Three Days

Music by
Gustav Holst

Text by
M.D. Ridge

Arranged by
Jeffrey Honoré

FROM THE RECORDING
A Light in Darkness
OCTAVO PACKET #11905
CD #11466

Performance Notes

In February 1999, Richard Clarke commissioned this new text on Holst's great tune THAXTED for his choir to sing at Easter. Let us "unpack" its meaning in order to sing with understanding.

"Three Days" begins in history, in the period of transition after Jesus' death. The first verse connects us, believers of the present day, with the Lord's followers during that time of confusion and uncertainty: Our Lord is dead. What will we do now? Will the Romans kill us too? John's gospel relates that "the disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were for fear" (Jn. 20:19). It could well have been the same upper room where they had shared his Last Supper.

In verse two, the women discovered the empty tomb. All four gospels agree on the disciples' reluctance to believe the Lord had risen; the story seemed like nonsense ("the dead do not arise") and, besides, who could believe hysterical women? Yet who had stood by the cross? Who had braved the soldiers to anoint the Lord's body in the tomb? The men had fled and hid. The evangelists themselves couldn't get the names of the women straight, except for Mary Magdalene. We present-day Christians may also be slow to believe, but verse two transitions from history into a strong, personal affirmation of faith in the risen Lord, present here in bread and wine and community.

Christ has died and is risen. Though the Body of Christ is still being crucified wherever there is war or violence or injustice, death is not the end. We who have known sorrow know delight. We rise with Christ. We rejoice.

—M.D.R.

This beautiful and descriptive text is set to a noble and sturdy tune that carries the weight of these most holy events of our faith. Take your time. Sing carefully from the depths of your personal experience of our Christ. Feel the sorrow and despair (verse 1); the bright light of early morning dawn (verse 2); and the supreme joy of new life (verse 3). Use the indicated dynamics to their fullest extent. The build from verse 1 to 3 is a gradual crescendo, a musical expression of resurrection.

The brass and timpani add to, but must never dominate, the sound of the human voice. As the best option, have your assembly (if they know the tune) join in on verse 3.

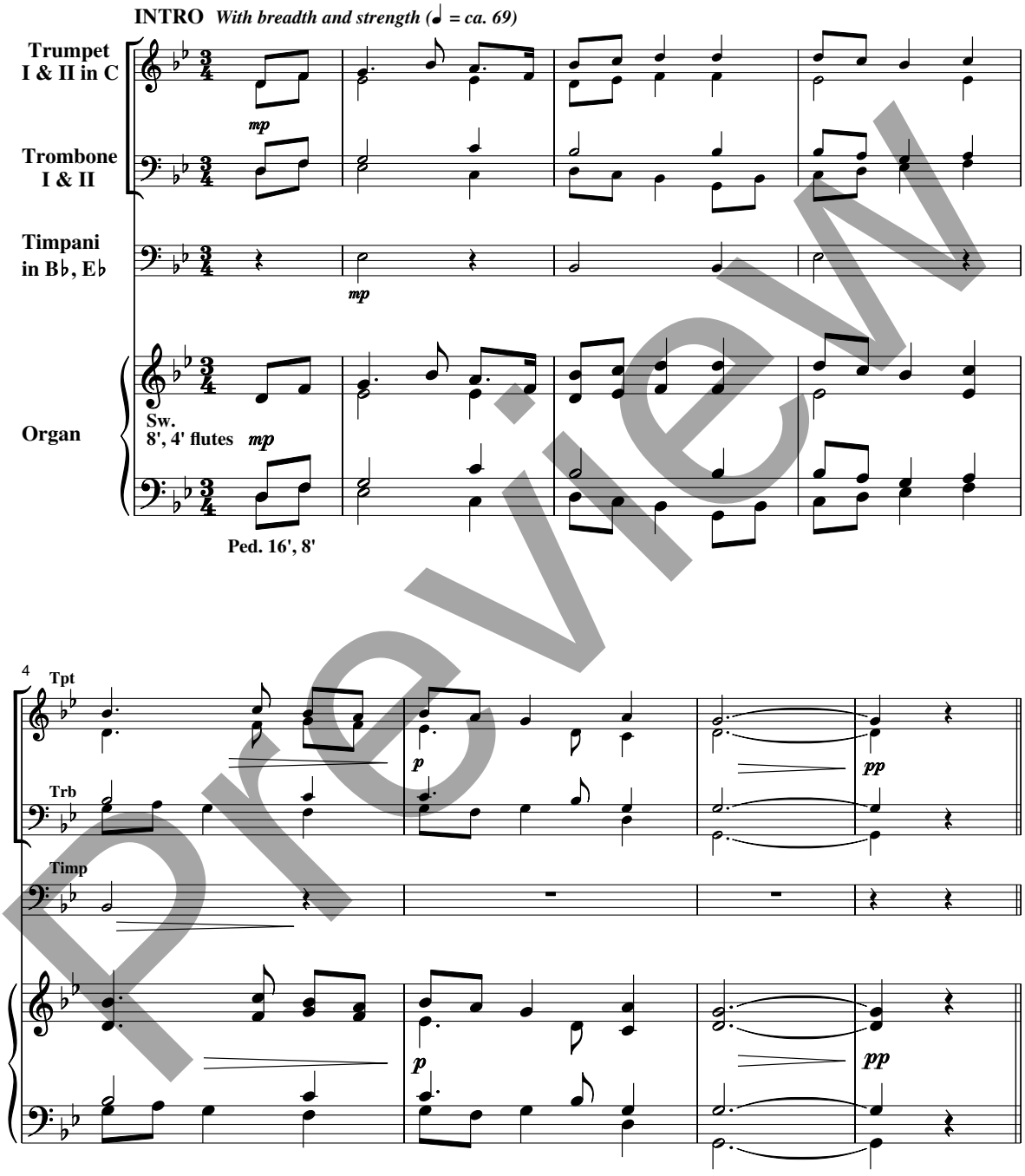
—J.H.

Three Days

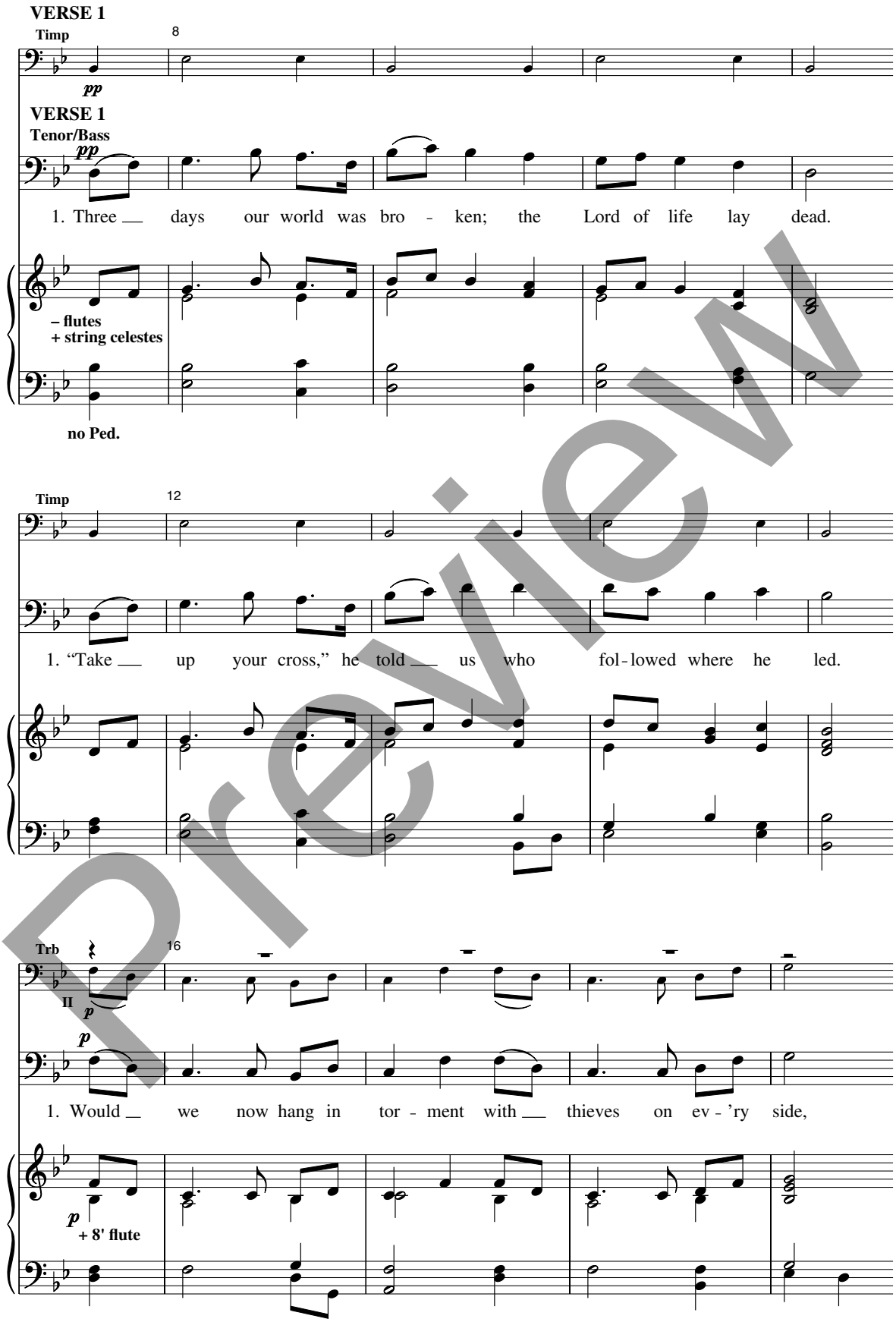
for Richard Clarke

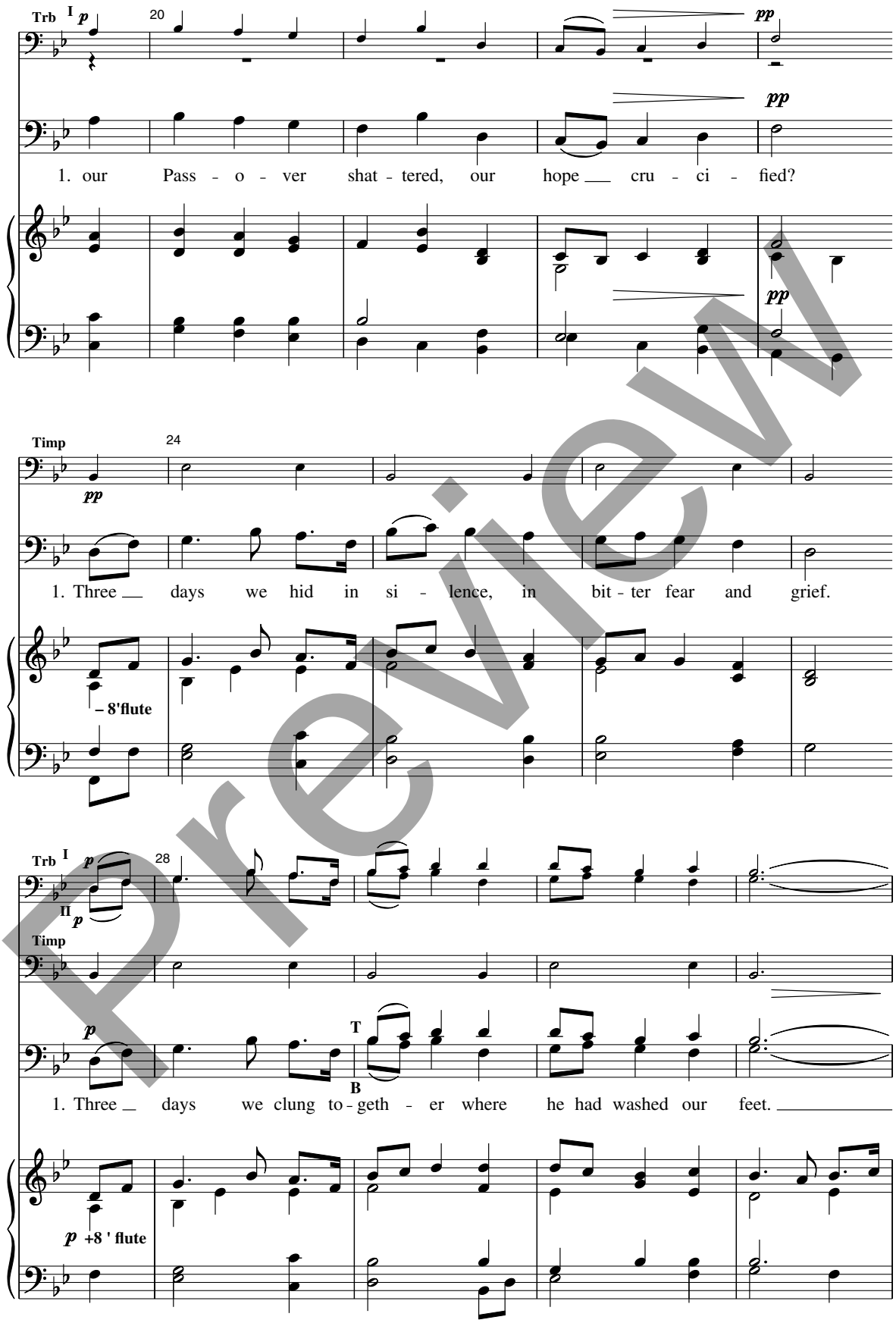
THAXTED, 13 13 13 11 13 13
Tune by Gustav Holst (1874–1932)
Arranged by Jeffrey Honoré

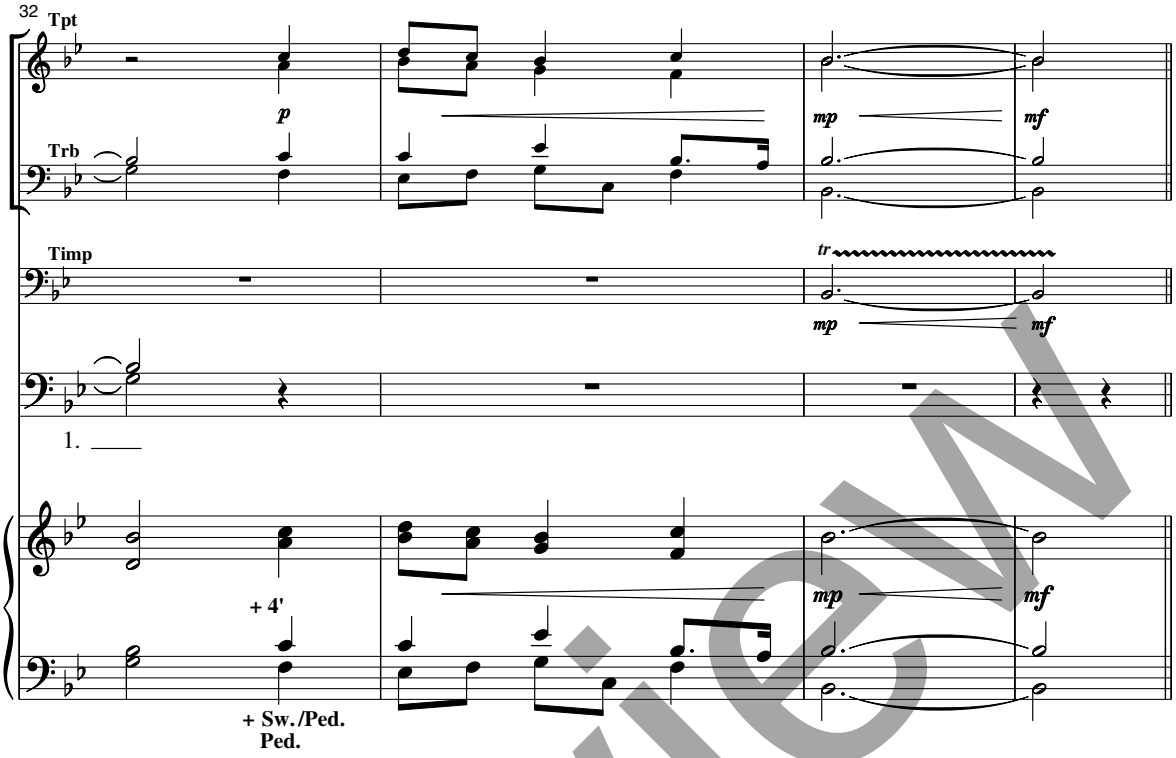
M. D. Ridge



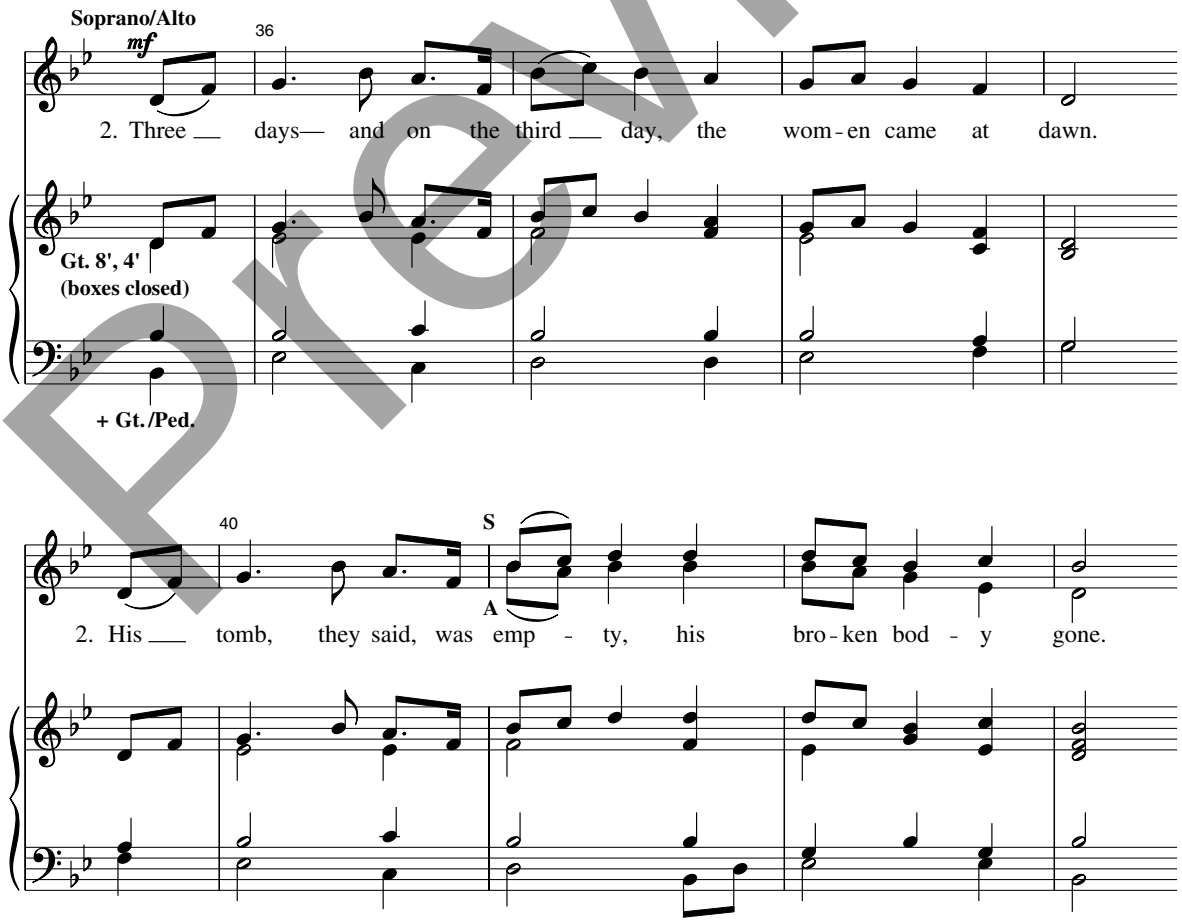
Instrument parts are available from the publisher, edition 70263.

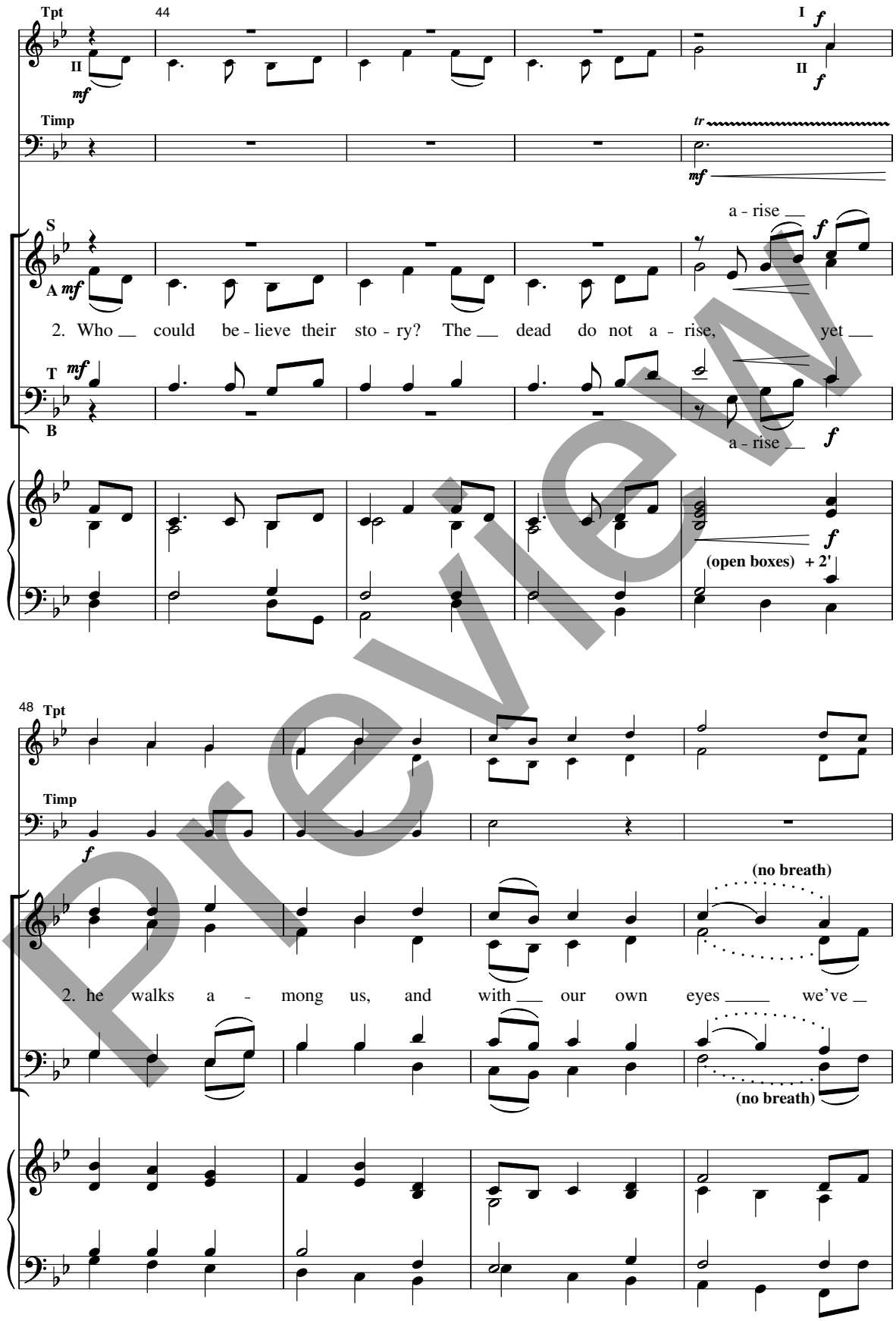

VERSE 1
Timp
8
pp
VERSE 1
Tenor/Bass
pp
1. Three days our world was bro - ken; the Lord of life lay dead.
– flutes
+ string celestes
no Ped.
Timp
12
1. "Take up your cross," he told us who fol - lowed where he led.
Trb
16
II
p
1. Would we now hang in tor - ment with thieves on ev - 'ry side,
p
+ 8' flute

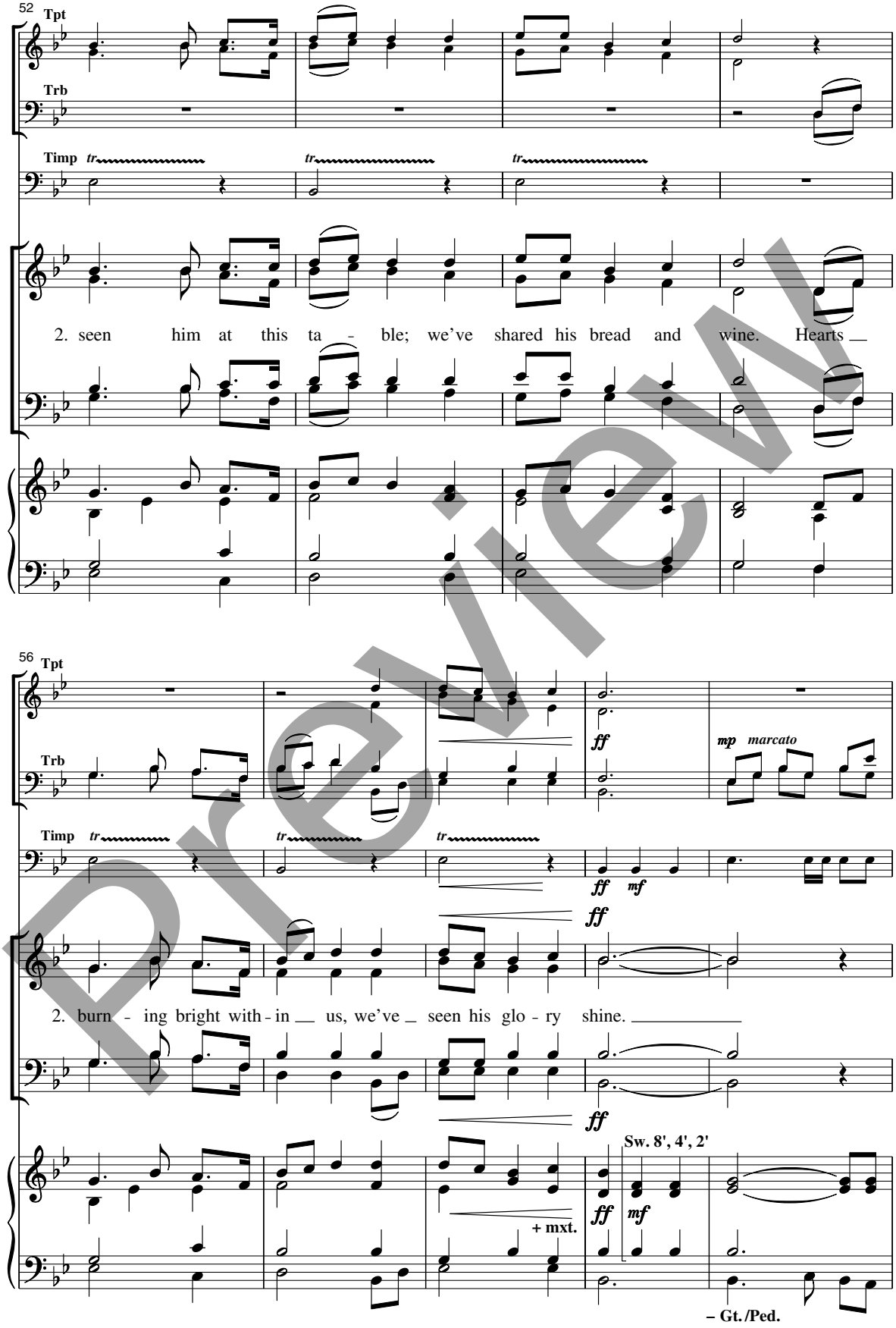

Trb I
p
20
pp
pp
1. our Pass - o - ver shat - tered, our hope cru - ci - fied?
pp
Timp
24
pp
1. Three days we hid in si - lence, in bit - ter fear and grief.
– 8'flute
Trb I
p
28
II
p
Timp
p
T
B
1. Three days we clung to - geth - er where he had washed our feet.
p +8 ' flute

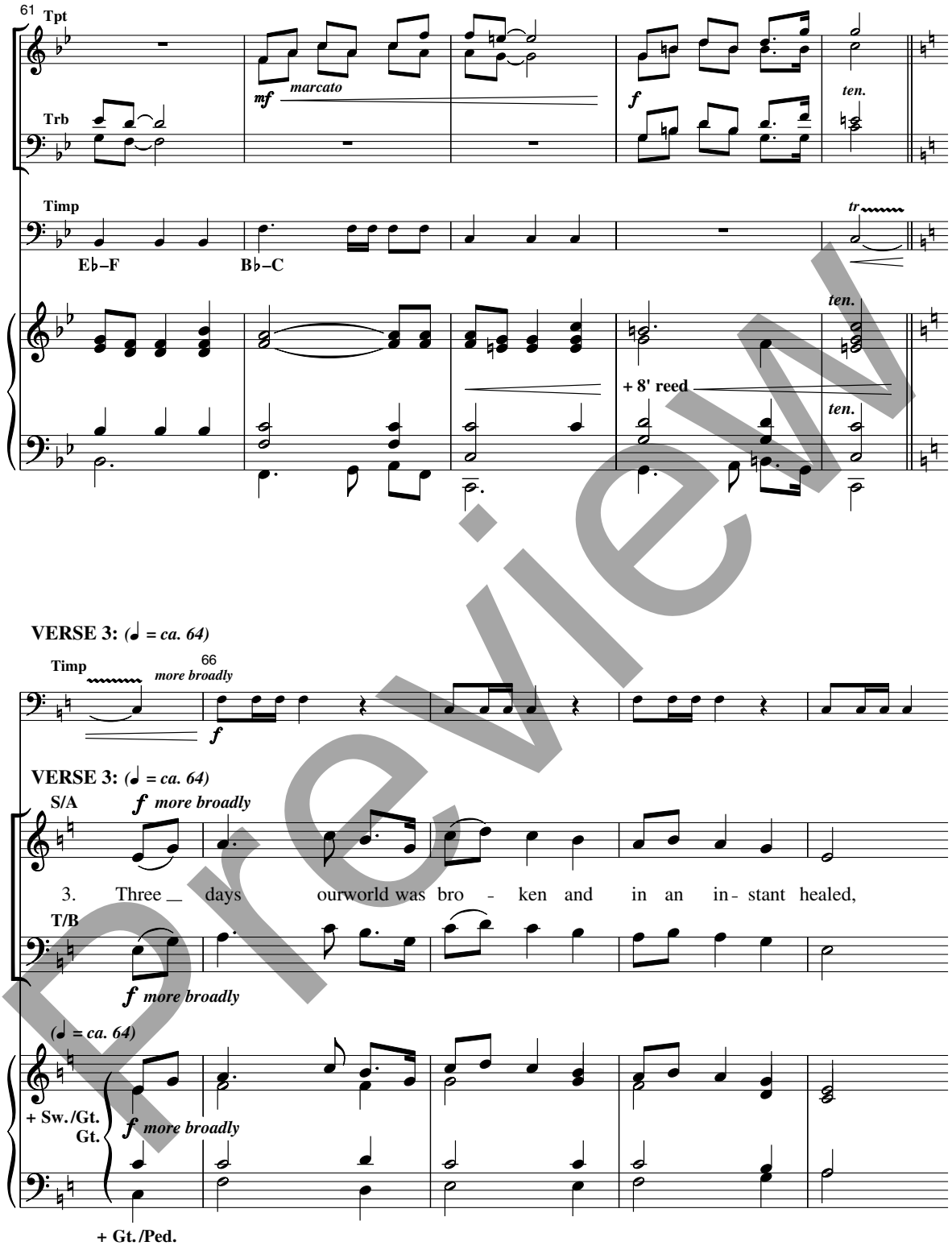


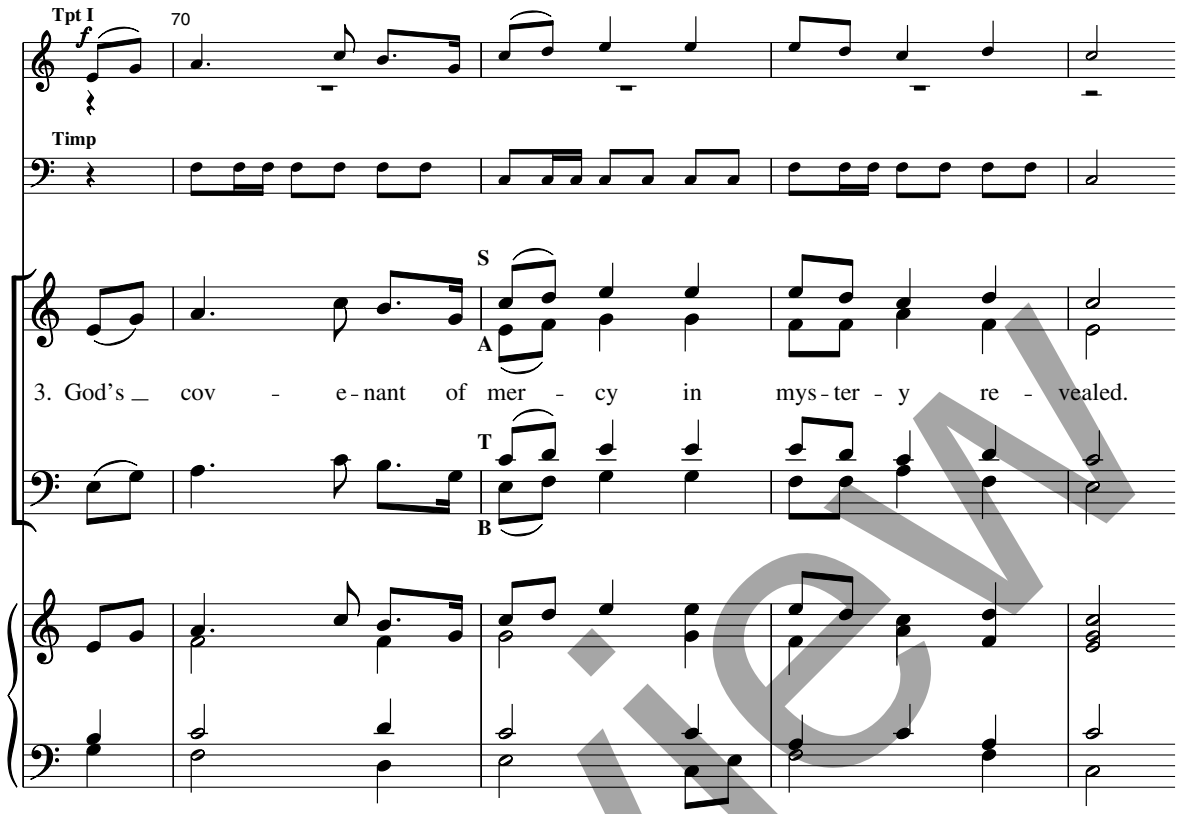
VERSE 2

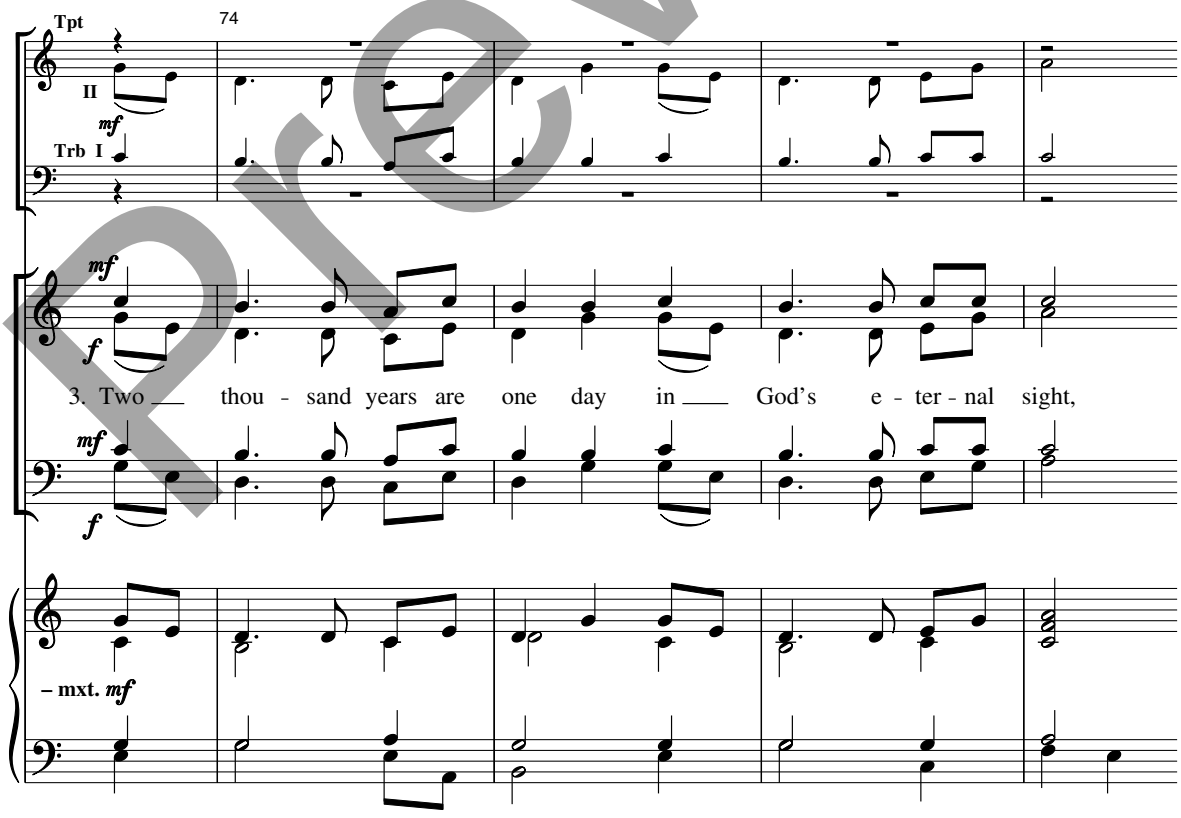


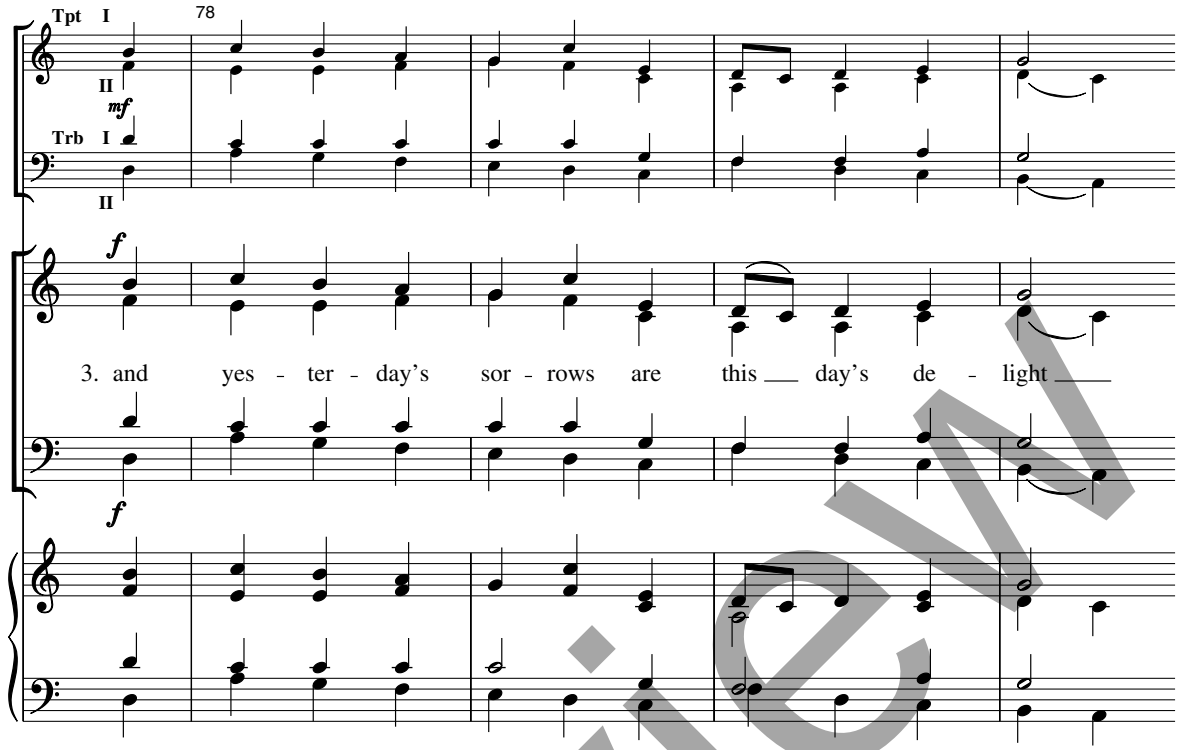

Tpt
44
I
II
mf
f
Timp
tr
mf
S
A
mf
a - rise
f
2. Who could be - lieve their sto - ry? The dead do not a - rise, yet
T
B
mf
a - rise
f
f
(open boxes) + 2'
48
Tpt
Timp
f
(no breath)
2. he walks a - mong us, and with our own eyes we've
(no breath)

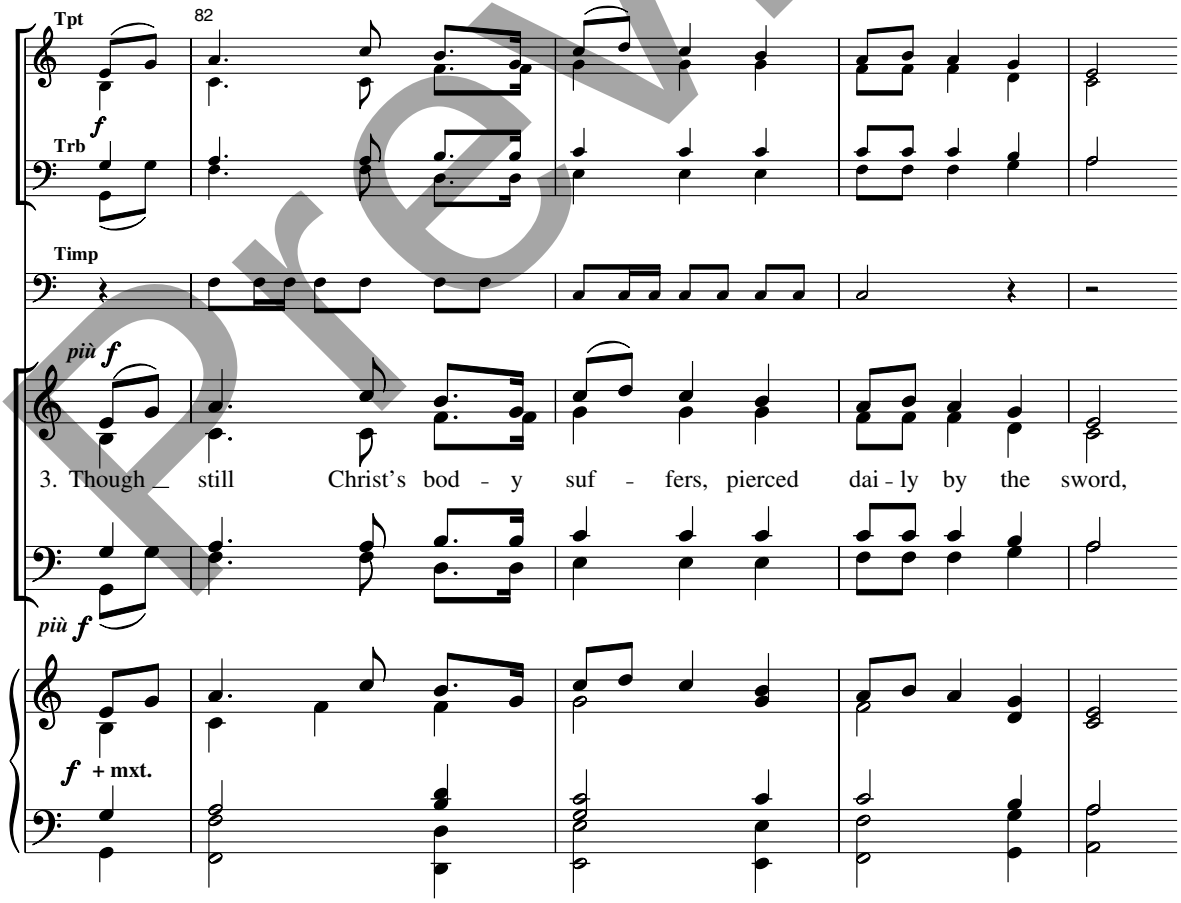

52
Tpt
Trb
Timp
tr
2. seen him at this ta - ble; we've shared his bread and wine. Hearts
56
Tpt
Trb
Timp
ff
mp marcato
mf
2. burn - ing bright with - in us, we've seen his glo - ry shine.
Sw. 8', 4', 2'
+ mxt.
– Gt./Ped.


61
Tpt
Trb
mf marcato
f
ten.
Timp
Eb–F
Bb–C
tr
ten.
+ 8' reed
ten.
VERSE 3: (♩ = ca. 64)
66
more broadly
Timp
f
VERSE 3: (♩ = ca. 64)
S/A
f more broadly
3. Three _ days ourworld was bro - ken and in an in - stant healed,
T/B
f more broadly
(♩ = ca. 64)
+ Sw./Gt.
Gt.
f more broadly
+ Gt./Ped.

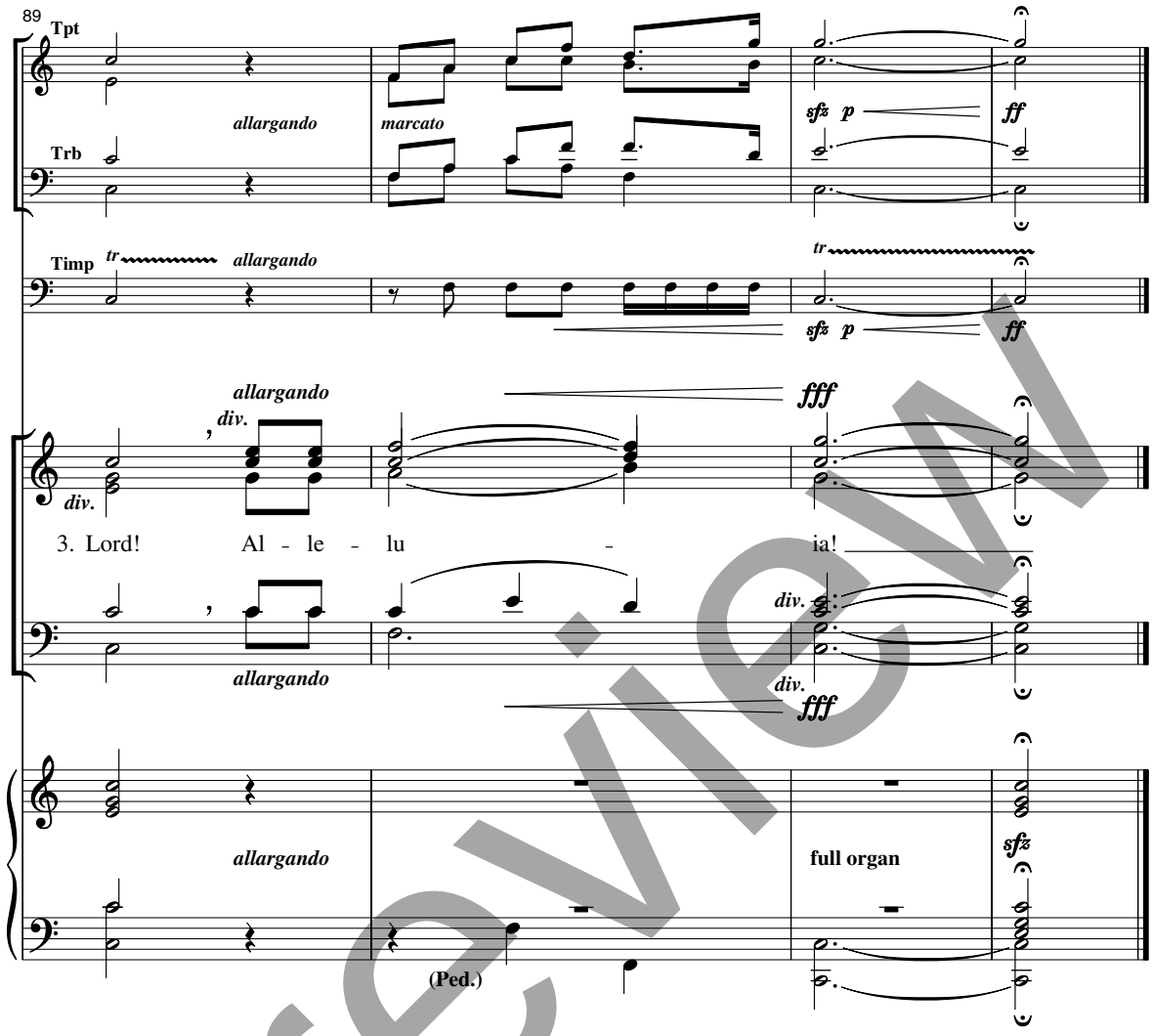

Tpt I
f
70
Timp
S
A
3. God's cov - e - nant of mer - cy in mys - ter - y re - vealed.
T
B


Tpt
II
mf
Trb I
74
mf
f
3. Two thou - sand years are one day in God's e - ter - nal sight,
mf
f
– mxt. mf


Tpt I
II
78
mf
Trb I
II
f
3. and yes - ter - day's sor - rows are this ___ day's de - light ___
f


Tpt
82
f
Trb
Timp
più f
3. Though _ still Christ's bod - y suf - fers, pierced dai - ly by the sword,
più f
f + mxt.


Tpt
86
ff
Trb
rit.
Timp
tr
ff
rit.
ff
rit.
3. yet ___ death has no do - min - ion: the ___ ris - en Christ is
ff
rit.
ff + reeds
rit.

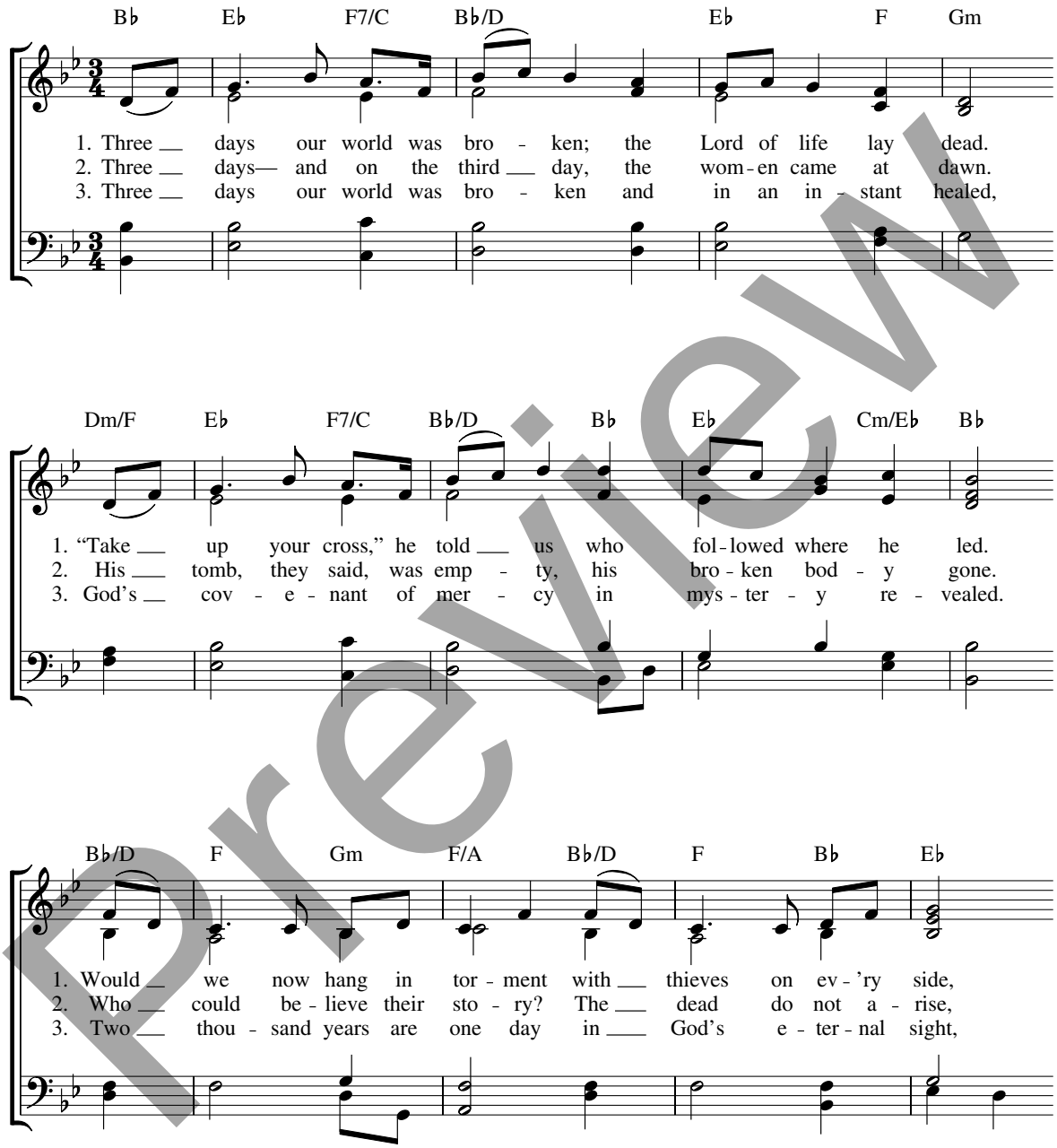

89
Tpt
Trb
Timp
allargando
marcato
sfz p
ff
tr
fff
div.
3. Lord! Al - le - lu - ia!
full organ
sfz
(Ped.)

Three Days

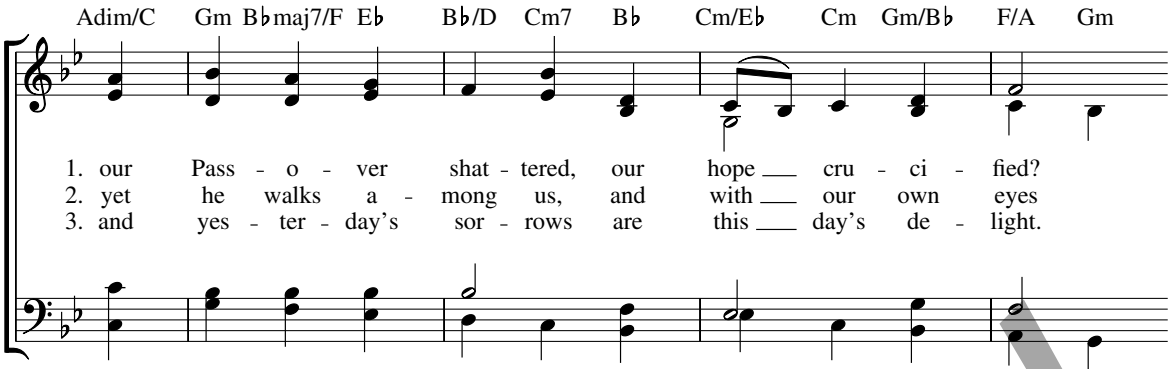
(Hymn Version)*

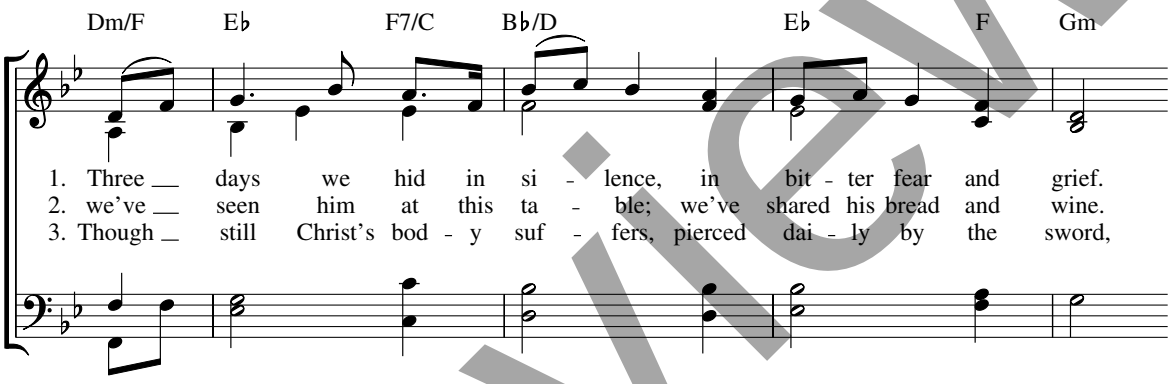
THAXTED, 13 13 13 11 13 13
Tune by Gustav Holst (1874–1932)
Arranged by Jeffrey Honoré

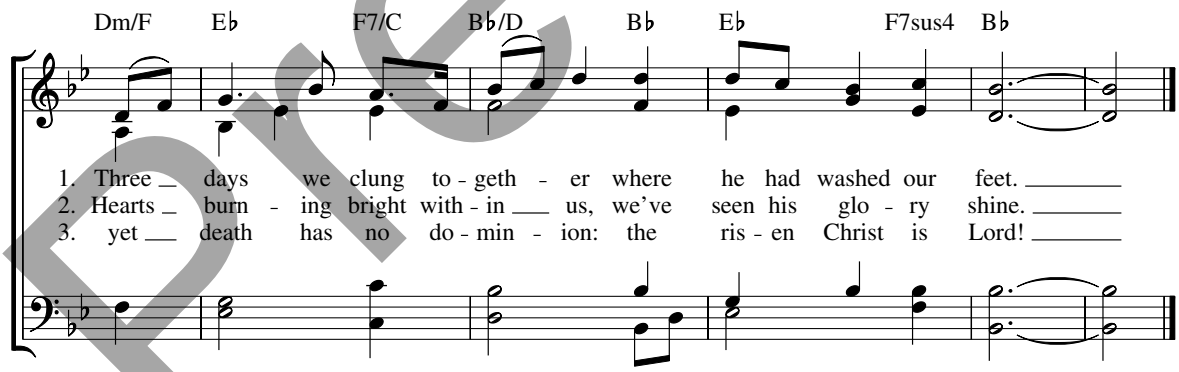
M. D. Ridge



***Melody and keyboard.**


Adim/C Gm B♭maj7/F E♭ B♭/D Cm7 B♭ Cm/E♭ Cm Gm/B♭ F/A Gm
1. our Pass - o - ver shat - tered, our hope ___ cru - ci - fied?
2. yet he walks a - mong us, and with ___ our own eyes
3. and yes - ter - day's sor - rows are this ___ day's de - light.

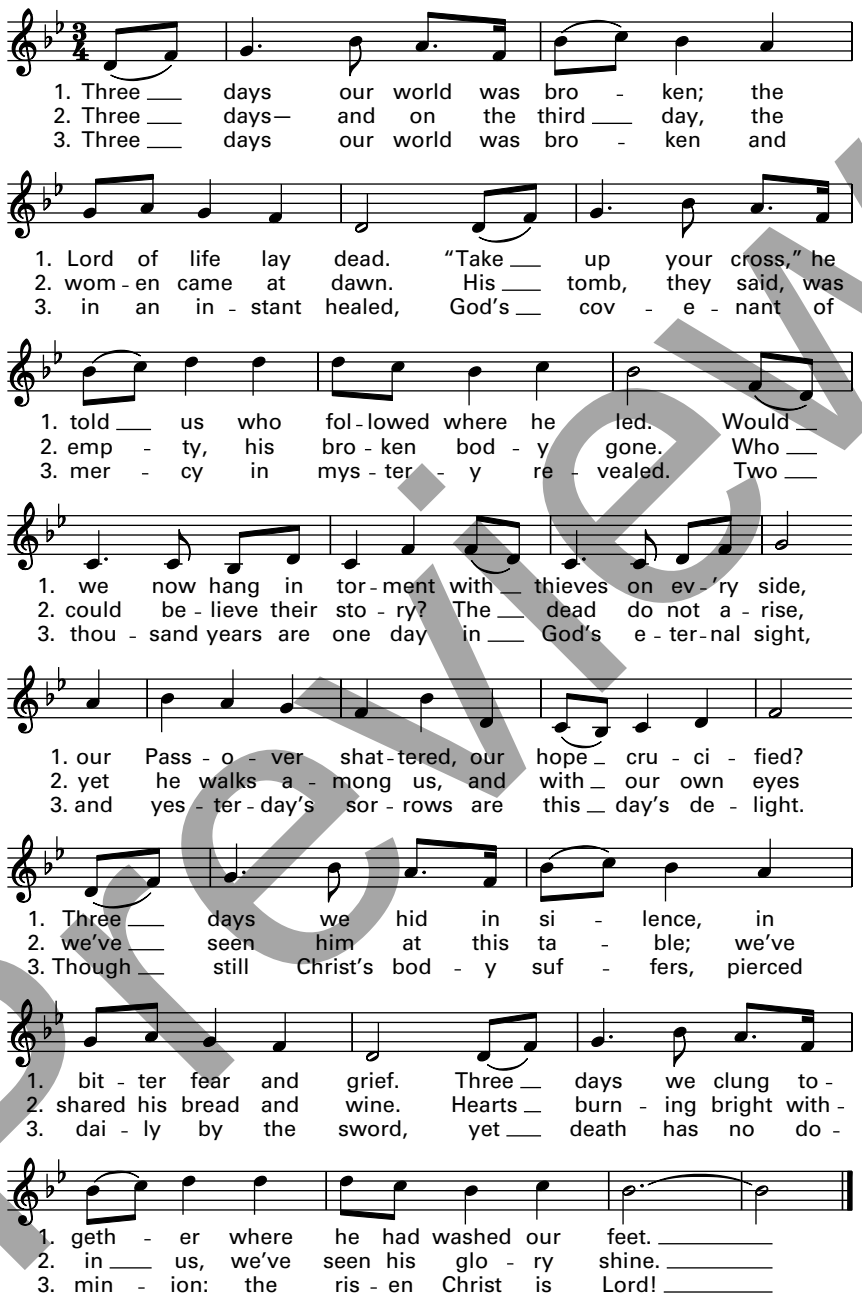

Dm/F E♭ F7/C B♭/D E♭ F Gm
1. Three ___ days we hid in si - lence, in bit - ter fear and grief.
2. we've ___ seen him at this ta - ble; we've shared his bread and wine.
3. Though _ still Christ's bod - y suf - fers, pierced dai - ly by the sword,


Dm/F E♭ F7/C B♭/D B♭ E♭ F7sus4 B♭
1. Three _ days we clung to - geth - er where he had washed our feet. _____
2. Hearts _ burn - ing bright with - in ___ us, we've seen his glo - ry shine. _____
3. yet ___ death has no do - min - ion: the ris - en Christ is Lord! _____

Assembly Edition

THREE DAYS

THAXTED



7 68371 15010 5