

Hymns of the Church – *The Tree of Life* – 17 November 2015, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



*In the midst of the street...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. (Revelation 22:2)*

*And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. (Gen 2:8-10)*

There seems to be a growing misconception - both unbiblical and untrusting - that God is unable, somehow, to finish that which He begins. To this misconception of God, many false ministers ascribe believing that God failed in His Creation in the Garden, eastward, in Eden. Do you, friend, believe that nonsense? If you believe that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, do you not need to believe also that He cannot fail? Do you not believe that God knew Adam would sin in the Garden before He created him from the dust of the earth? He did, indeed, know of Adam's fall long before the event occurred. The Mind of the Creator that conceived all of Creation, along with the heavenly bodies in their circuits, cannot fail in His foreknowledge and even predestinative intent.

Why would our Father provide for our salvation in the Person of Jesus Christ long before the worlds were made if there had been no perceived need for a Savior? . . . . *ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20)* When God declares His Will, it is as good as done though declared millennia before the consummation of it. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. (Rev 13:8-9)*

Admittedly, this is a mystery that may not square with our understanding, but the Bible is filled with mysteries that do not square with our understanding. For example, how could the God of Heaven love our miserable fellows enough to send His only Begotten Son to die a terrible death to redeem us of our sins? Many such mysteries will not be stone-clear to us until we pass over the waters of Jordan Banks. Just because they are mysteries to us do not lend any credence whatsoever to their being discounted. The clay does not dictate to the Potter and has no idea what it shall become in the Potter's Hands. *Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.* (Jer 18:6)

Our beautiful hymn today is of the Tree of Life by that dearly beloved, and blind from infancy, hymn writer, Fanny Crosby. Though blind, Fanny's hymn describes beauty that often escapes those with excellent eyesight. Here spiritual eye was strong to see and understand the things of God. Miss Crosby published the lyrics in 1875 to the music composed by Chester G. Allen. Fanny Crosby crossed over Jordan Banks in 1915 and could even better describe that Tree today.

### **The Tree of Life**

Our Father has planted a beautiful tree,  
Whose evergreen branches His children behold;  
They walk 'neath its shade in the City above,  
Whose gates are of pearl and whose streets are of gold.

Refrain

We may eat of the beautiful tree of life,  
That stands in the midst of the City so fair;  
We may eat of its fruit and be healed with its leaves;  
No hunger, no sickness, no sorrow is there.

Beside the pure river of crystal it grows,  
And yieldeth its fruit every month, we are told;  
Its leaves for the healing of nations designed,  
The nations who dwell in that City of gold.

Refrain

The hand of the Savior will wipe every tear,  
And banish forever the darkness of night;  
Sweet anthems eternal that region shall fill,  
The Lord is its glory, the Lord is its light.

Refrain

*Our Father has planted a beautiful tree, Whose evergreen branches His children behold; They walk 'neath its shade in the City above, Whose gates are of pearl and whose streets are of gold.* My Lord has allowed each of us of faith to have a passing glimpse of that Tree of Life. In fact, the day that we came to know the Lord as our personal Savior was the same day we saw that Tree - for that Tree represents our Lord Jesus Christ in full fruit and foliage. Our Father planted many trees in the Garden, but two of particular distinction in the midst of the Garden - the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Given our own volition, man will never choose the Tree of Life, but opt for that which satisfies his carnal imagination - the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God knew this from the beginning. The Tree of Life represents His dearly beloved Son. He was rejected by Adam and Eve in favor of Satan's counterfeit. "*Ye shall not surely die!*" the serpent whispered to Eve in direct contradiction of God's Word. So sin, suffering and death came upon all mankind, and even all Creation, because of our Federal head in the flesh - Adam. The Tree of Life has branches that are evergreen

because our Lord is rooted in the Water of Life and that River of Life in Heaven today.

Christ is our shade from the heat of worldly passions, and His branches over-arch us now, and in that future City so fair. The gates are of Pearl. I wonder why? Could it be because pearls are formed by the tears of the oyster when an impurity enters its shell? Could it be that those pearls represents the tears of the saints formed around the dreadful sins of the world that have invaded, not only the world, but even the Church itself?

*Beside the pure river of crystal it grows, And yieldeth its fruit every month, we are told; Its leaves for the healing of nations designed, The nations who dwell in that City of gold.* Like our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life is all encompassing. He is our "All in All," and so will be that Tree of Life that was taken from us in the Garden. That River of Life along whose banks the Tree grows is also representative of our Lord who is the Word and Water of Life. Christ is the only cure for the ills of the nations. Would it not be an awesome blessing if our own nation would turn to Christ again for healing?

*The hand of the Savior will wipe every tear, And banish forever the darkness of night; Sweet anthems eternal that region shall fill, The Lord is its glory, the Lord is its light.* When the Hand of Christ wipes away every tear, our hearts will burn with love to see those same nail-scarred hands by which our salvation was purchased. HIS Hands will bear the scars, but not OURS, for He makes all things NEW! *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* (Rev 21:5-6) Once Christ said, "**It is finished!**" but now He says, "**It is done!**" - all of His works for us are done! No tears, no sickness, no suffering, and no sin. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* (Rev 21:4) You will recall that Jesus (Emmanuel) is with us, and while we are in the world, He is the Light of the world; but now, He is the Light of Heaven for us at that day: *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* (Rev 21:23)

Isn't it amazing a woman, blind from infancy, could learn so much biblical truth without sight to read? We have clear vision and sight, why can we not take the time to study the majesty and beauty of God's Word? Remember: . . . *to whom much is given, much shall be required.* (see Luke 12:48) Fanny took that biblical truth that she had learned in earnest and wove it into her more than 9,000 hymns. What hymn are you weaving in your life's hymn today?