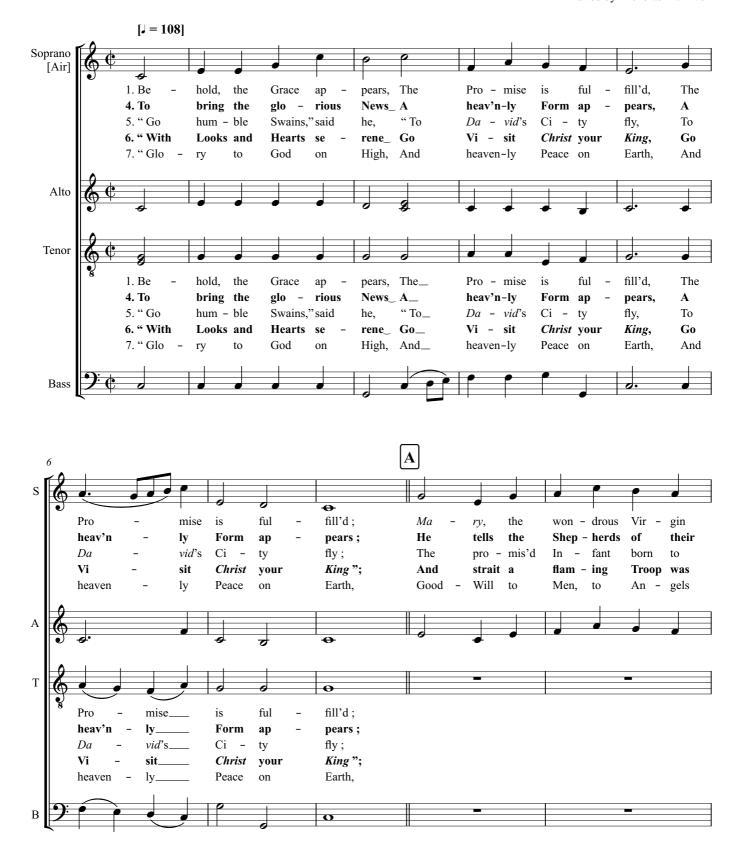
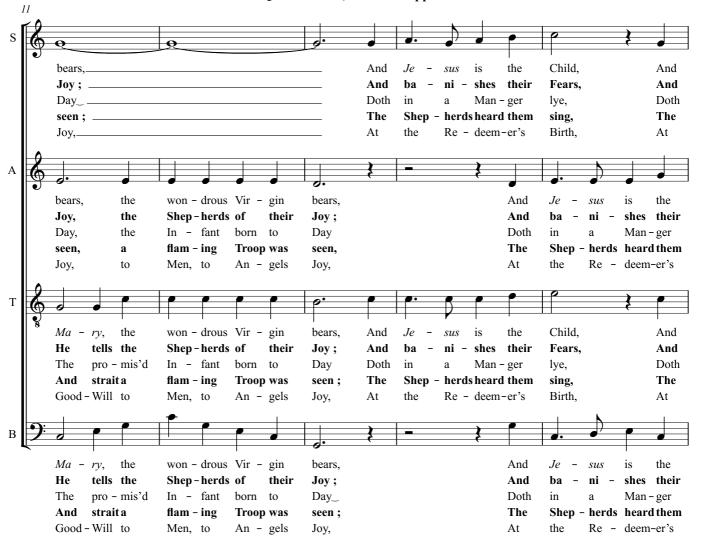
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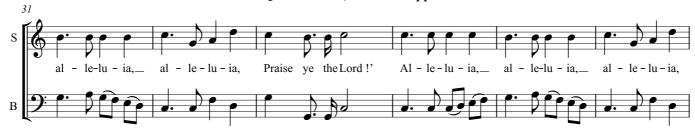
Behold, the Grace appears

Isaac Watts (1674–1748) Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1707 Back Lane by William Womack (c. 1797–1845)
Based on the arrangement by Ian Russell
Edited by Nicholas Markwell











William Womack was a Yorkshireman from Storrs, a hamlet now within the city of Sheffield. He was a farmer who also worked in the metal trade as a grinder, and a composer of a number of tunes still sung in the villages to the north-west of Sheffield during November and December each year.

The instrumental parts for Back Lane, (1st & 2nd violins and cello) are found in the MSS by Thomas Nichols (1794–1867), a violinist from Brightholmlee, a hamlet also now within the city of Sheffield, dated c. 1830. The vocal parts are from the Mount-Dawson MSS from Worrall, dated c. 1873, and it is thought the instrumental parts there may have been copied from the Thomas Nichols MSS. At the time of writing, I have not yet been able to access these MSS, which are held in the Village Carols Archives by Professor Ian Russell in Aberdeen, and have instead relied on the Mount-Dawson MSS, now held in the Sheffield City Archives.

Five of the original nine stanzas by Isaac Watts have been selected here; stanzas 2, 3, 8 and 9 were enclosed in square brackets in the second edition of his Hymns and Spiritual Songs of 1709, indicating that they may be omitted if required. They are printed below. The source of the text of the Coda has not yet been located.

2 The Lord, the Highest God Calls him his only Son; He bids him rule the Lands abroad, And gives him David's Throne.

8 In Worship so Divine Let Saints imploy their Tongues; With the Celestial Host we join, And loud repeat their Songs. 3 O'er Jacob shall he reign With a peculiar Sway; The Nations shall his Grace obtain, His Kingdom ne'er decay.

9 "Glory to God on High,
"And Heavenly Peace on Earth,
"Good-Will to Men, to Angels Joy,
"At our Reedeemer's Birth.

The text of Watts' hymn given here is the original, and this edition does not seek to reproduce the altered form of words and music now usually sung in the biennial Festival of Village Carols, and in villages to the north-west of Sheffield. That version may be found in The Sheffield Book of Village Carols, edited and arranged by Ian Russell.