



Rise, Ye Children of Salvation

Text: Justus Falckner (1672-1723)

Tune: Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

As the Church commemorates her saints, especially martyrs, a battle imagery emerges. This makes sense because the Church on earth is the Church Militant, the Church that must fight the efforts of Satan to overcome the Word and destroy the faith of God's children. We pray, in hymns like these, that God would keep us faithful unto death, despite the attacks of Satan and the world. Only by the Blood of Christ and the faith given and strengthened by the Holy Spirit are we able to endure and receive salvation.

“Rise, Ye Children of Salvation” is a significant hymn for American Lutheranism. Though not written in America, or even in English, it was written by Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran Pastor ordained on American soil. He was the fourth son of Daniel Falckner, Pastor at Langenreinsdorf, Saxony, born November 22, 1672. He entered the University of Halle in 1693 as a student of theology. After completing his degree, when he should have entered the Ministry, he felt the responsibility of the Pastoral Office too great. At this time, his brother, Daniel, was in America. Upon Daniel's return in 1700, the two became power of attorney for William Penn and were authorized to sell his land in Pennsylvania. In 1701 they sold 10,000 acres to Andreas Rudman, a Swedish missionary. Through his interactions with Rudman, Justus eventually reconsidered entering the Ministry. When he agreed to become a Pastor, his ordination proved to be a difficult task. Because ordinations could only be done by a Bishop, and there was no American Lutheran Bishop for these Swedes, it seemed he would not be able to be ordained. However, after writing to the Bishop in Uppsala, he authorized Rudman to be *Su^r ragan Bishop*, or a sort of

temporary Bishop with limited authority. Rudman was assisted by the other two Pastors who came to America with him, and Justus was ordained on November 24, 1703 at Gloria Dei, the oldest church in Pennsylvania (formerly a Lutheran church, but has been Episcopalian since 1845). His first charge was serving as Pastor to the Dutch settlers near New Hanover. Shortly afterwards, Rudman sent Justus to be Pastor of the Lutheran congregations of New York and Albany. In 1714 he oversaw the founding of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldwick, New Jersey, the oldest Lutheran church in the state. He died there in 1723.

In his mission work, Justus believed music to be key. Several times he wrote to Germany, asking for an organ to be sent, as he believed the use of music—specifically organ music—would be an aid in converting Native Americans. Though he wrote several other hymns, the only one that has survived and entered into limited congregational use is “Rise, Ye Children of Salvation.”

As Justus was writing, he chose the tune NEANDER for “Rise, Ye Children of Salvation.” Written by Joachim Neander (author of “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” and others), this tune has been used for several hymns. Neander lived an interesting life. Though raised a devout Christian, in his college days he and his friends found mocking the Church and Christians to be their source of entertainment. He was converted after a near-death experience and vowed to become a Pastor. However, he died of tuberculosis at the age of 30, in 1680. His work lived on, and was used occasionally by Johann Sebastian Bach in his music for the Church.

“Rise, Ye Children of Salvation” is a hymn of encouragement. We are pointed to those faithful saints who have gone before and are encouraged to imitate them in their faithful confession of Christ, standing firm in the face of all things, even death. Though Satan “would defy all the hosts of God most high” (st. 1), we are “conquerors through the Savior's Blood” (st. 2, 3). That means that it is not we who have the victory, but the Blood of Christ that defeats the devil and silences his accusations against us. Finally, the Blood of Christ will inspire our eternal song of “Victory” (st. 4) as we stand before the triumphant Lamb of God, praising Him for His victory that has given us the Kingdom of Heaven.