

Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior—April's Hymn of the Month 2020

By

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Fanny Crosby would write hymns for many different composers, but one of her favorites was William Howard Doane. He was born on February 2, 1832 in Preston, Connecticut. Young William was the fifth of eight children and, at an early age, showed musical talent. After attending the Woodstock Academy in Woodstock, Connecticut, he became the school's choir director. Later in life at the age of 34, he became the president of J. A. Fay & Company, a woodworking machinery company; but he never lost his love for music.

In 1868 while visiting New York City, Doane met Fanny Crosby and discovered that they were kindred souls. It was shortly thereafter that he requested that Fanny write a hymn with the title, "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior." She said she would see what she could do.

Fanny was receiving many invitations to speak at conventions, churches, YMCA's and even prisons. It would be at one of these prisons where the inspiration for writing Doane's story finally came. While speaking at a Manhattan prison in the spring of 1868, Fanny heard a prisoner cry out, "Good Lord, do not pass me by." Later that evening back in her room, she completed the poem. Doane was pleased when he received the finished poem. He composed the music and published the new hymn in a collection of his in 1870.

This was just the beginning of the writer and composer's partnership of writing great songs. In the years to follow, together, they would give us over one thousand hymns including *Rescue the Perishing*; *Draw Me Nearer*; *I Am Thine O Lord*; *Near the Cross*; *Savior, More than Life to Me*; *To God Be the Glory*; *Will Jesus Find Us Watching*, and 991 more songs. In December 1915, William Doane departed for Heaven to spend eternity with the Savior he loved so dearly and with his dear friend, Fanny Crosby, who had been there since February the 12th of 1915.

Both Doane and Fanny understood the importance of the Bible verse that states, "Today is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2) We are never promised or guaranteed a tomorrow. It's what you do with Jesus' invitation today that will count for eternity. Invite Him into your heart and life (John 3:16) right now or reject His love and salvation and gamble with eternity in Hell. Like the prisoner in Manhattan, the best decision is to cry out, "Good Lord, do not pass me by."

Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

Let me at Thy throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief;

Kneeling there in deep contrition,
Help my unbelief.

Trusting only in Thy merit,
Would I seek Thy face;
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,
Save me by Thy grace.

Thou the spring of all my comfort,
More than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside Thee,
Whom in Heav'n but Thee.

Refrain:

Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry,
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass my by.