

Looking Unto Christ

by Samuel Davies

The sermon emphasizes the importance of looking unto Christ for salvation, emphasizing the need for a living faith that affects the heart and leads to a transformation in our lives.

Scripture: Acts 16:31

Topics: "Faith In Christ", "Personal Salvation"

Description

Samuel Davies preaches about the importance of looking unto Christ for salvation, emphasizing the personal concern sinners have with Jesus in every age. He highlights the need for an intimate, affectionate application to Christ as the Savior of guilty men, stressing the necessity of consent to the terms of salvation offered through Him. Davies urges sinners to have faith in Jesus with affectionate dispositions, vigorous exercises of heart, and a life of grateful obedience, as salvation is not only purchased but applied through Christ.

Transcript

The Nature of Looking unto

Christ Opened and Explained

by Samuel Davies

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

It is the peculiar sin and unhappiness of the Christianized world, that while they profess and speculatively believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the Savior of sinners; and while they harbor some kind of high esteem for him as a Benefactor who appeared upon earth about 1700 years ago, who should be still remembered with gratitude--yet they are not deeply sensible of that intimate, personal concern which degenerate sinners have with him in every age. They do not make that eager, importunate, affectionate application to him, which his character requires, as the Savior of guilty men.

Divine justice indeed was satisfied, the demands of the law were answered by the obedience and sufferings of our divine Redeemer, long before we came into existence, and God became reconcilable to a guilty world. But all this alone, does not ensure our salvation. Redemption must not only be purchased--but applied; and though it was purchased without our concurrence--yet all mankind, in all ages, are concerned in the application of it. There was no need of the gospel and its ordinances to procure

it; but all these are necessary, and therefore appointed for our obtaining an actual interest in it.

Hence Christ, as an almighty Savior, is exhibited, and the blessings of his purchase are offered in the gospel; and all who hear the gracious proposal are invited to entertain this Savior with suitable dispositions, and to consent to the terms on which these blessings are offered, upon the penalty of everlasting damnation. Our personal consent is required as much in this age--as when the gospel was first published to the world; and it is this which is solicited by all the means of grace; it is to gain your consent to this gracious proposal, that the gospel is still continued among you. It is for this we preach: for this you should hear, and perform every other duty; for this the Lord's supper in particular was instituted, and has been today administered among you. It is to melt your hearts, and engage your affections to a dying Savior, that he is represented both in words and in actions--in all the agonies of Gethsemane, and in all the tortures of Calvary.

But though these affecting means have been used from age to age--yet, alas! they have not had the intended effect upon multitudes. They act like a sick person infatuated with the imagination that the mere grateful remembrance of Galen or Hippocrates, or some other eminent physician of past ages, will be sufficient for his recovery, without following their prescriptions, or making a speedy application to a living physician now; whereas there is as much reason why we in this age should be pricked to the heart, and cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" as there was for Peter's hearers. Acts 2:37, 38. There is as much reason to exhort unregenerate sinners now to repent and be converted, as there was to exhort the impenitent Jews to it. There is as much cause to direct and persuade men now to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the heathen jailer, who had been an infidel. Acts 16:31.

It is true indeed, when we now exhort men to believe in Christ, we cannot include all the ideas in it which were included in this exhortation when addressed to infidel Jews and heathens in the apostolic age; for then it included, that they should renounce their former religion, and assent to this important truth, that Jesus is the Messiah, and take upon them the profession of Christianity; and this is rendered in general, I hope, needless in our land, as we have been initiated into this persuasion by our education and other means.

But, my brethren, all this is far short of that consent which we must yield to the gospel, if we expect to be saved by it. This faith is not that living faith which we are called to act upon the Redeemer; and we must give him another kind of reception than multitudes do, who thus believe his divine mission, and profess his religion.

We must have those affectionate dispositions and vigorous exercises of heart towards him, which befit guilty, perishing sinners--towards an almighty and gracious Savior, who deserves and therefore demands our supreme affection, our humble dependence on his merits alone, and our hearty consent to be his servants forever. We must be brought to believe in him with such a faith as will regulate our practices, and render the whole of our life--a series of grateful obedience to him, who is an atoning Priest upon a throne of royal authority, enacting laws and demanding the dutiful submission of his subjects! And therefore, though it is needless to call upon you to believe in the same sense in which this exhortation was addressed to infidels by the apostles; yet there is still room enough to urge you to this duty, only leaving out one ingredient then included, namely, a speculative belief and external profession of the Christian religion, and that Christ is the Messiah.

There is still reason to persuade sinners to consent to the terms of life established in the gospel, to renounce all dependence on their own righteousness, and to place their humble confidence in his righteousness alone, to acquiesce with the warmest delight in the method of salvation through grace, and in the meantime to surrender themselves to his government, to obey his will, with the most cheerful willingness, the most ardent devotion, and the humblest adoration. In short, to entertain the great Redeemer with those affections and dispositions which the nature and design of his mediatorial office demand, and which befit our condition as guilty, miserable, helpless creatures; all which are included in that faith in Jesus, which the gospel enjoins as the grand condition of salvation.

This FAITH is one of the principal subjects of sacred Scripture, and is expressed in various forms: sometimes in plain terms--but more frequently in metaphors borrowed from earthly things, and particularly from the actions of the body. This method of expressing spiritual objects and intellectual ideas, in terms that originally and properly are applied to the body, is not only common in Scripture--but intermingled in conversation, and authorized by the best authors in all ages and languages. We speak of the eye of the understanding as well as of our bodily eye: and to see an argument, or a meaning, is almost as common a phrase as to see a man or any other material object. The evidence by which the soul forms its determinations is called light--as well as the medium of proper vision.

And as the metaphor is here borrowed from the eye, so it is frequently borrowed from the other organs of the body and their actions. This is owing to the poverty of the language of mortals, who, as they are most conversant with material objects, and have the earliest and most frequent occasions of receiving or conveying their ideas of them in sound, are habituated to a dialect proper to these things; and, when they would express their ideas of immaterial things, they are obliged to transfer these terms, originally applied to material objects, to express those immaterial things; and there is not only necessity but reason for this, as there is a resemblance between those actions of the body from which these metaphors are borrowed, and those actions of the mind to which they are transferred; yes, it is not only reasonable--but a beautiful and moving method of representing divine things. In this principally consists the beauty of poetry, that it clothes intellectual ideas in lively material images, which make deep impressions on our imaginations.

In such metaphorical terms, as I observed, faith is often represented in sacred Scripture. Sometimes the metaphor is borrowed from the feet; and then to believe is to come to Christ; to come to him as one oppressed with a heavy burden to a person who can relieve, Matthew 11:28; to come to him as one perishing with thirst, to a fountain of living water, Isaiah 45:1; Revelation 22:17; or as the man-slayer, closely pursued by the avenger of blood, to the city of refuge: hence it is expressed by the most emphatic phrase of fleeing for refuge. Hebrews 6:18.

Sometimes the metaphor is taken from the conduct of a dutiful and loyal people towards their rightful Sovereign upon his entering among them in his own territories. John 1:11, 12.

Sometimes the metaphor is taken from the ears; and faith is expressed by hearing his voice, as an impoverished, dying wretch would hear the offer of plenty and life. Isaiah 55:3; John 5:25.

And sometimes, as in the text, the metaphor is taken from the eyes; and faith is represented as looking to Christ. My present design is,

- I. To explain the duty here expressed by the metaphor of looking.
- II. To urge it upon you by sundry important considerations.

To explain the duty expressed by the metaphor of LOOKING, we are to observe in general, that a man's looks often reveal the condition and frame of his mind. By virtue of the strange union between the soul and the body, the dispositions of the one are often indicated by the emotions and appearances of the other. The eye, in particular, is a mirror in which we may see the various passions of the mind; and it has a kind of silent--and yet significant language, which conveys to others those inward exercises which the tongue does not, and perhaps cannot express.

Hence we can understand a look of surprise and consternation, a look of sorrow and compassion, a look of joy, the look of a perishing supplicant, or of a needy, expecting dependant. If an agonizing patient casts an eager look upon his physician, we understand it to be a silent petition for relief. When a dying husband fixes a wishful, tender look upon his surviving wife, or those little other selves, his children, they know the melting language, and feel its resistless energy. And when we see a drowning man casting a wild and eager look towards a boat coming to his relief, we understand it to be the language of earnest importunity for speedy help.

Hence it follows, that "looking to Christ implies those suitable dispositions and exercises of heart towards him, which are expressed by the earnest and significant looks of people in a distressed condition towards their deliverer." And in such a case it is natural to conceive a person as expressing by his looks:

a particular notice and distinct knowledge of his deliverer,

and importunate cry for his deliverance;

a wishful expectation for deliverance;

a dependence upon him for deliverance;

a universal submission to him;

a hearty love and approbation of him;

and joy and gratitude for his deliverance.

And these dispositions and exercises of mind towards Christ are intended in the text by looking to him.

I. The duty of looking unto Christ explained:

1. Looking to Christ implies--a particular notice and distinct knowledge of him. When we fix an earnest look upon an object, we take particular notice and a distinct survey of it, and so obtain a clear knowledge of it. Thus we are called to fix our mental eyes upon Christ, to make him the object of our contemplation, and by these means to obtain the knowledge of him.

Mankind are too commonly regardless and ignorant of him. And are not many of you chargeable with this criminal neglect? The blessed Jesus has exhibited himself to your observation in the gospel--but your attention is so engaged by other objects, that you will not allow him an earnest look! He has been set forth evidently crucified before your eyes--but you have, as it were, passed and repassed careless and unconcerned by his cross. You have had a variety of opportunities and means to be instructed in the glorious mysteries of the gospel; to know the person of the Redeemer as Immanuel, God and man; to know the absolute necessity, the gracious design, and the high degree of his sufferings; to know his sufficiency and willingness to pardon and save believing penitents; and, in a word, to obtain a competent

acquaintance with the method of salvation. But you have taken but little or no notice of these things; and consequently remained contentedly ignorant of them.

It is equally lamentable and astonishing, that in a land like this, abounding in Bibles and other means of instruction, Christianity should be so little known even by those who profess it. How ridiculous a figure would an artist make, who knew nothing of his trade! Or a school-master, who could not spell! Or a doctor, who knew nothing of medicine! And yet men have the impious impudence to call themselves Christians, and resent it when their profession is pronounced a hypocritical pretense, though they are ignorant of the rudiments of Christianity!

You are therefore called in the text to pursue the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, John 17:3, to make this the object of your study; for without it you cannot be saved. It is by the knowledge of him, that you are justified, Isaiah 53:11; and if you are a people of no understanding, he who formed you will not have mercy on you, Isaiah 27:11--but you shall be destroyed through lack of knowledge. Hosea 4:6.

Not that a mere speculative knowledge of Christ will suffice; no, it must not be a look of curiosity and speculation--but you must be affected with the object. Your eye must affect your heart; and by beholding the glory of the Lord in the looking-glass of the gospel--you must be changed into the same image, or conformed to him in holiness. 2 Corinthians 3:18. A drowning man is not a mere curious spectator of his deliverer; but he views him with the tenderest passions. So you must look upon Christ. Thus the knowledge of him--was attended with supreme affection to him, in Paul. Philippians 3:7, 8. But this will be further illustrated under the following particulars.

2. Looking to Christ implies an importunate eagerness for relief from him. See Psalm 25:15. If your child were fallen into the hand of a murderer just ready to dispatch him, and should cast a wishful look upon you, while you was running to his deliverance, you would understand it as a silent cry for help. So we are enjoined to look to Christ with the most eager importunity for deliverance from him as our Savior. And this supposes a deep sense of our need of him. When a guilty creature, who had been involved in the general presumptuous security, is effectually alarmed with just apprehensions of his danger; when he sees his numberless transgressions in all their horrid aggravations, and the dreadful threatenings of the law in full force, and ready to be executed against him: in short, when he sees himself ripe for ruin, and ready every moment to sink into it--then with what importunate cries will he betake himself to him for relief!

Behold he prays! Now he is often on his knees before God in secret, as well as in social prayer; and in the intervals between his prayers, he is often looking to the hills from whence comes his aid, Psalm 121:1, and wafting up many an importunate cry to heaven. Sometimes he sinks into an abyss of sorrow, and is overwhelmed with boisterous waves of fears, so that, with Jonah, he is ready to cry out, "I am cast out of your sight, O Lord!" Yet with him he says, "I will look again towards your holy temple!" Jonah 2:4.

Happy the souls that are thus looking to Jesus, who is lifted up for the recovery of a dying world, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness! John 3:14. And happy we, should this spirit of pious importunity prevail among us, and banish that spirit of deep sleep which seems poured out upon us! Then would prayer be our employment, not only when we observed the returns of stated prayer in secret, in our families, and in our public assemblies--but our souls would be always in a supplicating posture; every wish, every groan--would be a cry for mercy! And then might we expect to obtain the blessings we need; and the aspect of our religious affairs would be happily altered among us. To this duty the text invites us;

and oh that we may consult our own interest, as well as regard the authority of God, so far, "as to seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near!" Isaiah 45:6.

3. Looking to Christ implies a wishful expectation of deliverance from him. See Psalm 69:3. It may be illustrated by the history of the lame beggar, in Acts 3:4, 5. He begged an alms of the apostles Peter and John; they do not immediately relieve him--but give him some ground of encouraging expectation by taking particular notice of him and telling him to fix his eyes upon them. Thereupon the anxious cripple gives heed to them, and wishfully looks upon them, expecting to receive something of them.

Just so, a poor sinner, amidst all his anxious fears and despondencies, approaches the throne of grace, and begs for mercy. The Lord Jesus, though his affections are yearning over him, does not give him immediate relief; he puts him off for a while, as he did the Syrophenician, that he may give occasion for him to plead with the more importunity, and more suitably prize the blessings when obtained. Yet, in this melancholy interval, he does not leave him quite hopeless. The invitations of the gospel cry, "Look on me;" and the poor sinner lifts up the eyes of wishful expectation to receive something. "Who knows--but that sovereign and unbounded grace, which has relieved thousands, may also listen to my cries? Blessed Jesus! may I not indulge some trembling hope that you will at length grant me deliverance? Your free, your indefinite invitations and absolute promises give me some ground of pleasing expectation; and oh! shall it be frustrated? No, let me trust in you for the gracious accomplishment." Such are the soliloquies of such an anxious soul. And though we might be all left in remediless despair--yet, blessed be God, we have encouragement to look to Jesus with humble, joyful hope; and it is to this the text exhorts us.

4. Looking to Jesus implies an humble dependence upon him for salvation. This supposes that we are deeply sensible of our own utter inability to relieve ourselves; and when we are convinced of this, we shall immediately look to another; when we see no ground at all for self-confidence, we shall place our trust in Jesus alone. It was such a look as this that good Jehoshaphat raised to heaven: "O our God, won't you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do--but we are looking to you for help." 2 Chron. 20:12. So Micah, finding no room for human confidence, resolves, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord." Micah 7:7. Thus an humble sinner, sensible of his utter inability, resolves to venture upon Christ, to trust in him, though he should slay him. Job 13:15. And in those happy moments when the sinner has some glimmering hopes of acceptance, with what pleasure and satisfaction does he rest upon this eternal rock! And how happy are we--should we be engaged this day to place our humble dependence there! It is to this the text calls us.

5. Looking to Christ means a universal, cheerful submission to his authority. We must consent to be his servants forever, and wait all the intimations of his will to obey them. We must look and observe the motion of his hand pointing out to us the way of duty. We must look as a servant upon his master, eager to receive his orders. So the phrase seems used in Psalm 123:1, 2, "I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy." Thus, whoever trusts in Jesus with a saving faith, surrenders himself to an unlimited obedience to all his commandments; and to this the text invites us.

6. Looking to Christ implies a hearty approbation of him as a Savior, and supreme affection to him. Love is often expressed by looks; and when we look affectionately upon an object, it evidences that we are pleased with the survey. So a perishing world is commanded to acquiesce in the method of salvation, through Christ, to love him above all, and to take the fullest and noblest complacence to him; and upon

their so doing, they are assured of salvation. We have indeed been influenced by education and the like means to entertain a general good esteem of Christ; but, alas! this is very far short of that endearing affection and hearty complacency which he claims and deserves. Our hearts must be engaged to him; he must be the chief among ten thousand in our eyes. Our thoughts and passions must often ascend to him, and we must rest in him with delight, as containing all our salvation and all our desire. 2 Sam. 23:5.

7. And lastly, Looking to Christ implies joy and gratitude for his delivering goodness. The passions of joy and gratitude are easily discovered by the looks; and therefore are intended by this phrase, look unto me. And this it not only the duty--but the delightful inclination of one who has been relieved by him from the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the dreadful displeasure of God. Joy is in itself a pleasing passion, and we delight to indulge it: and to a heart that has just felt the mercy of deliverance from everlasting destruction, thanksgiving is a most grateful and pleasing employment; and, in this, much of the happiness of heaven consists.

From this view of the duty intended by looking to Jesus, take occasion, my brethren, to examine, whether you ever have complied with it; for it is a matter of infinite importance, as your eternal state depends upon it. "He who has the Son, has life, and he who has not the Son of God, has not life!" 1 John 5:12.

The duty of looking to Christ being explained, I shall,

II. Urge you to look to him by several weighty considerations.

This is the great duty of both saints and sinners, and consequently of everyone in all ages and places, even to the ends of the earth. It is the duty of sinners to turn away their eyes from beholding vanity--and fix them upon this attractive--but, alas! neglected Savior! It is the duty of sinners to turn their attention from the trifles of time--to the great Antitype of the brazen serpent, who is lifted up that a dying world may open their eyes, just closing in death, and look and live!

And saints, whose eyes have been turned to this glorious object, ought to fix them more intensely upon him--to take larger surveys of his glory, and to renew their affectionate trust in him.

I would premise, that when I exhort SINNERS to look to Jesus, I would not intimate, that they are able to do this of themselves. No! I am very sensible, that all the exhortations, persuasions, invitations, and exhortations that a feeble mortal, or even the most powerful angel in heaven, can use with them will have no effect--but vanish into air, without the efficacious operation of almighty grace! And yet such exhortations are neither useless, improper, or unscriptural: they tend to convince sinners of their inability to believe, which is necessary to their believing aright; and it is while such arguments are addressed to their understandings, that the Holy Spirit is accustomed to work upon their hearts. Hence they are so often commanded in Scripture to repent, to believe in Christ, to look to him, to make them a new heart, etc. I would add, that when I express the duty enjoined under the metaphor of looking, I hope it will not lead any of you into gross ideas as physical eyesight, since the import of it has been so fully shown.

The arguments to enforce this important evangelical duty can never be exhausted; and therefore I must confine myself to those which this copious text furnishes us with, which, when resolved into particulars, will stand thus:

It is salvation we are called upon to pursue.

It may be obtained upon the easiest terms, without any personal merit, namely, by a look!

It is Immanuel, the incarnate God--who commands and invites us to look!

And he is the glorious and affecting object--to which we are to look!

And our looking shall not be in vain, for he is God, who engages to save those who look to him!

And it is in vain to look elsewhere for salvation, and needless to fear that his grace should be only be for others; for as he is God, so there is none else--and we in particular are invited, being especially meant by the ends of the earth.

1. It is salvation which is here offered. "Look unto Me--and be saved!" Look--and be saved! Salvation! Oh most wonderful, transporting sound! Amazing! that ever it should be heard by our guilty ears!

Sin, my friends, has exposed us to the curse of the divine law, to the loss of heaven, and all its joys; yes, and of earth too, and all its entertainments: for death, the consequence of sin--will rend us from them.

We must languish and pine through an endless duration without a drop of bliss--if we are punished according to our demerit. We are also subject to the torturing agonies of a remorseful conscience, to be cut off from the earth by the sword of justice, and swept away by the broom of destruction into the regions of horror and despair, there to consume away a long, long eternity--in inextinguishable flames, in remediless, intolerable torments, in the horrid society of devils and damned men, who shall mutually promote and join in the general roar of torture and desperation!

This, sirs, is our just, our unavoidable doom--unless we obtain a saving interest in the salvation of the Lord. But salvation brings us a complete remedy, equal to our misery!

"Look unto Me--and be saved!" Salvation contains a title to the divine favor, and consequently to all the joys of heaven! Salvation contains a perfect deliverance from all the torments of hell!

And shall we not then regard and obey the voice that cries, "Look unto Me--and be saved!" Is it not fit those should perish without remedy, who hear the offer of such a salvation with indifference? How shall we escape--if we neglect so great salvation?

Were we now under a sentence of condemnation to death, by an earthly court, and were going out one after another to the place of execution, and should some welcome messenger, with a general pardon in his hand, come with joyful speed into this assembly, and proclaim salvation; salvation! to all that would accept it on the easiest terms--what a shout of general joy would burst from this assembly! What changed faces, what tears of thankful joy, would appear among us!

In this agreeable character, my brethren, I have the honor and the happiness of appearing among you this day. I proclaim salvation from the Lord--to dying men; salvation to all who will look unto him for it. And I would not make the offer to the air, or to the walls of this house--but to rational creatures, capable of consenting and refusing. I therefore request you to look upon it as a proposal made to you; to you men, to you women, to you youth and children, to you negroes, demanding a speedy answer. Will you look to Jesus? Or will you hide your faces from him? Will you not think him and his salvation worth a look? Which leads me to observe,

2. This salvation may be obtained upon the easiest terms, without any personal merit, namely, by a look!

LOOK--and be saved! And this metaphor implies that no merit is required in us to procure this salvation. It is as cheap a cure as that which the Israelites obtained, by looking to a brazen serpent. The salvation is wrought already; Christ would not separate his soul and body, and put an end to his pains, until he could say, It is finished! And all required of us, is a cheerful acceptance: and what terms can be easier?

It is true that we are required to abstain from sin, and be holy, in order to enjoy this salvation; but can this be thought a hard term? It is impossible in the nature of things--that you should be saved in a course of sin; for one great part of the salvation consists in deliverance from sin. This is the deadly disease which must be healed, in order to your happiness. And how, then, can you expect to be saved from sin--while you indulge in sin? Would you not think your physician made easy prescriptions to you, if he assured you of recovery, when you were sick, upon condition that you would abstain from poison, and confine yourselves to a wholesome diet? Holiness is as necessary to happiness, as temperance to health! And though sinners, like drunkards, think this a hard imposition--yet it cannot be altered, without a change in the immutable Deity.

Therefore submit to the terms of salvation: they are as low, as easy as the nature of things will permit. They are not the rigid, arbitrary impositions of an austere being--but the mild, unavoidable requisitions of an indulgent and wise God, acting according to the reason of things. If salvation was offered to you, upon condition of your making an infinite satisfaction for your sins--you might be hopeless at the proposal; for even almighty grace could not enable you to do this: for this you could not do without being advanced above the rank of creatures, and endowed with infinity, which you are physically incapable of.

But grace can dispose you to consent to the terms of the gospel; grace can turn your eyes to look to Jesus, for you are only morally incapable of this; that is, you are unwilling, you are sinfully averse to it.

Come, then--look and live! The lowness of the terms aggravates the guilt of a non-compliance with them. What do those deserve--who do not think a salvation purchased with the blood of a God--is worth a look? What drudgery do you endure, what hardships do you voluntarily undergo, to procure some of the foolish toys of this world? What a difficult regimen will you submit to, what nauseous potions will you take, for the recovery of the health of your mortal bodies? And will you not take the trouble of a look for the salvation of your immortal souls? How eagerly will you accept the offer of any temporal advantage! And will you neglect this invitation to look and live? Especially, when,

3. It is Immanuel, our incarnate God, who invites and commands you to look to him, and be saved! You may trifle with the commands of a usurper, and reject the treacherous invitations of an enemy; but dare you trifle with the injunctions, dare you refuse the gracious invitations of our supreme King and heavenly Friend? That it is Christ who here calls us to look to him, is evident from the application of this context to Christ by the apostle: "To this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. For it is written, as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom 14:9-11. Which words, according to the Hebrew, you find in the verse following my text. See also Philippians 2:9-11.

Moreover the characters here predicted concerning the Lord Jehovah, most properly belong to Christ, according to the dialect of the New Testament; "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord I have righteousness and strength." Now we know that Christ is everywhere represented as our righteousness and strength, "In the Lord shall the seed of Israel be justified," verse 24, 25, which is spoken most properly of Christ, through whom alone we can be justified. It is therefore the voice of our Immanuel that sounds so

delightfully in our text. It is his voice which spoke this goodly universe into being out of its original nothing; which said, "Let there be light; and there was light!"

And dare we disobey his voice by whom all things were created? Col. 1:16. He spoke us into being, and we obeyed; and shall we, when blessed with existence, resist his almighty call? It is his voice whom angels obey; Gabriel, and all his flaming ministers, fly at the first hint of his sovereign pleasure. Nay, universal nature hears his solemn mandate, and all her laws are observed, or cancelled according to his pleasure. Events natural and supernatural are equally easy to him. And is this the majestic voice which sinners hear sounding in the gospel--and yet disregard? Is this he whom they make so light of, as not to give him a look? Amazing presumption!

And further, it is his voice which shall pronounce the final sentence upon the assembled universe. He now sits exalted upon a throne of grace, scattering blessings among his subjects, and inviting a dying world to look to him and live! But before long he will put on majesty and terror, and ascend the throne of judgment. From thence he will speak, and omnipotence will attend his Word to execute it. From thence he will pronounce, on all who hear and obey his call now; and neither earth nor hell can repeal the joyful sentence, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world!"

And on those who will not now look to him, he will pronounce that dreadful sentence, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" Depart from me; "away, away, from my blissful presence, you cursed creatures, never, never, to see me more." And though they can now resist the voice of mercy--yet then they must obey the dreadful orders of justice, and shrink confounded from his face, and sink into hell.

We, my friends, must all mingle in that vast assembly, and hear our doom from his lips: and can we, in the serious expectation of that day--refuse his call to look to him now? Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him; and how shall we stand the terror of his face, if we now treat him so contemptuously?

These considerations show, that the call in my text is the command of authority, and therefore that our neglect of it is disloyalty and rebellion!

But, oh! there is a more melting, a more endearing consideration still. It is the voice of our Beloved, it is the gracious invitation of love! It is his voice who heard the cry of our helpless misery: who, though equal with God, and possessed of infinite, independent happiness, emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant. He often looked up to heaven with strong cryings and tears in the days of his flesh for us. For us he spoke many a gracious word, still upon record! For us he wrought many a miracle! For us he traveled many a fatiguing journey, and endured hunger and thirst, and all the calamities of poverty! For us he was reproached, belied, persecuted! And oh! for us he sweat and groaned in Gethsemane! For us his back was furrowed with scourging! For us his face defiled with spitting! For us his head bruised with buffetings, and pierced with thorns! For us he was nailed to the cross! For us he hung in ignominy and torture! For us he shed his blood, he breathed out his life! For us his side was pierced! For us the Lord of life lay in the dust of death!

And oh! blessed Jesus, after all his love, after all these sufferings, will not men afford you one affectionate, believing look when you exhibited yourself in the gospel, crying with a loud and loving voice, "Behold me! behold me! Look unto me--and be saved?" Oh sirs, can you reject the invitation of such a Savior? Are you

capable of such horrid ingratitude? He bespeaks your attention with dying groans; his wounds preach from the cross and cry, "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth!" There he was lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; that whoever believes in him, though in the agonies of death, should not perish--but have everlasting life! And can we neglect the invitation of such a Savior, in such circumstances? Shall a guilty world always find something else to look upon, so that they cannot spare a glance to the blessed Jesus? With what pious horror must angels behold such a sight! And may not the earth shudder to support such impious ingratitude?

4. It is Immanuel we are to look to. "Look unto me!" He who issues the command--is the glorious and attractive object we are called to behold. The adorable glories of a God, and the milder beauties of a perfect man, meet in his person. His glories attract the admiring gaze of angels, and charm the attention of the happy immortals above. The survey of his perfections is the source of all their bliss, and will furnish all their powers with ecstatic employ, through the revolutions of eternal ages!

And will not worms look up from the dust to him? Shall every sordid trifle engage their intense contemplation, while they hide their faces from this glorious Immanuel, as though he had no form or loveliness?

There is an infinite variety of objects within the compass of the creation which attract our attention. Our eyes are charmed with the splendor of the day, the midnight glories of the starry arch, the verdure of the spring, the majesty of mountains, the beauties of human faces: nay, there is not a trifling curiosity in nature but engages our observation. But all the glories of the universe are but the faint reflections of his; they are but obscure copies of his underived excellences. And shall we be charmed with the transcript, and take no notice of the original? Does the contemplation of the works of nature afford such exquisite entertainment to philosophic minds, and shall not every mind be transported in the survey of Immanuel's uncreated glories? But if all these considerations fail, surely the love of Christ must constrain you! He has exhibited himself to your view this day in a vesture dipped in blood. He has emblematically passed before you crowned with thorns, and covered with blood; and as Pilate said to the Jews, to melt them in compassion, so say we to you, Behold the man!

And will you turn away from him regardless, or view him with as much indifference as though he were a malefactor? What is this but to join the Jewish rabble, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" He has virtually said to you as to Thomas, "Look into my hands, and behold the print of the nails; and look into my side, and behold the stab of the spear, which opened a fountain of life for you!" And can you deny an affectionate look to such an object? He hangs conspicuous on the cross, his nerves racked, his bones disjoined, his heart melting like wax, while streams of blood run down his sacred body; and it is in this posture we are to look upon him. In this posture, as it were, he issues forth his gracious invitation, "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth!"

And is there a mortal so hardy, so ungrateful, as to refuse an affectionate look to him in such circumstances? Shall he complain, with David, his type, "I looked for some to take pity: but there was none!" Psalm 69:20. "I looked on my right hand, and beheld--but there was no man that would know me; no man cared for my soul." Psalm 143:4.

Blessed Jesus! shall you take up this complaint over creatures for whom you bled and died? over creatures who owe all their hopes to you? May not the whole creation be struck with consternation at the complaint? Why are not the miraculous solemnities that attend your death renewed? Why do not the earth

tremble, the rocks rend, the sun put on the livery of a mourner, to see a dying God and a careless world! The Creator, the Savior of men, in agony, in blood; and his guilty creatures asleep, and not affording him so much as a look of love and compassion! Were ever such horrid incongruities pronounced at a breath, or united in one sentence!

But the cross is not the only place where we should look upon him. Lift up your eyes to the heavenly glory: there you may behold him who tasted of death--now crowned with glory and honor! His head, which was once crowned with thorns--is now adorned with a crown of glory! His face, which was once bruised with blows, and disgraced with spitting--now shines brighter than the sun in his meridian glory! His hands, that were once nailed to the cross--now sway the scepter of the universe! His feet, that were cruelly pierced--now walk the crystal pavement of heaven! He who was insulted by Jews and Gentiles, he at whom they wagged their heads--is now adored by all the heavenly hosts, who congratulate his exaltation, and cry with united voice, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Revelation 5:11, 12. This is the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands in that world where Jesus is best known.

And shall we break the harmony of the universal choir? Shall we not echo back their song, and reply, To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (which is more than he did for the fallen angels) to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen. Revelation 1:5, 6.

Shall we not look to him whose glory attracts the eyes of all the celestial multitudes, and congratulate his exaltation? We have cause indeed to rejoice in it; for oh! he is exalted--that he may have mercy upon us, Isaiah 30:18. He has ascended the throne--that he may thence scatter blessings on a guilty world beneath him. He retains his great love, and the tenderest affections of compassion towards the lowest of his people. He is now pleading their cause in the court of heaven, and preparing a place for them. From thence he exhibits himself to our intellectual view, and invites us to look to him. And can we slight such glory and love united? Are our natures capable of such infernal ingratitude? Oh, let us look to him, especially since it shall not be in vain, for,

5. He is able to save us--upon our looking to him. "Look unto me--and be saved, for I am God!" This is annexed as the reason of the duty enjoined; and what can give us greater security of salvation upon our compliance? "If God is for us, who shall be against us? If God justifies us--who can condemn us? It is his right to constitute the terms of salvation, and he has almighty power to save all who comply with them. It is that God, who threatens to punish sinners--who here promises to save them upon their looking to him. And what glorious encouragement, what strong consolation does this afford us! Is there a creature here so full of unbelieving despondency, as seriously to think that even Jehovah cannot save him? Surely not! Therefore look and be saved, for it is God himself, who undertakes to save you. And he can do exceeding abundantly more for you--than you can ever ask or think. Your sins may be mighty--but not Almighty! Your guilt may be great--but the blood of God can expiate it! The obstructions in your way may be numerous and insuperable to you--but he can reduce a mountain into a plain before you! You are feeble, helpless things, but "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint!" Isaiah 40:28-31

6. Look to him alone--for there no others who can save you. This implies that there is no other Savior, and that this sole Savior is almighty, and therefore able to save.

It is only a God who is able to work our salvation. Men, angels, all creatures are unequal to the task. They cannot satisfy divine justice for our sin; they cannot subdue our corruptions, and sanctify our hearts; nor conduct us safely through all the dangers and temptations which surround us. We in particular, are utterly incapable of these wondrous things! It is not in the power of our hand to save ourselves. And if you will not look to Christ--then to whom will you look? "Call now--if there are any who will answer you; and to which of the saints, to which of the angels, will you turn?" You are shut up to the faith in Christ as the ONLY way to salvation; you have no alternative but to look to Christ--or sink to hell. There is no salvation in any other. And will you rather be without a Savior--than look to him as such? Why, what evil has he done? Why such strange aversion you have to your best Friend, who is able to save to the utmost! And as none else can save--so He alone is able to save, because he is almighty God.

There is no God besides, to reverse his will; but whom he blesses--is blessed indeed. He is head over all things to his church. He limits the power, controls the rage, and baffles all the infernal schemes of the powers of hell. The hearts of men, of kings, are in his hand--and he turns them wherever he pleases. None, therefore, shall pluck his sheep out of his hand; but he will give unto them eternal life. Look then to HIM, poor, trembling weaklings, who are daily putting your life in his hand, and often dismally forebode your own destruction, and the victory of your enemies. Trust in the Lord, Jehovah; for in his arm is everlasting strength!

7. And lastly, look to him, for you are particularly invited, being especially meant by those in the ends of the earth. A promiscuous call may not be regarded so much as a particular invitation directed to us, as it were, by name. We dwell in a continent that may be called the ends of the earth with peculiar propriety; and though America was unknown in Isaiah's time, and not in his thoughts when he uttered these words--yet no doubt that omniscient Spirit, who inspired his lips, had a reference to it. It is true the words may be taken figuratively, as referring to the Gentiles in general, who might be said to be in the ends of the earth with respect to the favorite land of Judea, which was situated near the middle of the then known world, on the borders of Asia, near where it joins with Europe and Africa.

Those in the ends of the earth seem also to suggest to us the ideas of poor outcasts in a helpless condition, as the Gentiles then were, without the knowledge of God and the means of grace. And if we take the text in this sense--it still refers to us who are the posterity of heathen. But methinks there is a particular beauty and propriety in it, taken literally; "Look unto me, and be saved, you who dwell in the remotest ends of the inhabited earth! Look unto me, you Americans, you Virginians!" Oh what a joyful sound! Not many years ago we or our near ancestors came from the old continent of Europe or its adjacent islands; and the Lord has driven out the heathen from before us, and planted us in their stead. We left his church and the favorite lands where his gospel had shined for ages, and came among savages that never heard of the name of Jesus--but dwelt in darkness and the shadow of death. But lo! he sends his gracious invitation after us to the ends of the earth, "Look unto me--and be saved!"

In the days of Isaiah, God was mindful of America, he was mindful of Virginia, and treasured up a rich invitation, until it should be inhabited, and in need of it. And shall we not regard it? shall we not regard his voice crying in this wilderness? Indeed if any other blessings were worthy to be compared with those of the gospel, I might observe that he has not been kind to us in this respect only. He has turned this wilderness into a fruitful field: the residence of savages and wild beasts--into a mart of nations. "He has

blessed us also, so that we are multiplied greatly; and he suffers not our cattle to decrease." See Psalm 107:36-38.

We may borrow the words of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32:10-14. But, alas! We have waxed fat, and kicked against God, like well-fed horses against their proprietor. We have turned his blessings--into occasions of sinning. We have increased in guilt and impiety--in proportion to our increase in riches and the arts of life. And it is an instance of divine patience--that may astonish even heaven itself, that so ungrateful a land has not been visited with some signal judgment from God!

But our iniquities are not yet full, and we hope that there are more than ten righteous people among us, whose prayers stand in the gap, and prevent the eruption of Divine vengeance. But perhaps our day is at hand, and then, though Noah, Daniel and Job, should stand before God--yet his heart will not be turned towards us. "Do you thus requite the Lord, oh foolish people and unwise! Is not he your Father who bought you? Has he not made you, and established you?" Deuteronomy 32:6.

But to abuse the gospel is the greatest of all crimes. It is this that ripens a people for ruin, and fills up the measure of their iniquity! God will easier bear with the abuse of any mercy--than with the contempt of his Son. Therefore, look unto him, and be saved, O you ends of the earth!

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