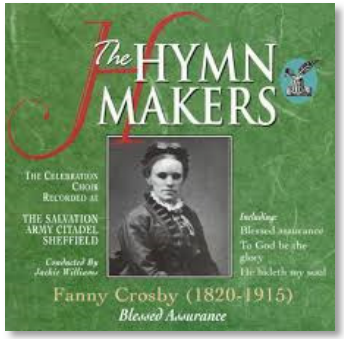
The Hymns of Fanny Crosby

At one of our church's recent sharing services, I chose the hymn *A Wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord* written by Fanny Crosby. Most of us will know and love Fanny Crosby's hymns. Just a few of her most well-known hymns which we have all sung at one time or another are:

All the Way My Saviour Leads Me,
Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour,
Jesus Is Tenderly Calling Thee Home,
Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It,
Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine,
Draw Me Nearer, Nearer, Blessed Lord,
To God be the Glory, Great Things He Hath Done,
Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus Our Blessed Redeemer!

Fanny Crosby was born in 1820 and died in 1915, and, according to her biography on the website *Hymnary.org* during her 95 years on this earth she wrote over 8,000 hymns and gospel songs!

That is quite extraordinary! But what is even more extraordinary – and what has always seemed such a wonderful thing to me - is that in so many of her hymns, she writes of SEEING. Of seeing the beauties of God's creation, of seeing the radiance of the Lord, of seeing visions of the raptures of heaven, yet from the age of six weeks she was blind and remained so throughout her long life.

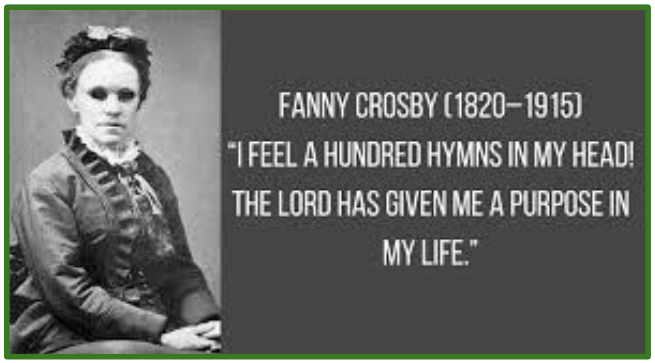


Her hymns are full of radiant descriptions of the goodness of God – as you sing them you will be struck by their vibrancy: how bright and rich with colour they are; how they overflow with gladness and thankfulness to the Lord.

She writes in them of *"bliss"*, of *"happiness"*, of *"perfect delight"*, and of *"divinest comfort"*. She describes *"smiling fields"*, *"rivers of pleasure"*, *"mansions bright"* and *"glorious crowns"*. She joys that as Jesus *"walketh beside me, brightly His sunshine appears"*, and she pictures the *"bright and golden morning … beyond the glowing skies … when at home with the Lord I shall be."*

Fanny's hymns are always filled to the brim with sound biblical doctrine about the Lord's death on the cross and His resurrection, the salvation He has provided for us, His tender calling of us to come to Him, and His faithful and daily guidance of us.

The theme of many of her hymns is heaven, as she looks beyond this world, beyond her own blindness, to the Lord's Second Coming and the bodily redemption of the saints which, for her, will include regaining her sight. And, perhaps for all of us there will be some ailment which, praise God, will then be gone forever!



Fanny Crosby has blessed countless Christians through her hymns of worship to her precious Saviour – all of them focusing only on Him, joyfully praising God for His goodness, looking for the Lord's return, and declaring the wonders to come in her eternal home.

Hymnary.org says of her: *"Fanny loved her work, and was happy in it … The secret of this contentment dates from her first composition at the age of eight years, when she wrote: 'O what a happy soul am I! Although I cannot see, I am resolved that in this world, Contented I will be.' 'This', she said, 'has been the motto of my life.'"*

May Fanny's motto be ours too, and may we always delight to sing her beautiful hymns as we walk through this life awaiting our Lord's return; proclaiming with her, in the wonderful words of praise she has penned in the hymn I chose for our service in June:

"When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise,
To meet Him in clouds of the sky,
His perfect salvation, His wonderful love,
I'll shout with the millions on high!"

And woe betide any Contemporary Christian Music songwriters who vainly think they can 'improve' Fanny Crosby's sublime and timeless hymns!

Elizabeth McDonald, 1st August 2024, bayith.org
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