

# Early American Songs

## I. Simple Gifts

for 2-part treble chorus and piano

This melody and text are often assumed to be a folk song which usually implies that they are of unknown origin. There is proof, however, that Elder Joseph Brackett, a citizen of Maine and member of the Shaker community in the 19th century, is the composer of both the words and tune. The melody became world famous primarily through American composer Aaron Copland who included it in his ballet score *Appalachian Spring* in 1944.

Joseph Brackett, Jr. (1797-1882)

arr. Daniel Kallman

With graceful, unhurried simplicity ♩ = 88-92

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) is for piano, starting in 4/4 time with a *pp* dynamic. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The second system (measures 6-9) includes a vocal line with lyrics: "'Tis the gift to be sim-ple, 'tis the gift to be free 'Tis the gift to come down". The piano accompaniment continues with a *mp* dynamic. The third system (measures 10-14) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "where we ought to be, And when we find our-selves in the place just right, 'Twill". The piano accompaniment concludes with a *mp* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*pp*, *mp*), tempo markings (*a tempo*), and performance instructions (*rit.*, *poco cresc.*).

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be in the val - ley of love and de-light. When true sim - pli-cit-y is gained, To

19

bow and to bend we shan't be a - shamed, To turn, turn will be our de-light, Till by

24

turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round right. 'Tis the

28

gift to be sim-ple, 'tis the gift to be free 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, And