



# Tell Me the Old, Old Story

*The Story Behind Some of the Greatest  
Hymns and Hymns Composers*



by Diana Leigh Matthews



Growing up in the smaller Southern Baptist Churches, I grew up singing many of the popular hymns. My Dad was a minister, but also an awesome vocalist with a great love for the old hymns. We performed together for years until his death. Today when I perform for local nursing homes and other senior venues, the biggest request is to always have a hymn sing.

Unfortunately, today many of the beloved hymns of the past are falling by the wayside. I want to remind you of some of these great hymns. Hopefully you still sing them in church today, but if not, I hope to take you back to your childhood.

This e-book gives the histories behind thirty of the most popular hymns and biographies of ten of the most popular composers of these hymns.

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## *Amazing Grace*

Amazing Grace is one of the best known and loved hymns of our day. When it was first written it started off as a poem to illustrate a sermon on New Year's Day 1773.

The poem was written by John Newton and is considered to be his spiritual autobiography in verse.

John Newton was born in 1725. His mother wanted him to be a clergyman and at her knee he memorized numerous Bible passages and hymns. She died when he was seven years old and he would later recall her tearful prayers over him.

After the death of his mother he alternated between boarding school, living with his stepmother and the high seas. At the age of 11, he joined his father on his boat and began a life on the seas. They were involved with capturing men from West Africa and selling them as slaves. Several years later he was pressed into the British Navy. He deserted, was captured, suspended for two days and then flogged. He admitted later his thoughts switched between murder and suicide. While a sailor he renounced his faith and openly mocked his Captain with obscene poems and songs that became so popular the crew would join in. He gained notoriety for being the most profane man the Captain had ever met and even went so far as to create new words to "exceed the limits of verbal debauchery."

On March 9, 1748 a terrible storm came upon the slave ship he captained. It was so bad that he and another mate had to tie themselves to a pump to keep from being washed overboard. He cried out to God for help and the next day he began to read "Temptation of Christ" by Thomas A Kempis. This book led to his conversion in Christ and eventually a dramatic change in life. He celebrated March 10 annually thereafter stating "The 10th of March is a day much remembered by me; and I have never suffered it to pass unnoticed since the year 1748-- the Lord came from on high and delivered me out of deep waters."

He continued his work, holding services onboard for his crew, and tried to justify the selling of slaves but eventually realized just how inhumane his work was. In time he felt a call for the ministry and began to crusade against slavery.

John Newton married his youthful sweetheart, Mary Catlett, on February 12, 1750. He left a life at sea and worked as a clerk at the Port of Liverpool for nine years while obtaining his education. He was thirty-nine when he was ordained as a Minister of the Anglican Church. He served the illiterate and poor village of Olney, England {near Cambridge}. The main industry of

the 2,500 residents was making lace by hand. He was very involved and loved by the residents of his parish.

He was greatly influenced by John and Charles Wesley. When he could not find enough hymns to share with his congregation, he began to write simple heartfelt hymns for his congregation to use over the psalms they'd been reciting. Large crowds gathered to hear him preach, where he'd share about his early life and conversion. This was during a time when most ministers refused to admit to any wrongdoing on their part. John Newton and his friend, William Cowper, produced the *Olney Hymns Hymnal*, with John writing over a fifth of the songs.

Amazing Grace is based on 1 Chronicles 17:16-17: *"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: 'Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God.'" The song originally had six verses and was titled "Faith's Review and Expectation".*

It is not known what, if any tune, was associated with the initial singing of the song. It was associated with a number of different tunes before finding a home with the melody we know and recognize today. The tune we use today is an early American folk melody known as either *"Loving Lambs"* or *"New Britain"* {I've seen references to both}. The earliest known publication of the song was in 1831 and "scarcely a hymnal appeared through the south during the remainder of the 19th Century that did not include this hymn". The last stanza we know today {*When we've been there ten thousand years*} was added later and was a spiritual that had been sung and passed down orally for over fifty years in the African American communities. This stanza was included and published with the song for the first time in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

John Newton died in 1807, the same year British Parliament abolished slavery throughout its domain. {To learn more about the fight in parliament, the movie *Amazing Grace* is a great resource.} Right before his death Newton was quoted as saying *"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!"*

He wrote his own eulogy that was placed on his grave stone. *"John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and Libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy."*

Below are all of the lyrics to Amazing Grace, including those no longer used.

*Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)  
That sav'd a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears reliev'd;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believ'd!*

*Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.*

*The Lord has promis'd good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.*

*Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease;  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.*

*The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who call'd me here below,  
Will be forever mine.*

{Last verse added later}

*When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Then when we first begun.*

## *Because He Lives*

Because He Lives, was written by Bill and Gloria Gaither. The couple are still a popular Southern Gospel performers and songwriters of our day. The couple met while they were both teachers and were married in 1962. By the end of the 1960s, the Gaithers had two daughters and were expecting their third child. They were traveling and singing with Bill's brother, Danny, as the Bill Gaither Trio.

However, the couple "had not written any songs in a while and were going through a dry spell creatively". They were discouraged by the activities taking place in the world at that time. This was during the peak of the Vietnam War. A "God is dead" movement was taking place. They felt that this was a poor time to have a child.

Gloria gave birth to a son the named Benji. The couple realized that life is worth living because of Christ. No matter how unsure the future, Christ would guide their son the whole way. The couple then wrote the now popular song. The second verse begins "*How Sweet to hold a new born baby and feel the pride and joy he gives,*" this was written thinking about their new son, Benji.

Is life worth living for you? Can you face tomorrow '*Because He Lives*'?

## ***Because He Lives***

*God sent His son, they called Him Jesus  
He came to love, heal, and forgive.  
He lived and died to buy my pardon,  
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.*

*Chorus: Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.  
Because He lives, All fear is gone.  
Because I know He holds the future,  
And life is worth the living just because He lives.*

*How sweet to hold a newborn baby,  
And feel the pride and joy he gives.  
But greater still the calm assurance,  
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.*

*And then one day I'll cross the river,  
I'll fight life's final war with pain.  
And then as death gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.*

## *Blessed Assurance*

Fanny Crosby went blind at the age of six weeks in 1820. Her blindness was not necessary but was due to an improper medical procedure.

One day in 1873, Fanny was visiting her friend Phoebe Knapp. Phoebe began to play a tune for Fanny, which she {Phoebe} had composed. She asked Fanny what the tune said to her. Fanny's answer: "*That says Blessed Assurance*". Fanny then quickly composed the words for her popular hymn.

In July of that year, the hymn appeared on the last page of Palmer's *Guide to Holiness and Revival Miscellany*, a magazine printed by Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Palmer of 14 Bible House, New York City.

The song became very well known with the popular 19<sup>th</sup> Century Evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. He often used this hymn and many of Fanny Crosby's other hymns in his crusades.

In the summer of 1894, Fanny Crosby was in Northfield, Massachusetts and attended a revival with Dwight L. Moody. She did not want to be recognized, but when Moody's son, Will, offered her a seat he realized who she was. Moody asked Fanny to speak and share her testimony. At first she refused, but finally relented. While her hymn was sung, Will led her to the platform where Fanny received a standing ovation upon being recognized.

Fanny Crosby lived to be 95 years old. She wrote over eight thousand songs and hymns throughout her lifetime. She said she always asked God for inspiration before she began to write. She used over two hundred pseudonyms besides her own name. Although Fanny did not want a large tombstone, a large memorial stone was erected over her grave. On the memorial is transcribed the first stanza of *Blessed Assurance*.

## ***Blessed Assurance***

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

*Chorus: This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior, all the daylong;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior, all the day long.*

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.*

## *Christ Arose*

On Easter Sunday one of the most common hymns you hear in a service is “*Christ Arose*,” which is often known as *Low In the Grave He Lay*.

The hymn was written by Robert Lowry, a pastor and musician. Lowry served churches in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He was a graduate of Bucknell University, where he also served as a professor and received his doctorate.

While having his daily devotion at Easter time in 1862 the words to “*Christ Arose*” came to him. The hymn was inspired by Luke 24:6-8, specifically the part that says “*He is not here, but is risen.*” He immediately wrote out the words, and having an organ in his house, sat down and wrote the score. He said “*My brain is sort of a spinning machine, for there is music running through it all the time.*”

“*Christ Arose*” was first published in 1875. The hymn shows the contrast between the moods of the death and resurrection, with a vigorous tempo used in the refrain to express that Christ was indeed risen.

Lowry’s songs often paint word pictures. He usually wrote the words and tunes at the same time. Others hymns include “*Nothing But the Blood*,” “*I Need The Every Hour*,” *Marching to Zion*,” and “*Shall We Gather At the River*”. Later in his life, after the death of William Bradbury, he became the editor of Biglow Publishing Company. His songbook, “*Pure Gold*”, sold more than one million copies.

## *Christ Arose*

*Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior,  
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!*

*Chorus: Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose!  
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

*Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Savior;  
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!*

*Death cannot keep its Prey, Jesus my Savior;  
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!*

## *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* was written by Rev. Robert Robinson in the 18th Century. He was twenty-two when he penned the words in 1757.

As a young man Robinson lived a wild life that was full of debauchery. The story goes that Robert Robinson came upon a gypsy who said *"And you, young man, you will live to see your children and your grandchildren."*

Her words haunted him and he felt that he needed to change his way of living. His father died when he was eight and by the age of fourteen, he was sent to barbering school. That night he went to a Methodist meeting led by Evangelist George Whitefield. His intention in going was to make fun of those "poor, deluded Methodist." The sermon was based on the Sadducees and Pharisees in Matthew 3:7. Apparently, that was the planting of the seeds that would change his life. Another three years would pass before he accepted Christ into his heart, on December 10, 1755.

After accepting Christ, Robinson felt the call and entered the ministry, teaching himself. He served Calvinist Methodist Chapel, Norfolk, England and a Baptist church in Cambridge, England. He wrote various hymns and theological books during his career.

For Pentecost {or Whit Sunday} 1858, he decided to pen his spiritual autobiography. *Come Thou Fount* is the result of what he wrote on that occasion. Part of the passage was taken from 1 Samuel 7:12. Robinson said it was *"a prayer that the Holy Spirit flood into our hearts with his streams of mercy, enabling us to sing God's praises and remain faithful to Him."*

Legend says that one day while riding in a stagecoach a lady asked him what he thought of the hymn she was humming, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. He responded, *"Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then."*

Robinson published a number of other works during his lifetime. He died on June 9, 1790 at the age of fifty-four.

In the United States the hymn is usually to the American folk tune, *Nettleton*, composed by John Wyeth. In the United Kingdom the hymn is sung to the Bost tune *Normandy*. The hymn first appeared in *Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Songs* hymnal in 1813.

## ***Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing***

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above.  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of Thy redeeming love.*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
Here by Thy great help I've come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

*O that day when freed from sinning,  
I shall see Thy lovely face;  
Clothed then in blood washed linen  
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,  
Take my ransomed soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry  
Me to realms of endless day.*

## *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*

*Have Thine Own Way, Lord* was written by Adelaide A. Pollard. Born in 1862 Iowa, she had a gift for writing prose, poetry, hymns and even articles. Her birth name was Sarah, but she strongly disliked the name and changed it to Adelaide. She spent her life in ministry, teaching at schools, working with evangelist and serving in missions overseas. She had a strong interest in foreign missions.

In 1902, she was hoping to go to Africa as a missionary. She was unable to raise the funds, had to cancel things at the last moment and was greatly discouraged.

At prayer service an elderly woman said "*It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord, just have your own way with our lives.*" Pollard thought on this and thought about the story of the potter in Jeremiah 18:3, "*So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel.*"

Upon returning home that evening she wrote all four stanzas of her hymn.

George C. Stebbins wrote the music for this hymn. The song was first published in *Northfield Hymnal* with Alexander's Supplement in 1907. Later that year the song appeared in two of Ira Sankey's hymnals.

Years later Pollard would serve for a time in Africa. She also spent the years of World War I ministering in England. She continued to speak publically the rest of her life. She died on December 20, 1934 in New York City. She was at the train station, waiting to travel to a speaking engagement when she was struck with a seizure and made her trip into glory. She wrote over one hundred hymns during her lifetime. She wanted no recognition for her hymns and signed most of them AAP. *Have Thine Own Way Lord* is her only hymn still known to be in use today.

## ***Have thine own way, Lord***

*Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Thou art the potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after thy will,  
while I am waiting, yielded and still.*

*Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Search me and try me, Savior today!  
Wash me just now, Lord, wash me just now,  
as in thy presence humbly I bow.*

*Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Wounded and weary, help me I pray!  
Power, all power, surely is thine!  
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine!*

*Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway.  
Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me!*

## *His Eye Is On the Sparrow*

One day in 1905, Mrs. Civilla Martin visited a friend that was bedridden. Concerned for her friend she asked her how she dealt with discouragement. The friend replied, "*Mrs. Martin, how can I be discouraged when my Heavenly Father watches over each little sparrow and I know he loves and cares for me.*" Hearing these words Mrs. Martin immediately put the lyrics to this popular hymn onto paper.

The experience is even better shared in Mrs. Martin's own words:

"Early in the spring of 1905, my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle—true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple: "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and me. The hymn "*His Eye Is on the Sparrow*" was the outcome of that experience."

Mrs. Martin was further inspired by two Bible verses found in the book of Matthew. The first is: "*Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*" (Matthew 6:26).

The second is: "*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows*" (Matthew 10:29-31).

Mrs. Martin gave her lyrics to composer Charles H. Gabriel. He composed the music to this popular hymn.

Ethel Water, a popular gospel soloist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, often sang this hymn and helped increase the popularity. When Ethel Waters wrote her autobiography, she decided to name her memoirs *His Eye Is On the Sparrow*.

## *His Eye Is On the Sparrow*

*Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,  
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home,  
When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He:  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

*Chorus: I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
For His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.*

*"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,  
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;  
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

*Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,  
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,  
I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

## *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Reginald Heber, an Anglican minister, published a collection of fifty-seven of his hymns in 1827. Among the hymns published were *Holy, Holy, Holy*. Rev. Heber wrote the song to be used in the liturgy for Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost. The lyrics of this popular hymn speak of the trinity. *Holy, Holy, Holy* is a translation of the *Sanctus*, which is part of the Catholic Order of Mass.

The text paraphrases the passages in Isaiah 6:1-5. Verse three in that passage says: "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.*"

The tune of this great hymn was composed by John Bacchus Dykes in 1861. Originally the tune was titled *Nicaea*, tribute to the first Council of Nicaea, which formalized the doctrine of trinity in 325AD.

Rev. Heber later became Bishop of Calcutta for a short time. He died in 1826 at the age of forty-three.

In the 1956 and 1975 Baptist Hymnals, *Holy, Holy, Holy* was the first hymn listed.

### *Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!*

*Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,  
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,  
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.*

*Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
perfect in power, in love and purity.*

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.*

## *How Firm A Foundation*

*How Firm A Foundation* was published in 1787 by John Rippon. When it appeared in Rippon's '*A Selection of Hymns*,' it was signed simply "K". All efforts to identify this mysterious "K", have been fruitless; and the mystery remains to this day. Some reprints show the author was Kenne. Dr. Rippon's musical director was R. Keene and it's believed he might be the author of the text, although it's just speculation.

Dr. Rippon was pastor at Carter's Lane Baptist Church in London for sixty-three years.

The tune is thought to be from an old English folk tune.

Each verse was based on a passage of promises in the Bible. Verse one was based on Isaiah 41:10 *{Fear not, I am with you}*; verse two is based on Isaiah 43:2 *{I will be with you}*; verse three is based on 2 Corinthians 12:9 *{My Grace is sufficient for thee}*; and verse four is based on Hebrews 13:5 *{I will never leave nor forsake you}*.

*How Firm A Foundation* was General Robert E. Lee's, President Theodore Roosevelt and President Andrew Jackson's favorite hymn.

"The story is told that once, when the crowds were thus assembled, General Jackson called out to a local minister: 'There is a beautiful hymn on the subject of the exceeding great and precious promises of God to His people. It was a favourite with my dear wife until the day of her death. It commences thus: 'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord! I wish you would sing now.'"

And so, to please and give comfort to an aging former president, the whole assembly sang the entire hymn.

On Christmas Eve 1898, American units involved in the Spanish–American War joined together to sing the hymn.

## ***How Firm A Foundation***

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

*In every condition, in sickness, in health;  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.*

*Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

*Even down to old age all My people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.*

*The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

## *How Great Thou Art*

Today *How Great Thou Art* is a staple in the protestant church and often requested for funerals. The song did not gain popularity until after celebrating its fiftieth birthday. Cliff Barrows, the song leader for the Billy Graham crusades brought *How Great Thou Art* to international fame in the 1940s and 1950s during the London Crusades.

The text was written by a Swedish pastor named Carl Boberg. During the year of 1886, Boberg was visiting a beautiful country estate when he was caught in a sudden thunderstorm. The violent lightning and thunder gave way to brilliant sunshine and the sweet singing of birds in the trees. Carl Boberg himself gave the following account of that day: "It was that time of year when everything seemed to be in its richest colouring; the birds were singing in trees and everywhere. It was very warm; a thunderstorm appeared on the horizon and soon thunder and lightning. We had to hurry to shelter. But the storm was soon over and the clear sky appeared. When I came home I opened my window toward the sea. There evidently had been a funeral and the bells were playing the tune of 'When eternity's clock calling my saved soul to its Sabbath rest.' That evening, I wrote the song, '*O Store Gud*.'"

When he arrived home Boberg wrote nine stanzas of praised. He originally titled the poem "*O Store God*." The words were put to an old Swedish folk song and sung in Swedish congregations.

Rev. S. K. Hine was an English missionary serving the Ukraine. He came across the song and translated the words into English, Russian and German. When war broke out in 1939, Rev. Hine and his family were forced to flee the Ukraine. Rev. Hine would later add the fourth verse to the hymn we now sing.

A story told by the Gideon's is that Tim Spencer, who was a member of the Sons of the Pioneers {with Leonard Slye [who would become better known as Roy Rogers] and Bob Nolan} lived an unsavory life of smoking, drinking and other rough behaviors. His wife continued to pray for his salvation. One day in 1949 he checked into a hotel in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Velma left him a note with a verse of scripture. Wanting to look the passage up, he reached for the nearby Gideon bible on the night stand. He continued to read the Bible until he gave his life to Christ that night. Later he founded the Christian publishing company, *Manna Music*. Several years later his son, Hal, was at a youth rally where they were taught a new hymn. Hal asked the missionary for a copy of the Swedish hymn they'd learned. Hal took it home and showed it to his father, who secured the rights and published the song. That song was "*How*

*Great Thou Art*” which introduced the song to the English speaking people of the United States. The song soon spread and became very popular.

### *How great Thou art*

*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

*Chorus: Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

*When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.*

*And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.*

*When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"*

## *I Love To Tell the Story*

*I Love to Tell the Story* and *Tell Me the Old, Old Story* are sister songs. They were both written by Kate Hankey. Arabella Katherine Hankey was born in 1834. She lived in London with her family, but was influenced by John Wesley and his work. At the age of eighteen, she organized a Bible study for girls working in the factory. Kate was a Sunday School teacher that organized classes for both the rich and poor. Kate was musically inclined and often wrote melodies with her poems.

In 1866, at the age of thirty, Kate became ill. Her illness and recovery left her bedridden during her long convalescence. While homebound, Kate wrote a lengthy poem about the life of Christ. The poem was divided into two sections. The first was titled "*The Story Wanted*" and the second part was titled "*The Story Told.*" Each section consisted of fifty verses.

After her recovery, Major General Russell read the poem at the International Convention of Young Men's Christian Association. Everyone was left breathless by the time he finished reading the poem.

Bishop William Doane was in the audience and put the first part of the poem to music. This became known as the hymn "*Tell Me the Old, Old Story.*"

William G. Fischer put the second part to music. This is the hymn we now know as "*I Love To Tell the Story.*"

*I Love To Tell the Story* first appeared in a hymnal in 1869. The hymn became a popular Moody Sankey song during their crusades.

Kate had such a heart for missions, that she later donated all of her income to missions work. She served as a missionary with her brother in Africa. Kate Hankey overcame her illness and lived to be 77, dying in 1911.

## *I Love To Tell the Story*

*I love to tell the story  
of unseen things above,  
of Jesus and his glory,  
of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story,  
because I know 'tis true;  
it satisfies my longings  
as nothing else can do.*

*Chorus: I love to tell the story,  
'twill be my theme in glory,  
to tell the old, old story  
of Jesus and his love.*

*I love to tell the story;  
more wonderful it seems  
than all the golden fancies  
of all our golden dreams.  
I love to tell the story,  
it did so much for me;  
and that is just the reason  
I tell it now to thee.*

*I love to tell the story;  
'tis pleasant to repeat  
what seems, each time I tell it,  
more wonderfully sweet.  
I love to tell the story,  
for some have never heard  
the message of salvation  
from God's own holy Word.*

*I love to tell the story,  
for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting  
to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory,  
I sing the new, new song,  
'twill be the old, old story  
that I have loved so long.*

## *Tell me the old, old story*

*Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.  
Tell me the story simply, as to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary, and helpless and defiled.*

*Chorus: Tell me the old, old story, tell me the old, old story,  
Tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and His love.*

*Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in,  
That wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.  
Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;  
The early dew of morning has passed away at noon.*

*Tell me the story softly, with earnest tones and grave;  
Remember I'm the sinner whom Jesus came to save.  
Tell me the story always, if you would really be,  
In any time of trouble, a comforter to me.*

*Tell me the same old story when you have cause to fear  
That this world's empty glory is costing me too dear.  
Yes, and when that world's glory is dawning on my soul,  
Tell me the old, old story: "Christ Jesus makes thee whole."*

## *In The Garden*

Dr. Adam Geibel, a music publisher, asked pharmacists and composer, C. Austin Miles, to write a hymn that would bring hope. Miles retreated to "a cold, dreary and leaky basement in New Jersey that didn't even have a window in it let alone a view of a garden," according to his great-granddaughter. Miles turned to his Bible and read John 20:18 about the meeting of Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the garden, after the resurrection. Miles said he could see the scene unfold before him while he read the scripture passage. He wrote the song and thought that it would make a great Easter song.

Miles would later explain the experience this way:

*"One day in April 1912, I was seated in the dark room, where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John 20—whether by chance or inspiration let each reader decide. That meeting of Jesus and Mary had lost none of its power and charm.*

*As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary's life, when she knelt before her Lord, and cried, "Rabboni!"*

*My hands were resting on the Bible while I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in, and hurried away.*

*John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John.*

*As they departed, Mary reappeared; leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried, "Rabboni!" I awakened in sun light, gripping the Bible, with muscles tense and nerves vibrating. Under the inspiration of this vision I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the poem exactly as it had since appeared. That same evening I wrote the music."*

The popular hymn was first published in 1912. The song was originally made popular by Billy Sunday Evangelistic Campaigns and many people around the world fell in love with this hymn. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans recorded a popular version in 1950, *In the Garden* was one of the hymns Elvis loved to sing and Governor Earl Kemp Long of Louisiana had the words of the hymn inscribed on a bench by his grave.

## *In the Garden*

*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.*

*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.*

*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 be falling,  
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe  
His voice to me is calling.*

## *In the Sweet By and By*

The happy song, *In the Sweet By and By*, came from a moment of depression.

Joseph Webster, a composer, was friends with Dr. Sandford Bennett.

Joseph Webster was born in the east in 1819. As a young man he studied music with Lowell Mason. In his thirties, he moved west settling in Elkhorn, Wisconsin in 1857. He is said to have written more than a thousand tunes.

Dr. Sanford Fillmore Bennett, a man that enjoyed writing verses, moved to Elkhorn in 1861. He started out owning a drugstore, while he studied and earned his medical degree. He wrote a number of prose and poetry throughout his life.

The two men became good friends and it is said that Dr. Bennett could read Webster "like a book."

Webster, carrying a violin under his arm, was depressed one day when he went to see Dr. Bennett. The good doctor asked him "what's the trouble now."

'Oh, nothing,' came the dejected reply. 'Everything will be alright by and by.'

Dr. Bennett pondered on those words, while Webster and two other patients stood by the stove to stay warm.

The doctor scribbled hastily before handing Webster a piece of paper with three verses and the course. "Here is your prescription, Joe," he told his friend. The story goes that Webster was taken with the lyrics and wrote the melody in even less time than the lyrics were written.

Dr. Bennett said "It was not over thirty minutes from the time I took my pen to write the words before two friends with Webster and myself were singing the hymn." Webster then took his violin and began to play the song. The four men in the shop gave the song a try. Another customer entered while they were singing the song and remarked "Gentleman, I have never heard that song before but it is immortal."

The song has remained immortal ever since.

### ***In the Sweet By and By***

*There's a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar;  
For the Father waits over the way  
To prepare us a dwelling place there.*

*Chorus: In the sweet by and by,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore;  
In the sweet by and by,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.*

*We shall sing on that beautiful shore  
The melodious songs of the blessed;  
And our spirits shall sorrow no more,  
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.*

*To our bountiful Father above,  
We will offer our tribute of praise  
For the glorious gift of His love  
And the blessings that hallow our days.*

## *Jesus Loves Me*

*Jesus Loves Me* is the best loved children's song of all time.

The words were written by Anna Bartlett Warner, who was born in 1827. Warner could trace her lineage back to the Puritan Pilgrims on both sides. Her father was Henry Warner, a well known New York City lawyer originally from New England, and her mother was Anna Bartlett, from a wealthy, fashionable family in New York's Hudson Square. When Warner was a young child, her mother died, and her father's sister Fanny came to live with the Warner's. Although Henry Warner had been a successful lawyer, he lost most of his fortune in the Panic of 1837 and in subsequent lawsuits and poor investments. The family had to leave their mansion at St. Mark's Place in New York and move to an old, ramshackled Revolutionary War-era farmhouse on Constitution Island, near West Point, NY. In 1849, seeing little change in their family's financial situation, Susan and Anna started writing to earn money.

Both sisters became devout Christians in the late 1830s. After their conversion, they became confirmed members of the Mercer Street Presbyterian church, although in later life, Anna became drawn into Methodist circles.

Anna's sister, Susan, wrote under the pen name Elizabeth Wetherell. She wrote over thirty novels, but her first, *"The Wide, Wide World"* written in 1850 was the most popular. The book was translated into several other languages, including French, German, and Dutch. After *"Uncle Tom's Cabin"*, it was perhaps the most widely circulated story of the day. Anna wrote under the pseudonym Amy Lothrop. She wrote thirty-one novels including *"Robinson Crusoe's Farmyard"*, *"Dollars and Cents"*, *"In West Point Colors"* and a biography of her sister. The sisters published 106 novels and children's books, eighteen of which they wrote together. Together the duo wrote *"Wych Hazel"*, *"Mr. Rutherford's Children"*, and *"The Hills of the Shatemuc."* Anna published two collections of verse in *"Hymns of the Church Militant"* in 1858 and *"Wayfaring Hymns"* in 1869.

Neither sister married, but held regular Bible Studies for West Point cadets. Their uncle, Rev. Thomas Warner, was the Academy Chaplain. Anna wrote a fresh hymn for her Sunday School class each month. It is believed that Dwight D. Eisenhower was one of the last cadets to attend their classes. He graduated the year of Anna's death.

The words to *"Jesus Loves Me"* first appeared in Susan's 1860 bestselling novel *"Say and Seal"*. In the novel, Sunday School teacher Mr. Linden comforts his student, Johnny Fax. The words are spoken to soothe the dying child.

*"Jesus Loves Me"* was published as a hymn in the hymnbook *"Original Hymns"*.

The tune and chorus were added in 1862 by Dr. William Batchelder Bradbury. Dr. Bradbury dedicated himself to teaching, writing and publishing his music; published 59 collections of sacred and secular music. He wrote hymns such as *"He Leadeth Me"*, *"Just As I Am"* and *"Sweet Hour of Prayer"*. *"Jesus Loves Me"* appeared in his hymnal *"The Golden Sower"*.

When they were on military duty, the cadets would sing *"Jesus loves me."*

Anna outlived her sister by more than thirty years. The popularity of the song was so great, that both sisters were buried with military honors because of their contribution they made to the spiritual well being of the soldiers. They are the only civilians buried in the West Point Cemetery.

Their home, *Good Crag*, was willed to West Point Academy and made into a National Shrine. Their home is now a museum in their honor.

*"Jesus Loves Me"* is the first hymn taught to new converts and children worldwide. Additional verses have been added throughout the years.

### *Jesus Loves Me*

*Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong;  
They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Chorus: Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me! This I know,  
As He loved so long ago,  
Taking children on His knee,  
Saying, "Let them come to Me."*

*Jesus loves me when I'm good,  
When I do the things I should,  
Jesus loves me when I'm bad,  
Though it makes Him very sad.*

*Jesus loves me still today,  
Walking with me on my way,  
Wanting as a friend to give  
Light and love to all who live.*

*Jesus loves me! He who died  
Heaven's gate to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin,  
Let His little child come in.*

*Jesus loves me! Loves me still  
Tho' I'm very weak and ill;  
That I might from sin be free  
Bled and died upon the tree.*

*Jesus loves me! He will stay  
Close beside me all the way;  
Thou hast bled and died for me,  
I will henceforth live for Thee.*

## *Just As I Am*

Charlotte Eliott spent the majority of her life as an invalid. During this time she said the only thing she could do was “worship God.”

Ms. Eliott began her life with a lot of promise as a popular portrait artist and writer with a humorous voice. She was often in bad health and at the age of thirty became an invalid for life.

Feeling hopeless and helpless she met with Dr. Caesar Malan, the Swiss evangelist, in 1824. He told her “Charlotte, you must come just as you are—a sinner—to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” Charlotte gave her heart and life to Christ and found the inner peace she was seeking. John 6:37, which says, “*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away*” became her life verse.

In 1836, Charlotte’s brother, Rev. H. V. Elliott, held a charity bazaar to help pay for the education of the daughters of the clergymen supported by St. Mary Church. The night before the bazaar, Charlotte, was kept awake despondent over her uselessness. She began to question her own spiritual life and became easily disillusioned. She realized later that her troubles were only met “with such force that she felt they must be met and conquered in the grace of God.” Taking pen to paper she found comfort in writing the “the formulae of her faith. Hers was a heart which always tended to express its depths in verse. So in verse she restated to herself the Gospel of pardon, peace, and heaven. “Probably without difficulty or long pause” she wrote the hymn, getting comfort by thus definitely “recollecting” the eternity of the Rock beneath her feet. There, then, always, not only for some past moment, but “even now ” she was accepted in the Beloved *Just as I am.*”

The final verse of this hymn is taken from Elliott’s *Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted* which she wrote in 1836. After writing the poem she sold it for the children at the school of these poor clergymen. The leaflet said “*Sold for the benefit of St. Margaret’s Hall, Brighton: Him that Cometh to me in will in no way cast out.*”

Charlotte lived to be eighty-two years old. Over the course of her life she wrote 150 hymns.

*Just As I Am* became very popular as an invitation during the Billy Graham crusades.

## *Just As I Am*

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, and waiting not  
to rid my soul of one dark blot,  
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, though tossed about  
with many a conflict, many a doubt,  
fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
yea, all I need in thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, thy love unknown  
hath broken every barrier down;  
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

## *Nearer, My God, To Thee, Last Song Played as the Titanic Sinks*

*Nearer, My God, To Thee* is commonly believed to be the last song the *Titanic* played as the ship sank.

The popular hymn was written by Sarah Flower Adams and is loosely based on Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:11-19. This hymn is considered by hymnology students to be the finest hymn ever written by a woman composer.

Sarah was born in Harlow, England on February 22, 1805. Her father, Benjamin Flower, was a newspaper editor and man of prominence. Sarah was active on the stage in her younger days. She won rave reviews portraying Lady MacBeth in London. She worked closely with her sister, Eliza Flower, who was an accomplished musician. Sarah married railway engineer, William Bridges Adams, in 1834. The couple lived in Loughton, Essex, England, where a blue plaque is now dedicated to the public.

Sarah and Eliza worked created many hymns with William Johnson Fox for his hymnal "*Collection Hymns and Anthems*". Sarah wrote quickly and editors found little to change, many of her songs were praising God. Her longest work is "*Vivia Perpetua, A Dramatic Poem*" written in 1841. While working together Rev. Fox said he wished he could find a song to conclude his sermon on Jacob and Esau. Eliza recommended her sister write the hymn. Sarah spent the next week in prayer and studying the scriptures. The song was published in a 1841 hymnal under the title "*Hymns and Anthems.*" Sarah and Eliza were raised in the Unitarian Church, but Sarah may have converted to the Baptist Faith shortly before her death.

Sarah faithfully cared for her sister when she contracted tuberculosis. Eliza died in 1846, but Sarah had developed the consumption by this time. She died on Aug 14, 1848 at the age of forty-three and is buried at the church in Harlow.

The words Sarah wrote are associated with three different tunes. In the United Kingdom, it is usually sung to a tune known as "*Horbury.*" This tune was written in 1841 by John Bacchus Dykes.

The tune "*Propior Deo*" was written by Sir Arthur Sullivan of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. This tune is popular in British Methodist traditions.

Lowell Mason, who is known as writing over 1600 tunes such as "*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*", "*Joy to the World!*" and "*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*", wedded the lyrics to

Sarah's song with his tune, "*Bethany*." Although the lyrics were introduced in 1844, it was after this marriage that the song became popular. This version is the most popular and well known of the three.

"*Nearer, My God, To Thee*" has proven its popularity through the ages.

The Confederate army band played this song as the survivors of the disastrous Pickett's Charge (in the Battle of Gettysburg) returned from their failed infantry assault.

The Rough Riders, led by {future President} Theodore Roosevelt, sang the hymn at the burial of their slain comrades after the Battle of Las Guasima.

Legend says the words of this hymn were the dying words of President William McKinley after his assassination in 1901. The hymn was also played at President William McKinley, President James Garfield and President Gerald Ford's funerals.

Wallace Hartley, the *Titanic's* band leader, was known to like this song and request that the hymn be played at his funeral. Survivor accounts differ among which version or melody was played. Friends of Hartley recounted after the sinking, that he had said if he was ever on a sinking ship he would play *Nearer, My God, To Thee*.

## *Nearer, My God, To Thee*

*Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!  
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,  
still all my song shall be,  
nearer, my God, to thee;  
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

*Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,  
darkness be over me, my rest a stone;  
yet in my dreams I'd be  
nearer, my God, to thee;  
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

*There let the way appear, steps unto heaven;  
all that thou sendest me, in mercy given;  
angels to beckon me  
nearer, my God, to thee;  
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

*Then, with my waking thoughts bright with thy praise,  
out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;  
so by my woes to be  
nearer, my God, to thee;  
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

*Or if, on joyful wing cleaving the sky,  
sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I fly,  
still all my song shall be,  
nearer, my God, to thee;  
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

## *The Old Rugged Cross*

*The Old Rugged Cross* is often requested during hymn sings. The message seems to be one that everyone can cling onto. Three different sites claim to be the home of this well loved hymn.

The hymn was written by George Barnard, a minister ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Barnard began his ministry in the Salvation Army. While going through a difficult time in his own life, Rev. Barnard reflected on the significance of the cross. During the Christmas season of 1912 he began work on the melody that would become *The Old Rugged Cross*. Once he'd finished the melody, he began working on the lyrics in the kitchen of his rented home in Albion, Michigan.

He continued working on the lyrics when 1913 rolled around. He was still working on the lyrics when he preached a revival in Sturgeon Bay, Michigan. He said the "words were put on my heart in answer to my own special need." The hymn was first performed at the final revival meeting on January 12, 1913. Upon completion of the Sturgeon Bay revival, Rev. Barnard immediately went to Pokagon, Michigan to preside over another revival. During this revival Rev. Barnard performed his newly written song. Later four members of First Methodist Episcopal Church performed song.

Rev. Barnard sent his new hymn to composer Charles Gabriel, who told him he'd definitely "hear from this song." Charles Gabriel assisted Rev. Barnard with creating the melodies for the hymn. *The Old Rugged Cross* was first published in 1915. Homer Redeheaver and Virginia Asher were the first to record song in 1921.

Albion, Sturgeon Bay and Pokagon have all claimed to be the home of this song over the last one hundred years. In Albion, Michigan, the site near where Barnard's lived is a historical marker that says "*The Old Rugged Cross*, one of the world's best loved hymns, was composed here in 1912..." The Friends Community Church in Sturgeon Bay has a garden with a cross on it to commemorate the first singing of the hymn. Pokagon has a garden and historical marker claiming to be the birthplace.

Rev. Barnard retired to Reed City, Michigan where they have a museum dedicated to his life and ministry. Over the last century a number of artists have recorded the popular hymn.

## *The Old Rugged Cross*

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
the emblem of suffering and shame;  
and I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
for a world of lost sinners was slain.*

*Chorus:        So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
and exchange it some day for a crown.*

*O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
has a wondrous attraction for me;  
for the dear Lamb of God left his glory above  
to bear it to dark Calvary.*

*In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,  
a wondrous beauty I see,  
for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,  
to pardon and sanctify me.*

*To that old rugged cross I will ever be true,  
its shame and reproach gladly bear;  
then he'll call me some day to my home far away,  
where his glory forever I'll share.*

## *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*

Thomas Andrew Dorsey experienced tremendous loss and sadness when he received word that his wife and newborn son died. In August 1932, at the time of their death he was at a revival meeting in St. Louis, Missouri and notified of his loss by telegram. He was left deeply depressed. Dorsey grew up a preacher's kid but turned away from God when he grew older. He spent several years writing jazz and blues pieces. "After he was miraculously spared in brushes with death" he returned to God while attending the National Baptist Convention in Chicago in 1921. He began to write gospel songs after his conversion.

The telegram he was handed said "Your wife just died." A friend drove him through the night when he discovered his son had also died. Upon hearing the news of his loss he cried out "God, you're not worth a dime to me right now." The next Saturday, he reported that a strange calm came over him. A few weeks later he wrote this heart wrenching hymn. *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* was performed at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in South Chicago, Illinois for the first time. Reportedly the song was inspired by the 1844 hymn "Maitland" by American composer, George N. Allen.

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand* was one of over 250 gospel songs Thomas Dorsey wrote. Dorsey is also the author of the song "Peace in the Valley."

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand* has been published in over forty languages. The hymn was one of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr favorite songs. His last words before being shot was to play this song at a mass he was supposed to attend that night.

***Precious Lord, take my hand***

*Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home*

*When my way grows drear  
Precious Lord linger near  
When my life is almost gone  
Hear my cry, hear my call  
Hold my hand lest I fall  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home*

*When the darkness appears  
And the night draws near  
And the day is past and gone  
At the river I stand  
Guide my feet, hold my hand  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home*

*Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home*

## *Rock of Ages*

*Rock of Ages* was written by Reverend Augustus Montague Toplady in 1763. The song was first published in *The Gospel Magazine* in 1775.

Rev. Toplady's father died when he was a child. He was sixteen when he accepted Christ while on a trip to Ireland, however he'd already been preaching for four years and writing hymns for two years. His conversion came about when he was attending a meeting with an uneducated preacher. The service was taking place in an old barn. He was ordained into the ministry in 1762.

While traveling through the English countryside a fierce storm sent Rev. Toplady scrambling for shelter. He soon found it in the cleft of a great rock.

Inspired by the situation and scenery, he took out a playing card in his pocket and scribbled his initial lyrics. Later Rev. Toplady used the words for an article he was writing for "*The Gospel Magazine*," where he was an editor.

In the article, "Toplady had calculated that a fifty year old man in his lifetime would be guilty of; one billion, five hundred and seventy-six million, eight hundred thousand sins. He quite rightly argued that it was humanly impossible for anyone to pay off such a staggering debt of iniquity. Therefore, sinners must needs avail themselves of the mercy and pardon of the Lord Jesus, who died upon the Cross to 'redeem us from the curse of the law.' He concluded the article with - 'A living and dying prayer for the holiest believer in the world' - which contained the recently written hymn "*Rock Of Ages*". This article was written to refute the teachings of John and Charles Wesley. He preferred the doctrine of John Calvin.

Two years after writing that article, Rev. Toplady entered his heavenly home on August 11, 1778 at the age of thirty-eight. Tuberculosis claimed his life, but his words lived on in his popular hymn.

The tune was written by Thomas Hastings of Washington, Connecticut. While suffering from eye problems, he still wrote over one thousand hymn tunes and some six hundred hymn text. In 1858, the University of the City of New York bestowed the degree of Doctor of Music upon him.

Today several places claim to be that rock, but no one knows the exact location. Although traditionally it is believed that Rev. Toplady drew his inspiration from an incident in the gorge of Burrington Combe in the Mendip Hills in England.

While few of his other hymns have lived on, *Rock of Ages* is still a favorite.

## *Rock of Ages*

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save from wrath and make me pure.*

*Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.*

*While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When my eyes shall close in death,  
When I rise to worlds unknown,  
And behold Thee on Thy throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

## *There Is A Fountain*

Have you ever been under so much stress that it caused a mental breakdown?

That's what happened to William Cowper {pronounced Cooper} while preparing for his bar exam. His breakdown was so complete that he was admitted to an insane asylum until he recovered. During his time in the asylum his life was forever changed when he came to know Christ. In 1764, William was reading the Bible and stumbled upon Romans 3:25, which says "*God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood —to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.*" After reading this passage he gave his heart and life over the Christ.

Three years later in 1767, William Cowper met the Rev. John Newton. Rev. Newton is best known for writing the hymn, *Amazing Grace* {although the men met before the popular hymn was written.}

Together, Mr. Cowper and Rev. Newton produced the *Olney Hymnal*, which was published in 1779. These hymns were written for use in the rural parish where Rev. Newton was a minister. William Cowper wrote approximately sixty-seven of the 348 hymns, while John Newton wrote the remaining hymns.

*There is a fountain* is one of the hymns William Cowper wrote for the *Olney Hymnal*. William had a difficult life. His mother died when he was six years old and he was bullied at boarding school. He suffered from what we {today} call depression for the majority of his life.

This popular hymn is based on the passage Zachariah 13:1, "*On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.*"

The hymn was originally titled "*Peace for the Fountain Opened.*"

## *There Is A Fountain*

*There is a fountain filled with blood  
drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
and sinners plunged beneath that flood  
lose all their guilty stains.  
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;  
and sinners plunged beneath that flood  
lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see  
that fountain in his day;  
and there may I, though vile as he,  
wash all my sins away.  
Wash all my sins away, wash all my sins away;  
and there may I, though vile as he,  
wash all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
shall never lose its power  
till all the ransomed church of God  
be saved, to sin no more.  
Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;  
till all the ransomed church of God  
be saved, to sin no more.*

*E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream  
thy flowing wounds supply,  
redeeming love has been my theme,  
and shall be till I die.  
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;  
redeeming love has been my theme,  
and shall be till I die.*

*Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing thy power to save,  
when this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
lies silent in the grave.  
Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave;  
when this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
lies silent in the grave.*

## *To God Be the Glory*

To God Be the Glory was written by Fanny Crosby around 1875. She originally titled the hymn "*Praise for Redemption.*" William Doane composed the music to go with Fanny Crosby's lyrics. The hymn first appeared in the *Brightest and Best Hymnal*, which was compiled by William Doane and Robert Lowry in 1875. The song was not much a big hit when it was first published.

In 1952, Rev. Billy Graham was preaching his crusades in the United Kingdom. The crusades placed considerable strain on Rev. Graham as he dealt with a multitude of situations. Rev. Frank Colquhoun came across this hymn. Rev. Colquhoun gave Cliff Barrows a copy of *To God Be the Glory*, while Rev. Barrows was preparing for the London Crusades. For the next three months the song was sung every night in the crowded Haringay Arena. The hymn has become very popular since being introduced and used so extensively at these crusades.

## *To God Be the Glory*

*To God be the glory, great things he hath done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.*

*Chorus: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,  
and give him the glory, great things he hath done!*

*O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God;  
the vilest offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.*

*Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,  
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;  
but purer, and higher, and greater will be  
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.*

## *Victory in Jesus*

Eugene Bartlett was a popular composer and lyricist writing over eight hundred hymns and songs. He was born on Christmas Eve in 1885. At a young age he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior. He is considered the founding father of Southern Gospel music.

Bartlett traveled throughout the country singing and teaching at singing schools. He wanted to teach others how to write music, often not charging any fee.

In 1918 he established the *Hartford Music Company* in Arkansas.

In 1939 he suffered a major stroke that affected his health. That same year he painfully wrote *Victory in Jesus*, one note and phrase at a time. This hymn is considered the culmination of his life's work. The hymn was published in "*Gospel Choruses*". Later that year he recorded the song.

Two years after his stroke, Bartlett passed away. *Victory in Jesus* was the last of the large collection of hymns he left behind. In 1979, he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. He leaves us with the reminder that we can experience Victory in Jesus each day of our lives.

## *Victory in Jesus*

*I heard an old, old story,  
How a Savior came from glory,  
How He gave His life on Calvary  
To save a wretch like me;  
I heard about His groaning,  
Of His precious blood's atoning,  
Then I repented of my sins  
And won the victory.*

*Chorus: O victory in Jesus, My Savior, forever.*

*He sought me and bought me  
With His redeeming blood;  
He loved me ere I knew Him  
And all my love is due Him,  
He plunged me to victory,  
Beneath the cleansing flood.*

*I heard about His healing,  
Of His cleansing pow'r revealing.  
How He made the lame to walk again  
And caused the blind to see;  
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus,  
Come and heal my broken spirit,"  
And somehow Jesus came and bro't  
To me the victory.*

*I heard about a mansion  
He has built for me in glory.  
And I heard about the streets of gold  
Beyond the crystal sea;  
About the angels singing,  
And the old redemption story,  
And some sweet day I'll sing up there  
The song of victory.*

## *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*

Joseph Scriven did not live an easy life. The night before his wedding, his fiancé drowned. This one tragedy dramatically changed his life. He left his homeland of Ireland and moved to Canada shortly after his fiancé's death. He was twenty five years old at that time. He did find love again but his second fiancé, Eliza Catherine Roche, died of tuberculosis in 1860.

Joseph decided to live the way Jesus would live. He was a devoted friend and helper to others. There are even stories of him giving the clothes on his own body to others. He took the Sermon on the Mount {found in Matthew 5-7} literally and lived that lesson every day.

One day he received word that his mother was seriously ill in Dublin. He was living in Ontario, Canada and was not able to see her. Longing to be there for his mother and to be a comfort, Joseph wrote this poem to comfort her and enclosed it in the next letter he sent. His mother gave a copy of the poem to a friend. The poem was then published anonymously. Joseph Scriven had no intention of anyone else seeing this poem. Upon publication the hymn quickly spread and became very popular.

Charles C. Converse, who often used the pen name Karl Reden, composed the music to this hymn in 1868. William Bolcom composed a setting of the hymn. Ira D. Sankey stumbled across the hymn and included it in his 1875 hymnal, *"Sankey's Gospel Hymns Number One."* Sankey said *"The last hymn which went into the book became the first in favor."*

By the 1880s, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus* was very popular but the author of the hymn was still anonymous. The hymn had been translated into multiple languages and had various versions and lyrics accompanying the Scriven's words.

In the 1880s, Joseph Scriven became ill. A friend visited him and saw the words he'd scribbled down and sent to his mom. When the friend began to question him, he realized that Scriven was the anonymous author of this hymn. Later when his friend asked him if he truly composed the song, Scriven answer *"The Lord and I did it between us."*

On October 10, 1896, Joseph Scriven was so ill that he was delirious. In his delirium, he staggered outdoors, fell into the creek and drowned. He was 66 years old at the time. His feet are buried opposite Eliza's so that at the resurrection they might *"arise facing one another."*

The Japanese versions of *What A Friend We Have in Jesus* is titled *"Deep Affection."* A version sung during World War I has the title *"When this bloody war is over."* The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnals notes, *"In spite of the fact that this hymn, with its tune, has been criticized as being too much on the order of the sentimental gospel type, its popularity remains strong, and the hymn retains a place in modern hymnals."* Even today that statement rings true.

## ***What A Friend We Have in Jesus***

*What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Are we weak and heavy laden,  
cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;  
thou wilt find a solace there.*

## *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* is a popular Palm Sunday and Good Friday hymn, when we recognize Jesus death on the cross.

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* was inspired by Galatians 6:14: “*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*”

Isaac Watts, the author of the song, had been writing hymns since childhood. During two years of his childhood he wrote a hymn for every Sunday service. By the age of twelve, Watts had learned a number of languages including Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

After returning home from college, Isaac Watts felt a tug towards the ministry and wrote many songs. He preached his first sermon in 1698. A year later he became the assistant pastor of London’s Mark Lane Church. He became that church’s regular pastor in 1702.

Watts wrote *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* in 1707. The inspiration came while he was preparing to serve communion to his congregation.

His brother, Enoch, encouraged him to publish his hymns, which he originally published in 1707. He sold the copyrights to his songs to the publisher, a Mr. Lawrence, for ten pounds. The hymnal, “*Hymns and Spiritual Songs*”, was an instant success and republished two years later.

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* was originally titled “*Crucifixion to the World, by the Cross of Christ*”.

Composer Lowell Mason married his tune “*Hamburg*” to the words in 1824. Mason originally arranged the tune from a Gregorian Chant he’d heard. The tune only consist of five notes and first appeared in 1825 in the “*Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society Collections of Church Music.*”

Isaac Watts wrote over 600 hymns, including “*O God, Our Help in Ages Past.*” His songs have a strong and triumphant statement. He is known as the Father of English hymnody.

The fourth verse of “*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*” is often omitted today. Charles Wesley stated he wish he’d written this hymn over all of the ones he wrote. The theologian, Matthew Arnold, considered this hymn the “finest hymn in the English church.”

## *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of Glory died;  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
save in the death of Christ, my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.*

*See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were an offering far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.*

## *When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder*

*When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder* was written by James Milton Black in 1893.

The story goes that when the time came to take roll in his Sunday School class, a little girl was absent. He'd met the fourteen year old girl one day and she touched his heart. He noticed that she was poorly dressed and realized she was a child of a drunkard. He invited her to attend the Sunday School and she accepted his invitation. One day when the roll was being taken she did not respond. This made him think about how heartbreaking it would be if someone wasn't in heaven. After checking on the child he went home and searched the hymnal. Not finding a song on this subject, he wrote the hymn in less than fifteen minutes. He later reported that his wife noticed how he seemed deeply troubled when he returned home at the thought of someone not being in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. After completing the lyrics, he sat at the piano and composed the tune, which is the same tune in the hymn book today.

The missing girl had pneumonia and answered the "roll call" a short ten days after she took the fever.

The lyrics were first published in *Songs of the Soul* in 1894. They have been translated into over fourteen languages and sung around the world.

In 1945, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stirred up controversy when asked when the Big Three {Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin} would meet. His response was published in the Winnipeg Free Press: "*Mr. Churchill, in one of his somewhat puckish moods, replied that he did not know, but, he added irreverently, 'When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.'*"

## ***When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder***

*When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more,  
And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair;  
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*

*Chorus: When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there.*

*On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,  
And the glory of His resurrection share;  
When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*

*Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun,  
Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;  
Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*



## *Away in a Manger*

This popular Christmas carol was originally thought to have been written by Martin Luther for his own children and later passed on to German mothers. That legend has since been disproven.

The first two stanzas of the song first appeared in the *Little Children's Book* published in 1885 by the John Church Company in Philadelphia. In the hymnal compiled by James R. Murray was the notation "*Composed by Martin Luther for his children and still sung by German mothers to their little ones*" which began the long held legend. In 1887 the song was republished in "*Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses*" to the title "*Luther's Cradle Hymn*". The reason the song was attributed to Luther is unknown, although they were celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in 1883. The possibility of a marketing gimmick is also an option.

The song quickly became a favorite children's carol. The third verse was written by Dr. John T. McFarland, a Methodist Minister, and published by Charles H. Gabriel in his 1892 hymnal, *Gabriel's Vineyard Songs*.

In 1945, Richard Hill published an article about the song in *Little Children's book* by German Lutherans in Pennsylvania. He stated that no author was given and no proof had ever been found in Luther's papers. He concluded that "*Although Luther had nothing to do with this hymn the colonies of German Lutherans in Pennsylvania most certainly did.*"

The song has been sung to forty-one different tunes. The tune first published in *Little Children's Book for Schools and Families* was to the tune "*St. Kilda*" by J. E. Clark. The most popular tune in the United States is "*Mueller*" by James R. Murray. The first half of the melody is identical to Johann Strauss Jr Waltz #4. Sir David Willcock's arrangement is very a popular arrangement in the United Kingdom.

## *Away in a Manger*

*Away in a manger,  
No crib for His bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head*

*The stars in the bright sky  
Looked down where He lay  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay*

*The cattle are lowing  
The poor Baby wakes  
But little Lord Jesus  
No crying He makes*

*I love Thee, Lord Jesus  
Look down from the sky  
And stay by my side,  
'Til morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus,  
I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever  
And love me I pray*

*Bless all the dear children  
In Thy tender care  
And take us to heaven  
To live with Thee there*

## *The First Noel*

This is my mother's favorite carol, so I wanted to learn more about the origin of the song for her.

*Noel* is the French word for Christmas. The French word is from the Latin word *natalis*, meaning birthday.

The song is a narrative of the birth of Christ. The *First Nowell* is a traditional classical English carol. Researchers believe the song was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and is of Cornish origin. The song was first published in 1823 "*Carols Ancient and Modern*" and a decade later in "*Gilbert and Sandys Carols*." Both of these volumes were edited by William B. Sandys.

Most arrangements sung today are by the English Composer John Stainer. His version was first published in the "*Carols, New and Old of 1871*."

*The First Noel* has an English folk melody, with one musical phrase repeated twice, followed by a refrain that is a variation of that phrase.

## *The First Noel*

*The first Noel the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepards in fields as they lay:  
In fields where they lay a keeping their sheep  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

*Noel Noel Noel Noel  
Born is the King of Israel.*

*They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the east beyond them far:  
And to the earth it gave great light  
And so it continued both day and night.*

*Noel Noel Noel Noel  
Born is the King of Israel.*

*And by the light of that same star  
Three wise men came from the country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.*

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

*This star drew nigh to the north-west;  
O'er Bethlehem it took it's rest,  
And there it did both stop and stay,  
Right over the place where Jesus lay.*

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

*Then entered in those wise men three,  
Fell reverently upon their knee,  
And offered there in his presence  
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.*

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the kind of Israel.*

*Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
And with his blood mankind has bought.*

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

## *Joy to the World*

*Joy to the World* is a paraphrase of the Psalm 98. Originally the Christmas Carol was titled “*The Messiah’s Coming and Kingdom*” and first appeared in Watt’s 1719 “*Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*” hymnal.

The music is believed to be adapted from parts of Handel’s *Messiah* by Lowell Mason. “*And heaven and nature sing*” appears in the opening of the recitative “*Comfort Ye.*”

Although parts are taken from sections of the “*Messiah*” the tune is called “*Antioch.*”

By the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, *Joy to the World* was the most published Christmas hymn in North America.

### *Joy to the World*

*Joy to the World , the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.*

*Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

## *O Come All Ye Faithful*

*O Come All Ye Faithful* was originally written in Latin. No one is sure who the original text was written by. Many people have been given the credit, but most likely an order of monks wrote the text. The original text consisted of four Latin verses, which were translated and used in the hymn we now know today.

The composer of the tune was originally unknown but research shows that the carol was written in 1744. Seven hand written manuscripts have been found bearing the signature of the English layman John Wade. The widely held belief is now that Mr. Wade wrote the hymn. The carol first appeared in Wade's collection "*Cantus Diversi*" which was published in 1751 in England.

The Anglican minister, Rev. Frederick Oakeley, translated the text into English a hundred years later. The song was originally translated "*O Faithful, Approach Ye*" but was not a hit with audiences of the day. Several years later Rev. Oakeley tried again with the words "*O Come All Ye Faithful*" and the song became very popular.

The Spanish song, *Adeste Fideles*, was taken from the first part of the original Latin text which means "be present or near, ye faithful."

The Jacobite army of Scotland in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, interpreted the song as a birth ode to Bonnie Prince Charlie. The song originally appeared in old English Roman Catholic liturgical books near the prayers of the exiled Old Pretender {Bonnie Prince Charlie's father}. The pages were decorated with Jacobite imagery. These facts most likely led to this legend.

Another story states that King John IV of Portugal wrote the hymn for his daughter, Catherine, as she traveled to England to marry King Charles II. She was announced and accompanied by this hymn everywhere she went. In England the song became widely known as the Portuguese Hymn.

Whatever the truth, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, is still a well loved Christmas Carol.

## *O Come All Ye Faithful*

*O Come All Ye Faithful  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him,  
Born the King of Angels;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*O Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.  
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*All Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
O Jesus! for evermore be Thy name adored.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

## *Silent Night*

*Silent Night* has become a favorite Christmas Carol around the world. The hymn was never meant to be the legend it's become.

Joseph Mohr was the assistant priest at the Church of St. Nicholas in the Tyrol Alps of Austria. Father Mohr and Franz Gruber, the village schoolmaster and church organist, were discussing the fact that they believed the perfect Christmas hymn had never been written.

On Christmas Eve 1818, Father Mohr received word that the church organ was not working. He decided to write his own Christmas hymn for the Christmas Eve mass that night. Upon completion of his words, he took them to Gruber. The organist responded "*Friend Mohr, you have found it—the right song—God be praised!*" Gruber then put a tune with the next. The music bears a strong resemblance to Austrian folk music and yodeling.

The men completed the hymn in time for both men to perform the song at the Christmas Eve service. They were accompanied only by Gruber's guitar. The hymn reportedly made a deep impact on the parishioners of St. Nicholas.

The song was never meant to be passed on to other congregants. Legend says that the organ repairman, Karl Maurachen of Zillerthal, came across the sheet music when he went to repair the organ. He was impressed with the song and spread a copy of the music throughout Tyrol.

*Stille Nacht* first appeared in a German Hymn book in 1838. The song was sung for the first time in the United States by a family of four children, the Strasser Family. They were called the Song of Tyrolean Singers and performed the song in 1839. John F. Young translated the German text into English. *Silent Night* was published in the English Sunday School songbook in 1863. The carol has since been translated into over 140 different languages.

On Christmas Day 1914, during the height of WWI, the French, English and German troops called a Christmas truce. *Silent night* was the one carol soldiers on all sides of the front knew and sung simultaneously in the three languages.

The original manuscript is believed to be lost. In 1995 a manuscript was discovered in Mohr's handwriting. Research dated the manuscript to circa 1820 and is the only manuscript still in existence in his handwriting. The manuscript shows that Mohr wrote the words in 1816 while serving a church in MariaPharr, Austria. According to the manuscript Gruber composed the music in 1818. This arrangement is now housed at the Museum Carolino Augusteum in Salzburg.

The Nikolaus-Kirche, where *Stille Nacht* was performed for the first time, was terribly damaged by flood damage and demolished in the early 1900s. A "Silent Night Memorial Chapel" {"Stille-Nacht-Gedächtniskapelle"} stands where the demolished church was. A nearby house has been converted into a museum and attracts tourist from around the world throughout the year. According to The Silent Night Society there are "*many romantic stories and legends that add their own anecdotal details to the known facts.*"

### ***Silent Night***

*Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child  
Holy Infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace*

*Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ, the Saviour is born  
Christ, the Saviour is born*

*Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth "*



## **BONUS PATRIOTIC HYMNS**

### ***My Country Tis of Thee***

Samuel Francis Smith wanted to write a song to bring the nation of the United States to God. In 1831, he was a twenty-four year old theological student. His friend, Lowell Mason, had asked him to translate some German school songbooks or to write some new lyrics. Muzio Clementi's *Symphony No. 3* caught his attention. Smith decided to write his own American patriotic hymn. He sat down and wrote the words to *My Country Tis of Thee* in thirty minutes. His words were later added to the British tune, "*God Save the King/Queen.*"

The song was originally titled "*America*". Smith's friend, William Jenks, took the new Patriotic anthem to the pastor of the Park Street Church in Boston. The first performance of the song was on July 4, 1831. The song was performed by the Juvenile Choir at a Sunday School Rally. "*America*" was published for the first time in 1832.

Samuel Francis Smith would go on to write 150 hymns in his eighty-seven years. He later became editor of a missionary magazine and Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Union. He died at the Boston train station in 1895, on his way to preach in the Boston neighborhood of Readville.

## ***My Country Tis of Thee***

*My country, 'tis of thee,  
sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;  
land where my fathers died,  
land of the pilgrims' pride,  
from every mountainside let freedom ring!*

*My native country, thee,  
land of the noble free, thy name I love;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
thy woods and templed hills;  
my heart with rapture thrills, like that above.*

*Let music swell the breeze,  
and ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song;  
let mortal tongues awake;  
let all that breathe partake;  
let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.*

*Our fathers' God, to thee,  
author of liberty, to thee we sing;  
long may our land be bright  
with freedom's holy light;  
protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

## ***The Star Spangled Banner***

We all know our National Anthem, but do you know how it originated?

The author, Francis Scott Key, was at Fort McHenry when the British Royal Navy bombed the fort in 1814.

Francis Scott Key, a lawyer and amateur poet, and John Stuart Skinner were on a mission for President James Madison on September 3, 1814. The men were sailing on the *HMS Minden* to secure the exchange of prisoners.

Having overheard plans of attack the two men were held captive until the battle was over. They had a front seat view of the attack and were inspired by the American victory. Key paced the ship deck throughout the night while the battle raged. The next morning Key saw the large American flag flying triumphantly over the fort. There was no doubt the Americans had beaten the British forces. At that time the flag had fifteen stars and fifteen strips, known as the Star Spangled Banner flag.

Still onboard the ship, Key wrote the lyrics to the poem on the back of a letter he had in his pocket. He originally titled his poem the "*Defense of Fort McHenry*." The men were released the next day {September 16}. Key finished the final stanzas while staying at the Indian Queen Hotel.

Key gave the poem to his brother-in-law, Judge Joseph N. Nicholson. The poem was set to a popular tune, "*The Anacreontic Song*" (or "*To Anacreon in Heaven*"). This was the official song of the 18th Century gentleman's club of amateur musicians in London known as the Anacreontic Society.

No one knows for sure who the composer of the melody was, but it is generally attributed to John Stafford Smith of Gloucester, England.

Soon the song was renamed "*The Star Spangled Banner*" and its popularity spread.

The United States Navy recognized the song in 1889. There were many versions when President Woodrow Wilson requested an official version in 1916. The song did not become the National Anthem until President Herbert Hoover signed a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931.

There are four stanzas to the poem/song, although the first stanza is the one mainly sung. The original manuscript written by Francis Scott Key is on display at Maryland's Historical Society. The flag flown over the fort that 1814 is on display at the National Museum of American History. The flag is owned by the Smithsonian and has been restored twice.

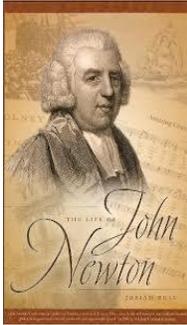
### ***The Star Spangled Banner***

*O say can you see by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;  
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave,  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

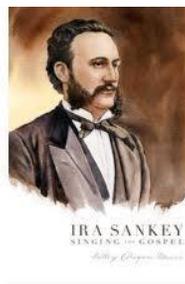
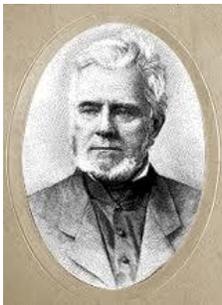
*On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:  
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O! long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

*And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,  
A home and a country, should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

*O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation.  
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*



# COMPOSERS



## ***William B. Bradbury***

William Batchelder Bradbury is a composer you may have never heard of, but I'm sure you know his most popular tune, "*Jesus Loves Me*."

William was born on October 6, 1816 in York, Main. Music was part of his life from a young age, with his father the director of the church choir.

William met the composer, Lowell Mason, and studied organ and voice from the accomplished musician. By 1834, William was a well known organist. He began teaching in Brooklyn, New York in 1840. Seven years later he studied music composition and harmonies in Germany.

William and his brother, Edward, founded the Bradbury Piano Company in New York City in 1854.

William was a well known composer. He compiled and published a number of music collection books. There are at least fifty-nine compilations and hymnbooks that he published. He was also instrumental in organizing the Juvenile Music Festivals held in New York and the music conventions in New Jersey.

In 1862, he discovered the poem, *Jesus Loves Me*, written by Anna Bartlett Warner. He wrote the music to go with her lyrics and added the chorus.

*Jesus Loves Me* is just one popular song composed by William Bradbury. Included in today's hymn books are many other popular tunes he provided including *Just As I Am*, *Sweet Hour of Prayer*, *The Solid Rock*, *He Leadeth Me* and *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*.

William died in Montclair, New Jersey on January 7, 1868. He was fifty-two years of age, but left a strong musical legacy behind.



## *Fanny Crosby*

Frances Jane Crosby was born on March 24, 1820 in Brewster, New York. She is best known as Fanny.

At the age of six weeks, Fanny caught a cold that caused inflammation in her eyes. Mustard poultices were applied to treat the inflammation, damaging her optic nerves and blinding her.

Her father died the same year she was born and she was raised by her mother and grandmother, Eunice. Her mother went to work as a maid to support the family. She was very active in the Methodist Episcopal Church where she was raised. She would often memorize long passages of scripture. She would later attribute her deep faith to her Puritan heritage.

Fanny wrote her first poem when she was eight years old. That poem described her blindness. By the age of twelve, she was receiving singing lessons. Shortly before her fifteenth birthday, she enrolled at the New York Institution for the Blind. She continued her studies there for ten years and developed her musical abilities.

In 1841, her poem about the death of President William Henry Harrison was published in the *New York Herald*. Afterwards her poems were published frequently in works such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Saturday Emporium*, to name just a few publications. She was reluctant to have her poems published, but hopeful that this would be a way to raise money for the blind school.

While Fanny is best known for her hymns, she also wrote a number of secular songs. She and George F. Root wrote over sixty parlour songs. She wrote music for the popular minstrel shows, usually using a pen name. The duo's first song was "*Fare Thee Well, Kitty Dear*" and her first hit was "*The Hazel Dell*".

After she finished her education, Fanny joined a group of lobbyists to order for more support for the education for the blind in Washington, DC. She was the first woman to speak in the United States Senate when she read her poem. In 1846, she sang and played one of her compositions at the White House for President Polk and his wife.

Later that year she became an instructor at her alma mater. She continued to teach there until her marriage in 1858. While she was teaching she met and befriended Grover Cleveland, future US President. He often helped her transcribe her poems.

In the summer of 1843, Fanny met Alexander Van Alstyne, Jr. He was one of her students at the blind school. Later he would become a teacher at the school. The couple was married on March 5, 1858 in Maspeth, New York. Fanny resigned from her teaching position

three days before their marriage. Most of their friends called him Van. Fanny continued to use her maiden name on her published writing, but used her married name on all legal documents.

Following a cholera outbreak in 1849, Fanny realized she did not have a true love for God in her heart. The following year she attended a revival at Thirtieth Street Methodist Episcopal Church (later renamed the Chelsea Methodist Episcopal Church). On November 20, 1850 she "sought an assurance of her salvation."

In 1854, Root and Crosby worked with Lowell Mason to compose *The Pilgrim Fathers* cantata.

In 1859, Fanny gave birth to a baby girl. Unfortunately the child died in her sleep shortly after birth. The belief is that her hymn "*Safe in the Arms of Jesus*" was written about her daughter. Crosby never spoke about her child until a few interviews near the end of her life. One such interview she said "*Now I am going to tell you of something that only my closest friends know. I became a mother and knew a mother's love. God gave us a tender babe but the angels came down and took our infant up to God and to His throne*".

Fanny and Van moved frequently and never owned their own homes. Van gave private music lessons and played the organ for two churches in New York City. Van provided the music for a few of her poetry pieces, but preferred to play classical music.

During the Civil War, she was extremely patriotic and wrote a number of tunes. One account says that Crosby "was so patriotic that when the Civil War broke out, she often pinned the Union flag to her blouse. When a southern lady found this offensive and snapped, '*Take that dirty rag away from here!*' Fanny was incensed and told the woman to '*Repeat that remark at your risk!*' The restaurant manager arrived on the scene just in time to prevent the two women from coming to blows".

She collaborated with William B. Bradbury on the popular "*There is a Sound Among the Forest Trees*" and "*Song to Jeff Davis*." In September 1908, she was still writing Patriotic songs for the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In 1877, Fanny met William J. Kirkpatrick, with whom she would write many hymns. One of their best known hymns is "*I Am Thine, O Lord*."

By 1880, Fanny and Van had separated and were living in different residences. Van became a recluse after the death of their daughter. There are many theories about their separation but no one knows the reasons for sure. In 1903 she said "*He had his faults—and so have I mine, but notwithstanding these, we loved each other to the last*".

Fanny once said "*when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior*".

By the end of the 19th Century, Fanny Crosby was a household name and "one of the most prominent figures in American evangelical life". When Fanny wrote her autobiography in 1906, Former President Grover Cleveland wrote the recommendation. Throughout the United Kingdom, she is best known by her married name as Frances van Alstyne.

She was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1875. She is sometimes referred to as the "*Queen of Gospel Song Writers*", and as the "*Mother of modern congregational singing in America*".

In addition to her well known hymns, she wrote over one thousand secular poems, four books of poetry, a secular cantata and two autobiographies. Some of these songs dealt with the Mexican-American War, American Civil War, and 1840 US Presidential Election to name just a few.

Fanny also wrote at least five cantatas and was well known for her public speaking. Some of her best known songs include *To God Be the Glory*, *Blessed Assurance*, *Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior*, *Saved By Grace*, *Rescue the Perishing*, *Jesus Is Tenderly Calling You Home*, *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross* and *Praise Him, Praise Him*. It is estimated that she wrote over nine thousand hymns over the course of her life. Often she was paid only \$1 or \$2 per song or poem. Her hymns were published by a number of publishers. Howard Doane collaborated with Fanny Crosby on over fifteen hundred of her hymns. Fanny also worked with Ira Strankey who greatly promoted her songs. The two developed a deep friendship and continued to write hymns together until the end of their lives.

Crosby described her hymn-writing process: '*It may seem a little old-fashioned, always to begin one's work with prayer, but I never undertake a hymn without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration.*' Sometimes she would compose up to seven hymns in a day. Fanny could write little more than her name. Her husband and later her half-sister, Carrie, would transcribe the hymns she dictated. She had them developed fully in her mind before dictating and reportedly dictated forty hymns one day.

Because she published so many hymns and poems, she used at least two hundred different pseudonyms throughout her career.

In 1880 she rededicated her life to Christ and serving the poor. Fanny had a great heart for missions and helped many in New York City. This work inspired some of her hymns, including *Rescue the Perishing* and *Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior*. She supported the American Female Guardian Society, Bowery Mission in Manhattan, Cremorne Mission and Home for the Friendless.

On July 18, 1902, Van died in Brooklyn. Fanny, who was suffering from a serious heart condition, was unable to attend his funeral. Her good friend, Phoebe Knapp {with whom she wrote *Blessed Assurance*} paid for his burial.

On her 85th birthday, March 26, 1905, churches around the world celebrated Fanny Crosby Day. In 1906, Fanny published her autobiography, *Memories of Eighty Years*.

Fanny continued her work in missions, writing and public speaking until the end of her life. She often met with presidents, generals and other dignitaries. She is often said to give all she had to those she deemed less fortunate than herself. The last stanza she wrote shortly before her death was "*You will reach the river brink, some sweet day, bye and bye.*"

Fanny Crosby died on February 12, 1915 in Bridgeport, New York. At her request, her family erected a very small tombstone, which carried the words: "*Aunt Fanny: She hath done what she could; Fanny J. Crosby*". In 1955, a larger monument was erected with the first verse of *Blessed Assurance* engraved.

George C. Stebbins stated, '*There was probably no writer in her day who appealed more to the valid experience of the Christian life or who expressed more sympathetically the deep longings of the human heart than Fanny Crosby.*' And many of her hymns have stood the test of time, still resonating with believers today". According to Blumhofer, "*The popularity of Fanny Crosby's lyrics as well as her winsome personality catapulted her to fame*".



## *William O. Cushing*

William Orcutt Cushing was born December 31, 1823 in Hingham, Massachusetts. His father was raised in a Unitarian household by his minister father. After reading the Bible, William joined the Christian Church. Feeling a call to minister he prepared to join the ministry. He served a number of churches in New York.

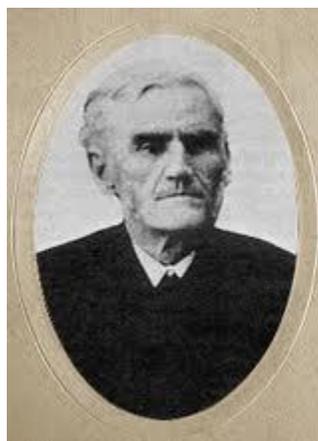
On February 4, 1843 he married Hena Proper in Searsburg, New York. His beloved wife suffered through a long illness through which William lovingly cared for her, eventually retiring from the ministry to devote to her care. Hena died on July 13, 1870.

After leaving the ministry he prayed "Lord, still give me something to do for Thee!" He began to write many popular hymns, signing them W. O. Cushing. William worked with such composers as Ira D. Sankey, W. Howard Doane and Rev. Robert Lowry.

Rev. Cushing is reported to be of a sweet spirit and noble character. "He was ever mindful of the suffering of others, but was oblivious to his own. It was a characteristic of his life to minister to the wants of others, and trust the Lord to supply his own." He provided material to a blind school in Batavia, gave a blind girl all the money he had for his education, and played a large part in establishing the Seminary at Starkey, NY.

William wrote over three hundred hymns, often dealing with themes such as death and heaven. Including in his illustrious collection are: *Under His Wings, When He Cometh, Ring the Bells of Heaven, Down in the Valley, Fair is the Morning Land, Follow On, Hiding in Thee, I Will Follow Jesus* and *We are Waiting, We are Watching*. Many of his tunes became very popular in Sunday School.

After the death of his wife, William lived in the home of Rev. and Mrs. E. E. Curtis in Lisbon Center, NY. During this time he joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Rev. William Cushing entered his heavenly reward on October 19, 1902.



## *Bill and Gloria Gaither*

Bill and Gloria Gaither are one of the leading Christian songwriters and performers in Southern Gospel Music today.

Bill Gaither was born on March 28, 1936 in Alexandria, Indiana. Growing up, Bill was a huge fan of gospel quartets. His family ran a small farm that harvested corn, wheat and even cows. He attended Anderson College and formed his first trio while a student there. That trio included himself with his sister, Mary Ann, and brother, Danny. After graduation, he worked as an English teacher.

Bill married Gloria Sickal on December 22, 1962. She was born Gloria Lee Sickal on March 4, 1942. Her father was a minister. She also attended Anderson College where she met Bill. Gloria had a triple major in English, French and Sociology.

In 1967, Bill quit his job as an English teacher to pursue full time Christian ministry. By this time Bill and Gloria were traveling with his brother, Danny, as the Bill Gaither Trio. *I've Been To Calvary* was Bill's first song to be published. *He Touched Me* was published in 1963 and a huge hit. Even Elvis Presley recorded the song. Their first album was *Sincerely*. *When God Seems So Near* and *I Am Free* soon followed in 1964.

Gaither founded the Gaither Music Company. They have a record company, management group for bookings, TV production, copyright management, recording studio, and retail store. Their son, Benji, runs Live Bait Productions, an animation company, through the company.

Gloria often writes the lyrics and Bill composes the music. The couple has composed over seven hundred songs. Some of their songs include *Because He Lives*, *The King Is Coming*, *Something About that Name*, *A Hill Called Mt. Calvary*, *Something Beautiful*, *He Touched Me*, *It Is Finished*, *The Old Rugged Cross Made a Difference*, *The Longer I Serve Him* and *Let's Just Praise the Lord*. Their music has been performed by some of the leading performers in Christian music, including Sandi Patti, Larnelle Harris, Carman, Steve Green, Michael English, and even Elvis Presley.

Bill and Gloria have taken many young performers under their wings to help them start their careers. Bill is also part of the quartet the Gaither Vocal Band. He is the core member of the group that began as an impromptu group in 1981. Other members have varied but include Michael English, Mark Lowry, Guy Penrod and Gary McSpadden to name just a few.

The Gaither Homecoming tours started in 1991 and are still a big hit today. Their concerts can also be bought on DVD and CD and seen on the television.

Bill and Gloria have won eight Grammy Awards, two Dove Awards, been named Gospel Music's "Songwriter of the Year" eight times and has a host of other awards and nominations. They were the first musical artists to be inducted into the Christian Booksellers Association's Hall of Honor and ASCAP named them Songwriters of the Century. In 2002, they were inducted into the International Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

They have released more than forty albums. Fifty of the Gaither Homecoming Videos have received certified gold status. Of the over one hundred videos all have received some sort of status including platinum and multi-platinum. His hymnal, *Hymns for the Family of God*, is a bestselling hymnal.

The couple has published a number of books, including Bill's autobiography, *It's More Than The Music*, which was published in 2005.

Gloria has a beautiful gift with words, in not only her lyrics, but her poetry and other writings. In 1991, she graduated Ball State University with a Master's of Arts in Literature. She has also taught at her alma mater, Anderson University. She has written over forty books, for both adults and children, and over 100 video scripts. She has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from six universities. She also maintains an active speaking schedule and serves on the boards of the Board of Directors for both the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and the United Christian College Fund.

The Gaither's also have the Gaither Family Resources, which includes a conference center, coffee shop and gift shop.

The couple still lives and run their business from their home in Alexandria, Indiana. The couple has three children, Suzanne, Amy and Benji and five grandchildren. Fans can be assured that as long as Bill and Gloria Gaither are able to make beautiful music honoring the Lord they will continue to delight us with their creations.



## *Frances Ridley Havergal*

Frances Ridley Havergal wrote such hymns as *Take My Life and Let It Be* and *I Gave My Life for Thee*.

Frances was born December 14, 1836 in Worcestershire, England. Her family and friends called her Fanny. She loved the written word and would often find a corner to hide and read.

Her father, William Henry Havergal, was a minister, writer, hymn writer and composer. Her brother, Henry, became a priest in the Church of England and was an organist.

Around the age of six, she accepted Jesus Christ into her heart. By the age of seven she was already writing verses and poems. Throughout her life she published various collections of her poems, devotions and hymns in various volumes being published.

Growing up she was so far advanced that she did not attend the local school. Instead she studied at home. She studied not only English, but also German, French, Hebrew, Latin and Welsh. At fourteen she attended the prestigious school for girls at Belmont.

She studied for over a year in Germany in 1852-1853. Her first well known hymn, *I Gave My Life To Thee*, was written during this time. The song was inspired by a picture with the crucifixion with those words underneath. She even wrote some of her poems in German, including *I Gave My Life For Thee*. "One day as she sat opposite a picture bearing the motto, *I Gave My Life For Thee*, the lines flashed into her mind and she wrote them on a scrap of paper. They did not satisfy her, so she tossed them into the fire. However, through a miracle of grace they fell out untouched. Months later she showed them to her father who encouraged her to preserve them and wrote a tune to fit the words."

Upon returning to England, she dedicated herself to Christian work. She was active in her church and taught Sunday School for over fourteen years. Her father even taught her Greek, so she could read the New Testament in its original language.

*Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated, Lord to Thee* was inspired by a visit to a friend's house. During that visit she was able to lead all of the occupants of the house to the Lord.

Francis preferred her hymn, "*Take My Life and Let It Be*," be sung to her father's tune, *Patmos*.

Francis often suffered from ill health, journeying to Switzerland six years before her death to recuperate. Her father even took a smaller parish at one point due to her failing health. She died on June 3, 1879 in Wales at the age of forty-three. Much of her work was published posthumously.

Her sister, M. V. G. Havergal, published her autobiography after her death. Her poems were printed in three books, *Ministry of Song*, *Under The Surface*, and *Under His Shadows*. Havergal College in Toronto Canada is named for her.



## Lowell Mason

Lowell Mason was born on January 8, 1792 in Medfield, Massachusetts. He came from a musical family and from a young age showed a strong interest in music. He studied with Frederick L. Abel, a German Teacher, and studied composition with Oliver Shaw.

While serving at the Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia, the first Sunday School for black children in America was created. In 1822 he published, *The Handel and Haydn Society's Collection of Church Music*. His collection of hymns was a surprising hit.

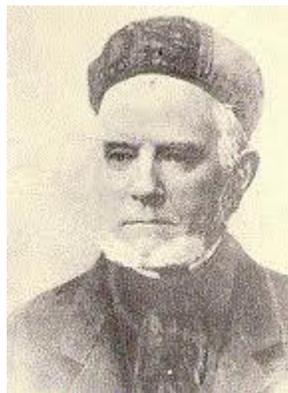
Mason worked as a banker for a number of years. He was president of the Handel and Haydn Society, taught in the public schools, co-founded the Boston Academy of Music and served as music superintendent for the Boston school system in 1838.

Mason set music to the popular nursery rhyme, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. Mason is largely responsible for introducing music into American public schools. He is considered the first important music educator in the United States. In his 1834 book, *The Manual of the Boston Academy of Music*, he listed seven principles for music education.

Mason was widely traveled and met with many European musicians. He often received a lot of criticism for bringing European music to the American people. In 1855, Yale University awarded him an honorary doctorate in music. Upon the end of his life he would bestow his vast collection of books and music upon the university.

In the later part of his life he served as music director at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. He radically transformed American church music from having professional choirs with accompaniment to congregational singing that was accompanied by organ music. He maintained his office in New York and lived in Orange, New Jersey.

He composed over sixteen hundred hymns. Some of his best known are *Joy to the World*, *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* and *Nearer, My God, To Thee*. He died on August 11, 1872 at his home in Orange, New Jersey.



## John Newton

John Henry Newton is the slave trader turned clergyman that wrote the popular hymn, *Amazing Grace*. He was born on July 24, 1725 in London, England. He grew up around the shipping industry with his shipmaster father. His mother brought him up with religious training. Two weeks before his seventh birthday his mother died. From there he bounced around and eventually went to boarding school. John did not have a good relationship with his step-mother. By the age of eleven he'd gone to sea with his father. They sailed six voyages together. The men ran a slave ship. Newton became notorious for his hard living, gambling, drinking and profanity. He later admitted that the conditions on a slave ship was notorious.

He was kidnapped and forced into the Royal Navy. When he tried to desert, he was beaten. He was even made a slave by the wife of a ship captain in West Africa for a short time. In 1748, he was rescued by a sea captain that was a friend of his father's.

That same year he was aboard the ship, *Greyhound*, when a severe storm struck and almost sank the ship. He called out to God as the ship filled with water. Later as the ship headed home to England, Newton began to read the Bible and accepted Christ into his heart. He'd mark the day of his conversion, March 10, 1748, for the rest of his life. He completely gave up his ways of hard living. He continued in the slave trade for some time after his conversion. He did develop a sympathy for the slaves over a period of time.

In 1750, Newton married Mary Catlett, his childhood sweetheart. In 1754, he suffered a severe stroke and gave up his seafaring life. He then became a tax collector and studied to become a minister. He learned Greek, Hebrew and Syriac in his spare time. In 1757, he applied to be ordained as a priest by the Church of England. Seven years would pass before he was accepted.

In 1779, he became Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth in London. He would officiate there until his death. Many flocked to him for advice.

Newton worked with William Cowper, and together the men published the *Olney Hymns* in 1779. This work had a great influence on English hymnology.

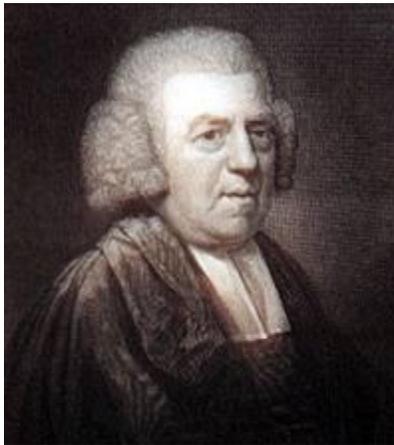
In 1788, he published a pamphlet *Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade* where he described the horrific conditions aboard the slave ships. He became part of the campaign to abolish the slave trade. One can imagine how he must have rejoiced when the Slave Trade Act of 1807 was passed in Great Britain.

His wife, Mary, died of cancer on December 15, 1790. By all accounts he was still greatly in love with her. He said he only made it through losing her and was able to preach her funeral due to "months of prayer."

He wrote an anonymous autobiography called *An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable And Interesting Particulars in the Life of ----- Communicated, in a Series of Letters, to the Reverend T. Haweiss.*

In 1792, Princeton University awarded him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In the last years of his life, Newton became blind but continued to preach until the last year of his life. Newton died December 21, 1807 and was buried beside his wife.

In 1982 he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.



## *Ira Sankey*

Ira D. Sankey was born on August 28, 1840 in Edinburgh, Pennsylvania. He travelled greatly with Evangelist Dwight L. Moody. The names Moody and Sankey are often synonymous with one another.

Reportedly from an early age he had a joyous spirit and fondness of music. At the age of sixteen, he accepted Christ at the King's Chapel United Methodist Church revival meeting near his home. In 1860 he became Superintendent of the Sunday School where he attended church. After serving in the Civil War as a young man, he began to make a name for himself as a Gospel singer.

He eventually caught the attention of Dwight L. Moody. Sankey soon attended his first meeting with Moody preaching.

In 1863, Sankey married Fanny Edwards.

When the Great Chicago Fire broke out in October 1871, Moody and Sankey were in the middle of a revival meeting. They barely escaped with their lives. Sankey watched the city burn from a rowboat on Lake Michigan. After the fire, in which many worshipping perished, Moody vowed that he would always offer an altar call at the end of the meeting.

Sankey wrote a number hymns, sometimes with Rev. Moody. In their evangelical services Moody would preach and Sankey would lead the singing. They were the 19th Century equivalent of Dr. Billy Graham and Cliff Barrows in the 20th Century.

In addition to his partnership with Rev. Moody, Sankey collaborated with Philip Bliss, James Mcgranahan and George Stebbins. He had a number of his hymns published by Biglow & Main.

The Moody/Sankey duo traveled to the United Kingdom in 1875 to large crowds. His first hymn *Yet There Is Room*, was composed on this trip while in Edinburgh, Scotland.

His most famous hymn {also his first} is *The Ninety and Nine*.

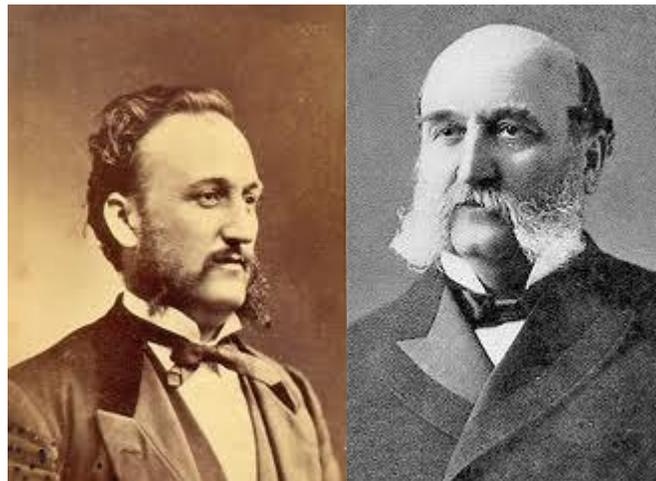
According to Wikipedia the story of the song goes that "Sankey and Moody were en route from Glasgow to Edinburgh, Scotland, in May, 1874, as they were to hold a three-day campaign there. This was at the urgent request of the Ministerial Association. Prior to boarding the train, Sankey bought a weekly newspaper for a penny. He found nothing of interest but a sermon by Henry W. Beecher and some advertisements. Then, he found a little piece of poetry in a corner of one column that he liked, and he read it to Moody, but only received a polite

reply. Sankey clipped the poem and tucked it in his pocket. At the noon day service of the second day of the special series, Moody preached on The Good Shepherd. Horatius Bonar added a few thrilling words and then Moody asked Mr. Sankey if he had a final song. An inner voice prompted him to sing the hymn that he found on the train. With conflict of spirit, he thought, this is impossible! The inner voice continued to prod him, even though there was no music to the poem, so he acquiesced. As calmly as if he had sung it a thousand times, he placed the little piece of newspaper on the organ in front of him. Lifting up his heart in a brief prayer to Almighty God, he then laid his hands on the keyboard, striking a chord in A flat. Half speaking and half singing, he completed the first stanza, which was followed by four more. Moody walked over with tears in his eyes and said, "Where did you get that hymn?" 'The Ninety and Nine' became his most famous tune and his most famous sale from that time on. The words were written by Elizabeth Clephane in 1868. She died in 1869, little realizing her contribution to the Christian world."

Of the over twelve hundred hymns he composed are *Trusting Jesus, Faith Is the Victory, Jesus of Nazareth, The Cross of Jesus, Room for Thee, A Shelter in the Time of Storm, While the Days Are Going By, Hiding Thee, I Am Praying For You, When the Mists Have Rolled Away, Take Me As I Am, Home at last thy labour done, and Under His Wings*. He also published *Sacred Songs and Solos*.

The last five years of his life, Sankey was blinded by glaucoma. He found a kindred spirit in Fanny Crosby, with whom he wrote a number of hymns.

Ira Sankey died in Brooklyn, New York on August 13, 1908. In 1979 he was added to the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. People say that his greatest desire was to serve Jesus.



## *Isaac Watts*

Isaac Watts, the Father of English and children's Hymnody, was born on July 17, 1674 in Southampton, England. He was raised by a nonconformist father, who was incarcerated for his beliefs.

Watts was prone to rhyme from an early age. As a child he learned Greek, Latin and Hebrew. He attended the Dissenting Academy when he went to college.

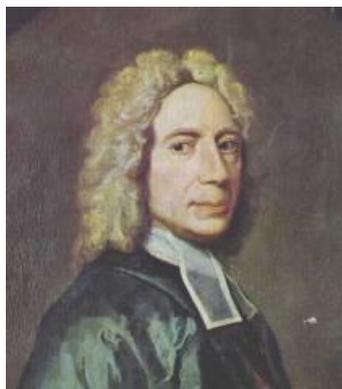
In 1702, he was ordained to the ministry, although he'd been preaching since he was twenty-four years old. In 1712, a fever greatly affected his health. He became good friends with Sir Thomas Abney and lived in the Abney household the rest of his life.

In 1728, he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree by the University of Edinburgh for his numerous works including *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* {1707-1708} and *The Psalms of David Imitation in the Language of the New Testament* {1719}.

His more than 700 hymns are included in a number of denominational hymnals. Some of his hymns include *Joy to the World, Come Ye that Love the Lord, O God Our Help in Ages Past, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Am I A Soldier of the Cross* and *Alas! and did my Savior Die*.

In addition to his numerous hymns, Watts was also a logician, theologian and minister. He wrote a number of books and essays on various subjects, including three volumes of theological discourses. He even wrote a children's book, *Divine and Moral Songs for the use of Children*, when few people were writing for children.

He died in Stoke Newington, England on November 25, 1748. He is buried in the Bunhill Fields Cemetery in London, England.



## Charles Wesley

Charles Wesley and his brother, John Wesley, were the founding fathers of the Methodist Church. Charles was born on December 18, 1707 in Lincolnshire, England. He was the eighteenth child {of nineteen children} and youngest son of his parents. His father was a rector for the Church of England.

He was educated at Westminster School. In 1721, he was elected King's Scholar, which granted him free room and board and education. He was in the first wave of Oxford Methodists. The name Methodists originated because they "so strict in their religious methods." He was apparently a good pupil, and excelled in Latin. He took on his own pupils after receiving his B. A. in 1730. In 1735, Charles graduated with a Masters' in classical languages and literature. That year he became a clergyman of the Church of England. He then joined his father and brother in church work. The next year he served a brief stint in the colony of Georgia, but he was not well received and soon returned to England.

In early 1738, Charles had a profound spiritual awakening. He was vividly aware of the power of the New Testament and the message of salvation. In 1749, he married Sarah Gwynne, who was almost twenty years his junior. By all accounts they had a happy marriage and she often travelled with him in his evangelistic travels. The family made their residence in Bristol and later in London. Of the couple's eight children, only three survived infancy. Both of his surviving sons were musical child prodigies like their father.

Charles Wesley published over six thousand hymns including, *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*, *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*, *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, *And Can It Be that I Should Gain?*, *Jesus Lover of My Soul*, *Love Divine All Loves Excelling*, and *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*. He wrote the *Great Four Anglican Hymns*, which are four widely popular hymns with the Anglican and Protestant churches during the 19th Century.

When he died "*he was known as a preacher of great power and wisdom.*" He died on March 29, 1788 and is buried in the St. Marylebone Parish Church. His brother was grieved that they would not be buried in the same church yard. Charles said "*I have lived, and I die, in the Communion of the Church of England, and I will be buried in the yard of my parish church.*" Many consider Charles Wesley to be the greatest hymn writer ever.



## *Resources*

[www.popularhymns.com](http://www.popularhymns.com)

[www.cyberhymnal.org](http://www.cyberhymnal.org)

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

[www.hymnlyrics.org](http://www.hymnlyrics.org)

[www.hymnsite.org](http://www.hymnsite.org)

[www.nethymnal.com](http://www.nethymnal.com)

*101 Hymn Stories*                      Kenneth W. Osbeck      Kregel Publications      1982

*101 More Hymn Stories*                Kenneth W. Osbeck      Kregel Publications      1985

*The Sings My Soul*                      Robert J. Morgan        Thomas Nelson Publishers      2003

*The Sings My Soul Book 2*                Robert J. Morgan        Thomas Nelson Publishers      2004

*The Sings My Soul Book 3*                Robert J. Morgan        Thomas Nelson Publishers      20011

*Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*

Kenneth W. Osbeck      Kregel Publications      1990



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SingingtheSongInMyHeart explores music of many genres and generations. The goal is to educate others about various styles, composers, and performers of music. Leigh also enjoys going behind the scenes to discover the story behind many of the beloved songs of our day. She hopes that composer and performers will be willing to share their stories in her Friday Spotlights.

Diana Leigh Matthews has been playing the piano since she was four years old. She is also a powerful vocalist. She is a speaker and writer and has a Ministry, at [www.DianaLeighMatthews.com](http://www.DianaLeighMatthews.com)

In addition to these accomplishments, she's an amazing genealogist and has taught the subject for Greenville Tech and spoken to the SC Jaycees on the subject. You can find more about her love of history at [www.alookthrutime.com](http://www.alookthrutime.com)

