

# SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER?

A General or All Saints' Anthem  
for S.A.T.B. voices, accompanied

Arranged by  
HAL H. HOPSON

Words and Music by  
ROBERT LOWRY (1826-1899)

With motion, but unhurried (♩ = ca. 76 - 80)

ACCOMP.

4 *a tempo*  
UNISON WOMEN *p*

Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have

*a tempo*

7 *trud.*  
UNISON MEN *p*

With its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow-ing

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10 12 *mp*

Yes, we'll gath - er at the

by the throne of God?

13

riv - er,

*mp*

the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;

16

*mf* *p* *rit.*

Gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of

*mf* *p*

*mf* *rit.*

20 *a tempo*

19 God. *(p)* Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er,  
*(p)* Shin - ing riv - er,

*a tempo*

22 *mp* Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ry bur - den  
 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry  
 shin - ing riv - er, bur - den

25 down; Grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro -  
 bur den down; Grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, pro -  
 down; Grace de - liv - er, pro -

28 vide a robe and crown. 30 *mf*

vide a robe and crown. Yes, we'll gath - er at the

vide a robe and crown.

31

riv - er,

*mf*

the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful — riv - er;

34 *f* *mf* *rit.*

Gath - er with the saints — at the riv - er that flows by the throne of —

*f* *mf*

*rit.*

37

38 With breadth and fervor

God. Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er,

Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, shin - ing riv - er,

With breadth and fervor

40

soon our pil - grim-age will cease;

soon our pil - grim-age will cease, our pil - grim - age will cease;

42

Soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er, will quiv - er with the

44

mel - o - dy, the mel - o - dy of peace.

peace. Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er,

47 *ff*

Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful —  
shin - ing riv - er

soon we'll gath - er, O yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er

50

riv - er; gath - er with the saints at the

with all the saints; O yes, we'll gath - er with the saints at the

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (measures 52-55) features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a *mf* dynamic and a *rit.* marking, leading to a *p* dynamic. The piano accompaniment also starts with *mf* and *rit.*, then moves to *p*. The tempo/style is marked "Slowly, legato". The lyrics are: "riv - er that flows by the throne of God. We'll gath - er at the".

The second system (measures 56-58) continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line is marked "slower and softer to the end" and *p*. The piano accompaniment also has a *p* dynamic and is marked "slower and softer to the end". The lyrics are: "(SOP.) We'll gath - er at the throne of God. throne of God. of God."

The third system (measures 59-61) shows the final piano accompaniment. It is marked "slower and softer to the end" and *p*. The lyrics are: "throne of God. of God."

**Shall We Gather at the River** is a choral arrangement of one of the most popular 19th century gospel hymns. It is appropriate for All Saints' Day, funerals, memorial services, and more general occasions. Suggested corresponding lectionary readings include Psalms 24 and 34: 1-10 & 22, Matthew 5: 1-12, 1 John 3: 1-2, and Revelation 7: 9-17 and 22: 1. One basic homiletical theme is celebrating the lives of those who walk the many paths to God's heavenly kingdom.

In rehearsal, strive for a rather martial, triumphant sound within gently flowing four-measure phrases. Practice verses 1 and 3 (m. 4-19, 38-58) singing staccato "doo" until the rhythms are secure and the parts are perfectly aligned. Next, sing these verses legato on "noo" without sacrificing the energetic, martial feeling of the staccato. Add the text with great sensitivity to proper declamation. The first half of verse 2 (m. 20-29) should slightly contrast the other verses with a more flowing, though no less energetic, articulation.

**Robert Lowry** was a brilliant 19th century theologian, preacher, author, musician, and music editor. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he served Baptist churches in the northeast and taught at Bucknell University. His gospel hymns and texts appear in many hymnals.

**Hal H. Hopson** is Music Consultant at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas. He earned degrees from Baylor University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has served on the church music faculties of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and Scarritt Graduate School in Nashville. Especially celebrated for his arrangements and editions of sacred masterworks, Hopson has over 1,000 publications to his credit.