

**Looking Unto the
Lord, the Lord
Looking On Us,
Seven Human Looks
& Seven Divine Looks**

L O O K I N G

A. W. Pink

Looking Unto the Lord, the Lord Looking On Us, Seven Human Looks and Seven Divine Looks

A. W. Pink

Looking Unto the Lord

Looking unto the Lord is an attitude of the soul, an act of the will, and the exercise of faith—a turning away from all that is of the creature and relying solely upon the living God. It is tersely, but graphically, expressed in these words: “But our eyes are upon thee” (2 Chron. 20:12), and blessed is the one who can really so aver. That is the language of all God’s children when they are in their right minds. At that time, they place no reliance upon self, have no confidence in the flesh, and expect nothing good from the world; but they put all their trust in the Lord. Their hearts are engaged with an almighty God, and, like Moses, they endure “as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). It is this which characterizes those who are members of the Household of Faith: in their need, they look to God for their supplies; in straits, for deliverance; in trouble, for comfort; in weakness, for strength. It is this which distinguishes them from unbelievers, who lean upon the “arm of flesh” (2 Chron. 32:8) and look to their fellows for help. In proportion, as we maintain this attitude of dependence on and expectation from our heavenly Father, our hearts will be kept in peace, our souls made to rejoice, and our every want will be supplied. For the sake of young preachers, we will topicalize our subject.

1. The look of *salvation*. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:22). Look not to the Law, the priest, nor to your baptism, nor church attendance. Look not to your sincerity and good intentions, nor to your prayers and good deeds; nor even to your convictions of sin. None but *Christ* can save you. This is very humbling to the proud creature: to have to look away from self, and be wholly indebted to Another. It is not a matter of what we are—how good or bad—but of what He is: namely, an all-sufficient Saviour, freely offered in the Gospel to every hearer. If you look unto Him, as the serpent-bitten Israelites looked upon the divinely appointed object (John 3:14)—with simple but confident faith—He will save you. No

qualifications are needed to entitle you to do so: the command of God and the invitation of the Gospel supply sufficient authorization. The viler you feel yourself to be, the more suited to Christ's cleansing blood. He is the great Physician and can heal the foulest leper. Do you say, "But I am blind?" True, yet you are not bidden to "See," but "Look"—and sight comes by looking!

2. The look of *illumination*. "They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Psa. 34:5). Faith's looking unto Christ is the grand means of blessing appointed by God: pardon and peace, light and liberty, are obtained thereby. Of old, Job said, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living" (Job 33:29-30). He does so by the power of His Spirit working faith in us upon Christ. God announced concerning His beloved Son, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 49:6). And in due time, the Sun of righteousness arose "with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2), putting an end to the night of darkness for many a soul. By His Gospel, He declares, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46). Then look unto Him, and you too shall be divinely illumined: your faith shall not be confounded, nor your face covered with confusion.

3. The look of *supplication*. "But our eyes are upon thee" (2 Chron. 20:12). The setting of those words is very striking. A great army of the heathen had gathered together to do battle against Judah. When their king was informed, he "set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast" (verse 3). Then, in the hearing of the congregation, he addressed himself unto the God of their fathers, saying, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (verse 12). It was an earnest appeal unto the omnipotent One by those in the place of conscious weakness and helplessness. It was likewise an expression of humble but confident faith. It was also an expectation of help from the Almighty. Nor was this simple but affecting supplication in vain. Of course it was not! Jehovah made answer: "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's" (verse 15). He caused the enemy to fall upon

themselves, “and none escaped” (verse 24). *There* is the grand remedy for every strait. No matter how desperate the situation, nothing is too hard for the Lord. Turn unto Him the eyes of faith, of dependence, of reliance, of confident expectation, and you will not be mocked.

4. The look of *transformation*. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). This “beholding” is not simply one of faith, but especially of holy ambition and resolve. As the believer contemplates the moral perfection and character of Christ as they are set forth in the Word, there is born within him a deep yearning to be conformed to His likeness and to “walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). As that yearning persists and is accompanied by earnest prayer, the Holy Spirit works in him a deeper spirit of obedience, causing him to be increasingly regulated by Christ’s example and precepts, and thereby “changes” him, little by little, unto the same image. The Greek verb for “change” here is rendered “transformed” in Romans 12:2, and “transfigured” in Matthew 17:2. As the will is brought into subjection to Christ, we drink into His Spirit and become partakers of His holiness. This lifelong process will be completed when “we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2), “face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12).

5. The look of *inspiration*. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [better, “Leader and Captain”] of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). In Hebrews 10:32, the apostle began to set before suffering, tried, and persecuted saints a number of considerations calculated to nerve them for the conflict and stimulate unto the continued performance of duty. Throughout chapter 11, he showed how faith was what animated the Old Testament worthies. As a climax, he reminded them of the Saviour, who supplied the perfect example of faith and fortitude under unparalleled suffering. When, then, you grow weary of running the race set before you, look unto your Leader and draw inspiration from Him—see Hebrews 12:3-4. Do as He did: look beyond the present sorrows to “the joy” awaiting you; see above the painful Cross an eternal crown prepared for him who “endureth to

the end” (Matt. 10:22). It is by so looking unto our great Exemplar, by devoutly contemplating His spirit of self-sacrifice and steadfastness, that we obtain strength to bear the hardships of the way.

6. The look of *expectation*. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13). That is a very different thing from having the mind engaged with signs of the times or charmed with the study of prophecy; or even being on the *qui vive* (alert) for the next appointed item on the divine programme. It is concerned not so much with an event as with the advent of a Person. The second coming of Christ is ridiculed by the infidel (2 Pet. 3:2-4) and dreaded by the world (2 Thess. 1:8); but it is regarded by the saints with great delight, for then will be the perfecting of their salvation (Heb. 9:26). Titus 2:13 describes a spiritual attitude of heart. It is an attitude of *faith*—and faith is not influenced by sensational items taken from the newspapers! It is an attitude of *hope*—joyous anticipation of our being rid of sin. It is an attitude of *love*, so that we cry, “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices” (Song 8:14). *Such* looking weans the heart from the world (Heb 11:9-10), produces patience in trials (James 5:6-8), and purifies the heart (1 John 3:3). Therein we may behold the *practical* side of our blessed hope. Such an expectation of the returning Saviour works in us a careful attention to our conduct, that we may “not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28).

7. The look of *consummation*. “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness” (Psa. 17:15). That is the ultimate longing of every believer: to behold the King in His beauty and for ever gaze upon His blessed features. Such too is *His* desire: to have us with Him, beholding His glory (John 17:24)—nothing less will satisfy the eternal Lover of our souls. In a real sense, believers discern something of the glory of Christ even now, but oh, how feebly and faintly! But hereafter, we shall look upon Him without hindrance or interruption. That will be the fruition of our hope: to have immediate communion with Him. That will fill us with joy, and make us overflow with praise. Oh, how altogether lovely will He appear, when we see Him no longer “through a glass, darkly

[obscurely]”—but “face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12)!

The Lord Looking On Us

As we near the close of another period of time, it is our desire (following our usual custom) to look unto the Lord and ask Him to graciously give us a word, which—with His blessing upon the same—will prove a real help to His people for the new year, and which may serve to keep up their faith upon Him throughout the days which lie ahead. Here is the one which is now laid upon our heart: “Look thou upon me” (Psa. 119:132). It is a very brief address unto the living God, yet much is contained in it, and most comprehensive is the same. It is an appeal unto the divine compassion, a looking to God for help, a request for mercy, a petition for His favourable regard, a begging Him to take notice of our need. It is a very modest request, for the least discovery of the divine favour is welcome to a tried or afflicted soul. Any regenerate person regards it as a great favour for God to look upon him; and there is nothing he values so highly as a token and sense of His approbation.

Since my looking unto Thee is often so slight, so formal, so distant, that little impression is made upon my heart, do Thou condescend to “look upon me.” Vouchsafe me such a look as will melt me to tenderness and contrition. “Lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon [me]” (Psa. 4:6), so that all darkness will be dispelled from my soul, that “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7) may be mine in increasing measure. Grant me such a sight of Thy countenance as will kindle my affections and draw out my heart unto Thee. Such a request is an expression of faith and hope: “Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless” (Deut. 26:15)—such a look is fraught with *blessing!* As Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) well put it: “If a look from us to God has saving virtue in it, what may we not expect from a look from God to us!” It is much to be thankful for when this is really the desire of our hearts: when, instead of shrinking from God and dreading His notice of us, we have such confidence in His goodness and mercy that we cry, “Look thou upon me.”

There was a time when the Lord said unto you, “Look unto me, and be ye saved” (Isa. 45:22), and by enabling grace, you did so;

and now you say unto Him, “Look thou upon me.” Thus, we see how Christ and the believer speak one and the same language: and no marvel, for one and the same Spirit who dwells in the Head dwells also in His members! “Look thou upon me” is a word which every soul who is hungering and thirsting after Christ may well appropriate. It is one which is most suitable for each of them to lay hold of at the beginning of a new year, for—no matter what may be your circumstances—it will prove an appropriate one for every day and every hour in it. Though so short, this prayer is exceedingly full, and expresses all we need to say, whatever be our situation. Whether in prosperity or adversity, joy or sorrow, health or sickness, life or death, you will need nothing more than for the Lord to look upon thee. Whether a babe or a mature saint, all your spiritual desires are summed up in this one expression.

All is well with the believer when the Lord looks in a manifestative way upon him with a look of love. Christ cannot look upon one of His own without His heart being drawn out to him, “for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:15). Far otherwise: “In all their affliction he was afflicted” (Isa. 63:9). Ask the genuine Christian what his case is, and he will reply, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18). Ask him how this affects him, and he will say, “The heart knoweth his own bitterness” (Prov. 14:10). But this makes way for him to put up this petition: “Look thou upon me.” Is that the experience of the reader? It is frequently so with the writer. Thus, your case and mine are one and the same. Such experience consists of a knowledge of self and of sin; and this it is which fits us to live upon Christ—the sinner’s Saviour. “O LORD, I am *oppressed*; undertake for me” (Isa. 38:14).

As none are freed from indwelling sin, so none are from its workings and effects. Nor is any child of God exempted in this life from the sorrows and distresses which are the consequences of the same. As a regenerate soul is conscious of the activities of indwelling sin and their defiling effects, he cannot but grieve over the same; and such grief produces manifold disquietude of mind. Then it is that all of us are far too apt to lose sight of Christ and cast away our confidence in Him. Too often, the saints resort to

reasoning, and draw gloomy conclusions—if not downright false inferences—from their uncomfortable feelings. But it ought not to be so. God suffers His people to be brought frequently into such a condition that they may make fuller use of this prayer: “Look thou upon me.” When do you have most *need* for Him to look upon you? When sensible of your sins, and cast down by them! He gives us a clear sight of what we are by nature to wean us from self and cast us more upon Himself.

Sometimes we are sorely tried by our outward circumstances—when, to carnal reason, everything seems to have gone wrong—and we petulantly exclaim with Jacob, “All these things are against me” (Gen. 42:36). Yet they were not. His conclusion was, in fact, entirely erroneous, for all those things were working in his favour at that very time. Yet it often appears to us that everything is contrary to our best interests. Yes, my reader, God permits that *testing*, yea, orders those seemingly unpropitious circumstances. And why? To lead you from the creature unto Himself. Were we not painfully conscious of our straits and wants, what occasion would there be for us to go unto the Lord with such a prayer, as “Look thou upon me?” What saint is there who has not found exactly suited to his case those words, “Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is *overwhelmed*: lead me [for I seem to have lost my way] to the rock that is higher than I” (Psa. 61:1-2)?

It is a wonderful relief to the mind to recall that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, yea, of the very chief of sinners. To remember that He loved us before ever we loved Him. That He loved us when there was nothing but sin in us. We readily assent to that as sound doctrine; but when, in experience, we feel how sinful we still are—what complete failures we have proved to be—we are slow to give full and hearty consent thereto. That is because we are too much occupied with our wretched selves. We forget that the greater the skill of the physician, the more suited to him is a desperate and urgent case. All too frequently we neglect coming to the great Physician. Do you feel there is none in more need of Him? Then say, “Look thou upon me.” Have compassion upon me, O Lord, even though I be not worthy to be called Thy son. If He deigns to look upon us—and when did He ever cast out one who came to

Him?—we are sure to be the better for it.

The Lord has said everything in His Word to encourage His people to turn unto Him. He declares: “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isa. 49:16). “And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me” (Isa. 65:10). “But my kindness shall not depart from thee” (Isa. 54:10). “I will not turn away from them, to do them good...Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good” (Jer. 32:40-41). Christ regards His redeemed as His “brethren,” as members of His mystical body, as the travail of His soul, and as the apple of His eye. Therefore, we may well cry unto Him, “Look thou upon me.” In so doing, you give Him His glory. O fellow believer, suffer what you may, experience whatever it be, and allow it not to weaken your confidence in your most gracious Lord. Say to Him, Didst not Thou bear all my sins in Thine own body on the tree? Hast Thou not redeemed me from the curse of the Law, by being made a curse for me? Hast Thou not loved me, even me, and washed me from my sins in Thine own blood? Then “Look thou upon me” now.

If you be in health and strength, pray “Look thou upon me” (Psa. 119:132) that they may be used to Thy honour and praise. If you are being ill treated by friends and deserted by brethren, here is your relief. When sin has mastered and overthrown you, make this your recourse. When you can feelingly confess, “I am vile” (Job 40:4), plead Isaiah 66:2. When bowed down with bereavement and your heart is too full to add more, say, “Look upon mine affliction” (Psa. 25:18). If lying upon a bed of pain or the cold hand of death be nearing your brow, this is most suitable language to address the eternal Lover of your soul. You cannot have a need which He is unable to supply. He is interested in your body, as well as your soul, and is engaged to care for us in temporals, as well as spirituals. Nothing is too hard for Him. Such is His grace that “he giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isa. 40:29). If we are spared to enter 1950, may each of us make frequent use of this prayer: “Look thou upon me.”

Seven Human Looks

We continue to write upon “Looking,” for, said the prophet,

“Mine eye affecteth mine heart” (Lam. 3:51). John Bunyan (1620-1677) wrote impressively on “Eyegate” and showed what a large part it played in admitting enemies into the city of Mansoul. [Mansoul – the city attacked by Diaboles and freed by Immanuel in Bunyan’s allegory, *The Holy War*]. The heart has no more influential gate than the eyes; and if we are wise, we shall do as the patriarch and make “a covenant” with them (Job 31:1). Guard your eye and thereby safeguard your heart. Blessed are they who use their eyes to noble purpose, but better to have been born blind than pervert such a gift. Observation exerts a considerable influence upon the inner man, and therefore is no small factor in moulding the life. But alas, observation is not always rightly used: instead of evoking reflectiveness, drawing out sympathy, and leading to kindly deeds, only too often it excites our corruptions and issues in evil works. Whether observation affects us for good or evil depends not only upon the objects contemplated, but also upon our reflections on and reactions to the same.

1. The look of *faith*. “And the LORD said unto Abram...Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it” (Gen. 13:14-15). That was in sharp contrast with the greed of his nephew, Lot, who “lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan” (verse 10), which was the look of covetousness. God here made a great promise and donation to His servant, and bade Abraham view his fair heritage, for it was a land flowing with milk and honey. As he gazed upon such an attractive portion, his heart would indeed be affected by a sense of the Lord’s goodness and magnanimity. And so should it ever be with us. As we behold the wondrous handiwork of God all around us in the realm of creation, we should admire His wisdom, be awed by His power, and adore the grace of Him who “giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17)—to evoke thoughtfulness, regale our senses, and minister so freely to our needs. God’s workmanship in nature should fill us with wonderment and gratitude.

2. The look of *disobedience*. “But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26). Solemn indeed is that, and chronicled for our admonition. God had given express command, “Look not behind thee” (verse 17), but Lot’s

partner disregarded His injunction. In unbelief and love to Sodom, she looked back and probably attempted to return there, for in Luke 17:31-32, we find that our Lord pointed His prohibition, "Let him likewise not *return back*" with the warning, "Remember Lot's wife." This incident is recorded to show us the peril of hankering after forbidden and forsaken objects, and to make us fear and tremble, lest after having escaped the corruption which is in the world through the knowledge of Christ, we are again entangled therein, and overcome, only to find our latter end is worse than the beginning (2 Pet. 2:20). Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt as a lasting monument of God's displeasure against apostates. True conversion is the renouncing of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and it is at our peril that we lust after the things we have abandoned. As Matthew Henry (1662-1714) says, "Drawing back is *to* perdition, and looking back is *towards* it."

3. The look of *curiosity*. "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land" (Gen. 34:1). So far as Scripture informs us, she was the only daughter he had, and with so many brothers, was probably petted and spoiled. Born just before Joseph (Gen. 30:21-24), she could not have been more than fifteen or sixteen; and therefore, her mother was more to blame than she was. The Hebrew for "went out to see the daughters of the land" implies "to look about with them." Probably it was some occasion of public festivity, and unrest and discontent with the tent possessed her; and a spirit of inquisitiveness moved her to mix with the ungodly and to look at the customs and fashions of the heathen. The sequel was disastrous, for not only did she lose her honour, but her conduct led to her brothers committing murder. For young girls to get away from the eyes of their mothers and go out unchaperoned is highly dangerous, because of their inexperience of the world, their ignorance of the artifices of unscrupulous men, and their proneness to be easily deceived by flatterers. Let young women bear in mind that God has inseparably linked together "discreet, chaste, keepers at home" (Tit. 2:5)!

4. The look of *contempt*. "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth" (1 Sam. 17:42). Goliath could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw this stripling advancing toward him, and "looked about" for one whom

he deemed more “worthy of his steel.” He was expecting to be confronted with the champion of Israel’s army; and thus, when he perceived that an unaccounted shepherd-boy had entered the lists against him, the Philistine utterly despised him. Therein he made the fatal mistake of underestimating his enemy. David indeed had no coat of mail upon him, but, what was infinitely preferable, he was clothed with “the whole armour of God” (Eph. 6:11, 13). He might be totally unacquainted with the arts of warfare, but he knew from personal experience that Jehovah fails no one who really trusts Him. Said he, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied” (1 Sam. 17:45); and the giant fell before him. Learn, then, that might cannot prevail over weakness, when that weakness leans upon the Almighty!

5. The look of *discontent*. “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought...and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 2:11). That was the disappointing discovery made by the one man whom God permitted to obtain everything which the carnal heart craves. The force of his honest acknowledgement is the better perceived by observing what he tells us in the nine verses preceding, and then listening to his summing up: “And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour” (Eccl. 2:10). But having realized his ambitions and gratified every desire, he found that so far from their affording him any real and lasting satisfaction, they still left an aching void within. Mere *things*—however costly or lovely in themselves—cannot meet the real needs of the soul. The heart was made for God, and He alone can fill it. Self’s enjoyment of the joys of this earth leaves naught but emptiness behind. The thirst of the soul cannot be quenched by the cisterns of this world. Gold can purchase nothing but what proves to be vanity. Christ alone “satisfieth the longing soul” (Psa. 107:9).

6. The look of *humiliation*. “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD...and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged” (Isa. 51:1). That is very necessary if a lowly spirit is to be preserved in the child of God. It is a most salutary

exercise to look back and view our origin, and behold what we were when the hand of divine mercy was first laid upon us. “Wherefore remember,” says the apostle, “that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh...That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:11-12). Remember it to your shame. Look to the “horrible pit [and] the miry clay” (Psa. 40:2), out of which the God of all grace brought you, that you may be confounded and never more open your mouth boastfully (Ezek. 16:63). Daily ponder the question, “Who maketh thee to differ from another?” (1 Cor. 4:7)—not only from those who are hastening to destruction, but from what you were *yourself* only a short time since! Let such a look humble you into the dust.

7. The look of *hope*. “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple” (Jonah 2:4). That is, though because of my reprehensible conduct, Thou no longer viewest me with approbation and delight; nevertheless, I will not give way to despair, but cast myself upon Thy mercy. Those words, “I will look again toward thy holy temple,” show that his faith laid hold of that statement: “If thy people...shall pray unto the LORD *toward* the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: Then hear thou in heaven...If they sin against thee... and pray unto thee toward their land...and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer” (1 Kings 8:44-49 and compare 2 Chron. 20:9). When a captive in Babylon, Daniel had acted on the same (Dan. 6:10), and now the chastened prophet made it *his* confidence. Though in the whale’s belly, he refused to abandon hope. He “remembered the LORD: and [his] prayer came in unto [Him], into [His] holy temple” (Jonah 2:7). He remembered His grace, His faithfulness, His power, His past mercies, and turned unto Him the eyes of expectation; and he was miraculously delivered! Oh, what encouragement is there here for every failing saint who is tempted to despond.

Seven Divine Looks

Much is said in Scripture about the eyes of the Lord and His looking upon one and another: much that is solemn and searching;

much that is encouraging and comforting. What a contrast is there between “I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good” (Amos 9:4) and “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect [upright, which beats true] toward him” (2 Chron. 16:9). That is the difference between God’s avenging eye (1 Chron. 12:17; 2 Chron. 24:22) and His gracious eye. “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings” (Prov. 5:21): what a restraining influence should our apprehension of that fact exert upon us! On the other hand, assured of the mercy and compassion of the Lord, believers will often desire that He should look upon them, knowing that their very needs and unexpressed longings will plead for them (2 Sam. 16:12), and give him or her cause to say, “For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden” (Luke 1:48).

1. The look of *covenant faithfulness*. “And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen. 9:16). There is no doubt whatever in our mind that the rainbow appeared then in the lower heavens for the first time: had it existed previously, it would have possessed no new meaning and message after the flood—compare Genesis 2:6. It was given as an assurance to allay men’s fears, as a divine pledge that the world would never again be destroyed by a universal deluge. It was a ratification of the promise which God had given for the temporal preservation of His creatures. God calls it “my bow,” which He sets in the cloud (Gen. 9:13), and upon it, He looks in remembrance of His oath (Isa. 54:9)—as *we* also should. “How blessed to know that the cloud that comes across our sky is one of *His* bringing; and if so, how sure that, in some way, He will reveal His glory in it”—Frederick W. Grant (1834-1902). Still more blessed is it to know that the canopy of God’s Throne in heaven is a rainbow (Rev. 4:3)—a token and pledge that He is ruling this world according to his covenant engagements.

2. The look of *grace*. “And God looked upon the children of Israel” (Exod. 2:25). This, too, was analogous with the former, for as the content informs us, they “cried by reason of their bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant

with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” And well for them that He did so. They had sinned grievously while in Egypt (Jos. 24:14; Ezek. 20:7-8), and were sorely chastised for the same. But now, notwithstanding their provoking transgressions, as their groanings came into His ears, the Lord remembered His covenant and looked upon them. Moses had beheld them with pity, but he was powerless to effect their release. But as Jehovah saw their abject condition and hard service, He had a favourable regard to them (Exod. 3:7-8). His eyes were now fixed upon them to show Himself strong in their behalf and deliver them. It is a typical picture of God contemplating the wretchedness of His elect by nature when He saves them from their sins: His everlasting covenant of grace is the sure foundation of mercy, and the ground of all His dealings with His people, He is blessed to find that when Israel learned that the Lord “had looked upon their affliction,” then they bowed their heads and worshipped (Exod. 4:31). Let each Christian reader do likewise.

3. The look *of encouragement*. “And the LORD looked [literally ‘turned His face’] upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” (Judg. 6:14). Such language as that from God to a worm of the earth is startling, for what “might” had poor Gideon? None—and what is more, he was *conscious* of this fact. Therein is revealed to us an invaluable secret: “Before honour is humility” (Prov. 15:33). Gideon confessed his weakness: “Wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house” (Judg. 6:15). True, but set over against that the Almighty’s “Surely I will be with thee” (verse 16). Ah, my reader, the face of the Lord is always turned unto those who acknowledge their poverty and powerlessness. It is the empty vessel which He fills, the one owning himself to be “the least” who He commissions and uses (see Isa. 6:5-8; Eph. 3:8)! That look of the Lord was designed to dispel Gideon’s fears, to revive his drooping spirits and send him forth in the strength of Jehovah. God used Gideon to effect a mighty deliverance for Israel.

4. The look *of revelation and discovery*. “My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself” (Song 2:9). Taken in

conjunction with the foregoing verse, we have here a blessed figure of Christ desiring fellowship with “his own” and the increasingly clear discoveries—which He graciously makes of Himself, both to the local church collectively and to the saint individually—He is likened to a “roe” because of His pleasantness and lovingness (Prov. 5:19), He being most winsome to His people and gentle in His carriage towards them. In the spiritual visits with which Christ favours His people, He is pleased to make clearer and fuller manifestations of Himself to them. First, He appears as it were “behind *our* wall”—for *we* are ever the ones who interpose barriers!—near, but not yet visible. Then, “he looketh forth at the windows”—a sight, though not yet a full one, being obtained of Him through the ordinances. Finally, He shows “himself through the lattice” of our longings, and we enjoy His manifested presence, and He sups with us, and, with Him (Rev. 3:20).

5. The look of *approbation*. “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66:2). Pride God abominates, but humility and submission He appreciates. Poverty of spirit consists of a realization that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, but have need of all things. It is the Spirit’s emptying the heart of self that Christ may fill it. Contrition is a feeling sense of the heinousness and loathsomeness of sin, causing one to mourn over it with godly sorrow. It is the Spirit’s discovering to us the plague of our hearts, making sin to be bitter and hateful to us, our sorest grief and heaviest burden. To tremble at God’s Word is to be sensible of its searching purity, to be awed by its authority, to be conscious of its requirements, to hold its Author in the utmost reverence. Each soul possessing these qualities is an object of complacency to the Holy One. He views them not only with favour, but with pleasure: it is God delighting in His own handiwork, setting His seal of approval thereon.

6. The look of *welcome*. “But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). The context gives us a picture of what an elect soul is by nature and practice: a wanderer from God, a dissipater of His mercies, a forlorn creature finding nothing in this world which can meet his spiritual and eternal needs. At

length convicted of his wretchedness and sinfulness, his heart and feet turn unto the Lord. The verse now before us reveals the attitude of God unto such an one and the reception awaiting the repentant and seeking sinner. The father is viewed as on the lookout, ready to welcome the returning prodigal. Love's eyes are keen, and he sees him while he is yet "a great way off"—which tells of the awful distance that sin removes the soul from God. It was love's anticipation and readiness to receive the erring one. He "saw him" with the eyes of favour, yea, eagerness. What a word is this for any repenting and seeking reader: a hearty welcome is assured such if he comes unto God by Christ.

7. The look *of recovery*. "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61). Surely this is one of the most remarkable, blessed, and affecting statements recorded in Holy Writ! Note, first, this is said not simply of "Jesus," but of "the Lord:" to emphasize the fact that He acted here with divine understanding, authority, and mercy. Second, that He "turned." It was in the high priest's house, and the Saviour had been facing the motley gang who had apprehended Him in the Garden. One of "his own" had been overtaken in a grievous fault, but He did not contemptuously ignore him, but turned His face toward him! He did not call to him, lest He should endanger His sheep! He "looked upon Peter"—not scowled or frowned! With sad, hiding, yet compassionate expression. It was a look of conviction, for Peter at once remembered His warning word. It was a look of power, for it brought repentance. It was a look of love, for it melted Peter's heart. Christ was about to die and put away Peter's sins, and here He gave him a pledge of it by turning *toward* and "look[ing] upon" him! May He so look today upon backsliders.

***“But our eyes are upon Thee” 2 Chronicles 20:12.
“Look Thou upon me” Psalm 119:132.
“Mine eye affecteth mine heart” Lamentations 3:51.***



“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him” 2 Chronicles 16:9.