**The Spirit & The Understanding, Part 32**

**Reading – 1 Corinthians 14:1-15**

***[Colossians 3:16-17]*** ***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*** ***And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

**America The Beautiful # 1007**

Katherine Lee bates was teaching at a new summer school in Colorado Springs with several other professors from Eastern colleges.

The group planned to climb Pike’s Peak.

Since this was 1893, without the roads and trails we have today, tht was quite a climb.

When Bates got to the top, she recalled, “I gazed in wordless rapture over the far expanse of mountain ranges and sed-like sweep of plains.” She was in awe.

That evening in Colorado Springs, she wrote this hymn.

One her way to Colorado, Bates and the others had stopped to see the Chicago World’s Fair. Later she said, “Chicago was in no small degree responsible for at least the last stanza.”

Later she wrote, “If only we could couple the daring of the Pilgrims with the moral teachings of Moses, we would have something in this country that no one could ever take from us.”

 **My Country ‘Tis Of Thee # 1024**

Samuel Smither was 24 years old when he graduated from Harvard.

By then he had a reputation for being able to speak fifteen languages.

That’s why composer Lowell Mason handed him a collection of some German songs for children.

Mason did not know German and he didn’t know if any of the songs would be worth translating.

He wanted Smith to check them out for him.

Here is the way Smith tells it: “One dismal day in February 1832, about half an hour before sunset, I was turning over the leaves of one of the music books, when my eye rested on the tune which is now known as ‘America’.

I liked the spirited movement of it…I glanced at the German words and saw that they were patriotic and instantly felt the impulse to write a patriotic hymn of my own, adapted to that tune.

Picking up a scrap of waste paper which lay near me, I wrote at once, probably within half an hour, the hymn ‘America.’”

The following Fourth of July it was sung publicly for the first time.

What Smith did not realize was that the British had been using the same tune for a hundred years to sing “God save the King.”

**God Of Our Fathers # 1025**

Six years before his death in 1907, Daniel Roberts wrote, “I remain a country parson, known only within my own small world.”

This hymn was penned while he preached at a rural church in Brandon, Vermont.

He wrote ii in 1876 to commemorate the one-hundredth birthday of the Declaration of Independence.

It was sung for the first time at Brandon’s Fourth of July celebration.

Because the people of Brandon enjoyed the hymn, Roberts submitted it to the committee planning the centennial celebration for the U.S. Constitution.

The committee chose it as the official hymn for the occasion and sent it to the organist at St. Thomas Episcopal in New York City to compose an original tune.

The new tune with a dramatic trumpet fanfare, was introduced in 1892 in New York City at the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery f America by Christopher Columbus.

**Battle Hymn Of The Republic # 1009**

Julia Ward Howe wrote these lyrics during the heart of the Civil War.

She sent the words to the Atlantic Monthly magazine and received an honorarium of five dollars.

The money wasn’t her concern. Her purpose was to provide some wholesome lyrics for the tune “John Brown’s Body Lies A-Mouldering in the Grave.”

She accomplished that and more.

When President Abraham Lincoln first heard the hymn, he asked to have it sung again.

Soon the entire nation was singing the song.

The text is filled with biblical allusions.

The expression “grapes of wrath” refers to Revelation 14:19.

The sounding trumpet is probably from Revelation 8.

For the Christian, the message of this song is that God’s truth is eternal.

Although circumstances may appear overwhelmingly difficult, God will still accomplish His purposes, and His truth will endure.

It can be dangerous to identify political causes or even national patriotism with God’s truth.

Nations my rise and fall, but Go’s truth remains forever. “His truth is marching on!”

**Just A Closer Walk With Thee # 406**

“Just A Closer Walk With Thee” was probably the favorite southern gospel song of the twentieth century, yet no one knows who wrote it or when it was written.

It became known nationally in the 1930’s when African-American congregations held huge musical conventions.

In the 1940’s southern gospel quartets featured in in all night gospel singing rallies.

In the 1950’s Elvis Presley set sales records with it on a 45 RPM single.

In the 1960’s Tennessee Ernie Ford made the charts with it.

By the time the 1970’s ended more than a hundred artists had recorded the song.

Its history goes back to an unknown writer in the slave fields of the South before the Civil War.

Southern black choirs kept the hymn alive until World War II.

People of every background can identify with this song because it presents the humble prayer of every Christian’s heart—and humble prayer is the kind that God honors.