

O MORNING STAR, HOW FAIR AND BRIGHT



What is your first awaking thought each morning? Have you ever looked to the East and seen the beautiful morning star?

Often, when we are very young “prayers” are “words” spoken to God at mealtime, at bedtime, or at church on Sundays. But now that we are older, prayer is beginning to be an all-the-time knowing that God is ever with us — and whenever fears, or problems, or difficult decisions confront us, we can simply turn to “The Morning Star” — to “God” — and open our hearts to His wisdom and courage. At the very moment when we open our lives and thoughts to God — no matter where we are — this is “prayer.”

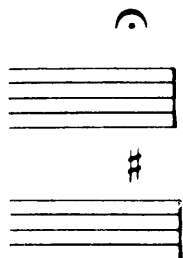
What were the words that Jesus taught us to use as we turn toward God in prayer?

Philipp Nicolai, the Lutheran pastor who wrote the original German words to this hymn, lived between 1556 and 1608. A great movement had just begun to happen in Germany shortly before the time that Nicolai was born.

What was it? _____

There were two translations of Nicolai’s words: Catherine Winkworth’s “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” in 1863 and William Mercer’s “How Brightly Beams the Morning Star” in 1859. Why is the work of translators important to our hymns and to our Bible and thus, to us?

Listen to the tune of “O Morning Star.” Can you hear the melody patterns that sound exactly the same? Listen how beautiful each of the harmonizing parts are as you sing them separately. Look at the music and see if you know what these different marks mean: (Name and define.)



Why not memorize this hymn to carry within your heart always as a constant reminder that the Morning Star is always shining, God is always with us, and “Prayer” is how we may overcome the darkest of problems with the Light of God!

This hymn has long been called “The Queen of Chorales.” Ask your choir director to help you find the hymn known as “The King of Chorales.” A hint: it was written (both text and music) by the same man, Philipp Nicolai.