

8th July

Memory Verse:

If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:31b-32

A hymn to learn



PD-US-expired

Georg Neumark (1621-1681) died on 8th July.

Here is the hymn he wrote as a young man:

1 Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find him in the evil days
Thy all-sufficient strength and guide;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move.

2 Only thy restless heart keep still,
And wait in cheerful hope, content
To take whate'er his gracious will,
His all-discerning love, hath sent;
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To him who chose us for his own.

3 Sing, pray, and swerve not from his ways,
But do thine own part faithfully;
Trust his rich promises of grace,
So shall they be fulfilled in thee;
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted him indeed.

Georg Neumark was the son of a clothier who lived in Langensalza a spa town in Thuringia, central Germany. The Thirty Years War had been raging in Germany since before his birth when, in 1641



he decided to go to Königsberg to study law. He was on his way there along with a band of merchants (presumably travel alone was not safe) when as they were crossing Gardelegen Heath, a band of highway robbers appeared. Georg had sewn a small sum of money into his clothes but they took everything else he had apart from his prayerbook. Now he would have to find work since he had no money for his university fees but alas, although he was already a well educated young man, there seemed to be nobody that wanted to employ him. Friend after friend tried to help him passing

him on from one to another until eventually he arrived in Kiel far to the north. Here he found a friend from his native Thuringia, Pastor Nicolaus Becker. Pastor Becker tried to find him work too and, just when it seemed that no one would want him once again, a job as a tutor in a good family came up unexpectedly. Pastor Becker recommended him and he got the post. Georg's heart overflowed with gratitude to God for this happy end to all his trials and he wrote the *chorale* or hymn *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, as a result of his experiences. It is in many English hymnbooks translated by Catherine Winkworth as “Leave God to order all thy ways”.

Georg's hymn soon became popular all over Germany in those difficult and war torn times. If you read through the words of the hymn again you can imagine him, his little sum of money dwindling away as he travels from place to place wondering if he will survive or starve. The last two lines are almost a paraphrase of the lovely verse in Psalm 37 “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.”

Georg was able to save enough money from his tutoring to continue to Königsberg and complete his studies. But he was to suffer another test of his “trust in God's unchanging love” in 1646. This time it was a fire – which destroyed every single thing he possessed.

After his studies, Georg became court poet, librarian and registrar of administration to the Duke of Weimar, later becoming secretary of the ducal archives as well. By the time of his death in 1681 he was already blind but the Duke kept him on in his post even so – he was unemployable no longer.

Learn to sing the hymn¹

Georg Neumark was a gifted musician and wrote not only the words but also the tune for the hymn. Included in the optional resources files for today are the score and sound files so that you can learn his tune yourselves. Here is a good method to learn the hymn. There are two sound files. One has longish pauses after each line to help you learn the tune. The other has no pauses.

Step 1: Read through the words of the first verse aloud from the musical score.

Step 2: Listen to the tune for the first line only. Follow the score as you listen. Use the version with pauses for learning. Notice that the tune just goes up by step **Leave God to or-** and down again **-der all thy ways** with a little “skip” on **thy**. Sing the first line. Do this again until you are happy that you know this line.

Step 3: Listen to the tune for the second line only. Follow the score as you listen. Sing the second line. This is a little more tricky than the first line but don't worry; it is easier when you join them together.

Step 4: Listen to the tune for the first and second lines together only. Follow the score again. Sing the two lines together. If you can do this you can almost do the whole tune now because (like many German Chorale tunes) the first two lines of the music repeat although the words are different.

Step 5: Now you should find you can sing the first four lines. Listen and then try it.

Step 6: The last two lines move out of the very narrow compass used in the first four lines to bring in some higher notes. **Who trusts in God's unchanging love** rises to the highest notes in the tune. Listen and try it.

Step 7: The final line moves down confidently from the higher notes to the end. Listen and try it.

Last step: Sing through the whole tune using the score.

When you are confident you can sing the whole hymn.

It was a tune that was destined to very great things...

¹ It is possible that some families know the hymn already to a different tune. If so do learn this one! It is by the person who wrote the words and the tune and words belong together.

Something to listen to

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), perhaps the greatest composer who has ever lived, was born like, Georg, in Thuringia and lived and worked there for much of his life. He grew up in a musical atmosphere that was saturated with German chorales. The hymns and their tunes were so generally well-known in the Germany of Bach's day that just the first line of the tune alone would at once suggest to the listeners the words and the general theme of the chorale. Bach was very skilful in using the chorale tunes in his works to suggest the thoughts he wanted in the minds of his hearers.



Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten “Leave God to order all thy ways” was one of the most well-known of all the chorales and Bach used it in no less than six separate works. His listeners, as soon as they heard the opening notes, would at once be reminded of God's providential care for his people and that they should carry on trusting Him **whate'er betide**. It ends Bach's Wedding Cantata BWV197,² for instance, in a plain and simple form that, after all the lavish and joyful music of the previous movements, makes a quiet and fitting piece of guidance for a newly married couple. Bach wrote another cantata (BWV93) in several movements (parts) which each treat Georg Neumark's chorale in different ways.³

Bach also wrote an organ prelude BWV642 which is based on the tune. Find a recoding to listen to.⁴ Can you pick out the tune as you listen? If you have learned the hymn you will have no difficulty.

Vocabulary work

I am sure you all know that **thou** and **thy** just mean “you” and “your” but there are a few interesting words in the hymn that we don't come across every day. Do you know what **betide** means? And **naught**? **All-discerning**, **inmost**? What about the abbreviations **Thou'lt** and **what'er**?

As is often the case, it is not unusual words that might make this hymn tricky to understand but familiar words used in a slightly different way. For instance, **order** here is a verb meaning **put in order** or **sort out**.

Who is short for **he who**. **So** means **in this way** and **at need** means **when we needed Him**. **Swerve** means **go off course**. These are all words we might use everyday but not quite in the same way. Can you write a sentence using each of these words in the way they are used in the hymn? An easy way to do it would be to write a sentence using the blue words and then write it again using the equivalent red word instead. Like this:

*I must **sort out** the books in my library so that I can find the ones I want.*

*I must **order** the books in my library so that I can find the ones I want.*

The one word that might fall into this category that I have left out is **grace**. This word has a very special meaning in the Bible. It is nothing to do with gracefulness or smooth beautiful movement which is the common meaning of the word. It means **God's favour to us which we do not deserve**.

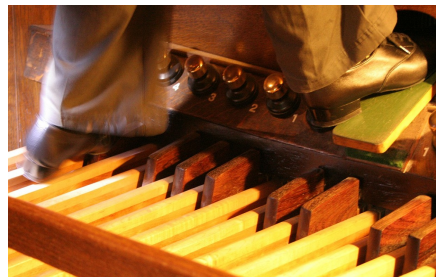
² BWV is the shorthand term for the catalogue of Bach's music. Every piece has an individual number for identification. We will be looking at BWV numbers later this month in the lesson for 28th July.

³ If you want to listen to part of it, it can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmGoF_r9GwQ. In the opening movement you will hear the tune after 0.49.

⁴ You can hear it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ygitc1xO-yA/>

Learn about the organ

The organ is a wind instrument which is played from a keyboard. Each note has a pipe, or combination of pipes and when the key is pressed down air is allowed into the correct pipe. If you are used to looking at hymn music you may wonder why I set out the score of the hymn with three staves (lines of music) rather than two. The answer is I set it out as if it was organ music. Music for organ is usually set out on three staves; one for the right hand, one for the left hand.... Can you guess what the third staff is for? The picture is a clue!⁵



5 If you want to see just how amazingly an organist uses his (or her) feet you can hear the *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten* organ prelude played here by a rather showy American lady organist here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnGhgPqzjbY>. The video shows what she is doing very well but she does not bring out the chorale tune so clearly as the organist we heard earlier. What do you think?