

Man Transient—god's Word Eternal

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the fleeting nature of human life and achievements contrasted with the eternal and unchanging Word of God, urging believers to place their hope and trust in God's enduring promises rather than temporal things.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:8, Psalm 102:25-27, Matthew 24:35, Hebrews 13:8, 2 Timothy 3:16, John 1:1, Psalm 119:89, Psalm 119:105

Topics: "The Word of God", "Faith and Hope"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon contrasts the fleeting nature of human life and accomplishments with the eternal and unchanging Word of God. He encourages believers to anchor their hope and faith in God's promises and the person of Jesus Christ rather than in temporal things. Spurgeon highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit's work as the only lasting spiritual reality, offering comfort and assurance to Christians amid life's uncertainties.

Transcript

"The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:8.

A FEW thoughts, first, upon the things that wither. Then a word or two upon that word which endures. And then the lessons which the contrast will suggest. I. THE THINGS WHICH WITHER.

The things which wither—grass and its flower; man and all that comes of man; the creature and all that springs from the creature. We are apt to think man a long-lived creature, and as we look upon races and nations, we regard the history of mankind as though it were of considerable length. If we could form any idea of eternity, we should ridicule ourselves for thinking a thousand years or six thousand years to be anything at all. They are but as a watch in the night in comparison with the endless ages of the life of God! They are no sooner come than they have gone! We look upon the grass as a short-lived thing, and talk about the frailty as well as the loveliness of the flowers—but is there so great a difference? They have their seasons—we have ours—and the seasons differ not so much after all. What if they last a month, and we last 70 years? Yet when both are withered, what does it signify? He that died but yesterday is as much dead as he that died a thousand years ago! And when the season is over, it comes to pretty much the same thing, whether we count that season by years or count it by hours. After all, the short-lived thing and we are cousins—and, looked at in the light of eternity, we and the insects are things which are and are not, floating for a while in the sunbeam, and then are gone from the land of the living. The voice that cried in

the wilderness warned all mankind of that familiar truth, that all men, being but flesh, will as surely pass away as all the grass! Grass, being but grass, will surely, in its season, come to the scythe, or wither where it stands!

But the meaning of the text, as opened by the context, is not only that man is frail and must die, but that everything connected with man is so—everything that man can do, all his surroundings, especially everything in which man glories, as the grass may glory in its flower—everything of which man boasts about, which he measures and esteems himself, shall also pass away. And I shall remind you of this, dear Friends, that if you are rejoicing in anything which belongs to time and sense, you may decrease what the poet calls, "this brainless ardor," and may set your affections upon something more worthy of an immortal spirit! Remember that all the hopes of man that have to do with man are but as the flower of grass.

You are setting your hopes, perhaps, upon that dear boy when he shall have grown up and come to maturity. What a comfort and a stay he will be! Or your hope is resting upon that speculation which you trust will turn out successfully, or more solidly, perhaps, upon the gains of perseverance which, if slow, are sure. Set not your hopes on any of these things, for if you do, they may end in disappointment as you grasp them, like the apples of Sodom, which are fair to look upon, but which turn to ashes in the mouth! These hopes may be eggs that never shall be hatched, phantoms that have no reality in them. If your hopes are fixed on God's Word—the Word that endures—be as optimistic as you will, for you shall never be deceived! But if your hopes are earth-born, hear the cry of the Prophet—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field"—your hope will wither as flowers do.

Equally so will it be with the joys you have already attained. It may not be altogether hoping with you. You have passed the early morning of life and you have realized something. You are content and that is to be rich. You are thankful that God has smiled upon you in Providence and that He has blessed you in many respects. Yes, but still even contentment may be a sin if it is an earthly contentment which checks your aspirations for the skies. If you are content enough to say with the rich man, "Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years," then remember that of all the attainments of this world, by way of pleasure, satisfaction and wealth, it may be said, "The goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." You will die and leave these things—and then what pleasure will you have in your garden, in your home, your well-stored chambers and your money? What can all yield you when your eyes shall be glazed in death? Or, before you depart from them, these things may depart from you, for riches have wings and oftentimes but one clap of the hand of Providence and all these birds have flown to nests somewhere else!

But if this is true of common hopes and ordinary attainments, you must not think it is not true of higher matters, for in these it is equally the case. Suppose we have been seeking after mental acquisitions, have been great students, have read many books, have tried to be learned? Now, there is something in this far more elevating than in seeking to gather together so many coins of the realm, but still, all the learning that comes of man and that comes in man, is but as the flower of the field that withers! You shall find, Friends, that, "much study is a weariness of the flesh, and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow unto himself." The more you know, the more you shall discover of your own ignorance— and as you attain unto what you think to be the light, you shall find the very excess of light causes you a greater sense of the surrounding darkness! And when you come to die, if you have neglected the knowledge of God, how will it avail you to have measured the stars, to have counted those mighty orbs, to have fathomed the depths of oceans, or have soared the heights of the hills? Where are all the philosophies of the man in Hell? Where is all the wisdom of yon corpse that slumbers in the sepulcher, while the spirit is driven from the Presence of God? All such comeliness is but as a withered flower.

Perhaps, however, you are accumulating around you love, which is the richest of treasures, and the best of wisdom. You are living in the affections of your household, and you are grateful to do so—and I honor you for having thought it better to win the love of others than to selfishly amass anything to yourself. But yet, dear Friend, remember that even this must go! There is not a child in the household that is immortal. The fondest object of your affections must certainly, before long, succumb beneath the arrows of death. Insatiable Archer! You carry many arrows and you spare no human hearts! All of woman born must be targets for your shafts! Set not, then, your heart's choice, to be chief affections on those dear ones here, but upon another Husband, another Father, another Brother, another Friend! Let these aspirations of your heart become Immortal, lest in the bitterness of your spirit, you find of all these that "the flower thereof fades away."

Going a step higher, there is a kind of spiritual life, so called, which is not of God, and even this, coming entirely of man, is just as fading as everything else that is human. Beloved, if you and I should seek to obtain a righteousness by exact obedience to the Law of God, by patience under suffering, by zeal in the service of our Master—if we were to be successful in this righteousness and, year after year, by consistency of character and excellence of conduct, should win the esteem of our fellow men and deserve it, yet, mark you—even that righteousness, if not worked in us by the Holy Spirit, but only the fruit of our own resolution, would be only as the flower of grass, and in due time it would wither away! Do you remember when your righteousness did wither? Some of us will never forget when ours did. We prided ourselves much. We supposed—and we were probably not wrong in the supposition—that we were about as good as our neighbors, and we were satisfied with this belief. Indeed, we had some degree of generosity, good feeling and good desire towards God, of a sort, and in all this we wrapped ourselves up and we said, "Surely this will suffice! I may safely venture into eternity with such a preparation as this!" But oh, when the Sun of Righteousness began to shine into our souls, though He brought healing under His wings to everything that was good within us, He brought death to all this proud righteousness of ours! And how it began to droop, decay and wither—just like a lily that is snapped when the heat of the sun begins to pour on it. Surely, Brothers and Sisters, the best that man can do for himself, with all his diligence and all his care, is but as a fading flower! And when he sits himself down at ease in his contentment and says, "I shall see no sorrow. I have served my Maker. I thank God that I am not as other men," even then is he naked, and poor and blind and miserable—a blighted, blasted, withered flower, though he thinks "himself to be as a rose of Sharon, or a lily of the valley."

So, Brothers and Sisters, it is equally true of everything in the child of God that does not come from God. Not only is our own righteousness a conceit of righteousness, but all our attainments in the Divine life which are made in our own strength will all wither. Oh, what holy frames of mind we sometimes think we have, and how we are getting on in spirituality! We half believe in attaining to perfection—we mean to get to within an inch or two of it, at any rate. We think the old Adam is dead, and if the devil is not dead, yet we think, at any rate, he is busy somewhere else and he is going to leave us alone. If we are not quite past temptation, yet we think we are such experienced Christians that if temptation shall come, we shall be aware of Satan's devices and be able to escape. But in a moment all this melts away. Some new temptation comes, we are smitten in a place for which we are not provided with any armor—we are wounded and fall down. Oh, the quantity of confectionery sanctification that some of us have made—such gilt gingerbread confectionery, all molded into the most delicate shapes, but somehow or other the stand on which we place these things slips aside and there is such a breaking! There is discovered such foulness and abomination lurking within our hearts that we could not have believed that we could have been such as we turn out to be! We would have said, if we had been told, "Is your servant a dog that he

should do this thing?"—but such dogs we, after all, turn out to be! Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid of my good frames! I am afraid of my graces! I am afraid of anything that I begin to think is good in myself, for although sins are dangerous and to be abhorred, yet we generally know what they are, and we watch against them, but under the cover of that which is supposed to be good and excellent, pride creeps in, as does self-sufficiency and carnal security, and so we get many a deadly stab! Believer, remember when you work yourself up into devotedness, when you think you have got a Divine Grace and have not got it, but have only got that which you gave yourself—this is but the flower of the grass and it will wither—it cannot stand.

So do I believe it is in all religious exercises. Everything which is got up and worked for by man always comes to an end. Those excitements which some delight in, I do not think come of the Spirit of God. At least they may come of His work as much as the dust in the road has to do with the progress of a carriage. It is a nuisance that somehow or other is tied to a good thing, but the excitement some people seem to think is the progress, is just as the fly, as he sat on the carriage, thought that he made it roll along the road. But it is not so! It is not so at all! How many churches have been revived into perpetual barrenness! The bladder has been blown till it burst. There has been a pumping and a heaving, and a trusting in the artificial, instead of waiting quietly upon God. People have been driven pretty nearly mad, and this has been thought to be spirituality and the work of the Grace of God! Brother and Sisters, it is only the flower of grass—a very pretty flower—oftentimes a most tempting and fascinating flower—but it will all fail, for nothing will stand but the work of the Holy Spirit! Nothing will endure even the test of time, but the Spirit's own work upon the heart and conscience! Anything that comes of man, and not of God, will as surely disappear as the smoke of the chimney when the wind blows it away, or as the hoar frost of the morning when the sun has fully risen with his fervent heat. Take this, then, as the first Truth of God, that everything in us, or which we glory in, or trust to, or rejoice in, will as certainly pass away as does the grass from the field and the flower which springs of it. But now, in the second place, we have a much more comfortable subject of reflection in the next sentence—

II. THE WORD THAT ENDURES.

"But the Word of our God stands forever." What "Word" is this? I think the term applies to the Word of God in five different ways. First, it is the Word of His purpose. The Word of our God. Has He said it and shall He not do it? Has He purposed and shall it not come to pass? God has, from all eternity, a wondrous plan by which He will manifest all His attributes in the salvation of His people. Now from His plan He will never vary, and in the details of it He will never change. Whatever He has decreed shall most certainly come to pass! And as for the salvation of His elect, all the powers of evil, both of earth and Hell, shall never be able to thwart the Eternal Mind as to the salvation of any of those whom He has predestinated unto eternal life. We do not find ministers often preaching about this Eternal Purpose, but we do find the Apostle Paul often writing about it. And the saints of old were accustomed to dwell upon it with very much delight. Oh, beloved Friends, there is a purpose concerning His people, even their eternal salvation—and that purpose will as surely be fulfilled as God is God—yes, though before conversion they plunge into sin! Yes, and though during their conversion they resist the Spirit of God! Yes, and though after conversion they go astray like lost sheep, yet shall the ous power of Sovereign Grace is more than a match for the waywardness of nature—and the will of God shall sweetly lead in Divine captivity the will of man, and though the man resolves on his own destruction—God, who ordains salvation, shall accomplish His own purpose, earth and Hell notwithstanding! Oh, precious Truth of God, on which the child of God may fall back in his darkest moments! The grass withers, but the Word of the Divine Purpose stands forever!

This "Word" also refers to His Word of promise. Every Word which God has spoken to His people by way of promise is as true today as when it was first uttered by the Prophet who was originally sent with it. And if this world should exist through tens of thousands of years, every promise will still have the raven locks of its youth about it. No promise will grow stale! No Word of God will cease to be of effect. It may have been fulfilled ten thousand times ten thousand times, but it will still be fulfilled. The promise shall be forever a well flowing for thirsty souls to drink of. It shall be a granary forever stored for the hunger of the Lord's people to be supplied from. What a mercy it is for us that the promise cannot be made to fail! Though we believe not, yet He abides faithful. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not a jot or tittle of the promise shall fail—

"His every Word of Grace is strong, As that which built the skies— The voice that rolls the stars along, Spoke all the promises."

The Words spoken to Nature by God when He bade seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, never cease, have all been kept! The promise that the rainbow should be seen in the cloud in the day of rain has not been forgotten—nor shall any one of the promises of the Covenant ordered in all things and sure be forgotten by the God of Grace! Oh, Christian, how you may go, tonight, to your Bible and read out the promise and find it as new to you and as true to you as if an angel came from Heaven to bring it in fresh language from the Divine Throne! You have lost your child. Your husband is gone. Your property has melted. Your health declines. You draw near to death, but the promise, the promise is still yours, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "As your days so shall your strength be." "I am God, I change not; therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed." The Words of purpose and the Words of promise stand forever!

So, Brothers and Sisters, especially is it with the Incarnate Word. We are in the habit of calling the Bible, "the Word of God." I suppose that is accurate enough, but the Word of God is not the Bible—it is Jesus Christ. His name shall be called, "The Word of God." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Well now, of this Incarnate Word, this Everlasting Logos, we may say that He stands forever. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." When I, a trembling sinner, went to the great High Priest and looked up to Him who wore the miter and the many-jeweled breastplate, looked up to His wounds, saw the blood marks, trusted Him, fell at His feet and heard Him say, "I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities," how dear He was to my soul that day, how fairer than the sons of men! And this day, though years have passed since then, He is the same, and to Him I may come again, tonight, as I did then, and find that He has still the fountain filled with blood and that its efficacy has in no degree been diminished! And so, should I live till gray old age, I shall find that He abides still the same. That precious blood of His—

"Shall never lose its power,

Till all the ransomed Church of God,

Is saved to sin no more."

Oh, to have a faithful, an unchanging Friend, one that never departs—this is comfort, indeed, regardless of what trouble may come. The Word of our God, Christ Jesus, stands forever!

The fourth signification of the term must be surely the Word of the Gospel—the Word of Gospel Truth which we preach, for so says the Apostle as he quotes this passage, "This is the Word which by the

Gospel is preached unto you." That Word stands forever! Brothers and Sisters, the old Gospel of the Apostles is the Gospel of today! There has been a notion abroad about discoveries in theology, but recollect that everything that is new in preaching is not true—and everything that is true is not new! We may say, concerning the preaching of the Gospel, "The old is better." Let us keep to the good old ways. You will never advance upon Peter and Paul! If you do, you will have to go back again. All the advances there are, are but running on a fool's errand, running before the clouds, running beyond the Wisdom of God— and he who is wise beyond what is written will only find himself landed in folly. The Gospel was to have been disproved years ago, according to the notion of some. Modern discoveries were to have proved this, that, and the other to have been all a mistake, and we were to have given up this dogma as being a delusion and that other teaching as being a superstition! But it is not so. The Gospel has gone through the furnace and come out like silver, well refined! The Gospel of Jesus Christ has not lost one iota of its glory and perfection. There is not a Doctrine that has been disproved—not one of her

Truths has been broken, nor so much as one single pillar of the house been shaken, nor shall it be! There may be atheists and deists, philosophers and skeptics, but when they have done their best, or done their worst, the Gospel shall bestir itself, like Samson, when he had been bound with green withes, and shall snap all their cords and send the Philistines in confusion, flying here and there! Believe in the power of the Gospel, dear Christian Friends, and never be afraid. Do not believe in the wisdom of those who are wiser than God, and do not tremble at all their boasts. Many men open their mouths widest when they have nothing to say, and so may it be with these. They would not brag and boast so much if they felt secure, but feeling that they have not touched the vitality of our religion, they do but rage and rave.

And fifthly, this term, "The Word of our God" refers to the inner spiritual life of the Christian, for remember, you are quickened by the incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever—and that incorruptible Seed is said to be the Word of God. Now, all other seed throughout the world, and that which comes from a mortal source, dies, but the Seed of the Divine Truth, dropped by the Holy Spirit in the heart, is incorruptible and, therefore, it lives and abides forever! What a blessing it is to get the Word of God into the heart, because if God puts it in, none but God can take it out again. If you get a word into your heart from the lip of one man, the lip of another man may drive it out, but if you get living Truth burned into your soul by God, the Holy Spirit, Himself, then you may defy the devil himself to remove the glorious work! Oh, Beloved, remember the Words of Jesus, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." "He that lives and believes in Me," says Christ, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." We do not find our Master speaking of this new life decaying, or of the fountain which He puts into the soul drying up, but He says, "Out of him shall flow rivers of living water." And, "I give unto My sheep, eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Men may die, but Christians shall not—I mean the natural life expires but the celestial life never dies! Death does not affect the principle which God implants at Regeneration. No, it sets free that principle. It delivers it from the bondage of flesh and blood, from the slavery of corruption and introduces it into liberty, into a region where it can expand and develop, and come to all its glorious perfection! The grass withers, the flower thereof fades away, but the enduring Word of our God neither withers nor fades, but stands fast forever! And now, to close—

III. WHAT ARE THE LESSONS WHICH THIS STRONG CONTRAST OUGHT TO TEACH US?

Everything of the creature dying, everything of the Creator living, everything of man withering, everything of God blooming in eternal youth—what should this say to us? Why, it should say to us, first— Weave not a chaplet of flowers that shall surely fade for your brow! Do you seek fame? Let it be the fame that comes

from God! Do you seek wealth? Let it be a wealth that will be current in the skies. Do you seek love? Let it be a love which will exist where they marry not, neither are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God. Flowers? Yes, if you will, but gather them in Paradise. Garlands? Yes, if you please, but let them be woven in the King's own gardens, in that land where—

"Everlasting spring abides, And never withering flowers." You are an immortal, trade for immortality! You shall never die, Christian—there is a new life within you—you shall exist forever! Equal with the life of God shall be your life. Oh, then, be not gathering trifles—things that melt. Let not your life be as a miser's dream, who dreams he gathers gold and wakes and it is gone. Be not like that foolish Roman Emperor who took his troops to Britain, landed them in full State, bade every man gather a handful of shells and then go back to Rome with great triumph! He had taken Britain, he said—here were the shells from the shore. Oh, never say, "I have conquered life—here is the money! I can say I have lived grandly—here is honor!" Oh, these things are but the broken shells upon the shore. Seek jewels and pearls that shall be jewels and pearls before God, that shall be looked upon by Him as being precious because they last and continue in eternity. Dear Hearer, seek your soul's wealth. Seek to have your sins forgiven. Seek to wrap your soul in the righteousness of Christ—that garment which the moth cannot fret! Seek to be one with Jesus! There is nothing beneath the stars worth having if you have not these things! Trust in Him. All else shall be like a bubble on a wave and melt and fly before you, if you have not confidence in Jesus! There stands the first lesson. Since all of earth shall melt and fade away, build not your house with these shadows, but with substantial timbers and hewn stones that shall stand through the lapse of ages and last into eternity.

Another lesson. If you are on God's side, never be afraid of the mightiest opponent. What are they? What are they? Grass! Where is the mower? Then he comes, there is an end of them. And what are their boasts, and what are their railings? The flower of grass! Here comes a breeze—the sharp breath of winter, and they are gone! Some people are always afraid of the Pope, and some are dreadfully alarmed at Puseyism, some are shocked at the Broad Church movement. I do not know where we are not going to, Brother and Sisters, according to the accounts we are daily receiving from those who ought to know! We are in a dreadfully bad way and it seems that the Church of God is going to be broken up, sold for old timber, and put an end to! And there will be burnings in Smithfield again, and I do not know what besides! Ah, the Lord knows how to take care of His Church without the help of some of those gentlemen who are so very earnest in taking care of it just lately, and I am pretty sure that if He could not take care of it without them, He won't do much at it with them! But his Truth of God will never shake nor be moved, come what may! You never need be alarmed. If all the kings, and emperors, and cardinals, and popes, and priests, and great men and mighty men, and merchants, and mobs, and crowds should rise against the Lord's Truth and against the Lord's Anointed, what would it matter? Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that is but a worm? The grass in the field—why, let it boast! What cares the King with His army about the grass? "Why," He says, "the steeds of My cavalry shall eat the grass! It shall soon be gone." So God shall overthrow all their show of strength! In an hour, if so God willed it, He could convert the world! In a single hour, if so it pleased Him, dominant superstitions would be relinquished, and the old systems of idolatry would totter to their fall. Never think of the Church of God as if she were in danger. If you do, you will be like Uzza—you will put forth your hand to steady the Ark and provoke the Lord to anger against you! If it were in danger, I tell you, you could not deliver it! If Christ cannot take care of His Church without you, you cannot do it. Be still, and know that He is God.

Who am I that I should begin to agitate myself about the safety of the Empire of France and should go to Napoleon and should tell him that I was afraid the empire was insecure, and I was come to help him manage the Government? I think I should be sent back about my business. And so, surely, when you begin to say, "The Church is in danger! The Church is in danger!" what is that to you? It stood before you were born—it will stand when you have become worm's meat! Do your duty. Keep in the path of obedience, and fear not. He who made the Church knew through what trials she would have to pass, and He made her so that she can endure the trials and become the richer for it. The enemy is but grass, the Word of the Lord endures forever!

And so, Beloved, take heed, let each of us take heed that we keep to the enduring Truth of God. Never let us be tempted by the flash of novelty, or by the attractions of supposed intelligence, to turn aside from the Word of God. "To the Law and the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." If our creed is partly made up of the Word of God, partly of the traditions of the Fathers, partly of the speculations of thinkers, it will be like Nebuchadnezzar's image—part of gold, part of iron and part of clay—and the clay will fly and the iron will be melted. But if we can get a creed that is made up, as far as our poor fallible judgments can enable us, altogether of the Word of God, then we have a creed that we can take with us into eternity! The Word of the Lord endures forever. How I like to get my own thoughts and beliefs put through the fire every now and then. I do not think there is a single Doctrine that I have not doubted. I am happy to have to say that now, painful as the process was. It has been such a blessed thing to have to go to the bottom of it, to get arguments for it, to dig up and see whether the roots were sound and healthy, and oh, what a deal of what we think we know goes to the dogs in the hour of trial! But that which comes to us through the Word, and concerning which we can give a, "Thus says the Lord," that, and only that, will stand with an honest man who subjects himself to a daily examination—and asks the Holy Spirit, like a refiner's fire, to go through and through his soul! I fear there are many who could not abide the day of the coming of this work into their hearts. It acts like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. It burns up a thousand fancies! It washes away I do not know what of predilection and of prejudice. It might induce some here to give up some of their most cherished things! It might involve a solemn sacrifice for the future, but I beseech them to do it. Side not with the grass that must wither, for you must wither with it if you take it for your defense. But keep to this grand old Book! Keep the Word of God, for this shall neither wither, nor shall you, if you abide in the living Spirit of God hard and fast by what this Word teaches you.

God grant us this, and His be the praise forever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM119:153-174.

Verse 153. Consider my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget Your Law. As much as if he said, "Lord, I do not forget You—do not forget me." Your Grace has kept my memory—let your Grace keep me altogether.

154-56. Plead my cause and deliver me: quicken me according to Your word. Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not Your statutes. Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD, quicken me according to Your judgments. Oh, how the saints need quickening. They know they do! They feel that they get dull, and they cannot endure it—they are not happy unless they possess vivid Grace and true light!

157-58 Many are my persecutors and my enemies: yet do I not decline from Your testimonies. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not Your Word. The very sight of them gave me

sorrow. Even though they tried to be mirthful, I was not amused by them, and beheld them and was grieved, "Because they kept not Your Word."

159. Consider how I love Your precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to Your loving kindness. My heart is right, I do love You, but I feel dull and heavy. Lord, come and quicken me, not according to my love to You, but according to Your loving kindness, come and quicken me. "Your Word is true from the beginning"—from the first page of the Book of Genesis to the very last—true about everything, true from the first moment it began with me! Every promise has been kept. There has not been a falsehood all the way through.

160. Your Word is true from the beginning: and everyone of your righteous judgments endures forever. "Princes have persecuted me without a cause." David was a prince—and a man expects to be fairly dealt with by his peers—but it was not so in his case.

161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart stands in awe of Your Word. When we are in awe of God's Word, we shall not be in awe of princes. The fear of God is the best cure for the fear of men.

162. I rejoice at Your Word, as one that finds great spoil He had more joy in reading the Scriptures than in winning a great battle, or in being surprised at the finding of a great treasure!

163. I hate and abhor lying: but Your Law do I love. Now the Orientals did not hate lying—they generally tried to be proficient at it. The only fault about lying with them is to be discovered—then they think they must have been very unskillful. David, therefore, was far ahead of his time—far ahead of his fellow countrymen.

164. Seven times a day do I praise You because of Your righteous judgments. He could not have enough of praise! He did it often, he did it perfectly—seven times a day—and if he praised God seven times a day because of His righteous judgments, how much more ought we to do it because of His abounding Grace! Ah, there is a special cause for thanks.

165-66. Great peace have they which love Your Law: and nothing shall offend them. LORD, I have hoped for Your salvation, and done Your commandments. Two good things to put together—hope in God's mercy and obedience to God's will.

168-174. My soul has kept Your testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies: for all my ways are before You. Let my cry come near before You, O LORD: give me understanding according to Your Word. Let my supplication come before You: deliver me according to Your Word. My lips shall utter praise when You have taught me Your statutes. My tongue shall speak of Your word: for all Your commandments are righteousness. Let Your hand help me, for I have chosen Your precepts. I have longed for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your Law is my delight. Cannot we say that, dear Friends, this evening? I hope we can—with all our failings and wandering, yet the Law of God is our delight—and if we could have our wish, we would never again go beyond its restraints, nor fall short of its demands!

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