



6 I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: 7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. 8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. 9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. (Psalm 26:6-9)

This is a hymn marked by beauty and reverence. I first heard the hymn at St. Peter's Anglican Orthodox Church in Statesville, North Carolina in 1995. It impressed me beyond measure, not only for the magnificence of expression, but also for the simplicity and reverential mood it conveys in its music – St. Bees, or even Theodora. I believe we sang this hymn at Evening Prayer at St. Peter's. The rich notes of the hymn sounded forth on the organ were spiritually hypnotic.

Though some have claimed Charles Wesley as author, he clearly was not. The hymn appears in none of his collections, and its first appearance in 1800 did not credit him. It is simply presented as anonymous, but I believe it comes from God even if the penmanship was executed by the hand of an unknown man or woman.

This hymn is sung primarily to three different tunes: *St. Bees*, by John Bacchus Dykes, the tune provided in the 1940 Hymnal; my favorite, *Theodora*, by Handel; and, *Nuremberg*, by Johann Rudolf Ahle. But *St. Bees* holds the most enduring sentimental value for me since it was the tune I first heard employed in the hymn.

Sing My Soul, His Wondrous Love

Sing, my soul, his wondrous love,
who from yon bright throne above,
ever watchful o'er our race,
still to us extends his grace.

Heaven and earth by him were made;
all is by his scepter swayed;
what are we that he should show
so much love to us below?

God, the merciful and good,
bought us with the Savior's blood,
and, to make our safety sure,
guides us by his Spirit pure.
Sing, my soul, adore his Name!
Let his glory be thy theme:
praise him till he calls thee home;
truth his love for all to come.

Sing, my soul, his wondrous love, who, from yon bright throne above, ever watchful o'er our race, still to us extends his grace. The tongue only responds to the impulses sent forth to it by the brain, and the brain responds in worship to the warrants sent forth from the heart of man's soul. *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.* (Psalm 77:6) It is the soul that calls forth to the mind the remembrance of our songs in the night. If we will always be in an attitude of prayer and worship, we should practice the art of speaking to ourselves in the classic hymns and psalms of the Church. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.* (Eph 5:19) There is only one race in the Mind of God, and that is the human race. Though His Throne is high and lofty, yet He deigns to care for, and love, all of His creatures of His making upon the earth. His Throne is bright because He is the Source of all Light!

Heaven and earth by him were made; all is by his scepter swayed; what are we that he should show so much love to us below? The first great beacon of truth given in Holy Scripture is this: *In the Beginning, God created the Heaven and the earth.* (Genesis 1:1) That is no casual fact, but one of greatest import to every human being. You and I, whether we are believers or not, were made by Him. God rules over His Creation, but He has also given mankind dominion over the care and benefit of all of creation. Just as God has treated us with the utmost love and compassion, so should we in turn treat every living creature in the same way. We are by no means worthy or entitled to the love of God, He loves us out of a compassion that exceeds our ability to understand. He made us in His image, and He provides us with many faculties that reflect the character of His Person; however, that character is marred by sin and wickedness from Adam down to our own time.

God, the merciful and good, bought us with the Savior's blood, and, to make salvation sure, guides us by his Spirit pure. Unlike the little gods of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Shamanism, The Almighty God of Heaven and earth is altogether merciful and righteous. But He is also a God of Justice and Judgment. His character of Justice cannot overlook the slightest violation of the Law in His children. Since all have sinned, and none are righteous, this characteristic of God seems to foreclose the salvation of every living soul – but it does not! God has made provision for a Kindred-Redeemer in His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He came among us and became like unto us by suffering every pain and heartache that we can experience. He even went further than that in willingly dying on the cross in payment for the sins for which we could in no wise pay. Our debt was insurmountable except by the pure and divine blood of our Lord. He defeated death and Hell for us, and rose on the third day. He ascended into Heaven to intercede for us and to prepare a place for us. Not only is He preparing a place for us, but He has sent His Holy Spirit to prepare US for that place.

Sing, my soul, adore his Name! Let his glory be thy theme: praise him till he calls thee home; trust his love for all to come. What does the Name of Jesus Christ mean to

you? It should mean EVERYTHING worth remembering, for our Lord Jesus Christ is our All-in-All. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (Phil 2:10-11) You may not need reminding that this verse includes every living creature – both in Heaven and on earth. It is a powerful Name. It is the only Name under Heaven whereby we shall be saved. *21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* (Acts 2:21) What does that Name, JESUS, mean? It means the Salvation of Jehovah. The name, Christ, means anointed. So Jesus Christ is the anointed Savior of the God. He is many things, and all things worthy. He is the Ancient of Days, the Great I AM, the Creator God, the Atoning Savior, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lord, the Prince of Peace, the alpha and Omega – and all in between. But the Name by which He is known that I love the most is that of EMMANUEL. He is WITH us all of the time, and for all of the distance. And, yes, we should praise Him until He calls us home, but that should be just the beginning of our praise for we shall praise Him throughout the breadth and width of Eternity.

O LORD, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and evening comes (that is, the evening of life), and the busy world is hushed, 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*