

END OF PSALM 118

You are Psalms

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

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

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

PSALM NUMBER: 118

Of the excellence of virtue consisting in the love
and observance of the commandments of God.

ALEPH

1. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.
2. Blessed are they that search his testimonies; that seek him with their whole heart.
3. For they that work iniquity, have not walked in his ways.
4. Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently.
5. O! That my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications.
6. Then shall I not be confounded, when I shall look into all thy commandments.
7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned the judgments of thy justice.
8. I will keep thy justifications: O! Do not thou utterly forsake me.

BETH

9. By what doth a young man correct his way? By observing thy words.
10. With my whole heart have I sought after thee: let me not stray from thy commandments.
11. Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.
12. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy justifications.
13. With my lips I have pronounced all the judgments of thy mouth.
14. I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches.
15. I will meditate on thy commandments; and I will consider thy ways.
16. I will think of thy justifications: I will not forget thy words.

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GIMEL

17. Give bountifully to thy servant; enliven me, and I shall keep thy words.
18. Open thou my eyes: and I will consider the wondrous things of thy law.
19. I am a sojourner on the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.
20. My soul hath coveted to long for thy justifications, at all times.
21. Thou hast rebuked the proud: they are cursed who decline from thy commandments.
22. Remove from me reproach and contempt: because I have sought after thy testimonies.
23. For princes sat, and spoke against me, but thy servant was employed in thy justifications.
24. For thy testimonies are my meditation: and thy justifications my counsel.

DALETH

25. My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken thou me according to thy word.
26. I have declared my ways, and thou hast heard me: teach me thy justifications.
27. Make me to understand the way of thy justifications: and I shall be exercised in thy wondrous works.
28. My soul hath slumbered through heaviness: strengthen thou me in thy words.
29. Remove from me the way of iniquity: and out of thy law have mercy on me.
30. I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments I have not forgotten.
31. I have stuck to thy testimonies, O Lord: put me not to shame.
32. I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart.

HE

33. Set before me for a law the way of thy justifications, O Lord: and I will always seek after it.
34. Give me understanding, and I will search thy law; and I will keep it with my whole heart.
35. Lead me into the path of thy commandments; for this same I have desired.
36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
37. Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity: quicken me in thy way.
38. Establish thy word to thy servant, in thy fear.
39. Turn away my reproach, which I have apprehended: for thy judgments are delightful.
40. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy justice.

VAU

41. Let thy mercy also come upon me, O Lord; thy salvation according to thy word.
42. So shall I answer them that reproach me in anything; that I have trusted in thy words.
43. And take not thou the word of truth utterly out of my mouth: for in thy words I have hoped exceedingly.
44. So shall I always keep thy law, forever and ever.
45. And I walked at large, because I have sought after thy commandments.
46. And I spoke of thy testimonies before kings; and I was not ashamed.
47. I meditated also on thy commandments, which I loved.
48. And I lifted up my hands to thy commandments, which I loved; and I was exercised in thy justification.

ZAIN

49. be thou mindful of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope.
50. This hath comforted me in my humiliation: because thy word hath enlivened me.
51. The proud did iniquitously altogether: but I declined not from thy law.
52. I remembered, O Lord, thy judgments of old: and I was comforted.
53. A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.
54. Thy justifications were the subject of my song, in the place of my pilgrimage.
55. In the night I have remembered thy name, O Lord; and have kept thy law.
56. This happened to me because I sought after thy justifications.

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173. "Let thy hand be with me to save me; for I have chosen thy precepts." He follows up his prayer, asking for the only thing worth asking for, life everlasting, which is the object of the Commandments. "Let thy hand be with me to save me." Let your wisdom and power be exercise to save me; and as the apostle teaches, that Christ is the power and wisdom of God, the Fathers have very properly explained this prayer to be, "let Christ be with me to save me:" – "for I have chosen thy precepts." He could not assign a better reason, Christ himself having said, "if thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments."

174. "I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord: and thy law is my meditation." He assigns a reason for asking so pressingly for salvation; and that is, because he wishes for it above and beyond anything he ever desired, as it is really the only object worthy of such desire, it being the only thing they can effectually satisfied man's desires. And, as it will not suffice to have a desire for salvation without observing the commandments of God, he, therefore, adds, "and thy law is my meditation," I will always, therefore, think on it, and exercise myself in keeping it.

175. "My soul shall live, and shall praise thee; and thy judgment shall help me." "My soul shall live" when it shall have obtained the salvation it longs for and "thy hand shall have been with it to save it;" and then its duty, and its only business, will be to praise you for "blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee forever and ever," "and thy judgments shall help me." Your commandments, so observed by me, will help me, ultimately, when I shall rise in the resurrection to live forever.

176. "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek thy servant, because I have not forgotten thy commandment." Banished from my country, and still an exile, through the sin of my first parents, that extended to the whole human race, "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost," by seduction, and not like the devil, the roaring lion, who fell through malice. "Seek thy servant," for though you have already partly sought and found him, inasmuch as you justified him from sin, and reconciled him to God; yet the lost sheep is still to be sought for, inasmuch as he expects the redemption of his body, so that he may body and soul be brought to the heavenly mountains, and those most fertile pastures, where the ninety-nine that did not stray had been left; and I confidently ask for this salvation of soul and body, "because I have not forgotten thy commandment."

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HETH

57. O Lord, my portion, I have said, I would keep thy law.
58. I entreated thy face with all my heart: have mercy on me according to thy word.
59. I have thought on my ways; and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
60. I am ready, and am not troubled; that I may keep thy commandments.
61. The cords of the wicked have encompassed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.
62. I rose at midnight to give praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justification.
63. I am a partaker with all them that fear thee, and that keep thy commandments.
64. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me justifications.

TETH

65. Thou hast done well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word.
66. Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.
67. Before I was humbled, I offended; therefore have I kept thy word.
68. Thou art good, and in thy goodness teach me thy justifications.
69. The iniquity of the proud hath been multiplied over me: but I will seek thy commandments with my whole heart.
70. Their heart is curdled like milk: but I have meditated on thy law.
71. It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications.
72. The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver.

JOD

73. Thy hands have made me and formed me: give me understanding, and I will learn thy Commandments.
74. They that fear thee shall see me, and shall be glad; because I have greatly hoped in thy words.
75. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity: and in thy truth thou hast humbled me.
76. O! let thy mercy before my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.
77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, and I shall live: for thy law is my meditation.
78. Let the proud be ashamed, because they have done unjustly towards me: but I will be employed in thy commandments.
79. Let them that fear thee turn to me, and they that know thy testimonies.
80. Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications, that I may not be confounded.

CAPH

81. My soul hath fainted after thy salvation: and I thy word I have very much hoped.
82. My eyes have failed for thy word, saying: When wilt thou comfort me?
83. For I am become like a bottle in the frost: I have not forgotten thy justifications.
84. How many are the days of thy servant: when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?
85. The wicked have told me fables, but not as thy law.
86. All thy statutes are truth: they have persecuted me unjustly: do thou help me.
87. They had almost made an end of me upon earth: but I have not forsaken thy commandments.
88. Quicken thou me according to thy mercy: and I shall keep the testimonies of thy mouth.

LAMED

89. Forever, O Lord, thy word standeth firm in heaven:
90. Thy truth unto all generations: thou hast founded the earth, and it continueth.
91. By thy ordinance the day goeth on: for all things serve thee.
92. Unless thy law had been my meditation, I had then perhaps perished in my abjection.
93. Thy justifications I will never forget for by them thou hast given me life.
94. I am thine, save thou me: for I have sought thy justifications.
95. The wicked have waited for me, to destroy me: but I have understood thy testimonies.
96. I have seen an end of all perfection: thy commandment is exceeding broad.

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MEM

97. O how have I loved thy law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day.
98. Through thy commandment, thou hast made me wiser than my enemies: for it is ever with me.
99. I have understood more than all my teachers; because thy testimonies are my meditation.
100. I have had understanding above ancients: because I have sought thy commandments.
101. I have restrained my feet from every evil way; that I may keep thy words.
102. I have not declined from thy judgments; because thou hast set me a law.
103. How sweet are thy words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth.
104. By thy commandments I have had understanding; therefore have I hated every way of iniquity.

NUN

105. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths.
106. I have sworn, and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice.
107. I have been humbled, O Lord, exceedingly; quicken thou me according to thy word.
108. The free offerings of my mouth make acceptable, O Lord: and teach me thy judgments.
109. My soul is continually in my hands: and I have not forgotten thy law.
110. Sinners have laid a snare for me; but I have not erred from thy precepts.
111. I have purchased thy testimonies for an inheritance forever; because they are the joy of my heart.
112. I have inclined my heart to do thy justifications forever, for the reward.

SAMECH

113. I have hated the unjust; and have loved thy law.
114. Thou art my helper and my protector; and in thy word I have greatly hoped.
115. Depart from me, ye malignant: and I will search the commandments of my God.
116. Uphold me according to thy word, and I shall live and let me not be confounded in my expectation.
117. Help me, and I shall be saved: and I will meditate always on thy justifications.
118. Thou hast despised all them that fall off from thy judgments; for their thought is unjust.
119. I have accounted all the sinners of the earth prevaricators: therefore have I loved thy testimonies.
120. Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear: for I am afraid of thy judgments.

AIN

121. I have done judgment and justice; give me not up to them that slander me.
122. Uphold thy servant unto good: let not the proud calumniate me.
123. My eyes have fainted after thy salvation, and for the word of thy justice,
124. Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy: and teach me thy justifications.
125. I am thy servant: give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies.
126. It is time, O Lord, to do: they have dissipated thy law.
127. Therefore have I loved thy commandments above gold and the topaz.
128. Therefore was I directed to all thy commandments: I have hated all wicked ways.

PHE

129. Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore my soul hath sought them.
130. The declaration of thy words giveth light: and giveth understanding to little ones.
131. I opened my mouth, and panted because I longed for thy commandments.
132. Look thou upon me, and have mercy on me, according to the judgment of them that love thy name.
133. Direct my steps according to thy word: and let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134. Redeem me from the calumnies of men: that I may keep thy commandments.
135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: and teach me thy justifications.
136. My eyes have sent forth springs of water: because they have not kept thy law.

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Elias and Eliseus said, “the Lord liveth, in whose sight I stand.”

Tau

169. “Let my supplication, O Lord, come near in thy sight; give me understanding according to thy word.” In this last section, fully aware of the value of perseverance in prayer, as the Lord himself afterwards impressed, he concludes by another prayer to God, for the grace and salvation he had so frequently asked for before. “Let my supplication, O Lord, come near to thy sight;” that is to say, may my prayer, that does not rely on its own merits, be raised up and ascend, through the aspirations of your grace, and come so near you, that you may deign to take a nearer view of it, and regard it with favor; and that prayer is, “give me understanding according to thy word,” agreeable to the promise you made me in Psalm 31, “I will give thee understanding, and I will instruct thee.” Grant me the grace, therefore, of understanding your commandments, as they are understood by those who observe them, and who, by their observance, have come to life everlasting.

170. “Let my request come in before thee: deliver thou me according to thy word.” A repetition of the same prayer in different language. The words “deliver me” indicating his reason for having asked for understanding, for the object of understanding is, the being delivered from sin – “and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

171. “My lips shall utter a hymn, when thou shalt teach me thy justifications.” He now promises to return thanks on getting the grace he so often asked. “When thou shalt teach me thy justifications.” When your grace shall so enlighten and assist me to keep your commandments then, in the fullness of my inward joy, and in acknowledgment of so great a favor, “my lips shall utter a hymn” of praise and thanksgiving, because “from the abundance of the heart and mouth speaketh.”

172. “My tongue shall pronounce thy word; because all thy commandments are justice.” He says that he will not only praise God, but that he will teach mankind, and prove to them how full of justice are the commandments of God. “My tongue shall pronounce thy word.” I will announce your precepts to man, and I will teach them that “all thy commandments are justice,” that they are all based on justice; and it is, therefore, but just that they should be observed by all.

165. "Much peace have they that love thy law: and to them there is no stumbling block." The greatest and truest praise that can be conferred on anyone is to say they love God's law; for if they love the law, they love him who gave the law; and if they love him, they love everything belonging to him; and thus, on their part, they have no enemy; but, as far as they are concerned, they are at peace with all. Again, "to them that love God all things work together unto good;" and, therefore, he that loves God should be at peace with all; and, therefore, the apostle, in Galatians 5, says, "the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, etc." By the same process of reasoning, "there is no stumbling block" to him "who loves thy law;" he runs on smoothly to his country, for he who loves the law cannot give scandal, scandal being a sin, and sin being a breach of the law; but scandal offered by others, either applies to the infirm, who, from their ignorance, look upon as forbidden what is not forbidden at all, and take offense at things they thought were illicit; or it is that of the Pharisees, who put a bad construction on what should have been viewed in quite a different light. But they "who love thy law" are neither infirm nor Pharisees, and, therefore, "to them there is no stumbling block."

166. "I looked for thy salvation, O Lord: and I loved thy commandments." He now assumes the person of the perfect, and, therefore, confidently says, "I looked for thy salvation," life everlasting, that is to come from you; and he assigns a reason for it, because "I loved thy commandments;" as the apostle has it, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; for the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me at that day."

167. "My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and hath loved them exceedingly." Speaking still in the person of the same perfect soul, he asserts that he kept the commandments by reason of his great love for them. For, as St. Gregory writes, "love, when real, does wonders; and if it do not wonders, it is no love;" and our Lord himself has, "he that loveth me not, keepeth not my words." And the apostle, in Romans 13, says, "the love of the neighbor worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law."

168. "I have kept thy commandments and thy testimonies; because all my ways are in thy sight." Speaking again in the person of the perfect, he asserts that he kept the "commandments and the testimonies," but from another motive, peculiar to the perfect, viz., because in all his actions he looked upon God to be then and there present, for such is the meaning of the words, "because all my ways are in thy sight;" that is to say: whatever I did was done as if your eyes were fixed on me, being fully satisfied of your seeing and knowing everything. Such thoughts have a wonderful effect in controlling man's actions; for, if the presence of a prince of this world has the effect of preventing the subject from transgressing, nay even more, of making them blush to be found lazy or careless, timid or fearful, what must not be effect be of having constantly before one's eyes the presence of a heavenly and all-powerful ruler?" Hence the Lord said to Abraham, "walk before me, and be perfect." And

(continued from preceding page)

SADE

137. Thou art just, O Lord: and thy judgment is right.
138. Thou hast commanded justice: thy testimonies, and thy truth exceedingly.
139. My zeal hath made me pine away; because my enemies forgot thy words.
140. Thy word is exceedingly refined; and thy servant hath loved it.
141. I am very young and despised; but I forget not thy justifications.
142. Thy justice is justice forever: and thy law is the truth.
143. Trouble and anguish have found me; thy commandments are my meditation.
144. Thy testimonies are justice forever; give me understanding, and I shall live.

COPH

145. I cried with my whole heart, hear me O Lord: I will seek thy justifications.
146. I cried unto thee; save me: that I may keep thy commandments.
147. I prevented the dawning of the day, and cried: because in thy words I very much hoped.
148. My eyes to thee have prevented the morning: that I might meditate on thy words.
149. Hear thou my voice, O Lord, according to thy mercy; and quicken me according to thy judgment.
150. They that persecute me have drawn nigh to iniquity; but they are gone far off from thy law.
151. Thou art near, O Lord: and all thy ways are truth.
152. I have known from the beginning concerning thy testimonies, that thou hast founded them forever.

RES

153. See my humiliation, and deliver me: for I have not forgotten thy law.
154. Judge my judgment and redeem me; quicken thou me for thy word's sake.
155. Salvation is far from sinners; because thy have not sought thy justifications.
156. Many, O Lord, are thy mercies: quicken me according to thy judgment.
157. Many are they that persecute me, and afflict me; but I have not declined from thy testimonies.
158. I beheld the transgressors, and I pined away; because they kept not thy word.
159. Behold, I have loved thy commandments, O Lord: quicken me thou in thy mercy.
160. The beginning of thy words is truth: all the judgments of thy justice are forever.

SIN

161. Princes have persecuted me without cause: and my heart hath been in awe of thy words.
162. I will rejoice at thy words, as one that hath found great spoil.
163. I have hated and abhorred iniquity: but I have loved thy law.
164. Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice.
165. Much peace have they that love thy law: and to them there is no stumbling block.
166. I looked for thy salvation, O Lord: and I loved thy commandments.
167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and hath loved them exceedingly.
168. I have kept thy commandments and thy testimonies; because all my ways are in thy sight.

TAU

169. Let my supplication, O Lord, come near in their sight; give me understanding according to thy word.
170. Let my request come in before thee: deliver thou me according to thy word.
171. My lips shall utter a hymn, when thou shalt teach me thy justifications.
172. My tongue shall pronounce thy word: because all thy commandments are justice.
173. Let thy hand be with me to save me; for I have chosen thy precepts.
174. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord: and thy law is my meditation.
175. My soul shall live, and shall praise thee; and thy judgments shall help me.
176. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek thy servant, because I have not forgotten thy commandments.

Please continue forward for an explanation of each Psalm.

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

Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 118

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

ALEPH

1. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." The Prophet, most properly, in praising the excellence and the advantage of the divine law, draws his first argument from happiness, that is, the ultimate end of man; for in the moral order the end holds the same place that first principles do in the order of nature. The meaning of the first verse, then, is: Blessed are they who, in their journey through life, are not soiled by the mud or dirt of sin; and they who escape being thus soiled, and thus blessed, are those "who walk in the law of the Lord;" they who abandoned every other way, and choose that of the law of the Lord, as being the purest and the clearest. To come to particulars, the word "blessed" implies eternal happiness, which alone is complete happens; and also temporal happiness, as far as such can be had in this world. The meaning, then, is: blessed are they in eternity; and, even in this life, blessed are they, joyous and content, coveting nothing in this world, are those who live unblemished by sin, by reason of "their walking in the way of the Lord." Christ himself informs us that the straight road to eternal happiness is the observance of his law. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments." With that, experience, as well as reason, teaches us that, even in this world, none lead a happier life than they who lead an upright and a pious one; for happy must that man be who has all he desires, and wishes for nothing bad; while wicked men wish for many things that are bad, and have not very many of the things that they wish for. On the contrary, the just wish for nothing that is bad, and they have whatever they wish for by reason of their wishing for God alone and in doing of his will. The word "undefiled" does not imply the absence of venial sin; if such were the case, we should not have even one to come under such a category. It means the absence of mortal sin, that alone, strictly speaking, leaves a stain on the soul. The metaphor seems to be taken from the spots one picks up in walking through muddy, dusty, or dirty places. "In the way" means through life, which is most aptly called a way by reason of the constant changes in it, and, as Job has it, "must ever continue in the same state," from the moment we commence it to the very last stage of our existence. "In the law of the Lord;" giving us to understand that God's law is a straight and clear path, because it prohibits all manner of sin. The law of the Lord is here opposed to the law of the flesh, which the apostle designates as "the way of concupiscence," full of the dust of pride, the mud of luxury, and the dirty water of avarice.

2. "Blessed are they that search his testimonies; that seek him with their whole heart." He explains the last verse by saying that it is not every observance of the law that will secure happiness. Many observe the law superficially, content with abstaining from murder, theft, adultery, while they do not, in reality, walk as they ought in the way of the Lord, inasmuch as

Sin

161. "Princess have persecuted me without cause: and my heart hath been in awe of thy words." In the next octave the Prophet calls attention to his perseverance in observing God's law, and his desire of guarding against any backsliding therein. "Princes persecuted me without cause." Saul persecuted me without any reason whatever, and he returned evil for good; so did his son Isboseth, who, with Abner as his general, waged a most uncalled for war against me; and so did my son Absalom, who sought to dethrone me, and reign in my stead. "And my heart hath been in awe of thy words." Still, great as was the temptation, I did not consent to it, and I, therefore, did not injure them; for, I was "in awe of thy words," and, therefore, I more than once spared Saul, avenged the death of Isboseth, and wept for Absalom; thus returning good for evil.

162. "I will rejoice at thy words, as one that hath found great spoil." I have not only "been in awe of thy words," but I have also loved them; and therefore, "I will rejoice at thy words" whenever I shall have occasion to observe them in the same spirit of him that rejoices on meeting we great booty after a signal victory. A most appropriate simile, because David was a warrior, used to battle; and because we have to fight fiercely with the evil spirit when we propose to observe God's commandments; and when we do fight and conquer, we have prepared for us a crown of more value than any amount of spoil left behind by the enemy.

163. "I have hated and abhorred iniquity: but I have loved thy law." He again repeats his love for the law, and his hatred of iniquity, a proof positive of his love of him who gave the law, as the Lord himself says, "if you love me keep my commandments;" and further on, in John 14, "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Happy soul, who could assert, with the Holy Ghost to bear him out in it, "I have hated iniquity, and loved thy law."

164. "Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice." And a great sign of love is the praising of God repeatedly, on account of his judgments being most just, and his laws being the very essence of judgment. And though the number seven is only expressive of a considerable number, just as the text in Proverbs, "for a just man shall fall seven times;" that is to say, frequently; still the Church seems to have had some grounds for the institution of the seven canonical hours, partly alluded to in this passage. Being most desirous that her children should imitate this most holy king in his devotions, she decided that seven times in the day they should be required to praise God, which we do in the seven canonical hours, to which, if we add the eighth, indicated by "at midnight I rose to praise thee," we shall have the Holy Trinity praised every third hour by the faithful.

155. "Salvation is far from sinners; because they have not sought thy justifications." I said, "quicken me, for I have not forgotten thy law;" because I know that "salvation is far from sinners, because they have not sought thy justifications." For, in the first place, demons, who may, to a certain extent, be called sinners, are very far from salvation, it being a thing they never will see; because, instead of "seeking for the justifications" of the Lord, they rather entertained a thorough contempt for them. Other sinners, too, will just be as far from salvation as they were from seeking the law of the Lord, and to them the warning of our Savior, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," will prove not to have been an idle one.

156. "Many, O Lord, are thy mercies: quicken me according to thy judgment." However severely you may punish those from whom your "salvation is far," still, "many are thy mercies;" and I, therefore, pray that "according to thy judgments," through which you mercifully judge those who show mercy and who have a love for your law, that you "quicken me."

157. "Many are they that persecute me, and afflict me; but I have not declined from thy testimonies." It is not without reason that I ask you to quicken me; for the visible enemies, and the invisible ones who outnumber them, and seek to destroy me, are very numerous, yet, nevertheless, through the help I have had from you, "I have not declined" to one side or the other, "from thy testimonies;" from thy commandments, the only straight and direct road.

158. "I beheld the transgressors, and I pined away; because they kept not thy word." Here is real love, indeed! The conduct of the transgressors, his persecutors, grieved and afflicted him; not exactly for the injury inflicted on himself, but for the injury thereby offered to God. This he expressed before, when he said, it is very Psalm, "a fainting hath taken hold of me because of the wicked that forsake thy law;" and again, "my zeal hath made me pine away: because my enemies forgot thy words."

159. "Behold, I have loved thy commandments, O Lord: quicken me thou in thy mercy." When "I beheld the transgressors, I pined away;" and it is, therefore, only just that you, who see that "I have loved thy commandments" should "quicken me in thy mercy."

160. "The beginning of thy words is truth: all the judgments of thy justice are forever." Your words, whatever you say, spring from truth as their source, their fountain, and, therefore, abound in truth; and "all the judgments of thy justice;" through which the just are rewarded all the wicked are punished, "are forever."

they have a hatred for their neighbor, abound in wealth they have no use for, or indulge in fornication. He, then, that really wishes to be happy must "search his testimonies," must seriously reflect on the meaning of the whole law, called "his testimonies," by reason of its making God's will known to us; for whoever will search the law will find that the precept, "thou shall not kill," prohibits not only murder, but also hatred and anger, as the Lord himself explained it; nay more, that it even obligates us to love, for "love is the fulfilling of the law;" and when God said, "thou shalt not kill," he said so lest love should be infringed on, which also will be found to apply to the other precepts by anyone "that will search them." They may be truly said to search his testimonies who "seek him with their whole heart;" for he that seriously seeks for God with his whole heart longs for his grace in this world and a sight of him in the next; such a one most undoubtedly seeks to know God's will in everything, and to walk according to it. Like travelers on their way to a place they wish to reach as quickly as possible, they earnestly inquire and ask of all they meet the easiest and most direct road to the place they are bound for; while those who travel without any fixed purpose, having no particular place in view, take very little trouble as to what road they may be traveling. The Prophet, therefore, says, "Blessed are they that search his testimonies;" that is, I called those who walk in the Lord happy, but let it be understood that I mean those only who diligently examine the meaning of the whole law, and of him who gave it; a thing done only by those "who seek him with their whole heart," who neither prefer, nor even put any creature on a level with him, who do not divide their love between him and any creature, but love him solely on his own account, and creatures for him.

3. "For they that work iniquity, have not walked in his ways." He proves his assertion, that they only who walk in the way of the Lord are undefiled, inasmuch as not one of those "that work iniquity," and are thus found defiled on the road, have walked "in the ways," that is, in the law of the Lord; a clear proof of which is, that it is the way of the Lord alone that preserves those who walk in it undefiled. His argument, then, stands thus, by reversing the case, "they that work iniquity," and are, consequently, found defiled, have not walked in the way of the Lord, therefore, they who do walk in God's path do not work iniquity, and are, consequently, undefiled. St. Augustine raises what he calls a serious question here. All the saints walked in the way of the Lord, therefore, they work not iniquity, and yet they say, through 1 John 1, "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, and sin is iniquity." They will work iniquity certainly do not walk in the way of the Lord, inasmuch as they work iniquity, because they walk in a way directly opposite to God's way, as they do who commit mortal sin; while those who commit venial sin merely walk in a way a little outside of God's way. Now, the saints who have the desire of walking in God's way, and do so habitually, may be said to walk therein; and if they occasionally get off the path, by doing something not directly opposed to God's law, they quickly get on it again through penance and confession.

4. "Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently." He now draws another argument from the excellence of the legislator, as much as to say: these are not the commands of man, but of God; that God who requires implicit obedience from all his servants. To give greater weight to what he has to say thereon, he addresses God directly, saying, "thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently." O Lord, you can freely command your servants, and punish them severely if they disobey, and who can neither forgive nor forget the transgressor, "thou hast commanded," not by way of advice, but by strict precept, "thy commandments to be kept" not negligently or carelessly, but "most diligently" and studiously. Who, then, will not, at once, give their mind to a thorough observance of them?

5. “O! That my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications.” Looking at the authority, of him that commands, and the strictness of the order, the Prophet wishes that God’s commands should be most implicitly obeyed, and he expresses such wish himself, to give an example to others of the obedience due by them to God; for, if he, a king, supreme head of his people, so trembles at God’s commands, and so ardently desires to comply with them, what should ordinary persons not do? “O, that my ways,” all my thoughts, words, and deeds, “maybe directed,” may be made agreeable to your righteous law, “to keep thy justifications,” to observe your law, called “justifications” frequently in this Psalm. The law for variety’s sake gets different names in the Scripture, such as the precept, the command, the discourse, the speech, the word, sometimes the testimony; by reason of its bearing witness to what God’s will is, sometimes the justification, as in this passage, because it is through it we are justified; that is, made more just, according to the apostle, who says, “the doers of the law shall be justified;” observe, though, that I said, they who observe the law shall be made more just, because the first justification, through which we are made just, from being sinners, cannot be ascribed to the law, but to grace, as the same apostle has it, “for if justice be by the law, then Christ died in vain.”

6. “Then shall I not be confounded, when I shall look into all thy commandments.” He draws great fruit from directing his ways to keep the justifications of the Lord. They who regard the greatness of the legislator; and in their actions do not regard the rule of his divine law, and afterwards find their work out of shape, and not in conformity with the direct way of the law of God, they are fearfully confounded and disheartened, they can scarcely lift their eyes to God, saying to themselves, “who am I that I should have dared to direct my thoughts, words, or deeds, to anything but what was agreeable to the straight way of the commands of the supreme legislator, who ordered them to be so zealously observed?” David, then, considering it of great importance, as it really is, to have no reason for being confused on such grounds, says, I always wished to direct my ways to keep God’s justifications, because then “I shall not be confounded,” I will have no reason for blushing before you, O Lord, “when I showed look into all thy commandments,” when I shall have tested all my actions by the rule of your commandments, to see if they are conformable, to them. Hence, we learn how far removed from the spirit, and the piety of David, are they who do so many crooked things, anything but conformable to the law of God, and yet are quite unconscious of their deformity, by reason of their not reflecting on the greatness of the legislator.

7. “I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned the judgments of thy justice.” He adds that not only will he not become founded, but he will even return thanks to God for having, through his grace and assistance, learned how to observe his law. “I will praise thee,” and give thee thanks, “with uprightness of heart,” with a pure and upright heart, “when I shall have learned,” for having the good luck to learn, “the judgments of thy justice;” your most just judgments and laws. The word “learned” conveys more than simple knowledge; it implies an amount of approbation and persuasion on the part of those who have come at the truth, and, therefore, determine to observe it; in which sense we are to understand it in John 6, where the Lord says, “everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned, cometh to me.” Now, they learn of the Father, who, by the infusion of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, are firmly persuaded that it is a good thing to believe, to be converted, or to observe the law. Such persuasion springs from uprightness of heart; for God is looked upon as thoroughly good by those who have an upright heart, as Psalm 72 has it, “how good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart.” Now, they who are pleased with God, cannot but be pleased with everything that declares his will, and as it is through the Commandments his will is declared, they must take great pleasure in obeying his commandments. By the judgments of justice” we understand the same precepts of the divine law, that are sometimes called judgments, sometimes the “judgments of justice.” They are called judgments, inasmuch as they are

150. “They that persecute me have drawn nigh to iniquity; but they are gone far off from thy law.” It is not without reason that I ask to be quickened; for I am pressed by persecutors, who seek to ruin me by constant temptations; and, be they men or demons, “they have drawn nigh to iniquity, but they are gone far off from thy law;” that is, they love iniquity, they cling to it, they seek to persuade others to do the same; as, on the contrary, they hate your law, they eschew it, and seek to make it odious to everyone.

151. “Thou art near, O Lord: and all thy ways are truth.” Though my persecutors “have gone far off from thy law,” they could not go far from you, because “thou art near” them, by reason of your justice; “and all thy ways are truth;” all your laws, all your judgments are supremely just; thus, they could not possibly escape thy avenging hand. “Thou art near” me too, “O Lord,” through your assistance; “and all thy ways are truth;” you will not allow my persecutors to injure me; for though, perchance, you may give them power over my body, you will give them none over my soul; and all my persecutions will be ultimately turned into a crown of glory.

152. “I have known from the beginning concerning thy testimonies; that thou hast founded them forever.” That “all thy ways are truth,” nay, even eternal truth, “I have known from the beginning concerning thy testimonies;” that is to say, from the first moment that I began to look into your commandants, a careful consideration of them led me to the conclusion, “that thou hast founded there forever,” that is, that they are based on eternal truth, and, therefore, clearly immutable, and not to be dispensed in; for it has been already stated that they are immutable, by reason of their having in them order of justice, and the intention of the legislator.

Besch

153. “See my humiliation, and deliver me: for I have not forgotten thy law.”

154. “Judge my judgment and redeem me: quicken thou me for thy word’s sake.” The Prophet in the next octave, again puts up his prayer to God, asking to be delivered from his enemies, be they men or demons, who sought to make him break the law by their temptations. “See my humiliation,” my affliction and trouble, “and deliver me; for I have not forgotten thy law;” that is to say, though I may not observe the law to perfection, still I have not entirely rejected it; nay, I even frequently think and reflect on it, and I am anxious to observe it; as it is, therefore, only right for you to “deliver me,” from the enemies that tempt me, and perfect in me what you have begun through your grace. Therefore, “judge my judgment;” sit in judgment on my cause, “and redeem me,” by your judgment, from the hand of my enemies; “quicken thou me for thy words’ sake,” by virtue of the promise or the law you made in reference to rewarding the good and the bad; “quicken me,” by giving me an additional supply of grace here and glory hereafter.

144. “Thy testimonies are justice forever; give me understanding, and I shall live.” He repeats what he said in verses 138 and 142. Thy commandments, by reason of their extreme justice, “are justice forever;” and I, therefore, beg of you to “give me understanding,” that I may fairly comprehend them, and, by observing them, “I shall live;” for, if I do not observe them, I must, of necessity, die.

145. “I cried with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord: I will seek thy justifications.” In the next eight verses, the Prophet expresses his love for the law of God by an ardent prayer, expressing his feelings in the first and second verses by the pitch of his voice, and in the third and fourth by the unreasonableness of the hour he selected. “I cried with my whole heart,” with all my might, with all my affections; and, therefore, “hear me, O Lord.” For, as we cannot hear one speaking in a subdued tone, and are sure to hear them when they shout, thus God seems to take no notice, as if he did not hear it at all, of a cold, distracted prayer, but is all attention to an ardent, earnest one, as if he could not avoid hearing it. “I will seek thy justifications.” Hear me, that I may diligently inquire into and observe your commandments.

146. “I cried unto thee, save me: then I may keep thy commandments.” This may be understood of the salvation that we have through hope in this world, and of the reality, through glory, in the next. “I cried unto thee,” prayed to you most earnestly, “save me,” through grace, which is the commencement of salvation, “that I may keep thy commandments,” as far as human frailty will allow me; and also, “save me” in life everlasting, “that I may keep thy commandments,” without any fear of breaking them.

147. “I prevented the dawning of the day, and cried: because in thy words I very much hoped.” I anticipated the time of rising, and make great haste to pour forth my prayer before dawn, by reason of the great hope I had in your promises.

148. “My eyes to thee have prevented the morning: that I might meditate on thy words.” A repetition of the preceding idea, in which he repeats that he rose long before sunrise, in order, through God’s grace, to meditate on his words.

149. “Hear thou my voice, O Lord, according to thy mercy; and quicken me according to thy judgment.” He follows up the prayer he commenced in the morning, when the cares of this world having been set aside, and, in profound silence, he prayed with the greatest attention. “Hear thou my voice,” not according to my merits, but “according to thy usual mercy,” – “and quicken me,” by preserving and increasing the spiritual life you already conferred on me, and, by so perfecting and completing it in the world to come, that it will be impossible ever after to move me, “according to thy judgments” by virtue of which you always carry out what you promise.

certain opinions judged by God to be more perfect, or certain divine statutes and decrees; they are called justices, as being the rules containing justice; and, finally, they are called the judgments of justice, as being most just judgments and decrees. Thus, the meaning of the verse is: I will praise you with an upright heart, because I am persuaded that your laws are most just, and should be most faithfully observed; all of which I acknowledge proceeds not from me, but from thy grace.

8. “I will keep thy justifications: O! Do not thou utterly forsake me.” This is the conclusion of the first octave, if we may so call the eight verses composing the divisions of the Psalm, and indicated by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, for which division no satisfactory reason can be assigned. The meaning is: whereas the observance of your law tends to the happiness of those who keep it, and whereas it has been proposed by you, the supreme legislator, and its observance most strictly ordered, “I will keep that justifications;” I determined and resolved with all my strength to keep them; but do you, on your part, withhold not your grace and your assistance, without which I can do nothing; and if, perchance, in your justice, you shall have to desert me for a while, so that I may feel my own weakness, and learn to fly to thee, and to confide in thee, do not, at all events, “utterly forsake me,” that is, altogether and forever.

Beth

9. “By what doth a young man correct his way? By observing thy words.” Having praised the law of God, by reason of its object and of its author, he now praises it by reason of the advantage of it to the person to whom it is given. And, as nobody needs the law more than one beginning in the world, such as a young man, he speaks in particular of such. The young man needs the law of God, first, because it is in such persons the law of the members is strongest; secondly, because they have not yet learned prudence by experience; thirdly, as it is of the utmost consequence to a traveler to strike upon the right path in the beginning of his journey, as it may save him the labor of retracing his steps, and beginning it over again; thus, it is of the highest importance to the young man, who means to preserve his innocence, to accustom himself in early life to the observance of the Commandments. “It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth,” says Jeremias. Who are we to understand by “a young man?” I do not imagine David means such a young man as the prodigal, for such a one would need the grace of repentance to correct such faults, and a knowledge or observance of the latter would not suffice; nor do I think that he speaks of a young man renovated by grace, as opposed to an old man; for there is question here of the correction of errors, which are not supposed to be found in one renovated. I imagine, then, that David speaks of a young man, in the plain acceptation of the words, who requires a remedy against the natural impulses of corrupt nature, “that is prone to evil from his youth.” – “By what doth a young man correct his way?” By what means, manner, or art doth a young man correct his way? That is, his actions, or his life, corrupted by natural deprivation through original sin, and prone to evil. He answers, “by observing thy words;” for, he that from his youth has been accustomed to fear God, and, under the influence of such holy fear, to observe God’s words, that is, his divine laws, will, undoubtedly, avoid many errors. Take, for example, Tobias the younger, whom his father “taught from his infancy to fear God, and to abstain from all sin.”

10. “With my whole heart have I sought after thee: let me not stay from thy commandments.” David, influenced by such advantages, now asks God for grace to observe his commandments, decides firmly on observing them, and teaches us by his example to do the same, and first assigns a reason, the very one assigned in the Gospel,

“seek, and you shall find.” – “Everyone that seeketh findeth,” why he should be heard, “with my whole heart have I sought after thee.” Such is the reason he assigns for his being heard, for having sought after God with his whole heart, that is, for having asked his grace, for having desired to please him, and to carry out his will; a truly wonderful petition, as if God, who commanded his “Commandments” to be kept most “diligently,” could wish to repel anyone from observing them. This mode of speaking, however, only implies the necessity of grace, a thing known to those only, who are desirous of observing the commandments, while they are conscious of their own weakness.

11. “Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.”

12. “Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy justifications.” Another reason for his being heard, and a fresh petition for grace to keep his law, and the reason is, his great desire to avoid sin, and thus to keep the law. “Thy words have I hidden in my heart.” I have placed your words, that is, your law, in the inmost recesses of my heart, so that I may never forget them; and my object in doing so was, “that I may not sin against thee;” thus, my desire of avoiding sin makes me wish I should never forget God’s law; and, for fear I should possibly forget it, I have hidden it in the recesses of my heart so that nothing can possibly wrest it from me. Having thus premised his reason for being heard, he presents the petition, “Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy justifications.” The words, “teach me,” as we observed on the seventh verse, 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 verse seven he said he “had learned the judgments of his justice;” it includes grace to observe his law. God teaches his justifications when he, through his grace, causes one to delight in his law, and fully persuades one to wish to keep it exactly. The words, “Blessed art thou,” contain another argument for his being heard. It means: do, O Lord, who art blessed by all created things, for you fill all things with your blessing, teach me your justifications. “For the lawgiver shall give a blessing.” Thus God is blessed, and he in turn blesses; he is blessed when he is praised, and he blesses when he pours down his favors.

13. “With my lips I have pronounced all the judgments of thy mouth.”

14. “I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches.”

15. “I will meditate on thy commandments: and I will consider thy ways.”

16. “I would think of thy justifications: I will not forget thy words.” In those four verses he expresses his love of God’s law, possibly by reason of his having got that benediction of the lawgiver, that he had just asked for. He says he has the law of God in his mouth, his will, his understanding, and his memory, and thus, in every part of his soul. As to his mouth he says, “with my lips I have pronounced all the judgments of thy mouth.” I have constantly spoken of, and constantly preached, your commandments to all who may choose to hear them; “judgments,” here, mean commandments, and he adds, “of thy mouth,” to remind us they are not the precepts of man, but of God, having been declared by his mouth. In regard of his will, he says, “I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches.” I have taken a great delight in walking in the way of thy testimonies, as misers take in amassing riches. Great and rare is such affection, when man, in general, for a very trifling lucre, is wont to despise all God’s commandments. As to his understanding or reflection he says, “I will meditate on thy commandments: I will consider thy ways.” I will be constantly occupied in meditation and turning over in my mind all you have commanded or prohibited; and, as regards another affection of the heart, he says, “I will think of thy justifications.” The Hebrew here implies that he will be delighted in chanting them. Having previously said “I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches.” Where his delight seems to arise from the utility of the

138. “Thou hast commanded justice: thy testimonies, and thy truth exceedingly.” He shows that the law of God is just, not only by reason of its having been imposed by a just God, but also by reason of its containing the very essence of justice, “thou hast commanded justice in thy testimonies,” you have prescribed your testimonies, which are the very essence of truth. St. Thomas infers from this, that the law is one that cannot be dispensed in, inasmuch as it contains the very order of justice; just as if one should order that no one should fall into sin, or do any injustice, then the law would admit of no dispensation; for, in no possible case could it be lawful to commit sin, or do an act of injustice.

139. “My zeal hath made me pine away; because my enemies forgot thy words.” Your law being thus so extremely just, I could not but grieve, and even languish and pine away, through my zeal, at seeing people, even enemies as they were, “forget thy words,” devoid of the slightest regard for your most valuable commandments.

140. “Thy word is exceedingly refined; and thy servant hath loved it.” He again repeats that the law of God is most just and pure, comparing it to gold tried in the fire; for he says, “thy word is exceedingly refined,” because God’s law is like gold in a furnace, that comes out as it went in, by reason of its having no dross, no dirt in it; whence it follows that we should have the greatest esteem for it, and, therefore, he adds, “and thy servant hath loved it.”

141. “I am very young and despised; but I forget not thy justifications.” David alludes here to his own brothers, saying, “I am the least among my brethren,” despised by my father and brothers, and yet I have been raised to the throne, and specially honored by God, because “I forget not thy justifications.” See 1 Kings 16.

142. “Thy justice is justice forever: and thy law is the truth.” This is a repetition and an explanation of verse 138, for “the justice of the Lord;” that is, his most just law “is justice forever,” because it is immutable and cannot be dispensed with; and it is also “the truth,” for it has nothing false in it, for its promises, as well as its threats, will most certainly be carried out.

143. “Trouble and anguish have found me; thy commandments are my meditation.” The aforesaid reflections on God’s justice cause me whenever I am in trouble, to console myself by constant meditation on your law. “Trouble and anguish have found me.” Whenever they did lay hold of me, “thy commandments are my meditation;” my only remedy is to meditate, and revel in meditation on thy commandments.

134. “Redeem me from the calumnies of men: that I may keep thy commandments.” Direct my steps, then especially, when, confused by calumnies, there may be danger of straying from the right way, for “calumny troubleth the wise, and shall destroy the strength of his heart.” Redeem me from the calumnies of men.” Deliver me from their calumnies, that my mind being at rest, “I may keep thy commandments.”

135. “Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: and teach me thy justifications.” He now repeats, in different words, what he said in verse 132. “Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.” For, as when the sun’s light is obscured by the intervention of the clouds, we are deprived thereby of light and heat, thus, when God does not help us with his grace, he seems either to hide his face or to envelop it in darkness; and, on the contrary, when he illuminates us with the light of his grace, he seems to disperse the envious clouds, and to show the serenity of his face; he, therefore, says, “make thy face to shine,” look upon me with a face of serenity, and by the infusion of your light teach me thy justifications; that is, the knowledge and the observance of your laws.

136. “My eyes have sent forth springs of water: because they have not kept thy law.” The number of prayers, so often repeated, for the grace of observing the law, is a proof of the earnest desire David had to keep it; which he now proves from the deep sorrow he feels for having broken it, for he says it was not one or two tears that he shed, but floods of tears (which he calls waters) from his eyes, like so many gushing fountains, “because they have not kept thy law.” For, though sin, that is, a transgression of the law is the offspring of the will or the heart, still, the instruments by which it is committed are the eyes, the tongue, the hands. Now, the most grievous sins committed by David, and for which “he washed his couch every night with his tears,” were committed through the eyes; for he looked with too much curiosity at a naked female while she was bathing, that led him to concupiscence, and afterwards to adultery and murder.

Sade

137. “Thou art just, O Lord: and thy judgment is right.” God’s law is praised in this section, for its extreme fairness and justice. He first proves the law to be most just, by reason of its author being most just, one in whom injustice can have no place. He, therefore, says, “thou art just, O Lord,” you are peculiarly just, you are the just one exclusively, you alone have the justice that excludes all manner of injustice, as St. John says, “God is light, and in him there is no darkness.” – “And that judgment is right,” and, consequently, your judgment, decree, command, is always right in just. Throughout this Psalm the word “judgment” always means the law, though taking the word even to mean God’s allocation of rewards and punishments, it is then also most just, though we may not see the justice of it.

subject, he now says that he will be delighted with them by reason of the pleasure to be derived from them, just as the law of the Lord is compared in Psalm 18, to gold and to honey, as being both useful and agreeable. The meaning of the passage, then, is: “I will think of thy justifications;” I will occupy myself in chanting the praises of your Commandments, in order to delight myself, as I would with sweet and pleasant songs. He now ultimately comes to the memory, saying, “I will not forget thy words;” because, by frequent meditation on them, and pleasing chant of them, I cannot possibly forget “thy words,” or your law. Hence, we infer that to those who have the benediction of the lawgiver, that is, the spirit of true charity, the law of the Lord is neither heavy nor severe, but that it is, as the Lord himself said, “a sweet yoke and a light burden.”

17. “Give bountifully to thy servant; enliven me, and I shall keep thy words.” In the next octave he enumerates the obstacles to the observance of the law, and prays for their removal out of his way. Death of the soul is the first obstacle, for men that are dead cannot observe the commandments of life as they ought, so as to obtain eternal life; and David, even if he could hope to consider himself as one of the living, still, “as no one knoweth whether he is worthy of love or hatred,” and, as he assumed the person of the sinner, he, therefore, for himself, or for them, prays and says, “give bountifully to thy servant, enliven me; and I shall keep thy words;” that is to say: give your servant, should he chance to be dead in sins, spiritual life, and then he will be able “to keep thy words.”

18. “Open thou my eyes: and I will consider the wondrous things of thy law.” The passions of the soul, such as love, fear, desire, anger, and similar affections form the second obstacle, and often prevent men from coming to right conclusions. Concerning them, he says, “open thou my eyes.” Remove, by the infusion of your light, the veil of passion from my intellectual visions with which, when so purified, “I will consider the wondrous things of thy law,” the wonderful justice, the wonderful wisdom, the wonderful advantages, and all the other wonderful things that shine forth in thy law.

19. “I am a sojourner on the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.” The third obstacle lies in this pilgrimage of ours here below, for while we are here pilgrims, we must needs be earthly and carnal, while “the law is spiritual.” If God, then, through his grace, will not make us spiritual, we cannot observe a spiritual law. “I am a sojourner on the earth,” an earthly animal man, living on the earth, while I am in exile from my country: and, therefore, I ask, “that thou hide not thy commandments from me;” that is, that you may, through your grace, make me fit to receive your commandments.

20. “My soul hath coveted to long for thy justifications, at all times.” The fourth obstacle is imperfection. The perfect, who love God and his law with their whole heart, and do good from the pure love of it, are very rare indeed. Very many have the best intentions, but there they stop. The Prophet, then, speaking as if he were one of such, says, “my soul hath coveted to long for thy justifications at all times.” He dare not say: my soul hath coveted to observe your commandments, but, conscious of his infirmity, he says, “it hath coveted to long for,” and this very acknowledgment of imperfection is a regular petition for that perfection which God grants, when he makes one ardently long to observe his commandments.

21. “Thou hast rebuked the proud: they are cursed who decline from thy commandments.” The fifth and greatest obstacle of all is pride, that prevents man from submitting his neck to the yoke, but which David seems to think has no place in him, or in anyone like him, but solely in God’s enemies; thus, without anymore ado, he simply execrates it. “Thou hast rebuked the proud,” who, from pure contempt, did not observe

your commandments. Lucifer, for instance, hurled by God's rebuke to hell, with such violence as to have the Lord himself say of him, "I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven." Adam, too, whose pride, in wishing to become equal to God, led him to disobey God, was rebuked by him, and bore the sentence of death for himself and for the whole human race. Finally, God will, on the last days administer a dreadful rebuke to all the wicked; and, therefore, the Prophet adds, "they are accursed who decline from thy commandments," to wit, those who decline especially through pride and contempt of the legislator, but such will be told specially, "go ye cursed into everlasting fire."

22. "Remove from me reproach and contempt: because I have sought after thy testimonies."

23. "For princes sat, and spoke against me: but thy servant was employed in thy justifications." The proud not only refuse to obey God, but they even despise and insult those who obey him; but such insolence ultimately reverts on themselves, as David here predicts; for this, like other similar expressions in the Psalms, though in the form of an imprecation, is really a prediction. He, therefore, says, "remove from me reproach and contempt;" the time will come when you will remove both from me, and cast them back on the proud who disobey you; "because I have sought after thy testimonies," which they despised looking after. In the next verse he assigns a reason for this; that is, "for princess sat and spoke against me; but thy servant was employed in thy justifications." Proud princess, sitting on their thrones, presiding at their councils, or luxuriating in their riches and their power, "spoke against me;" reproached me with obeying God's commands; "but thy servant was employed in thy justifications;" regardless of their threats or their reproaches, I was entirely wrapt up in the consideration, the announcement, and the carrying out of your justifications.

24. "For thy testimonies are my meditation: and the justifications my counsel." An explanation of "I was employed in thy justifications;" for he says they were a sweet consolation to him in his troubles, and a faithful counselor in his doubts.

Daleth

25. "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken thou me according to thy word." In the next eight verses David still assumes the person of one imperfect, who is kept back by the concupiscence of the flesh from the perfect observance of the Commandments, and asks the grace and help to observe them. "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement;" to the groveling things of this world; "quicken me according to thy word;" grant that I may lead a life agreeable to your law; for, by my love for the things of this world I am become a carnal man; but, if I shall live according to your law, which is a spiritual one, I shall adhere to God, and become one spirit with him. St. Augustine observes that, at present, the soul adheres to the flesh, or the earth, and thus becomes carnal, or earthly, and thus prevented from observing the law to perfection; but, after the resurrection in glory, the flesh will adhere to the soul, and the soul to God; and thus of flesh will then become spiritualized, will, to a certain extent, be deified, will observe the law to the fullest extent, without any trouble; or rather, will need no law, when it will carry out everything ordained by the law to the letter.

26. "I have declared my ways, and thou hast heard me: teach me thy justifications." He makes a further acknowledgment of his own misery, and again asks the grace. "I have declared my ways;" I have not been ashamed to acknowledge my bad acts, I have openly avowed them; "and thou hast heard me," and spared me with your usual mercy; "teach me thy justifications;" that is, to make me keep your commandments; for, as we observed before, the word "teaching," in this Psalm, implies more than imparting knowledge; it unites the being

Prophet alludes here. With that, the Decalogue that principally contains God's law, is wonderful for being written in such plain and intelligible language, though it contains, in the smallest possible space, all the principles of justice on which all the laws that ever have been, or will be made, are based. All other laws are innumerable, have filled, and are still filling, many large volumes, and yet they are all conclusions or inferences from the laws of the Decalogue. Thus, as small seeds are wonderful by reason of their having within them the germs of large trees, so the Decalogue is wonderful by reason of its essentially comprising all the laws of the world.

130. "The declaration of thy words giveth light: and giveth understanding to little ones." As he said that God's commandments were wonderful, he now adds, that if they be explained, either by the infusion of divine light, or by some learned teacher, they wonderfully enlighten the mind. Now, the law is declared or explained, when the mysteries indicated by the figures that are in the ceremonial law, are disclosed to us, when conclusions are drawn from the moral law, and, finally, when the decrees of the judicial law are applied to particular cases.

131. "I opened my mouth, and panted: because I longed for thy commandments." And I, as one of those little ones, "opened my mouth," the mouth of my interior, by asking and praying, "and panted," longed for the spirit of knowledge and piety, that I may understand and observe your commandments, for I longed both to understand and to observe them. The metaphor taken from our natural respiration, for when we are worked hard, and nearly suffocated in consequence, we open our mouth and pant, of which we draw breath and get better.

132. "Look thou upon me, and have mercy on me, according to the judgment of them that love thy name." In opening my mouth to pray, I said, "look thou upon me, and have mercy on me." Look on me with an eye of pity, and have mercy on me, laboring under the load of your commandments, which, through my own strength, I am not able to keep, "according to the judgment of them that love thy name." Have the same mercy on me that you have on those friends of yours that truly love you.

133. "Direct my steps according to thy word: and let not iniquity have dominion over me." You will have mercy on me, "according to the judgment of them that love thy name;" if you will "direct my steps according to thy words;" that is, if you will cause me, through your grace, to walk in the right way in the direction of your law; and thus, "let no iniquity have dominion over me," let me do nothing that may cause me to be held a captive, for, as our Lord says, "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

124. "Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy; and teach me thy justifications." He goes on with the prayer, begging that God may deal with him not according to his own merits, "but according to thy mercy," which especially consists in teaching him "thy justifications;" that is, that he should impress him with a thorough conviction of the observance of God's law being a good thing, and thus teach them not so much the theory as the practice of it. This happens when God gives one a great amount of love, and not when he gives knowledge alone, which, without love, puffs up without edifying.

125. "I am thy servant: give me understanding that I may know your testimonies." The asking for the same thing repeatedly is a proof of one's great desire for it. "I am thy servant," and thus bound to execute your behests; therefore "give me understanding," make me understand "thy testimonies," that I may learn them perfectly. See first verse of Job.

126. "It is time, O Lord, to do: they have dissipated thy law." It is time for you, O Lord, to pass judgment on, and punish the wicked, because "they had dissipated thy law;" they have not only violated it, but they have altogether dissipated it, by not observing a single particle of it.

127. "Therefore have I loved thy commandments above gold and topaz."

128. "Therefore was I directed to all thy commandments: I have hated all wicked ways." As so many "have dissipated thy law," and I see the most dreadful punishment in store for them in consequence, I am, therefore, on the other hand, the more smitten with a love for thy law, and I value it more than gold or precious stones; and I, therefore, not only loved it, but I did my best to observe it, for; "therefore was I directed to all thy commandments." I walked in the direct path of them, turning neither to the right nor to the left; nay, more, "I have hated," and consequently turned away from "all wicked ways," the whole law of the flesh and of sin.

Phe

129. "Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul hath sought them." The Prophet again returns, in the next eight verses, to praise the law, and to ask for grace for its perfect observance. He, therefore, praises the law by reason of its being wonderful, and having, on that account, studied it diligently. But how does this not contradict the expression of the Lord himself, regarding the commandments in Deuteronomy? "This commandment, that I command thee this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee." The answer is, that God's law, whether moral, judicial, or ceremonial, are not wonderful, as regards the literal meaning of them, and they are quite clear and easily comprehended, and they who break them cannot plead ignorance, and so Moses affirms in the same chapter. But as regards the mystic meaning, especially of the ceremonial laws, they are wonderful and most obscure, foreshadowing, as they do, all the mysteries of the Christian religion, to which the

persuaded to do the thing so taught.

27. "Make me to understand the way of thy justifications: and I shall be exercised in thy wondrous works." Being very desirous in the way of the Lord, he becomes more urgent again in praying to God for light. "Make me to understand the way of thy justifications." Tell me what your commandments mean, how I should walk in your law; "and I shall be exercised in thy wondrous works;" I will be entirely taken up in putting your precepts into practice, precepts so wonderful as to appear nigh impossible of observance; such as, "thou shalt love God with thy whole heart;" and, "thou shalt not covet;" "thou shalt love thy enemy;" and the like.

28. "My soul hath slumbered through heaviness: strengthen thou me in thy works." He comes again to acknowledge the infirmity of his flesh, and to ask for mercy; for, in this our pilgrimage, rarely will anyone be found not to relax at some time or another, and become drowsy and more tepid from the constant struggle between the spirit and the flesh. "My soul hath slumbered through heaviness;" while I am tired of the labor I have to undergo in the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit. "Strengthen thou me in thy words." Strengthen me while I endeavor to keep your commandments, by the fervor of your grace, through which I may be able to persevere.

29. "Remove from me the way of iniquity: and out of thy law have mercy on me." A copious explanation of the expression "strengthen me," in the previous verse. "Remove from me the way of iniquity," grant, through your grace, that I may keep far away from the way of iniquity, from the path of sin I had just entered on, "by slumbering, through heaviness;" and, "out of thy law have mercy on me;" in your mercy, cause that I may tread in the path of your law, as the Hebrew clearly indicates.

30. "I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments I have not forgotten." He hitherto acknowledged his own inherent wretchedness; he now, in these verses, tells what the mercy of God may effect, as if he said: hitherto I have chosen the path of falsehood, but, through that mercy, in which, "out of thy love, thou hast mercy on me," now "I have chosen the way of truth," have seriously proposed to walk in the true way, the way of thy commandments; and, through your mercy, "I have not forgotten thy judgments;" that is, thy commandments, however vehemently "the flesh may lust against the spirit."

31. "I have struck to thy testimonies, O Lord put me not to shame." Of myself, "I have cleaved to the pavement," but, through your mercy, I have stuck to thy testimonies; and though, in my flesh, I am a slave to the law of sin, in my soul I am a servant to your law, and, therefore, "put me not to shame," to which I must come, if deprived of your help.

32. "I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart." Of myself, "I have slumbered through heaviness," but, through your mercy, "I have run the way of thy commandments;" I have observed them with delight, with readiness, with alacrity, "when thou didst enlarge my heart" by the infusion of your love, which makes "your yoke sweet and your burden light."

He

33. "Set before me for a law the way of thy justifications, O Lord: and I will always seek after it." In the next eight verses he asks, in a certain order, first, for a desire of observing the law; secondly, for light to understand it; thirdly, for grace to observe it; and fourthly, for the removal of all obstacles thereto. In this very long Psalm, David, for the purpose of

touching the affections, and of guarding against tedium, repeats the same matter frequently, but in different phraseology. The meaning of this verse is: grant, O Lord, that I may desire to keep no other law than yours. "Set before me for a law the way of thy justifications, O Lord;" that is, put a desire for your law alone in my heart. Two questions arise, how can he ask for a law when the law was already given? Second, why does the just man ask for a law when the apostle says, "the law is not made for the just man?" The Prophet does not absolutely ask for a law, but he asks that the law of sin, or of the world, or of the flesh, may not please him, but the law of God alone; and, through God's grace, he desires that it alone should find a place in his heart, his desires, and his affections, and, therefore, he adds, "and I will always seek after it;" which means, if, through your grace, I shall look for it alone, I will never do anything but what is commanded by it.

34. "Give me understanding, and I will search thy law; and I will keep it with my whole heart." After having asked for a desire or affection for the law, he also asks for understanding; that he may rightly comprehend it, and inquire into its utility, excellence, and other advantages, so that he may "keep it with my whole heart;" thereby implying that it was not through curiosity, but for its better observance, that he seeks to understand the law.

35. "Lead me into the path of thy commandments; but this same I have desired." He now, in the third place, asks for grace to observe the law. "Lead me in the path of thy commandments;" make me observe them. They had 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 it, as St. Paul says, "who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish."

36. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." This verse is nearly a repetition of the first of this octave. In that verse he prayed for affection to the law of God, in this he prays for the exclusion of avarice, which is a great obstacle to such affection. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." Pour an abundance shower of grace into my heart, so as to incline to the observance of thy law, "and not to covetousness;" do not incline my heart to avarice. God is said to incline one to evil when, by the withdrawal of his grace, he allows him to incline to evil; and the Scripture, in using such language, merely means to shed the power of God's grace; for God, strictly speaking, cannot incline anyone to evil. Similar expressions frequently occur in the Scriptures; thus, in Romans, where it is said, "God delivereth them unto a reprobate sense," and then Isaiah; "why hast thou caused us to stray from thy way?"

37. "Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity: quicken me in thy way." This verse corresponds with the second in this division, for in that he asked for the gift of understanding, to reflect upon the law; hear me asks, that his mind's eye may not be averted from the law to vanity. "Turn away thy eyes that they may not behold vanity" that I may not be taken up in reflecting on the things of this world, that are all vanity, but rather make me apply myself entirely to your laws; and so "quicken me in thy way," enliven, refresh, and preserve me, while I walk in thy way, the way of thy commandments.

38. "Establish thy word to thy servant, in thy fear." Through a holy fear of you, establish, confirm, and so ground your law in thy servant, that it may remain and persevere most firmly with him. This verse corresponds with the third in this section, in which he asks for grace to observe the law, and here he asks for the grace of perseverance.

119. "I have accounted all the sinners of the earth prevaricators; therefore have I loved thy testimonies." St. Augustine raises a serious question on this passage, as to how all sinners can be called prevaricators; whereas the apostle says, "for where there is no law, there is no transgression;" and again, "for whosoever have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law." The answer is. The first text is to be understood of law in general, the second text is to be understood of the written law only; and, therefore, that all sinners must be reckoned prevaricators, because they all transgress the natural law that is written on their hearts. But why does the Prophet say so? In order to show that sin, the greatest of all evils, arises only from transgression of the law. He adds, "therefore have I loved thy testimonies." I have loved your law in order to escape such an amount of misery.

120. "Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear: for I am afraid of thy judgments." He asks, finally, to be confirmed in the fear of God, that, through it, he may persevere in obeying his law. "Pierce thou," as if with a nail, "my flesh with thy fear;" my carnal desires, so that they cannot make any further commotion, as the apostle says, "and they who are of Christ have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." "For I am afraid of thy judgments;" for I have begun to fear the dreadful punishments that your judgments threaten; and I, therefore, pray I may be so grounded in your holy fear that I may never be moved from it.

Ain

121. "I have done judgment and justice; give me not up to them that slander me" He asks, in the next octave, that he may be delivered from his calumniators, and for help to observe the law to perfection. "I have done judgment and justice;" I gave anyone his own, and it is, therefore, only meet that you "give me not up to them that slander me."

122. "Uphold thy servant unto good: let not the proud calumniate me." "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."

123. "My eyes have fainted after thy salvation and for the word of thy justice." He reasserts his having a most ardent desire for that perfect tendency to good, that will be enjoyed by the elect in eternity. "My eyes have fainted" from looking constantly with desire towards your salvation that is to come to us from heaven, "and for the word of thy justice," and toward your most faithful promise. See first and second verses of Caph.

reason of their nature, but by reason of their iniquity; as, on the other hand, he loved his enemies, and therefore, the unjust, not by reason of their iniquity, but by reason of their nature.

114. “Thou art my helper and my protector; and in thy word I have greatly hoped.” That I may not fear the wicked whom I hate, and that I may observe the law that I love, “thou art my helper and protector,” my helper in observing the law, and my protector in evading the persecution of my enemies. And I, in turn, “have greatly hoped in thee,” in the promises you made me.

115. “Depart from me, ye malignant: and I will search the commandments of my God.” One of the reasons why the Prophet so hated the wicked was, because their presence interfered with his meditations, that required quiet and peace of mind. He wishes them, therefore, as he would so many troublesome wasps, to be off with themselves.

116. “Uphold me according to thy word, and I shall live and let me not be confounded in my expectation.” As well as I wish the malignant to depart, I wish you to approach me, that you may “uphold me” in thy bosom; “according to thy word,” agreeable to the promises you made me, and then, most truly, “I shall live,” when I shall be united to you, who art the life. And as I hope for so much, not through my own merits, but through your goodness, “let me not become confounded in my expectation.”

117. “Help me, and I shall be saved: and I will meditate always on thy justifications.” He repeats the same idea in different language; “uphold me, and I shall live,” and “help me, and I shall be saved,” being the same; and the consequence of his being so helped will be, that he will thenceforward be always able to meditate on God’s law without any impediment.

118. “Thou hast despised all them that fall off from thy judgments; for their thought is unjust.” He now shows, that if he does hate the wicked and wishes they should keep away from him, he is only following God’s example therein, who has a most thorough and most just execration of the wicked. “Thou hast despised,” as you would a thing of no value, “all them that fall off from thy judgments,” all the wicked who have abandoned the path of God’s law; “for their thought is unjust;” because they think they ought not to be subject to the law of God, and that they should set no value on it, one of the most impious ideas they could possibly entertain, since every creature is strictly bound to obey its Creator. Such were the notions of Lucifer, who instead of being subject to, sought to put himself on an equality with, his Creator. Such was the idea of our first parents, who desired to be like God. Such are the ideas of all proud people, who say in their hearts, “who is our Lord?” It is such as those that God despises, and cares very little if thousands of them perish for all eternity, because the more value they set on themselves, the less will God set on them.

39. “Turn away my reproach, which I have apprehended: for thy judgments are delightful.” The not having persevered in the observance of the law of God, when it is not only our own advantage to have done so, but is also sweet and pleasant to observe it, will be a great reproach on the day of judgment, as it is at present in the sight of the angels, and, therefore, having asked for the grace of perseverance, he assigns a reason for such request; and that is, his fear of the reproach that will follow those who will not persevere. “Turn away thy reproach which I have apprehended,” that I feared, should I not persevere in the observance of your law, that is so good in itself.

40. “Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy justice.” He concludes the petitions of this section by saying that it is now sufficiently clear that he heartily desires to observe the commandments. “Behold, I have longed after thy precepts;” behold how evident it is that I have seriously desired to observe them; and, therefore, “quicken me,” increase and preserve my spiritual life “in thy justice,” in thy commandments; that is, in the observance of them, for the “just man is still made more just” so long as he observes them.

Vau

41. “Let thy mercy also come upon me, O Lord; thy salvation according to thy word.” In the commencement of the next eight verses the Prophet begs for God’s mercy; and in the remaining verses of it explains the effect of his mercy, as far as they regard the observance of God’s law, which is the whole scope and object of the Psalm. He, therefore, says, “let thy mercy come upon me,” let your grace and mercy descend from on high upon me; and he tells in what that mercy consists, when he adds, “thy salvation according to thy word;” that is to say, thy salvation, or thy mercy that saves the soul, “according to thy word,” the promise you made of mercy and salvation to those that trust in thee.

42. “So shall I answer them that reproach me in anything; that I have trusted in thy words.” And when your mercy, according to your promise, shall have come upon me, I will not fear my enemies when they will reproach me with having feared God in vain, for “so shall I answer them,” in a manner they will not be able to contradict, “that I have trusted in thy words,” because you can keep your promise, by reason of your omnipotence, and you wish to keep it, by reason of your goodness.

43. “And take not thou the word of truth utterly out of my mouth: for in thy words I have hoped exceedingly.” I pray that you “take not the word of truth,” in which I glory over those who reproach me, “out of my mouth;” that is to say, that you may not, by depriving me of your grace, so enervate me that I may not have the coverage to speak out, that you may not close the mouth of one who has such confidence in you, and so ready to record your promises; or if you choose to withdraw your grace for awhile, in order to prove me, yet do not withdraw it “utterly,” altogether, forever, “for in thy words I have hoped exceedingly,” for I have had the greatest confidence in your justice and faithfulness.

44. “So shall I always keep thy law, forever and ever.” He now tells us the effect of the mercy that so heals the soul, and that is the perpetual observance of God’s law.

45. “And I walked at large, because I have sought after thy commandments.”

46. “And I spoke of thy testimonies before kings; and I was not ashamed.”

47. "I meditated also on thy commandments, which I loved."

48. "And I lifted up my hands to thy commandments, which I loved: and I was exercised in thy justification." In these four verses he explains, in what the observance of the law consists; a thing he promised, when he said, in the fourth verse of this division, that he would observe God's law in his heart, in his words, in his mind, and in his acts; and the Prophet seems, all at once, as having been heard, to have changed his mode of speaking, for he says, "and I walked at large." When God's mercy visited me, I did not walk in that narrow ways of fear, but in the wide ones of love; that is to say, I observed the law willingly, joyfully, with all the affections of my heart, "because I have sought after thy commandments" as a thing of great value, and most important to come at; "and I spoke" openly and fearlessly on the justice of your 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 deed, "I was exercised in thy justifications.

Zain

To the next eight verses the Prophet celebrates the eternal reward promised by God to those who observe his law; and says that it induced him to observe the law, that it consoled him in trouble, and made him grieve for the prevarication of the wicked.

49. "Be thou mindful of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope." God is not subject to forgetfulness, nor to fickleness, nor to retracting what he says but he is, by a figure of speech, said to forget when he defers the execution of a promise, as if he had altogether forgotten it. Now, that he does designedly; and, though determined on carrying out his decrees, he still wishes his faithful servants to ask him to carry them out; and thus, prayer becomes one of the means through which God decreed to fulfill his promises. David, then, in his own person, and of the faithful in general, prays to God, saying, "be thou mindful of thy word;" that is, of thy promise "in which thou has given me hope," when you said to Abraham, and through him to all his children, "walk before me, and be perfect;" I will be "thy reward exceedingly great."

50. "This hath comforted me in my humiliation: because thy word hath enlivened me." The first word of this verse, "this," does not refer to the hope alluded to in the preceding verse; it refers to the concluding portion of this verse, as is evident from the Hebrew; and the meaning of the whole verse is: one thing was a source of great comfort to me in my humiliation, or my affliction, that "your word," meaning your promise, "hath enlivened me;" gave me life and spirit, strengthened and fortified me.

51. "The proud did iniquitously altogether: but I declined not from my love." The life and vigor infused into me by your promise caused me "not to decline from thy law," even though "the proud did iniquitously altogether;" doing all in their power, through their jeering's at me, to deter me from its observance.

52. "I remembered, O Lord, thy judgments of old: and I was comforted." While I was thus humbled and scoffed at, "I remembered the judgments of old;" by virtue of which, from time immemorial, you exalted the humble, and depressed the proud; conferring great rewards on those who observed your law, and inflicting signal punishment on those who transgressed it; and from such reflections I derived the greatest consolation in my infliction; "I was comforted."

109. "My soul is continually in my hands: and I have not forgotten thy law." The fact of my being in daily danger of my life, by reason of my observance of your law, is a proof how serious I was when I swore I would observe it, and how willingly I offered such a sacrifice. "My soul is continually in my hands;" I am in constant danger; for what we have in our hands may easily slip out of them, or be snatched out of them, unless one have a firm hold of it. Jephthe makes use of a similar expression in Judges 12, "I put my life in my own hands," to show in what a critical position he was placed; the same is said of David, "and he put his life in his hands, and he slew the Philistine."

110. "Sinners have laid a snare for me; but I have not erred from thy precepts." I had just reason for saying, "my soul is continually in my hands," because "sinners have laid a snare for me," to take and to slay me; and still, however, "I have not erred from thy precepts;" strayed from thy commandments. Such was the case all the time Saul was trying to put David to death, who would have frequently put Saul to death, and thus delivered himself, had he not been afraid of offending God.

111. "I have purchased thy testimonies for an inheritance forever; because they are the joy of my heart." The reason for my not having "erred from thy precepts" was because "I have purchased thy testimonies for an inheritance forever;" that is, I have chosen your law as an everlasting inheritance, because it is most sweet and most agreeable to me, and the source of supreme joy and delight.

112. "I have inclined my heart to do thy justifications forever, for the reward." Now, the abundant reward that the observance of the law brings with it is the cause of such delight. "I have inclined my heart to do thy justifications forever." When the law of sin which drag me one way, and your law would seek to bring me the other way, "I have inclined my heart," as I would a scale or a balance, to observe your law, and that "for the reward," because I recollected life everlasting to be the reward promised to those who would observe your law.

Samech

113. "I have hated the unjust; and have loved thy law." In the next eight verses the Prophet expresses his detestation of those who break the divine law, and proves how much opposed to them he is. St. Augustine observes that the Prophet does not say here, "I have hated iniquity; and loved thy law," one being directly opposed to the other; but he says, "I have hated the unjust," the show that he not only hated iniquity, but those who are guilty of it as well; and again, that he does not say, "I have hated the unjust, and loved to just;" but "I have loved thy law;" the show that he hates the wicked only, inasmuch as they go against the law of God that he so loves. He, therefore, hates the unjust, not by

104. “By thy commandments I have had understanding: therefore have I hated every way of iniquity.” He proves that he derived great pleasure from God’s law, because it always creates an easy conscience, for “by thy commandments I have had understanding;” I have become prudent and wise through the lessons I got from your commandments. “Therefore have I hated every way of iniquity;” from the wisdom and prudence I acquired by constant meditation on the law, I not only abstained from sin, but I even got a thorough hatred of all sinful actions. Such hatred is a wonderful preservative of the purity and sanctity of the soul, and generates great confidence in God, which leads to joy unspeakable, to a peace and tranquility far and away beyond all the treasures and pleasures of this world.

Nun

105. “Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths.” The Prophet, in the next eight verses, praises the law of the Lord, by reason of its being of great use to us, and then promises that, no matter what trouble he may be in, he will observe it. A great advantage to us is that the law of the Lord is to us, while here below, like a lamp to one walking in the dark; for the law of sin, our own evil desires, either blinds entirely, or so darkens man’s intellect, that he cannot distinguish what is truly good from what is truly bad; and thus, those who follow that law, that is, those who suffer themselves to be led away by their evil desires, tumble down various precipices; now, God’s law dispels such darkness, and points out what is truly good, and truly bad; and, therefore, they who follow it stray not, are not moping their way, but proceed on the path that leads directly to their heavenly country. He, therefore, says, “thy word is a lamp to my feet;” thy law is one, “and a light to my paths,” to guide me as I go along.

106. “I have sworn, and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice.” The law being a light, and, therefore, a most useful and valuable thing to have, the Prophet “swears and is determined,” firmly resolved with himself, “to keep” the law, which he calls “the judgment of thy justice;” that is, his most just judgments.

107. “I have been humbled, O Lord, exceedingly; quicken thou me according to thy word.” “I have been humbled,” persecuted and harassed by reason of my observance of the law;” for “all who live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;” but do you, O Lord, “quicken me;” grant me, at last, that true life that will be free from all evils; “according to thy word;” according to the promise you made when you said, “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

108. “The free offerings of my mouth make acceptable, O Lord: and teach me thy judgments.” My having sworn and determined to observe the law, no matter under what amount the persecution, is the free offering of my mouth; I pray, therefore, that this free offering may be acceptable to thee, O Lord and as, of itself, it can have no such merit, “make it acceptable, O Lord,” by kindly condescending, in your grace, to approve of it; and that I may offer the sacrifice in due form, “teach me thy judgments;” teach me the perfect observance of your law.

53. “A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.” The same hope of so great a reward caused me to have the greatest feeling for those sinners, who, by the dereliction of your law, are deprived of so much happiness; and such was the effect of it upon me that it actually induced fits of fainting. Great must have been the love that caused one the faint on beholding the pitiable condition of another.

54. “Thy justifications were the subject of my song, in the place of my pilgrimage.” The wicked transgressed the law, deeming it an unpleasant thing to observe it; but to me, aware, as I was, of the rewards in store for those who observe it, “thy justifications,” were as agreeable as so many sweet and pleasant songs.

55. “In the night I have remembered thy name, O Lord; and have kept thy law.” The happy hope of such promises not only supported me through the day; but even “in the night I have remembered thy name;” and, through my affection for it, I persevered, and have thus “kept thy law.”

56. “This happened to me, because I sought after thy justifications.” “This,” that is to say, my having reflected on God’s promises, and drawn so much hope from them, and the other advantages that followed, “happened to me, because I sought after thy justifications;” for the Prophet wishes, in this Psalm, which is entirely devoted to praising the law, to attribute everything to a diligent study and love of the law, that he may thus stimulate man to reflect on it, and to observe it.

Beth

57. “O Lord, my portion, I have said, I would keep thy law.” In the commencement of these eight verses, he lays down the proposition, “the Lord is my portion;” and argues from that that he should have the desire of observing his law most faithfully, and that he must constantly pray to God for grace thereto, in spite of all obstacles. “O Lord, my portion;” as he says in Psalm 15, “the Lord is the portion of my inheritance;” and in Psalm 72, “God that is my portion forever;” and in Lamentations 3, “the Lord is my portion.” Happy soul that could say from his heart, “the Lord is my portion,” or, in other words, I renounce all things created, I seek for no right in them; let who will have them, you, O Lord, suffice for me; I seek for nothing else now, nor will I ever seek for anything else; and, with the view of getting possession of you at one time or other, I have determined to study your will alone; I, therefore, “have said,” I resolved, I firmly proposed, “to keep your law” because I know you will not stoop to be the portion of those who will not observe it.

58. “I entreated thy face with all my heart: have mercy on me according to thy word.” He said he was determined to observe God’s law; but, as man cannot do so without God’s assistance, he, therefore, “entreats the face of the Lord with all his heart,” and says, “have mercy on me according to thy word;” as you promised it, “have mercy on me,” that, through your assistance, I may accomplish what I have decided on through your inspiration.

59. “I have thought on my ways; and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.” It won’t do to pray to God; we must cooperate with his grace; and, therefore, the Prophet having prayed to God, adds, “I have thought on my ways,” as to whether they were right or wrong, whether they were agreeable to God’s laws or not; and, “I turned my feet unto thy testimonies;” I turned my affections from the law of the flesh and of sin to your law, O Lord, it being exclusively the right way.

60. "I am ready and am not troubled; that I may keep thy commandments." I am not only determined to observe your law, but "I am ready" to make a beginning in the good work, and "no trouble" will retard me in prosecuting it.

61. "The cords of the wicked have encompassed me: but I have not forgotten thy law." Many a one, however, sought to keep me back and to confuse me, for "the cords of the wicked," the snares, or the nets of various temptations, usually set by sinners, or by the evil spirits "have encompassed me;" but I have not forgotten thy law;" all the temptations could not make me forget your law, or prevent me from obeying it.

62. "I rose at midnight to give praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justification." As you are my portion, O Lord, I devoted myself to the consideration of your law, not only by day, but even by night; nay, even in the very dead of night, when silence reigns profound; for "I rose at midnight to give praise to thee;" to praise you for "the judgments of thy justification," for your most just and wise commandments.

63. "I am a partaker with all them that fear thee, and that keep thy commandments." This, too, follows from the proposition he laid down originally, "the Lord is my portion;" for all who fear God and keep his commandments are united as living members in one body, by a bond of love that cries out, "the Lord is my portion;" and thus, each member "is partaker with all," for love makes all things common; and, thus, "if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Corinthians 12.

64. "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy justifications." I am, certainly, "a partaker with all them that fear thee," but, as all the inhabitants of the earth, good and bad, men and beasts, animate and inanimate things, are also partakers of your mercy, have mercy, then, on me, that you may "teach me thy justifications," for the height of misery is the not knowing your law as they do who observe it. May your mercy ward off this misery from me, it being the only thing I covet, the only object of my desire, and that, by reason of your being "my portion, O Lord."

65. "Thou hast done well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word."

66. "Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments." In these eight verses the Prophet asks for three gifts necessary for observing the precepts of the Lord, and proves the necessity of them from their effects; first saying, by way of a preface, "thou hast done well with thy servant, O Lord;" you have shown much sweetness, mildness, and kindness to your servant, "according to thy word;" agreeable to your promise. He then asks, "teach me goodness, and discipline, and knowledge;" as well as you have displayed your goodness in my regard, teach me the same goodness or sweetness to my neighbor, that I may not wish to hurt, deceive, or defraud anyone; teach me also "discipline," that is, prudence, to guard against the deceiver and the fraudulent, so that it may have the sweetness and the mildness of the dove, without being devoid of the counsel and the prudence of the serpent. Next to them I ask for "knowledge," that I may know the mysteries of your law; which knowledge, when not accompanied by goodness and discipline, only inflates, but when savored by them, is of the greatest value; "for I have delivered thy commandments," firmly believed in your promises; or believed your commands to be divine, and therefore deserving of the strictest observance. How many seek for knowledge and for discipline, caring very little for goodness; not so with the Prophet, guided by the Holy Spirit, who asks first for goodness, then for the others.

67. "Before I was humbled, I offended; therefore have I kept thy word."

96. "I have seen an end of all perfection: thy commandment is exceeding broad." "Having understood thy testimonies," that is, thy law, "I have seen an end of all perfection;" that is, that the whole perfection of this life consisted "in thy commandment," in that precept of love that "is exceedingly broad," comprehending, as it does, all the commandments, and extending to God, all the angels, all manhood, not excluding even our enemies.

Mem

97. "O how have I loved thy law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day." In the next eight verses he again praises the law by reason of the various advantages, as well as pleasures, that it brings with it. He first declares the love he entertains for the law, and tells us why, and enumerates its advantages. "O, how have I loved thy law." What an ardent love have I had for it; and, as constant conversation with the beloved is a sign of one's love, "it is my meditation the whole day." I think of nothing, speak of nothing, care for nothing but it.

98. "Through thy commandments, thou hast made me wiser than my enemies: for it is ever with me." The first advantage of the law is, that when a man reflects seriously on it, and observes it faithfully, it directs him what, how, when, and where he ought to speak and to do, or to be silent and take no action; a wisdom that is not enjoyed by the transgressors of the law, we have no regard for a rule, much in keeping with the first principles of rectitude. He, therefore, says, "through thy commandment thou hast made me wiser than my enemies." By reflecting daily on thy commandments I have been made much wiser than my enemies; "for it is ever with me," always before my eyes, so that I can never forget it.

99. "I have understood more than all my teachers; because thy testimonies are my meditation."

100. "I have had understanding above ancients: because I have sought thy commandments." Another advantage of the law is its being productive not only of prudence, but also of wisdom; and thus David, by constant meditation on God's law, became much more learned than those who taught him the law; and got more understanding than those who were much more advanced in years.

101. "I have restrained my feet from every evil way; that I may keep thy words."

102. "I have not declined from thy judgments; because thou hast set me a law." The third advantage of God's law is, that it causes us to avoid many sins. "I have restrained my feet from every evil way." I took care not to walk in the paths of the wicked, who have no law but their own desires, the law of sin and of the flesh, and that, in order that "I may keep thy words," or your law, that pointed out a path in the very opposite direction; because "I have not declined from thy judgments," from your commandments, full of justice, "because thou hast set me a law;" because you, my God, have given me said holy law.

103. "How sweet are thy words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth." The fourth advantage is, that God's law confers extreme happiness on those that observe it; for "thy words," that is, God's commandments, are sweeter to the palate of the soul than honey is to that of the body. Nothing can be sweeter than a good conscience, and the hope of everlasting happiness, derived from the observance of God's law.

87. "They have almost made an end of me upon earth: but I have not forsaken thy commandments." So grievously did these sinners, who, with their sweet words, sought to seduce me, press their persecutions, "that they almost made an end of me on earth;" still they did not succeed; for "I have not forgotten thy commandments."

88. "Quicken thou me according to thy mercy: and I shall keep the testimonies of thy mouth." He returns to the first petition, and concludes this division by saying, "Quicken thou me according to thy mercy," in a happy and everlasting life; and then, at length, I will most perfectly "keep the testimonies of thy mouth;" thy divine law.

Lamed

89. "Forever, O Lord, thy word standeth firm in heaven."

90. "Thy truth unto all generations: thou hast founded the earth, and it continueth."

91. "By thy ordinance the day goeth on for all things serve thee." In the next eight verses the Prophet argues from the certainty of God's promises, in exhorting to the observance of his law, which promises so much, both in this and the next life, "forever, O Lord, thy word," that is, thy promise, "standeth firm in heaven;" for, though it may not seem to stand firm on earth, when we see the just depressed, and the wicked exalted, still it stands quite firm in heaven; for God will certainly carry out anything he promised. He will cause the brief tribulation of the just to be turned into everlasting joy; and the short glory of the wicked to be turned into eternal disgrace and punishment. He repeats, or rather explains, the same idea when he adds, "thy truth unto all generations;" it too, stands firm. So does the earth; so do the days; all observe your laws and regulations; and the reason is, "for all things serve thee;" and, therefore, in due time it will be seen how you will stand by your promise to the just.

92. "Unless thy law had been my meditation, I had then perhaps perished in my abjection." Had I not been daily meditating on your law, when I learned the truth of your promises, I, possibly, overcome by temptation, would have "perished in my abjection."

93. "Thy justifications I will never forget; for by them thou hast given me life." Strengthened by meditation on the promises that are made in the law, I now confidently assert that "thy justifications will I never forget; for by them," that is, by having observed them, "thou hast given me life," by an increase of the life of grace and a promise of the life of glory.

94. "I am thine, save thou me: for I have sought thy justifications." It is written in Psalm 23, "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof: the world and all they that dwell therein" but I am peculiarly thine, because I avow myself to be thine. I wish to be thine, and having resolved to be a slave to no passion, I wish to have no other Lord; and, therefore, I have a right to ask you to save me, to protect what belongs to you, "for I have sought thy justifications." And as I do belong to you, and am your servant alone, I ask for nothing but your commands, that I may obey them. Few, indeed, are they who can say, "I am thine;" for few are they whose affections are fixed on God alone.

95. "The wicked have waited for me, to destroy me: but I have understood thy testimonies." It was not without reason that I said, "save thou me," because "the wicked have waited for me" in a place convenient for laying hold on me, to induce me to yield to temptation, and thus "destroy me;" but, through the assistance of your grace, "I have understood thy testimonies." I understood what the law commanded, promised, and threatened under such circumstances.

68. "Thou art good; and in thy goodness teach me thy justifications." He explains the necessity of the three gifts aforesaid, stating he had good reason for asking for them, inasmuch as it was through the want of them he transgressed, and for his transgressions was humbled by God in his justice. "Before I was humbled," by being visited with tribulations, "I offended," through ignorance; "therefore have I kept thy word," the promise I made of thenceforward observing your law more attentively; but do "thou who art good," that is, sweet and kind, "in thy goodness," in conformity with your mildness, "teach me thy justifications," that I may sin no more.

69. "The iniquity of the proud hath been multiplied over me: but I will seek thy commandments with my whole heart."

70. "Their heart is curdled like milk: but I have meditated on thy law." He now explains the necessity of the second gift, discipline, or prudence. "The iniquity of the proud hath been multiplied;" proud sinners told me lies without end, to try and make me break your law; hence the necessity for prudence, through which "I will seek thy commandments with my whole heart." Their heart is curdled like milk;" those proud sinners have a heart hard as cheese formed of curdled milk, and I, therefore, dismissed them, and "have meditated on thy law."

71. "It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications."

72. "The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver." From the abundance of the first gift that had been conferred on him, he now declares, "it is good for me that thou hast humbled me," no one but one truly meek and humble of heart, and thus truly good, and who from experience could form an opinion of what is good, could give expression to such a sentiment. For he that is truly good looks upon any humiliation, arising from tribulation, as a great good, inasmuch as it leads to a better observance of God's law, the value of which he expresses, when he says, "the law of thy mouth is good to me above thousands of gold and silver," and so it is, because through the observance of the law we acquire life everlasting, to which no treasures can be compared.

Jod

73. "Thy hands have made me and formed me: give me understanding, and I will learn thy commandments." In the next eight verses he assigns many reasons for asking the grace to observe the law; and first, from the fact of his being one of God's creatures, and, therefore, owing him implicit obedience. "Thy hands have made me and formed me." Thy power and wisdom, like a pair of hands, "made me," when I had no existence, "and formed me," by working, out of the shapeless mass, my members and my senses, or made me as to my soul, and formed me as to my body. Being thus entirely yours, and owing you the most profound obedience, I ask you "to give me understanding and I will learn thy commandments," that it may not only know them but practice them.

74. "They that fear thee shall see me, and shall be glad; because I have greatly hoped in thy words." The second reason, derived from the edification of the neighbor, "they that fear thee shall see me" keeping your commandments, "and shall be glad," because they shall see that I have "greatly hoped in thy words," in the promises contained in your law.

75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity: and in thy truth thou hast humbled me." Reason the third, is having confessed his faults. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity," that your judgments are essentially just, and if "you have humbled me," by

depriving me of your grace, I know you have done so “in truth,” because I deserved it, I therefore complain not of your justice, but it for myself on your mercy, saying –

76. “O! Let thy mercy be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.” The comfort he asks for is grace to observe the law; for he who grieves for his humiliation, by reason of having been deprived of grace, and thus having fallen into sin, will get great consolation, if a profusion of grace will enable him to observe God’s laws perfectly and thoroughly.

77. “Let thy tender mercies come unto me, and I shall live: for thy law is my meditation.” Having asked for the grace of observing the law, that he may draw comfort there from, he now tells us in what that comfort he so looks for consists. “Let thy tender mercies come to me and I shall live.” Have mercy on me, according to the multitude of your tender mercies, that I may get hold of the true life, that which alone is the happy and eternal life. St. Augustine pertinently observes, that he uses the word “live” without any addition, because wherever the word of life is thus used, it means eternal life; thus, “in him was life;” and again, “unto the resurrection of life.” “If thou wilt enter into life.” – “For thy law is my meditation;” here is the reason why he thus ventures to ask for God’s mercies, for it is only meet that God should regard one who is constantly occupied in meditating on his law.

78. “Let the proud be ashamed, because they have done unjustly towards me: but I will be employed in thy commandments.” The fourth reason assigned for getting grace to observe the law, is derived from the confusion it will prove to the wicked, just as the second reason was derived from the satisfaction it would afford to the just. “Let the proud be ashamed.” Grant me grace to observe your law to the letter, that those proud sinners, who by their persecutions and oppressions seek to make others follow their example, on seeing me, may be thus confounded and ashamed; and while they are thus confounded and ashamed, I will, with increased zeal and vigor, “be employed in thy commandments,” in meditating on them and observing them.

79. “Let them their fear thee turn to me, and they that know thy testimonies.” He now exhorts the pious, if there be any such, who may have been deceived by the sinners, and began to regard them, to return to themselves and unite with him. “Let those that fear thee and know thy testimonies,” let all those who fear God, and understand his law, “turn to me,” and observe it with me.

80. “Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications, that I may not be confounded.” He concludes by asking again for the grace he had so often asked for, to enable him to observe the commandments of God with a perfect heart, so that he may not have to fear the disgrace of being confounded here or hereafter.

Caph

81. “My soul hath fainted after thy salvation: and in thy word I have very much hoped.” In the next eight verses David introduces one desirous of observing the commandments, but suffering severely from temptation, and asking in the most pitiable terms for help from heaven. “My soul hath fainted after thy salvation.” My desire of eternal salvation has been so great, that I have nearly fainted in consequence. “And in thy word I have very much hoped;” still your promises held out great hopes to me. Thus, while the delay to one’s salvation makes one faint, the hope built on the promise strengthens and supports.

82. “My eyes have failed for thy word, saying: when wilt thou comfort me?” What an extraordinary expression for the Prophet to use, as if the eyes could hear or could speak! But the eyes, the ears, and the tongue of the interior are one and the same, but the intellect hears, sees, and speaks. “My eyes have failed for thy word;” my mind, reflecting on the promised help so long deferred, has failed through desire for it, just as the eyes of the body, when fixed for long time on some one spot, in which they expect something or some person, grow dim and fail. “Saying: when wilt thou comfort me?”; those eyes of my interior, that have so failed from looking out so long, explain the cause of their defect, when they say: when shall we have that perfect consolation that we may no longer fear a relapse, or a violation of your holy law.

83. “For I am become like a bottle in the frost: I have not forgotten thy justifications.” I had good reason for saying, “when wilt thou comfort me?” Because I am as arid and as void of the dew of consoling grace, from despair and the pleasure of temptation, as a bottle that would be put in the frost when the cold is severest; for then the leathern bottles shrivel up and harden. A similar expression occurs in Psalm 142, “my soul is as earth without water unto thee.” Yet, however I may labor under such aridity, “I have not forgotten thy justifications;” thy commandments.

84. “How many are the days of thy servant: when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?” He urges the same petition, praying for consolation, and deliverance from temptation. “How many are the days of thy servant,” during which this affliction is to last? When will there be an end to the days of misery and temptation? “When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?” When will you judge and condemn those that persecute and tempt me, that my persecution may cease on their condemnation? He makes no curious inquiries as to the number of the days of his life, or of those of the world, he merely expresses his desire of life everlasting, when all the wicked, consigned to hell, shall cease to harass the just, who, in the enjoyment of supreme and everlasting peace, will serve God in justice and holiness without any fear of their falling from it.

85. “The wicked have told me fables but not as thy law.” 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 real – nothing like the round and solid pleasure that always flows from a pious observance of the law of the Lord.

86. “All thy statues are truth: they have persecuted me unjustly: do thou help me.” Having said, “but not as thy law,” he now says, “all thy statues are truth;” are full of promises, abounding in truth, and, therefore, confer pleasure of the truest sort on those that observe your law. The wicked, therefore, in relating their falsehoods, have “persecuted me unjustly;” and, therefore, “do thou help me” against their false machinations.