

## Leave me o love by Philip Sidney

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The speaker refuses "human, temporal, impermanent love in favor of eternal love—the love for and of God. It is the most explicitly Christian, as well as the most specifically biblical of all Sidney's sonnets". Regarding the theme, "Sidney redefines love's 'yoke,' and shifts his speaker's allegiance from the lord of [courtly] love to the Lord of all Love".

The mood of this sonnet is atypical for Sidney's writing. It is different from that is found in "the sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella*, in the two versions of the *Arcadia*, and rare in his prose works".

The speaker commands the temporal, mortal love that ends with rust: "but to dust" (l. 1) to leave him, instead, he calls himself to follow the eternal or divine love. Sidney refers to the Bible Matthew 6:19-20:

**contrasting that which moth and rust consume—all material possessions and human affections—with that which neither moth nor rust can consume—heaven and divine love. Fleeting, mortal, ephemeral things give only momentary joy or satisfaction.**

The second quatrain holds a significant metaphor of the 'yoke'. The speaker wishes himself to put on "that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be" (l. 6). This image is also quoted from the Bible (Matthew, chapter 11) and the yoke is identified by 'the light'. It also means an 'easy burden'. Also, it can be interpreted as God's yoke which is not a mere slavery but is the real freedom.

In the concluding six lines, the speaker desires to have the 'light of salvation' that can lead a person through the progression of mortal life to a happy end in heaven. The speaker denounces any who "slide." Since each "comes of heavn'ly breath," it is a primary human commitment to discard the privileges of transient things in favor of "Eternal Love."

Critics connected this 'tonal shift' of this sonnet "within the expanding Protestant state as well as Sidney's own troubled political career".

### **Form**

Sonnet 32 is slightly different from the English sonnet it is composed of three quatrains, each with pair of rhyme sounds, and an ending couplet. This structure is relevant to theme of the poem rather than the Petrarchan structure " since the couplet completes, rather than contrasts with, the preceding four lines". The rhyme scheme does not follow the typical English pattern and Sydney uses "an interlocking rhyme scheme of abab, cdcd, dd, and all the rhymes are masculine (accented). This sonnet shows Sidney at his mature best". The meter of the poem is iambic pentameter, and it is consistent, and "its rhythms are emphasized by the alliteration used only in the first quatrain; other devices are employed in the remaining 10 lines".

### **References**

Marjory E. Lange