

London Gallery Quire 663

Thomas Sternhold (1500–49)

How perfect is the law of God !
Psalm 19 v.7–10 & Doxology

St Martin's by William Tans'ur (1706–83)
Edited by Nicholas Markwell

[♩ = 100]

Soprano

1. How per - fect is the law of God !
2. **The Lord's com - mands are right - eous, and**
3. The fear of God is ex - cel - lent,
4. **And more to be de - sir - ed are**
5. To Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,

Alto

Tenor [Air]

1. How per - fect is the law of God !
2. **The Lord's com - mands are right - eous, and**
3. The fear of God is ex - cel - lent,
4. **And more to be de - sir - ed are**
5. To Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,

Bass

6

S

his co - ve - nant is sure,
re - joice the heart like - wise :
and e - ver doth en - dure ;
than much fine gold al - way ;
im - mor - tal glo - ry be ;

A

T

his co - ve - nant is sure,
re - joice the heart like - wise :
and e - ver doth en - dure ;
than much fine gold al - way ;
im - mor - tal glo - ry be ;

B

S
Con - vert - ing souls, and mak - ing wise *tr*
His pre - cepts are most pure, and do
The Judge - ments of the Lord al - so
The ho - ney and the ho - ney - comb
As was, and is, and shall be still,

A

T
Con - vert - ing souls, and mak - ing wise *tr*
His pre - cepts are most pure, and do
The Judge - ments of the Lord al - so
The ho - ney and the ho - ney - comb
As was, and is, and shall be still,

B

S
the sim - ple and ob - scure, -scure. *1.* *2. tr*
give light un - to the eyes, eyes.
most right - eous are and pure, pure;
are not so sweet as they, they.
to all e - ter - ni - ty, ty.

A

T
the sim - ple and ob - scure, -scure. *tr*
give light un - to the eyes, eyes.
most right - eous are and pure, pure;
are not so sweet as they, they.
to all e - ter - ni - ty, -ty.

B

William Tans'ur's tune *St Martin's* was first published in 1748 as *Brampton* in "The Royal Psalmodist Compleat", set to the current OV text. The alto part was incomplete, missing entirely in the first quarter, and the first half of the third. Tans'ur revised the melody in 1752, introducing the dotted crotchet-quaver rhythms and renaming it *St Martin's*. He made further changes in his "Melodia Sacra" of 1772, adding the trills and slightly revising the still incomplete alto part. A rather sparse figured bass was included, which indicates that a four-part texture was intended throughout, and this edition completes the alto part editorially, with reference to the figured bass provided. The original printed key is A, and Tans'ur instructs that if no organ be available, to "Set the Pitch-Pipe to Ab". As pitch was roughly a semi-tone lower in his day, G has been preferred here. Tans'ur's tune was reharmonised with minor adjustments to the melody and bass by Caleb Ashworth in his "A Collection of Tunes" of 1761, where it is renamed *Gainsborough*. His harmony is distinctly odd in a couple of places, and Tans'ur's final version of 1772 has been preferred. The small number of parallel fifths have been left uncorrected.