

THE LIFE-LOOK**NO. 2867****A SERMON****PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 1904****DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON****ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 9, 1876**

*“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*

I HAVE preached a good many times from this text [The following sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage have been previously published #60, Sovereignty and Salvation, #2805, Life for a Look. The fullest account of his conversion is in his autobiography, published by Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster]. I hope to do so, if life is spared, many more times.

It was about twenty-six years ago—twenty-six years exactly last Thursday—that I looked unto the Lord and found salvation through this text. You have often heard me tell how I had been wandering about, seeking rest and finding none, till a plain, unlettered, lay preacher among the Primitive Methodists stood up in the pulpit, and gave out this passage as his text, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” He had not much to say, thank God, for that compelled him to keep on repeating his text, and there was nothing needed—by me, at any rate—except his text.

I remember how he said, “It is Christ that speaks. ‘I am in the garden in an agony, pouring out My soul unto death, I am on the tree, dying for sinners, look unto Me! Look unto Me!’ That is all you have to do. A child can look. One who is almost an idiot can look. However weak, or however poor, a man may be, he can look, and if he looks, the promise is that he shall live.”

Then, stopping, he pointed to where I was sitting under the gallery and he said, “That young man there looks very miserable.” I expect I did, for that is how I felt. Then he said, “There is no hope for you, young man, or any chance of getting rid of your sin, but by looking to Jesus,” and he shouted, as I think only a Primitive Methodist can, “Look! Look, young man! Look now!” And I did look, and when they sang a hallelujah before they went home, in their own earnest way, I am sure I joined in it.

It happened to be a day when the snow was lying deep, and more was falling, so as I went home, those words of David kept ringing through my heart, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;” and it seemed as if all nature was in accord with that blessed deliverance from sin which I had found in a single moment by looking to Jesus Christ.

I have always felt inclined, when this time of the year comes round, to preach from this text. I have sometimes thought—“They will suppose I must go over the same ground again, and give them the same sermon, and so perhaps, I shall not have so attentive an audience.” I cannot help it if it is so, for I must preach from this text. As it was blessed to me, I hope it will be blessed to somebody else.

I wanted to preach from it last Thursday night, on the exact anniversary of my spiritual birthday, but I was led to take another text, and I am glad I was, for when I entered my vestry tonight, I found on the table this note—“Mr. Spurgeon, I want to tell you that your ‘good news’ [Sermon #2866, Good News], last Thursday, was the means of reclaiming a wanderer. How good of Jesus to take such a one as I am back, and give me the joy I had when first I knew Him!”

The writer encloses a thanksgiving offering, and blesses the name of the Lord. So, this text has been reserved for tonight, and who knows but that there has come here somebody who was not here on Thursday night, and whom the Lord intends to bless? I only hope it may be so, indeed, I know it will be so.

Let us read the text again, “Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” This message is addressed, as you perceive, not to the Israelites, but to the Gentiles—to the nations at the very ends of the earth. Alas! Many of these nations have long been looking to their idols. They do not feel at rest, they know that they lack something; and very earnestly are devout heathens looking to their false gods for what they need. They make great sacrifices, and spend vast sums of money upon their idol temples, but salvation does not come, and cannot come, through these false gods. JEHOVAH bids them look to Him, that they may be saved.

Some among the nations are throwing off the yoke of superstition, but sad to say, they seem to be falling into skepticism instead. The Hindu, when educated, turns from his idols only to make an idol of his own judgment.

Many men worship their own wisdom. They hope by searching to find out the Almighty unto perfection, and this theory and that, they promulgate and say, “This form of thought and the other will emancipate the human mind.” Ah, it is not so! “The world by wisdom,” in the old Socratic and philosophic days, worked out that problem, and the result was that they “knew not God,” but “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” And that is where man, with his great thought and wisdom, always drifts to—to some absurdity or another. Only JEHOVAH can save mankind. Philosophy is powerless in this matter.

The nations have been looking long, first to this thing, and then to that, to save them. Sometimes, they have looked for some great conqueror, who will break the yoke of oppression, and set the people free. But how often have they been deceived, and the idols of the democracy have turned out to be the grossest tyrants that ever lived.

Then there are various international and other societies formed, by which men are to lift themselves up by confederation. They will look there too in vain, though all men should join hand in hand, they cannot do it. If they looked to God, there would be accomplished what all mankind would not be able to perform. One man advises this policy, another pleads for that form of government. One has this idea, and the other has another. And every now and then, there seems to be a craze for something or other. Just now, we are told that civilization will do away with war, and I know not what besides. All evil is to be extinguished by the growth of commerce.

But the Lord of hosts has willed it that nothing shall save the nations but Himself, and this poor bleeding earth needs to be told, again and again, that for her wounds—and she has many of them—there is no healing liniment but that which flows from the hands, and feet, and side of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. From the crown of her head to the sole of her foot, she is full of “wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores,” and for all these there is no cure but the blessed balm that flowed from Jesus’ heart on Calvary—no remedy but the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ. “Look unto me,” saith He, “and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

O Lord, turn the eyes of the nations to Yourself, and to Your Son! When this happens, then shall the day of the world’s salvation have fully come.

The general principle holds good in each particular case. As it is with the nations at the ends of the earth, so must it be with me, so must it be, dear friends, with you. There is no salvation but by looking unto God in Christ. Let us try to turn that thought over, not merely with the view of thinking of it, but that we may carry it into effect—that if there be salvation to be had, we may have it, and have it at once. O God, grant that it may be so!

First, we shall ask, *What does the word “Look” mean in reference to God? Secondly, for what part of salvation are we to look to God? Thirdly, what is our encouragement to look? And fourthly, when is the best time to look?*

I. First, JEHOVAH says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” **WHAT DOES THIS WORD “LOOK” MEAN?** It means a great deal more than I can tell you, and among other things, it means this.

First, *consider that there is a God*, and enthrone Him in your mind as a real Person, the one living and true God. You have been trying to cure yourself of your spiritual maladies, now think of God as the great Physician of your soul. Let your mind turn towards Him. You are like that young man who left his father's house, and whose circumstances became so bad, through his own fault, that he was obliged to take up very low and mean employment, and yet, with all that he did do, he did not earn enough to fill his belly. The best thing that he could do was to remember that he had a father, and the happiest day for him was when he came back to his father, and received a loving welcome from him.

You say that you are not happy, you are not at rest, your conscience is disturbed, and you have tried ever so many things in order to get peace. Now, think about your God. Think about the loving Father who receives His wandering prodigal children, and as you think of Him, you will have begun to look to Him.

While you are thinking about Him, I wish you would remember this concerning Him—that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Think of that wonderful truth that God came here in human flesh and blood, and for us men and for our salvation, died a cruel death upon the tree. Turn that over and over again, for it is there that your only hope of salvation lies. Do think of that, read often—

*“The old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.”*

Think over all the details of it, accustom yourself to look towards God in Christ Jesus in your thoughts and contemplations. By the blessing of the Holy Spirit, this will breed faith in you. Set your face that way—look at God as He has revealed Himself in the person of the great Propitiation, Jesus Christ His Son.

Looking to God means, however, more than that. When you have considered Him, and taken Him into your calculations, then *address yourself to Him*. Speak to Him. Tell Him where you are, and what you are. Tell Him what you feel, and what you do not feel, and what you ought to feel, and what you wish to feel. Tell Him what you want which you have not yet got. If you cannot pray, tell Him so, if you cannot repent, and cannot believe, tell Him so. Only speak to Him, for that speaking will be a turning to look, and I find that the Hebrew word used here is not so well expressed by the word “look” as by the phrase “turning to look.”

If I want to look at the clock above my head, I must turn to look at it. In that fashion, I want you to turn towards God, to consider Him, and then to speak to Him. Tell Him that you are a wretch undone without His sovereign grace. Tell Him whatever you know to be the truth, do not mock Him with mere words that do not come from your heart, but let your heart speak to Him. Address Him, for that is looking to Him.

Only, *mind that you do get to God*. The mischief is, dear friends, that we often stop somewhere short of God when we are seeking salvation. A Romanist, for instance, erects a crucifix and bows down before it. The original intention of the crucifix, no doubt, was to help the person who used it to remember the death of Christ, but frequently, the thought rests on the crucifix instead of upon the Christ. If the Romanist says that he does not worship the image, it is not true, because there is a certain “Our Lady of Lourdes,” and another “Notre Dame de la Garde,” and other “Our Ladies.” Why is it that the Virgin Mary in a certain church, or a certain town, works great cures, and gets more worship than “Our Lady” in a certain other place?

The fact is, it is the image that is worshipped, and so is it with the crucifix, that gets the Romanists' worship, and not the Christ. They stop there, but why do I talk about this to you Protestants? Why, because many of you do just the same in other respects. You say, “Now, if I am to be converted, I ought to read the Bible.” Yes, that is quite right. Read the Bible, but if you stop at the Bible, you will no more get to God than if you stop at the crucifix.

What you need is to get to God through what you read, and not merely to come to the Book. The Bible, or the most gracious words, or the most appropriate collects, or the most pious prayers, cannot save you, you must pass through these things, which ought to be helps, and not make them into barriers, for if you make them into barriers by stopping there, you never will be saved.

You have to get to God, dear heart—to God in Jesus Christ, and I pray you, do not stop till you feel, “I have spoken to God in Jesus Christ, I have confessed to Him my sins, I have sought His forgiveness, I have asked Him for mercy.” You are sure to get it if you have done so. But if you stop at this point—“I have prayed so often, I have read so much,” these very readings and praying will get to be idols, and they will keep you away from God.

I used, when seeking the Lord, to read Doddridge’s “Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,” and an admirable book it is, and Baxter’s “Call to the Unconverted.” I would wake up as soon as the sun was up in the morning that I might read these books, but I must confess that for many a day, I stopped at Doddridge’s “Rise and Progress” and Baxter’s “Call.” When I had read so much, and tried to feel what those good men said, there I stuck.

Oh, that I had gone to Christ before! Oh, that I had got away from Doddridge’s “Rise and Progress” and Baxter’s “Call,” and gone to Jesus Christ Himself! I am not finding fault with those books, I commend them, but I find fault with myself for making so bad a use of the books.

In like manner, I do not find fault with prayer or the reading of the Scriptures, God forbid! But I do complain of putting prayer and the reading of the Scriptures into the place of getting to God, for it is looking to Him as He is revealed in Jesus Christ that will save the soul, and nothing short of that, be it what it may, will do so. Therefore, looking to God means that we are to consider God, and then to address ourselves to Him.

In the next place, to look to Him means that *we must know that, if we are ever to be saved, salvation must come from God alone.* Learn this, O man, that you are helpless and hopeless apart from God—that you are shut up, and cannot come forth, bound with fetters of iron, and laid like the dead in their graves, numbered among the slain like those that go down into the pit, and no arm can help you but the arm of the Omnipotent, nothing can save you but the blood of Jesus Christ.

Then, next, to look to Him means *expect that He will save you.* Oh, what a step that is for anyone to take! I would that, by God’s grace, you might take it, saying, “Nobody but God can save me. Salvation comes from Him, but He is gracious, He has given His dear Son to die for sinners. I, a sinner—the most unworthy, perhaps, who ever lived—will, nevertheless, dare to hope that I shall be saved. Nay, more—

*“He has promised to receive
All who on His Son believe;”—*

“so I will now trust His Son, and look to Him to give me full and free salvation because I trust Him.” Joseph Hart’s hymn puts it—

*“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

Some have objected to the verse, because they say it is not a venture. It is very easy to be too critical. It is a venture to the sinner’s thought, it appears to him to be a venture, and you must not expect him to talk as you wise men talk. Do not put into a sinner’s mouth words that would be above his range of thought. I know it seemed a wonderful venture to me. I thought, “Can it be true that this is all I have to do? Have I to believe God’s grace in Christ, and trust myself only to that?” Why, if the minister had said, “You must go home, and take a whip, and flog yourself—twenty lashes will do”—I tell you I would have laid them on as heavily as I could, for I should have felt, “I will make sure work of it,” and they would have been twenty of the sweetest cuts that ever a man endured. If they made me smart, I

would have blessed God for them, so long as I received mercy through them. But there was nothing in the gospel about lashing myself—nothing even about lashing my conscience, I was told simply to look to God as He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and I did so, and thus I was saved.

Possibly someone asks, “Does that faith make any difference to a man?” It makes all the difference in the world. Suppose you have a bad servant, who is always doing wrong things, and you find out that the great reason why he so provokes you is that he does not believe in you and has no respect for you. But one day you convince him of your kind feeling towards him, and prove to him that all you wish is for his good, and that you have been seeking his good all the while you have had him. Now that man is saved from his ugly temper by believing you to be good and kind, and from the moment when this change takes place, there is nothing too much for him to do for you.

That is just the effect that faith in God has upon a sinner’s moral character. Before you believe in God, you do not care much about Him. It is true that you may do a few good works, with the hope of thereby getting salvation, just as your servant does as much or as little as he dares do, for the sake of his wages. But oh! when once you believe in God, and serve Him out of love, then you become like those old-fashioned servants that our grandmothers used to have, we cannot get them now. They used to serve their masters and mistresses from motives of affection—those old body-servants that the squires and dames used to have, who would cleave to them, wages or no wages, because they loved them so.

What a grand thing it is to have faith in the heart! It will save a man entirely from his old ways, and his old lusts, and his old sins, by making him love God, and serve God out of love, which is the mightiest transforming motive that was ever implanted in the bosom of a lost soul. This is how God saves men—by leading them to trust in Him in Jesus Christ.

II. Secondly, FOR WHAT PART OF SALVATION ARE WE TO LOOK TO GOD?

For every part of it, from beginning to end, and first, *for the pardon of sin*, you must look to God in Christ, for who can pardon an offense except the person who was offended? If somebody over there has offended a brother yonder, it would be no use for me to say to that person, “I forgive you the offense.” The other brother might say, “The wrong was not done to you, it was done to me. Only I, who have been offended, can forgive the offense.”

So, if you want the pardon of your sin, it is evident that it can only come from God. But you tell me that you feel as if you were not fit to be forgiven. Very well then, if there be such a fitness—I know there is none—but if there is any truth in what you mean, that fitness must be given you by God, and you must look to Him for it.

*“True belief and true repentance—
Every grace that brings you nigh—
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy.”*

Possibly you say to me, “It is not merely that I need to have my sins forgiven, *I want to become a new man.*” You must look for that also to God. I think that the best man to clean a watch is the watchmaker, and the best person to renew the heart is the God who made the heart. He who made you can alone remake you. There is no power under heaven, except the power that created you, which can create you anew in Christ Jesus, so you must look to God for that.

But you say, “Well, if I were made a new man, I fear that I would go back to my old sins. *Must I not trust to something to keep me?*” No, to nothing but God, for all the bonds and all the devices that men make to keep themselves from sin, are of no more strength than a spider’s web. God must keep you alive as well as make you live, “For I am God,” saith He, “and there is none else.” Rest in the almighty power of God to keep you from going back to sin after, He has rescued you from it.

You know also, that you must be perfect, or you can never enter heaven. *How are you to become perfect?* Well, you must look to God for that too, for He, the perfectly Holy One, can sanctify you

wholly, spirit, soul, and body. May your faith embrace the whole of salvation, and see it to be all in God in Christ, and look to God in Christ Jesus for it all!

III. Our third question is, WHAT IS OUR ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOOK TO GOD?

I tried to show you what it was to look—to consider God, to speak with Him, to trust in Him as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, and to rest wholly in Him. You say, “What is my encouragement to do that, and to expect that thus I shall be saved? May I do it? I know that trusting in Christ saves men, but may I trust Him?”

Your encouragement to do this is, first of all, *God’s command*, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” We, certainly, almost beyond the inhabitants of any other country, might have been called “the ends of the earth.” There was a time when England was reckoned to be the Ultima Thule—the far-off land, it was supposed that there could be nothing beyond the British Islands. When the prophet spoke, these were the very ends of the earth, so, surely, God commands you, my dear hearer, to look unto Him, inasmuch as you belong to the ends of the earth.

If you tell me that you come from America, well, you also come from the ends of the earth. Do you say that you come from Australia? That is another of the ends of the earth. Some of you sail round the world, well, sometime or other, you have been at the ends of the earth, and you know that when God sends His command to the ends of the earth, it always includes everything within its bounds. He certainly commands the middle as well as the ends.

Those who are farthest off from Him are bidden to look unto Him, and as He commands you to do it, what better warrant can you desire than His command? The gospel command is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” You never ought to say, “May I believe?” for God commands you to do so, and threatens you with punishment if you do not, for He says, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” The only warrant for a sinner’s believing is the command of the Gospel. Oh, that you might be encouraged by that!

The next encouragement for you is *God’s promise*, “Look unto me, and be ye saved”—as much as to say, “As surely as you look, you are saved. When you look, you are saved.” Does it not mean that? If anyone said to you, “Sit down, and eat, and be filled,” you would not say, “He only means that I am to sit down at a bare table,” but you would feel sure that he meant that there should be something on the table of which you might freely eat. So, sinner, do but look to the Lord, turn your eye in confidence to God in Christ Jesus, for there is no other God and no other Savior, and when you have done this, you shall be saved at once.

Still further to encourage you, you have *the fact of His Godhead*, “for I am God.” You need a God to save you. You have a great load of sin resting upon you, but the Omnipotent can lift it off your shoulders. Then, there are the bonds of iniquity, the old habits of forty years, perhaps of fifty years, but Christ can tear away the iron net, and break the chains, and set the captive free in a moment, for He is God. Were the Savior any less than divine, I should not dare to encourage sinners to believe in Him, but there is a divine Savior, infinitely strong, and infinitely gracious, so, you blackest, foulest, vilest sinner, why should you not obey the command of my text, and look unto Him, expecting mercy and favor from Him?

Another encouragement to you comes from *God’s character*. He knew that you sinners would be afraid that His justice would stand in your way, and that, though able to save you, He might not do it because you have been such great sinners, and He must punish you, so kindly read what He says in the latter part of the twenty-first verse, “There is no God else besides me: a just God and a Savior: there is none besides me.” God can justly save you by His wondrous plan of substitution, if you look unto Him, He will not mar the integrity of His government or the severity of His justice in order to save you, for by the blood of His dear Son, His law has been so magnified, and made so honorable, that He can be as just in pardoning as He would have been just in punishing.

This doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the marvelous mystery of the Gospel, the greatest of all revealed truths, and this ought to take away from the guilty conscience everything that makes it

fear to trust God. God's justice is satisfied by Jesu's death, therefore, trust Him, I implore you, trust Him. Did you know the joy that faith brings—could you but understand the peace, the liberty, the transport, the bliss, which simple confidence in Christ will bring to you—you would not need my pleadings, but you would say, "Blessed Jesus, I rush into Your arms, accepting You as my Savior, and rejoicing in Your great salvation."

IV. Our last question was to be, WHAT IS THE BEST TIME IN WHICH TO LOOK TO THE LORD?

I answer—the best time is God's time. And when is God's time? What does the Holy Spirit say is the best time? "*Today*, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." This is God's time—today. I do not remember, nor do I think there is in the whole Bible, a single precept addressed to the sinner, requiring him to repent and believe tomorrow, or next week. The Gospel promise runs, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," but it does not say, "Believe next February," or "Believe next March," or "next year." It is understood that every Gospel precept or command is for this present moment.

God Himself, my hearer—not I, poor, feeble man, but God Himself—saith to you, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," and He says this to you at this very moment. What is your answer? What reply shall I give to Him who sent me to you with this message? Will you have Him to be your Savior, or will you not? Say one or the other, which you will.

If I may plead with you, I urge you to say "Yes" from your very heart. But I shall be almost satisfied if you will say one or the other, for that will bring you to the point, and if you say "no," it may be that, having taken up that position, you may begin to think where you are, and you will go home saying, "I have refused to look to Christ, I have refused the great salvation, and deliberately said, 'I will not look for salvation in God through Jesus Christ.'"

I wish, sinner, that you would even do that rather than act as so many do, who say, "Go your way for this time; when we have a more convenient season, we will send for thee," for that tends to quiet conscience, although the convenient season never comes, and Felix is most *infelix*. There is nothing felicitous in what he says. Happy by name, he is most unhappy in his fatal procrastination concerning this all-important matter. I must have an answer to give to Him that sent me. Will you now be saved or not? God sets the time, the time is now, so, say "Yes" or "No."

Let me, however, remind you that *the present is the only time you have*. The past is gone, the future may never come. Should it come, it will be present when it does come. On this winged hour all eternity hangs. Possibly, you are thinking of what you will do when you get home, but you do not know that you will get there. Do not many fall in the street never to rise again? You are calculating upon what you will do tomorrow. The image of death will be on your face when you are asleep, are you quite sure that you will ever awake from that form of death into real life again? May not that bed become your sepulcher?

You have planned what you intend to do on Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, yet you know not what a day may bring forth. There is a seat, just there, that may speak to some of you. There used to sit, in that pew, one who was well known to you. He came home from business feeling slightly unwell, the doctor was sent for, but our friend was dead ere he arrived. Why should not that which has happened to many others who have attended here, happen also to you, or to me? "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh."

If I knew how to preach to you, so that I might win men to believe in Jesus Christ, God knows that there is nothing that I would not say, or leave unsaid, that might conduce to that end. I know that there is no power in mere rhetoric or oratory, so I have chosen to speak to you very plainly and simply, without any ornament of speech, and almost without an illustration, that he who runs may read. It is not one half so much my business, dear hearer that you should be saved as it is yours. When I have faithfully delivered the word of salvation, I wash my hands of you. If you refuse it, I cannot help it. At your own door must your doom lie, and at your own door alone.

Yet would I pluck you by the sleeve, and say, “Dear friend, you do need to be saved. Salvation must come from God, and He bids you look to Him for it. Trust His Son for it. God in Christ must be your hope. Will you trust Him? Do you understand me? Simply relying upon the atoning sacrifice, trusting in it, resting in it, believing God to be God, and henceforth yielding yourself up to be ruled by His goodness—believing Christ to be able to save you, and yielding yourself up to be saved by Him, and guided in the way of holiness and peace—believing that the blood of Jesus can take away your sin, and trusting to it so to do—if so it be, it is done, and you are saved.”

The salvation has commenced which will never end, for in the simple act of faith, there lies a living seed which the devil himself cannot crush—which, though it is small as the mustard seed, will begin to swell, and germinate, and send forth its shoots, till it shall be such a tree that many a happy bird of the air shall come, and sit and sing among its branches, and your life, made happy and shaded by this blessed faith in Jesus, shall then bring forth fruit unto God, and the end shall be everlasting life. God grant that it may be so, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ISAIAH 45

The first paragraph concerns Cyrus, and the great work for which God raised him up.

Verses 1-4. *Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed you, though thou hast not known me.*

A remarkable prophecy, issued long before the time of Cyrus, foretelling that he should conquer Babylon, and destroy it, and though for many a day Cyrus knew nothing about the Most High God, yet he was used, in the Lord’s hand, for wonderful purposes. Sometimes, a man may have been used of God for great ends without his own knowledge. When, however, he comes to the discovery of that fact, as he may if he will but think it over, should he not reverently bow before the Most High, and worship Him who, though unknown to him, had been his Helper and his Friend?

5-6. *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.*

Those who believe in idols think that there may be lords many and gods many, but he who is a true follower of JEHOVAH knows that there can be no other god besides Him. He fills all space, and there is no room for another. There is but one Creator, one Preserver, and one God, who alone is to be worshipped.

7. *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*

Cyrus was a believer in two gods—one the god of light, and the other the god of darkness. Hence this declaration from God’s servant, the prophet, that there was no prince of darkness who was a god, but that all things were made by the one Most High God.

8-11. *Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashions it, What makest thou? or thy work, he hath no hands? Woe*

unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command you me.

Note the tone which God uses. He speaks like a God, and claims to be above the questioning of His creatures. These verses remind us of what the apostle Paul wrote, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” God is the great Sovereign over all, and He claims a sovereign’s place. He does as He wills, but He always wills to do that which is just and right.

12-17. *I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*

If you are God’s people, you have a God of whom you need never be ashamed, and one who will not leave you to be ashamed of your confidence and hope. Those that trust to false gods will be ashamed; those that rest upon themselves will be confounded; but stay yourself upon God, O man, and you shall never be ashamed, world without end!

18-19. *For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; and himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.*

Here is the glory of our God—that His every word is true, and that He has never said, in any place, that which contradicts what He has spoken in public to His people. You may safely rest upon the God who is always the same, who never plays fast and loose with His promises, or speaks anything in secret contrary to His pledged word. He is as true as He is sovereign, therefore stay yourselves upon Him.

20-21. *Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? Have not I the LORD?*

He challenges all the idols to prove that they had uttered any true prophecy—that they had spoken about Cyrus, or anybody else, from ancient times, so that the prophecy was literally fulfilled. There were dark double-meaning oracles, with which the false priests mocked their votaries; but the true words of God—His ancient prophecies—proved Him to be the only real and true God.

21-23. *And there is no God else besides me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*

Glory be to God, it will be so in the latter days. It shall come to pass that the truth shall be universally triumphant, and the one God, who made the heavens and the earth, shall be worshipped both by heaven and by earth, without any discordant note.

24-25. *Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.