

Fairest Lord Jesus

Schönster Herr Jesu

MÜNSTERISCH GESANGBUCH (1677)

revised in SCHLESISCHE VOLKSLIEDER (1842)

translated by RICHARD STORRS WILLIS (1819–1900)

and JOSEPH A. SEISS (1823–1904)

Fairest Lord Jesus!
Ruler of all nature!
O Thou of God and man the Son!
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor,
Thou! my soul's glory, joy, and crown!

*Fair are the meadows,
Fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer
Who makes the woful heart to sing.*

Fair is the sunshine,
Fairer still the moonlight,
And the twinkling starry host;
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

*Beautiful Saviour!
Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of man!
Glory and honor,
praise, adoration,
Now and for evermore be Thine!*

of God and man the Son: German: “Son of God and Mary” (*Gottes und Mariä Sohn*).
joy, and crown: This translates the 1842 German text (*Freud' und Kron'*), but the 1677 German text reads “joy and home” (*Freud und Wohn*).
Fair are the meadows: This stanza is in the 1842 German text but not in the 1677 German text.
meadows... woodlands: In the German text Willis prints, *Felder* (meadows) comes first and *Wälder* (woodlands) comes second, as in his translation, but these are in the reverse order in the *Schlesische Volkslieder* text—that is, the meadows are fairer.
Fair is the sunshine... starry host: The 1677 German text instead reads, “Be ashamed, O sun; be ashamed, O moon; be ashamed, all you stars” (*Schame dich O Sonne / schame dich O Mone / Schämet euch ihr Sternen all*).
sunshine... moonlight: Willis's German text, and his translation, again reverse the order in the *Schlesische Volkslieder* text, where *Monden* (moons) comes first and *Sonne* (sun) comes second—that is, the sun shines fairer.
Beautiful Saviour: This stanza by Seiss follows his translation of the three stanzas also translated by Willis, and is often printed after Willis's translation. This stanza does not correspond to any of the remaining German stanzas in either the 1677 or 1842 texts, but may be a repetition of the first stanza with variations.

English text (Willis, st. 1-3): Richard Storrs Willis, *Church Chorals and Choir Studies* (New York, 1850)

English text (Seiss, st. 4): *Sunday-School Book, without music, for the use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations* (Philadelphia, 1877)

German text: Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Ernst Richter, *Schlesische Volkslieder mit Melodien* (Leipzig, 1842)

Original German (1842 text, stanzas 1-3):

Schönster Herr Jesu,
Herrscher aller Erden,
Gottes und Mariä Sohn!
Dich will ich lieben,
dich will ich ehren,
Meiner Seelen Freud' und Kron'!

*Schön sind die Wälder,
noch schöner sind die Felder,
In der schönen Frühlingszeit!
Jesus ist schöner,
Jesus ist reiner,
Der unser trauriges Herz erfreut!*

Schön leucht der Monden,
noch schöner leucht die Sonne
Als die Sternlein allzumal!
Jesus leucht schöner,
Jesus leucht reiner,
Als all die Engel im Himmelsaal.