

Heritage Hymn of the Month

APRIL

“Like the Golden Sun Ascending”

ELH 354

This Easter hymn is a prayer of thanks and praise. The hymn’s first stanza is an exclamation to the world – “thus my Jesus ... rose triumphant Easter morning” – but the rest of the hymn is sung to Jesus. The world can listen in, and learn of our risen Savior, but this is personal! “Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious! ... Thanks because Thou didst arise, and hast opened Paradise!” The hymn ends with this: “Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee,/And in heav’n I shall behold Thee.” Throughout this hymn, we speak to Christ of what He has done for us. This is praise: speaking back to God the great things He has done.

Like all great Easter hymns, this hymn emphasizes the finished work of Christ that has redeemed us: “Thou hast won for me salvation,/All my sins on Thee were laid” (v. 4). This is the Gospel. What sets this hymn apart is its extremely pastoral emphasis, using the Gospel in Word and Sacrament (v. 7, 10) as healing medicine for the wounded sinner. The hymn deals with great spiritual troubles and applies the comfort of the resurrection. “For my heart finds consolation,/And my fainting soul grows brave” (v. 3), addresses the one who is overtaken by sin, feels defeated by life and helpless, is forsaken or forgotten by others, suffers “sore distress,” or is despised and condemned by an unsympathetic world (v. 4). “Thou hast buried all my woe ... Sin and death shall not o’erthrow me/Even in my dying hour” (v. 6, 7).

Secondary Hymn for the Month

“Peace to Soothe Our Bitter Woes”

ELH 595

This hymn by Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig is for the Second Sunday of Easter, when we hear Jesus say to the hidden-away disciples, and later to Thomas too: “Peace be with you.”

Like the Golden Sun Ascending

1. Like the golden sun ascending,
Breaking through the gloom of night,
On the earth his glory spending
So that darkness takes to flight,
Thus my Jesus from the grave
And death’s dismal, dreadful cave
Rose triumphant Easter morning
At the early purple dawning.

2. Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious!
Thanks to Thee, O Lord of life!
Death hath now no power o’er us,
Thou hast conquered in the strife.
Thanks because Thou didst arise
And hast opened Paradise!
None can fully sing the glory
Of the resurrection story.

3. For my heart finds consolation
And my fainting soul grows brave
When I stand in contemplation
At Thy dark and dismal grave;
When I see where Thou didst sleep
In death’s dungeon dark and deep,
Yet didst break all bands asunder,
Must I not rejoice and wonder?

4. Though I be by sin o’ertaken,
Though I lie in helplessness,
Though I be by friends forsaken
And must suffer sore distress,
Though I be despised, contemned,
And by all the world condemned,
Though the dark grave yawn before me,
Yet the light of hope shines o’er me.

5. Thou hast died for my transgression,
All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation,
On the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise
And shall meet Thee in the skies.
Death itself is transitory;
I shall lift my head in glory.

6. Satan’s arrows all lie broken,
Death and hell have met their doom;
Christ, Thy rising is the token:
Thou hast triumphed o’er the tomb.
Thou hast buried all my woe,
And my cup doth overflow;
By Thy resurrection glorious
I shall wave my palms victorious.

7. As the Son of God I know Thee,
For I see Thy sov’rign pow’r;
Sin and death shall not o’erthrow me
Even in my dying hour;
For Thy resurrection is
Surety for my heav’nly bless,
And my baptism a reflection
Of Thy death and resurrection.

8. Unto life Thou shalt arouse me
By Thy resurrection’s pow’r;
Though the hideous grave shall house me,
And my flesh the worms devour;
Fire and water may destroy
My frail body, yet with joy
I shall rise as Thou hast risen
From the deep sepulchral prison.

9. Grant me grace, O blessed Savior,
And Thy Holy Spirit send
That my walk and my behavior
May be pleasing to the end;
That I may not fall again
Into death’s grim pit and pain,
Whence by grace Thou hast retrieved me
And from which Thou hast relieved me.

10. For the joy Thy birth doth give me,
For Thy holy, precious Word;
For Thy Baptism which doth save me,
For Thy blest Communion board;
For Thy death, the bitter scorn,
For Thy resurrection morn,
Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee,
And in heav’n I shall behold Thee.