

Romans 16<sup>25-27</sup>: *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Christ fulfils God's promises in the Old Testament. We have an example in today's Old Testament Lesson – God's promises to David, made almost 1,000 years before the Birth of Jesus, fulfilled in our Saviour for all eternity. This is so because the story of Jesus is God's eternal plan. It is in the very nature of God that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us because God is love. It is in the very nature of God that He laid down His life on the Cross for our Salvation. God is love. It is of the very nature of God that death can have no more dominion over Him because God is love. The promise of the Holy Ghost shed forth is of the very nature of God because God is love. It is of the very nature of God that He will come again in glory and that His kingdom will have no end.

This is God's eternal plan, the eternal purpose of the One Who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, which is, which was, and which is to come. To put it another way, *He's got the whole world in His hands*. When God creates the heavens and the earth, when He creates us, He creates something different and separate from Himself, something to love. Not only does He love the world and everything in it, He creates and loves us, human beings made in His image and likeness, human beings capable not only of being loved but of loving in return. To put it another way, *He's got you and me, brother in his hands, He's got you and me, sister, in his hands*. It is His eternal purpose to bridge the gap created by our rejection of His love, our sin, by becoming one of us, by sharing every aspect of our lives, by dying for and by rising again and by giving us the Holy Spirit so that we may be prepared when He comes again in glory to bring us home to His realm of eternal love.

We speak of God as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. We speak of Christ as all in all. The words mean that God is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere, but what does that mean? It means *He's got the whole world in His hands* and *He's got you and me, brother, in his hands, He's got you and me, sister, in his hands*. The Advent hope is that our lives will be fulfilled eternally in the love of God, the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The advent hope is that the whole of creation will be fulfilled eternally in the love of God. The Christmas promise is Emmanuel, God with us, God in Christ sharing every aspect of our lives. We live, you and I, in the embrace of the divine love. *He walks with us and talks with us, along life's narrow way*. Whatever happens we are in the embrace of the arms of the One Who loves us so much that He suffered those arms to be stretched out on the Cross for our Salvation. We dwell in Him and He in us – the Christmas promise and the Advent hope – God's eternal purpose revealed in so many ways in the wonders of the universe, proclaimed in the Scriptures and manifested to the whole Creation in Christ Jesus. (Repeat text.)

Creed p145.

Intercessions and confession in form of Litany p111.