



FOR men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. *17* Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: *18* That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: *19* Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; (Hebrews 6:16-19)

This is one of my longtime favorites. It signals the eternal truth that those who come to Christ are consoled and leave their disconsolations at the foot of the cross. Though there will be struggles and earthly sorrows for the Christian, yet, he is able to persevere beyond those moments with an unbridled joy in his heart as he contemplates the joy of a loving Savior.

This hymn is of mixed authorship. Thomas Hastings and Lowell Mason have produced the lyrics in their present form in 1831. The hymn tune is *CONSOLATION*, or *ALMA (ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER)*, also arranged by Hastings and Mason from an older German *air*.

Come Ye Disconsolate

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that Heav'n cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
Earth has no sorrow that Heav'n cannot cure.

Here see the Bread of Life, see waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above.
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but Heav'n can remove.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish, Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel. Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish; Earth has no sorrow that Heav'n cannot heal. How often have I been laden with sorrow either while driving a lonely highway, or else sitting home feeling melancholy, when the words of this old classic hymn came to mind. Singing as I sorrowed, I would suddenly discover that my sorrows had evaporated. Frankly, when the Lord Jesus Christ is our Sovereign, we have no right or reason to sorrow. But we are weak and forgetful children who need reminding of that great reservoir of grace made available in Christ. Our coming to Christ is by way of the Law of old; but the Mercy Seat (purchased by the blood of Christ) stands above the Tables of the Law of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. Mercy trumps Law. The spiritually emaciated may approach that Mercy Seat without the intercession of any interceding priest other than our High Priest – Jesus Christ. We must approach that place in reverence and holy expectation. A mild approach will not suffice, our coming to the Mercy Seat must be borne in fervency and faith. We are free to speak in liberty to the One who is able to heal every malady of sin. We express our deepest pains and desires as a child to his Father. The One who is the Creator of earth is able to repair and relieve any pains the earth has placed upon our hearts with its unbecoming yoke.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying, Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure! Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying, Earth has no sorrow that Heav'n cannot cure. Can one find joy in desolation? Did Hagar find joy in the desolation of the desert Wilderness at Beerlahairoi (“*Well of the Living One that Sees Me,*”)? Did Mary Magdalene find joy in the desolation of an empty tomb in the Garden? Did the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus find joy at the end of their journey of desolation? Our Lord did not come for those whose petty joys are set upon earthly possessions. He came to give joy to the poor and desolate of spirit – both rich and poor. An empty vessel can hold more wine of joy than those half-filled with vinegar! I hope that I can empty my heart of the vanities and pride of life to make room for that greater filling of joy which the Holy Spirit imbues. There is no room for the higher hope of Heaven to those whose hopes are measured in gold, silver, sex, and power. But those whose heart strings are drawn to the Mercy Seat by the interceding power of the Holy Ghost are the elect ones whose hearts are emptied of malice and ready to be filled, to the brim, with the love of God.

At what point can the Voice of the Comforter be heard at its greatest magnitude – is it not at the Mercy Seat to which the penitent fervently kneels? The rich and healing medicines of the Holy Spirit are broad spectrum in covering every heartbreak of the mendicant drawn by a broken and contrite spirit. “*18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*” (Psalm 34:18) “*17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*” (Psalm 51:17) “*15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*” (Isaiah 57:15) It should be observed here repetition in God’s Word serves as an exclamation point of emphasis.

Here see the Bread of Life, see waters flowing Forth from the throne of God, pure from above. Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing Earth has no sorrow but Heav'n can remove. Have you yet tasted the Bread that fills to complete satisfaction? The mystery of Christ dwells in this holy metaphor. “*48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and*

drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (John 6:48-56) Symbolically, the Word from Genesis to Revelations, is a full presentation to us of Christ. We feed on Him as we read, study, and digest the Word. In the Holy Communion Service, we feed on Christ as with friends about the family Table. His Spiritual Presence is strongly with us as we *"do this in remembrance of Him.*

Remember the two disciples with whom Christ walked following the resurrection on that road to Emmaus. They knew Him not until they arrived at home and He broke bread and gave to them. At that very instant, their eyes were opened and they KNEW Him! Not only our Communion Service, but every duty of the disciple fulfilled is a feast of love. Christ is our overflowing Fountain of the Water of Life. *"⁵ And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. ⁶ And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of **the fountain of the water of life** freely."* (Revelation 21:5-6) *"²⁶ In the **fear of the LORD** is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. ²⁷ **The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,** to depart from the snares of death."* (Proverbs 14:26-27)

Mortal fear does not inspire confidence – it provides no refuge but is, instead, a threat of danger. But holy fear of God is like unto the fear a child has for a loving father – not to disappoint, but to make proud. It is the latter fear that the Christian feels for His Sovereign God. Such fear may begin as a mortal fear for the lost sinner whom God is calling; but, in the process of time and a growing faith, the Christian's initial mortal fear for his soul turns to a loving fear that instills the confidence and assurance of the Father's salvation made available through the redemption of His only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ!

QUESTION: Do you fear the LORD as an avenger or follow as a Savior? He is one, or the other, to each of us!