

February's hymn of the month 2019

By
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Anna Barlett Warner was born 1827 in New York City. Her father, Henry Warner, a successful lawyer, provided Anna and her sister, Susan, the ways and means to receive a good education. This would prove to be a great asset as time went by. In 1837, a financial crisis hit our country. Mr. Warner lost most of his holdings and his residence in the city. He was forced to move to a summer home he had purchased years earlier at the recommendation of his cousin, the chaplain at West Point. The house, on an island opposite West Point, now became the Warner's year round home. To supplement the family income, Anna and Susan began writing books. Susan's *The Wide, Wide World* reached popularity in America and was second only to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Anna, under the name of Amy Lothrop, wrote a number of novels and two collections of verse, *Hymns of the Church Militant* in 1858 and *Wayfaring Hymns Original and Translated* in 1869. It was in 1860 that together the sisters produced a book that led to the creation of one of the world's most beloved hymns.

In their book, *Say and Seal*, there is a little boy named Johnny Fox. The youngster is dying and his Sunday School teacher comforts him with a poem that Anna had written for her sister's book. "Jesus loves me this I know" was the opening line given by Mr. Linden to the dying boy. Somehow, the poem came to the attention of composer, William Bradbury. So taken was he with the words that he would write the tune we now sing, thus preserving the words for us. Some sources say that the poem only appeared in the first editions of *Say and Seal*. For sure, the Lord had His hand in making this all come together.

The Warner sisters never married. They devoted their lives to serving the Lord. Each Sunday, a flotilla of row boats crossed the Hudson from West Point to the Warner home, Good Crag. The sisters would spend these afternoons teaching the cadets the Bible and gospel hymns. Toward the end of their lives, Mrs. Russell Sage stepped in and paid off the mortgage on the Warner home with the stipulation that the sisters could live there until the Lord took them home. The house and the island were willed to the United States government. Today, we know the site of the old Warner home as Constitution Island. Both Anna and Susan were buried with military honors at West Point for all those years of helping the young cadets. The words of their song have travelled around the world:

Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus love me—he who died heaven's gate to open wide.
He will wash away my sin, let his little child come in.

Jesus loves me, this I know, as he loved me long ago,
taking children on his knee, saying "Let them come to me."

Chorus

Yes, Jesus love me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

The hymn of the month for February 2019: **Jesus Loves Me** (See pictures on A 1,000 Words page)

