

The Three Trees



We are fortunate indeed to live in this particular part of the world; for at this time of Easter, the Resurrection of our Lord, nature gives us, in this season of spring, so many examples of new life. It is a time of renewal in nature and a good time, as St. Paul exhorts us in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 12, verse 2 to consider the renewal of the spirit of our minds to be a new person serving God in righteousness and true holiness.

At this time, we are surrounded by the first flowers of spring, the snowdrops, white for purity, and shortly thereafter, the golden daffodils, the gold of Kings, and the budding forth of the trees.

Christians, throughout the ages, have looked upon the Cross of Christ as the true Arbor Vitae, the Tree of Life. Of course, that does not shut out the identification of the Tree of Life with our Lord Himself. But, viewed in either way, the fruits of the Tree are blessings that come to us from His redemption of the world by His Passion and Death upon the Cross, and His Resurrection and Ascension to present Himself as our Sacrifice in Heaven. We may regard these blessings as answers to the questions: ‘Why did it all happen?’ ‘Has it any meaning for us now?’ ‘Why should such a life end in suffering and death?’

We must realize that the Cross does not stand out as an isolated event. It is the consummation of all that our Lord did and suffered in the thirty-three years of His life on earth.

God became Man that He might make Himself known as He had never been known before: as He never could be known by men until they saw Him in their own nature.

God has declared His favour to His chosen people, He had given evidence of His good will even to the vast Gentile world but, to show that His very nature is love, God had to come Himself. ‘Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ The Cross reveals the amazing truth that such love is the very character of God.

Christ Jesus sacrificed Himself upon the Cross, in perfect obedience to His Father, so that he might perfect our human nature, carrying it through death that we might share His Risen Life and live by Him forever. He offered us in Himself to the Father, He restored us to our destined union with Him and he made us “partakers of His Divine Nature.” On the Cross, He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Now Christ calls upon us to own Him as the Captain of our salvation and ‘to fight manfully under the banner of His Cross against the world, the flesh and the devil, and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our life’s end’.

The Cross beneath which we carry on his work is not the symbol of doubt or defeat, but of an accomplished triumph. In the army of the Crucified, we are already “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

We have to show forth that triumph in the midst of a tangled, doubting world scene by our example of Godly living in the place where we are, working

with God in the salvation of souls. This is the immense privilege, as well as the imperative obligation of every Christian believer.

In rejecting the Kingdom of Satan, we raise up the heavenly Jerusalem, the city that is built round, and is supported by our Lord as the Corner Stone, the great Central Tower from which radiance and strength stream forth through all His members, we, the living stones. That celestial fabric is the final and eternal outcome of the Passion of our Lord on Mount Calvary. “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. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it.” Then shall the richness of His redemption be revealed; for “in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bore twelve manner of fruit and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations.”

In the Garden of Eden, the downfall of man was caused by eating of the Tree of Life which was in the midst of the Garden.

Christ died on the Tree of Calvary for our redemption, making there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

In the Book of the Revelation, the Son of Man, bearing the seven stars and seven candlesticks, tells St. John “to him that overcometh the evil of the world, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Tree is central in each of these accounts.

Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing.”

May God grant us the fullness of Christ’s blessing, May He strengthen and renew us in the new life secured for us by Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.
AMEN.