

*Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;*

*But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.*

Bernard of Clairvaux

FACE TO FACE

IT IS THE WAY OF FRAIL HUMANITY to imagine that the way things are now are not just normal, but perhaps even the best they will be. The young especially are short on historic context, and myopic in their outlook. When I was a little boy in the 1950s, I thought that Dwight D. Eisenhower had *always* been the president, and that Reverend Anderson had always been the pastor at our church. Humans seem to be born with the opinion that whatever happened before their birth is unimportant, and that conditions in which they are living are what is accepted norm. (After all, isn't it the height of short-sightedness to believe that in all the millennia of its lifespan, the world's climate right this minute is what is normal and best, and cannot survive even one more change?)

...but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:24-25

Christians too can suffer from this fleshly malady. The redeemed can become fairly complacent, even smug, that they have a Savior and advocate up in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, who defends and intercedes for

them. On top of that, every believer is in possession of the Holy Spirit, carrying around within them that holy umbilical to God, translator, comforter, interpreter.

That can make us feel kind of special and blessed in comparison to the unregenerate common-folk around us.

As good as it is, however, it is not the best. This is not the best it can or will be.

As wonderful as it is having Christ in our heart and head, He remains invisible to us. No one on earth today has the slightest idea what He looks like, and except for a handful of disciples, even those who *did* see Him on earth, have any idea what He looks like now. Today He is our Master and Lord—but not one of us has ever heard His audible voice. We worship Him—but it is always in absentia; we are with Him in spirit, but never in person. We have to *imagine* Christ Jesus upon His throne; we have to imagine the One before whom we bow in adoration.

No matter how wonderful your relationship with Jesus is today, you ain't seen nuthin' yet. Not one of us still on earth has ever heard our King say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." But we will. There will come a day when we will no longer need to imagine Him;

we will be physically *with* Him, we will feel His presence, we will see His face, we will hear His voice.

And, just like many who met Him while He was on earth, I am sure that in that first moment, overwhelmed by the love and holiness of our Lord, we will fall at His feet in worship and adoration. And, being God, He will not refuse it. For the first time in our life, Jesus will literally, physically receive and accept our praise.

Do you think this present life is as good as it gets?
Not even close.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:12

*Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me?*

*Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkling veil between;
But a blessed day is coming
When His glory shall be seen.*

*Face to face—oh, blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so.*

*Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!*

Carrie E. Breck