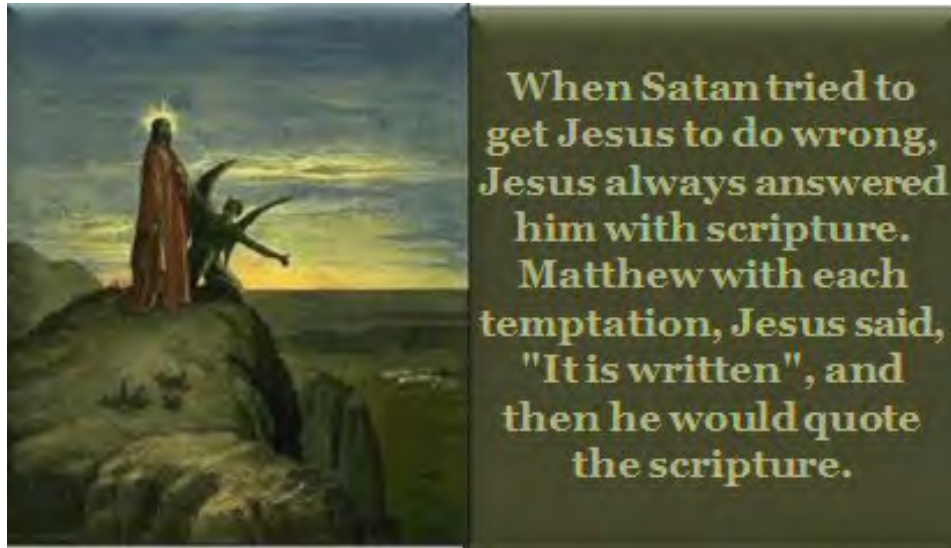


Devotion on Hymns of the Church (Hymn 59 - Lord who Throughout these Forty days)
– 4 March 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



The textual basis for this hymn is the account of given in Luke 4:1-13 of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in which our Lord spent forty days in the Wilderness being tempted by Satan. It may surprise many readers to learn that this great old Lenten hymn was first intended as a children's hymn and first appeared as such in the author's *Child's Book of Praise* (1873). It is amazing to see to what level the dumbing down process has brought us when children, in time's past, could understand such reverent, majestic, and meaningful hymns as this one. Today adult congregations are challenged to get the full meaning of "*God is so Good.*"

This hymn (**Lord, who throughout these Forty Days**) surveys with depth of feeling the full scope of Lent more than any other in the Hymnal. It's lyrics were composed by Claudia F. Hernaman to the tune of St. Flavian to which it is most commonly played and sung. The hymn is so full of scriptural truth that one barely needs to read the Gospel to understand the full story. This fact brings to light the value of sound, doctrinal hymns that were the mainstay of many persecuted Christians of the Reformation and pre-Reformation era who had no access to the Bible. They could remember the Bible truths through the words of great hymns and psalms.

Lord, who Throughout these Forty Days

Lord, who throughout these forty days,
For us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with thee to mourn our sins,
And close by thee to stay.

2. As thou with Satan didst contend,
And didst the victory win,
O give us strength in thee to fight,
In thee to conquer sin.

3. As thou didst hunger bear and thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and chiefly lye
By thy most holy word.

4. And through these days of penitence,
And through thy Passion-tide,
Yea, evermore, in life and death,
Jesus! with us abide.

5. Abide with us, that so, this life
Of suffering overpast,
An Easter of unending joy
We may attain at last!

“Lord, who throughout these forty days/for us didst fast and pray, teach us with thee to mourn our sins, and close by thee to stay.” The forty days fast of our Lord was not to satisfy some personal want or need. It was solely for us. There is only one thing that can cause a mourning in Heaven, and that thing is our sin. It was for us that Jesus came; for us that he fasted in the Wilderness; for us that He most often prayed; for us that He bore the humiliation and passion of the cross; and it was for us that He rose again from the grave that wonderful Spring morning in the Garden. We have a partner to mourn our sins if we will keep our souls close by Him.

“As thou with Satan didst contend / and didst the victory win, O give us strength in thee to fight, in thee to conquer sin.” We do, indeed, have an Advocate with the Father – Christ Jesus our Lord. The outcome of the Battle is not in question for victory has already been achieved at Calvary. If we have taken the likeness of Christ upon our mortal souls, it is He who fights our battles. Our greatest battle is not against the unbelievers without, but the weakness of faith within. Our Lord Jesus Christ cannot cover our sins if we are not hidden away in His blessed Bosom.

“As thou didst hunger bear and thirst, So teach us, gracious Lord, To die to self, and chiefly lye By thy most holy word.” Our Lord’s thirst on the cross was ravenous even while He was, to us, the very Water of Life. Taking up our crosses daily and following Christ is a DAILY dying to self. We never sit on the laurels of courage and victory for the struggle in this world is endless until the curtain of Time is raised. If we are Christians indeed, we will not require a daily spoon-feeding by teachers of the Bible. We will, rather, be seekers of the meat, having been weaned from the gentle milk of His Word. A Christian who does not devour the bible readings daily from out of a great hunger for God’s Word can in no wise survive the allurements and charms of a wicked world. When it comes to Bible study, there are no ‘couch-potato’ Christians. (PERIOD)

“And through these days of penitence, And through thy Passion-tide, Yea, evermore, in life and death, Jesus! with us abide.” As blind Bartimaeus called out to Jesus – “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” it is also necessary that we cry out when He draws near to us, “Jesus, thou Son of David, ABIDE with me.” These days of Lent are particular days set aside for penitence in anticipation of the Passion of our Lord; but the penitence does not end at Easter. Having Christ ABIDE with us will evoke a desire to penitence daily, hourly, and moment-by-moment. How sweet to know that Jesus does not sojourn in our hearts, but literally ABIDES there (lives there forever) – even in death (and Christ cannot die anew).

“Abide with us, that so, this life Of suffering overpast, An Easter of unending joy We may attain at last! Now these final words of the hymn are rapturous beyond imagination, are they not? The Passover/Easter that we observe of Christ is not isolated to two thousand years ago. It is a NOW event for all who die in the Lord. *“Behold, I*

shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 15:51-57)

**A Prayer From Manual Of Devotion
For Soldiers And Sailors (1847)**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Thou art worshipped by the perpetual praises of heaven, while the seraphim do cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory! Cause thy fear to fall upon us, and a sense of thine excellency to make us afraid. And since we are sinners, be pleased to sprinkle us with the blood of reconciliation. Gather in our wandering thoughts, and fit our souls for thy most worthy praise. Fulfill to us, this day, the gracious promise of our Lord and Redeemer, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he will be in the midst of them. Grant us the influences of thy Holy Spirit, without which our worship must be in vain. Open our understandings to receive thy word. Assist our devotions, when we pray to thee. Attune our hearts and voices to thy praise. And graciously pardon and accept us, for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*