



**H**E loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. <sup>7</sup> He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. <sup>8</sup> Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. (Psalm 33:5-8)

**D**EEP calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. (Psalm 42:7)

**P**RAISE ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. <sup>3</sup> Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. <sup>4</sup> Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. (Psalm 148:2-4)

This classical hymn is one of high praise to the God of all Creation in descending order of magnitude – the Heavens which includes all the heavenly bodies and distant galaxies; the earth and all that is in it; and the sea which covers a greater part of the earth. The author, nephew of William Wordsworth, is Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1883), an Anglican cleric who was Bishop of Lincoln in 1865. As with every Christian hymnist, Wordsworth attempted to cause each of his hymns to have a direct reflection on biblical doctrine. In the words of the Rev. J. H. Overton, D.D.: “He held it to be ‘the first duty of a hymn-writer to teach sound doctrine, and thus to save souls.’ He thought that the materials for English Church hymns should be sought (1) in the Holy Scriptures, (2) in the writings of Christian Antiquity, and (3) in the Poetry of the Ancient Church. Hence he imposed upon himself the strictest limitations in his own compositions.”

## O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea

O Lord of heav'n and earth and sea,  
to Thee all praise and glory be;  
how shall we show our love to Thee,  
who givest all?

The golden sunshine, vernal air,  
sweet flow'rs and fruits Thy love declare,  
when harvests ripen, Thou art there,  
who givest all.

For peaceful homes and healthful days,  
for all the blessings earth displays,  
we owe Thee thankfulness and praise,  
who givest all.

Thou didst not spare Thine only Son,  
but gav'st Him for a world undone,  
and freely with that blessed One,  
Thou givest all.

Thou giv'st the Holy Spirit's dow'r,  
Spirit of life and love and pow'r,  
and dost His sev'nfold graces show'r  
upon us all.

For souls redeemed, for sins forgiv'n,  
for means of grace and hopes of heav'n,  
Father, what can to Thee be giv'n,  
who givest all?

**1 O Lord of heav'n and earth and sea, to Thee all praise and glory be; how shall we show our love to Thee, who givest all?** The first verses of both Genesis and the Gospel of St. John call upon us to acknowledge God as the Pre-existent, omniscient, and omnipotent Creator of all things. Indeed, the supreme question is proclaimed in this first verse – “How shall we show our love’ to our Lord who has given all things without whom we would not only have nothing, but not exist at all? Even our love for Him is granted in the first instant to us by Him. “18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* 19 **We love him, because he first loved us.**” (1 John 4:18-19)

**2 The golden sunshine, vernal air, sweet flow'rs and fruits Thy love declare, when harvests ripen, Thou art there, who givest all.** Walk out tomorrow morning in the warmth of a dawning sunrise, inhale the fragrance-laden air, and listen to the natural music of the birds and creatures of the garden. From whence do you believe those blessing came? Of course, once you consider that question, the answer will emerge immutable that the Lord your God has made those blessings available out of an immeasurable love for you and all Creation.

**3 For peaceful homes and healthful days, for all the blessings earth displays, we owe Thee thankfulness and praise, who givest all.** This would be a commendable appeal in prayer for it asks nothing, but expresses thankfulness for all that the Lord has given. May I ask a simple question? When was the last time you gave thanks to God for allowing you to get out of bed this morning, for your home, for days of joy and sunshine, or for your freedom to move about and have your being in life? Your next breath is a gift of God – be thankful for it and all things big and small.

**4 Thou didst not spare Thine only Son, but gav'st Him for a world undone, and freely with that blessed One, Thou givest all.** Abraham was spared the ordeal of sacrificing his only son, Isaac at Mt. Moriah. This was an example to us, not only of the great faith of Abraham, but of the grievous hurt of the Father in providing His own only Begotten Son as a propitiation for our sins. Can we even barely conceive of the pain of that sacrifice? The ultimate sacrifice one could ever make would be his own life, and that is what Christ gave for us.

**5 Thou giv'st the Holy Spirit's dow'r, Spirit of life and love and pow'r, and dost His sev'nfold graces show'r upon us all.** Here is a most beautiful mystery seldom expressed in our fellowships. A widow's dower was a provision made for the widow by her deceased husband to provide all her future needs. The Church is the Bride of Christ. *"For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called."* (Isaiah 54:5) The Lord has left a dower for His Church in the Person of the Holy Ghost. The power of love and life is vested in the elect by means of that Holy Ghost which is our Comforter. Once the first great act of grace is granted (salvation), then all the other graces of God are added. *"2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."* (Isaiah 11:2-3)

**6 For souls redeemed, for sins forgiv'n, for means of grace and hopes of heav'n, Father, what can to Thee be giv'n, who givest all?** How shall we repay anything to God since we are literally nothing without him. He gave even our bodies to us and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. We rebelled as the clay to the potter. But when we were the most disfigured by sin, he marred the lump of clay which we were and created a new and comely child of His own cherishing. He makes all things new – including you and me. He has freely forgiven and removed our sins by virtue of His unmerited grace. Instead of desponding fear, He has given us a brightly burning hope. He has given us, in fact, ALL! Are you thankful?

### **Closing Thought**

In reading and contemplating the words of this hymn, how successful do you believe the hymnist was in conveying the doctrinal truths of God's love and redeeming grace, and our obligations to return thanks and praise for such undeserved blessings?