



AS the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. (John 15:9)

YE have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)

BELOVED, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. . . . 19 We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:7-13,19)

This hymn was written at a time when decent society selected Christian men of character as their leaders. This hymn was written by Sir John Bowring (1792-1872) twice a member of the British Parliament and later assigned as governor of Hong Kong. Before the age of sixteen, he was proficient in German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, in addition to his native English. Author of more than 600 hymns, Sir John's work on Matins and Vespers is still found in many libraries of devote Christian men and women.

God is Love; His Mercy Brightens

God is love: His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens:
God is wisdom, God is love.

Chance and change are busy ever;
Man decays and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never:
God is wisdom, God is love.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth,
Will His changeless goodness prove;
Through the gloom His brightness streameth;
God is wisdom, God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere His glory shineth;
God is wisdom, God is love.

God is love: His mercy brightens All the path in which we rove; Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens: God is wisdom, God is love. God is love in all His dimensions – even in His judgment of the sinner and the reprobate. God loves all of His Creation – He loves the world that He created, too, but not the marring of that creation that sin and disobedience has wrought. When we consider the full spectrum of problems confronting the world, we must acknowledge that all such problems could be immediately solved if mankind would simply obey the pure and undefiled Word of God. The paths of the world are crooked and dark, but every path of the committed Christian is straight and well-lit by His Word and Spirit. Wisdom and Love are married together under the Providential Eye of the Lord. “*9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. 10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. 11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. 12 Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. 13 Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.*” (Psalm 85:9-13)

Chance and change are busy ever; Man decays and ages move; But His mercy waneth never: God is wisdom, God is love. Atrophy of those elements of God's Creation were set to work the moment that Adam partook of the forbidden fruit. The cell tissues of his body began an immediate and timed decline in the fruits of life; but that was not the greater loss – Adam died spiritually the moment of his disobedience. Whether Adam was eventually redeemed or not is a matter of speculation; but salvation was available to him in the same way it has been made available to us in the atoning Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. His physical nakedness was covered by the blood of an innocent animal – the first physical death on earth – but his spiritual nakedness required a more efficacious sacrifice – the Blood of the Lamb of God. The mercy of God is never shortened by the enormity of our sins. His mercy is sufficient, always, for thee.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth, Will His changeless goodness prove; Through the gloom His brightness streameth; God is wisdom, God is love. Even our beloved martyr, Stephen, when facing the hate-filled stones of death cast upon him by the then religious establishment, looked up to behold the merciful face of his Lord and Maker: “*54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to*

their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:54-60) He looks down upon all of us of faith who suffer any hurt by reason of the hate of the world. He is not the author of sin and hate, but He will always ameliorate the suffering of the innocent in ways often unseen but felt in the depths of the soul.

He with earthly cares entwined Hope and comfort from above; Everywhere His glory shineth; God is wisdom, God is love. All true hope and comfort come down from the Father of Lights: *“17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”* (James 1:17-18) Not only are we comforted on the long and tiring march of life, but given the hope of a blessed rest just a ways up ahead in our march. Can any deny that wisdom and love are equally symbolic of God’s Holy nature? They are intertwined in all of His Commandments and Counsel to us. It is the parent’s love for the child that seasons His wise advice to the child. It is the wisdom that is generated by His love in His dealings with us.

Please observe how love and wisdom are intertwined in the following passage: *“9 For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. 10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12 So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. 13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; 14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.”* (Deut 32:9-14)

The great eagle works laboriously in building a nest of large branches, sharp twigs, and jagged stones as a foundation for the soft wool, feathers and leaves which are made beds for their young. These are diligently fed and watched over in storm and wind. When the young are able to walk about, the eagle begins removing the comforts that have made the nest so enticing. The young eagles get exercise in walking about their high home atop some mountain crag. When they have grown sufficiently strong, the mother eagle will shove the young eagle off a cliff. It is terrified, but is must, in its own mind, fly or perish. But the mother is watching from a distance. If the young eagle is in danger of smashing itself against the rocks below, the mother swoops under it at the last minute and carries the young eagle on her back up again to the nesting area. This is all performed – not out of hate or disdain – but LOVE. That is the kind of Love entwined in our Lord’s Commandments to us.