



. . . . *God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.* (1 Tim 1:1)

This ancient hymn has lost its lustre for modern day pretenders, but for those who love that Hope represented in Christ, and who worship in Spirit and in Truth, the lyrics (and tune) are as fresh as the falling snow. The tune is by that great Christian composer, George Fredric Handel included in his great work, *The Messiah*, HWV 56 composed in 1741 – *I know, that my, Redeemer Liveth..* The sentiments of the present hymn are even more ancient than the unknown author's lyrics. Those lyrics are translated from the Latin of its 7th century composition.

O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart's Desire

O Christ, our Hope, our heart's Desire,
Redemption's only Spring!
Creator of the world art Thou,
Its Savior and its King.

How vast the mercy and the love
Which laid our sins on Thee,
And led Thee to a cruel death,
To set Thy people free.

But now the bands of death are burst,
The ransom has been paid,
And Thou art on Thy Father's throne,
In glorious robes arrayed.

O may Thy mighty love prevail
Our sinful souls to spare;
O may we come before Thy throne,
And find acceptance there!

O Christ, be Thou our lasting Joy,
Our ever great Reward!
Our only glory may be it be
To glory in the Lord.

All praise to Thee, ascended Lord;
All glory ever be
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Through all eternity.

O Christ, our Hope, our heart's Desire, Redemption's only Spring! Creator of the world art Thou, Its Savior and its King. The Church is a great ship at sea. It has no part in the harbor except for replenishment of rations and dropping off cargo. It must forever be moving through the turbulent waters of the world. In the days of sailing vessels, it sailed through both calm and stormy seas. When the gales and billows grew too intense, she turned her bow facing into the storm, furled her sails, and dropped anchor. The best possible outcome would be for that anchor to lodge against a great rock to secure the ship from the slightest drift. That Rock is Christ and, should the Church forget that Rock, she will crash against that Rock in total ruin. *Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* (Matt 21:42-44) That Rock-anchored hope secures our most cherished desires in Christ: *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.* (Heb 6:19)

How vast the mercy and the love Which laid our sins on Thee, And led Thee to a cruel death, To set Thy people free. The mercy and love of God came all the way from the highest heaven to the lowest parts of the earth (grave) for our benefit. Jonah even found that the mercy of God was abundant in the depths of the sea. Our sins, too, being laid upon our Lord are there in the depths of the sea. *18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* (Micah 7:18-19)

But now the bands of death are burst, The ransom has been paid, And Thou art on Thy Father's throne, In glorious robes arrayed. We are made debtors by sin, but we know freedom from that debt through the sacrifice of our Redeemer. *7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* (Eph 4:6-10) Those bands of death were burst on that glorious Resurrection of Christ from the Tomb. Please remember that we take up our crosses daily and follow Him. There are times when the way is strewn with stones and bramble, but other times that we walk with Him the shores of peaceful Galilee. Finally, however, we follow Him in death; and not only death, but resurrection as well. It is then that we receive the Father's best Robe, fully purchased by the Holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ!

O may Thy mighty love prevail Our sinful souls to spare; O may we come before Thy throne, And find acceptance there! There is no question concerning whether or not

His mighty love might prevail: *9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* (2 Cor 12:9) We are granted that acceptance through the foreknowledge and foreordination of our Lord. We shall not be ashamed in our appearing before His Throne.

O Christ, be Thou our lasting Joy, Our ever great Reward! Our only glory may be it be To glory in the Lord. So, you believe you are good because of your good work? Who do you suppose is responsible for your good works? *8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* (Eph 2:8-9) The good works we do is Christ working in us. *29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* (Col 1:29) Guess who can lay claim to the evil works we all do? I need not say – it is YOU!

O Christ, be Thou our lasting Joy, Our ever great Reward! Our only glory may be it be To glory in the Lord. Christ is not only our lasting joy, and ever great Reward – He is our ONLY joy and Reward. In Him we glory. Without Him, we are reduced to the ruins of Hell.

All praise to Thee, ascended Lord; All glory ever be To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Through all eternity. As we say in the benediction of the Lord's Prayer: *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen* (Matt 6:13) Christ is the Word from eternity past, present, and future – ONE ETERNITY! He is the Word Incarnated before our very eyes! He was the Executive Power of the Creation of Genesis 1. *1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (John 1:1-3) *14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* (John 1:14) So Genesis 1 presents, in the single term GOD, the entire Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Elohim is, in the Hebrew, a rare singular/plural – more than One in One. The entire Law and the Prophets (Old Testament) is about Christ our Lord. Remember His words to the doubting travelers on the Road to Emmaus: *25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* (Luke 24:25-27)