

May 3, 2020

Hymns We Love: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Here at First Church we love hymns so much we have not one, but two hymnals in our pews! This gives us the choice of three different tunes to choose from when we sing the majestic hymn, All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name. The lyrics were written in 1780 by Englishman Edward Perronet (1726-1792), the published Christian poet and pastor who worked closely with John and Charles Wesley.

At his death, Perronet is said to have left a large sum of money to his close friend William Shrubsole (1760-1806), who was organist at Spafeld's Chapel, London. Shrubsole composed the tune MILES LANE for All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name in 1779, when he was 19 years old. He later served as Organist of Bangor (Wales) Cathedral, but was dismissed due to his sympathy towards Dissenters and Methodists. The opening phrase of MILES LANE is carved on Shrubsole's tombstone.

Perronet's lyrics were set to the tune CORONATION in America by Yankee carpenter and part time composer Oliver Holden (1765-1844). First published in 1793, CORONATION is the only 18th century American hymn tune still in general use. The little pipe organ on which it was composed is still preserved in the Old State House in Boston.

In the 19th century, Perronet's lyrics were set to music by James Ellor (1819-1899), an English haberdasher and part-time Methodist choirmaster. Like William Shrubsole, Ellor was only 19 years of age when he composed the tune DIADEM in 1838. He later emigrated to America to pursue the hat making trade in New York. I wonder what he thought of Oliver Holden's tune CORONATION, when he first encountered it in American churches?

Now is your opportunity to vote for your favorite tune! Listed below are links to the hymn in all three versions. After you compare them, vote for your favorite by emailing me at seanm@firstchurch.org. We'll schedule the winning hymn version for Sunday, October 22, Christ the King Sunday. Meanwhile, take care, and keep singing!

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name:

MILES LANE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbXmuuugGlk>

CORONATION: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlhJ3GS5GzY>

DIADEM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WVSyGBBf8>

