

I Am Thine, Oh Lord—January's hymn of the Month

By
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Fanny Crosby was blind all of her life; but even in her blindness, she was able to see things that most sighted people miss everyday. Maybe, it was the love of a caring Grandmother, who spent endless hours instructing this “little blind girl,” that gave her eyes to see with an invisible sight. It might also have been the years spent at the Institution for the Blind in New York City and that fateful night when Fanny surrendered her life to Jesus Christ at the St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. All of these worked together for good; and before her life was finished, she would write over 8,000 hymns.

Fanny had many friends in her lifetime of 95 years, and one of the closest was William Doane. Mr. Doane was a prosperous factory president and an active Baptist layman. He also had a love for music and would write over 2,000 gospel songs and tunes himself. It was at his home in Cincinnati, Ohio that Fanny was inspired to write a hymn that gives insight into what is yet to come for the believer.

It was late one afternoon at the Doane home in Cincinnati, and Fanny was the welcomed guest. As the members of the Doane family became Fanny's eyes for a brief moment, describing a glorious sunset, a hymn was stirring in Fanny's soul. Mr. Doane and Fanny were discussing the nearness of God at a time like this-- the beauty of His creation, the gift of His Son, and the longing to live a life that would be pleasing to Him. Fanny was usually inspired to create hymns late at night when all alone, but this evening things were different. In a moment of inspiration, Fanny asked Doane to write down a poem that was forming in her mind; and within minutes, a new hymn was born that for years has given God's children a glimpse of what's to come.

Many will go through this life never seeing the things that blind Fanny did. In her blindness, she saw a loving Father and a caring Son who opened the door to heaven for those who would accept and believe. She also saw a day when, on the other side, all things would be made new, including her own eyes. Most of all, she saw a need for us today to draw nearer to the one who gave His all in all, and that one is Jesus Christ. Because of this, she would write:

I am thine O Lord. I have heard thy voice
and it told thy love to me
but I long to rise in the arms of faith
and be closer drawn to thee

Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord,
by the power of grace divine;
let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
and my will be lost in thine.

Oh the pure delight of a single hour
that before thy throne I spend.
When I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend

There are depths of love that I cannot know
Till I cross the narrow sea;
There are heights of joy that I may not reach
Till I rest in peace with thee.

Refrain:

Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord
to the cross where thou has died
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord
to thy precious bleeding side

The year 2020 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest hymn writers the world has ever known, Fanny Crosby. Born on March 24, 1820, and blinded at six weeks of age, Fanny would overcome many setbacks to be used of God to provide the church with all these hymns. For 2020, each month, we will feature one of Fanny Crosby's 8,000 songs to celebrate the life of this, our Lord's servant.

Plus, along the way, we hope to have some Edison recordings of her songs for your listening pleasure and inspiration. Check in each month for another Fanny Crosby story and song.