

MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE

At twenty-two, Ray.Palmer was having a tough year. He wanted to go into the ministry but was stuck teaching at a girls' school in New York City. He was lonely, depressed, and sick. Then he found a German poem about a sinner kneeling before the cross. He translated it and added four stanzas.

"I wrote the verses with tender emotion," he said later. "There was not the slightest thought of writing for another eye, least of all writing a hymn for Christian worship."

Two years later, while visiting Boston, he ran across his friend Lowell Mason. Mason, a major figure in American music in the early 1800s, was preparing a new hymnal. He asked Palmer if he'd like to contribute anything. Palmer bashfully showed Mason these verses. "You may live many years and do many good things," Mason said, "but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."

MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary.
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me,
O may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire!

While life's dark maze I tread
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.

When ends life's passing dream,
When death's cold, threatening stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Savior, then, in love,

Fear and distrust remove;
O lift me safe above,
A ransomed soul!

Ray Palmer (1808-1887)
Hymn #452