

*"There stood the Son of God in love, His grace to us extending; The Holy Spirit like a dove, upon the scene descending; The Triune God assuring us, with promises compelling, That in our Baptism He will thus, among us find a dwelling, to comfort and sustain us.*

*"All that the mortal eye beholds Is water as we pour it. Before the eye of faith unfolds the pow'r of Jesus' merit. For here it sees the crimson flood, to all our ills bring healing; The wonders of His precious blood, the love of God revealing, assuring His own pardon."*

Our hymn reminds us, in both of these verses, that in Holy Baptism, the Triune God assures us of His promises, His presence, and His gracious pardon. That pardon, forgiveness for our sins, is ours through the redeeming work of Jesus our Lord. As Jesus began His public ministry, taking up the road that would finally lead to the cross, He first stepped into the waters of the Jordan River to be baptized by His kinsman John. John proclaimed a Baptism of repentance as he prepared the people to welcome their Messiah and Savior. Jesus had no sin for which to repent, yet He chose to enter the baptismal waters, placing Himself alongside the sinners whom He would, in just a few years, suffer and die to save.

The presence of the Holy Trinity was revealed—to mortal eyes and ears—at Jesus' Baptism. As the Son rose up from the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, and the Father's testimony echoed from the heavens: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17b). This revelation of the Holy Trinity at Jesus' Baptism assures us that the Triune God is also present when we are baptized "to comfort and sustain us."

When we see a Baptism done in the Name of the Triune God, our "mortal eye" can see only ordinary water, such as we might use to drink or wash our hands. Some people may question the use or power of this ordinary, earthly substance, as Martin Luther (the author of this hymn) asks in his *Small Catechism*: "How can water do such great things?" Yet with the eyes of faith we see so much more. Spirit-born faith reveals the presence and power of the Holy Trinity. Unseen to mortal eyes is the crimson flood of Jesus' precious blood that, in the baptismal waters, cleanses us from sin. Unseen is the Holy Spirit at work in the Word, anointing us with His indwelling presence and

creating faith in our hearts. Unheard by mortal ears is the Father's voice, calling out with love, "This is My beloved son ... this is My beloved daughter," claiming us as His children and welcoming us into the kingdom of His Son. In the water and Word of Baptism, through His presence, His power, and His promises, the Triune God reveals His love for us, "assuring His own pardon."

**THE PRAYER:** Triune God, You have claimed me as Your child in Baptism. Help me to be confident in Your promises and assured of Your pardon for my sins. Amen.

This Devotion is based on the hymn, "To Jordan Came the Christ, our Lord," which is found on page 406 of the *Lutheran Service Book*.