

A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

for S.A.T.B. voices, accompanied

Words by
WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

Music by
EUGENE BUTLER

Flowing (♩ = ca. 76-80)

ACCOMP.

mp *cresc.* *mf*

4

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

5 *unis.* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

O ——— for a clos — er walk with

mp *cresc. poco a poco*

unis.

mp *cresc. poco a poco*

7

mf

God, ——— a clos - er walk with God, a calm and

mf

mf

10

mp unis.

heav'n - ly

frame,

A

*mp unis.**mp*

13

*cresc. poco a poco**mf*

light, a light to shine up-on the road that

*cresc. poco a poco**mf**cresc. poco a poco**mf*

16

leads me to the Lamb!

19 20 Slightly faster
mp unis.

Where is the bless - ed - ness I knew when

Slightly faster
mp

22

first I saw the Lord? _____ *mf unis.*

Where is the soul - re - fresh - ing

mf

25 *rit.*

view of Je - sus and His Word? _____

rit.

(b)

(b)

28 **Tempo I**

cresc. poco a poco

mp unis.

O _____ for a clos - er walk with God, _____, a clos - er

cresc. poco a poco

mp unis.

Tempo I

mp cresc. poco a poco

31

mf

walk with God that leads me to the Lamb!

mf

mf

35

mp

Re

mp

Re

38

turn — O ho-ly Dove, re - turn, sweet mes - sen-ger of rest! — For -

turn O Dove, re - turn, sweet mes - sen-ger of rest!

mp (keyboard may double voices as needed)

42

give — the sins that — made you mourn, that drove you from my

45

breast. —

mp *cresc.*

48 *poco rit.* *mf* So shall my walk be Ah *a tempo mp* *unis.*

51 close, be close with God, a clos - er walk with God,

54 *mf* Calm, se - rene my frame, So pur - er light shall Ah *a tempo mp* *unis.*

57 Ah the *mf*

mark, shall mark the road that leads me, road that leads, that

60 *dim.* *poco rit. to end* *p*

leads me to the Lamb.

dim. *p*

poco rit. to end *p*

The musical score is for a three-part setting (Soprano, Alto, and Bass/Tenor). It begins at measure 57 with the lyrics 'Ah the' and continues through measure 60 with 'leads me to the Lamb.' The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *dim.*, and *p*, and tempo instructions like *poco rit. to end*. The notation features various musical symbols including notes, rests, and slurs.

A Closer Walk with God is a general anthem that may be especially appropriate for late Epiphany or early Lent. Suggested corresponding lectionary readings include Psalm 15, Micah 6:1-8, Matthew 5:1-12, and 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. One basic homiletical theme is the humble surrender of our will to walk in the light of God's vision.

In rehearsal, create a vocalise in which the singers crescendo very gradually from piano to forte and back again. Next, instruct the singers to perform mm. 5-8 on a neutral syllable such as "noo," carefully shading the dynamics as indicated. To insure uniform ensemble and prevent the tied notes from slowing the tempo, rehearse the same measures pulsing every eighth note in exact alignment with the accompaniment. This technique may be expanded to include the entire anthem and may be especially effective at cadence points such as m. 27 and in the a cappella section (mm. 37-45), where the omission of the flowing accompaniment may cause the tempo to slow unnecessarily. To achieve better balance in the final verse, assign only a few sopranos to sing the descant ("Ah" in mm. 50-53 and 56-57), with the remaining sopranos joining the altos in those measures.

Eugene Butler is Director of Choral Activities and Music Theory at Johnson County Community College and Director of Music and the Arts at Valley View United Methodist Church, both in Overland Park, Kansas. The recipient of a Master's Degree in Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary in New York and a Doctorate in Composition from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Dr. Butler has over 600 published compositions.

