



The Conscience Pure

*Three Quaker texts appropriate to the mid-winter season
for soprano voice and guitar*

Nigel Morgan

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About the music

The Quakers, known today as The Religious Society of Friends, have their origins in the Puritan sects of 17th century Britain. They hold to no creed, they have no liturgy or established doctrine, their religious services are meetings held in silence. What might be said to constitute a theology is a rich tradition of testimonial writing of personal experience; it is from this tradition three texts have been chosen, one from the late 17th, one from the mid 19th and one from the 20th. The texts are linked by their association with the mid winter season when Quakers, who in earlier times did not recognize Christmas as a special day, nevertheless use the mid winter festival as an opportunity for meditation and reflection.

The Conscience Pure is taken from the words of the Quaker mystic Isaac Penington (1616 – 1679) whose writings were published in 4 volumes in 1681. This text was found in a collection of intergenerational readings brought together for the Christmas Gatherings of Manasquan Meeting in New Jersey, USA.

The Joy of Giving is a short poem by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 – 1892). Largely known today for his hymn tune *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* he has claimed a place as one of the most prolific of Quaker writers to use poetry as a medium of testimony. Whittier was an ardent abolitionist who enjoyed much popular regard during his lifetime. His poetry is still the common currency of older Quakers who were often required to learn his inspirational verses at children's meeting. This is one of Whittier's shortest and best.

Music in the Heart is a benediction from *The Work of Christmas* by Dr Howard Thurman, a theologian and civil-rights leader. He was Dean of Theology at the University of Boston in 1940s. Although not by Quaker Thurman's poem looks at the aftermath of Christ's birth that those in the Religious Society of Friends have come to find inspirational and appropriate.

Performance Notes

The singer and guitarist might adopt a presentation and delivery that reflects something of the Quaker tradition. If appropriate and possible there could be a period of silence before and after each song. A performing score in portrait is available. This contains comprehensive fingering for the guitarist to realise the many resonant effects called for in the score.

The Conscience Pure

The main thing
is to keep the conscience pure:
Wait till the spirit leads.

Know and follow the guide,
receive from him the light
whereby to walk
and not take things for truths
because others see them as truths.

Keep the conscience pure:
Wait till the spirit makes them
Manifest,

nor run into worships,
duties or practices
because others are led that way.

The main thing
is to keep the conscience pure:
Wait till the spirit leads.

Isaac Pennington

The Joy of Giving

Somehow, not only for Christmas
But all the year through,
The joy that you give others
Is the joy that comes back to you.
And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to you glad.

John Greenleaf Whittier

Music in the Heart

When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flock
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild the nations
To bring peace among brothers
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

The Conscience Pure

with discernment ♩ = 50

Soprano

Guitar

The Main thing

6

is to keep the con - science pure wait till the Spi - rit leads. Know and fo - llow the

10

guide re - ceive from him the light where - by to walk and not take things for

15 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

truths be-cause o-thers see them as truths. Keep the con - science pure:

22

Wait till the Spi - rit makes them ma - ni - fest Nor run in - to wor - ships, du - ties, pra - cti - ces

27

be- cause o-thers are led that way. The main thing is to keep the con-science pure

32

wait till the Spi-rit leads.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, starting in 4/4 time and changing to 3/4 and then 2/4. It contains the lyrics "wait till the Spi-rit leads." followed by rests. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, starting in 4/4 time and changing to 3/4 and then 2/4. It features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and a section with a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#).

The Joy of Giving

in a right spirit ♩ = 130

Soprano

Some -how, not on -ly for Christ -mas But all the year

Detailed description: This system contains the first five measures of the piece. The Soprano part is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The lyrics are: "Some -how, not on -ly for Christ -mas But all the year". The Guitar part is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music features a mix of 6/8 and 5/8 time signatures. The guitar accompaniment includes chords and melodic lines that support the vocal melody.

6

through the joy that you give o - thers is the joy that comes back to you

allargando

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 through 11. The Soprano part continues with the lyrics: "through the joy that you give o - thers is the joy that comes back to you". The music is marked *allargando*. The guitar accompaniment features more complex chordal textures and melodic flourishes. The time signature remains 6/8.

12 *a tempo*

Some -how, not on -ly for Christ -mas But all the year through the

Detailed description: This system contains measures 12 through 16. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics: "Some -how, not on -ly for Christ -mas But all the year through the". The music is marked *a tempo*. The guitar accompaniment continues with the same style as the previous systems. The time signature is 6/8.

18

joy that you give o - thers is the joy that comes back to you And the more you spend in

23

ble - ssing the poor and lone -ly and sad the more of your heart's po - sse - ssing re -

28

turns to you re-turns to you glad. And the more you spend in ble - ssing the

33

poor and lone-ly and sad the more of your heart's po- -sse -ssing re - turns to you re - turns

This musical system contains five measures. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 5/8 to 6/8 and back to 5/8. The lyrics are: "poor and lone-ly and sad the more of your heart's po- -sse -ssing re - turns to you re - turns".

38

to you glad.

This musical system contains three measures. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 5/8 to 6/8 and back to 5/8. The lyrics are: "to you glad.".

Music in the Heart

with compassion ♩ = 50

Soprano

Guitar

When the song of the an-gels is stilled When the star in the

♯ to G
○ to C

5

sky is gone When the kings and prin-ces are home When the shep-herds are back with their flocks

10

The work of Christ -mas be-gins: To find the lost To heal the bro-ken To feed the hun-gry

15

To re - lease the pri - so - ner To re - build the na - tions to bring peace a - mong bro - thers

19

To make mu - sic in the heart To make mu - sic in the

23

heart

for Alice

Composed on St Lucy's Day 2011