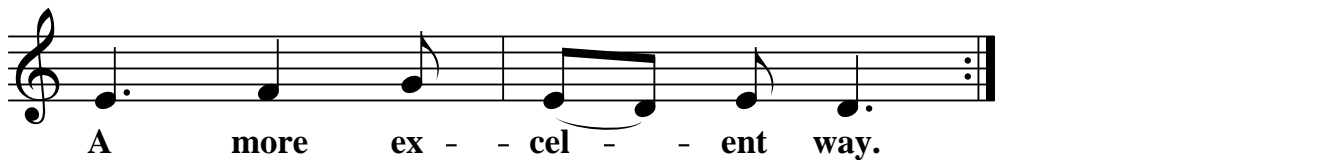
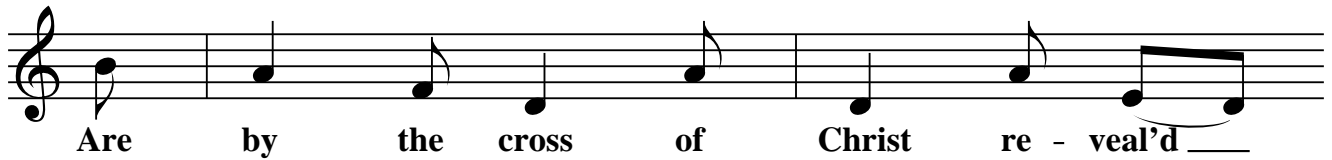


The Excellent Gift

♩ = 80



The gifts of God, so long conceal'd,
Are by the cross of Christ reveal'd,
In this last gospel day.
And while these gifts so freely flow,
From sweet experience we can show
A more excellent way.

Tho' I could speak all human tongues,
And those of the angelic throngs,
And heaven and earth compass,
Without the gift of charity,
A tinkling cymbal I should be,
Or like the sounding brass.

Tho' future things I could foretell,
And understand all myst'ries well,
And of deep knowledge boast;
And tho' my faith could mountains move,
Without the precious gift of love,
All other gifts are lost.

Tho all my goods I should bestow,
And to the stake a martyr go,
It would no blessing prove;
My works can no acceptance find,
Unless they're of that noble kind,
That flows from heavenly love.

Love suffers long, is kind to all,
And envies not the great nor small,
Nor will she vaunt herself;
Unseemly she will not behave,
Nor her own ways will strive to have,
She seeks no sordid pelf.

Not soon provok'd, she thinks no ill,
But in the truth rejoices still,
Tho' satan's legions rail:
She bears all things and standeth sure,
Hopes and believes, and will endure
When other gifts all fail.

Tongues and the like are for a sign,
And tho such gifts awhile may shine,
They must at length decrease;
But perfect love is come again,
And on the earth shall ever reign,
In righteousness and peace.

Great signs and wonders, we are told,
Were given to the saints of old;
But we justly reply,
They ate their manna and are dead;
But Lord, give us this living bread,
And we shall never die.

