



My Answer

By Billy Graham

DEAR DR. GRAHAM: Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ really important? — J.A.L.

DEAR J.A.L.: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in human history. It is the watershed or dividing line between hope and despair.

The resurrection of Christ is important first of all because it shows that death has been defeated. Death is an intruder in the world, for God created the world perfect. Man's rebellion against God brought about death. But by his resurrection, Jesus Christ showed that the last enemy of man — death — has been defeated. And that means that you and I have the hope of eternal life. There is no reason to believe in life after death apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because he rose, he has given us assurance of life beyond the grave in Heaven for all who trust Christ. "We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence" (2 Corinthians 4:14).

The resurrection also proves that Jesus Christ is who he said he was — the Son of God. That means the death of Jesus was not a tragic accident, but God's means of bringing us salvation from sin. The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that God accepted the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world.

The real question, however, is this: is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important to you personally? Have you ever committed yourself to Christ, inviting him to be Lord of your life and trusting him alone for salvation? If not, make this a time of commitment, so you can know the hope of heaven by faith in Christ. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whosoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

History of Hymns

by William J. Reynolds

*Love divine, all loves Jesus, thou art all
excelling,
Joy of heaven, to Pure, unbounded
earth come down; love thou art;
Fix in us thy humble Visit us with thy
dwelling; salvation;
All thy faithful mer- Enter every trembl-
cies crown. ing heart.*

There were few hymns that dealt with the idea that God is love when this hymn was first published in 1747. Charles Wesley's opening line declares that God's love exceeds all other loves that we know.

The hymn was a welcomed addition to Wesleyan hymn-singing, for it mirrored the preaching of both John and Charles Wesley.

Both in hymnic meter and poetic expression, Wesley imitated the opening lines of John Dryden's play, *King Arthur*:

*Fairest Isle, all Isles excelling
Seats of Pleasures and of Love,
Venus here will choose her Dwelling
And forsake her Cyprian Groves.*

Favorite words of Wesley were "all" and "every," for these lines occur like a resounding gong or drumbeat through all his hymns. The Wesleys preached that Jesus provides salvation for all persons — for everyone — not just a select few. Many scriptural allusions are in those stanzas for Wesley was highly skilled in putting a maximum of content into a minimum of poetic lines.

The tune most frequently sung to this text was composed in 1870, by John Zundel. Born in Germany, educated in Russia, Zundel came to America in 1847. Beginning in 1850, he served for 30 years as organist at Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, N.Y.

At Plymouth Church, Zundel's organ playing became as popular as Beecher's preaching. Crowds thronged to the services, so great was the reputation of the church for great preaching, skillful organ playing, and thrilling congregational singing.

While Zundel wrote a number of hymn tunes, only this one survives in our hymnals. It is variously named "Love Divine," or "Beecher," or "Zundel."

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