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ECHOES FROM THE UNDER SHEPHERD ~

STEWARDSHIP EMPHASIS MONTH

“PALM SUNDAY” AT CALVARY

(William R. Newell, 1968-1956)

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.” (Ephesians 1:7, 8) (NIV)

Calvary, meaning “the place of the skull,” is a place that everyone has heard about and that thousands of Holy Land tourists visit every year. But the significance of the events that took place on this hill nearly two thousand years ago are often not truly realized by many of those who merely view its location. “At Calvary” focuses our attention on the wondrous mercy and grace that Christ demonstrated through His death on the cross. The hymn exalts our Lord for conquering sin and death and bringing salvation to all who will accept Him as Redeemer and Lord. The “mighty gulf” between God and man was bridged with Christ’s sacrificial atonement at Calvary.

William R. Newell was a noted evangelist, Bible teacher, and later assistant superintendent at the Moody Bible Institute. One day on his way to teach a class, he was meditating about Christ’s suffering at Calvary and all that it meant to him as a lost sinner. These thoughts so impressed themselves on his mind that he stepped into an empty classroom and quickly scribbled down the lines of this hymn on the back of an envelope. A few minutes later he met his friend and colleague, Daniel B. Towner, music director at the institute, and showed him the text he had just written, suggesting that Towner try composing music for it. An hour later as Newell returned from class, Dr. Towner presented him with the melody and they sang their completed hymn together.

Following its publication in 1895, Christians everywhere have used this hymn enthusiastically to rejoice in the “riches of God’s grace” made available “At Calvary. AMEN.

Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified,
knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary.
By God’s Word at last my sin I learned—then I trembled at the law I’d spurned,
till my guilty soul imploring turned to Calvary.

Now I’ve giv’n to Jesus ev’rything; now I gladly own Him as my King;
now my raptured soul can only sing of Calvary.
O the love that drew salvation’s plan! O the grace that bro’t it down to man!
O the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!
Chorus: Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me. There my
burdened soul found liberty—at Calvary. AMEN.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

