

Heritage Hymns of the Month

MAY

“How Blest Are They Who Hear God’s Word”

ELH 586

This is a good hymn to learn and sing as Sunday School children, school children and catechism students end their school year and head into summer. It is based on Jesus’ words, “Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it” (Luke 11:28). In this verse, “keep” does not mean “obey it,” but “cling to it.” This is what the hymn conveys, that not only is it important to hear the Word of God and gladly learn it (v. 1), but it is important to treasure it, use it in battle, and be preserved in this faith “till my account is given before the throne in heaven!” (v. 3)

If children learn one verse of this hymn, it should be the second. It teaches how God’s Word sustains a person in trials and difficulty. “God’s Word a treasure is to me!” Why is it such a treasure? “Through sorrow’s night my sun [it] shall be,” and also “the shield of faith in battle” (Ephesians 6:16). We live in the church militant on earth, where faith is attacked daily. The Christian looks for reassurance to the promise that “faileth never”: God has written – in Jesus’ blood! – “my title as His child and heir.”

“He That Believes and Is Baptized”

ELH 241

This Baptism hymn by Thomas Kingo is short, but very sweet! Because it is short, it is easily memorized. It is a good hymn for Pentecost, because of the prayer for God to give His Holy Spirit (v. 2). Many chief Bible verses about baptism and eternal life are put right into this hymn (Mark 16:16, Romans 6:3, 2 Cor. 5:17, Rev. 7:9).

The first stanza teaches that baptism gives eternal life and brings the blessings of Jesus’ work of redemption to the baptized. This includes being placed in the church that includes those in heaven! The baptized infant even stands before God righteous through the gift of faith. “Baptized into the death of Christ” means baptism gives strength to walk in newness of life. The second stanza is a prayer that the Holy Spirit will lead us to grow in grace by holy baptism; the blessings of baptism are for each day!

How Blest Are They Who Hear

1. How blest are they who hear God’s Word,
And keep and heed what they have heard!
They daily grow in wisdom.
Their light shines brighter day by day,
And while they tread life’s weary way,
They have the oil of gladness
To sooth their pain and sadness.
2. God’s Word a treasure is to me,
Through sorrow’s night my sun shall be,
The shield of faith in battle.
The Father’s hand hath written there
My title as His child and heir,
“The kingdom’s thine forever.”
That promise faileth never.
3. Today I was my Savior’s guest;
My soul was here so richly blest,
The bread of life receiving.
O may thereby my faith prevail
So that its fruit shall never fail
Till my account is given
Before the throne in heaven!

He That Believes and Is Baptized

1. He that believes and is baptized
Shall see the Lord’s salvation;
Baptized into the death of Christ,
He is a new creation.
Through Christ’s redemption he shall stand
Among the glorious heav’nly band
Of ev’ry tribe and nation.
2. With one accord, O God, we pray:
Grant us Thy Holy Spirit.
Look Thou on our infirmity
Through Jesus’ blood and merit.
Grant us to grow in grace each day
By holy baptism that we may
Eternal life inherit.