

Christ is Victor

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“Nothing impossible with God”

During [a] . . . trip to East Germany . . . a lady was waiting to see me after a meeting. She felt that she had to speak to me. Now here was her amazing story. In the previous year she had come to hear me, and I had apparently preached that one should delete the word “impossible” from one’s vocabulary, for “there is nothing impossible with God”. These words pierced her heart for she had a crushing sorrow: she had no milk for her baby. Being deeply grieved that she was unable to nurse her baby, she returned home, pondering the words that she had heard. “There is nothing impossible with God”: the words rang in her heart. Would these words work for her? She took up her baby in her arms and began to breastfeed it. Lo and behold, the Lord by His miraculous touch made those milk-secreting glands that had remained utterly dry for so long begin to produce enough milk for the baby from that point on. Of course, the narration of this event and the obvious joy of the young mother thrilled my heart.

—Joshua Daniel

“The News of Christmas”

“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

The first tidings of Christmas [that] came to Mary, the mother of Jesus, left her stunned and breathless with wonder. She surely knew the promise that the great Redeemer, whose coming was foretold in the Scriptures, was to be born of a virgin. Being devoid of all self-consciousness and beautiful in her purity, Mary found it impossible to believe that she was to be God’s choice of the ages, to be the mother of His son.

Simple in her sincerity, she asked the angel who brought the tidings to her: “You know that I am a virgin, how can these things be?” Not that she disbelieved God, but for one stunning moment, she lost sight of God’s promise that Jesus was to be virgin-born and gave way to natural reasoning.

The beauty [that] is invested in purity becomes an enduring beauty. Despite all the cosmetics and face-lifts of today, most beauty queens have a very short beauty span. How quickly their charm vanishes! But the beauty of a clean woman and a praying mother grows with her increasing years. Even her grey hair is so pleasing to behold.

But the torment of an unclean conscience can shatter nerves of steel, etch lines and wrinkles on your face, and make your beauty disgusting and hateful. That is why many young people today appear to be many years older than they are.

While the revelation of the angel came to Mary as a bolt from the blue, completely unsettling the even tenor of her life, . . . she received the tidings with joyful anticipation and submission with those timeless words, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord!”

Christmas—the beautiful story of God’s love for rebellious sinners—comes to us as a breath from Heaven. It is not

at all the annual spree of buying and the uninhibited binge of beer, alcohol, and gorging of prodigious piles of food.

Christmas is a forceful reminder to all mankind that we are not merely cut adrift to float aimlessly in the sea of life. “Unto you is born this day a Saviour!” Who needs a Saviour? Those who are lost. Who is more lost than we who live on this planet today? We hold in our hands weapons of self-destruction, which promise a carnage so uniform that there will be no victor or vanquished.

At the heart of the Christmas story is the Saviour. Without Him Christmas has no meaning. Like Mary of old, it could be that we are slightly puzzled as to what this should mean. Is God going to do such a wonderful thing for me? It seems incredible, but let us say: “I do believe it, God will not deceive me, He will do the impossible for me.”

Yes, Christmas makes a lot of impossibilities actual realities. God’s promise to send the Saviour has come to pass; everyone who trusts in Him is going to see a glorious deliverance from sin.

Christmas brings to us God in very flesh. How many are the sages who almost despaired that their earnest seeking of God was all in vain—they felt they could never meet the Eternal One! Oh what a thrill to see Jesus, God in very flesh, God’s holiness, God’s love, God’s tender compassion for the suffering, all put into flesh and blood before us! Not in marble, not in gold, but in Flesh and Blood.

There He comes and stands before us—Immaculately beautiful, Peerless, Perfect—all that God should be! Can you turn your gaze away from Him? No, He grips you, He fills you, and He thrills you until you cry: “Jesus is all to me; I cannot live without Him.” Yes, that is true Christmas—the coming of Jesus into your life.

—Joshua Daniel

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“Jesus Christ was born for you”

“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” (Isaiah 9:6).

The child is born unto us. The whole nature around us, angels above us, and the saints of God who knew Him had been expecting the Son. When a kingdom is awaiting a child to be born in the royal family and when a son is born, the whole kingdom is filled with joy. There is a spirit of triumph abroad because an heir apparent is born.

Here also the prophet sees that a time of triumph for God’s kingdom has come. The Hebrew prophet says, “the government shall be upon His shoulder”. He will be called “Wonderful” and “Counsellor” and the mighty God.

The Son who [was] going to be born [would] be far greater than any wise man or any great king that was born on this earth. He [would] be the second Adam with the innocence of the first Adam before he was deceived.

When Jesus was born, the greatness of the event was fully understood only by Heaven. Nature seemed to understand it, and a new star appeared in the sky. The magi or the wise men understood this, and the extremely simple folk, the shepherds, understood this. The whole universe had been looking forward to this great event. “[T]he whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). *Sin not only affects humanity but also affects nature. When sin came, thorns came (Genesis 3:18).* In the first home, murder between brothers was committed. Animals that were friendly to man became inimical to him. The human heart became desperately wicked, producing poisonous thoughts and making the imaginations of man a source of untold trouble to him; untimely rains, floods, storms, failure of crops, and allied natural calamities began to occur.

A King came into the world who can restore order again. He is the Prince of Peace. There were dangerous forces at work to destroy humanity and to wipe out all peace and safety in this world. But this King has power to quell all these things. He demonstrated His power on the sea. For instance, He ordered the roaring sea with the fiat “Peace be still” (literally “muzzled”), and the winds and the sea obeyed. The disciples saw for the first time the Almighty God in Him. When He rose from the dead, He was completely crowned as the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Not only the troubled sea but also the troubled heart with so much agitation, commotion, and disturbance can be restored to peace—the peace that passes all understanding. Only those that have believed in Him understand the supernatural or superhuman influence of this newborn Babe. The world and its philosophers have been seeking for peace. Here comes the Prince of Peace who can touch human nature and transform it into divine nature. The sin of mankind is nailed to the Cross, and the resurrection victory ransoms us from the power of the grave, redeeming us from death (Hosea 13:14).

Only those who are born of the Spirit can understand the significance of the great events of our Lord’s birth. A Son is born to be the King of the whole universe by virtue of His holy life, having been tempted like any one of us yet always above sin (Hebrews 4:15). He proved that the prerogatives that were given to the first Adam were sufficient to make him triumph over the evil one. This same Jesus, having been tempted in all points like as we are, was without sin, and then He took upon Himself the sin of humanity. He took it into the grave and buried it there. Thus He befitted Himself to be the King.

Even nature recognised Him when the earth trembled and the sun became dark and the grave delivered up some of the saints, who arose and appeared before men. He walked on the earth as a king. Death yielded and the dead were raised to life. The grave had to give up Lazarus when He stood before its mouth and made Lazarus walk out a live man.

Greater than that, several sinful men and women who were “dead in trespasses and sins” went from Him completely changed. In an hour’s conversation, the harlot of Sychar became the missionary of the same place. He became the King who conquered the depraved human nature and restored man back to his near-angelic position.

The very name of Jesus makes the underworld tremble. The devil and his angels have been holding complete sway over the world, filling the human mind with sophistry and misguided philosophy, which have missed the way of salvation. When men began to worship idols, these evil spirits entered the idols and created in deluded men and women a kind of false reality. But the depraved human nature is never bettered by this kind of idol worship. All the so-called “avatars” are a human fabrication, and some persons even philosophise over the sinful lives of these “avatars”.

But this Jesus, after two thousand years, remains unspotted, and no one can ascribe any kind of impurity, sin, or selfishness to Him. He is the selfless Deity who took upon Himself our

sickness, sin, and sorrow. Our sicknesses and sorrows produced in Him those wounds while He willingly gave His life for humanity. Jesus, by virtue of His character, stands supreme in Heaven and on Earth. Nobody can dethrone Him, and those that follow this great Saviour also share His greatness. They stand supreme, not by human support nor by patriotic sentiment but by sheer virtue [that] gives them the highest place in humanity. The grave has no power over them. There is no fear of death in them—Jesus allays all fears. They become the stars that shine forever in the firmament of God’s kingdom.

Of the increase of Jesus’ government and peace there shall be no end, and the throne of David will overflow with judgement and justice forever. He is known as “the rod of the stem of Jesse”, “a branch” that should grow out of his stem. He came from the family of Abraham. God’s promise that all the nations of the world [would] be blessed through Abraham’s family is being fulfilled. A prophecy about Jesus was that He would be a person “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears” (Isaiah 11:3).

He is the “Wonderful Counsellor” who, with transcendental wisdom, guides His people. There is no wisdom above the wisdom that comes from Jesus. All the philosophers of the world have become dwarfs before Him. He lived what He preached. His philosophy was translated into holy living. The world wants to see a great philosophy or a revealed philosophy in concrete form and that is personified in Jesus. God made it possible for man to look at His own image in the flesh. On the Cross we see the broken and the bleeding heart of God, the heart that was broken for sin-ridden humanity. Finally we see Him enthroned in Heaven above all principality and power.

Is this great and matchless Saviour and Lord the undisputed ruler of your whole personality and all that you have this Christmas?

—N. Daniel

Reality Check!

[T]HE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH HATH VISITED US, TO GIVE LIGHT TO THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS AND IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, TO GUIDE OUR FEET INTO THE WAY OF PEACE (LUKE 1:78-79).

“Wait: an answer to prayer”

One November, a lady was travelling with her aged father and two small girls.

“We started from New Hampshire on Thursday morning, expecting to have ample time to get through to Indiana before Saturday night, but, after we crossed the St. Lawrence River, the next day . . . our train [was hindered] about two hours. I began to feel anxious, as I knew our limited means would not permit us to stop long on the way. After the cars had started again I inquired of the conductor what time we should get to Toledo, fearing we should not reach there in time for the down train. He said it would be impossible to gain the time.

“Soon they changed conductors, and I made a similar inquiry, getting about the same answer. Still I hoped, till we reached the Detroit River. Here I found that, though they had put on all the steam they dared to, they were almost an hour behind time, so I should have to stay over till Sunday night.

“After getting seated in the cars on the other side, I ventured to ask the conductor if we should get to Toledo in time for the down train. He readily said: ‘No, madam; impossible! . . . If we were on some trains, we might hope they would wait, but on his, never! He is the most exact conductor you ever saw. He was never known to wait a second, say nothing about a minute, beyond the time.’ I then inquired if we could

not stay at the depot. He said: ‘No; you would all freeze to death, for the fire is out till Sunday evening.’

“A gentleman sitting in front of us said he would show us a good hotel nearby, as he was acquainted there. I thanked him but sunk back on my seat. Covering my eyes with my hand, and raising my heart to God, I said: ‘O God, if thou art my Father, and I am thy child, put it into the heart of that conductor to wait till we get there.’

“Soon I became calm and fell asleep, not realizing that God would answer my poor prayer; but, when we reached Toledo, to the astonishment of us all, there stood the conductor, wanting to know the reason why he had to wait. . . . [O]ur conductor told him there was a lady with her crippled father and two little daughters, who were going down on that train.

Soon as all were out of the car, both conductors came with their lanterns, and gave their aid in helping my father to the other train, where they had reserved seats by keeping the door locked. All was hurry and confusion to me, as [I] had my eye on father, fearing he might fall, it being very slippery, when the baggage master said: “Your checks, madam!” I handed them to him and rushed into the car, but before I got seated, the car started, and I had no checks for my baggage. Again my heart cried out: “O Thou that hearest prayer, take care of my baggage!”, believing He

could do that as well as make the conductor wait. In a few moments the conductor came to me with a face radiant with smiles, saying: “Madam, I waited a whole half hour for you, a thing I never did before since I was a conductor, so much as to wait one minute after my time.” He said: “I know it was your father that I was waiting for, because there was nothing else on the train for which I could have waited.” I exclaimed, in a half-suppressed tone, “Praise the Lord!” I could not help it; it gushed out. Then he said: “At the very moment all were on board, and I was ready to start, such a feeling came over me as I had never had in my life before. I could not start. Something kept saying to me, you must wait, for there is something pending on that train you must wait for. I waited, and here you are, all safe.” Again my heart said, Praise the Lord! And he started to leave me, when I said: “But there is one thing.” “What is it?” was his quick reply. “I gave the baggage-master my checks and have none in return.” “What were the numbers?” I told him. “I have them,” he said, handing them to me, “but your baggage will not be there till Monday morning. We had no time to put it on, we had waited so long.”

—Selected from S. B. Shaw, *Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer*

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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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“Lose your own soul?”

For three weeks, young Mary had not been allowed to speak to her friend Jane. The latter had told her Bible stories, but Mary’s parents had dedicated their daughter to their religion. One Friday, however, as Mary was walking down a main street, she saw a bit of white paper lying on the sidewalk. At first she ignored it, but when she reached the warehouse to which she was going, something inside urged her to go back and pick it up. She did so, and found it to be a little card. On one side were these words: “*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*” (Mark 8:36).

Mary read the card several times, but never having read the Bible, she did not know the meaning of the text. At last she said to herself: “Jane can tell me,” and went to see Jane, a distance of two miles.

Entering Jane’s room in a very agitated state and showing her the card, she said: “What does this mean?”

Jane read it and replied: “It means what it says: ‘What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’” And in a simple way, Jane explained the passage.

“Who said that?” asked Mary, hurriedly.

“The Lord Jesus Christ in His own Word,” Jane answered.

Mary snatched the card out of the other girl’s hand and frantically rushed out of the house. Jane was so alarmed by her looks and actions that after some time she followed her. She met Mary’s mother at their door and asked how her daughter was and if she could see her.

“Oh, indeed,” she replied, “she is a strange creature; I think her mind is going—she is walking up and down her room like one bewitched. I do not think she could see anyone,” and turning around, she went into the house.

Some time after, Jane shared the story with her Christian teacher one Sunday evening, “I am quite sure she is going mad,” she said. “Do pray for her that the Lord may spare her reason.”

On Tuesday morning, the teacher received a letter from Jane, which read: “Praise the Lord! Mary is converted. . . . It seems that on Friday night, after she left me, she was like a lunatic all evening, pacing up and down. Her father and mother were in a terrible state, not knowing what to do with her. . . . All that night she paced her room in wild agony.

To use her own words, ‘Everything I looked at had these awful words written on it in enormous letters: “Lose his own soul! Lose his own soul!” Ceiling, walls, floor; yes, my very hands contained them. I was on the verge of madness. I felt it, I did not dare lie down, or put out the light.’

“Next morning she came down looking pale and miserable. . . . [Father] reminded me of a party we were to have. . . . Again I asked leave to retire early, but as I closed my door, again the huge letters appeared all around me. It was no fancy, for there they stood, “Lose his own soul. That whole night I spent like the one before, pacing my room, now and again trying to pray; but I had no words except, “Lord, help me.”

“Next day father was very angry because I looked so ill and miserable still, and said I must see a doctor. I said if I was not better tomorrow I would. About eleven o’clock I heard father and mother go by to their room, and just then I remembered that Nana, an aged nurse, had left an old, torn Bible behind her, which was thrown into a lumber room downstairs. At once the thought struck me that I must get it. . . . I sought amongst heaps of old rubbish till I found it. Bringing it up, I closed my door. I laid it on my bed, and asked God to show me my text, then opening the Book my eyes fell on these words, “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16).

“I was greatly disappointed; I expected to see my verse when I asked God to show it to me, and . . . closing the Book, I reopened it, but at the same place. Again impatiently shutting the Bible, I cried to God to show me my verse. Once more I opened it, and again at the same verse. And this time it was no fancy: it was not the light of the lamp that fell upon the page, but oh, I saw it all. God loved, God gave, I had to believe, and I had everlasting life. I felt bursting, and could only utter a shriek of joy, which brought father and mother into my room. They saw what it all meant, and scolded and threatened. Father took my Book to burn, and Mother wept; but I was happy. I had no pale face the next day, but felt so calm; I cannot explain it to you unless you have known it yourself.”

The Sunday school teacher felt wonder and praise as she heard of God’s dealing with Mary, a young soul apparently shut out from all human aid, but whom He had met and taught Himself.

“Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest”—Jesus

— Hy. Pickering, 100 Thrilling Tales

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