

Lecture #26 – Even More Hymn Writers You Should Know

I. Charles H. Gabriel

1856-1932

American

Methodist

There is one folklore story, that the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilton (Pastor Pollock or McAulay) once saw Gabriel walking in town early in the week. He asked Gabriel if he knew a good song to go along with his sermon. The pastor shared the sermon topic and by the end of the week the boy had written a song for that Sunday, words and music.

Songs to Know

“O That Will Be Glory”

“Send the Light”

“My Savior’s Love”

“Pentecostal Power”

Tunes:

“Higher Ground”

“The Way of the Cross Leads Home”

“Since Jesus Came Into My Heart”

“His Eye Is On the Sparrow”

“Will the Circle Be Unbroken”

II. A.J. (Adoniram Judson) Gordon

1836-1895

American

Baptist

Close friend of D.L. Moody.

Also one of the first Baptist leaders to be known as a Fundamentalist.

Songs to Know

Tune:

“My Jesus, I Love Thee”

Born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, William Featherston most likely wrote this hymn at the age of sixteen on the occasion of his conversion and/or baptism. It was published anonymously in the London Hymn Book to a now forgotten tune. Adoniram Judson Gordon found it, wrote a new tune for it, and also published it anonymously in The Service of Song for Baptist Churches. It wasn't until around 1930, fifty years after its publication, that enough research had been done to establish Featherston as the author, who had died at the young age of 28. Today, it is a much loved hymn of assurance and confession of faith, with words of comfort and peace. And perhaps bolstering the power of the text is Featherstone's story itself. A young man with no connections, who simply wrote a poem one night about his own faith, has, unbeknownst to him, come to bless millions. God certainly works in mysterious ways to use the gifts and talents of his people.

III. Phillips Brooks

1835-1893

American

Episcopalian

Considered one of the finest preachers of his day.

“Preaching is truth through personality.”

Songs to Know

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

In 1865, the year the Civil War ended and President Lincoln was assassinated, themes of peace and quiet would probably have been welcome to Americans. In that year, the Rev. Phillips Brooks took a trip to Israel and saw Bethlehem and its surrounding fields on Christmas Eve, which eventually inspired him to write this Christmas hymn. In contrast to some other Christmas hymns that emphasize the glory of God as seen in the grand chorus of angels, Brooks focuses on the quietness of Christ’s birth, and how little the larger world paid attention. The final stanza is a prayer that Christ would come and be present with us.

IV. J. Wilburn Chapman

1859-1918

American

Presbyterian

One of the great evangelists of his day.

Songs to Know

“One Day”

“Our Great Savior”

V. Albert E. Brumley

1905-1977

American

Church of Christ

Wrote over 800 Gospel songs

Songs to Know

“I’ll Fly Away”

“Turn Your Radio On”

“If We Never Meet Again”

“I’ll Meet You in the Morning”

“Rank Stranger”

“He Set Me Free”

“The Blood That Stained the Old Rugged Cross”

VI. B.B. McKinney

1886-1952

American

(Southern) Baptist

Taught at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary

Music Editor for the Baptist Sunday School Board

Songs to Know

“The Nail-Scarred Hand”

“Wherever He Leads, I’ll Go”

“Glorious Is Thy Name”

“Neath The Old Olive Trees”

“God Give Us Christian Homes”

VII. Bill Gaither

1936-??

American

Church of God / Nazarene ?

Songs to Know

“He Touched Me”

While Bill Gaither was accompanying Dr. Dale Oldham on his evangelistic crusades, the preacher said to him, "Bill, the word 'touch' is a very popular word. It comes up so often in the New Testament stories about Jesus touching people's eyes and healing them, or touching people's lives and changing them. It's a special, spiritual word and you ought to write a song that praises His touch." So Gaither did. That week, Dr. Oldham's son Doug Oldham began singing it in the meetings.

“Because He Lives”

“I Will Serve Thee”

“There’s Something About That Name”

“The Family of God”

“The Longer I Serve Him”

VIII. Harold Lillenas

1885-1959

Norwegian / American

Nazarene

Songs to Know

“Wonderful Grace of Jesus”

IX. John W. Peterson

1921-2006

American

Attended Moody Bible Institute and American Conservatory of Music

Composed over 1,000 songs

Songs to Know

“It Took A Miracle”

“Surely Goodness And Mercy”

“Heaven Came Down”

“Jesus Is Coming Again”

“Springs of Living Water”