The word "behold" is used 1275 times in the Bible, and naturally, when a word is repeated so many times, it emphasises its importance and urgency. We have taken it for granted that we know Jesus Christ; that we know the book, the Bible, in which He is the chief subject; we have taken it for granted that we know what He has done for us. But I want to challenge our misguided conscience that we do not know Him, you do not know Him, and that you ought to know Him better.

CHANGED BY BEHOLDING

The phrase "behold the man" is used six times, and is interpreted to mean "fixing our eyes on Jesus Christ until His image is reproduced in us." It is by beholding Him that we become changed.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18).

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!" (John 19:5).

We cannot know the Roman governor's real estimate of Jesus any further than that he believed Him to be innocent of all charges brought against Him by the Jews, and that He was the victim of a cruel conspiracy. Pilate was doubtless well impressed with the Man of Galilee because of His noble conduct and godly bearing during the long trial that was now coming to a tragic end.

When, a little later, the Jews demanded the death of Jesus because He claimed to be the Son of God, as the world shall do to those who claim to be true children of God, Pilate was frightened, and was more determined than ever to release Him. It is evident that the governor regarded Jesus as no ordinary man, and his final appeal was to the sympathy of the mob as he set Jesus forth before them and cried out, "Behold the Man!"

THE POWER OF A GAZE

"This is My Father's will, that everyone who fixes his gaze on the Son of God and believes in Him should have the Life of the Ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day." (John 6:40).

The power of a fixed gaze to reproduce what is looked upon is beautifully illustrated by the camera. In order to reproduce the likeness of a landscape or a person, the camera must be fixed in an immovable position till the image is formed on the delicate film. The eyes or lens must be focused on the object to be photographed, and the gaze must remain fixed until the light completes the impression. The film must then be taken to the darkroom and be submitted to a chemical bath in order to bring to view all the beautiful details of the reproduction.

CHRIST'S PORTRAIT

Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple. He is posing for the reproduction of His image in us, and the gaze must remain fixed till His character is fully reproduced. As in the photograph, the darkroom experience and the acid test of fiery trials are necessary in order to develop and to make visible what has been impressed upon the mind and heart by beholding Jesus. These were the experiences that developed into visibility the marvellous perfections of Christ's matchless character.

TRIALS DEVELOP CHARACTER

The darkroom of obscurity and trial developed the character of Joseph in Egypt, of Moses in the wilderness, of David in exile from the wrath of Saul, of Daniel in Babylonian captivity, and of Paul during the severe persecutions that ended in his martyrdom.

In Malachi 3:3 Jesus is represented as a silversmith watching the metal in the fiery furnace until the dross is all burned away and He can see in the silver the reflection of His own image. It is a true saying that "fiery trials make golden Christians." Jesus always beholds those who behold Him.

"All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus.... If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness." (DA, p. 302).

Beholding the Man of God transfixes the gaze and produces admiration. Beholding the Lamb of God reaches the heart and effects a transformation. Of the transforming power of beholding, the apostle Paul wrote: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18).

The glory and the image of God represent His character. By beholding the character of Christ we are changed into His image, or likeness. This transformation from one degree of holiness to another depends on the constancy with which we keep our eyes fixed upon the Master Pattern. The development of character by the beholding process is gradual; it is a growth. The character goal of spiritual growth is to develop "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13).

Our characters are determined by what we look at, whether it be through the physical eyes, or the mind – the eyes of the soul. We always look at what we think about, and we think about what we look at. "As he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he," is a well-known proverb (Prov. 23:7). Looking at and thinking about the faults of others has an unconscious influence that will eventually place them in our own characters.

On the other hand, to fix our thoughts on things that are true, honest, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy will have a powerful influence in developing these beautiful traits of character in us (Phil. 4:8). It is because all these desirable virtues are found only in Christ that we are admonished to keep our eyes fixed upon Him. In Him are none of the character blotches and blemishes common to humanity, the beholding of which would warp and dwarf our own character development.

As the mind dwells upon the Lamb of God, the character is molded after the divine similitude. As we contemplate His matchless character, His love encloses us, and our thoughts are pervaded with a sense of His goodness and mercy. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul, and every portion of the daily life is affected by a power that softens and subdues the whole nature.

The mysterious power of faith, adoration, and love will be awakened in the soul of him who constantly beholds the character of Christ through a study of the Scriptures. As the vision is fixed upon the character of the Holy One, the beholder grows into the likeness of the Man of Calvary whom he adores.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews said: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1). "Consider" means "to look at closely, to observe; to fix the mind on, with a view to careful examination; to think on with care; to ponder, to study, to meditate on, to view attentively; to take time to consider well."

Never will a true follower of Christ cease to keep his mind and attention centred upon Him who is both the victim and the priest. A Christian is one who is Christ-like. In order to be like Christ we must continually behold Him to see what He is like. He is also our guide, and we are to "walk even as He walked."

AN UN-ERRING GUIDE

A guide, in order to be successfully followed, must always be kept in view. There are many different viewpoints from which we can consider Jesus; but beholding Him as the Lamb of God involves a contemplation of His atoning sacrifice and crucifixion. It therefore calls for a consideration of the closing scenes of His earthly sojourn, culminating in His death. It was at the cross that mercy and truth met together, that righteousness and peace kissed each other. It is the thought of Calvary that awakens tender and sacred emotions in the heart.

Pride and self-sufficiency cannot flourish in the soul that keeps fresh in memory the trials, crucifixion, and death of the Lamb of God. The contemplation of these scenes will fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, and produce a complete transformation of character. The purpose of this tract is to focus our attention on those scenes and events upon which depend our eternal destiny.

SOLITARY AND ALONE AMONG MEN

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history furnish no other example of such complete and astounding success, in spite of the absence of these material, social, literary, and artistic powers and influences which are indispensable to success for mere man. Christ stands, in this respect also, solitary and alone among all the heroes of history."

He who can change the course of history, if allowed, He can change your life to become the son and daughter of God. This was His sole mission to the world, and still is as long as probation shall last.

> *"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!"*
>
> JOHN 19:5

A GOSPEL TRACT

Behold Christ

FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

2 Corinthians 3:18

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