

MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN
POEMS OF THE GOOD, THE BEAUTIFUL,
AND THE TRUE DRAWN FROM THE
CHURCH'S SONG

(According to my Facebook Friends
on the Eve of St Andrew's Day, 2016)

Compiled by Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

PREFACE

I was visiting shut-ins today, and sang the beautiful Gerhardt Advent hymn *O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee*. It occurred to me, especially as I sang the third stanza, what a beautiful piece of poetry this is.

I lay in fetters, groaning,
Thou com'st to set me free;
I stood, my shame bemoaning,
Thou com'st to honor me;
A glory Thou dost give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail or leave me
As earthly riches fly.

Meditating, then, on the beauty of Christian hymns as poems, I asked Facebook, “Set aside the music. What hymns are the best poems?” The responses were so fantastic I thought, “This should be a book,” and then, “Really, this should be a book!” And here you have it, the lark of a Facebook thread turned into a collection of poems.

All the hymns here are in the public domain. Many thanks to www.lutheran-hymnal.com for making these texts available. Most especially, thank you to my Facebook friends who are always ready to engage in conversation, especially if it is about the beautiful hymns of the church.

May God give us joy and comfort as we meditate on these verses!

Pastor Bryan Wolfmüller
St. Andrew's Day, 2016

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My Song is Love Unknown

Samuel Crossman, 1664

Suggested by Richard Bicknase, Tim Barone

My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.

O who am I,
That for my sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh and die?

Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Martin Schalling, 1567

Translated by Catherine Winkworth 1829-1878

Suggested by Thomas Lock, Theodore Staudacher, Jake Wert

Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;
I pray Thee ne'er from me depart,
With tender mercies cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share,
Yea, heaven itself were void and bare
If 'Thou, Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break,
My trust in Thee no one could shake.
Thou art the Portion I have sought;
Thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ,
My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.

Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave
My body, soul, and all I have
In this poor life of labor.
Lord, grant that I in every place
May glorify Thy lavish grace
And serve and help my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile
And Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me
To bear my cross and follow Thee.
Lord Jesus Christ,
My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
In death Thy comfort still afford.

Lord, let at last Thine angels come,
To Abram's bosom bear me home,
That I may die unfearing;
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until Thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
That these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace,
Lord Jesus Christ,
My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise Thee without end.

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676

Suggested by Adam Michael Debner, Matthew Laine

"Yea, Father, yea, most willingly
I'll bear what Thou commandest;
My will conforms to Thy decree,
I do what Thou demandest."
O wondrous Love, what hast Thou done!
The Father offers up His Son!
The Son, content, descendeth!
O Love, how strong Thou art to save!
Thou beddest Him within the grave
Whose word the mountains rendeth.

O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is

Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676

Suggested by James Preus, Richard Bicknese, Aaron Rohde

O Jesus Christ,
Thy manger is
My paradise at which my soul reclineth.
For there, O Lord,
Doth lie the Word
Made flesh for us; herein Thy grace
forth shineth.

He whom the sea
And wind obey
Doth come to serve the sinner in great
meekness.
Thou, God's own Son,
With us art one,
Dost join us and our children in our
weekness.

Thy light and grace
Our guilt efface,
Thy heavenly riches all our loss
retrieving.
Immanuel,
Thy birth doth quell
The power of hell and Satan's bold
deceiving.

Thou Christian heart,
Whoe'er thou art,
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move
thee!
For God's own Child,
In mercy mild,
Joins thee to Him;-how greatly God must
love thee!

Remember thou
What glory now
The Lord prepared thee for all earthly
sadness.
The angel host
Can never boast
Of greater glory, greater bliss or gladness.

The world may hold
Her wealth and gold;
But thou, my heart, keep Christ as thy true
Treasure.
To Him hold fast
Until at last
A crown be thine and honor in full
measure.

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Martin Luther, 1535
Suggested by James Preus

And thus, dear Lord, it pleaseth Thee
To make this truth quite plain to me,
That all the world's wealth, honor, might,
Are naught and worthless in Thy sight.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken

Johann Heermann, 1630
Suggested by Cody Norton, David Preus

What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not know Him.

The sinless Son of God must die in sadness;
The sinful child of man may live in gladness;
Man forfeited his life and is acquitted, --
God is committed.

Savior of the Nations, Come

St. Ambrose, +397

German version translated by Martin Luther, 1524

Suggested by Lisa Jaquest Kress, Dan Chambers, Tim Barone

Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh--
Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.

Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child
Of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
Still to be in heaven enthroned.

From the Father forth He came
And returneth to the same,
Captive leading death and hell--
High the song of triumph swell!

Thou, the Father's only Son,
Hast o'er sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Thy kingdom be;
When shall we its glories see?

Brightly doth Thy manger shine,
Glorious is its light divine.
Let not sin o'ercloud this light;
Ever be our faith thus bright.

Praise to God the Father sing,
Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be
Ever and eternally.

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Aurelius C. Prudentius, 413, cento

Translated by John. M. Neale, 1818-1866 and Henry W. Baker, 1821-1977

Suggested by Gwen Wenck, John Moseman, Miguel Ruiz, Carolyn Nelson

Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the Source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed
When the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bare the Savior of our race,
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heaven, adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him
And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.

This is He whom Heaven-taught singers
Sang of old with one accord;
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the Long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore.

"Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying"

Philipp Nicolai, 1599

Translated by Catherine Winkworth, 1829-1878

Suggested by Carol Hack Broome, George Ruwisch

"Wake, awake, for night is flying,"
The watchmen on the heights are crying;
"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"
Midnight hears the welcome voices
And at the thrilling cry rejoices:
"Oh, where are ye, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes, awake!
Your lamps with gladness take!
Hallelujah!
With bridal care Yourselves prepare
To meet the Bridegroom, who is near."

Zion hears the watchmen singing,
And all her heart with joy is springing,
She wakes, she rises from her gloom;
For her Lord comes down all-glorious,
The strong in grace, in truth victorious,
Her Star is ris'n, her Light is come.
"Now come, Thou Blessed One,
Lord Jesus, God's own Son,
Hail! Hosanna!
The joyful call We answer all
And follow to the nuptial hall."

Now let all the heav'ns adore Thee,
Let men and angels sing before Thee,
With harp and cymbal's clearest tone.
Of one pearl each shining portal,
Where, dwelling with the choir immortal,
We gather round Thy radiant throne.
No vision ever brought,
No ear hath ever caught,
Such great glory;
Therefore will we Eternally
Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee.

Abide with Me! Fast Falls the Eventide

Henry F. Lyte, 1847

Suggested by Martha Milas, Tony Esolen, Gail S. Kirkegaard

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Here is Love

William Rees 1802-1883
Translated by William Edwards, 1900
Suggested by Kevin Bullock

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Lovingkindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout Heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And Heav'n's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Jerusalem the Golden

Bernard of Morlas, 12th century
Translated by John M. Neale, 1818-1866
Suggested by Matthew Tasse

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest.
I know not, oh, I know not,
What joys await us there,
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,
All jubilant with song
And bright with many an angel
And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them;
The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast;
And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.

Over Kedron Jesus Træder

Thomas Kingo

Translated by Mark DeGarmeaux

Verses 1.2.6.7.12.13 translated by J. Jeffrey, 1880

Suggested by Rolf Preus

Over Kedron Jesus treadeth
To His passion for us all;
Every human eye be weeping,
Tears of bitter grief let fall!
Round His spirit flock the foes,
Place their shafts and bend their bows,
Aiming at the Saviour solely,
While the world forsakes Him wholly.

David once, with heart afflicted,
Crossed the Kedron's narrow strand,
Clouds of gloom and grief about him
When an exile from his land.
But, O Jesus, blacker now
Bends the cloud above Thy brow,
Hasting to death's dreary portals
For the shame and sin of mortals.

Wilt Thou in Thy pain and ruing
To the Mount of Olives go?
Yet there is no tree for viewing
Where the fruits of peace may grow;
War and battle, bitter pain,
Death and mockery and shame
Every bud shoots forth with sorrow
Jesus now no peace can borrow.

Enter now the restful garden
As a peaceful quiet space,
Sorrow soon begins to darken,
Follow Thee in every place!
Come now, Adam, come and see
Enter blest Gethsemane!
See the Lord of heaven shaking
Hellish anguish for us taking.

All of Jesus' limbs are quaking
As sins' burden hard doth press
See the God-Man ever shaking
Death doth bring to life distress
Jesus' lifeblood forth doth pour
And His heart aches more and more
Shooting forth with blood-streams narrow
From ten thousand poisoned arrows.

See how, anguish-struck, He falleth
Prostrate, and with struggling breath,
Three times on His God He calleth,
Praying that the bitter death
And the cup of doom may go,
Still He cries, in all His woe:
"Not My will, but Thine, O Father!"
And the angels round Him gather.

See how, in that hour of darkness,
Battling with the evil power,
Agonies untold assail Him,
On His soul the arrows shower;
All the garden flowers are wet
With the drops of bloody sweat,
From His anguished frame distilling-
World's redemption thus fulfilling!

O ye heavéns, will ye give Him
Strength of heart, and that right soon?
To the end He hard has striven
Jesus dies! He dies so soon!
Holy angels, come and see
Strengthen Him for death to see!
How His cheeks are filled with pallor,
As He meets His death with valor.

See the blood so sadly dripping
With each drop of sweat so cold;
Death in every vein is seeping
And His face is dark as coal;
And the grass where Jesus prays
Now a bloody carpet stays
From His precious veins now offering,
See what pains He now is suffering!

Daily I am gladly yearning
E'er to go to Kedron's stream
And from earthly pleasure turning
In a penitential theme!
Daily in Gethsemane
With my spirit I shall see
Jesus' bleeding and His sighing
For my soul is all His dying.

Now, away with earthly pleasure!
Let me see my Jesus dear!
In Gethsemane, my Treasure,
I will gather me a tear
From His bloody sweat of pain
Which my righteousness did gain
Earth now gives me only sadness
Till I enter heaven's gladness.

But, O flowers, so sadly watered
By this pure and precious dew,
In some blessed hour your blossoms
'Neath the olive-shadows grew!
Eden's garden did not bear
Aught that can with you compare,
For the blood, thus freely given,
Makes my soul the heir of heaven.

When as flowers themselves I wither,
When I droop and fade like grass,
When the life-streams through my pulses
Dull and ever duller pass,
When at last they cease to roll,
Then, to cheer my sinking soul,
Grace of Jesus, be Thou given-
Source of triumph! pledge of heaven!

And now when my heart is breaking,
And my eye no longer sees,
When my tongue no sound is making,
Let my soul a droplet seize
Of Thy precious sweat and blood;
Wash my heart in that dear flood.
In the hour when I am dying,
On Thy Passion I'm relying.

Be Still, My Soul

Catharine Amalia Dorothea von Schlegel, 1752, cento
Translated by Jane Borthwick, 1855
Suggested by Sandra Ostapowich

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heavenly, Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul; thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul, though dearest friends depart
And all is darkened in the vale of tears;
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrows and thy fears.
Be still, my soul; thy Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Teach Me, My God and King

George Herbert, 1633
Suggested by Tapani Simojoki

Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see;
and what I do in anything
to do it as for thee.

A man that looks on glass,
on it may stay his eye;
or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
and then the heaven espy.

All may of thee partake;
nothing can be so mean
which, with this tincture, For thy sake,
will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine;
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Paul Gerhardt

Based on the Latin poem "Salve caput cruentatum"

Bernard of Clairvaux, 1153, asc.

Suggested by Ken Howes, Richard Bolland

O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory,
What bliss, till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

Men mock and taunt and jeer Thee,
Thou noble countenance,
Though mighty worlds shall fear Thee
And flee before Thy glance.
How art thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How doth Thy visage languish
That once was bright as morn!

Now from Thy cheeks has vanished
Their color, once so fair;
From Thy red lips is banished
The splendor that was there.
Grim Death, with cruel rigor,
Hath robbed Thee of Thy life;
Thus Thou has lost Thy vigor,
Thy strength, in this sad strife.

My burden in Thy Passion,
Lord, Thou hast borne for me,
For it was my transgression
Which brought this woe on thee.
I cast me down before Thee,
Wrath were my rightful lot;
Have mercy, I implore Thee;
Redeemer, spurn me not!

My Shepherd, now receive me;
My Guardian, own me Thine.
Great blessings Thou didst give me,
O Source of gifts divine!
Thy lips have often fed me
With words of truth and love,
Thy Spirit oft hath led me
To heavenly joys above.

Here I will stand beside Thee,
From Thee I will not part;
O Savior, do not chide me!
When breaks Thy loving heart,
When soul and body languish
In death's cold, cruel grasp,
Then, in Thy deepest anguish,
Thee in mine arms I'll clasp.

The joy can ne'er be spoken,
Above all joys beside,
When in Thy body broken
I thus with safety hide.
O Lord of life, desiring
Thy glory now to see,
Beside Thy cross expiring,
I'd breathe my soul to Thee.

What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this, Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never,
Outlive my love for Thee.

My Savior, be Thou near me
When death is at my door;
Then let Thy presence cheer me,
Forsake me nevermore!
When soul and body languish,
Oh, leave me not alone,
But take away mine anguish
By virtue of Thine own!

Be Thou my Consolation,
My Shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy Passion
When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,
Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee.
Who dieth thus dies well!

Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

Thomas Kelly, 1804
Suggested by Richard Bicknase

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed,
See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the WORD, the LORD'S ANOINTED,
Son of Man and Son of God.

Here we have a firm foundation;
Here the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the Rock of our salvation,
His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.

Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow

Paul Gerhardt, 1648
Suggested by Sarah Gulseth

Now rest beneath night's shadow
The woodland, field, and meadow,
The world in slumber lies;
But Thou, my heart, awake thee,
To prayer and song betake thee;
Let praise to thy Creator rise.

The radiant sun hath vanished,
His golden rays are banished
By night, the foe of day;
But Christ, the Sun of gladness,
Dispelling all my sadness,
Within my heart holds constant sway.

The rule of day is over
And shining jewels cover
The heaven's boundless blue.
Thus I shall shine in heaven,
Where crowns of gold are given
To all who faithful prove and true.

To rest my body hasteth,
Aside its garments casteth,
Types of mortality;
These I put off and ponder
How Christ will give me yonder
A robe of glorious majesty.

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
Oh, spread Thy wings above me
And shield me from alarm!
Though evil would assail me,
Thy mercy will not fail me:
I rest in Thy protecting arm.

My loved ones, rest securely,
For God this night will surely
From peril guard your heads.
Sweet slumbers may He send you
And bid His hosts attend you
And through the night watch o'er your beds.

Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands

Martin Luther, 1524, cento
Translated by: Richard Massie, 1854, alt.
Suggested by Thomas Lock, Sarah Gulseth

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands,
For our offenses given;
But now at God's right hand He stands
And brings us life from heaven;
Therefore let us joyful be
And sing to God right thankfully
Loud songs of hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

It was a strange and dreadful strife
When Life and Death contended;
The victory remained with Life,
The reign of Death was ended;
Holy Scripture plainly saith
That Death is swallowed up by Death,
His sting is lost forever.
Hallelujah!

Here the true Paschal Lamb we see,
Whom God so freely gave us;
He died on the accursed tree-
So strong His love!-to save us.
See, His blood doth mark our door;
Faith points to it, Death passes o'er,
And Satan cannot harm us.
Hallelujah!

So let us keep the festival
Whereto the Lord invites us;
Christ is himself the Joy of all,
The Sun that warms and lights us.
By His grace He doth impart
Eternal sunshine to the heart;
The night of sin is ended.
Hallelujah!

Then let us feast this Easter Day
On Christ, the Bread of heaven;
The Word of Grace hath purged away
The old and evil leaven.
Christ alone our souls will feed,
He is our meat and drink indeed;
Faith lives upon no other.
Hallelujah!

What is the World to Me?

Georg M. Pfefferkorn, 1667

Translated by: August Crull, 1923, alt.

Suggested by Rhonda Campbell Metcalfe, Cathrine Stange

What is the world to me!
My Jesus is my Treasure,
My Life, my Health, my Wealth,
My Friend, my Love, my Pleasure,
My Joy, my Crown, my All,
My Bliss eternally.
Once more, then, I declare:
What is the world to me!

Salvation Unto Us Has Come

Paul Speratus, 1523

Suggested by Peter Ill, Jonathan Pratt

Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer.

What God did in His Law demand
And none to Him could render
Caused wrath and woe on every hand
For man, the vile offender.
Our flesh has not those pure desires
The spirit of the Law requires,
And lost is our condition.

It was a false, misleading dream
That God His Law had given
That sinners should themselves redeem
And by their works gain heaven.
The Law is but a mirror bright
To bring the inbred sin to light
That lurks within our nature.

From sin our flesh could not abstain,
Sin held its sway unceasing;
The task was useless and in vain,
Our guilt was e'er increasing.
None can remove sin's poisoned dart
Or purify our guileful heart,-
So deep is our corruption.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

O Darkest Woe

Unknown, 1628, Stanza 1, Johann Rist, 1641, ab, Stanzas 2-7
Translated by: Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.
Suggested by David Preus

O darkest woe!
Ye tears, forth flow!
Has earth so sad a wonder?
God the Father's only Son
Now is buried yonder.

O sorrow dread!
God's Son is dead!
But by His expiation
Of our guilt upon the cross
Gained for us salvation.

O sinful man!
It was the ban
Of death on thee that brought Him
Down to suffer for thy sins
And such woe hath wrought Him.

Lo, stained with blood,
The Lamb of God,
The Bridegroom, lies before thee,
Pouring out His life that He
May life restore thee.

O Ground of faith,
Laid low in death.
Sweet lips. now silent sleeping!
Surely all that live must mourn
Here with bitter weeping.

Oh. blest shall be
Eternally
Who oft in faith will ponder
Why the glorious Prince of Life
Should be buried yonder.

O Jesus blest,
My Help and Rest
With tears I now entreat Thee:
Make me love Thee to the last,
Till in heaven I greet Thee!

Joy to the World, the Lord is Come

Isaac Watts, 1719
Suggested by David Preus

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877
Suggested by Tony Esolen

The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me
And on His shoulder gently laid
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight,
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh! the transport of delight
With which my cup o'erfloweth.

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever!

Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng

Edward H. Plumptre, 1821-91
Suggested by Jim Lowitzer

Rejoice, O pilgrim throng!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing;
Your festal banner wave on high,
The cross of Christ your king.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

With voice as full and strong
As ocean's surging praise,
Send forth the sturdy hymns of old,
The psalms of ancient days.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

With all the angel choirs,
With all the saints on earth
Pour out the strains of joy and bliss,
True rapture, noblest mirth.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

Yet on and onward still,
With hymn and chant and song,
Through gate and porch and columned aisle
The hallowed pathways throng.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

Still lift your standard high,
Still march in firm array,
As pilgrims through the darkness wend
Till dawns the golden day.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

At last the march shall end;
The wearied ones shall rest;
The pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

Praise him who reigns on high,
The Lord whom we adore:
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God forevermore.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest

William W. How, 1864
Suggested by Jason Braaton

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confess,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest,
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on His way.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia! Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest.
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Lo! He Comes, with Clouds Descending

Charles Wesley, 1758
Suggested by Jason Braaton

Lo! he comes, with clouds descending,
once for our salvation slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!
Christ the Lord returns to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him,
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshipers;
with what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Now redemption, long expected,
see in solemn pomp appear;
all his saints, by man rejected,
now shall meet him in the air:
Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, amen! let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the power and glory;
claim the kingdom for thine own:
Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Suggested by Jason Braaton

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim.
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored.
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell;
Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

Hail, the heavenly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He leaves His throne on high,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth;
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Oh, to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

The Head That Once was Crowned with Thorns

Thomas Kelly, 1820
Suggested by Jerry Gernander

The Head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of kings and Lord of lords,
And heaven's eternal Light;

The Joy of all who dwell above,
The Joy of all below
To whom He manifests His love
And grants His name to know.

To them the cross, with all its shame,
With all its grace, is given;
Their name an everlasting name,
Their joy the joy of heaven.

They suffer with their Lord below,
They reign with Him above,
Their profit and their joy to know
The mystery of His love.

The cross He bore is life and health,
Though shame and death to Him:
His people's hope, His people's wealth,
Their everlasting theme.

Jesus, My Great High Priest

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
Suggested by Jerry Gernander

Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered His blood and died;
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside.
His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.

To this dear Surety's hand
Will I commit my cause;
He answers and fulfils
His Father's broken laws.
Behold my soul at freedom set;
My Surety paid the dreadful debt.

My Advocate appears
For my defense on high;
The Father bows His ears
And lays His thunder by.
Not all that hell or sin can say
Shall turn His heart, His love, away.

Should all the hosts of death
And powers of hell unknown
Put their most dreadful forms
Of rage and mischief on,
I shall be safe, for Christ displays
Superior power and guardian grace.

Before the Throne of God Above

Charitie Lees Bancroft, 1863
Suggested by Jeremy Heffernan

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea;
a great High Priest, whose name is Love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on his hands,
my name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heaven he stands
no tongue can bid me thence depart,
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look, and see him there
who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
my sinful soul is counted free;
for God the Just is satisfied
to look on him and pardon me,
to look on him and pardon me.

Behold him there! the risen Lamb,
my perfect, spotless righteousness;
the great unchangeable "I AM,"
the King of glory and of grace!
One with himself, I cannot die,
my soul is purchased by his blood;
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Savior and my God,
with Christ my Savior and my God.

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

George Matheson, 1882
Suggested by Jeremy Heffernan

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Liturgy of St. James (5th c)
Translated by Gerard Moultrie, 1864
Suggested by Steven Brummett

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
set your minds on things eternal,
for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descended,
come our homage to command.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
once upon the earth he stood;
Lord of lords we now perceive him
in the body and the blood.
He has given to all the faithful
his own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank, the host of heaven
stream before him on the way,
as the Light of Light, descending
from the realms of endless day,
comes, the powers of hell to vanquish,
clears the gloom of hell away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph,
cherubim with sleepless eye
veil their faces to his presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry:
“Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia, Lord Most High!”

Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel

Unknown, c. 1100
Translated by John M. Neale, 1818-1866
Suggested by Zach Leshner

Oh, come, Oh, come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home:
Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Lord of Our Life and God of Our Salvation

Matthaeus A. von Loewenstern, 1594-1648

Translated by Philip Pusey, 1799-1855

Suggested by Robin D. Fish, Jr

Lord of our life and God of our salvation.
Star of our night and Hope of every nation,
Hear and receive Thy Church's supplication,
Lord God Almighty.

See round Thine ark the hungry billows curling;
See how thy foes their banners are unfurling.
Lord, while their darts envenomed they are hurling,
Thou canst preserve us.

Lord, Thou canst help when earthly armor faileth;
Lord, Thou canst save when deadly sin assaileth;
Lord, o'er Thy Church nor death nor hell prevaieth;
Grant us Thy peace, Lord:

Peace in our hearts, our evil thoughts assuaging;
Peace in Thy Church where brothers are engaging;
Peace when the world its busy war is waging.
Calm Thy foes' raging.

Grant us Thy help till backward they are driven;
Grant them Thy truth that they may be forgiven;
Grant peace on earth or, after we have striven,
Peace in Thy heaven.

By Grace I'm Saved, Grace Free and Boundless

Christian L. Scheidt, 1709-1761
Suggested by Catherine Stange

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Hath Scripture ever falsehood taught?
Nay; then this word must true remain;
By grace thou, too, shalt heav'n obtain.

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;
Our works and conduct have no worth.
God in His love sent our Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;
His death did for our sins atone,
And we are saved by grace alone.

By grace! Oh, mark this word of promise
When thou art by thy sins opprest,
When Satan plagues thy troubled conscience,
And when thy heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by His grace to thee doth send.

By grace God's Son, our only Savior,
Came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of thine own merit
That Jesus died thy soul to win?
Nay, it was grace, and grace alone,
That brought Him from His heavenly throne.

By grace! This ground of faith is certain;
So long as God is true, it stands.
What saints have penned by inspiration,
What in His Word our God commands,
What our whole faith must rest upon,
Is Grace alone, grace in His Son.

By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation's furnace tried,--
By grace, despite all fear and trouble,
The Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure?

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears, 1849
Suggested by Joel T. Dieterichs

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

Edward Mote, 1797-1874
Suggested by Ted Crandall

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

John Brownlie, 1859-1925
Suggested by Eric Bendekovic

The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks,
when beauty gilds the eastern hills
and life to joy awakes

Not, as of old, a little child,
to bear and fight and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun
that lights the morning sky.

Oh, brighter than the rising morn
when Christ, victorious, rose
and left the lonesome place of death,
despite the rage of foes -

Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
shall dawn upon our race
the day when Christ in splendor comes
and we shall see his face.

The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
come quickly, King of kings.

O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee

Paul Gerhardt, 1653
Suggested by Bryan Wolfinueller

O Lord, how shall I meet Thee,
How welcome Thee aright?
Thy people long to greet Thee,
My Hope, my heart's Delight!
O kindle, Lord, most holy,
Thy lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please Thee best.

Thy Zion strews before Thee
Green boughs and fairest palms,
And I, too, will adore Thee
With joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever
For Thee with praises new
And from Thy name shall never
Withhold the honor due.

I lay in fetters, groaning,
Thou com'st to set me free;
I stood, my shame bemoaning,
Thou com'st to honor me;
A glory Thou dost give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail or leave me
As earthly riches fly.

Love caused Thy incarnation,
Love brought Thee down to me;
Thy thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling,
That led Thee to embrace,
In love all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race!

Rejoice, then, ye sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed
And tremble at your doom.
Despair not, He is near you,
Yea, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you
And bids you weep no more.

Ye need not toil nor languish
Nor ponder day and night
How in the midst of anguish
Ye draw Him by your might.
He comes, He comes all willing,
Moved by His love alone,
Your woes and troubles stilling;
For all to Him are known.

Sin's debt, that fearful burden,
Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon
And cover by His grace.
He comes, for men procuring
The peace of sin forgiven,
For all God's sons securing
Their heritage in heaven.

What though the foes be raging,
Heed not their craft and spite;
Your Lord, the battle waging,
Will scatter all their might.
He comes, a King most glorious,
And all His earthly foes
In vain His course victorious
Endeavor to oppose.

He comes to judge the nations,
A terror to His foes,
A Light of consolations
And blessed Hope to those
Who love the Lord's appearing.
O glorious Sun, now come,
Send forth Thy beams so cheering,
And guide us safely home.

The World Is Very Evil

Bernard of Morlas, 12th century
Translated by John M. Neale, 1818-1866
Suggested by Bryan Wolfmueller

The world is very evil,
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate;
The Judge that comes in mercy,
The Judge that comes with might,
To terminate the evil,
To diadem the right.

Arise, arise, good Christian,
Let right to wrong succeed;
Let penitential sorrow
To heav'nly gladness lead,
To light that hath no evening,
That knows no moon nor sun,
The light so new and golden,
The light that is but one.

O home of fadeless splendor,
Of flow'rs that bear no thorn,
Where they shall dwell as children
Who here as exiles mourn.
Midst pow'r that knows no limit,
Where knowledge has no bound,
The beatific vision
Shall glad the saints around.

Strive, man, to win that glory;
Toil, man, to gain that light;
Send hope before to grasp it
Till hope be lost in sight.
Exult, O dust and ashes,
The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His forever,
Thou shalt be and thou art.

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.

