# Songs of the Heart

A Piano Hymnal

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# Introduction

This book teaches you how to play Christian hymns on the piano by ear. Instead of reading complex sheet music, you will learn to:

- identify the melody using solfège (do, re, mi).
- complement the melody with basic chords.
- perform hymns in various genres.

By the end of this book, you should be able to:

- play hymn melodies,
- add chords with your left hand,
- make simple piano arrangements.

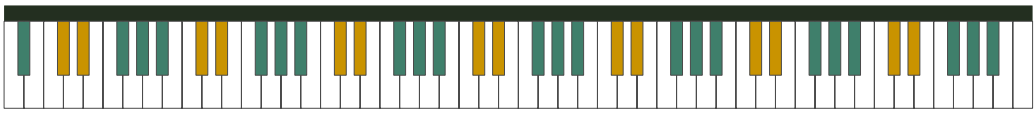
The goal is not only to play notes but also to understand the music.

## Understanding the Piano Keyboard

The piano keyboard has a repeating pattern of black keys. You will see:

- groups of **two black** keys
- groups of **three black** keys

These groups help us easily find the notes.



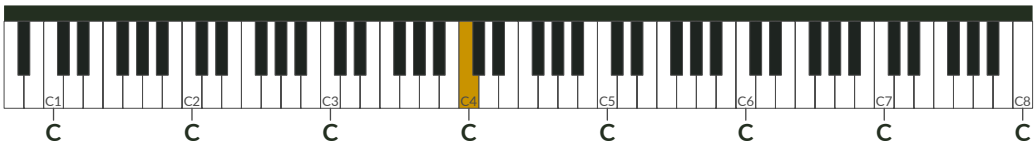
## Finding C

The white key immediately to the **left of two black keys** is always **C**.

Once you find C, the white keys follow this pattern:

**C D E F G A B**

After **B**, the pattern repeats again.




The gold key near the middle is **middle C** (C4).

## The C Major Scale

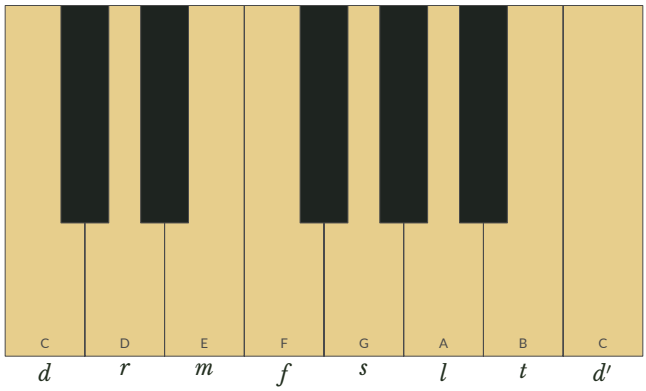
The simplest scale on the piano is the **C major scale**. It uses only white keys.

C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

In Tonic Sol-Fa this becomes:

*d* – *r* – *m* – *f* – *s* – *l* – *t* – *d*

Tonic Sol-Fa helps us understand **how melodies move**.

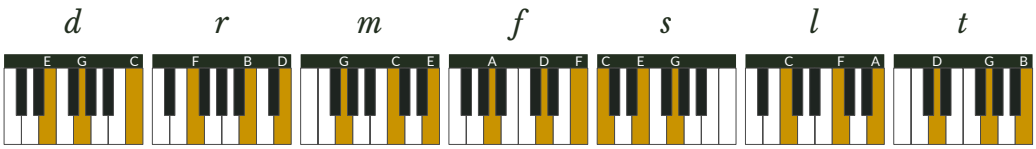



To play the three-note pattern, use three fingers. Your ring finger plays the melody note.

For most notes in the C scale, the other two fingers follow a straightforward pattern. The pointing finger plays a note one step left of the main note. The thumb plays a note two steps left of the melody note.

For example, if the melody note is r, the three notes would be r - t - f.

There is one minor exception: the melody note is d. For d, the pointing finger must take two steps to the left rather than one. The three notes will be d-s-m.



## Playing the Melody

To begin, play the melody **with one finger**. Follow the solfege syllables.

Example: d – m – s – m – r – d

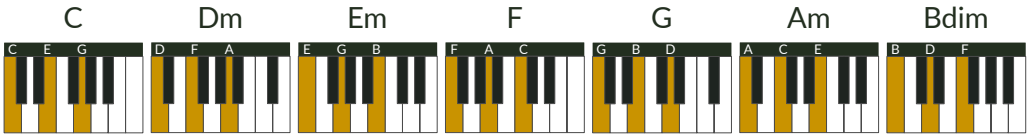
This method trains your **ear** to recognize melody patterns. Later you will learn to play the melody using **three fingers** for better control.

## Chords in the Scale Of C

A chord is a group of notes played together. Most chords are built by **skipping notes in a scale**.

For example: start on C. C – E – G. This forms the **C major chord**. Other important chords in the key of C are:

| Chord | Notes |
|---|---|
| C | C E G |
| Dm | D F A |
| Em | E G B |
| F | F A C |
| G | G B D |
| Am | A C E |
| Bdim | B D F |



## A Note on These Songs
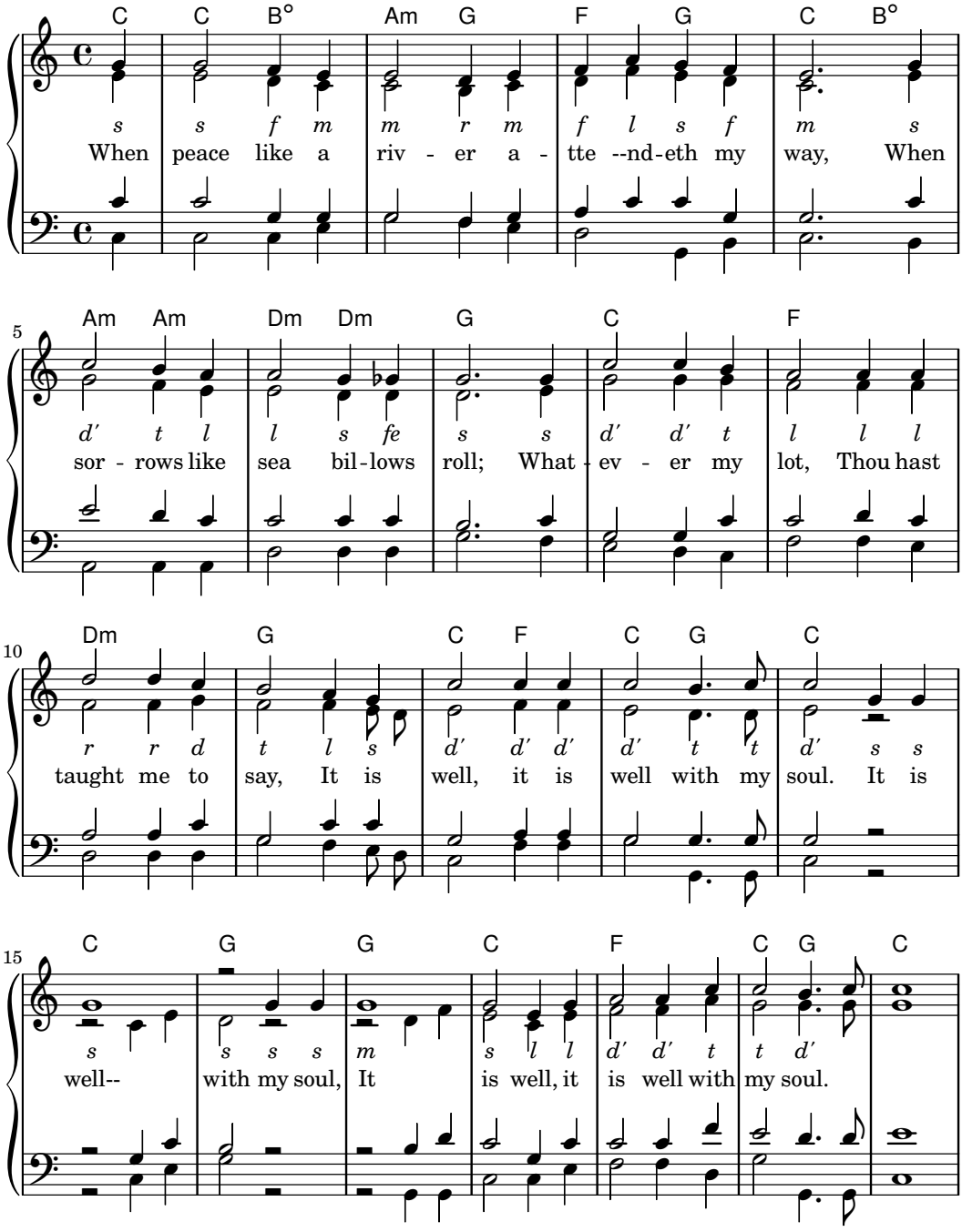
These five hymns were chosen because each one answers a specific kind of hard day. When Peace Like a River reminds the grieving heart that stillness is still possible even when sorrow rolls in like the sea. Sweet Hour of Prayer is for the person too tired to compose their own words and needing a rhythm to lean on instead. Jesus Loves Me is deliberately the simplest song in the book, because sometimes the truest thing is also the plainest one.

Arrangements are written for solo piano, voiced so a beginner can play the melody alone at first and grow into the full four-part texture over time. Solfege sits above the staff, English lyrics below it: sing the shape before you sing the words.

# When Peace Like a River (It Is Well)

BL Piano – Key C
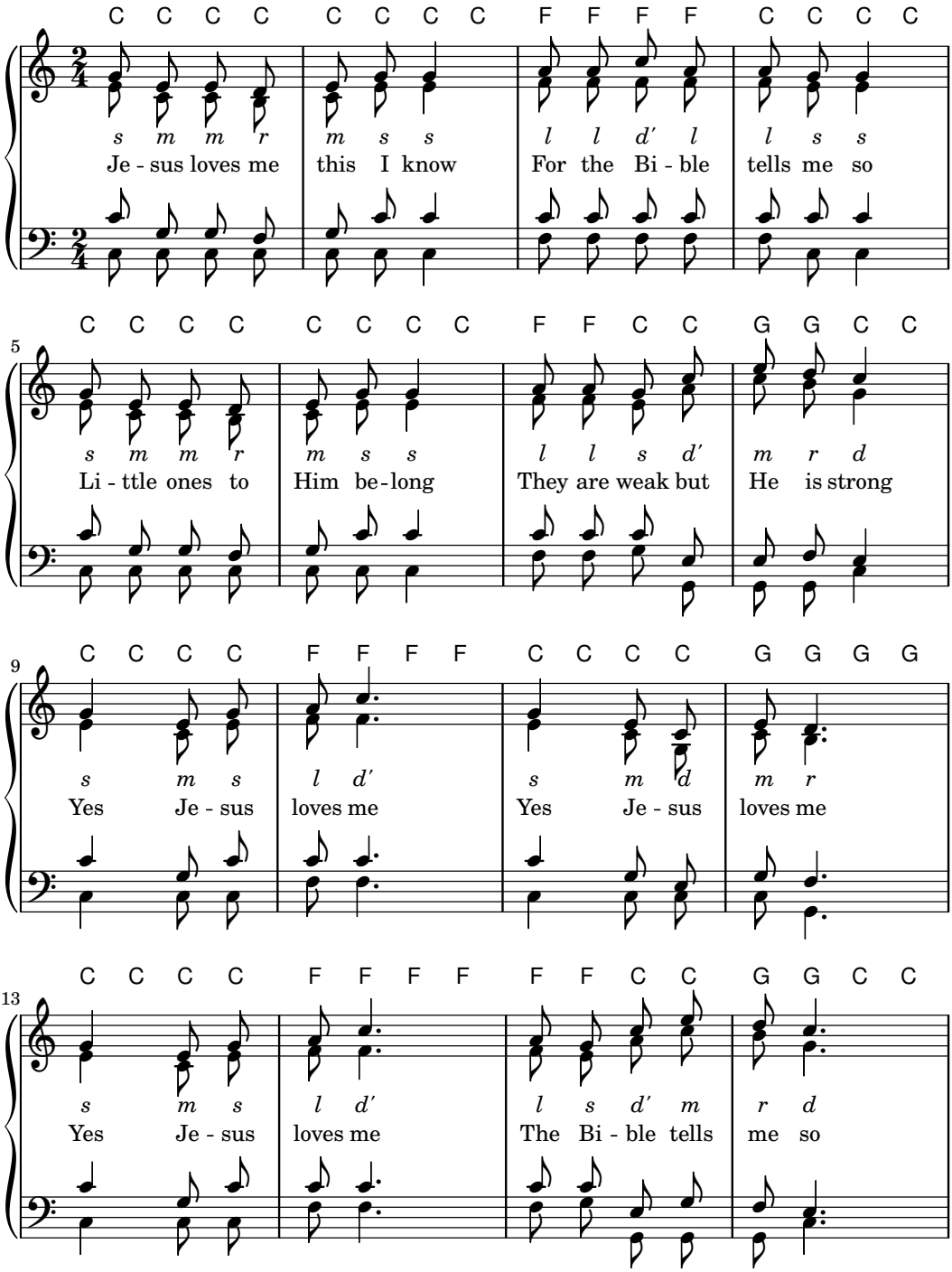
Philip P. Bliss (1838–1876)



# Jesus Loves Me This I Know

BL Piano – Key C
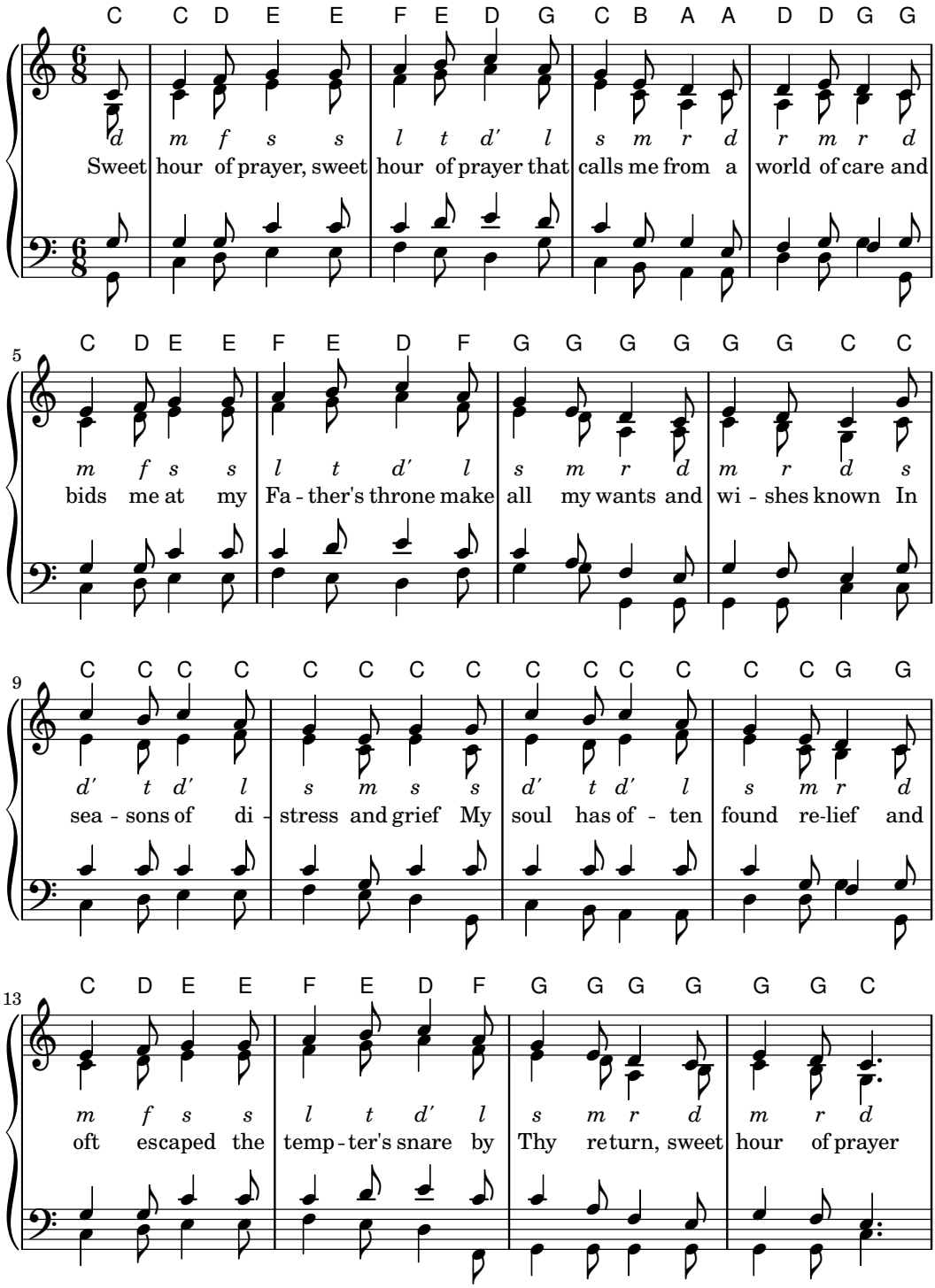
W. B. Bradbury (1816–1868)



# Sweet Hour of Prayer

BL Piano – Key C
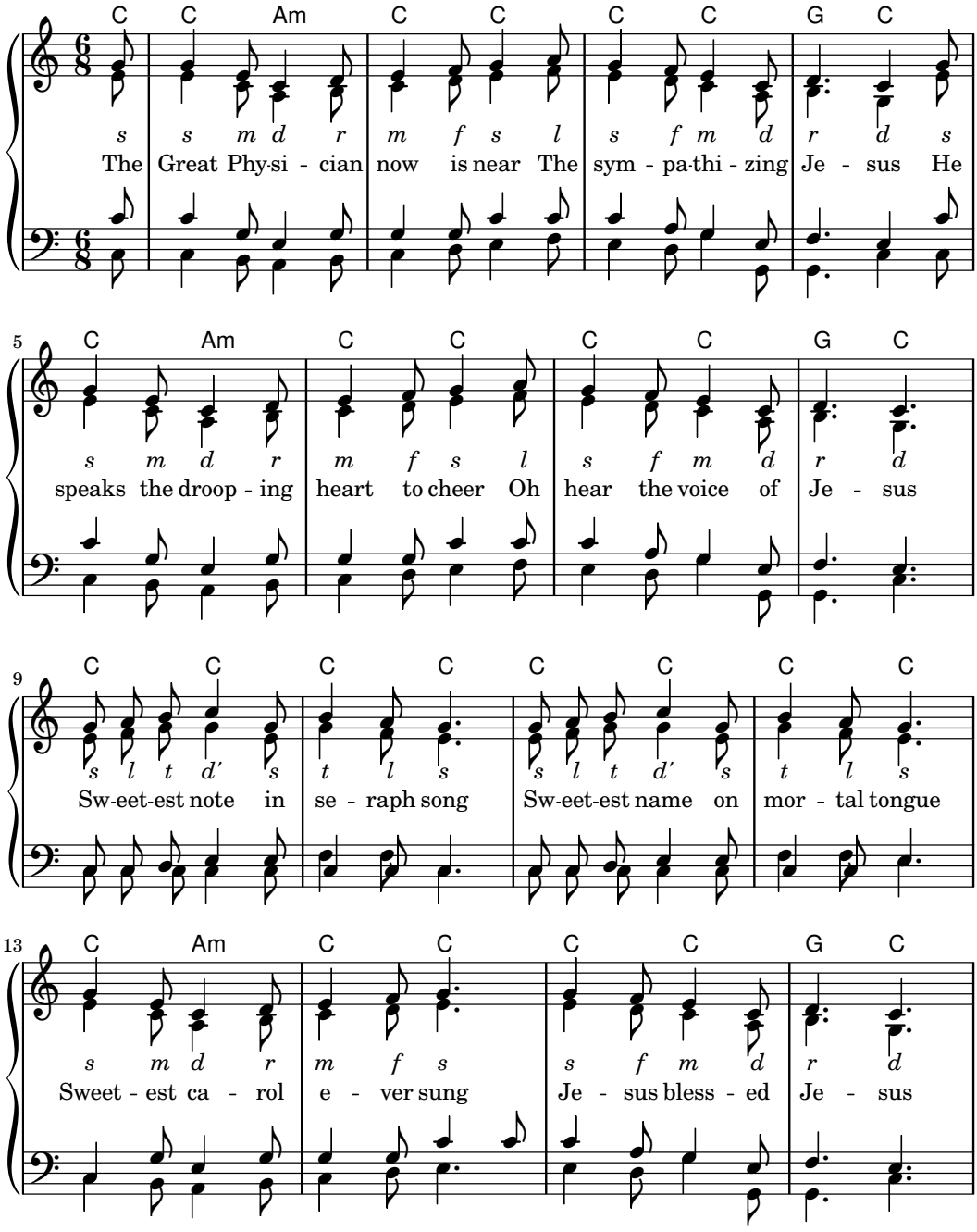
W. B. Bradbury (1816–1868)



# The Great Physician

BL Piano – Key C
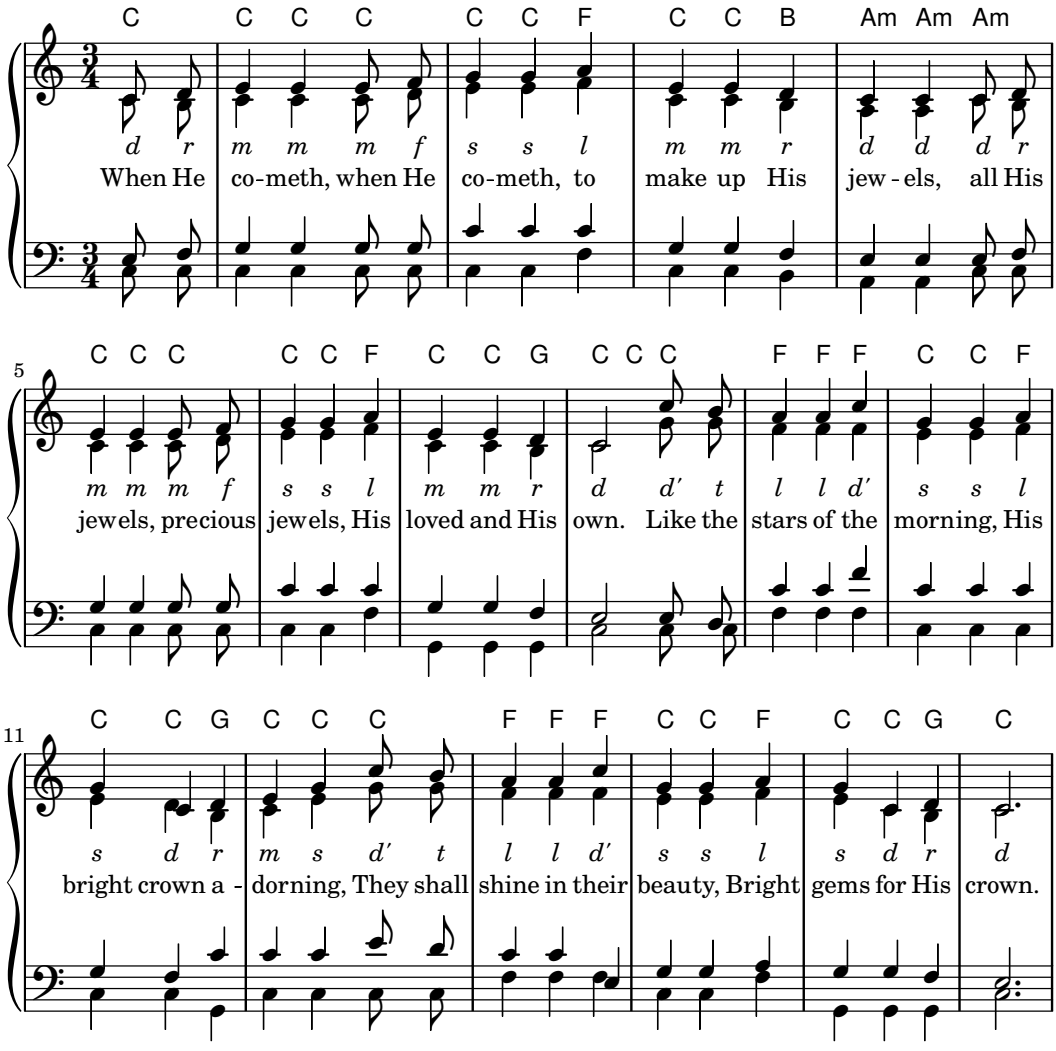
William Hunter (1811–1877)



# When He Cometh

BL Piano – Key C

George P. Root (1820–1895)



## The Key of F

You already know how to play by ear in the key of C. The good news: **the sol-fa pattern never changes**. Only the starting note moves. In the key of F, *d* is F instead of C, and everything else follows from there.

The key of F brings your **first black key**: B♭ (B flat). Whenever the melody reaches *f*, you play B♭ instead of B.

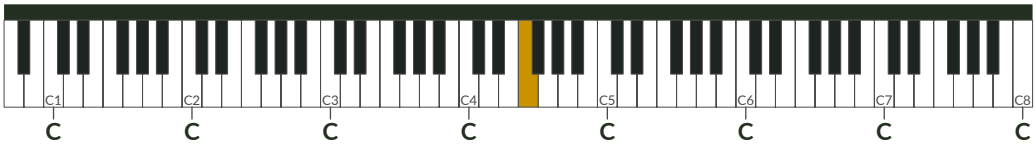
## Finding F

F is the white key immediately to the **left of the three black keys**.

Once you find F, the key of F uses these notes:

**F G A B♭ C D E**

B♭ is the black key just to the left of B.



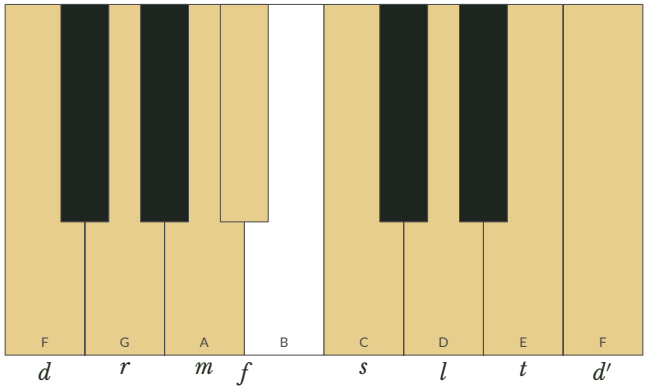

The gold key is the F just above middle C (F4).

## The F Major Scale

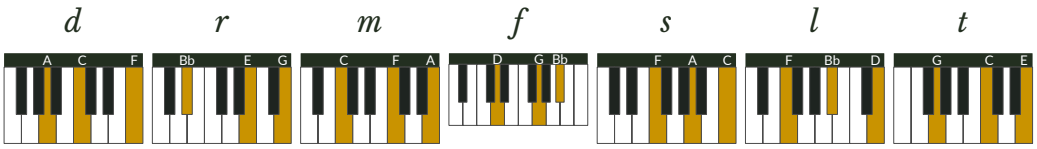
F – G – A – B♭ – C – D – E – F

In Tonic Sol-Fa it is exactly the same as in C:

*d* – *r* – *m* – *f* – *s* – *l* – *t* – *d*



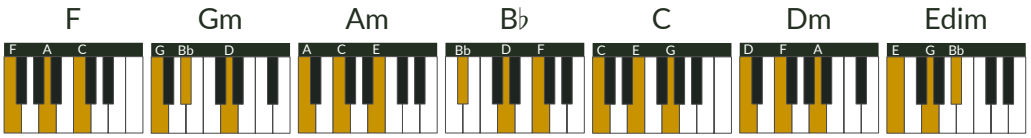

The three-finger pattern works exactly as in C: your ring finger plays the melody note, the pointing finger one step to the left, and the thumb two steps to the left. The exception is still *d*: there the pointing finger moves two steps, giving *d* – *s* – *m*.



## Chords in the Key of F

The chords are built the same way, by skipping notes in the scale. The three most important chords in F are **F**, **B♭** and **C**.
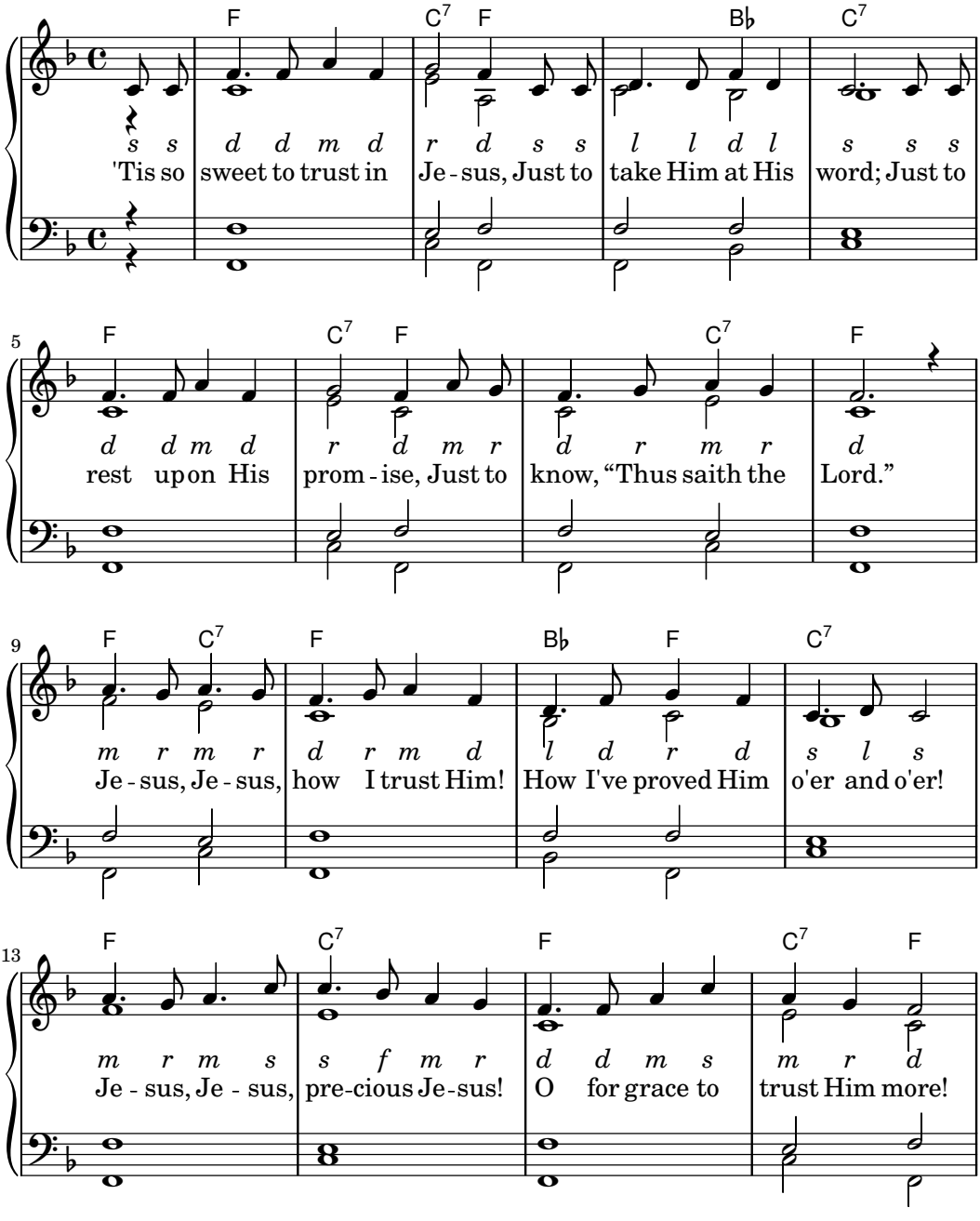
| **Chord** | **Notes** |
|---|---|
| F | F A C |
| Gm | G B♭ D |
| Am | A C E |
| B♭ | B♭ D F |
| C | C E G |
| Dm | D F A |
| Edim | E G B♭ |



# 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

BL Piano – Key F
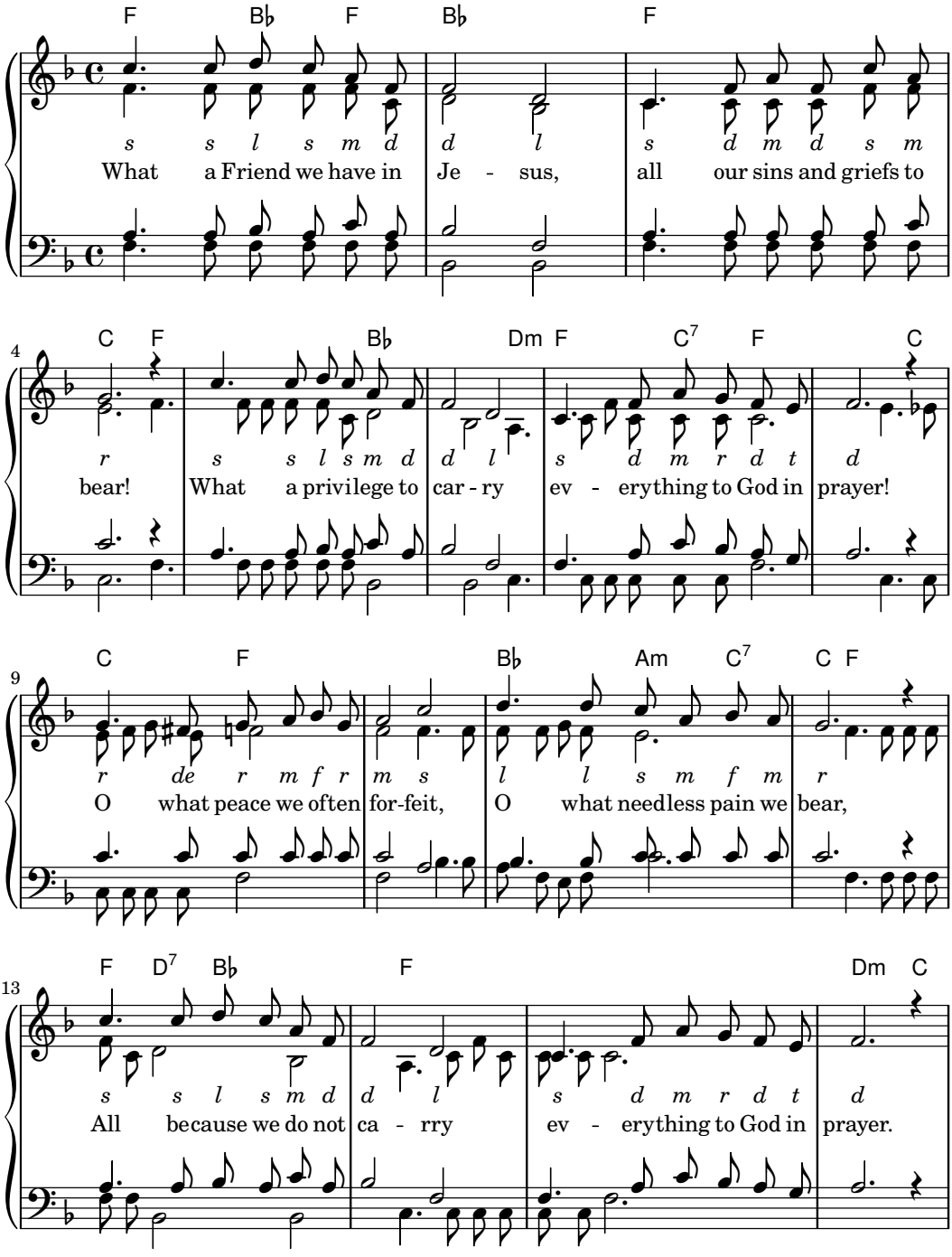
William J. Kirkpatrick (1838–1921)



# What a Friend We Have in Jesus

BL Piano – Key F
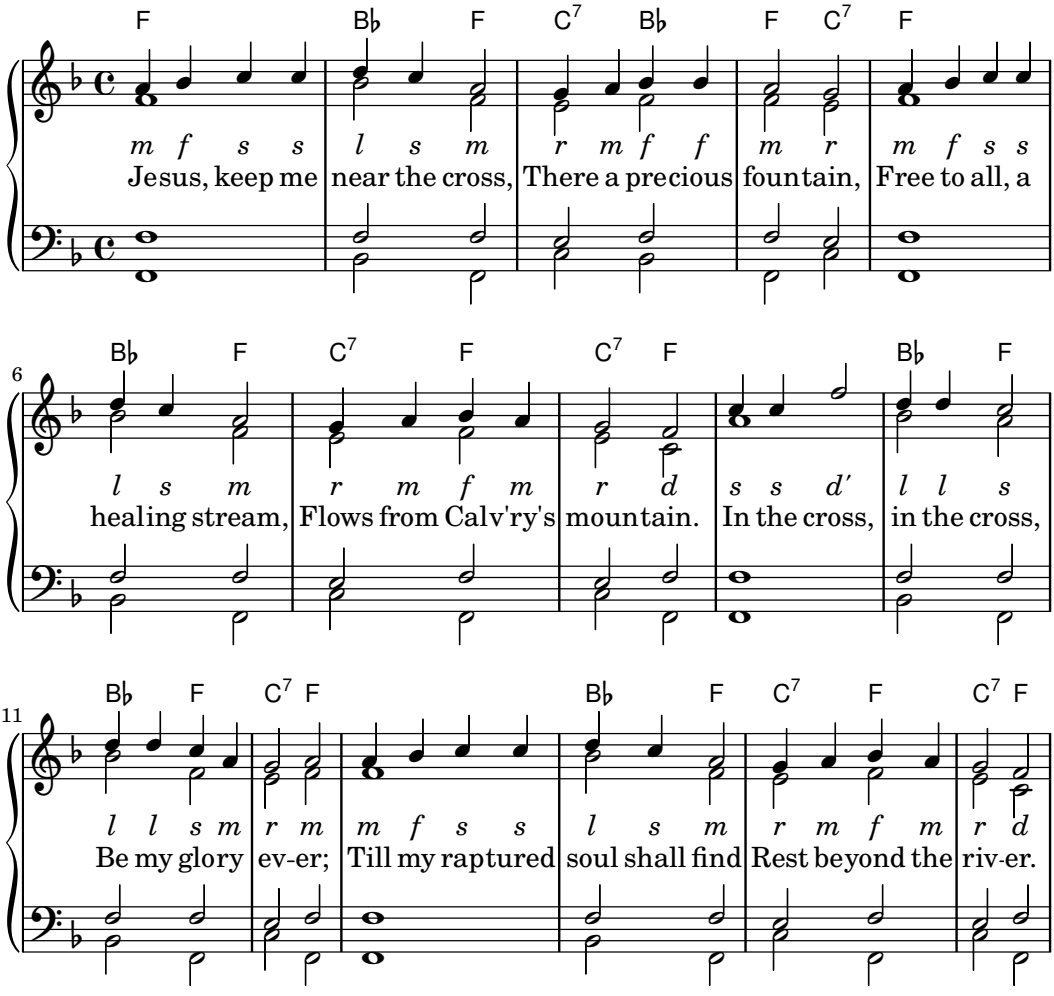
Charles C. Converse (1832–1918)



# Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

BL Piano – Key F
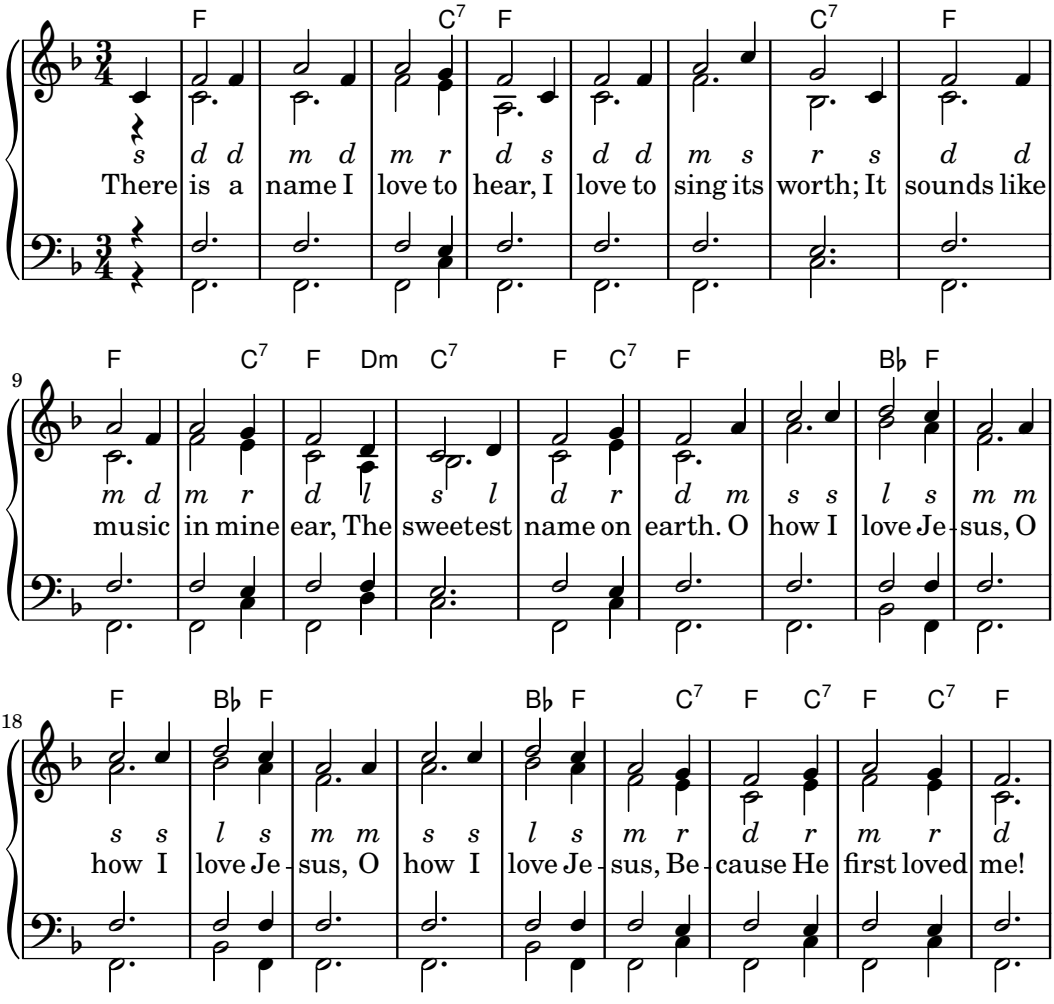
William H. Doane (1832–1915)



# O How I Love Jesus

BL Piano – Key F

American melody, 19th century



## The Key of G

You already know how to play by ear in the key of C. The good news: **the sol-fa pattern never changes**. Only the starting note moves. In the key of G, *d* is G instead of C, and everything else follows from there.

The key of G also has **one black key**: F♯ (F sharp). Whenever the melody reaches *t*, you play F♯ instead of F. G is a favourite key for gospel and worship music.

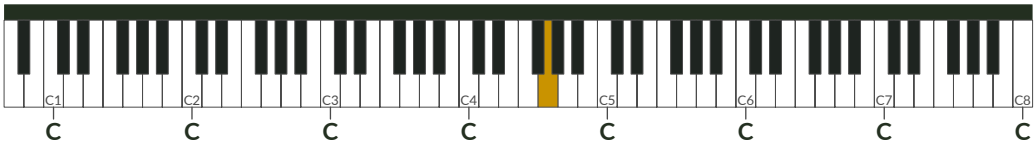
## Finding G

G is the white key **between the first and second** of the three black keys.

Once you find G, the key of G uses these notes:

**G A B C D E F♯**

F♯ is the black key just to the right of F.



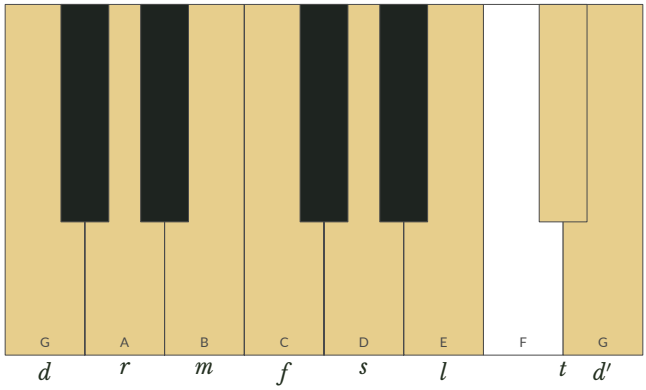

The gold key is the G just above middle C (G4).

## The G Major Scale

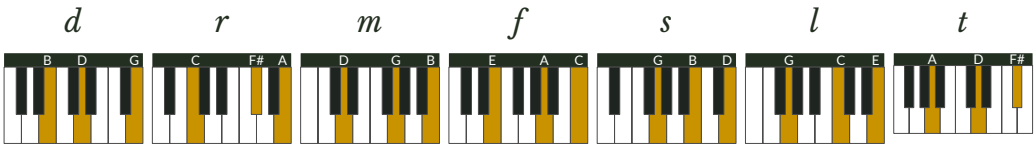
G – A – B – C – D – E – F♯ – G

In Tonic Sol-Fa it is exactly the same as in C:

*d* – *r* – *m* – *f* – *s* – *l* – *t* – *d*



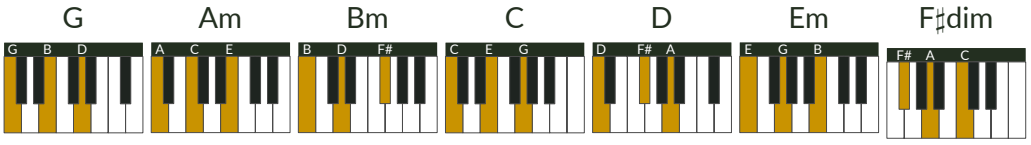

The three-finger pattern works exactly as in C: your ring finger plays the melody note, the pointing finger one step to the left, and the thumb two steps to the left. The exception is still *d*: there the pointing finger moves two steps, giving *d* – *s* – *m*.



## Chords in the Key of G

The chords are built the same way, by skipping notes in the scale. The three most important chords in G are **G**, **C** and **D**.

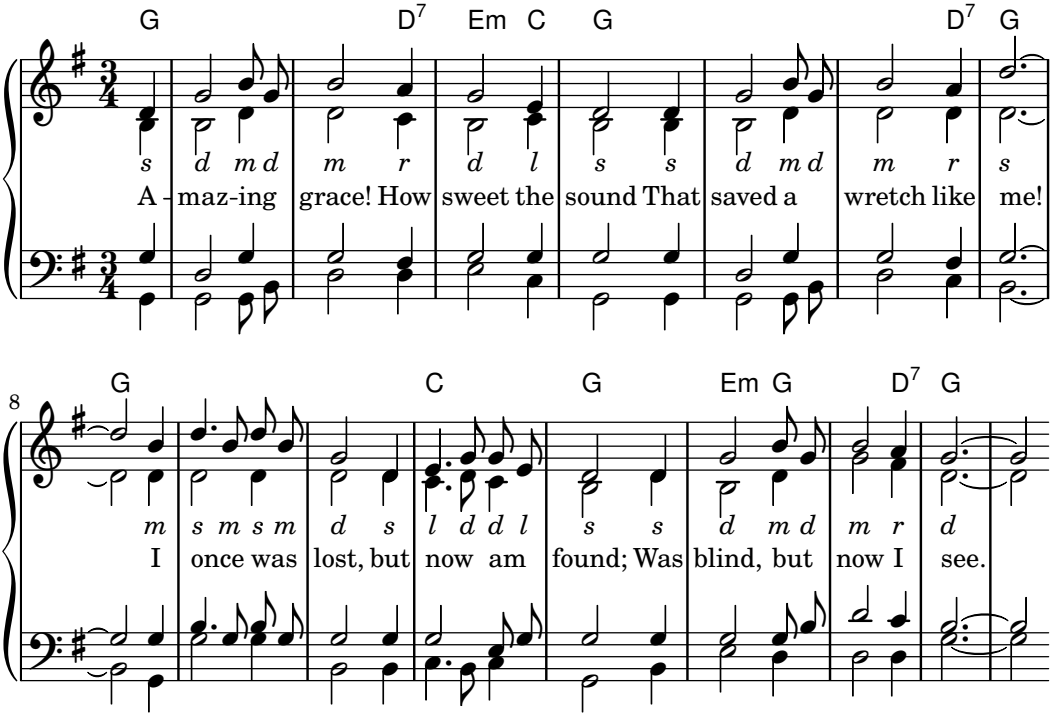
| **Chord** | **Notes** |
|---|---|
| G | G B D |
| Am | A C E |
| Bm | B D F♯ |
| C | C E G |
| D | D F♯ A |
| Em | E G B |
| F♯dim | F♯ A C |



# Amazing Grace

BL Piano – Key G
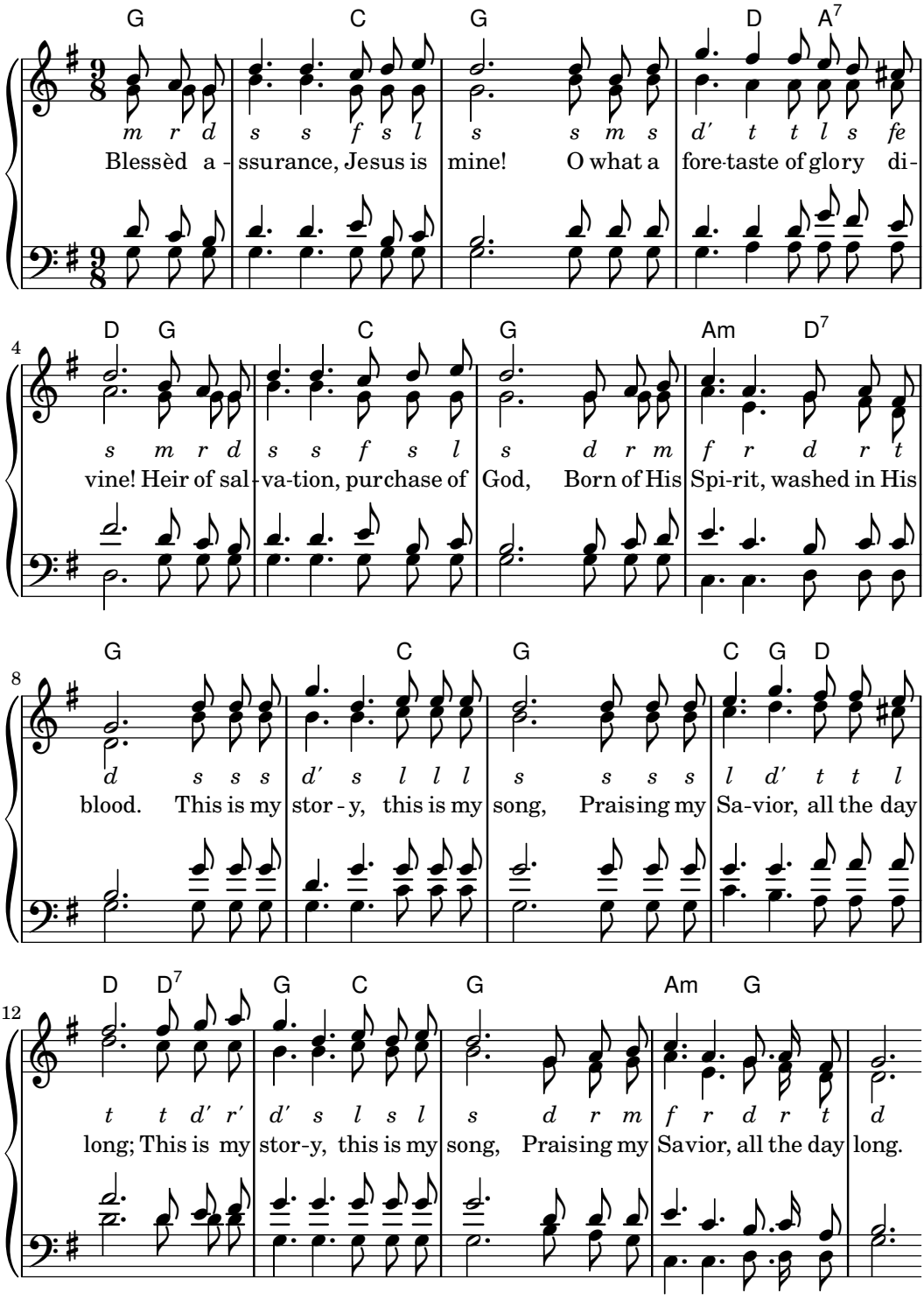
New Britain, early American melody



# Blessed Assurance

BL Piano – Key G
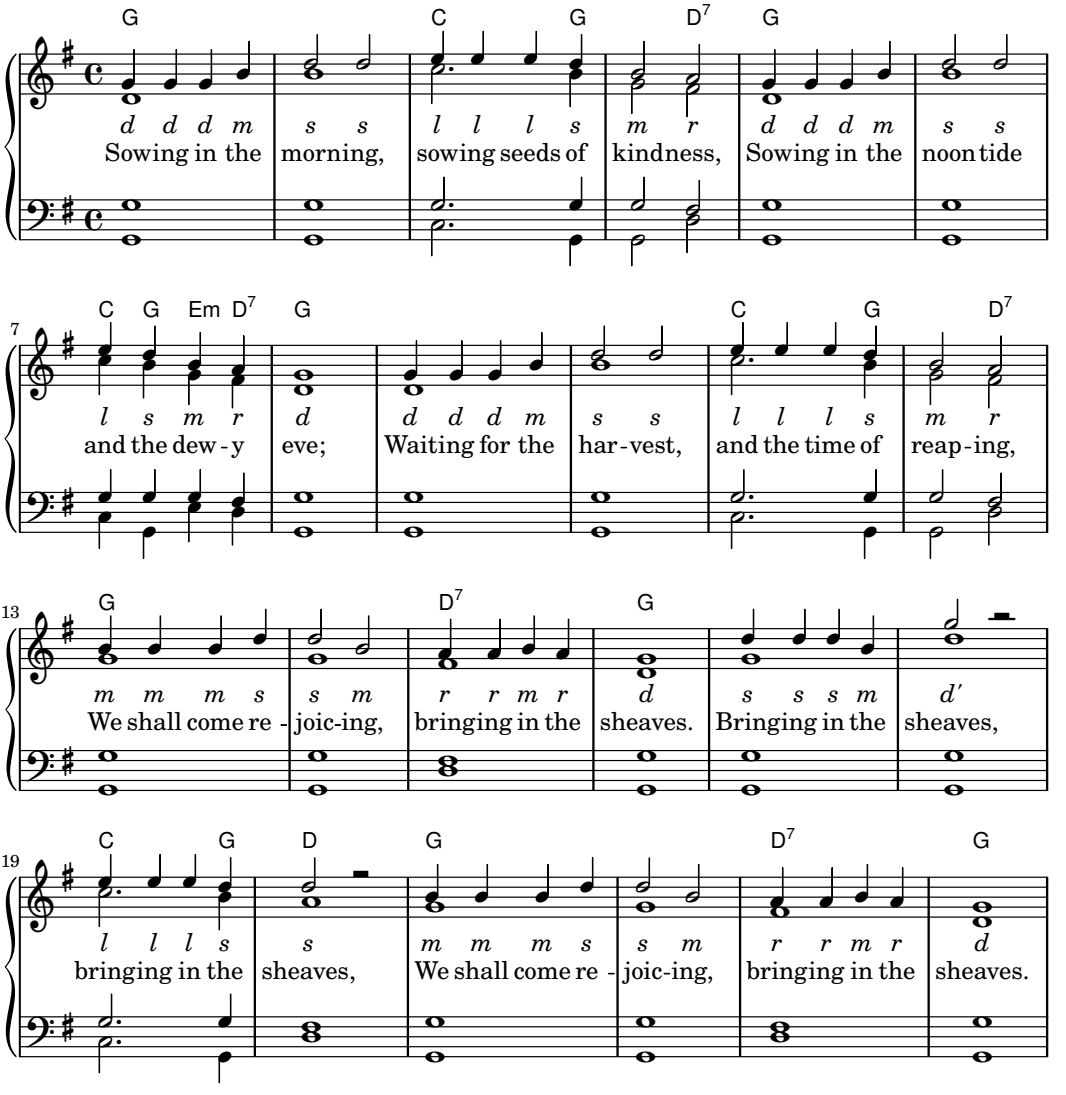
Phoebe P. Knapp (1839–1908)



# Bringing in the Sheaves

BL Piano – Key G

George A. Minor (1845–1904)



# Rock of Ages

BL Piano – Key G
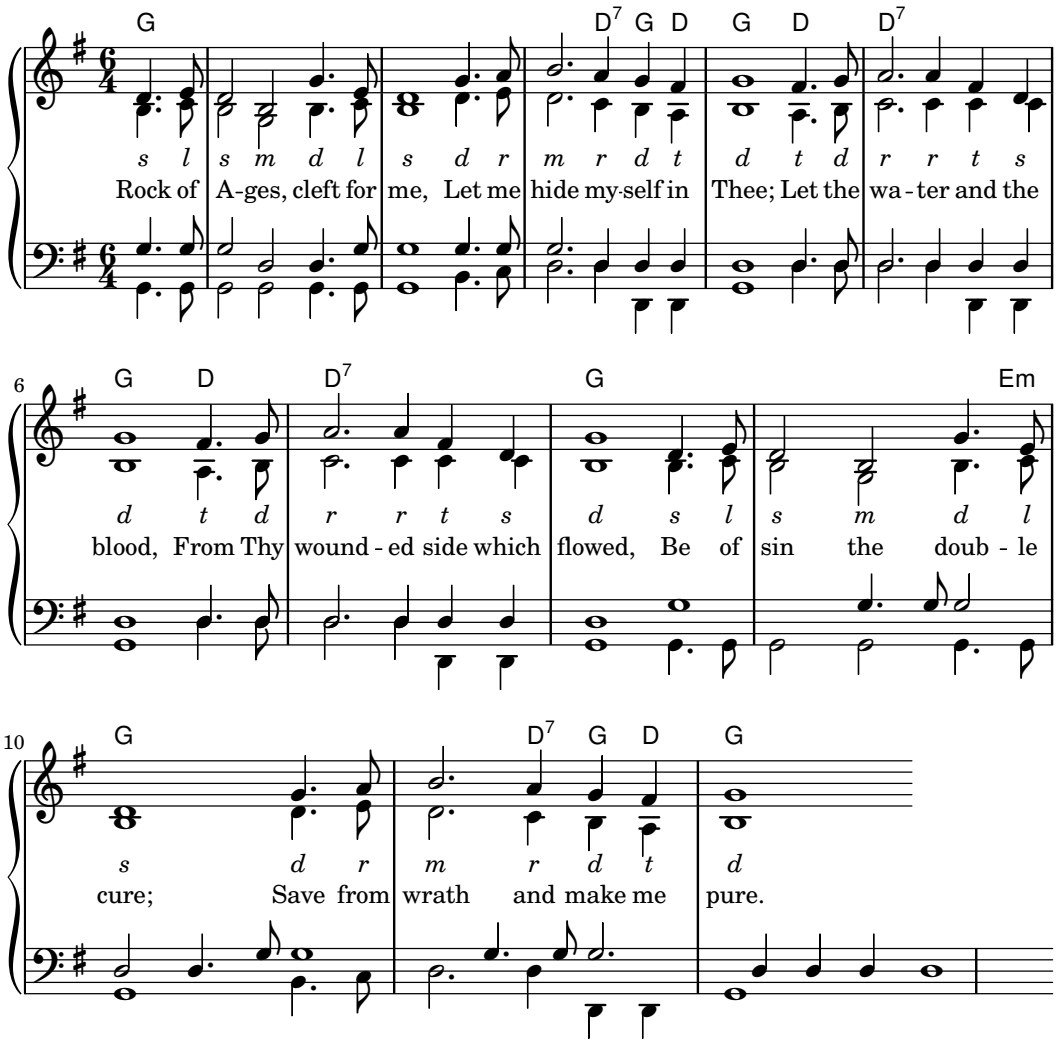
Thomas Hastings (1784–1872)

