
*In memory of John F. Elliott,
Choral Director at Valley Forge High School
and Parma-South Presbyterian Church, Parma, Ohio*

GLENN L. RUDOLPH

IF WORDS ARE SPOKEN

An Anthem for SATB Choir and Organ

If Words Are Spoken

If words are spoken at some future time
about our lives, or how we met each day,
may they be tokens of our faithful climb
with Christ, who led us on the Holy Way.

No praise we claim, unless praise points to One
who is our Lord, and whose Eternal Light
served as our flame, our joy, our beaming sun!
And drew us toward the good, the true, the right.

If we were faithful, noble, kind of heart,
If we were slow to anger, quick to bless,
If we refused to speak the critic's part,
or if we strove for quiet holiness...

We bid you not to look our way to see
ourselves, but rather, may our open face
be less a window; more a frame, so we
point to beyond—to scenes of lasting grace!

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If Words Are Spoken - Notes on the Text

This hymn text was written at the end of January, 2002. In the Church, January is a time for Annual Reports, that is, of looking back over the year just past and making a kind of assessment of how it went. We are reminded of the passing days and months, and we note those events in the life of a church that have to do with programs and goals that have been met or surpassed. All of these are indicative of a busy group of Christians at work in a particular place to do the will of God.

The question of what sort of legacy we leave, or would hope to leave, is addressed in this hymn, in which the singers are expressing their hope in terms of Christian ideals. As much as we may hope to mold our destiny, and even if we seek to leave lasting reminders of our presence here, we must know that time and circumstances are more powerful than any measures we might take. A Christopher Wren may say something along the lines, "*You who seek his memorial, look around you*" in the setting of St. Paul's Cathedral, but most of us are building cathedrals of flesh and blood, spires and domes of hope and help, in people we know and love.

These lives that we influence may or may not verbalize the impact we have had. Even so, may our impact be one of goodness, kindness, hopefulness, encouragement, honesty, integrity, holiness, joy, and those concomitant values that built up people and communities of faith.

That is the message underlying these lines, and always with the greater goal of pointing toward Jesus Christ. Thus, the image in the final stanza, "*may our open face be less a window; more a frame*", through which the greater vista of Christ and His grace can be seen.

- John A. Dalles, June 10, 2014

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IF WORDS ARE SPOKEN

Words: John A. Dalles

Music: Glenn L. Rudolph

♩ = 48

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Organ

I Clarinet

mp
Soft Fonds

pp
Soft Bd 16, 8

Pedals

pp

S
A

T
B

Org.

Ped.

5

time a-bout our lives, or how we met each day, may they be to-kens of our faith-ful climb with

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9 *rit.* *a tempo*

S
A
T
B

Christ, who led us on the Ho-ly Way.

9 *rit.* *a tempo*

Org. I Clarinet *mp* (III)

Ped.

rit. $\text{♩} = 48$ *mf*

13

S
A
T
B

No praise we claim, un-less praise points to One who is our

mf

13 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 48$ *mp* III +4' I

Org. *mp*

Ped. *mp*

16 *f*

S
A Lord, and whose E - ter - nal Light served as our flame, our joy, our beam-ing

T
B Lord, and whose E - ter - nal Light served as our flame, our joy, our beam-ing

Org. *mf* *f* *mf* II *f* I + *Sw mix, Sm reeds, Sw/Ch*

Ped. *mf* *f*

19 *ff* *mp* $\text{♩} = 42$

S
A *ff* sun! *mp* And drew us t'ward the

T
B *ff* sun! *mp* And drew us t'ward the

Org. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp* *- mix* *soft fonds, 8, 4* $\text{♩} = 42$

Ped. *ff*

22 *allarg.* $\text{♩} = 48$ *rit.*

S
A
T
B

good, the true, the right.

good, the true, the right.

Org.

I Cornet *mp*

II Bourdon 8 *mp*

III *soft fonds*

Ped. *mp*

25 *a tempo* *mp*

S
A
T
B

If we were faith - ful, no - ble, kind of heart, If we were

If we were faith - ful, no - ble, kind of heart, If we were

Org.

(I) *mp*

Ped.

28

S
A

slow to an-ger, quick to bless, If we re - fused to speak the crit-ic's

T
B

slow to an-ger, quick to bless, If we re - fused to speak the crit-ic's

Org.

Ped.

31

S
A

rit. *a tempo*
part, or if we strove for qui-et ho - li - ness...

T
B

part, or if we strove for qui-et ho - li - ness...

Org.

rit. *a tempo*
II solo flute
I fonds 8, 4
mp

Ped.

mp

34

S
A

ff

We bid you not to look our

T
B

ff

We bid you not to look our

Org.

34 (II) *Add*

(I) *mf* *f* *ff* II

Ped.

Add *mf* *f* *ff*

38

S
A

way to see our - selves, but rath - er may our o - pen

T
B

way to see our - selves, but rath - er may our o - pen

Org.

38

Ped.

42

S
A

face be less a win - dow; more a frame,

T
B

face be less a win - dow; more a frame,

Org.

Ped.

Add

cresc.

cresc.

45

S
A

fff so we point to be - yond, to scenes of last - ing *rit.*

T
B

fff so we point to be - yond, to scenes of last - ing *rit.*

Org.

Ped.

48 *a tempo* *rit.*

S
A

grace! _____

T
B

grace! _____

48 *a tempo* *rit.*

Org.

fff

Add

Ped.

fff

Add

6 July 2014
 Cranberry Township, PA
 Duration: 3'45"