

The Eyes of the LORD

“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.”

—II Chronicles 16:9

cause us to doubt the Heavenly Father's care. Thus, we must continually remind ourselves, “The LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King.” “Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”—Jer. 10:10; Ps. 136:1, *New American Standard Bible*

IN THE DAYS IN WHICH

we are now living, it is needful for all true Christians to think, to live, and to strive to perfect their faith in the true and living God. There are many conditions in the world around us which, without sufficient faith, might

Our faith in God must include the assurance of his tender mercies, as well as implicit trust in his plans and purposes. Doing so, and appreciating his wonderful attributes of character, truly defines a God that is the source of all hope, both for ourselves and for the world, even as it races ever faster toward

chaos. More and more, mankind worships the false gods of fleshly aspirations and pride, seeks imagined rights of every kind, engages in all manner of lifestyles now being deemed acceptable, and practices sin in every form, even among those in high places and trusted positions. Truly, “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”—Ps. 118:8

If we have had the privilege of being a parent, we became aware of the great responsibility we had of teaching our children to have proper respect for themselves, for others, and especially for the Heavenly Father. As spiritual children of God, we must be developing these same qualities in ourselves as well. Jesus summed up each one’s obligation: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Mark 12:30,31

Our Heavenly Father is watching over us, teaching us the lessons that we need to learn as his children, and showering us with his love and tender mercies. As we strive to submit to his will in these matters, we come to know the goodness of the Lord, and that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28) It is thus our privilege to rejoice at all times and under all circumstances, and to give thanks to God in all experiences. The trials and difficulties of life develop in us strength of character, that we might be shaped and fitted for future service in God’s kingdom for the recovery of the sin-sick and dying world.

GOD'S EYE

In Psalm 33:18, we read, “Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.” Here we are reminded that the “eye of the LORD” is upon us for a purpose, that he might see in us the development of a character which demonstrates that we fear, or reverence him, and that our hope is made possible by his mercy and love. Such reverence for God is “the beginning of wisdom,” and “the knowledge of the Holy, is understanding;” (Prov. 9:10, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) “The knowledge of the Holy” has to do with the understanding of God’s plan, now revealed to all those who have entered into a covenant relationship with him.—I Cor. 2:9,10; I Pet. 1:12

Our opening text is part of an account in which the Prophet Hanani confronted Asa, king of Judah, saying he had done foolishly by soliciting the help of a neighboring heathen nation in battle, rather than relying on the Lord. Hanani reminded Asa that the “eyes of the LORD” see everything and would have overruled a much more complete victory if the king had put his faith and trust in him, rather than in a human leader of a Gentile nation. God’s infinite capability to “see” is beyond human comprehension, but in order to help us understand it, the eye is employed as an illustration. The human eye is an extraordinary organ, capable of seeing with accuracy and perspective very small and intricate objects. Indeed, we often do not appreciate our eyesight until something happens to adversely affect it.

When God is described as having eyes, we are not to think of him merely along the lines of human capabilities. No one can make a likeness or image

of God, nor can they truly know fully his ability to “see.” In man’s use of a camera, pictures are taken of various objects, people or scenes. They are captured as images, either digitally or on paper, and can be viewed at any time and as often as desired. Similarly, our eyes take pictures constantly, storing them as images, either for immediate use, or to be recalled from memory at some future time. God’s sight in this respect is unparalleled. He sees and notes everything that is happening in every corner of his vast universe, and has done so from the beginning of creation. These images of every moment, of every object, animate and inanimate, in every place, are stored, in perfect order, in the infinite mind of our God.

With such eyesight, no wonder David was moved to say: “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. ... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”—Ps. 139:1-6

HIS EYES ARE OVER THE RIGHTEOUS

Although God sees all things, his eyes are especially upon the righteous. The Apostle Peter affirms this when he says, quoting from the Psalms, “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers” (I Pet. 3:12; Ps. 34:15) In reality, we know that none of fallen Adam’s progeny are by nature righteous. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10; Ps. 14:1-3)

However, by his abundant grace God has been drawing certain ones to him. Through faith in the redemptive work of Jesus, and the making of a full consecration to do God's will, he is developing a special class to be members of his spiritual family. These are referred to as "a people for his [God's] name." (Acts 15:14) Having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, God reckons them as "righteous," or "justified" in his sight.—Rom. 4:7,8,24,25

As God's eyes are over the righteous, he also opens their eyes. Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see." (Matt. 13:16) Our eyes of faith and of understanding must be opened before we can fully appreciate spiritual things. The opening of our eyes is a gradual work and is for the purpose of helping us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Pet. 3:18) Our eyes also become more and more open to see the blessings we receive at God's hand, and the peace and joy they bring to us. With such spiritually directed vision, we see all the promises of God in their exquisite beauty, and seek communion with him through prayer in every experience.

Growing in "grace" and in "knowledge" entails the putting on of the fruits and graces of the spirit described by Paul and Peter. In Galatians 5:22,23 and II Peter 1:5-7, a listing of many of these qualities is given us, including such things as: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity [love]. God's eyes are upon us to see the development of these character qualities, which give witness to his

spirit dwelling and working in us as we learn in the school of Christ.

EYES EXPRESSIVE OF MANY FEELINGS

Eyes can be very expressive of many emotions, whether pain, pleasure, sadness or joy. We especially notice this in the eyes of a child. If the child is happy, their eyes seem to light up and move with joy. On the other hand, if the child is sad, the sparkle is missing from their eyes, and they become still, or even tearful. The eyes can also express approval, or disapproval, oftentimes even before words are spoken.

The expressions of the eyes can likewise denote favor or disfavor. Surely this is true with respect to our relationship with God as his children. He “sees” us in a favorable way, and we focus our eyes upon him as our loving Heavenly Father. Such a favorable viewpoint from God should instill within us the same desire as our Lord had: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:8) God’s eye of favor toward us should encourage the daily petition, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits to me?” Our answer—“I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD.” (Ps. 116:12-14) It is but a reasonable service that we should pay our vows of consecration to God, and present to him all that we possess in this present life, since it is only by his grace and favor that his eyes are upon us.—Rom. 12:1

GOD KNOWS ALL THINGS

“Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.” (Ps 147:5) Here we see that our loving God is able to give each of us needed

counsel in all of life's affairs, whether spiritual or temporal, because he has infinite understanding. His "eyesight," therefore, is unerring as he watches over his people and their affairs. Nothing can escape his attention. God says, through the prophet, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done."—Isa. 46:9,10

Most assuredly, God knows everything about us. He knows our heart and our spirit. He knows our frame, and that we are but dust. He knows that we are imperfect in many ways, and often cannot do what we would like to do. He knows the things that delight us, and those that may annoy us. He knows what draws us to the throne of heavenly grace in prayer. (Ps. 34:18; 103:14; Rom. 7:15; Matt. 11:28) Though we are weak, nothing can separate us from the "love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:35-39) By reason of our Heavenly Father's assistance, we are made much stronger in the "power of his might" than we could ever be in our own strength. Therefore, we can say with Paul, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—Eph. 6:10; II Cor. 12:10

Our loving God desires that we bring our lives into harmony with his principles of truth and righteousness, and thus "bear much fruit." His infinite wisdom knows when and how each of us needs "pruning" in order to accomplish this purpose. Without pruning, the farmer would harvest little fruitage, for pruning promotes new growth and, hence, more

fruit production. Similarly with spiritual fruitage, our Heavenly Father prunes us through the experiences of life, teaching and guiding us each step of the way, so that we might bear fruit in abundance, and of the highest quality.—John 15:1-8

The wisdom of God unerringly provides each experience that we need, whether it be the sunshine of blessings, or the storms of trial and adversity. It is especially these seasons of trial and testing that will help to prove our faith, our love and our growth. Such experiences may not seem “joyous, but grievous,” but if we are properly exercised by them, they will yield “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” in the eyes of God. (Heb. 12:11) We will learn to “glory in tribulations,” knowing that they are working in us “patience, experience; and ... hope.”—Rom. 5:3,4

Realizing that God knows both the intents of our hearts, as well as the motive of our words, we should strive for that lofty goal expressed by David, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” (Ps. 19:14) The desire that the sum of all our words and meditations be acceptable to the Lord is based, the psalmist says, upon that fact that it is only in him that we have spiritual strength and redemption.

EYES OF FAITH AND LOVE

In the Scriptures, faith is frequently associated in a metaphorical way with sight. For example, Jesus said, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” (John 8:56) We understand this to mean that, by faith, Abraham looked forward to the day when a seed would *(Continued on page 36)*

(Continued from page 31) come to be used in bringing blessings to all the families of the earth, in fulfillment of the promise God had made to him. Abraham, and other faithful ones of old, “all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, ... were persuaded of them, and embraced them.” (Heb. 11:13) These heroes of faith all “saw,” not with the natural eye, but with the eye of faith. With limited knowledge, but much faith, they saw God’s plan working out in accord with his eternal purposes, and which would be centered in a promised seed.

Christ Jesus is the focus of our eyes of faith, for he is the long-promised seed of blessing. (Gal. 3:16) We, too, have been invited to be part of that seed. If we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham’s seed, Paul says, “and heirs according to the promise.” (vs. 29) To be “heirs” with Christ of the Abrahamic promise, we must follow in the Master’s footsteps. We recall Jesus’ words, “He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) The Apostle Paul counsels us to continually have our eyes on Jesus, “the leader and perfecter of the faith, ... who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarded the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) Jesus is our leader, our teacher, our pattern, and the one through whom we are privileged to enter into sonship with God.

There is also an important connection between spiritual eyesight and love. Paul indicates that it is only to those who love God supremely that he reveals his truth “by his Spirit.” (I Cor. 2:9,10) The apostle

further says, when speaking of the various gifts of the Spirit that have been available to the consecrated followers of the Lord, that love is “a more excellent way.” (I Cor. 12:31) It seems impossible to describe love itself, and the best that we can do is describe its conduct. If we possess unswerving faith in God and his purposes, it will be so because we have such a deep love for him and his will that no experience we encounter will be able to shake us as New Creatures. All of the gifts of God’s Holy Spirit are important and have merit, but love should be the controlling principle of our hearts and minds at all times. “Let all that you do be done in love,” Paul concluded.—I Cor. 16:14, *NASB*

In describing love, the apostle tells us what its conduct should be, and what it should not be. Paraphrasing, he says that love suffers long; it is kind; it does not envy; it does not boast nor get puffed up with pride; it does not behave in an unbecoming way; it does not seek glory for self; it is not easily provoked nor does it think evil of others; it does not rejoice in iniquity, but in the truth; it bears all things; it believes the best of others and hopes for good things for them; it endures all things. (I Cor. 13:4-7) Daily, we should ask ourselves, Do I have this kind of love?

Having eyes of faith and love is very important for us during this time of our present earthly sojourn. “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:26) Yet, it is love, Paul says, that is the greatest of all character qualities. “Now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (I Cor. 13:13, *NASB*) To those who make their “calling and election sure,” and are given

the divine nature, faith will be exceeded by full and complete knowledge, and all the hopes related to their calling will be realized by their entering into the heavenly kingdom. However, Paul says, "Love never ends." (I Cor. 13:8, *English Standard Version*) This is because "God is love," and abides forever. (I John 4:8) Our Lord Jesus, and his glorified church, will also be the embodiment of divine love throughout all the ages to come.

Having such a prospect in view, let us daily strive to lay up this wonderful treasure of love. Indeed, it will be forever part of our being, if faithful, and we will have the added opportunity of ministering it unto the world of mankind in the kingdom, both as a blessing to them, and also as a mark of divine approval, that they might attain to everlasting life on earth. Love is the standard for all whom God will acknowledge as his children on either the heavenly or the earthly plane of existence.

The Apostle Paul says, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* renders the wording as having "the eyes of the heart" of us enlightened. Since we are told to keep our hearts "with all diligence," having the eyes of our heart enlightened is most surely a necessary requisite to faithfulness. Out of our hearts, the verse continues, "are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:23

THE APPLE OF GOD'S EYE

In prayer, David requested of the Lord, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow

of thy wings.” (Ps. 17:8) The phrase, “apple of the eye,” is most unusual, but full of meaning. *Strong’s Hebrew Definitions* denotes it as signifying “little man of the eye,” literally, the pupil of the eye. When one looks closely into another person’s eye, he sees himself reflected in their pupil, as a “little man.” Certainly, when we look into the eyes of God, we see ourselves as very little in his sight, yet we have the promise of his watch-care and protection. In this analogy, there is also the fact that our eyes, especially the pupils, are a very important part of the body. It is through the small aperture in the pupil that rays of light pass to form an image on the retina, by which we are able to see. Because of this, we protect our eyes by blinking or turning away when something potentially harmful approaches. In this, too, we see a lesson of God’s promised keeping power on our behalf.

We note that David made this request of God even though he had committed serious sins in his life. We, too, were born in sin and “shapen in iniquity.” (Ps. 51:5) If, however, we have accepted by faith the merit of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice and have made an unreserved consecration of ourselves to do God’s will, he is pleased to count us as united with Christ, the greater David, the apple of his Father’s eye. What a glorious privilege is ours of thus being viewed by God!

Jesus was the apple of God’s eye throughout his earthly ministry. On at least two occasions, a voice from heaven was heard saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17; 17:5) Jesus did not turn away from the dangers and suffering that came to him, but instead “endured the

cross.” He was “tempted [Greek meaning: tested] in all points, ... yet without sin.” (Heb. 12:2,3; 4:15) By his death and resurrection Jesus made it possible for mankind to be released from the bondage of sin and death.—Phil. 2:5-11, *Diaglott*

Let us, then, be continually mindful of the wonderful privilege of being considered the apple of God’s eye, remembering that with this privilege also comes great responsibility. Even as we look into the eyes of God for guidance and instruction, he has his eyes on us. May we be faithful, even unto death, so that we might have a part in fulfilling his promise made so long ago, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”—Gen. 22:18 ■