

Ex more docti mystico
By Precepts Taught of Ages Past

John M. Neale / ERHALT UNS, HERR



1. By precepts taught of ages past,
now let us keep again the fast
which year by year, in order meet
of forty days is made complete.
2. The law and seers that were of old
in diverse ways this Lent foretold,
which Christ himself, the Lord and guide
of every season sanctified.
3. More sparing, therefore, let us make
the words we speak, the food we take;
deny ourselves in mirth and sleep,
in stricter watch our senses keep.
4. Avoid the evil thoughts that roll
like waters o'er the heedless soul;
nor let the foe occasion find
our souls in slavery to bind.
5. Blest Three-in-One and One-in-Three,
almighty God, we pray to thee,
that thou wouldst now vouchsafe to bless
our fast with fruits of righteousness.

Inspiration: "Ex more docti mystico"; ascribed to Gregory the Great, ca. 540-604.

Lyrics: 88.88; translated by John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, in "The Hymnal Noted", 1851 as "The Fast as Taught by Holy Lore"; adapted in "Hymns Ancient and Modern", 1861.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR; Joseph Klug's "Geistliche Lieder"; Wittenberg, 1543; adapted by Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750.