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Kissing Cousins

By Teresa Hampton

Fanny Crosby's life story is fascinating. She developed a severe eye infection when she was just six weeks old. The family doctor was out of town so another doctor came to see her. He asked the mother to put a poultice of hot mustard on her eyes until the infection cleared. The remedy blinded the little girl. The family found out later that the man who treated her was not a doctor, but a certified quack.

Fanny's first poem, written at age eight, could be the anthem for her life: *O what a happy soul am I! Although I cannot see, I am resolved that in this world, contented I will be. How many blessings I enjoy, that other people don't. To weep and sigh because I'm blind, I cannot and I won't!*

The budding song writer did not spend her time angry, bitter, or resentful about her blindness. She grew up to be a prolific writer. During her lifetime she wrote the lyrics to over eight thousand gospel songs, many of which we sing today. "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" (1868), "Blessed Assurance" (1873), and "To God Be the Glory" (1875). She was content with her life struggles and thankful for the gifts God gave her. She channeled her intellect and energy into doing good.

Contentment and thankfulness go hand in hand. One is closely attached to the other. They are kissing cousins, so to speak. God's people were often examples of the opposite, discontentment and ingratitude. They murmured and complained after God delivered them from bondage (Exodus 17:2-3). They were discontent with the judge, Samuel, and cried out for a king (1 Samuel 8:4-5). They were not satisfied to serve the one true God, but worshiped idols (1 Kings 16:30-33). After they returned from captivity, they were not content to take Hebrew wives. Instead, they took foreign women (Ezra 9:1-2). In each case, their poor decisions led them down a dark path filled with undesirable consequences.

Paul recognized the importance of being content and thankful. He wrote Christians, *Now godliness with contentment is great gain* (1 Timothy 6:6). Despite the harshness of his life, Paul said, *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:* (Philippians 4:11).

Contentment is neither inborn nor accidental. It is a decision. When we *choose* to be content with the life we have been given, we will be thankful for everything, good and bad. We will trust God to keep us humble when we abound, and gently lift us up when we falter.

May we, like Fanny Crosby, strive each day to be thankful and content in all things. In this, let us praise God and magnify His holy name!

Today's verses: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'* (Hebrews 13:5), *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 5:20)

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Hymns written by Fanny J. Crosby:

A Wonderful Saviour
All the Way My Saviour Leads Me
All To Christ I Owe
Awake! Awake!
Blessed Assurance
Blessed Redeemer
Blessed Saviour, Friend Divine
Calling For Thee
Christ the Lord is King
Christ, The Lord, Is Risen Today
Close to Thee
Come Home
Come to the Fountain!
Draw Me Nearer
Every Day and Hour
God Be With You Till We Meet Again
He Hideth My Soul
He is Coming
Hear Us, O Saviour!
Hide Me, O My Saviour, Hide Me
Hide Thou Me
Hold Thou My Hand
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord
Holy Is The Lord
I Am Thine, O Lord
I Come to Thee
In Perfect Peace
Jesus I Love Thee
Jesus is Tenderly Calling You Home
Jesus Lead My Heart To Thee
Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross
Meet Me There
More Like Jesus Would I Be
Near the Cross
Nearer the Cross
Out of Bondage
Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour
Praise Him, Praise Him
Praise Ye the Lord
Redeemed
Rescue the Perishing
Safe in the Arms of Jesus
Safe In The Glory Land
Saviour, More Than Life to Me
Sing On Softly, Softly On My Ear
Take the World, But Give Me Jesus
Tell Me the Story of Jesus
The Hour Of Prayer
The House Upon A Rock
The Wondrous Love Of Jesus
They Tell Us Of A Land So Fair

Though Your Sins Be as Scarlet
Through the Valley of the Shadow
'Tis the Blessed Hour of Prayer
To the Work!
To God Be the Glory
When Jesus Comes
Work For Jesus

God Be With You Till We Meet Again

1 God be with you till we meet again,
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you,
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

2 God be with you till we meet again,
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still divide you,
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

3 God be with you till we meet again,
When life's perils thick confound you,
Put His arms unfailing round you,
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

4 God be with you till we meet again,
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Smite death's threatening wave before you,
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.
Amen.