

Christ is Victor

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“Jesus: the sweetest name”

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

When a person is dear, everything connected with him becomes dear for his sake. Thus, so precious is the person of the Lord Jesus in the estimation of all true believers, that everything about Him they consider to be inestimable beyond all price.

“All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,” said David, as if the very vestments of the Saviour were so sweetened by His person that he could not but love them. Certain it is, that there is not a spot where that hallowed foot hath trodden—there is not a word which those blessed lips have uttered—nor a thought which His loving Word has revealed—which is not to us precious beyond all price.

And this is true of the names of Christ—they are all sweet in the believer’s ear. Whether He be called the Husband of the Church, her Bridegroom, her Friend; whether He be styled the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the King, the Prophet, or the Priest, every title of our Master—Shiloh, Emmanuel, Wonderful, the Mighty Counsellor—every name is like the honeycomb dropping with honey, and luscious are the drops that distil from it.

But if there be one name sweeter than another in the believer’s ear, it is the name of Jesus. Jesus! It is the name, which moves the harps of heaven to melody. Jesus! the life of all our joys.

If there be one name more charming, more precious than another, it is this name. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. It is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity; a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.

Jesus, I love Thy charming name, ‘Tis music to mine ear.

— C. H. Spurgeon

“Jesus is Counsellor”

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (a prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7).

“A child is given”. A son is given who will bear the government on His shoulder. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor. He is the everlasting Father. He is the Prince of Peace. Thus He goes on progressively. Truth and grace are combined in Him. Grace makes truth bearable. Some men who are truthful are very hard. But this our God is full of truth and grace. *John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”* He is going to bear the burden of the whole universe. He is going to bear the responsibility and also the sin of mankind. He is going to take on Himself the punishment of sin, and thus free man for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Sin is the sickness that prevents man from enjoying the higher life in Jesus Christ. The cross is going to release us from our sin and from our sinful nature.

Jesus who bears our sin and prepares us for the school of the Holy Spirit is the burden bearer of the whole world. When we mention the name of Jesus the gates of hell will not prevail against us. Every prayer in this name will reach God. He is a Counsellor. It is the “open Sesame” to the treasures of Heaven, when it is uttered with a pure heart and a clean conscience. His name is

Counsellor. *2 Chronicles 9:23: “And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.” All the kings of the earth came to him who was taught of God. 2 Chronicles 9:3-4: “And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.”* She wondered at his wisdom.

Jesus is a wonderful Counsellor who counsels you and me. “A greater than Solomon is here.” There is a perfect Counsellor who can never mislead you. Blessed are those who seek His counsel every day. Grace and truth have kissed each other in Him. The great and mighty God whom the Israelites trembled to hear is now appearing in the form of grace and love. There is no error in His counsel. Jesus changes your heart and fills you with love. His government will increase. Nothing can stop it. Will you be a member of that Government? You will increase. Will you be a part of that movement that spreads His light and love? You will be eternal. They that know their God shall do great exploits. *Daniel 11:32: “And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”* You will do mighty things because your strength is not yours but the Almighty’s. You will be meek and humble and gentle and yet almighty. This is divine nature. You will share in all His qualities, including His almightiness.

—N. Daniel

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“Tears for lost souls”

“Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water” (Lamentations 3:48-50).

We see a grave insensitivity and hardness of heart gripping the men of our generation. The mass media, newspapers, TV and magazines are full of violence and the coverage given to heartless carnage and bloodshed is simply appalling. All this has the effect of making the heart hard and compassionless.

A man came up to the platform soon after a public address . . . and said to me: “Sir, just like you were saying in your message now, I got drunk, beat my wife who was pregnant and drove her away. Then I deceived another girl into thinking that I was an unmarried man and married her.” For the first time in his life, this man who had worshipped Mary so much, began to repent for his sins and turn to Christ. Moreover, his freewheeling sexual promiscuity had brought upon him an awful skin disease and I had to pray for him. Compassion for his poor wife, whom he had ill-treated so much, was only just beginning to dawn upon him.

Sin and immorality make the heart as hard as granite. But when sin is confessed to Jesus and put away, then love and concern for others breaks upon us as a new dawn.

When you stand before the cross of Jesus, there comes an unmistakable melting in your heart. That studied coldness, that lofty indifference to the cry of human misery, that icy, expressionless countenance all give way before a great thaw. The warmth of heaven comes into that hard and wintry face. This is the love of Jesus, just seeping in.

In the Book of Lamentations, we see the prophet Jeremiah grieving over the spiritual destitution of Jerusalem. With a prophet’s foresight he had foretold the physical destruction of Jerusalem. Now he weeps for the people of God.

Lamentations 3:48-50: “Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.”

The art of modern hypocrisy is so advanced that they simply will not acknowledge that a higher standard of living is the full and final solution for our problems. How long are we going to delude ourselves into thinking that when we fill our homes with materialistic comforts of all sorts, then we shall be happy?

I asked a lady in Europe: “How has the television affected your home?” She said:

“TV has brought a total breakdown in communication in our home. Formerly, we used to sit and talk with each other. Now my husband and children are so taken up with the TV programmes, they scarcely talk to me.” What a tragedy! Another woman would have become a nervous wreck. But this lady, who had repented for her sins and found the wonderful healing which Jesus gives to a sin-sick soul at one of my retreats in Europe, is proving that Jesus is sufficient for all her need.

I could weep for her. How much suffering her husband inflicts on her. He professes to be an agnostic but most of the children in their home are converted and are praying for their dad’s conversion.

There are homes around us for whom we must shed tears in prayer. Real prayer opens a fountain of compassion in our souls. I simply can’t understand how people spend all their days in a sort of selfish seclusion. It seems as though they have told themselves: “Well, there is little I can do to lift the load of others while I am literally crushed by my own load.” So saying, they shut their eyes and walk through life, occupying themselves with nothing but their own wants and pleasures. One could weep for such people. What poor miserable persons they are! They are a curse to their own children.

A life without Christ, a heart without-compassion, and tearless eyes, are a great calamity. You don’t know what you are missing. A letter, which I read today, asked me to pray for a young non-Christian girl who has just turned to Christ. The letter said, “She is in grave moral danger in her own home.” Do you realise, dear listener, that there are tender young women in some homes, who feel so oppressed and fearful that they have no protection, and they may be scarred for life in their own homes! Do you know that there are children who know not parental love? How it grieves me when I get letters, which say, “I have never known a father’s love”.

At one of my meetings in Europe, a young man pushed his way to the front. He could hardly contain himself while I was speaking. I did not know why he wanted so badly to speak. All he wanted to say was: “What this preacher has been saying about broken homes is true. See my mother has been running after other men. She did not even care to send me a birthday card for my recent birthday. I have never had a happy Christmas.” I told one of the men converted in my meetings, who had himself once been a smuggler and a slave to uncleanness, “Brother, please see that at this Christmas

this boy has love.” Christmas was only 15 days away and this brother rented a lovely scenic forest lodge and gathered some homeless boys and had a special Christmas celebration for them, complete with the preaching of the Word of God.

Let us weep then in prayer for souls who are lost, love-lorn and bitter in this sad world of ours. The lights seem to shine only for the wealthy.

When one is moneyed and young, it looks as though all nature smiles for him. But this is not true. The young people of today have sorrows and burdens coming upon them quite disproportionate to their tender years. We need to weep before the Lord Jesus to send the Good News and thus the deliverance to embittered, frustrated and drug-bound young people, to whom life has become a wearisome burden.

Yes, Jeremiah wept that the people of Israel had lost their purity and the fear of the Lord. They were pretty nearly disowned by God and carried away captive. They had not heeded his warning and repented of their sins. Jeremiah was a man whose heart was like the heart of God—full of grief for the lost condition of the sinners.

Dear listener, if you would just let go [of] that stony heart, Jesus will give you a new heart where there is love and compassion for the lost. Your mouth too will then begin to speak of the great Saviour, who gave His life-blood, so that you may be forgiven and filled with His love and compassion.

—Joshua Daniel

Reality Check!

**“AND JESUS ANSWERING SAITH UNTO THEM, HAVE FAITH IN GOD”
(MARK 11:22).**

**“NEVERTHELESS WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?”
(LUKE 18:8B).**

**“BE YE THEREFORE READY ALSO: FOR THE SON OF MAN COMETH AT AN HOUR WHEN YE THINK NOT”
(LUKE 12:40).**

“The carols of Bethlehm Center”

No glad tidings would have met a sinner's wintry heart one Christmas morning were it not for voices in the snow; those voices were straight from Him who gave the angels the song “On earth peace, good will to men.”

At the end of the winter term in Gertrude Windsor's junior year of college, the doctor had prescribed a year of rest for her, and she had come to find it in the quiet of Bethlehem Center.

Soon Gertrude was asked to take on a Sunday School class at the church. She hesitated, but the wistful face of one boy named Harry decided her.

Not until school was over, however, did she learn the reason of another student's, little Phil's, conscious silence; when she met him with his father on the street, she tried to atone for her former ignorance.

“Are you Phil's father?” she asked.

Tim Shartow, believed by some to regard neither God, man, nor the devil, grew strangely embarrassed.

“Yes'm,” he answered.

“I am to be his Sunday school teacher,” she went on, “and of course I want to know the fathers and mothers of my boys. I hope Phil can come regularly. We are going to have some very interesting lessons.”

“I guess he can come,” answered his father. “It's a better place for him than on the street, anyway.”

Gertrude smiled, and in that meeting won Phil's lifelong regard and that of his father—for after that, Tim Shartow felt that he had two friends in Bethlehem Center of whom he need not be ashamed.

Shartow's other friend was James McKenzie, the pastor. The (qualified) respect

which they felt for each other dated from their first meeting, when Mr. McKenzie had walked into the saloon and asked to tack up some adverts for his revival services.

“I guess you can,” the proprietor had answered.

“We should be very glad, Mr. Shartow,” the pastor had told him, “If you would attend some of the meetings.”

“It'll be a cold day when I do,” answered the saloonkeeper.

Mr. McKenzie did not reply.

“The worst enemies I've got are in that church,” added Tim.

A smile lit up the pastor's earnest face. “No, Mr. Shartow,” he said, “you're wrong. They don't like your business—I don't like your business—but you haven't an enemy in our church. And I want to tell you now”—he was looking straight into the eyes of the man to whom he spoke—“that every night, as I pray that God will remove this saloon, I shall pray that he will bring you to know my Savior. And if ever you need help that I can give, I want you to feel free to come to me. We are travelling different roads, Mr. Shartow, but we are not enemies; we are friends.”

And the pastor departed, leaving the saloonkeeper “that shook up” that he may never have fully regained his former attitude toward “them church folks.”

Gertrude's class was joined by more, and after she announced the mid-week meetings as a reward for full attendance, not one absence occurred for thirteen weeks.

It had the look of a miracle that the class for whom no teacher could be found was as clay in the hands of the potter. There

was nothing Gertrude could not do with them. And they sang with a wild abandon that was exhilarating to hear. Even Harry, who held the note on which his voice first fastened, never failed to sing; it spoke volumes for the spirit of the school and the devotion to the chorister.

The boys did much for Gertrude, too. As health and strength returned, and every pulse beat brought the returning joy of life, she often felt that all her work for that class had been repaid a hundredfold.

One mid-August afternoon, there came the first thoughts of the carols. Most of the boys were with her, and looking down upon a pasture where sheep were feeding, little Phil began the shepherd psalm that she had taught them—

“The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie”—

and, the other boys joining, they sang through to the end.

It was beautiful. She had never realized that they could sing so well, and, suddenly, as she listened, a plan came into her mind, and she proposed it then and there. The boys were jubilant. For a half-hour they discussed details, and then, “all seated on the ground,” she taught them the beginning of “While shepherds watched their flocks by night.”

That was the first of many rehearsals. Only Harry's voice was defective, but that difficulty vanished when it was learned that his fondest ambition was satisfied by striking the tuning-fork.

Six songs they learned by heart. The last but best, because it seemed especially made for them, began:

“O little town of Bethlehem, how still

“THE CAROLS..” CON'T ON PAGE 4

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we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by."

And so at length came Christmas Eve. In Bethlehem Center, preparations for early rising had been made and an agreement that not one present should be looked at until after the boys' return.

After the first tinkle of the alarm clock, Gertrude was quickly out into the keen morning air. The stars were bright overhead, and there was no light in the east, but most of the boys were already waiting.

Mr. McKenzie's was the first stop; beneath the study windows, like one, there rose to greet the dawning of another Christmas day those clear young voices:

"Hark! the herald angels sing,

'Glory to the newborn King;

Peace on earth and mercy mild,

God and sinners reconciled.' "

When, after the "Amen", the pastor started to open a window, the boys were too quick for him. There was a volley of "Merry Christmas," and his answer reached only the rearguard tumbling over the picket fence.

Beneath the bare apple tree boughs in Harold Thornton's yard, "We Three Kings of Orient Are" was sounded out.

Then came tears into the eyes of Mrs. Martin as, watching beside her sick child, she heard again the story of the Babe, "away in a manger, no crib for His bed." Old Uncle King forgot for a moment his vexing troubles as he listened to the admonition to "rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!" Mrs. Fenny cried, as sick people will, when she heard the boys reiterate the sweet, triumphant notes.

So from house to house the singers went, pausing at one because of sickness, at another because those within were lonely, at some for love, as they had serenaded the pastor and the superintendent, and bringing to each some new joy.

The stars were fading out, and they had started to return. Opposite them was the saloon, with its gaudy gilt sign, "Tim's Place." Little Phil was behind Gertrude, and as they passed that building—it was home to him—his hand just touched her sleeve.

"Do you think," he whispered, and she could see the quiver of his chin as he spoke—"Do you suppose—we could sing one for m' father?"

Tears filled Gertrude's eyes.

"Why, surely," she answered. "Which one do you think he would like best?"

Phil had shrunk behind her, and beneath the gaze of the other boys his eyes were those of a little hunted animal at bay. "Bethlehem," he said, huskily.

And when Harry had struck the tuning-fork, they began to sing:

"O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by."

The twenty-fourth had been a good day for business in Tim Shartow's place. But now, in the quiet of the early morning, as he sat alone, the reaction had come. He remembered how Rob MacFlynn had had too much, and gone home maudlin to the wife who had toiled all day at the wash tub. He thought of the fight Joe Frier and Tom Stacey had had. And these things disgusted him. He did not drink much himself; he despised a drunkard. There was little Phil, too—"the saloonkeeper's boy"—and that cut deep. Wouldn't it pay better, in the long run—and then the music floated softly in.

He did not hear the words at first, but he had a good ear—it was the singing that had brought him, as a boy, into the beer-gardens—and, stepping to the window, he listened, all unseen by those without. There the words reached him:

"How silently, how silently,

The wondrous gift is giv'n!

So God imparts to human hearts

The blessings of His heav'n.

No ear may hear His coming,

But in this world of sin

Where meek souls will receive Him"—and until they sang the "Amen", Tim Shartow never stirred from the window.

Beside his study fire, James McKenzie was surprised by a knock at the door later that day.

"Good evening, Mr. Shartow," he said. "Won't you come in?"

The face of his visitor was tense and haggard, for the struggle had lasted the whole day long.

"I've come for help," he answered, shortly. "I guess it's the kind you can give, all right."

For a moment the pastor searched his face. "God bless you!" he exclaimed. "Come in, come in."

And so was wrought again, on the day ushered in by the singing of carols, the ever new miracle of Christmas; for God's gift to men had again been accepted, and into another heart made meek and ready to receive Him the dear Christ had entered.

—Abridged; see "The Carols of Bethlehem Center;" Stories worth re-reading.

THANKSGIVING RETREAT

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