

## To God Be the Glory—June’s Hymn of the Month 2020

By Bill Dagle

Originally intended as a Sunday School song, “To God Be the Gory” was first entitled “Praise for Redemption” and was first published in *Brightest and Best*, compiled by William Doane and Robert Lowry in 1875. Apparently compilers of collections of gospel songs would overlook this song for eighty years until it was rediscovered in a most unusual way.

Billy Graham’s evangelistic campaigns had their beginnings in 1949 out in Los Angeles. By the mid-fifties, he was traveling around the world with his gospel outreach. In 1954, preparations were being made for the Billy Graham Greater London Crusade, and an important part of this was the music. Cliff Barrows had this responsibility, of course, and was compiling a songbook to be used in the singing. Someone in London suggested that the song, “To God Be the Glory,” be included. Barrows wasn’t familiar with the song; but on the strong recommendation of some English advisors, he included it in the songbook. The song became an immediate success at Harringay—to such an extent that Barrows returned to the states and introduced it to America in the 1954 crusade in Nashville at the Vanderbilt University’s football stadium.

The irony of the song is that it wasn’t originally from England, but America; and it didn’t have an English writer, but an American, Fanny Crosby, the blind hymn poetess. Fanny had a love for the Lord and a love for children. She wrote this song during one of her “night watches” for she said, “Most of my poems have been written during the long night watches.” It would be during these times that her songs would come to her; and the following day she would dictate them to a stenographer.

“To God Be the Glory” is a wonderful way for young and old alike to express their thankfulness to the God who certainly deserves all our glory. I remember so well, as a Sunday Schooler at the Grafton Baptist Church, the singing of this hymn. I would stay for the church service through my teen years, and this hymn became a favorite of mine. So much that even today many years later, I still can sing this hymn from memory. Paul certainly knew what he was talking about when he said, “Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” (Ephesians 5:19) The hymn is also a great way to fulfill Psalm 110:11, “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Fanny’s prayer for *God Be the Glory* was that it would touch the hearts of Sunday Schoolers. Her prayer was certainly answered in my life thanks to Sunday School. To God be the Glory!

To God be the glory—great things He hath done!  
So loved He the world that He gave us His son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the lifegate that all may go in.

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.