

“Teach me, O Lord the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to walk in the path of Your commandments. For I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.” (Psalm 119:33-36)

The suppliant’s objective in this octave of the 119th Psalm is a divine education. He would be taught of God the way of His statutes. Only God will suffice for this education. If we are to be assured that we are His we must be taught of Him. *“All your children shall be taught of the Lord”* (Is.54). *“For whom the Lord loves, He chastens”* (Heb. 12:6). If we are to persevere, to never fall away, to finish our course with honor and joy, we must be taught of God Himself. The following verses illustrate the method God uses.

He addresses the mind. Understanding is the goal. Most fail in law keeping because they do not understand. This was the downfall of the Jew. Paul tells us in Romans 10:1-3 that though they had great zeal for God they went about law keeping to establish their own righteousness because they were *ignorant*, they did not understand the righteousness of God. In the parable of the sower, most upon whom the word fell did not bear fruit because they did not understand. Hearts were too hard or clogged with cares of the world. We may obey God’s law without understanding it, but our hearts are not in it, and it is not worship, but only grievous legalism. How shall we obtain this understanding? Only by grace! We cannot earn it. It is not in our learning powers to rise to it. It comes to us as all blessedness does; the *gift* of God. (Eph. 2:8, John 4:10, Romans 5:15).

God also orders the behavior, our actions, deeds. *“Make me to walk”*. The path of His commandments is His will revealed. That with which He is pleased and that with which He is not pleased. At least 99% of the will of God is clearly revealed to us. Our failure to walk in it is our unwillingness to do so, not because of our ignorance of it. God, in His child training *makes* us do it, not by brute force, but by irresistible grace. This blessed grace does not end in our conversion but continues with us all our lives. He makes us do right by His providence. He sometimes closes every door except the one we would never choose ourselves, so we are made to walk through it. He does it by depriving us of those things not good for us, but that which we would surely lay hold of to our destruction. He will withhold from us no good thing. He does it by spiritual checks, inward prompting and restraints. And He does it by causing us to see and understand His written recorded word.

God also corrects our affections. How very wrong these are in all of us! We come into this world full of lust and covetousness, wanting, desiring, longing for everything that is wrong, and having a strong distaste for everything that is right. We will never be secure in the way of righteousness if we do not like it, enjoy it, thirst and hunger for it. People do not pray, go to church, serve God because they do not like it.

That is why *our* converts fall away, and God’s do not. Only God can transform our affections, desires, longings, and tastes. He can and does that for every one of His children. That is an indispensable part of His child training. And that is

why “law” is no evil, burdensome word to the Christian. The essence of freedom and liberty is in the transforming of our desires so that we are God’s willing, joyful, slaves to righteousness (Rom.6:8), to our righteous King Jesus.

- C. M.