

# Lord Christ, God's Only Dear Son

Herr Christ, der einig Gotts Sohn

Elisabeth Cruciger, 1524

Tr. Christopher J. Neuendorf, 2014

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HERR CHRIST, DER EINIG GOTTS SOHN

Erfurt Enchiridion, 1524

1 Lord Christ, God's on - ly dear Son, His from e - ter - ni -  
2 For us was born of wom - an In the ful - ness of  
3 Let us in love a - dore Thee, In Thy knowl - edge in -  
4 Thou who the whole world found - ed, Thou of fa - ther - ly  
5 Lord, kill us in Thy good - ness, Quick - en us in Thy

ty, Forth from the Fa - ther's heart sprung, As in Scrip - ture we  
time He whose pure moth - er vir - gin Kept her chaste - ness sub -  
crease, In spir - it serve be - fore Thee, Nor from faith ev - er  
might, Who in Thy pow'r un - bound - ed Reign - est o'er day and  
grace, Make our old na - ture per - ish, Grant new life in its

see, The Morn - ing Star, He gleam - eth, His light  
lime, Who death for us hath riv - en, Un - barred  
cease, That here in earth - ly weak - ness Our hearts  
night, O let our hearts pur - sue Thee, And turn  
place While yet on earth we're dwell - ing. Each thought,

more bright - ly beam - eth Than all stars in the sky.  
the gates of heav - en, Life re - stored un - to us.  
may taste Thy sweet - ness, Thirst - ing ev - er for Thee.  
our minds un - to Thee Lest from Thee they should stray.  
de - sire, and long - ing Make to cleave un - to Thee.

ONE OF THE very first Lutheran hymns ever to be published, “Lord Christ, God’s Only Dear Son” (“*Herr Christ, der einig Gotts Sohn*”) was written by Elisabeth Cruciger née von Meseritz, a former nun who, together with her parents, had been won over for the Lutheran Reformation and in 1522 fled to Wittenberg, where she met her husband Caspar Cruciger, at that time a student under Luther. Her hymn was included in one of the earliest Lutheran hymnals, the Erfurt Enchiridion of 1524, as well as in Johann Walter’s collection of polyphonic hymn settings, the *Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn*, also of 1524. Due to its emphasis on the Incarnation of Our Lord, the hymn went on to be prescribed for Advent and Christmas, while the first stanza’s imagery of Jesus as the Morning Star caused the hymn to be sung at the Epiphany of Our Lord.

The tune originated with a fifteenth-century love song, “*Mein frewd möcht sich wol meren*,” but the meter was adapted to the new text. It has since been used as the tune for numerous Lutheran hymns, though it has not become common in English usage. The setting used for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book is a composite of several sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources, owing most to the setting by Johann Hermann Schein.

English Lutheran hymnals have made use of a translation by Arthur Tozer Russell, *Psalms and Hymns*, 1851, No. 41, “The Only Son from Heaven,” which omits the last two stanzas. To some recent hymnals has been added a doxological stanza that is not present in the original. The translation developed for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book includes all five original stanzas, and every attempt has been made to keep it as close as possible to the phrasing of the original. Both text and music may be freely used and reproduced for any purpose whatever and are offered with the prayer that they may serve for the edification of Christian people everywhere.