

H Y M N S

Praising the Lord for His Deep Love

- 1 O how deep and how far-reaching
Is Thy love, dear Lord, to me!
Far beyond my pow'r to fathom,
Deeper than the deepest sea!
It has caused Thee death to suffer
And to me Thyself impart,
That in Thee I might be grafted
And become of Thee a part.
- 2 Who can tell of all the wonders
Which Thy love for me has wrought,
Yet the greatest of these wonders
Is that Thou to me art brought.
Oh! to me Thy love has given
All Thou art as my supply;
As true life I now may share Thee
And Thy riches e'er enjoy.
- 3 Lord, Thy love is the expression
Of Thy loving self divine,
Making life so full of meaning,
Harmonized with God's design.
Grace of life, how all-sufficient,
Is my portion day by day;
I'm the object of Thy favor
And Thy sweetness taste always.
- 4 What from Thee can separate me?
Thou wilt love me to the end!
Oh! Thy love is so prevailing,
E'en Thyself with me to blend!
We two one will be for ever;
I am Thine and Thou art mine!
This will be my testimony:
In Thy love we'll ever twine! (*Hymns*, #152)

The love of Christ—profound, untraceable, knowledge-surpassing, yet knowable in the experience of the believers (Eph. 3:19)—is the subject of the hymn above, written by Witness Lee. This hymn exults in the deep, deep love of Jesus—a love that is “far beyond my pow’r to fathom, / Deeper than the deepest sea!” The hymn is not written as a theologian might write, attempting to objectively define and delineate the love of God. Rather, it is an expression of intense appreciation for and intimate responsiveness to Christ. A marvelous thought springs from the heart of the author and echoes in the heart of the seeking believer who takes the time to sing, consider, and meditate over this hymn—that is, the love of the

Lord is just the Lord Himself imparting Himself as life into His seeker to make Himself one with His beloved and to make His beloved one with Him—inseparable now and for eternity.

The first stanza introduces the theme that Christ’s love to us is attested in His imparting of Himself into us: “It [the unfathomably deep love of the Lord] has caused Thee death to suffer / And to me Thyself impart.” The suffering of death is the story of the substitutionary death of the Son of God, a fact well known among Christians and even among many unbelievers. Yet many unbelievers foolishly scoff at the thought that the death of one man could bring atonement and forgiveness to all those who turn their hearts to believe in Him. And, unfortunately, many believers fail to realize that the efficacy of the vicarious death of our Savior is applied to us not merely objectively; His righteousness becomes ours in reality through the impartation of Himself into us as the Spirit who gives us life (Phil. 3:9; 1 Cor. 1:30; 15:45). Indeed, the shallow application of many believers in this matter may be one of the chief causes for the scoffing of unbelievers. Forgiveness of sins is not merely a judicial act by which God, the eternal Judge, declares the case against a sinful person to be dismissed because Another has paid the debt for his corrupt deeds. It is a wonderful fact that, on the basis of the righteous act of Christ’s sinless death on behalf of all mankind, God can and does justify as many as receive Him (Rom. 5:18). However, this is not the complete story. The Bible says that we receive the justification *of life*, implying that it is also through the impartation of life that those who believe “will be constituted righteous” (v. 19).

The life that God gives to believers is not an objective gift of everlasting existence—it is a person, the Son of God Himself, who has been dispensed into us. “This is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (1 John 5:11-12). Hence, this hymn heralds not only His suffering of death but also the imparting of Himself into us because of His deep love. We receive Him into our very being as a living and life-imparting factor by which we are constituted righteous inwardly, i.e., we are righteous because of an inward constituent which is spreading into our entire being making us “the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Moreover, Christ's imparting of Himself as life into us brings us into an organic union with Him: "That in Thee I might be grafted / And become of Thee a part." The concept of grafting in the Bible is introduced in chapter eleven of Romans where Paul uses the illustration of branches from a wild olive tree (the Gentile believers) being grafted into a cultivated olive tree (the Israelites as the people of God who are rooted in God). The issue of the grafted life is also beautifully exemplified by the branches of the vine (John 15:1-5). Through mutual abiding, two lives become one life with one expression. We have been grafted into Christ! The efficacy of this grafted life is seen in Romans 6:4-5:

We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.

We are growing "together with Him" both in His death and in His resurrection. It is an astounding fact that the very life of God in Christ is now the life by which we live and through which we are growing into full participation with Him in the divine sonship and glory (Rom. 8:29-30).

The theme of Christ's love as the transmission of Himself as life into us is continued in the second stanza, which, while musing upon all the unfathomable and unsearchable wonders which the Lord's love has wrought, reaches the conclusion that "the greatest of these wonders / Is that Thou to me art brought." In the Son all that the Triune God is and all that He has accomplished, attained, and obtained can be dispensed into His redeemed people. This dispensing is far beyond the mere acceptance of a sinner by the Father. Rather, in God's economy the Son of God as life is transmitted into His believing recipients, and they become qualified to exultantly sing, "Oh! to me Thy love has given / All Thou art as my supply." Here is the secret of the Christian's joyful life. We rejoice because our sins are forgiven, and we anticipate by experience today an eternity of union with our Father. We rejoice because right now, in this present age, we can experience the bountiful supply of life—the very person of the Son of God coming into us to be our everything and to meet our every need. Hallelujah! We share this wonderful Christ as our inexhaustibly rich portion with all the saints in the light (Col. 1:12). "As true life I now may share Thee / And Thy riches e'er enjoy."

The third stanza says, "Lord, Thy love is the expression / Of Thy loving self divine." The enjoyment of this wonderful person in His loving presence makes "life so full of meaning, / Harmonized with God's design." When one figuratively rests in the embrace of our loving Savior, life is

full of meaning. One who is captivated by the loveliness of Christ cannot restrain from joyfully proclaiming the meaning of life—the unutterable satisfaction of a purposeful life.

Through our mingling with Christ, we are "harmonized with God's design." God's design is the producing of the one new man as His corporate expression. When we are filled with His life, we are harmonized with His design, receiving the all-sufficient grace of life as our portion day by day. We are the objects of God's favor, and we taste His sweetness always. Apart from participating in Christ as our portion day by day, life is a cacophony of dissonant sounds. In contrast, the exhilarating concord of blending into God's design is heavenly music resounding in us and even around us in every circumstance. In Philippians, Paul gave his testimony as a person harmonized with God's design in every situation: "I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me" (4:12-13).

The final stanza echoes the apostle Paul's exultant conclusion to Romans 8: "What from Thee can separate me? / Thou wilt love me to the end!" Paul completed his review of God's complete salvation with a victorious paean of praise. Since God is for us, nothing and no one can stand against us! Christ died on our behalf and now intercedes for us; therefore, no one is qualified to bring a charge against us as God's elect. Who or what can separate us from the love of Christ? There are, he admits, many sufferings in the daily life of every Christian; indeed, "we have been accounted as sheep for slaughter" (v. 36). "But," the apostle ecstatically confirms, "in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us" (v. 37). The love of Christ is the conquering power that sustains us in every condition, incident, and event. Lastly, the hymn again turns our attention to the basis for overcoming every adversity: It is the person of the Son blended with His beloved elect. "Oh! Thy love is so prevailing, / E'en Thyself with me to blend!"

"We two one will be for ever; / I am Thine and Thou art mine!" The mention of the inseparable love between our dear Lord and the believers alludes to the marriage of Christ with the church His bride. God ordained that "the two shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31). This is the ultimate joining of two lovers, a joining in human experience which typifies and exemplifies God's goal to consummate His divine purpose with the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ. God and corporate man are thus joined in the eternal, inseparable love of God: "This will be my testimony: / In Thy love we'll ever twine!"

by Gary Kaiser