

April's hymn of the month

By

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At Easter time we joyfully sing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" by Charles Wesley and "Christ Arose" by Robert Lowry, to celebrate our Lord's victory over death. For in his resurrection, we too have the promise of the same victory. The list of songs could go on to include many wonderful hymns, but there is one song that takes the message of Easter to a higher plain. In the words of its author, "Easter is not an experience limited to a happening almost 2000 years ago, but is a daily companionship with the Savior that makes up the Christian's daily walk."

The title of this song is "In the Garden" and was written by C. Austin Miles in a most unlikely place. Miles was an editor and manager of music publishing firms in Philadelphia and Winona Lake, Indiana (headquarters for Billy Sunday). Along with his editorial duties, Miles had developed an interest in photography to the extent of even building his own darkroom. It would be in the darkroom in March of 1912, just before Easter, that the Lord met with this photographer and gave him the words of this hymn in a very unusual way. In his own words, this is how the hymn was born:

"One day as I waited for some film to develop, I picked up my Bible which fell open to the Gospel of John, chapter 20. I began to read the story of Jesus and Mary on resurrection morning. As I read it, I seemed to be transported to the actual garden and I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment. I saw the very movements. I heard the very words of Mary as she thought she was talking to the gardener: and I heard Jesus say, 'Mary,' after which I saw her kneel before her Lord and say, 'Rabboni!' Under the inspiration of that holy moment I wrote the poem as it appears today and that evening I added the music."

The hymn soon grew in popularity as good friend Homer Rodeheaver used the song over and over again in Billy Sunday meetings across the land and remains today as one of the favorites of Christians round the world:

I come 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.

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.

I'd stay in the garden with Him though the night around me is falling, but He bids me go; through the voice of woe, His voice to me is calling.

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.

The hymn of the month for April: **In the Garden**