

*Hymn 174, O Christ, Our King, Creator, Lord*

If you look below the hymn at the tiny print, you will see that 3 very interesting men each had a part in assembling our hymn. It was written by Gregory the Great, 540-604, it was translated by Ray Palmer, 1858, and the music was provided by William Henry Gladstone, who lived from 1840-1891

So, Gregory the Great wrote this hymn about 1,400 years ago. Gregory loved Scripture, had committed large portions of it to memory, and urged others, including lay-people to read, yes, even to saturate themselves with the words of the Bible. Gregory once warned a physician, Theodorus, not to be so dominated by secular pursuits that he failed "to read daily the words of his Redeemer." On these he should meditate daily to learn the heart of his Creator and "sigh more ardently for the things that are eternal, that your soul may be kindled with greater longings for heavenly joys."

The words of this hymn were translated 1,200 years after they were written, in the year 1858, by an American Pastor named Ray Palmer. Ray Palmer was himself the author of a number of hymns, the best known was "My Faith Looks up to Thee." He was born in Rhode Island in 1808, graduated from Yale in 1830, went on for theological studies and in 1835 served as a pastor in Maine and then in New York. It was in 1858 that he translated this hymn. About 25 years later, in 1883, he had a stroke and was partially paralyzed. He lived for 4 more years.

The one who wrote the music for this hymn was William Henry Gladstone (1840 – 1891). He was raised as a Christian and seriously considered becoming a pastor, but instead became a statesman. He was a Member of the British Parliament, and his political career lasted over 60 years. He once said to Queen Victoria, "My political or public life is the best part of my life: it is that part in which I am conscious of the greatest effort to do and avoid as the Lord Christ would have me do and avoid." He loved the outdoors and believed in vigorous exercise. When young and strong, William Gladstone played soccer for Scotland in the first unofficial England v Scotland International game in 1870. Though great demands were placed upon his time, he often made time for introducing bills that helped the poor, and he engaged in much personal giving to the poor. In later years, he wrote several works in defense of the Christian faith. A singer and organist, he was well versed in musical history, especially the development of church music.

He died in London in 1891, and he received the honor of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Of all of the many tributes offered in his memory, perhaps the shortest and simplest was the most eloquent. One member of Parliament stated that Gladstone was "a great Christian man." As if to prove that, his funeral was extremely well attended, and the poor of the parish were said to have "unmistakably felt that they had lost a most kind and generous benefactor".

These are the 3 interesting men that each had a part assembling our hymn.