

STUDIES IN PSALMS

3. The three-fold appeal of verses 2-4 is interesting for at least two reasons. What are they?
4. What was "the strait" and "the roomlyplace" of verse 5?
5. It is more important to express our adoration and praise than petitions. Why?
6. Rotherham's heading: "Entangling alliances severed" is an innovation. Why? Discuss.
7. Who is the enemy of vs. 13? How decided?
8. "Jubilation in the homes of the righteous" (vs. 15, 16) offers a real exegesis problem. What is it?
9. Rotherham firmly states "imaginative applications *are not exegesis*"—with this we agree. But, we wonder who exercises more imagination—the Evangelical writers or Rotherham? Discuss.
10. What are the "gates of righteousness" of verse 19? Is there any application for us in this? Discuss.
11. From vs. 21 to the end of the psalm we have a different literary form. What is it? What building is here involved?
- 12.. Who voices these words: "A stone the builders rejected hath become the head of the corner"?
13. When were the above words fulfilled?
14. The figure of the cornerstone and the foundation was very familiar to Israel. Give examples.
15. Are we to believe Jesus is the chief—once rejected—later accepted cornerstone of the Jewish nation—or regenerated Israel? Discuss.
16. The three English words: "do save, pray" are quite significant when studied in-depth. Discuss.
17. Verse 26 offers a beautiful thought for discussion—please take the time to understand the point and application here made.
18. Jesus twice fulfilled the words of vs. 26. Explain.
19. Verse 27 gives a problem. What is it? How answered?
20. This is indeed a magnificent psalm. How much of it did the Jewish nation understand?

PSALM 119

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Jehovah's Will in Relation to Human Character and Conduct, celebrated in Twenty-two Alphabetical Stanzas, and by the aid of Eight Comprehensive Synonyms.

PSALM 119
ANALYSIS

(The analysis of this Psalm may be seen in its superficial structure, and further discovered by an examination of the following Table of Synonyms.)

SYNONYMS EXPRESSIVE OF JEHOVAH'S WILL IN RELATION TO
HUMAN CONDUCT AS CELEBRATED IN PSALM 119.

TABLE OF PRINCIPAL WORDS AND PHRASES USED IN
CONNECTION WITH EACH SYNONYM.

English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended	
1. COMMANDMENTS	<i>mizwah</i>	22	22	look well to, 6; go astray from, 10, 21, 110; run in way of, 32; lead in path of, 35; delight in, 47, 143; keep, (55), 60; believe in, 66; understand in order to learn, 73; are faithfulness, 86, 151; broad, 96; make wise, 98; observe, 115; love, 47, 127; long for, 131; quicken, (156), done, 166; not forgotten, 176.
2. DECISIONS (appointments)	<i>mishpat</i>	23	22	learn, 7; rehearse of thy mouth, 13; long for, 20; esteem, 30; good, 39; wait for, 43; remember, 52; thanks for, 62; better than g. and s., 72; righteous, 75; execute on (just decision), 84; h. and earth stand by, 91; not turned aside from, 102; keep, 106; afraid of, 120; done, 121; shew favour ac. to, 132; equitable, 137; quicken ac. to, 149; righteous and age-abiding, 160; praise for righteous, 164; sing of, 172.
3. LAW or INSTRUCTION	<i>torah</i>	25	22	walk in, 1; delight in, (16), 70, 77, 92, 174; discern wonders out of, 18; favour with, 29; observe, 34; keep, 44, 136; forsake, 53; not forgotten, 61, 109, 153; men not ac. to, 85; love, 97, 113, 165; frustrate,

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English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended
4. PRECEPTS or CHARGES	<i>pikkudh</i>	21	22 126; truth (or faithfulness), 142; go far from, 150. keep, 4, 63, 128, 134, 168; so-liloquise in, 15, 78; observe, (22), 56, 69, 100; cause to understand, 27; long for, 40; sought out, 45, 94; not forsaken, 87, do, (112); stray from, 118; not forgotten, 141; know from, 152; love, 159; choose, 173.
5. PROMISE or SAYING	<i>'imrah</i>	19	22 keep, (5), 67; treasure, 11; not hide, (19); quicken ac. to, (25), 107, 154; leadeth to revere, 38; salvation ac. to, 41; hath quickened, 50; shew favour ac. to, 58; comfort ac. to, 76; eyes bedimmed for, 82, 123; to gen. after gen., 90; smooth (sweet), 103; uphold ac. to, 116; direct footsteps in, 133; love, refined, 140; soliloquise in, 148; joyful over, 162; deliver ac. to, 170.
6. STATUTES	<i>hok hukkah</i>	19	22 keep, 8; teach me, 12, 26, 64, 68, (108), 124, 135, 172; soliloquise in, 23, 48; point out to me the way of, 33; become melodies, 54; be thorough in, 80; not forgotten, 83, 93; get understanding out of, (104); delight in, 117; righteous, (144); observe, 145; not sought after, 155; love, 163.
7. TESTIMONIES	<i>'edah 'eduth</i>	23	22 observe, 2; rejoice in, 14; delight, 23; keep close to, 31; incline heart to, 36; speak of bef. kings, 46; swerved from, 51, 157; turned feet to, 59; learn, (71); know, 79; keep, 88, 146, 167; dil. consider, 95; are soliloquy, 99; take as inheritance, 111; love, 119, 167; get to know, 125; wonderful, observe them, 129; commanded as righteous and faithful, 138; help me, (175).

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English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended
8. WORD	<i>dhabhar</i>	22	22 walk in, (3); take heed ac. to, 9; keep, 17, 57, 101; raise up ac. to, 28; quicken, 37; trust in, 42; remember, on wh. hope, 49; deal well ac. to, 65; wait for, 74, 81, 114, 147; stationed in heavens, 89; lamp and light, 105; surety with, (122); opening giveth light, 130; forgot-ten, 139; not kept, (158); stood in awe of, 161; cause understanding ac. to, 169.

[1. THE EIGHTFOLD ALEPH.]

Each verse in the Hebrew beginning with the letter Aleph;
and so with the rest.

- 1 How happy the blameless in behaviour—¹
who walk in the LAW of Jehovah.
- 2 How happy they who observe his TESTIMONIES—
with a whole heart do they seek after him.
- 3 Yea they have not wrought perversity—
in his (WORD)² have they walked.
- 4 Thou thyself hast commanded thy PRECEPTS—
to be kept³ diligently.
- 5 Ah! that my ways might be established—
to keep thy (PROMISE).⁴
- 6 Then shall I not be put to shame—
when looking well unto all thy COMMANDMENTS.
- 7 I will thank thee with uprightness⁵ of heart—
when I learn thy righteous DECISIONS.
- 8 Thy STATUTES will I keep—
do not forsake me utterly.

1. U.: "way."

2. M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight synonyms: "word" otherwise missing from stanza.

3. Ml.: "to keep."

4. M.T.: "statutes," in ver. 8: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

5. Or: "straightforwardness."

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[2. THE EIGHTFOLD BETH.]

- 9 Whereby shall a young man keep⁶ pure his path?—
by taking heed according to thy WORD.⁷
- 10 With all my heart have I sought after thee—
let me not go astray from thy COMMANDMENTS.
- 11 In my heart have I treasured thy PROMISE—⁸
to the end I may not sin against thee.
- 12 Blessed art thou Jehovah—
teach me thy STATUTES.
- 13 With my lips have I told
of all the DECISIONS of thy mouth.
- 14 In the way of thy TESTIMONIES have I rejoiced—
as over all riches.
- 15 In thy PRECEPTS will I soliloquise—
that I may discern thy paths.
- 16 In thy (LAW)⁹ will I delight myself—
I will not forget thy word.¹⁰

[3. THE EIGHTFOLD GIMEL.]

- 17 Deal bountifully with thy servant I shall live—¹¹
so shall I keep thy WORD.¹²
- 18 Unveil thou mine eyes that I may discern
wonderful things¹³ out of thy LAW.
- 19 A sojourner¹⁴ am I in the earth—¹⁵
do not hide from me thy (PROMISE).¹⁶
- 20 Crushed is my soul with longing
for thy DECISIONS at all times.
- 21 Thou hast rebuked the insolent as accursed—¹⁷
who go astray from thy COMMANDMENTS.

6. Or: "make."

7. Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

8. Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "promises" (pl.)—Gn.

9. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 12: "law" not otherwise in stanza.

10. In some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

11. Cp. Isa. 38:19.

12. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

13. Cp. ver. 27.

14. Cp. ver. 54, Ps. 39:12, Gen. 47:9.

15. Or: "land."

16. M.T.: "commandments"—in ver. 21: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

17. Or: "insolent—accursed are they who," etc.

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- 22 Roll off from me reproach and contempt—
for thy (PRECEPTS)¹⁸ have I observed.
- 23 Although princes have taken their seat against me have
talked—
thy servant doth soliloquise in thy STATUTES.
- 24 Yea¹⁹ thy TESTIMONIES are my delight—
[they are] my counsellors.²⁰

[4. THE EIGHTFOLD DALETH.]

- 25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust—
quicken me according to thy (PROMISE).²¹
- 26 My ways I recounted and thou didst answer me—
teach me thy STATUTES.
- 27 The way of thy PRECEPTS cause thou me to understand—
so will I soliloquise in thy wondrous things.²²
- 28 My soul hath wept itself away for grief—
raise me up according to thy WORD.²³
- 29 The way of falsehood remove from me—²⁴
and with thy LAW be gracious unto me.²⁵
- 30 The way of faithfulness have I chosen—
thy DECISIONS do I esteem.²⁶
- 31 I have kept close to thy TESTIMONIES—
Jehovah! do not put me to shame.
- 32 The way of thy COMMANDMENTS will I run—
for thou wilt enlarge my heart.²⁷

[5. THE EIGHTFOLD HE.]

- 33 Point out to me Jehovah the way of thy STATUTES—
and I will observe it unto the end.

18. M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 24: "precepts" not otherwise in stanza.

19. So Dr., Br.; also Per.; "Nevertheless" (thus connecting vers. 23, 24)
—Del.

20. Ml.: "my men of counsel"="my counsellers"="my counsellors."

21. M.T.: "word"—in ver. 28: "promise" otherwise not in stanza.

22. Cp. vers. 18, 129.

23. Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "according to thy words" (pl). But
other cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "in (or 'by') thy words" (pl).—Gn.

24. Cp. Mt. 6:13.

25. "And favour me with Thine instruction" ("torah not having the
notion of fixed doctrine, but that of living empirical instruction")—Del.
"Grant me thy law graciously"—A.V., R.V., Dr. "With thy law be gracious
to me"—Br., Per. "Bestow upon me thy law"—Carter. "Be gracious to me
according to thy law"—Aglen.

26. So Dr. "Have I set before me"—Del.

27. "That is, cause it to swell for joy." Cp. Isa. 60:5—Dr. Sp. I.
Watts'h'm. "My God the spring," ver. 4.

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- 34 Cause me to understand that I may observe thy LAW—
and I will keep it with a whole heart.
- 35 Lead me in the path of thy COMMANDMENTS—
for therein do I find²⁸ pleasure.
- 36 Incline my heart unto thy TESTIMONIES—
and not unto covetousness.
- 37 Cause mine eyes to pass on from beholding unreality—²⁹
by thy (WORD)³⁰ quicken thou me.
- 38 Confirm unto thy servant thy PROMISE—
which leadeth men to revere thee.³¹
- 39 Cause to pass away my reproach which I have feared—
for thy DECISIONS are good.
- 40 Lo! I have longed for thy PRECEPTS—
in thy righteousness quicken thou me.

[6. THE EIGHTFOLD WAW.]

- 41 And let thy kindness reach me O Jehovah—
thy salvation according to thy PROMISE.
- 42 And I will make answer to him that reproacheth me—
for³² I trust in thy WORD.
- 43 And do not snatch away from my mouth a truthful word
utterly—
because for thy DECISIONS have I waited.
- 44 And I will keep thy LAW continually—
to the ages³³ and beyond.
- 45 And I will walk to and fro in a roomy place—³⁴
because thy PRECEPTS have I sought out.³⁵
- 46 And I will speak of thy TESTIMONIES before kings—
and shall not be put to shame.
- 47 And I will delight myself in thy COMMANDMENTS—
the which I have loved.

28. Or: "have I found."

29. So Dr. "Without real, *i.e.*, without divine substance; God-opposed teaching and life"—Del. "Worthlessness"—Br. "Delusion"—Carter. "Perhaps *from looking on idols*"—Aglen. And cp. Mt. 6:13.

30. M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight; "word" not otherwise in stanza.

31. Cp. 130:4.

32. Or: "that."

33. U.: "to times age-abiding."

34. Cp. 18:19, 31:8, 118:5.

35. Or: "studied."

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48 And I will lift up mine open hands⁸⁶ unto thy
commandments—⁸⁷
and will soliloquise in thy STATUTES.

[7. THE EIGHTFOLD ZAYLN.]

49 Remember the WORD to thy servant—
seeing that thou hast caused me to hope.
50 This is my comfort in my humiliation—⁸⁸
that thy PROMISE hath quickened me.
51 Insolent men have scorned me exceedingly—
from thy (TESTIMONIES)⁸⁹ have I not swerved.
52 I have remembered thy DECISIONS [that have been] from
antiquity Jehovah—
and have consoled myself.
53 A ranging heat hath seized me by reason of the lawless—
forsakers of thy LAW.
54 Melodies have thy STATUTES become to me—
in my house of sojourn.⁴⁰
55 I have remembered in the night thy name Jehovah!
and have kept thy (COMMANDMENTS).⁴¹
56 This hath become mine—
that thy PRECEPTS have I observed.

[8. THE EIGHTFOLD HETH.]

57 My portion Jehovah!
I have said⁴² I would keep thy WORDS.
58 I have sought the smile of thy face⁴³ with a whole heart—
be gracious unto me according to thy PROMISE.
59 I thought on my ways—
and turned my feet unto thy TESTIMONIES.
60 I have hastened and not delayed—
to keep thy COMMANDMENTS.
61 The meshes of lawless men have enclosed me—
thy LAW have I not forgotten.

36. Ml.: "palms."

37. M.T. adds: "which I have loved"—"repeated probably by error from ver. 47"—Dr.

38. Cp. vers. 67, 71, 75, 92, 107.

39. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "testimonies" not otherwise in stanza.

40. Cp. ver. 19, Ps. 39:12, Gen. 47:9. Or—may not the allusion be to a temporary banishment? Cp. and consider Pss. 42, 43.

41. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "commandments" not otherwise in stanza.

42. Or: "promised." Cp. 1 Ch. 27:23, 2 Ch. 21:7, Est. 4:7, 2 K. 8:19, Neh. 9:23; hence *'imrah* easily becomes "promise" where context favours.

43. "Lit. make the face of any one sweet pleasant"—O.G. 318b.

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- 62 At midnight I arise to give thanks to thee—
because of thy righteous DECISIONS.
63 Companion am I to all who revere thee—
and to them who keep thy PRECEPTS.
64 Of thy kindness Jehovah the earth is full—
thy STATUTES O teach me.

[9. THE EIGHTFOLD TETH.]

- 65 Well hast thou dealt with thy servant—
O Jehovah according to thy WORD.
66 Good perception⁴⁴ and knowledge teach thou me—
for in thy COMMANDMENTS have I believed.
67 Before I was humbled⁴⁵ I was going astray—
but now thy PROMISE⁴⁶ have I kept.
68 Good art thou and a doer of good—⁴⁷
teach me thy STATUTES.
69 Insolent men have plastered falsehood over me—⁴⁸
I with a whole heart will observe thy PRECEPTS.
70 Unfeeling like fat⁴⁹ is their heart—
I in thy LAW have found delight.
71 Well was it for me that I was humbled—⁵⁰
to the end I might learn thy (TESTIMONIES).⁵¹
72 Better to me the (DECISIONS)⁵² of thy mouth—⁵³
than thousands of gold and silver.

[10. THE EIGHTFOLD YODH.]

- 73 Thine own hands made me and established me—
cause me to understand that I may learn thy
COMMANDMENTS.
74 They who revere thee shall see me and rejoice—
that⁵⁴ for thy WORD I waited⁵⁵

44. Ml.: "taste"—quick moral perception.

45. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

46. "Promise"—if understood as conditional or directory: else, "saying."

47. Cp. Wesley's hymn: "Good thou art."

48. So Dr.

49. "Impervious to good influences; cp. Isa. 6:10"—Dr.

50. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

51. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 68: "testimonies" not otherwise in stanza.

52. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 70: "decisions" not otherwise in stanza.

53. Cp. vers. 13, 88.

54. Or: "because."

55. Cp. 35:27.

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- 75 I know Jehovah that righteous are thy DECISIONS—
and in faithfulness didst thou humble⁵⁶ me.
- 76 Let thy kindness pray serve to comfort me—
according to thy PROMISE to thy servant.
- 77 Let thy compassions reach me that I may live—
for thy LAW is my delight.
- 78 Put to shame⁵⁷ be insolent men that with falsehood they
deprived me of justice—⁵⁸
I soliloquise in thy PRECEPTS.
- 79 Let those who revere thee turn⁵⁹ unto me—
and they shall⁶⁰ know thy TESTIMONIES.
- 80 Let my heart be blameless⁶¹ in thy STATUTES—
to the end I may not be put to shame.

[11. THE EIGHTFOLD KAPH.]

- 81 My soul languisheth⁶² for thy salvation—
for thy WORD have I waited.
- 82 Bedimmed are mine eyes for thy PROMISE—
saying When wilt thou comfort me?
- 83 Though I have become like a wine-skin in smoke
thy STATUTES have I not forgotten.
- 84 How many are the days of thy servant?
when wilt thou execute on my persecutors a DECISION?⁶³
- 85 Insolent men have digged for me pits—
who are not according to thy LAW.
- 86 All thy COMMANDMENTS are faithfulness—
falsely⁶⁴ have they persecuted me help me!
- 87 Almost had they made an end of me⁶⁵ in the land—⁶⁶
but I forsook not thy PRECEPTS.
- 88 According to thy kindness quicken me—
that I may keep the TESTIMONY⁶⁷ of thy mouth.

56. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

57. Cp. 35:26.

58. So (prob.)—O.G.

59. Or: "return."

60. Or: "who"—ancient authorities divided.

61. Or: "thorough"; cp. ver. 113.

62. Cp. 84:2.

63. A pos. error for the customary "thy decisions."

64. Cp. ver. 78: and 35:19.

65. Cp. 35:25.

66. Or: "earth."

67. "Read 'testimonies' as usual"—Br.

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[12. THE EIGHTFOLD LAMEDH.]

- 89 To the ages⁶⁸ O Jehovah—⁶⁹
thy WORD is stationed in the heavens.
- 90 To generation after generation is thy PROMISE—⁷⁰
thou hast⁷¹ established the earth and it standeth.
- 91 By thy DECISIONS they stand to-day—
for they all⁷² are thy servants.
- 92 Unless thy LAW had been my delight—
then should I have perished in my humiliation.⁷³
- 93 To the ages will I not forget thy STATUTES—⁷⁴
for by them hast thou quickened me.
- 94 Thine am I O save me—
for thy PRECEPTS have I sought out.⁷⁵
- 95 For me have lawless men waited to destroy me—
thy TESTIMONIES do I diligently consider.
- 96 To all completeness have I seen an end—
broad is thy COMMANDMENT exceedingly.

[13. THE EIGHTFOLD MEM.]

- 97 Oh how I love thy LAW!—
all the day is it my soliloquy.
- 98 Beyond mine enemies shall thy COMMANDMENT make me
wise—
for age-abiding it is mine.
- 99 Beyond all my teachers have I shewn understanding—
because thy TESTIMONIES are a soliloquy to me.
- 100 Beyond elders do I get understanding—
because thy PRECEPTS have I observed.
- 101 From every path of wickedness have I restrained⁷⁶ my feet—
to the end I might keep thy WORD.
- 102 From thy DECISIONS have I not turned aside—
for thou thyself hast directed me.

68. U.: "To times age-abiding."

69. "For ever is Jahve"—Del.

70. M.T.: "faithfulness"—not a syn.: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

71. Or: "didst."

72. "All things"—Dr. "All beings"—Del.

73. Cp. refs. to ver. 50, and cp. Gen. 8:21, 22, also Ps. 33:6-9.

74. M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 94: "statutes" not otherwise in stanza.

75. Or: "studied."

76. Dr. after P.B.V.: "refrained."

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- 103 How pleasant⁷⁷ to my palate is thy PROMISE⁷⁸—
more than honey to my mouth.
104 Out of thy (STATUTES)⁷⁹ do I get understanding—
therefore do I hate every path of falsehood.

[14. THE EIGHTFOLD NUN.]

- 105 A lamp to my foot is thy WORD—
and a light to my path.
106 I have sworn and have confirmed it—
to keep thy righteous DECISIONS.
107 I have been humbled⁸⁰ exceedingly Jehovah!
quicken thou me according to thy (PROMISE),⁸¹
108 The freewill offerings of my mouth accept pray Jehovah!
and thy (STATUTES)⁸² teach thou me.
109 My life⁸³ is in mine open hand⁸⁴ continually—
yet thy LAW have I not forgotten.
110 The lawless set a trap for me—
yet from thy COMMANDMENTS⁸⁵ I went not astray.
111 I have taken as an inheritance thy TESTIMONIES to the ages—
for the exultation of my heart are they.
112 I have inclined my heart to do thy (PRECEPTS)—⁸⁶
a reward to the ages.

[15. THE EIGHTFOLD SAMECH.]

- 113 Half-hearted ones⁸⁷ do I hate—
but thy LAW do I love.
114 My hiding-place and my shield art thou—
for thy WORD have I waited.
115 Depart from me ye evil-doers—
and I will observe the COMMANDMENTS of my God.
116 Uphold me according to thy PROMISE that I may live—
and do not shame me out⁸⁸ of my hope.

77. Ml.: "smooth."

78. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "are thy promises" (pl.)—Gn.

79. M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 100: "statutes" not otherwise in stanza

80. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

81. M.T.: "word"—in ver. 105: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

82. M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 106.

83. U.: "soul."

84. Ml.: "palm."

85. M.T.: "precepts"—"commandments" not otherwise in stanza.

86. M.T.: "statutes"—(now) in ver. 108.

87. Cp. ver. 80n.

88. Or: "on account."

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- 117 Support me that I may be saved—
and I will delight in thy STATUTES continually.
- 118 Thou hast made light of all who stray from thy
(PRECEPTS)—⁸⁹
because of the falsehood of their deceit.⁹⁰
- 119 Dross have I accounted⁹¹ all the lawless of the land—⁹²
therefore do I love thy TESTIMONIES.
- 120 My flesh hath bristled up from dread of thee—
and of thy DECISIONS have I been afraid.

[16. THE EIGHTFOLD AYIN.]

- 121 I have done (thy righteous DECISIONS)—⁹³
do not leave me to mine oppressors.
- 122 Be thou surety (with thy WORD)⁹⁴ for thy servant for good—
let not insolent men oppress me.
- 123 Mine eyes have become dim for thy salvation—
and for thy righteous PROMISE.
- 124 Deal with thy servant according to thy kindness—
and thy STATUTES teach thou me.
- 125 Thy servant am I cause me to have understanding—
so shall I get to know thy TESTIMONIES.
- 126 It is time for Jehovah to act—
they have frustrated thy LAW.
- 127 Therefore do I love thy COMMANDMENTS—
more than gold yea than fine gold.
- 128 Therefore all thy PRECEPTS concerning me have I kept—⁹⁵
every path of falsehood⁹⁶ do I hate.

[17. THE EIGHTFOLD PE.]

- 129 Wonderful⁹⁷ are thy TESTIMONIES—
therefore hath my soul observed them.
- 130 The opening of thy WORD⁹⁸ giveth light—
causing the simple to understand.

89. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 117: "precepts" not otherwise in stanza.

90. Cp. 35:19.

91. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.

92. Or: "earth."

93. M.T.: "justice and righteousness"—in which case no synonym in ver.

94. So Br. M.T.: no synonym.

95. So. *Gt.*

96. Cp. ver. 118, Ph. 35:19.

97. Cp. vers. 18, 27.

98. M.T.: "words" (pl.).

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- 131 My mouth have I opened wide and panted—⁹⁹
because for thy COMMANDMENTS have I longed.
- 132 Turn to him that loveth thy name—
and according to thy DECISIONS be gracious unto me.¹⁰⁰
- 133 My footsteps direct thou in thy PROMISE—¹⁰¹
and let no iniquity¹⁰² have dominion over me.
- 134 Ransom me from the oppression of man—
and I will keep thy PRECEPTS.
- 135 Thy face light thou up on thy servant—
and teach me thy STATUTES.
- 136 Streams¹⁰³ of water have run down mine eyes—¹⁰⁴
because they have not kept thy LAW.

[18. THE EIGHTFOLD ZADHE.]

- 137 Righteous art thou Jehovah—
and straightforward¹⁰⁵ are thy DECISIONS.
- 138 Thou hast commanded as¹⁰⁶ righteousness thy TESTIMONIES—
and as¹⁰⁶ exceeding faithfulness.
- 139 My zeal hath undone¹⁰⁷ me—
for mine adversaries have forgotten thy WORD.¹⁰⁸
- 140 Refined¹⁰⁹ is thy PROMISE to the uttermost—
and thy servant loveth it.
- 141 Young¹¹⁰ am I and despised—
thy PRECEPTS have I not forgotten.
- 142 Thy righteousness is right to the ages—¹¹¹
and thy LAW is truth.
- 143 Strait and stress have found me—
thy COMMANDMENTS are my delight.

99. Cp. Pss. 42, 43.

100. Verse emended after Br., restoring synonym.

101. "Promise"—if understood to be conditional and directory: otherwise "saying."

102. "Naughtiness"—Dr.

103. "Rills"—Dr.

104. Cp. 42:3.

105. "Upright"—Dr. "Straight"—Del. Cp. 19:8.

106. Or: "in."

107. U.: "exterminated."

108. M.T.: "words" (pl.). Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Syr.): "word" (sing.)—Gn.

109. "Sterling metal"—Dr. Cp. Pro. 30:5. "Is very pure"—Del.

110. So Del. "Small"—Per., Kp., Br., Dr. ("or young"). "Little"—Carter. "More often of age"—O.G.

111. U.: "to times age-abiding."

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144 Righteous are thy (STATUTES) to the ages—
give me understanding that I may live.

[19. THE EIGHTFOLD KOPH.]

145 I have called with a whole heart answer me Jehovah!—
thy STATUTES will I observe.

146 I have called upon thee O save me!—
and I will keep thy TESTIMONIES.

147 I am beforehand with the morning twilight and cry for
help—
for thy WORD¹¹² have I waited.

148 Mine eyes forestall the night-watches—
to soliloquise in thy PROMISE.

149 My voice O hear according to thy kindness—
Jehovah! according to thy DECISIONS¹¹³ quicken me.

150 They have drawn near who persecute¹¹⁴ with infamous
devices—
from thy LAW have they gone far away.

151 Near art thou Jehovah—
and all thy COMMANDMENTS are truth.

152 Long have I known from thy (PRECEPTS)—¹¹⁵
that to the ages¹¹⁶ thou didst found them.

[20. THE EIGHTFOLD RESH.]

153 O see my humiliation and rescue me—
for thy LAW have I not forgotten.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me—
by thy PROMISE O quicken me.

155 Far from lawless men is salvation—
for thy STATUTES have they not sought out.¹¹⁷

156 Thy compassions are many Jehovah—
according to thy (COMMANDMENTS)¹¹⁸ quicken me.

157 Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries—
from thy TESTIMONIES have I not swerved.

112. MSS. and versions vary between "word" and "words"—cp. Gn.

113. So (pl.) in some cod. (w. 6 ear. pr edns.)—Gn. M.T. sing.

114. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "persecute me"—Gn.

115. M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 146: "precepts" otherwise not in stanza.

116. U.: "to times age-abiding."

117. Or: "studied."

118. M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 160: "commandments" not otherwise in stanza.

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- 158 I beheld traitors and felt loathing—
because thy (WORD)¹¹⁹ had they not kept.
159 O see that thy PRECEPTS I have loved—
Jehovah! according to thy kindness quicken me.
160 The sum of thy word is truth—
and to the ages are all¹²⁰ thy righteous DECISIONS.

[21. THE EIGHTFOLD SIN (OR SHIN).]

- 161 Princes have persecuted me without cause—
but of thy WORD¹²¹ hath my heart stood in awe.
162 Joyful am I over thy PROMISE—
like the finder of spoil in abundance.
163 Falsehood I hate and abhor—
thy (STATUTES)¹²² I love.
164 Seven times a day have I praised thee—
because of thy righteous DECISIONS.
165 Blessing in abundance¹²³ have the lovers of thy LAW—
with nothing to make them stumble.
166 I have hoped for thy salvation Jehovah—
and thy COMMANDMENTS have I done.
167 My soul hath kept thy TESTIMONIES—
and I have loved them greatly.
168 I have kept thy PRECEPTS (and thy testimonies)—¹²⁴
for all my ways are before thee.

[22. THE EIGHTFOLD TAU.]

- 169 Let my ringing¹²⁵ cry come near before thee Jehovah!—
according to thy WORD cause me to understand.
170 Let my supplications come in before thee—
according to thy PROMISE deliver me.
171 Let my lips pour forth praise—
because thou teachest me thy STATUTES.
172 Let my tongue sing (in faithfulness)
of thy rightful DECISIONS.¹²⁶

119. M.T.: "promise"—in ver. 154: "word" not otherwise in stanza.

120. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "all"—Gn. M.T.: "is each of."

121. MSS. and versions vary between "word" and "words"—cp. Gn.

122. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 165: "statutes" not otherwise in stanza.

123. Or: "great peace," "great prosperity."

124. Clearly redundant. "Implying variant readings at an early date"—

Br.

125. Or: "piercing."

126. M.T.: "Let my tongue sing thy promise—for all thy commandments are righteous." "Promise" is in ver. 170; and "commandments" in ver. 176.

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- 173 Let thy hand be ready to help me—
for thy PRECEPTS have I chosen.
- 174 I have longed for thy salvation O Jehovah!
and thy LAW is my delight:
- 175 Let my soul live and it shall praise thee—
and let thy (TESTIMONIES)¹²⁷ help me.
- 176 I have strayed like a wandering sheep seek thou thy
servant—¹²⁸
for thy COMMANDMENTS have I not forgotten.

PARAPHRASE

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Happy are all who perfectly follow the laws of God.

2 Happy are all who search for God, and always do His
will,

3 Rejecting compromise with evil, and walking only in His
paths.

4 You have given us Your laws to obey—

5 Oh, how I want to follow them consistently.

6 Then I will not be disgraced, for I will have a clean
record.

7 After You have corrected¹ me I will thank You by living
as I should!

8 I *will* obey! Oh, don't forsake me and let me slip back
into sin again.²

9 How can a young man stay pure? By reading Your word
and following its rules.

10 I have tried my best to find You—don't let me wander
off from Your instructions.

11 I have thought much about Your words, and stored them
in my heart so that they would hold me back from sin.

12 Blessed Lord, teach me Your rules.

13 I have recited Your laws,

14 And rejoiced in them more than in riches.

127. M.T.: "decision." In some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Vul.): "decisions" (pl.)—Gn. "Decisions" needed in ver. 172.

128. "If I should go astray—like a lost sheep seek thy servant; for," etc.—Del. "I wander like a lost sheep; seek thy servant"—Carter. "I have gone erringly astray like lost sheep; seek thy servant; for," etc.—Leeser. "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; O seek thy servant; for," etc.—Dr.

1. Literally, "when I learn (have experienced) Your righteous judgments."

2. Literally, "Oh forsake me not utterly."

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15 I will meditate upon them and give them my full respect.

16 I will delight in them and not forget them.

17 Bless me with life³ so that I can continue to obey You.

18 Open my eyes to see wonderful things in Your word.

19 I am but a pilgrim here on earth; how I need a map—
and Your commands are my chart and guide.

20 I long for Your instructions more than I can tell.

21 You rebuke those cursed proud ones who refuse Your
commands—

22 Don't let them scorn me for obeying You.

23 For even princes sit and talk against me, but I will
continue in Your plans.

24 Your laws are both my light and my counselors.

25 I am completely discouraged—I lie in the dust. Revive
me by Your Word.

26 I told You my plans and You replied. Now give me
Your instructions.

27 Make me understand what You want; for then I shall
see Your miracles.

28 I weep with grief; my heart is heavy with sorrow; en-
courage and cheer me with Your words.

29, 30 Keep me far from every wrong; help me, undeserving
as I am, to obey Your laws, for I have chosen to do right.

31 I cling to Your commands and follow them as closely
as I can. Lord, don't let me make a mess of things.

32 If You will only help me to want Your will, then I will
follow Your laws even more closely.

33, 34 Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord. As
long as I live I'll wholeheartedly obey.

35 Make me walk along the right paths for I know how
delightful they really are.

36 Help me to prefer obedience to making money!

37 Turn me away from wanting any other⁴ plan than Yours.
Revive my heart toward You.

38 Reassure me that Your promises are for me; for I trust
and revere You.

39 How I dread being mocked for obeying; for Your laws
are right and good.

40, 41, 42 I long to obey them! Therefore in fairness re-
new my life, for this was Your promise—yes, Lord, to save me!

3. Literally, "deal bountifully that I may live."

4. Literally, "from beholding vanity."

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Now spare me by Your kindness and Your love. Then I will have an answer for those who taunt me, for I trust Your promises.

43 May I never forget Your words; for they are my only hope.

44, 45, 46 Therefore I will keep on obeying You forever and forever, free within the limits of Your laws. I will speak to kings about their value; and they will listen with interest and respect.

47 How I love Your laws! How I enjoy Your commands!

48 "Come, come to me," I call to them, for I love them and will let them fill my life.

49, 50 Never forget Your promises to me Your servant; for they are my only hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!

51 Proud men hold me in contempt for obedience to God, but I stand unmoved.

52 From my earliest youth I have tried to obey You; Your Word has been my comfort.

53 I am very angry with those who spurn Your commands.

54 For these laws of Yours have been my source of joy and singing through all these years of my earthly pilgrimage.

55 I obey them even at night and keep my thoughts, O Lord, on You.

56 What a blessing this has been to me—to constantly obey.

57 Jehovah is mine! And I promise to obey!

58 With all my heart I want Your blessings. Be merciful just as You promised.

59, 60 I thought about the wrong direction in which I was headed, and turned around and came running back to You.

61 Evil men have tried to drag me into sin, but I am firmly anchored to Your laws.

62 At midnight I will rise to give my thanks to You for Your good laws.

63 Anyone is my brother who fears and trusts the Lord and obeys Him.

64 O Lord, the earth is full of Your lovingkindness! Teach me Your good paths.

65 Lord, I am overflowing with Your blessings, just as You promised!

66 Now teach me good judgment as well as knowledge! For Your laws are my guide.

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67 I used to wander off until You punished me; now I closely follow all You say.

68 You are good and do only good; make me follow Your lead!

69 Proud men have made up lies about me, but the truth is that I obey Your laws with all my heart.

70 Their minds are dull and stupid, but I have sense enough to follow You.

71, 72 The punishment You gave me was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to Your laws. They are more valuable to me than millions in silver and gold!

73 You made my body, Lord; now give me sense to heed Your laws.

74 All those who fear and trust in You will welcome me because I too am trusting in Your Word.

75, 76, 77 I know, O Lord, that Your decisions are right and that Your punishment was right and did me good. Now let Your lovingkindness comfort me, just as You promised. Surround me with Your tender mercies, that I may live. For Your law is my delight.

78 Let the proud be disgraced, for they have cut me down with all their lies. But I will concentrate my thoughts upon Your laws.

79 Let all others join me, who trust and fear You, and we will discuss Your laws.

80 Help me to love Your every wish; then I will never have to be ashamed of myself!

81 I faint for Your salvation; but I expect Your help, for You have promised it.

82 My eyes are straining to see Your promises come true. When will You comfort me with Your help?

83 I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, exhausted with waiting. But still I cling to Your laws and obey them.

84 How long must I wait before You punish those who persecute me?

85, 86 These proud men who hate Your truth and laws have dug deep pits for me to fall in. Their lies have brought me into deep trouble. Help me, for You love only truth.

87 They had almost finished me off, yet I refused to yield and disobey Your laws.

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88 In Your kindness, spare my life; then I can continue to obey You.

89 Forever, O Lord, Your Word stands firm in heaven.

90, 91 Your faithfulness extends to every generation, like the earth You created; it endures by Your decree, for everything serves Your plans.

92 I would have despaired and perished unless Your laws had been my deepest delight.

93 I will never lay aside Your laws, for You have used them to restore my joy and health.

94 I am Yours! Save me! For I have tried to live according to Your desires.

95 Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind upon Your promises.

96 Nothing is perfect except Your words.

97 Oh, how I love them. I think about them all day long.

98 They make me wiser than my enemies, because they are my constant guide.

99 Yes, wiser than my teachers; for I am ever thinking of Your rules.

100 They make me even wiser than the aged.

101 I have refused to walk the paths of evil for I will remain obedient to Your Word.

102, 103 No, I haven't turned away from what You taught me: Your words are sweeter than honey.

104 And since only Your rules can give me wisdom and understanding, no wonder I hate every false teaching.

105 Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me, and keep me from stumbling.

106 I've said it once and I'll say it again and again: I will obey these wonderful laws of Yours.

107 I am close to death at the hands of my enemies; oh, give me back my life again, just as You promised me.

108 Accept my grateful thanks and teach me Your desires.

109 My life hangs in the balance, but I will not give up obedience to Your laws.

110 The wicked have set their traps for me along Your path, but I will not turn aside.

111 Your laws are my joyous treasure forever.

112 I am determined to obey You until I die.

113 I hate those who are undecided whether or not to obey You; but my choice is clear—I love Your law.

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114 You are my refuge and my shield, and Your promises are my only source of hope.

115 Begone, you evil-minded men. Don't try to stop me from obeying God's commands.

116 Lord, You promised to let me live! Never let it be said that God failed me.

117 Hold me safe above the heads of all my enemies; then I can continue to obey Your laws.

118 But You have rejected all who reject Your laws. They are only fooling themselves.

119 The wicked are the scum You skim off and throw away; no wonder I live to obey Your laws!

120 I tremble in fear of You; I fear Your punishments.

121 Don't leave me to the mercy of my enemies, for I have done what is right; I've been perfectly fair.

122 Commit Yourself to bless me! Don't let the proud oppress me!

123 My eyes grow dim with longing for You to fulfill Your wonderful promise to rescue me.

124 Lord, deal with me in lovingkindness, and teach me, Your servant, to obey;

125 For I am Your servant; therefore give me common sense to apply Your rules to everything I do.

126 Lord, it is time for You to act. For these evil men have violated Your laws,

127 While I love Your commandments more than the finest gold.

128 Every law of God is right, whatever it concerns. I hate every other way.

129 Your laws are wonderful; no wonder I obey them.

130 As Your plan unfolds, even the simple can understand it.

131 No wonder I wait expectantly for each of Your commands.

132 Come and have mercy on me as is Your way with those who love You.

133 Guide me with Your laws so that I will not be overcome by evil.

134 Rescue me from the oppression of evil men; then I can obey You.

135 Look down in love upon me and teach me all Your laws.

136 I weep because Your laws are disobeyed.

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137 O Lord, You are just and Your punishments are fair.

138 Your demands are just and right.

139 I am indignant and angry because of the way my enemies have disregarded Your laws.

140 I have thoroughly tested Your promises and that is why I love them so much.

141 I am worthless and despised, but I don't despise Your laws.

142 Your justice is eternal for Your laws are perfectly fair.

143 In my distress and anguish, Your commandments comfort me.

144 Your laws are always fair; help me to understand them and I shall live.

145 I am praying with great earnestness; answer me, O Lord, and I will obey Your laws.

146 "Save me," I cry, "for I am obeying."

147 Early in the morning, before the sun is up, I was praying and pointing out how much I trust in You.

148 I stay awake through the night to think about Your promises.

149 Because You are so loving and kind, listen to me and make me well again.

150 Here come these lawless men to attack me;

151 But You are near, O Lord; all Your commandments are based on truth.

152 I have known from earliest days that Your will never changes.

153 Look down upon my sorrows and rescue me, for I am obeying Your commands.

154 Yes, rescue me and give me back my life again just as You have promised.

155 The wicked are far from salvation for they do not care for Your laws.

156 Lord, how great is Your mercy: oh, give me back my life again.

157 My enemies are so many. They try to make me disobey; but I have not swerved from Your will.

158 I loathed these traitors because they care nothing for Your laws.

159 Lord, see how much I really love Your demands. Now give me back my life and health because You are so kind.

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160 There is utter trust in all Your laws; Your decrees are eternal.

161 Great men have persecuted me, though they have no reason to, but I stand in awe of only Your words.

162 I rejoice in Your laws like one who finds a great treasure.

163 How I hate all falsehood but how I love Your laws.

164 I will praise You seven times a day because of Your wonderful laws.

165 Those who love Your laws have great peace of heart and mind and do not stumble.

166 I long for Your salvation, Lord and so I have obeyed Your laws.

167 I have looked for Your commandments and I love them very much;

168 Yes, I have searched for them. You know this because everything I do is known to You.

169 O Lord, listen to my prayers; give me the common sense You promised.

170 Hear my prayers; rescue me as You said You would.

171 I praise You for letting me learn Your laws.

172 I will sing about their wonder, for each of them is just.

173 Stand ready to help me because I have chosen to follow Your will.

174 O Lord, I have longed for Your salvation and Your law is my delight.

175 If You will let me live, I will praise You; let Your laws assist me.

176 I have wandered away like a lost sheep; come and find me for I have not turned away from Your commandments.

EXPOSITION

The "Descriptive Title" prefixed to this psalm may make the inadequate impression, that here we have an excessively artificial composition; and a cursory perusal of the psalm itself may awaken the further apprehension, that this artificially constructed series of sayings is wearisomely monotonous. The instant correction of these plausible forebodings is desirable. The monotone, whose existence cannot be denied, is that of a lullaby by which a troubled soul may be softly and sweetly hushed to rest. The art is so exquisite that, when familiarised, it not only gratifies the taste, but aids the judgment, and

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ministers to the hunger of the spirit. This psalm, so far as it is a song at all, is one composed in mournful measure. It is, however, a soliloquy rather than a song. It is a study set to the murmuring of the sea. Its repetitions are like the recurring waves of light by which new satellites are discovered in the ancient heavens. In truth, it reveals a soul in close communion with God; and its art resolves itself into the measured movements of an eagle's wings by which is sustained its nearness to the sun.

The art is undeniably there: *visibly* there—in the eight-fold *aleph*, the eight-fold *beth*, and so on to the end of the Hebrew alphabet of twenty-two letters, yielding in all one hundred and seventy-six verses; *credibly* there—in the eight synonyms which continue changefully pealing like so many bells till full measure has been given; and *possibly* there—in the closing assonances in *ka* and *ee* which some critics deem they discover in the original, though now buried beneath numberless transpositional inadvertences committed by editors and copyists not sufficiently on the alert to safeguard so many stylistic beauties.

But the art is subservient to the sense. Even the grouped initial letters are luminous with concentrated rays of light. For instance, the *aleph* bursts forth, once and again, with impassioned benedictions on the head of the man of God—at once rebuking those who fancy that art cannot minister to devout feeling; the humble linguistic "peg," *waw*, shews how nimbly it can suggest logical continuity of thought; the serpent-like *teth*, harmless as a dove, and full of all "goodness," makes the dweller in its stanza feel that it is "good" to be here; the *ayin* has an "eye" to the beautiful, and opens fresh "fountains" of gladness; and, to name no more, the *zadhe* looks well to it that "righteousness" shall be strong, and "right" on every side be done.

Then those eight synonyms—even though we have lost for the present the poetry of the system by which, chorus-like, they change places—how logically expansive and expanding they are! They are the sworn foes of over-narrowness of definition, and irresistibly demand that grace be permitted to temper law. For what, let us ask, is the master-thought of the psalm? A weighty question truly, and one to which the synonyms must be heard in reply. The verbs—to *love*, to *hate*, to *run*, to *keep*, to *quicken*, etc.—all have their quota of evidence to tender; but they cluster about their nouns, and chiefly about those sturdy synonyms—*law*, *precept*, *word*, etc.—which dominate the landscape. If we

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start with ever so narrow a concept of *law*, for example,—then we have to hearken to *testimony*, with its “witness” to the love of God as well as to the duty of man. If we begin with the *written* “word,” as we very well may, by starting at *statute*, from a root meaning “to engrave,”—then the question comes—whether we must not include the *oral* “word” as well, seeing that the psalmist speaks of *waiting for it* (74, 81, 114, 147), which he would not need to do if it were already in his hand. *The word written and oral*—so far, at least, we must go. But we find the *word stationed in the heavens*; its synonymous *promise* assuring us that Jehovah hath *established the earth so that it standeth*; and its synonymous *decisions* evidently applying to all created things in *heaven and earth*, and causing them all to obey as *Jehovah’s servants*. We are thus uplifted to the altitude of Jehovah’s WILL—*written, oral, or effectuated* only, by the silently working power of God. THE KEY-NOTE OF ALL THE SYNONYMS IS, THEREFORE, JEHOVAH’S WILL HOWEVER MADE MANIFEST.

This conclusion at once places us at the psalmist’s own angle of vision, and explains how it is that his whole soul is aflame with affection for an object so variously named as by these eight synonyms. But it does more. It justifies our adoption of a new synonym—or at least it vindicates our search for one, so as not to render both *dabhar* and *’imrah* by the one English term “word.” The presumption is that in some way they perceptibly differ, or they would not both be employed. “Saying” for *’imrah* would have commended itself but for the feeling that it leaned over too much to the sense of “familiar proverb.” Finding, therefore, that the usage of this term has generally an especially gladsome set of words in association with it (as tracing it through the Table will shew), we have ventured on the welcome word *promise* as its suitable English representative. There is one restriction to be placed on all these synonyms; and that is, that they must be held to have a regulative bearing on human character and conduct. The manner of the man they make is always an essential question throughout the psalm. The psalmist’s one absorbing passion is to be conformed to Jehovah’s will. The word “promise,” therefore, can only be accepted in so far as it submits to this limitation. But, to this rule, it easily conforms; since divine “promises” are often, in their very wording, directory of human conduct; and even when no condition is expressed, one nevertheless is mostly implied. Indeed, it may perhaps safely be said, and dutifully borne in

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mind, that as a rule Jehovah's promises *are* conditional; and only when it is distinctly protested by Himself that they are absolutely unconditional, can they wisely be so held. There is perhaps not more than a single instance to be discovered in the accompanying Table in which the rendering of *'imrah* needs to be subdued to "saying."

Thus far our effort after exposition has been directed chiefly to the helping of the student to use the Table of Synonyms with pleasure and profit. It is needless to remind him that there are several other veins of interest running through the psalm: as, for instance the words descriptive of sacred study and meditation, and those displaying the moods and tenses of affection and devotion and holy living.

But all these lines of inquiry fall into a secondary place when compared with the familiar question of authorship; which, in this case, becomes one of unusual interest—unless, indeed, it is at once vetoed as a bootless inquiry. The present writer,—forgetting that he had already, when commenting on Pss. 1 and 19, committed himself to an opinion as to the authorship of this psalm also,—started to deal with this extraordinary composition with an open mind as to its probable author; and could not help being at once rather fascinated by the opinion of Thrupp that Daniel wrote it. But, little by little, the plausibility of this conclusion melted away before continuous meditation on the circumstantial evidence, which, it should be noted, is in this case unusually voluminous. Here is a man admitting us into his closet, and permitting us to hearken to the prolonged out-pouring of his soul before Jehovah; in the course of which he not only reflects the character and aspirations and struggles of his own soul, but makes so many allusions to his enemies and affords so many indications of his relations to them and their attitude and endeavours regarding him, that it becomes feasible that with due patience we shall discover with something like moral certainty *who he is*. And, in point of fact, the situation ultimately becomes so patent, that we are persuaded that only one man in the field of sacred story fits the situation and fulfils its many-sided demands. But, in order to make this discovery, we need to have studied the psychology of the previous psalms with some persistence and insight. If we have already caught glimpses of THE MAN, without foreseeing whither they would lead us; but now at length realise a SITUATION exactly fitted for him, and, so far as we can judge, for no other possible writer

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of a psalm like the present, we may hope for the patience of our readers, before the strength of our persuasion that we have found the author, is condemned. Those fellow-students who have accompanied us in our investigation of Pss. 31, 35; 42, 43, will anticipate the avowal that here again we are on the track of PRINCE HEZEKIAH. We say "prince" advisedly; for it is only by antedating Hezekiah's ascension to the throne; by reflecting that he must have been prince before he became king; by assuring ourselves that he must have had a history before he began to reign, that certainly he did not burst forth from oblivion an already strong man of God without decision of character previously formed or moral culture previously pursued; that probably he had had a godly mother; that possibly he had quite easily and naturally come under the tutorial care of the prophet Isaiah with whom we know he was intimate in after years; that, almost certainly, he had long had access to the royal library in which the archives of Israel and the psalms of David were stored; that as a king's son he would be well-educated, would have leisure at command, and could easily secure assistance in any pursuit in which he might care to indulge;—it is only when we put these things together, that we begin to conceive of the situation as it really must have been formed by the circumstances and conditions of Hezekiah's younger days. These are by no means all the formative influences on which we can reckon. The life and doings of his father Ahaz are known to us: his vanity—his timidity—his inclinations towards idolatry—his readiness to use his priests as patrons of his apostate doings and his ministers as the tools of his innovating designs: these things are well known to us. Then we have our knowledge of human nature to furnish an element of guidance. We can readily conceive how the pious and faithful Hezekiah would be a thorn in his father's side; a reflection on his father's instability; a rebuke to the sycophantic courtiers who would be only too ready to connive at his father's questionable courses; and, moreover, how, *less than a word* from such a father against such a son would serve as a cloak under which those courtiers who chiefly wished to curry favour with the reigning monarch would little by little develop into persecutors of the pious prince and, it may be, secure his banishment from court, or at least his retirement into country life. Then, too, we must remember that Hezekiah did not begin to reign till he was twenty-five; and if we date his conscious manhood and perceptible self-assertion

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no further back than to eighteen years of age, that gives us seven ample years for culture in music and song, abundant leisure for searching among the library scrolls and tablets, and for *writing acrostics of any length*. Hezekiah, at five-and-twenty, would practically be as old as most of his compeers at fifty.

If now we bring into comparison with these conditions the indications afforded by the psalm itself, we become more and more amazed at the correspondence between the two sets of circumstances. Daniel, it is true, had enemies of high rank (23, 161) watchful and treacherous (61, 85, 110, 150; 118, 158): Hezekiah's enemies were all this; and, besides, had one characteristic which Daniel was not confronted with in Babylon: Hezekiah's enemies were faithless to the Divine Law, which they nevertheless knew (118, 150, 158); and this alone puts Daniel out of court as having any claim to be considered the author of this psalm. Not only were this writer's enemies acquainted with the law of Jehovah, but they were frustrators of it (126); and it is no wonder that our author was both indignant at their conduct (53) and deeply grieved by it (136). Hezekiah's privileged position, in having access to the Library of the Law, fully justified him in promising that those who *turned* (or *returned*) to him should know Jehovah's testimonies (79). He could tell them as well as any scribe. Accustomed, as prince, to enjoy the benefit of competent counsellors, in dark days of apostacy he would be glad to find *counsellors* in his much-loved sacred books (24). His position made him well aware of the value of wealth; and, therefore, it was no empty comparison when he preferred the knowledge of Jehovah's will to *all riches, to thousands of gold and silver* (14, 36, 72, 127). If Hezekiah was ever banished to the upper reaches of the Jordan, as appears probable (Ps. 42), we can perceive an especial fitness in the allusion here (54) to his "house of sojourn," made vocal with "melodies" in honour of Jehovah's "statutes"; and at the same time can appreciate his sense of distance from Jehovah's house which he so greatly loved (41, 77). It is only needful to add, that in spite of the appearance of age in the author of this psalm which has persuaded several commentators into the inference that he was at least a middle-aged man, the balance of evidence contained in the comparisons and positive assertion of the psalm itself (99, 100, 141) is decidedly in favour of the conclusion that he was still a young man when he composed it; and we can well believe what an unspeakable solace it was to the ban-

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ished prince Hezekiah thus to beguile the weary hours in constructing this work of sacred art—which probably, merely as literature, has few if any equals in the world. The references appended to the text above, calling attention to the third stanza of Ps. 35, will add another item of circumstantial evidence, which tends to make the inference, that Hezekiah wrote this psalm as well as that stanza, well-nigh irresistible.

It was hoped to close this merely introductory "Exposition" with the foregoing paragraph. But the psalm refuses to be hastily dismissed. By this time it has cast over us a spell which is not easily broken. We began with something akin to a defence of the psalm from the suspicion of necessarily being dry, because so obviously artificial and inevitably monotonous. But, little by little, how completely has such an anticipation vanished. How full the psalm is of passion; how many sidelights on character does it convey; how gem-like many of its single sentences have come to sparkle in our eyes, commending themselves as texts and mottoes, memorable words of warning and cheer; how charmingly its biographical contributions, profusely scattered through its stanzas, have opened up to us the engrossing incidents which probably bestudded a single good man's life; and especially how profound are the historical and theological problems to which it effectively introduces us. Only to instance a single biographical suggestion, and an unexpected theological inquiry:—What have we before us in the way of personality, but a young man, who at least once went astray; whose sin seems to have become known to those who wished him ill, who very probably magnified his offence, procuring by their evil tongues a punishment which, directly or indirectly, nearly cost the young prince his life: this same young man, being led to bethink him of his ways, to turn his feet into the way of Jehovah's testimonies, and ever after to serve his pardoning God with an enthusiasm and thoroughness which converted his ill-wishers into crafty and persistent persecutors. Some such personal history as this floats before us, as the kaleidoscope of alphabetical reminiscence continues its aphoristic suggestions. The theological inquiry alluded to is no less profound than that which concerns itself with the beginnings and fluctuations of the divine life in the human soul. This same young man, was he already a backslider in the divine life when he first egregiously went astray; or did he suddenly fall into unforeseen and unexpected temptation and as quickly experience recovery to Divine

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favour, thenceforth to walk more guardedly than before in the narrow way of Jehovah's commandments? We cannot exactly know; nor would we, if we could, brood over the diagnosis of his sin. The thing that interests us is, the simple fact, that eleven times over in the course of this psalm is reference made to the quickening of the spiritual life within him (namely in vers. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156 and 159); which interest is intensified into sustained wonder, that the contact of Jehovah's WILL, which we are so ready to denominate LAW, and to regard as "killing" rather than "giving life," should have been so largely instrumental in bringing this psalmist's soul into conscious nearness to God. As closely related Scripture words often qualify each other; so it would seem do related human experiences, though far removed in point of time and condition, limit each other so materially as to require careful adjustment before we finally pronounce on the whole psychological question involved. In other words: How can we harmonise the condemnatory and slaying effects of "law" as portrayed in the Seventh of Romans with the life-giving functions discharged by "law" in the one hundred and nineteenth psalm? Doubtless, there is perfect harmony between them: but how seldom do we allow a steady eye on that harmony to guard us from exaggerations when we are engrossed in either the one sphere of thought or the other. It may be added that, intimately entwining itself with these biographical and theological questions, is another, which, though closely related, is nevertheless distinct: namely, the historical problem of growing spirituality in the nation of Israel. Many writers plausibly argue that these remarkable approximations of Old Testament spirituality to that of New Testament times, can only have resulted from the long and severe discipline of the Exile. Grant that assumption, as regards the nation as a nation, does it hold good also and equally of individuals? We need not disturb the foregone conclusion which goes so far to solve the mystery of pain, namely that the highest form of goodness can be produced only from the refining process of suffering; and yet we may discover, that the painful schooling of a nation is mostly or always heralded by the stern discipline of individuals. From this point of view, the enquiry becomes pertinent, how far the best of the pre-exilic kings were perfected by suffering; or, to close in upon the problem offered by this psalm: If we assume that such a chastened composition as the one-hundred-and-nineteenth psalm

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could only have sprung from the soil of sanctified suffering, it is still open to us to conclude that the Young Prince Hezekiah had himself graduated in that school; and that he, out of the treasuries of a varied and instructive experience, stored and wrought up into exquisite form during a period of ample leisure, produced this unique sacred composition—which not being a Temple Song was not earlier introduced in the Psalter, and being in an especial sense a piece of private autobiography was not readily placed at the public service; but which some such discerning Scribe as Ezra has, under Divine Guidance, saved from permanent oblivion.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How answer the charge that this psalm is “wearisomely monotonous”? Rotherham uses two or three beautiful figures of speech to answer this charge. Discuss them.
2. There are two devices used to give art and beauty (as well as structure) to this psalm. What are they?
3. What is the “master-thought of the psalm”? How is an answer reached to the above question?
4. The writer of the psalm is “aflame with affection” for the object of this psalm. What is it? Why so concerned about it?
5. There are nine synonyms instead of eight. Why? What is the ninth?
6. The study of all 176 verses of this psalm is a life-long pursuit. Consider what is said here about the study and meditation on the word of God. What about holy living as seen in this psalm?
7. There is some possibility that Daniel was the writer of this psalm. Why rejected?
8. Hezekiah is the writer of the psalm with hardly a question of doubt in the mind of Rotherham. Do you agree? Discuss.
9. At what time in the life of Hezekiah was this written? Hezekiah’s resources for writing were very good. What were they?
10. The life and doings of Ahaz could relate to this psalm. How?
11. Consider the details given as to the enemies of Hezekiah and of Daniel. How compared and related to this psalm?
12. The place of the writing is also discussed. What is said?

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13. There is an intriguing biographical inference to the author in the psalm. What is it?
14. What theological question could be raised here? How answered? (It is important—do *not* ignore it!)
15. The historical problem of growing spirituality in the nation of Israel is here mentioned. What is said about it?

PSALM 120

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Peace versus War.

ANALYSIS

(See Inserted Headlines.)

(Lm.) Song of the Steps.

(A GRATEFUL KING'S MEMORIAL.)

- 1 Unto Jehovah in the distress that befell me
I called and he answered me:—
- 2 "Jehovah! oh rescue my soul—
from the lip of falsehood
from the tongue of deceit."

(A BELLIGERENT COUNSELLOR'S WARLIKE SPEECH.)

- 3 "What shall one give to thee and what shall one add to thee,
thou tongue of deceit?
- 4 Arrows of a warrior—
sharpened with glowing coals of broom!"¹

(THE PEACEFUL KING'S LAMENT.)

- 5 "Ah! woe is me! that I sojourn with Meshech—²
that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!³
- 6 Full long hath my soul had her dwelling
with haters⁴ of peace!

1. "The broom shrub makes the best charcoal, and therefore the best coal to burn and glow"—Br.

2. "The Moschi . . . in Assyr. times they dwelt in W. (or N.W.) Armenia"—O.G.

3. "Tribes of nomads in Arabian desert"—O.G.

4. So (pl.) some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "a hater" (sing.)