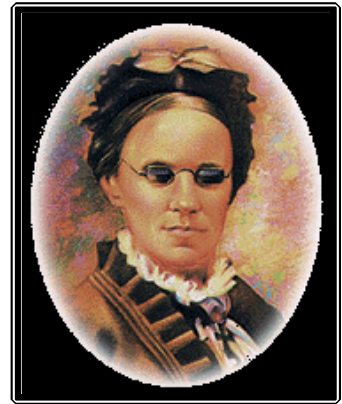


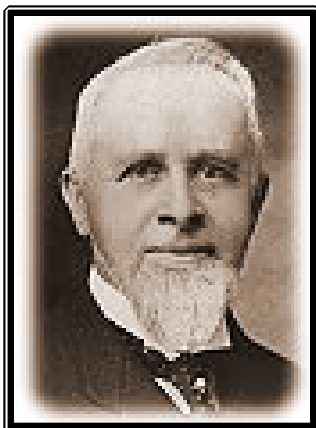
NEAR THE CROSS

Fanny Crosby, Lyrics; Williams Doane, Music; 1869

This hymn was written by one of America's most prolific hymn writers, Frances Jane VanAlstyne, better known as Fanny Crosby. She is said to have written more than 8,000 poems during her lifetime, the vast majority of which were of a religious nature that eventually were paired with melodies and made into hymns. Fanny was blind from the age of 6 weeks. At 15 she enrolled in the New York Institute for the Blind. She was a student there for 8 years and upon graduation, she accepted a faculty position. She published her first collection of secular poems at the age of 24. She became very well-known during her lifetime and became a popular public speaker. She corresponded with several U.S. presidents, senators, generals, and other dignitaries. She recited one of her poems before Congress, and performed "*Safe in the Arms of Jesus*" at President Grant's funeral. Among her better known hymns include "*Blessed Assurance*" and "*Jesus is Calling*".



"*Near the Cross*" was written in the space of about 2 hours one evening when noted hymnist, Dr. William Doane visited Fanny during a brief stopover as he was traveling by train through New York City on his way back to Cincinnati. With only limited time, he wanted to play a new tune he had just written that day, and wondered if she could write some lyrics and possibly send him some lyrics later. She finished the hymn in time for him to take it with him. Dr. Doane has composed more than six hundred Sunday-school songs, at least one hundred and fifty church and prayer-meeting hymns, and two hundred and fifty other songs and ballads, beside anthems, cantatas, etc.



~Tull