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The Divine Glory of Jesus Christ – by James Smith

The Lord Jesus Christ is God, possessed of all divine attributes, and entitled to all divine honours. He is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, over all, God, and blessed forevermore. He is naturally, essentially, perfectly, and eternally possessed of everything peculiar to Deity. He owes his existence to none, nor borrows leave to be. He says “I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour.” He is God, and there is none else. There is no other name given under Heaven, or amongst men, whereby we can be saved. He is the rock of Ages. The infinite, omnipotent, omnipresent, gracious, just, holy, and unchangeable I AM. Angels worship Him, devils obey Him, saints love Him, and sinners must acknowledge Him to the glory of God the Father. He is the author of creation, preservation, redemption, and glorification. He produced all things by his power, formed them by his wisdom, supplies them by his bounty, rules them by his instruments, and employs them according to his sovereign will. He is above all in the glory of his nature, he possesses all by essential right, and he will judge all according to his righteousness.

All things are dependent upon Him, and all rational beings are amenable to Him. Nothing can escape his eyes, none can fly out of his hand. He is exalted above the water flood, and remaineth King for ever. He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords – the only supreme law-giver of the universe. He is naturally, essentially, and eternally God: one with the Father, equal to the Father, and infinite as the Father. Thus the scriptures reveal Him, as such saints acknowledge Him, and join the angelic host in worshipping, praising, and adoring Him. As such he loves them, yea, is love to them, as such they love them, and trust their eternal interests in his hands; and no man can have right views of Christ, who has no right views of the deity of Christ. His divinity gives lustre and glory to his love. If he were not God, his love would be only a passion like ours and may fluctuate and change, but it is an infinite perfection, and remains immutably the same.

News of the Fellowship

It was a joy to witness the marriage of Daniel Price and Rachel Evans on June 12th. Rachel had been brought up in the church. After the service and reception Rachel's auntie, Mrs. Mair Davies, wrote the following letter that captures the blessing of the day :-

Dear Don,

Please convey to the Church of Peniel Green our grateful thanks for all the extra work, love and support shown for the marriage of Rachel and Daniel. Our particular thanks to Mr. Pfeiffer and Mr. Higham for a God glorifying service. Many hearts were touched. Pray much that God would continue to work in their hearts and they would turn to Christ and be saved.

We would also like to thank Peter and Caryl and all those who helped with the refreshments in the school room after the marriage service. Members of both families were touched by the warmth and love shown them. A wonderful witness!

I'm sure you will be pleased to know that when I spoke with the manager and staff after the reception and indeed the following day by telephone their comments were – and I quote –

“You told us it was going to be a Christian wedding, but we never expected it to be so happy and relaxed. It was certainly one of the nicest weddings we have experienced at the Golf Club.”

Praise God – Ann would have been so pleased.

Once again thank you all for your kindness,

With Christian love,
Neville & Mair

We wish the happy couple God's blessing as they seek to serve the Lord in the future together.

On Friday 30th June our first annual church barbeque was held. Although slightly overcast in the morning, the sun shone brightly in the afternoon. Over 50 people including children gathered on the manse lawn and were treated to the usual fare of beefburgers and hotdogs. Mr. Malcolm Coulson was ably assisted by a team of willing helpers. It was encouraging to see a number of outsiders with us.

Mr. Colin Jones gave an epilogue based upon the sweet words of invitation given by the Lord Jesus Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How we pray that sinners heavy laden with sin will, by grace be brought into that haven of believing rest in Christ.

Edwina Phillips entered into her eternal rest on Saturday 17th June 2006 at the age of 81 years after a brief illness. It was a joy to hear that friends had been able to sing with her days before she died. Her funeral was held here, at Peniel Green, on Friday the 23rd with the interment at Morryston cemetery. The church was filled to capacity with relatives and friends.

Edwina was brought up in the Kilvey area of St Thomas, Swansea, and at an early age attended the Gwyn mission. Her father was a lay preacher and personal evangelist who would often be seen distributing gospel tracts. She married a brick layer and lived for a while in Glais before moving to Llwyn Crwn Rd, Llansamlet. She attended a pentecostal church in Morryston and afterwards, the Presbyterian mission in Llansamlet where she met Mrs. Rabey. When the mission closed she made her home at Peniel Green.

Mrs. Phillips was a quiet woman. She was faithful to the Lord and his people. She was faithful at the means of grace attending both Lord's Day services, the prayer meeting and Tuesday night sisterhood. We remember her children at this time, Colin, Stephen, Carol, Jeffrey and Janet.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Psalm 116 v15

Sunday School Outing

On the evening of Friday, 14th July, the excited youngsters of our Sunday School set off for Swansea beach for a “Sandcastle Competition”, driven by 4 noise hardened adult members of the Sunday School – 22 in all.

The eager youngsters, together with their buckets and spades were soon planning, digging and building their constructions to the highest specification! What emerged: a sea dragon, a castle village, and twin castles.

We finished the evening with a buffet tea for children and their parents, 28 in all in all, and the children sang a selection of their hymns and choruses which they had learned in Sunday School over the past year.

“It is a good thing, to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.” Psalm 92 :1.

We were thankful to God for a glorious summer evening and for keeping us all safe and happy,

Please remember the work of the Sunday School in your prayers and if you are able, please bring along any new recruits.

Marge

Diary

Lord's Days:

September

3rd	–	Rev. M. Watts, <i>Salisbury</i>	
10th	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
17th	–	Pastor	– Communion - p.m
24th	–	Pastor	

October

1st	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
8th	–	Pastor	
15th	–	Pastor	– Communion - p.m
22nd	–	Pastor	
29th	–	Pastor	

November

5th	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
12th	–	Rev. M. Stocker, <i>Spring Rd, Southampton</i>	
19th	–	Pastor	– Communion - p.m
26th	–	Pastor	

Forthcoming:

Thursday Oct. 26th

- Mr. C Richards – Protestant Alliance

Christian Worship 2010

In the light of the continuing downgrade in worship a number of ministers met together to consider preserving traditional orthodox hymnology, As a result of a meeting held at Dudley Baptist Church in March 2005 the Christian hymn book project was “born”. The following ministers formed a co-ordinating committee – Revs. R. Burrows, J. Brooks, D Higham, V Higham, D. Kay, A. McNabb, N. Pfeiffer, H. Roberts, and J. Thackway. In due course the Rev. S. Ford was asked to join to become treasurer and to provide help in the area of charitable status.

We can report that, under the Lord’s hand we are making excellent progress. We now have a definitive list of hymns and the work on the Psalms is progressing well. Professor J. Stephens of Aberdeen University has agreed to be our musical consultant.

The following article written by Vernon Higham expresses the ethos of the proposed hymnbook :-

In introducing this proposed new Hymn Book, I would like to give a word of explanation. There are many of us who wish to maintain a certain tradition that is precious to us, and well worth safe guarding. It is our hope that we will be able to maintain that balance between the expression of Biblical and Reformed truths, whilst keeping the spiritual dimension as well. It may be called experiential or or experimental Calvinism. It is a desire to continue this great tradition in Christian worship. It is essential in our hymnology that the fundamental truths are clearly expressed with a warmth of Christian experience and practical application. This will mean that such hymns would be God-centred and an inspiration in our worship and an encouragement in our lives. Many of us believe that it is essential that these hymns should maintain the spiritual warmth and spiritual devotion. Indeed it may be described as worshipping God in ‘spirit and in truth’.

The hymns that we sing have a profound effect upon our attitude in the worship of God and an encouragement of reverence in our services. In doing this the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted and our hearts uplifted. It is a well known fact that the hymns we sing have a profound

effect on what we believe. What we sing we ultimately believe and therefore it is essential that we keep close to the principles mentioned in the choice of material. In the days that we are living in, such principles have to be jealously guarded, Unless we are diligent in safeguarding our expression in song, before long very different hymns will find their way into our churches and ultimately change our form of worship and bring in the influence of the world. Reverence to God will have gone. Today we are struggling for our very existence, but we sincerely believe that the Lord will be our strength and guide. In saying all this, I would like to express our deep gratitude for the hymn book “Christian Hymns”, which was published about 25 years ago. This particular book encouraged so many churches and strengthened their stand for true religion and against the floodgates that have opened allowing a very different attitude.

The proposed new hymn book will be carefully prepared by many men of the reformed and biblical tradition which we hold most dearly. By and large, many of the hymns will be from the Christian Hymns book published 25 years ago. There will be some subtractions and numerous additions, such as hymns by Joseph Hart and Gadsby etc. There will be a larger section at the beginning in the worship of the Godhead, and also many more gospel hymns. It is intended to have a separate section which will include all the Psalms. We intend to choose the Scottish Metrical Psalms with a few sensitive changes to clarify the meaning in some stanzas. Nevertheless the Psalms paraphrased by Isaac Watts and others will be included in the hymn section under their various headings. The inclusion of Psalms will contribute in our worship and devotion.

I trust that these few comments are helpful and express the concern of many of us and the desire to keep the purity of worship which we have maintained through the ages in the worship of God.

Rev. V. Higham

Prayer letter from Pietro & Teresa Lorefice

Summer 2006

Dear Friends in the Lord,

"...this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

The words of our text remind us of a precarious situation for God's people and are a word of great encouragement from the preacher, because he has a big vision and he is looking to bring God's people into this big adventure, to build up the city and God's temple.

First of all, sincere thanks from our heart for the good help that through you we are receiving to enable us to continue the work that the Lord has established in Sicily and in Italy too. After a quiet winter and a lovely springtime, we have the hope that the season that is in front of us may bring new things in the Lord's work.

In the Family

Teresa had her birthday in March and in the Church the Christians there prepared a lovely surprise – a meal for her and for all the people. Maurizio Capizzi and his family from Palermo were also with us, and Giuseppa from Novara (a relative of Teresa's). We were 24 people at the table.

Then on 10th of May a new baby arrived in the family of Suzanna and Paul, little Bruno Pier Paolo. Teresa was there to help the family. Both mother and baby are well. We thank you for your prayers.

In the Work

After the cold winter we are seeing new souls in the Church. Filippo and Giusi with their little boy continue to attend the services. Two ladies (Maria and Carmela) have been coming to the Church since last March. The midweek meetings are also well attended. Since February we have had these meetings in homes and seem to have more people. The fellow-

ship is increasing. In the following months we are planning to have evangelistic meetings.

Vincenzo and his son came from Venezuela and have been with us for some weeks. Vincenzo is a native of Ribera. Now that he is 68 he is trying to claim some pension here. They left their family in Orlando (Florida), but are hoping to bring them here to Ribera.

Literature Work

The translation work is going on. Our books now are in all the Christian bookshops in Italy. Early this year we produced *The Momentous Event* by W.J. Grier. In June we hope to print *The Three are One* by Stuart Olyott, and *A Dictionary of Theological Terms* by M.E. Manton.

The ACERI

Recently Pietro has paid several visits to Peschici and Turin, to renew fellowship and to discuss plans for the future. We are very happy that our books are selling well through the CLC in Italy. The translation work is going on with two other books, including an abridged version of Calvin's *Institutes*. The translation is done under the supervision of Silvio in Turin.

Now the good season is in front of us. We will glad of your prayers for the coming months as we try to evangelise around us.

Christian greetings to all of you, trusting that the summer season will be fruitful for the Lord's work in your churches.

Yours in Him,

Pietro and Teresa

LUTHER'S CONVERSION

by Horatius Bonar

'He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters'
(Ps 18:16).

'Their righteousness is of ME, saith the Lord' (Is 54:17).

LUTHER, the great Reformer of the church from popery, was born of poor parents in Germany in the year 1483. When he was eighteen years of age he began to study at one of the colleges; but it was not till he was twenty that he ever saw a Bible! After he had studied two whole years, he was one day in the library of the college, turning over one book after another, to read the names of their authors. At last he came to one which fixed his attention. It was a Bible! With eagerness and delight he read page after page, and book after book. "Oh," thought he, "if God would but give me such a book for my own." He soon returned to the library, and read again and again the wonderful pages of the new-found volume. A deep impression from that day remained upon his soul. But still he knew nothing of the gospel of Christ.

Some time after this he became a monk. He thought he would thus separate himself from the world. He did not then know that there was more wickedness among the monks than in the world. But while in the convent, he found a Bible! It was fastened by a chain to a particular place, so that he could not carry it with him to study it in secret. But every day he came to this chained Bible to read the words of eternal life. At first it was dark to him; he did not understand its meaning. It was not only a chained but a sealed book to him. Yet he continued to study it with the utmost eagerness, and to meditate upon it night and day. The word of God 'was precious in these days'. It was very precious to the anxious soul of Luther. But yet he was miserable. He felt he was a sinner, and knew not how he was to be forgiven. His soul was in chains like the Bible that he read. As yet he knew not the liberty of the gospel. He knew not the power of the blood of Jesus, nor did he understand the free forgiving love of God.

One of his friends tells us that about this time he was often under great terrors when he thought of the wrath of God against sin. Once and again deep anguish took hold of his soul, and it seemed as if he would sink under it. On one occasion

he had been conversing with a friend upon the things of God. No sooner had the conversation ended, than the truths of which they had been speaking, struck home with awful power to the tossed soul of Luther. He left the room and sought the nearest chamber to give vent to the feelings of his bursting heart. He threw himself upon the bed and prayed aloud in agony; repeating over and over again these words of the apostle, 'He hath shut them all up in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all' (Rom 11:32).

Reader! Have you ever felt what SIN is? Have you ever known what the law of God is? Do you remember that the wages of sin is death? Have you considered what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God?

Luther now began to try to make himself holy. He fasted for days together. He shut himself up alone in his cold cell. He passed many nights, sometimes for weeks, without sleep. He read, he studied, he prayed, he wept, he watched, he strove, but all in vain! He found himself as far from holiness and peace as ever! If ever anyone could have gained heaven by his own merits, Luther would have gained it. To those around him he seemed the holiest man alive. But the light of the law showed him that within all was vile. His soul cried out for rest, but he found it not, for he was seeking it not in God's way, but in a way of his own. He wanted to be sure that his sins were forgiven him, for he felt that till he knew this he could not have peace. But his fear increased upon him, and he knew not what to do, nor which way to turn. He saw every thing that he thought and did to be sin, and how could he rest till he knew that all was forgiven? His friends told him to do good works and that would satisfy the justice of God. Miserable comforters!

"What good works," said he, "can proceed out of a heart like mine; how can I with works like these stand before a holy Judge?"

The terrors of the fiery law compassed him about and consumed his soul. His 'sore ran in the night and ceased not'. He saw nothing in God but the angry Judge. He had not yet learned the riches of his grace through Jesus Christ.

His bodily health gave way. 'A wounded spirit who can bear'. He wasted away. He became thin and pale. His eyes, which were peculiarly bright, looked wild with despair; and death seemed just at hand. In this state he was visited by an old priest. His name was Staupitz. He pitied the dying monk, and all the more so when he was told the cause of his suffering, for he had himself passed through the same conflict. But he had found the peace of Christ in his soul, and was therefore well fitted to give counsel to Luther.

“It is vain,” said Luther to him, “that I make promises to God; sin is always too strong for me.”

“Oh, my friend,” said Staupitz, “I have often made vows myself, but I never could keep them; I now make no more vows; for if God will not be merciful to me for Christ’s sake, I cannot stand before him with all my vows and works.”

Luther made known to him all his fears. He spoke of God’s justice, God’s holiness, God’s sovereign majesty. How could he stand before such a God?

“Why,” said his aged friend, “do you distress yourself with these thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus, to the blood which he has shed for you; it is there that you will see the mercy of God. Cast yourself into the arms of the Saviour. Trust in Him – in the righteousness of his life, in the atoning sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink away from him. God is not against you; it is only you who are averse from God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favour.”

Still Luther was dark. He thought he had not repented properly, and asked, “How can I dare believe in the favour of God, so long as there is in me no real conversion? I must be changed before he can receive me.” He is told that there can be no real conversion so long as a man fears God as a stern Judge. “There is,” said his friend, “no true repentance but that which begins in the love of God and righteousness. That which some fancy to be the end of repentance is only its beginning. If you wish to be really converted, do not try these penances. Love Him who has first loved you.”

Luther listens and is glad. The day breaks – new light pours in. “Yes,” said he, “it is Jesus Christ that comforts me so wonderfully by these sweet and healing words. In order to true repentance we must love God!” He had never heard this before. Taking this truth as his guide, he went to the Scriptures. He turned up all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion; and there two words which were formerly his terror, now become precious and sweet. The passages which used most to alarm him, now ‘seemed to run to me from all sides, to smile, to spring up and play around me. Formerly I tried to love God, but it was all force; and there was no word so bitter to me as that of repentance. Now there is none more pleasant. O how blessed are all God’s precepts when we read them not in books only, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour’.

Thus he learned that we are not forgiven because we love God, but we love God because we are forgiven. We cannot repent, we cannot love, till we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Weary souls, who are trying to repent, and trying to love God in order that he may love and forgive you, look at Luther, and learn the more excellent way! It is the free love of God to us that melts the heart – that fills the eye with tears – that constrains the soul to love in return! Trembling sinners, hear this and be glad. Careless sinners, hear this and turn!

Still Luther's darkness at times returned. His sins again went over his soul, and hid the face of God.

“Oh, my sin! my sin! my sin!” cried he, one day, to his aged friend.

“What would you have?” said Staupitz. “Would you like if your sin was not real? Remember, if you have only the appearance of a sinner, you must be content with the mere appearance of a Saviour. But learn this, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who are real and great sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation.” “Look at the wounds of Christ,” said he, on another occasion, “and you will see there shining clearly the purpose of God towards men. We cannot understand God out of Christ.” How true! It is only when we feel that we are real sinners, that we prize a real Saviour – one who really ‘made his soul an offering for sin’. It is only when we see sin coming between us and God that we find the preciousness of Him who ‘put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’. It is then also we see the face of the true God in the face of Jesus; and learn to read the love of the Father in the love of the Son.

But Luther's peace sometimes gave way, and his fears returned. He was taken ill and brought down to the gates of death. Terror again took hold on him. Death seemed full of gloom. It was a fearful thing to meet a holy God! An old monk visited him in his sick-bed, and in him God gave him another comforter and guide. Sitting at his bedside he repeated this sentence of the creed, ‘I believe in the forgiveness of sins’. These words, thus simply and sweetly brought to mind, were like balm to the soul of Luther. “I believe,” said he to himself, “the forgiveness of sins.” “Ah, but,” said the old man, “we are not merely to believe that there is forgiveness for David or Peter: the command of God is that we believe there is forgiveness for our own sins.” Luther's spirit was revived. He found on this rock a sufficient resting-place, and his soul rejoiced in the forgiving love of God. Believing in the name of Jesus, he found the blessedness

of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. He saw himself at once and completely forgiven – at once and completely reconciled.

In one of his letters he thus refers to the struggle which had taken place in his soul. It was long, and made up of many parts. It was the struggle of a soul, seeking to get rid of sin – groping after light – fighting its way to God. He says:

I had, in truth, a hearty desire to understand particularly the Epistle to the Romans. What kept me from understanding it was that single expression, ‘the righteousness of God,’ in the first chapter (verse 17). To this righteousness, as I understood it, I had a great aversion. I thought it meant God’s character as the righteous judge, Now, though as a monk I had lived a blameless life, I still found myself a great sinner before God, and I did not dare to think of pleasing him by my own works. On this account I did not love this just and angry God, because he punishes sinners. I hated Him, and felt incensed against Him. Still, however, I studied the beloved Paul, that I might find out the meaning of that passage, for I thirsted greatly to know it. In these thoughts I spent day and night, until, through God’s grace, I observed how the words are connected together in the following way, ‘the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, as it is written, the just shall live by faith’. Observing this connection, I have become acquainted with this same righteousness of God, in which the justified person lives, only through faith. I saw that the apostle’s meaning was this, that by the gospel is made known that righteousness which avails with God; in which God, out of grace and mere mercy, makes us righteous through faith. Upon this I felt immediately as if I was wholly born anew, and had now found an open door into paradise itself. The precious holy Scripture now at once appeared quite another thing to me. I ran quickly through the whole Bible, and collected all that it says on the subject. Thus, as I had before hated this expression, ‘the righteousness of God’ so I now began dearly and highly to esteem it as my beloved and most comfortable word of Scripture; and that passage became to me the very gate of heaven.

Thus his weary soul found rest. He was now like a vessel that has reached its haven. No storm can reach or harm it. He was like the dove in the clefts of the rock. He was like the man who had reached the city of refuge. He found himself safe and at rest. Jehovah his righteousness was his song, and his joy. It was what he saw in Christ that gave him hope and confidence toward God, and not what he saw in himself. It was what he knew of Christ and His righteousness, that took away all fear, and filled his soul with peace. He believed and was forgiven. Nor did he reckon it presumption, to count himself a forgiven soul. He gloried

and rejoiced in this. He counted it one of the most grievous of all sins to doubt it. He saw that the gospel was intended to bring us forgiveness, and to assure us of it. He saw that whenever we really believe the gospel, then that forgiveness is as completely and certainly ours as if we were already in heaven. This was the very life of Luther's soul. It was this that made him so bold in the cause of Christ, in all his future life. He was assured of the favour of God, and that took away all fear of man.

There was one text of Scripture which seems to have been greatly blessed to him. It was very frequently on his mind during his many struggles. It was the text which Paul quotes from Habakkuk, to prove that we are justified by faith alone, 'the just shall live by faith'. Once, he was sent to Rome on some business, and he thought that good works done at Rome were better, and had more merit than those done anywhere else. He was told that if he would crawl up a very long stair, called Pilate's staircase, on his bare knees, he would acquire a great stock of merit. With great earnestness he set himself to do this miserable penance. While he was crawling up the steps, he thought he heard a voice like thunder, saying aloud to him, 'the just shall live by faith'. Immediately he started from his knees, and stopped in the middle of the ascent. The words went to his soul like the voice of God reproving him for his folly. Filled with shame, he instantly left the place. He saw that it was not by his works that he was to save himself at all, far less by works such as these. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy he saved us.'

At another time he was appointed to lecture on divinity. After explaining the Psalms, he came to the epistle to the Romans. In studying this he took great delight. He used to sit in his quiet cell for many hours with the Bible open before him, meditating on that Epistle. The 17th verse of the first chapter fixed his eye, and filled his whole thoughts. 'The just shall live by faith.' In this he saw that there was another life than that possessed by man in general, and that this life was the fruit of faith. In the midst of much darkness these simple words were 'a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path'. Clearer light soon dawned upon his soul, and through him the bright beams of the gospel shot forth upon the benighted nations of Europe. The conversion of Luther was the dawning of the Reformation.

CHOICE SAYINGS OF LUTHER

1. The law saith do this, and yet it never will be done; but grace says believe on Him – and behold it is already done.

2. Nature will feel, and be certain before it believes; but grace will believe before it feels.

3. It is impossible for a man to be a Christian without having Christ; and if he has Christ, he has all that is in Christ. What gives peace to the conscience is, that by believing, our sins are no more ours, but Christ's, upon whom God has laid them all; and that on the other hand all Christ's righteousness is ours. Christ lays His hand on us, and we are healed. He casts his mantle over us, and we are clothed; for He is the glorious Saviour blessed for ever.

4. Within my heart Christ reigns alone! He only is the beginning, the middle, and the end of my thoughts day and night.

5. He who doubts of God's mercy, sins in so doing, quite as much as he who trusts in his own works.

6. Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to despair of yourself, and sing to him such a song as this, 'Lord Jesus thou art my righteousness, but I am thy sin: thou hast taken to thee what is mine; and given to me what is thine, thou hast taken upon thee what thou wast not, and given to me what I was not'.

7. In order to be justified, we must do nothing at all, but only receive the treasure, which is Christ, and take hold of Him in our hearts by faith, although we feel ourselves to be ever so full of sin.

8. I have used many words, to declare that a Christian must assure himself that he is in the favour of God. This have I done that we may learn to cast away that devilish opinion of the whole kingdom of the pope, that a man should stand in doubt of the great favour of God towards him. If this opinion be received, then Christ profiteth nothing. This monstrous doctrine of doubting of God's grace, passes all other monsters.

9. What! Are we then to do nothing? Are we not to work for the obtaining of this righteousness? I answer – No; – nothing at all. For this is perfect

righteousness, to do nothing, to hear nothing, to know nothing of the law, or of works; but to know and to believe this only, that Christ is gone to the Father, and is not now seen; that He sitteth in Heaven at the right hand of His Father, not as a judge, but made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

10. Moses with his law is a hard taskmaster. He requires that we should work and give. On the other band, the gospel giveth freely, and requires of us nothing else but to hold out our hands and to take that which is offered.

11. This we must needs learn, that forgiveness of sins, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, are freely given to us by the hearing of faith alone (Gal 3:2), notwithstanding our horrible sins and demerits.

12. A man is made a Christian not by working but by knowing. Wherefore, he that will exercise himself to righteousness must first exercise himself in learning the gospel.

13. All our doing, that is, all our endeavour to know and apprehend God, is to suffer God to work in us.

14. Faith is nothing else but the truth of the heart; that is to say, a true and right opinion of the heart as touching God. Truth, therefore, is faith itself which judgeth rightly of God, namely, that God regardeth not our works and righteousness, because we are unclean; but that he will have mercy upon us, look upon us, accept us, justify and save us, if we believe on his Son whom He hath sent to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This is a true opinion of God, and in very deed nothing else but faith itself. I cannot comprehend, nor be fully assured by reason that I am received into God's favour for Christ's sake; but I hear this to be purchased by the gospel, and I lay hold on it by faith.

Epilogue

'And they said, The Lord hath need of him' (Lk. 19:34)

As he neared the time appointed for his death, Christ sent two disciples into a nearby village to procure an ass's colt, upon which he intended to make his entry into Jerusalem. They were told that the beast would be tied and so were instructed to loose it and bring it to Him. Should anyone question their actions, they were to say, 'The Lord hath need of him,' and straightaway the owners would let it go. All three synoptic accounts agree that these prophecies came to pass exactly.

There is much in this incident that is noteworthy. We might comment on our Lord's perfect knowledge; for He told his disciples exactly where to find the animal. We might remark on our Lord's condescension; for He who rides upon the heavens chose one of the lowliest of His creatures to convey Him into Jerusalem. We might also observe the faith exhibited by the disciples; for they did as Jesus commanded without question.

But it is the Word of God and the accomplishment of its purpose to which our text specifically relates. Regarding the Word, note that the words spoken by the disciples were not their own, but had been given to them by Christ. Regarding the accomplishment of its purpose, note that as soon as Christ's words were spoken, the owners and the colt itself rendered perfect obedience to His will.

The two disciples went to fetch the colt fully equipped with the words of Christ. We too have been graciously given the Word of God. The two disciples used the Word to bring forth that which the Lord desired. Let us therefore do the same – studying, hearing and speaking the Word of God, that we too might bring forth that which is pleasing unto Him.

'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.' (Is. 55:11)

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