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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“Look thou upon me, and be merciful to me, as thou usest to do unto those who love thy name.”
Psalms 119:132

[“We believe that David wrote this Psalm. It is Davidic in tone and expression, and it tallies with David’s experience in many interesting points. In our youth, our teachers called it, ‘David’s pocketbook,’ and we incline to the opinion then expressed that here we have the royal diary written at various times throughout a long life.”—*C. H. SPURGEON’S Note in The Treasury of David as to the author of Psalm 119.*]

PERHAPS you noticed, while I was reading, that during the writing of several of the verses David occupied himself with the praises of God’s Word. He kept to that point, extolling with all his might those Scriptures in which God had spoken to his heart, but he could not go on long without prayer. If these meditations were written in his pocketbook, day by day, it is noteworthy that, although he fervently praises the Word of God, yet he also frequently breaks out into prayer. However the child of God may occupy his mind—and he very properly employs it in many holy occupations—yet he often turns to prayer, for he cannot live without it. Well does Montgomery say—

*“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air.”*

We *must* pray. Brethren, we are bound to praise God for all His goodness, we cannot help bearing testimony to His faithfulness and His truth, we are delighted to engage in all acts of holy service, but in addition to all that, we *must* pray. Prayer is a *sine qua non* with us, we continually come back to that sacred exercise, for without it, we are nothing, and we can do nothing, therefore, again I say, we *must* pray.

Notice also how brief David’s prayer is, and yet how full of matter! I believe that, very often, the longer the prayer is, the less there is in it, and that the best prayers that were ever prayed have usually been the shortest. An arrow may easily be too long, and prayers should be like arrows shot from the bow of faith. If they are short it does not matter so long as they are sharp, and sent on their way with a good pull of the bowstring. The first petition here is very short, but very full, “Look thou upon me.” The words are few, but the sense is deep, as I shall have to show you. Oh, that we all spoke with greater freshness and naturalness in prayer, that we had no thought about keeping on with fine language, but great anxiety as to holding on with a firm grip of wrestling, pleading prayer!

The whole of our text is but short, yet it contains much more meaning than I can bring out to you in this one discourse. I want to call your attention to four things in it, first, *David’s brief petition*, “Look thou upon me.” Secondly, *his humble confession* (it is not given in so many words, but it lies hidden away like the perfumed violet beneath the green leaves), “Be merciful unto me,” which is a virtual confession of sin. Thirdly, *his tacit profession*, for he says, “as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,” which is tacitly saying that he loves God’s name, or else he could not pray the Lord to deal with him as He used to do with such people, and fourthly, and here I shall enlarge somewhat, *his gracious aspiration*. The highest, loftiest wish that David had was that God would deal with him as He was

accustomed to do unto those that love His name. He did not want to fare either better or worse than the rest of the Lord's family, so he boldly prayed, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

I. To begin with, here is in our text DAVID'S BRIEF PETITION, "Look thou upon me."

I think that these words came to David's mouth from his heart, and that he prayed, "Look thou upon me," because *his own eyes had failed him*. Turn to the 123rd verse. If you look at it, you will see that one thing in a saint may suggest another. In that verse he wrote, "Mine eyes fail," and in our text he says, "Look *thou* upon me. Lord, when I feel as if I could not look at thee, do thou look at me! Mine eyes fail me; I have washed them out with rivers of water, I have flooded them with fountains of grief, unbelief has come in, I cannot see as I would, the dust of the world, and the smoke of care, have bedimmed mine eyes, I seem to grow blind, my Lord, and though I would always look at thee, and never take mine eyes off thee, yet my eyes fail me!" In such a case as that, it is so sweet to pray to God, "Look thou upon me."

Brethren, there is great virtue in our looking to Christ, it is the way of salvation. What virtue, then, must there be in Christ's love-gaze upon us! A faith-look at the blood of Jesus gives us peace, but as I always remind you, it is God's sight of the blood that brings us salvation. Did He not say to Moses and Aaron, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you"?

*"When thine eye of faith is dim,
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim."*

When you cannot see your God, still say with poor Hagar, "Thou God seest me." JEHOVAH is the all-seeing one, remember that, and be comforted. If thine eyes be put out, His eyes can never be blinded, still doth He look upon you with compassion, and see thee with His eye of grace. Again I say, Lord, if ever I should forget to look to Thee, or if ever I should be in such a state of despondency that I cannot look up to Thee, look Thou upon me!

Next, notice that *man's eye had misjudged David*. I think the psalmist's prayer is to be read in this light, that he had been condemned and persecuted by the ungodly, and he was evidently under the oppression of man, as we noticed in reading the 134th verse, "Deliver me from the oppression of man." Men had misconstrued his words, and misrepresented him, so now he says, "LORD, look *thou* upon me!

Whenever evil men look at me, they look askance, they look askint, they do not see what should be seen, but they see a great deal that is not really there, Lord, I know what they say of me, but do Thou look upon me!" It has fallen to the lot of many of us to pass under the censure of men, and the cure for that censure is to cry, "LORD, look *thou* upon me."

Mr. Blind-man, the foreman of the Vanity Fair jury that condemned Christian's brother Faithful, said, "I see clearly that this man is a heretic," and the blinder bad men are, the more fault they can see in God's people, even when there is nothing of evil to be seen. They will make it up if they cannot find it, and they will swear to it even if they know that it is not so. It is not for a child of God to battle with them about the matter, but to turn his eyes to the Lord who is our only Judge, and with David to pray, "Look *thou* upon me."

Again, do you not think it was this that made the psalmist pray in this way? He knew that *God's eye perceives what His servant needs*. David opened his mouth, and panted, he knew he wanted something, but he hardly knew what he really did want. At times we do not know how to word our prayers, because our sense of need is so very great, it seems idle to ask for one thing when we need everything. When we are quite emptied out, we scarcely know where to begin, and when our case is very puzzling and perplexing, we cannot tell what to ask for when we come to the throne of grace.

That is a sweet thought, "Thou, my heavenly Father, knowest what things I have need of before I ask for them!" Prayer is not for God's information, but for our instruction, we need to be made to learn what our wants are, but God always knows them. It is a very blessed thing, when we cannot tell what our

needs are, to utter such a prayer as this, “Look thou upon me, O Lord! Thou wilt see what I need, thou wilt see wherein I fail, thou will see how I struggle, thou wilt see what I suffer; Lord, look thou upon me!”

This is also to my mind such a lovely and God-honoring prayer because it leaves all with God, David does not say what he thinks the Lord should do. When prayer dictates to God, it has gone beyond its lawful bounds, and it is not then proper prayer. But the psalmist prays, “LORD, look thou upon me.” When he was very sick, he did not say, “Lord, heal me,” but he prayed, “LORD, look thou upon me.” An ordinary physician’s look alone is not worth much, but one glance of the Great Physician’s eye is sufficient to cure all the maladies of the heart. We need the earthly physician’s hand and his medicine, and possibly also the surgeon’s knife. Ah! but we get everything in a look from our Lord.

When Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, did He preach a sermon? He did a great deal more than that. Did He rebuke the denier? He did a great deal more than that. Did He draw the wanderer back to Himself? He did a great deal more than that. Oh, nobody knows how much lies in one look of the eye of God!

Let us each one present this prayer tonight, “Lord, here is my case, I do not understand it, I know what I would like, but I am not sure whether it would be right for me to ask for it. I put myself before You, look You upon me. I sit, like the blind man by the wayside, and all I ask is that You will but turn Your face this way, and see me where I am, and see what I am, and if You will but do that, do what else You please. I will not dictate to You as to what You should do, I will leave myself and my affairs entirely in Your hands, only look You upon me.”

I think David also meant this petition, “Look thou upon me,” in the sense in which we sang just now—

*“Look upon me, Lord, I pray Thee,
Let Thy Spirit dwell in mine!”*

In this sense, *God’s look will be a sign of divine favor*. Frequently, in Scripture, God is represented as turning His face away in anger, but when He looks towards His chosen ones, it is in love. Brethren, is there anything under heaven more delightful than to be loved by God, and to know it? The love of God in itself is inexpressibly sweet, but if you do not apprehend it, it is a sea of sweetness of which you do not taste, or like a mountain of honey to which you cannot gain access.

But oh! To be loved of God, and to know it, would make a man dance if he were in chains, it would turn a dungeon into a palace if the poor prisoner were sure that God loved him, and that is precisely what David means when He prays, “Look thou upon me....Make thy face shine upon thy servant.” Do you see men scowling, and do you hear them howling? What does it all matter? God is smiling, and that is an end to all the oppression of man. One sun soon puts an end to all the darkness. One glimpse of God’s smiling, reconciled, eternally-loving face drives away all sorrow from the believer’s heart. The psalmist’s prayer, “Look thou upon me,” means just that.

I think, too, that David meant one thing more, that is, that *God’s look would prepare him for future obedience*. When David said to the Lord, “Look thou upon me,” he meant, “Look at me, and see that I am armed for the fight against evil. O Lord, look me up and down, search me all over, and see that I do not lack any needful thing! Look at me inside and outside, look at my brain, look at my heart, look You upon me to see that there is nothing omitted that will be necessary for my future conduct in the world, in the church, in the household, or alone with You!”

Does not the psalmist mean all that I have said, and did I not speak truly when I told you that this little prayer, “Look thou upon me,” has much more in it than I can draw out of it in a single discourse? I advise you to pray it as it is, with all the meanings packed away in it, “Look thou upon me.” God help you so to do!

II. Our next division is DAVID’S HUMBLE CONFESSION. It is not actually expressed in words, but it is hidden away in his next utterance, “Be merciful unto me.”

The psalmist's confession is the link between his first prayer and this second supplication. *His prayer grew out of this confession.* He prayed to the Lord, "Look thou upon me," because he could not himself look to God, and then he added this petition because he realized his need of divine mercy, "Be merciful unto me." Do you recollect the Savior's parable, or the fact the Savior described when He said, "Two men went up into the temple to pray?" One of them, the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Surely David, long before that story was told, was acting it out. He dared not look up to God, he could not look up, or he would not have prayed, "Look thou upon me."

Then he cried, "Be merciful unto me." *By this petition he evidently sought forgiveness.* Mercy is only for guilty people. Favor may be for the miserable, but mercy is for the guilty. One said, the other day, "Oh, I am such a great sinner!" and a wise person, who stood by, said, "I am glad to hear you admit it." "Oh!" answered the other, "but I am lost." "It is so," responded the friend, "and I am pleased to hear you confess it." "And why are you so pleased? It sounds rather cruel to be glad because I am a sinner, and pleased because I am lost." "Ah!" said the wise Christian instructor, "but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He Himself said that 'the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

There would be nobody to receive mercy if nobody were guilty. Oh, that you might all feel, whether you are saints or sinners, that the language of the text suits you, "Be merciful unto me." "Oh!" said one, "I do not think I have been so guilty as some." Nevertheless, there is no way to heaven but one, and that way is open for the vilest as well as the most moral. "Be merciful unto me," is the prayer you must learn to pray if you hope to enter the kingdom of God.

It is evident also that *upon this ground alone the psalmist sought for the blessing he desired,* "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me." Do you see what he means? "Lord, I do not expect a look from thee except as a proof of thy mercy. If thou dost only give me a glance of thine eye, it will be a token of mercy." If we get a crumb from God's table, it is a mercy; if we get a promise out of His Word, it is a mercy; if we get anything from the Lord, it is a mercy; but if we receive forgiveness of sin, what a mercy is that!

Did you ever try to fathom the depth of mercy that lies in the forgiveness of a single sin? There are some sins in our lives which will always be remembered by us. That night, when you gave way to that one particular fit of temper, which led to that one dreadful act of sin, has God forgiven that? Ah! yes, for "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." When you cannot forgive yourself, yet you may know that God has, for Christ's sake, forgiven you.

You may have all the more pleasure in knowing that He has forgiven you because you cannot forgive yourself. That sin which overwhelms you, and lays you in the very abyss as you remember it, that is the sin God delights to pardon. What a blessing it is that it is so, that we are able to assure you that "He delighteth in mercy," and especially in this particular form of mercy, the blotting out of sin! After David had sinned with Uriah's wife, or after other great transgressions, this prayer was especially suitable, "Be merciful unto me."

There I will leave this part of my subject, but I pray God the Holy Ghost not to leave it, but to lay it home to some heart here. People are getting ready for Whitsuntide, some will be going into the country, and others are obliged to keep their shops open late before the holidays, therefore we are fewer in number here than usual, but I have been wondering whether God does not intend to save somebody who has come in here tonight because it is the holiday season. The Lord grant that it may be so! What can be more appropriate to you who are conscious of guilt, and groaning under the heavy burden of sin, than that you should pray these two sentences of David's supplication, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me"?

III. The third point, upon which I will not detain you long, is, DAVID'S TACIT PROFESSION.

There is again hidden away here, not uttered in words, but secretly implied, a profession of love for the Lord, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name"

If the psalmist does not actually declare that he loves God's name, he does at least say, "Lord, put me down among them that love thy name, count me with them; I do want to love thy name, O Lord; therefore, treat me as thou dost treat them!"

***"With them numbered may I be,
Now, and through eternity!"***

David hardly dares to say that He does loves God's name, but he does practically say it by praying that God will treat him as He treats those who do love His name. Some of those who love God best are not the loudest in proclaiming their love. I believe there are some here who would die for Christ if it were necessary, yet they have not had the courage to come out, and confess Him.

I heard of a good woman who was afraid to testify before the church to her faith in Christ. As she was going away, she turned round, and said to the minister, "I cannot speak about my faith, sir, but I could die for Christ." "Come back," he said, "come back, that confession is better than any other sort of speaking." There have been some, in the time of the martyrs, who have been very loud in their professions, but they have recanted at the last, while others, who have been very timid, have been the bravest of all when the burning day came.

I remember that one martyr, when chained to the stake with two others, slipped down from under the chain, and was hidden by the kindling some two or three minutes. All thought he had recanted, but he came back, and placed himself in the chain again, and stood up boldly to be burned to death. He said to a brother at his side, "I lost sight of my Lord's face, and I could not stand there to burn until I had found Him again. He has come to me so sweetly, and now by His grace I shall die like a man."

If we have Christ with us, how strong we are, but if He is not with us, we are weakness itself! I cannot, therefore, condemn those who are afraid to say very boldly that they love the Lord's name. I hope, however, that they will have the courage, at any rate, to slip in edgeways, and sandwich themselves between some other believers, and say in the words of the text, "Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

But the true child of God does love his Lord's name. What does that mean? He loves God's name, that is, *he loves the person of God*. He loves God, his heart goes out towards the infinitely glorious JEHOVAH. *He loves the character of God*.

There are a great many, nowadays, who want JEHOVAH to be improved upon. When they read of the God of Holy Scripture, they do not like Him, they say they want a kinder and more tender God. These are the men who worship the gods of modern thought, gods newly come up, which are more like the devil than the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the true child of God loves God as he finds Him, and as he finds Him in Holy Scripture, the one living and true God, who made all things, and by whom all things consist. This is the God we love, and adore, and worship.

The genuine child of God also *loves God's revelation*. That is often what is meant by the expression, "His name." He who is right with God loves every doctrine of the Scriptures, and every part of that doctrine. He does not try to alter and improve the Scriptures, nor to prepare an addendum to the Word of God, but he loves the revelation given to us in the name of God, and loves every point of it.

By the "name" is sometimes meant *the glory of God*. I trust that the very feeblest of us can say that we love the glory of God. When we hear Him praised, our hearts are all aglow. When we hear anything that is said against Him, our indignation burns vehemently, for we love His name. Oh, that God would grant us grace to love Him far more than we do!

I must not say more on this point, for I have only a little time left, and I want that for the last division of my discourse.

IV. Fourthly, we are to consider DAVID'S GRACIOUS ASPIRATION.

What he asks is that God would be merciful to him as He is accustomed to be to those who love His name. That is our aspiration too, I trust, we want God to deal with us as He deals with the rest of His people.

Notice, here, that *David would be dealt with as saints have always been dealt with*. If God treats us as He treats His children, I think we may be perfectly satisfied. There was a time when, if anybody had said to me, "The Lord will put you amongst His children, and treat you as one of them," I would have been ready to dance for joy, and I do not run back today from the solemn conviction that, if He will only treat me as He treats the rest of His family, I shall be perfectly satisfied. How is that? How does the Lord deal with His children?

Well, you know what He used to do to those who loved His name, He used to come and visit them. For instance, there were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These all had visits from the Lord, as did Moses, when God was in the burning bush. In olden days, God could be found in the desert or in a bush. He came to His people by the brook side, by the river, in the fiery furnace, and in the lions' den, and it is still the use and wont of God to visit His people. Did He ever visit you? Pray that He may visit you as He used to do to those who loved His name. Lord, come and visit me under a tree, as You did meet Abraham, come and meet me beneath the city wall, as You did meet Joshua of old, come to the river's brink, as You came to Ezekiel by the river of Chebar, come to the lonely island, as you did to John in Patmos.

God not only used to visit those who loved His name, but He used to instruct them. What teachings they had from Him! What revelations and manifestations of Himself! Lord, teach me as You usest to teach those who loved thy name!

How patient also He was with them! They had many faults and failings, and they grieved His Holy Spirit, but He forgave them, and went on teaching them, and when they fell and wandered from Him, He restored them, and brought them back again.

Then you know, dear brethren, the Lord was always faithful to those who loved His name. When He made them a promise, He always kept it. He said He would meet them, and He did; He said that He would help them, and He did; He said that He would strengthen them, and He did; He said that He would give them victory, and He did. He never was a liar to them, He never left them in want. By the mouth of His servant Jeremiah He asked, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?" He never broke a single condition of His covenant, so I think we can each one pray, "Lord, look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name!"

But notice this also, the Lord used to whip them when they needed it, those who loved His name were chastened. Asaph said, "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Well, suppose you should have the same treatment, you can thank God that He is doing to you as He used to do to those who loved His name. If He had a child of His who was strong, He used to try and test him. If he was brave, He made him fight, if he was vigorous, He made him bear burdens. You will always find that, in proportion to the strength the Lord gave, so He sets the trial. That is how He used to do to those who loved His name.

You cannot tell how it has comforted me sometimes when it has been said to me, "You are reproached." "Very well," I say to myself, "that is how the Lord used to allow it to be done to those who loved His name." "But you have lost your reputation through standing up for the truth of God." "Yes," I answer, "that is how it used to be done to those who loved God's name, that is the way His servants have always gone to glory." You can go to hell with a whole skin if you wish to do so, but you must go to heaven with many a bruise and gash. If you would be faithful to the Lord, you must expect to be rejected, but take it all as part of the lot that belongs to you, and do not quarrel with it.

Do you expect to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease? I should be sorry to see you trying such a plan of going to heaven, for that is not how the Lord used to do to those who loved His name. Do you expect to go all the way to heaven, clapped and applauded by an eager throng, crying, "Well done"? Is that how He used to do unto those who loved His name? Far otherwise. Therefore, be satisfied if God deals with you as He used to do with those who loved His name.

I think also that, when using these words, David meant that *he was quite willing that God should deal with him in His usual way*, in His regular order. He did not want to have some special railway thrown up for him, in which he could ride first-class to glory, but he was willing to go the old way, the way the holy prophets went, and the saints, and martyrs, and confessors of God, that is to say, he did not want salvation without holiness, he did not want justification without sanctification, he did not want pardon without regeneration. He asked God to do with him as He used to do with those who loved His name, and with them, you know, the water and the blood always went together, they had the new heart as well as the new robe. Acceptance in the Beloved did not come without there being also an acceptableness of holy character given by the Spirit of God.

Next, David did not want profit without exertion. He was not one of those who said, "I want to be happy, but never to do anything; I want to take the promises, but to have no part in Christian service; I want to understand without reading the Scriptures, I want to be taught and comforted without coming to hear sermons, I want to lie down and sleep myself into glory." No, he was willing that God should do with him as He used to do unto those who loved Him.

David did not expect to have answers without prayer. The Lord Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We shall be willing to have it as it was done to those who loved the Lord's name. David said, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

Some of our churches expect prosperity without prayer meetings, and hope to get many converts without unitedly asking for them. Perhaps half-a-dozen Christians meet for prayer on Monday evenings, or perhaps a few gather on Wednesdays, when there is half a lecture and half a prayer meeting, so that they can say that they do have a prayer meeting when in reality they do not have one at all, but David said, "Make me pray, LORD; do not give me anything unless I pray for it; compel me to plead with thee, and then give me thy blessing!"

Then, again, David did not expect to pass through life without experiencing difficulties. He had to fight Goliath, and he had to go into the cave of Adullam. He expected to have troubles, and he certainly was not disappointed, nor will you be. Do not reckon that God will give you a life without difficulty. Tell me, if you can, of any child of His who ever had such a portion? He had one Son without sin, but no son without sorrow. Nay, that Son who had no sin was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, so you must expect the Lord to deal with you as He does with the rest of His household.

Lastly, you cannot expect that you shall have continual enjoyments of the light of Christ's countenance, and a blessed experience of the sweets of His love, without having struggle of soul and conflict of spirit which come from the fact that the devil is not dead, that the world is not changed, that sin still dwells within you, and still causes you grief. "Deal with me, O LORD, as thou used to do with thy children! I do not want to be picked out from the rest, and treated as a favorite." David had a favorite child once, Absalom, and a dreadful fellow he turned out to be. God does not fill us with sweetmeats, it is not His custom to take away all trouble, and give us nothing but joy. Sweetmeats at night mean medicine in the morning. God grant us grace to be willing to take the bitter with the sweet, to be baptized with Christ's baptism and to drink of Christ's cup, and to ever be satisfied so long as we may follow where the bleeding Savior leads the way!

Now, dear friends, I have done. I hope there has been a word for everybody, and if there has been a word from me to you, let there be a word from you to God, and let this be the prayer that you utter before leaving this house, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 119:129-144

Verse 129. *Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.*

Every true believer admires God's Word, and more than that, it amazes him, "Thy testimonies are wonderful." View them from any point you may select, they are wonderful, wonderful in themselves, wonderful in their operation, wonderful in the way in which they endure all kinds of testing, and yet remain the same, "Thy testimonies are wonderful."

This wonder, however, in the true believer, leads to godly practice, to holy living: "Therefore doth my soul keep them." Our soul must be like a golden casket in which we store the priceless jewels of the Word of the Lord. You cannot rightly keep God's Word anywhere but in your soul, to keep it merely in the memory, or in the intellect, is of no avail.

130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light;*

The very first principles, the elements of God's Word, are full of light, and no sooner does it come into the heart than there is light directly. How much more light does it give when it penetrates into the secret chambers of our being, and we begin to understand its deeper mysteries!

130. *It giveth understanding unto the simple.*

God's Word gives understanding to those who feel that they have very little mental ability, "the simple." They are only plain people, who must have the truth put very simply before them, or else they cannot comprehend it, but as soon as ever God's Word enters their heart, even such people get understanding. It is not the Word outside the heart that gives the blessing, it is the entrance of the Word that gives true life to the soul.

131. *I opened my mouth, and panted:*

That was an admirable way of praying, no words were used by the psalmist, but his soul expressed itself by panting, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

131. *For I longed for thy commandments.*

The very best kind of prayer is that inarticulate panting, in which there is a longing, a sighing, that cannot be expressed in words.

132-133. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. Order my steps in thy word:*

"Lord, I have found the way into Your Word, that is the road I intend to travel, now I pray You to guide my every step." They say that, "Order is heaven's first law," and certainly a Christian should lead an orderly life. He should be a Methodist, he should have a method in all that he does, and he should pray for God to order his steps according to His Word.

133. *And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

A hypocrite says to himself, "I do not swear, I do not steal, and I do not lie, yet I allow other sins to have dominion over me," but a true man of God will not have any master but the Lord Jesus Christ. He will not put his neck under the foot of even the most attractive sin, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." That is the psalmist's prayer, here is the apostle's answer to it, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

134. *Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.*

He does not mean that he will not keep God's precepts if he is not delivered from man's oppression, but there are persons in such circumstances—Christian wives with wicked husbands, godly servants with ungodly masters, believers who are greatly oppressed by evil men—and they desire to be delivered from the oppression of man that they may be the better able to keep God's commandments.

135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant;*

What a blessed prayer that is! Let each one here pray it tonight, "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant." The Lord is our sun, He is the very sun of heaven, they need no sun there because they see His face.

135. *And teach me thy statutes.*

The Lord's servant ought to know the law of his Lord's house, how can he be an obedient servant if he does not know his Master's will? So the psalmist prays, "LORD, I will take it as a favor if thou wilt teach me thy statutes, that I may not only know, but also do them!"

136. *Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not thy law.*

Some think that the psalmist meant that his eyes wept because they, that is, his eyes did not keep God's law. You know how easily sin comes in through the eyes, and goes out through the eyes too. Well may those eyes weep in sorrow that have lusted towards sin. But I think the psalmist alludes here to the ungodly. The sins of sinners are the sorrows of saints. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." Perhaps David referred to his own children, or he may have meant his soldiers, those rough, rugged warriors who were led by Joab. He met with many in his own country who turned aside from God, and he wept over them.

It is a blessed sign of grace when you can weep over other men's sins. Do not say, "So-and-so has gone wrong," and treat the matter with indifference. If you can do so, you may question whether you have grace in your own heart, for a true Christian ought to be tender and compassionate at the thought of the sinful things around him. There are some who can look upon the error and false doctrine which abound everywhere and say, "Oh! let it alone, do not trouble yourself about that," but he who walks with God is not of their mind, it is a constant grief and agony of spirit to him that men keep not God's law.

137. *Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgements.*

It is always well to set God in contrast with wicked men. If others are unjust, He is not. If they forsake the truth, He does not.

138. *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.*

True to the letter, true always, true to the core.

139. *My zeal hath consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten thy words.*

Yes, God's faithful servants become the more zealous when others grow cold. When they see that God's words are forgotten by others, they remember them all the more, and they grow exceedingly zealous for the law of the Lord.

140. *Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*

It is pure in the sense of being unadulterated, and it is pure in the sense of being holy. There is nothing in the Scripture that would lead us to sin, nor excuse it, it is a wonderful condemner of sin, "Thy word is very pure." Notice the psalmist's use of the word "very." In the one hundred and thirty-eighth verse he says, "Thy testimonies are very faithful," and now, in the one hundred and fortieth, "Thy word is very pure."

"Therefore thy servant loveth it." When purity draws out our love, it proves that our heart itself loves that which is pure, and the heart that loveth purity is a pure heart.

141. *I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.*

He was poor but pious, little but loving, despised but devoted. It was the man who had but one talent who went and dug in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. David was not of that kind; he was small, but he knew he was not too small to sin, he was despised, but he did not on that account think that he might turn aside from the right path.

142. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,—*

God's Word does not change, it is everlasting, and the righteousness which it reveals and which it proclaims to us is everlasting.

142. *And thy law is the truth.*

God's Word is not only true, but it is "the truth." The truth is God's law, and God's law is the truth.

143. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me:*

Just now he said that he was despised, and now he says he is unhappy. Trouble without, and anguish within, seemed to grip him as in a vice.

143. *Yet thy commandments are my delights.*

A man of the world cannot understand how a Christian can be in trouble and yet be full of delight, but it is true. We can be cast down, but not destroyed, we can be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, we can be poor, yet make many rich. Here you have another holy paradox, “Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights,” not only his delight, but his delights, as if he had a whole host of them, a great company of joys, and a chorus of holy mirth.

144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding,—*

That is a great prayer, not only, “give me to understand,” but “give me understanding.” It is one thing to tell a man the truth, but quite another thing to make him understand it, and if you make him understand that particular truth, he may not understand another, but David asks for understanding with which he might be able to comprehend all the truth of God, “Give me understanding,”—

144. *And I shall live.*

God grant that this prayer may be offered by each one of us, and heard by the Lord, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—779, 773, 791

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