

The Work of a Blind Hymnist

Despite being blind from shortly after birth, Fanny Crosby became one of the most prolific hymnists in history, writing more than 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, with more than 1 million copies printed.

Crosby (1820 – 1915) was known as the “Queen of Gospel Song Writers” and “the mother of modern congregational singing in America.” Ira Sankey – gospel singer and associate of evangelist Dwight L. Moody – attributed the success of the Moody and Sankey evangelical campaigns largely to Crosby’s hymns. Some of her best-known songs include *Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior*, *Blessed Assurance*, *Jesus Is Tenderly Calling You Home*, *Praise Him, Praise Him*, *Rescue the Perishing* and *To God Be the Glory*.

Crosby said she never attempted to write a hymn without first kneeling in prayer. Obviously, she must have been a woman of considerable prayer.



Like many creative people, Crosby was often under pressure to meet deadlines. One such time came in 1869 as she tried to write lyrics for a tune composed by W.H. Doane. She couldn’t seem to find the words, and then remembered she had forgotten to pray. As she rose from her knees, she dictated – as fast as her assistant could write – the words of the famous hymn, *Jesus Keep Me near the Cross*.

Another time, she had run short of money and needed exactly \$5 for a particular purpose. There was no time to call upon her publishers, so she simply prayed for the money. As she ended her prayer, she began to pace back and forth in her room, trying to get into the mood to write.

Just at that time, an admirer called upon her. The two chatted briefly, and in parting, the woman pressed something into her hand. It was a \$5 bill.

Crosby fell to her knees in a prayer of thanksgiving, and upon rising wrote: “All the way my Savior leads me.”

Jesus does not just give answers. He is the answer. He encourages each of us to bring our concerns – and our praises – to Him.

(more)

Here are a couple of verses from *All the Way My Savior Leads Me*:

*All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.*

*All the way my Savior leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread;
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living Bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see;
Gushing from the rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see.*

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:12-13 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter