

VANITY DEPRECATED**NO. 3026**

A SERMON

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“Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in Your way.”
Psalm 119:37.

THERE are divers kinds of vanity. In the play of the frivolous and the sport of the idle, we see but one sort of vanity—light, open and undisguised. The cap and bells of the fool, the motley of the jester, the mirth of the world, the dance, the lyre and the cup of the dissolute—men know these to be vanities—they wear upon their forefront their proper name and title. Yet another species of vanity, and more deceitful, can be discovered in the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in the counting-house as in the theater. If he is spending his life in amassing wealth, he is heaping vanity to himself quite as much as though he openly passed his days in vain show or empty pageant. All the fools do not dance or drink. All the fools do not make jests—full many there are of somber mood who spend money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfies not!

Moreover, there is such a thing as solemn vanity—the vanity that may be seen among those who observe the empty ceremonials of religion, invest themselves with strange garments and affect the odor of sanctity. Or, turning from the gorgeous meetings to the lowly conventicle, vanity may even be discovered beneath the broad brim of the Friend who, seeking after the world rather than after Christ, thinks that he rebukes the world's vanity when the world may well rebuke his! Vanity, I say, is quite as certainly to be found among the sober as among the frivolous. Unless we follow Christ, and make God the great Object of our life, we only differ from the most frivolous in degree—and possibly the degree may not be as great as we suppose!

You will all understand my text, as you hear it, to mean, first, “Turn away my eyes from looking upon the levities of men, the tomfoolery of the world.” But it means more than this. “Turn away my eyes from looking at the world's pride, at the world's wealth, at the world's substantial temptations.” These, as the royal preacher has said, are vanity. “Vanity of vanities,” said Solomon, “all is vanity,” as he looked at everything beneath the sun! And we may say of everything short of Christ, “Turn away my eyes from beholding it, less my heart should love it.”

The Psalmist goes on to couple with this another petition—“Quicken me in Your way.” Beholding vanity is sure to bring deadness into the soul. You all know that this is true, not only of that which is frothy, but of all that, however specious, is not sterling. If you let the cares of this world enter into your mind too much, do they not destroy your spirituality? If honor is your *game*, or even if you are hunting after an honest livelihood without casting the care of it upon God, you know that your Grace declines, your faith grows weak and your love becomes ready to expire. No high degree of Divine Grace can be attained when the eyes are fixed upon debasing things. We must have our eyes where we profess that our hearts already are—beyond the skies. We must be looking for Christ to reveal the exceeding riches of His Grace and Glory—not after vanities to display the pleasure of this present evil world—or else our souls will soon lose the force and strength of piety and we shall have good reason to cry, “Quicken me in Your way.”

Beloved, I hope you all know what the Psalmist means by being quickened in God's way. Often your spirits get lethargic and dull when, suddenly, the Spirit of God comes upon you and once, more your former vigor returns. And, instead of creeping, you begin to run in the way of God's Commandments. Pray, then, this prayer as well as the former one, “Quicken me in Your way,” for, as the looking at vanity will make us dull, so our souls being quickened will be sure to turn our eyes away from vanity! As the first part of the text acts upon the second, so the second will act also upon the first. Put the two together and may they be graciously fulfilled in the experience of every one of us!

To amplify the teaching of the text, I shall now call your attention to four things—*a tacit confession; a silent profession; a vehement desire and a confident hope.*

I. First, then, I observe here A TACIT CONFESSION. It is not stated in so many words, but it is really meant.

The Psalmist seems to impeach himself and unburden his breast before God, deploring, indeed, *a natural tendency towards vanity.* What? Is it so, after all, that David has known of fellowship with the world? Does the vain still attract him? What? When God's Covenant has been peculiarly delightful to the shepherd-king, do the mirth and revelry of this world and the gewgaws of earth still attract him? He seems to confess it. He would not need to have his eyes turned off from vanity if there were not a something in his heart that went after it! He would not ask God to turn them off unless he felt that he needed a stronger arm than his own to keep him in fitting restraints! It is very easy for you and me to stand up and play the wise man—yes, and in the closet to pray like wise men. We may feel, in our own souls, that we have experience, now, and shall never again be intoxicated by the world's draughts, never more be deceived by its lies. But no sooner does Madam Bubble show her face than her strange fascinations draw our eyes! Let the world ring the bell and straightway we start up and our heart wanders, too often before we are aware of it! We know they are vain things—know it thoroughly—but yet, knowing it, we do not in our own nature therefore avoid them! Reckless of the snares, the birds are foolish enough to fly into them! Though we know that the draught is poisoned, yet is it so sweet that unless prevented by God's Grace, you and I would soon be drunk with it! Every child of God knows that he is a fool or he is a great fool, indeed, if he does not know it! Every heir of Heaven understands that there is within himself a very sink of vanities—his vicious tastes respond to the vile compounds of earth as “deep calls unto deep.” It is clear enough, I think, if you turn over the prayer, that the Psalmist confesses that his heart goes after vanity.

He confesses, yet again, that *his eyes are on it now.* He says, “*Turn them off.*” What does he mean but that they are on it? And some of us, in coming up to the House of God, tonight, and, perhaps, while sitting here, have had to confess that our eyes are on vanity. Why, some of you Believers may have been thinking of some silly snatch of a song that you heard before you were converted, or some idle tale that was told you the other day. You would gladly forget it, but it has followed you in here—yes, and may even follow you to the Communion Table. Or, possibly, your worldly cares have come up with you and my poor talk has scarcely had power to lift you up from your families, from your shops, or from all the anxious thoughts that burden you! Your heart is on these things now. When you stood up to sing about Christ and asked Him to set you as a seal upon His heart, where were your flighty imaginations roaming? We tried to pray just now, but while the preacher's words went up to Heaven, did not your hearts wander, I know not where?

The confession assumes another character as it seems to hint that, *no sooner are our eyes on vanity, than our heart goes after it.* What? Can we not manage our own eyes? What? Are we such vain creatures that the mere sight of vanity is a temptation to us? Surely to see vanity ought to be sufficient to make us avoid it! Some men say that they will look at evil and, knowing that it is evil, they will be safe from the danger of being betrayed by it. Ah, how many have proved the hollowness of that pretense? Brothers and Sisters, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil has brought little benefit to mankind—it has certainly brought a curse! Beware of the hope to be as gods through eating again of that tree! We are more likely to be as devils than to be as gods through feeding upon it! Oh, no! I know enough of sin without looking at it! There is enough knowledge of my sinfulness forced upon me by my daily temptations and failures, without my going to this place or to the other, that I may look upon sin! Do not tell me that you went into bad company just to ascertain its character! Do not tell me, young man, that having heard a certain thing condemned, you thought you ought to see it for yourself! That will not do! That is not a Believer's desire, nor a godly man's wish! He cries, “Turn away my eyes. Lord, let me speak to You humbly. Am I so sinful and so weak that I have only to see a ditch to fall into it—only to see a fire to put my finger into it? I am not like that in other things—how is it that I am so besotted in the carnality of my mind? Yet so it is, Lord. You know and Your servant feels that it is so.” Therefore, let the confession stand, “Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity.”

The Psalmist's confession seems to go a little deeper, for *he seems to say that he cannot keep his own eyes off vanity.* “Turn away my eyes.” What, Lord? Have I not an optic nerve? Is there not a power in my head to turn which way it wills? Am I *compelled* to look at vanity? No, not compelled by physical necessity, but still, so compelled by the disposition of this vile nature of mine that unless You keep Your hands on my head and turn my eyes from beholding vanity, I shall surely be looking at it! We will go anywhere to see vanity! It is strange what mountains men will climb—into what depths they will dive—what leagues they will travel—what wealth they will spend to see vanity! And when

they have seen all they can see, what does it come to but the sight of so much smoke, after all? And yet, Brothers and Sisters, we cannot keep our eyes off it! If anybody tells you that there is a lewd or unseemly thing, a juggle, or some witchcraft, do you not feel an inward craving, an unholy desire to see it? Is not that a well-known principle of human nature? There is a little tract, I think, entitled, “Don’t Read It”—and why, do you think, was it so entitled? Because, whatever tract might remain unread, that one is certain to be read! “Don’t Read It”—the prohibition provokes appetite, and the moment you and I hear, “don’t,” said, inclination begins to be astir! Thank God that this morbid propensity is restrained and subdued by Sovereign Grace through the love of Jesus! But still, the natural bias is toward evil and only toward evil. Therefore, Lord, “Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity.” The confession goes very deep, you see.

But there is even more in the next clause. “Quicken me in Your way.” *He seems to confess that he is dull, heavy, lumpy, all but dead.* Do not you feel the same? I hope you do not, but I often do, and I am afraid you often do, even the best of you. And when we think of how fast our spirits ought to move along the heavenly road, constrained and moved by love like that of Jesus, I think we all must cry—

*“Dear Lord! And shall we always lie
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to You,
And Yours to us so great?”*

Yes, we are dull if God leaves us for a moment—so dull and so doting that the best motives cannot quicken us! Otherwise the Psalmist would not have needed to appeal to the Almighty to effect that of which he was himself capable. What? Will not the thought of Hell quicken me? Can I think of sinners perishing and yet not be awakened? Will not the thought of Heaven quicken me? Can I think of the reward that awaits the righteous and yet be dull and stupid? Will not the thought of death quicken me? Can I think of dying and standing before my God—and yet be slothful in my Master’s service? Will not Christ’s love quicken me? Can I think of His dear wounds, can I sit at the foot of His Cross and think of Him, and yet not be stirred to something like fervency and zeal? Yet it seems that no such consideration can quicken to zeal, but that God Himself must do it or else there had been no need to cry, “Quicken me.” It struck me, as I turned this text over, that it was amazing how poverty-stricken the Psalmist felt himself. What does a beggar ask for? The poorest beggar that I ever met never asked me, so far as I remember, for anything less than a drink of water and a bite of bread—but here is a man who does not ask God for anything so little as that—he asks for life itself! “Quicken me.” The beggar has life—he only asks me for means to sustain it. But here is a poor beggar, knocking at Mercy’s door, who has to ask for life itself! And that beggar represents me—represents you—represents, I am sure, every Christian who knows himself. You may well ask, every day, for spiritual existence! It is not, “Enlarge me, Lord. Enrich me in heavenly things,” but, “Oh, do keep me alive! Quicken me, O Lord!” You see that the confession thus takes us into the most secret places of man’s need. I pray God to teach us all so to feel what our true state is that, with humble, sincere and devout hearts, we may pray the prayer, “Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in Your way.”

II. The text likewise involves A SILENT PROFESSION. Do you observe it? It is not all confession of sin—there is a profession of *something*.

There is a profession at least of this, “Lord, I know it is vanity.” That is something. “O my God, how I bless You that I know the hollowness of the world and the plague of my own heart! It was always so, but I did not always think so.” There are some of you who do not think that even worldly amusements are vanity. You love them—there is a sweetness and a substance in them to you. Perhaps you are like the lady who said to the minister that she loved to go to the play, because, first of all, there was the pleasure of thinking of it before she went—and then there was the pleasure of being there, then there was the pleasure of thinking of it afterwards—and the pleasure of telling it to one’s friends. “Ah,” said the man of God, “and there is another pleasure you have forgotten.” “What is that, Sir?” asked the lady. “It is the pleasure of thinking of it on a dying bed, Madam.” Small pleasure that! Some of you have never thought of that last pleasure and, therefore, the world’s vanity is very satisfactory to you. I know what a pig would say if he were to talk. As he munched his husks, he would say, “I cannot tell what to think of those stupid men—they call these husks empty—and throw them away. I think them very luscious and substantial.” You would, then, attribute the quality of the taste to the nature of the beast. It is after the manner of a pig and so, sinners say, “We cannot make out why these strict people, these Puritans, find fault with worldly amusements—we find them very sweet.” Yes, but you see that it is only a sinner who

says so—it is only a sinner who feels so. The true child of God knows that both the pleasures of this world and its cares are, alike, vanity!

I know how some of you have often felt when you were busy. Encumbered with many things, more than you could manage, a friend has complimented you and said, “I am glad you are getting on so well. Appearances bespeak a thriving trade.” “Well,” you reply, “I think I am. I am grateful for business.” But, as your friend turned his head, you thought to yourself, “Ah, but I should be more grateful if I had more Divine Grace, for I feel that much business needs much Grace to balance it, or else the more I get, the poorer I shall be.” You felt that it was vanity unless you could have God’s blessing and the Presence of Christ with it.

It is a feature of this profession that, seeing this vanity, you do not want to love it and would avoid being ensnared by it. If I say, “Turn away my eyes from it,” I do, in effect, confess before God that I do *not* love it. I hope there are many of us here who can say, “Lord, our evil heart sometimes goes after it, but we do not really love it—in the bottom of our souls there is a hatred of sin so deeply rooted that if the loss of our eyes would take away temptation and prevent us from sinning, we would thank You to never allow us to see a ray of light, again, for sin is so terrible an evil to us that even blindness would be a blessing if it enabled us to escape from sin.”

The second clause of the text has in it, likewise, the nature of profession—“Quicken me in Your way.” The man who can pray thus is already in God’s ways! He professes that he loves them—that he desires to be obedient to God’s will and to continue to make greater progress in God’s ways. What do you say, dear Brothers and Sisters? Some of you find the ways of righteousness very rough, yet, would you leave them? Some of you are reproached and persecuted for Christ’s sake, yet, would you like to go back to the ways of sin? The devil has put a horse at your door and there is a golden bridle on it—and it ambles so softly! “Now mount,” he says, “and come back and serve your old master! Nobody will laugh at you then! Everyone will call you a good fellow—charitable, kind and liberal. Come back,” he says, “and I will treat you better than before!” Will you mount and ride? “No,” the very least of us would say if we had the highest offer for the renunciation of Christ—we would not leave Him—

*“Go you that boast in all your stores,
And tell how bright they shine—
Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,
But my Redeemer’s mine!
I would not change my blest estate
For all that earth calls good or great!
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”*

No, Lord, I may be weary *in* Your way, but, by Your Grace I will never weary *of* Your way.

III. And now, in the third place, there is before us here A VEHEMENT DESIRE—how vehement, those only experience who know the bitterness of vanity and the disappointment which it brings! How vehement those only can describe who know the excellence and sweetness of Divine Quickening! The Psalmist breathes his whole soul out in this prayer. He seems to plead most vehemently, his body and his soul seem to pray together. “Turn away my eyes,” says the body. “Quicken me,” says the soul!

This is a most reasonable and a most practical desire.

How reasonable it is! When a Christian is not quickened in God’s way, he is very uncomfortable. The happiest state of a Christian is the holiest state. As there is the most heat nearest the sun, so is there the most happiness nearest to Christ. I am persuaded that no Christian ever finds any comfort when his eyes are fixed on vanity—no, that he never finds any satisfaction unless his soul is quickened in the ways of God. The world may find happiness elsewhere, but he cannot. I do not blame ungodly men for going to their pleasures. Why should I blame them? Let them have their fill—that is all they have to enjoy. I heard of a converted wife who despaired of her husband’s salvation, but she used to be always very kind to him. She said, “I am afraid he will never be converted.” But whatever he wished for, she always got for him, and she would do anything for him, “for,” she said, “I fear that this is the only world in which he will be happy and, therefore, I have made up my mind to make him as happy as I can in it.” But you Christians must seek your delights in a higher sphere because you cannot be happy in the insipid frivolities of the world, or in the sinful enjoyments of it!

Besides being uncomfortable, it is very dangerous. A Christian is always in danger when he is looking after vanity. We heard of a philosopher who looked up to the stars and fell into a pit. But if they fall deeply who look up, how deeply

do they fall who look down! No Christian is ever safe when his soul is so slothful or drowsy that it needs quickening. Of course you do not understand me to mean that his soul is in danger of being lost. Every Christian is always safe as to the great matter of his standing in Christ, but he is not safe as regards to his standing and happiness in this life. Satan does not often attack a Christian who is living near to God—at least, I think not. It is when the Christian gets away from God and gets half-starved and begins to feed on vanities, that the devil says, “Now I will have him!” He may sometimes stand foot to foot with the child of God who is active in his Master’s service, but the battle is generally short. He that slips as he goes down into the Valley of Humiliation invites Apollyon to come and fight with him!

Again, for a Christian to have his eyes fixed on vanity is injurious to his usefulness. No, more—it does positive damage to others. When a Christian is found setting his affection upon worldly things, what do worldlings say? “Why, he is one of our own kith and kin! He is just like us! See, he loves what we love, where is the difference between us and him?” Thus the cause of Christ gets serious injury. How can you, my dear Brother, from the pulpit, for instance, preach concerning a certain sin when you are, yourself, guilty of it? I should like, for instance, to hear a man who swears that Baptism regenerates when he knows it does not, rebuke a countess for saying that she is “not at home” when she is! I should like to hear him rebuke a draper for “a white lie” across the counter. I should like to hear him rebuke the devil, for, I think he could scarcely venture to do it! Unfaithfulness to the Spirit of God is as great a sin as ever Satan committed! No, my Brothers and Sisters, we must keep ourselves clear of these sins, or else, for practical purposes, the tendon of Achilles has been cut and we cannot serve God with might and main! We can only do some trifling service for Him when our garments are spotted and our souls are set on vanity.

For all these reasons, then, let the Christian pray this reasonable prayer that he may be kept from vanity.

Did I say that this is a *very practical prayer*? So, in truth, it is. You will observe that the former pain is practical, though the latter may seem spiritual. The Psalmist says, “Turn away my eyes.” Now, the man who prays after this fashion will not fail in the directness of his aim. He who is diligent in praying this prayer will not be negligent in his life. He will not pray, “Turn away my eyes from vanity,” and then go and drink death-draughts of carnal pleasures. He will not pray, “Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity,” and then go and turn his eyes on the very evil that he deprecated! No, Brothers and Sisters, there is something so practical in the text that I commend it to your earnest observation. Make it your prayer tonight, each one of you!

IV. Lastly, there is in the text an expression of CONFIDENT HOPE.

The Psalmist does not pray like a waverer who will receive nothing of the Lord. It seems to me that he has an unmoved confidence that God will turn his eyes away from vanity and that God can quicken him. Have any of you backslidden? Let this sentence comfort you tonight! Do not lose the belief that Divine Love can restore you. Have you sunk very low? Do not, I pray you, doubt the efficacy of the right hand of the Most High to bring you back again! Satan will get a great advantage over you if you begin to think that God cannot quicken you. No, be assured that He can. And let me tell you that He can do so readily. It may cost you many pains, but it will cost Him none. He the made the world out of nothing can certainly restore to you the joy which you have lost!

And may I tell you what I think is the means which God often uses with his people to restore and quicken them, and take their eyes from vanity? I think it is a sight of Christ! At any rate, my personal witness is that I never know the vanity of this world so well as when I see the beauties and the perfections of the Lord, my Master. That true man of God, Dr. Hawker—I am told by a friend of mine who visited him one morning—was asked to go and see a military review that was then taking place at Plymouth. The doctor said, “No.” My friend pressed him and said, “I know you are a loyal subject and you like to see your country’s fleets—it is a noble spectacle.” The doctor said, no, he could not go and, being pressed until he was ashamed, he made this remarkable answer, “There are times when I could go and enjoy it, but my eyes have seen the King in His beauty this morning, and I have had so sweet a sense of fellowship with the Lord Jesus that I dare not go to look upon any spectacle lest I should lose the present enjoyment which now engrosses my soul.” I think you and I will have felt the same thing, in our measure, when Christ has manifested Himself to us. What? Look on vanity, my Lord, when Your pierced hand has touched my heart? What are the grandest buildings of this world, with all their pomp of architecture, compared with You, You Great Foundation Stone, you Chief Cornerstone, elect and precious? What is the music of this world, with all its swell and roll, compared with Your name, Immanuel, *God With Us!*—

*“Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me in Immanuel’s name—*

*All her hopes my spirit owes
To His birth, and Cross, and shame.”*

What are the world’s feasts compared with You, O Christ? Its dainties are not sweet, for I have tasted of Your flesh. Its wines are no longer luscious, for I have sipped from the cup of Your blood. What are the world’s choicest offers that she can make me of honor or of wealth? Have You not raised me up and made me to sit together in heavenly places with Yourself, and have You not made me a king and a priest unto God and shall I not reign with You forever and ever? Christian, you may carry on such musing as this by the hour together! You may boast yourself in God and your leviathan faith may swim in this boundless deep of Jesus’ love! You surely, after this, can never wish to go back to the pool wherein the minnow of this world disports itself. Here you can bask yourself in the rays of a meridian sun—and will you afterwards cry for a farthing candle because you have lost its beams?

Shame on you, Christian, if your soul is taken up with vanities! Let those love them find their all in them, but you cannot! The sight of Him who is white as the lily for perfection and red as the rose for sacrificial suffering must have taken away the beauty of this world for us! Says Rutherford, “Ever since I ate the Bread of Heaven, the brown bread of this world has not been to my palate. And since I have feasted on the food of angels, I cannot eat the ashes that satisfy the men whose portion is in this life.” And truly it is so! Arise, Sun of Righteousness, and our love of darkness shall be dispelled while we are charmed with Your light! We hear of some who worship the sun at its rising—that is sad idolatry—but rise, Sun of Righteousness, and we will worship You and there shall be no idolatry in that! You are not like the sun that burns out human eyes when they look upon it. We will look into Your face until Your transporting light shall only burn out our sight for this world—to help us to gaze upon Yourself without a veil between.

Oh, that I were talking thus for you all, but I am conscious that I am not. I do pray, however, that you who love vanity may find out how vain it is before you come to die. The other night I lay awake and tossed to and fro many hours before I fell asleep. I realized then, more than at any other time in my life, what it was to die. My every bone seemed to tremble. I lay, as I thought, upon a bed of sickness—the room seemed hushed around me. The ticking of my clock sounded like the ticking of the death-watch. I thought I heard them whisper, “He must die.” And then my soul seemed to fling itself back upon the realities of God in Christ and I asked myself, “Have I preached or have I prayed for this? But now is Christ able to save me. He is my only hope and my only plea. Is it true that Christ came into the world to save sinners?” And I recalled those cogent and blessed arguments which prove that Christ is the Sent One of God and my soul rejoiced that it could die in peace! And then I could but think of that sweet rest which Jesus brings when you can throw yourself on Him.

And now, tonight, in the recollection of that strange vision of the shadow of death through which I passed, I can but ask others, “What will you do when you really come to die, if you have no Savior?” Men and women, if you have no Christ to trust to, what will you do? You must soon have the death-sweat wiped from your clammy brows. You must soon have the needed drop of water administered to your parched lips. What will you do when Death shakes the bones within the strong man and makes each nerve thrill with the dread music of pain? What will you do when death, and Hell, and judgment, and eternity, and the Great White Throne have become real things to you and your business, and even your children and your wife seem banished from your eyes? Let a brother’s love beseech you to flee from the wrath to come and to fly to Christ for salvation! God knows how I love your soul! It is for the sake of men’s souls that I suffer contempt and scorn and will gladly bear it—yes, and will provoke it more than I have ever done—provoke it because this dull, dead age needs provocation—needs to be stirred up! Even its ministers need to be stirred up to something like honesty and zeal for the souls of men! I say that I will gladly bear reproach for your souls’ sake—will not you?

Oh, will not you be persuaded to think on those things that make for your eternal peace? The gates of Heaven are up there! The gates of Hell are down yonder! The Cross of Christ points you to Heaven—follow its guidance! Look to the wounds of Jesus! These are the gates of pearl through which you must enter Heaven. But if you will turn to your vanities and to your sins and follow them—and delight yourself in worldly pleasures—then Hell is your portion as surely as you sin! May the Lord give faith to those who have none and help us who have believed through Grace, to walk in His ways—and unto His name shall be the Glory, world without, end! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*PSALM 119:81-88.***

Verse 81. *My soul faints for Your salvation: but I hope in Your word.* The Psalmist was so full of longing, hungering, thirsting, for God's salvation that he had come even to faintness through the strength of his desire. Yet, in his faintness, he was not too far gone to hope—and we, also, have good ground for hoping and believing that God, who gave us His Word, will stand to it, for He is both able and willing to fulfill all that He has promised!

82. *My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, When will You comfort me?* He looked out for a message from God as the watchers of the night looked for the breaking of the morning. His eyes ached to behold the comforts of his God. Oh, blessed state of strong desire! I pray God that we may all experience it!

83. *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget Your statutes.* When an empty skin bottle was hung up in one of the smoky dwellings of the East, it became withered, cracked, useless. And the Psalmist says, “I am become like a bottle in the smoke,”—I seem to be good for nothing, withered, dried up—‘yet do I not forget Your statutes.’” A good memory is one of the best of things for us to possess, but a good memory for that which is good is better still.

84. *How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on them that persecute me?* “I am not going to live here forever, Lord. Let me not have to wait to be vindicated until I am in my grave. O my God, hasten the day of my deliverance!”

85, 86. *The proud have dug pits for me, which are not after Your Law. All Your commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help You me.* God's Word is all true—the longer we test and try it, the more shall we find it to be worthy of our fullest confidence. Those who doubt its Truth have never really proved its power. Those who mistrust it in any degree are as yet like inexperienced mariners who are constantly doubting and fearing what is going to happen. But those who have long done business on the great waters of the ocean of Divine Inspiration and who have seen the wonders of the Lord there, will tell you that though Heaven and earth shall pass away, God's Word shall endure forever! We have seen a thousand things in the course of our earthly pilgrimage, but there is one thing that we have never seen, and that we never shall see, namely, God proving unfaithful to His promise and deserting His people in their time of need!

What a short yet comprehensive prayer the Psalmist prayed when he uttered those three words, “Help You me!” “‘Help You me’—that I may never be frightened by those who wrongfully persecute me—that I may never do anything to deserve their persecution—that I may be able to behave myself wisely while they are plotting against me.” If you are in business, write this prayer on your shops, your offices, and your ledgers! If you are sick, have this petition hanging before your eyes, that you may be constantly reminded to cry to the Lord, “Help You me.”

87. *They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not Your precepts.* Therefore his enemies could not consume him. As long as the Believer holds fast to God's precepts, he is indigestible even to the old dragon, himself! And no adversary shall ever be able to devour him as long as the Word of God is in his heart!

88. *Quicken me after Your loving kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Your mouth.* “Give me more true spiritual life, inspirit me, revive me, ‘quicken me.’ At this very moment, good Lord, if I am cold, and half frozen, and almost dead, yet since I am like the trees whose life is in them even when they have lost their leaves, give me a new springtime—‘Quicken me after Your loving kindness.’” We all need this quickening if we are to hold on and hold out to the end and, blessed be the name of the Lord—

*“New supplies each hour we meet
While pressing on to God.”*

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**