

# Billy Graham's



## "My Answer"

DEAR DR. GRAHAM: I have a lot of habits that I suppose are bad for me, but I admit that I enjoy them. If I become a Christian, do you think God will make me give up these things?--B.D.H.

DEAR B.D.H.: Yes, God's will might well be that you give up these habits. You do not indicate what they are, but if they are things which are not helpful to you and in fact hurt you they do not honor God and should not be a part of your life.

Let me be clear about one thing: when you come to Jesus Christ, you are in effect asking him to take control of your life and you need help, and he alone can help you. The call of Christ is a call to follow him, and that means we must be willing to turn our backs on ways of living that are not pleasing to him and allow him to direct us and change us. Jesus said bluntly, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

But before you turn away from Christ and decide you want to keep on living without him, I want you to consider several

very important questions. First, are you sure these habits will give you happiness and peace in the years ahead? Look around you. Everywhere you will find people who have given themselves to all kinds of habits and pleasures--but they have come to the end of the road and discovered they are empty and unhappy. What makes you think you will be the exception?

Also, I have to tell you frankly that turning your back on Christ will not only harm you in this life but will have eternal consequences as well. Some day you will die and go into eternity. What are a few years of so-called pleasure here worth, when compared with an eternity separated from God? Jesus said, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" (Luke 9:25).

Christ came to give you life--far greater than anything you will ever find without him.

# History of Hymns

by William J. Reynolds

*Come, ye disconsolate, your wounded hearts, here where'er ye languish, tell your anguish: Earth has Come to the mercy seat, no sorrow that heav'n ferfently kneel; Here bring cannot heal.*

These comforting lines were written by Thomas Moore, an Irish Roman Catholic poet, in 1816. Born in Dublin, where his father was a grocer and wine-merchant, he studied law in London, and briefly held a government post in Bermuda.

In London he championed the Irish cause in the highest levels of society in the early 19th century. Through his disarmingly pleasant personality and the beauty of his songs, he greatly aided the Irish cause and became a national hero as had no other poet in Irish history.

Among his more popular songs were "The Last Rose of Summer" and "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," choice examples of his poetic skills and imagination.

In the literary community of his day, he was a friend of Byron and Shelley, and his own literary publications brought him fame and fortune.

London's leading literary critic, Lord Jeffrey, so bitterly criticized Moore's "Odes and Epistles," in 1806, that Moore challenged his critic to a duel. Just

as they were ready to fire, officers intervened and prevented bloodshed.

Moore became a favorite in London society circles. His musical gifts, his charming social graces, and his sparkling wit made him a welcomed guest in the most exclusive gatherings.

The imaginative lyric characteristic of Moore's writing is evident in the hymn. Here is poetic expression of unusual quality and typical of the romantic poetry of his day.

The biblical imagery in the reference to the "mercy seat" may be found in Exodus 25:17-22. It was the gold covering over the ark of the covenant and was regarded as the place of access to God. NEXT WEEK'S HYMN: "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus."

Dr. William J. Reynolds is on the faculty of the school of Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He is immediate past president of the Hymn Society of America and was formerly secretary of the Church Music Department of the Southern Baptist Sunday school board. A lecturer, musician and composer, he has written several books on hymns and was general editor of Baptist Hymnal.

## Cash

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Four months later shortly before midnight Pete McKnight's phone rang in Charlotte. It still pains him to tell what happened when he picked it up:

"It was Mary Cash, calling from Mexico City. Just moments before Cash's body had been found in a Reforma Hotel room, hanging from a bathroom door hook. She asked me to notify his parents in Shelby and, through a friend, her mother.

"I was dazed. Reveling in national acclaim for his new book, Cash had gone to Mexico on a Guggenheim fellowship and planned to try writing a Southern novel. Now that prodigious intellect was stilled forever, and I had lost a close friend.

To sum up Cash, unlike other writers such as Hemingway and O'Hara, did not learn to write well by working at a newspaper; in fact, his periodic style, laden with adjectives, would be anathema to modern newspapers. "Can you imagine trying to edit Cash's prose on deadline?" asked a chief editor at the present-day Observer. He shook his head.

Instead, newspapers provided Cash with the emotional acceptance, financial security, and sense of place in society that he needed in order to write *The Mind of the South*. Newspapers gave him friends and a wife, whom he had met when she was working part-time at the News. As Pete McKnight says:

"To write a great novel one must live. In the first six months of his happy marriage, Cash was just beginning to live."



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