



*<sup>3</sup>Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; <sup>4</sup>Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. <sup>5</sup>For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. (2 Cor 1:3-5)*

Some have called this the greatest hymn in the English language for beauty of expression. This I will not deny to the ears of the admirer of the hymn; however, I believe each classical and Godly hymn has its own place and purpose, as inspired of God, in our hymnals. This hymn is one of great comfort to the saved of God. It extols the glorious salvation to which we are heir, and omits mention, with tact, the great suffering and torture of our Lord on Calvary's brow in the purchase of that great salvation. It emphasizes His Love and not His suffering.

The author, Charles Wesley, preached what some in England considered a new doctrine of the Gospels with which many Churchmen of his day disagreed. Both Charles and his brother, John, were often harassed in their preaching, but persevered at all cost. Below is a quote taken from a descendant of an Irish family that witnessed one occasion of Charles' being threatened by a mob. The hymn itself is a product (in 1740) of that dark danger he faced on the occasion:

*"Mrs. Mary Hoover, of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, whose grandmother was the heroine of the story, has related to her pastor this family tradition: Charles Wesley was preaching in the fields of the parish of Killyleagh, County Down, Ireland, when he was attacked by men who did not approve of his doctrines. He sought refuge in a house located on what was known as the Island Barn Farm. The farmer's wife, Jane Lowrie Moore, told him to hide in the milkhouse, down in the garden. Soon the mob came and demanded the fugitive. She tried to quiet them by offering them refreshments. Going down to the milkhouse, she directed Mr. Wesley to get through the rear window and hide under the hedge, by which ran a little brook. In that hiding place, with the cries of his pursuers all about him, he wrote this immortal hymn. Descendants of Mrs. Moore still live in the house, which is much the same as it was in Wesley's time."*

There are at least four different tunes to this hymn three of which are presented in the 1940 Hymnal. *Aberystwyth*, by Joseph Parry, is the first and my personal favorite. Other tunes are, Hollingside, Martyn and St. Fabian.

## Jesus Lover of My Soul

Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;  
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of Thee;  
Spring Thou up within my heart; rise to all eternity.

*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high. Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last.* The heart of Jesus is the only perfectly pure Heart that has ever existed in the flesh. It is pure and overflows with the eternal springs of love whose waters originate in the Heights of Heaven. Hidden in the Bosom of our Lord is that Heart that is able to provide sanctuary from every sincere and repentant sinner that seeks and claims its benefit of sanctuary. As we live out our mortal lives, every minute of every day brings us ever nearer those raging waters of Jordan Banks across which lies our reward. Though the sound of those swirling billows may seem dismaying, yet those who are in Christ know that He is able to calm the storm and even to tread upon those waters. I love the evening prayer found in the Family Prayer section of the Book of Common Prayer. It so wonderfully expresses that close of the final day of our earthly lives, and seals it with a joyful reception into our final home: "O LORD, support us all the day long (our earthly lives), until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes (as we near the end), and the busy world is hushed (the world has no more appeal), and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last. Amen"

*Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee; Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me. All my trust on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee I bring; Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing.* This sphere that we call earth hangs upon nothing. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.* (Job 26:7) But this old world, and all of its contents, shall one day melt with fervent heat, and pass from the annals and registry of God's Heavens. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* (2 Peter 3:10) If you are not risen in Christ at that day, what foundation will your foot find upon which to stand; or will you be as a disembodied soul wandering the dark expanse of an empty Universe forever? If all of our trust and dependence is stayed upon the Lord, we have no better Captain and Fortress to preserve our souls from ruin. Yes, apart from the shadowing wings of our Lord, we shall have no covering or protection when life's final notes are played out in our room of dying.

*Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to cover all my sin; Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within. Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of Thee; Spring Thou up within my heart; rise to all eternity.* There is a

wideness in the mercy, grace, and love of God. But it is also deeper than the Pacific Deep. The life-giving Fountain of Life is a gushing stream of Living Waters whose source knows no limits. We need not wonder about those streams of healing waters for they are now available: "*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*" (John 4:13-14) When we taste of that Water of Life which Christ is, we, too, become a Fountain of living waters whose Springs are filled with endless supplies of love. In fact, the more we love others, the greater is the remaining reservoir of Love. And love makes the heart full of joy and endless comforts. Taste it, and share it, and you will find that it truly is possible to taste "Heaven on Earth."