

## Violet Hay

**Violet Hay** (1873 – 1969) is the author of the texts of 7 hymns in our regular hymnal and 4 in the 2017 Hymnal. She was a Londoner. Born in 1873, she entered the public practice of Christian Science in 1901 (at the age of 28) and helped establish First Church of Christ, Scientist in London. She had Primary Class with Edward Kimball and Normal Class with Judge Hanna, becoming a teacher in 1907 (at the age of 34).

### Hymn 175

Mrs. Hay married Commander Gerald Hay in Cape Town, South Africa. By 1915 she was listed as a teacher and practitioner in Cape Town, and was Committee on Publication for South Africa. Mrs. Hay was also a musician: a singer who also played the violin and piano. At one point she published a book of solos, as well as a book of poems. During the time that the Christian Science Hymnal was being revised, there were two Hymnal Revision Committees: one in Boston and one in London. Mrs. Hay was chair of the London Committee from 1928 to 1932, and she remained a Committee member until 1955. It is thought that she wrote all the texts for her hymns around the time the Hymnal was being revised, and she chose all the tunes to accompany her texts.

### Hymn 472

In 2005, the Longyear Foundation ([www.longyear.org](http://www.longyear.org)) published a book about Violet Hay's life and work, titled simply, *Violet Hay*, and written by Peter Hodgson. Hodgson was a college professor of music, a church organist from an early age, and probably our movement's best expert on hymnody. His book is still available for \$12 and an audio version is available for \$22. Here is an anecdote recounted by Peter Hodgson: "I love Thy way of freedom Lord,' was used during the Second World War by the airmen in the British Air Force. It was called the 'Airmen's Song of Praise.' It was never the official hymn, contrary to some stories that are out there, but it was given to the chaplain of the Air Force by Mrs. Hay, and the chaplain agreed to distribute copies of this hymn to the pilots. Actually, of course, it was written back in the 1920s, but then it was republished during the War—in the early part of the War—about the time of the Battle of Britain. It's a gorgeous hymn. The text, we believe, was also inspired by Mrs. Hay's overcoming of a fear of heights. Apparently she had to do some repairs on her home, and it then involved climbing up a very tall ladder. And she was healed of this fear through Christian Science, and then wrote this text. That's, again, an anecdote, but it was given to me in very good faith, and I've included that reference in the book."

### Hymn 136

The preceding quote by Peter Hodgson was from his Sentinel Audio Chat on Dec. 13, 2005 titled "How Hymns Can Provide Comfort and Healing." Hodgson talks a bit about Violet Hay in this chat, and you can still listen to it on JSH Online (or you can read the transcript). One of the points he made was that, from his researches, he believed that Violet Hay's 7 hymns have been sung with more frequency than any other hymns in the Hymnal – except those of Mrs. Eddy. He adds: "And there's a chapter in my book which deals with what I think motivated her, and it is one of the Beatitudes, 'Blessed are the meek.' Now I've been doing a little bit of research on that word, and am still working on it. It is not what most of us think it means at all. The word *meek* has a great sense of power and majesty in it. Mrs. Eddy connects it with might and majesty. It also has a meaning of getting rid of yourself, getting rid of the false sense of self—emptying oneself of false reputation, and so on. And it seems like Mrs. Hay had absolutely no sense of false reputation, despite her wonderful connections and standing, she was a very meek woman, but she was a very strong woman, which, is, of course, what *meekness* also means."

### **Hymn 421**

The might of meekness is shown in the impact Violet Hay's hymns have had on our movement. There are scores of healings in the Christian Science periodicals that cite the inspiration gained from those hymns. She also authored 15 articles for the periodicals between 1917 and 1964.

### **Hymn 526**

According to the Hymnal Notes, the words (to Hymn 157) "were written with special recognition of the mission of The Christian Science Monitor." Let's sing it and see if we can see that motivation.

### **Hymn 157**

As we've said, Violet Hay was a practitioner from an early age, and she was Journal-listed until her passing in 1969. And of course she was a Christian Science teacher, having taught over 1,400 pupils during her long life. She passed on in her 96th year.

### **Hymn 64**

(Not included: 9, 12/13, 478 & 501)

(Latest update: 1/29/23. Compiled by Dick Frantzreb. For the latest version and for other composer/lyricist hymn sing outlines, visit [www.vocal-works.com](http://www.vocal-works.com).)