

# Psalm 42:6 Commentary - Remember God!

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**Psalm 42:6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember Thee from the land of the Jordan, And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar:**

- **my God** : Ps 22:1 43:4 88:1-3 Mt 26:39 27:46
- **therefore**: Ps 77:6-11 Jon 2:7
- **from the**: Ps 61:2 2Sa 17:22,27
- **Hermon**: Deut 3:8,9 4:47,48
- **Mount Mizar**: or, the little hill, Ps 133:3)

KJV Psalm 42:6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

NET Psalm 42:6 I am depressed, so I will pray to you while I am trapped here in the region of the upper Jordan, from Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

BBE Psalm 42:6 My soul is crushed down in me, so I will keep you in mind; from the land of Jordan and of the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.

BHT Psalm 42:7 'élôhay `älây napšî tišôâh `al-kên 'ezkorkä mē'e°res yardën wehermônîm mëhar mic`är

CSB Psalm 42:6 I am deeply depressed; therefore I remember You from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

ESV Psalm 42:6 and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

GWN Psalm 42:6 My soul is discouraged. That is why I will remember you in the land of Jordan, on the peaks of Hermon, on Mount Mizar.

NAB Psalm 42:6 Why are you downcast, my soul; why do you groan within me? Wait for God, whom I shall praise again, my savior and my God. 7 My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you From the land of the Jordan and Hermon, from the land of Mount Mizar.

NAS Psalm 42:6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember Thee from the land of the Jordan, And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

NIV Psalm 42:6 my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon-- from Mount Mizar.

NKJ Psalm 42:6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar.

NLT Psalm 42:6 my God! Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember you-- even from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan, from the land of Mount Mizar.

YLT Psalm 42:5 What! bowest thou thyself, O my soul? Yea, art thou troubled within me? Wait for God, for still I confess Him: The salvation of my countenance -- My God! 6 In me doth my soul bow itself, Therefore I remember

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## MY SOUL IS IN DESPAIR

### Here is the English of the Septuagint

O my God, my soul **has been troubled** (tarasso - shaken or stirred up, troubled, agitated, distressed, acute mental/spiritual agitation) within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the little hill.

**William MacDonald** writes - The depression recurs in cycles. But faith strikes back with the confident assertion that it will remember God from the land of the Jordan and of Hermon and from the Hill Mizar. Perhaps these three places symbolize three spiritual experiences; we do not know. What does seem clear is that they represent the land of exile, far removed from the house of

God in Jerusalem. And the thought seems to be that even when we cannot visit the house of God, we can still remember the God of the house!

**My God** - Not "O God," but "My God!" Although in despair, he has not jettisoned his relationship with the Almighty. God is still his high "Prize" and he acknowledges this truth, but clearly his faith is "under assault." As **Spurgeon** said "You cannot praise another man's God. Possession is not only nine points of the law, but it is all the points of the Gospel."

**Despair** ([07817](#)) (**shachach/sahah**) means literally to be brought low and figuratively to be humbled, to have one's arrogance brought down (Is 2:9, 11, 17, 5:15), to be in despair (Ps 42:5, 6, 11, 43:5) In some contexts it means to bow down in the sense of doing obeisance before someone (Isa 60:14 Pr 14:19). It can mean to bow in sense of to walk in a stooped posture, for example describing one who is dejected as in a period of mourning (Ps 35:14 Ps 38:6 or to crouch - Job 38:40). Physically (literally) bringing a wall down (Isa 25:12, crumbling a mountain Hab 3:6).

Note that the Greek word used to translate **despair** (**shachach**) is **tarasso** which is a strong word, meaning "to deeply upset," "to deeply disturb," "to perplex," or "to create fear." Most of the NT uses of **tarasso** describe the state of one's mind as stirred up, agitated or experiencing inward commotion. The passive voice is always used in the NT with a negative meaning, conveying the sense of emotional disturbance or inner turmoil, so that one is unsettled, thrown into confusion, or disturbed by various emotions, including excitement, perplexity, fear or trepidation. John records that even Jesus experienced this emotion - "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was **troubled**." (John 11:33) And again "Now My soul has become **troubled**; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour." (John 12:27) And again "When Jesus had said this, He became **troubled** in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."" (John 13:21). The OT antidote for **despair** is to preach a sermon of hope to your soul. In John 14:1 Jesus gave His disciples instructions on how to fight **despair** declaring "**Do not let** your heart be **troubled** (present imperative with a negative); believe (present tense or present imperative) in God, believe (present tense or present imperative) also in Me." and again ""Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **Do not let** your heart be **troubled** (present imperative with a negative), nor **let** it be **fearful** (present imperative with a negative)."  
(John 14:27) Notice the repetition of the present imperatives (positive and negative) which are commands calling for this attitude to be one's habitual practice or lifestyle. How is this possible? While it is **impossible**, it is "**Him possible!**" In other words the only way to obey Jesus' commands is by continually (daily) surrendering to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit Who indwells us and gives us both the desire and the power to obey! (See Php 2:13NLT-note) Notice that in John 14:1 Jesus' "antidote" for a troubled mind is to continually believe in God and in Him, again, something we must choose to do (100% our responsibility), but can only accomplish with the Spirit's enabling power (100% God's sovereign provision). In John 14:27 Jesus' "antidote" for a troubled mind is His gift of supernatural, inner peace, peace independent of one's circumstances. It follows that when our mind is troubled we need to do what Jeremiah did (see notes below on Lamentations) when he was feeling hopeless - "This I recall to my mind." (Lam 3:21). What is "**this**"? The truth about God (e.g., Lam 3:22,23) and in the present context the truth that Jesus has given us His peace! This is not "mind over matter," but it is choosing (enabled by the Spirit) to set one's mind on the truth about God (cp discussion of "**Vertical Vision**" below).

The etymology of the English word "**despair**" is enlightening - **Despair** - early 14 century, from stem of Old French *desperer* "be dismayed, lose hope, despair," from Latin *desperare* "to despair, to lose all hope," from de- "without" (see *de-*) + *sperare* "to hope," from spes "hope" (see *sperate*). Notice that the literally (etymological) rendering of "**despair**" is "no hope!" It is a state of depressed mood and hopelessness. The Cambridge Dictionary says **despair** is "the feeling that there is no hope and that you can do nothing to improve a difficult or worrying situation."

When our lives are heavy laden,  
Cold and bleak as winter long,  
Stir the embers in our hearts, Lord;  
Make Your flame burn bright and strong.  
—Kieda

**Spurgeon writes** - O my God, my soul is cast down within me. Perhaps the spasm of despondency returned. With God the song begins the second time more nearly than the first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone; there was no visible panting; the sorrow was now all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down; it may well be so while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better. Therefore will I remember thee. Blessed downcasting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord! From the hill Mizar. He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill where love spoke her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in

bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. Or does David mean that even where he was he would think of his God; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground, as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem!"

#### Related Resources:

- [J R Miller's message Mastering the Blues.](#)
- [J C Philpot's The Hope of the Cast-down Soul - Ps 42:5](#)
- [Hope in Discouragement - Ps 43:5](#)
- [God Dwelling with the Contrite Francis Bourdillon, 1881](#)
- [The Pathway of Promise - Words of Comfort to the Christian Pilgrim - Entire book by John MacDuff](#)
- [No Cause for Sadness - James Smith, 1842](#)
- [The Depressed Soul's Soliloquy - Ps 43:5](#)

## CHOOSE "VERTICAL VISION" INSTEAD OF "HORIZONTAL VISION"

**Therefore** - Always be alert to this **term of conclusion** asking what it is it "*there for?*" Some uses will be very obvious as in the present passage, but other uses will not be so obvious and will force you to re-read the preceding context to determine what the writer is concluding. In this case, the psalmist concludes that his inner feeling of hopelessness calls for immediate action. His "antidote" for those "horizontal" thoughts ("**horizontal vision**") that drag him down is to inject "vertical" thoughts ("**vertical vision**"). In other words, instead of focusing on the problem, focus on the Problem Solver. Instead of looking horizontally (in a sense at what one sees on an earthly plane), make the choice to set the eyes of your heart vertically, looking at heavenly things. The first is temporal and passing, while the second is eternal and forever.

When you come to that place in your life where you discover that Jesus is all that you have, you then discover that Jesus is all that you need!

**I remember Thee** - This is an act of faith, for faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). The psalmist cannot literally "see" God, but in choosing to "remember Thee" he is choosing by faith to "see" God. As Paul said now in these mortal, temporal bodies, "we walk by faith, not by sight." Indeed, earlier Paul had written "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen ("**horizontal vision**"), but at the things which are not seen ("**vertical vision**"); for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18-note)

**I remember Thee** - This is one key to battling recurring despair, despondency or depression. What does the psalmist remember about God? He does not specifically say in this verse but read the following lines (especially Psalm 42:8). The **what** is not as important as the **Who!** When we set our minds on the things above ("**Vertical Vision**" - Col 3:2-note cp Col 3:1-note), the things of this world (including despair) "[will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.](#)" ([Pause and sing "Turn Your Eyes on Jesus"](#)) Peter says it this way "Therefore, gird (prepare) your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (aorist imperative) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ("**Vertical Vision**"). (1 Peter 1:13-note) So say to your soul, "Soul, remember God. Remember His attributes. Remember His power. Remember His imminent return! Remember that your Jesus Who holds the entire universe together by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3-note) is able to hold you in the midst of the raging storm! Jesus came to turn our darkness into light and to transform our despair into hope. Indeed, the One Who holds the universe intact will never lose His grip on you!"

Recommended Resource for Restoring Your "Vertical Vision" - [Fix Your Eyes on Jesus by Anne Ortlund](#)

We see this same spiritual dynamic at work in the life of the "weeping prophet" Jeremiah who recorded...

So I say, "My strength has perished, And so has my hope from the LORD."

19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness.

20 Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me.

21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.

22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.(Lam 3:18-25)

Notice how Jeremiah recalled to his mind truths about God, specifically His ceaseless lovingkindnesses (plural - cp the psalmist's remembrance of Jehovah's lovingkindness in Ps 42:8) and His never failing compassions (plural!) And so in this short passage we see the prophet traverse from the slough of despond ("my hope" perished ~ "**horizontal vision**") to the fountain of hope ("therefore I have hope" ~ "**vertical vision**") because he choose to remember God. He choose to recall that the anchor of God's faithfulness holds firm in the strongest storms! When you are in despair the last place you want to go is to the Word of God (and the God of the Word), but it is then that we must cry out for His help in time of need (just in the nick of time, cp Heb 4:16+ = "appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it" - Amplified), knowing that even the power to cry out is provided by His all powerful Spirit Who will not allow us to be tested beyond what we are able to endure (read 1 Corinthians 10:13+).

So next time **despair** "knocks", enabled by the Holy Spirit, send Philippians 4:8-9 to "answer the door"....

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell** (present imperative - only possible to obey as we surrender to and depend on the indwelling Spirit) on these things ("**Vertical Vision**"). The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice** (present imperative) these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9+)

**C. S. Lewis** and his older brother, Warren (Warnie), endured several terms at Wynyard, an English boarding school for boys. The headmaster was a cruel man who made life unbearable for everyone there. Decades later, Warnie wrote in his understated dry wit, "I am now sixty-four and a bit, and have never yet been in a situation in which I have not had the consolation of reflecting that at any rate I was better off than I was at Wynyard." Most of us can recall a similar dark and difficult time in our lives and be grateful that we're better off now than we were then (**Ed**: cp "Therefore I remember Thee"). ([The Low Point](#))

**Phil Newton** - Charles H. Spurgeon, the best-known preacher of the 19th century, faced times of melancholy despair. On one such occasion he was taking a holiday and slipped into a Methodist Church for Sunday worship. He said, "I felt at that time very weary, and very sad, and very heavy at heart; and I began to doubt in my own mind whether I really enjoyed the things which I preached to others. It seemed to be a dreadful thing for me to be only a waiter, and not a guest, at the gospel feast." The man conducting the service was an engineer, and rather than developing his own sermon, he had borrowed one of Spurgeon's. He did not know that the London pastor was in his service. As he preached, Spurgeon commented, "The tears flowed freely from my eyes; I was moved to the deepest emotion by every sentence of the sermon, and I felt all my difficulty removed, for the gospel, I saw, was very dear to me, and had a wonderful effect upon my own heart." He later introduced himself to the shocked speaker, and told him that it was just the sermon that he needed to hear [C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography: The Full Years, vol 2, 365-366]. If someone like Spurgeon occasionally struggled with doubts due to his bent of personality, do not be surprised if that happens to you. Like Spurgeon, find your assurance once again in the gospel. (Sermon on Matthew)

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### Look up! (J. R. Miller, "Unto the Hills!" A Meditation on Psalm 121)

"I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1-2

It is good always to look up. Thousands of people dwarf their lives, and hinder the possibilities of growth in their souls—by looking downward. They keep their eyes ever entangled in mere earthly sights, and miss the glories of the hills that pierce the clouds, and of the heavens that bend over them!

A story is told of a boy who one day found a gold coin on the street. Ever after this—he kept his eyes on the ground as he walked, watching for coins. During a long lifetime, he found a good number of coins—but meanwhile he never saw the flowers and the trees which grew in such wondrous beauty everywhere; he never saw the hills, the mountains, the sweet valleys, the picturesque landscapes; he never saw the blue sky. To him, this lovely world meant only a dusty road, dreary and unbeautiful, merely a place in which to look for coins.

This really is the story of the life of most people. They never lift their eyes off the earth! They live only to gather money, to add field to field, to scheme for power or to find pleasure. Or, if their quest is a little higher, it is still only for earthly things. They never lift up their eyes to God! There is no blue sky in their picture. They cherish no heavenly visions. They are without God in the world.

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Colossians 3:1-2

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## **I will look up! (James Smith, "Daily Bible Readings for the Lord's Household")**

"In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice. In the morning I lay my requests before You — and I will look up!" Psalm 5:3

This was the Psalmist's determination in the morning — and it should be ours.

Preserved and protected through the night — we should look up with gratitude, and praise our God for His goodness.

Aware of our dependence and needs — we should look up and beg mercies of our Almighty God for the new-born day.

Sensible of our foes and dangers — we should look up and pray to be kept, guided, and sanctified by our ever-present God.

If we look within — it will dispirit us;  
if we look around — it may distract us;  
if we look back — it may awaken fears;  
if we look forward — it may arouse foreboding!  
But if we look UP to God — it will preserve . . .

the head from swimming,  
the heart from sinking,  
the feet from slipping, and  
the hands from hanging down!

Beloved, let us look up!  
There our loving Father is!  
There our interceding Savior is!  
There all our supplies are!  
There our everlasting home is!

Let others look where they will, "I will look up!"

If we look up to God in faith — then He will look down upon us in mercy; and looking, He will supply all our needs!

## **Look up! (James Smith, "A New Year's Motto" 1865)**

"Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near!" Luke 21:28

The time of his second coming approaches, and it befits his disciples to think of that event, and diligently prepare for it. But if we do not witness the descent of our Lord in the clouds — death will soon come and usher us into his presence; and before that we may be exposed to many and painful troubles, so that the direction given by our Lord to his disciples may be just suitable, "Then look up!"

We are entering upon a new year, we shall have . . .

- new toils,
- new trials,
- new temptations,
- new troubles.

First, the OCCASIONS to which this advice is applicable. There may be national calamities — such as pestilence, famine, or war; but whatever comes upon the nation, the Christians in it should "look up"

There may be persecution — laborers may lose their jobs, cottagers their cottages, and children many of their comforts, for Christ's and conscience' sake. While the sword of the magistrate is sheathed, the pen, the tongue, the frowning countenance — persecutes some; the withholding employment or custom persecutes others; but if persecution should rage against any of us this year, let us "look up."

Providence may frown and throw us into perplexity and difficulty; losses and crosses may become almost our daily lot; we may think that God is turned against us, and that everything is contrary to us; but when our circumstances are most trying, when our souls are ready to faint within us — then let us remember the Lord has engaged for us by promise and by covenant, and let us "look up."

We may be called to change our residences, and leave dear friends and connections behind us; or, what is worse, our friends may be alienated from us, and turn against us; but if every friend frowns upon us, even if father and mother forsake us, or if we be removed to the ends of the earth — let us remember that our God is the same to us, and that he is ever near us; therefore let us "look up."

If death should enter in at our windows, and take away the desire of our eyes with a stroke; if our parents should die, our children be removed, or our wives or husbands be laid in the grave; though lover and friend be removed far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness, still, whatever death may do — let us determine that we will "look up."

If darkness becloud our evidences, obscure our path, and throw its gloom over our minds; if discouragement brood over our souls, or place stumbling-blocks in our way; if all our past experience appear questionable, and our acceptance with God at present doubtful, still let us not give way or yield to despondency — but let us "look up."

If thrown on the bed of sickness, racked with pain and fainting with weakness; if death stand before us, and the grave appear ready for us; if eternity throws its revealing light upon us, or draws back its curtain to us — let us not tremble, or shake with fear, but let us "look up."

We will now notice —

Secondly, the DIRECTION our Savior gives: "Then look up!"

- Do not look back — as Lot's wife did.
- Do not look within — as too many do.
- Do not look around — as David did.

But "look up!" Look up to God — He is your Father, your Friend, your Savior. He can help you. He will help you. He says, "Look unto Me, and be delivered — for I am God!"

Look up for light to guide you — and He will direct your path.

Look up for grace to sanctify you — and the grace of Jesus will be found sufficient for you.

Look up for strength to enable you to do and suffer God's will — and His strength will be made perfect in your weakness.

Look up for comfort to cheer you — and as one whom his mother comforts, so will the Lord comfort you.

Look up for courage to embolden you — and the Lord will give courage to the faint; and to those who have no might — He will increase strength.

Look up for endurance to keep you — and the God who preserves you will enable you quietly to bear the heaviest burden, and silently to endure the most painful affliction.

Look up for providence to supply you — and the jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry; but God shall supply all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Look up in faith — exercising confidence in the Word of a faithful God.

Look up in prayer — asking for what God has graciously promised.

Look up in hope — expecting what you ask in the name of Jesus.

Look up with adoration — and adore the sovereignty, righteousness, and wisdom of God.

Look up constantly — let nothing daunt or discourage you! Rather say, "Our eyes are on the Lord our God until He shows us mercy."

Look up — for this will keep . . .

- the head from swimming,
- the heart from sinking,
- the knees from trembling,
- the feet from slipping, and

- the hands from hanging down!

Well, my friends, what do you say? Will you follow this advice? Will you take this counsel? Will you act upon this direction? He who loves you best, who knows you most, and who always wishes you well — gave it. Take it — and you will never regret it. Act upon it — and you will never repent of it.

It is impossible to say what will happen to us, or what will be required of us this year — but "Look up!" This direction, if properly attended to, will . . .

procure for us all that we need,  
secure us against all that we dread, and  
make us more than a match for all our foes and fears!

Fellow-Christian, are you fearful? "Look up" and hear Jesus saying to you, "Do not be afraid — I Myself will help you!"

Are you discouraged? "Look up" — and your youth shall be renewed like the eagle's, and fresh light, comfort, and courage shall be given to you!

Are you desponding? "Look up" for Jesus never breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax.

Do not look too much at your sin — look most at the infinitely meritorious blood of God's dear Son!

Do not look too much at self — but look at Jesus, who ever lives to make intercession for you in Heaven.

Are you stripped of your comforts, your props, and your goods? Then look up! He who stripped you — loves you! He will be more than all these to you! He will bind up your broken heart, calm your perturbed spirit, cheer your drooping mind, and fill you with his own peace and happiness.

Look up . . .

for all that you need;  
from all that you fear;  
through all that would obstruct your way;  
and notwithstanding all that would deter you from doing so.

Look up every day, saying with David, "In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and will look up!" Psalm 5:3

Look up in every trial, saying "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help: my help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth!"

- Do not look at your sin — it will discourage you!
- Do not look at your self — it will distress you!
- Do not look at Satan — he will bewilder you!
- Do not look to men — they will deceive, or disappoint you!
- Do not look at your trials — they will deject you!

But do as the church did, look up "until the Lord looks down from heaven and sees" (Lamentations 3:50).

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us — looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith!" Hebrews 12:1-2. Look only, look always, look intently, to Jesus; run looking, work looking, fight looking, suffer looking, live looking, and die looking — to Jesus, who is at God's right hand in glory. Oh, look, look, look to Jesus!

"Behold the Lamb of God, who bore  
Your burdens on the tree;  
And paid in blood the dreadful score —  
The ransom due for Thee!

Look to Him till the sight endears  
The Savior to your heart;  
His pierced feet — bedew with tears,  
Nor from His cross depart!

Look to Him till His dying love  
Your every thought control;  
Its vast constraining influence prove,  
O'er body, spirit, soul.

Look to him, as the race you run,  
Your never failing Friend;  
Finish He will, the work begun,  
And grace — in glory end!

## Looking For Jesus James Smith (1842)

"We look for the Savior — the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20

The first Christians kept the second coming of Christ continually in view; they constantly expected it, and are spoken of as "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ," Titus 2:13; Philippians 3:20; as waiting "for God's Son from Heaven, even Jesus, who has delivered us from the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 1:7.

The scriptures always represent the second coming of Christ as sudden and unexpected; "The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them." 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments." Revelation 16:15. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3:10. "Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:42.

The Lord informs us He will come quickly — "Behold, I come quickly!" Revelation 22:7, 12, 20. "The Lord is at hand." Philippians 4:5.

He will come gloriously — "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-11; Dan. 7:9-11. "Behold, the Judge stands before the door." James 5:9; Acts 17:31.

He will come in wrath — hence, the day of His coming is called "the day of wrath," Romans 2:5; "the great day of His wrath." Revelation 6:17.

He will come for salvation — "To those who look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28. "It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Romans 13:11. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith until salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:5-8.

We are warned that in the last days there shall come scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Peter 3:4. These

give heed "to seducing spirits," 1 Tim. 4:1; "being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness — but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:4, 5.

But of the coming of Jesus — Enoch prophesied, Jude 14; Christ Himself preached it, Matthew 16:27; and the church expected it! 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

Believer, are you looking, waiting, and preparing for the coming of Christ? You profess to expect Him — to believe that He will come, both to punish the wicked and reward His servants? "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat!" 2 Peter 3:11-12

The scriptures, which you profess to reverence, exhort you to watch, because you know not the day nor hour wherein the Son of Man comes, Matthew 25:13-30; to be sober, lest that day overtake you as a thief, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-9; to be patient, waiting for Christ, 2 Thessalonians 3:5; to strengthen your hearts, for the



coming of the Lord draws near, James 5:7-11; to be diligent, that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless, 2 Peter 3:14; to "abide in him, that when He shall appear you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 2:28.

Do you believe that you must then stand before His judgment-seat? 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; that judgment must first begin at the house of God? 1 Peter 4:17; that you must give an account of yourself? Romans 14:10-13; that you must be judged and rewarded according to your works? Matt 16:27; 10:41, 42, Romans 2:6; 1 Corinthians 3:8; Ephesians 6:8; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 2:23; 22:12-15. Consider these scriptures, and may the Lord give you understanding.

And you who are careless and indifferent in reference to the second coming of Jesus, I have a word for you. You must witness it — you are deeply interested in it; for, "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him," Revelation 1:7, and shall cry, "Hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Revelation 6:16. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn when "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30.

O sinner! what a state, what a situation will you be in! And yet you are secure, though you have nothing to assure you that you shall not be brought into this situation this day, or this night. Christ will come — He will come as a thief, in a day you think not, and in an hour you are not aware of; for of that day and of that hour knows no man. Matthew 24:36-51; and if that day should find you without Christ, under the law, and living in pleasure — it will fix your doom forever; for then it shall be said, "He who is unjust — let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy — let him be filthy still." Revelation 22:11.

But you who believe your Savior's word, long for His coming, wait His approach, and are preparing to meet your God — happy are you; rejoice, and be exceeding glad. "Now you are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what you shall be; but we know, that when He shall appear, you shall be like Him; for you shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2. "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear — then shall you also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:4.

Now, you are called to suffer with Him; "then, you shall be glorified together." His glory shall be revealed in you, at the manifestation of the sons of God; then shall you be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; then shall you enjoy the adoption, even the redemption of the body. If, then, you hope for such things, see that with patience you wait for them; for "He who shall come will come, and will not tarry." Romans 8:17-26; Hebrews 10:35-38. "Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21. 36

To conclude — Are you living as a part of the Bride of Christ? As not your own — but His? Are you aiming to glorify Him in all things? Are you joining the Church in her cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly"? Revelation 22:20. If so, "at that day you shall say, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9. Then shall you take your place "before the throne of God, and

serve Him day and night in His temple, and He who sits on the throne shall dwell among you. You shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." Revelation 7:15-17. "He who overcomes shall sit down with Jesus on his throne." Revelation 3:21. "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 22:4, 5.

**Look up today, O parched plant!**  
**Charles Spurgeon**

"I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:26

Here is sovereign grace, "I will send down showers." Is it not sovereign, divine mercy--for who can say, "I will send down showers," except God? There is only one voice which can speak to the clouds, and bid them beget the rain, "Who sends down the rain upon the earth? Who scatters the showers upon the green herb? Do not I, the Lord?" Grace is the gift of God--and is not to be created by

man.

It is also needed grace. What would the ground do without showers? You may break the clods, you may sow your seeds--but what can you do without the rain? As absolutely needful, is the divine blessing. In vain you labor--until God bestows the plenteous shower, and sends the needed grace down!

Then, it is plenteous grace. "I will send down showers." It does not say, "I will send them drops," but "showers." So it is with grace. If God gives a blessing, He usually gives it in such a measure that there is not room enough to receive it. Plenteous grace! Ah! we need plenteous grace . . .

to keep us humble,  
to make us prayerful,  
to make us holy,  
to make us zealous,  
to preserve us through this life,  
and at last to land us in heaven!

We cannot do without saturating showers of grace!

Again, it is seasonable grace. "I will send down showers in season." What is your season this morning? Is it the season of drought? Then that is the season for showers. Is it a season of great heaviness and black clouds? Then that is the season for showers. "I will send down showers in season."

And here is a varied grace. "I will give you showers of blessing." The word is in the plural. All kinds of blessings God will send. All God's blessings go together, like links in a golden chain. If He gives converting grace, He will also give comforting grace. He will send "showers of blessing." Look up today, O parched plant--and open your leaves and flowers for a heavenly watering!

## The Expectation of Eternal Life

### William Nicholson, 1862

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, **looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life**"  
Jude 21

This poor world is full of sin, sorrow, pain, and death. If we had this life only — we would be most miserable. But the Christian has an unfailling hope of a holier, happier, sublimer, and more durable world than this. This hope supports him in every scene of earthly conflict and distress.

As the mariner tossed by the storm and tempest, hopes to gain the desired haven;  
as the traveler fatigued by the perils and toils of his journey, hopes to reach his own beloved home;  
as the soldier harassed by conflict in the field of battle, hopes to conquer and to wear the victor's crown  
— so the Christian pilgrim in the midst of his strenuous labors, hopes that he will . . .  
successfully brave all the storms of life,  
finish his course,  
fight the good fight of faith, and  
then lay hold on eternal life in his Father's house above.

How beneficial the advice of the Apostle in the context! He refers to a prediction of Christ's respecting the enemies of Christ and of Christians, "mockers in the last time." etc., verse 17-19. And this has come to pass in the present time. Look around and see. They may be mockers of Christianity — but they have no weight. See their characters described. But Christians are to cleave to Christ, and look for Heaven, verse 20, 21.

#### **I. The Great Object of Christian Expectancy. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."**

1. Believers come to this eternal life immediately after death, and fully after the resurrection of the body.
2. This life will be enjoyed in Heaven. The residence of the ever blessed God, his palace of splendor, the habitation of his holiness, the place where his honor dwells — the dwelling-place of angels and perfected spirits.

It is a place of inexpressible felicity, as it appears from its names. It is called . . .

- a paradise;

- a building from God;
- a mansion of God;
- a heavenly city;
- a better country;
- an unfading inheritance;
- an eternal kingdom;
- an unfading crown of glory;
- peace, rest, and joy of the Lord.

3. It will be a life of complete purity. Sin, in this world, is the great source of estrangement from God — it is that which constantly vexes and distresses the soul. But in Heaven sin can never enter to defile, "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life!" Revelation 21:27.

The Church in its triumphant state shall be faultless, Jude 24; Ephesians 5:26-27.

They shall be "like God;" 1 John 3:2; Psalm 17:15.

4. It will be a life of perfect happiness. There is no perfect happiness in this world. Life here is like the sea — like the atmosphere, and the mutations of weather — calms and storms, sunshine and clouds.

Sorrow is frequently the lot of God's people. Some are afflicted under the hand of God — or mourning the loss of relatives or friends — or sunk into deep adversity. Some are weeping over the sins of others, parents over their children, pastors over their flocks, and Christians over the wickedness of the world.

All the causes of evil will be annihilated in Heaven:

- sin shall distress no more,
- Satan shall tempt no more,
- sickness shall pain no more,
- the tyrant shall oppress no more,
- death shall bereave and destroy no more.

"Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!" Revelation 7:16-17

Their joy will surpass that of the Israelites when they listened to the announcement of Moses, "Your enemies which you see today, you shall see no more forever."

5. It will be a life of substantial honor. They will be raised to a kingdom! "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32. Here on earth, they are counted as lowly and base, but there they will be recognized as the seed-royal of Heaven! What can be received, more than a kingdom? It is the highest dignity known on earth. Who can be higher than a king? — than a priest? "He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father!" Revelation 1:6

It will be a life of honor which conquerors obtain. Crowns of victory are in reserve! "Everlasting joy upon their heads." Here they wear a crown of thorns — but there they will wear a diadem of glory!

It will be an incorruptible crown, not a fading laurel, etc. 1 Corinthians 9:25. No length of time will terminate the dominion of the saints, or tarnish the luster of their crowns. They shall reign forever and ever.

It is called a crown of righteousness, 2 Timothy 4:7. It was purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and is given, wholly for his sake, to none but His redeemed people.

It is a crown of life, meaning they shall never die! "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him!" James 1:12; Revelation 2:10.

It is a crown of gold, Revelation 4:4, to denote the priceless and lasting honor to which they will be advanced, and the superlative wealth of the kingdom which they will possess.

They shall sit upon a throne — the throne of Christ, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne!" Revelation 3:21; that lofty throne, that expansive throne, in which he will make room for all his faithful soldiers.

6. It will be a life of rich enjoyment.

A. Heaven is represented as a feast; "Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast" Matthew 8:11.

B. Heaven is represented as a marriage supper; "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" Revelation 19:9.

C. Heaven is represented as a life of enjoyment in the best society — God himself, angels, and glorified saints.

D. Heaven is represented as enjoyment of the beatific vision of God, when we shall see him face to face, and understand the mysteries of creation, providence, and grace. Then shall light penetrate the soul, and satisfy it, so that whatever in this world was enraped in mystery, shall be transparent and equitable there, while the soul will exclaim, "You have done all things well!"

7. To crown all, it is called eternal life. Most of the Scriptural representations of Heaven are combined with adjectives expressive of endless perpetuity. Hence Heaven is called . . .

- the everlasting kingdom,
- the incorruptible inheritance,
- the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, etc., etc. etc.

If a miser could insure his wealth for eternity, that alone would be Heaven enough for him — but it is his misery when he dies, that he can carry none of his riches away with him.

But he who lays up treasure in Heaven need not fear moth or rust, or thief — all is eternally secure.

There shall be no night there, no danger to be apprehended, no darkness to fear. The glory of God and the Lamb are the light of the celestial city, and the nations of them that are redeemed shall walk in the light thereof.

## **II. The Source of Eternal Life: "The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."**

This is its only source, whatever may be the pretensions of man. The sacred writers uniformly so represent the incarnation and the ignominious sufferings and death of Jesus, as the source of eternal life. It is so ascribed, because:

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ announced it; and that more clearly than any who had preceded him. See John 3:16, 36. "He has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." He has poured a flood of light upon those dark things. How limited was the knowledge of Socrates and Plato, and all the sages of Greece and Rome respecting a future state. But it was amply revealed by Christ.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ has procured it. He by fulfilling the law, enduring its curse, dying the death of the cross — satisfied all the claims of Divine justice, and unbarred for man the gates of paradise. His precious blood falling upon the soul, is the believer's passport to endless life! 1 John 5:11, 12.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ bestows it, John 17:22. Eternal life is his gift. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish — ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ prepares us for it. By his Spirit he enlightens the mind to perceive and feel that sin has separated from God, and will debar from eternal life. He leads the soul to the cross of Christ — there it is stripped of vileness, and robed with Divine acceptance. The Spirit carries on the work begun, and performs it unto the day of the manifestation of the sons of God

## **III. The Conduct of the Expectants of Eternal Life.**

1. They are to keep themselves in the love of God. This supposes they are already interested in the love of God, and they love him. "Keep yourselves in the love of God!" This supposes danger — danger of the loss of the Divine favor. To keep in the love of God, the Apostle recommends:

(1.) Faith; verse 20. "Build yourself up in your most holy faith." What is this but constant dependence upon Christ for salvation; resting upon the only sure foundation. This foundation is stable and durable; so are those who rest upon it. It is the living stone, 1 Peter 2:4, imparting life, energy, communion, hope, and happiness to all who rest upon it. Building implies progression.

(2.) Prayer, verse 20. "Praying in the Holy Spirit." See also Romans 8:26. Prayer fetches down omnipotence from Heaven, to the otherwise poor, feeble Christian.

By these two, building, etc., praying, etc., the Christian is made strong to resist temptations, from every source, not to depart from the living God.

2. They are to look for Eternal life.

(1.) They are to expect it as matter of absolute certainty. It is no visionary object, but is founded on an immutable basis, Titus 1:2. Christ not only had the words of eternal life, but the title-deeds of that vast inheritance, and has transmitted them to all his followers, and those who believe now enter into rest.

(2.) They are to look for it with humble expectation and deep abasement.

(3.) They should wait for it with joyful and intense desire.

(4.) They should live in a daily state of preparation for it. So that when they hear the announcement, "Behold the bridegroom comes!" they may be ready and go forth to meet him!

## Keep Looking Up! George Everard, 1881

A sailor lad was climbing the mast for the first time. After a while he began to grow dizzy, and feared lest he might fall. "What shall I do?" he anxiously cried out to the captain, who was watching him from below. "Keep looking up, my boy!" was the answer he received. He obeyed, and soon lost his fear, so that he was able steadily to move along the rigging.

In another and a more important sense, this direction is applicable to every Christian. Whatever your position is, whatever are your fears or dangers — keep looking up! Think of God, of your soul and its salvation, of Christ, and of forgiveness through Him. Lift up your eyes to Him who dwells in the heavens. Expect help from above. Your Father is ever ready to support you. Your Almighty Savior is ever pleading your cause. Therefore you can never be disappointed. The look of faith will ever have a response from the heart and hand of God.

**Keep looking up!** This is what David did. He was surrounded by foes and dangers. He was hated by Saul, who sought him every day to kill him. He was often in the greatest peril, but his spiritual sight was ever heavenward. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who has made Heaven and earth." "My eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net." Nor did he look in vain. The Lord delivered him from all his enemies, and set him upon the throne of the kingdom. He was ever with him, and prospered him on every side.

**Keep looking up!** This is what Jehoshaphat did. He was compassed about by a great host of adversaries. Various powers united together for the destruction of Jerusalem; but Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord. He gathered the people for prayer and supplication; and he kept looking up for help. He said: "O our God, will You not exercise judgment upon them? For we have no might to stand against this great company that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You!" 2 Chronicles 20:12. And God regarded him, and sent him deliverance — before a blow was struck, the confederacy was broken up and the army scattered. The people had but to rejoice and praise the Lord.

**Keep looking up!** Be sure that the Lord cannot disregard the upward glance of the weakest of His children as they turn to Him.

Imagine a little child in fear and trembling. Perhaps the peril is great, and he cannot speak, but he turns a wistful look for help to his father or mother who is near. Would any parent disregard such a look? Would not the father or mother run to support the child who thus appealed to their love? And shall it not be so with our Father in Heaven? Has He not far more than any parent's love? Will He refuse to help and comfort the one who thus relies upon Him?

**Keep looking up!** Here is a message for the anxious, seeking soul. You desire salvation. You know something of your sin and misery. You feel that you are lost and wretched and undone. But all seems dark and hopeless. But look up.

Look straight up to Jesus! Not to your faith, not to your repentance, not to anything in yourself or anything you can do; looking downwards to these will make you wretched — therefore look up to Jesus only. He died for your sins, and now pleads your cause. He saves to the uttermost, the greatest sinners, and rejects none who trust in Him.

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,  
There is life at this moment for you!"

**Keep looking up!** Here is a message for a believer who would hold fast and make progress in grace and holiness. From first to last,

the strength is in Jesus, and not in yourself. You have no power to stand for a moment, or to advance one step along the narrow way. But keep looking up, and all will be well.

You will be kept from falling. While Peter looked to Jesus, he was able to walk in safety over the rough and boisterous waves; but when he looked off from Him he began to sink. So fix your eye constantly on the Savior.

He can bring you through a thousand temptations;  
He can hold you up and keep you safe;  
He can strengthen you with might by His Spirit in the inner man;  
He can endue you with wisdom and power for every call of duty;  
He can make you, day by day, more holy and more like Himself in all things.

As you keep looking to Him, He will transform you into His lovely image by the renewing of your mind. "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

**Keep looking up!** Here is a message for the pilgrim who is cast down and sorely tried by the difficulties and sorrows of the way. You are passing through much tribulation. You have to endure days and nights of suffering, or perhaps it may be you have to witness the failing health of one dear to you. Or perhaps your means are very insufficient, and you look in vain for friends to assist you.

But whatever is the trial — look above it. Don't fix your eye on that bitter trial, on that dark providence — but on Him who sits above the water-floods. When you can't see His hand — trust His heart! Be sure that there is a silver lining in the dark cloud, and that redeeming love has appointed all your sorrow. Christ Himself is ever near you. He is by your side, close by you in tender pity and compassion. He will never fail you, nor ever forsake you. He will make all things work together for your good. He will bring you through all your wilderness journeys, to His bright House of Glory. Therefore keep looking up.

## The Coming of the Lord, The Crown and Consummation of Spiritual Life

Octavius Winslow

"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1Peter 1:13.

Could this volume close with a theme more appropriate to our subject, or more animating to the believing soul, than the present- the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the crown and consummation of the Spiritual life of His saints? There are three revelations of the Lord Jesus spoken of in the Scriptures, with each one of which our spiritual life is essentially connected. His first revelation is His coming in the flesh to accomplish the salvation of His Church. His second, is His spiritual revelation in His saints. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." His third revelation is that which is now to engage our thoughts. "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Such is our present subject- the Second Coming of Christ to complete and crown the spiritual edifice of His kingdom in His people. Between His first and second Coming there are strong points of analogy, as there are of contrast. These, however, will incidentally appear in the progress of our subject. We have only to premise- to prevent disappointment- that we are now concerned with the fact, and not with the mode of our Lord's Coming. Our object is simply to treat the subject, not so much in its relation to the structure of prophecy, as in its connection with the perfection and crown of the spiritual and glorious life of the Church-the 'grace'-that is, the glory- that is to be 'brought unto it at His revelation.' The Coming of the Lord in His glory, is the Hope- "the blessed Hope" -of the Christian Church, even as the coming of the Lord in His humiliation was the long-predicted and looked for hope of the Jewish Church. A Savior to come has in all ages and dispensations been the expectation of God's people. The terms which set forth this doctrine are decided and impressive. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I ask God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a notable and instructive fact that, very rarely is the event of the believer's death- in other words, the believer's going to Christ- employed in the sacred writings as an argument to holiness, or an incentive to preparation; while, on the other hand, the Appearing of the Lord- or Christ's coming to him- is constantly set forth as a motive to diligence and watchfulness, comfort and prayer.

But let us not be misunderstood. We are far from looking with a cold and indifferent eye upon the fact of the Christian's going to Christ. It is indescribably blessed, and ought never to be foreign to our thoughts. "To die is gain." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ." The thought that, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, my 'soul may be

as the chariots of Amminadab,' bearing me into the presence of the 'King in His beauty' is a solemn and sanctifying one. The death of the believer is a covenant mercy, as much in the covenant of grace as any covenant blessing. "All things are yours- death." It is therefore the privilege of the Christian to die; and he may be assured of this, that, as his death is in the covenant, so the covenant has provided for all the circumstances and exigencies of the impressive event. 'Grace' dying grace- will be brought unto him in death, even as 'grace' glorifying grace- will be 'brought unto him at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'

But, the pole-star of the believer is the Coming of the Lord. Thus is he taught to look above and beyond death- to Him who "has abolished death," and His coming as the "Resurrection and the Life" of all who believe in Him. The adaptation of this doctrine-the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ to the constitution of our being, will appear obvious to every individual who has studied the philosophy of human nature. Is death, we ask, an object of dread to the natural mind in general? Far from it! With no event in human history is man more familiar- none does he less fear- and for none is so little preparation made- as death. It is a fact patent to every mind that men brave death in almost every form from considerations the most puerile and insignificant. Challenge their bravery, insult their people, and they will hasten to vindicate the one at the cannon's mouth, and resent the other at the point of the sword. Death is not the 'king of terror' to such. Thus, we may urge it as a motive to conversion with all the fervor and eloquence we can command, and yet fail to inspire one alarmed feeling, or rouse one serious thought.

But, change the theme- hold forth the Second Coming of the Lord to judge the quick and the dead- portray the august scene- the great white throne- the descending judge- the unfolding books- the trumpet sound- the graves opening- countless myriads crowding up to the judgment seat- the solemn decision- the shrieks of the wicked, rising far above ..... the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds. "Mountains! rocks! fall on us!" -and you have touched a chord of feeling, and have unsealed a fount of thought, which the most vivid and impressive presentation of death would never have effected.

But let us direct our thoughts to this august event as it relates to the final glory of the saints. Not to speak prophetically, what are some of its most prominent and impressive features? The Coming of the Lord will be Personal. With the Personality of Christ we deal too faintly. Oh, it is not with the gospel of Christ or with the Church of Christ- or with the Ordinances of Christ or with the Ministers of Christ- we have mainly to do; but with CHRIST HIMSELF! "Come unto ME, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is the gracious invitation. Oh truth most divine! oh privilege most precious! that teaches me to repair- not to a creed, or to a dogma, or to a system- but, to a PERSON: that Person God in my nature! One like myself- a personal Savior, and personal Friend- "touched with the feeling of my infirmities."

Now such will be the revelation of Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. It will not be a spiritual, but a Personal, revelation of our Lord. The angels, at His ascension, preached the Personal Coming of Christ. "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." Blessed hope! That same Jesus- in the same form will come Himself to raise His saints, and present them as a "glorious Church" to His Father.

But, oh, how changed! No mock-majesty invests Him now! no thorn-crown is upon His head! no reedy-scepter is in His hand! no look of anguish shades His brow! He comes in His proper personal glory, and before His face the heaven and the earth flee away!

The revelation of the Lord will be Visible. "Every eye shall see Him." Magnificent spectacle! Appalling thought! -magnificent to those who loved, confessed, and served Him here below: appalling to those who, living and dying as Balaam, take up his melancholy lamentation- "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near." Oh how the imagination droops its wing in the attempt to soar to the splendor and sublimity of that spectacle- Christ visible to every eye!

Pause, then, for a moment, and contemplate, with the eye of faith, or if you have no faith, with the eye of imagination, this tremendous scene. Look at that point, far away in the ethereal regions, where the gradually lessening form of our Savior disappeared from the gaze of His disciples, when He ascended to heaven. In that point see an uncommon, but faint and undefined, brightness just beginning to appear. It has caught the roving eye of yon careless gazer, and excited his curiosity. He points it out to a second, and a third. A little circle soon collects, and various are the conjectures which they form respecting it. Similar circles are formed, and similar objections made, in a thousand different parts of the world. But conjecture is soon to give place to certainty- awful, appalling, overwhelming certainty. While they gaze, the appearance, which had excited their curiosity, rapidly approaches, and still more rapidly brightens. Some begin to suspect what it may prove; but no one dares to give utterance to his suspicions. Meanwhile the light of the sun begins to fade before a brightness superior to his own. Thousands see their shadows cast in a new direction, and thousands of hitherto careless eyes look up at once to discover the cause. Full clearly they see it; and now new hopes and fears begin to agitate their breasts. The afflicted and persecuted servants of Christ begin to hope that the predicted, long-expected day of their deliverance is arrived. The wicked, the careless, the unbelieving, begin to fear that the Bible is about to prove no idle tale. And now fiery shapes, moving like streams of lightning, begin to appear indistinctly amid the bright, dazzling cloud which comes rushing down as on the wings of a whirlwind. At length it reaches its destined place. It pauses: then, suddenly unfolding, discloses at once a great white throne, where sits- starry, resplendent, in all the glories of the Godhead- the Man Christ Jesus. Every eye sees Him; every heart knows Him.

Too well do the wretched, unprepared inhabitants of earth now know what to expect, and one universal shriek of anguish and despair rises up to heaven, and is echoed back to earth. But louder, far louder, than the universal cry, now sounds the last trumpet; and far above all is heard the voice of the Omnipotent, summoning the dead to arise and come to judgment. New terrors now assail the living on every side, no, under their very feet, the earth heaves as in convulsions; graves open, and the dead come forth; while, at the same moment, a change, equivalent to that occasioned by death, is effected by Almighty power on the bodies of the living. Their mortal bodies put on immortality, and are thus prepared to sustain a weight of glory or of wretchedness which flesh and blood could not endure. Meanwhile, legions of angels are seen, darting from pole to pole, gathering together the faithful servants of Christ from the four winds of heaven, and bearing them aloft to meet the Lord in the air, where He causes them to be placed at His own right hand, preparatory to the sentence which is to award to them everlasting life.

Christian, if you would gain more and greater victories over the world than you have ever done, bring this scene often before the eye of your mind, and gaze upon it until you become blind to all earthly glory. He who gazes long at the sun becomes unsusceptible of impressions from inferior luminaries; and he who looks much at the Sun of Righteousness, will be little affected by any alluring object which the world can exhibit.

It will follow from this exceedingly graphic description that the Coming of the Lord will be a visible spectacle- a spectacle seen by every eye; but especially and more gloriously so to the enraptured vision of the saints. "Behold, He comes With clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him." This is not a minor feature of the august event; it is one which the believing mind delights to anticipate.

A Savior seen is an object both to faith and sense. A believing sight of Christ is the spiritual life of the soul. Until He is thus seen, He must be an unknown and an unapplied Savior. The uniform teaching of the Bible is consonant with this truth. "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Responsive to the divine invitation of the Old Testament is the evangelist's invitation of the New. "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And all this harmonizes with the writing of the Apostles- "Looking unto Jesus."

Such is the action of faith. Looking to Christ is believing in Christ. It was by a look- a look of faith- that the serpent-stung Israelite was healed. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Oh what a guilt-removing, heart-cheering, soul-saving truth is this! Penitent sinner! a look of faith at Jesus will bring an immediate and free salvation to your soul. However distant the Object or dim the sight, one glance of Christ is life! Sensible of the moral virus circulating through your entire being- made to know the plague of your own heart arrived at the end of all human remedies- like the poor woman in the gospel, having "spent your all on physicians, and are nothing bettered, but rather grown worse"- now behold the Lamb of God! look and live!- look and be forever healed of your plague!

All your merit is in Christ all your salvation is in Christ: all your help is in Christ. "Christ is all, and in all," of your hope of heaven. And this salvation is yours on one condition only- that you receive, and do not merit it; that you accept, and do not purchase it. It is the free- unpurchased and unpurchasable- gift of God. "By grace are you saved." "It is of faith that it might be by grace." "By the works of the law shall no man living be justified." Oh, if you, a poor sin-laden soul- longing to find rest will but cast overboard the oar of your own doings, with which you are 'toiling in rowing' to get to heaven, and accept in faith the finished work of Christ, that weary soul of yours soon would find the rest for which it sighs!

But this first saving sight of Christ is the commencement of a series of yet clearer, more sanctifying and assimilating views of the same ineffable Object. The history of spiritual life- and this is one of its brightest 'lights'- is a continuous "looking unto Jesus." It is a looking to Jesus, and learning; looking to Jesus, and admiring; looking to Jesus, and loving; looking to Jesus, and obeying; looking to Jesus, and suffering; living and dying, still looking unto Jesus, until the dim but ravishing vision of earth is changed for the full, beatific vision of heaven!

This will be the "grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ"- the unveiled sight of our glorified Redeemer. "We shall see Him as He is." To have seen Him by faith in His humiliation was a marvellous, soul-saving spectacle: but, to see Jesus in His glory- our true Joseph- "taken from prison and from judgment," and highly exalted with 'a name which is above every name,' coming in the clouds of heaven, escorted by angels, encircled by saints, and on His head the jeweled diadem of the universe, oh, this will be a spectacle, transcending and eclipsing all others! What a sanctifying effect should this hope have upon our mind! what a molding, unearthly influence should it exert upon our life! "Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He (Christ) is pure." Thus the doctrine of the Coming of the Lord is one of the most practical, as one of the most consolatory, truths of the Bible. It is impossible fully to believe it, much less to receive it in the heart, and be insensible to its Christ-endearing and Christ-assimilating power. Surely the believer, whose heart is in heaven where Christ its treasure is, will be in frequent and close communion with his absent Lord; and the Church, as a Body, 'looking for and hastening unto the Coming of the Lord,' will long for the cry that shall break the stillness of the midnight hour- "Behold, the BRIDEGROOM comes; go out to meet Him!"

Lord, may I be found waiting and watching and praying for Your appearing! To see You, be this the ardent desire, the highest



ambition of my soul: and whether I cross the river to come to You, or You do cross the river to come to me, let my lamp be daily trimmed and brightly burning, lest, "coming suddenly, You find me sleeping."

We can only allow ourselves a passing glance at two events consequent upon the Coming of the Lord, which must ever be radiant with hope, and replete with a soothing and sanctifying power, to the Christian mind- the first, the believer's Resurrection. This is "the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." This is termed "the First Resurrection," a thousand years intervening between it and the Second. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Could we fix your mind upon a blessing connected with the Coming of the Lord more glorious and precious than this?

The Resurrection of Christ was the crown and consummation of His humiliation; the Resurrection of the Christian will be the crown and consummation of his glory- the edifice of his spiritual life will then receive the 'top-stone, amid the shoutings of grace, grace unto it! "Blessed is the pen" -so wrote an aged saint nearing her heavenly flight "and blessed the heart that indites it, that gives one cheering view of the mighty blessings that await the sleeping dead! The dust of the Christian reposes in quietude until the voice of Jesus rouses the slumberer perfected in His own beauty. Happy Christian! your journey may be a thorny one, and 'the last enemy' may be even now approaching; but, courage! the time is coming when this identical body- re-united to the soul- will be raised a glorious body- the soul increasing in knowledge, beauty, and bliss, through the countless ages of eternity. Oh the glory and the happiness of that moment, who can fully describe! Lord, increase my faith!" (Mary Winslow)

Such is the animating influence of a simple faith in the hope of the Resurrection, and such the spiritual breathing which that hope inspires! Who would not strive after holiness, "if by any means"- by the most strenuous exertions- he might, with the Apostle, "attain unto the resurrection of the dead;" and, with all who have departed this life in the Lord, have part in the First Resurrection. The re-union and the recognition of the saints stand high up in the catalogue of blessings synchronizing with this revelation of Jesus Christ.

One of the saddest and bitterest sorrows of earth is the separation, by death, from those we love. Oh the pang of receiving the last sigh- of catching the last look- of listening to the last word-of one who was to us in life more precious than life itself! But, the gospel unveils the hope of a re-union, and even before the risen body- of a recognition of all the holy dead! "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.... Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Who longs not for the "grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ"?

"Oh thrilling thought, that I shall be  
With Him who shed His blood for me,  
Where nothing from Him can sever!  
Where I, with sainted hosts above,  
Overshadowed by the Holy Dove,  
Shall banquet on His boundless love,  
And know that word- 'forever'.

"Oh thrilling thought, to see Him shine,  
For evermore to call Him mine!  
With Heaven-all Heaven-before me;  
To stand where angel myriads gaze,  
Amid the illimitable blaze,  
While He the Godhead full displays  
To all the sons of glory."

And now will come the crown and consummation of our spiritual life! Unshaded by a cloud- uneclipsed by an object- it will shine forth as the sun in its meridian glory, ever deepening, ever widening with its new orbit of life and knowledge, of happiness and splendor. No shadows will dim it no doubts will disturb it- no fears will ruffle it- no sin will taint it now; but, lost in the Infinite Ocean "Where flows this river down to us," it will be swallowed up in God, and "God Shall Be All in All!"

Be watchful; be diligent be holy; for the Coming of the Lord draws near! The events flow transpiring in the world's history indicate its approach. The "signs of the times" are pregnant with profound and solemn significance. The 'fig-tree' blossoms! The Jews are hastening to their own land- the Turkish power is drying up- the nations of Europe are arming- earthquakes, and judgments, and rumors of war are, to the intelligent and observant eye- if not proximate signs of the Lord's Coming- yet are indices of a most ominous and significant character! "When these things begin to come to pass, then LOOK up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near." Be this our holy and constant attitude- under all circumstances looking up, waiting and watching our Lord's appearing.

"Look up! when all around is bright,

And sunshine gilds each day;  
When every earthly, sweet delight,  
Is strewn along the way.

"Look up! and bless the God above,  
Let gratitude arise;  
Forget not Him, who in His love  
Your every need supplies.

"Look up! when all is darkness round,  
Your heart with grief oppressed;  
When sorrow's darkest shadows drown  
The joys within your breast.

"Look up! in earnest, faithful prayer  
All is in mercy given;  
Your every grief, your every care,  
Is meted out in Heaven.

"Look up to Jesus! who has shed  
His precious blood for thee;  
Oh, raise your weary, drooping head,  
And His salvation see!

"Look up! for strength and heavenly might  
Upon your Savior wait;  
And He shall make your Shadows Bright,  
And crooked places straight.

"Look up! when death is hastening on  
When life is almost over;  
The victory then will soon be won,  
And joys for evermore!

"Look up! by steadfast faith and see  
The land of holy rest,  
Where saints through all eternity  
Shall be with Jesus blest.

"Look up! and hail your Coming Lord  
He comes to call for you;  
To burst your chain-to break your cord,  
And set His prisoner free!"

"Until the Day breaks, and the shadows flee away, I will get to the Mountain of Myrrh, and to the Hill of Frankincense."

## **The Christian on His Watch-tower** **George Everard, 1866**

In rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah's workmen combined a triplet of duties — watching, working, praying. With a weapon in the one hand, they guarded against their foes. With a trowel in the other hand, they labored at their work. With a heart toward Heaven, they prayed to their God.

The servants of Christ must do likewise: it is the Master's own teaching. "Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It is like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch." (Mark 13:33, 34.) On the first of these duties, let me here address a few words of counsel, and reserve the two latter for the following chapter.

Watch against sin. You have three great foes whom you are pledged to renounce — the world, the flesh, and the devil — but sin is

the spear or the arrow by which alone any one of them can injure you. Therefore, if you watch against sin, you watch against all.

Be on your guard, because of the hidden peril of sin. The bird sees not the net set for her destruction — nor the fish the hook beneath the tempting bait. Alike unseen at the time, is the danger by which the sinner is afterwards overtaken. What did Eve know of the untold wretchedness that would follow her disobedience? Or the Israelites, led into sin by Moabite women, of the thousands that would be slain that very day? Or, when they murmured, of the serpents that would destroy them? Little did Gehazi, carrying away the talents and the clothing, foresee the leprosy that would cleave to him. Nor did Ananias and Sapphira imagine the speedy discovery that would follow their agreement in falsehood.

Nor, my reader, can you tell, when you yield to the Tempter, when in anything you act against your conscience — to what sore evils and miseries it may lead? It has been said, "The devil leads the sinner down a winding staircase." One step in sin leads to another, and that to one still lower — and you never know where the final end may be.

Before you sin, consider the sorrow of a possible repentance. Of course you may hereafter repent of the sin you now commit — but will not the bitterness of the sorrow connected with it far outweigh any pleasure or profit it may give you now?

Consider also the woe of a possible impenitence. You may repent — but you may not. And if so, what follows? What but the worm that never dies — and the fire that is never quenched?

In watching against sin, be careful never to act the part of the Tempter. Bitter must have been the remembrance of his own crafty persuasiveness, when the old prophet of Bethel heard of the death of the man of God whom he had brought back. And who can tell the bitter remorse that may be felt even here, if by any word or deed of ours, we have turned the scale for death in the history of a fellow-man? "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence comes. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea!"

Be equally guarded in never being persuaded against your conscience. Clever reasons may be suggested for your compliance with the request made to you — the advantage it may afford — the example of others, even Christians — the frailty of youth — the slightness of the sin, etc. But do not hearken. Have the courage to say "No!" and stick to it — and you will gain a great victory — you are one of God's heroes. "Blessed is the man who endures temptation."

"Flee youthful lusts." Mark the expression. "Flee" as from a house infected with the plague! Flee, as from a serpent whose poison is death. In thought, word, and deed — be pure, be chaste. Say "good bye" forever to any companion in whose society you are not safe from allusions to evil. Keep far from any place where there may be danger. Be like Joseph. Utterly abhor all such iniquity. Say, "How shall I do this great wickedness — and sin against God?"

Shrink from the least approach to profane conversation. There is nothing manly about such a way of speaking. The noblest spirits the world has ever known, have cherished the most profound reverence for the Most High God.

Watch against pride of every kind. Boasting speech, arrogance, self-glorying — little befit a follower of the Lamb. Be not proud of wit — or wealth; of your person — or bodily strength. A very small worm may soon destroy your pleasant gourd. Like Jonah's, it may wither in a night. More than all other, guard against spiritual pride. Keep on the low ground. Do not think that you have reached a higher standard of knowledge or of grace than others. Be you content to walk in the old paths, to keep low at Christ's footstool, to love your fellow-Christians of every name, and spend your life in doing all the good you can.

Watch against the indulgence of any wrong temper. Avoid ruffling your own spirit or disturbing the comfort of those about you. Do not be irritated if others do not act always as you wish. Expect many contrary winds. Check yourself at once, when you find passion rising — keep it down with a high hand. Do not be sarcastic, or sullen, or silent — when something is amiss. Try to overcome that pettishness which is often worse than sudden anger — a sitting still for half-an-hour without speaking a word; the unkind look, the refusal to be pacified, the sharp, curt "yes," or "no."

Nor is it fitting that a Christian should manifest a cold, frozen manner. Natural temperament has much to do with this; but surely it is more Christ-like to manifest love, as well as feel it. An icy chilliness deadens sympathy and cuts up by the root many of life's purest pleasures. It hinders usefulness and puts a stumbling block in the way of young inquirers. Far better is it to live in Italy, than Siberia. The warm sun of kindness is better every way, than the frost of harshness and indifference.

With reference to temper, let me remind you to be considerate for the feelings of servants and dependents. They are of the same flesh and blood as yourself, and you are bound so to regard them. None can tell what disquietude is caused, and harm done by young people being harsh, exacting, or dictatorial to those about them. Instead of this, be kindly and forbearing. Do all you can to make them happy, and to win them for Christ. Remember, a servant brought to repentance and faith, is a soul saved from Hell, and another jewel in the crown of the Redeemer.

Keep off the border land between right and wrong. Fear the least sin more than the greatest suffering. Maintain a conscience void of

offence. Reckon no sin to be a light matter. Little acts of dishonesty, of selfishness, of neglect, the love of dress, petty deceits, half untruths — who can tell how great the guilt of these things in the sight of our Judge? "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults."

### Watch for the Lord's appearing.

The right position for every Christian is that named by the Apostle, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ!" Apart from all disputed questions, the coming of Christ is the great object of hope and expectation. Ever has it been the cry of His Church, and never should it be more so than now, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Though we may rejoice that His servants are carrying the Gospel into all lands, though many come from east and west to sit down in His kingdom — yet, side by side with this, error abounds and unbelief spreads wide in nations and in Churches that are called by His name. Well, then, is it that the young Christian should stand on his watch-tower, eagerly looking for that glorious day, as the Jewish watchmen would look out for the first beams of the rising sun.

"That day" will reveal much of the mystery of God's dealings with our world, and put an end forever to all that opposes itself against the Lord and His Christ. The thought of "that day" will likewise animate you to the exercise of every Christian grace and duty. Regarding Christ as near at hand, you will . . .

- guard against all that may offend His all-searching eye,
- diligently employ the talents He commits to you, and
- be patient in suffering, knowing that in a little while, the days of your mourning shall be ended.

Perhaps in nothing will this spirit of watchfulness give plainer guidance than as to the Christian's separation from the world. Twice does our Lord speak of His own, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." And so is it written in James, "True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this to keep himself unspotted from the world." And again, "Don't you know that friendship of the world, is enmity with God?"

But the difficult problem is — How can the Christian practically manifest this separation? How far may you mix in general society? Where can you draw the line between one scene of recreation and another? Which invitations shall you accept — and which decline? What deference is due to the wishes of parents, when they conflict with your own conscientious scruples? How may you perform all the social duties that pertain to your position in life — and yet live in deed and in truth as a citizen of the heavenly Zion?

These are questions by no means easy to be answered. It seems to me clearly impossible to lay down any rules that will determine all such cases. Each case requires prayerful consideration and a desire to please God and not self.

But may not the subject of Christ's return afford a clue to direct you? It is clearly your duty to watch and pray always, to have your lamps trimmed, to be ready at any hour for the Bridegroom's approach. You cannot, therefore, safely frequent any scenes where this would be impossible.

It is likewise your duty never in any company to be ashamed of Christ, but to be prepared, as occasion may demand, boldly to confess His name before men — remembering that only thus can you receive the promise that He will confess your name at His coming before His Father and the Holy angels. If, therefore, from any place the name of Christ and the subject of religion is banished by common consent — is that the right position for one who professes to love Him as their Lord and Savior?

It is moreover your duty and privilege, in anticipation of the joyful welcome Christ will bestow upon the faithful when He appears, to rise far above mere morality — even . . .

- to live as strangers and pilgrims here,
- to keep yourselves in the love of God,
- to witness for Christ by a very self-denying life,
- to utilize time and means, strength of body and spirit,
- to be active in your Master's service.

Whatever, therefore, interferes with this — to you is sin. "To him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin." If, therefore, by late hours you turn recreation from its proper intention of refreshing you for other work, if you thus over-tax strength and hinder devotion, if you use your Lord's money to no profit, if you waste your substance in dress or luxury — are you not sinning against Christ, and marring the effectiveness of your service for Him?

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things." "The end of all things is at hand — be therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching; truly I say unto you, He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to eat, and will come forth and serve them."

#### PRAYER.

O God, my Father in Christ, I come to ask You for a watchful spirit. Teach me to avoid the very least approach to evil. Give me a tender conscience. Keep me from every wrong temper and disposition. Keep me from sin in thought, word, or deed. I ask You also to prepare me for the great day of Christ's appearing. May I cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. May I purify myself, through Your Spirit, even as Christ is pure. And O my Father, keep me from all the snares and allurements of this present evil world. Keep me far from the brink of danger, and very near to Yourself. In all doubtful matters, give me heavenly wisdom, that I may know what things I ought to do — and give me grace faithfully to perform the same. When this world and all within it shall be destroyed, grant that I may be found among Your elect, safe in Your kingdom forever. Hear me, O my Father, and fulfill all my petitions, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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**WATCHING AND WAITING** (Scriptures that speak of "Vertical Vision") - This thought would give me hope, and through my struggle I would eagerly wait until my change comes. I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. And so my soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. So I will wait for the LORD Who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. I will even look eagerly for Him. I will watch expectantly for the LORD. I will wait for the God of my salvation, waiting expectantly for God's Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who delivers us from the wrath to come. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait (in great anticipation and patience) for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. For we through (the enabling power of) the Spirit, by faith, are waiting eagerly for the hope (absolute certainty) of righteousness, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (Who promised) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." Maranatha. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Job 14:14, 19:26, 27, Ps 130:6, Titus 2:13-14, Isaiah 8:17, Micah 7:7, 1 Th 1:10, Phil 3:19-20, 1 Cor 15:51-52, 1 John 3:2, Gal 5:5, 1 Cor 1:7, Rev 22:12, 1 Cor 16:22-24)

#### **MARANATHA!**

**OUR LORD,  
COME QUICKLY!**

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**Vertical versus Horizontal Vision** - Years ago, a minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him in front of the service station. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business." If ours is an eternal perspective, we will be gripped by the biblical truth that our brief earthly sojourn is designed to prepare us for an eternal heavenly citizenship. The more we align ourselves with this perspective, the more it will have an impact on our short-term and long-term priorities. (Kenneth Boa)

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**Abram's Bad Example of Horizontal Vision** - Genesis 12:10-20-note gives us an example from Abram's life of choosing "Horizontal Vision" over "Vertical Vision." As Warren Wiersbe says Abram "moved from confidence to fear. When you are in the place of God's choosing, you don't ever need to be afraid; for faith and fear cannot dwell in the same heart (Isa. 12:2; Mark 4:40). The fear of God is the fear that conquers every fear (Ps. 112; Isa. 8:13); but "the fear of man brings a snare" (Prov. 29:25, NKJV). God had repeatedly said "I will" to Abraham, but now Abraham was saying "They will" (Gen. 12:12, italics added). He took his eyes off the Lord and started looking at people." Abram reasoned within himself, rather than praying outside himself. He feared for his life and forgot his right fear of God. He reasoned that Pharaoh would see Sarai's beauty, covet her and kill him to fulfill his lusts. He forgot that God had given him a promise to bless the world through a seed (descendant) from his and Sarai's line, something that could not have occurred if he were killed! In short, he looked at the (possible) problem instead of looking at his Protector!

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**Charles Swindoll** - Our past is like an art gallery. Walking down those corridors of our memory is like walking through an art gallery.

On the walls are all of yesterday's pictures: our home, our childhood, our parents, our rearing, the heartaches, the difficulties, the joys and triumphs as well as the abuses and the inequities of our life. Since Jesus Christ our Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever, then we can take the Christ of today and walk with Him into our yesterday and ask Him to remove the pictures that bring bad or defeating memories. In other words, the Christian can let Jesus invade yesterday and deal with those years of affliction—those years which the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25–26)—and remove those scenes from the corridors of our lives. I have them. You have them. We need to let Him leave the murals that bring pleasure and victory and take down from the walls those things that bring **despair** and defeat. (David: A Man of Passion and Destiny)

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Here is a devotional from [Dennis Fisher](#) that emphasizes the value of "**Vertical Vision**" over "**Horizontal Vision**" -

**Perspective From The Clouds** (Read: Job 3:3-5; 42:5-6) "I have heard of You . . . but now my eye sees You." (Job 42:5) In 1927 the silent film *Wings*, a World War I film about two American aviators, won the first Academy Award for Best Picture. When it was being filmed, production stopped for several days. Frustrated producers asked the director why. He responded: "All we have is blue sky. The conflict in the air will not be as visible without clouds. Clouds bring perspective." He was right. Only by seeing aerial combat with clouds as a backdrop could the viewer see what was really going on. We often wish for blue skies instead of storm clouds. But cloudy skies may reveal God's faithfulness. We gain perspective on how God has been faithful in our trials as we look back on the clouds. At the beginning of his terrible suffering, Job lamented: "May the day perish on which I was born . . . . May a cloud settle on it" (Job 3:3-5). His experience of despair continued for a long time until God spoke. Then Job exclaimed, "I have heard of You . . . but now my eye sees You" (42:5). Job had encountered the sovereign Creator, and that changed his perspective on God's purposes. Do clouds of trouble fill your skies today? Sooner than you think, God may use these clouds to help you gain perspective on His faithfulness.

God, give us wings to rise above  
The clouds of trial that block the sun,  
To soar above gray skies and see  
The love and goodness of Your Son.  
—Sper

Often the clouds of sorrow reveal the sunshine of His face. —Jasper

INSIGHT: In Job 3:3-5, we have what many Bible scholars call Job's soliloquy. After a time of quiet agony, the great Old Testament saint breaks his silence and lets out his anguish. He calls for darkness and then destruction to overwhelm him. Instead of seeing God's light-filled and good creation, Job feels he is living in a world of darkness. But in Job 42:5-6, we see the resolution to Job's conflict. Out of the whirlwind, God challenges Job and points to creation as a witness to His reality. Although he is never told that his sufferings are the result of spiritual warfare from the devil, Job submits to the sovereignty of God and experiences restoration.

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**Dave Branon's** devotional "**Out Of The Darkness**" is based on Psalm 77:1-15 where Asaph writes "I cried out to God . . . . Who is so great a God as our God?" (Psalm 77:1,13). Branon writes "I don't know what desperate situation gripped Asaph, the writer of Psalm 77, but I've heard, and made, similar laments. Over the past dozen years since I lost my daughter, many others who have experienced the loss of a loved one have shared with me heartbreaking sentiments like these: Crying out to God (Ps 77:1). Stretching empty arms heavenward (Ps 77:2). Experiencing troubling thoughts about God because of horrible circumstances (Ps 77:3). Enduring unspeakable trouble (Ps 77:4). Cowering under the feeling of being cast aside (Ps 77:7). Fearing failed promises (Ps 77:8). Fearing a lack of mercy (Ps 77:8). **But a turnaround occurs for Asaph** in Ps 77:10 through a **recollection of God's great works**. Thoughts turn to God's love. To memories of what He has done. To His marvelous deeds of old. To the comfort of God's faithfulness and mercy. To reminders of God's wonders and greatness. To His strength and redemption. **Despair** is real in this life, and answers do not come easily. Yet in the darkness—as we remember God's glory, majesty, power, and love—our despair can slowly subside. Like Asaph, we can rehearse God's acts, especially the salvation He brought through Jesus, and we can return to where we once were—resting gratefully in His mighty love. Lord, we cannot fathom the depth of Your character or the wisdom of Your actions when trouble visits us. Help us to inch our way back into Your arms through a rehearsal of Your goodness and a recollection of Your glorious love.

**Branon** then writes "Remembering the past can bring hope to the present." I would add the qualifier that we must remember the past times when God has moved in our lives, when the hand of the Almighty took hold of our stumbling hand, when in our weakness, we experienced the very real truth that His grace is sufficient (2 Cor 12:9), etc. In other words like the psalmist say "**Therefore I remember Thee!**"

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**A Gift Of Hope** - He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. —Judges 13:5 - When a powerful typhoon swept through the city of Tacloban, Philippines, in 2013, an estimated 10,000 people died, and many who survived found themselves homeless and jobless. Necessities became scarce. Three months later, while the town was still struggling to dig itself out from the destruction, a baby was born on a roadside near Tacloban amid torrents of rain and strong wind. Although the weather brought back painful memories, residents worked together to find a midwife and transport the mother and newborn to a clinic. The baby survived, thrived, and became a symbol of hope during a time of despair. Forty years of Philistine oppression marked a grim period in Israel's national history. During this time, an angel informed an Israelite woman that she would give birth to a special son (Judg. 13:3). According to the angel, the baby would be a Nazirite—a man set apart to God—and would “begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (v.5). The infant, Samson, was a gift of hope born in a troubled time. **Trouble is unavoidable, yet Jesus has the power to rescue us from despair.** Christ was born “to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace” (Luke 1:76-79). Lord, help me to see beyond my circumstances and put my hope in You. All authority and power are Yours. Remind me of Your goodness, and let me rest in Your love. Jesus is the hope that calms life's storms. ([Jennifer Benson Schuldt](#))

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[Dennis Fisher](#) has written a devotional entitled [God's Enduring Word](#) - Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Matthew 24:35 At the beginning of World War II, aerial bombings flattened much of Warsaw, Poland. Cement blocks, ruptured plumbing, and shards of glass lay strewn across the great city. In the downtown area, however, most of one damaged building still stubbornly stood. It was the Polish headquarters for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Still legible on a surviving wall were these words: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matt. 24:35). Jesus made that statement to encourage His disciples when they asked Him about the “end of the age” (v. 3). But His words also give us courage in the midst of our embattled situation today. Standing in the rubble of our shattered dreams, we can still find confidence in God's indestructible character, sovereignty, and promises. His enduring Word assures us of His unfailing love. The psalmist wrote: “Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens” (Ps. 119:89). But it is more than the word of the Lord; it is His very character. That is why the psalmist could also say, “Your faithfulness continues through all generations” (Ps 119:90). **As we face devastating experiences, we can define them either in terms of despair or of hope. Because God will not abandon us to our circumstances, we can confidently choose hope.** His enduring Word assures us of His unfailing love. Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Word. Thank You for its truth, its timelessness, and the guidance You give us by that Word. Help us believe and trust everything You say. We can trust God's unchanging Word.

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**All Safe! All Well!** - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 - In January 1915, the ship Endurance was trapped and crushed in the ice off the coast of Antarctica. The group of polar explorers, led by Ernest Shackleton, survived and managed to reach Elephant Island in three small lifeboats. Trapped on this uninhabited island, far from normal shipping lanes, they had one hope. On April 24, 1916, 22 men watched as Shackleton and five comrades set out in a tiny lifeboat for South Georgia, an island 800 miles away. The odds seemed impossible, and if they failed, they would all certainly die. What joy, then, when more than four months later a boat appeared on the horizon with Shackleton on its bow shouting, “Are you all well?” And the call came back, “All safe! All well!” What held those men together and kept them alive over those months? Faith and hope placed in one man. They believed that Shackleton would find a way to save them. This human example of faith and hope echoes the faith of the heroes listed in Hebrews 11. Their faith in the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” kept them going through great difficulties and trials (Heb. 11:1 nkjv). **As we look out upon the horizon of our own problems (Ed: I call this "horizontal" thinking or "horizontal vision"), may we not despair. May we have hope through the certainty of our faith in the One Man—Jesus, our God and Savior (Ed: I call this "vertical" thinking or "vertical vision").** Thank You, Father, for the promise of forgiveness made possible by Jesus. May that promise lighten the darkest of our days. The hope of Jesus shines brightly even on our darkest day. We can take courage and hope from those who have preceded us in the life of faith. The author of Hebrews lists many examples of people who acted in faith despite their circumstances and despite the fact that they had not yet received what “had been promised” (11:39). This is why Hebrews 11 begins by saying that “faith is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (J.R. Hudberg) - [By Randy Kilgore](#)

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**Spurgeon on I remember Thee** - Oh, what a mercy it is to be able to look back upon our past experiences of God's mercy! How delightful it is to remember what the Lord was, to us in days gone by, for he is the same God still. When you are like in the great storm, when neither sun, nor moon, nor stars for many days appeared, it is very pleasant to remember that the sun, moon, and stars did shine in the past, and that they will shine forth again. From the little hill I will think of all thy former love, — all the sacred spots where thou hast met with me, all the lonely places where thou hast been my comfort, and all the joyful regions where thou hast

been my glory. I will think of these, and take comfort from them, for thou art an unchanging God.; and what thou didst for me aforetime, thou wilt do for me again and yet again. Is it not a blessed thing that, even when he is down, he says, “ Oh, my God”? He gets hold of his God. He has loat his company, but he has not lost his God. See-” my soul”-” my God.” His God is as much his as his soul is his. He puts them together-” my God “-” my soul.” Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonite, from the hill Mizar. Were these places where he was then wandering? He would remember God wherever he was. He would remember happier days-seasons long past when he did walk in fellowship with God. So let us remember how he kept his tryst with us in former days of sorrow,-how he manifested himself unto us as he does not to the world. He will do the same now. Let us be of good courage.

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**[Life's Darkest Moments](#)** - An angel touched [Elijah], and said to him, “Arise and eat.” —1 Kings 19:5 - Charles Whittlesey was a hero's hero. Leader of the so-called “Lost Battalion” in World War I, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery when his unit was trapped behind enemy lines. When the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated, Charles was chosen to serve as pallbearer for the first soldier laid to rest there. Two weeks later, it is presumed that he ended his own life by stepping off a cruise ship in the middle of the ocean. Like Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-7), Charles was publicly strong, but in the quiet, post-public moments, his feelings of despair set in. People today frequently face situations bigger than they can handle. Sometimes it's temporary despair brought on by fatigue, as in Elijah's case. He had been part of a great victory over the prophets of Baal (1 Ki 18:20-40), but then he feared for his life and ran into the wilderness (1 Ki 19:1-3). But often, it's more than despair and it's more than temporary. That's why it is imperative that we talk about depression openly and compassionately. God offers His presence to us in life's darkest moments, which enables us, in turn, to be His presence to the hurting. Crying out for help—from others and from God—may be the strongest moment of our lives. Father, grant us the candor to admit to each other that sometimes life overwhelms us. And grant us the courage to help others find help—and to seek it when we need it. Hope comes with help from God and others. ([Randy Kilgore](#))

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**[Remembering Our Father's Words](#)** - I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life. —Psalm 119:93 - Jim Davidson was climbing down Mount Rainier when he fell through a snow bridge and into a crevasse (a pitch-black, ice-walled crack in a glacier). As Jim stood bloodied and bruised in that dark ice cave, he reflected on his childhood and recalled how his father had repeatedly reminded him that he could accomplish great things if he pressed through adversity. Those words helped to sustain Jim as he spent the next 5 hours climbing out of that dark ice cave to safety with very little gear and under extremely difficult circumstances. The psalmist seemed to climb out of his own crevasse of affliction and pain by recalling his heavenly Father's words. He admitted that if God and His Word had not sustained him with joy, he would have died in his misery (Ps. 119:92). He expressed full confidence in the Lord's eternal Word (Ps 119:89) and in the faithfulness of His character (Ps 119:90). As a result of God's faithfulness, the psalmist made a commitment never to forget God's words to him because they had a central part in rescuing his life and bringing him strength. In our darkest caves and moments of affliction, our souls can be revived by our Father in heaven when we recall and fill our minds with His encouraging words. Thinking It Over - What crevasse of discouragement are you currently in? How can you use this time as an occasion to revive your soul by filling your mind and heart with God's Word? Remembering God's words revives our soul. ([Marvin Williams](#))

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**[I Am Not Forgotten](#)** - Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. —Psalm 33:20 - Waiting is hard at any time; but when days, weeks, or even months pass and our prayers seem to go unanswered, it's easy to feel God has forgotten us. Perhaps we can struggle through the day with its distractions, but at night it's doubly difficult to deal with our anxious thoughts. Worries loom large, and the dark hours seem endless. Utter weariness makes it look impossible to face the new day. The psalmist grew weary as he waited (Ps. 13:1). He felt abandoned—as if his enemies were gaining the upper hand (v.2). When we're waiting for God to resolve a difficult situation or to answer often-repeated prayers, it's easy to get discouraged. Satan whispers that God has forgotten us, and that things will never change. We may be tempted to give in to despair. Why bother to read the Bible or to pray? Why make the effort to worship with fellow believers in Christ? But we need our spiritual lifelines most when we're waiting. They help to hold us steady in the flow of God's love and to become sensitive to His Spirit. The psalmist had a remedy. He focused on all that he knew of God's love, reminding himself of past blessings and deliberately praising God, who would not forget him. So can we. Lover of my soul, who draws close in the darkest and longest night, please keep me trusting You, talking to You, and leaning on Your promises. God is worth waiting for; His time is always best. All believers go through times of frustration due to unanswered prayer. Yet the Scriptures provide hope for this apparent dilemma. Psalm 13 illustrates the release that grows out of praying through a problem. David asks God four times “how long” he must wait to get an answer to prayer (Ps. 13:1-2). Eventually he understands that his perspective has not been a divine one. He then asks God to “give light to my eyes” so that he can have the strength to endure opposition (Ps. 13:3-4). David redirects his heart to trust in God's unfailing mercy. The Hebrew word for “mercy” here is hesed, which connotes enduring, unfailing, and gracious care. With a new perspective, David now sings of God's goodness with petitions of praise



(Ps. 13:5-6). ([Marion Stroud](#))