# Selected Hymns

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## INTRODUCTION

"Grace and peace! I am planning, according to the examples of the prophets and the ancient Fathers, to create vernacular psalms, that is hymns, for the common folk, so that the Word of God remain with the people also through singing. Therefore we are looking everywhere for poets."[a] These lines, written by Martin Luther in December 1523 to Georg Spalatin,[1] mark the origin of one of the most typical and most successful fruits and means of the Reformation, the Protestant hymn. They do so not only for the Wittenberg Reformation but also for the one stamped by Geneva, although there the impulse that Luther set was taken up in a particular way.[2] This is not meant to say that there had not been hymns in the vernacular before. Such hymns had existed in the Middle Ages, when they were sung at different occasions such as processions or pilgrimages, and sometimes, although not officially, and repeatedly forbidden, even at Mass. Luther himself had composed his first hymn in German a few months before the letter to Spalatin when the shock about the news of the first martyrdoms of the Reformation[3] found release in the creation

**1.** Georg Spalatin (1484–1545), secretary, father confessor, and preacher at the Wittenberg court.

**2.** Namely, in the form of the *Genevan Psalter*, restricted to the Psalms and other biblical hymns and to be performed only by human voice without the use of musical instruments.

**3.** Two young Augustinian friars from Antwerp had been burned at the marketplace of Brussels.

*a* WA Br 3, nr. 698.

of the hymn "A New Song Here Shall Be Begun."[b] Thus the Wittenberg professor whose lingustic mastery had already expressed itself in different genres of prose at the age of forty discovered his poetic vein. Three other hymns followed soon, among them "Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice"[c] and "From Trouble Deep I Cry to Thee."[d] What was new, however, in the letter to Spalatin was that now Luther started a project of planned production of hymns in the vernacular. The reason for this unprecedented step was the stage of the liturgical development reached at Wittenberg by December 1523.

Although in the multicolored early Reformation liturgical pieces and orders in the vernacular had already appeared at some places,[4] Luther's first liturgy, the *Formula missae et communionis*,[e] published in December 1523, which was in many respects still a transitional formulation, was in Latin. Nevertheless, precisely this formulary contained a remark that, nearly in passing, set in motion a truly revolutionary development: the elevation of the vernacular hymn to an integral part of the Sunday Mass. Luther wrote that the Latin parts of the Mass sung by the choir could be followed or regularly replaced and should in the end be wholly supplanted by German hymns sung by the congregation. But, of course, such a vision required a large and diverse stock of vernacular hymns. That is why Luther in the same month wrote his letter asking for new German hymns. He named a few medieval examples and enclosed his "From Trouble Deep" as a model. This hymn was composed on the basis of a psalm, and indeed, the first hymns Luther required were such "psalm hymns" (*Psalmlieder*), and thus a new poetic genre was born. He added a few principles on how the hoped-for poets should proceed. They should not stick to the biblical wording. The biblical message must come through clearly and faithfully, but the poets should feel free to render it in their own German ways, with words that were common, but not vulgar; easy, but also to the point.

Luther's letter was sent not only to Spalatin, but at the same time to several colleagues, for, in order to fulfill the pressing need, he said that "we are looking everywhere for poets." Since

**4.** The most important was the *Deutsch Kirchenamt* by Thomas Müntzer (1489–1525), from 1523.

*b* See below, hymn 1, pp. 109 and 122.

*c* See below, hymn 2, pp. 110 and 126.

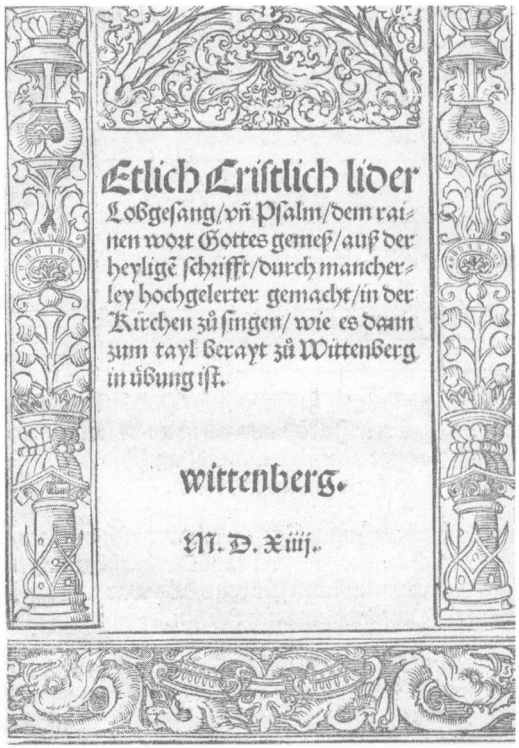
*d* See below, hymn 4, pp. 113 and 131.

*e* WA 12:205–20; LW 53:19–40.

he was not successful with his call, he had to do the work himself and did so immediately. In the following year, 1524, two-thirds of all his hymns were composed. These hymns, together with a few more written by others, were enough to allow the publication of the *Deutsche Messe* (German Mass)[f] in 1525/26, whose *ordinarium* is completely in the vernacular and which requires that all hymns including—as soon as possible—those to be sung *de tempore* were in German as well. Thus, full and active participation of the congregation in the service—hearing, understanding, praying, singing—was possible, the liturgical realization of the priesthood of all believers.

The year 1524 was thus the birth year of the Protestant hymn. In the same year appeared, besides a host of broadsheets with individual hymns, the first Lutheran hymnals, among them one for choirs with four voices set by Luther's musical advisor, Johann Walter.[5] Six hymnals,[g] growing in size from year to year, were published under Luther's personal supervision. He sought to control the content and the form of his own hymns in an age that knew no copyright laws. Many more hymnals were published across and beyond the Holy Roman Empire without his participation, altogether about a hundred Lutheran hymnals before his death.[6] This number mirrors the enormous popularity of the hymns written by Luther and his followers. As sources of the time show, they were widely sung inside and outside of churches, in services, in families, in open places, and at work. Thus, they came to be one of the most effective means of propagating the message of the Reformation and, practically from the beginning, one of the distinguishing marks of those congregations that followed the Wittenberg Reformation.[h]

In many cases Luther used existing hymns, ancient and medieval, in German and in Latin, which he reshaped, enlarged,


Etlich Cristlich lider
Lobgesang/vñ Psalm/dem rai-
nen wort Gottes gemeß/auß der
heyligē schrifft/durch mancher-
ley hochgelerter gemacht/in der
Kirchen zů singen/ wie es dann
zum tayl Berayt zů Wittenberg
in übung ist.

wittenberg.

M. D. Xiiij.

The title page of the *Achtliederbuch*, the first German hymnal, published in 1524. It contained only eight hymns, four of which were written by Luther. The title in German is *Etlich Cristlich lider Lobgesang un Psalm dem rainen wort Gottes . . . zů Wittenberg in übung ist.*

5. Johann Walter (1496–1570), court musician in Wittenberg and Dresden, founder of the first congregational choir and thus the father of this new institution, which was to become one of the trademarks of the Lutheran church.

6. The enormity of this number is made plain in the introduction to Ulrich S. Leupold's Luther's hymns in LW

*f* *German Mass*, WA 19:72–113; LW 53:61–90; TAL 3:131–61.

*g* Cf. LW 53:191–94 (WA 35:317–33).

*h* See, for example, Christopher Boyd Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

53:194 n.25: "In comparison, the English Reformation produced thirteen hymnals up to the end of the sixteenth century (Scottish hymnals included)."

and, in the latter case, translated. In other cases, as mentioned above, he made biblical texts into German hymns—in the first place, the Psalms. A few times he created hymns out of catechetical material, and not rarely he composed a hymn without a preexisting textual base. In every case his hymns were songs of the Christian faith, which expressed itself in them. They displayed the Christian's joys and hopes before God and humans, not in a modern way oriented at subjective emotions, but as echoes of the gospel message that they wanted to convey. Since the hymns were meant for the people in the pews, Luther chose—among the different options present in the poetic usage of a time before literary standardization of vernacular poetry—a simple style with short sentences, containing mainly nouns and verbs with few adjectives and adverbs, devoid of abstract words and rich in images. He used rhymes, but in the rather loose way common at the time, and he applied alliteration.

For many hymns Luther used music that was already available. He reshaped tunes, especially in order to adapt their rhythms and melodic lines to the texts he had composed. He tended to choose rather strong, at times even complicated, rhythmical structures. The melodic lines followed the traditional church modes, although some already pointed to the new major and minor scales that were being advanced in his time. In all this, not only his musical talent, but also the solid musical education, both practical and theoretical, he had received at school and university bore fruit. Luther, who loved to sing in his spare time with friends and family, considered music to be God's second best gift after theology. Moreover, he attributed to music itself a theological role. Not only did he consider singing hymns a vital realization of the priesthood of all believers, he also underlined that music, especially sung music, possesses a particular affinity with the gospel: the gospel is not a written, bookish thing; neither is it something merely inward and spiritual, but it is a "living voice," vocal and audible, in need of advancement through speaking and singing. It is "a good message, good news, a good report, a good shout, which one sings and tells with gladness."[i] Therefore,

i LW 35:358. In the German "*gute botschafft, gute meher, gutte newzeytung, gutt geschrey, davon man singet, saget und frolich ist*" (WA DB 6:2,24). See how the good news of Christ's birth is to be spoken and sung, as the first stanza of "From Heaven on High I Come to You" states.

Luther criticized "spiritualists" who rejected church music: they despised the word of God in its external, audible mode, as sound, just as they despised it in its tasteable and visible mode, as sacraments, in favor of a purely spiritual understanding. Yet, in fact, the word by definition has an external, sensual nature, and for its audible mode this becomes apparent in the strongest and most beautiful way when it is sung.[j]

## The Hymn Texts

### *1. A New Song Here Shall Be Begun (1523)*[k]

With "A New Song" Luther's activity as a hymnwriter began, both in terms of text and melody, and the hymnological history of the Reformation began.[l] Obviously, an emotion as deep as the one triggered by the news of the martyrdom of two young friars from his own order[7] in the Netherlands was needed to make him express himself for the first time in poetic form. After all, the excommunication and the Edict of Worms that had been pronounced upon him and all his followers in 1521 stipulated the same fate for him. The protection of his prince, Frederick the Wise,[8] spared Luther a similar death. Yet in the Netherlands, under the immediate rule of the Habsburgs, who suppressed the Reformation with all their might, there was no way out for adherents of the Reformation, as the two young Augustinian hermits and a third one to follow later[9] had to experience.

For his song Luther chose the genre of folk ballad. This was the poetic form for telling stories of heroes and villains, of battles and victories, of love and death. Ballads were dramatic and gripping: their language was simple, but colorful; their melodies, to be accompanied by the lute or another string instrument, were easy. Such ballads were sung by wandering bards in marketplaces and in taverns; they were printed and sold on broadsheets and quickly disseminated. Thus, the story they told

**7.** That is, the Augustinian Order. Friars Jahn van den Esschen and Henry Vos refused to renounce Lutheran teachings and were executed in Brussels on July 1, 1523.

**8.** Frederick the Wise (1483–1525), elector of Saxony.

**9.** Lambert Thorn, who was imprisoned and executed only later in 1528.

*j* See Dorothea Wendebourg, "Luther und das Kirchenlied im lutherischen Protestantismus," *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 28. Jahrgang (2011), Heft 2: 44–59.

*k* LW 53:211–16.

*l* See above pp. 105–6.

made its way across the country. Indeed, Luther wanted the story of the two Augustinian friars to be known everywhere. It was a story of faithfulness in extremity, of simplicity in the midst of cunning, of victory over cruelty and death. Whoever listened to it or sang it could not but take sides with the two martyred "boys." Indeed, that was, besides honoring the two, the scope of the song. For taking sides with them implied taking sides with the cause for which they had died, the gospel itself as it was proclaimed anew by the Reformation. At the dramatic climax of the ballad, immediately before the "two huge great fires" are kindled for the young friars, the message of the Reformation for which they are going to be burnt is explicitely cited (stanza 7): they have to read "a paper small" on which their "fault" is written, namely, that they trusted "solely in God"—the bell is rung for the Reformation catchword "alone." In fact, their "ashes" will spread this message, as the blood of the martyrs has from the beginning of Christianity been the seed of the church. Moreover, the "reappearance" of the word of God testified to by the two faithful "boys" points further, toward the ultimate goal (stanza 12): it announces the "summer" that will finally end the long winter of spiritual cold, the longed-for second coming of Christ (cf. Matt. 24:32). Thus, the ballad closes with an expression of eschatological hope and joy.

### *2. Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice (1523)*[m]

"Dear Christians," which followed soon after "A New Song," is also a kind of ballad that pictures a dramatic story of life and death and final victory. But this time the story is not a historical event in Luther's time but the divine history behind the scenes that makes victories like the martyrdoms in Brussels possible: the struggle between God and the devil over sinful humans, or, from the human perspective, the rescue from the devil's dominion and from death to the joyful life of the justified Christian. The narrative is retrospective, told from the point of the happy result that the poet and singer shares with all those "dear Christians" who are invited to sing with him (stanza 1). Yet the poet tells it and invites everybody to tell it in the first person singular, for the divine story becomes existential reality in faith for

*m* LW 53:217–20.

every Christian individually. The nine stanzas (2–10), which contain the struggle-and-rescue story, present the basic insights of Luther's theology: the first act looks back at the singer's being lost under devil, death, and sin, his lack of good works and the bondage of his will, his anguish and despair. The second act presents God's decision, rooted alone in the mercy of his "father-heart," to rescue the captive, and his request that his own son, his "heart's most precious crown," "go down," kill death, and let the captive live with him. The third act deals with the Son's obedient fulfillment of his Father's command. It alludes to the incarnation, the Christmas event ("a maiden mother"), and indicates that its purpose was to "catch the devil."

One would expect the narrative to continue in the same way—with the cross, resurrection, and so forth. But it does not; it stops here, at the point of the Son's having come "down to me"—in other words, the narrative stops at Christmas. Instead of continuing to report on the Son's story, the hymn now lets the Son himself talk: the whole rest of the hymn (stanzas 7–10) is one long speech of the Son incarnate to the captive, to the "me" for whom he just "came down." He tells the captive to "hold by" him, because he is now going to fight his battle. "For I am thine and thou art mine, and my place also shall be thine" (stanza 7)—the ancient nuptial formula, which reminds the reader of the image of the "Happy Exchange" (*fröhlicher Wechsel und Tausch*), about which Luther wrote in his famous treatise *The Freedom of a Christian.*[n] As the Son has taken on the captive's existence in the incarnation, now the captive is encouraged to make the Son's existence his own. Because of this exchange the Son will die the captive's bloody death, and the captive in turn will profit from the victorious Son's eternal life with God, to be experienced on earth through the gift of the Holy Spirit. All these consequences of the *fröhlicher Wechsel* appear as part of the Son's speech and therefore in the future tense (stanzas 8 and 9). With this linguistic trick Luther does not want to give the impression that Christ's death, resurrection, and the rest had not yet happened. Rather, he underlines that what once has happened aims at becoming the basis and sense of the Christian's life today: such uniting of Christ and the Christian and thereby also of Christ's fate and the Christian's life takes place when the gospel becomes audible as Christ's own

*n* LW 31:333–77; TAL 1:467–538.

word spoken to a hearer and when the hearer "cleaves" to this word and thus "holds by" him who spoke it. It is this intricate relationship between Christ and the human, between Christ's story and human presence that is not simply the content of the hymn "Dear Christians," but which is acted out poetically in it.

"Dear Christians" is Luther's most theologically and hermeneutically refined hymn. One could say it is *the* hymn of the Reformation. No wonder that in the final stanza Christ strongly exhorts the singer to act and teach accordingly and to beware of corruptions of the gospel. Possibly because of its programmatic significance, "Dear Christians," included in Lutheran hymnals from the beginning, was circulated with three different tunes, one by Luther himself and two older ones that might have been proposed because they are easier to sing. Luther's own tune is bold in its intervals and melodic line, thus a congenial musical translation of his words.

### *3. From Heaven on High I Come to You (1535)*[o]

Like "A New Song" and "Dear Christians," this hymn is also one of Luther's free compositions, both in regard to text and tune, with no earlier textual or melodic base. Yet it does not come from the early, groundbreaking years of the Reformation, but from a later period of Luther's life when he did not often write hymns. In the first editions it carries the title "A Childrens' Song"—and that is indeed what it is. Some interpreters claim that Luther, who by now was a father of several children, wrote this Christmas hymn for them. Originally, it came with a melody already in use, before Luther composed his own that begins, as he loved, with a high note and is particularly fitting for the movement of the angel who descends "from heaven on high" to proclaim the birth of Christ.

The setting of the hymn is the biblical story of the angels' appearance before the shepherds (Luke 2:9-16). The stanzas obviously reflect the reenactment of this scene in popular Nativity plays: the message of the angel, the conversation of the shepherds, their walk to the manger in which the congregation joins. Yet the hymn deviates from this pattern in a peculiar way. Mary and Joseph do not appear, only the child, for the hymn concen-

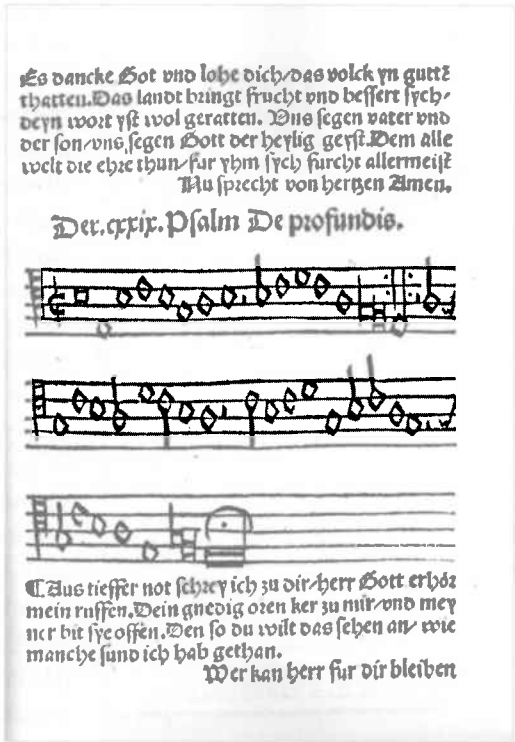
o LW 53:289–91.

trates completely on the relationship of the person who sings it and the Christ child. In fact, the second half of the hymn (stanzas 8–14) consists only in one long prayer addressed to the child. It is a prayer of welcome to the newborn Christ, who comes into a miserable environment not fitting to the "Lord, the maker of us all," as Luther specifies in a series of traditional rhetorical contrasts (stanzas 8, 9, 11). The scope of this welcome, however, is not the child's lying down in the manger. The bed in which he is asked to take his place is the praying person's heart. As in "Dear Christians," the Christ story must become the Christian's own story. Luther indicates how that will happen: contrary to what is normal, this child is asked to "make" himself "a soft, white little bed" (stanza 13). In other words, the initiative is Christ's; he makes the believer's heart his cradle—he awakens the believer's faith in him. In the imagery of the Christmas story, such faith is the rocking of the child in the cradle-heart that cannot but be accompanied by the song of "lullaby" (stanza 14).

### *4. From Trouble Deep I Cry to Thee (1523)*[p]

"From Trouble Deep" was one of Luther's earliest hymns.[q] Yet, contrary to the three hymns presented so far, it is not a free composition but a poetic reshaping of a much older poem, Psalm 130. With it started a new genre and the long series of psalm hymns in the Lutheran, the Reformed, and other Protestant traditions. From early on "From Trouble Deep" was published with different melodies, some taken from other hymns. Two of them belong specifically to this hymn, one in C major and one in the Phrygian mode, the latter by Luther himself.

If one wanted to create vernacular hymns, it was obvious that one would have recourse to the hymnbook of the Bible itself, the psalter. This hymnal had provided daily sustenance for the former monk Luther. Of all the parts of the Bible, none other was treated by the Wittenberg professor more often


Es dancke Got vnd lobe dich/das volck yn gutt̃ thatten. Das landt bringt frucht vnd beſſert ſych/ deyn wort yſt wol geratten. Vns ſegen vater vnd der ſon/vns ſegen Gott der heylig geyſt. Dem alle welt die ehre thun/für yhm ſych furcht allermeiſt Nu ſprecht von hertzen Amen.

Der. cxxix. Pſalm De profundis.

Aus tieffer not ſchrey ich zu dir/herr Gott erhör mein ruffen. Dein gnedig oren ker zu mir/vnd mey ner bit ſye offen. Den ſo du wilt das ſehen an/ wie manche ſund ich hab gethan.
Wer kan herr für dir bleiben

A setting of "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir" ("From Deep Trouble I Cry to Thee") printed in the Erfurt *Enchiridion* (1524)

p LW 53:221–24.

q See above, p. 106.

than the psalter and to no other did he turn more frequently for personal consolation. It was understood that he, like the tradition before him and his Christian contemporaries, read, interpreted, and sang the psalter as a Christian book that spoke of Christ and wanted to strengthen and gladden Christian believers. This was so much a matter of fact that in the Christian use of the Psalms the name Christ did not even have to be spelled out. Such is the case in "From Trouble Deep." In the form of an urgent prayer it expresses the central insight of the Reformation that is enclosed in the formulas "alone through grace" and "alone by faith." As the negative background the hymn depicts the "trouble deep" of sin and unrighteousness, the impossibility to produce "good works" and rely on "my deserts."[10] The only way out is the gracious word of God on which the sinner can rely. This decisive message is strategically placed in the third stanza, that is, in the center of the hymn. And it is presented in a way that implies a specific understanding. Whereas the psalmist simply says that he hopes for God's word, the hymn characterizes this word as the one in which God "promises" divine grace—"promise" being a key word for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Consequently, those whom the singer calls to put their trust upon this divine word are the "Israel . . . born of [the] Holy Ghost" (stanza 4). The God who will finally redeem them is the Good Shepherd (stanza 5). With this image before him, the Christian singer could not but think of the Good Shepherd from John 10, Jesus Christ.

**10.** "Deserts" here means "what I deserve."

### *5. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (1528/29)*[r]

This hymn is the most famous of Luther's seven psalm hymns, if not of all his hymns; its original title was simply "The 46th Psalm," *Deus noster refugium et virtus*[s]—the first words of Psalm 46. We do not know when it was written, but it was published in 1529. The melody, which in its flow and rhythm corresponds perfectly to the poetic text, can safely be considered also to be from Luther's hand.

As much as this hymn is based on Psalm 46, Luther uses the biblical text with great liberty. Only a few words are taken from

*r* LW 53:283–85.

*s* "God is our refuge and strength" (RSV).

the psalm; the imagery of his hymn is different, as is the existential situation in which it is set. However, the theme of both psalm and hymn is identical: both praise God as the singer's only refuge and strength, and for both God proves to be this by destroying the singer's powerful enemies. Yet, whereas the psalmist thinks of pagan peoples attacking the city of Jerusalem, whose military might is countered by God, Luther's hymn speaks of the last battle that "the world's prince," the devil, wages against the faithful before the end of the world. In this final assault of the "*alt böse feind*" (the old evil foe) the faithful have but God as their "fortress" in which to take refuge (stanza 1). What they can do themselves is "all in vain"; the only one—once again the motif of "grace alone"—who can sucessfully "fight for" them is God, the "Lord of hosts" (Lord Zebaoth). The latter conviction is already expressed by the psalm. What is new in Luther's hymn is the identification of this "Lord of hosts": he is Jesus Christ, at the same time human ("the right man") and divine ("God but him is none"), and thus sure "to win the battle" (stanza 2). To this "Lord of hosts," who is obviously not a man of military might, corresponds a specific weapon: the "word," the gospel (stanza 3). Through the "word" alone—the German original reads "one little word" in order to underline the contrast between the apparent powerlessness and the actual power of this means—Jesus Christ overturns "the world's prince" and brings about his "kingdom." Through the same word he fortifies the faithful with his Spirit and protects them (stanza 4). The last stanza hints at the specific context in which the hymn expresses its confidence: the menace coming from the enemies of the Reformation who do not want to "allow the word to stand," and possibly the threat of martyrdom. Those who have Christ as their fortress will not lose the kingdom of God even when they lose everything else.

### *6. Our Father Who in Heaven Art (1539)*[t]

Psalms are not the only biblical pieces Luther made into hymns. He also did so with other texts, for instance, the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) (*Nunc dimittis*), the vision of Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-4), the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father"). The latter two were at the same time part of his versification of

*t* LW 53:295–98.

the *Small Catechism*, whose "Main Parts" (*Hauptstücke*)—Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and Lord's Supper[u]—were all presented in the form of hymns. Thus, they not only could be meditated upon in the textual form of the *Small Catechism*, but also be committed to memory and understanding through singing. The hymn "Our Father" is one of the few for which Luther's handwritten draft, both of text and music, is extant. The text was, however, printed with another melody, taken from the hymnal of the Bohemian Brethren and adapted to the text. Since this happened under Luther's eyes it might be that he was not satisfied with his own music and even did the adaptation of the Bohemian melody himself. The hymn has always been used with this latter melody.

The structure of the hymn closely follows that of the Lord's Prayer. Each of the seven petitions has its own stanza that always opens with the biblical words and continues with an interpretation of the petition. What is requested is in each case given a broader perspective than the literal meaning would suggest. These interpretations obviously mirror the respective passages of Luther's catechisms. The petition stanzas are framed by one that meditates on the first line of the prayer, its address "Our Father," which makes all those who pray and sing this prayer equally his children, and one that is dedicated to the final "Amen." The implicit topic of this last stanza is the notion through "the word alone—by faith alone," for it is stressed that the basis for genuine praying and genuinely saying "Amen!" is faith that trusts solely in the word of God.

### *7. All Praise to Thee, O Jesus Christ (1523/4)*[v]

The first stanza of this Christmas hymn is a medieval song that dates at the latest from the fourteenth century. The "*Kyrioleis*" at the end marks it as a "*Leise*," that is, a stanza that developed from a vernacular acclamation to a Latin sequence.[11] "*Kyrioeleis*" ("Lord, have mercy!") was the closing word of such a *Leise*. The melody, at least in its general line, most probably was also medieval.

**11.** A sequence is an elaborate liturgical piece sung in the Mass on special feast days by the choir before the reading of the Gospel.

*u* See below, hymn 10, pp. 120 and 144.

*v* LW 53:240–41.

Luther took over this *Leise*, as he did in several other cases,[w] and added six new stanzas of his own. In the first stanza itself he made only one significant change: whereas the medieval version praised Christ because he is born "today," Luther's version praises him because he is born "man," thus shifting the accent from the liturgical remembrance of the Bethlehem event to its theological depth: the incarnation. What is immediately striking, however, is the change in the rhetorical direction between the first and the new stanzas: the first stanza is a prayer of praise directed to Jesus Christ who was "born as a human." The following six stanzas proclaim this event and therefore speak about him in the third person. Why this proclamation follows—and why Luther added his stanzas to the medieval one—as well as how it takes place is expressed in the finale (stanza 7): the fact of the incarnation that is celebrated in the first stanza as such has to be communicated and appropriated as a deed of "great love" performed by the Son of God "for us." Only if the event of Bethlehem is seen in this relational perspective[12] does "Christendom" have a reason for its Christmas joy and praise. Stanzas 2 and 3 describe the Son's deed of love by depicting the contrast between his divine majesty and the lowliness of the human existence he took upon himself—the same rhetorical strategy as in the Christmas hymn "From Heaven on High." Stanzas 4 through 6 point out what this step of loving condescension—described in three different images as the coming of light into darkness, of a noble guest into a miserable world, and of a rich one into poverty—means "for us": to become children of light, royal heirs, and rich inhabitants of heaven like the angels, a dense web of biblical allusions drawing on verses like John 1:4-9; 12:36; Rom. 8:17; 1 Thess. 5:5; Titus 3:7; 2 Cor. 8:9; and Heb. 12:22.

**12.** Cf. "From Heaven on High" (hymn 3 above, pp. 112-13), where this same scope of putting the Christmas event in a relational perspective is reached in another way: not in the form of proclamation of Christ's love, but through prayer to the child for faith in his love.

### *8. Death Held Our Lord in Prison (1524)*[x]

The history of this hymn is complicated, as its original title, "The Song of Praise 'Christ Is Arisen,' amended," indicates. "Christ Is Arisen" is a medieval Easter *Leise*, one of the oldest German vernacular hymns. Luther loved it dearly and included it in 1529 among the hymns to be sung in the congregations

*w* See below, hymn 8, pp. 117 and 139.

*x* LW 53:255-57.

of the Reformation.[y] "Amended" therefore does not imply that this hymn in his eyes needed correction of faults. Luther, rather, thought the medieval hymn needed theological deepening. More precisely, as in his Christmas hymns he wanted to expose what the underlying Gospel story, in this case the event that "Christ was arisen," means for the believers who sing about it. To this end he presented the *Leise* in a new form (stanza 1) and added six stanzas of his own, for one of which, the central stanza 4, he made use of another medieval piece, the Latin sequence "Praise to the Paschal Victim" (*Victimae paschali laudes*), which had once given occasion for the birth of "Christ Is Arisen" as its acclamation. For the melody of his hymn Luther also took this sequence as its base, in addition to the music of "Christ Is Arisen," which had itself already been dependent on the melody of the sequence.

The first stanza introduces the theme "Christ Is Arisen" in the wake of the *Leise*. Yet several significant changes foreshadow what follows. Luther not only drops the *Kyrioleis*, but he also underlines the purpose of what happened to Christ "for us," the bestowal of forgiveness and life. In accordance with this two-dimensional aim, Christ's resurrection itself has a reverse side, his death, which needs to be addressed. In fact, the hymn "Death Held Our Lord" could just as well be taken for a Good Friday hymn; not accidentally, Luther wrote no hymn on Christ's passion and crucifixion. On the basis of Rom. 4:25, stanza 1 first speaks about Christ's death for the sake of "our sins" before it refers to his resurrection for the sake of our "life." The following six stanzas unfold this short Pauline formula as a dramatic story. The Good Friday/Easter event is told in a ballad of liberation. Thus, there is close affinity between "Death Held Our Lord" and "Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice."[z] The latter hymn tells the liberation drama in the perspective of the individual believer's justification, whereas the Easter hymn presents it as a revolution that happened once and for all (stanzas 2–4) and then speaks about the believer's involvement in a second unit (stanzas 5–7). The drama evolves in four acts: the life of the sons of men under the captivity of death (stanza 2), the victorious interference of Christ (stanza 3), the duel between death and life (stanza 4), and the banquet of the liberated (stanzas 5–7). The

*y* Namely in the *Klugsche Gesangbuch*, from 1529.

*z* See above, hymn 2, p. 110.

center is stanza 4 which, on the basis of Hos. 13:14, depicts the Easter event as one death "eating" the other. Even more drastic is the image presented in stanza 5: Christ as the paschal lamb which on the cross was "roasted" in the passion of God's love—a blending of Exod. 12:3-8 and Luther's image of God being an "oven of love."[a] This image opens up to the dimension of personal appropriation of God's love: appropriation through communion in the Lord's Supper, which is hinted at indirectly by way of the clue "lamb," and appropriation through faith, which is addressed directly by saying that faith "holds" Christ's blood "before Death's eyes" (cf. Exod. 12:7), that is, it holds the forgiveness achieved by Christ against the debt brought on by sin (cf. stanza 3). Thus, the word comes into play that is the goal of the last stanza and thus of the whole hymn, faith. The joy of Easter (stanza 6) springs from the faith that is fed by the crucified and risen Christ alone (stanza 7).

### *9. Come, Holy Ghost Lord and God (1524)*[b]

All three of Luther's hymns for Pentecost were based on medieval hymns, one of them Latin and two in the vernacular. The first stanza of "Come, Holy Ghost" was likely a fifteenth-century German translation of an eleventh- or twelfth-century Latin antiphon. Luther held it in the highest esteem; indeed, he said about it: "'Come, Holy Ghost Lord and God etc.' is a hymn composed by the Holy Ghost about himself, both words and music."[c] Nevertheless, since 1529 his hymn bore the title "'Come, Holy Ghost . . .' amended by Martin Luther." Again, "amended" is not to be understood in the sense of correction, but of theological deepening. For this purpose Luther added two stanzas of his own that interpret the medieval piece in a specific way. The melody was also taken over from the medieval stanza, though slightly simplified.

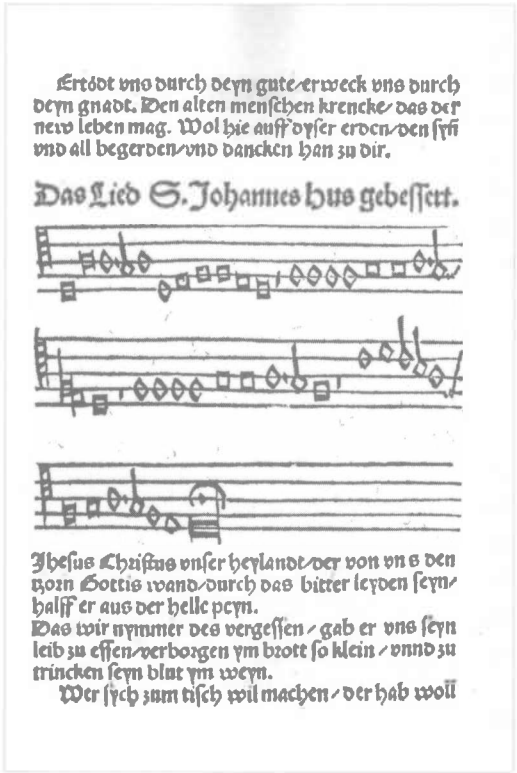
After the first stanza has prayed to the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts of the believers whom the Spirit's light has united in one faith with God's grace and kindle their love, the second stanza makes this desire specific by introducing the notions of word and

*a* See WA 36:425, 1/13.

*b* LW 53:265–67.

*c* WA TR 4, nr. 4478.

faith. Asking for the Spirit's light means asking for illumination through the divine word, the gospel, which enables the believer to recognize God in the right way, as loving Father instead of demanding judge, and to trust in Christ alone with true faith. The third stanza proceeds from faith to life in faith that is a life in the service of God. Such service in a world of troubles resembles the service of a knight for which the Spirit is asked to send comfort, joy, and strength.


Ertödt vns durch deyn gute/erweck vns durch deyn gnadt. Den alten menſchen krencke/das der new leben mag. Wol hie auff dyſer erden/den ſyn vnd all begerden/vnd dancken han zu dir.

Das Lied S. Johannes Hus gebeſſert.

Jheſus Chriſtus vnſer heylandt/der von vns den zorn Gottis wand/durch das bitter leyden ſeyn/halff er aus der helle peyn.
Das wir nymmer des vergeſſen/gab er vns ſeyn leib zu eſſen/verborgen ym brott ſo klein/vnnd zu trincken ſeyn blut ym weyn.
Wer ſych zum tiſch wil machen/der hab wol

This version of "Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior" appeared with the title "The Hymn of St. John Hus" in 1524.

*10. Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior (1524)*[d]

This hymn on the Lord's Supper again presents itself as an "amendment": it bears the title "The Hymn of St. John Hus, amended." In fact, it was only attributed to the Bohemian "forerunner" of the Reformation who had been martyred for his criticism of the church and is therefore here called a saint.[13] Luther used material from this Latin hymn and revised it as he did other medieval hymns. Here, however, his revision went considerably further than in the previous cases. Luther undertook not only a theological deepening, but a complete theological revision of the medieval hymn, which can only in parts, mainly in stanza 1, still be recognized. The music is also medieval, but did not originally belong to this hymn.

The "Hymn of St. John Hus" praised the wondrous real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. In his revision, Luther also speaks about this real presence (stanza 2). But in his perspective, Christ's sacramental presence is not a static reality but part of a movement of self-giving: what makes the presence of Christ's body and blood remarkable is that they are given to eat and to drink. Thus, the sacrament is an element in the overarching movement of grace that the Christ story is in itself (stanza 1) and which is "unforgettably" remembered by receiving the sacrament (stanza 2). After the first two stanzas have delineated this movement of grace from the cross to the distribution of the sacrament and have characterized it as a movement for all of "us," the following eight stanzas

**13.** Jan Hus (1369–1415), a Czech theologian who was burned at the Council of Konstanz, was considered to be such a "forerunner" because of parallels with the Reformation in his demands for reform of the church.

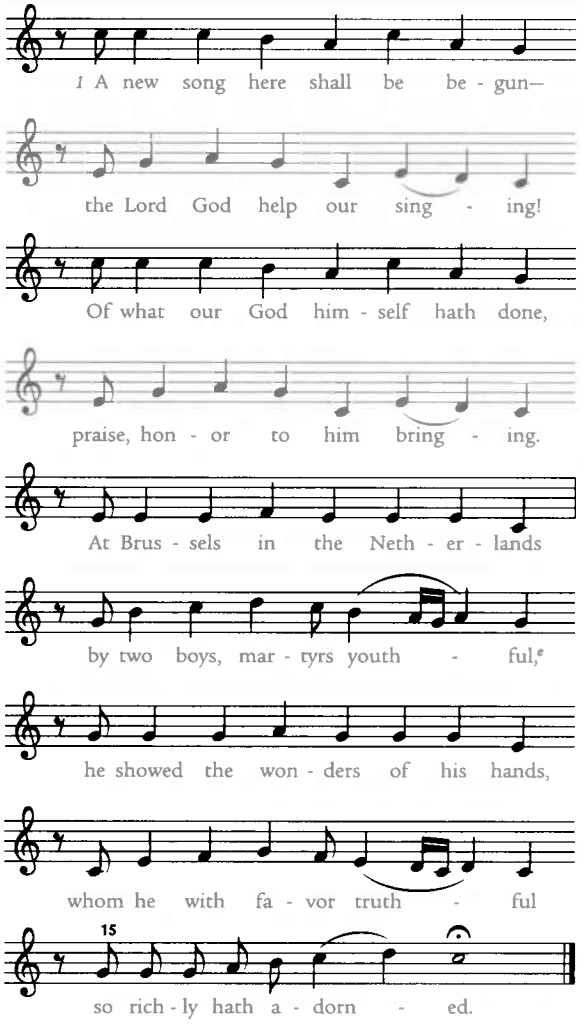
d . LW 53:249–51.

look at the other pole of the movement, the communicant. Or, more precisely, they speak to him and do so in the second person singular. In stanzas 4 and 5 it is even Christ himself who speaks to the communicants and tells them what he is giving them here and now at the sacramental table. The hymn thus becomes a personal proclamation of the gospel. On the part of the communicant who hears and eats there is only one attitude that corresponds to this divine communication: faith—faith which is aware of one's own destitution (stanza 6) and inability to change the situation (stanza 8), and which expects everything from Christ (stanzas 7 and 9). Who comes to the table with such faith is well "prepareth" and "worthy" to receive the body of Christ (stanza 3; cf. 1 Cor. 11:27-29). The hymn closes with a reminder that faith is not idle. The love of God received by the communicant cannot but bring forth fruit, that is, works of love for one's neighbor (stanza 10).

# SELECTED HYMNS[14]

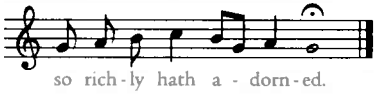
## Hymn 1: "A New Song Here Shall Be Begun"

*Erfurt 1524*




**14.** The hymn texts in this volume are based primarily on the translation in LW 53 by George MacDonald, revised by Ulrich S. Leupold. According to the introduction of that volume, "faithfulness to the original wording, style, and meter seemed more important than a completely idiomatic English rendition" (LW 53:199). Further, Leupold states the LW edition "would like to represent Luther's hymns in an English form that is as close as possible to the original German text and at the same time singable to the original melodies" (LW 53:201). Some changes to the hymn texts have been made in this current edition, but they are not specifically noted.

**15.** Walter's Wittenberg hymnal of 1524 and most later hymnals have the final cadence lead to the dominant instead of the tonic.




*e* See n. 3, p. 105 and n. 7, p. 109.

2. The first right fitly John[16] was named,
So rich he in God's favor;
His brother, Henry[17]—one unblamed,
Whose salt lost not its savor.
From this world they are gone away,
The diadem they've gained;
Honest, like God's good children, they
For his word life disdained,
And have become his martyrs.

3. The old arch-fiend[18] did them immure[19]
With terrors did enwrap them.
He bade them God's dear Word abjure,
With cunning he would trap them:
From Louvain many sophists came,[20]
In their curst nets to take them,
By him are gathered to the game:
The Spirit fools doth make them—
They could get nothing by it.

4. Oh! they sang sweet, and they sang sour;
Oh! they tried every double;
The boys they stood firm as a tower,
And mocked the sophists' trouble.
The ancient foe it filled with hate
That he was thus defeated
By two such youngsters—he, so great!
His wrath grew sevenfold heated,
He laid his plans to burn them.

5. Their cloister-garments[21] off they tore,
Took off their consecrations;
All this the boys were ready for,
They said Amen with patience.
To God their Father they gave thanks
That they would soon be rescued
From Satan's scoffs and mumming pranks,
With which, in falsehood masked,
The world he so befooleth.

**16.** Jahn van den Esschen (see n. 7, p. 109, above).

**17.** Henry Vos (see n. 7, p. 109, above).

**18.** I.e., Satan (the devil).

**19.** I.e., imprison.

**20.** The Catholic University of Louvain was founded in 1425 in Louvain (Leuven), Belgium. The "sophists" refer to Scholastic scholars at the university who demanded that the Augustinian brothers recant their public support of Reformation teachings.

**21.** The tunics worn by the friars were torn from them to show that they were no longer part of the order.

Augustinian friars Jahn van den Esschen and Henry Vos being burned at the stake

6. Then gracious God did grant to them
To pass true priesthood's border,
And offer up themselves to him,
And enter Christ's own order,
Unto the world to die outright,
With falsehood made a schism,
And come to heaven all pure and white,
To monkery be the besom,[f]
And leave men's toys behind them.

7. They wrote for them a paper small,
And made them read it over;
The parts they showed them therein all
Which their belief did cover.
Their greatest fault was saying this:
"In God we should trust solely;
For man is always full of lies,
We should distrust him wholly":
So they must burn to ashes.

8. Two huge great fires they kindled then,
The boys they carried to them;
Great wonder seized on every man,
For with contempt they view them.
To all with joy they yielded quite,
With singing and God-praising;
The sophs had little appetite
For these new things so dazing.
Where God was thus apparent.

9. They now repent the deed of blame,[g]
Would gladly gloss it over;
They dare not glory in their shame,
The facts almost they cover.
In their hearts gnaweth infamy—

*f* I.e., broom.

*g* WA 35:414–15 prints this verse and the next one at the end of the poem.

They to their friends deplore it;
The Spirit cannot silent be:
Good Abel's blood out-poured
Must still besmear Cain's forehead.*h*

10. Leave off their ashes never will;
Into all lands they scatter;
Stream, hole, ditch, grave—nought keeps them still
With shame the foe they spatter.
Those whom in life with bloody hand
He drove to silence double,
When dead, he them in every land,
In tongues of every people,
Must hear go gladly singing.

11. But yet their lies they will not leave,
To trim and dress the murther;[22]
The fable false which out they gave,
Shows conscience grinds them further.
God's holy ones, e'en after death,
They still go on belying;
They say that with their latest breath,
The boys, in act of dying,
Repented and recanted.[23]

12. Let them lie on for evermore—
No refuge so is reared;
For us, we thank our God therefore,
His word has reappeared.
Sure at the door is summer nigh,
The winter now is ended,
The tender flowers come out and spy;
His hand when once extended
Withdraws not till he's finished.

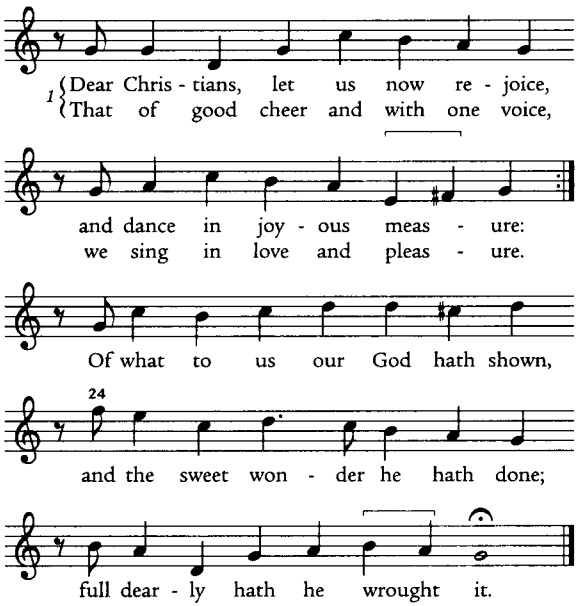
**22.** I.e., murder.

**23.** Their Louvain accusers falsely claim the boys recanted their support of Protestant teachings as they died.

*h* A reference to Cain's murder of Abel in Gen. 4:1-16.

## Hymn 2: "Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice"

*Nürnberg 1523*




2. Forlorn and lost in death I lay,
A captive to the devil,
My sin lay heavy, night and day,
For I was born in evil.[25]
I fell but deeper for my strife,
There was no good in all my life,
For sin had all possessed me.[26]

3. My good works they were worthless quite,
A mock was all my merit;
My will did hate God's judging light,
To all good dead and buried.
E'en to despair my anguish bore,
That nought but death[27] lay me before;
To hell I fast was sinking.

**24.** Some of the later hymnals substitute D for the F here to avoid the high note.

**25.** Ps. 51:7.

**26.** Rom. 7:17.

**27.** Rom 7:24.

4. Then God felt sorry on his throne
To see such torment rend me;
His tender mercy he thought on,
His good help he would send me.
He turned to me his father-heart;
Ah! then was his no easy part,
For of his best it cost him.

5. To his dear Son he said: "Go down;
'Tis time to take compassion.
Go down, my heart's most precious crown,
Be the poor man's salvation.
Lift him from out sin's scorn and scath,[28]
And strangle for him cruel Death,
That he with thee live ever."

6. The Son he heard obediently,
And by a maiden mother,
Pure, tender—down he came to me,
For he would be my brother.
Secret he bore his strength enorm,
He went about in my poor form,
For he would catch the devil.

7. He said to me: "Hold thou by me,
Thy matters I will settle;
I give myself all up for thee,
And I will fight thy battle.
For I am thine, and thou art mine,
And my place also shall be thine;
The enemy shall not part us.

8. "He will as water shed my blood,
My life he from me reave[29] will;
All this I suffer for thy good—
To that with firm faith cleave well.
My life from death the day shall win,
My innocence shall bear thy sin,
So were you blest forever.

**28.** I.e., injury.

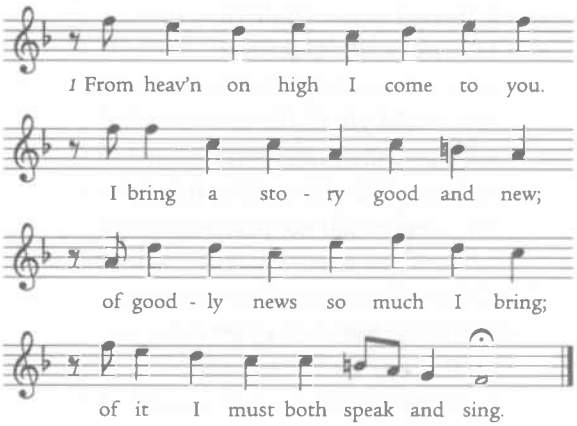
**29.** I.e., deprive of; seize, carry away.

9. "To heaven unto my Father high,
From this life I am going;
But there thy Master still am I,
My spirit on thee bestowing,
Whose comfort shall thy trouble quell,
Who thee shall teach to know me well,
And in the truth shall guide thee.

10. "What I have done, and what I've said,
Shall be thy doing, teaching,
So that God's kingdom may be spread—
All to his glory reaching.
Beware all doctrines man will do,
For that corrupts the treasure true;
With this last word I leave thee."

## Hymn 3: "From Heaven on High I Come to You"

*Nürnberg 1523*



2. To you a child is come this morn,
A child of holy maiden born,
A little babe so sweet and mild—
Your joy and bliss shall be that child.

3. It is the Lord Christ, our own God.
He will ease you of all your load;
He will himself your Savior be,
And from all sinning set you free.

4. He brings you all the news so glad
Which God the Father ready had—
That you shall in his heavenly house
Live now and evermore with us.

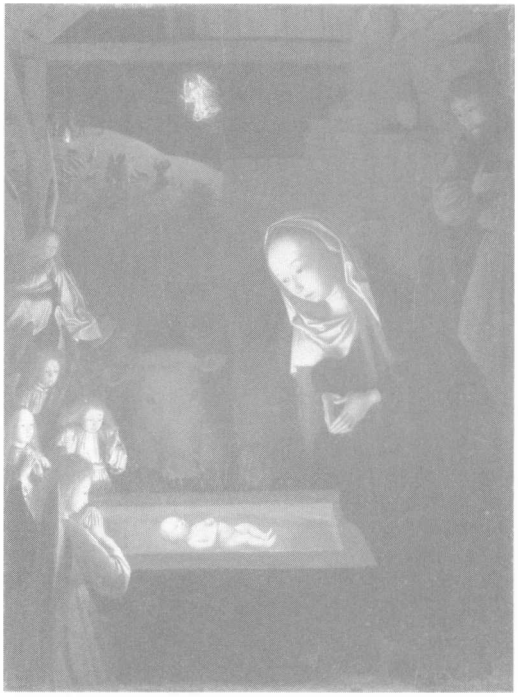
5. Take heed then to the token sure,
The crib, the swaddling clothes so poor;
The infant you shall find laid there,
Who all the world doth hold and bear.

6. Hence let us all be gladsome then,
And with the shepherd folk go in
To see what God to us hath given,
With his dear Son endowed from heaven.

7. Take note, my heart; see there! look low:
What lies then in the manger so?
Whose is the lovely little child?
It is the darling Jesus-child.

8. Welcome thou art, thou noble guest,
With sinners who dost lie and rest,
And com'st into my misery!
How thankful I must ever be!

9. Ah Lord! the maker of us all!
How hast thou grown so poor and small,
That there thou liest on withered grass,
The supper of the ox and ass?



"The Nativity at Night," painted by Geertgen tot Sint Jans, c. 1490

10. Were this world wider many fold,
And decked with gems and cloth of gold,
'Twere far too mean and narrow all,
To make for thee a cradle small.

11. The silk and velvet that are thine,
Are rough hay, linen not too fine,
Yet, as they were thy kingdom great,
Thou li'st[30] in them in royal state.

12. And this hath therefore pleased thee
That thou this truth mightst make me see—
How all earth's power, show, good, combined,
Helps none, nor comforts thy meek mind.

13. Dear little Jesus! in my shed,
Make thee a soft, white little bed,
And rest thee in my heart's low shrine,
That so my heart forget not thine.

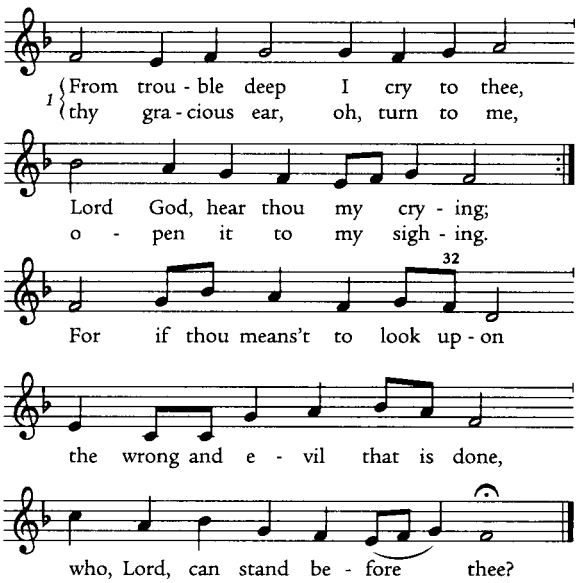
14. And so I ever gladsome be,
Ready to dance and sing to thee
The lullaby thou lovest best,
With heart exulting in its guest.

15. Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who his own Son to us hath given!
For this the angel troop sings in
Such a new year with gladsome din.

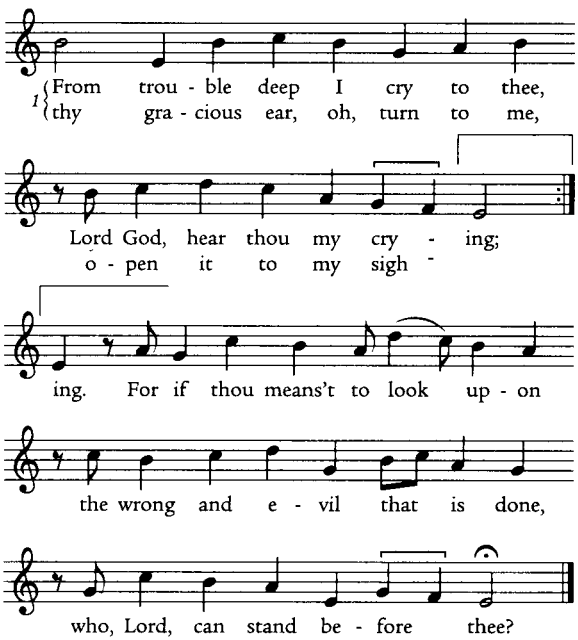
**30.** I.e., liest.

## Hymn 4: "From Trouble Deep I Cry to Thee"[31]

*Strassburg 1525*




*Erfurt 1524*




**31.** The first melody shown is F major. The second melody is Phrygian.

**32.** *Ordnung des Herren Nachtmahl* (Strassburg, 1525) and later sources substitute E for F.

2. With thee counts nothing but thy grace
To cover all our failing.
The best life cannot win the race,
Good works are unavailing.
Before thee no one glory can,
And so must tremble every man,
And live by thy grace only.

3. Hope therefore in my God will I,
On my deserts[33] not founding;
Upon him shall my heart rely,
All on his goodness grounding.
What his true Word doth promise me,
My comfort shall and refuge be;
That will I always wait for.

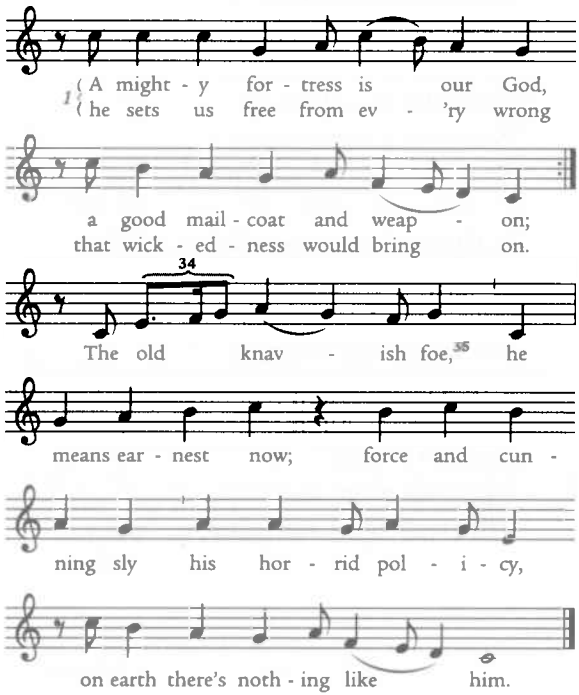
4. And though it last into the night,
And up until the morrow,
Yet shall my heart hope in God's might,
Nor doubt or take to worry.
Thus Israel must keep his post,
For he was born of [the] Holy Ghost,
And for his God must tarry.

5. Although our sin be great, God's grace
Is greater to relieve us;
His hand in helping nothing stays,
The hurt however grievous.
The Shepherd good alone is he,
Who will at last set Israel free,
From all and every trespass.

**33.** I.e., deserved rewards or punishments.

## Hymn 5: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

*Klug 1533*




2. 'Tis all in vain, do what we can,
Our strength is soon dejected.
But he fights for us, the right man,
By God himself elected.
Ask'st thou who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Lord of Hosts alone,
And God but him is none,
So he must win the battle.

**34.** In the first edition of Walter's hymnal that contains "Our God He Is a Castle Strong," the edition of 1544, Walter changed this figure.

**35.** I.e., Satan (the devil).

3. And did the world with devils swarm,
All gaping to devour us,
We will not fear the smallest harm,
Success is yet before us.
This world's prince accurst,
Let him rage his worst,
No hurt brings about;
His doom it is gone out,
One word can overturn him.

4. The word they must allow to stand,
Nor any thanks have for it;[i]
He is with us, at our right hand,
With all gifts of his spirit.
If they take our life,
Wealth, name, child, and wife—
Let everything go:
They have no profit so;
The kingdom ours remaineth.

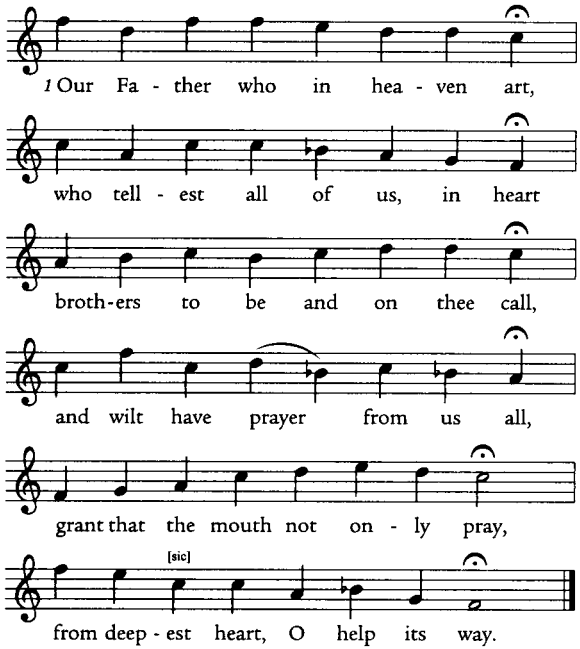
## Hymn 6: "Our Father Who in Heaven Art"

2. Hallowed be thy name, O Lord;
Help us keep pure thy holy word,
That we too may live holily,
And keep in thy name worthily.
Defend us, Lord, from lying lore;
Thy poor misguided folk restore.

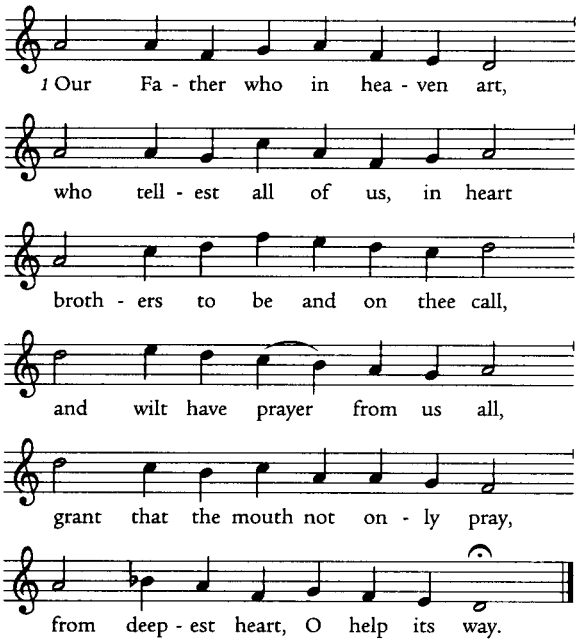
3. Thy kingdom come now here below,
And after, up there, evermo'.
The Holy Ghost his temple hold
In us with graces manifold.
The devil's wrath and greatness strong,
Crush, that he do thy church no wrong.

*i* Or: Nor any choice have in it.

*Luther Ms.*




*Schumann 1539*



4. Thy will be done the same, Lord God,
On earth as in thy high abode;
In pain give patience for relief,
Obedience in love and grief;
All flesh and blood keep off and check
That 'gainst thy will makes a stiff neck.

5. Give us this day our daily bread,
And all that doth the body stead;
From strife and war, Lord, keep us free,
From sickness and from scarcity;
That we in happy peace may rest,
By care and greed all undistressed.

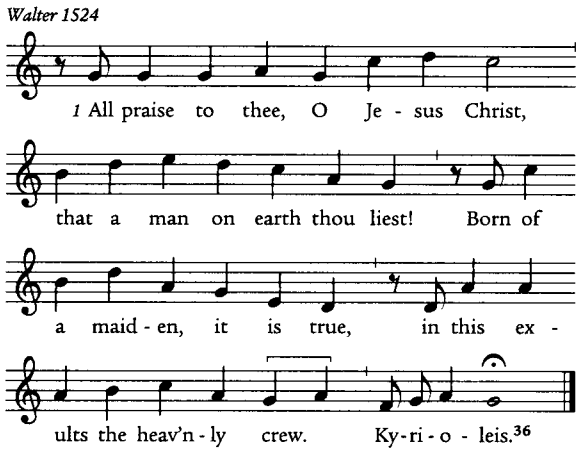
6. Forgive, Lord, all our trespasses,
That they no more may us distress,
As of our debtors we will let
Pass all the trespasses and debt.
To serve make us all ready be
In honest love and unity.

7. Into temptation lead us not.
E'en though the foe makes battle hot
Upon the right and the left hand,
Help us with vigor to withstand,
Firm in the faith, armed 'gainst a host
Through comfort of the Holy Ghost.

8. From all that's evil free thy sons—
The time, the days are wicked ones.
Deliver us from endless death;
Comfort us in our latest breath;
Grant us also a blessed end,
Our spirit take into thy hand.

9. Amen! that is, let this come true!
Strengthen our faith ever anew,
That we may never be in doubt
Of that we here have prayed about.
In thy name, trusting in thy word,
We blithely say Amen, O Lord.

## Hymn 7: "All Praise to Thee, O Jesus Christ"



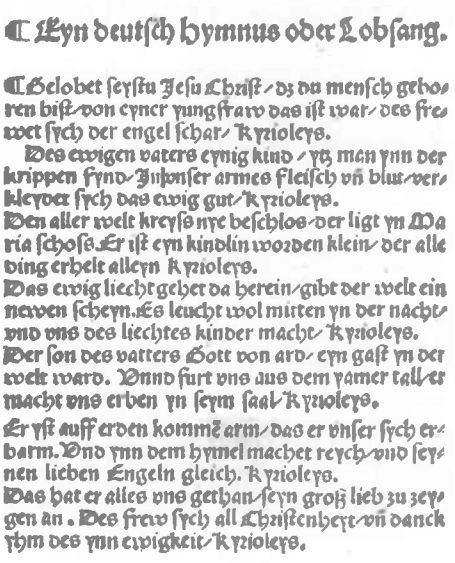

**36.** *Kyrie eleison*, a common contraction in medieval sacred folk song.

2. The Father's only son begot
In the manger has his cot,
In our needy flesh and blood
Doth mask itself the endless good.
*Kyrioleis.*

3. Whom all the world could not enwrap,
Lieth he in Mary's lap;
A little child he now is grown,
Who everything upholds alone.
*Kyrioleis.*

4. Here the eternal light breaks through,
Gives the world a glory new;
It brightly shines amid the night,
And makes us children of the light.
*Kyrioleis.*

5. The Father's Son, God is his name,
In the world a guest became
He leads us from the vale of tears,
And in his palace makes us heirs.
*Kyrioleis.*



¶ Eyn deutſch Hymnus oder Lobſang.

¶ Gelobet ſeyſtu Jeſu Chriſt / dz du menſch geboren biſt von eyner yungfraw das iſt war / des freuet ſych der engel ſchar / Kyrioleys.

Des ewigen vaters eynig kind / yts man ynn der krippen fynd / Jnn vnſer armes fleiſch vñ blut verkleydet ſych das ewig gut / Kyrioleys.

Den aller welt kreyſs nye beſchlos / der ligt yn Maria ſchoſs. Er iſt eyn kindlin worden klein / der alle ding erhelt alleyn Kyrioleys.

Das ewig liecht gehet da herein / gibt der welt ein neuen ſcheyn. Es leucht wol mitten yn der nacht / vnd vns des liechtes kinder macht / Kyrioleys.

Der ſon des vatters Gott von art / eyn gaſt yn der welt ward. Vnnd furt vns aus dem yamer tall / er macht vns erben yn ſeym ſaal / Kyrioleys.

Er yſt auff erden kommē arm / das er vnſer ſych erbarm. Vnd ynn dem hymel machet reych / vnd ſeynen lieben Engeln gleich. Kyrioleys.

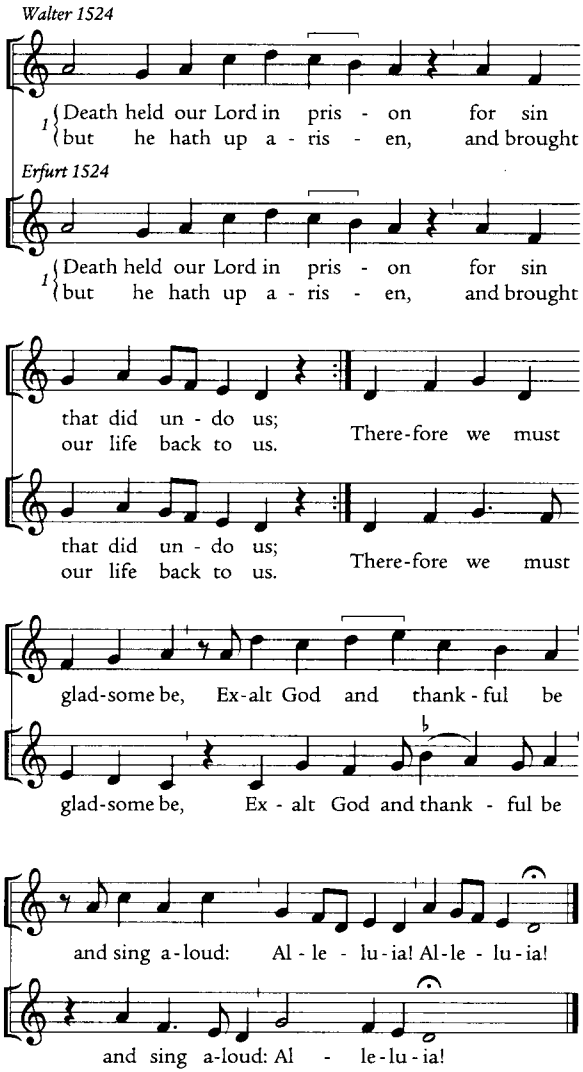
Das hat er alles vns gethan / ſeyn groß lieb zu zeygen an. Des frew ſych all Chriſtenheyt / vñ danck yhm des ynn ewigkeit / Kyrioleys.

Martin Luther's *Weihnachtslied* (Christmas song) "Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ" as it appeared in *Erfurter Enchiridion* (1524)

6. Poor to the earth he cometh thus,
Pity so to take on us,
And make us rich in heaven above,
And like the angels of his love.
*Kyrioleis.*

7. All this for us the Son did do,
his great love for us to show.
Let Christendom rejoice therefore,
And give him thanks for evermore.
*Kyrioleis.*

# Hymn 8: "Death Held Our Lord in Prison"[37]




**37.** Two melodies are provided for this text.

2. Death no one yet overcame—
All sons of men were helpless;
Sin for this was all to blame,
For no one yet was guiltless.
So Death came that early hour,
O'er us he took up his power,
And held us all in his kingdom. Alleluia!

3. Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
Into our place descending,
Away with all our sins hath done,
And therewith from Death rending
Right and might, made him a jape,[38]
Left him nothing but Death's shape:
His ancient sting—he has lost it. Alleluia!

4. That was a right wondrous strife
When Death in Life's grip wallowed:
Off victorious came Life,
Death he has quite upswallowed.
The Scripture has published that—
How one Death the other ate.
Thus Death is become a laughter. Alleluia!

5. Here is the true Paschal Lamb
On which we shall have feasted.
That was on the tree of shame
In flaming passion roasted
His blood on our doorpost lies;
Faith holds that before Death's eyes;
The smiting angel can do nought. Alleluia!

6. So we keep high feast of grace,
Hearty the joy and glee is
That shines on us from his face:
The sun himself, ah! he is,
Who, by his brightness divine,
His light in our hearts makes shine:
The night of our sins is over. Alleluia!

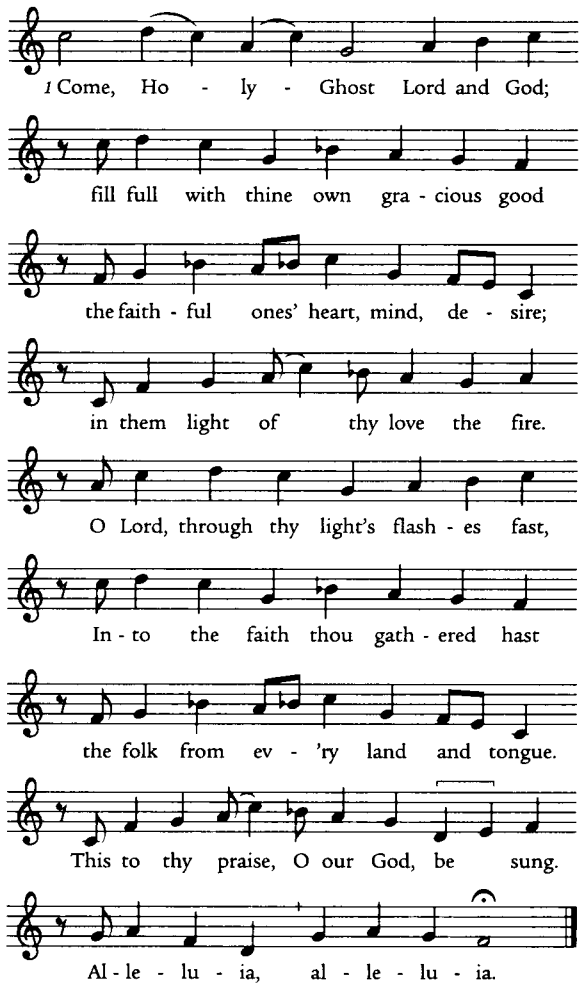
**38.** Something designed to arouse laughter.

*The Resurrection* by Lucas Cranach the Younger, 1558

7. We eat—and so we well fare—
Right Easter cakes sans leaven;
The old leaven shall not share
In the new word from heaven.
Christ himself will be the food,
Alone fill the soul with good:
Faith will live on nothing other. Alleluia!

## Hymn 9: "Come, Holy Ghost Lord and God"

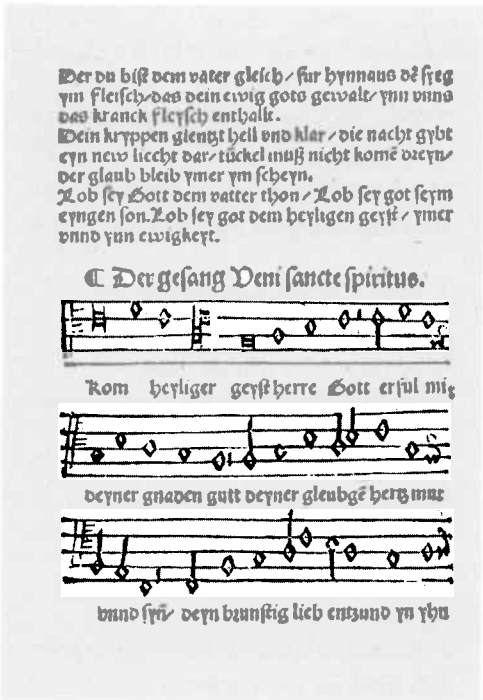
*Erfurt 1524*




2. Thou holy light, sure resort,
Shine on us your life-giving word.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call him Father with delight.
O Lord, protect us from strange lore,
That we may seek no masters more,

But Jesus with true faith solely,
And him with all our might trust wholly.
Alleluia, Alleluia.

3. Thou holy fire, comfort sweet,
Now help us, glad with cheer complete,
That in thy service nought shake us,
From thee let trouble ne'er take us.
Lord, by thy power us prepare,
And make the weak flesh strong to bear,
That as good knights we here with force
Through life and death to thee steer our course.
Alleluia, Alleluia.


Der du biſt dem vater gleich / fur hynnaus dē ſteg
ym fleiſch das dein ewig gote gewalt / ynn vnns
das kranck fleyſch enthalte.
Dein kryppen glentzt hell vnd klar / die nacht gybt
eyn new liecht dar / tückel muß nicht kome dreyn /
der glaub bleib ymer ym ſcheyn.
Lob ſey Gott dem vatter thon / Lob ſey got ſeym
eyngen ſon. Lob ſey got dem heyligen geyſt / ymer
vnnd ynn ewigkeyt.

℄ Der geſang Veni ſancte ſpiritus.

Kom heyliger geyſt herre Gott erfūl mit

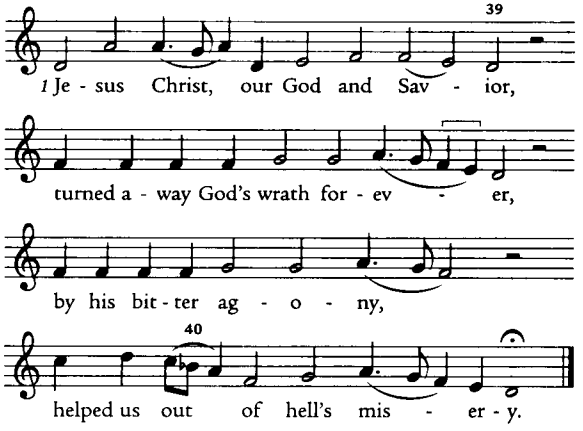
deyner gnaden gutt deyner gleubgē hertz mut

vnnd ſyn / deyn brunſtig lieb entzund yn yhn

A printing of Luther's "Come, Holy Ghost Lord and God" (Erfurt, 1524)

## Hymn 10: "Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior"

*Walter 1524*

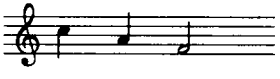



**39.** Most other hymnals have two quarter notes, F and E, in this place.

**40.** This slur appears in many different forms. For example, here are two variations:

*Wittenberg 1524*

*Zwickau 1524, Klug 1533*



2. That we never should forget it
Gave he us his flesh to eat it,
Hidden in this bit of bread,
And to drink gave he us his blood.

3. Whoso to this board repaireth,
Take good heed how he prepareth.
Who unworthy thither goes,
He not life then, just death he knows.

4. God the Father praise thou duly,
That he thee would feed so truly,
And for ill deeds by thee done
Unto death has he giv'n his Son.

5. Have this faith, and do not waver,
It is food for every craver
Who, his heart with sin opprest,
Can no more for its anguish rest.

6. Such a love and grace to get,
Seeks a heart with agony great.
Is it well with thee? take care,
Lest at last thou shouldst evil fare.

7. Lo, he saith himself, "Ye weary
Come to me and I will cheer ye;
Needless were the doctor's skill
To the souls that be strong and well.

8. "Hadst thou any claim to proffer,
Why for thee then should I suffer?
This table is not for thee,
If thou wilt set thine own self free."

9. If such faith thy heart possesses,
And the same thy mouth confesses,
Fit guest then thou art indeed,
And this food thine own soul will feed.

10. Fruit of faith therein be showing
That thou art to others loving;
To thy neighbor thou wilt do
As in love God hath done to you.