

PEOPLE'S PULPIT...



Sermon by
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WEeping ALL NIGHT

"Weeping May Endure For the Night, but Joy Cometh In the Morning" (Psalm xxx, 5).

Sunday, November 21.—Pastor Russell, of Brooklyn Tabernacle, preached today to a crowded house from the above text. He said:—

No other book treats the matter of human woe and sorrow in the wise, tender, sympathetic, helpful manner of the Bible. It assures us that however cold, heartless and disappointing the world may be and our friends may be, or those from whom we may have expected better things, we have, nevertheless, a God of sympathy—a God of love. No heathen religion knows anything of such a God. With them God's attributes are merely more or less of ferocity. Their gods are to be placated and worshipped from fear of what they otherwise would do to their creatures. The God of the Bible assures us of his love, his sympathy, in all of our distresses—his interest in our affairs and his provision for the ultimate welfare of all those who will come into the attitude of loving righteousness and hating iniquity—the only proper attitude of heart, the only one which he can approve and bless with everlasting life.

A Night of Sorrow and Death.
The Scriptures point out to us what we recognize to be the truth—that the world has been under a pall and blight and curse of death for six thousand years. Appropriately our text describes this period as a dark time of hard, blighting experiences, a night of weeping—of sorrow. In harmony with this figure it declares that "darkness covers the (civilized) earth and gross darkness the heathen."

Not alone does this condition affect those who are in alienation from God through ignorance and superstition and the power of sin, but it affects also those who have accepted the grace of God, who have turned their backs upon sin and who are seeking to walk in the narrow way, in the footsteps of Jesus. Well does the Apostle say, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our Body,"—the Body of which Jesus is the Head or Chief and we are symbolical members or an underpriesthood (Romans viii, 22, 23).

There is a difference, however, between the Church and the world in this groaning, as suggested by the Apostle's words. The world groans aloud without alleviation, and even its waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God is a waiting in ignorance; for, being out of touch with the Eternal One, they know not of his gracious purposes and arrangements—for these are kept secret from all except his sanctified ones. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear reverence him and he will show them his Covenant" (Psalm xxv, 14). These who possess the secret of the Lord "sorrow not as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians iv, 13). They "groan inwardly" and wait for the glorification of themselves and all the brethren, members of the symbolical Body of Christ, by participation in the First Resurrection. The hopes of these must be realized first, before the blessing can come to the "groaning creation" in general. The latter are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; namely, the Church in glory.

A Light in a Dark Place.
The Bible represents itself as being the candle of the Lord, the lamp of Divine Truth and enlightenment. But it tells us that its light is not for the world—either now or at any time future. Its light is only for those who by faith and obedience unto consecration seek to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. They need the light. God provides it for them. These are represented by the Prophet as saying to the Lord, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (footsteps) (Psalm cxix, 105). This light evidently does not shine far into the future, but enough for each onward step as it becomes due.

St. Peter amplifies the same thought. After telling us of the assurance which he himself and his associates had upon the Mount of Transfiguration when they beheld "the vision" (Matthew xvii, 1-9) of the Lord miraculously transformed and with him Moses and Elijah and heard the voice from heaven, it was fearful to their minds as teaching the coming of our Lord in glory, in due time. Nevertheless, says the Apostle, honoring the Bible above any vision, "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (2 Peter i, 19), indicating that the morning is at hand and that the Sun of Righteousness will soon fulfill its mission of blessing all the families of the earth.

But Why is This Thus?
Why does God permit the reign of sin and death, injustice, unrighteousness, sorrow, trouble, pain, headaches, heartaches, etc.? Why does he not deal with humanity graciously, kindly, lovingly, as a Father—as he deals with the angelic sons of God? Is it just or loving on the part of our Creator

to bring forth millions of his creatures under these admittedly unfavorable conditions—beset by weaknesses and sinfulness from their birth and surrounded by others similarly weak, and beset by Satan and his minions—wicked spirits? Is it just that we should thus be in an unequal fight subjected to weaknesses and dying and imperfect conditions on account of the sin of our first parents and then, on the same account, be in danger of an eternity of torture with nine hundred and ninety-nine chances out of a thousand against us?

No, thank God, that thought of eternal torture which came down to us from the dark ages, and which we for a time supposed to be Biblical, we find now is quite unscriptural, when judged in the light of the Bible's own testimony. The eternal torment doctrine assuredly is not of God, not of the Bible, but, as St. Paul declares, one of the "doctrines of devils."

The inheritance of weaknesses, blemishes, sorrows, pain and trouble, to which we were born, is quite sufficient and, according to the Scriptures, these are all part of death, and all reach their culmination in death, which is the real penalty for sin prescribed by our Creator. The fact that these blemishes still continue with the race proves that their sins are not yet blotted out, and to this agree the Scriptures which point us to the oncoming glorious day of blessing a thousand years long, the Millennium, in which Divine blessing will be bestowed upon every member of Adam's race. The merit of Christ's sacrifice, the ransom-price for sinners which he laid down, will by that time be made available "for the sins of the whole world."

The merit of that sacrifice has already been applied to the Church—"The household of faith"—since Pentecost. It has brought to this class very special privileges, though very different ones from those it will bring to the world during the Millennium. The willing and obedient of the world will then get restitution gradually (Acts iii, 20), back to human perfection and a world-wide Edenic home. The blessing upon the Church is different. The promise now made to those who can and will walk by faith and not by sight is a heavenly one. They are to have a heavenly or spiritual reward and in their resurrection become partakers of the divine nature and have no share thereafter in human nature. The conditions of the present time are severe, proportionately to the greatness and grandeur of their heavenly calling. The terms of acceptance to the divine nature include not only faith and love, but a self-sacrificing will. These sacrifice their earthly restitution rights and privileges for the privilege of suffering with Christ, that they may also reign with him in his Millennial Kingdom.

Learning by Suffering.
The same thought is elsewhere expressed. Only those who hear his voice and obey him as the Teacher sent of God will be successful in their endeavor to become members of the "Royal Priesthood," now being selected from the world. Only those who, during the Millennial Age, will hear and obey will there receive this great blessing of eternal salvation—eternal life under Divine favor, free from the curse. The reward to the world in the close of the Millennium and the reward to the Church in the close of this Gospel Age will each be eternal salvation; but the Church's reward will include eternal glory, heavenly glory and joint-heirship with the Redeemer himself in his great work of administering God's blessings to the world of mankind, as Mediator of the New Covenant between God and men—the world.

It seemed wise to our Heavenly Father that our Lord Jesus should learn obedience through sufferings and be tested in respect to his willingness to endure suffering for righteousness' sake. How appropriate it is that the same Father should make similar arrangements for all of the Church, whom he will receive from amongst the race of Adam to be members of the Royal Priesthood under Jesus, the High Priest of our order. We see a necessity for this, not only as respects our own testings and a thorough proof of our own heart-loyalty to the Lord, but additionally we see a wisdom on God's part in thus preparing a priest-hood for the future. The term priest as recognized amongst the Jews was not merely one who offered sacrifices, although every priest was of necessity a sacrificer. The special mission of the priestly tribe amongst the other tribes was that of instructing, helping, healing, teaching. And so God is preparing a Royal Priesthood for the Millennial Age to bless, to heal, to teach, to uplift all the willing and obedient of humanity.

The royalty of the priesthood signifies that it will no longer be a sacrificing class, for all sacrificing will be at an end. It will be a glorious class, royal, of the divine nature, and representatives with our Lord Jesus of the Divine power. As priests who will have to do with judging and chastening, healing and helping humanity, how

much sympathy do we suppose that these Royal Priests should have? Are they not to be on the Divine plane of glory, "members of the Body" of Messiah, the great kingly priest after the order of Melchizedek? And of him has not the Apostle written that he must be a faithful and merciful High Priest, able also to sympathize with the people in their infirmities? Does he not declare that it was for this reason that our Lord was touched with a feeling for humanity's infirmities? And is it not in perfect keeping with this that all those accepted as "members of his Body" should have such experiences in this sacrificing time as would demonstrate their loyalty to the Lord and guarantee their deep sympathetic interest in the world, then committed to their care? To such will be committed the work of human restitution, uplift out of sin and death conditions—mental, moral and physical?

The Morning of Joy.
How glad we should be that our Heavenly Father's sympathy for us will provide "a morning of joy" to be ushered in, in his "due time." Additionally he sympathizes with us to the extent that he has given us in advance a message and Revelation and explanation to comfort us, to sustain us in the way? We have already seen that this Revelation is only for those who have the eyes of faith and the ears of faith at the present time. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." "He that hath an ear let him hear."

We recognize the wisdom of God in withholding the secret of his plan from the world in general. We recognize that for the world to know the deep things of God at the present time would be injurious rather than helpful to them. It might possibly work an interference with the Divine Program. Nevertheless we are bound to sympathize with the poor groaning creation in its blindness and ignorance. The poor world knows not why it came into being. In an animal fashion, eating, drinking, etc., it seeks to use the opportunities of present life and, after a few short years full of trouble, it goes down into the tomb, ignorant of the purposes of its creation, and usually considerably entrained by fear respecting the future beyond the portals of death.

How we may rejoice in spirit as we perceive the length and breadth and height and depth of the Divine Program for the future and the blessings which it will bring to this "groaning creation!" How we long for the time to come when the Church shall be made ready through the sufferings of this present time for the glories of the future—the Kingdom! No wonder the Apostle declares, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he [the Lord] is pure (1 John iii, 3). He is our exemplar, our pattern. We seek to copy him. Although we cannot hope to be like him in the flesh, we can be like him in the spirit of our minds and thus be of the character-likeness which the Father will be pleased to honor with a share in the "First Resurrection." By that glorious "change" we shall be made like him actually and see him as he is and share his glory.

The morning of joy, the Millennial Morning, of course, cannot be ushered in until the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Its beams of grace and Truth will flood the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to such a degree that it will drive out, expel, all ignorance, superstition and sin, which have worked such havoc in our race.

But what is this Sun of Righteousness? Whence comes it? The Bible answers the question by telling us that it symbolically represents the Lord himself and the elect Church of this Gospel Age. The Sun of Righteousness is a synonym for the Seed of Abraham, of whom it is written, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Mystery hidden for a time from many is the fact that the Church is to share with her Lord in every feature of his glorious work, not only in suffering, but also in reigning. Thus we have St. Paul's assurance that the overcomers will be members of the Seed of Abraham (Galatians iii, 29). And we have our Lord's own words that this faithful class will be represented in the great Sun of Righteousness, the great Messiah, the great Prophet, Priest, King and Mediator between God and men (Matthew xiii, 43).

"What Manner of Persons."
St. Peter, in viewing the prospects of the Church, inquires as to "what manner of persons we ought to be in all manner of holy living and godliness." He refers to us, who know that the present order of things is the reign of sin and death from which our Lord died to deliver us. What manner of persons ought we to be, who have heard the Lord's invitation to joint-heirship in his Kingdom, and who know that we are now on trial to determine by our voluntary course our worthiness or unworthiness of that glorious position to which we have been called by God's favor? How paltry, how insignificant, do all the affairs of the world appear in comparison to this great prize set before us in the gospel!

And what should be our attitude towards the world, seeing from this inside standpoint of Divine Revelation the real condition of the world and God's sympathy for it? Its ignorance should make us very sympathetic, and very much disposed to lend a helping hand of relief in every possible manner. We should be ever ready to remove the scales of blindness from the mental vision of all who give indication of a desire for God—any who seem to be "feeling after God, if haply they might find him" (Acts xvii, 27). Only such will be ready for the Kingdom, fit for the Royal Priesthood, every member of which must be "touched with a feeling" for earth's infirmities.

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MILLIONS ARE SPENT TO AID THE FARMERS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—Secretary Wilson has issued a statement pointing out that the United States government is spending in the neighborhood of \$18,000,000 a year on experimental work in increasing the yield and efficiency of the farms of the country.

The statement was inspired by the charge made by William C. Brown, president of the New York Central lines, at a dinner in New York this week, that the nation could better afford to invest the cost of one battleship in agricultural experiment work than to expend it in the increase of the navy. A battleship costs approximately \$9,000,000.

Secretary Wilson recited the case of a farmer who was raising only 20 bushels of potatoes to the acre and who appealed to the department for assistance and advice. Both were given and, Mr. Wilson says, he now is raising 250 bushels to the acre on the same land.

How One Doctor Successfully Treats Pneumonia.

"In treating pneumonia," says Dr. W. J. Smith of Sanders, Ala., "the only remedy I use for the lungs is Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. While, of course, I would treat other symptoms with different medicines, I have used this remedy many times in my medical practice and have yet failed to find a case where it has not controlled the trouble. I have used it myself, as has also my wife, for coughs and colds repeatedly, and I most willingly and cheerfully recommend it as superior to any other cough remedy to my knowledge." For sale by Leon B. Haskins' Pharmacy.

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