
 ALEPH

PSALM 119: 1 Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the LORD's law.

The various excellencies and important uses of the law or revelation of God.

This is another of the alphabetical or acrostic Psalms. It is divided into twenty-two parts, answering to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Every part is divided into eight verses; and each verse begins with that letter of the alphabet which forms the title of the part, e.g.: The eight first verses have א aleph prefixed, the second eight ב beth, each of the eight verses beginning with that letter; and so of the rest. All connection, as might be naturally expected, is sacrificed to this artificial and methodical arrangement.

It is not easy to give any general Analysis of this Psalm; it is enough to say that it treats in general on the privileges and happiness of those who observe the law of the Lord. That law is exhibited by various names and epithets tending to show its various excellences. Earnest prayers are offered to God for wisdom to understand it, and for grace to observe it faithfully. These particulars may be collected from the whole composition, and appear less or more in every part.

The words which express that revelation which God had then given to men, or some particular characteristic of it, are generally reckoned to be the ten following:

1. Testimonies;
2. Commandments,
3. Precepts;
4. Word;
5. Law;
6. Ways;
7. Truth;
8. Judgments;
9. Righteousness;
10. Statutes.

To these some add the following:

1. Faithfulness,
2. Judgment;
3. Name; but these are not used in the sense of the other ten words.

I believe it is almost universally asserted that in every verse of this Psalm one or other of those ten words is used, except in Psa 119:122; but on a closer inspection we shall find that none of them is used in the above sense in Psa 119:84 (note), Psa 119:90 (note), Psa 119:121 (note), Psa 119:122 (note), Psa 119:132 (note).

To save myself unnecessary repetition, and the reader time and trouble, I shall here, once for all, explain the above words, which the reader will do well to keep in remembrance.

I. The Law, תורה Torah, from ירה yarah, to direct, guide, teach, make straight, or even, point forward; because it guides, directs, and instructs in the way of righteousness; makes our path straight, shows what is even and right, and points us onward to peace, truth, and happiness. It is even our school master to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified through faith; and by it is the knowledge of sin.

II. Statutes, חקים Chukkim, from חק chak, to mark, trace out, describe, and ordain; because they mark out our way describe the line of conduct we are to pursue and order or ordain what we are to observe.

III. Precepts, פקודים Pikkudim, from פקד pakad, to take notice or care of a thing, to attend, have respect to, to appoint, to visit; because they take notice of our way, have respect to the whole of our life and conversation, superintend, overlook, and visit us in all the concerns and duties of life.

IV. Commandments, מצות Mitsvoth, from צו tassah to command, order, ordain; because they show us what we should do, and what we should leave undone, and exact our obedience.

V. Testimonies, עדות Edoth, from עד ad, denoting beyond, farther, all along, to bear witness, or testimony. The rites and ceremonies of the law; because they point out matters beyond themselves, being types and representations of the good things that were to come.

VI. Judgments, משפטים Mishpatim, from שפט shaphat, to judge, determine, regulate, order, and discern, because they judge concerning our words and works; show the ways by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly.

VII. Truth, אמונה Emunah, from אמן aman, to make steady, constant, to settle, trust, believe. The law that is established steady, confirmed, and ordered in all things, and sure; which should be believed on the authority of God, and trusted to as an infallible testimony from Him who cannot lie nor deceive.

VIII. Word, דבר dabar, from the same root, to discourse, utter one's sentiments, speak consecutively and intelligibly; in which it appears to differ from מלל malal, to utter articulate sounds. Any prophecy or immediate communication from heaven, as well as the whole body of Divine revelation, is emphatically called דבר יהוה debar Yehovah, the word of Jehovah. On the same ground we call the whole Old and New Testament The Word of the Lord, as we term the volume in which they are contained The Bible-The Book. In his revelation God speaks to man; shows him, in a clear, concise, intelligible, and rational way, his interest, his duty, his privileges; and, in a word, the reasonable service that he requires of him.

IX. Way, דרך Debech, from the same root, to proceed, go on, walk, tread. The way in which God goes in order to instruct and save man; the way in which man must tread in order to be safe, holy, and happy. God's manner of acting or proceeding in providence and grace; and the way that man should take in order to answer the end of his creation and redemption.

X. Righteousness, צדקה Tsedakah from צדק tsadak, to do justice, to give full weight. That which teaches a man to give to all their due; to give God his due, Man his due, and Himself his due; for every man has duties to God, his neighbor, and himself, to perform. This word is applied to God's judgments, testimonies, and commandments; they are all righteous, give to all their due, and require what is due from every one.

The three words, which some add here, are,

The first is Faithfulness, אמונה Emunah: but see this under No. VII., nor does it appear in Psa 119:90, where it occurs, to be used as a characteristic of God's law, but rather his exact fulfillment of his promises to man.

The second is Judgment, משפט mishpat. See this under No. VI.: it occurs in Psa 119:84 and Psa 119:121 : "When wilt thou execute judgment," etc.; but is not used in those places as one of the ten words.

The third is Name, שם shem, see Psa 119:132 : but this is no characteristic of God's law; it refers here simply to himself. Those that love thy Name is the same as those that love Thee. Bishop Nicholson inserts promises among the ten words: but this occurs no where in the Psalm.

We might, and with much more propriety, add a fourth, אמרה Imrah, from אמר amar, to branch out, spread, or diffuse itself, as the branches of a tree, and which is often used for a word spoken, a speech. This often occurs in the Psalm: and we regularly translate it word, and put no difference or distinction between it and דבר dabar, No. VIII.: but it is not exactly the same; דבר dabar may apply more properly to history, relation, description and such like; while, אמרתך imrathecha, thy word, may mean an immediate oracle, delivered solemnly from God to his prophet for the instruction of men. But the two words appear often indifferently used; and it would not be easy to ascertain the different shades of meaning between these two roots.

Having thus far introduced the Psalm to the reader's attention, I should probably speak at large of the elegance of its composition, and the importance and utility of its matter. Like all other portions of Divine revelation, it is elegant, important, and useful; and while I admire the fecundity of the psalmist's genius, the unabating flow of his poetic vein, his numerous synonyms, and his copia verborum, by which he is enabled to expand, diversify, and illustrate the same idea; presenting it to his reader in all possible points of view, so as to render it pleasing, instructive, and impressive; I cannot rob the rest of the book of its just praise by setting this, as many have done, above all the pieces it contains. It is by far the largest, the most artificial, and most diversified; yet, in proportion to its length, it contains the fewest ideas of any Psalm in the Book.

Several of the ancients, particularly the Greek fathers, have considered it as an abridgement of David's life; in which he expresses all the states through which he had passed; the trials, persecutions, succours, and encouragements he had received. The Latin fathers perceive in it all the morality of the Gospel, and rules for a man's conduct in every situation of life. Cassiodorus asserts that it contains the sentiments of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all the saints. In the introduction to the Book of Psalms I have conjectured that many of them were composed from notes taken at different times, and in widely different circumstances; hence the different states described in the same Psalm, which could not have been at one and the same time the experience of the same person. It is most likely that this Psalm was composed in this way, and this, as well as its acrostical arrangement, will account for its general want of connection.

Though the most judicious interpreters assign it to the times of the Babylonish captivity; yet there are so many things in it descriptive of David's state, experience, and affairs, that I am led to think it might have come from his pen; or if composed at or under the captivity, was formed out of his notes and memoranda.

I shall now make short remarks on the principal subjects in each part; and, at the end of each, endeavor by the Analysts to show the connection which the eight verses of each have among

themselves, and the use which the reader should make of them. In all the Versions except the Chaldee this Psalm is numbered 118.

Verse 1

Blessed are the undefiled in the way - אֲשֶׁרֵי תְּמִימֵי דָרֶךְ - ashrey temimey darech, "O the blessedness of the perfect ones in the way." This Psalm begins something like the first, where see the notes Psa 1:1-6 (note). By the perfect, which is the proper meaning of the original word, we are to understand those who sincerely believe what God has spoken, religiously observe all the rules and ceremonies of his religion, and have their lives and hearts regulated by the spirit of love, fear, and obedience. This is farther stated in the second verse.

PSALM 119: 2 Blessed are those who keep his statutes, who seek him with their whole heart.

PSALM 119: 3 Yes, they do nothing wrong. They walk in his ways.

Verse 3

They also do no iniquity - They avoid all idolatry, injustice, and wrong; and they walk in God's ways, not in those ways to which an evil heart might entice them, nor those in which the thoughtless and the profligate tread.

PSALM 119: 4 You have commanded your precepts, that we should fully obey them.

Verse 4

Thy precepts diligently - מְאֹד meod, "superlatively, to the uttermost." God has never given a commandment, the observance of which he knew to be impossible. And to whatsoever he has commanded he requires obedience; and his grace is sufficient for us. We must not trifle with God.

PSALM 119: 5 Oh that my ways were steadfast to obey your statutes!

Verse 5

O that my ways were directed - "I wish that my way may be confirmed to keep thy statutes." Without thee I can do nothing; my soul is unstable and fickle; and it will continue weak and uncertain till thou strengthen and establish it.

PSALM 119: 6 Then I wouldn't be disappointed, when I consider all of your commandments.

Verse 6

Then shall I not be ashamed - Every act of transgression in the wicked man tends to harden his heart; and render it callous. If a man who fears God is so unhappy as to fall into sin, his conscience reproaches him, and he is ashamed before God and man. This is a full proof that God's Spirit has not utterly departed from him, and that he may repent, believe and be healed.

Unto all thy commandments - God requires universal obedience, and all things are possible to him whom Christ strengthens; and all things are possible to him that believes. Allow that any of God's commandments may be transgressed, and we shall soon have the whole decalogue set aside.

PSALM 119: 7 I will give thanks to you with uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgements. I will observe your statutes. Don't utterly forsake me.

BET

PSALM 119: 8

Verse 8

O forsake me not utterly - **אֶדְמָד** ad meod, "to utter dereliction;" never leave me to my own strength, nor to my own heart!

PSALM 119: 9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

Verse 9

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

1. He is to consider that his way is impure; and how abominable this must make him appear in the sight of God.
2. He must examine it according to God's word, and carefully hear what God has said concerning him and it.
3. He must take heed to it, **לִשְׁמֹר** lishmor, to keep guard, and preserve his way - his general course of life, from all defilement.

PSALM 119: 10 With my whole heart, I have sought you. Don't let me wander from your commandments.

Verse 10

With my whole heart have I sought thee -

4. He must seek God, make earnest prayer and supplication to him for Divine light, for a tender conscience, and for strength to walk uprightly.

5. His whole heart; all his affections must be engaged here, or he cannot succeed. If he keep any affection for the idol or abomination; if his heart do not give it before the Lord, he may make many prayers, but God will answer none of them.

6. He must take care to keep in the path of duty, of abstinence and self-denial; not permitting either his eye, his hand, or his heart to wander from the commandments of his Maker.

PSALM 119: 11 I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Verse 11

Thy word have I hid in my heart -

7. He must treasure up those portions of God's word in his mind and heart which speak against uncleanness of every kind; and that recommend purity, chastity, and holiness. The word of Christ should dwell richly in him. If God's word be only in his Bible, and not also in his heart, he may soon and easily be surprised into his besetting sin.

PSALM 119: 12 Blessed are you, LORD. Teach me your statutes.

Verse 12

Blessed art thou -

8. He must acknowledge the mercy of God, in so far preserving him from all the consequences of his sin.

9. He should beg of him to become his teacher that his heart and conscience might be instructed in the spirituality of his statutes.

PSALM 119: 13 With my lips, I have declared all the ordinances of your mouth.

Verse 13

With my lips have I declared -

10. He should declare to his own heart, and to all his companions in iniquity, God's judgments against himself and them; that if his longsuffering merely have not made a proper impression on their hearts, they may tremble at his approaching judgments.

PSALM 119: 14 I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Verse 14

I have rejoiced -

11. He must consider it his chief happiness to be found in the path of obedience, giving his whole heart and strength to God; and when enabled to do it, he should rejoice more in it than if he had gained thousands of gold and silver. O how great is the treasure of a tender and approving conscience!

PSALM 119: 15 I will meditate on your precepts, and consider your ways. I will delight myself in your statutes. I will not forget your word. GIMEL

Verse 15

I will meditate -

12. He should encourage self-examination and reflection; and meditate frequently on God's words, works, and ways - and especially on his gracious dealings towards him.

13. He should keep his eye upon God's steps; setting the example of his Savior before his eyes, going where he would go, and nowhere else; doing what he would do, and nothing else; keeping the company that he would keep, and none else; and doing every thing in reference to the final judgment.

PSALM 119: 16

Verse 16

I will delight myself - The word is very emphatical: אשתעשע eshtaasha, I will skip about and jump for joy.

14. He must exult in God's word as his treasure, live in the spirit of obedience as his work, and ever glory in God, who has called him to such a state of salvation.

15. He must never forget what God has done for him, done in him, and promised farther to do; and he must not forget the promises he had made, and the vows of the Lord that are upon him. Any young man who attends to these fifteen particulars will get his impure way cleansed; victory over his sin; and, if he abide faithful to the Lord that bought him, an eternal heaven at last among them that are sanctified.

PSALM 119: 17 Do good to your servant. I will live and I will obey your word.

Verse 17

Deal bountifully - גמל gemol, reward thy servant. Let him have the return of his faith and prayers, that the Divine life may be preserved in his soul! Then he will keep thy word. From גמל gamal, to reward, etc., comes the name of ג gimel, the third letter in the Hebrew alphabet, which is prefixed to every verse in this part, and commences it with its own name. This is a stroke of the psalmist's art and ingenuity.

PSALM 119: 18 Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of your law.

Verse 18

Open thou mine eyes - גל עיני gal eynai, reveal my eyes, illuminate my understanding, take away the veil that is on my heart, and then shall I see wonders in thy law. The Holy Scriptures are plain enough; but the heart of man is darkened by sin. The Bible does not so much need a comment, as the soul does the light of the Holy Spirit. Were it not for the darkness of the human intellect, the things relative to salvation would be easily apprehended.

PSALM 119: 19 I am a stranger on the earth. Don't hide your commandments from me.

Verse 19

I am a stranger in the earth - In the land. Being obliged to wander about from place to place, I am like a stranger even in my own country. If it refer to the captives in Babylon, it may mean that they felt themselves there as in a state of exile; for, although they had been seventy years in it, they still felt it as a strange land, because they considered Palestine their home.

PSALM 119: 20 My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times.

Verse 20

My soul breaketh - We have a similar expression: It broke my heart, That is heart-breaking, She died of a broken heart. It expresses excessive longing, grievous disappointment, hopeless love, accumulated sorrow. By this we may see the hungering and thirsting which the psalmist had after righteousness, often mingled with much despondency.

PSALM 119: 21 You have rebuked the proud who are cursed, who wander from your commandments.

Verse 21

Thou hast rebuked the proud - This was done often in the case of David; and was true also in reference to the Babylonians, who held the Israelites in subjection, and whose kings were among the

proudest of human beings. Instead of זדים zedim, the proud, some MSS. read זרים zarim, strangers, and one reads גוים goyim, the heathen; and so the Syriac.

PSALM 119: 22 Take reproach and contempt away from me, for I have kept your statutes.

Verse 22

Remove from me reproach and contempt - Of these the captives in Babylon had a more than ordinary load.

PSALM 119: 23 Though princes sit and slander me, your servant will meditate on your statutes.

Indeed your statutes are my delight, and my counsellors.

DALED

Verse 23

Princes also did sit - It is very likely that the nobles of Babylon did often, by wicked misrepresentations, render the minds of the kings of the empire evil affected towards the Jews.

PSALM 119: 24

Verse 24

Thy testimonies also are - my counsellors - אנשי עצתי anshey atsathi, "the men of my counsel." I sit with them; and I consider every testimony thou hast given as a particular counsellor; one whose advice I especially need.

The Analysis will farther explain the particular uses of this part.

PSALM 119: 25 My soul is laid low in the dust. Revive me according to your word!

Verse 25

My soul cleaveth unto the dust - It would be best to translate נפשי naphshi, my life; and then cleaving to the dust may imply an apprehension of approaching death; and this agrees best with the petition.

Quicken thou me - חייני chiyeni, "make me alive." Keep me from going down into the dust.

PSALM 119: 26 I declared my ways, and you answered me. Teach me your statutes.

Verse 26

I have declared my ways - ספַרְתִּי sippiarti, "I have numbered my ways," I have searched them out; I have investigated them. And that he had earnestly prayed for pardon of what was wrong in them, is evident; for he adds, "Thou heardest me."

PSALM 119: 27 Let me understand the teaching of your precepts! Then I will meditate on your wondrous works.

PSALM 119: 28 My soul is weary with sorrow: strengthen me according to your word.

Verse 28

My soul melteth - דָּלַף dalaph signifies to distil, to drop as tears from the eye. As my distresses cause the tears to distil from my eyes, so the overwhelming load of my afflictions causes my life to ebb and leak out.

PSALM 119: 29 Keep me from the way of deceit. Grant me your law graciously!

Verse 29

The way of lying - The propensity to falsity and prevarication, whatsoever is contrary to truth. Remove me from its solicitations, and remove it from me. "Grant me thy law graciously;" give it to me as a rule of moral conduct; but give it to me graciously through the gospel, and then it will not be the letter that killeth, but will be sanctified to me, so as to become to me holy, just, and Good.

PSALM 119: 30 I have chosen the way of truth. I have set your ordinances before me.

Verse 30

I have chosen the way of truth - And that I may continue in its "remove from me the way of lying." See above.

PSALM 119: 31 I cling to your statutes, LORD. Don't let me be disappointed. I run in the path of your commandments, for you have set my heart free. HEY

Verse 31

I have stuck - דָּבַקְתִּי dabakti, I have cleaved to, been glued to, them: the same word as in Psa 119:25. My soul cleaves as much to thy testimonies, as my life has cleaved to the dust.

O Lord, put me not to shame - Let my sins and follies be blotted out by thy mercy; and so hide and cover them that they shall never appear, either in this or the coming world, to my shame and confusion! How many need to be importunate with God in this prayer!

PSALM 119: 32

Verse 32

I will run - The particle 'ע elci, which we translate when, should be translated because: Because thou shalt enlarge, or dilate, my heart; make plain my path by cleansing me from my impurity, and taking the hinderances out of my way. I will then run without dread of stumbling, and every day make sensible progress.

PSALM 119: 33 Teach me, LORD, the way of your statutes. I will keep them to the end.

Verse 33

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes - To understand the spiritual reference of all the statutes, etc, under the law, required a teaching which could only come from God.

I shall keep it unto the end - Here is a good thing asked for a good end. He wishes for heavenly teaching; not to make a parade of it, but to enable him to discern his duty, that he might act accordingly.

PSALM 119: 34 Give me understanding, and I will keep your law. Yes, I will obey it with my whole heart.

Verse 34

With my whole heart - I will not trifle with my God, I will not divide my affections with the world; God shall have all.

PSALM 119: 35 Direct me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in them.

PSALM 119: 36 Turn my heart toward your statutes, not toward selfish gain.

Verse 36

Not to covetousness - Let me have no inordinate love for gain of any kind, nor for any thing that may grieve thy Spirit, or induce me to seek my happiness here below.

PSALM 119: 37 Turn my eyes away from looking at worthless things. Revive me in your ways.

Verse 37

From beholding vanity - An idol, worldly pleasure, beauty, finery; any thing that is vain, empty, or transitory. Let me not behold it; let me not dwell upon it. Let me remember Achan: he saw, - he coveted, - he took, - he hid his theft, and was slain for his sin.

PSALM 119: 38 Fulfil your promise to your servant, that you may be feared.

Verse 38

Stablish thy word - Fulfil the promises thou hast made to me.

PSALM 119: 39 Take away my disgrace that I dread, for your ordinances are good. Behold, I long for your precepts! Revive me in your righteousness. WAW

Verse 39

Turn away my reproach, which I fear - This may be understood of the reproach which a man may meet with in consequence of living a godly life, for such a life was never fashionable in any time or country. But I have found the following note on the passage: "I have done a secret evil; my soul is sorry for it: if it become public, it will be a heavy reproach to me. O God, turn it away, and let it never meet the eye of man!" - Anon.

PSALM 119: 40

Verse 40

Behold, I have longed - Thou searchest the heart; thou knowest that I have long desired thy salvation; thou seest that this desire still remains. Behold it! it is thy work; and through thy mercy I breathe after thy mercy.

Quicken me - I am dying; O give me the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!

PSALM 119: 41 Let your loving kindness also come to me, LORD, your salvation, according to your word.

Verse 41

Let thy mercies come - Let me speedily see the accomplishment of all my prayers! Let me have thy salvation - such a deliverance as it becomes thy greatness and goodness to impart. Let it be according to thy word - thy exceeding great and precious promises.

PSALM 119: 42 So I will have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in your word.

Verse 42

So shall I have wherewith to answer - Many say, "My hope in thy mercy is vain;" but when thou fulfilllest thy promises to me, then shall I answer to the confusion of their infidelity.

PSALM 119: 43 Don't snatch the word of truth out of my mouth, for I put my hope in your ordinances.

Verse 43

Take not the word of truth - Grant that the assurances which thy prophets have given to the people of approaching deliverance may not fall to the ground; let it appear that they have spoken thy mind, and that thou hast fulfilled their word.

PSALM 119: 44 So I will obey your law continually, forever and ever.

PSALM 119: 45 I will walk in liberty, for I have sought your precepts.

Verse 45

I will walk at liberty - When freed from the present bondage, we shall rejoice in obedience to thy testimonies; we shall delight to keep all thy ordinances.

PSALM 119: 46 I will also speak of your statutes before kings, and will not be disappointed.

Verse 46

I will speak - before kings - Dr. Delaney supposes that this is spoken in reference to Achish, king of Gath, whom David had instructed in the Jewish religion; but we have already seen that it is most likely that the Psalm was compiled under the Babylonish captivity. But the words may with more propriety be referred to the case of Daniel, and other bold and faithful Israelites, who spoke courageously before Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius. See the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

PSALM 119: 47 I will delight myself in your commandments, because I love them. I reach out my hands for your commandments, which I love. I will meditate on your statutes. ZAYIN

Verse 47

Thy commandments, which I have loved - O shame to Christians who feel so little affection to the Gospel of Christ, when we see such cordial, conscientious, and inviolate attachment in a Jew to the laws and ordinances of Moses, that did not afford a thousandth part of the privileges!

PSALM 119: 48 I reach out my hands for your commandments, which I love. I will meditate on your statutes.

Verse 48

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

PSALM 119: 49 Remember your word to your servant, because you gave me hope.

Verse 49

Remember the word - Thou hast promised to redeem us from our captivity; on that word we have built our hope. Remember that thou hast thus promised, and see that we thus hope.

PSALM 119: 50 This is my comfort in my affliction, for your word has revived me.

Verse 50

This is my comfort - While enduring our harsh captivity, we anticipated our enlargement; and thy word of promise was the means of keeping our souls alive.

PSALM 119: 51 The arrogant mock me excessively, but I don't swerve from your law.

Verse 51

The proud have had me - We have been treated, not only with oppressive cruelty, but also with contempt, because we still professed to trust in thee, the living God, who because of our transgressions hadst been greatly displeased with us; yet we have not declined from thy law.

PSALM 119: 52 I remember your ordinances of old, LORD, and have comforted myself.

Verse 52

I remembered thy judgments of old - The word judgments is here taken for providential dealing; and indeed kind treatment; that which God showed to the Hebrews in bearing with and blessing them. And it was the recollection of these judgments that caused him to comfort himself.

PSALM 119: 53 Indignation has taken hold on me, because of the wicked who forsake your law.

Verse 53

Horror hath taken hold upon me - The word זלעפה zilaphah, which we render horror, is thought to signify the pestilential burning wind called by the Arabs simoom. Here it strongly marks the idea that the psalmist had of the destructive nature of sin; it is pestilential; it is corrupting, mortal.

PSALM 119: 54 Your statutes have been my songs, in the house where I live.

Verse 54

Thy statutes have been my songs - During our captivity all our consolation was derived from singing thy praises, and chanting among our fellow-captives portions of thy law, and the precepts it contains.

PSALM 119: 55 I have remembered your name, LORD, in the night, and I obey your law. This is my way, that I keep your precepts. CHET

Verse 55

I have remembered thy name - Thou art Jehovah; and as our God thou hast made thyself known unto us. In the deepest night of our affliction this has consoled me.

PSALM 119: 56 This is my way, that I keep your precepts. CHET

Verse 56

This I had, because I kept thy precepts - Though thou didst leave us under the power of our enemies, yet thou hast not left us without the consolations of thy Spirit.

PSALM 119: 57 The LORD is my portion. I promised to obey your words.

Verse 57

Thou art my portion, O Lord - From the fifty-seventh to the sixtieth verse may be seen the progress of the work of grace on the human heart, from the first dawn of heavenly light till the soul is filled with the fullness of God. But as I consider this Psalm as notes selected from diaries of past experience, formed at different times; and that the author has been obliged, for the support of his acrostic plan, to interchange circumstances, putting that sometimes behind which in the order of grace comes before; because, to put it in its right place, the letters would not accord with the alphabetical arrangement; I shall therefore follow what I conceive to be its order in the connection of grace, and not in the order in which the words are here laid down.

PSALM 119: 58 I sought your favour with my whole heart. Be merciful to me according to your word.

PSALM 119: 59 I considered my ways, and turned my steps to your statutes.

Verse 59

First. I thought on my ways - חשבתי chashabti, I deeply pondered them; I turned them upside down; I viewed my conduct on all sides. The word, as used here, is a metaphor taken from embroidering, where the figure must appear the same on the one side as it does on the other; therefore, the cloth must be turned on each side every time the needle is set in, to see that the stitch be fairly set. Thus narrowly and scrupulously did the psalmist examine his conduct; and the result was, a deep conviction that he had departed from the way of God and truth.

Secondly. And turned my feet unto thy testimonies - Having made the above discovery, and finding himself under the displeasure of God, he abandoned every evil way, took God's word for his directory, and set out fairly in the way of life and salvation.

PSALM 119: 60 I will hurry, and not delay, to obey your commandments.

Verse 60

Thirdly. I made haste, and delayed not - He did this with the utmost speed; and did not trifle with his convictions, nor seek to drown the voice of conscience.

The original word, which we translate delayed not, is amazingly emphatical. ולא התמהמהתי velo hithmahmahti, I did not stand what-what-what; or, as we used to express the same sentiment, shilly-shallying with myself: I was determined, and so set out. The Hebrew word, as well as the English, strongly marks indecision of mind, positive action being suspended, because the mind is so unfixed as not to be able to make a choice.

Verse 58

Fourthly. Being determined in his heart, he tells us, I entreated thy favor with my whole heart. He found he had sinned; that he needed mercy; that he had no time to lose; that he must be importunate; and therefore he sought that mercy with all his soul.

Fifthly. Feeling that he deserved nothing but wrath, that he had no right to any good, he cries for mercy in the way that God had promised to convey it: "Be merciful unto me!" And to this he is encouraged only by the promise of God; and therefore prays, "Be merciful unto me According to thy Word."

Verse 57

Sixthly. To keep himself firm in his present resolutions, he binds himself unto the Lord. "I have said that I would keep thy words." Thy vows are upon me, and I must not add to my guilt by breaking them.

Seventhly. He did not seek in vain; God reveals himself in the fullness of blessedness to him, so that he is enabled to exclaim, Thou art my portion, O Lord! My whole soul trusts in thee, my spirit rests supremely satisfied with thee. I have no other inheritance, nor do I desire any. Here then is the way to seek, the way to find, and the way to be happy. Other effects of this conversion may be seen below.

PSALM 119: 61 The ropes of the wicked bind me, but I won't forget your law.

Verse 61

The bands of the wicked have robbed me - חבלֵי chebley, the cables, cords, or snares of the wicked. They have hunted us like wild beasts; many they have taken for prey, and many they have destroyed.

PSALM 119: 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you, because of your righteous ordinances.

Verse 62

At midnight I will rise - We are so overpowered with a sense of thy goodness, that in season and out of season we will return thee thanks.

PSALM 119: 63 I am a friend of all those who fear you, of those who observe your precepts.

The earth is full of your loving kindness, LORD. Teach me your statutes.

TET

Verse 63

I am a companion - This was the natural consequence of his own conversion; he abandoned the workers of iniquity, and associated with them that feared the Lord.

PSALM 119: 64 The earth is full of your loving kindness, LORD. Teach me your statutes. TET

Verse 64

The earth is full of thy mercy - What an astonishing operation has the grace of God! In the midst of want, poverty, affliction, and bondage, it makes those who possess it happy! When Christ dwells in the heart by faith, we have nothing but goodness around us. Others may complain; but to us even the earth appears full of the mercy of the Lord.

PSALM 119: 65 Do good to your servant, according to your word, LORD.

Verse 65

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant - Whatsoever thy word has promised, thou hast fulfilled. Every servant of God can testify that God has done him nothing but good, and therefore he can speak good of his name.

PSALM 119: 66 Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments.

Verse 66

Teach me good judgment and knowledge - טוב טעם ודעי למדני - tob taam vedaath lammnedeni. Teach me (to have) a good taste and discernment. Let me see and know the importance of Divine things, and give me a relish for them.

PSALM 119: 67 Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I observe your word.

Verse 67

Before I was afflicted I went astray - Many have been humbled under affliction, and taught to know themselves and humble themselves before God, that probably without this could never have been saved; after this, they have been serious and faithful. Affliction sanctified is a great blessing; unsanctified, it is an additional curse.

PSALM 119: 68 You are good, and do good. Teach me your statutes.

Verse 68

Thou art good - And because thou art good, thou doest good; and because thou delightest to do good, teach me thy statutes.

PSALM 119: 69 The proud have smeared a lie upon me. With my whole heart, I will keep your precepts.

Verse 69

The proud have forged a lie - The poor captives in Babylon had their conduct and motives continually misrepresented, and themselves belied and calumniated.

PSALM 119: 70 Their heart is as callous as the fat, but I delight in your law.

Verse 70

Their heart is as fat as grease - They are egregiously stupid, they have fed themselves without fear; they are become flesh-brutalized, and given over to vile affections, and have no kind of spiritual relish: but I delight in thy law - I have, through thy goodness, a spiritual feeling and a spiritual appetite.

PSALM 119: 71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver. YUD

Verse 71

It is good for me that I have been afflicted - See on Psa 119:67 (note).

PSALM 119: 72 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes.

Verse 72

The law of thy mouth is better - Who can say this? Who prefers the law of his God, the Christ that bought him, and the heaven to which he hopes to go, when he can live no longer upon earth, to thousands of gold and silver? Yea, how many are there who, like Judas, sell their Savior even for thirty pieces of silver? Hear this, ye lovers of the world and of money!

As the letter U teth begins but few words, not forty, in the Hebrew language, there is less variety under this division than under any of the preceding.

PSALM 119: 73 Your hands have made me and formed me. Give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments.

Verse 73

Thy hands have made me - Thou hast formed the mass out of which I was made; and fashioned me - thou hast given me that particular form that distinguishes me from all thy other creatures.

Give me understanding - As thou hast raised me above the beasts that perish in my form and mode of life, teach me that I may live for a higher and nobler end, in loving, serving, and enjoying thee for ever. Show me that I was made for heaven, not for earth.

PSALM 119: 74 Those who fear you will see me and be glad, because I have put my hope in your word.

Verse 74

They that fear thee - They who are truly religious will be glad - will rejoice, at this farther proof of the saving power of God.

PSALM 119: 75 LORD, I know that your judgements are righteous, that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

Verse 75

I know - that thy judgments are right - All the dispensations of thy providence are laid in wisdom, and executed in mercy: let me see that it is through this wisdom and mercy that I have been afflicted.

PSALM 119: 76 Please let your loving kindness be for my comfort, according to your word to your servant.

Verse 76

Thy merciful kindness - Let me derive my comfort and happiness from a diffusion of thy love and mercy, רַחֲמֶיךָ chasdecha, thy exuberant goodness, through my soul.

PSALM 119: 77 Let your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight.

Verse 77

Let thy tender mercies - רַחֲמֶיךָ rachameycha, thy fatherly and affectionate feelings.

PSALM 119: 78 Let the proud be disappointed, for they have overthrown me wrongfully. I will meditate on your precepts.

Verse 78

Let the proud be ashamed - To reduce a proud man to shame, is to humble him indeed. Let them be confounded. Without cause - without any colourable pretext, have they persecuted me.

PSALM 119: 79 Let those who fear you turn to me. They will know your statutes. Let my heart be blameless toward your decrees, that I may not be disappointed. KAF

Verse 79

Let those that fear thee - The truly pious.

Turn unto me - Seeing thy work upon me, they shall acknowledge me as a brand plucked from the burning.

PSALM 119: 80 Let my heart be blameless towards your decrees, that I may not be disappointed. KAF

Verse 80

Let my heart be sound in thy statutes - Let it be perfect - all given up to thee, and all possessed by thee.

PSALM 119: 81 My soul faints for your salvation. I hope in your word.

Verse 81

My soul fainteth for thy salvation - I have longed so incessantly after thy salvation - the complete purification and restoration of my soul, that my very spirits are exhausted. "My heartstrings groan with deep complaint; My soul lies panting, Lord, for thee;

And every limb and every joint stretches for perfect purity."

PSALM 119: 82 My eyes fail for your word. I say, "When will you comfort me?"

Verse 82

Mine eyes fail - With looking up for the fulfillment of thy promise, as my heart fails in longing after thy presence.

PSALM 119: 83 For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke. I don't forget your statutes.

Verse 83

Like a bottle in the smoke - In the eastern countries their bottles are made of skins; one of these hung in the smoke must soon be parched and shrivelled up. This represents the exhausted state of his body and mind by long bodily affliction and mental distress.

PSALM 119: 84 How many are the days of your servant? When will you execute judgement on those who persecute me?

Verse 84

How many are the days of thy servants - Dost thou not know that I have few to live, and they are full of trouble?

When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? - Shall not the pride of the Chaldeans be brought down, the arm of their strength broken, and thy people delivered? In this verse there is none of the ten words used in reference to God's law.

PSALM 119: 85 The proud have dug pits for me, contrary to your law.

Verse 85

The proud have digged pits - The Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic, translate this verse thus: "They have recited to me unholy fables, which are not according to thy law." They wish us to receive their system of idolatry, and the tales concerning their gods; but these are not according to thy law. The Anglo-Saxon is the same: They quothed me the unrightwise spells; but no so so law thine.

PSALM 119: 86 All of your commandments are faithful. They persecute me wrongfully. Help me!

PSALM 119: 87 They had almost wiped me from the earth, but I didn't forsake your precepts. Preserve my life according to your loving kindness, so I will obey the statutes of your mouth. LAMED

Verse 87

They had almost consumed me - Had it not been for thy mercy, we had all been destroyed under this oppressive captivity.

PSALM 119: 88 Preserve my life according to your loving kindness, so I will obey the statutes of your mouth.

Verse 88

Quicken me - Make and keep me alive.

So shall I keep - Without the spiritual life there is no obedience; we must therefore rise from the dead, and be quickened by the Spirit of Christ.

PSALM 119: 89 LORD, your word is settled in heaven forever.

Verse 89

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven - Thy purposes are all settled above, and they shall all be fulfilled below.

PSALM 119: 90 Your faithfulness is to all generations. You have established the earth, and it remains.

Verse 90

Thy faithfulness - That which binds thee to accomplish the promise made. And this shall be, not for an age merely, but from generation to generation; for thy promises refer to the whole duration of time.

Thou hast established the earth - Thou hast given it its appointed place in the system, and there it abideth.

PSALM 119: 91 Your laws remain to this day, for all things serve you.

Verse 91

They continue this day - This verse should be thus read: All are thy servants; therefore, they continue this day according to thy ordinances. "All the celestial bodies are governed by thy power. Thou hast given an ordinance or appointment to each, and each fulfils thy will in the place thou hast assigned it."

PSALM 119: 92 Unless your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

Verse 92

Unless thy law had been my delights - Had we not had the consolations of religion, we should long ago have died of a broken heart.

PSALM 119: 93 I will never forget your precepts, for with them, you have revived me.

Verse 93

I will never forget thy precepts - How can I? It is by them I live.

PSALM 119: 94 I am yours. Save me, for I have sought your precepts.

Verse 94

I am thine, save me - He who can say this need fear no evil. In all trials, temptations, dangers, afflictions, persecutions, I am thine. Thy enemies wish to destroy me! Lord, look to thy servant; thy servant looks to thee. O how sovereign is such a word against all the evils of life! I am Thine! therefore save thine Own!

PSALM 119: 95 The wicked have waited for me, to destroy me. I will consider your statutes. I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commands are boundless. MEM

PSALM 119: 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commands are boundless.

Verse 96

I have seen an end of all perfection - Literally, "Of all consummations I have seen the end:" as if one should say, Every thing of human origin has its limits and end, howsoever extensive, noble, and excellent. All arts and sciences, languages, inventions, have their respective principles, have their limits and ends; as they came from man and relate to man, they shall end with man: but thy law, thy revelation, which is a picture of thy own mind, an external manifestation of thy own perfections, conceived in thy infinite ideas, in reference to eternal objects, is exceeding broad; transcends the limits of creation; and extends illimitably into eternity! This has been explained as if it meant: All the real or pretended perfection that men can arrive at in this life is nothing when compared with what the law of God requires. This saying is false in itself, and is no meaning of the text. Whatever God requires of man he can, by his grace, work in man.

PSALM 119: 97 How I love your law! It is my meditation all day.

Verse 97

O how love I thy law - This is one of the strongest marks of a gracious and pious heart, cast in the mould of obedience. Such love the precepts of Christ: in his commandments they delight; and this delight is shown by their making them frequent subjects of their meditation.

PSALM 119: 98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for your commandments are always with me.

Verse 98

Wiser than mine enemies - Some have thought that this Psalm was composed by Daniel, and that he speaks of himself in these verses. Being instructed by God, he was found to have more knowledge than any of the Chaldeans, magicians, soothsayers, etc., etc.; and his wisdom soon appeared to the whole nation vastly superior to theirs.

PSALM 119: 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.

Verse 99

I have more understanding than all my teachers - As he had entered into the spiritual nature of the law of God, and saw into the exceeding breadth of the commandment, he soon became wiser than any of the priests or even prophets who instructed him.

PSALM 119: 100 I understand more than the aged, because I have kept your precepts.

Verse 100

I understand more than the ancients - God had revealed to him more of that hidden wisdom which was in his law than he had done to any of his predecessors. And this was most literally true of David, who spoke more fully about Christ than any who had gone before him; or, indeed, followed after him. His compositions are, I had almost said, a sublime Gospel.

PSALM 119: 101 I have kept my feet from every evil way, that I might observe your word.

Verse 101

I have refrained my feet - By avoiding all sin, the spirit of wisdom still continues to rest upon me.

PSALM 119: 102 I have not turned aside from your ordinances, for you have taught me.

PSALM 119: 103 How sweet are your promises to my taste, more than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts, I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. NUN

Verse 103

Sweeter than honey to my mouth! - What deep communion must this man have had with his Maker! These expressions show a soul filled with God. O Christians, how vastly superior are our privileges! and alas! how vastly inferior in general, are our consolations, our communion with God, and our heavenly-mindedness!

PSALM 119: 104 Through your precepts, I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. NUN

Verse 104

Through thy precepts I get understanding - Spiritual knowledge increases while we tread in the path of obedience. Obedience is the grand means of growth and instruction. Obedience trades with the talent of grace, and thus grace becomes multiplied.

PSALM 119: 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path.

Verse 105

Thy word is a lamp - This is illustrated thus by Solomon, Pro 6:23 : "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." God's word is a candle which may be held in the hand to give us light in every dark place and chamber; and it is a general light shining upon all his works, and upon all our ways.

PSALM 119: 106 I have sworn, and have confirmed it, that I will obey your righteous ordinances.

Verse 106

I have sworn - Perhaps this means no more than that he had renewed his covenant with God; he had bound himself to love and serve him only.

PSALM 119: 107 I am afflicted very much. Revive me, LORD, according to your word.

Verse 107

I am afflicted very much - מַאֲדָה מְאֹדָה ad meod, "to extremity, excessively." We are in the most oppressive captivity.

Quicken me - Deliver us from our bondage.

PSALM 119: 108 Accept, I beg you, the willing offerings of my mouth. LORD, teach me your ordinances.

Verse 108

The freewill-offerings of my mouth - פִּי נִדְבוֹת pi, the voluntary offerings which I have promised. Or, As we are in captivity, and cannot sacrifice to thee, but would if we could; accept the praises of our mouth, and the purposes of our hearts, instead of the sacrifices and offerings which we would bring to thy altar, but cannot.

PSALM 119: 109 My soul is continually in my hand, yet I won't forget your law.

Verse 109

My soul is continually in my hand - נַפְשִׁי naphshi, my life; that is, it is in constant danger, every hour I am on the confines of death.

The expression signifies to be in continual danger. So Xenarchus in Athenaeus, lib. xiii., c. 4: Ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχοντα, "having the life in the hand;" which signifies continual danger and jeopardy. There is some thing like this in the speech of Achilles to Ulysses, Hom. Il. ix., ver. 322: - Αἰεὶ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμιζεῖν. "Always presenting my life to the dangers of the fight."

My soul is in thy hand, is the reading of the Syriac, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic; but this is a conjectural and useless emendation.

PSALM 119: 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I haven't gone astray from your precepts.

Verse 110

The wicked have laid a snare - Thus their lives were continually exposed to danger.

PSALM 119: 111 I have taken your testimonies as a heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I have set my heart to perform your statutes forever, even to the end. SAMEKH

Verse 111

As a heritage - In Psa 119:57 he says, God is my portion, חֶלְקִי chelki. In this he says, Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage, נַחַל nachal. To these he was heir; he had inherited them from his fathers, and he was determined to leave them to his family for ever. If a man can leave nothing to his child but a Bible, in that he bequeaths him the greatest treasure in the universe.

PSALM 119: 112 I have set my heart to perform your statutes forever, even to the end. SAMEKH

Verse 112

I have inclined mine heart - I used the power God gave me, and turned to his testimonies with all mine heart. When we work with God, we can do all things.

PSALM 119: 113 I hate double-minded men, but I love your law.

Verse 113

I hate vain thoughts - I have hated סעפים seaphim, "tumultuous, violent men." I abominate all mobs and insurrections, and troublers of the public peace.

PSALM 119: 114 You are my hiding place and my shield. I hope in your word.

Verse 114

My hiding place - My asylum.

And my shield - There is a time in which I may be called to suffer in secret; then thou hidest me. There may be a time in which thou callest me to fight; then thou art my Shield and Protector.

PSALM 119: 115 Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God.

PSALM 119: 116 Uphold me according to your word, that I may live. Let me not be ashamed of my hope.

Verse 116

Depart from me - Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo, I abominate the profane, and will have no communion with them. I drive them away from my presence.

Uphold me - סמךני sammecheni, prop me up; give me thyself to lean upon.

PSALM 119: 117 Hold me up, and I will be safe, and will have respect for your statutes continually.

Verse 117

Hold thou me up - I shall grow weary and faint in the way, if not strengthened and supported by thee.

And I shall be safe - No soul can be safe, unless upheld by thee.

PSALM 119: 118 You reject all those who stray from your statutes, for their deceit is in vain.

Verse 118

Thou hast trodden down - All thy enemies will be finally trodden down under thy feet.

Their deceit is falsehood - Their elevation is a lie. The wicked often become rich and great, and affect to be happy, but it is all false; they have neither a clean nor approving conscience. Nor can they have thy approbation; and, consequently, no true blessedness.

PSALM 119: 119 You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross. Therefore I love your testimonies. My flesh trembles for fear of you. I am afraid of your judgements. AYIN

Verse 119

Thou putttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross - There is no true metal in them: when they are tried by the refining fire, they are burnt up; they fly off in fumes, and come to no amount. There is probably an allusion here to the scum or scorias at the surface of melting metals, which is swept oft previously to casting the metal into the mould.

Therefore I love thy testimonies - Thy testimonies will stand; and thy people will stand; because thou who didst give the one, and who upholdest the other, art pure, immovable, and eternal.

PSALM 119: 120 My flesh trembles for fear of you. I am afraid of your judgements.

Verse 120

My flesh trembleth for fear of thee - I know thou art a just and holy God: I know thou requirest truth in the inner parts. I know that thou art a Spirit, and that they who worship thee must worship thee in spirit and in truth; and I am often alarmed lest I fall short. It is only an assurance of my interest in thy mercy that can save me from distressing fears and harassing doubts. It is our privilege to know we are in God's favor; and it is not less so to maintain a continual filial fear of offending him. A true conception of God's justice and mercy begets reverence.

PSALM 119: 121 I have done what is just and righteous. Don't leave me to my oppressors.

Verse 121

I have done judgment and justice - I have given the best decision possible on every case that came before me; and I have endeavored to render to all their due.

PSALM 119: 122 Ensure your servant's well-being. Don't let the proud oppress me.

Verse 122

Be surety for thy servant - ערב arob, give a pledge or token that thou wilt help me in times of necessity. Or, Be bail for thy servant. What a word is this! Pledge thyself for me, that thou wilt produce me safely at the judgment of the great day. Then sustain and keep me blameless till the coming of Christ. Neither of these two verses has any of the ten words in reference to God's law or attributes. The judgment and the justice refer to the psalmist's own conduct in Psa 119:121. The hundred and twenty-second has no word of the kind.

PSALM 119: 123 My eyes fail looking for your salvation, for your righteous word.

Verse 123

Mine eyes fail - See on Psa 119:82 (note).

PSALM 119: 124 Deal with your servant according to your loving kindness. Teach me your statutes.

PSALM 119: 125 I am your servant. Give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies.

Verse 125

I am thy servant - See on Psa 119:94 (note).

PSALM 119: 126 It is time to act, LORD, for they break your law.

Verse 126

It is time for thee, Lord, to work - The time is fulfilled in which thou hast promised deliverance to thy people. They - the Babylonians,

Have made void thy law - They have filled up the measure of their iniquities.

PSALM 119: 127 Therefore I love your commandments more than gold, yes, more than pure gold. Therefore I consider all of your precepts to be right. I hate every false way. PEY

Verse 127

Therefore I love thy commandments - I see thou wilt do all things well. I will trust in thee.

Above gold - מִזְהָב mizzahab, more than resplendent gold; gold without any stain or rust.

Yea, above fine gold - וּמִפָּז umippaz, above solid gold; gold separated from the dross, perfectly refined.

PSALM 119: 128 Therefore I consider all of your precepts to be right. I hate every false way. PEY

Verse 128

All thy precepts concerning all things to be right - There are too many supplied words here to leave the text unsuspected. All the ancient versions, except the Chaldee, seem to have omitted the second כל col, All and read the text thus: "Therefore I have walked straight in all thy precepts." I go straight on in all thy precepts, hating every false way. I neither turn to the right hand nor to the left; the false ways are crooked; thy way is straight. I am going to heaven, and that way lies straight before me. To walk in the way of falsity I cannot, because I hate it; and I hate such ways because God hates them.

PSALM 119: 129 Your testimonies are wonderful, therefore my soul keeps them.

Verse 129

Thy testimonies are wonderful - There is a height, length, depth, and breadth in thy word and testimonies that are truly astonishing; and on this account my soul loves them, and I deeply study them. The more I study, the more light and salvation I obtain.

PSALM 119: 130 The entrance of your words gives light. It gives understanding to the simple.

Verse 130

The entrance of thy words giveth light - פֶּתַח pethach, the opening of it: when I open my Bible to read, light springs up in my mind. Every sermon, every prayer, every act of faith, is an opening by which light is let into the seeking soul.

PSALM 119: 131 I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for your commandments.

Verse 131

I opened my mouth, and panted - A metaphor taken from an animal exhausted in the chase. He runs, open-mouthed, to take in the cooling air; the heart beating high, and the muscular force nearly

expended through fatigue. The psalmist sought for salvation, as he would run from a ferocious beast for his life. Nothing can show his earnestness in a stronger point of view.

PSALM 119: 132 Turn to me, and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name.

Verse 132

As thou usest to do - Treat me as thy mercy has induced thee to treat others in my circumstances. Deal with me as thou dealest with thy friends.

PSALM 119: 133 Establish my footsteps in your word. Don't let any iniquity have dominion over me.

Verse 133

Order my steps - יִסְדּוּ hachen, make them firm; let me not walk with a halting or unsteady step.

Have dominion over me - יְבִי bi, In me. Let me have no governor but God, let the throne of my heart be filled by him, and none other.

PSALM 119: 134 Redeem me from the oppression of man, so I will observe your precepts.

PSALM 119: 135 Make your face shine on your servant. Teach me your statutes. Streams of tears run down my eyes, because they don't observe your law. TZADI

Verse 135

Make thy face to shine - Give me a sense of thy approbation. Let me know, by the testimony of thy Spirit in my conscience, that thou art reconciled to me. The godly in all ages derived their happiness from a consciousness of the Divine favor. The witness of God's spirit in the souls of believers was an essential principle in religion from the foundation of the world.

PSALM 119: 136 Streams of tears run down my eyes, because they don't observe your law. TZADI

Verse 136

Rivers of waters run down mine eyes - How much had this blessed man the honor of God and the salvation of souls at heart! O for more of that spirit which mourns for the transgressions of the land! But we are not properly convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

PSALM 119: 137 You are righteous, LORD. Your judgements are upright.

Verse 137

Righteous art thou - Thou art infinitely holy in thy nature; and therefore thou art upright in thy judgments - all thy dispensations to men.

PSALM 119: 138 You have commanded your statutes in righteousness. They are fully trustworthy.

Verse 138

Thy testimonies - Every thing that proceeds from thee partakes of the perfections of thy nature.

PSALM 119: 139 My zeal wears me out, because my enemies ignore your words.

Verse 139

My zeal hath consumed me - My earnest desire to promote thy glory, and the pain I feel at seeing transgressions multiplied, have worn down both my flesh and spirits.

PSALM 119: 140 Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.

Verse 140

Thy word is very pure - צרופה tseruphah, it is purification. It is not a purified thing, but a thing that purifies. "Now ye are clean," said Christ, "by the word I have spoken unto you." God's word is a fire to purify as well as a hammer to break.

PSALM 119: 141 I am small and despised. I don't forget your precepts.

Verse 141

I am small and despised - And on these accounts have every thing to fear. Being small, I cannot resist; being despised, I am in danger; but even all this does not induce me to start aside, or through the fear of man to be unfaithful to thee.

PSALM 119: 142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness. Your law is truth.

Verse 142

Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness - The word צדק tzedek is a word of very extensive meaning in the Bible. It signifies, not only God's inherent righteousness and perfection of nature, but also his method of treating others; his plan of redemption; his method of saving others. And the word δικαιοσύνη, which answers to it, in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, is used with the same latitude of meaning, and in the same sense; particularly in that remarkable passage, Rom 3:25-26 (note), where see the notes. Thy merciful method of dealing with sinners and justifying the ungodly will last as long as the earth lasts; and thy law that witnesses this, in all its pages, is the truth.

PSALM 119: 143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me. Your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever. Give me understanding, that I may live. KUF

Verse 143

Trouble and anguish - I am exercised with various trials from men and devils.

Have taken hold on me - But still I cleave to my God, and am delighted with his law.

PSALM 119: 144 Your testimonies are righteous forever. Give me understanding, that I may live. KUF

Verse 144

The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting - Thy moral law was not made for one people, or for one particular time; it is as imperishable as thy nature, and of endless obligation. It is that law by which all the children of Adam shall be Judged.

Give me understanding - To know and practice it.

And I shall live - Shall glorify thee, and live eternally; not for the merit of having done it, but because thou didst fulfill the work of the law in my heart, having saved me from condemnation by it.

PSALM 119: 145 I have called with my whole heart. Answer me, LORD! I will keep your statutes.

Verse 145

I cried with my whole heart - The whole soul of the psalmist was engaged in this good work. He whose whole heart cries to God will never rise from the throne of grace without a blessing.

PSALM 119: 146 I have called to you. Save me! I will obey your statutes.

PSALM 119: 147 I rise before dawn and cry for help. I put my hope in your words.

Verse 147

I prevented the dawning - קדמתי kiddamti, "I went before the dawn or twilight."

PSALM 119: 148 My eyes stay open through the night watches, that I might meditate on your word.

Verse 148

Mine eyes prevent - קדמו kiddemu, "go before the watches." Before the watchman proclaims the hour, I am awake, meditating on thy words. The Jews divided the night into three watches, which began at what we call six o'clock in the evening, and consisted each of four hours. The Romans taught them afterwards to divide it into four watches of three hours each; and to divide the day and night into twelve hours each; wherein different guards of soldiers were appointed to watch. At the proclaiming of each watch the psalmist appears to have risen and performed some act of devotion. For a remarkable custom of our Saxon ancestors, see the note on Psa 119:164 (note).

PSALM 119: 149 Hear my voice according to your loving kindness. Revive me, LORD, according to your ordinances.

PSALM 119: 150 They draw near who follow after wickedness. They are far from your law.

Verse 150

They draw nigh - They are just at hand who seek to destroy me.

They are far from thy law - They are near to all evil, but far from thee.

PSALM 119: 151 You are near, LORD. All your commandments are truth. Of old I have known from your testimonies, that you have founded them forever. RESH

Verse 151

Thou art near - As they are near to destroy, so art thou near to save. When the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.

PSALM 119: 152 Of old I have known from your testimonies, that you have founded them forever. RESH

Verse 152

Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old - קדם ידעתי kedem yedati, "Long ago I have known concerning thy testimonies." Thou hast designed that thy testimonies should bear reference to, and evidence of, those glorious things which thou hast provided for the salvation of men; and that this should be an everlasting testimony. They continue, and Christ is come.

PSALM 119: 153 Consider my affliction, and deliver me, for I don't forget your law.

Verse 153

Consider mine affliction - See mine addiction or humiliation: but the eye of the Lord affects his heart; and therefore he never sees the distresses of his followers without considering their situation, and affording them help.

PSALM 119: 154 Plead my cause, and redeem me! Revive me according to your promise.

Verse 154

Plead my cause - ריבה ריבה ריבי ribah ribi. "Be my Advocate in my suit." Contend for us against the Babylonians, and bring us out of our bondage.

According to thy word - Spoken by thy prophets for our comfort and encouragement.

PSALM 119: 155 Salvation is far from the wicked, for they don't seek your statutes.

Verse 155

Salvation is far from the wicked - There is no hope of their conversion.

For they seek not thy statutes - And they who do not seek, shall not find.

PSALM 119: 156 Great are your tender mercies, LORD. Revive me according to your ordinances.

Verse 156

Great are thy tender mercies - They are רבים rabbim, multitudes. They extend to all the wretchednesses of all men.

PSALM 119: 157 Many are my persecutors and my adversaries. I haven't swerved from your testimonies.

PSALM 119: 158 I look at the faithless with loathing, because they don't observe your word.

Verse 158

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved - Literally, I was affected with anguish.

PSALM 119: 159 Consider how I love your precepts. Revive me, LORD, according to your loving kindness. All of your words are truth. Every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.

PSALM 119: 160 All of your words are truth. Every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.
SIN AND SHIN

Verse 160

Thy word is true from the beginning - ראש rosh, the head or beginning of thy word, is true. Does he refer to the first word in the Book of Genesis, בראשית bereshith, "in the beginning?" The learned reader knows that ראש rash, or raash, is the root in that word. Every word thou hast spoken from the first in Bereshith (Genesis) to the end of the law and prophets, and all thou wilt yet speak, as flowing from the fountain of truth, must be true; and all shall have in due time, their fulfillment. And all these, thy words endure for ever. They are true, and ever will be true.

PSALM 119: 161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.

Verse 161

Princes have persecuted me - This may refer to what was done by prime ministers, and the rulers of provinces, to sour the king against the unfortunate Jews, in order still to detain them in bondage. In reference to David, the plotting against him in Saul's court, and the dangers he ran in consequence of the jealousies of the Philistine lords while he sojourned among them, are well known.

My heart standeth in awe - They had probably offers made them of enlargement or melioration of condition, providing they submitted to some idolatrous conditions; but they knew they had to do with a jealous God; their hearts stood in awe, and they were thereby kept from sin.

PSALM 119: 162 I rejoice at your word, as one who finds great plunder.

Verse 162

As one that findeth great spoil - שלל רב shalal rab. This appears to refer to such spoil as is acquired by stripping the dead in a field of battle, taking the rich garments of the slain chiefs; or it may refer to plunder in general. As God opened his eyes he beheld wonders in his law; and each discovery of this kind was like finding a prize.

PSALM 119: 163 I hate and abhor falsehood. I love your law.

Verse 163

I - abhor lying - Perhaps they might have made the confessions which the Chaldeans required, and by mental reservation have kept an inward firm adherence to their creed; but this, in the sight of the God of truth, must have been lying; and at such a sacrifice they would not purchase their enlargement, even from their captivity.

PSALM 119: 164 Seven times a day, I praise you, because of your righteous ordinances.

Verse 164

Seven times a day do I praise thee - We have often seen that seven was a number expressing perfection, completion, etc., among the Hebrews; and that it is often used to signify many, or an indefinite number, see Pro 24:16; Lev 26:28. And here it may mean no more than that his soul was filled with the spirit of gratitude and praise, and that he very frequently expressed his joyous and grateful feelings in this way. But Rabbi Solomon says this is to be understood literally, for they praised God twice in the morning before reading the decalogue, and once after; twice in the evening before the same reading, and twice after; making in the whole seven times. The Roman Church has prescribed a similar service.

In a manuscript Saxon Homily, Domin. 3, in Quadrag, a.d. 971, I find the following singular directions: -

Every Christian man is commanded that he always his body seven times bless with the sign of Christ's cross.

1. First, at day-break.
2. Second time at undern tide, (nine o'clock in the morning).
3. The third time at midday.
4. The fourth time at noon-tide. (3 o'clock P.M.)
5. The fifth time in the evening.
6. The sixth time at night ere he go to rest.
7. The seventh time at midnight. A good man would do so if he awoke.

It seems that the sign of the cross was thought sufficient, even without prayer.

PSALM 119: 165 Those who love your law have great peace. Nothing causes them to stumble.

Verse 165

Great peace have they - They have peace in their conscience, and joy in the Holy Spirit; and Nothing shall offend - Stumble, or put them out of the way.

PSALM 119: 166 I have hoped for your salvation, LORD. I have done your commandments.

Verse 166

Lord, I have hoped - Thou hast promised deliverance, and I have expected it on the ground of that promise.

PSALM 119: 167 My soul has observed your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. I have obeyed your precepts and your testimonies, for all my ways are before you. TAV

Verse 167

My soul hath kept - I have not attended to the latter merely, but my spirit has entered into the spirit and design of thy testimonies.

PSALM 119: 168 I have obeyed your precepts and your testimonies, for all my ways are before you. TAV

Verse 168

For all my ways are before thee - Thou knowest that I do not lie; thy eye has been upon my heart and my conduct, and thou knowest that I have endeavored to walk before thee with a perfect heart.

PSALM 119: 169 Let my cry come before you, LORD. Give me understanding according to your word.

Verse 169

Let my cry come near before thee - This is really a fine image; it is of frequent occurrence, and is little heeded. Here the psalmists cry for deliverance is personified; made an intelligent being, and sent up to the throne of grace to negotiate in his behalf. He pursues this prosopopoeia in the next verse and sends his supplication in the same way. I have already had occasion to refer to a similar figure in Homer, where prayers are represented as the daughters of Jupiter. See on Psa 88:2 (note).

PSALM 119: 170 Let my supplication come before you. Deliver me according to your word.

PSALM 119: 171 Let my lips utter praise, for you teach me your statutes.

Verse 171

My lips shall utter praise - תהלה *tehillah*, a song of praise.

PSALM 119: 172 Let my tongue sing of your word, for all your commandments are righteousness.

Verse 172

My tongue shall speak of thy word - There is a curious distinction here. In the preceding verse he says, "My lips shall utter;" here no reference is made to articulate sounds, except as affixed to musical notes. In this verse he says, "My tongue shall speak;" here articulate and intelligible words are intended. He first utters sounds connected with words expressive of his grateful feelings; in the second he speaks words, principally those which God himself had spoken, containing promises of support, purposes relative to the redemption of his people, and denunciations against their enemies.

PSALM 119: 173 Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.

Verse 173

Let thine hand help me - Exert thy power in my defense.

PSALM 119: 174 I have longed for your salvation, LORD. Your law is my delight.

PSALM 119: 175 Let my soul live, that I may praise you. Let your ordinances help me.

Verse 175

Let my soul live - Let my life be preserved, and my soul quickened!

PSALM 119: 176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I don't forget your commandments.

Verse 176

I have gone astray like a lost sheep - A sheep, when it has once lost the flock, strays in such a manner as to render the prospect of its own return utterly hopeless. I have seen them bleating when they have lost the flock, and when answered by the others, instead of turning to the sound, have gone on in the same direction in which they were straying, their bleatings answered by the rest of the flock, till they were out of hearing! This fact shows the propriety of the next clause.

Seek thy servant - I shall never find thee; come to the wilderness, take me up, and carry me to the flock. See the notes on the parable of the lost sheep, Luk 15:4 (note), etc. The psalmist began with "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord;" and he concludes with "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant." And thus, conscious of the blessedness of those

who are in the way of righteousness, he desires to be brought into it, that he may walk in newness of life. Psa 119:1 : "It is a good way, and they are blessed that walk in it." Verse the last, "Bring me into this way, that I may be blessed." And thus the Psalm, in sentiment, returns into itself; and the latter verse is so connected with the former, as to make the whole a perfect circle, like the serpent biting its own tail.

There is one extraordinary perfection in this Psalm: begin where you will, you seem to be at the commencement of the piece; end where you will, you seem to close with a complete sense. And yet it is not like the Book of Proverbs, a tissue of detached sentences; it is a whole composed of many parts, and all apparently as necessary to the perfection of the Psalm, as the different alphabetical letters under which it is arranged are to the formation of a complete alphabet. Though there be a continual recurrence of the same words, which would of itself prevent it from having a pleasing effect upon the ear, yet these words are so connected with a vast variety of others, which show their force and meaning in still new and impressive points of light, that attention is still excited, and devotion kept alive, during the whole reading. It is constructed with admirable art, and every where breathes the justest and highest encomiums on the revelation of God; shows the glories of the God who gave it, the necessities and dependence of his intelligent creatures, the bounty of the Creator, and the praise and obedience which are his due. It is elegant throughout; it is full of beauties, and I have endeavored in the preceding notes to mark some of them; but the number might have been greatly multiplied. To no Psalm can its own words be better applied, Psa 119:18 : "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."