

“What Wonderful Love Is This” ~ Alexander Means

This hymn comes from Appalachia and dates to the early 1800s to a time and place where hymnals were scarce where people learned hymns by singing them again and again. And so it repeats and repeats "What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, what wondrous love is this, O my soul!"

The words begin with a question, "What wondrous love is this?" But then, in the third verse, they become an anthem "To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing." (NOTE: Check your hymnal some hymnals have different words). The last verse has a triumphant quality "And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on."

We don't like to think about death, but death is a fact of life. This hymn reminds us that Christ frees us from death makes it possible for death to be more the opening than the closing of a door. It looks forward to an eternity filled with joyful song. On earth, some of us have good singing voices and others don't. But in heaven, every voice will ring loud and true in honor of the God who blesses us and gives us -----

From --Lectionary.orggreat joy.

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am;
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be;
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And through eternity, I'll sing on.*

In olden days the Methodists were noted for their joyful salvation in Christ and that heartfelt love was often expressed in their seasons of worship. At one time, one of the denominations itinerant preachers, Samuel Sellers, made a visit to the Attakapas county in Louisiana. There lived there a certain woman named Mrs. Rice, who had a reputation of being a pious woman, but who disliked the feeling and joyful expressions of the Methodists in their worship. It is said that she fell into doubts as to her acceptance with God and readiness to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and she began to seek earnestly for light. She was informed that Mr. Sellers was going to preach near her home, and went to hear him, hoping that she might receive some message from God's Word that would give her the long-sought for peace. Under the sermon she found no relief from her heavy burden. But after the sermon the preacher began to sing the song beginning with "What wondrous love is this!" Strange feelings welled up in Mrs. Rice's heart. They were attended

At one time Samuel Sellers made a visit to the Attakapas country in Louisiana. There lived there a Mrs. Rice, who had the reputation of being a pious woman; but she disliked the Methodists, and especially their habit of shouting when happy in the Lord. But she fell into doubts as to her acceptance with God and readiness to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and she began to seek earnestly for light. Learning that Mr. Sellers was going to preach near her home, she went to hear him, hoping that she might receive some message from God's Word that would give her the long-sought peace. Under the sermon she got no relief from her heavy burden. But after the sermon the preacher began to sing the song beginning with "What wondrous love is this!" Strange feelings welled up in Mrs. Rice's heart. They were attended with such joy that she repeated to herself: "What wondrous love is this, O my soul?" Mr. Sellers with full heart advanced to the second stanza:

*When I was sinking down, sinking down,
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul.*

There was now no suppressing of the joy that welled up and overflowed her heart, and she said, "Let the Lord do as he will;" and now with a flood of fastfalling tears and her face illumined by a heavenly smile, she gave vent to her feelings in loud and longcontinued praises to God. After this she was no longer prejudiced against the Methodists, but became an ardent advocate of a "joyful and feeling religion."