

**A DEVOTIONAL AND
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE 119TH PSALM**

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A devotional and practical exposition of the 119th Psalm by W. St. G. Sargent

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DEVOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

119TH PSALM,

INTENDED, CHIEFLY, AS A HELP TO FAMILY
AND PRIVATE WORSHIP.

BY THE
REV. W. ST. G. SARGENT, B.A.,

*Incumbent of Kimberley, Notiz. ;
And Chaplain to the Right Honourable Lord Ellenborough.*

"Si Christum discis, nihil est quod altera needs.

"Si Christum needs, nihil est quod altera discis.

"Knowest thou Christ, all knowledge then is gain.

"Knowest thou not Christ, all knowledge else is vain.

A translation of the above Latin sentences in verse.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Book of the Psalms has been a favourite devotional study of God's people in every age of the Church. This is not surprising, when we recollect, that these inspired hymns are not only full of the sweetest and most graceful Eastern poetry, but point out, in the clearest manner, the danger of lifeless formality in worship, and the blessedness of inward purity and heart-religion. Christians, too, love to hide their sacred contents in their hearts and memories with greater zeal, when they find that the work of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people, is the prominent subject of the entire collection. Oh! yes; whilst we read of the heart-rending sorrows, persecutions, and deliverances of David, and the glorious kingdom of his son Solomon, we feel, and know, that a greater than either David or Solomon is here.

This little work, which is intended to make the 119th Psalm of more practical and de-

votional use to the Church of Christ, is now published with the hope that it may be received by its members in the same loving and gracious spirit in which it is offered to their acceptance.

Since we live in a day when rationalism and infidelity are advancing, with a bold and united front, to undermine, pull down, and destroy the citadel of God's truth—a day, when the authority and the veracity of God's word have been openly and daringly denied, the Author feels that there is no need of any one, much less a Minister of the Gospel, making an apology for a publication which is designed to draw the hearts of Christian people after the word and commandment of their God. He, therefore, simply in faith, commends the work to the Holy Spirit, earnestly praying that the weakness of the attempt may, by His influence and blessing, be overruled to the edification of souls, and the promotion of God's unrivalled glory.

PSALM 119th.

*This Psalm containeth sundry prayers, praises,
and professions of obedience.*

This is not only the longest Psalm of the 150, but by far the most important and valuable. If we want to hide God's word in our hearts as a pure and precious treasure—more precious than unalloyed gold; and more necessary to our spiritual existence than our daily food is to our natural life—let us earnestly study and meditate on this 119th Psalm. If we want to be consoled in deep affliction, to be built up in doctrine, and to be warned from the errors of false religion, let us study this sweet Psalm. Every sentence in its 176 verses should be read over so often and prayerfully, as to be

treasured in the memory of every child of God as a precious deposit or storehouse; from whence can be drawn forth, on the moment of need and necessity, language for warning, reproof, prayer, and thanksgiving. There is a variety and divine fulness of expression in this Psalm, for all these occasions, which is quite marvellous. We will have an opportunity of observing on its varied excellencies as we read it throughout, verse by verse.

May God richly bless the prayerful consideration of it for Christ's sake.

The Psalm is supposed to have been compiled by the Prophet Ezra, during the Babylonish captivity, as a manual of devotion. And as king David's exercises of heart, state of life and experiences are so plainly set forth in the Psalm, it is believed, with some show of probability, that it was originally composed by the sweet Singer of Israel him-

self, and that Ezra only compiled it from his papers. Be this as it may, we know so much of king David's life, and reverence for God's word and law, that we could read every line of it in connexion and profitable association with the trials and religious experiences of that illustrious and pious monarch.

In the way of generally illustrating the great fulness and variety of expression, touching the word of God in this Psalm, it is worthy of observation, that the Psalmist uses no less than ten words to express divine revelation. Each and all of these unitedly are most suggestive of its deep value to us. He calls it, 1, God's law; 2, His way; 3, His testimonies, 4, His commandments; 5, His precepts; 6, His word; 7, His Judgments; 8, His Righteousness; 9, His Statutes; and 10, His Truth. How many deep thoughts and heart-searching musings are these ten names from a portion of our Bible

calculated to suggest, even to the most thoughtless.

This is another of the Alphabetical Psalms. Its very peculiar structure renders it most convenient for reference and private meditation. Its 176 verses are divided into 22 parts, corresponding with the 22 letters in the Hebrew Alphabet. Each of these parts contains eight verses; and every verse, in the Hebrew original, begins with the letter at the heading of each part.

It does not appear probable that the Psalmist intended any connexion in sense between the different parts, or even the verses of each part. Any attempt to establish such a connexion, at least in all cases, would prove a vain and unprofitable speculation. The one grand object and design of the whole Psalm is to draw the human mind after the Divine law in the path of holy admiration, love, reverence, and obedience. This unity of