

Behind the Hymn: I Cannot Tell

I had long admired William Y. Fullerton's hymn, "I Cannot Tell". As part of my product development duties at Lillenas Publishing Company, I had sought places to use it in publication. But arrangers to whom I presented it would never choose it. Finally one of them told me why: the text had too many archaic phrases and would need a rewrite.

April 12-17, 1996, I did that rewrite, and since then, the hymn has enjoyed broad usage in hymnals and choral publications. Many individuals have singled it out for praise. But I have to make an honest admission: for me, my version does not have the poetic subtlety or depth of insight of William Y. Fullerton's original version.

Yet many find it meaningful because it makes the majestic mysteries of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and eternal triumph accessible to the minds and hearts of believers.

Father, it is Yours.

--Ken Bible

Hymn: [I Cannot Tell](#)