

# Albert Midlane 1825 - 1909

[Return to content](#)

Born in Carisbrooke on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1825 Albert Mildane was the son of a tinsmith and ironmonger. Apprenticed first to a local Newport printer he later helped his father in the shop. Soon Albert was writing hymns for children the most famous of which is *'There's a Friend for little children, above the bright blue sky.'* The hymn soon achieved great popularity, and is constantly being sung by the Sunday-school children not only of the English-speaking races, but also of many others, including the Japanese and Chinese, for it has been translated into many tongues. It is in common use among all denominations. It was first taken into the "Hymns Ancient and Modern" when the supplement of 1868 was published, Sir John Stainer having written the tune *'In Memoriam'* for it, his own son having died just a few weeks earlier. In the opinion of some judges, say the Times, his hymn "A Lamb went straying" deserves at least an equally high place.



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1. There's a Friend for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
Friend Who never change,  
Whose love will never die;  
Our earthly Friends may fail us,  
And change with changing years,  
This Friend is always worthy  
Of that dear name he bears.
  2. There's a rest for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
Who love the blessed Saviour.  
And to the Father cry;  
A rest from every trouble,  
From sin and danger free  
Where every little pilgrim  
Shall rest eternally.
  3. There's a home for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
Where Jesus reigns in glory,  
A home of peace and joy;  
No home on earth is like it,  
Nor can with it compare;  
And every one is happy,  
Nor could be happier there.
  4. There's a crown for little children  
Above the bright blue sky  
And all who look at Jesus  
Shall wear it by and by;  
A crown of brightest glory  
Which he will then bestow  
On those who found his favour  
And loved his name below.
  5. There's a song for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,
  6. There's a robe for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,

A song that will not weary,  
Though sung continually;  
A song which even angels  
Can never, never sing;  
They know not Christ and Saviour,  
But worship him as King.

And a harp of sweetest music,  
And palms of victory,  
All, all above is treasured  
And found in Christ alone;  
O come, dear little children,  
That all may be your own.

Three thousand children sang his best-known hymn on its jubilee at St Paul's Cathedral in its author's presence. It was sung also in Churches and Sunday-Schools throughout the British Isles, and in many other countries, with a special celebration at Newport, Isle of Wight. Children from all the Sunday Schools in the district gathered in St James' Square and sang the hymn while the aged composer stood on the steps of the Queen Victoria memorial. Is there any other English hymn which has been accorded the distinction of a jubilee celebration with its writer present? On 17<sup>th</sup> February 1909, Albert Midlane was 'with Christ', the Friend alike of little children and aged pilgrims.

[Return to contents](#)

But Midlane did not write just a single well know hymn, but hundreds!

### Receive thy work, O Lord

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|---|--|
| 1. Revive thy work, O Lord,<br>Thy mighty arm make bare;<br>Speak with the voice that wakes the dead,<br>of Life, And make Thy people hear. | 2. Revive Thy work, O Lord<br>Create soul-thirst for Thee;<br>And hungering for the Bread<br>O may our spirits be. |
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*Revive Thy work, O Lord,  
While here to Thee we bow;  
Descend, O gracious Lord descend!  
O come and bless us now.*

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| 3. Revive Thy work , O Lord<br>Exalt Thy precious name;<br>And, by the Holy Ghost, our Love<br>For Thee and Thine inflame. | 4. Revive Thy work, O Lord:<br>Give power unto Thy word;<br>Grant that Thy blessed Gospel may<br>In living faith be heard. |
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5. Revive Thy work, O Lord,  
And give refreshing showers;  
The glory shall be all Thine own,  
The blessing, Lord, be ours.

Albert Midlane's ability to weave a hymn around a single phrase is well illustrated by the following:

### A little Maid

"A little maid", 'tis all that's said  
About a captive girl:

To Israel's King he goes, but, no !  
He knew not of that power

Of no account in man's esteem;  
But God's resplendent pearl;  
Away from home, but not from God,  
She thought upon Him there,  
And of His love and mighty power  
Was able to declare

A! maid more wise than Israel's King  
Dark was indeed the hour !  
But God was there; the healing came,  
To Jordan's bank he stole,  
And, dipping the appointed times -  
Obedient, - was made whole.

Her master leperous; well she knew  
No Syrian cures availed;  
But in Samaria's land was power  
That never, never failed,  
She knew - nor knew the fact alone  
She loved it to declare;  
And lo, her master seeks the land,  
To find his healing there.

And now he owns the One supreme  
He never knew before;  
Not Rimmon now, but Israel's God,  
He hence forth will adore;  
He hence forth will adore;  
The mighty change in body, soul,  
So fully here portrayed  
Was through the simple loving words  
Of but "a little maid" !

[Return to contents](#)

## Isle of Wight County Press Articles

Perhaps the best local summary of Albert Midlane, his life and work and the election in which he was held is given by the IW County Press near and at the time of his death and for some years after, reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor for which thanks are extended.

### Rejoicing with the Children's Poet

CP 1901 Nov 09 p5 c4

Thursday evening, 7 November 1901, Mr and Mrs Albert Midlane and friends assembled to join in "Rejoicing of the Children's Poet" as a special appeal for assistance for a venerable and honoured fellow townsmen and popular hymn-writer who, owing to falling trade and other misfortune, found himself in his declining days in pecuniary difficulties. Amongst those present were the superintendents and representatives of Sunday Schools. The company first partook of tea, and a meeting of thanksgiving and devotional character followed, brief congratulatory addresses from friends being interspersed with the singing of hymns. Mrs W.H. Upson ably presiding at the piano.

Mr Midlane opened the proceedings with a touching address, in the course of which he very gratefully acknowledged the wonderful sympathy which in so very practical a form had been manifested towards him by friend both far and near.

Mr Fred Morgan, as honorary secretary of the Isle of Wight Sunday School Union, said the members of that Union most heartily joined in the rejoicing at the welcome result of the appeal made on behalf of their good friends Mr and Mrs Albert Midlane to the Sunday School children, not only of our own land, but of the whole world. At the recent half yearly meeting of the Union at Brading, they heard with great gratification the welcome news that they had subscribed about £1200 for the assistance of Mr Midlane in his difficulties in which he had found himself through no

fault of his own. He was sure it must be a great gratification to Mr and Mrs Midlane that the whole Sunday School World was so in sympathy with them and they were proud to have in their midst one so worthy of the honour ascribed to him (applause).

Mr Midlane feelingly acknowledged the assurance of sympathy and rejoicing of the Sunday Schools Union, expressing his deep appreciation not only for the pecuniary help, but also for the wonderful sympathy which had been aroused with him in his difficulties which unfortunately came upon him. He could only attribute it to Divine goodness. If he has been enabled to write anything which has been helpful or useful, he was only thankful to Him, it was His doing. The workhouse might have been before them, but the Lord came in a wonderful way in the midst of the darkness and all was bright. God took care of his own and did not suffer his name to be dishonoured. He could not say how thankful he was for the great sympathy and generous pecuniary help afforded so that all claims could be met and the name of the Lord would not be dishonoured.

Mr W.H. Upton varied the proceedings with solo singing and also joined in the congratulations to Mr and Mrs Midlane. As the prime mover of the local effort which resulted in the "golden wedding" presentation to Mr and Mrs Midlane earlier in the year, Mr Upton gave some touching instances of the sympathy of supporters of the movement, and warmly thanked Mr and Mrs Midlane for giving those present the opportunity of participating in what might be regarded as an almost historic gathering.

Other speakers added their testimonies and congratulations before the close of the interesting proceedings.

[Return to contents](#)

## Death of Mr Albert Midlane

CP May 06 1909 p5 c6

We record with deep regret the death, which occurred just before midnight on Saturday, at his residence Forest Villa, Newport, of Mr Albert Midlane, the author of the famous hymn "There's a Friend for little children" As we reported last Saturday, Mr Midlane, who was in his 85th year, was stricken with an apoplectic seizure early on the previous Thursday morning, and became unconscious next day. In spite of all the medical skill and tender nursing could do, the venerable hymn writer never rallied again, but passed peacefully to his long rest during sleep in the presence of the devoted partner of his life, Mrs Midlane, and his daughter and sons, with whom widespread and very deep sympathy is felt in their heavy bereavement.

The late Mr Midlane, who prided himself of being a native and life-long resident of Newport, and of the fact that he has always lived in the historic parish of Carisbrooke, was born in Newport on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1825, three months after the death of his father, being one of a large family. His mother was a member of Newport Congregational Church of.. Thomas Binney, author of the hymn "Eternal Light! Eternal Light" was written at Newport - was minister and it was in that church that Mr Midlane received his early training. Mr Midlane started his life's work in a local printing office under Mr Kingswell, but after about three years he became an

ironmonger's assistant and ultimately worked in the business of tinsmith and ironmonger on his own account. Mr Midlane was one of the most prolific hymn-writers of our time, his literary work being marked by intense religious fervour and a passionate love for children. But hymn-writing by no means exhausted his literary efforts, as the columns of the County Press and other journals and periodicals, in which have appeared innumerable poems on national and local events and other subjects, have borne eloquent testimony. As an enthusiast in the study of the annals of his much loved Island home, he wrote a history of Carisbrooke Castle entitled "A Catalogue and Textbook of Carisbrooke Castle," and "The Story of Princess Elizabeth". Versification, however, was his principal delight, and his first poetical attempts date from the time when he was a small boy. His first published hymn was written at Carisbrooke in 1842, and since then he has written and published hymns by the hundred. His first attempts at hymn writing were included in "A Collection of Hymns for the use of the Young Men's Union Improvement Society, Newport, I.W.," and the first hymn in this book with his signature began:

God is our witness that we are  
In mutual love combined  
We love as brethren in the Lord  
As His Word has enjoined.

He often told how as a child at the Sunday services, instead of listening to the sermons, he used to search through the hymn-book for the names of the authors of the hymns, and in his young days he contributed poems and hymns to various magazines under the non-de-plume of "Little Albert". Mr Midlane's first used hymn was written in 1844, when he was 19 years of age. It was the well known hymn "God Bless our Sunday School" sung to the tune of the National Anthem. Mr Midlane was also the author of the familiar hymn "Revive Thy work, O Lord" which is used at revival services of all denominations; but, of course, "There's a Friend for little Children" is the hymn by which the late Mr Midlane will be principally remembered through the coming ages. It was on 7 February 1859 that this famous hymn was penned. Stimulated by a passionate desire to write a special message for the little ones, Mr Midlane, after a busy day, settled down in the quiet of the evening to what proved the great task of his life, and by 2 o'clock in the morning his supreme effort in hymnology was completed. But it was achieved at the expense of great physical fatigue which was most marked after a hard day's work in his business, and he recently told the writer of this notice that he was found in a state of collapse and had to be medically attended. "But the hymn was completed," added Mr Midlane with a radiant smile. That Mr Midlane was a calumnious versifier is attested by the fact that in one recent year he wrote about 400 hymns, largely for publication in America. Over 300 of his hymns were collected to form his "Bright Blue Sky Hymn Book" of which a jubilee edition was lately published. The title of the book is Taken from the celebrated hymn, the opening lines of which are: -

*There's a Friend for little children,  
Above the bright blue sky.*

On 20 March 1901, the late Mr Midlane and his wife celebrated their golden wedding, and then as on many occasions since, notably on the commemoration of

the jubilee of the writing of his most celebrated hymn just three weeks before his death, Mr Midlane received numerous affectionate messages of congratulation and good wishes from admirers in all parts of the land, including many little children, whose touching epistles specially rejoiced the heart of the veteran hymn-writer. He was particularly grateful for the full acknowledgement of the catholicity of his celebrated hymn, which he delighted to think was sung in all places of worship, from the stately cathedral to the humble meeting-place. In his closing days this knowledge of the widespread influence for good of his hymn was a constant joy to him and his partner in life. It will be remembered that the jubilee commemoration of the hymn was specially marked in Newport by the Sunday-school children of all denominations assembling in the Market place and singing the hymn, which has made its author famous. This occasion was made especially memorable by the presence of Mr Midlane, who leaning on the arm of a close friend, walked from his home to the Market place, and from the steps of the Victoria Monument delivered a touching address, in which he said he stood before them, not only as the writer of the children's hymn, but as an old Sunday-school teacher and lover of little children. He added that he was deeply thankful that the little hymn had become so popular and had been blessed to so many little children as well as children of a larger growth. He paid generous tribute to the memory and influence for good of the writers of other celebrated hymns who had lived in Newport, and concluded by expressing the hope that he would have the joy of meeting them all in that "Home above the bright blue sky"

Mr Midlane was one of many who have done great things without reward. Though the author of numberless hymns, he has received no monetary profit from his work, and after over half a century's toil in his ironmongery business he found himself a bankrupt for £500 through having become guarantor for a friend. His misfortune was made known to the public, and Sunday-school friends throughout the country subscribed generously with the result that Mr Midlane was able to pay all his creditors and get his bankruptcy annulled, and an annuity was secured which relieved the veteran hymn-writer and his wife of further anxiety in this connection.

For the greater part of his life Mr Midlane has been connected with the Brethren who now worship in the Gospel-hall in Union-street, Newport, and here, at Sunday evening's service, touching allusion was made by Brethren to the deceased's life and work. To-morrow (Sunday) evening a special memorial service will be held at the Gospel-hall, Union-street.

A pathetic interest attaches to several of the latest hymns written by the late Mr Midlane. One of these, entitled "The Bridge of Time" was written in his 84th year whilst standing upon the rustic bridge at Shanklin Chine, and the composition must rank amongst his best and most touching hymns. In it occurs the following verse, which has now a pathetic significance: -

*Upon the Bridge of Time all stand  
And moments roll before;  
The place which knows us now will soon  
Be knowing us no more.*

Strangely prophetic was the poem which the late Mr Midlane contributed to the 'County Press' of 23 January last, entitled "On my 84th Birthday" two verses of which were as follow: -

What is the world to one whose hopes  
Are fixed beyond the skies ?  
What can impede the charioteer  
Just near to grasp the prize ?

Enough! One's cup is brimming full,  
All earthly struggles o'er;  
Beneath the shadow of His wings,  
In bliss for evermore.

In a poetic tribute in the 'Westminster Gazette' G.H.R.D. speaking with the knowledge of close association as a former resident of Newport, writes:

What time the Winter stay'd the Spring  
And all the hills were tipp'd with snow,  
A tender spirit lifted wing  
And soared to where our children go;  
O children! he was good and true  
And showed your Heavenly Friend to you!

His simple saintly life he poured  
As Love's libation on your lot,  
The servant of a tender Lord,  
He would not see one child forgot,  
For, children! well your true friend knew  
The Friend of Friends who waits for you!

In churches, chapels, and Sunday-school in the Island, as well as in other parts of the country, reference was made to the loss of Mr Midlane and a tribute was paid to his work and worth. In some Sunday-schools "There's a Friend for little children" was sung.

At the Congregational Church, Newport, on Sunday morning, the Pastor (the Rev. Arthur Jones) prefaced his sermon by a touching reference to Mr Midlane. He said most of them were aware that Mr Midlane had passed away during the night, and he felt sure it would be their desire that he should make a reference to that event. Most of them knew that the late Mr Albert Midlane was a scholar in their Sunday school, and that he was trained in that church. Only recently, when a letter of congratulation was sent from the teachers of the Sunday-school to Mr Midland on the occasion of the celebration of the jubilee of him writing his famous hymn, the veteran and esteemed hymn-writer, in his reply, referred in very affectionate terms to his connection with their Church and Sunday-school, and confessed that the knowledge he had of that Friend of whom he sang in his hymn first came to him



through the instrumentality of teachers in their Sunday-school. One who has come so prominently before the public, not only in that town, but also throughout the land - thanks the inspired words of that beautiful hymn, which has been translated into many languages - should now pass from their midst without some special reference there, and without their rendering in their prayers thanks to God for the life of him who had now been taken from them, and for the inspiring words which he had left them and which they trusted would continue to be a blessing to many who heard or sang them. The rev gentleman then offered a special prayer of thanksgiving for the life of him who had given them a hymn which had been a source of blessing and help for so many.

The letter from Mr Midlane referred to by the Rev. Gentleman read as follows: -

*My Dear Mr Stokes,  
Please thank the dear teachers of your Sunday-school for their kind remembrance of the occasion of the jubilee of the little hymn. As a scholar of your school from infancy, until I was a teacher, this remembrance of me is especially joyous. I can only thank God for the spiritual and the lasting benefits received from the St James's Sunday-school. Its very walls are still dear to me in reviving the sweet and - I may say - holy hours spent within them. Their associations of lessons, teachers, and instruction still haunt me when I pass them and call for an uplifted note of praise. May many a dear one be blessed, as I was, amongst you. IT was a fit preparation for labouring in the Lord's wide, extended harvest, and a prelude to the hymn now so loved. The Lord bless you with many a star for the Saviour's crown and many a lamb for the Saviour's flock!*

*-In him, most truly, Albert Midlane.*

Mr C.F. Spooner, an intimate friend of Mr Midlane, who took a leading part in arranging the recent jubilee commemoration at Newport, writing from London, says: It seems scarcely possible that only three weeks ago we stood together on the Victoria Monument, before that large assembly of children and friends of his native town, to join in celebrating the jubilee of his beautiful hymn. All of us must be glad now that we did so; to him, I know it was a great joy to think that his own people had shown him this token of their affection, but his greatest joy, he told me, was to know that the Lord had so used him as the means by which so many thousands of little children in every land had learnt to sing with gladness "There's a Friend for little children" When going home from the celebration a lady stopped us and asked him to let her little boy shake his hand. "He wants to thank you for The Friend for little children" she added.

The Rev. Harry Abraham, a native of Newport, in an interesting appreciation of the late Mr Midlane, published in the South Wales Argus of Tuesday, says: "I first saw Albert Midlane in my toddling days and looked into his kindly face with the interest awakened by the fact that he was the writer of the hymn which I had learned to sing in childish treble and which had taken a strong hold of my dawning imagination when it was introduced to the Sunday-school in which I was a scholar. Since that far-off time the same hymn has been heard wherever the English language is spoken,



and has been translated into the speech of many peoples, with the result that a crowd which no one can number heard with a chastened and quiet interest that the author of "There's a Friend for little children" had finished his long life of four score years and four spent in the little capital town of Newport, Isle of Wight, and passed to join the "choir invisible" .. For many years there was a competition with the children making strong claims upon his muse and his affection. Carisbrooke Castle was his other love. He became the Laureate of the beautiful and historic pile; he haunted the slopes, the trenches, the walls, and the Keep. He sang of all the seasons, of all the events, and of all the persons associated with the picturesque ruin; of the fair Princess Elizabeth who died within its walls; of Charles I, who was imprisoned there and who tried in vain to escape; of the knights, ladies and governors, who knew its sunny slopes and bosky bowers. I remember well the little stitched books, with blue paper covers and gilt lettering on the title pages, in the preparation of which I had some small part, filled with the overflowing of the tinsmith poet's sentimental, fancy, and devotion. It was a disappointment to himself and to his friends when he failed to secure the nomination as Custodian of the Castle ... But it will ever be his chief distinction - one for which many a man would gladly exchange fabulous wealth and glittering honours - that he gave the little people of the world one of their sweetest hymns, "There's a Friend for little children" and thus proved that he also was the Children's Friend.

[Return to contents](#)

## The Funeral

-took place on Thursday, the ceremony being, as the late Mr Midlane would have wished, touching in its simplicity, and the interment was at Carisbrooke Cemetery, in full view of the Castle, which he loved so well. There were many signs of mourning in the town and the flag over the Guildhall was at half-mast as a tribute to the memory of one of the most estimable and widely known of Newport's citizens. The coffin of polished elm, bore the inscription:



Albert Midlane fell asleep in Jesus  
February 27<sup>th</sup> 1909 aged 84

By special request there were no floral tributes, although many would have been sent had it not been made generally known that the late Mr Midlane, who loved to see flowers in their natural state, did not wish them to be used in this connection.

The coffin was conveyed from the residence to the Cemetery in a hearse, and the principal mourners included Messers A.G. and W.H. Midlane (sons), Mr Douglas A.G.Mill (grandson) of Jersey, Mr G.H. Toomer, Miss May Dudley, and Mr William Smith (for 50 years in deceased's employ). Amongst others were Mr and Mrs Vine

(Portsmouth) representing the Rev Carey Bonner and the Sunday-school Union, Councillor Dye (president of the Portsmouth Sunday-School Union) representative of the Brethren from Newport and other parts of the Island, as well as from the mainland, and superintendents and other officials of Sunday-schools in the district, school children and others. The Mayor of Newport (Mr A.Gill-Martin) wrote regretting inability to attend in consequence of being confined to the house with a cold, and others holding official positions were also unavoidably absent, including Mr Robey, F. Eldridge, J.D. and Mr James Eldridge. A letter was received from Sir John Kirk of the Ragged School Union, regretting that he could not be present and stating that thousands of little children sent their sympathy, as he did himself, in touching terms. The first part of the service was conducted at the Cemetery Chapel by Mr J.R. Holman (Bembridge) assisted by one of the Brethren from the Gospel-hall at Newport. Among others present were the Revd A.Johnson (Wesleyan) W.Bridge (Primitive Methodist), P. Cudmore and J.Rawling (United Methodist), Major Windham (Bembridge), Messrs R.Bullen JP, J.Thomas JP, (Superintendent of the Newport Congregational Sunday-school), H.W.Morey, A.G. Harrison (Newport Congregational Church), A.W.Abraham (Superintendent Baptist Sunday-school), W.Smith (secretary Newport Primitive Methodist Sunday-school), Arthur Kemp (secretary IW Sunday-school Union), Fred Morgan TC, Ald G.D.Rich, Messers C.Salter JP and F.Cooper (Hand-in-Hand Society, of which deceased had been a member from his young manhood), D.F.Ritchie (churchwarden of the Parish-church), Dr M.Kay, Messers G.Baker, J.B.Garlick (Totland), W.Wells, E.W.Talyor, C.Turner Clark (representing Mr Godfrey Baring MP, T.Lee, J.W.Marshall, H.W. Adams, W.Couldrey, A.Cooke, W.Colenuitt, G.Brooke, G.F.Quinton, G.H.Dunford, Case, Roy, Moorman, Priestley, Griffiths, Morley, Cooper and S.W.P.Whitcombe, Mrs and Miss Farquhar, Miss Dibbens, and many others, including school girls from the National and Nodehill Council-schools, under Mrs Westmore.

After an opening prayer by one of the Brethren of Newport, one of the deceased's hymn—"Star of the morning, rise, Disperse these shades of night"- was sung, and Mr Holman then read the 23rd Psalm and another portion of Scripture and gave a touching address, in the course of which he said their beloved brother could say in the language of the Psalmist "The Lord is my Shepherd" Absent from the body, present with the Lord - and the Apostle Paul spoke of that state as being far better. They knew that the deceased was one who through a long life proved the goodness and faithfulness of God, not only to save, but also to keep. He trusted not to his own righteousness or goodness, but he stood on the solid Rock Christ Jesus and His righteousness. They knew he was blessed with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sin and that he was indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and that was the secret of his happy and useful long life of service. And now he rested and now he saw the King in His glory. Then followed a prayer by Mr Holman, who besought comfort for the bereaved ones.

At the graveside the hymn "Amen - one lasting long amen" was sung, and the service was concluded by Mr Holman. It had been arranged during the week that a number of children from each school in the town should sing Mr Midlane's celebrated hymn at the grave, but owing to the fall of snow during Wednesday night it was deemed inadvisable to carry out this arrangement. However, a number of children were at the grave, and they sang the well-known hymn. And so the last sounds heard at the open

grave of the children's poet were children's voices sweetly singing the last verse of the children's hymn<sup>o</sup>-

There's a robe for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
And a harp of sweetest music,  
And a palm of victory.  
All, all, above is treasured,  
And found in Christ alone;  
Oh come, dear little children,  
That all may be your own.

As the singing ended one of "the little children" was being laid to rest in another part of the Cemetery.

Mrs Albert Midlane and the family wish to return their heartfelt thanks to the numerous friends of the late Mr Albert Midlane for their kind enquiries and letters of sympathy, the latter being so great in number that it is quite impossible to acknowledge them individually.

Mr Francis White, of Cowes writes suggesting that it would be fitting that a children's memorial should be erected to Mr Albert Midlane and the late Mrs Luke, the later the writer of the hymn "I think when I read that sweet story of old."

[Return to contents](#)

## Quoted from "Musical Times" in the IW County Press

Countless hymns have been written for the use of children. In many instances the poetry is as poor as the sentiment is silly. It is not an easy thing to write a children's hymn that will express great thoughts in simple language. That it can be done the lyrics of Mrs Alexander and others bear testimony. One golden example is the hymn "There's a Friend for little children" which has just obtained its jubilee. No hymnal, whatever its denomination, would be considered complete without this hymn. In its original form it is headed "Above the bright blue sky" together with verses 9 and 10 from I Corinthians ii - "Eye hath not seen" & The verses of the hymn then differed from the order in which we now know them. The initial lines were (1) There's a rest, (2) home, (3) Friend, (4) crown, (5) song, and (6) robe, these words being emphasised by the use of italics. Most people will be in accord with the Rev Dr Julian, editor of the Dictionary of Hymnology, in his opinion the "The rearrangement produces a better sequence in the order of the stanzas, and gives greater unity to the hymn" The tune 'Memoriam' by Sir John Stainer, to which Mr Midlane's hymn is so often sung, has an interesting history. The story evidently derived from first-hand information, is that told in "The music of Church Hymnary" by Messrs William Cowan and James Love: "The committee engaged on the music of hymns 'Ancient and Modern' (enlarged edition 1875) were meeting at the Langhan Hotel, London, and when the hymn came up for consideration it was found that though they had several tunes before them, none were considered satisfactory. It was

Suggested that a new tune might be written by one of the committee, and the Rev Sir Henry Baker (the chairman) proposed that Sir John Stainer should retire to his (Sir Henry's) bedroom. and try what he could do. Sir John complied with the suggestion, and in a very short time returned with the present tune, which was at once adopted." The tune which first appeared in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' (1875) was named 'In Memoriam' in connection with the death of Sir John's little son, Frederick Henry Stainer, who died on 30 December 1874. The composer was wise in writing his melodious and to him, pathetic strain as a unison tune and within the compass of an octave, with A flat as the highest note. The tune should not be sung too quickly, or both music and words will be spoilt, and the concluding two lines of the last verse Naturally suggest a much slower speed in order to give full significance to the prayer, which forms the peroration of this supremely beautiful hymn. The tune is an ideal one for children, and the singing of it has given untold joy to numerous boys and girls in church and home - Musical Times.

[Return to contents](#)

[Biography and Further Information](#)