

Classic Poetry Series

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

- poems -

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Robert Wadsworth Lowry(1826 - 1899)

Robert Lowry was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 12th March 1826.

He studied theology at the University of Lewisburg and on graduating, in 1854, became ordained as a Baptist minister. He had charge of churches in a number of places including New York, Brooklyn, West Chester, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

In 1869 he returned to Lewisburg as a faculty member (having previously served as a professor of literature) and later went on to become its chancellor.

From 1880 until 1886 he was president of the New Jersey Baptist Sunday School Union.

He is most remembered as a composer of gospel music and a hymn writer, and also worked as a music editor at the Biglow Publishing Company. He was responsible for around 500 compositions, including Beautiful River and Nothing But the Blood.

Volumes he edited include:

Happy Voices (1865)
Gospel Melodies (1868)
Bright Jewels (1869)
Pure Gold (1871)
Royal Diadem (1873)
Temple Anthems (1873)
Tidal Wave (1874)
Good as Gold (1880)
Our Glad Hosannas (1882)
Joyful Lays (1884)
Glad Refrain (1886)

Despite his success as a hymn writer, it was as a preacher that Lowry would have preferred to be recognised. He once stated: "Music, with me has been a side issue... I would rather preach a gospel sermon to an appreciative audience than write a hymn. I have always looked upon myself as a preacher and felt a sort of depreciation when I began to be known more as a composer."

Despite this, it is as a hymn writer that he remains renowned, songs such as I Need Thee Every Hour and Christ Arose as popular now as they ever were.

Lowry was married with three sons and died in Plainfield, New Jersey on 23rd November 1899.

At The River

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide for ever flowing
by the throne of God?
Gather at the river!
Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Yes well gather at the river
that flows by the throne of God.
Shall we gather? Shall we gather at the river?

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

Beautiful River

And he showed me a pure River of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb." -- Rev. xxii. 1

Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?

CHORUS.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

On the margin of the river,
Washing up its silver spray,
We will walk and worship ever,
All the happy, golden day.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

On the bosom of the river,
Where the Saviour-king we own,
We shall meet, and sorrow never
'Neath the glory of the throne. Cho.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

Ere we reach the shining river,
Lay we every burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver,

And provide a robe and crown. Cho.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

At the smiling of the river,
Rippling with the Saviour's face,
Saints, whom death will never sever,
Lift their songs of saving grace. Cho.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

Soon we'll reach the shining river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease,
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace. Cho.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river --
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

Chorus Of Fire

O! golden Hereafter, thine every bright rafter
Will shake in the thunder of sanctified song;
And every swift angel proclaim an evangel,
To summon God's saints to the glorified throng.

Refrain

O! chorus of fire,
That will burst from God's choir,
When the loud hallelujahs leap up from the soul,
Till the flowers on the hills,
And the waves in the rills,
Shall tremble with joy in the music's deep roll.

O! host without number, awaked from death's slumber,
Who walk in white robes on the emerald shore;
The glory is o'er you, the throne is before you,
And weeping will come to your spirits no more.

Refrain

O! mansions eternal, in fields ever vernal,
Awaiting your tenantry ransomed from sin,
We'll stand on your pavement, no more in enslavement,
With home-songs to Jesus Who welcomes us in.

Refrain

O! Jesus, our Master, command to beat faster
These weary life pulses that bring us to Thee,
Till, past the dark portal, we stand up immortal,
And sweep with hosannas the jasper lit sea.

Refrain

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

How Can I Keep From Singing?

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet though far off hymn
That hails a new creation:
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth:
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smoothes
Since first I learned to love it:
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing:
All things are mine since I am His—
How can I keep from singing?

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

Lead Them To Thee

Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them to Thee,
These children dear of mine,
Thou gavest me.
O, by Thy love divine,

Refrain

Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them, lead them,
Lead them to Thee.

When earth looks bright and fair,
Festive and gay,
Let no delusive snare,
Lure them away;
But from temptation's power,

Refrain

E'en for such little ones,
Christ came a child,
And through this world of sin,
Movèd undefiled;
O, for His sake, I pray,

Refrain

Yea, though my faith be dim,
I would believe
That Thou this precious gift,
Wilt now receive;
O, take their young hearts now;

Refrain

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

Low In The Grave He Lay

Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior,
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!
Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph over His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Savior;
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph over His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Death cannot keep its Prey, Jesus my Savior;
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph over His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

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Nothing But The Blood

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing, this my plea -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

CHORUS

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Robert Wadsworth Lowry

The Angel's Song

Rolling downward, through the midnight,
Comes a glorious burst of heav'nly song;
'Tis a chorus full of sweetness—
And the singers are an angel throng.

Refrain

"Glory! glory in the highest!
On the earth goodwill and peace to men!"
Down the ages send the echo;
Let the glad earth shout again!

Wond'ring shepherds see the glory,
Hear the word the shining ones declare;
At the manger fall in worship,
While the music fills the quiv'ring air.

Refrain

Christ the Savior, God's Anointed,
Comes to earth our fearful debt to pay—
Man of sorrows, and rejected,
Lamb of God, that takes our sin away.

Refrain

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The Straying Sheep

How many sheep are straying
Lost from the Savior's fold!
Upon the lonely mountain, They shiver with the cold:
Within the tangled thickets,
Where poison vines do creep,
And over rocky ledges
Still roam the poor lost sheep.

O come, let us go and find them!
In the paths of death they roam.
At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say:
"I have brought some lost one home."

O who will go to find them?
Who, for the Savior's sake,
Will search with tireless patience
Through brier and through brake
Unheeding thirst or hunger,
Who still from day to day,
Will seek, as for treasure,
The sheep that go astray?

O come, let us go and find them!
In the paths of death they roam.
At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say:
"I have brought some lost one home."

Say, will you seek to find them?
From pleasant bow'rs of ease
Will you go forth determined
To find the least of these?
For still the Savior calls them,
And looks across the wold,
And still He holds wide open
The door into His fold.

O come, let us go and find them!
In the paths of death they roam.
At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say:

"I have brought some lost one home."

How sweet 'twould be at evening
If you and I could say,
"Good Shepherd we've been seeking
The sheep that went astray!
Heartsore and faint with hunger,
We heard them making moan,
And lo! we come at nightfall,
And bear them safely home."

O come, let us go and find them!
In the paths of death they roam.
At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say:
"I have brought some lost one home."

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