

H Y M N S

Concerning the Experience of Christ as Life

- 1 O glorious Christ, Savior mine,
Thou art truly radiance divine;
God infinite, in eternity,
Yet man in time, finite to be.

Oh! Christ, expression of God, the Great,
Inexhaustible, rich, and sweet!
God mingled with humanity
Lives in me my all to be.
- 2 The fulness of God dwells in Thee;
Thou dost manifest God's glory;
In flesh Thou hast redemption wrought;
As Spirit, oneness with me sought.
- 3 All things of the Father are Thine;
All Thou art in Spirit is mine;
The Spirit makes Thee real to me,
That Thou experienced might be.
- 4 The Spirit of life causes Thee
By Thy Word to transfer to me.
Thy Spirit touched, Thy word received,
Thy life in me is thus conceived.
- 5 In spirit while gazing on Thee,
As a glass reflecting Thy glory,
Like to Thyself transformed I'll be,
That Thou might be expressed thru me.
- 6 In no other way could we be
Sanctified and share Thy vict'ry;
Thus only spiritual we'll be
And touch the life of glory.
- 7 Thy Spirit will me saturate,
Every part will God permeate,
Deliv'ring me from the old man,
With all saints building for His plan.

Witness Lee was not only an inexhaustible writer and interpreter of the Word of God, but he was also skilled in putting the thoughts of the Scriptures into hymns. One of his favorite hymns, "O Glorious Christ, Savior Mine," is the subject of this review. The author's burden in writing this and many other hymns was to encourage the believers to enter into the practice and experience of the unsearchable riches of Christ in His person and work. In October 1996 Witness Lee spoke with elders and co-workers at an international conference concerning our need to experience and enter into all that Christ is, has accomplished, and has attained. Although we have received many positive



things in the Scriptures and in our hymns, he expressed his concern about our shortage in entering into the experiences of these riches. During one of the meetings he warned that we need to beware of not entering into the application of the divine truths so clearly presented in the Bible, in our literature, and in our hymnal. He expressed his concern in *How to Be a Co-worker and an Elder—and How to Fulfill Their Obligations*:

The many clear revelations which we have seen in the Bible have been released among us and printed in books; also many hymns have been written. However, I first ask myself frequently whether or not I live according to this light and revelation in the Bible" (72).

He went on to illustrate by giving a brief critique of our use of this hymn:

The first stanza...says, "O glorious Christ, Savior mine, / Thou art truly radiance divine; / God infinite, in eternity, / Yet man in time, finite to be." This God infinite in eternity came to be a man finite in time. Where is He being a finite man? He is in us as a finite man. Have we experienced these two lines? The Lord, who is the embodiment of the great

God, was the infinite God in eternity, yet today He came into us, human beings who are so small, to be a finite man. Praise the Lord that for us to live is He who is the infinite God, the God in eternity. Although we are finite men in time, He is living within us today. We should learn to apply the truth in this way....

The chorus of this hymn says, "Oh! Christ, expression of God, the Great, / Inexhaustible, rich, and sweet! / God mingled with humanity / Lives in me my all to be." We need to learn to apply these words to our daily life.

Stanza 2 says, "The fulness of God dwells in Thee; / Thou dost manifest God's glory; / In flesh Thou hast redemption wrought; / As Spirit, oneness with me sought." These lines are really good, but we should not simply remain in the appreciation of them. We need to ask ourselves whether this is the life we live. God's glory was manifested in Him, but is He manifested in us today? Furthermore, is the Spirit one with me today? Husbands, when you talk to your wife, is Christ one with you? Perhaps in experience you can only say, "In flesh Thou hast redemption wrought," but you cannot say, "As Spirit, oneness with me sought." Hence, although we sing this hymn, we do not have its reality.

Stanza 3 says, "All things of the Father are Thine; / All Thou art in Spirit is mine; / The Spirit makes Thee real to me, / That Thou experienced might be." This is an excellent stanza. All that the Father has, was received by the Son, and all that the Son is, was given to the Spirit. This Spirit comes into our spirit to become our reality so that the all-inclusive Christ may be our experience. Have these words become our experience? Do we have this reality in our living?...

In a previous chapter we saw that the degradation of the church is due to our not enjoying the Christ who is in our spirit. Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."...We need to enjoy Christ in our spirit as our portion to be the abounding grace to us. Brothers, we need to bow our heads and confess that we are short of this....

We do not allow the Spirit to make the Lord real to us that the Lord may be experienced by us. Our experience is not "the Spirit makes Thee real to me."...When we sing such a hymn, we should sing it with tears, saying to the Lord, "Lord, all things of the Father are Thine; all Thou art in Spirit is mine; the Spirit makes Thee real to me, that Thou experienced might be. Forgive me, Lord, I am not like this. I need Your Spirit to make You real to me that You may become my experience."...

Stanza 4 of this hymn says, "The Spirit of life causes Thee / By Thy Word to transfer to me. / Thy Spirit touched, Thy word received, / Thy life in me is thus conceived." In our daily life, do we allow the Spirit to cause the Lord to be realized in us through His living word? Do we, moment by

moment, touch the Spirit and receive the Lord's word that we may receive the Lord as our supply?

If we compare the poetic words in this hymn with our living, we will find that there is quite a discrepancy. We have such a hymn, but we have very little of the reality of what it speaks. How poor our living is when we compare it with the unsearchable riches of Christ. Paul said that he announced to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel (Eph. 3:8). If we desire to announce to people the unsearchable riches of Christ, we need to experience Him richly in our living. The riches of Christ are unsearchable, but how much reality do we have in us? (72-75)

Witness Lee was a man of integrity and vision dedicated to the realization and application of the high truths that were unveiled to him during his more than seventy years of ministry. His warnings should be received as a loving admonition to beware of not living and walking according to the Spirit of the indwelling Christ, knowing that "we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced" (2 Cor. 5:10).

The final three stanzas of this hymn concerning the experience of Christ as our life, present the way in which we, in our daily living, can apply the riches of the inexhaustible, rich, and sweet Christ. The fifth stanza says, "In spirit while gazing on Thee, / As a glass reflecting Thy glory, / Like to Thyself transformed I'll be, / That Thou might be expressed thru me." It is by beholding and reflecting His glorious image that we are transformed to be able to live out His expression on the earth (2 Cor. 3:18).

Stanza 6 continues, "In no other way could we be / Sanctified and share Thy vict'ry." It is only by the metabolic transformation—a change which occurs in our life and living by the adding of the divine life into us—that we will be able to "apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:18-19).

The final stanza further affirms that as we are beholding Him, "Thy Spirit will me saturate, / Every part will God permeate." The Triune God as the consummated Spirit, "the Lord Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18), saturates and permeates us in every part of our humanity, thus "Deliv'ring me from the old man, / With all saints building for His plan." The purpose and provision of our God are that we would fully receive and live by His all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit until He and we become one in life and expression. We worship the Lord for His marvelous purpose and provision as expressed in this wonderful hymn!

by Gary Kaiser