

Deeper and Deeper

~Other Speakers G-L: Hymn Stories:

"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" Psalm 40:8

Into the heart, the will, the cross, the joy, the love of Jesus--deeper and deeper I go . . ." These beautifully worded lines with their soulful melody flowed from the heart of Oswald J. Smith after many difficult experiences during the early years of his ministry. He related in his book *The Story of My Life* that he was carried through these troublesome times by what he called his "morning watch."

It was when I walked alone with God that I learned the lessons He would teach. I set aside a time and a place to meet Him, and I have never been disappointed.

Dr. Smith, regarded today as one of the finest missionary statesmen and evangelists of the twentieth century, described the inspiration that came to him for "Deeper and Deeper":

Arriving in Woodstock, Ontario, I was invited to preach one Sunday morning in the largest Methodist Church in that city. As I walked along the street on my way to the church, the melody of this hymn sang itself into my heart and with it the words, "Into the heart of Jesus, deeper and deeper I go." I can still recall the joy and buoyancy of youth, the bright sunshine overhead, the thrill with which I looked forward to my service that Sunday morning, as again and again I hummed over the words. I wondered if I could retain the music in my mind until the service was over. I was just twenty-one years of age. After preaching, I quickly returned to my rented room, and the first thing I did was to write out the melody as God had given it to me. I had been able to remember it, and it has never changed from that day to this. The writing of the remaining verses was much more difficult. It was three years later, in the First Presbyterian Church of South Chicago, which I pastored, that I completed them. It was then 1914, and I was twenty-four years old. The writing of the hymn afforded me much joy, nor has it ever grown old. I still love it and always will, for it was the child of my youth. It proves conclusively that God can impart His deepest truths to the hearts of the young, for I doubt I have ever written anything more profound since.

Evangelist Billy Graham, who spoke at Dr. Smith's funeral in 1986, paid him this tribute: "The name Oswald J. Smith symbolizes worldwide evangelism. His books have been used of the Holy Spirit to sear into the very depths of my soul and have had a tremendous influence on my personal life and ministry. He is the greatest combination of pastor, missionary, statesman, hymn writer, and evangelist of our time."

Alone, dear Lord, ah, yes! alone with Thee!
My aching heart at rest, my spirit free;
My sorrow gone, my burdens all forgotten,
When far away I soar alone with Thee.
-Oswald J. Smith