

Lord Emmanuel

Author Unknown

Submitted by Mary Lambrecht, M.S. LMFT

Dear Readers,

The following narrative speaks of the never-changing attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ. I found these words especially meaningful in light of the world tragedies of the last year; hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, the tsunami in Southeast Asia, the earthquake in Pakistan, and the continuing war in Iraq. They were written inside the front cover of the program for the 2005 St. Olaf Christmas Worship Festival. The author is unknown. May this year's celebration of the birth of the Christ Child, bring a deeper knowledge to you of how He is with you; our Lord Emmanuel. You are not alone, no matter what losses, tragedies or changes in life may or have come your way. - *Mary Lambrecht*

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

When time and knowledge wash like soft but steady waves
Against the certainties of early times-
Eroding, undercutting, turning rock to sand-
And signs and symbols lose their power
To symbolize with confidence and calm-
To what shall we compare enduring grace, abiding love?

"The mountains round about Jerusalem?"
Not in these times. Mountains built of rock will move
With shifts and tremors in the crust of earth.
They slide with rains or quakes to villages and valleys far below.
The continents themselves drift slowly round the earth
Like mighty icebergs in a calm but swelling sea.

The sea? The never changing, ever changing sea?
"Thus far you shall go, and no further," say the ancient words.
And yet, beset by instability of ocean floors and raging winds,
It trespasses appointed bounds that have been set,
It surges up and sweeps away what mortals think secure.
Even sun and stars, once thought eternal, burn to darkness and are gone.

What then endures...what shall abide...what can we trust from age to age?

A manger and a mother's love, the angels' song, an infant's cry
Are better symbols than the earth and sky
Of what endures, of what abides.
For only faith-hope-love- abide, these three,
Sung as a triune carol for all eternity.

Meanwhile, the green sea's primal ebb and flow,
Orion standing proud above a wintry world below,
The rocky peaks and hills beside
Cannot abide, but welcome our respect because
They bear their witness to the One who does.

Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel.

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