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HOSANNAS FOREVER

HYMNS *of* HEAVEN
and our PILGRIMAGE

SECTION ONE | HYMNS 1-19

If the book *Pilgrim's Progress* came with a soundtrack, that soundtrack might include the following nineteen hymns.

Swedish Christians use the term *Himland Verset*, “heaven verse,” to describe hymns that end with a verse about Heaven. Each of the hymns in this section could have that same label stamped on them. The early stanzas of these hymns address the trials, burdens, and anguish that the author may bear. Other stanzas speak of God’s guidance and love. The last stanza summarizes our hope in God and ultimately in the glory and rejoicing of Heaven. These final stanzas have been printed in bold typeface to catch your eye. As you read these lyrics and biographies, you may no doubt identify with the trials that led to the authors’ pilgrimage and longing for Heaven.

Is yearning for Heaven a form of escapism? No! Christ has told us to long for it. He knows the pain that a world of sin brings and desires to guide us through our trials and be our faithful Savior. We can take great comfort in the fact that ultimately He wants to provide our release from sin's horrors by taking us to Heaven in His time. Longing for Heaven fashions our hearts to love the Creator more. It also enables us to stop clutching so tightly to this world, which frees us to sacrifice ourselves for God and others as long as we remain in it. The most heavenly minded people, it turns out, are free to do the most earthly good.

But this longing is not like waiting long for graduation, a birthday party, or a vacation. Looking from the vantage point of our pilgrimage as described in the early stanzas of these hymns, we need to become heavenly minded. Paul says in Colossians 3:1–2, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” These words are not a suggestion but a command. Cameron Cole writes,

The Lord commands us to think about eternity as a daily habit. Heavenly mindedness serves as a deliberate, ongoing spiritual practice. . . . Paul's portrayal of heavenly mindedness is comprised of more than just an intellectual exercise. His exhortation included the emotions and desires of the heart. One could characterize this aspect of heavenly mindedness as heavenly longing. In Romans 8:23 Paul writes that “not only creation, but we ourselves . . . groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoption *as sons, the redemption of our bodies*.”⁶

Other *Himland Verset* hymns may be found in *Our Hymns, Our Heritage*:

- 22. What Wondrous Love Is This?
- 37. Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- 41. Rejoice the Lord Is King
- 72. The Solid Rock
- 100. Rock of Ages
- 105. All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night
- 107. Amazing Grace
- 108. It Is Well with My Soul
- 118. Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Earth and Heaven

A Prayer Upon Beginning to Sing Hymns of Heaven

O Lord,
I live here as a fish in a vessel of water,
 only enough to keep me alive,
 but in heaven I shall swim in the ocean.
Here I have a little air in me to keep me breathing,
 but there I shall have sweet and fresh gales;
Here I have a beam of sun to lighten my darkness,
 a warm ray to keep me from freezing;
 yonder I shall live in light and warmth forever.
My natural desires are corrupt and misguided,
 and it is Thy mercy to destroy them;
My spiritual longings are of Thy planting,
 and Thou wilt water and increase them;
Quicken my hunger and thirst after the realm above.
Here I can have the world,
 there I shall have Thee in Christ;
Here is a life of longing and prayer,
 there is assurance without suspicion,
 asking without refusal;
Here are gross comforts, more burden than benefit,
 there is joy without sorrow,
 comfort without suffering,
 love without inconsistency,
 rest without weariness.
Give me to know that heaven is all love,
 where the eye affects the heart,
 and the continual viewing of Thy beauty
 keeps the soul in continual transports of delight.
Give me to know that heaven is all peace,
 where error, pride, rebellion, passion raise no head.
Give me to know that heaven is all joy,
 the end of believing, fasting, praying, mourning,
 humbling, watching, fearing, repining;
And lead me to it soon.

—*The Valley of Vision*⁷

Week 1 Day by Day

TEXT: Karolina Sandell Berg || b. October 3, 1832, Fyöderyd, Sweden
d. July 27, 1903, Stockholm, Sweden

Karolina Sandell Berg was born in Sweden in the nineteenth century during a time of revivals in Europe, England, and America. During that time, several prominent women hymn writers emerged, including Charlotte Elliot, Frances Havergal, and Fanny Crosby.

Lina, as she was nicknamed, was the daughter of Jonas Sandell, the Lutheran pastor of their town. She and her father were remarkably close, due in part to her health issues in childhood that caused her to prefer her father's study to playing outside. When she was 26, the two were traveling to Gothenburg when their boat lurched forward, and he fell overboard. Lina watched him drown. She returned home to grieve and found comfort and consolation by reading her Bible and writing hymns. In the first year after her father's death, she wrote fourteen of her most loved hymns, including "Children of the Heavenly Father." Seven years later, she wrote "Day by Day," the second of her most well-known works. Erwin Lutzer says, "Far from seeing this incident as a cruel oversight on God's part, she saw in her father's death an expression of loving protection!"⁸ Karolina wrote over 650 hymns and became known as the "Fanny Crosby of Sweden."

TUNE: Oskar Ahnfelt || b. May 21, 1813, Gullarp, Skåne, Sweden
d. October 22, 1882, Karlshamn, Sweden

Oskar Ahnfelt, a famous traveling troubadour, wrote tunes for Lina's hymns and traveled around Scandinavia singing and accompanying them on his guitar. Lina said of him, "Ahnfelt has sung my songs into the hearts of the people."⁹

As you sing this hymn . . . you are reminding yourself and testifying to others that your heavenly Father is no distant God. This text is a powerful reminder that He is an ever-present help and gives continuous comfort in all our trials and troubles, no matter how severe. He is with us every day, every hour, every moment, "with a special mercy for each hour." It is a reminder of His pledge to His children: "As your days, so shall your strength be" (Deut. 33:25). Charles Spurgeon observes:

God is always thinking of us, never turns aside His mind from us, has us always before His eyes. His thoughts are always tender, loving, wise, prudent, far-reaching, and they bring to us countless benefits; hence it is a special joy to remember them. . . . These thoughts of the Lord encompass us in all our paths, and penetrate the innermost region of our being. Not a nerve or tissue, valve or vessel, of our bodily organization is uncared for; all the little of our little world are thought of by the great God.¹⁰

Day by Day

1

*So we do not lose heart.
Though our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16



1. Day by day, and with each pass - ing mom - ent, strength I
2. Ev - 'ry day the Lord Him - self is near me, with a
3. Help me then in ev - ery trib - u - la - tion so to



find to meet my tri - als here; trust - ing in my Fa - ther's wise be -
spe - cial mer - cy for each hour; all my cares He fain would bear and
trust Thy pro - mis - es, Oh, Lord, that I lose not faith's sweet con - so -



stow - ment, I've no cause for wor - ry or for fear.
cheer me, He whose name is Coun - se - lor and Power.
la - tion of - fered me with - in Thy ho - ly Word.



He whose heart is kind be - yond all mea - sure gives un -
The pro - tec - tion of His child and treas - ure is a
Help me, Lord, when toil and trou - ble meet - ing, e'er to



to each day what He deems best, lov - ing - ly, its part of pain and
charge that on Him - self He laid, "As your days, your strength shall be in
take, as from a fa - ther's hand, one by one, the days, the mo - ments



pleas - ure, min - gling toil with peace_ and_ rest.
meas - ure," this the pledge to me_ He_ made.
fleet - ing, till I reach the prom - ised_ land.

TEXT: Karolina Sandell Berg

BLOTT EN DAG

TUNE: Oskar Ahnfelt

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

2

*For this God is our God . . .
He will be our guide even to the end.*

PSALM 48:14 (NIV)



1. Guide me, O Thou great Je - hov - ah, pil - grim through this bar - ren land;
2. O - pen now the crys - tal_ foun - tain, whence the heal - ing stream doth flow;
3. When I tread the verge_ of_ Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious fears sub - side;



I am weak, but Thou_ art_ might - y; hold me with Thy_
let the fire and cloud - y_ pil - lar lead me all my_
Death of death, and hell's_ de - struc - tion, land me safe on_



pow'r - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, Bread of heav - en,
jour - ney through. Strong De - liv - 'rer, strong De - liv - 'rer,
Can - aan's side; songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



feed me till I want no more, feed me till_ I_ want no more.
be Thou still my strength and shield, be Thou still_ my_ strength and shield.
I will ev - er give to Thee, I will ev - er_ give to Thee.

TEXT: William Williams

CWM RHONDDA

TUNE: John Hughes

Week 3 *My Jesus, I Love Thee*

TEXT: William R. Featherston

b. July 23, 1846, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

d. May 20, 1873, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

These are the words of 16-year-old William Featherston upon his conversion. Featherston lived in Montreal, Canada, but little else is known about him. He supposedly sent these words to his aunt, who lived in Los Angeles, where she sought publication. Two years later the poem unexplainably appeared in *The London Hymn Book*, 1864, but with a different melody. Kenneth Osbeck notes, “It is reported that the original copy of the poem, in the author’s boyish handwriting, is still a cherished treasure in the family.”¹⁴

TUNE: Adoniram J. Gordon

b. April 13, 1836, New Hampton, New Hampshire

d. February 2, 1895, Boston, Massachusetts

Adoniram J. Gordon was named after Adoniram Judson, the famous Baptist missionary to India-Burma. He was ordained as a Baptist minister and served at the famed Clarendon Baptist Church in Boston. He was a friend of Dwight L. Moody and assisted in his evangelistic outreach in Boston. He founded Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He discovered Featherston’s hymn in the London hymnal but felt it needed a different tune, so he composed one, describing it this way: “In a moment of inspiration, a new air sang itself to me.”¹⁵ He then included it in a hymnal he was editing, *The Service of Song for Baptist Churches*. It has appeared in almost every Christian hymnal published since that time.

As you sing this hymn . . . try to memorize these words. The memorization of hymns is such a valuable habit as the time-tested words of the theologian or poet provide a means to express our thoughts and feelings about God so much better than we could ourselves. But you must believe what you are singing. In this case, you must love Jesus Christ.

Love for Jesus is most intense in one who has been convicted of sin in their heart by the Holy Spirit, who then illuminates the mercy and love of Jesus for sinners. Christ’s love is so deep that He paid the price of sin with His own blood as the sacrificial Lamb for whomever would believe in Him. “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This is the love that calls a penitent, forgiven sinner to say, “My Jesus, I love Thee.” This hymn is a deeply personal conversation between a forgiven sinner and their Savior.

Notice the reference to two crowns in stanzas 2 and 3. The first is the crown of thorns that was placed on the head of Jesus before He was crucified; the second is the “glittering crown” that is for the one He redeems. It is the “crown of life” in Revelation 2:10. What kind of love is this, that He wore the thorns that we might wear the gold?

My Jesus, I Love Thee

3

*So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.
God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God,
and God abides in him.
We love because He first loved us.*

I JOHN 4:16, 19



1. My Je - sus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
2. I love Thee be - cause Thou hast first lov - ed me,
3. In man - sions of glo - ry and end - less de - light,



for Thee all the fol - lies of sin I re - sign;
and pur - chased my par - don on Cal - va - ry's tree;
I'll ev - er a - dore Thee in heav - en so bright;



my gra - cious Re - deem - er, my Sav - ior art Thou; ___
I love Thee for wear - ing the thorns on Thy brow; ___
I'll sing with the glit - ter - ing crown on my brow: ___



if ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now.
if ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now.
if ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now.

TEXT: William R. Featherston

GORDON

TUNE: Adoniram J. Gordon

Week 4 *Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken*

TEXT: Henry Francis Lyte ||| b. June 1, 1793, Ednam, Scotland
d. November 20, 1847, Nice, France

Henry Lyte was orphaned and left alone at the age of 9. Robert Burrows, headmaster of Portora School, took him into his family and paid for his education. This small, abandoned boy became one of the world's finest poets and hymnologists, leaving us "Abide with Me" and "Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven."

Early in his ministry, while at the bedside of a dying friend and fellow clergyman, Lyte realized that both of them were "blind guides who were still groping for the light. Through a prayerful search of the Scriptures . . . they both came to a firm faith in Christ."¹⁶ Afterward, he said, "I began to study my Bible and preach in a manner different from what I had previously done."¹⁷ It may have been this incident that led to the writing of "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken." At the age of 54, he was traveling to Italy for his health, but got only to Nice, France, where he died. He is buried in the English cemetery there. On his tombstone is written, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14 KJV). For more on Lyte, see *Our Hymns, Our Heritage* no. 85 and no. 104.

TUNE: attr. to W. A. Mozart ||| b. January 8, 1792, Medfield, Massachusetts
ARR. Lowell Mason ||| d. August 11, 1872, Orange Mountain, New Jersey

Lowell Mason greatly influenced American musical culture in the nineteenth century. He is called "the father of American church music" and "the father of music education in America." Mason composed 1,600 hymn tunes, including those for "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Joy to the World," "Nearer My God to Thee," and "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."¹⁸

As you sing this hymn . . . you may question if you can sing truthfully: "Let the world despise and leave me" or "Go, then earthly fame and treasure." After all, the desire for acceptance and security is rooted deep in our hearts.

This hymn describes Jesus' meaning when He said, "Follow Me" (Matt. 4:19; 9:9) and "take up your cross" (Matt. 10:38; 16:24). Theologian David Mathis refers to this as singing "above our head." "Lyrics above us help us grow and stretch. They press us and extend us and shape us. . . . In worship, we express what we already believe and feel and live, what we aspire to, and what we pray for. Worship forms us."¹⁹

Each stanza describes current loss but ends by expressing triumph that awaits those who follow Him. Mathis continues, "This hymn is not a disgruntled manifesto of complaint but a declaration of joy, or exquisite delights the unregenerate soul never tastes. Yes, we lose. But how much more we gain. We gain Heaven, all things, Christ's own comfort, and God Himself."²⁰

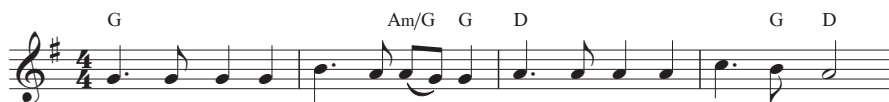
The text's author, Henry Lyte, an orphan, never knew his father's love. But in following Christ and taking up His cross, he gained so much more: "I have called Thee 'Abba Father'; I have stayed my heart on Thee" (stanza 3).

Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

4

*“If anyone would come after Me,
let him deny himself
and take up his cross and follow Me.”*

MATTHEW 16:24



1. Je - sus, I my cross have tak - en, all to leave and fol - low Thee;
2. Let the world de - spise and leave me, they have left my Sav - ior too,
- +3. Go, then, earth - ly fame and trea - sure, come dis - as - ter, scorn, and pain.
4. Soul, then know Thy full sal - va - tion, rise o'er sin and fear and care.
5. **Haste thee on from grace to glo - ry, armed by faith and winged by prayer.**



des - ti - tute, de - spised, for - sak - en, Thou from hence my_ all shalt be.
hu - man hearts and looks de - ceive me; Thou art not, like_ man, un - true;
+ In Thy ser - vice pain is plea - sure, with Thy fa - vor - loss is gain.
Joy to find in ev - 'ry sta - tion, some - thing still_ to_ do or bear.
Heav'n's e - ter - nal days be - fore thee, God's own hand_ shall_ guide thee there.



Per - ish ev - 'ry fond am - bi - tion, all I've sought or hoped or known;
and, while Thou shall smile up - on_ me, God of wis - dom, love, and might,
+ I have called Thee "Ab - ba Fa - ther;" I have stayed my heart on Thee.
Think what Spir - it dwells with - in_ thee, think what Fa - ther's smiles are thine,
Soon shall close thy earth - ly mis - sion, swift will pass thy pil - grim days;



yet how rich is my con - di - tion, God and heav'n are_ still my own.
foes may hate and friends may shun me; show Thy face, and_ all is bright.
+ Storms may howl and clouds may gath - er; all must work for_ good to me.
think that Je - sus died_ to win thee, child of heav'n_ shouldst_ thou re - pine.
hope shall change to glad fru - i - tion, faith to sight and_ prayer to praise.

TEXT: Henry F. Lyte

ELLESDIE

TUNE: attr. to W. A. Mozart, arr. Lowell Mason

Week 5 When Trials Come

TEXT AND TUNE: Keith Getty

Kristyn Getty

b. 1974, Lisburn, Ireland

b. 1980, Belfast, Northern Ireland

(For more on the Gettys, see weeks 45 and 50)

Kristyn and Keith Getty have been serving the church in worship and music for over two decades. Their website says that “their songwriting journey began in 2000 when Keith wrote the tune for ‘In Christ Alone’ on the back of a Northern Ireland Electricity bill.”²¹ Three key concerns are evidenced in their music and ministry: the advocacy for the great hymns of the church, writing texts that are scripturally based, and focusing on the fact that worship and singing in the church is to be done by the people, not those on the stage.

As you sing this hymn . . . you are singing these statements from Scripture:

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6–7).

Peter continues in chapter 4:12–13, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.”

Notice the stanzas of the hymn speak of confidence, not fear; peace, not anxiety; trust, not confusion; hope, not despair. The final stanza puts all into perspective and reveals what must be the focus of our trials here: our hope of Heaven and an eternity with God.

Joseph Stowell states it this way: “When eternity is off the screen, all of life is compressed into the distorted assumption that this is all we have. And, frankly, it’s never quite enough. Why? Because we are built for eternity . . . an eternal unhindered relationship with God, who created us to know the deep pleasure of His companionship.”²²

Indeed, we are built for eternity. Ultimately, we must view our trials as the true way to glory—glory that *only* comes by way of the cross. (See week 4, “Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken.”)

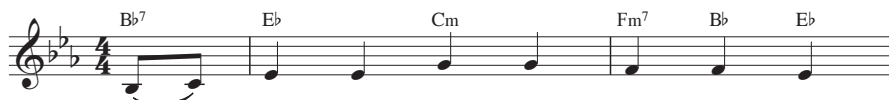
Other Scriptures to consider are Psalm 138:8, Psalm 136:1, Lamentations 3:19–25, Romans 8:18, Philippians 1:6, Revelation 21:3–7, Psalm 57, Psalm 91:4, and Luke 12:7.

When Trials Come

5

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.

JAMES 1:12



1. When tri - als come no long - er fear,
 2. With - in the night I know Your peace;
 + 3. I turn to wis - dom not my own,
 4. When I am wear - y with the cost,
 5. **One day all things will be made new;**



for in the pain our God is near
 the breath of God brings strength to me;
 + for ev - 'ry bat - tle You have known.
 I see the tri - umph of the cross.
 I'll see the hope You've called me to;



to fire a faith worth more than gold;
 and new each morn - ing mer - cies flow,
 + my con - fi - dence will rest in You;
 So in its shad - ow I shall run,
 and in Your king - dom paved with gold,



and there His faith - ful - ness is told,
 as trea - sures of the dark - ness grow,
 + Your love en - dures, Your ways are good;
 'til He com - pletes the work be - gun,
 I'll praise Your faith - ful - ness of old,



and there His faith - ful - ness is told.
 as trea - sures of the dark - ness grow.
 + Your love en - dures Your ways are good.
 'til He com - pletes the work be - gun.
 I'll praise Your faith - ful - ness of old.

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TEXT AND TUNE: Keith and Kristyn Getty

Week 6 *He Hideth My Soul*

TEXT: Fanny J. Crosby || b. March 24, 1820, Putnam County, New York
d. February 12, 1915, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Fanny Crosby, one of the foremost hymn writers of the nineteenth century, was blind from the age of six weeks. When she was 8 years old, she wrote her first poem. Late in life she said of the poem, “It has been the motto of my life.” The poem reads:

*O what a happy soul I am! / Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world / Contented I will be:
How many blessings I enjoy / That other people don't:
To weep and sigh because I'm blind, / I cannot and I won't.*²³

This resolve and contentment carried her through her entire life. She loved people; she loved her work; but most of all, Fanny loved her Lord. This hymn's title suggests sorrow and fear, but in reality, each stanza is a positive statement of praise; her need for refuge is not stated. The repeated chorus attending each stanza is based on Exodus 33:18–23.

TUNE: William Kirkpatrick || b. February 27, 1838, County Tyrone, United Kingdom
d. February 12, 1915, Bridgeport, Connecticut

William Kirkpatrick was a prominent writer of gospel songs in the nineteenth century. He partnered with John R. Sweney, a professor at the Pennsylvania Military Academy and a hymn writer, to write over one thousand gospel hymns and produce sixty hymnals. In 1877, Fanny Crosby met Kirkpatrick, whom she called “Kirkie,” and he wrote several tunes for her hymns, including this one.

As you sing this hymn . . . In Exodus 33:22, God hides Moses in the cleft of the rock while His glory passes by. Earlier in the chapter Moses asks God to show him His glory. God responds, “You cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live” (Ex. 33:20). That statement conveys the magnitude of what it means that one day we will look upon His face.

“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12).

“His servants will worship Him. They will see His face” (Rev. 22:3–4).

However, for now we're looking through a dim mirror. Spurgeon says, “We can't yet see things clearly because we can't yet see God clearly.”²⁴ Alcorn adds, “Not only will we see God, he will be the lens through which we see everything else . . . To look into God's eyes will be to see what we've always longed to see: the One who made us for his own good pleasure.”²⁵

Until then, the songwriter states, by faith we rest in the fact that our souls are hidden with Him “in the cleft of the rock,” where He covers and protects us with His hand. Is your life “hidden” with God? Only through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for your sins are you “in Christ” (John 3:16; Col. 3:3).

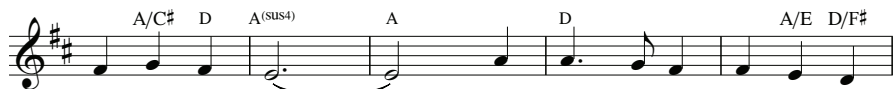
He Hideth My Soul

*“While My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock,
and I will cover you with My hand.”*

EXODUS 33:22



1. A won - der - ful Sa - vior is Je - sus my Lord, a won - der - ful
2. A won - der - ful Sav - ior is Je - sus my Lord, He tak - eth my
3. With num - ber - less bless - ings each mo - ment He crowns, and filled with His
4. **When clothed in His bright-ness, trans-ported I rise to meet Him in**



Sa - vior to me. _____ He hid - eth my soul in the
bur - den a - way; _____ He hold - eth me up and I
full - ness di - vine, _____ I sing in my rap - ture all
clouds of the sky, _____ His per - fect sal - va - tion, His



cleft of the rock, where riv - ers of plea - sure I see. _____
shall not be moved; He giv - eth me strength as my day. _____
glo - ry to God for such a Re - deem - er as mine! _____
won - der - ful love, I'll shout with the mil - lions on high! _____

Refrain



He hid - eth my soul in the cleft of the rock, that sha - dows a



dry thirst - y land. _____ He hid - eth my life in the



depths of His love, and cov - ers me there with His hand, _____



and cov - ers me there with His hand. _____

TEXT: Fanny J. Crosby

KIRKPATRICK

TUNE: William Kirkpatrick