

On Christ the solid rock

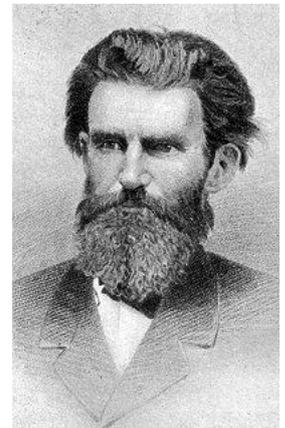
Edward Mote, 1797-1874. Born in England. Parents owned a London pub and neglected him. "My Sabbaths were spent in the streets at play. So ignorant was I that I did not know there was a God." In 1813 he heard John Hyatt preach, and in 1815 he was baptized. Ran a successful cabinet-making business. In 1852 became pastor of the Baptist Church in Horsham, Sussex. The congregation offered him the church building as a gift. He replied "I do not want the chapel, I only want the pulpit; and when I cease to preach Christ, then turn me out of that."



This hymn was written in 1834. Mote wrote the refrain and the first 4 stanzas on his way to work when "it came into my mind... to write an hymn on the 'Gracious Experience of a Christian.'" Last two verses were written after visiting an ill parishioner.

THE SOLID ROCK

William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868. Born in Maine. Studied with Lowell Mason. Organist, choir director, composer, teacher, publisher, piano builder. He wrote tunes for "Jesus Loves Me," "Just As I Am," "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us," and many more. Written for this text in 1863.



"On Christ the solid rock" is in the public domain.

Musical score for "On Christ the solid rock" in 3/4 time, G major. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are as follows:

1. My hope is built on noth - ing less Than Je - sus' blood and  
 2. When dark - ness veils His love - ly face, I rest on His un -  
 3. His oath, His cov - e - nant and blood, Sup - port me in the  
 4. When He shall come with trum - pet sound, O may I then in

1. right - eous - ness; I dare not trust the sweet - est frame, But  
 2. chang - ing grace; In ev - 'ry high and storm - y gale, My  
 3. whelm - ing flood; When all a - round my soul gives way, he  
 4. Him be found; Dressed in His right - eous - ness a - lone, Fault -

1. whol-ly lean on Je-sus' name.  
 2. an-chor holds with-in the veil. On Christ, the so-lid Rock, I stand, All  
 3. then is all my hope and stay.  
 4. less to stand be-fore the throne.

oth-er ground is sink-ing sand, All oth-er ground is sink-ing sand.

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## Nearer, my God, to Thee

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Sarah Flower Adams, 1805-1848, English poet and hymn writer. She was a Unitarian, and her career was hampered by deafness which she had inherited from her father. Encouraged by her husband, she had a brief and successful stint as an actress in 1837 but her poor health caused her to return to her writing. Her work often addressed equal rights for women and for the working class. She died after exhausting herself caring for her invalid sister.

Adams' pastor asked her to write some hymns for services in his chapel, and this was in one of the sets.

It tells the story of Jacob's dream from Genesis 28: "So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it..."

Interesting history includes this hymn's singing as the SS Valencia went down in 1906 off the Canadian coast. That may have inspired the legend of this song being played by the band of the RMS Titanic as she sank. Wallace Hartley, the Titanic's bandleader, loved that hymn and had wished it played at his funeral. It would have been sung (and played) with a different tune, probably PROPIOR DEO. The first few notes of that tune are inscribed on Hartley's memorial.

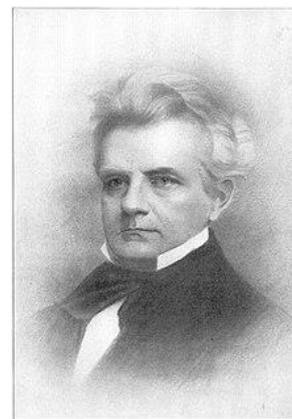
The first few lines of this hymn were President William McKinley's dying words in September of 1901. On September 14, 1901, after five minutes of silence, bands across the country played this hymn, which was McKinley's favorite.

The Confederate army band played this as survivors of Pickett's Charge returned from their failed assault. And the Rough Riders sang it at the burial of their comrades after the Battle of Las Guasimas in the Spanish-American war.

It was even on the operatic stage, when the singer Emma Abbott, an "uncompromising and grotesque" puritan, rewrote Verdi's *La Traviata* so Violetta did not sing "Addio del passato," but "Nearer my God to thee."

## BETHANY

Lowell Mason, 1792-1872, American. He was influential in church music and is credited with re-introducing music into American public schools. He first became a banker, and in 1827 he moved to Boston and continued that career. He served three churches in Boston (on a six-month rotation!) and became an important figure on the Boston musical scene. He was president of the Handel and Haydn Society, he taught music in the public schools, and was cofounder of the Boston Academy of Music. In 1838 he was appointed music superintendent for the Boston public school system. He retired at age 59 and moved to New York City with his sons. He took a tour of Germany and was amazed by their congregational singing. So he returned to New York, became music director for Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, disbanded the choir and orchestra, installed an organ, and developed congregational singing so the church was known for the best hymn singing in the city.



*"Nearer, my God, to thee" is in the public domain.*

1. Near - er, my God, to Thee, Near - er to Thee!  
 2. Though like the wan - der - er, The sun goes down,  
 3. There let the way ap - pear, Steps un - to heav'n;  
 4. Then, with my wak - ing thoughts, Bright with Thy praise,  
 5. Or if on joy - ful wing, Cleav - ing the sky,

1. E'en though it be a cross That rais - eth me;  
 2. Dark - ness be o - ver me, My rest a stone;  
 3. All that Thou send - est me, In mer - cy giv'n;  
 4. Out of my ston - y griefs, Beth - el I'll raise;  
 5. Sun, moon and stars for - got, Up - wards I fly,

1. Still all my song would be  
 2. Yet in my dreams I'd be  
 3. An - gels to beck - on me Near - er, my God, to Thee,  
 4. So by my woes to be  
 5. Still all my song shall be



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## Precious Lord, Take My Hand

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Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993, born Georgia, son of a Baptist minister and a church organist. Moved to Atlanta, then to Chicago where he played blues and studied at the Chicago College of Composition and Arranging. Worked with Paramount Records, then organized the Wild Cats Jazz Band for "Ma" Rainey, the Mother of the Blues, on her tours in the '20's. Directed the choir for a short time at Ebenezer Baptist, then directed music at Pilgrim Baptist, where he stayed for more than forty years. Toured with Mahalia Jackson.

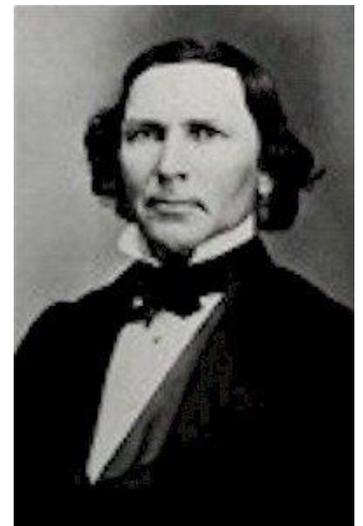


1932: Dorsey was singing at a revival meeting in St. Louis and drove there from Chicago in his Model A Ford. The crowd wanted more and more. Dorsey received a message that his wife had just died. Dorsey went back to Chicago, and found that the child, a boy, had also died. "I felt that God had done me an injustice. I didn't want to serve Him anymore or write gospel songs." A friend took him to a college, where he was left alone in a room with a piano. "It was quiet; the late evening sun crept through the curtained windows. I sat down at the piano, and my hands began to browse over the keys. Something happened to me. I felt at peace. I felt as though I could reach out and touch God. I found myself playing a melody, one I'd never heard or played before, and words came into my head - they just seemed to fall into place."

## PRECIOUS LORD

Dorsey thought he was playing an original melody, but it was in fact MAITLAND, written by George N. Allen (1812-1877). Original text was "Must Jesus bear the cross alone."

Allen: student of Lowell Mason, from Massachusetts. Graduated from Oberlin College and taught sacred music and geology there (!) from 1837 until he retired in 1864. He founded the Oberlin Musical Association, set up a piano department, raised money for a music hall, and invited famous conductors to campus. His work helped found the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1865.



1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me  
 2. When my way grows— drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger  
 3. When the dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws—

1. stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
 2. near, When my life is al - most gone;  
 3. near, And the day is past and gone;

1. — Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the  
 2. — Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand, lest I  
 3. — At the riv - er I stand, Guide my feet, hold my

1. light, Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, Lead me on.  
 2. fall, Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, Lead me on.  
 3. hand, Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, Lead me on.

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