

## Henry John Gauntlett, 1805-1876.

Born: July 9, 1805, Wellington, Shropshire, England.

Died: February 21, 1876, London, England.

Buried: Kensal Green Cemetery, London, England. Adelaide Anne Procter and William Wallace lie nearby.

Gauntlett was a gifted organist; also in turn, lawyer, organist, author, organ designer, and organ recitalist. His father, Henry Gauntlett, was a curate at Wellington Parish Church, Salop, England, where Henry John was born. In 1814 his father moved to Olney, Buckinghamshire and the younger Gauntlett persuaded his father to appoint him to share the post of organist. Within six months, being taught by his mother, he was proficient enough to take up the post. Later, he took lessons from Wesley. Gauntlett the elder discouraged his son from becoming a professional musician. Henry John became a lawyer and moved to London where he practiced with his brother. In 1827 he took up his first post as organist at St. Olave, Southwark. There he began his campaign to reform organ design, which brought him into conflict with the established organ world. Nevertheless, he persisted to the point where he introduced the Grand Chorus based on continental style organs, extending the pedal compass and patenting electricity to power the instrument. In 1846 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy chose Gauntlett to play the organ part in the first performance of *Elijah* in Birmingham Town Hall. About this time he was granted a Lambeth Doctorate by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley. He was admired by Mendelssohn no less who wrote of him: *His literary attainments, his knowledge of the history of music, his acquaintance with acoustical law, his marvelous memory, his philosophical turn of mind as well as practical experience - these render him one of the most remarkable professors of the age.* He collaborated with William Hill, the organ designer, from the 1830's to 1860. During this period Gauntlett edited *The Musical World* and later provided articles for various publications. A portrait of Gauntlett, circa 1840, hangs in the Royal College of Organists, London, and is reproduced in *The Making of the Victorian Organ* (Thistlewaite: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Gauntlett was a prolific hymn writer, edited various hymn books, and was actively concerned with every major collection of hymns made over the course of about fifty years. He was also much in demand as a performer. Gauntlett has been described as The Father of Church Music for he was the creator of the school of four-part hymn tunes.

In 1872, Gauntlett composed a tune for *O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, by Charles Wesley, but the name of the music has been lost to time.

### Music

Constance	In Viam Rectam	St. Barnabas
Cry of Faith	Newland (Gauntlett)	St. Fulbert (1)
Evermore	Riseholme	St. George (Gauntlett)
Hawkhurst	Sherwood	St. Mark
Houghton	St. Albinus	Triumph
I Love to Hear the Story	St. Alphege	University College

### Irby (1848)

*Once in Royal David's City*; lyrics by Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, 1823-1895.  
In *Hymns for Little Children*, 1848.

### Stuttgart (1825)

Arrangement of music by Christian Friedrich Witt, circa 1660-1716. In *Psalmodia Sacra*, Gotha, 1715.

*God Is Love; His Mercy Brightens*; Words: Sir John Bowring, 1792-1872. (2)

In *Hymns, as a Sequel to the Matins*, 1825.

*O My Soul, Bless God the Father*; lyricist unknown; Paraphrase of Psalm CIII (103). (3)

From the *United Presbyterian Book of Psalms*, 1871.

*Child of Blessing, Child of Promise*; 1981 copyrighted lyrics by Ronald S. Cole-Turner.

In *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 1989, Abingdon Press.

*Earth Has Many a Noble City*; lyricist unknown. In other Presbyterian hymnals.

*God, My King, Thy Might Confessing*; lyricist unknown. In other Presbyterian hymnals.

One of Gauntlett's tunes and one arrangement led to three hymns in *The Methodist Hymnal*, 1932 (1939 Edition), Whitmore & Smith. While still a hymn, *Once in Royal David's City* was intended as a Christmas Carol and the tune, *Irby* joyously supports the lyrics in a celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

1) Alternate music for *My God, I Love Thee*. Words: Author unknown (O Deus, ego amo te). Translation from Latin to English: Rev. Edward Caswall (1814-1878), *Lyra Catholica*, 1849. *The Methodist Hymnal*, 1932 (1939 Edition), Whitmore & Smith used the tune, *Molleson*; 1935 music by Douglas Fletcher (b. 1884).

(2) and (3): Part of *The Methodist Hymnal*, 1932 (1939 Edition), Whitmore & Smith.