

## I Need Thee Every Hour-February's Hymn of the Month 2024

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Not far from where I live is the birthplace and gravesite of Annie Sherwood Hawks. Born on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1835, in Hoosick, New York, Annie Sherwood would, by the age of fourteen, have local newspapers putting her poems in print. In 1859, she married Charles Hawks and spent much of her life in Brooklyn, far from her country home in upstate New York.

The couple placed their membership in the Hanson Place Baptist Church while living in Brooklyn. The pastor at that time was Robert Lowry, the writer and composer of hymns. He is best remembered for *Shall We Gather at the River, Nothing but the Blood, Christ Arose, Marching to Zion* and the song that his new parishioner would give him.

Annie Sherwood Hawks, in her own words, tells how the hymn came to be:

I remember well the morning many years ago, when in the midst of the daily cares of my home, I was so filled with the sense of nearness to the Master. While wondering how one could live without Him either in joy or pain for any period of time, these words, 'I need Thee every hour,' were ushered into my mind—the thought at once taking full possession of me. Seating myself by the open window in the balmy air of that bright June day, I took up my pencil and the words were soon committed to paper, almost as they are sung today.

She went on to record for us that a few months later, her pastor, Robert Lowry, set the words to music with the addition of a chorus. The new hymn would be sung for the first time at a Sunday School Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. It would be years later when Annie truly felt the comfort this hymn can bring after her beloved Charlie went home to be with the Lord.

Annie returned to her childhood home, spending her remaining years with her children in Bennington, Vermont, until her death in 1918. Her gravesite is not far from where her journey on earth had begun 83 years before—a journey that would be remembered by only a few, except for one thing. She left behind a song. See a 1,000 Words Page for pictures.