

Trust and Obey—January’s Hymn of the Month 2023

By
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D.L. Moody is remembered as one of the greatest evangelist who ever lived. In his lifetime, he shook two continents for Jesus Christ and won millions to the Lord. Even though he was never ordained as a pastor, his influence on the church is still felt today. Moody had a special calling of getting others involved in the Lord’s work—especially, when it came to evangelism and music. Moody knew the secret that music prepares the heart for the message.

In 1890, Moody founded the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. Years before, he challenged Ira Sankey to leave his position at the IRS and become his song leader. In 1890, he would do it again by convincing Daniel B. Towner to become the first head of the Music Department at the school. Towner would go on to hold this position for 29 years before being called home. Towner is remembered for over 2,000 songs such as *At Calvary*, *Grace Greater than our Sin*, *My Anchor Holds* and the hymn, *Trust and Obey*.

Like Philip P. Bliss, Towner received inspiration for writing from listening to D.L. Moody preach. On one occasion, in 1886, Daniel Towner was leading the music for Moody at a meeting in Brockton, Massachusetts. Towner’s heart was being challenged by Moody when the meeting was opened to testimonies. A young man rose and said this, “I am not quite sure—but I am going to trust and I am going to obey.” Towner jotted down the sentence: a few days later, he sent the words to Rev. J.H. Sammis, a Presbyterian minister. With the good minister supplying the words and Towner supplying the music, a new song was born.

Since then, congregations have sung the hymn that reflects the words of our Savior when He said, “If you love me, obey my commandments.” Trust is the beginning of the story, but obedience is the rest. The life of obedience is a great way to show others your love for Christ:

Trust and obey, for there’s no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.