

Face to Face

By
Bill Dagle

For years now, I have referred to this hymn as the “jelly hymn” because of the story behind the hymn. The author, Grant C. Tullar, called this hymn his “jelly song” because of what took place in Rutherford, New Jersey, in 1898, at the home of Pastor and Mrs. Mead. In his own words, he tells us what happened there while holding a series of evangelistic meetings:

My fondness for jelly was not long a secret and my hostess, Mrs. Mead, did her best to see that a reasonable supply was always on the table. The Pastor, his wife and myself had spent the afternoon calling on the sick, so we were a bit hurried in the preparation for supper that evening, and the jelly dish was neglected. It had only a wee dab of jelly in it, and as I passed it to the others, I possibly showed fear lest they should not refuse it. But host and hostess refused it, and as I started to help myself I said, “So this is all for me, is it?”

At that instant, “All for me” as a theme for a song thrust itself upon my mind with such force that I placed the dish again on the table without taking any jelly, and excusing myself, went to the piano and wrote the melody and a few verses, the first one beginning:

All for me the savior suffered

All for me he bled and died.

The Pastor asked if he might sing it at the service, that night, before I preached. He told the people the story of its writing and declared he had found the secret of getting Mr. Tullar to write good songs—“Don’t feed him too much jelly!”

That would be the end of the story, but the Lord had better things to come for Tullar’s new song. The next day a letter arrived for Rev. Tullar from Mrs. Carrie Breck. A native of Walden, Vermont, now living in Portland, Oregon, Mrs. Breck had posted a number of poems to the evangelist. One of the poems caught his eye; and he discovered that his new melody fit exactly with her words. The Lord was orchestrating a new hymn all along—a hymn that would remind us that a day of reckoning is coming for all. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews. (9:27). Either you will meet Jesus as your savior or as your judge. The choice is yours. It is better to receive Christ as your savior today; and with the song writer, you too can say:

Face to face with Christ, my Saviour, Face to face—what will it be? When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me.

Only faintly now I see Him, With the darkling veil between, But a blessed day is coming, When His glory shall be seen.

What rejoicing in His presence, When are banished grief and pain; When the crooked ways are straightened, And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face! O blissful moment! Face to face—to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ who loves me so.

Chorus

Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!