

In Christ Alone My Hope Is Found: Stuart Townend & Keith Getty (2001)¹

Visualisation: Anthrodirectional.

Analysis: An interesting structure, it begins with the singer as saved (stanza 1), then backtracks to the saviour's incarnation (stanza 2), atoning death (stanza 3), and parousia to come (stanza 4). Every 1st & 3rd line, and 5th & 6th line, rhyme more or less (stanza 2's *esh/*ess, & stanza 4's *an/*and are imperfect rhyme). There is inconsistent wording about the trinity. Although *the wrath of God* indicates our loving father, our hope is said to be *in Christ alone*. Paul's hope was in God (Ac.24:15), though this may be amplified as being with Christ in God (Col.3:3), or we may speak of hope in Christ (Eph.1:12). None of the biblical options deny the father. Added to expressions of him being *my comforter*, *my all in all*, I note that it's borderline Jesusism. Incidentally, *comforter* is bad translation nowadays for παρακλητος/*paraklētos* and *paraclete* should anyway be about the Holy Spirit, and *all in all* is supposed to be the father (1 Cor.15:28). I'm also unhappy about fears & striving presumed to be negative: fearing God and striving for good are positives. I enjoy the paradox of identifying our life with Christ's death.

Took on flesh (Heb.2:14?) can sound like a battle, but he neither battled with the flesh, nor donned flesh merely to fight—after the fight he maintained his humanity. It's a very archaic way of saying that God's son became human, what we might call a part download (<http://mdtc.eu/wggsarx.html>). It is better to speak here of God's son, not *Christ* the lord. Christhood/Anointing, did not predate incarnation: there was a time when Jesus was not. Nor is he God's *fullness in helpless babe*: he has gone through that phase, so don't play with baby's toes! *This gift* might be better as God's gift, and he was not *scorned by all he came to save*. Some scorned, some sorrowed. Did the scorning end—*until*—once God was satisfied? Perhaps [*then*] instead of [*till*]? *The wrath of God* is a valid salvation image, though if unexplained allows the idea of God as the Angry One calmed down by his loving son. Perhaps this could have been better worded, nor were all sins laid on Christ, unless Universalism is true: was Satan's sin really atoned for? Do we picture trillions of human sins met at the cross? Whatever the imagery, isn't the deeper picture of the sin principle, rebellion, Jesus by defeated as he died there for us? Perhaps too, the pronoun, *him*, should be replaced by Christ, to clarify that *him* doesn't mean God, just mentioned: the father didn't die on the cross. I also question whether we live *in his death*, or *in his life by his death*: John Bunyan wrote of offloading condemnation at the cross, then moving on from the cross to God's city.

There, preceding *in the ground*, suggests to me an invisible finger pointing to an invisible place: there! where? In the ground! Why not start with, *in the ground*? I think *then* would be a more useful word—*subsequent* to death his body was buried. If we sing that Jesus rose *again*, when did he rise before? I can't marry *again* unless my first wife dies, at least to me. Up from the grave he arose, once, but not a second time—*he rose to life*. *I am his* does not preclude others being his, though I'd prefer singing that *I'm one of his*. And in context of him, it's silly to speak of *the precious blood of Christ* as if that's someone else's blood. I like Barry, and I like *the house of Barry*, er, *his house*. Better to use the pronoun, *his*. Perhaps it could end as stanza 2, 2&3 sandwiched between 1&4, as ego statements (I stand/live): *his precious blood, I live*. On the other hand, this breaks the *of Christ* pattern for line 8. This could be reinstated by changing the subject in line 7 from the lord to

¹ www.stuarttownend.co.uk/song/in-christ-alone/ this link places Townend first; the corresponding Getty site places Getty first.

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A = Mixed Themes (-4); B = Incompleteness (-4); C = Archaism (-8);

D = Blessing God (-4); E = Buddy or Boyfriend (-4); F = Polytheism (-8); G = Voxdeism: Soft (-24), Hard (-48); H = Unitarianism: Soft (-60), Hard (-72); I = Misdirection (-12); J = Misvisualisation: Soft (-12), Mid (-24), Hard (-36); K = Boasting (-8); L = Decontextualising (-8); M = Hermit Harakiri (-12)

God, thus making a noun, not a pronoun, required in line 8. That would both keep the *of Christ* pattern, as well as harmonising with stanzas 1,2&4. I'm tempted to harmonize further by *now by*, instead of *bought by*, but feel that the theme of purchase is better kept.

No guilt sounds like the "let's get into sin" (and today we add, "though there is no sin") antinomian that Paul rejected (Rm.3:5). We ought to feel guilt if we know we have acted immorally. I murdered Barry in Barry's house, but thanks be to Jesus, I have no guilt, huh? In salvation terms, is it better to see what is, or to live in delusion?² Paul warned that Christians violating the eucharist were guilty of sin. *No guilt in life?* Even Christians are guilty of sins of omission & commission, but they stand ultimately forgiven, and that's Paul's point. Substituting a negative free-from,³ is more difficult than substituting a positive. Admittedly, the song might mean that if Christ's power in us is always at max, then we'll never be guilty in God's sight, or it might [wrongly] assume that God is blind to our personal guilt, seeing only Jesus within. I gladly sing that Jesus as lord commands my destiny, yet aware that I don't always obey his commands. Biblically, it's not *his hand*, but *God's hand* (Jhn.10:28). And if changing that, the next line would then need changing from *till he*, to *till Christ*. It closes with, IMO, an ego boast, since in context *I'll stand* implies self-will: I'd prefer the subjunctive desire, *I'd stand*, a this-is-where-I-wanna-be.

Suggestions: Stanza 1: Replace *in Christ alone*, **by** *in Christ the lord*, *this cornerstone*, *this solid*, **by** *the cornerstone*, *the solid*, *when fears/strivings*, **by** *wrong fears/strivings*, *my comforter*, *my all in all*, **by** *my way to God*, *my saviour dear*.

Stanza 2: Replace *in Christ alone*, **by** *in God's own son*; *who took on flesh*, **by** *heaven's brightness*, *in helpless babe*, **by** *once helpless babe*; *this gift*, **by** *the gift*; *by the ones*, **by** *among those*, *till on that*, **by** *then on that*; *every sin*, **by** *human sin*; *on him*, **by** *on Christ*; *here in the death*, **by** *now by the death*.

Stanza 3: Replace *there*, **by** *then*; *he rose again*, **by** *he rose to life*; *for I am his*, **by** *for I am God's*; *the precious blood of Christ*, **by** *the blood of Christ*, *I live*.

Stanza 4: Replace *no guilt in life*, **by** *pardon in life*; *from his hand*, **by** *from God's hand*; *till he returns*, **by** *till Christ returns*; *I'll stand*, **by** *I'd stand*.

BAG	A	B	C	D	E	F	G ^{1,2}	H ^{1,2}	I	J ^{1,2,3}	K	L	M	Total	Grade
	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	84	B+

In Christ the lord *my hope is found / he is my light, my strength, my song / the cornerstone, the solid ground / firm through the fiercest drought and storm. / What heights of love, what depths of peace / wrong fears are stilled, wrong strivings cease / my way to God, my saviour dear / Here in the love of Christ I stand.*

In God's own son - heaven's brightness, / *fullness of God once helpless babe. / the gift of love and righteousness / scorned among those he came to save: / then on that cross, as Jesus died, / the wrath of God was satisfied / for human sin on him was laid / now by the death of Christ I live.*

Then *in the ground his body lay, / Light of the world by darkness slain / Then bursting forth in glorious day / up from the grave he rose to life / And as he stands in victory / sin's curse has lost its grip on me, / for I am God's and he is mine / bought by the blood of Christ, I live.*

Pardon in life, *no fear in death / this is the power of Christ in me; / From life's first cry to final breath / Jesus commands my destiny. / No power of hell, no scheme of man / can ever pluck me from God's hand / Till Christ returns, or calls me home / here in the power of Christ I'd stand.*

² Pastorally, sometimes "where ignorance is bliss, it's folly to be wise", can be justified.

³ A [no * in life] requires a short word. *Shame* would fit the slot, but again, ought we feel no shame at an immorality, such as betraying a friend? Something like *condemnation* is too long a word.

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