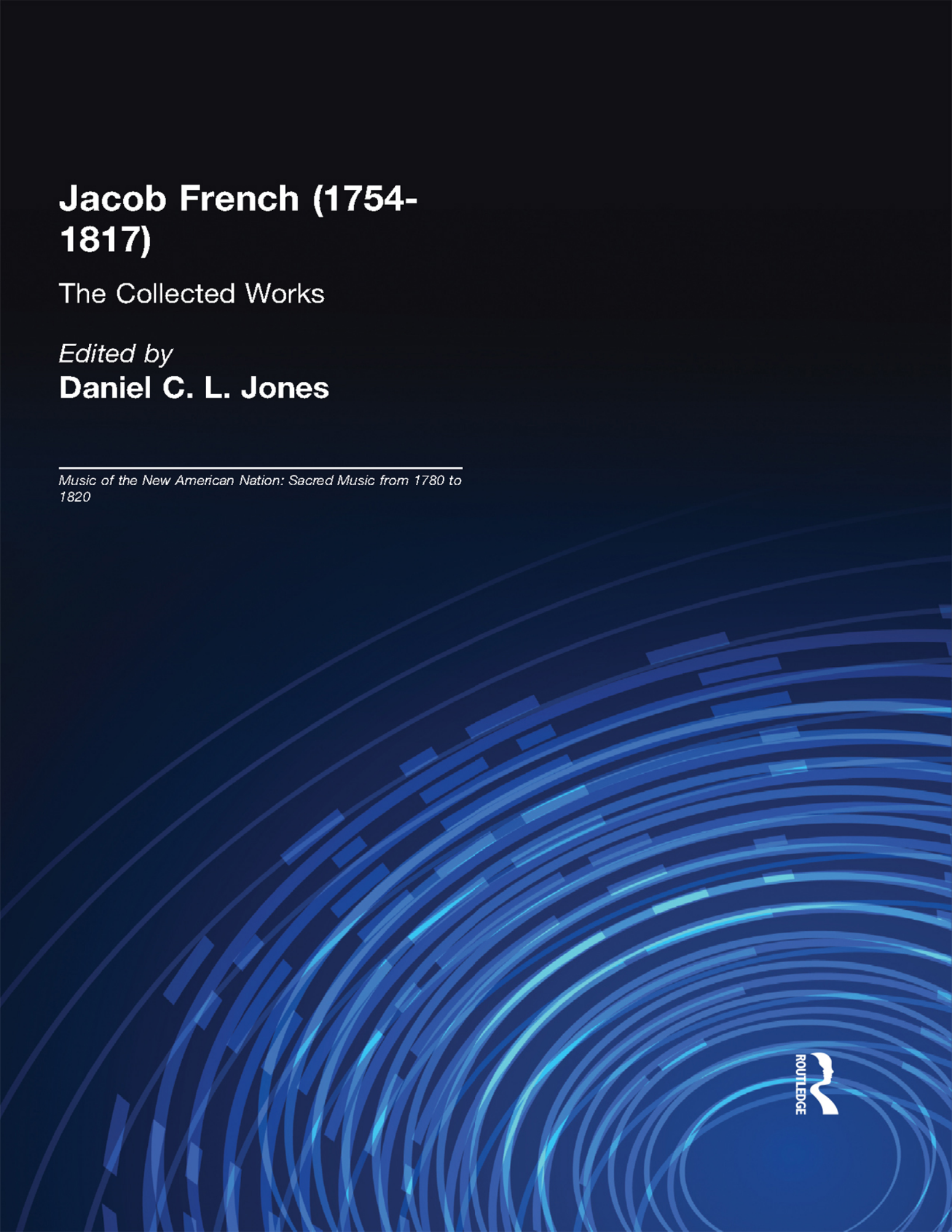
Jacob French (1754-1817)

The Collected Works

Edited by
Daniel C. L. Jones

Music of the New American Nation: Sacred Music from 1780 to 1820



Music of the NEW AMERICAN NATION

Sacred Music
from 1780 to 1820

KARL KROEGER, GENERAL EDITOR
University of Colorado at Boulder

Contents of the Series

VOLUME 9

Jacob French (1754–1817)

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Edited by
DANIEL C.L. JONES

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
New York London

First published 1998 by Garland Publishing, Inc.

This edition published 2013 by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jacob French (1754–1817) : The Collected Works / edited by Daniel C.L. Jones.

(Music of the new American nation; 9)

ISBN 0-8153-2406-5

Musical scores are "out of scope" of the Library of Congress's
Cataloging-in-Publication program.

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Introduction to the Series

This series presents the music of early American composers of sacred music—psalmody, as it was called—in collected critical editions. Each volume has been prepared by a scholar who has studied the musical history of the period and the stylistic qualities of the composer. The purpose of the series is to present the music of important early American composers in accurate editions for both performance and study. Until now, much of this repertory was unavailable except in the original tunebooks in which the music was first issued. These are difficult to use because of their age and fragility, the antique layout of the musical typography, and frequent printing errors that beset the music and text. While the music is presented here in modern musical orthography, no attempt has been made to improve it. Suspected typographical errors have been corrected (and noted in the commentary), but what may be thought of as compositional errors—parallel fifths and octaves, for example—are an important part of the musical style and have not been tampered with.

The twenty-three composers represented in this series were among the most important of the several hundred who contributed to the psalmody repertory. Some, like Abraham Wood, Joseph Stone, Jacob French, and Elisha West, were prolific and popular in their day but are largely unknown today. Others, such as Nathaniel Billings, Lewis Edson, Jr., and Merit Woodruff, were little known even in their own time, but they wrote some interesting and expressive music that warrants wider acquaintance. Most of these composers have the whole of their published music presented in this series. This will allow for a better assessment of their musical contributions, and will provide performers with the widest possible selection of the composers' works.

Three particularly prolific composers, Samuel Holyoke, Jacob Kimball, and Oliver Holden, are only represented by selected works. Some criteria used in selecting their pieces to be included here are: which works were popular and influential in the composer's own day and which works represent music of significant artistic merit. Composers who already have collected works editions either in print or in progress—William Billings, Daniel Read, Timothy Swan, and Stephen Jenks—have not been included in this series.

The fifteen volumes in this series by no means exhaust the repertory. A number of significant composers of the era could not be represented, among them Amos Albee, William Cooper, Samuel Capen, Ebenezer Child, Benjamin Holt, Solomon Howe, Jeremiah Ingalls, Walter Janes, Abraham Maxim, Hezekiah Moors, James Newhall, Warwick Palfray, Amos Pilsbury, Zedekiah Sanger, Oliver Shaw, Nehemiah Shumway, Samuel Thomson, and Truman Wetmore. Most of these composers published tunebooks containing their own music and that of colleagues. However, the twenty-three composers whose works are included were important and influential in their day and composed music that has interest and artistic worth in our own.

During the quarter century following the Revolutionary War, a flowering of American musical creativity occurred that was unprecedented in any period until the present day. Centered in the New England states, principally Massachusetts and Connecticut, this outpouring was based on the musical practices of the Congregational church as they had developed over the previous half century. It involved music for the church choir, which had been introduced following over a century of opposition, and its

ancillary organizations, the singing school and the musical society. The composers writing for these groups were their friends and neighbors. They supplied pieces for special occasions, for didactic purposes, or as artistic responses to particularly moving psalms or hymns.

These composers were not trained professionals with highly developed skills, but merchants, schoolteachers, farmers, and mechanics who had gained some facility at singing. They learned their compositional craft through trial and observation. They often taught the rudiments of music reading and choral singing to young people in their community in occasional singing schools. Frequently, they also led the choir in their local church. Occasionally they may have been called upon to supply new music for ordinations, celebrations, and other local occasions, or they may have composed pieces to demonstrate musical precepts in their singing schools. Over time, some of these composers amassed a sizable body of works. Friends and supporters then may have encouraged them to publish a tunebook of their pieces. Others, having gained a reputation as a good composer, may have lacked sufficient financial backing to issue a tunebook of their own. Their tunes might then be published in the tunebooks of other compilers. New American music was in demand by singers, and in this way, between about 1780 and 1810, some 200 American composers issued over 5000 pieces—psalm tunes, extended tunes, fuging-tunes, set-pieces, and anthems. Undoubtedly many works remained in manuscript, and, since these lacked the permanence of print, much of this music was lost or destroyed by later generations that generally lacked an appreciation of its historic or aesthetic value. But 5000 pieces is a sizable repertory, one that offers today's choral director a profusion of beautiful, exciting, significant religious partsongs that are again highly valued.

Prior to the Second World War, little notice was taken of early American psalmody. Following the war, however, greater attention began to be paid by scholars to the history, bibliography, and style of this music. Doctoral dissertations by Allen P. Britton and Alan Buechner explored important aspects of this musical tradition. Dissertations and books by Glenn Wilcox, Lawrence Willhide, David McKay, Richard Crawford, David McCormick, Vinson Bushnell, Marvin Genuchi, David Warren Steel, Betty Bandel, and Daniel Jones dealt with individual composers, their lives, and their music. Works by Ralph Daniel, Karl Kroeger, and Nym Cooke have clarified musical forms and personal relationships. The bibliography of Britton, Lowens, and Crawford has provided an accurate account of tunebook publication to 1810.

What has been lacking up to now have been reliable editions of the music. Prior to 1977, the psalmody repertory had received no critical attention. In that year the first volume of *The Complete Works of William Billings*, edited by Hans Nathan, was published by The American Musicological Society and The Colonial Society of Massachusetts. During the 1980s and early 1990s, three more volumes of Billings's music were issued by these societies. Meanwhile, plans were underway for a series of volumes, *Music of the United States of America*, containing American musical monuments. Sponsored by the American Musicological Society, this series will include collected works editions of psalmodists Daniel Read and Timothy Swan. The *Recent Researches in American Music* series, published by A-R Editions, has also issued a volume of music by Stephen Jenks. *Music of the New American Nation* will complement and extend beyond these earlier publications to composers who did not find a place there. Thus, as the twentieth century closes, the works of the most important American psalmodists will be available for performance and study.

Psalmody served a number of functions in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America: it was a pious duty in the praise of God, a vehicle for vocal instruction, a means of innocent recreation, both public and private, and a medium for artistic self-expression. The church-goer in the pew probably thought little about the music being sung, so long as it was appropriately solemn and suited to the occasion; however, for the singer in the choir, the singing master, and the composer, it was an important ad-

junct to daily life. For composers, in particular, psalmody offered a means of communicating their concerns and their vision to a wider audience. Composers set texts that moved them. This can be amply demonstrated by their selection; often these are not the first stanzas of the psalm or hymn, but an interior verse that carries a particularly dramatic image or pressing thought. Their settings are also individual. One composer might set the text as a plain tune, simple and unadorned; another as an extended tune, with expressive melismas; a third as a fuging-tune, with extensive word painting. The same text might also be used in a set-piece, where the musical details are so individual that another text could not be substituted. If the composers were merely concerned with providing a succession of notes to guide a text through time, a purely utilitarian function, they need not have marked them with their own individual expressive features. If they had wanted only to demonstrate some musical precept to their singing schools, they need not have worked to make their tunes melodically expressive and rhythmically invigorating. The American composers of psalmody were artists, somewhat naive perhaps and certainly not as well trained and deeply experienced as European art-music composers, but they approached their medium and performers with the same sense of concern and respect as those who composed symphonies, quartets, and sonatas.

Acknowledgments

We wish to express our appreciation to our colleagues Richard Crawford, William Kearns, Lawrence Worster, and Maxine Fawcett-Yeske for their help and encouragement in connection with this project. In particular, we acknowledge our debt to Gary M. Rader, developer of the MusicEase music notation software used for the musical scores. His offer of technical help in overcoming numerous format problems and his expertise in computer operations made the inputting of the music easier. Mary Louise VanDyke of the Dictionary of American Hymnology Project assisted in locating some particularly obscure hymn texts, and Nym Cooke supplied important information in a timely manner. To all of these, plus the editors of the individual volumes, who participated in this project with enthusiasm, we send our deepest thanks.

K.K. and D.C.L.J.

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Performance Practice

A full appreciation of the music of early American psalmodists depends, to a large extent, upon an understanding of the performance practices applicable to it. Most psalmodists were experienced composers who wrote for a medium they understood from years of practice: the unaccompanied choir of mixed voices. They followed certain conventions of notation and execution that, if followed by today's choirs, enhance the music's aural appeal and communicative powers. This résumé of performance practice in early American psalmody covers the basic elements of the choral sound, the effect of the words, the musical symbols used, ornamentation, and accompaniment. A fuller discussion of these and other issues related to the performance of this music can be found in *The Complete Works of William Billings* (v.4, xxxiii–lxiv).

THE CHORAL MEDIUM

The New England sacred music composer wrote for a choir of mixed voices, normally in four parts, referred to as treble, counter, tenor, and bass. These generally correspond to the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass parts of today's choral ensembles. The main melody of the piece was usually carried by the tenor, sung by male voices. The bass was also a male singing part. The counter was often sung by young boys, who would be reassigned to tenor or bass after their voices broke. The counter also included some deeper female voices, but the majority of female singers were assigned to the treble. A few composers, like William Billings and Isaac Lane, advocated doubling the tenor part an octave higher by a few treble voices and the treble part an octave lower by a few tenors. It is uncertain how widely this arrangement was practiced, since it is mentioned by no other writers. A few composers, like Amos Bull, substituted a second treble part for the counter. In this case, the part would be sung by women and its range would overlap with that of the first treble.

Some composers, such as Samuel Holyoke, Samuel Babcock, and Timothy Olmsted, composed music in only three parts: treble, tenor, and bass. In this arrangement, the principal melody was usually in the treble voice, although it sometimes appeared in the tenor. The composer of three-part music often marked the principal part with the word "Air" to indicate its primacy. A few pieces exist in the repertory for five, six, or seven parts, but these are very rare. Similarly, pieces were occasionally published in only two parts, melody and bass. In most cases, however, these are reductions of four-part pieces, published in this way to permit a larger number to be printed.

The normal church choir of the day probably consisted of from fifteen to thirty singers—perhaps a few more in larger congregations, a few less in smaller. The choir make-up seems to have included a large proportion of male singers. Most writers of the day recommended that at least half the voices be assigned to the bass part, with the rest spread fairly evenly among the other parts. This produced a male-dominated vocal sound with the main melody in the tenor and a special emphasis on the bass. The female voices were apparently relegated to the background. This situation seems to have changed in the early 1800s, however, with the introduction of the principal melody in the treble. In this case, the female voices would lead and the male voices would support the melody.

THE WORDS

The texts for singing were drawn principally from two sources: the psalms and hymns of Isaac Watts and the *New Version of the Psalms* by Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate. The latter, the metrical translation officially sanctioned by the Anglican Church, was perhaps more widely used before the Revolutionary War, but following it, Watts's version, along with his hymns, gained almost unrivaled ascendancy. A few other English hymnodists contributed to the pool of texts that American composers set: Philip Doddridge, James Relly, Elizabeth Rowe, Ann Steele, Charles Wesley, John Newton, and William Cowper were among the most prominent. But their contributions were minor compared to the overwhelming popularity of Watts. Very few American poets were part of the text pool (e.g., Mather Byles, Jeremy Belknap, Timothy Dwight, and William Billings), and their contributions were very small.

The text played a controlling role in the performance of the music. Not only did it convey the sense of the subject being sung, but it also affected the tempo, dynamics, and mood of the music. Although writers emphasized the effect of the words on performance, the text that was printed with a tune was not necessarily the one that was sung. Substitution of texts performed in public worship was a common practice of the day. Nor was every verse of a psalm or hymn sung. Some stanzas could be omitted without damaging the sense of the subject. A joyous text was to be sung to a joyous tune, set in a major mode with vigorous rhythmic motion. Similarly, a lamenting text required a minor-mode tune, with a moderate to slow pace. Some psalmodists even recommended changing the tempo of a tune if the mood of the text changed from verse to verse. The words could also affect the dynamics of the music. Those conveying strong images, such as "might," "strength," and "power," were to be sung louder than those conveying milder images, such as "weak," "poor," and "lowly." Ejaculatory words, such as "Oh," "Ah," and "Hark," were also to receive extra emphasis. Much was left to the taste and discretion of the choir leader, but his decisions were guided by the subject of the hymn and the words being sung.

MUSICAL SYMBOLS

Most of the notational symbols used in psalmody are familiar to today's singers, although some carried somewhat different meanings than current usage. One of the most important symbols was the time signature. This not only controlled the metrical content of the measures but also determined the tempo of the music. Each time signature carried with it a tactus, an implied tempo, that singers followed to determine how fast or slow to sing. There were nine time signatures in common usage, categorized in so-called moods of time: common, triple, and compound. Common time had four moods, marked C, ¢, reversed C, and 2/4; triple time, three moods, marked 3/2, 3/4, and 3/8; and compound time, two moods, marked 6/4 and 6/8. Within each category, the moods were successively faster. For example, in the first mood of common time (marked C), the quarter-note was to occupy one second of time. The second mood, also with a quarter-note as its beat note, was about half again as fast. The third mood, which had a half-note beat, was also to take a second of time per beat. And the fourth mood, with a quarter-note as the beat note, was to take a full second of time per measure. Triple and compound time were similarly proportioned. A more accurate approximation of tempo could be obtained from the swing of a pendulum keyed to the moods of time, and many tunebook compilers provided pendulum lengths in their discussions of this subject. A summary of metronome markings, based on verbal directions and pendulum swings, is given in *The Complete Works of Billings* (v.4, xlix, lxx).

The tempo suggested by the time signature could be altered by the text being sung—as noted earlier, a lamenting text might be sung slower than indicated, and a joyous text somewhat faster. The tempo might also be altered by the composer's use of directive words, such as *fast, slow, vivace,* and *grave.* These directive words were intended to affect the basic

tempo set by the time signature, speeding up or slowing down the tempo by perhaps as much as a quarter to a third.

Because the choir had no conductor (the choir leader acted as leading singer rather than conductor), and each singer kept his or her own time by raising and lowering the hand, tempo fluctuations, such as those associated with *accelerando* and *ritardando,* were not employed in psalmody. Apparently, even at the conclusion of a piece there was no slowing down, except where the composer actually wrote longer note values.

DYNAMICS

Composers of psalmody used dynamic markings only when they intended a special dynamic effect. Otherwise, the text being sung and the musical situation that prevailed determined the dynamic level. If a dynamic mark was used, a single word—*piano, forte, fortissimo*—was placed above the treble staff. This indication affected all the voices singing at that time. Dynamic change was abrupt; *crescendo* and *diminuendo* were seldom used in this music, except in the fuging-tune. When no dynamic mark was present, the choirs sang at a moderate dynamic level, which might be characterized in today's usage by the term *mezzoforte. Piano* would be a degree softer, and *forte* a degree louder, with *fortissimo* being as loud as the choir could sing and still maintain a good choral sound. Other dynamic gradations, such as *pianissimo, mezzopiano,* and *mezzoforte,* were rarely used.

Certain musical situations called for certain dynamic levels. If some of the voice parts were silent for a phrase or two, those still singing were supposed to sing their parts *piano.* When the full chorus entered again, it should enter *forte.* It was recommended that the third line of a four-line hymn be sung soft, with the following fourth line sung loud. As the voices joined in the fuge of a fuging-tune, they were to begin softly and increase in strength as they entered, giving the effect of a crescendo. While few specific directions were given by the composers, the perceptive choir leader could fashion a dynamic, vibrant musical performance based on clues provided by the words, the musical texture, and custom.

ORNAMENTATION

Improvised ornamentation of psalm tunes was an American tradition dating back at least to the late seventeenth century. The uncontrolled improvised embellishment of melodies was a motivation for the Boston clerics beginning singing schools in the 1720s. A congregation of voices, each singing the melody as it pleased the singer, must have raised a din that was exhilarating to the participant but dismaying to the listener. Realizing that singers would ornament tunes as they pleased, composers attempted to exert some measure of control over the number and placement of ornaments.

By the late eighteenth century only two graces were widely recommended in tunebook introductions: the trill and the transition. The trill, the rapid alternation between a principal note and its upper neighbor, was sometimes indicated in the music, usually at cadence points. However, it could also be improvised by the performer, and some compilers supplied rules in their tunebooks for adding improvised trills, usually accompanied by a warning not to trill "promiscuously"—a caution to which singers likely paid little heed.

The one ornament that received universal approbation from the tunebook compilers was the transition. This was usually an improvised ornament, although occasionally transitions are notated as cue-size notes slurred from the prior main note and filling in a vocal leap of a third (rarely a fourth or larger interval). The pitch of the transition note was to be touched on quickly and lightly, as a graceful sliding between the two main pitches. The only time a transition was proscribed was when a "mark of distinction" (a wedge-shaped staccato mark, performed as an accent) stood over the notes. Then the vocal portamento was not to be performed.

Some of the younger psalmodists of the 1790s and early 1800s employed the appoggiatura, particularly at phrase endings. Appoggiaturas were notated as cue-size eighth- or quarter-notes on the beat and slurred to the following main note. Eighth- and quarter-note appoggiaturas seem to have been used interchangeably. Their value was determined by that of the following note: if the following note was a duple value, the appoggiatura took half; if triple, the appoggiatura took two-thirds.

ACCOMPANIMENT

Psalmody was composed originally as unaccompanied choral music. The tunebooks rarely contain separate instrumental parts or bass figures that would suggest a keyboard accompaniment. Most Congregational churches in New England had long opposed the use of instruments in the meetinghouse and came to accept them only as an expedient to support weak singing. During the 1790s some pastors, concerned over the deteriorating vocal part of the service, asked members of the congregation who could play certain instruments to sit in the choir and support the weak parts. The instruments commonly used were the "bass viol" (i.e., cello) or bassoon to double the bass, the flute or clarinet to help the counter, and the flute or violin to assist the treble. The tenor might also have been doubled by clarinet or viola. The instruments usually played with the singers, although they were occasionally permitted to play over the tune before the singers entered. Rarely, the choral sections of a composition were connected by an instrumental "symphony" (a brief passage without underlaid text) that shared one or more staves with the vocal parts.

The question often arises in modern performance whether or not early American psalmody should be performed with instruments. The answer is a matter of individual taste. If the choir is able to present a good performance without instrumental assistance, that is probably preferred. However, choir directors should not avoid the use of instruments for fear of being inauthentic. There is ample evidence that instruments were used in the singing galleries, in particular the bass viol to support the bass voices. If the church possesses an organ, that instrument might be used to accompany both the choir and congregation singing. There is no record of the piano or harpsichord being employed to accompany the singing, although they may have been used in the home when this music was performed there. An organist accompanying psalmody must take care to play from the open score or a transcription of it. In particular, the bass line should not be thought of as an unfigured bass. Since the contrapuntal procedures used by the composers do not conform to thoroughbass rules, the music does not follow those principles and dissonance will result from adhering to them.

Much in the performance of early American psalmody was left to the taste and judgment of the performers. This obviously led to a wide variation in the quality of individual performances. Following directions, however faithfully, cannot, of course, guarantee good performances, yet ignoring them can often distort the music. American psalmodists wrote a music that embodied their faith, hopes, aspirations, and visions, in an effort to communicate these to the singers and listeners. It is most respectful of their efforts for present-day performers to sing their music in a style that enhances these qualities. However, the important thing in all musical performance is to seek to capture and convey the music's spirit. It should be musically convincing to the listener, and, if it is, that spirit will move both performers and listeners.

Editorial Policy

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDITION

Each volume of the series presents the music of either one composer or several composers who worked at about the same time in the same region. Each composer's works are presented in alphabetical order by title. This arrangement overrides the original format in which some of the music was published—in collections with their own importance and integrity. However, many of the pieces are taken from different collections, most of which contained compositions of many other composers. Except in a few cases where the tunebook contained only the music of a single composer, there is little reason to retain the original order of pieces in a volume. Each volume begins with a brief introduction to the series, performance practice, the composer and his music, and this statement of general editorial policy. Following the music, a commentary on the pieces and various indexes are included.

SOURCES

The sources of all works included in this edition are tunebooks and other musical publications issued between ca. 1780 and ca. 1810 by American printers. Manuscripts, of which few survive, do not usually contain definitive versions of the pieces, because the composer often revised them when preparing a collection for printing. Tunes were often reprinted in different tunebooks, occasionally with some variation in their musical detail. In choosing which versions most clearly represent the composers' intentions, the following criteria have been observed:

1. A tunebook for which the composer was also the compiler has been given the highest priority. This seems likely best to represent the composer's intentions. If the composer printed the work several times, the latest printing is considered the definitive version. Variants in the earlier versions are discussed in the commentary.

2. A tunebook with which the composer seems likely to have had some connection, even though he was not the compiler, is given the second highest priority. This is often the earliest printing of a work, and thus is likely to represent the composer's intentions. Later printings, often reprinted from this version, have usually not been considered.

3. The earliest printing of a work has been selected if neither of the previous criteria apply.

MUSICAL ORTHOGRAPHY

Slurs and ties

Slurs indicating a melisma (two or more notes sung to one syllable) have not been used in this edition. Instead, the placement of syllables and a line extending from the last letter of a word indicate the melisma's length. In some cases, several repeated notes appear under a slur in the publication. If these notes are separated by a bar line, the slur is interpreted as a tie, which is supplied editorially. Repeated notes may also occur within a bar; in most such instances, the notes are not treated as tied, but should be articulated in performance. In some instances, however, repeated notes within a bar under a slur have been considered as ties: when the repeated notes constitute a notational value for which a single symbol is unavailable (such as the value of five eighth-notes). Such articulated repeated notes

are mentioned in the commentary; ties, however, have been added without comment.

In the few cases where only one note of a "chusing note" (a two- or three-note chord in one vocal part) is tied, ties on the other notes have been tacitly supplied.

Accidentals

Psalmodists were often inconsistent in applying accidentals in their music, particularly leading tones in pieces in minor keys, less frequently on the fourth scale degree in major keys. Billings noted in *The Continental Harmony* that the seventh scale degree in minor was usually raised in performance whether it was indicated or not. While such alterations have not been made editorially to this edition, accidental sharps may be added in performance as personal preference dictates. Editorial accidentals in parentheses are supplied to clarify passages where notational practice of the day required none. Composers sometimes used both the raised and lowered form of a pitch simultaneously, apparently on purpose. In such cases, an accidental natural sign has been supplied by the editor.

During this period, sharps and flats not in the key signature seem to have affected only the notes before which they stood. Thus, one frequently finds several chromatically altered, repeated notes in succession, each with its own sharp or flat. In this edition, modern practice is applied: accidentals affect all notes on that pitch for the duration of the measure, and extra accidentals have been tacitly omitted. Composers occasionally used sharps and flats as substitutes for the natural sign, to cancel temporarily a sharp or flat in the key signature. This usage has been interpreted as calling for a natural sign, which has been supplied without comment.

Clef signs

American psalmodists normally used three clef signs in their music: treble clef for treble and tenor voices, alto clef for counter, and bass clef for the bass. The treble clef in the tenor was intended to be sung an octave lower than the notated pitch. In this edition, clefs for the treble and bass have been retained, the treble clef substituted for the alto clef in the counter, and the octavating treble clef supplied to the tenor. Occasionally, the treble clef was also used in the counter voice, with the music notated an octave higher than it was intended to be sung. In such cases, the counter line has been transposed an octave lower.

Meter signatures

The meter signatures used in this edition are those which the composers employed, with one exception: the third mood of common time, indicated either by a reversed C or a reversed C with a line through it, has not been retained and the time signature 2/2 tacitly substituted. Performers are reminded that, in addition to specifying the metrical organization of the music, meter signatures in psalmody also indicated tempo (see Performance Practice).

Repeat signs

The sign :S: was usually used to indicate the beginning of a section of music to be repeated. Normally placed above the treble line, the sign was intended to affect all voices. The same sign also indicated the end of the repeated section, except when the end of the repeat coincided with the conclusion of the piece, in which case it was usually omitted. In this edition, the dotted double bar has been substituted without comment. Occasionally the first ending of a repeated section has been adjusted to correct the notation. Such alterations have been noted in the commentary.

Repetitions of words or lines of text were also at times indicated with a repeat sign. These signs have been tacitly omitted and the intended text supplied without mention in the commentary.

An unusual type of fugal repetition is found in a few pieces: staggered repeats in the fugal entries. Normally, in the fugal section of a fuging-tune, all voices repeat back to the onset of the fuge (usually beginning in the bass voice). However, in a few pieces, the

repeat goes back to the start of that particular voice, omitting prior rests, and retaining a four-part polyphonic texture throughout. In this edition, the staggered repeats have been written out, the repeat signs omitted, and a note made in the commentary.

TEXTS

Text sources and number of stanzas

Composers normally set a single stanza of text, most often the first stanza, but sometimes a later one. In the present edition, contemporaneous sources of the poetry that has been set, not necessarily the versions printed in the tunebooks, are taken as the standard. During the period many editions of the various hymn collections were printed, making it virtually impossible to determine precisely which one a composer actually used. Although there may occasionally be some small variation in the text of the psalm or hymn, an attempt has been made to find a contemporary source that closely matches the text that the composer set.

Metrical psalters and hymnbooks were widespread, so performers who wanted to sing more stanzas would have had easy access to them. In this edition, additional stanzas of text have been supplied following the music of strophic pieces, providing access to the poem from which the composers drew their text. Where possible, text sources or lyricists have been noted at the head of the music, although these may have been omitted in the original publication. Complete information on text sources and number of stanzas set is included in the commentary.

When the composer set a stanza of a text other than the first, that stanza has been designated stanza one and the remaining stanzas renumbered to follow. Composers also occasionally set two or, rarely, three stanzas of text, but still intending strophic performance. In such cases, all of the text that was set is considered to be the first stanza, and later stanzas have been combined and renumbered to parallel the first. All such information is presented in the commentary.

Composers' strophic settings of multiple stanzas sometimes left one stanza unset. Such stanzas, usually the last in the hymn, have been placed in the commentary, where performers may sing them with the music as they wish. For the additional stanzas of text, following contemporaneous sources, left margins have been justified and the first letters of each line capitalized.

Poetical Meter indications

Psalm tunes and fuging-tunes were designed to be sung strophically. In many cases, the tunes could also be used with completely different texts from the one the composer set. At the head of many tunes are letters designating the poetic meter the tune is intended to serve. There were four standard meter designations in Anglo-American psalmody:

L.M. = Long Meter (4 lines of 8 syllables each in iambic meter).

C.M. = Common Meter (4 lines alternating 8 and 6 syllables each in iambic meter).

S.M. = Short Meter (4 lines of 6, 6, 8, and 6 syllables, respectively, in iambic meter).

H.M. = Hallelujah Meter (4 lines of 6 syllables each, followed by 4 lines of 4 syllables each, in iambic meter).

A fifth designation—P.M.—stands for Particular Meter, which could be any syllable pattern that does not conform to one of the four standard meters. In this edition, the four standard designations are used without further explanation, but P.M. is followed by the exact syllable pattern given in brackets.

Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation

The spelling and punctuation of the text follow the poetic source. In some publications, composers tend to use phonetic spellings and word abbreviations to save space on crowded copper plates and to use sporadic punctuation. Significant differences in spelling between the underlaid text and the text source have been noted in the commentary, but ob-

vious misspellings have been tacitly altered. Changes in punctuation have been made without comment.

Capitalization also tends to be sporadic. In most eighteenth-century poetic sources, the first letter of each line of a verse is capitalized, a practice retained in this edition. Occasionally other words, such as nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, begin with a capital letter in the tunebooks for no apparent reason; these have not been retained, except for proper names and direct references to the Deity. Metaphorical references to God or Jesus—e.g., savior, redeemer, creator, and judge—and pronoun references to them, often capitalized in the text source, have been spelled with lowercase letters without mention.

Names that are sometimes printed in italic type in the text source have been printed here in roman type. Quotation marks, usually set at the beginning of every line containing quoted words, are here placed at the beginning and end of the quotation, and at the beginning of each subsequent stanza if the quotation extends beyond a single verse.

Partial texts

Because of space constraints on tunebook pages, engravers sometimes indicated only the first few words of the text, leaving it to the performers to find the remaining words in psalm and hymn books. In particular in fuging sections, the full text was usually set under one voice, normally the counter, and only the beginning words of the text were printed in the other voices. In this edition, the full text fitting the music has been set in all voices without mention in the commentary. Even when limited space was not a consideration, the repetition of the prior line was often indicated by only the first two or three words of that line. Such repetitions have been written out in full.

Contractions and abbreviations

To save space, long words were often contracted in the tunebooks and, occasionally, in the text sources. In most cases, contractions—such as "tho'" for "though" and "thro'" for "through"—have been tacitly spelled out in full. Contractions have been retained when a word of several syllables is set to be sung to fewer syllables—e.g., "heav'n" for "heaven" and "sov'reign" for "sovereign." "Ye" was often used as an abbreviation for the article "the"; in such cases "the" has been tacitly restored. However, when "ye" has been used as an archaic form of "you" it has been retained. One also encounters similar abbreviations for other common words—such as "yt" for "that" and "wch" for "which"—which have been restored to their modern spelling without comment.

OTHER ISSUES

Initial measure of rest

In some works a measure of rest is placed at the beginning of a tune. The composer apparently intended a measure's silence to be observed between the end of the underlaid text and the beginning of the next stanza to be sung. (Singers would normally continue beating time between stanzas, assuring a precise beginning to the next stanza.) These rests were almost always omitted in later reprints of the piece, and they have been tacitly omitted in this edition.

Notation of dotted notes

In 6/4 and 6/8 time the values of the dotted whole-note and dotted half-note, respectively, were often notated as two dotted half-notes or two dotted quarter-notes tied. In 3/2 and 3/4 time, however, the dotted whole-note and dotted half-note were used. In this edition, in 6/4 and 6/8 time, dotted whole-notes and dotted half-notes are substituted without comment.

Beaming of note groups

The beaming of groups of notes tends to be erratic in tunebooks. Normally an eighth-note (or smaller value) carrying a single syllable of text is not connected to the next note following it, but in melismas, where the single syllable may extend for two, three, four, or more eighth-notes (or other smaller values), the beaming may encompass all of the notes, some of them, or notes may be flagged separately under a slur. In this edition, beaming follows the meter of the music, so that in 2/2 time four eighth-notes sung on one syllable

would be beamed as a group. No mention is made of beaming discrepancies in the commentary.

Rebarring

Occasionally, it has been necessary to rebar either whole pieces or parts of them, so that the musical and textual accents coincide. Particularly in anthems, where the prose text presented the composers with an irregular succession of verbal accents, some psalmodists were unable to coordinate their music to the stresses in the text. However, psalmodists generally subscribed to the axiom that whenever the words and music did not coincide, the accents of the words prevailed. Thus, the editor has adjusted the meters and barlines to align the accents of the words and those of the music. Whenever a piece or a passage has been rebarred, a note of the alteration has been made in the commentary for that work, and the original meter signature and barring have been indicated above the treble line for the length of the rebarring.

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Introduction to This Volume

This volume presents the music of Jacob French, one of the most talented and imaginative of the composers of psalmody active in New England after the Revolutionary War. Although several of his early pieces achieved a modest popularity, none of his music was printed widely. His failure to connect with the mainstream of early American musical production may have resulted from French's own personality and interests. His music tends to be more complex in its structure, rhythm, and counterpoint than most of his contemporaries. A student of William Billings, French adopted Billings's innovative approach to psalmody, without, perhaps, having Billings's unique flair for melody. He was, however, an original and creative composer, a few of whose compositions live on today in the Southern shape-note repertory.

The Life and Music of Jacob French

Jacob French, the second son of Jacob and Miriam Downs French, was born on July 15, 1754 in Stoughton, Massachusetts. While there is no evidence that the family was musical, his younger brother Edward (1761–1845) was known locally as a fine singer and good composer. In 1771, the seventeen year old Jacob moved into the household of Deacon John Atherton. There he met his future wife, Esther Neal, who had been adopted by Deacon Atherton (Genuchi, 39–40). The first record of French's interest in music dates from 1774, when he is listed among the members of William Billings's singing school in Stoughton. This instruction was significant, for Crawford notes distinct similarities between French's and Billings's compositional styles (New Grove, 168–69). During 1775–81, French served in the Continental Army, war records listing him as a "husbandman" (i.e., farmer) and a resident of Stoughton (*Massachusetts Soldiers*, VI/74). On May 26, 1779, French and Esther Neal were married. Over the years, the couple had at least four, perhaps five, children (Genuchi 43, 46).

Shortly after the war, the first evidence of French's activities as a composer and singing master appears. His first compositions to see print, both anthems, were published in Oliver Brownson's *Select Harmony* (ca.1785) and *The Worcester Collection* (1786). In 1789 French's first tunebook, *The New American Melody*, consisting entirely of his own pieces, was published in Boston. Over the next several years, French seems to have moved frequently. The title page of *The New American Melody* locates him in Medway, about fifteen miles west of Stoughton. In the same year the birth of his daughter Fanny is recorded in Walpole (Genuchi, 45). The census of 1790 places him back in Stoughton.

French's second tunebook, *The Psalmodist's Companion*, was published in 1793 by Isaiah Thomas in Worcester, Massachusetts. He may have moved to the Worcester area, for a legal document from July 1795 places him in Uxbridge, about fifteen miles southeast (New Grove, 168). On September 5, 1795, French placed an advertisement for a singing school in the *Providence Gazette*, in which he also offered his services as a teacher of composition. While he may have taught in Rhode Island, there is no suggestion that he actually settled there.

French's third tunebook, *Harmony of Harmony*, was published in 1802 by Andrew Wright in

Northampton, Massachusetts. Evidence suggests that by this time French and his family had relocated to western Massachusetts. In 1805, the *Republican Spy*, an area newspaper, listed his name among those having mail to be picked up at the Post Office (Osterhout, 314). Genuchi suggests that over the next decade French remained active as a singing master in the Northampton area, although he gives no details (Genuchi 44, 48). In 1815, French moved to Simsbury, Connecticut, where he spent his last years in retirement and died in May 1817.

Most of French's music was issued in his three tunebooks. The title page of *The New American Melody* (hereafter *NAM*) proudly announces "The whole entirely new and composed . . . by Jacob French." Only two American composers—William Billings and Daniel Read—had previously issued tunebooks consisting entirely of their own pieces. French also notes that this "body of Church Musick" was "composed for the use of SINGING SOCIETIES." *NAM* begins with a frontispiece showing a man sitting in a book-lined study. The picture is surrounded by music on a staff in eliptical form. The illustration was copied in substance from William Tans'ur's *The Royal Melody Compleat* (London, 1755), with perhaps some reference also to Billings's *The New-England Psalm-Singer* (Boston, 1770). Only fourteen of the fifty-seven pieces in *NAM* are plain tunes, while the rest employ longer, more complex forms, including eleven anthems and set-pieces. The American predilection for the fuging-tune is satisfied with twenty pieces in this form.

The Psalmodist's Companion (hereafter *PC*) represents French's attempt to make a book more useful and appealing to a wider audience. It includes not only French's music but compositions by other American and European composers. Not only the variety in contents but also the typographical format and arrangement was designed to increase the work's appeal. The tunebook's three sections are organized alphabetically by tune name, precluding the need for an index. The brief exposition of musical rudiments, the illustrating of keys, time, and tempo in nine "Lessons" (short pieces which exemplify these characteristics), and the selection and arrangement of the pieces all bespeak a compiler concerned with providing his users with a well-designed compendium. However, it appears that commercial success for the tunebook was not fully realized. French seems to have made a strategic error in preparing the music for the tunebook. French altered many of the borrowed pieces in the collection from the versions that appeared in other tunebooks. These changes made the pieces practically useless when sung with the settings from other books, diminishing PC's appeal and utility. Adding to French's problems, a year or so after *PC*'s publication, Isaiah Thomas filed suit against him to recover funds still owed to Thomas for the tunebook's printing (Kroeger, 330).

PC contains seventy-one pieces (excluding the Lessons), the vast majority by American composers, most by French himself. A major difficulty with PC is the lack of composer attributions; none of the pieces carry a composer's name. Whether this omission was caused by the lack of an index (where composers were often identified) or for some other reason is unknown. It may be that the extensive revisions French made in the borrowed pieces caused him to consider them as largely his own works, thus not requiring attributions. Whatever the reason, French identified none of the music. In many cases, unattributed works not by French can be easily traced to their original composers; however, nineteen pieces cannot be found in other tunebooks. Since these pieces bear the hallmarks of French's style, they have been included in this edition as possibly his compositions with the statement "Authorship undetermined" in their commentaries.

French's third and final tunebook, *Harmony of Harmony* (hereafter *HOH*), was printed in 1802 in Northampton by Andrew Wright. *HOH* is similar to the typical eclectic tunebooks of the day. Gone are the "Lessons" and the alphabetical arrangement. At ninety-eight pieces, *HOH* is somewhat larger than the two previous collections, and the proportion of tune types shows substantial changes in two basic

categories: a significant decrease in fuging-tunes and a noticeable increase in the shorter forms (plain and extended tunes). On the other hand, French retained his self-assurance, remaining true to his own musical interests. *HOH* maintains high percentages of French's own music (forty-five works), of new material (fifty-six first printings), and of American works (eighty pieces). Works in extended forms (anthems and set-pieces) appear in the greatest number of any of his tunebooks.

While differences between French's three tunebooks seem to reflect an evolution in his approach to compiling and the tunebook market, perhaps more important is French's adherence to his own values. He shows himself to be a self-confident composer and musician whose interest in challenging and expressive musical material and the promotion of new American works is significant.

Including the nineteen unattributed works in PC and one in *HOH*, French's catalog of published works comes to 124 pieces, a sizeable repertory compared to most American psalmodists. Moreover, a fifth of these works are in extended forms, while plain tunes represent only a relatively small proportion of his catalog. He displayed a fondness for the fuging-tune, in line with the prevailing tastes in New England—roughly a third of his pieces are in this form.

Two constants are noteworthy in French's compositional style: a sensitivity to rhythmic nuance and a skillful handling of contrapuntal textures. French's concern for rhythmic variety is evident in his close attention to prosody, the vitality of individual melodic lines, and the frequent changes of meter found in his music. And such changes in meter are not limited to longer works; they also occur in some extended and fuging-tunes (e.g., COELESTIS, FAIRHAVEN, JERUSALEM [II] and NORTH BOLTON). French's fondness for fuging has already been noted. However, he outdid most of his American contemporaries in the length and complexity of his fuging sections, (e.g., ATTENTION, BABEL, CAROLINA, CHINA, DAUPHIN, DORMANT, MOUNT ZION, RESOLUTION, and SABBATH). While varied textures appear in all of French's anthems and set-pieces, they also occur frequently in shorter, non-fuging works (e.g., ASCENSION, CASTILE, CHARLTON, ITALY, NORTHAMPTON, and PROCLAMATION).

In addition to these constants, one can observe a development in French's style over time. This development can be followed in four of the anthems he composed during the course of his compositional career: FAREWELL ANTHEM (first published in Brownson's *Select Harmony*, ca. 1785); THE EXHORTATION (first published in *NAM*; later recomposed as THANKSGIVING ANTHEM in *HOH*); SONG OF SONGS (first published in *PC*); and REBELLION: AN ANTHEM FOR FAST (first published in *The Village Harmony*, 3d ed. [1797] and reprinted in *HOH*). In the earlier two anthems, open-fifth sonorities occur regularly as opening and cadential sonorities; in the latter two, nearly all sustained sonorities in three or four parts are full triads. In FAREWELL ANTHEM the text is generally set syllabically throughout, while in the other three anthems short melismas highlight or paint important words. In the earlier two anthems, secondary melodic leading tones tend to resolve to the fifth of the target sonority; in the latter two, these tones resolve to the root, suggesting a more tonal harmonic framework. FAREWELL ANTHEM uses relatively simple rhythms within and between parts; in the later three anthems more complex rhythmic patterns (dotted figures, triplets, etc.) create a livelier and more varied rhythmic style. Finally, French's handling of motivic materials becomes more consistent over time: points of imitation are longer and more complete across the parts; melodic motives are recalled and exchanged between the parts more gracefully; melodic sequences are used more tastefully and to better effect; and textural changes are smoother and aligned closer to the text.

Only a few of French's compositions gained a degree of popularity. Only three of his works received more than five printings in tunebooks other than his own: DAUPHIN, FAREWELL ANTHEM, and THE HEAVENLY VISION. The reasons for this are var-

ied: many of the pieces are complex and difficult; many of the pieces were protected by the 1790 Federal copyright law; a standard repertory of pieces was being developed by publishers, who found little place for French's music among their selections (see Jones "Kearns Festschrift" and Osterhout, 316–17). The two anthems were published at a time when this standard repertory was being established and probably benefited from being in the public domain. DAUPHIN, a short, straightforward fuging-tune in the minor mode, may have been attractive to reform-era compilers because of its simplicity and somberness; most of its reprintings came after 1800. Despite a lack of commercial success, French left many excellently crafted, expressive compositions that should find interest among today's choral singers.

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Jacob French:
The Collected Works

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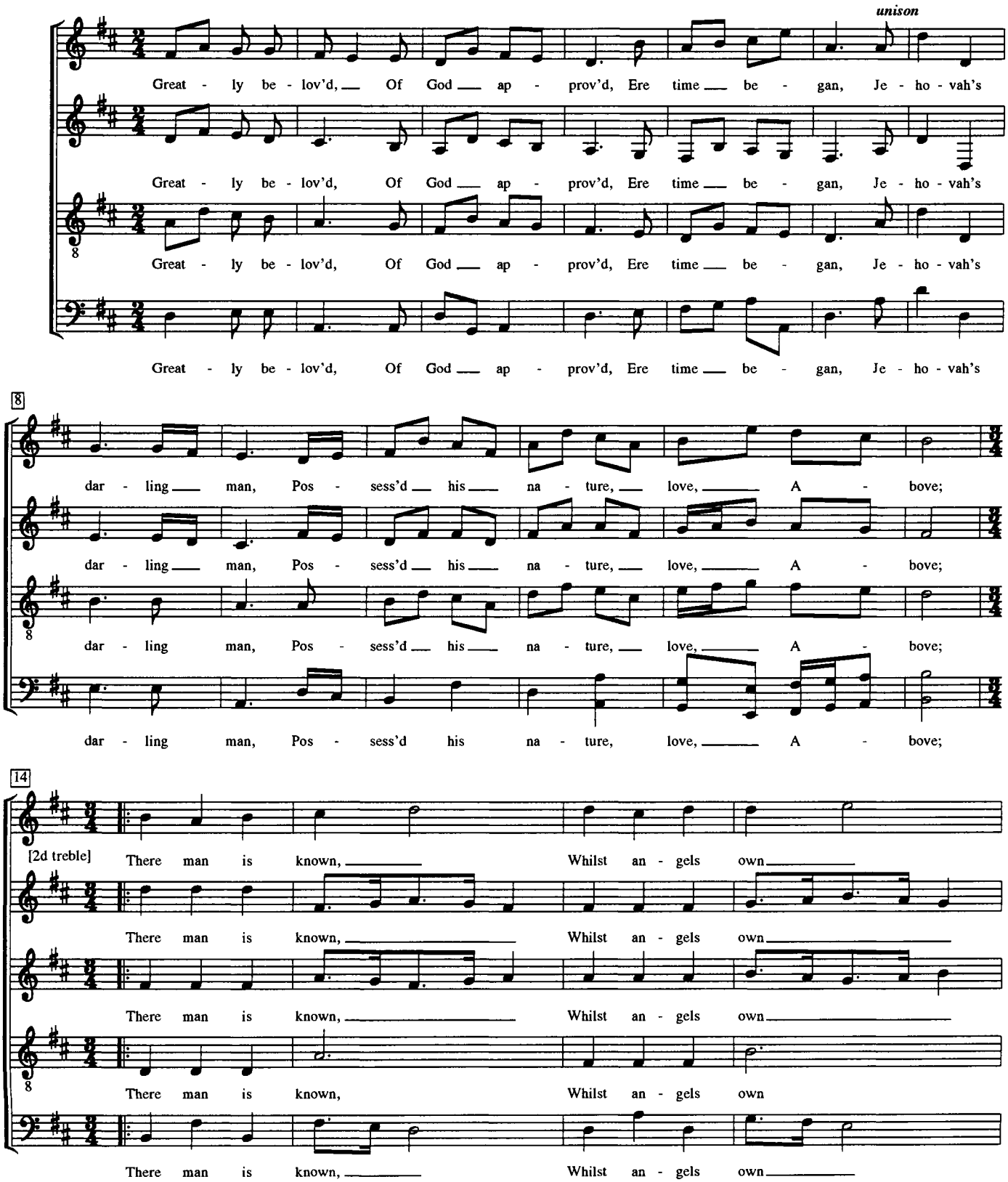
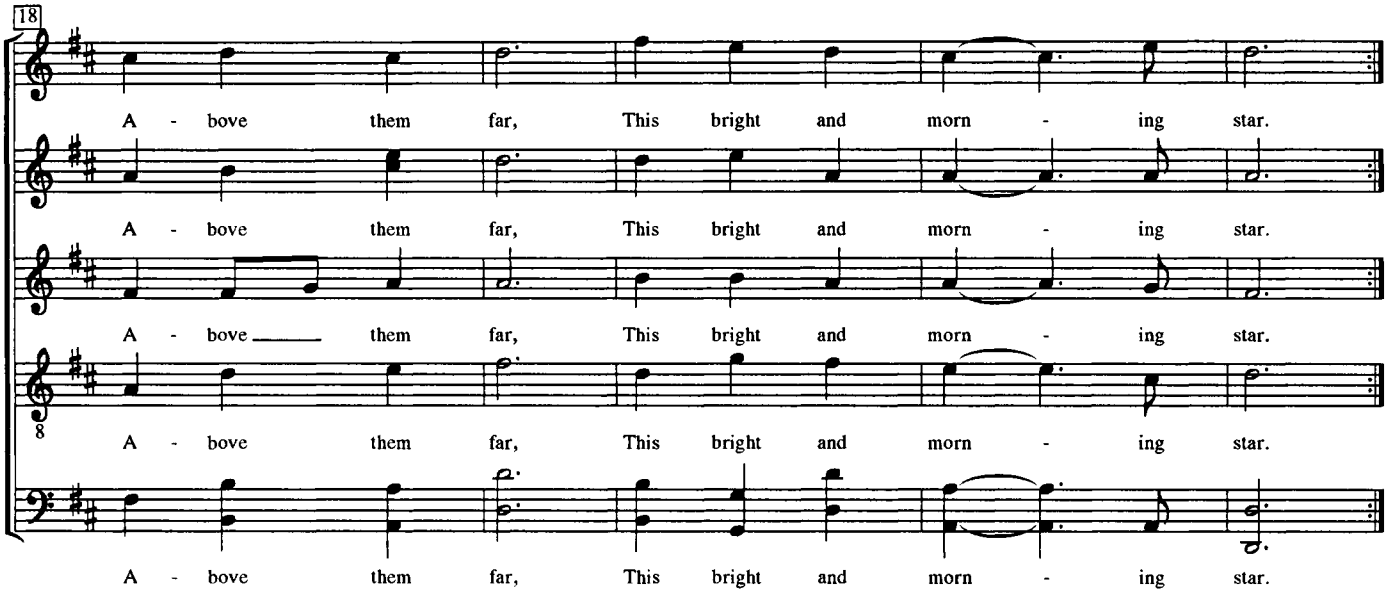
ABYSINA

James Relly **P. M. [4.4.4.6.6.2.4.4.4.6]**





2. When all beheld,
With wonder fill'd,
The glorious grace
Sparkle in Jesu's face;
We, worms, as wholly blind
In mind,
Could not discern
What did concern
Our hearts alone,
That orb in which we shone.

3. But God would show,
To us below,
His grace and choice,
Whilst we in heart rejoice;
And this reveal'd by blood,
When God
Became a man;
And then began
In love to cure
Our nature, blind, impure.

4. The work was great,
It made him sweat,
Blood-rivers flow'd,
He groan'd and cry'd aloud;
Whilst sorrows rent his heart
With smart
Unspeakable:
The pains of hell,
Infernal wrath,
Incompass'd him in death.

5. With many tears,
And unknown fears,
Heart-breaking sighs,
Infinite agonies,
Wounds, blood, and bruises fresh
His flesh
All over fill;
In anguish, still,
He yields his breath
To the accursed death.

6. Fail nature's laws;
The sun withdraws;
With dreadful crack,
The rocks asunder break;
Convuls'd creation shakes,
Earth quakes,
All old things die,
Non-entity,
Pass'd over all
That liv'd by Adam's fall.

7. Hence came the hour,
When God with pow'r
Rais'd from the dead
The members, and the head:
In that one perfect man,
The plan
Of grace we see,
When Christ and we
Were nam'd in one,
The Father's only son.

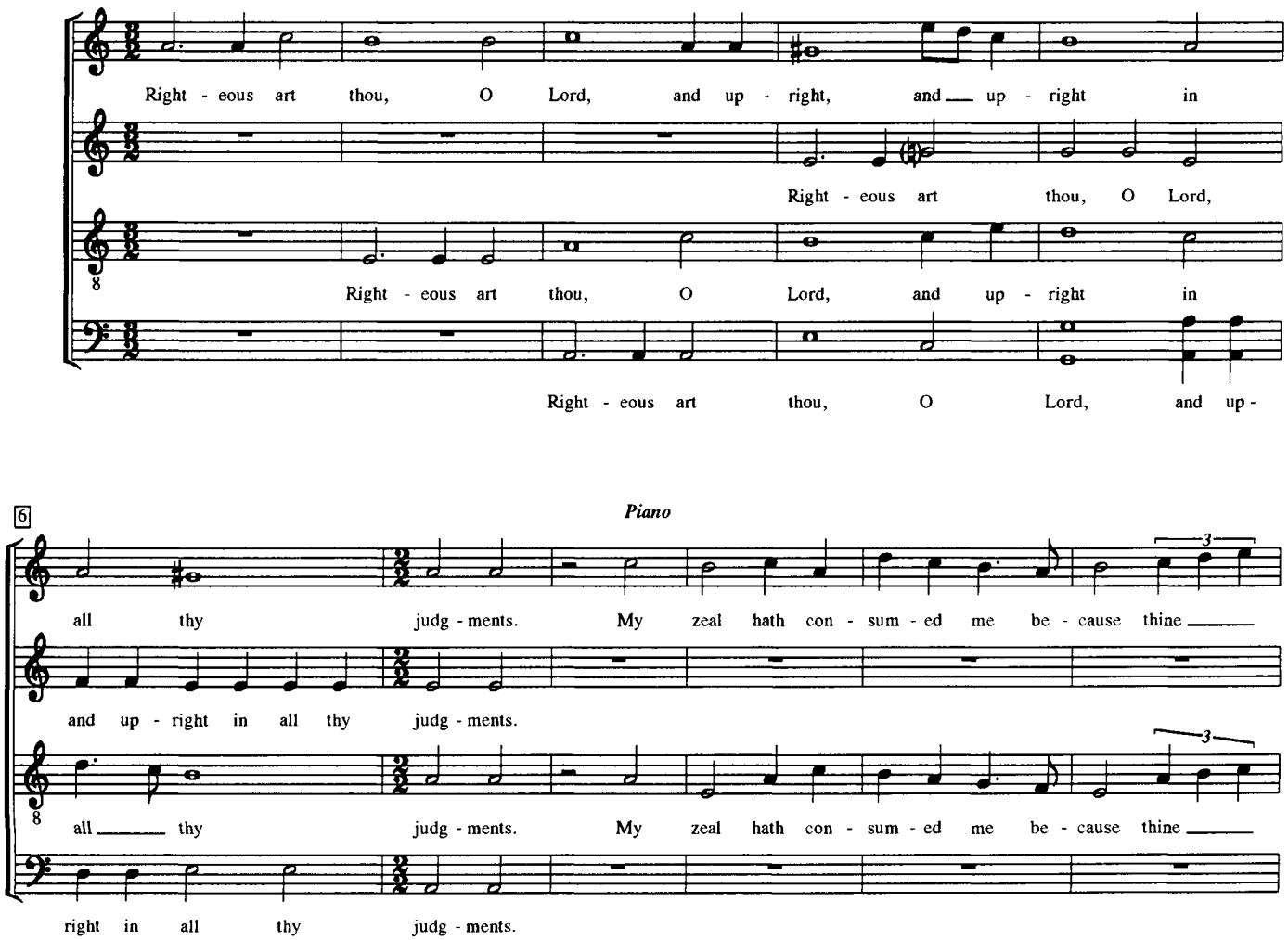
8. His joy fulfill'd
In ev'ry child:
We, in that grace,
Behold the Father's face:
In that exalted man,
We can
For ever view,
That love, so true,
Which did us raise
To never-ceasing praise.

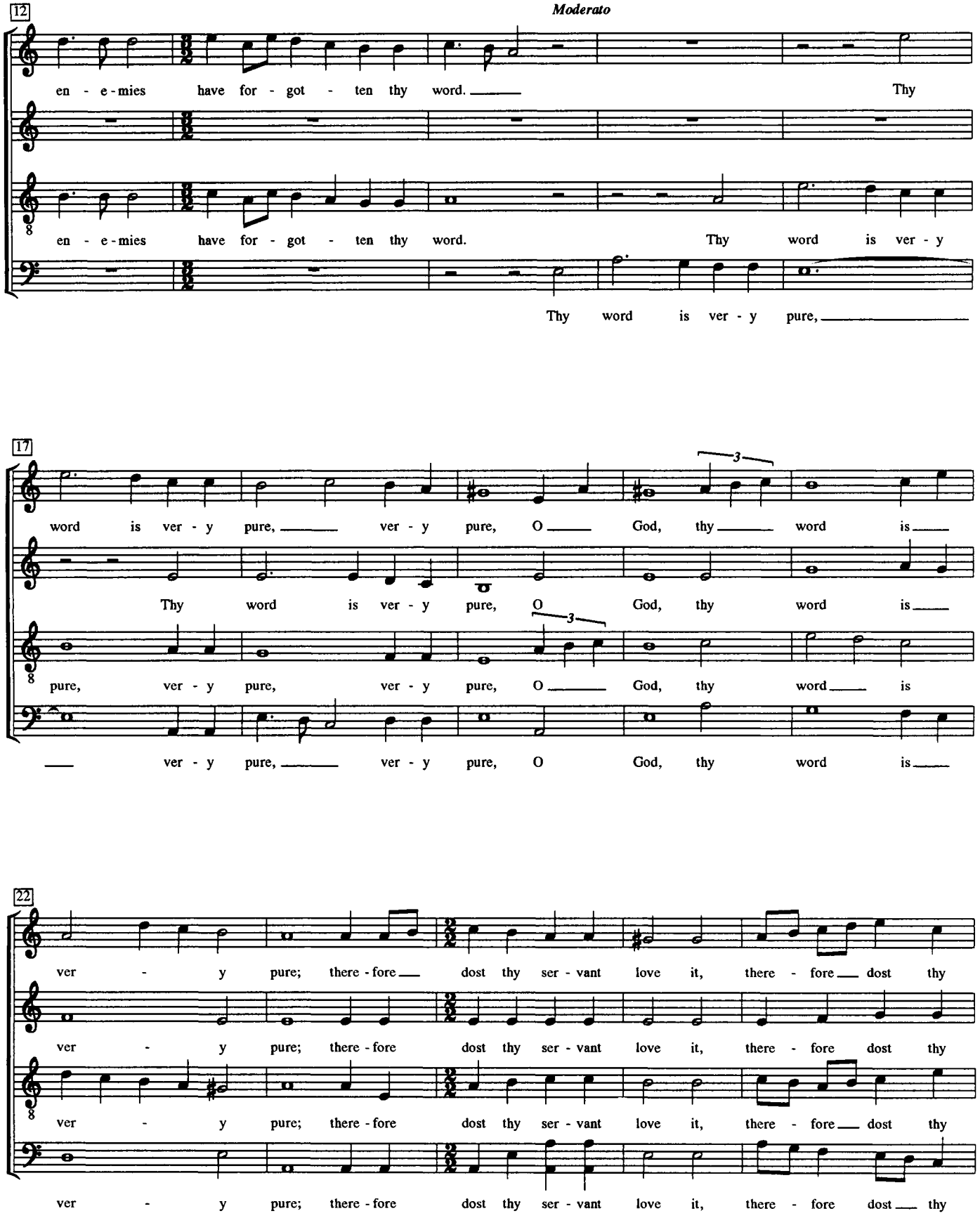
ABYSINA

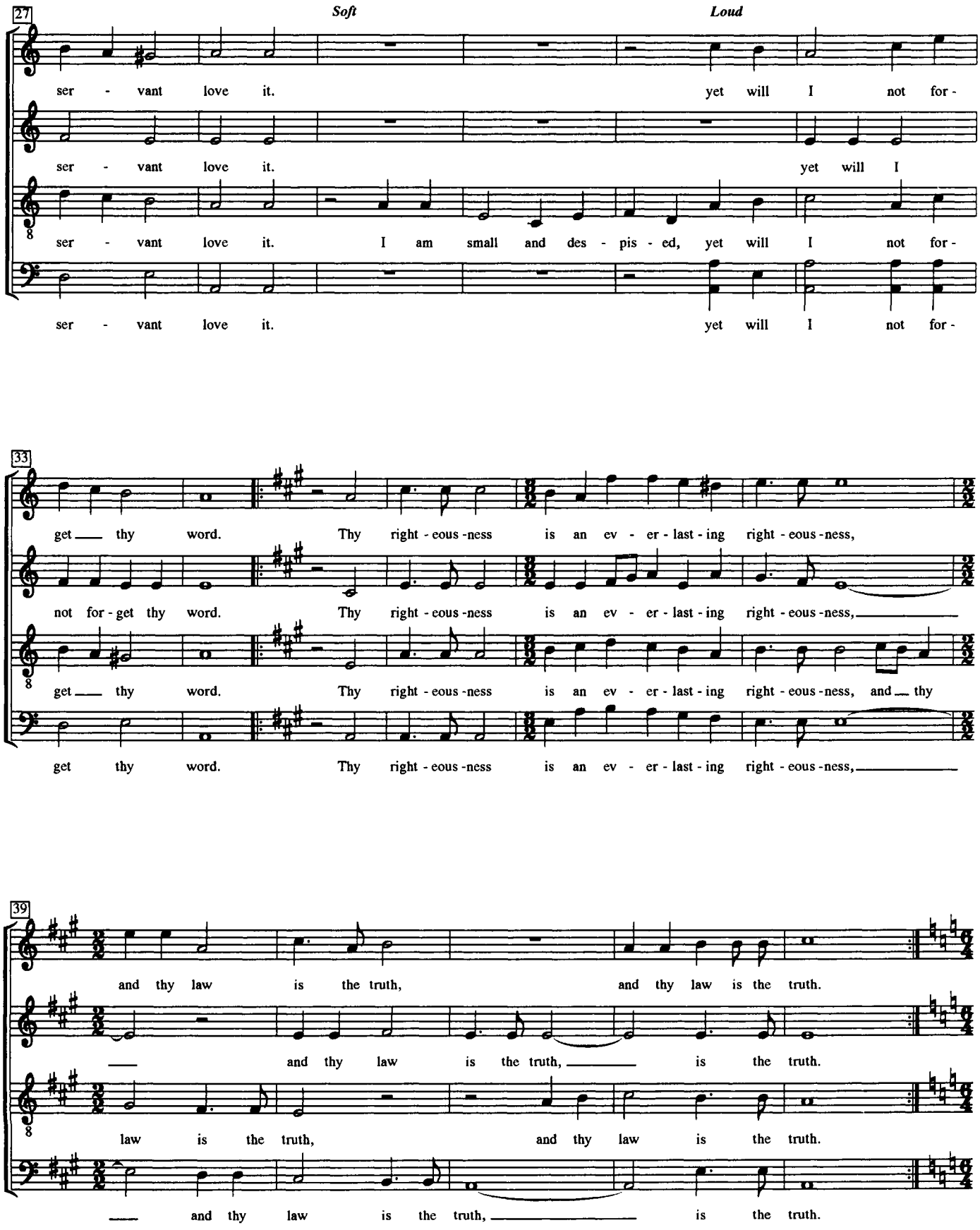
AN ANTHEM from PSALM 119

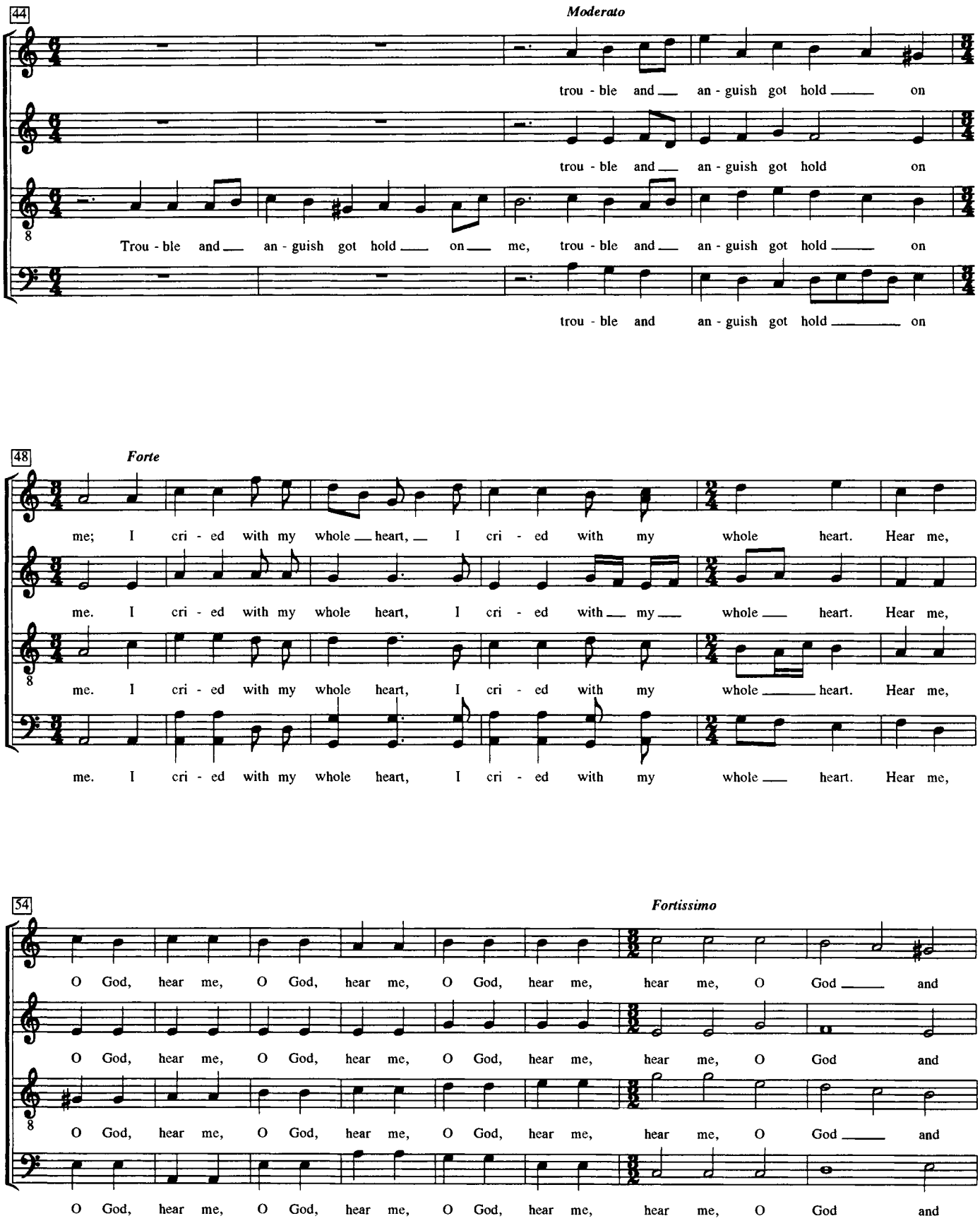
Righteous Art Thou, O Lord

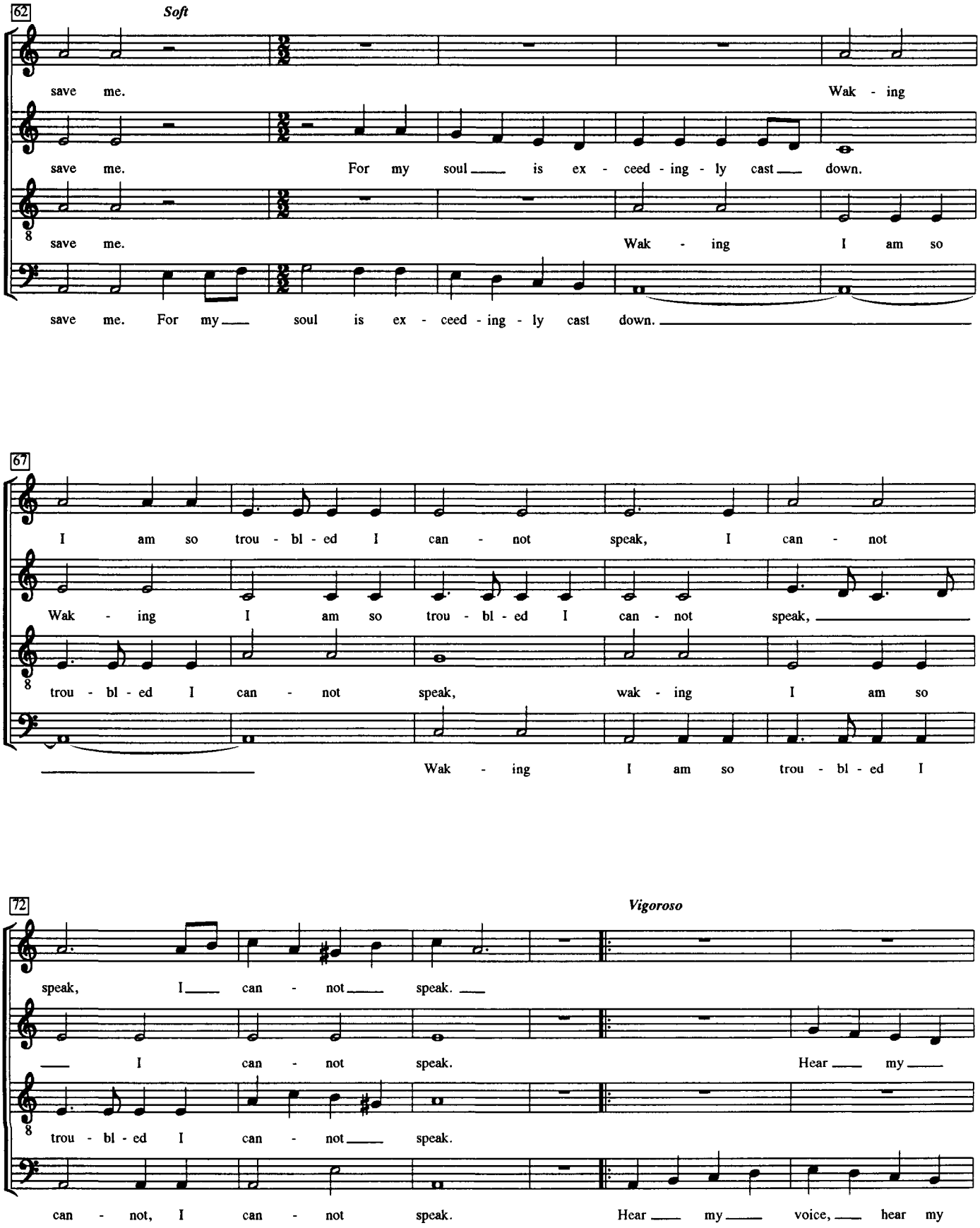
Bible, Psalms 119, 120, & 121

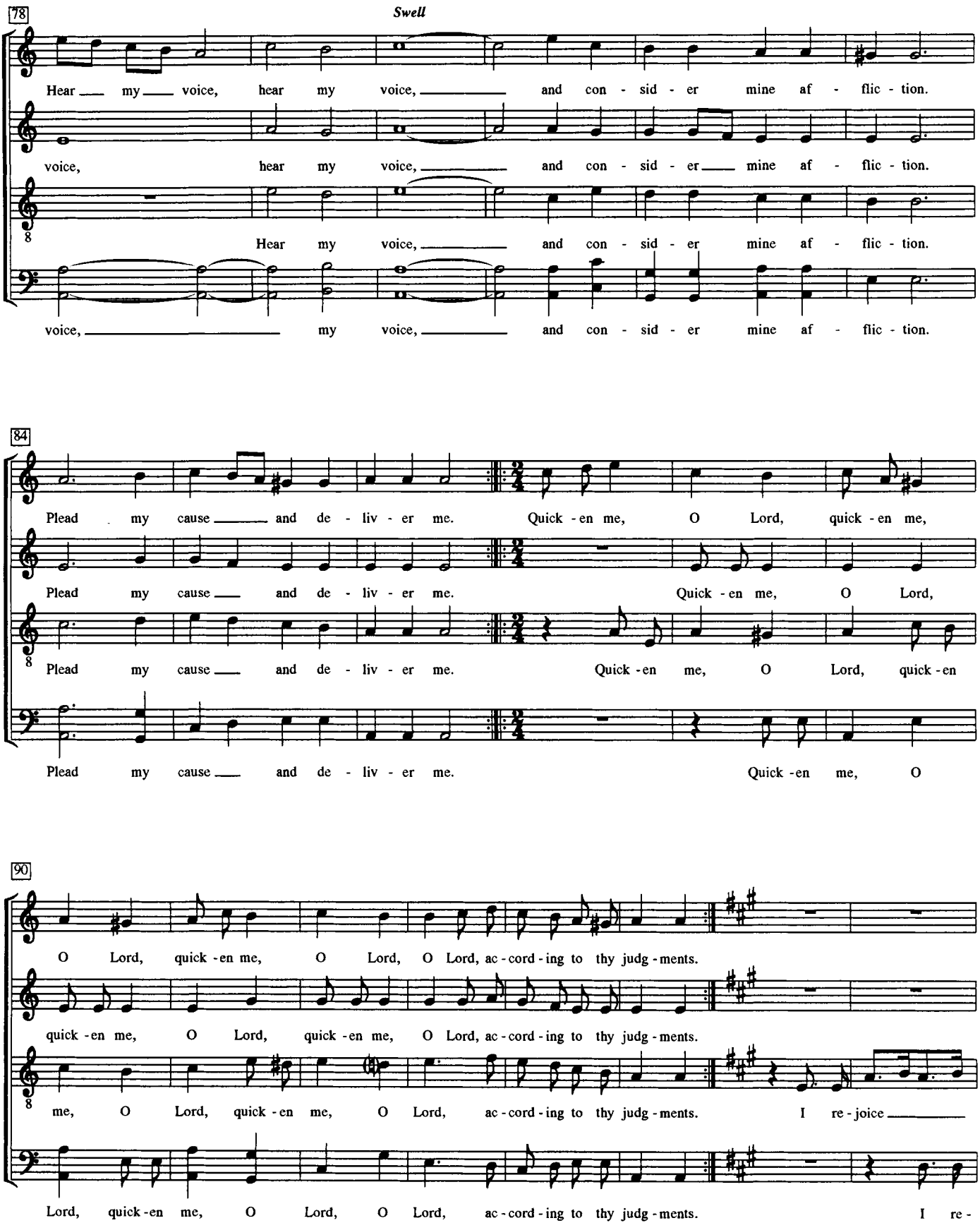


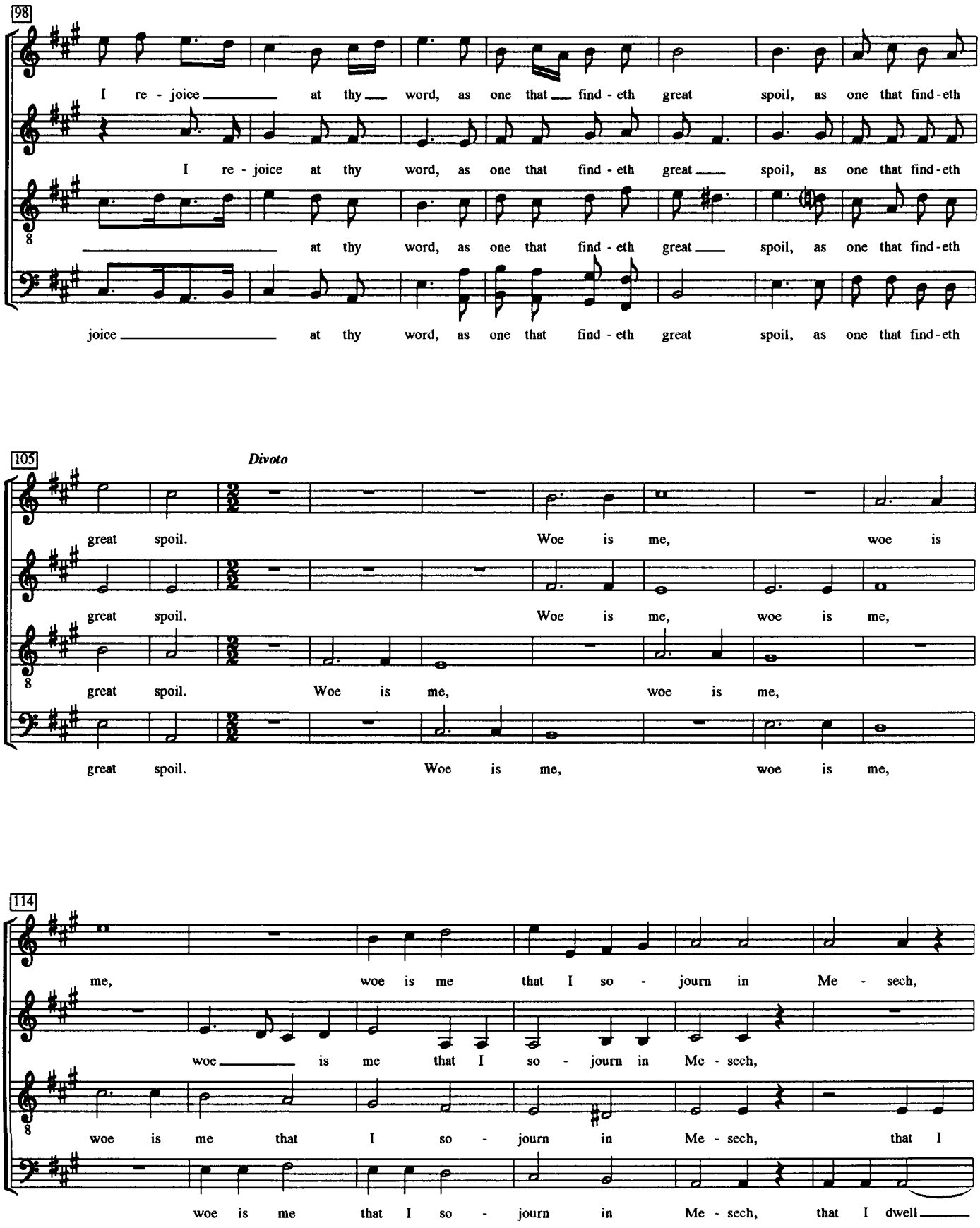

12
Moderato
en - e-mies have for - got - ten thy word. Thy
en - e-mies have for - got - ten thy word. Thy word is ver - y
Thy word is ver - y pure,
17
word is ver - y pure, ver - y pure, O God, thy word is
Thy word is ver - y pure, O God, thy word is
pure, ver - y pure, ver - y pure, O God, thy word is
ver - y pure, ver - y pure, O God, thy word is
22
ver - y pure; there - fore dost thy ser - vant love it, there - fore dost thy
ver - y pure; there - fore dost thy ser - vant love it, there - fore dost thy
ver - y pure; there - fore dost thy ser - vant love it, there - fore dost thy
ver - y pure; there - fore dost thy ser - vant love it, there - fore dost thy


27
Soft
Loud
ser - vant love it. yet will I not for -
ser - vant love it. yet will I
ser - vant love it. I am small and des - pis - ed, yet will I not for -
ser - vant love it. yet will I not for -
33
get thy word. Thy right - eous - ness is an ev - er - last - ing right - eous - ness,
not for - get thy word. Thy right - eous - ness is an ev - er - last - ing right - eous - ness,
get thy word. Thy right - eous - ness is an ev - er - last - ing right - eous - ness, and thy
get thy word. Thy right - eous - ness is an ev - er - last - ing right - eous - ness,
39
and thy law is the truth, and thy law is the truth.
and thy law is the truth, is the truth.
law is the truth, and thy law is the truth.
and thy law is the truth, is the truth.


44
Moderato
trou - ble and an - guish got hold on
trou - ble and an - guish got hold on
Trou - ble and an - guish got hold on me, trou - ble and an - guish got hold on
trou - ble and an - guish got hold on
48
Forte
me; I cri - ed with my whole heart, I cri - ed with my whole heart. Hear me,
me. I cri - ed with my whole heart, I cri - ed with my whole heart. Hear me,
me. I cri - ed with my whole heart, I cri - ed with my whole heart. Hear me,
me. I cri - ed with my whole heart, I cri - ed with my whole heart. Hear me,
54
Fortissimo
O God, hear me, O God, hear me, O God, hear me, hear me, O God and
O God, hear me, O God, hear me, O God, hear me, O God, hear me, hear me, O God and
O God, hear me, O God, hear me, O God, hear me, hear me, O God and
O God, hear me, O God, hear me, O God, hear me, hear me, O God and


62
Soft
save me.
Wak - ing
save me.
For my soul is ex - ceed - ing - ly cast down.
save me.
Wak - ing I am so
save me. For my soul is ex - ceed - ing - ly cast down.
67
I am so trou - bl - ed I can - not speak, I can - not
Wak - ing I am so trou - bl - ed I can - not speak,
trou - bl - ed I can - not speak, wak - ing I am so
Wak - ing I am so trou - bl - ed I
72
Vigoroso
speak, I can - not speak.
I can - not speak. Hear my
trou - bl - ed I can - not speak.
can - not, I can - not speak. Hear my voice, hear my


78
Swell
Hear my voice, hear my voice, and con - sid - er mine af - flic - tion.
voice, hear my voice, and con - sid - er mine af - flic - tion.
Hear my voice, and con - sid - er mine af - flic - tion.
voice, my voice, and con - sid - er mine af - flic - tion.
84
Plead my cause and de - liv - er me. Quick - en me, O Lord, quick - en me,
Plead my cause and de - liv - er me. Quick - en me, O Lord,
Plead my cause and de - liv - er me. Quick - en me, O Lord, quick - en
Plead my cause and de - liv - er me. Quick - en me, O
90
O Lord, quick - en me, O Lord, O Lord, ac - cord - ing to thy judg - ments.
quick - en me, O Lord, quick - en me, O Lord, ac - cord - ing to thy judg - ments.
me, O Lord, quick - en me, O Lord, ac - cord - ing to thy judg - ments. I re - joice
Lord, quick - en me, O Lord, O Lord, ac - cord - ing to thy judg - ments. I re -


98
I re - joice at thy word, as one that find - eth great spoil, as one that find - eth
I re - joice at thy word, as one that find - eth great spoil, as one that find - eth
at thy word, as one that find - eth great spoil, as one that find - eth
joice at thy word, as one that find - eth great spoil, as one that find - eth
105
Divoto
great spoil. Woe is me, woe is
great spoil. Woe is me, woe is me,
great spoil. Woe is me, woe is me,
great spoil. Woe is me, woe is me,
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me, woe is me that I so - journ in Me - sech,
woe is me that I so - journ in Me - sech,
woe is me that I so - journ in Me - sech, that I
woe is me that I so - journ in Me - sech, that I dwell