

ANNE SHEPHERD 1809 - 1957

Isle of Wight Hymnwriter

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Another authoress that is little generally known today. Anne Houldich Shepherd née Houlditch, was born at Cowes in 1809 and went on to write the hymn for which she is particularly remembered:

Anne Shepherd's "*Around the throne of God in heaven*" was first published in her Hymns adapted to the Comprehension of Young Minds (c. 1830) and became in extensive use in America and other English-speaking countries it was found in about a quarter of the children's hymn books. Anne Shepherd invokes a heaven where singing and brightness exist, and which is especially peopled by children: "*Around the throne of God in heaven, Thousands of children stand*" Anne writes with children always in mind. Her questions are the child's questions.

Work

"Hymns adapted to the Comprehension of Young Minds"
Some sixty-four hymns first published 1836 which reached its fifth edition by 1855

The most popular of these hymns was one of six verses beginning:

Around the throne of God in heaven
Thousands of children stand;
Children whose sins are all forgiven
A holy, happy band,
Singing glory, glory, glory.

After describing the heavenly scene and limitations of their previous earthly existence, in the second half she deals with the question:

What brought then to that world above,
That heaven so bright and fair,
Where all in peace, and joy and love,
How came those children there,
Singing glory, glory, glory.

Around the throne of God in Heaven

Around the throne of God in heaven
Thousand of children stand
Children, whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band

Singing: Glory, glory, glory !

In flowing robes of spotless white
See every son arrayed,
Dwelling in everlasting light
And joys that never fade

What brought them to that world above,
That heaven so bright and fair,
Where all is peace, and joy, and love
How came those children there ?

Because the Saviour shed His blood
To wash away their sin;
Bathed in that pure and precious flood,
Behold them white and clean.

On earth they sought the Saviour's grace,
On earth they loved his name;
So now they see His blessed face
And stand before the Lamb.

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