

## GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE AND SING



Tune: Gelobt Sei Gott

Did you think this was a Christmas hymn when you first read the title? The first four words are the same as a famous German Christmas carol, “In Dulci Jubilo,” but this hymn is for Easter. Find the other hymn and compare it.

The author was Cyril A. Alington, an Anglican (in the United States we would say Episcopalian) school master and a clergyman. He was invited to write it for inclusion in a famous hymnal called *Songs of Praise* (1931) – a book which included many new songs and hymns. At the time of writing he was headmaster of Eton, one of the most important private schools in England.

Because of the unusual meter (three lines of poetry, each with eight syllables, followed by the three Alleluias) there are few tunes which could be used with these words. We know that Alington had this well known tune in mind, and it has a joyful combination of scales and jumps which make the words easy to sing. Are there any other tunes by Melchior Vulpinus in your hymnal? You can find out by looking in the Index of Composers and Arrangers.

There are many interesting words to think about:

- (1) “Good”: is there any connection between “good” and “God?” What?
- (2) triumph: what triumph, or victory, did Christ the King win?
- (3) aye: (pronounced like the letter A, to rhyme with *way* and *say*). How long is “forever?”
- (4) flowers of song - strew: How are flowers and singing related?  
To “strew” means to scatter all around – does this mean that we should give away our songs like flowers to everyone?
- (5) accord: are we supposed to sing all alone, or join with others? Could “one accord” tell something of the way your choir should sound?
- (6) life laid down, life restored: Whose life? Does *laid down* mean death? When was life restored?

The last word “Alleluia” means “Praise ye the Lord.” How many other hymns do you know that end with Alleluias? Start with “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” “Come, Christians, Join to Sing,” and “All Creatures of Our God and King.” How many more can you find? Why should this word be found so often in hymns? Is it because “Ah” is such a nice sound to sing? Can a singing sound perhaps express your feelings just as well or maybe even better than words? Which is more important – the words or the music?

*Hymnstudy by Austin C. Lovelace*