

## Frances Jane Crosby - Hymn Writer and Poetess

(March 24, 1820 – February 12, 1915)

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Frances Jane Crosby (usually known as Fanny Crosby), the daughter of John and Mercy Crosby, was born in Southeast, Putnam County, New York, March 24, 1820. She lost her eyesight when she was just six weeks old due to maltreatment of her eyes during a bout of sickness.

When Fanny was around nine years of age, the family moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut, where she was to stay until age 15. Her mother was kind but busy making a living for both of them, so it was her grandmother who became an unforgettable influence in her life. Her grandmother spent many hours describing the things of nature and heaven to her. Also, she introduced Fanny to the Bible and this book now became more familiar to her than any other. She began to devour the Scriptures. It is said that, as a child, she could repeat from memory the Pentateuch, the book of Ruth, many of the Psalms, the books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and much of the New Testament! This furnished the themes, inspiration, and diction for her imperishable gospel hymns.

Blind for all of her life, Fanny Crosby, the greatest hymn writer in the history of the Christian Church, later wrote, "And I shall see Him face to face, and tell the story--saved by grace." Though blind, she witnessed over 8,000 of her poems set to music and over 100,000,000 copies of her songs printed. As many as 200 different pen names, including Grace J. Frances, were given to her works by hymn book publishers so the public wouldn't know she wrote so large a number of them. She produced as many as seven hymn-poems in one day. On several occasions, upon hearing an unfamiliar hymn sung, she would inquire about the author, and find it to be one of her own!

Crosby passed away on 12 February 1915.

The following Hymns in the Mar Thoma Church hymn book "Kristheeya Keerththanangal" are written by Crosby:

No 91	Praise Him Praise Him	(Vaazhththin,vaazhththin)
No 171	Jesus is tenderly calling	(Melveetil ennesu haa)
No 251	Blessed Assurance	(Yeshu en swantham)
No 282	Safe in the arms of Jesus	(Yeshu kayyil maa swairyam)
No 350	Pass me not	(Pokalle Kadannenne nee)

