April Hymn Author’s Bios:

**GELLERT, CHRISTIAN FURCHTEGOTT** (1715-1769) In 1734 Gellert en­tered the Un­i­ver­si­ty of Leip­zig as a the­ol­o­gy stu­dent; af­ter com­plet­ing his stu­dies, he served for some time as an as­sist­ant to his fa­ther, the pas­tor at Hain­i­chen. How­ev­er, due his poor mem­o­ry, he de­cid­ed he was un­suit­ed for the min­is­try. In 1739, he be­came do­mes­tic tu­tor to the sons of Herr von Lüt­ti­chau, near Dres­den, and in 1741 re­turned to Leip­zig to su­per­vise the ed­u­ca­tion of a ne­phew at the Un­i­ver­si­ty. He al­so re­sumed his own stu­dies, grad­u­at­ing M.A. in 1744. In 1745, he be­came pri­vate tu­tor or lec­tur­er in the phi­lo­so­phy fa­cul­ty; in 1751, he was ap­point­ed ex­tra­or­din­ary pro­fes­sor of phi­lo­so­phy, lec­tur­ing on po­e­try and rhe­tor­ic, and then on mor­al phi­lo­so­phy. He re­fused a reg­u­lar pro­fes­sor­ship in 1761, not feel­ing strong enough for the post.

**HEBER, REGINALD** (1783-1826) Heber at­tend­ed Brase­nose Coll­ege, Ox­ford, where he won a num­ber of awards in Eng­lish and La­tin. He re­ceived a fel­low­ship to All Souls Coll­ege, and lat­er be­came Rec­tor at Hod­net, Shrop­shire, Eng­land. In 1823, he be­came, some­what re­luct­ant­ly, Bi­shop of Cal­cut­ta, In­dia. Most of his hymns were not pub­lished un­til af­ter his death; 57 of them ap­peared in *Hymns Writ­ten and Adapt­ed to the Week­ly Church Ser­vice of the Year* (Lon­don: J. Mur­ray, 1827).

**MONTGOMERY, JAMES** (1771-1854) When Montgomery was five years old, his fam­i­ly moved to the Mo­rav­i­an set­tle­ment at Grace­hill, near Bal­ly­mena, Coun­ty An­trim. Two years lat­er, he was sent to the Ful­neck Sem­in­ary in York­shire. He left Ful­neck in 1787 to work in a shop in Mir­field, near Wake­field. Soon tir­ing of that, he se­cured a sim­i­lar po­si­tion at Wath, near Rother­ham, on­ly to find it as un­suit­a­ble as his pre­vi­ous job. A trip to Lon­don, hop­ing to find a pub­lish­er for his youth­ful po­ems, end­ed in fail­ure. In 1792, he glad­ly left Wath for Shef­field to be as­sist­ant to Mr. Gales, auc­tion­eer, book­sel­ler, and print­er of the Shef­field Reg­is­ter. In 1794, Gales left Eng­land to avoid po­lit­ic­al pro­se­cu­tion. Mont­gom­ery took the Shef­field Reg­is­ter in hand, changed its name to the Shef­field Iris, and con­tin­ued to ed­it it for 32 years. Dur­ing the next two years he was im­pris­oned twice, first for re­print­ing a song in com­mem­or­a­tion of the fall of the Bas­tille, then for giv­ing an ac­count of a ri­ot in Shef­field.

**SCHAFF, PHILIP** (1819-1893) Schaff was ed­u­cat­ed at the Un­i­ver­si­ties in Tü­bing­en, Halle, and Ber­lin, Ger­ma­ny. Af­ter em­i­grat­ing to Amer­i­ca in 1844, he taught at the Mer­cers­burg Re­formed Sem­in­a­ry in Mer­cers­burg, Penn­syl­van­ia. In 1870, he moved to the Un­ion The­o­lo­gi­cal Sem­in­a­ry, New York Ci­ty, where was a pro­fess­or of sac­red li­ter­a­ture.

The ed­it­ing of his pa­per, the com­po­si­tion and pub­li­ca­tion of his po­ems and hymns, the de­liv­ery of lec­tures on po­e­try in Shef­field and at the Roy­al In­sti­tu­tion, Lon­don, and the ad­vo­ca­cy of for­eign mis­sions and the Bi­ble So­ci­e­ty, gave great va­ri­e­ty, but very lit­tle of stir­ring in­ci­dent in his life, though he did find time to write 400 hymns. In 1833, Mont­gom­ery re­ceived a roy­al pen­sion of £200 per year.

**WESLEY, CHARLES** (1707-1788) the eighteenth child of the rector of the Anglican church in Epworth, Lincolnshire. All 19 Wesley children received individual weekly instructions in religious matters from their mother, who gave them some of her own independent spirit. Although Charles was bright, he wasted much of his energy looking for good times when he began his studies at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1726. In 1729, after he had settled down, Charles, his older brother John, and several other Oxford students formed the Holy Club, for the purpose of studying the Bible and receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The group soon became known as the "Methodists" because of the regularity of their religious activities.

**WATTS, ISAAC** (1674-1748) Watts’ fa­ther was Non­con­form­ist im­pris­oned twice for his re­li­gious views. Isaac learned Greek, Latin, and He­brew un­der Mr. Pin­horn, Rec­tor of All Saints, and head­mas­ter of the Gram­mar School in South­amp­ton. Isaac’s taste for verse showed it­self in ear­ly child­hood, and his prom­ise caused a lo­cal doc­tor and other friends to of­fer him a un­i­ver­si­ty ed­u­ca­tion, as­sum­ing he would be or­dained in the Church of Eng­land. How­ev­er, Isaac de­clined and in­stead en­tered a Non­con­for­mist Acad­e­my at Stoke New­ing­ton in 1690, un­der the care of Thom­as Rowe, pas­tor of the In­de­pen­dent cong­re­ga­tion at Gir­dlers’ Hall; Isaac joined this con­gre­ga­tion in 1693.

**SPARROW-SIMPSON, JOHN WILLIAM** (1860-1952) English clergyman and son of the librarian and succentor of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

**KELLY, THOMAS** (1769-1855) Son of a judge, Kel­ly at­tend­ed Trin­i­ty Coll­ege (BA 1789) and planned to be a law­yer. Af­ter con­vert­ing to Christ, though, his ca­reer plans changed to the min­is­try. He be­came an Ang­li­can priest in 1792, but event­u­al­ly be­came one of the fa­mous dis­sent­ing min­is­ters. He wrote over 760 hymns.

**GABRIEL, CHARLES HUTCHINSON** (1856-1932) Growing up on an Io­wa farm, Ga­bri­el taught him­self to play the fam­i­ly’s reed or­gan. He be­gan teach­ing in sing­ing schools by age 16, and be­came well known as a teach­er and com­pos­er. He served as mu­sic di­rect­or at Grace Meth­od­ist Epis­co­pal Church, San Fran­cis­co, Cal­i­for­nia (1890-2), then moved to Chi­ca­go, Il­li­nois. In 1912 he be­gan work­ing with [Hom­er Ro­de­heav­er](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/r/o/d/rodeheaver_ha.htm)’s pub­lish­ing com­pa­ny. His ed­it­ed some 43 song books, 7 men’s chor­us books, 19 an­them col­lect­ions, and 23 can­ta­tas.

**LAWRY, ROBERT** (1826-1899) Lowry at­tend­ed the Un­i­ver­si­ty at Lew­isb­urg (later re­named Buck­nell Un­i­ver­si­ty), where he be­came a pro­fess­or of lit­er­a­ture. He was or­dained as a Bap­tist min­is­ter and pas­tored at West Ches­ter, Penn­syl­van­ia; Bloom­ing­dale Bap­tist Church, New York Ci­ty; Han­son Place Bap­tist Church, Brook­lyn, New York; First Bap­tist Church, Lew­is­burg, Penn­syl­vania; and Park Ave­nue Bap­tist Church, Plain­field, New Jer­sey. He al­so worked as a mu­sic ed­i­tor at the Big­low Pub­lish­ing Com­pa­ny, and helped found the Sixth Av­e­nue Bap­tist Church in New York Ci­ty. He wrote about 500 Gos­pel tunes.

**POTT, FRANCIS** (1832-1909) Pott at­tend­ed Brase­nose Coll­ege, Ox­ford, Eng­land (BA 1854, MA 1857), and took Ho­ly Or­ders in 1856. He served as Cur­ate at Bis­hops­worth, Glou­cester­shire (1858-68); Ard­ling­ly, Berk­shire (1858-61); Tice­hurst, Sus­sex (1861-6); and as Rec­tor at Nor­hill, Bed­ford­shire, 1866. He re­tired to Speld­hurst, Tun­bridge Wells. Pott wrote sev­er­al orig­in­al hymns, but is bet­ter known as a hymn trans­lat­or. Som­etimes his work is in­cor­rect­ly at­trib­ut­ed to Alfred Pott.

Pott served on the com­mit­tee which com­piled Hymns An­cient and Mo­dern, and ed­it­ed Hymns Fit­ted to the Or­der of Com­mon Pray­er (1861) and The Free Rhy­thm Psalte­r (1898). He re­tired due to deaf­ness in 1891.

**CHARLES, ELIZABETH RUNDLE** (1828-1896) Elizabeth was the daugh­ter of John Run­dle, bank­er and Mem­ber of Par­lia­ment. She mar­ried law­yer And­rew Pa­ton Charles in 1851. Ang­li­can by af­fil­i­a­tion, she was a gift­ed po­et, mu­si­cian, paint­er, and au­thor, and trans­lat­ed a num­ber of hymns.

**CELPHANE, ELIZABETH CECELIA** (1830-1869) Elizabeth was the third daugh­ter of An­drew Cle­phane, Sher­iff of Fife and Kin­ross. She lived most of her life in Me­lrose, Scot­land, about 30 miles south­east of Ed­in­burgh. She spent most of her mon­ey on char­it­a­ble caus­es, and was known lo­cal­ly as The Sun­beam.

Clephane’s hymns ap­peared post­hu­mous­ly, al­most all for the first time, in the Fam­i­ly Trea­sury (1872), un­der the gen­er­al ti­tle of Breath­ings on the Border.

**LUTHER, MARTIN** (1483-1546) Luther be­gan the Pro­test­ant Re­for­ma­tion in 1517, and the Lu­ther­an de­nom­in­a­tion bears his name to this day. In ad­di­tion to be­ing a re­form­er, he was ac­tive in church mu­sic.

**MASSIE, RICHARD** (1800-1887) Massie was an Ang­li­can rec­tor in Ec­cles­ton, Eng­land. He is best known for his trans­la­tions of Ger­man hymns by [Mar­tin Lu­ther](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/l/u/t/luther_m.htm), [Paul Ger­hardt](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/g/e/gerhardt_p.htm), and others.

**CAMPBELL, ROBERT** (1814-1868) Campbell at­tend­ed the Un­i­ver­si­ty of Ed­in­burg while quite young, and be­came a law­yer who de­vot­ed much of his time to the class­ics. In 1848, he be­gan trans­lat­ing La­tin hymns for re­lax­a­tion. In 1852, at age 38, he left the Epis­co­pal Church of Scot­land and be­came a Ro­man Ca­tho­lic.

**BLISS, PHILIP PAUL** (1838-1876) Bliss and his wife died in a tra­gic train wreck caused by a bridge col­lapse. He sur­vived the in­i­tial im­pact, but went back in­to the flames in an un­suc­ces­sful at­tempt to res­cue his wife.

*Buried:* The re­mains re­trieved from the Ash­ta­bu­la dis­as­ter were placed in a com­mon grave marked by a cen­o­taph in the Ash­ta­bu­la Cem­e­te­ry. A cen­o­taph in mem­o­ry of the Bliss­es was al­so erect­ed in the cem­e­tery at Rome, Penn­syl­vania, Ju­ly 17, 1877.

The night be­fore that ter­ri­ble rail­road ac­ci­dent at Ash­ta­bu­la…he said to his au­di­ence, I may not pass this way again; then he sang a so­lo, I’m Go­ing Home To­mor­row. This in­deed proved pro­phe­tic of his own home go­ing**.**

**COWPER, WILLIAM** (1731-1800) - Cowper (pro­nounced Coop­er), whose fa­ther was cha­plain to King George II, went through the mo­tions of be­com­ing an at­tor­ney, but ne­ver prac­ticed law. He lived near Ol­ney, Buck­ing­ham­shire, the name­sake town of the Ol­ney Hymns, which he co-wrote with [John New­ton](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/n/e/w/newton_j.htm), au­thor of [Amaz­ing Grace](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/a/m/a/amazing_grace.htm). Cow­per al­so wrote po­et­ry, in­clud­ing The Ne­gro’s Com­plaint, an an­ti-slav­ery work, and the 5,000-line The Task.

**LILLENAS, HALDOR** (1885-1959) Lillenas em­i­grat­ed to Amer­i­ca as a child; his fam­i­ly set­tled first in South Da­ko­ta, then moved to Or­e­gon in 1889. He at­tend­ed Deets Pa­ci­fic Bi­ble Coll­ege in Los An­ge­les, Cal­i­for­nia (later re­named to Pa­sa­de­na Coll­ege); stu­died mu­sic at the Sie­gel-My­ers School of Mu­sic in Chi­ca­go, Il­li­nois; and re­ceived an hon­or­ary Doc­tor of Mu­sic de­gree from Ol­i­vet Na­za­rene Coll­ege. His first pas­tor­ate was in Lom­poc, Cal­i­for­nia, in 1910; he lat­er pas­tored in Redlands, Cal­i­for­nia, and In­dianapolis, In­diana. In 1924, he found­ed the Lil­le­nas Mu­sic Com­pa­ny (bought by the Na­za­rene Pub­lish­ing Com­pa­ny in 1930), and worked as an ed­it­or there un­til his re­tire­ment in 1950. Haldor mar­ried [Ber­tha Mae Wil­son](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/l/i/l/lillenas_bm.htm), a song­writ­er like him­self. He and Ber­tha were el­ders in the Church of the Na­za­rene. Hal­dor tra­veled as an evan­gel­ist, then pas­tored sev­er­al church­es, 1914-1924. In his life­time, he wrote some 4,000 hymns, and sup­plied songs for ma­ny evan­gel­ists.

**MEDLEY, SAMUEL** (1738-1799) After a false start as an ap­pren­tice, Med­ley joined the Bri­tish Roy­al Na­vy, be­com­ing a mid­shi­pman in 1755. He was wound­ed in bat­tle off Port La­gos in 1759; dur­ing his re­cup­er­at­ion, some­one read a ser­mon by [Isaac Watts](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/w/a/t/watts_i.htm) to him, lead­ing to his con­ver­sion. He then left the na­vy and stu­died for the min­is­try un­der Dr. Gif­ford in Lon­don. In 1767, he be­came pas­tor at the Bap­tist church in Wat­ford, Here­ford­shire. In 1772, he be­gan his min­is­try at By­ron Street in Liv­er­pool.

**CROSBY, FANNY JANE** (1820-1915) Fanny Cros­by was prob­ab­ly the most pro­lif­ic hymn­ist in his­to­ry. Though blind­ed by an in­com­pe­tent doc­tor at six weeks of age, she wrote over 8,000 hymns. About her blind­ness, she said:

It seemed in­tend­ed by the bless­ed prov­i­dence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dis­pen­sa­tion. If per­fect earth­ly sight were of­fered me to­mor­row I would not ac­cept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been dis­tract­ed by the beau­ti­ful and in­ter­est­ing things about me.

**PALMER, RAY** (1808-1887) Ray Palmer wrote these lyr­ics up­on re­ceiv­ing a vi­sion of Christ short­ly af­ter his grad­u­a­tion from Yale Un­i­ver­si­ty, while work­ing as a tu­tor at a New York school. How­ev­er, he kept them to him­self un­til meet­ing Low­ell Ma­son on a street in Bos­ton, Mas­sac­hu­setts. When Ma­son asked him to write some­thing for a new hymn­al, Palm­er dug out his old notes and pro­duced these lyr­ics, writ­ten two years ear­li­er. Af­ter tak­ing the lyr­ics home and read­ing them, Ma­son com­posed this tune. Sev­er­al days lat­er he saw Palm­er again and said:

You may live ma­ny years and do ma­ny good things, but I think you will be best known to pos­ter­i­ty as the au­thor of *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*.

**NEWTON, JOHN** (1725-1807) Newton’s mo­ther died when he was sev­en years old. At age 11, with but two years school­ing and on­ly a rud­i­men­tary know­ledge of La­tin, he went to sea with his fa­ther. Life at sea was filled with won­der­ful es­capes, viv­id dreams, and a sail­or’s reck­less­ness. He grew into a god­less and aban­doned man. He was once flogged as a de­sert­er from the na­vy, and for 15 months lived, half starved and ill treat­ed, as a slave in Af­ri­ca.

A chance read­ing of Thom­as à Kemp­is sowed the seed of his con­ver­sion. It was ac­cel­er­at­ed by a night spent steer­ing a wa­ter­logged ship in the face of ap­par­ent death. He was then 23 years old. Over the next six years, dur­ing which he com­mand­ed a slave ship, his faith ma­tured. He spent the next nine years most­ly in Li­ver­pool, stu­dy­ing He­brew and Greek and ming­ling with White­field, [Wes­ley](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/w/e/s/wesley_j.htm), and the Non­con­form­ists. He was even­tu­al­ly or­dained, and be­came cur­ate at Ol­ney, Buck­ing­ham­shire, in 1764.

**CLARK, WILLIAM H**. (nineteenth century) – No info online. Blessed Be the Name.

**HUDSON, RALPH E.** (1843-1901) Hudson’s par­ents, Hen­ry and Sar­ah Hud­son, moved to Penn­syl­van­ia when Ralph was a boy. Soon af­ter the out­break of the Amer­i­can ci­vil war, Ralph en­list­ed in the 10th Penn­syl­van­ia Vol­un­teers, and served over three years. Af­ter dis­charge from the ar­my, he be­came a suc­cess­ful mu­sic teach­er. From 1872-4, he was Pro­fes­sor of Vo­cal Mu­sic at Mount Un­ion Coll­ege, and for the next quar­ter cen­tu­ry lived in the Mt. Un­ion-Alliance, Ohio, area. For a while, he was in a real es­tate par­tner­ship with Rev. D. D. Waugh. How­ev­er, he was best known as a hymn writ­er and mu­sic pub­lish­er, and for evan­gel­ism and tem­per­ance work. He was a lay preach­er and mem­ber of the Mt. Un­ion Meth­od­ist Epis­co­pal Church, and was one of the few sup­port­ers of the Sal­va­tion Ar­my when it strug­gled to gain a foot­hold in Al­li­ance in the mid-1880’s.

**PLUMPTRE, EDWARD HAYES** (1821-1891) Plumptre was ed­u­cat­ed at King’s Coll­ege, Lon­don, and Un­i­ver­si­ty Coll­ege, Ox­ford, grad­u­at­ing as a dou­ble first in 1844. He was for some time Fel­low of Brase­nose. On tak­ing Ho­ly Or­ders in 1846, he ra­pid­ly reached a fore­most po­si­tion as the­o­lo­gian and preach­er. His ap­point­ments in­clud­ed as­sist­ant preach­er at Lin­coln’s Inn; se­lect preach­er at Ox­ford; Pro­fess­or of Pas­tor­al The­ol­o­gy at King’s Coll­ege, Ox­ford; Pre­ben­da­ry in St. Paul’s Ca­thed­ral, Lon­don; Pro­fess­or of Ex­e­ge­sis of the New Test­a­ment, King’s Coll­ege, Lon­don; Boyle Lec­tur­er; Grin­field Lec­tur­er on the Sep­tu­a­gint, Ox­ford; and ma­ny others.