

O Lord, look down from Heaven

JONATHAN BATTISHILL (1738-1801)

Edited by Christopher Maxim



Introduction

Since the autograph of this work is not known to survive, the prime source is a handsomely engraved volume that dates from some three years after the composer's death. The title page reads:

Six Anthems | *and TEN CHANTS* | Composed by the late | Mr Jonathan Battishill, | Organist of Christ Church, | Newgate Street, | S^t Clement[']s Eastcheap | and formerly of S^t Paul's Cathedral. | DEDICATED[,] BY | PERMISSION, TO THE | Hon^{ble} George Pomeroy | By JOHN PAGE, | Vicar Choral of S^t Paul's Cathedral | *FROM THE* | Original Manuscript in his Possession | London. | Printed for the Editor N^o19, Warwick Square, | Newgate Street, | 1804. | Price 1^L 1^S – | *Gale & Butler, 50, Crooked Lane*

The engraver is identified at the bottom of page 102 (i.e. at the end of the volume)

Engrav'd by J. Balls, No 8, Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall.

The anthem *O Lord, look down from Heaven* is found on pages 37-45 and is dated 'June 5. 1765'. It is headed:

FULL ANTHEM. For Seven Voices, 63^d Chapter | of Isaiah, Verse 5th

The text is actually drawn from the 15th verse of Isaiah 63.

The first 'modern' edition of this piece was the work of Sir George Martin (1844-1916) (GM) and published by Novello. The same company issued a new edition in 1968, this time by Watkins Shaw (1911-1996) (WS). GM's edition provided dynamic and other expression markings in the vocal parts, and thickened the texture of the organ accompaniment in places, while also calling for use of the pedals. WS retained almost all of the marks of expression 'so suitably added by Martin', but presented the organ part in a manuals-only form that is very close to that of the source. At first sight, the WS edition appears to be a thorough-going scholarly edition based on the prime source. Further investigation reveals, however, that there are several places where his reading follows GM rather than John Page (JP), whose edition may be assumed to be the closest thing we have to Battishill's own intentions in the absence of an autograph score.

The purpose of this new edition is threefold:

1. To provide musicians with a clear and practical performing score;
2. To present both the music and words in a form that is faithful to the prime source, while correcting its errors;
3. To put forth what the editor believes to be Battishill's original intentions for the Treble parts in bars 38-41, it being the his contention that JP's version (which was followed by both GM and WS) is a misreading of Battishill's manuscript. The editor's reasoning is presented in his article 'Where is thy zeal?: Jonathan Battishill, his anthem *O Lord, look down from heaven*, and a possible error in its musical text', *Organists' Review* (February, 2009), pp. 31-37. The change made by the editor is noted in the Editorial Commentary at the end of this edition.

Front cover: engraving of Battishill as a young man by Silvester Harding, after L. Sullivan.

Back cover: engraving of Battishill as an older man by J. Chapman, after Rose Emma Drummond.

32 *[cresc.]* *[ff]* *[div.]*

of thy Glo - ry:

[cresc.] *[ff]* *[ff]*

and of thy Glo - ry: where is thy zeal, thy zeal

[cresc.] *[ff]* *[ff]*

and of thy Glo - ry: where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy

[cresc.] *[ff]* *[ff]*

and of thy Glo - - ry, and of thy Glo - -

6 6 5 3 4 3 5 3

p. 40

38 *[Tr I]* *[ff]*

where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy strength, thy zeal

[Tr II] *[ff]*

where is thy

and thy strength, where, where, O

strength, and thy strength, where is thy zeal, thy zeal, thy

ry:

4 5 # 6 5 9 8 7 5 5 5 5 4 3 5

43

and thy strength, where is thy
 zeal, thy zeal and thy strength, thy strength, thy zeal and thy
 Lord, where is thy zeal and thy
 zeal and thy strength, where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy
 where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy

— 5 5 6 — 7 6 — 7 6 — 7 4 — 7 #
 6 4

48 [p. 41]

zeal, where is thy strength,
 strength, where O where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy strength,
 strength, where is thy zeal and thy strength, where
 strength, where is thy zeal, thy zeal and thy strength, where
 strength, where is thy zeal and thy strength, where

4 [3] 8 7 3 6 7 6 — 7 7 7 8 8
 7 8 [3] — 7 4 # 3 4

75

thy mer - cies to - wards me, thy mer - cies

thy mer - cies to - wards me, thy mer - cies

thy mer - cies to - wards me, thy mer - cies

[a2]
thy mer - cies to - wards me, thy mer - cies

thy mer - cies to - wards me, thy mer - cies

6 6 $\flat 7$ $\flat 6$ 5 $\sharp 4$ 6 $\flat 4$
4 3 3 4 6 4 3

81

to - wards me? are they re - strain'd,

to - wards me? are they re - strain'd,

to - wards me? are they re - strain'd, [div.]

to - wards me? are they re - strain'd, [div.]

to - wards me? are they re - strain'd,

[p. 44]
[p] are they re - strain'd,

[p] are they re - strain'd,

[p] are they re - strain'd,

[p] are they re - strain'd,

[p] are they re - strain'd,

$\sharp 4$ 6 6 $\flat 6$ 5 $\sharp 4$
 $\flat 3$ 6 7 2
6

88

are they re - strain'd,

[CT I] are they re - strain'd,

[CT II] are they re - strain'd, [cresc.]

[T I] are they re - strain'd, [cresc.] are

are they re - strain'd, are they re -

[T II] are they re - strain'd, [cresc.]

are they re - strain'd, are they re -

are they re - strain'd, are they re -

6 7 3 5 4 5 4 # 8 7

p. 45

95

[Tr I] are they re - strain'd,

[Tr II] are they re - strain'd,

are they re - strain'd,

they re - strain'd, are they re - strain'd

strain'd, re - strain'd, are they re - strain'd,

strain'd, re - strain'd, are they,

strain'd, are they re - strain'd re - strain'd,

9 7 5 4 6 7 #

4 6 6# 4 5 #3 5 5 6 4 6 6 7 6 #

Editorial procedure

- C clefs, found in the Contra Tenore (*CT*) and Tenore (*T*) parts, and occasionally in the organ part, have been replaced with the usual modern G and F clefs.
- Original barring and note-values have been retained, including the double-length bars towards the end. These, as WS suggests, 'may well be an indication to broaden the style'.
- Bar numbers are editorial.
- The numbers in boxes above the Treble (*Tr*) stave indicate the page in the source on which is found the music that follows.
- The small vertical lines that appear above bar-lines of the *Tr* stave indicate the end of a system in the source.
- To assist performers, some editorial dynamic markings have been included, together with a *rall.* at the end. The only performance direction in the source is 'Supplicatory', which appears at the beginning, between the *Tr* and *CT* staves and also between the two staves of the organ part.
- Slurs and ties are original, unless they have a small vertical line through them. Slurs and ties that appear in this edition but not in those of GM and WS were omitted by them.
- Accidentals (including cautionary accidentals) are original, unless in brackets. The source contains a few redundant accidentals; these have been omitted.
- When voice-parts divide in the source, they are usually written on two staves. The two exceptions to this procedure are the division of the Bass (*B*) in bars 25-27 and the division of the *Tr* in bars 98-101. In both these cases we have followed the source and written the divided voices on one stave. The divided *T* parts in bars 71-74 are notated on two staves in the source, but we have notated them on one stave since the division is brief and it is perfectly clear which voice sings which notes.
- The spelling of the text follows the source, but the punctuation is editorial. The only punctuation in the source is a full stop at the end.

The organ part

In the source, the organ part is notated on two staves. From bar 8 onwards, the organ bass is figured. The absence of figures in the first seven bars might indicate that Battishill himself wrote out the accompaniment in full for that portion of the anthem and then, having established the style, left the rest as a figured bass to be realised by the player. WS, like GM, omitted the figures in his edition on the grounds that they were 'quite redundant' owing to the completeness of the organ part. We, however, have provided the figured bass as it appears in the source, retaining its notational inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies, but correcting errors (see the Editorial Commentary for details).

The organ part is laid out in the source so that, to an extent, the notes written on the upper of the two staves are to be played by the right hand, and the notes on the lower of the two by the left. This principle does not *always* hold true, however, and there are a few instances where notes that are definitely or probably to be played by the right hand are notated on the lower organ stave and *vice versa*, apparently to minimise the use of ledger lines. For example, bars 1-6 are written on one stave in the source (in alto C clef, after the first note, which is in the bass F clef). In the present edition, these notes have been distributed over the two staves of the organ part. Thus, the organ part as presented in this new edition seeks (on the one hand) to present it as closely as possible to the way it appears in the source, while (on the other), making it easy for the modern organist to read. The lines that show movement of the 'voices' between staves are editorial, as are the suggestions where the right and should play notes written on the lower stave and *vice versa*.

WS commented in his introductory notes that 'It should be realised that the original organ part does not purport to shew logical part-writing in the matter of a modern short score, but only what notes to play. An organ accompaniment is, of course, *obbligato*, not optional. If organists wish to amplify what is given here, that is for them to decide.' These words remain true. It is possible, for example, that organists of Battishill's day doubled the bass an octave lower in certain passages, either by hand or using pedal pull-downs. Apt moments include the climax of bars 71-82, the long pedal point of from bar 91 to (the beginning of) bar 106, and the last bar (which might explain why, in the source, the **D** in the organ bass in the penultimate bar is not tied to the **D** in the final bar). If the modern organist wishes to employ the pedals to achieve the octave doubling, the pedals should be coupled to the manual and played an octave lower than written, rather than using a 16' pedal stop. If the editorial suggestions as to how to divide the notes between the hands are followed, it will be found that the accompaniment fits under the fingers comfortably without the assistance of pedals to play the bass at written pitch (though freeing the left hand is useful at page turns).

Editorial commentary

¹² / organ / lower stave: C³ clef.

⁷¹ / organ / lower stave: Redundant minim **G** (unison with the semibreve **G** on upper stave) omitted.

7² / organ / lower stave: Bass clef.

7² / organ / lower stave: The two crotchets in the bass are slurred in the source.

8²-10¹ / *B* / GM and WS have 'from heaven'. However, the underlay is correct in bars 19-20 of those editions.

15¹ / organ / lower stave: C³ clef.

18¹ / organ / lower stave: Redundant minim **G** (unison with the semibreve **G** on upper stave) omitted; small notes on lower and upper staves added (*cf* bar 6).

18¹ / organ / lower stave: Crotchet **G** added (*cf* bar 6).

18² / organ / lower stave: Bass clef.

21² / fig. bass: The sharp is *below* the **3** in the source.

25 / organ / lower stave / upper voice: Semibreve written as two tied minims in source.

26 / *CT*: Dotted minim **C** written as a minim tied to a crotchet in source.

28¹ / organ / upper stave: **E flat** misprinted as **D** in source.

32² / organ / upper stave: **C** misprinted as **D** in source.

34 / *B*: GM and WS place '-ry' of 'Glory' on the minim **B flat**; and place 'and' on the two crotchet beats of beat 2. This (arguably) works better in performance – but it is not what is in the source.

38²-41¹ / *Tr1*: JP, GM and WS all give these notes to *Tr2*. The reasons why we are convinced this is a misreading of Battishill's manuscript and why we have therefore assigned this passage to *Tr1* are presented in detail in the *Organists' Review* article cited in the Introduction to this edition (above).

41 / organ / upper stave: **D** in the lowest voice misprinted as **C** in source.

48¹ / fig. bass: **4** almost invisible in source.

48² / fig. bass: **3** appears to be an almost invisible **4**.

61 / *B*: In the source the two bass parts are still on separate staves (until bar 63²), though they are singing the same notes. It is possible – likely, even – that, in the autograph, the divided voices were written on one stave (see the editor's article cited above). Thus the garbled text in bar 61, *B1*, 'thy zeal is thy zeal', found in JP, GM and WS, might not have been the composer's intention. The editor has simply deleted 'is' on the second beat of bar 61 of *B1* and added a slur on beat 1 so that the text makes sense.

61¹ / fig. bass: The line above the **3** is editorial. In the source there is a natural above the **3**.

71-74: This is the text set by Battishill: it comes from the Authorised (King James) version of the Bible. GM altered the rhythm of Battishill's music to make it fit the words 'where is thy zeal and thy strength'. WS replaced 'sounding' with 'yearning' (taken from the Revised Version), and also suggested that 'bowels' could be replaced with the Revised Standard Version's 'heart'.

71-74: The two *T* parts are written on separate staves in the source.

73 / *CT*: GM and WS give two minims.

76² / organ / upper stave: **G** not in source (added editorially to show destination of the preceding rising figure).

82¹ / organ / lower stave: Crotchet-quaver slurred in source.

84-86 / *CT*: In the source *CT2* has rests in bars 84-86. GM and WS therefore give this phrase to *CT1* only. However, comparison with how JP handles division of the voices on two staves elsewhere in the piece suggests that *all CTs* should sing this phrase. In the source, rather than writing an identical passage on two staves when parts divide later in the system, JP writes the passage before the division in the upper part only with rests in the lower part. The singer(s) of the lower part are expected to sing from the upper stave (ignoring the lower line with rests in it) and jump to the stave below at the appropriate point. In illustration: *B2* has rests in bars 53-56 (i.e. from the start of the system), plus a crotchet rest on the first beat of bar 57. The *B2* part is notated from the second crotchet beat of bar 57, on the words 'and thy'. Similarly, *T2* has rests in bars 69-70, i.e. from the start of the system until the *T* parts divide in bar 71. For the lower voice to remain silent during the rests in both these instances was clearly not JP's intention.

85² / organ / upper stave: Flat before **A** in omitted source.

98² / *CT2*: Sharp before **F** omitted in source.

98² / organ / upper stave: Sharp before **F** omitted in source.

98-101: GM and WS write the divided *Tr* parts on separate staves.

100 / *CT1*: **B flat** misprinted as **A** in the source (GM and WS correct without comment).

101 / *Tr*: GM and WS give *Tr1* the **D** and *Tr2* the **F sharp**, but the source does not indicate that the parts should cross. (Either way there are consecutive octaves with *T1*.)

101 / *CT2*: **A** and (lower) **E flat** in the source – i.e. two notes in the same voice. GM and WS omit the **A** and substitute **D** for **E flat** without comment. We, however, have omitted the **E flat** (which does not belong to the chord) and kept the **A**. **A** sung by both *CT* voices at this moment balances the chord better than **D**, since the same **D** is also simultaneously sung by *T2* and *B*. (The stray **E flat** in the source may have been caused by the engraver copying in error the **D** found in *Tr2* in the same bar, **E flat** being fourth line of the alto C clef, and **D** being on the fourth line of the treble G clef.)

104 / *T1*: Source has minim **D** followed by minim **G**, with crotchet appoggiatura **A** before the **G**. This causes consecutive unisons with the notes in the *B*. We have followed GM and WS's readings, though to sing two minims (as in the source), but *without* the appoggiatura may be found preferable. (Singing a minim **G** on the second beat of the bar will clash with the appoggiatura **A** in the *B*: its acceptability will be a matter of personal taste.)

104 / *B*: GM and WS write four crotchets rather than the two minims with crotchet appoggiaturas found in the source.

104 / organ / upper stave: Editorial appoggiatura **F sharp** (from *CT2*) does not appear in WS.

109 / organ / upper stave: Editorial appoggiatura **F** (natural) (from *CT1*) is included by WS.

Battishill's biography

In the prime source, before the Index, there is an article titled: 'MEMOIRS of the late Mr. JONATHAN BATTISHILL, | COMMUNICATED BY | DR. BUSBY¹.' From that, the following biographical information is distilled.

Battishill's grandfather, also Jonathan, was rector of the parish of Sheepwash, near Hatherleigh in Devon. He had two sons, Jonathan and John. Jonathan junior served his clerkship as an attorney at law in London. He married Mary Leverton of Great Torrington and their only surviving child was Jonathan Battishill the composer, born in London in May, 1738. In 1747, Battishill entered the choir of St. Paul's, under [William] Savage and, when his voice changed, became his articulated pupil. The young man was studious and much given to practising the organ. He was a noted extemporiser and had among his 'particular friends and admirers' Arne, Stanley and Boyce, for whom he deputised at the Chapel Royal (St. James's).

Battishill gained for himself a reputation as a composer of secular songs and he played the harpsichord at Covent Garden Theatre. There he met a Miss Davies whom he married. Shortly after this, he became organist of the united parishes of St. Clement, Eastcheap² and St. Martin Orgar³, later also being appointed to Christchurch, Newgate Street⁴. About the same time, a set of twelve airs met with such success that he found himself collaborating with Michael Arne, son of Thomas Arne. They composed the music to *Almena*, an English Opera that was produced by Garrick at the Drury Lane Theatre in about 1764. Despite his success in the theatre and the demands of his pupils, Battishill continued to compose 'cathedral' music and his setting of *Call to remembrance* was particularly admired. He also composed catches and glees; and, in about 1770, he was awarded the gold medal of the Nobleman's Catch Club for his glee for three voices, *Underneath this myrtle shade*.

As the years went by, Battishill composed less. Busby attributes this to his dedication to his library of between six and seven thousand volumes, his pupils and his 'festive friends'. He blames this 'division of his time' for 'the late decline of that promptitude and warmth of imagination which had formerly been inseparable from his performance on the Organ. Yet he sometimes, even to the last, recovered a gleam of his native fire, and in finely-conceived fugues poured forth all the powers of harmony and responsive melody.'

In 1801, Battishill's health was in serious decline. Busby links this with 'some professional disappointment' and the loss of a close friend. By the autumn, Battishill was confined to his chamber. He tried sea bathing and the air of Margate, but this only made him worse. On medical advice he took apartments in Islington, where he died on Thursday, 10th December, 1801, aged 63 years. He was buried, in accordance with his wishes, in the crypt of St. Paul's, near the grave of Boyce.

More recent writers have identified rather less coyly the reasons for the waning of Battishill's musical powers. From the mid-1770s, 'he took increasingly to over-indulgence in drink, for which he had always had a propensity'⁵. Perhaps Busby's term 'festive friends' is code for 'fellow drinkers'? The reason for the alcoholism might be attributable to the failure of his marriage. Battishill's wife eventually lived openly with the actor Anthony Webster, with whom she went to Ireland in 1776, dying in Cork the following year. The composer did not, however, resign himself to a life of enforced bachelorhood and, from about 1775, apparently lived with a woman who, on his death, called herself Ann Battishill. The 'professional disappointment' to which Busby alludes is likely to be the fact that Battishill was not made organist of St Paul's on the death of John Jones in 1796 – presumably because he drank too much and possibly because of his domestic arrangements.

Busby tells of Battishill's phenomenal memory: 'what he once read he scarcely ever forgot. [...] His reminiscence with respect to dates and other circumstances was truly astonishing. He always knew where and with whom he had dined on any particular day, however, distant, and could even recollect the subjects of conversation. If he once heard any music, it was indelibly written in this mind'. Of Battishill's compositions, Busby expresses the view that they 'were marked with a peculiar strength of idea, great force and justness of expression, a masterly disposition, and a happy contrivance in the parts.' He concludes with a touching description of the man: 'Among his amiable qualities are to be reckoned his great good-nature, unlimited generosity of temper, tender humanity towards real merit, wherever he found it, and a manliness of mind that rendered him superior to the littleness of professional jealousy.'

¹ Thomas Busby (1755-1838): organist, composer and writer on musical topics.

² Rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire, this church still stands. The upper part of the case (including the pipe façade) of the organ that Battishill played forms the case of the present instrument.

³ This church was destroyed in the Great Fire – hence the parishes being united.

⁴ Also known as Christ Church Greyfriars, it was rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire. It was bombed in WWII. Its tower is now a residential property, while the ruins of the remainder of the building are a public garden.

⁵ Peter Ward Jones, 'Battishill, Jonathan', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, Vol. II, ed by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp 912-913. The information that follows in this paragraph is drawn from this *New Grove* article.

