

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

“The Only Song from Heaven” (*Lutheran Service Book*, #402)

Text: Elisabeth Cruciger (1500?-1535)

(Arthur T. Russell, English translator, 1806-1874 – Stanzas 1-3)

(*Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978 – Stanza 4)

Was it on a morning such as this? Elisabeth Cruciger, awaking early, looked out into the pre-dawn darkness that surrounded their Wittenberg home. Their two children were still asleep. Her husband Caspar would soon be up and off to his daily adventures with Luther and Melancthon. But for now all was quiet. It was a time for prayer and meditation.

There was a bright morning star aglow on the distant horizon. How could she help but recall that promise of ages “a star shall come out of Jacob”! (Numbers 24:17) And she might have wondered if poor, foolish Balaam even suspected what those God-given words meant. But she knew well who that Morning Star was to be.

For the day had dawned and the morning star had risen in her heart (2 Peter 1:19) when she was brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ, “the only Son from heaven.” And had not her Savior Himself proclaimed it? “I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” (Revelation 22:16)

And so, Elisabeth Cruciger, born of German nobility, sat down to write of the One whose far greater nobility was demonstrated in His coming into this world as the virgin-born, God-anointed King, to vanquish grim death and open heaven and life to every sinner.

Here was the soon-forgotten wife and mother, who had been rescued from the nunnery of false belief and superstition, writing of how her heart had been awakened to know and love her Savior and Lord. Now she was able to stand in that saving gospel with faith unshaken.

Elisabeth Cruciger must have realized, in the midst of the early Reformation movement, that the world continued to move desperately and tragically against the Lord and His anointed. Because of that, the lives of the reformers and their families were threatened every day.

And yet, each morning star would be a glimpse of heaven, a sure reminder and proof of the truth of Scripture—salvation in Jesus Christ alone—and the fullness of life in heaven.

Elisabeth Cruciger’s proclamation of the gospel, her hymn-testimony of faith, has continued to shine through the past five hundred years! And, like a true and faithful child of God and disciple of the Lord, she let that light shine, not on herself, but only on the One whose light of salvation could never be confined and to which no star in the heavens could ever compare.

Thank You, Lord God of our salvation, our Bright Morning Star. Shine into our hearts. Awaken us with Your gospel of life. Let us also shine for You. Amen.

Lonie Eatherton
Fenton, MO

<photo of Lonie>

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The only Son from heaven, foretold by ancient seers,
By God the Father given, in human form appears.
 No sphere His light confining,
 no star so brightly shining
As He, our Morning Star.

O time of God appointed, O bright and holy morn!
He comes, the king anointed, the Christ, the virgin-born,
 Grim death to vanquish for us,
 to open heaven before us
And bring us life again.

O Lord, our hearts awaken to know and love You more.
In faith to stand unshaken, in spirit to adore,
 That we, through this world moving,
 Each glimpse of heaven proving
May reap its fullness there.

O Father, here before You with God the Holy Ghost
And Jesus, we adore You, O pride of angel host.
 Before You mortals lowly
 Cry, "Holy, holy, holy,
O blessed Trinity!"

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