

# 2 Corinthians 4:18 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT  
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[Another Overview Chart](#)

## Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
Character of Paul	Collection for the Saints	Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

**2 Corinthians 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** me skopounton (PAPMPG) hemon ta blepomena (PPPNPA) alla ta me blepomena; (PPNPN) ta gar blepomena (PPNPN) proskaira, ta de me blepomena (PPNPN) aionia.

**Amplified:** Since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting. ([Lockman](#))

**ASV:** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Barclay:** so long as we do not think of the things which are seen, but of the things which are unseen, for the things which are seen are passing, but the things which are unseen are eternal. ([Westminster Press](#))

**BBE:** While our minds are not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are for a time; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Darby:** while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are for a time, but those that are not seen eternal.

**God's Word:** We don't look for things that can be seen but for things that can't be seen. Things that can be seen are only temporary. But things that can't be seen last forever. ([GWT](#))

**ESV:** as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. ([ESV](#))

**GNT:** For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts for ever.

**HCSB:** So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**ICB:** So we set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time. But what we cannot see will last forever. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**ISV:** because we do not look for things that can be seen but for things that cannot be seen. For things that can be seen are temporary, but things that cannot be seen are eternal.

**KJV:** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Mace:** for I have no regard to the things which are visible, but to such as are invisible: since visible things are temporary, but the invisible are eternal.

**MLB (Berkley):** because we do not fasten our eyes on the visible but on the unseen; for the visible things are transitory, but the unseen things are everlasting.

**Moffatt:** for those of us whose eyes are on the unseen, not on the seen; for the seen is transient, the unseen eternal.

**NAB:** as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

**NEB:** Meanwhile our eyes are fixed, not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are unseen: for what is seen passes away; what is unseen is eternal.

**NET:** because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV:** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NJB:** since what we aim for is not visible but invisible. Visible things are transitory, but invisible things eternal.

**NKJV:** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**NLT:** So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** For we are looking all the time not at the visible things but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory: it is the invisible things that are really permanent. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**RSV:** because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**TEV:** For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.

**TLB:** So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

**Weymouth:** while we look not at things seen, but things unseen; for things seen are temporary, but things unseen are eternal.

**Wuest:** while we are not contemplating the things that are seen but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Young's Literal:** we not looking to the things seen, but to the things not seen; for the things seen are temporary, but the things not seen are age-during.

**Related Passage:**

1 John 2:17+ The **world is passing away**, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

**Andrus** - Someday it's all going to be left behind, and eventually it's going to go up in smoke. But the spiritual realities are lasting and eternal—love, worship, faithful ministry, lives touched, kindnesses done, generosity expressed.

**WHERE ARE  
YOU LOOKING?**

**While we look ([skopeo](#)) not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal** - How important it is that we look in the right direction! This is the great truth I like to call **Vertical Vision**, living horizontally (temporally, on earth) with a view to eternity and heaven and face to face with Jesus! (See related topics "[Maranatha Mindset](#)" and [Maranatha-Our Lord, Come!](#)) In this passage **skopeo** is in the present tense which calls for the Christian runner to continually fix his or her attention on the goal set before them - Jesus, eternity, heaven!

**Michael Andrus** - We naturally prefer the seen. Offer someone cash or an IOU for a larger amount, and most are going to take the green stuff. We have a well-known proverb we often quote: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." But Paul says that when it comes to spiritual issues, the world we cannot see is just as real as and infinitely more important than the world we inhabit at present. Our problem is that too often we define reality as "the material, the touchable, the seeable, the scientific." But the Bible makes it clear again and again that there is an unseen world that intersects our world, and we ignore it to our own detriment. The paradigm example is when Elisha's servant went out for the paper one morning and found his whole town surrounded with horses and chariots sent to capture his master, the prophet (Read 2 Ki 6:15-16). "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" he asked. "Don't be afraid," Elisha answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." The servant looked around but he couldn't see any reinforcements. Elisha couldn't see them either, but he knew they were there because he knew God. He then prayed and asked God to open the spiritual eyes of the servant, and as a result "he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." I assume this brought a certain sense of peace and confidence to the servant. And I also assume that if we could see the angels God has assigned to protect us in given situations, we would likewise have peace and confidence in the ways of the Lord. For the most part, however, God asks us to trust Him and to fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

The Scriptures frequently allude to **Vertical Vision**...

If (since) then you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking** (present imperative = command to make this your habitual practice to seek - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set your mind on** (present imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **the things above**, not on the things that are on earth. (Col 3:1+, Col 3:2+)

**Enjoy life  
but anticipate heaven!**

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, **looking for** (present tense = not just occasionally but as your lifestyle, looking daily for) the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (Luke 2:25+)

At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who **were looking for** (present tense = not just occasionally but as your lifestyle, looking daily for) the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:38+)

For those who are according to the flesh **set their minds on** (present tense = habitually) **the things of the flesh** (~visible, temporal), but those who are according to the Spirit, **the things of the Spirit** (~invisible, eternal). (Ro 8:5+)

But **seek** (present imperative = command to make this your habitual practice to seek - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. (Mt 6:33+)

**Looking for** (present tense = not just occasionally but as your lifestyle, looking daily for) the blessed hope and

the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (Titus 2:13+).

### Expectant Looking Is the "Antidote" for Apathetic Living

**Looking for** (present tense = not just occasionally but as your lifestyle, looking daily for) and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (2 Peter 3:12+)

**Comment:** Joni Eareckson Tada asks "Why all the verbs in the present tense? Because God **wants** to get your heart beating with a present-tense excitement, a right-around-the-corner anticipation of Heaven. Isn't that the way strangers on foreign soil are supposed to feel about their homeland?"

**Fixing our eyes** on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2+)

**Comment:** Our eyes gaze at that which captivates our heart. If worldly, fleshly desires creep into our heart, they will obscure our moral vision and our ability to see Jesus as we should. Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and the invisible things of eternity is the best way to live in a visible world which is passing away.

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,  
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;  
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,  
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.  
— Esther Kerr Rusthoi

As **Johann Bengel** rightly stated "Whatever a man's aim is, that he follows. ([The Critical English Testament](#))

When the heart has lost interest in the invisible,  
memory is brittle relative to things spiritual.  
-- Williams

**Corrie Ten Boom** said it this way

Look around and be distressed.  
Look inside and be depressed.  
Look at Jesus and be at rest.

The principle is clear that the more the heaven and longing to see the face of Jesus engages our heart, the less will the passing shadows of the earthly seduce and sink down our hearts. What you are **looking** for will determine what you are **living** for -- are you looking for the visible and temporal or the invisible and eternal?

#### Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus,

Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

We have seen that Paul does not lose heart because his inner man in being renewed (2Co 4:16). The present passage helps us understand in part how this inner renewal takes place -- from looking at what he cannot see!

### WE LOOK...

**We look not at the things which are seen**"for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2Co 5:7+), remembering that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1+) and that it is "in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we (as we actually do) hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly" (Ro 8:24, 25+), for "the hope laid up for (us) in heaven" (Col 1:5+), which motivates us to choose "rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of (this passing world) for (we are) looking to the reward". And so "by faith (we have) left (this visible world), not fearing the wrath of the (world); for (we) endure, as seeing Him who is unseen." (He 11:25, 26, 27+), "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith." (He 12:2+)

**Jim Elliot**, martyred missionary to the Auca Indians of South America, had a proper perspective regarding the invisible eternal world

declaring that "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

**Look** (4648)(**skopeo** from **skopos** = distant mark looked at, goal or end one has in view; English '**scope**' as in microscope or telescope) means to "spy out", to look at, to observe, to contemplate, to mark ( to fix or trace out the bounds or limits of). Contemplate, look into, examine, inspect, continue to regard closely, to notice carefully, pay attention to, keep one's attention on. The essential idea of this verb is to keep a watchful eye on something, being concerned about it, keep thinking about it.

**Skopeo** in 2Cor 4:18 refers to mental consideration of our future home and conveys the picture of attentively fixing our attention upon something with desire for and/or interest in the future reality in glory. **Skopeo** can also convey the sense of to "aim at", which is what we should be doing regarding heaven. This "look" does not merely describe human vision but instead conveys the idea of regarding a thing as important. The things seen on earth are not to be the goal of a believer's existence. Believers are to continually "scope out" the invisible things of eternity.

**Skopos**, the root of **skopeo**, describes a look at a distant mark or goal, which is a perfect parallel with 2Co 4:18 which is calling for believers to look not at the passing afflictions of the present life but at the eternal glory of the future life, the goal for which we have been redeemed. Throughout eternity every believer will give clear, indisputable testimony that they are a "trophy" of the glory of God's grace which is our ultimate purpose for existence.

Think of yourself as a runner in a race. What does the runner do, especially as they approach the end of the race? Obviously they keep their eye on the goal, which is exactly the idea of **skopeo**.

**Vincent** (quoting Schmidt) adds that **skopeo** means "To direct one's attention upon a thing, either in order to obtain it, or because one has a peculiar interest in it, or a duty to fulfil toward it. Also to have an eye to with a view of forming a right judgment. (Ed: Each of these nuances of meaning are readily applicable).

**Skopeo** - 6x in 6v in **NAS** - Luke 11:35; Ro 16:17; 2Cor 4:18; Gal 6:1; Php 2:4; 3:17. **NAS** = keep your eye on(1), look(2), looking(1), observe(1), watch(1).

## **THE PARADOX OF LOOKING AT THE INVISIBLE**

In the introduction to his sermon on 2Cor 4:18 **C H Spurgeon** asks...

How was it that when cast down Paul was not destroyed-that when troubled he was not distressed? What sustained him? He gives us the key to this fortitude by telling us that he counted his afflictions light because they were, in his estimation, but for a moment ; and they were working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. He was calm and happy midst rage and tumult, violent prejudice, and adverse, and even disastrous, circumstances, because, in the language of the text, he looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen, reckoning that the things which are seen are not worth looking at, so transient are they, while the things unseen are of priceless worth, because they are eternal. That is our subject at this time: Firstly, things not to be looked at; and, secondly, things to be looked at. The text wears the shape of a double paradox. Things that can be seen are, naturally, the things to be looked at. What should a man look at but what he can see? And yet the apostle tells us not to look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. How can things invisible be looked at? That again is a paradox. How can you look at what you cannot see? This is only one paradox of the Christian life, which is all paradox, and the riddle lies rather in the words than in the sense. We shall soon discover that there is no Contradiction or incongruity, no difficulty whatever...

The word "**look**"... means, first, lightly esteeming both present joy and present sorrow, as if they were not worth looking at. The present is so soon to be over that Paul does not care to look at it. There is so little of it, and it lasts such a brief time, that he does not even deign to give it a glance, he looks not at it. Here he is persecuted, despised, forsaken. "It will not last long," saith he. "It is but a pin's prick; it will soon be over, and I shall be with the goodly fellowship above, and behold my Master's face." He will not look at it. He ignores it. Thus it behoves us to do if surrounded with trials, troubles, present sorrows; we should not think so much of them as to fix our attention, or rivet our gaze on them. Rather let us treat them with indifference and say, "It is really a very small matter whether I am in wealth or in poverty, in health or in sickness; whether I am enjoying comforts or whether I am robbed of them. The present will be so soon gone that I do not care to look at it. I am like a man who stays at an hostelry for a night whilst he is on a journey. Is the room uncomfortable? When the

morning breaks it is of no use making a complaint, and so he merely chronicles the fact, and hastens on. He says to himself, "Never mind, I am up and away directly; it is of no use fretting about trifles." If a person is going a long distance in a railway carriage, he may be a little particular as to where he shall sit to see the country, and as to which way he likes to ride; but if it is only a short stage- between, say, the Borough Road and the Elephant and Castle-he does not think about it. He does not care in whose company he may be, it is only for a few minutes; he is hardly in before he is out again, it is a matter not worth thinking about. That is how the apostle regarded it. He reckoned that his present joys and present sorrows were so soon to be over that they were to him a matter of indifference, not even worth casting his eye that way to see what they were. "Doth Jesus bid me go to Rome?" says the apostle. "Then I do not look to see whether I shall be housed in Nero's hail or caged in Nero's dungeon. It is for so short a while that if I can serve my Master better in the dungeon than I can in the palace, so let it be. My casual lot shall be my well-contented choice. It shall be a matter, if not of cool indifference, yet still of calm serenity, for it will be soon over, and gone into history. A whole eternity lies beyond, and therefore a short temporality dwindles into an insignificant trifle." What a blessed philosophy this is which teaches us not even to look at passing, transient troubles, but to fix our gaze on eternal triumphs. **(This excerpt is just to give you a sample of Spurgeon's sermon - I encourage you to read the entire encouraging message - [Vanities and Verities](#))**

**Seen** (991) (**blepo**) basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, and frequently implies special contemplation (e.g., often in the sense of "keep your eyes open," or "beware" [see #6 below]).

**Friberg's** summary of **blepo** - see, look at; (1) of sense perception see (Mt 7.3); (2) in contrast to being blind be able to see (Lk 7.21); figuratively, of spiritual perception see, understand, be aware of (Jn 9.39; Ro 11.8); (3) of careful observing look at, regard (Mt 5.28; Jn 13.22); (4) of mental functions; (a) as directing one's attention take notice of, regard, consider (1Co 1.26); (b) as taking warning watch, beware, take heed (Mk 13.9); (c) as mentally perceiving discover, find, become aware of (Ro 7.23) (Analytical Lexicon)

**Blepo** indicates greater vividness than **horao**, a similar verb meaning "to see", for according to W E Vine **blepo** expresses "a more intentional, earnest contemplation. in Luke 6:41, of beholding the mote in a brother's eye; Luke 24:12, of beholding the linen clothes in the empty tomb; Acts 1:9, of the gaze of the disciples when the Lord ascended. The greater earnestness is sometimes brought out by the rendering "regardest," Mt. 22:16. ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

**TDNT** says that like **horao** **blepo** also means "to see" with a stronger emphasis on the function of the eye, so that it serves as the opposite of "to be blind." It can also be used for intellectual or spiritual perception, and in the absolute for insight... (another word for seeing is) **theáomai** suggests spectators and denotes attentive seeing, i.e., "to behold." Having a certain solemnity, it is used for visionary seeing and the apprehension of higher realities... (**Blepo**) first denotes ability to see as distinct from blindness (Mt 12:22; 15:31; Mk 8:23-24; Lk. 7:21; Jn. 9). Seeing the book in Rev. 5:3, 4 includes reading. Scrutiny is implied in Mt. 22:16. God's seeing in Mt. 6:4 is a secret one. Jesus sees the Father's works in Jn. 5:19 (cf. Jn 8:38). Angels see the face of God in Mt 18:10. Empirical seeing is the point in Ro 8:24, 25; 2Co 4:18; He 11:1ff. Figuratively **blepo** can mean "to note," "to perceive" (Ro 7:23; Col 2:5). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Vine** adds that **blepo** means "to look," see, usually implying more especially an intent, earnest contemplation. **Blepo** is also used of (a) bodily and (b) mental vision, (i.) "to perceive," e.g., Mt. 13:13; (ii.) "to take heed," **Blepo** It especially stresses the thought of the person who sees. **Blepo** primarily, "to have sight, to see," then, "observe, discern, perceive," frequently implying special contemplation, is rendered by the verb "to look" in Luke 9:62 ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

Some uses of **blepo** are rendered showing "**regard**" (KJV) or "**partiality**" (NASB) (Mt 22:16, Mk 12:14). The idea of "**regard**" is to observe or to notice with some particularity, to attend to with respect and estimation.

**Mounce** writes that **blepo** "is a general word meaning "to see." It commonly refers to seeing physical objects (Mt 15:31; Lk 7:21; Jn 9:7). It can also mean "to look at, watch" such as watching a woman with lustful intent (Mt 5:28) or looking at the "speck" in someone else's eye (Mt 7:3). In Rev 5:3, 4, no one is able "to looking into" the scroll (Rev 5:3, 4) except the Lamb. ([Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words](#))

In secular Greek **blepo** was commonly used of bringing a ship to land... think of our life as a "ship of faith" moving through the fog, avoiding the dangerous reefs by keeping our focus on the Lighthouse on the shore.

The idiom **blepo eis prosopon** = literally to see into the face = to judge on the basis of external appearances

Below are the various nuances of **blepo** - note that there definitions often overlap making the following distinctions somewhat



arbitrary.

(1) To have sight, see with the eye - simple vision (Mt 11:4, 12:22, 14:30 15:31 24:2 Mk 5:31 13:2 Lk 7:44 8:16)

Lk 10:23 And turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which **see** the things you see, 24 for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see (eido) the things which you **see**, and did not see (eido) them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them. "

Jn 1:29 The next day he **saw** Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

(2) Seeing as opposed to literal blindness (This meaning clearly overlaps with #1) (Mt 12:22, 13:16, 15:31, Mk 8:23, 24 Lk 7:21 Jn 9:7, 15, 19, 25, Acts 9:9, Ro 11:8, 10, Re 3:18)

(3) Figuratively of spiritual perception (and spiritual blindness) - to understand, be aware of (Mk 8:18 Lk 8:10 Jn 9:39, Ro 11:8)

Mt 13:13 (also Mk 4:12) Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while **seeing** (simple vision) they do not **see** (describes seeing without spiritual perception), and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Mt 13:16 (also Mt 13:17) "But blessed are your eyes, because they **see** (Blepo ~ not just physically see but see with spiritual understanding); and your ears, because they hear.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

**Comment:** True faith is NOT based on empirical evidence but on divine assurance, and is a gift of God. Our goal, then, as George MacDonald once said, is to "grow eyes" to see the unseen.

(4) Of careful observing - to look at, to observe (Lk 9:62 Acts 1:11 Jn 13:22)

Mt 5:28 but I say to you, that everyone who **looks** ( **present tense**. = continually, not a glance but a gaze!) on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.

**Comment:** The "look" that Jesus mentioned was not a casual glance, but a constant stare with the purpose of lusting. (Job31:1) It is possible for a man to glance at a beautiful woman and know that she is beautiful, but not lust after her. The man Jesus described looked at the woman for the purpose of feeding his inner sensual appetites as a substitute for the act. It was not accidental; it was planned.

This use of blepo combines the ideas **seeing** and **perceiving**. To **perceive** means to attain awareness or understanding of. Webster's 1828 says **perceive** means "*To have knowledge or receive impressions of external objects through the medium or instrumentality of the senses or bodily organs; as, to perceive light or color; to perceive the cold of ice or the taste of honey.*"

(5) Directing one's attention to something - to take notice, regard, consider (Lk 6:41 1Co 1:26)

Lk 6:41 "And why do you **look** (**Blepo** used figuratively in the context of not just seeing but of passing judgment) at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? **42** "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not **see** (Blepo - figurative sense here of spiritual discernment) the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

Lk 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and **looking** back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

(6) Seeing with the idea of "seeing to" something = Have your eye on so as to beware of. - to watch, to take heed, to take care. To see with the mind's eye, to discern mentally, to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing.

Mt 24:4 (similar uses in Mk 13:5, 9, 23, 33, Lk 21:8) And Jesus answered and said to them, **See to it** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention. Calls for constant vigil.) that no one misleads you (Context = the last days, the days preceding the Messiah's return. Deception will be

common).

Mk 4:24 (similar use in Lk 8:18) And He was saying to them, "**Take care** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.

Mk 8:15 (see also Mk 12:38) And He was giving orders to them, saying, "**Watch out! Beware** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) of the leaven of the Pharisees (= hypocrisy Lk 12:1) and the leaven of Herod (secularism and worldliness)."

Ac 13:40 Therefore **take heed** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention), so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you:

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must **be careful** (present imperative) how he builds on it.

1Co 8:9 But **take care** (present imperative) that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1Co 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) that he does not fall.

Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, **take care** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) that you are not consumed by one another.

Eph 5:15 - Therefore **be careful** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention. Why? see v16) how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Php 3:2 **Beware** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) of the dogs, **beware** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) of the evil workers, **beware** (present imperative) of the false circumcision

Col 2:8 - **See to it** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Col 4:17 Say to Archippus, "**take heed** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

**Comment:** A good warning for all who are in active ministry (we should all be involved in some way!)

2 Jn 1:8 **Watch** (Keep a watchful eye on yourselves; "Look out") (present imperative = command calling for continual attention - why? see Mt 26:41+) yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

**Comment:** All believers will receive praise at the judgment or **bema** seat of Christ according to 1Cor 4:5, but some believers shall suffer loss of their rewards as described in 1Cor 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

Heb 3:12 **Take care** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention), brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

**Comment:** "Be seeing to it constantly, keep a watchful eye ever open," is the idea. Be on your guard against enemies both within and without. The ruin of others should be a warning to us to take heed.

Heb 12:25 **See to it** (present imperative = command calling for continual attention) that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

(7) Looking with the sense of to discover, to find, to become aware of (Mt 7:3, Mt 13:13 Lk 8:10 Ro 7:23 He 7:23).

Mt 7:3 "Why do you **look** (blepo) at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not **notice** the log that is in



your own eye?

**Blepo** - 132x in 116v **NAS** translates **blepo** - beware(5), careful(1), careful\*(1), consider(1), facing(1), guard(1), keep on seeing(2), look(7), looking(5), looks(1), partial\*(2), saw(12), see(54), seeing(8), seen(8), sees(8), sight(2), take care(5), take heed(5), watch(1). (+: Most of the uses of blepo are in the **present tense**. More than half of uses of blepo are in the Gospels = 72x)- Mt 5:28-+; Mt 6:4-+, Mt 6:6-+, Mt 6:18-+; Mt 7:3-+; 11:4; 12:22; 13:13, 14, 16, 17; 14:30; 15:31; 18:10; 22:16; 24:2, 4; Mk 4:12, 24; 5:31; 8:15, 18, 23, 24; 12:14, 38; 13:2, 5, 9, 23, 33; Lk 6:41, 42; 7:21, 44; 8:10, 16, 18; 9:62; 10:23, 24; 11:33; 21:8, 30; 24:12; Jn 1:29; 5:19; 9:7, 15, 19, 21, 25, 39, 41; 11:9; 13:22; 20:1, 5; 21:9, 20; Acts 1:9; 2:33; 3:4; 4:14; 8:6; 9:8, 9; 12:9; 13:11, 40; 27:12; 28:26; Ro 7:23-+; Ro 8:24, 25-+; Ro 11:8-+, Ro 11:10-+; 1Co 1:26; 3:10; 8:9; 10:12, 18; 13:12; 16:10; 2Co 4:18; 7:8; 10:7; 12:6; Gal 5:15; Ep 5:15-+; Php 3:2-+; Col 2:5-+, Col 2:8-+; Col 4:17-+; He 2:9-+; He 3:12-+, He 3:19-+; He 10:25-+; He 11:1-+, He 11:3-+, He 11:7-+; He 12:25-+; Jas 2:22; 2Jn 1:8; Rev 1:11-±, Re 1:12-±; Re 3:18-±; Re 5:3, 4-±; Re 9:20-±; Re 11:9-±; Re 16:15-±; Re 17:8-±; Re 18:9-±, Re 18:18-±; Re 22:8-±.

**Blepo** - 109x in 98v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Gen 45:12; 48:10; Exod 4:11; 23:8; Num 21:20; Deut 4:34; 28:32, 34; 29:3; Josh 18:14; Jdg 9:36; 13:19f; 19:30; 1 Sam 3:2; 4:15; 9:9, 11, 18; 16:4; 25:35; 26:12; 2 Sam 14:24; 1 Kgs 1:48; 12:24; 17:23; 2 Kgs 2:19; 9:17; 1 Chr 9:22; 21:3; 29:29; 2 Chr 4:4; 5:9; 10:16; Neh 2:17; Esth 2:15; 5:1; Ps 9:32, 35; 39:13; 68:24; Prov 4:25; 12:13; 16:25; Eccl 8:16; 11:4, 7; 12:3; Song 1:6; Job 10:4; Amos 8:2; Hag 2:3; Zech 4:2; 5:2; Isa 6:9; 8:22; 21:3; 29:18; 38:14; 44:18; Jer 5:21; 20:18; 49:2; Lam 3:1; Ezek 8:3, 14; 9:2; 11:1; 12:2; 13:3, 6; 40:6, 19ff, 32, 40, 44ff; 42:7f, 15f; 43:1f, 4, 17; 44:1; 46:1, 12, 19; 47:1f; Dan 3:55.

**TDNT** comments on the use of blepo in the Septuagint - In the main the Hebrew original is the same as for horāō. Ability to see is mostly in view, including ability to perceive. God is the subject in Ps. 10:11. Prophetic vision is at issue in Am. 8:2; Zech. 4:2; 5:2. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#) )

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**Riches Obscure Need of Heaven** - For his first sermon in an elementary preaching class, Lawrence, an African student, chose a text describing the joys we'll share when Christ returns and ushers us to our heavenly home. "I've been in the United States for several months now," he began. "I've seen the great wealth that is here—the fine homes and cars and clothes. I've listened to many sermons in churches here, too. But I've yet to hear one sermon about heaven. Because everyone has so much in this country, no one preaches about heaven. People here don't seem to need it. In my country most people have very little, so we preach on heaven all the time. We know how much we need it."

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**Worldliness, Distraction Of Worldliness** (Or Looking at the Things Which are Visible) - SOME time ago, I was on Fifth Avenue walking and paused to look at a lifelike mannequin in a store window. I quickly realized that she wasn't a mannequin because she blinked. She almost fooled me though because everything else about her was stationary. Other people began gathering in front of the window and they attempted to get her to break her concentration. People were making faces, making fun of her, knocking on the window, and just doing everything they could to get her to move. But she held her ground. There was something more important than pleasing folk on the other side of the glass. What was more important was pleasing her employer, who was paying her to stand at that window. **For you to live a focused life, a life untouched by worldliness, you are going to have to ignore the folks on the other side of the glass.** ([Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations](#)).

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**Homily from Pulpit Commentary** - Observe: 1. That there are things invisible to the bodily eye that can be seen by the soul. There are two classes of invisible things: (1) those that are essentially invisible, such as thoughts, spirits, God; and (2) those that are contingently invisible, such as those things that are visible in their nature, but, through minuteness, distance, or some other cause, are at present invisible. It is to the first of these that the apostle refers—things that are essentially invisible to the bodily eye. The soul can see thoughts, moral intelligences, and the great God. 2. That the things that can be seen only by the soul are not temporal, but eternal. We talk about the everlasting mountains, eternal sun, etc.; but there is nothing that is seen is lasting—all is passing away. Moral truths are imperishable; spiritual existences are immortal; God is eternal; these are things belonging to a kingdom that cannot be moved. 3. That the things that are seen only by the soul are the things that, if realized, will make this mortal life issue in transcendent good. ([The pulpit commentary - Homily](#))

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**Another Homily** - Be not much concerned about the things of this life. (2Co 4:18.) These are perishing. The imperishable are our better portion. Look not at the things which are seen; they are not worth looking at. "Set your affection on things above" (Col. 3:2.) 3. Look at things unseen by the carnal sense, but clear to faith's vision. (2Co 4:18.) God, Christ, holiness, usefulness, spiritual joys, the

Homily entitled...

## "Seeing the unseen"

### I. The habit of mind here described.

The apostle speaks, not of an act or effort, but of a steady mental habit which he had formed—an intentness of regard in a particular direction (**Ed**: As emphasized by "look" is in the present tense = continuous action). He describes it in a form that sounds paradoxical, but the thing meant is well known to all experimental (experiential) Christians. The things **seen** and **not seen** in this passage are not the visible and invisible by mortal eyes, as in Ro 1:20. The things not seen in the verse before us are so, not because they cannot be seen, but because the time has not yet come for their manifestation. The things seen, from which Paul turned away his eyes, were the toils and afflictions endured by him as a servant of Christ. The things not seen were the rewards of faithful service at the coming of the Lord—the “weight of glory.”

And the habit here indicated is that of looking off from labours and sufferings to the glorious appearing of the Lord, and the bright “recompense of reward.” It is the highest form of looking on the cheerful side of things. As this is a habit, it must be formed by degrees and by reiterated efforts. By bending the mind as much as we can towards the future with Christ, we must train it to habitual expectation and desire. (**Ed**: Note that 1 in 20 verses in the NT speaks directly or indirectly of the **Second Coming**, so clearly God seeks to continually draw out attention to the unseen eternity which will be culminate in Christ's return).

### II. The reason assigned for forming this habit.

“For the things which are seen are,” etc. Paul reflected that “the sufferings of the present time” were, after all, of short continuance. The affliction he endured was only for a moment as compared with the eternity before him. So he felt that he would outlive and triumph over all his trials. They were temporal, and so could not reach into the life beyond or mar the hope laid up for him in heaven. Was not this the way with the Divine Master himself? For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. And so should all who are his bear the cross and endure patiently, because the time will not be long and the things not seen are eternal.

### III. The benefits which accompany or flow from this habit when formed.

#### 1. Elevation of the tone of life.

Life is as its motives are; and the motives come from the convictions, fears, and hopes that are strongest in the mind. A superficial religion has not power enough to cleanse the heart or ennoble the principles of conduct. But a formed habit of regarding the things eternal as those to which we hasten must raise and refine the character. “Every one who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.” (1Jn 3:3-+) And this is no selfish hope, no egotistical ambition. It is the hope of being crowned along with all who love his appearing (2Ti 4:8), and of being rewarded along with all the faithful servants of the King.

#### 2. Consolation in hardship and adversity.

Even when a lamp is not near enough to cast a clear light on our path, it is cheering to see it in a murky night; and so are we comforted as we look for the glory with Christ. We move towards it over ever so rugged a path. We steer towards it over ever so restless a sea. If we look at the things which are seen, the waves and the threatening rocks, we lose strength and courage; but with the eye fixed on the light of that blessed hope, we make straight for the harbor.

#### 3. Preparation for departure hence.

It is appointed to men to die. To take no thought about this appointment, and to occupy the mind with only the things that are seen, forgetting their transience, is to play the part of a fool. The wise man is he who, while fulfilling the duties of the passing time, looks much and steadily into the future, and so, when he departs, goes, not into regions unknown, but to the Saviour, whom he has loved and served, to wait with him and with all the saints for the resurrection and the glory.—F. ([The pulpit commentary](#))

- **for**: Mt 25:46 Lev 16:25,26 2Th 2:16 1Jn 2:16,17,25
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For the things which are seen are temporal**- temporary, transitory, phantasmal, passing

**Temporal** (4340) (**proskairos** from **pros** = for, toward + **kairos** = an opportune time) means literally **for a season** and just like a season comes and goes, so **proskairos** conveys that sense (of that which is passing, temporary). The idea of **proskairos** is that which lasts for only for a short or limited time (= temporary, transient). It follows that **proskairos** is the direct opposite of that which is eternal or everlasting. In a secular Greek religious writing we read "behold, all the property of my father P. is transitory and **evanescent** (tending to vanish like vapor = **proskairos**), but the bounties of your inheritance, Lord, are incorruptible and eternal" In the letter of Diogenes, **proskairos** is used to describe the fire of persecution as **proskairos** or only for a short time (unlike Jesus' description in Mt 25:41, 46). In another secular use **proskairos** described a person as one who "lasts only a little while (**proskairos**)". **Proskairos** is the exact antithesis of **aionios** (eternal). **Proskairos** is used only 3 other times in the NT (no uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint)...

Matthew 13:21+ (20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy) yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only **temporary**, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

**Comment:** How tragic to have such a seemingly positive reception, which proves to be only emotional and not volitional (a choice of the will). This individual hears what seems to be a happy release from his troubles and fears, and so receives Christ immediately and joyfully. But there is no root and no foundation, for his purely experiential faith (profession but not "possession"). This individual feels good about it for a while, but salvation does not come through feelings. Note that the unbelieving world does not persecute the believer because of his or her joyful feelings but because of the Living Word and Christ in them. Emotional professors who have no grounding in the solid truth of the Word, cannot resist attacks by unbelievers.

Mark 4:17+ (Context = Mk 4:16) and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only **temporary** (quick to sprout, quick to stumble); then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

**A T Robertson comments:** What a picture of some converts in our modern revivals. They drop away overnight because they did not have the root of the matter in them. This man does not last or hold out.

Hebrews 11:25+ (MOSES) choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the **passing** pleasures of sin

**Comment:** Oh, how we need to meditate on this truth, that we might **pass over** the temptation to gratify ourselves with **passing** pleasure. How easily we give in to the temporal to the detriment of the eternal!

A worldly person lives for the passing, polluting pleasures of the flesh (cf 2Pe 1:4b+), but a dedicated Christian lives for the present and eternal joys of the Spirit. A worldly believer lives for what he can see, the lust of the eyes, but a spiritual believer lives for the unseen realities of God (2 Cor. 4:8-18)

**THOUGHT** - Father, please give every saint reading this note Spirit enabled eternal vision for the sake of the glory of Your great Name in Christ. Amen.

**Things not seen are eternal** - The underscores the fact that eternity is not a mere extension of time, but a condition qualitatively different from time. The "**things... eternal**" exist as much now as they will ever do. The implication is that while we cannot see the invisible with our physical eye, the eye of faith (2Co 5:7) allows us to see what the physical eye is incapable of seeing.

**Broomall** writes "Eternity is the everlasting now; we live in the midst of it, although we cannot see it. In the glorified state we shall know fully (cf. 1 Cor 13:12) and see fully ( Cf. 1 Jn 3:2). Now we walk by faith. ([Wycliffe Bible Commentary online 2 Corinthians 4](#))

All believers need to seek to maintain the holy heavenly attitude that **Moses** possessed (and which "possessed" Moses!)...

Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; (Hebrews 11:25+)

considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

(Hebrews 11:26+)

By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he **endured** (remained strong, steadfast, firm, able to endure, hold out and bear the burden), as seeing Him who is unseen. (Hebrews 11:27+)

**Comment:** Moses did not fear the visible king because he saw the Invisible One. This verse also provides a nice segue to the writer's exhortation in Hebrews 12 to **fix our eyes on Jesus** (Who we have not seen with physical eyes but with spiritual eyes as we read of Him in the Word - see Heb 12:2+) (See Ro 1:20+ for an interesting aspect of seeing the invisible - men saw the attributes of God in creation but refused to "accept" them, instead rejecting and even exchanging truth for a lie Ro 1:25+) - Moses saw He Who is unseen and unknowable apart from His gracious revelation (believers today have His full written revelation) because Moses was obedient to His call... he was pure in heart and thus he saw God.

Faith leaves Egypt (the things which are seen are temporal), does not fear the wrath of the prince of the power of the air and demonstrates the reality of this conviction by holding out against afflictions and persecutions for His Name's sake, enabled to do so because He has given that person a vision of eternity and the Eternal One (the things which are not seen are eternal).

As believers we need to remember that according to Paul in a mystical way I cannot fully comprehend we as believers are already seated in heaven, a position which should facilitate our vision of the invisible eternal things...

and raised us up with Him, and **seated us with Him in the heavenly places**, in Christ Jesus (Ep 2:6+)

**John Piper** emphasizes the importance of the Gospel in "seeing the unseen" writing that "The parallels between this text (2Co 4:16-18) and 2 Corinthians 3:18 are instructive. Being "**renewed day by day**" (2Co 4:16) is part of being "**transformed ... from one degree of glory to another.**" And looking "**to the things that are unseen**" includes "**beholding the glory of the Lord**"—because "**the glory of the Lord**" in Paul's mind is in the category of "**things that are not seen**" by the ordinary physical eye. Seeing the unseen glory of Christ in the Gospel is the key to inner transformation from day to day and from glory to glory. (Excerpts from Chapter 6 on page 87 - read the entire chapter for an insightful discussion of sanctification - [God Is the Gospel Meditations on God's Love as the Gift of Himself - download](#))

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**The need for eternal vision** - Often when people get a little discouraged about what they are getting done, it helps them to step back and get a broader perspective. We have become too spiritually nearsighted, and living in a world of "instant everything" has robbed us of the perspective of time. Time has a way of reversing judgments, and eternity has a way of telling us what was valuable and what was permanent and exposing that which was temporary and useless. ([K L Chafin - The Preacher's Commentary Volume 30- 1, 2 Corinthians](#))

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**Andrew Murray** contrasts vision of the visible and invisible - And these three are one in root and essence. The spirit of this world is, that man makes himself his own end: he makes himself the central point of the world: all creation, so far as he has power over it, must serve him; he seeks his life in the visible. This is the spirit of the world: to seek one's self and the visible. (John 5:44) And the Spirit of Jesus: to live not for one's self and not for the visible, but for God and the things that are invisible. (2Cor. 4:18; 5:7, 15) ([The New Life - Chapter 40 = Conformity to the World](#))

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**Clear Vision** - A MAN was getting his windshield washed and wiped at the filling station. When the attendant finished doing his windshield, the man said, "Terrible job! Redo my windshield. That windshield's as dirty as when you started."

The filling station attendant wiped it again.

The man in the car looked it over, and then in frustration said, "My goodness! Can't you even clean a windshield? This window has not changed."

The attendant did it again.

The man's wife was sitting next to him in the car, fuming. She reached over, pulled off his glasses, wiped them, and gave them back to him. The attendant had been doing his job correctly. The man himself was the problem all along. ([Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations](#)).

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**Charles Simeon** ([biography](#)) describes the spiritually minded (in Ro 8:6)...

Happy they who are of this description! Let such adore the grace that has caused them to differ from others. Let them endeavor to improve in spirituality of mind; let them guard against relapses, which will destroy their

peace (**Ed:** and joy); and let their eyes be fixed upon the eternal state, where their present bliss shall be consummated in glory. (**Ed:** Hallelujah! Amen!) ([from Romans 8:6 The Carnal and Spiritual Mind Contrasted](#))

**Charles Simeon** speaks of eternal vision...

**To a man who has heaven in his eye,  
nothing is impossible.**

Behold Moses, when at the summit of human grandeur and power: an alternative was before him, “to suffer affliction with the people of God, or to enjoy the pleasures” and honours of the court of Pharaoh: and which did he prefer? He chose “the reproach of Christ, esteeming it to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” And what guided him to this strange decision? it was hope; “he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” (He 11:24, 25, 26-+) In like manner St. Paul “pressed forward with incessant ardour in his heavenly course, forgetting what was behind, and reaching forward to what was before.” (Php 3:13-+) And, if we inquire into the principle which animated him to such exertions, we shall find that it was precisely that which is mentioned in our text,—the hope and prospect of securing “the prize of his high calling.” (Php 3:14-+) We may even say that our blessed Lord himself, as a man, was actuated by the same divine principle; since it was “for the joy that was set before him, that he endured the cross and despised the shame, and rested not till he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (He 12:2-+) And we too, if we would “run our race with patience,” (He 12:1-+) must imitate him in this respect; we must keep our eye steadily fixed on him, and continue without intermission “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:13-+) Then shall we “be steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,” when we are convinced in our mind, “that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” ([Romans 8:24, 25 The Office of Hope](#))

**Keep your eye fixed on heaven,  
as your home**

**What would ever divert your steps, or retard them for an instant, if you contemplated, as you ought, the blessedness that awaits you at the close of your journey?** To be in your Father’s house, in the very mansion prepared for you; yea, and in the very bosom of that Saviour, who went, as your forerunner, to prepare it—to have all your trials for ever terminated, and all your dangers for ever past, and all your labours for ever closed; and to have nothing but an eternity of bliss, such as no words can express, no imagination can conceive—what joy will you feel in the retrospect, what exultation in the prospect, and, above all, what recollections as arising from the stupendous mystery of redemption, whereby the whole has been accomplished for you! Set before you this prize; and then tell me, whether you will ever need any thing to carry you forward in your heavenly course. Truly, the contemplation of that glory will swallow up every thing else, even as the stars of heaven are eclipsed by the meridian sun. Joys will be no joys, and sorrows no sorrows—I mean, not worth being so accounted—if only you keep heaven in your view: for neither the comforts “nor the sufferings of this present life are worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Ro 8:18-+) Moses (He 11:24, 25, 26-+), and Paul (Acts 20:24), and all the saints (He 11:35-+), yea, and even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, were animated by this thought: and, if it fully possess your mind, you can never faint, nor ever come short of the rest that remains for you (2Pe 1:10,11-+). ([Saints Strangers on Earth](#))

**Charles Simeon** has some thoughts about whether we are looking for the visible temporal or the invisible eternal...

The thoughts will naturally be fixed on the objects that are best suited to the reigning principle: to these objects they recur with frequency, fervor, and complacency. If we be under the dominion of a carnal principle, we shall be thinking of some pleasure, profit, honour, or other worldly vanity: if we be led by a spiritual principle, God, and Christ, and the concerns of the soul, will occupy the mind. Whatever we most esteem, we desire it when absent, hope for if it be attainable, love the means of attaining it, and rejoice in it when secured. If there be danger of losing it, we fear; we hate the means that would deprive us of it; and if it be lost, we grieve. The carnal mind is thus exercised about carnal objects: the spiritual mind is thus exercised about spiritual objects. Hence that caution given us with respect to the affections—The principles will yet further influence our aims and ends of action—A carnal man can only act from carnal motives: he will have carnal aims even in spiritual employments. A spiritual man, on the contrary, will act from spiritual motives: he will act with spiritual views even in his temporal concerns. The one will seek his own interest or honour, and the other God’s glory. ([The Carnal and Spiritual Mind Contrasted](#))

**Keep your eyes steadily fixed on your eternal inheritance**—The man who is in a race keeps his mind fixed,



as it were, upon the prize; which he is determined, if possible, to obtain. Do ye in like manner keep in view the prize of your high calling; and “have respect, even as Moses had, to the recompense of the reward.” In the prospect of heaven, every trial will appear light, every effort be accounted easy. What we may meet with in life, or whether we shall ever behold each other’s face again in this world, God alone knows. But let us live for God, and for eternity: let us live, as we shall wish we had lived, when we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive our eternal doom. Let us go forward in the path of duty, assured, that the rest which awaits us will richly repay our labours, and the crown of righteousness our conflicts. ([A Farewell Discourse](#))

## A W Pink

Faith overcomes the world thirdly, by occupying the soul with more glorious, soul-delighting and satisfying objects. We often hear and see 2 Corinthians 4:16 or 17 quoted—but rarely the explanatory words which follow. The daily renewing of the inner man and our afflictions working for us an eternal weight of glory are qualified by: “While we look not at the things which are seen—but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). The more the substance of the heavenly world engages the heart, the less hold will the shadows of this earthly world have upon it. Thus, faith wrought in the saints of old: “You accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions” (Hebrews 10:34). “By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:9-10). ([Faith as an Overcomer](#))

Faith looks within the veil, and so has a mighty influence to support the soul in time of trial. **He who walks in the light of Eternity** goes calmly and happily along through the mists and fogs of time; neither the frowns of men nor the blandishments of the world affect him, for he has a ravishing and affecting sight of the glorious Inheritance to which he is journeying. (An exposition of The Faith of Abraham Hebrews 11:17).

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen” (2 Cor. 4:17, 18)... is the language of joyous anticipation. No matter how dark may the clouds which now cover thy horizon, ere long the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. (An exposition of Hebrews - Divine Chastisement Hebrews 12:7)

**Faith** is a looking not at the things which are seen, but a looking “at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:18)—strange paradox to the natural man! (Gleanings in Exodus - Crossing the Red Sea)

**The principle of grace received at the new birth not only inclines its possessor to love God and to act in faith upon His Word, but it also disposes him to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen”** (2Co 4:17, 18), inclining his aspirations away from the present toward his glorious future. Thomas Manton aptly declares, “The new nature was made for another world: it came from thence, and it carrieth the soul thither.” Hope is an assured expectation of future good. While faith is in exercise, a vista of unclouded bliss is set before the heart, and hope enters into the enjoyment of the same. It is a living hope exercised within a dying environment, and it both supports and invigorates all of us who believe. While in healthy activity, hope not only sustains amid the trials of this life but lifts us above them. Oh, for hearts to be more engaged in joyous anticipations of the future! For such hopeful hearts will quicken us to duty and stimulate us to perseverance. In proportion to the intelligence and strength of our hope will we be delivered from the fear of death. (A guide to fervent prayer - The Great Interests of the Regenerate Soul)

**Eternal** (166) (**aionios** from **aion**) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute). **Thayer** summarizes ...Without end, never to cease, everlasting: **Eternal** describes a number of entities in the NT -- **kingdom** = 2Pe 1:11, **glory** = 2Co 4:17 2Ti 2:10, 1Pe 5:10; **inheritance** = He 9:15; **redemption** = He 9:12; **comfort** = 2Th 2:16; **dwelling places** = Lk 16:9, 2Co 5:1; **salvation** = He 5:9; **punishment** = Mt 25:46; **destruction** = 2Th 1:9; **judgment** = He 6:2; sin = Mk 3:29).

**A W Pink** on **aionios** - The connections in which the Holy Spirit has employed the word **aionios** leave no room whatever for any uncertainty of its meaning in the mind of an impartial investigator. That word occurs not only in such expressions as “eternal destruction” “everlasting fire,” “everlasting punishment,” but also in “life eternal” (Mt. 25:46), “eternal salvation” (He. 5:9), “eternal glory” (1Pe 5:10); and most assuredly they are timeless. Still more decisively, it is linked with the subsistence of Deity: “the everlasting God” (Rom. 16:26). Again, the force and scope of the word are clearly seen in the fact that it is antithetical to what is of limited duration: “the things which are seen are **temporal**; but the things which are not seen are **eternal**” (2Cor. 4:18). Now it is obvious that if the temporal things lasted forever there could be no contrast between them and the things which are eternal. Equally



certain is it that if eternal things be only "age long" they differ not essentially from temporal ones. The contrast between the temporal and the eternal is as real and as great as between the things "seen and unseen." (interpretation of the scriptures)

Alpha, Omega—our God we proclaim,  
**Eternal**, unchanging, always the same;  
He's the beginning and He is the end,  
He is our Savior, our Lord, and our Friend. —Fitzhugh

**For time and for eternity,  
Jesus is all we need.**

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**Illustration** - Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we realize these three truths, we will not let trifles trouble us, nor be interested so much in the passing pageants of the hour. We would live, as we do not now, for the permanent and eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

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**Illustration** - Over the entrance of Thornbury Castle there is a scroll upon which is inscribed '*Doresenevant*.' This is an old French word which means "*Henceforward*," or "*Hereafter*." The builder was Duke of Buckingham, who in this manner expressed his hopes with regard to the English crown. As believers we may truly joyously say "*Hereafter*," and it should be our watch word which energizes and encourages us to endure the period of waiting for His kingdom to come and the day when we too shall be crowned but not with a temporal earthly crown but with an eternal heavenly crown.

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**Lloyd-Jones** says "the business of the Bible is to assert the reality of the **unseen**. Not only that, the Bible asserts the primacy, the all-importance, of the unseen. (Courageous Christianity)

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**MacDonald** comments that the things not seen "might include the glory of Christ, the blessing of one's fellow men, and the reward that awaits the faithful servant of Christ at the Judgment Seat. **Jowett** comments:

To be able to see the first is sight; to be able to see the second is insight. The first mode of vision is natural, the second mode is spiritual. The primary organ in the first discernment is intellect; the primary organ in the second discernment is faith ... All through the Scriptures this contrast between sight and insight is being continually presented to us, and everywhere we are taught to measure the meagerness and stinginess of the one, and set it over the fulness and expansiveness of the other. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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**Illustration** - In old age, Pierre Auguste, the great French painter, suffered from arthritis, which twisted and cramped his hand. Henri Matisse, his artists friend, watched sadly while Renoir, grasping a brush with only his fingertips, continued to paint, even though each movement caused stabbing pain. One day, Matisse asked Renoir why he persisted in painting at the expense of such torture. Renoir replied, "The pain passes, but the beauty remains." - He had his eyes on something other than his pain. He saw the goal.

**Those who fix their eyes on heaven  
will not be distracted by the things of earth.**

**Charles Simeon** on looking at "**things which are seen**" versus looking at "**things which are not seen**"...

It was by faith that he attained this blessed state: and if, like him, we cultivate that heavenly principle, and take it as the spring and source of all our conduct, we shall find it productive of similar blessedness in our souls. It is, in truth, this principle, which above all others distinguishes the true Christian from every other person under heaven...

**He fixes his eye, not on things visible and temporal,  
but on things invisible and eternal**

... Faith is opposed to sight, and has respect entirely to things which are beyond the reach of mortal eyes.

**It looks upon an unseen God**; even as Moses did, who feared not the wrath of Pharaoh, because "he saw him that is invisible." This great and adorable Being it beholds, and contemplates all his glorious perfections. It sees all his mind and will in the book of revelation: it recognizes his superintending providence in all events: it

regards him as inspecting continually the most hidden recesses of our souls, and noting every thing in the book of his remembrance in order to a future judgment.

**Faith also views an unseen Saviour** as the supreme object of his people's love, and the only foundation of all their hopes. It beholds him dying for their sins, and rising again for their justification: yea, it sees him interceding for them at the right hand of God, and preserving for them that peace which by their sins and infirmities they would soon forfeit. It enters into the whole of the Saviour's work and offices, surveying them in all their extent and variety; and particularly regards him as the fountain of life to all his people; as having in himself all fulness of spiritual blessings treasured up for them, and imparting to them continually out of that fulness according to their several necessities.

**Faith views an unseen heaven also.** It soars and penetrates into the very paradise of God, and surveys the crowns and kingdoms which God has there prepared for all that love him. There it beholds that glorious tabernacle which the soul shall inhabit as soon as this earthly house shall be dissolved: and in the promises recorded in the written word, it sees the possession of that glory assured to every believing soul, assured by an everlasting covenant, and by the oath of a "God that cannot lie."

Such are the objects of faith! and such the objects on which the Christian's eye is continually fixed!

By these he regulates the whole of his life and conversation—These are the things which draw forth his regards; and in comparison of these all earthly things are but as dung and dross. For these he sighs, and groans, and weeps, and strives: to obtain an interest in them is more to him than ten thousand worlds. Whatever will endanger the loss of these, he flees from, as from the face of a serpent: and whatever has a tendency to secure his interest in them, he labours incessantly to perform. In these all his affections centre: his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, all terminate in these: and, in exact proportion as he is enabled by faith to realize and apprehend these, he is happy. In a word, "he walks by faith:" and every step he takes is under the influence of that principle.

Faith is to the Christian what the compass is to the mariner in the trackless ocean: under all circumstances he consults its testimony, and follows its directions: and, in so doing, he fears not but that in due time he shall arrive at his destined haven.

This was the character of the Apostle Paul: and it is the character of every true Christian under heaven: "the life which he now lives in the flesh, he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him?" ... there is no comparison between the wisdom of walking by faith or of being actuated by sight.

The principle of faith is, More exalted in its objects—The objects of sense are all poor, and mean, and worthless. Take all that eye ever saw, or ear heard, or heart conceived; and it would not weigh against one glimpse of the Saviour's glory, or one taste of his love. Besides, it is all transient and of very short duration. But think of Almighty God and his covenant of grace; think of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the wonders of redeeming love; think of heaven, and all its glory and blessedness; and then say, which are most deserving of our regard? In attaching ourselves to the one, we degrade ourselves to the state of unenlightened heathens... but by living wholly with a reference to the latter, we emulate, as it were, the glorified saints and angels. The one is as high above the other, as the heavens are above the earth...

### **EARTHLY THINGS...** **A SHADOW, A DELUSION**

Earthly things may dazzle us with their glare and glitter: but they are all a lie, a cheat, a shadow, a delusion: there is no substance in them. With whatever confidence we press forward for the attainment of them, the more they disappoint our endeavours: and, when we think we have secured thee prize, we no sooner stretch out our hands to lay hold on it, than it eludes our grasp: or, if we apprehend the object of our desires, it proves to us no better than vanity and vexation of spirit.

**But was ever any one deceived in apprehending the realities of the eternal world? Did ever any one who sought them by faith, fail in the pursuit of them, or find them, when attained, below his expectation?** No truly: it is justly said by the Lord Jesus Christ under the character of wisdom, "I cause them that love me to inherit substance:" and every promise that makes over these things to the believing soul, is as immutable as God himself...

The tendency of visible things is to sensualize and debase the soul: but the effect of heavenly things is to purify and exalt it. The more we contemplate the Divine Being, the more shall we be transformed into his blessed image (cp 2Co 3:18). The more we exercise faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, the more will grace, and

mercy, and peace be multiplied unto us. The more we breathe the atmosphere of heaven, the more shall we be fitted for the everlasting enjoyment of it. "Every man that has such hopes in him, purifies himself just as He is pure" (1Jn 3:3) and the very promises by which he apprehends them, lead him to "cleanse himself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God." (2Co 7:1) Truly "by these he becomes a partaker of the divine nature," (2Pe 1:4) and is progressively "changed into the divine image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God." (2Co 3:18)

### **THE WHOLE WORLD... A MERE PHANTOM**

What does he possess who has the whole world at his command? A mere phantom: and, if he look for any solid happiness from it, he will find, that he has only "filled his belly with the east wind." But who can describe the happiness of him, who, by faith, has already in his soul "the substance of things hoped for, as well as the evidence of things not seen?" (He 11:1) Who can declare the blessedness of him, who has God for his Father, Christ for his Saviour, the Holy Spirit for his Comforter, and heaven for his home? This man lives on "angels' food." He has grapes of Eshcol already by the way: he stands on Pisgah's top, surveying in all its length and breadth the land of promise: he has already an earnest and foretaste of the heavenly bliss: and, when he goes hence, he will change neither his company nor his employment: he is already dwelling in, and with, his God; and tuning his harp ready to join the choirs above, as soon as ever his attendant angels shall have received their commission to bear him hence...

We thank our God that there are a goodly number of you who have learned to estimate things by their relation to eternity. O beg of God to "turn off your eyes from beholding vanity, and to quicken your souls in his way."

**Pray to him to "increase your faith," that your discernment of unseen things may be more clear, your enjoyment of them more rich, your improvement of them more uniform and abiding.**

Pray that your faith may be more and more influential on the whole of your life and conversation: and strive, in dependence on the Spirit of God, to walk more and more "worthy of your high calling." Paul, in his most assured prospects of glory, "laboured, that, whether present in the body, or absent from it, he might be accepted of the Lord." Do ye in this respect follow his example: "not setting your affections on any thing here below," but "having your citizenship altogether in heaven, from whence you look for the Lord Jesus Christ" "to come and take you to Himself," that you may "be with him, and like him "for ever. ([The Christian Walking by Faith](#))

**Charles Simeon** - Eternal life is that prize which is set before (the Christian runner in 1Ti 6:12). The conquerors in the Grecian games had only a corruptible crown for their reward; but the victorious Christian has "a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." (1Co 9:25+) Yes, "this is the promise that God has promised us, even eternal life." (1Jn 2:25) To this "he is called;" and with nothing short of this should he be content. Let us, then, ever keep this in view—The sight of the prize held out to them (the runners in the earthly games), animated, no doubt, the people that were engaged in the various contests. **And shall not the hope of eternal life encourage us? What could withstand us, if we kept that steadily in view? What could for a moment fascinate our minds, or what prevail to damp our ardour in the pursuit of it?** In vain would the world offer its delights, or menace us with its displeasure: in vain would our corrupt appetites plead for a momentary indulgence, or Satan endeavour to beguile us with any promises whatever. If our eyes were only fixed habitually on the glory of heaven, we should prove as victorious as Moses himself, when "he refused to become the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

**Thomas Doolittle** (1630-1707) wisely warns us "How we eye eternity—which makes men eternally miserable or everlastingly blessed, should have a powerful influence upon every step we take in our daily travels to the unseen, eternal world—to look at unseen, eternal evil things, that we might not fall into them—to look at unseen, eternal good things, that we might not fall short of them. Which is the design of the question propounded from this text; namely, How we should eye eternity, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we do. We must look at eternal things that are unseen with an eye that also is unseen; namely, with an eye of knowledge, faith, love, desire, hope. While we have a certain knowledge of unseen, eternal things, a firm belief of them, fervent love unto them, ardent desires after them, lively hope and patient expectation of them—we faint not in all our tribulations.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Dr. A.W. Tozer used to remind us that the invisible world described in the Bible was the only "real world." If we would only see the visible world the way God wants us to see it, we would never be attracted by what it offers (1Jn 2:15+ , 1Jn 2:16+, 1Jn 2:17+). The great men and women of faith, mentioned in Hebrews 11, achieved what they did because they "saw the invisible" (He 11:10, 13, 14+, He 11:27+). The things of this world seem so real because we can see them and feel them; but they are all temporal and destined to pass away. Only the eternal things of the spiritual life will last. Again, we must not press this truth into extremes and think that "material" and "spiritual" oppose each other. When we use the material in God's will, He transforms it

into the spiritual, and this becomes a part of our treasure in heaven. (More on this in 2Co 8–9.) We value the material because it can be used to promote the spiritual, and not for what it is in itself. How can you look at things that are invisible? By faith, when you read the Word of God. We have never seen Christ or heaven, yet we know they are real because the Word of God tells us so. Faith is “the evidence of things not seen” (He 11:1-+). Because Abraham looked for the heavenly city, he separated himself from Sodom; but Lot chose Sodom because he walked by sight and not by faith (Gen. 13; He 11:10-+). Of course, the unsaved world thinks we are odd—perhaps even crazy—because we insist on the reality of the invisible world of spiritual blessing. Yet Christians are content to govern their lives by eternal values, not temporal prices. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Robert Morgan** adds that “We are inwardly renewed because we are upwardly focused. We see that which is invisible. What is Paul referring to? Paul is thinking about our everlasting life. Let’s read verse 18 again, then keep going, remembering that the chapter divisions were not in the original....while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He’s talking about our resurrection bodies, about our eternal life, about the New Jerusalem with its streets of gold and shining crystal river, which we looked at a few months ago.

**David Guzik** - Paul was saying this especially about his own life and ministry. In the world's eyes, Paul's life was an incredible failure. At the height of a career that would reach much higher, he left it all for a life of hardship, suffering and persecution, with eventual martyrdom. But Paul recognized that the world only sees the outward, not the unseen eternal things. When we look at the things which are seen, all we see is our light affliction, and it doesn't look very light then! But when we look at the things which are not seen, then we see and appreciate the eternal weight of glory. Paul isn't saying that all afflictions automatically produce glory. It is possible to allow suffering to destroy us, and to let affliction make us bitter, miserable, and self-focused. But if we will look to the things which are not seen, then our affliction will work in us an eternal weight of glory. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**James Lias** ([Cambridge Bible Commentary](#)) - The Christian habitually views all that comes before him from the standpoint of the invisible world, which is revealed to him by the Spirit from within. See 1Co 2:9, 10, 13; 1Jn 4:5, 6. Also He 11:1. (Seen... temporal) Rather, temporary, i. e. they last, and are intended to last, but a season. (Not seen... eternal) Here was the secret of the Apostle's confidence. The invisible truths of which he was persuaded, which lay at the root of the Resurrection of Christ, and therefore of the moral strength he felt within him and was enabled to impart to others, rested upon no uncertain basis, but upon the unchangeable Will of the Eternal God. See notes on 2Co 1:19, 10. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

The things of this world, have their day and cease to be; the things that are unseen, the things of heaven, last forever.

**A T Robertson** commenting on Heb 11:27 writes that “seeing him who is invisible... is the secret of his choice and of his loyalty to God and to God's people. This is the secret of loyalty in any minister today who is the interpreter of God to man ([2 Corinthians 4](#))”

**William Barclay** “There are two ways of looking at life. We can look at it as a slow but inexorable journey away from God. Wordsworth in his Ode on the Intimations of Immortality had the idea that when a child came into this world he had some memory of heaven which the years slowly took away from him.

“Trailing clouds of glory do we come,”

but,

“Shades of the prison house begin to close  
About the growing boy.”

And in the end the man is earthbound and heaven is forgotten. Thomas Hood wrote with wistful pathos:

“I remember, I remember  
The fir-trees dark and high.  
I used to think their slender spires  
Were close against the sky.  
It was a childish ignorance  
But now ‘tis little joy  
To know, I’m farther off from heaven  
Than when I was a boy.”

If we think only of the things that are visible we are bound to see life that way. But there is another way. The writer to the Hebrews said of Moses: “He endured as seeing him who is invisible.” (Hebrews 11:27). Robert Louis Stevenson tells of an old byreman. Someone was sympathizing with him about his daily work amidst the muck of the byre and asking him how he could go on doing it day in and day out, and the old man answered, “He that has something ayont (beyond) need never weary.” ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

### Thomas Doolittle

The good things in this world which are seen—such as riches, pleasures, honors—are things of time, and only for time; therefore we Christians are not much concerned whether we win or lose them. And the bad things in this life which are seen—such as poverty, imprisonment, persecution—are at longest but for a short space; and therefore we are not much concerned whether we endure them, or are freed from them.

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18

That which adds weight to the things in the other world, which draws our eyes toward them, and keeps them fixed thereon—is the eternity of them. It is the observation which believers make—that all seen things are temporal; while unseen things are eternal; and this influences them in what they do. They realize that all worldly things are but temporary toys and trifles!

We seriously consider and weigh in our minds—the vanity, insufficiency, and short continuance of all visible things, both good and bad, whether profit or poverty, honor or disgrace; and the fullness, excellency, and everlasting nature of things unseen; and therefore prefer these eternal realities.

Believers are lowly in heart; but they look high. The men of this world are of a haughty spirit; but they aim at low things.

Take, then, a summary account of all that wicked, worldly men have—all is "but for a while." See what the richest among them have: their grandeur endures "but a short time;" and then is past and gone, and has no more existence. See what the merriest among them have—pleasures, mirth, carnal delights and joy: and this is "but for a season;" their merry bouts will be quickly over—and then follows weeping and wailing forever! Upon all they have, you may write, "All is temporal!" They had riches—but they are gone. They had honors and pleasures—but they are gone. They had many good things in time—but, at the end of time, all have an end! And then, when their endless misery comes, this will be their doleful tune, "All our good is past and gone!"

It would make a man to tremble, to think what a sight these sinners shall have, after death has closed their eyes; when their soul shall see an angry God, a condemning Judge, the gates of heaven shut against it, and itself in everlasting misery! ([How we should eye eternity, that it may have its due influence upon us in all we do](#))

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### Samuel Davies

Among all the causes of the stupid unconcernedness of sinners about true religion, and the feeble endeavors of saints to improve in it—there is none more common or more effectual, than their not forming a due estimate of the things of time—in comparison to those of eternity!

Our present affairs engross all our thoughts, and exhaust all our activity—though they are but transitory trifles; while the solemn realities of the future world are hid from our eyes by the veil of flesh and the clouds of ignorance. Did these unseen eternal realities break in upon our minds in all their tremendous importance, they would ...

annihilate the most desired vanities of the present state, obscure the glare of all earthly glory, render all its pleasures insipid, and give us a noble resignation under all its sorrows.

A realizing view of these eternal realities, would ... shock the worldling in his thoughtless career, tear off the hypocrite's mask, and inflame the devotion of the languishing saints!

The concern of mankind would then be how they might make a safe exit out of this world—and not how they may live happy in their earthly state. Present pleasure and pain—would be swallowed up in the prospect of everlasting happiness—or misery hereafter! Eternity, solemn eternity, would then be our serious contemplation. The pleasures of sin would strike us with horror—as they issue in eternal pain! And our present afflictions, however tedious and severe, would appear but light and momentary—if they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! ([Unseen Things to Be Preferred to Seen Things](#))

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## WELCOME HOME.

## WELL DONE.

When the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the air, He is going to “WELCOME HOME” every saint, for at that time He shall come to take us home to heaven. Our entrance into heaven is solely on the basis of our faith in His shed blood and death on the cross, and every believer shall receive the same “WELCOME HOME.” But, how many of us will receive His “WELL DONE,” and the “crown of righteousness”? (2Ti 4:8+, Mt 25:21, 23, Lk 19:17+)

**The greatest joy on earth is the sure hope of heaven!**

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A T Pierson has a sermon outline entitled

### The Unseen World

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen—2 Corinthians 4:18.

#### Five golden thoughts are in this paragraph,

2 Corinthians 4:16-18:

**There is a world of the unseen.** Here are the highest verities and realities. Ge 1:1: “In the beginning God.” The Invisible God, infinitely greater than all He made. The things no sense can perceive are the great things. No force is visible. We can see phenomena, but not their cause. Gravitation, light, and heat, electricity, and magnetism; all these are invisible. Life no man ever saw, nor thought, nor desire, nor love.

**There is a sense of the unseen.** Heb 5:14. “We look,” etc. Imagination is the sense of the invisible. Memory is the sense of a vanished past; Hope, of an unseen future; Reason, of truth; Conscience, of right and wrong. These senses may be cultivated and exercised, so as to become far more acute and keen of perception; or dulled and blunted and seared into insensibility.

**There is an experience of the unseen.** “We walk,” etc. Holy men and women have lived in the unseen world and walked with the unseen God. e.g., Pastor Gossner and his mission work—“Ringing only the prayer bell”; George Muller, Hudson Taylor, Quarrier, etc.

**There is an effect of the unseen upon the seer.** “The inward man is renewed.” The tendency of things seen is to exalt the carnal. God gives us the Sabbath to exercise our spiritual senses; so, of the Word of God, to introduce us into hidden mysteries; Prayer, to acquaint us with an unseen God. “Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

**There is an effect of the unseen upon the seen.** Our affliction, however heavy, becomes light in comparison with the eternal weight of glory. Our habit ought to be to weigh every experience in God’s scales, where earthly things weigh light, and heavenly things heavy. Then we should reverse many of our present judgments, and learn to give things their true value.

#### Maxims:

The only things in the universe that can work harm to us or good for us are the unseen forces. Nothing material, visible, tangible, is to be dreaded, nor can it be utilized largely. It is the unseen forces, that lie behind phenomena, that alone represent Power.

Our most valued senses are not the five physical, but the five spiritual: Reason, the sense of truth; Conscience, the sense of right; Imagination, the sense of the invisible; Memory, the sense of the past; Sensibility, the sense of the morally beautiful.

All true estimates depend on comparison. We must learn to measure and weigh by God’s own standards. Worldly things put in heaven’s scales weigh light; heavenly things in worldly scales weigh light—but the latter is a false estimate.

The disciple of Christ is one who lives, sees, walks, in the unseen world. There alone faith reaches her greatest triumphs. And for the sake of our discipline in the power of seeing invisible things, God often constrains us to walk by faith when sight no longer avails.

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## Sam Storms...

Note the connection between 2Co 4:18 and 2Co 4:16. Our "inner person" is being renewed as we look or while we look at the unseen, eternal things of the age to come. In other words, the process of renewal only occurs as the believer looks to things as yet unseen. As we fix the gaze of our hearts on the glorious hope of the age to come, God progressively renews our inner being, notwithstanding the simultaneous decay of our outer being! Point: inner renewal does not happen automatically or mechanically ... it happens only as or provided that we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (v. 18).

Paul is here describing in his own terms the battle for the mind of mankind that has been raging since the beginning. On what shall we set our sights (cf. Col. 3:1-4)? To what shall we give our allegiance? On what shall we meditate and ponder and focus?

One frightening statistic about this battle in our own day is the fact that the average teenager watches 18,000 murders and 35,000 commercials before he/she graduates from high school! Someone has calculated that by the time one reaches the age of 65, he/she will have spent 10 years watching TV! ([2Corinthians 4:1-18](#))

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**Grace Gems** - Reader! let not the poor engrossments of earth eclipse the brightness of this glorious heritage. Seek to be able to say, with one who had heaven ever in his eye, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are NOT seen!" (2Cor. 4:18.) He seems to say, So glorious and out-dazzling are the prospects of coming glory, that they are like the sun extinguishing the candle. The things of earth are not worth looking at—they pale into nothing, when brought side by side with the grandeur of the future. opportunities. The night of earth is "far spent," the day of eternity is close "at hand." Do not forget, it is now or never. In most other earthly things, there are new chances—new experiments; in familiar language, "we can try again." But, once across yonder boundary of time, and an irrevocable seal is stamped on the transactions of the past. The star takes its immutable place in the spiritual skies: "Where the tree falls there it shall be."

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## F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

We are here bidden to look through the things which are seen; to consider them as the glass window through which we pass to that which is behind and beyond. You do not waste your time by admiring the frame or casket of some rare jewel, but penetrate to the jewel itself; so, day by day, look through the material and transient to the eternal purpose, the Divine idea, the deep that lieth under.

"All visible things," said Carlyle, "are emblems. What thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly speaking, is not there at all. Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth." This is an exaggerated way of stating the old saying, "Everything that is, is double." Both, however, illustrate the affirmation of the text.

Look for God's thought in all the incidents, circumstances, and objects of your daily life. Do not stop at the outward; penetrate to the inward and eternal. Beneath that bitter physical suffering there are stores of Divine fortitude and grace. Beneath that trying dispensation there are celestial compensations. Beneath those sweet family ties there are suggestions of love and friendship, which can never grow old or pass away. Beneath the letter of Scripture is the spirit; beneath the ordinance, oneness with the loving Saviour; beneath the world of nature, the processes of the eternal husbandry.

When such is the attitude of the soul, afflictions, that might otherwise have weighed as heavy, become light; and those that drag through long and tedious years, seem but for a moment. And without exception, they all go to produce that receptivity of character that can contain the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

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## F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk-

NOTICE THE marvellous antithesis of this chapter: light and darkness; life and death; pressure, perplexity, pursuit, and persecution; but side by side, victory, elastic hope, and the brightness of Christian faith. The decay of the outward man and the renewal of the inward; the light affliction and the weight of glory; the brief moment of earth's pilgrimage contrasted with the eternity of reality and bliss.

It is very important that we should not miss the mighty blessing which is within the reach of every troubled soul. Of course it is quite possible to sit down before troubles and afflictions, hopeless and despairing, confessing that we are over-powered and defeated; it is also possible to be hard and stoical, bearing adversity because we cannot help or avoid it, but the highest Christian way is to be thankful that the earthen vessel is breaking if

only the torch will shine out; to be content that the dying of Jesus should be borne about in our mortal body, if only His life will thereby become manifest.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go, The rivers of grief shall not thee overflow; For I will be with thee in trouble to bless; And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

**PRAYER** - Fix my heart, O Lord, on Thyself, that amid the changes and chances of this mortal life I may be kept steadfast and unmoveable and ever abounding in Thy work. AMEN.

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**Keathley** writes "The possibility of the return of the Lord at any moment is to have a great influence on our daily lives. The old saying, "he's so heavenly minded he's of no earthly good" is a misnomer. To be heavenly minded in the biblical sense is to labor here on earth for the Lord, not in our own ability, but in His, knowing that because of the glorious future our labor is never in vain in the Lord. ([Comfort for God's People Isaiah 40](#))

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**WHY ARE THEY CHEERING?** - On a balmy October afternoon in 1982, Badger Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin, was packed. More than sixty thousand die-hard University of Wisconsin supporters were watching their football team take on the Michigan State Spartans. MSU had the better team. What seemed odd, however, as the score became more lopsided, were the bursts of applause and shouts of joy from the Wisconsin fans. How could they cheer when their team was losing? It turned out that seventy miles away the Milwaukee Brewers were beating the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the 1982 World Series. Many of the fans in the stands were listening to portable radios and responding to something other than their immediate circumstances. Paul encourages us to fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen (2 Cor. 4:18). When we do, we can rejoice even in hardships because we see Christ's larger victory. Greg Asimakoupoulos ([1001 Quotes, Illustrations, and Humorous Stories](#))

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#### **FOCUS- As it relates to renewing out mind**

Missionary pilot Bernie May writes,

One of the most difficult lessons to teach new pilots about landing on short, hazardous airstrips is to keep their eyes on the good part of the strip rather than on the hazard. The natural tendency is to concentrate on the obstacle, the danger, the thing he is trying to avoid. But experience teaches us that a pilot who keeps his eye on the hazard will sooner or later hit it dead center.

Bernie May sums it up by saying that experienced pilots focus their attention solidly on the track they want the plane to follow, keeping the hazards in their peripheral vision only.

When Christ and His interests are the focus of our lives, the lure of the old life remains in the corner of our eye, while we aim to land squarely in the center of God's will. What "hazards" sometimes divert your attention from Jesus? What positive, God-honoring actions can you concentrate on doing instead.

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#### **Spurgeon writes that**

In our Christian pilgrimage it is well, for the most part, to be looking forward. Forward lies the crown, and onward is the goal. Whether it be for hope, for joy, for consolation, or for the inspiring of our love, the future must, after all, be the grand object of the eye of faith.

Looking into the future we see sin cast out, the body of sin and death destroyed, the soul made perfect, and fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Looking further yet, the believer's enlightened eye can see death's river passed, the gloomy stream forded, and the hills of light attained on which standeth the celestial city; he seeth himself enter within the pearly gates, hailed as more than conqueror, crowned by the hand of Christ, embraced in the arms of Jesus, glorified with Him, and made to sit together with Him on his throne, even as He has overcome and has sat down with the Father on his throne.

The thought of this future may well relieve the darkness of the past and the gloom of the present. The joys of heaven will surely compensate for the sorrows of earth. Hush, hush, my doubts! Death is but a narrow stream, and thou shalt soon have forded it. Time, how short-eternity, how long! Death, how brief-immortality, how endless! Methinks I even now eat of [Eshcol's](#) clusters, and sip of the well which is within the gate. The road is so, so short! I shall soon be there.

When the world my heart is rending  
With its heaviest storm of care,  
My glad thoughts to heaven ascending,

Find a refuge from despair.

Faith's bright vision shall sustain me  
Till life's pilgrimage is past;  
Fears may vex and troubles pain me,  
I shall reach my home at last.

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**Bubbles On The Border** - Stuck in a long line at the US-Canada border, Joel Schoon Tanis had to do something to lighten the mood! He reached for his bottles of bubble-making solution, bounded out of the car, and began blowing bubbles. He handed bottles to other drivers too, and he says that "soon there were bubbles everywhere... It's amazing what bubbles do for people." The line didn't move any faster, but "suddenly everyone was happy," Joel says.

"What we see depends mainly on what we look for," said British statesman John Lubbock (1834–1913). A good attitude and the right focus help us to handle life joyfully, even though it doesn't change our circumstances.

Paul encouraged the Corinthians in their trials: "Do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Co 4:18).

So what's unseen and eternal that we can look at? The character of God is an excellent place to focus. He is good (Ps 25:8), He is just (Is 30:18), He is forgiving (1Jn 1:9), and He is faithful (Dt 7:9).

Pondering God's character can give us joy in the midst of our struggles. — by Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The eyes of faith when fixed on Christ  
Give hope for what's ahead;  
But focus on life's obstacles,  
And faith gives way to dread.  
—D. De Haan

**When Christ is the center of your focus,  
all else will come into proper perspective.**

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**What's Inside** - A third-grader was asked to write an essay on the subject of the human body. He submitted this masterpiece:

"Your head is kind of round and hard, and your brains are in it and your hair is on it. Your face is in front of your head where you eat and make faces... Your stummick is something that if you don't eat often enough it hurts, and spinach don't help none... Your arms you got to have to throw a ball with and so you can reach the butter.

"Your fingers stick out of your hands so you can throw a curve and add up rithmatick. Your legs is what if you don't have two of, you can't run fast. Your feet are what you run on, and your toes are what always get stubbed. And that's all there is of you, except what's inside, and I never saw that."

In a different sense, the rich farmer in Luke 12 also was unable to see "what's inside." He thought he had "the good life." He was dead wrong. What we put in barns or closets or garages do nothing for the soul.

Does it take a grim funeral scene to demonstrate that "the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal"? (2Co 4:18). Only a fool ignores "what's inside." — by Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have you thought of where you're going  
When this earthly life is past?  
Will the seed that you are sowing  
Bring a harvest that will last?  
—Jacobsen

**Life is more than the stuff we store.**

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## Obscured by Clouds

We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. 2 Corinthians 4:18

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

A rare supermoon appeared in November 2016—the moon in its orbit reached its closest point to the earth in over sixty years and so appeared bigger and brighter than at other times. But for me that day the skies were shrouded in gray. Although I saw photos of this wonder from friends in other places, as I gazed upward I had to trust that the supermoon was lurking behind the clouds.

The apostle Paul faced many hardships but believed that what is unseen will last forever. He said how his “momentary troubles” achieve “an eternal glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). Thus he could fix his eyes “not on what is seen, but on what is unseen,” because what is unseen is eternal (v. 18). Paul yearned that the Corinthians and our faith would grow, and although we suffer, that we too would trust in God. We might not be able to see Him, but we can believe He is renewing us day by day (v. 16).

I thought about how God is unseen but eternal when I gazed at the clouds that day, knowing that the supermoon was hidden but there. And I hoped the next time I was tempted to believe that God was far from me, I would fix my eyes on what is unseen.

By: Amy Boucher Pye ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What does it mean for you to fix your eyes on what is unseen? How does your hope in Jesus help you face the difficulties of life?

Lord God, sometimes I feel like You're far from me. Help me to believe the truth that You are ever near, whether I feel Your presence or not.

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**Temporary Or Eternal** - The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were wonderful indeed! These impressive creations of human genius include the Tomb of Mausolos, built in 350 bc; the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus; the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; King Ptolemy's lighthouse near Alexandria; the 100-foot statue of Apollo called the Colossus of Rhodes; the 40-foot statue of Zeus in the city of Olympia; and the great pyramids of Egypt.

Six of these remarkable achievements have been destroyed—Ptolemy's lighthouse by an earthquake, and the other five demolished by plunderers. Only the pyramids remain to fill us with awe.

We may marvel over these Seven Wonders, but we must never forget that everything in our world is temporary. I remember looking at the skyline of New York City from the stern of a ferryboat and recalling the lines of a hymn: “These all shall perish, stone on stone; but not Thy kingdom nor Thy throne.”

The writer of Hebrews said, “Since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us ... serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (He 12:28). These words and the words of Psalm 102 help us to keep the temporary and the eternal in perspective.— by Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see—  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me! —Lyte

**Hold tightly to what is eternal  
and loosely to what is temporal.**

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**What Will Last?** - I have a friend who was denied a doctorate from a prestigious West Coast university because of his Christian worldview. As he was approaching the conclusion of his studies, his advisor invited him to come into his office and informed him that his dissertation had been rejected.

My friend's first thought was of thousands of dollars and 5 years of his life taking flight, and his heart sank. But then he thought of the words of the hymn by Rhea Miller:

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold, I'd rather be His than have riches untold; ... I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.

And then my friend laughed—for he realized that nothing of eternal value had been lost.

How we respond to loss is all a matter of perspective. One person is absorbed with the permanent; the other with the passing. One stores up treasure in heaven; the other accumulates it here on earth. One stays with a difficult marriage because heaven is on ahead; another moves out and looks for happiness in another mate. While one believes that happiness is found in being rich and famous, Christ's followers are willing to suffer poverty, hunger, indignity, and shame because of "**the glory that will be revealed**" (1Pe 5:1).

Wouldn't you "rather have Jesus"?— by David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause,  
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;  
I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame,  
I'd rather be true to His holy name.  
—Miller

**Living only for temporary gain leads to eternal loss.**

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John Angell James, 1846 in THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

### HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Col. 3:2

My dear friends, The subject of this address is **heavenly-mindedness**. It may seem, perhaps, that there is considerable sameness in these first three letters of the series which it is my intention to lay before you. That they are alike and related, I admit, but not that they are identical; and, indeed, they are selected on account of their relation to each other, and with the hope of mutually aiding to deepen, by the repetition and concentration of one train of thought, the impression which each by itself, and the three together, are intended to produce.

Heavenly-mindedness is an expression that explains itself, it is the minding of heaven; or the exercise of the thoughts and affections upon those invisible but eternal realities, which are declared by the Scriptures to await the Christian beyond the grave. Spirituality is one branch of holiness; and heavenly-mindedness is spirituality, exercised in reference to one specific object—the celestial state.

Alas! how little of this is there to be found even among professing Christians—"How low their hopes of heaven above, How few affections there."

The description given by the apostle of the predominant taste and pursuits of the men of the world—"They mind earthly things"—too well suits a large proportion of those who have 'professed' to come out from the world, and to be a people separated unto God. How engrossed are they, not only in the business, but in the cares, the love, and the enjoyment of earthly vanities. Who would imagine, to see their conduct, to hear their conversation, to observe their spirit—so undevout, and so worldly—that these were the men, who have heaven in their eye, their heart, their hope? Even to them, we would be inclined to think, that the Paradise of God is nothing more than a name, a sublime fiction, a sacred vision, which, with all its splendor, has scarcely power enough to engage their thoughts and fix their regards. How little effect has it to elevate them above a predominant earthly-mindedness, to comfort them in trouble, to minister to their happiness, or to mortify their corruptions. Can it be that they are seeking for, and going to glory, honor, and immortality—who think so little about it, and derive so small a portion of their enjoyment from the expectation of it?

What is heaven? The Bible, and the Bible only, can answer this question—and even this, though a revelation from God, but partially discloses the infinite and eternal reality. There is enough to excite, sustain, and animate hope—but far too little to gratify curiosity. Substantials are revealed, circumstantialia are withheld. In the Bible heaven is represented, rather as a state of mind, than as a place. Where objects of sense and locality are spoken of, they are to be understood, for the most part, in a figurative, and not in a literal meaning.

The description of the celestial world, as we find it in the Word of God, has always appeared to me one of the most striking and convincing of the internal evidences of Christianity. The Elysium of the Greeks and Romans;

the Paradise of Mahomet, and the various fantastic ideas of the world beyond the grave, entertained by modern pagans, are all of the earth, earthly; nothing more or better than earthly and sensual gratifications rendered immortal. How different the heaven of the New Testament; how pure, how spiritual, how unearthly, how divine! How strictly in harmony with the sublime and holy character of God! How befitting a creature, intelligent and holy! How completely different from everything which the unholy, sensual, and earthly mind of man would ever have devised! How far remote from the track of all his thoughts!

Heaven is usually called eternal life, that is—eternal happy existence—everlasting existence, with all that can render existence a blessing. But what are the elements of its felicity? As regards our own condition, they consist of a soul, possessed of perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, perfect liberty, perfect love; united with a body raised from the grave, incorruptible, immortal, and spiritual. As regards our relations to other beings, heavenly bliss means our dwelling in the immediate presence of Christ; the perfect vision, service, likeness, and enjoyment of God—the society and converse of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Connected with this, is the absence of everything that annoys, disturbs, or distresses us in this life. Such is the scripture-representation of heaven, as will be seen by consulting the following scriptures. Psalm 16:11; 17:15. John 3:14, 15, 36; 17:24. Rom. 2:7; 8:18. 1 Cor. 15. 2 Cor. 4:17. Philip 1:21; 3:21. Heb. 4:9; 12:22-24. 1 John 3:2. Rev. 7:9-17; 21.,22.

"My chief conception of heaven," said Robert Hall to Wilberforce, "is rest."—"Mine," replied Wilberforce, "is LOVE; love to God, and love to every bright and holy inhabitant of that glorious place." Hall was an almost constant sufferer from acute bodily pain; Wilberforce enjoyed life, and was all amiability and sunshine; so that it is easy to account "for their respective conceptions of this subject. What a mercy that both these conceptions are true." Yes, both are true; and the union of rest and love, perhaps, conveys, within a small compass, the most correct idea of the heavenly state.

Following the order of the representation given in the address on Spirituality of Mind, I observe, that heavenly-mindedness means the spontaneous, frequent, delightful, practical bent of our reflections toward eternal life. A heavenly-minded man is one who, as a convinced, condemned sinner, having obtained a title to eternal life, through faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a fitness for it, in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, considers himself as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth—regards heaven as his native country, and as instinctively turns his thoughts to it, as he who in a distant part of the world, feels his mind and heart attracted to his home. Scarcely a day passes during which no thought of his mind, no glance of the eye of faith, turns to the glory to be revealed.

In his solitary musings in the house, or by the way, the object is present to his mind to occupy his thoughts, to refresh and delight his spirit—and when he is with others like-minded with himself, it is his delight to converse upon the country to which they are traveling. Precious to him are those parts of Scriptural revelation which speak of the life to come, and exhibit to him, amid the darkness of his way, the distant lights of his father's house. Sermons that represent the holiness and happiness of heaven are delightful to his heart; books that describe it are congenial with his taste; and the songs of Zion, which sounds like the echo of its divine harmonies, excite all his hallowed sensibilities, and elevate his spirit to catch some of the falling rays of the excellent glory. The beautiful symbols of heavenly bliss, the city too bright with inherent splendor to need the sun; the walls of jasper, the gates of pearl, and streets of pure gold, like unto clear glass; the crown of life; the harp of gold; the palm of victory; the white robe; the song of salvation sounding from the countless multitude of the redeemed; all by turns seize and fix his imagination; while his enlightened judgment and his holy heart, letting go these brilliant images, repose upon the realities they are intended to portray—the presence of God, the vision of the Lamb, the sinless purity, the eternal rest, the communion of the blessed, the fellowship of angels.

The heavenly-minded man not only employs his thoughts, but sets his affections on things above. His hope and his heart are there. He does not wish it, it would not be proper that he should, instantly to dissolve his ties with earth, and leaving his family and connections fly the next moment to his eternal home—he is willing to wait as long as it is his heavenly Father's will to detain him upon earth—but he is willing to leave all and go to God, whenever it is judged proper by him to decide the matter—that he should go up to the mount and die. His hopes of heaven do much to destroy his love of life—and fear of death. If nature shrinks, as it sometimes will, at the approach of dissolution, he looks beyond the gloomy passage, and anticipates by a lively hope, the moment when "lifting his last step from the wave, having passed the stream of death, he shall linger and look wondrously back upon its dark waters, then gilded with the light of immortality, and rippling peacefully on the eternal shore."



It is not in suffering only that he feels a longing after immortality, for it is no indication of heavenly-mindedness to wish to depart in order to get rid of trouble. Impatience to die is often felt by those who have ceased to feel any attractions in life, and the grave is coveted as a shelter from the 'storms of earth'. There is nothing holy in such wishes; nothing heavenly in such impatience; it is only nature groaning after rest, and not grace longing for its perfection. Perhaps the most holy frame is to have no will or wish about the matter—but a readiness to live or die as God shall appoint. If, however, a preference may be cherished, and the soul rises into a longing to depart, the only ground on which it can with propriety be indulged is—an earnest desire to get rid of sin—to be near and like Christ—to serve God more perfectly—and to glorify him more entirely. And such desires after immortality, when no tie binds us to earth, are legitimate and holy.

Happy moments there sometimes are, alas! how rare, in the experience of the spiritual Christian, when such are his views of the desirableness of heaven, that he feels as if he should be glad to break down the prison-walls of his spirit, and let her go forth into the liberty of her eternal felicity. The celebrated John Howe once had such a view of heaven, and such a desire to depart, that he said to his wife—"Though I think I love you as well as it is fit for one creature to love another, yet if it were put to my choice, whether to die this moment, or live through this night; and living this night would secure the continuance of life for seven years longer, I would choose to die this moment." Still the glory of a Christian is to be neither weary of the world nor fond of it; to be neither afraid of death nor impatient after it; to be willing to go to heaven the next hour from the greatest comforts—or to wait for it through many lingering years, amid the greatest hardships, the most self-denying and laborious duties, and the severest and most complicated sufferings.

The heavenly-minded man goes farther than this, and prepares for future glory. Considering heaven not merely as an object of delightful contemplation of devout imagination, or of holy revery—a sublime and splendid picture for a visionary piety to gaze upon—but as a state of moral being, action, and service, for which a fitness is required—he diligently cultivates those dispositions which the Word of God assures him belong to, and are to be exercised in the celestial state. He has a post to fill, a situation to occupy, a service to perform in heaven, and for which he knows the necessary qualifications must be acquired on earth.

Death is only a physical change, and as far as we can understand, produces no moral effect. Grace is the preparation for glory, and he who has most grace, is most fitted for glory. The man who is going to occupy a place in the palace, endeavors to acquire courtly manners, and to provide himself with a court dress. So the eminently spiritual Christian considers himself as going in to dwell in the palace of the King of kings, and his great business upon earth is to prepare himself with the qualifications and dress of the celestial court. And as he clearly perceives that the prevailing dispositions of heaven are purity and love, he labors to grow in holiness and charity. If asked, in any situation or circumstance, or at any period, what are you engaged in or employed about? his answer is, "I am dressing for heaven; making myself ready to go in and dwell with Christ. Having a post to fill in the divine palace, I am preparing for it by the mortification of sin, and a growth in grace."

Such is heavenly-mindedness—but, alas! where is it to be found? I know where it ought to be found—in every professing Christian. His principles demand it, his profession requires it, his prospects justify it. "If we should give a stranger to Christianity an account of the Christian's hopes, and tell him what Christians are, and what they expect to enjoy before long, he would sure promise himself to find so many 'angels' dwelling in human flesh, and reckon when he came among them, he should be as amid the heavenly choir; every one full of joy and praise. He would expect to find us living on earth as the inhabitants of heaven—as so many pieces of immortal glory, lately dropped down from above, and shortly returning there again. He would look to find everywhere in the Christian world 'incarnate glory', sparkling through the overshadowing veil; and wonder how this earthly sphere should be able to contain so many great souls." And oh, how astonished, surprised, and disgusted would he be to witness the earthly-mindedness, and to hear the worldly conversation of the great bulk of professing Christians—as if heaven were nothing more than a splendid painting to adorn their temples of religion, and to be looked at once a week; but not a glorious reality to be ever before their eyes, to form their character, to regulate their conduct, support them in trouble, and furnish their chief happiness!

What a source of strong consolation and ineffable delight is a heavenly mind to its possessors! This is what the apostle calls "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." Could we actually look into the celestial world, and see its felicities and honors; could we hear the very sounds of paradise, and have the songs of the redeemed continually, or at intervals, undulating on our ear; could the rays of the excellent glory, literally fall upon our path—how constantly would we go on our way rejoicing, as we reflected that each step brought us nearer to this world of light and love; and of purity and immortality! How soft would be the cares, how tolerable the sorrows, how easy the most difficult duties, so soon to be laid aside amid such rest and such happiness! This

sight of heaven would irradiate the darkest scenes of earth, and prevent us from being seduced by the beauties of the fairest worldly trifle.

Who could weep while heaven was spreading out its glories to comfort us, and opening its doors to receive us! Who could think much of that sickness—which was sustained beneath the vision of an incorruptible inheritance; or of those losses—which came upon them in sight of an infinite portion that never fades away! There would need no amusement or recreation to make us happy, while listening to the song of salvation—nor of any other pleasure to cheer us. This mixture of the view of heaven with the scenes of earth, would change the aspect of everything, and give truth to the expressions of the poet—

"The men of grace have found,

Glory begun below."

And what more than a heavenly mind, a vigorous, lively, and influential faith—is necessary to give something like a reality to this? Heaven does exist; all these glories are above us and before us, though we see them not; and it is only to believe them as they may be, and ought to be believed, and we shall rejoice in them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Vivacious thoughts of them would, in measure, produce the same kind of happiness as seeing them. Happy would we be amid all the cares, and labors, and sorrows, and trials of earth, if in meditation, and by faith and hope, we could thus dwell on the borders of the promised land. It would be to pitch our tent on Mount Pisgah, and constantly to have the promised land spreading out in boundless and beautiful perspective before us.

Nor is it our comfort only that would be promoted by a heavenly mind, but our sanctity also. "Every man who has this hope in him," says the apostle, "purifies himself even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. Heaven, being a holy state, yes, the very perfection of holiness; does, by a natural process, render those holy who meditate upon it, believe it, hope for it, and long for it. Men's hopes always affect their conduct, and transform their characters into a likeness to the nature of the objects of their desires and expectations. How effectually guarded from temptation to lust, worldly-mindedness, and malice—is he whose affections are strongly fixed upon a state of purity, spirituality, and love! Who that is drinking happiness from the crystal river that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, can take up with the filthy puddle of worldly amusements? What mortification of sin, what conquest of besetting corruption, what eradication of evil tempers, what suppression of unholy disposition goes on, when the soul fixes the 'eye of faith' on unseen and eternal realities!

Yes, what discoveries of hidden and unsuspected sins are made, when the light of heavenly glory is let into the soul! In looking so much to earth, and earthly-minded men, we become so familiarized with sin, as to lose our clear perceptions, our accurate discrimination of its evil nature, and our accurate sensibilities to its criminality and odiousness. We lose our self-aborrence for our own sins, by the view of so much evil without and around us. And we recover our keenness of vision, and tenderness of conscience, only by lifting up our eyes to that pure and blessed region, where no sin dwells, and holiness is in perfection; and where,

One view of Jesus as he is,

Will strike all sin forever dead.

You will much wish to know how such a heavenly state of mind may be promoted.

You must be WILLING to have it. Willing! you exclaim, with somewhat of surprise, "Who is not willing? Who would not enjoy such a holy and heavenly frame?" You, perhaps, who ask the question! Comparatively few are willing to be heavenly-minded. The great bulk even of professing Christians do not want this state of the soul. They want to enjoy earth; they are ever seeking new devices by which to be more and more gratified by things seen and temporal; they are ever seeking to invest earth with new charms, and to throw greater attractions over the scenes that surround them. They do not wish to have the luxuriance of their earthly affections repressed, or the exuberance of their worldly joys restrained. It is no part of their plan, or wish, or effort, or prayer—to have one single terrestrial delight limited or displaced by such as are heavenly! Very few are willing then, to be heavenly-minded—and if not willing, they will never attain to it!

You must be not only willing but DESIROUS of this frame. It must appear to you a state to be coveted and longed for; and for which you would be willing to part with some worldly joys, and the pleasures of earth—to endure the discipline of trial, and the influence of sorrow. Your heart must be set upon it—your soul must pant after it.

It must appear to you not only desirable, but ATTAINABLE. No such idea must be in your mind as that it is too

high an elevation of piety for you to reach, too difficult an acquirement for you to make. Do not imagine that it is the devotion of the cloister and the monastery, and which can be cultivated only by the recluse. Spiritual and heavenly Christians have been found, too rarely I admit, amid all the cares of a large family, and all the urgency of an extensive trade. Besides, if you cannot attain to as much of this celestial temper as some others, may you not have much more of it than you already possess? Do not even your circumstances allow of improvement and increase?

Use the right means for acquiring it. BELIEVE its reality. Your faith is too weak to be influential. It is not so much a deep conviction, a full persuasion, a confident anticipation—but only 'a mere opinion'. You have the name of heaven upon your lips, but not the grand idea, the glorious reality in your mind—the infinite, the transcendent conception, does not occupy and fill the soul. You are too much a stranger to the force of that expression, "lay hold on eternal life."

Acquire a clear and satisfactory evidence of your personal interest in the joys and glories of immortality. "Give all diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Unite the full assurance of hope, with the full assurance of understanding and of faith. What is our own, more interests us, though it be little—than what belongs to another, though it be far greater. The heir of a small estate has his mind and heart far more occupied about his little inheritance—than about the vast domain bordering it, of some wealthy peer. Realize your personal interest in heaven. If you are indeed a child of God, seek the witness of the spirit to your sonship; and if a child of God, then you are to heir of God, and joint heir with Christ! After reading the gracious promises, and surveying the boundless prospects of eternal glory—indulge the thoughts that these are all yours! Yours to be admitted to the presence of God and Christ, and to dwell there forever! Yours to be like God and Christ in purity, love, knowledge, and immortality! Yours to be the everlasting companion of all holy angels and blessed spirits. Call the joys of heaven your own—and they will then be infinitely more attractive than they now are!

Give yourselves time for reading, meditation, and prayer. You must keep the world within due bounds—as to the time it occupies in your thoughts and life. If you allow it to take and keep the occupancy of the whole day, from the time you open your eyes in the morning, until you close them at night—you cannot grow in this grace of heavenly-mindedness. If you don't resist the world's engrossing, absorbing power—your soul must suffer, your salvation be endangered, your heaven be lost. Oh, will you, with glory, honor, immortality above you, and before you—allow yourselves to be so engaged with worldly trifles—as to have no time to think of them, or to look at them! With the splendor of heavenly and eternal glory beaming upon your path, blazing around you, will you be so taken up with the world, as to hurry by and not turn aside to see this great sight!

Oh, Christians, believers—at least professed believers in immortality—is it thus you treat that heaven which occupied the thoughts of God from eternity, which was procured by the death of Christ upon the cross, which is the substance of revealed truth, and the end of all God's dispensations of providence and grace to man! What! no time to retire and meditate on eternal life! Will you—can you—dare you, bring yourself to utter such an expression as this, "I am really so taken up with my business, that I cannot retire to meditate and pray." Then I must tell you, you have no time to be saved; although plenty of time to be lost!

Go into your closet, and with your Bible as the telescope that brings eternal glories near—meditate, meditate upon heaven! Survey its glories—go over them in detail and in succession. Dwell upon the presence of God; upon being with Christ; upon perfect love, perfect purity, perfect liberty, perfect knowledge, perfect bliss. Contemplate their infinity, their immensity, their eternity. Oh, what thoughts, what topics, what sources of delight! What sublime, elevating subjects for the child of dust, of sin, of sorrow, of mortality—to indulge in! What a reflection upon us, that we should need to be admonished to turn our thoughts that way; that with heaven open before us, we should need to be reminded, "There is immortal glory, look at it!" And yet after all, should feel that we are so preoccupied and engaged with earthly trifles, that we have no time to survey the wondrous scene!

Dwell much upon the nearness of heaven. What is remote has less power over the thoughts than that which is near at hand. How near is all this glory to your soul! Nothing separates you from it, but the thin partition of flesh and blood—a moment of time, a point of space, may be all that intervenes between you and immortality! When you lie down to rest any night—you know not but that you may be in heaven before the next morning! When you rise up in the morning—you know not but that you may be in heaven before night! If you are true Christians, you are ever in the 'vestibule of the heavenly temple', waiting for the opening of the door, to be admitted to the holy of holies! The heirs of glory are every moment going in to be forever with the Lord, and you will soon go with them. Heaven is ever as near to you as God is—for it is the enjoyment of his presence,

and he compasses you about on every side. At any given moment of your existence, you know not but that the next may be the commencement of your eternal career of holiness, knowledge, and happiness. Did you realize the nearness of heaven, how would it tend to keep up the frame of mind I am so anxious to promote.

As heaven consists of enjoying the divine presence, and of holiness and love, together with the joy arising from them—let us seek more intimate communion with God now, and labor after more purity, more benevolence, more spiritual peace. This would make us think of heaven, and long for it—when we had these, its first fruits—in our soul now. We cannot go up into heaven, without heaven first coming down into us! Holiness in the soul of man is a part of heaven, and the 'greater heaven above' will put forth an attraction to draw up to itself this 'lesser heaven below'. Fire ascends to the sun; rivers run to the ocean; matter gravitates to its center—so holiness in the soul aspires to heaven, to which it belongs.

And withal you must be much in private, earnest, and believing prayer for the supply of the Holy Spirit. Who is sufficient for these things, but he whose sufficiency is of God the Spirit? To make the future predominate over the present; the invisible over the visible; the immaterial over the material; and heaven over earth—is an achievement of faith, to which he only is equal, who is taught and helped of God. "He who has wrought us for this self-same thing," says the apostle, "is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." 2 Cor. 5:5.

Believers in Christ Jesus! Children of God! Heirs of immortal glory! traveler to Zion! Possessors of eternal life! Look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal. Think of what is before you in the world to which you are going! Let your character and your destiny be in harmony. Born from heaven, and bound to it, let your thoughts and affections be in heaven! "We are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body!"

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## Great Texts of the Bible - THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 Cor. 4:18.

THE Apostle looked on the things that are temporal as not looking on them, but as looking straight through, on the thing eternal, which they represent and prepare. He looked on them just as a man looks on a window-pane, when he studies the landscape without. In one view he looks on the glass. In another he does not. Probably enough he does not so much as think of the medium interposed. Or, a better comparison still is the telescope; for the lenses of glass here interposed actually enable the spectator to see, and yet he does not so much as consider that he is looking on the lenses, or using them at all; he looks only on the stars. So also the Apostle looks not on the things that are temporal, even while admiring the display in them of God's invisible and eternal realities. He looks on them only as seeing through; uses them only as a medium of training, exercise, access to God. Their value to him is not in what they are but in what they signify.

¶ It is a true use of things temporal, that they are to put us under the constant all-dominating impression of things eternal. And we are to live in them, as in a transparency, looking through, every moment, and in all life's works and ways, acting through, into the grand reality-world of the life to come.

¶ Crathie, 29th Oct. 1854.—This has been a heavenly day of beauty—the sky almost cloudless; the stones on the hill side so distinct that they might be counted; the Dee swinging past with its deep-toned murmur. I preached before the Queen and Royal Family without a note the same sermon I preached at Morven; and I never looked once at the royal seat, but solely at the congregation. I tried to forget the great ones I saw, and to remember the great Ones I saw not, and so I preached from my heart, and with as much freedom, really, as at a mission station.

## I THE SEEN IS GIRDLED BY THE UNSEEN

1. There are two worlds—the world of sense and the world of spirit; and the world of spirit surrounds, enspheres, and interpenetrates the world of sense. We speak as if the world of sense came first, and the world of spirit came after; whereas the truth is that the world of spirit is about us now, though the veil of sense hangs between. We imagine that we dwell in time here, and shall dwell in eternity hereafter; while the fact is, we dwell in eternity here, though we take a little section of it and call it time.

Each of these two worlds must be discerned by its own faculty. One is made up of places, people, circumstances, possessions—the physical; the other of ideas, feelings, affections, expectations—the spiritual. We are conscious of the house we live in, the faces that look at us, the tasks we do, the afflictions that befall us. We are conscious also of the sins that are past, of the love we have tasted, of the aims we cherish, of the sorrow that wounded our hearts. Both worlds surround us, one of them tangible like water, the other intangible like air. We see one with our eyes, we feel the other with our soul.

God keeps His holy mysteries  
Just on the outside of man's dream,  
In diapason slow we think,  
To hear their pinions rise and sink  
While they float pure beneath His eyes  
Like swans adown a stream.

Things nameless, which in passing so,  
Do touch us with a subtle grace,  
We say, Who passes? They are dumb,  
We cannot see them go or come;  
Their touches fall, soft, cold as snow  
Upon a blind man's face.

¶ It is a marvellous but familiar fact that, when an orchestra is playing, the ear of the listener can so concentrate itself upon one particular class of sounds in the united harmony—the note of the clarinet, the note of the violoncello—as to hear that alone; the rest subordinate, if not all but extinguished. Mysterious truth, showing that even in the realm of physical nature we do not see with the eye only, or hear with the ear only, but with the brain, or something more spiritual still that lies behind eye and ear. And so it is, not less but more so, with the visions and melodies addressed to man's eternal part. We see what we wish to see among all the sights that tempt our souls; and we hear what we wish and set ourselves to hear. We can see only the temporal, if all we wish is to see the temporal; and we can see the eternal, if our desire is to see the eternal.

2. Both worlds minister to us. If we were to track the first steps in the growth of a flower just emerging from the seed we should discover, upon the cracking open of the seed, that one minute vegetable fibre commences presently to be pressed thence away up through the overlying soil into the air and the light, and another vegetable thread begins, at the same time, to wind itself away down through the underlying soil into the ground beneath. If now we sink a single delicate thought into the botanical fact just stated, we shall see that that very process of groping up into the air of one part of its nature, and at the same time groping down into the deep places of the earth with the other part of its nature, is a statement in miniature, and a quiet prophecy, of the double affinity with which the plant is endowed, and the twin congeniality with which it has been by God made instinct.

Man similarly buds in two directions; he, too, is underlaid with a twin tendency. He is divinely endowed with one impulse that tends to push him out into the world, and into the association of things that lie easily in sight, and he is endowed also with a companion impulse that inclines to conduct him into the fellowship of things upon which the sun does not shine. But each, like the soil under the plant, offers to become to him the means of his life, and the material for his fixity, his power, and his hope.

¶ The idealizing of the outer world is one of God's ways of teaching us to see the beauty and fineness that lie hidden in the uncouth and rough and commonplace; the victory that waits our grasp within every difficulty. It spells out for us the great simple secret Paul had learned: while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are often coarse and commonplace and are only for a passing hour; but the things that are not seen are full of beauty and power, and last for ever. The God-touched eye sees through fog and smoke to the unseen harbour beyond. It insists on steering steady and straight regardless of the storm overhead, and the rock or snag underneath. There is a victory in hiding in every knotty difficulty. Every trying circumstance contains a song of gladness waiting to be freed by our touch. Each disheartening condition can be made to grow roses.

## II THE SEEN INTERPRETS THE UNSEEN

1. Only by looking at the things that are seen do we gain any idea of the unseen. "All visible things," said Carlyle, "are emblems. What thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly speaking, is not there at all. Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth." And so John Ruskin:—"The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think; but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion—all in one."

Nature is a mirror of the Unseen. The world around is an ever-present witness to us of the existence of things unseen. The world of Nature—that ever-changing world, the world of that which is ever being born out of the life of God, the world in which we may look upon ever-new manifestations of the great life of the Divine One—that itself is an ever-present token of a Presence Divine. The Sacramentalism of Nature—for such is the name we may give to this great principle—is presenting itself to the minds of men with increasing vividness. "The things that are made" are being more and more discerned as suggestive to the human mind of thoughts respecting "the invisible things of God." These thoughts are presenting themselves only to reverent and loving souls.

When love interprets what the eye discerns,

When mind discovers what is really meant,  
When grace improves what man from Nature learns,  
Each sight and sound becomes a sacrament.

¶ There is an experience which I remember well. The time was evening, the scene a valley in a foreign land. The crystalline sky stretched above, lit by the summer moon; the wide, still lake spread beneath, surrounded by the summer woods; not a cloud in the air; not a rustle in the leaves; not a ripple to stir the glassy expanse or break the reflection of the tiny church where it glimmered on its birchen knoll—the whole such a picture of perfect, ethereal, and dreamlike rest that it seemed ready to pass off into spirit before one's very gaze. It was an hour when talk about common things was hushed, and the thoughts went back to the distant and banished. "What a beautiful sky!" said one of the company. "Yes," was the sudden reply of another, whose words breathed the longing of these lone mountain lands, yet fitted themselves to the mood of us all,—“yes, if we could only see behind.” So near may Nature bring us to the heart and the secret of things! So clear are her tokens! So thin is her veil! The spell of the eternal lies upon her. The mystery of the eternal breathes through her. Thanks to faith, we may pass beyond, and, entering through the outer curtain, gaze, and wonder, and worship in the inner shrine!

The world is round me with its heat,  
And toil, and cares that tire;  
I cannot with my feeble feet  
Climb after my desire.

But, on the lap of lands unseen,  
Within a secret zone,  
There shine diviner gold and green  
Than man has ever known.

And where the silver waters sing,  
Down hushed and holy dells,  
The flower of a celestial spring—  
A tenfold splendour dwells.

Yea, in my dream of fall and brook  
By far sweet forests furled,  
I see that light for which I look  
In vain through all the world.

The glory of a larger sky,  
On slopes of hills sublime,  
That speak with God and Morning, high  
Above the ways of Time!

2. It is the unseen things that give meaning to the things which are seen. A man who studies the universe without his thought outrunning his eye, and his heart distancing his thought, is like a child who fumbles over the letters in his primer without drawing an idea from the word in which the letters meet or an inspiration from the sentence in which the words combine. The body takes its beauty from the invisible spirit that is sheathed in its features of expression and organs of action. The single life gains meaning and becomes worth living because of the subtle threads by which it is bound into the general life and the silken meshes that make it part of the fabric universal. This earth of ours is interesting because inaudible messages flash between it and the farthest star, and because it moves in rhythmic tread with all the flashing host that throng the ethereal plain. History first draws to itself our interested regard because it bends upon an invisible axis, and because its events are spelling out in ever-lengthening lines the wisdom, power, and tenderness of God. Each smallest thing everywhere and always wins character and grace from the ties that relate it to the distant and unsounded, as the bay is tremulous with the tide that throbs out in the bosom of the sea.

¶ There is a remarkable passage in Prince Bismarck's Conversations where he attributes the steadfastness of the German soldiers in the ranks to the deeply-rooted belief in God as ordering duty. But the virtue of heroes or saints or martyrs transcends this. What is its ultimate justification? How is it defensible that a man should lay down his life for duty, if the law of duty is relative only to this present life? I do not see a fair escape from this dilemma. Either life is the highest prize that a man possesses, or there is something beyond and above this present life, and, if so, something which belongs to the world of things unseen. But the Christian martyr lays down his life, and lays it down rationally, because in his eyes duty receives its justification not in this world but in the world for which he looks. Hence, self-sacrifice never seems to him a failure. He that loses his life shall save it. There is no possibility of a final antinomy between the law of duty and the law of interest. God has eternity in which to work out His purposes; and here on earth we touch but the hem of His great providence. The rest is faith. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." But if



this present life is all complete in itself, then we stand face to face with moral contradictions. Virtue does not always succeed. Vice triumphs. It is not always best to do our duty. The poet of to-day, in the new Locksley Hall, has seen with the eye of genius that to deny the eternity of the moral law is to deny the moral law itself—

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just;  
Take the charm "For ever" from them, and they crumble into dust.

3. Jesus Christ is the clearest evidence as well as the fullest interpretation of the unseen. It was not possible for the Jewish race of that day by any principle of evolution to have produced Him. He came from elsewhere. No one has ever lived after His fashion, with such becoming perfection. He belonged to elsewhere. Death did not bury His life; it remains unto this day the chief moral energy in the world. While He moved among men He suggested that other world where the hopeless ideals of this life are fulfilled. His biography breaks the bonds of sight; it lays the foundation for faith.

¶ Years ago the English Academy and the French Salôn contained at the same time two pictures which, if they had been painted for the purpose, could not have been a more perfect illustration of St. Paul's great utterance. In one the king is lying on his bed the moment after death—he was the mightiest monarch of his day—and the sceptre has just dropped from his hands. And behold, the servants who an hour ago trembled at his look are rifling his treasury and dividing his possessions. Below with fine irony was written the title, "William the Conqueror"—his conquests had ceased. In the other, a man is lying in a rocky tomb; His conflict is over, and His enemies have won. He denied the world, and the world crucified Him; He trusted in God, and God left Him to the cross. But love has wrapped His body in spices, and given Him a new tomb amid the flowers of the garden; love is waiting till the day breaks to do Him kindness. The Angels of God and not the Roman soldiers are keeping guard over Him while He takes His rest, after life's travail. When the day begins to break, He will rise conqueror over death and hell—Lord both of this poor world which passeth away, and of the riches of the world which remaineth for ever.

### III THE SEEN IS THE SHADOW, THE UNSEEN THE SUBSTANCE

1. All the deeper realities of life are conveyed to us by intimation rather than by demonstration. They come to us by other roads than those of the senses. The persons to whom we are bound in the sweetest relationships or by the noblest compulsion are never really seen by us. We see and touch their garments; we never see or touch them. They may live with us in the closest intimacy, and yet no sense of ours ever made a path of final approach between us. When they vanish out of life, they leave behind them all that we ever saw or touched; but how pathetically unavailing is the appeal of the heart to the garment laid aside in the haste or pain of the final flight! All we ever saw is there, and yet it is nothing! That which we loved, and which made the world dear and familiar through the diffusion of its own purity and sweetness, we never saw or touched. It was never within the reach of our senses; it was accessible only to our spirits. So sacred was it that the final mystery was never dissipated; so Divine was it that the final veil was never lifted. One came our way and dwelt with us in a tabernacle of flesh, even as Christ did, and then departed, leaving behind all that we ever saw or touched, and yet taking with her all that was real, companionable, comprehensible. And yet with this constant and familiar illustration of the presence of a reality which we never touch or see under our roof and by our side, we reject the intimations that come to us from every quarter and bring us the truths by which we live.

2. The eternal persists in spite of outward changes. There is always a continuity in the midst of change, always something eternal rising out of decay, always something immortal to rebuke our mortal fears; there is a human love in us that never dies; there are hopes that never perish; there is a growth that never ceases; there are good thoughts that never leave us; there are joys which no man can take away; there is something always beyond that we are drawn to; there is something out of sight, to which we are always stretching our unsatisfied and aching hands. The body pants for a deliverance which lies beyond; the soul hungers for a larger portion than it has ever known; the whole of our nature cries out for that future which is still unrevealed. And God has written eternity in the hidden heart of all things, not to mock us with vain dreams, but to make us certain that there is a happier and nobler life behind the veil.

3. Let us make the most of the seen by living in the unseen. The statement of the Apostle implies, with reference to "the things which are not seen," much more than a mere conviction of their existence, however lively and sincere. It implies also an earnest and steadfast contemplation of them—a turning of the thoughts to them, a fixing of the affections on them, and a bending of our aims and efforts to the attainment of them. The word here translated "look at" is in other passages translated by the expressions "take heed," "mark," "consider," or "observe attentively," and sometimes it means to aim at or to pursue. Indeed, as has been observed, our English word "scope" is derived from it, which signifies the general drift or purpose of a man's conduct—the mark he aims at, or the end he has in view. When Christians, therefore, are said to "look at the things which are not seen," the meaning evidently is, that they look at these things with earnest attention, with eager desire, with steady contemplation, as the marksman looks at the target which he seeks to hit, or the racer looks at the goal which he is striving to reach.

¶ During the greater part of his illness he would have chosen to live, and he was hopeful, as we were hopeful, until within a few days of the last. Then he became glad to go. Though devoted doctors and nurses did all that skill and care could do, the walls of the

Dwelling-House of that ardent spirit grew thin and more thin. One morning he beckoned to us to come nearer, and he tried to put into words a state of vision he had been in when he appeared to be neither sleeping nor waking. He had looked into the Book of Creation, and understood that the whole could be comprehended—made plain from that other point of view which was not our earthly one. “A glorious state,” he called it, and we looked on the face of one who had at last seen “true being” when he said, “Now I see that great Book—I see that great Light.”

¶ I remember standing once on a high Swiss pass, the ledge of a perpendicular precipice, where I waited for the morning view. There was nothing as I gazed ahead but mist—mist puffing, circling, swirling, like steam from the depths of some tremendous caldron. But I watched, and there was a break for a moment far down to the left, and a flash of emerald green; it was meadow-land. Then there was a break to the right, and a cluster of houses appeared, with a white church steeple you could almost have hit with a well-aimed stone. Then they were covered, and the mist hid the scene as before, till it parted again, this time in front; and there was blue sky, and against the blue sky a vision of glittering snow peaks. So it went on, peep after peep, rift after rift, here a little and there a little, till at last, as if worked on unseen pulleys the mist curtain slowly drew up, and from east even unto west there stretched the chain of the Italian Alps, sun-smitten, glorious, white as no fuller on earth could white them. Have your faces to the sunrise. Be ye children of the dawn. Then “though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Though the revelation be fragmentary here, it will be perfect hereafter. Now we see through the mists darkly, then, when the mists have vanished, face to face, with the eyes that are purged by God’s Spirit, in the light that streams from His throne.