ETLICH CHRISTLICH LIEDER

Or

Some Christian Hymns, Canticles, and Psalms

Made According to the Pure Word of God,
From Holy Scripture
by Several Very Learned Men,
to Sing in Church as it is in Part
Already Practiced in Wittenberg.

WITTENBERG

1524

INTRODUCTION

This small hymnbook is a reprint of the first Reformation hymnbook ever published, the *Etlich Christlich Lieder*, which, literally translated, means "Some Christian Hymns." Published in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1524, it compiled a few of the earliest Reformation hymns that had hitherto been circulated as broadsheets only. Known also as the *Achtliederbuch*, or "Hymnbook of Eight," it contains exactly eight hymns. Four of these are by Martin Luther himself, three are by his fellowlaborer Paul Speratus, and one is anonymous, often attributed to Luther's friend Justus Jonas.

THE TEXT WRITERS

Luther's history is well known. He was the bold German Reformer whose careful study of the Scripture led him to question the unscriptural practices of the Roman Catholic Church, to nail his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, and ultimately to begin a Reformation that would spread throughout Europe and influence the entire Christian world. His hymns were a very powerful force in this work, often carrying the truth to cities and towns long before he himself reached them with his preaching. The Reformation was indeed "born in song," and these are the very hymns that birthed it.

Paul Speratus, like Luther, was a well-educated priest in the Roman Catholic Church. Soon after Luther's presenting of his Ninety-Five Theses, Speratus was found preaching reform from the pure truth of Scripture and was consequently ejected from his pulpits. Even before Luther's marriage, Speratus took this bold step and in 1520 became one of the first

priests to marry. Denounced by the Church, he found an open door to preach in Moravia for a few years, then was put in prison for three months, and in 1523 arrived in Wittenberg to work with Luther. He was a faithful addition to the work for the rest of his life, joining forces with Luther in preaching justification by faith alone and the other doctrines of the Reformation. He wrote several hymns, which did much to further the truth he preached.

Justus Jonas was a very close personal friend of Born as Jodokus Koch, the son of Jonas Koch, he became known as "the Just Jonas" early in life and accordingly adopted the appellation as his full name, Justus Jonas. Well educated, he became the rector of the University of Erfurt and thereafter professor of church law at the University of Wittenberg. He heard the famous debate between Luther and Eck and began to be swayed by Reformation doctrines. Ere long, he became a staunch adherent and preacher of these doctrines, being present at the Diet of Marburg and the Diet of Augsburg. Jonas worked closely with Luther and Melancthon for the next several years. So close was he to Luther that he was present to witness Luther's marriage, he was at his side when Luther breathed his last, and he was chosen to preach Luther's funeral. Thereafter he remained a faithful preacher of Scriptural truth until his own death in 1555. wrote several hymns, proclaiming in song the truth he preached, and it is believed that the last one in this collection is from his pen.

LUTHER'S PURPOSE

In a letter written to his friend Spalatin requesting him to write hymn texts, Luther explained the purpose he had in mind for these hymns:

"[Our] plan is to follow the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers of the church, and to compose vernacular psalms for the people, that is, spiritual songs, so that the Word of God may be among the people in the form of music. Therefore we are looking everywhere for Since you are endowed with richness and elegance in the German language, which you have polished through much use, I ask you to work with us, and turn a Psalm into a hymn . . . But I would like you to avoid any new words or language used at court. In order to be understood by the people, only the simplest and the most common words should be used for singing; at the same time, however, they should be pure and apt, and further, the sense should be clear and as close as possible to the Psalm. You need a free hand here: maintain the sense, but don't cling to the words but rather translate them with other appropriate words."

Thus Luther and his fellow hymn writers endeavored to do through hymns of various kinds. In this collection several kinds can be seen. The first is a hymn by Luther on a single topic, that of justification by faith, the great truth that he is famous for championing. The second is one by Paul Speratus also on a particular topic, his being the Law and the Gospel. The third is a metrical version of the Creed by Speratus. The fourth is a confession of man's sinful plight and a plea for God's mercy. The fifth, sixth, and sev-

enth hymns are all Luther's metrical versions of particular Psalms, Psalms 12, 14, and 130 respectively. In these, notice his effort to do as he instructed Spalatin, to use "the simplest and the most common words," yet words that are "pure and apt," with a "clear sense" "as close as possible to the Psalm." Throughout these hymns can be seen the same force and power of language found in his "A Mighty Fortress." Last is Jonas' hymn, which appears to be a teaching hymn, specifically challenging some of the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church and using specific Scripture passages to teach the truth on those points.

THE MUSIC

In this "hymnal of eight" only four tunes are given. Hymns two, five, six, and seven are all sung to the same tune, and hymns three and four likewise share a tune. This was done for very practical reasons. Luther and his companions were writing for an uneducated populace. Their chief design was to teach the people new texts, which they wanted them to learn as quickly and as easily as possible. Therefore, they chose tunes in the common, familiar folk song style of the day. All of these tunes, except the last, are in the form AAB, meaning that the first musical phrase is repeated to form the second musical phrase, and only the third musical phrase is different. This greatly aided in memorizing the tune, which could then be used as a vehicle for many texts.

In the years to come, as the people learned the texts, Luther and his companions would compose new tunes and assign specific tunes to these texts. But in these early days, the object was to get the texts onto the lips of the people, and this was accomplished best by this simple and concise collection of folk style

tunes.

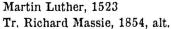
Foreign to our ears today is the modal character of these tunes. Two of the four tunes are in the Mixolydian mode, meaning that they are written in a major key with a lowered seventh scale degree. The tune for hymns three and four is in the Dorian mode, meaning that it is written in a minor key with a raised sixth scale degree. And the tune for the last hymn is written in the first half with the Dorian scale in the second half with the minor scale. All of this gives both major and minor features to all the tunes, giving them a uniquely serious but optimistic character, well suited to their words. We give the tunes here as they appeared in the original German hymnal, melody lines only with no harmonies.

This is the first hymnal of Reformation psalmody and hymnody, which was to have such a profound influence on the world. Congregational singing and vernacular psalms and hymns, set to singable melodies, were virtually unknown for centuries until Luther. Truly the Reformation was "born in song," and Luther's hymnody sang the truth into the hearts of the people and spread it much farther and faster than could have been done otherwise. It began a whole tradition of congregational psalmody and hymnody, following the example of the early church, that has restored this Biblical exercise to the church and brought untold blessing and edification to God's people for centuries.

References:

Etlich Christlich Lieder, Facsimile, Digital Version. The Whole Church Sings, Robin A. Leaver.

Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice Nun Freut Euch. Liebe Christen G'mein





5. He spoke to His beloved Son:
'Tis time to have compassion.
Then go, bright Jewel of My crown,
And bring to man salvation;
From sin and sorrow set him free,
Slay bitter death for him that he
May live with Thee forever.

- 6. The Son obeyed His Father's will, Was born of virgin mother, And God's good pleasure to fulfill, He came to be my Brother.

 No garb of pomp or pow'r He wore, A servant's form, like mine, He bore, To lead the devil captive.
- 7. To me He spake: Hold fast to Me, I am thy Rock and Castle;
 Thy Ransom I Myself will be,
 For thee I strive and wrestle;
 For I am with thee, I am thine,
 And evermore thou shalt be Mine:
 The Foe shall not divide us.
- 8. The Foe shall shed My precious blood, Me of My life bereaving.
 All this I suffer for thy good;
 Be steadfast and believing.
 Life shall from death the vict'ry win,
 My innocence shall bear thy sin;
 So art thou blest forever.
- Now to My Father I depart,
 The Holy Spirit sending
 And, heavenly wisdom to impart,
 My help to thee extending.
 He shall in trouble comfort thee,
 Teach thee to know and follow Me,
 And in all truth shall guide thee.
- 10. What I have done and taught, teach thou, My ways forsake thou never; So shall My kingdom flourish now And God be praised forever.

 Take heed lest men with base alloy The heav'nly treasure should destroy; This counsel I bequeath thee.

Salvation Unto Us Has Come

Es Ist Das Heil Uns Kommen Her



5. Yet as the Law must be fulfilled Or we must die despairing, Christ came and hath God's anger stilled, Our human nature sharing. He hath for us the Law obeyed And thus the Father's vengeance stayed Which over us impended.

- 6. Since Christ hath full atonement made And brought to us salvation,
 Each Christian therefore may be glad
 And build on this foundation.
 Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
 Thy death is now my life indeed,
 For Thou hast paid my ransom.
- 7. Let me not doubt, but trust in Thee, Thy Word cannot be broken;
 Thy call rings out, "Come unto Me!"
 No falsehood hast Thou spoken.
 Baptized into Thy precious name,
 My faith cannot be put to shame,
 And I shall never perish.
- 8. The Law reveals the guilt of sin And makes men conscience-stricken; The Gospel then doth enter in The sinful soul to quicken.
 Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live; The Law no peace can ever give, No comfort and no blessing.
- 9. Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone And rests in Him unceasing; And by its fruits true faith is known, With love and hope increasing. Yet faith alone doth justify, Works serve thy neighbor and supply The proof that faith is living.
- 10. All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise To Father, Son, and Spirit,
 The God that saved us by His grace,
 All glory to His merit!
 O Triune God in heaven above,
 Who hast revealed Thy saving love,
 Thy blessed name be hallowed.

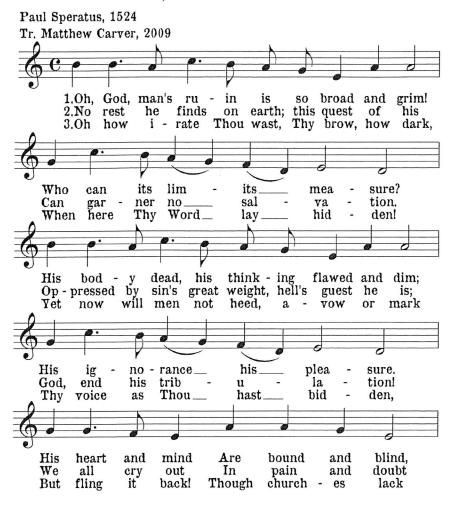
In God I Trust, For So I Must

In Got Geland Ich Das Er Hat





Oh, God, Man's Ruin Is So Broad and Grim Hilf Gott, Wie Ist Der Menschen Noth





O Lord, Look Down from Heaven, Behold

Ach Gott Vom Himmel, Sieh Darein



Word to stand; Dark times have o'er-tak - en. us In er ror's maze as-tound-ed. to and fro, can - not fail; We own no lord and mas - ter." sharp-ly smite, The poor with might de-fend ing." hu - man dross, It shines through ev - 'ry na - tion. our Sal - va - tion. flock con-found; But Thou art

The Mouth of Fools May Well Confess



need, They'd be

That God

their own is made his

And Is - rael leap with, glad - ness.

Com - fort.

time

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From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

Aus Tiefer Not Schrei' Ich Zu Dir

Martin Luther, 1523

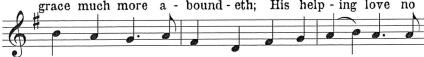
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.



depths I to Thee, Lord. 1.From of woe crv To 2.Thy and grace a - lone a - vail love the Lord 3.There - fore my hope is in And the night And till 4.And though it tar - ry sins and sore our woes. His 5. Though great our



im - plore Thee. Bend down Thy gra-cious hear I me. The best and ho-liest my trans-gres-sion; blot out mine own mer - it; It rests up - on His not in wak - en, My heart shall nev - er the morn-ing till His help - ing love no grace much more a - bound - eth;



ear to me, My prayer let come be - fore Thee. If deeds must fail To break sin's dread op - pres - sion. Befaith - ful Word To them of con-trite spir - it That doubt His might Nor count it - self for - sak - en. Do lim - it knows, Our ut - most need it sound-eth. Our



Thou re-mem-b'rest each mis-deed, If each should have its fore Thee none can boast-ing stand, But all must fear Thy He is mer-ci-ful and just; This is my com-fort thus, O ye of Is-rael's seed, Ye of the Spir-it Shep-herd good and true is He, Who will at last His



Who may a - bide Thy pres - ence? right - ful meed, And live a - lone by mer - cy. strict de - mand I my trust. His help wait with pa - tience. and Wait for your God's ap - pear - ing. born in - deed; From all their sin and sor - row. Is - rael free

In Jesus' Name We Upward Lift In Jesus Namen Heben Wir An



And let the way to bless-ed-ness by you be heard. Through Him, the same, shall bless-ed life e - ter-nal have. A-tone-ment bought by Christ the Lamb whom faith holds dear.



4. To God gave Abram honor due,
His promise trusted to be true.
In Romans four it saith
That Christ Himself the promise made
And unto him for righteousness did count his faith.

Yet saving faith by God is wrought; In John we find the difference taught, In chapter six faith false and true; True faith in Christ of Mary born, This faith He giveth to the few.

5. Now prove the faith thou hast professed;If thou God's servant art, then test,Thy neighbor lovest thou?By serving him with all thy might,As God Himself hath in perfection shown thee how?

Hark! God through Moses did command, The poor who in thy city stand, Thine open hand their want subdue, And let their need become thine own; Show by this that thy faith is true.

6. To God ascends the poor man's call,While on thine ears it ought to fall;Leave off from usury.'Tis surely faith like this God loves,As He repeatedly in Scripture warneth thee.

In chapter five of Matthew read How Christ doth say and we must heed: "If any borrow will from thee, Refuse it not at any time, Friend or enemy though he be."

7. God's Kingdom He the poor doth give; Believe it, poor and rich, and live. Buy not indulgences, Nor money bring; God giveth free. Ye poor men, but receive and trust His promises.

Now hearken, men and boys, arise; God must we keep before our eyes, Upon our walls place His commands, Must teach them to our progeny, And them carry within our hands.

8. While thou dost walk along the way,
As God through Moses' pen did say,
His love consider thou,
Which thee begat through Jesus Christ,
Who from Law's curse thee free and so doth keep thee now.

One truth remains, on which to touch; Christ's man-at-arms must suffer much, Yea, scorn and hate from all sides cast, With strangers in the grave must lie, But be gathered to God at last.

9. Ah lose not heart, thou worthy knight;God shelt'reth thee by His great might.When He shall overcomeDeath, sin, and hell, all dang'rous foes,A crown of victory awaits thy coming home.

Enough; here let us strength obtain, Steadfast to Jesus Christ remain, Who only is our Comforter, Who from all evil us redeemed; Thee we praise, Thou sweet Comforter!

10. Oh break to us our daily bread,
Thy Word by which our souls are fed,
Alone doth them sustain.
No fear can tear us from Thy love,
For our salvation Thou dost evermore remain.
(No more of this stanza is given; presumably this much was sung to the first half of the melody as an ending to the song.)

This booklet is respectfully offered for your prayerful consideration.

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