

Religious works for chorus, organ and/or orchestra

Salve Regina

Approximate Length: 5 minutes

Composed: 1876

Tantum ergo

Approximate Length: 4 minutes 45 seconds

Composed: 1876

Credo in E minor

Approximate Length: 7 minutes

Composed: 1876/7/TD>

O salutaris Hostia (G major)

Approximate Length: 4 minutes

Composed: 1877

O salutaris Hostia (E minor)

Approximate Length: fragment

Composed: 1877/8

O salutaris Hostia (Eb major) - unaccompanied

Approximate Length: 2 minutes

Composed: 1880

O salutaris Hostia (Eb major) - accompanied

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1880

O salutaris Hostia (Eb major) - bass solo

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1882

Four Litanies

Approximate Length: 5 minutes 30 seconds

Composed: 1882

Ave Verum Corpus, op. 2, no. 1

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1887, revised 1902

Ave Maria, op 2, no. 2

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1887, revised 1907

Ave Maris Stella, op. 2, no. 3

Approximate Length: 4 minutes 30 seconds

Composed: 1887, revised 1907

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1888

Te Deum and Benedictus, op 34

Approximate Length: 20 minutes

First Performance :

Date : 12 September 1897

Venue : Hereford Festival

Conductor : G R Sinclair

Dedicated to : G R Sinclair

O Mightiest of the Mighty

Approximate Length: 3 minutes 45 seconds

Composed: 1902

Two Single Chants for Venite in D & G

Approximate Length: 5 seconds each

Composed: 1907

Two Double Chants in D for Psalms 68 & 75

Approximate Length: 10 seconds each

Composed: 1907

How Calmly the Evening

Approximate Length: 2 minutes 45 seconds

Composed: 1907

A Christmas Greeting

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1907

Lo! Christ the Lord is born

Approximate Length: 2 minutes

Composed: 1908

The Angelus

Approximate Length: 3 minutes 15 seconds

Composed: 1909

They are at rest

Approximate Length: 3 minutes

Composed: 1909

O Hearken Thou, op 64

Approximate Length: 4 minutes

First Performance :

Date : 22 June 1911 (Coronation of King George V)

Venue : Westminster Abbey

Great is the Lord (Psalm 48), op 67

Approximate Length: 10 minutes

First Performance :

Date : 16 July 1912

Venue : Westminster Abbey

Conductor : Sir Frederick Bridge

Dedicated to : Very Rev J Armitage Robinson, DD

Give Unto the Lord (Psalm 29), op 74

Approximate Length: 8 minutes

First Performance :

Date : 30 April 1914 (Festival of the Sons of Clergy)

Venue : St Paul's Cathedral

Dedicated to : Sir George Martin, MVO, Mus D

Fear not, O Land (Harvest Anthem)

Approximate Length: 3 minutes 30 seconds

Composed: 1914

I Sing the Birth

Approximate Length: 8 minutes

Composed: 1928

Good Morrow

Approximate Length: 4 minutes

Composed: 1929

Edward Elgar's religious works are founded on irony upon irony. His father, William, was the organist at St. George's Church, Sansone Place, Worcester from 1846 to 1884. He was not a pious man nor a Roman Catholic and detested any organised religion – he wrote to his family of “the absurd superstition and playhouse mummery of the Papist; the cold and formal ceremonies of the Church of England; or the bigotry and rank hypocrisy of the Wesleyan”. He took the post solely for the money and he clearly had to separate the musical from the religious aspects of his post. Two years after he took the post, he married Ann Greening who, not liking him to walk alone to Worcester every Sunday, accompanied him and attended the services. In 1852, four years after her marriage, she was converted to Roman Catholicism and her children were therefore brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Edward helped his father, played his first complete mass at St. George's in 1872 and was assistant organist from the mid-1870s, becoming organist in 1885. It is therefore unsurprising that the tyro composer wrote a number of religious works intended to be performed in church services. And, whilst he also increasingly lost his faith as he grew older, the church played an important part in his musical development: the smaller, devout works composed for the choir of St. George's were further milestones on the road to becoming a fully-fledged composer. There are many fragments, hymn-tunes and other insignificant works and the individual ones described below are those with some greater significance. A full description of all the works is contained in John Allison's *Edward Elgar: Sacred Music*, (Border Lines, 1994).

Against this background, what many will find surprising is that each of his four most substantial compositions of church music were first performed in Anglican churches, two of them being specially commissioned for the occasion. The first of these, the Te Deum and Benedictus of 1897, was commissioned for that year's Three Choirs' Festival at Hereford. The remaining three works - O Hearken Thou (1911), Great is the Lord (1912) and Give Unto the Lord (1914) - followed each other in quick succession some fifteen years later, by which time Elgar had already written most of his great masterpieces. Each is a setting of verses from the Psalms.

Individual Works

Salve Regina (1876)

After a short Kyrie of 20 bars (1868-9), a Gloria (1872-3) arranged from Mozart's Violin Sonata in F K547, a Credo (1873) based on themes from Beethoven's symphonies and a tiny “Introduction to somebody's Anthem” (1874), Elgar wrote this work in the Summer and Autumn of 1876. He thought highly enough of it at the time to inscribe it his original Opus 1, although that honour eventually went to the Romance in E minor for Violin and Piano of 1878. For SATB and organ, it was first performed for the visit to St. George's on 6 June 1880 of Bishop Ullathorne, celebrating the opening of a new chancel. In four sections, the piece demands a high soprano part and bears tiny traces of the mature Elgar.

*Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae,
Vita dulcedo et spes nostra salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes,
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.*

*Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.*

*Hail holy queen, mother of mercy,
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry poor banished children of Eve,
To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping
in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate
your eyes of mercy toward us.
And after this, our exile,
Show us the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

Tantum ergo (1876)

The text is traditionally sung, like the O salutaris hostia, at the Benediction service in the Catholic Church. Originally Elgar's Opus 2, this setting is dated 27 November 1876 and resembles in its opening his Salve Regina written in the preceding few months. It was certainly performed in the service on 21 June 1879 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of St. George's. It was also played (along with the premiere of the Salve Regina) for the visit to St. George's on 6 June 1880 of Bishop Ullathorne, celebrating the opening of a new chancel. The original score is lost and the version is edited from a number of manuscripts but it is in ternary form with a dominating first theme and a more chromatic middle section.

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum
veneremur cernui:
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui:
praestet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.*

*Genitori, Genitoque
laus et jubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et benedictio:
procedenti ab utroque*

*Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble senses fail.*

*To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high,
with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from Each eternally,*

*be salvation, honour, blessing,
might and endless majesty.*

Credo (1877) in E minor

Elgar originally gave this work as his opus 3 but withdrew it and *Cantique* was awarded that number when the composer revised in 1912 a relic of his wind quintet days to make an orchestral work whose origins harked back to the time of such an early opus number. The *Credo* was begun in 1872 but most was composed in 1877 and it is a more substantial work than most he completed at that time. Furthermore, its perhaps self-conscious originality led to its not being published. Elgar maintained the key of E minor throughout when this affirmation of faith was habitually and more appropriately in the major.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ, visibílium omnium et invisibílium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Fílium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum, ante omnia sæcula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt.

*Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spírítu Sancto, ex María Vírgine, et homo factus est.*

Crucifíxus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et íterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos. Cuius regni non erit finis.

*Et in Spírítum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre et Fílio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.*

*Confíteor unum baptísma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam ventúri saeculi.
Amen.*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father beyond all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And he became flesh by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary: and was made man.

He was also crucified for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And on the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And of his kingdom there will be no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, and who spoke through the prophets.

*And in one holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the world to come.
Amen.*

O salutaris Hostia (c.1877) G major, contralto & organ

O salutaris Hostia (1877-8) E minor, SATB (or soprano) and organ

O salutaris Hostia (1880 or earlier) E flat major, SATB unaccompanied

O salutaris Hostia (c.1880) E flat major, SATB and organ "No. 2"

O salutaris Hostia (17 April 1882) E flat major, bass (chorus ad lib) and organ

O salutaris Hostia (1880-88) F major, SATB and organ "No. 3"

Elgar is known to have composed at least six settings of this text, which is traditionally sung, like the Tantum ergo, at the Benediction service in the Catholic Church. They include one from about 1877 for contralto and organ, the second, a fragment in E minor from 1877-8 based on Paganini's Caprice in G minor for solo violin, and the fifth, which was signed and dated on 17 April 1882 and is stylistically prescient of the later Elgar, with even a passage closely resembling the opening of King Olaf.

Three are better known through recordings. The third (No. 1) is an unaccompanied hymn in E flat that is charming and undistinctive although one of Elgar's better early hymn-tunes.

The fourth (No. 2) is for SATB and organ. It is peacefully gentle and devout and dates from 1880. The manuscript is marked (M. Grafton), probably a reference to his niece, May, the dedicatee of his Sonatina for piano. It was published in 1889 in Cary's Modern Church Music for Catholic Choirs. Alphonse Cary of Newbury was a small publisher of Catholic music, who also published Elgar's Ecce Sacerdos Magnus and Four Litanies.

The sixth (No. 3) was published (along with the fourth, No. 2) in Tozer's Complete Benediction Manual in 1898 (although composed some years earlier) and is straightforwardly set. It includes a characteristic Elgarian sequence to be relished and a very finely wrought Amen.

O salutaris Hostia

Quae coeli pandis ostium.

Bella premunt hostilia;

Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino

Sit sempiterna gloria:

Qui vitam sine termino,

Nobis donet in patria.

Amen.

O Saving Victim opening wide

The gate of heaven to man below.

Our foes press hard on every side;

Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

All praise and thanks to thee ascend

For ever more, blest One in Three;

Oh, grant us life that shall not end,

*In our true native land.
Amen.*

Four Litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary (c1882)

These litanies, two in D major, 2 in E major, are the best known of Elgar's litanies, although there were actually up to twenty-seven written and compiled for the choir at St. George's Roman Catholic Church in Worcester. In 1885, Elgar became the Organist and the duties sometimes irked him; after only a few months he wrote in early 1886 to his Settle-based friend, Dr Buck, "I am a fully-fledged organist now & HATE it". They were inscribed to Father Knight of St. George's, who compiled the series with Elgar, received Alice Elgar into the Catholic Church and, seven years later, would present Elgar with John Henry Newman's poem *The Dream of Gerontius*. Of those written by Elgar, they may have been composed during the period 1876 to 1886 (with a late one added in 1890). The four referred to here were composed in about 1882 and were the first of Elgar's church music to be published: in 1888 by Alphonse Cary of Newbury, a small publisher of Catholic music who also published his *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus* and two settings of *O salutaris Hostia*. They also appeared in *Tozer's Complete Benediction Manual* in 1898, as did two of his settings of *O salutaris Hostia*. Years later, Elgar recounted and then demonstrated to Hubert Leicester how Tozer had changed the harmonies so that the published version was "absolutely different" from, and inferior to, Elgar's original. Nevertheless, they are conventional, with variations in colour occurring in No. 1, with Trebles alternating with Tutti, and No. 4, where the chorus accompanies the Sopranos.

Chant: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison.

Litany: Sancta Maria, Sancta Dei Genitrix, Sancta Virgo virginum, Ora pro nobis

Pié Jesu (1887, revised 1902 as Ave Verum Corpus, op. 2 no. 1,)

Ave Maria op. 2 no. 2 (1887, revised 1907)

Ave Maris Stella op. 2 no. 3 (1887, revised 1907)

In 1885, Elgar succeeded to the post of organist at St. George's Roman Catholic Church in Worcester, and the move gave him an even more regular platform for his religious compositions. It was in this role that he produced the charming trio of works *Pié Jesu*, *Ave Maria* and *Ave Maris Stella* - works which held such a lasting appeal for Elgar that nearly twenty years later he orchestrated them, giving them the opus number 2, with *Pié Jesu* becoming *Ave Verum Corpus* in the process.

William Allen, a member of the congregation at St. George's and a musical friend of the Elgar family, was a solicitor in whose office Edward briefly worked at the age of 15. Allen died on 27 January 1887 and on the following day Elgar composed a *Pié Jesu* for soprano and organ for the St. George's choir to sing at the funeral, basing part of the melody on a *Kyrie* he had sketched the year before. Poignantly, it was sung at St. George's many years later, to honour the death of the composer himself.

In 1902 he rearranged it as *Ave verum corpus* for full choir, expanding it by repeating each half and adding a coda. For SATB and organ, it is a simply set, winning, small scale melody, led by the trebles, each verse being repeated by the full choir. There is a short coda, with antiphonal effects between trebles and tenors and altos and basses. Elgar described it as "too sugary, I think, but it is nice & harmless & quite easy".

*Ave, verum corpus, natum
Ex Maria Virgine:
Vere passum, immolatum
In cruce pro homine,*

*Cuius latus perforatum
Vero fluxit et sanguine:
Esto nobis praegustatum,
Mortis in examine.
O clemens, O dulcis Jesu, Fili Mariae*

*Hail true body that was born
of the Virgin Mary,
That truly suffered
and was sacrificed on the Cross for men,*

*From whose pierced side
flowed water and blood;
Be for us a foretaste
of death and judgement.
O sweet and gentle Jesus, son of Mary.*

At his suggestion, Novello's reflected the Ave verum's early provenance by publishing it as his op. 2, thereby superseding his *Tantum ergo*. It was not, however, substantial enough to occupy an opus number on its own, so Elgar looked out sketches as "amongst the heaps of similar things I wrote when a youth (I) may find something which may do for further numbers". So, five years after re-arranging *Ave verum corpus*, he put together *Ave Maria* and *Ave Maris Stella* from fragments of anthems written for St. George's in 1887.

Again for SATB and organ with the direct devotion simply expressed, the *Ave Maria* was dedicated to Mrs Hubert Leicester, wife of his great friend and the choirmaster at St. George's. Hubert wrote in grateful acknowledgement of this on 20 June 1907: "You cannot realise how pleased my wife was at your kind thought of her, & you know that I am more than pleased ... The farther we travel from the old days & the old associations the dearer they become. There must be many pieces among your 'archives' that would, if published, be hailed with delight by the Catholics."

The *Ave Maris Stella* was eventually dedicated to the Rev. Canon Charles Vincent Dolman OSB, the priest of St. Francis Xavier in Hereford where Elgar worshipped when he lived in the city between 1904 and 1911. It is written for SSTB and organ, the consequent difference in colouring and slightly faster tempo making this the most distinctive of the three works. An English version appeared as *Jesu, meek and lowly*, with words supplied by the Revd. Henry Collins. In May 1907 Elgar sent them to Novello's with the admonition: "They are tender little plants, so treat them kindly whatever is their fate". John Allison (in *Edward Elgar: Sacred Music, Border Lines*, 1994) points out that the three motets received no reviews when their new versions appeared in 1902 and 1907, particularly curious as Elgar was then at the height of his powers and popularity and *The Musical Times* was a Novello publication. He speculates that the Latin texts were still considered provocative.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena;
Dominus tecum; Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.*

*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus.
Nunc et in hora mortis
nostrae, ora pro nobis*

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death
pray for us.*

*Ave maris stella,
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper Virgo,
Felix coeli porta.*

*Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Hevae nomen.*

*Solve vincula reis,
profer lumen caecis
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.*

*Monstra te esse matrem,
sumat per te preces,
qui pro nobis natus,
tulit esse tuus.*

*Virgo singularis,
inter omnes mitis,
nos culpis solutos,
mites fac et castos.*

*Vitam praesta puram,
iter para tutum:
ut videntes Jesum
semper collaetemur.*

*Sit laus Deo Patri,
summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
tribus honor unus. Amen.*

*Hail, O Star of the ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
ever sinless Virgin,
gate of heav'nly rest.*

*Taking that sweet Ave,
which from Gabriel came,
peace confirm within us,
changing Eve's name.*

*Break the sinners' fetters,
make our blindness day,
Chase all evils from us,
for all blessings pray.*

*Show thyself a Mother,
may the Word divine
born for us thine Infant
hear our prayers through thine.*

*Virgin all excelling,
mildest of the mild,
free from guilt preserve us
meek and undefiled.*

*Keep our life all spotless,
make our way secure
till we find in Jesus,
joy for evermore.*

*Praise to God the Father,
honour to the Son,
in the Holy Spirit,
be the glory one. Amen.*

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus (1888)

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus is one of the last of Elgar's works for St. George's Church, Worcester, where he was organist until May 1889. With hindsight, it may be viewed as a watershed: not only was it almost the last work for his steady employer of the past four years when he was learning to become a practical musician and finding his voice, but it was also virtually the first of his ceremonial set-pieces, the forerunner of the music that celebrated great national occasions. In addition, he became engaged to Alice a few days before the first performance and the occasion of his leaving St. George's was his marriage a week later and their consequent move to London.

This short work was "commissioned" for the occasion on 9 October 1888 of the visit by Bishop Isley, Roman Catholic Bishop of Birmingham, to St. George's. The Bishop was there to inaugurate the Apostleship of Prayer and the League of the Sacred Heart and Elgar emphasised the importance of the visit in the letter he wrote a few days later to his friend in Settle, Dr Charles Buck: "for the special service some special things had to be sung for which we had no music; thus I had to set to work & compose it all & copy out the parts!! Had to get it in anyhow & and broke my neck doing it. Anyway, the leading paper says the new composition was 'exquisite' so I suppose 'twas good enough." The main theme is based on the Benedictus melody in Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, and in the noble tune set against the pedestrian bass, Timothy Hooke sees a prefiguration of the opening of the First Symphony of twenty years later. It was published by Alphonse Cary of Newbury, a small

publisher of Catholic music who also published four of his Litanies and two settings of O salutaris hostia. Elgar dedicated it to his great friend, Hubert Leicester, the choirmaster at St. George's Church, Worcester and quondam flautist in the Wind Quintet for which Elgar wrote some significant early pieces in 1878-79.

*Ecce sacerdos magnus, qui in diebus suis,
placuit Deo, et inventus est justus,*

*Behold the great priest, who in his day
pleased God, and has been found just.*

Te Deum and Benedictus, op. 34 (1897)

The first of Elgar's major works intended for a church service was the Te Deum and Benedictus of 1897, and it was commissioned for that year's Three Choirs' Festival at Hereford. Elgar set about the work immediately after completing The Banner of St. George. Apart from purely musical considerations, the work is significant in that it brought Elgar into contact with two individuals who were later to become friends associated with the Enigma Variations: George Robertson Sinclair and August Jaeger. Sinclair was the organist at Hereford Cathedral, to whom Elgar dedicated the work and who conducted its first performance on 12 September 1897. Jaeger was the publishing office manager at Novello's who was to champion Elgar's work at Novello's and whose efforts Elgar was to recognise in *Nimrod*, the greatest of the variations. At the time of the commission, Elgar's reputation was far from established and it is somewhat surprising that he had been chosen to write a large work with orchestra and organ intended to be the centrepiece of the festival's opening service, with its ceremonial and civic pomp (and inclusion of the second performance of his Imperial March). There was, however, a safeguard: Elgar had to run through the piece for Sinclair's approval for it to be accepted for the festival. Fortunately, and somewhat hesitantly, Sinclair declared "It is very, very modern, but I think it will do." It "did" to such an extent it was repeated in the next Hereford Festival in 1900, and Novello's offered 15 guineas for the copyright.

It is difficult to compress the varied moods of the Te Deum into a twelve-minute piece, as it suits a grander scale. Elgar solved the problem by developing and varying the opening pair of contrasted themes, lending unity by bring them back at the end of the Benedictus at "Glory be to the Father..."

Te Deum

*We praise Thee, O God:
we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee:
the Father everlasting.*

*To Thee all Angels cry aloud:
the heavens and all the powers therein.
To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim:
continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy:
Lord God of Sabaoth;*

*Heaven and earth are full
of the Majesty of Thy glory.*

*The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee.*

*The holy Church throughout all the
world doth acknowledge Thee;
The Father: of an infinite majesty;
Thine honourable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.*

*Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.*

*When thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.*

*When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.*

*Thou sittest at the right hand of God:
in the glory of the Father.*

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.

*We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants:
whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.*

*Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints
in glory everlasting.*

*O Lord, save Thy people
and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them
and lift them up for ever.*

*Day by day we magnify Thee;
And we worship Thy Name,
ever world without end.*

*Vouchsafe, O Lord,
to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us,
as our trust is in Thee.
O Lord, in Thee have I trusted:
let me never be confounded*

Benedictus

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people;
And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
As he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the world began;
That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.
To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers and to remember his holy Covenant;
To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham, that he would give us;
That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear;
In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
And thou, Child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face
of the Lord to prepare his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, for the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us;
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet
into the way of peace.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

O Mightiest of the Mighty (1902)

Words by the Rev. Samuel Childs Clarke (1821-1903)

This hymn, composed grudgingly following a Royal request, was one of the works composed especially for the coronation held in Westminster Abbey on 9 August 1902 of Edward VII. It was dedicated to HRH The Prince of Wales, the only composition Elgar dedicated to the future George V. With no opus number and a dedication to the unsympathetic Prince, it is hardly surprising to find that Elgar was dissatisfied with it. He wrote to Jaeger in January 1902: "That hymn is all 'wrong', hymns always are – look at the accents in first lines – then the words pause at end of third line in every stanza except 2 which requires to go on at once – That's the reason I never write hymn tunes – they're so ghastly inartistic".

O Mightiest of the Mighty

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
O Mightiest of the Mighty hear our call,
As now before Thy mercy-seat we fall,
Thine is the Kingdom ruling over all –
Unto thee be power and glory.*

*Defend and save all Christian Kings, we pray,
Whose hearts Thy rule and governance obey,
Be evermore their God and Guide, while they
Yield thee alway Power and Glory.*

*Let blessings on our Sovereign Lord descend,
Thy grace on him be sweet and people send
And with thy stretched out arm his mighty friend
Unto thee be Power and Glory.*

*His head with holy oil anointed be,
His crown and sceptre – signs of majesty,
And golden orb he bears: these are from Thee –
Unto Thee be Power and Glory.*

*May Thy blest unction, Holy Heavenly Dove,
Crown him through life with wisdom from above,
And rule his heart in Thy faith, fear and love,
Gracious Lord of Power and Glory.*

*Victoria's virtues in him be display'd,
Like her in robes of righteousness array'd;
Be his, at last, the Crown that ne'er shall fade
Thine the Kingdom, Power and Glory.*

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen

**Two Single Chants for Venite in D & G (1907)
Two Double Chants in D for Psalms 68 & 75, (1907)**

In May 1907, Elgar completed these tiny chants for the New Cathedral Psalter that Novello brought out in 1909.

***How Calmly the Evening* (1907)
Words by Thomas Toke Lynch (1818-1871)**

December 1907 saw Elgar compose a series of part-songs: the hymn *How calmly the evening*; a setting of a poem by Alice that was a Christmas greeting set for high voices accompanied by two violins and piano and destined for George Robertson Sinclair (1863-1917) and his Hereford choristers' Christmas concert; the *Marching Song* for Alfred Littleton (1845-1914) of Novello; *The Reveille* for Dr W.G. McNaught (1849-1918) and then his *Four Part-Songs*, op. 53. *How calmly* is a curious and singular song, setting a simply devout, high Victorian, hymn-like prayer in response to a request from the editor of the *Musical Times* for a setting of this specific text. Uncharacteristically, there are no technical challenges nor eerie mood-painting and drama and Elgar's apt description of it is "homely but felt". It appeared in Novello's *Musical Times* late that year.

How Calmly the Evening
*How calmly the evening once more is descending,
As kind as a promise, as still as a prayer;
O wing of the Lord, in Thy shelter befriending,
May we and our households continue to share.*

*We come to be soothed with Thy merciful healing;
The dews of the night cure the wounds of the day;
We come, our life's work and its brevity feeling,
With thanks for the past, for the future we pray.*

*Lord, save us from folly; be with us in sorrow;
Sustain us in work till the time of our rest;
When earth's day is over, may heaven's tomorrow
Dawn on us, of homes long expected possess.*

A Christmas Greeting (1907)

Words by Caroline Alice Elgar (1848-1920)

Set for two trebles with male chorus ad lib, two violins and piano, this was first performed in the Town Hall, Hereford, on 1 January 1908 and dedicated to Dr. G.R. Sinclair and the Choristers of Hereford Cathedral. Novello published the carol in 1907. This extract from the *Hereford Times* of 4 January 1908 (kindly provided by Martin Bird) reports on the packed-out Cathedral Choristers' carol concert: "The concert given in the Hereford Townhall on Wednesday evening was an artistic triumph, and ... the record attendance is explained by the fact that a new composition by Sir Edward and Lady Elgar was down for performance. The great musician and his wife, by residence and innumerable kindly thoughts and acts on behalf of the people of Hereford, have endeared themselves greatly to all classes.

The composition entitled "A Christmas Greeting" was posted to Hereford from Rome, where Sir Edward and his wife are resting, after somewhat strenuous times. It is dedicated to Dr. Sinclair and his choristers, a mark of recognition totally unexpected, and therefore all the more acceptable. The words are by Lady Elgar, and they link the county of Hereford with one of the most beautiful parts of Italy – the River Wye and Tiber and their surrounding characteristics. The outstanding feature is the assurance, is any is needed, "Friends always mine". Herefordians gratefully reciprocate the kindly feeling so forcibly expressed. Sir Edward Elgar has entered into the spirit of the words in a manner worthy of our leading English composer. He seems to have written the music when in one of his happiest moods, the rhythm throughout being exquisitely tuneful. It is for two treble, tenor and bass voices, with accompaniment for pianoforte and two violins. It was the performance of this work for the first time that principally accounted for the large attendance. ... Then came the tit-bit of the evening, "A Christmas Greeting to George Robertson Sinclair and his boys", from C. Alice Elgar and Edward Elgar. Mr. J. Boardman, an artiled pupil of Dr. Sinclair, played the pianoforte, and Mr. Bernhard (father) Carrodus and Leonard (son) the violins. In this selection only a portion of the male voices were called upon, but there was the requisite strength. The work was magnificently rendered, the voices and the accompaniment throughout being most effective. A very pretty part is that in the middle announcing the appearance of the pifferari of pipers, which reminds us of Handel's Pastoral Symphony in six-eight time. The work was repeated in response to loud demands and the audience desired a third performance, which would have been granted but for the lengthiness of the programme. "A Christmas Greeting" will always be popular at Hereford on account of its association."

A Christmas Greeting

*Bowered on sloping hillsides rise
In sunny glow, the purpling vine;
Beneath the greyer English skies,
In fair array, the red-gold apples shine.
To those in snow,
To those in sun,
Love is but one;
Hearts beat and glow,
By oak and palm.
Friends, in storm or calm.*

*On and on old Tiber speeds,
Dark with the weight of ancient crime;
Far north, thr' green and quiet meads,*

*Flows on the Wye in mist and silv'ring rime.
To those in snow,
To those in sun,
Love is but one;
Hearts beat and glow,
By oak and palm.
Friends, in storm or calm.*

*The pifferari wander far,
They seek the shrines, and hymn the peace
Which herald angels, 'neath the star,
Foretold to shepherds, bidding strife to cease.*

*Our England sleeps in shroud of snow,
Bells, sadly sweet, knell life's swift flight,
And tears, unbid, are wont to flow,
As "Noël! Noël!" sounds across the night.
To those in snow,
To those in sun,
Love is but one!
Hearts beat and glow,
By oak and palm.
Friends, in storm or calm.*

Lo! Christ the Lord is born (1908)
Words by Shapcott Wensley (1855–1917)

Of the more or less obscure solo and part-songs, one in particular stands out a little by virtue of appearing as an illustration in many works on Elgar: it was the Elgars' Christmas card of 1897 that featured a part-song, *Grete Malverne on a Rock*. The words were by W. Salt Brassington, from a book called *Historic Worcestershire* published in 1894, to which one of the subscribers was 'ELGAR, Mr. E., Forli, Malvern'.

In 1897, the work underwent a transformation. Shapcott Wensley (the pseudonym of the English author and poet Henry Shapcott Bunce), revised the words so that the song became the carol *Lo! Christ the Lord is born*, a simple, almost naïve arrangement that could easily feature far more often in today's Christmas services than it does. Wensley was the librettist of *The Banner of St George*, which also appeared in 1897, a year that in retrospect can be seen as an *annus mirabilis*, witnessing as it did the *Imperial March* for orchestra, the *Te Deum* and *Benedictus* for chorus and organ or orchestra and *Caractacus*, the cantata for chorus and orchestra (as well as the tiny *Minuet* for pianoforte). Interestingly, Martin Bird points out that *Historic Worcestershire* also contains a chapter entitled 'A British Hero', which gives a detailed account of *Caractacus* and the Roman occupation of Worcestershire.

The carol was published as a "Carol for Christmastide" by Novello's in 1908, following an appeal by A.J. Jaeger ('Nimrod') who wrote to his old firm about it in November 1907 from his sickbed.

*Lo! Christ the Lord is born -
The earth rejoices
And wakes to greet the morn.
Jubilant voices*

*Uplift the joyous song
Which grateful hearts prolong
And join the angel throng
To praise the Lord.*

*Let not the proud world's chain
Again enslave thee;
He cometh now to reign,
Cometh to save thee.
He knoweth what thou art,
His word shall life impart,
And lift the contrite heart
To praise the Lord.*

*Come, see Him where he lies
In manger lowly,
And hear from radiant skies
Bright angels holy.
He comes with blessed peace,
To give our souls release,
O may we never cease
To praise the Lord.*

*Soon may all hearts find rest,
In Him confiding,
And earth with love be blest,
Strong and abiding.
Then far o'er land and sea,
From strife by Christ set free,
Man's truest joy shall be
To praise the Lord.*

The Angelus, op. 56 no. 1 (1909)

Elgar spent the spring of 1909 at a villa owned by an American friend, Mrs Julia Worthington, at Careggi, near Florence. Michael Kennedy relates how Elgar was jotting down melodies and phrases that he used in the Second Symphony and Falstaff but not in an opera that he was also considering at the time but that did not materialise. (He began there a sketchbook labelled "Opera in Three Acts".) On that trip, he composed his finest part-song, Go, Song of Mine, and another, The Angelus, which had words allegedly 'from Tuscan dialect' but were almost certainly Elgar's own. He had planned a suite of part-songs, listing in a sketchbook "I Intro., II In a Vineyard, III Angelus, IV Dance, V Vintage, VI Envoi". He dedicated the Angelus, the one completed song, to his close friend Alice Stuart-Wortley, his "Windflower", the third daughter of Sir John Millais and a gifted amateur pianist. "I was afraid the simple words might be too papistical for you - or for your family!", he wrote to her, adding that the words 'are of the place & not far from your own monastery on the Fiesole road ... It would give me the greatest pleasure to put your beloved name on it if you both allow it". It was first performed at the Albert Hall, London, on 8 December 1910. The opening paragraph sings out against a part of the choir "tolling" on a falling second an accompanying Ave Mary. Later, he incorporated other music from the sketches into the Crown of India suite.

*Ave Mary! Sancta Maria, mater Dei; ora pro nobis.
Look down, O Queen, on thy children lowly bending,
Pray for us to thy Son in joy unending;
He once was weak, and a babe on earth,
The angel told of his wondrous birth;
He now on high in His Godhead dwells;
We plead through thee, with the sweet, blest bells.*

*Through thee He came to us sinners, peace bestowing;
Through thee our prayer now ascends, with firm hope glowing.
To Him, who once was a babe on earth,
The angel told of his wondrous birth;
And now on high in His Godhead dwells;
We raise our hymn with the sweet, blest bells. Amen*

They are at rest (1909)

In the same year as **The Angelus** was written, Elgar was asked by Sir Walter Parratt (after whose death in 1924 Elgar took over as Master of the King's Musick) to write a work in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Queen Victoria's death. This beautifully spare and simple Elegy for unaccompanied chorus (SATB) set some words by John Henry (Cardinal) Newman (1801-1890) that echo the mood of his poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, the only other use Elgar made of Newman's works. John Allison, in *Edward Elgar: Sacred Music*, (Border Lines, 1994) wryly points out that "Queen Victoria was of a low-church inclination; her views on a commemorative ode by two of England's most distinguished Catholics might have been amusing."

It was completed in November 1909, received its first performance at the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore on 22 January 1910, and was published by Novello in the same year.

*They are at rest;
We may not stir the heaven of their repose
By rude invoking voice, or prayer address in waywardness to those
Who in the mountain grotts of Eden lie,
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.*

*And soothing sounds
Blend with the neighbouring waters as they glide;
Posted along the haunted garden's bounds, Angelic forms abide,
Echoing, as words of watch, o'er lawn and grove
The verses of that hymn which Seraphs chant above.
They are at rest.*

O Harken Thou, op. 64 (1911)

O Harken Thou is one of three religious works completed close to each other, the others being *Great is the Lord* (1912) and *Give Unto the Lord* (1914). Following the death of Edward VII, George V ascended to the English throne and was crowned on 22 June 1911 in Westminster Abbey. Elgar composed two works for the King's coronation: the Coronation March, arguably the finest of all his processional marches, and a short "Coronation Offertorium", O Harken Thou. They were requested by Frederick Bridge, the organist at Westminster Abbey (who also conducted the first performance of *Great is the Lord*). O Harken Thou in its original version is a setting of verse 2 from Psalm 5 and comes in the period that saw the appearance of the *Violin Concerto* in 1911 and the *Second Symphony* in

1910. It is a short, peaceful and meditative work, and similarities in mood to equivalent parts of the Symphony can be discerned. Novello published the work in 1911.

The Catholic son of a tradesman who had struggled against class, religious and musical establishment prejudice, received on 20 June 1911 the news that he had been appointed to the Order of Merit, the same day that he heard *O Harken Thou* rehearsed in Westminster Abbey in preparation for the coronation. This was the very peak of success, and yet he perversely (or characteristically, according to your view) had announced he would not go to the Coronation nor let his wife go alone. One can imagine the well-born Lady Elgar's disappointment at this denial of a social triumph, after all those years of supporting her husband despite having been dropped by family and friends for marrying "beneath" herself.

Elgar was not happy in writing the work, and Rosa Burley later speculated that he was dissatisfied "either because he was asked to contribute only an offertorium and a Coronation March or because the fee offered was inadequate". Nevertheless, the Preface to *The Form and Order of Their Majesties' Coronation* did not share any of the composer's dissatisfaction: "The setting written specially for this occasion by Sir Edward Elgar is in every way a worthy example of English music, exhibiting in every line that spiritual intensity so characteristic of the composer. Amongst many striking progressions, the final cadence will be particularly noted, while the impression given by the work is exactly what it should be – a reverent supplication." (Allison, *Edward Elgar: Sacred Music*, Border Lines, 1994, p91)

Three versions of the piece appeared in due course (all appearing as op. 64). The original was a setting in English of Psalm 5, verse 2.

*2 O hearken thou unto the voice of my calling, my King, and my God:
for unto Thee will I make my prayer.*

There is also a version with a Latin text, also published by Novello:
*Intende voci orationis meae, Rex meus, et Deus meus.
Quoniam ad te orabo, Domine.*

The final version sets verse 3 besides verse 2:

*3 My voice shalt Thou hear betimes, O Lord;
early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee,
and will look up.*

Great is the Lord, op. 67 (1912)

Of the three religious works completed close to each other - *O Harken Thou* (1911), *Great is the Lord* (1912) and *Give Unto the Lord* (1914) - *Great is the Lord* has the earliest origins, dating from Elgar's holiday to Alassio in 1903, shortly following the first performance of *The Apostles*. It will be recalled that *The Apostles* was planned as the first part of a trilogy and Elgar's mind may already have been wrestling with the Biblical settings for the remaining parts of the trilogy. In the course of the holiday, the Elgars became acquainted with an English clergyman, Dr Joseph Armitage Robertson, then Dean of Westminster and an expert on biblical research. A number of interesting discussions on theological aspects of the trilogy ensued. According to Elgar's close friend Rosa Burley, in the course of one such discussion, Elgar asked the Dean to suggest a text suitable for setting as an anthem. In a somewhat offhand way, Robertson is reported to have replied: "Oh...Praise the Lord".

The suggestion remained in Elgar's mind until 1910 when he set to work in August on Psalm 48 and composed *Great is the Lord*, virtually completing it that year in the form for SATB choir, bass solo and organ. He had just completed the *Violin Concerto* and there are obvious

musical parallels between the two works - two of its themes are virtually quotations from the concerto's first movement and finale. Perhaps for this reason, he delayed submitting the work to Novello's until after he finished adjusting the work in March 1912. When he sent it for publication, he described it as "gigantic ... which I fear will be commercially not much to you".

The work was first performed in Westminster Abbey conducted by Sir Frederick Bridge, the organist at the Abbey (who also conducted the first performance O Harken Thou), on 16 July 1912 at a service to mark the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society and is dedicated to Dr Robinson, by now Dean of Wells. Elgar provided an orchestral arrangement of it in 1913.

Writing in 1988, Michael Kennedy summarised the work thus: "it is a large-scale setting, with a straightforward response to the words, including a realistic response to the line about women in labour. The assembly of the kings takes place to a staccato accompaniment. The tonic is D major and it is a surprise when the baritone solo 'We have thought on thy loving kindness' is in the remote key of A flat. The daughters of Judah rejoice in an ingratiating 6/4 before the opening theme returns for the ceremonial conclusion".

*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised
in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
beautiful in elevation - the joy of the whole earth -
is mount Zion, on the sides of the north,
the city of the great King.
God hath made himself known in her palaces for a refuge.*

*For, lo! the kings assembled themselves,
they passed by together.
They saw, then they were amazed;
they were troubled, they hasted away.
Trembling took hold of them there;
pain, as of a woman in travail,
as with the east wind
that breaketh the ships of Tarshish.*

*As we have heard, so have we seen
in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever.*

*We have thought of Thy loving kindness, O God,
in the midst of Thy temple.
As is Thy name, O God,
so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth;
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

*Let mount Zion be glad,
let the daughters of Judah rejoice,
because of Thy judgements.
Walk about Zion, and go round about her,
tell the towers thereof,
Mark ye well her bulwarks,
consider her palaces,
that ye may tell it to the generation following.*

*For this God is our God for ever and ever:
He will be our guide even unto death.*

Give Unto the Lord (Psalm 29), op. 74 (1914)

After the labour required to produce the Violin Concerto, the Second Symphony, The Music Makers, The Crown of India Suite and Falstaff, Elgar's energies turned in 1914 to composing seven part-songs, four songs for solo voice and two anthems, the last Church music he was to write for fourteen years. These last two included Give Unto the Lord, which was commissioned by, and dedicated to, the organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir George Martin MVO MusD, for a festival to mark the two hundredth anniversary of the Sons of the Clergy in St Paul's Cathedral on 30 April, 1914. A setting of Psalm 29 scored for chorus, orchestra and organ, it is an exuberant work, in marked contrast to O Harken Thou.

On 15 April 1914, Elgar wrote to his friend, the Worcester Cathedral Organist, Ivor Atkins, enclosing "the new anthem – it wd do well for yr Sunday with full orch. – thunderstorms and drums". "Sunday" referred to the opening service of the Worcester Festival, for the equivalent service in 1897 in Hereford the Te Deum and Benedictus was written. Atkins did not use it, to Elgar's offended disappointment, and nor did he use it in lieu of a new work for the Worcester Festival in 1920.

The form is not conventional or cyclical – the episodes are set each according to their mood. The outer sections are based in E flat major and the middle section in B minor, the latter being the key of the Violin Concerto, and there are some resemblances (as there were between the Concerto and Great is the Lord). As John Allison (in Edward Elgar: *Sacred Music*, Border Lines, 1994) points out, some "shortcomings" alongside the "notable traits" exist: "stock gestures ... suggest that his heart was not quite in it".

*Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
the God of glory thundereth:
it is the Lord that ruleth the sea.
The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation;
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon;
yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire,
the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness
and strippeth the forests bare.*

*In his temple doth every one speak of His glory.
The Lord sitteth above the water-flood
and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.
The Lord shall give strength unto His people;
the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.*

Fear not, O Land (Harvest Anthem) (1914)

At the same time as Give unto the Lord, and after the labour required to produce the Violin Concerto, the Second Symphony, The Music Makers, The Crown of India Suite and Falstaff, Elgar's energies turned in 1914 to composing seven part-songs, four songs for solo voice and

a second anthem, the last Church music he was to write for fourteen years. This was the "Harvest Anthem SATB for Parish Choirs" Fear not, O Land, for Novello's Octavo Series for Church Choirs, indicating that it was technically for the amateurs of his early church experience rather than for the professionals for whom his later and larger religious works were composed. Whatever the intended market, Novello's offered 50 guineas for the copyright to publish in 1914 – a large sum for a piece to which Elgar did not see fit to ascribe an opus number. He did however dedicate it to Sir George Martin, M.V.O., Mus.D.

It is a setting for SATB and organ of verses from the Book of Joel and, harking back to the usual form of his early works, the piece is in simple ternary form, the confident outer sections framing a more meditative central section.

*Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice,
for the Lord will do great things.*

*Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field:
for the pastures of the wilderness do spring,
for the tree beareth the fruit,
the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.*

*Be glad, then, ye children of Zion,
and rejoice in the Lord your God.*

*The floors shall be full of wheat,
and ye shall eat in plenty,
and praise the Name of the Lord your God,
that hath dealt wondrously with you.
Amen.*

I Sing the Birth (1928)

Words by Ben Jonson (1572 –1637)

The carol I Sing the Birth – An Hymn on the Nativity of my Saviour is a setting of a poem by Ben Jonson. It was published in 1928, and was written for Christmas at Tiddington, the house on the river near Stratford upon Avon that Elgar occupied for a while. Elgar dedicated it "To my friend The Rev. Harcourt B S Fowler, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire".

After some wrangling over money with Novello, his publisher since the days when he was still an unknown Worcestershire musician, he broke with them in 1924. Thereafter, he was to use a range of publishers with Novello being offered nothing more than three further part-songs, including this carol completed on 30 October 1928. They offered 15 guineas for the copyright, over which there was no wrangling.

Written for unaccompanied SATB, the style is unusual, bearing no relation to his early works for St. George's, Worcester, nor little to the later masterpieces, except the quasi-plainsong parts of The Dream of Gerontius. In fact, it harks back to much older styles, with each of the three soloists giving a long unaccompanied single voice line, interspersed with slow modal alleluias from the choir.

The Royal Choral Society under Malcolm Sargent gave the first performance in London's Royal Albert Hall on 10 December 1928. It was also given a few days later at Evensong on Boxing Day in Worcester Cathedral under his old friend and the Cathedral organist, Ivor Atkins.

*I sing the birth was born to-night,
the author both of life and light;
the angels so did sound it.
And like the ravish'd shepherds said,
who saw the light, and were afraid,
yet search'd, and true they found it.*

*The Son of God, th'eternal king,
that did us all salvation bring,
and freed our soul from danger.
He whom the whole world could not take,
the Word, which heaven and earth did make,
was now laid in a manger.*

*The Father's wisdom will'd it so,
the Son's obedience knew no No,
both wills were in one stature.
And, as that wisdom had decreed,
the Word was now made flesh indeed,
and took on him our nature.*

*What comfort by him do we win,
Who made himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory!
To see this babe, all innocence;
a martyr born in our defence:
can man forget the story?
Alleluia*

Good Morrow (1929)

Words by George Gascoigne (1525?-1577)

Elgar's other late ventures into the part-song medium were commemorative works. After 1924, when he broke with Novello's, Elgar was to use a range of publishers with, ironically, Novello's being offered nothing more than three further part-songs, including *Good Morrow*, written to commemorate King George V's recovery from a severe illness in 1929.

Henry Walford Davies, organist of St. George's Chapel Windsor, wrote to Elgar on 6 June 1929 asking for "such a work we could sing to the King and record for public consumption". Elgar described the result as "A simple carol for His Majesty's recovery. First performed by the St. George's Choir at their annual concert 9th December 1929". He conducted that first performance which was also broadcast.

Good Morrow

*You that have spent the silent night
In sleep and quiet rest,
And joy to see the cheerful light
That riseth in the east;
Now clear your voice, now cheer your heart,
Come help me now to sing:
Each willing wight, come bear a part,
To praise the heav'nly King.*

*And you whom care in prison keeps,
Or sickness doth suppress,
Or secret sorrow breaks your sleep,
Or dolours do distress;
Yet bear a part in doleful wise,
Yea, think it good accord
And an acceptable sacrifice,
Each sprite to praise the Lord.*

*The little birds which sing so sweet
Are like the angels' voice,
Which render God his praises meet
And teach us to rejoice:
And as they more esteem that mirth
That dread the night's annoy,
So much we deem our days on earth
But hell to heav'nly joy.*

*Unto which joys for us to attain,
God grant us all his grace,
And send us, after worldly pain,
In heaven to have a place,
Where we may still enjoy that light,
Which never shall decay:
Lord, for thy mercy, lend us might
To see that joyful day.*

*The rainbow bending in the sky,
Bedeck'd with sundry hues,
Is like the seat of God on high,
And seems to tel these news:
That as thereby He promisèd
To drown the world in no more,
So by the blood which Christ hath shed,
He will our health restore.*