

Looking Unto *Jesus*

Adolph Monod

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” – Hebrews 12:2

Three words only – but in three words is the whole secret of life.

Looking unto Jesus in the Scriptures, to learn there what He is, what He has done, what He gives, what He demands; to find in His character our model, in His requirements our instruction, in His precepts our law, in His promises our support, in His person and in His work a full satisfaction to all the wants of our soul.

Looking unto Jesus crucified, to find in His blood our ransom, our pardon, our peace.

Looking unto Jesus risen again, to find in Him the righteousness which alone justified us, and permits us, all unworthy as we are, to approach with assurance in His name, Him Who is His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

Looking unto Jesus glorified, to find in Him our heavenly Advocate, appearing even now for us before the presence of God and supplying the imperfection of our prayers, by the efficacy of those which the Father hears always.

Looking unto Jesus revealed by the Holy Spirit, to find in His abiding communion the purification of our defiled hearts, the enlightening of our darkened minds, the transformation of our rebellious wills; to be enabled to triumph over all the assaults of the world and of the evil one, withstanding their power by Jesus our strength, baffling their wiles by Jesus our wisdom; sustained by the sympathy of Jesus who was spared no temptation, and by the succour of Jesus who yielded to none.

Looking unto Jesus to receive from Him the task and the cross of each day, with grace sufficient to bear the cross, and to fulfil the task; patient with His patience, active with His activity, loving with His love, asking not, “what can I?” but “what can He?” and waiting upon His strength which is made perfect in weakness.

Looking unto Jesus in order that the brightness of His face may be the light of our darkness; that our joy may be holy, and our sorrow calm; that He may humble us and He raise us up; that He may afflict and He comfort us; that He may make us poor, and He make us rich; that He may teach us to pray and He answer our prayers; that even while leaving us in the world, He may separate us from it, our life being hid with Him in God, and our conduct bearing witness to Him before men.

Looking unto Jesus, Who having re-entered His Father’s house is preparing there a place for us, in order that this blessed hope may encourage us to live without repining, and may prepare us to die without regret, when the day shall come to encounter that last enemy, which He has conquered for us, which we shall conquer through Him.

Looking unto Jesus, Who gives repentance as well as remission of sins, to receive from Him hearts that are conscious of their misery and come to deplore it at His feet.

Looking unto Jesus, that He Who is the Author of our faith, as He is its Finisher may keep us in that faith unto the end.

Looking unto Jesus and to nothing else, as our text expresses it in a single untranslatable word, which enjoins us at once to fix our eyes on Him and to turn them away from all beside.

Unto Jesus, and not to ourselves, to our thoughts, our desire, our purposes. Unto Jesus, and not to the world, to its lusts, its examples, its maxims, its judgments. Unto Jesus, and not to Satan, whether he seeks to frighten us by his rage, or to seduce us by his flattery. Oh, how should we rid ourselves of useless questions, of disquieting scruples, of dangerous parleyings with the evil one, of dissipation of spirit, of vain fancies, of bitter disappointments, of painful struggles, of lamentable falls, by looking straight unto Jesus and following Him wherever He leads, too anxious not to lose sight of the path which He marks for us, to cast even a glance to those in which He does not think fit to lead us!

Unto Jesus, and not to our meditations and our prayers, to our pious conversations, or to our edifying reading, to the holy assemblies we frequent, nor even to our partaking of the Supper of the Lord. Let us faithfully use all these means of grace, but without confounding them with grace itself, and without turning off our looks from Him, who alone can render them efficacious, by communicating Himself to us by their means.

Unto Jesus, and not to our position in the Christian Church, to the name which we bear, to the doctrine which we profess, to the idea which others form of our piety, or to that which we form of it ourselves. Many of those who have prophesied in the name of Jesus will hear Him one day say to them, "I never knew you," but He will confess before His Father and before His angels, even the most humble of those who have looked unto Him.

Unto Jesus, and not to our brethren, not even to the best and most beloved among them. In following a man we run a risk of going wrong; in following Jesus we are certain never to go wrong. Besides, by putting a man between Jesus and ourselves, it comes to pass that the man insensibly becomes more to us, and Jesus becomes less. Soon we no longer know how to find Jesus, when we cannot find the man, and so if man's help fails, our all fails. On the contrary, if Jesus keeps His place between us and our nearest friends, our attachment to man will be at once less direct and more sweet, less passionate and more pure, less indispensable and more useful, an instrument of rich blessings in the hands of God when He pleases to make use of it, and in its absence a blessing still, when He pleases to do without it.

Unto Jesus, and not to the obstacles which meet us on our journey – as soon as we stop to consider them they startle us, they stagger us, they overthrow us, incapable as we are of understanding either the reason for which they are permitted, or the means by which we may overcome them. The apostle was engulfed as soon as he set himself to look at the billows, agitated by the tempest; so long as he looked unto Jesus, he walked upon the waves as upon a rock. The more difficult our task, the heavier our cross, the more needful it is that we should look only unto Jesus.

Unto Jesus, and not to the temporal blessings which we enjoy. To look first to these blessings is to expose ourselves to be so captivated by them that they hide from us the light of Him who gives them to us. To look first unto Jesus is to receive from Him all these

benefits, chosen by His wisdom, bestowed by His love, a thousand times more precious because we take them at His hand, to enjoy them in His fellowship and to use them to His glory.

Unto Jesus, and not at our own strength. Our strength is good only to glorify ourselves; to glorify God one must have the strength of God.

Unto Jesus, and not to our own weakness. By lamenting our weakness, have we ever become more strong? By looking unto Jesus, His strength will communicate itself to our hearts, and His praise will burst forth from our lips.

Unto Jesus, and not to the law; the law gives commands, and does not give strength to perform them. The law always condemns, and never pardons; to place ourselves again under the law is to withdraw ourselves from grace. In proportion as we make our obedience the means of our salvation, we lose our peace, our strength, our joy, because we have forgotten that Jesus is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." As soon as the law has constrained us to seek Him, our only Saviour, it is for Him only to require of us obedience; an obedience which extends to nothing less than our whole heart and our most secret thought, but which has ceased to be an iron yoke and an insupportable burden, to become an easy yoke and a light burden; an obedience which He makes at once pleasant and binding; an obedience which He at once bestows and prescribes, and which, rightly understood, is less a consequence of our salvation, than it is a part of that salvation itself, and like all the rest, a grace.

Unto Jesus, and not to what we do for Him. Too much taken up with our own work, we may forget our Master; it is possible to have the hands full and the heart empty. Taken up with our Master, we cannot forget our work; if the heart is filled with His love, how can the hands not be active in His service?

Unto Jesus, and not to the apparent success of our efforts. Apparent success is not the measure of real success, and besides, God has not commanded us to succeed, but to work. It is of our work that He will require an account and not of our success; why then take thought about it before the time? It is for us to sow the seed; it is for God to gather the fruit: if not today, it will be tomorrow; if not by us, it will be by others. Even when success is granted, it is always dangerous to let our eyes rest upon it complacently; on the one hand we are tempted to attribute something of it to ourselves; on the other hand we thus accustom ourselves to give way to relaxing our zeal when we cease to perceive its effects, that is to say, at the very time when we ought to redouble our energy. To look to success is to walk by sight; to look to Jesus, and to persevere in following and serving Him in spite of all discouragements, is to walk by faith.

Unto Jesus, and not to the spiritual gifts which we have received already, or which we are receiving now from Him. As for yesterday's grace, it passed away with yesterday's work; we can no longer use it, we ought no longer to dwell upon it. As for today's grace, given for the work of today, it is entrusted to us not to look at but to use; not to make it ring in our hands and count ourselves rich, but to spend, and to live poor, looking unto Jesus.

Unto Jesus, and not to the degree of grief which our sins have caused us, or to the degree of humiliation which they produce in us. If only we are so humbled by them as to be no longer satisfied with ourselves, if only we are so grieved by them as to look unto Jesus that He may deliver us from them, it is all He demands of us, and it is moreover this look more than all besides, that will make our tears flow and our pride fall.

Unto Jesus, and not to our faith. The last device of the Adversary when he cannot make us look elsewhere, is to turn off our eyes from our Saviour to our faith, and thus to discourage us if it is weak, and to fill us with pride if it is strong, and both in the one case and in the other to enfeeble us: for it is not from faith that strength comes, but it is from the Saviour by faith; it is not by looking unto our look, it is by looking unto Jesus.

Unto Jesus; and it is from Him and in Him that we learn to know, not only without danger but for the good of our souls, that which is good for us to know of the world and of ourselves, of our misery, of our dangers, of our resources, of our victories; seeing all things in their true light, because it is He who makes us see them, and that only in the time and in the measure, in which this knowledge shall bring forth in us the fruits of humility and of wisdom, of gratitude and of courage, of watchfulness and of prayer. All that is desirable for us to know, Jesus will teach us; all that we do not learn from Him, it is better for us not to know.

Looking unto Jesus, while we remain upon earth; to Jesus from moment to moment, without suffering ourselves to be distracted either by the recollections of a past, which we should leave behind, or by the anticipations of a future.

Unto Jesus now, if we have never looked to Him.

Unto Jesus anew, if we have ceased to do so.

Unto Jesus alone.

Unto Jesus again.

Unto Jesus always, with a look more and more earnest, more and more confident; “transformed into the image from glory to glory”; and thus waiting for the hour when He shall call us to pass from earth to heaven, and from time to eternity – the promised hour, the blessed hour, when at length “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

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