

Dear Directors, Leaders, and Members:

Dr. Robert H. Bullock, Jr., one time editor of the *Presbyterian Outlook*, one time member of one of our seminars, and one time worship leader at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church of Richmond, Virginia (when I was, at one time, the pastor there), introduced this **Puritan** prayer to me:

O GOD OF GRACE,
Thou hast imputed my sin to my substitute,
and hast imputed his righteousness to my soul,
clothing me with a bridegroom's robe,
decking me with jewels of holiness.
But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;
my best prayers are stained with sin;
my penitential tears are so much impurity;
my confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin;
my receiving the Spirit is tintured with selfishness.

I need to repent of my repentance;
I need my tears to be washed;
I have no robe to bring to cover my sins,
no loom to weave my own righteousness;
I am always standing clothed in filthy garments,
and by grace am always receiving change of raiment,
for thou dost always justify the ungodly;
I am always going into the far country,
and always returning home as a prodigal,
always saying, Father, forgive me,
and thou art always bringing forth the best robe.
Every morning let me wear it,
every evening return in it,
go out to the day's work in it,
be married in it,
be wound in death in it,
stand before the great white throne in it,
enter haven in it shining as the sun.
Grant me never to lose sight of
the exceeding sinfulness of sin,
the exceeding righteousness of salvation,
the exceeding glory of Christ,
the exceeding beauty of holiness,
the exceeding wonder of grace.

The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions, edited by Arthur

Bennett (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), p. 76; (new edition, 2002), pp. 136-137.

O Lord, grant me the grace to learn so to pray!

And even while this prayer reminds me of the grace and goodness of God, it also reminds me of the goodly heritage he has given us in the Reformers' appropriation of the Christian faith. What a privilege it is for you and me to be involved in, and committed to, the recovery of this heritage for the faith and life of the church today.

Grace and Peace,

Jim

Dr. James C. Goodloe IV, *Executive Director*

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