

LOOK AND LIVE

Isaiah 45:22

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22.

On Sunday morning, January 6, 1850, a young man about sixteen years of age did not go with his father to the usual place of worship in England. A heavy snow had fallen which made it difficult to go very far to church, so he heeded the advice of his mother and went to a nearby chapel where the Primitive Methodists worshipped. He had heard that these people sang so loudly as to make one's head ache. Here was his opportunity to test out that report for himself.

Having been convicted of his sin for some time, and then "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity," this miserable young man, anxious to know how to be saved, entered the house of worship and took a seat in the little balcony. The regular pastor did not come so, after waiting a while, a local lay preacher stepped into the pulpit and conducted the service. He wondered whether or not to preach a sermon because there were so few there, but decided to do so. He announced his text: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." During the course of his message, this tall and slender preacher set his eyes upon the young man in the balcony and in tones of thunder said, "Young man, you are in trouble; you will never get out of it, unless you look to Christ!" He then lifted up his hands and cried out, "Look! Look! Look! It is only look!" Seeing the way of salvation, that young man then and there looked to Christ as his personal Saviour and found life through that look. He had been waiting to do many things in the hope that he might receive divine forgiveness and spiritual joy, but when he truly looked to Christ he received them.

What a lesson we have here of how God honors His Word when spoken by lips which have been anointed by a live coal from off the altar. Here was a lay preacher who did not know much about homiletics, but who did know how to repeat the Word of God and ask someone to believe it and accept Christ. What a tragedy it would have been had the service been dismissed that morning because the regular pastor did not appear. This young man who was saved went out to serve his Lord to the best of his ability.

Five years after his salvation this young man, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was pastor of a Baptist church in London, the New Park Street Chapel. His work was blessed of God and it grew and prospered through the years that followed. It seems almost incredible that one individual could have done so much in the Lord's service in one lifetime. He founded and presided over a college for the training of preachers, which is still rendering a splendid service. He established an orphanage which has provided a home for many hundreds of children. He instituted a home for aged widows. He led in building the Metropolitan Tabernacle at a cost of \$150,000, which was an unheard of sum for a church in those days, and which had an unheard of seating capacity of 5,000. For more than thirty years he was the pastor of this famous church and there he invited multiplied thousands to look to Christ and be saved. He welcomed over fifteen thousand members into that church. While worshipping in the basement of that church in 1955, after the superstructure was destroyed by the bombs of the Germans during World War II, I heard the senior deacon say that more people had been saved on that spot of ground than on any other in all the world. For the same period he was the editor of a magazine known as "The Sword and Trowel," which contained about six hundred pages per year. He was the author of more than fifty large volumes. His works have been

into twenty-five languages, and it is said that they have been read by more than forty million people. Though this noble servant of our Lord, and one of the greatest preachers of the gospel of Christ since the days of Paul, has been dead since 1892, he yet speaketh through the printed page. A Christian worker in England said, "I was called to see a dying woman. I found her rejoicing in Christ, and asked her how she found the Lord. 'Reading that,' she replied, handing me a torn piece of paper. I looked at it and found that it was part of an American newspaper containing an extract from one of Spurgeon's sermons. 'Where did you find this newspaper?' I asked. She answered, 'It was wrapped around a parcel sent me from Australia.' Think of that! A sermon preached in London, conveyed to America, then to Australia, then back to England to save a soul!" No doubt this sort of thing could be duplicated many times.

As we view this verse of scripture three things attract our attention and impress us greatly.

I. A Proclamation of Guilt.

The subjects of this invitation are those who are in need of salvation. The state of their sinful wretchedness is borne out by observation. As you look at your character and conduct and that of the people about you, it will be obvious that all have one general characteristic. There are all degrees of rank, wealth and education, but all are guilty of sin. While there are various shades of moral excellence or delinquency, there is nothing but universal failure in this matter of rendering supreme homage to God.

II. A Provision of Grace.

The God of mercy has provided a way of escape through the atoning sacrifice of His only begotten Son. Truly He is the God of compassion. "For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). In all its parts and effects salvation must be ascribed to the illimitable grace of God.

God designed our salvation. His wisdom drew the plan. His love procured the sacrifice. Christ secured it. The Holy Spirit delivered it to us. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary was propitiatory. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6). In this atonement we find refuge.

It is important to have clear and scriptural ideas about the way of salvation. When compared with salvation all other subjects sink into utter insignificance. Many have a very poor conception of what salvation means. The average person would say that salvation is deliverance from the penalty of sin, the wrath of God and the miseries of hell. But, is that all that salvation is? No! Salvation includes deliverance from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin and eventually from the presence of sin.

It is interesting to note that we are not told to look to ourselves for salvation. The main reason why we are not told to look to ourselves for salvation is that we cannot save ourselves. Neither does our text tell us to look to a priest for

salvation. We must never put anyone between the soul and God except Christ. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

This command, "Look unto me," does not tell us to analyze our thinking, to examine our hearts, to delve into the mysteries of nature or to study the history of the world. Involved in this looking is the admission of the reality of God. It is the acknowledgement of the reality and of the ability of the One to Whom we look. It is an expression of faith. It is vain and useless to look for spiritual help and comfort unless we look to Him of Whom it is declared, "Behold, The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Many think the way of salvation is difficult. Naaman the Syrian expected the prophet of God to do something miraculous and cure him of his leprosy. The prophet's command to dip himself in the waters of the Jordan River was too simple to please Naaman. Since that day many have been like him in wanting something difficult rather than God's simple method of salvation.

This salvation, which man needs and which God has provided, may be received through looking to Christ with the eye of faith. Nothing else can take the place of looking to Him for salvation. None but Christ is able to save.

III. A Promise of Glory.

"And be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." This supreme blessing centers in the words, "And be ye saved." To many salvation is meaningless. This is due to a lack of the consciousness of sin and the terrible penalty it carries. The Bible teaches a salvation from something and a salvation to something. The believer in Christ is delivered from Satan, sin and self, and saved from a life of uselessness. He is saved to peace of mind, joy of heart, fruitfulness of life and a home in heaven. What a blessed result!

This salvation is offered to every individual of every race and in every nation to whom the gospel of Christ is proclaimed. It is adapted to the needs of people of every character and in every condition. The expression, "all the ends of the earth," indicates that sinners of every degree of human guilt are included in this invitation. It includes the youngest and the oldest, the most ignorant and the most cultured, the worst and the best, yea, even those who are the farthest from Christ. To whatever child of Adam the gospel of Christ is proclaimed, the voice of innocent mercy is offering salvation. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

None but Christ is able to save. You cannot save yourself. Your parents cannot save you. Your friends cannot save you. The church cannot save you. The angels cannot save you. Only the Lord is able to deliver your soul from sin and death. If you reject Him, no other can forgive your sin and renew your heart. Look to Him and be saved now.

"Look and live, my brother, live,
Look to Jesus now and live:
'Tis recorded in His Word hallelujah,
It is only that you look and live."