

THE LAMB OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE

"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

John 1:35, 36

You all know the old, old story. The world was lost. God must punish sin. He sent His Son to take our sin upon Him that He might honor the Law of God and establish God's government by being obedient to the Law of God and yielding Himself up to the death penalty. He whom Jehovah loves beyond all else came to earth, became a Man and, as a Man, was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. It is He who is called, in our text, "the Lamb of God," the one Sacrifice for man's sin. There is no putting away of sin without sacrifice—there is only one Sacrifice that can put away sin—and that is Jesus Christ, the Righteous. He is Divine, yet Human—Son of God, yet Son of Mary. He yielded up His life, "the Just for the unjust," the Sinless for the sinful, "that He might bring us to God," and reconcile us to the great Father. That is the story and whoever believes in Him shall live. Any man, the world over, who will trust himself to Christ, God's great Sacrifice, shall be saved, for this is our continual witness, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Tonight I do not intend so much to preach a sermon as to urge those who have seen the Lamb of God to look at Him more intently, to study Him more and especially to plead for the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal Him to them. I want to entreat men who have looked elsewhere, to now turn their eyes away from the fruitless search after peace and life, and to come and, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." May the Spirit of God open their eyes and incline their hearts that, tonight, even tonight, they may look unto Him and live!

When John saw Jesus Christ on that memorable day, he, first of all, beheld Him, himself, and then he said to others, "Behold the Lamb of God." "Looking at Jesus as He walked," steadfastly beholding Him, watching Him, gazing with humble admiration at Him, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Brethren, we cannot preach what we have not practiced! If these eyes have never looked to Jesus, how can I bid your eyes look at Him? Beholding Him, I found peace to my soul. I, who was disposed, even, to despair, rose from the depths of anguish to the heights of joy by looking unto Him! And I, therefore, dare to say to you, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Oh, that each one of you might believe our testimony concerning Jesus and look to Him and live!

What did John mean by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God"? Behold, in the Latin, "ecce," is a note of admiration, of wonderment, of exclamation. "Behold the Lamb of God!" There was nothing of greater wonder ever seen than that God, Himself, should provide the Lamb for the Burnt Offering, that He should provide His only Son out of His very bosom, that He should give the delight of His heart to die for us! Well may we behold this great wonder! Angels admire and marvel at this mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh! They have never left off wondering and adoring the Grace of God that gave Jesus to be the Sacrifice for guilty men. Behold and wonder, never leave off wondering—tell it as a wonder, think of it as a wonder, sing of it as a wonder! Even in Heaven you will not cease to wonder at this glorious Lamb of God!

I think that John also meant his disciples to consider, when he said to them, "Behold the Lamb of God!" So we say to you, "Think of Him, study Him, know all that you can about Him, look Him up and down. He is God—do you understand that He stood in the sinner's place? He is Man—do you know how near akin He is to you, how sympathetic He is—a Brother born for your adversity? The

Person of Christ is a great marvel—how can God and man be in one Person? It is impossible for us to tell. We believe what we cannot comprehend and we rejoice in what we cannot understand! He whom God has provided to be your Savior is both God and Man—He can lay His hand upon both parties. He can touch your manhood in its weakness and touch the Godhead in its All-Sufficiency! Study Christ! The most excellent of all the sciences is the knowledge of a crucified Savior. He is most learned in the university of Heaven who knows most of Christ. He who has known most of Him still says that His love surpasses knowledge. Behold Him, then, with wonder! And behold Him with thankfulness.

But when John says, “Behold the Lamb of God!” he means more than wondering or considering. “Looking” is used in Scripture for faith—“Look unto Me and be you saved.” Therefore we sing—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for you!”*

Beholding is a steady kind of looking. Believe then, in Christ with a solid, abiding confidence. Come, you sinners, come, and trust your Savior, not for tonight, only, but forever! Believe that He is able and willing to save you and trust Him to do so—

*“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.”*

Take your eyes off everything else and behold the Lamb of God! You need not see anything else, nothing else is worth seeing, but behold Him. See how He takes your guilt, see how He bears it, see how He sinks under it and yet rises from it, crying, “It is finished!” He gives up the ghost. He is buried. He rises again from the dead because He is accepted of God and His redeeming work is done. Trust Him, trust Him, trust Him! “Look and live,” is now our message—not, “do and live,” but, “live and do!” If you ask how you are to live, our answer is look, trust, believe, confide, rest in Christ—and the moment you do so, you are saved!

But, once more, when John said to His disciples, “Behold the Lamb of God!” it was a hint that they should leave off looking at John and turn their attention wholly to Jesus and follow Him. Hence we find that John’s two disciples left him and became the disciples of Christ. Beloved, we who preach long to have your attention, but when you give your attention to us, our longing, then, is to pass it on to Christ our Lord. Look on Him and follow Him, not us! What can we do, poor creatures that we are? Look unto Him! Mark His footsteps! Walk in them. Do as He bids you! Take Him for your Lord, become His disciples, His servants. Behold the Lamb of God and always behold Him! Look to Him, look up to Him and follow where He leads the way.

Thus I have put the text before you pretty simply. Now I want to talk to you a little about beholding this Lamb of God, taking a hasty run through various Scripture references to the lamb. And I will ask you, first, to Behold the Lamb of God in His connections with men. And secondly to Behold the Lamb of God in His benedictions to men.

1. Let us, first, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD IN HIS CONNECTIONS WITH MEN.

How was the Lamb of God first seen in the world? It was the case of the lamb for one man, brought by one man for himself, and on his own behalf. You all know that I refer to Abel, who was a shepherd, and brought of the firstlings of his flock, that is, a lamb, and he brought this lamb for himself, and on his own account, that he might be accepted of God, and that he might present to God an offering well-pleasing in His sight. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground as an offering to God. I think that there was a difference in the sacrifice, as well as in the man bringing it, for the Holy Spirit says little about the difference of the man, but He says, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,” and he was accepted because he brought a more excellent sacrifice. The one sacrifice was bloodless, the fruit of the ground—the other was typical of Christ, the Lamb of God and was, therefore, accepted. “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”

Now, Beloved, our first view of Christ usually is here, to know Him for ourselves. I am a sinner and I want to have communion with my God—how shall I obtain it? I am guilty, I am sinful—how shall I draw near to the holy God? Here is the answer. Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be yours by faith and bring Him to God! You must be accepted if you bring Christ with you! The Father never repelled the Son, nor one who was clothed with the Son's righteousness, or who pleaded the Son's merit. Come you, as Abel came, not with fruits of your own growing, but with the sacrifice of blood—with Christ, the Holy Victim, the spotless Lamb of God—and so coming, whoever you may be, you shall be acceptable

I know what someone will say, "I hope to do that, by-and-by." I hope you do not so deceive yourself! I have heard that there was once a great meeting in the den of the arch-enemy and he was stirring up his lackeys to seek the destruction of men. One of them said, "I have gone forth and I have told men that there is no God, and no hereafter, and no difference between sin and righteousness, and that they may live as they like!" And there was considerable approbation among the evil spirits. But Satan, himself, said, "You have done small service, for man has a conscience, and his conscience teaches him better. He knows that there is a God. He knows that there is a difference between sin and righteousness. He knows that there must be future punishment. You have done but little." Then another stood up, and said, "I have done better, I think, most Mighty Chieftain, for I have told them that the Bible is a worn-out book, that it was a fable at the first, and that they need not believe it." There was a round of cheers, for they said that he had done splendid service for the cause of darkness.

But Satan said, "It is in vain that you meddle with the old Book! It has taken care of itself and it can still do so. There is no shaking it, it is like a rock. You have done service for a time, but it will soon pass away." And scarcely did any of the fallen spirits, after that, venture to bring forward his boasting in the presence of the terrible master who sat in the midst of them. But, at last, one said, "I have told men that they have souls, and that there is a God, and that the Bible is true. I have left them to believe as they will, but I have whispered in their ears that there is plenty of time to consider all this." Then there was a hush—and the great master of demons said, "You have done best of all. This is my great net in which I take more souls than with any other, this net of procrastination or delay."

Therefore say I to you, my Hearers, disappoint the fiend! Fly to Jesus. Fly to Jesus at once! Behold, not tomorrow, but tonight! Behold the Lamb of God, each man for himself!

Now turn over the pages of this grand old Book and you will find the Lamb, next, in another connection. Israel was in Egypt and there they had the lamb for the family—"In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." Oh, I wish that you would all go on to behold the Lamb of God for your households! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Why do you stop before you finish the verse? What said the Apostle to the trembling jailor? Not merely all that I have quoted, but more—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house." Are there not many Believers who do not believe for their house? Come, now, and believe in this provision of the Lamb for the house! Trust the Grace of God for that little girl, the last born, and for that boy who is still at school, who does not think much of these things as yet—and for that son of yours who has left home and gone out as an apprentice. Oh, that the Lamb of God might be for him! Pray for him, tonight, and you older parents, pray for your sons who are married, and your daughters who have taken to themselves husbands and are away from you! The Lamb is for the house, pray for the whole household, tonight—take in your grandchildren, all you old folks—all of them who are in your house. Pray that the Lamb may be for the house!

I bless God that I can look upon all my household and rejoice that they are converted to Christ! My father has this joy, too! And my grandfather also had that joy! Oh, it is a great bliss to have families, generation after generation, all brought to Christ without exception! Why should it not be so? Let us cry for it! Surely we may expect the same blessing that God gave to His chosen people under the Law and expect it more largely. Grace does not run in the blood, but Grace often runs side by side with it, so that Abraham is loved, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Ephraim, and Manasseh. Thus the Covenant blessing goes on from one to another. Plead with

God, tonight, that all in your house may be beneath the sprinkled blood of the Lamb and be saved from the destroying angel—and that all with you may go out of Egypt to have a possession in the land of the promise!

A little further on, following the Scripture, and asking you to still behold the Lamb, in the 29th chapter of that famous Book of Exodus, at the 38th verses, we come across God's command for the lamb for the people—"Now this is that which you shall offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at even." Here is the lamb for all the chosen people, the lamb for Israel! It began with the unit, it went on to the family and here the Lord, who "loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," makes His Tabernacle to be the central place where a lamb shall be offered for the whole nation! Think of it with delight, tonight, that Christ died for all His chosen people! He has redeemed them from among men. Though they are as many as the stars for number, or as the sand on the seashore, innumerable, yet that one Sacrifice has redeemed them all! Glory be to God for the blood of the Lamb by which the whole of Christ's people are redeemed!

Then let your mind take wing right out of the Old Testament into the New, for I have not time to trace all the successive steps. Come now to John, saying, in the 29th verse of this chapter, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." Now you have gone beyond the bounds of Israel, and have come to the Lamb for the world. You have come to the Lamb of God who dies for Gentiles as well as for Jews, for men in the isles of the sea, for men in the wilds of Africa, for men of every color and every race, and every time, and every clime! Oh, glory be to God, wherever there are men, we may go and tell them of Christ! Wherever there are men born of Adam's race, we may tell them of the Second Adam, to whom looking, they who look shall live—and in Him they shall find eternal life! I love to think of the breaking down of the boundaries that shut in the flow of Grace to one nation! Behold, it flows over all Asia Minor, at first, and then over all Greece, and then to Rome, and Paul talks of going to Spain and the Gospel is borne across the sea to England, and from this country it has gone out unto the utmost ends of the earth!

Well now, take your flight, if you can get beyond that, away to Heaven, itself, and there you will see the Lamb for all Heaven! Look at Revelation, the seventh chapter, and the 14th verse. No, you need not look it up, for you know it. All the saints in Heaven are standing in their glittering ranks, white-robed, pure as the driven snow. They sing and praise one glorious name, when one of the elders first asked the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and from where did they come?" He, himself, gave the answer, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—

*"Round the altar priests confess,
If their robes are white as snow,
'Twas the Savior's righteousness,
And His blood that made them so."*

The blood of the Lamb has whitened all the saints who are in Heaven! They sing of Him who loved them and laved [washed] them from their sins in His own blood! I have often wondered why that second word was not brought into our translation, for it so beautifully fits the language of the beloved Apostle John—"Unto Him that loved us, and laved us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." There is no whiteness in Heaven but what the Lamb has worked, no brightness there but what the Lamb has bought! Everything there shows the wondrous power and surpassing merit of the Lamb of God!

If it is possible to think of something more glorious than I have already described, I think you will find it in the fifth chapter of Revelation, at the 13th verse—"And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne,

and unto the Lamb forever and ever." The day shall come when, from every place that God has made, there shall be heard the voice of praise unto the Lamb—there shall be found everywhere men and women redeemed by blood, angels and glorious spirits, rejoicing to adore Him who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty Lamb of God!

I think I have given you something to consider if you turn over the pages of Scripture and follow the track of the bleeding Lamb.

II. But now, taking you again over the same road a little, I want you, in the second place, to BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD IN HIS BENEDICTIONS TO MEN.

The first blessing of all is that of Abel. He was accepted of God. He offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Well now, let anybody here who does not know it, try to learn this lesson tonight. You can only be "accepted in the Beloved." God loves His Son with such an overflowing love that He has love enough for you, love enough for me—if we are in Christ Jesus. He is the great conduit or channel of God's love and that love flows through all the pipes to every soul that believes in Jesus. Hide behind your Lord and you are safe! Trust His name, living and dying, and nothing can harm you. How many dear hearts, when passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death—when grim thoughts have clustered about them—have been cheered and comforted by the thought of Christ! Remember the monk who, as he died, put away the priest, the crucifix and everything else, and cried, "Tua vulnera, Jesu! Tua vulnera, Jesu!" "Your wounds, Jesus! Your wounds, Jesus!" I am not saved by what I can do, but by what He has done—not by what I have suffered, but by what He has endured. There hangs our everlasting hope—we trust to Christ in life and in death and we are accepted for His sake! Come, every sinner, bring the Lamb of God! Put Him on the altar and you shall be accepted at once, and you

But then, as we go on, we find this Lamb of God useful, not only for acceptance, but also for rescue and deliverance. It is a dark and dreadful night. Egypt shivers and stands aghast. And just at midnight flies forth an angel, armed with the sword of death. In every house of Egypt there is heard a wail, for the firstborn is dead, from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the woman who turns the mill to grind the daily corn. Death is in every house! No, stop—there are houses wherein there is no death! What has secured those habitations? The father took a lamb, shed its blood, dipped a bunch of hyssop in it and smeared the lintel and the two side posts—and then all sat down and feasted, undisturbed, on the lamb—calm and happy. They rejoiced to have for food that lamb whose blood was the ensign of their safety. There was no crying, there, no dying there! Death could not touch the inhabitants of the house that was marked with the blood of the paschal lamb. Beloved, you and I are perfectly safe if we are sheltered beneath the blood of the Lamb of God! Nothing can harm us, everything must bless us—and we may go to our beds, tonight, singing—

*"Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest,
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Savior's breast."*

We may rise tomorrow morning, if we are spared, and go into this busy world without any fear. The broad arrow of the King is set upon us in the blood-mark of the atoning Sacrifice, and we are safe, and safe forever. Glory be to the name of the Lord for this!

Nor was that all. As I have told you, the blood of the paschal lamb was not only sprinkled for the protection of the house, but its flesh was the food of the inhabitants. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we do not, at first, know what it is to feed on Christ! We are satisfied to be sprinkled with His blood, but the Believer, afterwards, finds that Christ is the food of his soul. His blood is drink, indeed, and His flesh is meat, indeed. Oh, what a festival have we kept over the Person of our Lord! Sometimes, when faint and hungry, we have begun to think of the Incarnate God, the bleeding Lamb, the full Atonement paid, and we have said, "My soul is full, satisfied with favor, full of the

blessing of the Lord.” I do not know what there is in the Gospel if you take away the Atoning Sacrifice. It seems to me that there would be nothing left but chaff which might suit asses and horses, but would not be fit for men. Look to Jesus Christ dying in our place and here is something for the soul to feed upon, yes, and to be satisfied with, as with marrow and fatness!

I pointed you, a little further on, to the lamb in the wilderness, the lamb offered up every day. That brings us to another point in our Lord’s work. We have had Christ for acceptance, Christ for safety, and Christ for food, now we have Christ for perpetual resort. The Lamb of God in the morning! Oh, blessed be God for a Savior in the morning! If the night has gathered anything of evil, He does then disperse it, as the sun dispels the darkness. But oh, what a precious thing to also have the Lamb of God in the evening! If in the day we have soiled our feet in traversing this busy world, here we come to the Fountain and we are made clean through the blood of the Lamb! Perpetual merit, perpetual intercession, perpetual life-giving, perpetual salvation flow from Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God! He is not slain twice. His one wonderful offering has finished transgression and made an end of sin, but its efficacy continues as though He were sacrificed often, always supplying us with merit, so that, in effect, His wounds continually bleed. He is always a new Savior for me every morning, always a new Savior every night and yet always the same Savior, the same Christ! There is no getting weary of Him, there is nothing “stale” in Him. They may talk about “a new view of the Atonement.” I have no view of the Atonement but this—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” “Who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” And that old view of the Atonement is always fresh and always new to the heart and conscience!

Well now, Beloved, when we again come to John, following our former run of thought, we find the Lamb of God useful for guidance, for when John said, “Behold the Lamb of God,” the two disciples followed Jesus and we read of some, “These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” The Lamb is our Guide. The Lord is a Shepherd as well as a Lamb, and the flock following in His footsteps is safely led. My Soul, when you need to know which way to go, behold the Lamb of God! Ask, “What would Jesus do?” Then do what Jesus would have done in such a case and you can not do amiss.

Further on we find such a passage as this, telling us of victory through the Lamb of God—“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” The Lamb is a great Warrior—there is none like He. Is He not the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Though He is gentle as a lamb, yet against sin and iniquity He is fiercer than a young lion when it roars on its prey. If we follow Him, hold fast His Truth, believe in His Atonement and perpetually proclaim His Gospel, we shall overcome all error, all sin and all evil!

Well now, this blessed Lamb—it is not easy to leave off talking about Him when one once begins—one is so blessed that you may well behold Him, for all happiness comes through Him. In Heaven you will see nothing without Him. “Nothing,” you ask? No, nothing—here is a proof of my words. “The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” All the light, the knowledge, the joy, the bliss of Heaven come through the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ! Not Jesus only, but Jesus slain, Jesus the Lamb of God is the very Light of Heaven!

And what do you think is the joy-day of Heaven, the time for the highest exultation? Why, the joyous day when all the golden bells shall peal out their glorious melodies, and all the silver trumpets shall ring out their jubilant notes will be the day of the marriage of the Lamb! It is the Heaven of Heaven, the climax of ineffable delight!! And the voice of the great multitude, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunder, sings, “Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.” So that, at the topmost round of the ladder of eternal bliss, there you find the Lamb! You cannot get beyond Him. He gives you all He has, even Himself. Behold Him, then, and go on beholding Him throughout the countless ages of eternity!

I would to God that you had all beheld Him, and I pray you to behold Him tonight. It is but a little while and the death-film will gather about your eyes—and if you have not seen the Lamb while yet you have mortal eyes, you will see Him, you will certainly see Him—but your vision will be like that of Balaam. “I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near.” If it is with you, “not now,” it may be, “not near.” It will be an awful thing to see the Lamb with a gulf between yourself and Him, for there is a great, impassable gulf fixed in the next world—and when you see Him across that gulf, how will you feel? Then shall you cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!” Jesus will still be a Lamb, even to the lost—it is “the wrath of the Lamb” that they will dread! The Lamb is always conspicuous. He may be neglected, rejected, refused tonight, but He will be beheld in eternity and beheld to your everlasting confusion and unutterable dismay if you refuse to behold Him now. Let it not be so with any of you—

*“You sinners, seek His face,
Whose wrath you cannot bear!
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,
And find salvation there.”*

Amen.