

Burl Faywood

Gospel Keyboard Studies

Dear Student:

Before we begin, I wish to touch on a few things about the studies we will be doing together.

First of all, I believe you are going to find this series a very exciting and rewarding experience. As we continue from lesson to lesson, we will not only learn new musical arrangements, but you will find yourself beginning to add a chord here; a run there; a beautiful “fill” here; etc. to your playing in general, until you have developed a rich and thrilling new style.

As we advance, we will grow in our understanding of what we are doing, and why we are doing what we are doing. It will be a growing experience as we learn to add new things and to expand in many different areas. Experience has shown that this is by far the most productive approach, rather than trying to “cram” it into our minds all at once. For this reason, do not worry if everything is not grasped all at once. It will become increasingly clear as we progress.

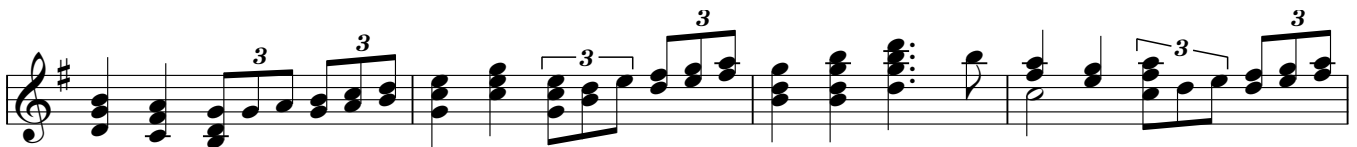
It is a pleasure to work with you. I believe you will find it equally satisfying as we move ahead into new experiences in Gospel music.

KEYBOARD IMPROVISING.

To improvise in music is to add extra notes, harmony, chord or rhythm patterns, etc., which go beyond the written score. For example, the treble clef of *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*, looks like this in the hymnal:



However, we might play the right hand like this:



Or, perhaps we like the sound of rich, full chords. We might play like this:



In the above illustrations, we retained the basic theme of the passage, but added various embellishments to the written score. In other words, we improvised on the song. This is the principle upon which our studies will be based, as you will note in the arrangements which follow.

CHORD STYLE PLAYING

Most pianists play by simply taking prescribed notes, time values, etc. as written and merely transferring them to the keyboard. This is fine, of course, but it does impose the restriction of playing only that which is before us and of limiting our creativity in terms of whether we only reproduce or whether we create at the keyboard.

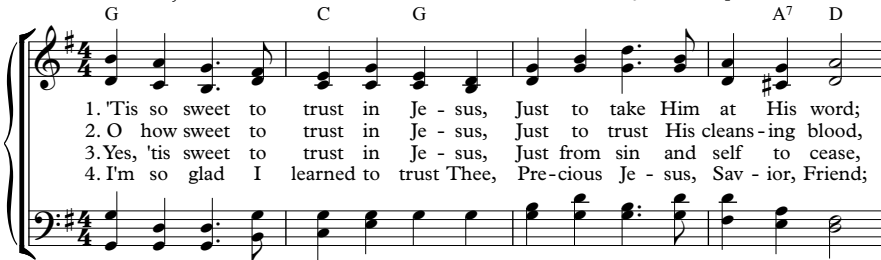
The key to all this rests upon our coming to understand music as passages based upon what we call THE CHORD UNIT CONCEPT, rather than just an assortment of notes and figures to be transferred to the keyboard. This is the principle by which all professional Gospel artists play. And, this is the principle which we will gradually teach and instill as we continue through these lessons. It will open a new world to you!

THE LESSON HYMN

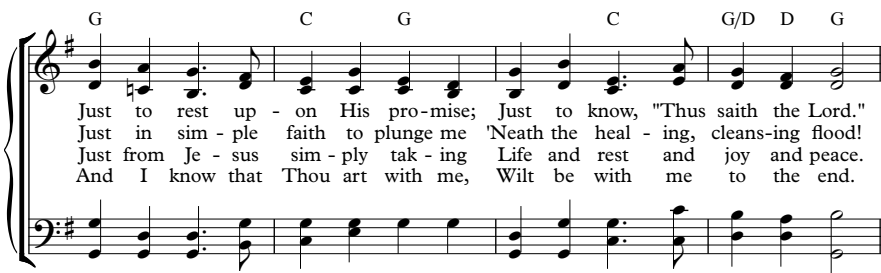
'Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus

Louisa M. R. Stead, c. 1850-1917

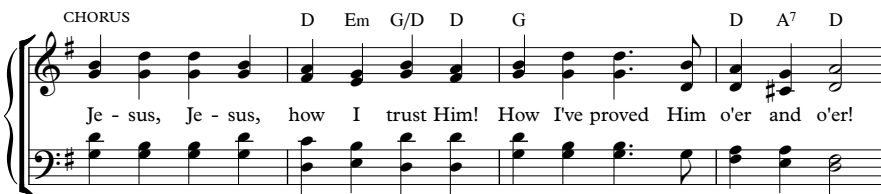
William James Kirkpatrick, 1838-1921



1. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Je - sus, Just to take Him at His word;
 2. O how sweet to trust in Je - sus, Just to trust His cleans - ing blood,
 3. Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Je - sus, Just from sin and self to cease,
 4. I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee, Pre - cious Je - sus, Sav - ior, Friend;



Just to rest up - on His pro-mise; Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."
 Just in sim - ple faith to plunge me 'Neath the heal - ing, cleans-ing flood!
 Just from Je - sus sim - ply tak - ing Life and rest and joy and peace.
 And I know that Thou art with me, Wilt be with me to the end.



CHORUS
 Je - sus, Je - sus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!



Je - sus, Je - sus, pre - cious Je - sus! O for grace to trust Him more!

NOTES

To our left is the familiar song which we will use in this lesson. By using the songs with which we are well acquainted, we are better able to judge our use of new and expanded ideas.

1. Note the chord line. This means the names of chords placed above the treble clef in each line of the song. This tells us that the basic harmony of a passage is taken primarily from the notes of that particular chord until a change is indicated.
2. Note that this arrangement is written in the key of G (one sharp in the key signature). Many hymnals will have this song written in the key of Ab (four flats) which is one half step higher. Later we will learn about key transposing, but for now we will use this arrangement for purposes of simplicity.
3. If, perchance, you are not thoroughly familiar with this song as written, you should become so, before proceeding.

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KEYBOARD STUDIES

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

G G C G D A7 D



f 'Tis so sweet to trust in Je-sus, Just to take Him at His word;

G D7 G C G C G/D D G



Just to rest up-on His pro-mise; Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

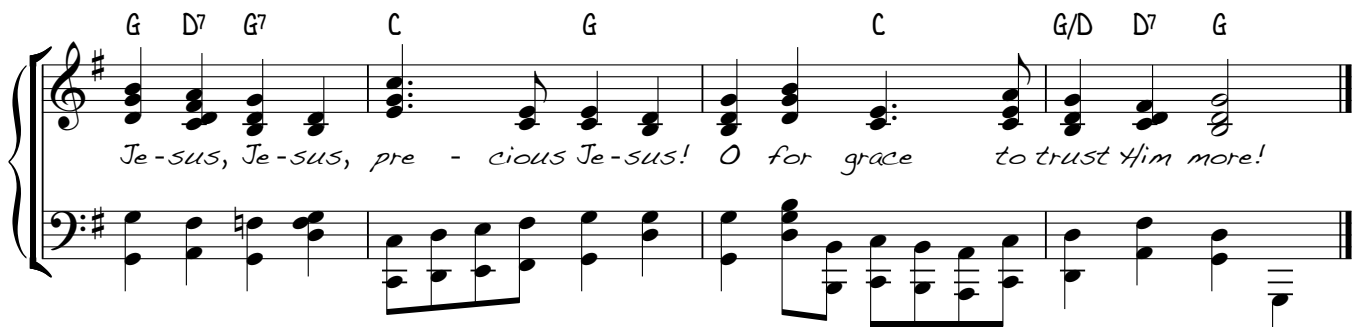
Chorus:

G D Em G/D D G Em D A7 D



Je-sus, Je - sus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!

G D7 G7 C G C G/D D7 G



Je-sus, Je-sus, pre - cious Je-sus! O for grace to trust Him more!

'Tis So Sweet (Arr. #2)



'Tis so sweet to trust in Je-sus, Just to take Him at His word;



Just to rest up - on His pro-mise; Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Chorus:



Je-sus, Je-sus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!



Je-sus, Je-sus, pre-cious Je-sus! O for grace to trust Him more!
rit.

* Technically, a 9th chord should resolve in a 7th. However, we will take the liberty to use the 9th in the above for the present.

PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT

ARRANGEMENT #1

In this arrangement, we have expanded the treble clef to include both three- and four-part harmony. Particularly note that certain measures or passages (such as the first two measures of the first line, and the first two measures of the second line) which are identical in the original score (page 2), are each arranged somewhat differently here. Accordingly, we could interchange the passages, or combine ideas from both.

ARRANGEMENT #2

This somewhat more advanced arrangement makes an attractive offertory or special number.

It will be essential to play this arrangement in a smooth, flowing style. A heavy touch, or too rapid tempo will ruin the effect we are striving to achieve.

You will notice that the left hand makes use of certain chords covering a rather wide span. (These are known as 10th chords, encompassing a range of ten lines and spaces.) If it is at all possible, play the notes in the chord simultaneously. However, since many people have difficulty reaching this span, you are free to “roll” or “break” the chord as we have designated in the score.

It is important that we note the following with regard to the foregoing arrangements, as they are principles with which we will be working as we continue in these lessons:

1. We developed a smooth flowing rhythm in our left hand. While the melody of the song contains dotted quarter and eighth notes, half notes, etc., we played a more flowing sense of rhythm in our left hand. This is important, as it provides a steady background against which we can then play the right hand with its uneven notes and timing.
2. In the second arrangement, we sometimes played our right hand in the octave where it is written in the original score, and sometimes in the next octave higher. Notice that in the beginning of the Chorus, we alternated octaves from note to note. It does not alter the basic theme of a song to play the melody in a higher octave, and will, in fact, often add to the sense of richness.

PRACTICE THE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN, UNTIL YOU ARE COMPLETELY FAMILIAR WITH THEM. TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU PLAYED AND WHERE YOU PLAYED IT. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS PRACTICE, THEN RETURN TO THE BASIC ARRANGEMENT ON PAGE 2, BUT WITH THIS DIFFERENCE:

AS YOU PLAY THE SONG. TRY TO ADD THINGS WHICH YOU REMEMBER FROM EITHER OF THE TWO SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS. IT MAY BE JUST A CHORD HERE, A “FILL” THERE, OR EVEN SOME IDEAS WHICH YOU MAY GAIN FROM EXPERIMENTING YOURSELF. IN ANY CASE, IT REPRESENTS THE BEGINNING OF A DEVELOPMENT TOWARD A THRILLING NEW STYLE!

RETURN TO THE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW. THEN AGAIN READ AND PLAY THE ORIGINAL ON PAGE 2, ADDING SUCH THINGS AS YOU ARE ABLE TO REMEMBER AND WORK IN.

After a few days of going back and forth between the original score and the special arrangements, I assure you that you will never play *'Tis So Sweet To Trust in Jesus* again, in the same manner as before. You are beginning to play in improvised, Gospel style!!

PART II CHORD STUDY

The following chart lists the basic notes which comprise our more common chord forms. Be sure to keep this diagram handy as it will be very useful to us in future lessons.

C	M	m	6	7	9	Au9	Dim	F	M	m	6	7	9	Au9	Dim

6th CHORDS

Our first chord study will focus on the 6th chords. We will only touch on their usage here, so as to begin to give us a small insight into their sound and how they are used. In later lessons we will learn about how and when to use them, etc. But, for now this is a start in learning chords and harmony.

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

(We will not normally use the 6th chord form to the extent given in the following exercise. We simply wish to demonstrate the basic sound.) F6 chord equals any combination of F, A, C and D notes. Bb6 chord equals any combination of Bb, D, F and G notes.

NOW NOTICE THE BEAUTIFUL, RICH SOUNDS DERIVED FROM 6th CHORDS INTERSPERSED WITH OTHER FULL RICH CHORDS. We will learn about these chords also, as we continue.

COMING NEXT LESSON – RUNS, RUNS, RUNS!!! YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT.