

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

~Other Speakers G-L: Hymn Stories:

Author --Adelaide A. Pollard, 1862-1934

Composer --George C. Stebbins, 1846-1945

Tune Name --"Adelaide"

Scripture Reference - Jeremiah 18:3,4

"But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand." Isaiah 64:8

It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord-just have your way with our lives ...

This simple expression, prayed by an elderly woman at a prayer meeting one night, was the source of inspiration that prompted the writing of this popular consecration hymn, in 1902. From that time to the present, it has been an influential hymn in aiding individuals to examine and submit their lives to the Lordship of Christ.

The author of this hymn text, Adelaide A. Pollard, was herself experiencing a "distress of soul" during this time. It appears that it was a period in her life when she had been unsuccessful in raising funds to make a desired trip to Africa for missionary service. In this state of discouragement, she attended a little prayer meeting one night and was greatly impressed with the prayer of an elderly woman, who omitted the usual requests for blessings and things, and simply petitioned God for an understanding of His will in life. Upon returning home that evening, Miss Pollard meditated further on the story of the potter, found in Jeremiah 18:3, 4:

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

Before retiring that evening, Adelaide Pollard completed the writing of all four stanzas of this hymn as it is sung today.

Adelaide Addison Pollard was known as a remarkable, saintly woman but one who lived the life of a mystic. She was born on November 27, 1862, at Bloomfield, Iowa. She was named, Sarah, by her parents, but because of her later dislike for this name, she adopted the name, Adelaide. After an early training in elocution and physical culture, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, during the 1880's and taught in several girls' schools. During this time, she became rather well-known as an itinerant Bible teacher. Later, she became involved in the evangelistic ministry of Alexander Dowie, assisting him in his healing services. She, herself, claimed to have been healed of diabetes in this manner. Still later, she became involved in the ministry of another evangelist named Sanford, who was emphasizing the imminent return of Christ. Miss Pollard desired to travel and minister in Africa, but when these plans failed to materialize, she spent several years teaching at the Missionary Training School at Nyack-on-the-Hudson. She finally got to Africa for a short time, just prior to World War I and then spent most of the war years in Scotland. Following the war, she returned to America and continued to minister throughout New England, even though by now she was very frail and in poor health.

Miss Pollard wrote a number of other hymn texts throughout her life, although no one knows exactly how many, since she never wanted any recognition for her accomplishments. Most of her writings were signed simply AAP. "Have Thine Own Way, Lord!" is her only hymn still in use today.

The music for this text was supplied by George Coles Stebbins, one of the leading gospel musicians of this century. The hymn first appeared in 1907 in Stebbins' collection, Northfield Hymnal with Alexander's Supplement. That same year, it also appeared in two other popular hymnals, Ira Sankey's Hallowed Hymns New and Old and Sankey and Clement's Best Endeavor Hymns.

In 1876, George Stebbins was invited by D. L. Moody to join him in his evangelistic endeavors. For the next twenty-five years, Stebbins was associated with Moody and Sankey and such other leading evangelists as George F. Pentecost and Major D. W. Whittle as a noted song leader, choir director, composer, and compiler of many gospel song collections. He has supplied the music for such popular gospel hymns as: "Saved by Grace" (No. 76), "Ye Must Be Born Again" (No. 101), "There Is a Green Hill Far Away" (101 Hymn Stories, No. 96), "Jesus, I Come," "Take Time to be Holy," "Savior, Breathe an Evening Blessing," and many others. He has left an interesting autobiography of his life and times entitled *Memoirs and Reminiscences*, published in 1924. George C. Stebbins lived a fruitful life for God to the age of ninety-one, passing away on October 6, 1945, at

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

Catskill, New York.

"I AM WILLING--

**To receive what Thou givest,
To lack what Thou withholdest,
To relinquish what Thou takest,
To surrender what Thou claimest,
To suffer what Thou ordainest,
To do what Thou commandest,
To wait until Thou sayest 'Go.'
--Unknown**