



*Anglican Orthodox Church*



## **The Sovereign who will be Worshipped!**

Sir Robert Grant the author of “O Worship the King” was acquainted with kings. His father was a member of the British Parliament and later became chairman of the East India Company. Following in his father’s footsteps, young Grant was elected to Parliament and then also became appointed governor of Bombay, and in that position he became greatly loved. A medical college in India was named in his honor.

This hymn by Grant is based on Psalm 104, a psalm of praise. The progression of titles for God in the fifth stanza is interesting. God is first our Maker, our Creator. Then, even before our conversion, He is our Defender, our Keeper from harm. We know Him then as Redeemer, our personal Savior from sin and its penalty. Finally, as we walk day by day with Him, as we commune with Him and enjoy His fellowship, we know Him also as Friend. (Taken from: “The One Year Book of Hymn,” Tyndale press)

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O worship the King, all glorious above,  
O gratefully sing His power and His love;  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,  
Whose robe is the light, Whose canopy space,  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

The earth with its store of wonders untold,  
Almighty, Thy power hath founded of old;  
Established it fast by a changeless decree,  
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;  
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;  
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

O measureless might! Ineffable love!  
While angels delight to worship Thee above,  
The humbler creation, though feeble their lays,  
With true adoration shall all sing Thy praise.

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The great and lovely hymn above is an example of what a Christian Hymn should be in total. It is not light and frivolous, but serious and pregnant with deep, spiritual truth and meaning.

Every line contains a different truth directly from Scripture.

Many of our modern ‘wonders of hymnody’ are more like mantras than like hymns - they repeat the same kindergarten-like phrases over and over again. There is no intellectual rigor or challenge at all. The words in these modern ‘made-for-profit’ songs are so common that they bore the thinking worshipper.

Words are the blood of a great hymn and the music is the heart which provides its delivery to all our faculties. Both are important and both should be reverential, serious, and God-honoring. The so-called music which pulsates with sensual emotions, and which owes its origins to some head-hunter tribe or has been passed on from some pagan society, has no place in the worship setting of a Christian church. Music has potent effect upon our minds and hearts. It must be uplifting and respectful if it is to be honored and received by a Sovereign to whom we owe our very existence.

Another measure of a hymns spiritual quality is its living testimony. Who was the author? Why was the hymn written? What telling effect has it had on the Christian family through the years of its existence. An example would be the hymn: Amazing Grace. This hymn is the salvation story of its author, John Newton. Another is: What a friend we Have in Jesus, a hymn whose author lived a life so close to God that he was known as the “Good Samaritan of Port Hope (Canada)”

Next time you hear ‘God is so good’ being repeated over and over, ask yourself, “Where is the spiritual worth?” The worshippers wave their arms back and forth, trance-like, as they sing this juvenile piece, repeating the same phrase, again and again. By the time the sermon is delivered, most are too emotionally exhausted to listen. Friends, let’s get serious with our worship! JLO

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