

Reformation  
& Revival



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A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

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# *Reformation & Revival Journal*

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A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

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1. To encourage *reformation* in the local Christian churches worldwide,
  2. To promote the cause of *revival* and spiritual awakening through prayer and the provision of resources to aid Christian leaders.
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## Information

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**The conviction of the staff and editors** of the *Reformation & Revival Journal* is that awakening, of the kind seen in the First Great Awakening in this country, wedded to the doctrinal concerns of the historic Protestant Reformation as expressed in the terms *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*, is needed in our generation.

**The views expressed in this publication** should be considered as the personal opinions of the authors and are not to be taken as an official editorial perspective.

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## Editor's Introduction

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**W**hen therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately" (John 13:31-32).

Jesus is now alone with His eleven men. These had remained faithful to Him as real disciples. He opens His heart, more fully than ever before. What He sets before them is His glory! But what a strange thing He says regarding that glory. It is as if the Savior says, "An event will take place on the morrow which, however painful it will be for both you and Me, in reality will be the event in which maximum glory will be brought to Me and My Father!"

Surely J. C. Ryle is right in saying, "There is a dark and mysterious saying here, and we may well believe that the eleven did not understand it."

What was to happen within hours of this statement? The horrors of the crucifixion would descend upon the person of our Lord. The minds of His disciples would be filled with fear, loneliness, dismay, disappointment, even shame. Only later would this statement recorded by John the Evangelist come home to their minds with clarity and effect.

When I read these poignant and powerful words of my Lord I am struck by four questions, each touching upon the very mystery of the Cross itself.

First, what does Jesus mean here by "glorified?" Five times in the space of two short verses this concept appears. An exegete as capable as Leon Morris refers to this as "a very complicated sentence." Yet glory is virtually the theme of this fourth gospel. Consider what John writes in 12:23, 27, and 31-32. All are plainly related to this text.

An analysis of this concept in John reveals that glory has three distinct references and two different meanings. The word "glory" (*doxa*) is related to the ancient word *dokeo*, meaning "to appear, to seem," and then later "to hold an opinion of." It evolved in time to mean "to hold a good opinion

of," and finally, "to praise, to honor."

To be orthodox came to mean "to hold a right opinion regarding God." To describe right opinions regarding God, opinions that were according to the truth of His revelation in the Word, was to worship and praise God correctly. Thomas Watson thus said, "Glory is the sparkling of the Deity." A. H. Strong, in a statement that at first seems redundant, wrote, "God's glory is that which makes Him glorious." Yes, it does, and most powerfully.

There are two different ways in which we properly speak of God's glory. First, we speak of His intrinsic, or internal, glory as that which is embodied in His character. Second, we speak of His extrinsic, or external, glory as that which is usually associated with the shining forth of His divine being, i.e., His "outward brilliance" (usually associated with blinding light in Scripture). Here, in John, both senses are intended. When the tense of the verb is present the first idea is generally in view, and when the tense is future the second seems correct.

Now, consider again what our Lord actually says here in John 13. He says, beyond any shadow of doubt, "I am glorified most supremely in all that I am and all that I do in the cross!" Here, as nowhere else, all the glory of Christ's person will be shown in the mystery of an event that the disciples will only later understand as the central event of all divine revelation to man.

The second question I am prompted to ask of this text is this: How can Christ be glorified (supremely, no less) in His crucifixion? You must confess the wonder of this claim. If it does not prompt wonder then you have lost the central mystery and glory of the Christian faith itself. Surely these disciples wondered, and wondered, and they never got over it for the remainder of their days.

What our Savior speaks of is His death on a cruel Roman cross designed for criminals and rejects. But this ignominious end is designed to be not martyrdom, not disgrace, but glory!

Notice, the words of Jesus begin with "Now...." How wonderful if He had said this at His Baptism, or at the Transfiguration. But, now, at the cross, His glory is to be truly revealed. But how? Wherein?

I suggest the following for your careful reflection:

1) He is supremely glorified in that here He performed the greatest work which history has ever seen, or ever will see.

2) Here, at the cross, He reversed the conduct of the first Adam and thus turned the race about, creating a new mankind, a new race.

3) Here, by His death, He destroyed him who had the power of death over fearful, fallen men and women (Heb. 2:14).

4) Here, at Calvary, He paid the full ransom for a people (Heb. 2:10).

5) And, further, the manner of His sufferings also glorified Him in a unique way, as He willingly suffered, being led as a lamb to slaughter, not driven as a victim. This same Lamb of God, now glorified through this death and seated at God's right hand, is a glorified Savior and King.

And this glory Jesus has shared with us, His people. Later in the same gospel record we read, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one" (John 17:22). And, further, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:10), precisely because He has been glorified in His being lifted up as the God-man.

The third question that is prompted to my mind by this marvelous statement of our Lord is this: How exactly is the Father glorified in the Son's crucifixion?

William Hendriksen writes:

... due to the infinite closeness existing between the Sender and the One Sent (cf. 10:30), God was glorified in Him. The two are inseparable. Whenever we think of Christ's sufferings, we never know what to admire most; whether it be the voluntary self-surrender of the Son to such a death for such a people, or the willingness of the Father to give up such a

Son to such a death for such a people.

What a theme! One that no preacher, no writer, and surely no journal can exhaust—the glory of the Lamb of God slain for sinners.

Consider for a moment, as you begin to read this issue of *Reformation & Revival Journal*, how the Father is glorified in the Son's awful crucifixion. Consider how marvelous light shines forth from the very mystery of the darkness which shrouds Calvary's tree.

First, the *justice* of God is exceedingly glorified in this event. God, who had written, "I will by no means clear the guilty," demonstrates His justice so as to be "just and the justifier of the ungodly" (Rom. 3:26). Nothing more glorifies the justice of God than the Propitiation of the Son. God's justice could not be more satisfied even if every single sinner perished for an eternity under just condemnation.

Second, the *power* of God is wonderfully glorified at the Cross. Christ is crucified in weakness, yet this very weakness is God's strength (cf. 1 Cor. 1:25). Here is the "wisdom of God" which appears to men without God-given sight as foolishness.

Third, here the *holiness* of God is marvelously glorified as well. Habakkuk writes of Jehovah, "Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, and Thou canst not look on wickedness with favor" (1:13). The apostle adds, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13). Christ, the dying sacrifice, becomes for us "the cursed of God." What mystery—the perfectly innocent One becomes the totally guilty One. Never did God so manifest His hatred of sin and the holiness of His throne.

Fourth, God's *faithfulness* is glorified. The old covenant was filled with a myriad of promises—in shadow, type and prophetic utterance—that God would provide a way of escape for those who fled to the shelter of His mercy provided in Atonement,

or covering, for sin. Here the glory is revealed in history, after centuries of revelation in expectation and hope. God keeps His word.

But even more amazing to me is the revelation of the *love* of God which is glorified in the Cross. How can we not come, in the face of this mystery, again and again to the precious words of the most familiar text in all the Bible. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). As John writes, "In this 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).

When we view God's grand design our thoughts are lost in reverent awe. Here we see more of the glory of God revealed than either angel or man had ever seen. Here the divine perfection joins the glories of both justice and grace in such a way that fallen men shall never see a revelation more glorious than this.

But verse 32 raises a final question to my mind: How will the Father glorify the Son? This is future glory. Future, at least, in terms of the events unfolding at the time at which this was actually spoken by our Savior. Jesus is looking right through the passion of the coming hours to the Resurrection, the Ascension and the future Exaltation. God will be glorified *in* the coming events, but He will also be glorified *by* them as well. The idea is this—a parent can be honored, glorified shall we say, in the character of his son or daughter. He can also be glorified by that same character.

The apostle Paul had a choice of things to glory in as a man. He could have received honor, esteem, and glory, for he was a respected rabbinical teacher and philosopher. Even as a Christian he might have gloried in his sufferings for the sake of Christ, or perhaps in his profound personal revelations from God. Yet what we read is this: "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Paul surely gloried in the *person of Christ*, writing some of the most profound Christological statements of the entire corpus of Scripture. But what he apparently gloried in above all else was the dying Lamb of God crucified for him as a sinner. Indeed, he determined to know nothing among the signs and wonders group in Corinth "except Jesus Christ and Him as crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

Paul gloried in the *fact* of the cross. He continually brought his hearers to the event itself. Here was the only truly redemptive act in the whole of human history. Nothing compared with the death of the Son of God. He would, ultimately, speak about little else.

Paul gloried in the *doctrine* of the cross. His teaching was centered here. The recovery of this emphasis in the sixteenth century, in the events now known as the Protestant Reformation, were nothing less than the recovery of the Pauline gospel of the doing and dying of Jesus. The now famous watchwords—*sola gratia*, *sola fide* and *solus Christus*—all come back finally to the mystery of the Cross. This doctrine had been virtually lost by the time of Luther (at least in the larger sphere of visible Christendom) through centuries of drama. The church had turned from the Gospel preached to the event of the Mass—a drama regularly acted out at the front of a church. This doctrine of the Cross had been lost because preaching was no longer the central event of public worship. People came, and they came faithfully, but they no longer heard the Good News—the "preaching of the Cross."

The editors of this publication are convinced that our time is not all that different. Multitudes still attend services of worship, but the preaching of the Cross is almost absent. They worship in considerable darkness, believing that they are hearing the Gospel. They are attracted to dramas, which have far more intrigue and interest to baby boomers, so-called,

than exposition of the doctrine of the Cross. We hear, even in our churches where drama has not yet replaced the centrality of the preached word, endless moralizing homilies upon changing our corrupt world through political and social involvement. We are urged to save the family, stop pornography and clean up our streets. We are urged to "get out the vote" and to renew the nation. We are invited to join great movements of men, but we have almost no concept of building great local churches centered on the preaching of the Cross. (There are some shining exceptions for which we give thanks to God!)

Martin Luther wrote, "There is not a word in the Bible which is *extra crucem*, which can be understood without reference to the cross." Do you believe this? Does this inform your entire theology and practice? When you read the Word of God, or hear it proclaimed, do you listen for the message of the Cross? Or has the Bible become for you a book of moralisms and pious teachings for living a life of spirituality in this fast-paced modern age? Do you seek to find a common ground between your reason and the Cross? A. W. Tozer put it well when he wrote several decades ago, "To try to find a common ground between the message of the cross and fallen man's reason is to try the impossible, and if persisted in must result in an impaired reason, a meaningless cross, and a powerless Christianity." I find only a small handful of moderns who will agree with Tozer and Luther, at least if their practice is really allowed to determine the matter.

In more pietistic circles we hear about the Christ upon the throne of our heart, but very little about the Christ slain upon the hill. We are repeatedly urged to look within. We must once again be told to look without, for only here is true hope. Only here is evangelical faith established and nurtured. The objective Gospel of Christ is almost lost in evangelical circles. Will we continue to seek power elsewhere, or will we return again to the message of the Cross? This is the question our generation of evangelicals must answer. Have we given up our

message for the cult (culture) of relativism and pragmatism? Is it possible that we might offer again the message that is offensive to modern minds, but at the same time the heaven-endorsed power of God for those who believe?

Hopeful signs flicker here and there as ministers again discover the power of the preached Gospel, a Gospel centered in objective, historical truths. This Gospel consists of truths already authoritatively defined and interpreted by apostolic witness, truths explained with majesty in the great historical creeds and confessions of the Christian church. The *crux* of our message is the Cross! As the church understands and confesses the mystery of God's revelation of glory in the Cross, she will surely be better prepared for undertaking the work of reformation. Should God open the heavens with the blessings of true revival, she will have a Gospel as well, a Gospel that gives her power to live and power to die. Who can not pray, "O Lord, hasten the day"?

*Editor*