

## BLINDNESS

William Walford was blind, but he kept his hands busy and his mind busy, too. He had no formal education, but the Lord had blessed him with an amazing memory. He knew much of the Bible by heart, and was sometimes called upon to speak in the local church. When he stepped into the pulpit, the blind preacher was able to quote Scripture passages word for word, giving chapter and verse, with hardly a slip. He also composed lines of verse.

You may not find his name familiar, but you would probably recognize a hymn he wrote that is still very popular today. On occasion, we play the instrumental version of it here during our time set aside for personal intercessory prayer. The hymn is “Sweet Hour of Prayer”.

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!  
 That calls me from a world of care,  
 And bids me at my Father's throne  
 Make all my wants and wishes known.  
 In seasons of distress and grief,  
 My soul has often found relief  
 And oft escaped the tempter's snare  
 By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

We know only a little about William Walford; however, the hymn he wrote has touched untold numbers of lives by his simple but eloquent expression of the genuine joy he found in prayer.

Fanny Crosby was blinded in infancy, but she did not let that stop her from becoming one of the most prolific gospel hymnists in history. Over her 94 years of life, she wrote over 8,000 gospel songs in addition to her other writings. When we sing “I am Thine, O Lord” or “To God be the Glory” or “The Lion of Judah”, we are praising God through songs written by Fanny Crosby.

She wrote the following poem when she was eight years old. It is called “Resolve”:

Oh what a happy soul am I although I cannot see,	I
am resolved that in this world contented I will be;	How
many blessings I enjoy that other people don't;	To weep
and sigh because I am blind, I cannot and I won't.	

In addition to being a lyricist, poet and composer, Mrs. Crosby was also a mission worker and a teacher.

While neither of these very accomplished people had the blessing of physical sight, they exhibited a deeper vision than just what we can comprehend through normal eyesight. While

they certainly used their time on this earth profitably (for themselves and others), they were always looking for that city whose Builder and Maker is God. They understood the concept Paul elaborated in II Cor 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Eph 4:17-18 "With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him." These people deliberately tie a blindfold around their eyes and their heart. They are like the Laodiceans in

Rev 3:17: "You say, 'I am rich, with everything I want; I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that spiritually you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

One of the dictionary definitions for blindness is ignorance. Being ignorant of our need for God can blind us to our pitiful human condition and our desperate need for change

But wait, there's hope for healing from spiritual blindness, and that healing comes from above.

James 1:17 (ERV): "Everything good comes from God. Every perfect gift is from Him. These good gifts come down from the Father who made all the lights in the sky. But God never changes like the shadows from those lights. He is always the same."

God is the only one who can throw the switch from Off to On and dispel the blackness which surrounds us.

II Cor 4:6: For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

The apostle Paul was most certainly spiritually blind until God chose to show him mercy and give him enlightenment. In order to make him spiritually sighted, God needed to physically blind him to get his attention.

Acts 26:15-18: "Then I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are harassing. Get up! Stand on your feet! I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you as my servant and witness of what you have seen and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to open their eyes. Then they can turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, and receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are made holy by faith in Me.'"

Last, but not least, I want to read this quote from Helen Keller. Most of us are familiar with her story and her many achievements. She said: “The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision”.