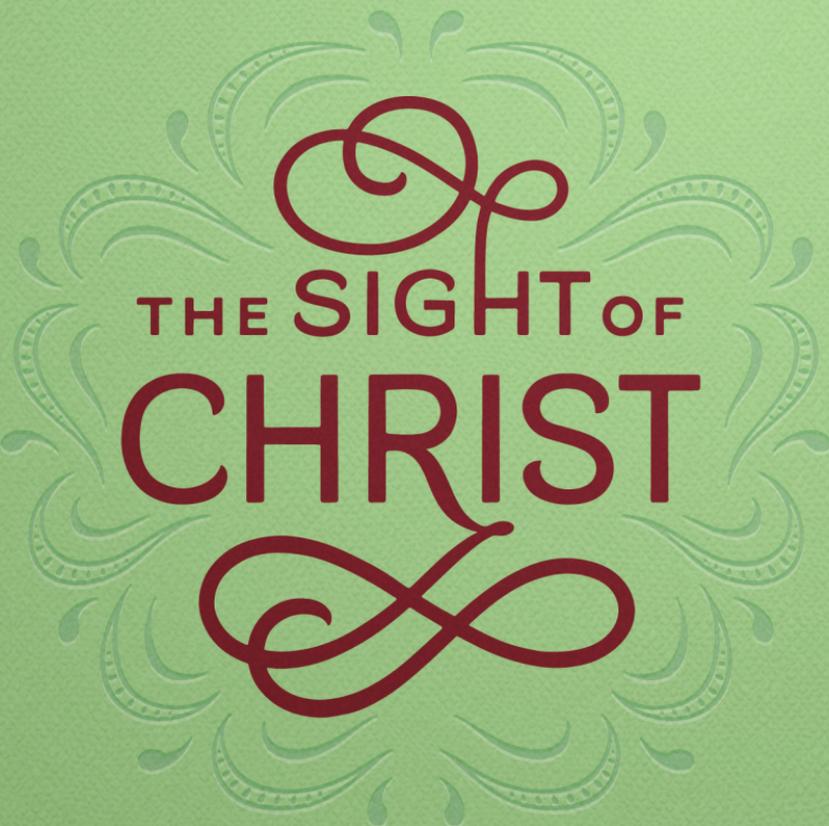


STEPHEN YUILLE

A decorative floral emblem in a light green color, featuring intricate scrollwork and leaf-like patterns surrounding the central text.

THE SIGHT OF
CHRIST

90 DAYS *with the* PURITANS

“Some more mature people in my childhood could suck a peppermint slowly and savor its taste for a long time. Impatient youngsters (like me) crunched them quickly; the aftertaste was correspondingly brief. Perhaps that’s a parable of our ability, or inability, to linger on God’s word and meditate lovingly on its Spirit-given riches. If so, thanks to Stephen Yuille, *The Sight of Christ* will help us to slow down and taste that the Lord is good.”

—Sinclair Ferguson, Chancellor’s Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary

“The joy that makes life sweet comes from beholding the beauty of Christ with the spiritual eyes of faith. And yet we often let sin, temptation, and distractions cloud our vision of Him. We need faithful brothers to point us back to Christ in His Word so that we lay hold once again of the communion with our Savior that is the very marrow of life. Stephen Yuille’s *The Sight of Christ* is a faithful help in daily redirecting our hearts to Jesus. These brief but soul-enriching devotionals will equip us to worship our Shepherd as He is worthy. Read and be blessed.”

—Michael Riccardi, pastor, GraceLife, Grace Community Church; professor of theology, The Master’s Seminary

“Real theology is not simply academic. Biblical doctrine addresses the heart. This book is an example of the kind of teaching we need more of today. It is clear and Bible saturated, but its aim is to cause us to embrace and enjoy the truths that we confess. It is the kind of book that will enrich your devotional life by pointing you to Jesus Christ.”

—Jonathan L. Master, president, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

“When I first began to read the Puritans, I gravitated toward some and not others. Puritanism was a large movement, encompassing preachers and writers in the thousands. Differences among them are therefore not surprising. The ones with whom I felt the deepest affinity were those who highlighted an experiential Reformed faith. They stood in the Augustinian tradition that makes much of the affections of the heart and the *suavitas* (sweetness) of religion. This latest book by Stephen Yuille, a leading scholar of the Puritan movement, stands squarely in this tradition. I highly recommend it.”

—Michael A. G. Azad Haykin, professor of
church history and biblical spirituality,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Devotionals abound, but few capture the theology, piety, and practice of Christianity in a heartwarming manner. Stephen Yuille has done just this in providing a devotional that helps us to walk with the Puritans as we contemplate the glories of Christ and His salvation. This work is an invaluable resource for your spiritual edification and for strengthening your faith. Read it; you will be greatly edified.”

—Christopher J. Gordon, senior minister,
Escondido United Reformed Church;
host, *Abounding Grace Radio*

STEPHEN YUILLE

THE SIGHT OF
CHRIST

90 DAYS *with the* **PURITANS**



Reformation Heritage Books
Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Sight of Christ: 90 Days with the Puritans

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In memory of

Lisa Marie Beatty

1974–2025

*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

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Introduction

Experiential knowledge is growing more and more in the holy experience of the endless love of God and fellowship with Christ.

WILLIAM PERKINS

According to the Scriptures, knowledge includes the affections. Real knowledge brings down spiritual things into the heart.

THOMAS GOODWIN

There is a felt presence of God which no words can communicate. The thoughts swell with a fullness of spiritual things, which strive for vent.

JOHN FLAVEL

Experiential knowledge is feeling what we understand. Such knowledge is called not only sight, but taste.

THOMAS MANTON

What do these Puritans mean? Think of it this way: It is one thing to know about God's majesty and another thing entirely to behold its beauty and excellency; it is one thing to know that sin is the greatest evil and another thing to feel its horror; it is one thing to know the excellency of God's love and another thing to taste its sweetness.

For the Puritans there is a difference between intellectual and experiential knowledge. The first remains in the head, while the second moves from the head to the heart. They were convinced that we only know something when it stirs our affections—love, desire, delight, hate, fear, and sorrow. For this reason, our minds must be constantly occupied with what they called “lively truths.”

We meditate on *the glory of God* that we may stand in wonder and amazement at His excellent perfections.

We meditate on *the severity of sin* that we may see its ugliness, grieve for it, and turn from it.

We meditate on *the beauty of Christ* that we may delight in Him who is altogether lovely and seek Him as our greatest treasure.

We meditate on *the mystery of providence* that we may trust in God’s power and wisdom and rest in His wise fatherly disposal of every circumstance in life.

We meditate on *the certainty of glory* that we may abound in hope and remain steadfast to the end.

These five “lively” truths take center stage in this devotional. As you spend time each day in meditation, my prayer is that your love will be kindled, your faith strengthened, your joy increased, and your hope renewed, that “you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19).

A Glorious Perfection

Holiness is the blessedness and nobleness of God's nature.

STEPHEN CHARNOCK

“Holiness is not divine scowling.” I recall hearing those words for the first time. The preacher was in earnest as he cautioned against perceiving of God’s holiness strictly in terms of His displeasure toward sinners. Whether he knew it or not, he was speaking to me. For years the term *holiness* had conjured up images in my mind of a cranky old man with a look of annoyance etched permanently on his face. It took a long time for me to realize that holiness is about beauty, not severity; joyfulness, not dreariness; glory, not melancholy. Stephen Charnock expresses it so wonderfully in *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*: “Holiness is the blessedness and nobleness of God’s nature.”

In the year that King Uzziah died, the prophet Isaiah saw “the Lord sitting on a throne” (Isa. 6:1). The term “Lord” in Hebrew is *Adonai*, the plural of *adon*, which is used in Scripture to describe the relationship between husband and wife and master and servant (Gen. 18:12; 24:34). When ascribed to God, the title *Adonai* declares that He is the supreme Lord and Master: “The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome” (Deut. 10:17).

According to Isaiah's vision, the Lord is so mighty and awesome that "the train of His robe filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). Upon reading those words, my mind immediately goes to an old hockey arena in my boyhood town. At one end of the rink was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on the wall, which was a little unsettling since it was impossible to escape her gaze anywhere on the ice. In this portrait, the train of Queen Elizabeth's robe covered the stairs in front of her—a symbol of splendor since ancient times. In Isaiah's vision, the train of God's robe did not merely cover a few steps but filled the temple, thereby pointing to His incomparable grandeur.

Isaiah also saw the seraphim above God's throne. With two of their six wings, they covered their face (Isa. 6:2). This is reminiscent of the occasion in Moses's life when he asked to see God's glory. God replied, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). The seraphim are not sinful creatures like Moses, yet even they cannot look on God's face because His glory is too brilliant. They simply cry to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isa. 6:3).

This is one of the most fundamental truths we can declare about God. He is holy, set apart from creation—limitless in His being:

The LORD is high above all nations,
His glory above the heavens.
Who is like the LORD our God,
Who dwells on high? (Ps. 113:4–5)

He is holy, set apart from sin—faultless in His being. "O

LORD my God, my Holy One.... You are of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Hab. 1:12–13).

But there is more. Because God is eternal, His holiness cannot be understood merely in relation to sin and creation, which are temporal and creaturely realities. He must be eternally holy in Himself. As Charnock declares, “Holiness is a glorious perfection belonging to the nature of God.” This means that God’s holiness is above all else His excellence:

Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Ex. 15:11)

We worship a holy God. We marvel at His glorious perfection, and we are amazed that He has given Himself to us, thereby making His excellence our eternal blessedness (see Ps. 144:15). His holiness fills our souls with awe and wonder and leads us to rest in Him, declaring with the psalmist,

O my soul, you have said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You.” (Ps. 16:2)

O Lord, we praise You, for You alone are glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. We behold Your matchless beauty in the person of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in whom we are supremely blessed. May You fill us this day with Your fullness. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Clinging to the Dust

Christ's blood is all-sufficient to cover, abolish, and wholly take away our sins in such a way that He neither sees, will see, nor can see them as sins and debts against us.

SAMUEL WARD

The psalmist utters a heartrending cry: “My soul clings to the dust” (Ps. 119:25). His words make us think of a man who has been mortally wounded in battle. He is lying face down on the ground, his hands clutching the earth as he takes his final breath. The psalmist offers up another agonizing cry, “My soul melts from heaviness” (v. 28). Here, the image is of a man weighed down with sadness and unable to find comfort anywhere.

What is going on? Why is the psalmist in such inner turmoil? The answer is simple. He is struggling with a troubled conscience (Ps. 119:37, 71, 80, 176). Elsewhere, he declares,

You have laid me in the lowest pit,
 In darkness, in the depths.
 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
 And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. (Ps. 88:6–7)

The depths and waves speak of God’s displeasure toward the psalmist’s sin. As the darkness encompasses him and the

depths envelop him, he feels like he is drowning. He has sinned, God has removed His gracious presence—that sweet sense of His love—and the result is terrible distress.

Such is the impact of sin on the soul:

Your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden His face from you,
So that He will not hear. (Isa. 59:2)

This hiding of God's face on account of sin has unmistakable effects. It hinders prayer and fellowship, stifles joy and peace, removes comfort and assurance. It leads to discouragement, plus emotional and mental anguish. Have you ever been through anything like that? Have you ever soaked your bed with tears on account of your sin (Ps. 6:6)? Has your body ever ached because of your sin (Ps. 38:3)? Have you ever felt God's displeasure weighing heavily on you?

It is crucial to note that God puts the psalmist through this season of spiritual unrest for a purpose—that he may acknowledge his guilt, confess his sin, and seek God's face. When our soul clings to the dust and melts from heaviness, we must see God's hand in it, and we must pray with the psalmist, "Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak" (Ps. 6:2). We do not stand on our own merit but appeal to God's mercy, remembering that Christ is an all-sufficient Savior. When He shed His blood on the cross, He passed through the depths and waves of God's displeasure. He entered the darkness and descended to the lowest pit. Having thus "become a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), He paid the penalty for our sin in full. On that basis God

forgives us, dissolving the obligation to punish us. In *The Life of Faith*, Samuel Ward expresses this beautiful reality as follows: “Christ’s blood is all-sufficient to cover, abolish, and wholly take away our sins in such a way that He neither sees, will see, nor can see them as sins and debts against us.” What a marvelous truth!

We confess our utter sinfulness and weakness, and we admit our complete dependence on God. We cry out to Him, “Have mercy on me!” How does He respond? “The LORD has heard the voice of my weeping,” says the psalmist (Ps. 6:8). Did you know repentant sobs, cries, and tears are like a voice that God hears? He knows exactly what they mean. He understands their significance. As a result, He draws near, removes our guilt, and restores His peace. It has been said that the God who forces us to our knees is the same God who sets us on our feet. When He has hidden Himself from the soul, there is no mistaking His return. When He renews a sweet sense of His love, we gasp as if taking our first breath.

Our Father, we bless You for Your gift of salvation. We praise You for Your great mercy in forgiving us our sins and giving us the hope of eternal life. We thank You for the never-failing pledge of Your love, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

A Ravishing Beauty

*O, what a fair One, what an excellent,
lovely, ravishing One is Christ!*

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

The seasons in Ontario dazzle the senses. In summer, the glowing mosaic of yellows and greens as the corn grows tall in the fields is quite stunning. Autumn arrives, and the trees are ablaze with shades of red, orange, and yellow while geese gather in the harvested cornfields, plotting their trek south. Winter means ice and snow blanket the landscape, and the sun—hovering in the southern sky—never arrives directly overhead. The shadows grow long by the middle of the afternoon, covering the countryside in a grayish, pinkish hue. Finally, spring arrives, and the dark gives way to light. Tulips and daffodils push through the ground, unleashing a bouquet of color. It is difficult to capture such beauty in a photo or painting, let alone in words.

We often forget that just as our physical senses are enamored with beauty, so, too, is our heart. Beauty is one of our deepest longings, and therefore it always exerts a compulsive and persuasive influence on us. For this reason, the Puritans were convinced that the heart must be ravished with Christ's beauty in order to be drawn to Him. This accounts

for the attention they give in their writings to celebrating and commending Christ's loveliness. For example, Samuel Rutherford declares,

O, what a fair One, what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand worlds like the Garden of Eden in one. Put all trees, flowers, smells, colors, tastes, joys, sweetness, and loveliness in one. O, what an excellent thing that would be! And yet, it would be less to that fair Christ than one drop of rain to all the seas, rivers, and lakes of ten thousand earths.

Rutherford's "ravishing One" is "the brightness of [God's] glory and the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3). This means God's sparkling excellencies shine forth in Christ. They shine forth in His words: "All things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). They shine forth in His miracles: "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory" (John 2:11). They shine forth in His person: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). The Infinite has become finite. The Creator has become a creature: "For in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). In Christ, therefore, we behold the beauty of God's goodness, loving-kindness, and faithfulness. We behold His glorious perfection.

This ravishing One upholds "all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). It has been said, "The hand that made everything maintains everything." By His power Christ holds the greatest galaxy and smallest molecule in place. He is the power that causes our fingers, arms, bones, and lungs to function. If

He were to stop thinking us into being right now, we would cease to exist.

This ravishing One has “purged our sins” (Heb. 1:3). Sin is not an isolated act but a power that moves in our mind, affections, and will. It corrupts every faculty, imprisoning the soul in its rebellion against God, and we are powerless to do anything about it. “‘Though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before Me,’ says the Lord GOD” (Jer. 2:22). But Christ’s blood “cleanses us from all sin” (1John 1:7). It wipes away the dirtiest and deepest stain.

This ravishing One is now seated “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). Like the high priest of old, He bears the names of His people into God’s presence (Ex. 28:29). Here is conclusive proof that God has forgiven us our sins, reconciled us to Himself, and welcomed us into His presence. Here is the unshakeable assurance that nothing can separate us from God’s love.

“O, what a fair One, what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One is Christ!”

Our Father, we thank You for Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. He is indeed altogether lovely. Help us this day to fix our eyes on Him in whose name we pray. Amen.

Goodness and Mercy

*God is the Father of mercies because all the mercy,
all the pity, all the compassion that is in all the
fathers on earth is but a drop in this ocean, a spark
in this flame, a coin in this treasury.*

THOMAS BROOKS

Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved portions of God's Word. Millions of people have memorized it, and countless numbers have turned to it for solace amid life's numerous trials and tribulations. I have read it while standing beside hospital beds and open graves. I have prayed it when the storm clouds have gathered in my own life. I have found sweetness and tenderness emanating from every line.

We see Christ suffering in Psalm 22 and reigning in Psalm 24. It is Psalm 23 that spans the gap between His suffering and reigning, His agony and glory, His cross and crown. We see Him walking through the valley of the shadow of death, looking to His Father as His enemies surround Him. We see Him walking by faith as His Father sustains Him in His darkest hour.

It is encouraging to know that someone has been where we are. The persecuted wants to pray with the persecuted. The bereaved wants to weep with the bereaved. The childless wants to visit with the childless. The reason is obvious:

sympathy. We want to interact with those who can relate to our personal struggles. As we pass through difficult days, we can look to Christ because He has been there. He is “the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

Because of Christ we can say, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1). He has brought us into a relationship with the living God by means of His atoning sacrifice. “I am the good shepherd,” says He. “The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Whether we like it or not, we are mere sheep, incapable of taking care of ourselves. We cannot provide our own food, find our own way, or fight our own battles. We are utterly helpless. But thankfully, our safe arrival at our destination does not depend on us but on our Shepherd. He guides us each step of the way, keeps us on the straight and narrow, meets all our needs, sustains us when we are weak, carries us when we are injured, and protects us from numerous dangers—seen and unseen. He is indeed the Good Shepherd.

At times, we find ourselves in “the valley of the shadow of death” (Ps. 23:4). The “valley” is the experience that overwhelms the soul with a sense of terror. It is the positive test result for cancer, the agonizing loss of a loved one, the overwhelming fog of depression, the crippling betrayal of a close friend, the broken marriage, the estranged child. It is death itself. Our only confidence in such moments is that our Shepherd is with us: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (v. 6). What a comfort to know that goodness and mercy do not follow us merely for a week or

two, or even a year or two, but “all the days” of our lives! The term “follow” literally means to hound. According to Thomas Brooks in *An Ark for All God’s Noahs in a Gloomy and Stormy Day*, “It signifies a studious, anxious, careful, diligent following.” In other words, God’s mercy and goodness follow us constantly, swiftly, earnestly, and tirelessly. He observes, “God is the Father of mercies because all the mercy, all the pity, all the compassion that is in all the fathers on earth is but a drop in this ocean, a spark in this flame, a coin in this treasury.” Such goodness and mercy are a never-failing beacon of light, even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

O Lord, You number the stars in the heavens above. Your providence extends from the smallest dust particle to the greatest supernova. And yet You remember us. You are our Shepherd who guides, protects, and sustains us. Strengthen our faith in You this day. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Unsure where to begin with the Puritans? Begin with a sentence.

In *The Sight of Christ*, Stephen Yuille stirs our affections toward Christ with warm daily devotions inspired by choice Puritan quotes and seasoned with relevant scriptures. These ninety meditations are a winsome invitation for newcomers and a rich feast for those who already love Puritan devotion.

 Reformation
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