have a power to punish them, they will deny it a power to rule them; that's the force of the simple word here used, as applied to highest transgressing against the Law of God. Joseph Caryl.

Verses 126-127. Everything betters a saint. Not only ordinances, word, sacraments, holy society, but even sinners and their very sinning. Even these draw forth their graces into exercise, and put them upon godly, broken hearted mourning. A saint sails with every wind. As the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst. Because "they have made void thy law, therefore do I love thy commandments." Holiness is the more owned by the godly, the more the world despiseth it. The most eminent saints were those of Caesar's (Nero's) house (Php 4:22); they who kept God's name were they who lived where Satan's throne was (Re 2:13). Zeal for God grows the hotter by opposition; and thereby the godly most labour to give the glory of God reparation. William Jenkyn (1612-1685), in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 127. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, etc. Partly, because it is one evidence of their excellency, that they are disliked by the vilest of men. Partly, out of a just indignation and opposition against my sworn enemies; and partly, because the great and general apostasy of others makes this duty more necessary to prevent their own and other men's relapses. Matthew Pool.

Verse 127. I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. The image employed brings before us the picture of the miser; his heart and his treasure are in his gold. With what delight he counts it! with what watchfulness he keeps it! hiding it in safe custody, lest he should be despoiled of that which is dearer to him than life. Such should Christians be, spiritual misers, counting their treasure which is "above fine gold"; and "hiding it in their hearts," in safe keeping, where the great despoiler shall not be able to reach it. Oh, Christians! how much more is your portion to you than the miser's treasure! Hide it; watch it; retain it. You need not be afraid of covetousness in spiritual things: rather "covet earnestly" to increase your store; and by living upon it and living in it, it will grow richer in extent, and more precious in value. Charles Bridges.

Verse 127. I love thy commandments. He professes not that he fulfilled them, but that he loved them; and truly it is a great progress in godliness, if we be come thus far, as from our heart,to love them. The natural man hates the commandments of God; they are so contrary to his corruption; but the regenerate man, as he hates his own corruption, so he loves the word, because according to it he desires to be reformed. And here is our comfort, that, albeit we cannot do what is commanded, yet if we love to do it, it is an argument of grace received. "Above gold" etc. It is lawful to love those creatures which God hath appointed for our use; with these conditions: the one is, that the first seat in our affection of love be reserved to God; and any other thing we love, that we love it in him and for him, and give it only the second room. Thus David, being a natural man, loved his natural food; but he protests he loved the law of the Lord more than his appointed food; and here he loves the commandments of God above all gold. William Cowper.

Verse 128. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. It is no compromising testimony to the integrity and value of the Lord's precepts with which the Psalmist concludes," I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right" -- every command, however hard; every injunction, however distasteful; every precept, however severe; even cut off thy right hand, pluck out thy right eye; forget thine own people and thy father's house; take up thy cross daily; sell all that thou hast-- yea, Lord, even so, "all thy precepts concerning all things are right." What a blessed truth to arrive at, and find comfort in! -- Barton Bouchier.

Verse 128. I esteem all thy precepts, etc. We must not only respect all God's commandments, but also respect them all alike, and give them all the like respect. Obedience must be universal. R. Mayhew, in "The death of Death in the Death of Christ," 1679.

Verse 128. All. The many "alls" in this verse used (not unlike that in Eze 44:30) showeth the integrity and universality of his obedience. "All" is but a little word, but of large extent. John Trapp.

Verse 128. All thy precepts concerning all things to be right. He had a high estimate of God's precepts; he thought them just in all things; just, because they prescribe nothing but that which is exactly just; and just, because they bring a just punishment on the transgressors, and a reward to the righteous. William Nicholson.

Verse 128. The upright man squares all his actions by a right rule: carnal reason cannot bias him, corrupt practice cannot sway him, but God's sacred word directs him. Hence it is that his respect is universal to all divine precepts, avoiding all evil, performing all good without exception. Thus David's upright man here esteems God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and therefore is careful to observe them. Hence it is, that he is the same man at all times, in all places; because at all times, and in all societies, he acts by one and the same rule. It is a good saying of S. Cyprian, "ea non est religio, sed dissimulatio, quce per omnia non constat sibi", that is not piety, but hypocrisy, that is not in all things like itself, since the upright man measures every action by the straight line of divine prescript. Abraham Wright.

Verse 128. I hate every false way. The best trial of our love to God and his word is the contrary-- hatred of sin and impiety: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." He that loves a tree, hates the worm that consumes it; he that loves a garment, hates the moth that eats it; he that loveth life, abhorreth death; and he that loves the Lord hates every thing that offends him. Let men take heed to this, who are in love of their sins: how can the love of God be in them? Religion binds us not only to hate one way of falsehood, but all the ways of it. As there is nothing good, but in some measure a godly man loves it; so is there nothing evil, but in some measure he hates it. And this is the perfection of the children of God; a perfection not of degrees; for we neither love good, nor hate evil as we should; but a perfection of parts; because we love every good, and we hate every evil in some measure. William Cowper.

Verse 128. And I hate. The Being who loves the good with infinite intensity must hate evil with the same intensity. So far from any incompatibility between this love and this hatred, they are the counterparts of each other, -- opposite poles of the same moral emotion. John W. Haley, in "A Examination of the alleged Discrepancies of the Bible," 1875.

Verse 128. I hate every false way. If Satan get a grip of thee by any one sin, is it not enough to carry thee to damnation? As the butcher carries the beast to the slaughter, sometime bound by all the four feet, and sometime by one only; so it is with Satan. Though thou be not a slave to all sin; if thou be a slave to one, the grip he hath of thee, by that one sinful affection, is sufficient to captive thee. William Cowper.

Verse 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful. The Scriptures are "wonderful," with respect to the matter which they contain, the manner in which they are written, and the effects which they produce. They contain the most sublime spiritual truths, veiled under external ceremonies and sacraments, figurative descriptions, typical histories, parables, similitudes, etc. When properly opened and enforced, they terrify and humble, they convert and transform, they console and strengthen. Who but must delight to study and to "observe" these "testimonies" of the will and the wisdom, the love and the power of God Most High! While we have these holy writings, let us not waste our time, misemploy our thoughts, and prostitute our admiration, by doting on human follies, and wondering at human trifles. George Horne.

Verse 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful. God's testimonies are "wonderful" (1) In their majesty and composure, which striketh reverence into the hearts of those that consider; the Scripture speaketh to us at a God like rate. (2) It is "wonderful" for the matter and depth of mystery, which cannot be found elsewhere, concerning God, and Christ, the creation of the world, the souls of men, and their immortal and everlasting condition, the fall of man, etc. (3) It is "wonderful" for purity and perfection. The Decalogue in ten words comprise the whole duty of man, and reacheth to the very soul, and all the motions of the heart. (4) It is "wonderful" for the harmony and consent of all the parts. All religion is of a piece, and one part doth not interfere with another, but conspires to promote the great end, of subjection of the creature to God. (5) It is "wonderful" for the power of it. There is a mighty power which goeth along with the word of God, and astonishes the hearts of those that consider it and feel it. 1Th 1:5. Thomas Manton.

Verse 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful. The Bible itself is an astonishing and standing miracle. Written fragment by fragment through the course of fifteen centuries, under different states of society, and in different languages, by persons of the most opposite tempers, talents, and conditions, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, bond and free; cast into every form of instructive composition and good writing; history, prophecy, poetry, allegory, emblematic representation, judicious interpretation, literal statement, precept, example, proverbs, disquisition, epistle, sermon, prayer-- in short, all rational shapes of human discourse, and treating, moreover, on subjects not obvious, but most difficult; its authors are not found like other men, contradicting one another upon the most ordinary matters of fact and opinion, but are at harmony upon the whole of their sublime and momentous scheme. J. Maclagan, 1788-1852.

Verse 129. Highly prize the Scriptures, or you will not obey them. David said," therefore doth my soul keep them"; and why was this, but that he counted them to be wonderful? Can he make a proficiency in any art, who doth slight and deprecate it? Prize this book of God above all other books. St. Gregory calls the Bible "the heart and soul of God." The rabbins say, that there is a mountain of sense hangs upon every apex and tittle of Scripture. "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Ps 14:7). The Scripture is the library of the Holy Ghost; it is a pandect of divine knowledge, an exact model and platform of religion. The Scripture contains in it the credenda," the things which we are to believe," and the agenda," the things which we are to practise." It is "able to make us wise unto salvation": 2Ti 3:15. "The Scripture is the standard of truth, "the judge of controversies; it is the pole star to direct us to heaven (Isa 8:20). "The commandment is a lamp": Pr 6:23. The Scripture is the compass by which the rudder of our will is to be steered; it is the field in which Christ, the Pearl of price, is hid; it is a rock of diamonds, it is a sacred collyrium, or "we salve; " it mends their eyes that look upon it; it is a spiritual optic glass in which the glory of God is resplendent; it is the panacea or "universal medicine" for the soul. The leaves of Scripture are like the leaves of the tree of life," for the healing of the nations": Re 22:2. The Scripture is both the breeder and feeder of grace. How is the convert born, but by "the word of truth"? Jas 1:18. How doth he grow, but by "the sincere milk of the word"? 1Pe 2:2. The word written is the book out of which our evidences for heaven are fetched; it is the sea mark which shows us the rocks of sin to avoid; it is the antidote against error and apostasy, the two edged sword which wounds the old serpent. It is our bulwark to withstand the force of lust; like the Capitol of Rome, which was a place of strength and ammunition. The Scripture is the "tower of David," whereon the shields of our faith hang: So 4:4. "Take away the word, and you deprive us of the sun," said Luther. The word written is above an angelic embassy, or voice from heaven. "This voice which came from heaven we heard. We have also, "bebaioteron lolon," a more sure word": 2Pe 1:18-19 O, prize the word written; prizing is the way to profiting. If Caesar so valued his Commentaries, that for preserving them he lost his purple robe, how should we estimate the sacred oracles of God? "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food": Job 23:12. King Edward the Sixth, on the day of his coronation, had presented before him three swords, signifying that he was monarch of three kingdoms. The king said, there was one sword wanting; being asked what that was, he answered, "The Holy Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and is to be preferred before these ensigns of royalty." Robert King of Sicily did so prize God's word, that, speaking to his friend Petrarcha, he said, "I protest, the Scriptures are dearer to me than my kingdom; and if I must be deprived of one of them, I had rather lose my diadem than the Scriptures." -- Thomas Watson, in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 129. The word contains matter to exercise the greatest minds. Many men cannot endure to spend their thoughts and time about trivial matters; whereas others think it happiness enough if they can, by the meanest employments, procure subsistence. Oh, let all those of high aspirations exercise themselves in the law of God; here are objects fit for great minds, yea, objects that will elevate the greatest: and indeed none in the world are truly great but the saints, for they exercise themselves in the great counsels of God. We account those men the greatest that are employed in state affairs: now the saints are lifted up above all things in the world, and regard them all as little and mean, and are exercised in the great affairs of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Hence the Lord would have the kings and the judges to have the book of the law written, De 17:18-19; and it is reported of Alphonsus, king of Arragon, that in the midst of all his great and manifold occupations, he read over the Scriptures fourteen times with commentaries. How many have we, men of great estates, and claiming to be of great minds, that scarce regard the law of God: they look upon his law as beneath them. Books of history and war they will peruse with diligence; but for the Scripture, it is a thing that has little in it. It is a special means to obedience to have high thoughts of God's law. That is the reason why the prophet speaks thus," I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing": Ho 8:12. As if he should say, if they had had the things of my law in their thoughts, they would never so have acted. Ps 114:129," Thy testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them." He saith not, therefore do I keep them; but, therefore doth my soul keep them; my very soul is in this, in keeping thy testimonies, for I look upon them as wonderful things. It is a good sign that the spirit of the great God is in a man, when it raises him above other things, to look upon the things of his word as the only great things in the world. "All flesh is grass, and all the godliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever:" Isa 40:6,8. There is a vanity in all things of the world; but in that which the word reveals, in that there is an eternity: we should therefore admire at nothing so as at the word, and we should greatly delight in God's commandments; an ordinary degree of admiration or delight is not sufficient, but great admiration and great delight there should be in the law of God. And all arguments drawn from God's law should powerfully prevail with you. Jeremiah Burroughs.

Verse 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful. Wonders will never cease. Air, earth, water, the world above, the world beneath, time, eternity, worms, birds, fishes, beasts men, angels are all full of wonders. The more all things are studied, the more do wonders appear. It is idle, therefore, to find fault with the mysteries of Scripture, or to deny them. Inspiration glories in them. He who rejects the mysteries of love, grace, truth, power, justice and thankfulness of God's word, rejects salvation. It has marvels in itself, and marvels in its operation. They are good cause of love, not of offence; of keeping, not of breaking God's precepts. William S. Plumer.

Verse 129. My soul, not merely I, but I with all my heart and soul. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 129. I have completed reading the whole Bible through since January last. I began it on the first day of the present year, and finished it on the 26th of October. I have read it in that space four times, and not without real profit to myself. I always find in it something new; it being, like its Author, infinite and inexhaustible. Samuel Eyles Pierce, 1814.

Verse 129. What do I not owe to the Lord for permitting me to take a part in the translation of his word? Never did I see such wonders, and wisdom, and love, in the blessed book, as since I have been obliged to study every expression; and it is a delightful reflection, that death cannot deprive us of the pleasure of studying its mysteries. Henry Martyn.

Verse 130. The opening of thy words enlightens, making the simple understand. The common version of the first word (entrance) is inaccurate, and the one here given, though exact, is ambiguous. The clause does not refer to the mechanical opening of the book by the reader, but to the spiritual opening of its true sense by divine illumination, to the mind which naturally cannot discern it. Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 130. Entrance, lit. opening, i.e. unfolding or unveiling. J.J Stewart Perowne.

Verse 130. The entrance of thy words giveth light. The first entrance, or vestibule: for the Psalmist wishes to point out that only the beginnings are apprehended in this life; and that these beginnings are to be preferred to all human wisdom. Henricus Mollerus.

Verse 130. The entrance of thy words giveth light, etc. The beginning of them; the first three chapters in Genesis, what light do they give into the origin of all things; the creation of man, his state of innocence; his fall through the temptations of Satan, and his recovery and salvation by Christ, the seed of the woman! The first principles of the oracles of God, the rudiments of religion, the elements of the world, the rites of the ceremonial law gave great light unto Gospel mysteries. John Gill.

Verse 130. The entrance of thy words giveth light. A profane shop man crams into his pocket a leaf of a Bible, and reads the last words of Daniel: "Go thou thy way, till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days," and begins to think what Iris own lot will be when days are ended. A Gottingen Professor opens a big printed Bible to see if he has eyesight enough to read it, and alights on the passage," I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," and in reading in the eyes of his understanding are enlightened. Cromwell's soldier opens his Bible to see how far the musket ball has pierced, and finds it stopped at the verse: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart and the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And in a frolic the Kentish soldier opens the Bible which his broken hearted mother had sent him, and the first sentence that turns up is the text so familiar in boyish days: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and the weary profligate repairs for rest to Jesus Christ. James Hamilton, 1814-1867.

Verse 130. He amplifies this praise of the word of God when he saith that the entrance thereof, the first operant of the door of the word, gives light: for if the first entrance to it give light, what will the progress and continuance thereof do? This accuseth the age wherein we live, who now of a long time hath been taught by the word of God so clearly, that in regard of time they might have been teachers of others, yet are they but children in knowledge and understanding. But to whom doth the word give understanding? David saith to the "simple": not to such as are high minded, or double in heart, or wise in their own eyes, who will examine the mysteries of godliness by the quickness of natural reason. No: to such as deny themselves, as captive their natural understanding, and like humble disciples submit themselves, not to ask, but to hear; not to reason, but to believe. And if for this cause, naturalists who want this humility cannot profit by the word; what marvel that Papists far less become wise by it, who have their hearts so full of prejudices concerning it, that they spare not to utter blasphemies against it, calling it not unprofitable, but pernicious to the simple and to the idiots. And again, where they charge it with difficulty, that simple men and idiots should not be suffered to read it, because it is obscure; all these frivolous allegations of men are annulled by this one testimony of God, that it gives light to the simple. William Cowper.

Verse 130. Light. This "light" hath excellent properties.

1. It is lux manifestans, it manifests itself and all things else. How do I see the sun, but by the sun, by its own light? How do I know the Scripture to be the word of God, but by the light that shineth in it, commending itself to my conscience! So it manifests all things else; it layeth open all frauds and impostures of Satan, the vanity of worldly things, the deceits of the heart, the odiousness of sin.

2. It is lux dirigens, a directing light, that we may see our way and work. As the sun lighteth man to his labour, so doth this direct us in all our conditions: Ps 119:105. It directs us how to manage ourselves in all conditions.

3. It is lux vivificans, a quickening light. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life": Joh 8:12. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light": Eph 5:14. That light was the life of men: so is this spiritual life; it not only discovereth the object, but helpeth the faculty, filleth the soul with life and strength.

4. It is lux exhilarans, a comforting, refreshing, cheering light; and that in two respects. (1) Because it presents us with excellent grounds of comfort. (2) Because it is a soul satisfying light. Condensed from Manton.

Verse 130. It giveth understanding. If all the books in the world were assembled together, the Bible would as much take the lead in disciplining the understanding as in directing the soul. It will not make astronomers, chemists, or linguists; but there is a great difference between strengthening the mind and storing it with information. Henry Melvill.

Verse 130. It giveth understanding to the simple. There are none so knowing that God cannot blind; none so blind and ignorant whose mind and heart his Spirit cannot open. He who, by his incubation upon the waters at the creation, hatched that rude mass into the beautiful form we now see, and out of that dark chaos made the glorious heavens, and garnished them with so many orient stars, can move upon thy dark soul and enlighten it, though it be as void of knowledge as the evening of the world's first day was of light. The schoolmaster sometimes sends home the child, and bids his father to put him to another trade, because not able, with all his art, to make a scholar of him; but if the Spirit of God be master, thou shalt learn, though a dunce: "The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.": No sooner is the soul entered into the Spirit's school, than he becomes a proficient. William Gurrnall.

Verse 130. To the simple. He does not say, "giveth understanding" to the wise and prudent, to learned men, and to those skilled in letters; but to the "simple." -- Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 130. To the simple. This is one great characteristic of the word of God, -- however incomprehensible to the carnal mind, it is adapted to every grade of enlightened intelligence. W. Wilson.

Verse 130. The simple. The word is used sometimes in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad sense. It is used in a good sense, First, for the sincere and plain hearted: "The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me": Ps 116:6. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly toward you": 2Co 1:12. Secondly, for those that do not oppose the presumption of carnal wisdom to the pure light of the word: so we must all be simple, or fools, that we may be wise: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1Co 3:18); that is, in simplicity of heart submitting to God's conduct, and believing what he hath revealed. Thomas Manton

Verse 131. I opened my mouth, and panted. By this manner of speech, David expresses, as Basil thinks, animi propensionem, that the inclination of his soul was after God's word. For, this opened mouth, Ambrose thinks, is os interioris hominis, the mouth of the inward man, which in effect is his heart; and the, speech notes vehementem animi intensionem, a vehement intension of his spirit, saith Euthymius. Yet shall it not be amiss to consider here how the mind of the godly earnestly affected moves the body also. The speech may be drawn from travellers, who being very desirous to attain to their proposed ends, enforce their strength thereunto; and finding a weakness in their body to answer their will, they pant and open their mouth, seeking refreshment from the air to renew their strength: or as Vatablus thinks, from men exceeding hungry and thirsty, who open their mouth as if they would draw in the whole air, and then pant and sigh within themselves when they find no full refreshment by it. So he expresses it: "My heart burns with so ardent a longing for thy commandments, that I am forced ever and anon to gasp by reason of my painful breathing." However it be, it lets us see how the hearing, reading, or meditating of God's word wakened in David a most earnest affection to have the light, joy, grace, and comfort thereof communicated to his own heart. For in the godly, knowledge of good increaseth desires; and it cannot be expressed how vehemently their souls long to feel that power and comfort which they know is in the word; and how sore they are grieved and troubled when they find it not. And happy were we, if we could meet the Lord with this like affection; that when he opens his mouth, we could also open our heart to hear, as David here doth. Christus aperit os, ut daret allis spiritum; David aperuil ut acciperet;offering his heart to receive the spirit of grace, when God openeth his mouth in his word to give it. For it is his promise to us all-- "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Let us turn it into a prayer, that the Lord, who opened the heart of Lydia, would open our heart to receive grace when he offers by his word to give it. William Cowper.

Verse 131. I opened my mouth, and panted, etc, There are two ways in which these words may be understood. They may be considered as expressing the very earnest longing of the Psalmist for greater acquaintance with God in spiritual things; and then in saying, "I opened my mouth, and panted," he merely asserts the vehemence of his desire. Or you may separate the clauses: you may regard the first as the utterance of a man utterly dissatisfied with the earth and earthly things, and the second as the expression of a consciousness that God, and God only, could meet the longings of his soul. "I opened my mouth, and panted. "Out of breath, with chasing shadows, and hunting after baubles, I sit down exhausted, as far off as ever from the happiness which has been earnestly but fruitlessly sought. Whither, then, shall I turn? Thy commandments, O Lord, and these alone, can satisfy the desires of an immortal being like myself; and on these, therefore, henceforward shall my longings be turned. Henry Melvill.

Verse 131. I opened my mouth, and panted. A metaphor taken from men scorched and sweltered with heat, or from those that have run themselves out of breath in following the thing which they would overtake. The former metaphor expressed the vehemency of his love; the other the earnestness of his pursuit: he was like a man gasping for breath, and sucking in the cool air. Thomas Manton.

Verse 131. I longed for thy commandments. This is a desire which God will satisfy. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it": Ps 81:10. Thomas Manton.

Verse 132. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, etc. "Look upon me" stripped by thieves of my virtues, and then wounded with sins, and "be merciful unto me," showing compassion on me, taking care of me in the inn of the Church universal, that I fall not again among thieves, nor be harmed by the wolves which howl about this fold, but dare not enter in. "Look upon me," no longer worthy to be called thy son, and "be merciful unto me," not as the jealous elder brother would treat me, but let me join the glad song and banquet of them that love thy name. Look upon me the publican, standing afar off in thy temple the Church, and be merciful unto me, not after the Pharisee's judgment, but "as thou usest to do unto them that love thy name," which is the gracious God. Look on me as on weeping Peter, and be merciful unto me as thou wast to him, who so loved thy name as by his triple confession of love to wash out his threefold denial, saying, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "Look upon me," as on the sinful woman, penitent and weeping, and be merciful unto me, not according to the judgment of the Pharisee who murmured at her, as Judas who was indignant at her, but forgiving me as thou didst her, "because she loved much," telling me also, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." -- Neale and Littledale.

Verse 132. Look thou upon me. Lord! since our looks to thee are often so slight, so cold, so distant, that no impression is made upon our hearts, do thou condescend continually to look upon us with mercy and with power. Vouchsafe us such a look, as may bring us to ourselves and touch us with tenderness and contrition in the remembrance of that sin, unbelief, and disobedience, which pierced the hands, the feet, the heart of our dearest Lord and Saviour. Comp. Lu 22:61. Charles Bridges.

Verse 132. As thou usest to do, etc. David would not lose any privilege that God hath by promise settled on his children. Do with me, saith he, "as thou usest to do." This is no more than family fare, what you promise to do for all that love thee; and let me not go worse clad than the rest of my brethren. William Gurnall.

Verse 132. As thou usest to do unto those, etc. We should be content if God deals with us as he has always dealt with his people. While he could not be satisfied with anything less than their portion, David asks for nothing better; he implores no singular dispensation in his favour, no deviation from the accustomed methods of his grace...It is always a good proof that your convictions and desires are from the operation of the Spirit when you are willing to conform to God's order. What is this order? It is to dispense his blessings connectedly. It is never to justify without sanctifying; never to give a title to heaven without a meetness for it. Now the man that is divinely wrought upon will not expect nor desire the one without the other. Therefore he will not expect the blessing of God without obedience; because it is always God's way to connect the comforts of the Holy Ghost with the fear of the Lord; and if his children transgress his laws, to visit their transgressions with a rod. Therefore he will neither expect nor desire his blessing without exertion; for it has always been God's way to crown only those that run the race that is set before them, and fight the good fight of faith. Therefore he will not expect nor desire the Divine blessing without prayer; for it has always been God's way to make his people sensible of their wants, and to give an answer to prayer. Therefore he will not expect nor desire to reach heaven without difficulties; for his people have always had to deny themselves, and take up their cross. If they have not been chosen in the furnace of affliction, they have been purified. God had one Son without sin, but he never had one without sorrow: "he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Yes," says the suppliant before us, "secure me their everlasting portion, and I am willing to drink of the cup they drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism they were baptized with. I want no new, no by path to glory. I am content to keep the King's high road. Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. I ask no more." -- William Jay, 1769-1853.

Verse 133. Order my steps in thy word. As before he sought mercy, so now he seekers grace. There are many that seek mercy to forgive sin, who seek not grace to deliver them from the power of sin: this is to abuse God's mercy, and turn his grace into wantonness. He that prayeth for mercy to forgive the guilt of sin only, seeks not that by sin he should not offend God; but that he may sin and not hurt himself: but he who craves deliverance also from the commanding power and deceit of sin, seeks not only a benefit to himself, but grace also to please and serve the Lord his God. The first is but a lover of himself; the second is a lover of God, more than of himself. And truly he never knew what it was to seek mercy for sin past, who with it also earnestly sought not grace to keep him from sin in time to come. These benefits cannot be divided: he who hath not the second whosoever he flatter himself may be assured that he hath not gotten the first. William Cowper.

Verse 133. Order my steps in thy word. It is written of Boleslaus, one of the kings of Poland, that he still carries about him the picture of his father, and when he was to do any great work or set upon any design extraordinary, he would look on the picture and pray that he might do nothing unworthy of such a father's name. Thus it is that the Scriptures are the picture of God's will, therein drawn out to the very life. Before a man enter upon or engage himself in any business whatsoever, let him look there, and read there what is to be done; what to be undone; and what God commands, let that be done; what he forbids, let that be undone; let the balance of the sanctuary weigh all, the oracles of God decide all, the rule of God's word be the square of all, and his glory the ultimate of all intendments whatsoever. From Spencer's "Things New and Old."

Verse 133. Order my steps. Nbh hachen, make them firm;let me not walk with a halting or unsteady step. Adam Clarke.

Verse 133. Order my steps, etc. The people of God would not only have their path right, but their steps ordered; as not their general course wrong (as those who walk in the way of everlasting perdition), so not a step awry; they would not miss the way to heaven, either in whole or in part. Thomas Manton.

Verse 133. My steps. Speaking of the steps of the Temple, Bunyan says, "These steps, whether cedar, gold, or stone, yet that which added to their adornment, was the wonderment of a Queen. And whatever they were made of, to be sure, they were a shadow of those steps, which we should take to, and in the house of God. Steps of God, Ps 75:13. Steps ordered by him, Ps 37:23 Steps ordered in his word, Ps 64:133. Steps of faith, Ro 4:12. Steps of the spirit, 2Co 7:18. Steps of truth, 3Jo 1:4. Steps washed with butter, Job 29:6. Steps taken before, or in the presence of God. Steps butted and bounded by a divine rule. These are steps indeed." -- John Bunyan, in "Solomon's Temple Spiritualized."

Verse 133. Let not any iniquity, etc. True obedience to God is inconsistent with the dominion of any one lust, or corrupt affection. I say, though a man out of some slender and insufficient touch of religion upon his heart, may go right for a while, and do many things gladly; yet that corruption which is indulged, and under the power of which a man lieth, will at length draw him off from God; and therefore no one sin shall have dominion over us. When doth sin reign, or have dominion over us? When we do not endeavour to mortify it, and to cut off the provisions that may feed that lust. Chrysostom's observation is, the apostle does not say, let it not tyrannize over you, but, let it not reign over you; that is, when you suffer it to have a quiet reign in your hearts. Thomas Manton.

Verse 133. Let not any iniquity have dominion over me. I had rather be a prisoner to man all my life than be a bondage to sin one day. He says not, Let not this and the other man rule over me; but "let not sin have dominion over mo." Well said! There is hope in such a man's condition as long as it is so. Michael Bruce, 1666.

Verse 134. Deliver me from the oppression of man. 1. "Man" by way of distinction. There is the oppression and tyranny of the Devil and sin; but the Psalmist doth not mean that now: Heminum non daemonum, saith Hugo. 2. "Man" by way of aggravation. Homo homini lupus:no creatures so ravenous and destructive to one another as man. It is a shame that one man should oppress another. Beasts do not usually devour those of the same kind; but, usually, a man's enemies are those of his own household: Mt 10:36. The nearer we are in bonds of alliance, the greater the hatred. 3. "Man" by way of diminution. And to lessen the fear of this evil, this term Adam is given them, to show their weakness in comparison of God. Thou art God; but they that are so ready and forward to oppress and injure us are but men; thou canst easily overrule their power and break the yoke. I think this consideration chiefest, because of other places. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isa 41:12-13. Thomas Manton.

Verse 134. From the oppression of man. Some render it, "from the oppression of Adam; "as Jarchi observes; and Arama interprets it of the sin of Adam, and as a prayer to be delivered or redeemed from it; as the Lord's people are by the blood of Christ. John Gill.

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. The face of God shines upon us, when, in his providence, we are guided and upheld; also when we are made to share in the good things of his providence, and when we are placed in a position wherein we can do much good. Much more does the face of God shine upon us, when we are favoured with tokens of his gracious favour; for then we grow under the consciousness of a loving God, with rich supplies of his grace and Spirit. John Stephen.

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. Oftentimes the wrongful dealings of men, of others, and of ourselves, like a cloud of smoke arising from the earth and obscuring the face of the sun, hide from us for a while the light, of the countenance of God: but he soon clears it all away, and looks down upon us in loving mercy as before, lighting for us the path of obedience, and brightening our way unto himself. "Plain Commentary, " 1859.

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. The believer's incessant cry is, Let me see "the King's face." This is a blessing worth praying for. It is his heart's desire, his present privilege, and what is infinitely better, his sure, everlasting prospect-- "They shall see his face." Re 22:4. Charles Bridges.

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine... and teach me. Blessed is the man whom eternal Truth teacheth, not by obscure figures and transient sounds, but by direct and full communication. The perceptions of our senses are narrow and dull, and our reason on those perceptions frequently misleads us. He whom the eternal Word condescends to teach is disengaged at once from the labyrinth of human opinions. For "of one word are all things"; and all things without voice or language speak of him alone: he is that divine principle which speaketh in our hearts, and without which there can be neither just apprehension nor rectitude of judgment. O God, who art the truth, make me one with thee in everlasting life! I am often weary of reading, and weary of hearing; in thee alone is the sum of my desire! Let all teachers be silent, let the whole creation be dumb before thee, and do thou only speak unto my soul! Thy ministers can pronounce the words, but cannot impart the spirit; they may entertain the fancy with the charms of eloquence, but if thou art silent they do not inflame the heart. They administer the letter, but thou openest the sense; they utter the mystery, but you reveal its meaning; they point out the way of life, but you bestow strength to walk in it; they water, but thou givest the increase. Therefore do thou, O Lord, my God, Eternal Truth! speak to my soul! lest, being outwardly warmed, but not inwardly quickened, I die, and be found unfruitful. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." -- Thomas a Kempis, 1380-1471.

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine teach me, etc. God hath many ways of teaching; he teaches by book, he teaches by his fingers, he teaches by his rod; but his most comfortable and effectual teaching is by the light of his eye: "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me: let them bring me unto thy holy hilt:" Ps 42:3. Richard Alleine (1611-1681), in "Heaven Opened."

Verse 135. Make thy face to shine... teach me thy statutes. God's children, when they beg comfort, also beg grace to serve him acceptably. For by teaching God's statutes is not meant barely a giving speculative knowledge of God's will; for so David here; "Make thy face to shine"; and "Teach me thy statutes." -- Thomas Manton.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down my eyes. Most of the easterners shed tears much more copiously than the people of Europe. The psalmist said rivers of waters ran down his eyes; and though the language is beautifully figurative, I have no doubt it was also literally true. I have myself seen Arabs shed tears like streams. John Gadsby.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, etc. Either because mine eyes keep not thy law, so some. The eye is the inlet and outlet of a great deal of sin, and therefore it ought to be a weeping eye. Or rather, they, i.e., those about me: Ps 119:139. Note, the sins of sinners are the sorrows of saints. We must mourn for that which we cannot mend. Matthew Henry.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, etc. David's afflictions drew not so many tears from him as the sins of others; not his banishment by his son, as the breach of God's law by the wicked. Nothing went so to his heart as the dishonour of God, whose glory shining in his word and ordinances, is dearer to the godly than their lives. Elijah desired to die when he saw God so dishonoured by Ahab and Jezebel. The eye is for two things, sight and tears: if we see God dishonoured, presently our eyes should be filled with tears. William Greenhill, 1591-1677.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, etc. Godly men are affected with deep sorrow for the sins of the ungodly. Let us consider the nature of this affection.

1. It is not a stoical apathy, and affected carelessness; much less a delightful partaking with sinful practices.

2. Not a proud setting off of their own goodness, with marking the sin of others as the Pharisee did in the gospel.

3. Not the derision and mocking of the folly of men, with that "laughing philosopher": it comes nearer to the temper of the other who wept always for it.

4. It is not a bitter, bilious anger, breaking forth into railings and reproaches, nor an upbraiding insultation.

5. Nor is it a vindictive desire of punishment, venting itself in curses and imprecations, which is the rash temper of many, but especially of the vulgar sort.

The disciples' motion to Christ was far different from that way, and yet he says to them, "We know not of what spirit ye are." They thought they had been of Elijah's spirit, but he told them they were mistaken, and did not know of what a spirit they were in that motion. Thus heady zeal often mistakes and flatters itself. We find not here a desire of fire to come down from heaven upon the breakers of the law, but such a grief as would rather bring water to quench it, if it were falling on them. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes." -- Robert Leighton.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, etc. The Lord requireth this mourning bitterly for other men's sins to keep our hearts the more tender and upright; it is an act God useth to make us more careful of our own souls, to be troubled at the sins of others, at sin in a third person. It keepeth us at a great distance from temptation. This is like quenching of fire in a neighbour's house: before it comes near thee, thou runnest with thy bucket. There is no way to keep us free from the infection, so much as mourning. The soul will never agree to do that which it grieved itself to see another do. And, as it keepeth us upright, so also humble, fearful of Divine judgment, tender lest we ourselves offend, and draw down the wrath of God. He that shrugs when he seeth a snake creeping upon another, will much more be afraid when it cometh near to himself. In our own sins we have the advantage of conscience scourging the soul with remorse and shame; in bewailing the sins of others, we have only the reasons of duty and obedience. They that fight abroad out of love to valour and exploits, will certainly fight at home out of love to their own safety. Thomas Manton.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, etc. Thus uniformly is the character of God's people represented-- not merely as those who are free from-- but as "those that sigh and cry for-- all the abominations that are done it, the midst of the land": Eze 9:4 And who does not see what an enlarged sphere still presents itself on every side for the unrestrained exercise of Christian compassion? The appalling spectacle of a world apostatized from God, of multitudes sporting with everlasting destruction-- as if the God of heaven were "a man that he should lie" is surely to force "rivers of waters" from the hearts of those that are concerned his honour. What a mass of sin ascends as a cloud before the Lord, a single heart! Add the aggregate of a village-- a town-- a country-- a world! every day-- every hour-- every moment. Well might the "waters rise to an overflowing tide, ready to burst its barriers." -- Charles Bridges.

Verse 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not law. The vices of the religious are the shame of religion: the sight this hath made the stoutest champions of Christ melt into tears. David was one of those great worthies of the world, not matchable in his time yet he weeps. Did he tear in pieces a bear like a kid? Rescue a lamb will the death of a lion? Foil a mighty giant, that had dared the whole of God? Did he like a whirlwind, bear and beat down his enemies bel him; and now, does he, like a child or a woman, fall weeping? Yes, had heard the name of God blasphemed, seen his holy rites profaned, his statutes vilipended, and violence offered to the pure chastity of that virgin, religion; this resolved that valiant heart into tears: "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes." -- Thomas Adams.

Verse 136. My soul frequently spent itself in such breathings after conformity to the law of God as the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm is with throughout: "O that my ways were directed to keep thy My heart breaketh through the longing it hath to thy commands at times; incline my heart that I may keep them alway unto the end, "the like. This appeared further in a fixed dislike of the least inconformity: to the law, either in myself or others. Now; albeit I was always affected with my own or others' breaches, yet this was my burden; I always that rivers of tears might run down mine eyes, because I, or transgressors, kept not God's law. Thomas Halyburton, 1674-1712.

Verse 136. If we grieve not for others, their sin may become Eze 4:8 1Co 5:2. William Nicholson.

S. Jerome, whom most of the medievalists follow, explains Tsaddi as meaning justice or righteousness, which, however, is mru, tsedek But he is so far right that there is a play in this strophe on the sound of the initial letter, as in the case of Gemol;for the very first word, righteous, is mru, tsaddik, and the whole scope of the strophe is the strong grasp which even the young and inexperienced soul can have of righteousness amidst the troubles of the world. Neale and Littledale.

All these verses begin with Tzaddi, the eighteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet; Ps 119:137,142,144, with some form of the word which we render righteous, or righteousness; each of the remainder with a wholly different word. William S. Plumer.

Verse 137. Righteous art thou, O LORD, etc. Here David, sore troubled with grief for the wickedness of his enemies, yea, tempted greatly to impatience and distrust, by looking to their prosperous estate, notwithstanding their so gross impiety, doth now show unto us a three fold ground of comfort, which in this dangerous temptation upheld him. The first is, a consideration of that which God is in himself; namely, just and righteous: the second, a consideration of the equity of his word; the third, a view of his constant truth, declared in his working and doing according to his word. When we find ourselves tempted to distrust by looking to the prosperity of the wicked, let us look up to God, and consider his nature, his word, his works, and we shall find comfort. Righteous art thou. This is the first ground of comfort-- a meditation of the righteousness of God's nature; he alters not with times, he changes not with persons, he is, alway and unto all, one and the same righteous and holy God. Righteousness is essential to him, it is himself; and he can no more defraud the godly of their promised comforts, not let the wicked go unpunished in their sins, than he can deny himself to be God, which is impossible. William Cowper.

Verse 137. Righteous art thou, O LORD, etc. Essentially, originally, and of himself; naturally, immutably and universally, in all his ways and works of nature and grace; in his thoughts, purposes, counsels, and decrees; in all the dispensations of his providence; in redemption, in the justification of a sinner, in the pardon of sin, and in the gift of eternal life through Christ. "And upright are thy judgments." They are according to the rules of justice and equity. He refers to the precepts of the word, the doctrines of the gospel, as well as the judgments of God inflicted on wicked men, and all the providential dealings of God with his people, and also the final judgment. John Gill.

Verse 137. Righteous art thou, O LORD, etc. Here is much to keep the children of God in awe. The Lord is a righteous God: though they have found mercy and taken sanctuary in his grace, the Lord is impartial in his justice. God that did not spare the angels when they sinned, nor his Son when he was a sinner by imputation, will not spare you, though you are the dearly beloved of his soul: Pro 11:31. The sinful courses of God's children occasion bitterness enough; they never venture upon sin, but with great Joss. If Paul give way to a little pride, God will humble him. If any give way to sin, their pilgrimage will be made uncomfortable. Eli falls into negligence and indulgence, then is the ark of God taken, his two sons are slain in battle, his daughter-in-law dies, he himself breaks his neck. Oh! the wonderful tragedies that sin works in the houses of the children of God! David, when he intermeddled with forbidden fruit, was driven from his palace, his concubines defiled, his own son slain; a great many calamities did light upon him. Therefore the children of God have cause to fear; for the Lord is a just God, and they will find it so. Here upon earth he hath reserved liberty to visit their iniquity with rods, and their transgression with scourges. I must press you to imitate God's righteousness: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him": 1Jo 2:29. You have a righteous God; and this part of his character you should copy out. Thomas Manton.

Verse 137. David's great care, when he was under the afflicting hand of God, was to clear the Lord of injustice. Oh! Lord, saith he, there is not the least show, spot, stain, blemish, or mixture of injustice, in all the afflictions thou hast brought upon me. I desire to take shame to myself, and to set to my seal, that the Lord is righteous, and that there is no injustice, no cruelty, nor no extremity in all that the Lord hath brought upon me. He sweetly and readily subscribes unto the righteousness of God in those sharp and smart afflictions that God exercised him with. "Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments." God's judgments are always just; he never afflicts but in faithfulness. His will is the rule of justice; and therefore a gracious soul dares not cavil nor question his proceedings. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 137. The hundred and thirty-seventh verse, like the twenty-fifth, is associated with the sorrows of an Imperial penitent (Gibbon, Decline and Fall, ch. 46). When the deposed and captive Emperor Maurice was led out for execution by the usurper Phocas, his five sons were previously murdered one by one in his presence; and at each fatal blow he patiently exclaimed, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." -- Neale and Littledale.

Verse 138. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. The force of this expression is much feebler than that of the original, which literally may be rendered, "Thou hast commanded righteousness thy testimonies, and truth exceedingly. "So the Septuagint hath it. Righteousness and truth were his testimonies; the testimonies were one with his righteousness and truth. The English translation gives the quality of the testimonies; the Hebrew gives that which is commanded; as if we might say, Thou hast enjoined righteousness to be thy testimonies, and truth exceedingly. John Stephen.

Verse 138. Thy testimonies. The word of God is called his testimony, both because it testifies his will, which he will have us to do; as also because it testifies unto men truly what shall become of them, whether good or evil. Men by nature are curious to know their end, rather than careful to mend their life; and for this cause seek answers where they never get good: but if they would know, let them go to the word and testimony; they need not to seek any other oracle. If the word of God testify good things unto them, they have cause to rejoice; if otherwise it witnesseth evil unto them, let them haste to prevent it, or else it will assuredly overtake them. William Cowper.

Verse 138. Righteous and very faithful. Literally, "faithfulness exceedingly." Harsh and severe as they may seem, they are all thoroughly for man's highest good. William Kay.

Verse 139. My zeal hath consumed me. "Zeal" is a high degree of love; and when the object of that love is ill treated, it vents itself in a mixture of grief and indignation, which are sufficient to wear and "consume" the heart. This will be the case where men rightly conceive of that dishonour which is continually done to God by creatures whom he hath made and redeemed. But never could the verse be uttered, with such fulness of truth and propriety, by any one, as by the Son of God, who had such a sense of his Father's glory, and of man's sin, as no person else ever had. And, accordingly, when his zeal had exerted itself in purging the temple, St. John tells us, "his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal thine house hath eaten me up." The place where it is so written Ps 69:9, and the passage is exactly parallel to this before us. Horne.

Verse 139. My zeal hath consumed me, etc. Zeal is the heat or tension of the affections; it is a holy warmth, whereby our love and an are drawn out to the utmost for God, and his glory. Now, our love to and his ways, and our hatred of wickedness, should be increased, because ungodly men. Cloudy and dark colours in a table, make those that are and lively to appear more beautiful; others' sin should make God and godliness more amiable in thine eyes. Thy heart should take fire by striking on such cold flints. David by a holy antiperistasis, did kindle from of coldness: "My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten words." Cold blasts make a fire to flame the higher, and burn the hotter -- George Swinnock.

Verse 139. My zeal hath consumed me. The fire of zeal, like the fire which consumed Solomon's sacrifice, cometh down from heaven; and zealots are not those salamanders that always live in the fire of hatred contention; but seraphs, burning with the spiritual fire of divine And there true zeal inflames the desires and affections of the soul. If it be true zeal, then tract of time, multitude of discouragements, falseness of deserting the cause, strength of oppositions, will not tire out a man's s Zeal makes men resolute, difficulties are but whetstones to their fortitude steels men's spirits with an undaunted resolution. This was the zeal burned in the disciples (Luke 24), that consumed David here, and up the very marrow of Christ: Joh 2:17. Abraham Wright.

Verse 139. My zeal hath consumed me. There are divers kinds of there is a zeal of the world, there is a zeal of the flesh, there is a zeal of religion, there is a zeal of heresy, and there is a zeal of the true God. First, we see the zeal of the world maketh men to labour day night to get a transitory thing. The zeal of the flesh torments me minds early and late for a momentary pleasure. The zeal of heresy maketh travel and compass sea and land, for the maintaining and increasing of opinion. Thus we see every man is eaten up with some kind of zeal. The drunkard is consumed with drunkenness, the whoremonger is spent with his whoredom, the heretic is eaten with heresies. Oh, how ought this to ashamed, who are so little eaten, spent, and consumed with the zeal of word! And so much the rather, because godly zeal leaveth in us advantage and a recompence, which the worldly and carnally zealous have not. For when they have spent all the strength of their bodies, powers of their mind, they have no gain or comfort left, but torment conscience; and when they are outwardly spent, they are inwardly never better: whereas the godly being concerned for a good thing, and eaten with the zeal of God's glory, have this notable privilege and profit, howsoever their outward man perisheth and decayeth, yet their inward is still refreshed and nourished to everlasting life. Oh, what a benefit to be eaten up with the love and zeal of a good thing! -- Richard Greenham.

Verse 139. Have forgotten thy words. A proper phrase to set forth in the bosom of the visible church who do not wholly deny and reject word and rule of Scripture, but yet live on as though they had it: they do not observe it; as if God had never spoken any such thing, given them any such rule. They that reject and condemn such things as word enforces, surely do not remember to do them. Thomas Manton.

Verse 140. Thy word is very pure. In the original, "tried, purified, like gold in the furnace, "absolutely perfect, without the dross vanity and fallibility, which runs through human writings. The more we try the promises, the surer we shall find them. Pure gold is so fixed, Boerhaave, informs us of an ounce of it set in the eye of a glass furnace for two months, without losing a single grain. George Horne.

Verse 140. Thy word is very pure; therefore, etc. The word of God is not only "pure, "free from all base admixture, but it is a purifier;it cleanses from sin and guilt every heart with which into comes into contact. "Now ye are clean, "said Jesus Christ to his disciples, "by the word which I have spoken unto you": Joh 15:3. It is this its pure quality combined with its tendency to purify every nature that yields to its holy influence, that endears it to every child of God. Here it is that he finds those views of the divine character, those promises, those precepts, those representations of the deformity of sin, of the beauty of holiness, which lead him, above all things, to seek conformity to the divine image. A child of God in his best moments does not wish the word of God brought down to a level with his own imperfect character, but desires rather that his character may be gradually raised to a conformity to that blessed word. Because it is altogether pure, and because it tends to convey to those who make it their constant study a measure of its own purity, the child of God loves it, and delights to meditate in it day and night. John Morison.

Verse 140. Thy word is very pure. Before I knew the word of God in spirit and in truth, for its great antiquity, its interesting narratives, its impartial biography, its pure morality, its sublime poetry, in a word, for its beautiful and wonderful variety, I preferred it to all other books; but since I have entered into its spirit, like the Psalmist, I love it above all things for its purity; and desire, whatever else I read, it may tend to increase my knowledge of the Bible, and strengthen my affection for its divine and holy truths. Sir William Jones, 1746-1794.

Verse 140. Thy word. Let us refresh our minds and our memories with some of the Scripture adjuncts connected with "the word, "and realize, in some degree at least, the manifold relations which it bears both to God and our souls. It is called "the word of Christ, " because much of it was given by him, and it all bears testimony to him...It is called "the word of his grace, "because the glorious theme on which it loves to expatiate is grace, and especially grace as it is seen in Christ's dying love for sinful men. It is called ololov tou staurou, "the word of the cross" (1Co 1:18), because in the crucifixion of the divine Redeemer we see eternal mercy in its brightest lustre. It is called "the word of the gospel, "because it brings glad tidings of great joy to all nations. It is called "the word of the kingdom, "because it holds out to all believers the hope of an everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace. It is called "the word of salvation, "because the purpose for which it was given is the salvation of sinners. It is called "the word of truth, "because, as Chillingworth says, it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without mixture of error for its contents. And we will only add, it is called "the word of life, "because it reveals to a sinful, perishing world the doctrines of life and immortality. IV. Graham, in "A Commentary on the First Epistle of John, "1857.

Verse 140. Therefore thy servant loveth it. Love in God is the fountain of all his benefits extended to us; and love in man is the fountain of all our service and obedience to God. He loved us first to do us good; and hereof it comes that we have grace to love him next to do him service. Love is such a duty that the want thereof cannot be excused in any; for the poorest both may and should love God: yet without it all the rest thou canst do in his service is nothing; nay, not if thou shouldest give thy goods to the poor, and offer thy body to be burned. Small sacrifices, flowing from faith and love, are welcome to him, where greater without these are but abomination to him. Proofs of both we have in the widow's mite and Cain's rich oblation; whereof the one was rejected, the other received. Happy are we though we cannot say, "We have done as God commands, "if out of a good heart we can say, -- "We love to do what he commands." -- William Cowper.

Verse 140. Therefore thy servant loveth it. Of all our grounds and reasons of love to the word of God, the most noble and excellent is to love the word for its purity. This showeth indeed that we are made partakers of the Divine nature: 2Pe 1:4. For I play you mark, when we hate evil as evil, and love good as good, we have the same love and hatred that God hat Is. When once we come to love things because they are pure, it is a sign that we have the same love that God hath. Thomas Manton.

Verse 140. Thy servant loveth it. Otherwise, indeed, the Psalmist would not have been the Lord's servant at all. But he glories in the title because he delights in the pure service. John Stephen.

Verses 140-141. God's own utterance is indeed without spot, and therefore not to be carped at; it is pure, fire proved, noblest metal, therefore he loves it, and does not, though young and lightly esteemed, care for the remonstrances of his proud opponents, who are older and more learned than himself. Franz Delitzsch.

Verse 141. I am small and despised, or, I have been. Some versions render it young; as if it had respect to the time of his anointing by Samuel, when he was overlooked and despised in his father's family (1Sa 16:11 17:28); but the word here used is not expressive of age, but of state, condition, and circumstances; and the meaning is, that he was little in his own esteem, and in the esteem of men, and was despised; and that on account of religion, in which he was a type of Christ (Ps 24:6 Isa 53:3), and which is the common lot of good men, who are treated by the world as the filth of it, and the offscouring of all things. John Gill.

Verse 141. I am small. They that love God may be reduced to a mean, low, and afflicted condition; the Lord seeth it meet for divers reasons: 1. That they may know their happiness is not in this world, and so the snore long for heaven, and delight in heavenly things. 2. It is necessary to cut off the provisions of the flesh and the fuel of their lusts. A rank soil breeds weeds; and when we sail with a full stream we are apt to be carried away with it. 3. That they may be more sensible of his displeasure against their sins and scandalous carriage by which they have dishonoured him, and provoked the pure eyes of his glory. 4. That they may learn to live upon the promises, and learn to exercise suffering graces; especially dependence upon God, who can support us without a temporal, visible interest. 5. That God may convince the enemies that there is a people that do sincerely serve him, and not for carnal, selfish ends: Job 1:6. That his glory may be more seen in their deliverance; and therefore, before God doth appear for his children, he bringeth them very low. Thomas Manton.

Verse 141. Small. This applies to David in his early days of trouble and persecution. It is difficult to find any other individual to whom it is so suitable. James G. Murphy.

Verse 141. A notable example to the shame of them, that perhaps will serve and praise God in their prosperity, and when they are increased; but let affliction or want come, and then they have little heart to do it. Abraham Wright.

Verse 141. Yet do not I forget thy precepts. God observeth what we do in our trouble: "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god: shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart": Ps 44:20-21. If we slacken our service to God, or fall off to any degree of apostasy, the Judge of hearts knoweth all: God knoweth whether we would have depraved and corrupt doctrine, worship, or ordinances; or whether we will faithfully adhere to him, to his word, and worship, and ordinances, whatever it cost us. In our poor and despicable condition we see more cause to love the word than we did before; because we experience supports and comforts which we have thereby: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, " etc. (Ro 5:3); "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ": 2Co 1:5. God hath special consolations for his afflicted and despised people, and makes their consolation by Christ to run parallel with, and keep pace with, their sufferings for Christ. Thomas Manton.

Verse 141. Yet do not I forget thy precepts. We see by experience that our affection leaves anything from the time it goes out of our remembrance. We cease to love when we cease to remember; but earnest love ever renews remembrance of that which is beloved. The first step of defection is to forget what God hath commanded, and what we are obliged in duty to do to him; and upon this easily follows the offending of God by our transgression. Such beasts as did not chew their cud, under the law were accounted unclean, and not meet to be sacrificed unto God: that was but a figure, signifying unto us that a man who hath received good things from God, and doth not think upon them, cannot feel the sweetness of them, and so cannot be thankful to God. William Cowper.

Verse 142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness. Here the law of God is honoured by the additional encomium, that it is everlasting righteousness and truth; as if it had been said, that all other rules of life, with whatever attractions they may appear to be recommended, are but a shadow, which quickly vanishes away. The Psalmist, no doubt, indirectly contrasts the doctrine of the law with all the human precepts which were ever delivered, that he may bring all the faithful in subjection to it, since it is the school of perfect wisdom. There may be more of plausibility in the refined and subtle disquisitions of men; but there is in them nothing firm or solid at bottom, as there is in God's law. This firmness of the divine law he proves in the following verse from one instance-- the continual comfort he found in it when grievously harassed with temptations. And the true test of the profit we have reaped from it is, when we oppose to all the distresses of whatever kind which may straiten us, the consolation derived from the word of God, that thereby all sadness may be effaced from our minds. David here expresses something more than he did in the preceding verse; for there he only said that he reverently served God, although from his rough and hard treatment he might seem to lose his labour; but now when distressed and tormented, he affirms that he finds in the law of God the most soothing delight, which mitigates all griefs, and not only tempers their bitterness, but also seasons them with a certain sweetness. Assuredly when this taste does not exist to afford us delight, nothing is more natural than for us to be swallowed up of sorrow. John Calvin.

Verse 142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness. Not only righteous at the first giving out, but righteous in all ages and times; and should we slight this rule that will hold for ever? In the world, new lords, new laws; men vary and change their designs and purposes; privileges granted today may be repealed tomorrow; but this wold will hold true for ever. Our justification by Christ is irrevocable; that part of righteousness is everlasting. Be sure you are justified now upon terms of the gospel, and you shall be justified for ever: your forgiveness is an everlasting forgiveness, and your peace is an everlasting peace: "I will remember their sin no more": Jer 31:34. So the other righteousness of sanctification, it is for ever; approve yourselves to God now, and you will approve yourselves at the day of judgment. Thomas Manton.

Verse 142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, etc. The original is better expressed thus, "Thy righteousness is righteousness everlastingly, and thy law is truth. "So the Septuagint. The English translation expresses the perpetuity of the righteousness, the original expresses also the character of it...God's righteousness is essentially and eternally righteousness. The expressions are absolute; there is only this righteousness, and only this truth. John Stephen.

Verse 142. Thy law is the truth. 1. It is the chief truth. There is some truth in the laws of men and the writings of men, even of heathens; but they are but sorry fragments and scraps of truth, that have escaped since the fall. 2. It is the only truth; that is, the only revelation of the mind of God that you can build upon. It is the rule of truth. 3. It is the pure truth. In it there is nothing but the truth, without the mixture of falsehood; every part is true as truth itself. It is true in the promises, threatenings, doctrines, histories, precepts, prohibitions. 4. It is the whole truth. It containeth all things necessary for the salvation of those that yield up themselves to be instructed by it. Thomas Manton.

Verse 143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights. This is strange, that in the midst of anguish David had delight: but indeed the sweetness of God's word is best perceived under the bitterness of the cross. The joy of Christ and the joy of the world cannot consist together. A heart delighted with worldly joy cannot feel the consolations of the Spirit; the one of these destroys the other: but in sanctified trouble, the comforts of God's word are felt and perceived in a most sensible manner. Many a time hath David protested this delight of his in the word of God; and truly it is a great argument of godliness, when men come not only to reverence it, but to love it, and delight in it. Let this be considered by those unhappy men who hear it of custom, and count it but a weariness. Abraham Wright.

Verse 143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, or "found me, "etc. We need not take pains, as many do, "to find trouble and anguish; "for they will, one day, "find us." In that day the revelations of God must be to us instead of all worldly "delights" and pleasures, which will then have forsaken us; and how forlorn and desolate will be our state if we should have no other delights, no other pleasures, to succeed them, and to accompany us into eternity. Let our study be then in the Scriptures, if we expect our comfort in them in time to come. George Horne.

Verse 143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me. You may conceive a bold figure here, as if Trouble and Anguish were being sent out against the helpless sons of men. These, like enemies, were going round. Instead of seizing upon the wicked, they had found the righteous man. So it was by the ordering of God. I suppose many of us have remarked, that the believer is never long at ease. He is in the world; he is in the flesh; there is indwelling sin; there are enemies around; there is the great enemy; besides all this, the Lord, for wise purposes, hides his face. Then the believer is in trouble and anguish. John Stephen.

Verse 143. Have taken hold on me. Hebrew, found me. Like dogs tracking out a wild beast hiding or fleeing. A.R. Fausset.

Verse 143. Thy commandments are my delights. Delight in moral things (saith Aquinas) is the rule by which we may judge of men's goodness or badness. Delectatio est quies voluntatis in bono. Men are good and bad as the objects of their delight are: they are good who delight in good things, and they are evil who delight in evil things. Thomas Manton.

Verse 144. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. Thy moral law was not made for one people, or for one particular time; it is as imperishable as thy nature, and of endless obligation. It is that law by which all the children of Adam shall be judged. "Give me understanding." To know and practise it. "And I shall live." Shall glorify thee, and live eternally; not for the merit of having done it, but because thou didst fulfil the work of the law in my heart, having saved me from condemnation by it. Adam Clarke.

Verse 144. Give me understanding, and I shall live. I read it in connection with the preceding clause; for although David desires to have his mind enlightened by God, yet he does not conceive of any other way by which he was to obtain an enlightened understanding than by his profiting aright in the study of the law. Further, he here teaches that men cannot, properly speaking, be said to live when they are destitute of the light of heavenly wisdom; and as the end for which men are created is not that, like swine or asses, they may stuff their bellies, but that they may exercise themselves in the knowledge and service of God, when they turn away from such employment their life is worse than a thousand deaths. David therefore protests that for him to live was not merely to be fed with meat and drink, and to enjoy earthly comforts, but to aspire after a better life, which he could not do save under the guidance of faith. This is a very necessary warning; for although it is universally acknowledged that man is born with this distinction, that he excels the lower animals in intelligence, yet the great bulk of mankind, as if with deliberate purpose, stifle whatever light God pours into their understandings. I indeed admit that all men desire to be sharp witted; but how few aspire to heaven, and consider that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Since, then, meditation upon the celestial life is buried by earthly care, men do nothing else than plunge into the grave, so that while living to the world, they die to God. Under the term life, however, the prophet denotes the utmost he could wish. Lord, as if he had said, although I am already dead, yet if thou art pleased to illumine my mind with the knowledge of heavenly truth, this grace alone will be sufficient to revive me. John Calvin.

Verse 144. Give me understanding, and I shall live. The saving knowledge of God's testimonies is the only way to live. There is a threefold life. 1. Life natural. 2. Life spiritual, and, 3. Life eternal. In all these considerations may the point be made good.

First. Life is taken for the life of nature, or the life of the body, or life temporal, called "this life" in Scripture: 1Co 15:19; 1Ti 4:8. Life is better preserved in a way of obedience than by evil doing; that provoketh God to cast us off, and exposes us to dangers. It is not in the power of the world to make us live or die a day sooner or longer than God pleaseth. If God will make us happy, they cannot make us miserable: therefore, "Give me understanding, and I shall live"; that is, lead a comfortable and happy life for the present. Prevent sin, and you prevent danger. Obedience is the best way to preserve life temporal: as great a paradox as it seems to the world, it is a Scripture truth, "Keep my commandments, and live" (Pr 4:4); and, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life" (verse 13); and, "Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour" (Pr 3:16); and, "She is a tree of life" (verse 18). The knowledge and practice of the word is the only means to live comfortably and happily here, as well as for ever hereafter.

Secondly. Life spiritual;that is twofold, the life of justification, and the life of sanctification.

1. The life of justification: "The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life": Ro 5:18. He is dead, not only on whom the hangman hath done his work, but also he on whom the judge hath passed sentence, and the law pronounces him dead. In this sense we were all dead, and justification is called justification to life; there is no living in this sense without knowledge: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many": Isa 43:11. We live by faith, and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing doeth no good unless the Lord giveth understanding; as meats nourish not unless received and digested.

2. The life of sanctification: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins": Eph 2:. And men live not properly till they live the life of grace; they live a false, counterfeit life, not a blessed, happy, certain, and true life. Now, this life is begun and carried on by saying knowledge: "The new man which is renewed in knowledge": Col 3:10. Again, men are said to be "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them": Eph 4:18. They that are ignorant are dead in sin: life spiritual cometh by knowledge. Hence begins the change of the inward man, and thenceforth we live. "Give me understanding, "ut vere in te vivare, that the true life began in me may grow and increase daily, but never be quenched by sin.

Thirdly. Life everlasting, or our blessed estate in heaven. So it is Said of the saints departed, they all live unto God: Lu 20:38. And this is called the water of life, the tree of life, the crown of life; properly this is life. What is the present life in comparison of everlasting life? The present life, it is "mars vitalis", a living death; or "mortalis vita", a dying life, a kind of death; it is always in flux, like a stream: it runneth from us as fast as it cometh to us: "He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not": Joh 14:2. We die as fast as we live: it differeth but as the point from the line where it terminates. It is not one and the same, no permanent thing; it is like the shadow of a star in a flowing stream. Its contentments are base and low, called "the life of thine hand": Isa 57:10. It is patched up of several creatures, fain to ransack the storehouses of nature to support a ruinous fabric. And compare it with the life of grace here, it doth not exempt us from sin, nor miseries. Our capacities are narrow. We are full of fears, and doubts, and dangers; but in the life of glory we shall neither sin nor sorrow any more. This is meant here: "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live"; it is chiefly meant of the life of glory. This is the fruit of saving knowledge, when we so know God and Christ as to come to God by him. Thomas Manton.

Verse 144. I shall live. I shall be kept from those sins which deserve and bring death. Matthew Pool.

Verse 145. I cried with my whole heart. As a man cries most loudly when he cries with all his mouth opened; so a man prays most effectually when he prays with his whole heart. Neither doth this speech declare only the fervency of his affection; but it imports also that it was a great thing which he sought from God. And thou, when thou prayest, pray for great things; for things enduring, not for things perishing: pray not for silver, it is but rust; nor for gold, it is but metal; nor for possessions, they are but earth. Such prayer ascends not to God. He is a great God, and esteems himself dishonoured when great things with great affection are not sought from him. William Cowper.

Verse 145. I cried with my whole heart. In all your closet duties God looks first and most to your hearts: "My son, give me thine heart": Pr 23:26. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, that will satisfy the Maker of the heart; the heart is a treasure, a bed of spices, a royal throne wherein he delights. God looks not at the elegancy of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart: Ps 51:17; Jas 1:8. God neither loves halting nor halving; he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, "Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was naught, the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those sacrifices wherein the heart is not. Prayer without the heart is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, nor an affected tone, nor studied motions, nor seraphical expressions, but the stirrings of the heart, that God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks. If the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer takes with God, but that which is the travail of the heart. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 146. I cried unto thee. The distressed soul expresses itself in strong cries and tears. Of old they cried unto the Lord, and he heard them in their distress. So Israel at the Red Sea. The men of the Reformation thus expressed themselves in earnest prayer, and found relief. Luther at the Diet of Worms, when remanded for another day, spent the long night in the loud utterance of prayer, that he might appear for his Lord before an august earthly assembly. Our reading of the covenanting times will remind us of many instances of the same. We may think of John Welch, going into his garden night after night, in a night covering, and crying to the Lord to grant him Scotland. The expression of prayer, however, is manifold as the frame of the spirit. Intense feeling will beget strong cries in prayer; but prayer that is uttered under realizing views of our gracious God will be mild, and often delivered as it were in whispers. So was Alexander Peden accustomed to pray, as if he had been engaged in calm converse with a friend... But when the feeling is intense, when wrath lies heavy upon us, when danger is apprehended as near, when the Lord is conceived to be at a distance, or when there is eager desire after immediate attainment-- in all these cases there will be the strong cries. Such seems to have been the state of the Psalmist's mind when he poured forth the expressive utterance of this part. John Stephen.

Verse 146. Brief as are the petitions, the whole compass of language could not make them more comprehensive. "Hear me." The soul is in earnest, the whole heart is engaged in the "cry." "Save me" -- includes a sinner's whole need-- pardon, acceptance, access, holiness, strength, comfort, heaven, -- all in one word-- Christ. The way of access is not indeed mentioned in these short ejaculations. But it is always implied in every moment's approach and address to the throne of grace. "Hear me" in the name of my all prevailing Advocate. "Save me" through him, whose name is Jesus the Saviour. Charles Bridges.

Verse 146. I cried unto thee. A crying prayer pierces the depths of heaven. We read not a word that Moses spake, but God was moved by his cry. Ex 14:15. It means not an obstreperous noise, but melting moans of heart. Yet sometimes the sore and pinching necessities and distresses of spirit extort even vocal cries not unpleasant to the inclined ears of God. "I cried unto God with my voice, "says David, "and he heard me out of his holy hill": Ps 3:4. And this encourages to a fresh onset: "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God": Ps 5:2. "Give ear unto my cry: hold not thy peace at my tears": Ps 39:12. Another time he makes the cave echo with his cries. "I cried, I cried. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low." -- Samuel Lee (1625-1691), in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 146. I cried unto thee; save me. In our troubles, we must have recourse to God, and sue to him by prayer and supplication for help and deliverance in due time; because he is the author of our trouble. In mercies and afflictions, our business lieth not with men, but God; by humble dealing with him we stop wrath at the fountain head: he that bindeth us must loose us; he is at the upper end of causes, and whoever be the instruments of our trouble, and how malicious soever, God is the party with whom we are to make our peace; for he hath the absolute disposal of all creatures, and will have us to acknowledge the dominion of his providence and our dependence upon him. In treaties of peace between two warring parties, the address is not made to private soldiers, but to their chief: "The Lord hath taken away, "saith Job; "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Job 34:29. Thomas Manton.

Verse 146. Save me, and I shall keep the testimonies. The servants of God regard life itself as chiefly desirable on account of the opportunity which it affords for serving God: "Save me, that I may keep thy testimonies, "is the prayer of the believer in the day of trouble and conflict. "To me to live, "says he, "is Christ, and to die is gain." How unlike is this to the wicked! Their whole desire in the day of trouble is expended on the wish to escape calamity; they have no desire to be delivered from sin, no wish to be conformed to God! -- John Morison.

Verse 146. Save me. From my sins, my corruptions, my temptations, all the hindrances that lie in my way, that I may "keep thy testimonies." We must cry for salvation, not that we may have the case and comfort of it, but that we may have an opportunity of serving God the more cheerfully. Matthew Henry.

Verse 146. God hears us, that we should hear him. Thomas Manton.

Verse 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning. The manner of speech is to be marked. He saith he prevented the morning watch, thereby declaring that he lived, as it were, in a strife with time, careful that it should not overrun him. He knew that time posts away, and in running by wearieth man to dust and ashes. But David pressed to get before it, by doing some good in it, before that it should spur away from him. And this care which David had of every day, alas, how may it make them ashamed who have no care of a whole life! He was afraid to lose a day; they take no thought to lose months and years without doing good in them: yea, having spent the three ages of their life in vanity and licentiousness, scarce will they consecrate their old and decrepit age to the Lord. William Cowper.

Verse 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, etc. Those that make a business of prayer will use great vigilance and diligence therein. I say, that make a business of prayer; others that use it as a compliment and customary formality, will not be thus affected; they do it as a thing by-the-by, or a work that might well be spared, and do not look upon it as a necessary duty; but if a man's heart be in it, he will be early at work, and follow it close, morning and night: his business is to maintain communion with God, his desires will not let him sleep, and he gets up early to be calling upon God. "But unto thee have I cried, O Lord: and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee." Ps 88:13. Thus will good men even break their sleep to give themselves to prayer, and calling upon the name of God. Thomas Manton.

Verse 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning. It is a grievous thing if the rays of the rising sun find thee lazy and ashamed in thy bed, and the bright light strike on eyes still weighed down with slumbering sloth. Knowest thou not, O man, that thou owest the daily firstfruits of thy heart and voice to God? Thou hast a daily harvest, a daily revenue. The Lord Jesus remained all night in prayer, not that he needed its help, but putting an example before thee to imitate. He spent the night in prayer for thee, that thou mightest learn how to ask for thyself. Give him again, therefore what he paid for thee. Ambrose.

Verse 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning. David was a good husband, up, early at it: at night he was late at this duty: "At midnight will I rise to give thanks unto thee": Ps 119:62. This surely was his meaning when he said he should dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; he would be ever in the house of prayer... I wish that when I first open my eyes in the morning, I may then, in soul ejaculatory prayer, open my heart to my God, that at night prayer may make my bed soft, and lay my pillow easy; that in the daytime prayer may perfume my clothes, sweeten my food, oil the wheels of my particular vocation, keep me company upon all occasions, and gild over all my natural, civil, and religious actions. I wish that, after I have poured out my prayer in the name of Christ, according to the will of God, having sowed my seed, I may expect a crop, looking earnestly for the springing of it up, and believing assuredly that I shall reap in time if I faint not. George Swinnock.

Verse 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning. Early prayers are undisturbed by the agitating cares of life, and resemble the sweet melody of those birds which sing loudest and sweetest when fewest cars are open to listen to them. O my soul, canst thou say that thou hast thus "prevented the dawning of the morning" in thy approaches to God? Has the desire of communion with heaven raised thee from thy slumbers, shaken off thy sloth, and carried thee to thy knees? -- John Morison.

Verse 147. And cried. Here is a repetition of the same prayer, "I cried"; yea, again I cried, and a third time, "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried." We use to knock at a door thrice, and then depart. Our Lord Jesus "prayed the third time, saying the same words" (Mt 26:44), "Father, if it he possible, let this cup pass from me." So the apostle Paul: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me": 2Co 12:8. So, "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again": 1Ki 17:21. This, it seemeth, was the time in which they expected an answer in weighty cases; and yet I will not confine it to that number; for here we are to reiterate our petitions for one and the same thing as often as occasion requireth, till it be granted. Thomas Manton.

Verse 147. Poets have delighted to sing of the morning as "Mother of the Dews, ""sowing the earth with orient pearl"; and many of the saints rising up from their beds at the first blush of dawn have round the poetry of nature to be the reality of grace as they have felt the dews of heaven refreshing their spirit. Hence morning exercises have ever been dear to the enlightened, heaven cloying souls, and it has been their rule, never to see the face of man till they have first seen the face of God. The breath of morn redolent of the smell of flowers is incense offered by earth to her Creator, and living men should never let the dead earth excel them; truly living men tuning their hearts for song, like the birds, salute the radiant mercy which reveals itself in the east. The first fresh hour of every morning should be dedicated to the Lord whose mercy gladdens it with golden light. The eye of day openeth its lids, and in so doing opens the eyes of hosts of heaven protected slumberers; it is fitting that those eyes should first look up to the great Father of Lights, the fount and source of all the good upon which the sunlight gleams. It augurs for us a day of grace when we begin betimes with God; the sanctifying influence of the season spent upon the mount operates upon each succeeding hour. Morning devotion anchors the soul so that it will not very readily drift far away from God during the day; it perfumes the heart so that it smells fragrant with piety until nightfall; it girds up the soul's garments so that it is less apt to stumble, and feeds all its rowers so that it is not permitted to faint. The morning is the gate of the day, and should be well guarded with prayer. It is one end of the thread on which the day's actions are strung, and should be well knotted with devotion. If we felt more the majesty of life we should be more careful of its mornings. He who rushes from his bed to his business and waiteth not to worship, is as foolish as though he had not put on his clothes, or cleansed his face, and as unwise as though he dashed into battle without arms or armour. Be it ours to bathe in the softly flowing river of communion with God, before the heat of the wilderness and the burden of the way begin to oppress us. C.H.S.

Verse 147. I hoped in thy word. Even if there should not be actual enjoyment, at least let us honour God by the spirit of expectancy. Charles Bridges.

Verses 147, 148. The student of theology and the minister of the word should begin the day with prayer, and this chiefly to seek from God, that he may rightly understand the word of God, and be able to teach others. Solomon Gesner Brethren, note this! -- C.H.S.

Verse 147, 148. See here:

1. That David was an early riser, which perhaps contributed to his eminency. He was none of those that say, "Yet a little sleep."

2. That he began the day with God; the first thing he did in the morning, before he admitted any business, was to pray; when his mind was most fresh and in the best frame. If our first thoughts in the morning be of God, it will help to keep us in his fear all the day long.

3. That his mind was so full of God and the cares and delights of his religion, that a little sleep served his turn, even in "the night watches, "when he awaked from his first sleep, he would rather meditate and pray, than turn him and go to sleep again. He esteemed the words of God's mouth more than his necessary repose, which we can as ill want as our food: Job 23:12.

4. That he would redeem time for religious exercises; he was full of business all day, but that will excuse no man from secret devotion; it is better to take time from sleep, as David did, than not find time for prayer. And this is our comfort when we pray in the night, that we can never come unseasonably to the throne of grace, if we may have access to it at all hours. Baal may be asleep, but Israel's God never slumbers, nor are there any hours in which he may not be spoken with. Matthew Henry.

Verse 148. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word. You will all admit that this is the language of an ardent, earnest, and painstaking student. David represents himself as "rising early, and late taking rest, "on purpose that he might employ himself in the study of God's word. "He meditates in this word, "the expression implying close and patient thought; as if there were much in the word which was not to be detected by a cursory glance, and which required the strictest application both of the head and the heart. The Bible is a book in which we may continually meditate, and yet not exhaust its contents. When David expressed himself in the language of our text, Holy Writ-- the word of God-- was of course a far smaller volume than it now is, though, even now, the Bible is far from a large book. Yet David could not, so to speak, get to the end of the book. He might have been studying the book for years, -- nay, we are sure that he had been, -- and yet, as though he were just entering on a new course of reading, with volume upon volume to peruse, lie must rise before day to prosecute the study. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word."

The same remark may be made upon precepts which enjoin continued study of the Bible. Is there material for that study? Unless there be, the precepts will become out of place; the Scriptural student will have exhausted the Scriptures; and what is he to do then? He can no longer obey the precepts, and the precepts will prove that they cannot have been made for perpetuity-- for the men of all ages and all conditions. . . . Here is a servant of God, who, from his youth upward, has been diligent in the study of the Bible. Year after year he has devoted to that study, and yet the Bible is but a single volume, and that not a large volume. "Well, then, "you might be inclined to say, "the study must surely by this time have exhausted the book! There can be nothing new for him to bring out; nothing which he has not investigated and fathomed." Ah, how you mistake the Bible! What a much larger book it must be than it seems! In place of having exhausted it, the royal student speaks as though there were more work before him than he knew how to compass. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." -- Henry Melvill.

Verse 148. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches." The Hebrew word means a watch-- a part of the night, so called from military watches, or a dividing of the night to keep guard. The idea of the Psalmist here is, that he anticipated these regular divisions of the night in order that he might engage in devotion. Instead of waiting for their return, he arose for prayer before they recurred; so much did his heart delight in the service of God. The language would seem to be that of one who was accustomed to pray in these successive "watches" of the night; the early, the middle, and the dawn. This may illustrate what occurs in the life of all who love God. They will have regular seasons of devotion, but they will often anticipate those seasons. They will be in a state of mind which prompts them to pray; when nothing will meet their state of mind but prayer; and when they cannot wait for the regular and ordinary season of devotion; like a hungry man, who cannot wait for the usual and regular hour of his meals. The meaning of the phrase, "Mine eyes prevent, "is that he awoke before the usual time for devotion. Albert Barnes.

Verse 148. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, etc. His former purpose is yet continued, declaring his indefatigable perseverance in prayer. Oh, that we could learn of him to use our time well! At evening he lay down with prayers and tears; at midnight he rose to give thanks; he got up before the morning light to call upon the Lord. This is to imitate the life of angels, who ever are delighted to behold the face of God, singing alway a new song without wearying. This is to begin our heaven upon earth: Oh, that we could alway remember it! -- William Cowper.

Verse 148. Night watches. The Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, divided the night into military watches instead of hours, each watch representing the period for which sentinels or pickets remained on duty. The proper Jewish reckoning recognized only three such watches, entitled the first, "or beginning of the watches" (La 2:19), "the middle watch" (Jud 7:19), and "the morning watch" (Ex 14:24; 1Sa 11:11). These would last respectively from sunset to 10 p.m.; from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.; and from 2 a.m. to sunrise. It has been contended by Lightfoot that the Jews really reckoned four watches, three only of which were in the dead of the night, the fourth being in the morning. This, however, is rendered improbable by the use of the term "middle, "and is opposed to Rabbinical authority. Subsequently to establishment of Roman supremacy, the number of watches was increased four which was described either according to their numerical order, as the case of the "fourth watch" (Mt 14:25), or by the terms" midnight, cock crowing, and morning" (Mr 13:35). These, terminated at 9 p.m., midnight, 3 a.m., and 6 a.m. Conformably to this, the guard of soldiers was divided into four relays (Ac 12:4), showing that the Roman regime was followed in Herod's army. Watchmen appear have patrolled the streets of the Jewish towns (So 3:3 5:7; Ps 127:1) where for "maketh" we should substitute "watcheth"; Ps 130:6. William Latham Beyan, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 1863.

Verse 150. They are far from thy law. Truly it should greatly all the godly, to remember that such as are their enemies are God's also. Since they are far from the obedience of God's law, what marvel be also far from the duty of love which they owe us? It may content want that comfort in men which otherwise we might and would have, we consider that God wants his glory in them. Let this sustain us see that godless men are enemies unto us. William Cowper.

Verse 150. If we can get a carnal pillow and bolster under our we sleep and dream many a golden dream of ease and safety. Now, God, who is jealous of our trust, will not let us alone, and therefore will put us upon sharp trials. It is not faith, but sense, we live upon before; faith, if we can depend upon God when "they draw near that follow mischief:" "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about": Ps 3:6. A danger at distance is but imagined, it worketh otherwise when it is at hand. Christ himself had other thoughts of approaching danger than danger at a distance: "Now is my soul troubled": Joh 12:27. This vessel of pure water was troubled though he discovered no dross. Thomas Manton.

Verses 150-151. Our spiritual enemies, like David's earthly persecuters are ever present and active. The devouring "lion, "or the insinuating "serpent" is "nigh to follow after mischief"; and so much the more dangerous, as his approaches are invisible. Nigh also is a tempting, ensnaring world; and nearer still, a lurking world of sin within, separating us from communion with our God. But in turning habitually and immediately to our stronghold, we can enjoy the confidence-- "Thou art near, O Lord." Though "the High and Lofty One, whose name is Holy" -- though the just and terrible God, yet art thou made nigh to thy people, and they to thee, "by the blood of the cross." And thou dost manifest thy presence to them in "the Son of thy love." -- Charles Bridges.

Verses 150-151. They are "nigh" to persecute and destroy me; thou art nigh, O Lord, to help me. J.J. Stewart Perowne.

Verses 150-151. They draw nigh. ..."Thou art near." From the meditation of his enemies' malice he returns again to the meditation of God's mercy; and so it is expedient for us to do, lest the number and greatness and maliciousness of our enemies make us to faint when we look unto them. It is good that we should cast our eyes upward to the Lord; then shall we see that they are not so near to hurt us as the Lord our God is near to help us; and that there is no evil in them which we have cause to fear, but we shall find in our God a contrary good sufficient to preserve us. Otherwise we could not endure, if when Satan and his instruments come near to pursue us, the Lord were not near to protect us. William Cowper.

Verse 151. Thou art near, O Lord. How sweetly and how often has this thought been brought home to some forsaken and forgotten one! "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up, "was the comfort of one in that deep affliction. And in the first out breaking of the heart, how sweetly has the conviction come, like some whisper of peace, "I am with thee!" And I have no doubt that many and many a time in those hours of solitary prayer, when before the dawning of the morning, and before the night watches, or the Psalmist arose at midnight to commune with God, when no voice broke on the stillness, and every sound was hushed save the beating of his own heart, then had David heard the whisper of God's Holy Spirit, "I am near, ""Fear not, I am with thee." -- Barton Bouchier.

Verse 151. Thou art near, O Lord. This was once man's greatest blessing, and source of sweetest consolation. It was the fairest flower which grew in Paradise; but sin withered it, the flower faded, it drooped, it died. Ge 3:8 4:16. It must be so once more; the flower must once again bloom, again it must revive; even upon earth must it blossom, or in heaven it will never put forth its fragrance.

Thou art near. Even in thy works of "creation", in the sun in his glory, in the moon in her softness, gleaming in the firmament, I see thee. In the balm of this fragrant air, in the light of this cheerful day, in the redolence of these shrubs around me, whose flowery tops, as they drink in the soft and gentle shower as it falls, seem to breathe forth a fresh perfume in gratitude to him who sends it. In the melody of these birds which fill the air with their Songs, thou, O Lord, art near. I perceive thee not with my bodily eyes, although by these I discern thy workmanship, and with the eye of the mind behold thee in thy works, a present God.

Thou art near. Even in the book of thy providence, dark and mysterious though it be, I see thee. There do I read thy wisdom, as developed in thy world, thy church, thy saints, thy servant before thee; the wisdom that guides, the wisdom that guards, the wisdom that bestows, the wisdom that encourages, the wisdom that corrects, that kills and makes alive. There do I read thy power, thy justice, thy faithfulness, thy holiness, thy love.

But it is in thy Son, thy beloved Son, that I most clearly and distinctly see thee as near. If in creation, if in providence, thou art near, in him thou art very near. O Lord. Near as a sin forgiving God. Ro 8:1. Near as a promise-keeping God. 2Co 1:20. Near as a prayer hearing God. Joh 16:20; Ps 145:18. Near as a covenant keeping God. Heb 8:10. Near as a gracious, tender Father. Joh 20:17.

Thou art near, O Lord. O that I might live in the constant sense of thy nearness to me! How often, far too often, alas, do I seem quite to forget it!

Art thou near? Then may I realizingly remember, that by the blood of thy dear Son, and by that alone, have I been brought nigh (Eph 4:13); that it required nothing less than the stoop of Deity, and the sufferings and death of Iris perfect humanity, to remove those hindrances which interposed between a holy God and an unholy creature. Oh, to walk before thee with a grateful spirit, and with a broken, contrite heart!

Art thou near? Then may I walk as before thee, as seeing thee, in holy fear, in filial love, in simple faith, in child like confidence. Ge 17:1. When sin would tempt and solicit indulgence, when the world presents some new allurement, when Satan would take advantage of constitution, society, circumstances, oh, that I may ever remember "Thou art near."

If my dearest comforts droop and die, if friends are cool, if the bonds once the firmest, the closest, the tenderest, are torn asunder and dissevered, yet may I still remember, "Thou art near, O Lord, "and not afar off. And when the solemn moment shall come, when heart and flesh shall fail, when all earthly things are seen with a dying eye, when I hear thee say, "Thou must die, and not live, "then, oh then may I remember, with all the composedness of faith, and all the liveliness of hope, and all the ardour of love, "Thou art near, O Lord." -- James Harington Evans, 1785-1849.

Verse 151. All thy commandments are truth. His meaning is, -- Albeit, O Lord, the evil will of wicked men follows me because I follow thee; yet I know thy commandments are true, and that it is not possible that thou canst desert or fail thy servants who stand to the maintenance of thy word. Then, ye see, David's comfort in trouble was not in any presumptuous conceit of his own wisdom or strength, but in the truth of God's promises, which he was persuaded could not fail him. And here also he makes a secret opposition between the word of the Lord and the word of his enemies. Sometimes men command, but without reason; sometimes they threaten, but without effect. Herod's commanding, Rabshakeh's railing, Jezebel's proud boasting against Elijah, may prove this. But as to the Lord our God he is alway better than his word, and his servants shall find more in his performance hereafter than now they can perceive in his promise: like as his enemies should find more weight in his judgments than now they can apprehend in his threatenings. William Cowper.

Verse 152. This portion of our psalm endeth with the triumph of faith over all dangers and temptations. "Concerning thy testimonies, " the revelations of thy will, thy counsels for the salvation of thy servants, "I have known of old, "by faith, and by my own experience, as well as that of others, "that thou hast founded them for ever"; they are unalterable and everlasting as the attributes of their great Author, and can never fail those who rely upon them, in time or in eternity. George Horne.

Verse 152. I have known of old. It was not a late persuasion, or a thing that he was now to learn; he always knew it since he knew anything of God, that God had owned his word as the constant rule of his proceedings with creatures, in that God had so often made good his word to him, not only by present and late, but by old and ancient experiences. Well, then, David's persuasion of the truth and unchangeableness of the word was not a sudden humour, or a present fit, or a persuasion of a few days' standing; but he was confirmed in it by long experience. One or two experiences had been no trial of the truth of the word, they might seem but a good hit; but his word ever proveth true, not once or twice, but always; what we say "of old, "the Septuagint reads kat adxas, "from the beginnings"; that is, either--

1. From my tender years. Timothy knew the Scriptures from a child (2Ti 3:15); so David very young was acquainted with God and his truth.

2. Or, from the first time that he began to be serious, or to mind the word in good earnest, or to be a student either in God's word or works, by comparing providences and promises, he found concerning his testimonies that "God had founded them for ever."

3. Lastly, "of old" may be what I have heard of all foregoing ages, their experience as well as mine: "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded:" Ps 22:4,5. Thomas Manton.

Verse 152. Let us mark this eternal basis of "the testimonies of God." The whole plan of redemption was emphatically "founded for ever": the Saviour was "foreordained before the foundation of the world." The people of God were "chosen in Christ before the world began." The great Author "declares the end from the beginning, "and thus clears his dispensations from any charge of mutability or contingency. Every event in the church is fixed, permitted, and provided for-- not in the passing moment of time; but in the counsels of eternity. When, therefore, the testimonies set forth God's faithful engagements with his people of old, the recollection that they are "founded for ever" gives us a present and unchangeable interest in them. And when we see that they are grounded upon the oath and promise of God-- the two "immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie" -- we may truly "have strong consolation" in venturing every hope for eternity upon this rock; nor need we be dismayed to see all our earthly dependencies-- "the world, and the lust, and the fashion of it-- passing away" before us. Charles Bridges.

Verse 154. Plead my cause, and deliver me, etc. Albeit the godly under persecution have a good cause, yet they cannot plead it except God the Redeemer show himself as Advocate for them; therefore prayeth the Psalmist, "Plead my cause." When God the Redeemer pleadeth a man's cause, he doth it to purpose and effectually: "Plead my cause, and deliver me." Except the Lord's clients shall find new influence from God from time to time in their troubles, they are but as dead men in their exercise; for, "Quicken me" imports this. Till we find lively encouragement given to us in trouble we must adhere to the word of promise: "Quicken me according to thy word." What the believer hath need of, that God hath not only a will to supply, but also an office to attend it, and power to effectuate it, as here he hath the office of an Advocate and of a powerful Redeemer also, wherein the believer may confidently give him daily employment, as he needeth: "Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word." -- David Dickson.

Verse 154. Plead my cause, and deliver me, etc. He now supposes himself to be arraigned before the tribunal of men, as he certainly was in their general charges against him; arraigned, too, in his helplessness, without a name, without state; in such way as one disowned would be arraigned. He prays the Lord to come in and plead his cause; so should he be redeemed; for this is the import of the original. As it were, he regards himself as one sold to corrupt judges, or at all events, as one that has lost his standing in society in the estimation of men. But if the Lord will come, and maintain the cause of his servant, his servant shall be redeemed indeed. There is good confidence in this prayer; the man of God is acquainted with the way of the Lord, and he makes his believing application. O how much do we need to know the Lord's righteous character in our seasons of great distress! Now the Lord pleads the cause of his own by the power of the truth; he pleads it also in his providences of divers kinds; he acts upon the hearts, and the hopes, and the fears of men; and in many wondrous ways he pleads his people's cause. He redeems his saints from all evil; and if not together from all evil in this world, certainly from all evil as concerns the world to come. John Stephen.

Verse 154. Plead my cause, and deliver me, etc. In this verse are three requests, and all backed with one and the same argument. In the first, he intimates the right of his and that he was unjustly vexed by wicked cause, men; therefore, as burdened with their calumnies, he desireth God to undertake his defence: "Plead my cause." In the second, he represents the misery and helplessness of his condition; therefore, as oppressed by violence, he saith, "Deliver me; "or, as the words will bear, "Redeem me". In the third, his own weakness, and readiness to faint under this burden; therefore he saith, "Quicken me." Or, in short, with respect to the injustice of his adversaries, "Plead my cause; "with respect to the misery of his own condition, "Deliver me; "with respect to the weakness and imbecility of his own heart, "Quicken me." The reason and ground of asking, "According to thy word." This last clause must be applied to all the branches of the prayer: "Plead my cause, ""according to thy word; ""deliver me, ""according to thy word; ""quicken me, ""according to thy word:" for God in his word engages for all: to be advocate, Redeemer, and fountain of life. The word that David buildeth upon was found either in the general promises made to them that kept the law, or in some particular promise made to himself by the prophets of that time. Thomas Manton.

Verse 154. Plead my cause, and deliver me. A wicked woman once brought against Dr. Payson an accusation, under circumstances which seemed to render it impossible that he should escape. She was in the same packet, in which, many months before, he had gone to Boston. For a time, it seemed almost certain that his character would be ruined. He was cut off from all resource except the throne of grace. He felt that his only hope was in God; and to him he addressed his fervent prayer. He was heard by the Defender of the innocent. A "compunctious visiting" induced the wretched woman to confess that the whole was a malicious slander. From Asa Cummings' Memoir of Edward Payson.

Verse 154. Plead my cause. I do not know that David meant, by calling upon God to plead his cause, anything more than that he should vindicate his innocence, and make it manifest to all, by delivering him out of the hand of all his enemies; but whether he had an ulterior reference or no, the word powerfully and sweetly recalls to every Christian heart him who was indeed to be the Advocate for poor sinners, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 154. Plead my cause. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of God. Which made David here pray to God that he would plead his cause, and be his Advocate against all their lies. He trusted not to the equity of his own cause, but to the Lord. From whence we gather, that the cause why our oppressors prevail oft against us is, because we trust too much in our own wits, and lean too much upon our own inventions; opposing subtilty to subtilty, one evil device to another, matching and maintaining policy by policy, and not committing our cause to God. Abraham Wright.

Verse 154. Deliver. Not as in Ps 119:153, but a word meaning to redeem, or to save by avenging. The corresponding participle is rendered redeemer, avenger, revenger, kinsman, near kinsman, next kinsman. William S. Plumer.

Verse 154. Quicken me. Here, again, we are called to consider the bearing of the pious mind. Ever and anon, the great desire of the man of God is to advance in the divine life. He makes spiritual gain of everything. He seeks his goodly pearls out of strange conditions; the reason is, his heart is in these things. Deliverance from temporal evil, deliverance from spiritual evil, both were sought; but along with these, ever does the man of God take up the prayer to be quickened. Certainly we may understand him as seeking life. Such is the import of the phraseology; but in a man like David, the life he seeks must be the highest. He desires spiritual life above all things; he wants to get more into a blessed assimilation to God, that so he may enjoy the highest good. So pants the heaven born soul...Give the believer this, and this will set him above all the ills of life. And this and all good had been promised in the word. So he prays, "Quicken me according to the word." He goes upon the word for everything; he cannot be self deceived there. Judge of yourselves, my brethren, by your spiritual aspirations. Nothing less will prove you to be of the Lord's redeemed. John Stephen.

Verses 154, 156, 159. Quicken me. Pray to be quickened, as the Psalmist often does, and look unto Jesus, who is a quickening spirit: 1Co 15:45. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." As he has given you life, so he is ready to give it more and more abundantly; this will make you to live to him, and to be unweariedly active for him. Nathanael Vincent, in "A Present for such as have been Sick and Recovered," 1693.

Verse 155. Salvation is far from the wicked. The Lord is almighty to pardon; but he will not use it for thee an impenitent sinner. Thou hast not a friend on the bench, not an attribute in all God's name will speak for thee. Mercy itself will sit and vote with the rest of its fellow attributes for thy damnation. God is able to save and help in a time of need, but upon what acquaintance is it that thou art so bold with God, as to expect his saving arm to be stretched forth for thee? Though a man rise at midnight to let in a child that cries and knocks at his door, yet he will not take so much pains for a dog that lies howling there. This presents thy condition, sinner, sad enough, yet this is to tell thy story fairest; for that almighty power of God which is engaged for the believer's salvation, is as deeply obliged to bring thee to thy execution and damnation. What greater tie than an oath? God himself is under an oath to be the destruction of every impenitent soul. That oath which God sware in his wrath against the unbelieving Israelites, that they should not enter into his rest, concerns every unbeliever to the end of the world. In the name of God consider, were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men that, like those in the Acts, should swear to be the death of such an one, and thou wert the man, would it not fill thee with fear and trembling, night and day, and take away the quiet of thy life, till they were made thy friends? What then are their pillows stuffed with, who can sleep so soundly without any horror or amazement, though they be told that the almighty God is under an oath of damning them body and soul, without timely repentance? -- William Gurnall.

Verse 155. Salvation! What music is there in that word. Music that never tires, but is always new, that always rouses yet always rests us! It holds in itself all that our hearts would say. It is sweet rigour to us in the morning, and in the evening it is contented peace. It is a song that is always singing itself deep down in the delighted soul. Angelic ears are ravished by it up in heaven; and our Eternal Father himself listens to it with adorable complacency. It is sweet even to him out of whose mind is the music of a thousand worlds. To be saved! What is it to be saved in the fullest and utmost meaning? Who can tell? Eye hath not seen, nor car heard. It is a rescue, and from such a shipwreck! It is a rest, and in such an unimaginable home! It is to lie down for ever in the bosom of God, in an endless rapture of insatiable contentment. Frederick William Faber, 1853.

Verses 155-156. Salvation is far from the wicked. "Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD." When the godly do think and speak of the damnable condition of the wicked, they should not be senseless of their own ill deserving, nor of God's grace which hath made the difference between the wicked and them. David Dickson.

Verse 156. Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD. Two epithets he ascribes to God's mercies; first, he calls them "great, "and then he calls them "tender" mercies. They are great in many respects: for continuance, they endure for ever; for largeness, they reach unto the heavens, and are higher than they; yea, they are above all the works of God. And this is for the comfort of poor sinners, whose sins are many and great: let them not despair; his mercies are greater and more; for since they are greater than all his works, how much more greater than thou and all thy sinful works!...The other epithet he gives them is, that they ale "tender" mercies; because the Lord is easy to be entreated; for he is slow unto wrath, but ready to show mercy: S. James saith that the wisdom which is from above is "gentle, peaceable, easy to be entreated." If his grace in his children make them gentle and easy to be entreated, what shall we think of himself? Since he will have such pity in us poor creatures, that seventy times seven times in the day he will have us to forgive the offences of our brethren; Oh, what pity and compassion abound in himself! Thus we see our comfort is increased; that as his mercies are great, so are they tender; easily obtained, where they are earnestly craved. William Cowper.

Verse 156. The Psalmist, when speaking of the wretched condition of "the wicked, "is naturally led to adore the mercies of the Lord which had "made him to differ." For indeed to this source alone must we trace the distinction between us and them. Charles Bridges.

Verse 157. Persecutors. A participle from the verb rendered pursue, chase. "Enemies, "as in verse 139, the authors of my distress. Until men are hunted and hounded by many enemies, who for the time have power, and are withal fierce and to some extent unscrupulous, they can have but a faint conception of the anguish of the prophet when he experienced the evils noted in this verse. Yet they did not move him from his constancy and integrity. William S. Plurner.

Verse 158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved. Celerinus in Cyprian's Epistles, acquaints a friend with his great grief for the apostasy of a woman through fear of persecution; which afflicted him so much, that at the feast of Easter (the Queen of feasts in the primitive church) he wept night and day, and resolved never to know a moment's delight, till through the mercy of God she should be recovered. Charles Bridges.

Verse 158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved. Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbours. Alas, there is but a step betwixt them and death and hell: many hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate they are lost for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace: should you not rather say, as the lepers of Samaria, is it not a day of glad tidings, and do we sit still and hold our peace 2Ki 7:9. Hath God had so much mercy on you, and will you have no mercy on your poor neighbours? You need not go far to find objects for your pity: look but into your streets, or into the next house to you, and you will probably find some. Have you never an ignorant, an unregenerate neighbour that sets his heart on things below, and neglects eternity? What blessed place do you live in, where there is none such? If there be not some of them in thine own family, it is well; and yet art thou silent? Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labour with them, or travel with them, or sit and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come? If their houses were on fire, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell? If thou knewest but a remedy for their diseases thou wouldst tell it them, or else thou wouldst judge thyself guilty of their death. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), in "The Saints' Everlasting Rest."

Verse 158. Grieved, because they kept not thy law. I never thought the world had been so wicked, when the Gospel began, as now I see it is; I rather hoped that every one would have leaped for joy to have found himself freed from the filth of the Pope, from his lamentable molestations of poor troubled consciences, and that through Christ they would by faith obtain the celestial treasure they sought after before with such vast cost and labour, though in vain. And especially I thought the bishops and universities would with joy of heart have received the true doctrines; but I have been lamentably deceived. Moses and Jeremiah, too, complained they had been deceived. Martin Luther.

Verse 158. Grieved. The word that is here translated "grieved" is from "katat", that signifies to loathe, abhor, and contend. I beheld the transgressors, and I loathed them; I beheld the transgressors, and I abhorred them; I beheld the transgressors, and I contended with them; but not so much because they were mine enemies, as because they were thine. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 158. The day when I first met Colonel Gardiner at Leicester, I happened to preach a lecture from Ps 114:158: "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word." I was large in describing that mixture of indignation and grief, strongly expressed by the original word there, with which a good man looks on the varying transgressors of the divine law; and in tracing the causes of that grief, as arising, from a regard to the divine honour, and the interest of a Redeemer, and a compassionate concern for the misery such offenders bring on themselves, and for the mischief they do to the world about them. I little thought how exactly I was drawing Colonel Gardiner's character under each of those heads; and I have often reflected upon it as a happy providence, which opened a much speedier way than I could have expected, to the breast of one of the most amiable and useful friends which I ever expect to find upon earth. We afterwards sung a hymn, which brought over again some of the leading thoughts in the sermon, and struck him so strongly, that on obtaining a copy of it, he committed it to his memory, and used to repeat it with so forcible an accent, as showed how much every line expressed of his very soul. In this view the reader will pardon my inserting it; especially as I know not when I may get time to publish a volume of these serious though artless compositions, which I sent him in manuscript some years ago, and to which I have since made very large additions:

Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise,

o torrents melt my streaming eyes;

And thou, my heart, with anguish feel

Those evils which thou canst not heal.

See human nature sunk in shame;

See scandals pour'd on Jesus' name;

The Father wounded through the Son;

The world abused, and souls undone.

See the short course of vain delight

Closing in everlasting night;

In flames that no abatement know,

Though briny tears for ever flow.

My God, I feel the mournful scene;

My bowels yearn o'er dying men,

And fain my pity would reclaim,

And snatch the firebrands from the flame.

But feeble my compassion proves,

And can but weep where most it loves;

Thy own all saving arm employ,

And turn these drops of grief to joy.

-- Philip Doddridge, in "The Life of Colonel Garainer."

Verse 159. Consider how I love thy precepts. Search me. Behold the evidence of my attachment to thy law. This is the confident appeal of one who was conscious that he was truly attached to God; that he really loved his law. It is similar to the appeal of Peter to the Saviour (Joh 21:17), "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." A man who truly loves God may make this appeal without impropriety. He may he so confident, so certain, that he has true love for the character of God, that he may make a solemn appeal to him on the subject, as he might appeal to a friend, to his wife, to his son, to his daughter, with the utmost confidence that he loved them. A man ought to have such love for them, that he could affirm this without hesitation or doubt; a man ought to have such love for God, that he could, affirm this with equal confidence and propriety. Albert Barnes.

Verse 159. Consider how I love thy precepts. He saith not, consider how I perform thy precepts; but how I love them. The comfort of a Christian militant, in this body of sin, is rather in the sincerity and fervency of his affections than in the absolute perfection of his actions. He fails many times in his obedience to God's precepts, in regard of his action; but love in his affection still remains; so that both before the temptation to sin, and after it, there is a grief in his soul, that he should find in himself any corrupt will or desire, contrary to the holy will of the Lord his God; and this proves an invincible love in him to the precepts of God. William Cowper.

Verse 159. Consider, etc. Translate (the Hebrew being the same as in verse 158) "Behold how I love thy precepts, "as is evinced in that when "I beheld the transgressors I was grieved." He begs to God to behold this, not as meritorious of grace, but as a distinctive mark of a godly man. A. R. Fausset.

Verse 159. I love thy precepts: quicken me. The love wherewith he loved God came from that love wherewith God first loved him. For by seeing the great love wherewith God loved him, he was moved and refereed to love God again. So that his meaning is thus much: Thou seest, Lord, that I am an enemy to sin in myself, for I forget not thy law; thou seest that I am an enemy to sin in others, for I am grieved to see them transgress thy law; wherefore, O Lord, "quicken me, "and let thy loving mercy whereby thou hast created me and redeemed me in Christ, whereby thou hast delivered me from so many troubles, and enriched me with so many and continual benefits, renew, revive, quicken, and restore me. Richard Greenham.

Verse 159. Quicken me. Often as the Psalmist had repeated his prayer for quickening grace, \*it was not a "vain repetition, "or an empty sound. Each time was it enlivened with abundant faith, intense feeling of his necessity, and the vehemency of most ardent affection. If the consciousness of the faintness of our strength and the coldness of our affections should lead us to offer this petition a hundred times a day in this spirit, it would never fail of acceptance. Charles Bridges.

\*Nine times is the petition urged, verses 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149 154, 156, and 159.

Verse 159. According to thy lovingkindness. We need not desire to be quickened any further than God's lovingkindness will quicken us. Matthew Henry.

Verse 160. Thy word is true from the beginning. Literally, "The beginning of thy word is truth, "in antithesis to the "enduring for ever, "in the future, in the next clause. Cocceius and Hengstenberg take it, "The sum of thy word is true, "as in Nu 26:2 31:26. But the antithesis noticed above in the English version is thus lost; and the old versions support the English version. Also, if it were "the sum, " the plural ought to follow, viz., "of thy words, "not "word." -- A. R. Fausset.

Verse 160. Thy word is true from the beginning, etc. As if he should say, I believe that thou wilt thus quicken me, because the very beginning of thy word is most just and true; and when thou didst first enter into covenant with me, I did find that thou didst not deceive me, not beguile me. And when by thy Spirit thou madest me believe thy covenant, thou meanest truth; and I know that as thou didst promise, thou wilt perform, for thou art no more liberal in promising than faithful and just in performing, and thy judgment will be as righteous as thy promise is true. I know that as soon as thou speakest, truth proceedeth from thee; and even so I know thou wilt defend and preserve me, that thy judgments may shine as righteous in thee. Richard Greenham.

Verse 160. Thy word is true from the beginning, etc. God's commandment and promise is exceeding broad, reaching to all times. Was a word of command "the guide of thy youth"? I assure thee it will be as good a staff of thine age. A good promise is a good nurse, both to the young babe and to the decrepit old man. Your apothecaries' best cordials in time will lose their spirits, and sometimes the stronger they are, the sooner. But hath a promise cheered thee, say, twenty, thirty, forty years ago? Taste it but now afresh, and thou shalt find it as fresh, and as full of refreshment as ever. If it hath been thy greatest joy in thy joyful youth, I tell thee, it hath as much joy in it for thy sad old age. That may be said of God's word, which the prophet saith of God himself (Isa 46:4): "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you." Doth not the Psalmist say as much here, "Thy word is true from the beginning"? It's well, it begins well. But will it last as well? Yes: he adds, "and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." Answerable to which is that other expression (verse 152), "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever." "For ever, "and "founded for ever." O sweet expression! O grounded comfort! Brethren, get acquainted with God's word and promise as soon as you can, and maintain that acquaintance everlastingly; and your knowledge of it shall not either go before, or go beyond its truth. Know it as soon and as long as you will or can, and you shall never find it tripping or failing; but you may after long experience of God say of it, "I have known of old that thou hast founded it for ever." -- Anthony Tuckhey, 1599-- 1670.

Verse 161. Princes have persecuted me. The evil is aggravated from the consideration that it is the very persons who ought to be as bucklers to defend us, who employ their strength in hurting us. Yea, when the afflicted are stricken by those in high places, they in a manner think that the hand of God is against them. There was also this peculiarity in the case of the prophet, that he had to encounter the grandees of the chosen people-- men whom God had placed in such honourable stations, to the end they might be the pillars of the Church. John Calvin.

Verse 161. Without a cause. I settle it as an established point with me, that the more diligently and faithfully I serve Christ, the greater reproach and the more injury I must expect. I have drank deep of the cup of slander and reproach of late, but I am in no Wise discouraged; no, nor by, what is much harder to bear, the unsuccessfulness of my endeavours to mend this bad world. Philip Doddridge.

Verse 161. Without a cause. We know what persecutions the body of Christ, that is, the holy Church, suffered from the kings of the earth. Let us therefore here also recognize the words of the Church: "Princes have persecuted me without a cause." For how had the Christians injured the kingdoms of the earth? Although their King promised them the kingdom of heaven, how, I ask, had they injured the kingdoms of earth? Did their King forbid his soldiers to pay and to render due service to the kings of the earth? Saith he not to the Jews who were striving to calumniate him, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"? Mt 22:21. Did he not even in his own person pay tribute from the mouth of a fish? Did not his forerunner, when the soldiers of this kingdom were seeking what they ought to do for their everlasting salvation, instead of replying." Loose your belts, throw away your arms, desert your king, that ye may wage war for the Lord, "answer, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with wages?" Lu 3:14. Did not one of his soldiers, his most beloved your companion, say to his fellow soldiers, the provincials, so to speak, of Christ, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers"? and a little lower he addeth, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Ro 13:1,7,8. Does he not enjoin the Church to pray even for kings themselves? How, then, have the Christians offended against them? What due have they not rendered? In what have not Christians obeyed the monarchs of earth? The kings of the earth therefore have persecuted the Christians without a cause. Augustine.

Verse 161. But my heart standeth in awe of thy word. If there remains any qualm of fear on thy heart, fear from the wrath of bloody men threatening thee for thy profession of the truth, then to a heart inflamed with the love of truth, labour to add a heart filled with the fear of that wrath which God hath in store for all that apostatize from the truth. When you chance to burn your finger, you hold it to the fire, which being a greater fire draws out the other. Thus, when thy thoughts are scorched, and thy heart scared with the fire of man's wrath, hold them a while to hell fire, which God hath prepared for the fearful (Re 21:8), and all that run away from truth's colours (Heb 10:39), and thou wilt lose the sense of the one for fear of the other. Ignosee imperator, saith the holy man, tu carcerem, Dens gehennam minatur;"Pardon me, O Emperor, if I obey not thy command; thou threatenest a prison, but God a hell." Observable is that of David: "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word." He had no cause to fear them that had no cause to persecute him. One threatening out of the word, that sets the point of God's wrath to his heart, scares him more than the worst that the greatest on earth can do to him. Man's wrath, when hottest, is but a temperate climate to the wrath of the living God. They who have felt both have testified as much. Man's wrath cannot hinder the access of God's love to the creature, which hath made the saints sing in the fire, in spite of their enemies' teeth. But the creature under God's wrath is like one shut up in a close oven, no crevice is open to let any of the heat out, or any refreshing in to him. William Gurnall.

Verse 161. My heart standeth in awe of thy word. There is an awe of the word, not that maketh us shy of it, but tender of violating it, or doing anything contrary to it. This is not the fruit of slavish fear, but of holy love; it is not afraid of the word, but delighteth in it, as it discovereth the mind of God to us; as in the next verse it is written, "I rejoice at thy word." This awe is called by a proper name, reverence, or godly fear; when we consider whose word it is, namely, the word of the Lord, who is our God, and hath a right to command what he pleaseth; to whose will and word we have already yielded obedience, and devoted ourselves to walk worthy of him in all well pleasing; who can find us out in all our failings, as knowing our very thoughts afar of (Ps 139:2), and having all our ways before him, and being one of whom we read, -- "He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Jos 24:19), that is to say, if we impenitently continue in them. Considering these things we receive the word with that trembling of heart which God so much respects. Thomas Manton.

Verse 161. In awe of thy word. I would advise you all, that come to the reading or hearing of this book, which is the word of God, the most precious jewel, and most holy relic that remaineth upon earth, that ye bring with you the fear of God, and that ye do it with all due reverence, and use your knowledge thereof, not to vain glory of frivolous disputation, but to the honour of God, increase of virtue, and edification both of yourselves and others. Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1555.

Verse 161. Awe of thy word. They that tremble at the convictions of the word may triumph in the consolations of it. Matthew Henry.

Verse 162. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. He never came to an ordinance but as a soldier to the spoil, after a great battle, as having a constant warfare with his corruptions that fought against his soul. Now he comes to see what God will say to him, and he will make himself a saver or gainer, and get a booty out of every commandment, promise, or threatening he hears. John Cotton (1585-1652), in "The way of life."

Verse 162. I rejoice at thy word. "Euripides, "saith the orator, "hath in his well composed tragedies more sentiments than sayings; " and Thucydides hath so stuffed every syllable of his history with substance, that the one runs parallel along with the other; Lysias's works are so well couched that you cannot take out the least word but you take away the whole sense with it; and Phocion had a special faculty of speaking much in a few words. The Cretians, in Plato's time (however degenerated in St. Paul's), were more weighty than wordy; Timanthes was famous in this, that in his pictures more things were intended than deciphered; and of Homer it is said that none could ever peer him for poetry. Then how much more apt and apposite are these high praises to the book of God, rightly called the Bible or the book as if it were, as indeed it is, both for fitness of terms and fulness of truth, the only book to winch (as Luther saith) all the books in the world are but waste paper. It is called the word, by way of eminency, because it must be the butt and boundary of all our words; and the scripture, as the lord paramount above all other words or writings of men collected into volumes, there being, as the Rabbins say, a mountain of sense hanging upon every tittle of it, whence may be gathered flowers and phrases to polish our speeches with, even sound words, that have a healing property in them, far above all filed phrases of human elocution. Thomas Adams.

Verse 162. As one that findeth great spoil. This expressive image may remind us of the inward conflict to be endured in acquiring the spoils of this precious word. It is so contrary to our natural taste and temper, that habitual self-denial and struggle with the indisposition of the heart can alone enable us to "find the spoil." But what "great spoil" is divided as the fruit of the conflict! How rich and abundant is the recompense of the "good soldier of Jesus Christ, "who is determined through the power of the Spirit to "endure hardness, "until he overcome the reluctance of his heart to this spiritual duty. He shall "rejoice in finding great spoil." Sometimes -- as the spoil with which the lepers enriched themselves in the Syrian camp-- it may be found unexpectedly. Sometimes we see the riches and treasures contained in a passage or doctrine, long before we can make it our own. And often when we gird ourselves to the conflict with indolence, and wanderings, under the weakness of our spiritual perceptions and the power of unbelief, many a prayer, and many a sigh is sent up for Divine aid, before we are crowned with victory, and are enabled, as the fruit of our conquest joyfully to appropriate the word to our present need and distress. Charles Bridges.

Verse 163. I hate and abhor lying, etc. One sees here how the light on David's soul was increasing more and more unto the perfect day. In the earlier part of this psalm, David in the recollects of his own sin had prayed, "Remove from me the way of lying, "and the Lord had indeed answered his prayer, for he now declares his utter loathing of every false way: "I hate and abhor lying." And we see, in some measure, the instrument by which the Holy Spirit wrought the change: "Thy law do I love"; nay, as he adds in a later verse, "I love them exceedingly." And so it ever must be, the heart must have some holier object of its affection to fill up the void, or there will be no security against a relapse into sin! might talk for ever on the sin, the disgrace, and the danger of lying, and though at the time and for a time my words might have some influence, yet, unless the heart be filled with the love of God and of God's law, the first temptation would prove too powerful. The Bible teaches us this in a variety of ways. God says to Israel, not only "cease to do evil, "but, "learn to do well." And still more pointedly does the apostle, when he was warring against drunkenness, say, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, -- but be filled with the Spirit." -- Barton Bouchier.

Verse 163. I hate and abhor lying. "Lying, "according to Scripture usage, not only signifies speaking contrary to what one thinks, but also thinking contrary to the truth of things, and, particularly, the giving to other of that worship and glory which are due to the true God alone to think and act aside from God's truth. The men who persecuted that godly man thought of earthly prosperity and power as they should not have thought; they judged God's servant falsely, and they thought wickedly Of God himself. The man of God took a view of these things; he saw wickedness and the vileness of them, and he continued-- "Falsehood I hate and abhor: thy law do I love." From all the false and delusive ways of men, from all the pride and pomp that surround courts, from the sinful and pursuits of worldly men, as well as from the ostentatious idolatry heathen nations, he could turn with heart delight to the contemplation Jehovah, in that wonderful ritual which manifested the divine mercy in vicarious sacrifices, and observances, and festivals; and to that holy law which was given as man's rule of duty and grateful obedience, and these he loved as the manifestations of God's grace. John Stephen.

Verse 163. I hate and abhor lying: not only "hate" it, nor simply I "abhor" it, but "hate and abhor, "to strengthen and increase the sense, and make it more vehement. Where the enmity is not great against the sin, the matter may be compounded and taken up; but David will have nothing to do with it, for he saith, -- I loathe and abhor it, and hate it with a deadly hatred. Slight hatred of a sinful course is not sufficient to guard us against ft. Thomas Manton.

Verse 163. Sin seemeth to have its name from the Hebrew word "sana", to hate, the word here used, because it is most of all to be hated, as the greatest evil, as that which setteth us furthest from God the greatest good. None can hate it but those that love the law of God; for all hatred comes from love. A natural man may be angry with his sin, but hate it he cannot; nay, he may leave it, but not loathe it; if he did, he would loathe all sin as well as any one sin. Abraham Wright.

Verse 163. Lying. All injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime, but lying is that crime which, above all others, tendeth to the dissolution of society and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. Of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. "A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the month of the wicked devoureth iniquity, "saith the wise man: Pr 19:28. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. Most distinctly he beareth false witness against his neighbour: he doth covet his neighbour's goods, for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is also a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrates all sorts of wrong against his neighbour. Isaac Barrow.

Verse 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee. Affections of the soul cannot long be kept secret; if they be strong they will break forth in actions. The love of God is like a fire in the heart of man, which breaks forth, and manifests itself in the obedience of his commandments, and praising him for Ins benefits; and this is it which David now protests, that the love of God was not idle in his heart, but made him fervent and earnest m praising God, so that" seven times a day" he did praise God. For by this number the carefulness of holy devotion is expressed, and the fervency of his love. In praising God he could not be satisfied, saith Basil. William Cowper.

Verse 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee. "As every grace, " says Sibbes, "increaseth by exercise of itself, so doth the grace of prayer. By prayer we learn to pray." And thus it was with the Psalmist; he often times anticipated the dawning of the morning for his exercise of prayer; and at midnight frequently arose to pour out his soul in prayer; now he adds that "seven times in a day, "or as we might express it, "at every touch and turn, "he finds opportunity for and delight in praise. Oh for David's spirit and David's practice! -- Barton Bouchier.

Verse 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee. A Christian ought to give himself up eminently to this diary without limits. Walter Marshall.

Verse 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee. Not as if he had seven set hours for this duty every day, as the Papists would have it, to countenance their seven canonical hours, but rather a definite number is put for an indefinite, and so amounts to this, -- he did very often in a day praise God; his holy heart taking the hint of every providence to carry him to heaven on this errand of prayer and praise. William Gurrnall.

Verse 164. Seven times a day. Some of the Jewish Rabbis affirm that David is here to be understood literally, observing, that the devout Hebrews Were accustomed to praise God twice in the morning, before reading the ten commandments, and once after; twice in the evening before reading the same portion of inspiration, and twice after; which makes up the number of seven times a day. James Anderson's note to Calvin in loc.

Verse 165. Great peace have they which love thy law. Amidst the storms and tempests of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breasts of those, who not only do the will of God, but "love" to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves, by the answer of a good conscience, and the subjection of those desires which war against the soul; at peace with all men, by the spirit of charity; and the whole creation is so at peace with them that all things work together for their good. No external troubles can rob them of this "great peace, "no "offences" or stumbling blocks, which are thrown in their way by persecution, or temptation, by the malice of enemies, or by the apostasy of friends, by anything which they see, hear of, or feel, can detain, or divert them from their course. Heavenly love surmounts every obstacle, and runs with delight the way of God's commandments. George Horne.

Verse 165. Great peace have they which love thy law. There have been Elis trembling for the ark of God, and Uzzahs putting out their hand in fear that it was going to fall; but in the mids't of the deepest troubles through which the church has passed, and the fiercest storms that have raged about it, there have been true, faithful men of God who have never despaired. In every age there have been Luthers and Latimers, who have not only held fast their confidence, but whose peace has deepened with the roaring of the waves. The more they have been forsaken of men, the closer has been their communion with God. And with strong hold of him and of his promises, and hearts that could enter into the secret place of the Most High, although there has been everything without to agitate, threaten, and alarm, they have been guided into perfect peace. James Martin, in, "The Christian Mirror, and other Sermons," 1878.

Verse 165. Great peace have they which love thy law. Clearness of conscience is a help to comfortable thoughts. Yet observe, that peace is not so much effected as preserved by a good conscience and conversation; for though joy in the Holy Ghost will make its nest nowhere but in a holy soul, yet the blood of Christ only can speak peace; "being justified by faith, we have peace:" Ro 5:1. An exact life will not make, but keep conscience quiet; an easy shoe does not heal a sore foot, but it keeps a sound one from hurt. Walking with God according to gospel rules hath peace entailed upon it, and that peace is such a treasure, as thereby, a Christian may have his rejoicing from himself. Ga 6:4,16. His own heart sings him a merry tune, which the threats and reproaches of the world cannot silence. The treasure of comfort is not expended in affliction; death itself doth not exhaust but increase and advance it to an eternal triumph. O the excellency and necessity of it! Paul laid it up for a death-bed cordial: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience:" 2Co 1:12. And Hezekiah dares hold it up to God, as well as cheer up himself with it on approaching death. A conscience good in point of integrity will be good also in point of tranquillity: "The righteous are bold as a lion": they have great peace that love and keep God's commandments: Pr 28:1 Ps 119:165. And saith the apostle, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God" (1Jo 3:2), and I may add also, towards men. Oh! what comfort and solace hath a clear conscience! A conscientious man hath something within to answer accusations without; he hath such a rich treasure as will not fail in greatest straits and hazards. I shall conclude this with a notable saying of Bernard: -- "The pleasures of a good conscience are the Paradise of souls, the joy of angels, a garden of delights, a field of blessing, the temple of Solomon, the court of God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit." -- Oliver Heywood.

Verse 165. Great peace. Note that for "peace" the Hebrew word is mylw, shalom:it signifies not only "peace, "but also perfection, wholeness, prosperity, tranquillity, healthfulness, safety, the completion and consummation, of every good thing; and so it is frequently taken by the Hebrews; hence in salutations, wishing one the other well, they say, Pl mylw, shalom lekha, i.e, "peace be with thee"; as if one should say, "may all things be prosperous with thee." -- Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 165. They which love thy law. To love a law may Seem strange; but it is the only true divine life. To keep it because we are afraid of its penalties is only a form of fear or prudential consideration. To keep it to preserve a good name may be propriety and respectability. To keep it because it is best for society may be worldly self interest. To keep it because of physical health may be the policy of epicurean philosophy. To keep it because we love it is to show that it is already part of us-- has entered into the moral texture of our being. Sin then becomes distasteful, and temptations lose their power. W.M. Statham, quoted in "Atictoilette Commentary on the Psalms," 1879.

Verse 165. And nothing shall offend them. Hebrew, "they shall have no stumbling block." 1Jo 4:10, "There is none occasion of stumbling in him" who abides in the light, which makes him to see and avoid such stumblingblocks. Wealth, tribulation, temptation, which are the occasion to many of falling (Isa 8:14,15; Ez 3:20 7:19 14:3 4:7), are not so to him. A.R. Faussett.

Verse 165. Learn the true wisdom of those of you who are new creatures, and who love God's holy law. All of you who are really brought to Christ are changed into his image, so that you love God's holy law. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart": Psalm 19. The world says: What a slave you are! you cannot have a little amusement on the Sabbath-- you cannot take a Sabbath walk, or join a Sabbath tea party; you cannot go to a dance or a theatre; you cannot enjoy the pleasures of sensual indulgence-- you are a slave. I answer: Christ had none of these pleasures. He did not want them: nor do we. He knew what was truly wise, and good, and happy, and he chose God's holy law. He was the freest of all beings, and yet he knew no sin. Only make me free as Christ is free-- this is all I ask. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." -- Robert Murray M Cheyne, 1813-1843.

Verse 165. Nothing shall offend them. They that have this character of God's children, will not the stumbled at God's dispensations, let them he never so cross to their desires, because they have a God to fly unto in all their troubles, and a sure covenant to rest upon. Therefore the reproaches cast upon them, and on the way of God, do not scandalize them; for they have found God in that very way which others speak evil of; they are not so offended by anything that attends the way of God, as to dislike or forsake that way. Nevertheless we must take heed that we be not offended. John Bunyan.

Verse 166. LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, etc. This is the true posture in which all the servants of God should desire to be found-- hoping in his mercy, and doing his commands. How easy were it to demonstrate the connection between the mental feeling here recognized, and the obedience with which it is here associated! It is the hope of salvation which is the great and pervading motive to holiness, and it is the consciousness of obedience to the will of God which strengthens our hope of interest in the divine mercy. John Morison.

Verse 166. Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation. This saying he borrowed from good old Jacob. Ge 49:18. John Trapp.

Verse 166. I have done thy commandments. Set upon the practice of what you read. A student in physics doth not satisfy himself to read over a system or body of physics, but he falls upon practising physics: the life blood of religion his in the practical part. Christians should be walking Bibles. Xenophon said, "Many read Lycurgus's laws, but few observe them." The word written is not only a rule of knowledge, but a rule of obedience; it is not only to mend our sight, but to mend our pace. David calls God's word "a lamp unto his feet" (Ps 119:105). It was not only a light to his eyes to see by, but to his feet to walk by. By practice we trade with the talent of knowledge, and turn it to profit. This is a blessed reading of Scripture, when we fly from the sins which the word forbids, and espouse the doctrines which the word commands. Reading without practice will be but a torch to light men to hell. Thomas Watson.

Verses 166-168. He that casts the commands behind his back is very presumptuous in applying the promises to himself. That hope which is not accompanied with obedience will make a man ashamed. He that has learned the word of God knows that the law is not made void by faith, but established: Ro 3:31. Christ the church's Head and Prophet, in his sermon upon the mount shows the extent of the law, requiring purity in the heart and thoughts, as well as in the life and actions, and condemns them "who shall break the least of these commands and shall teach men so"; but "those that teach and do them, "he owns as great in his kingdom: Mt 5:19. The law spoken on Mount Sinai is established by the Legislator Christ in Mount Zion as a rule of righteousness. And they who are rightly instructed, "which walk according to this rule, "will have both heart and conversation ordered according to its direction, and "peace and mercy will be upon them, " and hereby they will show themselves to be indeed the Israel of God. Nathanael Vincent.

Verse 167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. Should he not have said, first, I have loved thy commandments, and so have kept them? Doubtless he did so; but he ran here in a holy and most heavenly circle, I have kept them and loved them, and loved them and kept them. If we love Christ, we shall also live the life of love in our measure, and his commandments will be most dear when himself is most precious. Thomas Shepard, in "The Sound Believer", 1671.

Verse 167. My soul. It is a usual phrase among the Hebrews, when they would express their vehement affection to anything, to say, "My soul": as Ps 103:1 104:1, "My soul, praise thou the Lord, "and Luke 1. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." -- Richard Greenham.

Verse 167. I love them exceedingly. It is only a reasonable return to God; for the Father loved me so exceedingly as not to spare his own Son, but to give him up for me; and the Son loved me so exceedingly that he gave himself to me, and gave me back to myself when I was lost in my sins, original and actual. Gerhohus (1093-1169), in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 167-168. Let not our consciousness of daily failures make us shrink from this strong expression of confidence. It is alleged as an evidence of grace, not as a claim of merit, and therefore the most humble believer need not hesitate to adopt it as the expression of Christian sincerity before God. David aspired to no higher character than that of a poor sinner: but he was conscious of spirituality of obedience, "exceeding love" to the divine word, and an habitual walk under the eye of his God-- the evidences of a heart (often mentioned in the Old Testament)" perfect with him." -- Charles Bridges.

Verse 168. I have kept thy precepts, for all my ways are before thee. When men are some way off in a king's eye they will be comely in their carriage; but when they come into his presence chamber to speak with him they will be most careful. Because saints are always in God's sight, their constant deportment must be pious and seemly. George Swinnock.

Verse 168. I have kept thy precepts, etc. The Hebrew word yne, shamar, that is here rendered "kept, "signifies to keep carefully, diligently, studiously, exactly. It signifies to keep as men keep prisoners, and to keep as a watchman keeps the city or the garrison; yea, to keep as a man would keep his very life. But now mark what was the reason that David kept the precepts and the testimonies of the Lord so carefully, so sincerely, so diligently, so studiously, and so exactly. Why, the reason you have in the latter part of the verse, "for all my ways are before thee." O sirs! it is as necessary for him that would be eminent in holiness, to set the Lord always before him, as it is necessary for him to breathe. In that 31st of Job you have a very large narrative of that height and perfection of holiness that Job bad attained to, and the great reason that he gives you, for this is in the 4th verse, "Doth not he see my way, and count all my steps?" The eye of God had so strong an influence upon his heart and life, that it wrought him up to a very high pitch of holiness. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 168. All my ways are before thee. That God seeth the secrets of our heart, is a point terrible to the wicked but joyful to the godly. The wicked are sorry that their heart is so open: it is a boiling pot of all mischief, a furnace and forge house for evil. It grieveth them that man should hear and see their words and actions; but what a terror is this-- that their Judge, whom they hate, seeth their thought! If they could deny this, they would. But so many of them as are convinced and forced to acknowledge a God, are shaken betimes with this also-- that he is All seeing. Others proceed more summarily, and at once deny the Godhead in their heart, and so destroy this conscience of his All knowledge. But it is in vain: the more they harden their heart by this godless thought, the more fear is in them; while they choke and check their conscience that it crow not against them it checks them with foresight of fearful vengeance and for the present convinceth them of the omniscience of God, the more they press to suppress it. But the godly rejoice herein; it is to them a rule to square their thoughts by; they take no liberty of evil thinking, willing, wishing, or affecting, in their hearts. Where that candle shineth, all things are framed as worthy of him and of his sight, whom they know to be seeing their heart. William Struther, 1633.

Verse 168. All my ways are before thee. Walk, Christian, in the view of God's omniscience; say to thy soul, cave, videt Deus;take heed, God seeth. It is under the rose, as the common phrase is, that treason is spoken, when subjects think they are far enough from their king's hearing; hut did such know the prince to be under the window, or behind the hangings, to their discourse would be more loyal. This made David so upright in his walking: "I have kept thy precepts, for all my ways are before thee." If Alexander's empty chair, which his captains, when they met in counsel, set before them, did awe them so as to keep them in good order; how helpful would it be to set before ourselves the fact that God is looking upon us! The Jews covered Christ's face, and then buffeted him: Mt 14:65. So does the hypocrite; he first says in his heart, God sees not, or at least forgets that he sees, and then he makes bold to sin against him; like that foolish bird, which runs her head among the reeds, and thinks herself safe from the fowler, as if because she did not see her enemy, therefore he could not see her. Te mihi abscondam, non me tibi (Augustine). I may hide thee from my eye, but not myself from thine eye. William Gurnall.

This commences a new division of the psalm, indicated by the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the letter Tau, corresponding to our "t," or "th." -- Albert Barnes.

Verse 169. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD. That is, as some will have it, Let this whole preceding Psalm, and all the petitions (whereof we have here a repetition) therein contained, be highly accepted in heaven. John Trapp.

Verse 169. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD. We are now come to the last section of this psalm, wherein we see David more fervent in prayer than he was in the first, as ye shall easily observe by comparing them both together. The godly, the longer they speak to God, are the more fervent and earnest to speak to him; so that unless necessity compel them, they desire never to intermit conference with him. Many prayers hath he made to God in this psalm: now in the end he prays for his prayers, that the Lord would let them come before him. Some men send out prayers, but God turns them into sin, and puts them away back from him: therefore David seeks favour to his prayers. William Cowper.

Verse 169. Give me understanding. This was the prayer of Solomon (1Ki 3:9), and we are told that it pleased the Lord, and as a reward he added temporal prosperity, which the young king had not asked. Yet Solomon meant less by his prayer than his father David did; for we see in him little trace of the deep devotion for which his father was so remarkable. The Psalmist here prays a deep prayer which can only be answered by the Holy Ghost himself enlightening the soul. The understanding is a most important member of our spiritual frame. Conscience is the understanding exercised upon moral questions, and if that be not right, where shall we be? Our understanding of the word of God comes by teaching, but also through experience: we understand hardly anything till we experience it. Such an enlightening experience is the gift of God, and to him we must look for it in prayer. C.H.S.

Verse 169. Give we understanding. The especial work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds unto the understanding of the Scripture is called "understanding." The Psalmist prays "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law" (verse 34). So the apostle speaks to Timothy: "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things": 2Ti 2:7. Besides his own consideration of what was proposed unto him, which includes the due and diligent use of all outward means, it was moreover necessary that God should give him understanding by an inward effectual work of his Spirit, that he might comprehend the things wherein he was instructed. And the desire hereof, as of that without which there can be no saving knowledge of the word, for advantage by it, the Psalmist expresses emphatically, with great fervency of spirit in verse 144: "The righteousness of thy testimony is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live." Without this he knew that he could have no benefit by the everlasting righteousness of the testimonies of God. All understanding, indeed, however it be abused by the most, is the work and effect of the Holy Ghost for "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding": Job 32:8. So is this spiritual understanding in an especial manner the gift of God. In this "understanding" both the ability of our mind and the due exercise of it is included. This one consideration, that the saints of God have with so much earnestness prayed that God would give them understanding as to his mind and will as revealed in the word, with his reiterated promises that he would so do, is of more weight with me than all the disputes of men to the contrary. No farther argument is necessary to prove that men do not understand the mind of God in the Scripture in a due manner, than their supposal and confidence that so they can do without the communication of a spiritual understanding unto them by the Holy Spirit. This self confidence is directly contrary unto the plain, express testimonies of the word. John Owen.

Verse 169. Give me understanding. Why should the man of God here pray for understanding? Had he not often prayed for it before? Was he a novice in knowledge, being a prophet? Doth not our Saviour Christ reprehend repetitions and babbling in prayer? True it is our Saviour Christ doth reprehend that babbling which is without faith and knowledge and a feeling of our wants; but he speaketh not against those serious repetitions which proceed from a plentiful knowledge, abundant faith, and lively feeling of our necessities. Again, although it cannot be denied but lie was a man of God, and had received great grace, yet God giveth knowledge to his dearest saints in this life but in part, and the most which we see and know is but little. Besides, when we have knowledge, and knowledge must be brought into practice, we shall find such difficulties, such waywardness, such forgetfulness, such wants, that although we have had with the prophet a very good direction in the general things of the word, which are universal and few, yet we shall find many distractions in our practices, which must be particular and many; and we shall either fail in memory by forgetfulness, or in judgment by blindness, or in affection by dulness. So easily may we slip when we think we may hold our journey on. Wherefore the man of God, through that examination which he took of his heart and affections, seeing those manifold straits and difficulties, prayeth in the verse following, not for the renewing of men in general in their troubles, but for the considering of his own particular condition. Richard Greenham.

Verse 169. According to the word. David here seeks understanding not carnally, for the wisdom of the flesh is death: but he seeks understanding according to God's word. Without this the wisdom of man is foolishness; and the more subtil he seems to be in his ways, the more deeply he involves himself in the snare of the devil. "They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" Jer 8:9. But seeing he was an excellent prophet, and protested before that he had more understanding than the ancients, yea, than his teachers; how is it that he still prays for understanding? In answer to this we are to know, that there is a great difference between the gifts of nature and grace. Nature ofttimes gives to man very excellent gifts, as rare memory, knowledge, quick wit, strength, external beauty; but therewithal it teacheth not man to consider that in which he is wanting; whereof it comes to pass, that he waxeth proud of that which he hath. This is a common thing to men in the state of nature, that of small gifts they conceive a great pride: but grace, as it gives to man more excellent gifts than nature can afford, so it teacheth him to look unto that which he wants, that he be not puffed up by considering that which he hath, but carried in all humility of heart to pray for that which he wants. Abraham Wright.

Verse 170. Let my supplication come before thee, etc. The sincere worshipper cannot be contented with anything short of actual intercourse with God. The round of duty cannot please where the spirit of grace and supplication has not been vouchsafed. A filial disposition will pour itself forth in earnest longings after communion with God. Nor will the hope of gracious audience be founded on any other plea save that of the sure word of Jehovah's promise. It is in accordance with that word, and not in opposition to it, that the child of God expects to be heard. All his deliverance he feels to be from the Lord, and all that he looks for from heaven he anticipates in answer to prayer. O for more of that faith which makes its appeal to the divine veracity, and which looks with steadfast eye to the promise of a covenant keeping God. John Morison.

Verse 170. Let my supplication come before thee. Observe the order of the words here and in the preceding verse. First we had, "Let my cry come near; "then "Give me understanding, "and that "according to thy word, "and now we have "Let my prayer enter in (LXX., Syr., Arb., Vulg.,)before thee." Just so, if you wish for an interview with a man of very high rank, first you come near his house, then you ask for information and instruction as to his intentions, then you ask permission to enter, lest you should be driven away and refused admittance. Knock therefore at the door of the heavenly palace: knock, not with your bodily hand, but with the right hand of prayer. For the voice can knock as well as the hand, as it is written, "It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh": So 5:2. And when you have knocked, see how you go in, lest after entering you should not get the sight of the King. For there are many who make their way into palaces, and do not at once get an audience of an earthly sovereign, but have to watch constantly to obtain an interview at last. Nor have they the choice of the opportunity, they come when they are sent for, and then present their petition, if they wish to be favourably received. Ambrose, in Neale and Littledale.

Verse 171. My lips shall utter praise. You have stood at the fountain head of a stream of water, and admired while it bubbled up, and ran down in a clear little rivulet, till at length it swelled the mighty river. Such is the allusion here. The heart taught of God, cannot contain itself, but breaks out in praise and singing. This would be the effect of divine illumination, and this would be felt to be a privilege, yea, and a high duty. Have you not found so, believers, specially on common occasions? Be assured, such utterances are the sign of a renewed heart; yea, of a heart filled with all gratitude of right feeling. John Stephen.

Verse 171. My lips shall utter praise, etc.

O make me, Lord, thy statutes learn!

Keep in thy ways my feet,

Then shall my lips divinely burn;

Then shall my songs be sweet.

Each sin I cast away shall make

My soul more strong to soar;

Each deed of holiness shall wake

A strain divine the more.

My voice shall more delight thine ear

The more I wait on time;

The service bring my song more near

The angelic harmony.

T. H. Gill, in "Breathings of the Better Life" 1881.

Verse 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word. One duty of thankfulness promised by David is, to speak of God's words for the edification of others. Every Christian man, as he is a priest to offer sacrifice unto God, so is he a prophet to teach his brethren; for unto us all stands that commandment, "Edify one another in their most holy faith." But, alas, ye shall see many Christians now, who at their tables, and in their companies, can speak freely upon any subject; only for spiritual matters, which concern the soul, there they are dumb, and cannot say with David, "My tongue shall speak of thy word." -- William Cowper.

Verse 173. Let thine hand help me. David having before made promises of thankfulness, seeks now help from God, that he may perform them. Our sufficiency is not of ourselves, but of God; to will and to do are both from him. In temporal things men ofttimes take great pains with small profit; first, because they seek not to make their conscience good; next, because they seek not help front God: therefore they speed no better than Peter, who fished all night and got nothing till he cast his net in the name of the Lord. But in spiritual things we may far less look to prosper, if we call not for God's assistance: the means will not profit us unless God's blessing accompany them. There is preaching, but for the most part without profit; there is prayer, but it prevails not; there is hearing of the word, but without edifying; and all because in spiritual exercises instant prayer is not made unto God, that his hand may bc with us to help us. Abraham Wright.

Verse 173. I have chosen thy precepts. Hath God given you a heart to make choice of his ways? O bless God! There was a time when you went on in giving pleasing to the flesh, and you saw then no better thing than such a kind of life, and the Lord hath been pleased to discover better things to you, so as to make you renounce your former ways, and to make choice of another way, in which your souls have found other manner of comforts, and satisfactions, and contentments than ever you did before. Bless God as David did: "Blessed be the Lord who hath given me counsel"...Seeing God hath thus inclined your heart to himself, be for ever established in your choice: seeing God hath shown to you his ways, as Pilate said in another case, "That I have written I have written": so say you, "That I have chosen I have chosen." -- Jeremiah Burroughs, in "Moses his Choice."

Verses 173-174. I have chosen. My delight. Cheerfulness accompanies election of a thing. Lumpishness is a sign we never chose it, but were forced to it. Such cheerfulness in service procures cheerfulness in mercies: Isa 64:5, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." He puts to his hand to help such an one. Christ loves not melancholy and phlegmatic service; such a temper in acts of obedience is a disgrace to God and to religion: to God, it betrays us to have jealous thoughts of God, as though he were a hard master; to religion, it makes others think duties are drudgeries, and not privileges. -- Stephen Charnock.

Verse 174. I have longed for thy salvation, 0 LORD, ere. The thing which we learn hence out of David's joining these two together, I long for salvation, and thy law is my delight, is this, that it is not enough for a man to say, he longs and desires to be saved, unless he makes a conscience to use the appointed means to bring him thereunto. It had been but hypocrisy in David to say he longed for salvation, if his conscience had not been able to witness with him that the law was his delight. It is mere mockery for a man to say he longeth for bread, and prayeth to God every day to give him his daily bread, if he yet walk in no calling, or else seek to get it by fraud and rapine, not staying himself at all upon God's providence. Who will imagine that a man wishes for health, who either despiseth or neglects the means of his recovery? God hath in his own wisdom appointed a lawful means for every lawful thing; this means, being obediently used, the comfortable obtaining of the end may be confidently looked for; the means being not observed, to think to attain to the end is mere presumption. God will deliver Noah from the flood, but Noah must be "moved with reverence, "and "prepare the ark" (Heb 11:7), or else he could not have escaped. He would save Lot from Sodom, but yet Lot must hurry him out quickly, and not look behind him till he have entered Zoar: Ge 19:17. He was pleased to cure Hezekiah of the plague, but yet Hezekiah must take "a lump of figs, and lay it upon his boil:" Isa 38:21. He vouchsafed to preserve Paul and company at sea, yet the sailors must "abide in the ship, "else ye cannot be saved, saith Paul: Ac 27:31. Samuel Hieron, 1572-1617.

Verse 174. I have longed for thy salvation. It is God's salvation proper that he must desire-- "thy salvation" -- for nothing else could satisfy his pure mind-- perfect peace with God, perfect purity and perfect hope. Now, if you ask what was God's way of delivering, and what was his way of salvation, the answer is, it was set forth in his word, and was what the Psalmist calls his "law." God's salvation and his law were discerned to be one. "I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is ray delight." -- John Stephen.

Verse 174. I have longed for thy salvations, O LORD. "Salvation, "by the "hand, "or arm of Jehovah, (which is often in Scripture a title of Messiah,)hath been the object of the hopes, the desires, and "longing" expectations of the faithful, from Adam to this hour, and will continue so to be until he, who hath already visited us in great humility, shall come again in glorious majesty to complete our redemption and take us to himself. George Horne.

Verse 174. I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD. For a present salvation from the guilt and power of sin, and for future salvation, in the full and everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven. David had the happiness to be a partaker, both of pardoning mercy and of sanctifying grace; yet still he longed for more of this salvation, that is, for a more assured faith of pardoning mercy, and larger measures of sanctifying grace. A gracious soul is insatiable; the more it hath received, the more it desires to receive. Enjoyment, instead of surfeiting, sharpens the appetite. Nay, so sweet is the relishing of spiritual things, that every renewed taste of them quenches the thirst for other things. Thy law is my delight. Here David chooses the term "law" for denoting the whole revelation of God's will, to remind us of the inseparable connexion between privilege and duty, faith and obedience, holiness and comfort; and to teach us that we ought to be thankful to God for the direction he hath given us in the road to heaven, no less than for the promises by which we are assured of the possession of it. Robert Walker, 1716-1783.

Verse 174. Thy law is my delight. Religion will decay or flourish, as it is our duty or our delight. The mind is incapable of continued exertion for duty; but it readily falls in with "delight." Thus our duties become our privileges, while Christ is their source and life. Every step of progress is progress in happiness. This verse of which experience is the best interpreter is the believer's language in his lively, as well as in his fainting state. For the more be knows and enjoys of tim divine presence, the more he longs to know and enjoy it. Charles Bridges.

Verse 174. Delight, in the plural, "delights, "as in verses 24, 77, 92, 143. God's word is an abundant source of pleasure to his people. William S. Plumer.

Verse 175. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, etc. This verse containeth three things,

First, David's petition for life: "Let my soul live." "My soul; "that is, myself: the soul is put for the whole man. The contrary: "Let me die with the Philistines, "said Samson (Jud 21:30); Hebrew, margin, "Let my soul die." His life was sought after by the cruelty of his enemies; and he desireth God to keep him alive.

Secondly, His argument from the aim of his life; "And it shall praise thee." The glorifying of God was his aim. The fruit of all God's benefits to profit us, and praise God. David professes that all the days of his life he would live in the sense and acknowledgment of such a benefit.

Thirdly, The ground of his hope and confidence in the last clause: "And let thy judgments help me." Our hopes of help are grounded on God's judgments, whereby is meant his word. There are judgments decreed, judgments executed; doctrinal judgments, and providential judgments, That place intimates the distinction: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil:" Ec 8:11. There is sententia lata et dilata. Here God's judgments are put for the sentence pronounced; and chiefly for one part of them, the promises of grace. As also, "I have hoped in thy judgments:" Ps 119:43. Promises are the objects of hope. Thomas Manton.

Verse 175. Let my soul live. What is the life that the Psalmist is now praying for, but the salvation for which he had just expressed his longing? The taste that he has received makes him hunger for a higher and more continued enjoyment-- not for selfish gratification, but that he might employ himself in the praise of his God. Indeed, as we have drawn towards the close of this Psalm, we cannot but have observed that character of praise to pervade his experience, which has been generally remarked in the concluding Psalms of this sacred book. Much do we lose of spiritual strength for want of occupying ourselves more in the exercise of praise. Charles Bridges.

Verse 175. Live and praise. The saint improves his earthly things for an heavenly end. Where layest thou up thy treasure? Dost thou bestow it on thy voluptuous appetite, thy hawks and thy hounds; or dost thou lock it up in the bosom of Christ's poor members? What use makest thou of thy honour and greatness? To strengthen the hands of the godly or the wicked? And so of all thy other temporal enjoyments. A gracious heart improves them for God; when a saint prays for these things, he hath an eye to some heavenly end. If David prays for life, it is not that he may live, but "live and praise God." When he was driven from his regal throne by the rebellious arms of Absalom see what his desire and hope were, 2Sa 15:25: "The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation." Mark, not shew me my crown, my palace, but the ark, the house of God. William Guruall.

Verse 175. Live and praise. Liveliness of soul is the Spirit's gift, and it will show itself in abounding praises. Henry Law.

Verse 175. Let thy judgments help me. In the second clause it would be harsh to understand the word "judgments" of the commandments, to which it does not properly belong to give help. It seems, then, that the prophet, perceiving himself liable to numberless calamities -- even as the faithful, by reason of the unbridled license of the wicked, dwell in this world as sheep among wolves, -- calls upon God to protect him in the way of restraining, by his secret providence, the wicked from doing him harm. It is a very profitable doctrine, when things in the world are in a state of great confusion, and when our safety is in danger amid so many and varied storms, to lift up our eyes to the judgments of God, and to seek a remedy in them. John Calvin.

Verses 175-176.

Though like a sheep estranged I stray,

Yet have I not renounced thy way.

Thine hand extend; thine own reclaim;

Grant me to live, and praise thy name.

--Richard Mant.

Verse 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Though a sheep go astray, yet it is soon called back by file voice of the shepherd: "My sheep hear my voice." Thus David when he went against Nabal was called back by the Lord's voice in a woman; and when he had slain Uriah he was brought again by Nathan. And therefore if we will be sheep, then though we sometimes go astray, yet we must be easily reclaimed. Richard Greenhorn.

Verse 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, driven out by storm, or dark day, or by the hunting of the dogs chased out from the rest of the flock. David Dickson.

Verse 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, etc. And this is all the conclusion-- "a lost sheep!" This long psalm of ascriptions, praises, avowals, resolves, high hopes, ends in this, that he is a perishing sheep. But, stay, there is hope-- "Seek thy servant." "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." The original is of the most extensive range, comprehending all time past, and also the habitual tendencies of the man. The believer feels that he had gone astray when the grace of God found him; that he had gone astray many times, had not the grace of God prevented it. He feels that he went astray on such and such unhappy occasions. He also feels that he hath gone astray in all that he hath done; and indeed that he is astray now. But the word expresses the habitual tendency likewise -- I go astray like a lost sheep, and this rendering is in keeping with the prayer, "Seek thy servant." The third member is also properly rendered in keeping with it: "I go astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." All this is descriptive of the remaining corruption that is in the believer. He is not unmindful of the Lord; he has the root of the matter in him, the seed of divine life; yet he does go astray; whence the necessity of the prayer: "Seek thy servant." Isaiah's description of men, although conveyed in the same terms, is evidently more sweeping, as the context words show: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This would seem to apply to the race of man. Rather is the experience of the Psalmist similar to that described by the apostle Paul: "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." And the Psalmist had the same remedy at the early period, as had the apostle in the later times; for God's salvation is one. The Psalmist's remedy was, "Seek thy servant; "the apostle's, :"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." -- John Stephen.

Verse 176. I have gone astray. The original word signifies either the turning of the foot, or the turning of the heart, or both, out of the way. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; "that is, I have been deceived, and so have gone out of the way of thy holy commandments. Satan is an ill guide, and our hearts are no better: he that follows either, quickly loseth himself; and until God seeketh us (as David prays in the next words), we cannot find our way when we are once out of it. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 176. I have gone astray. Gotthold one day saw a farmer carefully counting his sheep as they came from the field. Happening at the time to be in an anxious and sorrowful mood, he gave vent to his feelings and said: Why art thou cast down, my soul? and why disquieted with vexing thoughts? Surely thou must be dear to the Most High as his lambs are to this farmer. Art thou not better than many sheep? Is not Jesus Christ thy shepherd? Has not he risked his blood and life for thee? Hast thou no interest in his words: "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand"? Joh 10:28. This man is numbering his flock; and thinkest thou that God does not also count and care for his believing children and elect, especially as his beloved Son has averred, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered? Mt 10:30. During the day, I may perhaps have gone out of the way, and heedlessly followed my own devices; still, at the approach of evening, when the faithful Shepherd counts his lambs, he will mark my absence, and graciously seek and bring me back. Lord Jesus, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." -- Christian Striver (1629-1693), in Gotthold's Emblems.

Verse 176. I have gone astray, etc. Who is called "the man after God's own heart"? David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough -- blackest crimes-- there was no want of sin. And, therefore, unbelievers sneer, and ask, "Is this your man after God's own heart?" The sneer, it seems to me, is but a shallow one. What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often baffled, never ended struggle of it, be forgotten?...David's life and history, as written for us in those psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given us of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discover in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled-- sore baffled -- driven as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended, ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose begun anew. Thomas Carlyle, (1795-1881), in "Heroes and Hero Worship."

Verse 176. For I do not forget thy commandments. In all my wandering; with my consciousness of error; with my sense of guilt; I still do feel that I love thy law, thy service, thy commandments. They are the joy of my heart, and I desire to be recalled from all my wanderings, that I may find perfect happiness in thee and in thy service evermore. Such is the earnest wish of every regenerated heart. For as such a one may have wandered flora God, yet he is conscious of true attachment to him and his service; he desires and earnestly prays that he may be "sought out, "brought back, and kept from wandering any more. Albert Barnes.

Verse 176. For I do not forget thy commandments. The godly never so fall but there remains in them some grace, which reserves a hope of medicine to cure them: so David here. Albeit he transgressed some of God's commandments, yet he fell not into any full oblivion of them. William Cowper.

Verse 176. I do not think that there could possibly be a more appropriate conclusion of such a Psalm as this, so full of the varied experience and the ever changing frames and feelings even of a child of God, in the sunshine and the cloud, in the calm and in the storm, than this ever clinging sense of his propensity to wander, and the expression of his utter inability to find his way back without the Lord's guiding hand to restore him; and at the same time with it all, his fixed and abiding determination never to forget the Lord's commandments. What an insight into our poor wayward hearts does this verse give us-- not merely liable to wander, but ever wandering, ever losing our way, ever stumbling on the dark mountains, even while cleaving to God's commandments! But at the same time what a prayer does it put into our mouths, "Seek thy servant, "-- "I am thine, save me." Yes, blessed be God! there is One mighty to save. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." -- Barton Bouchier.

As far as I have been able, as far as I have been aided by the Lord, I have treated throughout, and expounded, this great Psalm. A task which more able and learned expositors have performed, or will perform better; nevertheless, my services were not to be withheld from it on that account, when my brethren earnestly required it of me. Augustine.