

Devotion on Hymns of the Church (Hymn 409 – Just as I am) – 27 May 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor 6:2)

Toady's hymn is one of simple beauty and heavenly grandeur. It has been the instrument whereby many lost souls have turned loose the doubts and treasures of the world, and its burdens, and come to Christ in repentance. The hymn is sung in many evangelistic churches as a closing appeal to any who may be holding out, for whatever reason, from accepting the Lord Jesus Christ. It was actually written by one to whom the hymn was intended to appeal. Coming from a family of clergymen, Charlotte Elliot did not have an assurance of her salvation. She was, for most of her life, unhealthy and unable to get about. She suffered much pain. Often, when the subject of her salvation was raised, she would abruptly avoid discussion of the matter.

Charlotte wrote the five verses to "Just As I Am" in 1834. William B. Bradbury composed music for her lyrics and published the song in 1849. One can feel the strong beckoning of Christ to all who are lost, forlorn, and thirsty for the Water of Life in both the tune and the lyrics of this simple hymn. Dr. John Julian wrote this account of how the hymn came to be written: *"(Charlotte) was in poor health and often harassed with severe pain, which tended to make her irritable. A severe illness had left her a permanent invalid. She resented the question thus pointedly put, and petulantly answered that religion was a matter she did not wish to discuss. Dr. Malan replied in his usual kind manner, that he would not pursue a subject that displeased her, but would pray that she might give her heart to Christ, and employ in His service the talents with which He had gifted her. It seems that the Holy Spirit used her abrupt and almost rude conduct towards God's servant to show her what depths of pride and alienation from God were in her heart. After several days of spiritual misery, she apologised for her unbecoming conduct, and confessed that his question had troubled her greatly. "I am miserable" she said, "I want to be saved. I want to come to Jesus; but I don't know how". "Why not come just as you are?", answered Malan. "You have only to come to Him just as you are"."*

This hymn has been translated into many languages all over the world. Tens of

thousands of people have committed their lives to Christ during the playing of this hymn.

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt;
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive;
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
here for a season, then above:
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

"Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come." The opening phrase, ***"Just as I am,"*** leads the opening line of each of the seven verses of this hymn. It reminds us that the sinner cannot turn and make himself acceptable to God, but must be quickened by the Holy Ghost. We cannot become "good enough" to come to Christ. We must come as we are. But once we have come, we do not REMAIN as we were! We leave the sin and lust of the world behind and take up the plow and reins of the Christian walk. We must readily acknowledge that a visible (and invisible) change takes place when one comes to Christ. The change is VISIBLE in the way we walk, talk, think, and act. The INVISIBLE change takes place in the dark and hidden chambers of our hearts as Christ begins to expunge those things that are hateful and contrary to our joy, and replace them with love and faith.

There was a half-dressed woman drug before the Lord one day at the Temple by

the cruel and power-mongering Jewish leaders. She had been taken in adultery – in the very act – yet only the woman was brought to Christ since the Jewish leaders, even in that day, were politically correct. She was brought, JUST AS SHE WAS, to Christ by those who meant her only pain, death, and humiliation. These hateful clerics intended the greatest harm to the woman, but they unwittingly brought her to the One who could, and would, do her the most good – the Lord Jesus Christ. As the calls rang out for her stoning, she dared not raise her head for terror and shame. Yet, she heard the distinct contradiction in voices calling for her ruin, and another calm and loving voice simply stating a simple challenge to cast the first stone. The woman could offer not a single word in her defense – she was caught, as you and I were, in her sins – red-handed. She did not at first come to Christ, but was dragged there by her enemies who sought her death. But at last, a great hook (made of solid love) was placed in her heart and she KNEW – she KNEW who this great Personage was who had become her Advocate and Savior. The only one present who had the authority to condemn the woman did not do so, but freely forgave her and said, *“Go, and sin no more.”* We do not usually stumble at the forgiven part, but almost always at the *“Go and sin no more”* part. We must come as we are, but leave as new creatures in Christ.

“Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” Do we linger at the brink of glory for reason of pride or desire? Why wait? Will we be better suited for salvation tomorrow? I think the longer we live in sinner, the greater sinner we become. Why not come to the Lord now while life endures and the seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter continue. Perhaps we have a great sin that seems impossible to overcome (one dark blot), and we hope that we can, after some time, overcome this great sword to the flesh. I can tell you that such a victory, apart from Christ, is not possible. It is the blood of Christ that can cleanse us through and through and none of our cheap detergents can avail. It is Christ who is the Lamb of God – that perfect Passover sacrifice that enables us to live in that day when the Angel of Death passes over the souls of men as in Goshen of Egypt.

“Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt; fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” The world itself is a stormy place. The winds and tempest arise without warning, and our sails may be empty in the dead of that sea. Every doubt and fear hinders our voyage and may even cause shipwreck. The storms of the sea are demonstrated in the raging waters beneath and stormy billows above. All seems to be submerging our souls beneath the turbid waters of life. Peter was not in his best condition as he was sinking beneath the waters of Galilee, and when the waters covered his soul. He had no time to rehearse a sophisticated and eloquent prayer. He only had time to cry out *“Lord, save me.”* (Matt 14:30) There have been moments in prayer groups in which I wish I could hear that simple and desperate prayer.

“Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need, in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” Only when we know that we are poor, wretched, and blind, can we call on the Lord for help from the mire that we have created. We see our total depravity and His total Righteousness. We know that He is able if He is willing....and He is willing at every moment! He is our all in all, and will make us new in Himself. Our minds, our hearts, our tongues, our families all new! But we cannot return, as a dog to its vomit, or as a pig to wallow in the mire once we have been washed by the blood of Christ. There is no blindness so stark as spiritual

blindness – a blindness to the Lord of Glory! But no man or woman can remain blind in the Presence of the Lord! *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.”* (Isaiah 35:5)

“Just as I am, thou wilt receive; wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* (John 6:37) Strong qualification there – *“in no wise cast out.”* There is nothing under the sun that would cause the Lord to cast out any who come unto Him; and no one comes but by calling and approbation of God. He will relieve us of our heavy burden; He will pardon all sin; He will cleanse from inside to outside; and all He does because of our faith in believing in the Lamb of God.

“Just as I am, thy love unknown has broken every barrier down; now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” Who can know the breadth, the depth, and the width of the Love of God? Truly, His love is three dimensional in every direction, and those three dimensions are infinite in magnitude. Christ has broken down the Gates of Hell and Death. He has become the Door through which we, as His lambs, must pass into green pastures and still waters. When we belong to Christ, we can only belong without reservation. Our hearts, minds, hands, and all belong to Christ. And, if we belong to Christ, He becomes OURS as well.

“Just as I am, of that free love the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove, here for a season, then above: O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” All that belongs to the heart of Jesus on earth will enjoy a safe haven in heaven as well. That love of God is of such great proportion that our imaginations cannot comprehend its borders. That love is stronger than death; in fact, stronger power does not exist. *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38-39) That love of God is reciprocated in the heart of the believer because He loved us first. It is the wine of love that causes our cups to run over. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:10) *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19) In order that we come to the Lord, we must leave our self-wills in the dust of the earth.