

## 452. Trinity 26 – I

*Restless is our soul, Lord. In You alone does it find rest!*

*[Augustine<sup>1</sup>: Confessions, 1,1]*

**Matthew 11:25–30** At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

**W**ith incredible willingness the Son wants to reveal the mystery of grace for *all*. But *they do not want it; they want to walk in the darkness*. Their “wisdom and understanding,” their pride and wantonness make them blind to the Light, deaf to the Lord’s Word. Listen then, you needy ones, to the precious Savior’s calling voice! “Come to Me!” With these words He puts love’s life-saving rope around us and pulls us in. It is His earnest will that we should come, and in His inviting call there is the power for us to follow. He calls. *This* paves the way for you through all obstacles. But here *He* calls who is above all things, our King and Lord, Jesus Christ. No one should say: “I cannot come.” By the calling power of His grace, you can do it. Come then, dear soul, O come to Jesus! “But *where* is He?” He is where His voice is: in the Word and the Sacraments. If you could see how near He is! But you will not see it, for God has decided that we should believe, and He gives us grace for this by His Spirit.

“But how shall I *come* to Jesus?” Indeed, by praying to Him for grace and entrusting yourself into His saving hands. Believe He is near you and saves you, and thank Him, and you *have* come and *have* rest. “But He calls only those who labor and are heavy-laden. How do I know if I am one of them?” Friend, become simple, and learn that He gives everything *by grace*, not a little, but great and free, with heavenly, lavish generosity. Here He calls out to the masses and He doesn’t say: “Only those who labor and are heavy-laden may come,” but: “Come, all who labor and are heavy-laden,” that is: all who want to find rest. You come, completely certain of nothing except that you are burdened by your sin. But if you want to come, then it is His calling grace that draws you, and the way is open. Don’t you feel burdened and in need of rest? Shouldn’t you realize that you are blind and need enlightenment from God’s Spirit to be sure of salvation? Then at least you stand at the crossroads and *can* enter *His* school, that instructs children about the Father. O listen, all you who realize that by your own wisdom you cannot know God and cannot with your own works find peace of mind and hope for life! Listen to Jesus’ most loving invitation, and come to Him, come to Him! To all, to all He calls. “If *anyone* is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!” “And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” [*Rev 22:17*]. Let no one stay away! Whoever you are, and wherever you are, you need salvation. Come, for He calls you. You are lost. He seeks and saves those who are lost [*Luk 19:10*]. Understand this: *that’s the very reason* He has come. Blessed are those who are not offended at Him!

He says: “Take My yoke, My salvation, bear with it My burden. I free you from the harsh yoke of the Law, from the bondage of works, for I have fulfilled it all for you. Therefore when the law accuses you, all you have to do is refer the matter to Me, and find

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo in north Africa, came to Christianity after struggling with Manichaeist dualism and Neo-Platonism. His theology had a major impact on western Christianity and on Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk.

relief in faith on my perfect righteousness. Take My *love* and serve one another.” “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” [Gal 6:2]. When out of love we bear with others’ weaknesses and serve them with physical and spiritual help, then we bear Christ’s “burden” with His “yoke.” Love is the yoke; others’ troubles are the burden. This He “teaches” us, that is, *gives* us His grace to do it. And in this He is the most gentle Teacher, who does not reject us for our slow learning. But this gentleness of His He also gives to us, so that we in turn can bear with others, and even regard them higher than ourselves. And so neither can our own or others’ wretchedness hinder our rest in Christ.

O, my soul, don’t let it be in vain that He calls you to Himself! Come and learn to know love, so that you entrust yourself to Him. Freed from the yoke of the Law, feel your unworthiness. Be still before the Lord and taste His peace. Then you are with Him, and *come* to Him ever anew. You have rest and *get* rest, *bear* His yoke, and *take* His yoke. You are His disciples and *become* one, until you are perfect in love and enter into the heavenly Sabbath rest.

My Jesus, explain these Your sweet words to me, and draw me to You. You know how much there is that would keep me away from You, obscure You to me, and make Your yoke seem heavy for me. But, precious Savior, You know Your servant and You know how sincerely I pray You for grace to believe on You, love You, to be like You in meekness and gentleness, to follow You in cross and trial, to live in Your love, and to use all the power You give me for the best for the brethren. You see, dear Lord, that I love Your yoke and do not want to cast away Your burden. O draw me to You, and draw me after You, and I am blessed! In You alone my soul has rest, and in You alone it will have its rest. Praise to You with the Father and the Holy Spirit to all eternity. Amen.

Come unto Me, O weary soul!  
I am your gracious Herdsman:  
As surely as you would be whole,  
Then come with all your burden!  
Come, lay your troubles down;  
My easy yoke take on.  
And learn My love to trace,  
For I am rich in grace,  
And humble and forgiving.

With Me is peace and rest so sweet,  
With Me is strength for weakness,  
With Me is healing for all need,  
With Me is light in darkness;  
O soul, believe in Me,  
My yoke is still easy,  
My burden is so light,  
Come in your deepest plight!  
And nevermore you’ll sorrow.

I come to You, O Jesus dear,  
From You I would be learning;  
No more sin’s burden can I bear,  
For comfort I am yearning;  
Your voice I long to hear;  
Me with Your comfort cheer,  
And let me know aright  
Your burden is so light  
Your yoke a joy and gladness!

Unknown: Kom hen til mig, du trætte Sjæl! L. 577 tr. DeGarmeaux; tune: Ein feste Burg (isometric ELH 251);  
alternate hymn: Come unto Me, ye weary ELH 413

## 453. Trinity 26 – II

*Your testimonies are very sure;*

*Holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever. [Psa 93:5]*

**1 Thessalonians 5:12–23** And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Only Christ's redeemed can lead such a glorious life. But from this immeasurably rich text we may look at only a few things.

It goes completely against the wicked spirit of the times to regard superiors in the Lord "*on account of their work.*" People honor *persons*, but despise the office. Let the disciples of the meek Savior take note of this: "esteem them very highly in love *for their work's sake.*" And then the following: "Warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all." We let the unruly do as they like, the weak sink. We are soft toward our own people and judgmental towards others. O let the Apostle's words chasten us, but also strengthen the good in us. Let no one give up!

What remarkable things the Apostle goes on to say—in connection with the preceding: "*Rejoice always!*" Can he mean it? Certainly. He also writes to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord *always*" [Phi 4:4]! So joy should be the undercurrent beneath all the changing feelings in our life. "Rejoice!" Yes, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer" (Rom 12:12). Here it says this in three successive steps: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks!" And he adds: "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Then nothing must prevent it, but we can and will do what he says! Let every breath and every heartbeat be a song of praise for God's love to us in Christ! But then again we must follow this threefold teaching: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good." Let the gifts of the Spirit be cultivated: let no envy or contempt quench the holy fire, where it glows in simple and scholarly people. Let nothing hinder the proper use of the gifts! But on the other hand, remember: "All that glitters is not gold!" "Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

*The faithful God, He will do this. Go and do it! He is the "God of peace," the origin and source of peace. He will take away what harms you, destroy sin that hinders your full joy, sanctify you completely, and preserve you blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Apostle can strengthen us in such hope, then he can indeed say: "Rejoice always ... in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

Praise to You, our God, who appointed us for salvation in Jesus Christ and called us in Him to eternal glory! We thank You also for these precious words through Your Apostle and humbly pray You for grace to believe the Word and to live it. Amen.

May Jesus' gladness in us live,  
Our pray'rs to heav'n be raising;  
To God our thanks with joy we give  
For joy and rest amazing,  
And ne'er God's Spirit we offend,  
But by His Word our hearts do tend  
To glory, love, and praising.

Grant us Your Holy Spirit, Lord,  
That we with faith be trying  
Each doctrine by Your holy Word,  
Its comfort true applying,  
To flee all wickedness and shame  
And give all honor to Your name  
For grace and life supplying.

O God of peace, in holy love  
Your people knit together,  
That in Your pow'r from heav'n above  
In one true name we gather;  
That body, soul, and spirit may  
Stand blameless on the judgment day  
To live with Christ forever.

*Kingo: O kjære Sjæl luk op din Mund L 578:5-7 tr. DeGarmeaux; tune: Es is gewisslich (ELH 538);  
alternate hymn: O Lord, who in Thy love divine ELH 505:9-10*

## 454. Trinity 26 – Monday

*Draw us to You, Lord Jesus, and reveal to us Your glory. Amen.*

**John 5:19–23** Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

**Y**esterday we heard Jesus say: “No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” [Mat 11:27]. As these words testify about His unity with the Father, so also do His words in our text today. “Whatever the Father does, the Son also does *in like manner*. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him *all things* that He Himself does ... the Son gives life to whom He will ... and has all judgment ... He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” If we are to know *God*, then it must be in Christ that we know Him, for *only in Him* do we find God. But when we come to Him in the Gospel (for He is there), then we come to the true God. Then we also become partakers of His life-giving divine power, for He gives us new life: love, so that we love Him and flee from sin. When we thus honor Him, we honor the Father. Although we usually pray to the Father, we can surely also pray to the Son. Sometimes our heart may especially desire to turn to Him. And if we know Him and can speak confidently with *Him*, then we are the Father's beloved and should not fear any wrath. The Son has *all* judgment. He who hangs on the cross for me and pays for all my sin with His blood, *He* and no one else has the power to judge over me. The unrepentant He must condemn, because they do not want to be saved. But to the poor who hold on to His saving name He will give eternal life. There is His own

word: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who *hears* My word and *believes* in Him who sent Me *has everlasting life*, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (v. 24).

In You, Lord Jesus, I have found the Father, and in You I shall see Him forever. Let me never fall into unbelief, but keep me close to You, and show me Your glory. Lord Jesus, hold me fast, that I may remain with You forever. Amen.

To me the preaching of the cross  
Is wisdom everlasting;  
Thy death alone redeems my loss;  
On Thee my burden casting,  
I, in Thy name,  
A refuge claim  
From sin and death and from all shame—  
Blest be Thy name, O Jesus!

O Jesus, may I constant be,  
Forever with Thee staying!  
O may I feel love’s mastery,  
My ev’ry fear allaying!  
The dove at last  
Hath found sweet rest  
From all her weary, futile quest,  
Although she long went straying.

*Anon.: In Jesus I find rest and peace L 298:6-7 ELH 437:6-7 tr. G. A. T. Rygh; tune: I-Jesus søger jeg*

## 455. Trinity 26 – Tuesday

*Let Your light shine for us, O Spirit of God,  
and drive the darkness out of our soul. Amen.*

**1 Corinthians 1:17–21** For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Christ praises the Father, “that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes” [Luk 10:21], and to us He says: “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” [Mat 18:3]. So become simple. Admit that with your natural wisdom you know nothing of the truth of salvation, and pray for God the Holy Spirit’s enlightenment to *believe*. Things that never “entered into the heart of man ... God has prepared for those who love Him” [1Co 2:9]. They are too foolish and they are too wonderful to be thought up by man. If we on our own could have found a way of salvation for ourselves, would it have been this: that God’s Son dies for us, and that we are justified by faith in Him by no merit of our own? O no! This plan to save sinners could only come from our God. And would we have proposed anything like this rule of life, that “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” [Mar 16:16]? No, it would seem too lowly for us so that we would never have hit upon it.

But now since these things are of God and exalted above all wisdom, we must become fools in order to learn them. Never think that you are able to grasp divine truth for salvation with your reason, but *become a little child and believe the Gospel*. Look to Him on the tree, and live. For it pleased God by this foolishness of preaching *to save those who believe*. Praise the Lord for this, to all eternity! Give us grace to believe, merciful God, by Your Holy Spirit for Jesus' sake. Amen.

All our knowledge, sense, and sight  
Lie in deepest darkness shrouded  
Till Thy Spirit breaks our night  
With the beams of truth unclouded.  
Thou alone to God canst win us;  
Thou must work all good within us.

Glorious Lord, Thyself impart,  
Light of Light, from God proceeding;  
Open Thou our ears and heart,  
Help us by Thy Spirit's pleading.  
Hear the cry Thy people raises,  
Hear and bless our prayers and praises.

*Clausnitzer: Blessed Jesus, at Thy Word L 4:2-3 ELH 1:2-3 tr. C. Winkworth; tune: Liebster Jesu*

## 456. Trinity 26 – Wednesday

*Lord, give us hearts that are humble and hungry for grace!*

*Let Your Spirit accomplish this in us by the Word. Amen.*

**Isaiah 57:15–21** For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,” says the LORD, “And I will heal him.” But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

**G**od is angry with His arrogant and disobedient children. He strikes them, but they increase their transgressions and go on in the way of their heart. It can last a long time, and yet the lost son can finally come and *humble* himself before his God. For no soul has peace when separated from the Lord. The worm gnaws at his innermost heart. Under the smooth surface there is unrest, and before you know it, the troubled sea casts out muck and mire. But when the troubled person humbles himself, the Lord comes in to him and heals him. The Lord has raised his throne to the *highest heaven and in the hearts of the humble and lowly*. He dwells among the *saints*, exalted above all sin, perfectly pure — and yet also within the *souls of poor sinners*. If anyone would come very near to God, let him become lowly in himself! “The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit” [Psa 34:18]. O you people, dust and ashes, impure and wicked, humble yourselves. Humble yourselves, feel your wretchedness, and honor the Lord, then He will gloriously exalt you. With His incomprehensible love He formed the heart of man so that He would dwell in the heart, and the heart would dwell in Him. But humility is the only door through which the Glorious One enters our heart.

Lord, You take no pleasure in the strength of a man, but You take pleasure in those who fear You, In those who hope in Your mercy [*Psa 147:10-11*]. Give me a humble heart and a simple, lowly spirit. O my pride and twisted mind! Lord, create humility and living fear of God in my soul, that I may receive in You much grace and peace. Amen.

His mercy is on all who fear,  
Who trust in Him from age to age.  
His arm of strength to all is near,  
The proud He scatt' reth, though they rage.

The strong He casteth from their seat  
And raiseth men of low degree;  
To hungry souls He giveth meat,  
The rich depart in poverty.

He helped His servant Israel;  
Remembering His eternal grace,  
As from of old He did foretell  
To Abraham and all his race.

So praise with me the Holy One,  
Who cometh in humility.  
Divine Redeemer, God's own Son,  
Eternal glory be to Thee!

*Landstad: Magnificat L 299:3-6*

*[We substitute: ELH 47:3-6 Unknown German author; tr. J. T. Mueller; tune: Gottlob, es geht]*

## 457. Trinity 26 – Thursday

**Psalm 138** I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. In the day when I cried out, You answered me, And made me bold with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, When they hear the words of Your mouth. Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, For great is the glory of the LORD. Though the LORD is on high, Yet He regards the lowly; But the proud He knows from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

**W**hy will you not *all* come and receive grace with our God? Why will you not all learn to sing praises to His name? Is it because *He* would not receive you? Is anyone's sin too great, or is anyone's heart too wicked, that the Lord would not be able to have mercy? No, "but *you were not willing*" [*Mat 23:37; Luk 13:34*]! We should shout aloud in the whole world as loud as we can that God saves all poor souls who repent, so that no one needs to go under the yoke of sin without peace and finally be lost. All Satan's lies cannot shake the truth that Jesus receives sinners.

But if you will not come and enjoy His mercy and take part in singing praise, even that will not keep God's people from rejoicing and praising the Lord. "Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your judgments; He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more" [*Zep 3:14-15*]. Praise to You, O God. "I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods (all mighty ones) I will sing praises to You." Never can I thank You fully. Me, a worm worthy of death, which You should tread under foot, You have made me Your child. My restless soul You gave rest in Your loving

bosom. But still more glorious things You have promised me. You will fulfill Your work in me, and I will see You as You are, in Your heavenly beauty. Then I will drink of the crystal pure water of the river of life and walk in the light of Your face forever [Rev 22:1]. “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” [Rev 22:14].

But once again: People, why won’t you come to Him? You are still poor and death’s sure prey, no matter what you say, — in your inmost heart you must admit it!

O dear Lord, we praise You. When You freed us from captivity, we were like those who dream [Psa. 126:1]. But we still sigh and weep: “Bring back our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South” [Psa 126:4]. O hear us for Your mercy and Your truth’s sake. Amen.

But you, that make a better choice,  
Shall share your great Redeemer’s joys  
When this your warfare’s over;  
No mortal tongue can e’er express,  
With what rewards the God of Grace  
Will crown His faithful lover.

And what our great and gracious Lord  
Has promis’d in His holy Word,  
And seal’d with His own Spirit,  
He will perform and safely bring  
Our souls where saints and angels sing  
Of His eternal merit.

*Ringwaldt: Come hither! saith our blessed Lord L 576:9-10 tr. J. C. Jacobs, 1725;  
tune: Kommt her zu mir (ELH 189); alternate hymn: Come, follow Me, the Savior spake ELH 422:1.5.6*

## 458. Trinity 26 – Friday

*Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—  
Your salvation according to Your word [Psa 119:41].*

**John 6:43–47** Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”

**O**ur salvation from beginning to end is from God. No one wakes himself from the sleep of sin, no one recognizes his sin with concern for the Lord, no one comes to Christ to receive grace, no one believes the forgiveness of sins, no one is born again except that this is all worked by God. In the same way the faithfulness of the regenerate to the very end is God’s work. But how does it happen that He does this with some and not with all? Surely He wants all to be saved [1Ti 2:4]! — We shall not try to solve this riddle here. God’s Word doesn’t answer it, so it remains a mystery, that will only be fully revealed in heaven— to the glory of God’s wisdom, love, and righteousness.

But if anyone asks with worry about himself, then let him simply follow God’s call, that he may experience that the Father draws precisely him. Whatever serious thoughts and longing for God there are in you — they are the Father’s drawing. When you felt the emptiness of the world, were restless and longing for peace, when God’s Word penetrated your heart, and the Gospel commended itself to your conscience, when despite your unwillingness toward Jesus there was something in you that wanted to go to Him: Know that all this was the Father’s drawing you to the Son. Then you could follow if you wanted,

and you are without excuse if you stayed away. But now, if from God's Word you recognize yourself as a sinner worthy of death, who knows nothing for salvation except the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, then the Father has been able to draw you, and you are already with the Son. It is God who has taught you to know your sin and to pray to Jesus for mercy. You believe in Him already, for You hold on to Him as your only Savior and are sure that He is the true God and eternal life. Give God the glory. He has done great things with you. You will soon see the ways of heavenly brightness. His wisdom led you from beginning to end. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you" [*Jer 31:3*], He says. Thus you should be thankful in eternal awe and blessed adoration.

With our whole heart we confess that our salvation is only and completely from You, our God, and we pray for grace to have our one and all in You, O eternal Love. Amen.

Deep and glorious, word victorious,  
Word divine that ever lives!  
Call thou sinners to be winners  
Of the life that Jesus gives;  
Tell abroad what God hath given;  
Jesus is our way to heaven.

Savior tender, thanks we render  
For the grace Thou dost afford;  
Time is flying, time is dying,  
Yet eternal stands Thy Word;  
With Thy Word Thy grace endureth,  
And a refuge us secureth.

By Thy Spirit, through Thy merit,  
Draw all weary souls to Thee!  
End their sighing, end their dying,  
Let them Thy salvation see!  
Lead us in life's pathway tending,  
To the life and bliss unending.

*Oldenburg: Deep and glorious, Word victorious L 238 LHy 251 tr. C. Døving;  
tune: Herr, ich habe missgehandelt (ELH 450); alternate hymn: Just as I am ELH 319*

## 459. Trinity 26 – Saturday

**Psalm 31:19–24** Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men! You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city! For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You. Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! For the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

“**F**or I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God’” (v. 13-14). The believers are everywhere surrounded by mortal enemies from hell, but God is their mighty fortress; everywhere in mortal danger, everywhere in sure protection. No one can express what love the mighty Lord in heaven has for them. “O whoever truly from the heart entrusts himself to God with living, firm hope has Him with all His treasure of grace, with all His goodness and love.

God gives Himself completely to those who give themselves completely to Him” (Johann Arndt<sup>2</sup>). Mount Tabor<sup>3</sup> in the wilderness! “You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence,” says the psalmist. The secret place of Your presence: an invisible and secure hiding place, hidden to human eyes! They live before the Lord’s presence, and the Lord’s presence protects them. They flee to Him, and He “makes His face shine upon them” [*Psa 31:16*]. Who dares touch them while they are under His watchful eye? So Joseph escapes from the wicked woman, Daniel from the lions, and his friends in the fire. But salvation is often hidden a long time, even to the faithful. It always shows itself at the right time. But our times are not His. Our faith must be tested. David tells how it was for him: “I said in my haste, ‘I am cut off from before Your eyes’; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You.” Though I was unfaithful, You heard me. The Lord knows our weak hearts and saves us of His “great goodness.” This He hid from those who fear Him — hid from them and hid for them — to reveal it before the eyes of all at the right time.

“Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!” Rejoice in Him with holy joy, and entrust yourselves to Him with your whole heart. “Be of good courage.” Hear this, you sorrowful, who fear His wrath and see everything in dark colors. Hear these words of His, and entrust yourselves to them: “Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.”

My God, You know Your servant. When I see Your face shine, then I am confident, but when You hide Yourself, then I am discouraged. O do not take Your goodness away from Your poor child, but hide me always in the secret place of Your presence, and hide me in Your pavilion, and strengthen my heart and be my strong city, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

I have Thy Word, Christ Jesus, Lord;  
Thou never wilt forsake me.  
This will I plead In time of need.  
O help with speed,  
When troubles overtake me!

Grant, Lord, we pray, Thy grace each day,  
That we, Thy law revering,  
May live with Thee, And happy be  
Eternally,  
Before Thy throne appearing.

*Sthen: Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior blest L 80:7-8 ELH 258:6-7 tr. H. R. K. Spaeth; tune: Herre Jesu Krist*

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<sup>2</sup> Johann Arndt (1555-1621) was a Lutheran pastor who wrote devotional works (such as *True Christianity*), which became popular among the pietists.

<sup>3</sup> Mount Tabor, a high mountain in Israel, according to tradition is the mount of the Transfiguration.