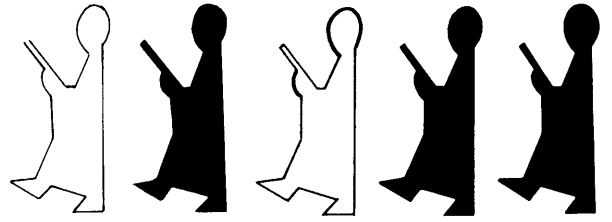


## REJOICE, YE PURE IN HEART

Come . . . watch a most amazing parade!



We see men and women — young and old — angel choirs and saints — marching by us, singing and waving festal banners high above them. A mood of rejoicing is all around us! In church we call it “processing.”

Even more remarkable, when we try to see where the parade is coming from or where it is going, we discover **no beginning and no ending**. The past — the present — even future times — seem to be processing before our very eyes!

“Rejoice, Ye Pure In Heart,” describes just such an event — with Christians of all ages and all eras joining in a processional to “Rejoice, give thanks, and sing” to God. Do you know what an “era” is?

Find some of the opposites who join in the processional:

bright youth \_\_\_\_\_

strong men \_\_\_\_\_

Find three more pairs of opposites in the fourth stanza. The author, Edward H. Plumtre, uses opposites to help us remember that when we center our thoughts on “Christ, our King” — differences disappear among us. Though **external opposites** can still be seen, **internal opposites** no longer exist.

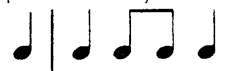
Look for this same miracle in the congregation of your own church. See how many persons with “external opposites” you can find . . . persons who look differently, dress differently, speak differently, do different tasks in church, drive different kinds of cars, spend their time in different ways. But then, notice how, in the prayers and hymns of praise in the worship service and at the communion table, differences are forgotten and we become as **one** in raising “high the free, exultant songs” which speak God’s wondrous praises.

Being a part of a choir festival is a great experience. We stand in a different church, than our own, amid different children, perhaps with a different director . . . but all of our voices join as one when the singing of hymns and anthems begins!

A choir festival at Peterborough Cathedral in England in 1865 heard the first singing of “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart.” However, the tune which you and I use with the hymn was not written until 1883. Arthur H. Messiter, an Englishman who had gone to America to become choirmaster at the Trinity Church in New York, was the composer.

Long ago, choir festivals often used colorful and symbolic banners for the processions along the streets and down the aisles into the sanctuary. Many churches are reviving this custom. Wouldn’t it be exciting if all the churches in town were to design their own banner and let their children carry them into a community festival, singing “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart” as they process? One hint: processional music must always be sung with a strong, sturdy rhythm so that the choristers will stay together. Sometimes, singers entering from the foyer or narthex must momentarily **pretend** they are singing while they wait to hear the rhythm which has preceded them in the processional.

Practice singing the first stanza as if you were processing. **Don’t** be worried about keeping step but **do** try to use precise, clear diction and rhythm as you sing, especially on the recurring rhythmic pattern:



The range and the interval progressions also help this serve as an excellent processional hymn. Can you tell why?

Say! Instead of just watching . . . let’s **join** the processional ourselves . . . so that we too may

REJOICE, GIVE THANKS, AND SING!