

"WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?"

Even the Winds and the Waves Obey Him."



On the Atlantic, Nov. 13.—Pastor Russell of the Brooklyn Tabernacle is homeward bound. He declares that he greatly enjoyed his visit to Great Britain, where he preached in twelve of the principal cities, including three Sundays in London. He greatly admired the reverential sub-strata of religious thought in Britain. Whether or not the people are really more holy than their brethren in the United States and Canada, they are, he says, as a rule, more reverential in their demeanor—in their attitude toward Divine things.

Pastor Russell considers public thought in Great Britain to be at least twenty years behind that of the States in respect to the Bible as a Divine revelation. This is much in their favor, he says. The Evolution theory and so-called Higher Criticism of the Bible, he says, wrought great alienation of the clergy and more alienation of the people of America. He finds in Great Britain the same destructive sentiments at work, but they have not yet reached the masses with such force and poisoning power. Faith in God and in the Bible as his Word Pastor Russell has specially sought to inculcate. He feels greatly encouraged and hopes to see his friends and the public of Great Britain soon again, as they request.

His love for our British cousins has not, however, diminished his love and interest in God's people of America. If Americans are less reverent it may also be said that many of them are more independent and more courageous in their convictions respecting the Truth. The British friends should, he thinks, cultivate an independence of thought; while American Christians, losing none of their courage, should cultivate a spirit of reverence for God, for his Word and for all holy things.

Pastor Russell is enjoying his usual good health and continues his literary work on the sea, as on the land. A representative of the American Press Association and a stenographer accompany him. Pastor Russell's address for today was from the following text:

"What manner of man is this? For even the winds and the waves obey him."—Matthew viii, 27.

This text is taken from the Gospel narrative of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, during which Jesus was asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, until the sturdy seamen, appalled by the storm, cried to him, Master, earnest thou not that we perish? Then the Savior arose and rebuked the storm and there was a great calm. When the fishermen disciples beheld this they said, What kind of person is this that even the winds and the sea obey him? The speaker declared that although more than eighteen centuries had passed, the same question is going the rounds of most civilized peoples of the world—"What manner of man is this?" Some of the best thinkers and noblest hearts of all nationalities, Jew and Gentile, agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a most wonderful man. It is still agreed, as in the days of his presence, that "never man spake like this man!" Some, indeed, called him a deceiver. Others said that he was under the control of evil spirits. Others, going to the opposite extreme, declared that this great Jew was Jehovah himself, who, for the time, was masquerading as a man.

"Wonderful Words of Life."

Pastor Russell contends that the greatest of all Jews told the truth about himself, as well as about other matters. When he prayed to the Father with strong cryings and tears in Gethsemane (Hebrews v, 7) he was not shamming. He was not perpetrating a fraud and deceiving his disciples then and since.

We have great sympathy for the fellow-countrymen of Jesus who, failing to understand him, caused his execution, considering him a menace to their institutions. His wonderful works, his wonderful words of life, of which it is recorded that the public declared, "never man spake like this man," and in general his wonderful personality, seemed really incongruous with his general demeanor. Not claiming to be Jehovah, not claiming to be his own Father, as some now teach, but, on the contrary, declaring, "My Father is greater than I," he nevertheless claimed a special relationship to God; and this he demonstrated by such miracles as the one of our lesson. Had he done and said these things as a member of one of the popular sects of his day, he would have been revered. Had he joined in with the Pharisees and winked at their interpreting the Law in one way for the people and in another manner for themselves, he would have received much honor from the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant. But he antagonized all these by his humility in mingling with the common people, accepting some of them as his special disciples and sending them out as his representatives. This specially branded him as foolish in the eyes of the worldly-wise. This specially discredited him, not only as a man and a teacher, but particularly as one who claimed to be the Messiah, the King of glory who was to set up an Empire. We can well see why worldly-wise people of that day or this day would consider such a person a fraud, a pretender, a deceiver. Appearances were against him.

Jesus declared that the Father sent

him and that he delighted to come in obedience to Jehovah's will, to be his agent and servant in the outworking of a great plan for human redemption. Those who deny all of this, and who have awakened so much confusion amongst Christians, and have made the Gospel of Christ impossible to the Jew, should give an account of themselves and explain by what authority they contradicted the Great Teacher—"The Father is greater than I." And when they claim that the death of Jesus was merely a farce, and that he as Jehovah merely stepped out of the body of Jesus and perpetrated a fraud and pretended to be dead and aroused his disciples so to think and so to teach, and pretended later to be raised from the dead—those who thus teach and who thus confuse the minds of all Christendom and Jewry, should explain away, if they can, the plain statement of the Apostle that God raised up Jesus from the dead by his own power on the third day.

"Art Thou a King Then?"

Picture the Great Teacher walking with his twelve Apostles, a nondescript crowd of those who heard him gladly—not many great, not many learned, not many rich, not many noble. Hear him telling them—those who acknowledge themselves to be ignorant and unlearned (Acts iv, 13)—that, if faithful to him, he would "grant them to sit with him in his Throne." The statement surely seemed fraudulent, and he had not the heart to condemn the Jews who so misinterpreted him. St. Peter did not condemn them, but distinctly said, I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye crucified the Prince of Life, as did also your rulers (Acts III, 15-17).

Can we wonder that the learned Jews of that day were confused? They did, indeed, hear of his miracles—his recovering of sight to the blind and of strength to the withered hand of the impotent man; and, in the case of Lazarus, at least, they had demonstration of his power over the dead. They perceived that these miracles were having an influence upon the masses—that they detracted from their own esteem amongst the people. They knew that many of Jesus' sayings were wonderfully wise and that his criticisms of their own inconsistencies were remarkably sharp. Yet wital, they said, we know that he is a fraud, because of his peculiar claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God. This claim of his discountenances all of his teachings and mighty works. It cannot be true that he is the Messiah that our nation has waited for these more than sixteen centuries. God would surely send Messiah a sufficiency of demonstration of glory and power to convince the most intelligent of our nation, the Scribes and Pharisees and Priests. What they all dissent from, repudiate and denounce, must be false.

For the Good of the Nation.

The Jewish wise men of eighteen centuries ago concluded that a man who set the masses agog with anticipation of himself as the Messiah-King, yet came without an army and without financial backing for a campaign, would present their nation to the Romans in a ludicrous light. As a result they might have taken from them, at the word of the Emperor, the civil and religious privileges and rights they were enjoying. They took counsel and determined that in the interests of the peace of the nation this golden-tongued miracle-worker should either be exposed as a fraud or be killed. They tried first to expose him by trapping him in his language in the presence of his followers and the multitude. But his intellect was keener than theirs and the thrusts they made at him rebounded to their own discomfort and established his own standing in the estimation of his followers and in the eyes of the people. One of these efforts to show up the hollowness of his claims and their fraudulence and to discourage his followers is worthy of particular notice, as it furnishes us the key to the sentiment of the rulers and also the key to the real facts of the case which those rulers failed to discern.

The Kingdom in Your Midst.

The influential Jews said, Let us question this fraudulent Messiah respecting his pretensions, not with any hope of correcting him, but with a view to opening the eyes of his followers to the weakness and fallacy of his teachings. Then they will see the hollowing of the hopes they are entreating and their foolishness in leaving their various avocations to become his followers, in the hope of sitting with him in his Throne. They will see that he has no prospect of ever securing a Throne and that they are merely deluded by him in such expectations. They inquired of him, When will your Kingdom appear? How long will it be before you sit upon your throne and have your followers with you in the Throne? How long before this Messianic Kingdom will rule in Palestine and extend from its borders to the ends of the earth? After you have answered us these questions we will ask you others respecting your financial support and resources—your own qualifications, and your subordinate officers; the arms for your soldiers and the supplies necessary for such a world-campaign as you are about to begin, according to your teachings.

The Great Teacher's brief answer entirely silenced every objection. His questions, had these men been "Israelites indeed," would have been so deeply impressed upon them that they would have followed up the matter with an entirely different line of questioning than at first contemplated. But they were insincere. Hence when their questions, intended to entrap the Teacher and Master, were answered and failed they merely acknowledged their defeat by their silence.

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