

SINGING & PRAYING

with Martin Luther

Martin Luther's
Own Hymns
For Personal
Prayer



by KING SCHOENFELD

INTRODUCTION

When sadness comes ... and threatens to gain the upper hand, then say: "Come, I must play our Lord Christ a song ... For Scripture teaches me that he loves to hear joyful songs and stringed instruments ..." Strike the keys with a will, and sing out until the thoughts disappear ... If the devil returns and suggests cares or sad thoughts, then defend yourself with a will and say: "Get out, devil! I must now sing and play to my Lord Christ."

—*Martin Luther*

The words to all the hymns in this little book were written by Martin Luther himself. Read these hymns as personal prayers, and they will touch your heart as they speak to the heart of our Christian faith.

ABOUT LUTHER'S HYMNS

Just how did Martin Luther, a former priest, become a poet and composer?

After being declared an “outlaw” by Emperor Charles V, Martin Luther was secluded for months for his safety, living in Wartburg Castle high above the city of Eisenach. There he fought depression by playing his lute and translating the New Testament into German. Returning to Wittenberg in 1522, he felt obligated to write hymns for the common people to sing. Why?

The reformers saw that worship no longer belonged only to the clergy and the religious orders. Worship among Protestants was destined to be in the language of the people, who needed hymns. The first hymnal with songs by Luther and others appeared in 1524. Eventually Luther—lute-player, theologian and reformer—composed 75 hymns!



CHRISTMAS

“From heaven above to earth I come,
To bear good news to ev’ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

“To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child, of lowly birth,
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

“This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

“He will on you the gifts bestow
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair,
You may with us His glory share.”

Now let us all with gladsome cheer
Go with the shepherds and draw near
To see the precious gift of God,
Who hath His own dear Son bestowed.

Ah, Lord, You have created all,
How weak You are, how poor and small,
That You should choose Your infant bed
Where humble cattle lately fed!

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make You a bed, soft, undefiled,
A holy place within my heart,
So You and I will never part.

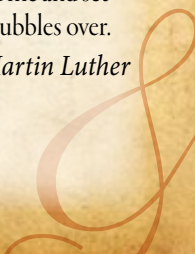
My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep;
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle song:

Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto us His Son has given!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.”

Creative
Communications
Sample

*M*y love for music, which has often refreshed me and set
me free from great worries, abounds and bubbles over.

—Martin Luther



CHRISTMAS

All praise to You, eternal God,
Who, clothed in garb of flesh and blood,
Do take a manger for Your throne
While worlds on worlds are Yours alone. Alleluia!

Once did the skies before You bow;
A virgin's arms contain You now,
While angels, who in You rejoice,
Now listen for Your infant voice. Alleluia!

A little Child, You art our Guest
That weary ones in You might rest;
Forlorn and lowly was Your birth
That we might rise to heav'n from earth. Alleluia!

You came here in the darksome night
To make us children of the light;
To make us in the realms divine
Like Your own angels, 'round You shine. Alleluia!

All this for us Your love has done;
By this to You our love is won;
For this our joyful songs we raise
And shout our thanks in ceaseless praise. Alleluia!



This prayer book is based on some of Luther's classic chorales, giving to us his very personal words of faith and trust for us to use as our own. Included are his familiar songs for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, as well as hymn verses that teach, like his versification of the Lord's Prayer, and those that encourage, like "A Mighty Fortress."



Compiled by King Schoenfeld. Design by Jamie Wyatt. © 2003, 2017 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. (800) 325-9414. www.creativecommunications.com. Hymn text of "Our Father, Who from Heaven Above" from *The Lutheran Service Book*, text (sts. 2-5, 7): © 1980 Concordia Publishing House. Used with permission. www.cph.org. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. SP8