

B-001: My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

This is one of several Isaac Watts hymn that adapt Psalms to common meters. It has most commonly been set to tune RESIGNATION, a traditional American folk song found in the hymnbook Southern Harmony.

Submission

Submitted By

Jim Duke

Reason for the Submission

In one of the many auditioned choirs Michael Duke participated in, one included a choral arrangement by Mack Wilberg of My Shepherd Will Supply My Need. A YouTube recording of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing the Mack Wilberg arrangement can be found [here](#). The words and music were so moving that I wanted to see if we could find the original and use it in our worship.

Research

Jim Duke did the research about this hymn.

Copyright Information

The hymn and tune are in the Public Domain.

About the Hymn

The hymn appears to have been written in 1719. This hymn is one of many where Isaac Watts adapted the psalms to fit various common meters used in hymn singing in his day. This adaptation of Psalm 23 was adapted to fit the common meter (CM - 8.6.8.6).

Sources

1. An excerpt from Isaac Watts 1719 publication "The Psalms of David: Imitated in the language of the New Testament" found in a 1740 printing is found in [Issac Watts Hymnal 1740.pdf](#)
2. An excerpt from the 1854 Southern Harmony edition that pairs the hymn with the tune RESIGNATION can be found in [Southern Harmony 1854.pdf](#)
3. An improved harmonization of the tune, together with the Lutheran text variation is found in [From Modern Lutheran Hymnal 2006.pdf](#)

Original Verses

1. My Shepherd will supply my Need;
Jehovah is his Name;
In Pastures fresh he makes me feed,
Beside the living Stream.
2. He brings my wand'ring Spirit back
When I forsake his Ways,
And leads me for his Mercy's Sake
In Paths of Truth and Grace.
3. When I walk through the Shades of Death,
Thy Presence is my Stay;
A Word of thy supporting Breath
Drives all my Fears away.
4. Thy Hand in Spite of all my Foes
Doth still my Table spread;
My Cup with Blessings overflows,

Thine Oil anoints my Head.

5. The sure Provisions of my God
Attend me all my Days;
O may thy House be mine Abode,
And all my Work be Praise!
6. There would I find a settled Rest,
(While others go and come)
No more a Stranger or a Guest,
But like a Child at Home.

Capitalization and punctuation carefully follows the original Isaac Watts publication.

Variations in the text

Besides minor modifications in capitalization and punctuation, the most significant variation is found in Lutheran hymnals where they modified the first verse by changing "will" to "you", and replacing "Jehovah is his Name" with "most holy is your name". In most places where "He" appears it has been replaced with "You".

One version omitted the 6th verse. That wouldn't work with the tune pairing typically used because two verses of the original have to be combined to form a single verse to suit the length of the tune.

Tune

The most dominant pairing of this hymn is with the traditional American tune that first appeared in Southern Harmony 1854 edition under the tune name RESIGNATION.

Researcher Recommendation

I recommend that we use the modern harmonization found in the Lutheran hymnal but use the original text. Don't follow the Capitalization scheme of Watts, but use standard modern practices.

Critical Review

During the critical review a desire to modernize the words was raised. The Lutheran hymnal words were nice, but they made some changes that deviated too much from the Psalm 23 text. After an analysis comparing the two versions (Watts, Lutheran) with Psalm 23, a third rendition that took the best of both. The recommended verses are as follows:

1. My Shepherd will supply my need;
Jehovah is His name;
in pastures fresh He makes me feed,
beside the living stream.
2. He brings my wand'ring spirit back
when I forsake His ways,
and leads me for His mercy's sake
in paths of truth and grace.
3. When I walk through the shades of death,
His presence is my stay;
one word of His supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
4. His hand in sight of all my foes
does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows,
His oil anoints my head.
5. The sure provisions of my God
attend me all my days;
O may His house be my abode,

and all my work be praise!

6. There would I find a settled rest,
(while others go and come)
no more a stranger or a guest,
but like a child at home.

Typesetting

TBD

Technical Review

TBD