

Blessed Assurance

No seven

Throughout the 19th century, the overwhelming majority of evangelical churchgoers were preoccupied with the popular hymnody which focused on spiritual experience. One of the most successful and prolific of the writers was the blind Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915), who produced possibly 9000 poems; the majority were set to music, of which sixty are still commonly used. One of Crosby's closest friends was an amateur musician Mrs. Joseph Knapp. On one of her visits to the poetess she brought a melody she had composed. "What does the tune say?" she asked Crosby, after playing it a few times. The blind woman responded immediately:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

"Blessed assurance" is still a favourite hymn, expressing the certainty of the unbreakable bond we have with Christ. Christians may possess "blessed assurance" right now. We often get the impression from those who proclaim the Gospel that the victory Christ won over death and hell will benefit us only after we die. This is not the Biblical picture at all! Nowhere does it say that we will inherit eternal life after death. It is ours now - if we believe. Those who are linked to Christ by faith, and who are nourished by the bread of life, will pass from this life to heaven with the relationship unbroken. Our life with Jesus cannot be lost (Rom.14: 8). Jesus says, "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5: 24). Our names are "written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev.21: 27). It is the roster of our heavenly citizenship. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Philippian church, says, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil.3: 20), or as Moffat renders it, "We are a colony of heaven." We have a dual citizenship. Through our flesh and blood we belong to this earth. Through our rebirth we belong to heaven. We do not belong to this world doomed to destruction. While living here on earth, we are like a colony in an invisible land. Although we may be nonresidents here, in due time we expect to arrive in our heavenly homeland. Doctrines have consequences. We live what we believe. We have died with Christ and have been raised with Him (Rom.6; Col.2:12). We have also ascended with Him. We are already now in "heavenly places with Christ"(Eph.2: 4-7). What a "blessed assurance!" A marvelous "foretaste of glory divine!"