

O Lord, Look Down from Heaven
Martin Luther, 1523.
16th Century German.

O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold
And let Thy pity waken:
How few are we within Thy fold,
Thy saints by men forsaken!
True faith seems quenched on every hand,
Men suffer not Thy Word to stand;
Dark times have us o'ertaken.

With fraud which they themselves invent
Thy truth they have confounded;
Their hearts are not with one consent
On Thy pure doctrine grounded.
While they parade with outward show,
They lead the people to and fro,
In error's maze astounded.

May God root out all heresy
And of false teachers rid us
Who proudly say: "Now, where is he
That shall our speech forbid us?
By right or might we shall prevail;
What we determine cannot fail;
We own no lord and master."

Therefore saith God, "I must arise,
The poor My help are needing;
To Me ascend My people's cries,
And I have heard their pleading.
For them My saving Word shall fight
And fearlessly and sharply smite,
The poor with might defending."

As silver tried by fire is pure
From all adulteration,
So through God's Word shall men endure
Each trial and temptation.
Its light beams brighter through the cross,
And, purified from human dross,
It shines through every nation.

Thy truth defend, O God, and stay
This evil generation;
And from the error of their way
Keep Thine own congregation.
The wicked everywhere abound
And would Thy little flock confound;
But Thou art our salvation.