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MESSIAH'S GLORY IS AT THE DOOR

The Stones Announce the Signs of His Presence.

KINGDOM OF GREAT POWER.

Pastor Russell Preaches His First Pastoral Sermon at Washington Temple. The Message of the Hour—Not the Burning of the World, but the Rolling Away of the Curse and the Uplift of Humanity Will Result From the Messianic Kingdom of a Thousand Years.



Washington City, Jan. 5.—Pastor Russell, having accepted the call of the Washington Temple Congregation (Unitarian), preached his first pastoral sermon in the Temple today. He announced that his first three sermons here will be based upon texts cut in the stone front of our handsome Union Station. The first of these served him today: "Thou hast put all things under Him." (Psalm 8:6.) The speaker said:—

Our text is a prophecy respecting the Divine intention that eventually Messiah's Kingdom shall be established in majesty and power. Victoriously it shall overthrow the Prince of Darkness and his reign of sin and death. Gradually it will emancipate humanity, healing their sin-sickness, opening their blinded eyes of understanding, and un-stopping their deaf ears to the Message of Divine grace and peace. Eventually every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God. In the language of our text, Divine Power will be exercised through Messiah and His Kingdom to the full subjection of every earthly thing to Him.

From day to day we repeat the Lord's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven." Its fulfillment would be impossible aside from the associated promise of the Bible that the present Dispensation of preaching the Gospel is eventually to give way to the Messianic Kingdom and its reign of force. Many Christian people entirely overlook this feature of the Divine Program—that the New Dispensation is to be ushered in by a Time of Trouble which will wreck everything not fully in accord with the Divine standards.

A Kingdom of Power and Glory.

I remind you of the Divine decree respecting Messiah's Kingdom recorded in the Second Psalm: "I will give Thine heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This prophecy is referred to by our Lord, who declared that its fulfillment would be after the completion of His Church, to participate with Him in the work of bringing the world into proper subjection to the rules of righteousness, justice and love. He says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne." "To him that overcometh . . . will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken into shivers: even as I received of My Father."—Revelation 3:21; 2:26, 27.

A failure to apply the Scripture portraying the transfer of the government of earth from the Prince of Darkness to the Prince of Light has confused the minds of many and led them to expect things contrary to the Divine Word. The very Scripture so frequently quoted in support of a gradual conversion of the world declares that this transfer will not be by the conversion of the world—that it will be by Messiah's taking possession of man's inheritance purchased by Him for humanity at Calvary. The nations will become Christ's by the conquering power of the terrible trouble in which the nations will be angry and God's wrath will come.—Revelation 11:15-18.

The Pendulum's Swing.

In the long ago past our forefathers studied these Scriptures, but misunderstood and misapplied them. They assumed that God had given to the Church authority to establish His Kingdom. The espoused virgin Church became united or married to the world—to civil power—and ceased to wish for and to pray for the Heavenly Bridegroom to whom she was espoused through the Gospel. Under the delusions that she had been authorized to establish Messiah's Kingdom and that her share in earthly dominion brought about by union with civil power constituted it the Kingdom of Messiah, the Church endeavored to apply and to fulfill these prophecies.

An attempt was made to rule the world with a rod of iron through the civil governments, and to put under the Church's feet everything antagonistic to her supposed rights and interests. As a result of this mistaken interpretation of the Lord's Word, the world was drenched with blood, and atrocities were committed by professed followers of Christ, who, however sincere they were in many respects, served the cause of Satan and misrepresented the Cause of God.

Imperfect human reasoning is apt to go from one extreme to the opposite.

Hence, revolting from the thought of the Church's conquering the world by sword and flame, by thumb-screw and rack and stake, the general misconception turned to an expectation of conquering the world by the Gospel Message. This second mistake is not so serious in some respects as the first—it does not involve horrible atrocities in the name of God and the Savior. However, it is equally misleading as respects the Truth. It sets aside the Word of God and substitutes the human theory that the preaching of the Gospel is to convert the world. The Divine Word is that the preaching of the Gospel is for the purpose of selecting a Church to be Messiah's joint-heirs in His Kingdom.

If the Church could convert the world with the Gospel, it would be very fine. But it is surely absurd to so expect in the face of our experiences of the past century and of the plain statements of God's Word to the contrary. All see that the world is not being converted; and that if Christianity cannot convert the people at home, it would be vain for her to expect to convert the heathen abroad. If great religious centers such as London, Rome and Washington are no nearer to having God's will done in them as it is done in Heaven, what hope would there be of better results in heathendom?

I am not saying one word against Foreign Missions. God forbid! In proportion as we are able to send the light of Truth into more benighted lands, let us do so. But, if possible, let us send the True Light from God's Word. And let us trim our lamps that we ourselves may have that True Light in our favored land. What we urge is that Christian people should come back to the teaching of the Bible. In order to do this, each denomination should throw away its creedal spectacles, which have injured the spiritual sight of all of us. All true children of God should study afresh the Divine Chart, which shows us where we are and the Port for which we should strive.

Heirs of the Kingdom.

Thus doing, all is plain. The shadows and mists of darkness flee away. We begin to realize and to see that the Elect Church are all that are being saved as yet; and that they are being chosen out of the world for a very special high office in joint-heirship with their Redeemer.

The non-elect are not consigned to endless misery nor to purgatorial torture, but simply sleep, awaiting the glorious awakening in the morning of the New Dispensation—awaiting the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom with power for their release from the chains of sin and the prison-house of the tomb. If this Message goes to the heathen of the Orient, it will doubtless deal with them as it has done with the peoples of the Occident—all will receive enlightenment; a few will be drawn to sainthood and prepared under the Lord's providence for glory, honor and immortality with Jesus at His Second Coming, by the glorious "change" of the First Resurrection.

Let Us Connect Up Our Text.

In the Eighth Psalm we find the Prophet expressing amazement at the greatness of the Creator as manifested in nature, especially in the starry firmament. He then expresses amazement that so great a Being should take heed to humanity in its present deplorable, fallen, sinful condition. Prophetically he implies a knowledge of the fact that God from the beginning purposed a redemption for every member of the race.

The Prophet then answers his own question as to what man is, explaining that as he left the hand of his Creator he was crowned with glory and honor, as an earthly image of his Maker, only a little lower in gradation or scale than the angels. He was made to have dominion over the earthly works of God. The intimation is that God's visiting of humanity in due time will mean the reclamation of the earthly dominion and its human king from sin and death. Nothing in the prophecy goes into detail, because it was not then due time for details to be revealed.

Centuries Later St. Paul Commented.

St. Paul declares, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed." The greater nearness should make many features of that salvation much more conspicuous. Taking up David's prophecy, he shows that it implies human Restitution, the bringing of mankind back to the image and likeness of God and to the full dominion of earth—the redemption fully offsetting the curse. "But," the Apostle proceeds, "we see not yet all things put under him." (Hebrews 2:8.) Do we see anything? Has any star of hope arisen guaranteeing the coming blessings? Yes! The Apostle declares, "We see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor"—just as the first man was—and this in order that He might suffer death—in order that He might be the Redeemer or Ransomer of the first man and his family, humanity.

Thus we see that the foundation has been laid for God's return of favor to humanity—a Sin-Offering and Atonement, covering Adam and all of his race. What a grand superstructure of blessings will ultimately be erected upon this broad and gracious foundation! But we ask, Why the long delay of more than eighteen centuries?—and yet the work of uplifting the race of Adam from sin and death has only been started—only the Church have had their eyes and ears of understanding opened, permitting them to come into relationship with God through Christ.

The Answer is Important.

Unless it be seen that the work of this Gospel Age has been specially to select the Church, Christ's joint-heirs in His Messianic Kingdom, no answer can be given as to why the Almighty has so long delayed to bring to earth

the Heavenly Kingdom. His blessings waited for and prayed for are still future. They cannot come until the First-fruits shall have been harvested. St. James (1:18) declares that the Church is a kind of First-fruits unto God of His creatures. Through this First-fruits the Divine blessing will operate amongst men for a thousand years, to restore that which was lost—human perfection in the image and likeness of the Creator.

St. Paul's argument proceeds along this line. He declares that the first feature of the Divine Plan is to bring many sons to glory—as joint-heirs with Jesus. As Jesus was made perfect through sufferings, so these following, Him as their Captain and Leader, walking in His steps, are also to be made perfect through sufferings, for "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with him."—Heb. 2:10; 2 Tim. 2:12.

Proceeding, the Apostle discusses this sanctified class, Head and Body. They are sanctified or set apart under a special covenant, which reads, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) This special sanctification or setting apart to sacrifice marks this little company of sons of God as separate and distinct from all others of God's creatures. With their Lord and Head, they are heirs of God—joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with Him. The Redeemer who sanctifies them and those who are sanctified through Him "are all of one [Body or company], for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren—in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee."—Heb. 2:11, 12.

Christ Jesus and His Children.

Then the Apostle's argument broadens so as to include the general scope of Messiah's redemptive work—extending beyond the Church, His Body, to Adam and all the families of the earth. St. Paul quotes in proof of this, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me." This statement evidently applies to those who will be saved to the human, earthly salvation during the Millennium. They will all be the children of Messiah. That it could not refer to the Church is evident; for we are never styled the children of Christ, but His brethren, His spouse, His members.

St. Peter elsewhere emphasizes this, saying, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us." (1 Peter 1:3.) Jesus emphasized this also, saying, "My Father and your Father." Never did the Master speak of Himself as the Father of His Church class, nor would it be an appropriate figure that He should be represented as espoused to His own children. On the contrary, He is prophetically declared to be the Father of restored humanity. To the world He becomes the Second Adam. The first Adam, the qualified head or father of humanity, failed to give ever lasting life because of his disobedience, by which he himself came under the sentence of death.

The Logos left the Heavenly glory was made flesh and was crowned with glory and honor like the first man—that He might taste death for every man—that He might redeem the race from the sentence of death. In making satisfaction for sin He associates with Himself the Elect, who present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, as His members. Then in dealing with the world He will officially take the place of Live-Giver, or parent—to restore, to regenerate, to revive, to resurrect, to uplift, all the willing and obedient, during the thousand years of His Messianic Kingdom.

All obedient to Him will thus be enabled to regain all that was lost through the first father, Adam—human perfection in an earthly Paradise, with everlasting life and fellowship with God. Since Jesus will be the Live-Giver to all of the race at the cost of His own life, He is appropriately styled their Father, and they His children. So also we read in the prophecy that He shall be called "The Prince of Peace," the Father Everlasting—the Father who gives everlasting life.

All Things Put Under Him.

At the dawn of this thousand-year Day in which His Kingdom will accomplish the full rolling away of the Curse, how appropriate that this text should have our consideration! And how appropriate it is that this text should greet the thousands who enter and leave our Union Station! As we run to and fro in these chariots which go like lightning, let us have in mind their newness, and also the fact that the Lord has specially declared that they will be signs by which His people may know that they are living in the time when they may expect speedily the fulfillment of the gracious promises of our God to the effect that He will through Jesus' Kingdom wipe away all tears from all faces, bind up the broken hearts, liberate the captives of sin, and deliver the captives of the tomb.

St. Paul refers to our text when discussing Messiah's Millennial Reign. (1 Corinthians 15:27.) Here he declares that Divine Power will put all things under Messiah, that He will reign gloriously and victoriously, and that at the close of His successful work He will deliver up the Kingdom of earth to the Father, restored to the original glory of manhood, with not a rebel to be found—because all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.

How beautiful, how complete and how logical are all of the Divine arrangements for the great work outlined in the Bible as the Divine Plan of the Ages! When all mankind shall come to see His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power, many knees shall bow and many tongues confess to His glory and majesty. Surely the number destroyed in the Second Death will be proportionately small!

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