

# Billy Graham's



## "My Answer"

DEAR DR. GRAHAM: Do you think it is right for a pastor to show favoritism to certain people in his congregation? Our

DEAR MRS. H.F.A: No, it would not be right for a pastor to act in this way if he was deliberately avoiding people who had spiritual needs and concentrated on only a few. The apostle Peter tells those who are pastors, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care" (1 Peter 5:2). Paul could say concerning his ministry in Ephesus, "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). Paul told the young pastor Timothy to do things "without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism" (1 Timothy 5:21).

Since I do not know your situation, however, let me say one or two other things. If it is true that your pastor seems to act in this way you ought to ask if there are some reasons why he does. For example, have some people--by their attitude or their criticism--made him feel

pastor willingly visits some people, but others he almost never even talks to. -- Mrs. H.F.A.

unwanted? If this is the case, then those who have acted in that way need to face their sin and confess it to God. If God has called a man to preach, those in his congregation should receive him as God's man. "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching" (1 Timothy 5:17).

Also, it is possible that your pastor does not visit many people or seem to give much attention to them because his time is completely given to those who have special needs (such as the sick). Let me ask you this: Are you seeking to help the pastor by visiting those who are in need yourself? All too often we think that we hire a pastor to do the spiritual work, and the rest of the church has no responsibility. But that is not so. We are all called to help and encourage each other. Pray for you pastor, and seek ways you and others in your congregation can help him do the work of the ministry.

# History of Hymns

by William J. Reynolds

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean  
In its fullness over me,*

*Underneath me, all around,  
Is the current of thy love;  
Leading onward, leading homeward,  
To my glorious rest above.*

Samuel Trevor Francis, the author of the hymn, grew up in the Church of England. Later he joined the Plymouth Brethren, a group of Christians in Plymouth, England, who met for prayer and fellowship and emphasized biblical prophecy.

A merchant of considerable means in London, he contributed generously of his time and fortune to religious and charitable works. During the Moody-Sankey meetings in England (1873-75), Francis assisted Ira D. Sankey in the music of the crusades.

At an early age he showed great interest in writing poetry, and his poems appeared in religious newspapers and other periodicals of his time.

The music used for singing Francis' hymn has both a real and fictional background. The real story is that the music was written in 1890 by Thomas John Williams, a Welsh musician born in the Swansea Valley of Glamorganshire. Within less than a decade after its writing, it became a favorite tune for the singing of several different hymn texts.

As its popularity grew, a London daily newspaper carried a story that provided the basis for the unfounded background story. In Wales, the tune was popularly known as "Ton-y-Botel," which in English means "the tune in the bottle."

The newspaper said that it was believed to have been picked up on the Welsh coast, sealed up in a bottle, and cast ashore by the waves.

Thursday, February 18, 1982  
Read Matthew 11:25-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. --Matthew 11:28 (asv)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, I want to trust in You when I am assailed by doubts and fears. Fill the emptiness of my heart with Your presence. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

There is no greater emptiness in our lives than that created by the absence of God.

The article continued with an apparently made-up story about a young man who had sung the tune in a private gathering. When asked the source of the tune, he laughingly told his friends that it had been discovered in a bottle, washed up on the Llein coast of Wales.

Though unfounded, this strange and fascinating story has remained even though the tune name long ago was re-christened "Ebenezer," the name that appears in most of our hymnals today.

By any name, this is a delightful tune that, when sung enthusiastically by a large group, has the effect of accumulating grandeur in the singing of the three stanzas.

NEXT WEEK'S HYMN: "Nearer, My God, to Thee"

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.



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