

Christ is Victor

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“Jesus: His goodness and beauty”

“[H]ow great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!” (Zechariah 9:17.)

I have seen some breath-taking panoramic views of unbelievable natural beauty. But the best sights in the world cannot hold you spell-bound endlessly.

In Europe, when the winter snows come down and forest and glade, meadow and mountain side are covered by a mantle of pure white, it's when winter colds and coughs take their toll, [and] men tire even of the beautiful snow and long for the Spring and Summer.

But there is one thing of which you can never tire—Jesus' love. To the one who has tasted Jesus' love, it seems to get more precious and satisfying as the days go by.

“[H]ow great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!” Only that which is good can have unfading beauty.

The ancient Greeks invested their goddesses with seductive physical beauty. But it never occurred to them that their gods could never be truly beautiful without holiness.

Again and again when poets tried to call their mental creations gods, they thought chiefly of the attribute of power, but their poor human fantasy could never think of so necessary an attribute as holiness. Surely they ought to have known that a god without holiness is no god at all.

It was only when Jesus was sent down to us that man could comprehend a little of the holiness of God.

Men and women dread the onset of age and lament the loss of physical beauty. Some have a figure which is statuesque in its dimensions, but how long does that beauty last?

When Jesus comes into your life and lifts your heavy burdens and wipes away your tears, then a strange beauty shines through

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“Oil in the vessel of your life”

“But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (Jesus, Matthew 25:4).

When a man comes to Jesus, he learns wisdom. It is wise to take oil in one's vessel. When one professes to follow Christ, he must have oil. One does not grow if he has no oil, and he prevents others from growing. He takes a diversion from the right path. If a converted person does not bear fruit, there is something very wrong. This shows he has no proper union with Christ. God decided there should be a new heaven and a new earth. Zechariah and Malachi prophesied that the Messiah would come but people did not believe it and ignored it. It is a foolish thing to believe that sin reigns and will continue to reign victoriously. Will you believe darkness is more powerful than light? No. When light comes, darkness flees. Jesus conquered even death.

Some trees can only be used for firewood. They cannot bear fruit. But man is created with the purpose of bearing fruit. He should not amass wealth. Communism is fighting capitalism tooth and nail. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17). God says His word will prevail. Do not doubt the Word of God. Do not run against the Rock. You will be broken. You may gather many degrees and titles for yourself and emptiness in the soul. Dare you think you will be successful in your life without believing the Word of God? No! The people who mocked at my prayer and my love of the Bible in their youth, are now in misery. God has commanded a new world into being. The Bridegroom is preparing Himself. It is up to you to prepare oil.

The call of the Bridegroom will come. He has laid the foundation for the new heaven and the new earth on the cross. Are you building on the Rock? The kingdom of Heaven is within you. Do not look here and there for the Kingdom. If we are divided personalities, hell will find place within us . . .

[W]e are afraid of poverty, want, and privation. Great men went through these experiences and came out none the worse. There is wickedness in highly educated circles. Students, when they enter college have faith in God. But by the time they finish their studies and leave college, they have lost their faith and they have no peace. Education will not make us happy. We will be miserable if we do not accept Christ. Why did the

Bridegroom lay down this condition that the virgins should come with lamps burning? Are our lamps burning?

New hearts are the beginning of the new earth. New holiness, pure living, new joy and peace and faith! These are the new force of heaven that will be released through your selfless life. This is the meaning of lamps burning. Peace restores and recreates. This is the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth.

Pastor Hsi was working for the Lord in China. Once in one of his meetings two men broke into a fierce quarrel. One threw a knife at the other and the thigh of the other man was cut and bleeding. The people around wanted to kill the man who threw the knife. But Pastor Hsi threw himself into their midst and, speaking words of wisdom, tied up the wound. Peace was restored.

People die early because of quarrels. The tongue turns into a sword when Christ is not in our hearts. When a family knows Jesus, they build the kingdom of God. They bring forth children who rise and shake the world. Susanna and Samuel Wesley brought forth John Wesley who shook England. The call of the Bridegroom cometh! It came to Hudson Taylor, John Bunyan, and John Wesley.

Some may be converted, but have they got the oil that will make their lamps burn? Where will you get the oil? At the feet of Jesus. Go alone there to pray and meditate on the Word of God. Do not seek prominence. If you believe the Word of God, wherever you go, you can breathe peace on people.

We must go to Christ. Do not go against the Rock.

The call will soon sound, “The Bridegroom is coming.” Have you got the faith that shines in darkness? Christ deserves your all. Those who have faith in Him will lack nothing. . . . The only lack I feel is that, I do not have enough of Christ Himself. I want more of His Spirit. If you and I live like Him, the power of the risen Christ to heal people and to love our enemies will shine forth out of us.

God wants us to be filled with His faith and peace. Our life will create faith in others. . . . The Bridegroom is calling! Have you oil in your lamp?

—N. Daniel

your life. This is not a skin-deep beauty, but a beauty that spreads to others.

I have met some very beautiful people in my many travels, men and women of great purity, patience, and grace.

Christ-given beauty ... grows even as the years pass. Even in old age a godly woman, who has a well-spent youth behind her, is beautiful. The infirmities, sorrows, regrets, and frustrations of the wicked are painful to narrate. As old age engulfs them, they appear to grow more and more bitter, restless, irritable, and gloomy.

Life has to be taken as a whole span. Youth and manhood pass all too quickly. The strains and stresses of life take a most horrible toll. But to the one whose sins are washed in Jesus’ blood, there is a deep inward peace. There is an inner glow in his life, which surfaces in his words and actions. It is a beauty all of its own.

The great miracle that takes place when you say to Jesus, “Come right in Lord Jesus, here is my heart. It’s all Yours. Until now it was fast closed against You but now with it my life is Yours,” is hard to explain, and hard to measure with a human yardstick. The salvation is a growing experience—first the birth, the New birth, then the growth. Unlimited vistas are open before you, boundless treasures of power and love are yours to explore and possess.

“[H]ow great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!” I often marvel at what God has wrought in me—a man so sinful in my inclinations and bent. There certainly was no hope for me apart from Jesus.

I once woke up from a dream, which made me so sad. It was simply this: I dreamt that I had somehow slipped from the path of God. The

very thought filled me with anguish. There is neither goodness nor beauty in me. All I have is from Jesus. He took my innate ugliness, meanness, and wickedness on His sinless body. He died in my place and gave me His beauty. Jesus’ beauty is an enduring beauty.

In any city suburban train, you can see them when the offices close, weary, haggard, listless, joyless, worn, and pitiful faces. There is no trace of joy on their faces—only tension. When they go home in such a state, they are sure to transmit their tensions, grumpiness, and cheerlessness to others. In fact they seem all set to explode the emotional bomb pent up in their personalities. It’s not only naughty children who are stubborn and wilful; men can be more stubborn—stubborn and stony-hearted in not yielding to Jesus.

One of the men whose company and conversation I enjoy very much, was a notorious thief before his conversion. His life has become so beautiful that many are attracted to hear him. Upon a life so wicked and a nature so depraved, the Lord Jesus has etched His own beauty. Wherever he stands to speak about His beautiful Saviour, a large crowd gathers and listens to him with rapt attention.

“[H]ow great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!”

I went into a store one day, up in the mountains of South India. Looking down at me was a fearful image with a snarling countenance, its mouth open wide exposing sharp teeth, like those of a tiger. I looked at the man at the counter and said, “Whom do you intend to frighten by that image.” The man was startled at my question.

It’s simply tragic that men cringe and tremble before demons, whose favour they try to win by costly offerings of money and long pilgrimages. A fabulous sum is being spent today ... to buy charms, amulets, mascots, relics of supposed saints, all to ward off impending evil. Astrologers and religious quacks and self-styled gurus from India are engaged in a brisk trade, offering all sorts of cures, for all kinds of obsessions and torments. What a dark world of spells and counter-spells we live in?

One woman wrote to me ... how black-magic has been played upon her husband so as to take him away from her. Having repented for her sins, she has come to Jesus. Yes, she has Jesus to look to. What hope and relief Jesus brings to a tortured and downtrodden soul!

When you come under the blood of Jesus, what a different world we live in. When cruelly tortured souls come to me, after several sleepless nights, when they were attacked by demons, what a wonderful Saviour I can introduce to them. When His good Hand comes upon them, the devils flee and peace and rest dawns upon them.

“[H]ow great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!”

Dear readers, yield to Jesus now. Tell Him that you can’t live anymore with the ugliness of your life thoughts that beset you. You long that His beauty be etched upon you, His goodness to possess and guide you the rest of life’s race.

—Joshua Daniel

“Christ at the end of Self”

Turning to Christ

Roy was born in a London suburb in 1908, one of two boys left to a lady after her husband’s death. As a young boy, he encountered “religion” in his boarding school chapel and even an occasional consciousness of God stirring in his heart. Yet he knew nothing about God’s good news for sinners.

One day, Roy received a letter from a cousin. This letter spoke enthusiastically about Jesus Christ and urged Roy to give his life to Him. Roy was shocked and disgusted. It seemed indecent to be enthusiastic about God and Christ! To him, God did not appear to offer anything better than boredom. Moreover, Roy wanted to run his own life.

The cousin did not give up, however, and invited Roy to a holiday of young military officers. Some of these were new Christians and others would turn to Christ at the holiday. Roy hated the event and decided to have nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

Yet in the summer of leaving school, Roy

did attend another Christian holiday camp. He dreaded it. God had been pursuing him, he was cornered, and he did not know how long he could hold out. Then one day, listening to a talk, Roy saw the cross of Jesus Christ, God’s love for him, and His laying of Roy’s sins upon His Son. Roy’s opposition vanished and he said to himself: “Why in the world am I so scared? That does not look like the act of One who is against me and who would make my life miserable!”

A night or two later, after someone had spoken of Christ knocking on the door of the human heart, Roy prayed: “Lord Jesus, if you’ve never come into my heart before, come now.” Peace with God entered his heart for the first time.

On the next day, he confessed all this to others in the camp and that made it final. “I had opened my mouth to the Lord and I could not go back”—nor did he want to. God’s joy filled his heart. Intimacy with God was so real that when he knelt to pray

by his bed, he did not want to get up.

Roy’s appetites became heavenly ones; the prizes and pleasures after which every-

Reality Check!

BEHOLD, GOD

IS MINE HELP-

ER: THE LORD IS

WITH THEM THAT

UPHOLD MY SOUL

PSALM 54:4

one else was chasing lost their appeal. Upon finally attending a Bible class in his area months later, the meeting and the speaker were not particularly outstanding but the message was a “draught of cool water to a thirsty man”.

Putting Christ first

There were two things that God would have to knock down in Roy’s life for being more important than Jesus Christ. These were his trumpet-playing and athletics crazes. Intensely pursuing these, Roy knew that he would have to get rid of them if Jesus were to be Lord. They were not wrong as hobbies—but they were wrong in shoving Jesus down to third place.

In the battle that followed, God kindly began to show the future to Roy, a future with Roy in His service, souls being changed, and God’s Kingdom being extended far into the distance. God said: “All this and more, if you are prepared to ‘lay in dust life’s glory dead’ at My feet!” On that particular night, Roy “counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus [his] Lord”.

Having surrendered and written the relevant letters of resignation, God the Holy Spirit could anoint Roy’s words with power when he spoke. Those words were spoken by a tongue that Jesus now healed of a stammer.

Christ instead of Self

Along with other young men who had attended the Bible class, Roy would learn important lessons in the Christian life. At one summer camp where Roy could now assist, he discovered the sin of jealousy in his heart. God eventually took him to this Scripture verse: “I have been crucified with Christ ... it is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). Roy saw

that he had a real problem with “I”—but in this verse, the apostle Paul was pointing to a historical crucifixion in which he himself had been involved. Roy then understood: he, whose centre was self, had been judged and crucified with Jesus Christ. He should therefore see himself as ended, not mended. He should not struggle with self but accept the sentence of death pronounced so many years ago on self and trust God to gradually carry out the execution. Roy had to stop living by his own efforts. The Lord Jesus was the source of the new life that had to be lived: “it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me”.

Roy believed God’s Word, that for him “self” was on the cross and Jesus on the throne of his life. To make the promise of God good in experience, Roy knew that he had to share this new relationship by faith. He did; Christ became his life, God’s Spirit filling him.

Roy became a preacher, speaking to many about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus shows Himself again

There was a time in Roy’s Christian life when his relationship with God deteriorated. Yet Jesus “showed Himself again” (see John 21:1) after Roy attended a conference at which Christians working in East Africa spoke; they emphasised repentance and the blood of Jesus.

Roy began to ask God for cleansing from personal sins, small as they seemed—tense-ness, the consequent sharpness with his wife ... He confessed that he was nothing more than a Cain; Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, had offered up the fruit of the ground as a sacrifice to God, representing our own works. The moment that Roy confessed this, he became an Abel, the brother of Cain who had offered a sacrifice from his flock. He now came with the blood of a Lamb to God,

with nothing but the blood of Jesus, and was accepted by God as a sinner.

Roy had to put certain matters right. After a disagreement over a money issue, one Christian brother had not spoken to him for a year. God showed Roy that this was because he had been wrong first. Even if Roy’s opinion had been right, his way of enforcing it had been wrong. There was another way, the way of Jesus Christ, by which they eventually would have come to agreement. Roy had to learn “Not I, but Christ” again.

Jesus in the Centre

Five years later, God brought Roy further in his spiritual life, this time into the freedom of grace. At a conference, Roy learnt the importance of Jesus in the centre for Christian revival and nothing else. William Nagenda, an African brother, stuck a white spot on his Bible to illustrate this. Life was found in Jesus alone Who sets men free, the great First Cause from which every other good effect follows. Jesus is the One by whom grace has come for sinners: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). This was a wonderful message with limitless possibilities. Jesus was the end of every struggle.

—See Roy Hession, My Calvary Road

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God’s ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries.

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“The Hot Water Bottle”

One night in the Belgian Congo (today’s “Democratic Republic of Congo”), a Christian doctor named Helen Roseveare was urgently trying to help a mother in a labour ward. Yet the lady sadly died and left behind a premature baby and a crying, two-year-old daughter.

How could that baby be kept alive? There were no incubators, no special feeding facilities, and nights could be chilly with serious drafts.

One student-midwife went to fetch a box and cotton wool for the baby. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill up a hot water bottle. Then disaster struck! She soon came back to inform Helen that the bottle had burst while she was filling it. “And it is out last hot water bottle!” she exclaimed. It would not be easy to get another one right now. Helen advised keeping the baby as close to the fire as was safe. “Sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts,” she added, “Your job is to keep the baby warm.”

On the following day, as she often did, Helen went to have prayers with orphanage children who chose to do so. She mentioned the baby, the problem of keeping it warm enough, and the hot water bottle. The baby could easily die if it got chilled. She told them also about the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

During the prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth, prayed with a bluntness that was not unusual among these children. “Please, God,” she prayed, “send us a water bottle. It’ll be no good tomorrow, God, the baby’ll be dead; so, please send it this afternoon.” Helen later noted how she “gasp(ed) inwardly” at

the boldness of this prayer. Yet Ruth was not finished: “And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she’ll know You really love her?”

Helen was put on the spot. Could she honestly say, “Amen” (“so be it”)? Weren’t there limits to God’s works? God could only answer this prayer by way of a parcel from the homeland. Yet in Helen’s almost-four years in Africa, she had never received a parcel from home! And who would send a hot water bottle—to a country on the Equator?!

That afternoon, Helen was out when she received a message that there was a car at her front door. The car left before she could reach home, but on the veranda was a parcel! Tears pricked Helen’s eyes and she sent for the orphanage children; together they opened the parcel, excitement growing. From the top of the box, she lifted out clothes (given to the children), and then there were some other items. Putting in her hand again, she felt something ... could it really be? Yes! “A brand-new rubber, hot water bottle!” Helen cried. She had not truly believed that God could send it. Ruth rushed forward: “If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!” From the bottom of the box, she pulled out a small, beautifully dressed dolly. Looking at Helen, she asked, “Can I go over with you, Mummy, and give this dolly to that little girl, so she’ll know that Jesus really loves her?”

The parcel had been on the way for five months, packed up from Helen’s former Sunday School class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God’s prompting to send a

hot water bottle. One of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child. The promise of God written by the eight-century BC prophet Isaiah had been true in this situation too: “*And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*” (Isaiah 65:24).

—See **Helen Roseveare, Living Faith**

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