

# Christ is Victor

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## “Jesus: His goodness and beauty”

“How 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 spellbound 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.

“How 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.

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## “True Repentance”

Acts 3:19: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Such repentance is caused by the Spirit. It is a godly sorrow that leads to new life. 2 Corinthians 7:10: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” What does this repentance do? It makes us feel we are sinners and that no enduring goodness can come out of us. Most Christians feel they are sinners but not such bad sinners after all. That is not repentance. Peter was telling the people that it was by faith that this man was healed. If you have faith and grow in faith, that is enough for you. At repentance and conversion life begins by faith. But that life is like the life of a little child. It has to be nourished by the mother. 1 Peter 2:2: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.” John 6:63: “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” When a child is born it has life. But as it is fed, it gets more life. By prayer and feeding of the Word more life will come into you. When you are just converted, your faith is not very strong. Faith is the fitness required to be in the presence of God. How does this robust faith come? You must be sanctified. 1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Jesus paid for our sins by the sacrifice on the cross. Our emotions also have to be purified. Our emotions must be balanced. As you study the Word, negative emotions die and positive emotions begin in you. These positive emotions get established in you

and begin to play a greater and greater part in your being. You are converted, but do not stop there. You can read good books, but the best book to cleanse you is the Bible. We have such subtle sins detected only when we meditate on the Word of God. 1 John 2:14: “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”

John gives us the secret of Christian life. He seems to have enjoyed that perfection that God gives. John Wesley was one such. The Word of God abides in us when we obey it. All our efforts must be to this end—to obey the Word of God. When you study the Word, you must remember it and obey it. Thus you will be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Finally the Word of God begins to abide in you and you overcome the evil one.

The devil has no power on us when we do the will of God. To be in the will of God is very hard. We may be religious but perfection comes only when we do the full will of God. The devil can attack you only when you miss God's will. I missed God's will in certain things and have suffered for that. God sometimes becomes cheap to us when our prayers are being continually answered and people begin to honour us as children of God. This process of cleansing goes on in us until we get a holy heart. Then many a soul will be touched by you. “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” We must go forward perfecting ourselves in holiness and in the love of God.

—N. Daniel

## “Jesus: His goodness and beauty”

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 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.

This story is recounted in ‘Under their very eyes: the astonishing life of Tom Hamblin, Bible courier to Arab nations’ by Deborah Meroff with Tom Hamblin.

A Filipino Christian visited a hospital to see a non-Christian friend dying of cancer, who was in a ward with other patients including an Arab from Saudi Arabia.

The Christian read to his friend from the New Testament passage about the woman who had suffered for twelve years with an issue of blood. When she heard that Jesus was passing by she pushed through the crowds and managed to touch the hem of His clothing. Instantly she felt herself to be healed. He encouraged his friend to reach out to Jesus for salvation and healing but the latter resisted.

“Please, let me pray for you before I leave,” he said finally. He prayed with

“How 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.

“How 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.

“How 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

## “Trusting the Lord”

passion, but the man continued to refuse to trust the Lord. As he stood up and prepared to leave the ward, the Arab man in the other bed suddenly called out.

“I want you to pray for me, please. I heard what you said about Isa [Jesus] and the woman.” So the Christian shared more about Jesus and prayed for him.

A few days later, the Christian returned to the hospital to urge his friend again to call upon the Lord. But he had already died, and the bed that the Arab patient had occupied was also empty.

As he was leaving, a nurse spoke up and said the Saudi man had left him a note. He handed it over. The message expressed warm thanks, and explained that the surgeon had found no more cancer in his body. He was returning home to tell all of his family that it was Isa who had forgiven

his sins and healed him. “From now on,” he added, “all my prayers will be in His name.”

## Reality Check!

**“COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN OF ME; FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART: AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT”—JESUS (MATTHEW 11:28-30).**

## *“A brand plucked from the fire”*

In 1709, the rectory in Epworth, home to the Wesley family, caught fire. It was the occasion of a providential rescue, for John Wesley, the fifteenth child of his parents, was left for lost in the building after his agonized father, the rector, had been repeatedly beaten back by the flames. As the rector, kneeling in prayer in an outer passage, commended to God the soul of his six-year-old son, whom he thought surely doomed, kindly neighbours formed a human pyramid; it was the means of the boy's rescue. To John, that prayer always seemed to be the divine seal on a peculiar and exalted mission for which he had been miraculously preserved. His tombstone he ordered to be inscribed, “A brand plucked out of the burning.”

John's godly mother, Susanna Wesley, saw an equal miracle in the rescue. She encouraged John's belief in his great destiny and fostered his high hope. “What shall I render unto the Lord for his mercies? The little unworthy praise that I can offer is so mean and contemptible an offering, that I am even ashamed to tender it. But, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ, and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice. I would offer thee myself, and all that thou hast given me; and I would resolve—O give me grace to do it!—that the residue of my life shall be all devoted to thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I

may endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently; and bless my attempts with good success.” God answered her prayer.

On the night of the fire, when the agonized rector finally realized that wife and children were all safe, he gathered them about him in the garden. He was told that all his property was lost. “What care I,” he said. “I have my children and dear wife. These are riches enough. Come, neighbours, let us give thanks to God for his blessings.”

Possibly the hardest blow to the rector was the loss of his library. Only two bits of charred paper escaped the flames. One was a copy of the only hymn written by Samuel Wesley, “Behold the Saviour of Mankind,” and the other a fragment of his beloved Polyglot Bible with only a sentence legible: “Sell all thou hast. Take up thy cross, and follow me.”

Educated at Oxford University, John—the boy rescued from the fire—became leader of the Oxford group his brother Charles had founded called “The Holy Club”. They were dubbed “Methodists” because of their methodical approach to study and devotion.

In 1735, John set out for America but returned to England in 1738 after a failed venture to work among American Indians. He wrote: “I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me?” Some Moravian Christians had made a great impression on him

while away.

On 24 May 1738 John felt his heart “strangely warmed” at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, an experience that he said “kindled a fire which I trust shall never be extinguished”. He wrote in his diary: “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ. Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

God did not put out the fire kindled in John Wesley's heart. He began an itinerant evangelistic ministry travelling some 250,000 miles (mostly on horseback) all over Britain and Ireland and preaching an estimated 40,000 sermons.

—See William Horton Foster, Susanna Wesley

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## “Now’s your chance, Lord”

*Below is a story of how prayer changes things by God’s answers. It was written many years ago by Mrs. Howard Taylor, a missionary to China.*

A large number of children attend our schools in Shae-k’i-chen, and most of the Chinese teachers are just as keen as the missionaries about the “one thing needful.” At morning prayers, day by day, it was not unusual to have from two to three hundred boys and girls present.

It was one of our Chinese teachers, a Miss Gold, who taught a little Mohammedan [Muslim] girl to pray. The child had given her heart to the Lord and was eager to learn, so out of school hours the young teacher would take her to a quiet room, explain about praying in the name of the Lord Jesus and pray with her over matters that were on their hearts.

At home, however, the child found no sympathy. When she talked about the Lord Jesus or wanted to pray, her grandfather was very angry. A proud old Mohammedan [Muslim], he would have no such doings in his house, and the child was beaten and even kicked if he found her praying. But the little girl prayed on, longing for the conversion of her parents and grandfather, and sure that the Lord would find a way.

The time was one of danger and distress through the evil practices of soldiers as well as bandits, and the grandfather had suffered not a little from one company who had taken up their abode in his premises. He had learned that soldiers (such as these) were only robbers in uniform, and great was his alarm when walking on the city wall one day he saw the same company returning. They were marching toward the city with the very officer at their head whom he had painful occasion to remember. What to do the grandfather did not know. There was no protection, no appeal from the demands of such oppressors, and he was sure it was to his place they were coming, as there was more to be squeezed out of him than out of most of his neighbours.

Searching in vain for some hope of succor the grandfather suddenly thought of the little girl. Why, of course! Did she not pray? Hastening home he found her, shook her roughly to awaken her to the seriousness of the situation, and cried: “If ever you prayed in your life, pray now! Those soldiers are coming back. I

have seen them from the city wall; they will soon be here. You say God answers prayer. Go into that room and pray—pray that they may not come to our house, child!

Suiting the action to the word, he pushed her into an empty room and shut the door.

All alone the little girl, who was only eight years old, knelt down. Was she frightened, tearful, uncertain? Her mother, who was in an inner room, heard her as she poured out her heart to the Lord:

“Heavenly Father,” she said, “I am so happy, so thankful, because my grandfather has told me to pray! Always before he beat me or kicked me if I prayed and was so angry. But now he has told me to pray. Heavenly Father—now’s your chance! Please show my grandfather that you do answer prayer. Please don’t let those soldiers come back—don’t let them come to our house.”

And her prayer was in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The soldiers entered the city and came tramping down that very street. The door of the grandfather’s house was standing open—a big, double-leafed door into the courtyard—for he knew it would be no use to shut it. The officer in front of the band drew up and turned his horse’s head to go in. That was the place he was making for. And the little girl, inside, was praying:

“Don’t let them come to our house. Heavenly Father, now’s your chance! Please show my grandfather that you do answer prayer.”

Was that little prayer heard and answered? Ah yes, something happened, perhaps the last thing of which one would have thought! Most unaccountably, the horse would not go in. No, it backed and kicked; it shied this way and that way, and nothing would make it go in! The officer beat it and dug his spurs into it, but all to no purpose, until at length the superstitious fears that are never far to seek in China overcame him, and he turned to his men and said:

“Why, this courtyard must be full of demons! We cannot see them but the horse can. Not one of you go in there! Not one of you go in there!”

And he turned his horse and led them to another part of the town.

What the horse saw or feared we do not know; but we do know what Baalam’s ass

saw long ago when it turned aside in the way. And we know that it would be just as easy for the Lord to send His angel with a drawn sword today as it was then. We know also from the missionary in that city that the grandfather came around to the mission house the next day and when they met tears were in the eyes of the proud old Mohammedan [Muslim].

“To think,” he said, “to think that all the while that little granddaughter of mine was right and I was wrong! Teach me about the God who answers prayer like that. Teach me to pray.”

*By Mrs. Howard Taylor, Australian Evangel / Glad Tidings Messenger*

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