

INTRODUCTION

To the Moravian musicians in America, Church music was the most profound and genuine expression of their inner lives. Like the early Christians, they had been through terrible persecutions and known great tribulation, and, like them their faith had become fixed on God and their Saviour, Jesus Christ. In their music the expression of that nearness to God, that faith and love, is simple, sincere and poignant. That it played a very important part in the education of even the little children is recorded in John Wesley's "Journal", where he quotes from The Constitution of the Church of the Moravian Brethren at Herrnhut laid before the Theological Order at Wittenberg in the year 1733: "Our little children we instruct chiefly by hymns; whereby we find the most important truths most successfully insinuated into their minds."

The first Moravian settlers came to America from the West Indies (where they had been serving as missionaries) in 1735, and were succeeded by others who came direct from Europe and who founded the town of Bethlehem, which was named by Count Zinzendorf on his visit to the colony, on Christmas Eve 1741, when he led the people in singing

"Not Jerusalem,
Rather Bethlehem
Gave us that which
Maketh life rich."

You will gather from this that everything of importance or of general interest was, almost at once, celebrated in prayer and poetry, which was sung. So, for instance, upon their arrival in North Carolina the Moravians held a love feast and sang a song of thanksgiving which also expresses what life meant to them, in any land:

"We hold arrival love feast here
In Carolina land,
A company of Brethren true.
A little pilgrim band,

Called by the Lord to be of those
Who through the whole world go,
To tell of Jesus everywhere,
And naught but Jesus know."

When Benjamin Franklin visited Bethlehem in 1756, he was impressed by the fact that he heard so much music. When George Washington, as President, arrived in Salem on his first tour of the states after the war, he was welcomed by a band of trumpets and horns.

Singing was a very important part of the church services. One curious thing was that there seems to have been a great scarcity of tenors, so that many of the anthems were composed with a second soprano part, which a tenor could sing if one happened to appear. The choir was accompanied at first by a string quartet or quintet which merely doubled the voices, but gradually the strings were given more independent parts, and wood-winds and brasses were added to make a full orchestra.

In 1744 J. C. Fyrlagus organized the COLLEGIUM MUSICUM in Bethlehem, which played even the great compositions by European musicians of the day; similar societies were soon organized in Nazareth, Lititz and Salem. The lists of people who played in these orchestras from every walk of life is truly amazing. Then, in 1898 J. Fred Wollé founded the still active and famous Bethlehem Bach Choir.

The development of the Moravian Church is one of the most poignant chapters in all history. Its faith was born under the great leader Jan Hus, who was minister in Prague and became President of Prague University, but was burned at the stake in Constance in 1415. In spite of the years of persecution which followed, it was established as the Church of the Unity of the Brethren (Unitas Fratrum) in 1457. The religious wars of the seventeenth century threatened to annihilate it; in fact, in 1627 all members of the Unitas Fratrum were banished by imperial decree; but in 1722 God sent again deliverance; Count Zinzendorf gave them a large grant of land on his estate and helped them to re-establish themselves and the Church both financially and spiritually. One is tremendously impressed with the significance of this re-establishment when one looks at the lists of missionaries who have been sent out, and when one visits the Moravian communities and participates in the wonderful Easter Dawn services, when as many as five hundred players play the great chorales in the cemeteries to congregations of many thousand people.

As one contemplates these things one can not but remember the great influence exercised by Jan Hus's writings on Martin Luther and later, by the Moravian Brethren on shipboard and in England and in America and by that great disciple Peter Boehler and by Martin Luther's expositions of Hus's teachings on John and Charles Wesley — an incalculably great power for the spread and the strengthening of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus.

IT IS A PRECIOUS THING

(ES IST EIN KÖSTLICH DING)

Anthem for Mixed Voices

English Translation by
HELEN A. DICKINSON

JOHANN FRIEDRICH PETER (1746 - 1813)
ARR. BY CLARENCE DICKINSON

ORGAN

Andante
Ch.

p
Sw.

Ped.

SOLO BARITONE

p

It is — a — pre - cious thing

p
Sw.

when the heart is fixed — and trust-eth in God; —

Full Score and Parts for Violin I, II, Viola, Violoncello, and Bass are available.

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[B]

SOLO SOPRANO

mp

It is— a— pre - cious thing when the heart is fixed; —

[B]

mp

mf
It is— a— pre - cious thing when the heart is —

mf
It is— a— pre - cious thing when the heart is —

mf
fixed, through the mer - cy, through the mer - cy of God — and our

fixed, through the mer - cy of God and our

Sav - iour, Je - sus Christ.

Sav - iour, Je - sus Christ.

[C] It is a pre-cious thing

[C] It is a pre-cious thing

when the heart is fixed and trust-eth in God,

when the heart is fixed trust-eth in

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score consists of several systems. The first system shows the vocal melody and piano accompaniment for the phrase 'Sav - iour, Je - sus Christ.' The second system continues this phrase. The third system begins with a square box containing the letter 'C', indicating a common time signature change, and features the lyrics 'It is a pre-cious thing'. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment for this phrase. The fifth system returns to the vocal melody with the lyrics 'when the heart is fixed and trust-eth in God,'. The sixth system continues the vocal melody with the lyrics 'when the heart is fixed trust-eth in'. The piano accompaniment throughout includes various triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano).

[D] *p*

— trust - eth in God, through the - mer - cy of

God, trust - eth in God, through the - mer - cy of

[D] *p*

Je - sus Christ our Lord.

Je - sus Christ our Lord.

[E] *p*

SOPRANO My heart is rest - ing, O my Sav - iour, In Thy

ALTO My heart is rest - ing, O my Sav - iour, In Thy

TENOR My heart is rest - ing, O my Sav - iour, In Thy

BASS My heart is rest - ing, O my Sav - iour, In Thy

[E] *p*

My heart is rest - ing, O my Sav - iour, In Thy

Four-part vocal harmony (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "lov - ing care, My trust is ev - er stayed on Thee; O". The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A large red watermark "Preview Requires Purchase" is overlaid diagonally across the page.

lov - ing care, My trust is ev - er stayed on Thee; O

lov - ing care, My trust is ev - er stayed on Thee; O

lov - ing care, My trust is ev - er stayed on Thee; O

lov - ing care, My trust is ev - er stayed on Thee; O

Continuation of the musical score. The lyrics are: "hear my earn - est - prayer That ev - er faith-ful I may be, And". The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). A large red watermark "Preview Requires Purchase" is overlaid diagonally across the page.

hear my earn - est - prayer That ev - er faith-ful I may be, And

hear my earn - est - prayer That ev - er faith-ful I may be, And

hear my earn - est - prayer That ev - er faith-ful I may be, And

hear my earn - est - prayer That ev - er faith-ful I may be, And

F

ev - er do Thy will; O grant this in Thy

ev - er do Thy will; O grant this in Thy

ev - er do Thy will; O grant this in Thy

ev - er do Thy will; O grant this in Thy

F



mp *p* *pp*

mer-cy still, Through Je-sus Christ our Lord. A - men, A - men.

mp *p* *pp*

mer-cy still, Through Je-sus Christ our Lord. A - men, A - men.

mp *p* *pp*

mer-cy still, Through Je-sus Christ our Lord. A - men, A - men.

mp *p* *pp*

mer-cy still, Through Je-sus Christ our Lord. A - men, A - men.

