



I must admit I am plagiarizing myself on this hymn devotion; however, I find the subject hymn the most excellent upon which to comment at the beginning of a new year.

There is one story that is unchanging, absolute, and immutable – the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ beginning at Genesis 1:1 and concluding at Revelations 22:21. The most ancient of truths will become the New Creation of that New Beginning created of God on the final sound of the Trumpet. The Ancient Landmark of God's Word, long abandoned by the wider church, will become the new Chart and Compass for that new Creation.

There is, in the deepest chambers and sinews of the heart of each person, a longing for the better elements of the ancient times past. If the lyrics are ignored, there is something spiritually appealing in the tune, Auld Lang Syne - it evokes tender and cherished memories, does it not? The tenderness of a mother's embrace remains deeply woven into the mystic longings of the most savage of men. A father's tenderness of a kiss on the brow of a precious little daughter is the fabric that is woven into her heart of love forever. This is the beginning of love sent down from the Father and Author of Love. It is echoed in the mother's and father's love for their children just as God regards those of His own Elect from His Fountain of Love. The truly Old is identical to the truly New in God's equation. The Garden of Eden (the Paradise of God) remains unchanged on deposit beyond the Gates of Splendor along with that beautiful Tree of Life which is Christ:

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the **tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see

his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

Though our society, along with many churches, have become drunken with the new wine of social immorality, the ancient truth remains written large in the annals of God and His Ancient Landmark, *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.* Neither the wizard of medicine nor the perverse desires of fallen man can alter that fact one iota! All the surgeries of the physician will not alter the inherent DNA even to the slightest in atomic and molecular structure.

I want to share with you the Old, Old unchanging story of God's love at the beginning of this year; but first, I would like to request that you make a list of ten-only resolutions for the New Year of some big improvement in your life, or some bad habits or deeds you will forsake. Place them in your Bible and wait two months; then, open your Bible and see how good you are at keeping your own Ten Commandments! If you are unable to keep your own petty resolutions, how do you ever expect to keep those Commandments of God? The only means of obedience must be enforced by love that echo's that greater Love from God, the Father of Lights, above. It is His love and grace that opens the floodgates of mercy and sacrificial living for us! *And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. (2 John 1:5-6)*

Tell Me The Old, Old Story

W*HOM shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (Isaiah 28:9-11)*

T*HUS saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. (Jer 6:16)*

The oldest and most priceless story ever told is the Old, Old Story of the Redeemer promised by God in Eden's lush Garden. Mrs. Kate Hankey has performed a wonderful service to the Church in writing a hymn that brings to mind the grandeur and critical importance to us of remembering every detail of that '*Old, Old Story of Unseen Things Above.*' This is by no means the only hymn by Hankey that directs our memory back to those treasures of God's Word from Eden until now. Another, among many, is entitled, *I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY.* Today's hymn was composed in 1866 during a serious illness. The music is by William Howard Doane. (1869) I will relate another testimonial associated with the story which I quote from Mr. Steven Miller:

The story is told of a dear old saint who was dying in Ireland, and a young minister who came in to be at his bedside. The old saint enjoyed conversation, but the younger man confessed his embarrassment in not knowing how to keep up the conversation. The dying man consoled his visitor by saying, Just tell me the old, old story. Just the old, old story, nothing more. It is said that when this incident was related to Miss Hankey, it inspired her to write her famous hymn.

Tell Me The Old, Old Story

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
Tell me the story simply, as to a little child,
for I am weak and weary and helpless and defiled.

Refrain:

Tell me the old, old story, tell me the old, old story,
tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and his love.

Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in,
that wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.
tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;
the early dew of morning has passed away at noon.

Refrain:

Tell me the story softly, with earnest tones and grave;
remember I'm the sinner whom Jesus came to save.
Tell me the story always, if you would really be,
in any time of trouble, a comforter to me.

Refrain:

Tell me the same old story when you have cause to fear
that this world's empty glory is costing me too dear.
Yes, and when that world's glory is dawning on my soul,
tell me the old, old story: Christ Jesus makes thee whole.

Refrain:

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. Tell me the story simply, as to a little child, for I am weak and weary and helpless and defiled It is an irony of the spirit that often the one who suffers physical blindness can see those unseen things above' far better than those of us with 20/20 physical vision. Our youth choir today (Palm Sunday) sang *Praise Him, Praise Him* by the lady blind from infancy – Fanny Cosby. Many of Fanny's hymns dwell upon seeing and believing, but she means seeing with the Spirit and not the eyes. The ancient fathers knew something of the love of God, but I do not believe they could fully grasp the beauty and completeness of its expression in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was LOVE personified! Is it the vanity of pride that prevents us from believing as a little child for, **2** *And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,* **3** *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* **4** *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven..* (Matt 18:2-4) There is no soul with greater joy than that of a little child who knows he is loved. If we belong to Christ, there could no greater love be showered upon us than that of the One who laid down His life to redeem us from our sins.

Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in, that wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin. tell me the story often, for I forget so soon; the early dew of morning has passed away at noon. Amazing point here from which preachers could learn an important lesson. Christ never screamed or jumped about in pretended drama while preaching. He most often sat down and spoke in a very conversational tone. Truth needs no human emphasis. I do not say that the normal accentuated pitch and tone of the voice should not be used in making points in preaching; but, really, are we entertainers or servants of God called upon to share His Word? One cardinal rule of teaching and learning is this: *Repetition aids recall.* There is repetition of 'line upon line,

precept upon precept in God's Word. Important points are repeated often to reinforce their importance to us. We need to hear the old, old story of our Lord from Genesis to Revelations, and often repeated. Not only are our memories incapable of holding every point, but even those points that we do remember need regular watering with the Word. The dew aids the rose every morning, but it evaporates in the heat of life and needs the replenishment of distillation each day.

Tell me the story softly, with earnest tones and grave; remember I'm the sinner whom Jesus came to save. Tell me the story always, if you would really be, in any time of trouble, a comforter to me. Does the spiritual manner with which we expound upon the Word of God matter? Yes! It definitely matters. Let me give you an example from Holy Scripture. Do you recall the incident at Jacob's Well in which a Samaritan Woman of ill repute came to the Well to be met by Christ? She was notorious in the village as an adulteress; however, her credibility changed once she knew Christ. *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.* (John 4:28-30) Suddenly, the woman had a new credibility. Her fervency of expression proved that 'something' had happened in her heart. *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.* (John 4:39) The woman's testimony had the ring of truth. Many BELIEVED on Christ for her testimony. Do we have that strength of faith in our own testimonies so that men will believe our testimonies?

Tell me the same old story when you have cause to fear that this world's empty glory is costing me too dear. Yes, and when that world's glory is dawning on my soul, tell me the old, old story: Christ Jesus makes thee whole. Please let us adhere to that SAME old story preached by the prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles. If we will demand pure water from the spring, we must drop our buckets upstream from the herd where men and beasts have muddied the waters. The story is changeless and immutable. It is all the seamless story of redemption and election in Christ from the beginning. Christ healed lepers, the paraplegic, the demon possessed, the deaf and dumb, and the blind; but these healings are not sufficient to make one whole – the entire man must be healed to be made whole. Only our Lord can make us whole in body, mind, and soul. Though we may forget, we pray the Holy Ghost to bring to our remembrance all that is written in Holy Scripture about our Lord Jesus Christ, and that, by the way, is every Word of Scripture.

Refrain

Tell me the old, old story, tell me the old, old story, tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and his love. Three times for emphasis is the appeal repeated *Tell me the old, old story* and it could be repeated one thousand times without exaggeration. The old, old story is sealed by that inestimable LOVE of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The heart of each saint has the Crimson Seal of His blood upon the Gates and passageways of the Temple of his Heart.