

All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord

Charles Wesley 1707–88

Hymn 442 from *Together in Song*
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All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.

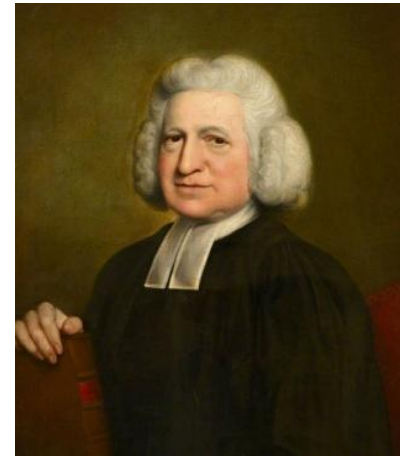
The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love.

Even now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree;
concentred all, through Jesus' name,
in perfect harmony.

We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.

And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet.

All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord is the hymn which most illustrates Charles Wesley's lyrical theology of Christian friendship. For the Wesleys, "there was no religion but social religion, no holiness but social holiness. In other words, faith always includes a social dimension. One cannot be a solitary Christian". Numerous biblical passages may be cited that affirm the Wesleyan concept of "social religion". Wesley scholar Diana Sanchez-Bushong specifically mentions 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 as biblical foundations for this hymn. For example, 1 Corinthians 12: 12 notes, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (KJV). Ephesians 4: 3 states, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (NIV).



Each of the six verses reinforces the theme of "social religion" in some way:

"... together seek his face" (v.1); ***"He bids us build each other up"*** (v.2)

"The gift which he on one bestows, we all delight to prove" (v.3)

"... concentred all in Jesus' name, in perfect harmony" (v.4)

"We all partake the joy of one; the common peace we feel" (v.5)

The final verse appropriately points the Christian community to heaven where the sanctification of the believer and the fullness of the Christian body is perfected:

***And if our fellowship below in Jesus be so sweet,
what height of rapture shall we know when round his throne we meet!***

This hymn is most closely, though not exclusively, identified with Methodists, not because other traditions do not share in its principles, but perhaps because the theological language is distinctly Wesleyan. For modern singers, some may find specific words or phrases to be curious; for example, "concentred" (v.4), "sensual minds" (v.5).

And it begs the question: "Does the language really describe the reality of the fledgling Methodist societies at the time of the Wesleys?" While this hymn may not have always been an existential description of reality, it was aspirational – a vision of what Christian community might become.



excerpts from an article by

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www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/history-of-hymns-all-praise-to-our-redeeming-lord