

Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands
Martin Luther, 1524.
Geistliche Gesangbuchlein, 1524.

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands,
For our offenses given;
But now at God's right hand He stands,
And brings us life from Heaven.
Wherefore let us joyful be,
And sing to God right thankfully
Loud songs of Alleluia! Alleluia!

No son of man could conquer death,
Such mischief sin had wrought us,
For innocence dwelt not on earth,
And therefore death had brought us
Into thralldom from of old
And ever grew more strong and bold
And kept us in his bondage. Alleluia!

But Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
To our low state descended,
The cause of death He has undone,
His power forever ended,
Ruined all his right and claim
And left him nothing but the name,
His sting is lost forever. Alleluia!

It was a strange and dreadful strife
When life and death contended;
The victory remained with life;
The reign of death was ended.
Stripped of power, no more it reigns,
An empty form alone remains
Death's sting is lost forever! Alleluia!

Here the true Paschal Lamb we see,
Whom God so freely gave us;
He died on the accursed tree
So strong His love! to save us.
See, His blood doth mark our door;
Faith points to it, death passes over,
And Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!

So let us keep the festival
Where to the Lord invites us;
Christ is Himself the joy of all,
The sun that warms and lights us.
By His grace He doth impart
Eternal sunshine to the heart;
The night of sin is ended! Alleluia!

Then let us feast this Easter day
On the true bread of Heaven;
The Word of grace hath purged away
The old and wicked leaven.
Christ alone our souls will feed;
He is our meat and drink indeed;
Faith lives upon no other! Alleluia!