

Versions of “Nearer, My God, to Thee”

Chicago Christian Scientists Ursula Gestefeld and Joseph Adams adapted Sarah Adams’s version for their respective hymnals. Here is a comparison of their texts with the original by Sarah Adams:

Sarah Adams (1841)

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.

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.

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heav’n;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy giv’n;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to thee.

Then with my waking 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.

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

Ursula Gestefeld (1889)

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to Thee:
Since I the Truth perceive,
I cannot be.
In Thee I live and move,
Leaning alone on Love,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
I cannot be.

Never a wanderer,
Never alone,
Encircling me the Light
I am Thine own;
E’en in this dream, of Thee
Conscious I now may be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
I cannot be.

Now doth the way appear
Steps up to heaven,
All that I am and have
From Thee is given;
Thy thoughts are waking me,
Clearly, my God, to see,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
I cannot be.

Thus every thought shall be,
bright with Thy praise;
Out of my consciousness,
Bethel I’ll raise;
There are no woes for me,
This blessed Truth I see
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
I cannot be.

Swift on the wings of Truth,
Rising on high;
Earth senses all forgot,
Upward I fly;
Now all my song shall be,
Ever, my God, with Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
I cannot be.

Joseph Adams (1889)

Nearer I cannot be
My God to Thee
In Thee I live and move,
Sustaining me.
Thy love my song shall be,
More of my God I see
Always with me.

Never a wanderer;
The sun not down,
No darkness covers me
In sleep alone.
For in my dreams I’d be
Conscious, my God, of thee,
Never from me.

Then with my waking thoughts,
Bursting with praise;
Out of my sense of Thee
Bethel I’ll raise.
So shall my moments be
Joyous, my God, with thee,
Sweet harmony.

Brighter the way appears,
Lighted with heaven,
In which our Father lives,
With His children.
Spirit thoughts teaching me
my God, of thee,
Baptizing me.

Soaring on joyful wing,
Thinking of Him,
Sickness and woes forgot,
Evil and sin.
Always, my song shall be,
More of my God, to see,
My life to be.