

# 《The Treasury of David (Vol. 09)(C.H. Spurgeon)》

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## EXPOSITION

**Verse 25-32.** Here, it seems to me, we have the Psalmist in trouble bemoaning the bondage to earthly things in which he finds his mind to be held. His soul cleaves to the dust, melts for heaviness, and

cries for enlargement from its spiritual prison. In these verses we shall see the influence of the divine word upon a heart which laments its downward tendencies, and is filled with mourning because of its deadening surroundings. The word of the Lord evidently arouses prayer (Psalms 119:25-29), confirms choice (Psalms 119:30), and inspires renewed resolve (Psalms 119:32): it is in all tribulation whether of body: or mind the surest source of help.

This portion has 'D' for its alphabetical letter: it sings of Depression, in the spirit of Devotion, Determination, and Dependence.

**Verse 25.** My soul cleaveth unto the dust. He means in part that he was full of sorrow; for mourners in the east cast dust on their heads, and sat in ashes, and the Psalmist felt as if these ensigns of woe were glued to him, and his very soul was made to cleave to them because of his powerlessness to rise above his grief. Does he not also mean that he felt ready to die? Did he not feel his life absorbed and fast held by the grave's mould, half choked by the death dust? It may not be straining the language if we conceive that he also felt and bemoaned his earthly mindedness and spiritual deadness. There was a tendency in his soul to cling to earth which he greatly bewailed. Whatever was the cause of his complaint, it was no surface evil, but an affair of his inmost spirit; his soul cleaved to the dust; and it was not a casual and accidental falling into the dust, but a continuous and powerful tendency, or cleaving to the earth. But what a mercy that the good man could feel and deplore whatever there was of evil in the cleaving! The serpent's seed can find their meat in the dust, but never shall the seed of the woman be thus degraded. Many are of the earth earthy, and never lament it; only the heaven born and heaven soaring spirit pines at the thought of being fastened to this world, and bird limed by its sorrows or its pleasures.

Quicken thou me according to thy word. More life is the cure for all our ailments. Only the Lord can give it. He can bestow it, bestow it at once, and do it according to his word, without departing from the usual course of his grace, as we see it mapped out in the Scriptures. It is well to know what to pray for, -- David seeks quickening: one would have thought that he would have asked for comfort or upraising, but he knew that these would come out of increased life, and therefore he sought that blessing which is the root of the rest. When a person is depressed in spirit, weak, and bent towards the ground, the main thing is to increase his stamina and put more life into him; then his spirit revives, and his body becomes erect. In reviving the life, the whole man is renewed. Shaking off the dust is a little thing by itself, but when it follows upon quickening, it is a blessing of the greatest value; just as good spirits which flow from established health are among the choicest of our mercies. The phrase, "according to thy word," means -- according to thy revealed way of quickening thy saints. The word of God shows us that he who first made us must keep us alive, and it tells us of the Spirit of God who through the ordinances pours fresh life into our souls; we beg the Lord to act towards us in this his own regular method of grace. Perhaps David remembered the word of the Lord in Deuteronomy

32:39, where Jehovah claims both to kill and to make alive, and he beseeches the Lord to exercise that life giving power upon his almost expiring servant. Certainly, the man of God had not so many rich promises to rest upon as we have, but even a single word was enough for him, and he right earnestly urges "according to thy word." It is a grand thing to see a believer in the dust and yet pleading the promise, a man at the grave's mouth crying, "quicken me," and hoping that it shall be done.

Note how this first verse of the 4th octonary tallies with the first of the "Quicken me." While in a happy third (17). -- "That I may live"... "Quicken me." While in a happy state he begs for bountiful dealing, and when in a forlorn condition he prays for quickening. Life is in both cases the object of pursuit: that he may have life, and have it more abundantly.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

The eight verses alphabetically arranged:

1. (D)epressed to the dust is my soul: quicken thou me according to thy word.
2. (D)eclared have I (to thee) my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.
3. (D)eclare thou to me the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.
4. (D)ropping (marg.) is my soul for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
5. (D)eceitful ways remove from me; and grant me thy law graciously.
6. (D)etermined have I upon the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me.
7. (D)eliberately I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.
8. (D)ay by day I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Theodore Kubber.

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

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

detached from them; that his affections were low, earthly, grovelling, so as to give him deep distress, and lead him to cry to God for Life and strength that he might break away from them. Albert Barnes.

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

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

And hereof we learn, how that which the worldling counts wisdom, to the Christian is folly; what is joy to the one, is grief to the other. The joy of a worldling is to cleave unto the earth; when he gripes it surest, he thinks himself happiest, for it is his portion: to take heed to his worldly affairs, and have his mind upon them (in his estimation) is only wisdom. For the serpent's curse is upon him, he creeps on the earth, and licks the dust all the days of his life. This is the miserable condition of the wicked, that even their heavenly soul is become earthly. Qui secundum corporis appetentiam vivit caro est, etiam anima eorum caro est; as the Lord spake of those who perished in the Deluge, that they were but flesh, no spirit in them; that is, no spiritual or heavenly motion.

But the Christian, considering that his soul is from above, sets his affection also on those things which are above: he delights to have his conversation in heaven; and it is a grief to him when he finds his motions and affections drawn down and entangled with the earth. His life is to cleave to the Lord; but it is death to him when the neck of his soul is bowed down to the yoke of the world. William Cowper.

**Verse 25.** *My soul cleaveth to the dust*. "Look up now to the heavens." So once spake the Lord to Abraham his friend, and he speaketh thus to us also. Alas! why must it be so always that, when we come to know ourselves even but a little, we are constantly answering with the mournful sigh, "My soul cleaveth to the dust"? Ah! that is indeed the deepest pain of a soul which has already tasted that the Lord is merciful, when, although desiring to soar on high, it sadly feels how impossible it is to rise.

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

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

seek in God that, which he deeply feels, he least of all can give himself.

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

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

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

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

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

**Verse 25 Quicken thou me according to thy word.** *Where there is life there will be the endeavour to rise -- the believer will not lie prone in his aspirations after God.* From the lowest depths the language of faith is heard ascending to God most high, who performeth all things for the believer. The true child cannot but look towards the loving Father, who is the Almighty, All sufficient One. Have you not found it so? But will you mark the intelligence that shines around the believer's prayer? He prays that the Lord may quicken him according to his word. The word may be regarded in the light of the

standard after which he is to be fashioned; or the Psalmist may have in view the requirements contained in the word regarding the believer's progress; or he may be thinking of the promises found therein in behalf of the poor and needy when they apply. Indeed, all these significations may be wrapped up in the one expression -- "according to thy word" -- the standard of perfection, the requirements of the word, -- the promises concerning it. The great exemplar of the believer is Christ, -- of old it was the Christ of prophecy. Then the requirements of the Lord's will were scattered through the word. The Psalmist, however, may be dwelling upon the large promises which the Lord hath given towards the perfecting of his people. You see after what the spiritual nature aspires. It is quite enough to the natural man or the formalist that he be as the generally well behaved and esteemed among professors -- the spiritual man aspires beyond -- he aspires after being quickened according to God's word. Judge of yourselves. John Stephen.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 25.** *According to thy word.* What word doth David mean? Either the general promises in the books of Moses or Job; which intimate deliverance to the faithful observers of God's law, or help to the miserable and distressed; or some particular promise given to him by Nathan, or others. Chrysostom saith, "Quicken me according to thy word: but it is not a word of command, but a word of

promise." Mark here, -- he doth not say *secundum meritum meum*, but, *secundum verbum tuum*; the hope, or that help which we expect from God, is founded upon his word; there is our security, in his promises, not in our deserving: *Promittendo se fecit debitorem*, etc.

When there was so little Scripture written, yet David could find out a word for his support. Alas! in our troubles and afflictions, no promise comes to mind. As in outward things, many that have less live better than those that have abundance; so here, now Scripture is so large, we are less diligent, and therefore, though we have so many promises, we are apt to faint, we have not a word to bear us up. This word did not help David, till he had lain so long under this heavy condition, that he seemed dead. Many, when they have a promise, think presently to enjoy the comfort of it. No, waiting and striving are first necessary. We never relish the comfort of the promises till the creatures have spent their allowance, and we have been exercised. God will keep his word, and yet we must expect to be tried. In this his dead condition, faith in God's word kept him alive. When we have least feeling, and there is nothing left us, the word will support us: "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" ([Romans 4:19-20](#)). One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, *Chirographa tua injiciebat tibi Domine*, show him his handwriting; God is tender of his word. These arguments in prayer, are not to work upon God, but ourselves. Thomas Manton

**Verse 25.** *One does not wonder at the fluctuations which occur in the feelings and experience of a child of God -- at one time high on the mountain, near to God and communing with God, at another in the deep and dark valley. All, more or less, know these changes, and have their sorrowing as well as their rejoicing seasons. When we parted with David last, what was he telling us of his experience? that God's testimonies were his delight and his counsellors; but now what a different strain! all joy is darkened, and his soul cleaveth to the dust. And there must have been seasons of deep depression and despondency in the heart of David -- given as a fugitive and wanderer from his home, hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, and holding, as he himself says, his life continually in his hands. Yet I think in this portion of the Psalm there is evidence of a deeper abasement and sorrow of heart than any mere worldly suffering could produce. He had indeed said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul"; but, even in that moment of weak and murmuring faith, he knew that he was God's anointed one to sit on the throne of Israel. But, here there is indication of sin, of grievous sin which had laid his soul low in the dust; and I think the petition in [Psalms 119:29](#) gives us some clue to what that sin had been: "Remove me from the way of lying." Had David -- you may well ask in wonder -- had David ever lied? had he ever deviated from the strait and honourable path of truth I am afraid we must own that he had at one time gone so near the confines of a falsehood, that he would be but a poor casuist and a worse moralist who should attempt to defend the Psalmist from the imputation. We cannot read the*



27th chapter of the 1st of Samuel without owning into what a sad tissue of equivocation and deceit David was unhappily seduced. Well might his soul cleave to the dust as he reviewed that period of his career; and though grace did for him what it afterwards did for Peter, and he was plucked as a brand out of the burning, yet one can well imagine that like the Apostle afterwards, when he thought thereon he wept, and that bitterly. Barton Bouchier.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 25-32.** -- Quickening. Prayed for with confession (Psalms 119:25-26). When obtained shall be talked of (Psalms 119:27). Desired for the sake of strength (Psalms 119:28), of truthfulness (Psalms 119:29-31), and of activity (Psalms 119:32).

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 25.** --

1. Nature and its tendency.
2. Grace and its mode of operation.
3. Both truths in their personal application.

**Verse 25.** -- Quicken thou me, etc.

1. There are many reasons why we should seek quickening.
  - (a) Because of the deadening influence of the world. "Thy soul cleaveth," etc.
  - (b) The influence of vanity (see Psalms 119:37).
  - (c) Because we are surrounded by deceivers (see Psalms 119:87-88).
  - (d) Because of the effect of seasons of affliction upon us (see Psalms 119:7).
    1. Some of the motives for seeking quickening.
      - (a) Because of what you are -- a Christian; life seeks more life.
      - (b) Because of what you ought to be.
      - (c) Because of what we shall be.
      - (d) In order to obedience (see Psalms 119:88).
      - (e) For your comfort (Psalms 119:107,50).
      - (f) As the best security against the attacks of enemies (Psalms 119:87-88).
      - (g) To invigorate our memories (Psalms 119:93).
      - (h) Consider (as a motive to seek this quickening) the terrible consequences of losing spiritual life; or, in other words, lacking it in its manifest display.
        1. Some of the ways in which the quickening may be brought to us.

(a) It must be by the Lord himself. "Quicken me, O Lord."

(b) By the turning of the eyes (Psalms 119:37).

(c) By the word (Psalms 119:50).

(d) By the precepts (Psalms 119:93).

(e) By affliction (Psalms 119:107).

(f) By divine comforts.

1. Enquire where are our pleas when we come before God to ask for quickening.

(a) Our necessity (Psalms 119:107, etc.).

(b) Our earnest desire (Psalms 119:40).

(c) Appeal to God's righteousness (Psalms 119:40).

(d) To his lovingkindness (Psalms 119:88,149,156).

(e) The plea in the text: "according to thy word" (Psalms 119:28,107). See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1350: "Enlivening and Invigorating."

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 26.** I have declared my ways. Open confession is good for the soul. Nothing brings more ease and more life to a man than a frank acknowledgment of the evil which has caused the sorrow and the lethargy. Such a declaration proves that the man knows his own condition, and is no longer blinded by pride. Our confessions are not meant to make God know our sins, but to make us know them.

And thou heardest me. His confession had been accepted; it was not lost labour; God had drawn near to him in it. We ought never to go from a duty till we have been accepted in it. Pardon follows upon penitent confession, and David felt that he had obtained it. It is God's way to forgive our sinful way when we from our hearts confess the wrong.

Teach me thy statutes. Being truly sorry for his fault, and having obtained full forgiveness, he is anxious to avoid offending again, and hence he begs to be taught obedience. He was not willing to sin through ignorance, he wished to know all the mind of God by being taught it by the best of teachers. He pined after holiness. Justified men always long to be sanctified. When God forgives our sins we are all the more fearful of sinning, again. Mercy, which pardons transgression, sets us longing for grace which prevents transgression. We may boldly ask for more when God has given us much; he who has washed out the past stain will not refuse that which will preserve us from present and future defilement. This cry for teaching is frequent in the Psalm; in Psalms 119:12 it followed a sight of God, here it follows from a sight of self. Every experience should lead us thus to plead with God.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 26.** *I have declared my ways*, etc. This verse contains a prayer, with a reason after this form: --

O Lord, I have oft before declared unto thee the whole state and course of my life, my wanderings, my wants, my doubts, my griefs: I hid nothing from thee, and thou, according to my necessity, didst always hear me: therefore now, Lord, I pray thee to teach me; by thy light illuminate me that I may know thy statutes and receive grace to walk in them. This is a good argument in dealing with the Lord, -- I have gotten many mercies and favourable answers from thee; therefore, Lord, I pray thee to give me more; for whom he loves, he loves to the end; and where he begins to show mercy he ceaseth not till he crown his children with mercy. And so gracious is he Lord, that he esteems himself to be honoured as oft as we give him the praise that we have found comfort in him, and therefore come to seek more.

Next, it is to be marked how he saith, I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: these two go well together, Mercy and Truth: truth in the heart of man confessing; mercy in God, hearing and forgiving: happy is the soul wherein these two meet together. Many there are who are destitute of this comfort; they cannot say, God hath heard me, and all because they deal not plainly and truly with the Lord in declaring their ways unto him. William Cowper.

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

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

**Verse 26.** *I have declared my ways,* etc. Him whom thou hast heard in humble confessing of his sins, him thou must teach thy statutes. The saints lay open to God what they find, both good and evil seeking deliverance, supply, strengthening, directing: even as sick patients tell to their doctor both what good and what otherwise they perceive; or as clients lay bare their case to their counsel.

Declared. As if he had read them out of a book. The saints know their ways. A man that hath light with him seeth the way, and can tell you all about it; another is in darkness and knoweth nothing: the one taketh observation of his course, the other doth not.

Thou hast heard me. God's goodness is seen in his hearing what we lay open before him. If great ones let a poor man tell his tale at large we count it honourable patience; but it is God's glory to hear our wants, our weakness through sin, the invincibility of our evils, our utter impotency in ourselves even to seek redress. That mode of procedure would lose the favour of man, but it winneth favour with God. The more humbly we confess all our wants, the more confident we may be that God will hear us. He teacheth the humble, for the humble scholar will give to his master the honour of that he

learns.

I have rehearsed (said with myself) my ways; and "thou hast beard my private confession." I have declared to others what my way is, and "thou hast heard me" so discoursing; wherefore teach me, seeing I communicate what I receive. It is a plea derived from his carefulness to learn, and from the use he had made of that he had learned. The godly, like candles, light each other. Paul Bayne.

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

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

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

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

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

**Verse 26-30.** *The way of thy precepts.* My ways. The way of lying. The way of truth. Here should be noticed the two contrasts by which the Prophet teaches what must be shunned both in life and in doctrine, and what embraced. The first respects the life of Christians, as the Prophet sets the way of God's commandments over against his own ways, [Psalms 119:26-27](#); and respecting these he confesses that they have pressed him down to the dust and have greatly distressed him; but respecting those he declares that they have again raised him up. He means by his own ways a depraved nature, carnal desire, and the carnal mind which is enmity against God, [Romans 8:7](#); but by the ways of the Lord he denotes the will of God expressed in the Word. Therefore the boastings of the papists of the perfect obedience of the renewed are empty: for David, assured by having been renewed, complains bitterly and with many tears that his soul, under the intolerable weight of sins, had been brought down to the dust of death and almost suffocated; but that God had heard his prayers and brought him back to the way of his commandments. We, here, also, gather that in this life

all the saints experience the wrestling and contest of the flesh and the spirit, so that they are continually compelled to mourn that their flesh turns them aside from the way of the Lord into the by paths of sin: just as Paul cries out, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, etc. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:23-24.

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

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

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

1. The necessity of this knowledge.
2. The desire he had to obtain it.
3. That such repetitions are not frivolous when they proceed from a sound heart, a zealous affection, and a consideration of the necessity of the thing prayed for.
4. That such as have most light have little in respect of what they should have.
5. As covetous men think they have never gold enough, so Christian men should think they have never knowledge enough. Richard Greenhorn.

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 26.** -- Confession. Absolution. Instruction.

**Verse 26. --**

1. The duty: "I have declared my ways" -- made known my experience of thy word to others.
2. Its notice by God: "Thou heardest me."
3. Its reward. More knowledge will be given: "Teach me," etc. --G.R.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 27.** Make me to understand the way of thy precepts. Give me a deep insight into the practical meaning of thy word; let me get a clear idea of the tone and tenor of thy law. Blind obedience has but small beauty; God would have us follow him with our eyes open. To obey the letter of the word is all that the ignorant can hope for; if we wish to keep God's precepts in their spirit we must come to an understanding of them, and that can be gained nowhere but at the Lord's hands. Our understanding needs enlightenment and direction: he who made our understanding must also make us understand. The last sentence was, "teach me thy statutes," and the words, "make me to understand," are an instructive enlargement and exposition of that sentence: we need to be so taught that we understand what we learn. It is to be noted that the Psalmist is not anxious to understand the prophecies, but the precepts, and he is not concerned about the subtleties of the law, but the commonplaces and everyday rules of it, which are described as "the way of thy precepts."

So shall I talk of thy wondrous works. It is ill talking of what we do not understand. We must be taught of God till we understand, and then we may hope to communicate our knowledge to others with a hope of profiting them. Talk without intelligence is mere talk, and idle talk; but the words of the instructed are as pearls which adorn the ears of them that hear. When our heart has been opened to understand, our lips should be opened to impart knowledge; and we may hope to be taught ourselves when we feel in our hearts a willingness to teach the way of the Lord to those among whom we dwell. Thy wondrous works. Remark that the clearest understanding does not cause us to cease from wondering at the ways and works of God. The fact is that the more we know of God's doings the more we admire them, and the more ready we are to speak upon them. Half the wonder in the world is born of ignorance, but holy wonder is the child of understanding. When a man understands the way of the divine precepts he never talks of his own works, and as the tongue must have some theme to speak upon, he begins to extol the works of the all perfect Lord.

Some in this place read "meditate" or "muse" instead of "talk"; it is singular that the words should be so near of kin, and yet it is right that they should be, for none but foolish people will talk without thinking. If we read the passage in this sense, we take it to mean that in proportion as David understood the word of God he would meditate upon it more and more. It is usually so; the thoughtless care not to know the inner meaning of the Scriptures, while those who know them best are the very men who strive after a greater familiarity with them, and therefore give themselves up to

musing upon them.

Observe the third verse of the last eight (19), and see how the sense is akin to this. There he was a stranger in the earth, and here he prays to know his way; there, too, he prayed that the word might not be hid from himself, and here he promises that he will not hide it from others.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

1. It will be so.

2. It should be so.

1. It will be so. When the heart is deeply affected, the tongue cannot hold, but will run out in expressions of it; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When cheered and revived in their afflictions saints are transported with the thought of the excellency of God. "Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul" (Psalms 66:15). The woman, when

she had found the lost groat, calleth her neighbours to rejoice with her. He that hath but a cold knowledge, will not be so full of good discourse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 27.** --



1. A student's prayer.
2. It deals with the main subject of the conversation which is to be that student's occupation -- "the way of God's precepts."
3. A confession is implied: "Make me," etc.
4. A great boon is asked -- to understand, to know, thy statutes.
5. The Fountain of all wisdom is applied to.
6. The occupation of the instructed man.
7. He testifies of God's works -- his wondrous works -- Christ's work for us; the Holy Spirit's work in us. The wonderful character of these works of God, a wide field for devout study.
8. He speaks very plainly: "I will talk," etc.
9. He will speak very frequently: "I will talk."
10. He will speak to the point: "So" -- i.e., according to understanding.
11. The intimate relation between the prayer of the student and the pursuit that he subsequently followed. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1344: "The Student's Prayer."

**Verse 27.** -- Education for the ministry.

1. The student at college: "Make me to understand." His lesson. His instructor. His application.
2. The preacher at his work: "So shall I talk," etc. His qualification. His theme. His manner.  
--C.A.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 28.** My soul melteth for heaviness. He was dissolving away in tears. The solid strength of his constitution was turning to liquid as if molten by the furnace heat of his afflictions. Heaviness of heart is a killing thing, and when it abounds it threatens to turn life into a long death, in which a man seems to drop away in a perpetual drip of grief. Tears are the distillation of the heart; when a man weeps he wastes away his soul. Some of us know what great heaviness means, for we have been brought under its power again and again, and often have we felt ourselves to be poured out like water, and near to being like water spilt upon the ground, never again to be gathered up. There is one good point in this downcast state, for it is better to be melted with grief than to be hardened by impenitence.

Strengthen thou me according unto thy word. He had found out an ancient promise that the saints shall be strengthened, and here he pleads it. His hope in his state of depression lies not in himself, but in his God; if he may be strengthened from on high he will yet shake off his heaviness and rise to joy again. Observe how he pleads the promise of the word, and asks for nothing more than to be dealt with after the recorded manner of the Lord of mercy. Had not Hannah sung, "He shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his anointed"? God strengthens us by infusing grace through his word: the word which creates can certainly sustain. Grace can enable us to bear the

constant fret of an abiding sorrow, it can repair the decay caused by the perpetual tear drip, and give to the believer the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Let us always resort to prayer in our desponding times, for it is the surest and shortest way out of the depths. In that prayer let us plead nothing but the word of God; for there is no plea like a promise, no argument like a word from our covenant God.

Note how David records his inner soul life. In [Psalms 119:20](#) he says, "My soul breaketh;" in [Psalms 119:25](#), "My soul cleaveth to the dust;" and here, "My soul melteth." Further on, in [Psalms 119:81](#), he cries, "My soul fainteth;" in [Psalms 119:109](#), "My soul is continually in my hand;" in [Psalms 119:167](#), "My soul hath kept thy testimonies;" and lastly, in [Psalms 119:175](#), "Let my soul live." Some people do not even know that they have a soul, and here is David all soul. What a difference there is between the spiritually living and the spiritually dead.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 28.** *My soul melteth for heaviness.* In the original the word signifies, "droppeth away." The Septuagint hath it thus: "My soul fell asleep through weariness." Probably by a fault of the transcribers, putting one word for another. My soul droppeth. It may relate

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

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

**Verse 28.** *Heaviness.* There is nothing may comfort a natural man but David had it; yet cannot all these keep him from that heaviness whereunto, as witnesseth S. Peter, the children of God are subject in this life, through their manifold temptations. The men of the world are so far from this disposition, that if they have health and wealth, they marvel what it is should make a man heavy: they

are not acquainted with the exercise of a feeling conscience; they know not the defects of the spiritual life, and are not grieved at them: being dead in sin they feel not that they want life; all their care is to eat and drink and make merry. But miserable are they; for in their best estate they are as oxen fed for the slaughter. Woe be to them who laugh now, they shall mourn; but blessed are they who mourn now, for they shall be comforted. William Cowper.

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 28.** -- Heaviness, its cause, curse, and cure.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 29.** Remove from me the way of lying. This is the way of sin, error, idolatry, folly, self righteousness, formalism, hypocrisy. David would not only be kept from that way, but have it kept from him; he cannot endure to have it near him, he would have it swept away from his sight. He desired to be right and upright, true and in the truth; but he feared that a measure of falsehood would cling to him unless the Lord took it away, and therefore he earnestly cried for its removal. False motives may at times sway us, and we may fall into mistaken notions of our own spiritual condition before God, which erroneous conceits may be kept up by a natural prejudice in our own layout, and so we may be confirmed in a delusion, and abide under error unless grace comes to the rescue. No true heart can rest in a false view of itself; it finds no anchorage, but is tossed to and fro till it gets into the truth and the truth into it. The true born child of heaven sighs out and cries against a lie, desiring to have it taken away as much as a man desires to be set at a distance from a venomous serpent or a raging lion.

And grant me thy law graciously. He is in a gracious state who looks upon the law itself as a gift of grace. David wishes to have the law opened up to his understanding, engraved upon his heart, and carried out in his life; for this he seeks the Lord, and pleads for it as a gracious grant. No doubt he viewed this as the only mode of deliverance from the power of falsehood: if the law be not in our hearts the lie will enter. David would seem to have remembered those times when, according to the

eastern fashion, he had practised deceit for his own preservation, and he saw that he had been weak and erring on that point; therefore he was bowed down in spirit and begged to be quickened and delivered from transgressing in that manner any more. Holy men cannot review their sins without tears, nor weep over them without entreating to be saved from further offending.

There is an evident opposition between falsehood and the gracious power of God's law. The only way to expel the lie is to accept the truth. Grace also has a clear affinity to truth: no sooner do we meet with the sound of the word "graciously" than we hear the footfall of truth: "I have chosen the way of truth." Grace and truth are ever linked together, and a belief of the doctrines of grace is a grand preservative from deadly error.

In the fifth of the preceding octave (Psalms 119:21) David cries out against pride, and here against lying -- these are much the same thing. Is not pride the greatest of all lies?

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

and here prayeth against it. John Trapp.

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

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

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

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

1. Because they are invented by Satan, the father of lies.
2. They are countenanced by man's wit, the storehouse of lies.
3. They seem to be that, which they are not, which is of the nature of lies.
4. They are contrary to God and his truth, the discoverers of lies. Richard Greenham.

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

**Verse 29.** *Grant me thy law graciously.* David had ever the book of the law; for every king of Israel was to have it always by him, and the Rabbis say, written with his own hand. But, "Grant me thy law graciously;" that is, he desires he might have it not only written by him, but upon him, to have it

imprinted upon his heart, that he might have a heart to observe and keep it. That is the blessing he begs for, "the law"; and this is begged "graciously," or upon terms of grace, merely according to thine own favour, and good pleasure. Here is, --

1. The sin deprecated, "Remove from me the way of lying."
2. The good supplicated and asked, "Grant me thy law graciously."

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 29.** -- The way of lying.

1. Describe the way of lying. Various paths, e.g., erroneous views of doctrine: false grounds of faith: looseness of practice: shrinking from the daily cross.
2. Show why it is thus named. It does not furnish its promised pleasures. It does not lead to its professed goal. It lies through the territory of the father of lies.
3. Notice the peculiarity in the prayer against it. Not remove me from, but remove from me: for the way of lying is within us.
4. Our deliverance from the way of lying lies with God. -- C.A.D.

**Verse 29-30.** --

1. The way of lying, our wish to have it removed, and the method of answer.
2. The way of truth, our choice, and the method of carrying it out.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 30.** I have chosen the way of truth. As he abhorred the way of lying, so he chose the way of truth: a man must choose one or the other, for there cannot be any neutrality in the case. Men do not drop into the right way by chance; they must choose it, and continue to choose it, or they will soon wander from it. Those whom God has chosen in due time choose his way. There is a doctrinal way of truth which we ought to choose, rejecting every dogma of man's devising; there is a ceremonial way of truth which we should follow, detesting all the forms which apostate churches have invented; and then there is a practical way of truth, the way of holiness, to which we must adhere whatever may be our temptation to forsake it. Let our election be made, and made irrevocably. Let us answer to all seducers, "I have chosen, and what I have chosen I have chosen." O Lord, by thy grace lead us with a hearty free will to choose to do thy will; thus shall thine eternal choice of us bring forth the end which it designs.

Thy judgments have I laid before me What he had chosen he kept in mind, laying it out before his mind's eye. Men do not become holy by a careless wish: there must be study, consideration, deliberation, and earnest enquiry, or the way of truth will be missed. The commands of God must be

set before us as the mark to aim at, the model to work by, the road to walk in. If we put God's judgments into the background we shall soon find ourselves departing from them.

Here again the sixth stanzas of the third and fourth octaves ring out a similar note. "I have kept thy testimonies" (Psalms 119:22), and "Thy judgments have I laid before me." This is a happy confession, and there is no wonder that it is repeated.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 31.** I have stuck unto thy testimonies, -- or I have cleaved, for the word is the same as in Psalms 119:25. Though cleaving to the dust of sorrow and of death, yet he kept fast hold of the divine word. This was his comfort, and his faith stuck to it, his love and his obedience held on to it, his heart and his mind abode in meditation upon it. His choice was so heartily and deliberately made that he



stuck to it for life, and could not be removed from it by the reproaches of those who despised the way of the Lord. What could he have gained by quitting the sacred testimony? Say rather, what would he not have lost if he had ceased to cleave to the divine word? It is pleasant to look back upon past perseverance and to expect grace to continue equally steadfast in the future. He who has enabled us to stick to him will surely stick to us.

O LORD, put me not to shame. This would happen if God's promises were unfulfilled, and if the heart of God's servant were suffered to fail. This we have no reason to fear, since the Lord is faithful to his word. But it might also happen though the believer's acting in an inconsistent manner, as David had himself once done, when he fell into the way of lying, and pretended to be a madman. If we are not true to our profession we may be left to reap the fruit of our folly, and that will be the bitter thing called "shame." It is evident from this that a believer ought never to be ashamed, but act the part of a grave man who has done nothing to be ashamed of in believing his God, and does not mean to adopt a craven tone in the presence of the Lord's enemies. If we beseech the Lord not to put us to shame, surely we ought not ourselves to be ashamed without cause.

The prayer of this verse is found in the parallel verse of the next section (Psalms 119:39): "Turn away my reproach which I fear." It is evidently a petition which was often on the Psalmist's heart. A brave heart is more wounded by shame than by any weapon which a soldier's hand can wield.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

**Verse 31.** *Put me not to shame.* Forasmuch as David, in a good conscience, endeavoured to serve

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 31.** -- Reasons for sticking to the Divine testimonies.

**Verse 31.** -- A wholesome mixture.

1. Sturdy fidelity.
2. Self distrust,
3. Importunate prayer. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 32.** I will run the way of thy commandments. With energy, promptitude, and zeal he would perform the will of God, but he needed more life and liberty from the hand of God.

When thou shalt enlarge my heart. Yes, the heart is the master; the feet soon run when the heart is free and energetic. Let the affections be aroused and eagerly set on divine things, and our actions will be full of force, swiftness, and delight. God must work in us first, and then we shall will and do according to his good pleasure. He must change the heart, unite the heart, encourage the heart, strengthen the heart, and enlarge the heart, and then the course of the life will be gracious, sincere, happy, and earnest; so that from our lowest up to our highest state in grace we must attribute all to the free favour of our God. We must run; for grace is not an overwhelming force which compels unwilling minds to move contrary to their will: our running is the spontaneous leaping forward of a mind which has been set free by the hand of God, and delights to show its freedom by its bounding speed.

What a change from Psalms 119:25 to the present, from cleaving to the dust to running in the way. It is the excellence of holy sorrow that it works in us the quickening for which we seek, and then we show the sincerity of our grief and the reality of our revival by being zealous in the ways of the Lord. For the third time an octave closes with, "I will." These "I wills" of the Psalms are right worthy of being each one the subject of study and discourse.

Note how the heart has been spoken of up to this point: "whole heart" (2), "uprightness of heart" (7), "hid in mine heart" (11), "enlarge my heart." There are many more allusions further on, and these all

go to show what heart work David's religion was. It is one of the great lacks of our age that heads count for more than hearts, and men are far more ready to learn than to love, though they are by no means eager in either direction.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Henry Melvill, 1798-1871.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 32.** *I will run the way.* His intended course in this way he expresses by running. It is good to be in this way even in the slowest motions; love will creep where it cannot walk. But if thou art so indeed, then thou wilt long for a swifter motion; if thou do but creep, creep on, desire to be enabled to go. If thou goest, but yet haltingly and lamely, yet desire to be strengthened to walk straight; and if thou walkest, let not that satisfy thee, desire to run. So here, David did walk in this way; but he earnestly

wishes to mend his pace; he would willingly run, and for that end he desires an enlarged heart. Some dispute and descant too much whether they go or no, and childishly tell their steps, and would know at every step whether they advance or no, and how much they advance, and thus amuse themselves, and spend the time of doing and going in questioning and doubting. Thus it is with many Christians; but it were a more wise and comfortable way to be endeavouring onwards, and if thou make little progress, at least to be desiring to make more; to be praying and walking, and praying that thou mayest walk faster, and that in the end thou mayest run, not satisfied with anything attained. Yet by that dissatisfaction we must not be so dejected as to sit down, or to stand still, but rather we must be excited to go on. Robert Leighton.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 32.** *Enlarged.* Surely a temple for the great God (such as our hearts should be) should be fair and ample. If we would have God dwell in our hearts, and shed abroad his influences, we should

make room for God in our souls, by a greater largeness of faith and expectation. The rich man thought of enlarging his barns, when his store was increased upon him ([Luke 12:16-21](#)), so should we stretch out the curtains of Christ's tent and habitation, have larger expectations of God, if we would receive more from him. The vessels failed before the oil failed. We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves; by the scantiness of our thoughts, we do not make room for him, nor greatness God: "My soul doth magnify the Lord" ([Luke 1:46](#)). Faith doth greatness God. How can we make God greater than he is? As to the declarative being, we can have greater and larger apprehensions of his greatness, goodness, and truth.

1. There needs a large heart, because the command is exceedingly broad: "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad" ([Psalms 119:96](#)). A broad law and a narrow heart will never suit: we need love, faith, knowledge, and all to carry us through this work, which is of such a vast extent and latitude.
2. We need enlarged heart, because of the lets and hindrances within ourselves. There is lust drawing off from God to sensual objects: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" ([James 1:14](#)). Therefore there needs something to draw us on, to carry us out with strength and life another way, to urge us in the service of God. Lust sits as a clog upon us, it is a weight of corruption ([Heb 12:1](#)), retarding us in all our flights and motions, thwarting, opposing, breaking the force of spiritual impulsions, if not hindering them altogether ([Galatians 5:17](#)). Well then, lust drawing so strongly one way, God needs to draw us more strongly the other way. When there is a weight to poise us to worldly and sensual objects, we need a strength to carry us on with vigorous and lively motions of soul towards God, an earnest bent upon our souls, which is this enlargement of heart. Thomas Manton.

**Verse 32 My heart.** *The great Physician knows at once where to look for the cause, when he sees anything amiss in the outward life of his people. He well knows that all spiritual disease is heart disease, and it is the heart remedies that he must apply. At one time, our Physician sees symptoms which are violent in their nature; at another, he sees symptoms of languor and debility; but he knows that both come from the heart; and so, it is upon the heart that he operates, when he is about to perform a cure.*

The strong action of the heart in all holy things comes from the blessed operation of the Spirit upon it; then only can we "run" the way of God's commandments, when he has enlarged our heart.

Heartiness in action is the subject to which the reader's attention is here directed, and it is one of considerable importance.

There are many believers, who for want of enlargement of heart are occupying a poor position in the church of God. They are trusting to Jesus for life eternal, and he will doubtless not disappoint them; he will be true to his word, that "he that believeth shall be saved;" but they are still, alas! to a

deplorable degree, shut up in self; they have contracted hearts; still do they take narrow views of God's claim, and their own privileges, and the position in which they are set in the world and however much they might be said to stand, or sit, or walk in the way of God's commandments, they cannot be said to "run" in it. Running is a strong and healthy action of the body; it requires energy, it is an exercise that needs a sound heart; none can run in the way of God's commandments, except in strength and vigour imparted by him. The running Christians are comparatively few; walking and sitting Christians are comparatively common; but the running Christian is so uncommon as often to be thought almost mad.

Let us, for the sake of order, classify our observations on this subject under the following heads:

1. What heartiness is. The heartiness spoken of here under the term, "enlargement of the heart," is cheerfulness in doing God's will -- love for that will -- a drawing out of the affections towards it -- an interest in it; all this it is, and a great deal more, which it is not easy to describe or define.
2. What heartiness does. Where there is enlargement of the heart by God, there is an outgoing beyond all the limits which fallen selfishness assigns. The heart contracted at the fall; it shrank when sin entered into it; it became unequal to containing great and generous thoughts; it became a bonded heart. True! the responsibilities of duty could not be escaped, nor could the directions of conscience; but the affections are voluntary, and the fallen heart drew in its affections from God; it felt that it had the power of withholding them from him and his commandments, and it rejoiced to shew its enmity in withholding its sympathy, where it could not withhold its obedience...
3. Whence heartiness comes. Now, as we have already said, where the heart is operated on by the Spirit, and all its natural evil overruled, it has outgoings which are entirely beyond the limits that fallen selfishness assigns. Love is inwrought with it: the union of sentiment, the identity of interest which love inspires, pervade it, in all belonging to God, for it has received these from God; the heart becomes unbonded from mere rules, or perhaps to speak more correctly, it rises above them, and it feels -- not merely it knows, but it feels -- so much of the beauty of God's commandments, that it delights to "run" in them; it loves to be hearty in them; its interests, its affections are in them. Philip Bennet Power, in "The I Wills' of the Psalms," 1862.

**Verse 32.** *Disquiets of heart unfit us for duty*, by hindering our activity in the prosecution of duty. The whole heart, soul, and strength should be engaged in all religious services; but these troubles are as clogs and weights to hinder motion. Joy is the dilatation of the soul, and widens it for anything which it undertakes; but grief contracts the heart, and narrows all the faculties. Hence doth David beg an "enlarged heart," as the principle of activity: I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart; for what else can be expected when the mind is so distracted with fear and sorrow,

but that it should be uneven, tottering, weak, and confused? so that if it do set itself to anything, it acts troublesomely, drives on heavily, and doth a very little with a great deal ado; and yet, the unfitness were less, if that little which it can do were well done; but the mind is so interrupted in its endeavours that sometimes in prayer the man begins, and then is presently at a stand, and dares not proceed, his words are swallowed up, "he is so troubled that he cannot speak" Psalms 77:4. Richard Gilpin, (1625-1699), in "Daemonologia Sacra."

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 32.** -- The Fettered Racer set free.

1. The course that invited him.
2. The shackles that bound him.
3. The impatience that prompted him.
4. The Lord that freed him.
5. Now let him go. --C.A.D.

**Verse 32.**

1. Liberty desired.
2. Liberty rightly used. Or, the effect of the heart upon the feet.

**Verse 32.** -- The text will give us occasion to speak,

1. Of the benefit of an enlarged heart. The necessary precedence of this work on God's part, before there can be any serious bent or motion of heart towards God on our part.
2. The subsequent resolution of the saints to engage their hearts to live to God.
3. With what earnestness, alacrity and rigour of spirit this work is to be carried on: "I will run." --T. Manton.

**Verse 32.** --

1. The way of obedience: "Thy commandments."
2. The duty of obedience: "I will run" -- not stand still -- not loiter -- not creep -- not walk, but run.
3. The life of obedience.

(a) Where it lies -- in the heart.

(b) Whence it comes: "When thou shalt," etc.

(c) What it does -- enlarges the heart. --G.R.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 33-40.** A sense of dependence and a consciousness of extreme need pervade this section, which is all made up of prayer and plea. The former eight verses trembled with a sense of sin, quivering with a childlike sense of weakness and folly, which caused the man of God to cry out for the help by which alone his soul could be preserved from falling back into sin.



**Verse 33.** Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes. Child like, blessed words, from the lips of an old, experienced believer, and he a king, and a man inspired of God. Alas, for those who will never be taught. They dote upon their own wisdom; but their folly is apparent to all who rightly judge. The Psalmist will have the Lord for his teacher; for he feels that his heart will not learn of any less effectual instructor. A sense of great slowness to learn drives us to seek a great teacher. What condescension it is on our great Jehovah's part that he deigns to teach those who seek him. The lesson which is desired is thoroughly practical; the holy man would not only learn the statutes, but the way of them, the daily use of them, their tenor, spirit, direction, habit, tendency. He would know that path of holiness which is hedged in by divine law, along which the commands of the Lord stand as sign posts of direction and mile stones of information, guiding and marking our progress. The very desire to learn this way is in itself an assurance that we shall be taught therein, for he who made us long to learn will be sure to gratify the desire.

And I shall keep it unto the end. Those who are taught of God never forget their lessons. When divine grace sets a man in the true way he will be true to it. Mere human wit and will have no such enduring influence: there is an end to all perfection of the flesh, but there is no end to heavenly grace except its own end, which is the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord. Perseverance to the end is most certainly to be predicted of those whose beginning is in God, and with God, and by God; but those who commence without the Lord's teaching soon forget what they learn, and start aside from the way upon which they professed to have entered. No one may boast that he will bold on his way in his own strength, for that must depend upon the continual teaching of the Lord: we shall fall like Peter, if we presume on our own firmness as he did. If God keeps us we shall keep his way; and it is a great comfort to know that it is the way with God to keep the feet of his saints. Yet we are to watch as if our keeping of the way depended wholly on ourselves; for, according to this verse, our perseverance rests not on any force or compulsion, but on the teaching of the Lord, and assuredly teaching, whoever be the teacher, requires learning on the part of the taught one: no one can teach a man who refuses to learn. Earnestly, then, let us drink in divine instruction, that so we may hold fast our integrity, and to life's latest hour follow on in the path of uprightness! If we receive the living and incorruptible seed of the word of God we must live: apart from this we have no life eternal, but only a name to live.

The "end" of which David speaks is the end of life, or the fulness of obedience. He trusted in grace to make him faithful to the utmost, never drawing a line and saying to obedience, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further." The end of our keeping the law will come only when we cease to breathe; no good man will think of marking a date and saying, "It is enough, I may now relax my watch, and live after the manner of men." As Christ loves us to the end, so must we serve him to the end. The end of divine teaching is that we may persevere to the end.

The portions of eight show a relationship still. GIMEL, begins with prayer for life, that he may keep the word (Psalms 119:17); DALETH cries for more life, according to that word (Psalms 119:25); and now HE opens with a prayer for teaching, that he may keep the way of God's statutes. If a keen eye is turned upon these verses a closer affinity will be discerned.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

SECTION h HE.

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

Key phrase: *dtrma drk[| ~qh*. Set up before thy servant thy word (Psalms 119:38).

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

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

**Verse 33-40.** *In this part*, nine times does the Psalmist send up his petition to his God, and six of

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

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

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

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

1. The way of God's statutes is worthy to be found by all.
2. It is hard to be found and kept by any.
3. It is so dangerous to miss it, that this should quicken us to be earnest with God. Thomas Manton.

**Verse 33.** *Teach me, O LORD, etc.* "He who is his own pupil," remarks S. Bernard, "has a fool for his master." A soldier who enters on a march does not settle for himself the order of his going, nor begin the journey at his own will, nor yet choose pleasant short cuts, lest he should fall out of rank, away

from the standards, but gets the route from his general, and keeps to it; advances in a prescribed order, walks armed, and goes straight on to the end of his march to find there the supplies provided by the commissariat. If he goes by any other road, he gets no rations, and finds no quarters ready, because the general's orders are that all things of this kind shall be prepared for those who follow him, and turn not aside to the right hand or the left. And thus he who follows his general does not break down, and that for good reasons; for the general consults not for his own convenience, but for the capability of his whole army. And this, too, is Christ's order of march, as he leads his great host out of the spiritual Egypt to the eternal Land of Paradise. Ambrose, quoted by Neale and Littledale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 33-40.** -- Faithfulness secured by divine in working. Prayer for divine teaching, understanding, constraint, and control of heart and eyes, to ensure persevering and wholehearted faithfulness (Psalms 119:33-37). The Psalmist, thus established in the word, prays for the establishment of the word to himself (Psalms 119:38); deprecates the reproach of unfaithfulness (Psalms 119:39); and enforces the whole prayer by the vehemence of the desire which prompts it (Psalms 119:40).

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 33.** -- In this prayer for grace observe,

1. The person to whom he prays: "O Lord."
2. The person for whom: "teach me."
3. The grace for which he prayeth: to be taught.
4. The object of this teaching: "The way of thy statutes." The teaching which he begs, is not speculative, but practical, to learn how to walk in the way of God. --T. Manton.

**Verse 33.** -- The superior efficacy of divine teaching: it secures holy practice and insures its perpetuity.

**Verse 33-34.** -- Light from above.

1. The blinding power of sin. "Teach me", i.e., "point out to me." "Give me understanding." Whatever may have been the original amount of light which came item eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that light has long been insufficient.
    - a. Men need light to discern the right way from the wrong.
- (b) Men need light to understand the beauties of the right way. Such beauties line the way of truth on either hand, but only the God taught mind appreciates them. Even Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, is as a root out of a dry ground, till the mind is taught of the Lord. Sin is the cause of this blindness. The farther any man walks in the way of sin, the less can he see of the beauties of holiness.

1. The enlightening grace of the Lord. "Teach me." "Give me understanding." This grace,
  - a. May be boldly asked: "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God."

(b) Will be freely given. "Who giveth to all men

liberally." "Ask, and it shall be given."

(c) Will be amply sufficient. "I shall keep it unto the end." "I shall keep Thy law." To see is to follow.

1. The stimulating power of clearly revealed truth. "I shall observe it with my whole heart." To see is not only to follow, but to follow with love and gladness. It is written of the light which will come before the throne, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." "O thou, that dwellest between the Cherubim, shine forth," even here, on the way that leads to thy presence. --F.G.M.

**Verse 33-35.** -- Alpha and Omega.

1. God, the giver of spiritual instruction: Psalms 119:33.
2. Of spiritual understanding, without which this instruction is in vain: Psalms 119:34.
3. Of grace for practical obedience when thus instructed: Psalms 119:35.
4. For wholehearted obedience: Psalms 119:84.
5. For final perseverance: Psalms 119:33. --C.A.D.

**Verse 33-36.** -- Human Dependence on Divine help.

1. There can be no steady keeping in the way of the Lord without the Lord's guidance: Psalms 119:83.
2. There can be no observing of the way with the heart without Divine light for the mind: Psalms 119:34.
3. There can be no diligent pursuit of the way till divine energy be given to the will: Ps 119:35.
4. There can be no true love of the way unless the heart be constrained by the love of God: Psalms 119:36. He who said, "Without me ye can do nothing," is necessary for us to see the way, to understand the way, to walk in the way, and to love the way. --F. G. M.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 34.** Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. This is the same prayer enlarged, or rather it is a supplement which intensifies it. He not only needs teaching, but the power to learn: he requires not only to understand, but to obtain an understanding. How low has sin brought us; for we even lack the faculty to understand spiritual things, and are quite unable to know them till we are endowed with spiritual discernment. Will God in very deed give us understanding? This is a miracle of grace. It will, however, never be wrought upon us till we know our need of it; and we shall not even discover that need till God gives us a measure of understanding to perceive it. We are in a state of complicated ruin, from which nothing but manifold grace can deliver us. Those who feel their folly are by the example of the Psalmist encouraged to pray for understanding: let each man by faith cry, "Give me understanding." Others have had it, why may it not come to me? It was a gift to them; will

not the Lord also freely bestow it upon me?

We are not to seek this blessing that we may be famous for wisdom, but that we may be abundant in our love to the law of God. He who has understanding will learn, remember, treasure up, and obey the commandment of the Lord. The gospel gives us grace to keep the law; the free gift leads us to holy service; there is no way of reaching to holiness but by accepting the gift of God. If God gives, we keep; but we never keep the law in order to obtaining grace. The sure result of regeneration, or the bestowal of understanding, is a devout reverence for the law and a resolute keeping of it in the heart. The Spirit of God makes us to know the Lord and to understand somewhat of his love, wisdom, holiness, and majesty; and the result is that we honour the law and yield our hearts to the obedience of the faith.

Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. The understanding operates upon the affections; it convinces the heart of the beauty of the law, so that the soul loves it with all its powers; and then it reveals the majesty of the lawgiver, and the whole nature bows before his supreme will. An enlightened judgment heals the divisions of the heart, and bends the united affections to a strict and watchful observance of the one rule of life. He alone obeys God who can say, "My Lord, I would serve thee, and do it with all my heart"; and none can truly say this till they have received as a free grant the inward illumination of the Holy Ghost. To observe God's law with all our heart at all times is a great grace, and few there be that find it; yet it is to be had if we will consent to be taught of the Lord.

Observe the parallel of [Psalms 119:2](#) and [Psalms 119:10](#) where the whole heart is spoken of in reference to seeking, and in [Psalms 119:58](#) in pleading for mercy; these are all second verses in their octonaries. The frequent repetition of the phrase shows the importance of undivided love: the heart is never whole or holy till it is whole or united. The heart is never one with God till it is one within itself.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 34.** *Give me understanding.* The Psalmist goes to the root of the matter; he is taught to do so by the Spirit of all teaching. He would not merely be taught, as a master would teach, but he would have his mind remoulded and informed as only the Creator could do. The words imply as much. "Give me understanding" -- make me to understand. Not merely did he want to know a thing -- the

general nature of it; but he wished to understand the beginning, the outgoing and the end of it. He wanted to attain the power of distinction between right and wrong -- spiritual discernment that so he might discern the right, and, at the same time, all that was contrary to it; he wanted understanding, that so he might know, and discern, and prize the truth, the true way of God, carefully avoiding all that would be aside from it. John Stephen.

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

**Verse 34.** *Understanding.* The understanding is the pilot and guide of the whole man; that faculty which sits at the stern of the soul: but as the most expert guide may mistake in the dark, so may the understanding, when it wants the light of knowledge. "Without knowledge the mind cannot be good" (Proverbs 19:2); nor the life good; nor the external condition safe (Ephesians 4:18). "My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

It is ordinary in Scripture to set profaneness, and all kinds of miscarriages, upon the score of ignorance. Diseases in the body have many times their rise from distempers in the head; and exorbitance in practice, from errors in the judgment. And, indeed, in every sin, there is something both of ignorance and error at the bottom: for did sinners truly know what they do in sinning, we might say of every sin what the Apostle speaks concerning that great sin, "Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). Did they truly know that every sin is a provoking the Lord to jealousy, a proclaiming war against heaven, a crucifying the Lord Jesus afresh, a treasuring up wrath afresh unto themselves against the day of wrath; and that if ever they be pardoned, it must be at no lower a rate than the price of his blood -- it were scarce possible but sin, instead of alluring, should affright, and instead of tempting, scare. From the "Recommendatory Epistle prefixed to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms."

**Verse 34.** *My whole heart.* The whole man is God's by every kind of right and title; and therefore, when he requireth the whole heart, he doth but require that which is his own. God gave us the whole by creation, preserveth the whole, redeemeth the whole, and promises to glorify the whole. If we had been mangled in creation we would have been troubled; if born without hands or feet. If God should turn us off to ourselves to keep that part to ourselves which we reserved from him, or if he should make such a division at death, take a part to heaven, or if Christ had bought part: "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). If you have had any good work upon you, God sanctified the whole in a gospel sense, that is every part: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Not only conscience, but will and affections, appetite and body. And you have given all to him for his use: "I am my beloved's"! not a part, but the whole. He could not endure Ananias that kept back part of the



price; all is his due. When the world, pleasure, ambition, pride, desire of riches, unchaste love, desire a part in us, we may remember we have no affections to dispose of without God's leave. It is all his, and it is sacrilege to rob or detain any part from God. Shall I alienate that which is God's to satisfy the world, the flesh, and the Devil? Thomas Manton.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 34.** -- The influence of the understanding upon the heart, and the united power of understanding and heart over the life.

**Verse 34.** -- Seeing and loving.

1. When men see they love (the whole verse).
2. When men love they see. Only the loving heart would have seen enough to write such a verse.

--F. G. M.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 35.** Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which good I find not." Thou hast made me to love the way, now make me to move in it. It is a plain path, which others are treading through thy grace; I see it and admire it; cause me to travel in it. This is the cry of a child that longs to walk, but is too feeble; of a pilgrim who is exhausted, yet pants to be on the march; of a lame man who pines to be able to run. It is a blessed thing to delight in holiness, and surely he who gave us this delight will work in us the yet higher joy of possessing and practising it. Here is our only hope; for we shall not go in the narrow path till we are made to do so by the Maker's own power. O thou who didst once make me, I pray thee make me again: thou hast made me to know; now make me to go. Certainly I shall never be happy till I do, for my sole delight lies in walking according to thy bidding.

The Psalmist does not ask the Lord to do for him what he ought to do for himself: he wishes himself to "go" or tread in the path of the command. He asks not to be carried while he lies passive; but to be made "to go." Grace does not treat us as stocks and stones, to be dragged by horses or engines, but as creatures endowed with life, reason, will, and active powers, who are willing and able to go of themselves if once made to do so. God worketh in us, but it is that we may both will and do according

to his good pleasure. The holiness we seek after is not a forced compliance with command, but the indulgence of a whole hearted passion for goodness, such as shall conform our life to the will of the Lord. Can the reader say, "therein do I delight"? Is practical godliness the very jewel of your soul, the coveted prize of your mind? If so, the outward path of life, however rough, will be clean, and lead the soul upward to delight ineffable. He who delights in the law should not doubt but what he will be enabled to run in its ways, for where the heart already finds its joy the feet are sure to follow.

Note that the corresponding verse in the former eight (Psalms 119:35) was "Make me to understand," and here we have "Make me to go." Remark the: order, first understanding and then going; for a clear understanding is a great assistance towards practical action.

During the last few octaves the fourth has been the heart verse: see Ps 119:20,28, and now Psalms 119:36. Indeed in all the preceding fourths great heartiness is observable. This also marks the care with which this sacred song was composed.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

**Verse 35.** *The path of thy commandments.* They are termed "the paths," because paths are narrow, short, straight, clean passages for people on foot only, and not for horses and carriages; and such is the way of the Lord, as compared with that of the flesh and of the world, all the ways of which are broad, filthy, and crooked, trodden by the brute beasts, the type of carnal, animal man. He assigns a reason for being heard when he says, For this same I have desired; because, through God's grace, I

have chosen this path, and desired to walk in it, and it is only meet that he who gives the will should give the grace to accomplish, as St. Paul says, "Who worketh in you both to will and to do." Robert Bellarmine.

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

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

**Verse 35, 37.** *The path.* Thy way: The Hindus call panth or way the line of doctrine of any sect followed, in order to attain to mukti, or deliverance from sin. Way signifies the chief means to an end, and is applied to the Scriptures, Psalms 119:27, to God's counsels, to God's works. This spiritual way is --

1. easy to find, Isaiah 35:8,
2. clean, no mud of sin;
3. never out of repair. Christ the same now as 6,000 years ago;
4. no lion or wild beasts on;
5. costly, the blood of Christ made it;
6. not lonely, many believers on it, Hebrews 12:1;
7. no toll, all may come;
8. wide. The way to the cities of refuge was forty-eight feet wide. The map of the Bible shows this path;
9. the end pleasant -- Heaven. J. Long, in "Eastern Proverbs and Maxims illustrating old Truths," 1881.

**Verse 35-36.** *Therein do I delight.* Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. A child of God hath not the bent of his heart so perfectly fixed towards God but it is ever and anon returning to its old bent and bias again. The best may find that they cannot keep their affections as loose from the world when they have houses, and lands, and all things at their will, as they could when they are kept low and bare. The best may find that their love to heavenly things is on the wane as worldly things are on the increase. It is reported of Pius Quintus that he should say of himself that, when he first entered into orders, he had some hopes of his salvation; when he came to be a cardinal, he doubted of it; but since he came to be pope, he did even almost despair. Many may find a very great change in themselves, much decay of zeal for God's glory, and love to and relish of God's word, and mindfulness of heavenly things, as it fares better with them in the world. Now it is good to observe

this before the mischief increaseth. Look, as jealousy and caution are necessary to prevent the entrance and ginning of this mischief, so observation is necessary to prevent the increase of it. When the world doth get too deep an interest in our hearts, when it begins to insinuate and entice us from God, and weaken our delight in the ways of God and zeal for his glory, then we need often to tell you how it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Thomas Manton.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 35.** -- The prayer of a child, and the delight of a child. Or, Our pleasure in holiness a plea for grace.

**Verse 35.** --

1. Delight avowed.
2. Disinclination implied.
3. Constraint implored. --W. W.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 36.** Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. Does not this prayer appear to be superfluous, since it is evident that the Psalmist's heart was set upon obedience? We are sure that there is never a word to spare in Scripture. After asking for active virtue it was meet that the man of God should beg that his heart might be in all that he did. What would his goings be if his heart did not go? It may be that David felt a wandering desire, an inordinate leaning of his soul to worldly gain, -- possibly it even intruded into his most devout meditations, and at once he cried out for more grace. The only way to cure a wrong leaning is to have the soul bent in the opposite direction. Holiness of heart is the cure for covetousness. What a blessing it is that we may ask the Lord even for an inclination. Our wills are free, and yet without violating their liberty, grace can incline us in the right direction. This can be done by enlightening the understanding as to the excellence of obedience, by strengthening our habits of virtue, by giving us an experience of the sweetness of piety, and by many other ways. If any one duty is irksome to us it behooves us to offer this prayer with special reference thereto: we are to love all the Lord's testimonies, and if we fail in any one point we must pay double attention to it. The learning of the heart is the way in which the life will lean: hence the force of the petition, "Incline my heart." Happy shall we be when we feel habitually inclined to all that is good. This is not the way in which a carnal heart ever leans; all its inclinations are in opposition to the divine testimonies.

And not to covetousness. This is the inclination of nature, and grace must put a negative upon it. This vice is as injurious as it is common; it is as mean as it is miserable. It is idolatry, and so it dethrones God; it is selfishness, and so it is cruel to all in its power; it is sordid greed, and so it would sell the Lord himself for pieces of silver. It is a degrading, grovelling, hardening, deadening sin, which withers everything around it that is lovely and Christlike. He who is covetous is of the race of Judas, and will

in all probability turn out to be himself a son of perdition. The crime of covetousness is common, but very few will confess it; for when a man heaps up gold in his heart, the dust of it blows into his eyes, and he cannot see his own fault. Our hearts must have some object of desire, and the only way to keep out worldly gain is to put in its place the testimonies of the Lord. If we are inclined or bent one way, we shall be turned from the other: the negative virtue is most surely attained by making sure of the positive grace which inevitably produces it.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 36.** *THE WORD SET BEFORE THE HEART.* Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. It is nothing for the eyes to see, for the mind to understand, nor even for the feet to be made to go in the way of truth, if the heart be not inclined thereunto also. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. To be without love is, according to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, to be without everything.

Thus the sense of these four methodical petitions in this section is as follows: Make me to see, make me to understand, make me to go in, and make me to love to go in, the beaten and narrow path of thy testimonies. So far as I gather, Luther gives almost the exact sense of the foregoing exposition; for he translates the opening words of Psalms 119:33- 36 by terms signifying respectively, "Point out to me," "Explain to me," "Lead me," and "Incline (bend, slope) my heart," etc.

**Verse 36.** *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies*, and not to covetousness. We must be convinced that covetousness, I mean that our covetousness, is vice; for it holds something of a virtue, of frugality, which is not to that which one hath: and this makes us entertain thoughts that it is no vice; and we often say that it is good to be a little worldly; a little covetousness we like well; which shows that we do not indeed and in heart, hold it to be a sin. For if sin be naught, a little of sin cannot be good. As good say, a little poison were good, so it be not too much. And so we find, that men will rate at their children for spending, and are ready to turn them of doors, if they be given unto waste; but if they be near and pinching then we like that too much; and I scarce know a man who doth use to call upon his children that they spare not, save not. I know youth is rather addicted the other way, and is more subject to waste and consume, by that the natural heat is quick and active in them; and therefore there is more fear and danger that they prove prodigal and turn and therefore the more may be said and done that way to youth. But the thing I press is, that in case we see our children in their youth to begin to be covetous and worldly, we call them good husbands, and are but too to see it so, and are too much pleased with them for it. Little do think that worldliness is a most guilty sin in respect of God, and hurtful in respect of men. Hark what the word of God saith of it, Ephesians 5:5: It is idolatry, and idolatry is the first sin of the first table. It is the root of all evils, 1 Timothy 6:10. There is no evil but a worldly man do it to save his purse. Thus David: "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness": he saith not, this or that testimony, but (as including all the laws of God) he saith "testimonies"; to show us covetousness draws us away, not from some only, but from all God's

commandments. So St. Paul: where covetousness is, there are "many lusts," 1 Timothy 6:9, and "many sorrows," 1 Timothy 6:10. "It drowns men in perdition and destruction," 1 Timothy 6:9. And the Greek word signifies such a drowning as is almost past all hope and recovery. It is the bane all society: men cry out of it, because they would have none covetous, rich but themselves. A hater he is of mankind; he hates all poor, they would beg something of him; and all rich, because they have which he would have. A covetous man would have all that all have. Thus speaks a noble father (Chrysostom). Such believe not the word, they trust neither nor man. For he that trusts not God, cannot trust man. It robs God that confidence we should have in him, and dependence we owe unto him it turns a man from all the commandments. Hence the prophet prays God to turn his heart to his commandments, "and not to covetousness." For not only we ought not, but as the phrase is, "we cannot serve God mammon," Luke 16:13. Richard Capel, in "Tentations: their Danger, Cure." 1655.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Verse 36.** *Covetousness is an immoderate desire of riches,* in which these vices concur. First, An excessive love of riches, and the fixing of our hearts upon them. Secondly, A resolution to become rich, either by lawful or unlawful means, 1 Timothy 6:9. Thirdly, Too much haste in gathering riches, joined with impatience of any delay, Proverbs 28:20,22, 20:21.

Fourthly, An insatiable appetite, which can never be satisfied; but when they have too much, they still desire more, and have never enough, Ecclesiastes 4:8. Like the horseleech, Proverbs 30:15; the dropsy, and hell itself, Proverbs 27:20. Fifthly, Miser like tenacity, whereby they refuse to communicate their goods, either for the use of others, or themselves. Sixthly, Cruelty. Proverbs 1:18-19, exercised both in their unmercifulness and oppression of the poor. Covetousness is a most heinous vice; for it is idolatry, and the root of all evil, Colossians 3:5 1 Timothy 6:10; a pernicious thorn, that stifles all grace and chokes the seed of the word, Matthew 13:22, and pierceth men through with many sorrows, 1 Timothy 6:10, and drowns them in destruction and perdition. James Usher, 1580-1655.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 36.** -- Holiness a cure for covetousness.

**Verse 36,112.** -- The Cooperation of the Divine and the Human in Salvation.

1. It is God that worketh in you: Psalms 119:36.
2. Therefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: Psalms 119:112. -- C.A.D.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 37.** Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. He had prayed about his heart, and one would have thought that the eyes would so surely have been influenced by the heart that there was no need to make them the objects of a special petition; but our author is resolved to make assurance doubly sure. If the eyes do not see, perhaps the heart may not desire: at any rate, one door of temptation is closed when we do not even look at the painted bauble. Sin first entered man's mind by the eye, and it is still a favourite gate for the incoming of Satan's allurements: hence the need of a double watch upon that portal. The prayer is not so much that the eyes may be shut as "turned away"; for we need to have them open, but directed to right objects. Perhaps we are now gazing upon folly, we need to have our eyes turned away; and if we are beholding heavenly things we shall be wise to beg that our eyes may be kept away from vanity. Why should we look on vanity? -- it melts away as a vapour. Why not look upon things eternal? Sin is vanity, unjust gain is vanity, self conceit is vanity, and, indeed, all that is not of God comes under the same head. From all this we must turn away. It is a proof of the sense of weakness felt by the Psalmist and of his entire dependence upon God that he even asks to have his eyes turned for him; he meant not to make himself passive, but he intended to set forth his own utter helplessness apart from the grace of God. For fear he should forget himself and gaze with a lingering longing upon forbidden objects, he entreats the Lord speedily to make him turn away his eyes, hurrying him off from so dangerous a parley with iniquity. If we are kept from looking on vanity we shall be preserved from loving iniquity.

And quicken thou me in thy way. Give me so much life that dead vanity may have no power over me. Enable me to travel so swiftly in the road to heaven that I may not stop long enough within sight of vanity to be fascinated thereby. The prayer indicates our greatest need, -- more life in our obedience. It shows the preserving power of increased life to keep us from the evils which are around us, and it, also, tells us where that increased life must come from, namely, from the Lord alone. Vitality is the cure of vanity. When the heart is full of grace the eyes will be cleansed from impurity. On the other hand, if we would be full of life as to the things of God we must keep ourselves apart from sin and folly, or the eyes will soon captivate the mind, and, like Samson, who could slay his thousands, we may ourselves be overcome through the lusts which enter by the eye.

This verse is parallel to Psalms 119:21,29 in the previous eights: "rebuke," "remove," "turn away"; or "proud," "lying," "vanity."

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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



wanted to see, the Psalmist here prays for the hiding of what he would not see.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Verse 37.** *Turn away mine eyes*, etc. The fort royal of your souls is in danger of a surprise while the outworks of your senses are unguarded. Your eyes, which may be floodgates to pour out tears,

should not be casements to let in lusts. A careless eye is an index to a graceless heart. Remember, the whole world died by a wound in the eye. The eyes of a Christian should be like sunflowers, which are opened to no blaze but that of the sun. William Seeker, 1660.

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

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

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

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

1. Via mundi, the way of the world; and that is spinosa, thorny.
2. Via carnis, the way of the flesh; and that is insidiosa, treacherous.
3. Via Satana, the way of the devil; and that is tenebricosa, darksome.

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 37.** -- Quicken thou me in thy way. This brief prayer --

1. Deals with the believer's frequent need.
2. It directs us to the sole worker of quickening: "Thou."
3. It describes the sphere of renewed rigour: "in thy way."
4. It denotes that there may be special reasons and special seasons for this prayer -- times of temptation: Psalms 119:37; seasons of affliction: Psalms 119:107; when called to some extraordinary service. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1073: "A Honeycomb."

**Verse 37.** -- Here is,

1. Conversion from "vanity."
2. Conversion to -- "thy way."
3. Conversion by -- "Quicken thou me." --G. R.

**Verse 37.** -- David prays,

1. For restraining grace that he might be prevented and kept back from that which would hinder him in the way of his duty: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."
2. For constraining grace, that he might not only be kept from everything that would obstruct his progress heavenward, but that he might have that grace which was necessary to forward him in that progress: "Quicken thou me in thy way." --M. Henry.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 38.** Stablish thy word unto thy servant. Make me sure of thy sure word: make it sure to me and make me sure of it. If we possess the spirit of service, and yet are troubled with sceptical thoughts we cannot do better than pray to be established in the truth. Times will arise when every doctrine and promise seems to be shaken, and our mind gets no rest: then we must appeal to God for establishment in the faith, for he would have all his servants to be well instructed and confirmed in his word. But we must mind that we are the Lord's servants, for else we shall not long be sound in his

truth. Practical holiness is a great help towards doctrinal certainty: if we are God's servants he will confirm his word in our experience. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"; and so know it as to be fully assured of it. Atheism in the heart is a horrible plague to a God fearing man, it brings more torment with it than can well be described; and nothing but a visitation of grace can settle the soul after it has been violently assailed thereby. Vanity or falsehood is bad for the eyes, but it is even worse when it defiles the understanding and casts a doubt upon the word of the living God.

Who is devoted to thy fear, or simply -- "to thy fear." That is, make good thy word to godly fear: wherever it exists; strengthen the whole body of reverent men. Stablish thy word, not only to me, but to all the godly ones under the sun. Or, again, it may mean -- "Stablish thy word to thy fear," namely, that men may be led to fear thee; since a sure faith in the divine promise is the fountain and foundation of godly fear. Men will never worship a God in whom they do not believe. More faith will lead to more godly fear. We cannot look for the fulfilment of promises in our experience unless we live under the influence of the fear of the Lord: establishment in grace is the result of holy watchfulness and prayerful energy. We shall never be rooted and grounded in our belief unless we daily practise what we profess to believe. Full assurance is the reward of obedience. Answers to prayer are given to those whose hearts answer to the Lord's command. If we are devoted to God's fear we shall be delivered from all other fear. He has no fear as to the truth of the word who is filled with fear of the Author of the word. Scepticism is both the parent and the child of impiety; but strong faith both begets piety and is begotten of it. We commend this whole verse to any devout man whose tendency is to scepticism: it will be an admirable prayer for use in seasons of unusually strong misgivings.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 38.** *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, etc.* -- Well, but here is a strange thing -- a man who is a true "servant of God," "devoted to his fear," praying for what he surely must already have, else how could he be a servant? or be living in Jehovah's fear? He seems to assume, clearly and without any doubt, his own personal consecration, and then he prays for that which must surely be, at least in considerable measure, assumed and comprehended in the very idea of a true personal consecration. Unless God's word is made sure to a man he will never become his servant. If he is his servant, why should he pray, "Stablish thy word"? Why, too, should he say in [Psalms 119:35](#), "Make me to go in

the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight"? "Therein do I delight. It is the way of my choice, of my joy!" And yet, "Make me to go in it," as if I were unwilling. This apparent contradiction or discrepancy is easily solved in a true experience, and can be, in fact, solved in no other way. Is not this the very condition of many and many a one? "Stablished," yet moved; "devoted," yet uncertain; "serving" God truly, yet looking and longing for clearer warrant, and higher sanction, and more inward grace, to make the service better; "believing," yet crying, sometimes, "with tears, Help thou mine unbelief!" Alexander Raleigh.

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

1. By the inward assurance of the Spirit increasing our faith.
2. By the outward performance of what is promised.

First, By the inward assurance of the Spirit, by which our faith is increased. Great is the weakness of our faith, as appears by our fears, doubts, distrusts, so that we need to be assured more and more. We need say with tears as he doth in the gospel: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24); and to cry out with the apostles, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). There is none believeth so, but he may yet believe more. And in this sense the word is more established, when we are confirmed in the belief of it, and look upon it as sure ground for faith to rest upon. Secondly, By actual performance, when the promise is made good to us. Every event which falls out according to the word is a notable testimony of the truth of it, and a seal to confirm and strengthen our faith. Three ways may this be made good.

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

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

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

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

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

1. Thy word; for in the original Hebrew the posture of the verse is thus, "Stablish to thy servant thy word, which is to the fearing of thee," or, "which is given that thou mayest be feared;" there being in the word of God the greatest arguments and inducements to fear, to reverence, and to obey him. The word of God was appointed to plant the fear of God in our hearts, and to increase our reverence of God; not that we may play the wantons with promises, and feed our lusts with them.
2. I rather take our own translation, and it hath such a sense as that passage, "But I give myself unto prayer" (Ps 119:4). In the original it is, "But I prayer." So in this place it may be read, Stablish thy word to thy servant, "Who is to thy fear." Our translators add, to make the sense more full, addicted, or "devoted to thy fear," that is, who makes it his business, care, and desire to stand in the fear of God.

Now this is added as a true note and description of God's servants, as being a main thing in religion, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalms 11:10), it is the first in point of order, and it is the first thing when we begin to be wise, to think of God, to have awful thoughts of God, it is a chief

point of wisdom, the great thing that makes us wise to salvation. And it is added as an argument of prayer, "O Lord, let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name" (Nehemiah 1:11). The more any are given to the fear of God, the more assurance they have of God's love, and of his readiness to hear them at the throne of grace. Thomas Manton.

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 38.** -- Confirmation. What? "Thy word established." To whom? "Unto thy servant." Why? "Who is devoted," etc.

**Verse 38.** -- Fear of God evidences itself,

1. By a dread of his displeasure.
2. Desire of his favour.
3. Regard for his excellencies.
4. Submission to his will.
5. Gratitude for his benefits.
6. Conscientious obedience to his commands. --Charles Buck.

**Verse 38.** -- The four kinds of fear.

1. The fear of man, by which we are led rather to do wrong than to suffer evil.
2. Servile fear, through which we are induced to avoid sin only from the dread of hell.
3. Initial fear, in which we avoid sin partly from the fear of hell, but partly also from the love of God, which is the fear of ordinary Christians.
4. Filial fear, when we are afraid to disobey God only and altogether from the love we bear him. Jeremiah 32:40. --Ayguan, in J. Edward Vaux's "Preacher's Storehouse," 1878.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 39.** Turn away my reproach which I fear. He feared just reproach, trembling lest he should cause the enemy to blaspheme through any glaring inconsistency. We ought to fear this, and watch that we may avoid it. Persecution in the form of calumny may also be prayed against, for it is a sore trial, perhaps the sorest of trials to men of sensitive minds. Many would sooner bear burning at the stake than the trial of cruel mockings. David was quick tempered, and he probably had all the greater dread of slander because it raised his anger, and he could hardly tell what he might not do under



great provocation. If God turns away our eyes from falsehood, we may also expect that he will turn away falsehood from injuring our good name. We shall be kept from lies if we keep from lies.

For thy judgments are good. Therefore he is anxious that none may speak evil of the ways of God through hearing an ill report about himself. We mourn when we are slandered; because the shame is cast rather upon our religion than ourselves. If men would be content to attribute evil to us, and go no further, we might bear it, for we are evil; but our sorrow is that they cast a slur upon the word and character of God, who is so good, that there is none good in comparison with him. When men rail at God's government of the world it is our duty and privilege to stand up for him, and openly to declare before him, "thy judgments are good"; and we should do the same when they assail the Bible, the gospel, the law, or the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we must take heed that they can bring no truthful accusation against us, or our testimony will be so much wasted breath.

This prayer against reproach is parallel to Psalms 119:31, and in general to many other of the seventh verses in the octaves, which usually imply opposition from without and a sacred satisfaction within. Observe the things which are good: "thy judgments are good;" "thou art good and doest good" (Ps 119:68); "good for me to have been afflicted" (Psalms 119:71); "teach me good judgment" (Ps 119:66).

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

1. A request, "Turn away my reproach."
2. A reason to enforce it. "For thy judgments are good."

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

and am sensible of the sad consequences of it.

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

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

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

Out of the first exposition we learn, First, that the godly are subject unto notorious sins. Secondly, that those sins will cause shame in them, though the wicked will not be ashamed. Thirdly, that God only can take away this shame. Fourthly, that we may pray for the removing of shame even amongst men, especially that which may bring with it some dishonour to God. Fifthly, that the godly are most jealous over themselves. Sixthly, the way to avoid sin is ever to be afraid lest we should sin.

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

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

**Verse 39.** *For thy judgments are good.* One would have expected him to say -- For thou art merciful -- Cause my reproach which I fear to pass over from me, for thou art merciful. No, he does not add this as his present reason, but "Thy judgments are good." We should catch the meaning at once, were the words these -- For thy judgments are awful -- "Turn away my reproach which I fear," for thy

judgments are awful. But as the words are -- "For thy judgments are good," we find he verily takes refuge in the "judgments" -- viz., that the Lord would vindicate him against all the unjust judgments of men; and as to judgment with God, since he took refuge in the atonement which the Lord had appointed, the Lord would vindicate him there also. John Stephen.

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

1. Because God is goodness itself.
2. He cannot be deceived.
3. He will not be bribed.
4. He alone is no respecter of persons, but judgeth according to every man's work. Richard Greenham.

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 39.** --

1. Man's judgment dreaded.
2. God's judgment approved.

**Verse 39.** -- The reproach of inconsistency.

1. The dishonour caused by it (2 Samuel 12:14).
2. The danger of incurring it.
3. The prayer against it. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 40.** Behold, I have longed after thy precepts. He can at least claim sincerity. He is deeply bowed down by a sense of his weakness and need of grace; but he does desire to be in all things conformed to the divine will. Where our longings are, there are we in the sight of God. If we have not attained perfection, it is something to have hungered after it. He who has given us to desire, will also grant us to obtain. The precepts are grievous to the ungodly, and therefore when we are so changed as to long for them we have clear evidence of conversion, and we may safely conclude that he who

has begun the good work will carry it on.

Quicken me in thy righteousness. Give me more life wherewith to follow thy righteous law; or give me more life because thou hast promised to hear prayer, and it is according to thy righteousness to keep thy word. How often does David plead for quickening! But never once too often. We need quickening every hour of the day, for we are so sadly apt to become slow and languid in the ways of God. It is the Holy Spirit who can pour new life into us; let us not cease crying to him. Let the life we already possess show itself by longing for more.

The last verses of the octaves have generally exhibited an onward look of resolve, hope, and prayer. Here past fruits of grace are made the plea for further blessing. Onward in the heavenly life is the cry of this verse.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

**Verse 40.** *Quicken me in thy righteousness.* He said before, "Quicken me in thy word," here, "in thy righteousness"; all is one; for the word of God is the righteousness of God, in which is set down the will of righteousness. In this the prophet desires to be quickened, that is, to be confirmed, that in

cheerfulness and gladness of spirit he might rely upon the word of God. Richard Greenham.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 40.** --

1. Gracious longings experienced.
2. Great necessity felt -- more life needed.
3. Wise petition offered.

### **EXPOSITION**

In these verses holy fear is apparent and prominent. The man of God trembles lest in any way or degree the Lord should remove his favour from him. The eight verses are one continued pleading for the abiding of grace in his soul, and it is supported by such holy arguments as would only suggest themselves to a spirit burning with love to God.

**Verse 41.** Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD. He desires mercy as well as teaching, for he was guilty as well as ignorant. He needed much mercy and varied mercy, hence the request is in the plural. He needed mercy from God rather than from man, and so he asks for "thy mercies." The way sometimes seemed blocked, and therefore he begs that the mercies may have their way cleared by God, and may "come" to him. He who said, "Let there be light," can also say, "Let there be mercy." It may be that under a sense of unworthiness the writer feared lest mercy should be given to others, and not to himself; he therefore cries, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father." Viewed in this light the words are tantamount to our well known verse

"Lord, I hear of showers of blessing  
Thou art scattering, full and free;  
Showers, the thirsty land refreshing;  
Let some droppings fall on me,

Even me." Elizabeth Codner, 1860.

Lord, thine enemies come to me to reproach me, let thy mercies come to defend me; trials and

troubles abound, and labours and sufferings not a few approach me; Lord, let thy mercies in great number enter by the same gate, and at the same hour; for art thou not the God of my mercy?

Even thy salvation. This is the sum and crown of all mercies -- deliverance from all evil, both now and for ever. Here is the first mention of salvation in the Psalm, and it is joined with mercy: "By grace are ye saved"... Salvation is styled "thy salvation," thus ascribing it wholly to the Lord: "He that is our God is the God of salvation." What a mass of mercies are heaped together in the one salvation of our Lord Jesus! It includes the mercies which spare us before our conversion, and lead up to it. Then comes calling mercy, regenerating mercy, converting mercy, justifying mercy, pardoning mercy. Nor can we exclude from complete salvation any of those many mercies which are needed to conduct the believer safe to glory. Salvation is an aggregate of mercies incalculable in number, priceless in value, incessant in application, eternal in endurance. To the God of our mercies be glory, world without end. According to thy word. The way of salvation is described in the word, salvation itself is promised in the word, and its inward manifestation is wrought by the word; so that in all respects the salvation which is in Christ Jesus is in accordance with the word. David loved the Scriptures, but he longed experimentally to know the salvation contained in them: he was not satisfied to read the word, he longed to experience its inner sense. He valued the field of Scripture for the sake of the treasure which he had discovered in it. He was not to be contented with chapter and verse, he wanted mercies and salvation.

Note that in the first verse of HE ([Psalms 119:33](#)) the Psalmist prayed to be taught to keep God's word, and here in VAU he begs the Lord to keep his word. In the first case he longed to come to the God of mercies, and here he would have the Lord's mercies come to him: there he sought grace to persevere in faith, and here he seeks the end of his faith, even the salvation of the soul.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 41-48.** *This whole section consists of petitions and promises. The petitions are two; [Psalms 119:41,43](#). The promises are six. This, among many, is a difference between godly men and others: all men seek good things from God, but the wicked so seek that they give him nothing back again, nor yet will promise any sort of return. Their prayers must be unprofitable, because they proceed from love of themselves, and not of the Lord. If so be they obtain that which is for their necessity, they care not to give to the Lord that which is for his glory: but the godly, as they seek good things, so they give praise to God when they have gotten them, and return the use of things received, to the glory of God who gave them. They love not themselves for themselves, but for the Lord; what they seek from him*

they seek it for this end, that they may be the more able to serve him. Let us take heed unto this; because it is a clear token whereby such as are truly religious are distinguished from counterfeit dissemblers. William Cowper.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 41-48.** -- Promised mercies. Desired (Psalms 119:41), as an answer to "him that reproacheth"

(Psalms 119:42-43); as a means of faithfulness (Psalms 119:44); liberty (Psalms 119:45); boldness (Psalms 119:46); delight (Psalms 119:47), and eager longing (Psalms 119:48).

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 41.** -- See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1524: "Your Personal Salvation."

**Verse 41.** --

1. God's mercies come to us unsought continually. His sparing mercies, temporal mercies, etc.
2. The chief outcome of God's mercies is his salvation. It is our greatest need; it is his greatest gift.
3. We should have a personal interest in this salvation: "Let thy mercies come also unto me."
4. When we seek God's salvation, we may plead his promise: "according to thy word." -- Horatio Wilkins, of Cheltenham, 1882.

**Verse 41.** -- Even me.

1. In me there is need of mercy.
2. To me mercy can come.
3. Thy salvation suits me.
4. Special difficulties would daunt me.
5. Thy word encourages me.

**Verse 41.** --

1. Salvation is all of mercy.
2. All mercies are in salvation.
3. All men should be anxious for salvation to come to them.
4. It can only come according to God's word.

--W.W.

**Verse 41-43.** -- A Comprehensive Prayer.

1. The possession of salvation, Psalms 119:41.
2. Is the power for defence: Psalms 119:42.
3. And the qualification for usefulness: Psalms 119:43. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 42.** So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me. This is an unanswerable answer. When God, by granting us salvation, gives to our prayers an answer of peace, we are ready at once to answer the objections of the infidel, the quibbles of the sceptical, and the sneers of the contemptuous. It is most desirable that revilers should be answered, and hence we may expect the Lord to save his people in order that a weapon may be put into their hands with which to rout his adversaries. When those who reproach us are also reproaching God, we may ask him to help us to



silence them by sure proofs of his mercy and faithfulness.

For I trust in thy word. His faith was seen by his being trustful while under trial, and he pleads it as a reason why he should be helped to beat back reproaches by a happy experience. Faith is our argument when we seek mercies and salvation; faith in the Lord who has spoken to us in his word. "I trust in thy word" is a declaration more worth the making than any other; for he who can truly make it has received power to become a child of God, and so to be the heir of unnumbered mercies. God hath more respect to a man's trust than to all else that is in him; for the Lord hath chosen faith to be the hand into which he will place his mercies and his salvation. If any reproach us for trusting in God, we reply to them with arguments the most conclusive when we show that God has kept his promises, heard our prayers, and supplied our needs. Even the most sceptical are forced to bow before the logic of facts.

In this second verse of this eight the Psalmist makes a confession of faith, and a declaration of his belief and experience. Note that he does the same in the corresponding verses of the sections which follow. See Psalms 119:50, "Thy word hath quickened me"; Ps 119:58, "I entreated thy favour"; Psalms 119:66, "I have believed thy commandments"; Ps 119:74, "I have hoped in thy word." A wise preacher might find in these a series of experimental discourses.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

**Verse 42.** *So shall I have wherewith to answer*, etc. This follows the phrase, "according to thy word."

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 42.** -- Faith's answer to reproach found in the fact that she trusts God's word.

**Verse 42-43.**, 47. -- Faith, hope, and love. "I trust." "I have hoped." "I have loved." Faith warring, hope testifying, love obeying.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 43.** And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth. Do not prevent my pleading for thee by leaving me without deliverance; for how could I continue to proclaim thy word if I found it fail me? such would seem to be the run of the meaning. The word of truth cannot be a joy to our mouths unless we have an experience of it in our lives, and it may be wise for us to be silent if We cannot support our testimonies by the verdict of our consciousness. This prayer may also refer to other modes by which we may be disabled from speaking in the name of the Lord: as, for instance, by our falling into open sin, by our becoming depressed and despairing, by our labouring under sickness or mental aberration, by our finding no door of utterance, or meeting with no willing audience. He who has once preached the gospel from his heart is filled with horror at the idea of being put out of the ministry; he will crave to be allowed a little share in the holy testimony, and will reckon his dumb Sabbaths to be days of banishment and punishment.

For I have hoped in thy judgments. He had expected God to appear and vindicate his cause, that so he might speak with confidence concerning his faithfulness. God is the author of our hopes, and we

may most fittingly entreat him to fulfil them. The judgments of his providence are the outcome of his word; what he says in the Scriptures he actually performs in his government; we may therefore look for him to show himself strong on the behalf of his own threatenings and promises, and we shall not look in vain.

God's ministers are sometimes silenced through the sins of their people, and it becomes them to plead against such a judgment; better far that they should suffer sickness or poverty than that the candle of the gospel should be put out among them, and that thus they should be left to perish without remedy. The Lord save us, who are his ministers, from being made the instruments of inflicting such a penalty. Let us exhibit a cheerful hopefulness in God, that we may plead it in prayer with him when he threatens to close our lips.

In the close of this verse there is a declaration of what the Psalmist had done in reference to the word of the Lord, and in this the thirds of the octaves are often alike. See Psalms 119:35, "therein do I delight"; Psalms 119:43, "I have hoped in thy judgments"; Psalms 119:51, "yet have I not declined from thy law"; Psalms 119:59, "I turned my feet to thy testimonies"; and Psalms 119:67,83,99, etc. These verses would furnish an admirable series of meditations.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

**Verse 43.** *Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth.* Sometimes we are afraid to speak for the Saviour, lest we should incur the charge of hypocrisy. At other times we are ashamed to speak,

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

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

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

1. The law or whole word of God; so that, "I have hoped in thy judgments," is no more, but in thy word do I hope; as it is, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope" ([Psalms 130:5](#)).
2. Answerable execution of the law, when the promise or threatening is fulfilled.
  1. When the promise is fulfilled: that is judgment in a sense when God accomplishes what he has promised for our salvation and deliverance. Thus God is said to judge his people, when he righteth and sayeth them according to his word: "O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause" ([Lamentations 3:59](#)).
  2. But the more usual notion of judgment is the execution of the threatening on wicked men; which being a benefit to God's faithful servants, and done in their favour, David might well be said to hope for it. Their "judgment" is our obtaining the promise. Thomas Manton.

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 43.** -- How the true preacher could be silenced, and his plea that he may not be so.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 44.** So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. Nothing more effectually binds a man to the way of the Lord than an experience of the truth of his word, embodied in the form of mercies and deliverances. Not only does the Lord's faithfulness open our mouths against his adversaries, but it also knits our hearts to his fear, and makes our union with him more and more intense. Great mercies lead us to feel an inexpressible gratitude which, falling to utter itself in time, promises to engross eternity with praises. To a heart on flame with thankfulness, the "always, unto eternity and perpetuity," of the text will not seem to be redundant; yea, the hyperbole of Addison in his famous verse will only appear to be solid sense: --

"Through all eternity to thee

A joyful song I will raise;

But oh! eternity's too short

To utter all thy praise." Addison.

God's grace alone can enable us to keep his commandments without break and without end; eternal love must grant us eternal life, and out of this will come everlasting obedience. There is no other way to ensure our perseverance in holiness but by the word of truth abiding in us, as David prayed it might abide with him.

The verse begins with "So," as did Psalms 119:42. When God grants his salvation we are so favoured that we silence our worst enemy and glorify our best friend. Mercy answereth all things. If God doth but give us salvation we can conquer hell and commune with heaven, answering reproaches and keeping the law, and that to the end, world without end.

We may not overlook another sense which suggests itself here. David prayed that the word of truth might not be taken out of his mouth, and so would he keep God's law: that is to say, by public testimony as well as by personal life, he would fulfil the divine will, and confirm the bonds which bound him to his Lord for ever. Undoubtedly the grace which enables us to bear witness with the mouth is a great help to ourselves as well as to others: we feel that the vows of the Lord are upon us,

and that we cannot run back.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

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

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

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

1. It shows the difficulty of perseverance: unless believers do strongly persist in the resistance of temptation, they will soon be turned out of the way; therefore David binds his heart firmly: we must do it now, yea, always, unto the end.
2. He expresses his vehemence of affection: those that are deeply affected with anything are wont to express themselves as largely as they can. As Paul, who had a deep sense of God's power: "Exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power" ([Ephesians 1:19](#)). He heaps up several words, because his sense of them was so great: so David here doth heap up words -- "continually, and for ever, and ever, and ever."
3. Some think the words are so many, that they may express not only this life, but that which is to come. I will keep them continually, and for ever, and ever; that is, all the days of my life, and in the other world. So Chrysostom, "I will keep them continually," etc., points out the other life, where there will be pure and exact keeping of the law of God. Here we are every hour in danger, but then we shall be put out of all danger, and without fear of sinning, we shall remain in a full and perfect righteousness; we hope for that which we have not attained unto, and this doth encourage us for the present: so would he make David express himself.
4. If we must distinguish these words, I suppose they imply the continuity and perpetuity of

obedience; the continuity of obedience, that he would serve God continually, without intermission; and the perpetuity of obedience, that he would serve God for ever and ever, without defection or revolt, at all times, and to the end. Constancy and perseverance in obedience is the commendation of it. Thomas Manton.

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 44.** -- The perpetuity of gracious living. On what it is conditioned: "So." How entirely it is consistent with free agency: "I keep." How continuous it is, and how eternal.

**Verse 44.** -- Heaven begun below.

1. The present life of the believer -- keeping God's law.
2. The continual care of the believer -- to keep God's law.
3. The eternal prospect of the believer -- keeping God's law for ever and ever. -- C.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 45.** And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. Saints find no bondage in sanctity. The Spirit of holiness is a free spirit; he sets men at liberty and enables them to resist every effort to bring them under subjection. The way of holiness is not a track for slaves, but the King's highway for freemen, who are joyfully journeying from the Egypt of bandage to the Canaan of rest. God's mercies and his salvation, by teaching us to love the precepts of the word, set us at a happy rest; and the more we seek after the perfection of our obedience the more shall we enjoy complete emancipation

from every form of spiritual slavery. David at one time of his life was in great bondage through having followed a crooked policy. He deceived Achish so persistently that he was driven to acts of ferocity to conceal it, and must have felt very unhappy in his unnatural position as an ally of Philistines, and captain of the body guard of their king. He must have feared lest through his falling into the crooked ways of falsehood the truth would no longer be on his tongue, and he therefore prayed God in some way to work his deliverance, and set him at liberty from such slavery. By terrible things in righteousness did the Lord answer him at Ziklag: the snare was broken, and he escaped.

The verse is united to that which goes before, for it begins with the word "And," which acts as a hook to attach it to the preceding verses. It mentions another of the benefits expected from the coming of mercies from God. The man of God had mentioned the silencing of his enemies ([Psalms 119:42](#)), power to proceed in testimony ([Psalms 119:43](#)), and perseverance in holiness; now he dwells upon liberty, which next to life is dearest to all brave men. He says, "I shall walk," indicating his daily progress through life; "at liberty," as one who is out of prison, unimpeded by adversaries, unencumbered by burdens, unshackled, allowed a wide range, and roaming without fear. Such liberty would be dangerous if a man were seeking himself or his own lusts; but when the one object sought after is the will of God, there can be no need to restrain the searcher. We need not circumscribe the man who can say, "I seek thy precepts." Observe, in the preceding verse he said he would keep the law; but here he speaks of seeking it. Does he not mean that he will obey what he knows, and endeavour to know more? Is not this the way to the highest form of liberty, -- to be always labouring to know the mind of God and to be conformed to it? Those who keep the law are sure to seek it, and bestir themselves to keep it more and more.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

**Verse 45.** *I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.* When the Bible says that a man led by the Spirit is not under the law, it does not mean that he is free because he may sin without being punished for it; but it means that he is free because being taught by God's Spirit to love what his law commands he is no longer conscious of acting from restraint. The law does not drive him, because



the Spirit leads him... There is a state, brethren, when we recognize God, but do not love God in Christ. It is that state when we admire what is excellent, but are not able to perform it. It is a state when the love of good comes to nothing, dying away in a mere desire. That is a state of nature, when we are under the law, and not converted to the love of Christ. And then there is another state, when God writes his law upon our hearts by love instead of fear. The one state is this, "I cannot do the things that I would;" the other state is this, "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy commandments." Frederick William Robertson, 1816-1853.

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

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

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

1. That he should be free and easy in his duty: I will walk at liberty: freed from that which is evil, not hampered with the fetters of my own corruptions, and free to that which is good.
2. That he should be bold and courageous in his duty: I will speak of thy testimonies before kings.
3. That he should be cheerful and pleasant in his duty: I will delight myself in thy commandments, in conversing with them, in forming to them.
4. That he should be diligent and vigorous in his duty: I will lift up my hands unto thy commandments; which notes not only a vehement desire towards them, but a close application of mind to the observance of them.
5. That he should be thoughtful and considerate in his duty: I will meditate in thy statutes.

Matthew Henry.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 45-47.** -- Liberty of walk. Liberty of speech. Liberty of heart.

**Verse 45-48.** -- The true freeman enjoys --

1. Free walk with God.
2. Free talk about God.
3. Free love unto God.
4. Free exercise, of soul,
  - a. in holy practice;
  - b. in heavenly meditation. --W. Durban.

**Verse 45-48.** -- Five things the Psalmist promises himself here in the strength of God's grace.

1. That he should be free and easy in his duty: "I will walk at liberty."
2. That he should be bold and courageous in his duty: "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings."
3. That he should be cheerful and pleasant in his duty: "I will delight myself in thy commandments."
4. That he should be diligent and vigorous in his duty: "I will delight myself in thy commandments."
5. That he should be thoughtful and considerate in his duty: "I will meditate in thy statutes." --M. Henry.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 46.** I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. This is part of his liberty; he is free from fear of the greatest, proudest, and most tyrannical of men. David was called to stand before kings when he was an exile; and afterwards, when he was himself a monarch, he knew

the tendency of men to sacrifice their religion to pomp and statecraft; but it was his resolve to do nothing of the kind. He would sanctify politics, and make cabinets know that the Lord alone is governor among the nations. As a king he would speak to kings concerning the King of kings. He says, "I will speak": prudence might have suggested that his life and conduct would be enough, and that it would be better not to touch upon religion in the presence of royal personages who worshipped other gods, and claimed to be right in so doing. He had already most fittingly preceded this resolve by the declaration, "I will walk," but he does not make his personal conduct an excuse for sinful silence, for he adds, "I will speak." David claimed religious liberty, and took care to use it, for he spoke out what he believed, even when he was in the highest company. In what he said he took care to keep to God's own word, for he says, "I will speak of thy testimonies." No theme is like this, and there is no way of handling that theme like keeping close to the book, and using its thought and language. The great hindrance to our speaking upon holy topics in all companies is shame, but the Psalmist will "not be ashamed"; there is nothing to be ashamed of, and there is no excuse for being ashamed, and yet many are as quiet as the dead for fear some creature like themselves should be offended. When God gives grace, cowardice soon vanishes. He who speaks for God in God's power, will not be ashamed when beginning to speak, nor while speaking, nor after speaking; for his theme is one which is fit for kings, needful to kings, and beneficial to kings. If kings object, we may well be ashamed of them, but never of our Master who sent us, or of his message, or of his design in sending it.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

**Verse 46.** *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings.* Before came to the crown kings were sometimes his judges, as Saul and Achish: but if he were called before them to give a reason of the hope that was in: him, he would speak of God's testimonies, and profess to build his hope upon them, and make them his council, his guard, his crown, his all. We must never be afraid to own our religion, though it should expose us to the wrath of kings, but speak of it as that which we will live and die by, like the three children before Nebuchadnezzar, [Daniel 3:16](#) [Acts 4:20](#). After David came to the crown kings were sometimes his companions, they visited him, and he returned their visits; but he did not, in complaisance to them, talk of everything but religion for fear of affronting them, and making his

converse uneasy to them: no, God's testimonies shall be the principal subject of his discourse with the kings, not only to show that he was not ashamed of his religion, but to instruct them in it, and bring them over to it. It is good for kings to hear of God's testimonies, and it will adorn the conversation of princes themselves to speak of them. Matthew Henry.

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

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

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

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

Festus, and to Felix. William Cowper.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 46-48.** -- Lips, heart, and hands.

1. Public profession of God's word ("I will speak," Psalms 119:46) must be warranted by --
2. Private delight in God's word ("I will delight myself," Psalms 119:47), which must result in --
3. Practical obedience to God's word ("I will lift up my hands," Psalms 119:48).

**Verse 46.** --

1. The truly earnest must speak.
2. They are at no loss for good subjects: "Thy testimonies." The range is boundless -- the variety endless.
3. They never fear any audience: "before kings." --W.W.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 47.** And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Next to liberty and courage comes delight. When we have done our duty, we find a great reward in it. If David had not spoken for his Master before kings, he would have been afraid to think of the law which he had neglected; but after speaking up for his Lord he feels a sweet serenity of heart when musing upon the word. Obey the command, and you will love it; carry the yoke, and it will be easy, and rest will come by it. After speaking of the law the Psalmist was not wearied of his theme, but he retired to meditate upon it; he discoursed and then he delighted, he preached and then repaired to his study to renew his strength by feeding yet again upon the precious truth. Whether he delighted others or not when he was speaking, he never failed to delight himself when he was musing on the word of the Lord. He declares that he loved the Lord's commands, and by this avowal he unveils the reason for his delight in them: where our love is, there is our delight. David did not delight in the courts of kings, for there he found places of temptation to shame, but in the Scriptures he found himself at home; his heart was in them, and they yielded him supreme pleasure. No wonder that he spoke of keeping the law, which he loved; Jesus says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." No wonder that he spoke of walking at liberty, and speaking boldly, for true love is ever free and fearless. Love is the fulfilling of the law; where love to the law of God reigns in the heart the life must be full of blessedness. Lord, let thy mercies come to us that we may love thy word and way, and find our whole delight therein.

The verse is in the future, and hence it sets forth, not only what David had done, but what he would do; he would in time to come delight in his Lord's command. He knew that they would neither alter, nor fail to yield him joy. He knew also that grace would keep him in the same condition of heart towards the precepts of the Lord, so that he should throughout his whole life take a supreme delight in holiness. His heart was so fixed in love to God's will that he was sure that grace would always hold

him under its delightful influence.

All the Psalm is fragrant with love to the word, but here for the first time love is expressly spoken of. It is here coupled with delight, and in Psalms 119:165 with "great peace." All the verses in which love declares itself in so many words are worthy of note. See Ps 119:47,97,113,119,127,140,159,163,165,167.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

**Verse 47-48.** *What is in the word a law of precept, is in the heart a law of love; what is in the one a law of command, is in the other a law of liberty* "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Galatians 5:14. The law of love in the heart, is the fulfilling the law of God in the Spirit. It may well be said to be written in the heart, when a man doth love it. As we say, a beloved thing is in our hearts, not physically, but morally, as Calais was said to be in Queen Mary's heart. They might have looked long enough before they could have found there the map of the town; but grief for the loss of it killed her. It is a love that is inexpressible. David delights to mention it in two verses together: I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, and often in the Psalm resumes the assertion. Before the new creation, there was no affection to the law: it was not only a dead letter, but a devilish letter in the esteem of a man: he wished it razed out of the world, and another more pleasing to the flesh enacted. He would be a law unto himself; but when this is written within him, he is so pleased with the inscription, that he would not for all the world be without that law, and the love of it; whereas what obedience he paid to it

before was out of fear, now out of affection; not only because of the authority of the lawgiver, but of the purity of the law itself. He would maintain it with all his might against the power of sin within, and the powers of darkness without him. He loves to view this law; regards every lineament of it, and dwells upon every feature with delightful ravishments. If his eye be off, or his foot go away, how doth he dissolve in tears, mourn and groan, till his former affection hath recovered breath, and stands upon its feet! Stephen Charnock.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 48.** My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved. He will stretch out towards perfection as far as he can, hoping to reach it one day; when his hands hang down he will cheer himself out of languor by the prospect of glorifying God by obedience; and he will give solemn sign of his hearty assent and consent to all that his God commands. The phrase "lift up my hands" is very full of meaning, and doubtless the sweet singer meant all that we can see in it, and a great deal more. Again he declares his love; for a true heart loves to express itself; it is a kind of fire which must send forth its flames. It was natural that he should reach out towards a law which he delighted in, even as a child holds out its hands to receive a gift which it longs for. When such a lovely object as holiness is set before us, we are bound to rise towards it with our whole nature, and till that is fully accomplished we should at least lift up our hands in prayer towards it. Where holy hands and holy hearts go, the whole man will one day follow.

And I will meditate in thy statutes. He can never have enough of meditation upon the mind of God. Loving subjects wish to be familiar with their sovereign's statutes, for they are anxious that they may not offend through ignorance. Prayer with lifted hands, and meditation with upward glancing eyes will in happy union work out the best inward results. The prayer of [Psalms 119:41](#) is already fulfilled in the man who is thus struggling upward and studying deeply. The whole of this verse is in the future, and may be viewed not only as a determination of David's mind, but as a result which he knew would follow from the Lord's sending him his mercies and his salvation. When mercy comes down, our hands will be lifted up; when God in favour thinks upon us, we are sure to think of him. Happy is he who stands with hands uplifted both to receive the blessing and to obey the precept; he shall not wait upon the Lord in vain.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

they want hands and cannot practise it. William Cowper.

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

1. To pray: as in Psalms 28:2 Lamentations 2:19 Habakkuk 3:10.
2. To bless others: as Leviticus 9:22 Psalms 134:2.
3. To swear: as Genesis 14:22 Exodus 6:8.
4. To set about some important matter: as Genesis 41:44; "without thee shall no man lift up his hand;" i.e. shall attempt anything, or shall accomplish; Ps 10:12, "lift up thine hand," viz., effectively, to bring help: Hebrews 12:12, "lift up the hands," etc.; i.e. strongly stimulate Christians.

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

1. Prayer for Divine grace for the doing of the precepts: or,
2. Blessing, i.e. praise of God because of them, and the advantages which have thence accrued to us: which the Syriac translator approves, who adds, "and I will glory in thy faithfulness:" or,
3. Vow, or oath of constant obedience, etc.: -- or,
4. Active and earnest undertaking of them; which, also, appears to be here chiefly meant. Henry Hammond in Synopsis Poli.

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

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

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

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

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

**Verse 48.** *Thy commandments.* By commandments he understandeth the word of God, yet it is more powerful than so; it is not, I have loved thy word; but, I have loved that part of thy word that is thy "commandments," the mandatory part. There are some parts of the will and word of God that even ungodly men will be content to love. There is the promissory part; all men gather and catch at the promises, and show love to these. The reason is clear; there is pleasure, and profit, and gain, and



advantage in the promises; but a pious soul doth not only look to the promises, but to the commands. Piety looks on Christ as a Lawgiver, as well as a Saviour, and not only on him as a Mediator, but as a Lord and Master; it doth not only live by faith, but it liveth by rule; it makes indeed the promises the stay and staff of a Christian's life, but it makes the commandments of God the level. A pious heart knows that some command is implied in the qualification and condition of every promise; it knows that as for the fulfilling of the promises, it belongs to God; but the fulfilling of the commands belongs to us. Therefore it looks so, upon the enjoying of that which is promised that it will first do that which is commanded. There is no hope of attaining comfort in the promise but in keeping of the precept; therefore he pitches the emphasis, "I have loved thy word," that is true, and all thy word, and this part, the mandatory part: "I have loved thy commandments."

Observe the number, "thy commandments"; it is plural, that is, all thy commandments without exception; otherwise even ungodly men will be content to love some commandments, if they may choose them for themselves. Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649), in "The Valley of Vision."

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 48.** --

1. Love renewing its activity.
2. Love refreshing itself with spiritual food.

**Verse 48.** --

1. Scripture in the hand for reading. Often in the hand.
2. In the mind for meditation: "I will meditate," etc.

3. In the heart for love: "Which I have loved." --G.R.

**Verse 48.** -- Religion engaged the whole manhood of David: hands, heart, head.

1. The uplifted hands.

(a) Taking an oath of allegiance to God's word.

Ge 14:22 Ezekiel 20:28. To receive its doctrines, obey its precepts, regard its warnings, uphold its honour.

(b) Imploring a blessing upon God's word. le+9:22"> 9:22 ">Genesis 48:14;

Le 9:22 ;

Le 9:22 Luke 24:50. That its light might spread:

"Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel;" that its influence may become universal.

1. The loyal heart.

(a) This accounts for uplifted hands. He had loved the word himself. Religion is inward first, then outward. We must love it before we are anxious to spread it.

(b) But what accounts for the loyal heart? The word had brought him salvation, yielded him sustenance, afforded him guidance. We love the world for its joyous effects upon ourselves.

1. The studious mind.

(a) Devout meditation the best employment.

(b) The Word of God affords a grand field for it.

(c) To meditate in it learn to love it: "have loved," "will meditate." --H.W.

**Verse 48.** --

1. God's commandments loved. We love the law when we love the Lawgiver. We love his will only when our hearts are reconciled and renewed. Hence the need of spiritual renewal.

2. God's commandments the subject of prayer: "My hands also will I lift up." Perowne says, "The expression denotes the act of prayer." We may pray for a fuller knowledge, a deeper experience, a readier and more perfect obedience.

3. A theme for meditation. Amidst the hurry of outward activities we must not forget the need of quiet meditation. --H.W.

## **EXPOSITION**

This octrain deals with the comfort of the word. It begins by seeking the main consolation, namely,

the Lord's fulfilment of his promise, and then it shows how the word sustains us under affliction, and makes us so impervious to ridicule that we are moved by the harsh conduct of the wicked rather to horror of their sin than to any submission to their temptations. We are then shown how the Scripture furnishes songs for pilgrims, and memories for night watchers; and the psalm concludes by the general statement that the whole of this happiness and comfort arises out of keeping the statutes of the Lord.

**Verse 49.** Remember the word unto thy servant. He asks for no new promise, but to have the old word fulfilled. He is grateful that he has received so good a word, he embraces it with all his heart, and now entreats the Lord to deal with him according to it. He does not say, "remember my service to thee," but "thy word to me." The words of masters to servants are not always such that servants wish their lords to remember them; for they usually observe the faults and failings of the work done, in as much as it does not tally with the word of command. But we who serve the best of masters are not anxious to have one of his words fall to the ground, since the Lord will so kindly remember his word of command as to give us grace wherewith we may obey, and he will couple with it a remembrance of his word of promise, so that our hearts shall be comforted. If God's word to us as his servants is so precious, what shall we say of his word to us as his sons?

The Psalmist does not fear a failure in the Lord's memory, but he makes use of the promise as a plea, and this is the form in which he speaks, after the manner of men when they plead with one another. When the Lord remembers the sins of his servant, and brings them before his conscience, the penitent cries, Lord, remember thy word of pardon, and therefore remember my sins and iniquities no more. There is a world of meaning in that word "remember," as it is addressed to God; it is used in Scripture in the most tender sense, and suits the sorrowing and the depressed. The Psalmist cried, "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions": Job also prayed that the Lord would appoint him a set time, and remember him. In the present instance the prayer is as personal as the "Remember me" of the thief, for its essence lies in the words -- "unto thy servant." It would be all in vain for us if the promise were remembered to all others if it did not come true to ourselves; but there is no fear, for the Lord has never forgotten a single promise to a single believer.

Upon which thou hast caused me to hope. The argument is that God, having given grace to hope in the promise, would surely never disappoint that hope. He cannot have caused us to hope without cause. If we hope upon his word we have a sure basis: our gracious Lord would never mock us by exciting false hopes. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, hence the petition for immediate remembrance of the cheering word. Moreover, it is the hope of a servant, and it is not possible that a great and good master would disappoint his dependent; if such a master's word were not kept could only be through an oversight, hence the anxious cry, "Remember Our great Master will not forget his own servants, nor disappoint the expectation which he himself has raised: because we are the

Lord's, and endeavour to remember his word by obeying it, we may be sure that he think upon his own servants, and remember his own promise by making good."

This verse is the prayer of love fearing to be forgotten, of humility conscious of insignificance and anxious not to be overlooked, of trembling lest the evil of its sin should overshadow the promise, of a desire longing for the blessing, and of holy confidence which feels that that is wanted is comprehended in the word. Let but the Lord remember his promise, and the promised act is as good as done.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

**Verse 49.** -- *Thy servant.* Be sure of your qualification; for David pleadeth here, partly as a servant of God, and partly as a believer. First, "Remember the word unto thy servant;" and then, "upon which

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 49-56.** -- Hope in affliction. It arises from God's word (Psalms 119:49). It produces comfort (Psalms 119:50), even in trouble caused by the wicked (Psalms 119:51-53). It gladdens the believer's pilgrimage and his holy night seasons (Psalms 119:54-56).

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 49.** --

1. The personality of the word: "The word unto thy servant."
2. The application of the word: "upon which thou hast caused me to hope."
3. The pleading of the word: "Remember the word," etc.

**Verse 49.** -- The word of hope.

1. God's word the foundation of human hope. (The fact of a revelation. The substance of the revelation.)
2. Particular words of God which have been found peculiarly hope enkindling.
3. The pleading of such words at the throne of grace. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 50.** This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. He means, -- Thy word is my comfort, or the fact that thy word has brought quickening to me is my comfort. Or he means that the hope which had given him was his comfort, for God had quickened him thereby ever may be the exact sense, it is clear that the Psalmist had affliction -- affliction peculiar to himself, which he calls "my affliction"; that he had comfort in it, -- comfort specially his own, for he styles it "my comfort"; and that he knew what the comfort was, and where it came from, for exclaims -- "this is my comfort". The worldling clutches his money bag and says, "this is my comfort"; the spendthrift points to his gaiety,

shouts, "this is my comfort"; the drunkard lifts his glass, and sings, "this is my comfort"; but the man whose hope comes from God feels the giving power of the word of the Lord, and he testifies, "this is my fort." Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." Comfort is desirable all times; but comfort in affliction is like a lamp in a dark place. Some unable to find comfort at such times; but it is not so with believers, their Saviour has said to them, "I will not leave you comfortless." have comfort and no affliction, others have affliction and no comfort; the saints have comfort in their affliction.

The word frequently comforts us by increasing the force of our inner "this is my comfort; thy word hath quickened me." To quicken the is to cheer the whole man. Often the near way to consolation is sanctification and invigoration. If we cannot clear away the fog, it may be to rise to a higher level, and so to get above it. Troubles which weigh down while we are half dead become mere trifles when we are full of Thus have we often been raised in spirit by quickening grace, and the thing will happen again, for the Comforter is still with us, the Consolation of Israel ever liveth, and the very God of peace is evermore our Father. Looking back upon our past life there is one ground of comfort as to state -- the word of God has made us alive, and kept us so. We were but we are dead no longer. From this we gladly infer that if the had meant to destroy he would not have quickened us. If we were only hypocrites worthy of derision, as the proud ones say, he would not revived us by his grace. An experience of quickening is a fountain of cheer.

See how this verse is turned into a prayer in [Psalms 119:107](#). "Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word." Experience teaches us how to pray, and furnishes arguments in prayer.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

prerogatives of a Christian, that he is the child of God, that he is justified, that he is the heir of heaven, and such like; comforts from the promises of grace, of the presence of God, of assistance by his presence. --Richard Sibbes.

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

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

Gospel comforts are, first, unutterable comforts, 1 Peter 1:8; Philippians 4:4. Secondly, they are real, John 14:27; all others are but seeming comforts, but painted comforts. Thirdly, they are holy comforts, Isaiah 64:5 Psalms 138:5; they flow from a Holy Spirit, and nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy. Fourthly, they are the greatest and strongest comforts, Ephesians 6:17. Few heads and hearts are able to bear them, as few heads are able to bear strong wines. Fifthly, they reach to the inward man, to the soul, 2 Thessalonians 2:17, the noble part of man. "My soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour." Our other comforts only reach the face; they sink not so deep as the heart. Sixthly, they are the most soul filling and soul satisfying comforts, Psalms 16:11 Song of Solomon 4:3. Other comforts cannot reach the soul, and therefore they cannot fill nor satisfy the soul. Seventhly, they comfort in saddest distresses, in the darkest night, and in the most stormy day, Psalms 94:19 Hebrews 3:7-8. Eighthly, they are everlasting, 2 Thessalonians 2:16. The joy of the wicked is but as a glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking; but the joy of the saints is lasting. --Thomas Brooks.

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

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

**Verse 50.** -- *Thy word hath quickened me.* It made me alive when I was dead in sin; it has many a

time made me lively when I was dead in duty; it has quickened me to that which is good, when I was backward and averse to it; and it has quickened me in that which is good, when I was cold and indifferent. --Matthew Henry.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 50.** -- Each man has his own affliction and his own consolation. Quickened piety the best comfort. The word the means of it.

**Verse 50.** --

1. The need of consolation.
2. The consolation needed. --G.R.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 51.** The proud have had me greatly in derision. Proud men never love gracious men, and as they fear them they veil their fear under a pretended contempt. In this case their hatred revealed itself in ridicule, and that ridicule was loud and long. When they wanted sport they made sport of David because he was God's servant. Men must have strange eyes to be able to see a farce in faith, and a comedy in holiness; yet it is sadly the case that men who are short of wit can generally provoke a broad grin by jesting at a saint. Conceited sinners make footballs of godly men. They call it roaring fun to caricature a faithful member of "The Holy Club"; his methods of careful living are the material for their jokes about "the Methodist"; and his hatred of sin sets their tongues wagging at long faced Puritanism, and straitlaced hypocrisy. If David was greatly derided, we may not expect to escape the scorn of the ungodly. There are hosts of proud men still upon the lace of the earth, and if they find a believer in affliction they will be mean enough and cruel enough to make jests at his expense. It is the nature of the son of the bondwoman to mock the child of the promise.

Yet have I not declined from thy law. Thus the deriders missed their aim: they laughed, but they did not win. The godly man, so far from turning aside from the right way, did not even slacken his pace, or in any sense fall off from his holy habits. Many would have declined, many have declined, but David did not do so. It is paying too much honour to fools to yield half a point to them. Their



unhallowed mirth will not harm us if dogs pay no attention to it, even as the moon suffers nothing from the dogs that bay at her. God's law is our highway of peace and safety, and those who would laugh us out of it wish us no good.

From Psalms 119:61 we note that David was not overcome by the spoiling of his goods any more than by these cruel mockings. See also Psalms 119:157, where the multitude of persecutors and enemies were baffled in their attempts to make him decline from God's ways.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 51.** -- *The proud, etc.* Scoffing proceedeth from pride. Proverbs 3:34 1 Peter 5:5. --John Trapp.

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

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

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 51.** -- The proud man's contumely, and the gracious man's constancy.

**Verse 51.** -- Fidelity in the face of contempt.

1. The proud deride the believer's subjection to God's law.
2. They ridicule the believer's delight, in God's service.
3. They are met by the believer's resolution to cleave to God. 2 Samuel 6:20,22. -- C.A.D.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 52.** I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself. He had asked the Lord to remember, and here he remembers God and his judgments. When we see no present display of the divine power it is wise to fall back upon the records of former ages, since they are just as available as if the transactions were of yesterday, seeing the Lord is always the same. Our true comfort must be found in what our God works on behalf of truth and right, and as the histories of the olden times are full of divine interpositions it is well to be thoroughly acquainted with them. Moreover, if we are advanced in years we have the providence of our early days to review, and these should by no means be forgotten or left out of our thoughts. The argument is good and solid: he who has shown himself strong on behalf of his believing people is the immutable God, and therefore we may expect deliverance at his hands. The grinning of the proud will not trouble us when we remember how the Lord dealt with their predecessors in by gone periods; he destroyed them at the deluge, he confounded them at Babel, he drowned them at the Red Sea, he drove them out of Canaan: he has in all ages bared his arm against the haughty, and broken them as potters' vessels. While in our own hearts we humbly drink of the mercy of God in quietude, we are not without comfort in seasons of turmoil and derision; for then we resort to God's justice, and remember how he scoffs at the scoffers: "He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh, the Lord doth have them in derision."

When he was greatly derided the Psalmist did not sit down in despair, but rallied his spirits He knew that comfort is needful for strength in service, and for the endurance of persecution, and therefore he comforted himself. In doing this he resorted not so much to the sweet as to the stern side of the Lord's dealings, and dwelt upon his judgments. If we can find sweetness in the divine justice, how much more shall we perceive it in divine love and grace. How thoroughly must that man be at peace with God who can find comfort, not only in his promises, but in his judgments. Even the terrible things of God are cheering to believers. They know that nothing is more to the advantage of all God's creatures than to be ruled by a strong hand which will deal out justice. The righteous man, has no fear of the ruler's sword, which is only a terror to evil doers. When the godly man is unjustly treated he finds comfort in the fact that there is a Judge of all the earth who will avenge his own elect, and redress the ills of these disordered times.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

**Verse 52.** -- *I remembered thy judgments.* He remembered that at the beginning Adam, because of transgression of the divine command, was cast out from dwelling in Paradise; and that Cain,

condemned by the authority of the divine sentence, paid the price of his parricidal crime; that Enoch, caught up to heaven because of his devotion, escaped the poison of earthly wickedness: that Noah, because of righteousness the victor of the deluge, became the survivor of the human race; that Abraham, because of faith, diffused the seed of his posterity through the whole earth; that Israel, because of the patient bearing of troubles, consecrated a believing people by the sign of his own name; that David himself, because of gentleness, having had regal honour conferred, was preferred to his elder brothers. --Ambrose.

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

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

1. It must be remembered that judgment implies both parts of God's righteous dispensation, the deliverance of the godly, and the punishment of the wicked. Now, in the first sense there is no ground of scruple, for it is said, "Judgment shall return unto righteousness" (Psalms 94:15); the sufferings of good men shall be turned into the greatest advantages, as the context showeth that God will not cast off his people, but judgment shall return unto righteousness.
2. Judgment, as it signifieth punishment of the wicked, may yet be a comfort, not as it imports the calamity of any, but either, --
  - a. When the wicked is punished, the snare and allurement to sin is taken away, which is the hope of impunity; for by their punishment men see that it is dangerous to sin against God: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa 26:9); the snare is removed from many a soul.
  - (b) Their derision and mocking of godliness ceaseth, they do no longer vex and pierce the souls of the godly, saying, "Aha, aha" (Psalms 40:15); it is as a wound to their heart when they say, "Where is thy God?" (Psalms 42:10). Judgment slayeth this evil.
  - (c) The impediments and hindrances of worshipping and serving God are taken away: when the nettles are rooted up, the corn hath the more room to grow.

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

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

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

**Verse 52,55.** -- *I remembered thy judgments,* "thy name in the night." Thomas Fuller thus writes in his "David's Heartie Repentance": --

"For sundry duties he did dayes deride. Making exchange of worke his recreation; For prayer he set the precious morne aside. The midday he bequeathed to meditation: Sweete sacred stories he reserved for night. To reade of Moses' meeknes, Sampson's might: These were his joy, these onely his delight."

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 52.** -- Comfort derived from a review of the ancient doings of the Lord towards the wicked and his people.

**Verse 52.** --

1. The dead speaking to the living.
2. The living listening to the dead. --G.R.

**Verse 52.** -- Sweet water from a dark well.

1. God's judgments are calculated to inspire terror.
2. But they prove God's superintending care over the world.
3. They are ever against sin, and for holiness.
4. In all times of judgment God delivers his people. Noah, Lot, etc.
5. Therefore God's judgments are a source of comfort to the believer. --G.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 53.** Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. He was horrified at their action, at the pride which led them to it, and at the punishment which would be sure to fall upon them for it. When he thought upon the ancient judgments of God he was filled with terror at the fate of the godless; as well he might be. Their laughter had not distressed him, but he was distressed by a foresight of their overthrow. Truths which were amusement to them caused amazement to him. He saw them utterly turning away from the law of God, and leaving it as a path forsaken and over grown from want of traffic, and this forsaking of the law filled him with the most painful emotions: he was astonished at their wickedness, stunned by their presumption, alarmed by the expectation of their sudden overthrow, amazed by the terror of their certain doom.

See [Psalms 119:106,158](#), and note the tenderness which combined with all this. Those who are the firmest believers in the eternal punishment of the wicked are the most grieved at their doom. It is no proof of tenderness to shut one's eyes to the awful doom of the ungodly. Compassion is far better shown in trying to save sinners than in trying to make things pleasant all round. Oh that we were all more distressed as we think of the portion of the ungodly in the lake of fire! The popular plan is to shut your eyes and forget all about it, or pretend to doubt it; but this is not the way of the faithful servant of God.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 53.** -- *Horror hath taken hold upon me*, etc. Oh who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable; for who knows the power of God's anger?

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

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

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

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

well from him, exercising not only the skill of science but also benignity of disposition. Even so, a righteous man, when he is treated with contempt, does not turn away, but when he is calumniated he regards it as madness, not as depravity; and desires rather to apply his own remedy to the wound, and sympathises, and grieves not for himself but for him who labours under an incurable disease. --Ambrose.

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

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

1. In law itself; law, as a rule of order; law, as a guide of conduct; law, as a security for safety.
2. In such a law as that of God: -- so pure, so holy, so fitted to promote the happiness of man.
3. In the stability of that law, as constituting his own personal security, the ground of his hope.
4. In law in its influence on the universe, preserving order and securing harmony, -- Albert Barnes.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 53.** -- The sensations of godly men at the sight of sinners: horror at their crime, their perseverance in it, their rejection of grace, and their end.

**Verse 53.** -- Horror stricken.

1. The guilt and danger of impenitent sinners.
2. The horror and concern of godly spectators.
3. The prayer and labour which such concern should dictate, --G.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 54.** Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Like others of God's servants, David knew that he was not at home in this world, but a pilgrim through it, seeking a better

country. He did not, however, sigh over this fact, but he sang about it. He tells us nothing about his pilgrim sighs, but speaks of his pilgrim songs. Even the palace in which he dwelt was but "the house of his pilgrimage," the inn at which he rested, the station at which he halted for a little while. Men are wont to sing when they come to their inn, and so did this godly sojourner; he sang the songs of Zion, the statutes of the great King. The commands of God were as well known to him as the ballads of his country, and they were pleasant to his taste and musical to his ear. Happy is the heart which finds its joy in the commands of God, and makes obedience its recreation. When religion is set to music it goes well. When we sing in the ways of the Lord it shows that our hearts are in them. Ours are pilgrim psalms, songs of degrees; but they are such as we may sing throughout eternity; for the statutes of the Lord are the psalmody of heaven itself.

Saints find horror in sin, and harmony in holiness. The wicked shun the law, and the righteous sing of it. In past days we have sung the Lord's statutes, and in this fact we may find comfort in present affliction. Since our songs are so very different from those of the proud, we may expect to join a very different choir at the last, and sing in a place far removed from their abode.

Note how in the sixth verses of their respective octaves we often find resolves to bless God, or records of testimony. In Psalms 119:46 it is, "I will speak," and in Psalms 119:2, "I will give thanks," while here he speaks of songs.

**Verse 54.** -- Thy statutes have been my songs. In the early ages it was customary to versify the laws, that the people might learn them by heart, and sing them. -- Williams.

**Verse 54.** -- Thy statutes have been my songs. God's statutes are here his "songs," which give him spiritual refreshing, sweeten the hardships of the pilgrimage: and measure and hasten his steps. --Franz Delitzsch.

**Verse 54.** -- Songs. Travellers sing to deceive the tediousness of the way; so did David; and hereby he solaced himself under that horror which he speaks of in verse Psalms 119:53. Great is the comfort that cometh in by singing of Psalms with grace in our hearts. -- John Trapp.

**Verse 54.** -- "Songs."

"Such songs have power to quiet

The restless pulse of care,

And come like the benediction

That follows after prayer."

"And the night shall be filled with music, And the cares that infest the day Shall fold their tents like the Arabs, And as silently steal away." --Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882).

**Verse 54.** -- Songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Wherefore is everything like warmth in religion branded with the name of enthusiasm? Warmth is expected in the poet, in the musician, in the scholar, in the lover and even in the tradesman it is allowed, if not commended -- why then is it



condemned in the concerns of the soul -- a subject which, infinitely above all others, demands and deserves all the energy of the mind? Would a prisoner exult at the proclamation of deliverance, and is the redeemed sinner to walk forth from his bondage, unmoved, unaffected, without gratitude or joy? No, "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Shall the condemned criminal feel I know not what emotions, when instead of the execution of the sentence he receives a pardon? and is the absolved transgressor to be senseless and silent? No. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Other travellers are accustomed to relieve the tediousness of their journey with a song. The Israelites, when they repaired from the extremities of the country three times a year to Jerusalem to worship, had songs appointed for the purpose, and travelled singing as they went. And of the righteous it is said, "They shall sing in the ways of the Lord. The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." --William Jay.

**Verse 54.** -- Songs in the house of my pilgrimage. See how the Lord in his wise dispensation attempers himself to our infirmities. Our life is subject to many changes, and God by his word hath provided for us also many instructions and remedies. Every cross hath its own remedy, and every state of life its own instruction. Sometimes our grief is so great that we cannot sing; then let us pray: sometimes our deliverance so joyful that we must break out in thanksgiving; then let us sing. "If any man among you be afflicted, let him pray; if he be merry, let him sing." Prayers for every cross, and psalms for every deliverance, hath God by his own Spirit penned for us; so that now we are more than inexcusable if we fail in this duty. --William Cowper.

**Verse 54.** -- In the house of my pilgrimage. According to the original, "the house of my pilgrimages"; that is, whatever places I have wandered to during Saul's persecution of me. --Samuel Burder.

**Verse 54.** -- In the house of my pilgrimage. Natablus expounds this of his banishment amongst the Philistines; that when he was put from his native country and kindred, and all other comforts failed him, the word of the Lord furnished matter of joy to him. And indeed, the banishment of God's servants may cast them far from their kindred and acquaintance; but it chaseth them nearer to the Lord, and the Lord nearer to them. Proof of this in Jacob, when he was banished, and lay without, all night in the fields, he found a more familiar presence of God than he did when he slept in the tent with father and mother.

But we may rather, with Basil, refer it to the whole time of David's mortal life: "oranera vitam suam peregrinationera vocare arbitror". So Jacob acknowledgeth to Pharaoh, that his life was a pilgrimage;

and Abraham and Isaac dwelt in the world as strangers.

S. Peter therefore teacheth us as pilgrims to abstain from the lusts of the flesh; and S. Paul, to use this world as if we used it not; for the fashion thereof goeth away. Many ways are we taught this lesson; but slow are we to learn it. Alas, what folly is this, that a man should desire to dwell in the earth, when God calleth him to be a citizen of heaven! Yet great is the comfort we have of this, that the houses wherein we lodge upon earth are but houses of our pilgrimage. The faithful Israelites endured their bondage in Egypt the more patiently, because they knew they were to be delivered from it. If the houses of our servitude were eternal mansions, how lamentable were our condition! But God be thanked, they are but way faring cottages, and houses of our pilgrimage. Such a house was the womb of our mother: if we had been enclosed there for ever, what burden had it been to her, what bondage to ourselves! Such a house will be the grave; of the which we must all say with Job, "The grave shall be my house, and I shall make my bed in the dark." If we were there to abide for ever, how comfortless were our estate. But, God be praised, our mansion house is above; and the houses we exchange here on earth are but the houses of our pilgrimage; and happy is he who can so live in the world as esteeming himself in his own house, in his own bed, yea, in his own body, to be but a stranger, in respect of his absence from the Lord. --William Cowper.

**Verse 54.** -- My pilgrimage. If men have been termed pilgrims, and life a journey, then we may add that the Christian pilgrimage far surpasses all others in the following important particulars: -- in the goodness of the road, in the beauty of the prospects, in the excellence of the company, and in the vast superiority of the accommodation provided for the Christian traveller when he has finished his course. --H.G. Salter, in "The Book of Illustrations", 1840.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 54.** -- Here is --

1. Light in darkness.
2. Companionship in solitude.
3. Activity in rest: "house of pilgrimage." --G.R.

**Verse 54.** -- The cheerful pilgrim.

1. A good man views his residence in this world as only the house of his pilgrimage.
2. The situation, however disadvantageous, admits of cheerfulness.
3. The sources of his joy are derived from the Scriptures. --W. Jay.

**Verse 54.** -- See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1652: "The Singing Pilgrim."

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 55.** I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night. When others slept I woke to think of thee, thy person, thy actions, thy covenant, thy name, under which last term he comprehends the

divine character as far as it is revealed. He was so earnest after the living God that he woke up at dead of night to think upon him. These were David's Night Thoughts. If they were not Sunny Memories they were memories of the Sun of Righteousness. It is well when our memory furnishes us with consolation, so that we can say with the Psalmist, -- Having early been taught to know thee, I had only to remember the lessons of thy grace, and my heart was comforted. This verse shows not only that the man of God had remembered, but that he still remembered the Lord his God. We are to hallow the name of God, and we cannot do so if it slips from our memory.

And have kept thy law. He found sanctification through meditation; by the thoughts of the night he ruled the actions of the day. As the actions of the day often create the dreams of the night, so do the thoughts of the night produce the deeds of the day. If we do not keep the name of God in our memory we shall not keep the law of God in our conduct. Forgetfulness of mind leads up to forgetfulness of life.

When we hear the night songs of revellers we have in them sure evidence that they do not keep God's law; but the quiet musings of gracious men are proof positive that the name of the Lord is dear to them. We may judge of nations by their songs, and so we may of men; and in the case of the righteous, their singing and their thinking are both indications of their love to God: whether they lift up their voices, or sit in silence, they are still the Lord's. Blessed are the men whose "night thoughts" are memories of the eternal light; they shall be remembered of their Lord when the night of death comes on. Reader, are your thoughts in the dark full of light, because full of God? Is his name the natural subject of your evening reflections? Then it will give a tone to your morning and noonday hours. Or do you give your whole mind to the fleeting cares and pleasures of this world? If so, it is little wonder that you do not live as you ought to do, No man is holy by chance. If we have no memory for the name of Jehovah we are not likely to remember his commandments: if we do not think of him secretly we shall not obey him openly.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

remembrance of it; yea, though he was shrouded in darkness, yet he was as solicitous to cherish the remembrance of God as if he occupied the most public and conspicuous place. --John Calvin.

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

**Verse 55.** -- *I have remembered thy name*, O Lord, in the night. This verse contains a new protestation of his honest affection toward the word of God. Wherein, first, let us mark his sincerity; he was religious not only in public, but in private; for private exercises are the surest trials of true religion. In public, oftentimes hypocrisy carries men to simulate that which they are not; it is not so in the private devotion; for then, either doth a man, if he make no conscience of God's worship, utterly neglect it, because there is no eye of man to see him; or otherwise if he be indeed religious, even in private he presents his heart to God, seeking it to be approved by him; for his "praise is not of man, but of God."

Again, this argues his fervency in religion: for as elsewhere he protests that he loved the word more than his appointed food; so here he protests that he gave up his night's rest that he might meditate in the word. But now, so far is zeal decayed in professors, that they will not forego their superfluities, far less their needful refreshment, for love of the word of God. --William Cowper.

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

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

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

been left alone with God. --Daniel March, in "Night unto Night." 1880.

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

**Verse 55.** -- *The night.*

"Dear night! this world's defeat;  
The stop to busy fools; Care's check and curb;  
The day of spirits, my soul's calm retreat

Which none disturb!

Christ's progress, and his prayer time;  
The hours to which high heaven doth chime."

"God's silent, searching flight;  
When my Lord's head is filled with dew, and all  
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night;

His still, soft call;

His knocking time; the soul's dumb watch,  
When spirits their fair kindred catch." --Henry Vaughan, 1621-1695.

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

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

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

**Verse 55-56.** -- *He that delights to keep God's law,* God will give him more grace to keep it, according to that remarkable text, "I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts." What had David for keeping God's precepts? He had power to keep his law; that is, to grow and increase in keeping of it. As the prophet ([Hosea 6:8](#)) speaks of the knowledge of God: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord"; that is, if we industriously labour to know God, we shall have this reward, to be made able to know him more. So may I say of the grace of God: he that delights to keep God's law shall have his reward, -- to be enabled to keep it more perfectly. A true delight in God's word is grace increasing. Grace is the

mother of all true joy ([Isaiah 32:17](#)), and joy is as the daughter, and the mother and daughter live and die together. --Edmund Calamy (1600-1666), in "The Godly Man's Ark."

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 55,49.** -- "Remember." "I have remembered."

**Verse 55.** -- Night memories. Day duties. How they act and react upon each other.

**Verse 55.** -- Dark nights. Bright memories. Right results. --C.A.D.

**Verse 55.** --

1. Happy though restless night.
2. Happy though busy day. --W.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 56.** This I had, because I kept thy precepts. He had this comfort, this remembrance of God, this power to sing, this courage to face the enemy, this hope in the promise, because he had earnestly observed the commands of God, and striven to walk in them. We are not rewarded for our works, but there is a reward in them. Many a comfort is obtainable only by careful living: we can surely say of such consolations, "This I had because I kept thy precepts." How can we defy ridicule if we are living inconsistently? how can we comfortably remember the name of the Lord if we live carelessly? It may be that David means that he had been enabled to keep the law because he had attended to the separate precepts: he had taken the commands in detail, and so had reached to holiness of life. Or, by keeping certain of the precepts he had gained spiritual strength to keep others: for God gives more grace to those who have some measure of it, and those who improve their talents shall find themselves improving. It may be best to leave the passage open just as our version does; so that we may say of a thousand priceless blessings, "these came to us in the way of obedience." All our possessions are the gifts of grace, and yet some of them come in the shape of reward; yet even then the reward is not of debt, but of grace. God first works in us good works, and then rewards us for them.

Here we have an apt conclusion to this section of the psalm, for this verse is a strong argument for the prayer with which the section commenced. The sweet singer had evidence of having kept God's precepts, and therefore he could the more properly beg the Lord to keep his promises. All through the passage we may find pleas, especially in the two remembers. "I have remembered thy judgments," and "I have remembered thy name"; "Remember thy word unto thy servant."

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 56.** -- *This I had*, because I kept thy precepts. As sin is a punishment of sin, and the wicked waxeth ever worse and worse; so godliness is the recompense of godliness. The right use of one talent increaseth more, and the beginnings of godliness are blessed with a growth of godliness.

David's good exercises here held him in memory of his God, and the memory of God made him more godly and religious. --William Cowper.

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

**Verse 56.** -- *This I had*, that is, this happened to me, etc. I experienced many evils and adversities; but, on the other hand, I drew sweetest consolations from the word, and I was crowned with many blessings from God.

Others thus render it, This is my business, This I care for and desire, to keep thy commandments; i.e., to hold fast the doctrine incorrupt with faith and a good conscience. - -D.H. Mollerus.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 56.** -- *David saith indefinitely*, "This I had"; not telling us what good or privilege it was; only in the general, it was some benefit that accrued to him in this life. He doth not say, This I hope for; but,

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 56.** -- The gains of godliness; or, what a man gets through holy living.

**Verse 56.** --

1. The duty: "I kept thy precepts."
2. Its reward: "This I had," etc. Protection: "this I had." Guidance: "this I had." Prosperity: "this I had." Consolation: "this I had." --G.R.

#### **EXPOSITION**

In this section the Psalmist seems to take firm hold upon God himself; appropriating him ([Psalms 119:57](#)), crying out for him ([Psalms 119:58](#)), returning to him ([Psalms 119:59](#)), solacing himself in him ([Psalms 119:61-62](#)), associating with his people ([Psalms 119:63](#)), and sighing for personal experience of his goodness ([Psalms 119:64](#)). Note how the first verse of this octave is linked to the last of the former one, of which indeed it is an expanded repetition. "This I had because I kept thy precepts. Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words."

**Verse 57.** Thou art my portion, O LORD. A broken sentence. The translators have mended it by insertions, but perhaps it had been better to have left it alone, and then it would have appeared as an exclamation, -- "My portion, O Lord!" The poet is lost in wonder while he sees that the great and glorious God is all his own! Well might he be so, for there is no possession like Jehovah himself. The form of the sentence expresses joyous recognition and appropriation, -- "My portion, O Jehovah!" David had often seen the prey divided, and heard the victors shouting over it; here he rejoices as one who seizes his share of the spoil; he chooses the Lord to be his part of the treasure. Like the Levites,



he took God to be his portion, and left other matters to those who coveted them. This is a large and lasting heritage, for it includes all, and more than all, and it outlasts all; and yet no man chooses it for himself until God has chosen and renewed him. Who that is truly wise could hesitate for a moment when the infinitely blessed God is set before him to be the object of his choice? David leaped at the opportunity, and grasped the priceless boon. Our author here dares exhibit the title deeds of his portion before the eye of the Lord himself, for he addresses his joyful utterance directly to God whom he boldly calls his own. With much else to choose from, for he was a king, and a man of great resources, he deliberately turns from all the treasures of the world, and declares that the Lord, even Jehovah, is his portion.

I have said that I would keep thy words. We cannot always look back with comfort upon what we have said, but in this instance David had spoken wisely and well. He had declared his choice: he preferred the word of God to the wealth of worldlings. It was his firm resolve to keep -- that is, treasure up and observe -- the words of his God, and as he had aforetime solemnly expressed it in the presence of the Lord himself, so here he confesses the binding obligation of his former vow. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words," and this is a case which he might have quoted as an illustration; for the Psalmist's love to God as his portion led to his keeping the words of God. David took God to be his Prince as well as his Portion. He was confident as to his interest in God, and therefore he was resolute in his obedience to him. Full assurance is a powerful source of holiness. The very words of God are to be stored up; for whether they relate to doctrine, promise, or precept, they are most precious. When the heart is determined to keep these words, and has registered its purpose in the court of heaven, it is prepared for all the temptations and trials that may befall it; for, with God as its heritage, it is always in good case.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

1. Such as God hath chosen and effectually called, they get grace to make God their choice, their delight, and their portion; and such as have chosen God for their portion have an evidence of their regeneration and election also; for here David maketh this a mark of his regeneration: Thou art my portion.
2. It is another mark of regeneration, after believing in God, and choosing him for our portion, to resolve to bring forth the fruits of faith in new obedience, as David did: I have said that I would keep thy words.

3. As it is usual for God's children, now and then because of sin falling out, to be exercised with a sense of God's displeasure, so it is a mark of a new creature not to lie stupid and senseless under this exercise, but to deal with God earnestly, for restoring the sense of reconciliation, and giving new experience of his mercy, as the Psalmist did; I intreated thy favour with my whole heart; and this is the third evidence of a new creature.
4. The penitent believer hath the word of grace and the covenant of God for his assurance to be heard when he seeketh mercy: Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
5. The searching in what condition we are in, and examination of our ways according to the word, and renewing of repentance, with an endeavour of amendment, is a fourth mark of a new creature: I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
6. When we do see our sin we are naturally slow to amend our doings; but the sooner we turn us to the way of God's obedience, we speed the better, and the more speedy the reforming of our life be, the more sound mark is it of a new creature: I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.
7. Enduring of persecution and spoiling of our goods, for adhering to God's word, without forsaking of his cause, is a fifth mark of a new creature: The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.
8. As it is the lot of God's children who resolve to be godly, to suffer persecution, and to be forced either to lose their temporal goods or else to lose a good cause and a good conscience; so it is the wisdom of the godly to remember what the Lord's word requireth of us and speaketh unto us, and this shall comfort our conscience more than the loss of things temporal can trouble our minds: The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.
9. A sixth mark of a new creature is, to be so far from fretting under hard exercise as to thank God in secret cheerfully for his gracious word, and for all the passages of his providence, where none seeth us, and where there is no hazard of ostentation: At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.
10. A seventh mark of a renewed creature is, to associate ourselves and keep communion with such as are truly gracious, and do fear God indeed, as we are able to discern them: I am a companion of all them that fear thee.
11. The fear of God is evidenced by believing and obeying the doctrine and direction of the Scripture, and no other ways: I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.
12. The eighth mark of a new creature is, not to rest in any measure of renovation, but earnestly to deal with God for the increase of saving knowledge, and fruitful obedience of it; for, Teach me thy statutes, is the prayer of the man of God, in whom all the former marks are found.

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

**Verse 57.** *Thou art my portion*, O LORD. The sincerity of this claim may be gathered, because he speaks by way of address to God. He doth not say barely, "He is my portion"; but challengeth God to his face:

Thou art my portion, O LORD. Elsewhere it is said, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul" ([Lamentations 3:24](#)). There he doth not speak it by way of address to God, but he adds, "saith my soul"; but here to God himself, who knows the secrets of the heart. To speak thus of God to God, argues our sincerity, when to God's face we avow our trust and choice; as Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" ([John 21:17](#)). Thomas Manton.

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

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

work against you. John Mason, --1694.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

Verse 57-64. -- The believer's portion. The Lord is the believer's portion ([Psalms 119:57](#)); heartily sought ([Psalms 119:58-60](#)); remaining though all else be taken away ([Psalms 119:61](#)); causing joy even at midnight ([Psalms 119:62](#)), and the selection of congenial company (Ps 119:63-64).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 57.** --

1. The infinite possession: "Thou art my portion, O LORD." Notice --  
(a) A clear distinction made by the Psalmist between his portion and that of the ungodly here and hereafter:

See [Psalms 48:2](#).

(b) positive claim: "Thou art my portion, O LORD." This "portion" is boundless, abiding, appropriate, satisfying, elevating, all of grace.

1. The appropriate resolution: "I have said that I would keep thy words."

a. Notice the preface: "I have said."

(b) The link between the portion possessed and the resolution made.

(c) The work of keeping God's words. Keep him who is the Word -- Christ Jesus. Keep the word of the gospel -- doctrines, precepts, promises (kept in the heart to comfort the believer). This blessed subject suggests a solemn contrast. See the portion of that servant who did not keep his Lord's word: Matthew 24:48-51. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1372: "God our Portion, and his Word our Treasure."

**Verse 57.** (first clause). -- The believer's portion.

1. Show the validity of his claim: "my."

(a) A gift by covenant: Hebrews 8:10-13.

(b) Involved in joint heirship with Christ: Romans 8:17.

(c) Confirmed by the experience of faith.

1. Survey the superlative value of his possession: "The Lord."

(a) Absolutely good.

(b) Infinitely precious.

(c) Inexhaustibly full.

(d) Everlastingly sure.

1. Suggest a method of deriving the greatest present advantage from it.

a. Meditate much upon God, under the conviction that he is your portion.

(b) Carry all cares to him, and cast every burden on him.

(c) Refer every temptation to the word of his law, and every doubt to the word of his promise.

(d) Draw largely upon his riches to meet every need as it arises. --John Field, of Sevenoaks, 1882.

**Verse 57-58.** -- The believer's estate, profession, and petition.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 58.** I intreated thy favour with my whole heart. A fully assured possession of God does not set aside prayer, but rather urges us to it; he who knows God to be his God will seek his face, longing for his presence. Seeking God's presence is the idea conveyed by the marginal reading, "thy face," and this is true to the Hebrew. The presence of God is the highest form of his favour, and therefore it is the most urgent desire of gracious souls: the light of his countenance gives us an antepast of heaven. O that we always enjoyed it! The good man entreated God's smile as one who begged for his life, and the entire strength of his desire went with the entreaty. Such eager pleadings are sure of success; that which comes from our heart will certainly go to God's heart. The whole of God's favours are ready for those who seek them with their whole hearts.

Be merciful unto me according to thy word. He has entreated favour, and the form in which he most needs it is that of mercy, for he is more a sinner than anything else. He asks nothing beyond the promise, he only begs for such mercy as the word reveals. And what more could he want or wish for? God has revealed such an infinity of mercy in his word that it would be impossible to conceive of more. See how the Psalmist dwells upon favour and mercy, he never dreams of merit. He does not demand, but entreat; for he feels his own unworthiness. Note how he remains a suppliant, though he knows that he has all things in his God. God is his portion, and yet he begs for a look at his face. The idea of any other standing before God than that of an undeserving but favoured one never entered his head. Here we have his "Be merciful unto me" rising with as much intensity of humble pleading as if he still remained among the most trembling of penitents. The confidence of faith makes us bold in prayer, but it never teaches us to live without prayer, or justifies us in being other than humble beggars at mercy's gate.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

**Verse 58.** -- *With my whole heart.* Prayer is chiefly a heart work. God heareth the heart without the

mouth, but never heareth the mouth acceptably without the heart. -- Walter Marshall.

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

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 58.** -- The soul's sunshine.

1. God's favour the one thing needful.
2. Wholeheartedness the one mode of entreating it.
3. Covenant mercy the one plea for obtaining it. --C.A.D.

**Verse 58.** -- We may learn how a seeker may come to enjoy saving favour, by a careful study of --

1. The Profession: "I intreated thy favour with my whole heart."

(a) What he did: "I intreated." Heb. "I painfully sought thy face." Earnest desire. Importunate supplication.

Painful sorrow for sin.

(b) How he did it: "With my whole heart." The intellect, affections, will, all engaged and concentrating effort.

Otherwise, seeking is solemn trifling. This only worthy of our purpose, pleasing to God, and successful.

(c) The evidence that we are doing it. Frequent prayer, searching the word, often enquiring. The first and main business -- Giving up for Christ.

1. The Petition: "Be merciful unto me."

(a) God's favour to be expected on the terms of mercy only.

(b) Happily, this is a prayer every sinner can and should use.

(c) Blessedly true it is, that it never fails.

1. The Plea: "According to thy word."

(a) A plea that cannot be gainsaid is a great thing in an entreaty.

(b) The promise of God is just such a plea.

(c) Seek it out, lay hold of it, and urge it. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 59.** I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. While studying the word he was led to study his own life, and this caused a mighty revolution. He came to the word, and then he came to himself, and this made him arise and go to his Father. Consideration is the commencement of conversion: first we think and then we turn. When the mind repents of ill ways the feet are soon led into good ways; but there will be no repenting until there is deep, earnest thought. Many men are averse to thought of any kind, and as to thought upon their ways, they cannot endure it, for their ways will not bear thinking of. David's ways had not been all that he could have wished them to be, and so his thoughts were sobered over with the pale cast of regret; but he did not end with idle lamentations, he set about a practical amendment; he turned and returned, he sought the testimonies of the Lord, and hastened to enjoy once more the conscious favour of his heavenly friend. Action without thought is folly, and thought without action is sloth: to think carefully and then to act promptly is a happy



combination. He had entreated for renewed fellowship, and now he proved the genuineness of his desire by renewed obedience. If we are in the dark, and mourn an absent God, our wisest method will be not so much to think upon our sorrows as upon our ways: though we cannot turn the course of providence, we can turn the way of our walking, and this will soon mend matters. If we can get our feet right as to holy walking, we shall soon get our hearts right as to happy living. God will turn to his saints when they turn to him; yea, he has already favoured them with the light of his face when they begin to think and turn.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

**Verse 59.** -- *I thought on my ways*, etc. The Hebrew word *bct* that is here used for thinking, signifies to think on a man's ways accurately, advisedly, seriously, studiously, curiously. This holy man of God thought exactly and curiously on all his purposes and practices, on all his doings and sayings, on all his words and works, and finding too many of them to be short of the rule, yea, to be against the rule, he turned his feet to God's testimonies; having found out his errors, upon a diligent search, a strict scrutiny, he turned over a new leaf, and framed his course more exactly by rule. O Christians, you must look as well to your spiritual wants as to your spiritual enjoyments; you must look as well to your

layings out as to your layings up; you must look as well forward to what you should be, as backward to what you are. Certainly that Christian will never be eminent in holiness that hath many eyes to behold a little holiness, and never an eye to see his further want of holiness. --Thomas Brooks.

**Verse 59.** -- *I thought on my ways.* The word signifies a fixed, abiding thought. Some make it an allusion to those that work embroidery; that are very exact and careful to cover the least flaw; or to those that cast accounts. Reckon with yourselves, What do I owe? what am I worth? "I thought" not only on my wealth, as the covetous man, Psalms 69:11; but "on my ways"; not what I have, but what I do; because what we do will follow us into another world, when what we have must be left behind. Many are critical enough in their remarks upon other people's ways that never think of their own, but "let every man prove his own work."

This account which David here gives of himself may refer either to his constant practice every day; he reflected on his ways at night, directed his feet to God's testimonies in the morning, and what his hand found to do that was good he did it without delay: or it may refer to his first acquaintance with God and religion, when he began to throw off the vanity of childhood and youth, and to remember his Creator; that blessed change was by the grace of God thus wrought. Note,

1. Conversion begins in serious consideration; Ezekiel 18:28; Luke 15:17.
2. Consideration must end in a sound conversion. To what purpose have we thought on our ways, if we do not turn our feet with all speed to God's testimonies? --Matthew Henry.

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

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

**Verse 59.** -- *And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* Mentioning this passage, Philip Henry

observed, that the great turn to be made in heart and life is, from all other things to the word of God. Conversion turns us to the word of God, as our touchstone, to examine ourselves, our state, our ways, spirits, doctrines, worships, customs; as our glass, to dress by, James 1; as our rule to walk and work by, Galatians 6:16; as our water, to wash us, Psalms 119:9; as our fire to warm us, Luke 24:32; as our food to nourish us, Job 23:12; as our sword to fight with, Ephesians 6:13-17; as our counsellor, in all our doubts, Psalms 119:24; as our cordial, to comfort us; as our heritage, to enrich us.

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 59.** --

1. Self examination: "I thought on" my private "ways" -- my social ways -- my sacred ways -- my public ways.
2. Its advantages: "And turned my feet," etc. --G.R.

**Verse 59.** --

1. Unthinking and straying.
2. Thinking and turning. --C.A.D.

**Verse 59.** --

1. Conviction.
2. Conversion. --W. D.

**Verse 59.** -- Thinking on our own ways. Enquire,

1. Why so generally neglected?

(a) Want of courage.

(b) Occupied too much.

(c) Unpleasant, and therefore the chief care of many is to banish it.

1. When is it wisely conducted?

(a) When honestly engaged in.

(b) When thoroughly carried out.

(c) When Scripture is made the referee and standard.

1. When Divine help is sought.
2. What end will it serve?

(a) Turn us from our own ways with shame and penitence.

(b) Turn us to God's testimonies with earnestness, reverence, and hopefulness. --J.F.

**Verse 59.** --

1. Right thinking: "I thought on my ways."

(a) That this thought upon his ways caused the Psalmist dissatisfaction is evident.

(b) Right thinking upon our ways will suggest a practical change.

(c) The retrospect we take of our life should suggest that any turn we make should be towards God: "Unto thy testimonies."

(d) Right thinking also suggests that such a turning is possible.

1. Right turning. The turn was --

(a) Complete.

(b) Practical.

(c) Spiritual.

(d) Immediate.

(e) It must be a divine work. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1181: "Thinking and Turning."

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 60.** I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. He made all speed to get back into the royal road from which he had wandered, and to run in that road upon the King's errands. Speed in repentance and speed in obedience are two excellent things. We are too often in haste to sin; O that we may be in a greater hurry to obey. Delay in sin is increase of sin. To be slow to keep the commands is really to break them. There is much evil in a lagging pace when God's command is to be followed. A holy alacrity in service is much to be cultivated. It is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and the preceding verses describe the method of it: we are made to perceive and mourn our errors, we are led to return to the right path, and then we are eager to make up for lost time by dashing forward to fulfil the precept.

Whatever may be the slips and wanderings of an honest heart, there remains enough of true life in it to produce ardent piety when once it is quickened by the visitations of God. The Psalmist entreated for mercy, and when he received it he became eager and vehement in the Lord's ways. He had always loved them, and hence when he was enriched with grace he displayed great vivacity and

delight in them. He made double speed; for positively he "made haste," and negatively he refused to yield to any motive which suggested procrastination, -- he "delayed not." Thus he made rapid advances and accomplished much service, fulfilling thereby the vow which is recorded in Psalms 119:57: "I said that I would keep thy words." The commands which he was so eager to obey were not ordinances of man, but precepts of the Most High. Many are zealots to obey custom and society, and yet they are slack in serving God. It is a crying shame that men should be served post haste, and that God's work should have the go by, or be performed with dreamy negligence.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

**Verse 60.** -- *I made haste*, and delayed not. The original word, which we translate "delayed not", is

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

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

**Verse 60.** -- *I made haste*, and delayed not, etc. In the verse immediately preceding, the man of God speaks of repentance as the fruit of consideration and self examining: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." But when did he turn? for, though we see the evil of our ways, we are naturally slow to get it redressed. Therefore David did not only turn to God, but he did it speedily: we have an account of that in this verse, "I made haste," etc. This readiness in the work of obedience is doubly expressed; affirmatively, and negatively. Affirmatively, "I made haste"; negatively, "I delayed not." This double expression increaseth the sense according to the manner of the Hebrews; as, "I shall not die, but live" ([Psalms 118:17](#)); that is, surely live; so here, "I made haste, and delayed not;" that is, I verily delayed not a moment; as soon as he had thought of his ways, and taken up the resolution to walk closely with God, he did put it into practice. The Septuagint read the words thus, "I was ready, and was not troubled or diverted by fear of danger." Indeed, besides our natural slowness to good, this is one usual ground of delays; we distract ourselves with fears; and, when God hath made known his will to us in many duties, we think of tarrying till the times are more quiet, and favourable to our practice, or till our affairs are in a better posture. A good improvement may be made of that translation; but the words run better, as they run more generally, with us, "I made haste, and delayed not," etc.

David delayed not. When we dare not flatly deny, then we delay. Non vacat, that is the sinner's plea, "I am not at leisure"; but, Non placet, there is the reality. They which were invited to the wedding varnished their denial over with an excuse ([Matthew 22:5](#)). Delay is a denial; for, if they were willing, there would be no excuse. To be rid of importunate and troublesome creditors, we promise them payment another time: though we know our estate will be more wasted by that time, it is but to put them off: so this delay and putting off of God is but a shift. Here is the misery, God always comes unseasonably to a carnal heart. It was the devils that said, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" ([Matthew 8:29](#)). Good things are a torment to a carnal heart; and they always come out of

time. Certainly, that is the best time when the word is pressed upon thy heart with evidence, light, and power, and when God treats with thee about thine eternal peace. --Thomas Manton.

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

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 60.** -- The dangers of delay. The reasons for prompt action.

**Verse 60.** -- A sermon to loiterers.

1. Reflection. Keeping God's commandments is my duty; is my welfare. Commandments delayed may be never kept. Delay is in itself disobedience. Alacrity is the soul of obedience.
2. Resolve. I will make haste and delay not. --C.A.D.

**Verse 60.** --

1. Quick.
2. Sure. --W.D.

**Verse 60.** -- Procrastination considered in its most important application; that is, to religion.

1. This procrastination is irrational.
2. It is unpleasant, disagreeable, painful.
3. It is disgraceful.
4. It is sinful, and that is the highest degree.
5. It is dangerous. --John Angell James.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 61.** The bands of the wicked have robbed me. Aforetime they derided him, and now they have defrauded him. Ungodly men grow worse, and become more and more daring, so that they go from ridicule to robbery. Much of this bold opposition arose from their being banded together: men will dare to do in company what they durst not have thought of alone. When firebrands are laid together there is no telling what a flame they will create. It seems that whole bands of men assailed this one child of God, they are cowardly enough for anything; though they could not kill him, they robbed him; the dogs of Satan will worry saints if they cannot devour them. David's enemies did their utmost: first the serpents hissed, and then they stung. Since words availed not, the wicked fell to blows. How much the ungodly have plundered the saints in all ages, and how often have the righteous borne gladly the spoiling of their goods!

But I have not forgotten thy law. This was well. Neither his sense of injustice, nor his sorrow at his losses, nor his attempts at defence diverted him from the ways of God. He would not do wrong to prevent the suffering of wrong, nor do ill to avenge ill. He carried the law in his heart, and therefore no disturbance of mind could take him off from following it. He might have forgotten himself if he had forgotten the law: as it was, he was ready to forgive and forget the injuries done him, for his heart was taken up with the word of God. The bands of the wicked had not robbed him of his choicest treasure, since they had left him his holiness and his happiness.

Some read this passage, "The bands of the wicked environ me." They hemmed him in, they cut him off from succour, they shut up every avenue of escape, but the man of God had his protector with him; a clear conscience relied upon the promise, and a brave resolve stuck to the precept. He could not be either bribed or bullied into sin. The cordon of the ungodly could not keep God from him, nor him from God: this was because God was his portion, and none could deprive him of it neither by force or fraud. That is true grace which can endure the test: some are barely gracious among the circle of their friends, but this man was holy amid a ring of foes.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

**Verse 61.** -- *The bands of the wicked have robbed me.* Some have it, "Cords of wicked men have



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

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

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

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

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 61.** --

1. Spiritual highway robbery.
2. The traveller keeping his road. Or, what enemies can do, and what they cannot do.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 62.** At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. He was not afraid of the robbers; he rose, not to watch his house, but to praise his God. Midnight is the hour for burglars, and there were bands of them around David, but they did not occupy his thoughts; these were all up and away with the Lord his God. He thought not of thieves, but of thanks; not of what they would steal, but of what he would give to his God. A thankful heart is such a blessing that it drives out fear and makes room for praise. Thanksgiving turns night into day, and consecrates all hours to the worship of God. Every hour is canonical to a saint.

The Psalmist observed posture; he did not lie in bed and praise. There is not much in the position of the body, but there is something, and that something is to be observed whenever it is helpful to devotion and expressive of our diligence or humility. Many kneel without praying, some pray without kneeling; but the best is to kneel and pray: so here, it would have been no virtue to rise without giving thanks, and it would have been no sin to give thanks without rising; but to rise and give thanks is a happy combination. As for the season, it was quiet, lonely, and such as proved his zeal. At midnight he would be unobserved and undisturbed; it was his own time which he saved from his sleep, and so he would be free from the charge of sacrificing public duties to private devotions. Midnight ends one day and begins another, it was therefore meet to give the solemn moments to communion with the Lord. At the turn of the night he turned to his God. He had thanks to give for mercies which God had given: he had on his mind the truth of Ps 119:57, "Thou art my portion," and if anything can make a man sing in the middle of the night that is it.

The righteous doings of the great Judge gladdened the heart of this godly man. His judgments are the terrible side of God, but they have no terror to the righteous; they admire them, and adore the Lord for them: they rise at night to bless God that he will avenge his own elect. Some hate the very

notion of divine justice, and in this they are wide as the poles asunder from this man of God, who was filled with joyful gratitude at the memory of the sentences of the Judge of all the earth. Doubtless in the expression, "thy righteous judgments," David refers also to the written judgments of God upon various points of moral conduct; indeed, all the divine precepts may be viewed in that light; they are all of them the legal decisions of the Supreme Arbiter of right and wrong. David was charmed with these judgments. Like Paul, he could say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." He could not find time enough by day to study the words of divine wisdom, or to bless God for them, and so he gave up his sleep that he might tell out his gratitude for such a law and such a Lawgiver.

This verse is an advance upon the sense of [Psalms 119:52](#), and contains in addition the essence of [Psalms 119:55](#). Our author never repeats himself: though he runs up and down the same scale, his music has an infinite variety. The permutations and combinations which may be formed in connection with a few vital truths are innumerable.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

1. The ardency of his devotion, or his earnest desire to praise God: "at midnight," when sleep doth most invade men's eyes, then he would rise up. His heart was so set upon the praising of God, and the sense of his righteous providence did so affect him, and urge and excite him to this duty, that he would not only employ himself in this work in the daytime, and so show his love to God, but he would rise out of his bed to worship God and celebrate his praise. That which hindereth the sleep of ordinary men, is either the cares of this world, the impatient resentment of injuries, or the sting of an evil conscience: these keep others waking, but David was awaked by a desire to praise God. No hour is unseasonable to a gracious heart: he is expressing his affection to God when others take their rest. Thus we read of our Lord Christ, that he spent whole nights in prayer ([Luke 6:12](#)). It is said of the glorified saints in heaven, that they praise God continually: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" ([Revelation 7:15](#)). Now, holy men, though much hindered by their bodily necessities, will come as near to continual praise as present frailty will permit. Alas, we oftentimes begin the day with some fervency of prayer and praise, but we faint ere the evening comes.
2. His sincerity, seen in his secrecy. David would profess his faith in God when he had no witness by him; "at midnight," when there was no hazard of ostentation. It was a secret cheerfulness and delighting in God: when alone he could have no respect to the applause of men, but only to approve himself to God who seeth in secret. See Christ's direction: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in

secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6). Note also Christ's own practice: "Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35): before day he went into a desert to pray; both time and place implied secrecy.

3. We learn hence the preciousness of time: it was so to David; see how he spendeth the time of his life. We read of David, when he lay down at night, he watered his couch with his tears, after the examination of his heart (Psalms 6:6); at midnight he rose to give thanks; in the morning he prevented the morning watches; and seven times a day he praised God: morning, noon, and night he consecrated. These are all acts of eminent piety. We should not content ourselves with so much grace as will merely serve to save us. Alas! we have much idle time hanging upon our hands: if we would give that to God, it were well.
4. The value of godly exercises above our natural refreshing. The word is sweeter than appointed food: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 13:12). David prefers the praises of God before his sleep and rest in the night. Surely, this should shame us for our sensuality. We can dispense with other things for our vain pleasures: we have done as much for sin, for vain sports, etc.; and shall we not deny ourselves for God?
5. The great reverence to be used in secret adoration. David did not only raise up his spirits to praise God, but rise up out of his bed, to bow the knee to him. Secret duties should be performed with solemnity, not slubbered over. Praise, a special act of adoration, requireth the worship of body and soul. --Thomas Manton.

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

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

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

1. David's holy employment, or the duty promised, giving thanks to God.
2. His earnestness and fervency implied in the time mentioned, "At midnight I will rise"; he would rather interrupt his sleep and rest, than God should want his praise.
3. The cause or matter of his thanksgiving, "because of thy righteous judgments": whereby he meaneth the dispensations of God's providence in delivering the godly and punishing the wicked, according to his word. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 62.** -- *At midnight I will rise to give thanks.* Cares of this world, impatience of wrongs, a bad

conscience, keep awake the ungodly and disturb their sleep (Rivetus); but what I awake for is to give thanks to thee. --A. R. Faussett.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 62.** --

1. The duty of gratitude: "give thanks."
2. The subject for gratitude: "thy righteous judgments."
3. The season for gratitude: at night as well as in the day. --G.R.

**Verse 62.** -- Up in the night. Singing in the night. Reasons for such singular conduct.

**Verse 62.** -- The nightingale.

1. A natural association of thought: "midnight" and "judgments." Exodus 7, etc.
2. An incongruous association of feeling: "thanks" and "judgments."
3. A full justification of this apparent incongruity: "thanks because of thy righteous judgments."
4. A vigorous performance of an incumbent duty: "at midnight I will rise to give thanks." - -C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 63.** I am a companion of all them that fear thee. The last verse said, "I will," and this says, "I am." We can hardly hope to be right in the future unless we are right now. The holy man spent his nights with God and his days with God's people. Those who fear God love those who fear him, and they make small choice in their company so long as the men are truly God fearing. David was a king, and yet he consorted with "all" who feared the Lord, whether they were obscure or famous, poor or rich. He was a fellow commoner of the College of All saints.

He did not select a few specially eminent saints and leave ordinary believers alone. No, he was glad of the society of those who had only the beginning of wisdom in the shape of "the fear of the Lord": he was pleased to sit with them on the lower forms of the school of faith. He looked for inward godly fear, but he also expected to see outward piety in those whom he admitted to his society; hence he adds, and of them that keep thy precepts. If they would keep the Lord's commands the Lord's servant would keep their company. David was known to be on the godly side, he was ever of the Puritanic party: the men of Belial hated him for this, and no doubt despised him for keeping such unfashionable company as that of humble men and women who are straitlaced and religious; but the man of God is by no means ashamed of his associates; so far from this, he even glories to avow his union with them, let his enemies make what they can of it. He found both pleasure and profit in saintly society: he grew better by consorting with the good, and derived honour from keeping right honourable company. What says the reader? Does he relish holy society? Is he at home among gracious people? If so he may derive comfort from the fact. Birds of a feather flock together. A man is known by his company. Those who have no fear of God before their eyes seldom desire the society of

saints; it is too slow, too dull for them. Be this our comfort, that when we are let go by death we shall go to our own company, and those who loved the saints on earth shall be numbered with their in heaven.

There is a measure of parallelism between this seventh of its octave and the seventh or Teth ([Psalms 119:71](#)) and of Jod ([Psalms 119:79](#)); but, as a rule, the similarities which were so manifest in earlier verses are now becoming dim. As the sense deepens, the artificial form of expression is less regarded.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 63.** -- *I am a companion*, etc. He said in the first verse of this section that God was his portion; now he saith, that all the saints of God are his companions. These two go together -- the love of God and the love of his saints. He that loveth not his brother, made in God's image, whom he seeth, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen? Seeing our goodness extends not to the Lord; if it be showed to his saints and excellent ones upon earth, for his sake, it shall be no small argument of our loving affection towards himself.

Godly David, when Jonathan was dead, made diligent inquisition. Is there none of Jonathan's posterity to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake? and at length he found a silly, lame Mephibosheth. So if we enquire diligently, is there none upon earth to whom I may show kindness for Christ's sake who is in heaven? We shall ever find some, to whom whatsoever we do shall be accepted as done to himself.

His great modesty is to be marked. He saith not, I am companion of all that follow thee, but of all that fear thee. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. He places himself among novices in humility, though he excelled ancients in piety. -- William Cowper.

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

**Verse 63.** -- *I am a companion of all them that fear thee*. Birds of a feather will flock together. Servants of the same Lord, if faithful, will join with their fellows, and not with the servants of his enemy. When a man comes to an inn you may give a notable guess for what place he is bound by the company he enquires after. His question, -- "Do you know of any travelling towards London? I should be heartily glad of their company," will speak his mind and his course. If he hear of any bound for another coast he regards them not; but if he know of any honest passengers that are to ride in the same road, and set out for the same city with himself he sends to them, and begs the favour of their good company. This world is an inn, all men are in some sense pilgrims and strangers, they have no

abiding place here. Now the company they enquire after, and delight in, whether those that walk in the "broad way" of the flesh, or those who walk in the "narrow way" of the Spirit, will declare whether they are going towards heaven or towards hell. A wicked man will not desire the company of them who walk in a contrary way, nor a saint delight in their society who go cross to his journey. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The young partridges hatched under a hen go for a time along with her chickens, and keep them company, scraping in the earth together; but when they are grown up, and their wings fit for the purpose, they mount up into the air, and seek for birds of their own nature. A Christian, before his conversion, is brought up under the prince of darkness, and walks in company with his cursed crew, according to the course of this world; but when the Spirit changes his disposition, he quickly changes his companions, and delights only in the saints that are on earth.  
--George Swinnock.

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

1. The person speaking. The disparity of the persons is to be observed. David, who was a great prophet, yea, a king, yet saith, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee." Christ himself called them his "fellows": "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps 65:7); and therefore David might well say, "I am a companion."
1. The persons spoken of. David saith of "all them that fear thee." The universal particle is to be observed; not only some, but "all": when any lighted upon him, or he upon any of them, they were welcome to him. How well would it be for the world, if the great potentates of the earth would thus think, speak, and do, "I am a companion, of all them that fear thee." Self love reigneth in most men: we love the rich and despise the poor, and so have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons ([James 2:1](#)): therefore this universality is to be regarded. Hearing of your faith and love to all the saints ([Ephesians 1:15](#)), to the mean as well as the greatest. Meanness doth not take away church relations ([1 Corinthians 11:20](#)). There are many differences in worldly respects between one Christian and another; yea, in spiritual gifts, some weaker, some stronger; but we must love all; for all are children of one Father, all owned by Christ: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" ([Hebrews 2:11](#)).

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

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

**Verse 63.** -- *A companion, properly is such an one as I do choose to walk and converse with ordinarily in a way of friendship; so that company keeping doth imply three things; first, it is a matter of choice, and therefore relations, as such, are not properly said to be our companions; secondly, it*

implies a constant walking and converse with another, and so it is expressed, Job 34:8 Proverbs 13:20. And, thirdly, this ordinary converse or walking with another, must be in a way of friendship.

--William Bridge, 1600-1670.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 63.** --

1. True religion is friendly.
2. Our friendliness should be catholic.
3. Our friendliness should be discriminating.
4. Such friendliness is most useful.

**Verse 63.** -- Of good and bad company. How to avoid the one, and improve the other. See W. Bridge's Sermon, in his works, vol. v. p. 90. Tegg's edition, 1845.

**Verse 63.** -- The believer's choice of companions.

1. Ought to be decided by their piety: "Them that fear thee."
2. Is directed by their conduct: "Them that keep thy precepts."
3. Should be extended as far as possible: "All."
4. Involves reciprocal obligation: "I am a companion." --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 64.** The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy. David had been exiled, but he had never been driven beyond the range of mercy, for he found the world to be everywhere filled with it. He had wandered in deserts and hidden in caves, and there he had seen and felt the lovingkindness of the Lord. He had learned that far beyond the bounds of the land of promise and She race of Israel the love of Jehovah extended, and in this verse he expressed that large hearted idea of God which is so seldom seen in the modern Jew. How sweet it is to us to know that not only is there mercy all over the world, but there is such an abundance of it that the earth is "full" of it. It is little wonder that the Psalmist, since he knew the Lord to be his portion, hoped to obtain a measure of this mercy for himself, and so was encouraged to pray, teach me thy statutes. It was to him the beau ideal of mercy to be taught of God, and taught in God's own law. He could not think of a greater mercy than this. Surely he who fills the universe with his grace will grant such a request as this to his own child. Let us breathe the desire to the All merciful Jehovah, and we may be assured of its fulfilment.



The first verse of this eight is fragrant with full assurance and strong resolve, and this last verse overflows with a sense of the divine fulness, and of the Psalmist's personal dependence. This is an illustration of the fact that full assurance neither damps prayer nor hinders humility. It would be no error if we said that it creates lowliness and suggests supplication. "Thou art my portion, O Lord," is well followed by "teach me"; for the heir of a great estate should be thoroughly educated, that his behaviour may comport with his fortune. What manner of disciples ought we to be whose inheritance is the Lord of hosts? Those who have God for their Portion long to have him for their Teacher. Moreover, those who have resolved to obey are the most eager to be taught. "I have said that I would keep thy words" is beautifully succeeded by "teach me thy statutes." Those who wish to keep a law are anxious to know all its clauses and provisions lest they should offend through inadvertence. He who does not care to be instructed of the Lord has never honestly resolved to be holy.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 64.** -- *The earth*, O LORD, is full of thy mercy. The molten sea, the shewbread, the sweet incense, the smoke of the sacrifices, Aaron's breastplate, the preaching of the cross, the keys of the kingdom of heaven: do not all these proclaim mercy? Who could enter a sanctuary, search conscience, look up to heaven, pray or sacrifice, call upon God, or think of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, if there were no mercy? Do not all visions, covenants, promises, messages, mysteries, legal purifications, evangelical pacification, confirm this? Yes, mercy is in the air which we breathe, the daily light which shines upon us, the gracious rain of God's inheritance; it is the public spring for all the thirsty, the common hospital for all the needy; all the streets of the church are paved with these stones. What would become of the children if there were not these breasts of consolation? How should the bride, the Lamb's wife, be trimmed, if her bridegroom did not deck her with these habiliments? How should Eden appear like the Garden of God, if it were not watered by these rivers? It is mercy that takes us out of the womb, feeds us in the days of our pilgrimage, furnishes us with spiritual provisions, closes our eyes in peace, and translates us to a secure restingplace. It is the first petitioner's suit, and the first believer's article, the contemplation of Enoch, the confidence of Abraham, the burden of the Prophetic Songs, the glory of all the apostles, the plea of the penitent, the ecstasies of the reconciled, the believer's hosannah, the angel's hallelujah Ordinances, oracles, altars, pulpits, the gates of the grave, and the gates of heaven, do all depend upon mercy. It is the load star of the wandering, the ransom of the captive, the antidote of the tempted, the prophet of the living,

and the effectual comfort of the dying: -- there would not be one regenerate saint upon earth, nor one glorified saint in heaven, if it were not for mercy. -- From G. S. Bowes's "Illustrative Gatherings," 1869.

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

"Why bursts such melody from tree and bush,

The overflowing of each songster's heart,

So filling mine that it can scarcely hush

Awhile to listen, but would take its part?

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

Though countless be the notes, that God is Love.

"Why leaps the streamlet down the mountainside?

Hasting so swiftly to the vale beneath,

To cheer the shepherd's thirsty flock, or glide

Where the hot sun has left a faded wreath,

Or, rippling, aid the music of a grove?

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

"Is it a fallen world on which I gaze?

Am I as deeply fallen as the rest,

Yet joys partaking, past my utmost praise,

Instead of wandering forlorn, unblessed?

It is as if an unseen spirit strove

To grave upon my heart, that God is Love!" Thomas Davis, 1864.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 64.** -- The sum and substance of this verse will be comprised in these five propositions: --

1. That saving knowledge is a benefit that must be asked of God.
2. That this benefit cannot be too often or sufficiently enough asked: it is his continual request.
3. In asking, we are encouraged by the bounty or mercy of God.
4. That God is merciful all his creatures declare.
5. That his goodness to all his creatures should confirm us in: hoping for saving grace or spiritual good things. --T. Manton

**Verse 64.** --

1. Observations in the school of nature.
2. Supplications enter the school of grace.

**Verse 64.** -- The mercy of God in nature and his mercy as revealed in word.

1. The one excellent; the other super excellent.
2. The one easily given; the other coming through a great sacrifice.

3. The one may enjoyed, and even increase condemnation; the other, if enjoyed, is salvation.
4. The one should lead to repentance; the other is s adapted for the penitent's restoration to holiness. --J.F.

## EXPOSITION

In this ninth section the verses all begin with the letter Teth. They are the witness of experience, testifying to the goodness of God, the graciousness of his dealings, and the preciousness of his word. Especially the Psalmist proclaims the excellent uses of adversity, and the goodness of God in afflicting him. The sixty-fifth verse is the text of the entire octave.

**Verse 65.** Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word. This is the summary of his life, and assuredly it is the sum of ours. The Psalmist tells the Lord the verdict of his heart; he cannot be silent, he must speak his gratitude in the, presence of Jehovah, his God. From the universal goodness of God in nature, in Psalms 119:64, it is an easy and pleasant step to a confession of the Lord's uniform goodness to ourselves personally. It is something that God has dealt at all with such insignificant and under serving beings as we are, and it is far more that he has dealt well with us, and so well, so wondrously well. He hath done all things well: the rule has no exception. In providence and in grace, in giving prosperity and sending adversity, in everything Jehovah hath dealt well with us. It is dealing well on our part to tell the Lord that we feel that he hath dealt well with us; for praise of this kind is specially fitting and comely. This kindness of the Lord is, however, no chance matter: he promised to do so, and he has done it according to his word. It is very precious to see the word of the Lord fulfilled in our happy experience; it endears the Scripture to us, and makes us love the Lord of the Scripture. The book of providence tallies with the book of promise: what we read in the page of inspiration we meet with again in the leaves of our life story. We may not have thought that it would be so, but our unbelief is repented of now that we see the mercy of the Lord to us, and his faithfulness to his word; henceforth we are bound to display a firmer faith both in God and in his promise. He has spoken well, and he has dealt well. He is the best of Masters; for it is to a very unworthy and incapable servant that he has acted thus blessedly: does not this cause us to delight in his service more and more? We cannot say that we have dealt well with our Master; for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; but as for our Lord, he has given us light work, large maintenance, loving encouragement, and liberal wages. It is a wonder that he has not long ago discharged us, or at least reduced our allowances, or handled us roughly; yet we have had no hard dealings, all has been ordered with as much consideration as if we had rendered perfect obedience. We have had bread enough and to spare, our livery has been duly supplied, and his service has ennobled us and made us happy as kings. Complaints we have none. We lose ourselves in adoring thanksgiving, and find ourselves again in careful thanks living.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

1. The party dealing is God himself: all good is to be referred to God as the author of it.
2. The benefit received is generally expressed, "Thou hast dealt well." Some translate it out of the Hebrew, "Bonum feeisti", thou hast done good with thy servant; the Septuagint, *krhststhta epoihsaj meta ton doulou sou*, thou hast made goodness to or with thy servant; out of them, the Vulgate, "Bonitatem fecisti". Some take this clause generally, "Whatever thou dost for thy servants is good": they count it so, though it be never so contrary to the interest of the flesh: sickness is good, loss of friends is good; and so are poverty and loss of goods, to an humble and thankful mind. But surely David speaketh here of some supply and deliverance wherein God had made good some promise to him. The Jewish rabbis understand it of his return to the kingdom; but most Christian writers understand it of some spiritual benefit; that good which God had done to him. If anything may be collected from the subsequent verses, it was certainly some spiritual good. The Septuagint repeat *krhstothta* twice in this and the following verse, as if he acknowledged the benefit of that good judgment and knowledge of which there he begs an increase. It was in part given him already, and that learned by afflictions, as we see, in the third verse of this portion: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." His prayer is -- Now, then, go on to increase this work, this goodness which thou hast shown to thy servant.
3. The object, "thy servant": it is an honourable, comfortable style; David delighted in it. God is a bountiful and a gracious master, ready to do good to his servants, rewarding them with grace here, and crowning that grace with glory hereafter: "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). --Thomas Manton.

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

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

accusing conscience is afraid to ask more, because it hath abused the former mercies: but faith, assuring us that all God's benefits are tokens of his love bestowed on us according to his word, is bold to ask for more. --Richard Greenham.

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

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

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

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

God dealt well with him "according to his word," in the sense of dealing with him according to what his word explained was the true good -- not delivering him from all trial, but sending him such trial as he specially required. He felt truly that God had dealt well with him when he could say ([Psalms 119:67](#)), "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." Again, ([Psalms 119:71](#)), "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Such dealing was hard for flesh and blood to bear, but it was indeed "well," in the sense of accomplishing most blessed results.

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

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

According to thy word, O Lord, thou hast dealt well with thy servant. Thy word is the light and lamp

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

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

Let our prayer then for mercy, and strength, and comfort, and understanding, and deliverance, ever be a prayer for these, in the full measure in which they are revealed and promised in the word of God.

--Mary B.M. Duncan (1825- 1865), in "Under the Shadow."

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

Verse 65-72. -- The Lord's dealings. Gratefully acknowledged ([Psalms 119:65](#)), and their instructiveness still desired ([Psalms 119:66](#)), even affliction from him is "good" ([Psalms 119:67-68](#)), and with its beneficial result is preferred to the prosperity of the wicked ([Psalms 119:69-72](#)).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 65.** -- The servant giving his master a character; or, tallying with Scripture: two fruitful themes.

Verse 65. --

1. Experience confirmed by the word.
2. The word by experience. --G.R.

**Verse 65.** -- A servant's story.

1. Although he knew my faults he engaged me.
2. Although I am so far beneath him, yet he familiarly teaches me.
3. Although I am always ailing, he is very kind to me in my afflictions.
4. Although I am one of the meanest of his servants, he permits me to feast his own table.
5. Although I do little work, he will pay me good
6. Although I am to have such great wages, I have very many perquisites.
7. Although my Master is all this to me (can you believe it?) I murmur and repine at him if he crosses me in anything. Application: --
  - a. Does the word: servant "sound like a misnomer?" -- "not

servants...but I have called you friends."

(b) Though he calls me "friend," I shall never cease to call him "Master." --Richard Andrew Griffin, in "Stems and Twigs."

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 66.** Teach me good judgment and knowledge. Again he begs for teaching, as in verse 64, and again he uses God's mercy as an argument. Since God had dealt well with him, he is encouraged to pray for judgment to appreciate the Lord's goodness. Good judgment is the form of goodness which the godly man most needs and most desires, and it is one which the Lord is most ready to bestow. David felt that he had frequently failed in judgment in the matter of the Lord's dealings with him: from want of knowledge he had misjudged the chastening hand of the heavenly Father, and therefore he now asks to be better instructed, since he perceives the injustice which he had done to the Lord by his hasty conclusions. He means to say -- Lord, thou didst deal well with me when I thought thee hard and stern, be pleased to give me more wit, that I may not a second time think so ill of my Lord. A sight of our errors and a sense of our ignorance should make us teachable. We are not able to judge, for our knowledge is so sadly inaccurate and imperfect; if the Lord teaches us knowledge we shall attain to good judgment, but not otherwise. The Holy Ghost alone can fill us with light, and set the understanding upon a proper balance: let us ardently long for his teachings, since it is most desirable that we should be no longer mere children in knowledge and understanding.

For I have believed thy commandments. His heart was right, and therefore he hoped his head would be made right. He had faith, and therefore he hoped to receive wisdom. His mind had been settled in the conviction that the precepts of the word were from the Lord, and were therefore just, wise, kind, and profitable; he believed in holiness, and as that belief is no mean work of grace upon the soul, he looked for yet further operations of divine grace. He who believes the commands is the man to know and understand the doctrines and the promises. If in looking back upon our mistakes and ignorance we can yet see that we heartily loved the precepts of the divine will, we have good reason to hope that we are Christ's disciples, and that he will teach us and make us men of good judgment and sound knowledge. A man who has learned discernment by experience, and has thus become a man of sound judgment, is a valuable member of a church, and the means of much edification to others. Let all who would be greatly useful offer the prayer of this verse: "Teach me good judgment and knowledge."

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 66.** -- *Teach me good judgment*, etc. David, who discovered a holy taste ([Psalms 19:10](#) [104:34](#) [119:103](#)) and recommended it to others ([Psalms 34:8](#)), requests in our text to have it increased. For the word rendered "judgment", properly signifies taste, and denotes that relish for

divine truth, and for the divine goodness and holiness, which is peculiar to true saints. I propose therefore to consider the nature and objects of that spiritual taste which is possessed by every gracious soul, and which all true saints desire to possess in a still greater degree.

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

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

**Verse 66.** -- *Teach me good judgment and knowledge*, etc. Literally it may be rendered thus, -- Teach me goodness, discernment and knowledge; for I have believed or confided in thy commandments. In our system of divine things, we might be inclined to place knowledge and discernment first, as begetting the "goodness." But it is a well ascertained fact, that the intellectual and moral powers are reciprocal -- that the moral also give strength to the intellectual. Moreover, it is only the spiritual man that discerns the things of God. The state of being spiritually minded, and also conversant with divine things, gives a rigour and breadth to the intellect itself, that remarkably



appears in the lives of eminent men. And if you remark that some have been eminent who were devoid of spiritual qualities, the reply might be -- How much more eminent would they have been had they possessed these qualities. The petition is, "Teach me goodness, discernment, and knowledge." The principle of pleasing God may be within, and yet the mind may require to be enlightened in all duty; and again, though all duty be known, we may require spiritual discernment to see and feel it aright. --John Stephen.

**Verse 66.** -- *Teach me good judgment.* In a lecture of Sir John Lubbock's on the fertilization of flowers by the agency of insects, a striking distinction is noted in regard to this operation between beautiful and hideous plants. Bees, it would appear, delight in pleasant odours and bright colours, and invariably choose those plants which give pleasure to man. If we watch the course of these insects on their visit to a garden, we shall observe them settling upon the rose, the lavender, and all other similar agreeable flowers of brilliant hues or sweet scent. In marked contrast with this is the conduct of flies, which always show a preference for livid yellow or dingy red plants, and those which possess an unpleasant smell. The bee is a creature of fine and sensitive tastes. The fly is "a species of insectoid vulture," naturally turning to such vegetable food as resembles carrion. Let two plates be placed on a lawn, at a little distance apart, the one containing that ill scented underground fungus, the Stink horn, and the other a handful of moss roses, and this difference will be immediately discerned. The foul odour and unsightly fungus will soon be covered with flies, while the bees will resort to the plate of roses. To this love of bees for fine colours and fragrant perfumes we are indebted for our choicest flowers. For by taking the pollen dust of some conspicuous flower to the stigma of another, they have by this union produced the seed of a still richer variety. Thus, age after age, many blossoms have been growing increasingly beautiful. On the other hand, strange to say, through a similar process, a progress in the opposite direction has taken place in those plants which are frequented by flies, and their unwholesome and repulsive qualities have become intensified.

So is it with the two great classes into which mankind may be divided -- the men of this world, and the men of the next. While the purified affections of the one centre continually on "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," so the earthward and vile affections of the other fasten on corruption. Not more surely does the laborious bee fly from one beautiful flower to another, than does the Christian seek of set purpose all that is fairest, sweetest, and best on earth. His prayer is that of David, in Ps 119:66, "Teach me good taste" (which is the literal translation); and "if there be any virtue, and if there be any Praise," he thinks on these things. --James Neil, in "Rays from the Realms of Nature", 1879.

**Verse 66.** -- *Good judgment and knowledge.* No blessings are more suitable than "good judgment and knowledge" -- "knowledge" of ourselves, of our Saviour, of the way of obedience -- and "good

judgment" to direct and apply this knowledge to some valuable end. These two parts of our intellectual furniture have a most important connexion and dependence upon each other. "Knowledge" is the speculative perception of general truth. "Judgment" is the practical application of it to the heart and conduct. --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 66.** -- *For I have believed thy commandments.* These words deserve a little consideration, because believing is here joined to an unusual object. Had it been, "for I have believed thy promises," or, "obeyed thy commandments," the sense of the clause had been more obvious to every vulgar apprehension. To believe commandments, sounds as harsh to a common ear, as to see with the ear, and hear with the eye; but, for all this, the commandments are the object; and of them he saith, not, "I have obeyed"; but, "I have believed."

To take off the seeming asperity of the phrase, some interpreters conceive that "commandments" is put for the word in general; and so promises are included, yea, they think, principally intended, especially those promises which encouraged him to look to God for necessary things, such as good judgment and knowledge are. But this interpretation would divert us from the weight and force of these significant words. Therefore let us note, --

1. Certainly there is a faith in the commandments, as well as in the promises. We must believe that God is their author, and that they are the expressions of his commanding and legislative will, which we are bound to obey. Faith must discern the sovereignty and goodness of the law maker and believe that his commands are holy, just, and good; it must also teach us that God loves those who keep his law and is angry with those who transgress, and that he will see to it that His law is vindicated at the last great day.
2. Faith in the commandments is as necessary as faith in the promises; for, as the promises are not esteemed, embraced, and improved, unless they are believed to be of God, so neither are the precepts: they do not sway the conscience, nor incline the affections, except as they are believed to be divine.
3. Faith in the commands must be as lively as faith in the promises. As the promises are not believed with a lively faith, unless they draw off the heart from carnal vanities to seek that happiness which they offer to us; so the precepts are not believed rightly, unless we be fully resolved to acquiesce in them as the only rule to guide us in obtaining that happiness, and unless we are determined to adhere to them, and obey them. As the king's laws are not kept as soon as they are believed to be the king's laws, unless also, upon the consideration of his authority and power, we subject ourselves to them; so this believing notes a ready alacrity to hear God's voice and obey it, and to govern our hearts and actions according to his counsel and direction in the word. -- Thomas Manton.

**Verse 66.** -- *For I have believed thy commandments.* The commandments of God are not alone; but

they have promises of grace on the right hand, and threatenings of wrath on the left: upon both of these faith exercises itself, and without such faith no one will be able to render obedience to God's commands, --Wolfgang Musculus.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 66.** --

1. Singular faith: "I have believed thy commandments."
2. Special petition based upon it: "Teach me."

**Verse 66.** -- The value of a good judgment to sound knowledge.

1. It carefully discriminates between truth and error.
2. It puts each truth in its proper relation to other truths.
3. It holds every truth firmly, but has the greater care for the more important.
4. It rather avoids the curious and the speculative, but really loves the plain and useful.
5. Knowing that truths are rightly held only, when applied, it turns all to practical account.
6. Knowing also, that good food may, under some circumstances, become poisonous, it is careful in its selection and use of truths. --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 67.** Before I was afflicted I went astray. Partly, perhaps, through the absence of trial. Often our trials act as a thorn hedge to keep us in the good pasture, but our prosperity is a gap through which we go astray. If any of us remember a time in which we had no trouble, we also probably recollect that then grace was low and temptation was strong. It may be that some believer cries, "O that it were with me as in those summer days before I was afflicted." Such a sigh is most unwise, and arises from a carnal love of ease: the spiritual man who prizes growth in grace will bless God that those dangerous days are over, and that if the weather be more stormy it is also more healthy. It is well when the mind is open and candid, as in this instance: perhaps David would never have known and confessed his own straying if he had not smarted under the rod. Let us join in his humble acknowledgments, for doubtless we have imitated him in his straying. Why is it that a little ease works in us so much disease? Can we never rest without rusting? Never be filled without waxing fat? Never rise as to one world without going down as to another! What weak creatures we are to be unable to bear a little pleasure! What base hearts are those which turn the abundance of God's goodness into an occasion for sin.

But now have I kept thy word. Grace is in that heart which profits by its chastening. It is of no use to plough barren soil. When there is no spiritual life affliction works no spiritual benefit; but where the heart is sound trouble awakens conscience, wandering is confessed, the soul becomes again obedient to the command, and continues to be so. Whipping will not turn a rebel into a child; but to

the true child a touch of the rod is a sure corrective. In the Psalmist's case the medicine of affliction worked a change -- "but"; an immediate change -- "now"; a lasting change -- "have I" an inward change -- "have I kept"; a change towards God -- "thy word." Before his trouble he wandered, but after it he kept within the hedge of the word, and found good pasture for his soul the trial tethered him to his proper place; it kept him, and then he kept God's word. Sweet are the uses of adversity, and this is one of them, it puts a bridle upon transgression and furnishes a spur for holiness.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

**Verse 67.** -- *I was afflicted*. As men clip the feathers of fowls, when they begin to fly too high or too

far; even so doth God diminish our riches, etc., that we should not pass our bounds, and glory too much of such gifts. --Otho Wermullerus.

**Verse 67.** -- *But now have I kept thy word.*

Affliction brings Man Home.

"Man like a silly sheep doth often stray,

Not knowing of his way,

Blind deserts and the wilderness of sin

He daily travels in;

There's nothing will reduce him sooner than

Afflictions to his pen.

He wanders in the sunshine, but in rain

And stormy weather hastens home again."

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

Me, my unworthy sheep

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

Let foul, then, bring me to it.

Rather than I should perish in my error,

Lord bring me back with terror;

Better I be chastised with thy rod

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

"Though for the present stripes do grieve me sore,

At last they profit more,

And make me to observe thy word, which I

Neglected formerly;

Let me come home rather by weeping cross

Than still be at a loss.

For health I would rather take a bitter pill,

Than eating sweet meats to be always ill." --Thomas Washbourne, 1606-1687.

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

immortality instead. --William Garrett Lewis, in "Westbourne Grove Sermons", 1872.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 67.** --

1. The dangers of prosperity.
2. The benefits of adversity. --G.R.

**Verse 67.** -- The restraining power of affliction

**Verse 67,71,75.** -- Affliction thrice viewed and thrice blessed. I

1. Before affliction: straying.
2. In affliction: learning.
3. After affliction: knowing. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 68.** Thou art good, and doest good. Even in affliction God is good, and does good. This is the confession of experience. God is essential goodness in himself, and in every attribute of his nature he is good in the fullest sense of the term; indeed, he has a monopoly of goodness, for there is none good but one, that is God. His acts are according to his nature: from a pure source flow pure streams. God is not latent and ill active goodness; he displays himself by his doings, he is actively beneficent, he does good. How much good he does no tongue can tell! How good he is no heart can conceive! It is well to worship the Lord as the poet here does by describing him. Facts about God are the best praise of God. All the glory we can give to God is to reflect his own glory upon himself. We can say no more good of God than God is and does. We believe in his goodness, and so honour him by our faith; we admire that goodness, and so glorify him by our love; we declare that goodness, and so magnify him by our testimony.

Teach me thy statutes. The same prayer as before, backed with the same argument. He prays, "Lord be good, and do good to me that I may both be good and do good through thy teaching." The man of God was a learner, and delighted to learn: he ascribed this to the goodness of the Lord, and hoped that for the same reason he would be allowed to remain in the school and learn on till he could perfectly practise every lesson. His chosen class book was the royal statutes, he wanted no other. He knew the sad result of breaking those statutes, and by a painful experience he had been led back to the way of righteousness; and therefore he begged as the greatest possible instance of the divine goodness that he might be taught a perfect knowledge of the law, and a complete conformity to it. He who mourns that he has not kept the word longs to be taught it, and he who rejoices that by grace he has been taught to keep it is not less anxious for the like instruction to be continued to him.

In verse 12, which is the fourth verse of Beth, we have much the same sense as in this fourth verse of Teth.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

1. As to his nature, he is originally "good", good in himself, and good to others; as the sun hath light in himself, and giveth light to all other things. Essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality or superadded gift; but in God it is not a quality, but his essence. In a vessel that is gilded with gold the gilding or lustre is a superadded quality; but in a vessel all of gold, the lustre and the substance is the same. God is infinitely good; the creatures' good is limited, but there is nothing to limit the perfection of God, or give it any measure. He is an ocean of goodness without banks or bottom. Alas! what is our drop to this ocean! God is immutably good; his goodness can never be more or less than it is; as there can be no addition to it, so no subtraction from it. Man in his innocency was 'peccabilis', or liable to sin, afterwards 'peccator', or an actual sinner; but God ever was and is good. Now this is the pattern propounded to us, but his nature is a great deep. Therefore --
2. As to his work; "he doeth good." What hath God been acting upon the great theatre of the world but goodness for these six thousand years? Acts 14:17, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." He left not himself without a witness, anaqopiwn, not by taking vengeance of their idolatries, but by distributing benefits. This is propounded to our imitation, that our whole life may be nothing else but doing good: Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Well, therefore, doth the Psalmist say, "Teach me thy statutes." -- Thomas Manton.

**Verse 68.** -- *Thou art good and doest good.* We should bless the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God, on every occasion, especially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify God in the fires (Isaiah 24:15); and this the three children did in the hottest furnace... I grant, indeed, we cannot give thanks for affliction as affliction, but either as it is the means of some good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is some way remarkable therein toward us. In this respect there is no condition on this side of hell but we have reason to praise God in it, though it be the greatest of

calamities. Hence it was that David, when he speaks of his affliction, adds presently, "Thou art good, and doest good"; and he declares (Psalms 119:65), "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word." Hence Paul and Silas praised God when they were scourged and imprisoned. --John Willison, 1680-1750.

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 68.** -- The double plea for a choice blessing. The goodness of God the hope of our ignorance.

**Verse 68.** -- Thou art good and doest good. The nature and work of God are manifest in nature, providence, grace, and glory. They are morally good; beneficially good; perfectly good; immeasurably good; immutably good; experimentally good; satisfactorily good. -- W.J.

**Verse 68.** (first clause). -- A sermon on God's goodness.

1. The perfectness of it.
2. The proofs of it.
3. The power it should have over us. --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 69.** The proud have forged a lie against me. They first derided him (Psalms 119:51), then defrauded him (Psalms 119:61), and now they have defamed him. To injure his character they resorted to falsehood, for they could find nothing against him if they spoke the truth. They forged a lie as a blacksmith beats out a weapon of iron, or they counterfeited the truth as men forge false coin. The original may suggest a common expression -- "They have patched up a lie against me." They were not too proud to lie. Pride is a lie, and when a proud man utters lies "he speaketh of his own." Proud men are usually the bitterest opponents of the righteous: they are envious of their good fame and are eager to ruin it. Slander is a cheap and handy weapon if the object is the destruction of a gracious reputation; and when many proud ones conspire to concoct, exaggerate, and spread abroad a malicious falsehood, they generally succeed in wounding their victim, and it is no fault of theirs if they do not kill him outright. O the venom which lies under the tongue of a liar! Many a happy life has been embittered by it, and many a good reputation has been poisoned as with the deadliest drug. It is painful to the last degree to hear unscrupulous men hammering away at the devil's anvil forging a new calumny; the only help against it is the sweet promise, "No weapon that is formed against thee



shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. My one anxiety shall be to mind my own business and stick to the commandments of the Lord. If the mud which is thrown at us does not blind our eyes or bruise our integrity it will do us little harm. If we keep the precepts, the precepts will keep us in the day of contumely and slander. David renews his resolve -- "I will keep"; he takes a new look at the commands, and sees them to be really the Lord's -- "thy precepts"; and he arouses his entire nature to the work -- "with my whole heart." When slanders drive us to more resolute and careful obedience they work our lasting good; falsehood hurled against us may be made to promote our fidelity to the truth, and the malice of men may increase our love to God. If we try to answer lies by our words we may be beaten in the battle; but a holy life is an unanswerable refutation of all calumnies. Spite is balked if we persevere in holiness despite all opposition.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

**Verse 69.** -- *Forged.* expresses the essential meaning of the Hebrew word, but not its figurative form which seems to be that of sewing, analogous to that of weaving, as applied to the same thing, both in Hebrew and in other languages. We may also compare our figurative phrase, to patch up, which, however, is not so much suggestive of artifice or skill as of the want of it. The connection of the

clauses is, that all the craft and malice of his enemies should only lead him to obey God, with a more undivided heart than ever. -- Joseph Addison Alexander.

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

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

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

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 69.** -- Wholehearted obedience the best solace under slander; the best answer to it; and the best way of converting the slanderers.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 70.** Their heart is as fat as grease. They delight in fatness, but I delight in thee. Their hearts, through sensual indulgence, have grown insensible, coarse, and grovelling; but thou hast saved me from such a fate through thy chastening hand. Proud men grow fat through carnal luxuries, and this makes them prouder still. They riot in their prosperity, and fill their hearts therewith till they become insensible, effeminate, and self indulgent. A greasy heart is something horrible; it is a fatness which makes a man fatuous, a fatty degeneration of the heart which leads to feebleness and death. The fat in such men is killing the life in them. Dryden wrote,

"O souls! In whom no heavenly fire is found,  
Fat minds and ever grovelling on the ground."

In this condition men have no heart except for luxury, their very being seems to swim and stew in the fat of cookery and banqueting. Living on the fat of the land, their nature is subdued to that which they have fed upon; the muscle of their nature has gone to softness and grease.

But I delight in thy law. How much better is it to joy in the law of the Lord than to joy in sensual indulgences! This makes the heart healthy, and keeps the mind lowly. No one who loves holiness has the slightest cause to envy the prosperity of the worldling. Delight in the law elevates and ennobles, while carnal pleasure clogs the intellect and degrades the affections. There is and always

ought to be a vivid contrast between the believer and the sensualist, and that contrast is as much seen in the affections of the heart as in the actions of the life: their heart is as fat as grease, and our heart is delighted with the law of the Lord. Our delights are a better test of our character than anything else: as a man's heart is, so is the man. David oiled the wheels of life with his delight in God's law, and not with the fat of sensuality. He had his relishes and dainties, his festivals and delights, and all these he found in doing the will of the Lord his God. When law becomes delight, obedience is bliss. Holiness in the heart causes the soul to eat the fat of the land. To have the law for our delight will breed in our hearts the very opposite of the effects of pride; deadness, sensuality, and obstinacy will be cured, and we shall become teachable, sensitive, and spiritual. How careful should we be to live under the influence of the divine law that we fall not under the law of sin and death.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

1. Senseless and secure; they are past feeling: thus the phrase is used ([Isaiah 6:10](#)): "Make the heart of the people fat." They are not sensible of the teaching of the word of God, or his rod.
2. Sensual and voluptuous: "Their eyes stand out with fatness" ([Psalms 73:7](#)); they roll themselves in the pleasures of sense, and take up with them as their chief good; and much good may it do them: I would not change conditions with them; "delight in thy law." --Matthew Henry.

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

Being anxious to know the medical significance of fatty heart, I applied to an eminent gentleman who

is well known as having been President of the College of Physicians. His reply shows that the language is rather figurative than literal. He kindly replied to me as follows: --

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 70.** --

1. Fatty degeneration of the heart.
2. Thorough regeneration of the heart.

**Verse 70.** -- A fatty heart.

1. The diagnosis of the disease.
2. Its symptoms. Pride; no delight in God, nor in his law; dislike to his people; readiness to lie:  
Psalms 119:69.
3. Its fatal character.
4. Its only cure. Psalms 101:10 Ezekiel 36:26. --C.A.D.

**Verse 71.** --

1. David knew what was good for him.
2. David learned what is good essentially. Active obedience is learned by passive obedience.

**Verse 71.** -- Affliction an instructor.

1. Never welcomed: "Have been."
2. Often impatiently endured.
3. Always gratefully remembered: "It is good," etc.
4. Efficient for a perverse scholar: "That I might learn."
5. Indispensable in the education of all. --J.F.

**Verse 71.** -- The school of affliction.

1. The reluctant scholar sent to school.
2. The scholar's hard lesson.
3. The scholar's blessed learning.
4. The scholar's sweet reflection. --C.A.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 71.** It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Even though the affliction came from bad men, it was overruled for good ends: though it was bad as it came from them, it was good for David. It benefited him in many ways, and he knew it. Whatever he may have thought while under the trial, he perceived himself to be the better for it when it was over. It was not good to the proud to be prosperous, for their hearts grew sensual and insensible; but affliction was good for the Psalmist. Our worst is better for us than the sinner's best. It is bad for sinners to rejoice, and good for saints to sorrow. A thousand benefits have come to us through our pains and griefs, and among the rest is this -- that we have thus been schooled in the law.

That I might learn thy statutes. These we have come to know and to keep by feeling the smart of the rod. We prayed the Lord to teach us ([Psalms 119:66](#)), and now we see how he has already been doing it. Truly he has dealt well with us, for he has dealt wisely with us. We have been kept from the ignorance of the greasy hearted by our trials, and this, if there were nothing else, is just cause for constant gratitude. To be larded by prosperity, is not good for the proud; but for the truth to be learned by adversity is good for the humble. Very little is to be learned without affliction. If we would be scholars we must be sufferers. As the Latins say, "Experientia docet", experience teaches. There is no royal road to learning the royal statutes; God's commands are best read by eyes wet with tears.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 71.** -- *It is good for me*, etc. I am mended by my sickness, enriched by my poverty, and strengthened by my weakness, and with S. Bernard desire, "Irasecaris mihi; Domine", O Lord, be angry with me For if you chide me not, you consider me not; if I taste no bitterness, I have no physic;

if thou correct me not, I am not thy son. Thus was it with the great grandchild of David, Manasseh, when he was in affliction, "He besought the Lord his God": even that king's iron was more precious to him than his gold, his jail a more happy lodging than his palace, Babylon a better school than Jerusalem. What fools are we, then to frown upon our afflictions! These, how crabbed soever, are our best friends. They are not indeed for our pleasure, they are for our profit; their issue makes them worthy of a welcome. What do we care how bitter that potion be that brings Health. -- Abraham Wright.

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

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

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

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

doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life. --Isaac Barrow, 1630-1677.

**Verse 71.** -- *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* In Miss E.J. Whately's very interesting Life of her Father, the celebrated Archbishop of Dublin, a fact is recorded, as told by Dr. Whately, with reference to the introduction of the larch tree into England. When the plants were first brought, the gardener, hearing that they came from the south of Europe, and taking it for granted that they would require warmth, -- forgetting that might grow near the snow line, -- put them into a hothouse. Day by day they withered, until the gardener in disgust threw them on a dung heap outside; there they began to revive and bud, and at last grew into trees. They needed the cold.

The great Husbandman often saves his plants by throwing them out into the cold. The nipping frosts of trial and affliction are oftentimes needed, if God's larches are to grow. It is under such discipline that new thoughts and feelings appear. The heart becomes more dead to the world and self. From the night of sorrow rises the morning of joy. Winter is the harbinger of spring. From the crucifixion of the old man comes the resurrection of the new, as in nature life is the child of death. "The night is the mother of the day, And winter of the spring; And ever upon old decay, The greenest mosses spring." --James Wareing Bardsicy, in *Illustrated Texts and Texts Illustrated*, 1876.

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

my heart has bled; For all I bless thee, most for the severe. --Hugh Macmillan.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 71.** -- *Statutes.* The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe. The word means a definite, prescribed, written law. The term is applied to Joseph's law about the portion of the priests in Egypt, to the law about the passover, etc. But in this psalm it has a more internal meaning; that moral law of God which is engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart; the inmost and spiritual apprehension of his will; not so obvious as the law and the testimonies, and a matter of more direct spiritual communication than his precepts; the latter being more elaborated by the efforts of the mind itself, divinely guided indeed, but perhaps more instrumentally, and less passively, employed.



They are continually spoken of as things yet to be learned, either wholly or in part, not objectively apprehended already, like God's law... They are learned, not suddenly, but by experience, and through the means of trials mercifully ordained by God; lessons therefore which are deeply engraven on the heart. "Good is it for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn thy statutes." "I have more understanding than my teachers, because thy statutes I have observed." --John Jebb.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 72.** The law of thy mouth. A sweetly expressive name for the word of God. It comes from God's own mouth with freshness and power to our souls. Things written are as dried herbs; but speech has a liveliness and dew about it. We do well to look upon the word of the Lord as though it were newly spoken into our ear; for in very truth it is not decayed by years, but is as forcible and sure as though newly uttered. Precepts are prized when it is seen that they come forth from the lips of our Father who is in heaven. The same lips which spoke us into existence have spoken the law by which we are to govern that existence. Whence could a law so sweetly proceed as from the mouth of our covenant God? Well may we prize beyond all price that which comes from such a source.

Is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. If a poor man had said this, the world's wittlings would have hinted that the grapes are sour, and that men who have no wealth are the first to despise it; but this is the verdict of a man who owned his thousands, and could judge by actual experience of the value of money and the value of truth. He speaks of great riches, he heaps it up by thousands, he mentions the varieties of its forms, -- "gold and silver"; and then he sets the word of God before it all, as better to him, even if others did not think it better to them. Wealth is good in some respects, but obedience is better in all respects. It is well to keep the treasures of this life; but far more commendable to keep the law of the Lord. The law is better than gold and silver, for these may be stolen from us, but not the word; these take to themselves wings, but the word of God remains; these are useless in the hour of death, but then it is that the promise is most dear. Instructed Christians recognize the value of the Lord's word, and warmly express it, not only in their testimony to their fellow men, but in their devotions to God. It is a sure sign of a heart which has learned God's statutes when it prizes them above all earthly possessions; and it is an equally certain mark of grace when the precepts of Scripture are as precious as its promises. The Lord cause us thus to prize the law of his mouth.

See how this portion of the psalm is flavoured with goodness. God's dealings are good ([Psalms 119:65](#)), holy judgment is good ([Psalms 119:66](#)), affliction is good ([Psalms 119:67](#)), God is good ([Psalms 119:68](#)), and here the law is not only good, but better than the best of treasure. Lord, make us good, through thy good word. Amen.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

**Verse 72.** -- *The law of thy mouth is better unto me*. The sacred Scriptures are the treasures and pleasures of a gracious soul: to David they were better than thousands of gold and silver. A mountain of transparent pearls, heaped as high as heaven, is not so rich in treasure as these; hence that good man chose these as his heritage for ever, and rejoiced in them as in all riches. A covetous miser could not take such delight in his bags, nor a young heir in a large inheritance, as holy David did in God's word.

The word law comes from a root that signifies to try as merchants that search and prove the wares that they buy and lay up; hence also comes the word for gems and jewels that are tried, and found right. The sound Christian is the wise merchant, seeking goodly pearls; he tries what he reads or

hears by the standard or touchstone of Scripture, and having found genuine truths he lays them up to the great enriching of this supreme and sovereign faculty of the understanding. --Oliver Heywood.

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

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

**Verse 72.** -- *Thousands of gold and silver.* Worldly riches are gotten with labour, kept with care, lost with grief. They are false friends, farthest from us when we have most need of comfort; as all worldlings shall find to be true in the hour of death. For then, as Jonah's gourd was taken from him in a morning, when he had most need of it against the sun; so is it with the comfort of worldlings. It is far otherwise with the word of God; for if we will lay it up in our hearts, as Mary did, the comfort thereof shall sustain us, when all other comfort shall fail us.

This it is that makes us rich unto God, when our souls are storehouses, filled with the treasures of his word. Shall we think it poverty to be scant of gold and silver? "An ideo angelus pauperest, quia non habet jumenta", etc (Chrysostom). Shall we esteem the angels poor, because they have not flocks of cattle? or that S. Peter was poor, because he had not gold nor silver to give unto the cripple? No, he had store of grace, by infinite degrees more excellent than it.

Let the riches of gold be left unto worldlings: these are not current: in Canaan, not accounted of in our heavenly country. If we would be in any estimation there, let us enrich our souls with spiritual graces, which we have in abundance in the mines and treasures of the word of God. --William Cowper.

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

that may secondarily be applied to the gospel, which discovereth and offereth both to us. --Abraham Wright.

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

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

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

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

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

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 72.** -- The advantages of riches far excelled by the blessings of the word.

**Verse 72.** -- A valuation.

1. The saints' high estimate of God's law.
2. Show when it was formed: in affliction: [Psalms 119:71](#).
3. Vindicate its truth -- by illustrating the hollowness of riches, and the satisfaction found in godliness. --C.A.D.

**Verse 72.** -- The word, better than gold and silver.

1. It gives what gold and silver cannot purchase.

2. Without what it gives, gold and silver may be a curse.
3. Without gold and silver, it may yield its treasure more freely and fully than with them.
4. The word and what it gives shall rejoice the heart when gold and silver shall be useless to their disappointed worshippers. --J.F.

**Verse 72.** -- The law of thy mouth is better, etc.

1. It is more refining, and makes me a better man.
2. It is more enriching, and makes me a wealthier man.
3. It is more distinguishing, and makes me a greater man.
4. It is more sustaining, and makes me a stronger man.
5. It is more preserving, and makes me a safer man.
6. It is more satisfying, and makes me a happier man.
7. It is more lasting, and better suited to me as an immortal man. --W.J.

## **EXPOSITION**

We have now come to the tenth portion, which in each stanza begins with Jod, but it certainly does not treat of jots and titles and other trifles. Its subject would seem to be personal experience and its attractive influence upon others. The prophet is in deep sorrow, but looks to be delivered and made a blessing. Endeavouring to teach, the Psalmist first seeks to be taught (verse 73), persuades Himself that he will be well received (74), and rehearses the testimony which he intends to bear (75). He prays for more experience (76, 77), for the baffling of the proud (78), for the gathering together of the godly to him (79), and for himself again that he may be fully equipped for his witness bearing and may be sustained in it (80). This is the anxious yet hopeful cry of one who is heavily afflicted by cruel adversaries, and therefore makes his appeal to God as his only friend.

**Verse 73.** Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. It is profitable to remember our creation, it is pleasant to see that the divine hand has had much to do with us, for it never moves apart from the divine thought. It excites reverence, gratitude, and affection towards God when we view him as our Maker, putting forth the careful skill and power of his hands in our forming and fashioning. He took a personal interest in us, making us with his own hands; he was doubly thoughtful, for he is represented both as making and moulding us. In both giving existence and arranging existence he manifested love and wisdom; and therefore we find reasons for praise, confidence, and expectation in our being and well being.

Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments. As thou hast made me, teach me. Here is the vessel which thou hast fashioned; Lord, fill it. Thou hast given me both soul and body; grant me now thy grace that my soul may know thy will, and my body may join in the performance of it. The plea is very forcible; it is an enlargement of the cry, "Forsake not the work of thine own hands."

Without understanding the divine law and rendering obedience to it we are imperfect and useless; but we may reasonably hope that the great Potter will complete his work and give the finishing touch to it by imparting to it sacred knowledge and holy practice. If God had roughly made us, and had not also elaborately fashioned us, this argument would lose much of its force; but surely from the delicate art and marvellous skill which the Lord has shown in the formation of the human body, we may infer that he is prepared to take equal pains with the soul till it shall perfectly bear his image.

A man without a mind is an idiot, the mere mockery of a man; and a mind without grace is wicked, the sad perversion of a mind. We pray that we may not be left without a spiritual judgment: for this the Psalmist prayed in verse 66, and he here pleads for it again; there is no true knowing and keeping of the commandments without it. Fools can sin; but only those who are taught of God can be holy. We often speak of gifted men; but he has the best gifts to whom God has given a sanctified understanding wherewith to know and prize the ways of the Lord. Note well that David's prayer for understanding is not for the sake of speculative knowledge, and the gratification of his curiosity: he desires an enlightened judgment that he may learn God's commandments, and so become obedient and holy. This is the best of learning. A man may abide in the College where this science is taught all his days, and yet cry out for ability to learn more. The commandment of God is exceeding broad, and so it affords scope for the most vigorous and instructed mind: in fact, no man has by nature an understanding capable of compassing so wide a field, and hence the prayer, "give me understanding"; -- as much as to say -- I can learn other things with the mind I have, but thy law is so pure, so perfect, spiritual and sublime, that I need to have my mind enlarged before I can become proficient in it. He appeals to his Maker to do this, as if he felt that no power short of that which made him could make him wise unto holiness. We need a new creation, and who can grant us that but the Creator himself? He who made us to live must make us to learn; he who gave us power to stand must give us grace to understand. Let us each one breathe to heaven the prayer of this verse ere we advance a step further, for we shall be lost even in these petitions unless we pray our way through them, and cry to God for understanding.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

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

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

those saints who have tried to follow it. --Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 73.** -- *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me*, etc. This verse hath a petition for understanding, and a reason with it: I am the workmanship of thine hands, therefore give me understanding. There is no man but favours the works of his hands. And shall not the Lord much more love his creatures, especially man, his most excellent creature? Whom, if ye consider according to the fashion of his body, ye shall find nothing on earth more precious than he; but in that which is not seen, namely, his soul, he is much more beautiful. So you see, David's reasoning is very effectual; all one as if he should say as he doth elsewhere, "Forsake not, O Lord, the work of thine hands"; thou art my author and maker; thine help I seek, and the help of none other.

No man can rightly seek good things from God, if he consider not what good the Lord hath already done to him. But many are in this point so ignorant, that they know not how wonderfully God did make them; and therefore can neither bless him, nor seek from him, as from their Creator and Conserver. But this argument, drawn from our first creation, no man can rightly use, but he who is through grace partaker of the second creation; for all the privileges of our first creation we have lost by our fall. So that now by nature it is no comfort to us, nor matter of our hope, that God did make us; but rather matter of our fear and distrust, that we have mismade ourselves, have lost his image, and are not now like unto that which God created us in the beginning. --William Cowper.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 73.** -- *Thy hands*. Oh, look upon the wounds of thine hands, and forget not the work of thine

hands: so Queen Elizabeth prayed. --John Trapp.

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

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

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

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

**Verse 73.** -- *That I may learn thy commandments.* That he might learn them so as to know the sense and meaning of them, their purity and spirituality; and so as to do them from a principle of love, in faith, and to the glory of God: for it is not a bare learning of them by heart or committing them to



memory, nor a mere theory of them, but the practice of them in faith and love, which is here meant.  
--John Gill.

**Verse 73-74.** -- *From these verses, learn,*

1. Albeit nothing can satisfy unbelief, yet true faith will make use of the most common benefit of creation to strengthen itself: "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me."
2. It is a good way of reasoning with God, to ask another gift, because we have received one; and because he hath given common benefits, to ask that he would give us also saving graces: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments."
3. Seeing that God is our Creator, and that the end of our creation is to serve God, we may confidently ask whatsoever grace may enable us to serve him, as the Psalmist's example doth teach us...
4. It should be the joy of all believers to see one of their number sustained and borne up in his sufferings; for in the proof and example of one sufferer a pawn is given to all the rest, that God will help them in like case: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." --David Dickson.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 73-80.** -- Natural and spiritual creation. The Psalmist prays to the Creator for spiritual life or "understanding" ([Psalms 119:73](#)), he will then be welcomed by the spiritual ([Psalms 119:74](#)). He submissively receives affliction for spiritual training ([Psalms 119:75-77](#)), deprecates the hostility of the proud ([Psalms 119:78](#)), craves the company of the spiritual ([Psalms 119:79](#)), and prays for heart soundness ([Psalms 119:80](#)).

**Verse 73.** --

1. Consider the Lord's great care in our creation.
2. See in it a reason for his perfecting the new creation within us.
3. Observe the method of this perfecting.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 74.** They that fear thee will be glad when they see me: because I have hoped in thy word. When a man of God obtains grace for himself he becomes a blessing to others, especially if that grace has made him a man of sound understanding and holy knowledge. God fearing men are encouraged when they meet with experienced believers. A hopeful man is a God send when things are declining or in danger. When the hopes of one believer are fulfilled his companions are cheered and established, and led to hope also. It is good for the eyes to see a man whose witness is that the

Lord is true; it is one of the joys of saints to hold converse with their more advanced brethren. The fear of God is not a left handed grace, as some have called it; it is quite consistent with gladness; for if even the sight of a comrade gladdens the God fearing, how glad must they be in the presence of the Lord himself! We do not only meet to share each others' burdens, but to partake in each others' joys, and some men contribute largely to the stock of mutual gladness. Hopeful men bring gladness with them. Despondent spirits spread the infection of depression, and hence few are glad to see them, while those whose hopes are grounded upon God's word carry sunshine in their faces, and are welcomed by their fellows. There are professors whose presence scatters sadness, and the godly quietly steal out of their company: may this never be the case with us.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

## HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS

**Verse 74.** --

1. The encouraging influence of good men upon others.
2. The instructive influence of others upon them: --G.R.

**Verse 74.** -- Converse with a tried but steadfast believer is a source of gladness to the children of God.

1. He has a thrilling tale of experience to tell.
2. He has valuable counsels and cautions to give.
3. He is a monument of God's faithfulness, confirming the hope of others.
4. He is an epistle of Christ, written expressly to illustrate the preciousness and the power of the gospel. --J.F.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 75.** I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right. He who would learn most must be thankful for what he already knows, and be willing to confess it to the glory of God. The Psalmist had been sorely tried, but he had continued to hope in God under his trial, and now he avows his conviction that he had been justly and wisely chastened. This he not only thought but knew, so that he was positive about it, and spoke without a moment's hesitation. Saints are sure about the rightness of their troubles, even when they cannot see the intent of them. It made the godly glad to hear David say this,

And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Because love required severity, therefore the Lord exercised it. It was not because God was unfaithful that the believer found himself in a sore strait, but for just the opposite reason: it was the faithfulness of God to his covenant which brought the chosen one under the rod. It might not be needful that others should be tried just then; but it was necessary to the Psalmist, and therefore the Lord did not withhold the blessing. Our heavenly Father is no Eli: he will not suffer his children to sin without rebuke, his love is too intense for that. The man who makes the confession of this verse is already progressing in the school of grace, and is learning the commandments. This third verse of the section corresponds to the third of Teth (67), and in a degree to several other verses which make the thirds in their octaves.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 75.** -- *I know*, O LORD, that thy judgments are right. In very early life the tree of knowledge seemed a very fine, a glorious tree in my sight; but how many mistakes have I made upon that subject! And how many are the mistakes which yet abound upon that which we are pleased to call knowledge, in common speech. He that hath read the classics; he that hath dipped into mathematical science; he that is versed in history, and grammar, and common elocution; he that is apt and ready to

solve some knotty question and versed in the ancient lore of learning, is thought to be a man of knowledge; and so he is, compared with the ignorant mass of mankind. But what is all this compared with the knowledge in my text Knowledge of which few of the learned, as they are called, have the least acquaintance with at all.

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

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

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

are right."

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

Yet this is the meaning here, or certainly the chief meaning. For though the word "judgments" does mean God's dealings of every kind, yet here the words that follow make it apply especially to God's afflictive dealings, that is, to those dealings of his that do not seem to be for our happiness; "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." The judgments which the Psalmist chiefly had in view, and which he felt so sure were right, were not joys, but sorrows; not things bestowed, but things taken away; those blessings in disguise, those veiled mercies, those gifts clad in the garb of mourning, which God so often sends to his children. The Psalmist knew, and knew against all appearance to the contrary, that these judgments were "right." Whatever they might be -- losses, bereavements, disappointments, pain, sickness -- they were right; as right as the more manifest blessings which went before them; quite right, perfectly right; so right that they could not have been better; just what were best; and all because they were God's judgments. That one thing satisfied the Psalmist's mind, and set every doubt at rest. The dealings in themselves he might have doubted, but not him whose dealings they were. "Thy judgments." That settled all. "And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." This means that, in appointing trouble as his lot, God had dealt with him in faithfulness to his word, faithfulness to his purposes of mercy, with a faithful, not a weak love. He had sent him just what was most for his good, though not always what was most pleasing; and in this he had shown himself faithful. Gently and lovingly does the Lord deal with his children. He gives no unnecessary pain; but that which is needful he will not withhold.  
--Francis Bourdillon, 1881.

**Verse 75.** -- *Thy judgments.* There are *judicia oris*, and there are *judicia operis*; the judgments of God's mouth, and the judgments of God's hands. Of the former there is mention at verse 13: "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth." And by these "judgments" are meant nothing else but the holy law of God, and his whole written word; which everywhere? This psalm are indifferently called his "statutes," his "commandments", his "precepts," his "testimonies," his "judgments." And the laws of God are therefore, amongst other reasons, called by the name of "judgments," because by them we come to have a right judgment whereby to discern between good

and evil. We could not otherwise with any certainty judge what was meet for us to do, and what was needful for us to shun. A lege tua intellexi, at Psalms 119:104; "By thy law have I gotten understanding." St. Paul confesseth (Romans 7), that he had never rightly known what sin was if it had not been for the law; and he instances in that of lust, which he had not known to be a sin, if the law had not said, "thou shalt not covet." And no question but these "judgments," these judiciorum, are all "right" too; for it were unreasonable to think that God should make that a rule of right to us, which were itself not right. We have both the name (that of "judgments;") and the thing too, (that they are "right") in the 19th Psalm; where having highly commended the law of God, under the several appellations of the "law," testimonies, statutes and commandments, verses 7 and 8, the prophet then concludes under this name of "judgments," verse 9: "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Besides these judiciorum, which are God's judgments of directions, there are also judiciorum operis, which are his judgments for correction. And these do ever include aliquid poenale, something inflicted upon us by Almighty God, as it were by way of punishment; something that breeds in us trouble or grief. The apostle saith in Hebrews 12 that every chastening is grievous; and so it is, more or less; or else it could be to us no punishment. And these, again, are of two sort; yet not distinguished so much by the things themselves that are inflicted, as by the condition of the persons on whom they are inflicted, and especially by the affection and intention of God that inflicts them. For all, whether public calamities that light upon whole nations, cities, or other greater or lesser societies of men (such as are pestilences, famine, war, inundations, unseasonable weather), and the like for private afflictions, that light upon particular families or persons, (as sickness, poverty, disgrace, injuries, death of friends, and the like;) all these, and whatsoever other of either kind, may undergo a twofold consideration; in either of which they may not unfitly be termed the judgments of God, though in different respects.

Now we see the several sorts of God's judgments: which of all these may we think is here meant? If we should take them all in, the conclusion would hold them, and hold true too. Judiciorum operis, and judiciorum operis; public and private judgments; those plagues wherewith in fury he punishes his enemies, and those rods wherewith in mercy he correcteth his children: most certain it is they are all "right." But yet I conceive those judiciorum operis not to be so properly meant in this place; for the exegesis in the latter part of the verse (wherein what are here called judgments are there expounded by troubles) seemeth to exclude them, and to confine the text in the proper intent thereof to these judiciorum operis only; but yet to all them of what sort soever; public or private, plagues or corrections. Of all which he pronounces that they are "right;" which is the predicate of the conclusion: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right." --Robert Sanderson.

**Verse 75.** -- *Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* Mark the emphasis: he doth not barely

acknowledge that God was faithful, though or notwithstanding he had afflicted him, but faithful in sending the afflictions. Affliction and trouble are not only consistent with God's love plighted in the covenant of grace; but they are parts and branches of the new covenant administration. God is not only faithful notwithstanding afflictions, but faithful in sending them. There is a difference between these two: the one is like an exception to the rule, quae firmat regulam in non exceptis: the other makes it a part of the rule, God cannot be faithful without doing all things that tend to our good and eternal welfare. The conduct of his providence is one part of the covenant engagement; as to pardon our sins, and sanctify us, and give us glory at the last, so to suit his providence as our need and profit require in the way to heaven. It is an act of his sovereign mercy which he hath promised to his people, to use such discipline as conduces to their safety. In short, the cross is not an exception to the grace of the covenant, but a part of the grace of the covenant.

The cause of all afflictions is sin, therefore justice must be acknowledged: their end is repentance, and therefore faithfulness must be acknowledged. The end is not destruction and ruin, so afflictions would be acts of justice, as upon the wicked; but that we may be fit to receive the promises, and so they are acts of faithfulness. --Thomas Mantel.

**Verse 75.** -- *Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* That is, with a sincere intention of doing me good. God thoroughly knows our constitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our distempers; and therefore accordingly disposes to us

Pro jucundis aptissima quaeque

instead of pleasant honey, he sometimes prescribes wholesome wormwood for us. We are ourselves greatly ignorant of what is conducive to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, should make very foolish, very disadvantageous elections.

We should (be sure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful estate; when as, God knows, that would make us slothful and luxurious, swell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares and expose us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourselves and neglectful of him. Therefore he wisely disposes poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of sobriety, the nurse of industry, the mistress of wisdom; which will make us understand ourselves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourse unto his help. And is there not reason we should be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from those desperate mischiefs, and obtain these excellent advantages?

We should all (certainly) choose the favour and applause of man: but this, God also knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with spurious pleasure, would tempt us to ascribe immoderately to ourselves, and sacrilegiously to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he advisedly suffers us to incur the disgrace and displeasure, the hatred and contempt of men: that so we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may pursue more earnestly

the purer delights of a good conscience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks?

We would all climb into high places, not considering the precipices on which they stand, nor the vertiginousness of our own brains: but God keeps us safe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We should perhaps insolently abuse power, were it committed to us: we should employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the disturbance of others, and their own ruin: vast knowledge would cause us to over value ourselves and contemn others: enjoying continual health, we should not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A suitable mediocrity therefore of these things the divine goodness allots unto us, that we may neither starve for want, nor surfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages arising from afflictions are so many, and so great, that it were easy to demonstrate that we have great reason, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the crosses and vexations we meet with; to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our soul, and the condiments of our fortune; as the arguments of his goodwill, and the instruments of virtue; as solid grounds of hope, and comfortable presages of future joy unto us.

--Isaac Barrow.

**Verse 75.** -- *Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* When a father disowns and banishes a child, he corrects him no more. So God may let one whom he intends to destroy go unchastened; but never one with whom he is in covenant. --William S. Plumer.

**Verse 75.** -- *I know, O Lord, etc.*

Yet, Lord, in memory's fondest place  
I shrine those seasons sad,  
When, looking up, I saw thy face  
In kind austereness clad.  
I would not miss one sigh or tear,  
Heart pang, or throbbing brow:  
Sweet was the chastisement severe,  
And sweet its memory now.  
Yes! let the fragrant scars abide,  
Love tokens in thy stead,  
Faint shadows of the spear pierced side.  
And thorn encompassed Head.  
And such thy tender force be still,  
When self would swerve or stray,



Shaping to truth the froward will

Along thy narrow way. --John Henry Newman, 1829.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 75.** -- Experimental knowledge: positive, personal, glorifying to God, consoling to the saints.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 76.** Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Having confessed the righteousness of the Lord, he now appeals to his mercy, and while he does not ask that the rod may be removed, he earnestly begs for comfort under it. Righteousness and faithfulness afford us no consolation if we cannot also taste of mercy, and, blessed be God, this is promised us in the word, and therefore we may expect it. The words "merciful kindness," are a happy combination, and express exactly what we need in affliction: mercy to forgive the sin, and kindness to sustain under the sorrow. With these we can be comfortable in the cloudy and dark day, and without them we are wretched indeed; for these, therefore, let us pray unto the Lord, whom we have grieved by our sin, and let us plead the word of his grace as our sole reason for expecting his favour. Blessed be his name, notwithstanding our faults we are still his servants, and we serve a compassionate Master. Some read the last clause, "according to thy saying unto thy servant"; some special saying of the Lord was remembered and pleaded: can we not remember some such "faithful saying," and make it the groundwork of our petitioning? That phrase, "according to thy word," is a very favourite one; it shows the motive for mercy and the manner of mercy. Our prayers are according to the mind of God when they are according to the word of God.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 76.** -- *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort.* In the former verse he acknowledged that the Lord had afflicted him; now in this he prayeth the Lord to comfort him. This is strange that a man should seek comfort at the same hand that strikes him: it is the work of faith; nature will never teach us to do it. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath spoiled, and he will heal us: he hath wounded, and he will bind us up." Again, we see that the crosses which God lays on his children, are not to confound, not to consume them; only to prepare them for greater consolations. With this David sustained himself against Shimei's cursing; "The Lord will look on my affliction, and do me good for this evil": with this our Saviour comforts his disciples; "Your mourning shall be turned into joy." As the last estate of Job was better than his first; so shall the Lord render more to his children at the last than now at the first he takes from them: let us therefore bear his cross, as a preparative to comfort. --William Cowper.

**Verse 76.** -- *Let thy merciful kindness be for my comfort.* Several of the preceding verses have spoken of affliction ([Psalms 119:67,71,75](#)). The Psalmist now presents his petition for alleviation

under it. But of what kind? He does not ask to have it removed. He does not "beseech the Lord, that it might depart from him" [2 Corinthians 12:8](#). No. His repeated acknowledgments of the supports vouchsafed under it, and the benefits he had derived from it, had reconciled him to commit its measures and continuance to the Lord. All that he needs, and all that he asks for, is a sense of his "merciful kindness" upon his soul. Thus he submits to his justice in his accumulated trials, and expects consolation under them solely upon the ground of his free favour. --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 76.** -- *Let thy merciful kindness, etc.* Let me derive my comfort and happiness from a diffusion of thy love and mercy, kdmh chasdecha, thy exuberant goodness through my soul. --Adam Clarke.

**Verse 76.** -- *According to thy word unto thy servant.* If his promise did not please him, why did he make it? If our reliance on the promise did not please him, why did his goodness work it? It would be inconsistent with his goodness to mock his creature, and it would be the highest mockery to publish his word, and create a temper in the heart of his supplicant suited to his promise, which he never intended to satisfy. He can as little wrong his creature as wrong himself, and therefore he can never disappoint that faith which after his own methods casts itself into the arms of his kindness, and is his own workmanship, and calls him author. That goodness which imparted itself so freely to the irrational creation will not neglect those nobler creatures that put their trust in him. This renders God a fit object for trust and confidence. --Stephen Charnock.

**Verse 76.** -- *According to thy word.* David had a particular promise of a particular benefit; to wit, the kingdom of Israel. And this promise God performed unto him; but his comfort stood not in it; for Saul before him had the kingdom, but the promises of mercy belonged not to him, and therefore, when God forsook him, his kingdom could not sustain him. But David here depends upon the general promises of God's mercy made to his children; wherein he acknowledgeth a particular promise of mercy made to him. For the general promises of mercy and grace made in the gospel are by faith made particular to every believer. --William Cowper.

**Verse 76.** -- *Thy word unto thy servant.* Here we may use the eunuch's question: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" Of himself questionless, under the denomination of God's servant. But then the question returneth, -- Is it a word of promise made to himself in particular, or to God's servants in the general? Some say the former, the promises brought to him by Nathan. I incline to the latter, and it teacheth us these three truths: --

First. That God's servants only are capable of the sweet effects of his mercy and the comforts of his promises. Who are God's servants?

1. Such as own his right and are sensible of his interest in them: "God, whose I am, and whom I serve" ([Acts 28:23](#)).
2. Such as give up themselves to him, renouncing all other masters. Renounce we must, for we were once under another master ([Romans 6:17](#) [Matthew 6:24](#) [Romans 6:13](#) [1 Chronicles](#)

30:8).

3. Such as accordingly frame themselves to do his work sincerely: "serve with my spirit" (Romans 1:9); and, "in newness of spirit" (Romans 7:6), even as becomes those who are renewed by the Spirit: diligently (Acts 26:7), and universally (Luke 1:74-75), and wait upon him for grace to do so (Hebrews 7:28). These are capable of comfort. The book of God speaketh no comfort to persons that live in sin, but to God's servants, such as do not live as if they were at their own disposal, but at God's beck. If he say go, they go. They give up themselves to be and do what God will have them to be and do.

Secondly. If we have the benefit of the promise, we must thrust in ourselves under one title or other among those to whom the promise is made; if not as God's children, yet as God's servants. Then the promise is as sure to us as if our name were in it.

Thirdly. All God's servants have common grounds of comfort: every one of God's servants may plead with God as David doth. The comforts of the word are the common portion of God's people. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 76.** -- *Thy word unto thy servant.* Our Master has passed his word to all his servants that he will be kind to them and they may plead it with him. --Matthew Henry.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 76.** -- Comfort.

1. May be a matter of prayer.
2. Is provided for in the Lord.
3. Is promised in the word.
4. Is of great value to the believer.

**Verse 76.** --

1. The need of comfort.
2. The source of comfort: "Thy merciful kindness."
3. The rule of comfort: "According to thy word." --G.R.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 77.** Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live. He was so hard pressed that he was at death's door if God did not succour him. He needed not only mercy, but "mercies," and these must be of a very gracious and considerate kind, even "tender mercies," for he was sore with his wounds. These gentle favours must be of the Lord's giving, for nothing less would suffice; and they must "come" all the way to the sufferer's heart, for he was not able to journey after them; all he could do was to sigh out, "Oh that they would come." If deliverance did not soon come, he felt ready to expire, and yet he told us but a verse or so ago that he hoped in God's word: how true it is that hope lives on

when death seems written on all besides. A heathen said, "dum spiro spero," while I breathe I hope; but the Christian can say, "dum expiro spero," even when I expire I still expect the blessing. Yet no true child of God can live without the tender mercy of the Lord; it is death to him to be under God's displeasure. Notice, again, the happy combination of the words of our English version. Was there ever a sweeter sound than this -- "tender mercies"? He who has been grievously afflicted, and yet tenderly succoured is the only man who knows the meaning of such choice language.

How truly we live when tender mercy comes to us. Then we do not merely exist, but live; we are lively, full of life, vivacious, and vigorous. We know not what life is till we know God. Some are said to die by the visitation of God, but we live by it.

For thy law is my delight. O blessed faith! He is no mean believer who rejoices in the law even when its broken precepts cause him to suffer. To delight in the word when it rebukes us, is proof that we are profiting under it. Surely this is a plea which will prevail with God, however bitter our griefs may be; if we still delight in the law of the Lord he cannot let us die, he must and will cast a tender look upon us and comfort our hearts.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 77.** -- *Let thy tender mercies come unto me*, that I may live. If we mark narrowly we shall find that David here seeks another sort of mercy than he sought before. For first he sought mercy to forgive his sins; then he sought mercy to comfort him in his troubles; now he seeks mercy to live, and sin no more. Alas, many seek the first mercy, of remission; and the second mercy, of consolation in trouble, who are altogether careless of the third mercy, to live well. It is a great mercy of God to amend thy life: where this is not, let no man think he hath received either of the former. It is a great mercy of God, which not only pardons evil that is done, but strengthens us also to further good that we have not done; and this is the mercy which here David seeks. --William Cowper.

**Verse 77.** -- *Let thy tender mercies come unto me*, etc. The mercies of God are "tender mercies," they are the mercies of a father to his children, nay, tender as the compassion of a mother over the son of her womb. They "come unto" us, when we are not able to go to them. By them alone we "live" the life of faith, of love, of joy and gladness. And to such as "delight" in his law, God will grant these mercies, and this life; he will give them pardon, and, by so doing, he will give them life from the dead. --George Horne.

**Verse 77.** -- *Let thy tender mercies*, etc. Taking the more literal rendering, the words express high confidence -- "Thy tender mercies shall come unto me, and I shall live; for thy law is my delight." Had the believer nothing but his own deserts to support his plea at the throne of grace, he could never rise into this high confidence. He goes upon the foundation of the divine goodness, manifested through the anointed One, and he goes surely. --John Stephen.

**Verse 77.** -- *Come*. Coming to him notes a personal and effectual application. First. A personal

application, as in Psalms 119:41; "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word." David would not be forgotten, or left out or lost in the throng of mankind, when mercy was distributing the blessing to them. Secondly. Effectual application: which signifieth,

1. The removal of obstacles and hindrances;
2. The obtaining the fruits and effects of this mercy.

First. The removing of obstacles. Till there be a way made, the mercy of God cannot come at us; for the way is barricaded and shut up by our sins: as the Lord maketh a way for his anger (Psalms 78:50), by removing the hindrances, so the Lord maketh way for his mercy, or mercy maketh way for itself, when it removeth the obstruction. Sin is the great hindrance of mercy. We ourselves raise the mists and the clouds which intercept the light of God's countenance; we build up the partition wall which separates between God and us; yet mercy finds the way.

Secondly. The obtaining the fruits of mercy...It is not enough to hear somewhat of God's saving mercies; but we should beg that they may come unto us, be effectually and sensibly communicated unto us, that we may have experience of them in our own souls. A man that hath read of honey, or heard of honey, may know the sweetness of it by guess and imagination; but a man that hath tasted of honey knoweth the sweetness of it in truth: so, by reading and hearing of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, we may guess that it is a sweet thing; but he that hath had an experimental proof of the sweet effects and fruits of it in his own heart perceives that all which is spoken of God's pardoning and comforting of sinners is verified in himself. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 77.** -- *Thy law is my delight.* A child of God, though he cannot serve the Lord perfectly, yet he serves him willingly; his will is in the law of the Lord; he is not a pressed soldier, but a volunteer. By the beating of this pulse we may judge whether there be spiritual life in us or no. David professes that God's law was his delight; he had his crown to delight in, he had his music to delight in; but the love he had to God's law did drown all other delights; as the joy of harvest and vintage exceeds the joy of gleaning. -- Thomas Watson.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 77.** --

1. Visitors invited.
2. Boon expected.
3. Welcome guaranteed: "for thy law," etc.

**Verse 77.** -- Divine life -- it is born, sustained, increased, by God's tender mercies. -- W.W

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 78.** Let the proud be ashamed. He begged that the judgments of God might no longer fall upon himself, but upon his cruel adversaries. God will not suffer those who hope in his word to be put to

shame, for he reserves that reward for haughty spirits: they shall yet be overtaken with confusion, and become the subjects of contempt, while God's afflicted ones shall again lift up their heads. Shame is for the proud, for it is a shameful thing to be proud. Shame is not for the holy, for there is nothing in holiness to be ashamed of.

For they dealt perversely with me without a cause. Their malice was wanton, he had not provoked them. Falsehood was employed to forge an accusation against him; they had to bend his actions out of their true shape before they could assail his character. Evidently the Psalmist keenly felt the malice of his foes. His consciousness of innocence with regard to them created a burning sense of injustice, and he appealed to the righteous Lord to take his part and clothe his false accusers with shame. Probably he mentioned them as "the proud," because he knew that the Lord always takes vengeance on proud men, and vindicates the cause of those whom they oppress. Sometimes he mentions the proud, and sometimes the wicked, but he always means the same persons; the words are interchangeable: he who is proud is sure to be wicked, and proud persecutors are the worst of wicked men.

But I will meditate in thy precepts. He would leave the proud in God's hands, and give himself up to holy studies and contemplations. To obey the divine precepts we have need to know them, and think much of them. Hence this persecuted saint felt that meditation must be his chief employment. He would study the law of God and not the law of retaliation. The proud are not worth a thought. The worst injury they can do us is to take us away from our devotions; let us baffle them by keeping all the closer to our God when they are most malicious in their onslaughts.

In a similar position to this we have met with the proud in other octaves, and shall meet them yet again. They are evidently a great plague to the Psalmist, but he rises above them.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 78.** -- *Let the proud be ashamed*, etc. Here is the just recompense of his pride. He would fain have honour and preeminence, but God will not give them unto him: he flies shame and contempt, but God shall pour them upon him. "For they dealt perversely with me without a cause." David complains of the wicked and false dealing of his enemies against him; and his prayer is written to uphold us in the like temptation. For Satan is always like himself, hating them whom the Lord loveth. He can scarce be worse, lie can never be better; and therefore with restless malice stirs he up all his cursed instruments in whom he reigns, to persecute those who are loved and protected of the Lord. "But I will meditate in thy precepts." David's enemies fought against him with the weapons of the flesh, wickedness and falsehood: lie withstands them by the armour of the Spirit; not meeting wickedness with wickedness, and falsehood with falsehood. For if we fight against Satan with Satan's weapons he will soon overcome us; but if we put upon us the complete armour of God to resist him, he shall flee from us. --William Cowper.

**Verse 78.** -- *Let the proud be ashamed.* That is, that they may not prosper or succeed in their attempts; for men are ashamed when they are disappointed. All their endeavours for the extirpation of God's people are vain and fruitless, and those things which they have subtilly devised, have not that effect which they propounded unto themselves. "For they dealt perversely with me without a cause." The Septuagint have it asikwf unjustly. Ainsworth readeth, "With falsehood they have depraved me." It implies two things: first, that they pretended a cause; but, secondly, David avouches his innocency to God; and so, without any guilt of his, they accused, defamed, condemned his actions, as is usual in such cases. When the proud are troublesome and injurious to God's people the saints may boldly commend their cause to God...The Lord may be appealed unto upon a double account; partly, as he is an enemy to the proud, and as a friend to the humble (James 4:6 Ps 138:6); partly, as he is the portion of the afflicted and oppressed (Psalms 140:12). When Satan stirreth up his instruments to hate those whom the Lord loveth, the Lord will stir up his power to help and defend them. Is not this a revengeful prayer? Answer, No. First. Because those who pray it are seeking their own deliverance, that they may more freely serve God by consequence. Indeed, by God's showing mercy to his people, the pride of wicked ones is suppressed (Psalms 119:134); but mercy is the main object of the prayer.

Secondly. As it concerneth his enemies, he expresses it in mild terms -- that they may "be ashamed"; that is, disappointed, in their counsels, hopes, machinations, and endeavours. And therefore it is not against the persons of his enemies, but their plots and enterprises. In such cases shame and disappointment may even do them good, They think to bring in the total suppression of God's people, but that would harden them in their sins; therefore God's people desire that he would not let their innocency be trampled upon, but disappoint their adversaries, that the proud may be ashamed in the failing of their attempts.

Thirdly. The prayers of the righteous for the overthrow of the wicked, are a kind of prophecies; so that, in praying, David doth in effect foretell, that such as dealt perversely should soon be ashamed, since a good cause will not always be oppressed: "But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" (Isaiah 66:5).

Fourthly. Saints have a liberty to imprecate vengeance, but such as must be used sparingly and with great caution: "Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul" (Psalms 71:13). Malicious enemies may be expressly prayed against. -- Thomas Manton.

**Verse 78.** -- *Let the proud be ashamed.* This suggests a word to the wicked. Take heed that by your implacable hatred to the truth and church of God you do not engage her prayers against you. These imprecatory prayers of the saints, when shot at the right mark, and duly put up, are murdering pieces, and strike dead where they light. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:7-8. They

are not empty words -- as the imprecations of the wicked poured into the air, and there vanishing with their breath -- but are received into heaven, and shalt be sent back with thunder and lightning upon the pates of the wicked. David's prayer unravelled Ahithopel's fine spun policy, and twisted his halter for him. The prayers of the saints are more to be feared -- as once a great person said and felt -- than an army of twenty thousand men in the field. Esther's fast hastened Haman's ruin, and Hezekiah's against Sennacherib brought his huge host to the slaughter, and fetched an angel from heaven to do the execution in one night upon them. -- William Gumall.

**Verse 78.** -- *The proud.* The wicked, especially the persecutors of God's people, are usually characterized by this term in this psalm, "the proud" ([Psalms 119:51,69,122](#)). Pride puts wicked men upon being troublesome and injurious to the people of God. But why are the persecutors and the injurious called "the proud"?

1. Because wicked men shake off the yoke of God, and will not be subject to their Maker, and therefore desist not from troubling his people: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go"? (Ex 5:2). What was in his tongue, is in all men's hearts; they contemn God and his laws. Every sin hath a degree of pride, and a deprecation of God included in it, ([2 Samuel 12:9](#)).
2. Because they are drunk with worldly felicity, and never think of changes. "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud" ([Psalms 123:4](#)). When men go on prosperously, they are apt wrongfully to trouble others, and then to flout at them in their misery, and to despise the person and cause of God's people, which is a sure effect of great arrogancy and pride. They think they may do what they please: "They have no changes; therefore they fear not God," and put forth their hands against such as be at peace with them ([Psalms 60:19-20](#)): whilst they go on prosperously and undisturbed, they cannot abstain from violence and oppression.
3. Because they affect a life of pomp, and ease, and carnal greatness, and so despise the affliction, and meanness, and simplicity of God's people. The false church hath usually the advantage of worldly power and external glory; and the true church is known by the Divine power, gifts and graces, and the lustre of holiness.
4. They are called "proud," because of their insolent carriage towards the Lord's people; partly in their laws and injunctions, requiring them to give them more honour, respect, and obedience, than in conscience can be afforded them; as Haman would have Mordecai to devote himself to him after the manner of the Persians ([Esther 3:5](#)). --Condensed from Manton.

**Verse 78.** -- *When any of you,* says Caesarius, "is singing the verse of the Psalm where it is said, Let the proud be put to shame, let him be earnest to avoid pride, that he may escape everlasting shame." --William Kay.



**Verse 78.** -- *But I will meditate in thy precepts.* He repeateth the same thing often, and surely if the world could not contain the books that might be written of Christ, and yet for our infirmity the Lord hath comprised them in such a few books, and yet one thing in them is often repeated, it showeth that the matter is weighty, and of us duly and often to be considered. And again we are taught that this is a thing that none do so carefully look unto as they ought. And he showeth that as his enemies sought by evil means to hurt him; so he sought to keep a good conscience, that so they might not hurt him. Then we must not set policy against policy nor cretizare rum Cretensibus; but let us always tend to the word, and keep within the bounds of that, and fight with the weapons that it lendeth us...If we would give over ourselves to God and his word, and admit nothing but that which agreeth to the word, then should we be made wiser than our enemies. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 78.** -- *I will meditate in thy precepts.* The verb tyfa, asiach, in the second clause of the verse, may be rendered, "I will speak of," as well as, "I will reiterate upon"; implying, that, when he had obtained the victory, he would proclaim the goodness of God, which he had experienced. To speak of God's statutes, is equivalent to declaring out of the law how faithfully he guards his saints, how securely he delivers them, and how righteously he avenges their wrongs. --John Calvin.

**Verse 78.** -- *Meditate.* Truths lie hid in the heart without efficacy or power, till improved by deep, serious, and pressing thoughts...A sudden carrying a candle through a room, giveth us not so full a survey of the object, as when you stand a while beholding it. A steady contemplation is a great advantage. --Thomas Manton.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 78.** --

1. A hard thing -- to make the proud ashamed.
2. A cruel thing -- "they dealt perversely with me," etc.
3. A wise thing -- "but I will meditate," etc.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 79.** Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies. Perhaps the tongue of slander had alienated some of the godly, and probably the actual faults of David had grieved many more. He begs God to turn to him, and then to turn his people towards him. Those who are right with God are also anxious to be right with his children. David craved the love and sympathy of gracious men of all grades, -- of those who were beginners in grace, and of those who were mature in piety -- "those that fear thee," and "those that have known thy testimonies." We cannot afford to lose the love of the least of the saints, and if we have lost their esteem we may most properly pray to have it restored. David was the leader of the godly party in the nation, and it wounded him to the heart when he perceived that those who feared God were not as glad to see him

as aforetime they had been. He did not bluster and say that if they could do without him, he could very well do without them; but he so deeply felt the value of their sympathy, that he made it a matter of prayer that the Lord would turn their hearts to him again. Those who are dear to God, and are instructed in his word, should be very precious in our eyes, and we should do our utmost to be upon good terms with them.

David has two descriptions for the saints, they are God fearing and God knowing. They possess both devotion and instruction; they have both the spirit and the science of true religion. We know some believers who are gracious, but not intelligent; and, on the other hand, we also know certain professors who have all head and no heart: he is the man who combines devotion with intelligence. We neither care for devout dunces nor for intellectual icebergs. When fearing, and knowing walk hand in hand they cause men to be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. If these are my choice companions I may hope that I am one of their order. Let such persons ever turn to me because they find in me congenial company.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS**

**Verse 79.** -- *Let those that fear thee turn unto me.* Some think it intimates that when David had been guilty of that foul sin in the murder of Uriah, though he was a king, they that feared God grew strange to him, and turned from him, for they were ashamed of him; this troubled him, and therefore he prays, Lord, let them "turn to me" again. He desires especially the company of those that were not only honest but intelligent, "that have known thy testimonies," have good heads as well as good hearts, and whose conversation will be edifying. It is desirable to have an intimacy with such. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 79.** -- *Let those that fear thee turn unto me,* etc. As he had not his own flesh to fight against only, but the world also, so he did not only himself fight, but he seeketh the help of others. When many see that religion cannot be truly professed but danger will come of it, because many set themselves against it, they flee from it, and go to the greater pair, which is the wicked. If we will avoid this, let us join ourselves to God's children, and they will help us with counsel and advice; for one may be strong when we are weak, another may have counsel when we shall not know what to do; therefore by them we shall be kept from many evil things. So Paul (2 Timothy 1:16), after he had complained of the wrong that many had done unto him, he straightway giveth thanks for the family of Onesiphorus, which refreshed him more than all his enemies could discourage him; so that he durst oppose this one household to the whole rabble of the wicked. -- Richard Greenham.

**Verse 79.** -- *Let those that fear thee,* etc. You must go to God and beseech him to choose your company for you. Mark what David said and did; in Psalms 119:63 he saith, "I am a companion of all them that fear the Lord"; yet in this verse he goes to God, and prayeth, saying, "Let those that fear thee, O Lord, turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies." As if he should say, "Of a

truth, Lord, I am a companion of all that do fear thee; but it is not in my power to bend their hearts unto me; the hearts of all men are in thy hands", now therefore "let those that fear thee turn unto me." So do you go to God, and say likewise: Lord, do thou choose my company for me; oh, do thou bow and incline their hearts to be my companions. --William Bridge.

**Verse 79.** -- *Those that fear.* "Those that have known. "Fear and knowledge do make up a godly man. Knowledge without fear breeds presumption; and fear without knowledge breeds superstition; and blind zeal, as a blind horse, may be full of mettle, but is ever and anon stumbling. Knowledge must direct fear, and fear must season knowledge; then it is a happy mixture and composition. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 79.** -- *One great means to restore a good understanding among God's people is prayer.* David goeth to God about it: "Lord, let them turn to me." The Lord governs hearts and interests, both are in his hands, and he useth their alienation or reconciliation, either for judgment or mercy. God, when he pleaseth, can divert from us the comfort of godly friends; and when he pleaseth, he can bring them back again to us. The feet of God's children are directed by God himself; if they come to us, it is a blessing of God; if not, it is for a correction. He made Jacob and Laban meet peaceably (Genesis 30), and in the next chapter, Jacob and Esau. --Thomas Manton.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 79.** -- Restoration to church fellowship.

1. Good men may be in such a case as to need to be restored.
2. They should not be ashamed to seek it.
3. They should pray about it.

**Verse 79.** -- Select society.

1. Sociableness is an instinct of human nature.
2. Sociableness is helpful to a wholesome Christian life.
3. The choice of society should be a subject of prayer. --C.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 80.** Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed. This is even more important than to be held in esteem by good men. This is the root of the matter. If the heart be sound in obedience to God, all is well, or will be well. If right at heart we are right in the main. If we be not sound before God, our name for piety is an empty sound. Mere profession will fail, and undeserved esteem will disappear like a bubble when it bursts; only sincerity and truth will endure in the evil day. He who is right at heart has no reason for shame, and he never shall have any; hypocrites ought to be ashamed now, and they shall one day be put to shame without end; their hearts are rotten, and their names shall rot. This eightieth verse is a variation of the prayer of the seventy-third verse; there

be sought sound understanding, here he goes deeper, and begs for a sound heart. Those who have learned their own frailty by sad experience, are led to dive beneath the surface, and cry to the Lord for truth in the inward parts. In closing the consideration of these eight verses, let us join with the writer in the prayer, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes."

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 80.** -- *Let my heart be sound.* What is a sound heart? It notes reality and solidity in grace. The Septuagint hath it, Let my heart be without spot and blemish. It implies the reality of grace, opposed to the bare form of godliness, or the fair shows of hypocrites, and the sudden and vanishing motions of temporaries.

If you would have me unfold what this sound heart is, there is required these four things: --

1. An enlightened understanding; that is, the directive part of the soul; and it is sound when it is kept free from the leaven and contagion of error: "A man of understanding walketh uprightly," [Proverbs 15:21](#). A sound mind is a good help to a sound heart.
2. There is required an awakened conscience, that warns of our duty, and riseth up in dislike of sin upon all occasions: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, -- it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Pr 6:22): to have a constant monitor in our bosoms to put us in mind of God, when our reins preach to us in the night season ([Psalms 16:7](#)): there is a secret spy in our bosoms that observes all that we do, and think, and speak; a domestic chaplain, that is always preaching to us. His heart is his Bible.
3. There is required a rightly disposed will, or a steadfast purpose to walk with God in all conditions, and to do what is good and acceptable in his sight: "He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord," [Acts 6:23](#). Many have light inclinations, or wavering resolutions; but their hearts are not fixedly, habitually bent to please God; therein chiefly lieth this sound heart, that it doth inseparably cleave to God in all things.
4. There is required that the affections be purged and quickened: these are the vigorous motions of the will, and therefore this must be heedfully regarded; purged they must be from that carnality and fleshliness that cleaveth to them. This is called in Scripture the circumcision of the heart ([Deuteronomy 30:6](#)). --Condensed from Manton.

**Verse 80.** -- *Let my heart be sound.* "A sound mind in a sound body," was the prayer of a heathen, and his desire was according to the extent of his knowledge; but a heart sound in God's statutes, sound to the very core, with no speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, and like the king's daughter, "all glorious within." this is what the Psalmist prays for, this is what every child of God aims at, and prays for too, -- "Even as He is pure." -- Barton Bouchier.

**Verse 80.** -- *Let my heart be sound.*

True hearted, wholehearted, faithful and loyal,

King of our lives, by thy grace will we be!  
Under thy standard, exalted and royal,  
Strong in thy strength, we will battle for thee!  
True hearted, wholehearted! Fullest allegiance  
Yielding henceforth to our glorious King;  
Valiant endeavour and loving obedience  
Freely and joyously now would we bring.  
True hearted, Saviour, thou knowest our story;  
Weak are the hearts that we lay at thy feet,  
Sinful and treacherous! yet for thy glory,  
Heal them, and cleanse them from sin and deceit.  
Wholehearted! Saviour, beloved and glorious,  
Take thy great power, and reign thou alone,  
Over our wills and affections victorious,  
Freely surrendered, and wholly thine own.  
Half hearted! false hearted! Heed we the warning!  
Only the whole can be perfectly true;  
Bring the whole offering, all timid thought scorning,  
True hearted only if wholehearted too.  
Half hearted! Saviour, shall aught be withholden,  
Giving thee part who has given us all?  
Blessings outpouring, and promises golden  
Pledging, with never reserve or recall.  
Half hearted! Master, shall any who know thee  
Grudge thee their lives, who hast laid down thine own?  
Nay; we would offer the hearts that we owe thee, --  
Live for thy love and thy glory alone.  
Sisters, dear sisters, the call is resounding,  
Will ye not echo the silver refrain,  
Mighty and sweet, and in gladness abounding, --  
"True hearted, wholehearted!" ringing again?  
Jesus is with us, his rest is before us,  
Brightly his standard is waving above.  
Brothers, dear brothers, in gathering chorus,  
Peal out the watchword of courage and love!

Peal out the watchword, and silence it never, Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free! "True hearted, wholehearted, now and for ever, King of our lives, by thy grace we will be!" Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) in "Loyal Responses."

**Verse 80.** -- *Let my heart be sound*, etc. This is a plain difference between a sound heart and a false heart; in the receiving of Christ the sound heart receives him as a favourite receives a prince, he gives up all to him, and lets him have the command of all. A mere innkeeper entertains him that comes next to him; he will take any man's money, and will give welcome to any man; if it be the worst man that comes he cares not, for he loves gain above all things. Not so the good heart; he welcomes Christ alone, and resigns up all to Christ. Whatsoever is pleasing to Christ he will do it, and whatsoever comes from Christ he will welcome. --Thomas Hooker (1586-1647) in "The Soules Implantation."

**Verse 80.** -- *Be sound*. Heb. Be perfect; as the word from the same root is rendered in Job 1:1. Dr. R. Young gives as the meaning of the word as used by the Psalmist, whole, complete, plain.

**Verse 80.** -- *Sound in thy statutes*, etc. Though an orthodox creed does not constitute true religion, yet it is the basis of it and it is a great blessing to have it. --Nicolson, quoted by W. S. Plumer.

**Verse 80.** -- *If you would be faithful to Christ*, be sincere in your profession of him, make David's prayer and desire to be yours: "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed." Religion which is begun in hypocrisy will certainly end in apostasy, and this always carries with it reproach and ignominy. --William Spurstowe (1666)

**Verse 80.** -- *Ashamed*. We may be ashamed either before God or men, ourselves or others.

1. Before God: either in our addresses to him at the throne of grace, or when summoned to appear at the last day before the tribunal of his justice.
  - a. If you understand it of our approach to him, we cannot come into his presence with confidence if we have not a sound heart. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God": 1 John 3:21. We lose that holy familiarity and cheerfulness, when we are unbosoming ourselves to our heavenly Father, when our hearts are not sound.

(b) When we are summoned to appear before the tribunal of his justice. Many, now, with a bold impudence, will obtrude themselves upon the worship of God, because they see him not, and have not a due sense of his majesty; but the time will come, when the most impudent and outbraving sinners will be astonished, even then when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open and made manifest, and hidden things brought to light (1 Corinthians 4:5); and every one is to receive his judgment from God according to what he hath done, either good or evil.

1. Before men man may be ashamed, and so before ourselves and others.
  1. Ourselves. It was a saying of Pythagoras, Reverence thyself; be not ashamed of

thymself. God hath a spy and deputy within us, and taketh notice of our conformity and unconformity to his will, and, after sin committed, lashes the soul with the sense of its own guilt and folly, as the body is lashed with stripes: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Romans 6:21.

(2) Before others. And so our shame may be occasioned by our scandals, or our punishments; it is hard to say which is intended here. --Condensed from Manton.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 80.** --

1. David's prayer for sincerity -- that his heart might be brought to God's statutes, and that it might be sound in them, not rotten or deceitful.
2. His dread of the consequences of hypocrisy: "that I be not ashamed." Shame is the portion of hypocrites, here or hereafter. --M. Henry.

**Verse 80.** --

1. The heart in religion.
2. The necessity of its being sound in it.
3. The result of such sound heartedness.

### **EXPOSITION**

This portion of the gigantic psalm sees the Psalmist in extremis. His enemies have brought him to the lowest condition of anguish and depression; yet he is faithful to the law and trustful in his God. This octave is the midnight of the psalm, and very dark and black it is. Stars, however, shine out, and the last verse gives promise of the dawn. The strain will after this become more cheerful; but meanwhile it should minister comfort to us to see so eminent a servant of God so hardly used by the ungodly: evidently in our own persecutions, no strange thing has happened unto us.

**Verse 81.** My soul fainteth for thy salvation. He wished for no deliverance but that which came from God: his one desire was for "thy salvation." But for that divine deliverance he was eager to the last degree, -- up to the full measure of his strength, yea, and beyond it till he fainted. So strong was his desire that it produced prostration of spirit. He grew weary with waiting, faint with watching, sick with urgent need. Thus the sincerity and the eagerness of his desires were proved. Nothing else could satisfy him but deliverance wrought out by the hand of God, his inmost nature yearned and pined for salvation from the God of all grace, and he must have it or utterly fail.

But I hope in thy word. Therefore he felt that salvation would come, for God cannot break his promise, nor disappoint the hope which his own word has excited: yea, the fulfilment of his word is near at hand when our hope is firm and our desire fervent. Hope alone can keep the soul from fainting by using the smelling bottle of the promise. Yet hope does not quench desire for a speedy

answer to prayer; it increases our importunity, for it both stimulates ardour and sustains the heart under delays. To faint for salvation, and to be kept from utterly failing by the hope of it, is the frequent experience of the Christian man. We are "faint yet pursuing" hope sustains when desire exhausts. While the grace of desire throws us down, the grace of hope lifts us up again.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

The whole eight verses, 81-89. -- The eleventh letter, Caph, signifies the hollowed hand. The expositors, however, looking only to the meaning curved, which is but half of its import, explain the section as signifying the act of bowing down in penitence, or as noting that the fathers of the Old Testament were like veteran soldiers, stooping with years and toil, and bowed down yet further by the heavy weight of the law, only removable by that coming of Christ for which they prayed. Others extend the notion to the saints of the church, weighed down by the sorrows and cares of this life, and therefore desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. The true meaning is to be sought in the full interpretation of the word; for the hand is hollowed either in order to retain something which actually lies in it, or to receive something about to be placed in it by another. Thus the hand may be God's, as the giver of bounty, or man's, as the receiver of it; and the whole scope of the section, as a prayer for speedy help, is that man holds out his hand as a beggar, supplicating the mercy of God. --Jerome, Ambrose, and others, in Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 81.** -- *My soul fainteth for thy salvation.* The word here rendered "fainteth" is the same that in [Psalms 73:26](#) is translated "faileth": "My flesh and my heart faileth". The idea is, that his strength gave way; he had such an intense desire for salvation that he became weak and powerless. Any strong emotion may thus prostrate us; and the love of God, the desire of his favour, the longing for heaven, may be so intense as to produce this result. -- Albert Barnes.

**Verse 81.** -- *My soul fainteth.* Fainting is proper to the body, but here it is ascribed to the soul; as also in many other places. The Apostle saith, "Lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds" ([Hebrews 7:3](#)); where two words are used, weariness and fainting, both taken from the body. Weariness is a lesser, fainting is a higher degree of deficiency: in weariness, the body requireth some rest or refreshment, when the active power is weakened, and the vital spirits and principles of motion are dulled; but, in fainting, the vital power is contracted, and retires, and leaveth the outward parts lifeless and senseless. When a man is wearied, his strength is abated; when he fainteth, he is quite spent. These things, by a metaphor, are applied to the soul, or mind. A man is weary, when the fortitude of his mind, his moral or spiritual strength, is broken, or begins to abate, when his soul sits uneasy under sufferings; but when he sinks under the burden of grievous, tedious, or long affliction, then he is said to faint, when all the reasons and grounds of his comfort are quite spent, and he can hold out no longer. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 81.** -- *My soul fainteth.* What is this fainting but the lofty state of raptured contemplation in



which the strength of heavenly affections weakens those of earth. Just as the ascent into the highest mountains causes a new respiration, as when Daniel had a great vision from God, he tells us "he fainted and was sick certain days." --E. Paxton Hood, 1871.

**Verse 81.** -- *My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope.* Believe under a cloud, and wait for him when there is no moonlight nor starlight. Let faith live and breathe, and lay hold of the sure salvation of God, when clouds and darkness are about you, and appearance of rotting in the prison before you. Take heed of unbelieving hearts, which can father lies upon Christ. Beware of "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" for it was a man, and not God said it. Who dreameth that a promise of God can fail, fall a swoon, or die? Who can make God sick, or his promises weak? When we are pleased to seek a plea with Christ, let us plead that we hope in him. O stout word of faith, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" O sweet epitaph, written upon the gravestone of a departed believer, namely, "I died hoping, and my dust and ashes believe in life!" Faith's eyes, that can see through a millstone, can see through a gloom of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace. Hold fast Christ in the dark; surely ye shall see the salvation of God. Your adversaries are ripe and dry for the fire. Yet a little while, and they shall go up in a flame; the breath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, shall kindle about them. -- Samuel Rutherford, 1600-1601.

**Verse 81.** -- *For thy salvation.* Understood in a higher sense, the holy man longs for the coming of the Saviour in the flesh. --Cornelius Jansen.

**Verse 81.** -- *Thy salvation.* A believer in God, how afflicted so ever lie be, seeketh not to be delivered but in a way allowed by God; "My soul fainteth for thy salvation"; or, till thou deliver me in thy good way. --David Dickson.

**Verse 81.** -- *I hope in thy word.* David knew where he moored his ship. Hope without a promise is like an anchor without ground to helot by; but David's hope fixed itself upon the divine word. --William Gurnall.

**Verse 81.** -- *I hope in thy word: ie.* I hope beyond anything I understand, and beyond anything I can possibly do, and beyond anything I deserve, and beyond all carnal and spiritual consolations, for I desire and look for Thee only I seek Thee, not Thine: I long to hear "Thud word," that I may obey it in patience and meekness. --Le Blanc.

**Verse 81,83.** -- *It is good in all times of persecution or affliction to have an eye both on the promises and on the precepts; for the looking to the promise doth encourage to hope, and the eyeing of tim precepts doth prove the hope to be sound.* The Psalmist hoped in the word ([Psalms 119:81](#)), and ([Psalms 119:88](#)), he forgot not the statutes. --David Dickson.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 81-88.** -- Hope in depression. In the depression arising from mortal frailness ([Ps 119:81-81](#)),

and from unjust persecution (Psalms 119:85-87), the word of God is the source of joy and comfort.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 81.** -- Text suitable for a missionary sermon.

1. The condition of the heathen world, enough to make the Christian faint for the salvation of God to visit it.

a. The grossness of its darkness.

(b) Its wide area.

(c) Its long continuance.

(d) The limited character and effect of mission labour.

(e) The opposing influences.

1. This condition, though exceedingly sad, is not hopeless. Because --

(a) Of the intention, adaptation, and universal call of the gospel.

(b) Of Christ's commission to his church.

(c) Of the compassionate character of the spiritually enlightened, produced by their faith in the word.

(d) Of the prophecies and promises. Thus, there is hope in the word.

1. If Christians are fainting for the salvation, but hoping in the word, their interest in mission work will be intense, and will show itself,

a. In earnest prayer for more labourers, and greater results.

(b) In devoting themselves, if possible, to the work.

(c) In free and generous giving, to help on the work. --J.F.

**Verse 81.** -- My soul fainteth, etc. Men faint for health, provision, rest, promotion, success, and in some instances for salvation. David fainted.

1. For his own salvation.

(a) From guilt: "Deliver me from all my transgressions;" "from blood guiltiness."

(b) From defilement: "Create in me a clean heart." "Wash me."

(c) From formality: "Let the words of my mouth," etc.

(d) From darkness: "Why hidest thou thyself?" "Lift up," etc. "Say unto my soul," etc.

1. From unhappiness: "Out of the depths," etc.

2. For the salvation of others.

(a) He talked about it: "Time for thee to work, Lord."

(b) He prayed for it: "Oh that the salvation," etc. "Let thy work," etc. "God be merciful unto us:" "Save now, I beseech thee."

(c) He laboured for it: "I will make mention of thy righteousness:" "I will teach transgressors thy ways." --W.J.

**Verse 81.** --

1. Eagerness of expectation.
2. Energy of hope.
3. Establishment of promise: "In thy word."

**Verse 81.** -- Salvation, in Scripture, hath divers acceptations: it is put --

1. For that temporal deliverance which God giveth, or hath promised to give to his people: so it is taken. Exodus 14:13.
2. For the exhibition of Christ in the flesh. Psalms 98:2-3 Luke 2:29-30.
3. For the benefits which we have by Christ on this side of heaven; as the pardon of sin, and the renovation of our natures. Matthew 1:21; Titus 3:5 Psalms 51:12.
4. For everlasting life: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9); meaning thereby our final reward. --T. Manton.

**Verse 81.** --

1. Faint.
2. Pursuing. --W.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 82.** Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? His eyes gave out with eagerly gazing for the kind appearance of the Lord, while his heart in weariness cried out for speedy comfort. To read the word till the eyes can no longer see is but a small thing compared with watching for the fulfilment of the promise till the inner eyes of expectancy begin to grow dim with hope deferred. We may not set times to God, for this is to limit the Holy One of Israel; yet we may urge our suit with importunity, and make fervent enquiry as to why the promise tarries. David sought no comfort except that which comes from God; his question is, "When wilt thou comfort me?" If help does not come from heaven it will never come at all: all the good man's hopes look that way, he has not a glance to dart in any other direction. This experience of waiting and fainting is well known by full grown saints, and it teaches them many precious lessons which they would never learn by any other means. Among the choice results is this one -- that the body rises into sympathy with the soul, both

heart and flesh cry out for the living God, and even the eyes find a tongue, "saying, When wilt thou comfort me?" It must be an intense longing which is not satisfied to express itself by the lips, but speaks with the eyes, by those eyes failing through intense watching. Eyes can speak right eloquently; they use both mutes and liquids, and can sometimes say more than tongues. David says in another place, "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping" ([Psalms 6:8](#)). Specially are our eyes eloquent when they begin to fail with weariness and woe. A humble eye lifted up to heaven in silent prayer may flash such flame as shall melt the bolts which bar the entrance of vocal prayer, and so heaven shall be taken by storm with the artillery of tears. Blessed are the eyes that are strained in looking after God. The eyes of the Lord will see to it that such eyes do not actually fail. How much better to watch for the Lord with aching eyes than to have them sparkling at the glitter of vanity.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 82.** -- *Mine eyes fail for thy word.* Has a mother promised to visit her son or daughter? should she not be able to go, the remark of the son or daughter will be: "Alas! my mother promised to come to me: how I have I been looking for her? But a speck has grown on my eye. I cannot see, my eyes have failed me"; that is, by looking so intensely for coming. --Joseph Roberts.

**Verse 82.** -- *Mine eyes fail for thy word.* He was continuously lifting eyes to heaven, looking for help from God. He was so perpetually this, that at length the eyes themselves became dim.

When wilt thou comfort me? He was saying this in his heart; he was saying this with his mouth; he was saying the same thing with his eyes perpetually looking up to heaven. -- Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 82.** -- *For thy word.* The children of God make more of a promise than others do; and that upon a double account: partly, because value the blessing promised; partly, because they are satisfied with assurance given by God's word; so that, whereas others pass by these thin with a careless eye, their souls are lifted up to the constant and earnest petition of the blessing promised. It is said of the hireling, that he have his wages before the sun go down, because he is poor and hath set heart upon it ([Deuteronomy 24:15](#)); or, as it is in the Hebrew, lifted up his to it, meaning thereby both his desire and hope. He esteemeth his for it is the solace of his labours, and the maintenance of his life; and assuredly expects it, upon the promise and covenant of him who him who setteth him awork. So it is with the children of God; they esteem the blessing promised, and God's word giveth them good assurance that they do wait upon him in vain. --Thomas Manton

**Verse 82.** -- *Saying, When.* The same spirit of faith which teaches man to cry earnestly, teaches him to wait patiently; for as it assures that mercy is in the Lord's hand, so it assures him, it will come forth in Lord's time. --John Mason, 1688.

**Verse 82.** -- *When wilt thou comfort me?* It is a customable manner of God's working with his children, to delay the answer to their; prayers, and to suspend the performance of his promises: not because he is unwilling to give, but because he will have them better prepared to receive. Tardins

dando quod petimus instantia nobis orationis indicit: he is slow to give that which we seek, that we should not seek slowly, but may be awakened to instancy and fervency in prayer, which he knows to be the service most acceptable unto him, and most profitable unto ourselves. --William Cowper.

**Verse 82.** -- *When wilt thou comfort me? Let us complain not of God, but to God.* Complaints of God give a vent to murmuring; but complaints to God, to faith, hope, and patience. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 82.** -- *The prophet,* to prevent it from being supposed that he was too effeminate and faint hearted, intimates that his fainting was not without cause. In asking God, "When wilt thou comfort me?" he shows, with sufficient plainness, that he was for a long time, as it were, east off and forsaken. --John Calvin.

**Verse 82.** -- *When wilt thou comfort me? The people of God are sometimes very disconsolate,* and need comforting, through the prevalence of sin, the power of Satan's temptations, the hiding of God's face, and a variety of afflictions, when they apply to God for comfort, who only can comfort them, and who has set times to do it; but they are apt to think it long, and inquire, as David here, when it will be. --John Gill.

**Verse 82.** -- *When wilt thou comfort me? A poor woman had been long time questioning herself,* and doubting of her salvation; when at last the Lord made it good unto her soul that Christ was her own, then her minister said unto her, The Lord will not always give his children a cordial, but he hath it ready for them when they are fainting. --Thomas Hooker.

**Verse 82.** -- *When wilt thou comfort me? Comfort is necessary because a great part of our temptations lies in troubles,* as well as allurements. Sense of pain may discompose us as well as pleasure entice us. The world is a persecuting as well as a tempting world. The flesh troubleth as well as enticeth. The Devil is a disquieting as well as an ensnaring Devil. But yet comfort, though necessary, is not so necessary as holiness: therefore, though comfort is not to be despised, yet sincere love to God is to be preferred, and, though it be not dispensed so certainly, so constantly, and in so high a degree, in this world, we must be contented. The Spirit's comforting work is oftener interrupted than the work of holiness; yet so much as is necessary to enable us to serve God in this world, we shall assuredly receive. --Thomas Manton.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 82.** -- Answer to the enquiry -- When wilt thou comfort me?

1. When your grief has answered its purpose.
2. When you believe.
3. When you leave sin.
4. When you obey.
5. When you submit to my will.
6. When you seek my glory.

**Verse 82. --**

1. How longingly the believer turns to God for comfort in his affliction: "When wilt thou comfort me?"
2. How intently he gazes upon the Divine promises: "My eyes fail for thy word."
3. How the weariness of waiting cannot wear out his patience, while hope increases his importunity: "When wilt thou?" --J.F.

**Verse 82. --** The pleading of the eyes.

1. How the eyes speak. By "expression" of the moods of the soul, as -- longing, [Isaiah 8:17](#); faith, [Isaiah 45:22](#) [Hebrews 12:2](#); expectation, [Psalms 5:3](#) [Philippians 3:20](#) [Titus 2:13](#); love, [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) [Joh 1:14](#).
2. What the eyes say. "When wilt thou comfort me? Brushing aside all other comforters, thou art my sun: my life: my love: my all."
3. How the pleading eyes shall meet the responsive Eye of the Lord: [Hebrews 9:18](#). In the look of the recognition of grief, [Exodus 2:25](#); in the look of pardon, [Luke 22:61](#); of strength giving, [Judges 6:14](#); of complacent love, [Isaiah 66:2](#). --C.A.D.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 83.** For I am become like a bottle in the smoke. The skins used for containing wine, when emptied, were hung up in the tent, and when the place reeked with smoke the skins grew black and sooty, and in the heat they became wrinkled and worn. The Psalmist's face through sorrow had become dark and dismal, furrowed and lined; indeed, his whole body had so sympathized with his sorrowing mind as to have lost its natural moisture, and to have become like a skin dried and tanned. His character had been smoked with slander, and his mind parched with persecution; he was half afraid that he would become useless and incapable through so much mental suffering, and that men would look upon him as an old worn out skin bottle, which could hold nothing and answer no purpose. What a metaphor for a man to use who was certainly a poet, a divine, and a master in Israel, if not a king, and a man after God's own heart! It is little wonder if we, commoner folk, are made to think very little of ourselves, and are filled with distress of mind. Some of us know the inner meaning of this simile, for we, too, have felt dinghy, mean, and worthless, only fit to be cast away. Very black and hot has been the smoke which has enveloped us; it seemed to come not alone from the Egyptian furnace, but from the bottomless pit; and it had a clinging power which made the soot of it fasten upon us and blacken us with miserable thoughts.

Yet do I not forget thy statutes. Here is the patience of the saints and the victory of faith. Blackened the man of God might be by falsehood, but the truth was in him, and he never gave it up. He was faithful to his King when he seemed deserted and left to the vilest uses. The promises came to his

mind, and, what was a still better evidence of his loyalty, the statutes were there too: he stuck to his duties as well as to his comforts. The worst circumstances cannot destroy the true believer's hold upon his God. Grace is a living power which survives that which would suffocate all other forms of existence. Fire cannot consume it, and smoke cannot smother it. A man may be reduced to skin and bone, and all his comfort may be dried out of him, and yet he may hold fast his integrity and glorify his God. It is, however, no marvel that in such a case the eyes which are tormented with the smoke cry out for the Lord's delivering hand, and the heart heated and faint longs for the divine salvation.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 83.** -- *A bottle in the smoke.* Sleep was out of the question, for I was...almost smothered with the smoke from a wood fire, for there was no chimney. I was indeed "like a bottle in the smoke," turned black and dried almost to cracking; for this was something of what the Psalmist had in view. The bottles being of leather, and being hung up in rooms with large fires of wood, and without chimneys, they became smoke-dried, shrivelled, and unfit for use. --From "My Wanderings", by John Gadby, 1860.

**Verse 83.** -- *Like a bottle in the smoke.* The tent of a common Arab is so smoky a habitation, that I consider the expression of a bottle in the smoke, to be equivalent to that of a bottle in the tent of an Arab. There was a fire, we find, in that Arab tent to which Bishop Peteeke was conducted when he was going to Jerusalem. How smoky must such an habitation be, and how black all its utensils! Le Bruyn in going from Aleppo to Standcroon was made sufficiently sensible of this: for being obliged to pass a whole night in a hut of reeds, in the middle of which there was a fire, to boil a kettle of meat that hung over it, and to bake some bread among the ashes, he found the smoke intolerable, the door being the only place by which it could get out of the hut.

To the blackness of a goat skin bottle, in a tent, but to the meanness also of such a drinking vessel, the Psalmist seems to refer, and it was a most natural image for him to make use of, driven from among the vessels of silver and gold in the palace of Saul, to live as the Arabs do and did, and consequently often obliged to drink out of a smoked leather bottle. --Thomas Harmer, 1719-1788.

**Verse 83.** -- *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke.* A bottle in the smoke has very little inflation, fatness, moisture, beauty. Thus God wastes away, debases, and empties his people, while he exercises them with tribulations and the disquiet of hoping and waiting. The glory and eagerness of the flesh must be emptied, that the Divine gifts may find room, and the remembrance of the commandments of God may be restrained, which cannot be well kept in bottles which are swollen, inflated, and filled. -- Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 83.** -- *A bottle in the smoke.* One object amongst the ancients of such exposure was to mellow the wine by the gradual ascent of the heat and smoke from the fire over which the skin was suspended; and thus the words teach us the uses of affliction in ripening and improving the soul.

--Rosenmuller, quoted in Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 83.** -- *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke*, etc. Satan can afflict the body by the mind. For these two are so closely bound together that their good and bad estate is shared between them. If the heart be merry the countenance is cheerful, the strength is renewed, the bones do flourish like an herb. If the heart be troubled, the health is impaired, the strength is dried up, the marrow of the bones wasted, etc. Grief in the heart is like a moth in the garment, it insensibly consumeth the body and disorders it. This advantage of weakening the body falls into Satan's hands by necessary consequence, as the prophet's ripe figs, that fell into the mouth of the eater. And surely he is well pleased with it, as he is an enemy both to body and soul. But it is a greater satisfaction to him, in that as he can make the sorrows of the mind produce the weakness and sickness of the body; so can he make the distemper of the body (by a reciprocal requital) to augment the trouble of the mind. How little can a sickly body do? it disables a man for all services; he cannot, oft pray, nor read, nor hear. Sickness takes away the sweetness and comfort of religious exercises; this gives occasion for them to think the worst of themselves; they think the soul is weary of the ways of God when the body cannot hold out. -- Richard Gilpin, in "A Treatise of Satan's Temptations," 1677.

**Verse 83.** -- *Like a bottle in the smoke*. In this did the afflicted Psalmist find a striking emblem of his own spiritual state. He waited for the Lord to come. In spirit he was dried up by pressure upon him; and he still waited for the Lord to come, declaring his shrivelled condition. Perhaps his outward man partook of the same sad qualities at this time... The outward appearance of the man of God, to which he may be alluding, was, however, but the semblance of his spiritual nature at this period, whatever may have been the visible effects. David was exposed to the calumnious reports of evil minded men, and to the hot persecution of relentless enemies, till the effect upon his mind was such that his whole spiritual nature resembled, in his own mind, a skin hung up in the smoke for a length of time. Not only was he shrivelled in public estimation, but also in his own mind; not indeed because at this time, and on the ground of the charges made against him, he felt that he deserved it; but because so incessant and multifarious was the bitter invasion of his spirit, that even with all his faith in God, he well nigh literally sunk under it. The term given in our translation to the original would imply, that he bore himself well notwithstanding --

For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do not forget thy statutes. Whereas the words rendered more literally would convey the important all this happened to him even while he was in the very way of duty: "I am become like a bottle in the smoke -- I do not forget thy statutes." He was directly in the way of the Lord's appointments for all salvation; yet trouble came. It is sad when our spiritual man becomes shrivelled and dried up because of our falling into sin, or because of guilty omissions; but here seems to be a falling off of the spiritual man, and of the physical man, while the believer is conscious that he is not forgetting the statutes of his gracious God. --John Stephen.



**Verse 83.** -- *Observe here the difference between the beauty and strength of the body and of the soul: the beauty of the soul groweth fairer by afflictions, whereas that of the body is blasted. David was a bottle shrivelled and shrunk up; yet the holy frame of his soul was not altered; his beauty was gone, but not his grace.* --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 83.** -- *I am become like a bottle in the frost (so the Seventy translate it). When spiritual desires burn, carnal desires without doubt cool: on this account followeth, "Since I am become like a bottle in the frost I do not forget thy righteousnesses." Truly he desireth this mortal flesh to be understood by the bottle, the heavenly blessing by the frost, whereby the lusts of the flesh as it were by the binding of the frost become sluggish: and hence it ariseth that the righteousnesses of God do not slip from the memory, so long as we do not meditate apart from them; since what the apostle saith (Romans 13:14) is brought to pass: "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Therefore when he had said, "For I have become like a bottle in the frost," he added, "and I do not forget thy righteousnesses," that is, I forget them not, because I have become such. For the fervour of lust had cooled, that the memory of love might glow.* --Augustine.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 83.** --

1. The outward man in ill case.
2. Character blackened.
3. Constantly exposed to discomfort.
4. Contents maturing.

**Verse 83.** -- A bottle in the smoke.

1. God's people have their trials.
  - (a) From the poverty of their condition.
  - (b) Our trials frequently result from our comforts.
  - (c) The ministry hath much smoke with it.
  - (d) The poor bottle in the smoke keeps there for a long time, until it gets black.

1. Christian men feel their troubles; they are like "bottles" in the smoke.
  - a. The trial that we do not feel is no trial at all.

(b) Trials which are not felt are unprofitable trials. A bottle in the smoke gets very black, becomes very useless, in an empty bottle.

1. Christians do not, in their troubles, forget God's statutes -- the statutes of command, the statutes of promise. Why was it that David still held fast by God's statutes?
  - a. He was not a bottle in the fire, or he would have

forgotten them.

(b) Jesus Christ was in the smoke with him, and the statutes were in the smoke with him, too.

(c) The statutes were in the soul, where the smoke does not enter. --From "Spurgeon's Sermons." No. 71.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 84.** How many are the days of thy servant? I cannot hope to live long in such a condition, thou must come speedily to my rescue, or I shall die. Shall all my short life be consumed in such destroying sorrows? The brevity of life is a good argument against the length of an affliction. Perhaps the Psalmist means that his days seemed too many when they were spent in such distress. He half wished that they were ended, and therefore he asked in trouble, "How many are the days of thy servant?" Like a hired servant, he had a certain term to serve, and he would not complain; but still the time seemed long because his griefs were so heavy. No one knows the appointed number of our days except the Lord, and therefore to him the appeal is made that he would not prolong them beyond his servant's strength. It cannot be the Lord's mind that his own servant should always be treated so unjustly; there must be an end to it; when would it be?

When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? He had placed his case in the Lord's hands, and he prayed that sentence might be given and put into execution. He desired nothing but justice, that his character might be cleared and his persecutors silenced. He knew that God would certainly avenge his own elect, but the day of rescue tarried, the hours dragged heavily along, and the persecuted one cried day and night for deliverance.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 84.** -- *How many are the days of thy servant? etc.* Some read the two clauses apart, as if the first were a general complaint of the brevity of human life, such as is to be met with in other Psalms, and more frequently in the book of Job; and next, in their opinion, there follows a special prayer of the Psalmist that God would take vengeance upon his enemies. But I rather prefer joining the two clauses together, and limit both to David's afflictions; as if it had been said, Lord, how long hast thou determined to abandon thy servant to the will of the ungodly? when wilt thou set thyself in opposition to their cruelty and outrage, in order to take vengeance upon them? The Scriptures often use the word "days" in this sense... By the use of the plural number is denoted a determinate portion of time, which, in other places, is compared to the "days of an hireling": Job 14:6; Isaiah 16:14. The Psalmist does not, then, bewail in general the transitory life of man, but he complains that the time of his state of warfare in this world had been too long protracted; and, therefore, he naturally desires that it might be brought to a termination. In expostulating with God about his troubles, he does not do so

obstinately, or with a murmuring spirit; but still, in asking how long it will be necessary for him to suffer, he humbly prays that God would not delay to succour him. --John Calvin.

**Verse 84.** -- *When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? He declares that he does not doubt but that there will be at some period an end to his afflictions, and that there will be a time in which his haters and enemies will be judged and punished. He assumes the fact and therefore enquires the date. Thus in the saints their very impatience of delay does itself prove their confidence of future salvation and deliverance.* -- Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 84.** -- *When wilt thou execute judgment, etc.* This is an ordinary prayer, not against any certain persons, but rather generally against God's enemies and their evil courses. For the Lord executeth judgment upon his children for their conversion, as Paul (Acts 9), and upon the wicked for their confusion. He prayeth against them that belonged not to God, and yet not so much against their persons as their evil causes; and no otherwise against their persons than as they are joined with the evil causes. Thus we may pray for the confusion of God's enemies; otherwise we cannot. --R. Greenham.

**Verse 84.** -- *In this verse there is none of the ten words used in reference to God's law.* -- Adam Clarke. Is not judgment one of them? -- C.H.S.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 84.** -- A solemn question pointing to the shortness of life, the severity of sorrow, the necessity of industry, the nearness of the reward.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 85.** The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law. As men who hunt wild beasts are wont to make pitfalls and snares, so did David's foes endeavour to entrap him. They went laboriously and cunningly to work to ruin him, "they digged pits"; not one, but many. If one would not take him, perhaps another would, and so they digged again and again. One would think that such haughty people would not have soiled their fingers with digging; but they swallowed their pride in hopes of swallowing their victim. Whereas they ought to have been ashamed of such meanness, they were conscious of no shame, but, on the contrary, were proud of their cleverness; proud of setting a trap for a godly man. "Which are not after thy law." Neither the men nor their pits were according to the divine law: they were cruel and crafty deceivers, and their pits were contrary to the Levitical law, and contrary to the command which bids us love our neighbour. If men would keep to the statutes of the Lord, they would lift the fallen out of the pit, or fill up the pit so that none might stumble into it; but they would never spend a moment in working injury to others. When, however, they become proud, they are sure to despise others; and for this reason they seek to circumvent them, that they may afterwards hold them up to ridicule. It was well for David that his enemies were God's enemies, and

that their attacks upon him had no sanction from the Lord. It was also much to his gain that he was not ignorant of their devices, for he was thus put upon his guard, and led to watch his ways lest he should fall into their pits. While he kept to the law of the Lord he was safe, though even then it was an uncomfortable thing to have his path made dangerous by the craft of wanton malice.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 85.** -- *Pits.* Hajji said he would tell me a tale or two about crocodiles, and he would begin by telling me how they catch them sometimes. A deep pit, he said, is dug by the side of the river, and then covered with doura straw. The crocodiles fall into these pits, and cannot get out again... There can be no doubt that formerly pits were dug for the crocodiles, as Hajji described, as is the case still in some parts of the world or other animals. To this custom allusion is made in Psalms 7:15 9:15 10:2 35:8 141:10 Proverbs 26:27 Ec 10:8: etc. "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." Probably also this was the kind of pit referred to in Exodus 21:33: "If a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it"; i.e., not cover it effectually;" and an ass or an ox fall therein," etc.

Prisoners were sometimes shut up in pits, and left without water, literally to die of thirst. What a dreadful death! It is said that nothing can be more terrible. How dreadful must be their groans! --John Gadsby.

**Verse 85.** -- *The proud have digged pits.* It seems strange that a proud man should be a digger of pits; but so it is; for pride for a time can submit itself to gain a greater vantage over him whom it would tread under foot. "The wicked is so proud that he seeks not God, yet he croucheth and boweth, to cause heaps of the poor to fill by his might," Psalms 10:4,10. So proud Absalom abased himself to meanest subjects that so he might prepare a way to usurpation over his king and father. But mark, he saith not that he had fallen into the pits which his enemies had digged. No, no: in God's righteous judgments, the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands, while the good escape free. "He made a pit, and digged it," and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. Psalms 7:15-16. Thus Haman hanelled the gallows which he raised for Mordecai; and Saul, when he thought by subtlety to slay David with the Philistine's sword (when he sent him out to seek two hundred of their foreskins in a dowry) was disappointed of his purpose; but he himself at length was slain by the sword. --William Cowper.

**Verse 85.** -- *Let men beware how they dig pits for others.* All God's word testifies against such wickedness. How many tests are invented simply for the purpose of entangling men's consciences and furnishing ground for persecution. --William S. Plumer.

**Verse 85.** -- *Which are not after thy law.* Hebrew, Not after thy law. It may refer to the men or to the practice. The men walk not according to thy law, and their fraudulent practices are not agreeable to thy law. The law of God condemned pits for tame beasts: Exodus 21:33,84. Though it was lawful for

hunters to take wild beasts, yet they were to take heed that a tame beast fell not therein, at their peril. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 85.** -- *Which are not after thy law.* After God's law they could not be while they were doing such things. Perhaps he refers to the deed more than to the men "The proud have digged pits for me, which is not after thy law" -- which is against thy law; and they would seem to do it because it is against thy law -- delighting in wickedness as they do. Such men would seem to imbibe the foul spirit which Milton ascribes to the fallen archangel: "Evil, be thou my good." Obviously, however, the words contain this sentiment, -- The proud have sought to overthrow me, because they are not obedient to thy law. Hereupon he sets their conduct in the light of God's holy commandments, that the comparison may be made: "All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully." Whatever the Lord did was done in truth; these men acted against his servant without cause, and in so doing they also acted in defiance of his known will. --John Stephen.

**Verse 85.** -- *The wicked have told me fables, but not as thy law* (So the Septuagint). The special reason why he desires to be freed from the company of the wicked is, because they always tempt the pious by relating the pleasures of the world, which are nothing but fables, filthy, fleeting pleasures, more fallacious than real -- nothing like the grand and solid pleasure that always flows from a pious observance of the law of the Lord. -- Robert Bellarmine.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 85.** -- Pits; or, the secret schemes of wicked men against the godly.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 86.** All thy commandments are faithful. He had no fault to find with God's law, even though he had fallen into sad trouble through obedience to it. Whatever the command might cost him it was worth it; he felt that God's way might be rough, but it was right; it might make him enemies, but still it was his best friend. He believed that in the end God's command would turn out to his own profit, and that he should be no loser by obeying it.

They persecute me wrongfully. The fault lay with his persecutors, and neither with his God nor with himself. He had done no injury to anyone, nor acted otherwise than according to truth and justice; therefore he confidently appeals to his God, and cries, "Help thou me." This is a golden prayer, as precious as it is short. The words are few, but the meaning is full. Help was needed that the persecuted one might avoid the snare, might bear up under reproach, and might act so prudently as to baffle his foes. God's help is our hope. Whoever may hurt us, it matters not so long as the Lord helps us; for if indeed the Lord help us, none can really hurt us. Many a time have these words been groaned out by troubled saints, for they are such as suit a thousand conditions of need, pain, distress, weakness, and sin. "Help, Lord," will be a fitting prayer for youth and age, for labour and suffering, for

life and death. No other help is sufficient, but God's help is all sufficient, and we cast ourselves upon it without fear.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 86.** -- *All thy commandments are faithful.* David setteth down here three points. The one is that God is true; and after that he addeth a protestation of his good conduct and guidance, and of the malice of his adversaries: thirdly, he calleth upon God in his afflictions. Now as concerning the first, he showeth us that although Satan to shake us, and in the end utterly to carry us away, subtilly and cunningly goeth about to deceive us, we must, to the contrary, learn how to know his ambushes, and to keep us from out of them. So often then as we are grieved with adversity and affliction, where must we begin? See Satan how he pitches his nets and layeth his ambushes to induce and persuade us to come into them, what saith he? Dost thou not see thyself forsaken of thy God? Where are the promises whereunto thou didst trust? Now here thou seest thyself to be a wretched, forlorn creature. So then thou right well seest that God hath deceived thee, and that the promises whereunto thou trustedst appertain nothing at all unto thee. See here the subtlety of Satan. What is now to be done? We are to conclude with David and say, yet God is true and faithful. Let us, I say, keep in mind the truth of God as a shield to beat back whatsoever Satan is able to lay unto our charge. When he shall go about to cause us to deny our faith, when he shall lie about us to make us believe that God thinketh no more of us, or else that it is in vain for us to trust unto his promises; let us know the clean contrary and believe that it is very plain and sound truth which God saith unto us. Although Satan casteth at us never so many darts, although he have never so exceeding many devices against us, although now and then by violence, sometimes with subtlety and cunning, it seemeth in very deed to us that he should overcome us; nevertheless he shall never bring it to pass, for the truth of God shall be made sure and certain in our hearts. -- John Calvin.

**Verse 86.** -- *All thy commandments are faithful.* The Hebrew is Faithfulness; that is to say, they are true, sure, equal, infallible. "They have persecuted me wrongfully:" no doubt for asserting God's truths and commands, and adhering thereto. --John Trapp.

**Verse 86.** -- *They persecute me wrongfully.* There is a stress on the word falsely (or wrongfully); for that is a true saying of a martyr saint, "The cause, not the pain, makes the martyr." Wherefore the apostle teaches us, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." --Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 86.** -- *Help thou me.* "God help me" is an excellent, comprehensive prayer; it is a pity it should ever be used lightly and as a byword. --Matthew Henry.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 86.** (last clause). -- A prayer for all occasions. See the many cases in which it is used in

Scripture.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 87.** They had almost consumed me upon earth. His foes had almost destroyed him so as to make him altogether fail. If they could they would have eaten him, or burned him alive; anything so that they could have made a full end of the good man. Evidently he had fallen under their power to a large extent, and they had so used that power that he was well nigh consumed. He was almost gone from off the earth; but almost is not altogether, and so he escaped by the skin of his teeth. The lions are chained: they can rage no further than our God permits. The Psalmist perceives the limit of their power: they could only touch his earthly life and earthly goods. Upon earth they almost ate him up, but he had an eternal portion which they could not even nibble at. "But I forsook not thy precepts." Nothing could drive him from obeying the Lord. If we stick to the precepts we shall be rescued by the promises. If ill usage could have driven the oppressed saint from the way of right the purpose of the wicked would have been answered, and we should have heard no more of David. If we are resolved to die sooner than forsake the Lord, we may depend upon it that we shall not die, but shall live to see the overthrow of them that hate us.

**Verse 87.** -- Almost consumed. The lives of good men are full of narrow escapes. The righteous are scarcely saved. Many a time their feet do almost slip. Yet he, who has redeemed them, will not let them so fall that they can rise no more. One of their greatest perils is, a temptation to use unlawful means for terminating their trials. -- William S. Plumer.

**Verse 87.** -- It should be noticed that he says "upon the earth:" for it shows, that even if his enemies had taken away his life .on earth, he nevertheless confidently looked for another life in heaven; and that already he had by faith entered into heaven, and was living a heavenly life; so that if the life of the body should be taken away, it was not to be regarded as an evil. They who live such a life speedily recover from despair. --D.H. Mollerus.

## **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 87.** --

1. What the good man loses by gaining.
2. What he gains by losing. --G.R.

**Verse 87.** --

1. "Almost," but not altogether.
2. The saving clause: "I forsook not thy precepts."

**Verse 87.** -- Passing through fires, and the asbestos covering.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 88.** Quicken me after thy loving kindness. Most wise, most blessed prayer! If we are revived in our own personal piety we shall be out of reach of our assailants. Our best protection from tempters and persecutors is more life. Lovingkindness itself cannot do us greater service than by making us to have life more abundantly. When we are quickened we are able to bear affliction, to baffle cunning, and to conquer sin. We look to the lovingkindness of God as the source of spiritual revival, and we entreat the Lord to quicken us, not according to our deserts, but after the boundless energy of his grace. What a blessed word is this "loving kindness." Take it to pieces, and admire its double force of love. "So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth." If quickened by the Holy Ghost we shall be sure to exhibit a holy character. We shall be faithful to sound doctrine when the Spirit visits us and makes us faithful. None keep the word of the Lord's mouth unless the word of the Lord's mouth quickens them. We ought greatly to admire the spiritual prudence of the Psalmist, who does not so much pray for freedom from trial as for renewed life that he may be supported under it. When the inner life is vigorous all is well. David prayed for a sound heart in the closing verse of the last octave, and here he seeks a revived heart; this is going to the root of the matter, by seeking that which is the most needful of all things. Lord, let it be heart work with us, and let our hearts be right with thee.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 88.** -- *Quicken me after thy lovingkindness.* Finally, the man of God appears entreating to be quickened, that so he may be enabled to keep the divine testimony... Here is a last resort, but it is a sure one. Let the living principles of divine grace be imparted to the soul, and the believer will be raised above dismay at the face of men. How does the spiritual mind triumph over even the infirmities of the body! We may behold this from the deathbed of the believer, and we may recall this in the lives and deaths of many eminent ones. The man of pure mind goes right to the fountain of life. He goes, with understanding, for he takes in the character in which the Lord hath spoken of himself: "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness." All at once he lays aside thought of his enemies; he is present with his God. His desire is to rise into higher spiritual existence, that he may hold closer communion with the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness. --John Stephen.

**Verse 88.** -- *Quicken me,* etc. He had prayed before, "Quicken me in thy righteousness" ([Psalms 119:40](#)); but here "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness." The surest token of God's goodwill towards us is his good work in us. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 88.** -- *Quicken me.* Many a time in this psalm doth David make this petition; and it seems strange that so often he should acknowledge himself a dead man, and desire God to quicken him. But so it is unto the child of God: every desertion and decay of strength is a death. So desirous are they to live unto God, that when they fail in it and find any inability in their souls to serve God as they would, they account themselves but dead, and pray the Lord to quicken them. --William Cowper.

**Verse 88.** -- *The testimony of thy mouth.* The title here given to the directory of our duty -- "The



testimony of God's mouth," gives increasing strength to our obligations. Thus let every word we read or hear be regarded as coming directly from the "mouth of God" (Joh 6:63). What reverence what implicit submission does it demand! May it ever find us in the posture of attention, humility, and faith! each one of us ready to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." --Charles Bridges.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 88.** --

1. New life is the cause of new obedience.
2. New obedience is the effect of new life. --G.R.

**Verse 88.** -- Quickening.

1. Our greatest need.
2. God's most gracious boon.
3. The guarantee of our steadfastness; and so,
4. The promoter of God's glory.

**Verse 88.** --

1. He closes with a frequent petition: "Quicken thou me -- make me alive." All true religion consists in the LIFE of God in the SOUL of man.
2. The manner in which he wishes to be quickened: "After thy lovingkindness." He wishes not to be raised from the death of sin by God's thunder, but by the loving voice of a tender Father.
3. The effect it should have upon him: "So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth." Whatever thou speakest I will hear, receive, love, and obey. --Adam Clarke.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 89.** For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. The strain is more joyful, for experience has given the sweet singer a comfortable knowledge of the word of the Lord, and this makes a glad theme. After tossing about on a sea of trouble the Psalmist here leaps to shore and stands upon a rock. Jehovah's word is not fickle nor uncertain; it is settled, determined, fixed, sure, immovable. Man's teachings change so often that there is never time for them to be settled; but the Lord's word is from of old the same, and will remain unchanged eternally. Some men are never happier than when they are unsettling everything and everybody; but God's mind is not with them. The power and glory of heaven have confirmed each sentence which the mouth of the Lord has spoken, and so confirmed it that to all eternity it must stand the same, -- settled in heaven, where nothing can reach it. In the former section David's soul fainted, but here the good man looks out of self and perceives that the Lord fainteth not, neither is weary, neither is there any failure in his word.

The verse takes the form of an ascription of praise: the faithfulness and immutability of God are fit themes for holy song, and when we are tired with gazing upon the shifting scene of this life, the

thought of the immutable promise fills our mouth with singing. God's purposes, promises, and precepts are all settled in his own mind, and none of them shall be disturbed. Covenant settlements will not be removed, however unsettled the thoughts of men may become; let us therefore settle it in our minds that we abide in the faith of our Jehovah as long as we have any being.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

LAMED. -- Ver. 89. -- Here the climax of the delineation of the suppliant's pilgrimage is reached. We have arrived at the centre of the psalm, and the thread of the connexion is purposely broken off. The substance of the first eleven strophes has evidently been: "Hitherto hath the Lord brought me: shall it be that I now perish?" To this the eleven succeeding strophes make answer, "The Lord's word changeth not; and in spite of all evil foreboding, the Lord will perfect concerning me the work that he hath already begun." --Joseph Francis Thruput, 1860.

**Verse 89.** -- *For ever*, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. These words are usually rendered as making but one proposition; but the accent athnab showeth there are two branches; the one asserting the eternity of God; the other, the constancy and permanency of his word. Thus,

1. "For ever art thou O LORD."
2. "Thy word is settled in heaven." So the Syriac readeth it; and Geierus, and, after him, others prove and approve this reading. And so this verse and the following do the better correspond one with the other, if we observe beginning and ending: As thou art "for ever, O Lord," and "thy faithfulness is unto all generations," which are exactly parallel. And so also will the last clauses agree: "Thy word is settled in heaven," and, "thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."

It implies that as God is eternal, so is his word, and that it hath a fit representation both in heaven and in earth: in heaven, in the constant motion of the heavenly bodies; in earth, in the consistency and permanency thereof; that as his word doth stand fast in heaven, so doth his faithfulness on earth, where the afflictions of the godly seem to contradict it. -- Thomas Manton.

**Verse 89.** -- *For ever*, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. When Job considers his body turned to dust and worms (Job 14:19,25), yet by faith he says, "My Redeemer lives," etc. Even when patience failed in Job, yet faith failed not. Though God kill all other graces and comforts, and my soul too, yet he shall not kill my faith, says lie. If he separate my soul from my body, yet not faith from my soul. And therefore the just lives by faith, rather than by other graces, because when all is gone, yet faith remains, and faith remains because the promise remains: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." And this is the proper and principal meaning of this place. --Matthew Lawrence.

**Verse 89.** -- *For ever*, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. If we look at God's word of promise, as it is in our unsettled hearts, we dream that it's as ready to waver as our hearts are; as the shadow of the sun and moon in the water seems to shake as much as the water doth which it shines upon. Yet for all this seeming shaking here below, the sun and moon go on in a steadfast course in heaven. So

the Psalmist tells us that however our hearts stagger at a promise through unbelief, nay, and our unbelief makes us believe that the promise often is shaken; yet God's word is settled, though not in our hearts, yet "in heaven"; yea, and there "for ever," as settled as heaven itself is; yea, more than so; for "heaven and earth may pass," but "not one jot or tittle of the law (and therefore of the gospel) shall fail": [Luke 16:17](#). --Anthony Tuckney, 1599-1670.

**Verse 89.** -- *Settled.* J. M. Good translates the verse as follows -- "For ever, O Jehovah, hath thy word given array to the heavens," and observes that the Hebrew word *bcb* is a military term, and applies to arraying and marshalling the divisions of an army in their proper stations when taking the field. The hosts of heaven are here supposed to be arrayed or marshalled with a like exact order; and to maintain for ever the relative duties imposed on them: while the earth, like the heavens, has as established a march prescribed to it, which it equally fulfils; for all are the servants of the great Creator; and hence, as they change, produce the beautiful regularity of the seasons, the rich returns of harvest, and daily declare the glory of the Lord.

**Verse 89.** -- *In heaven.* Whenever you look to heaven, remember that within you have a God, who hath fixed his residence and shown his glory there, and made it the seat both of his mercy and justice. You have also there a Saviour who, after he had died for our sins, sat down at the right hand of Majesty, to see his promises accomplished, and by his word to subdue the whole world. There are angels that "do his commandment, hearkening to the voice of his word": [Psalms 103:20](#). There are glorified saints, who see God face to face, and dwell with him for evermore, and came thither by the same covenant which is propounded to us, as the charter of our peace and hope. In the outer region of heaven we see the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, move in that fixed course and order wherein God hath set them; and will God show his constancy in the course of nature, and be fickle and changeable in the covenant of grace, wherein he hath disposed the order and method of his mercies? --Thomas Manton.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 89, 91.** -- *In these verses there is affirmed to be an analogy between the word of God and the works of God.* It is said of his "word," that it is "settled in heaven," and that it sustains its faithfulness from one generation to another. It is said of his "works," and more especially of those that are immediately around us, even of the earth which we inhabit, that as it was established at the first so it abideth afterwards. And then, as if to perfect the assimilation between them, it is said of both in [Psalms 119:91](#), "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are ray servants"; thereby identifying the sureness of that word which proceeded from his lips, with the unfailing constancy of that Nature which was formed and is upholden by his hands.

The constancy of Nature is taught by universal experience, and even strikes the popular eye as the most characteristic of those features which have been impressed upon her. It may need the aid of

philosophy to learn how unvarying Nature is in all her processes -- how even the seeming anomalies can be traced to a law that is inflexible -- how what appears at first to be the caprices of her waywardness, are, in fact, the evolutions of a mechanism that never changes -- and that the more thoroughly she is sifted and put to the test by the interrogations of the curious, the more certainly will they find that she walks by a rule which knows no abatement, and perseveres with obedient footsteps in that even course from which the eye of strictest scrutiny has never yet detected one hair breadth of deviation. It is no longer doubted by men of science, that every remaining semblance of irregularity in the universe is due, not to the fickleness of Nature, but to the ignorance of man -- that her most hidden movements are conducted with a uniformity as rigorous as Fate -- that even the fitful agitations of the weather have their law and their principle -- that the intensity of every breeze, and the number of drops in every shower, and the formation of every cloud, and all the occurring alternations of storm and sunshine, and the endless shifting of temperature, and those tremulous varieties of the air which our instruments have enabled us to discover but have not enabled us to explain -- that still, they follow each other by a method of succession, which, though greatly more intricate, is yet as absolute in itself as the order of the seasons, or the mathematical courses of astronomy. This is the impression of every philosophical mind with regard to Nature, and it is strengthened by each new accession that is made to science...But there is enough of patent and palpable regularity in Nature to give also to the popular mind the same impression of her constancy. There is a gross and general experience that teaches the same lesson, and that has lodged in every bosom a kind of secure and steadfast confidence in the uniformity of her processes. The very child knows and proceeds upon it. He is aware of an abiding character and property in the elements around him, and has already learned as much of the fire, and the water, and the food that he eats, and the firm ground that he treads upon, and even of the gravitation by which he must regulate his postures and his movements, as to prove that, infant though he be, he is fully initiated in the doctrine, that Nature has her laws and her ordinances, and that she continueth therein, and the proofs of this are ever multiplying along the journey of human observation; insomuch that when we come to manhood, we read of Nature's constancy throughout every department of the visible world. It meets us wherever we turn our eyes...God has so framed the machinery of my perceptions, as that I am led irresistibly to expect that everywhere events will follow each other in the very train in which I have ever been accustomed to observe them; and when God so sustains the uniformity of Nature, that in every instance it is rigidly so, he is just manifesting the faithfulness of his character. Were it otherwise, he would be practising a mockery on the expectation which he himself had inspired. God may be said to have promised to every human being that Nature will be constant -- if not by the whisper of an inward voice to every heart, at least by the force of an uncontrollable bias which he has impressed on every constitution. So that, when we behold Nature keeping up its constancy, we

behold the God of Nature keeping up his faithfulness; and the system of visible things with its general laws, and its successions which are invariable, instead of an opaque materialism to intercept from the view of mortals the face of the Divinity, becomes the mirror which reflects upon the truth that is unchangeable, the ordination that never fails...And so it is, that in our text there are presented together, as if there was a tie of likeness between them -- that the same God who is fixed as to the ordinances of Nature, is faithful as to the declarations of his word; and as all experience proves how firmly he may be trusted for the one, so is there an argument as strong as experience, to prove how firmly he may be trusted for the other. By his work in us he hath awakened the expectation of a constancy in Nature, which he never disappoints. By his word to us, should he awaken the expectation of a certainty in his declarations, this he will never disappoint. It is because Nature is so fixed, that we apprehend the God of Nature to be so faithful. He who never falsities the hope that hath arisen in every bosom, from the instinct which he himself hath communicated, will never falsify the hope that shall arise in any bosom from the express utterance of his voice. Were he a God in whose hand the processes of nature were ever shifting, then might we conceive him a God from whose mouth the proclamations of grace had the like characters of variance and vacillation. But it is just because of our reliance on the one that we feel so much of repose in our dependence upon the other; and the same God who is so un failing in the ordinances of his creation, we hold to be equally un failing in the ordinances of his word. --Thomas Chalmers.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 89-96.** -- The immutable word of God. Is enthroned in heaven ([Psalms 119:89](#)), and on earth ([Psalms 119:90-91](#)), is the salvation of the believer in affliction ([Psalms 119:92,94](#)), His resource in danger ([Psalms 119:95](#)), and the embodiment of perfection ([Psalms 119:96](#)).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 89-92.** -- The Psalmist here tells us the prescription which soothed his pains and sustained his spirits. Here we have strong consolation.

1. In certain facts which he remembered.
  - (a) The eternal existence of God.
  - (b) The immutability of his word.
  - (c) The faithfulness of the fulfilment of that word.
  - (d) The perpetuity of the word in nature.
  - (e) The perpetuity of the word in experience.
1. The delights which tie experienced in the time of his trouble. In bereavements; when everything seemed shifting and inconstant; when his own faith failed him; when all helpers failed him; he fell back upon the eternal settlements: "O Lord, thy word is settled," etc. See

"Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1656: "My Solace in my Affliction."

**Verse 89.** -- Eternal settlements, or, heavenly certainties.

**Verse 89.** -- God's eternal calm (in contrast with earth's mutations) imaged in the starry heavens.

--William Bickle Haynes, of Stafford, 1882.

**Verse 89.** -- Consider,

1. The term, "thy word."

(a) A word is a revealed thought. The Scriptures are just this: the thoughts and purposes of God made intelligible to man.

(b) But a "word" also marks specially unity (it is one word) and wholeness or completeness, a word, not a syllable. The Scriptures are one and complete.

1. The statement, "for ever settled in heaven."

(a) "Settled in heaven" before it came to earth; therefore it could come as a continuous unfolding, through various dispensations, without the shadow of hesitation or contradiction manifest in it.

(b) Abides "settled in heaven," for its central revelation; the atonement is a completed fact, and Christ is now in heaven a perfected Saviour; thus the word is unalterable.

(c) "For ever settled in heaven." Not only because God in heaven is of one mind and cannot be turned; but because righteousness itself, the righteousness of heaven, demands that an atonement by suffering shall be fully and everlastingly answered by its due reward.

1. The lessons.

(a) If settled in heaven, men on earth can never unsettle it.

(b) The wicked may not indulge a future hope arising from any new dispensation beyond the grave; God's present word to us cannot then be unsettled.

(c) The godly may rely on a settled word amidst the unsettled experiences and feelings incident to earth. --J.F.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 90.** Thy faithfulness is unto all generations. This is an additional glory: God is not affected by the lapse of ages; he is not only faithful to one man throughout his lifetime, but to his children's children after him, yea, and to all generations so long as they keep his covenant and remember his commandments to do them. The promises are ancient things, yet they are not worn out by centuries of use, for the divine faithfulness endureth for ever. He who succoured his servants thousands of years ago still shows himself strong on the behalf of all them that trust in him. "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." Nature is governed by fixed laws; the globe keeps its course by the divine command, and displays no erratic movements: the seasons observe their predestined order, the sea obeys the rule of ebb and flow, and all things else are marshalled in their appointed order. There is an analogy between the word of God and the works of God, and specially in this, that they are both of them constant, fixed, and unchangeable. God's word which established the world is the same as that which he has embodied in the Scriptures; by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and specially by him who is emphatically THE WORD. When we see the world keeping its place and all its laws abiding the same, we have herein assurance that the Lord will be faithful to his covenant, and will not allow the faith of his people to be put to shame. If the earth abideth the spiritual creation will abide; if God's word suffices to establish the world surely it is enough for the establishment of the individual believer.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 90.** -- *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations.* As he gathered, the certainty of God's word from the endurance of heaven, so now he confirms it by considering the foundation of the earth. Since the foundation of the earth, made by the word of God, abides sure, shall we not think that the foundation of our salvation laid in Jesus Christ, is much more sure? Though the creatures cannot teach us the way of our salvation (for that we must learn by the word), yet do they confirm that which the word saith, "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever:" Jeremiah 31:85,36. As there Jeremy gathers the stability of the church from the stability of the creatures; so here David confirms the certainty of our salvation by the most certain and unchangeable course of creation; and both of them are amplified by Christ Jesus: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot of God's word shall not fall to the ground." Let us therefore be strengthened in faith and give glory to God. --William Cowper.

**Verse 90.** -- *Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.* Every time we set foot on the ground, we may remember the stability of God's promises, and it is also a confirmation of faith. Thus, --

1. The stability of the earth is the effect of God's word; this is the true pillar upon which the earth standeth; for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power; "For he spake, and it was done;

he commanded, and it stood fast": Psalms 33:9. Now, his word of power helpeth us to depend upon his word of promise.

2. Nothing appeareth whereon the globe of the earth should lean and rest: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing:" Job 26:7. Now, that this vast and ponderous body should lean upon the fluid air as upon a firm foundation, is matter of wonder; the question is put in the book of Job: "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the cornerstone thereof?" Job 38:6. Yet firm it is, though it hang as a ball in the air...Now, since his word beareth up such a weight, and all the church's weight, and our own burden leaneth on the promise of God, he can, by the power of his word, bear up all without visible means. Therefore his people may trust his providence; he is able to support them in any distresses, when no way of help appeareth.
3. The firmness and stability offereth itself to our thoughts. The earth abideth in the same seat and condition wherein God left it, as long as the present course and order of nature is to continue: Psalms 104:5. God's truth is as immovable as the earth: Psalms 117:2. Surely if the foundation of the earth abideth sure, the foundation of our salvation, laid by Jesus Christ, is much more sure.
4. The stability remains in the midst of changes: Ecclesiastes 1:4. All things in the world are subject to many revolutions, but God's truth is one and the same.
5. In upholding the frame of the world, all those attributes are seen, which are a firm stay to a believer's heart, such as wisdom, power, and goodness. The covenant of grace is as sure as the covenant made after the deluge. We cannot look upon this earth without seeing therein a display of those same attributes which confirm our faith, in waiting upon God till his promises be fulfilled to us. -- Condensed from T. Manton.

**Verse 90.** -- *It abideth.* Creation is as the mother, and Providence the nurse which preserveth all the works of God. God is not like man; for man, when he hath made a work, cannot maintain it: he buildeth a ship, and cannot save it from shipwreck; he edifies a house, but cannot keep it from decay. It is otherwise with God; we daily see his conserving power, upholding his creatures; which should confirm us that he will not cast us off, nor suffer us to perish (since we are the works of his hands) if we so depend upon him, and give him glory as our Creator, Conserver, and Redeemer. --William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 90.** -- The stability of the earth a present picture of everlasting faithfulness.

**Verse 90-91.** -- Consider,

1. The steadfastness of nature as dependent upon the divine decree: "according to thy ordinances."



2. The subserviency of nature to the divine will: "for all are thy servants."
3. The fixedness of nature's laws, together with their subserviency to God's purposes, as a confirmation of the Christian's faith in the written word, in the care of a divine providence, and in the sureness of spiritual and heavenly things. "Thy faithfulness is," etc. --J.F.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 91.** They continue this day according to thine ordinances. Because the Lord has bid the universe abide, therefore it stands, and all its laws continue to operate with precision and power. Because the might of God is ever present to maintain them, therefore do all things continue. The word which spake all things into existence has supported them till now, and still supports them both in being and in well being. God's ordinance is the reason for the continued existence of creation. What important forces these ordinances are! "For all are thy servants." Created by thy word they obey that word, thus answering the purpose of their existence, and working out the design of their Creator. Both great things and small pay homage to the Lord. No atom escapes his rule, no world avoids his government. Shall we wish to be free of the Lord's sway and become lords unto ourselves? If we were so, we should be dreadful exceptions to a law which secures the well being of the universe. Rather while we read concerning all things else -- they continue and they serve, let us continue to serve, and to serve more perfectly as our lives are continued. By that word which is settled may we be settled; by that voice which establishes the earth may we be established; and by that command which all created things obey may we be made the servants of the Lord God Almighty.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 91.** -- *They continue this day according to thine ordinances*, etc. Which of the works of God are not pervaded by a beautiful order? Think of the succession of day and night. Think of the revolution of the seasons. Think of the stars as they walk in their majestic courses, -- one great law of harmony "binding the sweet influence of the Pleiades,...and guiding Arcturus with his sons": [Job 38:31-32](#). Look upwards, amid the magnificence of might, to that crowded concave, -- worlds piled on worlds, -- and yet see the calm grandeur of that stately march; -- not a discordant note there to mar the harmony, though wheeling at an Inconceivable velocity in their intricate and devious orbits! These heavenly sentinels all keep their appointed watch towers. These Levites in the upper firmament, light their altar fires "at the time of the evening incense," and quench them again, when the sun, who is appointed to rule the day, walks forth from his chamber. "These wait all upon thee": [Psalms 104:27](#). "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." --J.R. Macduff, in "Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains," 1862.

**Verse 91.** -- *They continue this day according to thine ordinances*. Man may destroy a plant, but he is powerless to force it into disobedience to the laws given it by the common Creator. "If," says one,

"man would employ it for his use, he must carefully pay attention to its wants and ways, and bow his own proud will to the humblest grass at his feet. Man may forcibly obstruct the path of a growing twig, but it turns quietly aside, and moves patiently and irresistibly on its appointed way." Do what he may, turf will not grow in tile tropics, nor the palm bear its fruit in a cold climate. Rice refuses to thrive out of watery swamps, or cotton to form its fleece of snowy fibres where the rain can reach them. Some of the handsomest flowers in the world, and stranger still, some of the most juicy and succulent plants with which we are acquainted, adorn the arid and desolate sands of the Cape of Good Hope, and wilt not flourish elsewhere. If you twist the branch of a tree so as to turn the under surface of its leaves towards the sky, in a very little while all those leaves will turn down and assume their appointed position. This process will be performed sooner or later, according to the heat of the sun and the flexibility of the leaves, but none the less it will surely take place. You cannot induce the Sorrowful tree of India to bloom by day, or cause it to cease all the year round from loading the night air with the rich perfume of its orange like flowers. The philosopher need not go far to find the secret of this. The Psalmist declares it when, speaking of universal nature, he traces the true cause of its immutable order. God, he says, "hath established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass;" or, as it is in the Prayer book version, "hath given them a law which shall not be broken": Psalms 148:6. Truly is it said in another Psalms 114:91, "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." Wilful man may dare to defy his Maker, and set at nought his wise and merciful commands; but not so all nature besides. Well, indeed, is it for us that his other works have not erred after the pattern of our rebellion; that seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, with all their accompanying provision, have not ceased! To the precepts imposed upon vegetation when first called into being on creation's third day, it stilt yields implicit submission, and the most tender plant will die rather than transgress. What an awful contrast to this is the conduct of man, God's noblest work, endowed with reason and a never dying soul, yet too often ruining his health, wasting and destroying his mental power, defiling his immortal spirit, and, in a word, madly endeavouring to frustrate every purpose for which he was framed. --James Neil, in "Rays from the Realms of Nature," 1879.

**Verse 91.** -- *All creatures punctually observe the law he hath implanted on their nature*, and in their several capacities acknowledge him their sovereign; they move according to the inclinations he imprinted on them. The sea contains itself in its bounds, and the sun steps not out of his sphere; the stars march in their order: "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants." If he orders things contrary to their primitive nature they obey him. When he speaks the word, the devouring fire becomes gentle, and toucheth not the hair of the children he will preserve; the hunger starved lions suspend their ravenous nature when so good a morsel as Daniel is set before them; and the sun, which had been in perpetual motion since its creation, obeys the writ of

ease God sent in Joshua's time, and stands still. --Stephen Charnock.

**Verse 91.** -- *All are thy servants.* We should consider how great is that perversity by which man only, formed in the image of God, together with reprobate angels, has fallen away from obedience to God; so that what is said of all other creatures cannot be said of him, unless renewed by singular grace. --Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 91.** -- *All are thy servants.* Since all creatures must serve God, therefore we ought neither to use them for any other purpose, nor turn them to the service of sin. The creature by the sin of our first parents has been made subject to vanity, and groans, and longs to be delivered, Romans 8: Christians, therefore, who use the creature and the world, should use as not abusing, 1 Corinthians 7; but enjoy them with praise of the divine majesty and goodness, 1 Timothy 4. --Solomon Gesner.

**Verse 91.** -- *All are thy servants.*

Say not, my soul, "From whence

Can God relieve my care?

Remember that Omnipotence

Has servants everywhere." --Thomas T. Lynch, 1855.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 91.** -- Our starry monitors. They teach us,

1. To serve: though we cannot shine with their brightness.
2. To do all with strict regard to God's will.
3. To "continue" -- "according to thine ordinances." --W.B.H.

**Verse 91.** -- The service of nature.

1. Universal: "all are thy servants."
2. Obedient: "according to thy ordinances."
3. Perpetual: "they continue."
4. Derived: "thou hast established the earth."

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 92.** Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. That word which has preserved the heavens and the earth also preserves the people of God in their time of trial. With that word we are charmed; it is a mine of delight to us. We take a double and treble delight in it, and derive a multiplied delight from it, and this stands us in good stead when all other delights are taken from us. We should have felt ready to lie down and die of our griefs if the spiritual comforts of God's word had not uplifted us; but by their sustaining influence we have been borne above all the depressions and despairs which naturally grow out of severe affliction. Some of us can set our seal to this statement. Our affliction, if it had not been for divine grace, would have crushed us

out of existence, so that we should have perished. In our darkest seasons nothing has kept us from desperation but the promise of the Lord: yea, at times nothing has stood between us and self destruction save faith in the eternal word of God. When worn with pain until the brain has become dazed and the reason well nigh extinguished, a sweet text has whispered to us its heart cheering assurance, and our poor struggling mind has reposed upon the bosom of God. That which was our delight in prosperity has been our light in adversity; that which in the day kept us from presuming has in the night kept us from perishing. This verse contains a mournful supposition "unless"; describes a horrible condition -- "perished in mine affliction"; and implies a glorious deliverance, for he did not die, but live to proclaim the honours of the word of God.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 92.** -- *Unless thy law had been my delights*, etc. This text sets out the great benefit and comfort which David found in the law of God in the time of his affliction. It kept him from perishing: "Had not thy law been my delights, I had perished in ray affliction"...David speaks this (saith Musculus) of the distressful condition he was in when persecuted by Saul, forced to fly to the Philistines, and sometimes to hide himself in the rocks and caves of the earth. It is very likely (saith he) that he had the book of God's law with him, by the reading of which he mitigated and allayed his sorrows, and kept himself pure from communicating with the heathen in their superstitions. The Greek scholiasts say that David uttered these words when driven from Saul, and compelled to live among the Philistines, etc. For he would have been allured to have communicated with them in their impieties had he not carried about him the meditation of the word of God.

The word of God delighted in is the afflicted saint's antidote against ruin and destruction. The word of God is the sick saint's salve, the dying saint's cordial, a precious medicine to keep God's people from perishing in time of affliction. This upheld Jacob from sinking, when his brother Esau came furiously marching to destroy him (Genesis 32:12). He pleaded, "And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good," etc. Thus the promise of God supported him. This also upheld Joshua and enabled him courageously to fight the Lord's battles, because God had said, "He would never leave him nor forsake him" (Joshua 1:5). Melanethon saith that the Landgrave of Hesse told him at Dresden that it had been impossible for him to have borne up under the manifold miseries of so long an imprisonment, Nisi habuisset consolationem verbo divino in suo corde, but for the comfort of the Scriptures in his heart. --Edmund Catamy (1600-1666) in "The Godly Man's Ark."

**Verse 92.** -- *Certainly the reading of most part of the Scriptures must needs be a very comfortable thing; and I think a godly heart (disposed as it ought to be) can hardly tell how to be sad while it does it.* For what a comfort is it for a man to read an earthly father's letters sent to him, though they were written long ago? With what care do we keep such letters in our chests? With how much delight do we ever and anon take them out and look upon them? and with how much sorrow do we lose them?

Is my love to my earthly father so great, and shall my love to my heavenly Father be less? Can my heart choose but rejoice and my bones flourish like an herb, as oft as I look upon my Redeemer's last will and testament, whereby I know that he me so much and that he doth so for me continually, and that I shall be ever with him.

How is David ever and anon talking of his delight in the law of God, and in his statutes and testimonies. It was to him instead of all other delights; standing by him when all delights else left him; "Unless thy law had been my delight (or, my very great delight), I should then have perished in mine affliction," [Psalms 119:92](#). Let princes sit and speak against him never so much; yet will he meditate in God's statutes, [Psalms 119:23](#). Let him have never so many persecutors and enemies; yet will he not decline from God's testimonies, [Psalms 119:157](#). Let him be in a strange place, there shall God's statutes be his song, [Psalms 119:54](#). Let him be a stranger in the earth all his life; so that he be not a stranger to God's commandments he cares not, [Psalms 119:19](#). Although he should have never so much contempt cast upon him, yet will he not forget God's precepts, [Psalms 119:141](#). Although his soul should be continually in his hand, yet that should not make him forget God's law. Yea, although he became like a bottle in the smoke, yet will he not forget God's precepts, [Psalms 119:83](#). And therefore was it that he rejoiced, because he had been afflicted upon this account, that it made him learn God's statutes. He cared for no other wealth. "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart," Ps 119:111. Neither cared he much for life, but only to keep God's word, [Psalms 119:17](#). Whatever he had said before, or meant to say next, he still cries, "Teach me thy statutes," and, "I have longed for thy precepts," &c.; or some such expression or other. He could not forbear to speak of them, for they were still before him, [Psalms 119:30](#). No wonder, then, that he meditated upon them so often, as he saith he did. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day," [Psalms 119:97](#). And "Thy testimonies are my meditation," [Psalms 119:99](#). God's commandments were to David sweeter in his mouth than honey, to talk and discourse of them, [Psalms 119:103](#). --Zachary Bogan, 1653.

**Verse 92.** -- *The persons to whose delight the word of God actually conduces are the children of God, and none else. None but they are prepared to take in the consolation of the word.*

1. As they only are spiritually enlightened to discern the great and comfortable things contained in it, enlightened in a manner in which no others are: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" ([1 Corinthians 2:4](#)).
2. As they have the highest value for the word of God, this prepares them for receiving consolation from it.
3. As they have their hearts and ways suited to the word of God, this is another reason of the delight they fetch from it. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," and

take pleasure in them; "but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5). The comforts of the word are spiritual; and only the spiritual heart, as it is renewed by grace, can taste and relish them. The delight which the people of God have from the word, is a privilege peculiar to themselves: and this word hath enough to give delight to all of their numbers --Daniel Wilcox, 1676-1733.

**Verse 92.** -- *My delights*. The word signifieth delights in the plural number. Many were the sorrows of David's life; but against them all he found as many comforts and delectations in God's word. With such variety of holy wisdom hath God penned his word, that it hath convenient comfort for every state of life, and therefore the children of God account nothing so dear as it; they prefer it to their appointed food. --William Cowper.

**Verse 92.** -- *Thy law...my delights...in mine affliction*. I happened to be standing in a grocer's shop one day in a large manufacturing town in the west of Scotland, when a poor, old, frail widow came in to make a few purchases. There never was, perhaps, in that town a more severe time of distress. Nearly every loom was stopped. Decent and respectable tradesmen, who had seen better days, were obliged to subsist on public charity. So much money per day (but a trifle at most) was allowed to the really poor and deserving. The poor widow had received her daily pittance, and she had now come into the shop of the grocer to lay it out to the best advantage. She had but a few coppers in her withered hands. Carefully did she expend her little stock -- a pennyworth of this and the other necessary of life nearly exhausted all she had. She came to the last penny, and with a singular expression of heroic contentment and cheerful resignation on her wrinkled face, she said, "Now I must buy oil with this, that I may see to read my Bible during these long dark nights, for it is my only comfort now when every other comfort has gone away." -- Alexander Wallace, in "The Bible and the Working Classes," 1853.

**Verse 92.** -- *This verse I may call a Perfume against the Plague; The Sick Man's Salve; The Afflicted Man's Consolation; and a blessed Triumph*, in and over all troubles. -- Richard Greenham.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 92.** -- The sustaining power of joy in God.

**Verse 92.** -- The word of God as a sustaining power amid the greater sorrows of life.

1. Its necessity.

(a) For want of it, men have become drunkards to drown their sorrows, have become suicides because life was unbearable, have become broken and hopeless because they had no strength to struggle against misfortune, have become atheists in creed as, alas, they were before in practice; all, in fact, become subject to sorrow's worst bitterness

and calamity's worst effects.

(b) Nothing can supply the place of God's word. Nature throws no light on the mystery of suffering. Human philosophy is at best cold comfort, and when most needed most fails.

1. Its efficiency. Proved --

(a) In the experience of those who have tried it.

(b) By the character of its promises.

(c) By the discovery it makes of a beneficent providence working through calamity and sorrow.

(d) By the revelation it gives of the pity of God and the sympathy of Christ.

(e) By its record of the "Man of sorrows," who through suffering wrought out man's salvation, and entered into glory.

(f) By its teaching concerning the Incarnate Word; thus showing a suffering God, which may well be a solace to suffering men.

(g) By displaying the glory of heaven and the eternal felicity awaiting those who overcome through the blood of the Lamb. --J.F.

**Verse 92.** -- The Godly Man's Ark; or, City of Refuge in the day of his Distress. Discovered in divers (five) Sermons...By Edmund Calamy, B.D...Eighteenth edition. 1709. 12mo.

**Verse 92.** -- We have here set before us by the Psalmist,

1. The case which he had been in, and which he now refers to -- one sad and sinking. He was under such affliction that he was ready to perish; which seems to include inward and outward trouble at once; trials without and pressure within.
2. What it was that gave him relief, and this when nothing else could, etc., the law of God.
3. How he looked back upon this relief received, namely, with thankfulness to God, to whom he speaks, and records it for the encouragement and direction of others: "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction." -- Daniel Wilcox, 1676-1733.

**Verse 92.** -- The life buoy. Under the form of the narrative of a shipwrecked mariner, describe the experience of the soul struggling in the sea of affliction; almost overwhelmed: yet buoyed up over each successive billow: and finally saved by clinging to the Word of God. --C.A.D.

**Verse 92.** -- The Psalmist's shudder at recollected danger.

1. Sore peril: affliction tending to despair and ruin.
2. Fearful crisis: "then."
3. Many handed help: "thy law my delights." --W.B.H.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 93.** I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. When we have felt the quickening power of a precept we never can forget it. We may read it, learn it, repeat it, and think we have it, and yet it may slip out of our minds; but if it has once given us life or renewed that life, there is no fear of its falling from our recollection. Experience teaches, and teaches effectually. How blessed a thing it is to have the precepts written on the heart with the golden pea of experience, and graven on the memory with the divine stylus of grace. Forgetfulness is a great evil in holy things; we see here the man of God fighting against it, and feeling sure of victory because he knew the life giving energy of the word in his own soul. That which quickens the heart is sure to quicken the memory.

It seems singular that he should ascribe quickening to the precepts, and yet it lies in them and in all the words of the Lord alike. It is to be noted that when the Lord raised the dead he addressed to them the word of command. He said, "Lazarus, come forth," or "Maid, arise." We need not fear to address gospel precepts to dead sinners, since by them the Spirit gives them life. Remark that the Psalmist does not say that the precepts quickened him, but that the Lord quickened him by their means: thus he traces the life from the channel to the source, and places the glory where it is due. Yet at the same time he prized the instruments of the blessing, and resolved never to forget them. He had already remembered them when he likened himself to a bottle in the smoke, and now he feels that whether in the smoke or in the fire the memory of the Lord's precepts shall never depart from him.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 93.** -- *I will never forget thy precepts*, etc. Forgetfulness must be striven against in every possible way, lest it should gradually creep in, through ingratitude, old age, weakness of mind, or other overwhelming cares. See [Psalms 119:16,61,83](#). --Martin Geier.

**Verse 93.** -- *I will never forget thy precepts*, etc. This afflicted good man is now comforted; his comfort came from his delight in God's law; he thinks of it, he feels the force of it, and therefore to the end that he might ever receive the like comforts, he will bind himself by a promise to the Lord that he will never forget his precepts; adding a reason, namely, that they were to him spirit and life.

With them hast thou quickened me. Quickened he was, as he saith, by God, but yet also by the word, soundly preached, savingly understood, and particularly applied to the conscience. Thus then doth the power of Christ's death make us to walk on in newness of life. No aqua vitae, or celestis like unto this, by which we have inward peace of conscience, and an outward obedience to God's



commandments. David rejoiced in this blessing,, so ought we: we desire to be ever quick, and cheerful to all good duties; it is only God, by his Spirit, in the word, that can give it. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 93.** -- *With them thou hast quickened me.* The quickening Spirit delights to work by means of the word; but though the word be the means, yet the benefit comes from God: "For with them thou hast quickened me." Life comes, from the fountain of life. The gospel is a sovereign plaster; but it is God's hand that must apply it, and make it stick; make it to be peace, comfort, and quickening to our souls. There is a double quickening, when, from dead, we are made living; or when, from cold, and sad, and heavy, we are made lively...and so not only have life, but enjoy it more abundantly, according to Christ's gracious promise (John 10:10); that they may be living, lively, kept still in rigour. Now, this second quickening may be taken, either more largely, for the vitality of grace; or, strictly, for actual comfort Largely taken; so God quickens by increasing the life of: grace; either internally, by promising the life of grace; or morally and externally, by promising the life of glory. More strictly, his quickening may be taken for comfort and support in his affliction; so it is likely to be taken here: he had said immediately before, "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction"; and now, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." It was great comfort and support to him; and therefore he should prize the word as long as he lived. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 93.** -- *Thou hast quickened me.* Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your hearts warmed. Read the word, not only as a history, but labour to be affected with it. Let it not only inform you, but inflame you. "Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord": Jer 23:29. Go not from the word till you can say as those disciples, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" Luke 24:32. --Thomas Watson.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 93.** -- Experience fixes the word upon the memory.

**Verse 93.** --

1. A good resolve: "I will never forget thy precepts."
  - (a) The precepts are worth remembering.
  - (b) Safety lies in remembering them.
  - (c) Fidelity to God cannot be without remembering them.
  - (d) Not to remember them is shameful ingratitude.
1. An excellent reason for making it: "For with them thou hast quickened me."
  - a. A reason founded upon personal experience: "me."
  - (b) A reason appreciative of the benefit received: "quickened."
  - (c) A reason indicative of gratitude to God: "thou." --J.F.

**Verse 93.** -- Never forget; an often uttered phrase. Here golden.

1. Something that could not be forgotten: life and pardon received. How could it?
2. Something that should not be forgotten: the precious instrumentality. --W.B.H.

**Verse 93.** --

1. The instrumental power of truth.

(a) Used by God in our regeneration:

Jas 1:18 Psalms 19:7.

(b) Used in our liberation: John 8:32.

(c) Used in our sanctification: John 17:7.

1. Our consequent affection for it. We cannot forget.

(a) Our past obligations to it.

(b) Our present dependence upon it.

(c) Our future needs of it. --W.W.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 94.** I am thine, save me. A comprehensive prayer with a prevailing argument. Consecration is a good plea for preservation. If we are conscious that we are the Lord's we may be confident that he will save us. We are the Lord's by creation, election, redemption, surrender, and acceptance; and hence our firm hope and assured belief that he will save us. A man will surely save his own child: Lord, save me. The need of salvation is better seen by the Lord's people than by any others, and hence their prayer -- "save me"; they know that only God can save them, and hence they cry to him alone; and they know that no merit can be found in themselves, and hence they urge a reason fetched from the grace of God, -- "I am thine." "For I have sought thy precepts." Thus had he proved that he was the Lord's. He might not have attained to all the holiness which he desired, but he had studiously aimed at being obedient to the Lord, and hence he begged to be saved even to the end. A man may be seeking the doctrines and the promises, and yet be unrenewed in heart; but to seek the precepts is a sure sign of grace; no one ever heard of a rebel or a hypocrite seeking the precepts. The Lord had evidently wrought a great work upon the Psalmist, and he besought him to carry it on to completion. Saving is linked with seeking, "save me, for I have sought"; and when the Lord sets us seeking he will not refuse us the saving. He who seeks holiness is already saved: if we have sought the Lord we may be sure that the Lord has sought us, and will certainly save us.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 94.** -- *I am thine, save me.* David, a man after God's own heart, would be saved, but not after the manner of the men of this world, that would be saved to be their own and to enjoy themselves at their own will; but he in being saved would be God's, and at his disposing: "I am thine, save me."

There is a threefold strength in this argument.

1. The law of nature, which obliges a father to be good to his child, the husband to his wife, etc., and God hath subjected himself more unto the law of nature, he lies more under it, than any of these; and doth more perfectly, fully, and gloriously fulfil this law of nature than any; there is no father like him, no friend, no husband like him. "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yet will I not forget thee:" [Isaiah 44:15](#). A mother can hardly do it; nature teacheth her to have bowels, and a merciful remembrance towards her child; much, note will I, saith God.
2. When we can say to God, "I am thine," we plead the covenant which God hath made with us, wherein he is become our father and friend: and this is that which was pleaded in [Isaiah 63:16](#): "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not (because they are gone, and so have no cognizance of us now); yet thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." See what a conclusion here is made; doubtless thou art our Father, and therefore we call to thee for help.
3. There is this encouragement and strength that the spirit of, a man receives in thus arguing with God, that if he can say in truth, "I am thine," God much more will say to the creature, "I am thine." If we have so much love to offer ourselves to God, to become his; much more will the love of God make him to become ours; for God loves first, and most, and surest. If mine heart rise toward God, much more is the heart of God toward me; because there love is in the fountain. Never did a spouse speak to her husband, whom her soul loved to the highest, more willingly, and say, "I am thine," than the spirit of an upright man saith to God, "Lord, I am thine." And he loves him with a love of thankfulness. Hast thou given thyself to me, saith he, and shall I then withhold myself from thee? Hast thou, who art so great, done all this for me, and shall I stand out against thee? The gracious man will willingly acknowledge himself to be the Lord's. The saints often do this: David above twenty times comes with this acknowledgment in this psalm, and in [Psalms 116:16](#): "I am thy servant; I am thy servant." To say it once was not enough; he saith it again, to show the sincerity of his spirit, and to witness that his heart was fully pleased with this, that he was not his own, but the Lord's. The knowledge of our interest in God doth much further our approaches to God. When a man is once assured, and can say with a clear spirit, "I am thine," he will naturally cry, "Save me." Such a man is a man of prayer, he is much in addresses to God, and conversing with him. -- Joseph Symonds, 1653.

**Verse 94.** -- *I am thine.* This is an excellent motive to draw from the Lord help in trouble, - - "I am thine." Thine by creation, I was made by thee; thine by adoption, I was assigned over to thee; thine by donation, I was given to thee; thine by marriage, I was espoused to thee; thine by redemption, I was purchased by thee; thine by stipulation, I have vowed myself unto thee. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 94.** -- *For I have sought thy precepts.* See here how David qualifies his protestation: from his

earnest affection to the word of God, he proves that he was God's man and not his own servant. It is not words, but affections and actions which must prove us to be the Lord's. Tuus sum, quia id solum quod tuum est quaesivi: I am thine because I sought nothing but that which is thine, and how I might please thee. Mihi in tuis justificationibus est omne poatrimonium: in the observance of thy precepts is all my patrimony. -- William Cowper.

Verse 94. --

1. David claims relation to God: "I am thine" -- devoted to thee, and owned by thee, thine in covenant.
2. He proves his claim: "I am thine, save me; for Y have sought thy precepts"; i.e., I have carefully enquired concerning my duty, and diligently endeavoured to do it.
3. He Improves. His claim: "I am thine, save me." Save me from sin, save me from ruin. - -Mr. Henry.

Verse 94 --

1. A great prayer: "Save me."
2. A grand prayer: "I am thine."
3. A gracious experience: "I have sought," etc.

Verse 94. --

1. Relation: "I am thine."
2. Preservation: "save me."
3. Obligation: "I have sought," etc. --G.R.

Verse 94. --

1. God's child humbly points out to him his responsibility: "I am thine."
2. Ventures to urge his own sincerity: he has at least "sought."
3. With these two hands extended, he utters a sharp cry for help: "save me." -- W.B.H.

**Verse 94.** -- *Multum in parvo.*

1. A profession.
2. A prayer.
3. A plea. --C.A.D.

Verse 94. --

1. God's interest in us.
2. Our interest in God. --W.D.

**Verse 94.** -- *The characteristics of personal religion.*

1. Personal devotedness to God: "I am thine."
2. Personal obedience rendered: "I have sought thy precepts."
3. Personal expectation cherished: "save me." --J.F.

**Verse 94.** -- *The courage obedience gives.*

1. It emboldens us to a firm assurance: "I am thine, for I have," etc.

a. We become God's by faith alone.

(b) But the assurance of being his cannot exist without obedience; obedience proves the faith to ourselves; satisfies us concerning grace received.

(c) Poor obedience always interferes with assurance.

1. It emboldens us to pray, and in prayer: "Save me."

(a) The Christian's prayers are only of faith and offered in faith.

(b) Yet disobedience makes: him shrink from approaching God in prayer, and renders him feeble in petitioning.

(c) Obedience is humble but bold. The middle clause of the text applies equally to the first and third clauses. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 95.** The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies. They were like wild beasts crouching by the way, or highway men waylaying a defenceless traveller; but the Psalmist went on his way without considering them, for he was considering something better, namely, the witness or testimony which God has borne to the sons of men. He did not allow the malice of the wicked to take him off from his holy study of the divine word. He was so calm that he could "consider"; so holy that he loved to consider the Lord's "testimonies"; so victorious over all their plots that he did not allow them to drive him from his pious contemplations. If the enemy cannot cause us to withdraw our thoughts from holy study, or our feet from holy walking, or our hearts from holy aspirations, he has met with poor success in his assaults. The wicked are the natural enemies of holy men and holy thoughts; if they could, they would not only damage us but destroy us, and if they cannot do this today they will wait for further opportunities, ever hoping that their evil designs may be compassed. They have waited hitherto in vain, and they will have to wait much longer yet; for if we are so unmoved that we do not even give them a thought their hope of destroying us must be a very poor one.

Note the double waiting, -- the patience of the wicked who watch long and carefully for an opportunity to destroy the godly, and then the patience of the saint who will not quit his meditations, even to quiet his foes. See how the serpent's seed lie in wait as an adder that biteth at the horse's heels; but see how the chosen of the Lord live above their venom, and take no more notice of them than if they had no existence.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 95.** -- *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me.* Two things again he notes in his enemies; diligence, in waiting all occasions whereby to do him evil; and cruelty without mercy, for their purpose was to destroy him: wherein, still we see how restless and insatiable is the malice of the wicked against the godly. Daniel's preservation in the lions' den was a great miracle; but it is no less a marvellous work of God, that the godly who are the flock of Christ, are daily preserved in the midst of the wicked, who are but ravening wolves, and thirst for the blood of the saints of God, having a cruel purpose in their heart if they might perform it, utterly to destroy them. --William Cowper.

**Verse 95.** -- *But I will consider thy testimonies.* It was a grievous temptation to be sought for to be given up to slaughter, but a greater mercy to consider God's testimonies, even then when his life was sought for. Had it not been for the consideration of God's testimonies, a thousand to one he had fallen away. --Richard Greenham.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 95.** -- Wicked men patient in carrying out their evil designs. Good men patient in considering the ways of the Lord.

**Verse 95.** -- The hatred of the wicked towards the righteous.

1. Show that it ever has been, and still is.
  - (a) Select Scriptural instances, beginning with Abel.
  - (b) Notice the persecutions of the church.
  - (c) Treatment in the workshop.
  - (d) Often in the home.
  - (e) The contemptuous manner the "saints" are spoken of, etc.
1. Enquire as to why it is so.
  - (a) The enmity of the carnal heart to God.
  - (b) The jealousy excited by the Christian's assurance of eternal blessedness.
  - (c) The consciousness of being rebuked by a holy life.
  - (d) Excited to it by Satan.
  - (e) The restless mischievousness of sin which, if it cannot hinder holiness, will maliciously hurt its advocates.
1. Direct how to act when exposed to it: "I will consider thy testimonies." That means --
  - a. Be the more obedient to God.
  - (b) Have the more watchful control over words and feelings.
  - (c) Love your enemies.
  - (d) Pray for those who hate you.

(e) Do good to them on every opportunity.

(f) Be thankful that you are among the hated and not the haters.

(g) Especially consider the holy testimony of Christ's forbearing patience. --J.F.

**Verse 95.** -- Waiting counter wrought by waiting.

1. Temptations in ambush.
2. The saint with his Lord.

--W.B.H.

**Verse 95.** -- Immunity.

1. I am in danger.
2. I will attend to my duty.
3. I will trust thee to deliver me. --C.A.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 96.** I have seen an end of all perfection. He had seen its limit, for it went but a little way; he had seen its evaporation under the trials of life, its detection under the searching glance of truth, its exposure by the confession of the penitent. There is no perfection beneath the moon. Perfect men, in the absolute sense of the word, live only in a perfect world. Some men see no end to their own perfection, but this is because they are perfectly blind. The experienced believer has seen an end of all perfection in himself, in his brethren, in the best man's best works. It would be well if some who profess to be perfect could even see the beginning of perfection, for we fear they cannot have begun aright, or they would not talk so exceeding proudly. Is it not the beginning of perfection to lament your imperfection? There is no such thing as perfection in anything which is the work of man. "But thy commandment is exceeding broad." When the breadth of the law is known the notion of perfection in the flesh vanishes: that law touches every act, word, and thought, and is of such a spiritual nature that it judges the motives, desires, and emotions of the soul. It reveals a perfection which convicts us for shortcomings as well as for transgressions, and does not allow us to make up for deficiencies in one direction by special carefulness in others. The divine ideal of holiness is far too broad for us to hope to cover all its wide arena, and yet it is no broader than it ought to be. Who would wish to have an imperfect law? Nay, its perfection is its glory; but it is the death of all glorying in our own perfection. There is a breadth about the commandment which has never been met to the full by a corresponding breadth of holiness in any mere man while here below; only in Jesus do we see it fully embodied. The law is in all respects a perfect code; each separate precept of it is far reaching in its hallowed meaning, and the whole ten cover all, and leave no space wherein to please our passions.

We may well adore the infinity of divine holiness, and then measure ourselves by its standard, and bow before the Lord in all lowliness, acknowledging how far we fall short of it.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 96.** -- *I have seem an end of all perfection*, etc. These words are variously rendered and understood by interpreters, who in this variety do very much conspire and agree in the same sense. The Chaldee Paraphrase renders the words thus, "I have seen an end of all things about which I have employed my care; but thy commandment is very large." The Syriac version thus, "I have seen an end of all regions and countries" (that is, I have found the compass of the habitable world to be finite and limited) "but thy commandment is of a vast extent." Others explain it thus, "I have seen an end of all perfection," that is, of all the things of this world which men value and esteem at so high a rate; of all worldly wisdom and knowledge, of wealth, and honour, and greatness, which do all perish and pass away; "but thy law is eternal, and still abideth the same"; or, as the Scripture elsewhere expresses it, "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." --John Tillotson, 1630-1694.

**Verse 96.** -- *I have seen an end of all perfection*. Poor perfection which one sees an end of! Yet such are all those things in this world which pass for perfections. David in his time had seen Goliath, the strongest, overcome; Asahel, the swiftest, overtaken; Ahithophel, the wisest, befooled; Absalom, the fairest, deformed. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 96.** -- *I have seen an end of all perfection*, etc. The Psalmist's words offer us a double comfort and encouragement. We may read them in two ways:

1. "I have seen an end of all perfection; for thy commandment is exceeding broad"; and
2. "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad."

Read in the first way, they suggest the animating thought, that our haunting consciousness of imperfection springs from the bright and awful perfection of the Law we are bent on obeying, of the ideal we have set before us. It is not because we are worse than those who are without law, or who are a law unto themselves, that we are restless and dissatisfied with ourselves; but because we measure both ourselves and our fellows by the lofty standard of God's commandment. It is because that commandment is so broad, that we cannot embrace it; it is because it is so high, that we cannot attain to it; it is because it is so perfect, that we cannot perfectly obey it.

But we may read the verse in another way, and still derive comfort and encouragement from it. We may say: "I have seen an end of all perfection in myself, and in the world; but thy commandment is exceeding broad: that is perfect, though I am imperfect, and in its perfection I find the promise of my own." For shall God give a law for human life, and that law remain for ever unfulfilled Impossible! "The gifts of God are without repentance" -- irreversible, never to be lessened or withdrawn. His purpose is not to be made of none effect by our weaknesses and sins. In the Law he has shown us what he would have us to be. And shall we never become what lie would have us to be? Can the Law



remain for ever without any life that corresponds to it and fulfils it? Nay, God will never take back the fair and perfect ideal of human life depicted in his Law, never retract his purpose to raise the life of man till it touches and fulfils its ideal. And so the very Law which is our despair is our comfort also; for if that be perfect we must become perfect; its perfection is the pledge of ours. --From "The Expositor," 1876.

**Verse 96.** -- *I have seen an end of all perfection.* David's natural eye had seen the end of many human perfections, and the eye of his understanding saw the end of them all. He had seen some actually end, and he saw that all must end. Adam did not continue in that perfection which had no imperfection in it; how then shall any of his children continue in what is at best an imperfect perfection? --Abraham Wright.

**Verse 96.** -- *I have seen an end,* etc. The laws of Lycurgus among the Grecians, and of Numa among the Romans, had somewhat of good in them, but not all; prohibited somewhat that was evil, but not all that was evil. But the Christian religion is of a larger extent, both in its precepts and prohibitions: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." A man with the eye of his body may behold an end of many worldly perfections, of many fair estates, great beauties, large parts, hopeful families; but a man with the eye of his soul (or by faith) may see an end of all earthly perfections. He may see the world in a flame, and all its pomp and pride, and glory, and gallantry, and crowns and sceptres, and riches, and treasures, turned into ashes. He may see the heavens passing away like a scroll, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth, with the things thereon, consumed; and all its perfections, which men dented so much on, vanished into smoke and nothing. It is easy to see to the end of all terrene perfections, but it is difficult, yea, impossible, to see to the end of divine precepts: "But thy commandments are exceeding broad," of a vast latitude, beyond our apprehension. They are so deep that none can fathom them, [Psalms 36:6](#), so high that they are established in heaven, [Psalms 114:48](#); so long that they endure for ever, 2 Peter 1; and so broad, that none can measure them. They are not only "broad," but "exceeding broad": higher than heaven, longer than the earth, broader than the sea. "The commands of God reach the inward parts, the most secret motions and retired recesses of the soul. They reach all the privy thoughts, they pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, [Hebrews 4:12](#). They reach to all our actions; to those that seem smallest and of less concernment, as well as to those that are greater and of more concernment." --George Swinnock.

**Verse 96.** -- *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.* As there is more mercy in the gospel than we are able to comprehend, so there is more holiness in the law than we are able to comprehend. No man ever saw into the depths of that righteousness. There is an infinite holiness in the law. "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." He speaks not in the

concrete, I have seen an end of perfect things, but in the abstract, "an end of perfection," I have come to the outside or to the very bottom of all (a man may soon travel through all the perfections that are in the world, and either see their end, or see that they end); "but thy commandment is exceeding broad," that is, it is exceedingly broader than any of these perfections; I cannot see the end of it, and I know it shall never have an end. There is a vastness of purity and spiritualness in the law. -- Joseph Caryl.

**Verse 96.** -- *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.* It is so by the comprehensive applicableness of its grand, simple rules. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." It is so by the ample order of its special injunctions. Where is there a spot without a signal of the divine will? It is so by laying an authoritative hand on the first principles and origin from which any thing can proceed, in human spirit and action; then it reaches to all things that do or can proceed thence. It asserts a jurisdiction over all thought and inward affection. All language is uttered under this same jurisdiction. All that the world and each man is in action about. And even over what is not done it maintains its authority, and pronounces its dictates and judgments. It is a positive thing with respect to what is negative, omission, nonexistence Like the divine government in the material world, over the wastes, deserts, and barren sands. And from these spaces of nothing (as it were) it can raise up substantial forms of evil, of sin, in evidence against men. As at the resurrection men will rise from empty wastes, where it would not have been suspected that any were concealed. Let a man look back on all his omissions, and think what the divine law can raise from them against him. Thus the law in its exceeding breadth, is vacant nowhere; it is not stretched to this wide extent by chasms and void spaces. If a man could find one such, he might there take his position for sin with impunity, if not with innocence. --John Foster, 1768- 1848.

**Verse 96.** -- *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.* In the popular religious literature of the present times, the terms "broad" and "free" are of frequent occurrence. The fascination that surrounds them is enhanced by the use, at the same time, of their opposites, "narrow" and "bigoted." By an adroit manipulation of these terms and their equivalents, the heterodoxy of the day is labouring to stamp out the doctrine and spirit of the evangelical faith, and to allure the Christian multitude within the influence of the spreading rationalistic drift. Going to the market where the heterodox wares are exhibited with labels so attractive, the unsuspecting purchaser soon discovers that "their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter." Is the time not come when the adherents of the true faith should make an effort to wrest from their opponents the monopoly in the use of these terms, which they seem desirous of establishing for themselves? Those who, in the spirit of their Master, abide most closely by, and contend most tenaciously for, the whole faith that has been delivered to the saints, must be the most liberal minded and catholic; and those who forsake the "old paths" must, in proportion to the extent of their

departures, become contracted in their mental grasp, and narrow in their soul. Is not the Bible -- the whole Bible -- the only manual of Broad churchism in its truest and highest sense? Is not the revelation of God's Son in us, the great soul expanding power? "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Must we not infer, from the words of Christ "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," that the mind which apprehends the truth is a home of mental liberty? Does not strict conformity of the life to God's law produce real breadth of character? For "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Is not the gospel system the only true Broad churchism -- "the perfect law of liberty"? Is not the believer -- and the more so in proportion to the strength of his faith -- the only true Broad churchman, "increasing with the increase of God," "filled with all the fulness of God"? --James Kerr, in "The Modern Scottish Pulpit," 1880.

**Verse 96.** -- *Exceeding broad.* Notwithstanding many things do show the way of life to be narrow, yet unto the godly man it is a way of great breadth; though not for sin, yet for duty and delight. He makes haste and progress in it. --Robert Trail, 1642- 1716.

**Verse 96.** -- *Take notice that the law,* which is your mark, is exceeding broad. And yet not the more easy to be hit; because you must aim to hit it, in every duty of it, with a performance of equal breadth, or else you cannot hit it at all. --Stephen Marshall.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 96.** --

1. An end: -- "seen"; seen by one man; seen where it should not have been; seen where there was no end of boasting; seen in all perfection.
2. No end: -- to the extent, spirituality, perpetuity, and perfectness of the law.

**Verse 96.** --

1. The Finite explored.
2. The Infinite unexplored. --W.D.

**Verse 96.** -- Perfectionism disproved by experience and inspiration. --W.B.H.

**Verse 96.** -- Perfection -- perfect and imperfect.

1. Loud professions of perfection arise from ignorance (of self, or of God's requirements).
2. Are peculiarly liable to collapse: "I have seen an end."
3. Are best corrected by a survey of the breadth of the divine law. --C.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 97.** O how love I thy law! It is a note of exclamation. He loves so much that he must express his love, and in making the attempt he perceives that it is inexpressible -- and therefore cries, "O how I love!" We not only reverence but love the law, we obey it out of love, and even when it chides us for disobedience we love it none the less. The law is God's law, and therefore it is our love. We love it for

its holiness, and pine to be holy; we love it for its wisdom, and study to be wise; we love it for its perfection, and long to be perfect. Those who know the power of the gospel perceive an infinite loveliness in the law as they see it fulfilled and embodied in Christ Jesus.

It is my meditation all the day. This was both the effect of his love and the cause of it. He meditated in God's word because he loved it, and then loved it the more because he meditated in it. He could not have enough of it, so ardently did he love it: all the day was not too long for his converse with it. His main prayer, his noonday thought, his evensong were all out of Holy Writ; yea, in his worldly business he still kept his mind saturated with the law of the Lord. It is said of some men that the more you know them the less you admire them; but the reverse is true of God's word. Familiarity with the word of God breeds affection, and affection seeks yet greater familiarity. When "thy law," and "my meditation" are together all the day, the day grows holy, devout, and happy, and the heart lives with God. David turned away from all else; for in the preceding verse he tells us that he had seen an end of all perfection; but he turned in unto the law and tarried there the whole day of his life on earth, growing henceforth wiser and holier even sick of love, as the church saith ([Song of Solomon 2:5 5:8](#)), she was sick of love towards Christ: so seemeth the prophet to be sick of love towards the word of God. This word "how," also imports a comparison, and notes a greater love in David towards the word than towards riches or any other thing; in which respect he saith afterward in this very Psalm ([Psalms 119:127](#)), that he loveth the Lord's commandments "above gold, yea, above fine gold"; yea, as whosoever so loveth not Christ, that in respect of Christ, and for Christ's sake, he forsaketh father, and mother, and brethren, and sisters, wife and children, and his own life also (much more riches and other things not to be compared to life) is not worthy of him: so he that doth not love the word above all other things; yea, he that hateth not all other things below here, ill respect of the word, is not worthy of the word. Christ himself loved the word of God more than he loved any riches; for did he not for the performance of the word submit himself to such want, that the foxes had holes, and the birds had nests, but he had not whereon to lay his head? and that, although he were the heir of all things, yet he was ministered unto by certain women? He loved the word of God more than he loved his mother, brethren, and sisters...Yea, Christ loved the word of God more than he loved his own life; for did he not lay down his life to fulfil the word of God?...If Christ Jesus himself loved the word more than all other things, yea, more than his life, which was more than the life of all angels, was there not great reason why David should love it in like manner? Had not David as much need of it as Christ?... It is my meditation. The noun "meditation" seemeth to be more than if he had said only that he meditated. For he seemeth to mean that though he did often think upon other matters, yet he made nothing his "meditation" but that which he here speaketh of, and that this was his only, or his chief and principal meditation and set study.

The object of David's meditation is not only to be understood of the bare letter of the word, as if he did

always meditate of some text or other of the word before written; but also of the matters contained in the word; as of the justice, power, wisdom, mercy and goodness of God; of the frailty, corruption, and wickedness that is in man naturally, of the sins that God forbiddeth, and of the virtues that God commandeth in the word, and other the like. For he that meditates of these things, though he meditate not of any one text of the word, yet he may be truly said to meditate of the word.

All the day. We are not to imagine that the prophet did nothing else but meditate on the word; but this, first of all; that no day passed over his head wherein he did not meditate on the word; yea, that he took every occasion of meditating on the word. He was never weary of meditating. Though he had many other things wherein to employ himself, yet he forgot not the meditation of the word. His mind was not by any other employment alienated from the meditation of the word, but the more thereby provoked thereunto. As a man that hath laboured never so much one day in his calling, is not to be wearied thereby, but that he laboureth afresh the next day, and so day after day: so was it with the prophet touching this act of meditation. Secondly, when he saith he meditated on the word continually, or all the day, he meaneth that he did nothing at any time of the day without meditation on the word for doing thereof. Therefore we may safely say that continual meditation of the word is more necessary than continual praying, as being necessary before the doing of everything, and in the very doing of everything; yea, even before the said duty of prayer, and in the very act thereof, this work of meditation of the word is always necessary; as without which, we know not either for what to pray, or in what sort and manner to pray: it is God's word only that can and must teach us both what to pray for and also how to pray. --Thomas Stoughton, in "Two Profitable Treatises," 1616.

**Verse 97.** -- O how love I thy law! Who without love attempts anything in the law of God, does it coldly, and quickly gives it up. For the mind cannot give itself earnestly and perseveringly to things which are not loved. Only he who loves the law makes it his meditation all the day. --Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 97.** -- O how love I thy law! Were I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and to have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to the throne of grace. Were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles -- the historians, the orators, the poets of antiquity -- and devote my attention to the Scriptures of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my Divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This wisdom, whose fruits are peace in life, consolation in death, and everlasting salvation after death -- this I would trace -- this I would seek -- this I would explore through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testament. --James Hervey, 1714-1758.

**Verse 97.** -- This most precious jewel is to be preferred above all treasure. If thou be hungry, it is meat to satisfy thee; if thou be thirsty, it is drink to refresh thee; if thou be sick, it is a present remedy; if thou be weak, it is a staff to lean unto; if thine enemy assault thee, it is a sword to fight withal; if thou

be in darkness, it is a lantern to guide thy feet; if thou be doubtful of the way, it is a bright shining star to direct thee; if thou be in displeasure with God, it is the message of reconciliation; if thou study to save thy soul, receive the word engrafted, for that is able to do it: it is the word of life. Whose loveth salvation will love this word, love to read it, love to hear it; and such as will neither read nor hear it, Christ saith plainly, they are not of God. For the spouse gladly heareth the voice of the bridegroom; and "my sheep hear my voice," saith the Prince of pastors (Joh 5:27). --Edwin Sundys, 1519-1587.

**Verse 97.** -- O how love I thy law! As faith worketh by love unto God, so it worketh by love unto his word. Love me, love my word: love a king, love his laws. So it did on David; so it should do on us: "O how love I thy law!" saith David. "O how love I thy law!" should every one of us say; not only because it is a good law, but chiefly because it is God's law. --Richard Capel, 1586-1656.

**Verse 97.** -- O how love I thy law! He calls God himself to be judge of his love to the word; witnessing thereby that it was no counterfeit love, but complete and sincere love which he bore unto it. The like protestation was used by S. Peter: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I love thee!" --William Cowper.

**Verse 97.** -- Thy law. In every one of these eight verses the Bible is spoken of as the Lord's, as, indeed, all through the Psalm. Who is the author of Scripture? God. What is the matter of Scripture? God; it was not fit that any should write of God, but God himself. What is the end of Scripture? God. Why was the Scripture written, but that we might everlastingly enjoy the blessed God As Caesar wrote his own commentaries; so God, when there was none above him of whom he could write, he wrote of himself; by histories, laws, prophecies, and promises, and many other doctrines, hath he set himself forth to be the Creator, Preserver, Deliverer, and Glorifier of mankind; and all this is done in a perfect manner. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 97.** -- It is my meditation. Holy Scripture is not a book for the slothful: it is not a book which can be interpreted without, and apart from, and by the deniers of, that Holy Spirit by whom it came. Rather is it a field, upon the surface of which, if sometimes we gather manna easily and without labour, and given, as it were, freely to our hands, yet of which also, many portions are to be cultivated with pains and toil ere they will yield food for the use of man. This bread of life also is to be eaten in the wholesome sweat of our brow. --Richard Chenevix Trench, 1807-.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 97-104.** -- The profitableness of holy meditation. Its theme -- "thy law," ([Psalms 119:97](#)), its effect -- "wisdom" ([Psalms 119:98-100](#)), practically shown in daily life ([Psalms 119:101-102](#)), its sweetness ([Psalms 119:103](#)), and hallowing influence ([Psalms 119:104](#)).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 97.** --

1. Unusual Exclamation.

2. Unusual Application. --W.D.

**Verse 97.** -- Indescribable love and insatiable thought. The action and reaction of affection and meditation.

**Verse 97.** --

1. The object of love: "thy law."
2. The degree of that love: "oh, how love I," etc.
3. The evidence of that love: "it is my meditation," etc. --G.R.

**Verse 97.** -- Love to the law.

1. An ardent confession of love.
2. An unanswerable evidence of love. --C.A.D.

**Verse 97.** (first clause). -- Vehemency of love for God's word.

1. Its recognisable marks.

(a) Profound reverence for the authority of the word.

(b) Admiration for its holiness.

(c) Jealousy. For its honour; God's servant feels acute pain when men show it any slight.

(d) Respect for its wholeness; he would not divorce precepts from promises, nor ignore a single statement in it.

(e) Indefatigability in its study.

(f) Eager desire to obey it.

(g) Forwardness in praising it.

(h) Activity in spreading it abroad.

1. Its reasonableness.

(a) The word well deserves it.

(b) It is a proof of true intelligence.

(c) It is not less than a regard for our own interest demands.

1. Its requisiteness to the true worship of God. Men sneeringly call such an affection bibliolatry, as though it were the worship of a book. In truth, it is an essential element in the due worship of God. For --

a. Without it there cannot be the faith which honours God.

(b) It is involved in that love to God which constitutes the very essence of worship.

(c) It is itself an act of homage, that a worshipper dare

not withhold. --J.F.

**Verse 97-100.** -- Spiritual wisdom.

1. God's word the source of surpassing wisdom -- excelling that of "mine enemies," "my teachers," "the ancients."
2. The three methods of acquiring this wisdom -- love, meditation, practice.
3. The one Giver of this wisdom: "Thou:" Psalms 119:98. --C.A.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 98.** Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. The commands were his book, but God was his teacher. The letter can make us knowing, but only the divine Spirit can make us wise. Wisdom is knowledge put to practical use. Wisdom comes to us through obedience: "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." We learn not only from promise, and doctrine, and sacred history, but also from precept and command; in fact, from the commandments we gather the most practical wisdom and that which enables us best to cope with our adversaries. A holy life is the highest wisdom and the surest defence. Our enemies are renowned for subtlety, from the first father of them, the old serpent, down to the last cockatrice that has been hatched from the egg; and it would be vain for us to try to be a match with them in the craft and mystery of cunning, for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. We must go to another school and learn of a different instructor, and then by uprightness we shall baffle fraud, by simple truth we shall vanquish deep laid scheming, and by open candour we shall defeat slander. A thoroughly straightforward man, devoid of all policy, is a terrible puzzle to diplomatists; they suspect him of a subtle duplicity through which they cannot see, while he, indifferent to their suspicions, holds on the even tenor of his way, and baffles all their arts. Yes, "honesty is the best policy." He who is taught of God has a practical wisdom such as malice cannot supply to the crafty; while harmless as a dove he also exhibits more than a serpent's wisdom.

For they are ever with me. He was always studying or obeying the commandments; they were his choice and constant companions. If we wish to become proficient we must be indefatigable. If we keep the wise law ever near us we shall become wise, and when our adversaries assail us we shall be prepared for them with that ready wit which lies in having the word of God at our fingers' ends. As a soldier in battle must never lay aside his shield, so must we never have the word of God out of our minds; it must be ever with us.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 98.** -- *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies.* Now he praiseth the word for the singular profit and fruit which he reaped by it; to wit, that he learned wisdom by it. And this he amplifies, by comparing himself with three sorts of men; his enemies, his teachers,



and the ancients. And this he doth, not of vain glory (for bragging is far from him who is governed by the Spirit of grace); but to commend the word of the Lord, and to allure others to love it, by declaring to them what manifold good he found in it.

Wiser than mine enemies. But how can this be, seeing that our Saviour saith that the men of this world are wiser in their own generation than the children of God? The answer is, our Saviour doth not call worldlings wise men simply; but wiser in their own generation; that is, wise in things pertaining to this life. Or as Jeremy calls them, "wise to do evil"; and when they have so done, wise to conceal and cloak it. All which in very deed is but folly; and therefore David, who by the light of God's word saw that it was so, could not be moved to follow their course. Well; there is a great controversy between the godly and the wicked: either of them in their judgment accounts the other to be fools; but it is the light of God's word which must decide it. --William Cowper.

**Verse 98.** -- *Wiser than mine enemies.* They are wiser than their enemies as to security against their attempts, and that enmity and opposition that they carry on against them; they are far more safe by walking under the covert of God's protection than their enemies can possibly be, who have all manner of worldly advantages. A godly wise man is careful to keep in with God: he is more prepared and furnished, can have a higher hope, more expectation of success, than others have; or, if not, he is well enough provided for, though all things fall out never so cross to his desires. As to success, who hath made wiser provision, think you, he that hath made God his friend, or he that is borne up with worldly props and dependencies? They that are guided by the Spirit of God, or they that are guided by Satan those that make it their business to walk with God step by step, or those that not only forsake him, but provoke him to his face? Those that break with men, and keep in with God, or those that break with God? Surely, a child of God hath more security by piety than his enemies can have by secular policy, whereby they think to overreach and ruin him. The safety of a child of God lieth in two things:

1. God is his friend.
2. As long as God hath work for him to do, he will maintain him, and bear him out in it. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 98.** -- *They are ever with me.* The meaning of the last clause is not merely "it is ever with me, but it is for ever to me," i.e, mine, my inalienable, indefeasible possession. -- Joseph Addison Alexander.

**Verse 98.** -- *They are ever with me.* God gives knowledge to whom he pleaseth; but those that meditate most, thrive most. This may imply also that the word should be a ready help. Such as derive their wisdom from without cannot have their counsellors always with them to give advice. But, when a man hath gotten the word in his heart, he finds a ready help: he hath a seasonable word to direct him in all difficulties, in all straits, and in all temptations, to teach him what to do against the burden of the

present exigence; to teach him what to do and what to hope for. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 98.** -- *They are ever with me.* A good man, wherever he goes, carries his Bible along with him, if not in his hands, yet in his head and in his heart. --Matthew Henry.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 98-100.** -- *Three sorts of men he mentions,* "enemies," "teachers," "ancients"; the enemies excel in policy, teachers in doctrine, and ancients in counsel; and yet by the word was David made wiser than all these. Malice sharpens the wit of enemies, and teacheth them the arts of opposition; teachers are furnished with learning because of their office; and ancients grow wise by experience; yet David, by the study of the word, excelled all these. --Thomas Manton.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 98.** -- Constant communion with truth the student's road to proficiency.

**Verse 98-100.** -- The truly wise man.

1. The source of his wisdom. The word of "the only wise God," here described as
  - a. Thy commandments.

(b) Thy testimonies.

(c) Thy precepts.

1. The increase of his wisdom. It arises from

(a) The abiding indwelling of the word: "ever with me,"

Ps

[ps+119:98"> 119:98.](#)

(b) Meditation upon the word, [Psalms 119:99.](#)

(c) Obedience to the word, [Psalms 119:100.](#)

1. The measure of his wisdom.

(a) Wiser than his enemies, whose wisdom was "not from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish."

(b) Wiser than his teachers, whose wisdom was "of this world."

(c) Wiser than the ancients, whose wisdom was that of unsanctified age and experience. --W.H.J. Page, of Chelsea, 1882.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 99.** I have more understanding than all my teachers. That which the Lord had taught him had been useful in the camp, and now he finds it equally valuable in the schools. Our teachers are not always to be trusted; in fact, we may not follow any of them implicitly, for God holds us to account for our personal judgments. It behooves us then to follow closely the chart of the Word of God, that we

may be able to save the vessel when even the pilot errs. If our teachers should be in all things sound and safe, they will be right glad for us to excel them, and they will ever be ready to own that the teaching of the Lord is better than any teaching which they can give us. Disciples of Christ who sit at his feet are often better skilled in divine things than doctors of divinity.

For thy testimonies are my meditation. This is the best mode of acquiring understanding. We may hear the wisest teachers and remain fools, but if we meditate upon the sacred word we must become wise.

There is more wisdom in the testimonies of the Lord than in all the teachings of men if they were all gathered into one vast library. The one book outweighs all the rest.

David does not hesitate to speak the truth in this place concerning himself, for he is quite innocent of self consciousness. In speaking of his understanding he means to extol the law and the Lord, and not himself. There is not a grain of boasting in these bold expressions, but only a sincere childlike desire to set forth the excellence of the Lord's word. He who knows the truths taught in the Bible will be guilty of no egotism if he believes himself to be possessed of more important truth than all the agnostic professors buried and unburied.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 99.** -- *I have more understanding than all my teachers.* Even where the preacher is godly, partaker of that grace himself, whereof he is an ambassador to others, it falls out oftentimes that greater measure of light and grace is communicated by his ministry to another than is given to himself; as Augustine first illuminated and converted by Ambrose did far excel, both in knowledge and spiritual grace, him that taught him. And herein God wonderfully shows his glory, that, whosoever be the instrument, he is the dispenser of light and glory, giving more by the instrument than it hath in itself. And this is so far from being to a godly teacher a matter of grief, that it is rather a matter of glory. -- William Cowper.

**Verse 99.** -- *I have more understanding than all my teachers.* It is no reflection upon my teachers, but rather an honour to them, for me to improve so as to excel them, and no longer to need them. By meditation we preach to ourselves, and so we come to understand more than our teachers, for we come to understand our hearts, which they cannot. --Matthew Henry.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 99.** -- The surest way to excellence.

1. A good subject: "thy testimonies."
2. A good method: "are my meditations."

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 100.** I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. The men of old age, and the men of old time, were outdone by the holier and more youthful learner. He had been taught to

observe in heart and life the precepts of the Lord, and this was more than the most venerable sinner had ever learned, more than the philosopher of antiquity had so much as aspired to know. He had the word with him, and so outstripped his foes; he meditated on it, and so outran his friends; he practised it, and so outshone his elders. The instruction derived from Holy Scripture is useful in many directions, superior from many points of view, unrivalled everywhere and in every way. As our soul may make her boast in the Lord, so may we boast in his word. "There is none like it: give it me," said David as to Goliath's sword, and we may say the same as to the word of the Lord. If men prize antiquity they have it here. The ancients are had in high repute, but what did they all know compared with that which we perceive in the divine precepts? "The old is better" says one: but the oldest of all is the best of all, and what is that but the word of the Ancient of days

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 100.** *I understand...because I keep.* Would we know the Lord? Let us keep his commandments. "By thy precepts," saith David, that is, by the observance of thy precepts, "I get understanding." "If any man do my will" (saith our blessed Saviour, [John 7:17](#)), "he shall know my doctrine." *boulei qeololoj lenesqail taj entolaj fulasse* saith Nazienzen: Wouldst thou be a divine? do the commandments; for action is (as it were) the basis of contemplation. It is St. Gregory's observation concerning the two disciples who, whilst Christ talked with them, knew him not; but in performing an act of hospitality towards him, to wit, breaking bread with him, they knew him, that they were enlightened, not by hearing him, but by doing divine precepts, *Quisquis ergo vult audita intelligere; festinet ea quae jam audire potuit, opere implere*, Whosoever therefore will understand, let him first make haste to do what he heareth. -- Nathanael Hardy, 1618-1670.

**Verse 100.** -- *I understand more than the ancients.* The ordinary answer of ignorant people is, "What! must we be wiser than our forefathers?" And yet those same people would be richer than their forefathers were. The maximum quod sic of a Christian is this, he must grow in grace, till his head reach up to heaven, till grace is perfected in glory. --Christopher Love, 1618-1651.

**Verse 100.** -- *More than the ancients.* Understanding gotten by the precepts of the word is better than understanding gotten by long experience. It is better in four regards. First, It is more exact. Our experience reacheth but to a few things; but the word of God reacheth to all cases that concern true happiness. The word is the result of God's wisdom, who is the Ancient of days; therefore exceeds the wisdom of the ancients, or experience of any men, or all men. Secondly, as it is more exact, so a more sure way of learning wisdom, whereas experience is more uncertain. Many have much experience, yet have not a heart to see and to gather wisdom from what they feel: [Deuteronomy 29:2-4](#). Thirdly, it is a safer and cheaper way of learning, to learn by rule, than to come home by weeping cross, and to learn wisdom by our own smart. Experience is too expensive a way; and, if we had nothing else to guide us, into how many thousand miseries should we run! Fourthly, it is shorter.

The way by age and experience is a long way; and so, for a long time, all a man's younger age must needs be miserable and foolish. Now, here you may come betimes to be wise by studying the word of God. It concerns a man, not only to be wise at length, but to be wise betimes. The foolish virgins were wise too late: but never were any wise too soon. -- Condensed from Thomas Manton.

**Verse 100.** -- *If this way the Word of God were thus perfect in David's time, what is it by the addition of so many parcels of Scripture since? If it then gave wisdom to the simple (Psalms 14:7); if it made David, being brought up but as a shepherd, wiser than his enemies, than his ancients, than his teachers; as an angel of God in discerning right from wrong (1 Samuel 14:17); able to guide the people by the skilfulness of his hands (Psalms 78:72); what kind of wisdom is there, which we may not now gather from thence? What depth of natural philosophy have we in Genesis and Job! What flowers of rhetoric in the prophets! What force of logic in Saint Paul's epistles! what art of poetry in the psalms! What excellent moral precepts, not only for private life, but for the regulation of families and commonwealth in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes! To which may be added in a second rank as very useful, though apocryphal, the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. What reasonable and just laws have we in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which moved the great Ptolemy to hire the Septuagints to translate them into Greek: what unmatched antiquity, variety, and wonderful events, and certainty of story, in the books of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, the Kings, and Chronicles, together with Ruth and Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah, and, since Christ, in the sacred Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. And, lastly, what profound mysteries have we in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, and the Revelation of Saint John. But in this it infinitely exceeds the wisdom of all human writings, that it is alone "able to make a man wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). Upon these considerations, Charles the Fifth of France, surnamed The Wise, not only caused the Bible to be translated into French, but was himself very studious in the Holy Scriptures. And Alphonsus, King of Arragon, is said to have read over the whole Bible fourteen several times, with Lyra's notes upon it; though he were otherwise excellently well learned, yet was the law of God his delight, "more desired of him than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." -- George Hakewell, 1579-1649.*

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 100.** -- Antiquity no security for truth as contrasted with revelation: old age no proof of wisdom as contrasted with holy living: open confession no evidence of boasting as contrasted with sullen pride.

**Verse 100.** -- Obedience the high road to understanding. --W.B.H.

**Verse 100.** -- Obedience the key of knowledge. John 7:17.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 101.** I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. There is no treasuring up the holy word unless there is a casting out of all unholiness: if we keep the good word we must let go the evil. David had zealously watched his steps and put a check upon his conduct, -- he had refrained his feet. No one evil way could entice him, for he knew that if he went astray but in one road he had practically left the way of righteousness, therefore he avoided every false way. The bypaths were smooth and flowery, but he knew right well that they were evil, and so he turned his feet away, and held on along the strait and thorny pathway which leads to God. It is a pleasure to look back upon self conquests, -- "I have refrained," and a greater delight still to know that we did this out of no mere desire to stand well with our fellows, but with the one motive of keeping the law of the Lord. Sin avoided that obedience may be perfected is the essence of this verse; or it may be that the Psalmist would teach us that there is no real reverence for the book where there is not carefulness to avoid every transgression of its precepts. How can we keep God's word if we do not keep our own works from becoming vile?

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 101 -- I have refrained my feet, etc.** 1. We have David's practice: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way." 2. His end or motive: "That I might keep thy word;" that he might be exact and punctual with God in a course of obedience.

First, In his practice. You may note the seriousness of it: I have refrained my feet. By the feet are meant the affections: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God," Ecclesiastes 5:1. Our affections which are the rigorous bent of the soul, do engage us to practice; therefore fitly resembled by the feet, by which we walk to any place that we do desire: so that, "I have refrained my feet," the meaning is, I keep a close and strict band over my affections, that they might not lead me to sin. Then you may note the extent of it; he doth not only say, I refrained from evil, but universally, "from every evil way." But how could David say this in truth of heart, if conscious of his offence in the matter of Uriah? Answer: This was the usual frame and temper of his soul, and the course of his life; and such kind of assertions concerning the saints are to be interpreted, *voce et canatu, licet non semper eventu*. This was his errand and drift, his purpose and endeavour, his usual course, though he had his failings.

Secondly, What was his end and motive in this? That I might keep thy word; that I might be exact and punctual with God in a course of obedience, and adhere to his word universally, impartially. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 101.** -- *I have refrained my feet, etc.* Where there is real holiness, there is a holy hatred, detestation, and indignation against all ungodliness and wickedness, and that upon holy accounts: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way." But why? "That I may keep thy word." "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way;" Psalms 119:104. The good that he

got by divine precepts stirred up his hatred against every false way: Psalms 119:128, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." His high esteem of every precept raised up in him a holy indignation against every evil way. A holy man knows that all sin strikes at the holiness of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the law of God; and therefore his heart rises against all; he looks upon every sin as the Scribes and Pharisees that accused Christ; and as that Judas that betrayed Christ; and as that Pilate that condemned Christ; and as those soldiers that scourged Christ; and as those spears that pierced Christ; and therefore his heart cries out for justice upon all. --Thomas Brooks.

**Verse 101.** -- *Refrained...* that I might keep. By doing what is right we come both to know right and to be better able to do it. --"Plain Commentary."

**Verse 101.** -- *I have refrained my feet*, etc. The word "refrained" warns us that we are naturally borne by our feet into the path of every kind of sin, and are hurried along it by the rush of human passions, so that even the wise and understanding need to check, recall, and retrace their steps, in order that they may keep God's word, and not become castaways. And further note that the Hebrew verb here translated "refrained" is even stronger in meaning, and denotes "I fettered, or imprisoned, my feet," whereby we may learn that no light resistance is enough to prevent them from leading us astray. --Agellius and Genebrardus, in Neale and Littledale.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 101.** -- Self restraint needful to piety.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 102.** I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. They are well taught whom God teaches. What we learn from the Lord we never forget. God's instruction has a practical effect -- we follow his way when he teaches us; and it has an abiding effect, -- we do not depart from holiness. Read this verse in connection with the preceding and you get the believer's "I have," and his "I have not": he is good both positively and negatively. What he did, namely, "refrained his feet," preserved him from doing that which otherwise he might have done, namely, "departed from thy judgments." He who is careful not to go an inch aside will not leave the road. He who never touches the intoxicating cup will never be drunk. He who never utters an idle word will never be profane. If we begin to depart a little we can never tell where we shall end. The Lord brings us to persevere in holiness by abstinence from the beginning of sin; but whatever be the method he is the worker of our perseverance, and to him be all the glory.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS**

**Verse 102.** -- By "*mispballim*", "judgments," is meant God's law; for thereby he will judge the world. And the word "departed not" intimates both his exactness and constancy: his exactness, that he did

not go a hair's breadth from his direction; "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deuteronomy 5:32); and his constancy is implied in it, for then we are said to depart from God and his law, when we fall off from him in judgment and practice. Jer 32:40. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 102.** -- *Thou hast taught me.* God teacheth two ways: --

1. By common illumination.
  2. By special operation.
1. By common illumination, barely enlightening the mind to know or understand what he propounds by his messengers: so God showed it to the heathen: Romans 1:20. But then,
  2. By way of special operation, effectually inclining the will to embrace and prosecute duties so known: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts": Jeremiah 31:33. This way of teaching is always effectual and persuasive. Now, in this sense they are taught of God, so that they do not only get an ear to hear, but a heart to understand, learn, and practise.

This teaching is the ground of constancy, because,

1. They that are thus taught of God see things more clearly than others do; God is the most excellent teacher.
2. They know things more surely, and with certainty of demonstration, whereas others have but dubious conjectures, and loose and wavering opinions about the things of God.
3. This teaching is so efficacious and powerful, as that the effect followeth: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I Will walk in thy truth" (Psalms 86:11).
4. God renews this teaching, and is always at hand to guide us, and give counsel to us, which is the cause of our standing. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 102.** -- *For thou hast taught me.* Lest it should seem that David ascribed the praise of godliness to himself, or that it came from any goodness in him that he did refrain his feet from every evil way, he gives here all the glory to God, protesting, that because God did teach him, therefore he declined not. Wherefrom we learn, that if at any time we stand, or if when we have fallen we rise and repent, it is ever to be imputed to God that teacheth us; for there is no evil so abominable, but it would soon become plausible to us, if God should leave us to ourselves. David was taught by his ordinary teachers, and he did reverence them; but that he profited by them he ascribes unto God. Paul may plant, and Apollos water; God must give the increase. --William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 102.** -- Divine teaching necessary to secure perseverance, and effectual to that end.

**Verse 102.** -- Consider, --

1. The path appointed for men to walk in: "Thy judgments."



- (a) Right path.
- (b) Clean path.
- (c) Pleasant path.
- (d) Safe path.
- (e) The end -- eternal glory.

1. The persistent pursuit of it: "I have not departed."

- (a) Persecution would drive from it.
- (b) Pleasures would allure from it.
- (c) The flesh would weary in it.
- (d) But the true believer determines to hold on his way to the end.
- (e) And carefully watches his steps lest they depart.

1. The preserving power that holds the traveller to it: "For thou hast taught me."

- a. The traveller walks with God, and receives instruction by the special illumination of the Holy Spirit.

- (b) The choice property of this teaching is, not only that it makes wise, but that it captivates the soul, strengthens it, and holds it to a holy obedience. --J.F.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 103.** How sweet are thy words into my taste. He had not only heard the words of God, but fed upon them: they affected his palate as well as his ear. God's words are many and varied, and the whole of them make up what we call "the word": David loved them each one, individually, and the whole of them as a whole; he tasted an indescribable sweetness in them. He expresses the fact of their sweetness, but as he cannot express the degree of their sweetness he cries, "How sweet!" Being God's words they were divinely sweet to God's servant; he who put the sweetness into them had prepared the taste of his servant to discern and enjoy it. David makes no distinction between promises and precepts, doctrines and threatenings; they are all included in God's words, and all are precious in his esteem. Oh for a deep love to all that the Lord has revealed, whatever form it may take.

Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. When he did not only eat but also speak the word, by instructing others, he felt an increased delight in it. The sweetest of all temporal things fall short of the infinite deliciousness of the eternal word. Honey itself is outstripped of the Lord Widen the Psalmist fed on it he in sweetness by the word found it sweet; but when he bore witness of it it became sweeter still. How wise it will be on our part to keep the word on our palate by meditation and on our

tongue by confession. It must be sweet to our taste when we think of it, or it will not be Sweet to our mouth when we talk of it.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 103.** -- *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Even the words of a fellow creature of earth,* how inexpressibly sweet sometimes, how beyond all calculation precious! All gold and silver would be despised in comparison with them. They come freighted with love, and the heart is enriched with them as though the breath of God had come into it. But does not this rainbow of earthly joy die gradually out? Do not the enrapturing words sooner or later become exsiccated in the memory, and may they not meet with contemptuous treatment as reminders of an earthly illusion? Indeed they do; indeed they may.

Nevertheless the heart may find its happiness, its true and undying happiness, in words. At this moment there is nothing in the whole world so much to be desired as certain words. Words of love. Words expressive of infinite love. Treasures, pleasures, honours of earth, what are they? My unsatisfied soul cries out, Give me words. Words whereby I may know the love that God has towards me. Words declaring the unchangeable attachment of the Saviour. Words purifying my heart. Emboldening me in prayer. Exhibiting to me the blissful future. Words that shall give life to my dead powers, and change me from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. --George Bowen, in "Daily Meditations," 1873.

**Verse 103.** -- *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! etc.* There is given to the regenerated a new, supernatural sense, a certain divine, spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from anything that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the beauty of holiness is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; or, this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and a spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, [John 4:32,34](#).

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures where the nature and evidence of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the 119th Psalm. The Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the great object of the love, the

complacence, and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb; and that upon account of their holiness. The same psalmist declares that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law: Psalms 19:7-10. -- Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758.

**Verse 103.** -- *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Why does he not rather say, How pleasant are thy words to my ears? than that they are sweet to his taste and his mouth?* I answer: It is most meet that when God speaks by the mouth of his ministers we should be hearers, and the words of God should be the most joyous of all to our ears. But it is also the practice of the godly to converse about the words of God, and their words are so sweet to their own taste that they are more pleased and delighted than by any honey from the comb. And this is most necessary when either there is a scarcity of teachers, as with David in the wilderness or dwelling among the Philistines; or when those who hold the office of teaching, adulterate and vitiate the pure word of God. --Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 103.** -- *That which is here called "word,"* I take rather for "judgments," partly because in the proper tongue the word is left out, and partly because he had used this word "judgments" in the verse immediately going before. But some will say, How can the judgments of God be "sweet," which are so troublesome, fearful, and grievous? I answer, that the godly have no greater joy than when they feel either the mercies of God accomplished towards them that fear him, or his judgments showered upon the reprobates. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 103.** -- *Unto my taste.* "To my mouth." That is, I take as great pleasure in talking, conferring, and persuading, thy judgments, as my mouth, or the mouth of any that loveth honey, is delighted therewith. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 103.** -- *Sweeter.* As there are always among violets some that are very much sweeter than others, so among texts there are some that are more precious to us than others. --Henry Ward Beecher, 1879.

**Verse 103.** -- *An affectionate wife often says, "My husband! your words are sweeter to me than honey; yes, they are sweeter than the sugar cane." "Alas! my husband is gone," says the widow: "how sweet were his words! Honey dropped from his mouth: his words were ambrosia."* --Joseph Roberts.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 103.** -- Experience in religion the source of enjoyment in it; or,

1. Tasting the word: its sweetness.
2. Declaring the word with the mouth: its greater sweetness.

**Verse 103.** --

1. The word is positively sweet: "sweet to my taste."
2. Comparatively sweet: "sweeter the honey."

3. Superlatively sweet: "how sweet," etc. --G.R.

**Verse 103.** -- The comparison, setting forth the precious property of sweetness in the word: "Sweeter than honey." "Better than honey," would not do as well. It is --

1. The purest sweetness; even precepts and rebukes.
2. Uncloying sweetness.
3. Always a beneficial sweetness.
4. A specially grateful sweetness -- in affliction, in the hour of death. --J.F.

**Verse 103.** -- Spiritual delicacy.

1. The taste needed to relish it.
2. The life that alone is nourished by it.
3. The rare enjoyment derived from it. --G.A.D.

**Verse 103.** --

1. It is sweet.
2. Let us enjoy it.
3. The best effects will follow. George Herbert says: --

"O Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart  
Suck every letter, and a honey gain,  
Precious for any grief in any part;  
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain."

**Verse 103.** -- If we would taste the honey of God, we must have the palate of faith. -- A.R. Fausset.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 104.** Through thy precepts I get understanding. God's direction is our instruction. Obedience to the divine will begets wisdom of mind and action. As God's way is always best, those who follow it are sure to be justified by the result. If the Lawgiver were foolish his law would be the same, and obedience to such a law would involve us in a thousand mistakes; but as the reverse is the case, we may count ourselves happy to have such a wise, prudent, and beneficial law to be the rule of our lives. We are wise if we obey and we grow wise by obeying!

Therefore I hate every false way. Because he had understanding, and because of the divine precepts, he detested sin and falsehood. Every sin is a falsehood; we commit sin because we believe a lie, and in the end the flattering evil turns a liar to us and we find ourselves betrayed. True hearts are not indifferent about falsehood, they grow warm in indignation: as they love the truth, so they hate the lie. Saints have a universal horror of all that is untrue, they tolerate no falsehood or folly, they set their faces against all error of doctrine or wickedness of life. He who is a lover of one sin is in league with the whole army of sins; we must have neither truce nor parley with even one of these

Amalekites, for the Lord hath war with them from generation to generation, and so must we. It is well to be a good hater. And what is that? A hater of no living being, but a hater of "every false way." The way of self will, of self righteousness, of worldliness, of pride, of unbelief, of hypocrisy, -- these are all false ways, and therefore not only to be shunned, but to be abhorred.

This final verse of the strophe marks a great advance in character, and shows that the man of God is growing stronger, bolder, and happier than aforesaid. He has been taught of the Lord, so that he discerns between the precious and the vile, and while he loves the truth fervently he hates falsehood intensely. May all of us reach this state of discrimination and determination, so that we may greatly glorify God.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS**

**Verse 104.** -- *Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.* In this sentence the prophet seems to invert the order set down in Psalms 119:101. He had said, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word," where the avoiding of evil is made the means of profiting by the word; here his profiting by the word is made the cause of avoiding evil. In the one verse you have an account of his beginning with God; in the other, of his progress. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 104.** -- *I hate every false way.* David saith, "I hate every false way"; I hate not only the way when I have been misled into it, but I hate to go in it; and he professes at the Ps 119:163, "I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love." To abstain from and forbear lying is a sign of a gracious heart, much more to hate and abhor it. A godly man not only doth that which is good, but he delights to do it, his soul cleaves to it; he is in his clement when he is doing it, nothing comes more suitably to him than the business of his duty, he loveth to do it, yea, he loveth it when he cannot do it: Romans 7:22. Paul complained much that his corruptions clogged, hindered and shackled him; he was in lime twigs as to the doing of good, yet (saith he) "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; that is, the inward man delightfully moves after the law of God, when I am basely moved by my corrupt heart, and stirred by temptation against it. Now, as a godly man not only chooseth to do the holy will of God, but delights and rejoiceth to do it, and hath sweet content in doing it; so likewise a godly man not only refuseth to do the will of the flesh, or to follow the course of the world, but hates to do it, and is never so discontented with himself as when through carelessness and neglect of his watch he hath been overtaken and hath fallen. A carnal man may forbear the doing of evil, and do what is materially good, but he never abhors what is evil, nor delights in what is good. Though he abstain from acting those things which God forbids, yet he doth not say, with Job, "God forbid, I should act them."...To delight in good is better than the doing of it, and to abhor evil is better than abstaining from it. And if we compare the nature of sin with the new nature of a godly man, we may see clear grounds why his abstinence from sin is joined with an abhorrence of it. --Joseph Caryl.

**Verse 104.** -- *Through thy; precepts I get understanding.* Spiritual understanding is connected with the taste of spiritual sweetness. (Compare Proverbs 2:10-11.) "The sweetness of the lips" -- as the wise man observes -- "increaseth learning. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." Proverbs 16:21,23. Thus having learned "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," we are encouraged to "go on to perfection" -- "growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ." For the connexion between "grace and knowledge" is clearly manifested. --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 104.** -- *I hate every false way.* Universality in this is a sure sign of sincerity. Herod spits out some sins, when he rolls others as sweet morsels in his mouth. A hypocrite ever leaves the devil some nest egg to sit upon, though he take many away. Some men will not buy some commodities, because they cannot have them at their own price, but they lay out the same money on others; so hypocrites forbear some sins, yea, are displeased at them; because they cannot have them without disgrace or disease, or some other disadvantage; but they lay out the same love upon other sins which will suit better with their designs. Some affirm that what the sea loseth in one place it gains in another; so what ground the corruption of the unconverted loseth one way, it gains another. There is in him some one lust especially which is his favourite; some king sin, like Agag, which must be spared when others are destroyed. "In this the Lord be merciful to thy servant," saith Naaman. But now the regenerate laboureth to cleanse himself from all pollutions, both of flesh and spirit. 2 Corinthians 7:1. --George Swinnoek.

**Verse 104.** -- *I hate.* The Scriptures place religion very much in the affection of love; love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and the New, are innumerable. The contrary affection of hatred also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in Scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished. Proverbs 8:13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Accordingly, the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Psalms 97:10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity: Ps 101:2-3, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside." So Psalms 114:128, and the present place. Again, Psalms 139:21: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" -- Jonathan Edwards.

**Verse 104.** -- *I hate.* Hatred is a stabbing, murdering affection, it purposes sin with a hot heart to death, as an avenger of blood, that is to say, of the blood of the soul which sin would spill, and of the blood of Christ which sin hath shed. Hate sin perfectly and perpetually and then you will not spare it but kill it presently. Till sin be hated it cannot be mortified; you will not cry against it, as the Jews did against Christ, Crucify it! Crucify it! but shew indulgence to it as David did to Absalom and say, Deal gently with the young man, -- with this or that lust, for my sake. Mercy to sin is cruelty to the soul. --

Edward Reyner, 1600-1670.

**Verse 104.** -- *False way.* It is not said, "evil way," but "false way": or, as it is in the original, every path of lying and falsehood. Falsehood is either in point of opinion or practice. If you take it in the first sense, for falsehood in opinion, or error in judgment, or false doctrine, or false worship, this sentence holds good. Those that get understanding by the word are established against error, and not only established against error, or against the embracing or possession of it, but they hate it. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 104.** -- *False way.* All sin is a lie. By it we attempt to cheat God. By it we actually cheat our souls: Proverbs 14:12. There is no delusion like the folly of believing that a course of sin will conduce to our happiness. --William S. Plumer.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 104.** -- The influence of the precepts.

1. Upon the understanding.
2. Upon the affections.
3. Upon the life.

**Verse 104.** --

1. The intellectual effect of the Scriptures: "I get understanding."
2. Their moral effect: "I hate," etc. --G.R.

**Verse 104.** -- The understanding derived from God's precepts begets holy hatred.

1. To the false ways of conventional morality.
2. To the false ways of a formal religiousness.
3. To the false ways of an erring theology.
4. To the false ways of hypocritical practice.
5. To the false ways of sinful suggestions.
6. To the false ways of one's own deceitful heart. --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 105.** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet. We are walkers through the city of this world, and we are often called to go out into its darkness; let us never venture there without the light giving word, lest we slip with our feet. Each man should use the word of God personally, practically, and habitually, that he may see his way and see what lies in it. When darkness settles down upon all around me, the word of the Lord, like a flaming torch, reveals my way. Having no fixed lamps in eastern towns, in old time each passenger carried a lantern with him that he might not fall into the open sewer, or stumble over the heaps of ordure which defiled the road. This is a true picture of our path through this dark world: we should not know the way, or how to walk in it, if Scripture, like a

blazing flambeau, did not reveal it. One of the most practical benefits of Holy Writ is guidance in the acts of daily life: it is not sent to astound us with its brilliance, but to guide us by its instruction. It is true the head needs illumination, but even more the feet need direction, else head and feet may both fall into a ditch. Happy is the man who personally appropriates God's word, and practically uses it as his comfort and counsellor, -- a lamp to his own feet.

And a light unto my path. It is a lamp by night, a light by day, and a delight at all times. David guided his own steps by it, and also saw the difficulties of his road by its beams. He who walks in darkness is sure, sooner or later, to stumble; while he who walks by the light of day, or by the lamp of night, stumbleth not, but keeps his uprightness. Ignorance is painful upon practical subjects; it breeds indecision and suspense, and these are uncomfortable: the word of God, by imparting heavenly knowledge, leads to decision, and when that is followed by determined resolution, as in this case, it brings with it great restfulness of heart.

This verse converses with God in adoring and yet familiar tones. Have we not something of like tenor to address to our heavenly Father?

Note how like this verse is to the first verse of the first octave, and the first of the second and other octaves. The seconds also are often in unison.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light, etc.* David was a man of very good wit and natural understanding; but he gives to God the glory of his wisdom, and owns that his best light was but darkness when he was not lightened and ruled by the word of God. Oh that we would consider this, that in all our ways wherein the word of God shines not unto us to direct us, we do but walk in darkness, and our ways without it can lead us to none other end but utter darkness. If we hearken not to the word of God, if we walk not by the rule thereof, how is it possible we can come to the face of God? -- William Cowper.

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* The use of a lamp is by night, while the light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be day or night with us, we clearly understand our duty by the Word of God. The night signifieth adversity, and the day prosperity. Hence we may learn how to behave ourselves in all conditions. The word "path" notes our general choice and course of life; the word "feet" our particular actions. Now whether the matter, wherein we would be informed, concerneth our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or our dexterous prosecution of the way, still the word of God will direct a humble and well disposed mind. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, etc.* Basil the Great, interpreting the "word" as God's will revealed in Holy Scripture, observes that the Old Testament, and in especial the Law, was only a lantern (lamp or candle) because an artificial light, imperfectly illumining the darkness, whereas the



Gospel, given by the Lord Jesus himself, is a light of the Sun of Righteousness, giving brightness to all things. Ambrose, going yet deeper, tells us that Christ is himself both lamp and light. He, the Word of God, is a great light to some, to others he is a lamp. To me he is a lamp; to angels a light. He was a light to Peter, when the angel stood by him in the prison, and the light shined about him. He was a light to Paul when the light from heaven shined round about him, and he heard Christ saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And Christ is truly a lamp to me when I speak of him with my mouth. He shineth in clay, he shineth in a potter's vessel: he is that treasure which we bear in earthen vessels. --Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp...*and a light. Except the "lamp" be lighted -- except the teaching of the Spirit accompany the word -- all is "darkness, gross darkness" still. Did we more habitually halt to receive, and watch to improve, the light of the word, we should not so often complain of the perplexity of our path. --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet*, etc. What we all want, is not to see wonders that daze us, and to be rapt in ecstatic visions and splendours, but a little light on the dark and troubled path we have to tread, a lamp that will burn steadfastly and helpfully over the work we have to do. The stars are infinitely more sublime, meteors infinitely more superb and dazzling; but the lamp shining in a dark place is infinitely closer to our practical needs. --From "The Expositor", 1864.

**Verse 105.** -- *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet*. Going two miles into a neighbourhood where very few could read, to spend an evening in reading to a company who were assembled to listen, and about to return by a narrow path through the woods, where paths diverged, I was provided with a torch of light wood, or "pitch pine." I objected; it was too small, weighing not over half a pound. "It will light you home", answered my host. I said, "The wind may blow it out." He said, "It will light you home." "But if it should rain?" I again objected. "It will light you home," he insisted.

Contrary to my fears, it gave abundant light to my path all the way home, furnishing an apt illustration, I often think, of the way in which doubting hearts would be led safely along the "narrow way." If they would take the Bible as their guide, it would be a lamp to their feet, leading to the heavenly home. One man had five objections to the Bible. If he would take it as a lamp to his feet, it would "light him home." Another told me he had two faults to find with the Bible. I answered him in the words of my good friend who furnished the torch, "It will light you home." --From "The American Messenger," 1881.

**Verse 105.** -- *A lamp unto my feet*, etc. All depends on our way of using the lamp. A man tells that when a boy he was proud to carry the lantern for his Sabbath school teacher. The way to their school led through unlit, muddy streets. The boy held the lantern far too high, and both sank in the deep mud. "Ah! you must hold the lamp lower," the teacher exclaimed, as they gained a firm footing on the farther side of the slough. The teacher then beautifully explained our text, and the man declares that

he never forgot the lesson of that night. You may easily hold the lamp too high; but you can hardly hold it too low. -- James Wells, in "Bible Images," 1882.

**Verse 105.** -- *Light.*

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom  
Lead thou me on. The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
Lead thou me on. Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene; one step enough for me. --John Henry Newman (1801).

**Verse 105-106.** -- *A light unto my path.* I have sworn, and I will perform it, etc. I have looked upon thy word as a lamp to my own feet, as a thing nearly concerning myself, and then I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. It is a mighty means to stir up a man's spirit, and quicken him to obedience, to look upon the word as written to himself, as a lamp and a light for him. When you come to hear out of God's Word, and God directs the minister so that you apprehend the truth as spoken to you, it will stir and awaken you, and you will say, "Oh me thought this day every word the minister spoke was directed to me; I must take heed thereto." And so every word in the Scripture that concerns thee God writes to thee; and if thou wilt take it so, it will be a mighty means to stir thee up to obedience. --Jeremiah Burroughs, 1599-1646.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

Verses 105-112. -- The word a lamp. For guidance ([Psalms 119:105-106](#)). For life in affliction ([Psalms 119:107](#)). For preservation in peril of enemies ([Psalms 119:109-110](#)). For joy of heart ([Ps 119:111-112](#)).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 105-108.** --

1. Illumination ([Psalms 119:105](#)).
2. Decision ([Psalms 119:106](#)).
3. Testing: "I am afflicted" ([Psalms 119:107](#)).
4. Consecration ([Psalms 119:108](#)).
5. Education: "teach me," etc. ([Psalms 119:108](#)).

**Verse 105.** -- The practical, personal, everyday use of the word of God.

**Verse 105.** -- Lamp light.

1. The believer's dangerous night journey through the world.
2. The lamp that illumines his path.
3. The eternal day towards which he travels (when the lamp will be laid aside: [Revelation 22:5](#)). -  
-C.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 106.** I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. Under the influence of the clear light of knowledge he had firmly made up his mind, and solemnly declared his resolve in the sight of God. Perhaps mistrusting his own fickle mind, he had pledged himself in sacred form to abide faithful to the determinations and decisions of his God. Whatever path might open before him, he was sworn to follow that only upon which the lamp of the word was shining. The Scriptures are God's judgments, or verdicts, upon great moral questions; these are all righteous, and hence righteous men should be resolved to keep them at all hazards, since it must always be right to do right. Experience shows that the less of covenanting and swearing men formally enter upon the better, and the genius of our Saviour's teaching is against all supererogatory pledging and swearing; and yet under the gospel we ought to feel ourselves as much bound to obey the word of the Lord as if we had taken an oath so to do. The bonds of love are not less sacred than the fetters of law. When a man has vowed he must be careful to "perform it", and when a man has not vowed in so many words to keep the Lord's judgments, yet is he equally bound to do so by obligations which exist apart from any promise on our part, -- obligations founded in the eternal fitness of things, and confirmed by the abounding goodness of the Lord our God. Will not every believer own that he is under bonds to the redeeming Lord to follow his example, and keep his words? Yes, the vows of the Lord are upon us, especially upon such as have made profession of discipleship, have been baptized into the thrice holy name, have eaten of the consecrated memorials, and have spoken in the name of the Lord Jesus: We are enlisted, and sworn ill, and are bound to be loyal soldiers all through the war. Thus having taken the word into our hearts by a firm resolve to obey it, we have a lamp within our souls as well as in the Book, and our course will be light unto the end.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 106.** -- *I have sworn*, etc. Patrick's paraphrase is, "I have solemnly resolved and bound myself by the most sacred ties, which I will never break, but do now confirm."

**Verse 106.** -- *I have sworn*. I would now urge you to make a solemn surrender of yourself unto the service of God. Do not only form such a purpose in your heart, but expressly declare it in the Divine presence. Such solemnity in the manner of doing it is certainly very reasonable in the nature of things; and sure it is highly expedient, for binding to the Lord such a treacherous heart, as we know our own to be. It will be pleasant to reflect upon it as done at such and such a time, with such and such circumstances of place and method, which may serve to strike the memory and the conscience. The sense of the vows of God which are upon you will strengthen you in an hour of temptation; and the recollection may encourage your humble boldness and freedom in applying to him under the character and relation of your covenant God and Father, as future exigencies may require.

Do it therefore, but do it deliberately. Consider what it is that you are to do: and consider how reasonable it is that it should be done, and done cordially and cheerfully, "not by constraint, but

willingly"; for in this sense, and every other, "God loveth a cheerful giver."...

Let me remind you that this surrender must be perpetual. You must give yourself up to God in such a manner, as never more to pretend to be your own; for the rights of God are like his nature, eternal and immutable; and with regard to his rational creatures, are the same yesterday, today, and for ever. I would further advise and urge, that this dedication may be made with all possible solemnity. Do it in express words. And perhaps it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious divines have recommended, to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it, "that on such a day of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration and serious reflection, you came to this happy resolution, that whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord." --Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) in "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

**Verse 106.** -- *Frequently renew settled and holy resolutions.* A soldier un-resolved to fight may easily be defeated. True and sharpened courage treads down those difficulties which would triumph over a cold and wavering spirit. Resolution in a weak man will perform more than strength in a coward. The weakness of our graces, the strength of our temptations, and the diligence of our spiritual enemies, require strong resolutions. We must be "steadfast and unmoveable," and this will make us "abound in the work of the Lord": 1 Corinthians 15:58. Abundant exercise in God's work will strengthen the habit of grace, increase our skill in the contest, and make the victory more easy and pleasant to us. Let us frame believing, humble resolutions in the strength of God's grace, with a fear of ourselves, but a confidence in God. David bound himself to God with a hearty vow, depending upon his strength: "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." This was not in his own strength, for, Psalms 119:107, he desires God to quicken him, and to "accept the freewill offerings of his mouth," Psalms 119:108, namely, the oath which proceeded from a free and resolved will. God will not slight, but strengthen the affectionate resolutions of his creature. We cannot keep ourselves from falling unless we first keep our resolutions from flagging. --Stephen Charnock.

**Verse 106.** -- *I have sworn, and I will perform it.* Theodoricus, Archbishop of Cologne, when the Emperor Sigismund demanded of him the most direct and most compendious way how to attain true happiness, made answer in brief, thus: "Perform when thou art well what thou promisedst when thou wast sick." David did so; he made vows in war, and paid them in peace; and thus should all good men do; not like the cunning devil, of whom the epigrammatist writeth:

"The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;

The devil was well, the devil a monk was he."

Nor like unto many now a days, that, if God's hand do but be somewhat heavy upon them, oh, what promises, what engagements are there for amendment of life! How like unto marble against rain do they seem to sweat and melt but still retain their hardness! Let but the rod be taken of their backs, or health restored, then, as their bodies live, their vows die; all is forgotten: nay, many times it so falleth

out, that they are far worse than ever they were before. --From John Spencer's "Things New and Old", 1658.

**Verse 106.** -- *Thy righteous judgments.* So David styles the word of God, because it judgeth most righteously between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. And, secondly, because according to the judgment given therein, God will act towards men. Let us take heed unto it; for the word contains God's judgment of men and hath a catalogue of such as shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and another of such as shall dwell in God's tabernacle; let us read and see in which of the two catalogues our two selves are; for according to that word will the judgment go. --William Cowper.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 106.** -- Decision for God, and fit modes of expressing it.

**Verse 106.** --

1. Veneration for the word.
2. Consecration to the word.
3. Fidelity to the word. --G.R.

**Verse 106.** -- Swearing and performing.

1. The usefulness of religious vows. To quicken perception; to rouse conscience; (seen in Jewish nation: Exodus 24:37 2 Chronicles 15:12-15 Nehemiah 5:28,29; in Scottish nation -- Solemn League and Covenant).
2. The danger of religious vows. A vow unfulfilled, or receded from, is a moral injury: Ec 5:4-7.
3. The safeguard of religious vows: dependence on the Spirit of God: Ezekiel 11:19-20 2Co 4:5. --C.A.D.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 107.** I am afflicted very much. According to the last verse he had been sworn in as a soldier of the Lord, and in this next verse he is called to suffer hardness in that capacity. Our service of the Lord does not screen us from trial, but rather secures it for us. The Psalmist was a consecrated man, and yet a chastened man; nor were his chastisements light; for it seemed as if the more he was obedient the more he was afflicted. He evidently felt the rod to be cutting deep, and this he pleads before the Lord. He speaks not by way of murmuring, but by way of pleading; from the very much affliction he argues for very much quickening.

Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word. This is the best remedy for tribulation; the soul is raised above the thought of present distress, and is filled with that holy joy which attends all vigorous spiritual life, and so the affliction grows light. Jehovah alone can quicken: he has life in himself, and therefore can communicate it readily; he can give us life at any moment, yea, at this present instant; for it is of the nature of quickening to be quick in its operation. The Lord has promised, prepared, and

provided this blessing of renewed life for all his waiting servants: it is a covenant blessing, and it is as obtainable as it is needful. Frequently the affliction is made the means of the quickening, even as the stirring of a fire promotes the heat of the flame. In their affliction some desire death, let us pray for life. Our foreboding under trial are often very gloomy, let us entreat the Lord to deal with us, not according to our fears, but according to his own word. David had but few promises to quote, and probably these were in his own psalms, yet he pleads the word of the Lord; how much more should we do so, since to us so many holy men have spoken by the Spirit of the Lord in that wonderful library which is now our Bible. Seeing we have more promises, let us offer more prayers.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 107.** -- *I am afflicted very much*, etc. Whence learn,

1. It is no strange thing for the most holy men to be acquainted with the saddest sort of affliction, bodily and spiritual: "I am afflicted very much."
2. From whence soever affliction doth come, faith goeth to God only for comfort, as here: "Quicken me, O Lord."
3. When God is pleased to make the word of promise lively, or to perform what the promise alloweth us to expect, such a consolation is a sufficient antidote to the heaviest affliction: "Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word." --David Dickson.

**Verse 107.** -- *I am a afflicted very much*. We can recommend so persuasively the cheerful drinking of the cup of sorrow when in the hand of others, but what wry faces we make when it is put into our own. --Alfred John Morris, 1814-1869.

**Verse 107.** -- *I am afflicted...* quicken me. The Christian lives in the midst of crosses, as the fish lives in the sea. --Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney, 1786-1859.

**Verse 107.** -- *Quicken me*, O Lord. How doth God quicken us? By reviving our suffering graces, such as our hope, patience, and faith. Thus he puts life into us again, that we may go on cheerfully in our service, by infusion of new comforts. He revives the heart of his contrite ones, so the prophet saith ([Isaiah 57:15](#)). This is very necessary, for the Psalmist saith elsewhere, "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name" ([Psalms 80:18](#)). Discomfort and discouragement weaken our hands in calling upon God. Until the Lord cheers us again we have no life in prayer. By two things especially doth God quicken us in affliction, by reviving our sense of his love, and by reviving our hope of glory. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 107.** -- *According unto thy word*. David goes often over with that phrase, which imports that David lay under the sense of some promise which God had made for the quickening of his heart when it was out of frame, and accordingly he recounts the gracious influences of God's Spirit, and professes that he will never forget his precepts, because by them he had quickened him: [Psalms 119:93](#).

Thus, lay your dead hearts at Christ's feet, and plead in this manner: Lord, my heart is exceedingly dull and distracted; I feel not those enlarging, melting influences which thy saints have felt; but are they not chief material mercies of the covenant? dost thou not promise a spirit of illumination, conviction, and humiliation? is not holiness of heart and life a main branch of it? dost thou not promise therein to write thy law in my heart? to give me oneness of heart, to put thy fear within me, to subdue my corruptions, to help my infirmities in prayer? Now, Lord, these are the mercies my soul wants and waits for, fill my soul with these animating influences, revive thy work of grace in my soul, draw out my heart towards thee, increase my affection for thee, repair thine image, call forth grace into lively exercise. Doth not that gracious word intend such a mercy when thou sayest thou wilt not only give a new heart, but "put a new spirit within me" ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)), to make my soul lively, active, and spiritual in duties and exercises? Dear Lord, am not I in covenant with thee? and are not these covenant mercies? why, then, my God, is my heart thus hardened from thy fear? why dost thou leave me in all this deadness and distraction? Remember thy word unto thy servant in which thou hast caused me to hope, and which thou hast helped me to plead; O quicken my dull heart according to thy word. -- Oliver Heywood.

**Verse 107.** -- *According unto thy word.* David, when he begs for quickening, he is encouraged so to do by a promise. The question is, where this promise should be? Some think it was that general promise of the law, if thou do these things, thou shalt live in them ([Leviticus 18:5](#)), and that from thence David drew this particular conclusion, that God would give life to his people. But rather, it was some other promise, some word of God he had, to bear him out in this request. The Lord has made many promises to us of sanctifying our affliction. The fruit of all shall be the taking away of sin ([Isaiah 27:9](#)); of bettering and improving us by it ([Hebrews 4:10](#)), of moderating our affliction, that he will stay his rough wind in the day of the east wind ([Isaiah 27:8](#)); that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)). He hath promised he will moderate our affliction, so that we shall not be tempted above our strength. He hath promised he will deliver us from it, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the lot of the righteous ([Psalms 125:3](#)); that he will be with us in it, and never fail us ([Hebrews 13:5](#)). Now, I argue thus: if the people of God could stay their hearts upon God's word, when they had but such obscure hints to work upon that we do not know where the promise lies, ah! how should our hearts be stayed upon God, when we have so many promises! When the Scriptures are enlarged for the comfort and enlarging of our faith, surely we should say now as Paul, when he got a word, "I believed God" ([Acts 27:25](#)); I may expect God will do thus for me, when his word speaks it everywhere. --Thomas Manton.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 107.** --

1. A good man greatly afflicted.

2. A sure cure for the ills of affliction: "Quicken me."
3. A safe rule to pray by when afflicted: "according unto thy word."

**Verse 107.** --

1. The "very much" afflicted.
  - (a) The world has such -- widows, orphans, etc., etc.
  - (b) Most take their turn.
    1. But there is "very much" grace.
      - (a) God's word promises the needed quickening.
      - (b) Himself very much greater than all our needs.
      - (c) Christ died "in all points" has all help.
        1. Therefore bring "very much" faith, as the Psalmist here.
          - (a) Keen eyed for promises.
          - (b) Fervent in pleading them.
          - (c) Strong in expectation. --W.B.H.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 108.** Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord. The living praise the living God, and therefore the quickened one presents his sacrifice. He offers prayer, praise, confession, and testimony -- these, presented with his voice in the presence of an audience, were the tribute of his mouth unto Jehovah. He trembles lest these should be so ill uttered as to displease the Lord, and therefore he implores acceptance. He pleads that the homage of his mouth was cheerfully and spontaneously rendered; all his utterances were freewill offerings. There can be no value in extorted confessions: God's revenues are not derived from forced taxation, but from freewill donation. There can be no acceptance where there is no willingness; there is no work of free grace where there is no fruit of free will. Acceptance is a favour to be sought from the Lord with all earnestness, for without it our offerings are worse than useless. What a wonder of grace that the Lord will accept anything of such unworthy ones as we are!

And teach me thy judgments. When we render unto the Lord our best, we become all the more concerned to do better. If, indeed, the Lord shall accept us, we then desire to be further instructed, that we may be still more acceptable, After quickening we need teaching: life without light, or zeal without knowledge, would be but half a blessing. These repeated cries for teaching show the humility of the man of God, and also discover to us our own need of similar instruction. Our judgment needs educating till it knows, agrees with, and acts upon, the judgments of the Lord. Those judgments are not always so clear as to be seen at once; we need to be taught in them till we admire their wisdom and adore their goodness as soon as ever we perceive them.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 108.** -- *The freewill offerings of the mouth*, may be the offerings which the mouth had promised and vowed. And who can lay claim to these as the Lord? His are all things. --John Stephen.

**Verse 108.** -- *The freewill offerings of my mouth*. This place makes known that species of sacrifices, which neither tribulations nor poverty of means can hinder, and which does not require an external temple, but in desert places and among heathen may be offered by a godly man. And these sacrifices of the mouth God himself makes more of than if all the flocks of the whole earth had been offered to him, and all the treasures of gold, and of silver, and of precious stones. --Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 108.-- Freewill offerings.** *This expression is often used in the law (Leviticus 22:18 Nu 29:39 1 Chronicles 31:14 Amos 1:4-5).* What are these freewill offerings? They are distinguished from God's stated worship, and distinguished from that service which fell under a vow. Besides the stated peace offerings, there were certain sacrifices performed upon certain occasions, to testify God's general goodness, and upon receipt of some special mercy; and you will find these sacrifices to be expressly distinguished from such services as men bound themselves to by vow (Leviticus 7:16)... These serve to teach us two things.

First. They are to teach us how ready we should be to take all occasions of thankfulness and spiritual worship; for, besides their vowed services and instituted sacrifices, they had their freewill offerings, offered to God in thankfulness for some special blessing received, or for deliverance from danger.

Secondly. It shows with what voluntariness and cheerfulness we should go about God's worship in the Gospel, and what a free disposition of heart there should be, and edge upon our affections, in all things that we offer to God; in this latter sense our offerings to God -- prayer and praise should be freewill offerings, come from us not like water out of a still forced by the fire, but like water out of a fountain with native freeness, readily and freely. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 108.** -- *Offerings*. All God's people are made priests unto God; for every offering supposes a priest: so it is said, that Christ Jesus hath made us kings and priests (Revelation 1:6). All Christians have a communion with Christ in all his offices, whatever Christ was, that certainly they are in some measure and degree. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 108.** -- *Accept...*the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord. It is a great grace that the Lord should accept anything from us, if we consider these three things: First, who the Lord is; next, what we are; thirdly, what it is we have to give unto him.

As for the Lord, he is all sufficient, and stands in need of nothing we can give him. Our goodness extends not to the Lord

As for us, we are poor creatures, living by his liberality; yea, begging from all the rest of his creatures; from the sun and moon; from the air, the water, and the earth; from fowls and fishes; yea, from the

worms: some give us light, some meat, some clothes; and are such beggars as we meet to give to a king?

And, thirdly, if we well consider, What is it that we give? Have we anything to give but that which we have received from him? and whereof we may say with David, "O Lord, all things are of thee, and of thine own have we given thee again" (1 Chronicles 29:14). Let this humble us, and restrain us from that vain conceit of meriting at God's hand.

David at this time, in his great necessity, having no other sacrifice to offer unto the Lord, offers him the calves of his lips; but no doubt, when he might, he offered more.

There is nothing so small, but if it come from a good heart, God will accept it: the widow's mite, a cup of cold water; yea, and the praise of our lips, although it has no other external oblation joined with it: but where men may do more, and will not, it is an argument that their heart is not sincerely affected toward him, and their praises are not welcome to him. --William Cowper.

**Verse 108.** -- *Accept...*the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. Two things we are here taught to pray for in reference to our religious performances.

1. Acceptance of them: this we must aim at in all we do in religion, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of the Lord. That which David here earnestly prays for the acceptance of is "the freewill offerings," not of his purse, but of his "mouth," his prayers and praises; "the calves of our lips" (Hosea 14:2); "the fruit of our lips" (Heb 13:15); these are the spiritual offerings which all Christians, as spiritual priests, must offer to God; and they must be "freewill offerings;" for we must offer them abundantly and cheerfully; and it is this willing mind that is accepted. The more there is of freeness and willingness in the service of God, the more pleasing it is to him.
2. Assistance in them: "Teach me thy judgments." We cannot offer any thing to God which we have reason to think he will accept of, but what he is pleased to instruct us in the doing of; and we must be as earnest for the grace of God in us as for the favour of God toward us. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 108.** -- *Teach me thy judgments.* As if the man of God should say, This is one thing whereunto I will give over myself, even to see how thou dost punish the wicked, and conduct thy children. So that we must learn, that as it is necessary to understand the law and the gospel, so is it requisite to discern God's judgments. For as we cannot learn the one without observing God's mercy; so we cannot attain to the other without marking his vengeance. We must see always by the peculiar teaching of God's Spirit, how the Lord punishes in justice, and yet in mercy; in wrath, and yet in love; in rigour and hatred of our sin, humbling us with one hand; in pity and compassion to our salvation, comforting us with the other hand. We see then how the prophet prayeth, both to see them and to mark them: we need teach this often, because we dream so much of fatal necessity, and of the

connections of natural causes, or else because we call not discern between the crosses of the godly and the ungodly. This is then a singular gift of God, to discern how by the self same means the Lord both humbleth the good and overthroweth the wicked. -- Richard Greenham.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 108.** -- Consider, --

1. The instructive title given to prayer and praise: "The free will offerings of my mouth."
  - a. It shows the believer to be a priest: "offerings."
- (b) It shows the peculiarity of his service: "free will."
- (c) It implies wholehearted consecration.

1. The humility portrayed in the prayer: "Accept, I beseech thee."

- (a) Here is no pharisaic boasting.
- (b) Even the free will offering is felt to need an "I beseech thee."

1. The longing desire for further instruction in order to a more perfect obedience: "Teach me thy judgments." --J.P.

**Verse 108.** -- Free will seeking free grace. --W.D.

**Verse 108.** -- Work for "Free willers".

1. Offerings of Prayer -- for each of the blessings of salvation.
2. Offerings of Repudiation -- of all claim to unassisted good.
3. Offerings of Praise -- for sovereign grace. --W.B.H.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 109.** My soul is continually in my hand. He lived in the midst of danger. He had to be always fighting for existence -- hiding in caves, or contending in battles. This is a very uncomfortable and trying state of affairs, and men are apt to think any expedient justifiable by which they can end such a condition: but David did not turn aside to find safety in am, for he says,

Yet do I not forget thy law. They say that all things are fair in love and war; but the holy man thought not so: while he carried his life in his hand, he also carried the law in his heart. No danger of body should make us endanger our souls by forgetting that which is right. Trouble makes many a man forget his duty, and it would have had the same effect upon the Psalmist if he had not obtained quickening ([Psalms 119:107](#)) and teaching ([Ps 119:108](#)). In his memory of the Lord's law lay his safety; he was certain not to be forgotten of God, for God was not forgotten of him. It is a special proof of grace when nothing can drive truth out of our thoughts, or holiness out of our lives. If we remember the law even when death stares us in the face, we may be well assured that the Lord is remembering us.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 109.** -- *My soul is continually in my hand.* He had his soul in his hand, ready to give whenever God should take it. And this is to be observed, that there is no trouble so ready to take away the life of God's children, as they are ready to give it. As Elijah came out to the mouth of his cave to meet with the Lord; and Abraham in the door of his tent to speak to the angel; so the soul of the godly stands ready in the door of the tabernacle of this body to remove when the Lord shall command it; whereas the soul of the wicked lies back, hiding itself, as Adam among the bushes, and is taken out of the body perforce; as was the soul of that worldling; "This night thy soul shall be required of thee;" but they never sacrifice their souls willingly to the Lord. --William Cowper.

**Verse 109.** -- *My soul is continually in my hand.* If any one carry in the hand a fragile vessel, made of glass or any other similar material, filled with a precious liquor, especially if the hand be weak, or if from other causes dangers be threatening, he will scarcely be able to avoid the breaking of the vessel and the running out of the liquor. Such is the condition of my life, which I, set upon by various enemies, carry as it were in my hand; which, therefore, is exposed to such great danger, as that I always have death present before my sight, my life hanging on the slenderest thread. --Andreas Rivetus, 1572-1651.

**Verse 109.** -- *My soul is continually in my hand.* The believer is always in the very jaws of death. He lives with wings outstretched to fly away. Paul testified, "I die daily." In the extremity of persecution, the fervent desire was to know what God would have him to do. --Henry Law.

**Verse 109.** -- *My soul is continually in my hand.* I make no more of life than a child doth of his bird which he carrieth in the palm of his hand held open. --John Trapp.

**Verse 109.** -- *My soul is continually in my hand, etc.* Why doth David say, "My soul is in mine hand"; had he called it out of the hand of God, and taken the care of it upon himself? Nothing less. His meaning is only this, -- I walk in the midst of dangers and among a thousand deaths continually; I am in deaths often, my life is exposed to perils every day, yet do I not forget thy law: I keep close to thee, and will keep close to thee whatsoever comes of it. Augustine upon that place doth ingeniously confess that he understood not what David meant, by having his soul in his hands; but Jerome, another of the ancients, teacheth us, that it is an Hebraism, signifying a state of most extreme peril. The Greeks also have drawn it into a proverb speaking the same thing.

But why doth the holding or putting the life in the hand signify the exposing of the life to peril? There is a twofold reason of it.

First. Because those things which are carried openly in the hand are apt to fall out of the hand, and being carried in sight, they are apt to be snatched or wrested out of the hand. And, therefore, though to be in the hand of God signifies safety, because his hand is armed with irresistible power to protect us; yet for a man to carry a thing in his own hand is to carry it in danger, because his hand is weak,

and there are safer ways of carrying or conveying a thing than openly in the hand. If a man be to ride a long journey with any treasure about him, he doth not carry it in his hand, but puts it in some secret and close place where it may be hidden, and so be more secure. The Chaldee paraphrast, to express the elegancy of that place forecited out of the Psalm, gives it thus, "My life is in as much danger as if it stood upon the very superficies or outside of my hand," as if he had no hold of it, but it stood barely upon his hand; for that which is set upon the palm of the hand, and not grasped, is in greater danger. Things safe kept are hidden or held fast.

Secondly. There is another reason of that speech, because when a man is about to deliver a thing or to give it up, he takes it in his hand. They that put themselves upon great perils and dangers for God and his people, deliver up their lives and their all to God. Hence that counsel of the Apostle (1 Peter 4:19): "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." So here, the life of men in danger is said to be put in the hand, because such are, as it were, ready to deliver and commit their lives unto God, that he would take care of their lives to preserve them from the danger, or to take them to himself if they lose them in his service. --Joseph Caryl.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 109.** -- The soul's life in jeopardy. The life of the soul secured.

**Verse 109-110.** -- Here is, --

1. David in danger of losing his life. There is but a step between him and death; for "the wicked have laid a snare" for him. Wherever he was he found some design or other laid against him; which made him say, "My soul is continually in my hand." It was not so only as a man -- it is true of us all that we are exposed to the strokes of death -- but as a man of war, and especially as "a man after God's own heart."
2. David in no danger of losing his religion through this peril; for,
  - (a) He "doth not forget the law," and therefore is likely to persevere.
  - (b) He hath not yet erred from God's precepts, and therefore it is to be hoped he will not. --M. Henry.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 110.** The wicked have laid a snare for me. Spiritual life is the scene of constant danger: the believer lives with his life in his hand, and meanwhile all seem plotting to take it from him, by cunning if they cannot by violence. We shall not find it an easy thing to live the life of the faithful. Wicked spirits and wicked men will leave no stone unturned for our destruction. If all other devices fail, and even hidden pits do not succeed, the wicked still persevere in their treacherous endeavours, and,

becoming craftier still, they set snares for the victim of their hate. The smaller species of game are usually taken by this method, by gin, or trap, or net, or noose. Wicked men are quite indifferent as to the manner in which they can destroy the good man -- they think no more of him than if he were a rabbit or a rat: cunning and treachery are always the allies of malice, and everything like a generous or chivalrous feeling is unknown among the graceless, who treat the godly as if they were vermin to be exterminated. When a man knows that he is thus assailed, he is too apt to become timorous, and rush upon some hasty device for deliverance, not without sin in the endeavour; but David calmly kept his way, and was able to write,

Yet I erred not from thy precepts. He was not snared, for he kept his eyes open, and kept near his God. He was not entrapped and robbed, for he followed the King's highway of holiness, where God secures safety to every traveller. He did not err from the right, and he was not deterred from following it, because he referred to the Lord for guidance, and obtained it. If we err from the precepts, we part with the promises; if we get away from God's presence, we wander into the wilds where the fowlers freely spread their nets. From this verse let us learn to be on our guard, for we, too, have enemies both crafty and wicked. Hunters set their traps in the animals usual runs, and our worst snares are laid in our own ways. By keeping to the ways of the Lord we shall escape the snares of our adversaries, for his ways are safe and free from treachery.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 110.** -- *The wicked.* He calls them wicked men; which imports three things. First, they work wickedness. Secondly, they love it. Thirdly, they persevere in it. -- William Cowper.

**Verse 110.** -- *A snare.* One manner of catching wild animals, such as lions, bears, jackals, foxes, hart, roebuck, and fallow deer, was by a trap (paeh), which is the word used in this place; this was set under ground (Job 18:10), in the run of the animal (Proverbs 22:5), and caught it by the leg (Job 18:9). --William Latham Bevan, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 1863.

**Verse 110.** -- *The wicked have laid a snare for me.* In eating, he sets before us gluttony; in love he impels to lust; in labour, sluggishness; in conversing, envy; in governing, covetousness; in correcting, anger; in honour, pride; in the heart, he sets evil thoughts; in the mouth evil words; in actions, evil works; when awake, he moves us to evil actions; when asleep, to filthy dreams. --Girolamo Savonarola, 1452- 1498.

**Verse 110.** -- *Laid a snare for me: yet I erred not,* etc. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite. --Thomas Watson.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 110.** -- Various kinds of snares, and the one way of escaping them.

**Verse 110.** -- Consider, --

1. Some of the snares set for saints by sinners.

- (a) Doctrinal snares, by intellectual sinners.
- (b) False accusations, by malignant sinners.
- (c) False flatteries, by deceitful sinners.
- (d) False charity, by a large number of sinners nowadays.
  - 1. The secure safeguard for a saint's safety: "I erred not from thy precepts." Obedience to God gives security, because --
    - a. The snares are then suspected and watched against.
  - (b) The feet cannot become entangled by them.
  - (c) God keeps him who keeps his word. --J.F.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 111.** Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever. He chose them as his lot, his portion, his estate; and what is more, he laid hold upon them and made them so, -- taking them into possession and enjoyment. David's choice is our choice. If we might have our desire, we would desire to keep the commands of God perfectly. To know the doctrine, to enjoy the promise, to practise the command, -- be this a kingdom large enough for me. Here we have an inheritance which cannot fade and cannot be alienated; it is for ever, and ours for ever, if we have so taken it. Sometimes, like Israel at the first coming into Canaan, we have to take our heritage by hard fighting, and, if so, it is worthy of all our labour and suffering; but always it has to be taken by a decided choice of the heart and grip of the will. What God gives we must take.

For they are the rejoicing of my heart. The gladness which had come to him through the word of the Lord had caused him to make an unalterable choice of it. All the parts of Scripture had been pleasing to David, and were so still and therefore he stuck to them, and meant to stick to them for ever. That which rejoices the heart is sure to be chosen and treasured. It is not the head knowledge but the heart experience which brings the joy.

In this verse, which is the seventh of its octave, we have reached the same sweetness as in the last seventh (Psalms 119:103): indeed, in several of the adjoining sevenths, delight is evident. How good a thing it is when experience ripens into joy, passing up through sorrow, prayer, conflict, hope, decision, and holy content into rejoicing! Joy fixes the spirit: when once a man's heart rejoices in the divine word, he greatly values it, and is for ever united to it.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 111.** -- *Thy testimonies have I taken*, etc. The Scripture is called "testimonies" in respect to God himself, because it doth give a testimony to him, and makes God known to us: it gives a testimony of all those attributes that are himself, of his wisdom, of his power, of his justice, of his goodness, of his truth. The declaration of these, we have them all in the various books of the

Scriptures: there is never a book, but there is a testification of these attributes. In the book of Genesis we have a testimony of his power in making the world, of his justice in drowning the world, and of his goodness in saving Noah. In the book of Exodus, we have a testimony of his providence in leading the people of Israel through the Red Sea, in bringing them out of Egypt; we have a testimony of his wisdom in giving them his law. What should I name more? In the New Testament, in the Gospel, all is testimony. As the Old gave testimony to God, so the New to Christ: "To him gave all the prophets witness"; not only the Old, but the New: "These are they that testify of me." Everywhere there is testimony of Christ, -- of his humility, in taking our nature; of his power, in working miracles; of his wisdom, in the parables that he spoke; of his patience and love, in the torments that he suffered for us. Both Law and Gospel -- the whole book of Scripture, and every part of it in these regards is fitly called "the testimonies of the Lord." And the holy Psalmist made choice of this name when he was to speak to the honour and glory of it; because it was that name from which he sucked a great deal of comfort, because it was the testimony of God's truth and goodness and wisdom and power to him; thereupon he makes so precious esteem of it as to account it his "heritage." -- Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649), in "The Valley of Vision."

**Verse 111.** -- *Thy testimonies.* By "testimonies" is meant the covenant between God and his people; wherein he bindeth himself to them, and them to him. Some think that the excellency of the word is here set out by many names; but we must look to the propriety of every word: as before by "judgments," so by this word "testimonies," is meant the covenant: not the commandments, because they cannot be an inheritance, for they cannot comfort us, because we cannot fulfil them, but fail in them, and cannot therefore take comfort in them. It is the gospel that bringeth peace and comfort. "The law," when it is taken generally, containeth all the word, particularly the commandments; so "the word" generally containeth both law and gospel, but particularly the promises, as Rom. 10. So likewise by the "testimonies," when they are opposed to the law, is meant the promises of the covenant, as Isaiah 8, and this testimony is confirmed to us by the sacraments, as to them by sacrifices. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 111.** -- *As an heritage.* Why the divine testimonies should be called by the Psalmist an inheritance; why he brings them within the compass of this notion, may not So easily be understood; for the word of God points out the inheritance, but it is not the inheritance itself. Yes, there is good reason to be given for the expression, were there no more than this, that we consider the inestimable comfort, and heavenly treasure that is to be found in the word of God; it is a rich mine of all celestial treasure, it is a storehouse of all good things, of all saving knowledge. All privileges whatsoever they are that we can expect on earth or heaven, they are all contained in the word of God: here is ground enough why it is called an inheritance; he hath a good heritage that hath all these.

Yet there is a better reason than this; for if it be so that heaven is our inheritance, then the word of



God is; because it is the word that points out heaven, that gives the assurance of heaven: we have in the word of God all the evidences of heaven. Whatsoever title any saint hath to heaven, he hath it in and out of the word of God. There are the evidences in the word of God; both the evidence of discovery, it is the holy terrier of the celestial Canaan, and the evidence of assurance, it is as a sacred bond or indenture between God and his creature. St. Gregory said wittily, when he called it God's epistle that he sent to man for the declaration of his will and pleasure, he might as well have called it God's deed of gift, whereby he makes over and conveys to us all those hopes that we look for in heaven. Whatsoever interest we have in God, in Christ, whatsoever hope of bliss and glory, whatsoever comfort of the Spirit, whatsoever proportion of grace, all are made over to us in the promises of the gospel, in the word of God.

Now put this together, look as in human affairs, evidences, though they be not properly the inheritance itself, yet they are called the inheritance, and are the inheritance, though not actually, yet virtually so; because all the title we have to an inheritance is in the deeds and evidences; therefore evidences are precious things. Though it be but a piece of paper, or parchment full of dust and worm eaten, yet it is as much worth sometimes as a county, as much worth as all a man's possessions besides. So likewise it is with the Scriptures; they are not actually and properly the inheritance itself, but they are via, the way to the kingdom. It is called the gospel of the kingdom, nay more, the kingdom itself: "The kingdom of God is come among you," or "to you". Why the kingdom? Why the inheritance? By the same reason, both, because here we have the conveyance, here we have the deed, here we have the assurance of whatsoever title or claim we make to heaven. --Richard Holdsworth.

**Verse 111.** -- *They are the rejoicing of my heart.* He saith not that God's testimonies bring joy, but that they are joy; there is no other joy but the delight in the law of the Lord. For all other joy, the wise king said of laughter, "thou art mad," and of joy, "what is it that thou dost?" Ecclesiastes 6. True joy is the earnest which we have of heaven, it is the treasure of the soul, and therefore should be laid up in a safe place; and nothing in this world is safe to place it in. And therefore with the spouse we say, "We will be glad in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." Let others seek their joy in wine, in society, in conversation, in music; for me, thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. These indeed are the precious fruits of the earth, but they seal not up special favour; a man may have together with them, an empty, husky, and chaffy soul. And therefore these are not the joys of the saints; they must have God, or else they die for sorrow; his law is their life. --Abraham Wright.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 111.** --

1. Estate.

2. Entering upon it.
3. Entail upon it.
4. Enjoyment of it.

**Verse 111.** -- Notice, --

1. How rich the Psalmist was determined to be: "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage."

Rich, --

- a. In knowledge.

(b) In holiness.

(c) In comfort.

(d) In companionship, for God's company goes with his word.

(e) In hope.

1. How he clung to his wealth: "For ever."

(a) He hurt none by so doing; he could give generously his portion, and yet not waste.

(b) He was right; for he had the only wealth of which an everlasting possession is possible.

(c) He was wise.

1. How he rejoiced in his wealth: "They are the rejoicing of my heart."

- a. Here is internal and deep joy; not always possible to the possession of wealth.

(b) Pure, unalloyed joy; it is never so with other wealth.

(c) Safe joy; other joy is dangerous.

(d) Unloseable joy. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 112.** I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end. He was not half inclined to virtue, but heartily inclined to it. His whole heart was bent on practical, persevering godliness. He was resolved to keep the statutes of the Lord with all his heart, throughout all his time, without erring or ending. He made it his end to keep the law unto the end, and that without end. He had by prayer, and meditation, and resolution made his whole being lean towards God's commands; or as we should say in other words -- the grace of God had inclined him to incline his heart in a sanctified direction. Many are inclined to preach, but the Psalmist was inclined to practise; many are inclined to perform ceremonies, but he was inclined to perform statutes; many are inclined to obey occasionally, but David would obey alway; and, alas, many are inclined for temporary religion, but this godly man was bound for eternity, he would perform the statutes of his Lord and King even unto

the end. Lord, send us such a heavenly inclination of heart as this: then shall we show that thou hast quickened and taught us. To this end create in us a clean heart, and daily renew a right spirit within us, for only so shall we incline in the right direction.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 112.** -- *I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway*, etc. In the former verse he showed his faith, and his joy which came thereof; now he showeth that here in this joy he will keep the commandments; whereby he showeth that this was a true joy, because it wrought a care to do good. For if we believe the promises truly, then we also love the commandments, otherwise faith is vain; a care to live a godly life nourisheth faith in God's promises. Here is the cause then why many regard not the word and sacraments; or if they do a little, it is to no purpose, because they labour not to keep the commandments. For unless they have care to do this, the word of God to them cannot be profitable, nor the sacraments sacred. --Richard Greenham.

**Verse 112.** -- *I have inclined my heart to perform*, etc. Observe. In Psalms 119:36 he prayed to God, saying, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." And here he speaks about himself, saying, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway even unto the end." What need, then, was there to ask from God that which he in another place glories to have done himself? I answer: These things are not contrary the one to the other. God inclines, and the godly man inclines. Man inclines by striving; God inclines by effecting. Neither is that which the man attempts, nor that which he by striving achieves goodwards, from the man, but from God, who gives, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure:" Philippians 2:13. --Wolfgang Musculus.

**Verse 112.** -- *The sinful heart of itself will run any way; upon earthly things*, upon evil things, or upon impertinent and unseasonable things; but it will not come to or keep upon that which it should mind; therefore it must be taken as by strong hand, and set upon spiritual things, set on musing and meditation of heavenly things. A carnal heart is like the loadstone, it cleaves to nothing but steel or iron, and both of them easily unite: but the heart must be of another property, and act in a higher way. And a good heart, though it thinks too much earthward, and runs often wrong, yet it will set itself in its thinking on right objects, and make itself and them to meet and unite. David tells us how he did; he inclined his heart to God's commandments, both to keep them and to meditate on them. He took and bent his heart, as a thing bending too much to other things; set his mind on musing on it. He found his heart and the law of God too far asunder, and so would continue, unless he brought them together and made them one. If he had not brought his heart to the word, he had never meditated: the object cannot apply itself to the mind, but the mind must bring itself to the object. No holy duties will come to us, we must come to them. --Nathanael Ranew, in "Solitude Improved by Divine Meditation," 1670.

**Verse 112.** -- *I have inclined mine heart to perform*, etc. In this work he was determined to continue.

1. "I have inclined my heart." The counsel of the soul is like a balance; and the mind, which hath

the commanding power over the affections, inclines the balance to that which it judges best.

2. It was to perform it that he thus inclined his heart.
3. And this not for a time, or some particular occasion, but always, and unto the end. Then the end of life would be the beginning of glory. --Adam Clarke.

**Verse 112.** -- *I have inclined my heart.* The prophet, in order briefly to define what it is to serve God, asserts that he applied not only his hands, eyes, or feet, to the keeping of the law, but that he began with the affection of the heart. --John Calvin.

**Verse 112.** -- *Unto the end.* Our life on earth is a race; in vain begins he to run swiftly, that fainteth, and gives over before he come to the end. And this was signified (saith Gregory) when in the law the tail of the beast was sacrificed with the rest: perseverance crowneth all. It is good we have begun to do well; let us also strive to persevere to the end. -- William Cowper.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 112-113.** -- *When David had an inclination in his heart to God's statutes,* the immediate effect of it was to "hate vain thoughts." We read, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes"; and it follows, "I hate vain thoughts." The vanity of his heart was a burden to him. A new creature is as careful against wickedness in the head or heart, as in the life. A godly man would be purer in the sight of God than in the view of man. He knows none but God can see the wanderings of his heart or the thoughts of his head, yet he is as careful that sins should not rise up as that they should not break out. -- Stephen Charnock.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 112.** -- Heart leanings. Personality, pressure, inclination, performance, constancy, perpetuity.

Verse 112. -- The godly man's obedience.

1. Its reality

(a) "To perform"; not words or feelings merely; but deeds.

(b) "Thy statutes"; not human inventions, nor self conceits, nor conventional maxims.

1. Its cordiality: "inclined my heart."

(a) Heart inclination is requisite for pleasing a heart searching God.

(b) And to make obedience easy and even delightful.

(c) "I have," he says; was it therefore his doing? Yes. Was it his work alone No. See [Psalms 119:36](#).

(d) The proofs.

1. Universality: "statutes," the whole of them.
2. Uniformity: "always."

□ Its constancy: "even unto the end."

(a) Though a man should be cautious when planning for the future, yet this life long purpose is right, wise, and safe.

(b) Nor can he purpose less, if holy fervency fill the heart.

(c) It is no more than what God and consistency demand. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 113.** I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. In this paragraph the Psalmist deals with thoughts and things and persons which are the opposite of God's holy thoughts and ways. He is evidently in great fear of the powers of darkness, and of their allies, and his whole soul is stirred up to stand against them with a determined opposition. Just as he began the octave, Psalms 119:97, with "O how I love thy law," so here he begins with a declaration of hatred against that which breaks the law. The opposite of the fixed and infallible law of God is the wavering, changing opinion of men: David had an utter contempt and abhorrence for this; all his reverence and regard went to the sure word of testimony. In proportion to his love to the law was his hate of man's inventions. The thoughts of men are vanity; but the thoughts of God are verity. We hear much in these days of "men of thought," "thoughtful preachers," and "modern thought": what is this but the old pride of the human heart? Vain man would be wise. The Psalmist did not glory in his thoughts; and that which was called "thought" in his day was a thing which he detested. When man thinks his best his highest thoughts are as far below those of divine revelation as the earth is beneath the heavens. Some of our thoughts are specially vain in the sense of vain glory, pride, conceit, and self trust; others in the sense of bringing disappointment, such as fond ambition, sinful dreaming, and confidence in man; others in the sense of emptiness and frivolity, such as the idle thoughts and vacant romancing in which so many indulge; and, yet once more, too many of our thoughts are vain in the sense of being sinful, evil, and foolish. The Psalmist is not indifferent to evil thoughts as the careless are; but upon them he looks with a hate as true as was the love with which he clung to the pure thoughts of God.

The last octave was practical, this is thoughtful; there the man of God attended to his feet, and here to his heart: the emotions of the soul are as important as the acts of the life, for they are the fountain and spring from which the actions proceed. When we love the law it becomes a law of love, and we cling to it with our whole heart.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 113.** -- *I hate vain thoughts or, the evil devices; or, the double hearted imaginations; or, the intermeddling, counter coursing thoughts: that is to say, that kind of practice of some men, that sail*

with every wind, and seek still to have two strings to their bow. The Hebrew word doth properly signify boughs Or branches, which shoot up perplexedly or confusedly in a tree. --Theodore Haak, 1618-1657.

**Verse 113.** -- *I hate vain thoughts.* In those vacant hours which are spared from business, pleasure, company, and sleep, and which are spent in solitude, at home or abroad; unprofitable, proud, covetous, sensual, envious, or malicious imaginations, occupy the minds of ungodly men, and often infect their very dreams. These are not only sinful in themselves, indicating the state of their hearts, and as such will be brought into the account at the day of judgment; but they excite the dormant corruptions, and lead to more open and gross violations of the holy law. The carnal mind welcomes and delights to dwell upon these congenial imaginations, and to solace itself by ideal indulgences, when opportunity of other gratification is not presented, or when a man dares not commit the actual transgression. But the spiritual mind recoils at them; such thoughts will intrude from time to time, but they are unwelcome and distressing, and are immediately thrust out; while other subjects, from the word of God, are stored up in readiness to occupy the mind more profitably and pleasantly during the hours of leisure and retirement. There is no better test of our true character, than the habitual effect of "vain thoughts" upon our minds -- whether we love and indulge them, or abhor, and watch and pray against them. -- Thomas Scott, 1747-1821.

**Verse 113.** -- *I hate vain thoughts,* A godly man may have roving thoughts in duty. Sad experience proves this; the thoughts will be dancing up and down in prayer. The saints are called stars; but many times in duty they are wandering stars. The heart is like quicksilver which will not fix. It is hard to tie two good thoughts together; we cannot lock our hearts so close, but that distracting thoughts, like wind, will get in. Hierom complains of himself; "Sometimes," saith he, "when I am about God's service, I am walking in the galleries, or casting up accounts." But these wandering thoughts are not allowed: "I hate vain thoughts," they come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied, but turned out of doors. --Thomas Watson.

**Verse 113.** -- *I hate.* Every dislike of evil is not sufficient; but perfect hatred is required of us against all sorts and degrees of sin. --David Dickson.

**Verse 113.** -- *Vain thoughts.* The word is used for the opinions of men; and may be applied to all heterodox opinions, human doctrines, damnable heresies; such as are inconsistent with the perfections of God, derogate from his grace, and from the son and offices of Christ; and are contrary to the word, and which are therefore rejected and abhorred by good men. --John Gill.

**Verse 113.** -- *Vain thoughts.* Hebrew, "sedphim", halting between two opinions. See 1Ki 18:21. Hence it signifies sceptical doubts. --Christopher Wordsworth.

**Verse 113.** -- *Vain thoughts.* Our thoughts are set upon trifles and frivolous things, neither tending to our own profit nor the benefit of others: "The heart of the wicked is little worth;" all their debates,

conceits, musings, are of no value: for all their thoughts are taken up about childish vanity and foolish conceits. "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Proverbs 24:9); not only the thought of wickedness, but foolishness. Thoughts are the firstborn of the soul, the immediate issues of the mind; yet we lavish them away upon every trifle. Follow men all the day long, and take account of their thoughts. Oh! what madness and folly are in all the musings they are conscious of: "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Psalms 94:11). If we did judge as God judges, all the thoughts, reasonings, discourses of the mind, if they were set down in a table, we might write at the bottom, Here is the sum and total account of all, -- nothing but vanity.

The sins that do most usually engross and take up our thoughts are,

First. Uncleanness. Speculative wickedness makes way for active: "Hath committed adultery...in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). There is a polluting ourselves by our thoughts, and this sin usually works that way.

Secondly. Revenge. Liquors are soured when long kept; so, when we dwell upon discontents, they turn to revenge. Purposes of revenge are most sweet and pleasant to carnal nature: "Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually" (Proverbs 6:14), that is to say, he is full of revengeful and spiteful thoughts.

Thirdly. Envy. It is a sin that feeds upon the mind. Those songs of the women, that Saul had slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands, they ran in Saul's mind, therefore he hated David (1 Samuel 18:9). Envy is an evil disease that dwelleth in the heart, and betrays itself mostly in thoughts.

Fourthly. Pride. Either pride in the desires or pride in the mind, either vain glory or self conceit; this is entertaining our hearts with whispers of vanity: therefore it is said, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Luke 1:51): proud men are full of imaginations.

Fifthly. Covetousness, which is nothing but vain musings and exercises of the heart: "A heart they have exercised with covetous practices" (2 Peter 2:14). And it withdraws the heart in the very time of God's worship: "Their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Eze 33:31).

Sixthly. Distrust is another thing which usually takes up our thoughts -- distracting motions against God's providence. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 113.** -- *Vain thoughts.* Let us see what vanity is. Take it in all the acceptances of it, it is true of our thoughts that they are "vain."

1. It is taken for unprofitableness. So, Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, "All is vain," because there is "no profit in them under the sun." Such are our thoughts by nature; the wisest of them will not stand us in any stead in time of need, in time of temptation, distress of conscience, day of death or judgment: 1 Corinthians 2:6, "All the wisdom of the wise comes to nought"; Proverbs 10:20. "The heart of the wicked is little worth," not a penny for them all.
2. Vanity is taken for lightness. "Lighter than vanity," is a phrase used, Ps 62:9; and whom is it

spoken of? Of men; and if anything in them be lighter than other, it is their thoughts, which swim in the uppermost parts, float at the top, are as the scum of the heart. When all the best, and wisest, and deepest, and solidest thoughts in Belshazzar, a prince, were weighed, they were found too light, Daniel 5:27.

3. Vanity is put for folly. So, Proverbs 12:11, "vain men" is made all one with men "void of understanding." Such are our thoughts. Among other evils which are said to "come out of the heart" (Mark 7:22), *afsvcnh* is reckoned as one, "foolishness"; that is, thoughts that are such as madmen have, and fools -- nothing to the purpose, of which there can be made no use.
4. Vanity is put for inconstancy and frailty; therefore vanity and a shadow are made synonymous, Psalms 144:4. Such are our thoughts, flitting and perishing, as bubbles: Psalms 144:4, "All their thoughts perish."
5. Lastly, they are wicked and sinful. Vanity is Jeremiah 4:14 yoked with wickedness, and vain men and sons of Belial are all one, 2 Chronicles 8:7. And such are our thoughts by nature: Proverbs 14:9, "The thought of foolishness is sin." And therefore a man is to be humbled for a proud thought. --Thomas Goodwin.

**Verse 113.** -- *But thy law do I love* Ballast your heart with a love to God. Love will, by a pleasing violence bind down our thoughts: if it doth not establish our minds, they will be like a cork, which, with a light breath, and a short curl of water, shall be tossed up and down from its station. Scholars that love learning will be continually hammering upon some notion or other which may further their progress, and as greedily clasp it as the iron will its beloved loadstone. He that is "winged with a divine love" to Christ will have frequent glances and flights toward him, and will start out from his worldly business several times in a day to give him a visit. Love, in the very working, is a settling grace; it increaseth our delight in God, partly by the sight of his amiableness, which is cleared to us in the very act of loving; and partly by the recompences he gives to the affectionate carriage of his creature; both which will prevent the heart's giving entertainment to such loose companions as evil thoughts. --Stephen Charnock.

**Verse 113-114.** -- *When David was able to vouch his love to the command*, he did not question his title to the promise. Here he asserts his sincere affection to the precepts: "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love." Mark he doth not say he is free from vain thoughts, but he "hates" them, he likes their company no better than one would a pack of thieves that break into his house. Neither saith he that he fully kept the law, but he "loved" the law even when he failed of exact obedience to it. Now from this testimony his conscience brought in for his love to the law, his faith acts clearly and strongly on the promise in the next words, "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word." --William Gurnall.

**HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**



Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, By Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 113-120.** -- Vain thoughts contrasted with God's law. The believer takes sides (Ps 119:113-115); prays for upholding in the law (Psalms 119:116-117); contemplates the fate of the followers of vain thoughts (Psalms 119:118-119); and expresses the godly fear thereby inspired (Psalms 119:120).

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 113.** -- The thought of the age, and the truth of all ages.

**Verse 113.** --

1. The object of hatred.
2. The object of love.

OR

1. Love the cause of hatred.
2. Hatred the effect of love. --G.R.

**Verse 113.** -- Vain thoughts. What they are. Whence they arise. The mischief they cause. How they should be treated. --W.H.J.P.

**Verse 113.** -- How the believer --

1. Is troubled by vain thoughts. A frequent and painful experience:
2. Does not tolerate vain, thoughts. Some, suffer them to lodge within; he is anxious to expel them.
3. Triumphs over vain thoughts. By his love to the law of God. His prayer is --

"With thoughts of Christ and things divine,  
Fill up this foolish heart of mine." --W.H.J.P.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 114.** Thou art my hiding place and my shield. To his God he ran for shelter from vain thoughts; there he hid himself away from their tormenting intrusions, and in solemn silence of the soul he found God to be his hiding place. When called into the world, if he could not be alone with God as his hiding place, he could have the Lord with him as his shield, and by this means he could ward off the attacks of wicked suggestions. This is an experimental verse, and it testifies to that which the writer knew of his own personal knowledge: he could not fight with his own thoughts, or escape from them, till he flew to his God, and then he found deliverance. Observe that he does not speak of God's word as being his double defence, but he ascribes that to God himself. When we are beset by very spiritual assaults, such as those which arise out of vain thoughts, we shall do well to fly distinctly to the person of our Lord, and to cast ourselves upon his real presence. Happy is he who can truly say to the triune God, "Thou art my hiding place." He has beheld God under that glorious covenant aspect which

ensures to the beholder the surest consolation.

I hope in thy word. And well he might, since he had tried and proved it: he looked for protection from all danger, and preservation from all temptation to him who had hitherto been the tower of his defence on former occasions. It is easy to exercise hope where we have experienced help. Sometimes when gloomy thoughts afflict us, the only thing we can do is to hope, and, happily, the word of God always sets before us objects of hope and reasons for hope, so that it becomes the very sphere and support of hope, and thus tiresome thoughts are overcome. Amid fret and worry a hope of heaven is an effectual quietus.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 114.** -- *Thou art my hiding place and my shield*, etc. From vain thoughts and vain persons the Psalmist teaches us to fly, by prayer, to God, as our Refuge and Protector. This course a believer will as naturally take, in the hour of temptation and danger, as the offspring of the hen, on perceiving a bird of prey hovering over their heads, retire to their "hiding place," under the wings of the dam; or as the warrior opposeth his "shield" to the darts which are aimed at him. --George Horne.

**Verse 114.** -- *Thou art my hiding place*. Christ hath all qualifications that may fit him for this work of being a hiding place to believers].

1. He hath strength. A hiding place must be locus munitissimus. Paper houses will never be good hiding places. Houses made of reeds or rotten timber will not be fit places for men to hide themselves in. Jesus Christ is a place of strength. He is the Rock of Ages: His name is "the Mighty God," [Isaiah 9:6](#).
2. He hath height. A hiding place must be locus excelsissimus. Your low houses are soon scaled. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to heaven: [Genesis 28:12](#). He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls.
3. He hath secret places. A hiding place must be locus abditissimus. The more secret, the more safe. Now, Jesus Christ hath many secret chambers that no creatures can ever find: [Song of Solomon 2:14](#), "O my dove, that art in the secret places of the stairs." As Christ hath hidden comforts which no man knows but he that receiveth them; so he hath hidden places of secrecy which none can find out but he that dwells in them. "Come, my people, outer into thy chambers, and shut the doors upon thee" ([Isaiah 26:0](#)).
4. Christ is faithful. He that will hide others had need be very faithful. A false hearted protector is worse than an open pursuer. "Will the men of Keilah deliver me up?" saith David; "They will deliver thee up," saith the Lord. But now Christ is faithful: [Revelation 3:14](#), he is "the faithful witness;" he cannot be bribed to surrender up any creature that comes to hide himself with him. Christ will die before he will betray his trust.

5. Christ is diligent. Diligence is as necessary in those that will hide others, as faithfulness. A sleepy guard may betray a castle or garrison as well as a faithless guard. But Jesus Christ is very diligent and watchful, he hath his intelligencers abroad; yea, his own eyes run to and fro in the earth, to see what contrivances are made and set on foot against those who are hid with him: Psalms 121:3- 4, "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." --Ralph Robinson (1614-1655), in "Christ All in All."

**Verse 114.** -- *Hiding place*. The first word in the verse means properly a secret, or a secret place. --Joseph Addison Alexander.

**Verse 114.** -- *My shield*. Good people are safe under God's protection; he is their "strength and their shield"; their "help and their shield"; their "sun and their shield"; their "shield and their great reward"; and here, their "hiding place and their shield" --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 114.** -- *Shield*. The excellency and properties of a shield lie in these things: --

1. In the largeness and breadth of it, in that it hides and covers the person that weareth it from all darts that are flung at him, so as they cannot reach him: Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield (Psalms 5:12).
2. The excellence of a shield lies in that it is hard and impenetrable. So this answers to the invincible power of God's providence, by which he can break the assaults of all enemies; and such a shield is God .to his people: "My shield, and he in whom I trust" (Psalms 144:2).
3. Shall I add one thing more? Stones and darts flung upon a hard shield are beaten back upon him that flings them; so God beats back the evil upon his enemies and the enemies of his people: "Bring them down, O Lord, our shield" (Psalms 59:11). --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 114.** -- *I hope in thy word*. Of all the ingredients that sweeten the cup of human life, there is none more rich or powerful than hope. Its absence embitters the sweetest lot; its presence alleviates the deepest woe. Surround me with all the joys which memory can awaken or possession bestow, -- without hope it is not enough. In the absence of hope there is sadness in past and present joys -- sadness in the thought that the past is past, and that the present is passing too. But though you strip me of all the joys the past or the present can confer, if the morrow shineth bright with hope, I am glad amid my woe. Of all the busy motives that stir this teeming earth, hope is the busiest. It is the sweetest balm that soothes our sorrows, the brightest beam that gilds our pleasures. Hope is the noblest offspring, the first born, the last buried child of foreseeing and forecasting man. Without it the unthinking cattle may be content amid present plenty. But without it reflecting man should not, cannot be truly happy. --William Grant (1814-1876), in "Christ our Hope, and other Sermons"

**Verse 114-115.** -- *Thou art my hiding place*. "Depart from me, ye evil doers." Safe and quiet in his hiding place, David deprecates all attempts to disturb his peace. The society, therefore, of the ungodly is intolerable to him, and he cannot forbear frowning them from his presence. He had found

them to be opposed to his best interests; and he feared their influence in shaking his determination of obedience to his God. Indeed, when have the Lord's people failed to experience such society to be a prevailing hindrance alike to the enjoyment and to the service of God? --Charles Bridges.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 114.** -- Our protection from danger -- "hiding-place"; in danger -- "shield"; before danger -- "I hope."

**Verse 114.** -- Hiding place. Secrecy to conceal us. Capacity to hold us. Safety. Comfort. -- T. Manton.

**Verse 114.** -- Hiding and hoping.

1. A hiding place needed.
2. A hiding place provided ([Isaiah 25:14](#) 32:2).
3. A hiding place used. --C.A.D.

**Verse 114.** --

1. The refuge provided: "Thou art," etc.
2. The refuge revealed: "In thy word."
3. The refuge found: "I hope," etc. --G.R.

**Verse 114.** -- Thou art my hiding place.

1. In thy grace, from condemnation.
2. In thy compassion, from sorrow.
3. In thy succour, from temptation.
4. In thy power, from opposition.
5. In thy fulness, from want. --W.J.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 115.** Depart from me, ye evil doers. Those who make a conscience of their thoughts are not likely to tolerate evil company. If we fly to God from vain thoughts, much more shall we avoid vain men. Kings are all too apt to be surrounded by a class of men who flatter them, and at the same time take liberty to break the laws of God: David purged his palace of such parasites; he would not harbour them beneath his roof. No doubt they would have brought upon him an ill name, for their doings would have been imputed to him, since the acts of courtiers are generally set down as acts of the court itself; therefore the king sent them packing bag and baggage, saying, -- "Depart from me." Herein he anticipated the sentence of the last great day, when the Son of David shall say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." We cannot thus send all malefactors out of our houses, but it will often become a duty to do so where there is right and reason for it. A house is all the better for being rid of liars, pilferers, lewd talkers, and slanderers. We are bound at all hazards to keep ourselves clear of such companions as come to us by our own choice if we have any reason to believe that their

character is vicious. Evil doers make evil counsellors. Those who say unto God, "Depart from us," ought to hear the immediate echo of their words from the mouths of God's children, "Depart from us. We cannot eat bread with traitors."

For I will keep the commandments of my God. Since he found it hard to keep the commandments in the company of the ungodly, he gave them their marching orders. He must keep the commandments, but he did not need to keep their company. What a beautiful title for the Lord this verse contains! The word God only occurs in this one place in all this lengthened psalm, and then it is attended by the personal word "my" -- "my God."

"My God! how charming is the sound!

How pleasant to repeat!

Well may that heart with pleasure bound,

Where God hath fixed his seat."

Doddridge.

Because Jehovah is our God therefore we resolve to obey him, and to chase out of our sight those who would hinder us in his service. It is a grand thing for the mind to have come to a point, and to be steadfastly fixed in the holy determination, -- "I will keep the commandments." God's law is our pleasure when the God of the law is our God.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 115.** -- *Depart from me, ye evil doers, etc.* As if he had said, talk no more of it, save your breath, I am resolved on my course, I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep the commandments of my God; with God's help, there will I hold me, and all the world shall not wrest me from it. --Robert Sanderson, 1587-1663.

**Verse 115.** -- *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, etc.* It is common to sin for company, and that cup usually goeth round, and is handed from one to another. It is therefore wise to quit the company which is infected by sin. It can bring thee no benefit. At least evil company will abate the good in thee. The herb of grace will never thrive in such a cold soil. How poorly doth the good corn grow which is compassed about with weeds! Cordials and restoratives will do little good to the natural body, whilst it aboundeth with ill humours. Ordinances are little effectual to souls which are distempered with such noxious inmates. It is said of the mountain Kadish, that whatsoever vine be planted near it, it causeth it to wither and die: it is exceeding rare for saints to thrive near such pull backs. It is difficult, even to a miracle, to keep God's commandments and evil company too; therefore when David would marry himself to God's commands, to love them, and live with them, for better for worse, all his days, he is forced to give a bill of divorce to wicked companions, knowing that otherwise the match could never be made: "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God." As if he had said, Be it known unto you, O sinners, that I am striking a hearty covenant with God's

commands; I like them so well, that I am resolved to give myself up to them, and to please them well in all things, which I can never do unless ye depart; ye are like a strumpet, which will steal away the love from the true wife. I cannot, as I ought, obey my God's precepts, whilst ye abide in my presence; therefore depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God.  
--George Swinnock.

**Verse 115.** -- *Depart from me, ye evil doers.* Woe be to the wicked man, and woe to those who adhere to him and associate with him, saith Ben Sira. And even the pagans of old thought that a curse went along with those who kept evil company. To inhabit, or to travel with an impious man, and one not beloved of the gods, was held by them to be unlucky and unfortunate.

Vetabo qui Cercris sacrum

Vulgavit, sub isdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecuin

Solvat phaselum,

as Horace speaks.

They who mysteries reveal

Beneath my roof shall never live,

Shall never hoist with me the doubtful sail.

To dwell under the same roof, or to sail in the same yacht or pleasure boat with profane persons was deemed unsafe and dangerous by men of Pagan principles. How much more, then, ought Christians to be thoroughly persuaded of the mischief and danger of conversing with wicked men? It can no ways be safe to hold correspondence with them. Yea, we are in great danger all the while we are with them. You have heard, I suppose, who it was that would not stay in the bath so long as an arch heretic was there. It was St. John the Evangelist; he would not (as Iranaeus acquaints us) remain in that place because Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Christ, was then present there. That holy man thought no place was safe where such persons are.

Therefore be mindful of the Apostle's exhortation, and "Come out from among them" (2 Corinthians 6:17); listen to that voice from heaven: "Come out, that ye be not partakers of their sins, and that ye receive not of their plagues." Separate yourselves from them lest you not only in damage your souls, but your bodies, lest some remarkable judgment arrest you here, and lest the divine vengeance more furiously assault you hereafter. The fanciful poets tell us that Theseus and Perithous (a pair of intimate friends) loved one another so well that they went down to hell together. I am sure it is no poetical fiction that many do thus; that is to say, that they perish together, and descend into the bottomless pit for company's sake. --John Edwards (1637-1716), in "Theologia Reformata."

**Verse 115.** -- *Depart from them that depart from God.* --T. Manton.

**Verse 115.** -- *Of my God.* As a man can esteem of anything which he knows is his own; so if once he

know that God is his, he cannot but love him, and carefully obey him: neither is it possible that any man can give to God hearty and permanent service, who is not persuaded to say with David, He is my God. All the pleasures, all the terrors of the world cannot sunder that soul from God, who can truly say, The Lord is my God. --W. Cowper.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 115.** --

1. Ill company hinders piety.
2. Piety quits ill company.
3. Piety, in compelling this departure, acts as God will do at the last.

**Verse 115.** -- Evil companionship incompatible with genuine righteousness.

1. They necessitate concealment and compromise.
2. They destroy the capability of communion with God, and the relish for spiritual things.
3. They blunt the sensitiveness of conscience.
4. They involve deliberate disobedience to God. --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 116.** Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may have. It was so necessary that the Lord should hold up his servant, that he could not even live without it. Our soul would die if the Lord did not continually sustain it, and every grace which makes spiritual life to be truly life would decay if he withdrew his upholding hand. It is a sweet comfort that this great necessity of upholding is provided for in the word, and we have not to ask for it as for an uncovenanted mercy, but simply to plead for the fulfilment of a promise, saying, "Uphold me according to thy word." He who has given us eternal life hath in that gift secured to us all that is essential thereto, and as gracious upholding is one of the necessary things we may be sure that we shall have it.

And let me not be ashamed of my hope. In [Psalms 119:114](#) he had spoken of his hope as founded on the word, and now he begs for the fulfilment of that word that his hope might be justified in the sight of all. A man would be ashamed of his hope if it turned out that it was not based upon a sure foundation; but this will never happen in our case. We may be ashamed of our thoughts, and our words, and our deeds for they spring from ourselves; but we never shall be ashamed of our hope, for that springs from the Lord our God. Such is the frailty of our nature that unless we are continually upheld by grace, we shall all so foully as to be ashamed of ourselves, and ashamed of all those glorious hopes which are now the crown and glory of our life. The man of God had uttered the most positive resolves, but he felt that he could not trust in his own solemn determination: hence these prayers. It is not wrong to make resolutions, but it will be useless to do so unless we salt them well with believing cries to God. David meant to keep the law of the Lord, but he first needed the Lord of the law to keep

him.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 116.** -- *Uphold me.* A kite soaring on high is in a situation quite foreign to its nature; as much as the soul of man is when raised above this lower world to high and heavenly pursuits. A person at a distance sees not how it is kept in its exalted situation: he sees not the wind that blows it, nor the hand that holds it, nor the string by whose instrumentality it is held. But all of these powers are necessary to its preservation in that preternatural state. If the wind were to sink it would fall. It has nothing whatever in itself to uphold itself; it has the same tendency to gravitate towards the earth that it ever had; and if left for a moment to itself it would fall. Thus it is with the soul of every true believer. It has been raised by the Spirit of God to a new, a preternatural, a heavenly state; and in that state it is at held by an invisible and Almighty hand, through the medium of faith. And upheld it shall be, but not by any lower in itself. If left for a moment it would fall as much as ever. Its whole strength is in God alone; and its whole security is in the unchangeableness of his nature, and in the efficacy of his grace. In a word, "It is kept by the power of Gad, through faith, unto salvation." --From "The Book of Illustrations," by H. G. Salter, 1840.

**Verse 116.** -- *That I may live.* The life of a Christian stands in this, to have his soul quickened by the spirit of grace. For as the presence of the soul quickens the body, and the departure thereof brings instant death; and the body without it is but a dead lump of clay: so it is the presence of God's Spirit which giveth life to the soul of man. And this life is known by these two notable effects; for first, it brings a joyful sense of God's mercy; and next, a spiritual disposition to spiritual exercises. And without this, pretend a man what he will, he is but the image of a Christian, looking somewhat like him, but not quickened by his life. --William Cowper.

**Verse 116.** -- *That I may live.* The children of God think they have no life if they live not in God's life. For if we think we are alive, because we see, so do the brute beasts; if we think we are alive because we hear, so do the cattle; if we think we are alive because we eat and drink, or sleep, so do beasts; if we think we live because we do reason and confer, so do the heathen. The life of God's children is the death of sin; for where sin is alive, there that part is dead unto God...God's children, finding themselves dull and slow to good things, when they cannot either rejoice in the promises of God, or find their inward man delighted with the law of God, think themselves to be dead. -- Richard Greenham.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 116.** --

1. Upholding promised.
2. Needful for holy living.
3. The preventive of shameful acts.



**Verse 116.** -- Uphold me according unto thy word, etc.

1. The Psalmist pleads the promise of God, his dependence upon the promise, and his expectation from it : "Uphold me according unto thy word," which word I hope in and if it be not performed I shall be "ashamed of my hope."
2. He pleads the great need he had of God's grace, and the great advantage it would be to him: "Uphold me, that I may live"; intimating that he could not live without the grace of God. --M. Henry.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 117.** Hold thou me up: as a nurse holds up a little child. "And I shall be safe," and not else; for unless thou hold me up I shall be falling about like an infant that is weak upon its knees. We are saved by past grace, but we are not safe unless we receive present grace. The Psalmist had vowed to keep the Lord's commands, but here he pleads with the Lord to keep him: a very sensible course of procedure. Our version reads the word "uphold," and then "hold up;" and truly we need this blessing in every shape in which it can come, for in all manner of ways our adversaries seek to cast us down. To be safe is a happy condition; there is only one door to it, and that is to be held up by God himself; thank God, that door is open to the least among us.

And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. In obedience is safety; in being held up is obedience. No man will outwardly keep the Lord's statutes for long together unless he has an inward respect for them, and this will never be unless the hand of the Lord perpetually upholds the heart in holy love. Perseverance to the end, obedience continually, comes only through the divine power; we start aside as a deceitful bow unless we are kept right by him that first gave us grace. Happy is the man who realizes this verse in his life: upheld through his whole life in a course of unswerving integrity, he becomes a safe and trusted man, and maintains a sacred delicacy of conscience which is unknown to others. He feels a tender respect for the statutes of the Lord, which keeps him clear of inconsistencies and conformities to the world that are so common among others, and hence he is a pillar in the house of the Lord. Alas, we know some professors who are not upright, and therefore they lean to sin till they fall over, and though they are restored they are never safe or reliable, neither have they that sweet purity of soul which is the charm of the more sanctified who have been kept from falling into the mire.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 117.** -- *Hold thou me up*, and I shall be safe. Not only the consciousness of my weakness, but the danger of the slippery path before me, reminds me, that the safety of every moment depends upon the upholding power of my faithful God. The ways of temptation are so many and imperceptible -- the influence of it so appalling -- the entrance into it so deceitful, so specious, so insensible -- and my own

weakness and unwatchfulness are so unspeakable -- that I can do nothing but go on my way, praying at every step, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." --Charles Ridges.

**Verse 117.** -- *Hold thou me up.* Three things made David afraid. First, great temptation without; for from every air the wind of temptation blows upon a Christian. Secondly, great corruption within. Thirdly, examples of other worthy men that had fallen before him, and are written for us: not that we should learn to fall, but to fear lest we fall. These three should always hold us humble, according to that warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." --William Cowper.

**Verse 117.** -- *Up,* up above the littleness in which I have lived too long, -- above the snares which have so often caught me, -- above the stumbling blocks upon which I have so often fallen, -- above the world, -- above myself, -- higher than I have ever reached yet, -- above the level of my own mortality: worthy of thee, -- worthy of the blood, with which I have been bought, -- nearer to heaven, -- nearer to thee, -- "hold thou me up."

God's methods of holding his people up are many. Sometimes it is by the preacher's word, when the word comes fitly spoken to the heart and conscience. May God, in his infinite condescension, enable his servants in this church so to hold you up. Sometimes it is by the ordained means and sacraments which his grace commanded. Sometimes it is by the efficacy of the Holy Scriptures, when some passage in your own room strikes the mind, Just in season; or the stay of some sweet promise comes in sustaining to your spirit. Sometimes by the simple in working of the Holy Ghost in a man's own thoughts, as he will work "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." Sometimes by the ministration of angels, -- "They shall hold thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Sometimes by putting you very low indeed, making you feel that the safe place is the valley. There is no elevation like the elevation of abasement. Sometimes by severe discipline to brace up the heart, and strengthen it, and make it independent of external things. Sometimes by heavy affliction, which is the grasp of his hand, that he may hold you tighter. Sometimes by putting into your heart to think the exact thing that you need, -- to pray the very prayer which he intends at the moment to grant. Sometimes by appearing to let you go, and forsake you, while at the same time -- like the Syro Phoenician woman -- he is giving you the wish to hold on that he may give you the more at the last. --James Vaughan, of Brighton, 1877.

**Verse 117.** -- *I will have respect unto that statutes continually.* I will employ myself, so some; I will delight myself, so others; in thy statutes. If God's right hand uphold us, we must in his strength go on in our duty, both with diligence and With pleasure. -- Matthew Henry.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 117.** --

1. Upholding -- God's holding us up. It implies a danger, and that danger takes many forms. The believer's life may be described as walking in uprightness; he is a pilgrim. He needs upholding, for --

a. The way is slippery.

(b) Our feet make the danger as well as the way.

(c) Cunning foes seek to trip us up.

(d) Sometimes the difficulty is not caused by the way, but by the height to which God may elevate us.

(e) The prayer is all the more needful because the most of people do not keep upright.

1. Two blessed things that come out of this holding up.

(a) We shall be safe for ourselves, as examples, and as pillars of the church.

(b) We shall be watchful and sensitive: "I will have respect unto thy statutes continually." Without this no man is safe. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 1657: "My Hourly Prayer."

**Verse 117.** -- Hold thou me up, etc.

1. The good man is up.

2. The good man wishes to keep up.

3. The good man prays to be held up.

4. The good man knows that divine support is abundantly sufficient. --W.J.

**Verse 117.** --

1. Dependence for the future: "Hold," etc.

2. Resolution for the future: "I will have," etc. --G.R.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 118.** Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes. There is no holding up for them; they are thrown down and then trodden down, for they choose to go down into the wandering ways of sin. Sooner or later God will set his foot on those who turn their foot from his commands: it has always been so, and it always will be so to the end. If the salt has lost its savour, what is it fit for but to be trodden under foot? God puts away the wicked like dross, which is only fit to be cast out as road metal to be trodden down.

For their deceit is falsehood. They call it far seeing policy, but it is absolute falsehood, and it shall be treated as such. Ordinary men call it clever diplomacy, but the man of God calls a spade a spade, and declares it to be falsehood, and nothing less, for he knows that it is so in the sight of God. Men who err from the right road invent pretty excuses with which to deceive themselves and others, and so quiet their consciences and maintain their credits; but their mask of falsehood is too transparent.

God treads down falsehoods; they are only fit to be spurned by his feet, and crushed into the dust. How horrified must those be who have spent all their lives in contriving a confectionery religion, and then see it all trodden upon by God as a sham which he cannot endure!

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 118.** -- *Thou hast trodden down*, etc. David here, by a new meditation, confirms himself in the course of godliness: for considering the judgments of God, executed according to his word in all ages upon the wicked, he resolves so much the more to fear God and keep his testimonies. Thus the judgments of God, executed on others, should be awe bands to keep us from sinning after their similitude.

The Lord in chastising his own children takes them in hand like a father to correct them; but when his wrath is kindled against the wicked he tramples them under his feet, as vile creatures which are no account with him. --William Cowper.

**Verse 118.** -- *Thou hast trodden down*. The Septuagint, ebouoenwsaj, ad nihil deduxisti; thou hast brought to nothing; Aquila, confixisti, thou hast stricken through: Symmachus, aphlebaj, reprobasti, thou hast disproved; the Vulgate sprevisi, thou hast contemned; Apollinarius, aferibaj, parvi pependisti, thou hast little esteemed: all to the same purpose. The phrase of treading tinder foot, used by us, implies,

1. A full punishment;
2. A disgraceful one.
3. A full punishment. God will pull them down from their altitudes, even to the dust, though never so high and proudly exalting themselves against God. A full conquest of enemies is thus often expressed in Scripture. The Assyrian is said "to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets" ([Isaiah 5:6](#)).
4. It implies a disgraceful punishment: "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps 105:1); an expression used to show the ignominy and contempt God will put upon them. Thus Sapores, the king of Persia, trampled upon Valentinian the emperor, and Tamerlane made Bajazet his footstool. The meaning is, God will not only bring them under, but reduce them to an abject and contemptible condition. So Chrysostom on the text expounds this phrase, that God will make them eponeioistouj kai katalelastouj, ignominious and contemptible. They shall not go off honourably, but with scorn and confusion of face, miserably broken. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 118.** -- *Thou hast trodden down*, etc. There is a disposition to merge all the characteristics of the Divinity into one; and while with many of our most eminent writers, the exuberant goodness, the soft and yielding benignity, the mercy that overlooks and makes liberal allowance for the infirmities of human weakness, have been fondly and most abundantly dwelt upon -- there has been what the French would call, if not a studied, at least an actually observed reticence, on the subject of his truth

and purity and his hatred of moral evil. There can be no government without a law; and the question is little entertained -- how are the violations of that law to be disposed of? Every law has its sanctions -- the hopes of proffered reward on the one hand, the fears of threatened vengeance on the other. Is the vengeance to be threatened only, but never to be executed? Is guilt only to be dealt with by proclamations that go before, but never by punishments that are to follow?...Take away from jurisprudence its penalties, or, what were still worse, let the penalties only be denounced but never exacted; and we reduce the whole to an unsubstantial mockery. The fabric of moral government falls to pieces; and, instead of a great presiding authority in the universe, we have a subverted throne and a degraded Sovereign...If there is only to be the parade of a judicial economy, without any of its power or its performance; if the truth is only to be kept in the promises of reward, but as constantly to be receded from in the threats of vengeance; if the judge is thus to be lost in the overweening parent -- there is positively nothing of a moral government over us but the name, we are not the subjects of God's authority; we are the fondlings of his regard. Under a system like this, the whole universe would drift, as it were, into a state of anarchy; and, in the uproar of this wild misrule, the King who sitteth on high would lose his hold on the creation that he had formed. --Thomas Chalmers.

**Verse 118 -- For their deceit is falsehood.** *The true sense of the passage is, "for their cunning hath been fallacious,"* that is, it hath deceived them themselves and brought on their ruin. --Samuel Horsley, 1733-1806.

**Verse 118.** -- *Their deceit is falsehood.* He means not here of that deceit whereby the wicked deceive others, but that whereby they deceive themselves. And this is two fold: first, in that they look for a good in sin, which sin deceitfully promises, but they shall never find. Next, that they flatter themselves with a vain conceit to escape judgment, which shall assuredly overtake them. --William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 118.** -- Sin and falsehood: their connection, punishment, and cure.

**Verse 118.** --

1. Hearken to the tramp of God's armies. In nature; providence; angelic hosts of last day.
2. The mangled victims. Cunning deceivers specially obnoxious to God. Examples: Balaam, Pharaoh, Rome, the deceiver of the nations.
3. The warnings to us of this Aceldama. Repent. Avoid deceit. Mind God's landmarks. Hide in Christ. --W.B.H.

**Verse 118.** -- God's punishment of the wicked though awfully severe is just and necessary.

1. It is due as the merited wages of iniquity.
2. It is demanded by the position of God as moral governor, and by his character as righteous.
3. It is necessary to mark the real worth of righteousness and its reward. If the wicked are not punished, the full worth of righteousness cannot appear.

4. In the nature of the case, it is absolutely unavoidable, except upon one condition, namely, the gift of genuine repentance and holiness after death; that no man has any right to expect, nor has God given the slightest intimation that he will bestow if.
5. Hell lies in the bosom of sin; and if the wicked were taken to heaven, they would carry hell thither. Heaven supplies not the things in which the wicked delight, while it abounds in those they can neither understand nor sympathise with. --J.F.

**Verse 118.** (second clause). -- The deceits of the wicked are all falsehoods.

1. The world they embrace is a false Delilah.
2. The pleasure they enjoy is a Satanic snare.
3. Their formal religiousness is a vain delusion.
4. Their conceits of God are self invented lies. --J.F.

**Verse 118-120.** -- Saved by fear.

1. The wrath of God revealed against sin.
2. The judgment of God executed upon sinners.
3. The fear of God created in the heart. --G.A.D.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 119.** Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross. He does not trifle with them, or handle them with kid gloves. No, he judges them to be the scum of the earth, and he treats them accordingly by putting them away. He puts them away from his church, away from their honours, away from the earth, and at last away from himself. "Depart," saith he, "ye cursed." If even a good man feels forced to put away the evil doers from him, much more must the thrice holy God put away the wicked. They looked like precious metal, they were intimately mixed up with it, they were laid up in the same heap; but the Lord is a refiner, and every day He removes some of the wicked from among his people, either by making a shameful discovery of their hypocrisy or by consuming them from off the earth. They are put away as dross, never to be recalled. As the metal is the better for losing its alloy, so is the church the better for having the wicked removed. These wicked ones are "of the earth," -- "the wicked of the earth," and they have no right to be with those who are not of the world; the Lord perceives them to be out of place and injurious, and therefore he puts them away, all of them, leaving none of them to deteriorate his church. The process will one day be perfect; no dross will be spared, no gold will be left impure. Where shall we be when that great work is finished

Therefore I love thy testimonies. Even the severities of the Lord excite the love of his people. If he allowed men to sin with impunity, he would not be so fully the object of our loving admiration; he is glorious in holiness because he thus rids his kingdom of rebels, and his temple of them that defile it. In these evil days, when God's punishment of sinners has become the butt of proud sceptical

contentions, we may regard as a mark of the true man of God that he loves the Lord none the less, but a great deal the more because of his condign judgment of the ungodly.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 119.** -- *Thou putttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross.* The godly and the wicked live together in the visible church, as dross and good metal; but God, who is the purger of his church, will not fail by diversity of trials and judgments to put difference between them, and at last will make a perfect separation of them, and cast away the wicked as refuse. --David Dickson.

**Verse 119.** -- *God's judgments upon others may be a necessary act of love to us.* They are purged out as "dross," that they may not infect us by their example, or molest us by their persecutions or oppressions. Now, the more we are befriended in this kind, the more we are bound to serve God cheerfully: "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life": [Luke 1:74-75](#). The world is one of those enemies, or the wicked of the earth; therefore we should serve him faithfully. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 119.** -- *Thou putttest away all the wicked.* Many ways are wicked men taken away; sometime by the hand of other men, sometime by their own hand. The Philistines slew not Saul, but forced him to slay himself; yet the eye of faith ever looks to the finger of God, and sees that the fall of the wicked is the work of God. --William Cowper.

**Verse 119.** -- *The wicked of the earth.* Why are they thus characterized? Because here they flourish; their names "shall be written in the earth" ([Jeremiah 17:13](#)); they grow great and of good reckoning and account here. Judas had the bag; they prosper in the world: "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world" ([Psalms 73:12](#)). Here they are respected: "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" ([1 John 4:5](#)). Their hearts and minds are in the world ([Matthew 6:19-20](#)). It is their natural frame to be worldly, they only savour the things of the world; preferment, honour, greatness, it is their unum magnum; here is their pleasure, and here is their portion, their hope, and their happiness. A child of God looketh for another inheritance, immortal and undefiled. --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 119.** -- *Like dross.* The men of this world esteem God's children as the offscourings of the earth; so Paul (a chosen vessel of God) was disesteemed of men; but ye see here what the wicked are, in God's account, but dross indeed, which is the refuse of gold or silver. Let this confirm the godly against the contempt of men: only the Lord hath in his own hand the balance which weigheth men according as they are. --William Cowper.

**Verse 119.** -- *Dross.*

1. The dross obscures the lustre and glory of the metal, yea, covers it up, so that it appears not; rust and filth compass and hide the gold, so that neither the nature nor lustre of it can be seen.

2. Dross is a deceiving thing. It is like metal, but is not metal; the dross of silver is like it, and so the dross of gold is like gold, but the dross is neither silver nor gold.
3. Dross is not bettered by the fire: put it into the fire time after time, it abides so still.
4. Dross is a worthless thing. It is of no value -- base, vile, contemptible.
5. It is useless, and to be rejected.
6. Dross is an offensive thing: rust eats into the metal, endangers it, and makes the goldsmith to kindle the fire, to separate it from the gold and silver. --Condensed from William Greenhill.

**Verse 119.** -- *Thy testimonies.* So, very frequently, he calleth God's word, wherein there are both commands and promises: the commandments of God appertain to all, his testimonies belong to his children only; whereby more strictly, I understand his promises containing special declarations of his love and favour toward his own in Christ Jesus. -- William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 119.** -- An insight into the divine will, the best assistance in our journey through the earth. Or, what I am; where I am; where I am going; how am I to get there?

**Verse 119.** (first clause). -- The stranger in the earth.

1. A short exposition. The text means, --
  - (a) That the saint is not born of the earth.
  - (b) That the saint is not known on earth.
  - (c) The saint's portion is not upon the earth.
  - (d) The saint is compassed with sorrows and trials upon earth.
  - (e) The saint is soon to leave the earth.
1. A short application.
  - (a) Do not be like the world.
  - (b) Be prepared to be a sufferer on the earth.
  - (c) Sit loose to the world.
  - (d) Correspond with home.
  - (e) Cherish brotherly love for your fellow strangers on the earth.
  - (f) Hasten home.
  - (g) Press others to come with you.

--Duncan Macgregor's Sermon in "The Shepherd in Israel," 1869.

**Verse 119.** -- The stranger's prayer.

1. How he came to be a stranger in the earth. He was born again. He learned the manners of his foreign home. He spoke the language of his Fatherland; and so was misunderstood and rejected on earth.



2. How he longed after everything homelike. Home rules: "thy commandments." Home teaching: "hide not." Specially his Father's voice.
3. How in his loneliness he solaced himself by communication with his Father.
4. Would you not like to be a stranger? --C.A.D.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 119.** -- The saint's acquiescence in God's judgments. --W.B.H.

**Verse 119.** --

1. Comparison of the wicked to dross.
2. Comparison of their doom to the putting away of dross.
3. The saint's admiration of divine justice as seen in the rejection of the wicked.

**Verse 119.** -- God's putting away the wicked like dross.

1. God's judgments are a searching and separating fire.
2. The final judgment of the great day will complete the separating process.
3. The great result will be, the true metal and the dross, each gathered to its own place. -- J. F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 120.** My flesh trembleth for fear of thee. Such was his awe in the presence of the Judge of all the earth, whose judgment he had just now been considering, that he did exceedingly fear and quake. Even the grosser part of his being, -- his flesh, felt a solemn dread at the thought of offending one so good and great, who would so effectually sever the wicked from among the just. Alas, poor flesh, this is the highest thing to which thou canst attain!

And I am afraid of thy judgments. God's words of judgment are solemn, and his deeds of judgment are terrible; they may well make us afraid. At the thought of the Judge of all, -- his piercing eye, his books of record, his day of assize, and the operations of his justice, -- we may well cry for cleansed thoughts, and hearts, and ways, lest his judgments should light on us. When we see the great Refiner separating the precious from the vile, we may well feel a godly fear, lest we should be put away by him, and left to be trodden under his feet.

Love in the previous verse is quite consistent with fear in this verse: the fear which hath torment is cast out, but not the filial fear which leads to reverence and obedience.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

The fifteenth letter, SAMECH, denotes a prop or pillar, and this agrees well with the subject matter of the strophe, in which God is twice implored to uphold his servant ([Psalms 119:16-17](#)), while the utter destruction of those who make light of his law, or encourage scepticism regarding it, may be compared to the fate of the Philistine lords, on whom Samson brought down the roof of the house where they were making merry, by overthrowing the pillars which supported it. --Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 120.** -- *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee.* Instead of exulting over those who fell under God's displeasure he humbleth himself. What we read and hear of the judgments of God upon wicked people should make us

1. To reverence his terrible majesty, and to stand in awe of him. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? 1 Samuel 6:20.
2. To fear lest we offend him, and become obnoxious to his wrath. Good men have need to be restrained from sin by the terrors of the Lord; especially when judgment begins at the house of God, and hypocrites are discovered, and put away as dross. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 120.** -- *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee,* etc. At the presence of Jehovah, when he appeareth in judgment, the earth trembleth and is still. His best servants are not exempted from an awful dread, upon such occasions; scenes of this kind, shown in vision to the prophets, cause their flesh to quiver, and all their bones to shake. Encompassed with a frail body, and a sinful world, we stand in need of every possible tie; and the affections both of fear and love must be employed, to restrain us from transgression; we must, at the same time, "love God's testimonies, and fear his Judgments." --George Horne.

**Verse 120 -- My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, etc.** *In prayer,* in the evening I had such near and terrific views of God's judgments upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them...I flew trembling to Jesus Christ as if the flames were taking hold of me: Oh! Christ will indeed save me or else I perish. --Henry Martyn, 1781- 1812.

**Verse 120.** -- *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee.* Familiarity with men breeds contempt; familiarity with God, not so: none reverence the Lord more than they who know him best and are most familiar with him. --William Cowper.

**Verse 120,116.** -- *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; I am afraid...* Let me not be ashamed of my hope. True religion consists in a proper mixture of fear of God, and of hope in his mercy; and wherever either of these is entirely wanting, there can be no true religion. God has joined these things, and we ought by no means to put them asunder. He cannot take pleasure in those who fear him with a slavish fear, without hoping in his mercy, because they seem to consider him as a cruel and tyrannical being, who has no mercy or goodness in his nature; and, besides, they implicitly charge him with falsehood, by refusing to believe and hope in his invitations and offers of mercy. On the other hand, he cannot be pleased with those who pretend to hope in his mercy without fearing him; for they insult him by supposing that there is nothing in him which ought to be feared; and, in addition to this, they make him a liar, by disbelieving his awful threatenings denounced against sinners, and call in question his authority, by refusing to obey him. Those only who both fear him and hope in his mercy, give him the honour that is due to his name. -- Edward Payson.

**Verse 120.** -- *Trembles or shudders,* strictly used of the hair as standing erect in terror (comp. Job

4:15). --J.J. Stewart Perowne.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 120.** -- The judgments of God on the wicked cause in the righteous,

1. Love.
2. Awe.
3. Fear.

**Verse 120.** --

1. Describe the true character of the fear.

(a) It is the fear of reverence for God's authority and power.

(b) It is the fear of horror against sin as meriting judgment.

1. Show its compatibility with filial love.

(a) The more we love God the more firmly we believe in the certainty and awfulness of his judgments.

(b) The more we love God the more will we fear to arouse his chastising rod against ourselves.

(a) In fact, if we love not God, we shall have no fear lest sin should involve us in judgment.

1. Commend it.

(a) As it proves a just sense of sin's desert.

(b) As it shows a true appreciation of God's righteousness.

(c) As it is not a fear that hath torment, but a fear which increases watchfulness, and walks hand in hand with perfect confidence in saying grace. --J.F.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 121.** I have done judgment and justice. This was a great thing for an Eastern ruler to say at any time, for these despots mostly cared more for gain than justice. Some of them altogether neglected their duty, and would not even do judgment at all, preferring their pleasures to their duties; and many more of them sold their judgments to the highest bidders by taking bribes, or regarding the persons of men. Some rulers gave neither judgment nor justice, others gave judgment without justice, but David gave judgment and justice, and saw that his sentences were carried out. He could claim before the Lord that he had dealt out even handed justice, and was doing so still. On this fact he founded a plea with which he backed the prayer -- "Leave me not to mine oppressors." He who, as

far as his power goes, has been doing right, may hope to be delivered from his superiors when attempts are made by them to do him wrong. If I will not oppress others, I may hopefully pray that others may not oppress me. A course of upright conduct is one which gives us boldness in appealing to the Great Judge for deliverance from the injustice of others. Nor is this kind of pleading to be censured as self righteous: when we are dealing with God as to our shortcomings, we use a very different tone from that with which we face the censures of our fellow men; when they are in the question, and we are guiltless towards them, we are justified in pleading our innocence.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 121.** -- *This commences a new division of the Psalm indicated by the Hebrew letter Ain -- a letter which cannot well be represented in the English alphabet, as there is, in fact, no letter in our language exactly corresponding with it. It would be best represented probably by what are called "breathings" in Greek.* --Albert Barnes.

**Verse 121.** -- *I have done judgment against the wicked, "and justice" towards the good.* -- Simon de Muis, 1587-1644.

**Verse 121.** -- *I have done judgment and justice.* -- Here the view of David in his judicial capacity might present itself to us; and if so, we have David in the midst of large experience; for the words would take in a large portion of his life. How blessed were their reflections, if, after a long reign, all sovereign rulers could thus appeal unto God. It should be so; for to him all shall be accountable at last. Even although we only conceive of David as speaking in the character of a private man, the sentiment is worthy of all consideration... For parents to say this of their dealings with their children, masters of servants, a man of his neighbours, is very excellent. --John Stephen.

**Verse 121.** -- *Judgment and "justice,"* are often put in Scripture for the same, and when put together, the latter is as an epithet to the former. "I have done judgment and justice," that is, I have done judgment justly, exactly, to a hair. --Joseph Caryl.

Verse 121. --

Do right and be a king,  
Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,  
Still to preserve thy conscious innocence,  
Nor ever turn pale with guilt. --Francis's Horace.

**Verse 121.** -- *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God: 1 John 3:21.* This "testimony of conscience" has often been "the rejoicing" of the Lord's people, when suffering under unmerited reproach or "proud oppression." They have been enabled to plead it without offence in the presence of their holy, heart searching God; nay, even when, in the near prospect of the great and final account, they might well have been supposed to shrink from the strict and unerring scrutiny of their Omniscient Judge. Perhaps, however, we are not sufficiently aware of the importance of moral

integrity in connexion with our spiritual comfort. Mark the boldness which it gave David in prayer: "I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors." --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 121.** -- *Leave me not to mine oppressors.* That is, maintain me against those who would wrong me, because I do right; interpose thyself between me and my enemies, as if thou wert my pledge. Impartial justice upon oppressors sometimes lays judges open to oppression; but yet they who run greatest hazards in zeal for God shall find God ready to be their surety, when they pray, "be surety for thy servant," as in the next verse. -- Abraham Wright.

**Verse 121-122.** -- *I have done judgment and justice; but,* that I may always do it, and never fail in doing it, "uphold thy servant unto good," by directing him, so that he may always relish what is good, and then the consequence will be that "the proud will not calumniate me;" for he that is well established "unto good," and so made up that nothing but what is good and righteous will be agreeable to him, he will so persevere that he will have no reason for fearing "the proud that calumniate him." --Robert Bellarmine.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Verses 121-128. -- The just man's prayer against injustice. Out of the prison of oppression he appeals to God to be his surely (Psalms 119:121-122); utters his weary longing for deliverance (Psalms 119:123-125); points to the "time" (Psalms 119:126); and professes his supreme love for God's law in contrast to the oppressors' contempt of it (Psalms 119:127-128).

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

Outlines Upon Keywords of the Psalm, by Pastor C. A. Davis.

**Verse 121-122.** -- The double appeal.

1. Of conscious integrity: "I have done judgment," etc.
2. Of conscious deficiency: "Be surety for thy servant for good." --C.A.D.

#### **EXPOSITION**

Verse 122. Be surety for thy servant for good. Answer for me. Do not leave thy poor servant to die by the hand of his enemy and thine. Take up my interests and weave them with thine own, and stand for me. As my Master, undertake thy servants' cause, and represent me before the faces of haughty men till they see what an august ally I have in the Lord my God.

Let not the proud oppress me. Thine interposition will answer the purpose of my rescue: when the proud see that thou art my advocate they will hide their heads. We should have been crushed beneath our proud adversary the devil if our Lord Jesus had not stood between us and the accuser, and become a surety for us. It is by his suretyship that we escape like a bird from the snare of the fowler. What a blessing to be able to leave our matters in our Surety's hands, knowing that all will be well, since he has an answer for every accuser, a rebuke for every reviler.

Good men dread oppression, for it makes even a wise man mad, and they send up their cries to heaven for deliverance; nor shall they cry in vain, for the Lord will undertake the cause of his servants, and fight their battles against the proud. The word "servant" is wisely used, as a plea for favour for himself, and the word "proud" as an argument against his enemies. It seems to be inevitable that proud men should become oppressors, and that they should take most delight in oppressing really gracious men.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 122.** -- *Be surety for thy servant for good.* What David prays to God to be for him, that Christ is for all his people: Hebrews 7:22. He drew nigh to God, struck hands with him, gave his word and bond to pay the debts of his people; put himself in their law place and stead, and became responsible to law and justice for them; engaged to make satisfaction for their sins, to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification, and to preserve and keep them, and bring them safe to eternal glory and happiness; and this was being a surety for them for good. --John Gill.

**Verse 122.** -- *Be surety for thy servant for good.* There are three expositions of this clause, as noting the end, the cause, the event.

1. Undertake for me, ut sire bonus et justus, so Rabbi Arama on the place; surety for me that I may be good. Theodoret expounds it, "Undertake that I shall make good my resolution of keeping thy law." He that joins, undertakes; though we have precepts and without God's undertaking we shall never be able to perform our duty.
2. Undertake for me to help me in doing good; so some read it: would not take his part in an evil cause. To commend a wrong to God's protection, is to provoke him to hasten our punishment, to us serve under our oppressors; but, when we have a good cause, and good conscience, he will own us. We cannot expect he should maintain us and bear us out in the Devil's service, wherein we have entangled selves by our own sin.
3. Be with me for good: so it is often rendered: "Shew me a token for good" (Psalms 86:17); "Pray not for this people for good" (Jeremiah 11:14); so, "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Nehemiah 13:31). So here "Be surety for thy servant for good." --Thomas Manton.

**Verse 122.** -- *Be surety for thy servant for good.* It is the prayer Hezekiah in his trouble, "O Lord, I am oppressed," undertake for, (Isaiah 38:14); it is the prayer of Job for a "daysman" to between him and God (Job 9:33); it is the cry of the church before Incarnation for the appearance of a Divine Mediator; it is the confidence of every faithful soul since that blessed time in the perpetual of our Great High Priest in heaven, which is to us the pledge of blessedness. --Agellius and Cocceius, in Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 122.** -- *Be surety for thy servant for good.* His meaning is, thou knowest how unjustly I am calumniated and evil spoken of in parts: where I am not present or where I may not answer for

myself, answer thou for me. --William Cowper.

**Verse 122.** -- *Be surety for thy servant for good.* The keen eye of world may possibly not be able to affix any blot upon my outward confession; but, "if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities; O Lord, who shall stand?" The debt is continually accumulating, and the prospect of payment as distant as ever. I might well expect to be "left to my oppressors," I should pay all that was due unto my Lord. But behold! "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isaiah 51:13. The surety is found -- the debt is paid -- the ransom is accepted -- the sinner is free. There was a voice heard heaven -- "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom", Job 33:24. The Son of God himself became Surety for a stranger, and "smarted for it," Proverbs 11:15. At an infinite cost -- the cost of his precious blood -- he delivered me from "mine oppressors" -- sin -- Satan world -- death -- hell. -- Charles Bridges.

**Verse 122.** -- *Some observe that this is the only verse throughout the whole psalm wherein the Word is not mentioned under the name of "law "judgments," "statutes," or the like terms, and they make this note it, -- "Where the Law faileth, there Christ is a surety of a better testament. There are those that render the words thus, -- "Dulcify, or, delight thy servant good," that is, make him joyful and comfortable in the pursuit and of that which is good.* --John Trapp.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 122.** --

1. Suretyship entreated.
2. Good expected.
3. Obligation acknowledged: "thy servant."

**Verse 122.** (first clause). -- After explaining the Psalmist's meaning as shown in the preceding verse, this sentence may be used for a sermon upon the Suretyship of Christ, by a reference to Hebrews 7:22.

1. A Surety for good wanted -- the deeply felt, though, perhaps, undefined want of a sin burdened soul.
  - a. The mere statement of a gratuitous pardon on the part of God is not thoroughly believable to such a soul, nor, if it could be believed in, would it give peace to the conscience. For, on the one hand, the pardon could not be perceived as just, nor as consistent with God's necessary hatred of sin, yet the conscience demands this perception; on the other hand, mere pardon does not show how the obligation to a perfect fulfilment of God's law, as righteousness, can be met, yet the conscience demands to see this before it can be

satisfied to realize peace Luther's experience.

(b) Now the Scriptures tell us that God "justifies the ungodly," and that his "righteousness" is declared in his justifying sinners: Romans 3:25. He can forgive sins with justice. He can treat sinners as righteous persons, and yet be righteous in doing so. How? By a Surety. Therefore, a Surety is the real want.

1. A Surety existent. Jesus is the Surety.

(a) He undertook to bear our obligation to the law's penalty, and fulfilled it in death. Thus pardon, though mercy to us, is an act of justice to Christ.

(b) He undertook our obligation to a perfect obedience, and satisfied for that in his fulfilment of the law; thus for God to treat us as righteous is only just to Christ.

(c) God has shown his satisfaction with the office of Christ, and with his work, by the resurrection and glorification of Christ. Hence a well accredited and efficient Surety exists.

1. A Surety nigh at hand.

(a) In the gospel, Christ as Surety comes to the sinner as truly as though he himself left his throne and came in his own person.

(b) Thus, he is so close that a sinner has but to receive the gospel into his heart and he receives Christ.

(c) Christ received as a Surety is the Surety for whosoever receives him. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 123.** Mine eyes fail for thy salvation. He wept, waited, and watched for God's saving hand, and these exercises tried the eyes of his faith till they were almost ready to give out. He looked to God alone, he looked eagerly, he looked long, he looked till his eyes ached. The mercy is, that if our eyes fail, God does not fail, nor do his eyes fail. Eyes are tender things, and so are our faith, hope and expectancy: the Lord will not try them above what they are able to bear. "And for the word of thy righteousness:" a word that would silence the unrighteous words of his oppressors. His eyes as well



as his ears waited for the Lord's word: he looked to see the divine word come forth as a fiat for his deliverance. He was "waiting for the verdict" -- the verdict of righteousness itself. How happy are we if we have righteousness on our side; for then that which is the sinners' terror is our hope, that which the proud dread is our expectation and desire. David left his reputation entirely in the Lord's hand, and was eager to be cleared by the word of the Judge rather than by any defence of his own. He knew that he had done right, and, therefore, instead of avoiding the supreme court, he begged for the sentence which he knew would work out his deliverance. He even watched with eager eyes for the judgment and the deliverance, the word of righteousness from God which meant salvation to himself.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 123.** -- *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation.* In times of great sorrow when the heart is oppressed with care, and when danger threatens on every side, the human eye expresses with amazing accuracy the distressed and anguished emotions of the soul. The posture here described is that of an individual who perceives himself surrounded with enemies of the most formidable character, who feels his own weakness and insufficiency to enter into conflict with them, but who is eagerly looking for the arrival of a devoted and powerful friend who has promised to succour him in the hour of his calamity. As his friend delays the hour of his coming, his fears and anxieties multiply, till he finds himself in the condition of one whose eyes fail and grow dim in looking for the approach of his great deliverer. In this condition was the suppliant here described, -- his enemies were ready to swallow him up, and except from heaven he had no hope of final extrication. To the promises of God he betook himself, and while waiting their accomplishment, and looking with the utmost eagerness to the word of God's righteousness, he gives utterance to the desponding sentiment, "Mine eyes fail for thy salvation." O for such warm and anxious desires for that great salvation, which will realize the victory over all our spiritual enemies, and enable us to shout triumphantly through all eternity in the name of our almighty Deliverer! --John Morison.

**Verse 123.** -- *Mine eyes fail...*for the word of thy righteousness. Albeit the words of promise be neither performed, nor like to be performed, yet faith should justify the promise, for true and faithful. --David Dickson.

**Verse 123.** -- *For the word of thy righteousness.* This would be the word of promised salvation, which the Lord had given in righteousness. What an amazing plea -- God on the ground of his own righteousness appealed to for deliverance -- and yet how true! Or this might be the word of his justice, the issuing of justice, the exercising of a righteous decision between him and his oppressors. He had looked for the Lord to interpose between them, and so to fulfil all he had promised on behalf of the believer. The Lord will vindicate his own. Are any in great difficulty; and are they waiting for the Lord to interpose, to whom they have committed their concerns? ... Wait on; he will not disappoint a gracious hope. --John Stephen.

**Verse 123.** -- *For the word of thy righteousness, or, "the word of thy justice";* that is to say, for the sentence of justice on my oppressors, as the first part of the verse teaches; for the passing this sentence will be equivalent to the granting the salvation which the psalmist so earnestly desired. --George Phillips.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 123.** -- Holy expectation -- long maintained, in danger of failing; this fact pleaded; reasons for never renouncing it.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 124.** Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy. Here he recollects himself: although before men he was so clear that he could challenge the word of righteousness, yet before the Lord, as his servant, he felt that he must appeal to mercy. We feel safest here. Our heart has more rest in the cry, "God be merciful to me," than in appealing to justice. It is well to be able to say, "I have done judgment and justice," and then to add in all lowliness, yet "deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy." The title of servant covers a plea; a master should clear the character of his servant if he be falsely accused, and rescue him from those who would oppress him; and, moreover, the master should show mercy to a servant? even if he deal severely with a stranger. The Lord condescendingly deals, or has communications with his servants, not spurning them, but communing with them; and this he does in a tender and merciful way, for in any other form of dealing we should be crushed into the dust. "And teach me thy statutes." This will be one way of dealing with us in mercy. We may expect a master to teach his own servant the meaning of his own orders. Yet since our ignorance arises from our own sinful stupidity, it is great mercy on God's part that he condescends to instruct us in his commands. For our ruler to become our teacher is an act of great grace, for which we cannot be too grateful. Among our mercies this is one of the choicest.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 124.** -- *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy.* If I am a "servant" of God, I can bring my services before him only upon the ground of "mercy"; feeling that for my best performances I need an immeasurable world of mercy -- pardoning -- saving -- everlasting mercy; and yet I am emboldened by the blood of Jesus to plead for my soul -- "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy."

But then I am ignorant as well as guilty; and yet I dare not pray for divine teaching, much and hourly as I need it, until I have afresh obtained mercy. "Mercy" is the first blessing, not only in point of importance, but in point of order. I must seek the Lord, and know him as a Saviour, before I can go to him with any confidence to be my teacher. But when once I have found acceptance to my petition -- "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy" -- my way will be opened to follow on my petition --

"Teach me thy statutes. Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies" -- that I may know, walk, yea, "run in the way of thy commandments" with an enlarged heart, Psalms 119:32. My plea is the same as I have before urged with acceptance (Psalms 119:94) -- "I am thy servant." --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 124.** -- *Thy mercy.* All the year round, every hour of every day, God is richly blessing us; both when we sleep and when we wake, his mercy waits upon us. The sun may leave off shining, but our God will never cease to cheer his children with his love. Like a river, his lovingkindness is always flowing with a fulness inexhaustible as his own nature, which is its source. Like the atmosphere which always surrounds the earth, and is always ready to support the life of man, the benevolence of God surrounds all his creatures; in it, as in their element, they live, and move, and have their being. Yet as the sun on summer days appears to gladden us with beams more warm and bright than at other times, and as rivers are at certain seasons swollen with the rain, and as the atmosphere itself on occasions is fraught with more fresh, more bracing, or more balmy influences than heretofore, so is it with the mercy of God; it hath its golden hours, its days of overflow, when the Lord magnifies his grace and lifteth high his love before the sons of men. --C.H.S.

**Verse 124.** -- *Teach me.* David had Nathan and Gad the prophets; and beside them, the ordinary Levites to teach him. He read the word of God diligently, and did meditate in the law night and day; but he acknowledgeth all this was nothing unless God did teach him. Other teachers speak to the ear, but God speaks to the heart: so Paul preached to Lydia, but God opened her heart. Let us pray for this grace. --William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 124-125.** -- The servant of God.

1. Making profession: "I am thy servant."
2. Making confession -- of guilt, dulness, ignorance.
3. Making petition -- for mercy, understanding, and teaching. --C.A.D.

**Verse 124.** -- Heavenly instruction a great mercy.

**Verse 124.** --

1. His confidence in divine mercy.
2. His submission to divine authority.
3. His prayer for divine teaching. --G.R.

**Verse 124.** -- A Perfect Prayer.

1. As to the matter of it.

(a) Here is nothing superfluous; no petition for wealth, nor for honours, nor for anything the worldling covets.

(b) Here is nothing wanting; "Deal with thy servant

according to thy mercy" comprehends everything the guilty soul needs; "Teach me thy statutes" comprehends all a saint needs to be anxious for.

1. As to the manner of it.

(a) It is direct and definite.

(b) It is simple and fervent.

(c) It is reverent yet bold.

1. As to the spirit of it.

(a) "Deal with thy servant"; a sense of obligation; a feeling of devotedness; a spirit of consecration to holy work.

(b) "Deal...according to thy mercy"; a sense of unworthiness; becoming humility; submissiveness to the divine will as to what form the mercy shall take; great faith in the mercy, its freeness and sufficiency.

(c) "Teach me thy statutes." Longing for holiness, sense of ignorance, of weakness, of dependence upon special divine spiritual influence. --J.F.

## **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 125.** I am thy servant. This is the third time he has repeated this title in this one section: he is evidently fond of the name, and conceives it to be very effective plea. We who rejoice that we are sons of God are by no the less delighted to be his servants. Did not the firstborn Son assume the servant's form and fulfil the servant's labour to the full? What high, honour can the younger brethren desire than to be made like the Heir of things.

Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. In the verse he sought teaching; but here he goes much further, and craves understanding. Usually, if the instructor supplies the teaching, the finds the understanding; but in our case we are far more dependent, must beg for understanding as well as teaching: this the ordinary cannot give, and we are thrice happy that our Divine Tutor can furnish us with it. We are to confess ourselves fools, and then our Lord will make us wise, as well as give us knowledge. The best understanding is that which enables us to render perfect obedience and to exhibit intelligent faith, and it is this which David desires, -- "understanding, that I may know thy testimonies." Some would rather not know these things; they prefer to be at ease in the dark rather than possess the light which leads to repentance and diligence. The servant of God longs to know in an understanding manner all that the Lord reveals of man and to man; he wishes to be so instructed

that he may apprehend and comprehend that which is taught him. A servant should not be ignorant concerning his master, or his master's business; he should study the mind, will, purpose, and aim of him whom he serves, for so only can he complete his service; and as no man knows these things so well as his master himself, he should often go to him for instructions, lest his very zeal should only serve to make him the greater blunderer.

It is remarkable that the Psalmist does not pray for understanding through acquiring knowledge, but begs of the Lord first that he may have the gracious gift of understanding, and then may obtain the desired instruction. All that we know before we have understanding is apt to spoil us and breed vanity in us; but if there be first an understanding heart, then the stores of knowledge enrich the soul, and bring neither sin nor sorrow therewith. Moreover, this gift of understanding acts also in the form of discernment and thus the good man is preserved from hoarding up that which is false and dangerous: he knows what are and what are not the testimonies of the Lord.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 125.** -- *I am thy servant; give me understanding*, etc. I am not a stranger to thee, but thine own domestic servant; let me want no grace, which may enable me to serve thee. -- William Cowper.

**Verse 125.** -- *I am thy servant*. That thou art the servant of God, thou shouldest regard as thy chiefest glory and blessedness. --Martin Geier.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 125.** --

1. An office accepted.
2. Fitness requested.
3. Discernment desired.

**Verse 125.** --

1. A cheerful acknowledgment: "I am thy servant."
2. A desire implied -- to serve more perfectly.
3. A need recognized -- Divine instruction in holy service.
4. A plea urged: "I am thy servant," therefore "Teach me," etc. --W.H.J.P.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 126.** It is time for thee, Lord, to work: For they have made void thy law. David was a servant, and therefore it was always his time to work: but being oppressed by a sight of man's ungodly behaviour, he feels that his Master's hand is wanted, and therefore he appeals to him to work against the working of evil. Men make void the law of God by denying it to be his law, by promulgating commands and doctrines in opposition to it, by setting up tradition in its place, or by utterly disregarding and scorning the authority of the lawgiver. Then sin becomes fashionable, and a holy

walk is regarded as a contemptible puritanism; vice is styled pleasure, and vanity bears the bell. Then the saints sigh for the presence and power of their God: Oh for an hour of the King upon the throne and the rod of iron! Oh for another Pentecost with all its wonders, to reveal the energy of God to gain sayers, and make them see that there is a God in Israel! Man's extremity, whether of need or sin, is God's opportunity. When the earth was without form and void, the Spirit came and moved upon the face of the waters; should he not come when society is returning to a like chaos? When Israel in Egypt were reduced to the lowest point, and it seemed that the covenant would be void, then Moses appeared and wrought mighty miracles; so, too, when the church of God is trampled down, and her message is derided, we may expect to see the hand of the Lord stretched out for the revival of religion, the defence of the truth, and the glorifying of the divine name. The Lord can work either by judgments which hurl down the ramparts of the foe; or by revivals which build up the walls of his own Jerusalem. How heartily may we pray the Lord to raise up new evangelists, to quicken those we all early have, to set his whole church on fire, and to bring the world to his feet. God's work is ever honourable and glorious; as for our work, it is as nothing apart from him.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS**

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee, Lord, to work.* Was ever vessel more hopelessly becalmed in mid ocean? or did crew ever cry with more frenzy for some favouring breeze than those should cry who man the Church of the living God? If God work not, it is certain there is nothing before the Church but the prospect of utter discomfiture and overthrow. Greater is the world than the Church if God be not in her. But if God be in her, she shall not be moved. May he help her, and that right early!

When he arises to work we know not what may be the form and fashion of his operations. He worketh according to the counsel of his own will; and who knows but that when once he awakes, and puts on his strength, it may not be confined in its results to the immediate and exclusive quickening of the spiritual life of the Church; but may be associated with providential upheavals and convulsions which will fill the heart of the world with astonishment and dismay. His spiritual kingdom does not stand in isolation. It has relations which closely involve it with the material universe, and with human society and national life. There have been times when God has worked, and the signs of his presence have been seen, in terrible shaking of the nations, in the ploughing up from their foundations of hoary injustice, in the smiting of grinding tyrannies, and in the emancipation of peoples whose life had been a long and hopeless moan. There have been times, too, and many, when he has worked through the elements of nature -- through blasting and mildew, through floods and famine, through locust, caterpillar and palmer worm; through flagging commerce, with its machinery rusting in the mill and its ships rotting in the harbour. All these things are his servants. Sometimes the sleep of the world, and the Church too, is so profound that it can be broken only by agencies like the wind, or fire, or earthquake, which made the prophet shiver at the mouth of the cave, and without which the voice

that followed, so still, so small and tender, would have lost much of its melting and subduing power. When society has become drugged with the Circean cup of worldliness, and the voices that come from eternity are unheeded, if not unheard, even terror has its merciful mission. The frivolous and superficial hearts of men have to be made serious, their idols have to be broken, their nests have to be stoned, or tossed from the trees where they had been made with so much care, and they have to be taught that if this life be all, it is but a phantom and a mockery. When the day of the Lord shall come, in which he shall begin to work, let us not marvel if it "shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." But this working of God will also take other shapes. Will it not be seen in the inspiration of the Church with faith in its own creed, so far as that creed has the warrant of the Divine word? Does the Church believe its creed? It writes it, sets it forth, sings it, defends it; but does it believe it, at least with a faith which begets either enthusiasm in itself, or respect from the world? Have not the truths which form the methodized symbols of the Church become propositions instead of living powers? Do they not lie embalmed with superstitious reverence in the ark of tradition, tenderly cherished for what they have been and done But is it not forgotten that if they be truths they are not dead and cannot die? They are true now, or they were never true; living now, or they never lived. Time cannot touch them, nor human opinion, nor the Church's sluggishness or unbelief, for they are emanations from the Divine essence, instinct with his own undecaying life. They are not machinery which may become antiquated and obsolete and displaced by better inventions; they are not methods of policy framed for conditions which are transient, and vanishing with them; they are not scaffolding within which other and higher truth is to be reared from age to age. They are like him who is the end of our conversation, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever." There is not one of them which, if the faith it awakens were but commensurate with its intrinsic worth, would not clothe the Church with a new and wondrous power. But what would be that power if that faith were to grasp them all? It would be life from the dead. --Enoch Mellor (1823-1881), in "The Hem of Christ's Garment, and other Sermons."

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee*, Lord, to work. expresses emphatically the proper time for the Lord to do his own work; as if the Psalmist had said, "It is not for us to prescribe the time and occasion for God to exercise his power, and to vindicate the authority of his own law; he does everything at the proper time, and he will at the proper season punish those who have made void his law, and who have become notorious for their impiety and wickedness." --George Phillips.

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time to work*, just as when the attack of some illness is becoming more severe, you hurry to the physician, that he may come more quickly, lest he should later be unable to do any good.

So when the prophet saw in the Holy Spirit the rebellion of the people, their luxury, pleasures, deceits, frauds, avarice, drunkenness, he runs, for our help, to Christ, whom he knew to be alone able to remedy such sins; implores him to come, and admits of no delay. --Ambrose, in Neale and Littledale.

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee, Lord, to work.* -- Infidelity was never more subtle, more hurtful, more plausible, perhaps more successful, than in the day in which we live. It has left the low grounds of vulgarity and coarseness and ribaldry, and entrenched itself upon the lofty heights of criticism, philology, and even science itself. It pervades to a fearful extent our popular literature; it has invested itself with the charms of poetry, to throw its spell over the public mind; it has endeavoured to inweave itself with science; and he must be little acquainted with the state of opinion in this land, who does not know that it is espoused by a large portion of the cultivated mind of this generation. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work." --John Angell James, 1785-1859.

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, etc.* To send the Messiah, to work righteousness, to fulfil the law and vindicate the honour of it, broken by men. It was always a notion of the Jews that the time of the Messiah's coming would be when it was a time of great wickedness in the earth; and which seems to agree with the word of God, and was true in fact. See [Matthew 2:17](#) 3:1-3,15-16 4:2. --John Gill.

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, etc.* True it is, Lord, that we are not to appoint thee thy times and limits, for thou art the Ancient of Days, Time's Creator and destination. Neither do we presume to press in at the portal of thy privy chamber, to "know the times and seasons" which thou our Father hast reserved in thine own power; yet, Lord, thou hast taught us, as to discern the face of the sky, so to descry the signs of the times, and from the cause to expect the effect which necessarily doth ensue. "Thou art a God full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness" ([Psalms 103:8](#)); and thou dost sustain many wrongs of the sons of men, being crushed with their sins as a cart is laden with sheaves: but if still they continue to load thee, thou wilt case thyself of that burden, and cast it on the ground of confusion. Thou art "slow to anger, but great in power, and wilt not surely clear the wicked" ([Nahum 1:3](#)). Thou dost for a long space hold thy peace at men's sins, and art still, and dost restrain thyself. But if men will not turn, thou wilt whet thy sword and bend thy bow, and make it ready. Patient thou art, and for a long time dost forbear thine hand; but when the forehead of sin begins to lose the blush of shame, when the bead roll of transgressions doth grow in score from East to West, when the cry of them pierceth above the clouds, when the height of wickedness is come unto the top, and the fruits thereof are ripe and full, then it is time for thee, Lord, to take notice of it, to awake like a giant, and to put to thine all revenging hand.

But our sins are already ripe, yea, rotten ripe, the measure of our iniquities is full up to the brim. Doubtless our land is sunken deep in iniquity; our tongues and works have been against the Lord, to



provoke the eyes of his glory; the trial of our countenance doth testify against us (Isaiah 3:8-9), yea, we declare our sins as Sodom; we hide them not, the cry of our sins is exceeding grievous, the clamours of them pierce the skies, and with a loud voice roar, saying: "How long, Lord, holy and true? How long ere thou come to avenge thyself on such a nation as this?" Revelation 6:10 Jeremiah 9:9. --George Webbe, in "A Posie of Spiritual Flowers," 1610.

**Verse 126.** -- *It is time for thee, Lord.* Some read it, and the original will bear it, "It is time to work for thee, O Lord;" it is time for every one in his place to appear on the Lord's side, against the threatening growth of profaneness and immorality. We must do what we can for the support of the sinking interests of religion, and, after all, we must beg of God to take the work into his own hands. --Matthew Henry.

**Verse 126.** -- *They have made void thy law.* In the second verse of this section he complained that the proud would oppress him, now he complains that they destroyed the law of God. Who, then, are David's enemies, who seek to oppress him? Only such as are enemies to God, and seek to destroy his law. A great comfort have we in this, that if we love the Lord, and study in a good conscience to serve him we can have no enemies but such as are enemies to God. --William Cowper.

**Verse 126.** -- *They have made void thy law.* As if they would not only sin against the Law, but sin away the Law, not only withdraw themselves from the obedience of it, but drive it out of the world; they would make void and repeal the holy acts of God, that their own wicked acts might not be questioned; and lest the Law should have a power to punish them, they will deny it a power to rule them; that's the force of the simple word here used, as applied to highest transgressing against the Law of God. --Joseph Caryl.

**Verse 126-127.** -- *Everything betters a saint.* Not only ordinances, word, sacraments, holy society, but even sinners and their very sinning. Even these draw forth their graces into exercise, and put them upon godly, broken hearted mourning. A saint sails with every wind. As the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst. Because "they have made void thy law, therefore do I love thy commandments." Holiness is the more owned by the godly, the more the world despiseth it. The most eminent saints were those of Caesar's (Nero's) house (Philippians 4:22); they who kept God's name were they who lived where Satan's throne was (Revelation 2:13). Zeal for God grows the hotter by opposition; and thereby the godly most labour to give the glory of God reparation. -- William Jenkyn (1612-1685), in "The Morning Exercises".

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 126-128.** --

1. A terrible fact: "They have made void thy law": Psalms 119:126.
2. Two blessed inferences: "Therefore," "Therefore," etc.: Psalms 119:127-128.

**Verse 126.** -- They make void the law, by denying inspiration, by exalting tradition, by antinomianism,

by scepticism, by indifference, etc.

**Verse 126.** --

1. There are times when sin is specially active and dominant.
2. Such times reveal the dependence of the church upon God.
3. Such times awaken the desires of the church for the intervention of God.
4. Such times are the times when God does arise to plead his own cause. -- W.H.J.P.

**Verse 126.** --

1. The work anticipated -- the vindication of the divine law.
2. The work delayed.
3. The work executed: "It is time," etc. --G.R.

### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 127.** Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. As it was God's time to work so it was David's time to love. So far from being swayed by the example of evil men, so as to join them in slighting the Scriptures, he was the rather led into a more vehement love of them. As he saw the commandments slighted by the ungodly, his heart was in sympathy with God, and he felt a burning affection for his holy precepts. It is the mark of a true believer that he does not depend upon others for his religion, but drinks water out of his own well, which springs up even when the cisterns of earth are all dried. Our holy poet amid a general depreciation of the law felt his own esteem of it rising so high that gold and silver sank in comparison. Wealth brings with it so many conveniences that men naturally esteem it, and gold as the symbol of it is much set by; and yet, in the judgment of the wise, God's laws are more enriching, and bring with them more comfort than all the choicest treasures. The Psalmist could not boast that he always kept the commands; but he could declare that he loved them; he was perfect in heart, and would fain have been perfect in life. He judged God's holy commands to be better than the best earthly thing, yea, better than the best sort of the best earthly thing; and this esteem was confirmed and forced into expression by those very oppositions of the world which drive hypocrites to forsake the Lord and his ways.

"The dearer, for their rage,

Thy words I love and own, --

A wealthier heritage

Than gold and precious stone."

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 127.** -- *Therefore I love thy commandments above gold*, etc. Partly, because it is one evidence

of their excellency, that they are disliked by the vilest of men. Partly, out of a just indignation and opposition against my sworn enemies; and partly, because the great and general apostasy of others makes this duty more necessary to prevent their own and other men's relapses. --Matthew Pool.

**Verse 127.** -- *I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.* The image employed brings before us the picture of the miser; his heart and his treasure are in his gold. With what delight he counts it! with what watchfulness he keeps it! hiding it in safe custody, lest he should be despoiled of that which is dearer to him than life. Such should Christians be, spiritual misers, counting their treasure which is "above fine gold"; and "hiding it in their hearts," in safe keeping, where the great despoiler shall not be able to reach it. Oh, Christians! how much more is your portion to you than the miser's treasure! Hide it; watch it; retain it. You need not be afraid of covetousness in spiritual things: rather "covet earnestly" to increase your store; and by living upon it and living in it, it will grow richer in extent, and more precious in value. --Charles Bridges.

**Verse 127.** -- *I love thy commandments.* He professes not that he fulfilled them, but that he loved them; and truly it is a great progress in godliness, if we be come thus far, as from our heart, to love them. The natural man hates the commandments of God; they are so contrary to his corruption; but the regenerate man, as he hates his own corruption, so he loves the word, because according to it he desires to be reformed. And here is our comfort, that, albeit we cannot do what is commanded, yet if we love to do it, it is an argument of grace received. "Above gold" etc. It is lawful to love those creatures which God hath appointed for our use; with these conditions: the one is, that the first seat in our affection of love be reserved to God; and any other thing we love, that we love it in him and for him, and give it only the second room. Thus David, being a natural man, loved his natural food; but he protests he loved the law of the Lord more than his appointed food; and here he loves the commandments of God above all gold. --William Cowper.

#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 127.** -- The world's assault upon the truth a reason for our loving it.

**Verse 127.** --

1. The object of love: "Thy commandments."
2. The degree of love: "above gold," etc.
3. The reason of this love: "therefore," etc., because its object must ultimately prevail. -- G.R.

**Verse 127.** -- God's will versus the golden idol.

1. God's commandments are better than gold.
2. The love of them is proportionably nobler.
3. The unmeasurable superiority of character they produce. --W.B.H.

#### **EXPOSITION**

**Verse 128.** Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. Because the ungodly found fault with the precepts of God, therefore David was all the more sure of their being right. The censure of the wicked is a certificate of merit; that which they sanction we may justly suspect, but that which they abominate we may ardently, admire. The good man's delight in God's law is unreserved, he believes in all God's precepts concerning all things.

And I hate every false way. Love to truth begat hatred of falsehood. This godly man was not indifferent to anything, but that which he did not love he hated. He was no chip in the porridge without flavour; he was a good lover or a good hater, but he was never a waverer. He knew what he felt, and expressed it. He was no Gallio, caring for none of the things. His detestation was as unreserved as his affection; he had not a good word for any practice which would not bear the light of truth. The fact that such large multitudes follow the broad road had no influence upon this holy mail, except to make him more determined to avoid every form of error and sin. May the Holy Spirit so rule in our hearts that our affections may be in the same decided condition towards the precepts of the word.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS**

**Verse 128.** -- *I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.* It is no compromising testimony to the integrity and value of the Lord's precepts with which the Psalmist concludes, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right" -- every command, however hard; every injunction, however distasteful; every precept, however severe; even cut off thy right hand, pluck out thy right eye; forget thine own people and thy father's house; take up thy cross daily; sell all that thou hast -- yea, Lord, even so, "all thy precepts concerning all things are right." What a blessed truth to arrive at, and find comfort in! --Barton Bouchier.

**Verse 128.** -- *I esteem all thy precepts, etc.* We must not only respect all God's commandments, but also respect them all alike, and give them all the like respect. Obedience must be universal. --R. Mayhew, in "The death of Death in the Death of Christ," 1679.

**Verse 128.** -- *All.* The many "alls" in this verse used (not unlike that in [Ezekiel 44:30](#)) showeth the integrity and universality of his obedience. "All" is but a little word, but of large extent. --John Trapp.

**Verse 128.** -- *All thy precepts concerning all things to be right.* He had a high estimate of God's precepts; he thought them just in all things; just, because they prescribe nothing but that which is exactly just; and just, because they bring a just punishment on the transgressors, and a reward to the righteous. --William Nicholson.

**Verse 128.** -- *The upright man squares all his actions by a right rule: carnal reason cannot bias him,* corrupt practice cannot sway him, but God's sacred word directs him. Hence it is that his respect is universal to all divine precepts, avoiding all evil, performing all good without exception. Thus David's upright man here esteems God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and therefore is careful to observe them. Hence it is, that he is the same man at all times, in all places; because at all times, and

in all societies, he acts by one and the same rule. It is a good saying of S. Cyprian, "ea non est religio, sed dissimulatio, quae per omnia non constat sibi", that is not piety, but hypocrisy, that is not in all things like itself, since the upright man measures every action by the straight line of divine precept. --Abraham Wright.

**Verse 128.** -- *I hate every false way.* The best trial of our love to God and his word is the contrary -- hatred of sin and impiety: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." He that loves a tree, hates the worm that consumes it; he that loves a garment, hates the moth that eats it; he that loveth life, abhorreth death; and he that loves the Lord hates every thing that offends him. Let men take heed to this, who are in love of their sins: how can the love of God be in them?

Religion binds us not only to hate one way of falsehood, but all the ways of it. As there is nothing good, but in some measure a godly man loves it; so is there nothing evil, but in some measure he hates it. And this is the perfection of the children of God; a perfection not of degrees; for we neither love good, nor hate evil as we should; but a perfection of parts; because we love every good, and we hate every evil in some measure. --William Cowper.

**Verse 128.** -- *And I hate.* The Being who loves the good with infinite intensity must hate evil with the same intensity. So far from any incompatibility between this love and this hatred, they are the counterparts of each other, -- opposite poles of the same moral emotion. --John W. Haley, in "An Examination of the alleged Discrepancies of the Bible," 1875.

**Verse 128.** -- *I hate every false way.* If Satan get a grip of thee by any one sin, is it not enough to carry thee to damnation? As the butcher carries the beast to the slaughter, sometime bound by all the four feet, and sometime by one only; so it is with Satan. Though thou be not a slave to all sin; if thou be a slave to one, the grip he hath of thee, by that one sinful affection, is sufficient to captive thee. --William Cowper.

### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

**Verse 128.** (first clause). -- This view should be taken of all divine precepts in their bearing,

1. Toward Christ.
2. Toward Self.
3. Toward the World.
4. Toward the Church.
5. Toward Heaven. --W.J.

**Verse 128.** -- The Bible right.

1. Its science is correct.
2. Its history is true.
3. Its promises are genuine.
4. Its morality is perfect.

5. Its doctrines are divine. --W.J.

**Verse 128.** Learn four lessons, --

1. It is a good thing when wicked men do not praise the truth they cannot love.
2. It is a suspicious circumstance when they are found speaking well of any part of it; it is a Judas' kiss in order to betray its interests.
3. It must be right to accept and love what the wicked oppose.
4. It is always safe to be on the opposite side to them. --J.F.