

# The Watchfulness of God

by J.R. Miller

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*God's watchfulness is a promise that He will protect and care for every child, and our responsibility is to follow His way and be obedient to His command.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:13

**Topics:** "Divine Protection", "Childhood of Jesus"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes God's watchfulness over children, using the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt as a profound example of divine protection. He reassures that just as God safeguarded the infant Jesus from danger, He similarly watches over every child's life, ensuring that those with a divine purpose are shielded from harm. Miller encourages believers to focus on fulfilling their duties and following God's guidance, trusting that His way is the safest path, even amidst peril. He contrasts the true nature of Jesus' childhood with apocryphal tales, highlighting His normalcy, humility, and sinlessness, which made Him relatable and loving. Ultimately, Miller paints a picture of a nurturing environment that shaped Jesus, underscoring the beauty of His character and the divine love that radiated from Him.

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## Transcript

Does God watch over the lives of little children on the earth? Does He keep guard over imperiled infancy? The story of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt answers the question in the case of one infant life. It was a flight divinely ordered and directed. The Child Jesus was in danger. There was no human way of escape. He who had come to earth to be the Redeemer of men, was about to be slain in His cradle! Then Heaven interfered for His deliverance. An angel came to Joseph, bidding him hasten away because the life of the Child was in peril. Instantly the command was obeyed, and when Herod's soldiers came, the Child they were sent to destroy, was safe beyond their reach.

The Child Jesus was unique in the world's history--but the same providence that watched over His infancy, watches over the infancy of every child. To our eyes, evil seems to strike where it pleases. Weakness appears to have no defense against strength. Pestilence knows no distinction when it comes into a community--but enters the homes of the evil and the good with like impunity. But Heaven is ever watching. There are lives no pestilence can touch. There is a wall

of protection about them which nothing can pass. The child who has a mission for God in the future, cannot be stricken in his cradle!

Only one thing need concern us--the doing of our duty, hour by hour, as it comes to us. We have nothing whatever to do with the keeping of our own lives. We never need to ask whether a certain way is safe for us. Absolutely the only question we need to ask is--what God would have us to do. His way is the safe way, though it be through a thousand perils. If we listen for the divine voice, and then follow it without question, we shall ever be under the wings of God.

The legends tell of the way the Holy Family were led, protected and provided for, in the flight to Egypt. We call these apocryphal stories. But no matter. Heaven was really open over these peasant travelers all the way. So heaven is open over everyone who seeks safety and care, in obedience to the divine command.

We are apt to think that, as a child, Jesus must have been different from other children. When we remember that He was the Son of God, it seems to us that there must have been divine revealings even in His infancy. The apocryphal Gospels make the story of Christ's boyhood, a "blaze of miracle." But in their efforts to show His divine character, they give us a most undivine portraiture. The Child Jesus, as they depict Him, is cruel, vindictive, smiting down other children that resist His desires. His bearing is harsh and ungentle. He is mischievous and domineering.

Altogether different, however, is the portraiture of the childhood of Jesus given in the Gospels. He grew up among other children, with nothing in Him to set Him apart from them. He was not precocious--but learned His lessons by hard study, just as they did. He was humble and simple in His manner, obedient to His parents, gentle to all about Him, sweet and beautiful in His disposition. He was the Son of God--but the divine glory in Him was revealed in a perfectly natural human childhood.

We may think of the influences amid which this Holy Child grew up. His home life was pure and gentle, with an atmosphere of love and prayer. Nazareth was like a garden in its beauty. The village, nestling within a circlet of hills, has been described as "like a handful of pearls in a goblet of emeralds."

We know that in one sense, the Child Jesus was different from other children--He was sinless. This means that He lived a life of communion with God from His earliest years. But this did not make Him unnatural or unwholesome in His life--it only made Him the sweeter. Love always ruled in Him. He was gentle and thoughtful, never unkind, severe, censorious. His sinlessness did not make Him a prodigy among His playmates. The divine in Him, was revealed in the graces which everywhere are recognized as the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Artists seek to put the most marvelous beauty into the face of the Child Jesus. No doubt He was beautiful. The heart makes the face, and the perfect love and grace that dwelt in Him--must have made His countenance altogether lovely.

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