

*Hymn 552, From out the Depths I Cry, O Lord, to Thee*

The words are from Psalm 130, so through the years there have been a good number of arrangements of music, and various ways of translating and organizing the words.

The one who arranged this hymn and published it was Charles H. Purday, whose name you see on the bottom of your page beneath the musical notes.

Mr. Purday started out as a very fine singer. So fine, in fact, that he actually sang at the coronation of Queen Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom, in 1838.

Just a few years later, Mr. Purday was appointed the conductor of Psalm singing at Crown Court Scots Church in Covent Garden, London, in the 1840s.

Mr. Purday was the conductor for a lot of worshippers to sing. These were the years of the ministry of The Rev. Dr. John Cummings. The church was so well attended in those years that it was said traffic could not move in Bow Street and Drury Lane, because of so many carriages making their way to church services.

We have this hymn before us now because the church music conductor, Mr. Purday, went on to become a music publisher, and even a pioneer to change the laws for copyrighting music.

As I mentioned, Mr. Purday was not the only one to take Psalm 130 and put it to music for singing. As undoubtedly Mr. Purday was aware, 336 years earlier, in 1524, the great Reformer, Pastor Martin Luther wrote a variation of Psalm 130 for singing. Luther lived from 1483-1546, began writing hymns in 1523 and composed them until his death in 1546.

Luther's versification of Psalm 130 was one of the metrical psalms. Like many of Luther's hymns, it was probably introduced first in a broadsheet in 1523, like a small newspaper, and sold in the streets. However, this hymn was also one of Luther's 4 early hymns printed into a book in 1524. The original four-stanza hymn based on Psalm 130, was soon replaced with a five-stanza version that became much more widely printed and sung.

Psalm 130, beginning "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord," was a favorite Psalm of Luther's. The famous British hymnologist John Julian states, "it ranks with the finest of German Psalm versions." That German version of the hymn, with Luther's tune, was sung at Luther's own funeral.

Now we sing Purday's music to one of Luther's favorite Psalms.

From Psalm 130.

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