



# New World Records

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## Brighten the Corner Where You Are: black and white Urban Hymnody New World NW 224

BLACK URBAN HYMNODY: GOSPEL  
by Anthony Heilbut

James Baldwin, the best-known literary offspring of the black church, detects in the moans and shouts of gospel music, a note "tart and ironic, authoritative and double-edged" (*The Fire Next Time*). Even more, in singers who exult "I gave up everything to follow Him," Baldwin hears a note profoundly "sensual," assuming as he does that to be sensual is to be immediately present in the world. These are surely the attributes of great art, but very seldom of post-Renaissance religious music. And though the subject matter and performing situation of black gospel are religious, its appeal transcends sectarian barriers. At its best, as in the classic performances included here, gospel allows its practitioners the widest range of emotional expression. For almost two hundred years of segregation, the gospel church has been a homeland of the soul, a folk theater, a community center, and a house of worship. The gospel sound has become the dominant vocal influence on contemporary soul music and has helped provide the rhythmic and theatrical impulse of rock. But it is gospel, not as protojazz or prerock but as a distinctive sound with a very special story, that this album celebrates.

There is a gospel "code," not quite the same as the slave practice that could translate "steal away to Jesus" into an escape plot, but a code with equally specific social meaning. Gospel is "worldly," immediately present in the world, because there is scarcely a worldly emotion or situation it does not consider or express. Traditionally a testimony in song, gospel finds its hymnal antecedent in the lines "through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come" and its most resonant lyric in "my soul looks back and wonders how I got over."

In the ghetto world of segregation, unemployment, sickness, and broken families, this music of religious transcendence has also been the one form that seriously conveyed the bedrock concerns of poor people. Gospel music is about making it from

day to day, despite poverty ("I've been down to my last dime"), illness ("I've been sick and couldn't get well"), depression ("I've been almost level to the ground"), isolation ("friends move out and crowds get thin"), and betrayal ("folks smile in your face and cut your throat behind your back"). As a supremely emotional music, it allows vocal, physical, and facial contortions ("sometimes we need to get ugly for Him"), but it also requires wit, even comedy, and a musical skill that black audiences reward with the most ecstatic responses.

Some of the gospel code is incarnated by the performers themselves. Gospel is virtually the only art form I know where women are perceived as the equals or superiors of men as both performers and innovators. I. E. Stone once observed that America's true hero is the black mother working for other women's families while raising her own. Her music is gospel, and many gospel songs celebrate her: "mother" appears almost as often as "God" or "Jesus." One finds a similar divergence between fundamentalist beliefs and worship in both white and black congregations, where the most restrictive, unyielding morality is enacted with the most corybantic abandon. The greatest women gospel singers—Marion Williams, Willie Mae Ford Smith, Dorothy Love Coates—sashay, skip, sprint, and leap with a robust sensuality that confirms rather than detracts from their dignity. "I sing with my body, it's the only way I know to do," they say, and compared to their lusty presences, popular entertainers seem like shadow figures. In recent years, with commercialization, gospel has undergone many changes, but even today its practitioners assume that gospel is the most demanding of vocations, calling upon all their resources, making virtually every note a living witness.

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The term "gospel music" is vague and inadequate. In the nineteenth century "gospel songs" were what white evangelists sang. As recently as the nineteenth-thirties a popular radio program in rural America was called *The Gospel Singer* and featured maudlin rendi-

tions of "beloved hymns." Until the early sixties the record business referred to black religious music as "spirituals" as distinguished from the white "sacred"; today the euphemisms are soul and "country" gospel. In addition, gospel itself contains at least two distinct styles, "quartet" and "gospel." Yet for at least forty years "gospel singing" has been the favored term for what working-class black congregations sing.

Though gospel is a music of professionals, its origins lie in the traditional sounds of black folk music. In fact, all the dominant characteristics of the gospel vocal style—moaning (the folk word for humming), growling, note bending, and melisma—existed over a hundred years ago. Among the first songs slaves learned were the hymns of an eighteenth-century English poet, Isaac Watts. Dr. Watts entered the gospel mythology, not as a contemporary of Alexander Pope's but as a Methodist slave. The hymns credited to him (some, like "Amazing Grace" or "The Day Is Past and Gone," were not his) became the most popular religious songs; and the "Dr. Watts" vocal style, with its emphasis on an interplay between a lead voice that broadcast the lyric and a respondent (sometimes the same voice, more often a group or a congregation) that repeated it with all sorts of embellishments, dictated by the requirements of art and the spirit, became the basis of the earnest, eccentric manner of gospel phrasing.

Watts hymns similarly affected the great spirituals. Both forms contained an almost Jewish sense of suffering and of being in *this* world, not common in that body of white evangelist music that anticipates "mansions over the hilltop" and "vacations in heaven." The mournful hymns and spirituals were supplemented by frenetic "shouts"—rhythmic songs that allowed the physical release of "shouting," the folk word for the holy dance. The syncopation of these shouts and the melancholy slurs of the Watts hymns provided both the rhythmic urgency and the blue tonality of later black music. The blue note, the characteristic black sound of this continent, may have originated in field hollers rather than church moans (more likely the origins were simultaneous), but few field hollerers walk the city streets, while any store-front-church deacon of a Sunday morning can spellbind one with the slurred fluency of his prayers and moans.

After slavery the Fisk Jubilee Singers and similar university groups made world tours performing spirituals in the manner of European art music. In the folk churches, however, the real sound persisted. As far as contemporary gospel is concerned, the most important influences were the compositions of C. A. Tindley, the popularity of male quartets, and the growth of the Sanctified Church. Tindley, a Philadelphia Methodist preacher, was the first black composer to successfully combine the folk sentiments and tunes of spirituals with the conventionalized lyrics and melodies of white evangelism. His tunes spoke to the poor ("when this world from you withholds all its silver and its gold"; "we are often destitute of the things that life demands"); fifty years later one of his compositions, "I'll Overcome Some Day," was

converted into the civil-rights anthem. Tindley was the immediate inspiration for Thomas A. Dorsey, a former blues pianist and composer who in the late twenties returned to his native church music, incorporating the rhythmic lilt of jazz and the showmanship of vaudeville in tunes that read like Tindley pastiches; Dorsey called these "gospel songs."

Male quartets constitute a special genre, much older than the gospel style personified by soloists and groups, who are usually female and always perform in a tradition pioneered by women (as will be evident if you compare Brother Joe May with his inspiration, Willie Mae Ford Smith). As early as 1902 the Dinwiddie Colored Quartet was recording "jubilees," virtuoso a-cappella arrangements of spirituals and folk tunes. Since the twenties, recordings of male quartets singing jubilees and more recently gospel and soul (the "doo-wop" groups are the city-smart sons of country quartets) have dominated the "race-records" or "soul-music" market.

Quartets were admired among other reasons because they were male, home boys who had made good or remained loyal to tradition; they were also the musical extension of the male preacher. Even today many more conservative southerners consider religious singing and preaching a male vocation: like Samuel Johnson, they find females in the pulpit a travesty. In the mid-thirties the Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet became popular with both black and white audiences. As if acknowledging that the Golden Gates' musical excellence could not be matched, later quartets turned from jubilees almost exclusively to the newer gospel songs of Dorsey and his peers, the Memphis composers W. H. Brewster and Lucie Campbell. A few, however, retained the virtuosity of earlier groups and a fervor, evident in such quartets as the Blue Jays and the Kings of Harmony, that was even older than jubilees in its allusions to Watts hymns. Since the mid-fifties, gospel quartets have been accompanied by instruments, at no small cost in vocal beauty and spiritual power.

The Church of God in Christ and its many branches, known as "Pentecostal," "Holiness," or "Sanctified," formed in the late nineteenth century as a more committed alternative to the traditional black Baptist and Methodist worship. In these churches instrumentation was allowed, and rhythmic singing and dancing were the norm. For eighty years the Church of God in Christ has provided the most progressive musical sounds in the black church, including the experimentation with jazz and classical music that characterizes recent gospel of the Edwin Hawkins Singers ("Oh, Happy Day") style. Sanctified gospel can be overly bright and brittle, but its best practitioners are the freest of singers: I know no living blues singer who ad-libs so adventurously in the realm of blue tonality as Marion Williams, and other women Sanctified singers are almost as creative.

In the thirties the Dorsey compositions performed crosscountry by him and his disciples Mahalia Jackson, Roberta Martin, Sallie Martin, and others fired a network of store-front Sanctified churches and a generation of

younger singers. By the mid-forties the pioneer gospel soloists and gospel quartets (former jubilee groups like the Soul Stirrers and the Dixie Hummingbirds who had switched to the newer repertory) had established their own "gospel highway." There soon were enough great gospel singers to produce a golden age. Eventually the period 1945-60 in gospel will be appreciated as one of the great eras in American music.

This album can only suggest some of the riches of that time. The artists here are among the best gospel interpreters, but there were many others. In the fifties virtually any record produced by Ozzie Cadena of Savoy and Art Rupp of Specialty was a masterpiece; the output of other labels—Gotham, Apollo Peacock, Nashboro was almost as impressive. Except for Mahalia Jackson, white America heard none of the great gospel practitioners, but others were listening. All the important soul singers were inspired by artists on this album. R.H. Harris' plangent lyricism directly influenced Sam Cooke, who replaced him as lead singer with the Soul Stirrers and in his later career as pop singer transmitted the Harris sound to scores of vocal mimics. Aretha Franklin's phrasing and sweet pyrotechnics are inspired by Clara Ward; B. B. King's nasal intensity echoes Sam

McCrary, of the Fairfield Four; the jubilant growls and falsetto swoops of Little Richard, James Brown, and the Iseley Brothers were first combined by Marion Williams. Unfortunately none of these gospel names are household words, and though almost everybody today sings like these men and women few realize that their vocal turns and twists are not some generalized stuff, manna from the heavens, but the singular accomplishments of great singers. When R. H. Harris says "I don't care who it is, they all got some of me snuck up in them," he's not bragging.

In recent years some of the greatest gospel singer's—Mahalia Jackson, Clara Ward, Rosetta Tharpe, Joe May—have died, and the music has undergone changes that carry it far from Dr. Watts moans and Sanctified testimonies. But enough great singers remain. They, more than these recordings, are the best contemporary legacy of a musical form with the deepest historical and human significance.

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## THE RECORDINGS

### Side One

#### Band 1

#### *God Shall Wipe All Tears Away* (Antonio Haskell)

The Kings of Harmony: Carey Bradley, lead, Eugene "Pop" Strong, second lead; Marion Thompson, tenor; Walter Latimore, baritone; Bill Morgan, bass. *Recorded 1946, probably in New York. Originally issued on Manor 1024-A.*

This is the supreme example of the application of Dr. Watts vocal technique to a newer gospel composition. The Kings of Harmony were masters of Dr. Watts singing, and though they recorded only three 78s their reputation as the "hardest hitters" on the gospel highway remains unchallenged. The group was formed in the thirties by Sunday-school students of the Starlight Baptist Church in Bessemer, Alabama (their original name was the B.Y. P. U. Specials, after the Baptist Young People's Union). Their lead singer, Carey Bradley, migrated in the late thirties to Chicago, where he became a disciple of the newer gospel writers. When he rejoined his group in the

forties, they were ready to combine his new ideas with their traditional approach. At that time the group, operating out of Cleveland, was so popular that they could work some ghetto neighborhoods for months without overstaying their welcome.

The Kings of Harmony have the most powerful male-vocal-group sound I have heard. From the tenor to the commanding bass, each member contributes a subtle yet compelling vocal coloration. The singers were exquisitely attuned: Bradley says that this arrangement came to him in a dream, and it required only three rehearsals. The song shares a common image with Milton's *Lycidas*, the vision of God wiping away His followers' tears. From Bradley's first word, the record sustains a brooding intensity, supported by Bill Morgan's ominous bass rumblings, culminating in Bradley's lassolike tossing of the work "God." The chorus allows for Dr. Watts melisma, especially on the words "on" and "bright," when harmonic possibilities seem to succeed themselves by the microsecond. A

spirited dialogue develops between Bradley and the second lead, and the last word is cut off with absolute finality.

Though the clouds may hover o'er us,  
There's a bright and golden ray;  
'Tis the promise that in heaven  
God shall wipe all tears away.

When we reach that blessed homeland  
Where 'tis everlasting day,  
On that bright eternal morning,  
God shall wipe all tears away.

#### Band 2

#### *Canaan Land*

(A. H. Windom)

The Famous Blue Jay Singers: Charlie Bridges, lead; Silas Steele, second lead; Jimmy Veal, tenor; James Hollingsworth, baritone; Dave Parnell, bass. *Recorded 1947, probably in New York. Originally issued on Harlem 1027-B.*

The Blue Jay Singers were the Kings of Harmony's seniors and neighbors in Alabama. The original four members—Steele, Veal, Hollingsworth, Parnell—first recorded in 1932, earning their pio-

neer status by including the first recording of a Dorsey composition. In later years they acquired an additional lead, Charlie Bridges, a veteran of an even older Alabama quartet, the Birmingham Jubilee Singers. The Blue Jays excelled in Dr. Watts hymns; their rock-solid harmonies soared from the basement, unlike those of contemporary falsetto quartets who chirp from the attic. In more ways than one, they surpass their descendants in depth.

"Canaan Land," based on a Scottish folk tune, contains conventional lyrics redeemed by Silas Steele's energy. Carey Bradley calls Steele the first of the hard-singing quartet leads. Though a small man, Steele could summon up awesome vocal power. This song begins in slow waltz tempo with Bridges leading in somewhat lugubrious style over three-part harmony; in the second stanza Steele joins the background; with the shift in tempo he assumes the lead, trading off hollers with Bridges. Steele's vocal contains some of the earliest recorded examples of verbal repetition ("unworthy, unworthy, unworthy, boys, unworthy"), and in his subtle shifts of accent ("over there, over there, over *there*, way over there") one bears the paradigm of gospel shouting.

I am bound for Canaan land,  
To that happy golden strand.  
There I shall receive a blessing  
For the work I've done below.

There I'll meet my loved ones gone on,  
And the others gone on before.  
I'll be in that great reunion  
When we gather around the throne.

Though unworthy I may be,  
God has prepared a place for me.  
He is the king of glory,  
He's the man of Galilee.

### Band 3 *Walk Around*

(R. H. Harris)

The Soul Stirrers, including R. H. Harris: R. H. Harris, lead; S. R. Crain, tenor; Mozelle Franklin, baritone; Reverend Rundless, baritone; J. J. Farley, bass. *Recorded 1944 in Chicago. Originally issued on Down Beat 102-A.*

In 1936 the Five Soul Stirrers of

Tyler, Texas, recorded for the Library of Congress a group of rugged, syncopated jubilees. That was before R. H. Harris joined them. By the time of this recording the group's harmonies were conventionalized to an inch of doo-wop, but Harris had proved the most influential of gospel quartet leads. In his style, with its patented "delayed-time" phrasing and wispy falsetto, there is a melancholy lyricism that comprehends country fields as well as city street corners.

I want Jesus to walk around,  
Walk around my bedside, Lord.  
When I'm on my bed dying,  
I want Jesus to walk around.

Fisherman Peter was on the sea,  
On the sea of Galilee.  
He heard a voice say, "Be my disciple,  
Drop your nets and follow me."

Mother she said when she was dying,  
"Son, I'm bound to leave you alone,  
Just let the Holy Spirit guide you,  
It will lead you safely home."

### Band 4 *Tree of Level*

(Traditional)

The Fairfield Four: Sam McCrary, tenor; Edward Thomas, second tenor; Willie Lewis, baritone; Dicky Freeman, bass. *Recorded 1950 in Nashville. Originally issued on Dot 1003-A (6506).*

The Fairfield Four was another quartet formed by members of a Baptist church, the Fairfield Baptist Church of Nashville, where they were recorded by the Library of Congress in 1942. Following a series of radio broadcasts, the group achieved great popularity in the late forties.

"Tree of Level" is a misreading of the song's correct title, "Tree of Lebanon." Sam McCrary's bluesy tenor introduces the initial chorus. In the song's two verses, the tempo is slightly retarded, and bass Dicky Freeman assumes lead as the group wails out. Gospel audiences love vocal extremes, and Freeman manages to be as expressive as he is virtuosic. The first verse is taken from the Dr. Watts hymn "I Heard the Voice of Jesus," the second and third from a traditional spiritual. The

meshing of the two exemplifies the dual importance of hymns and spirituals in the gospel tradition.

Just like a tree of level, I'll forever stand,  
Just like a tree of level, I'll forever stand,  
Because I'm rooted and living in the  
rocks of ages,  
I'll forever stand.

You know I heard the voice of my Jesus  
say,  
"Come unto me and I'll give you rest.  
Lay down thy weary, weary one, lie  
down  
Thy head upon, upon my breast."  
Early one morning, I'll forever stand.

One day, one day, I was walking along;  
You know I heard a voice, but I saw no  
one.  
The voice I heard sounded so sweet,  
It must have been Jesus, He was talking  
to me.

### Band 5 *Yield Not to Temptation*

(Horatio Palmer)

The Roberta Martin Singers: Delores Barrett, lead; Roberta Martin, contralto and piano; Norsalus McKissick, tenor; Eugene Smith and Willie Webb, baritones. *Recorded 1947 in Chicago. Originally issued on Religious 2001-A.*

The Roberta Martin Singers were the first important gospel group. A native of Arkansas, Roberta Martin moved to Chicago in her teens, briefly studied music, and supported herself by playing silent-movie accompaniments. She was a protégé of Thomas A. Dorsey's and in turn trained some of Chicago's finest gospel singers. It is largely due to her that Chicago became Philadelphia's only rival as a gospel capital.

This early recording shows the nascent gospel-group style. "Yield Not to Temptation" is the hoariest of hymns; Delores Barrett's vocal is mildly operatic; the vocal background is subdued to the point of self-effacement. Yet this is an astonishingly pure gospel record. Martin's piano lopes along with an artfully controlled swing. Even at twenty-one, Delores Barrett (now Campbell) was a major gospel stylist. Note how she alternates pianissimo grace notes with intimations of vocal smears, an immediate clue that she

can holler as well as croon. And introducing each line she persistently interjects "but," a typical expressive ploy of folk preachers. Her intuition about grammar pays off: when she reaches the phrase "though we're often cast down," the associations are much richer than the original lyric's spiritual gymnastics.

Yield not to temptation, all yielding is sin.  
Each victory will help you some other to win.  
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue.  
Look ever to Jesus, Jesus will carry you through.

You just ask Him to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you;  
Jesus is ready, He's willing to aid you,  
Jesus will carry you through.

To him that o'ercometh, God will give a crown.  
Through faith we shall conquer, though we're often cast down.  
He who is our Savior, our strength He'll renew.  
Just look ever to Jesus, Jesus will carry you through.

### **Band 6** *Daniel in the Lion's Den (He Locked the Lion's Jaw)*

*(Traditional)*

Rosetta Tharpe, vocal and guitar; Katie Bell Nubin, vocal; Sammy Price, piano; Billy Taylor, Sr., string bass; Herbert Cowans, drums. *Recorded July 7, 1949, in New York. Originally issued on Decca 48116-B (75039).*

Gospel lyrics of such extreme simplicity strike some listeners as simpleminded. Actually, here is a fine example of the gospel code at work. Since slavery, Daniel, the Hebrew children, and Jonah have been symbolic figures whose deliverance from impossible situations related specifically to the plight of black Americans. In a gospel church, where such references are understood, a mere phrase ("through many dangers"; "my soul looks back"), a name, or even a hum can concentrate enough meaning to stir the listener.

Rosetta Tharpe was the first successful product of the Church of God in Christ. As a girl in Arkansas

she used to attend church conventions and heard the rousing vocal and piano style of the blind Arizona Dranes. Dranes, Tharpe, and other early Sanctified singers exhibit a precise, almost mannered diction and a relentless syncopation. Though Tharpe recorded with big bands, sang in nightclubs, and occasionally performed blues, her gospel repertory consisted primarily of Church of God in Christ shout songs she learned from her mother, Katie Bell Nubin. This recording begins with a curious tom-tom effect and a contagious exchange between Tharpe's Sanctified guitar and Sammy Price's boogie-woogie piano. Then, as if to cancel this eclecticism, there is a duet between Rosetta, all bouncy showmanly uplift (one can't miss her scatter-shot repetitions of "he locked"), and her mother, whose laconic, unornamented style helps keep matters serious. Each singer ends differently, Nubin with a slurred, matter-of-fact "jaw," Tharpe with a stylish "jaw-aw-aw"; the generation gap closes in harmony. Mother Nubin died in the late sixties, close to ninety; Tharpe outlived her by only a few years. For all Rosetta's worldly ways, she remained a Sanctified daughter.

Daniel in the den, in the den, in the den,  
Jonah in the belly of the whale.  
He locked the lion's jaw, he locked the lion's jaw,  
He locked the lion's jaw.

Send down your Son, your Son, your suffering Son,  
And see what the good Lord has done.  
Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego,  
Jonah in the belly of the whale.

### **Band 7** *Give Me Wings*

*(D. B. Hardy)*

Willie Mae Ford Smith, vocal; Bertha Smith, piano; Gwendolyn Cooper, organ. *Recorded c. 1950 in St. Louis. Private recording.*

This is a particularly attractive lyric, with imagery both Biblical and bluesy. Willie Mae Ford Smith was born in Mississippi and raised in Memphis and has lived in St. Louis

for over fifty years. She may be the most influential of female gospel soloists. Thomas A. Dorsey believes she could have outsung Bessie Smith. Mahalia Jackson, who always credited Bessie Smith as her inspiration, learned more about phrasing and showmanship from Willie Mae Ford. Mother Smith, as she is known, remains a singer and evangelist. She has survived her best-known protégés, Mahalia Jackson, Brother Joe May, and Edna Gallmon Cooke, and still sings with the breathy vibrato, startling dynamic shifts, and vocal resonance that turned on a generation of midwestern singers. Her piano accompanist here is her adopted daughter Bertha.

Ever since I found the Christ,  
There is something in my life  
That makes me feel like flying away to be at rest.

Since my soul is heaven bound,  
Wolves of hell are all around,  
That makes me feel like flying away to be at rest.

Late some night as I recline,  
Something steals across my mind  
That makes me feel like flying away to be at rest.

In the morning when I rise,  
Something moves before my eyes,  
Makes me feel like flying away to be at rest.

As I travel through the land,  
I meet Satan and his band,  
That makes me feel like flying away to be at rest.

As I go from door to door,  
Loved ones gone to come no more  
Make me feel like flying away to be at rest.

Then give me wings, Lord, give me wings, Lord,  
Wings of faith to fly away and be at rest  
(I'm feeling lonely);  
Give me wings, Lord, give me wings, Lord,  
And I'll fly away somewhere to be at rest.

### **Band 8** *They Led My Lord Away*

*(Traditional)*

Marion Williams, vocal. *Recorded c. 1970-75 in Philadelphia. Private recording.*

Marion Williams, a native of Miami, also grew up in the Church of God in Christ but was influenced by quartets like the Kings of Harmony even before she joined the Clara Ward Singers, with whom she sang for eleven years. Williams is a versatile and imaginative stylist but has often been recorded in uncongenial surroundings, performing unsuitable material. Here, happily, she sings an a-cappella spiritual with a purity and strength of performance and intention that recall field recordings.

Williams can evoke both the melancholy lyricism of R. H. Harris and the Burning Bush authority of Silas Steele. Her wit, evidenced by shifts in phrasing and word content, is her own. In the second stanza the sheer vocal propulsion of the ad-libbed "sure 'nuff" and the hair-raising upward slur on the final "hill" obviate instrumentation. In the third stanza the sorrow and intensity of the final "they pierced my Lord in the side" are almost visceral.

Well, they led my Lord away, they led  
Him away,  
They led him away;  
They led my Lord away, He never said a  
mumblin' word.  
They led my Lord away, He never said a  
mumblin' word,  
Hey, not a word, not a word did He say.

Well, they whipped Him up Calvary's  
hill, mmm yes they did,  
Sure 'nuff they did;  
They whipped Him up Calvary's hill, He  
never said a mumblin' word.  
They whipped Him up Calvary's hill, He  
never said a mumblin' word,  
Not a word, mmm-mmm not a word, no  
no, did He say.

Well, they pierced Him in the side, yes  
they did,  
Oh. they did so;  
They pierced Him in the side, He never  
said a mumblin' word.  
They pierced my Lord in the side, He  
never said a mumblin' word,  
Hmmm, not a word, not a word, oh, did  
He say.

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## White Urban Hymnody

by Harry Eskew

"Water runs downhill and the highest hills are the great cities. If we can stir them, we shall stir the whole nation." These words, spoken by Dwight L. Moody at the beginning of his career as an evangelist, show the focus on urban America made by the great revivalists from Moody in the eighteen-seventies to Billy Graham in the latter half of the twentieth century. Efforts to reach the urban masses with the gospel involved more than preaching; they involved a partnership between preaching the gospel and singing the gospel.

It was important that both preaching and music be on a plane that would communicate to the ordinary urban person rather than primarily to the college professor or the trained musician. In music this effort to communicate called for simplicity in both hymn texts and tunes. The primary device for simplifying the texts of urban hymns was repetition of key words or phrases, usually involving the use of a chorus after each stanza. The stanza-with-chorus had been a popular hymn form in the rural camp meeting starting about 1800 and found a growing acceptance in urban hymnody.

The King James Version of the Bible and popular secular songs furnished much of the vocabulary of urban hymnody. Notice the direct relationship between the imagery in John 8:12, in which Jesus says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," and the popular hymn written by Eliza E. Hewitt in 1887:

There is sunshine in my soul today,  
More glorious and bright  
Than glows in any earthly sky,  
For Jesus is my light.

### *Chorus*

Oh, there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,  
When the peaceful, happy moments roll:  
When Jesus shows His smiling face,  
There is sunshine in my soul.

The music of such hymns was of necessity simple, with catchy, lilting melodies that could be easily learned by untrained singers. Syncopation and such contagious rhythms as the dotted-eighth followed by a sixteenth note (both thought inappropriate in the more formal hymn tradition) were key ingredients in urban popular hymnody. The harmonies of these hymns were largely restricted to the familiar tonic (I), subdominant (IV), and domi-

nant (V) chords, and the same chord was often repeated for an entire measure, thus clothing the melody with unobtrusive harmonies. So close were the musical traits of urban hymnody and popular secular song that on occasion the same piece of music served both traditions. For example, George Frederick Root's "The Little Octaroon" (1866) served as the music for the hymn "Ring the Bells of Heaven" (1866). In contrast to earlier camp-meeting hymns and hymns of the *Sacred Harp* tradition, both of which freely used major and minor keys, urban popular hymnody made almost exclusive use of the bright major keys, probably because the minor keys were regarded as too mournful to effectively communicate the gospel to the masses.

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Before it was associated with the mass revivalism of Moody and others beginning in the eighteen-seventies, the primary milieu of urban hymnody was the Sunday-school movement. The origin of the movement is usually traced to the work of Robert Raikes, who in 1780 began Sunday classes for children in Gloucester, England. Sunday schools were soon established in England and America. In nineteenth-century America the Sunday school experienced phenomenal growth. From fewer than a hundred thousand children in 1824, when the American Sunday School Union was established in Philadelphia, Sunday-school enrollment increased to over six hundred thousand by 1831, to three and a quarter million by 1851, and to over six million by 1875. (The last two figures include Canada.) The most widely used collection of hymns in the Sunday school in its early decades was the English hymn writer Isaac Watts's *Divine and Moral Songs* (1720), which contained such stern verses as

How glorious is our heav'nly King,  
Who reigns above the sky!  
How shall a child presume to sing  
His dreadful majesty?

and

Why should I love my sport so well  
So constant at my play,  
And lose the thoughts of heaven and hell,  
And then forget to pray.

Such songs were too somber for the American Sunday-school movement, which developed its own hymn tradition based on a more positive theology, with lighter poetry and lilting music. Lowell

Mason's *Juvenile Psalmist* (1829) was one of the earliest American Sunday-school music books, but the leading pioneer in this field was Mason's student William B. Bradbury (1816-1868), composer of the most popular of all Sunday-school hymns, "Jesus Loves Me" (1862). Bradbury's Sunday-school collections, like others from about 1850, bore cheerful titles designed for the delight of Sunday-school children and their leaders, such as *Golden Chain* (1861) and *Fresh Laurels* (1867). These two songbooks reportedly sold two million and over one million copies respectively, a clear indication of the widespread popularity of Bradbury's Sunday-school compilations.

Three of the hymns selected to illustrate urban hymnody on this record appeared in the era of Sunday-school hymnody prior to the mass revivalism of the eighteen-seventies: "Just as I Am" (to Bradbury's "Woodworth," 1849), "Nearer, My God, to Thee" (to Mason's "Bethany," 1856), and "We're Marching to Zion" (to Robert Lowry's "Marching to Zion," 1867).

#### URBAN REVIVALISM: NINETEENTH CENTURY

The popular urban hymns associated with the Sunday school soon became strongly identified with the revival meetings of Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) and his famous singer-composer Ira D. Sankey (1840-1908). In this new setting they became known as gospel songs or gospel hymns, so named after Phillip P. Bliss's *Gospel Songs* (1874) and Bliss and Sankey's *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (1875). This latter collection, the most popular collection of urban revival hymnody of all time, was published in six volumes: *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (1875) (Bliss and Sankey); *Gospel Hymns No. 2* (1876) (Bliss and Sankey); *Gospel Hymns No. 3* (1878), *No. 4* (1882), *No. 5* (1887), and *No. 6* (1891) (all Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins); and *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1-6 Complete* (1894). The British counterpart of the *Gospel Hymns* series is *Sacred Songs and Solos* (1903), which sold eighty million copies within fifty years of publication and is still in print.

In 1873 Moody and Sankey went to Britain to hold evangelistic meetings. By the time they returned to America around two years later they had become world famous. In their mass meetings in England and Scotland the gospel hymns were often introduced by Sankey, who sang solos and accompanied himself at the reed organ. The important partnership of preaching and singing in their evangelistic work was clearly indicated by

a statement used to advertise their meetings: "Mr. Moody will preach the gospel and Mr. Sankey will sing the gospel."

Sankey and Bliss were two of the earliest evangelistic singers who contributed to the rise and growth of gospel hymnody, which in style was similar to the earlier hymns of the Sunday school. They were followed by McGranahan, Stebbins, and Daniel B. Towner, all associated with Moody at some time during his career. Each composed music to gospel hymns that remain in the repertory of evangelistic hymnody.

The leading poet of gospel hymnody was the blind hymn writer Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915). Famous as a secular poet, in the eighteen-sixties she turned to hymn writing. She produced some nine thousand hymn texts, which were set to music by such composers as Robert Lowry ("All the Way My Saviour Leads Me," 1875), William Howard Doane ("I Am Thine, O Lord" and "To God Be the Glory," both 1875), George Stebbins ("Jesus Is Tenderly Calling," 1883), and Ira Sankey ("O Child of God, Wait Patiently," 1886). Crosby's hymns typically emphasize the joy of her personal relationship to the Savior, drawing on words of emotion found also in the parlor songs of her time, as in "Blessed Assurance" (1873):

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight:  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

#### *Chorus*

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Three of the selections on this record were written during the Moody-Sankey era of the late nineteenth century: "The Ninety and Nine" (Sankey and Clephane, 1874), "To God Be the Glory" (Doane and Crosby, 1875), and "Saved by Grace" (Stebbins and Crosby, 1894).

#### URBAN REVIVALISM: TWENTIETH CENTURY

Moody's practice of each evangelist having his own singer continued into the twentieth century. After Moody's death urban revivalism continued to flourish under such evangelists as Sam P. Jones, B. Fay Mills, J. Wilbur Chapman, R. A. Torrey, and William A. Sunday. The two evangelistic singers who made the greatest impact on urban revivalism in the early

decades of this century were Charles McCallom Alexander (1867-1920) and Homer Alvan Rodeheaver (1880-1955).

Alexander was a native of Tennessee. He was briefly associated with Moody in 1893 but became famous through his revivals from 1901 on with Torry and later Chapman in America, England, and Australia. In contrast to Sankey, Alexander set a mood of informality in the services. In place of accompaniment by a reed organ Alexander preferred improvised trills and cadenzas on the piano, and he led the singing with wide-sweeping motions of his hands. In *Modern Revivalism*, William G. McLoughlin, Jr., describes Alexander's methods with the crowd during the half-hour song service before the sermon as resembling "more nearly the techniques of a master of ceremonies at a Rotary convention than those of a choir director or soloist at a religious service." Alexander was not a composer, but he popularized and published gospel hymns. His meetings in Australia brought about the popularity of "The Glory Song." His copyrighted and published gospel hymns include "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" (1905) and "Ivory Palaces" (1915). Although Sankey refused to accept personal income from hymnal sales, Alexander (and Rodeheaver) received a considerable income from them.

Rodeheaver gained his fame as Billy Sunday's music director beginning in 1909. Their campaigns were limited to the United States. Like Alexander, Rodeheaver sought to make the song service informal, lighthearted, and enjoyable. The Sunday-Rodeheaver meetings were held mostly in specially constructed "tabernacles," temporary buildings with the ground covered with sawdust (hence the expression "hitting the sawdust trail" for walking down the aisles to make public decisions during these meetings). Rodeheaver continued to use

many gospel hymns of the Sankey era, but the trend was toward lighter, optimistic, and semisacred music, as illustrated by the frequently used song "Brighten the Corner Where You Are" (1913). Rodeheaver's reply to those who criticized his use of such a song was:

It was never intended for a Sunday morning service, nor for a devotional meeting—its purpose was to bridge the gap between the popular song of the day and the great hymns and gospel songs, and to give men a simple, easy lilting melody which they could learn the first time they heard it, and which they could whistle and sing wherever they might be.

In 1910 Rodeheaver began publishing gospel-hymn collections, establishing the firm now known as Word Music, Inc. (formerly the Rodeheaver Company), of Winona Lake, Indiana. He recorded for Decca, Columbia, Edison, and Brunswick and also established his own label, Rainbow Records. Although Rodeheaver composed few gospel hymns, he used the services of several more talented gospel hymnists, including Charles H. Gabriel, who was associated with Rodeheaver's firm from 1912 until his death in 1932.

Beginning in the twenties urban revivalism declined until national attention was focused on the meetings of Billy Graham starting in 1949. Graham's revivals have by and large used the past heritage of gospel hymnody and have produced little new music. They have, however, served to popularize gospel hymnody, particularly through records, radio, television, and films.

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# THE RECORDINGS

## Side Two

### Band 1

#### *We're Marching to Zion*

(Robert Lowry and Isaac Watts)

Congregation of the Ridgecrest (N.C.)  
Baptist Conference Center. Recorded 1971  
in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Private  
recording.

This is an example of an older hymn adapted to the gospel-hymn tradition in the latter nineteenth century. These four stanzas are from ten stanzas titled "Heavenly Joy on Earth" in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (London, 1707) by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the father of English hymnody. In 1867 the Baptist pastor Robert Lowry set Watts's hymn to music and added the refrain, making it into a hymn that became widely popular in Sunday-school urban revivalism. "Marching to Zion" lost its characteristic dignified air as Lowry used a swinging 6/8 meter, march-like rhythms, and echo voices on the refrain, conjuring the excitement and physical sensations of a march to the new Jerusalem or heaven.

This performance and the next are from the annual Church Music Conference of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the largest conferences of its kind.

Come, ye that love the Lord  
And let your joys be known,  
Join in a song with sweet accord,  
(twice)  
And thus surround the throne. (twice)

#### *Chorus*

We're marching to Zion,  
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;  
We're marching upward to Zion,  
The beautiful city of God.

Let those refuse to sing,  
Who never knew our God;  
But children of the heav'nly King,  
(twice)  
May speak their joys abroad. (twice)  
(Chorus)

The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heav'nly fields,  
(twice)  
Or walk the golden streets. (twice)  
(Chorus)

Then let our songs abound,  
And ev'ry tear be dry;  
We're marching thro' Immanuel's  
ground, (twice)  
To fairer worlds on high. (twice)  
(Chorus)

### Band 2

#### *Jesus Is All the World to Me*

(Will L. Thompson)

Congregation of the Ridgecrest (N.C.)  
Baptist Conference Center. Recorded 1974  
in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Private  
recording.

"Jesus Is All the World to Me" has the same lilting 6/8 meter as "We're Marching to Zion" but is ordinarily sung more slowly, without the accented marchlike effect. Although without a chorus, Thompson's hymn begins and closes each stanza with the phrases "Jesus is all the world to me" and "He's my friend," thus providing the repetition essential in the gospel-hymn tradition. The idea of Jesus as friend is found in many popular gospel hymns, such as "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (1855), "I've Found a Friend, Oh, Such a Friend" (1863), and "There's Not a Friend like the Lowly Jesus" (1895).

Both words and music of this hymn were written by Will Lamartine Thompson (1847-1909), head of the music-publishing firm Will L. Thompson and Company at East Liverpool, Ohio, and Chicago. A composer also of secular and patriotic songs, Thompson was primarily interested in sacred music. He named the tune "Elizabeth" after his wife.

Thompson's most famous hymn, "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling," drew the following words of admiration from D. L. Moody: "Will, I would rather have written 'Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling' than anything I have been able to do in my whole life."

Jesus is all the world to me,  
My life, my joy, my all;

He is my strength from day to day,  
Without Him I should fall.  
When I am sad to Him I go,  
No other one can cheer me so;  
When I am sad He makes me glad:  
He's my Friend!

Jesus is all the world to me,  
My Friend in trials sore;  
I go to Him for blessings and  
He gives them o'er and o'er.  
He sends the sunshine and the rain,  
He sends the harvest's golden grain.  
Sunshine and rain, and golden grain:  
He's my Friend!

Jesus is all the world to me,  
And true to Him I'll be:  
Oh, how could I this Friend deny,  
When He's so true to me?  
Following Him I know I'm right,  
Keeping His cross within my sight;  
Following Him by day and night:  
He's my Friend!

Jesus is all the world to me,  
I want no better Friend;  
I trust Him now, I'll trust him when  
Life's fleeting days shall end.  
Beautiful life with such a Friend!  
Beautiful life that has no end!  
Eternal life, eternal joy:  
He's my Friend!

### Band 3

#### *The Ninety and Nine*

(Ira D. Sankey and Elizabeth C. Clephane)

George Beverly Shea, vocal; accompanied by  
Ira Sankey's reed organ. Recorded 1955 in  
Minneapolis. Private recording.

Sankey set this famous hymn to music spontaneously at the close of one of the Moody-Sankey meetings in Edinburgh. After a sermon on the Good Shepherd by Moody and eloquent words from the famed Scottish minister and hymn writer Horatius Bonar, Moody asked Sankey, "Have you a solo appropriate for this subject, with which to close the service?" Sankey wanted to use a hymn he had read in a newspaper the day before, but it had no music. As Sankey related in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns*:

Again the impression came  
strongly upon me that I must

sing the beautiful and appropriate words I had found the day before, and placing the little newspaper slip on the organ before me, I lifted my heart in prayer, asking God to help me to so sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands upon the organ I struck the key of A flat, and began to sing.

Note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this. As the singing ceased a great sigh seemed to go up from the meeting and I knew that the song had reached the hearts of my Scotch audience. Mr. Moody was greatly moved. Leaving the pulpit, he came down to where I was seated. Leaning over the organ, he looked at the little newspaper slip from which the song had been sung and with tears in his eyes said: "Sankey, where did you get that hymn? I never heard the like of it in my life." I was also moved to tears....

The words of "The Ninety and Nine" were written by Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane (1830-1869), whose hymn "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" is found in many current hymnals. It is quite appropriate in this album that Billy Graham's "Sankey," George Beverly Shea (born 1909), sings "The Ninety and Nine" accompanied by a reed organ Sankey used in England and Scotland. This organ is now at the offices of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Minneapolis.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
 In the shelter of the fold,  
 But one was out on the hills away,  
 Far off from the gates of gold.  
 Away on the mountains wild and bare,  
 Away from the tender Shepherd's care.  
*(repeat)*

"Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;  
 Are they not enough for Thee?"  
 But the Shepherd made answer; "This of mine  
 Has wandered away from me,  
 And, although the road be rough and steep,  
 I go to the desert to find my sheep."  
*(repeat)*

But all thro' the mountains, thunder-riven,  
 And up from the rocky steep,  
 There arose a glad cry to the gate of heaven,  
 "Rejoice! I have found my sheep!"  
 And the Angels echoed around the throne,  
 "Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own."  
*(repeat)*

#### Band 4

### *To God Be the Glory*

*(William Howard Doane and Fanny Jane Crosby)*

Billy Graham London Crusade Choir.  
 Recorded 1954 in London. Originally issued on RCA LPM- 2088.

Fanny Jane Crosby, the "Queen of Gospel Song," wrote the words to this hymn in 1875, and they were set to music by William Howard Doane (1832-1915) and first published in the Sunday-school collection *Brightest and Best* (by Lowry and Doane, New York, 1875). This hymn is unusual for Fanny Crosby in that it is objective, void of "I," "me," and "my" and expressions of sentiment; it is primarily a joyful hymn of praise, focusing on salvation through the atonement of Jesus. Doane, the president of a Cincinnati firm manufacturing woodworking machinery, composed more than twenty-two hundred hymn tunes and compiled more than forty collections. He provided music for some of Fanny Crosby's best-known hymns: "I Am Thine, O Lord" (1875), "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" (1868), "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

(1869), and "Rescue the Perishing" (1869).

"To God Be the Glory" became known in England through Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* but was omitted from its American counterpart, *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1-6 Complete*. This hymn, practically unknown in America, was a favorite in the 1954 Billy Graham Greater London Crusade and is sung here by this Crusade Choir. "To God Be the Glory" was reintroduced to America in subsequent Billy Graham meetings and has found a place in many recent American hymnals.

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,  
 So loved He the world that he gave us His Son,  
 Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
 And opened the life Gate that all may go in.

#### *Chorus*

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
 Let the earth hear His voice.  
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
 Let the people rejoice.  
 Oh, come to the Father  
 Through Jesus the Son,  
 And give Him the glory,  
 Great things He hath done.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
 And great our rejoicing thro' Jesus the Son;  
 But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
 Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.  
*(Chorus)*

#### Band 5

### *Brighten the Corner Where You Are*

*(Charles H. Gabriel and Ina Duley Ogdon)*  
 Homer Rodeheaver, vocal, and brass band.  
 Recorded 1915 in Camden, New Jersey.  
 Originally issued on Victor 17763.

Nondoctrinal and entertaining, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are" became the equivalent of "The Glory Song" during the

evangelistic meetings of Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver. The words are by Mrs. Ina Duley Ogdon (1877-1964), an Ohio schoolteacher who wrote several hundred hymn texts. Rodeheaver introduced "Brighten the Corner" at revival meetings in 1912, and it achieved immediate popularity. Gabriel's setting has prominent syncopated rhythms and an enjoyable arpeggio ("Shine for Jesus where you are") for the basses on the chorus. Rodeheaver described how this hymn was used to warm up the audiences in the Sunday tabernacle services:

"Brighten the Corner" was a general favorite as a congregational song because of the stunts it made possible. When the tabernacle was filled we would have one section on one side sing the first phrase of the chorus, then, jumping across the tabernacle, the section on the opposite side sing the second phrase, the chorus choir would sing the third phrase, and then we would pick out the ten back rows of the tabernacle, often nearly a short city block away, to sing the last "Brighten the Corner." We used this antiphonal idea effectively with many other songs, but none were as universally popular as "Brighten the Corner Where You Are."

Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,  
Do not wait to shed your light afar,  
To the many duties ever near you now be true,  
Brighten the corner where you are.

*Chorus*

Brighten the corner where you are!  
Brighten the corner where you are!  
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar,  
Brighten the corner where you are.

Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear,  
Let not narrow self your way debar,  
Tho' into one heart alone may fall your song of cheer,  
Brighten the corner where you are.  
*(Chorus)*

Here for all your talent you may surely find a need,  
Here reflect the bright, and morning star,  
Even from your humble hand the bread of life may feed,  
Brighten the corner where you are.  
*(Chorus)*

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**Band 6**  
*In the Garden*

*(C. Austin Miles)*

Mrs. William Asher and Homer Rodeheaver, vocals. *Recorded 1916 in Camden, New Jersey. Originally issued on Victor 18020.*

In addition to congregational singing and singing by the choir and soloist, many Billy Sunday meetings featured duets by Rodeheaver and Mrs. William Asher, a member of the Sunday staff who worked with businesswomen. Rodeheaver wrote, "...our voices harmonized in a way that pleased the people. No musical numbers presented in the Billy Sunday Campaigns were more popular or more appreciated than our duets." Their two most popular duets were "The Old Rugged Cross" and "In the Garden." Although C. Austin Miles (1868-1946) wrote "In the Garden" to express Mary's feelings after encountering the resurrected Christ in the garden at His tomb, the hymn is not frequently associated with this Biblical event. "In the Garden" has a strong romantic appeal in such phrases as "dew is still on the roses" and "so sweet the birds hush their singing." Beyond this, however, is the idea of intimate friendship

with Jesus expressed in the chorus. In contrast to such vigorous gospel hymns as "We're Marching to Zion" and "Brighten the Corner," the melody of "In the Garden" is lyrical and constantly flowing, with the comfortable feeling of a waltz. "In the Garden" and "The Old Rugged Cross" are probably the most popular gospel hymns composed in the second decade of the twentieth century.

I came to the garden alone  
While the dew is still on the roses;  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear:  
The Son of God discloses.

*Chorus*

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice  
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,  
And the melody that He gave to me,  
Within my heart is ringing.  
*(Chorus)*

I'd stay in the garden with Him  
Tho' the night around me be falling,  
But He bids me go thro' the voice of woe.

His voice to me is calling.  
*(Chorus)*

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**Band 7**  
*Nearer, My God, to Thee*  
*("Bethany")*

*(Lowell Mason and Sarah Flower Adams)*

Oscar Seagle and unidentified quartet, vocals. *Recorded 1920. Place of recording unknown. Originally issued on Columbia A-3354.*

The text of "Nearer, My God, to Thee" was written in 1840 by Sarah Flower Adams, an English Unitarian; it is based on the story of Jacob's dream at Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22). In 1856 Lowell Mason (1792-1872), the most important American hymn-tune composer during his life-

time, wrote the tune “Bethany.” This older hymn was well known in urban revivalism, for it appeared in Sankey's *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1-6 Complete* (1894) and Rodeheaver and Gabriel's *Songs for Service* (1915). In both these collections, “Nearer, My God, to Thee” is found in the back of the book in smaller print in the section reserved for familiar hymns. The hymn has been popularly thought to have been sung just before the sinking of the English ship *Titanic* in 1912, but it has been shown that Mason's tune was not used, for it has never become associated with this hymn in England. Oscar Seagle (1877-1945) was a well-known New York baritone, singing teacher, and coach.

Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!  
E'en tho it be a cross that raiseth me;  
Still all my song shall be,  
Nearer, my God, to Thee! (*repeat twice*)

Though like the wanderer, the sun gone  
down,  
Darkness be over me, my rest a stone.  
Yet in my dreams I'd be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee! *etc.*

#### Band 8

#### *Saved by Grace*

(George Coles Stebbins and Fanny Jane Crosby)

Gipsy Smith, vocal. *Recorded c. 1909.*  
*Place of recording unknown. Originally issued on Columbia A-5147.*

Fanny Crosby wrote this in 1891 an a four-stanza poem without a chorus. She added the chorus in 1894 at the request of George Coles Stebbins (1846-1945), who set the hymn to music. Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins sang it for the first time to a large meeting at Newport, Rhode Island, at which D. L. Moody preached. Stebbins, who was for twenty-five years associated with Moody and other leading evangelists, composed such famous gospel-hymn tunes as “Jesus Is

Tenderly Calling Today” (1883), “Jesus, I Come” (1887), and “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (1907). He also collaborated with Sankey and McGranahan on the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth books of the *Gospel Hymns* series. “Saved by Grace” was the last widely popular hymn Fanny Crosby wrote. The emphasis on heaven throughout this hymn occurs typically in the final stanza of most of Crosby's familiar hymns.

Gipsy Smith (Rodney Smith, 1860-1947) was a native English gypsy who worked with General William Booth of the Salvation Army and later became a famous evangelist. During the first of his more than thirty visits to America, Smith met Fanny Crosby and Ira D. Sankey, both of whom greatly encouraged him.

Note the rolled chords on the piano by the unidentified accompanist and Smith's expressive use of the fermata on the climactic high note on the word “saved.”

Someday the silver cord will break,  
And I no more as now shall sing;  
But, O, the joy when I shall wake  
Within the palace of the King!

#### *Chorus*

And I shall see Him face to face,  
And tell the story—Saved by grace;  
And I shall see Him face to face  
And tell the story—Saved by grace.

Someday my earthly house will fall,  
I cannot tell how soon 'twill be,  
But this I know—my All in All  
Has now a place in heaven for me.  
(*Chorus*)

#### Band 9

#### *Just as I Am, Without One Plea (“Woodworth”)*

(William B. Bradbury and Charlotte Elliott)  
Billy Graham Australian Crusade Choir.  
*Recorded 1959 in Australia. Originally issued on Radiola RLP-1001.*

An essential ingredient of urban revivalism from the days of Moody and Sankey was the

evangelist's appeal for decisions, which would normally be followed by an invitation hymn. During the hymn those making decisions to follow Christ would be asked to come to the front as an indication of their commitment. Probably no hymn has been more frequently used for the invitation than “Just as I Am.” It was written in 1834 by Charlotte Elliott, an Anglican. She was an invalid, and in “Just as I Am” she is reported to have “deliberately set down for her own comfort the formulas of her faith.” William B. Bradbury provided the tune “Woodworth,” which has become generally associated with “Just as I Am” in American hymnals. Bradbury also supplied music for several other widely popular hymns, such as “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand” (1834, tune 1863), “Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us” (1836, tune 1859), and “He Leadeth Me! O Blessed Thought” (1862, tune 1864).

“Just as I Am” has become *the* invitation hymn for the Billy Graham crusades, so it is particularly appropriate that it is performed by one of his crusade choirs.

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to  
Thee.  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each  
spot.  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, tho' tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings within and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

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#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- The Hymnal*. Norman Luboff Choir. Columbia CL-1106.
- Billy Sunday Campaign Music and The Old Time Religion*. 19 selections reissued on cassette tape No.15. Old Time Music, 523 DuBois Ave., Barrington, N.J. 08007.
- The Old Fashioned Faith*. 20 hymns and gospel songs recorded 1905-24, reissued on cassette tape No. 32. Old Time Music (see above).
- Old Time Gospel Songs*. Recordings by Homer Rodeheaver, F. Carlton Booth, and George Beverly Shea from the thirties and forties, reissued on cassette tape No. 49. Old Time Music (see above).
- Yesterday's Voices. The Actual Voices of Many of the World's Greatest Christian Leaders*. Word W3076-LP.

**Side One — Total time 22:04**

- 1 *GOD SHALL WIPE ALL TEARS AWAY* (Antonio Haskell) 2:54  
The Kings of Harmony: Carey Bradley, lead; Eugene “Pop” Strong, second lead; Marion Thompson, tenor; Walter Latimore, baritone; Bill Morgan, bass.
- 2 *CANAAN LAND* (A. H. Windom) 3:17  
The Famous Blue Jay Singers: Charlie Bridges, lead; Silas Steele, second lead; Jimmy Veal, tenor; James Hollingsworth, baritone; Dave Parnell, bass.
- 3 *WALK AROUND* (R. H. Harris) 2:51  
The Soul Stirrers, including R. H. Harris: R. H. Harris, lead; S. R. Crain, tenor; Mozelle Franklin, baritone; Reverend Rundless, baritone; J. J. Farley, bass.
- 4 *TREE OF LEVEL* (Traditional) 2:15  
The Fairfield Four: Sam McCrary, tenor; Edward Thomas, second tenor; Willie Lewis, baritone; Dicky Freeman, bass.
- 5 *YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION* (Horatio Palmer) 3:00  
The Roberta Martin Singers: Delores Barrett, lead; Roberta Martin, contralto and piano; Norsalus McKissick, tenor; Eugene Smith and Willie Webb, baritones.
- 6 *DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN (HE LOCKED THE LION'S JAW)* (Traditional) 2:42  
Rosetta Tharpe, vocal and guitar; Katie Bell Nubin, vocal; Sammy Price, piano; Billy Taylor, Sr., string bass; Herbert Cowans, drums.
- 7 *GIVE ME WINGS* (D. B. Hardy) 2:36  
Willie Mae Ford Smith, vocal; Bertha Smith, piano; Gwendolyn Cooper, organ.
- 8 *THEY LED MY LORD AWAY* (Traditional) 2:03  
Marion Williams, vocal.

**Side Two — Total time 28:04**

- 1 *WE'RE MARCHING TO ZION* (Robert Lowry and Isaac Watts) 3:19  
Congregation of the Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.
- 2 *JESUS IS ALL THE WORLD TO ME* (Will L. Thompson) 3:10  
Congregation of the Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.
- 3 *THE NINETY AND NINE* (Ira D. Sankey and Elizabeth C. Clephane) 2:47  
George Beverly Shea, vocal; accompanied by Ira Sankey's reed organ.
- 4 *TO GOD BE THE GLORY* (William Howard Doane and Fanny Jane Crosby) 2:13  
Billy Graham London Crusade Choir.
- 5 *BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE* (Charles H. Gabriel and Ina Duley Ogdon) 3:04  
(publ. *The Rodeheaver Co.*)  
Homer Rodeheaver, vocal, and brass band.
- 6 *IN THE GARDEN* (C. Austin Miles) 3:16  
(publ. *The Rodeheaver Co.*)  
Mrs. William Asher and Homer Rodeheaver, vocals.
- 7 *NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE (“BETHANY”)* (Lowell Mason and Sarah Flower Adams) 2:58  
Oscar Seagle and unidentified quartet, vocals.
- 8 *SAVED BY GRACE* (George Cole Stebbins and Fanny Jane Crosby) 3:42  
Gipsy Smith, vocal.
- 9 *JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA (“WOODWORTH”)* (William B. Bradbury and Charlotte Elliott) 3:06  
Billy Graham Australian Crusade Choir.

*Full discographic information and a list of the performers for each selection may be found within the individual discussions of the works in the liner notes.*

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