

## I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus

### ~Other Speakers G-L: Hymn Stories:

Author --Frances Ridley Havergal, 1836-1879

Composer --Ethelbert W. Bullinger, 1837-1913

Tune Name --"Bullinger"

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Jeremiah 17:7

"I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus--Trusting only Thee."

This is another of the child-like, but beautiful expressions from the soul of the esteemed English poetess, Frances Ridley Havergal, often referred to as "the Sweetest Voice of Hymnody." Though highly educated and cultured, Miss Havergal always maintained a simple, child-like faith and confidence in her Lord. She is generally called "the consecration poet," since her hymns so reflect this quality. Her entire life was characterized by spiritual saintliness. It is said that she never wrote a line of verse without first fervently praying over it, and then she gave God all the credit for its composition:

"I believe my King suggests a thought, and whispers me a musical line or two, and then I look up and thank Him delightedly and go on with it. That is how my hymns come."

Frances R. Havergal was born on December 14, 1836, in Astley, Worcestershire, England, into a cultured, religious family. Her father, William Havergal, was an influential Anglican clergyman, who for many years was also involved in improving and composing English hymnody. At the age of three, Frances could read, and at the age of seven, she was already writing verses. She received her education at English and German boarding schools and enjoyed exceptional advantages of culture and travel. She became a natural linguist, mastering French, German, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Miss Havergal was also a devoted Bible student, memorizing much of the New Testament as well as the Psalms, Isaiah, and the Minor Prophets. She was a brilliant pianist and interpreter of the music of the masters, especially Handel, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven, and was also a lovely singer. Her numerous little books of poems and hymn texts are now treasured all over England and America. Perhaps the keynote of them is her own expression: "Thy will be done is not a sigh, but only a song."

Frances Havergal, though seventeen years younger, was a contemporary of America's best-known, gospel song writer of this era, Fanny Crosby (1820-1915). Although these two gifted women never met, each was an ardent admirer of the other. The following is a letter sent by Miss Havergal 128 to Fanny Crosby:

"Dear blind sister over the sea--  
An English heart goes forth to thee.  
We are linked by a cable of faith and song,  
Flashing bright sympathy swift along.  
One in the East and one in the West,  
Singing for Him whom our souls love best.  
Singing for Jesus! Telling His love  
All the way to our home above,  
Where the severing sea, with its restless tide  
Never shall hinder and never divide.  
Sister, what shall our meeting soon be  
When our hearts shall sing and our eyes shall see?"

Frail in health all of her life, Miss Havergal one day caught a severe cold which caused inflammation of the lungs. When told that her life was in danger, she exclaimed, "If I am really going, it is too good to be true! " At another time she responded, "Splendid! To be so near the gates of heaven. " At the very end, it is reported that she sang clearly, but faintly, another of her hymns, "Jesus, I Will Trust Thee, Trust Thee With My Soul. " Then, according to reports by her sister,

"She looked up steadfastly, as if she saw the Lord; and surely nothing less heavenly could have reflected such a glorious radiance upon her face. For ten minutes we watched that almost visible meeting with her King, and her countenance was so glad, as if she were already talking to Him! Then she tried to sing; but after one sweet, high note her voice failed, and as her brother commended her soul into the Redeemer's hand, she passed away."

## I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus

Frances Havergal died at the early age of forty-two on June 3, 1879, in Swansea, Wales. On her tombstone at Astley, Worcestershire, is carved her favorite text, I John 1:7--"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The composer of the music, Ethelbert W. Bullinger, was born at Canterbury, England, December 15, 1837, a direct descendent of Johann H. Bullinger, the great Swiss Reformer. He was an Anglican clergyman, known as an able Greek and Hebrew scholar, receiving an honorary D.D. degree from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1881, in recognition of his accomplishments. Throughout his life, he maintained a keen interest in church music and composed several other hymn tunes. This is the only one, however, still in common usage. It was composed in 1874 and first appeared in Wesley's Hymns and New Supplement (1877). He was also the author of many books including: The Companion Bible, Commentary on Revelation, The Giver and His Gifts now titled Word Studies on the Holy Spirit, Great Cloud of Witnesses in Hebrews Eleven, Number in Scripture, and The Witness of the Stars.

"I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus" was said to be Miss Havergal's 129 favorite of all her hymns. It was written at Ormont, Dessous, Switzerland, in 1874. A copy of the text was found in her personal Bible after her death.

Frances R. Havergal is also the author of the hymns "I Gave My Life for Thee" (101 Hymn Stories, No. 34) and "Take My Life and Let It Be" (ibid., No. 87).

"Dare to look up to God and say, Deal with me in the future as Thou wilt; I am of the same mind as Thou art; I am Thine; I refuse nothing that pleases Thee; lead me where Thou wilt; clothe me in any dress Thou chooseth. " Discourses by Epictetus