



# THE VISION OF LIFE

A Symphonic Poem

Words and Music

by

C. Hubert H. Parry

Composed for the Cardiff Musical Festival - September 26, 1907

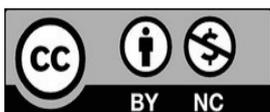
Revised for 1914 Norwich Festival which was cancelled due to start of World War I

HORN 2

Cover Image: "Spirit of the Summit" by Frederic Leighton, 1894



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## ENGLISH HERITAGE MUSIC SERIES

The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble ).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

### Matthew W. Mehaffey

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### Source Information

*Autograph Manuscript:*

Royal College of Music Library MS 4213

*Vocal Score:*

Novello Original Octavo Edition No. 12565

*Royal College of Music Library*

Jonathan Frank, Ass’t. Librarian - jonathan.frank@rcm.ac.uk

*Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation*

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### Reference Material and Software

*Notation Software:* Dorico Version 5.1.21.2225 (1-16-2025)

*Audio Software:* Note Performer 4

*Graphic Software:* Affinity Photo 2

*Document Software:* Affinity Publisher 2

*Music Notation Reference:* Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARRY AND “THE VISION OF LIFE”

**Sir Edward Elgar (May 18, 1909)**

“I hope you are well and that you are writing. I am so delighted we are to have *Job* in Hereford Cathedral. Your Cardiff ‘Vision’ was, I conclude, too strong for the Church, but I hope we may have it soon. It’s really strong bracing stuff, and, like your Odes, some of us love it and love you for giving us these things.”

**Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, p. 66**

“During the first half of this year (1914) he gave much time to the revision of the score of his Vision of Life with a view to its performance at Norwich—an expectation frustrated by the War.”

**Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, pp. 157-158**

“Hubert Parry’s ethical idealism was animated by a truly Christian spirit. The great aim of his later years was to impress on all people the need of enlarging their sphere of Religion; to consecrate his art to the service of humanity. ‘Religion,’ he wrote in one of his notebooks, ‘includes Art as well as definite devotional exercises,’ and again: ‘Art is a form of devotion. Everything that endeavours to beautify and make lovable the surroundings and the ideas of man is part of devotional religion. It is devotion to the beautiful aspect of things—the things which minister to spiritual well-being, to truth.’

Thus it came about, as Mrs. Ponsonby writes, that ‘when he spoke of some remarkable human being or act, or of Bach, or the sea, or architecture, or the country, one felt that to him the sphere of Religion was indeed without bounds. The beliefs which informs the message that he endeavoured to give to the world in his later works, and especially in *The Vision of Life*, is best defined in his own words, quoted by Miss Daymond in the memorial number of the Royal College Magazine:

*There is, as it were, a limitless, unflagging, living series of variations on a great subject—and that subject is the progress towards the highest good of the race . . . The highest optimism is the belief that as man has already succeeded in controlling his destiny, and the resources of the little corner of the world with which he is concerned, by slow degrees better and better, so he will go on doing it in the future. There is no hope of a comfortable easy-going Utopia, but a reality of constant effort towards the development of the consciousness that the guarantee of Life is the fruitful expenditure of energy.*

**Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, p. 224**

“The Vision of Life, brought out in 1907 and revised in 1914, is notable as an exposition of his philosophy of life, as an expansion of the gospel of brotherhood and love . . . it also commands admiration by its dignity and felicity of phrase and the skill with which rhymed passages are introduced to lend emphasis to a scheme of free verse. Traces are not wanting in vocabulary of the influence exerted by his familiarity with the Bible, and in the metre and use of alliteration with the old chronicles and Sagas and the libretti of Wagner. But, as it has been said of his music, so may it be repeated of this his most ambitious poem, that there is scarcely a passage that is not plainly and unmistakably Parry.”

**Hamilton Hartly**

“I have a personal theory—probably all wrong—that Parry was too broad and great a man to be a really first-rate genius as a musician. After all, to be a universally interested man, as he was, is better than to be a more or less narrow musician, and I can’t think of any great composer whose absorption in his art did not make him a little deaf and blind to the rest of the world and its problems.”

**Other Sources**

*C. Hubert H. Parry—His Life and Music* by Jeremy Dibble, Oxford University Press, © 1992, pp. 420-423

*An Imperishable Heritage: British Choral Music from Parry to Dyson* by Stephen Town, Ashgate Publishing Company, ©2012, pp. 1-36

*Parry before Jerusalem—Studies of His Life and Music* by Bernard Benoliel, Ashgate Publishing Company, © 1997

# The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

**Moderato**

6 11

1-6 11-21

stopped

*pp* *dim.*

22 1 open open

*p* *cresc.* *cresc.*

29 *p cresc.*

34 2

39 3

45 rit.

*p* *mf* *dim.* *pp*

50 2 3 4 4

51-52 53-55 59-62

*pp*

63 5

*sf* *f* *ff* *f* *p*

Detailed description: Musical staff 63-68. Treble clef. Measure 63 starts with a rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes with accents. Dynamics range from *sf* to *p*. A circled number '5' is above the staff.

69 6 Lento

*p* 3 5 74-76 77-81

Detailed description: Musical staff 69-78. Treble clef. Measure 69 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *p* dynamic. A circled number '6' is above the staff. The tempo is marked 'Lento'. There are two thick black bars representing rests, one for measures 74-76 and another for 77-81.

82 rit. *8va* Bsn 1 *f*

Detailed description: Musical staff 82-87. Treble clef. Measure 82 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *f* dynamic. A dashed line above the staff indicates an octave transposition (*8va*). The tempo is marked 'rit.'. The instrument is identified as 'Bsn 1'.

90 Lento 7 6 93-98

*dim.*

Detailed description: Musical staff 90-99. Treble clef. Measure 90 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *dim.* dynamic. A circled number '7' is above the staff. The tempo is marked 'Lento'. A thick black bar represents a rest for measures 93-98.

101 Allegro moderato 3 2 105-106

*sf* *pp*

Detailed description: Musical staff 101-108. Treble clef. Measure 101 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *sf* dynamic. A circled number '3' is above the staff. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. A thick black bar represents a rest for measures 105-106. A circled number '2' is above the staff.

109 3 3 3

Detailed description: Musical staff 109-114. Treble clef. Measure 109 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a circled number '3' above the staff. The staff contains several triplet markings.

115 8 *f*

Detailed description: Musical staff 115-121. Treble clef. Measure 115 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *f* dynamic. A circled number '8' is above the staff.

122 *f* *f*

Detailed description: Musical staff 122-128. Treble clef. Measure 122 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *f* dynamic. The staff contains several notes with accents.

129 9 14 133-146 *ff* *sempre dim.* Tbn. 1

Detailed description: Musical staff 129-148. Treble clef. Measure 129 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *ff* dynamic. A circled number '9' is above the staff. The tempo is marked 'sempre dim.'. A thick black bar represents a rest for measures 133-146. The instrument is identified as 'Tbn. 1'.

149 largamente Lento 3 155-157 *pp* *pp*

Detailed description: Musical staff 149-154. Treble clef. Measure 149 starts with a rest, followed by notes with a *pp* dynamic. The tempo is marked 'largamente Lento'. A thick black bar represents a rest for measures 155-157. The staff ends with a *pp* dynamic.

7  
160-166  
*p*  
rit. **10** a tempo  
*pp*

173 *p* sostenuto Più mosso tranquillo *pp* 6  
179-184

**11** 185 *p* agitato 3 rit. molto rit. a tempo 6 poco animando 3 *p*  
186-188 191-196 197-199

**12** 201 animato allargando *mf*

208 rit. Allegro animato **13**  
Tpt 1 6  
210-215

222 *f* 7  
229-235

14

3

236-238

*mf*

245

*f*

*p*

*cresc.*

253

*f*

*cresc.*

259

*poco rit.*

*Poco meno mosso*

265

15

272

16

*sf*

279

*sf*

*mf*

287

17

295

*p*

303

*cresc.*

18

311

320

329

poco rit.

19 a tempo

338

*f*

347

356-358

20

367

dim. e rit. **7** Moderato **6**

368-374 375-380

Bsn 1

387

Lentissimo **3** Più mosso

392-394

397-398

*mf*

Meno mosso **2**

407-408

409 **a tempo, moderato**

Musical staff 409-414. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

415 **Allegro**

Musical staff 415-419. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

21

Musical staff 420-423. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

Musical staff 424-428. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

Musical staff 429-432. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

Musical staff 433-436. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

22

Musical staff 437-442. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

23

Musical staff 443-448. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

449 **animando**

Musical staff 449-453. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*

454 **allargando**

Musical staff 454-458. The staff contains a melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *mf cresc.* and *p*. The staff ends with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *mf cresc.*



27

530 molto rit. Lento

Musical staff 530-537. It begins with a whole rest on a high note, followed by four measures of whole notes on a low note. The dynamic is *pp*. From measure 535, the melody begins with a half note, followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. The dynamic is *pp*.

28

animato

8

poco agitato

Musical staff 538-546. It starts with a melodic line in 8/8 time. A thick black bar covers measures 539-546, with 'Hn 3' written below it. The dynamic is *mf*.

29

a tempo, tranquillo

Musical staff 552-563. It begins with a melodic line. A thick black bar covers measures 554-555, with 'Hn 3' written below it. Another thick black bar covers measures 558-563, also with 'Hn 3' written below it. The dynamic is *f*. The tempo markings 'Colla voce', 'rit.', 'molto rit.', and 'rit.' are placed above the staff.

30

566 Lento maestoso

Musical staff 566-571. It features a melodic line with accents. The dynamic is *p*.

Musical staff 572-577. It continues the melodic line with accents. The dynamics are *f*, *ff*, *sf*, and *sf <*.

31

allargando

Tranquillo

9

Musical staff 578-591. It features a melodic line with various dynamics: *f*, *sf*, *p*, *sf*, *p*, and *pp*. A thick black bar covers measures 583-591, with 'Hn 3' written below it. The dynamic is *f*.

32

poco rit. a tempo

Musical staff 592-601. It features a melodic line. A thick black bar covers measures 598-600, with 'Hn 3' written below it. The dynamic is *pp*.

33

Musical staff 602-609. It features a melodic line with accents. The dynamic is *mf*.

34

Musical staff 610-618. It features a melodic line with accents. The dynamic is *cresc.*

619 allargando

rit.

Musical staff 619-626. It features a melodic line with accents. The dynamic is *f*. The tempo markings 'allargando' and 'rit.' are placed above the staff. The dynamic is *cresc.*

629 **a tempo** **Lento** **4**

*dim.* *p* 635-638 Cl. 1

35

642 **dim. e rit.** **a tempo**

*pp* *pp*

651 **allargando**

658 **rit.** **a tempo** **36** **poco agitato**

*p* *pp* *cresc.*

665 **mf** **mf cresc.**

37

670 **2** **a tempo** **5**

*mf* *mf cresc.* 673-674 675-679

680 **animando**  
Tbn. 1  
f *cresc.*

688 **animando** 38 *marcato*  
*cresc. mf*

697 *sf*

704 **Più mosso, allegro feroce**

712 *sf sf*

39  
720 *sf sf*

729 40  
**6**  
731-736 *ff*

742 **Vivacissimo** **8** **allargando** **4** **a tempo**  
747-754 755-758 *f*

760 *ff*

41  
771 *f*

Allargando a tempo

2  
781-782

791

800 rit. [Silent] Lento 12 Più mosso 8

805-816 817-824

*sf*

animando 4 42 agitato animando

825-828

B. Cl. 8ba

836 Allegro

*f*

844 43 Allegro

852

860 animato rit.

867 Moderato sempre cresc.

*ff* *mf*

874 rit. a tempo animato

*sf*

44

884 *allargando* **8** *agitato*

885-892 *f* *mf*

Detailed description: Musical staff 884-892. It begins with a whole rest. A thick black bar indicates a measure rest for 8 measures (885-892). The music resumes with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. Dynamics are *f* and *mf*.

*animando* **2** *poco allargando*

898-899 *sf*

Detailed description: Musical staff 898-899. It begins with a whole rest. A thick black bar indicates a measure rest for 2 measures (898-899). The music resumes with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. Dynamics are *sf*.

906 *Allegro* *poco rit.* *rit.* **45** *Agitato dolente*

*p* **3**

Detailed description: Musical staff 906-911. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. Dynamics are *p*. There are triplet markings over the notes.

912 *poco animando*

**3**

Detailed description: Musical staff 912-917. It consists of six measures of triplet eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3.

918 *molto rit.* *Lento* **6** *Più lento*

922-927

Detailed description: Musical staff 918-927. It begins with a triplet eighth note G4, followed by quarter notes F#4, E4, D4. A double bar line with repeat dots follows. A thick black bar indicates a measure rest for 6 measures (922-927). The music resumes with a whole note G4. Dynamics are *pp* and *cresc.*

929 *Moderato* *Moderato con anima*

*p*

Detailed description: Musical staff 929-936. It begins with a whole rest. A 4/4 time signature change is indicated. The music resumes with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F#4, E4, D4. Dynamics are *p*.

937 *pp* *cresc.*

Detailed description: Musical staff 937-945. It consists of nine measures of eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3.

46

946 *rit.* *a tempo largamente*

Detailed description: Musical staff 946-954. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F#4, E4, D4. Dynamics are *pp* and *cresc.*

955 *rit.* *a tempo allargando*

**6** 957-962 *mf*

Detailed description: Musical staff 955-962. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F#4, E4, D4. A thick black bar indicates a measure rest for 6 measures (957-962). The music resumes with a half note G4. Dynamics are *mf*.

47

968 *a tempo* *rit.*

Detailed description: Musical staff 968-976. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F#4, E4, D4. Dynamics are *pp* and *cresc.*

977 **a tempo - tranquillo** **poco rit.**

*p* 982-987

**48** **a tempo - tranquillo**

*pp* *mf cresc.*

Hn 3

**49**

*p*

1006-1007

**poco animando** **50**

*f*

1013-1015

*f*

1022-1023

1032 **Solenne**

*f* *p* *mf*

1038 **allargando** **rit.** **51** **Tempo giusto**

*cresc.* *cresc.* *f*

1043

*cresc.* *f*

1048

*mf* *cresc.* *ff*

1055 **rit.** **allargando** **52** **meno mosso**

*sf*

1062 **Allegro**

*dim.* *p*

1070 **poco agitato**  
**2**  
 1071-1072 *mf* < *p* *pp*

**meno mosso** **poco animando** **rit.** **Lento**  
**5**  
 1078-1082 *mf*

1089 **53** **più mosso** **Allegro agitato**  
**2** **4**  
 1090-1091 *pp* *f* 1097-1100

**54** **agitato accelerando** **Più lento (colla voce)** **a tempo** **rit.** **Andante**  
**2** **4** **4**  
 1101-1102 *pp* 1105-1108 1110-1113

1115 **55** **rit.** **a tempo - tranquillo**  
**6** **3**  
*pp* 1118-1123 1124-1126 *p*

1129 **56** **allargando**..... **animando**  
**2**  
*dim.* *cresc.* 1135-1136

**animando** **allargando** **57** **a tempo**  
**3**  
 1137-1139 *mf* *f*

1146 **58** **Moderato tranquillo**  
**6**  
*cresc.* 1149-1154

1158

1165 **59** **poco rit.** **a tempo** **dolce** **allargando** **Poco meno mosso**  
**8** **2**  
 1167-1174 1175-1176 *f*

1180 *p*

Tranquillo

1188 **8** poco rit. Allegro - animando cresc. sempre

1189-1196 *p*

1202 **60** *cresc.* *f*

1209 *f* allaargando a tempo

1217 **61** *sf*

1224

1232 **62** *sf sf sf*

1239 **63** *sf* agitato, vivace

1247 *cresc.* **64** *cresc. molto* lunga Lento tranquillo molto rit. **3** **2**

1252-1254 1255-1256 *pp*

1258 *p* **2** 1264-1265

1266 *poco rit. a tempo*

*mf* *cresc.*

65

1273

*p* *p*

1280 *rit.* **66** *poco animando* *poco rit.* *Poco animando, espressivo*

*mf dim.* *mf <*

67

1288 *animando*

68

1294

*f*

69

1301

*mf*

70

1308

*mf*

71

1315 *mf* *cresc.*

1322 *animato* *f* *animando*

1329 *sempre cresc. ed animando*





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