

## Christian Retirement

### Part 74

By [Thomas Reade](#)

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#### ON SPIRITUAL VISION

It is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun, and all the varied objects which are illuminated by its rays. If the natural eye be such a precious gift of providence, the eye of faith must be an invaluable gift of grace. Through the weakness of the natural eye, distant objects are dimly seen; but, by the eye of faith, we can pierce the veil which bounds our sight, and view the unseen glories of the heavenly world.

Lord, impart unto your servant this spiritual vision, that I may daily contemplate the wonders of eternity, and the blest abodes of heavenly purity and joy.

When I look with an eye of faith towards heaven, what do I there behold? The glorious habitation of Him who fills all space with his presence, who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. I there behold the throne of grace and mercy, in the midst of which appears a Lamb slain, even Jesus, the friend of sinners, the advocate of guilty man.

I there behold myriads of glorified spirits hymning the praises of Him, who was, and is, and is to come. They appear as flames of fire, burning with zeal and love. Their outstretched wings express their readiness to fulfill the mandate of their God.

I there behold rivers of pleasures, mansions of bliss; yes, more than tongue can speak or heart conceive. There dwells the great, the glorious God-Man, Emanuel, God with us. Around him are assembled all his faithful ministers and people; clothed in white, with palms of victory in their hands, singing to their golden harps, the praises of redeeming love. To be ever near this gracious Savior; to behold his glory; to experience the fullness of his love; to enjoy his smiles; to be filled with his Spirit—is the heaven, the felicity, the glory of the saints in light.

When from these high abodes I cast my eyes upon this earth on which I tread, how wretched does it appear. The believer may at that very moment be treading

upon a scorpion, but he feels not its painful sting; some acute disorder may be striking through every nerve, but his exalted views of heavenly glory benumb the pain, and blunt the edge of suffering. Through the power of his realizing faith, he is even more than conqueror. He can glory in tribulation, and triumph in death. The world may frown, but it troubles him not. It may smile, but he regards it not. His whole soul is full of heaven, of Christ, and of eternal glory.

Oh you ever-blessed Spirit of grace and truth, impart this precious faith—this realizing view of Jesus—this sweet foretaste of everlasting bliss. Give me to know and feel my interest in his atoning blood. Make me more active for Christ—more devoted to his cause—more attached to his people—more alive to his honor—more simple in my dependence—more sincere in my professions—more simple in all my aims to glorify my God and Savior.

When I look into the grave, what do I there behold? The dire effects of sin; the vanity of all created things; the end of pomp and pride. But when, with the eye of faith, I look beyond this cold and dreary mansion of the dead, what awful scenes present themselves before me! There I behold the rich man, who, when on earth, fared sumptuously every day, lifting up his eyes in torment, without one cooling drop to quench his flaming tongue. And why does he thus suffer? Because he trusted in his riches, and forgot his God.

The grave is the concluding scene of splendor and magnificence. There, the now pampered body must become the food of worms! There, the body now arrayed in purple and fine linen, must be covered with corruption!

Methinks this humiliating end of human greatness would convince the fondest worldling of the vanity of earthly things. And surely it would impress the mind, and deeply too, if men would but consider. Vain, thoughtless man! ah! when will he be wise? The opening grave creates a slight alarm, when some beloved object is laid within its cold embrace. But soon the transient tear is wiped away, and every serious thought, like writing on the sand, is rapidly effaced by the world's returning tide of business or of pleasure.

Lord, grant that it may not be so with me. Teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. Preserve me from the folly of building the fabric of my hopes upon so mutable a foundation as human life. Oh may I never boast of tomorrow, but labor to improve today. Oh may I seek you now while you may be found, and call upon you while you are near; for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. May I learn wisdom from the folly of others; and pray that they also may become wise unto salvation. Remembering that the end of all things is at hand, may I be sober and watch unto prayer. May I live in a constant preparation for a dying hour, and find the last retiring moment the happiest of my life, being brightened by faith in Jesus, and an assured hope of glory.

When I look around me in the world, what do I there behold? A scene of complicated misery—an Aceldama, a field of blood; a huge hospital filled with all manner of diseases; an asylum full of maniacs, fancying themselves immortal in the region of mortality, and happy in a valley of tears.

I behold a multitude of faithful prophets, now blowing the brazen trumpet of the law, and now the silver trumpet of the Gospel; each laboring to alarm or to allure this miserable, this dying crowd. Some few, through grace, are arrested in their mad career; their eyes begin to open, the scales drop off they stand confused and amazed, they look around in terror, and cry out—"What must we do to be saved?" Through grace, they behold the Savior; through grace, they repent and believe; through grace, they love and obey the Gospel. They now lament the dreadful situation of their poor companions, and become themselves the objects of derision.

Lord, what is man! how astonishing your forbearance; how surpassing thought your boundless grace and mercy!

Enable me to see the madness and folly of living at a distance from you. Lead me from the ways and customs of the world. Fix my heart more steadfastly upon heavenly joys; upon Christ, the fountain of bliss; upon Christ, the hope of glory; upon Christ, your well-beloved; upon Christ, the adoration of angels, the joy and portion of the church on earth, the bliss and glory of the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven.

In those blest regions of delight,  
Where Jesus is unveiled to sight,  
No mortal tongue can e'er express  
The ransomed sinner's blessedness.

His joys are all alike unknown,  
As seated on Emanuel's throne,  
He drinks the living streams of bliss,  
And views all heaven's joys as his.

Amazing grace! stupendous love!  
Oh! may each warm affection move;  
Until all my soul is knit to thee,  
In time and through eternity.

You of all joy the center art;  
Oh, never from my soul depart;  
Blest Jesus! let your saving love,  
Like dew, drop gently from above.

Blow on your garden, fairest one;

Oh, be my bliss, and you alone;  
Let sweetest spices ever flow  
To beautify your church below.

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