

BLESSED ASSURANCE, JESUS IS MINE!

Fanny J Crosby

Fanny Crosby was a prolific hymnwriter, who wrote over 8,000 hymns, including ...

- “All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask beside?”
- “I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me”
- “Here in Thy Name we are gathered, Come and revive us, O Lord; ‘There shall be showers of blessing,’ Thou hast declared in Thy Word. Oh, graciously hear us, Graciously hear us, we pray; Pour from Thy windows upon us Showers of blessing today”
- “Revive Thy work, O Lord! While here to Thee we bow; Descend, O gracious Lord, descend; O come and bless us now” (*adapted from Albert Midlane*)
- “Safe in the arms of Jesus”
- “Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word. Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard”

Her hymns are characterised by simplicity and earnestness. Because of her blindness, she herself never wrote out any of her hymns but first completed each one in her mind before dictating it for someone to write.

On one occasion a preacher remarked to her, “I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you”. She instantly replied, “Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I should be born blind?” “Why?” asked the surprised enquirer. “Because when I get to Heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Saviour!” ...

“But purer and higher and greater will be
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see!”

Her family had emigrated to New England, and she was born in 1820. She lost her sight when she was only six weeks old. She developed an inflammation in the eyes and her doctor mistakenly recommended a harmful poultice which blinded her. Before she was one year old her father died, and she was reared by her mother, grandmother and another family friend. She learned by heart the four Gospels and much of the first four books of the Bible. She was converted in a Methodist church during the singing of Isaac Watts’ hymn,

“Alas! And did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?”

She was educated in a school for the blind, and began to teach there English grammar, and Roman and Greek history. She married Professor Alexander van Alstyne who was a teacher of music, also totally blind. She died in 1915, at almost 95 years of age and on her gravestone is inscribed,

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh what a foretaste of Glory Divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of the Spirit, washed in His blood”.

‘Blessed assurance’ was published in 1873. Fanny Crosby was visiting her friend Phoebe Knapp, and Phoebe asked her to listen to a new tune she had composed. After playing the music a few times, Phoebe asked her what thoughts were generated as she listened ... and Fanny answered, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine”. And then continued, “Oh, what a foretaste of Glory Divine, heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood”. ... And that is how this hymn was ‘born’.

That was the central theme of her hymn, “a foretaste of Glory Divine” ... She focussed on Heaven, the place of ‘perfect submission’ (v.2) ... from the perspective of earth, from which she was “watching and waiting, looking above” (v.3) for her Saviour. ... Until He comes, she wanted to be “filled with His goodness, lost in His love” (v.3), and in the meantime, she was determined to “[praise her] Saviour all the day long”.

Let’s divide the hymn into three considerations ...

ASSURANCE One of the ways the devil attacks is to try and get us to doubt our salvation ... why would God save me? Am I really saved? ... It is something many of us, - if not all, - have had to contend with at some time or another. Satan would introduce all kinds of doubts to undermine our faith. And, in Fanny Crosby’s case, he could so easily have kept telling her, “You’re blind, what can you do for God? What use are you to Him?” ... And he could have crippled her resolve until he took away her desire to serve the Lord.

Satan is persistent, and he is the ‘arch-discourager’. If you give him an opportunity, he will sneak in, demoralise your spirit, and leave you as a ‘shrivelled-up’ Christian. ... So, how do you contend with him? Well, you begin by remembering you are saved *not* because of anything you have done, but instead, you are a Christian because of what God has done for you. He loved you so much He sent His Son to die on a cross, and every sin you have ever

committed or will commit, God has removed from your ‘account’ and ‘put’ into Christ’s account ... and Jesus completely ‘paid off’ the debt of your sin, thus purchasing you for His Father.

Like the slave standing in the slave market ... who could not plead for himself, or free himself ... Jesus looked at you, and in eternity, - before it all began, - He looked at you, loved you, and chose you to become His. Consider the slave standing in front of all the potential buyers ... his face bowed in shame, parted from his loved ones, dressed in rags, owning nothing, having a lifetime of captivity, misery and despair ahead ... and someone comes forward to pay the price demanded. The slave wouldn’t even lift his head for he could see no hope ... and he wasn’t expecting any! He has been sold, he has been bought, and he is someone else’s ‘property’ ... but then he hears from the person who paid the price, You are free!

And that is what it means to be purchased of God. You belong to Him, and none other. And when the devil comes and tells you all your faults and failings as a Christian, - some of them might be true, and need to be addressed, but many of them are lies to disparage you, - you just look up to the Saviour. Nothing the devil can accuse you off can break the bond Christ surrounded you with when He saved you.

Another hymn says, “He sought me and He bought me With His redeeming blood”. That’s what it means, the ‘purchase of God’. ... And when you are the purchase of God, you are the ‘heir of salvation’, **1 Peter 1:4** *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.* You are saved by God’s grace, and you are kept by God’s grace. ... You are not kept by your faith, - your faith doesn’t keep you, but it’s God’s grace that keeps you.

... Your faith is not powerful enough ... If your faith kept you, you would falter and fail, but it is by *grace* you are saved *through* faith, - God when He looks upon you by grace, He *gives* you the faith to trust Him ... and how does the faith come? It comes when the Holy Spirit opens your heart to receive and believe, **Titus 3:5** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Satan will tempt and test you, but when God saved you, He *purchased* you and now you belong to Him. Satan has no hold over you. You are an heir of all

God's promises. You have been born of His Holy Spirit, ... and you have been washed and cleansed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ Who died for you at Calvary, and Who rose again. That is your **assurance**.

And surely, already, you recognise how you have His **assurance** in **ABUNDANCE** for God is your Heavenly Father. He loves you with a love which cannot cease, and you are His and He is yours! ...

“My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold. ...
With Jesus my Saviour, I'm a child of the King”.

Believer, you are God's personal possession ... and how do you enjoy such a privilege? You enjoy it the most by being in the closest of fellowship with Him, and being obedient to His will, “perfect submission” ... And such “perfect submission” exposes the believer to the “perfect light”. ... When the way is dark and I cannot see around me, wrote Fanny Crosby, - He shows me the “Visions of rapture burst on my sight” ... This blind woman was looking forward to seeing Jesus! ...

“But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our *rapture* when Jesus we see” ...
“In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,
Till my *raptured* soul shall find rest beyond the river”.

She was looking forward to Christ's return when He would take her out, and up, and onto Himself. Another hymn she wrote says,

Hark the song of holy rapture,
Hear it break from yonder strand
Where our friends for us are waiting,
In the golden summer land;
They have reached the port of glory,
O'er the Jordan they have passed,
And with millions they are shouting,
Home at last, home at last ...
Look beyond, the skies are clearing;
See, the mist dissolves away;
Soon our eyes will catch the dawning
Of a bright celestial day.

Her attention on earth was fixed on the “echoes of mercy, whispers of love” ... She could hear them through the darkness. She couldn’t see, but she knew the darkness of her blindness could not overcome her Gospel hope (Jn. 1:5) for she wrote, “My simple trust in God’s goodness has never failed me during these many years. There is nothing in this wide world that gives me so much joy as telling the story of my Saviour’s loving mercy”.

At the age of 90, - blind all her life, practically, - she shared with a friend, “My love for the Holy Bible and its sacred truth is stronger and more precious to me at 90 than at 19. This Book is to me ‘God’s Treasure House’; there is nothing I love better than to have my friends read to me from the sacred page. *I am living in the sight of Eternity’s sunrise*”. ... By faith, eagerly looking for the promises of God in Christ Jesus, as another hymnwriter, Frances Ridley Havergal, who corresponded with her in the last seven years of her life wrote, “She is a blind lady whose heart can see splendidly in the sunshine of God’s love”. Another well-known hymn she wrote was ...

A wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord,
 A wonderful Saviour to me;
 He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
 Where rivers of pleasure I see.
 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.

Yes, she enjoyed God’s **assurance** in **abundance**, and after each verse, - in the chorus, - she made her personal word of testimony, her **AFFIRMATION**,

“This is my story, this is my song,
 praising my Saviour all the day long”.

When she was 74 she wrote another great hymn,

When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,
 When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
 I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
 And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

*I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
 And redeemed by His side I shall stand,
 I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
 By the print of the nails in His hand.*

Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face,
And the lustre of His kindly beaming eye;
How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love and grace,
That prepare for me a mansion in the sky.

Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they beckon me to come,
And our parting at the river I recall;
To the sweet vales of Eden they will sing my welcome home;
But I long to meet my Saviour first of all.

Through the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white,
He will lead me where no tears will ever fall;
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight;
But I long to meet my Saviour first of all

For a blind woman, her spiritual eyesight was impeccable for even in her blindness she saw God's glory ... and in many of her hymns she anticipated the day of which Isaiah prophesied, [Is. 35:5](#) **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened** ... And that was the personal testimony of this Godly woman throughout almost ninety years on this earth,

“This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long”.