

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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MY PRAYER.

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## A Sermon

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“Quicken thou me in thy way.”—Psalm cxix. 37.

I THINK you will find the prayer for quickening repeated nine times in this Psalm. The form of it differs, but it is always the same vehement cry, “Quicken thou me, O Lord.” In addition to this, you will hear David twice acknowledge that God had quickened him, saying on one occasion, “Thy word hath quickened me,” and in another place, “Thy precepts have quickened me;” so that eleven times in one Psalm David turns his contemplations to the subject of quickening, and this shows us the very great importance which he attached thereto.

Remember well that this Psalm is dedicated to the praise of the word of God. Throughout its entire length it sounds forth the honour of God's statutes, and in some way or other the word of the Lord is mentioned in every one of its one hundred and seventy-six verses. The psalm is a star of the first magnitude, and all its beams direct us to the divine statutes. It is clear from this that there must be an intimate connection between quickening and the word of God. Indeed it is so, for when we are much acquainted with the word of God we also discover more of our own deadness and lack of spiritual life. And, moreover, inasmuch as we find David twice blessing God that the word had quickened him, we see another connection between the word and quickening, namely, that while the word convinces us of our death, it is also the means in the hand of the Spirit of God of our resurrection to newness of life. It kills, but it also makes alive. It quickens, and it sustains what it begets. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God” shall man live. Wouldst thou mourn thy sluggishness? See it in the light of God's word. Wouldst thou escape from thy sloth? Be animated by the holy warmth of revealed truth. For both purposes, for conviction and for edification, the precious truths which are set forth in Scripture by the Holy Spirit will be exceedingly efficacious.

No. 1,072.



I purpose, this morning, in handling the brief prayer of our text, *to* note, first, that *it deals with the believer's frequent need*; and secondly, *it directs him to the sole worker of his quickening*; and thirdly, *it describes the true sphere of renewed spiritual vigour*; and fourthly, *it denotes that there may be special reasons and seasons when we should cry, "Quicken thou me."*

I. The prayer before us, "Quicken thou me in thy way," DEALS WITH THE BELIEVER'S FREQUENT NEED. I am sure that this is a frequent want of believers, because we find David in this psalm so often confessing his need thereof; and where the best of God's servants feel their need of a thing, we may be quite sure that the rest of the family are under the same necessity. David seems to have been by no means sluggish in the divine life. That wonderful photograph of his internal being which we have in the book of Psalms, shows us that he was a man of intensely fervent love to God; a man whose nature was vital to a degree of sensitive and energetic energy seldom, if ever, exceeded. Panting, crying, pleading, or singing, rejoicing, exulting, he was all life, and of him it could not be said that he was neither cold nor hot. Notwithstanding the grievous fault into which he fell, his inner life was as a rule vigorous, healthy, and energetic; and yet that man of God prayed often, "Quicken thou me." Oh my soul, thou art not to be compared with David for a single moment; what need, then, hast thou to pray again and again, even with agony of soul, "Quicken thou me, O God."

But, beloved, there is no reason to refer to others of God's servants for proof of this. You yourselves know, in your own souls, that your spirit is most apt to become sluggish and that you have need frequently to put up the prayer, "Quicken thou me." Apart from him who is your life, what are you but a mass of corruption? You know this experimentally. Do you not? There are some among you who have received a more abundant measure of spiritual life than the preacher has yet obtained, but I fear me that the great majority of us are in the very opposite condition, and have need to sigh and cry over our lack of inward strength. We need to lament more deeply our manifold deficiencies. If there be a prayer in this book which well becomes my lips, it is just this, "Lord, quicken thou me in thy way." I fear that those who are least ready to confess this are the very persons who ought to own it first; and I am certain that a large number of God's people feel that they are dry and sapless and have need to be revived by fresh life from above. Let us think over this matter a minute. Some years ago we needed quickening most emphatically, but then we had no power to pray, "Quicken thou me," for we were dead in trespasses and sins. No dead man ever prayed to be quickened; such a prayer would be an index of life. A really spiritual prayer for quickening can only come from those in whom the quickening Spirit has already taken up his abode. Now, beloved, blessed be the name of the Lord, we are no longer dead as once we were: the Spirit of God has breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and we have become living souls in the family of God. Let us be thankful for this, but let us, as we look around upon the spiritually dead who swarm our streets, take care to pray for them, "Lord, quicken thou the dead in sin." Let our



relatives be the especial objects of our prayers for quickening. If we have a brother who is rotting in the grave of his iniquities, let us pray the Master to say, "Lazarus, come forth." If we have a son who is dead in sin, let us ask the Lord to raise him up even from the bier of his transgressions. Or if it be a little daughter at home, fair and lovely yet unquickened, let our prayer be to the great Master that he would come and raise her up. He is able to raise any of the spiritually dead, for he hath raised us. Let our own conversion encourage us in praying for the spiritual resurrection of others.

But, brethren, although we ourselves are quickened in that sense, we have still need to continue the prayer. Do you remember the days of your first awakening, when you had only sufficient life to mourn and lament that you had so little? The first sense of life in you was painful; you were under a sense of sin, and your guilt lay heavy upon you; you had only life enough to dread the death that never dies; your life did little else for you but enable you to tremble, to mourn, to dread, and to reproach yourself. It was the dark side of life, the pain which is the true evidence of vitality, but is terrible to endure. Then you needed fuller light and healthier life, and no prayer could have better suited you than this which is now before us, "Quicken thou me." Oh, the agonising cries of awakened sinners, theirs are no mimicries, but stern realities. Believe me, they do pray.

Since that season, for blessed be God that state is over now, we have joy and peace in believing,—not all the joy and peace we could wish, but still a good share of it; yet have we still great cause to cry aloud, and that right often, "Quicken thou me." For instance, have you never felt the need of this prayer when you have been cast down by affliction? The spirit, broken and bruised, can only rally through an infusion of fresh life. When you could not get a grip at the promises, because the hand of your faith was benumbed, you needed an increased vitality. In temporal trial, more grace was your best support; and when the trouble was not only bodily, but spiritual, then increased inner life was the doubly efficacious remedy. Do you recollect when you were broken in pieces all asunder through some surprising sin, and God, in chastisement, seemed to hunt you with the terrors of his law, then your expiring faith and swooning hope needed a new vitality? There was no restored joy for you till you learned again the meaning of the Redeemer's words, "I am the life." Lying at the foot of his cross you saw the vital blood flowing from his dear wounds, and you cried "Quicken thou me." Forth from the heart of Jesus came a stream of warm life, which entered your soul, renewed your faith, inspired you with sacred confidence, and diffused within your spirit a blessed calm in which you softly breathed the life of God, and rose as one quickened from among the dead.

How many times, also, have you been the victim of worldliness, that horrible swoon of the heart towards Christ? Even over those who try to live nearest to God, this evil influence exerts itself like some stifling vapour, engendering a dreadful sleepiness, even where it cannot accomplish death. Men after God's own heart have cried, "My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me, O God." You have loved some earthly thing; some child, perhaps, has clambered into your heart's



throne while it has been fondled on your knee. Lawful loves have become unlawfully engrossing, and have eaten the Lord's portion. The Son of David has been displaced by a usurper, or at least another throne has been set up in his palace. Have you not been horrified at your own idolatry and resolved to have done with it, cost what it may? You have sought for the axe which should remove the right hand sin, the hammer which should dash down the usurper's image; but your heart has failed you, the fascination of the sin has spell-bound you. Around you the coils of the serpent have been twined, and you could not tear them off, for a poison chilled your blood and stupified your brain and heart. Ah, then you saw the beauty of the prayer, "Quicken thou me," and well was it for you that, feebly as you uttered it, it was answered from the throne of mercy. What could have stood you in good stead if you had been left a victim to the deadly drugs and mortal opiates of sin? You, my brethren, who are much engaged in business from morning to night, when things go with you very roughly, or on the other hand when they go with you very smoothly, have the deepest cause to pray, "Lord quicken thou me." Earth sticks to our hearts, especially those forms of it known as gold and silver; and lumps of adhesive earth make a pilgrim's progress tardy. You cannot wrestle in prayer while you are loaded down with worldly cares. No runner can win a race when he stoops under great weights. It is impossible to commune with God and yet to fix one's heart on money-making. While business is what it is, and the wheels of trade revolve at such a terrific rate, men had need be very vigorous in grace, or their souls will be ground to dust amid their own machinery. Oh you very busy men, ye ought day by day to plead with the Lord—"Quicken thou me, my God, lest I be overcome by the deadly influences of the world." Though I mingle little with the business or the politics of the hour, I feel a somnolent influence creep over me, from the smoke of these tents of Kedar in which I dwell, like that which Bunyan mentions in his description of the Enchanted Ground, where the very air made men drowsy. This influence tends to preaching mechanically, as an automaton might do if properly wound up, and it leads to praying by routine, after the manner of a Thibetian windmill or a Ritualistic priest. Hideous is this temptation to perform one's duties officially, because it is the time to do this and the proper hour to do that. Oh, my God, deliver us from crawling along in the ruts, and slipping sleepily along the grooves. We want life, vivacity, vigour, diligence, fervour, passion, vehemence in the service of our God, or else our Christianity is worth no more than a nutshell out of which the worm has eaten the kernel, and left nothing but rottenness. Our God is a consuming fire, and only by fire can we worship him. Sacrifices without heart are an abomination to him. The name to live is loathsome unless the spirit of life be present. The garments of a man may frighten birds, but only the heart and soul of manhood can avail with heaven. Without the living soul of sincerity and earnestness, what is religion but a charnel house, whitewashed without, but rottenness within? We must have life! First, last, and midst, we must have life; therefore to all professors I commend this prayer, "Quicken thou me."



My brethren, do not the most warm-hearted among us feel the need of more quickening? Let us consider a few matters which may awaken our desires more fully. First, let us enquire if we are as earnest in the things of God as in the common things of daily life? Is our soul as vigorous in its acts for God as in its emotions towards man? We are told by the Spirit that the time is short, and it remaineth that those who have wives be as though they had not, they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that weep as though they wept not, because all these things are passing away, and therefore our emotions about them should be comparatively slight; but spiritual things, seeing they endure for ever, ought to have a lodgment in the centre of our being, and concerning them we should think deeply and feel strongly. Sorrow for sin should be the keenest sorrow, joy in the Lord should be the loftiest of joy. Is it so? How find you it with yourselves? Suppose it be the love of a newly-married wife, is there not an intensity about it which needs no inflaming? Do you always or often find your soul so ardent towards the Lord Jesus Christ? Yet ought he not to be before all other? Or suppose it be your weeping for your lost husband or your dear departed child, you do not need excitement to grief; no, your hearts bleed all too freely, and you need arguments to assuage your sorrows: is it thus when you lament the dishonor done to the name of Jesus? Are the waterfloods quite as plentiful? Is repentance as deep and living an emotion with you as sorrow under bereavement? I fear that in these earthly matters our heart is wax, and in spiritual things it is as the nether millstone. Yet is it sad indeed that our affections entwine themselves about a mere creature but put forth no tendrils towards the Lord of love, who laid down his life for us. If you are suddenly made possessors of wealth, the joy you have over your substance is very manifest. None can question it. Or if your wealth be taken away by some loss in trade or otherwise, your distress is by no means superficial; I pray you tell me, are you equally concerned about the true riches? If you have found the priceless pearl, are you enchanted with it? If you have lost fellowship with Jesus, does the loss depress your spirit? Are you as eager to be rich in grace as to be great in wealth? Do you prize Christ as you do your profits? Are you as eager in a prayer meeting as you are on the market? I fear, brethren, that a comparison between our zeal for temporal and spiritual things would lead to very humbling conclusions, and give us reason to cry, "Lord, deaden me to this world, but quicken me towards the world to come."

The same truth will be apparent if we will think of the earnestness of men of the world in their callings and pursuits. How men will wear themselves out in seeking the secular objects on which their hearts are set! To what sacrifices will they expose themselves! The votaries of science altogether shame the followers of religion. They have penetrated into the densest swamps, defying fever and death; they have lost themselves amongst the wildest savages, or they have died amidst eternal snows. Have they not lost their lives while using deadly drugs, out of which they hoped to discover curative agents; or worn away their eyesight by weary night watchings of the orbs of heaven? Science



daily increases her martyrology, but where find we ours? Where is the chivalry of Christians? Alas, where survives the heroism of the cross? In former times the followers of Christ counted not their lives dear unto them for his sake; but now we hug ourselves in ease, and venture little for the Lord. The world has warm followers and devoted friends, but Jesus is attended by a lukewarm band of men who are more likely to sleep at Gethsemane's gates than to watch with him for a single hour. Oh Lord of love, will thou not quicken us? Behold our need, forgive our sin, and from this good hour teach us how to live.

We shall surely also be rebuked if we think of the zeal of some of the Lord's servants. Their lives should make us feel how little life we have. Put yourself, beloved brother, side by side with Paul for a few minutes. Think of his zeal unquenchable. Remember his voluntary exposure to a thousand risks; his sufferings, and his labours for the propagation of his Master's gospel. Where are we, and what are we? Alas! we blush and sink to nothing in the presence of such a man. Others of like energy have been and are in the church. Why are we so unlike them? Shame, shame upon us!

Perhaps it may touch us with some degree of feeling if we recollect what our own zeal was at one time. It never was much to boast of; when we were most earnest we could well have borne to be heated seven times hotter, and yet not become too much inflamed; but are we now as zealous as once we were? May I ask you to look back upon the early days of your religion? Oh, then ye ran where now ye creep. Ye blazed and glowed, where now but a few sparks alone are left. The love of your espousals, when you went after your Master into the wilderness, when nothing was too heavy or too hard for his dear sake, where is it now? Where is it now? As you grew in years you should have grown in zeal, for you know more of him, and you have received more from him; but is it so? Why, we thought we would push the church before us or drag the world behind us, and we meant to do I know not what, but have we done it? Then we cried, "Who art thou, great mountain?" "Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain:" but the great mountain remains where it was, because our faith has declined, and our zeal has flagged. Oh, for the Spirit to re-baptise us into the fulness of his life and strength.

Once more, think dear friends, of our condition of spiritual life, and of what it ought to have been, when we remember our obligations to our Saviour. Stand in spirit at the foot of the cross and see the five wounds and the precious blood that bought us. Can you here remain unmoved? Do we gaze into yon dear face, that mirror of love and grief, and feel no love to him? Can we think of his returning into his glory, and bearing our names upon his breastplate day and night before the eternal throne, and feel no enthusiasm for him? Can we meditate upon him as from before all worlds, loving us, and to all worlds loving us still, and yet remain indifferent? O adamant, thou art flesh, and flesh is adamant this day. Why, sirs, if we lived for Jesus solely and evermore, and died a thousand deaths for him, these were cheap things to lay at the foot of his dear cross. He deserveth infinitely more from us.



Think, I pray you, of all the truths of our religion, and ask yourselves what kind of life they require of us. We believe that men are lost, and shall we be idle when in our hands is the gospel, which alone can save them? We know that men are passing into a condition in which they shall for ever abide, everlastingly blessed or eternally accursed of God, and only the truth that we have to tell them can secure them from unending misery, and can we withhold the saving word. I do not wonder that those who believe the contrary to this should take things coolly, but I do marvel at ourselves that we are so insane at heart that we are not moved to passionate earnestness for ourselves and our fellowmen. Fanaticism itself were, under some aspects of it, nothing but cold-blooded reason in the face of such truths as these. We ought to live impassioned lives, full of flaming energy, and we should if this prayer were heard, "Quicken thou me in thy way."

Thus I have spoken upon the first head. Now may we be helped to dwell upon the second, and may the Spirit bless us thereby.

II. Our text DIRECTS US TO THE SOLE WORKER OF QUICKENING. "Quicken *thou* me." David seeks quickening from the Lord alone. He goes at once to him in whom were all his fresh springs. Life is the peculiar sphere of God: he is the Lord and Giver of life. No man ever received spiritual life, or the renewal of it, from any other source but the living God. Beloved, this is worth recollecting, for we are very apt when we feel ourselves declining to look anywhere but to the Lord. We, too, often look within. "Why seekest thou the living among the dead?" You might find a diamond upon a dunghill, but you will never find spiritual refreshing in human nature. Look then to some better source than to the howling wilderness of self. We are very apt also to think that in the use of the means of grace we shall necessarily obtain reviving and refreshing. "If I can hear Mr. So-and-so preach, who has often laid his hands among my heart-strings, and brought out music thence, then I should be again awakened. Oh, could I hear him once again I should see better days." Thou dost not know. That beloved voice may have lost all power over thee. If thou lookest to the servant and not to the Master, the Master will leave the servant and the servant will be of no use to thee. Dig the pools by all manner of means; passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: but the life-refreshing water does not rise from the bottom of the well, it drops from above,—“the rain also filleth the pools.” God out of heaven alone can make instrumentality to be of vital service to us. Not even the sweet succours of the Communion Table can bring back vigorous life to the Christian apart from the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Rest ye not in the outward, for it cannot touch the inward. Above all, never go to the law for reviving. Do not begin chiding yourself by saying, "This I ought to have done and I shall lose the love of God if I do not," and so on. That is all legal. The child of God, when he hears the roar of Sinai's thunder, sinks into a deeper death; it cannot rouse him into life. Slaves may be moved by terror, but not the true born child of God; a nobler motive sways his heart. Go not thou, then, to rewards and punishments for thy life; thou wilt never find it there. The ministry of the law is the ministry



of death, not of life. We must betake ourselves to the Spirit of God, who is the gift of the gospel, not of the law. Remember, beloved, that Jesus Christ is come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. Now, if any poor soul first of all obtained life from looking alone to Jesus it is clear that if she wants more life she must get it in the same way. They say that for a sick man his native air is the best. My native air was Calvary: was it not yours, dear brother? Let us together seek the blood-stained spot. Go and breathe the atmosphere of atoning love again! Get back to the cross-foot once more, and you will find effectual quickening. The Holy Spirit is the great agent by whom the life of Jesus is infused into our nature. The Holy Ghost at this moment can come upon the coldest heart in this place, and make it flame and blaze with more than angelic ardour. You are like a bush at this moment, dry and dark, but God has but to put one spark of his life in you and you will be like the bush in Horeb, which flamed like the sun. Dear sister, have you fallen very low? Go to God, for he can lift you up when no one else can. My ministry cannot quicken you, but the Lord can. He has only to send forth the divine life, and the dullest and most slothful, the most barren, the most dead, among us would become warm with apostolic fervour, and the life divine would make us shine as the glittering seraphim which surround the burning throne. Oh God, how this moves us to pray to thee! Thou canst do it. Do it now. "Quicken thou me in thy way."

Did you notice that in the text nothing is said about the means by which the Lord is to quicken us? David leaves that to God's discretion. Let him use his own methods. There is a prayer—you will find it in the one hundred and forty-ninth verse, and also in the one hundred and fifty-sixth—in which David prays, "Quicken thou me in thy judgment," as if he left it to infinite prudence to select its own methods. He did not pretend to say what was the best way, but left himself in God's hands, only praying, "Lord, quicken thou me." Let us consider the various methods by which the Lord can quicken his people. Usually he does it by his word. "Thy word hath quickened me." There are promises in God's word of such effectual restorative power, that, if they be but fed upon, and their nutriment be absorbed into our nature, they will make a dwarf into a giant in the twinkling of an eye; and he who lies faint upon the ground, and cannot move hand or foot, shall mount upon the wings of eagles, and run and not be weary, if but one word out of the mouth of God be applied to him by the Spirit.

Sometimes, however, God uses other instruments, such as affliction. It is wonderful how a little touch of the spur will quicken our sluggish natures. God has ways and means of touching our bone and flesh, and rendering sleep an impossibility in more senses than one. Personal affliction is like tonic medicine, by which our relaxed energies are strung up again; but to this end it must be sanctified, or it will fail. Blessed be God for a flick of his whip; we might else have stumbled in our sleep and fallen. It does good to such sorry jades as we are. I pray that some of you may get a touch of it, for you are dull enough. Just a touch now and then does all of us good; and rest



assured we shall have it too, if we do not keep awake without it, for God loves us too well to withhold his paternal rod.

At the same time, he can quicken us by great mercies. A man may be stirred up to diligence by a sense of gratitude to God for great mercies. I grant you it does not always have that effect; but it ought to do so. Oh, if our hearts were right, it would be sweet to say, "Here is another mercy, another favour from God; this binds me with another cord to his service; I will love him more, and devote myself more intensely to his work."

Christian example, too, sometimes stirs us up. I believe the reading of holy biographies has been exceedingly blessed of God. The life of such a man as McCheyne, or the diary of Brainerd or the story of Whitfield's ministry—such things make us think, "What are we? what are we living for?" Put microscopes upon our eyes, and yet we can hardly see ourselves, we are so little. We are as grasshoppers in their sight, yea, we are as grasshoppers in our own sight. This stimulates us. On the other hand, if you fall in with a number of idle dolts of professors, as sometimes you do, your indignation at them will help to excite you to zeal, or it ought to do so. We have known some who have said, "I am superior to these, at any rate," and therefore congratulating themselves they have gradually sunk down to the same ignominious level; but in a true heart the sluggishness of others is a spur to greater exertion, for such a man says, "Is my Master served in such a beggarly manner as this? then will I serve him with all my heart, to make up for the lack of service in others." It is said that Augustus Cæsar was once asked to a feast by one of his subjects, but the attendance was so dilatory, and the feast so mean, that he rose in disgust, and said he supposed he was invited to be honoured, but he had discovered that it was intended to insult him. Truly in many a congregation of Christians, yea, even of our own denomination, the worship of God is done in such a mean, stingy, dead-and-alive way that it seems as if Christ were asked to the assembly to be insulted rather than to be honoured. Verily such treatment of our Lord is enough to make us weep tears of blood, and then drive us onward to a service hitherto unparalleled in these frigid days.

Doubtless, too, a warm-hearted ministry has much to do with quickening us, and if we have a choice of ministries in any place, we should select not that which tickles the ear most, but that which most enlivens the heart. If there are two ministries to be had, one of which is highly rhetorical and exceedingly pleasing to the intellect, but the other, though lacking in these points, nevertheless appeals to our conscience, arouses our heart, feeds us with spiritual meat, and incites to higher degrees of sanctity, choose *that*, for it is the ministry which God approves.

Under God's blessing, every one of our graces may become a means of enlivening us. For instance, our faith, as it believes the great things of God will be sure to arouse us; our hope, as she looks forward to the bright reward will cause us to labour where otherwise we should have fainted: and love, which is the fore-horse of the team, will draw us to serve Christ with might and main. True love to Jesus, if it come to a great vehemence will quicken the entire spiritual nature, and then will the prayer be answered, "Quicken thou me"



Thus, brethren, you see God has both gentle and rough means of quickening us, but for my part if he will but quicken me, I will make no bargain with him: let him do it as he wills. Do what thou wilt with me, my Lord; only keep me from being lukewarm, cold-hearted, dead and alive. Do make me to be all on fire for thee.

Remember, beloved, that this is a promised blessing. David says, "Quicken thou me according to thy word." You will find that thought repeated in the Psalm. It is a blessing to be pleaded for, for in a former verse David says, "Quicken thou me in thy righteousness," as if he felt that God would not be righteous, would not be keeping his promise, if he did not quicken him. This is a blessing which is always a token of God's lovingkindness wherever it comes. Look at the eighty-eighth verse and the one hundred and fifty-ninth, and you will find them both saying, "Quicken thou me after thy lovingkindness."

III. Our text DESCRIBES THE SPHERE OF RENEWED VIGOUR. "Quicken thou me in *thy way*." I have no business to ask God to quicken me in my own way, no right to ask him to quicken me merely that I may enjoy myself religiously, or be thought to be a very eminent Christian, or be able to sit down and contemplate my own beauties and perfections with self-complacency. Somebody once said to a Christian man, "Pray what faith have you?" Said he, "I have none to boast of." If you see a fellow about who has not a sixpence to bless himself with, if he chanced to possess an imitation diamond ring how careful he is to show it. See how he always puts out his finger to let you see it; but he who is worth his millions never thinks of displaying his gewgaws in that fashion. He that has merely a name to be religious is sure to advertise it, but he who is rich towards God is the very man who thinks himself poor, and cries out, "Lord quicken thou me."

Now, what is the path in which we require to be quickened? First, it is in the way of duty in common life. Am I a father—quicken thou me to bring up my children aright. Am I a housewife—Lord quicken thou me that my duties at home may be discharged as in thy fear. Am I a servant or master—Lord, quicken thou me. I have my temptations in my daily calling, quicken me to stand against them; and I have also my daily opportunities for serving thee, quicken me to make use of them.

It means next, "Quicken thou me in sacred activity." Am I a preacher? Lord help me to preach with all my might and with all *thy* might too. Am I a teacher in a school? Lord grant that I may not go to sleep over my children, but may win their souls, being blest by thee with the earnestness which tells upon youthful minds. Have I any other work to do? Am I a deacon or elder of the church? Let me be so ardent in piety, that my fellow members may be excited by my zeal. You have all some work to do for Christ—I hope you have. If you have not, go home and begin; but if you are doing your work, I know your prayer must be, "Quicken thou me in thy way."

Did not David mean, again, quicken me in the way of patient suffering? for I must not forget that there are some whose service for Christ is more honourable even than the service of the worker, but who are very apt to think that Christ considers them useless. Oh dear brother



and sister art thou called to suffer bodily pain? Your work is to bring forth the inexpressibly sweet fruit of patience. Go and pray, "Quicken thou me in thy way." You know the story about poor Betty, who said the Lord had called her to do this and that while she was well, but now, "The Lord had said, 'Betty, go and lie on that bed and cough,'" and said she, "I will do it, for his sake." May you rejoice in the Lord's will even if it causes you to pine, to cough, and to die. Not even the song of the angels is more sweet to God's ear than the resignation and patience which are to be found in the hearts of the sons and daughters of affliction. But you will want great grace for this, my sister; you will want a strong inner life for this, my brother; therefore pray, "Quicken thou me in thy way."

And the same is true of the way of hallowed worship. We want to be quickened there, quickened in private prayer, quickened in public prayer, quickened in our family devotion, quickened in our reading the Scriptures, quickened in our contemplations of divine love, quickened in all forms of worship. We require to be quickened in our growth in grace, in humility, in patience, in hope, in faith, in love, in every good gift. Especially we need to be quickened in communion with our God. Then let us pray the prayer, "Quicken thou me in thy way."

IV. Lastly, the connection of our text DENOTES THAT THERE MAY BE SPECIAL REASONS AND SPECIAL SEASONS FOR THIS PRAYER. Just observe it. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and "Quicken thou me in thy way." You see the connection of the prayer. David is exposed to a temptation: the temptation reaches him through his eyes; he prays God to turn his eyes away from it, and then as a cure for the evil he says, "Quicken thou me." Brethren, are you never fascinated by a sin? Whenever you have been conscious of that diabolical fascination it has been time to cry, "'Quicken thou me in thy way.' I see I am weaker than I thought I was; Lord, I was carried away with anger when I thought I had gained a quiet temper at last; Lord, I found my heart going after an evil which I thought I had no relish for. Give me more grace, Good Master. 'Quicken thou me in thy way.'"

A fit time for this prayer is a season of great affliction. The one hundred and seventh verse teaches us that. "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word." Times of great temptation of spirit and trial of soul should be seasons for praying that God would give us extraordinary grace. When we have been confessing past sloth we should pray for grace to resist it for the future. If God at this time should convince any of us that we have not done one-tenth of what we ought to have done, and that we have been living at a distance from the love of Christ, then the prayer should arise, "Quicken thou me in thy way."

Are we just now called to some extraordinary service? Does the Lord lay upon us a heavy burden for his name? Do not let us shirk it, or say, "I cannot do it." No, "Lord, quicken thou me." Give me more grace, and then I shall be equal to any emergency, for as my days my strength shall be.

This prayer is very suitable to the members of this church, because at this time we have seen so many of the good and excellent among us



taken away. It scarcely seems as if the Lord would leave us any. During their last few months he has continued to sweep away one and another from us, and this week another valuable brother has been borne to the tomb. Surely every one remaining should say, "Lord, quicken thou me." Grant that I may live so that if I also am soon to be removed I shall have finished my course, and have fought the fight right through and gained the crown which grace has promised. Perhaps within the course of another week this black upon my pulpit may wear a third significance, as it has a double one already. From which of us shall it derive its third meaning. Do I stand here to preach in feebleness my last sermon to you? Do my beloved church officers sit around me for the last time? And have I here members of this fellowship who are now upon this last occasion gathered for united worship? Brethren, it may be so. Then let us pray for quickening, that we may live while we live, and waste no precious moment of our scant earthly existence. The needs of our church are very great. If I stood in a harvest field, and saw that the crop needed to be ingathered, and that a labourer was working in it till he fainted again and again, and if I saw him in great feebleness grasping the sickle still, impelled by a brave spirit which kept him to his work, I think I should pray, "Lord, help me to reap too, to go into that mass of standing corn and reap too, for I see thy servant overdone with service." My fellow servants, bought with the same blood, the harvest truly is plenty, but the labourers are few. I entreat you, by the blood and wounds of him who bought you, let not a single one turn away, but rise up and serve God with heart and soul and strength. Ah, we shall soon have to give account for all these things. Within a few short weeks or months we shall stand before his judgment seat whose eyes of fire shall read us through and through. We shall then be called to account for these ungodly ones who sit with us this day. Can we answer for their souls? We are a great church in a great city, and multitudes are dying without knowing Christ; if we do not give them all the help and instruction we can, how shall we answer for it? If standing in this pulpit to preach to crowds I do not stir my soul and preach earnestly, how shall I answer for it? When blood shall be upon these skirts in the day of judgment, the crimson of souls damned through my indolence, how shall I answer for it? Great God, forbid that it should ever be. But it may be so with you as well as with me, each one according to his responsibility and position. I again conjure you by every name that can tell upon your hearts and arouse your consciences, pray to God to quicken you to an ardour of love and an intense diligence of service for his dear and precious name.

Ah, some of you I cannot ask to offer this prayer. I have told you why. Dead souls, how can you pray for life? But I will ask God's people to pray for you, and I will pray for you, that the gospel which I am commanded to preach even to the dead in sin may come with power to your souls. Here it is: "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." The Lord lead you to obey the word. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm cix. 25—48.