

Episode 7

History of Hymns

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

[BEGIN MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Lex De Azevedo's version of "Nearer My God to Thee" from the "Child of God" CD from his "London Philharmonic Orchestra" series will underscore our next story segment.

NARRATOR Sarah Flower Adams was born at Harlow, Essex, England on February 22, 1805. She was the younger daughter of Mr. Benjamin Flower, editor and proprietor of the Cambridge Intelligencer and a political activist. Sarah grew up in a very literary household and was married in 1834 to Williams Bridges Adams, an inventor and civil engineer. Sarah wanted to be an actress, and in 1837 played the part of Lady MacBeth in a London production to rave reviews, but ill health cut her acting career short, so she turned to writing. As a member of the congregation of the Reverend William Johnson Fox, a Unitarian minister in London, she contributed thirteen hymns to "Hymns of Anthems" published by C. Fox London in 1841. Of all her hymns, the most widely known are "Nearer, My God, to Thee" and "He Sendeth Sun, He Sendeth Shower." "Nearer, My God, to Thee" was written by request to accompany a sermon by Reverend Fox on the account of Jacob's dream in Genesis chapter 28, and was sung to a tune composed by Sarah's sister, Eliza, who was a composer and musician. But the hymn did not gain wide appeal until paired with the Lowell Mason tune with which it is commonly sung today.

[END MUSIC]

[BEGIN MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Geslison and Groberg offer this instrumental version of "Nearer My God to Thee" on their album "Abide With Me."

NARRATOR: Lowell Mason, born January 8th, 1792, in Medfield, Massachusetts was a leading figure in American church and school music and the composer of over 1,600 hymns, many of which are often sung today. He was largely responsible for introducing music into American public schools and is considered to be the first important music educator in the United States. Mason started out as a clerk, then a banker, and considered his music an avocation, publishing his first hymnal anonymously. But when he was successful, he left banking to make his career in music.

After moving to Boston in 1827, he became music director for three churches, served as president of the Handel and Haydn Society, taught music in the public schools, was co-founder of the Boston Academy of Music, and eventually became superintendent for the Boston School System. It was Lowell Mason, who in the 1830's set the poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to music, adding the echoed words with which we are so familiar today.

In the last part of his career as music director of the 5th Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, he radically transformed American church music from a practice of having professional choirs and accompaniment to congregational singing accompanied by organ music. Lowell Mason wrote, among others, "Come All Whose Souls Are Lighted" and arranged and adapted the music for "Joy to the World", "How Gentle God's Commands" and many others.

NARRATOR: Thanks to Karen Lynn Davidson for material from her book, "Our Latter-day Hymns, The Stories and the Messages."

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: The Utah Chamber Artists perform "Nearer, My God, to Thee" on their album "We'll Sing and We'll Shout."

[BEGIN MUSIC]

"Nearer, My God, to Thee" performed by The Utah Chamber Artists

(Women)	Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee. E'en though it be a cross That raiseth me.
(Men & Women)	Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
(Women)	Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
(Men)	Though like the wanderer, The sun gone down, Darkness be over me, My rest a stone, Yet in my dreams I'd be Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
(Men & Women)	Then with my walking thoughts Bright with thy praise, Out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise; So by my woes to be Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
(Women)	Or, if on joyful wings Cleaving the sky, Sun, moon, and stars forgot, Upward I fly, Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Here is Kurt Bestor playing his instrumental version of “Nearer, My God, to Thee” from his album, “Images”.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee” performed by Kurt Bestor on the piano

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Octapella on their album “Worship” present this arrangement of “Nearer, My God, to Thee”.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee”/“Beautiful Savoir” performed by Octapella

Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
E’en though it be a cross That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.

Fair are the meadows, Fairer the woodlands,
Robed in the flowers of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer.
He makes the sorrowing spirit sing.

Or, if on joyful wings Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot, Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the Nations.
Son of God and Son of Man.
Thee I honor, praise and give glory,
Give praise and glory evermore.
Give glory ever, evermore.

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Michael Dowdle plays this arrangement of “Nearer, My God, to Thee” on his “Beloved Hymns of Prayer and Faith” album.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee” performed by Michael Dowdle on the guitar

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Lex De Azevedo performs “Nearer, My God, to Thee” from his “Variations on a Sacred Theme II” album.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee” performed Lex De Azevedo

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Vocal Point on their “Nonstop” album performed this arrangement of “Nearer, My God, to Thee”.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee” performed by Lex De Azevedo

(Latin) In articulo mortis Caelitus mihi vires
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
E’en though it be a cross That raiseth me.

(In background) There let the way appear, Steps unto heaven
All that thou sendest me, In mercy given;
In articulo mortis Caelitus mihi vires
Deo adjuvante non timedum, In perpetuum
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic ad astra Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsi

(In background) Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic ad astra Excelsior

(In background) Though like the wanderer, The sun gone down.
Darkness be over me, My rest a stone,
In articulo mortis Caelitus mihi vires
Deo adjuvante non timedum, In perpetuum
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic ad astra Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsi

(In background) Angels to beckon me, Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic ad astra Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsi

(In background) Or, if on joyful wings Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot, Upward I fly,
In articulo mortis Caelitus mihi vires
Deo adjuvante non timendum, In perpetuum
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic itur ad astra Excelsi
Dirige nos domi Ad augusta per angusta
Sic itur ad astra Excelsior

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square perform “Nearer, My God, to Thee” from their album “Then Sings My Soul”.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

“Nearer, My God, to Thee” performed by The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square

Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.
E’en though it be a cross That raiseth me.
Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.

Still all my song shall be Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer to thee.

[END MUSIC]

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