

## How Blest Are They

by  
Henry Purcell

SATB and Accompaniment  
Last Sunday of Epiphany; All Saints' Day; General

*How Blest Are They* is an abbreviated version of the motet *Beati omnes qui timent Dominum* by Henry Purcell (1659–1695). Purcell's original is a "verse anthem" in which sections for 4-part chorus alternate with sections for solo voices, singing alone or in combination. My arrangement here omits the sections for solo voices and renders the text (Psalm 128:1,4) in English.

Purcell's wrote *Beati omnes* for SSAB choir. In this SATB arrangement I have at a few places altered notes or interchanged vocal lines to keep each of the four parts within its accustomed range. I have suggested metronome and interpretative marks within brackets.

Purcell concludes his motet by repeating *alleluia* insistently throughout twenty-one measures (in this shortened version, *hallelujah* is repeated throughout the final seven measures). This ending makes the anthem an ideal musical offering for the Last Sunday of Epiphany, when *hallelujahs* are sung and then liturgically laid aside for the season of Lent, to be revived at Easter. The anthem's text makes it also appropriate for All Saints' Day.

To remind ourselves of just how uniquely marvelous Purcell's music is, we might play slowly the cadence from the final chord of ms.8 to the first chord of ms.9; or play the final chord of ms.12 (with the tenors' E-flat) and then let it resolve into ms.13; or play and hold the opening chord of the *Hallelujah* section at the end. If we then play or sing separately each voice part as it passes through these same measures, we hear how naturally every vocal line flows amidst Purcell's peculiar and piquant harmonies.

It makes me glad that the Episcopal Calendar of Lesser Feasts has seen fit to designate July 28 as a festival day in honor of Purcell, along with Bach and Handel.

Albert Blackwell  
February 27, 2012

# How Blest Are They

(Psalm 128:1,4)

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

arr. Albert Blackwell

Psalm 128:1,4

[♩ = 80]

Soprano  
How blest — are they who trust God and wor - ship him, how

Alto  
How blest — are they who trust God and wor - ship him, how

Tenor  
How blest — are they who trust God and wor - ship him, how

Bass  
How blest are they who trust God and wor - ship him, how

Acc.  
[♩ = 80]

S  
blest — are they who trust God and wor - ship him,

A  
blest — are they who trust God and wor - ship him, who

T  
blest — are — they who trust God and wor - ship him,

B  
blest are they who trust God and wor - ship him,

6

10

S  
A  
T  
B

who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness,  
fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness, who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of  
who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness, who  
who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of

10

15

S  
A  
T  
B

who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness.  
good - ness, who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good \_\_\_\_\_ ness.  
fol - low in, who fol - low in the paths, the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness.  
good - ness, who fol - low in the paths \_\_\_\_\_ of good - ness.

15

20 [♩ = 86]

S  
Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way on them, on

A  
Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way on them, on

T  
8 Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way on them, on them that trust in him,

B  
Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way,

26 [♩ = 86]

S  
them that trust in him, on them, on them that trust in him.

A  
them that trust in him, on them, on them that trust in him.

T  
8 Lo, how God's mer - cy doth - a-bide al - way

B  
Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way, God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way,

31

S Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way, on them, on them that

A Lo, how God's mer - cy doth - a-bide al - way, on them that

T 8 Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide

B on them, on them that trust in him,

36

S trust, that trust \_\_\_\_\_ in him, on them, on

A trust, \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ him, on them, on

T 8 al - way, on them, on

B Lo, how God's mer - cy doth a-bide al - way,

41

S  
them that trust in him, on them, — on them — that trust — in

A  
them that trust in him, on them, on them — that trust — in

T  
8 them that trust in him, on them, on them that — trust in

B  
on them, on them that trust in

41

[♩ = 82]

46

S  
him. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

A  
him. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

T  
8 him. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

B  
him. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

[♩ = 82]

46

48 [']

S lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

A lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

T 8 lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

B lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le -

48 [']

50 ['] *p* ['] [*rit.*]

S lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah.

A lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah.

T 8 lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah.

B lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah, ha - le - lu - jah. Ha - le - lu - jah.

50 ['] *p* ['] [*rit.*]