

The “Look” that Changed Spurgeon’s Life

“Look unto Me!...I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, ‘Look!’ what a charming word it seemed to me!”



(1834-1892)

Charles Spurgeon was raised in a godly home in England. Both his father and grandfather were ministers of the gospel. At the age of ten, he began to seek God regarding his own salvation. After a period of about five years, he happened to attend a Primitive Methodist meeting in which the passage, “Look unto Me, and be ye saved,” was being preached. That day Spurgeon found Christ.

Soon Spurgeon himself began to preach. He was so effective that by the age of nineteen this “boy-preacher” was attracting large crowds in London to hear the gospel of Christ. He continued preaching in that city, primarily at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, for thirty-eight years until his death in 1892. The following, taken from his book, *Conversion: the Great Change, gives an account of the day he found Christ.*

I SOMETIMES THINK I might have been in darkness and despair until now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snow-storm one Sunday morning while I was going to a certain place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people. I had heard of the Primitive Methodists, how they sang so loudly that they made people’s heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they could tell me that, I did not care how much they made my head ache. The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. Now, it is well that preachers should be instructed; but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was —

“LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED,
ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!”

He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a

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glimpse of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus: "My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pains. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, 'Look.' Well, a man needn't go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn't be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Ay!" said he, in broad Essex, "many of ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Some of ye say, 'We must wait for the Spirit's workin'.' You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ*. The text says, 'Look unto *Me*.' "

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: "Look unto Me; I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin' on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to heaven. Look unto Me; I am sittin' at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! look unto Me!"

When he had gone to about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, "and you always will be miserable — miserable in life, and miserable in death — if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live." I saw at once the way of salvation.

I know not what else he said — I did not take

much notice of it — I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, "Trust Christ and you shall be saved." Yet it was, no doubt, all wisely ordered, and now I can say —

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
and shall be till I die."

I do from my soul confess that I never was satisfied till I came to Christ; when I was yet a child, I had far more wretchedness than ever I have now; I will even add, more weariness, more care, more heartache than I know at this day. I may be singular in this confession, but I make it, and know it to be the truth. Since that dear hour when my soul cast itself on Jesus, I have found solid joy and peace; but before that, all those supposed gaieties of early youth, all the imagined ease and joy of boyhood, were but vanity and vexation of spirit to me. That happy day, when I found the Savior and learned to cling to His dear feet, was a day never to be forgotten by me.

An obscure child, unknown, unheard of, I listened to the Word of God; and that precious text led me to the cross of Christ. I can testify that the joy of that day was utterly indescribable. I could have leaped, I could have danced; there was no expression, however fanatical, which would have been out of keeping with the joy of my spirit at that

hour. Many days of Christian experience have passed since then, but there has never been one which has had the full exhilaration, the sparkling delight which that first day had. I thought I could have sprung from the seat on which I sat, and have called out with the wildest of those Methodist brethren who were present, "I am forgiven! I am forgiven! A monument of grace! A sinner saved by blood!" My spirit saw its chains broken to pieces. I felt that I was an emancipated soul, an heir of heaven, a forgiven one, accepted in Christ Jesus, plucked out of the miry clay and out of the horrible pit, with my feet set upon a rock, and my goings established. I thought I could dance all the way home. I could understand what John Bunyan meant, when he declared he wanted to tell the crows on the ploughed land all about his conversion. He was too full to hold. He felt he must tell somebody.

It is not everyone who can remember the very day and hour of his deliverance; but, as Richard Knill said, "At such a time of the day, clang went every harp in heaven, for Richard Knill was born again," it was e'en so with me. The clock of mercy struck in heaven the hour and moment of my emancipation, for the time had come. Between half-past ten o'clock, when I entered that chapel, and half-past twelve o'clock, when I was back again at home, what a change had taken place in me! I had passed from darkness into marvelous light, from death to life. Simply by looking to Jesus, I had been delivered from despair, and I was brought into such a joyous state of mind that, when they saw me at home, they said to me, "Something wonderful has happened to you"; and I was eager to tell them all about it. Oh! there was joy in the household that day, when all heard that the eldest son had found the Savior and knew himself to be forgiven — bliss compared with which all earth's joys are less than nothing and vanity.

Yes, I had looked to Jesus as I was, and found in Him my Savior. Thus had the eternal purpose of Jehovah decreed it; and, as the moment before, there was none more wretched than I was, so, within that second, there was none more joyous. It

took no longer time than does the lightning flash; it was done, and never has it been undone. I looked, and lived, and leaped in joyful liberty as I beheld my sin punished upon the great Substitute and put away forever. I looked unto Him, as He bled upon that tree; His eyes darted a glance of love unutterable into my spirit, and in a moment, I was saved. Looking unto Him, the bruises that my soul had suffered were healed, the gaping wounds were cured, the broken bones rejoiced, the rags that had covered me were all removed, and my spirit was white as the spotless snows of the far-off North. I had melody within my spirit, for I was saved, washed, cleansed, forgiven, through Him that did hang upon the tree.

— *Charles Spurgeon*

Like Charles Spurgeon, when a person has a seeking heart and wants to know how to be saved, any instrument or way God wants to use to point him to Christ is acceptable. Some people want to find Christ on their own terms and in their own way, but if your heart is seeking, you will find Christ on whatever terms and in whatever way God chooses to use. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that *all* things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Right now all things in your life are working together for "good," and that good, according to God's Word, is that you would receive Jesus Christ into your life.

Jesus said, "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). What are you seeking? Nothing will satisfy you ultimately. Even if you attained the highest human goal or could actually own the whole world, still, apart from Christ, you would be left with an emptiness inside. Your seeking needs to be focused, like Spurgeon's, to look to Christ and be saved. Isaiah 45:22 declares, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

You can turn your seeking of Christ into finding Him by following Paul's specific answer to the

Philippian jailor's question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30-31). This is how to find Christ —*believe on Him*, not by merely giving mental assent, but by making contact with Him in prayer, confessing Him as Lord. It works! Romans 10:11-12 says, ¹¹ "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to *all who call upon Him*."*

* This month's article is taken from the book *How They Found Christ — in their own words* edited by Bill Freeman. The entire book of the personal testimonies (including Augustine, Calvin, Bunyan, Madame Guyon, J. Wesley, J. Edwards, Whitefield, Finney, Müller, A. Murray, H. W. Smith, Hudson Taylor, Spurgeon, and W. Nee), may be ordered for \$ 9.95, plus \$2.25 postage, from **Ministry of the Word**, P. O. Box 12277, Scottsdale, AZ 85267 • Phone: (480) 948-4050 • Fax: (480) 922-1338.

"Beholding"

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

When Moses was on the mountain with God, he was not doing anything. He was not analyzing his own situation. He was not looking at himself. He was simply there watching the scenery, watching everything pass by him. Moses was just there and God passed by proclaiming His name, His goodness, His mercy, and His forgiveness. It was after seeing all of this that Moses came down from the mountain shining.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding . . . the glory of the Lord." To behold this glory we need to exercise ourselves to let the glory of Christ's Person and work pass before us. Paul practiced this in his preaching of the gospel. Thus, he could write to the Galatians about how the Lord Jesus had been

openly portrayed crucified before their eyes (Gal. 3:1). By such a gospel scenery they came under "the hearing of faith" and received the Spirit (Gal. 3:2). In other words, they received the Spirit by letting the crucified Christ pass before them by means of hearing the gospel. They beheld His Person and work and were infused with the Holy Spirit.

There are many other verses in the New Testament that talk about beholding the Lord, such as beholding the glory as of the only begotten from the Father in John 1:14, seeing Jesus in Hebrews 2:9, seeing the ascended Son of Man in John 6:62, beholding His glory in John 17:24, and looking away unto Jesus in Hebrews 12:2. These kinds of verses stress the importance in our daily life of allowing the Lord's entire redemptive process to pass before us, including His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement. We also need to behold all that His wonderful Person is, with all His attributes. What transforms us is seeing His mercy, His kindness, His goodness, His righteousness, His holiness, and His worthiness. All that Jesus is and all that He has passed through in His redemptive process needs to become our daily scenery. To be transformed, we just need to spend time with the Lord and let this scenery pass before us. Every day, even every hour, we can behold the glory of the Lord.*

— Bill Freeman

* Taken from *The Supplied Life Daily Devotional*, August 26th, pp. 244-245; **Ministry Publications**, Scottsdale, AZ.

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