

an essay:

THOUGHTS ON GOD'S AMAZING GRACE!

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VIII. REFERENCES

I. INTRODUCTION - THE MAN JOHN NEWTON

There is a certain well known and widely loved hymn, “Amazing Grace,” written by a certain English Clergyman by the name of John Newton, who lived from 1725 to 1807 AD.¹ When he died at the age of 87, he had served faithfully as a Minister and Pastor of Saint Mary’s Parishes in Wollnoth and Woolchurch Haw, England for 28 years. The Christian love and dedication which The Reverend John Newton devoted to CHRIST, to The Church and to his parishioners is testified to by the words found in his obituary, “Died December 21, 1807. His unblemished life, his amiable character, both as a man and as a Minister, and his able writings, are too well known to need any comment.”²

But there was another man named John Newtown who also lived from 1725 to 1807 AD. For the first several decades of his life, this same man spent his days serving on slaving ships, eventually becoming a captain of such a vessel. This same man was a hardhearted, cruel and hateful creature. His only goal was to obtain the pleasures and riches of the world. He cared nothing for the pleasures and riches of Heaven, much less for the welfare and wellbeing of his fellow man. And in the course of his chosen career as a captain of a slaving ship, he oversaw the carting of fellow human beings in abominably horrific conditions of bondage from Africa to The New World.³

He directly was responsible for the unspeakable chains, sufferings and deaths of literally thousands of men, women and children – many who died most horribly under his authority while on his ship as mere cargo. Those that survived the voyages directly owed their new lives of abject misery and pain in the cruel bonds of human chattel slavery in The Americas to Captain John Newton.⁴ But in the year of our Lord 1764, when Newton was 39 years old, he became a new creation in CHRIST. His conversion came in the midst of a horrific storm that almost sunk Newton’s slaving ship. Almost, but by GOD’s Grace, not quite! Thus John Newton, slave ship Captain, became The Reverend John Newton, saved by GOD’s amazing Grace!⁵ And so the hymn, “Amazing Grace:”

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.⁶

¹ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

² 2, Piper, “The John Newton Project - obituary from The Times, England, dated circa 21 December, 1807.”

³ 3, Pocock and Cook, “British History, Abolition of The Slave Trade, 1807 – The Business of Enslavement.” British Broadcasting Company.

⁴ 3, Ibid.

⁵ 4, Piper, “The John Newton Project, PSALM 107:23-32 & Newton's Narrative [of his conversion to CHRIST].”

⁶ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

II. THE AMAZING GRACE OF GOD

The life of John Newton comes to our attention today because of the hymn he wrote, “Amazing Grace,” and the recent movie by that same title that so well depicts the struggle of the English Parliamentarian William Wilberforce and his associates in their struggle over many years to end the slave trade in the English Empire.⁷ The U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops offers this movie review, “Overcome by a desire to serve GOD, Wilberforce seriously considers leaving politics, and devoting himself to The Church. His epiphany comes in his garden where he reveals to his astonished servant that GOD has found him.” William Pitt, the youngest British Prime Minister ever and a close friend of Wilberforce, “and others convince Wilberforce that he can serve GOD best as a political activist and by making a difference in the cause to outlaw slavery...”⁸

“With the help of Pitt... who sees to it that Wilberforce is elected to the House of Commons, and other like-minded friends in Parliament and elsewhere... Wilberforce would eventually, after tireless and courageous struggle over two decades, help an anti-slave trade bill pass in Parliament in 1807. But his triumph didn't come easily; he persevered through long bouts of illness and, for a time, with revolution in the air in France, the anti-slavery movement even carried a seditious stigma.”⁹ “Prominent in the story is John Newton..., a former slave ship captain who, after renouncing his past, became a Clergyman (and also wrote the words to "Amazing Grace")...”¹⁰

John Newton was saved from an earthly life of wickedness, sin and darkness - and from an eternal life of damnation, punishment and destruction - by The amazing Grace of GOD. There is an intersection of parallels between Newton and the bloody Pharisee persecutor of The early apostolic Church - Saul - who by GOD’s amazing Grace became The Apostle Paul. Though Saul was very religious before his conversion to CHRIST, while Newtown certainly was anything but that. One served a haughty and cold religious establishment. The other served a cold-hearted and money-loving financial system. Both men served themselves above all else before their conversions to CHRIST by The Grace of GOD.

Here we see a most vital question: Can any man or woman in this world - past, present or future - ever deserve salvation by their works apart from GOD’s Grace? Before The LORD, both Saul and Newton were both equally convicted as deserving Divine judgement, both earthly and eternal. Indeed, all men are sinners and, as Saint Paul says in ROMANS 3:23, and none may earn GOD’s mercy, “For all have sinned, and come short of The Glory of GOD.”¹¹

⁷ 5, USCCB, movie review, “Amazing Grace, 2007.”

⁸ 5, Ibid., paragraph 4.

⁹ 5, Ibid., paragraph 5.

¹⁰ 5, Ibid., paragraph 6.

¹¹ 6, KJV, ROMANS 3:23.

But then Paul declares in ROMANS 5:8-9, “But GOD commendeth His charity towards us; because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, CHRIST died for us; much more therefore, being now justified by His Blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him!”¹² It is at The Cross of CHRIST that PSALM 85:9-10 shine most brightly, “Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that Glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other!”¹³ It is by The Body and Blood of The Son of GOD shed for us His people that His amazing Grace flows most joyfully upon our lives and souls, that we might live in Him!

Noah Webster says of GOD’s amazing Grace, that it is “...the free unmerited love and favor of GOD, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from Him.”¹⁴ It is the “favorable influence of... The [HOLY] SPIRIT, in renewing the heart and restraining from sin.”¹⁵ As Paul says in II CORINTHIANS 12:9 of The Lord’s mercy, “My Grace is sufficient for thee...”¹⁶ It is “the application of CHRIST’s righteousness to the sinner,”¹⁷ His merciful substitutionary sacrifice which we do not deserve, but which if we but receive, are made clean and justified before The LORD. As Paul says in ROMANS 5:20, “...And where sin abounded, Grace did more abound!”¹⁸

This amazing “Grace” is being in “a state of reconciliation to GOD...”¹⁹ As Paul says in ROMANS 5:1-2, “Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with GOD, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST. By Whom also we have access through faith into This Grace, wherein we stand, and glory in the hope of The Glory of the sons of GOD!”²⁰ It is “eternal life” and “final salvation...”²¹ As Saint Peter says in I PETER 1:13, “Wherefore having the loins of your mind girt up, being sober, trust perfectly in The Grace which is offered you in The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST.”²² Only if we rest in GOD’s amazing Grace may we answer the call that The LORD places upon us.

¹² 7, DRA, ROMANS 5:8-9.

¹³ 5, KJV, PSALM 85:9-10.

¹⁴ 8, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, “Grace,” noun, entry 2, p GRA – GRA.

¹⁵ 8, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, “Grace,” noun, entry 3, p GRA – GRA. Webster quotes from and cites “2 Cor. xii,” i.e., II CORINTHIANS 12:9.

¹⁶ 7, DRA, II CORINTHIANS 12:9.

¹⁷ 8, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, “Grace,” noun, entry 4, p GRA – GRA. Webster quotes from and cites “Rom. v.,” i.e., ROMANS 5:20.

¹⁸ 7, DRA, ROMANS 5:20.

¹⁹ 8, Ibid., “Grace,” noun, entry 5, p GRA – GRA. Webster summarizes and cites “Rom. v. 2,” i.e. ROMANS 5:2.

²⁰ 7, DRA, ROMANS 5:1-2.

²¹ 8, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, “Grace,” noun, entry 6, p GRA – GRA. [pages not numbered] Webster summarizes and cites “I Pet. i.13,” i.e., I PETER 1:13.

²² 7, DRA, I PETER 1:13.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.²³

III. HERE AM I, O LORD! SEND THOU ME!

In the movie “Amazing Grace,” I recall the Reverend John Newton saying to William Wilberforce, as he came to him for spiritual guidance on his calling by GOD, “We don’t find GOD. He finds us!” But for a man to hear and know the call of The LORD upon his life and soul, a man must be known to himself in a small way as The Almighty knows him. For only then may he both hear and discern the voice of The LORD, saying as in ISAIAH 6:8, “Whom shall I send, and who shall go for Us?” And only by cooperating with the preceding, converting and sustaining Grace of GOD may he then answer The King of the universe, “Lo, here am I,” O LORD! “Send me!”²⁴

Observe the verses just preceding The LORD’s call upon Isaiah, and the prophet’s answer. The mere man Isaiah was humbled in awe and trembling in fearful reverence before The Almighty, for he says in ISAIAH 6:1-3, “...I saw The Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and His train filled The Temple. Upon it stood the seraphims... And one cried one to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, The LORD GOD of Hosts: all the earth is full of His Glory!”²⁵ Such a fearsome sight of The Most Holy One, beheld by the most unholy eyes of a mere sinful man, who was given the gift of gazing upon The Glory of GOD with his mortal eyes! Such amazing Grace!

As Matthew Henry says here, “...A believing sight of GOD’s glorious majesty should affect us all with reverence and godly fear. We have reason to be abased in the sense of that infinite distance that there is between us and GOD, and our own sinfulness and vileness before Him, and to be afraid of His displeasure. We are undone if there be not a Mediator between us and This holy GOD!”²⁶ As David confesses in PSALM 24:3-5, “Who shall ascend into The Mountain of The Lord: or who shall stand in His Holy Place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbour. He shall receive a blessing from The Lord, and mercy from GOD his Saviour!”²⁷

²³ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

²⁴ 7, DRA, ISAIAH 6:8.

²⁵ 7, DRA, ISAIAH 6:1-3.

²⁶ 9, Matthew Henry Notes, ISAIAH 6, Verses 5-6, I, 2.

²⁷ 5, KJV, PSALM 24:3-5.

So Isaiah confesses, “...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen The King, The LORD of Hosts!”²⁸ For what man can behold The full Glory of The King of the universe in this life and live, but for GOD’s amazing Grace? But here GOD gives His amazing Grace to His prophet, for we next read, “And one of the seraphims flew to me, and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: Behold this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed!”²⁹

And O, what a sweet sound that must have echoed in the very soul of Isaiah, the wretched sinner forgiven by GOD’s mercy and love! And so with we who are saved by His Blood, so undeserved by us, but yet so freely poured down from Heaven upon us! It is The amazing Grace of GOD – He Who suffered and died for our sakes at Calvary and rose again - that covers our sinfulness and burns upon our lips the righteousness of The LORD. It is The Lord that finds us and opens our eyes to see His Glory!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And Grace will lead me home.³⁰

IV. THE NEED FOR GOD’S GRACE

Can a man reform himself? Can we, as sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, ever do enough good on our own to be accounted as righteous before GOD, apart from GOD’s Grace? Most certainly not! As The Apostle says in II CORINTHIANS 9:8, “And GOD is able to make all Grace abound in you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work!”³¹ No, we can not take our own broken and fallen selves and make ourselves righteous by our own hands. Apart from The amazing Grace of our loving Creator, we are lost. It is only He Who enables us to do the good works he has set before. And that, too, only by His amazing Grace!

What does the prophet declare to us of the consequences of sin in EZEKIEL 18:20? He says, “The soul that sinneth, the same shall die...”³² Our justification before GOD comes not from any of our own good works, no matter how zealous, but “from The Grace of GOD,” It is, as The Catholic Church teaches us, That most undeserved “favor, the free and undeserved help that GOD gives us to respond to His call to become children of GOD, adoptive sons, partakers of The Divine nature and of eternal life.”³³

²⁸ 6, KJV, ISAIAH 6:5.

²⁹ 7, DRA, ISAIAH 6:6-7.

³⁰ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

³¹ 7, DRA, II CORINTHIANS 9:8.

³² 7, DRA, EZEKIEL 18:20.

³³ 10, CCC, # 1996, p 538.

Both John Newton and the Pharisee Saul, before they were redeemed by GOD’s Grace, each sought in their own ways to justify themselves before Heaven and earth. For under The Law of GOD, all men and women are imperfect sinners, convicted and worthy of The Divine judgement, all of us doomed if it were not for The amazing Grace of GOD. But for The mercy of The Almighty, none would be purged and made righteous before His Throne. The disease of fallen man is to be forever seeking to justify himself before The Creator and his fellow fallen man. As Jeremiah’s scribe records in BARUCH 2:12, “We have sinned, we have done wickedly, we have acted unjustly, O Lord our GOD, against all Thy Justices!”³⁴

And so Saint Paul observes in ROMANS 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of The Glory of GOD.”³⁵ As The Apostle says also in GALATIANS 3:22-24, “But The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by Faith of JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe. But before Faith came, we were kept under The Law, shut up unto The Faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto CHRIST, that we might be justified by Faith!”³⁶

Saint Augustine observes, that though we are to cooperate with GOD’s Grace by answering His call upon us to the good works which He calls us to, we can not do them on our own. “Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with GOD Who works, for His mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with GOD: for without Him we can do nothing!”³⁷

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.³⁸

³⁴ 7, DRA, BARUCH 2:12.

³⁵ 6, KJV, ROMANS 3:23.

³⁶ 6, KJV, GALATIANS 3:22-24.

³⁷ 10, CCC, # 2001, p 539. “St. Augustine, De Natura Et Gratia, 31: PL44, 264.”

³⁸ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

V. ONLY IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

It is only from the depths of darkness and despair, when we find that a life utterly cut off from GOD is futile and empty, that the Grace of The Lord anoints our eyes to see and be glad. For only after the darkness, which shows us the rags of our own self righteousness, does the dawn of GOD’s love wash us clean with His marvelous light! Only when Saint Paul was blinded on the road to Damascus by the hand of The Almighty, did he cry out as in ACTS 9:5, “...Who art Thou, Lord?”³⁹ So also with us.

Only in the midst of his utter destitution, having been struck down into the darkness from his haughty self acclaimed heights, did Saul hear The Words, “I am JESUS, Whom thou persecutest...!” Only then did Paul answer the call upon his life and soul by The Almighty, as he trembled in astonishment in his darkness, “...Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”⁴⁰ For this conversion The amazing Grace of GOD had prepared Saul all his life. For now The Lord answers that Paul is to walk through a dark night of the soul, learning to thirst, to cry out, to become utterly dependant, upon CHRIST. Therefore The glorified Son of GOD answers The Apostle in ACTS 9:7, “...Arise, and go... it shall be told thee what thou must do!”⁴¹

It is only in “The Dark Night of The Soul,” as Saint John of The Cross writes, that we turn from the things of the world to the things of GOD, “Into this dark night souls begin to enter when GOD draws them forth from the state of beginners – which is the state of those that meditate on the spiritual road – and begins to set them in the state of progressives – which is that of those who are already contemplatives – to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of The Divine union of the soul with GOD.”⁴² Preceding Grace. Converting Grace. Sustaining Grace. The freely given, undeserved Divine Mercy that The King of the universe calls us to at The Cross of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST. All The amazing Grace of GOD!

It is in this “dark night of the soul,” where all the things of the world have fallen away and the humble man cries out to The LORD our GOD as in MATTHEW 21:9, HOSA”-NA’⁴³ - הוֹשַׁע־נָא⁴⁴ - Save Thou us! So the cry of GOD’s people as in PSALM 106:47, “Save us, O LORD our GOD, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Thy holy Name, and to triumph in Thy praise!”⁴⁵ So also the multitudes cried out to JESUS as He entered The Holy City as in MATTHEW 21:9, “...Hosanna to The Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in The Name of The Lord; Hosanna in the highest!”^{46 47}

³⁹ 7, DRA, ACTS 9:5.

⁴⁰ 7, DRA, ACTS 9:5-6.

⁴¹ 7, DRA, ACTS 9:7.

⁴² 11, Saint John of The Cross, “Dark Night of The Soul,” Chapter 1, p 20, paragraph 1.

⁴³ In my transliteration of The Hebrew, I represent the letter א aleph = ‘ and the letter א ayin = “

⁴⁴ 12, HNT, MATTHEW 21:9.

⁴⁵ 6, KJV, PSALM 106:47.

⁴⁶ 6, KJV, MATTHEW 21:9.

⁴⁷ 6, KJV, PSALM 118:26, “Blessed be He that cometh in The Name of The LORD...”

For without the burdens and sin-guilt of our lives upon our shoulders, we would not in our rebellious fallen state ever bend the knee and cry out to The LORD, “Hosanna, O LORD our GOD, save Thou us!” So Saint John of The Cross observes that it is GOD’s Grace that prepares us to receive His mercy, “...that GOD will bring them into this night, wherein the soul is strengthened and confirmed in the virtues, and made ready for the inestimable delights of the love of GOD...”⁴⁸ And the more all else falls away in our darkness, the more we see our Lord JESUS CHRIST, The Light of the world Who shines His amazing Grace into our very being.

Think again of how our lives, we who are saved in CHRIST, mirror the paths of John Newton and Saint Paul! Without the paths of dangers, toils and snares of purging that GOD allows us to tread, which inevitably leads to a “dark night of the soul” for all of us, would any of us have bent our knees and cried out, “O LORD our GOD, save Thou us?” If we had not known the pain of sin against GOD, and our condemnation under His Law, would we ever seek His mercy? Indeed, many men harden their hearts and choose to perish in their sin.

But for those who lift up their eyes unto The LORD, Paul writes in EPHESIANS 2:5-7, “Even when we were dead in sins, [GOD] hath quickened us together in CHRIST, (by Whose Grace you are saved,) And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in The Heavenly Places, through CHRIST JESUS. That He might shew in the ages to come the abundant riches of His Grace, in His bounty towards us in CHRIST JESUS!”⁴⁹

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within The Veil,
A life of joy and peace.⁵⁰

VI. BEING A PROPHETIC VOICE FOR JUSTICE IN A DARK AGE

Being a voice for justice in a dark age is not an easy yoke to bear. It is a heavy burden that we can only carry if we are walking close to The Lord daily. For the chains than men forge upon other men, and thus upon themselves, in the furnaces of greed and idolatry are indeed burdensome. And even heavier to break. Who can break them, but The Almighty? Even so, CHRIST calls us to work for the breaking of those chains in His Name. Only by Faith have any of GOD’s saints ever persevered and overcome.

⁴⁸ 11, Saint John of The Cross, “Dark Night of The Soul,” Chapter 1, p 20, paragraph 1.

⁴⁹ 7, DRA, EPHESIANS 2:5-7.

⁵⁰ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

Our Redeemer JESUS CHRIST suffered in His Passion and Crucifixion for us. By His amazing Grace, He took upon Himself, in our place, the just penalties of our sins that would otherwise crush us. For only The Son of GOD can bear them and pay their price on our behalf! But this next thing we as Christians often forget, or wish that we could: that as we are in Him, so we shall also bear wounds and afflictions for His Name’s sake as we speak out for GOD’s justice to a dark age. It is a fearful thing to be an apostle of The Lord’s justice in the midst of an unjust people, for their wrath is drawn upon our heads in direct proportion as we speak His Truth.

And of all the blessings of The Beatitudes, it is The Eighth that is the most awesome to behold, both in the price asked of us and of the reward promised us. As our Lord says in MATTHEW 5:10-12, “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you!”⁵¹ As JESUS says to us in JOHN 15:18, “If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated Me before you.”⁵² We can expect no less.

Bishop Theodore of Cyr writes of The amazing Grace of GOD in the suffering of The Messiah JESUS for us, “...He allowed Himself to be slapped, spat upon, insulted, tortured, scourged and finally crucified. He accepted two robbers as His companions in punishment... He endured being reckoned with murderers and criminals. He drank the vinegar and the bitter gall yielded by the unfaithful vineyard of Israel. He submitted to crowning with thorns... He was ridiculed with the purple cloak, holes were dug in His hands and His feet, and at last He was carried to the grave” for us!⁵³

And here is the full cup of trembling of GOD’s amazing Grace, which He places in the hands of His people, as the prophet foresaw in ISAIAH 53:4-5, “Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as One struck by GOD and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed!”⁵⁴ The Lord passes on His cup of trembling into our hands. We can not keep hold of it unless His hand steadies our grasp.

Such is the price one pays for being a prophetic voice of The Lord to hard-hearted men in a dark, sinful and ungodly age. But such is also the reward, as Saint Peter says in I PETER 3:12-14, “Because the eyes of The Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of The Lord [is] upon them that do evil things. And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer any thing for justice’ sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ 7, DRA, MATTHEW 5:10-12.

⁵² 7, DRA, JOHN 15:18.

⁵³ 13, Bishop Theodore of Cyr, “I will heal their wounds” from “A treatise On The Incarnation of The Lord.” Liturgy of The Hours, Book IV, Ordinary Time Weeks 18-34, p 94, paragraph 2.

⁵⁴ 7, DRA, ISAIAH 53:4-5.

⁵⁵ 7, DRA, I PETER 3:12-14.

For to GOD belongs “...The Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”⁵⁶
And as His adopted sons and daughters in JESUS CHRIST, this too is our inheritance!

So we may also be sure that we shall receive the consolation of our Faith in Him, for as He is glorified in His resurrection and ascension, so we also take part in His victory – in part now in this life and in full in Heaven forever. Sometimes we may live to see victories in this life as His servant prophets. Other times not. Nonetheless, we shall live forever in That Victory in the next! As Paul says in ROMANS 8:16-17, “For The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of GOD. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.”⁵⁷

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing GOD's praise
Than when we first begun.⁵⁸

VII. TO CONCLUDE - ANSWERING GOD’S CALL BY HIS GRACE

It is written in WISDOM 8:7 says, “And if a man love justice: her labours have great virtues; for she teacheth temperance, and prudence, and justice, and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life.”⁵⁹ The GOD-fearing man may move towards these first 4 virtues by diligently seeking Divine wisdom from the study of creation and The Holy Bible. This produces men who know of GOD. But only the Christian soul may, by GOD’s Grace at The Cross of JESUS CHRIST, flourish in men when The HOLY SPIRIT comes to dwell within them. As The Apostle says in I CORINTHIANS 13:13, “and now there doth remain faith, hope, love -- these three; and the greatest of these is love.”⁶⁰

The Son of GOD turned over the tables of the moneychangers in The Israelite Temple of His Father with His own hands. But we, though His servants and soldiers, are not The Messiah. We can not turn over the tables of the moneychangers of our day without His aide. We require what The Catechism of The Catholic Church refers to as the virtues of Christian life: prudence; justice; fortitude; prudence; faith; hope; love.^{61 62}

⁵⁶ 6, KJV, MATTHEW 6:13.

⁵⁷ 7, DRA, ROMANS 8:16-17.

⁵⁸ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

⁵⁹ 7, DRA, WISDOM 8:7.

⁶⁰ 14, YLT, I CORINTHIANS 13:13.

⁶¹ 10, CCC, # 1805, p 495-496, “The [4] Cardinal Virtues” – prudence; justice; fortitude; temperance.

⁶² 10, CCC, # 1813, p 498, “The [3] Theological Virtues” – faith; hope; love.

Pretending that we can answer GOD’s calling upon us, but denying that we need GOD’s amazing Grace to do so, is to deceive ourselves and in fact deny The Lord. It is a blasphemy that leads to pride and self exaltation, rather than humility and exaltation of The LORD. We need His Light. So Saint John writes in I JOHN 1:7-9, “But if we walk in The Light, as He also is in The Light, we have fellowship one with another, and The Blood of JESUS CHRIST His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and The Truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity!”⁶³

Good is the fear of the soul that trembles before The Throne of The Most High for it’s own sinfulness. For precious to that same soul is The amazing Grace of GOD that is relieved of its uncleanness and sin-guilt at The Cross of CHRIST! As Saint Paul says of CHRIST’s calling of amazing Grace upon him in I CORINTHIANS 15:10, “But by The Grace of GOD, I am what I am; and His Grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but The Grace of GOD with[in] me.”⁶⁴

As Frederick Knecht observes of GOD’s amazing Grace in Paul, “...it was effectual because, instead of resisting it, he cooperated with it. He did not shut his soul to the light of Grace, but believed and submitted himself to the will of GOD. He repented of his sins, fasted, prayed, and prepared himself for holy Baptism. And after he was a Christian, he did not fear the scorn and hatred of... [hard hearted men], but fearlessly confessed and preached the Christian Faith.”⁶⁵ Who should we fear, if we but stand firm in GOD’s amazing Grace?

What does The Reverend John Newton say to William Wilberforce in counsel? First, “GOD has work for you!” Second, “Just make sure, that while you’re in the world, you’re not of the world!” Or to rephrase that, “Follow The Apostle Paul as he followed CHRIST.” If we, in calling for man’s justice to model GOD’s Justice, rely only upon own wisdom and strength, we shall surely fall. For in fighting the injustice of fallen man in this fallen world, if we do not rest on GOD’s amazing Grace for guidance and strength, we ourselves shall fall into injustice and become as the world. And we shall fail.

But if we go forth to answer GOD’s call on us in His Grace, we may pour ourselves as an offering in His Name, knowing that we shall dwell joyfully in His Presence for eternity. Therefore Saint Paul exhorts us in EPHESIANS 2:8-10, “For by Grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of GOD; Not of works, that no man may glory. For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS in good works, which GOD hath prepared that we should walk in them.”⁶⁶

⁶³ 7, DRA, I JOHN 1:7-9.

⁶⁴ 7, DRA, I CORINTHIANS 15:10.

⁶⁵ 15, Knecht, “A Practical Commentary on Holy Scripture,” XC. “The Conversion of Saul,” p 767, paragraph 2.

⁶⁶ 7, DRA, EPHESIANS 2:8-10.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ 1, “378. Amazing Grace.” Text: John Newton; verse 6 anonymous. Music: 19th century USA melody; harmony by Edwin O. Excell. Hymnsite.com. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>. Retrieved 8/09/2008.

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