

## Episode 6

### History of Hymns

#### LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

NARRATOR:

The views and opinions expressed here are those of the guests and are not the official position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Lex de Azevedo's London Philharmonic Orchestra recordings have [BEGIN MUSIC] this version of "Lux Benigna," or "Lead, Kindly Light," which will underscore the beginning of our story of the hymn.

John Henry Newman was born in London, England, the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1801. At the age of 7, Newman was sent to a private school. Newman was diligent and obedient, but also shy and aloof. He took no part in school games. He took great delight in reading the Bible and also the novels of Walter Scott, which were then in course of publication.

At the age of 15, during his last year at school, he was converted—an incident of which he wrote in his *Apologia* that it was "more certain than that I have hands or feet."

Apart from his academic studies, in which he excelled, he acted in Latin plays, played the violin, won prizes for speeches and edited periodicals, for which he also wrote articles.

His happy childhood came to an abrupt end in March 1816 when the financial collapse after the Napoleonic Wars forced his father's bank to close.

While his father tried unsuccessfully to manage a brewery at Alton, Hampshire, Newton stayed on at school through the summer holidays because of the family crisis.

Alone at school and shocked by the family disaster, he fell ill in August.

Later, he came to see it as one of the great three providential illnesses of his life, for it was in the autumn of 1816 that he underwent a religious conversion under the influence of one of the schoolmasters, Reverend Walter Mayers, who had himself shortly before been converted to a Calvinistic form of evangelicalism.

Newman had a conventional upbringing in an ordinary Church of England home where the emphasis was on the Bible, rather than dogmas and sacraments, and where any sort of evangelical enthusiasm would have been frowned upon.

He went into residence at Trinity College, Oxford in June 1817, and in 1818 he gained a scholarship of 60 pounds, renewable for nine years.

If not for this scholarship, he would have been unable to remain at the university, as in 1819, his father's bank suspended payment.

Michael Dowdle's "Fifty Favorite Hymns" recordings include this arrangement of 'Lead, Kindly Light,' which will underscore our continued story.

Anxiety to do well in the school's finals produced the opposite result. He broke down in the examination and so graduated with third-class honors in 1821.

On Trinity Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1824, Newman was ordained an Anglican minister, and ten days later, he preached his first sermon at Overwharton Church in Oxfordshire.

The ensuing years were punctuated by an 1827 nervous collapse brought on by overwork and family financial troubles and then, at the beginning of 1828, the sudden death of his beloved youngest sister Mary.

Newman became increasingly uncomfortable in his various church and academic positions and so, in December 1832, he went with a colleague on account of the latter's health for a tour in south Europe.

It was during the course of this tour that he wrote most of the short poems, which a year later were printed in the "Lyra Apostolica," a collection of religious poems by six authors.

From Rome, instead of accompanying his colleague home in April 1833, Newman returned to Sicily alone and fell dangerously ill with gastric or typhoid fever, of which many were dying at Leonforte. He recovered from it with the conviction that God still had work for him to do in England. He saw this as his third providential illness.

Kurt Bestor performs his version of "Lead, Kindly Light" from the compilation album "Music for a Sunday Afternoon."

In June 1833, he left Palermo for Marseille in an orange boat, which was becalmed in the Strait of Bonifacio, and there he wrote the verses "Lead, Kindly Light," which later became popular as a hymn.

John Bacchus Dykes was born March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1823 at Kingston upon Hull in England.

At age 12, Dykes became assistant organist at St. John's Church in Hull, England, where his grandfather was vicar. He studied at Wakefield and St. Catherine's Hall in Cambridge where he was a distinguished student and cofounder of the Cambridge University Musical Society.

In 1862, he became vicar of St. Oswald's in Durham.

John B. Dykes published sermons and articles on religion but is best known as composer of over 300 hymn tunes.

He was less dogmatic than many of his contemporaries and often fulfilled requests for tunes for non-Anglican hymns.

He played organ, piano, violin and horn.

John Dykes wrote the tune to which we sing “Lead, Kindly Light” specifically for John Henry Newman’s words. The tune name, LUX BENIGNA, is Latin for “kindly light.”

Dykes stated that the tune came into his head one day in August 1865 as he was walking in the Strand, one of London’s busiest thoroughfares.

The Brigham Young University Young Ambassadors feature this unique version of “Lead, Kindly Light” on their album “The Lord Is My Light.”

(Music: Brigham Young University Ambassadors, “Lead, Kindly Light”)

Reid Nibley’s “Twelve Hymn Preludes” includes this arrangement of “Lead, Kindly Light.”

(Music: Reid Nibley, “Lead, Kindly Light” [instrumental])

From “Variations on a Sacred Theme Volume 1,” we hear Lex de Azevedo’s arrangement of “Lead, Kindly Light.”

(Music: Lex De Azevedo; “Lead, Kindly Light”)

We listen now as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square perform “Lead, Kindly Light” from their album “Then Sings My Soul.”

(Music: Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square, “Lead, Kindly Light”)

[END MUSIC]