Russel Kelso Carter (1849-1928), the author and composer of *Standing On The Promises*, was a Military College professor and a licensed minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was active in leading camp meetings and revivals. He later studied and became a medical doctor as well as a novel writer. The Methodist Holiness camp meeting movement had a profound impact on his life. The hymn was composed in 1886 while Carter was teaching at the military academy. His military experience is reflected in the martial musical style of the hymn. This hymn was not included in authorized hymnals for Methodists (or in the 1957 hymnal of the Evangelical United Brethren Church) until the current hymnal 1989. Its place in the hymnal came from its inclusion in a list of hymns determined to be widely used by evangelical United Methodists.

The hymn *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*, though commonly known as “The Navy Hymn” is not at all militaristic. The four stanzas, writing by William Whiting (1825-1878) are a cry to the Triune God for those in peril on the sea. The tune *Melita* was written for this text by John B. Dykes (1823-1876). Melita is the Roman name for the island of Malta where Paul was shipwrecked while traveling as a prisoner to Rome (Acts 28). Dykes was educated at Cambridge and composed over 300 hymns, many of which remain in use today due to their remarkable durability and strong musical sense.

Civilla Durfee Martin (1866-1948) was born in Nova Scotia and died in Atlanta. *His eye is on the sparrow* (1905), is one of the most influential and most often recorded gospel hymns of the 20th century. In addition to being inspired by Matthew 6:26: “Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” Civilla also describes the context out of which the hymn was born: “Early in the spring of 1905, my husband and I traveled to New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle — true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was also an incurable cripple. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to everyone. One day while we were visiting, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle’s response was simple: ‘His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.’ The hymn was the outcome of that experience.” The next day she mailed the poem to Charles Gabriel, a famous composer of gospel songs, who wrote a tune for it.
1. Standing on the promises of Christ my King, Through eternal ages
2. Standing on the promises that cannot fail, When the howling storms of

let His praises ring; Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
doubt and fear assail, By the living Word of God I shall prevail,

Standing on the promises of God, Standing on the promises,
Standing on the promises, standing on the promises,

Standing on the promises of my Savior; Standing on the promises,
Standing on the promises, I'm standing on the promises of God.

1. Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm doth bind the
2. O Savior, whose almighty word the winds and waves sub-

restless wave, who bids the mighty ocean deep its
missive heard, who walked up on the foaming deep, and

own appointed limits keep; O hear us when we
calm amid the rage did sleep; O hear us when we

cry to Thee for those in peril on the sea.
cry to Thee for those in peril on the sea.