

Hymns of the Church – *Deep, Deep Love of Jesus* – 17 March 2015, Anno Domini (St. Patrick's Day)



*37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)*

*13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. 14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. (Luke 20:13-16)*

We are sweeping into the final week before Passion Sunday, and it is only fitting and proper that we should consider that Passion of Christ in dying for our sins – the Passion of a deeper Love than the world can ever know. Today is also St. Patrick's Day – a man whom the roman Church has hijacked as their own, and whose memory is celebrated by excessive drink and riotous parading. It must be a matter of embarrassment to St. Patrick that he was neither Roman Catholic (they disowned his ministry as he undertook it) nor did alcohol ever touch his lips. He was a teetotaler and carried on his mission to Ireland without the approbation of the Roman church. On this day, I wear orange (if I can find it) to signify the Protestant side of St. Patrick.

*Deep, Deep Love of Jesus* was written by S. Trevor Francis and published in 1875. The music, entitled *Ebenezer*, is composed by Thomas J. Williams and set to print in 1890. The hymn is most devotional and contemplative of that love of whose enormity we are incapable of comprehension. To consider the brave-hearted courage of our Lord in allowing Himself to be humiliated, brutally beaten, and hanged to die the ignominious death of the cross is unfathomable to us. He, being totally innocent of any sin whatsoever, died the deserved death those of us whose righteousness was of no account at all. He did it out of a divine LOVE. It is this LOVE that the hymn today contemplates:

## Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!  
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love  
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!*

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread His praise from shore to shore!  
How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore  
!How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call them all His own;  
How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne!*

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best!  
'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a haven giving rest!  
O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heaven of heavens to me;  
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!*

***"O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free! Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me! Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!"*** Yes, the Love of Jesus is deeper than any ocean, and boundless as all of the seas combined. I should point out, however, that, though the author is correct in calling that love 'free', free describes the cost of all love. Love, by definition, demands no ransom. In some ways, good St. Patrick gave evidence of a parcel of that love in his selfless mission to the Irish. His love of Christ is described in both his life and his teaching. His famous, poetic quote, presuming correctly that Christ is love personified, could very possibly given rise to the author of this hymn using the nearly same terms in this particular verse of the song. Here is how St. Patrick viewed our Lord:

*Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right,  
Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

The Love of Christ is a leading and victorious kind of love. It compels us to follow – not out of force – but that passion of love of which we share a portion with Him. It will see us through, and all of the way to our Highland Home.

***"O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread His praise from shore to shore! How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore! How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call them all His own; How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne!"*** Parents and grandparents can not keep quiet in boasting of their children

and grandchildren. To hear their clamoring over them, one would think the children were at least angels. Why is this true? I believe it is altogether owing to a love that cannot know any bounds. Such love sees only perfections in those in whom there is no perfection. But the love of Christ, though akin to this, is far greater – and it will never let its object go. Such a love needs praising and shouting from peak to peak. He is not the kind of lover that uses and abandons, but rather is unchangeable in His boundless affection for His own. As a matter of fact, His love is overflowing with constant abundance. He has watched over us from our primitive beginning, and His omniscient eye beheld us in His hazy view from that terrible cross of Calvary. If He watched over us from the cross, how much do you believe He watches over us now from His Throne of Glory! He is our High Priest who intercedes for us with the Father.

*“O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best! 'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a haven giving rest! O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heaven of heavens to me; And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!”* There is no dimension in which the love of Christ does not excel all others. The boundless limits of the love of Christ seems to fill the smallest havens of the sea as well as the limitless expanse of space. The love that traverses that expanse of space can also fit snugly into the artfully constructed sanctuary of the bird’s nest. One of my favorite hymns is *“Jesus, I Come.”* One line of that hymn suggests the depth, height and width of that love:

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry.  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.*

It is true that the Love of Christ is a lifting love. It is a bit like the words of a modern spiritual song by Josh Groban, and fits perfectly the sentiments expressed in the last line of today’s hymn –

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

How high do you ascend in that love, friend?