

Exposition on Psalm 119

by St. Augustine

This sermon is an exposition of Psalm 119, highlighting the importance of keeping God's commandments and the role of love and martyrdom in a life of righteousness.

Scripture: Psalm 118:2

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the importance of seeking bliss through being undefiled in the way of the Lord, walking in His law. He emphasizes the need to be blessed by being undefiled, even though it may bring fear as it is necessary for attaining true bliss. St. Augustine reflects on the wickedness of those who do not walk in God's ways, highlighting the importance of confessing sins and seeking forgiveness. He acknowledges the struggle between sin and righteousness, urging the congregation to seek God's mercy and guidance in surrendering unbelief and doubts.

Transcript

Aleph

1. From its commencement, dearly beloved, does this great Psalm exhort us unto bliss, which there is no one who desires not....And therefore this is the lesson which he teaches, who says, Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord Psalm 118:1. As much as to say, I know what you wish, you are seeking bliss: if then you would be blessed, be undefiled. For the former all desire, the latter fear: yet without it what all wish cannot be attained. But where will any one be undefiled, save in the way? In what way, save in the law of the Lord?...

2. Listen now to what he adds: Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and seek Him with their whole heart Psalm 118:2. No other class of the blessed seems to me to be mentioned in these words, than that which has been already spoken of. For to examine into the testimonies of the Lord, and to seek Him with all the heart, this is to be undefiled in the way, this is to walk in the law of the Lord. He then goes on to say, For they who do wickedness, shall not walk in His ways Psalm 118:3. And yet we know that the workers of wickedness do search the testimonies of the Lord for this reason, that they prefer being learned to being righteous: we know that others also search the testimonies of the Lord, not because they are already living well, but that they may know how they ought to live. Such then do not as yet walk undefiled in the law of the Lord, and for this reason are not as yet blessed....

3. It is written, and is read, and is true, in this Psalm, that They who do wickedness, walk not in His ways Psalm 118:3. But we must endeavour, with the help of God, in whose hand are both we and our words, Wisdom 7:16 that what is rightly said, by not being rightly understood, may not confuse the reader or hearer. For we must beware, lest all the Saints, whose words these are, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; 1 John 1:8-9 may either not be thought to walk in the ways of the Lord, since sin is wickedness, and they who do wickedness, walk not in His ways; or, because it is not doubtful that they walk in the ways of the Lord, may be thought to have no sin, which is beyond doubt false. For it is not said merely for the sake of avoiding arrogance and pride. Otherwise it would not be added, And the truth is not in us; but it would be said, Humility is not in us: especially because the following words throw a clearer light on the meaning, and remove all the causes of doubt. For when the blessed John had said this, he added, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 ...

4. What means, You have charged that we shall keep Your commandments too much? Psalm 118:4. Is it, You have charged too much? Or, to keep too much? Whichever of these we understand, the sense seems contrary to that memorable and noble sentiment which the Greeks praise in their wise men, and which the Latins agree in praising. Do nothing too much.. ..But the Latin language sometimes uses the word nimis in such a sense, that we find it in the holy Scripture, and employ it in our discourses, as signifying, very much. In this passage, You have charged that we keep Your commandments too much, we simply understand very much, if we understand rightly; and if we say to any very dear friend, I love you too much, we do not wish to be understood to mean more than is fitting, but very much.

5. O that, he says, my ways were made so direct, that I might keep Your statutes Psalm 118:5. Thou indeed hast charged: O that I could realize what you have charged. When you hear, O that, recognise the words of one wishing; and having recognised the expression of a wish, lay aside the pride of presumption. For who says that he desires what he has in such a manner in his power, that without need of any help he can do it? Therefore if man desires what God charges, God must be prayed to grant Himself what He enjoins....

6. So shall I not be confounded, while I have respect unto all Your commandments Psalm 118:6. We ought to look upon the commandments of God, whether when they are read, or when they are recalled to memory, as a looking-glass, as the Apostle James says. James 1:23-25 This man wishes himself to be such, that he may regard as in a mirror the commandments of God, and may not be confounded; because he chooses not merely to be a hearer of them, but a doer. On this account he desires that his ways may be made direct to keep the statutes of God. How to be made direct, save by the grace of God? Otherwise he will find in the law of God not a source of rejoicing, but of confusion, if he has chosen to look into commandments, which he does not.

7. I will confess unto You, he says, O Lord, in the directing of my heart; in that I shall have learned the judgments of Your righteousness Psalm 118:7. This is not the confession of sins, but of praise; as He also says in whom there was no sin, I will confess unto You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth; Matthew 11:25 and as it is written in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, Thus shall you say in confession, of all the works of God, that they are very good. Sirach 39:15-16 I will confess unto You, he says, in the directing of my heart. Indeed, if my ways are made straight, I will confess unto You, since You have done it, and this is Your praise, and not mine....

8. Next he adds: I will keep Your ordinances Psalm 118:8....But what is it that follows? O forsake me not even exceedingly! or, as some copies have it, even too much, instead of, even exceedingly. But since God had left the world to the desert of sins, He would have forsaken it even exceedingly, if so powerful a cure had not supported it, that is, the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; but now, according to this prayer of the body of Christ, He forsook it not even exceedingly; for, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:19 ...

Beth

9. Wherewithal shall a young man correct his way? Even by keeping Your words Psalm 118:9. He questions himself, and answers himself. Wherewithal? So far it is a question: next comes the answer, even by keeping Your words. But in this place the keeping of the words of God, must be understood as the obeying His commandments in deed: for they are kept in memory in vain, if they are not kept in life also. But what is meant by young man here? For he might have said, wherewithal shall any one (homo) correct his way? Or, wherewithal shall a man (vir) correct his way? Which is usually put by the Scriptures in such a way, that the whole human race is understood....But in this passage he says neither any one, nor a man, but, a young man. Is then an old man to be despaired of? Or does an old man correct his way by any other means than by ruling himself after God's word? Or is it perhaps an admonition at what age we ought chiefly to correct our way; according to what is elsewhere written, My son, gather instruction from your youth up: so shall you find wisdom till your gray hairs. Sirach 6:18 There is another mode of interpreting it, by recognising in the expression the younger son in the Gospel, Luke 15:12, etc. who returned to himself, and said, I will arise and go to my father. Luke 15:18 Wherewithal did he correct his way, save by ruling himself after the words of God, which he desired as one longing for his father's bread....

10. With my whole heart, he says, have I sought you; O repel me not from Your commandments Psalm 118:10. Behold, he prays that he may be aided to keep the words of God, wherewith he had said that the young man corrected his way. For this is the meaning of the words, O repel me not from Your commandments: for what is it to be repelled of God, save not to be aided? For human infirmity is not equal to obeying His righteous and exalted commandments, unless His love does prevent and aid. But those whom He aids not, these He is justly said to repel....

11. Your words have I hid within my heart, that I may not sin against You Psalm 118:11. He at once sought the Divine aid, lest the words of God might be hidden without fruit in his heart, unless works of righteousness followed. For after saying this, he added, Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your righteousnesses Psalm 118:12. Teach me, he says, as they learn who do them; not as they who merely remember them, that they may have somewhat to speak of. Why then does he say, Teach me Your righteousnesses, save because he wishes to learn them by deeds, not by speaking or retaining them in his memory? Since then, as it is read in another Psalm, He shall give blessing, who gave the law; therefore, Blessed are You, O Lord, he says, O teach me Your righteousness. For because I have hidden Your words in my heart, that I may not sin against You, You have given a law; give also the blessing of Your grace, that by doing right I may learn what Thou by teaching hast commanded....

12. With my lips have I been telling of all the judgments of Your mouth Psalm 118:13; that is, I have kept silent nothing of Your judgments, which Thou willed should become known to me through Your words, but I have been telling of all of them without exception with my lips. This he seems to me to signify, since he says not, all Your judgments, but, all the judgments of Your mouth; that is, which You have revealed unto me: that by His mouth we may understand His word, which He has discovered unto us in many revelations

of the Saints, and in the two Testaments; all which judgments the Church ceases not to declare at all times with her lips.

13. I have had as great delight in the way Your testimonies, as in all manner of riches Psalm 118:14. We understand that there is no more speedy, no more sure, no shorter, no higher way of the testimonies of God than Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:3 Thence he says that he has had as great delight in this way, as in all riches. Those are the testimonies, by which He deigns to prove unto us how much He loves us.. ..

14. I will talk of Your commandments, and have respect unto Your ways Psalm 118:15. And thus the Church does exercise herself in the commandments of God, by speaking in the copious disputations of the learned against all the enemies of the Christian and Catholic faith; which are fruitful to those who compose them, if nothing but the ways of the Lord is regarded in them; but All the ways of the Lord are, as it is written, mercy and truth; the fullness of which both is found in Christ. Through this sweet exercise is gained also what he subjoins: My meditation shall be in Your statutes, and I will not forget Your word Psalm 118:16. My meditation shall be therein, that I may not forget them. Thus the blessed man in the first Psalm shall meditate in the law of the Lord day and night.. ..

Gimel

15. He had said, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Even by keeping Your words. Behold he now more openly asks aid that he may do this: Reward, he says, Your servant: let me live, and keep Your word Psalm 118:17...It is this reward that he asks, who says, Reward Your servant. For there are four modes of reward: either evil for evil, as God will reward everlasting fire to the unrighteous; or good for good, as He will reward an everlasting kingdom to the righteous; or good for evil, as Christ by grace justifies the ungodly; or evil for good, as Judas and the Jews through their wickedness persecuted Christ. Of these four modes of reward, the first two belong to justice, whereby evil is rewarded for evil, good for good; the third to mercy, whereby good is rewarded for evil; the fourth God knows not, for to none does He reward evil for good. But that which I have placed third in order, is in the first instance necessary: for unless God rewarded good for evil, there would be none to whom He could reward good for good....

16. Nowhere then let human pride raise itself up: God gives good rewards unto His own gifts....

17. Open Thou my eyes, and I will consider wondrous things of Your law Psalm 118:18. What he adds, I am a lodger upon earth Psalm 118:19: or, as some copies read, I am a sojourner upon earth, O hide not Your commandments from me, has the same meaning....

18. Here an important question arises respecting the soul. For the words, I am a sojourner, or lodger, or stranger upon earth, cannot seem to have been said in reference to the body, since the body derives its origin from the earth. But in this most profound question I dare not define anything. For if it might justly have been said in respect of the soul (which God forbid we should suppose derived from the earth), I am a lodger, or stranger upon earth; or in reference to the whole man, since he was at one time an inhabitant of Paradise, where he who spoke these words was not; or, what is more free from all controversy, if it be not every man who could say this, but one to whom an everlasting country has been promised in heaven: this I know, that the life of man on earth is a temptation; Job 7:1 and that there is a heavy yoke upon the sons of Adam. Sirach 40:1 But it pleases me more to discuss the question in accordance with this construction, that we say we are tenants or strangers upon earth, because we have found our country above, whence we have received a pledge, and where when we have arrived we shall never depart.. ..

19. Those whose conversation is in heaven, as far as they abide here conversant, are in truth strangers. Let them pray therefore that the commandments of God may not be hidden from them, whereby they may be freed from this temporary sojourn, by loving God, with whom they will be for evermore; and by loving their neighbour, that he may be there where they also themselves will be.

20. But what is loved by loving, if love itself be not loved? Whence by consequence that stranger upon earth, after praying that the commandments of God might not be hidden from him, wherein love is enjoined either solely or principally; declares that he desires to have a love for love itself, saying, My soul has coveted to have a desire always after Your judgments Psalm 118:20. This coveting is worthy of praise, not of condemnation....

21. But he says not, covets, only; but, My soul has coveted to desire Your judgments. For there is no obstacle to possessing the judgments of God, save that they are not desired, while love has no warmth toward winning them, though their light is so clear and shining....

22. You have rebuked the proud: and cursed are they that do err from Your commandments Psalm 118:21. For the proud err from the commandments of God. For it is one thing not to fulfil the commandments of God through infirmity or ignorance; another to err from them through pride; as they have done, who have begotten us in our mortal state unto these evils....But consider now, after saying, You have rebuked the proud, he says not, Cursed are they that have erred from Your commandments; so that only that sin of the first men should come into the mind; but he says, Cursed are they that do err. For it was needful that all might be terrified by that example, that they might not err from the divine commandments, and by loving righteousness in all time, recover in the toil of this world, what we lost in the pleasure of Paradise.

23. O turn from me shame and rebuke; for I have sought out Your testimonies Psalm 118:22. Testimonies are called in Greek $\hat{\iota}\hat{\nu}\hat{\alpha}\hat{\iota}\hat{\sigma}\hat{\mu}\hat{\iota}\hat{\alpha}$, which word we now use for the Latin word: whence those who on account of their testimony to Christ have been brought low by various sufferings, and have contended unto death for the truth, are not called testes, but by the Greek term Martyrs. Since then ye hear in this term one more familiar and grateful, let us take these words as if it were said, O turn from me shame and rebuke; because I have sought out Your martyrdoms. When the body of Christ speaks thus, does it consider it any punishment to hear rebuke and shame from the ungodly and the proud, since it rather reaches the crown by this means? Why then does it pray that it should be removed from it as something heavy and insupportable, save because, as I said, it prays for its very enemies, to whom it sees it is destructive, to cast the holy name of Christ as a reproach to Christians....For my enemies, whom Thou enjoinest to be loved by me, who more and more die and are lost, when they despise Your martyrdoms and accuse them in me, will indeed be recalled to life and be found, if they reverence Your martyrdoms in me. Thus it has happened: this we see. Behold, martyrdom in the name of Christ, both with men and in this world, is not only not a disgrace, but a great ornament: behold, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men, precious is the death of His Saints; behold, His martyrs are not only not despised, but honoured with great distinctions....

24. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but Your servant is exercised in Your statutes Psalm 118:23. Thou who desirest to know what sort of exercise this was, understand what he has added, For Your testimonies are my meditation, and Your statutes are my counsellors Psalm 118:24. Remember what I have above instructed you, that testimonies are acts of martyrdom. Remember that among the statutes of the Lord there is none more difficult and more worthy of admiration, than that every man should love his

enemies. Matthew 5:44 Thus then the body of Christ was exercised, so that it meditated on the acts of martyrdom that testified of Him, and loved those from whom, while they rebuked and despised the Church for these very martyrdoms, she suffered persecutions....

Daleth

25. My soul cleaves to the pavement: O quicken Thou me according to Your word Psalm 118:25. What means, My soul cleaves to the pavement, O quicken Thou me according to Your word?...If we look upon the whole world as one great house, we see that the heavens represent its vaulting, the earth therefore will be its pavement. He wishes therefore to be rescued from earthly things, and to say with the Apostle, Our conversation is in heaven. To cling therefore to earthly things is the soul's death; the contrary of which evil, life is prayed for, when he says, O quicken Thou me.

26. ...The body itself also, because it is of the earth, is reasonably understood by the word pavement; since, because it is still corruptible and weighs down the soul, Wisdom 9:15 we justly groan while in it, and say unto God, O quicken Thou me. For we shall not be without our bodies when we shall be for evermore with the Lord; 1 Thessalonians 4:17 but then because they will not be corruptible, nor will they weigh down our souls, if we view it strictly, we shall not cleave unto them, but they rather unto us, and we unto God....

27. For what he was by himself, he confesses in the following words: I have acknowledged my ways, and You heard me Psalm 118:26. Some copies indeed read, Your ways: but more, and the best Greek, read my ways, that is, evil ways. For he seems to me to say this; I have confessed my sins, and You have heard me; that is, so that You would remit them. O teach me Your statutes. I have acknowledged my ways: You have blotted them out: teach me Yours. So teach me, that I may act; not merely that I may know how I ought to act. For as it is said of the Lord, that He knew not sin, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and it is understood, that He did no sin; so also he ought truly to be said to know righteousness, who does it. This is the prayer of one who is improving....

28. Finally he adds, Intimate to me the way of Your righteousness Psalm 118:27; or, as some copies have it, instruct me; which is expressed more closely from the Greek, Make me to understand the way of Your righteousnesses; so shall I be exercised in Your wondrous things. These higher commandments, which he desires to understand by edification, he calls the wondrous things of God. There are then some righteousnesses of God so wondrous, that human weakness may be believed incapable of fulfilling them by those who have not tried. Whence the Psalmist, struggling and wearied with the difficulty of obeying them, says, My soul has slumbered for very heaviness: O establish Thou me with Your word! Psalm 118:28. What means, has slumbered? save that he has cooled in the hope which he had entertained of being able to reach them. But, he adds, Establish Thou me with Your word: that I may not by slumbering fall away from those duties which I feel that I have already attained: establish Thou me therefore in those words of Yours that I already hold, that I may be able to reach unto others through edification.

29. Take Thou from me the way of iniquity Psalm 118:29. And since the law of works has entered in, that sin might abound; Romans 5:20 he adds, And pity me according to Your law. By what law, save by the law of faith? Hear the Apostle: Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works. Nay: but by the law of faith. Romans 3:27 This is the law of faith, whereby we believe and pray that it may be granted us through grace; that we may effect that which we cannot fulfil through ourselves; that we may not, ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish our own, fail to submit ourselves unto the righteousness of God. Romans 10:3

30. But after he had said, And pity me according to Your law; he mentions some of those blessings which he has already obtained, that he may ask others that he has not yet gained. For he says, I have chosen the way of truth: and Your judgments I have not forgotten Psalm 118:30. I have stuck unto Your testimonies: O Lord, confound me not Psalm 118:31: may I persevere in striving toward the point whereunto I am running: may I arrive whither I am running! So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Romans 9:16 He next says, I will run the way of Your commandments, when You have widened my heart Psalm 118:32. I could not run had Thou not widened my heart. The sense of the words, I have chosen the way of truth, and Your judgments I have not forgotten: I have stuck unto Your testimonies, is clearly explained in this verse. For this running is along the way of the commandments of God. And because he does allege unto the Lord rather His blessings than his own deservings; as if it were said unto him, How have you run that way, by choosing, and by not forgetting the judgments of God, and by sticking to His testimonies? Couldst thou do these things by yourself? I could not, he replies. It is not therefore through my own will, as though it needed no aid of Yours; but because You have widened my heart. The widening of the heart is the delight we take in righteousness. This is the gift of God, the effect of which is, that we are not straitened in His commandments through the fear of punishment, but widened through love, and the delight we have in righteousness....

He

31. In this great Psalm there comes next in order that which, with the Lord's help, we must consider and treat of. Set a law for me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall seek it always Psalm 118:33....

32. Why does this man still pray for a law to be laid down for him; which, if it had not been laid down for him, he could not have run the way of God's commandments in the breadth of his heart? But since one speaks who is growing in grace, and who knows that it is God's gift that he profits in grace; what else does he pray, when he prays that a law may be laid down for him, save that he may profit more and more? As, if you hold a full cup, and givest it to a thirsty man; he both exhausts it by drinking it, and prays for it by still longing for it....

33. But what means, Evermore?...Does evermore mean as long as we live here, because we progress in grace so long; but after this life, he who was in a good course of improvement here, is made perfect there? Here the law of God is examined into, as long as we progress in it, both by knowing it and by loving it: but there its fullness abides for our enjoyment, not for our examination. Thus also is this spoken, Seek His face evermore. Where, evermore, save here? For we shall not there also seek the face of God, when we shall see face to face. 1 Corinthians 13:12 Or if that which is loved without a change of affection is rightly said to be sought after, and our only object is, that it be not lost, we shall indeed evermore seek the law of God, that is, the truth of God: for in this very Psalm it is said, And Your law is the truth. It is now sought, that it may be held fast; it will then be held fast that it may not be lost....

34. Give me understanding, and I shall search Your law, yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart Psalm 118:34. For when each man has searched the law, and searched its deep things, in which its whole meaning does consist; he ought indeed to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind; and his neighbour as himself. For on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 22:37-40 This he seems to have promised, when he said, Yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.

35. But since he has no power to do even this, save he be aided by Him who commands him to do what He commands, Make me, he adds, to go in the path of Your commandments, for therein is my desire Psalm 118:35. My desire is powerless, unless You Yourself makest me to go where I desire. And this is surely the very path, that is, the path of God's commandments, which he had already said that he had run, when his heart was enlarged by the Lord. And this he calls a path, because the way is narrow which leads unto life; Matthew 7:14 and since it is narrow, we cannot run therein save with a heart enlarged....

36. He next says, Incline mine heart unto Your testimonies, and not to covetousness Psalm 118:36. This then he prays, that he may profit in the will itself.. ..But the Apostle says, Avarice is a root of all evils. 1 Timothy 6:10 But in the Greek, whence these words have been rendered into our tongue, the word used by the Apostle is not ἡ ἐπιθυμία, which occurs in this passage of the Psalms; but ἡ φιλαργία, by which is signified love of money. But the Apostle must be understood to have meant genus by species when he used this word, that is, to have meant avarice universally and generally by love of money, which is truly the root of all evils. Genesis 3:5 ...If therefore our heart be not inclined to covetousness, we fear God only for God's sake, so that He is the only reward of our serving Him. Let us love Him in Himself, let us love Him in ourselves, Him in our neighbours whom we love as ourselves, whether they have Him, or in order that they may have Him....

37. The next words in the Psalm which we have undertaken to expound are, O turn away my eyes, lest they behold vanity: and quicken Thou me in Your way Psalm 118:37. Vanity and truth are directly contrary to one another. The desires of this world are vanity: but Christ, who frees us from the world, is truth. He is the way, too, wherein this man wishes to be quickened, for He is also the life: I am the way, the truth, and the life, John 14:6 are His own words.

38. ...He prays that those eyes wherewith we consider on what account we do what we do, may be turned away that they behold not vanity; that is, that he may not look to vanity, as his motive, when he does anything good. In this vanity the first place is held by the love of men's praise, on account of which many great deeds have been wrought by those who are styled great in this world, and who have been much praised in heathen states, seeking glory not with God, but among men, and on account of this living in appearance prudently, courageously, temperately, and righteously; and when they have reached this they have reached their reward: vain men, and vain reward. Matthew 6:1 ...Moreover, if it be a vain thing to do good works for the sake of men's praises, how much more vain for the sake of getting money, or increasing it, or retaining it, and any other temporal advantage, which comes unto us from without? Since all things are vanity: what is man's abundance, with all his toil, wherein he labours under the sun? Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 For our temporal welfare itself finally we ought not to do our good works, but rather for the sake of that everlasting welfare which we hope for, where we may enjoy an unchangeable good, which we shall have from God, nay, what God Himself is unto us. For if God's Saints were to do good works for the sake of this temporal welfare, never would the martyrs of Christ achieve a good work of confession in the loss of this same welfare....

39. O establish Your word in Your servant, that I may fear You Psalm 118:38. And what else is this than, Grant unto me that I may do according to what You say? For the word of God is not established in those who remove it in themselves by acting contrary to it; but it is established in those in whom it is immoveable. God therefore establishes His word, that they may fear Him, in those unto whom He gives the spirit of the fear of Him; not that fear of which the Apostle says, You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; Romans 8:15 for perfect love casts out this fear, 1 John 4:18 but that fear which the Prophet calls the spirit of the fear of the Lord; Isaiah 11:2 that fear which is pure, and endures for ever;

that fear which fears to offend Him whom it loves.

40. Take away my reproach which I have suspected, for Your judgments are sweet Psalm 118:39. Who is he who suspected his own reproach, and who does not know his own reproach better than that of his neighbour? For a man may rather suspect another's than his own; since he knows not that which he suspects; but in each one's own reproach there is not suspicion for him, but knowledge, wherein conscience speaks. What then mean the words, the rebuke which I have suspected? The meaning of them must be derived from the former verse; since as long as a man does not turn away his eyes lest they behold vanity, he suspects in others what is going on in himself; so that he believes another to worship God, or do good works, from the same motive as himself. For men can see what we do, but with a view to what end we act, is hidden....

41. Behold, I have coveted Your commandments: O quicken Thou me in Your righteousness Psalm 118:40. Behold, I have coveted to love You with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and my neighbour as myself, but, O quicken Thou me not in my own, but in Your righteousness, that is, fill me with that love which I have longed for. Aid me that I may do that which Thou chargest me: Yourself give what Thou dost command. O quicken Thou me in Your righteousness: for in myself I had that which would cause my death: but I find not save in You whence I may live. Christ is Your righteousness, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, etc. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 And in Him I find Your commandments, which I have coveted, that in Your righteousness, that is, in Him, You may quicken me. For the Word Himself is God; and the Word was made flesh, John 1:14 that He Himself also might be my neighbour.

Vav

42. And let Your loving mercy come also unto us, O Lord Psalm 118:41. This sentence seems annexed to the foregoing: for he does not say, Let it come unto me, but, And let it come unto me....What then does he here pray for, save that through His loving mercy who commanded, he may perform the commandments which he has coveted? For he explains in some degree what he meant by adding, even Your salvation, according to Your word: that is, according to Your promise. Whence the Apostle desires us to be understood as the children of promise: Romans 9:8 that we may not imagine that what we are is our own work, but refer the whole to the grace of God....Christ Himself is the Salvation of God, so that the whole body of Christ may say, By the grace of God I am what I am. 1 Corinthians 15:10

43. And so shall I make answer, he says, to them that reproach me with the word Psalm 118:42. It is doubtful whether it be reproach me with a word; or, I will answer with a word; but either signifies Christ. They to whom Christ crucified is a stumbling-block or foolishness, 1 Corinthians 1:23 reproach us with Him; ignorant that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us; John 1:14 the Word which was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God. John 1:1 But although they may not reproach us with the Word which is unknown unto them, because His Divinity is not known unto those by whom His weakness on the Cross is despised; let us nevertheless make answer of the Word, and let us not be terrified or confounded by their reproaches. For if they had known the Word, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. 1 Corinthians 2:8 ...Therefore, when the Psalmist had said, I will make answer unto them that reproach me with the word: he at once adds, For my trust is in Your words, which means exactly, in Your promises.

44. O take not the word of Your truth away out of my mouth even exceedingly Psalm 118:43. He says, out of my mouth, because the unity of the body is speaking, among whose members those also are counted

who failed at the hour by denying, but by penitence afterwards came again to life, or even, by renewing their confession, received the palm of martyrdom, which they had lost. The word of truth, therefore, was not even exceedingly, or, as some copies have it, even every way, that is not altogether taken from the mouth of Peter, in whom was the type of the Church; because although he denied for the hour, being disturbed with fear, yet by weeping he was restored, Matthew 26:70-75 and by confessing was afterwards crowned. The whole body of Christ therefore speaks....Next follows, for I have hoped in Your judgments. Or, as some have more strictly rendered it from the Greek, I have hoped more; a word which, although compounded in a somewhat unusual way, yet answers the necessary purpose of conveying the truth in a translation....Behold the saints and the humble in heart when they have trusted in You, have not failed in persecutions: behold also those who from trusting in themselves have failed, and nevertheless have belonged to the Very Body, have wept when they became known unto themselves, and have found Your grace a more solid support, because they have lost their own pride.

45. So shall I always keep Your law Psalm 118:44: that is, if You will not take the word of Your truth out of my mouth. Yea, unto age, and age of age: he shows what he meant by always. For sometimes by always 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 says, Love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:10 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 also which is styled, world without end.. ..

46. And I walked at liberty: for I sought Your precepts Psalm 118:45....And I walked at liberty. Here the copulative conjunction, and, is not used as a connecting particle; for he does not say, and I will walk, as he had said, and I will keep Your commandments for ever and ever: or if this latter verse be in the optative mood, and may I keep Your law; he does not add, And may I walk at liberty, as if he had desired and prayed for both of these things; but he says, And I walked at liberty. If this conjunction were not used here, and if the sentence were introduced free from any such connection with what preceded, I walked at liberty, the reader would never be induced by anything unusual in the mode of speech to think he should seek for some hidden sense. Doubtless, then, he wished what he has not said to be understood, that is, that his prayers had been heard; and he then added what he had become: as if he were to say, When I prayed for these things, You heard me, And I walked at liberty; and so with the remaining expressions which he has added to the same purpose.

47. ...Whence after he had said, And I walked at liberty, he subjoined the reason, For I sought out Your commandments. Some copies have not commandments but testimonies: but we find commandments in most, and especially in the Greek; and who would hesitate rather to believe this tongue, as prior to our own, and that from which these Psalms have been rendered into Latin? If then we wish to know how he sought out these commandments, or how they ought to be sought out, let us consider what our good Master, who both taught and gave them, says: Ask, and it shall be given you. Matthew 7:7 And a little lower, If you then, He says, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him. Matthew 7:11 Where He evidently shows, that the words He had spoken, seek, ask, knock, belong only to earnestness in asking, that is, in praying. Moreover, another Evangelist says not, He will give good things to them that ask Him; which may be understood in many ways, either as earthly or spiritual blessings; but has excluded other interpretations, and very carefully expressed what our Lord wished us to pray earnestly and instantly for, in

these words: How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.. ..

48. I spoke of Your testimonies also, he says, before kings, and I was not ashamed Psalm 118:46: as one who had sought and had received grace to answer those who reproached him with the word, and the promise that the word of truth should not be taken from his mouth. Struggling for this truth even unto death, not even before kings was he ashamed to speak of it. For testimonies, whereof he does avow that he was speaking, are in Greek styled ἡμάρτυρις, a word which we now employ instead of the Latin. The name of Martyrs, unto whom Jesus foretold, that they should confess Him even before kings, Matthew 10:18 is derived hence.

49. And I meditated, he says, on Your commandments, which I have loved Psalm 118:47. My hands also have I lifted up unto Your commandments, which I have loved Psalm 118:48; or, as some copies read, which I have loved exceedingly, or too much, or vehemently, as they have chosen to render the Greek word ὑπερῶς. He then loved the commandments of God because he walked at liberty; that is, through the Holy Spirit, through whom love itself is shed abroad, Romans 5:5 and enlarges the hearts of the faithful. But he loved, both in thought and in acts. With a view to thought, he says, And I meditated: as to action, My hands also have I lifted up. But to both sentences, he has annexed the words, which I have loved: for the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart. 1 Timothy 1:5 ...The following words, And my study was in Your statutes, relate to both. This expression most of the translators have preferred to this, I rejoiced in, or I talked of, a version which some have given from the Greek ἀγαπᾶμαι»commandments of God, which he loves, both in thought and in works taking delight in them, is exercised with joy, and with a certain abundance of speech, in the judgments of God.

Zain

50. O remember Your word unto Your servant, wherein You have given me hope Psalm 118:49. Is forgetfulness incident to God, as it is to man? Why then is it said unto Him, O remember? Although in other passages of holy Scripture this very word is used, as, Why have You forgotten me? and, Wherefore forgettest Thou our misery?. ..These expressions are borrowed from moral discourses on human affections; although God does these things according to a fixed dispensation, with no failing memory, nor with an understanding obscured, nor with a will changed. When therefore it is said unto Him, O remember, the desire of him who prays is displayed, because he asks for what was promised; God is not admonished, as if the promise had escaped from His mind. O remember, he says, Your word unto Your servant: that is, fulfil Your promise to Your servant. Wherein You have given me hope: that is, in Your Word, since You have promised, You have caused me to hope.

51. The same is my comfort in my humiliation Psalm 118:50. Namely, that hope which is given to the humble, as the Scripture says: God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Whence also our Lord Himself says with His own lips, For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. We well understand here that humiliation also, not whereby each man humbles himself by confessing his sins, and by not arrogating righteousness to himself; but when each man is humbled by some tribulation or mortification which his pride deserved; or when he is exercised and proved by endurance; Sirach 2:4-5 whence a little after this Psalm says, Before I was troubled, I went wrong....And the Lord Jesus, when He foretold that this humiliation would be brought upon His disciples by their persecutors, did not leave them without a hope; but gave them one, whereby they might find comfort, in these words: In your patience shall you possess your souls; and declared even of their very bodies, which might be put to death by their enemies, and seemingly be utterly annihilated, that not a hair of their

heads should perish. Luke 21:17-18 This hope was given to Christ's Body, that is, to the Church, that it might be a comfort to Her in her humiliation....This hope He gave in the prayer which He taught us, where He enjoined us to say, Lead us not into temptation: Matthew 6:13 for He in a manner implicitly promised that He would give to His disciples in their danger that which He taught them to ask for in their prayers. And indeed this Psalm is rather to be understood to speak of this hope: For Your word has quickened me. Which they have rendered more closely who have put not word, but utterance. For the Greek has ἡ ἀπαγγελία, which is utterance; not ἡ λέξις, which is word.

52. The next verse is, The proud dealt exceeding wickedly: yet have I not shrunk from Your law Psalm 118:51. By the proud he wished to be understood the persecutors of the pious; and he therefore added, yet have I not shrunk from Your laws, because the persecution of the proud attempted to force him to do this. He says that they dealt exceeding wickedly, because they were not only wicked themselves, but even tried to make the godly wicked. In this humiliation, that is, in this tribulation, that hope comforted him which was given in the word of God, who promised aid, that the faith of the Martyrs might not faint; and who by the presence of His Spirit gave strength to them in their toils, that they might escape from the snare of the fowlers.. ..

53. For I was mindful of Your judgments from the beginning of the world, O Lord, and received comfort Psalm 118:52; or, as other copies have it, and I was exhorted, that is, received exhortation. For either might be rendered for the Greek παρεκλήθη. From the beginning of the world, that is, from the birth of the human race, I was mindful of Your judgments upon the vessels of wrath, which are fitted unto perdition: and I received comfort, since through these also have You shown the riches of Your glory on the vessels of Your mercy. Romans 9:22-23

54. Weariness has held me; for the ungodly that forsake Your law Psalm 118:53. Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage Psalm 118:54. This is the low estate, in the house of mortality, of the man who sojourns away from Paradise and the Jerusalem above, whence one going down to Jericho fell among robbers; but, in consequence of the deed of mercy which was done him by that Samaritan, Luke 10:30, 37 the statutes of God became his song in the house of his pilgrimage; although he was weary for the ungodly that forsook the law of God, since he was compelled to converse with them for a season in this life, until the floor be threshed. But these two verses may be adapted to the two clauses of the preceding verse, respectively.

55. I have thought upon Your Name, O Lord, in the night-season, and have kept Your law Psalm 118:55. Night is that low estate wherein is the trouble of mortality; night is in the proud who deal exceeding wickedly; night is the fear for the ungodly who forsake the law of the Lord; night is, lastly, the house of this pilgrimage, until the Lord come, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God. 1 Corinthians 4:5 In this night, therefore, man ought to remember the Name of the Lord; So that he who glories, may glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:31

56. Considering this, he adds, This was made unto me, because I sought out Your righteousnesses Psalm 118:56. Your righteousnesses, whereby Thou dost justify the ungodly; not mine, which never make me godly, but proud. For this man was not one of those who, ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Romans 10:3 Others have better interpreted these righteousnesses, as those whereby men are justified for nought through God's grace, though by themselves they cannot be righteous, justifications. But what

means, This was made unto me? What is This? It is perhaps the law? As he had said, and I have kept Your law; to which he subjoins, This was made unto me, meaning, This was made my law. We must therefore enquire first what was thus made unto him, next in what manner, whatever it may have been, was made unto him. This, he says, was made unto me: not This law, for the Greek, as I have said, refuses this sense. Perhaps then, This night: since the preceding sentence stands thus: I have thought upon Your Name, O Lord, in the night-season: and the next words are, This was made unto me: since then it is not the law, it must truly be the night which is thus spoken of. What then means, I had the night-season: for I have sought out Your righteousnesses? Rather light had come unto him than night, since he sought out the righteousnesses of God. And it is thus rightly understood, It was made unto me, as if it were said, It became night for my sake, that is, that it might profit me. For that low estate of mortality is not absurdly understood as night, where the hearts of mortals are hid to one another, so that from such darkness innumerable and heavy temptations arise....

Cheth

57. Let us hear what follows: I have promised to keep Your law. What means, My portion, O Lord: I have promised to keep Your law Psalm 118:57; save because the Lord will be each man's portion then, when he has kept His law? Consider therefore what he subjoins: I entreated Your face, with my whole heart: and saying in what manner he prayed: O be merciful, he says, unto me, according to Your word Psalm 118:58. And as if he had been heard and aided by Him whom he prayed unto, I thought, he says, on my own ways, and turned away my feet unto Your testimonies Psalm 118:59. That is, I turned them away from my own ways, which displeased me, that they might follow Your testimonies, and there might find a path. For most of the copies have not, Because I thought, as is read in some; but only, I thought. But what is here written, and I turned away my feet: some read, Because I thought, Thou also hast turned away my feet: that this may rather be ascribed to the grace of God, according to the Apostle's words, For it is God who works in us. Philippians 2:13 ...

58. Lastly, when he had received this blessing of grace, he says, I was ready, and was not disturbed, that I may keep Your commandments Psalm 118:60. Which some have rendered, to keeping Your commandments, some that I should keep, others to keep, the Greek being ἑτοιμασθαι ὑποτάσσασθαι...ὑποτάσσασθαι commandments, he has added, in these words: The bands of the ungodly have surrounded me: but I have not forgotten Your law Psalm 118:61. The bands of the ungodly are the hindrances of our enemies, whether spiritual, as the devil and his angels, or carnal, the children of disobedience, in whom the devil works. Ephesians 2:2 For this word peccatorum is not from peccata, sins; but from peccatores, sinners. Therefore when they threaten evils, with which to alarm the righteous, that they may not suffer for the law of God, they, so to speak, entangle them with bands, with a strong and tough cord of their own. For they draw iniquity like a long rope, Isaiah 5:18 and thus endeavour to entangle the holy, and sometimes are allowed so to do.

60. At midnight, he says, I rise to give thanks unto You: because of Your righteous judgments Psalm 118:62. This very fact, that the bands of the ungodly surround the righteous, is one of the righteous judgments of God. On which account the Apostle Peter says, The time has come when judgment must begin at the house of the Lord. 1 Peter 4:17 For he says this of the persecutions which the Church suffered, when the bands of the ungodly surrounded them. I suppose, therefore, that by midnight we should understand the heavier seasons of tribulation. In which he said, I arose: since He did not so afflict him, as to cast him down; but tried him, so that he arose, that is, that through this very tribulation he might advance unto a bolder confession.

61. For I imagine that what follows, I am a companion of all them that fear You, and keep Your commandments Psalm 118:63, does relate to the Head Himself, as it is in the Epistle which is inscribed to the Hebrews: Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.. ..Therefore Jesus Himself speaks in this prophecy: some things in His Members and in the Unity of His Body, as if in one man diffused over the whole world, and growing up in succession throughout the roll of ages: and some things in Himself our Head. And on this account, that since He became the companion of His brethren, God of men, the Immortal of the mortal, for this reason the seed fell upon the earth, that by its death it might produce much fruit; he next adds concerning this very fruit, The earth, O Lord, is full of Your mercy Psalm 118:64. And whence this, save when the ungodly is justified? That we may make progress in the knowledge of this grace, he adds, O teach me Your righteousnesses!

Teth

62. You have dealt in sweetness with Your servant: according unto Your word; or rather, according unto Your utterance Psalm 118:65. The Greek word ἡδύτης, ἡδύτης, ἡδύτης, has been variously rendered by our translators by the words sweetness and goodness. But since sweetness may exist also in evil, since all unlawful and unclean things afford pleasure, and it may also exist in that carnal pleasure which is permitted; we ought to understand the word sweetness, which the Greeks termed ἡδύτης, ἡδύτης, ἡδύτης, of spiritual blessings: for on this account our translators have preferred to term it goodness. I think therefore that nothing else is meant by the words, You have dealt in sweetness with Your servant, than this, You have made me feel delight in that which is good. For when that which is good delights, it is a great gift of God. But when the good work which the law commands is done from a fear of punishment, not from a delight in righteousness, when God is dreaded, not loved; it is the act of a slave, not of a freeman.

63. O learn me sweetness, and understanding, and knowledge, he says, for I have believed Your commandments Psalm 118:66. He prays these things may be increased and perfected. For they who said, Lord, increase our faith, Luke 17:5 had faith. And as long as we live in this world, these are the words of those who are making progress. But he adds, understanding, or, as most copies read, discipline. Now the word discipline, for which the Greeks use παιδεία, παιδεία, is employed in Scripture, where instruction through tribulation is to be understood: according to the words, Whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives. Hebrews 12:6 In the literature of the Church this is usually called discipline. For this word, παιδεία, παιδεία, is used in the Greek in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Latin translator says, No discipline for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, etc. Hebrews 12:11 He therefore toward whom the Lord deals in sweetness, that is, he in whom He mercifully inspires delight in that which is good, ought to pray instantly, that this gift may be so increased unto him, that he may not only despise all other delights in comparison with it, but also that he may endure any amount of sufferings for its sake. Thus is discipline healthfully added to sweetness. This discipline ought not to be desired, and prayed for, for a small measure of grace and goodness, that is, holy love; but for so great, as may not be extinguished by the weight of the chastening:...so much in fact as to enable him to endure with the utmost patience the discipline. In the third place is mentioned knowledge; since, if knowledge in its greatness outstrips the increase of love, it does not edify, but puffs up. 1 Corinthians 8:1 ...

64. But in that he says, not, Give unto me; but, O learn me; how is the sweetness taught, if it be not given? Since many know what does not delight them, and find no sweetness in things of which they have knowledge. For sweetness cannot be learned, unless it please. Also discipline, which signifies the tribulation which chastens, is learned by receiving; that is, not by hearing, or reading, or thinking, but by

feeling....

65. He adds, for I have believed Your commandments, and herein we may justly enquire, why he said not, I obeyed, rather than, I believed. For commandments are one thing, promises another. We undertake to obey commandments, that we may deserve to receive promises. We therefore believe promises, obey commandments....Teach me therefore sweetness by inspiring charity, teach me discipline by giving patience, teach me knowledge by enlightening my understanding: for I have believed Your commandments. I have believed that Thou who art God, and who givest unto man whence You may cause him to do what You command, hast commanded these things.

66. Before I was humbled, I went wrong; wherefore I have kept Your word Psalm 118:67; or, as some have it more closely, Your utterance, that is, lest I should be humbled again. This is better referred to that humiliation which took place in Adam, in whom the whole human creature, as it were, being corrupted at the root, as it refused to be subject to truth, was made subject to vanity. Which it was profitable to the vessels of mercy to feel, that by throwing down pride, obedience might be loved, and misery perish, never again to return.

67. Sweet are You, O Lord; or, as many have it, Sweet are You, even Thou, O Lord Psalm 118:68. Some also, Sweet are You, or, Good are You: as we have before treated of this word: and in Your sweetness teach me Your statutes. He truly desires to do the righteousnesses of God, since he desires to learn them in His sweetness from Him unto whom he has said, Sweet are You, O Lord.

68. Next he says, The iniquity of the proud has been multiplied upon me Psalm 118:69: of those, that is, whom it profited not that human nature was humbled after it went wrong. But I will search Your commandments with my whole heart. Howsoever, he says, iniquity shall abound, love shall not grow cold in me. Matthew 24:12 He, as it were, says this, who in His sweetness learns the righteousnesses of God. For in proportion as the commandments of Him who aids us are the more sweet, so much the more does he who loves Him search after them, that he may perform them when known, and may learn them by doing them; because they are more perfectly understood when they are performed.

69. Their heart is curdled as milk Psalm 118:70. Whose, save the proud, whose iniquity he has said has been multiplied upon him? But he wishes it to be understood by this word, and in this passage, that their heart has become hard. It is used also in a good sense, and is understood to mean, full of grace: for this word, some have also interpreted curdled....

70. It is good for me that You have humbled me: that I might learn Your righteousnesses Psalm 118:71. He has said something kindred to this above. For by the fruit itself he shows that it was a good thing for him to be humbled; but in the former passage he has stated the cause also, in that he had felt beforehand that humiliation which resulted from his punishment, when he went wrong. But in these words, Wherefore have I kept Your word: and again in these, That I might learn Your righteousnesses: he seems to me to have signified, that to know these is the same thing as to keep them, to keep them the same thing as to know them. For Christ knew what He reproveth; and yet He reproveth sin, though it is said of Him that He knew not sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21 He knew therefore by a kind of knowledge, and again He knew not by a kind of ignorance. Thus also many learn the righteousnesses of God, and learn them not. For they know them in a certain way; and, again do not know them from a kind of ignorance, since they do them not. In this sense the Psalmist therefore is to be understood to have said, That I might learn Your righteousnesses, meaning that kind of knowledge whereby they are performed.

71. But that this is not gained, save through love, wherein he who does them has delight, on which account it is said, In Your sweetness teach me Your righteousnesses: the following verse shows, wherein he says, The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver Psalm 118:72: so that love loves the law of God more than avarice loves thousands of gold and silver.

Jod

72. ...Your hands have made me, and fashioned me Psalm 118:73. The hands of God are the power of God. Or if the plural number moves them, since it is not said, Your hand, but, Your hands; let them understand by the hands of God the power and wisdom of God, both of which titles are given to one Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:24 who is also understood under the figure, Arm of the Lord. Or let them understand by the hands of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit; since the Holy Spirit works conjointly with the Father and the Son: whence says the Apostle, But all these works that one and the self-same Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:11 he said, one and the self-same; lest as many spirits as works might be imagined, not that the Spirit works without the Father and the Son. It is easy therefore to see how the hands of God are to be understood: provided, at the same time, that He be not denied to do those things through His Word which He does by His hands: nor be considered not to do those things with His hands, which He does through His word....But is this said in respect of Adam? From whom since all men were propagated, what man, since Adam was made, may not say that he himself also was made by reason of procreation and generation from Adam? Or may it rightly be said, in this sense, Your hands have made me, and fashioned me, namely, that every man is born even of his parents not without the work of God, God creating, they generating? Since, if the creative power of God be withdrawn from things, they perish: nor is anything at all, either of the world's elements, or of parents, or of seeds, produced, if God does not create it....

73. The Greek version has a more concise expression for our, Give me understanding, ἰψὶ...ἰψὶ Latin cannot do; as if one could not say, Heal me; and it were necessary to say, Give me health, as it is here said, Give me understanding; or, make me whole, as here it may be said, make me intelligent. This indeed an Angel could do: for he said to Daniel, I have come to give you understanding; Daniel 10:14 and this word is in the Greek, as it is here also, ἰψὶ...ἰψὶ Latin translator were to render ἰψὶ...ἰψὶ by sanitatem dare tibi. For the Latin interpreter would not make a circumlocution by saying, to give you understanding, if, as we say from health, to heal you, so one could say from intellect, to intellectuate you. But if an Angel could do this, what reason is there that this man should pray that this be done for him by God? Is it because God had commanded the Angel to do it? Just so: for Christ is understood to have given this command to the Angel. Daniel 8:15-16 ...

74. That I may learn Your commandments. Since Thou, says he, hast formed me, do Thou new form me; that that may be done in Christ's Body, which the Apostle speaks of, Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2

75. They that fear You, he says, will see me, and be glad Psalm 118:74: or, as other copies have it, will be joyful: because I have hoped in Your word: that is, in the things which You have promised, that they may be the sons of promise, the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations are blessed. Who are they who fear God, and whom will they see and be glad, because he has put his trust in the word of God? Whether it be the body of Christ, that is, the Church, whose words these are through Christ, or within it, and concerning it, these are as it were the words of Christ concerning Himself; are not they themselves among those who fear God?...The same persons, who see the Church and are glad, are the Church. But why said he not, They who fear You see me, and are glad: whereas he has written, fear You, in the present tense; while the

verbs shall see, and shall be glad, are futures? Is it because in the present state there is fear, as long as man's life is a temptation upon earth; but the gladness which he desired to be understood, will be then, when the righteous shall shine in the kingdom of their Father like the sun. Matthew 13:43 ...

76. I know, she says, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in Your truth You have humbled me Psalm 118:75. O let Your merciful kindness be my comfort, according to Your word unto Your servant Psalm 118:76. Mercy and truth are so spoken of in the Divine Word, that, while they are found in many passages, especially in the Psalms, it is also so read in one place, All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. And here indeed he has placed truth first, whereby we are humbled unto death, by the judgment of Him whose judgments are righteousness: next mercy, whereby we are renewed unto life, by the promise of Him whose blessing is His grace. For this reason he says, according to Your Word unto Your servant: that is, according to that which You have promised unto Your servant. Whether therefore it be regeneration whereby we are here adopted among the sons of God, or faith and hope and charity, which three are built up in us, although they come from the mercy of God; nevertheless, in this stormy and troublesome life they are the consolations of the miserable, not the joys of the blessed.

77. But since those things are destined to happen after and through these, he next says, O let Your loving mercies come upon me, and I shall live Psalm 118:77. For then indeed I shall truly live, when I shall not be able to fear lest I die. This is styled life absolutely and without any addition; nor is any life save that which is everlasting and blessed understood, as though it alone were to be called life, compared with which that which we now lead ought rather to be called death than life: according to those words in the Gospel, If you will enter into life, keep the commandments. Matthew 19:17 ...

78. He then goes on as follows: Let the proud be confounded, for they have unrighteously practised iniquity against me: but I will be occupied in Your commandments Psalm 118:78. Behold, what he says, the meditation of the law of God, or rather, his meditation the law of God.

79. Let such as fear You, he says, and have known Your testimonies, be turned unto me Psalm 118:79. But who is he who says this? For no mortal will venture to say this, or if he say it, should be listened to. Indeed, it is He who above also has interposed His own words, saying, I am a partaker with all them that fear You. Because He was made sharer in our mortal state, that we might also become partakers in His Divine Nature, we became sharers in One unto life, He a sharer in many unto death. He it is unto whom they that fear God turn, and who know the testimonies of God, so long before predicted of Him through the Prophets, a little before displayed in His presence through miracles.

80. O let my heart, he says, be unspotted in Your righteousnesses, that I be not ashamed Psalm 118:80. He returns to the words of His body, that is, His holy people, and now prays that his heart may be made unspotted, that is, the heart of

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